

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
FRANCES BRANDON

13 SEPTEMBER 1995
MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

INTERVIEWED BY REGINA FORSYTHE
FOR THE Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW #QMS.095

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

ALBERT GORE RESEARCH CENTER

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH
NAME**

Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.095

FORSYTHE: This tape is part of the Q. M. Smith collection designated as QMS.1995.95. This is Regina Forsythe, I am interviewing Mrs. Frances Brandon. Today is Wednesday September 13, 1995. The interview is being conducted in the Gore Research Center, Room 111 of the Ned McWherter Learning Resources Center. The tape 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. Brandon?

BRANDON: Indeed it is.

FORSYTHE: What is your full name?

BRANDON: I have a long full name, I was named for my father. Howell Frances Sweeney Brandon.

FORSYTHE: Your birth date and place?

BRANDON: June 23, 1916. Davidson County, near Una.

FORSYTHE: Your father's name and occupation?

BRANDON: Howell Fields Sweeney he was a teacher, principal administrator.

FORSYTHE: Where did he teach?

BRANDON: He taught in schools in Davidson County, at the time I was born. For a time he had a partnership in a small grocery which he helped to run in the summertime, the teacher pay was very small, then he became associated with Metro schools in Nashville and he taught when I was a school girl at Eastland school and it was an elementary school, and then he became principal of both Eastland and Bailey schools, Bailey was a new junior high school, it was new in Nashville.

FORSYTHE: What was your mother's name and occupation?

BRANDON: Eustatia Ellis. Her name was really Eustatia Frances but you don't need all of that do you? You want to write that in? She was a housewife and church-woman, she worked a lot in the Methodist church.

FORSYTHE: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

BRANDON: I have two living sisters Gayle and Anita.

FORSYTHE: Your husband's name?

BRANDON: Charles Morris Scott Brandon, at first he was a farmer, and then he was a teacher the rest of the time. He was an art professor in the city schools of Nashville, and then he became in time the head of the art department here at the University. He was known as Dr. Brandon.

FORSYTHE: Tell me more about him.

BRANDON: He like and believed in education in art for all students but especially elementary. He thought that art was essential for their success in teaching young people and he thought it made the person a better person to have some art background. Sometimes they could relate better in art than they could in words. Then he became the head of the art department here after being the associate head for some time and he continued to teach art education. His strength in art was sculpture and he preferred working in wood, and we have a large collection at our home of his sculptures at this point.

FORSYTHE: What years did he work here?

BRANDON: I can give it in round figures, I can say '60 as around figure to the time of his retirement in '76 I believe it was. But I need to look up those dates. He was a teacher when Fred Rubins was here, Fred Rubins was strong in water color and painting and Morris was strong in the education area.

FORSYTHE: Did anyone else in your family come to MTSU?

BRANDON: Only for summer school, my daughter came.

FORSYTHE: What are your children's names?

BRANDON: I have a daughter, her name is Stacia Ruth Brandon, and she is married to Moffitt. She took summer work here, history and some math when she was an under-grad. I have a son and he graduated from this college, he is Carl Morris.

FORSYTHE: What memories do you have as a student here at MTSU?

BRANDON: Wonderful memories. Very unlike the campus today. We had two girl's dormitories and Jones Hall for the men, and we had Old Main, and the Science Building and a library and there was a herd of cattle grazing within a stone's throw of the campus, and the milk furnished by these cows was the milk we drank in the dining hall, we had the dining hall of course, and there was a laundry here, and tennis courts. I loved dormitory life, I had a wonderful sweet roommate

Lucille McRae, who graduated from Litton High in Nashville, we became roommates because I had known her in the fifth or sixth grade, at Eastland school, where my father had been principal. Then there were others that I knew, there was a Ransom girl and a girl, Ruth McDonald who became a reading specialist in the city schools. We were in Lyon Hall, that is important, it was a new dormitory and we had rooms that did not have bathrooms, there were just showers stalls on each end of the hall, but we thought we were very modern. There was an old beat up grand in the lobby of Lyon Hall, anybody could play anytime they felt like it. There was one telephone, and it was a pay phone on the first level. There were four floors, and I happened to be very fortunate, I had a room in at the end of the first hall and we would get up early, we didn't think of cutting class in those days, to us falling into the routine was something wonderful. We thought it was wonderful to go to breakfast and wonderful to be at an 8 o'clock class and all those things. There was very little class-cutting in the girls that I knew, I think maybe some of the men and a few of the girls would cut class but I believe coming to school as it were, living away from home, was such a novelty that to the majority of people we were all very serious students.

FORSYTHE: What was the condition of the buildings when you were here?

BRANDON: The buildings were in good conditions still, they were not lit as well as they are now, but my English and History classes, well most classes were held in Old Main. The furniture was getting battered and they were carved, where people had inscribed their initials, and the teacher had a very plain desk, and there were chalk boards, we had never heard of computers, there were one or two manual typewriters in the offices, but things were very different, very relaxed compared to what they are today.

FORSYTHE: These benches, did you have desks in front of them?

BRANDON: No just plain benches. Five or six could sit on a bench, but you held your notebook in your lap or put them on the floor beneath you.

FORSYTHE: How many benches in a room?

BRANDON: Our classes ran between twenty and thirty. Not large classes.

FORSYTHE: So there were about five or six benches in each room.

BRANDON: That's right, that is they was it was. In the halls of Old Main, there were pictures and rows of pictures of those who had come to Normal School back in 1913, I believe it was, and I had an aunt who had a picture who's aunt was in one of the first graduating classes, and I would go up and look at the picture. She was an aunt by marriage. My aunt Vera Gambill, and she had been one of the early students in this University and was always proud that I was coming here.

FORSYTHE: Did she ever tell you any stories about coming here?

BRANDON: She did. There was electricity in the buildings but there was no way to get any food once you had supper in the dinning hall so most of the girls came from farms and one time her mother, in Coffee County, gave her some country ham, so I think she slipped a small skilled in her suitcase and they used an electric iron and propped in between books some way, and fried their ham in their room, and they said it was wonderful. But the smell of ham is very wonderful and very penetrating so before they knew it not only was the matron was there, but she accepted a piece of ham rather than reporting. People would get so hungry in those dormitories at night, there were no mechanical places where you could get Coca-Colas or drinks or crackers, so we would act like ferrets or rats, we would often take crackers or cheese to our room or maybe a can of sardines, and fruit of course, and many a midnight repass was furnished by every one bringing what ever they had left from the day, half of a candy bar, or some peanuts were so good. I went home every weekend because I lived in Nashville and could ride the bus and sometimes a train, there was a very good train service, this is I believe '35, '36 I am talking about, from Nashville, but oh when you went down to the train station the air was filled with smoke from the trains, and I would choke up, so I prefer the bus, because I didn't choke up on the bus, but the train was also fun, and we would usually ride up on Sunday nights on the train, and we would bring with us fruit and sandwiches and fudge, Oh boy, fudge was so good, so we made it. There was a lot of sharing back and forth.

FORSYTHE: Where was the train station?

BRANDON: It was in Nashville, the old depot, and the one that is here is down close to the cheese factory that is here it is close to Bridge avenue, not far from Cannonsboro, the depot is still very active, we have many freight trains now running in this area, and if you go to our depot it is still the same old building. But we came right to there, and there were about two cabs in Murfreesboro, and for one nickel you could ride to the dormitory. Now if you called a cab, if you had to make a bus, you had to pay a dime for the cab to come out and get you, but gasoline was 15 cents a gallon or less and usually there would be a car load I believe the cabs were old Dodges, the best I remember, big old Sedans, you could seat six or seven girls and pile in their baggage.

FORSYTHE: Where was the bus station?

BRANDON: The bus station is down where Red Rose is now, I believe I am correct in that. Murfreesboro has changed a lot since I was a student.

FORSYTHE: Can you remember any more of your aunt's stories?

BRANDON: I am trying to. She was proud to be coming to school, I think she was the only one in her family, she had a sister and brothers that had been able economically to

allow her to come. She very much loved Dr. and Mrs. Frazier, who were at that time English teachers and very fine English teachers, and also I believe Frazier taught Latin. But if one of the two of those became ill the other would stand in for them. They were equally appreciated by the students and so her love of the Fraziers stands out in my mind and the fact that they were fine scholars. Scholarship was really appreciated in those days, if any one knew Latin or Greek or French they were looked up to. I don't see a lot of that today, I don't feel that.

FORSYTHE: Did you go to chapel here?

BRANDON: Yes we did occasionally have a chapel in the big auditorium, but I guess the Fraziers were the main ones who led that, but we would have a chapel service now and then like Easter season or something in the dorms, that is the way it was done. The churches became active at that point, and the Methodist had a church where the big parking lot is on Tennessee, so the church interest was growing when I was a student, then we were encouraged to come into their groups, though they did not have a thing like Wesley House, or the Catholic center. They did not have the centers but they did encourage students and we were invited by the churches some times for rides, in bad weather, some of the patrons of the church would come and take us to The First Methodist or First Baptist Church on Sunday mornings.

FORSYTHE: What about the assemblies, I understood there was one each week.

BRANDON: Yes we did, chapel became less and less popular, now I don't ever recall cutting those, but since I came only two years, then was out two years, because I became a teacher, we were allowed to teach on a certificate, I know there were no assemblies in the summer schools, but I forget, I think announcements were made, and I think Dean Beasley took charge of some of those Chapels, as best I remember. This is getting into the thirties, when I am talking about now, and I don't think they were quite as rigid about those assemblies.

FORSYTHE: What degrees do you have?

BRANDON: I have, from this University it was STC then, my bachelors, and I majored in English and social studies. But I have my masters in children's literature from Peabody, and I have a great many additional hours in language, I have come back here for Spanish, and French.

FORSYTHE: Why did you choose to go to MTSU?

BRANDON: At that time it was the most economical university, and my father did not approve of sororities for girls, and they were becoming very popular in Nashville, and even Peabody had some, well I don't think they were sponsored by Peabody, but sororities were becoming popular. My father was a teacher himself and he had

three girls to rear, so we had to watch our money so he sent me here. There were no sorties at that time here.

FORSYTHE: Why did you decide to teach?

BRANDON: I had taught since I was four or five, when I played dolls I taught school and I wanted to be a teacher. My father was a very good teacher, a very patient understanding teacher, so I became a teacher. For one thing it was a paying job so I could make my money and come back and get my degree, and I was given sixty five dollars a month, nine months of the year, with my salary, and I was able to ride the street car and go to my first school, and save enough money to come to summer school, at the same time I would give a few dollars to my parents for Christmas and Holidays for extra food. Money was a different standard, a dollar would buy a lot then, for a 1.98 I could buy a pretty pair of slippers, for instance.

FORSYTHE: Did you have a job as a student?

BRANDON: No, I always wanted one. They would tell me "no", my family was too well off, they had to give jobs to the poor students, this is strange because I knew that we were watching our money closely so that there would be money for my sister, to come to school, but there were many who had even less, who had to work in order to stay. Some of the boys that I knew helped milk the cows, worked in the dairy, and some of the girls worked part time in the offices as best I remember.

FORSYTHE: What do you remember about president Lyon?

BRANDON: He was getting older, he was white headed and he would be present at the assemblies and call us to order, occasionally we would go to his office but most all the duties that I remember anything about were taken care of by the Dean, or the Bursar, the important man on the campus was Mr. Woodmoore, who was the Bursar because he was in charge down next to the post office and oh, how we loved our mail! I believe we could send a letter for two cents, you could research that, it was very inexpensive, just four or five pennies compared to now. We loved getting out mail, and I believe there would be two deliveries out here, but I am not certain, we thought we were so modern, we had the little post office things with a combination that you had to learn, and my roommate and I had ours together. We were forced to have one with another person, so she come get our mail, and bring it to the room or I could get our mail.

FORSYTHE: Where was the post office located?

BRANDON: In the basement of Old Main, it was dark down there, you went down the steps, and there was the post office, and the bursars office when you signed up for your courses you paid your check to Mr. Woodmore, that was the hub of the campus to many of us, because of the mail system, we had to get a check cashed Mr. Woodmore would cash it or go that direction. We bought a meal ticket down

there, most of us ate in the cafeteria and I believe you could get a month or six weeks supply, a little ticket that you just pull, and they were a dime or a nickel.

FORSYTHE: They were like coupon books?

BRANDON: Yes, a slender book. They were so easy to loose and I lost mine once and I thought I was going to starve before I got any more money, when you lost the book it was never found because some one else picked it up and used it. Every one was hungry. I hate to say we were poverty stricken, but you understand there was very little food offerings here except the dinning hall, I think the third or fourth year when I was going to summer school, I believe that there was a private place where you could have breakfast, hot pancakes, right here on the campus, and I seldom had enough extra coinage for that, but Mr. Bach had a tea room, across Tennessee, we were all allowed to go over there, and for a quarter you could get a plate lunch. He kept a very clean orderly. . . That is how I met my husband, he was working at Bach's and I would go over there occasionally for a meal on Sundays if we stayed here we would eat at Bach's. Mr. Bach had two children and his daughter became quite well known for her Latin ability, she went to some other school away from here, Carolyn Bach. She spoke here shortly before she died of cancer, to our alumni association, a very humorous, clever speech, and George was her brother, so I remember them.

FORSYTHE: Your husband was a student here?

BRANDON: Yes, only a year then he went to another university. But I knew his older brother and his sister before I knew him. Ruth, was in the dormitory and she was upstairs, and I knew and liked her because she liked English, and books and drama. I would see here in the library and I began to know here that way, Woolford was on campus, so then Morris came and I met him here. But he went away to school to Murray Kentucky, but after that time, I think we were engaged five years before we were married.

FORSYTHE: What do you remember about President Smith?

BRANDON: Mostly his voice, because he was a fine figure, and dressed neatly, but when he spoke, if you were in his presence, you wanted to make the conversation short, it seemed that it was difficult for him to speak, and he was always fair, and the students were not afraid of him, there was high respect for him, but I never had many interviews with him, as a person, I would just know him. When there were banquets, he would be the one to either be the prayer or introduce the speaker, things like that.

FORSYTHE: Did you know him after you graduated?

BRANDON: I knew his wife, better than I knew him. She was quite pretty, I think she had been either his student or secretary, and I believe it was the second marriage for

the both of them. I had went to their home at one time because they had a garden and they laid tomatoes, and remember going out there, I would meet here downtown, run into her as it were, and we would always have a chat, and of of course she would be at them meetings and the banquets that we held on campus, she was most friendly and delightful to know.

FORSYTHE: Tell me more about Bill Beasley.

BRANDON: Well now Bill Beasley, at that point, was a rascal running around the campus with his shirt tell out, I think I am probably fifteen or twenty years older than he. He and Carolyn Bach and Joy Bach would get on their scates or their bikes or their scooters and they would go up and down the sidewalks and play on the campus. They were the campus kids as far as we were concerned, just like there are always campus dogs, and so I knew Beasley more, I never had him as a professor, but he became a teacher, and I would hear about him through other students that came here, they always like his courses so much. He encouraged me to continue my writing, his father wrote the first letter to me, then Bill was always interested in poetry, but frequently we would conference together and he would encourage me to continue my writing.

FORSYTHE: George Davis

BRANDON: He was the Biology guy? I did not take biology, I took chemistry, now I am much more interested in biology, but my friend from Nashville, Mary Ransom, took classes under Dr. Davis, and they adored him, and they talked about his system of teaching, that he always had one focal point in every lecture, and that when you first got to the next class, you had to have a clean sheet in front of you, that he would ask question, usually it was to the point that he had made dynamically, it was about what they had been taught the session before, it was probably a very good way to teach, because those students knew, and they would hand that paper in and they got some credit for the good responses, it was a very clever way he had on making them think back on the lecture he had the time before, therefore it led into the new material, so I do know that Mary would report to me, she was right across the hall, she became later a teacher in the city schools, and we were life long friends, would tell some of his funny jokes, he was a very good raconteur. But then I had Dr. Mebane, and I did not like it, it was the first subject I had that i did not like. I did not understand it, it was chemistry, so I do not have a very good experience in under-grad, on biology, but I got into it later, and it became my most favorite subject, because I went to Peabody and got the courses in science for children, and I dearly loved that field, it is earth science.

FORSYTHE: Tell me some more about those benches.

BRANDON: I will be happy to tell you about those benches, if you had on a starched shirt, and then a skirt, you had to be careful because you would slide, they were highly polished, or had been highly polished, and if you had on a silk or voile dress, and

it was warm weather you would stick to the benches. When you sat on a bench, you looked at the initials, of they many, and I don't think they were all boys, but Jim and Robert, Bill, and there would be these hart shapes with the name of their girlfriends, carved on the back of the bench in front of you, no one liked to sit in the front bench, but I usually took the second row of benches, because I liked to participate, particularly in English literature, now when we went to science, I think we had tables, and the lab, with the lab counters, and I believe they had tiny little seat that you could sit on, that would fold back in like an old fashioned piano stool. But in the science halls mostly there were long tables, and they were used for dissection, things like that.

FORSYTHE: Did the benches have backs to them?

BRANDON: Oh yes, going back to the classroom benches, and they were, they never suited my back, and where the seat of the bench entered the back there was a of long hole, perhaps that was better because it did give a little ventilation in the summer time, I am not sure that those benches could have been folded over for moving, most time as I best remember they were very rugged things, by rugged I mean they were substantial, and they would hold six or eight students, and the men and boys would usually get the back ones, and now and then they would get a girl to sit with them but the professors would not encourage the girls and boys to ever sit together, so it is very different today. In fact, my husband, who had been a student a year before I entered, and then had dropped out a year because in those days you worked a year to come back, wanted to sit with an attractive girl, and he went in and sat beside her and he was told in one of his classes, to move back, they had to put their mind on their subjects. So this is how far we are going back in history.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about Mr. Mebane.

BRANDON: He had been a newspaper reporter, and he many interesting stories to tell, and we were inorganic chemistry and we had a work book, and he mostly went back to his office, he gave us something to do, and we would get out our little vials, and turn on our Bunsen burner, and we each had a partner in the lab, and I was confused the whole time. The classes were perhaps to large. I'll tell you the real, trouble, I didn't know for years, about Pinky. Pinky was his assistant, and he was enamored of the girls, I don't think he had a regular girl he dated, but he liked to tease, and I know now what he did, we were always given an unknown substance, or a substance in a vial to reduce and then report our findings, what salt it was, or this that and the other, we had a xxx to go by and invariably, Lucille and I, she was my roommate, got a bad grade, and I know why, Pinky put in some other stuff in those vials, he would drop in some iron, or something that we could never render and get the correct answer, he knew enough, he was a Charlatan, and it didn't occur to me until years later when my own daughter was in chemistry and they were having the little test on reducing a fluid down to its salt or whatever, then testing for whether it was an acid or a base, all these things that would come

up in beginning, she would talk to me about that, and then I would suddenly remember, just like a sudden inspiration from the gods, why Pinky was tricking Lucille and me, because we would rerun ours, faithfully, we would go over and over, and we would get a bad grade, so that is what turned me against chemistry to this day. He thought it was funny because he was always grinning, saying "did you get a result?" He would kid us, it was his fun, he made us get Cs and Ds where we should have been getting As because we were bright enough to do the experiment.

FORSYTHE: Was he a student?

BRANDON: He was an assistant, he was somewhere along as a student, not in our class, but he was the assistant, of the lab, and those lab assistants have great power, I found that out as my daughter, well she excelled in science, she had a PH.. D. in neurobiology, during all those years, when she would tell me of those experiences she was having in the lab, I would remember what happened. They called him Pinky because his eyes were always red. I don't know whether he was allergic, or whether he weak eyes, he did wear glasses, or whether, I don't think we had marijuana, or any drug problem at all, but he was called Pinky because his eyes were always pink.

FORSYTHE: What was his real name?

BRANDON: I don't know. To this day I don't know and I am kind of glad I don't. But we were all good friends, we knew we had to stay in good with that assistant. But I am just sure now since I have learned more in the field of science that he was being funny and tricking us girls.

FORSYTHE: How about Horace Jones?

BRANDON: Now he was a math wizard, and I know more about him through my husbands classes, he could work any of the difficult examples, just go right to the chalkboard, but he would rather talk about cars, then to teach math, and he would get off on models, Cadillacs, and Dodges, and Lincoln's, the Oldsmobiles were coming in, he was in a way a very brilliant man, but I don't know, if you weren't good in math whether you would learn a lot. I eschewed all math courses, I had all that I wanted in High School, I leaned toward history and the languages.

FORSYTHE: What about Dr. Sims?

BRANDON: One of the cleverest speakers, whenever you went to his class, you wanted to learn more about history. He could relate the past with the present, perhaps, I have heard people say, graduates of his major, that perhaps one of the strongest people in the university as far as scholarships went.

FORSYTHE: Catherine Monohan.

BRANDON: [laughs] Do you really want me to talk about her?

FORSYTHE: Yes I do, I want to know what that laugh is about.

BRANDON: Well, she ate at Bach's, and she never took tea, she asked for hot water, and sugar, I guess it was free, but it perhaps gave her some energy, maybe tea was bad for her, I don't know, but you think of a professor as liking their tea or their coffee. But she was very much a type of person that would pick out one or two of her kids and let them have an A. The rest, Bs or C's, her grading was erratic, and I know this, because my very dear roommate, who studies assiduously, and knew as much about the reading as I did, would give 76 or 85 or something on her paper, and I would get 90's and 100's. There was no earthly reason why my paper would be . . . we would go back to the dormitory and say "what did you put down for this question", and compare the answers. Poor little Silvey cried, and I said "Lucille, I don't know, take it back to her and show it to her, and you may take my paper." But Lucille was a shy girl and she would never do it. But I know that Ms. Monohan, had an overload, she was the only education teacher on the block. A lot of papers to grade and a lot of classes, I hate to say that, but that is my memory of her, it was another one who came, one other teacher who came a little bit later, what was her name, and she was also kind of silly, and we got the idea that the education teachers were silly except for Mary Hall, which I can really talk about Mary Hall, but every body can talk about her. there was at that time already a teacher, or a supervisor in Rutherford County, and went right on to, I think she remained a supervisor in Rutherford County, and became a much desired speaker, and she and a teacher friend at Peabody helped start the kindergartens in this area, they worked day and night, they would talk to people on the capitol steps, "let's have kindergartens in Nashville and Rutherford County." I believe that Mary Hall was teaching some in the city schools of Nashville, I cannot be sure because at that time I was working between this university for the summer school, and I had Miss Hall for two summers, and she taught me more about how to approach a class, and how to interest children, and how important discipline was, and of her love for children, she had wanted to be a doctor, but her father said "No, doctoring is not for a woman, the life is too hard, you are up all hours, you be a teacher, you will be a good one." and she was marvelous teacher, I could write a whole book on her, I have thought of doing a book on Mary Hall.

FORSYTHE: How about Dr. Golightly.

BRANDON: He was well knowledgeable in psychology, but psychology as you know, is a changing subject constantly, there is always new experiments and new idea coming forth and he would give a quiz on the text, and he would pretty well follow the text book, but now and then when you would go into his class, he would give you the lecture he had given you the week before. So if you had studied, you were all right for the next time. We all knew this but he was an

enjoyable person, and he talked a lot about what he understood about the mind. I don't think at that point the right and left side of the mind had come in, and Jung was doing some important writing about dreams in Europe, and he would talk to us generally, but his quizzes were a farce, he would give true false, and we would have to number our page from one to twenty, and he would read the question, but you could tell by the inflection of his voice, if it were true or false, and we soon caught on to that, and my husband in particular would laugh about how he could always make a 90 to 100 in his classes because of the inflection of his voice. He could not read an untrue thing with our it coming through his voice. No one ever told him this. He had a son and a daughter on campus. The daughter was quite glamorous, natural blonde, and the son was the major domo of our band, very tall, and both were beautiful people physically. But I don't they studied very well, and he deplored the fact that his own family was not studying like they should. I am giving you the honest pictures as I remember these professors.

FORSYTHE: Did Dr. Golightly do psychological experiments?

BRANDON: With us? Not to our knowledge, he may have been doing some things on his own. I know he helped in the grading of the tests, the testing. There was a test given to every student, an IQ level, and he and Dr. Lewis, and imagine Smith was in on this, he perhaps created it. To place the students, to know what their expectancy was but we were not given our grades, but I do happen to believe, and this is a belief and not a pure knowledge, I was chosen to be on the debating team because I made a pretty good score. It is because of knowing Dr. Lewis who is also an educator, he was something to. He would talk about his grandson Billy all the time, well of course he was studying child psychology. He and the Fraziers, we had a debating team, a couple of years, and I was so, proud to have been chosen to be an alternate, I didn't get to speak out there but one night. We went up into a tour through Kentucky, with the Fraziers, I remember that very well, it was very exciting. I think that particular tour Mr. and Mrs. Frazier were our sponsors. But Lewis had been in on getting the debating team started.

FORSYTHE: Tell me more about Mr. Lewis.

BRANDON: He married a nurse, and he would tell about her. I don't know if it was his second marriage or whether he married late. But he told about his grandson going to school, and the school nurse came around and saw that he needed his teeth cleaned, and so he went home and told his parents, that he had to have his teeth cleaned, and his grandmother who was the wife of Dr. Lewis, said "I'll fix those teeth get over here." She got, the way he tells it, comet, from the kitchen, and she said, "you are not supposed to swallow" and she got a brush or a dull paring knife, and clean the yellow, by using the abrasive which is in Comet on that kid's teeth, and they were as white as any other kid's teeth, and so the next time the nurse came around, his teeth seemed like they had been cleaned. This amused Dr. Lewis to tell about how smart his wife was, she knew an abrasive will clean, and she had to watch the child to be sure that he didn't swallow. I don't think he was

terribly poisoned at that point, because the child was very vigorous and never was ill, to my knowledge. Dr, Lewis liked to talk about education and the importance of education. We had a very dull textbook and he would forget what chapter we were in, and we would talk about what subjects were predominant in the schools and why psychology was taking on as important, and the fact that psychology was a new subject, fairly new. It wasn't a new word, but many tests were being made of the ability to read the mind, or to perceive the message, he was interested in those things.

FORSYTHE: Can you tell me more about Neal Frazier and his wife?

BRANDON: They were very devoted to each other, their love affair was so beautiful that the students were conscious of it. She dressed very daintily, and kept her hair very pretty, and he was always neatly dressed. I said they stood in for each other, and were equally competent in their English, Latin, and poetry. Dr, Mankin was my special teacher in English however, but also Mrs. Frazier did invite me and my friends to the meeting for the Methodist girls, and I have an old clipping, I think, of that. I maybe able to find it. It was held at the president's mansion, one evening and she served lemonade and cookies, and there were about eight or ten or twelve girls there, and she started a group and more or less saw to it that they knew they had a ride to the church, either to first Methodist, or to the College Church, and we may or had one or two meetings just to have girl talk, but she was the sponsor for the Methodist at that point.

FORSYTHE: Do you know her first name?

BRANDON: I don't remember it, she was just Mrs. Frazier to me. She died rather suddenly, and I did write a letter to Dr. Frazier, I was teaching in the city schools then, and I spoke with the fact that we had been on that trip in debating, through the grass lands of Kentucky. What is the name of that college that supports itself?

FORSYTHE: Berea?

BRANDON: Yes we went to Berea, and one or two other colleges. When we went there they would keep the ladies in the girl's dormitory, and the men in the men's dorm. That was all by pre-arrangement. We were the guests of the college, and it was very exciting.

FORSYTHE: What do you remember about Philip Mankin?

BRANDON: You don't want to start me on Philip Mankin. Philip Mankin was a lover of the novel, he was a constant reader, he did not drive a car, he walked to school, he lived down very close, only a few blocks away and his mother and he loved together, and he had a sister who I believe was a senior when I first started. He loved the modern writers, as well as the older ones, and he introduced me to Thomas Mann, who is still my favorite writer. He was stronger on novels and

prose than on poetry, but he loved poetry, but he really was a student of the novel, and Faulkner and Hemmingway were coming to the fore then, this was right at the edge of the time when those six or eight men had banded together at Peabody for there group, they had a same for themselves, I can not recall it now, they were interested in modern writing. The Fugitives. So he would frequently show us an essay or piece of work written by them and he constantly begged us to read, and he brought his books, and would share his own personal books with the students, he was a very kind person. He was noted for his kindness, he would not let us kill a wasp or a fly even though it was buzzing up around, he said that that creature was alive by some material, and we didn't know about what life was, and that unless we were really being made sick or tortured we had no right to kill another animal. He would not kill a beetle or an ant he was very humane. He did not embrace any particular church, but his religion was deep, he was very much like the American Indian, he appreciated life and the mystery of life, he liked drama, and his sister was in a play one year that I was here, I think it was an Oscar Wilde play that we put on.

FORSYTHE: I know that he was let go by Mr., Smith, do you remember the up roar?

BRANDON: I was not on campus at that point, whether it was about a student I don't know. I thought he was at Peabody, he hadn't got his doctorate, I thought he went to Vanderbilt and finished, did he not become a doctor?

FORSYTHE: I don't know about that but I know that after he worked here he worked at Vanderbilt.

BRANDON: That was what I remember, see I was then teaching, and not on the campus when this episode occurred.

FORSYTHE: I thought since you liked him so well . . .

BRANDON: I would like to know because if it were a love affair, or if it were about some student, he very much liked to be in my home and he came to see both Gayle and me many times, when I was already teaching and Gayle became a student, and she liked to be in his class to and he lent her many of his books. Then you see she went into teaching and it must have happened after that. I have been in his home, and his mother loved cats, she loved them, and was also sort of a weirdo, she made her hair very red and she loved to play the piano, and she played popular music, and she would play for you, and she let her cats run all over the house, even on the table while you were eating, you had to brush the cat hair off of the pillows and the sofas, but everyone loved Philip that we loved to be invited, and I remember going over, I don't recall all the items of the meal, it was just a simple country meal, I think they had opened some canned corn, maybe we had some pork chops, it was not what you would call fancy food but we enjoyed the fellowship and I think that his sister was there that night, and I never knew his brother, his brother is still living and is important here in Murfreesboro, he is

younger, but he has been associated with the commission, he is not a lawyer, but he had had a post in Murfreesboro. Maybe, the building code, I can find that out for you. I could tell you some of the poets that Philip liked, he liked Keats very much and one evening we did a little drama, using readers for one of the little plays, Keats wrote poetic plays, but the most I want to Mankin, is that he formulated the writers club, and it is a strange thing, but six or seven of his regulars, and I was one of those, have published, and I guess we owe a lot to Philip for encouraging us. The Pittards, both of the, Mable and Homer, Homer died a few years back, and of course the school, I call it the demonstration school was named for Pittard, and Mable is active now, he was writing a lot of local history and she had the notes and has finished some of his writing, and Pittard also has a book about Rutherford County that is really important. But they were both in the club, Lucille and I both went every time, I can't remember many others that came by their name, if I would look back in my book I could find some of them that came to the writers club. It was not a big group. He would ask us "have you brought anything to read?" and we would all kind of drop in a low nod, and he would say "you have a piece of paper over there, you start" so we would read them timidly, and we would get criticism, always friendly and always upbeat, and perhaps to much so but our writing and reading together gave us a start I am sure. I want to tell why am looking at these names, that Elizabeth Schardt was also my French teacher. I knew E. May Saunders, I had her for violin, and we had a little orchestra.

FORSYTHE: What about Dr. Cheek.

BRANDON: I didn't have any of his classes, but he was the most remote and at the same time interesting person on campus as a faculty. He was emaciated then, he dressed in dark clothes, it was known that he was a Greek scholar, which was held in reverence but he was the Latin teacher, the main one, and was interested in poetry, and I mentioned that he came to a few of the meetings, quite a few of them, I do remember that when my sister in law Ruth graduated, Dr, Cheek and Ms. Schardt, and what is the English teacher who is so popular, Anne Ordway, gave her a beautiful copy, I believe it was Shakespeare, that they themselves bought, in respect for her English work, she was that smart and studious, and I thought that was most unusual, this is going back now again to the 30's, and this was the Depression, which was still very rampant in this area, people just did not have a lot of money, and for three teachers to get together and buy a beautiful book, it was a matter of great pride to her. Oh I forgot Monohan, can we go over Monohan a minute?

FORSYTHE: Let me get a new tape this one is running out.