

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.096

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
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Q. M. SMITH ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW #QMS.096

BRANDON: He was an oddball. He would come to class with gravy on his tie many times, he didn't care, but he loved the creatures. He profoundly absentminded. The big joke about Mankin is that somebody picked him up downtown and brought him back to the campus, of course they spoke when he got into the car and they chatted in the way, and so the driver got out of the car and came on around, and Philip came on around, and they joined on the sidewalk, and Philip said "Hello Roy," of whatever his name was, "It is so nice to see you today." He spoke to him again as if they hadn't spoken, and he told that over and over, but the man's mind was entirely on whatever he had been reading that morning, and he would tell you whenever he got into the car, "Oh I have been reading this new book, or play and he would get into that. His mind was really on what he was studying that day. They tell me he was a profound mathematician at the same time, and I did not ever guess it because he was so loving of literature. Seeing his picture here, he is the forth one from the right he is exactly what you would call a nerd today's nerd. A very lovable one.

FORSYTHE: Let me identify this tape. This tape is part of the Q. M. Collection designated as QMS.1995.96. This is Regina Forsythe, I am interviewing Mrs. Francis Brandon, today is Wednesday September 13th, 1995. The interview is being conducted in the Gore Research Center, Room 111 of the Ned McWherter Learning Resource Center. You want to talk about something else?

BRANDON: Yes. Getting back to Cheek. He was named Cheek but his chee were so hollow and he was so thin, that the students would say "You are kind of Cheeky-cheek." He smoked constantly, of course cigarettes were very much in vogue then, very much. I don't think Philip Mankin smoked, he didn't care for it, but you never saw Dr. Cheek without his cigarettes, and when he ran out of one pack he had to have another, no doubt it was not very good for him. No doubt he was ill all ready, because he was very emaciated, and there was some talk about the fact that he liked his wine, but so far as I know was always at his classes, and always a gentlemen. I don't know that he ever dated anyone, I don't know about his love life, but he looked romantic, he could have been a most handsome person, but he was the great mystery man on campus, Dr. Cheek.

FORSYTHE: What about Ann Ordway?

BRANDON: Much beloved. She had lost her fiancee, in World War I, the great love of her life and she didn't talk of him a lot. She never even wanted to date anyone else, she had lost the love of her life. At times it would show in her face, she still grieved.

I think to lose someone in war must be a very horrible thing, she perhaps never really accepted in. I only had one course under her, as strange as it may seem, because I kept going back to Philip Mankin, as often as he offered a course I would go back to him. I was with Miss Ordway in "Literature for Children" and she taught it very well indeed, and we were encouraged to go to the library, and there weren't a terrible many books that were coming out right then. I am not sure that, Pooh was just coming out evidently, but she loved the books like wind in the willows, and the classics that we had, the Aesops, things like that, the new books she wanted us to also study, and we were encouraged to go to the library and check our one and read it and do a report on it, but her manner was so loving and gracious that it was a joy to be in her class, and her evident knowledge of what was available was there too and we learned from her. She dressed beautifully, she dressed in pastels, and she and one or two friends and I drove to the wedding of Mable and Homer Pittard, at Mable's home and I forget what little to win it is out from here and it was held in the yard, it was a garden affair and it was spring time and there were roses everywhere you looked, it was just heavenly. The grass was green and the roses were pink, and beautiful. The local minister conducted the service and my friend, Charles Coffman, who was in the car, he drove the car for Miss Ordway, was there and he was supposed to be best man, and he forgot to pay the minister. Our joke ever since has been, "Wouldn't I forget to pay the minister when Homer was depending on me." They were very staunch friends, he and Homer were, both of them liked writing, and Homer went on and got his doctorate, and Mable just backed him up every step of the way. I have been told that Homer rode the milk truck to Nashville, you the know the delivery milk. By that time I think MTSU had quit milking the cows here, because when I first came there was a cow farm and we drank the milk from our own herd and agriculture, and the classes were taught using the herds to study vaccinations, and all of those things were carried on right here and that is why we have the milk barn now. It is the art department, the old milk barn.

FORSYTHE: Clayton James

BRANDON: Everybody loved Clayton James. He was a sociologist, and he knew his text backwards and forwards. He did not forget what chapter he was on. He did not need his notes, but he had notes there. He gave very clever, difficult quizzes. You had to read your text very carefully, because he was smart enough that he knew how to insert a question, to see how well you had read the paragraph. I believe that he gave the best tests, I am looking from this from a professional viewpoint, of any person on campus. Now of course Philip Mankin's test, he just told us to write, write about a novel you have read or tell about a feeling that you have about the early writers in the United States, it was a very general paper, he wanted you to write a paper. But James gave very thorough, pointed sociological pointed test, he was reading wildly from all the magazines, keeping up with modern things. It was a good thing to get to be in his class. He was fond of his wife, they were childless and he made no apology to referring to the fact that love could go on past teenage and early marriage, that mature love was very beautiful.

An anecdote about him, he told this himself. One night he and his wife were driving after dinner, and they went down a pretty country road, the honeysuckle was so fragrant and the moon was rising, so they pulled over and just sat and watched the evening. The patrol came along and stopped and wanted to know why they were stopping, evidently they had been picking up some college lovers, on this lane, but there was this very mature professor and his wife, enjoying the evening. He said "we are still lovers, but we are not doing any trespassing, we are enjoying the evening together officer and thank you for stopping." But he told this very willingly, he endorsed, courtship, and knowing the person with whom you wished to share your life, making the decision carefully. I think that he was not for "free love" he was a very mature speaker, and being a sociologist, he saw in advance that free love was coming to be a prominent thing. The shows and the dramas were beginning to endorse free love, and he was against it, he thought courtship and respect of the other sex was very important.

FORSYTHE: What about E. May Saunders.

BRANDON: She loved her music and she was diligent, and she must have been getting old, but she never missed a class, and she would direct the orchestra, and the band and the clarinets, and then we would get out and we would drill. She determined what the girls would wear, it was usually a white blouse and a blue skirt, and we would drill. I took my violin under another person, Mrs. Ruby Taylor Sanders, and she was a good teacher a very thorough teacher, and I did not do well in violin because I have a very bad wrist and it hurt to hold the bow. But I liked to do the scales, and I learned the instrument, but I played clarinet in the band, so that is how I knew Miss Saunders, she was our band director.

FORSYTHE: What about Elizabeth Schardt?

BRANDON: Miss Schardt knew French because she had lived in France, and her brother was still living in France. She could speak it very well, but she did not know the knack of drilling us, on our vocabulary in getting us to speak the French, she wanted us to speak it, and she would greet us in French, but she would go very fast and she had a very high voice, and so we studied and passed the test, but I so loved languages that I would have never considered her a top notch of it, but certainly a lover of French and certainly a lovely lady. She would tell us about some of the French art, and being in her class was well worth the time, and if you had a good text book, you got your money's worth. My husband who was also in her class, another year, said that he learned one thing in her French class and that was *quelle j'mage* and that meant "what a pity" and she would say it real frequently, and when he came out of the class, the only thing he could really remember, other than counting, was *quelle j'mage*.

FORSYTHE: Somebody else told me that to.

BRANDON: It must be very prevalent. So there you go.

FORSYTHE: Mary Frizzle.

BRANDON: Impossible. She had a way of teaching that was supposed to delight us to look forward to our class, but the students went our puzzled, and they would quote her. They would do things and sing the little songs that she sang and they were not terribly complimentary. As a person she was probably a good person. You know education is an abstract thing, what can they tell you except to respect your students, know your subject matter, be able to bend, and these things that any person should know, but as far as telling us how to deal with reading and the child who could not read and was not grasping it, I can not give her a real high rating. The thing was people were suffering from this thing that is commonly known as inverted, backward reading, you know the coordination thing, dyslexia, and it was hardly spelled out, even in the journals. That came to the forefront pretty soon after I was out of my courses, but the way they attacked the dyslexia, and I will be happy to tell you this, a supervisor in Davidson county, used the cursive method, the child couldn't see a printed word, lets take the word "with", then we were always taught longhand, or cursive writing, go to the chalkboard and make the child write w-i-t-h in long hand and say "with" as you are writing, and the motion of the writing, the cursive movement supposedly helped some of the children who were having this dyslexic thing, it was teaching you left to right, it was teaching a movement. That was the newest thing that I learned in any of the education courses was the use of perhaps writing the words in cursive to see if that helped the child to read, and in that case, the parent could take a paragraph out of the text, and take the time to write it , and see if the child could progress by copying the writing and reading it. I know that it must be difficult not to be a good reader, because I look at a page of Greek and say "what meaning must that have?" Then later on as we study languages, we immediately begin to pick out words that we know and we see a resemblance to English in both French and Spanish. But even Latin looks strange at first, so if that is the way it looks to our children, we should be very patient with them. So I may have learned to be patient to expect that you would have some, and the girls are quicker as a rule in learning the reading and getting along faster than the boys but the boys certainly catch up with them.

FORSYTHE: Did you student teach?

BRANDON: No. I absolutely went with my education courses, or course these people were in high standing here, Dr. Lewis put all these on my certificate, and they gave us all there was available right then, but the student teaching came in a few years later where we had a demonstration school, I never got inside that. It was built, you would have to find the year, about the time that I graduated, I believe. I taught from observing teachers that I liked, and were successful teachers, I tried to imitate, that is how I taught, and I was a very successful teacher and I loved it. A lot of love goes along with tiny children, because they are frightened, and a lot of them can do what they will not do at first, you have just got wait.

FORSYTHE: What about B. B. Gracy?

BRANDON: I had him for tennis and he was lots of fun, he would mark us present and throw the balls out and say "you two play on this side and you two go over there" as far as giving us any real theory, he would tell us how we could practice, in getting our stroke, he would teach us what the backstroke was, very fundamental, and he had all the courts going at once, to many students during the time allowed, and he was just fun to be with and I think I made a B because I had good attendance.

FORSYTHE: You didn't have any tests?

BRANDON: No, never. I have never heard of a test in tennis. We never heard of a text book, we just got out and played.

FORSYTHE: Eva May Burkett.

BRANDON: Now she was the one who came late, and I think I only knew her, in summer school and she was a non-smiling serious teacher. She was a new teacher, and she knew her text, she had read the different authors, she could take any question, and I remember that Cecil, no that is not the one, one of the boys was pretty good in history and he would bate her but he never could pin her down, because she was young, almost as young as they were, and we would just sit in back and listen to the debate, she could hold her own, and she was writing her thesis, and I went to see her a couple of times, and I remember she always kept a fruit bowl in her room which I thought was nice rather than just a sack of oranges, and that impressed me, she lived right over here, she had a room in Rutledge. When I first came there was just Rutledge and Lyon Hall, I told you this, so she stayed in a dormitory.

FORSYTHE: Was it common for faculty to live in the dorms?

BRANDON: Uncommon. Most of them had their homes, or where married, or lived out in the community.

FORSYTHE: Tommie Reynolds.

BRANDON: I was not in any of her classes I do now know her very well.

FORSYTHE: Newby Freeman.

BRANDON: I was in his class. I made a cedar chest, and I made it myself, he saw to it that the girls worked, he did cut the trim, because he didn't want anything to happen to his saw that could cut curls and curlicues but as far as cutting our long pieces and doing our gluing, we did it, and he stood there and watched us. When that cedar chest was finished, it was our cedar chest, and I have mine to this very day. HE had other students that were more advanced, some of them would come in and do

the sanding and polishing on their piece, some were doing console tables and other things, from other groups, and they were always welcome. He liked slightly fancy things, and the trim at that time was for very modern lines, Danish furniture was coming in, if you know how that looked. We knew it because he studied those furniture ads, but he liked, my cedar chest has a filigree, because that was his taste, and he became ill, and it saddened me very much. He and his wife, she was a matron, and he was the councilor for the boy's dorm. So they came and had their meals with us, so we all felt close to the Freemans and Mrs. Freeman is still living here in Murfreesboro.

FORSYTHE: What is her first name?

BRANDON: Just write his name and you will have it, or call the Methodist church, or call the Baptist church. She is very nice to talk to. They would come and she was a pretty brunette, a little well I guess she was not much older than some of the girls that were in the school, but they would come to dinner, and they would stand and wait their turn in line and sit together.

FORSYTHE: Betty Murfree, the librarian.

BRANDON: She had too much to do, she would help you, was respected, she was Mrs. Murfree, everyone depended on her. But I think she was very overworked, I think that they had some students who got paid for helping to return the books to the shelves, but I know they had a room where they had to do all the lettering on the books, she may have taught some courses in library sciences, but I had Miss Freeman, Mrs. Freeman was my library teacher, she lives in town. She was the head librarian that was older, and had been there all these years, she taught the library classes, Miss Freeman did.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about Miss Freeman.

BRANDON: Pretty. She would get her pile of sheet music and I don't know if she lived in a dorm or if she lived out, and would come, I think maybe she lent an apartment out and play on the piano in the dining hall, practice to keep her music up. She was a very thorough teacher. She gave assignments and we knew exactly what was expected of us, as you would expect of a good librarian, she taught us the system,

FORSYTHE: The Dewy Decimal system?

BRANDON: Yes. We were supposed to know what each of those alphabetical things were for and for a while I had forgotten them as the years have gone by, but we were supposed to know that for a test and we were supposed to also know, I had children's literature, in library science, with her, and we were supposed to know the outstanding writers of the day. I remember the wonderful little poem about the little bull, Ferdinand, Monroe, had just come out, and they were getting some humor in the children's books, they preceded the Seuss books, and of course a lot

of color was being used, but at that point usually only three colors were allowed to the artist but black and white, so with your primary colors and black and white you could illustrate a story very well, now you can have orchid, pale green, chartreuse, anything you want in a picture, and the D'Aulaires were becoming prominent and they loved the water color, and so many of their books were expensive, because they were all those different colors.

FORSYTHE: Hester Rogers

BRANDON: Yes. She was the only art teacher on campus, and I had Design under her, I went to New York one summer, to the New York World's Fair, and got behind on my notebook, we kept a notebook, so I got a rather poor grade, the only poor grade that I ever got in college was under Hester Rogers, but that was because I missed the class. Couldn't get up the work. She wanted us to do something with dress, which was very good to have, and what made good dress for the individual which I thought was a very important thing, coordinating colors, and things like that. She had a painting that had been made, I believe of the Woodberry or Manchester Highway, where you go up the hill and there are two great bluffs on each side, and she hung it over her desk, and she would tell us why it impressed her, and whenever you liked a painting, figure out why it appealed to you, she said I like this because it shows distance and it shows the sky, and it is almost as if you have come to the world and you could drive off onto the other side, and she began to make us see art in a wider way than we would have. But dress and design was part of the course and it was good for the girls.

FORSYTHE: Marion Edney

BRANDON: Wasn't she also a biologist?

FORSYTHE: Yes.

BRANDON: I had friends who considered her one of the finest teachers on campus. Also my husband liked her and other friends from Nashville, because she was very thorough, she absolutely knew her course of study but she also knew literature, and she was able at times to bring in some literary facets about animal life, about nature, along with the biological facts, and the different genres that she was teaching, I was not in her class, but I would hear others give her high remarks, and she married a professor, and the two of them frequently ate at the cafeteria, but I was stupid enough to have taken chemistry and didn't take biology. Later biology became my love next to literature.

FORSYTHE: Coach Johnny Red Floyd

BRANDON: Well, we freshman girls stood in awe of the coach we cheered him. I played in the band and he was a good coach and we respected him, but some of the other guys were coming forward who made good names for themselves. Those years, I

saw some things while ago, they went ahead and played, they became coaches to, some of the people that we had under him, so evidently they had good instruction. I did not, well I loved to watch the games and never missed one, but I did not know him as a person.

FORSYTHE: Tell me about kangaroo court.

BRANDON: Kangaroo court was quite an experience. It was kept a secret in a strange way, you would have thought that somebody would have whispered it, but when you were a freshman, you were always shy, and you were learning the ways around, and there of course were the older girls who had been there the year before. Maybe have gone home and taught a year and they were much older. But one night my roommate and I were rudely awoken, someone shook us by the shoulders, "get up, you have got to come to kangaroo court" well we had never heard of a kangaroo court, we had heard of court, and to us court, being in jail, and the law, we eschewed anything to do with court, we didn't even know much about divorce courts. But we were ushered to a room upstairs, and it just had candles, and we were pushed in the dark, we were allowed to wear our robes, and it was a good thing we did because we would freeze we were so scared. When we got into this room there was a circle of girls, and one or two candles. I don't know what they called the person in charge, but she said "sit down" and she said "are you liking the dormitory?" and of course we said "yes", "are you minding the rules of the dormitory?, do you sign the book when you go out?" "Oh, yes" "Have you had any records brought to the matron?" "No" "Are you smoking in your room?" "We don't smoke" "OK, we are going to assign you to junior girls, they are on the third floor" "OK, you go to " I have forgotten the girls name we will call her Elizabeth Bair, just to make up a name "Room so and so, tomorrow morning at seven thirty, and you sweep her room, you get up the garbage, you make her bed, and you do that for the rest of this term." We were made a servant, and it was not known, I don't think on the campus, that they did this to the freshmen, where as the boys had to run in a belt line, and go through all that hazing, we had to clean upperclassmen's room, empty their garbage, maybe take their sheets to the laundry, and make their bed for them for the rest of that semester, until we ceased to be freshmen, and when you went into kangaroo court they did make some ugly, weird noises, like ghosts or something, and when you went back to bed that night, you didn't sleep anymore. It was kind of like a Halloween experience. Then the next year, they appointed me to be the head of kangaroo court for the second floor, so then I had to fall into this thing, and we called up the freshman and gave them their duties, but kind of half heatedly, I thought it was inhumane, but it did teach girls to be neat, and when I look at some of the dorm rooms of today, and how they are kept or not kept, how you can hardly walk for books and sweaters, and skates, I think maybe it was a pretty good plan. The other thing that we had that was difficult for me, because I had never thought of disobeying my parents, or not being on time, punctuality was important, but we had to sign out if we even went to writers club, if we went to the clubs on campus, we had to sign out, the time we left, what building, and we

had to be in by ten, and when there were dances, but we had to sign out and give the names of our escorts, so we had to sign out and it was very strictly kept, I made the mistake on a Sunday afternoon, not knowing that you had to sign out on Sunday, I had been to church, I had been to lunch, been with my girlfriends, so Mrs. Schardt's nephew was visiting her, I believe from St. Louis, and the start of the fall baseball games was on and Mr. Bach was playing the games, at his restaurant, so I did not know that I was supposed to sign out to go across the street, I thought that I was just on my own on Sundays, but we had to sign out for church, but I failed to sign out, I went on and we sat there with a bunch of students, we were served four to a booth, listening to the games, the Cardinal's were one of the outstanding teams, and Mrs. Schardt's nephew was very interested to the game, but then when I went home, the next weekend, Mr. Ransom came and he was the father of my friend, and my father came up to me one Sunday, and wanted a conference with me, about how was it that I got off of campus, on Sunday, and I had to think for a minute what had I done, I told them "Oh we were just listening to the game over at Bach's cafeteria" That was reported that quickly to our parents, and so Mary who did not go, she heard about it somewhere, other or Mr. Ransom heard about it, really took me to task because I had done that very simple things, sitting with other students right there in that restaurant, listening to a ball game, it didn't happen in the evening or at curfew hour, and I had been in complete ignorance, and from then on I was very careful to sign out, we were allowed to walk down town to go to the drugstore, or to go to the stores. We had ten cents stores then where we could get our supplies, and so that is how strict they were. When I came to summer school they were a little bit easier, but it was definitely wrong if you got caught smoking on campus.

FORSYTHE: You talked about the boys being hazed, tell me more about that.

BRANDON: I think I saw just one hazing and at that time I don't think I knew any of they boys that had to go through it, any freshmen, but I didn't like it, they used belts, and the boys had to run down a line, and I thought it was cruel, and I didn't see any reason in it. Some of the big football stars were wielding the belts, but I think it happened right in front of Old Main, and it was not a hidden thing. Our kangaroo court was the cousin to it, and I am sure that broke up soon after, I never heard of it much, I don't think my sister who was three years younger, had to do it, they called a mousy, she had to be mousy and do things for certain seniors, but I am not sure, I need to talk to Gayle about that. In other words it was becoming unpopular.

FORSYTHE: Was there a dress code?

BRANDON: Well now we had meetings now and then and there was a school nurse, but people just dressed like what they had worn to high school, they wore skirts and tops, and bloused, and very discreetly, there were no low cut dresses and no short at all, if we wore shorts it was in the hot summer time, on the tennis court.

FORSYTHE: Who was the matron of your dorm?

BRANDON: Miss Margie, and I can't recall her last name, but I might be able to find out, she later went on and got her degree at Peabody, and I would see her on the city buses in Nashville, she may have even gotten her masters, I don't know, what her academic standing, but she was Miss Margie, and that is all we ever called her. Of course she had another name.

FORSYTHE: Margie Mitchell, director of dorms.

BRANDON: That is right. She was nice but she was strict, so I guess it was she who had reported the fact that I had been out. But boy after that I was really careful, to always sign the register. There was a little table, there in the hall right across from the old, out of tune, grand piano, and there would be a pen on the table and you had to sign out or sign in. Some of the girls signed out for each other, and they got into a little trouble, we were careful not to do that.

FORSYTHE: Can you describe your room.

BRANDON: Yes there were polished floors, it was a hard floor, plastic, the rooms, were new and the shades were new, they windows were white, and we had a corner room and it was quite pretty, you had two views of the trees, the beds were iron beds, as best I remember, or metal that simulated wood, you know come to think of it, that first year, we had a double bed, but later a single bed was put into that bed, the population was growing, and it was big enough to take care of a single and a double bed, and my roommate and I slept together and we shared our laundry bill, we would usually keep our sheets for a week and take them over to the laundry, which was at the edge of the tennis courts, and you had to walk through cinders and also there was a big place there that was a furnace, that furnished warm air, as I best remember for Old Main, and I guess they had to dry their clothes someway, and there was a little building in the back of Old Main, and I think it only cost a quarter, to have a sheet laundered.

FORSYTHE: What about the rest of your clothes?

BRANDON: We tended to our own clothes, they would take a blouse and take your personal belongings, but they preferred linens, they had to take care of the football squads laundry and stuff, to, so most girls, we washed our own laundry we had a lavatory in our room and a mirror over the lavatory, and the rooms were neat, not glamorous, they were gray or blue, and white, but just as neat as pins, and we each had a clothes closet. The bathrooms were down the hall, for all purposes, we were allowed to bring a pretty throw rug to put at the side of the bed. There was a table at the center of the room, and we had to bring our own lamp, if we wanted a reading lamp, and we really needed a lamp, the lights were not adequate to study, you needed your own. In most cases, our grandparents or somebody had given us a lamp as a graduation present, so we had that. The windows were nice and

wide, and we could stack our books in the window, we were supposed to keep our rooms inspected, which I think was a good thing. Right outside my room, about two doors down, was a garbage pail, and we put all of our fruit peelings and scrap paper in there.

FORSYTHE: Did you have to turn our the light at a certain time?

BRANDON: Oh, yes lights out. There was a bell, I think we were allowed to study 'till 10 o'clock. If we got special permission we could come to the reception room, and study, but we had to get some paper, or a notebook or something, those light were kept on, in the middle of the building, and we were allowed by special permission only, to come and study and finish the assignment, that was allowed, you would see girls sitting very diligently getting things finished for their work. Strict, no men in the women's dorm! If a man came in to put in light bulbs, to work on the water fountains, we had water fountains in the hall, they were not ice water, but at least they were water fountains, someone in the front had to announce, or the person who was the assistant to the dorm matron, who lived in that first room there, off of the reception room, the person had to knock, and she had to call at the foot at the stairs, and I believe there was a tube that we used, "Man in the hall" and the girls would lock their doors, or know to be at least dressed, with their robes on. So if there was a workman, or sometimes there would be a father, to bring a package to his daughter, and sometimes there would be a box of candy or flowers delivered by a lonely boyfriend living back at the girl's hometown, and he would come by and bring a gift, and put it in the front room for her, and that was very special, and the girls who didn't have a girlfriend who had that much cash, always envied the one' s that got flowers and candy.

FORSYTHE: Do you remember any more anecdotes about dorm life?

BRANDON: Everyone was learning to dance, and couple dancing was becoming important, and I could both lead and follow, and I had taught myself to dance by watching movies, and practicing with my sister, and so I taught many girls to dance, in Lyon Hall, we would but, some of them would get the piano and play, and we would practice the two step, or the square, until we got that down pat, and they liked for me to teach them, and I liked to teach them, and they never tired of dancing, so I did teach dancing lessons for free. I taught a few guys, the guys were allowed to come and visit, oh I think for an hour or two after dinner, if they wanted to come and sit with a girl, and our reading club often met in my dormitory, or in Rutledge, down front, but we would get in a corner and get a chair, The writers club usually met in the dorms, it was more comfortable, but occasionally we would meet in the English department, but see they would turn the lights off in the main buildings, for economy and for safety, they would lock the buildings up at night, so the best I remember, most of our meetings, were in the dorms.

FORSYTHE: Were there any controversies that you remember?

BRANDON: One I believe that was a scandal, and I will tell you why, I am not going to name a name, the reason why the second bed was brought to my room, was that a girl had gotten into trouble, and had surgery, and was still having a flow, and she had to be on the first floor, the doctors would not let her use the stairs, and I am glad I cannot remember this girls name, but she was sent down to Lucille and Francis, we were both small, we were about 5' 1" in height, and they called us "the little ones" but Mable, who married Pittard, and we were called the "little ones", anyway they put this girl down there, and we never discussed her problem, because we were told by the matron the circumstances, and we were asked if we would mind if she had her bed there, and we said, if she doesn't smoke, and that was all cleared up, so the girl more or less kept to her self and I don't know what courses she took. Lucille and I went our way, that was our second year in school, we were anxious to get grades so we could get a job, and as you know the pay was very small, we both had sisters so we were trying to help our family, as well as help ourselves, so we went on with our own studying and writing, and going to the library together, we had to sign our to go to the library, I think it was just across the walk, but this girl, evidently she got well, she never volunteered any information any to us, but to us it was a good lesson, watch your step and don't do anything wrong, because you will have to be treated like this girls and you can't go up and down steps, and you have got to be under a doctor's care, it is much better to be careful. Our lives were so different from today's girls, our modes of behavior were so different, our dating were different. Martha Cooper was across the hall, she was quite pretty, and she had many suitors, and she and I would talk about how it was that we could have lots of boyfriends, and we would say that it was because we liked to talk about books and shows and tennis, and we liked to dance, we would always go to a party, and we tried to dress nicely, but we just didn't let them get to intimate, and so we would say that, well I would say "I just go for a drink of water, or move over, or get a book to look at, or just change the subject." So we would have our girl talks, but it was a different type of life, it was simpler in many ways better, to my way of thinking, than today, because girls did date many different boys before they became engaged, and then, you see, there came a time when you dated and you had a steady, and people began to know the steadies were becoming intimate with the girls, but I guess Lucille and I were very fortunate in coming along when we did, because when we went to school, we went to take our courses and learn something.

FORSYTHE: After you graduated, what did you do?

BRANDON: I loved my teaching, and I could never give enough time to get my things together, for my classroom, I would spend the summer getting new books and objects that were artistic, by the way I did a lot of drawing and painting, so I would collect from stores and wherever, and wallpaper, for instance, we could use the reverse side for murals, I became a muralist in my own right, and taught mural art for the different teachers, on Saturdays we would have teachers meetings, Miss Cornelius was my supervisor, and she liked my murals that I had done, and I

would just beg paper, the schools did not give us paper, we had to buy it or go to a firm and it made great murals, and I have some of those murals, they are very tattered to this day, that I did with my own classes, and mural art is fun to teach, because it is simplistic, and you get all the children in the class to do something, they can paint on the mural but you have to definitely supervise what they are doing, they have to draw before. My method is they drew the animal or the tree, or the flower, or whatever we are doing, until they knew it very well, before we tried to transpose that to a larger drawing, and I assisted them, I stood with them and encouraged them, they would often share the painting, it would be large, sometimes the painting of a bird would be six feet long, a big robin. So I loved teaching so I spent a lot of my time on that, and I began to write a little, but strange enough I wrote more when I was with my classes, the classes would inspire me, and I wrote a play for every class, that I ever taught, that they performed at the auditorium at the school, usually for the PTA, and that made me know the children more intimately, and we learned to sew costumes, I was a fulfillment of my husband's idea, that art was very important for children. I have taught many a child that was unhappy in school, not starting to read and not doing well by letting them do something in art first, "you can do this, see you are good, if you can do this I know you can read this paragraph" encouragement.

FORSYTHE: What school did you teach at?

BRANDON: I taught at Sylvan park, in Nashville, and Buena Vista, this was after my babies were coming, the city schools required that we take two years, leave, unpaid, but that was probably very smart, with our children, when we had a baby. Sylvan Park was my favorite, I taught there a long time, she gave me a lot of freedom, I taught art constantly with my courses, and so she just gave me free leave to do these things, and also I taught at Howard school, in south Nashville, because it was easier to drive after, we moved to Murfreesboro.

FORSYTHE: Is there anything else you want to talk about?

BRANDON: Not this morning, if I think of something else, I will tell you about it.

FORSYTHE: Thank you.

BRANDON: You are so welcome.