Mary Claire Bondurant Warren Transcription:
Sunday 18th March 2012

[Warren, Mary Claire 1. 01:04:08]

Catherine Oglesby: … when it is. Okay, it is March the 18th, Sunday and I am in Athens, Georgia in the home of Mrs. Mary Warren, and we're in her technologically high profile office here, where she does her thing, which is, she does a lot of things, she is a well, not retired genealogist, she's still working full time. But she's going to, we're gonna get started and see how far we can get today. And, M… shall I call you Mary?

***Mary Clair Bondurant Warren*:** Sure.

CO: Okay. Mary, life reviews seems start universally with the first question of: What is your first memory?

MW: I'm not sure what my first memory is. I would probably be three or four and I lived with my father's Mother and my father's baby, younger sister, in a big two story house on Cobb Street in Athens, Georgia and next door lived a little boy, just my age named Wightman Beckwith Jr. And Whitey and I, were like the Bobbsey Twins. All of my earliest memories were out playing croquet and having a good time together since we were the same age.

CO: Okay. You, I see here you have two brothers who are much younger…

MW: Two brothers, one seven years younger who's an attorney in Atlanta and the other's seventeen years younger, who is here in Athens and suffer from fibromyalgia, and he hasn't worked in quite a while.

MW: And hasn't worked in quite a while.

Okay. All right so your first memory is of a childhood friend, who lived nearby?

MW: Oh yes! Living with my Grandmother and my aunt and we had a cook named Jenny Burnett, who was a saint if there ever was one, and in the backyard of the house lived William Sims and his wife Lola, and probably five or six of their several children. And my two playmates were the two youngest. There were two girls.

CO: Now were these servants? The big family?

MW: William kept Grandmother's yard, the cow, the garden, and Lola kept her own house and her own children, but she was pretty much the brains of that family.

CO:

MW: And quite a matriarch I'd say.

CO: Now were these African American, were they a Black family?

MW: Yes, they were. They were a Black family.

CO: Okay.

MW: And Jenny's Grandmother, who I had always heard called "Mammy," and I'm not sure right offhand I remember what her name was, she came from Greene County, and she lived not far away and Jenny lived with her. But Mammy was my

Grandmother's cook.

MW: And she raised my father, as Dad said she had a very sharp blow with her wet dishtowel.

CO: [she guffaws]

MW: If you misbehaved, she disciplined.

CO: Ah, and she was allowed to discipline?

MW: She was allowed to discipline.

CO: Wow!

MW: Dad told a story one time, that Grandmother had thought that he had done something he should be spanked for, and she was gonna spank him, and Mammy didn't think it justified a spanking, and so she told Daddy to run around her, and Grandmother ran around Mammy and Daddy ran around Mammy until Grandmother got laughing so hard it all ended.

CO: But so this was a sort of a… family tradition for this family to work for your family?

MW: I do not know how it came about, but after World War II, Dad helped William Sims buy a lot, oh maybe a quarter of a mile away in an area that was being populated then by Blacks, and helped the family move off the property and the house was torn down. And they had a house of their own.

MW: And they bought it. And part of it, I'm sure was bought with funds that one of his sons had saved up while he was in the service.

MW: I don't know that for certain, but I suspect that's true.

CO: So this was a

MW: But they continued to work for Grandmother as long as William lived.

MW: or nearly.

CO: So? You were born in '30? So you probably do have some memories of the Depression?

MW: Oh yeah.

CO: And this family lived with you until after World War II? I mean lived nearby.

MW: They lived on the property until after World War II.

CO: So that's, that's fifteen years that you had the experience of having them that close by.

MW: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

CO: Okay.

MW: Right., I definitely remember during the Depression there were two families in Athens and their names were Alewine, who are prominent in the junk business now, and Bales.

CO: Can you, can we spell those names? A

MW: A-l-e-w-i-n-e

CO: A-l-e-w-i-n-e

MW: And Bales, B-a-, probably B-a-l-e-s, I guess.

CO: Okay. All right.

MW: But anyway they were having just a terrible time, and the adults would come by looking for just any kind of work.

MW: And Grandmother had a number of pecan trees in the yard and she would frequently give them, tell 'em to pick up nuts on halves, and then she would find that there was enough food to feed some of 'em, when they had finished.

CO: Were their families big?

MW: They were, I don't know rather they were big or not. There were several, but they were having an awful time.

CO: Okay. All right.

MW: And apparently they had, they probably were sharecroppers to start with and had no place to live that they didn't have to pay for.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And yet no work to pay for it with.

CO: Right. Okay.

MW: I'm drawing a conclusion from a four, five, six year old, which is not,

CO: Right.

MW: valid perhaps, but they were not the only ones, but there were people going around looking for any kind of work.

CO: Yeah.

MW: Any kind of help you could get.

CO: Yeah.

MW: My Grandmother was not well off, but at least she owned her house.

CO: Yeah, yeah. All right, well actually I have a whole section on some history and we can, I would like to come back, revisit the Depression, but, before we move too far from your early memories, could you describe yourself as a child?

MW: Well, I was at that point the only child in the family, and I began, I was precocious with music, and I began piano lessons at the age of four and I had perfect pitch.

CO: Wow!

MW: I didn't know until the teacher tested me and found that she could strike a chord and I could tell her what the three notes were.

MW: And so Dad was musical, and that was not surprising, and Mother was not musical, and that was, she probably didn't appreciate particularly.

CO: So what did your, what did your father, what way was he musical? What was his

MW: Oh he loved music, he had a beautiful tenor voice.

CO: ,.

MW: Irish tenor.

MW: And sang a good deal, I was raised behind the First Methodist Church organ, and I knew how to sing the "Messiah" from memory.

CO: oh my goodness!

MW: before I was four.

CO: Oh my goodness!

MW: because I set there every Sunday, and sang every Anthem with 'em.

CO: Oh wow.

MW: So I spent my childhood and my music teacher was the organist, so

CO: And this is here in Athens?

MW: This is here in Athens.

CO: So you're a Athen… you're a lifetime Athenian.

MW: Oh yeah, yeah.

CO: A native Athenian.

MW: I went off to school and I lived in Atlanta for a short time, I lived in Oak Ridge for a short time, but I'd say I'm a native Athenian.

CO: Okay. Do they call themselves, do you call yourself Athenian?

MW: We don't push this.

CO: Okay, because I've interviewed two native Atlantans,

MW: Yeah.

CO: And they're a rare breed now.

MW: They say they are, course we really don't know, but our family came from Virginia to the Cherokee Corner which is eastern Clarke County in 1791.

CO: hm..

MW: So we've been here ever since.

CO: Wow.

MW: And I mean,

CO: A few generations.

MW: Yeah, yeah, right, so it's been a while.

CO: Okay, so you were a precocious child,

MW: I wasn't necessarily, yeah I was precocious. I thought I knew it all. I loved to dance. I loved to sing, and music and dancing were the things that turned me on as a child.

MW: and particularly music, and I still like music.

CO: , what kind?

MW: Well, I decided it would be easy to play the harp so at 75 I bought one.

CO: Whoa!

MW: And I'm still workin' on it.

CO: Oh. Taking lessons?

MW: Yeah, yeah. Oh yeah.

CO: Well that must be fun?

MW: It is, but it nearly as easy as I thought.

CO: [she laughs]

MW: I thought playin' the piano was gonna be simple but I was surprised.

CO: So did you, do you think that learning an instrument at 75 did that help your brain cells, do you think it helped you to stay young in a way?

MW: I don't really think about staying young, it's not a, I mean I've got so much I wanna do, I haven't really considered this as a…

CO: Okay. All right.

MW: I like music and…

CO: So you…

MW: I tried to play a dulcimer first and the dulcimer I was playin' it as if it were a harp, and I said, "Well heck!" I went to a harp camp at John C. Campbell Folk School for a week and rented a harp to see if I'd like to try it.

MW: And so I got my feet wet there and I said that's fine. And then my teacher was teaching me on a pedal harp which is a much bigger one, and I was having trouble going from the folk harp to the pedal harp and so I bit the bullet after three years and bought a pedal harp.

MW: Which is a major expenditure, but it's a major piece of equipment that somebody else can enjoy who can move it.

CO: Have you recorded anything?

MW: Yeah, some things for the grandchildren.

CO: Aww.

MW: Nothing great I mean.

CO: It doesn't have to be great

MW: It's just me .

CO: Yeah, yeah. Well can you describe your parents, your father and your Mother?

MW: My father when I was born was running a business; his father had died when he was 17. Dad was in college. Father died suddenly and being the only boy in the family, Dad had to take over the business. Well, the Depression got it about 1932.

MW: And Dad went back and finished college in civil engineering in '33, and I remember when he was the colonel of the cavalry unit. I remember seeing Dad in his uniform on a horse, but then he went to, then he was a civil engineer for CCC at the Brasstown Bald Cornelia area for the Park Service.

CO: Ah.

MW: And that was when I was four and five, and then he came to Rutledge, Georgia to buy the property for the state for the park at Rutledge, and from that he then went to the Park Service at Alexander Stephens.

CO: So his

MW: in Crawfordville so it's still here in Georgia the whole time.

CO: hm, but you had him listed here as owner of Athens Lumber Company?

MW: Well that comes after '37.

MW: So it, my great uncle, my father's Mother's youngest brother, always wanted to be doctor and his father was a merchant, and his father wanted him in business. So they swung a deal that if Uncle Will would go to the University and get a degree, grandfather would set him up in business, and Uncle Will would work on that business for a year, and then if he still wanted to go to medical school the business would pay for his education. Well, Uncle Will did, and that was the business that became the Athens Lumber Company.

MW: Father set him up and Uncle Will after a year hired Mr. Tom Baxter as manager and Uncle Will headed for Johns Hopkins, and he was a specialist in tropical diseases, but in the process he also was one of the two people who discovered blood typing.

CO: Wow!

MW: He really, he was one of the smartest people you ever knew and he headed John Hopkins Medical School for a while and Harvard for a while and went with a Harvard Medical Corps to Europe for World War I, then he came to Georgia late after he retired, and ran the medical college at Georgia till Gene Talmadge wanted him to admit a student that Uncle Will said wasn't qualified. And Talmadge says, "Well, you admit it." And Uncle Will says, "Well, you find somebody else to run the school."

CO: Oh my goodness.

MW: So he came back to Athens, I mean he had the resources to do it. That was his, but anyway to make the long story short, Dad came from the Park Service to take over the Athens Lumber Company for Uncle Will as manager, and Uncle Will and Aunt Peg sold it to Dad and Mother. And this was what Dad did for the rest of his life.

CO: So this was in roughly ’37?

MW: Yeah, the end of ’37, ’38.

CO: So you were a little girl?

MW: Yeah.

CO: And your brother perhaps had just been born.

MW: Had just been born. Yeah, right. He was born when Dad was still at the Park Service.

CO: , okay. All right, so that’s your father,

MW: All right now, Mother. Mother came to the university from Pavo, Georgia which is near Thomasville

CO: I know where Pavo is. [she chuckles]

MW: know where Pavo is? Her father was the only dentist in the area, and her Mother had a hat shop before they married fairly late in life, and Mother was born later, and Mother was the star student in Pavo High School along with four people. Well, she came to the university and she was an extremely good student, and she met Dad the second year, and she married him at the beginning of her sophomore year, secretly.

CO: !?

MW: ‘cause they’d throw her out of school.

CO: Right.

MW: And that

CO: So this was in the 20s?

MW: This was 1927

CO: Okay. Ok.

MW: So they married in September ‘27 and they finally tell her parents in December ’27, and her parents being the only child they had, were determined they’re going to see her married. So they take her down and they marry a second time, down in Tallahassee, and Mother at the time was the social editor of *The Red and Black*.

CO: Oh my goodness!

MW: And so from then on in she’s always referred to as Mrs. John P. Bondurant. She is never ever again Mary Claire Brannon or Mary Claire Bondurant.

MW: in her whole tenure on *The Red and Black* staff.

CO: So she was doing that

MW: She was a Journalism major, yeah.

CO: Oh my goodness.

MW: And Dad, while Dad was trying to run his father’s business.

CO: Now how did they meet?

MW: They met at Wesley Foundation which was the Methodist Church’s college…

CO: outreach kind of…

MW: Well, we met before the night service for the hour. It's like a Sunday school at night.

CO: Oh okay. Okay.

MW: But it was limited to college students.

CO: hm.

MW: And they met at that.

CO: Wow.

MW: So the rest was history. Anyway Mother goes on, she graduates from college. She has me her senior year.

CO: ?

MW: And Mr. Claude Chance the head of the French department had her, she was a good student. And she had him for French, and he had me for French, and he used to laugh at me, and say, "I don't understand why you have such a hard time with French. You should've had some prenatal influence."

CO: [she laughs]

MW: And I had a terrible time with it.

CO: Oh my.

MW: But Mother then goes on to work at the University once she graduated, but she wins a scholarship to Columbia University for a Master's Degree in French I think it was.

CO: Wow!.

MW: And then, I go down to stay with her mother and father at Pavo every summer, and she goes off to college.

CO: Oh my!

MW: And then she got another scholarship to the University of Chicago and I think that's maybe in '34 or '35.

CO: So did she finish her Columbia degree?

MW: She finished her degree at Columbia and she finished her degree at the University of Chicago.

CO: Wow. In French?

MW: In Journalism.

CO: In Journalism okay.

MW: One was in French and one was in Journalism.

MW: Rather it's this one or that one, I don't know which

CO: Right.

MW: I really don't, I really never cared.

CO: Yeah. Okay.
MW: But she was a smart person, and she became the head of Student Aid and Placement at the University.
CO: Wow.
MW: And was that until she … resigned to take over and run my father's business when he was sent overseas during World War II.
CO: , so okay. Columbia offered her a scholarship
MW: Both of these were scholarships.
CO: Wow.
MW: And that's pretty good for the Depression.
CO: Well, it is. It's also good for a woman, I mean women
MW: Yeah, yeah.
CO: typically…
MW: Well Dad was one of those men who would allow her to be the best that she could be.
MW: And they were very rare.
CO: Oh definitely.
MW: I have a cousin Ann Byrd Firor Scott, who was the Duke Head of Women's Studies and Ann Byrd married right after the war. And her husband also a professor at U.N.C. was one of those that would allow the wife to be her best. She taught thirty years at Duke and he U.N.C.
CO: Wow.
MW: But they were rare birds.
CO: Yeah definitely.
MW: because very, very unusual.
CO: Yeah.
MW: And that's the kind of background that I had.
CO: Yeah.
MW: And I could go the University Library any time as a child and check out a book, and I did.
CO: You did.
MW: And we didn't have, we didn't have a public library until roughly 1938 or '39.
CO: Okay.
MW: When the Woman's Club got a whole room at the Y.M.C.A. donated the room, and the Woman's Club took up some money and bought some books.
MW: And that was the beginning of the Athen's Public Library.

CO: Wow. So there was no Carnegie Library?

MW: No! No. The Carnegie Library if any was the University.

CO: Okay. All right. That was a typical…

MW: But the city couldn't use it.

MW: I could use 'cause my mama was employed on the campus.

CO: , can you say something about the influence each of your parents had on you, it sounds like they were both pretty--you admired them both.

MW: Yeah, they were both intellectual.

CO: Okay.

MW: And reading was like breathing.

CO: hm.

MW: In my case, music was like breathing.

MW: And I mean they were encouraging. They certainly didn't put me down.

CO: So your father influenced the music, the love of music?

MW: Oh sure! I mean we just had that common bond.

CO: Yeah, and your Mother encouraged your intellectual curiosity?

MW: Well, both 'em did. Yeah, and I mean they allowed me to be curious.

CO: , okay. What about your two brothers? Once they come along were they equally as…

MW: Well, Mother and Emmett were much more alike in mentality and organizational ability and he is the middle brother, he's the attorney.

CO: hm.

MW: And they were very close and they were closer than Emmett and Dad were because they just simply seemed to have the same mindset.

CO: hm.

MW: They weren't, Emmett wasn't musical or whatever. He was competitive as a man can be. As he wrote Dad during the war that "I'm making hundreds by the thousands" in grammar school. And so he was a very good student. He's on the University Law School Board of Visitors. Has been for a long time, but Johnny was the, born after the war, and he's always felt that he was an afterthought. And he came into a family as I was a sophomore in college.

MW: And Emmett was a 10 year old elementary school student. And Emmett had very little use for a baby.

MW: And I was busy with my life, and so Johnny was pretty much left to his own devices. My Mother was pretty busy too.

CO: Yeah, oh my goodness. Okay. Well now so your Mother never really did the housewife 100% of the time thing?

MW: The only time she's even been mentioned as a house wife was in the 1930 Census when she had had me and was out of college for a quarter, and the census taker found her that day and her occupation is listed as a housewife. And she and I used to laugh at that because it ain't likely.

CO: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MW: And she

CO: That's interesting.

MW: She couldn't cook

CO: Yeah, oh really? So?

MW: Her Mother was a great cook, but she didn't teach Mother any cooking. Mother couldn't burn gravy.

CO: , so she had to have help.

MW: She had help, yeah.

CO: Domestic help.

MW: She had to have domestic help.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And she did have good domestic help.

CO: , okay.

MW: But she as far as housekeeping was concerned…

CO: She didn't do it? So was the help always Black?

MW: Oh yeah. There was no choice.

CO: Right. Well, yeah. On rare occasions there might be, but for the most part here in the South, yeah.

MW: In Athens, in Athens it was not.

CO: Okay.

MW: was not.

CO: And so your Mother sounds like a very…

MW: She is.

CO: exceptional person.

MW: She had a steel trap mind.

CO: okay.

MW: And there have been times where a superintendent of a school would call her on Saturday night or Sunday, and say that he needed a teacher to teach hieroglyphics, and Mother could spout from memory who might be available and how to get in touch with them from the top of her head. She had a fabulous memory. It even impressed other people with it.

CO: She was personal director at UGA.

MW: She was a personal director and they, as people needed jobs terribly.

CO: Yeah, yeah.

MW: And she was also the secretary for the American Teacher Placement Association. Teacher Placement Association which was headquartered in Chicago.

MW: And she did that for a number of years during the late 30s.

CO: , okay. So, what about your extended family your Mother was an only child?

MW: Yeah.

CO: How many siblings did your father have?

MW: In Dad's family the first child was born and died of food poisoning at the age of four. The second was a girl who died at 28 of TB. Third, was a child who, a girl, who got TB at 14 and died at 17..

CO: Oh my goodness.

MW: Then comes Dad, the only boy, and then his younger sister Aunt Birdie developed TB right after her oldest sister died.

CO: Good heavens!

MW: But she lived through it, and to be 91.

CO: What I'm tryin' to get at is how big was the extended family and if you know that was a big part of your life

MW: Well, I mean that was. What was left when I was a child was just Aunt Birdie, Dad, and Grandmother. Grandfather died and the two older sisters had died, and Rufus had died as a little boy in 1896, so those were all gone, and I never knew them. And then we had cousins here in town.

MW: Uncle Will's family had three, and Margarite's, almost my age, the oldest girl, and a girl and a boy younger, and then we had the Firor boys who lived three houses up the street and they were my Grandmother's sister's children. And Anne Byrd the teacher at Duke was the oldest child of that family. And she credits Mother who was Placement Director with encouraging Anne Byrdwho had won Phi Beta Kappa by that time in 1938 to apply for and she got her scholarship to Radcliffe to continue, and she finished and got her PhD in history.

MW: But anyways Mother, Anne Byrd said Mother stimulated her and encouraged her to go on with her schoolwork, and to do well at a time when her (Anne Byrd's) Mother wanted her to get married and settle down.

CO: Right, right, yeah., how long was your Mother Personal Director at UGA?

MW: To 1942, she resigned in probably December '42.

CO: Okay, because…

MW: Ten years anyway.

MW: And she then took over the Athens Lumber Company
MW: because Dad was going, went over seas to India for three years.

CO: To do what?
MW: He was in the Air Force, in the service.

CO: Okay.
MW: He had been called in December ’41.

CO: Oh my goodness.
MW: Immediately, yes.

CO: And he stayed.
MW: He had been a reserve officer.

CO: All right.
MW: And those are the first people they call.

CO: Yeah.
MW: And he was in the service in this country until he went in to India.

CO: In ’47? Is that what you said…
MW: No, he went to India in 1943 I believe.

CO: So is that when your Mother,
MW: And Mother took over, Mother resigned, when she knew he was going, she resigned.

CO: Okay.
MW: She went, took over. We had a middle manager, but Mother…

CO: So, I’m just not tryin’ to be obsessive about dates, I’m just tryin’ to get a…
MW: It’s a good idea., Mother having the experience that she had with personal knew that when the war was over that coming home, if Dad, if we had sold the mill or closed the mill, that Dad wouldn’t have a job.

CO: hm. So,
MW: And so she figured that she was a sacrificial lamb. She loved what she did at the university. And she wasn’t crazy about what she did at Athens Lumber Company, but she did it adequately.

CO: Yeah, yeah.
MW: And saved the job, so that he had something to come back to. This was her whole reason for doing it.

CO: So when he came back, what did she do.
MW: [she giggles] She began to live for the first time.

CO: Ah
MW: I mean she joined the Wednesday Study Club and she joined the Missionary

Society and the Mental Health Association and she was a powerhouse in whatever she did. But she hadn't had time for any of that until after the war.

CO: Yeah. Okay.

MW: I mean, she had been advisor to the Chi Omega Sorority from the time she was a member right after she got out of college until I came up for college and then she resigned, and her Little Sister in the sorority took over the same job and handled it for years, but that was the only thing that she did that I know of during the time, in the '30s when she was involved with the University.

CO: So when she, when your father returned did she then not have to work for money? These sound like volunteer…

MW: Yeah these were all volunteers. I mean she joined, what was it, the Junior Assembly which is our now Junior League. She worked that, and she would do that and we would have something to do. She worked at Well Baby Clinic I know at least one time. And I did that too, I ran the Heart Clinic for ten years. But this was before the Federal Government got into the running the clinics on their own.

CO: Yeah.

MW: Which, anyway Mother did volunteer work, let's say that. Quite adequate.

CO: A lot of volunteer work it sounds like.

MW: And she wrote the advertising for the Athens Lumber Company, and I'm sure Dad bounced ideas off of her, but she was not, Oh! I'm leaving out something! Okay. Right after the war, Dad being trained as a civil engineer and we owned land, so which we had already subdivided into lots and some houses had been built on it. But Dad decided, well he would just use his men at the mill during the slack times to build, to help build some houses, so they ended up building ten rental properties which Mother than ran till I took over in '94.

MW: for her.

CO: Rental properties?

MW: Yeah, rental houses.

MW: And they were all around where we lived. You see we were right in the center of 'em.

CO: Oh my.

MW: And so this was what she did in the way of a business during the…

CO: Where was that in Athens?

MW: Ah, right near the General Hospital.

CO: Okay.

MW: About three blocks away.

CO: Okay, all right.

MW: We're just now disposing of 'em.

CO: Oh really.

MW: We've had them ten years and my daughter Lisa is running them at the moment. We've sold all but two, three.

MW: And we're preparing to sell those.

CO: Bad time to try to sale isn't it?

MW: I know, yeah.

CO: Well,

MW: The alternative is for me to take them back over and I'd really rather not.

CO: You don't want to do that? Yeah, I can understand. My next question has to do with, it's gonna sound like it comes from nowhere, but I, before I started this project I was working on Mother/daughter relationships in the early 20th, late 19th and early 20th century so I have an interest in Mothering, how it changes over time, my question, I'll have a lot of questions about Mothering and Motherhood, so this question is about your Mother and her Mother, do you remember anything about their relationship? Did she talk about it?

MW: Oh yeah, yeah. Her Mother was a very motherly person and with very few children she loved to sew. And she made all of my clothes, and if a child in the Pavo area was in the hospital and needed pajamas and didn't have any, Dr. Daniel would call Grandmother and Grandmother would get into her scrap box and that baby would have a pair of pajamas next day. I mean this was her Mother, who was great cook. My Mother, no cooking, she didn't have any of this mothering.

CO: Your Mother didn't pick up on the maternal…

MW: She didn't pick up this maternal, feeling she probably didn't, she didn't have a chance to pick up a maternal feeling because when she had children she on maternity leave.

CO: , from jobs.

MW: From jobs and she knew she was going, that was her life and she was not a house wife.

CO: Right.

MW: She ran the house because we had to have a place to live. She was never…

CO: But she had a good relationship with her Mother?

MW: Oh yeah! Oh very definitely a good relationship, and grand… my Father's Mother now was a very, she had a lot of tragedy in her life, and to see her smile was a very rare. It was not that she was grumpy, it's just that she had lost so much that she just didn't really have a lot of humor.

CO: ,. Okay. Well, how did, because your Mother's active, you know, active career, was really different from most middle class white women,

MW: Oh yeah.

CO: It wasn't that it didn't, you know, it's not like there was no, there were no other women with careers but it was definitely the minority.

MW: And the people that she ran with, it was definitely the minority.

CO: Okay, so even her friends were

MW: Her friends…

CO: Well so how did you as her child feel about, as a child feel about that about your Mother being gone? Who kept you? Who took care of you?

MW: Well, my aunt and my Grandmother and my Aunt Jenny.

CO: Jenny?

MW: Jenny was just like my Mother.

CO: But your Grandmother lived in Pavo?

MW: My Mother's Mother lived in Pavo, but my father's Mother…

CO: So your father's Mother…

MW: It was my father's Mother who I lived with.

CO: Okay. All right.

MW: The summers I spent in Pavo were the happiest ones I ever had.

CO: Okay.

MW: Because it was just a child's delight.

CO: Okay, but your, how did your, do you have any sense of how your paternal Grandmother felt about your Mother's career?

MW: Oh I do have a good deal of sense about that. She felt like Mother shouldn't be doing that.

CO: Ah hah.

MW: And even Mother, and I can't imagine Mother talking to Grandmother like this as a young bride, but she told me one time. Mother came home from college after Dad had come home from work, and Grandmother Bondurant met her at the door and said, "A woman's place is in the home supporting her husband not out going to school." And Mother said something to Grandmother to the effect of, "When I said I'd marry your son, I didn't take my brain out."

CO: [she laughs]

MW: I don't know exactly what she said, but I can't imagine an eighteen year old gettin' away with that but Grandmother was imperious to say the least.

CO: So your Mother married at 18?

MW: Mother married at 18.

CO: But, but did she have sort of a, did, she felt confident in the man she married,

MW: Yeah.

CO: That he was not going to keep her from pursuing this ambition,

MW: Yeah, apparently they had an agreement.

Okay.

MW: They never told me they did

CO: , hm.

MW: But I think knowing Dad and knowing, well knowing Dad. I don't think Dad would have, Dad said if Mother hadn't had to take over the Athens Lumber Company, she would have been president of the University of Georgia.

CO: [she laughs]

MW: She probably would. But you see she never went back to the University. They replaced her with a permanent placement director and then they split the job, and she didn't go back.

CO: Do you think she ever wanted a more advanced degree? Do you think she ever wanted to get a PhD?

MW: No.

CO: No?

MW: .

CO: Okay.

MW: I don't think she saw that it would serve any purpose for her, but I think she realized she needed something other than an AB.

CO: Yeah, yeah.

MW: and a Phi Beta Kappa key to

CO: Right.

MW: progress at the university.

CO: Yeah.

MW: She knew things were, she knew how things were running.

CO: Yeah. Yeah., what do you recall, an event that you would consider the most significant thing or the most memorable thing that happened to you up to the age of twelve?

MW: I don't have any specifics.

CO: Okay, that's okay., can you, your childhood sounds fairly care free. Did you have any struggles as a child? Do you recall any struggles?

MW: Oh, no.

CO: No?

MW: No.

CO: Had a carefree childhood?

MW: Oh yeah and the fact that Mother was gone most of the time, I was able to

ramble. I liked to wander through. Then there was a lot of area behind General Hospital, that was just broomsedge and creeks

CO: hm

MW: I had a friend, a girl friend, who lived about half a mile away, and the two of us would go catch toad-frogs or tadpoles, or play in the creek, or dam the creek or whatever. I mean this was a childhood that I liked to have.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And my children had this.

CO: Oh my.

MW: We had a hundred acres of pine woods that they lived on.

CO: Wow.

MW: And they could dam the creek and get poison ivy and ticks and chiggers just like I did.

CO: Now how long have you been here, in this house?

MW: Eight years.

CO: Okay. All right.,

MW: I'd say it was carefree. Yes.

CO: Okay. Okay. You know today we read a lot about the transition from childhood to adolescence and have, there are a lot of studies on adolescence as a

MW: disease [she laughs]

CO: Yeah right, exactly! Exactly!

MW: [she continues to laugh]

CO: So we're kind of prepared for that. Maybe over prepared in some ways,

MW: I think it's overblown.

CO: Okay. Well that seems to be the general consensus of your generation: it's over blown. So do you recall that transition for yourself?

MW: Oh yeah, yeah.

CO: You do? Moving into adolescence?

MW: Well, we called it teens.

CO: That's right. Right.

MW: The word adolescent, I knew it was in the dictionary, but I didn't apply it,

CO: Right.

MW: to me.

CO: So you would use term as…

MW: I went off to boarding school, as soon as Dad went overseas. Athens High School had to go on a double shift. Half a day morning and half a day evening. And I

had been in Lakeland High School just before he left. And so we came back to Athens High, and it was crowded. They had few teachers and they were very overworked. And so, Aunt Peg Moss, and Mother and Mrs. Marvin Underwood from Atlanta started trying to hunt a place for me to go to high school. I was about to be 13, and so they found a place for me at a girl's boarding school called Fassifern in Hendersonville, North Carolina, and so just before my thirteenth birthday I go off to a boarding school, which was great. And I flunked English by the way, because I couldn't spell very well, and the teacher would make me rewrite my themes and all, and every time I would have another misspelling, and I would write, and rewrite, and re-spell and anyway, so I got an F an English, and so Mother decided I'd better not go back there the next year, so I went to another one, and I did fine.

CO: Where d'ya go? The second one…

MW: I went to a school that was just being started in Summerville, South Carolina called Adventure School and I had gone to Camp Adventure at Junaluska the summer before and I spent my junior and senior there and graduated.

CO: There weren't any boarding schools in Georgia that satisfied your Mother?

MW: Well, I had an opportunity to go to Washington Seminary in Atlanta instead of Fassifern, but Washington Seminary had only three people as boarders, and that's pretty lonesome on the weekends.

CO: , okay.

MW: And not very good coverage, so those three usually rode the bus home and rode back to Atlanta, and Mrs. Underwood from Atlanta knew that wasn't really a good idea, and I agreed with her. Fassifern was much better.

CO: Okay. A true boarding school

MW: They were both and almost entirely boarding school, they only had two town girls out of 110.

CO: Oh, okay.

MW: So it was a boarding school.

CO: Also, okay. That marks your transition to a teenager,

MW: But you see we were in a girl's school. There weren't any boys. I mean,

CO: Well,

MW: There were no boys and no activities with boys.

CO: Did you, you were removed from your Mother and your Grandmother, did that… What was that like?

MW: It was good.

CO: It was good.

MW: I realized that I had to iron my own dress. I had to be sure, and this was a strict school, that you had twenty-five minutes after breakfast in which you had to have your room neat, clean, and ready for inspection.

CO: .

MW: And it taught me that clothes don't hang themselves up, and they don't come back unless you wash 'em. Anyway it really put the ball back into my court, so I had to do for myself for the first time. Whereas at home with servants I had not ever had to worry about whether I had a clean dress to wear.

CO: Okay.

MW: And that's a very different situation.

CO: Yes, it is. So you…

MW: But I grew from it and I certainly didn't have any, I mean I was enjoying the fact that…

CO: So you didn't feel homesick?

MW: Gosh no! I was delighted.

CO: Wow!

MW: I mean I was glad to get home, but I felt like I was an adult, growing up.

CO: ,.

MW: And I had a couple of good teachers, not that the English teacher wasn't good, but Ms. Leek was fine except I couldn't spell.

CO: [she guffaws]

MW: And she was a stickler for spelling and punctuation and a few things like that.

CO: So you and your Mother got along okay in your teen years?

MW: Yeah.

CO: You don't remember having…

MW: Yeah. We were never close though until Mother got older, and I think the thing that turned it around was the time she told me that somebody had said, "Oh you're Mary Claire's Mother." And I had always been in her shadow, and Emmett had been in Mother and Dad's shadow, and both of us beat it out of Athens just as quick as we got out of college, because we wanted to see if we could make it on our own.

CO: hm. And there was a time when someone met your Mother

MW: Yes!

CO: And called her "Mary Claire's Mother"

MW: It made my day.

CO: Ah!

MW: I was probably 30-somethin' by then, but it just for once to get out to feel like I was out of her shadow. Just made a wonderful difference.

CO: But is that because, I mean, okay,

MW: She had a very prominent life,

CO: kay.

MW: And everybody knew, I mean she was well known and well thought of.

CO: Okay.

MW: And I felt like I wasn't measuring up perhaps.

CO: Was she, she was well known and well thought of in her own right because she came

MW: That's correct.

CO: in, but your father was the name Bondurant a well-known name here in Athens? So that being married to him, did it have its advantages or was he…

MW: It did, but I mean she made her name. She added more luster let's put it that way.

CO: Okay. All right.

MW: She wasn't capitalizing. It wasn't like being a Kennedy.

CO: hm. Well. Okay. All right., so all right. It doesn't sound like you had, I'm trying to get a sense of what it was like at home with a brother who was seven years younger and then another brother who is seventeen years younger. Was there any recognition on your part of gender difference, the difference in the way boys and girls were treated, if not in your own household because of the age difference, elsewhere around you?

MW: Well, I remember a phrase "Those to whom much is given, much is expected."

CO: hm.

MW: And I think that that spoke to both genders in our household.

MW: I mean you got a brain, you're expected to do something with it that's useful. I mean not necessarily selfish, but useful.

CO: So there was no difference in what was expected from you and from your brothers in terms of career, what contribution you'd make to society, or…

MW: This will tell you. I had done a degree in physics. I was only the third woman in the university history to get a degree in physics.

CO: From what university now?

MW: University of Georgia.

CO: University of Georgia, okay.

MW: And I,

CO: You were the third woman at…

MW: The third woman who took physics as a major.

CO: Wow! That's amazing!

MW: And one of 'em was Mother's era, Isabel Tipton, and I knew her at Oak Ridge. She taught at University of Tennessee and she was mighty sweet to me when I was up

there at Oak Ridge. She went on to get her PhD, and the second was Hackee, I've forgotten what her first name was. She lived a couple of blocks away when I was oh, eight or ten. Winifred Hackee! She got a PhD later. And I was more interested frankly in medical physics than I was in any other kind, but at that point.

CO: So your BS is in Physics?

MW: My BS is in Physics, yeah, yeah.

CO: Wow!

MW: I took enough that I was qualified for pre-Med, but my cousin Jan Newton was the registrar at Augusta at the Medical College, and she said, "Now look, Mary Claire, you are not going to get in for probably three years because we got to take all these veterans who didn't come, to qualify first, and so find something you'd like to do while you wait. So at that point having had, and that was very good advice.

MW: I proceeded to get a job offer from Oak Ridge one Friday afternoon, after my Mother and Dad had gone out of town for something, and I had been up in Oak Ridge the previous March for a physics meeting and had met some people, and one of my former physics teacher was up there, and I think he probably had something to do with it, but anyway I got the job offer and I said I'll be there Monday.

CO: Teaching at?

MW: No, working at Oak Ridge, TN.

CO: Oak Ridge being the…

MW: It was the Atomic Energy Commission.

CO: Oh, okay.

MW: Radiation.

CO: Wow!

MW: So I had packed Mother's college steamer trunk and sent it by Railway Express on Saturday, and Mother and Dad came home on Sunday night to find out that I was leaving Monday morning.

CO: Wow. Now you were how old?

MW: Dad says, "Well why you can stay, you can stay here. You know you don't have to do anything. You can live here at home. We're happy to have you. Why do you want to leave?"

CO: Yeah.

MW: You see this was, and that was the only time that I had that gender, well a gender bias showed.

CO: Okay. Do you think that he had to, did they, well I can imagine your Mother under the circumstances of her life showing that much difference, but do you think your father just masked it at other times?

MW: No, I don't think so. I think that it was, I admit it, a surprise. If one of my children had done that,

CO: Sure.

MW: I would have been surprised too.

CO: Right.

MW: But Mother says, "Well, I'll take you up there, so she went up, drove me up there, and we visited and had supper with one of her N.Y.A students in the 30s, who was personnel officer at Norris for the T.V.A. So I started out with a middle aged friend at T.V.A. and a middle aged friend teaching at the University of Tennessee that I could always call on if I needed to.

CO: How old were you by the way?

MW: I was 20.

CO: Twenty. Okay. All right. So working for the nuclear…

MW: Atomic Energy Commission.

CO: Atomic Energy Commission, okay. All right..

MW: DuPont was a contractor, it was the A.E.C.

CO: Okay., do you recall at any point in your time at home with your parents questioning their beliefs, or their values.

MW: [she laughs] Good question! Oh, I came back from high school, boarding school and some of my teachers had been at a Methodist College south of Chicago it begins with a W and I can't think of it right off my head, but this was an era when we were beginning to question why the Blacks had to be restricted to such an extent. Why couldn't they use a public library?

CO: hm

MW: And at boarding school, my, the plumbing in my bathroom stopped up, and the Black plumber came in and fixed it and I being a chatty person, I asked him about himself. It turned out he had a PhD in English literature from Howard University and I said in a tactless way, "Well, why are you plumbing?" And he said, "Because I have a family to feed and I can make money plumbing and there's very few, they're very few jobs open to people with my qualifications." That was perfect response and I brought it home, Emmett my younger brother who later was takin' on an awful lot of Civil Rights cases pro bono. He sat at the table and we discussed this at a number of meals. And I think that helped to form his feeling that it was not just.

CO: Wow! So what did your parents think about it? Your

MW: My Dad said, "Well now look in F.E.P.C."… was something that some of the Congress was trying to push making it essential that a business have front men who were Black or front women who were Black, and it was very definitely not going to go in Athens and Dad said, "I've got some people that could do it." One being Jimmy Wade who helped Mother with her houses. But Dad says, "They're not gonna tell me how to

do it. I'll do it if I want to. They're not gonna make me do it." But you see at that time the public library was not open for Blacks.

CO: hm, so you recall the…

MW: All these were

CO: You began to question racial

MW: We all, I mean Emmett and I had---with our parents--- Johnny was too little to know what was going on.

CO: hm

MW: But we had some serious discussions. It was almost always at mealtime.

CO: Did your parents have typical New South ideas about race relations?

MW: Neither one was trying to keep the Black down, but they say this is the way it is, and I will not be the person who breaks the color line.

CO: But you began to question that.

MW: Oh we questioned it vigorously.

CO: Okay. All right. I have a whole section on regional identity

MW: Okay.

CO: that I want to come back for this.

MW: Well you can. Someone who interviewed me for some article about Emmett, I told 'em that. Well, that may partially explain what he does.

CO: Yeah. Yeah. Well, I am really

MW: I bless that man for saying in such an honest way that he did it because he had to do it.

CO: Right.

MW: And he was a good plumber I'm sure, but he said also, "they can never take it away from me."

CO: The degree and the knowledge.

MW: The knowledge.

CO: Yeah.

MW: The knowledge. I don't think he was so overwhelmed by having the degree. I think the knowledge was what he was after.

CO: Yeah. Okay. Was your, it sounds like the answer to this is gonna be affirmative. Your family was aware of the world outside the household, like aware of

MW: Oh God!

CO: the news.

MW: Yes. Oh yeah, yeah.

CO: What was going on in the world

MW: Oh absolutely.

CO: And did you all discuss world events,

MW: Oh yeah.

CO: or local, national news

MW: Yeah. We did. We did frequently and of course when Dad was overseas we were watching the news all the time and reading his letters and what was happening.

CO: Did they, did your parents have strong feelings about F. D.R.?

MW: I do not remember. Not *my* family. My husband Jim's father was read out of the Baptist Church for voting for F.D.R. and saying so.

CO: Whoa.

MW: But they read him back in; he was a Treasurer.

CO: Oh. My goodness.

MW: And I thought that was pretty low. But he was an honest man, he was willing to admit that that's who he voted for.

CO: Oh my goodness.

MW: No, I do not remember any particular…

CO: You don't remember your parents having strong feelings

MW: Well, about F.D.R., because I was at boarding school when he died and I thought the nicest thing about that was that we had so much good music for three days.

CO: [she laughs quietly]

MW: because they played classical music on the radio.

CO: Oh my goodness. Well do you remember anything about Eleanor?

MW: Oh yeah! Oh yes, and I remember Mother's Mother thinking that Eleanor Roosevelt writing "My Day" was not appropriate for a…

CO: Wow. Oh.

MW: Yeah she would break the color line, and you'd hear that.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And I think Grandmother Brannon felt that Eleanor was overstepping the boundaries of what a First Lady should be.

CO: hm. Yeah. Well a common.

MW: It was more Grandmother saying that than Mother. I don't remember Mother and Dad taking a stand on Eleanor at all.

CO: Okay. When you were growing up, whenever at any point, did you have an idea about what you wanted to do when you became an adult?

MW: Oh yeah.

CO: You knew what you wanted to be?

MW: I was going to be the second Pavlova first, and then after that I was going to be a great medical doctor.

CO: Was there any, and would do you want to do with that?

MW: I just wanted to be a doctor.

CO: You just wanted to be a doctor, okay. All right, did you share this

MW: Oh yeah they knew it.

CO: They knew?

MW: Oh yeah. It was not said you can't be or whatever.

CO: Okay. All right.

MW: I didn't get put down there by it, and it's possible that if I had not come just as the end of World War II came and the soldiers filled up the Georgia Medical College, I might've I would have gone on the next year.

MW: But I'm not sorry I took the line I did.

CO: Yeah. Okay. We'll have a whole section on, work

MW: Yeah.

CO: and career and so forth, so.. Well, lastly in this section, you've talked about your family were there any friends that stayed with you from childhood through adult hood, and possibly even that you know now? Long term friendships?

MW: From childhood, a good many of 'em are dead.

CO: Yeah. Okay.

MW: They're a few. Lucy Tresp here in town and I grew up together, and my cousin Marguerite, who's here in town. We've been life-long friends. Oh, Marguerite's going through deteriorating health. Oh, my roommate in prep school and I keep up. She was head of Spanish Language studies at the University of Cincinnati, but she's retired now. And her specialty is translating plays of Spanish authors. But we correspond maybe twice a year and I haven't seen Pat maybe in 25 years.

CO: Okay. Do you recall any particular books or movies or or music, you've already said that you love music.

MW: Oh yeah.

CO: that had a lasting influence on you? Let's just take those one at a time. Books, do you recall a book that's, that really made a lasting influence on you?

MW: Oh *The Magnificent Obsession*.

CO: *The Magnificent*…
MW: *Obsession*.
CO: *The Magnificent Obsession* by whom?
MW: I don't know but I've got it.
CO: Okay, that's okay, and what about it?
MW: It was in the 1940s.
CO: Okay.
MW: And it's about a person who becomes a doctor.
CO: Oh okay. All right. Well that explains. Did you read that as a young woman?
MW: I read it in high school.
CO: Okay. All right.
MW: It was a best seller at the time. I didn't normally read best sellers, but that was one I read.
CO: Okay. What kind of music did you like?
MW: Oh classical music.
CO: Classical music.
MW: And I like some folk music, but not the redneck type.
CO: Right. Okay. And films, a film that has, that left an impression.
MW: Well I mean a lot of 'em I saw and enjoyed, but none of 'em that I'm crazy about.
CO: Okay.
MW: I saw a good many.
CO: All right. I'm gonna stop.
MW: Right.
[Warren, Mary Claire 1. 00: 00: 00]

[**BREAK BETWEEN TAPES**]

[Warren, Mary Claire 2. 01: 02: 16]

CO: It's a shame that the discipline of history is the one where they just had to have somebody, so anybody would do.
MW: Well.
CO: I mean I, my experience in high school was that my history teacher was a coach and I never had class. We had study hall because I went to a school where football was everything**.** And he was the coach, you know. The assistant coach of the football team and so, they just had, that was his priority.
MW: Well, my history teacher was a coach also, but it was very different situation 'cause I babysat with his little girl when I was at boarding school and loved the child. And he'd always say, "Now well if you don't study, I'm gonna flunk you." Had been

rather out spoken, and so when I wrote him a 24 page history of medicine for my first theme, he got the message that I was serious.

CO: Yeah, yeah. Okay.

MW: So he and I didn't cross swords after that.

CO: But he was a serious teacher. It sounds like he was probably a history teacher first and a coach, no? Hm.

MW: He was a nice guy. I loved those two.

CO: Hm.

MW: He and his wife both, they meant a lot to me. And I even met 'em when I did workshops in South Carolina. They'd come down and have supper with me the night before. They lived at Cheraw and I'd be doing them in Columbia or Camden, and they would come down and visit with me. And this was years, maybe 20 years later.

CO: ,.

MW: Both of 'em are gone now, but they were very, very fine people.

CO: Well, about your education, can you go back and just list from the from your earliest school, list the schools that you attended and graduated from all the way through your graduate degrees? You've mentioned them, but I just like for you to do them, you know like you would a vitae.

MW: In sequence,

CO: Yes.

MW: You begin Chase Street School, which is elementary, still here. Athens had a junior high school, at Childs Street, that's a school that's no longer there. And then high school I began high school in Lakeland, Florida, and we went from 11th to 12th grade system in Florida, and when I went off to boarding school the Fassifern in

CO: Would you spell Fassifern?

MW: F-a-s-s-i-f-e-r-n.

CO: F-a-s-s-i-f-e-r-n, okay.

MW: In Hendersonville, North Carolina. I got upped from the sophomore into the sophomore year, and so then I had only six months at Fassifern, January to June, or February to June, and then I went to Adventure School for two full years, my junior and senior years in high school, and graduated in spring of '46 from Adventure School.

CO: Adventure School? That was in South Carolina?

MW: In Summerville, South Carolina and the very next September I was at the University of Georgia. We went from about 5,000 students to 9,300

CO: Whoa!

MW: between June and September.

CO: Because of veterans?

MW: Because of veterans. And this was 1946, and it was the class rooms were

impacted. They'd haul teachers in who hadn't been teachers or maybe shouldn't have been teachers. And it was really impacted. And I went from a school that had 73 students, grades three through twelve to 9,000 plus and it was a shock.

CO: Oh my goodness! I can't imagine what that did to faculty. Cause faculty did not increase at that same ratio.

MW: Well they were trying to, they were trying to recruit faculty as fast as they could, but they couldn't get them. My first English teacher was a nice guy who'd retired years before. He was not dotage, but he just hadn't been in the world for quite a while

CO: hm.

MW: And he wasn't a great English teacher, but then I got some fairly good ones, and I enjoyed after that.

CO: When did you decide that you were gonna major in physics?

MW: My first quarter, no my second quarter I took Physical Science 1 which was physics, taught by the Physics Department; Physical Science two was taught by chemistry. And I just fell in love with it. I had thought. I had an opportunity to go to M.I.T. to take architecture. I had toyed with that and Dad said, "Well, you know I've been gone all this time and I'd really like to have you at home." So that went out the window.

CO: Yeah. What did you do, I mean how did they look at you when you declared physics as a major?

MW: My parents?

CO: No, the school?

MW: Well, the Physics Department Dr. Dixon, I had known all my life. He was happy to have me.

CO: , so nobody said, "Wow! A woman!"?

MW: No, no, no.

CO: Okay.

MW: He, I knew, he knew and I knew that they hadn't had many women who were willing to take it.

CO: Yeah, so then what happened?

MW: There's a lot of math in it.

CO: Yeah, right, and women aren't supposed to, was it, was the general consensus that women weren't good at math?

MW: No! There wasn't any consensus at all they just stayed away from it.

CO: Okay.

MW: I mean my declaring physics did not bother anybody.

CO: Okay.

MW: Dr. Dixon was just as kind as he ever was before I declared as after I declared. I mean it was fine with him. It was one more student, he didn't have a whole lot of 'em.

CO: Yeah.

MW: The physics department was very small.

CO: Hmm, okay.

MW: We had Dixon, Hugh Henry, and Gilbert Henry, and Dr. Hendren, who had been dean of the graduate school and was truly well past his prime and mentally gone downhill badly 'cause I've known him all my life. But when he was still teaching and we had Jack Bailey and Eddie Long, and that was the whole faculty of the physics department.

CO: Wow.

MW: And Dr. Hendrin was running on half a tank. It was bad.

CO: Yeah. So,. Okay. You finished with your B.S. in '47 did you say?

MW: No, I finished my B.S. in '50. June of '50

CO: Okay. All right.

MW: Actually I didn't finish it until June of '51 'cause I had missed a quarter having some dental work done in Baltimore, so I had a month out. So I was, had saved two courses that I had to have part of the core curriculum: a history course and geography. That I could take by correspondence. So when I got that job offer I just went to the university office and transferred those two courses, which I had been taking in summer school to correspondence and I was out.

CO: Yeah, and so did it take you the four years to finish the degree?

MW: Well, I, yeah because I didn't go to summer school.

CO: Okay.

MW: Except that one summer.

CO: And then did you go off to graduate school?

MW: No! I didn't go off anywhere. I went to Oak Ridge,

CO: to teach. I mean, I'm sorry to the

MW: to do

CO: the first job.

MW: Chemical research. Yeah.

CO: Okay. Can you shift now to a completely different subject?

MW: Oh sure.

CO: On marriage and children, and Motherhood, and that sort of…

MW: Okay.

CO: area. It doesn't sound like your family was, traditional about romance and dating and courting and that kind of thing

MW: They weren't focused on it at all. You're gonna need to fill in a gap to get to this.

CO: Okay.

MW: And the rest of the gap is that I, Mother had told me, "That whatever job you take, keep it for a year. Then make change." So I had a chemical assay job and using spectroscopy, which I had done to get Eddie Long his Master's degree at the university. He was my physics teacher, and I wasn't real happy with the job at Oak Ridge, and I had a roommate who was a journalism major from U.T. and she worked O.R.I.N.S. the Institute of Nuclear Studies and she told me about a job as a lab assistant so I applied for it and got it, and worked for the man who later became head of the Physiology Department at Emory Medical School, but I really enjoyed working with him and one of my biology teachers from the university had gone to O.R.I.N.S. too, and he knew me and recommended me to Dave Bruner and I got the job, so I got this new job and that I really liked!

CO: O.R.I.N.S.

MW: Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies.

CO: Okay.

MW: called O.R.I.N.S.

CO: Okay.

MW: and it was run by a consortium of southern colleges.

CO: hm.

MW: Including the University of Georgia, but I worked there until Dr. Bruner got the offer from Emory to come down and head physiology which he did. And his replacement was a man who was very nice, but that was enough said.

CO: No, it seems much better now to segue way into your work life.

MW: This will tell you why I keep switching.

CO: No! No it's fine. It's

MW: Well, I did switch

MW: I liked the guy but as a researcher he didn't have research ability. He didn't have the capacity for research, and so I called Dr. Bruner and said, "I can't stand it. I'm gonna quit at this." And he said," Well, I got a place here if you want to come to Atlanta." He asked me if I wanted to come and I said, "No, I don't think so. I think I'll stay at Oak Ridge." But so he gave me a job there at Emory running their radio isotope lab.

CO: Hm.

MW: And so I go down and

CO: Had you stayed a year like your Mother instructed you?

MW: I did, I did.

CO: Okay.

MW: yeah, before I changed jobs.

CO: So you took that seriously?

MW: I took that very seriously. She said not to be a job hopper.

MW: So I went to Emory and within a month of the time that I went to Emory I met Jim and we married that fall in November, and since I was working in radiation and we wanted to have children, we were looking for another job for me. And so we saw an ad, found an ad in the Atlanta Journal. The Institute of Nuclear Studies had women. Georgia Tech… Tech had a research arm that was funded by people they were doing research for. And I'll think of the name in a minute.

CO: It's okay.

MW: But anyway they needed a technical editor with basic information experience in physics, chemistry, and mathematics.

CO: And you had it.

MW: I had it, and I never had been a technical editor. But it just so happens that I knew the head of the physics section of that group and he knew me. And I told him that I was very familiar with what they were doing, understood what the reports were about, but I probably couldn't cross i's and do t's like I should have, and he said, "Oh, you'll do fine." So with that I got the job and

CO: And this was a technical editor for?

MW: The Engineering Experiment Station at Georgia Tech.

CO: Oh my goodness. Did you like that?

MW: Yeah.

CO: You did? This is now your third major job.

MW: It was my third major job since, and this is in I began it in '54. January 1954 and I ran it till June when Eve was born.

CO: So you married in '53?

MW: hm.

CO: Okay. And your, can you give me the years of your children's birth right quick? Eve

MW: Eve is '54, Mark is '55, Amy is '57, Stuart S-t-u-a-r-t is '59 and Lisa is '60.

CO: Okay.

MW: So you see…

CO: You had them.

MW: I had them, I was out of P.T.A. pretty quick.

CO: Whoa., ’54, ’55, ’57, ’59, and ’60. Wow!

MW: And somebody ask we got the T.V. in ’56. [she laughs] and the answer was no. Anyway we laugh about that.

CO: Yeah, did you, did you work while they were little babies, children.

MW: Back up.

CO: Okay.

MW: The technical editing. I did, I went back for a short time and filled in when someone was having another baby, so that was the end of my Tech experience. But

MW: No, I’m all right. When I came to ’56 we were living out past the Brookhaven and the V.A. hospital was in Brookhaven in Atlanta, and it just so happened that I had worked with the head of nuclear physics there, who’s a doctor. And I was getting stir-crazy with the babies at home. I just had two then and he said, “Well I need help in the lab two days a week.” And I said, “I’m your man.”

CO: Did you say that? “I’m your man.”?

MW: Well, I didn’t say it quite that way, but he knew, he had worked with me in the lab at Emory and at Oak Ridge and knew what I knew and what I could do so. Anyway he gave me the part time job and then Jim got a job --- to design and build a house over here in Athens. Jim had been trained as an architect. So he was coming to Athens and I worked at the V.A. hospital until we moved to Athens. Oh, in the meantime, back at Oak Ridge I did qualify for and took what was then the PhD. in nuclear physics, you had to take a training course at the O.R.I.N.S. in handling to get a license to handle radioactive material. And I did take and qualified for it while I was there working for Dr. Bruner. So when I came to Emory we already had the certificate so that made it easy for him to get the grant that he was going to work under.

Okay.

MW: Okay. Here’re children at home.

CO: Yeah.

MW: We moved to Athens in November, just before Thanksgiving of ’66.

CO: So your firstborn was twelve.

MW: It was ’56.

CO: Oh okay.

MW: ’56, I’m sorry I’m

CO: That’s okay.

MW: I'm losing a decade. '56.

CO: So you got a two and a one year old?

MW: Yeah, and Amy was born, when --- she was born almost right after we moved here to Athens.

MW: And I really was busy, lookin' after helping Jim with what his house building, design work, and then staying at home with the children most of the time. Civil War Centennial comes along, and I was on the county Civil War Centennial Board and the person who was the chairman wanted to do a book and the county commissioner said, "No, we won't pay for it." So he resigned, so I ended up as the chairman of the Civil War Centennial Board, but I had been writing for a weekly throw away newspaper, writing a weekly column on whatever I could write a weekly column on, but mainly it was local history. And so I had written for *The Athens Advertiser,* and then started the genealogy column in *The Athens Banner Herald*, and we had a new newspaper called *The Athens Daily News* and they wanted a weekly column which I named "Athens' Lives and Legends", so I wrote it. I wrote the genealogy column for one paper and the…

CO: Can we back up a minute?

MW: Okay.

CO: How did you get from, I got a gap in my understanding from all of this scientific focus on ah…

MW: Well, an opportunity just comes.

CO: And, and so, you embraced that because, did you have a…

MW: Well it's interesting.

CO: Okay. All right.

MW: I'm interested in a lot of things.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And I had the background of local history. I mean we've been here so long and I knew who to ask, or I thought I did. And I met a lot of different new people who could tell me things that I didn't know.

CO: So you were born researching, you were a born researcher.

MW: I was just a born researcher, I guess.

CO: Okay.

MW: I certainly didn't learn it from somebody that I knew of. This is why, and writing isn't really all that hard, and Mother had been a journalist. I even asked the Dean Drury head of the journalism school (I was makin' enough money from my column to pay a baby sitter to go.) I asked him if I needed, if he had a course there in the

journalism school that I could take that would make me a better writer and he had been reading what I was writing. And he said, “No, I think you’re just wasting your time. That I think you’re doing fine, and save your money and do something else with it.” Which to me was a real endorsement.

CO: Sure.

MW: because he knew what I was doing and whether training me in a field that I knew, he didn’t think it was worth the money or time.

CO: Okay. So this is your, the genesis of your genealogy work?

MW: Well, no.

CO: No?

MW: Not quite., I had been interested in family history anyway and Dad had always wanted to know where his Bondurants came from and before I was even born, when he was a late teenager and before he and Mother married. He had written to every Bondurant he had ever found the name of it, and that wasn’t many. And he had saved these letters. So during the period that I had five little children and I *was* at home, he came and brought me his letters. And he said, “Do something with this.” And it was interesting enough, I’ve still got them.

CO: No your parents only recently died, within the past decade, so you had them with you for a long time, and your children obviously…

MW: My aunt died at 2000, my Mother died at 2001, and my Dad died at 2002.

CO: Yeah. Wow. So your children knew their grandparents?

MW: Oh yeah. They were raised with ‘em.

CO: Okay. Okay.

MW: I mean they really do, much more so than my brother’s children who were nor raised with ‘em, which I think is unfortunate for the children. They’ve missed something.

CO: Yeah, yeah. So we’ve gone through three, your first three full time jobs, and now you’re in the child bearing and raising years when you’re doing sort of work at home as well as work out in the, as editor, technical editor, are you still doing that?

MW: No I’m not doing any of that.

CO: No, okay.

MW: Science just went out the window unfortunately.

CO: Okay.

MW: I’m still interested in it, and I still take *Science News* and read it every week.

CO: You’re in social science though with genealogy.

MW: No, I’m reading hard science.

CO: Yeah. Okay. All right., but then all right. Your, the children are at home,

MW: Yeah.

CO: Do you consider yourself, when they're at home, a full time, I don't wanna use the word house wife, it has something negative….

MW: Well, I am a house wife and a Mother because we didn't have help.

CO: You didn't have help.

MW: I didn't have help. We're keeping five children and a husband who's working full time, and long hours.

CO: And he your husband was

MW: designing and building houses.

CO: Okay. A builder.

MW: Yeah.

CO: All right. Okay. So let's just go ahead and work with your career for a while. The children are home you're doing genealogy, sort of on the side or when you can., how long did that go on?

MW: [she chuckles] Still going on.

CO: It's still going on?

MW: It hasn't stopped.

CO: Okay.

MW: I've done books since then, and you see that series up the top the shelf?

CO: huh.

MW: That is the 34 years of the quarterly…, weekly magazine

CO: Wow. Oh my goodness.

MW: those.

CO: That's, how many volumes is that?

MW: Well, we didn't make volumes out of four years, but all the others are there.

CO: That's about.

MW: From '70 to74 we didn't make a volume.

CO: Okay, but that's, that's over 20 issues, 20 bound volumes.

MW: Oh yeah, yeah.

CO: Yeah, okay. And this, was this what you were doing weekly?

MW: That' my weekly.

MW: It was just bound, bound a certain number up every year.

CO: And you've said that you did, that one issue was 20 pages.

MW: Yeah, yeah.

CO: You're gonna get…

MW: With an index. Yes, ma'am.

CO: Want me to get it? I can get

MW: You're taller than I am,

MW: I got it, but also I'm doing other books in the mean time.

CO: As in, well, as in

MW: As in books, these books were done. This was done, that one was done.

CO: And what are those?

MW: Well this one's *Whites Among the Cherokee*, it's the records of Georgia whites who lived among the Cherokees Indians. And this is the Georgia Gold Lottery that hadn't been at that time indexed. I indexed it.

CO: Wow.

MW: Well, there's a number of 'em. Some of 'em are in the other room. Did this one. And that one.

CO: This is a lot of information here to process.

MW: Yeah, yeah. I gave the university 44 drawers full of files that.

CO: Good heavens!

MW: Hargrett has 'em.

CO: Wow. You had no, you didn't have a lot of spare time.

MW: Well, no, but intellectually it was as stimulating as you want to be.

CO: Yeah.

MW: Because I met people, I did workshops all over the country and it's

CO: Workshops in genealogical research?

MW: Genealogical research workshops, from the top of my head, and you hear problems and you meet people and, it really was very satisfying.

CO: , now did this provide income for you?

MW: Yeah, yeah it did. It helped, it certainly helped financially. Cause we had 2,200 subscribers at one point.

CO: Whoa. Oh my.

MW: But we, to have that many you also had a lot of work.

CO: Right, did you have staff or did you wind up havin' to do most of this yourself? Well, you said the kids did a lot.

MW: Well Jim printed it at night, and the children helped assemble, did the assembly, and that's where they got their income. Their allowance came out of that, and I had a lady who worked with me every day. She did no writing or researching, but she did handle the orders and that sort of thing. And that helped. But it was, it took about five days a week to do each issue.

CO: Good heavens! and it was weekly.

MW: It's weekly.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And that was a thing that sold it because it came every week. Somebody said, "when the mailman comes I just go into hibernation till I've read it."

CO: [she laughs] Oh my.

MW: But it was fun.

CO: Yeah, well it sound like it. It sounds like you just loved it.

MW: I do. I do. I love it still that's why I keep doing the Bondurant Association Quarterly. I'm on volume, issue number 93 right now. But I mean, I like to do that. I like the digging.

CO: The Bondurant…

MW: The Bondurant Family Association has founded in 1980-something, I don't even remember when, but, we've done a quarterly ever since, and I've done all but five.

CO: Good heavens. Wow! So…

MW: You see my career just,

CO: Well it has a

MW: Doors shut and windows open.

CO: Yeah, but you don't, you haven't really retired. I mean you're

MW: I don't want to as long as I'm physically

CO: Right.

MW: Mentally and physically able to do it.

CO: You're 82.

MW: I'm 82.

CO: Okay.

MW: And I've got, I've published nine volumes so far of the Georgia British Records and I've got two more waiting to print, and I've got two that I'm finishing and when

that's done I'm going to switch over, I found the Huguenots receipts in London last year.

Signed in the 1680s and 1690s before they came to Virginia.

CO: Wow.

MW: The actual receipts. I saw my Mother's ancestor getting three pounds and giving his receipt for it in 1692 with his own signature on it.

CO: Oh my goodness.

MW: Now don't think that wasn't a thrill.

CO: I bet it was.

MW: Oh my that was, and Mother didn't know she had a Huguenot ancestor . She kept fussing at me for spending all that time on those Huguenots.

CO: [she laughs] This was last year did you say?

MW: This was, yeah Mark and I were over there.

CO: So she didn't live to know about it?

MW: No, she didn't.

CO: Awww

MW: If she had, she would've really have run with that ball.

CO: Oh!

MW: She would have teased Dad because her ancestor got here before his did. [she laughs]

CO: [she laughs]

MW: He was, hers was on the first ship and Dad was on the second.

CO: Oh wow. Oh my. That might've caused a fight.

MW: No, they wouldn't have fought, but it would have caused a lot of commentary. I wish, I would have loved to have seen her face, oh she would have glowed when I told her that.

CO: So you had to be gratified for both of you, I guess.

MW: Oh we were, it was a thrill. Mark photographed as fast as I turned the pages.

CO: Wow.

MW: I was pleased.

CO: What fun.

MW: Yeah, because I've been looking for 'em since '92 and I read that they had existed in 1886 and I hoped they had survived World War II, but I mean London is bombed. Found out they had been put in a coal mine in Wales***.*** But they were saved,

and they're perfect. They're still bound up. They hadn't been open since they were wound up in 1690s.

CO: So you had…

MW: I had 'em in my hands.

CO: Things that hadn't even been processed.

MW: They're not processed yet.

CO: How are they? Oh my God!

MW: No, no.

CO: How are they preserving them?

MW: Well, what they did was empty, they have an archive.

CO: Right.

MW: And when the Blitz starts, they emptied archives and they put 'em in places too far for the Germans to reach. And this particular archive was the Guild Hall Library. They had been taken to Wales and preserved.

CO: And put in a coal mine did you say?

MW: Put in a coal mine. But see even the Germans during the time that we were attacking moved a lot of stuff and put them in salt mines in Austria, in the Salzburg area for preservation. These were still tied, if you can imagine a receipt printed about this big and you fill in the man's name, fill in the date, you fill in the size of the family, and he signs it. And tells you how much they gave him. These things had been bound together, and they had been sort of done like this, so that they roll like a newspaper and they had a piece of linen tape tied around in one spot. And it's perfectly clean under the linen tape and the rest just Black as soot.

CO: You think the linen tape is from 1690-something?

MW: Yeah, of course it was because it couldn't be clean underneath it if it had been opened several time it wouldn't be perfectly clean.

CO: Wow.

MW: I think that once they had audited it, they bound 'em up, and put 'em aside for when they might need 'em again.

CO: Did you, did you, when you found it, did you take it to the archivist or to the staff and ask them would they protect that some way? Would they…

MW: Well, they're gonna protect it anyway. What I did last April after I went on a geology expedition we ended up in Salt Lake City, and I took my films that Mark had made for me.

CO: huh.

MW: to the Mormon library and talked their specialist for Europe. And showed him the value of these things, and they are digitizing in various places in Europe now, whether they will run with it, I don't know. I hope they will.

CO: Right.

MW: Because it's much too big for me.

CO: Yeah.

MW: But it has it's one of a kind information that is not available anywhere else.

CO: Right.

MW: on Earth.

CO: Surely, they will digitize them.

MW: They will, but at least I did that in order to try to find somebody permanent and able to do it.

CO: I'm just thinking about the long term. I can't imagine the paper not disintegrating and had they…

MW: Paper? Paper was made out of linen fiber.

CO: So it, and that didn't deteriorate.

MW: and it's felted. It's felted. That paper inside was as near white and the ink was brown. It's iron ink, and the printing was Black ink. It was just, almost pristine.

CO: That's

MW: You can't believe it cause a lot of our stuff, we're not gonna have the stuff once we start putting it on pine paper, which made pines very valuable for paper making, but it won't last like this fiber did.

CO: Yeah. Yeah.

MW: That's what I want to get into again. I had already started reconstructing who came to Virginia, and I've got practically everybody already zeroed in, but I, if I could take time, I could take my list and their files, and pull out at least a ten year history of the people in England before they got to Virginia.

CO: , wow.

MW: That's only when I finish the Loyalist Claims volume 13.

CO: Oh my goodness. Whoa.

MW: Yeah it's something.

CO: Okay.

MW: I've lost the place.

CO: If, you started out wanting to be a medical doctor, but you've had a very rewarding career in genealogy besides those two professions is there anything you

wish you could do, not wish but is there anything else you think you might have enjoyed as much and?

MW: Not really. I think that had I been a doctor, I would have enjoyed it. Gotten a lot of pleasure out of it, but look at what I've enjoyed out of genealogy.

CO: Yeah.

MW: I mean, it's been as varied as anything you can ask.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And I really liked the research is, it keeps me going.

CO: It's thrilling. I know. Yeah.

MW: It keeps me going, yeah.

CO: Yeah.

MW: It lights my fire every morning.

CO: Wow. That's so good to hear.,

MW: There's nothing I could buy that would give me more pleasure.

CO: Well, yeah. I hear ya., when your children, it sounds like this is something all of your children have been involved in.

MW: They have, they've had to.

CO: Yeah. Did, when they were growing up, you didn't have any ah, you mentioned one brief episode with your father with any kind of awareness of differentiating between you and your brothers because you were a girl, was there any of that in your own household with your children? Your

MW: No.

CO: Ah, one, two, three girls, and two boys. No?

MW: .

CO: You didn't encourage the girls…

MW: Well now the boys helped Jim more with the, all the girls could drive the tractors though.

MW: I mean, by that time we were out at Pocaand he was selling farm equipment. And both boys went, he sold Deutz the German air cooled tractor and both boys went before they were ten years old and got certified as Deutz mechanics and they were better than some of the people who were professionals.

CO: To fix the tractors?

MW: Yeah, they think like machines.

CO: Whoa!

MW: Yeah, right. The girls never went to Deutz School, but the boys did.

CO: Spell that Deutz,

MW: D-e-u-t-z

CO: Yeah. Oh my.

MW: They were good at it. I mean this is why Mark knows manufacturing. And Stuart's doing computer work. He's an IT professional down in Florida.

Mark Warren: You talkin' about us?

MW: Yeah, I'm talking about you

CO: Talking about you, yep.

MW: Tell her about going to Deutz School.

MkW: Well, I think I was maybe 13.

MW: Were you 13?

MkW: Thirteen or fourteen maybe.

CO: Yeah.

MW: All right then they weren't under 10.

MkW: Oh no.

CO: Still young

MkW: But

CO: to be learning mechanics of a tractor.

MW: Oh they were

MkW: But Dad had built houses, he had us on the work site from three years of age. And if I wasn't with Dad I was with Mom going around printing businesses used to, saw the printing presses.

CO: It was truly.

MW: And you'd go to the print shows.

MkW: Yep.

CO: So you had sort of two worlds apart joined together by the children who were working in both

MW: hm. hm.

MkW: Yep.

CO: Wow. You got a lot of experience.

MkW: I think I got my certified mechanic at maybe 14, 13 or 14.

CO: And so tell, we're talking now to Mary's younger son…

MkW: I'm the

CO: the oldest son.

MkW: Yes.

CO: Mark, who just walked in, tell us, tell us what you do Mark now.

Mk.W: Oh, I'm a consulting engineer helping management make improvements in their companies.

CO: , okay. All right. These sort of boundary-less fields, there's no real, I mean you do science, you do, you were trained in the hard sciences, and you shifted to the social sciences, and your children are in the mechanical sciences and so

MkW: A lot of mine is social science as well.

CO: Ok. What's the training, what's your school background? Your educational background?

MkW: Let's see. You want to put that in? Let's see quit in the ninth grade, went to the University,

MW: To Georgia College

MkW: to Georgia College cause my sisters were there., I took the SAT when my older sister went to take her SAT on a whim. I didn't even practice for it. Mom just asked, you know, "Do you wanna go with your sister to take the SAT and she'd already arranged it, so I went in and took the SAT and they accepted me into the school there. Because I was pretty frustrated in school., I mean you can imagine at home the exposure with the parents with the schooling they had

CO: Yeah.

MkW: We just didn't fit in to the school at all. You could have all sorts of very good at length conversations about just about any subject with our parents.

CO: Right. Yeah, I can see that.

MkW: So then I think with the CLEP test and exempted most of the first two years, and went like another year and got frustrated with the university as well.

CO: That happens often with very bright people or children from very bright backgrounds they don't have a lot of patience.

MW: Patience? What's that? [she laughs]

CO: Yeah. Right.

MkW: [he laughs]

MW: We don't have

CO: I've always said it was an overrated virtue.

MW: [she laughs] I would agree.

CO: Well, you were saying there really wasn't anything other than what you've done that you would, I mean some people say, "Oh, I'd...

MW: If I only...

CO: In another life I might like to have been an architect or...

MW: Well I was interested in architecture, and I was interested in photography, and I'm interested in music, and, when the university allowed us to take courses for free, I took a year of fabric design courtesy of Ed Lambert who let me in and I had a ball with it. And the next year I took a year of photojournalism from J School.

CO: mm.

MW: This was when I was, had been out of school 50 years and 51 years.

CO: Whoa.

MW: So I was his oldest student and older than he was by a good bit, but it was fun.

MkW: Well what about your touring with your rock group basically?

CO: Oh no.

MW: Oh yeah. Well, it sounds like I'm being musical. Well actually it's geology.

CO: I was gonna say which kind of rock are we talking about.

MW: It's geology. Yeah, David Dallmeyer who's retired from the Geology Department plans these classes at O.L.L.I. the Learning in Retirement Group.

CO: hm.

MW: And you take a class for a week and then you go off on a tour with him to see what you've been studying about, and so last spring to make it sound real good Lisa told my elderly compatriots, that I was touring with a rock group, and she said you should have seen the eyebrows go up. But anyway we went to Arizona and Utah to see their remarkable geology there.

CO: That must have been fun.

MW: It was. Yeah. I came back two weeks ago from a three day trip down to Jekyll Island, St. Simons to see the loss of sand because of the dredging of the canal there at Brunswick.

CO: Now did you go with the group.

MW: with the rock group. Yeah, with this same rock group.

CO: Oh okay. So this sounds like an on-going thing.

MW: It is. He has, he's got another tour coming to Nevada in the end of September and October, but I'm not going on it.

MkW: This is kind of a life-long learning, it's, not only is she focused in her core pieces, but she also has other pieces that she delves into.

MW: And those pictures are the pictures that we took at Santorini, Greece before I thought I was interested in geology. I mean

CO: It was a latent interest.

MW: Well, I took a geology course, Jim and I took one right before we married I guess at Emory in night school, but, it was just curiosity.

CO: hm.

MW: But this has been fun.

CO: Well, that's pretty obvious., well see I have questions about retirement but since you haven't retired they don't apply. [she laughs] Do you plan to retire?

MkW: Well she did already. She sold her business or closed most of your core business.

MW: Yeah.

CO: You mean this?

MW: Yeah.

CO: Who took over?

MW: Nobody.

CO: kay. So but you're really still, you're still working. You...

MW: Well, I don't really feel like it's working.

CO: Oh okay.

MW: And I must say that it never felt like employment. Or a job, it felt like something I was looking forward, it was work, but it was pleasant to work. It wasn't so pleasant when you had the collating and the stapling and the tying out for mailing and that sort of thing.

MkW: We got to do the camera work. Learn how to run printing presses and the assembly of the

CO: But that had to be good experience.

MkW: Yeah.

CO: Whether it was fun or not, it had to be good experience. Did it help you, did you use it later in life in any way?

MkW: Yeah, I got a head start on just about everybody I run into as far as understanding concepts of business.

CO: Well, I expect so.

MW: Well, it was fun.

CO: So you don't consider, do you consider yourself retired? I mean it's such a big, such a marker in life to reach a point where you can retire.

MW: I haven't even considered it.

CO: Okay. All right.

MW: Now the only thing that will retire me is going to be mental disability.

CO: But you're not making any plans for that.

MW: Well, I can't make plans although we have it in the family. My father was the only one of his first cousins who didn't have it.

CO: You mean dementia? Ok. But he did not.

MW: He did not, but my nearest cousin does.

CO: Now did he until 200 2, did he keep his mental clarity?

MW: He did.

CO: Wow! Wow!

MW: Yeah.

CO: So, it's quite possible that you

MW: Well, neither Mother nor her Dad went down with it; my aunt did though.

CO: Hm, well.

MW: So as long as I can tell that I am able to do it, I'll keep going.

CO: Okay.

MW: I mean, why would I want to quit? I got so much I haven't finished.

CO: Yeah, I do though look forward to retirement to travel, mainly because it's something I haven't been able to do and I, that's what I want to do, so I mean, most people that I talk to, when they retire they don't stop by any means they just you know have a different schedule

MW: Yeah.

CO: They keep, you know they keep on

MW: Well the thing is you can do like I did. I thought fabric design would be fun. I enjoyed that year. I would not be a fabric designer, but I enjoyed learning how other people do it.

CO: hm.

MW: And photojournalism, I knew how to take pictures before I took it, and I took pictures after I've taken it, and I learned how to run Photoshop. But I enjoyed the class, just something different.

CO: Right, right.

MW: The same thing with the geology. I'm not looking forward to going into geology. I just wanted to know a little more about it.

CO: Right, but the curiosity keeps your mind going.

MW: The curiosity keeps

CO: active.

MW: Oh yes. It's marvelous.

CO: Yeah, yeah. Like in

MW: I really seriously do not, I can't think of any reason to look forward to retirement.

CO: Yeah. Well,.

MW: That doesn't help you. It doesn't answer your question

CO: No that's fine. No it does too. That is an answer to the question, that's.

MW: Because when I retire, it's going to be because of disability.

CO: Okay. But you are you pretty much on your own schedule now, so you don't. You set your own times that you...

MW: You have to.

CO: Are you working on any kind of deadlines now?

MW: No.

CO: No.

MW: Yes and no. I mean life is determinate and I can't wait till forever to finish something.

CO: Right. Right.

MW: And I really have tried to focus more in the last several years because, I thought when I started this British series at most it would take two or possibly three books, and nine have been published already and I've got four more.

CO: Who's publishing them?

MW: R.J. Taylor Foundation. And, I've got one waiting for the grant. I got another one George Marshall said, he'll read and proofread for me. And I've got two more, one that's nearly through, and the major one is going to be the last one, which is all the Loyalist claims of which there are thousands of pages. And this is why we went to England and took photographs of.

CO: It's strange to have a field day with that.

MW: Well sure. Think of the work that I'm saving now.

CO: Right. Yeah.

MW: And it is not like Georgia history has been taught. It is not like that at all.

CO: Tell me a little bit about that, tell me what how it differs from what has been taught.

MW: It differs from what we have been taught. Visualize this: Here are a group, Georgia does not have 50,000 people in it. Maybe twenty-five are white and twenty-five are Black so in effect 25,000. Say a hundred people decide that they want to revolt and the New England colonies are already in open rebellion. Georgia's not yet. South Carolina's pretty hot, but Georgia's cool.

CO: And we're talking about 17

MW: We're talking about 1775.

CO: Right. Okay.

MW: And in late 1775 these roughly maybe not even a 100 people, but certainly not the majority, have succeeded in securing the control of the judiciary and the militia in Georgia, and the governor is being confined to house arrest. But he's still here. That's all. He can't get a legislature going, the rebels now have gotten enough of their friends elected to form a legislature.

CO: What are they doing for the militia? What are they doing for...

MW: Well they just don't want the British to hold it. They're weeding out all the local men, see the militia every man 21 and over, up to 60 had to serve in the local militia.

CO: hm.

MW: And so they don't want the British to continue to have the control of the militia. They want the militia control themselves. Well, they finally run the governor out, and the civil government goes in March of 1776, and here the rebels then take over. They immediately form another assembly and in this assembly in every, they have renamed the parishes as counties, and in every county they have appointed anywhere from 11 to 13 men to serve as the Council of Safety. And the Council of Safety is given the power to call any man 21 and upward to appear before them and bring two friends who are known to be Friends of Liberty, as in Congress, and if they can't get two friends to come, they were to be banished within 40 days, and half of their property confiscated. All right now, think of how many debts got paid there.

CO: So, but how would you explain to a student how a 100 people in a colony with 25,000 white people

MW: They just need to

CO: was able to

MW: They need to be aware that it only takes a few to start a bonfire and this is what happened. And the rebels are using the confiscated goods of the men they accused of being Loyalist to back their money. They even printed on the money itself, that it's backed up by the confiscated estates.

CO: So how much of this are you writing up, and how much are you just providing the documents?

MW: I am writing the background, but I'm giving them actual documents.

CO: So it's gonna be a, is it something close to

MW: I'm editing the documents though.

CO: So it's a document reader? Is that what you would call it?

MW: No.

CO: No?

MW: I don't know how to explain it. I am selecting what I give you in it to tell you the most about the life of the man who is being confiscated. What he's saying about what happened to him, and who did it and when, and what he lost.

CO: But who's going to buy this? Will it be for students? Will students be able to buy it for students?

MW: It will probably be reference work.

CO: kay, and who will publish it?

MW: Taylor Foundation.

CO: Okay. That's a British?

MW: No, that, R.J. Taylor, Jr. left two million dollars to be jointly managed by the Georgia Genealogical Society and the Georgia Archives.

CO: Okay.

MW: And Trust Company is a trustee, so they have one and they have six of another, the trustee. And they then use the, I presume the earnings certainly not the corpus, to publish genealogy material.

CO: Yeah. How, how does this? What does this do for your understanding of the state, of the colonial period in the state?

MW: Well, I was quiet, thought I knew it real well and it pretty well turns it on the head.

CO: hm. So how....

MW: What I will hope, and this is only a hope, maybe a vain hope, but that people from here once it gets into print; henceforth, will know it was not an easy revolution and that there were sufferers who did nothing to deserve the suffering.

CO: And so how, what do you, how, okay. There's this, almost random number that historians I don't know for how many years, but as long as, certainly as long as I've been studying history, claim that a third of the colonists were Patriots, a third were Loyalists, and a third didn't care.

MW: A third would like to be forgotten. A lot of 'em would like to be forgotten.

CO: What do you say about that formula?

MW: I think that they're overestimating the number of Loyalists there were, and they're certainly overestimating the number of rebels. The rebels were few and far between.

CO: So you think most people didn't care?

MW: Most people were wanted to be left alone and go about their business because in Georgia particularly, so many of 'em were on the frontier.

CO: Right.

MW: And they were just beginning to make headway.

CO: So you think Georgia was less a

MW: It was very much less and South Carolina got so mad at 'em, one time they refused to allow to import anything from Georgia, accusing Georgia of being sympathetic to the British. For instance, in a, in Cornwallis papers at Kew, England, I found a letter written for Elijah Clarke to General Cornwallis, spelled C-o-r-n-W-a-l-l-a-c-e I think, suggesting, that it's just the soldiers that are at war, and not the people, and that if you leave the people alone, and we leave the people alone, we can fight it out among ourselves. Well, there's so many misspellings and the grammar is terrible and I suspect that Cornwallis thought it was a joke, but the point is very well taken by Clarke, they were taking turns burning each other out.

CO: And when was this? You're still talking about '75?

MW: No, I'm talking about... this would be 1781. '80 or '81 when Cornwallis came was first in South Carolina.

CO: Okay. All right.

MW: But anyways there's a lot, there's a lot in these papers that tell it very differently from the way we tell it in school.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And I think it's fair for the people who lost everything to have their side exposed, and that's why I like the claims, to be able to finish those.

CO: Yeah. How long do you think it will take for that to quote "trickle down" into the text books?

MW: Who knows.

CO: Yeah.

MW: Look, it's just missionary work.

CO: Yeah.

MkW: It's an inconvenient truth to a large degree.

CO: Yeah. Much of our history's an inconvenient truth, and most of us don't know it. We don't know, we know a very sanitized view I think.

MW: Especially some things.

CO: Yeah.

MW: Very sanitary.

CO: Yeah, yeah.

MW: But I don't know. I'm gonna do it because it needs to be done.

CO: I can see why you would be so passionate about that.

MW: I had one Loyalist, but I had everybody else who wasn't. But that one Loyalist went to Bermuda and then came back to North Carolina.

CO: You're talking about in your family?

MW: Oh yeah.

CO: Yeah.

MW: Yeah, but I mean everybody else wasn't. But still, and I have none of 'em in Georgia. So I can't say that I'm biased in either case because I'm not talking about my family.

CO: Yeah.

MW: But somebody suffered and the suffering needs to be known.

CO: Yeah. Well I agree. I so whole heartily endorse that. Well, I don't, you don't seem to want to shift to marriage and Motherhood and child-raising, is that, you just don't want to talk about that?

MW: No, I don't have any problem with it.

CO: Okay.

MW: I get off on tangents all the time.

CO: Well, you can get off on tangents anytime.

MW: Sorry about that.

CO: Anytime you feel like it. No, tangents is what this is all about, so but by the time we get to the subject of history, you will have covered a good bit of it, so some of it.

MW: Whoever decollates this is gonna have trouble.

CO: Well that's true with all of 'em.

MW: I'm sorry.

CO: Trust me. Well, I don't know if you want Mark to participate or sit in on this part of courting and dating and, that sort of thing. I mean it's okay with me, but

MW: It doesn't bother.

CO: But can you talk about that.

MW: Yeah.

CO: Well you met your husband when you were at...

MW: I met my husband when I was at Emory,

CO: At Emory.

MW: Yeah.

CO: Working.

MW: hm.

CO: So what was your courtship and dating like up to that time?

MW: Well, I had been nominally engaged to a boy from M.I.T. who was up at Oak Ridge and he went back to Boston. I went up and met his family and decided that wasn't the thing to do.

CO: Had he met your family?

[**BREAK BETWEEN TAPES**]

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CO: But you mean to go your separate ways?

MW: Oh yeah. Yeah. I think it was better for both of us.

CO: So how many other serious relationships did you have?

MW: None.

CO: None.

MW: No, I had been dating, but nothing I was serious of.

CO: Okay. So would you call your husband your first real love?

MW: Well, not necessarily, because if things had been different, I would have married and gone to Boston, but thing weren't and worked just as well.

CO: Okay.

MW: But we met in late May and got engaged in August and married in November.

CO: And you had not known him before that?

MW: No! Un.

CO: And where was he from?

MW: He was from Tignall, Georgia

CO: Tignall, okay.

MW: Wilkes County.

CO: Yeah, okay, and this was in '53?

MW: Yeah, in '53. Mother's Mother had died the week before I was to go on a house party with Olive Ann Burns who wrote for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* Magazine Section and invited me to go with her, there was a business and professional women's group and she had a first cousin who was in town, and he needed a date. And I said, "Fine. I'll be glad to go." So we went up to Lakemont with maybe 30 other couples.

CO: Good heavens.

MW: For a house party in multiple houses, and I met, we rode up with Jim and with his date who was another girl who was in the business and professional women's club and he and she broke up and he and I got started and we got together and married. It

was within three days I saw him every night for supper, and so that was the end of that. He was the store planner for Rich's at the time.

CO: Do you recall that with a degree of nostalgia? Was it a good time?

MW: Oh sure it was a good time!

CO: Yeah. Yeah.

MW: It was a good time for both of us.

CO: Okay. Did you have romantic notions about courting and

MW: Oh good gosh no!

CO: No?

MW: I wasn't. I was busier with what I was doing.

CO: Yeah.

MW: See I was busy, I wasn't reading pulp novels or watching romantic movies.

CO: Yeah.

MW: I had things I wanted to do and things...

CO: You all married in then you started having children. Did you have an idea of how many kids you wanted to have?

MW: Well, we laughed about that "Cheaper by the Dozen," but we didn't have any dozen. We wanted to have a good sized family. He was from a family his Mother had lost one and there were just two of them.

CO: So he wanted lots of children.

MW: We wanted more than one certainly.

CO: Yeah, yeah.

MW: Oh yeah.

CO: Okay.

MW: We both did because we didn't think a one child family was desirable in any family.

CO: Okay, when you, well you didn't work outside the home after you started having babies, right? You worked?

MW: Yes, I did. I worked part time at the V.A. hospital.

CO: Okay. Part time so 20 hours a week?

MW: , two days a week, 16 Hours.

CO: Okay. And what, who kept the kids?

MW: He did. He was working at home, you know had his planning there at the house.

CO: Okay. All right. So you didn't have to have?

MW: I didn't have to have extra help, no.

CO: Okay. All right., what was your relationship like with your kids? Both of you, you and your husband? What was it?

MW: Well I think we got along fine.

CO: Okay. It seems like it.

MW: Jim's father had taken him. His father had general merchandise wholesale businesses, small stores in Elbert and Hart and Wilkes County, and Jim was takenaround with his father all summer going for business. So he was raised with business, and so as Mark told you he went out with Jim on the jobs from childhood.

CO: So that's

MW: And none of the girls did, but the boys did, so in effect there was a gender gap.

CO: Okay. Did the girls express an interest in it? In doing that?

MW: No, not especially.

CO: No. Have your girls, do all three of them have careers?

MW: Yes. Eve is, does the graphics and the presentations for food sciences at the university, and Amy's the office manager for a company that sells chemicals that preserves your meat, all over Canada and the U.S., and Lisa was in the navy 14 years and she's come back and taken a degree in interior design, and married, and she's about to move over to Utah.

CO: Ah wow.

MW: to be with her husband.

CO: Hm. Do you have grandchildren?

MW: Nine.

CO: Nine grandchildren. Any great grandchildren?

MW: Yes, 6.

CO: Nine grandchildren okay., do you miss the active role of Mothering?

MW: Well all my Mothering was done while we were working.

CO: Yeah. Okay. So you don't

MW: I mean, I can say that Mothering was what I did. We were cohesive and were always together and every child felt like they belonged. None of them were isolated.

CO: hm. So it sounds like for you, nurturing as in Mothering was just something you did, you didn't think about it, it just came.

MW: Well, I didn't think about it and I'm not sure it even came., I don't know. I can't answer that.

CO: Okay. That's okay., so you're not nostalgic or sentimental about Mothering? It sounds like it.

MW: Not at all.

CO: Okay. All right.

MW: I think they got a remarkable childhood anyway they look at it.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And they do too.

CO: Yeah, sounds like it., do you think it's harder or easier to be a Mother today than it was when you were bringing your children up?

MW: I can't answer that either.

CO: Okay.

MW: I think the children have it harder, there are more temptations and fewer restrictions than there were when we came up. I didn't even think about smoking, much less drinking or drugs.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And look at what the kids today are facing.

CO: Yeah, yeah.

MW: And I think it's not the Mothering, but the children are facing the problems. I really can't say other than that.

CO: That's okay. That's good enough. Well, we'll shift to money? Are you better off financially than your parents were?

MW: No.

CO: No. What about than your siblings?

MW: mmm, no. Not necessarily.

CO: Okay. Did your family have a sense of where they were economically? Like did they, do you think of yourself as middle class, and your family, and your parents as middle class?

MW: Oh yeah. They were never hard scrabble. They all came from educated backgrounds. They all earned a living and earned it honestly, but I mean we never considered ourselves as being high class or, it's always been a working family.

CO: Okay.

MW: in history all the way back to when they came down here.

CO: But culturally you're

MW: Culturally we're among the fortunate. Yeah, and we had it, all of us had had education.

CO: Yeah. Okay., so what role do you think money's played in shaping your life? Your life and who you are?

MW: I have not had to wonder where the next meal was coming from ever.

CO: Or debt or any.

MW: No.

CO: Okay.

MW: But then I don't live a lavish lifestyle ever anyway, and as to me given the choice of money or what I was doing, I was do what I was doing and always have.

CO: Yeah. So your choices have always been about what you loved?

MW: And what I was good at. I mean if I could've made twice as much money and hated the job, I'd never have taken it.

CO: Yeah. Yeah.

MW: It was not a motivator. I've had enough

CO: That you've been able to do that.

MW: Enough has been fine.

CO: Okay. What would you do if you won the lottery?

MW: Nothing.

CO: The big lottery.

MW: No, I have a sufficiency. I can live on what I've got and it is enough. It frees me so that I can produce these books at my expense, so that other people who haven't got the resources to produce 'em can have the books.

CO: Yeah.

MW: It's strictly missionary work. If I joined the country club and played golf, I would have nothing to show for it.

CO: Right. Right. Have you always called it missionary work?

MW: Yeah, because I think it is missionary work. I never know who is going to get any good at all out of it.

CO: Right.

MW: And that's missionary work. You don't know whether you save anybody.

CO: Absolutely. Absolutely, but I just love the fact that you can look at it like that, and not lose a minute's sleep over it. You just, that's just what it is and you just go on.

MW: Well, back to the old saying that "Those to whom much is given, much is expected."

CO: Yeah, but some people need to know that what they're doing…

MW: matters.

CO: matters.

MW: Well, I got that fixed when I did the Puzzlers, because I got an infinite amount of praise. There's never a day that I didn't get somebody, "Oh, how much you've helped me." And I've met 'em. Met some of them anyway, and I got enough strokes to last the rest of the life time.

CO: That's wonderful.

MW: And had it been condemnation, I probably wouldn't be doing what I'm doing.

CO: Yeah. That's very few people who can say that about their work.

MW: I know, I know. I had a friend who had a successful dress business here and she said, "You know, it sure would be nice to be free to do what you like to do." And of course they made a great deal more money.

CO: But probably not as satisfactory.

MW: I mean… In my book, it isn't. But I'm not going to say it's not. They're happy doing it, that's their job.

CO: Yeah, yeah.

MW: But I've enjoyed it and it's been a wonderful experience.

CO: Yeah. Yeah.

MW: And if I won the lottery, so what could I do that would be more fun. I've got enough to live on.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And I can't be any smarter with money.

CO: Yeah. Just give it to your children, give it to charity, give it to…

MW: Yeah. You'd have to, you'd find that you had all kinds of need folks coming out of the wood work.

CO: I'm sure.

MW: So I think it's better the way it is.

CO: Yeah.

MW: I haven't bought the first lottery ticket, and don't plan to.

CO: I don't know how, I mean.

MW: Everybody else, the people that buy them are the ones that shouldn't be spending that money.

CO: Yeah. Well,. Anybody who's lived 82 years has experienced lost, and I know recently your, well… if you consider this to private that's fine, but you made it clear that you're divorced and that was in 94.

MW: hm.

CO: Had you all lived separately before that or it just come up.

MW: No, we had lived separately two years.

CO: How has it been to live separately?

MW: Like a genie out of the bottle.

CO: Okay. So

MW: Because I continued to write the newsletter and did the same thing, I just moved from one place to another and I didn't have the negative pressure that I had at home.

CO: Okay. All right.

MW: I mean I've been a lot better ever since.

CO: You've been better?

MW: Yeah.

CO: You think your kids who were not at home at the time, but

MW: Oh, yeah. It was a plus five ways.

CO: Okay. All right. Did the alienation come all at once or had you lived with years of being alienated from your ex-husband?

MW: Well, it wasn't, it was progressive.

CO: Okay. Starting early in the marriage?

MW: I don't know.

CO: Okay. All right. Well can you talk about loss, I mean, the first loss would be through death. What's been the most difficult loss you've experienced?

MW: Oh the most difficult lost has been deaths of family and friends. Mark and I were on the Queen Mary headed for research in England, when I had a telephone call recorded and Lisa emailed that this Swiss-German lady, whom I had lived with when I went to language school in 1993 at Neuchatel had died. And two years before she had ovarian cancer, she and her husband had gone with Mark and me on a Mediterranean cruise during her sabbatical between one course of chemotherapy and another on the *Costa Concordia* I might add. The ship that just went down.

CO: Oh my goodness.

MW: But we enjoyed them and Marianne died when we went to sea.

CO: So that's been how many years?

MW: That's just last November.

CO: Oh my goodness.

MW: I stayed with them in ’93. I stayed with them in ’93 and they came over and spent six weeks with me in ’94 and four weeks with me in ’95. And we’ve traveled in Europe together almost every year since then.

CO: Oh my goodness. That’s a really close friend.

MW: They are good friends. They are just delightful people

CO: And so that,

MW: That’s my most recent loss, but that’s a loss.

CO: Okay.

MW: Of course losing my parents, and losing Aunt Birdie, and having to break up two houses, two years apart.

CO: Yeah. Right.

MW: is stressful and now the children are going through breaking up Jim’s house and the property, and Mark particularly is having the main stress with it.

CO: Okay. Besides loss through death have there been other losses that have marked your life? Illness, divorce, separation, losing a friend not through death but some other way, moving.

MW: No, not really. I have been blessed. I have made friends, a good many people that I consider good friends, and the divorce freed me. It was not a negative.

CO: Well, I’m sure it was difficult in some ways, but it was more liberating.

MW: It was difficult for all of us, but it was more liberating than it was anything else.

CO: Okay. All right. Can you talk about aging? I mean you are very young, eighty-82, but 82 is…

MW: I considered myself one of those who was never going to age until I began problems with my closest blood, cousins who are my age and almost my age. Both girls, both close friends. And they’re going through serious health problems, and that really brought me up short. I had been taking my time working on these books. Like the bear, there was always another mountain I wanted to cross before I started finishing one up. So I had four going at once. And that, seeing that happening to them last year, and Maryann’s passing made me realize that you really don’t have an unlimited amount of time left. And so I came back and rethought it and said well I’m gonna finish number 10 before I lift a finger on anything else. I’m gonna finish number 11 before I lift a finger on anything else. I’m gonna finish 12 before I even tackle this huge one, the Loyalist Claims, and so I have finished two. And I’m working on the third and I’ll probably have it finished before summer.

CO: Oh my. Whoa.

MW: But it may take me a year or two more, even with the two thousand plus images I have from the Loyalist claims to complete this.

CO: But you're driven to do that.

MW: Oh, I'm going to finish. See if I finish, if I had gone on and worked on a little on each one of 'em, I'd never had finished any of 'em.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And the stuff would be lost. It would wasted time, wasted effort and that's a sin.

CO: Yeah. Do you think Mark could pick it up since he's been with you.

MW: Well, Mark has his own life and his own things. Yeah, he knows what's going on, Eve and Amy could finish it. If worse comes to worse, both of them are good genealogists and capable.

CO: Wow. That must feel good.

MW: It does and if I have to give up the *Bondurant Association Newsletter*, either one of them could write it.

CO: Okay. How old do you feel, not in your body, but in your heart and mind, how old do you feel today?

MW: Oh gosh maybe 40.

CO: Okay.

MW: Maybe a little earlier than that, except I realize I have grandchildren who have children. I mean age hasn't, to me, hasn't a face.

CO: Oh, that's one thing I continue to learn doing this project, that's what it is. That it's, people don't feel their age. You know, their bodies might slow down

MW: hm.

CO: But here and in here, they're25, 35, you know it's

MW: Yeah.

CO: That's interesting to me that it's.

MW: Well, as long as you have your mental faculties, you don't

CO: Right.

MW: And I haven't had a severe illness, I had shingles two years ago and Mark looked after me through it, I didn't have a severe case. We caught it before it broke out and except for making me feel weak I was all right.

CO: Is there an age at, let's just say you know miraculously could live out endlessly at a certain age, what age would that be?

MW: I don't even consider that as a question. I don't even think about it.

CO: So there's not an age.

MW: I have a cousin who lived to be a 104, but not her quality of life. Her father was the mayor of Atlanta when it was surrendered to Sherman. Cousin Emma Jones didn't live the life that I'd like to.

CO: No, what I meant was an age where you felt good and you could stay and feel that way, that vigorous and alive, that

MW: I just don't see age like that.

CO: So you feel fine now?

MW: Yeah, I'm fine. I'm lucky. I am very lucky.

CO: So you still have energy to do what you want to do?

MW: Right. And I still, I think, have the faculties, the eyesight, and the mind to work with. Yeah. I've got my hearing. Still play the piano. I still play the harp.

CO: Wow.

MW: And I can still paint poorly. And you know, just do what ever I want to do so far.

CO: So you don't feel like age has really slowed you down?

MW: No. Yeah, it's taken a lot of energy, and on these geo-expeditions I'm the last one. And I say, "Oh, one more step!"

CO: Yeah.

MW: But I recognize that I'm not, I would have done better 20 years ago, but they didn't offer it then.

CO: Yeah. Okay., Can you talk about religion?

MW: Yeah.

CO: Something you can

MW: Yeah.

CO: , I got this question from NPR a few months ago, on their website they had a, they asked people to write in about what was the core value they had driven their lives? We have many values, we all do, but can you think of one that has driven you most of your life, the most prominent one.

MW: Yeah, and it isn't religion. It's this thing that Dad said about, "To those to whom much is given, much is expected." That just 'cause you got a lot, you're not supposed to use it all for yourself.

CO: Yeah. Okay,

MW: And I think that's, that's been my driving, and as I say missionary work, I don't know who will use it.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And it's all right.

CO: Right. Okay.

MW: I don't feel like, I don't need the adulation.

CO: Yeah, yeah. 'cause you really got a lot of that.

MW: I got a great deal of that.

CO: a great deal through.

MW: And I still got letters that people wrote me then, that warm your heart, if you ever wanna read 'em.

CO: Yeah, yeah..

MW: And I'm still helping people, right now I'm helping a young man who's teaching at Kennesaw college work on his dissertation on Gov. Wright, and Ken Thomas and I are feeding this young man everything he'd ever want to know and more than his committee will ever know, on the governor. And he's going to write, we hope, a biography on the last colonial governor, which

CO: Wow.

MW: would be welcomed because there's never been one.

CO: Right. Right. Yeah.

MW: And so, that's missionary work, but so what?

CO: Right, well.

MW: He's doing something that Ken and I, if we live to be a 150 might do it, but by that time we would probably find something else we'd do and not that.

CO: Yeah. Right.

MW: So better let Wright get it by somebody who's younger.

CO: Yeah, is it a young traditional age student?

MW: , Greg is in his early 30s, has two children, is married. And right now he is doing the final writing on the dissertation.

CO: Wow. That's wonderful.

MW: But we've been working with him for three years on this.

CO: It's time to…

MW: make it good. Yeah.

CO: Yeah.

MW: It'll be good.

CO: That's great., was religion important in your family when you were growing up?

MW: Oh, we opened the Methodist Church doors and shut 'em. Grandmother, Dad's Mother, was there. His father was the Sunday School Superintendent until he died

suddenly of a heart attack. And as I say, we sang, and I sang in the choir with Dad all my time. Every time I was there, but doing the work that I've done in history has made me feel that there's an awful lot of badness that's come out of religion and power structure, power struggles.

CO: Sure.

MW: And it makes me leery of it.

CO: Okay. Well okay.

MW: Not the philosophy.

CO: That's what I would like for you to do is tell me what your beliefs, and you don't have to call them religious you can call them whatever you want to, but your beliefs that,mm, you might not call it religious, "To whom much is given, much is expected", but some people would consider that a ah… a you know a Biblical principle.

MW: Well it may be a Biblical principle. It probably isn't couched in King James version terms, but I do think that if you have been among the fortunate few, you deserve to share some of it with someone else.

CO: Yeah, right.

MW: Because there are those who would share who don't have the capacity.

CO: Yeah. Okay.

MW: And I mean, whether that's religion or philosophy, either one, you can take your choice.

CO: Well you can call it philosophy if you…

MW: It doesn't matter.

CO: Yeah. So what are your beliefs that govern your, the way you live your life? That's a cardinal one clearly.

MW: Well, I think the other one is "Do no harm." Or try not to do harm in spite of yourself, but at least try not to. And try to give back to the people who need it.

CO: Okay. All right.

MW: I mean any church'll agree with you.

CO: Yeah. So

MW: I guess.

CO: Has religion been a big part of your own home with your nuclear family?

MW: No.

CO: No.

MW: No. Absolutely. Jim left the Baptist Church when he went into the Army and hadn't been back.

CO: Okay. So you when I ask about religion you put Methodist down, but that's because is that what your family of origin was.

MW: Well, I was, I have been predominantly a Methodist, and even after we married, we were living here in Athens, the children went to Methodist Church, and some of 'em have joined other churches. Stuart joined the Mormons. Lisa joined the Church of God, Eve and Amy joined the Baptist Church Congregations. Mark didn't join any so. I mean it's been all right, whatever they did. It's their choice.

CO: But you haven't felt the need to go back to the Methodist Church.

MW: No.

CO: Okay. All right. So you don't, if I asked you what has been the most profound spiritual moment in your life, would that be meaningless to you?

MW: Yes.

CO: Okay. So you haven't experienced something that you feel like you would consider a miracle in your life?

MW: No.

CO: No. Okay. If you get drained emotionally or, what do you do to restore yourself? What restores you to good?

MW: Get out and dig in the dirt.

CO: Okay.

MW: Get out in the sunshine, listen to the birds sing. Get your hands dirty and do something useful.

CO: Okay. All right.,

MW: The green cathedral.

CO: That's right. Absolutely., do you believe in an afterlife?

MW: Oh sure.

CO: You do?

MW: Oh sure. I may be a worm and not be surprised when I come back.

CO: [she chuckles]

MW: But, no I believe in it certainly.

CO: So,.

MW: It's not that I don't believe in God, I just don't believe in the organized religions. I've seen the damage they've done.

CO: Yes, right.

MW: I've spent years unfortunately seeing the damage they did. And it makes it very hard to see anything but.

CO: I think most people who study history have a good you know, sense of that.

MW: I'm afraid they do.

CO: The damage that has been done. Well, okay so, let's just change the word instead of saying what are your religious beliefs, what are your beliefs about God? You believe in a God.

MW: Oh sure I do. I just don't think he's sitting there, I don't think any group is predestined to be saved versus another one. And I'm sure that Dad is sitting next to a Hindu and a Buddhist, and a who knows what else. I don't think the organized religion is anything but a human invention. I have no doubt that there will be varying colors and varying ethnicities.

CO: In an afterlife?

MW: In an afterlife, yeah. What it is, I don't know.

CO: You said something a minute ago that made me think you might have some belief in reincarnation, does that?

MW: No, as I say if I am reincarnated as a worm or whatever, I'm going to be surprised.

CO: Oh, I see. Okay.

MW: I don't expect to be.

CO: Oh okay. Okay.

MW: I'll be a fishing worm. A big fat one if I do.

CO: So what do you think an afterlife will be like if there is one?

MW: I really don't worry much about it.

CO: You don't think about it?

MW: No, but if a genealogist, heaven is going to be heaven because for once we can ask the people we've been hunting for what you did, where did you die?

CO: [she chuckles]

MW: I mean you can't imagine the questions I've got.

CO: Oh I bet.

MW: I told Dad before he died that you be sure to send me back this piece of information and that piece and he said that, "I sure will." I haven't heard yet. But for a genealogist heaven is heaven.

CO: Yeah, yeah.

MW: I mean just being able to meet some of these people is going to be fun.

CO: Right. It will be a party for you.

MW: It will be, you don't realize what a party it will be all these questions answered that I've got filed away waiting.

CO: I was gonna say, have you got those written down somewhere or all up here?

MW: I got a lot of 'em written down. I have to write 'em down.

CO: Yeah, right,

MW: I've got a lot to remember.

CO: Well, okay. I know that your work gives you fulfillment and satisfaction and gratification. Is it, what else gives you, what gives you the greatest joy in life?

MW: Oh the work that I'm doing, but I enjoy playing the piano. I enjoy playing music. I have sung with the choral society. I enjoyed learning how to play the harp. I really was simulated on these geology trips.

CO: You have a wide range of interests.

MW: Well, I don't know what I'm not interested in.

CO: Yeah. Okay., do you feel at peace?

MW: Sure.

CO: Okay. How do you achieve this?

MW: I don't know. I think being busy. Working at something that you like.

CO: Yeah.

MW: The thing that you want to get out of bed for every morning.

CO: Yeah..And for you that's just work.

MW: That's just work.

CO: Yeah.

MW: Oh, absolutely.

CO: I hear ya., are you certain of anything?

MW: Yeah, that there's more work to do.

CO: [she laughs]

MW: and that there'll be some left when I'm gone. And of that I am certain.

CO: Most people have to stop and think about that.

MW: Oh gosh no. No, not with what's going on.

CO: , you really got started on this., then I started talking, so we'll go back to that.

MW: All right.

CO: This section is called regional identity, and I guess maybe some people have a really hard time with, because they just don't understand what I'm getting at, and maybe, you know how when you study something under a microscope how you lose …

MW: peripheral vision.

CO: You do. So I, that's my, that's where I come from. I'm just too it's too academic for me I guess to be able to even frame it in questions to make it sensible to people I talk to, but it's really a lot of it's about racial identity, and how especially in the South that's not say for a moment that racism is anyway limited to the South. Everybody knows better than that. But there is something in the particular race relations

MW: and over how they have changed, thank goodness.

CO: Right, right. But one thing that historians are interested in is how we come to know, I told you the young eight year old who went to live with the white family at eight already had imbibed those expectations, "racial etiquette" one historian calls it, what was expected of her.

MW: But it's like a girl told you, we talked about racial etiquette.

[the tape distorts and is stopped at 00: 23: 47 battery died]

CO: Right. We're back on, You, you told me that what you had been telling, what you had told your,

MW: Yeah.

CO: Your friends about the, I think we may have that on there.

MW: Well

CO: You didn't, what we didn't get on here was your story about Jimmy Wade.

MW: Okay. I'd just started it.

CO: And your parents.

MW: Well, we're desegregated. We were at a restaurant. Mother and Dad, and Jim and I, are eating supper somewhere, and Jimmy Wade and his wife come in. They would come over and speak, but they would no more ask if they could sit with us than the man in the moon.

CO: hm.

MW: And yet, when Jim and I are there alone eating, and Jimmy Wade and his wife come over and speak to us, and we invite them to sit down and eat with us, they will do it.

CO:

MW: Or would do that, both of 'em are dead now. Only because they didn't, they never pushed, only because we asked. They waited for the acknowledgement and the invitation. They knew they weren't gonna get the invitation from Mother and Dad. Although Mother and Dad went to his funeral. There's a barrier.

CO: Right. Would you say that your parents were sort of what we would identify as paternalistic in race relations?

MW: Well, yes, but they were good friends and they would do things for someone who needed it.

CO: hm.

MW: I mean our cook, Beatrice, when she worked three years for us, and she had a stroke. And she was out for quite a while and Mother and Dad paid her while she was out and hired her back when she was able to come back to work and Beatrice took care of them maybe 28 years. And we're lookin' after Beatrice now.

CO: Okay..

MW: But it is paternalistic.

CO: Yeah, okay. You clearly have a different racial perception, a different perception of race, the meaning of race than your parents did. Do you recall, we started off talking about this, but I don't think I had the recorder on at the time or maybe I did. The time in your life when you realized, did I ask you this already? That

MW: That we were different?

CO: That, right. But not only, not only that we're different because even a small child might recognize that, like they recognize the difference in sex, but that it means something. That it means that if you're white, there's a different expectation and if you're Black, you know there's

MW: Well, yes. Of course you knew that, and they knew it as well, but again I said this before. I loved of Jenny, Grandmother Bondurant's Black cook, more than I loved my Mother. At the time Jenny died when I was seven. Jenny was the Mother to me that my Mother, who was not there, was not. My Mother was working, but Jenny. And anybody that asks me if I love a Black. Yes, I loved a Black! And I'm not a bit ashamed to say so.

CO: Yeah, yeah. Well certainly not today, but would you have felt at liberty to say that…

MW: Oh, I said it then!

CO: 1965?

MW: Oh yeah. Right. Anybody asked and I'm sure that this can be said for a lot of people. I ran into a 1920s news story written by some *Atlanta Journal* columnist about a post-Civil War school in Covington and it had been founded and run as an orphanage and school after the Civil War by a Black girl who happened to be the quote "playmate" of my great Grandmother, who was a judge's daughter. And this Black girl had been taught to read and write and to count and add and subtract and she was teaching immediately after the Civil War at a time when Blacks were previously not been supposed to be taught to read and write.

CO: But she was teaching at a Black school?

MW: She had a Black orphanage and school.

CO: Wow.

MW: On her own in the Covington area where great Grandmother came from and Aunt Sarah Moss had saved that clipping and had it and in it says that she was the childhood nurse as in playmate of Elizabeth Luckie, whose father was the judge of the Superior Court for Covington.

CO: And they called her playmate?

MW: Yeah, but we all had playmates.

CO: Right. Right.

MW: We had nurses.

CO: Yes, but the playmates when they grew up, they

MW: They grew apart. Yeah, and Jimmy Carter in his reminisces, mentions that there was he had Black boys that he played with and as he turned into an adolescent there became a barrier between 'em. There was just an unspoken barrier

CO: Right. Right.

MW: And it was like that.

CO: Yeah. Yeah. Well, and you had begun to explain or to, you know say how you would explain that to someone who had no sense of what the history of the country was as a, I mean for you it requires a history lesson.

MW: Oh sure it does.

CO: to… how would you explain what it means to be a Southerner if you met a… Let's just say you and a delegation of people from all over the country went abroad and somebody said something about how you talk different.

MW: We do.

CO: Yeah. Right. What would you, how would explain what it means to be a Southerner to somebody?

MW: Well, Southerners come in various forms.

CO: Right.

MW: A Southerner from Texas talks very different from the way we do.

CO: Absolutely.

MW: And I went to school in the Charleston area and they speak very differently, the same thing in Savannah. So we really don't even have an identical dialect.

CO: Right of course.

MW: But we do have a history of having a predominant culture of Black slavery. And we have, we were agrarian, and we developed a clannish system, and family was very important. More so than up east or New England, I don't know. I've never lived there.

CO: But how would you explain how that continues to this day to shape identity and to…

MW: I think that it's dying. I'm glad to say, that I feel that it is dying away. I think that family is still real important, but I think, that a person's color should not affect their ability to be somebody and something. A brain is a terrible thing to waste.

CO: Right.

MW: Whatever color, it's housed in.

CO: Okay. All right.

MW: I mean if you saw Jesus, Jesus wouldn't be pure white.

CO: Right.

MW: I mean here we are worshipping a Jew, and you wouldn't have anything to do with Jews at a certain time, and yet you say mass to a Jew and you bless a Jewish Mother. How can you make that sit right.

CO: Well not everybody worships a Jewish Christ. Recently I interviewed a Black woman who is a preacher.

MW: Yeah.

CO: And hanging in the guest room of her home was a painting of a Black Jesus, and that Black Jesus had a noose around his neck.

MW: Well.

CO: And I asked her, she had no idea, but there are some historians who claim that Blacks in the New South had a far greater appreciation for the crucified Jesus because they saw lynching as a form of crucifixion. So they had this, you know.

MW: Yeah, and yet I heard the story from my Dad of a young Black man who had been taken out in Athens and hung, and his body was being paraded around town in the back of a pickup truck. And Dad said, he and his sisters had been taken by their parents to the back porch so that they would not see this. That the lynching was very much against their principles.

CO: Yeah, but you know that if you …

MW: He was none the less dead.

CO: Right, but if you look at photographs of lynching, some people, some fathers and Mothers actually took their children to lynchings.

MW: Well they did the same thing to hangings in England and America.

CO: Right. I know. Yeah.

MW: And the guillotine as well. I can't imagine why.

CO: Yeah, but the lynchings were in this century. I mean you know it's

MW: Yeah, but again it sensationalism. It's like Christians thrown to the lions and the Roman coliseum. Why is that considered play?

CO: Right. Oh I know.

MW: I mean, it's… it goes against my grain.

CO: Yeah.

MW: It has nothing to do with the color or the time.

CO: Right. Right.

MW: So I really can't, I'm not giving you an answer.

CO: Well, no. What you, but you have a sense of the historical roots of what we're experiencing, what we've experienced through the segregated, the Jim Crow era. Most people don't have that sense.

MW: Well, they just didn't live through it.

CO: Well, no I'm talking about people who lived through it. They don't have a sense of how connected it is to the slave past.

MW: Of course it is. You know, if they had come over as entrepreneurs, and not slaves their status would have been entirely different because we had Spanish people coming in, and we had people coming in from Turkey and the Mediterranean who were dark color, who integrate into the families all over the South without a problem.

CO: Yeah.

MW: But the fact that they came in as bonded. I mean they weren't bond servants. There was no hope of them being free. Their status was sealed and that was the problem.

CO: Do you, do you think that having a Black man in the White House has changed people's opinions towards race or has it made them worse. I mean has it made them stronger against or has it, do you think it's had any positive influence on race relations?

MW: My feeling is this and it has nothing to do with Obama or anybody else, but if any color or type of a person gets into the White House and does a bad job, it will make it very difficult for another person of the same color or ethnicity to be voted in because we will hold it against the next candidate.

CO: The race instead of the person,

MW: Against the race instead of the person.

CO: Do you think the same thing is true if it had been a woman? Do you think women

MW: Yes, I think if Margaret Thatcher had been a dud, I don't think they would have let another woman in the British Prime Ministership in human history.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And I think that if Obama botches his time, it's gonna be a long time before another Black gets in. If he does a great job, we might have another Black president in the next go round. But it depends on how he is seen during his time in office.

CO: And yet, white men don't get.

MW: Oh yes, they do, too.

CO: But we keep putting white men in.

MW: Look at Jimmy Carter. He was as honest as the day is long and his presidency was one of our least,

CO: effective.

MW: effective. Yeah.

CO: But it's none the less.

MW: He's still a fine person

CO: But he was followed by a white man. What I'm talking about is

MW: Yeah, but we have a mindset of a man being the leader.

CO: Right. Right.

MW: And

CO: but your point about

MW: We didn't have a Black woman first. We had a Black man.

CO: Right.

MW: So you see, we're still holding to the male.

CO: Yeah.

MW: Now I think if Obama's presidency is seen by the general public when we get to vote in November as being positive, that he has a chance of being reelected, and if he continues and does well, then there will be hope for another Black man at some other, or a woman or either one at another time, but if he blows it. Tt's going to make it very, very difficult for the best man in the world to take that job if he's not white.

CO: Yeah. Well.

MW: We may have a Hispanic next.

CO: I can,. It's hard not to comment on that, but I won't.

MW: Okay.

CO: What is the most important historical event that you've either participated in or lived through?

MW: Well to me the end of World War II was in my life the most important historical event, because with Dad overseas it meant that he wasn't in danger any longer and

hopefully he'd be home before long. And that was considered. He was in India-China-Burma theatre which meant until Japan…

CO: Until the war was over there.

MW: That war wasn't over for us.

CO: Yeah. So do you, when you when the war was declared over,

MW: When the treaty was signed in August.

CO: What did you do? What was that like? Do you

MW: Oh we were just delighted.

CO: Yeah, okay.

MW: Now we had hopes of Dad coming home the day after.

CO: Yeah.

MW: because we knew darn well it wasn't likely and he was

CO: When did he get home?

MW: He didn't get home until almost Christmas.

CO: Oh my goodness.

MW: He was the Executive Officer of a base and he had to close the base down and check the stuff that was coming back to America and check the stuff that they were going to give to the British in India before he could leave, and so he actually closed the base down \, before he got home. But the load was lifted with that signature.

CO: Yeah. Well, could we just kind like the take the decades the 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s and just kind of say what you recall from some of the events. Okay the end of the war was clearly.

MW: It was a major.

CO: A pivotal time

MW: in our family.

CO: Yeah.

MW: Because we had somebody at risk.

CO: Yeah, okay. So all right. That was followed by, now when your father came home was that the end of his time in serving in the?

MW: Yeah, he came home a lieutenant colonel and he was still in the reserves for another year or two and became colonel, he was never on active duty after that.

CO: Okay. And he was in the Army?

MW: He was in the Air Force.

CO: The Air Force, oh okay.

MW: He was first in the Army, the Army Air Force, and the Air Force then was split off.

CO: Yeah.

MW: So he went in, in the Army, and they sent him to chemical warfare school, but then he was immediately deployed as Adjutant at an Army Air Force base and was from then on in in the Army Air Force and then automatically the Air Force when it was divided.

CO: Do you remember after the war and the sort of devolution of relations between the United States and Russia and the Soviet Union?

MW: Oh yeah, the Cold War.

CO: The Cold War.

MW: Yeah.

CO: Did you, how did that, how did your father respond to that and consequently the rest of the family? What was that like? Do you recall him having strong opinions?

MW: I've got to take the Fifth Amendment on that one because that was during my college years and then when I left home and I was not there at all from then on for any length of time so from '46 on,

CO: All right.

MW: except for my opinions and a few pointed ones around the dining table.

CO: Well, so what was your opinion in the 40s, what do you recall about those late 40s?

MW: Well, we had a very active R.O.T.C. unit at the university and we didn't have a lot of protests. And the day that I went to work at Oak Ridge the war in Korea broke out and we immediately went on seven days three shifts.

CO: Whoa.

MW: making uranium. Purifying uranium, and the boy that I had been going with in college was called up as a second lieutenant the week after I got there.

CO: Oh my goodness.

MW: So it took on a very immediate

CO: And how did you feel about it? I mean, how did you, what was your thinking about the possibility of a nuclear war? What was that like?

MW: There wasn't a nuclear war. China hadn't had a nuclear

CO: till '49.

MW: They didn't have it. They didn't have it, but you know we were just so happy to get out of a war and to suddenly get back into one almost overnight, was a shock.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And of course here I was.

CO: You're talking about the war in

MW: The war in Korea.

CO: Yeah. Okay.

MW: Here I was, we were still occupying Japan.

CO: Yeah. Right.

MW: and it was getting the flower of youth in yet another war.

CO: Yeah.

MW: I mean we hadn't had a generation between 'em. It was a shock.

CO: Yeah. Okay.

MW: Does that answer the question?

CO: Yes,. So all right. That was late 40s early 50s, and you're working in Tennessee.

MW: I was in a nuclear industry you see at that time.

CO: Yeah. Right.

MW: But only for that first year.

CO: Then you come back to Emory.

MW: Then I came to Emory, yeah.

CO: And worked, you were working there

MW: But it was in medicine.

CO: Okay.

MW: Which took me out of the bomb making.

CO: Did that feel, did you feel relieved?

MW: No, it just got me back to what I really liked to do, wanted to do. I was interested in health physics.

CO: How did it feel to be making bombs?

MW: Well, when I took the job I wasn't making bombs.

CO: Oh. Okay.

MW: But suddenly, the week later when we were called to start around the clock shifts. They'd tell ya that's exactly what you're doing and that's why we need to go on shifts just in case China gets uppity. We need to have more than we got.

CO: Did you have any moral convictions about that?

MW: Well, I can't. I have to give President Truman a gold star for having the guts to use it in the first place. I don't think I could have. Even, and this is ridiculous to risk the

lives of a million men on both sides, instead of wiping out 110,000 on one side. Statistically, that doesn't work. And yet, it took a very strong person to say, "Do it."

CO: mm.

MW: I mean, if they weren't people. If it was just gambling odds, you'd know that you would take the 110,000 out.

CO: Yeah.

MW: But if I had to authorize it, I don't think I could.

CO: Mm.

MW: And I'm glad it was

***** [**BREAK BETWEEN TAPES**]

[Warren, Mary Claire 4. 00: 43: 34]

CO: Did, so much has been published about that decision and you know, the wisdom of it. The necessity of it.

MW: Well the thing is you had to, if you don't know the history. The Germans were working on heavy water and nuclear fusion. Thanks to some Jewish scientists that they then proscribed and who escaped through Norway to Britain who brought it to us, but what if they had developed it. You see they had the brains over there. If they had played the cards differently, World War II would have ended very, very different.

CO: Right, but I'm talking the choice of dropping the bombs.

MW: Yeah, but why were we working on it if we did not plan to deploy it?

CO: Of course, many people argue that's why it got deployed because of the momentum, the build up that was behind the making of it to begin with.

MW: But someone had to make a decision that we will go forward with millions of dollars and work to create something that we knew, was a double-edge sword.

CO: Yeah. Right.

MW: We didn't know this.

CO: Oppenheimer knew it as well as anybody if not better than

MW: Well, he wasn't the only one, Meitner, the English and the German scientists knew it too.

CO: Yeah.

MW: But the thing was that it had the potential of being so horrorific, that we hoped that it would scare all of us into the point of not using it. I think that the question when the Japanese were warned that we were going to use it, and they were warned. They said, "Yeah like foot you got something like that." And you see, since no one had ever had any previous experience.

CO: Right. Right. Well, so your, your that was '45, by '53 you had quit working in the

MW: in radiation.

CO: Yeah, but you left there in ’51? You went to Emory in

MW: I went to Emory in ’53.

CO: ’53. Okay., how were you processing that? I mean because it’s gonna get worse in terms of the fear, the scare that there’s going to be a you know?

MW: Yeah.

CO: a nuclear war.

MW: And the missiles and Cuba, I mean there’s like the Japanese tsunami and the people who can’t go back home because of the radiation damage up where they are. Mark has seen Chernobyl, and he says you can’t believe what it looks like.

CO: Yeah.

MW: There are things that look like they are perfectly all right, except they are so radioactive you can’t go near ‘em for the next fifty years.

CO: Yeah. Yeah.

MW: We knew this in the radiation research that we were doing up at Oak Ridge was not having to do with fallout, but it happened that at Emory while I was there we did the Inowetok test and the wind changed after the bomb had been blown, and the mushroom cloud went from the way it was said to be going and went in the opposite direction, and it rained down on a Japanese fishing vessel whose name was the “Fortunate Dragon .” We did feather curves which tells you what the isotopes were, four samples off of that fishing trawler that got into unfortunately heavily damaged with radiation as a result of the Inowetok and we did that at Emory.

CO: Spell that N-E?

MW: I-n-o-w-e-t-o-k I think.[1] It was two words an island in the Pacific in one of the atolls and I’ve forgotten which one.

CO: So testing it.

MW: We tested

CO: but it happed to’ve

MW: a more,, vigorous bomb.

CO: hm.

MW: Than the one that was dropped on Nagasaki or Hiroshima.

CO: hm.

[1] Enewetak Atoll (formely spelt Enewetok) part of the Marshall Islands and also part of the Pacific Nuclear proofing grounds. The contamination incident mentioned with the Daigo Fukuryu Maru [the Lucky Dragon no.5] happened near Bikini Atoll, a nearby place to Enewetak, as part of Operation Castle Bravo.

MW: And it was an underwater test and we had weather reports and the Navy was scattered out well away from it so they wouldn't get into fallout zone. This fishing vessel from Japan either didn't know about it or wasn't warned, and they were in the area. The wind changed and the mushroom cloud with all of its radioactive material fell on the decks, and onto the fish that they had caught, and there was radiation damage to the people and the fish were destroyed, but there was a lot of samples sent to find out what the isotopes were that been created by this underwater explosion. That was what we tested; we were not trying to help the fishermen. We were trying to find out what we had created.

CO: And what did we find out from that?

MW: Well we found out the types of isotopes that the bomb would make if it were deployed underwater.

CO: And what was that?

MW: I don't know. They didn't tell me.

CO: Oh. Okay.

MW: That's classified.

CO: I got ya., well, for okay. The decade of the 50s all about nuclear testing and efforts to, efforts on the part of some people to slow that down, but for you personally what was the decade of the 50s like?

MW: Raising children.

CO: Raising children.

MW: From '54

CO: Yeah, to '60.

MW: to '60.

CO: Yeah. Okay. So you were busy..

MW: Oh I was and Eve my oldest child had problems with repeated pneumonias and just before Lisa was born, they had had to do bronchoscopies and what they call vacuum her lungs. Three times, and they said couldn't live through another one.

CO: Oh my goodness

MW: And so my little sister in the sorority and Blaylock, my boyfriend's roommate in college, had married, and he was doing his residency under Dr. Ballock at Hopkins, and so I called Charles and told him to tell me what Eve's problem was, and asked if he could do anything for it. And he said, "Send her up." Well, I just had Lisa and I couldn't leave, and Mother took Eve up and stayed three weeks and they worked on her, and took out her tonsils and took out her adenoids and got her back on Earth, and she was out of school a year. She had to take antibiotics for a year but. She lived through it and never had to have another bronchoscopy or any further difficulty with it.

CO: That must have been a rough year.

MW: It was a rough year.

CO: Eve's the oldest.

MW: Yeah, she's my oldest one, and she would have been in the second grade.

CO: Well the 50s was all about raising children.

MW: Absolutely.

CO: Do you remember the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision in'54?

MW: Yeah, yeah.

CO: And how that,

MW: Well the thing is, there was so many feeling like I did that the plumber who couldn't find a job because for Black professors there weren't slots. It went against my grain then and still does.

CO: So you had a, just to reiterate, you had at your when you were in college, you had a plumbing issue in the dorm?

MW: This was high school.

CO: High school. Right you were in boarding school.

MW: I was in boarding school.

CO: And you had a plumbing issue and a Black plumber came out and some how or other, it came.

MW: I just asked a pointed question.

CO: And you found out that he was a PhD in English from Howard?

MW: Yeah.

CO: But he was plumbing because he could make more money, he could support his family with his plumbing

MW: With his plumbing. Yeah.

CO: Yeah. Okay.

MW: And that, then and now, that is not something that should be tolerated. We,

CO: But you

MW: We should be able, a person with ability no matter what color should be able to exercise and make a contribution.

CO: Right. But you understand that most people did not feel the way you did?

MW: I know they didn't. And I know, I saw the hate on the faces on the people in the pictures in *Life* magazine. But if they had been the family of the plumber who couldn't get a job because he was Black.

CO: But what do you, how do you think it took or would take actually to make people bridge that gap, because it's a huge gap between seeing that plumber, relating to the plumber as a person who can't get a break. Not as a Black man, but as a man who has potential, and can't get a break because… I mean there was a, there was a shift in the 60s but it still didn't take the majority. You know, it still didn't pull the majority

MW: In a way it may not yet have. If things had been different we might have hundreds of Booker T. Washington's. We might have had hundreds of people making contributions that we need made.

CO: Yeah.

MW: Or thousands, but we're limiting ourselves by being so mean, and it is mean.

CO: Okay.

MW: And it isn't right.

CO: Do you remember how your own family responded to desegregation? It took a while, it didn't happen the next year all deliberate speed took more than a decade, but do you remember how it was, because your children were in school.

MW: My children were in school. They were in school in a county that had about fifteen percent Black.

CO: So how did desegregation affect your family?

MW: Oh, it had to bring in to school, children who had been going to schools that were lesser, and so it had to dilute the academic opportunities of my children and everybody else's and discipline certainly went down.

CO: Do you think that there was a better way to have done what they did?

MW: I don't know how they would have done it. I don't think if it had been done voluntarily, it would have been done at all.

CO: Yeah.

MW: I don't see how it could have been done. I don't know how it could have been done any other way.

CO: Yeah. Okay.

MW: Separate was never equal.

CO: Right. Right, but you were aware of that even in the 50s and 60s?

MW: Well of course you knew that. Yeah.

CO: But it sounds to me like you cared about it, long before you knew it.

MW: Well of course you cared.

CO: No, there was a lot of many people who didn't care.

MW: Well, I take it back.

CO: But why did you care when, I'm trying to figure out?

MW: Why would I want to be the person with something a gift, that could give and to be locked out?

CO: Right. Right. And when you see that it's easy to see, but people who don't see it you can't convince them.

MW: Well, as the Indian said, you need to walk in the other Indian's moccasins for a day.

CO: Yeah. Yeah, but even poor whites who were walking in some pretty dreary moccasins themselves.

MW: They were and they didn't want to have to compete any further.

CO: Yeah, so it is as you state clearly it was and it continues to be far more complicated than you know, there are no simple solutions or easy answers because there's so much at issue. You know, there's so many layers of it.

MW: Yes, if you remember your early Bible teachings, that we're all brothers under the skin.

CO: Yeah. Yeah. And it's really amazing that out of all the people I've interviewed, every single one has said that. Even if they had a less enlightened view. They still say that.

MW: But we are. I mean if I go to an autopsy room and once we cut through that skin layer, they look just alike.

CO: Yeah, and so what keeps race, what keeps racial prejudice, ethnic prejudice, what keeps it alive?

MW: I don't know. I don't know.

CO: Do you remember the various manifestations of the Civil Rights movements: the sit-ins, the freedom rides.

MW: Yes, yes.

CO: The voter registration.

MW: Yes.

CO: Those

MW: I do, and speaking of people that take guts. It took an awful lot of guts for that.

CO: Right. Right. Sure it did., what do you, 'cause the 60s you're still very much raising children, what did you… How did you respond to that when you saw it on television?

MW: We didn't have TV.

CO: Oh you didn't have television?

MW: No.

CO: Okay, but you know what was going on?

MW: Of course we knew what was going on. We read about it.

CO: Read the newspapers.

MW: Yeah.

CO: So how did you, how did you respond to it?

MW: Well, the only thing we did was to respond to the children that it's not right. You shouldn't do this.

CO: So your children were aware.

MW: They were very much aware of it.

CO: Okay., and do you remember the assassinations of J.F.K?

MW: Yes, and Martin Luther King too. I mean this is just, it's a manifestation of hatred.

CO: Yeah. Okay..

MW: Something we shouldn't have and ought not to participate in.

CO: Yeah. Okay., what about the decade, the Civil Rights Movement of course is the most, energetic movement in the 60s, but then it spawns all these other movements: The Women's Movement, the

MW: Yeah.

CO: Red Power Movement, the Gay and Lesbian Movement, the Ecological Movement… how did you feel about all those?

MW: Well, the idea is that you need to think. And if you think that this is better way to make the world better, you need to follow it.

CO: Okay. Did, what, did you read Bettie Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*?

MW: Nooo.

CO: No?

MW: It's a lot of hogwash

CO: You think so?

MW: I think we should be color neutral and gender neutral, and if the person has anything to offer you, you ought to take it.

CO: Right.

MW: Because you may not get it again.

CO: Yeah.

MW: I worked next to a boy who was a chemist. The boy had not married, I'm not married. He took home a third more than I did only because he was a man.

CO: Yeah, so you did…

MW: It was unequal. We did the same jobs.

CO: So you did experience discrimination from being a woman?

MW: Oh sure, you experience discrimination being a woman.

CO: All right. That makes a difference.

MW: And you probably do even now.

CO: Yes. Even if, if not in pay there's a, there continues to be a double moral standard in some ways.

MW: Well, yeah. Till a man has a baby, there's gonna be a double standard.

CO: That's my line.

MW: My father in law said, "If the men had to have the babies, there would only be one in the country and that country would have died out."

CO: This is my line. I've been saying this for years, but that would change the world. So that brings me to the Women's Movement. What, how did you feel about the Women's Movement when it was going on?

MW: Well, I was asked by a young woman who was a friend of mine in college, if I wanted to print a newsletter for a women's unit that they were trying to get up in Macon at Wesleyan then. And Jim said, "No way!" And that was that.

CO: So you didn't do it?

MW: No, no. I, all it took was to find out what the idea was and he said, "No. No way."

CO: And you didn't, so you didn't pursue it?

MW: I didn't. I just said no. Whether they did it or not, I don't know. I was not in a position to print it.

CO: Oh, okay. So…

MW: I would've had to have someone who was supportive to do it. And he was anything but supportive.

CO: So you all had different opinions on?

MW: Well, it was a matter of power, and I think that he saw, and it does impinge on his power at the present time then. And that he saw it as an impingement on his leadership and fact that of any other man, and the competition that they might've had from women and he wasn't having any of it.

CO: And was this your, your husband?

MW: Yeah.

CO: When was this? What year?

MW: I couldn't tell you exactly.

CO: But was it in the 70s?

MW: I can't tell you that either.

CO: Okay, but did that….

MW: I don't know. That came up and went down immediately.

CO: Okay. Did that create problems?

MW: Not really.

CO: No?

MW: It would've created more problems if we had done it because there would have been, if not the KKK, somethin' mighty close to it where we lived, who would have seen it as a negative.

CO: Okay. All right. What about Vietnam? Where were you on that situation? What were your, would you, did you have, was anyone close to you in the war?

MW: No.

CO: No?

MW: No. Other than a cousin's husband who was a professional military solider and had been in World War II, Korean War, and Viet Nam, and that's his job.

CO: hm.

MW: And surprisingly he's still going. But, I didn't know anybody. I did not blame the ones who went to college in lieu of getting out of it. It was very unfair.

CO: So you, did you have strong convictions about the war? Against the war?

MW: No, I didn't have convictions either way. I just thought that making it possible for some with money to escape and those who didn't have the money to serve was not right.

CO: Okay. All right. What do you think has been the legacy of the Women's Movement?

MW: I hope that the legacy of the Women's Movement is that women are given more opportunities to serve in more variety of fields for which they have talent. Women are a talented bunch, and just to cut 'em off is not right.

CO: Yeah.

MW: I mean the civilization loses a lot in the process.

CO: Right.

MW: I realize that we are the only ones that can make the babies, and I realize that we are the only ones that can have 'em, but past that, not to use what else they've got to offer is, it's not right. It's not right.

CO: Yeah. Okay.

MW: What if I had, I just think of what if I had been raised in a Mormon, in a Muslim country where a woman is chattel and has no opportunities and can't read, can't write,

and legally do any of these things. What kind of life would I have and what kind of life could I offer my children? That isn't right.

CO: Well, go back to the time when you had the job where you knew that a male doing the same thing, I'm assuming was making a third more, did you feel like protesting that?

MW: We did.

CO: Oh.

MW: There were three of us who were girls with equivalent degrees to his, and we did protest it to the personal department, but they said that there was a rule that men get so much more because they're supporting families. And I said neither of they, nor he, nor we, are supporting families. How do you justify that? And they said, "Well, we don't have to." So that they didn't change it?

MW: Oh no. I didn't expect them to, but I wasn't going to let it go down without protest.

CO: Do you, did that give you more sympathy for the cause of the Women's Movement, that you had a pertinent experience, personal discrimination?

MW: I think every woman's experienced personal discrimination.

CO: No, some of them say they have not. They've never

MW: They had to be in a cocoon then.

CO: Well but they claim that they had never experienced against them being a woman.

MW: Well, Jan Newton a woman was registrar at Medical College of Georgia, and she told me point blank that until the vets get through we're not going to be taking women at M.C.G. Okay, that's discrimination.

CO: Right. Right.

MW: I mean, we've all been raised with it.

CO: I think so too, but the sad thing is that

MW: The sad thing is that it existed, but it had existed for a long a time.

CO: Yeah, but that some people, some women simply

MW: Well they had to, they had to

CO: don't see it.

MW: Whether they had, we were raised that that was our job. And if sacrifices were needed to be made we would make 'em. Yeah. I only hope though, and I think that this is happening, that women can go into more diverse fields and women can get better pay, and women can have a better life. And that's all I ask. Give 'em a chance.

CO: Yeah. Right. Right. Right.

MW: Let the good ones go up.

CO: Yeah, do you think that there's anything a woman should not do?

MW: Be a man.

CO: Be a what?

MW: Be a man.

CO: Be a man? [she laughs] Right., so do you have, had strong feelings about the Gay/Lesbian, thing do you have?

MW: No, I don't. I think that if this is your orientation, you're gonna have a hard enough time in life anyway. Why make it any worse?

CO: Okay.

MW: I mean, I'm a live and let live.

CO: Yeah, I can see that.

MW: Yeah.

CO: I can see that. Well, these last questions are real open ended and this one might strike as just, you can just pass on it if you want to, but it has to do with the, it's one of those sort of nature/nurture questions. You know it's both,

MW: Yeah, you can't divide it.

CO: Right, but for you, has your life the way your has turned out, has it been more of a result of circumstances beyond your control or just circumstances in your life? Having a relatively privileged background? Or is it more a result of your having made good decisions? Is it more about being in the right place in the right time or is it more about your own efforts and your own, and again it's always both, but to you which has been more prominent?

MW: Well, from the variety of jobs that I have had, I would think that it has to be at least part of it, my taking advantage of what conditions I was in, and running with it.

CO: Okay. All right.

MW: That may not answer it perfectly, but if I had not run with it I wouldn't have done any of these things.

CO: Right. Right. What has been your life time, what has been the happiest most gratifying period?

MW: It's the last 20 years.

CO: The last 20 years? Okay.

MW: The children are all launched. They are doing okay and I'm doing what I love to do, and I have just enough resources to do it, and that's enough.

CO: Okay. So what was the hardest? The most difficult time?

MW: Marriage.

CO: Okay. Because you didn't have the liberty to do as you are doing now?

MW: Oh well certainly I didn't that, but, we had some fundamental differences.

CO: Okay. All right., what would you consider the most crucial decisions you've made in your life?

MW: Oh the most crucial decision was the divorce, and I made that decision.

CO: Okay, and it has sort of catalyzed, the most productive and happiest years of your life?

MW: Right. The thing was it just took away some of the things that were dragging me down.

CO: Yeah. Okay

MW: A genie out of a bottle fits pretty well.

CO: One thing when people do a life review, one thing that they look for, sometimes I tell people this in the beginning and sometimes I don't. It doesn't seem to make any difference either way, but it's to identify turning points. You know and clearly that was a turning point for you, but if you had to name three significant turning points after which life is just fundamentally different, what would be two or three others, that you…

MW: Well, turning points, going off to school and finding out that I could get socks in the drawer. That's a turning point.

CO: Right. Of course it is.

MW: .

CO: Without a servant.

MW: Going off, yeah, going off to college. Well no I didn't go off to college, but going off to work, and finding out that I wasn't, I thought I could manage on my own, and nobody knew who Mom and Dad were, and I made it. For me, that was a turning point. And for me that was quite a turning point.

CO: So that was going to Tennessee to work

MW: Going to Tennessee.

CO: Okay. All right. Okay., do you have any regrets?

MW: Of course.

CO: Don't want to name them? You don't have to.

MW: Well, I don't regret the children.

CO: Right. Clearly. Okay., is there anybody to whom you would like to make amends or anything you would like to make amends for?

MW: I don't think so.

CO: Okay. If you could live your life over again, and this I would have asked about the whole Mothering thing, would you do anything differently? Let's make that two separate questions. Just about life in general, and then about the whole Mothering thing.

MW: Well, I can always fantasize about how much I would have enjoyed being a doctor, but who's to say I would have?

CO: Right. Right.

MW: And I have certainly enjoyed what I did and had no training for, which is the writing and the genealogy.

CO: hm.

MW: I've enjoyed that immensely, and the historical research, I love research. Just name it. I'm in there.

CO: Yeah.

MW: Ah, I didn't know I would have liked it. Who knows? It's just that the Lord's given me some opportunities and I've

CO: and you took them.

MW: taken 'em.

CO: Yeah. Okay. All right. What do you think? What do you consider the most valuable lesson you've learned in life?

MW: Just to keep on keeping on.

CO: Okay. Who has been the most influential person in your life? Or you can name more than one?

MW: Well, I'd have to say my parents to start with and my Aunt Birdie, Dad's sister because she also was a loving, wonderful person to anybody who had anything to do with her. She was the Dean of Women's Office at the university, councilor for freshman girls.

CO: This was Aunt Birdie?

MW: hm. This was the one that survived TB.

CO: And that was your father's

MW: My father's youngest sister. He lost the other two to TB.

CO: Okay. Those

MW: I'd give those three easily.

CO: Okay. Okay. All right. What gives your life meaning now?

MW: Work.

CO: I know the answer.

MW: Absolutely.

CO: [she chuckles].

MW: The research. It's the research process.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And somebody says, "Well are they paying you?" And I said, "Nooo. I wouldn't do this much work for pay."

CO: Yeah.

MW: Which is true.

CO: Yeah. It's a shame you can't get paid for doing something you love so much though.

MW: Well, I did when I did the genealogy.

CO: Yeah. So what is your biggest worry now?

MW: Just surviving long enough to get these things finished.

CO: Okay. And so what…

MW: And I have been blessed.

CO: Yes, I can tell, I can see that, and see that you appreciate that. What inspires you? I know work, but…. Why does work inspire you? Or is there anything else that inspires you, besides work?

MW: I don't remember who said it, but said we stand on the shoulders of giants. I'm trying to be one of the giants that somebody's gonna stand on the shoulder of. I'll never know 'em. And it really doesn't matter.

CO: Right. Right.

MW: But I'm leaving a legacy of some seventy books.

CO: Right. Wow! So

MW: I mean, the people I'll never know. Have the opportunity to use 'em if they ever will.

CO: And I'm sure they will.

MW: I mean that's my legacy.

CO: Well, that's a question. What do you want your legacy to be?

MW: That's, that is my legacy and I just hope to have enough time left and enough brain left to finish this last book on the Loyalist Claims. I think I will. Lord willing.

CO: That's right,

MW: It's up to Him of course.

CO: Yeah.

MW: But I'm doing my part.

CO: You sure are., and so, some of these questions are so redundant. What are you proudest of?

MW: I'm proudest of the children.

CO: Okay. All right.

MW: I mean every one of 'em is in a different way is making a contribution.

CO: Yeah. Well, I… I didn't ask this a while ago because I think we got through that section so fast, but could you say what you admire most about each of your five children?

MW: Their ability to stick to something through thick and thin.

CO: And that's true about all of them?

MW: Yeah. Everyone of 'em. I mean they have hard knocks, and they pick themselves up and they go on. And they've each one had hard knocks. And they've they have worked together on. They've come through on Jim, even though he treated them like dirt, and as mean as a snake to 'em in this last illness. And they did for him in spite of his behavior. And they're cleaning up after him so to speak, settling his estate. Doing it equitably and with kindness towards each other. And that is a test. That is a test. And I am proud of that. How they're doing it.

CO: Yeah. You've already said that you would like to be remembered. Is there anything that your children don't know about you, that you wish they did?

MW: No, I think they know me very well.

CO: Okay.

MW: They've spent enough time with me. Poor things.

CO: Is there anything that we didn't cover that you'd like to cover?

MW: I think we fairly well covered the globe. Didn't we?

CO: Well I hope so. Lastly, most people despise this question, so you don't have to answer it, and even if you answer it, it's not necessarily what I would use, but it's an exercise in sort of summation to ask, what would you title the story of your life?

MW: "When the Lord Shuts Doors, He opens Windows." Because, there is no way that I would have ever had half the ideas of how my life would have turned out if I had planned it.

CO: , and it sounds like it has turned out splendidly.

MW: Oh, it's exceeded expectations, or as Mr. Warren says, "Take cookies when they're passing cookies."

CO: And you did.

MW: Well, I tried. Sorry.

CO: That didn't take long for you to come up with that title. It usually takes people.

MW: Well, you never know what life will bring, and you never know when something is an opportunity.

CO: You think, do you think you have a gift for recognizing opportunity?

MW: No!

CO: No?

MW: I don't. I don't have the gift to recognize and just say no. And that also is a problem. So sometimes I think I can do more than I can do.

CO: And does that impede your progress sometimes because you've agreed to do something that you really?

MW: Not recently, because I've just said, "No. No. No." But I've had to bring myself to be willing to say no, because for a while I thought I had to say, "Yes" or else, and that isn't the case.

CO: How long did it take you to get there 'cause I'm still learning that?

MW: Oh about 70 years. Well actually it took longer than that. Try 75. Only when I realized that I might not live forever.

CO: So you say, you say no to things that you don't think are essential? You're able to do that now?

MW: Yeah. I say no right now to practically everything that isn't focused on what I'm trying to finish.

CO: Yeah.

MW: And you're lucky got in.

CO: Thank you.

MW: Oh you're welcomed, but.

CO: Well.

MW: The thing is that I could dissipate my time constantly.

CO: Right. Oh of course.

MW: I mean the opportunities are there. Now I said yes and did a two day course the Learning in Retirement thing on the King's Georgia which is the books that I'm working on because most people didn't know the King had Georgia except maybe, but I did not agree this year to do two other courses they wanted me to teach because I knew if I did that I'd have maybe four weeks or more work that I couldn't work on what I needed to do. And like this trip to Bedford, I had to go because we're meeting there in October and nobody lives near, and it was my idea to meet there anyway. So I went, but I try to stop, and evaluate the value of what I'm agreeing to.

CO: Well I'm glad that you thought this was worth your while.

MW: Well I hope it will be worth *your* while because you've taken a lot of time to do it.

CO: Well, it is.

MW: And you got a lot more to do before you have representative sample.