

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

MARY LOUISE MOULTON BARDEN
(MRS. GRAHAM ARTHUR BARDEN, JR.)

INTERVIEW 428

This is Marea K. Foster representing the Memories of New Bern Committee. My number is 400. I am interviewing Mary Louise Moulton Barden, Mrs. Graham Arthur Barden, Jr. Interview number 428. The date of this interview is Thursday, February 11, 1993. We are in Mrs. Barden's home at 4505 Tenella Road, Trent Woods in New Bern.

NAREA FOSTER: Now Mary this is a big thrill for me to be here because we've known each other forever. So let's start off with you telling me your name, birthdate, birthplace, mama and daddy and all your personal history, all those things.

MARY BARDEN: My name is Mary. I was born Mary Louise Moulton April 7, 1927. So I'm sixty-five years old. I was actually born in the old New Bern General Hospital. It's sort of interesting that in later years my mother and daddy bought that as an apartment house and it was a thorn in my flesh because there were five apartments and they were not upper class people that lived there and they nearly drove me to distraction. But that house has been sold and it has now been renovated and is quite a lovely home. It was 706 Craven Street.

My daddy was George Clarke Moulton and my mother was Myrtle Disosway Moulton. They were both born in 1886. So they were forty-two years old when I was born. I understand they lost a couple of babies ahead of me and one after me. So you might say I was sort of an over valuable, much wanted baby, the only grandchild on the Disosway side and the first one in twenty odd years on the Moulton side. We lived with my grandparents, Moulton grandparents, on East Front Street for the first four years of my life. Then when my grandmother Disosway

died we moved around and lived in the house on Johnson Street which is now 412 Johnson next door to the library. It's a two story house with a double porch. Because my grandfather was quite old and my mother lived there to take care of him. My father was a photographer. He worked in New Bern. They had a business also in Fayetteville at Fort Bragg when I was quite little. Then by the time I was four or so in about early 1931 or 1932 they had a business in Chapel Hill. He was in business with his sister, Bayard Wootten, and then later his sister Mrs. Celia Moulton Lively was a business partner of the studio in New Bern. But we'd go back and forth to Chapel Hill. Daddy would come home on the weekend. My mother had more financial resources than Aunt Bayard who was an artist with a camera but not much of a business woman.

If it hadn't been for daddy her business would have never been a financial success in any way. He would come home on weekends so during my childhood, my daddy was gone except for the weekends. I absolutely adored him and we always looked forward to his coming. If he couldn't come we often went up there. In 1941 when the Marines came full tilt to our area daddy had more business in New Bern than he had in Chapel Hill so he came home to help my Aunt Celia. So as a photographer's daughter I was much photographed. As an only child my parents did a good job of not spoiling me. They bent over backwards to keep me from being spoiled and sometimes I think they could have bent a little too far. (Laughter)

MAREA FOSTER: And as a photographer's daughter you can't even find one photograph for me today. (Laughter)

MARY BARDEN: Oh yes I can. I'll find some. But I grew up downtown for the most part on Johnson Street. We lived across the street from the Presbyterian Manse and at that time Reverend McClure was the Presbyterian minister and his daughter, Frances, and I were good friends. She was one year older and we shared birthday parties because her birthday was the day before mine.

MAREA FOSTER: Wasn't there a son Mary?

MARY BARDEN: Yeah, there was a son Robert. I never paid much mind to Robert.

MAREA FOSTER: But he was younger.

MARY BARDEN: He was younger and I just thought of him as a pesky little boy. (Laughter)

MAREA FOSTER: And you lived right next to my grandmother.

MARY BARDEN: Right, I lived next door to Mrs. Sadie Kafer. Before Mrs. Sadie moved there, there was Mrs. Waddell, Mrs. Alberta Waddell. And when I was real little, oh I mean maybe six, seven and eight years old, I used to play a lot in that back yard. We dug caves and Alberta didn't mind at all if we dug up her back yard. She had a grandson named Cliffy. We used to collect magnolia burrs to throw at the boys, Bobby Blades and his brother Jack who lived in the big house on the corner. There was, where the library is now, a very lovely old Victorian home that had belonged to my grandparents and my mother had lived there when she was sixteen, eighteen years old.

MAREA FOSTER: I didn't know that.

MARY BARDEN: It was a big, big house and it had been painted

green and it had fallen into complete disrepair. My daddy used to worry all the time about tramps sleeping in it and setting it on fire and I heard a lot of talk about that. It was surrounded by tall silver poplar trees. Of course we were not allowed to even go near the house itself but it was just there on the corner and one night when I was ten years old, maybe not quite that old, I had a dream that this house burned. My idea of a house burning would be a big bonfire with fire coming out all over it. Well ten days later I woke up in the middle of the night about twelve thirty and it was light outside. My mother said come on, we must go see the fire. You could hear the fire trucks and the excitement. It was a January night and everybody went out in their nightgowns and pajamas and bathrobes and this house burned as a complete bonfire. The whole thing went up at once. I was absolutely fascinated with such a wonderful fire. My mother was crying because she'd think of her memories that were going up in smoke. It was really something.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh gosh, Mary. Was that house right on the corner?

MARY BARDEN: Un-huh.

MAREA FOSTER: Fire comes about and you have dreamed about it. How did you feel?

MARY BARDEN: I really, I felt very strange that I had dreamed because I had dreamed exactly the same thing. I really sort of wondered if I was clairvoyant or something. Of course it was because my daddy and mother had feared such a thing would happen and had talked about it and I've never had anything else happen that I have predicted but

that really did happen. I really did dream that that fire would take place and two weeks or ten days later it went up as a bonfire and it was spectacular. Everybody was out in their night clothes looking at it and sparks were showering all over the neighborhood but the fact that there was no wind that night kept us from having other fires.

MAREA FOSTER: And that house was right on the corner and when that house burned...

MARY BARDEN: Across from the Blades house.

MAREA FOSTER: Across from the Blades. Is that when they later put the Pure Oil station there?

MARY BARDEN: Yes. Then the house next to that house was a lovely Victorian home that was lived in by Mrs. Street. That had a real pretty yard and some palm type shrubbery which always used to interest me.

MAREA FOSTER: I love that house.

MARY BARDEN: There had been talk oh I guess in the late 1940's of turning that into a funeral home which the neighbors protested and I protested too. Maybe it was even early 1950's when that was discussed because we just felt like that we didn't want a funeral home in the middle of our residential area.

MAREA FOSTER: Do you remember who wanted to put the funeral home there?

MARY BARDEN: I think it was Ballard. They had, Willis and Ballard, they had a funeral home down on Craven Street.

MAREA FOSTER: On the corner of Craven and Broad Street.

MARY BARDEN: Un-huh. And that was a very nice home and they

often put funeral parlors in homes but I just about lost it, the idea of living next door, because by that time I was back living on Johnson Street.

MAREA FOSTER: Yeah, well I didn't know they had planned to move there. I know the Willis Funeral Home started out as the J.K. Willis Funeral Home and I guess it stayed that until it became Willis and Ballard. Frank Ballard, that's who owned it wasn't it?

MARY BARDEN: I don't know.

MAREA FOSTER: I believe it was Frank Ballard. Then the house next to the Street house was the one that my grandmother lived in.

MARY BARDEN: Right, that was the Waddell house that Mrs. Sadie Kafer bought and she was a delight to have next door.

MAREA FOSTER: That's when I first met you.

MARY BARDEN: I lived in the house next to Mrs. Sadie's, the two story big house at 412 Johnson Street until two or three months before I was married. My mother and daddy bought the big house known as the Slater house, a big red brick house, the next block down on Johnson Street. Somehow or other I think she bought it the first of April and I was married the middle of June on the 18th and she got the house in order and we had the reception there at the big house on Johnson Street which never seemed like home to me. Then after I was married and came back to New Bern my mother and daddy gave us the Johnson Street house. So my husband and I lived in half. We had his office in the bottom side.

MAREA FOSTER: I remember that.

MARY BARDEN: And rented an apartment above which was a big financial help to us.

MAREA FOSTER: Yeah to help you with that. Well growing up in New Bern Mary, who were your playmates down on Johnson Street besides Frances McClure and the Blades boys that aggravated you?

MARY BARDEN: Well, for awhile Emma Katie Guion lived in the house that was later sold to the Wesketts. Then she moved down to the big Slover house on Johnson Street and I didn't play with her much past kindergarten age. But the Weskett girls, there were three girls and they were older than me but because there weren't too many playmates I played a lot with Julia. We used to play dolls and make doll clothes and so forth. And Robert Gaskins lived next door.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh I'd forgotten the Gaskins, yes.

MARY BARDEN: When I went to school I went to kindergarten to Mrs....

MAREA FOSTER: Miss Bessie Hollister?

MARY BARDEN: No, didn't go there, went to Mrs. Gibbs and Katherine Dean Ives and Say-So Morris, Ella Meadows and so forth were in my kindergarten class but they were a year younger than I am. When you're five it makes a difference.

MAREA FOSTER: Well was Miss Bessie Hollister running her kindergarten at the same time?

MARY BARDEN: Right, she was and my husband Bardie went to Miss Bessie but I went to Mrs. Gibbs. Then I went to the first grade and I had Miss Mollie Heath and I was probably the only person in the whole

town of New Bern that did not love Miss Mollie Heath. I did not love her at all.

MAREA FOSTER: You are right. I think you are the only one that didn't. (Laughter)

MARY BARDEN: The reason I didn't love her really was not all her fault, it was a little bit Miss Mollie's fault, but I lived next door to the school. I had an absolute unreasonable fear of doctors.

There was a public health nurse named Mrs. Dunn who came around to the school and she would give typhoid shots which to me was absolutely the worst form of torture in the world and I literally wouldn't go to school if I thought Mrs. Dunn was coming. Emma Katie used to tease me and say I'm going to tell Mrs. Dunn to give you a shot. (Laughter)

That's all it took. I would lose it. I would cry. Miss Mollie would pop me with a pencil and if I'd go home I would wet my pants so I would have to go home. Then I wouldn't go back to school. I would sit on the curb unless my mother took me and forced me to go. I didn't like Miss Mollie.

MAREA FOSTER: That was a traumatic year.

MARY BARDEN: That was hard. I loved my second grade teacher and wasn't overly fond of...

MAREA FOSTER: Do you remember who your second grade teacher was?

MARY BARDEN: I think Miss Essie Neal Ward was her name. She didn't stay here too long. I had Miss Fannie Howerton who was another old New Bern teacher who I wasn't real crazy about. She was kind of in the family for the third grade. I always did well in school, was

kind of a teacher's pet part of the way.

MAREA FOSTER: Were you in the Bell building or in the New Bern Academy?

MARY BARDEN: No first of all it was in the Primary building, the four grades there and the fifth and sixth grades were in the Bell building. I had Mrs. Myrtle Turner who is another one of my unfavorite people.

MAREA FOSTER: I had her in the eighth grade.

MARY BARDEN: No she taught fifth.

MAREA FOSTER: I know but when I was there she taught eighth. She taught me in the eighth.

MARY BARDEN: That was in the Academy building. No, that was in the - yeah the Academy building - in the Bell building there were the seventh and eighth grades.

MAREA FOSTER: Well it had all changed by the time I got there. When you were going to school in the Academy building, were you aware that you were in a very old, historic building?

MARY BARDEN: I think so. I was always told it was the oldest school in North Carolina, school building. I don't think we dwelled on it but I knew it was old.

MAREA FOSTER: It was the only schoolroom I'd been in that had fireplaces.

MARY BARDEN: I don't even know that they particularly registered with me.

MAREA FOSTER: I remember the fireplaces.

MARY BARDEN: The fireplaces. But I remember more Mrs. Turner. She taught music. And I remember there was a little lunchroom. We used to have to go over to the lunchroom even though we didn't eat there, we always went home for lunch, and sing. By the time I was in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades we used to play a lot of ping pong. There was an old building where the parking lot for the Presbyterian Church is now, had lovely trees and we'd go over and play ping pong in the afternoon, maybe seventh and eighth and so forth.

MAREA FOSTER: Mary, you mentioned Miss Fannie Howerton was one of your teachers. She was also a librarian.

MARY BARDEN: Right, she was.

MAREA FOSTER: Were the library hours just after school?

MARY BARDEN: I think she probably became a librarian shortly after - no I think she was teaching - I don't whether she did them both at the same time. She was a librarian later when she stopped teaching school.

MAREA FOSTER: That's when the library was in the Christian Science building wasn't it?

MARY BARDEN: I remember that a little bit. She was still a librarian when it was in the John Wright Stanley house.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh, when they first moved in the house.

MARY BARDEN: I'm not positive but I seem to remember her being in there. Yes, she was there.

MAREA FOSTER: When you got to high school what were some of your activities? I know you were a majorette and I want you to tell me

all about that because I remember watching you twirl that baton and strutting in the back yard. You would be out practicing.

MARY BARDEN: Right.

MAREA FOSTER: It was a thrill for me to watch.

MARY BARDEN: New Bern had a band about three years before I got involved with it. It had no uniforms and this was about 1941. They had the band probably from 1939. Mr. Harry McDonald came as principal and he started the band. Finally they raised enough money to buy the band uniforms. They had try-outs for majorettes and I had a baton and a little book you could flip that would show you how to twirl and I taught myself how to twirl. Mr. Smith asked me if I would teach some other girls and I did. Then they had try-outs for majorettes and it was held in the auditorium of the old Griffin building. I won't ever forget that day. A lot of us tried out. Then they selected them and they called out Marylus Menius and she was one. Virginia Hamilton, she was the senior so she was going to be the head majorette I guess.

Then they called out Lib Kennedy who was a sophomore and she was so pretty. Maybe she was a freshman. And they hadn't called me and I thought oh, dear I've taught everybody how to be a majorette and I'm not going to get to be one. (Laughter) And so finally they did call me. Basil Paafe was the drum major.

MAREA FOSTER: I remember that.

MARY BARDEN: ...two years. I must have been a majorette for three years. Then finally Guy Boyd was the drum major. But the day the uniforms came we had a big Latin test and I had a bad cold and

I felt bad and I used that as a good excuse to stay home. Then they said that the band uniforms had come and they were going to have a parade downtown to show off the uniforms and somehow I got well at lunchtime. (Laughter) I went right back to school and I was well enough to march in that parade.

MAREA FOSTER: Mary, what was your majorette uniform like?

MARY BARDEN: Oh it was lovely. It wasn't as brief as they are now. It was white satin with a white satin skirt and a band of fur around it. It had the gold buttons and the tall hats with the plume and we really thought we were elegant.

MAREA FOSTER: Well you were just as pretty as you could be and I think the tall hats are called shakos. It's similar to the hats the cadets at West Point wear with the plume.

MARY BARDEN: It was really, Basil had a really tall hat. One day we were practicing, we did a lot of practicing, marching in the band and there was a little Marine that was walking along beside us. He said "let me play that drum" and the bass drummer gladly handed it over. All of the sudden the drum beat changed considerably and when we got back to the school we found out this little Marine was named Joey Webb and he had played with Tommy Dorsey.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh my gracious.

MARY BARDEN: And he put on a concert for us and we were all absolutely amazed. That was the day when you would have the hit parade and on Friday or Saturday nights everybody would meet around at my house and we had a record player and you would just hold your breath

until you heard who was number one on the hit parade.

MAREA FOSTER: I remember all that.

MARY BARDEN: There were skating parties and they would rope off Craven Street down to South Front and have skating parties.

MAREA FOSTER: And street dances.

MARY BARDEN: Un-huh.

MAREA FOSTER: I'd forgotten all about those.

MARY BARDEN: That was fun because it was asphalt and your skates would you know slide along real well. There were some dances up in Stanley Hall. They used the Armory which is now the police station for basketball games. I was really short and not built to be a basketball player but I'd try and we'd have to run around that gym so many times.

MAREA FOSTER: Well you had a good time in school.

MARY BARDEN: Yeah I did. I enjoyed it. It was wartime.

MAREA FOSTER: How did the war affect you?

MARY BARDEN: Oh my goodness, it affected us a lot. All the girls were learning how to knit. I knitted a scarf and it looked, it was fat in one place and thin in another. (Laughter) It was six feet long and it was olive drab and had lots of mistakes and I was so proud of it. I think they unravelled it and used the wool over again. But I learned to knit. I had a home ec teacher who was very interested in the Marines and she would always let us out of class to go wave at the troop trains that came right down the street by the school. (Interruption)

MAREA FOSTER: You were waving at the troop trains.

MARY BARDEN: Okay. Another activity that they enlisted a lot of the young people was airplane spotters. This was really something. We went up in the cupola of the post office. You had to climb a ladder to get into that little observation thing and any plane that came over we had to call and say the height and the type of plane and of course none of us really had the slightest idea what kind of plane it was or what the height was. But we would say it was one engine or two engines or what-have-you. You would have a two hour session up as an airplane spotter. I think there must have been a little romance that went on up there too. (Laughter)

MAREA FOSTER: And they enlisted high school students to do this?

MARY BARDEN: Right. The Episcopal women had a pancake or waffle supper every Sunday night at the parish house for the sort of USO type thing for the boys. I remember one time all of the senior girls in high school would go down and help entertain and maybe enjoy it ourselves. But I remember one man signed the register William Tecumseh Sherman, III and the ladies that were running the pancake supper were absolutely horrified. Said well if he'd just put W.T. Sherman nobody would have known sure that he was really a descendent. (Laughter)

MAREA FOSTER: He was not very welcome.

MARY BARDEN: Un-uh. I thought that was real funny.

MAREA FOSTER: The War Between the States was still going on.

MARY BARDEN: That's right, isn't it still?

MAREA FOSTER: Yes I think it is in some respects. It sure is.

Were there any other activities for service people in town?

MARY BARDEN: Oh yeah there were a lot of dances. There were some dances down at the Woman's Club. Actually I didn't go to those in high school. I went to some my first year or two of college. I remember one down at the Woman's Club. They did a polka and I was dancing with a cute little boy from Pennsylvania and I didn't know, I had learned to polka at St. Mary's. I didn't know that at the end of the little section of dance that you stomped. Well he stomped and I had on a toeless shoe and I had to call my daddy to come get me.

(Laughter) I couldn't walk. It made my toe bleed. But there were lots of things like that. There were a lot of reading rooms open to the service men and people were anxious to help, we were so close to it with the Marine Corps here. Of course a lot of the older girls were really dating Marines and so forth. Actually I dated a young man from Chapel Hill my last year of high school. We knew his mother and daddy. He didn't really seem like a Marine as such but we had quite a romance going my last year in high school and then he went off to the South Pacific and I saw him again in college but by that time the bubble was burst. It was over.

MAREA FOSTER: Mary, do you remember rationing?

MARY BARDEN: Of course I do remember rationing. It was hard in that you didn't have things that really tasted good to eat. Sugar was tight and meat was tight. We had this awful stuff called oleo. Looked like lard and you'd get a little package of coloring and the idea was you sprinkled it over this lump of lard and worked it with

your hands until it turned yellow and then you played like it was butter.

(Laughter) That was hard on Mrs. Sadie I imagine with all her cooking.

MAREA FOSTER: It was.

MARY BARDEN: But you could use this stuff without coloring it but that wasn't too good. One thing Marea, I know you remember too is how the town was decorated at Christmas.

MAREA FOSTER: I don't remember that except for Belk's.

MARY BARDEN: When I was a little girl my daddy would come home from Chapel Hill and he'd always be late getting there because people wanted their pictures for Christmas gifts. So it was usually Christmas Eve before he got home and sometimes the day before. We would always go to ride to look at the lights. New Bern strung colored lights across the street and draped Spanish moss on it.

MAREA FOSTER: Now I do remember that Mary.

MARY BARDEN: I thought they were the loveliest things I had ever seen.

MAREA FOSTER: And people would decorate their doorways and have moss and lights around.

MARY BARDEN: None of this business of all white lights. It was all colored lights. Some people would be fancy and have all blue lights or all red lights but I always liked the colored lights. I've always thought this idea of sticking oranges and lemons on doorways was really not Christmas at all. I just don't understand that. But we'd enjoy looking at the lights. One of the highlights of the Christmas season for all the children was the opening of Toyland at Belk's because you'd

go up in the elevator to the fourth floor and it was usually the day after Thanksgiving and there were these wonderful toys that were not available in New Bern except at Christmas. We didn't have a toy store then. There would be all kinds of dolls and all kinds of things and you'd make out your list and write a letter to Santa Claus and reading them in the newspaper was a big deal.

MAREA FOSTER: It was and Santa Claus was usually up there too.

MARY BARDEN: Oh yes.

MAREA FOSTER: Mary, do you remember the Belk's window, as you looked at the Belk's store the window on the right that had the choir?

MARY BARDEN: The doll's choir? Oh yes.

MAREA FOSTER: I loved that. When we saw that going in we knew it was Christmas time and Santa Claus was going to come.

MARY BARDEN: Marea, I remember the circuses too. They would have a circus parade downtown with a calliope and so forth. I'd go down to my daddy's studio, I must have been really just three or four, but quite young. It was upstairs at the corner of Pollock and Middle where Hearne's is now.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh I didn't know he had a studio there.

MARY BARDEN: He had a studio up there and it later burned. But I could see the parade so well by sitting in the window. I remember the man on tall stilts walked by and I could almost shake hands with him. I thought that was really something. I always loved elephants.

When I was little instead of having a teddy bear I had a toy elephant which I called my "Efie" and that was my play toy as a little bitty

girl. But I went to the circus one time and my grandfather, Mark Disosway, was a little short man and he had a great sense of humor and he opened a cracker jack box and got out a pair of baby rubber pants and he put them on his head. I know I was just so embarrassed at my granddaddy sitting there with this baby hat on his head which was really rubber pants. (Laughter) The circus was a big deal.

MAREA FOSTER: The circus certainly was. I remember that.

MARY BARDEN: It was Clyde Beatty and I guess the Cole Brothers were then too but Clyde Beatty was the big deal.

MAREA FOSTER: I used to watch them unload when we lived on Park Avenue.

MARY BARDEN: Oh I'm sure you did.

MAREA FOSTER: And it was just wonderful.

MARY BARDEN: Once I went out to watch them unload and it was fun.

MAREA FOSTER: Yeah and carnivals. I remember the carnivals that came to town.

MARY BARDEN: Oh yeah we went to carnivals and they were fun.

MAREA FOSTER: Mary, during the war years there were not as many festivities and things as there had been previously were there?

MARY BARDEN: Marea, I don't remember that because you see I was just thirteen in 1940, 1941 I was fourteen. So I wouldn't have been old enough to have had anything to do with the parties. One thing I do want to mention is I took dancing from Frances Hussey. She was Frances Perry at that time when we first started. And I loved the

dancing. I did some acrobatics. I was never very limber but I could tap dance and I took toe dancing because my ankles were weak supposedly.

That was to strengthen my ankles. Well, we didn't have a whole lot of money in those days and my mother had taken music and liked to play the piano so she decided that I would take music which I never liked.

My first teacher was Rosalie Smith, I guess maybe...

MAREA FOSTER: Was it Mrs. Abernathy?

MARY BARDEN: I took from Mrs. Abernathy and I was very intimidated by her. I also took from Rosalie Smith.

MAREA FOSTER: Was that Mr. H.B. Smith's daughter?

MARY BARDEN: H.B. Smith's daughter, right. I learned more from Mrs. Abernathy but I think it was a shame that the teacher didn't realize I was not destined to be a pianist. I needed to be able to play fun things and instead I had all these crazy exercises which I did not enjoy. There wasn't enough money for me to take both dancing and music so I had to take music. That was a thorn in my flesh. (Laughter)

Even when I went to St. Mary's I took music and it made my whole first year very unhappy so when I dropped it and took art life immediately improved. I could play well but I never learned to sight read or read music easily. So it was a real effort. I felt like probably they should have recognized that I was to be no concert pianist and let me be. (Laughter) One thing that was always a real big deal was Frances Perry's dancing recital. They were held in the Masonic Theater. Everybody sold tickets and you had to wear costumes and it was a big deal for the children that were in it. My mother was quite Victorian

so she was anxious that I not have a costume that was too exposed.

I remember one time I was doing a dance and I had done it and done it right and I breathed a sigh of relief and the little skirt I had around me when I let out that big sigh it popped off and fell on the floor. (Laughter) Mr. Joe McDaniel did a little pirouette out and picked up my skirt and brought it off stage. Everybody accused me of trying to do a striptease on stage.

MAREA FOSTER: Mary, how about the Yuletide Revues that Joe McDaniel put on? Do you remember those?

MARY BARDEN: Oh I remember the Yuletide Revues very well. I was probably not taking dancing by that time. But Joe would put on I guess it was New Bern's talent show. It had all sorts of people in it. It was always held at eleven o'clock at night in the Masonic Theater after the last movie. Everybody in town would try to go to the Yuletide Revue. Anybody that had even a glimmer of talent was welcome to perform and the money was donated to the Christmas charities, Christmas gifts for the poor folks. This was probably all the Christmas that many people had. One thing I would like to mention, my grandparents had owned a number of Negro rental houses, it was called Barber Row.

It was up there where the Armstrong Grocery is now. There were maybe forty houses. Not nice houses. They'd be very sub-standard now but then they rented for anything from fifty cents to a dollar a week.

When Christmas came my mother knew the name and age of every child in those houses and she would line up paper grocery bags and put fruit and nuts and a small toy for each child with it's name and when Christmas

came we would take them up and give them to the people in the houses. Many times they were the only presents those children got.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh Mary, how sweet.

MARY BARDEN: This was full Depression days. I'm talking about the early 1930's. I remember it so well. There would be big mud puddles on the ground. My grandfather died in 1937 when I was ten. He died on Christmas Eve and was buried on Christmas day. That was when nobody bothered to hide the Santa Claus things. I had suspected there was no Santa Claus but then I found all the stuff because nobody had time to bother with me. So I kind of lost a lot that Christmas. But after that I would go with my mother to collect the rents or my Uncle Sam Morgan would go. She was really not afraid to go though the rest of the family was worried about her going up into that area. Later on when the highway was widened they took off the front row of these houses.

The back rows of the houses continued for awhile. But she got a chance to build a Colonial Store there and I had to go with her to tell these folks that their houses would have to be destroyed for the Colonial Store. She cried and they cried and they hugged each other. It was really a very hard decision for her but by that time my own father had died and she had not enough help. This was about 1956 I guess.

It was an answer for her not to have the responsibility of that property.

MAREA FOSTER: Mary, talking about that property, you and your mother had a very good relationship with the black tenants or the colored tenants.

MARY BARDEN: Right. I really think we did.

MAREA FOSTER: What was the relationship between blacks and whites when you were growing up and during that particular time?

MARY BARDEN: This was before integration and we had a lot of friends that were black and that we kind of looked after each other. It was more of a servant-master relationship I guess. But my mother always treated them very fairly and we were very, very fond of our maids. It was a different time.

MAREA FOSTER: It was a different time but as far as you know the relationship went along smoothly?

MARY BARDEN: We were really quite smooth with our relationship with the black people. Had a very funny black man named Charlie Becton who was sort of the town butler. He came along in later years. But Charlie would put on a white coat and serve at any social function that was going on in town and he and my mother, he would paint for her when she owned a number of apartments and stuff. You just couldn't go and hire a top flight painter because there wasn't enough money coming in to pay for it. But Charlie and she and a bucket of paint would go and clean up from these people. Charlie would be liable to paint right over straight pins that were stuck in the wall if you didn't watch him. (Laughter) But he and she really had a love-hate relationship. During her last illness the ambulance came and they took her from her home on Johnson Street to what was then St. Luke's Hospital and she saw Charlie painting. She said oh, Mary I haven't left Charlie anything in my will. And she actually made me go and

get some paper and a pen and write out that she wanted to leave him a hundred or two hundred dollars, whatever it was and I had to get it witnessed. I was crying so hard. That was just awful.

MAREA FOSTER: Well that's just a beautiful picture of your mother.

MARY BARDEN: It tells you how she you know - she would rant and rave at Charlie and he'd say now Miss Myrtle. (Laughter) One thing, when I was married Charlie was to serve at the wedding and he said now Miss Myrtle, you know I has a problem with alcohol. He said now if you'll just keep me busy before that wedding I'll be just fine.

My mother had him painting the basement steps at seven o'clock before my eight o'clock wedding to keep Charlie busy. (Laughter)

We had an old maid named Maggie Saunders that worked for us for many years. I was never taught to cook and to clean which would have been nice had I known how to do it. Later on I was very sorry. My mother didn't cook and clean. She always had somebody else to do it.

She never cooked anything until she was fifty years old and the war came and she couldn't get any help.

MAREA FOSTER: Mother did very little cooking and cleaning. I wasn't taught to do that.

MARY BARDEN: And I just wasn't taught the things I should have been.

MAREA FOSTER: Well that's the way we grew up.

MARY BARDEN: But Maggie didn't want to be bothered with me in the kitchen and she had a wood stove to cook on. We didn't have enough

money to be extra comfortable. We certainly weren't, well you know, the Depression was going full tilt and money was tight. I remember school dresses were two ninety-eight. If you got three or four new ones at the first of school you were awfully pleased.

MAREA FOSTER: Talking about that, where did your mother buy your school clothes?

MARY BARDEN: Probably at Belk's. Then there was...

MAREA FOSTER: Montgomery Ward's was there too.

MB; Montgomery Ward's and then she shopped a lot at Sam Lipman's. She used to argue with them and bargain and I would be so embarrassed that she would.

MAREA FOSTER: But that was part of the game.

MARY BARDEN: But that was a way of life. Another thing we need to mention Marea is the vegetable women that would come by on the street. They would sing a song. Nice, corn, peas, butterbeans. (Laughter) And you would run out and buy and this continued up until I was living on Johnson Street as a married woman.

MAREA FOSTER: And this is how you got your fresh vegetables every day.

MARY BARDEN: Right. And it was certainly a whole lot of improvement over having to have a garden and grow them which we try to do now and it's a pain.

MAREA FOSTER: It certainly is and I can't do that. But they would come out and get, Mary about seven o'clock in the morning and we'd wake up to the cries of the vegetable ladies. Mother would be

up and she'd go and get what she wanted.

MARY BARDEN: That was fun.

MAREA FOSTER: They were pulling wagons and most of them came from James City that came through here. I don't know if they walked or had a ride or not.

MARY BARDEN: One thing we did as a family a lot, we were always very big on picnics. You remember everybody was off Wednesday afternoon and we'd either go to Morehead which we did frequently or we would come out on the Trent River to Uncle Sam's farm and have a picnic.

He had grapevines; we'd pick the grapes and we could go swimming in the river. When we went to Morehead Sam was very interested in what's now turned into Radio Island. At that point it was a marsh that was getting filled in and we had to come and watch all the sand that was being pumped up. He and my daddy were in partnership and had a small dredge. Sam would stay on the boat with the dredge people, with the men that would work the dredge, and fill in lots which he sold on the causeway between Beaufort and Morehead. Daddy would go down and daddy furnished the money to pay the people that worked. Not long ago I found a postcard that daddy had saved and which I had written him because he was in Chapel Hill and we would communicate about how things were going. I said well, you don't have to worry about Jim anymore daddy. Sam gave him ten cents and he bought some alcohol and drank it and we buried him today in Cedar Grove. (Laughter)

Love, Mary.

MAREA FOSTER: Well Mary, talking about picnics, do you remember

the picnics the Episcopal Church would have down at Atlantic Beach?

MARY BARDEN: Oh, yeah. I remember pimento cheese sandwiches. I remember the deviled eggs, the fried chicken, all the ladies with their white hats, sun shades and white shoes.

MAREA FOSTER: And we'd be on the beach.

MARY BARDEN: Miserable little dressing rooms at Atlantic Beach. They really weren't big enough for anybody if they were particularly fat. I think they were two feet square.

MAREA FOSTER: You're about right.

MARY BARDEN: You would have a key to this locker which you wore around your ankle or sometimes you could tie it on your bathing suit strap. But they were lovely picnics and everybody in the church went.

MAREA FOSTER: They certainly did.

MARY BARDEN: I understand they used to go on the train. I don't quite remember going on the train.

MAREA FOSTER: As best I remember, if you needed transportation they chartered a bus or most people would get friends and get a car full.

MARY BARDEN: And they had tables on the boardwalk. Sometimes there would be two churches at a time that were having this wonderful feast. Some people came that didn't belong to a church which always aggravated people.

MAREA FOSTER: But I do remember those. They were a lot of fun.

MARY BARDEN: But during the war the gasoline was rationed and that was difficult for us because daddy was in Chapel Hill and to go

up to see him we often had to go on the bus after I graduated from high school.

MAREA FOSTER: You were at St. Mary's for two years.

MARY BARDEN: Right.

MAREA FOSTER: After St. Mary's what did you do?

MARY BARDEN: Well I went to Chapel Hill. In high school Marea, as I said, I was always a very good student. I ended up being salutatorian in New Bern High School and valedictorian at St. Mary's.

But it was a terrible shock for me when I went to St. Mary's because as I said I had made good grades with relative ease in high school.

When I first got to St. Mary's we had an English teacher whose name was Mr. Moore who made everybody's life miserable. He gave so much homework that all the other courses got neglected. Finally the faculty made him stop some of that. But I had gone from a ninety-five average in English to a seventy-two. Furthermore, that was the highest grade the old goat gave. I was just absolutely beside myself at such a terrible grade. But at least I was passing and that was more than most of them did the first semester. As I say, I ended up, at St. Mary's I roomed with Beverly Morrison. She was my close friend in high school and we roomed together two years at St. Mary's. When I went to Chapel Hill I had two seniors for roommates the first year and then Beverly and I roomed together our senior year.

MAREA FOSTER: So after you graduated from Chapel Hill what happened then?

MARY BARDEN: Well, at Carolina I majored in art and I met Bardie.

I knew who he was but I met him the Christmas of my junior year at Chapel Hill. My first date with him was on New Year's Eve. We double dated with Fred Latham and Muriel Day which was also their first date.

Had an absolutely wonderful time. He brought me home at six o'clock in the morning. We had been at his house cooking bacon and eggs and so forth and I must say he sort of deposited me on my front steps and left because he was afraid my mother would ring his neck. (Laughter)

Then I didn't see him again until the next summer. But once we started dating that summer between my junior and senior year after the first date that summer we were just a twosome.

MAREA FOSTER: Well he said that while he was away you grew up.

MARY BARDEN:; That's right. (Laughter) I did. We had a great time. We did a lot of water skiing on the river. His family had a Chris Craft called Bozo which they were all very fond of. By the time we went back to Chapel Hill he gave me his Sigma Chi pin at Christmas the second year. After I graduated I got an engagement ring. So I kidded him and said I got an AB and an MD all at the same time. He spent a year at Vanderbilt which was dreadful. He had told those Vandy people he would be single. He got out there and found out he was only one of three that was not married on the house staff. But we suffered through that year. It was a long year. I went out to see him a couple of times. When he came home we were married June 18, 1949. He spent a year at Duke. He had four months of obstetrics and eight months of pediatrics. Then he went to Wilmington with Dr. Sidberry for a year. Before that year was quite out the Korean War was going and

he was going to be drafted so he decided to enlist in the Navy. He got orders to go to Beaufort, South Carolina. We went to Beaufort and we found a lovely apartment. We packed all our stuff up. We put it on the train one morning took it to the train station and at noon that day he was transferred from Beaufort, which we never saw again, to Camp Lejeune. Dr. Sidberry pulled a lot of strings because he thought if he could get Bardie assigned to Camp Lejeune then Bardie could come down and work with him on the weekend or could conduct a Navy clinic in Wilmington for the military personnel and work for Dr. Sidberry at night. Well thank goodness that didn't come about. We just went to Lejeune and he didn't have to work for Dr. Sidberry too because Dr. Sidberry would work you to death. So we lived in a tiny little apartment in Jacksonville. It was twenty by twenty outside dimensions, divided into four rooms. Had a nice big bathroom, a fair size living room. The bedroom was so little that if you opened the door it bumped into the dresser and you couldn't get around the bed to make it up.

(Laughter) I think it was six by eight inside, maybe eight by ten.

It was so little it was pitiful. But we had a great time. We had a social life with the Navy, a social life with the Marine Corps and we were close enough to New Bern to have a social life there. After a year at Lejeune he got orders, all our friends were being sent to Camp Mumford which was the first stop before you went to Korea. It was a very tense time because I didn't want him to go to Korea. We were, are still, very much in love and I just couldn't think of anything worse than him going off to war. My next door neighbor whose husband

was a career Marine said if he doesn't go then he can't move up in the ranks. Well her father was a Marine general and his father was a Marine general so they had a very different attitude than I did which was don't let my man go away. I couldn't believe it when we were - we asked our marine friends where we should request to be sent next because you had to fill out a next assignment. Our Marine friends said don't put down Honolulu, everybody will put that. And don't put Guantanamo Bay. That's the next best thing. Why don't you put Roosevelt Roads in Puerto Rico? Nobody had ever heard of Roosevelt Roads so Bardie looked it up and found out they had a hundred and one bed dispensary so we requested that. Lo and behold the orders came through, we were assigned to Roosevelt Roads. We got a letter from the doctor saying you will be the only doctor on the base and there is a six bed dispensary over the PX and that's it. They had torn down the hospital.

(Laughter) But the thing was, I could go with him. Living in Puerto Rico was a wonderful experience. It was an air field that was the maneuver spot for Cherry Point and people were always coming back and forth from Cherry Point to Roosevelt Roads. During the year we lived there I think I counted up we had forty-eight folks that came to visit us. We knew more people than anybody. Bardie was a Lt. JG. The billet called for a "Lieutenant Commander." So we had to live in the bigger quarters.

MAREA FOSTER: Wasn't that wonderful?

MARY BARDEN: No actually we liked the smaller quarters better.

(Laughter) But anyway, it worked out. It was really a very, very

happy year of staying in Puerto Rico. Then we came back to New Bern and reality. He was the only pediatrician and there was none in Morehead, none in Pamlico County. Dr. Junius Davis had been here and he had been drafted. So when Bardie came he was the only one. He was the only one for three years until Dr. Davis came back. He practiced alone for ten years and that was really rough.

MAREA FOSTER: I remember when he practiced. Well you mentioned earlier that you were living in the house next to Nanny and he had his office down there. I remember that.

MARY BARDEN: Right. And our daughter was born.

MAREA FOSTER: And her full name?

MARY BARDEN: Thirty-nine years ago today. This is her birthday.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh, well for heaven's sake.

MARY BARDEN: She was Mary Ann Barden. Now she's married to Dr. John Berry and they live in Kinston. They have two little boys, John and Barden. That was 1954 when Mary Ann was born. Bardie would be working so hard. During the epidemic time I remember once his next office appointment was twelve midnight. The longer he worked the slower he went the tireder he got and it was a vicious cycle. Then my son was born two years later on February 27, 1956. He is Graham Arthur Barden III. I'd often get those children to bed and go over and help Bardie with the patients that he hadn't finished up at night. If people called they knew that we were right there next door to the office and that really was a disadvantage because I think it was abused a lot. He would go over next door and doctor them.

MAREA FOSTER: Mary, being a doctor's wife, a pediatrician's wife, how did this affect your family life, your quality time with family, your leisure time?

MARY BARDEN: There really wasn't much leisure. Bardie had this theory in his head that he would not come home to lunch until he finished his theoretical morning appointments. So this meant that I had to have lunch ready from one o'clock to three. It was more often three before he'd come even though all he had to do was just walk next door.

(Laughter) I worked mighty hard during those years. My father died when Mary Ann was eighteen months old. He had leukemia and that was very difficult. It also meant then when my son was born my mother stopped driving because she had cataracts and eye trouble so I had to take her many places and help her with the apartments. She owned about I think there were twenty-one or two apartments. That's an awful lot to keep up with. People were so demanding. For awhile it was easy to keep them rented when there were so many Marines and before all the housing was built. At that time when she first owned the apartments people that lived in her apartments were clerks at Belk's and Penney's and people that were substantial folks that just didn't have very much money but they were good people. Later on anybody that could scrap together four hundred dollars could make a down payment on a small house. So your core of people that had been renters changed until most of them were young and transient types. A lot of Marines. And it was very hard to keep the apartments in shape and to rent them to decent people.

MAREA FOSTER: And you had that to do and your children to take care of.

MARY BARDEN: Right. My children were little. I was helping Bardie. I wrote all his statements which were like four hundred a month by hand. I did all of that. Helped him at night. Took care of the apartments and as my mother's health disintegrated by the time my children were four and six my mother died of cancer and then I just really had a right hard time during those years. They've all blurred together. I think that's why I'm enjoying my grandchildren so much.

I can hardly remember my children's babyhood because I was just so stressed out with all the obligations.

MAREA FOSTER: But a doctor's family does have it hard.

MARY BARDEN: They do.

MAREA FOSTER: But harder I think when you and Bardie were first married and started because he was alone.

MARY BARDEN: He was alone for ten years.

MAREA FOSTER: Isn't it easier once they're in a practice with someone else to share the load?

MARY BARDEN: Oh yeah when you have somebody that can share and you can get a little time off. I remember one time somebody said something about a premature baby. Somebody said what's that and Mary Ann spoke up and said oh that's the baby that gets born on Saturday afternoon when we're trying to go somewhere and we can't. (Laughter)

But there just wasn't much time off. Bardie's always been a person who has enjoyed his work. He worked hard and he played hard. So when

we got a chance to go we would go down to Cape Lookout. It would be an awful lot of effort. We got a house down there. Peggy and Milt Langston and Teensy and Lib Hodges were partners in this venture. That was our recreation, it was a good break for him because it was away from the telephone.

MAREA FOSTER: And once you got there you could really relax. Mary, how has medicine changed from the time you were little? You still hate shots, typhoid shots? (Laughter)

MARY BARDEN: Marea, it's right funny. I was really so, I just hated the idea of a doctor so bad and I mean the doctor and the nurse would have to hold me down to do any sort of examination. I'd kick and scream and bite. I remember when I had my tonsils out Dr. Bender, we went by his office and just happened to see that man standing on the Elk's Temple corner. Yeah I bet. It was all arranged and the next thing I knew I was in Dr. Daniels' office and they had me on a stretcher and it took Dr. Bender and Dr. Daniels and his nurse to hold me down while they gave me anesthesia and I kept thinking if I could just get this thing off my nose and spit in his face we'll be even.

(Laughter) My mother had taught me that to spit was the worse thing you could possibly do. Well, I still remember the dream I had when I was under that ether and I wouldn't eat because my throat hurt and it was just so bad. Finally Dr. Bender made a house call when it was about a week past the operation and I still wouldn't eat anything.

He told me he would have to give me some IV fluids if I didn't eat and I ate. Anything to keep from having that happen. (Laughter)

MAREA FOSTER: What comment did Dr. Bender make later?

MARY BARDEN: He saw me on the street and he said "Without a doubt you were the worst patient I ever had and I can't believe you married a doctor." (Laughter) I'm still scared of doctors. I don't kick and scream anymore but I'd like to.

MAREA FOSTER: Dr. Bender was so nice ().

MARY BARDEN: Once I broke my arm when I was playing circus and hanging from my knees on the trapeze in the Gorham's yard across the street.

MAREA FOSTER: I remember them.

MARY BARDEN: They had a trapeze and I really thought that my calling was to be a circus lady.

MAREA FOSTER: (Laughter) Didn't we all Mary? We sure did. Tell me, when you came back to New Bern and as young adults how had New Bern changed and what activities did ya'll do when Bardie had time?

MARY BARDEN: I really didn't much want to come back to New Bern but Bardie had always planned to come home and I knew that my parents were getting much older. Of course in retrospect I'm so glad I came when I did. But I belonged to a bridge club that met at night once every two weeks I think. I was involved in church circles. Our recreation, the two of us together, he had so little time off that we'd have people over for supper but it was a lot of effort. There weren't many good restaurants and so forth. For a long time we did not belong to the country club. We did belong. Then Bardie got outdone with them about something and we dropped our membership and there was

quite a period in there that we didn't belong. But he didn't have time to do anything anyway. Most of our fun revolved around the water.

We had a boat and we would go out on the river or we'd go swimming somewhere and I'd take the children. We belonged to Trent Pines. That was a fun place to go.

MAREA FOSTER: And they had a swimming pool.

MARY BARDEN: They had a swimming pool and we'd take the children out there and enjoyed that.

MAREA FOSTER: But life growing up for your children was very different from when you grew up and when I grew up.

MARY BARDEN: Yeah.

MAREA FOSTER: I think the war and the Depression, well I know it did...

MARY BARDEN: Changed things.

MAREA FOSTER: Changed absolutely everything. Mary how has New Bern changed?

MARY BARDEN: Well New Bern was a small town where everybody knew everybody. You were always aware of what other people would say about your activities.

MAREA FOSTER: You knew if you didn't behave someone was going to tell your mama.

MARY BARDEN: Right. The churches were very important. I used to go to Kanuga, an Episcopal Camp in Hendersonville. I need to mention that. That was my camp that I went to and just adored. I wanted to go to Camp Yonalasee so bad; my Aunt Bayard made the pictures for their

catalog and I went with her and my Aunt Celia in the mountains. By the time I was ten I went about every summer for about four or five years with them to the mountains which was a nice trip. But New Bern it was a small town. Nobody had a whole lot of money. We all just seemed to get along pretty well together.

MAREA FOSTER: I think so.

MARY BARDEN: Helped each other I think.

MAREA FOSTER: It was a very loving, caring, nourishing community.

MARY BARDEN: It was a small town, small southern town.

MAREA FOSTER: It was so nice to walk down the streets and know everyone.

MARY BARDEN: And you knew just about everybody and that changed after the Marine base came. Well for one thing the churches exploded and the Catholic church in particular. The Catholic church wasn't exactly looked on with a lot of favor by all these Protestants around and they only had about fifteen Catholic families. Then all of a sudden when the Marine Corps came they were having four or five masses a day and it was just lots of people and things did change there. Going to the movies was a big deal. We didn't have television of course.

They'd have, you know, Wednesday matinee specials and sometimes they gave dishes if you'd go to the movies or something.

MAREA FOSTER: Would you go on Saturday to the cowboy movies?

MARY BARDEN: Not much. Bardie did. He would go and stay. I was allowed to go to a few but not many.

MAREA FOSTER: We always went on Saturday and I think mother was

glad to get us out of the house. (Laughter) Joe and I would go.

MARY BARDEN: I remember one thing Marea, for a little while I belonged to the Campfire Girls which has disintegrated. They met at the fire house and I remember sliding down that shiny pole.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh did you slide down that shiny pole?

MARY BARDEN: I did slide down it. We would do this after the Campfire Girls meeting.

MAREA FOSTER: I don't remember the Campfire Girls in New Bern.

MARY BARDEN: Well that was before your time. You are seven years younger than I am.

MAREA FOSTER: Well we had Girl Scouts.

MARY BARDEN: I belonged to the Girl Scouts too. Jessie Trowbridge I think was one of the leaders.

MAREA FOSTER: Your neighbor, Jeff Barker, was one of my leaders. I don't know how poor Jeff got roped into taking us. It was right after she and Charlie were married and came back to New Bern.

MARY BARDEN: She and I were scout leaders later on.

MAREA FOSTER: She got her experience with us but she was a good leader. I remember Mary vaguely and I was a member of it, during the war Dolly Bray and her father and Dolly's my age and her father was Morris Bray lived on Broad Street, started a group called the Junior Wac's.

MARY BARDEN: I don't remember the Junior Wac's.

MAREA FOSTER: Well all of them our age joined and we had uniforms and we would learn how to march in Dolly's side yard and that's all

I can remember about it.

MARY BARDEN: Probably all it did.

MAREA FOSTER: Well and your daddy took a picture of my sister and me in our little uniforms.

MARY BARDEN: Wac uniforms?

MAREA FOSTER: Yeah but I don't know what the purpose was. I don't remember us doing any good deeds like knitting. All I can remember was Dolly out there telling us to march. You don't remember that at all?

MARY BARDEN: No. At St. Mary's they had a military drill that we did. I don't know why.

MAREA FOSTER: I was hoping you could remember that to tell me what good we did.

MARY BARDEN: No. Your age group was so much younger than mine that I really did not know them.

MAREA FOSTER: Well at that particular time seven years made a great big difference.

MARY BARDEN: Oh yeah.

MAREA FOSTER: Yeah. We were just babes in the woods.

MARY BARDEN: I thought of Aggie who is now my sister-in-law as just a child and she had a big crush on me because of being a majorette and I would go out and teach her how to twirl a baton but I never remember seeing Bardie there because he was off at school.

MAREA FOSTER: Well Aggie was a majorette when I was in high school. She and I grew up together and graduated together and she

was one of our majorettes.

MARY BARDEN: One thing I remember when the school integration took place in New Bern.

MAREA FOSTER: Tell us about that.

MARY BARDEN: I had a maid then and she came to school. See Bardie's daddy was in Congress at that time and he was very much involved with this school bit. The maid came in, she was a big woman, and she said is my children going to have to go to that white school? I said I don't know. I said that's what it sounds like. She says well they ain't going. I don't want them to.

MAREA FOSTER: Did she say why she didn't want them to?

MARY BARDEN: She just didn't like the idea of them being told they had to go there. She only worked for us a little while. It was right after Mary Ann was born and she was very adamant about not wanting to have to give up their school and go to the white school. They were being made to do it and she didn't like that. Actually I think it was a little later than that. It started out all by the time my daughter was in the first grade Michael Morgan whose father is now mayor of New Bern, started out at Trent Park with her and he was one of you might say the token children, smart, nice little boy that was in her class but there were very few. It was only later that the schools were combined in a great deal of mixing. That actually happened when my son was in the seventh grade and they formed a little school. There was a group of people that got together and got Miss Danes who was a lady from Michigan who'd been into education and formed a white school

and I think they felt like that there were just a large number of black children who had not had the many advantages. It wasn't so much that they were black as it was that they had been economically deprived, Marea, hadn't had as much background. That was more or less the basis of it.

MAREA FOSTER: Of founding Trent Academy?

MARY BARDEN: Founded Trent Academy.

MAREA FOSTER: Well they had at first their freedom of choice. I don't know how many years that went on where blacks could choose to go to the white schools if they wanted to. That was offered a number of years before integration became a law. But it was difficult for everybody.

MARY BARDEN: It was and there was an awful lot when the high schools were integrated. The black people were, and understandably so, upset about having to give up what they considered their school.

MAREA FOSTER: Yes I can understand that.

MARY BARDEN: We had a white principal who was not able to control the situation and finally when they got rid of the white man and put the black principal in then he could speak with authority to black and white students and things got much better. But right there at first they made the statement they didn't expect any learning to take place. They just didn't want them to kill each other. And it was a very tense time. We were fortunate in being able to send both Graham and Mary Ann off to private schools. I don't know that that was the best thing to do but their academics were certainly improved by us

being able to do that.

MAREA FOSTER: Well we've had several people tell us Mary on interviews that yes, the standards were lowered because the black students had not had the advantages that the whites had and they had to give them a period to catch up intellectually, academically. So they were lowered for awhile and then within three years they were taken up to where they should have been.

MARY BARDEN: Well most of the children that went off to college got along alright. It was a tense time and there were instances that you don't like to think about today.

MAREA FOSTER: But it's worked out okay.

MARY BARDEN: Right.

MAREA FOSTER: Lots of big changes in New Bern. Well Mary is there anything else you can think of. You know you went ahead and covered just about everything that I'd written down here that I was going to ask you. You said now you ask me questions.

MARY BARDEN: I didn't give you a chance.

MAREA FOSTER: That's perfectly alright but you and I had talked so you went ahead and told me everything. But I didn't know if there was anything else. Mary, yeah, I know what I want to ask you. Your daddy was George Moulton.

MARY BARDEN: Right. George Clarke Moulton.

MAREA FOSTER: His sister was...

MARY BARDEN: Celia Moulton Lively and Bayard Morgan Wootten. George and Celia were full brother and sister and Warren, my uncle

Warren who was in the Coast Guard, those three were full brothers and sister. Sam Morgan and Bayard Morgan Wooten were their half brother and sister. My grandmother whose name was Mary Devereaux Clarke was first married to a man named Rufus Morgan. He was a delightful person from reading about him. He was also a photographer which I think is very interesting. But he went out to California to make his living raising bees. It seemed to be honey was a big deal and he invented some sort of honey hive or bee hive that was interesting. My grandmother could not go with him. Bayard was little. She was four years old and she was expecting Sam. After Sam was born they wrote back and forth and she was to go out with the two children as soon as they could arrange it. He wanted her to go by ship to Panama and cross the Ithmus and go up to San Diego by ship and he ate some poison mushrooms and died before she could go. So there was a period of, it was not until Bayard was ten years old that she met my grandfather Moulton who had come south to escape the bad New Hampshire winters and they were married.

MAREA FOSTER: And your grandfather Moulton's full name?

MARY BARDEN: He was just George Moulton. He was from Hampton Falls, New Hampshire. My grandmother, Mary, was living with her mother who was Mary Bayard Clarke. It's really interesting because she was quite a noted writer and poet in her day and I have found her papers.

Within all these family papers there are the letters of Mary with Rufus in California, letters back and forth.

MAREA FOSTER: Isn't that wonderful?

MARY BARDEN: Then when George came he was writing to his sister about meeting the southern lady with two children, no money but two jewels and they were Sam and Bayard. Mary Bayard Clarke got very ill and insisted that the two of them be married at her bedside. She died two or three weeks later. So I have all those letters back and forth describing that time.

MAREA FOSTER: How about that.

MARY BARDEN: In fact Marea, that comes a little bit later but it certainly occupied a big hunk of my life after my children grew up and left home my aunt Mrs. Lively was very ill and I found in her attic all these wonderful letters that Mary Bayard Clarke had written.

Hopefully I will turn them into a biography of her someday. I've done an awful lot of work on them. I have many hundreds of pages typed of the letters.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh how wonderful.

MARY BARDEN: Hopefully I will. I've spent a lot of time in this direction and met a lot of nice people.

MAREA FOSTER: I'm looking forward to it. Mary when I was growing up your daddy's studio was on Middle Street. It was Williams Cafe...

MARY BARDEN: Williams Cafe, my daddy's studio and Emmie's Flower Shop. My daddy worked mighty, mighty hard. He loved the outdoors for real. I think of all the hours he spent confined in that smelly darkroom with the chemicals. I often wondered if all those chemicals and so forth contributed to his having leukemia.

MAREA FOSTER: Could have.

MARY BARDEN: That was a real hard thing for me when he died.

MAREA FOSTER: Well Mary is there anything else you would like to tell us about? Now I'm going to go home and be angry with myself because I forgot to ask you something. I wrote down what I wanted to, the main things and getting your family history was one of the main ones of course being a majorette. We've covered a lot of things. But I didn't know if there was anything else that you would like to...

MARY BARDEN: Preserve for posterity.

MAREA FOSTER: Yeah that's right. Well for the record Mary is a member of our Memories of New Bern committee and Mary was in charge really the driving force behind the program we had of the 1922 fire in New Bern. Mary's father took all the pictures of that fire and Mary put that program together. It was excellent.

MARY BARDEN: It was fun to do. I met a lot of interesting people along the way and I think we're still involved with this thing.

MAREA FOSTER: Yeah I think so too.

MARY BARDEN: Actually Marea it might be interesting, it seems like I'm stuck on fires, but when I was ten our house on Johnson Street that I lived in after I was married caught fire. It was Thanksgiving night. We had sliding doors and the smoke began puffing out between the doors. It was a real big fire. You could go in the attic and drop a rock that would go all the way down to the second story and to the first story and to the ground from the attic. I remember it so well because I had an ear ache. It was bad, probably an abscessed ear. My ear was swollen. I had a sty on my eye, was really in pitiful

shape. I remember the firemen were bringing out, they rescued my doll carriage which was in the attic because I really never played a lot of dolls. (Laughter) But he was rolling it and I ran over to see it and he hit me, not meaning to but just shoved me out of the way and it popped the sty on my eye so the blood was trailing down my cheek and it made my ear hurt worse. (Laughter) I know my mother had them carry her dresser, insisted they carry it next door and put it in somebody's bedroom because she said it's got my diamond ring in it.

Well my mother was always losing her diamond ring and the next morning when daddy came from Chapel Hill to help us with the problem he found her diamond ring on the porch. So it had fallen off the dresser on the porch. (Laughter) I spent the night at the McClures and they tied a flaxseed poultice over my ear and wound it around with cloth until I looked like Haile Selassie. That was quite a time, that fire.

We lived in the other half of the house while it got repaired.

MAREA FOSTER: That's interesting Mary. The McClures were nice people.

MARY BARDEN: They were.

MAREA FOSTER: I remember them.

MARY BARDEN: Do you remember that big sycamore tree in front of Mrs. Sadie's house?

MAREA FOSTER: I certainly do.

MARY BARDEN: We used to play hide and seek. Oh we played hide and seek a lot. And hopscotch and badminton out on the front porch, front yard. And rode bicycles and did all those things.

MAREA FOSTER: We did too. Is there anything else Mary?

MARY BARDEN: I don't think so Marea.

MAREA FOSTER: Well at this point then I want to thank you so very much for me personally for letting me come and do this because I've been looking forward to it. And on behalf of Memories of New Bern, thank you so much.

MARY BARDEN: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW