

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

ANNIE RAGSDALE HUMPHREY

INTERVIEW 501

This is an interview by Francis P. King, number 500, tape number 501 on May 10, 1991 at 3:05 p.m. I am interviewing Miss Annie Humphrey, Mrs. James Richard Humphrey of 136 on Kimberly Road, New Bern, North Carolina. Now, can you tell me where you born?

Mrs. Humphrey: I was born in Albemarle, North Carolina, February 6, 1911. That's Stanly County.

FK: Can you tell me about your father and mother?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, they are both deceased as you know. My daddy was Manley Ragsdale. My mother was May Aycok Ragsdale.

FK: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Mrs. Humphrey: I had three sisters and one brother. No, I had two sisters and one brother, I'm counting me.

FK: Tell me something about your early childhood.

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, my early childhood; I went to school, we had a garden, we had cows, we had pigs, we had fruit trees, we had everything on the place to eat.

FK: Where did your father work?

Mrs. Humphrey: He worked at Badin Aluminum plant.

FK: But he had enough time to do the garden work?

Mrs. Humphrey: With our help. And we said, "Yes Mam and No Mam."

FK: To mama and daddy?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes siree! All papa had to do is to look

at us, and we'd mind! (Laughter)

FK: You think things are different now?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir.

FK: Did you feel deprived in this or think you were funny?

Mrs. Humphrey: No, no, we had a good homelife.

FK: It was a loving homelife.

Mrs. Humphrey: Yeah, yeah! We sure did! When one was in trouble all were in trouble, and we're still that way with my family.

FK: You left home in the Depression?

Mrs. Humphrey: In the Depression, it had started.

FK: All in all, your childhood was happy?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, yes.

FK: You didn't feel deprived?

Mrs. Humphrey: Oh no. We made not have had everything a lot people had but we had plenty to eat.

FK: What didn't you have that you want?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, maybe we didn't get to go everywhere we would of liked to have gone. We went to Sunday School and Church.

We knew we were supposed to get up every morning and go to Sunday School and Church.

FK: How often did you go to Sunday School and Church?

Mrs. Humphrey: We went to Sunday School and Church every

Sunday and every Sunday night we went to BYTU.

FK: What is that?

Mrs. Humphrey: Baptist Young People Union.

FK: This was a Baptist Church?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes.

FK: Tell me about your school.

Mrs. Humphrey: My school. We had a good school, Dr. King. It was an Academy, a private school.

FK: Now, they had public schools at this time?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes they did but this school in this little town was owned and operated by a family by the name of Eddins. It was a Boarding school that students from around in different Counties came there and went to school. They had a dormitory for the boys and the girls lived in the house of Dr. Eddins. We went through the eleventh grade. Dr. Eddins and his daughters ran that school with maybe three or four more other teachers coming in to do primary grades. They did the high school.

FK: Now, did he have a wife?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, he had a wife and she did the cooking with help you know and fed those boys.

FK: How many boys do you think they had?

Mrs. Humphrey: I don't know Dr. King.

FK: Fifteen, twenty?

Mrs. Humphrey: I would say that every bit of twenty.

FK: And this was where?

Mrs. Humphrey: In Palmerville in Stanly County.

FK: How long had the school been existing then, do you remember?

Mrs. Humphrey: No, but I can get it.

FK: How long did you go there?

Mrs. Humphrey: I went from the first grade through the eleventh?

FK: Education good?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, it was good, if we had of taken advantage of it. (Laughter)

FK: You mean talking about your playing when you should of listened?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes.

FK: You think that was unusual?

Mrs. Humphrey: No.

FK: Was it strict?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes.

FK: Were you punished?

Mrs. Humphrey: I can't ever remember being punished. Dr. King, I was the good one in the family.

FK: But you never got punished then?

Mrs. Humphrey: No, I didn't.

FK: But some of the others occasionally, but only be a spanking in the hand.

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, in the hand, in the hand, with a ruler.

FK: So, you didn't feel abused?

Mrs. Humphrey: Oh no, heaven's no!

FK: How long had the school been in existence?

Mrs. Humphrey: I don't know, before my time though.

FK: When did it go out of existence? When did it close?

Mrs. Humphrey: 1936.

FK: You went to school there beginning when you were six years old?

Mrs. Humphrey: Six years old.

FK: That would be 1917. You left school 1928?

Mrs. Humphrey: 1929. Maybe I repeated a grade somewhere along the way, but I didn't finish until 1929.

FK: All in all, you were happy there?

Mrs. Humphrey: Oh yes, and it was a good school, a very good school.

FK: Why didn't you go to the public schools?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, because we lived right there in that community and we lived in walking distance. We could walk home to our lunch.

FK: And your father was able to afford that?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, it was not an expensive school. He had to pay some tuition and of course buy our books.

FK: Did they have buses to take you to school at that

time?

Mrs. Humphrey: No, not there.

FK: Not there, but I mean at the public schools. Do you recall?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, yes.

FK: But all in all, you say your childhood and your schooling was happy to everybody else?

Mrs. Humphrey: Oh yes, yes.

FK: Tell me now how you came to New Bern.

Mrs. Humphrey: How I came to New Bern! Well, as I told you, I wanted to go in nursing training and I applied at the Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte which was just forty miles. You know at that time, Dr. King, a lot of girls were going in training.

FK: Training for nurses?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir, and they had already set up their class. My mother saw in the paper where they were advertising for student nurses at St. Luke's Hospital in New Bern and I applied and I was here in a matter of two or three weeks and been here every since.

FK: Was this a Charlotte paper or a local paper?

Mrs. Humphrey: It was probably a Greensboro paper.

FK: Greensboro paper, and they were advertising for nurses?

Mrs. Humphrey: For student nurses. Miss Guthrie Sledge was the Superintendent of the nurses of this hospital.

FK: You decided to go into nurses training, and how long was the program?

Mrs. Humphrey: Three years.

FK: Can you tell me about it?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, I certainly can. We worked ten hours a day, two hours off during the day. After we got our cap, after we've served our probation period, which was six months, we went on night duty. There would be two nurses on night duty. We would work twelve hours from seven to seven. We would take care of the patients on the two halls, that was first floor and second floor and the Emergency Room if anything in the Emergency Room.

FK: Seven to seven, was that day duty and night duty?

Mrs. Humphrey: No, day duty would be considered seven to seven, but we had two hours off during the day. One day we would have from eleven to one which would be considered two hours and we would have to have our lunch during that period.

Then, from one to three, and on Sunday we would have half a day. One Sunday we would have what we would call the A.M., and then the next Sunday we would have what they call P.M. We had our classes at night that was taught by the staff of the hospitals, the doctors. As I told you, a Miss Bradford from the High School came in and taught dietetics.



FK: Miss Bradford?

Mrs. Humphrey: Kathleen Bradford, Kathryn, I believe. She was a dietician. Miss Sledge taught drugs and solution, and ethics, and then the doctor's taught the other.

FK: That was how to get their medication?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir, and to work out the dosage of the morphine from a fourth to an eighth and to a thirty-second and all that like that.

FK: That was a fourth of a grain of morphine, and to get an eighth of a grain of morphine you'd take half of it?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, then a sixteenth, then a thirty-second, you know on down like you give the children.

FK: Was the discipline fairly strict on you?

Mrs. Humphrey: Very strict, oh she was extremely strict!

FK: She was unmarried, I guess and her whole life was the nursing then at the hospital?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes. She gave the anesthetics.

FK: All the time? That was ether?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir, and chloroform to mothers that were having babies that were born in the hospital.

FK: This was open drop?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir, on a cone.

FK: And the chloroform was used for delivery briefly?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, yes.

FK: Did you give medication during delivery for the

pain?

Mrs. Humphrey: I don't remember any. They had to push and bear down with those labor pains.

FK: Can you tell me some other things about the school now?

Mrs. Humphrey: I can tell you a lot about it, Dr. King. We were assigned to take care of a patient and we had to do that patient and we had to fix he or she up properly before we left that room or we would be corrected for my work. We had to see that our bed corners were turned properly on our sheets, they were not just thrown up there.

FK: Were they squared so-called, like the military hospital?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes. We made our own supplies, we made our own two by two's, four by four's .

FK: They're sponges you're talking about?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir. We made our own supplies, we did our own sterilization, and this you will not believe, we patched the rubber gloves and they reused them. We put them up and we had to sterilize them in the autoclave. We sterilized our own instruments for surgery.

FK: The nurses did that? Did the students do that under supervision?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, yes, we did. When we were in the Operating Room, that's when we did that. When we served our

time in the Operating Room we made our own sponges, folded and wrapped them individually, and put the gloves up that were used during surgery, they were dried and taken care and put up and autoclaved, we did all that.

FK: They were reused any time?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir, reused.

FK: How about the sponges, were they thrown away?

Mrs. Humphrey: They were thrown away, yes sir.

FK: These were gauze sponges?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir, and I can't remember what those big packs were that we made, Dr. King, the doctor's put down in the abdomen and used those retractors for, you know? I tried to think last night the name of them but I can't remember what those were called?

FK: They do have a name but I can't recall either, but they were used.

Mrs. Humphrey: Yeah, and we made them and autoclaved them. We made the perinatal pads for the OB cases, all that.

FK: Talking about the Operating Room, what kind of procedures were done in the operation?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, gallbladders, hernias, a lot of appendectomies, we had more appendectomies then than we do now and why I don't know. Dr. Duffy did a lot of kidney surgery.

FK: Were the appendectomies, most of them abnormal when they were done?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, I would say so. I don't think our doctors would of diagnosed them. We had good doctors, as you know, that they would of diagnosed them only if they were not.

FK: Well, sometimes appendicitis is hard to diagnose.

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, and we got a lot of ruptured appendix.

FK: People that didn't come in til they ruptured?

Mrs. Humphrey: That's right. They 'd do broken legs, broken bones, anything that came up, Dr. King. They did a lot of tonsils back then. Dr. Patterson and Dr. Jones did T & A's.

FK: Of course you did not do any chest surgery then?

Mrs. Humphrey: No, no.

FK: And they had other than that?

Mrs. Humphrey: Now, I've have known mastoid operations to of been done there.

FK: Who did that?

Mrs. Humphrey: Dr. O. C. Daniels and what was that other Dr. Daniels name, Dr. King? You know, I had forgotten about them. Dr. O. C. Daniels was from Oriental and he had a brother here. What was his brother's name, Dr. King? Ralph, Dr. Ralph Daniels. They were the ear, eyes, nose, and throat doctor.

FK: Now, let me go over with you the doctors again that were on the staff.

Mrs. Humphrey: That was on the staff, all right, that was; Dr. Robert Duvall Jones, and Dr. Joseph Patterson.

FK: Now, he started the hospital?

Mrs. Humphrey: That was their hospital, Dr. King. They owned and operated that. It was a good hospital, we got good training. As I told you yesterday, there was never a nurse that failed the State Board that finished from that hospital.

FK: From the training, you mean?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes.

FK: Now, who else do you remember operating there or being on the staff?

Mrs. Humphrey: All right. Dr. Gibbs operated, Dr. Pollock operated.

FK: Do you remember Dr. Gibbs' first name?

Mrs. Humphrey: Um uh.

FK: Dr. Raymond Pollock?

Mrs. Humphrey: Dr. Raymond Pollock. Dr. Harvey Wadsworth, and now he did more obstetrics.

FK: Did they do surgery on the women too, Dr. Wadsworth and most of them?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, yes.

FK: Hysterectomies?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, yes. Let's see now, you have; Dr. Patterson, Dr. Jones, Dr. Wadsworth, Dr. Gibbs, Dr. Pollock, and Dr. Richard Duffy. He did a lot of kidney surgery, Dr.

King, and he did a lot of cystoscopic treatments.

FK: He did other surgery as well, too?

Mrs. Humphrey: That's right. Dr. Bender was our pediatrician, that's Earnest Bender.

FK: Now, how about Charles Duffy?

Mrs. Humphrey: You know, I was thinking about him after I went to bed last night. Dr. King, I can't remember him coming to St. Luke's Hospital. Now, I remember him coming after we went over to Craven County.

FK: What about Dr. Christopher Barker?

Mrs. Humphrey: He did a lot of obstetrics.

FK: Did he do any surgery.

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, but not a lot. Dr. Joseph Latham, don't forget him. He was our Medical doctor and a smart man.

FK: Do you remember when he came? Was he there when you were there?

Mrs. Humphrey: He was here when I came but he died, and I don't remember, he died young. Don't remember the year Dr. Franklin Hammond came. He was practicing at St. Luke's when the Catholics ran the hospital.

FK: Were the doctors fairly congenial with one another or is that an unfair question?

Mrs. Humphrey: I can't remember any hard feelings.

FK: Let me ask you this. There were several other

hospitals in New Bern from time to time, when you went there, was St. Luke the only hospital there?

Mrs. Humphrey: The only one. New Bern General had closed and they had had a fire previously and I think that was in 1927. That, I don't remember anything there.

FK: You weren't there, then?

Mrs. Humphrey: No sir.

FK: And the old Caton Hospital had also closed?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes.

FK: And the Good Shephard had opened by that time?

Mrs. Humphrey: That's right.

FK: What about the Black people, were they admitted to the hospital?

Mrs. Humphrey: Dr. King, we had the basement down stairs that would accommodate four Black men, there was a ward, and four women.

FK: Did they use that?

Mrs. Humphrey: Oh yes. The Black was down there and they stayed down there. They were not admitted up on the second and third floor at that time.

FK: But they did receive the care?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yeah, yeah, and we took care of them.

FK: Ya'll heard from them?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes. The first patient I ever gave a

shot to was a black man. They got the same kind of care that the white did.

FK: Did they have difficulty getting into the hospital?

Mrs. Humphrey: No.

FK: Now, this was a private hospital and so they had to pay their own?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, that's right.

FK: Do you know what they did when they didn't have it?

Mrs. Humphrey: I reckon there is a lot on the books today that was never paid, wouldn't you think?

FK: Well, I don't know but you don't know. But that was not a problem that you recall, that people were not able to pay?

Mrs. Humphrey: No. Of course there wasn't any money.

FK: Nobody had big money. Do you remember what the charges were then per day or anything?

Mrs. Humphrey: It seemed like five dollars a day and it seemed like the wards were three fifty.

FK: Now, this was the St. Luke's Hospital that was built about 1914, before the addition there?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yeah, and I don't remember when that addition was put on. Dr. King, let me tell you a few more things about that. The nurses, they had to serve their time in the kitchen. We had to serve our time in the kitchen to serve diabetic trays, what diabetic patients could have, and



what certain patients could have. We had to serve a month in the kitchen and set up all the trays.

FK: How many patients did you have in the hospital, do you remember?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, it was suppose to have been a fifty bed hospital, I thought.

FK: Did you have that many at one time?

Mrs. Humphrey: No, I don't think so.

FK: Most of your patients were surgery or critically ill patients?

Mrs. Humphrey: Very ill, and surgery.

FK: And many people stayed home at that time for their illnesses?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, and I'll tell you something else that we had to do. When Dr. Jones and Dr. Patterson had a delivery in town that the patient didn't come to the hospital, the senior nurse on the floor had to go out and help them with that delivery in town. Also, if Dr. Jones and Dr. Patterson had a patient in town that needed an enema, we had to go out and give that enema.

FK: That was a part of your job? Was this in your training?

Mrs. Humphrey: In our training days, yes sir.

FK: Now, what do you remember about your nursing?

Mrs. Humphrey: We didn't get our patients up. Our

patients were kept in bed from at least ten days to two weeks, fourteen days for any kind of surgery, and for mothers ten days, maybe the ninth day you would let them sit on the bed.

FK: You ever thought why they did that?

Mrs. Humphrey: No. I wondered why and why it has advanced to the stage that it is today.

FK: Well, I think the feeling may have been that it was better to rest and allow the wound to heal up better. Especially in the OB room, that was the rationale there.

Mrs. Humphrey: I distinctly remember I was on night duty and a patient of Dr. Patterson had had a hernia, got up and went down from the second floor to the first, and I had to call Dr. Patterson in the middle of the night and tell him.

FK: Were you a student then?

Mrs. Humphrey: A student.

FK: What happened?

Mrs. Humphrey: He told me to put him back to bed and watch him closely for bleeding.

FK: Did he have any trouble?

Mrs. Humphrey: No, no trouble.

FK: But you were scared to death?

Mrs. Humphrey: Oh, I was scared to death. I didn't know what Dr. Patterson would do to me.

FK: But he was kind to you then?

Mrs. Humphrey: He was good to me.

FK: Were any of the doctors not good to you?

Mrs. Humphrey: I can't recall any not being good to me.

FK: They were not abusive?

Mrs. Humphrey: No, no. Dr. King, we gave a lot of hyperderma classes. This was Dr. Patterson's specialty for a person with pneumonia, mustard plasters. If a patient would have surgery and get abdominal distention, this was Dr. Jones' specialty, turpentine stupes, which you don't know anything about.

FK: How do you make a turpentine stupe?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, you know I think I have about forgotten, but you take hot water and you take a towel and put it in, I don't remember how much turpentine, and put that turpentine in there and wring it out in a towel and put that hot turpentine stupe on the abdominal to take that distention down.

FK: Did it help it.

Mrs. Humphrey: I reckon it did some of them got well, and they used to give molasses enemas, that you know nothing about?

FK: What did that do?

Mrs. Humphrey: It's suppose to take care of the gas.

FK: Did it?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, it helped.

FK: Did the molasses mix with water?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, you have to mix it with a little water to get to a consistency where it would go up in there. You never heard of fleets enemas at that day and time.

FK: So, you had to make all this up?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yeah. As I told you before, we gave a lot of hyperderma classes.

FK: Now, let me go back to the enema a minute, the enemas were given in bed?

Mrs. Humphrey: Oh yes.

FK: In the bedpan?

Mrs. Humphrey: Oh yes, and we didn't have a bedpan sterilizer, we had to wash all our bedpans. We had one place back there where we would empty at the bedpan hall, and empty all our bedpans.

FK: How was your stomach in all of this?

Mrs. Humphrey: It must of been very good.

FK: You survived?

Mrs. Humphrey: I survived. Oh yes, and I tell you something else, Dr. King. We had to count our laundry. It would go down the shoot and the nurse in the Operating Room, when you were doing your Operating Room time, we had to count all those dirty sheets and towels and send them to Braddy's Laundry and make out the slip how many went and we also had to count it when it came back and put it in the linen closet.

FK: Was there any mistakes ever made, did they lose any?

Mrs. Humphrey: I'm sure we did, but I don't recall.

FK: You didn't lose any sponges in the Operating Room?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes.

FK: Who was the cook?

Mrs. Humphrey: Nettie somebody.

FK: Was she black?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, she's dead and gone. We had one orderly, one day orderly, no orderly at night.

FK: How did you lift other men?

Mrs. Humphrey: We just did it. No orderly at night. Now, the nurses today would not believe that we worked all day and had our classes at night.

FK: Your lectures and stuff?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir.

FK: When did you study?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, we were suppose to study our two hours off during the day.

FK: What do you mean suppose?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, that's what it was given to us for, to rest and to do our studying, those two hours during the day time.

FK: Now, who did the teaching?

Mrs. Humphrey: Dr. Jones taught Anatomy, Dr. Latham taught Medicine, Dr. Wadsworth taught Obstetrics, Dr. Bender taught Pediatrics, Miss Sledge taught Ethics and Drugs and

Solutions, as I told you that.

FK: What do you mean by ethics?

Mrs. Humphrey: That's your behavior and how to behave and how to treat patients, and we had to stand up when the doctors came on the floor. We didn't sit down there and say, "Can I help you, Dr. King?". Do you believe that? We never called a doctor by his first name. We also had to call our co-workers Mrs. So and So, not by first name.

FK: Yes, I believe that. Did you have any other problems with ethics or decisions to make or anything that you recall? That's a big issue now, you know.

Mrs. Humphrey: We were not suppose to discuss our patients with outsiders, like if anything happened, you know.

We were not suppose to discuss our patients in case a young girl came in that was pregnant or anything, we were not suppose to discuss that even among ourselves. You're suppose to be quiet about those things. We were suppose to make rounds with the doctor when he was visiting the patients.

FK: So, it was a matter of protecting the feelings of the patient?

Mrs. Humphrey: That's right.

FK: Now, this was the days before antibiotics or any medication, any antibacterial agent at that time?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, that's right. I was out of training when antibiotics started being used.

FK: What did you do for pneumonia, for example?

Mrs. Humphrey: Mustard plasters.

FK: How did you make the mustard plasters?

Mrs. Humphrey: One to three; one part mustard and three part flour and you were suppose to put a little vinegar in it to keep it from blistering you. You would have it warm, you would make it with warm water enough that it would be warm, and then put hot water bottles on it and put it on your patient and let it stay half an hour and check to see that they were not red. It would make their skin red.

FK: Would they ever get blistered with that kind?

Mrs. Humphrey: I never had one to get blisters.

FK: Did it seem to help them?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, some of them lived, Dr. King. All our patients didn't die.

FK: Did it help relieve the pain?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, we thought, we told ourselves it helped break up that congestion, we told ourselves that. That was firm treatment of Dr. Patterson's and he was a good doctor as you know.

FK: Did you have a lot of pneumonia patients or were most of them at home?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, we did. We had a lot of pneumonia patients.

FK: In the hospital?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, we did, right many. Now, I look back and think well, it was because we were not active, you know like they are today.

FK: What do you mean, you had what now?

Mrs. Humphrey: More pneumonia after surgery, and I look back now and think well, maybe if we had turned them and that they had been more active that they wouldn't have gotten this congestion.

FK: Perhaps so. You remember other things about your treatments or anything?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, on the third morning after their surgery, we had to give their enema, that "S S" enema.

FK: That's a soap suds enema, you mixed it with soap?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir. That was Dr. Patterson's order. I can see him writing it now.

FK: It made the patient sort of miserable?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, yes, and we used a lot of rectal tubes to get rid of the gas, which you don't hear of now. No, no antibiotics, Dr. King.

FK: You remember using any quinine?

Mrs. Humphrey: You know, we've left out Dr. Ashford, but he really wasn't there when I trained. Dr. Ashford, that was his specialty for everybody that ran a fever.

FK: Dr. Charles Ashford?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir.



FK: And he came when, do you remember? It was after you finished your training then?

Mrs. Humphrey: I was through training.

FK: When did you finish your training?

Mrs. Humphrey: 1932. It was probably 1933 or 1934 when he came.

FK: Did you give many tonics?

Mrs. Humphrey: Oh yes! You've never heard of this, "tincture of Nux vomica". They'd give that for the appetite. Dr. Duffy always gave that.

FK: Did it help them?

Mrs. Humphrey: They ate.

FK: Now, during the Depression, how were things then? New Bern was hit hard then.

Mrs. Humphrey: Dr. King, the morning that the banks closed Miss Sledge said to us, that was our Superintendent, that this was a bad time, that this was a crucial time, that the banks had closed and that there was just not any money; but that she didn't know what the hospital would do, but it went on.

FK: It stayed opened?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, it stayed opened.

FK: Did it review the people that weren't afford to pay?

Mrs. Humphrey: Not that I know of, Dr. King. I can't ever remember of anybody being refused a bed admitted to that

hospital, not to my knowledge.

FK: But New Bern was in a desperate situation with no banks open?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, it really was.

FK: What did you do for money for a while?

Mrs. Humphrey: Our ten dollars was decreased to five.

FK: In your training?

Mrs. Humphrey: Per month.

FK: You initially got ten dollars a month in your training?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir, but we bought our books and furnished our uniforms.

FK: And you were given room and board?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir, and we had a good place to stay across the street. As I told you, that house has been torn down.

FK: But it was right across the street from the hospital?

Mrs. Humphrey? Yes sir. At night, if we had an accident or anything that required surgery at night, the nurse that was on Operating Room duty had to get up and go help. You know, she had to be the scrub nurse and go help set up for the surgery.

FK: Well, who gave the anesthesia?

Mrs. Humphrey: Miss Sledge.

FK: All of them?

Mrs. Humphrey: All of them. She'd get up and go too.

FK: Where did she live?

Mrs. Humphrey: She lived with us. Oh yes, and we had to be in at ten o'clock every night, and on Saturday we could stay out until eleven, and I never broke that rule.

FK: When did you and your future husband begin getting together?

Mrs. Humphrey: Oh, not until, oh I'd been out of training two years.

FK: Where did you live after you got out of training?

Mrs. Humphrey: I had a room on Metcalf Street with a Mr. and Mrs. D. C. May. They're both dead now.

FK: That was a little over a block away?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yeah, yeah, right down there next to that Inn, yes sir. I'll tell you something else. I got the flu, and Dr. Jones came around there to where I was living and he carried me to the hospital. I hadn't forgotten that.

FK: How long were you in the hospital?

Mrs. Humphrey: Oh about five days, and he gave me castor oil. They gave castor oil then, Dr. King.

FK: Did they have a routine for castor oil for night and something else for in the morning?

Mrs. Humphrey: You know, it's been fifty years!

FK: Were there any Dentist come to the hospital, did

they ever have any patients there?

Mrs. Humphrey: No. Harvey Civils was the Dentist here in town.

FK: Any of them never did any operating there?

Mrs. Humphrey: No. Dr. King, Dr. Cohen came down from Baltimore maybe once a year and did a lot of tonsillectomies and adenoid operations.

FK: And nasal and sinus surgery?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir, yes.

FK: He was a well known Physician, in ear, nose and, throat medicine.

Mrs. Humphrey: That's right. He was friendly with the Pattersons, I think. In fact, he did Joe Patterson's surgery.

FK: Do you remember Dr. Cohen's first name?

Mrs. Humphrey: No, I don't.

FK: How were things during the war?

Mrs. Humphrey: Oh, Dr. King, it was rushed to death! You know, I can't remember when they built that annex on.

FK: Well, I looked that up, and it was in 1944 when the Sisters came, but it was 1943 I think.

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, you know the War came, and there just was not enough room for all the patients.

FK: Now, the war here was World War II that we are talking about?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir.

FK: The Marine base at Cherry Point had opened up and there was a great influx of people down there?

Mrs. Humphrey: That's right. You were not here, were you?

FK: No.

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, Dr. Ashford worked himself to death, he really did. He'd come up there at ten or eleven o'clock at night making rounds and leaving orders, and he was another one for S S enemas. The hospital was full, and of course you know that we had that end upstairs for the OB, and that wing went down from second floor from medical and surgical and the rooms were always filled up.

FK: Did you have patients in the hall?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, we had patients in the hall, we certainly did.

FK: Were these Marine wives you had to add to the influx of OB patients?

Mrs. Humphrey: No, no. We had some Marine wives that were employed to help nurse.

FK: You didn't have any of the family of the Service as patients?

Mrs. Humphrey. No.

FK: Were they taken care of down there at Cherry Point?

Mrs. Humphrey: I guess they were. The living conditions in New Bern then were crowded. All these people would come

you know and they couldn't find room, anywhere to stay. They would stay in homes and wherever they could.

FK: It made you busy anyway. Did you have a great influx of other people, workers and so forth coming here?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, yes.

FK: And you were real busy?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yeah, busy, busy, busy!

FK: By that time, was Dr. Jones still practicing?

Mrs. Humphrey: No, no, and neither was Dr. Patterson. Really the load of the big surgery was on Dr. Ashford.

FK: And Dr. Duffy?

Mrs. Humphrey: Dr. Ashford at that time was still doing OB's and doing a lot out in the homes. Now, I was doing private duty at that time.

FK: Did you work in the hospital after you finished the training or you just did private duty?

Mrs. Humphrey: No, private duty and stayed on private duty until after Dick died, and then I worked for the hospital, over here for this hospital. I would help out when they would get busy you know, maybe for a month or something.

I nursed Senator Simmons when he died. I also nursed Dr. Joe and Dr. Simmons' grandfather, Mr. Albert Patterson. He lived on New Street.

FK: Grandfather, who was that now?

Mrs. Humphrey: Mr. Albert Patterson.

FK: Dr. Joseph Patterson, Sr's. father?

Mrs. Humphrey: Senator Simmons was out here with Miss Ella Meadows. I nursed him when he died. He was Dr. Simmons Patterson's and Dr. Joe Patterson's grandfather.

FK: When did they live down on East Front Street?

Mrs. Humphrey: The Pattersons?

FK: Or Dr. Simmons, I thought that was her home then.

Mrs. Humphrey: Senator and Mrs. Simmons lived on East Front Street, and she died. The Senator then lived with Miss Ella at Green Acres (inaudible).

FK: Miss Ella Meadows is his daughter?

Mrs. Humphrey: That's right. Dr. Patterson, Dr. Joe and Dr. Simmons' mother and father lived over there on New Street in a house right behind the big Bishop House. Later on, Dr. and Mrs. Patterson moved in the Senator Simmons' house and they were living there when Dr. Patterson died, I believe. I never did nurse anybody in that house. I nursed Dr. Joe in the house on New Street.

FK: Did you do a lot of home nursing?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes.

FK: How many hours a day did you work doing private duty?

Mrs. Humphrey: Oh I wanted to tell you that, Dr. King, I forgot that. The Private Duty Nurses did eighteen hour duty unless it was somebody that had really had some money and

could have two nurses, they did eighteen hour duty. You would go on at seven and stay up into the middle of the day.

FK: Seven at night, you mean?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir.

FK: And you left when?

Mrs. Humphrey: Twelve o'clock, ten, eleven, twelve o'clock the next day. If the patient were able, you had a cot in there room.

FK: So, you could maybe sleep some during the night?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir, yes sir.

FK: But it was interrupted a lot if the patient was sick?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, that's right.

FK: Now, did they serve you meals then too?

Mrs. Humphrey: We ate wherever we worked.

FK: You didn't have long to sleep though, did you?

Mrs. Humphrey: No.

FK: How long would this go on?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, it depended on how sick your patient was and what was wrong with them.

FK: Sometimes as long as several weeks.

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir.

FK: You remember how much you got paid back then?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yeah, I certainly do, five dollars a day.

FK: In the Thirties I guess. Was that comparable with



wages of other places?

Mrs. Humphrey: I guess it was, and, Dr. King, I can't remember when the hospital staff went on eight hour duty but I thought that was just wonderful when they got eight hour duty!

FK: You mean at St. Luke's Hospital?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes. The reason the training school was discontinued, it came to me that they didn't have teachers to staff, you know to do the teaching. That was one reason it was discontinued.

FK: Were these the nurses that taught?

Mrs. Humphrey: No. They didn't have anybody to do the teaching of any of the subjects that we were required to take.

FK: Were these to be taught by the doctors or the nurses there?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, anybody that could teach it you know, but they didn't have anybody there that they could get because our doctors were busy and getting old. They just got as if they couldn't carry on. You had to learn under Dr. Jones and Dr. Patterson and Dr. Latham. You had to know what you were doing. Dr. Latham said, "You're not going to State Board and fail what I taught you."

FK: And you didn't?

Mrs. Humphrey: No sir!

FK: How were the exams, were they difficult?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well yes, I thought they were hard. It

took us three days to take it. Then, you had to write out, you didn't have "mark this and mark that". I stayed at Sir Walter, we took the exams at the Capitol.

FK: In the Capitol building itself in Raleigh?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir.

FK: And that was a three day affair?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir.

FK: Then you became a Registered Nurse?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes. In about two or three months you heard. If you didn't pass, they would give you a permit to practice until you could take it again. Now, which we did have two or three that didn't pass it the first time, but they went back a second time and to take the exam again.

FK: Now, that was how many years of training, three years?

Mrs. Humphrey: Three years, and good training.

FK: Now, was there any lower levels, were there any Practical Nurses then?

Mrs. Humphrey: No. Practical Nurses were not allowed to practice there at that time.

FK: You in effect did the maid work for the hospital on the patients as well as the nursing.

Mrs. Humphrey: Oh yes. We cleaned the rooms, we did everything. We washed our bedpans, we had a little lamp with the spoon on it that we boiled our needles to sterilize our

needles to give shots.

FK: Plus you could take blood pressures and your temperatures?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes.

FK: We were talking about also during the War and afterwards. One thing we haven't talked about, in 1948 I guess, Dr. Richardson came, then Dr. Davidson. Then, in 1952 Dr. Joseph Patterson, Jr., and Dr. Simmons Patterson, and me, and Dr. William Bell all came. After that, Dr. Millns and Dr. Houghton. We had a whole slaughter of new doctors.

Mrs. Humphrey: Dr. Erdman, when did he come?

FK: A little bit later, I forget exactly. How did that seem to you then?

Mrs. Humphrey: Oh, that just seemed wonderful! That just seemed wonderful to have somebody like Dr. Milln, somebody that new what to do with the kidneys, you know. It seems that we had an awful lot of problems with people with kidneys, and you know they came from an adjoining area to Dr. Milln. I don't know when Dr. Clark came.

FK: A little later. He was with Dr. Milln. It's Dr. Joel Clark.

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, you know the Kafer Hospital opened up now in 1950.

FK: Yes, it was about 1950.

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, it opened up the year Richard was

born and he was born in 1950. Let's see now; Dr. Barefoot and Dr. Susanne and Dr. Henry, all those doctors came. Well, it took some of the load off of Dr. Ashford. As you know, he was overloaded.

FK: Well, how did you feel about the doctors that came?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, I thought it was wonderful to get all of these new doctors.

feel like they were talking about things that you hadn't had a chance to study?

Mrs. Humphrey: Oh yes, I knew they were. I knew that there was a lot of things that had never been covered during our training period because things had advanced so.

FK: But you were able to adapt to that?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, you could go along and adapt and pick it up and try to learn as you went with it. Now, Dr. Millns, he practiced over at Kafers.

FK: Did you work over there?

Mrs. Humphrey: I did some private duty over there, maybe I filled in a day or so.

FK: Well, Kafer Hospital was started by Dr. Oscar Kafer about 1950?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir. Well, they had the dedication in October of 1949, I think it was, and Pickett Duffy's, Mathilde, was the first baby born there.

FK: Mathilde Duffy, that's right. This was in an older

house on Broad Street.

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, it was the Jones House, Dr. King, Kenneth and Leah Jones' father's house.

FK: Why was that started?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, I guess Dr. Kafer wanted a hospital of his own. At that time the Sisters had come here and I think maybe there may of been a little resentment, Dr. King, with them being Catholic you know, and maybe they wanted another hospital.

FK: Now, we haven't really talked about the Sisters coming, I should of gotten that. We got a little ahead of ourselves.

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, the Sisters, they ran a good hospital, don't you think?

FK: Was it hard for you working under them?

Mrs. Humphrey: No, no. They didn't bother my religion.

FK: How about your working with the Nuns?

Mrs. Humphrey: No. I got along fine with them.

FK: They were good supervisors?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes they were, and so far as I know they were good to the patients. We were all patients there at the time that they had the hospital. In fact, Richard was born there. I had absolutely no complaint. In fact, the morning that he was born, I had a Cesarean section, they lit candles

for me.

FK: Were you bad off?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, I reckon maybe they thought I was going to die, but I didn't. But they were good to me as a patient. Margie was a patient there when the Sisters was there and Richard was sick and Dick was sick, we were all patients at the time the Sisters were there.

FK: You think some people resented the fact that they were Catholic? You do?

Mrs. Humphrey: Don't you?

FK: Well, I think so. I wondered why that was?

Mrs. Humphrey: I don't know. A lot of people got the idea then you know, if a mother was in labor and she was going to die that they would let her die and save the baby. I never been on a case like that. The public, you know, a lot people just resented going to a Catholic Hospital but that didn't bother me. Now, the Kafer Hospital was opened at the time we were sick but we chose to go to St. Luke's. They ran it for sixteen or eighteen years, I believe. Let me ask you, Dr. King, now when that addition was built on before the Sisters came here, didn't they get some money from the government some way some how?

FK: That is my understanding. I don't know all the details of that.

Mrs. Humphrey: I want to ask you something else. Didn't

the County buy from the Sisters for a song?

FK: It was fairly inexpensive, I would think now, yes.

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, that's what I was thinking, you know it did need a lot of repair, as you know.

FK: Now, the County Hospital opened in 1963, how was that, like Heaven?

Mrs. Humphrey: How was that? I thought we were rich, Dr. King, when I went in that room and it had running water in the room and a commode and everything just for one patient. I thought it was wonderful! (\*The following conversation was not intended to be recorded)

(The following is continued on tape). We felt like we were rich when we moved over there in 1963. We had a private bath for a private room patient, sink at the room, own bedpans, sterilizers for bedpans, and machines that did the suction.

FK: Oh they got the suction rather than the old wagon machine things that worked on a (inaudible) principle?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes. And the IVAC for the IV's, and our IV's were mixed in the Pharmacy, all that. We didn't have to stop and you know put the potassium chloride in our IV's, and maybe if we had one getting insulin, and the vitamins, all this was done in the Pharmacy and sent up to the floor. This was time consuming for the nurse you know to have to stop and do, if they had to do all that.

FK: Did you find that, it's hard to put, but, to find

that you were hard to learn and adapt to these new procedures?

Mrs. Humphrey: Not too much, not too much.

FK: Because your previous training enabled you to do that?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yeah, not too much, Dr. King.

FK: Do you think you knew more than some of the young ones coming on?

Mrs. Humphrey: I could learn a lot from them.

FK: Did they learn anything from you?

Mrs. Humphrey: I hope they did?

FK: You think you had something to teach them at times?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, I know bedside nursing.

FK: That seems to have gone out of style as far as the training for nurses. Who did the bedside nursing?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, you know we had aides at that time and they were really and truly were the ones that took care of the patients, Dr. King.

FK: It took them a lot of years?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes.

FK: Had they had any training much?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, they had had a course. Anne Gause taught those Aides, but I don't know for how long they had to go in training, but she did, she taught those Aides before they were employed at the hospital, and we had some good ones.



FK: Depended on much of the personality also in their training.

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes.

FK: How is your life in otherwise since you lost your husband?

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, I've worked hard, I've worked hard as you know and gotten by, staying busy with different things.

I like to work in the yard if I have the strength and I do all my housework and all my cooking.

Mrs. Humphrey: You've gotten my life history, Dr. King.

FK: Well, somewhere along the line people will be interested in this and you'd be surprised how this comes out, and if you go back through the years and say want to find out you know the history of nursing you got several segments in here and can do that now.

Mrs. Humphrey: You know, I left out one. We had History of Nursing that Miss Sledge taught, which we really did, and I had forgotten about that.

FK: Well, tell me about what you know about the history because I am interested in that.

Mrs. Humphrey: I have forgotten that, I really have. Miss Barton, what was she?

FK: She was a nurse in the Civil War. You don't have any old books do you?

Mrs. Humphrey: No, I certainly don't. I passed them on,

Dr. King, to the students that were under me that needed them.

I passed my books on. Now, Smitty Bartling says she has all hers.

FK: She still has them?

Mrs. Humphrey: She says she has all of hers packed up.

FK: Where is she?

Mrs. Humphrey: She's out to Bern Retirement, and Lela Badham is out there too.

FK: I didn't know that. I saw her the other day, but I didn't realize that she was out there.

Mrs. Humphrey: She is. She and Smitty both are out there. You know, Dr. King, the nurses that I trained with have gone on.

FK: You are eighty years old now and that's pretty good, like you still remember well.

Mrs. Humphrey: Well, I hope. I'll go to the refrigerator and say, "what I'd come here for?" (Laughter)

FK: We talked about in the St. Luke's Hospital answering the phone at night, can you tell me about that?

Mrs. Humphrey: I certainly can. You could be busy on the second floor and the phone would ring downstairs. There was no employees at night working after the offices closed and the nurses would have to answer the phone. Dr. Patterson had a phone in his office, and Dr. Jones had a phone in his office. Number 8 was the Hospital number, Dr. Patterson's was

54, and I don't remember what Dr. Jones' was. If they rang, the nurses that were on duty would have to go down at night, it made no difference what time of night it was, to answer the phone.

FK: You could hear it upstairs?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir.

FK: Did you have an elevator in the hospital?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes, we did. We had an elevator that we pulled by a rope to start and stop it.

FK: Once you started it, it went on its own?

Mrs. Humphrey: Yes sir. We also had a "dumb" waiter that brought the trays up from the kitchen in the basement to the first and second floor, and the nurses would take the trays off.

FK: Now the Operating Room was on the third floor?

Mrs. Humphrey: That's right.

FK: That was all up there?

Mrs. Humphrey: All; the Operating Room, the Sterilizer Room, and the Anesthesia Room where they put them to sleep in this little room here, and then put them in the Operating Room. The Sterilizer Room was over there on the right.

FK: Where did you take the patients when the operation was over, back to their room?

Mrs. Humphrey: Back to the room and the nurses had to take care of them. There was no Recovery Room, they went back

to the room and you had to stay with them until they reacted.

Of course, a lot of patient's families were there.

END OF INTERVIEW