

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

ELINOR DIXON HAWKINS
(MRS. CARROLL WOODARD HAWKINS)

INTERVIEW 412

This is Marea Kafer Foster representing the Memories of New Bern Committee. My number is 400. I am interviewing Elinor Hawkins, interview number 412. We are in Mrs. Hawkins' office at 400 Johnson Street in the New Bern-Craven County Public Library. Today is Tuesday the 9th of June, 1992.

MAREA FOSTER: Elinor, if you will give me your personal history, your full name, your birth date, your birthplace, your parent's names, and we will start that way.

MRS. HAWKINS: All right. My name is Elinor Dixon Hawkins. I was born on September 25, 1927 in Masontown, West Virginia. My parents were Susan Elizabeth Reed Dixon and my father was Thomas Fitchie Dixon. My mother was originally from Preston County in West Virginia and my father was from Philipsburg, Pennsylvania.

MAREA FOSTER: How interesting. How did he get to West Virginia?

MRS. HAWKINS: He worked for the Bethlehem Steel Corporation and he was a Banker.

MAREA FOSTER: Now where is Masontown located?

MRS. HAWKINS: It's about twelve miles from Morgantown, West Virginia where the University is. Later on we moved there, and I went to Morgantown High.

MAREA FOSTER: You graduated from there?

Mrs. Hawkins: Yes, then I graduated from Fairmont State College in Fairmont, West Virginia in 1949.

MAREA FOSTER: Before we get to education, you mentioned to

me in the Past that you have a sister.

MRS. HAWKINS: I have a sister, her name is Elizabeth Ann Dixon McMillan. She is married to R. D. McMillan, Jr. and they live in Raleigh.

MAREA FOSTER: Is she your only sibling?

MRS. HAWKINS: My only sister, no brothers.

MAREA FOSTER: After you graduated from Fairmont State, did you continue your education?

MRS. HAWKINS: Yes, that's how I came to North Carolina. I came to graduate school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for my Masters in Library Science, and there met my husband, Carroll, Carroll Woodard Hawkins. He was a student in the School of Business Administration. We had a very interesting meeting. I went to the University Baptist Church, and we had a student party and at the party it was sort of like a fair and you were given coupons when you went in. One of the coupons that you had to be able to use said, "Get somebody with blue eyes to sign this," and so I met Carroll through that coupon at this fair at the University Baptist Church. We still go back there. We met on October 6, 1949, and we still go back the weekend of October 6, and we go to all the home games anyway, but we always stay that weekend in Chapel Hill and go to church at that church.

MAREA FOSTER: I love that, that is very interesting! How long before ya'll married?

MRS. HAWKINS: We were married on June 24, 1951. In that

interim after I graduated from Carolina, I went to the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore to work, and I was a children's librarian there. Carroll was finishing school. He had had Navy duty, and then he received his degree in 1951 from Carolina. Interesting enough, one of his Professors was Bob Stallings. So, he knew Bob before we came here, but Carroll is really from Craven County. He is from Cove City, grew up there and always wanted to come back here.

MAREA FOSTER: And that's where you live now, in Cove City?

MRS. HAWKINS: That's where we live now. After we were married we both actually went to work in Greensboro, and I was at the Greensboro Public Library for six and a half years, and Carroll went to work with the North Carolina Revenue Department and he worked with the Revenue Department for about thirty-three years.

MAREA FOSTER: Then you were transferred to New Bern?

MRS. HAWKINS: That's right. He was transferred to New Bern and that's how I arrived here at the New Bern Public Library.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh, that's wonderful. I want to ask you about your time in Greensboro. I believe that's when you met Mrs. Kellenberger? Please tell me about that.

MRS. HAWKINS: That's right. At the Greensboro Public Library we had a very good history collection in our North Carolina room and Mrs. Kellenberger did a lot of the research on the restoration of Tryon Palace there in our North Carolina room.

She was a very disciplined person. As petite as she was, she had a lot of energy and drive and she came to the library at nine o'clock when we opened and some days she worked all day at least till five o'clock not even thinking about lunch, working through our files on Tryon Palace and on the history of Craven County. She was always so polite and so interested in doing the best she could with her research. I grew to just love Mrs. Kellenberger during that time!

MAREA FOSTER: She was a lovely lady. She just reminded me of a "China doll."

MRS. HAWKINS: I guess you really described her because she was more like a doll than anybody I've ever met.

MAREA FOSTER: She really was just truly lovely, without her and without her mother we wouldn't have this beautiful restoration that we have today.

MRS. HAWKINS: I also knew Mr. Kellenberger because I was on the Garden Club Council and he was a life-time member on the Garden Club Council of Greensboro. We always had an annual picnic, and Mr. Kellenberger came over to me one day and he says, "Mrs. Hawkins, I have a gift for you and let me put it in your hand but you can't know what it is until you just peek into your hand", and when I peeked in my hand it was a tremendous bumblebee! I'm very allergic to any bite or sting, and I said, "Mr. Kellenberger, I'm very allergic to anything that stings or bites," and he says, "but you see that bee has a big white spot on its

head, and, Mrs. Hawkins, this bee will not sting", and it didn't.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh, my gracious! He was very knowledgeable.

MRS. HAWKINS: Very! Of course later on we did become good friends when I was appointed on the Tryon Palace Commission, but those were long ago days really now.

MAREA FOSTER: That's true. I knew you had met her in Greensboro, you had mentioned that to me and I just wanted the story of it on tape. Now, when you came to New Bern, did you have a job with the New Bern Library before you got to New Bern or did you apply for it afterwards? How did you get the job?

MRS. HAWKINS: I applied through the library, but I was able to get the job through the state library. The state librarian, Elizabeth House, happened to know the opening here and recommended me to the New Bern Library Association which was I believe made up of fifteen women with Mrs. R. E. Whitehurst (Edna) as the Chairman, and Mrs. John Guion at that point in time I believe was the Treasurer. What I thought was an interview turned out to be a coffee hour at Mrs. Guion's home actually welcoming me when I thought it was going to be an interview with probably three people. Then, Marea you know at a coffee hour, you wore your hat and kid gloves, this is in actually 1958, in October. I was graciously received by all the fifteen women in Mrs. Guion's home for a lovely coffee hour, and at the end of the coffee hour I said, "Mrs. Guion, when do we have the interview?" and she says, "My dear, we were welcoming you as our new librarian!" Then, we

went over to the John Wright Stanly House which was the library at that time. I had already looked it over several times on visits to New Bern, and as we were going through the hallway there was Hilda Lancaster standing at the very old safe putting some records in it, so I met Hilda in the hallway at the John Wright Stanly House.

MAREA FOSTER: I know Hilda. I know her very well.

MRS. HAWKINS: She was a very dedicated staff member for many years.

MAREA FOSTER: Yes, she certainly was. Who did you replace?

MRS. HAWKINS: I replaced Elizabeth Flowers.

MAREA FOSTER: had talked about her before. She had been the high school librarian when I was in high school.

MRS. HAWKINS: Her husband I believe was Principal.

MAREA FOSTER: He was Principal I believe of Eleanor Marshall, maybe another school, but I do think it was Eleanor Marshall. Well, when you met everybody on your staff, who was on the staff besides Hilda?

MRS. HAWKINS: I'll have to recall. We had Sara Meadows as our Bookmobile librarian. Now Hilda was I believe the only full-time staff member and Sara was almost full-time, but of course the Bookmobile didn't go out every day. Nina Jacobs, was part-time and Charles Duffy was part-time. Let me think if I am forgetting anybody.

MAREA FOSTER: I know at one time Helen Ruth Scott worked

there.

MRS. HAWKINS: Now, that was later. She followed Margaret Nassef as our Bookmobile librarian. So, that was much later.

MAREA FOSTER: When you mention the Bookmobile, what route did Sara Meadows take?

MRS. HAWKINS: She covered all of Craven County and all of Pamlico County. That was the only library service that Pamlico County had then.

MAREA FOSTER: They did not have any branch libraries at that time?

MRS. HAWKINS: No. They did not have a branch library until 1964. They had a woman's club building down in Oriental that had a room, well actually it was their club room, and they had shelves along the wall with books that the State Library Commission had given them that were discards, and they sort of had a little library. They themselves would check out books and if anybody in the community wanted a book they would make arrangements. That was the only library service other than the Bookmobile.

MAREA FOSTER: How wonderful that they had the Bookmobile! Do you know who started the Bookmobile?

MRS. HAWKINS: I feel like that, and we really should check the records on this, but I feel like that actually Sara was the first Bookmobile librarian.

MAREA FOSTER: We are going to interview her, and she may know some more about it.

MRS. HAWKINS: Very good. I remember that they really did buy this old, panelled truck for the first Bookmobile and Sara can tell you all about that.

MAREA FOSTER: That will be great. What were your hours of operation?

MRS. HAWKINS: When I came here, our hours were ten until six, Monday through Friday and ten until one on Saturday.

MAREA FOSTER: You were in the downstairs part of the John Wright Stanly House, and I believe that had an addition on it, could you describe it to us and how the different rooms were used?

MRS. HAWKINS: I always just thought the John Wright Stanly House was the most beautiful house that I had ever seen, after being the Librarian for a number of years it just even grew on us. The interior was so beautiful that it became a part of us and we wanted to protect it. I tell you that of course the Entrance Hall is just fabulous, and that is where we used to have "story hours."

We would fill that whole Entrance Hall with children and they would even have to sit on the stairway that went up to the second floor apartments, and sometimes we would have as many as 120 children in there for our story hours. When you would turn to the right as you entered, that was our Circulation Room and we had an old desk that had been given the Library years ago that we used as the Circulation Desk. Hilda can remember firing the fireplace there with coal to keep it warm at times, the fireplace was operatable. That was our Circulation Room and we kept our new

books there. Then you went into another room that used to be a large Dining Room, or that's what they had told us it was, and it housed all of our fiction. Then, you went into the back big room that we called our Reference Room and Reading Room and it housed the non-fiction. Now, when you came into the Entrance Hall, if you turned left, that was the Board of Directors Room. The New Bern Library Association had that room that was very nicely furnished, and they had their Board meetings there and that was called our Board Room.

MAREA FOSTER: Who was on the Board, do you remember, at that time?

MRS. HAWKINS: Well, I can tell you some. Of course Mrs. Whitehurst was our Chairman, Mrs. Guion (John) was our Treasurer, Leah Jones Ward (Mrs.. D. L.), Mrs. Laurence Stith, Amy McKnight (Mrs. V. J.), Meta McCotter (Mrs. D. C. Jr.), Martha Mills (Mrs. Hugh), I really should have gotten this list together, but there were fifteen.

MAREA FOSTER: Right. We have the names in the research that Dorothy DeWeerdt did for us, but I just wanted it on tape from you. The Mrs. Guion you were talking about is Julia Mitchell's mother, Mary Louise, I believe.

MRS. HAWKINS: Yes, Mary Louise Jones Guion and of course Leah Ward was her sister, so we had sisters on the Board. Mrs. Caroline Ashford (Mrs. Charles), Mrs. Paul M. Cox, Mrs. W. F. Dowdy, Mrs. Mark S. Dunn, Mrs. C. E. Hancock, Jr., Mrs. Donald

Clements, Mrs. Harvey L. Barnes, Mrs. Raymond Maxwell and Mrs. Robert L. Stallings, Jr. were also on the Board.

MAREA FOSTER: You had a group of very active ladies.

MRS. HAWKINS: We really did and wonderful support. We had a good leader. I have to say that Mrs. Whitehurst was a very exceptional lady. She had just wonderful business sense and she really had the ladies on the Association as a real team, and she made demands of them, which I think is very interesting. That's one of the reasons I think our library has been strong from the beginning, is the Association. They were devoted and dedicated members and they wanted the best library they could get for New Bern, and that was their goal. I think that those basics have carried through.

MAREA FOSTER: I agree with you. They were people who wanted to work and were not afraid of working, they were just not nominal Board members.

MRS. HAWKINS: That's right. They just didn't attend meetings. Because then, we had to rent apartments and we had to completely maintain that large house.

MAREA FOSTER: Was this your responsibility?

MRS. HAWKINS: It was my responsibility to report this to the Library Association, and at that point in time, our budget was very limited. Our budget when I came here was about \$18,000 and that included all the money we received from the City, the County, the State and the money we made from rent.

MAREA FOSTER: But then with renting the apartments, you had to maintain them.

MRS. HAWKINS: Right! And the rent didn't take care of the maintenance, and I can't recall what the rent was.

MAREA FOSTER: Do you remember some of the tenants?

MRS. HAWKINS: Oh I certainly do! We had Emily Bunting, and she and her mother had lived there years before I came here, I mean many years. Then we had Emma Katie Firstbrooke, and she was just a delightful person. She was very sophisticated and loved to have tea in the afternoon and just thought you could run up to have tea.

MRS. HAWKINS: "Please Elinor, come up and have tea with me today!" (laughter)

MRS. HAWKINS: She was an avid smoker, and she had a lady who lived in with her to take care of her. We had some wonderful times with Mrs. Firstbrooke, and she's Emma Katie Davis' grandmother.

MAREA FOSTER: I've heard of Mrs. Firstbrooke, and she's Canadian or she was Canadian if I'm not mistaken.

MRS. HAWKINS: Exactly, she was from Canada, that's right.

MAREA FOSTER: So she was certainly used to afternoon tea! Any other tenants that you can remember?

MRS. HAWKINS: I can't, but we will have to ask Hilda because Hilda Lancaster can remember those better than I. We had somebody who followed Mrs. Firstbrooke that was a friend of mine, but right

this minute I can't recall her name. (Mrs. Estelle Babcock)

MAREA FOSTER: Don't feel badly about that, it happens to me all the time! Elinor, you mentioned story hour. When you came to New Bern to be Librarian, were "Story Hours" already in progress or is this a program that you initiated?

MRS. HAWKINS: Well, first of all a little background on "Story Hours." I was a children's librarian as I mentioned before at the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, and the emphasis of that tremendous library system was to have wonderful story hours for children because they are your patron of tomorrow, and they promoted story hours. When I went to Greensboro, I was not in the children's department, and so I was left out of the children's service area completely until the local TV station had auditions because the manager of that station wanted to start a television story hour. When I heard about this, I went to the auditions and luckily I won the audition, and I started "Telestory Time" through Channel 2, WFMY TV in Greensboro on June 24, 1952. Now that was when everything was live, black and white, we never thought of color. They gave us prime time for this weekly program, and it was from five-thirty to six o'clock in the evening just before the evening news! This program continued until we moved in 1958 here to the New Bern area. I had a wonderful time doing this program, and it was a pet of the station manager, Mr. Baines Kelly. When I left, they did not continue the program which really bothered me; it was dropped. We didn't have a television station in New Bern

at the time we came here and so I was very disappointed that the program couldn't be continued; however, when Channel 12 opened in 1964, in September, I decided I would go out and talk with them about having a local story hour on the television station. However, I decided I'd better let them get on their feet before I approached them with something like that, but in November they called me, out of the clear blue they called me and asked if I could pick up and produce the same "Telestory Time" that I had done in Greensboro. So, we started here the first year the station was opened on December 6, 1963 with "Telestory Time", and it has continued; we are in our twenty-ninth year right now.

MAREA FOSTER: And this is every week?

MRS. HAWKINS: Every Saturday morning.

MAREA FOSTER: And you wear a costume?

MRS. HAWKINS: I do. I wear sort of a Colonial costume, and our set is a fairy tale castle.

MAREA FOSTER: When you retire who is going to take your place?

MRS. HAWKINS: They have asked me to continue to do this show for a while, so that makes it nice. But back to the story hours at the John Wright Stanly House at the old library, I picked up right on the story hours. I feel like they have had story hours before. Scott Gurley and Elizabeth Flowers I'm sure had story hours. The thing I actually initiated for the children was the summer reading game. I came here in November 1958, and we started

our first summer reading game in the summer of 1959.

MAREA FOSTER: And it's still going strong?

MRS. HAWKINS: It's still going strong. It's a state program. We follow the state program.

MAREA FOSTER: Was it a state program before?

MRS. HAWKINS: No, no, there weren't such things; however, many of the large libraries in the state did have summer reading games at that time.

MAREA FOSTER: It's wonderful, and you are so right that the children of today are the libraries patrons tomorrow. I remember going to the John Wright Stanly House and checking out books, and that was when I was young as well as when I got in high school. I know that as a high school student, I used the library a lot and a lot of my classmates did. Now I want to ask you, did the high school ask you if the students could use the library, did they help you buy books, did the school system in any way help support you because their students were really using it?

MRS. HAWKINS: We've never had any type of monetary support from the school system. The philosophy of this library has been and hopefully always will be to serve the public of all ages. We have through years had some cooperation with teachers who will send a list, for instance, if the Biology department is having an insect project, they will let us know prior so that we can put books on reserve. However, we have always been a supplemental library for the schools and we've become even more of a

supplemental library and almost the prime library in the last fifteen years, because with busing the school libraries close at the last bell, and so if you have a student activity or if you are in any of the athlete programs, you don't have access to the study hall, and so the students have to come to us after school to do their homework and their school projects.

MAREA FOSTER: When I was in school, when the bell rang, the school closed and so we could not use the school library. And it was quite small, and I don't know what we would have done with our term papers and essays and things of that nature if we had not had the public library, and this is what I wondered with the limited facilities in the high school, that is why I wondered if the school system supplied you with books or anything of that nature.

MRS. HAWKINS: No, but I think down the road, and this has been talked about, we feel as if there has to be cooperative programs between the schools and the public libraries.

MAREA FOSTER: I agree with that.

MRS. HAWKINS: We have the first joint school-public library in the state of North Carolina down in Bayboro, the Pamlico County Library. It is over ten years old now and we have had wonderful response and we are open more hours there at the Pamlico County Library; we don't call it the school library, we don't call it the public library, it's the Pamlico County Library, and we are opened more hours there in than any of the libraries in our regional system. We open at eight o'clock and we are open until nine at

night and anybody who comes through the doors will be served; student, adult, child.

MAREA FOSTER: You just mentioned Regional library, so now is the chance for you to tell me how we grew from a New Bern library into a Regional library.

MRS. HAWKINS: Okay. As I said, originally we were the New Bern Public Library and our funds came from the City and the County as well as the State. We received a small grant, it was actually State aid, for Craven County and Pamlico County because we served Pamlico County with our Bookmobile. We realized that in Pamlico County that they needed more than Bookmobile service, the whole county depended on the Bookmobile. So we worked very hard trying to find a building and County support for a public library, and we were finally able to convince the County to let us have the old law building that was on Courthouse Square. It had been at one time, I believe, the Register of Deeds office. It had "safe doors" that you went through to enter the building, and by that it's like going into a bank vault, and so that was actually the door that you entered. It had very thick walls, but we were very thankful to get one room, it was a two-room building, very old brick building and we were very fortunate to get the first room. Finally, it was dedicated in 1964. We had the County appoint a Board. Our Region is made up of the three counties; Craven, Pamlico and Carteret Counties now; but, at that point in time we were the Craven-Pamlico Library service, so we had representatives

on a Board from Craven County and Pamlico County at that point in time. Marybelle Hollowell was the Board Chairman and worked very hard to have that Library approved to get the building and all in that County.

MAREA FOSTER: When did you become the Regional library with Carteret?

MRS. HAWKINS: We started working in Carteret County for them to come into a Region in 1962, and we drew up some papers but we were really finally under contract in 1964 with Carteret County, Pamlico County and Craven.

MAREA FOSTER: Did Carteret County have a public library?

MRS. HAWKINS: Carteret County library was housed at Beaufort in the old train station. The whole train station was the public library, the Carteret County Public Library. It's a tremendous building. We had many problems there on maintenance because it had a tile roof, a clay tile roof, and it was very hard to get it repaired, but they did enter the Region during 1964. At that point in time we then had three members of the Carteret County Public Library to join the Regional Board and we actually were the Craven- Pamlico-Carteret Regional Library Board with three members of the Carteret County Library Board, three from the Pamlico County Library Board and three from New Bern Library Board on a Regional Board and that continues still to this day, a nine member Board.

MAREA FOSTER: You said they joined the Region, did you ask

them to join or did they ask to join?

MRS. HAWKINS: Well, the State library was trying to coordinate libraries so that we would all be stronger and so that we could all operate in a more inexpensive way and to share materials and to share personnel. Miss Frances Gish was our library consultant from the State library and she was just a terrific person to work with, and she made us all very enthusiastic about trying to form a three county region. We had to really convince Carteret County to join our Region, but they did not have a professional librarian, and to be able to receive state aid they were required to have a professional librarian, and for a number of years they had waived this. With Miss Gish's enthusiasm and persuasion, we were able to have them join the Region with us.

MAREA FOSTER: So this initiated as a State project?

MRS. HAWKINS: From the State library, that's right.

MAREA FOSTER: And they've given you good support throughout?

MRS. HAWKINS: Throughout the years. Now in Carteret County at the old train station, I remember we had all the mystery books housed in the ticket office which was in the center. (Laughter)

MAREA FOSTER: The Mystery's must of been very popular!

MRS. HAWKINS: They were very popular! We had a large collection. But I always thought that was very humorous because when I went there the Mystery's were housed in the ticket office and we never did change it. We had to go into a building program

in Carteret County because of termites. We just couldn't get the Board to consider trying to have a new building; we were limping along at the train station for a number of years, but finally the termites ate the area that was housing World War II books, and somebody fell through the floor there, and when we really checked carefully, some of the termites were living in the World War II books.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh! You can't have that. (laughter)

MRS. HAWKINS: So this really convinced the "powers that be" that we needed to go into a building program, but I'm getting ahead of myself there.

MAREA FOSTER: Well, getting back to New Bern and John Wright Stanley House, how long were you there before you moved over on to Johnson Street?

MRS. HAWKINS: I realized that when I first came to New Bern the John Wright Stanley House was not a really functional library because we had about six rooms. The offices were in the back. When you left the Entrance Hall out as you went to the rear of building, to the left was the children's room. Two rooms had been added and those two rooms were where we mended books, cataloged books and the Librarian's office was the very last room where we also did all the typing for cataloging. We also had the little house in the back, we always called it "the little house in the back" but it was a two-story house. We also rented that and we rented it to Mary Phillips and her brother, Thad Miller for years.

That was another maintenance problem. One of the people I didn't mention on the New Bern Library Association who did a lot about the maintenance of these buildings was Genevieve Dunn. Genevieve really worked very hard on the New Bern Library Association. I recall one time that Genevieve and I really had to go to the attic of the John Wright Stanly House and that was another day! We'll have to ask Genevieve about that! (Laughter) That's was an experience!

MAREA FOSTER: This is before you uncovered the backstairs?

MRS. HAWKINS: That's right. We didn't know about the backstairs until the restoration of the John Wright Stanly House.

MAREA FOSTER: I do want to get into that and when it was moved, so if you'll continue about the Stanly House.

MRS. HAWKINS: We realized that we needed to have a functional library, and so I requested the County and City through the New Bern Library Association to appoint a Library Expansion Committee, and that Committee was appointed in 1964. It included, interesting enough, some people from Carteret County as well as Pamlico County and Craven County to pursue the governmental bodies about having a Regional Headquarters. Through our studies, we found that the Regional Headquarters needed to be in New Bern and that it should be at the New Bern-Craven County Public Library; so, that was when the New Bern and Craven County governing Boards looked at this very seriously and we came up with a building program. It was actually approved in 1966, but during that period

I will say that we had a big problem and of course that was money.

The New Bern Library Association was very, very positive that they would not look for a new library building until they could get the John Wright Stanly House preserved and restored. It was actually put on the market and we tried to sell it, but we could not find anybody who would buy the building knowing that they had a real liability in getting it restored. It came to Mrs. Whitehurst and me one day that probably the Tryon Palace Commission would be the place that we should go. Having known the Kellenbergers and talking with Miss Gertrude Carraway, we were able to arrange a meeting with John and May Gordon Latham Kellenberger. Mrs. Whitehurst made a very positive approach to them saying that we would give them the building. The Tryon Palace Commission would be given the building if it would be restored, furnished, and opened to the public; also, it would have to be moved from this site because we wanted to sell the site to the Post Office. We started this probably in the late part of 1963 and finally, I don't know the date of this, but the Tryon Palace Commission did accept the building, and I know that it was moved from the site on 407 New Street down to the Tryon Palace complex on George Street in December of 1966. At that point in time the City of New Bern and Craven County appointed a Library Board of Trustees because at that point in time the New Bern Library Association dissolved and the City of New Bern and Craven County accepted the responsibility of a public library for New

Bern and they appointed Trustees. They included: Mrs. Whitehurst who had been the long Chairman of the Association; William Sherratt who was an employed as an Engineer at Cherry Point; A. F. Whitley who was Wachovia Bank President over in Vanceboro; Mrs. Carl S. Hagar who was a teacher in the Craven County schools.

MAREA FOSTER: She taught me.

MRS. HAWKINS: She was Lucy Dameron then; Buck Rogers who was manager of J. C. Penney's was also appointed. We requested on our Board that we have a member of the Board of Aldermen to be on the Library Board as well as a County Commissioner and I'm not sure of our very first appointee from the City and the County, but I do know that maybe it was James Chance from the County and Ben Hurst from the City. A very active Board, and I will say that Mr. Sherratt was elected Board Chairman at our very first meeting of the new Library Board and he has continued as the Chairman through the building of this building, the new library now in 1992; he was the Board Chairman for over twenty-six years, and he has just resigned as of April.

MAREA FOSTER: He has done a fantastic job as Chairman.

MRS. HAWKINS: Very dedicated and really a non paid part-time staff member.

MAREA FOSTER: Yes. I don't know what you all would have done without him. After you gave the house to the Commission and then you sold the lot to the Post Office, had you already looked for a site for the new library, did you have one in mind?

MRS. HAWKINS: We were able to sell the lot at 407 New Street to the Post Office for \$44,000. That was fabulous! Our whole project cost \$234,000, the whole building of this new building, so we had to look for grant money, and so our seed money was the \$44,000 from the Post Office. We applied for a Federal grant and we received about forty-seven percent from the Federal Government for the building, and I believe that the City of New Bern and Craven County put in \$50,000 each. Isn't that fabulous that we were able to build a building of 12,500 square feet for about \$234,000.

MAREA FOSTER: Elinor, tell me, at that time I know there was no Kellenberger Historical Foundation. Mrs. Latham has a trust fund, but was her trust fund to be used for New Bern projects or is that strictly for Commission use?

MRS. HAWKINS: The Latham money is for Tryon Palace. There were no funds available, and so we were very fortunate indeed that at that point in time that the Federal Government was interested in actually promoting libraries, and not giving money for materials, but for construction.

MAREA FOSTER: How did you hit upon this lot at the corner of Johnson and Middle?

MRS. HAWKINS: We had an Expansion Committee as I mentioned, prior to that, and we were working all this time very hard hoping that everything would fall into place, and you know a lot of times

you just feel that everything is wrong and nothing is ever going to happen. But you know if you are just diligent and work real hard, all of a sudden everything just falls into place. Well, when the Tryon Palace Commission accepted the John Wright Stanly House, that was a big, big, day! I give a lot of credit to that to Mrs. Whitehurst. We were then considering sites for the library, and the site that we really wanted, in the beginning, was the Stewart property where Jane and Sara Stewart lived. That house looked like a haunted house and was vacant for a number of years, and we felt like we would like to have that property on the corner across from City Hall. But it turned out that the city felt like they needed it more than we needed it for a parking lot, and so they had already negotiated for that lot. We then considered the lot that the Sun Journal is on now, and we could not get the owner of that property and her heirs, (I can't recall her name (Mrs. Bradley Duffy) right now but she was a school teacher and she had a daughter who lived in Washington, D. C.) and we couldn't negotiate with them, but we really wanted that property. I think that the person that really came up with this idea of this lot was Livingston Stallings, and he was on the Board of County Commissioners at that time, and he said that we really needed to look at the Wadsworth property on Johnson Street. That was the big three-story, white house, and the Pure Oil Station was right here on the corner of Johnson and Middle Streets. We had to negotiate with them and Mr. Royston Blandford. So, we were

finally able to purchase this property. You know, as we look back, we were disappointed that we didn't get the property over on Pollock, the corner or then the next property, but long range planning, this was by far the best location.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh yes, I was thinking that as you mentioned the Stewart house because you would of had no place to expand unless you could of gone up, you could not have spread out. How long were you here before you decided you had to expand?

MRS. HAWKINS: Let's go into going into the Rawl's House. Let me talk about the move from the John Wright Stanly House down to the Rawls House on East Front Street.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh wonderful because I didn't know about that.

MRS. HAWKINS: We were down there for two years while this building was being built. We moved from the John Wright Stanly House by the Bookmobile. The staff did all the carrying of books out to the Bookmobile, and we moved all the books in order down to the Rawls House that we rented from Sara (Baxter) Bradbury, we rented it from her and her husband, and it was a two-story house. We rented just the first floor and it had about six large rooms, and we were able to operate as a public library at this temporary location for about two years. This was located on East Front Street across from the Holiday Inn.

MAREA FOSTER: Mrs. Rawls' house has now been torn down now.

MRS. HAWKINS: Right. It had a great big porch.

MAREA FOSTER: All of them down there did look so pretty.

When did you move into this building where we are now?

MRS. HAWKINS: We moved to this building, actually had the whole move complete and all the new furnishings delivered and everything, in February of 1968. We did not open the library to the public until after the dedication and our dedication was February 25, 1968.

MAREA FOSTER: It was a lovely library, but you outgrew it!

MRS. HAWKINS: We outgrew it. Our architect was John Peterson. We've always felt like his design was very attractive to be in a Historic District and I've always called it "modified colonial."

MAREA FOSTER: You're right about that. We agree it is attractive and it does blend in.

MRS. HAWKINS: But through the years we grew and grew, our services grew and we realized that we needed to look to expansion again, and so we asked for a joint meeting of the City of New Bern and Craven County governing Boards to meet to just discuss our library needs. I'm trying to think exactly what year that was because this building program has gone on and on and on. It was in 1984 that we requested the City and County to appoint an Expansion Committee and they did, and our first meeting then was in July of 1985. That was when we had people like Mr. Sherratt, Carole Anderson (Mrs. Albert Anderson from our Library Board), Ken Reesman, Howland Taft, Sidney French represented the County Commissioners, Paul Cox represented the City, and Eileen Cella,

and they were all the members of the Committee; also, I remember Eddie Russell was appointed on this Committee too, he had retired from the city.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh yes, he had been the City Treasurer for years.

MRS. HAWKINS: Exactly, for years, but that was the Committee that actually looked into the expansion possibilities for the library.

MAREA FOSTER: Was John Peterson chosen as the architect for the expansion?

MRS. HAWKINS: Right. We knew that there was going to be a lot of renovation to the building that we had lived in for about twenty years. So we then talked about should we be able to stay in this building while they tore out or should they build the new part of the building and all these things, and it was finally decided that we would have to look for a temporary location. We did have Mr. Peterson's architectural drawings approved by the Expansion Committee, the Board of Trustees and the City and County, but then all of a sudden that big word comes up again "MONEY", and when we talked with the County and City that we would need at that point about \$1,000,000 to construct what we had in mind, they said we would have to go to a fund raising drive. This was appalling to think that we were going to have to really go out and solicit funding in the Community, but we were really getting hyper about a new building by this time and all the

Committee was very enthusiastic. So, we decided that we would go out and look at other new libraries, and if we were going to have to raise the money we would not try to just expand this building just to make it do for a few years but we would really look at what we really needed and would never have to again expand the building downtown. So, we went around looking at libraries and so we developed the library to have much more space, and we really did feel better about it and all of a sudden we had another plan and it included more property. We found from the building code in New Bern that for the size building we were anticipating of 25,000 square feet that we would need a large parking lot, so then all of a sudden things began to grow. We realized too, that we would have to have the Eunice Wray House which we had known all along. That we would probably need, that we would absolutely have to have that house. At this point in time we started not only asking that the County and City appoint a New Bern Craven Library Development Fund, but that we would also have to be obtaining property. Our development fund was actually at the beginning sixteen members and it has expanded to eighteen members now, and they decided at a public meeting that we needed to have a fund raising consultant, and so we had to hire Don Monahan to come in and work with our Committees to supervise a fund raising drive, and it was awesome!

I think it's the hardest thing that I've ever been involved with.

We were unfortunate with our timing. We actually went into a fund raising drive on April 15 and the year I think was 1987. We

were very fortunate indeed that Dr. Dale Millns had just retired, and so he became the Chairman of our fund raising drive. I mentioned that we were unfortunate in our timing because a month after we initiated our fund raising drive the YMCA started their drive and their drive was to be for \$2,000,000, and with the plans that we adopted our project was \$1,000,000 but our whole total project was \$2,500,000. The County and City had told us to try and raise \$1,000,000 and \$1,000,000 turns out be more money than I really thought it was! We had public donations from fifty-cents up to one hundred thousand dollars. We weren't as fortunate as the "Y", they had a \$1,000,000 gift from one donor! Overall, I would say that the Library Board of Trustees, all the members of the development fund, the library staff and all the people that the development fund was able to get into committee work and that represented the business community, the civic organizations community, all these people came together and worked on committees to solicit these funds, and we finally went over \$1,000,000. We actually had forms you signed and it could be over a period of three years, and some people said ten dollars a month and some said two-hundred and fifty dollars a quarter, but it all came through and interesting enough we were able to collect all the money that had been committed except for about \$17,000, and that's wonderful!

MAREA FOSTER: Yes it is! I think that's a better record than probably some churches have on their pledges.

MRS. HAWKINS: That's a good comment Marea, because people can hardly believe this happened and some of the organizations that did not come through with their commitment were organizations that went bankrupt or some people who were prominent citizens who really left town and moved to another state and so they just didn't follow through with their commitment.

MAREA FOSTER: At this particular time too, interest rates were falling and some people's income, because they depended on interest, that fell too, and they were not able to meet the pledge they made when they had the income. That happened to a number of people that I know of. But it's a beautiful building now, just absolutely beautiful.

MRS. HAWKINS: Well, our ground breaking was in September of 1990, and the building was completed in exactly a year. During all this period, we had moved to a temporary location and then we had to move again. Our temporary location was the Heilig-Levine Building down on Tryon Palace Drive, the old furniture store. We were able to get that approximately 4,000 square foot building for a period of two years, and we used the complete first floor for offices and library service and we had storage on the second floor as well as a Staff lounge. It worked very well except for one thing, and we knew that we had some problems but we didn't know that we had the problem that actually existed and that was a leaking roof in the rear of the building in the warehouse where we stored all of our magazines. I think over the period of two

years, three different times we had at least three to four inches of water covering the floor, but the Staff was very supportive in all this because they knew that someday we were going to be in a new building. We had our boots there and we would go in to save everything. The City, Danny Meadows and his crew, really, would come at our beck and call when we had these big emergencies and sweep the water out and vacuum it with a shop-vac. Those were very trysome days. I will say that we had to cover our book stacks along two walls with plastic, covered the card catalog every night, afraid it might leak. (Laughter) But you know going through those stressful times really make the rewards of a new building greater, if you can just survive!

MAREA FOSTER: Yes, yes. Well, if you know you are coming into a lovely new building and everything on computer, a different concept so to speak about libraries now.

MRS. HAWKINS: Yes, that's another story. We realized that if we were going to have a new functional library that we would have to automate, and Craven County was very supportive of this. I will say that Tyler Harris encouraged us on this. It's a task that some libraries never attempt to do themselves, but we because of funding, knew that we couldn't find \$80,000 to do our retrospective conversion and that would be to input all of our acquisitions, all of our holdings, into the computer so that we could do away with the card catalog. A lot of libraries will send their shelf list that shows the holdings, all the different

titles, away to a company and let them do it, but that would of cost us about \$80,000. So, we knew we had to do it ourselves but we knew too that the task was too large. We went to the Community College and asked for their support and help and asked if we could solicit their computer science students to work for us as a lab and pay them minimum wage to assist us in doing this retrospective conversion.

MAREA FOSTER: That's a wonderful idea, and they did it didn't they?

MRS. HAWKINS: They did. For sixteen months our Staff and the Computer Science students at the Community College worked. We had two computers going, and from eight o'clock in the morning until nine o'clock at night we had two teams inputting our shelf list on the computer.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh Elinor, that's a wonderful example of Community support and cooperation!

MRS. HAWKINS: It really is! We could of never accomplished this if we hadn't of had this cooperation and too we had two people that were just very dedicated, and that was in our processing department; Debbie Caton and Fay Bullard, and they supervised this project. But the big person in the whole thing is Dennis Holton who is the Data Processing Director for Craven County, and he was our real supervisor and he is just tremendous. He is a workaholic and he really organized and coordinated this program for us. We were able to not only do our retrospective

conversion to have an on-line catalog, but we were able to develop the whole new circulation system that is on-line, we were able to put all of our bookkeeping and our statistics on computer. We did this all during about a sixteen month period before we moved to the new building. It's stressful enough to be in a building program and in the construction and so forth, but we attempted to do the whole thing and we made it. But at some point in time, at some of our Staff meetings, our Staff would think, "just what are we doing?", and all we did was say, "keep going, it isn't going to be as bad as it has been!" With their real dedication and very, very hard work, we were able to accomplish all of this.

MAREA FOSTER: Your staff has grown tremendously from the time you started in the John Wright Stanly House.

MRS. HAWKINS: It really has. Right now, including Pages, the high school students that shelve all of the books, our part-time and full-time staff members, we sometimes have thirty-three people on our payroll for a month, and even more in the summer with our student assistants.

MAREA FOSTER: You're opened on Sundays?

MRS. HAWKINS: Yes. In the new building we had promised the public that we would start being open on Sunday. To be able to really look at this from a manager's standpoint, we decided to close the library on Friday nights. Our library was not being used on Friday nights, it was the slow night by far of the week, and so we now close at six o'clock. Before, Friday was catch up

time for the Staff, so we decided to be fair that we would only have to add one hour to our payroll to be opened on Sundays, and we are open from two until six. So, closing three hours on Fridays and opening four hours on Sunday, we had to only add one hour.

MAREA FOSTER: I love the Sunday opening, and every place that I lived always had Sunday library hours, and I really enjoyed it. I missed it when we didn't have it here, but I got used to it. I knew I had to rush down here before six o'clock on Saturday if I had to have something, but I do think it's very nice. Do you find that on Sunday that you have a lot patrons? Do you have a lot of students?

MRS. HAWKINS: We have a lot of students and we have a family time, and that's what I try to promote on "Telestory Time", family reading, and I request the children to ask their parents to have a story hour at bedtime for them. If they only take five minutes to read to the children or if the child will let the parent read and then let the child read to the parent. Some of the very best memories I have of growing up actually are my family reading together, and my mother a former school teacher, read to my sister and me every night and we were allowed to choose the story we wanted her to read. My father was an avid reader. I always felt like we had more magazines than the public library at times because he subscribed to so many magazines, and then he subscribed to book clubs that were very popular in the thirties. So, I grew

up with a library background and I really try to promote this and I find that families are using the library. I encourage this because you know, you grow up awfully fast and all of a sudden your family time together is over, and you go away to school and you know that's almost it. I'm just encouraging this because the more you read the better reader you are. Interesting enough, not only enjoying the reading, but also learning so much as you read makes it a life time investment, and I shouldn't tell you that because you are one of our best patrons!

MAREA FOSTER: Yes it is! I love it, I read every single day. I'm going to read at least two hours every day! I can't go to bed at night without reading. I grew up reading and mother reading stories to me. Whenever I got any extra money I would go to McLellans because they had a wonderful selection of girl's books and I bought the "Honey Bunch" books and the "Bobsey Twins", and you could buy them at that time for ninety-nine cents. That was a lot of money then, but still that would be just about my months allowance, and I would go right to McLellans and buy a book.

MRS. HAWKINS: Well, I think that today television brings the world into our homes, but we need to budget our television time and budget reading time. If you read fifteen minutes each day, by the end of a week you will have read, as these statistics go, a half a book and by the end of two weeks you will have read a book.

So, if you could read two books a month just by fifteen minutes a

day, and if you read fifteen minutes a day and get interested in a book you're going to read much longer.

MAREA FOSTER: You certainly are. I've sat up many a night to two o'clock reading because the book was so good. You just get interested.

MRS. HAWKINS: That's right, and if you read while you are waiting for people; just have a book available, it's amazing how much time we wait.

MAREA FOSTER: The best place to read is the Doctor's office. I never go without a book. Any place as you say, when I have to wait I have a book with me, always.

MRS. HAWKINS: We need to encourage others to do that. Some people just sit.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh, and I can't do that, I have to read. Even when I'm going to the Optometrist and I know he is going to dilate my eyes and I go with a book in my hand. (Laughter) Well, now is there anything else that you would like to tell me about the new library?

MRS. HAWKINS: The new library has some interesting features. As you know, I am very interested in children's programming, and I wanted something in the new library that would be very appealing because we want them to feel that the library has been built for them. So, we were thinking about having an old Warner Brother theater marque with blinking lights to go into our mini-theater. We have a special theater for the children in the Children's Room

for our story hours, and so in my building program I had written that we wanted a blinking marquee. The lighting engineer never came up with the plan, and I kept saying, you know you put that on the back burner we'll really end up without anything and I'm getting worried, and so he says, we're going to have something. Well, on Memorial Day weekend I was home on a Monday, and I'd been concerned about this and I'd been worried about it for several weeks and a mini-rainbow came down in our yard, I live out in the country, and it was the most beautiful thing, a very small rainbow. I looked down and I said, "You know there isn't anything more beautiful than a rainbow. Thank you Lord!" I said, "We need a rainbow in the Children's Room as the entrance to the mini-theater." I really even get teary-eyed about it, but that was our answer because children love rainbows.

MAREA FOSTER: Yes, I've seen it and I love it!

MRS. HAWKINS: So, to go into our mini-theater you walk under a lighted rainbow. It wasn't as easy as all that because we started out wanting a stain glass rainbow that could be lighted. We found that was too heavy so we had to go to plexiglass, but it is very hard to find somebody to make a large rainbow other than the Good Lord. We called and called, and finally I found a place actually in Dover, it's called "Reflecting You" and they do beautiful stain glass work. When I told their receptionist we were looking for someone to make a rainbow, she said, "Oh, we just made one!"

MAREA FOSTER: How nice!

MRS. HAWKINS: They had made one that was about three feet in a mural of stain glass for a Chapel in Goldsboro, and so we started working with them and they came through with just what we wanted. Another thing we have in our Children's Room is the Book House, and it is a house that's over the picture books.

MAREA FOSTER: Yes, I've seen it and I love it!

MRS. HAWKINS: It has the roof of wooden shingles, a chimney and shutters on the windows and a very nice window box that my husband made for us.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh good, I'm glad you gave Carroll credit!

MRS. HAWKINS: I had to give Carroll credit on that! Then the only thing that is exceptional in our building is the Kellenberger Room, and that is where we have all of our North Carolina History and Genealogy collections. It was a feeling of the Library Board of Trustees and through my direction really that Mrs. Kellenberger needed to be recognized downtown. She's recognized at the Palace, but she came through with the Kellenberger Historical Foundation and she gave over three and a half million dollars for this Trust and in this Trust she wanted history research done as well as restoration for New Bern and Craven County, and she wanted people to be educated about our heritage. If you're a local person and like to tour the Palace, you know this. If you're a tourist, you definitely know this because you've learned about Mrs. Kellenberger and Mrs. Latham

when you toured Tryon Palace. But for the citizen of New Bern and Craven County, Mrs. Kellenberger had not been recognized, and so we felt like we could recognize her with our History Room. So, we did go the Kellenberger Historical Foundation and asked for \$100,000 for the room to house the North Carolina History and Genealogy collections and to name it the Kellenberger Room. They came through with the funding, and we were very happy.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh yes, yes, this would have pleased her just greatly, she would of said, "You shouldn't have done it", but I know she would have just been beaming!

MRS. HAWKINS: It sort of goes back to me in Greensboro because I met her through the historical research she was doing there, and it just came to mind when we were doing this, Mrs. Kellenberger, you would really appreciate this.

MAREA FOSTER: She would, because you saw how hard she studied it and knew how much history meant to her. It is a wonderful tribute. She would be very pleased, and Mr. Kellenberger would be pleased for her.

MRS. HAWKINS: He really would. We didn't make it really plush but we tried to make it elegant with the brass chandeliers and using the sofa that we already had but we always thought was elegant. We are going to have the portrait that Joseph Wallace King did of May Gordon Latham Kellenberger a number of years ago that hangs at the Palace duplicated; we've been able to borrow it for a couple of months, and Mr. King has agreed to do a duplicate

in oils of that portrait for our Kellenberger Room. That was absolutely just confirmed yesterday afternoon. It is such a beautiful portrait.

MAREA FOSTER: That's wonderful, and she was as we said earlier a lovely lady, like a China doll.

MRS. HAWKINS: It really adds so much to the room and since the room is a tribute in memory of her it's just most fitting.

MAREA FOSTER: I think so too. Now, anything else you want to tell me about the library? I have one question I want to ask you, if you don't have anything else.

MRS. HAWKINS: The only thing I would like to say is that being able to actually complete this newest library building, must be accredited to so many different people; especially dedicated Staff members, to dedicated Library Board Members who gave so much of their time and effort, especially Mr. Sherratt who really has been a most exceptional person. Also, to the people who worked so hard in the development fund, and that development fund and the committees were made up of our Community leaders, and so it's a big "Thank you" to all of them for this beautiful library that we have just been able to dedicate.

MAREA FOSTER: Thank you. Now the one thing I want to ask you because we didn't touch on it at all, when you came to New Bern the libraries were segregated, did Blacks use the library at the John Wright Stanly House?

MRS. HAWKINS: Actually they did not, Marea, and of course I

had come from Baltimore, big city, where everything was integrated. We had a West Street library, the West Street Public Library over on West Street and it was the Black library. Miss Charlotte Rhone was the Board Chairman and Mrs. Sadie Lowe was the Librarian.

MAREA FOSTER: She was here, if I'm not mistaken, when I worked down at the library.

MRS. HAWKINS: That's right, Mrs. Sadie Lowe was the Librarian. I immediately went and asked them if they would like to be a part of our Regional library, this was after 1964, to have collections of books that we could bring in to help their collection because they didn't receive state funds for their library operation. Charlotte Rhone, at the beginning, didn't feel like they really needed many books. Later I went back and I said, well you know we would really like you to use the Main library here and your children would have more books to use, and so they agreed finally that I would take Regional library collections to them. The whole idea of a Regional library is to rotate books, save money and not buy eight copies of one book but to buy three books that can be rotated through eight libraries, and I said we would love to rotate some books over here, and so we finally did that. I started attending the Library Board meetings and we had two white members; Mrs. W. C. Chadwick, and I can't think of the other lady's name just right now (Mrs. John D. Whitford), but it was interesting. They were very supportive for the Black library.

When we built this library and dedicated it in 1968, as I was going to the Board meetings I said, "I think it's really time that we closed this library because all your boys and girls are going over to the new library and they want the new library, and why don't we just ask the City not to fund this library anymore and get more funds for the new library?" Well, they were indignant about this, they did not want to close their Black library, and I can understand this. It took years for us to finally convince them by keeping statistics. Sadie Lowe was a dear person, and she kept really good statistics of the number of people who were using the library and the number of people checking out books, and the Board realized that they just didn't need the funds, because it (library) was not being used, they were using the new library. All this time I had suggested that Mrs. Sadie Lowe become a member of our Staff. If they would close the library, we would certainly want her to come on board over here. Finally, and I can't tell you the year, they did close the library, the City stopped funding them and Mrs. Lowe joined our Staff; that has been a long time ago.

MAREA FOSTER: Yes it has, it's been a long time. I worked in 1975 and she was here then and very nice to work with. Is she still living?

MRS. HAWKINS: Yes, she is still living and we are still real good friends, and I hear from her at Christmas time. She could give you some information. Charlotte Rhone died a number of years

ago.

MAREA FOSTER: I've heard a lot about Miss Rhone.

MRS. HAWKINS: Rev. Babbington Johnson followed Miss Rhone as the Chairman of the Library Board.

MAREA FOSTER: Do you know anything about the WPA and their work with the library?

MRS. HAWKINS: Yes. The New Bern Library Association was able to receive WPA funds to renovate the John Wright Stanly House. The New Bern Library Association bought the John Wright Stanly House at the time the new Federal Building was being built and it had to be moved from Middle Street over to New Street, and that's when they were able to buy the building, the John Wright Stanly House for under \$5,000 but I can't remember the exact amount. Then, they were able to get WPA workers to do the renovation work and the building I think was actually opened in 1935.

MAREA FOSTER: Elinor, do you know if these WPA workers were local people or people who were brought in?

MRS. HAWKINS: I don't know. Really, that was before my time.

I think that in Mary Louise Stevenson's history of the library, all this would be in there.

MAREA FOSTER: Something else I wanted to ask you, do you seek out rare books?

MRS. HAWKINS: No we don't. Oh, I'm glad you mentioned this

because when I came here I, and I don't know old books, but I knew we were using all this old shelving, what I call lawyers shelving with glass faces where one shelf would stack up on top of another, and we needed new shelving. We also had a lot of books that weren't being checked out, there were old books, but I do not know old books. I had learned to know Mr. & Mrs. Paul Smith at the "Intimate Book Shop" in Chapel Hill when I was a student. So, I called Mr. & Mrs. Smith because he had two old book shops and he did buy old books, and I called Mr. and Mrs. Smith to come down and appraise our collection to see if they could buy some of our old books that were not being checked out, and they came. He went through our collection and he called me to the backroom and says, "Mrs. Hawkins, Mrs. Hawkins, don't get excited!, don't get excited!, but I think I just found a gem!" He was so excited, but he didn't want me to become so. The book that he had in his hand was H. Lewis' History of the Mississippi written in German with seventy-five lithographs, and he says, "I think this is one of the things that we have on a rare book list that everybody is looking for, but I want you to put it in the vault at the bank, and I will be back in touch with you." Well, he bought probably about 120 books of all these old books we had and went back and called me and he says, "That is the book, I think." Then he asked permission from the Library Association to take the book to Chapel Hill and he asked us to bring it up. So Genevieve Dunn, Leah Ward, and I took that gem of a book. Before we got to Chapel Hill

we took it to Jeremy North in Durham, we wanted him to look at it.

I think he was head of the Duke University North Carolina Collection. We had him appraise it and then we took it on over to Mr. Smith and he immediately put it in the Chapel Hill bank. He called one of his best friends who was the rare book librarian at the New York Public Library to come and look at this book, and they decided that it was one of three in existence and that it was worth a substantial amount of money. We put it on the market and he was able to sell it for us for \$2,340, that was a lot of money!

It was sold to the Minnesota Historical Society, and to this day they print the lithographs and sell the prints for their Society, and they are from our book that we sold them. With the over \$2,000 we were able to buy metal shelving for our Main Room near the Circulation Department. That's how we were able to buy our metal shelving. But we do not look for rare books, the only thing we look for are rare North Carolina books that will enhance our collection in our Kellenberger Room for students and people who do research. We have people who do research who come to our Kellenberger Room from all over the United States.

MAREA FOSTER: They ask us at the Palace, "Where can I get information on such and such," and I always say go to the library and ask for Emily Jane Miles.

MRS. HAWKINS: She is so good. She knows the collection and is interested in helping and we do have the best Genealogy and North Carolina History collection east of Raleigh. Some of our

holdings they don't have and of course they have a lot we don't have, but we have so much on microfilm and we have all the Sun Journals back on microfilm to the very early dates.

MAREA FOSTER: That's wonderful. Just think, in a few years you are going to have all these tapes from "Memories of New Bern!"

MRS. HAWKINS: Yes, and we do have the old photo archives. Kellenberger Historical Foundation gave us a grant, and we have over 2,000 photographs of New Bern that go back prior to the Civil War and these are in great demand. They really have helped people write books and print the photographs, and we are very proud of that collection.

MAREA FOSTER: That is just fantastic. Elinor, what date did you say you and Carroll were married?

MRS. HAWKINS: June 24, 1951 in Fairmont, West Virginia. John Carroll Hawkins, our only child is thirty-two and married to Kellie Wiggins, a local girl from Cove City. She's just recently graduated from East Carolina University and is working at Weyerhauser. John graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in Business Administration and he works with the North Carolina Revenue Department as an Auditor just like his father did for about thirty-three years.

MAREA FOSTER: Yes. I remember John coming in and getting books on "fishing flies".

MRS. HAWKINS: Oh, you're right! He learned to tie flies and then he sold them when he was like ten years old until about

fourteen. He had a market through Baxter's Sporting Goods.

MAREA FOSTER: Oh that's wonderful, what a nice sideline, nice income for him. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us?

MRS. HAWKINS: Well, I have commuted to New Bern from Cove City. All these years we lived out on the farm that Carroll's father had forever, and we have enjoyed the country life, and our son John and his wife Kellie have renovated the farm house and are living within sight of our house. You know, at first I thought commuting from Cove City to New Bern every day would be difficult, but it's a wonderful time to relax and plan the day and when you go home you unwind, and that sixteen miles gets shorter every day. I've been here since 1958 and that's a long time, this is my thirty-fourth year and each day gets shorter. But I'm looking forward to retirement.

MAREA FOSTER: Well I'm sure you will still be active, as you said you'll still continue the "Telestory Time" for a while.

MRS. HAWKINS: That's right.

MAREA FOSTER: I do want to thank you so much for this wonderful interview.

MRS. HAWKINS: You've made it fun Marea!

MAREA FOSTER: Well, thank you. I have had a good time with it; it's just wonderful and interesting to talk to you, and you talked about people I know, and New Bern is home, and this is a wonderful, wonderful success story thanks to you and I appreciate

it.

MRS. HAWKINS: Thank you.

END

OF

INTERVIEW