

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

ROSE GOODE MCCULLOUGH

INTERVIEW 903

This is Dorothy Richardson representing the Memories of New Bern Committee. My number is 900. I am interviewing Mrs. Rose Goode McCullough, interview number 903. This interview is being conducted on July 9, 1992. We are at Twin Rivers Nursing Center.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: What happened in 1992?

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: You're being interviewed.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Oh, I don't remember.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Mrs. McCullough, where were you born? Where were you born?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: I was born in the country. We were living on a farm about five miles from Boydton, Virginia.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Oh. What year were you born?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: I don't remember. I couldn't remember.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Did you have brothers and sisters?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Yes. I don't know. Yes I do. I was born in 1886.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Oh, boy. Do you have any brothers and sisters?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: I have, I had several sisters and two brothers. The brothers died and only one sister is left still living.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Good. Who were your parents?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: What?

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Who were your parents?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Who were my parents? My mother, my father, of course, was a Goode. He was Edward Goode, but my mother was a Morton.

Do you know how you spell that?

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: No.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: It's M-o-r-t-o-n.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Oh, yes.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: And she was Miss Morton when she married my father. And he never married. She didn't ever marry anybody else. She died when I was little. I don't remember her.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Who took care of you all?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: My father lived in the town with his family. His mother and his sisters, they took care of us. He had a housekeeper and kept a home, but his mother and sisters lived there and they looked after things.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Do you remember going to school there?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Well, it wasn't what they'd call school now. They didn't have then any primary schools in the school system, and several parents would get together and hire a teacher who would start the little ones the first year or two. And I can remember going to school to my teacher like that when I was very little. It was what they called a day school. Didn't everybody go to school like they do now. Those parents that could afford it put together and hired a teacher to teach a small class.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Did you, after you were older did you go away to school?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: How old did I go out of the school?

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: When you were older did you go away to school,

to college?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Yes. When we were old enough, my mother died and that left nobody at home to supervise things and my sister and I went off to school. We were sent to Randolph Macon.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Oh yes, yes. That was a good, that still is a very noted school.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Well, Randolph Macon was a kind of a feeder for the college. It was a good school and we were there a year or two.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Do you remember any illness you had when you were younger?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: What was that?

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: You remember any illnesses you had when you were younger and how you were treated?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: And in the doctor? No. When my mother died, I was still quite young and I don't remember things back of that much and I don't remember any doctor that she had. I don't think she was sick long. Probably we didn't have a doctor.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Uh huh. Back then.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: At that time.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: How about you? Were you a healthy girl? Were you a healthy girl? Did you get sick?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: I was always very healthy. I, they used an expression then. They would say you were a tom-boy and I was a tom-boy. I was always climbing trees and getting over fences and things like

that. And I remember that.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: How old were you when you were married, Mrs. McCullough?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: You hope what?

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: How old were you when you were married?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: I did not marry young. I was 32 in the year I was married.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Who was your husband, Mrs. McCullough? What was your husband's name?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: My husband's name? He was Charles. Charles McCullough.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Did you have children?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: I had one son. The only child I ever had and he grew up nearly to be a man and then he died, the police, he was not sick. He left me one Sunday after dinner expecting to come back to supper, but I never saw him again. They, nobody was there. He was driving alone and the police found a small rock in his car. They think his car hit a rock and then flew up into the car and struck him on the head, but nobody knew exactly what happened.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: When did you move to New Bern, Mrs. McCullough? Do you remember?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: When I came to live in New Bern?

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Yes.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Not until I married. I think I had been in New Bern maybe a few months or a short time, but I hadn't lived there

or planned. But, of course, when I married I went where my husband lived and New Bern was his home. (This is incorrect. Mrs. McCullough lived with her husband in Darlington, S.C.; came to New Bern after her husband and son died.)

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: It was? Do you remember the years you worked in the library?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Yes, but it was different then. The librarians didn't get paid as a rule. It was not, a lot of times it was voluntary work and I think that my work was voluntary and I knew once they insisted on paying me something because I had worked a long time for nothing. But I didn't have to do that. It was voluntary.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: You loved books.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: But I know they insisted that they wanted to pay me something and they took, I took the money. They set the amount, somewhere around \$50 or \$60, but I remember I took the library money and did something with it for the library. It was a way of giving it back. I didn't want to be paid for what I did for the library.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: What were some of the things you did in the library?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: What?

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: What were some of the things that you did in the library?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Oh, well, mostly we would use the expression, I kept the library on Wednesday. That just meant you were there. You had the doors open. If anybody wanted to come in, the library

was open, and there was somebody there, me on my days, to supervise, to help people who were looking for books, to help them find what they wanted. But I kept the library a great deal, because I had a lot of time and the married women with little children didn't have all that time. So I kept the library a lot and I enjoyed it, working with the books.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: You loved books?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: I loved books.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Was Mrs. Flowers working there when you were there?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Oh, no. I didn't know her 'til years later. She was not married then, not living in New Bern. Her people, I think, live not far from there.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Who was librarian when you were there?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Well, I think there were several, because I was there a good while, but I don't remember.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Elinor Hawkins was there wasn't she?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Elinor Hawkins?

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Uh huh.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: If she says she was, she was, but my memory don't include that.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Did you catalog the books, and put them on the shelves, and

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Well, not what you'd call catalog. I would make a list of books of a certain kind that we had so when people asked

about them, I would have some answers. But I didn't do any regular cataloging.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Did you ever hear anyone talk about the WPA and how they helped the library? You weren't in New Bern then, but

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: No, I wasn't in New Bern then and I didn't hear much about that.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: They were suppose to have given books during the depression years.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: The trouble then was that I was not interested. I didn't care enough to listen. When people talked about old times and things that had happened, I didn't pay attention like I should have done and afterwards, I've regretted it, because they remembered a lot of things that got lost by not recording them.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Yes. Did you ever hear anyone mention the Mary Hendron Vance Memorial Fund?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: What?

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: The Mary Hendron Vance Memorial Fund? They were suppose to have given books.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Well I don't know. If he gave books, he probably was a little older than I was. If he had any money to buy books with and I don't remember him at all.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: You published some books too.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Probably.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: You wrote some books.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Oh yes. I wrote some books later. I wrote

four books in all, but that was after I was older, not when I was growing up there.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: But you wrote one about New Bern, didn't you? About the ships in New Bern?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: You know, I can't remember. I read about the ships. I knew about 'em. That's why I can't remember. I get what I remember mixed with the past and I don't remember about the ships.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: I think you wrote a book, you looked, investigated and interviewed and read papers on Ghosts of the River.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Ghost on the River. Oh, yes. That was the name of one of my books. If they have a library that keeps the old books, they'll still got that book. The New Bern library had all of my books and one of them was Ghost on the River.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: And when you came to New Bern, I imagine looking at the river, you kept wondering about the seaport that New Bern was at one time.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Not as much as I would now. One of my great regrets is that I had heard so much then and didn't keep it. Didn't make any record or try to remember it and so much was lost that I might have kept. But it's gone, so that's that.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Is there anything that you remember about the New Bern library, your working there, anything special that happened, or funny?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: No, except I remember it was, New Bern was a smaller town then than now, and it was a small library. Didn't have

a big staff and I used to, often I would keep the library. It was voluntary. They offered to pay me and keeping it just meant somebody would be there so it would be opened.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: What kind of books did you like the best?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: I always liked fiction.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Any authors especially you liked?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Yes, I always especially liked fiction. I didn't go in much for what you'd call the heavy reading.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: But you've always loved books?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Always loved books and was always reading something. My people on both sides of the family for a good way back came from England and I've always valued my English descent and been glad we go back to the old English families. But nobody cares about those things now.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: I think they do. I think we're appreciating more our roots.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Some places they do.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Our roots are very important. They make us what we are.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: I know it. But most people, or many people don't realize that. I was an Indian. You wouldn't think it to look at me would you?

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: No.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: But I'm one of the Virginians. There are a number of them who's descended from Pocahontas. So, I was, that's

when I say I was an Indian. I had that much Indian in me that I was one of, Pocahontas had one son, Thomas, her only child, and when she died, he left one son. And with just one in each generation they were easy to keep up with. And Pocahontas was one of my ancestors.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: So you are a true American?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Oh, no. I was a child then.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: No, but you are an American from the Pocahontas side.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Oh entirely so, English.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: And American.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: And American. Well, of course most Americans over there then were English, because we didn't have a lot of settlers. But,

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: I think that's so interesting that Pocahontas was one of your ancestors.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Well all of that record is very straight and very detailed. There wasn't any question about the history. There weren't so many English settlers here then, and those that were here kept very strict records. So all that's down straight.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: New Bern was settled by the Swiss in the beginning.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: I know it was. We were entirely English in my part of the country. Settled by English settlers. But I know New Bern was settled and the Swiss were good people too, and good settlers. They made good settlers.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: There've been many changes in New Bern since you came haven't there?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Well if I would have put them all down, I could write a dozen books just recording the changes, but it don't matter because things keep changing and when I would put down today this changed that month and next month something else was changed. It don't stay put.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: What do you think are some of the good changes?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Well, I don't know. Education, of course, is the main one. When I first went to school, there were not any public schools for very young children then. What we would call primary and the parents of a group of children of similar age would get together and hire a teacher and she was responsible to nobody but to the parents. They were her employers. But that was to start them and I remember when we would all go to school and the teacher was paid by the parents and of course that meant they favored certain scholars. They tried to please the parents. They naturally would. But afterwards, when they became public schools and they all had teachers, it made a big difference in the system.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Do you think public schools are doing what they should for children now?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: I don't think any public group has got anything to brag on now. No. I think it's a case of the individuals. Some of them are doing all they can and some of them don't care. And at

that time, when I was growing up, I didn't care.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Well, New Bern was very fortunate to have you come and live here.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Oh, I can't imagine living anywhere else or being anything but English in my origins.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Well, Mrs. McCullough, is there anything else you want to talk about?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: I don't, I've lived a long time to know so little, but I don't remember anything special that happened.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Well, you have lived a fruitful life.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Well, you see I lived in a little country town and on the edge of that and the things that were happening, a child wouldn't notice. So important things may have happened then, but they didn't mean anything to me, and I don't remember them.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Do you ever watch television now? The news?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Not so much as I did, but I watch it. Television, the people back of television have brains. Some of those programs are very good.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: What kind of programs do you like?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Oh, just a mixture of what, I just turn the television on to see what's there and if I'm interested, I leave it on and if not, I turn it off. But I don't have any program at all.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Do you like the news? The news programs?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Did I like what?

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: The news programs, where they tell about

the

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Oh, the news programs. They're the ones I listen to the most, because they tell you and most programs don't, but they tell you what's back of the news. Why such a man did this or that and his reasons for it and then they tell you that what the result is going to be of certain actions, and that is very informative and very interesting.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Did you always vote in elections?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Always, from the time a woman could vote. I didn't have a car and then I had to walk about a mile to vote.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: But you did?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: But I did and I was thinking on election day now of the many miles I have walked going to vote.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Did you have anything to do with helping the women get the vote?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Not a bit. I was not in sympathy with that particularly, not especially interested in it and I didn't think much of women having the vote. I knew enough about women to know that most of them didn't vote on principle. They voted on impulse. The way they felt about something. And I wasn't 'specially interested in their having the vote.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Or voted the way their husbands told them to vote.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Well, that exactly. What had really happened was that a household had as many votes as it had men in it. That,

of course, the women hardly counted at all as a voters. Nobody thought of them as being important voters. That came later.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Were you glad to see women take an active part?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: No. I never have thought women had as much sense as men.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Not even now?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Not even now.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Oh, Mrs. McCullough.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Well, I see 'em every day. The reason I feel that way is I know 'em now. I know these women and they are the same ones that I knew when I was a child.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: What about Eleanor Roosevelt?

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: I didn't like her. She was pushing, what I'd call an upstart. I never liked Eleanor Roosevelt. I always took a lot of interest in national politics and I knew what was going on and I knew, kept up with Eleanor Roosevelt, and I was not one of her admirers.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: She was for woman's vote and she was for better child labor laws and she was for

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Primarily, she was for Eleanor Roosevelt. What she thought was to her interest or that she wanted was what she worked for.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Well, it was an interesting time.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: What?

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: It was an interesting time.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: All times are interesting, but not all times see so many changes. That was a time the world was changing tremendously then on account of communication. It was beginning to get world wide news and to know why if you did a thing the effects are going to be bad. And that was a very interesting period.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Well, Mrs. McCullough, I do thank you for sharing with us.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Well, looking back it seems to me, mighty little to share for a life time.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Within you, you know that you have given and that's a, you've written.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: But it was an interesting time to live and I don't know how it would have been in a city, but I lived on the edge of a little country town and almost no communication. They didn't have telephones even. So it was very different from anything we know now.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Communications now, as you said,

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Yes, now you have, know what's happening before it happens. You do. You know exactly what's going to happen.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Well, we do thank you for sharing with us.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Well, it's not much to share for a life time of living, but meanwhile, I was living.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: You lived every moment.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: I lived.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON: Every moment. Thank you so much.

ROSE MCCULLOUGH: Oh, you are so welcome. I thank you for being interested.

END OF INTERVIEW