

Julie Gorman
Oral History
Fieldwork Plan
9/26/01

My first interview will be with Anne Bennett Maxwell here in Greenville. Dr. Jones set me up with her and I am really excited about meeting her. She attended ECU as an undergraduate and graduate student from 1966-1971. She grew up in this area and was the only female student in her high school class to attend college. Over the years she has been involved in community politics and had strong views on the politics during her college years.

I think talking to Mrs. Maxwell will be particularly interesting to me because of the time period she attended ECU. The late 1960's have always fascinated me, especially the student movement that was going on throughout the nation. I would like to find out how this played out at ECU. Also, like Mrs. Maxwell, I am first generation college in my family and I know how special that is like a family. I would like to know what it was like to leave the family and attend school in a time where most girls did not leave? Also, I would be very interested in finding out more about her views about the Vietnam War and how the views of other student were shown in Greenville. Finally, was there something at ECU that sparked her interest in community politics?

I have spoken with Mrs. Maxwell one time on Sunday evening, but we have not set a date for the interview yet. She seems to be a very busy lady, and I'll keep trying to contact her and set up a date. If it is okay with her we will probably just do the interview at her home since she lives so close by on 5th street.

I had hoped to speak with her again after our initial conversation on Sunday so I could find out a little more information to do background research. I hoped to ask her if she was involved in any campus organizations and what her major was here at ECU. Unfortunately I haven't been able to catch her at home to ask those questions, so its put a damper on my background research. I have read Bratton's book very closely in chapters 12-14 because they focus on the years she was a student here. President Leo Jenkins was struggling in the state to obtain independent university status, but he was finding great opposition throughout the state. He did not want to become part of the consolidated University of North Carolina like Chapel Hill, Wilmington, or NCSU. He also hoped to increase the number of PhD programs at ECU, one of the leading departments being History. I though this was interesting since we still do not have a PhD program. It sounds like the late 1960's was a big time for change at East Carolina. President Jenkins was fighting for respect as a university and the students were fight for respect as adults. Mrs. Maxwell would have been here during the first years of the university and experienced the change in campus life that took place as students demanded more freedom from rules.

I have located a Margie Ann Bennett in the 1967 yearbook as a freshman. I am guessing that this is Mrs. Maxwell. I cannot find her in every yearbook though. She is there again as a junior in the English Department, but then I cannot find her as a senior. Like I said I would have liked to find out those little pieces of information so that I could have done more background work, but I guess that will come in the next few days.

Interview Guide

Early Life

1. Birth, birthplace
2. Father's name; Mother's maiden name
3. Siblings
4. Parents' occupation/education background/biographical background/ideals
5. Describe the community you grew up in/What were the people like?
6. Your elementary and high school
7. Childhood chores, interests
8. What made you pursue college?
9. How did your parents react?

ECU

10. How did you adjust to leaving home? How did you prepare for leaving home?
11. Typical day for you when you were a freshman. Typical weekend as a freshman.
12. Typical day as a senior/grad student. Typical weekend.
13. Changes in campus life
14. What major? Why? Career goals?
15. Campus organization you were involved in? Were most students involved on campus?
16. What was it like going on to graduate school? Was there any difficulty because you were a woman? Were there many women in your graduate class?

Politics

17. Tell me about ECC changing to ECU, did the students know about the struggle?

18. Were students apprehensive about the new university status?
19. Campus activism? Particularly the student protest in 1971 over dorm visitation and the Vietnam War
20. Blacks being admitted to EC and enrollment rising, was this an issue with white students?
21. Coming from a conservative southern background, where did you find the spirit to break out and do something different, like attend school, oppose Vietnam, etc?
22. What did you do after college? Marriage and children? Career? Involvement in politics?
23. Did any of your experiences at ECU play a large role in your community involvement today?

East Carolina University: Oral History Project

Oral History Interview
With
ANNE BENNETT MAXWELL

By Julie Gorman
The Maxwell Home, Greenville, NC
October 5, 2001

**East Carolina University
Oral History Project: History of ECU**

General topic of interview: The student culture on East Carolina University's campus in the late sixties and early seventies. The effect ECU had on a young, female student from a rural eastern North Carolina town.

NARRATOR: Anne Bennett Maxwell

INTERVIEWER: Julie Gorman

DATE: October 5, 2001

PLACE: The Maxwell Home
Greenville, North Carolina

PERSONAL DATA:

Birthdate: 1948

Spouse: Hap Maxwell

Occupation: Special Education teacher at J.H. Rose High

BIOGRAPHY

Anne Bennett Maxwell was born in Blount's Creek, Beaufort County, North Carolina, a rural community in eastern North Carolina near Chocowinity and Washington. She grew up on a farm that grew mainly tobacco. As a child she attended a K-12 school in Chocowinity and worked on the farm during the spring and summers. During her senior year in high school a school counselor encouraged her to attend college, and upon graduation in 1966 she decided to attend East Carolina University. Anne Bennett did her undergraduate and graduate work at ECU, experiencing life on campus in the tumultuous sixties and seventies. She saw many changes on campus over the years. After graduation she worked in many different profession focused mainly on working in educational settings with special populations. She married at age thirty-one to Hap Maxwell and they have three children, two of which attend ECU today.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

This interview is very straightforward about the happenings on the East Carolina University campus from 1966-1971. The narrator describes the evolution of student culture during her time as a student at ECU and particularly how the Vietnam War affected student life. The narrator is very articulate and open. She also speaks of life in rural eastern North Carolina including topics like tobacco farming, fundamentalist religion, and the Ku Klux Klan. This recording portrays the spirit of a woman who has taken a leadership role in community politics over the years. Her rebellious spirit is very evident in her statements and her fascination in the human spirit is inspirational.

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

NARRATOR: Anne Maxwell

INTERVIEWER: Julie Gorman

Place: Maxwell Home
Greenville, NC

Date: October 5, 2001

Setting: We did the interview at the Maxwell Home on a Friday evening about 6:45-7pm. Because her entire family was in the house we sat outside on the patio. This was an okay location because the background noise wasn't so bad, but it did get pretty dark. Twice we were interrupted during taping, the interruptions were not long, but they did take away from taping time.

Number of tapes: 1

Number of sides: 1

Tape Length: 45 Minutes

002—Introduction

003—Birthplace, 1948, Beaufort County, Blount's Creek, Oldest of four children

007—Description of Blount's Creek, Cox's crossroads, Farming community

010—Tobacco, soybeans, corn, sweet potatoes, cucumber, hogs,

016—Hog killing, smokehouse, garden

018—Working on the farm as a child, 1 1/2 hour bus ride to Chocowinity

028—Chores as a child, tobacco planting

038—Tobacco description

044—Worked everyday as a child

048—Morning work in the tobacco farm

050—Her goal was to never work in tobacco again, motivation to go to school

054—Blount's creek, church activities, relatives, and school connected people

062—Early school, k-12 school

065—Description of Chocowinity School

070—Attending college after graduation

076—Parent's reaction to her attending college

078—Summer before college, living in Richmond

088—Transition to college

093—Umstead Dorm

096—Dress code for class and weekends (1966)

102—Men's dress

109--Typical day as a freshman, class, cafeteria dining

115--Cafeteria's on campus

124—Three in a dorm room, dorm meetings, 9:00 meetings

130—First-quarter required closed study, 7-9pm

140—Excitement of school, movies downtown
144—North Carolina Prospective Teachers scholarship
148—Old Town Inn restaurant downtown
150—Campus life changes
154—Senior year—Vietnam War affected the students
159—Soldiers returning to college from Vietnam, GI bill
167—Rebelliousness on campus
172—Marijuana on campus, Righteous Brother Concert on campus
188—Jimmy butler concert at the stadium, marijuana use, change in dress
196—Dress during graduate school, even in class
206—Fletcher Hall, 3 years,
210—Fraternities on campus, Sigma Nu dress, high pants
228—Movement on campus away from the conformity of Sororities and Fraternities
235—Leaning more toward the rebellious side
238—Rebellious spirit, Father's ideals passed along, fundamentalist religion
255—Strong-willed children, different views
261—School integration in high school, KKK activity, father's refusal to enter the KKK
70—Father's fear of the Klan, treatment by other students because of father
287—Student council President Senior Year in high school
290—Seeds of rebellion, standing up for what you believe
302—Struggle for university status, student participation
304—Pride of students, class rings, yearbook
315—Students wanted to move up to be a university,
319—Changes on campus reflected the condition of the world
327—Campus activism on the Mall
333—Hippie crowd, parties
340—Conservative students
345—Brother went to the war, dated a corpsmen who had been in the war
357—Returned soldier dealing with the war
370—Hearing both sides of the war argument, dating a hippie
380—Her personality as a voyeur
389—Recent call from the veteran she dated
408—English majors, taught in Roper, NC, English to special education children
420—Counselor at Chocowinity encouraging her to go to college, decides she wanted to be a counselor to help students in the same way
430—Counseling at Snow Hill
436—EB Aycock director of learning center working with exceptional children
445--Became a counselor
448—Worked for dept. of correction working with prisoners right before release
457—Married at 31 years old
459—First son born in 1981, decided to stay home for a year
467—Taught part-time at ECU in adult education program
478—Community political involvement
489—Political involvement just happened
497—You either lead or follow, rebellious spirit
505—Being a leader

515—Choosing someone to marry

530—Desire to marry leading to activities

535—General Electric program for counselors, spark plug people

557—People in this GE program, discussing topics at this program

585—Changed her life, racial issues discussed in program

601—First political moves, dating Tom Taft, state senator, became involved in political circles

Transcription of part of an interview with ANNE MAXWELL, October 5, 2001

078—summer before college, living in Richmond

AM: the summer after I graduated—I had never been away from home—so I had an Aunt who lived in Richmond and she got me a job working for the Virginia state parks service. So I lived in Richmond and worked in downtown Richmond that summer, and that was a really good experience for me because I had never—I guess it was just good to live in a large urban area and see what that was like. I would have to catch a bus every morning to go into Richmond and to be able to take city transportation and learn my way around. I certainly had never experienced stores that covered entire city blocks. So the first time I went into Miller-roads or Talheimers I came out of a different door and I was completely turned around and had to ask someone where I was.

JG: Did that make the transition, you think, to college easier?

AM: I don't know if it made it any easier. I think that I was so excited about the idea of getting away and the experience of, uh, anything, that I was thrilled!

115-- cafeterias on campus

AM: the cafeteria then was in the same building of the financial aid office and cashier's office now. That is where we ate. There was a North Cafeteria and a South Cafeteria because you went in the side where the library is now and that was one cafeteria, that would have been the South Cafeteria, then you had the North Cafeteria. And then there was the main cafeteria? I don't remember exactly, but that is where you would go to eat. And probably very typical to the way it is now, most of the time if I had an 8:00 class I didn't go to breakfast first because I was always running late, flying to class—we would sit up and talk {at night}.

JG: Right

AM: The dorms were so crowded that we had three in a room, and that was way too crowded. In fact, that is one of the things that stands out is just how crowded it was. But, you had groups of girls in the dorm and you had a big sister. And there were a lot of meetings, and they were mandatory meetings, uhm you had a hall meeting every Sunday night. I think everyone had to be back in the dorm by 9:00 on Sunday nights for the hall meeting. The first semester, actually it was quarter system then, in the first quarter you had to have closed study, and everyone had to study from 7-9. You either had to study in your room or there was a large room with a big table where you could go study if you wanted to study with other people and get some help. But no one could do anything but study from 7-9. If

you didn't have a C average at the end of first quarter, you had to be on closed study for the remainder of that year. I don't know how long that lasted, or how long you had to stay on closed study if you never got past a C average. I didn't want to have to be on closed study again after the first quarter, so that was my whole goal, to make sure that I had grades good enough that I didn't have to do close study again. Then you went to class and you ate and you talked, and for me, because I had grown up at Blount' Creek and had so little exposure to anything, everything was exciting to me. Everything. I particularly loved being able to walk downtown and being able to go to a movie. At that point there were two theaters, the Pitt Theater and that Park Theater, and I loved that. So that was one of the things I always wanted to do was to go to all the movies, I tried to make sure that I had enough money to do that.

150—Campus life changes

JG: Campus life probably changed some over the time you were here, so what would be the kind of differences between the time you were a freshman to when you were a senior or graduate student, later in the earlier seventies?

AM: By the time I was a senior, we were very much affected by the Vietnam War. Because so many...all the guys were scared because they were worried about going to Vietnam and a good number of them were. Um, people were being sent off, and then you had the people that had been gone for two years coming back to come to school. By the time I was in graduate school, there were a lot of people back from the military who had not started college or who had dropped out or were drafted, and they were coming back to finish. There were some advantages to that, in that they had the GI Bill when they got back to help them go to school. So, what I remember...and of course it is so difficult to really know for sure, because when you come as a naïve freshman from a remote area, and I was just trying to feel my way through things, I'm not sure how much rebelliousness there was on campus that I didn't know about. I didn't become aware of it until at least—I would say my senior year is when I became much more aware of the turbulence. And, certainly from that time on through my graduate school experience, what I remember so significantly was there was a lot more marijuana on campus. I can remember going to concerts... the first concert that stands out in my mind that I went to was in the old gym over here, because there was no Minges Coliseum, and I went to see the Righteous Brothers.

JG: Oh!

AM: Yeah, and that was really cool! And I really enjoyed that. And, I just remember...and this is what's so strange, I remember going with some guy, but I don't even remember how he asked me or how I ended up with a date, or even his name, I just remember that I went with somebody. And, what is even stranger is that I remember the dress that I wore, because it was a dress that I had bought in Richmond, and wondered when I would have an opportunity to wear it. It was

kind of a dressy dress, like you would wear to church, and to think that that is how we dressed, and that you would think of going to a concert like the Righteous Brothers and wearing a dress-up dress, but that is how we went. It was a very calm, sedate kind of, I mean, well, people cheered but it was much different than concerts I went to later after Minges was finished. I can even remember going over to the stadium for, I think it was a Jimmy Butler concert. Everybody was sitting out on blankets and every blanket that you see people were passing joints, and obviously the campus police new about it, because it was everywhere (whispers), and certainly the dress had changed. Then people were wearing jeans and I have skirts from that period where I took my jeans and cut a slit in them and put fabric with the paisley print, you know how you take the inside of the leg out and put the paisley print in. I have a skirt like that. And then, when I was in graduate school, girls were wearing their skirts way, way short.

JG: Was that in class or were things more strict when you went to class or had the dress code fallen apart by the late sixties, early seventies?

AM: The dress code had to have fallen apart, because people didn't dress differently for class.

210—Fraternities on campus, Sigma Nu dress, high pants

AM: It was a real interesting period, because you still had fraternities, but most of the fraternities or a good number of the fraternities on campus were incredibly wild and out of control. I can't really make a comparison to now because I don't know how out of control they are now. The TKE's, not the TKE's, the Sigma Nu's, they had a thing where they all wore khaki pants that were pulled way up high, and they all wore alligator belts, and button down collar blue oxford shirts, and tasseled loafers. And if you were the epitome of cool...and the reason I know all of this is that I had a good friend in the dorm who would not date anybody unless they were a Sigma Nu. If some one would call—there were people constantly calling to get you a blind date to go to a fraternity party of somewhere. They would come yell down the hall and her answer would be, "How high are their pants?" Somebody would have to go back and ask, and if they wore their pants high and they could shag she would go out with them. That was her measure of coolness.

Then you had, and I was not really into that scene, I was more into the...I don't know what you would call it at that point, but there was a real movement away from the conformity of sororities and fraternities. There was a whole group of people who made fun of that conformity. So that dissension was very much happening by the time I was a senior. And, I never was in a sorority, never chose to even look at a sorority, because I was very aware of that, and probably if I had to be leaning one way or another, I was leaning to the rebellious, radical side.

JG: So where do you think that came from? Considering you grew up in a small, Beaufort County community?

AM: the only thing I can think of is that my father was very strongly opinionated, and while there were many, many things I didn't agree with, because he was very fundamentalist religion, and I couldn't really buy into that.

AM: I guess the way he was so, so strict...because there are four children and we are all incredibly strong willed. So was he. And I've come to realize after my father died, just how strong-willed my mother is, also. Perhaps, while we didn't agree, we were having individuality very much modeled. Because, when the Klan reared its ugly head—my senior year in high school was the year that schools were integrated at Chocowinity—and the Klan became active and people would come and want my dad to join the Klan and he refused. He would say, "How can you bring me this literature that says you must be white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant, and a Christian to join and Jesus was a Jew." And they would just wheel around and leave and we would get Klan papers thrown in our yard at night. I didn't know how afraid daddy was until he was dying and he told us about how afraid he was that there would be a cross burning in our yard and we would be hurt.

JG: Were you aware of the stuff going on very much when you were in high school?

AM: Well, the principal of the school named me monitor of the bus since we were the end of the bus line, so people on the bus would call me Abe Lincoln. And, it is real interesting when I think back about it because it was obvious that I needed to live Blount's Creek because (whispers) I never really cared.

AM: So we saw daddy modeling that kind of standing up for what you believe, so I suppose the seeds of rebellion were planted back then.

302—Struggle for university status, student participation

JG: Were the students all aware of the whole struggle going on, were they part of it and did you participate in any of the activities that went with that?

AM: I think we all did, um, because I think all of us wanted...I can remember being very proud. In fact, I think back and I wonder, you know I had a class ring and I had my picture taken so that it would be in the ECU yearbook. Do people do that anymore?

JG: Not really!

AM: That is what I thought.

JG: Some people do class rings, but I don't even know of an ECU yearbook, and I have been here six years.

AM: I know, its really interesting, and I was thinking about that with Nathan [her son], we had a yearbook and we were very proud to be a university student, and wanting to be a university student instead of a college student. I do remember all of that, I don't remember what we did as students though I was very aware of it, but I can't remember what we did specifically.

JG: Were the students in general pretty much behind the push to become a university?

AM: Oh yeah

JG: They weren't apprehensive about moving up in the hierarchy?

AM: I think everybody wanted it, I can't remember being around anyone that did not want it.

JG: So, as soon as the State declared us a university and we started getting funds, do you think that is when the changes started happening on campus?

AM: I don't think it had anything with getting university status. I think it had more to do with the situation in the world.

327—campus activism on the Mall

JG: Was there campus activism with the Vietnam War, with the things going on in the world, or was it not...?

AM: There were things on the Mall. Students would ride their bikes on campus and have the flag upside down. There was a lot of...you had the peace symbol stuff and of course you had a whole lot of marijuana. I'm not sure, certainly it came in at that time...

JG: Was there a hippie crowd?

AM: Oh yeah, there was very much a hippie crowd. You could go down to Ripple City now and see everything we saw then. You know, you would go into parties and there were the bongos, Jimi Hendrix playing, and there was cream playing, and Janis Joplin, of course. And then you had the John East contingency, the very, very conservative people who were just really ripped out of their frame about Jane Fonda, and, about the fact that anybody would fight against us being in the Vietnam War. It was real interesting to me because I didn't believe in the war and yet my brother went. I was really sad about him having to go. Then I ended up dating a guy for four years and he had been a corpsman, and had seen so many of his friends die. He was so, so angry anytime he saw anybody do anything that was anti-war. And, I really understand now that he had to believe that there was a

reason for their dying, and to accept that they had died for nothing was too hard for him psychologically for him to deal with right then. I think he has come to grips with it now, but it took...during that time, when he first came back he always slept with a gun under his pillow. He was really messed up psychologically, and he called me about four weeks ago. We had maintained a friendship through the years, but I just knew that he was not the type of person I could ever marry because her was just so uptight. And, I think probably...a compulsive personality whether he had gone to Vietnam or not, and that ultimately played a part in what he was like, and so the way that whole thing played out for me...here I was dating somebody who was strongly into believing—and he had his group of people who had returned from the Vietnam War—so I was hearing the veteran’s perspective. That was when I was in graduate school, when I started dating him. After...that was the last part of my graduate school, in the first part of my graduate school I was dating a guy who rode around on a motor cycle and wore a sheepskin vest, and cut the sheepskin and put it on his helmet, and he had an apartment at Village Green that had posters on every wall and had black lights, so that when people walked in all you saw was posters. So I don’t know if you could classify who I was, I guess I have always been curious, you know, it was always interesting. [*Whispers, inaudible*] Maybe in a way I think I am still a voyeur, I think it is really fun to learn about different groups of people and how they think, and then you take the pieces of each of it and decide what of it you believe.

Interruption

AM: The guy called me and he thanked me, he said that the reason that he is alive today and not in prison is because of me, because he would want to go and shoot the people who had the flags on there bikes upside down. So I would start telling him that I didn’t believe in the war either, and that I thought that it was wrong, and he would turn his anger toward me and he wouldn’t hit me or kill me. So, he called me and said that he was having a reunion with a group of corpsmen who had survived Vietnam, and that he wanted to thank me for saving his life and keeping him alive and out of prison. And, he said that obviously there was a reason that he met me when he did, so that...I didn’t believe anything that he believed, but anyway...And, why he cared enough about me in spite of what I believed is all interesting.

JG: That must have been a special phone call.

AM: It was.

497—You either lead or follow, rebellious spirit

JG: Did it just come up that you got involved [politically] or is it something that, “Hey this is something that I want to do”?

AM: It is interesting, I don’t know how it happened, back when I was work as a counselor at Aycock...I suppose you have to look at the fact—and I know I am

rambling a bit, but I am thinking about your question—You either lead or follow, and at what point do you decide that you are not going to follow, and I am not sure that I ever wanted to follow anybody anywhere. So if you are rebellious, that in itself makes you stand out, and if you figure out how to channel the rebelliousness so that you are not perceived as too crazy, you can automatically become a leader. It is not really hard to be a leader because most people don't want to lead.

SELF-CRITIQUE

The interview with Anne Maxwell went really well, but I think that is more because of her skills as an interviewee than because of my skills as an interviewer. It was good that I asked all of the questions I had hoped to ask and got the information I was looking for out of the interview. When listening to the recording I was able to really pick out some weaknesses in my interviewing. First, I need to use more body language to indicate active listening rather than using verbal cues. My voice was on the recording way too much. Second, sometimes my questions were not clearly stated. I would use good follow-up questions, but when I was making the transition in topics I would ramble in my questions. Luckily, Anne Maxwell was a very outgoing and articulate narrator to make up for these weaknesses. One other thing I learned is how to set up the interview, particularly the day and time of the interview. By starting the interview on a Friday evening we were constricted by time restraints. It was necessary that we sit outside because her family was all around the house inside. It would have been better to set up the interview during a time that not so much was going on in the house. Also, it would have been better to do the interview during the afternoon so that it doesn't get too late.

December 3, 2001

Dear Mrs. Maxwell,

Thank you so much for all of the help you have given me this semester. The oral history interview was great and I really enjoyed hearing your stories. Your positive attitude and upbeat personality is an inspiration for me, especially as a future educator.

Also, thanks for all of your help at J.H.Rose while I did my study of the OCS. Your assistance and materials were so helpful and I could not have completed the project without you. I really enjoyed sitting in on your class and meeting your students, too.

I gave your name to my special education teacher for future placements of students that need to spend time in a special education classroom. I told her that she should especially send students who are eager to help out and work directly with the students. I hope this brings some students to you that can help out in the classroom.

Thanks again!

Sincerely,

Julie Gorman