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Interviewee: Susie Ridgway Neill
Interviewer: Charlotte Capers

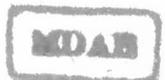
Title: An interview with Susie Ridgway Neill, July 15, 1971 /
interviewed by Charlotte Capers

OH 75-25

NEILL, Susie Ridgway

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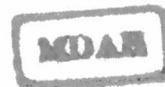
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NARRATOR: Mrs. Susie Ridgway Neill
INTERVIEWER: Miss Charlotte Capers, State Department of Archives and History
DATE: July 15, 1971
PLACE: Home of Mrs. Neill's sister, Miss Mattie Ridgway,
1831 Robinson Street, Jackson, Mississippi
SUBJECT: History of Jackson

Capers: This is Charlotte Capers. I am interviewing Mrs. Neill at the home of her sister, Miss Mattie Ridgway, on Robinson Street, in Jackson, Mississippi, on Thursday, July 15, 1971. Let's just talk normally and not make any effort to speak to the machine. You can just talk. Can you hear me all right? If you can hear me and I can hear you we can play this back and see how this works. First let's just practice. You give me, Mrs. Neill, your full name.

Neill: Susie Ridgway Neill.

Capers: How do you spell "Ridgway"?

Neill: R-I-D-G-W-A-Y.

Capers: No "e"?

Neill: Some spell it, same family, spell it with the "e." But Papa always left the "e" out.

Capers: All right, we were talking about how you spelled your name. I'm interested in collecting information about early citizens of Jackson. I'd like you to tell me about when your father came to Jackson.

Neill: Papa came to Fannin in 1871, a hundred years ago, from Georgia.

Capers: From Georgia?

Neill: Well in Troupe County really. But he was out in the country.

Capers: Do you know why he came? Did he come for land?

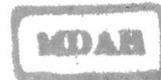
Neill: I asked him that very question. He said the rocks. The rocky soil. He was a young man going to Texas. He had a kinfolk at Fannin, Mississippi. He had five dollars and he knew he couldn't go very far on five dollars, so he asked the cab man the fare out to Fannin. He wanted five dollars. He walked and worked for that relative very shortly. He established credit early because it was recognized that he was a potential businessman.

Capers: Yes, what was his full name?

- Neill: Charles Robert Ridgway. He bought land at Fannin, had a gin, raised cattle and oats.
- Capers: Then Fannin was his first homeplace?
- Neill: Yes, and he chided my mother always about making him leave the best farming land anywhere near about. She had visited in Jackson and knew it was a coming town and she thought he had ability to grow up with the town.
- Capers: Which he certainly did. What was your mother's name? What was your mother's full name?
- Neill: Sue Boyd.
- Capers: Sue Boyd. Was she any kin to the mayor? John Boyd, wasn't he mayor of Jackson at one time? I believe there was a Boyd family back there.
- Neill: But she wasn't kin to that family. Her father brought them from Kentucky in 1869.
- Capers: They came to this part of the world in 1869?
- Neill: Yes.
- Capers: And they came to Jackson?
- Neill: They came to Brandon. I asked why. They had kinpeople there. I said, "Well, why did so many come to Brandon?" Well, if they ever expected to see each other, they decided to come to the same town.
- Capers: And you don't have any idea what attracted them to Brandon? I do think it's interesting that so many prominent people around here....
- Neill: It was after the war and merchandising and furnishing was what all of these relatives did.
- Capers: The business interests in Jackson had just been knocked out.
- Neill: Brandon was a better town than Jackson at that time.
- Capers: And Jackson was actually negligible as a town until the beginning of the twentieth century, I believe. Clinton was better than Jackson.
- Neill: So was Brandon.
- Capers: When you...your mother and father, then, when were they married?
- Neill: In 1881.

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Capers: My grandparents were married in 1882. And were they married in Jackson?

Neill: Married in Brandon. And their marriage was a whole tale in itself!

Capers: Well, tell me about it.

Neill: They married at nine o'clock so that they would catch the train to Georgia.

Capers: Now, what train would this be?

Neill: The morning A and V train. There was a wreck over towards Vicksburg and the train didn't come. The people had driven over in their carriages from Jackson. Bishop Galloway performed the ceremony.

Capers: In the church?

Neill: In the Methodist church in Brandon. Everyone kin to Mother had a party, and took care of the wedding guests for the day. My aunt said she hadn't had a wedding trip and she persuaded her husband to get a sitter for the baby and let her go on the train when it did come. She was the kind that couldn't stand for anybody to have more than she had.

Capers: Now, who was this?

Neill: Mrs. Buchanan. Margaret Buchanan's mother.

Capers: So the train finally came?

Neill: Oh, it came!

Capers: And the honeymoon couple took off with Mr. and Mrs. Buchanan. Did she go with them?

Neill: She went to North Carolina. They started on the same train. But Mother went to Georgia and Aunt Maggie went to Mr. Buchanan's home in North Carolina.

Capers: Did your family have a close association with Bishop Galloway?

Neill: Very.

Capers: Well, of course, he's one of our great men.

Neill: We had a photograph of him that he gave my mother. Bishop and Mrs. Galloway thought a great deal of my mother who visited in Jackson with her uncle, Captain Stevens...Captain John Stevens. Part of the house is there now.

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MOAH

Capers: What house is that?

Neill: It's on Amite Street right near the corner of President.

Capers: Is that the little house with the filling station backed up into it?

Neill: I think. The Stevens' cottage, they called it.

Capers: I believe that must be it, because now there's only one cottage left, and it's right down there. A part of it, and it's kind of across from the Baptist Book Store.

Neill: That's right, and Mrs. Stevens....

Capers: Now, was that Captain John Stevens' home?

Neill: And he had married one of the Green family who had come here from Maryland. There was a firm, T. and J. Green, that had a business before the war. His wife was a daughter of the Tom Greens, the Josh Greens went west, and the Tom Greens were the T. T. and J. was the way the firm was known.

Capers: And Marcellus came down from one of those.

Neill: Kin to the same family.

Capers: Well, I think this is interesting. This is what we...you know, it's wonderful to pull these old strands together!

Neill: Two of my uncles married two of the Green sisters.

Capers: Now what other uncle was that besides Captain Stevens?

Neill: Uncle W. (T.) Stevens we all called him. He rode around town on a horse that made me think of Robert E. Lee on Traveller. He looked like Robert E. Lee.

Capers: This is very interesting. Now your mother and father, then, when did they move to Jackson?

Neill: In 1890.

Capers: In 1890...because your mother wanted to come over here?

Neill: Yes, they'd been married ten years and he was doing well on this plantation but at that time...in his cotton gin, for instance, he never dared stand any way but with his back to the wall.

Capers: That was Reconstruction kind of left over, wasn't it?

Neill: Yes. He was doing well and he didn't have to sell the place. He came to Jackson and rented with the idea of buying a farm later. He rented through Mr. George Carlisle, I think...the only real estate agent in town at that time. What was known as the Baley house on State Street in the first block on the left as you go out.

Capers: Baley, I think that's the lady you asked me about.

Neill: I think I'm remembering that right.

Capers: I think you are because we interviewed her, and she said she used to live...her father's home was right across the street from where the Standard Oil Company is now...in the 100, I believe, 129 North State.

Neill: Well, isn't that interesting!

Capers: Isn't this interesting? Well, I think this is wonderful!

Neill: It's a beautifully built house. The fact is, it would be a modern house now. There was a basement on the ground level open at the back. It opened into a kind of moat in the front. We rented the whole lower floor and the basement and the yards. The gallery came right to the sidewalk. Upstairs were the most interesting people. Mrs. Ross Parker, who was kin to a man named Pickens Harper from Raymond...that fixes who she was. Mr. Ross Parker had something to do over at the penitentiary. He took me over and took me through the penitentiary.

Capers: Which is where the New Capitol is?

Neill: Yes. He took me over and took me through the penitentiary when I was a tiny little girl.

Capers: Can you tell us how you remember the penitentiary's appearance?

Neill: Very nice looking because it had verberna beds from the very front of the penitentiary clear over to...is that Mississippi Street?

Capers: I think it's Mississippi...President, West...whatever runs in front of it.

Neill: Well, the street that's in front of it.

Capers: Where the monument is to the women of the Confederacy?

Neill: The front towards town.

Capers: We can identify that on a map.

- Neill: Anyhow, there was a nice broad walk with this beautiful verbena and other nice flowers. Whoever was in charge of the penitentiary had an eye for the looks of things.
- Capers: Isn't that nice!
- Neill: I didn't feel that I was in a very bad place at all. He took me to the shops where they made things. I was particularly interested in the place where they made shoes. My mother had said she had a pair of shoes made at the penitentiary one time and they were beautiful.
- Capers: Were they nice looking shoes? Did they sell the shoes in town?
- Neill: I don't know about that. I think they took orders for making shoes.
- Capers: I thought they made...do you remember that they made bricks over there? Maybe they didn't.
- Neill: I heard they did.
- Capers: I've heard that. I just didn't know.
- Neill: I think they did. You know, I haven't thought of that in years and years!
- Capers: Well, actually their rehabilitation system was working pretty well then, wasn't it? They had shoes...they don't do that now at the penitentiary.
- Neill: And they made other kinds of leatherwork. I remember the shoes because my mother had said she had a pair of shoes, so naturally being a little four or five year old girl, I would have noticed the shoes!
- Capers: Do you remember who lived in that first block of North State Street right across the street from the Baley house? Where the Standard Oil station is now?
- Neill: Judge J. A. P. Campbell was on the corner, the Charlton Alexanders were next, I think. There was another house in there.
- Capers: The Morrison house was in there somewhere.
- Neill: I was just going to come to that. The Morrison house was right there. A granddaughter that I went to school with stayed there. Emma Dulaney...her father lived in the Delta and was prominent in the Legislature on and off. Did I say the Charlton Alexanders? Then next was the Presbyterian manse, the Hunters.

Capers: Was that the corner?

Neill: I think so. I know Miss Idalette Hunter was living there for a long time after that.

Capers: Let's go back to your recollections of who lived in the first block of North State Street on the opposite side of the street, which would be the east side of the street, the opposite side of the street from the Baley house. Judge Campbell on the corner....

Neill: Then I think the Morrison house.

Capers: Which Morrison was that?

Neill: Dan, if I remember right. He had a wholesale grocery. Then the Alexanders and then the Presbyterian manse as I recollect. Those were the houses. The Atkinsons were between the Dan Morrisons and the Alexanders. Mr. Dan Morrison married one of the Atkinsons.

Capers: And the First Presbyterian church was located for a long time on the corner of the next block of North...on the west side of North State Street. Was that there when you were a little girl?

Neill: Yes, and I saw the last wedding that took place in the old church. It was Mr. Flu Shingluer.

Capers: Mr. Flu Ellen Shingluer.

Neill: Married one of the Odeneals who lived next door to the Baley house.

Capers: That is interesting to me because I didn't realize that there was a church before the church that was there in my day on North State Street. When, approximately, would the old church have been built, do you think?

Neill: In the early '90s.

Capers: In the early '90s...and it would have been torn down and rebuilt. Was it torn down or did something happen to it?

Neill: It was torn down and rebuilt. They liked that location.

Capers: And the Shingluer wedding was about that time? The early 1890s?

Neill: Yes.

Capers: It's bound to have been in the early 1890s.

Neill: It was in the early 1890s because we didn't live there very long.

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MDAR

- Capers: When did you live there? Approximately how long? Do you know the dates?
- Neill: It seems a long time, because I was a little girl. My father had a hardware store on the second block on State Street.
- Capers: Would that be the block where South State begins? Where Virden had his store?
- Neill: Yes, in that area. I've forgotten what was in the first block.
- Capers: When your father had come from Fannin where he was in mercantile supplying the farms....
- Neill: He was farming and supplying Negroes.
- Capers: And he came to Jackson. And you lived at the Baley house and he had a hardware store. Now when did you get into this house where we are today?
- Neill: Let me tell you a little about that store. He bought it from Mr. Luther Manship who was an artist and poet and not a merchant. Had beautiful things in the store.
- Capers: Was Luther mayor at one time?
- Neill: Yes. Papa said, "Well, you made your money selling stove pipe and cheap china." And he told my mother to have any pretty thing she wanted out of that store. He'd never sell that.
- Capers: Now, this was Judge Luther Manship's father?
- Neill: Yes. He was lieutenant governor at one time. Well, Papa knew how to make that business a success. He had good credit at the bank and the Simmons Hardware Company wanted him to stay in the hardware business. But he had in mind to farm so that he'd be a free man to trade and traffic and that's why he left town. Then a man from Nebraska owned property down in Duttoville.
- Capers: How do you suppose you spell "Duttoville"?
- Neill: D-u-t-t-o-v-i-l-l-e. It was named for a Catholic priest.
- Capers: Father Dutto.
- Neill: Yes. Papa bought his property. The Taylor Machine Works is on part of it. We don't own that now. He bought it for an investment. He took over the management of Mr. Beatty's property.
- Capers: Who was Mr. Beatty?

- Neill: He was the man from Nebraska who decided he'd go back to Nebraska. We bought his surrey with the fringe top and his dear old horse, "Old John," and fine harness; and every afternoon Wiley would bring that surrey to our front door and my mother would put us in and, as she said, "nursed till supper."
- Capers: Where would you ride? This is like we used to go riding in the automobile?
- Neill: The end of town was where the Baptist Hospital is. That was a residence out there. Country began right there. But we often went out to the Insane Hospital.
- Capers: Which was where the University Medical Center is now.
- Neill: Mother knew the Mitchells personally. We didn't visit them every time we went but we knew Miss Etta.
- Capers: What did Miss Etta have to do with Dr. Mitchell?
- Neill: She was his daughter.
- Capers: She was his daughter.
- Neill: And Mrs. John Robinson was another daughter. And the Robinsons....
- Capers: What Robinson was that?
- Neill: That was John. The father of the John that you would know. And her name was Miss Ida Robinson, one of the most beloved women in this town. I think there is a Kings' Daughters to this day named the Ida Mitchell Robinson Chapter. Well, they were close to Mother because they were kin to Mother's aunt by marriage. I knew them. When we lived in this Baley house,...are you interested at this point in knowing who our visiting friends were, whose houses we went to?
- Capers: You bet! This is what I think is fun! Where did you go when you went riding in the afternoon? Who did you go to call on?
- Neill: We'd go up there to where the Baptist Hospital is and turn.
- Capers: How were the roads? What was North State Street like?
- Neill: Dirt.
- Capers: A dirt road?
- Neill: Very few people in Jackson had surreys or carriages.
- Capers: You were in a lot of dust, weren't you?

- Neill: Yes, but we had lap robes.
- Capers: Did you have anything to wrap around your head?
- Neill: We weren't that particular but we had linen lap robes.
- Capers: So you went up to where the Baptist Hospital is?
- Neill: Yes. The name of the owners of the house just won't come to me. But it was a residence...Mrs. Echols! Then occasionally if we had a lot of time and wanted to take a long ride, we'd go out and see the ducks fed at the state insane hospital grounds. They had things for people to see and do on the grounds. We didn't think about patients being there. In this particular park-like area people would get on the streetcar and go out and get off, and go up there and see the fish and see this park. Maybe see the bread coming out of the bakery or something like that. But your mind wasn't on the sadness of it being a hospital. Then what Mother used that surrey for was to scout around while Papa was busy in the store and locate a farm in a good neighborhood. She went to see Mrs. Gillespie; I went with her.
- Capers: Which Mrs. Gillespie is this? Is it George E.?
- Neill: The whole area around Belhaven College, about 100 acres in pine trees, the price was very good but Papa said it was very poor farming land.
- Capers: Well, he's right, because I live on it and my house is about to fall down.
- Neill: He could have bought that whole place for a song....
- Capers: That's Belhaven Heights now.
- Neill: Belhaven Heights...all that area from where Mrs. Gillespie lived near the back of where the Presbyterian Church is was the residence. I think the residence was about where that parking lot is.
- Capers: Back of the present Presbyterian church?
- Neill: The First Presbyterian Church. Mrs. Gillespie's house could be seen from State Street. You went to it over a bridge, a shaky bridge at that! We decided that wasn't good farming land. So he came out here, which was way out in the country far beyond West Jackson. This piece of land was available, forty acres. Mother knew Mrs. J. A. P. Campbell, Jr., on the next forty. She was a sister of Mrs. Richard Griffith...there's the Baley connection again.
- Capers: The Baleys keep cropping up.

Neill: And the neighbors on the other side were Mr. Arthur Short, whose father was an Episcopal rector.

Capers: Yes, Mr. Arthur Short was a kind of deacon in our church.

Neill: Then across was the Collins Hemingway family.

Capers: Would that be Judge Hemingway's family?

Neill: They were kin. Mrs. Collins Hemingway was kin to the Campbells.

Capers: Well, Jackson was pretty close knit, wasn't it?

Neill: When I taught in high school, Miss Lee Hazen stayed at Miss Kate Power's and she said she learned very quickly not to talk about anybody in Jackson because they were all connected!

Capers: Well, I believe it!

Neill: Then the other neighbors were the J. C. Matthews family. Phyllis' grandparents. Then all this for acres and acres was open. The nearest neighbor was Dr. P. W. Peeples, the president of the First National Bank.

Capers: Would that be Virginia Peeples Patton's family?

Neill: No, the Nances.

Capers: Pink Nance...Bill Nance.

Neill: He built that house and laid out a wide grand avenue....

Capers: Miss Mary Peeples.

Neill: ...With the idea of having the handsomest house in Mississippi. Of course, you wouldn't remember his house.

Capers: But I certainly remember all the...of course, Miss Mary taught me in Sunday School.

Neill: Yes...well, that's where they lived. Now we were going to talk about the....

Capers: We were talking about how your father...your mother kind of scouted around and found this land.

Neill: They liked the neighbors. And, they liked the land.

Capers: This was for farming?

- Neill: Yes. He was going to farm and do real estate on the side.
- Capers: He was an enterprising boy, wasn't he?
- Neill: Quite remarkable!
- Capers: How many children did they have by this time when they came out here?
- Neill: When they came out here, Ivison was the baby. I remember when Ivison was born. Dr. John Hunter, a very handsome doctor, standing at the head of the bed, and Mrs. Thomas Green standing on the other, and my father had told us to close the door and stay in the room next. I didn't mind...I opened the door and peeped in and saw this very quiet room and had no idea what was going on. My brother was always a person of integrity, from his birth, said, "They told you to close that door." I closed it.
- Capers: Which brother was this?
- Neill: This was Ivison, who was a doctor in New York. He studied at the University of Virginia and then went on. The brother who told me to close the door was Charles Robert Ridgway.
- Capers: This was when Ivison was born?
- Neill: He was the only one born on State Street, which was quite a distinction at that time. If you didn't live on State Street you weren't living!
- Capers: You know, Gabe, this Negro man who worked for the Garner Greens for so long, and worked for Dr. Shands for so long, said, "Nobody ain't nothing in Jackson unless they live on North State Street and uses Postell's Elegant flour."
- Neill: Well, you heard the tale!
- Capers: What was the date at which the house we're in now was built?
- Neill: 1891. I want to tell you one thing I remember while we were living in that house. Papa walked in one day and he said, "I bought one brick in Millsaps College today. The boys will go to college there, and Susie will get a husband."
- Capers: Well, that worked out, didn't it? I want to talk about your association with Millsaps, but we haven't gotten to that yet. What about...you were telling me about the different people and houses on North State Street that you visited and the children that came and went.
- Neill: That's right interesting. The Alexander children came to our place to play and we went to their yard to play.

Capers: Which children were these?

Neill: Charlton, Julian and James, John, and Mrs. Alexander put the current baby in my lap and let me hold him. I don't know if it was John or the one that was named Henry. I played with Julian and James. Then down the street were the Tom Greens. The Green that went to New York and built the bridge was the oldest child...Wharton Green.

Capers: What bridge did he build?

Neill: He built the first suspension bridge in New York City.

Capers: He was a graduate of Millsaps.

Neill: Graduate of Millsaps and brought fame to the college.

Capers: And he lived there.

Neill: They had the Mary Frances Tea Shop in the Green house for a long time. It's down now. Mrs. Green was a Wharton. That's where Wharton got his name. Mary Edgar was my age. Well, they came back and forth and visited. The Hi Henry children across from the Greens....

Capers: Now, the Hi Henrys...what does he have to do with the Clarion-Ledger?

Neill: He was the editor.

Capers: Was that Colonel Henry?

Neill: Colonel Henry.

Capers: He was the owner and the editor, and he started the Hederman boys in the business. He was their uncle. There was a connection. That's real interesting...and I think your surrey ride is very interesting. Is there anything else about the place on North State Street? Did you pay any attention to the Old Capitol being across the street?

Neill: Oh, yes! My mother was very history conscious. She had...you know how girls used to visit their kinfolks when there was a big family of girls at home. The sent the girls off to visit. Well, she practically grew up in Jackson, in the Stevens home and over at Colonel Richardson's.

Capers: Who was Colonel Richardson?

Neill: He was her great-uncle. And he didn't live here, he had lived in Brandon. He came to Jackson. He was a good businessman. He made money at the wrong time in the state. He was almost hated because

he just simply made money without trying, it looked like. He came with an inheritance from his mother from near Danville, Virginia. He knew how to turn over what he had. He outgrew Brandon and came to Jackson. He went to New Orleans in the cotton business and accumulated a number of Delta plantations. Mother visited these two uncles over here. So she practically grew up in Jackson. She was very conscious of history, and my father liked for us to keep up with anything that was going on. Though I do remember going to the old theatre. I saw "Editha's Burglar."

- Capers: Do you know who was in "Editha's Burglar"?
- Neill: No, I don't remember.
- Capers: Now where was the theatre located? Was this the Century?
- Neill: In the first block on Pearl Street. Upstairs.
- Capers: That would be, maybe, the old Robinson theatre. Could this be the old Robinson Theatre? Did you know the Robinson family owned a theatre?
- Neill: No.
- Capers: Well, I don't know if it's correct, but we have that information in the Archives.
- Neill: That could be so. I've got a Robinson and Stevens ledger that has all the names of the people that were living in Jackson at that time.
- Capers: You ought to put it in the Archives, or let us make a microfilm copy of it.
- Neill: I'll bring it over sometime. I've got two or three ledgers. We used them for scrapbooks.
- Capers: There was a theatre that we know about on Pearl Street.
- Neill: It was upstairs.
- Capers: I didn't know that. And what did it look like?
- Neill: It was just above a store. You know how these old stairs went up the side. I didn't ever go there but to this one play. But that was something to remember for a lifetime.
- Capers: Was this a travelling group of actors?
- Neill: Yes. Mentioning this travelling group of actors brings to mind a queer tale. When that Confederate monument was dedicated, a troupe of travelling actors came to town and they had diphtheria. My

cousin from Brandon, Mrs. Collier Maxie over there, Atwood Maxie's mother....

Capers: I went to school with Atwood.

Neill: ...Caught this diphtheria. My brother, Walter, had it, and a life-time later, out at the Ricketts' one day, they mentioned that their children caught diphtheria coming on the train...coming to the dedication of the Confederate monument. Isn't that a strange thing?

Capers: It certainly was. How could you do that?

Neill: Well, they just ran into these people, sat close to them on the train.

Capers: And they weren't coming with any....

Neill: I don't know. Maybe they were playing something at this same theatre.

Capers: I have heard from somebody, and you were too little to remember, that literally thousands pf people came to Jackson for the dedication of the Confederate monument.

Neill: Oh, it was something to remember!

Capers: ...That it was a big thing with trainloads of people.

Neill: Trainloads of people, and our house was just bulging with uncles and aunts from Brandon.

Capers: Jefferson Davis' little grandson unveiled that monument. He is now living in Colorado Springs and he is a very attractive man. I saw him about six years ago, and he is very good looking, and very alert, and at that time was travelling all over the world. He is retired from a bank out there. We had a letter from him.

Neill: When I went to Colorado Springs, I thought about him living there.

Capers: Well, he's real nice. You should look him up. We had a letter from him when we dedicated our new building...we invited him to come, but he said he wasn't really up to the trip. What do you remember? You were too young to remember anything but the balloons!

Neill: I just remember the crowd. The nurse took us by the hand and just took us over there. We stood on the outskirts and saw what was going on. Naturally, I didn't remember the speakers. I remember the unveiling, though.

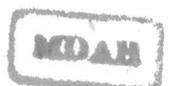
Capers: How was that done?

Neill: They pulled a rope in some way. I don't remember.

- Capers: Was the monument veiled?
- Neill: I think there was a Confederate flag in front of it that was removed to show the monument inside. The monument used to be inside there. It isn't any more.
- Capers: Because the vandals tore it up and somebody moved it into the Old Capitol in about 1916, when they remodelled it for state office buildings; and it's still in there because the vandals picked through the wrought iron and knocked one of the fingers off. But it was originally in....
- Neill: My mother said there weren't many things to go to in Jackson, and it....
- Capers: All right...there weren't too many things to go to in Jackson.
- Neill: ...So if anybody of prominence ever spoke at the Legislature, or there was any special subject coming up that everybody was interested in, you went and you sat and you listened!
- Capers: For instance, who did you hear speak in the Legislature?
- Neill: It was much later before I began to remember what I'd heard. But I'm talking about what she heard as a girl. But she didn't tell me what she heard. I think she saw Jefferson Davis. Different people of prominence that came....
- Capers: This was the Old Capitol?
- Neill: The Old Capitol. And even if it wasn't particularly thrilling it was somewhere to go and something to hear.
- Capers: Don't you think that perhaps they were there during the Constitution of 1890?
- Neill: Yes.
- Capers: Well, I'm sure everybody must have been very interested in that. And they would have seen people like Lamar...L. Q. C. Lamar. Of course, Bishop Galloway was very prominent.
- Neill: You had started to ask me about Bishop Galloway.
- Capers: I'd like to know something about Bishop Galloway.
- Neill: I told you I scatter around a lot!
- Capers: Well, we have to scatter around a lot!

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- Neill: Bishop Galloway was a neighbor of Captain John Stevens.
- Capers: And he lived on President?
- Neill: He lived on the corner of Congress, right in front of the Methodist Church.
- Capers: The Galloway home is still standing.
- Neill: Yes. So that was just around the corner to Captain Stevens', and Bishop Galloway's children were little. He'd get up early and made no secret of it, he'd come around to have a quiet breakfast. Mother said she remembers that he wouldn't crack his own egg. He was fearless before people, but wouldn't crack his egg. So, she knew him rather as a neighbor....
- Capers: She gave him breakfast.
- Neill: ...She knew him as a neighbor and friend. And it was a nice association that lasted to me and Robert, in invitations to the Galloway home, particularly when we were at Millsaps.
- Capers: Name the children in your family.
- Neill: All right. Charles Robert, Jr., then I was next...Susie Ridgway, Walter Stevens Ridgway, Iverson Boyd Ridgway, James Edgar Ridgway, Louis Ernest Ridgway, and Mattie Elizabeth Ridgway.
- Capers: Is Mattie the youngest?
- Neill: Youngest. She's a postscript to the family. My youngest brother was five years old before she was born. And I was the only girl with five brothers, and I wasn't particularly keen about having another one, especially since I wasn't the only girl anymore! And our next door neighbor was the only girl with four brothers! Mabel, Winston, Andrews, Cooper, and Robert Newton Campbell.
- Capers: You were in good shape. Now, we've gotten back to this house and I'm interested in the house itself.
- Neill: That was the outside wall when we came.
- Capers: Would you say this house was a...it's kind of a...tell me again when it was built.
- Neill: 1890, I would think.
- Capers: 1890...it's a late Victorian cottage-type house.
- Neill: Yes, and it was built with the idea that he'd add to it.
- Capers: It's a one-story house.

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- Neill: The other side of the house is much better built than this side.
- Capers: We can say in a general description that it's a one-story house with a central hall; it has galleries almost all around it on all sides except the west side.
- Neill: There's one on the west, too.
- Capers: How big a...this was a forty acre plot of land. So your father had this big family when he got out here.
- Neill: He wanted to teach the boys to work with their hands, to have time to study their books without interruption.
- Capers: That brings me to a question of interest about schooling. What was done about schooling? You were way out of town here.
- Neill: At the time we moved out here, there were country schools in Eureka, over in front of where the Old Ladies' Home is. For one year, we went over there. I wouldn't take a pretty for going to a country school for one year.
- Capers: Was the place called Eureka or was the school called Eureka?
- Neill: Eureka School.
- Capers: Just in the county?
- Neill: Yes. And the Wrights and the Hollands taught that school. I've forgotten if it was a Wright or a Holland, but there was one. It was the same family. But all the time my father was working on getting us into the city schools, and it was no small thing that he did!
- Capers: What kind of city school?
- Neill: Eureka was closed and another school over here was closed. And we paid tuition. So I really started in the first grade at Central School. That didn't count...that was just an experience!
- Capers: Central is the same Central that's there now.
- Neill: That was the only school in town.
- Capers: It went from the elementary grades right on through high school? It was a public school? State, public, city...supported by the taxpayers?
- Neill: My father took me to school the first day.
- Capers: How did he take you?

- Neill: Well, he took me in the buggy. He always got out of the buggy and took the whip with him, to keep somebody from stealing it. It looked like he was going to horsewhip whoever he was with! But I felt mighty important that my father thought enough of me to take me to school the first day. I felt that it was a big enterprise, or he wouldn't have done it.
- Capers: How old were you then, in the first grade? Same as we are now? Would you say you were six, or seven?
- Neill: Actually, I was six, but I became seven in October. School started in September.
- Capers: Do you mind giving us the date of your birth?
- Neill: October 26, 1886.
- Capers: Well, you went to school at Central and you went all through school at Central?
- Neill: No, because when I was in the fifth grade, they made Poindexter School.
- Capers: It was the second school in Jackson?
- Neill: Second school in Jackson, and I had the same wonderful teacher for three years...Miss Sally Enochs. She moved up with our class each year.
- Capers: At Poindexter?
- Neill: At Poindexter. And if I hadn't ever gone to school anywhere else, I'd have felt well-educated. She was that splendid!
- Capers: These great teachers mean more to children than anything in the world. Then you went to Poindexter, and did you graduate from high school at Poindexter, or did you go back to Central?
- Neill: ...Went back to the eighth grade at Central again.
- Capers: Who were your teachers you remember at Central?
- Neill: I remember Miss Daisey Crane was my eighth grade teacher.
- Capers: Would that be the Episcopal minister...Crane?
- Neill: Yes.
- Capers: Reverend William Croes Crane?
- Neill: That's right.

Capers: Would that be his sister...his wife?

Neill: His daughter.

Capers: His daughter. Now, what kin would she be to Miss Louise Crane?

Neill: Sister.

Capers: The older sister?

Neill: Yes, she was older than Louise.

Capers: Louise and who else? There were three of them.

Neill: There was a brother.

Capers: And there was another sister. I can't think of her name.

Neill: She lived up in Grenada, a Mrs. Lawrence, but I've forgotten her name.

Capers: Was Miss Crane a good teacher?

Neill: Do I have to tell the record?

Capers: Yes...everybody's dead in that family.

Neill: She was very smart. She knew no more about teaching than a June bug. She couldn't even keep good order. Miss Burlack had all the people I knew across the hall just teaching them to perfection. I regretted always that I didn't have...but in a way, it might have been a good thing. On my own, I was determined to learn. I studied extra hard...she wasn't any teacher. She was so extremely smart, but she hadn't come down to teaching.

Capers: Who was principal? Do you remember?

Neill: Mr. Stark.

Capers: Who was he?

Neill: He was the principal of the high school, and the next year after that eighth grade with Miss Daisey Crane, I went into Mr. Stark's room for two years and from there graduated.

Capers: Was he a good teacher?

Neill: He wasn't bad.

Capers: Better than Miss Daisey?

Neill: Better than Miss Daisey.

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- Capers: But not good...not as good as Miss Enochs.
- Neill: No. Nothing was as good as Miss Enochs. Mr. Stark...I just don't want to say anything about Mr. Stark's memory. It's just...he may have been a better teacher than I thought. I did work. He did keep order, and he did have two grades in the room.
- Capers: Did you often have two grades in a room? Was that the custom?
- Neill: Well, it was in the ninth and tenth grade. You see, it ended in the tenth grade.
- Capers: You graduated from high school in the tenth grade?
- Neill: Papa insisted on us studying our lessons perfectly at home. I had a great deal of time to listen to what he was teaching to the other grade that was ahead of me. Mary Hamilton was in it. She was a show in herself! Her cousin, Betsy Buck....
- Capers: The high school ended in the tenth grade?
- Neill: No, the tenth grade was there when I went.
- Capers: I mean, when you finished the tenth grade you were through with high school?
- Neill: I was through with high school, yes.
- Capers: Well, then, did you go...then you'd be very young. How old were you at the tenth grade if you started....
- Neill: I must have been sixteen because I started Millsaps when I was sixteen.
- Capers: Then you went right on to Millsaps? Were there any other women at Millsaps when you were there?
- Neill: Yes, four or five. Louise Crane was one of them. Aimee Hemingway, Frances Park, a girl called Peter Peeples....
- Capers: Was she kin to Miss Pink Peeples?
- Neill: She was another Peeples. She wasn't any kin to the P. W. Peeples. I think Miss Millsaps had graduated, and Miss Mary Holloman had already graduated. But when I was a freshman there were Miss Frances Park, my sister-in-law Mrs. Robert Ridgway, who was Hattie Lewis, Mathilde Lacey Yates and Bess Huddleston.
- Capers: Oh, Mathilde?
- Neill: Do you remember Mathilde?

- Capers: Oh, with affection!
- Neill: If you ever knew her, you'd never forget her. She was a visitor here.
- Capers: Did Mathilde live in Jackson?
- Neill: No, she boarded at Mrs. Dameron's. They had been in Baltimore, in private schools in Baltimore, and they came here to put Mathilde in Millsaps and Mae in society, and they boarded at Mrs. Dameron's.
- Capers: What was Mathilde's maiden name?
- Neill: Mathilde Lacey.
- Capers: Where were they from?
- Neill: Yazoo City. And my sister-in-law and Mathilde had been friends and co-graduates from high school in Yazoo City. And what wasn't done in Yazoo City wasn't do-able!
- Capers: I'm sure that's true. Knowing Mathilde, she was a gay blade even when I knew her. She was a lot of fun.
- Neill: She said if you didn't make yourself felt, you might as well be dead!
- Capers: Well, she made herself felt, she sure did! That's a real good recollection.
- Neill: She was walking along the campus one day with Charlton Alexander and her petticoat came off. Mathilde didn't bat an eye, she just laid the petticoat casually on her arm and walked right on with Charlton. Charlton said, "Don't mind, Miss Mat." That's all he said. But you know, that was something terrible for your petticoat to fall off!
- Capers: I'm sure it was! I don't know how Charlton was, but some of those Alexanders have been pretty strait-laced. I bet it gave him a turn. Who were some of the men in your class at Millsaps?
- Neill: Robert was already out there.
- Capers: Your husband was out there?
- Neill: He wasn't already out there, though. He started when I did. Robert was already out there or else I would not have gotten to go. Papa told Dr. Murrah that if I could have my dinner at a boarding house under somebody's eye, I could come. So Mrs. Worrell in the old Hemingway house took me in for lunch.
- Capers: Which old Hemingway house?

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Neill: You would hardly remember it, but that was a farm, a plantation, and this Hemingway house was the plantation house and on the campus facing West street right there where Ezelle Hall is, in that area back of the Kappa Alpha house.

Capers: It was facing West Street?

Neill: Facing West Street, and that whole area was a farm.

Capers: Was that Miss Aimee's place?

Neill: And then another part of Millsaps' campus was the old Petrie place...kin to Miss Eva Hamilton. The Petrie house is still there.

Capers: Which is the Petrie house?

Neill: It's a wooden house over back of Founder's Hall. I don't know what's housed in it. It was there, and kept because it was a keepsake.

Capers: I interviewed this Negro man who was president of Jackson State College...Dr. Dansby. Did you ever know him?

Neill: I never did.

Capers: Well, he's a real smart and interesting man. He told me something I'd never heard, and I'd like you to get this straight for me, that at one time Jackson State College was located where Millsaps College now is. Do you have any recollection of that?

Neill: No, I've never understood that.

Capers: Well, I haven't either. He's written a book, the History of Jackson State College.

Neill: There was a Negro school there.

Capers: It wasn't called Jackson College to begin with. It was a Baptist missionary Negro school. Could that have been what he was talking about?

Neill: There was one Negro school on that campus at one time.

Capers: I don't want to get off our subject, but we're talking about Millsaps and Jackson State. He said that the Baptist Missionary Society of New York....

Neill: That sounds familiar.

Capers: ...Came and established a school in Natchez, a school for Negroes,

and so they decided it would be desirable to move the school to Jackson; and when they were first organized as a Baptist school, they were where Millsaps now is. Then, later they found that they felt...and he said this...they felt that it would be a mistake. They saw the development of the white area was going to come out there and they felt that they would not be in a desirable position to grow, so they tried to move to where they would and established the college which they called Jackson College, although it was originally a Baptist college.

- Neill: Well, now, I'll tell you this about the colleges here. Campbell College...I was just trying to think of the name...was there a long time before Jackson State was, and that was a private institution. I couldn't contradict what you've said. It's possible that the school did come there. The Zach Taylors, when the Campbell College was formed, sold the place knowing it would make a desirable area for colored people...rich good farm. And they came to town. The daughter married one of the Hedermans, you know, Miss Jennie Belle.
- Capers: Which Hederman did she marry?
- Neill: She married Tom.
- Capers: Now, let's get back to Millsaps. When you went to school, who was president?
- Neill: Dr. Murrah.
- Capers: Dr. Murrah. Who were the teachers out there that you remember as being outstanding?
- Neill: To go back a little about Dr. Murrah's wife...she was from Fannin. Her father was Mr. Louis Fitzhugh, who had a school over there and then came over and started Belhaven. Dr. Moore and Dr. Swearingen.
- Capers: This is Ross Moore's father? And Bethany's father, Crawford's father, and Mack's father?
- Neill: Mr. Huddleston started me in Greek. He was in the prep department. Professor Ricketts. My English teacher was Dr. David Horace Bishop, who went to Ole Miss.
- Capers: Who taught me English a long time later. His children are good friends of mine. Dr. Bishop was at Ole Miss...well, I guess he must have alternated between Ole Miss and Millsaps, because he was at Millsaps when you were there, then the Bilbo regime came in and the school was not accredited, and then he came back to Millsaps when I was there during the Depression, then he went back to Ole Miss and taught me at Ole Miss. So he was back and forth. He married a Somerville from Oxford, so Oxford was more like his

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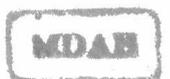
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MDAH

- home, I guess. Now, was Mr. Garner Green going to school at Millsaps at any time that you were there?
- Neill: He was there and gone before I was....
- Capers: He's a lot older than you are. He had been there, I knew. Well, Millsaps was...did it have the reputation then that it has now, academically, as a good school?
- Neill: It had a splendid reputation from the start. They just had wonderful professors to begin with.
- Capers: Did they have social life out there? Did they have fraternities and sororities?
- Neill: There were just a few girls and we were invited to everything that every fraternity had.
- Capers: Grand! I love that being a few girls! I was one of a few girls when I went to Ole Miss and it was just marvelous! What sororities did they have?
- Neill: They didn't have any when I was there.
- Capers: But they had fraternities.
- Neill: They had one the next year and I was invited to join, but I'd heard this expression "college widow" and I didn't want to be one! I foolishly declined the invitation to the new sorority, Phi Mu.
- Capers: I don't think that was foolish. I now think sororities are foolish, but I'm a Phi Mu. Tell me about meeting your husband.
- Neill: Professor Huddleston was in the Greek department, and I took Greek. Lamar took Greek. Professor Huddleston said, "Is there anyone in this room that knows the Greek alphabet?" My sister-in-law knew it, and Lamar raised his hand. His grandmother had taught him the Greek alphabet. His grandmother was one of these famous teachers in Jasper County. So Lamar shot that Greek alphabet off like a shoot...made everybody laugh. He turned around and looked at me and grinned. That was my introduction. But we weren't particularly...if I did like him I didn't say anything about it. Several years later, my brother said, "Why don't you like a nice boy like Lamar Neill?" (Looks at class picture). That's Mathilde Lacey. That's I looking so prim and proper, and Bess Huddleston. When I was in the ninth grade in high school I sat with Bess Huddleston. She had just moved to Jackson. Early in October she said, she wrote me a note, "My mother wants you to spend the weekend with us." I told my mother about it, and you know what she said? "We'll have to look into that." Old-timey!

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- Capers: Well, it's a good idea, I guess.
- Neill: The trustees had passed on the Huddlestons, but that didn't count with her!
- Capers: But that didn't count with your mother!
- Neill: Now, there is my husband, right there. He's much better looking than that. He was just a boy. And that's John Weems from Shubuta. They were wearing those huge bows, and he's reaching back there trying to show Mathilde's big bow. That is Silas Davis, the ancestor of many Jacksonians. That was his cousin that was kin to the Millsaps, Samuel Ivy Osborne from Greenwood. That was Dr. Swearingen's nephew from Georgia. That was Mr. Swayze from Yazoo City.
- Capers: All those Swayzes are still over there and over here, too.
- Neill: And that's Mr. C. O. Japp, and there are still some Japps in Jackson.
- Capers: The Japps were Episcopalians. I remember the Japp name.
- Neill: ..."Beauty" Buter. His mother was from Columbus. Miss Daisey Crane told me that fact. This is Dr. Terrell, who was kin to the Lamptons here, but he was a doctor down in....
- Capers: He was from Magnolia, wasn't he? Magnolia? South Mississippi?
- Neill: He was kin to that same family. I can't think of the town. Purvis, I believe...he was a doctor there. And then there's Zach Savage. Let me see if there's anybody else connected with....
- Capers: What year was this?
- Neill: I started there in 1903. My brother graduated that year. I was just looking to see if there's any other Jacksonian. Now, a great many of these didn't graduate with me but I picked up...at that time several students, Arthur Rogers from New Albany, the father of Nat Rogers, was out a year so that another brother could start college. So he came back into my class. And several that I graduated with had been out a year. There were sixteen in my class and I was the only girl.
- Capers: This was the year that the New Capitol was dedicated, 1903. Do you remember anything about that?
- Neill: Indeed I do! I went with him down there.
- Capers: Who was that?

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- Neill: John Locke from Magnolia. He was a Memphis lawyer.
- Capers: And you went to the dedication, and Bishop Galloway made the address. We have the address. It was a wonderful speech.
- Neill: When I went to Millsaps, we often went to the Legislature. The history department would say so and so was going to speak. That famous debate with Percy and Vardaman...we heard a lot of that!
- Capers: That was most interesting. Do you remember anything particularly about that?
- Neill: I'm afraid that I just couldn't put it into words.
- Capers: Well, you might think about it and we could talk about it later, sometime, because there have been a lot of articles written about that campaign.
- Neill: There was a lot of sentiment that the McLaurins were running the state.
- Capers: The Vardaman people...now we could talk about that. We could talk a lot...what people, what the contemporaries of Governor Vardaman thought about him.
- Neill: Governor Vardaman came in as governor...I went to his inauguration in the New Capitol, and I think that is where I went with...to that inauguration.
- Capers: I think we're about to run out of tape. I'm watching it here.
- Neill: Now, there's a Jackson man, Dr. Calvin Crawford Applewhite.
- Capers: Dr. Applewhite that used to live on North State Street right across from the old Episcopal rectory where I used to live.
- Neill: He came to this house. That was the most unpromising looking young man, and he made a famous lawyer on the Coast. He was with Pringle and something.
- Capers: Victor Pringle. Who was he?
- Neill: Backstrom from Leakesville. One of these men was from Yazoo City, from Union Church.
- Capers: Did you get a Bachelor of Arts degree from Millsaps? What did the course consist of? About what it consists of now?
- Neill: I wouldn't be surprised! History and English Literature and foreign languages, Latin and Greek. I wanted to take French and had conflicts. I've always regretted that.

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Capers: Did you have to take mathematics and science?

Neill: I did on account of Dr. Sullivan. I took science all the way through.

Capers: Well, you got a pretty broad base for almost everything.

Neill: Yes, I did. It was a base.

Capers: We're through with this....

Neill: Do you see these roses, the bushes in this yard? He's got a rose. I was on the way to put the bouquet of flowers in the library for the day. Silas Davis grabbed the bouquet. But all through there you'll see a rose. The bush is still in this yard.

Capers: And the address of this house is what?

Neill: 1831 Robinson.

Capers: Now, let's talk about the Campbells that lived next door.

Neill: Mother and Miss Patty knew each other before we moved out here.

Capers: Who was Miss Patty?

Neill: Mrs. J. A. P. Campbell, Jr.

Capers: When you say, "Mrs. J. A. P. Campbell, Jr.," was this the son?

Neill: Judge Campbell's oldest son. They had forty acres and Judge Campbell gave him these fine cows. He didn't know how to handle the cows, and Papa bought them and rented all the land between here and the P. W. Peeples for pasture for years and years. His idea was to have something to sell every day of the year from this farm. If Dr. Swearingen needed a cow, he knew where to come get it. Everybody on State Street had a cow. Did you know that?

Capers: No! Where did they keep them?

Neill: Over in the swamp.

Capers: Where's the swamp?

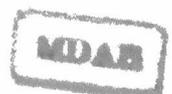
Neill: Down where the Coliseum is...that area over there.

Capers: They kept their cows down in there right back of the Old Capitol.

Neill: The Saunderses had a dairy. It wasn't generally known that they had a dairy, but they had milk to sell on State Street.

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Capers: That would be Mrs. R. L. Saunders?

Neill: Nobody ever said the Saunderses had a dairy.

Capers: Clifford wouldn't like it...to think she had a dairy!

Neill: But they had cows and they had milk. Well, he did sell Dr. Swearin-gen a cow. He had the registration papers and he bought more cows and had this dairy to occupy my brothers. We had darkies here to go sell the milk and the vegetables, or else the stores would send out here and get the vegetables. He was an intensive farmer. The neighbors laughed at him for having crooked rows. He knew about terracing and saving his land. He'd have turnips, acres of turnips! We even raised celery. And another big crop was watermelons! From Georgia he knew how to raise watermelons.

Capers: Did he raise asparagus?

Neill: Yes, we did have asparagus here. There wasn't anything to eat that we didn't have. We didn't have to go to the store...that was part of the proposition. The money crops were the turnips and the sweet potatoes and the watermelons, the strawberries, and the sugar cane molasses...the same man came each year and made the molasses. He even brought the same rags, I'm sure!

Capers: How did he make it? Did he make it here?

Neill: He had a mill. He brought the mill and brought everything about it.

Capers: Did he hitch a mule?

Neill: Yes, he had a mule and went round and round.

Capers: And that was the mill that crushed the sugar cane?

Neill: I remember my father said, "Any of Susie's friends that want to come to the cane mill and drink the juice and play around there can come. But don't send anybody else down there, because we're down there for business." Did I say he raised strawberries?

Capers: Yes.

Neill: I remember that James came home from medical school and thought that Papa had worried with those strawberries long enough. They were the hardest things, these other things weren't that hard. Plowed them up one day and I think that Papa was secretly glad that the strawberries were plowed up.

Capers: I didn't realize that they were hard.

- Neill: Yes, they are. Anyhow, the idea was that he raised what we had to eat and the cows made the fertilizer that raised the vegetables. He had the milk to sell. The boys had employment and plenty of time to study with the prospect that when they started to college there was no more work for them to do...just stick to the books!
- Capers: Your father really was master of his household!
- Neill: It was like a little principality. The Campbell house was run the same way. We didn't go dashing in. They Taylors were the same way. We telephoned. You made a date. "Are you going to be at home? I'm coming over." Mary Taylor, Mrs. Sigman's mother, the Campbells, and we...and the Campbells had a common ground where both sets of children could get out there and play and dig and tunnel when we got ready. But that didn't mean we went jumping over into Miss Patty's house or that they came into ours. Miss Patty was a wonderful lady. Miss Belle Kearney was her kin. Do you know Miss Belle?
- Capers: Yes, I know who she is. She was the first woman senator.
- Neill: When Belle came, she sent a little note over here to my mother, "Belle is coming to day. We're going to have a lot of good talk. Let Robert and Susie come and take a seat nearby." Dr. Andrews would come. That was another man that just missed being bishop when Bishop Galloway was elected. Dr. Boris Fearn and his wife who was a doctor, she was a Dr. Walter from Holly Springs.
- Capers: I know. We have a book she wrote.
- Neill: They'd come. "Send the children over to hear the talk." Now, wasn't that wonderful! Why don't people think of that?
- Capers: They don't talk that well, for one thing. I was brought up listening to the talk, because my father was a minister and we had company, real interesting people all the time, and my brother and I loved to be permitted to listen to the talk, and to come to the dinner table with the company. Children don't....
- Neill: We had lots of company here. The idea was for children to hear it. I couldn't mention anybody of prominence in the state that didn't have a meal at Lamar's house in Montrose. Mabel Campbell had a birthday party when she was fourteen.
- Capers: Who's Mabel?
- Neill: The daughter, the one daughter, the dear daughter. She spent a lot of her time up in town at Mrs. Griffith's...this was the country. She had this birthday party and it's something to remember! Miss Patty invited Mabel and Anita Perkins...
- Capers: ...From Shadowlawn?

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- Neill: From Shadowlawn. The younger Lemleys, Amanada and her...no, she didn't invite...Eileen was there as a guest - Mabel's age. Who else was around?
- Capers: Now, what age was this?
- Neill: Mattie and Helen Graves from Yazoo City; the Perkinses and the Graveses; Minnie Dameron and her sister Eugenia. The little fireplace just held this little group. Mrs. Charlie Campbell having Going to Jerusalem and all the games that fourteen-year-olds would play. I made friends for life around the fire that night. The Perkinses from Shadowlawn were constant visitors. We exchanged visits. Minnie Dameron and I went to Knoxville together...taught together...and were always dear friends.
- Capers: What was Mrs. Charlie Campbell to these Campbells?
- Neill: Sister-in-law.
- Capers: Dr. Willis Campbell's mother?
- Neill: Mother, yes.
- Capers: She was....
- Neill: ...Cohoun, from Virginia - Salem, Virginia. I remember that.
- Capers: I remember her...she stuttered...and she was a real gay old girl!
- Neill: She was a gay old girl, and she had a good party that night! Now, here are the people that were at that party.
- Capers: What party was this?
- Neill: This was Mabel's fourteenth birthday party. A perfectly beautiful party!
- Capers: But it was given next door by Mrs. Charlie Campbell?
- Neill: It was given by Mrs. J. A. P. Campbell, Jr., for her daughter, Mabel. But Mrs. Charlie Campbell engineered the games. Here are the guests at the party. This is history for you. Governor Stone's nieces were there...Maggie Stone and another that I've forgotten; Hamilton and Ethel Sivley; the three Green girls....
- Capers: Lula and Gertrude and Elise....
- Neill? Yes. Eileen Lemly, Willis Campbell, the Cooper boys, Judge Cooper's sons were kin. It wasn't a big party, it was very....
- Capers: How about the Alexanders?

Neill: That's a strange thing. There never was....

Capers: They were not friends?

Neill: I learned early in life...you know what I mean?

Capers: Yes! Don't push it.

Neill: That was it. They admired each other, and lived across from each other on North Jefferson Street. But when we came out here, Jackson had just begun to grow.

Capers: I know. Historically, that's the period that it began to grow.

Neill: The Alexanders moved to Jefferson.

Capers: Moved from North State to Jefferson?

Neill: Moved to North Jefferson.

Capers: Where did they move from the North State place, on Jefferson?

Neill: Right on the corner, right where you went up into Belhaven College area.

Capers: Right up into Bellevue?

Neill: It was on North Jefferson and on a corner. Must have been the corner of Boyd.

Capers: It was...Boyd and Jefferson.

Neill: But Mrs. Alexander never failed in all her life long to be sweet to me. By the way, she was kin to Lamar. The Alexanders were kin to Lamar. His grandmother was an Alexander. What was I talking about? It's so easy to ramble!

Capers: Well, I know it. We were talking about the party and the historic....

Neill: It wasn't such a big party. We went out in the yard to shoot fireworks...this was January 3...and Miss Sadie Cooper wore a wig and her wig caught on fire. She had to jerk the wig off.

Capers: And be revealed!

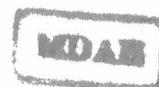
Neill: Yes, and that was such a horrible thing. She was a little crippled, and couldn't have caught it.

Capers: It would be horrible now, if she didn't have any hair.

- Neill: She didn't have control over her muscles; she was a little spastic, and a dear person.
- Capers: ...But her wig caught on fire....
- Neill: I owe a lot to Miss Sadie because this was in the country and all the boys had occupations. I never did do anything on the farm. I thought my brothers had so much fun milking that I went down there one morning and asked them to let me learn to milk. My brother stood up by the cow and said, "Go back to the house and never put your foot in this barn again. This is no lady's place." Have we finished the party? It wasn't a large party.
- Capers: I want to hear about Mrs. Charlie Campbell at the party. Do you remember her kind of leading the games?
- Neill: She led the games. I never did feel that I knew Mrs. Charlie Campbell or that she wanted to know me.
- Capers: She probably didn't. I remember her as...I have these funny memories because they're very childish memories formed by what my parents said. I didn't really know Mrs. Charlie Campbell. I just remember that she was an older, kind of a character in town, and that her son was Dr. Campbell; and that when she was sick, Father went to see her, because she was an Episcopalian. That's all I knew about her. They liked her fine, but they would laugh. She was a character. She seemed to be somebody they thought was amusing. I don't imagine she very warmly associated...she must have thought she was a "high society" person.
- Neill: She was. She didn't think too highly of the Campbells on the hill. They were a little bit....
- Capers: ...Beneath her. Well, I think she must have been a real interesting person.
- Neill: She was interesting.
- Capers: I think we've finished with the party, except we can add here a general note on parties at that time and what you did at parties at that time you were in...what we speak of as the "teen-age" group now. We didn't think it was that...you were just fourteen years old. What did you do? Did you play games and have boys and girls?
- Neill: Right!
- Capers: Did you have refreshments? A lot to eat?

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Neill: Her dining room table was something beautiful to remember. The candied fruits and the pretty Christmas candy. The children that were around the fire were carried to the table first and were already situated when the big ones came in. She didn't miss a lick of knowing when and how to be lovely.

Capers: She must have been a great person. What was her maiden name?

Neill: Patty Cooper.

Capers: She was a Cooper?

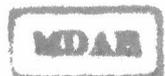
Neill: Yes, and Mrs. Griffith's sister.

(End of Tape)

(Typed by Mary H. Mingee)

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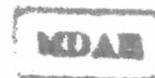
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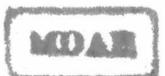
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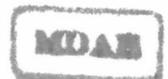
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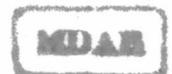


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