ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Chattanooga - Hamilton County Public Library

Chattanooga, Tennessee

An Interview With

MARGARET WHITE BRIGHT

By

Norman Bradley

July 22, 1983

PREFACE

This manuscript is a transcript of an interview conducted for the Oral History Project of the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Public Library. The purpose of the project is to capture the first-hand accounts of the social history of the Chattanooga area in the twentieth century.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that the transcript reflects the patterns of the spoken, rather than the written, word. The information is presented as it was recalled by the interviewee at the occasion of the interview and has been edited only for clarity.

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Two indexes have been prepared for locating specific information from either the transcript or the tape. The page index to the transcript is located at the end of this volume. A meter count number has been given in the left margin of the text for locating a section on the tape. It should be noted that this number will vary depending on the equipment used.

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ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

PERSONAL DATA SHEET

Date July 22, 1983

1. Full name (include maiden name and married name, where applies):

   Margaret Lea White (Mrs. Gardner) Bright

2. Current address and phone number:

   211 Scenic Highway, 821-2215
   Lookout Mountain, TN 37350

3. Date and Place of Birth:

   June 4, 1893 Chattanooga, TN

4. Mother's maiden name: Place of Birth:

   Ann Elizabeth Henegar Charleston, TN

5. Father's name: Place of Birth:

   George Thomas White Jefferson, NC

6. Spouse's name:

   James Gardner Bright (deceased 1960)

7. Children's names and addresses (if possible). Indicate daughters married names:

   Ann Henegar Bright Govan, Chapel Hill, NC

   George Thomas Bright -- deceased

   James Gardner Bright, Jr. -- deceased

   Lucy Lea Bright Thatcher, Lookout Mountain

   Fletcher White Bright, Lookout Mountain

(OHP FORM F)

INTRODUCTION

Margaret White Bright, a native of Chattanooga and at ninety years of age still a resident of the Lookout Mountain home into which she moved as a bride in the early twenties, has been a prominent figure in the community's social and civic life throughout her adulthood. She is the daughter of George Thomas White, a leading attorney of the city and the widow of Gardner Bright, who headed a highly successful real estate firm here.

Mrs. Bright's childhood home in the Fort Wood section, where she was born in 1893, is still one of the city's oldest standing residential structures. She played golf with her father and brothers before the game attracted many women participants, and remembers creating somewhat of a stir among her elders by her appearance in a knit bathing suit. Mrs. Bright attended the city's public schools and recalls her earlier years as a wonderfully satisfying experience in an era of gracious living.

The interview with her was recorded at her home July 22, 1983, by Norman Bradley for the Chattanooga - Hamilton County Public Library's Oral History Project.

Bradley: Now, Mrs. Bright, let's begin with a little bit of your family background. You were born here in Chattanooga?
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Bright: Yes, I was born in Chattanooga, and I was born on Vine Street; it was 522 Vine Street when I was born, but they've since renumbered the streets and now it's 822 Vine.

Bradley: 822.

Bright: 822, and it's on that part of Vine Street that's known as Fort Wood. Fort Wood has some historical significance because it was headquarters of a General Wood during the Civil War. I don't know General Wood's first name; I asked Gilbert Govan, but he didn't know either, (laughter) so I don't feel guilty about not knowing what his first name was. Anyway, it was his headquarters, and it was -- I don't guess I should say "headquarters" -- there was a fort there called Fort Wood, and they had two, I guess we would say short-range cannons, they certainly are not long-range as we think of them now. Our home was the first home to be built in that area, and I might say it is the oldest residential --

Bradley: Structure.

Bright: Yes, of Chattanooga, yes. When we built it was the first house
035 to be built in that area. And it was in the country.

Bradley: I can imagine. Let's spot it a little bit; where is it in relation to, say, the Fort Wood Apartments?

Bright: Well, it is in the same block. We are at, more or less, the beginning of the block, that is the south end -- Fort Wood runs north and south, I believe, or is it east and west?

Bradley: East and west.

Bright: East and west, yes, east and west. Well, we were at the eastern end, that's right, and the apartments at the western end. And really we could say we were on one corner and they were on the other, just for practical purposes. The house is very Victorian -- I don't know whether it's early, late, or middle, but I'd say it was -- I think it was kind of early Victorian; it
045 was built in 1882, I believe, and my father said he didn't know how he could make a living, living so far out in the country (laughter), but he did pretty well.

Bradley: What was his business?

Bright: He was a lawyer. White and Martin was the name*, and when they broke up their partnership, when each had sons that they wanted to take into the business, why it was the oldest law firm in Chattanooga at the time. My father was terrifically fond of the law; the law was really his avocation rather than his vocation, he got so much fun out of it.

Bradley: Was he from Chattanooga too?

Bright: Well, he had lived in Chattanooga since about 1872 or '73, but he, really, was born in North Carolina, Jefferson, North Carolina. When he was just a young baby, six months old, why the family migrated from North Carolina -- I guess you'd say "migrated" -- birds migrate and I guess you could say people [do] -- and so they came down the river and he [her grandfather, John White] was granted this large tract of land out in what we call -- it would be the Shepherd neighborhood. And he had quite an acreage there that was given to him by the government for meritorious duty performed in the Mexican War. And that tract of land has been in the family for -- was in the family for a long time. But I'm getting off the subject. I don't know what I started to say, I was starting to say about where I was born and when. (laughter)

Bradley: Well now, his name, his full name?

Bright: His full name was George Thomas White.

Bradley: George Thomas White. And your mother?

Bright: Ann Henegar White.

Bradley: How to you spell her last name?

Bright: H-E-N-E-G-A-R.

Bradley: Oh, Henegar, yes I see.

Bright: She lived at Charleston, Tennessee, she came from there. They were married in 1881 [ed: 1882], I believe.

Bradley: Did your father play a part in the Civil War, after the Mexican War?

* George T. White (1849-1928) and Francis Martin (1859-1919) were first listed as partners at 122 East Seventh Street in the 1889 City Directory and last listed in 1910.

Bright: Well, he was about twelve years old when the Civil War broke out, and his father played a big part in it. My Grandfather
075 White participated in every war he could get into. It seemed like he just liked the smell of gunpowder. He raised a company out east of the ridge. After he came down from North Carolina, he built a -- it wasn't a log cabin, it was a very, very nice house. I think part of it was log but it was covered over with regular wood, like we build a house.

Bradley: Wood siding.

Bright: Siding, like we do now, like we have now. He lived there until -- well, he was there when the war broke out, and my father was about twelve years old. He was taken prisoner and was a prisoner up in Boston Harbor, I believe it was, and he was paroled -- that's what I'm trying to say. When he came back, this part of the country was very much divided, politically that is, between the North and the South, and a lot of bitterness. So he decided to go to Florida, which he did.

He had a small family of six children, and so he (laughter) migrated -- I believe I used that word a while ago -- he went to Florida, refugeed I guess you'd say this time. And so he refugeed and went to Florida and took two slaves that stayed with them for a long time. To tell you what a hard time in
090 pioneer days -- as I said a minute ago he had six children, one little child died on the way down there. They were going through the country with ox carts, and the little boy was buried [at the] side of the road. After he got settled in Florida, he sent back and got the remains and took it to Florida. I don't know whether to go ahead and tell about Florida, or go back to Tennessee where I was --

Bradley: Let's come back to Tennessee for a moment.

Bright: Let's go back to Tennessee, yes, we're getting far afield. I told you you'd have to keep me on the track, and you must do it.

Bradley: Yes. Then, you were born -- as a matter of fact, you celebrated your ninetieth birthday just the other day, didn't you?

Bright: That's right, I really did.

Bradley: What's the date, Margaret?

Bright: June the fourth.
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Bradley: June the fourth, and the day of your party was your birthday.

Bright: Was actually my birthday. I was born on Fort Wood, as I said, on Sunday evening, June the fourth, 1893, and I'm still hanging on. Do you want me to go ahead with an account of my life, or --

Bradley: Yes. Let's talk about your life there in Fort Wood.

Bright: Okay.

Bradley: What's your earliest recollection of the neighborhood?

Bright: Well, the neighborhood was -- I'll start in maybe when I was, say, nine or ten years old [when] I went to First District School.

Bradley: Which was toward town from you.

Bright: Yes, where the library is now.* And I graduated in the -- then we graduated from grammar grades in the eighth grade. And from there I went to -- GPS [Girls' Preparatory School] was just starting, just barely starting, we didn't know too much about it, and so I went to Chattanooga High School. I had four glorious years there, having a good time, and leading my class until I started leading them socially rather than in books. (laughter) So I didn't come out with first honor, but I came out pretty well. After I graduated from high school, I went on to Hollins College [Virginia] and spent two years there.

Bradley: What year was it you graduated from high school?

Bright: I graduated in 1913.

Bradley: 1913, that means this was your seventieth year, or 1983 was.

Bright: That's right.

Bradley: Did you have a reunion this year?

Bright: Did not have a reunion, no, but we had -- it seemed to me like -- I'm not counting myself in this -- but seemed like we had a mighty good class in that 1913. I remember [William W., Jr.] Billy Brooks who died not too long ago was one of them. I remember Harold Patterson, I remember a lot of boys that have done well and girls too. It seemed to me like it was rather an outstanding class; maybe everybody feels that way, but I did.

* Refers to previous location of Chattanooga Public Library at McCallie Avenue and Douglas Street.

(Bright): But my life on Fort Wood was very happy. We'd come home from school, and we'd put on our skates and we'd skate up and down the sidewalk. I mean we didn't do it just one time, we did it every afternoon. And the boys would come out too, you know, and we'd skate together and we'd just have a big time. And then at night, why, there was a great big electric light not very far from where we were. It seemed to me like it was a queer kind of thing -- it seemed to be kind of carbon-lit. Every now and then it would flare up and then it would go out, and they'd fix it and everything. We would play all kind of games and everything, and have a big time playing just at dusk and after dusk. And I remember the big old pinching bugs we were mortally afraid of. (laughter)

And then long about that time, and before, I really spent every year of my life on Lookout Mountain, every summer. But in those days the mountain was a summer resort. And people didn't live up here in the wintertime on account of the transportation being so difficult; that is, the roads were bad, and it was before the days of automobiles. But we'd come up as soon as school was out. It was a glorious time. We would shed our winter underwear (laughter), we would shed our shoes, we'd come to the mountain. And we'd stay on the mountain all summer perhaps without going to town a single time. And the mountain was country, it was woodsy, and we lived a country life. It wasn't any trouble to move to the mountain, except we did have a cow. My father believed in having a cow, you know, and so Will Sneed, who was a trusted manservant for many years, he would start out from Fort Wood and walk all the way to the mountain with the cow, pulling the cow. (laughter)

Bradley: You had the same cow in town and on the mountain?

Bright: Yes, we should have had two cows. We had many cows because my father owned a farm east of the ridge, and he would always have what we called "a fresh cow," you know, a cow giving plenty of milk. And so he would come to the mountain, and the cow would be kind of worn out for about a week afterwards, (laughter) just lay around and didn't give much milk.

Bradley: How many families were there on the mountain at that time, Margaret?

Bright: Well, there were a good many summer residents, but mighty few winter residents. I can't think of anybody that stayed up during the wintertime except -- and she's with us still -- and that's Mary Mitchell Crutchfield [Mrs. William, Sr.]. She's down at Barnabas [St. Barnabas Apartments and Nursing Home]. Her family did stay up here the year-round, and they would have a good time in the wintertime. They'd have plenty of ice and

(Bright): snow and coasting and things like that. But I always felt like the mountain came into existence when we moved up, you know. It seemed to me like it didn't exist till we came, and then there it was, just like we had left it.

Bradley: Did a lot of families come at about the same time?

Bright: About the same time.

Bradley: When school was out.

Bright: When school was out. And we'd have three glorious months, and then when September and the days were getting longer, I mean shorter -- the shadows were getting longer, I guess it was, I was thinking of that -- and then we'd have to go back to town and back to school in the same routine of going to grammar grade and all that.

Bradley: Did your father come and go every day?

Bright: Yes, he came and went every day.

Bradley: What was his transportation?

Bright: Well, his mode of transportation was rather simple. We lived close to the old Lookout Mountain House, just after you get on top of the mountain where the condominiums are now [Stonedge Village, 100 Scenic Highway], and we lived in the house next door. There was a path that went down the mountain; he'd walk down to the foot, and he had some companions that walked with him. [William] W. B. Mitchell and [ed: James A.] J. B. Mitchell always came by about six-thirty in the morning, and they'd start down in the cool of the evening [ed: morning]. And my father had the Times delivered at a house just right at the foot of the mountain, right close to where the path came out, and he'd pick up his paper there. He'd get on a streetcar and read the paper going into town. (laughter)

And then when he'd start back up the mountain, he didn't walk back up. But like the skiers and all, why he'd come up the "lift" which was the Incline. And he would come up the Incline and then when he'd get to the top, he'd have "The Dinky," as we called it. It was a little [trolley] car that circulated around on the mountain, and it was a funny little car and Dinky was a good name for it, because it was dinky. Every now and then it'd get off the track and everything, and suppers were delayed lots of times by the Dinky getting off the track.

Bradley: It was electric powered.

Bright: It was electric power.

Bradley: Kind of like a trolley car.

Bright: Yes, it was a trolley car, that's what it was, and it seemed to have the wheels in the center; it would bounce up and down kind of like a seesaw. (laughter) And we'd have a good time riding the Dinky; it only cost a nickel, and I still think that that's plenty to ride on a streetcar. When you get on a streetcar now, it's around seventy-five cents; it seems just outrageous.

But the mountain was a lovely place to be, and it was so much cooler than it is now because there weren't so many houses. The streets -- there weren't so many streets, and that makes, you know -- and of course trees have been cut down. Every night we would have a little fire in the living room, build up just a small fire, and we'd put on a sweater towards evening. It was just a delightful summer place to be, as I say.

Oh yes, the way we got groceries -- there was one grocery store on the mountain.

Bradley: Yes, I was going to ask about that.

Bright: Yes, one grocery store, and they'd call up every morning and get your order. It was run by a Mr. [J. T.] Speight.

Bradley: How do you spell that?

Bright: S-P-E-I-G-H-T, and he was a black man; he had a nice family. His grocery store was sort of in the center of the mountain, and he'd come, they'd come -- he had a son that delivered, and he would come around with the truck. Then we also had a delivery every day from S. T. & W. A. Dewees. If there is any older members listening to this broadcast that I'm giving now, they will remember S. T. & W. A. Dewees. It was located [at 810 Market Street] about where Picketts store is now on Market Street.

But life in those days was lots simpler, [and] I imagine other senior citizens have said the same thing in this same microphone -- in those days. We didn't have the problems, of course -- and that's been said many times -- that we have now. We didn't have drugs, we didn't have whiskey, we didn't have automobiles (laughter), and it was just simpler.

It seemed like home was the center of everything, which I regret to say isn't so now. We didn't have apartment houses; I remember the first apartment house built in Chattanooga was

(Bright): the Elizabeth Apartment [opened December 1905]. It's been recently torn down. It was built, I believe, by Mr. [John Thomas] Lupton and Elizabeth was named for his wife, Elizabeth, I believe.

Bradley: It was on Fifth Street?

Bright: No, it was on the corner of McCallie Avenue and Georgia Avenue, McCallie and Georgia.

Bradley: Oh, yes.

Bright: 228 And as I say life was simpler, and I recall this: it was this little family incident -- I don't know whether it's too interesting or not -- but my father was always interested in politics. He was a big Democrat, I love to put that in. And so when we'd have election, you know, of either the national or local, we didn't have televisions, or course, and so my father and I would walk all the way from Fort Wood down to the Times Building. They would flash out the returns, and there was some kind of an awfully large sheet, or some kind of a large textile thing on the other side of the street, and they'd flash out the names of the candidates and how many votes they'd gotten and so forth. We'd whoop and holler down there, you know (laughter), and then we'd walk slowly home in the cool of the evening, I might say. That was quite an event.

But that's the way we kept up with our politics; we couldn't sit around and hear all these wonderful commentators that we hear now. I can't help but note that Frank Reynolds has died, the ABC commentator that we all thought highly of. So many that we know now that we never heard of then, because we didn't have TV.

Bradley: Or radio, radio came in about in the early twenties.

Bright: Yes, the early twenties, and I remember the first time I heard a radio and I didn't believe it; I said, "It's not so." I was at a luncheon and somebody told about it, and it was [at] a house on Glenwood; it's still there. And so we went out to hear it one night; we didn't hear anything but static, and every now and then we'd hear something about KDKA, that was in
250 Pittsburgh.

Bradley: Pittsburgh, one of the great --

Bright: And we sat there and thought it was wonderful if we got anything, you know. My brother who was older than myself -- that was Benton White -- he could make radios, he was very mechanical, had a very mechanical turn of mind. I remember he made

(Bright): a "superheterodyne"; now why I can remember that and nothing else, I don't know, but I do remember that. And I remember one Christmas night we got San Francisco one time, and I went and woke up everybody in the house (laughter) to tell them about it. And they all got up and didn't believe it, but we had one. I've forgotten the station name --

Bradley: The call name?

Bright: Yes, the call name, but I remember KDKA, that was Pittsburgh.

Bradley: And KMOX in St. Louis and you know there were a lot of them around.

Bright: I know it; it seemed so marvelous, and now we just accept it, we don't think anything about it, you know, I mean just -- it's nothing. It's not nothing, I don't mean that. We appreciate it but we -- so many wonderful things now that we just accept, that's all.

Bradley: Margaret, you were talking a moment ago about coming home from school and skating. What other kind of games were popular for boys and girls or whatever? What else did you play?

Bright: Well, they were all very active games. I remember we played -- it was "I Spy" really, but we called it "Hi Spy," H-I, "Hi Spy" and I was grown before I knew it was "I Spy." And that was where we'd run around the house, I don't know exactly, but we had a base and you would -- everybody would hide and then you'd see somebody sticking their head around the side of the house or somewhere, and you'd say, "I spy so-and-so" and then if you could get back to the base before they did, why it was to your credit some way. And that was a very favorite game.

And then we played "Fox and Hound" and that took in a large area (laughter). We'd tear up paper and we'd leave clues around. I mean we would drop paper and they would follow us and try to catch us. We'd go over back fences and everything, seemed like we went blocks and miles, scattering this newspaper. The Garden Club wouldn't approve of that now. And that was a very active game that we played.

Of course, we played "Hopscotch," and you could always tell when spring came when you were in the grammar grades. Girls would bring out jacks, and they were kind of a queer looking thing, looked like something that had come out of "E.T."* or something; it had a --

* E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial, popular 1982 science fiction film.

Bradley: The extra-terrestrial --

Bright: Extra-terrestrial, yes. And you'd play it with a rubber ball, and it took -- it's quite dexterous. And also you'd bring out ropes and start jumping ropes. The boys would bring out baseball bats and baseball gloves. You knew that spring had come, you know. And that was just as sure as the equinox would change and everything, we would have those games. Games weren't elaborate but they were strenuous and they were lots of fun. I'm trying to think of some other game that we played; well that's maybe enough.

Bradley: Were there ball games like basketball? Did you play basketball?

Bright: Oh yes, I played basketball. I played basketball, nearly killed myself playing basketball, broke my nose one time playing basketball. And we played boys' rules and now I think the girls' basketball team plays girls' rules and not quite as strenuous. But we played boys' rules. And I played basketball. I was considered a modern girl at the time, but I sure wouldn't be modern now.

Bradley: What was the dress that you played in?

Bright: (laughter) Well, of course swimming costumes were -- they were -- you wouldn't think of them as being swimming now, you'd think of them as being more of a kind of winter costume. We wore stockings (laughter), they covered us up completely. And when I finally came out with a knit bathing suit on, why it was -- caused a good deal of comment among the older people especially. I was a fairly good swimmer.

Bradley: Where did you swim?

Bright: Well, we didn't have many swimming places, we swam at Lula Lake. Lula Lake was the southern part of Heaven to all of us. We'd take a lunch and walk all the way out there, six or seven miles, have lunch, swim all day, and walk home just after dark. That wasn't hard in those days; now you'd get a -- you know how it would be, no use to tell it. (laughter) And now we just go next door to a swimming pool. But that was the main place. And then North Chickamauga Creek, if you wanted to go off the mountain, that was another place.

As I say, the whole thing has changed greatly, and I sometimes wonder now what children are going to remember and think about and love when they get grown and tell their children about. I've got plenty to talk about, but I just wonder what they are going to talk about, except sitting and watching

(Bright): television. It seems to me like --

Bradley: I don't know what else.

Bright: But they will; it's something that's made an impression on them I'm sure. I hardly know what it is. Now, let me see what else can I tell you, we --

Bradley: What about tennis, Margaret, was there tennis?

Bright: I didn't play, I was a golfer, I liked golf. I didn't much
338 care for tennis; I think it was because my family, my father and brothers, played golf, so I played golf. We played over at the old -- the Chattanooga Golf and Country Club.

Bradley: It was in the same location.

Bright: Same location, yes. And the club has been modernized greatly and they've added a swimming pool, which we didn't have, but very much the same as far as I can tell. I don't go over there often, but I'm always glad when I do go.

Bradley: Were there many women golfers in those days? I mean when you were growing up, did you have a lot of girls to play with, or was it unusual?

Bright: Well no, I generally played with the men; there weren't very many women. A rather interesting way we played it, we played a two-ball foursome. You see the men, they'd (laughter) knock -- We would be playing down here in a -- what do you call it? a
351 bunker or something -- if it was just the women playing, but they'd come and knock the ball, get it out, and the next time we'd duff it, you know, but it was a nice social meeting, and we had fun doing that. That was lots of fun. With a two-ball foursome -- and sometime we'd play four-ball foursome -- but we'd always hold them back, you know, we couldn't hit it far enough. I never took a golf lesson in my life; I had just a technique all my own. (laughter)

I remember when I came to the mountain and decided I'd brush up, after I was married, and I took some lessons. I'm trying to think of the man's name that I'm talking about now -- the pro out at the Fairyland golf links. And so I took a few lessons, I got my shoulder out of joint and everything else (laughter); he changed my swing so that I said, "Now listen, I'm just going to have to go back to my old way of playing, I just can't take on this new," and so I did; I quit because I just got -- I got bursitis -- I didn't get bursitis either, I got -- I don't know what you'd call it, "tennis elbow" or
370 something, in my shoulder. It was pretty bad. But finally I

(Bright): had to give up golf too; I haven't played in many years. But I think golf is a wonderful game. Tennis is a good game, it's a quick game. You can get your exercise quickly; golf takes all day.

Bradley: What was your principal mode of transportation in town when you were growing up? Did you have a carriage?

Bright: Yes, we had a carriage and we had a buggy. And we always had a horse. We never had two horses; it was a one-horse carriage and buggy. The buggy sat up kind of high. Of course, there were the streetcars, you know about streetcars. That was our principal way, like if you had a date, the boy would come and get you and you'd get on a streetcar and go someplace; he wouldn't have a car. (laughter) No, he didn't have a car. But I might add right here that I was the first woman in Chattanooga to drive a car. [Sarah] "Toots" Holtzclaw [Mrs. T. C. Thompson, Jr.], that was Dr. [Cooper] Holtzclaw's daughter, drove a car, but hers was an electric car and we didn't count that. (laughter)

Bradley: You had to shift gears, didn't you?

Bright: I had to shift gears. Some boys drove cars. I remember the Barr boys, the twins that lived in our neighborhood, they drove a car, drove a regular automobile where you shift gears and all -- a gasoline motor I'm trying to say, I guess. I remember they ran over my father one time and like to have killed him (laughter); he finally survived. I, fortunately, didn't have any accidents, but when people would see me coming they'd just get over the stone walls and give me plenty of room, they just didn't trust me. But I've been very fortunate.

Bradley: How old were you at that time, Margaret?

Bright: I started driving when I was about fourteen. See, we didn't have to have a license then. And the first car we had came without a top; it came without any door -- didn't have any doors at all, front or back, as I remember. They built a top on it. I mean, that was extra. And it didn't have electric lights, it had acetylene lights that you'd have to fix, and it was all dolled up with a lot of brass. If we had that car now, no telling what it would be worth. It was called a "national forty," forty horsepower, and it was supposed to be quite a racing car.

And my mother -- my brother wanted a car so badly, and she said, "Well, now, I'll give my consent to your having a car if you won't drive faster than ten miles an hour, that's plenty." (laughter) The first trip we took we went to

(Bright): [Hale's Bar] Lock and Dam and we like to have never got back going ten miles an hour. (laughter) We were out till after dark and everything else. So then she moved it up to fifteen, and that helped a lot. But everything moved slowly then; everything moved at a slower pace.

There were only two or three cars in town when we had ours. Putnam Morrison, I think, had the first car; if anybody remembers Putnam Morrison, just listen to this dialogue. We had, I guess, about the second or third, and to come up the mountain was quite a feat. We generally carried an extra bucket of water to put in the radiator. The Garden Club finally put in a -- just about the time cars were coming in -- they put the fountain down on the Ochs Highway and it's still there, where the trees arch over so beautifully. I think of it, and it's just sitting there, just -- as my old-time yard man would say, "Absolutely unuseless now," but it used to be quite useful.

Bradley: I know where that is.

Bright: Yes, it's there, and so whenever you pass, why we ought to salute it because it did serve a purpose at one time.

Bradley: Did you all take trips in cars in the summertime? I mean to other places?

Bright: Yes, the first trip we took was soon after we got the car, and it was soon after my brother had married. It wasn't exactly a honeymoon trip, but anyway it was pretty close to the time after they were married. My father insisted on my mother and myself going on this trip with my brother and my new sister-in-law. And so we started out and the first day we went as far as Rome, [Georgia], and then we spent the night. Then we went on to Atlanta, and then we shifted on over to Savannah, and then we got down in there. Roads were terrible. It was through Georgia. There were roads that were called sand-clay roads; they'd put just enough sand and clay to keep it from getting too sticky or bogged down. They were considered very fine roads. We have many pictures of mules and everything pulling us out of ditches. We had to buy new brakes and we had to buy new tires before we got back. We were held up at so many little country hotels down all through Georgia and Alabama. That was our first trip. The second big trip we took was before I was married, and I --

Bradley: Excuse me just a minute, Margaret, this would have been about what year?

Bright: This was in 1913, I'd say; it was just about 1913. The second trip I took was in 1919. I started out with my mother and father to take them to Florida because they loved Florida, and

(Bright): they, afterwards, had one home down there and went down all
462 the time in the wintertime. But we went down sort of reconnoitering to see where he would like to live. That was a slow trip too; it took us one week, I don't go into too much detail because I'm afraid my tape is running out. It took us one week to get from here to Valdosta [Georgia]. In the meantime my mother had to stop and get a tooth pulled; she had some trouble, but that didn't hold us back much. But anyway, it took us a week.

And I'm reminded now that my son, Fletcher Bright, flies to about the same place in upper Florida in two hours in his plane, (laughter) and it took us a week. So that illustrates the difference in time between then and now, how much longer it took us to do things. Since I broke my hip -- well, I won't bring that up -- but anyway, I've gone back to the old days now; I think it'd take me a week to get to Florida now, I'm sure. But anyway, those were good old days, as we say, and
480 of course they weren't all so good, but looking back on them we remember the happy things rather than the sad.

Bradley: Margaret, tell me something about the days when you began to socialize with boys and the young boy-and-girl games in a relationship. About what age were you when this occurred?

Bright: Well, I was a little behind. See, I didn't have any sisters, I just had brothers.

Bradley: Yes. How many brothers, incidentally?

Bright: I had three brothers; I really had four, but I had three that lived. And so I didn't have any special romantic feeling about boys. I loved to play ball with them; I loved to climb trees and I loved to swim and things like that. But I was a little slow, but when I blossomed forth, I blossomed. (laughter) It took me a long time, and really I think most of the eligible ones, all but one and I got him, had been gobbled up by that time.

But I came along, I would say, sort of a debutante, I'll say, during the first World War, you know about that time. It was a gay time in that we had so -- well, there was a lot of Liberty Bond drives; there was a lot of parades; there was a lot of military balls and what else shall I call it? Of course,
511 they had a fort out at Oglethorpe, and the soldiers would come in, and it was a glamorous time! It really was.

It was a sad time, every morning we would get up and there'd be names in the papers of people that we knew and loved dearly who weren't coming back. But it was a glorious

(Bright): time in that we felt like we were fighting for a wonderful cause, and we were fighting to end wars, and that there wouldn't be any more wars. Well, we were very much mistaken in that. It was a, as I say, a festive kind of a glorious time to -- and there was such a change in the new boys coming in all the time. And there was so much war work to be done; that is, the canteen work. We'd meet the boys at the station, serve them coffee, doughnuts, and things like that, and knitting sweaters. It was a busy, happy time.

I never will forget the Armistice, the morning of the Armistice, the eleventh hour, and how we all jumped up and ran -- all of them went to town. We had breakfast in town; we went to town -- we heard it at eleven o'clock that night. Now we don't think about going to bed before eleven, but we'd all gone to bed and we all hopped up and went to town and tooted horns and carried on. Really it was a very, very, wonderful, happy time when the Armistice was signed. My husband at the time was off at some -- no, he wasn't my husband, I mean he was -- I just knew him --

Bradley: Your husband-to-be.

Bright: Yes, husband-to-be, thank you. He was off at Louisville, Kentucky, at some school, military school of some kind training to be an artilleryman, an artillery school. It was a wonderful release when the war was over, of course.

Then I got married and we moved to the mountain, as I said, for winter and summer, and better or worse. I was one of the first people to build, and the house that I live in now -- I'm sitting here talking to Norman Bradley, a very dear friend, and I have lived here for sixty-two years in this same house. I guess I won't have sixty-two years ahead of me, but whatever are I hope they'll be as happy as the ones that have just passed.

Bradley: I'm sure they will be.

Bright: I hope so, I feel like I haven't done too well.

Bradley: To get back to a little bit earlier -- when you started in high school, were there parties during your high school days, or your elementary school days?

Bright: Yes.

Bradley: What sort of parties did you have as children and as youths?

Bright: You are talking about the "teen" age, in that age?

Bradley: Yes, in that age.

Bright: Well, we hiked a good deal, took long hikes, took lunch, and that was fun, and that was very beautiful and very fine to do. We had dances. Baylor and McCallie [Schools] were fairly young -- I didn't participate too much in Baylor and McCallie, but the high school dances were held at Temple Court. Now that no longer exists, I guess; it was a nice dance place down on the corner of Cherry and Seventh Street, I guess, Temple Court. I never heard of a place besides that. Then we had George K. Brown, I mustn't forget that. (laughter) That was the ice cream parlor [called the Palace] down on the corner of Seventh and Market. Oh, the concoctions he would fix up, all kinds of sundaes, and ice cream and everything.

Bradley: That was quite a gathering place.

Bright: Oh, yes, it was a gathering place, yes. If you wanted to pick up somebody or get picked up, why you'd go there. That was in the daytime you'd go down, fooling around on Market Street, shopping. That was quite a place! I remember there was one of them called "Saturday Sundae," and, of course, we were always down there on Saturdays, so that was kind of favorite; it had nuts and pineapple and whatever you could think of on top, a great big dish. I think my first banana split was in there.

Bradley: You probably paid what? Fifteen cents for it?

Bright: Oh, yes, that was plenty. I don't know -- Chattanooga was a village then, and it was just --

Bradley: Was the streetcar system pretty well established in the sense of you could get on the streetcar and go where you wanted to go?

Bright: Yes, and you'd get a transfer; that included the nickel too.

Bradley: You could pretty well reach the part of town that you wanted to go to.

Bright: Yes, you could.

Bradley: What about North Chattanooga, Margaret? Had that been --

Bright: That was beginning to be developed. The [John Thomas] Luptons had built that beautiful "Lyndhurst" home which has been subdivided -- I believe it's in apartments now or condominiums*,

* Lyndhurst was razed in 1960; she is possibly referring to the John A. Patten home, "Minnekahda," which is apartments.

(Bright): I guess. But it was a beautiful place, and it was a place that we'd go to for big, big parties. But that, of course, wasn't
630 in our teen age [years]; that was more when we were in the twenties, rather than when I was younger. Riverview wasn't developed then; it was beginning to find itself, but it wasn't the beautiful residential district that it is now. East Terrace was also another residential district, but I still say Fort Wood was -- it was the "first." (laughter) And it may be the last because it's being restored now; people are buying those places up, and it's amazing what they're doing out there in trying to restore them.

Bradley: Many are very lovely places.

Bright: Yes, some of them are very lovely, and there's a lot of the old trees still left there too. But Riverview was still in its infancy, I'd say.

Bradley: Margaret, did a great many of your contemporaries as a child have childhood diseases? Do you remember anything about epi-
656 demics or great numbers of cases of measles --

End Tape 1, Side 1
Begin Tape 1, Side 2

Bradley: Margaret, when we had to change the tape, I was asking you, do you recall any particular incidences of childhood diseases among your friends? How were they treated?

Bright: Well, I'll tell you we didn't have -- I hardly know how to deal
010 with it -- we didn't have a lot of diseases that we have now. It seems like we didn't know about them anyway; I guess we had them. But of course we had the regular mumps, measles, and chicken pox; that's part of childhood.

But I remember in the spring we would have what we'd call influenza, and it wasn't that quick kind, three or four days and would kill you, but it was more grippe. You'd have it for two weeks. The only known remedy I remember was calomel. I'm glad those calomel days are -- I hope they'll never come back -- they were awful. And then after you'd take about two or three grains of calomel in broken doses, as they called it, you'd take a tenth of a grain every hour for ten hours. Then it ended up, they would add insult to injury, by giving you a dose of castor oil, and if you survived, most likely you're alive now. (laughter)

Bradley: You didn't have to have a doctor to prescribe that, did you?
022

Bright: Well, when the doctor came I remember -- this is the first I remember of a doctor -- he would have a little medicine kit and

(Bright): he would have in that all kind of things, calomel, and I guess soda and baking powder, or whatever he carried, and he'd have some little papers that boys use to use to roll up cigarettes, and he'd lay all that out on the table and he'd dust out a little bit of this, a little bit of something else, and fold it up carefully. He'd hand it over to whoever was in charge of you, your mother, usually, and say, "Give her one of these every hour." And that was it; you didn't send to the drug store; he carried his medicine along with him.

He'd charge about a dollar and a half or two dollars for his visit, and that was it. Doctors came to the house and that was a blessing then. Now if you're half-dead you have to go to a doctor's office or else go to the hospital, of course. So I don't know whether medicine has advanced much or not; it seems like in advancement of medicine, we've just learned more of what's the matter with us; then we didn't know, we just went ahead and died, and that was maybe better.

Bradley: What about in your home, Margaret, did you have servants?

Bright: Did we have them and yes. (laughter) And that was nice. And we'd have them for a long time; they weren't very efficient, but they were there; they spent the night there. We had servants' quarters, and they were part of the family. It made life very much easier. I remember we'd sit down to a meal. We weren't supposed to get up unless it was absolutely necessary. We sat at that table until everybody got through, and now you go to the table -- the modern children go to the table, and they "gobble and git" just as quick as they can. (laughter) But you had to have a mighty good reason to leave the table before everything was served, dessert and all, when I was growing up. The servants were -- if you had a good one, they were mighty devoted, and you'd have them for fifteen, twenty years, or maybe a lifetime almost.

That part of housekeeping has changed very, very much, and I think one reason we've gone into cocktail parties is because it's so hard to put together a good meal like we used to serve our friends and have them in and have a nice meal and sit and talk. Why now, you come in and have a drink and just eat with your fingers, just bite-size eating. I really think that has popularized -- that was the reason that cocktails became so famous that we didn't have the help that we used to have in running our homes, and the easiest way to get together and have a social time.

Bradley: When you wanted to have friends in, what was the usual procedure? Was it for dinner?

Bright: Dinner. This, more in my mother's time -- I never went to a
060 dinner party that had a lot of courses -- but I remember Mrs. Francis Martin, she was a lady; she was really the husband [ed: wife] of my father's law partner, and she entertained very, very elaborately. She would have friends in for dinner, and maybe they'd have as many as ten or twelve courses. You'd start out with a little piece of fish, or a little bit of soup or something, and then they'd clear that off. Then they'd bring in something else, and they'd eat that and they'd bring in something else, and it'd take the whole evening to --

Bradley: For a meal.

Bright: Yes, to eat one of those meals. But when I was coming along, people would come in for a meal, and you'd always bring the preacher home from church and things like that, on Sunday, because you had help. But it would be a meal; you wouldn't come in just for a drink. No, it'd be a regular meal when they'd come in.

Of course, cards were played a good deal at this time. My father was a very good duplicate bridge player or whist, they called it then, and he had a club of Judge [Walter Brown] Garvin and Mr. E. Y. Chapin, that's E. Y. Chapin the first. There's
075 E. Y. Chapins now. And Mr. Charlie [L.] Morrison, he had some job at the courthouse, and they had this foursome who were very fine bridge players. They'd get together once a month and have that diversion. And then there's a game called "euchre" that the ladies played. I think it was simpler and easier to play, as I remember.

Then when I was growing up, I remember about the first game I played in cards was "flinch." It was simple, more of a childhood game. And then we went into bridge, and we had bridge parties and bridge clubs. I belonged to the -- oh, I hope I can think of the name of it -- oh, mercy! -- the Oseldink Bridge Club. (laughter) Oseldink, I don't know how that came -- And we had pins, it was almost like a fraternity. That was lots of fun.

Bradley: How many members did you have, Margaret?

Bright: Well, we'd have about three or four tables, that would be twelve or sixteen. Oseldink Bridge Club. I was lucky to think of it. But we had a lot of fun, a lot of diversion, and we'd get together in the evening, the young people would. We didn't go to picture shows or get out; we'd stay home and we'd play all kinds of games, you know, like "Why Am I Like It?" or -- oh, I can't
093 think of them now, but funny kinds of games that everybody had to enter in to. Or charades -- I'm glad I came through with

(Bright): that -- and where everybody entered in, and we'd have a big time, laughing and --

Bradley: Were movies any attraction at all?

Bright: What?

Bradley: Movies?

Bright: 097 Oh yes, yes, and they were a nickel and a dime when they first came in, and didn't last too long. You didn't have to drive way out to Eastgate or Northgate or somewhere to see them; they were right on Market Street, and that was nice. We had a lot of the old movie stars I remember, and they were --

Bradley: They also had stage performances in some of the theaters.

Bright: Yes, yes, we had the Bijou. Yes, we had stage performances, and so we'd go to that. Time didn't hang heavy on our hands; we were doing something all the time. And then there was a big rage at one time of skating parties down at the Hippodrome -- oh, that was wonderful!

Bradley: Where was the Hippodrome?

Bright: Oh, don't ask me where; it was on Market Street* down towards the river, about --

Bradley: Somewhere down near the car barns?

Bright: 110 Yes, down near the car barns. Thank you for telling me. I think it was something to do with the old armory or something like that. It was a great, big skating rink. And then they had a skating rink at Olympia Park, as we called it then; it's been changed to Warner Park [in 1912], of course. And they had a big skating rink there, and of course they have some around over the city now, I think, in outlying districts. But skating was a big part of our lives in early teens.

Bradley: Yes. Margaret, as you were growing up, did you go abroad?

Bright: Didn't travel much, no, I didn't travel. When I could have traveled, when I first got out of school and could have gone, I believe, the first World War was on. Let's see, then I got married and couldn't afford it, and then had children and

* The Hippodrome listed in 1909 City Directory at West Seventh Street at northwest corner of Broad Street.

(Bright): couldn't get away from them. Then the second World War came along, so it looked like it wasn't any time -- I finally had a beautiful trip, went on a Mediterranean trip and promptly got the flu, and spent most of the time in the cabin. Since then I decided I was going to stay home, which I have done, more or less. I wish I had traveled more when I was younger because I think it's a wonderful experience. I spent one lovely summer at Nantucket, I remember, and had a mighty good time up there.

Bradley: You went by train, of course.

Bright: Well, we went down to Savannah and caught a boat and went on up to New Bedford, Connecticut, and then from New Bedford we caught a boat over to Martha's Vineyard, and at Martha's Vineyard we caught another boat to Nantucket, quite a trip.

Bradley: Yes.

Bright: We were there one whole summer, and I played golf and swam and had a beautiful time, beautiful time. I've traveled in this country some, and I'm glad I've done that. I had a nice western trip in my early teens which lasted a month, and that was broadening and a nice experience.

Bradley: Well, the western trip, was it after automobiles came in or did you go by train?

Bright: We went by train, oh yes, we went by train. It took a long time. We went to Yellowstone National Park. Automobiles, no, hadn't come in, because we drove through Yellowstone Park in a tallyho, a great big tallyho, had four horses. It was a wonderful experience -- camped out at night and had tents, had permanent tents that we'd get to at night, and had beautiful meals and everything. It was kind of a conducted tour through there.

Bradley: Almost like the old stagecoach.

Bright: Yes, oh yes! oh, just exactly like it. Automobiles made a very great difference in our mode of travel and our mode of life and our living and all. I guess it was the biggest factor we have in changing our mode of living and our outlook on life, having automobiles. It's made us more restless. We can go places now.

Bradley: Were you conscious of social problems or economic problems or anything of the sort?

Bright: Didn't bother me at all. No, didn't bother me at all. I had just enough money to be all right and didn't have too much to

(Bright): spoil me. I was rather fortunate in that respect. My mother thought it was ill bred to speak of money much. If we asked the cost of anything, that was just beyond the pale, you weren't supposed -- (laughter) -- things were just supposed to happen, you know, sort of.

There was a great deal of stress laid on manners. Gracious living was something that I have missed. Because my children don't know, and my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren, I'm sure -- they have arrived at last -- I don't think they know anything about gracious living. Gracious living was gracious. It was something to remember. It was smooth, it was heartwarming, it was lovely. It seemed like people thought of other people; they didn't think of themselves so much. Things came easy and went easy, in a way. I don't know, it was just a nice time to have lived. I don't know if we'll ever have it again. I wonder. Do you think we'll ever have it again, gracious living? We won't have that Southern gracious living anyway.

Bradley: With the pace of our present-day lives, I doubt that we'll ever have it.

Bright: We had time then for things, yes. And it seemed like things fitted in better than now. Now everybody wants to do something different and to get everybody's plans fitted in, it's like fitting a puzzle together sometimes, just even a small family, to get everybody happy and satisfied. Then we did things together and it was a nice time to live, and I'm glad I lived in that period.

Grandmothers in that time took a big place. We didn't have a [St.] Barnabas to send our old people to. Young people were taught to be nice to older people, and they cared for them and were very kind and lovely. We looked up to grandmother -- get ready to go to a dance, we'd always go to see how she liked the dress. She was sort of the head of the house, in a way, but she did it in a gracious way, at least mine did.

Bradley: Was this your mother's mother or your father's?

Bright: Mother's mother, yes. I had grandparents right all the way; all through they were all more or less long-lived family. We always spent our Christmases away from home, went to my grandmother's house and that was a big occasion. I remember one time -- my grandmother lived, my maternal grandmother, lived at Charleston [Tennessee], a little town above Cleveland, and one time we missed the train -- the train was called the Vestibule. Can you tell me why it was called the Vestibule? I never have known.

Bradley: No, I have never heard of it.

Bright: It was called the Vestibule. I can't spell it but I can say
192 it. (laughter) The train left the Terminal Station where the old Choo-Choo is now; it left at three forty-five. One time we missed the train. We had to catch a streetcar to get there and everything, and the baggage and everything, and we all carried a few little Christmas presents. We didn't have any great big Christmas like we do now, but we carried suitcases and everything. We got down and we missed our streetcar at the foot of Palmetto Street, and so we missed the whole business all around. So, oh, we didn't know what to do. And I was a child about six or seven years old.

So my father got on the phone and he called the president of the Southern Railway -- and I felt so impressed, I felt like he was a big man to have done that -- and asked special permission for the midnight train that goes through Charleston -- it's direct to Knoxville, didn't make any stops -- for the midnight train to stop at Charleston. And so, yes, he got special permission; we'd get on the train -- I've never felt as important in my life or as prestigious -- and we'd get on the train and my brothers and my mother and father and all of us. It's only forty miles up there, but it took two hours to get there. So we go on up on the train, and the porter comes through and says, "By special dispen--" He didn't say "dispensation" but
208 some big word. "The train was stopping at Charleston." So everybody looks around and, of course, we all stand up, me feeling very important, and we all shuffled out.

My grandfather's house was fairly near the station, and we get off and it's dark, you know, and I'd never been up that late before, and it was just real mysterious. And the stars were shining bright. Pretty soon we saw some lights coming on in my grandmother's house, first one window and then another. Then pretty soon here comes my uncle, Mr. Edward Henegar of Knoxville, who lived to be quite old. But anyway, he comes out with a lantern to meet the train, and we come on, walked about -- it's about a half a block, I guess -- come in the back gate, and the back gate clicks in that familiar fashion that you've heard a country gate click. Then here comes all the aunts and uncles piling out of the house, and the stars shining, and me with that eerie feeling because I was so afraid that Santa Claus might arrive about that time, too, and he'd be frightened away.

I never will forget the feeling I had; I just had goose
222 pimples, just elated. And they were so glad to see us, and how on earth did we get the train to stop at Charleston at that time and on -- oh, we told them and we finally went in. And Santa Claus did come according to Hoyle the next morning; our

(Bright): stockings were filled and all. But I remember that especially. It was a big event going to my grandmother's house. We'd always go there in the summertime, too. Nothing to do; we just sat around in a big garden and a big yard and a summerhouse that we'd play in; it was a lovely thing.

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I'm reminded of a letter that I got from my daughter [ed: granddaughter], Tina Govan, who is a -- not a missionary, but I think of her as being a missionary -- but she's in the Peace Corps now in Africa. She wrote me a letter, a birthday letter, that I prize more than anything during the whole season, telling how much she enjoyed coming to my house, because she lived away from here. And to come here and stay or spend the summer -- it reminded me of my own childhood. Because the grandchildren that live here -- I'm just a house next door or two or three blocks away -- they don't think anything about it much. But I was reminded of that. But this is not telling about Chattanooga. Let me see if I can get back; I should have made tapes or notes or something so I could tell something more interesting.

Bradley: One other thing I wanted to ask you about -- What about when you bought clothes, or what about the stores? Where did you go to buy them or did you have them made or what?

Bright: Well, I'm still a Miller's or Lovemans' woman. (laughter)
245 I've never branched out to Northgate or Eastgate, I still -- if you can't get it at Miller's or Lovemans or Pickett's -- I'll give them a plug -- (laughter) I do without now. But ready-made clothes just weren't -- they weren't too satisfactory, and usually the clothes were made at home. My mother sewed very nicely, and she really dressed. Of course, boys were different; they went to a boys' store, and I guess they had a good deal of the same stores then that they have now. She didn't try to dress them, but she made most of my clothes. I always liked the things that she made better than anything you bought, because it seemed to me like they were better; they fitted better and were better quality. Colors were hard to deal with, they'd fade so. You know, now you can buy anything and you're pretty sure that it's not going to, you know --

Bradley: To run --

Bright: Yes, the first time it's washed, yes, that's right. So that's how we dressed in those days, and we dressed simply, like I would have one sweater; I didn't have a whole drawer full of sweaters. We wore hats, of course, and I'd have one winter hat and you just put a winter hat on, didn't have a hat for each dress. It was simpler. We'd have a heavy good coat, but we didn't have just -- Now it seems like you just have to have so many different kinds of clothes and you don't wear them much,
267 you know, and -- [interruption]

Bradley: Margaret, we were just talking about the clothes you had. You mentioned Lovemans and Miller's being downtown. Were there any other stores that you dealt with customarily that you remember particularly?

Bright: 273 Well, I think you're asking more especially the stores that I dealt with then, if they are in existence now. Well, I do think of T. H. Payne [which] was a store that everyone loved to go into and loved to deal with. It was a bigger store then; it covered -- oh, I guess it was fifty feet or maybe more on Market Street. But now it's contracted and it's a deep store but it isn't very wide. I remember Gilbert Govan presided there, beautifully, in the book department, and he would lean over -- I can see him now leaning over the counter and reading portions of books that he was very fond of to customers. He had no trouble at all in selling any books that he had. Other stores, let's see, there was --

Bradley: You mentioned Dewees' as a --

Bright: Yes, S. T. and W. A. Dewees. That was a big grocery store right on [810] Market Street. Chattanooga, then, was a one-street town. We didn't have much on Broad Street; if you were on Broad Street you didn't count for much. It was a one-street town in those days.

293 I'll tell you another store that I bet Norman has forgotten about -- and, of course, he's not in my generation -- but a shoe store run by Schwartz, Henry Schwartz [736-738 Market Street]. We'd always go in there. I would wear out a pair of shoes a month, and it's a good thing I don't wear out that many now; I'd be bankrupt. But it was in the middle of one of the blocks; I think it was in the middle of the -- between Seventh and Eighth, I believe, on the east side of Market. My mother would take me down, and we'd get fitted in shoes. I remember one time I bought a pair of shoes that I've been paying for up to this day: I got them too small. Oh, I thought they were so pretty! They were sort of yellow-looking tan, awful looking shoes, but I thought they were pretty and so I insisted on getting them. I wore them for about a week and started a bunion which I am still afflicted with. (laughter) That's the only foot trouble I've ever had.

Bradley: Did you have the high laced shoes?

Bright: 307 Oh, yes! It was awful, it took a long time to lace them up, you know -- and pointed toes, a lot of them. But I took care of my feet pretty well except that one time (laughter) when I got those shoes too tight. That was just too bad.

(Bright): Then we had Schwartz's ready-to-wear* a little bit later, but that came a little later. Those were the older stores that I remember.

Bradley: Where was your father's office?

Bright: My father's office was the corner of Seventh and Walnut, and it was called White's Block at the time because he owned clear down to Temple Court, almost down to Cherry Street. The Newell Sanitarium was right next door to it, and he built the Newell Sanitarium. I believe the sanitarium now takes in that whole block.

Bradley: That was very close to the courthouse.

Bright: Yes, oh, that was quite an asset in those days too. He was very proud of his law library. Now they don't -- lawyers I don't think have to have big law libraries because they have public law libraries. He had a tremendous law library, and had one or two rooms with just nothing but books in them. He loved the law. He was very fortunate in his selection of his work.

Bradley: As a member of his generation, what was his relationship to his children, Margaret?

Bright: Well, that brings up a rather interesting subject because it seems to me that children, then, had a different attitude towards their parents and their grandparents than they do now. I know now a lot of children call their parents by their first name. Well, then that wouldn't have been -- they wouldn't have thought you were showing the proper respect. I have some children -- my great-grandchildren call their grandfather, call him Joe, that's Joe Thatcher. But, then, you showed your parents more respect, and they were something apart. They were something different; we were children and they were adults, and there was a line between us that we just didn't step over.

Except my father, lots of times, would -- he'd take us for a walk or something and maybe we'd buy some cookies or candy or something, and we'd eat too much of it and he'd say, "Now, let's don't tell your mother you did all this because she wouldn't like it." He then would lower himself to our level, and it always pleased us very much because we felt like he was in cahoots with us, you know, or "partners in crime." (laughter) It was kind of unusual. We knew in a certain way he was playing and all, but anyway it was a rather pleasing experience when he would do that.

* Schwartz Bros., 730 Market Street, ladies ready-to-wear store.

(Bright): Because usually they would -- they were aloof, parents were, and we respected them, and I don't know but what it was a good thing. Of course you can overdo anything; you can be too aloof or you can be too familiar. But I think now sometimes children don't show parents the respect that they did when I was growing up. But it was just a different -- everything has changed; I don't know of anything that stands still. If it stood still, I guess it wouldn't be too good either, would it? (laughter)

Bradley: No, I'm afraid not.

Bright: We would stagnate if we didn't move in some direction, and we are moving fast it seems like now. Let me see, can you think of anything else to ask me?

Bradley: You were married to Mr. [Gardner] Bright right after World War I.

Bright: Yes, and that I guess was the best thing I ever did -- (laughter) settle down. And I settled! My father was very generous. I believe I mentioned in the early part of this tape that he built this house and gave it to us for a wedding present, and we've lived here ever since. I had five children who were all born -- not in the house because in those days we went to a hospital to have them -- but they were all brought back to this house when they were quite young.

Bradley: And Mr. Bright was --

Bright: Mr. Bright was -- when I married him he was in queensware business. He owned a wholesale china business [Chattanooga Queensware Company] on [1415] Market Street across from the Terminal Station. He had a big warehouse there. We were having a Depression about that time -- seems like I was born in a Depression, my middle life was in a Depression, and my latter days are certainly in one. Anyway, he had this store and it begun to lose ground, losing money rather, not ground, losing money. And he worked awfully hard to try to save it, but it finally went into bankruptcy, and he assumed the money that was owed, and it was twenty-five thousand dollars that they were insolvent for. Is that the word, Norman?

Bradley: Yes, I think so.

Bright: We'll use that anyway. And so he assumed that indebtedness, and I'll tell you the next fifteen to twenty years was just taken up in paying that back. We went in the real estate business and did real well, formed a partnership with Mr. James A. Glascock, and it was Glascock and Bright for a long time. They dealt more especially in mountain property. When we finally paid off that twenty-five thousand dollars, life was like being

(Bright): born again; life started over again. The birds sang, the flowers were blooming, and we were still young enough to make another start, and we got started and had some glorious years in there with our children growing up. He was very successful in his business, and we did very well. He died in 1960, and I have continued to live here at the same place after his death.

Bradley: You've lived a long and a very rich life, Margaret.

Bright: Well, it's been -- yes, I agree with you. (laughter)

Bradley: Are there any other reminiscences that come to mind on your part about the Chattanooga scene or the Lookout Mountain scene?

Bright: I'm trying to think; it seems that I'm not thinking of anything too earthshaking. (laughter) I'm just trying my best -- shut it off a minute and let me get -- let me think a minute, maybe I'll think of some.

Bradley: Margaret, just in recalling events of your childhood, do you recall the flood of, I think it was 1917?

Bright: Yes.

Bradley: That hit the town rather hard.

Bright: Yes, I do remember that, Norman, and it was a hard time. Later we felt that the TVA was so justified in coming in to control this condition. Going back to the condition that caused the flood -- we just had a terrific amount of rain, and there wasn't any control, there wasn't any dams on the rivers to control the extra water. The town was completely inundated; that is, it wasn't like the flood of 1876 that I could tell you about that my father was [in] here when they had that, and they came up in a boat on Market Street. But it was a bad flood, and the outlying districts were just flooded terrifically.

My brother, who was in his teens at the time, was interested in photography, and he took a lot of pictures of that flood. I have them now; if the library ever wants them, I can pull them out and show it to them. He was taking some pictures, I remember, out at Ferger Place*; it was just being built. One of the Fergers -- there were quite a few Fergers at that time in Chattanooga, and they were all in the real estate business, and they headed up Ferger Place. They saw him taking

* Early Chattanooga subdivision built by Herman Ferger. It is located off Main Street and consists of Evening Side and Morning Side Drive.

(Bright): pictures of the flood out in Ferger Place, and they made him leave because they said they didn't want that to go down in history because it wasn't a very good advertisement for their new development which they were very proud of, and justly so. He took pictures of people being evacuated with mules and wagons and all carrying their things out.

I remember making sandwiches for the flood sufferers, as we called them, and we kind of had an assembly line in the kitchen, and we had ham and cheese and things and made a lot of sandwiches and sent them to some headquarters where the sufferers were getting food and having shelter. As I say, it was a big, big argument, and we perhaps will never have that sort of situation again with the protection that we have with the dams and all that surround our city and hold back the water, that we didn't use to have.

Bradley: Margaret, do you remember the Billy Sunday --

Bright: Oh, Billy Sunday, yes, we did most of our courting on Billy Sunday there, big tent down there on Eleventh Street, I never will forget it. It was the biggest time, you know, it was just a big old social time to me. I didn't get -- I haven't gotten converted yet, I guess, just plain old heathen. (laughter) But I didn't go for that reason. Gardner and I, we would walk down there; he was courting me before we married. We'd walk down there just about every evening; it was a harmless thing to do, it seemed like, and it was. (laughter) We'd go down there and Rhodeheaver, he led the choir.

Bradley: Song leader, yes.

Bright: Rhodeheaver, I can see him now. Homer, that was his first name, Homer Rhodeheaver. Billy Sunday was quite a character and was quite a -- I guess was the most noted evangelist that we've ever had; that is, just real vital, vibrant sort of evangelist. We really enjoyed it and --

Bradley: Did they have a tent or was there a tabernacle?

Bright: Oh, it was a huge tent but it was a tabernacle tent, as I remember. Oh! it just held thousands of people. I can hear him now, preaching. I remember he got to preaching one night one time for Mr. Purse. Mr. [Robert P.] Purse was in the printing business and the Purse Company is still in business, isn't it, Norman?

Bradley: Yes.

Bright: Mr. Purse had been a heavy giver to the campaign, and he

(Bright): [Sunday] was waving his arms around, and said, "Oh Lord, take care of -- what's the name of that printer? Rhodeheaver, do you remember the name of the printer, don't you?" And Rhodeheaver, he kind of hesitated a little bit, and he answered, "Oh, yes, Purse. Purse, Lord." He said, "Take care of Purse, he's taking care of us." He was all very personal. He was something new to me; I had never been to a revival, never been to that type of revival. We just enjoyed it a lot. The singing was really very, very nice, the music was, and they sang old-fashioned songs but the main one was "I come to the garden alone, when the dew is still on the roses." [sings]

Bradley: Garden of Prayer I think. [Hymn: In the Garden by C. Austin Miles]

Bright: Yes, something like that.

Bradley: Sweet Garden of Prayer, wasn't that it?

Bright: That might have been it -- "I come to the garden alone, when the dew is still on the roses." I could play it on the piano right now, I think. (laughter) Anyway, I can't sing much as this tape will testify, but I can hear it now. And it was other songs that were favorites, but that was the main one, "I come to the garden alone."

Bradley: Margaret, I don't want to tire you, but you know this has been a marvelous experience talking with you.

Bright: Well, it's been nice for me. I feel like I'll think of so much after you've gone.

Bradley: Well, I'll come back.

Bright: Will you come back and give me a second chance?

Bradley: I will indeed. Thank you so much.

Bright: I'm just afraid that I haven't done the best I could, or something. No, I haven't.

Bradley: Oh, you've been fine!

End Tape 1, Side 2
END OF INTERVIEW

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