

Interviewee: Emily Whaley Whipple
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Interviewer: Anne Blessing, on behalf of Historic Charleston Foundation
Videographer: Leigh Moring, Historic Charleston Foundation
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BEGIN INTERVIEW

Anne Blessing: I'm Anne Blessing. I'm interviewing Emily Whipple. This is July 18th, 2017, 43 East Bay Street, Downtown Charleston. Can you tell us your name and when and where you were born?

EW: My name is Emily Whaley Whipple, and I was born in Charleston July 12th, 1939.

AB: Where were you born?

EW: At a hospital. I don't know which one. I actually looked at my birth certificate to see if it said, and it didn't say. But I do know that Doc Cousin Frank Cain delivered me.

AB: Can you tell us about your parents, their names and a little bit about each one of them?

EW: Well, my father is or was Ben Scott Whaley. He was born on Edisto Island. He graduated from the Citadel in 1929. He and my mother – my mother was Emily Fishburne Whaley. And they were married. She grew up in Pinopolis, South Carolina, which is a little peninsula that sticks out into Lake Moultrie, a beautiful little village. And she and my father were married on December 15, 1934. They went immediately to Washington, D.C., where my father was working for Senator James Byrnes. And they lived there for three years, came back to Charleston in 1937, and rented 128 Church Street. And when I was born in 1939, I went back to that house. But in 1940 they bought 58 Church Street, and they lived there, and now my sister Marty Cornwell lives there. So, that's two generations.

Daddy was very involved. He went to law school, and while he was still in law school at the University of South Carolina, he served in the South Carolina Legislature. There's so many things that he did, and I don't want to brag too much, but he was president of Historic Charleston for 13 years. He actually was a charter member of Historic Charleston Foundation. He was the attorney for county council. He was a member of the Trial Lawyers of America. He was president of the South Carolina Bar Association. He was very, very involved in this community, as was my mother who we – oh, my father, I meant to say, was a member of the vestry of St. Philip's Church, junior and senior warden.

And my mother, I never will forget the year that she was chairwoman of the St. Philip's Bazaar. And she went around the house with half-made or half-smocked dresses on her shoulders. And of course we were interrupting all the time, but the goal, the objective was to make 24 smock dresses for the St. Philip's Bazaar. Then she and a very close friend, Elizabeth

Lebby Robertson, Mrs. Henry Robertson, started dancing school because Mrs. Robertson had a son approximately my age whose name was Clay.

Mrs. Robertson was a excellent dancer, and my mother could play the piano. And my mother played by ear. She had gone to the University of Georgia to a music program there. And they teamed up and started this dancing school, and it kills me that I can't figure out which year exactly. I think it's 1947. But they felt that we needed to have – we should learn how to dance, and it was such a treat to learn. And on account of that, I knew all kind of people I might not ever have known.

AB: Can you tell us about how the dancing school operated and where it was held?

EW: Well, it started out in the bottom of the Hibernian. They have a room downstairs. That's where I remember it being. They have a room with a lot of pillows. It started out there, and the people that started were older than I was. I remember John Gibbs hiding under – you know who I'm talking about – hiding under one of the tables. I remember Bill Huggins. They were all older than I am. And it also went to the – what is, I think, now – it was the St. John's Hotel. And it ended up at the South Carolina Hall, which of course is the most beautiful ballroom in downtown – anywhere. It's 19th century ballroom. So, what else, Anne?

AB: What kind of dancing, and how did it work? When did it meet?

EW: Oh, it always met on Wednesdays, which was a great time for it to meet because you got out of your house on Wednesday nights. We started out, they taught the waltz. And this is an elementary version of the waltz, the foxtrot. We started with the shag which quickly went to the lindy, because Mrs. Robertson had had some special lessons in New York. I helped while I was at Ashley Hall. And then they decided after my second child was born that I needed to go down to New Orleans and be certified.

Well, I was nursing that baby, and I was told to wean her at once. And we went down to New Orleans to this – where I was going to be certified. And off we went. It quickly became apparent that there's a huge amount of competition amongst those dance people. And I got turned over to this very attractive man from New York City. And Mrs. Robertson and my mother were all politicking in other places. And it was no time at all before I became certified. It was a lot of fun. But it got turned over to me. The dancing school got turned over to me.

I was going to Paris for a year with my first husband who was taking a sabbatical from the medical university. Okay. And this was 1977, '78. And my mother looked at me, and she said, you go to Paris and have a good time. But when you come back, this is yours. And I wasn't sure that I wanted it because I had been studying Latin and French, and I have a master's degree, and I thought I was going to make my living teaching. But, thank goodness, I had the sense to realize that this was more fun, and it is more fun.

AB: Can you tell us about what the children wore to dancing school when you went and how that's changed?

EW: It hasn't really changed because they don't want – we really don't want girls to come in clothes above their knee. We expect you to have a full skirt below the knee and above the ankle. The boys wear coats and ties. The girls wear white gloves, short white gloves, wrist-length white gloves. And how many – I've saved so many people from terrible illnesses by those gloves. You should see the boys' hands when they come in. We have to send them to the boys' bathroom to get their hands washed.

AB: Well, when you were going to dancing school, were there other opportunities to dance? What kind of social events were there in Charleston?

EW: None for us when we were children, but as we became teenagers, we did a lot of dancing. People would have what they called Victrolas, and we would dance at people's houses. That's the kind of thing we did.

AB: Well, tell us about what growing up at 58 Church was like. What was your neighborhood, and what kind of activities did you do?

EW: Well, it was wonderful. First of all, 58 Church Street is very close to East Bay Playground. And we spent our afternoons there because the school where – I attended Charleston Day School, which was right up the street at 21 Elliott Street. And we all came home for dinner, 2:00 dinner. And then the Day School didn't have teams, like basketball teams and that kind of thing, but they did have that down at East Bay where Hazel Parker was in charge. So, I played basketball on the East Bay team. I threw the softball and the track meet for East Bay not very successfully. There was a girl here named Sally Seebeck who was absolutely amazing. She could throw the softball for miles.

Let's see. We rode bicycles everywhere. We roller skated everywhere. And my mother started us playing tennis very early. At that time there were two tennis courts over at Country Club of Charleston, and there were two tennis courts at St. Philip's Church that were cement. If you fell on them, it was not fun. And we would – I can't believe what she did, because she would pick all my friends up in this green Chevrolet. I think it was probably a 1952 Chevrolet. And we would go to the Country Club of Charleston, and she would throw tennis balls to us for hours. And tennis has been a lifelong thing that I love. My sister Angie played tennis with me, and I had friends who turned out to be good at it. One of them was Eleanor Hope, who was a wonderful athlete. But we just thrived on that, the tennis and the track and East Bay Playground, all the things like that.

AB: Tell us more about 58 Church.

EW: Oh, 58 Church Street is a single house, and that means it's one room wide to the street. The first room – as you go in, there's a hall, and on the left is what my mother called her parlor. And there was her Steinway. She had an upright Steinway piano, and she played music by ear without any problems. That was on the right, and on the left – no, that was on the left. And on the right was the dining room, small but very nice. And then as you went back through the pantry, there was a kitchen in the back. Outside of the dining room there was a porch.

And when I was a little girl, my parents rented a room to a lady whose name was Miss Nichols. This was during the war. And there was a set of very steep steps that went up. And Miss Nichols had a room and a bath on the second floor of that house. So, she was really at the very tail end of the house. Now, my sisters and I, we started out in the three little rooms that were sort of one after another. And this became very annoying because one of my sisters couldn't spell, and you're trying to do your homework. And every time you read a sentence, she's asking you, how do you spell this and how do you spell that?

So, I escaped to the third floor of 58 Church Street. There were two rooms and a bath up there, and one of them was a storage room. The other one, I took over as mine. And it had a window that opened onto – I could hear the noise from the Shriners Temple down here in the evenings. And there was a yellow-crowned night heron that lived in that oak tree, and I could see that at night. It was very private up there because I knew my mother would never come upstairs, if she could help it. So, I tended to be a procrastinator and had to read 25 lines of Latin a night and would wait, of course, until the last minute. And the room was a perfect mess. I once had a therapist ask me, in what area of my life was I not a perfectionist? And I said, all you need to do is look at my bedroom when I was a little girl.

But 58 Church Street was fabulous. And you see, this is a deep, deep lot. At the end of the lot is the carriage house for 51 East Bay. So, you've got this huge, deep lot which became my mother's garden. She was pregnant with my second sister in 1941. My sister was born January 14, 1942. And she was confined to the bed, and not even bathroom privileges. And my mother had been accustomed to riding horseback all over Lower South Carolina. You see, before the lakes, she had grown up in Pinopolis. She had her own horse. Horse was named Nabob. And she and her mother rode all over Lower South Carolina before the lakes flooded everything.

So, here she was down in Charleston in a single house and, true, it was on the street, but confined to the bed and pregnant with her second child. And my father comes and says, what can I do to lift your spirits? And she had the sense to say, you could call Loutrel Briggs and have him come and design a garden for us. Even though we can't afford it right now to put it in, let's get the design. So, I laugh when I think – if you know – if you ever knew Mr. Briggs, he was a very thin, little man. And that is not the time – at those times men did not go into women's bedrooms. Here's Mr. Briggs up on the second floor of 58 Church Street with my mother pregnant out to here. Think about what was going on in the world. Germany was taking over parts of Europe and whatnot. And together they sat down and collaborated. He sat down by my mother's bed. They collaborated on the garden. And what a treat. I mean, it is fabulous.

And the best thing that's happened to the garden is that my sister Marty, who is an artist amongst other things, lives there. And so often after a person who has gardened in a place for a long time, and someone buys the house, they try to keep the garden static. That garden is not static thanks to my sister. It is dynamic. It is absolutely fabulous. I'm so proud of her and some of the things she's done there. But the garden was always a topic of conversation because my father was president of Historic Charleston Foundation, and every single year the garden was on tour for all the tours. So, what would happen is that our next-door neighbor was Louise Hanahan who ran the Little School. There's so many things I could tell you about Downtown Charleston. The Little School was where we all went to kindergarten.

Okay. So, the fence between the two is wooden. And of course in these humid conditions, the fence rots. So, Daddy would write this letter on legal paper. I've talked with Sonny Mevers to repair the fence in time for the tours. It's going to cost such and such, and your share, Miss Hanahan, is such and such. Anyway, the tours were a lot of fun, and there was always a lot of excitement going on about that. Have I told enough about 58 Church?

AB: We'll get back to it. But how about your education, all the different schools?

EW: Well, we started out at Charleston Day School, which of course 21 Elliott Street was just a very easy walk from 58 Church. I'm the oldest child, and my mother said, I don't care if your best grade is a C, but I expect you to do your best. So, I go to Charleston Day School, and it was run by Miss Tenney and Miss Stuart. Miss Stuart was not – well, they had taken over for Miss Sadie Jervey. I only met Miss Sadie Jervey one time, but she is a legend. This is 1946. Miss Stuart has gone to England on an exchange program.

And so we are – 12 people in my class, supposedly 6 boys and 6 girls, we are to be taught to read by Miss Harriet Wilson and Frances Covington. And at one point we had this – I mean, would you believe, we had slates. We wrote on slates. We had one of those charts that says A is for apple. We also had Madame Giovere, Madame Giovere, this French lady. We had French from the first grade on. We had the most awful lunch, which was break at school. It was horrible milk and saltines and graham crackers. That was what you got. But it was a fantastic school, and I learned to love learning there. I was very excited.

I don't believe – I don't want to step on any shoes, but until I went to Duke University for graduate school, I don't think I've been as excited about learning as I was at Charleston Day School. I'm not sure exactly what it was. We were terrified of Miss Stuart but, as I said, she was in England at some sort of an exchange program. And I think – well, we had Latin, French. We had mythology. We had all sorts of wonderful things. The one area that I was not too good in was math. When Miss Stuart came back, we quickly discovered that I wasn't too good in math.

But Charleston Day School was very, very special. There were all kinds of things we learned. One thing we learned – Miss Harriet Wilson was in charge of the reading. In every classroom we had a list of books, and you had your name and everybody else's name. And when you read a certain book, you checked it off. But one really interesting thing about the Day School was something called the okay sheets. And periodically you had to be okay in every subject. Now, this means that if you weren't terribly good at math, and I wasn't – you see, you saved all your papers, all the mistakes, everything. You had to correct them. And until they were totally correct, you were not okay. That meant you were coming back in the afternoon or on Saturday morning.

They also taught us how to conserve. Every single room had a pile of scratch paper. You were expected to use the scratch paper. They taught us a lot of things like that, but I spent a good many afternoons back getting okayed in math until I had erased the paper so much that it had holes in it. It was a wonderful education, and I was blessed to have gone there.

AB: Can you tell us about going home for 2:00 dinner?

EW: Oh, yeah. All the schools, including Ashley Hall, let us out to go home, and of course it was just a quick walk back home. And we had – believe it or not, we had a full meal. We had some sort of protein, meat. My father liked to fish, so we had a lot of fish. And we had two vegetables, and we always had dessert. And we knew that on Wednesdays, there would always be a cake. It was fantastic.

And we sat down, and we had grace, and we had a wonderful lady, Ethel Simmons, who worked in the kitchen and was a good cook, and she would pass the vegetables, the rice and gravy, if it was rice and gravy. And when it came to me – when the broccoli came, they overcooked it. And when it came to me, I would say, no thank you. And then it would go to my sister Angie, and she would say, no thank you. And then it would go to my sister Marty, and she would say, no thank you. And my father would say, Ethel, bring the dish. And it would be divided three ways, and the Whaley girls would eat their broccoli. Anyway, what else can I tell you?

AB: Can you tell us about what you did in the summer?

EW: Oh, yes. We were blessed. My Uncle Nick and Emily, who lived in Philadelphia, did not have any children. And my mother – my birthday was a couple days ago. July 12 is my birthday. And they rented a house called the Sand Crab, front row of the Isle of Palms. My grandmother and my uncle rented the house for the first two weeks in July, and I came on the 12th. And they liked the house so much that my uncle bought the house. Talk about being spoiled. We spent every June and July on the front row of the Isle of Palms. And we spent every August with my grandmother in Flat Rock, North Carolina, which was again wonderful. They worked on our manners there.

We did not have any male first cousins. And my mother was great friends with a horticulturalist here named Salley Frampton. And actually Salley's husband Creighton Frampton was the best man in my father's wedding, and he was my godfather. And the Framptons spent the month of June with us on the Isle of Palms. They had a son, Creighton Jr., but he didn't go by that name. His name was Beansie, and he spent most of the month drowning the Whaley girls in the Atlantic Ocean, as my mother and his mother sat in dining room chairs on top of the sand dunes discussing plants and horticulture. And why we are not dead, I don't know because Beansie was much stronger than I was. Beansie was also a good tennis player. He went to Charleston High School. I could tell you so much about Beansie that's fun, but I think that's beside the point.

We didn't know there was anything wrong with being out in the sun. We were down on the beach all day long. And the Isle of Palms had these wonderful gullies. It's almost like having your own private swimming pool. No one seemed to be worried about us. We were down there all day. We went crabbing at Breach Inlet with bushel baskets and nets. Coming home, the crabs would get loose on the kitchen floor, and the dogs would be after the crabs. I never thought a thing about putting the crabs in the boiling water until I had grandchildren and did it in front of them, and then I realized this is kind of grisly. Then we picked the crabs.

I saw on Sunday's paper the thing about the swing bed. I don't know if any of you all saw that picture about these swing – we had one of those swing beds on the porch, a hammock that you could lie down in. It was wonderful. And when we weren't down on the beach, here's the treat, my mother read aloud to us. She would choose the book, and of course it would be plenty hot and whatnot. But there was no thought of having air condition in a beach house. There are plenty of windows, wide open screen porch. And she would read aloud to us until we couldn't stand it. We got impatient. But always in the summertime you had a nap after dinner, and that's when you were doing your summer reading supposedly.

And then we went to Flat Rock. And I'm sure you know that people left the Lowcountry to go to the mountains to escape disease. I mean, they went up there to get away from malaria. Now it's the heat, I guess, mostly. But Flat Rock was where my grandmother had a house. She was one of three sisters, and her mother built that house in 1917. And the other two sisters, one was in Boston and one was in Philadelphia. So, my grandmother really had the house for the whole summer. She took with her from the Lowcountry a cook and a couple of maids.

And we – all right. The first thing that would happen in the morning is someone would knock on your door, and they would bring in a cup of coffee. Even if you were a little girl, you had coffee. And then they had one of those xylophones, what do you call it, where they would beat on them, and that was the sign that you were to come downstairs for morning prayers. And morning prayers consisted of readings from the Bible, the [unintelligible] for the day, Psalms. And then we got down on our knees and said the Lord's Prayer. And of course what my grandmother was hoping is that would stop any sibling fighting or anything like that during the course of the day, but it didn't.

And every day my sister Angie and I would go – there was three or four places in Flat Rock where there were tennis courts. And we were a little bit young to be playing with the adults. But we'd go over to the Smythe's place where they had a wonderful clay court. Mr. Smythe would sit on a Charleston bench by the side of a court, and he would make the matches. Now, we knew that we were not going to be – and the matches were always doubles or mixed doubles. And we also knew that we weren't going to be in any of the first matches. But toward the end of the day, Angie and I would get to play tennis with the adults. And then when the tennis was over, we all went swimming. Everybody went swimming. And then you would get home for dinner. But it was idyllic.

And the help was away, was off on Sunday afternoons and Thursday afternoons. So, those were picnic afternoons, and we would go up into Pisgah Forest and swim in that cold, cold water, the adults and the children, go down Pisgah slides. How can I tell you how wonderful this was? I mean, there's no way to describe how spoiled we were and how amazing it was. The reason we weren't on the beach in August, besides going to see our grandmother, was that my Uncle Nicholas Roosevelt who bought the beach house, he had decided that he was going to show that a piece of Southern property could pay for itself. And he bought Gippy Plantation, and he imported a herd of Guernsey cows. And in August the foreman of the dairy had the first two weeks at the Sand Crab. That was the name of the beach house. And the assistant foreman had the second two weeks at the Sand Crab. What else can I tell you?

AB: Tell us about some of the different plantations, Foxbank and Gippy and some of the ones at the lake.

EW: Well, because of Pinopolis, we went to – if we weren't at St. Philip's on Sunday, we were up in Pinopolis. The Sunday school – well, a lot of the time my father was trying to make business for himself. I mean, he was a lawyer, and he was trying to get clients and that kind of thing. So, we were put on the bus on Wentworth Street, a Greyhound bus, on Friday afternoon after school. And my grandmother met us in Moncks Corner where we immediately went on out to Pinopolis, threw off our shoes. Our school books, God knows what happened to those. And we had the complete run of the village of Pinopolis. Nothing could have hurt us except drowning in the lake, and we all knew how to swim, or a rattlesnake or something like that. When they wanted us, they had one of these conches that they would blow for us to come.

But we had a tennis court. In fact, my grandfather Fishburne, who was head of the Berkeley County Health Department, taught my mother and her sister how to play tennis on that tennis court. They were ranked second and third in the South at one time. And when I said to my mother, oh, my gosh, what was that like? She said, oh, only two people in the South owned tennis rackets. We then started playing tennis up there, and a lot of young people would join us from all over village or from Moncks Corner and around. So, we had lots of fun playing tennis. I learned how to water ski on that lake. My Uncle Moultrie was patient enough to pull me over and over again. It was heaven. I don't know how to explain to you how absolutely extraordinary it was.

There was a lady there named Cousin Annie. To this day I don't know her last name, but she just kept cookies in her house for us, and we would just wander through and get cookies. There was a Cousin Marian Kirk. Once when I had scarlet fever or somebody in my family was sick, and I had to be sent to my grandmother, she was in charge of my schoolwork. It was a wonderful little community. And the people in it were very educated. They had been to Winthrop or whatever. And the Cain ladies, Cousin Carrie and Cousin Kitty Cain, and everybody was your cousin. That's where my mother grew up, and she said that you didn't worry about whether somebody was your age or your sex. You played bridge or tennis with whoever would appear. You were glad to have a companion. It was a small, little village.

AB: Tell us about some of your neighbors on Church Street.

EW: Oh, my goodness. I think we had – it's amazing because next door was – next door to 58 Church Street was the Hanahan Little School. Louise Hanahan ran that. And she was quick to call my mother. My mother thought you were going to die of polio by sunset if you didn't drink three glasses of milk a day and have eggs. And I didn't like either one of those, and I quickly found out – my friend Randolph Waring, who lived at 10 Atlantic Street, would come and get me every morning to go to the Day School. And she was very patient. I just could not get the eggs and the milk down. And I quickly resorted to giving it to the dog, flushing it down the toilet, or third possibility was depositing the eggs in Miss Hanahan's garbage can. Well, she was quick to call my mother and tell her, of course. So, that was the end of that escape.

So, she was a neighbor on one side, on the north side, and on the south side was Jeanne Hanahan. And she would call my father and say, Mr. Whaley, could you please chop down that mulberry tree? It's making such a mess. But across the street catty-corner on a diagonal were the Staats Mr. and Mrs. Staats. And Mrs. Staats was amazing. She had been to the Cordon Bleu, and she was, needless to say, a fabulous cook. She was there. Up the street were Alida and Huger Sinkler. The Warings were around on 10 Atlantic Street.

Of course, St. Philip's was right up the street. The Dock Street Theatre was right up the street. Up the street was also Mr. Rhodes' grocery, and the grocery was on the northeast corner of Elliott Street and Church Street. And that's where my mother would call every morning and order the groceries. And, voila, here would come somebody on a bike with the groceries. Up from that was Byers Drugstore. Up on the corner of Broad and Church where the hat man was, Byers Drugstore. We had everything we needed right there.

Let me see. Dick and Ruth Hanckel were at 71 Church. Oh, I mean were right up the street from Catfish Row. We're down the street from Catfish Row. 82 Church, which was a children's shop, was right up the street. Stoll's Alley Shop was right down in Stoll's Alley, run by Mrs. Sinkler and her friends. Margaret Riley's was on the corner of Elliott, was on the northwest corner of Elliott and Church Street. That's where my bridesmaids' dresses came from. And what else?

AB: How far were you allowed to wander?

EW: Well, I think I was a little timid. But I told you already that we could go up to the Riviera Theatre. We didn't feel restricted at all because the church was right there. The school was right there. There was an ice cream parlor on Broad Street. There was an ice cream parlor. Right after the war – you see, during the war we had chocolate and vanilla ice cream. But right after the war, they had sherbets, like orange sherbet, all of that. And we got into a lot of trouble because we were supposed to go directly home from school from Charleston Day. And my friend Randolph had a dime. She said, come on, let's go to the ice cream parlor. So, of course we did. And of course we got caught coming back by Mrs. Waring.

But we wandered pretty much, but we didn't go – I mean, I don't remember ever going – we were more oriented toward this side than the other side. But I had a friend Harriet Maybank, on Meeting Street Eleanor Moore. She was Eleanor Hope, 12 Meeting Street. Pat Wardlaw was at 2 Ladson. Shannon Ravenel was at 2A Ladson. So, I don't think we went much beyond – well, Schwettman's was on King and Tradd Street. That was a drugstore that was there. I don't think we really wandered much more than that until, of course, we went to Ashley Hall, and then we were more familiar with that part of town.

AB: And how would you go to and from Ashley Hall?

EW: What'd you say?

AB: Did you ride in a car, or did you ride your bike?

EW: We had a carpool. And, unfortunately, most of the people in the car smoked, and I didn't smoke, and it was not very pleasant. But we went in a carpool. And we went back for afternoon sports because, you see, the Day School hadn't had teams like that. You became a purple or a white at Ashley Hall. And then I played tennis and basketball on those teams. Ashley Hall was different from the Day School because it was not as strict. We did learn some things there. We learned to stand when the teacher came in the room. When an adult comes in the room, you stand. I was not as excited about learning there as I was at the Day School.

AB: Can you tell us any other memories about the war?

EW: Well, I do know that when we went to Brick House Camp, which was down on Edisto Island, we took our sugar rations with us. And I do remember that when – at some point they rang the bell and said that it was over. Of course, I don't remember the exact time at all. But I remember the blackout curtains in the mountains. I remember having those. I don't remember – except my father – we would go to Pinopolis on Sundays, and we always stopped and picked up any sailors. We gave people – who were thumbing, we always gave them rides, which of course you would never do now, but we always gave people rides. And I remember my parents had a bicycle for two that they used. I don't remember a whole lot more about the war really.

Of course, Charleston was flooded with sailors. And, oh, my friend Randolph's father was the editor of the News and Courier. And, oh, I should've said this. We got to go on – we went on a submarine once. Yes, we went – he got invited as the editor of the paper to go on a lot of these ships, and I got invited to go along. And I never will forget, on one of the ships there was a Filipino cook, and he gave us cookies. But we got to do a lot of things like that because of him. The reason my father didn't have to go to the war was because he was first assistant district attorney and then district attorney here in Charleston, which was a real treat for us because he had an office on the – what we call the post office there, he had an office on the second floor, and we got to sit on the balcony for the Azalea Parade. I remember that.

AB: Tell us about the Azalea Parade.

EW: It was wonderful. I can't really tell you too much about it other than that it was a parade with all kinds of beautiful people in it. The other parade I remember was when the tricentennial came. I remember that. We were never allowed to go to things like circuses or fairs. They were still very – this is long before the vaccine for polio came out, and that was a great concern. They didn't know actually what caused it. You didn't have anything to do with flies. My good friend Peter Read had polio. My sister Angie was suspected of having polio. All of the second grade and fifth grade at Charleston Day School were around at our house on the Saturday morning that she came down with it, and we were all quarantined. They used to put these big red signs with black printing on your door saying quarantine. And we don't to this day know if she actually had polio or not, but that was a real problem in those days.

AB: Can you tell us about holidays in Charleston? What were your traditions?

EW: Well, because my grandmother was in Pinopolis, we and my Aunt Emily and Uncle Nick, who lived in Philadelphia, always came south to Gippy Plantation for Thanksgiving. And they

stayed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and then they left after Easter and went back to Philadelphia. But we always stopped for my father to get a quart of oysters because my mother was going to make oyster stew when we got to Pinopolis the night before Christmas. And at that point my Aunt Emily and Uncle Nick had arrived, and so they arrived for Christmas Eve. My grandmother played – first of all, my Aunt Emily had a wonderful voice, and she would read aloud from Saint Luke a Christmas story. And then they would read *The Night Before Christmas*. And then we would sing all the Christmas carols with my grandmother playing the carols.

And the Whaley girls slept upstairs in – there was no central heat in this house. And we had a big fireplace in our bedroom and three beds, and one of the dogs we had would sleep in there with us. And someone would come up in the early morning – Louisa actually was her name, would come up and light a fire for us. And then we would go down and see what we'd gotten for Christmas. And Anne was asking about after the war or during the war. I'll never forget the Christmas that we got rubber dolls, dolls that you could bathe. Because up until then, I had wonderful dolls, but they were either made by my mother. They were rag dolls. But we had real rubber babies that we could bathe. I will never forget that. One Christmas we came downstairs, and there were three bicycles. But usually around here the weather was good enough at Christmas to play tennis, and we would get tennis rackets and tennis balls. So, that was – I talked about Christmas.

Oh, we would always have Christmas dinner down at Gippy Plantation. And my uncle, as I said, had a dairy there. And my father would go off with my uncle in the morning. Of course, we would go to church, and then he would go off with my – Trinity Church Pinopolis Episcopal Church – would go off with my Uncle Nick because he would have a Christmas tree with presents for everybody at the dairy, all the helpers, all the workers at the dairy. And of course Daddy would spike the punch, so that there would be a little bourbon in that punch, and everybody had a – they had a wonderful Christmas.

And then we would go down for Christmas dinner. And this is at Gippy Plantation. And my Aunt Emily had no idea of how to cook. So, it was always questionable as to what you were actually going to have. And I remember some raw duck at one point. But the children did not sit at the big table. They had a long, big, lovely, big table where all the adults were, and the children had a smaller table in the same room. But after the dinner, really the best part of what would happen is, they had some absolutely wonderful women who could sing, black women, African-American women who would come in. And of course they had been given something. They'd probably been given a little bourbon or something. And they could really sing and shout, and it was the most wonderful thing. I wish I could remember all their names. They were Maybelle and Celie, and I don't remember the rest of them. But we would have the most wonderful music, gospels and everything.

AB: Tell us about some of the other people who worked for your family, where they lived. What were their names?

EW: Well, one of the people – well, first of all, Peter Heyward was the buggy man for my grandfather William K. Fishburne, who was a doctor, and they drove all around Berkeley County. Peter was driving my grandfather around to various locations. He after that worked for

the Roosevelts at Gippy. So, Peter Heyward was there at Gippy Plantation when the Roosevelts were there.

My grandmother had the most wonderful cook whose name was Katherine Beatty. And Katherine Beatty would come in every morning to my grandparents' house. My grandfather, I've told you, was a doctor. And she did not approve of the fact that he did not wish to get out of bed until he had a thimbleful of bourbon. She did not approve of that, and she let it be known that she did not approve, but she did it anyway. So, that's Katherine Beatty. And I went to her funeral, and it was so hard to say goodbye to her.

My mother had Ethel Simmons, who was wonderful. And our gardener is Junior Robinson who still works for me today. And Junior, his real name is Cuffie, Cuffie Robinson. And he – well, he's the most faithful, wonderful man. He worked for my mother. And then after Hugo, she decided with all the trees down where I live at Yeamans Hall that I could have a garden. So, she designed my garden at Yeamans, and Junior was right along with her. And Junior still comes to me on Tuesdays and helps me because he knows far more than I know about anything. But he's the most faithful, wonderful man.

And right before the Historic Charleston tours, mother of course would run out to Hyams or Abide-A-While or wherever to buy more plants to put in the garden to make things look really nice. And this is before any cell phones. And so what would happen is that she would be trying to get ahold of Junior, and of course she couldn't get ahold of Junior, and she'd get more and more frustrated. By the time Junior came, he would realize that she was frustrated, and he said, Mrs. Whaley, it's too pretty of a day for you to be mad with me.

I mean, that's the type of person he is. He is wonderful, the most optimistic person. We'd plant seeds and I'd say, Junior, I don't see any sign of anything coming. Oh, just wait, Miss. They'll be coming. So, Junior is like a member of my family. His birthday is June the 15th. He's just special. He's a very – he must've had the most wonderful mother. And occasionally he'll bring his son with him to help prune, that kind of thing.

So, we had Ethel, Junior. Oh, there was Archie. Mama loved Archie because he was very light on his feet and wouldn't step on the plants in the garden. Then the last person that mama had before she died was Margaret Edwards. And I was over there a lot helping out, and I gave strict instructions to Margaret that so-and-so, this friend of mother's, was not allowed to drive. If they went anywhere, Mother was to drive. And Margaret ruled the roost over there for a while. And what else?

AB: Tell us about where you would shop if you needed to buy clothes. King Street?

EW: Yes. The places Charleston had, we had three department stores that I remember. We had Belk's. We had Condon's where you went for shoes, and the reason you went to Condon's for shoes was because they had this little – you could put your shoe and the foot into this little machine and see whether the shoe actually fit you or not. I'm not sure if that was safe, but we did it. And the other one was Kerrison's, so we had three department stores. Really, Condon's was not within walking distance, but the other two certainly were. Groceries, we really – Mr. Rhodes'

store and the delivery system was pretty fantastic. Occasionally after Harold's Cabin came, you would go up there for some special cheeses, hors d'oeuvres of some kind. But I don't remember shopping – I don't remember my mother shopping anywhere else than just Mr. Rhodes.

AB: How about restaurants?

EW: Well, at the time there was – now I've forgotten the name of it around here.

AB: Perdita's.

EW: Perdita's, right. Perdita's. There was always the Carolina Yacht Club, which is not a restaurant, but you could go there. Oh, the Flag Room at the Sergeant Jasper, that was something that was fairly new. I don't remember exactly when that came into being. I was not in restaurants very often. The man who did the Flag Room, or who started the Flag Room, then started the Colony House or something later on. But I don't really remember being in restaurants at all until the Flag Room came along.

AB: What do you remember about hurricanes and other storms?

EW: Well, I was not here for Gracie because I was in France that year. But the French people that I was living with were sure that Charleston had been wiped off the map. And they were so thrilled when the first letter came from home that everything was okay. I remember as a child a huge fire up on the waterfront, and I'm not sure what it was. It was an enormous fire, and it was something in port that went up in flames.

I remember Hurricane David. I remember being on the Isle of Palms prior to something that was supposed to be a hurricane one, but making my children pack up and coming in and someone asking me, why? And I said, because a hurricane one can turn into a hurricane three in no time flat. Of course Hugo, I was not here for Hugo. I was in Maine. I was shocked when I came back to see Yeamans Hall, how that looked. Trees were down everywhere. I came into Charleston to the Harris Teeter, and someone said, have you seen Charleston? I said, Charleston looks like Paris. Yeamans Hall looked like Beirut. I mean, it looked like a war zone.

And I really attribute to Hugo the changes in Charleston. I believe that the insurance money that came in here after the hurricane – though we were reminded every Sunday in church not to cheat on the insurance, that is when the money came in here that spiffed things up. When I was a senior at Ashley Hall, 1957, a training ship from Denmark came in with lots of young Danish males. And we were recruited to have dinner with them one night. And one of them looked at me and said, how does it feel to live in such a shabby, run-down place? Now, I'd never been anywhere but Flat Rock, Rockbrook Camp, and Charleston. And it didn't occur to me at all that this was a shabby, run-down place. It just didn't. And I remember being so shocked at what he said. Now after Hugo, all this money came in. Everything got spiffed up. And I really attribute some of the changes that we've had to that very moment.

AB: What are some of the changes that you see?

EW: Well, I mean, everything is very fancy. Charleston is like a well-tended and cherished garden. That is what the city of Charleston – Downtown Charleston is like. Certainly, there's some plants that need to be pulled up or changed or rooted. But this – we love it. I'm so proud of the next generation and what they are doing to keep it this way. But my mother always said that Charleston's adornment were its children, because we were all over the street.

And one of her projects that she never got completed, she hired a photographer to go around and take pictures of children doing things all over the street, all over the city. Well, where are they now? They're not here. Why not? Well, maybe because the houses have been bought by people who are older. When I say older, they don't have young children anymore. Maybe because they're not there very often. Maybe because they have a house in Southern France and maybe one in Idaho where they can go skiing or whatever. But the children are not all over the streets the way they used to be. So, that is a big change. I wish I had the pictures that she had taken of various children, but that's a huge change here.

AB: Can you tell us about Foxbank and your father?

EW: Yeah, I can tell you. Daddy grew up on Edisto Island. He had a gun in his hand at a early age, a fishing rod in his hand at another age. Anne, I talked a lot.

Female Voice: Not at all. I mean, as long as you're good, we're good.

EW: So, he was a country boy, so to speak. And my mother, of course, was a country person. She had this idea that she was going to move my father from Downtown Charleston over to Hobcaw, and she bought two lots in Hobcaw. She had all kind of visions of having horses there and this, that, and the other. But of course Daddy being a lawyer and his office in Downtown Charleston, that wasn't going to happen. So, she sold the lots in Hobcaw.

But gradually over the years, Daddy became friends with a man named P.O. Mead, and P.O. Mead would say, Ben Scott, there's such and such up for sale. So, he gradually started buying land up in Berkeley County. And then he got to the point where he wanted to – whatever you want to call it, maybe develop it. And they built – when I say develop, I'm talking about put roads in and ditches for drainage. They built a house there, not a very fancy house, but a comfortable house. And they spent a lot of weekends up there. They were able to duck hunt. If I remember correctly, it was mostly duck hunting.

But just riding around the place was a joy for him. And he got so he was not very mobile, and so he had a cut-down Volkswagen that he rode around the place. But it was a great deal of pleasure for him. He had a lake built. There were springs all over the place, and we had a lot of fun out there on the weekends. My mother planted all kinds of lovely things. And it was really hurt by Hugo because – I mean, I can't tell you – he was gone at that point, and the man who helped run the place was gone, and everything kind of fell into my lap. And the timber market was flooded after Hugo. It was not an easy job. But Foxbank got sold eventually. One of the things that made it less attractive was the fact that there was a racetrack out there, not on our property, but adjoining our property was a car racing track. And the noise from that was awful on the weekends.

AB: When you were growing up downtown, were you aware of different accents?

EW: No, I wasn't terribly. I'm a combination of Pinopolis and Edisto Island. I spent a year in France in school, and I went to the École Phonétique. The French are very, very precise about their language. And I thought after going to the École Phonétique that I wouldn't sound like my sisters anymore. But I come back to Charleston, and I call somebody on the phone, and they're not sure whether it's me or one of my sisters. So, it didn't change my accent at all.

AB: One thing we haven't talked about in changing Charleston is the neighborhoods and the makeup of different races and who lived where. What do you remember about where African-American people lived?

EW: Well, there was definitely – definitely there were people – were African Americans on Elliott Street right across from Charleston Day School. Definitely. I don't really remember any others. But Elijah Allston who also helped in the garden, in mother's garden, rode a bicycle always down from wherever he lived. And I remember taking him back in the car once when he couldn't ride his bicycle back. Ansonborough probably did have some African Americans. I know that whenever we took Lee Wilson and Gertrude Wilson home, it was to Drake Street, which is up on the east side. Mary Nelson, who helped me when Douglas was born, was up on Mary Street. So, I'm not really good on that. I'm sorry.

AB: Did you ever go north of Condon's for any reason on the peninsula?

EW: Only when we were going to Pinopolis or coming home from Pinopolis. No.

AB: And how would you drive? What was the route to and from Pinopolis?

EW: Well, we would go up Highway 52. But coming home from Pinopolis on Sunday nights, there was a donut shop somewhere on upper King or Meeting, and we always stopped and got donuts. But we would go up Highway 52, yes. That's how we got to Pinopolis, yeah.

Female Voice: Did you ever go to Hampton Park?

EW: Yes. Yes, we did go to Hampton Park. And it was the saddest zoo you've ever seen. It was sad. I do remember peacocks wandering around Hampton Park and of course ducks and things on the water. But, I mean, the zoo part was awful. I'm sorry. We should never have had that.

AB: Did your family have one car or two cars, or what kind of car?

EW: Oh, we had a Dodge. I remember a green Dodge. But I do remember when mama got a Chevrolet that was yellow and white. And I had a driver's license. And because of her interest in tennis, because I had the license, Angie and I went to the state tennis tournament every year. And I'm the one to drive because I had the license. I remember going in that car. We stayed in Columbia with my Aunt Laura Manning. We always had the most beautiful peaches and cream.

And the tournament was always at – I can't remember the name of the place. But we met all kind of cute boys from all over the state that played tennis. I remember the Zimmerman boys from Greenville, George and Sam. I remember Glen Oxner from Greenville. We always had fun at those tournaments. We did not do well.

AB: Where would you go to get gas?

EW: Oh, well, of course that was in Downtown Charleston because you had Jennings right up here on East Bay and Mr. Boxx on Tradd Street. So, I don't remember that a whole lot, but Jennings was right here.

AB: Do you remember the city flooding?

EW: I really don't.

AB: Did you spend time at White Point Gardens?

EW: Did I spend time away from what?

AB: White Point Gardens.

EW: We were in White Point Gardens, yes, nurses. We went down to White Point Gardens, or we went to the park there next to the city hall. This is when we were very, very little.

AB: What do you remember about tourists?

EW: What do I know about what?

AB: Tourists in Charleston when you were growing up.

EW: Oh, well, Miss, I'll tell you one of the most wonderful things that happened. I'm talking too much. My Uncle Nick was from Philadelphia. So, they – people in Philadelphia wanted to come to Charleston to learn about our zoning laws, our 1932 zoning laws. Now this created quite a stir because here was this group coming from Philadelphia, and of course Uncle Nick wanted us to be up to snuff and this, that, and the other. And there was to be a lunch party at Mrs. Staats' – I've already said she went to the Cordon Bleu – and a lunch party at our house. And I suspect the third house was probably Miss Harry Smythe's house. I don't know that for sure.

But what went on, they were coming from Philadelphia to find out – to learn about our zoning laws. So, the menu was going to be Edisto shrimp pie and Lady Baltimore cake. And where we had never had finger bowls in our house before, all of a sudden the finger bowls were brought out. And the help had – Lee Wilson and Ethel had to learn about finger bowls. They were brass finger bowls that had come from Belvidere Plantation. Who knows where they'd been stored? Anyway, they were polished, and we had to practice ahead of time with the finger bowls.

The day that they came, it was pouring rain. I mean, one of the days they were here, it was pouring rain. I remember this distinctly because I had never ever seen a man with rubber overshoes, and one of them came in. I must've been about 12. I don't know how old I was. And he took off those rubber shoes, and I remember before very impressed with that. And I remember my Uncle Nick, who of course wanted us to be up to snuff. What would you think he did? He comes early and goes into the kitchen. Well, the last thing you need when you are making a Lady Baltimore cake is for someone to be barging into your kitchen. He was not very popular for doing that, but I do remember that.

I do remember Mr. Waggoner who had, as far as I know, one of the first carriages, and he had this cute little dog that sat up by him on the seat right up here by him, and he was a lovely gentleman. And he would take people around, but it was not this mass of carriages. It was just this one carriage with this very educated, lovely person taking people around. And of course I remember the tours because of the garden, because they were coming into the garden. I remember going on – oh, I remember being a hostess at one of the tours at Josephine Pinckney's house as a matter of fact on Chalmers Street. We learned the things that you were – being a docent, what you were supposed to say and that kind of thing. I also worked one summer at the Nathaniel Russell House giving tours. I'd forgotten that I'd done that, but I did do it. What else, Anne?

AB: Can you think of any foods that you all ate that we don't eat in Charleston anymore?

EW: Foods that we ate? Well, my father – no. I mean, we can still eat fish here now. Daddy was a – we ate a lot of seafood. Daddy caught bass. We had crab in the summertime. We had shrimp. Of course he had a cast net. So, I mean, we still have those things. I remember that my Aunt Emily, when she came down from Philadelphia, the very first question she asked was, how is my spinach and lettuce doing in her garden? I don't remember – it doesn't seem to me that we had – I think we have more food than we had then. Of course, we have better – we have fancy restaurants all over the place now, which we didn't have then. But we had excellent food at home.

Female Voice: Do you remember any street vendors or hucksters coming by?

EW: Of course, the shrimp man in the morning. And Ethel and the shrimp man had quite a relationship. And Daddy would always give – yeah, I mean, that was wonderful because you would wake up, and you would hear them coming down the street. And Daddy would always give Ethel extra money to give to the shrimp man. I'm not sure exactly what that involved, but Marty says they had a romance. I'm not too sure about that either. But, yes, I do remember. And you know what else I remember? I remember the ice coming – the people coming with a box of ice to put in the iceboxes, not in the refrigerator, and the huge tongs that they had to get the blocks of ice out. I do remember that. What else, Anne?

AB: St. Philip's, tell us about your family's involvement with St. Philip's.

EW: Well, Daddy was on the vestry there. He was both junior and senior warden. We went to Sunday school there. And they divided the boys and girls. We were not all allowed to sit on the

same – the boys sat on one side, and the girls sat on – this is in the chapel at St. Philip’s. And Ashmead Pringle was in charge of the boys. And he had this huge ring. I think it was his college ring, and he would thump them on the head if they weren’t behaving. It must’ve hurt.

But, yes, we were taught – I’ll tell you who. Penny Davies – no, Penny Walker was one of Mordelle Thornhill was one of our teachers in Sunday school. This is in Charleston. Now, in Pinopolis my grandmother was a Sunday school teacher, and we had to learn the catechism because the bishop was supposed to come one Sunday, and we were supposed to do the catechism with the bishop. Well, I avoided that by going to the Sand Crab, by going to the beach. By the time the bishop got there, I was not have to answer what was my bound and duty and that kind of thing. But St. Philip’s is so exciting. Right now, the best two hours of my week are spent there. They are doing the best job on adult education. We of course went to Sunday school. We of course went to confirmation class. But after that I have to say that I kind of – there was a little lapse. And now we have fantastic teachers, and it’s so exciting, very, very exciting.

AB: How has the church changed since you were a child?

EW: Well, it has become more exciting to me anyway. Maybe the Lord is just allowing me to learn how to listen now. Maybe I wasn’t a good listener before. But it is very, very exciting to me right now at St. Philip’s. We have – like all the other churches, we have our tea room where we have – this is where the tourists come into play. We capture the tourists. They come for our – and other churches do this, too, at various times. We have a absolutely magnificent lunch there that you can come, and I highly recommend it. I usually do desserts. I try to do one cake every day for St. Philip’s. Anyway, there’s a lot going on there, and it’s very exciting.

Katherine Pemberton: Can you think of anything we haven’t covered that you wanted to tell us about? I feel like we could do five of these interviews with you.

EW: Well, I haven’t stopped talking.

Female Voice: That was the point.

Female Voice: It’s great.

EW: And I’m sure it’s past – I heard her say we had – I think it was just an hour of battery or something. We’ve given out, right? No. Well, you know what? You don’t understand how lucky I am. I had two fabulous parents, two sisters, two husbands, how about that, and two magnificent children. So, I mean, how could I be – and I’m in fairly good health. I’m living in a magnificent spot. Think about that. I’m blessed and I know it.

And I’m so proud of the next generation. I’m so proud of Anne. I’m so proud of Winslow. I’m so proud of Betsy Cahill and the things she writes for the paper. I am so proud of Elizabeth and Randy, Elizabeth Bradham and Randy. I love what I see amongst the care. It’s not easy to fight some of the things we have to fight. How disappointing at some of the things that are going on and going on. All the hotels. I remember when Spoleto started. They were thinking about bringing the Queen Mary in here for people to stay. They didn’t think we had enough

hotels. Do you remember that? Does anybody remember that? No, they didn't think we had enough hotel rooms. Now we've got, I would imagine, way too many. It would be very interesting to know what percentage are full.

AB: What else do you see as the big threats?

EW: Anne, I'm just so glad you all are watching out for it. That's the main thing. I mean, it's so sad that you can't – well, I was thrilled to see about the bicycle program the other day, the Holy Smokes or Holy Stokes. I was thrilled to see about that. But the worst thing is, it was not a month ago that I read in the Wall Street Journal what cities like Venice and all are doing about the cruises, the cruise ships, how they are – they're terrible. We don't need those cruise ships, especially down here.

I mean, the fact that – I walked up a bridge the other day for my birthday. That was my present from my son and my grandson to walk up the Ravenel Bridge. And I looked out, and there was a group up there. They were on a mission from North Wilkesboro, North Carolina, or somewhere. And I was pointing out to them all the steeples and what they were. How wonderful that they're not overshadowed by tall buildings. How wonderful. And why do we have to have the cruise ships? Why can't we say, no thank you? And Venice and some of these other places, they're very, very unhappy. Bermuda, they don't want them. Well, neither do we. The people that come off of the ships, it's nice to have people come and look at Charleston, but all of their food is provided on the ship. They certainly are not buying Douglas Balentine's artwork.

Maybe I sound a little bit like an isolationist, but the tourists have brought us wonderful things. St. Philip's can afford its missions because all the money recommend the tea room goes to the missions. We have missions in Haiti. We have missions in Honduras. We have a mission in Africa. The money that we make goes to those. That's great. And the tourists have – the tours that are offered bring in money to repair things, to do things. But we don't need to have so many that we can't move around ourselves.

Female Voice: Thank you very much.

EW: Well, I just want to say, you asked me to describe Downtown Charleston. It is like – look, think about this. If you buy a house in Downtown Charleston, you have not only bought the land and the house. Look at the miles of sky and sea you bought. Look at that. You are not that far from the beautiful, beautiful waterfront. You're not that far from our gorgeous skies. Think about that. We who grew up here within an inch of the water practically. I had a child go – I'm not going to say which child, and I'm not going to say which city, but he went to another city for college. Oh, I already said he. And he called me. He said, Mom, what's wrong up here? And I said, you grew up in a place with beautiful architecture. No matter if that guy from Denmark said to me it was shabby and run down. You grew up near the ocean. That's the difference. You could see the skies when you're here in Charleston. Anyway, that's what I've said, and I've said too much.

End of recording.