

**Index of digital audiotaped interview with Lucille Sawyer Harris,
retired Wake Forest University faculty member, Music Department
Interviewed by Anne R. Phillips, Ph.D., on March 13, 2009, at
Salem towne – Both Carl and Lucille Harris were present**

Index by Anne R. Phillips

L = Lucille Harris

A = Anne R. Phillips

C = Dr. Carl V. Harris, Lucille's husband and retired WFU faculty

L. was born in New Bern, NC, at home on August 26, 1926.

Had two older brothers, James and Glenn. Father was wholesale groceryman. Mother had been teacher before she married; in those days, women had to quit teaching when they got married, “a terrible loss,” L. says, because her mother was a “born teacher.”

Mother and father lived in a boarding house for first five years of married life. Father traveled for wholesale grocery, Armstrong Grocery Company—Maysville, Dover, and other small towns in N. C. Dealt with many merchants. Lucille later in life took her father to visit old friends.

Honesty, integrity, and fairness were qualities the friends always spoke of about her father.

Father always went to church with family, but “never bothered to join a church.” Did not like hypocrisy. If religion meant anything, it should be practiced seven days a week. Mother was active in church.

Lucille active in Girls' Auxiliary in Baptist church. Interest in missions. Mother required memory work of her students in Sunday school. Lucille can still recite all books of the Bible. Her mother had sixteen year olds teaching nine year olds in Sunday school. The way to learn something was to teach it.

L. took piano lessons from age of six. Her mother's parents were both blind. Their total education at School for the Blind in Raleigh, N.C.

L's maternal grandfather taught school and farmed; grandmother taught piano. Believed in education. Sent their three sighted daughters to equivalent of college at time when few women went to college.

If L's mother had finished, she would have been in Class of 1905 at Meredith College, Raleigh.

L. fascinated as a child with raised letters on a page—not Braille. After college L. taught for five years for Governor Morehead School for the Blind, where her grandparents had attended.

Grandfather's tragic death in Bridgeton, NC, where they lived.across the Neuse River from New Bern. Drowned when the draw bridge keeper did not put the stick across when bridge was up. He was good swimmer, but hit his head on pilings and died.

Grandmother lived until L. was four years old. L's mother and father born in Pamlico County, NC. Happy home. Big vacant lot next to their house. Neighborhood children all played together on Spencer Avenue.

L. began school at home, where her mother taught L. lessons at kitchen table. Early arithmetic by putting cans on shelf; exchanging play money. Love of reading; her mother read to them.

When L. and her brothers started school, they all entered the second grade. School superintendent thought maybe not a good idea, and he asked L's mother why she taught her children. "Because I enjoyed teaching my children." She was precise, loved the children. Great knowledge of the English language.

First school only four blocks from L's home. Was it all right for her to pick up pecans from sidewalk from tree between the sidewalk and the street, L. wondered.

Rode bike or rode with her mother in middle grades. Father would "adjust his business" to pick up the children to go home for lunch.

Grades eight through eleven were high school grades.

Eleven grades in NC at that time to finish high school.

So L. finished high school just before her 16th birthday.

Two years Latin, two years French, biology, chemistry, algebra, geometry.

Considered Mars Hill College and Meredith College. She was salutatorian of her high school class and was offered scholarship to Meredith. Chose Mars Hill because her mother's younger sister went there.

Cousin Nathan Brooks and missionary cousin, Ernelle Brooks, who became nurse in Nigeria. L's older brother, a bit timid, had gone to Mars Hill. L. thought Mars Hill had done good things for her brother, and Mars Hill more reasonable cost than Meredith, even with scholarship possibility at Meredith.

L's father valued common sense more than pure book learning. "Think for yourself," he would say. He offered to help his children with college expenses as long as they had common sense enough to know what to do with a college degree.

Father encouraged saving—for child's spending money –ice cream and gifts for others. Both mother and father were frugal with money, but "extravagant with us" [time and attention].

L. entered Mars Hill, a two-year college, in 1942. There learned what true friendship is and built deep friendships. Learned how to relate to people.

Then to Meredith in 1944. Started study of piano when she was six years old. Ola Ferebee, older woman, taught L. music from grades two through six. Then L's piano teacher was Sara Abernathy, graduate of Peabody Conservatory and then Woman's College of the University of North Carolina (now UNCG.) Professor Wade Brown at Woman's College. Abernathy did not give much praise. Very precise, but played recordings, a new experience for L. The Abernathy students entered state-wide competitions in piano. So L. played all four years of high school in statewide competitions--"a larger world."

L. studied violin from fourth to seventh grades. Peabody student, Robert Rhodes, was her violin teacher, who brought violin to L's home and let her play. One of L's brothers played the clarinet and another, the trumpet. She played violin with them and they met in people's homes to play. Also, annual county concert. All these were important influences on L.

L. played in Dubuque, Iowa, orchestra on campus, when she was first married.

If she had not majored in music, she would have majored in math or English or religion.

At Meredith majored in piano, and minored in Organ and Religion B.A. in liberal arts.

Finished Meredith in 1946. After graduation took another thirty hours because a professor said if she took the extra thirty hours, she could go to a place like University of Michigan and get master's in one year.

In February 1947, letter from president of Mars Hill College with offer to teach piano. Also music history, which she never taught at Mars Hill. Because L. had had more organ than the faculty member teaching organ, L. taught organ and piano.

Met Carl Harris in 1947; many veterans on campus. Both she and Carl teaching at Mars Hill.

In 1942, 375 men and 375 women on campus; in 1944, fifty men. Some of those students were back in 1947.

Men had had very maturing experiences, been in combat.

In New Bern in WW II, Cherry Point air base just built and marine base at Camp LeJeune, Jacksonville, North Carolina. Importance of different races and cultures for L. In New Bern, there was Syrian woman, a Mrs. Joseph and her six children lived next door to L.'s family. Mrs. Joseph had six marines and sailors boarding at her house; fed them breakfast and supper. Wonderful neighbor. Wrapped more bandages [for the war effort] than almost anyone. Also, Jewish people in L's neighborhood.

L's closest playmate was Catholic, "maybe unusual" in hometown of 11,000 – 12,000. About 50% black. L's parents had close personal relationship with people who helped in the business. L's mother would go cook for "our good friend," a black woman, Charlotte, if Charlotte were sick. But those times, blacks went to the back door of white people's houses.

Exception: black woman had lived briefly in L's home—even left her money with L's mother for safekeeping—later went to NYC.

That woman did NOT go to L's back door. Came to the front door when she came back to New Bern to visit. "That was good!" Carl and Lucille visited her in NYC later.

Carl and Lucille have always talked over interests in religion; she asked to read his thesis—on prayer by Origen of Alexandria, one of the early church fathers.

At Mars Hill both C. and L. on the religion, life, and training committee, which brought outside speakers to campus. Much emphasis on religion: required Sunday school, revivals, vespers, chapel, and church.

L. joined the church at age of eight. "Hope I've grown some since then." Talk regarding heavy doses of religion if we grew up Southern Baptist. [Those of us with liberal Baptist upbringing were very lucky. A.R.P.]

During one Religious Emphasis Week at Mars Hill, Clarence Jordan of interracial Koinonia Farm of Americus, Georgia, invited to speak and visit for a week. Afterwards at a faculty meeting, the college president said that Mars Hill had to be careful what speakers they invited to campus. L. did not want censored relationships. She thought, "I don't think I can stay."

She was teaching fifty students, piano and organ, "which is insane." Also playing organ for church, two services each Sunday. Choir rehearsals, weddings and funerals. Pay was \$ 8.00 per month—\$ 2.00 per Sunday to play for two services.

No cars. Rode bus or train or carpooled with friends. Sometimes L. asked Carl to go with group to hear concert in Asheville, but often he was too busy, with his student load of over 200 students. So they did not spend much personal time together at Mars Hill when they were teaching. The first letter she wrote C. was a selection of quotations from Switzer on education. L. dating someone else. Then friendship with Carl developed. Both C. and L. decided to leave Mars Hill in 1950.

“I dared to be bold enough to ask him [about his feelings or intentions].” He told her he valued their friendship. She had always been very independent. C. not going to commit to marriage until he had finished all his studies.

L. had inquired about work at N. C. School for the Blind. Personal history of blind grandparents plus other people. Interest in Shorter College, but master’s degree required.

Had done two summers on her master’s at UNC-Chapel Hill. L. needed scholarship funds.

In June 1950, in one day’s mail, L. received three letters:

- 1 – offer of assistantship at Chapel Hill,**
- 2- offer to teach at the North Carolina School for the Blind--even without interview,**
- 3- letter from Durham pastor with offer of church position in religious education and teaching piano and organ.**

Carl had applied to go back to Yale to finish his doctorate, but timing did not fit his schedule.

Instead, he went to Duke. C. and L. met for meal, and she told him she was accepting job at N. C. School for the Blind.

Chapel Hill offered no degree in Applied Music, which L. wanted. Policy changed now. L. kept true to herself in Applied Music.

L. described her leaving Mars Hill. She told president that she was grateful, but because “I feel like something inside will die if I stay; I have to go.” L. concerned about diversity and more integration in our world. Had been encouraged along those directions at Meredith. Had met with Shaw University students and had had dialogue with them. She could not “turn back” on this.

She knew when she turned down Chapel Hill and didn’t get the master’s, she was closing a door. Played for Fairview Methodist Church in Raleigh for two to three years while she taught at N. C. School for the Blind for five years. Carl came by bus on Sundays to see her.

Every child at School for the Blind got to take music. From second grade on, no extra fee. Excellent equipment: two grand pianos—one Steinway and one Mason and Hamlin next to each other. Seven or eight grand pianos on campus for seventy-five students.

She wanted to teach the older students—high school students. Her best high school student later on faculty at Brevard College; a composer. Attended Indiana University—played piano, violin, and sang, but someone on his Indiana University graduate committee thought no one unsighted should be granted the doctorate. At Brevard he held special Chair.

L. not sure that it was good for C. and L. friendship if both of them in heavy graduate studies at same time. Carl, at Duke, came over to Raleigh on week ends and helped with Sunday vesper programs for students, ages six to twenty.

In 1952, C. completed Ph.D. at Duke.

During the academic year 1953-54, C. taught at East Carolina College in Greenville, N.C. [now UNC-Greenville].

He was Director of Religious Activities, teaching religion as English (not allowed to teach religion in a state school) and also worked with woman who had been Kinsey associate.

In 1951, C. gave L. gold locket that had belonged to his “other mother,” a Mrs. Mabel Godwin Whitley,” his literary mother. She had sent C. locket and instructed him to give the locket to person he would marry. So at Christmas 1951, C. gave L. the locket and a letter to read to her family. On the locket, C. chose the Henry Drummond words: “To live is to love” inscribed to L.

Since then, they’ve decided they also like the words: “To love is to live.”

During the 1953-1954 year, C. wrote “disturbing” letter to L, and she went to Greenville to “get that straightened out.”

At Greenville, C. taught Greek to a student who was going to seminary and also a black janitor who “had his Greek [book] along with his dustpan.”

Carl went to Dubuque in Iowa in 1954 to teach Greek.

C. and L. married in 1955 in First Baptist Church in New Bern. Dr. W. R. Cullom, in his late eighties, of Wake Forest gave a prayer. Dr. Olin Binkley had taught Carl undergraduate courses at Wake Forest and had suggested that C. go to Yale, so he was first choice to perform the marriage ceremony, but Dr. Binkley not available. McCloud Bryan performed ceremony.

L. and C. had printed bulletin, not customary at that time.

“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” as part of music.

L. did not want bridesmaids, but her good friends sat down front together. Bride and groom memorized their vows. L’s mother thought wedding most meaningful one she had ever been to.

L. said she felt “we could do better together than separately.”

“Found C. a challenging friend—concerned about bringing more heaven to earth.” Together they have read much philosophy and religion and have maintained wide interests.

In her professional work, L. likes best the one-to-one arrangement. In 1956, L. came to Wake Forest College without a position. C. was already teaching in Classical Languages.

In August 1955, C. and L. had driven to Dubuque after their marriage; C. continued his teaching there. Soon C. began to receive airmail letters from Dr. Earp, asking C. to come teach at Wake Forest. Dr. Poteat did not want to leave the town of Wake Forest, so new faculty needed in Classical Languages.

Dr. Poteat had been Earp’s Greek teacher.

Earp wanted C. to come teach “the N. C. boys and girls Greek.”

C. and L. came home to Morganton at Christmas on train. Rode all night. C’s home--father terrible infection. No health insurance.

They signed papers at the hospital to assume the expense for C’s father’s surgery. “We would not have done anything otherwise.”

Carl’s father had foot amputated, then other leg—circulatory--not diabetes.

C. went to old WF campus for interview.

Back to Dubuque; WF job accepted, where C. would be teaching five courses each semester.

Had been teaching OT and NT and courses in Paul at Dubuque.

L. played organ at Presbyterian church.

In 1956, on new campus—red mud, newness.

Call from Mac Bryan, “I’m going to Wake Forest to teach in the Religion Department.”

C. said, “And I’m going to teach in Classical Languages.

Dr. Bryan: “Can they stand us both?”

Wake Forest did not pay moving expenses. Heavy books. C. and L. to Winston-Salem with very few little furnishings. Moved into Faculty Apartments sight unseen. L. got her mother to check out which apt. was better. L’s mother chose apartment with southern exposure. First floor of Building 6, where C. and L. lived for forty-two years, until they moved to Salemtowne, the Moravian retirement home in Winston-Salem.

L.’s brother Glenn was on faculty and Bowman Grey School of Medicine (GBSM) and also served at Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem from 1950 to 1989. Did first catherizations ever done at Baptist Hospital. Had finished BGSB in 1944.

At WFC Faculty Apartments, C. and L. had close faculty neighbors. Dot Casey and Marjorie Crisp, the “Mac” Bryans, Jeanne Owen, Paul Gross, Harold Barrow. Also a German Jew, newspaper person—whose family were all killed in the Holocaust crematoria.

Other neighbors were Indian. Roy Jumper across the hall. Dolly McPherson, Maya Angelou’s close friend. Could hear Dolly singing, going up and down the stairs to the laundry.

Ed Wilson and Tom Mullen and their wives and C. and L. would gather up in Dolly’s apartment with Maya and sing and tell stories.

Student Martha Mason, who has lived in iron lung for more than sixty years, lived in Building 10. L. remembers Martha’s studying Latin. Pop quizzes Dr. Earp gave. C. took papers back and forth to campus for Martha.

Have remained close friends with Martha, one of the most remarkable people L. has ever met.

Nothing was waived at Wake Forest for Martha except physical education and chemistry lab. Electronic buttons installed in classrooms so Martha could be called on. \Her mother had eighth grade educ and

her father about the same. Father worked for two years in Winston-Salem while Martha completed her college studies at Wake Forest. Gardner–Webb University [earlier, a two-year college] honored Martha in 2008.

L.'s first teaching in Winston-Salem was group of professors' children, including Jack and June Parker. Taught June's two daughters piano. Edna Lee Bryan.

L. gave up playing organ

Thane McDonald had known L.'s work at Mars Hill and at N. C. School for the Blind. He asked L. to teach part time at Wake Forest on fee basis pay: get the fees of students you are teaching. For example, ten students meant ten fees, but no guarantee of salary—or number of students for each semester. She had done that at Mars Hill.

Eventually L. said this arrangement was not professional, and music professors and students needed more spaces on campus. After ten years L. inquired—by that time she would have been teaching a full half load. No place to leave books—“traveling” professor on campus.

L. taught in Wingate, which also housed other departments: Religion, Philosophy, Sociology, church offices, the church kindergarten. Visitors “sort of alarmed” that there were no official practice rooms.

So L. taught in Wingate, Hoffman—next to post office, and building next to bookstore. Practice rooms wherever she could find them.

L. out of teaching for year and a half when she had rheumatic fever as adult—four months in Baptist Hospital. No pay during those months. No guarantee that job would be held.

Back to teaching about 1963 until 1991. In Wingate all the time. L. asked for establishment of some sort of salary. “Fair that I get half of a first-year's teaching salary.” That was \$ 1000.00 more than what she was making. No benefits. No retirement benefits. At the end of her Wake Forest teaching, she was considered on three-quarter time, so she got benefits. She taught more than forty years. “I loved my students.”

The new Scales Fine Arts Building was designed for art and theatre and music. However, the music wing was delayed.

Paul Sinal, “a renaissance man,” had studied piano with Christopher Giles, now deceased. “One of the most knowledgeable people I have known.” Paul Robinson; Ethel Kalter, voice; Clifford Bair, Thane McDonald.

Paul Sinal was WF student in the 1960s; majored in German and Latin. Doctorate in Linguistics from Cornell; law school at WF, Was county attorney.

Paul as bright and engaging. On campus, when he would see L., he’d ask: “Where are you headed? I’ll walk with you so we can talk.”

Later, when no music wing or building, Paul gave money for the music competition, held in the basement of Wingate.

Competition has continued for thirty-two years. Other contributors to the prizes. For example, Sharon Snow took her neighbor to hear the competition. That neighbor gave \$ 15,000.00 to the prizes fund, the money given in honor of her parents. Then another \$ 15,000.00, for a total of \$ 30,000 total.

One former student comes back every year from California and gives a prize of \$ 500.00.

Committee and Paul suggested name of Giles-Harris Competition. Performances on that day single day could number thirty-six, all on very high level.

Most of the people now teaching at WF were hired during L.’s time on faculty. She and colleagues read “huge number of dossiers.” More than 100 applications for every job. “We have strong Music Department.”

L. always champion for letting students study music, even if they were not majors. First Reynolds scholarships: at least three or four were music-involved. In addition, a science major was clarinetist. Music is very important part of education.

When C. was at Dubuque, L. taught a spring semester at Wisconsin State University at Platteville. Before she took that job. she wrote letter

to say she was from the South and wouldn't take the job unless she could ride the bus on those snowy days. The president said they had checked the bus schedule and they thought it would work. L. caught the 7:30 a.m. bus near their house, was at Platteville by 8:15, walked six blocks, and was at her studio by 8:30. Finished day about 3 p.m. Schedule for three days each week.

C. gave L. his Phi Beta Kappa key, that "I never wore."

C. thought key could be used as a necklace

Words: Love of Wisdom, (GUIDE of life) fitted her very well.

"I knew C. was giving me one of his most prized possessions. L. had heard the PBK key not to be given to someone who was a PBK. They did not have PKB at Meredith, but similar high scholarship society at Meredith, which had the same scholastic requirements.

It's been a great journey, sharing it with Carl. Talk about days of integration on campus and more inclusive stands at her church, Wake Forest Baptist Church on campus.

L. learned "so much from my students."

C. and L. consider themselves blessed to know many wonderful people and friends. Believe that there is no gift more valuable than friends.

Why L. went into music: not that verbal early in her life. L. could express things better through music than in words.

At WF, taught all sorts of students.

Grateful to Mars Hill, Wake Forest, to students, to Anne Phillips, to Sharon Snow for making all these memories possible.

End of Interview and End of Summary

A.R.P.