

INTERVIEWEE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name: Elizabeth Lowe M/F: Female

Address: 1151 7th Ave. Ragland, Al. 36131

Phone number(s): (205) 472-2413

Approximate age or date of birth: October 20, 1911

Mothers name: Lela Eugenia Youngblood

Father's name: William Elmer Davis

Places lived and when: Ragland, most of her life

Education: Master degree in education

Religion: Baptist

Business, political and social memberships (past and present): member of Home Economics Chapter in Tennessee

Present occupation: Retired

Former occupations: School teacher

Special Skills: Arts and Crafts

Major Accomplishments: She started a yearly school trip to Washington D.C. when she was a teacher.

National Events in which interviewee has participated: None

Local Events in which interviewee has participated: Mrs. Lowe works with the Senior ~~in~~ Citizens on different projects

National born U.S. citizen? Yes No Naturalized Citizen: Yes/No

Country from which he/she emigrated: _____

Documents, photographs, and artifacts which are in the possession of the interviewee: None

Individuals recommended by the interviewee who might be candidates for an oral history interview: None

Additional information: I enjoyed the interview with Mrs. Lowe very much.

Gift and Release Agreement

We Elizabeth Lowe and Amy Noah
Interviewee (print) Interviewer (print)

do hereby give and grant Jacksonville State University, Oral History Archive, all literary and property rights, title, and interest which we may possess to the audio or video recording(s) and transcript(s) of the interview(s) conducted at

Mrs. Elizabeth Lowe's home
on the date(s) of 3/28/96

for the oral history collection being compiled by Dr. Marshall.

Elizabeth D. Lowe
Interviewee's Signature

Date: March 28, 1996

Address 1151 1st ave.

Ragland, Al. 35131

Phone 402-2413

Amy Noah
Interviewer's Signature

Date 3/28/96

Address P.O. Box 303

Ragland, Al. 35131

Phone (205) 472-2272

Amy Noah
HY 202 Telecourse
April 9, 1996

The person whom I interviewed is Mrs. Elizabeth Lowe. Mrs Lowe was born in her home in Ragland, Alabama, on October 20, 1911, and she has lived there most of her life. The doctor who delivered Mrs. Lowe was Doctor Brown. Mrs. Lowe's parents were William Elmer Davis and Lola Eugenia Youngblood. Mrs. Lowe graduated from Ragland High School and then attended Berry College.

After Mrs. Lowe graduated from Ragland High School, it was three years later that she began at Berry College in Rome, Georgia. She went to Berry College because she could work for her college tuition at Berry. Mrs. Lowe attended Berry College during the Great Depression, ^{since} ~~so~~ her family could not afford to send her to college. She knew that at Berry she could pay her own way through college by working. Mrs. Lowe worked for her room and board, tuition, and all of her clothes at Berry. Mrs. Lowe said, "I knew I wanted to be a school teacher when I was in high school." She used to study a lot with her friends, and she thought that teaching people would be an interesting job. When I asked Mrs. Lowe if she enjoyed college, she said, "I really enjoyed it. I had always worked, so the working didn't bother me."

Mrs. Lowe said that working for her college expenses didn't bother her because she had always worked, as did many other people during the Great Depression. The Great Depression was a hard time for everyone, but Mrs. Lowe said that people who have always had to work for what they have appreciate it more than people who have not had to work for what they have. Mrs. Lowe said that at first she thought about becoming a nurse. However, her family did not want her to do that, so she decided to teach school.

repetition

No need to repeat the quote

Mrs. Lowe taught school for thirty-five years. She taught in Georgia for three years before coming back to her hometown of Ragland, Alabama, where she taught for thirty-two more years. Mrs. Lowe said that she enjoyed teaching during her first years, but closer to her retirement she had responsibilities to her parents and trying to take care of them and teach school was too much for her, and she did not really like what she was doing. When I asked Mrs. Lowe if she ever thought that she should have been something else other than a school teacher, she replied that she did not think she would have been as good at anything else besides teaching. The most important thing to Mrs. Lowe as a school teacher was discipline. She said that when she first came to Ragland High School, the athletics seemed more important than the academics and she did not like that. She said, "I always liked to see children taking their books home." Mrs. Lowe taught home economics in Georgia for three years, then she taught a little bit of everything at Ragland High School since Ragland did not have a home economics program at that time. After Ragland began its home economics program, she taught that until she retired.

I agree!

I asked Mrs. Lowe how children were punished when she was a school teacher, and she said by a paddling or by writing sentences after class. She said that she thought children get away with too much in today's schools because teachers are not allowed to discipline the children like they should because of the parents. I talked to Mrs. Lowe about how she felt about taking prayer out of schools. She said that she thinks prayer and Bible reading in school are very important and that children who could not get those things at home could always get them in school. Mrs. Lowe said that children in today's schools need prayer more than ever, and she thinks

they should have prayer in schools. Mrs. Lowe said that character building in schools when she was a teacher was better than it is today, because teachers had prayer in the schools and teachers also had better discipline and better students. All of these things are not in our schools today. She said that she would not want to be a teacher in today's schools. Mrs. Lowe said, "I wouldn't last more than a day and they would fire me." Mrs. Lowe was very involved in her job as a teacher; she was always doing extra activities with and for the school. She did the Junior and Senior Reception and the Halloween program at school, and she was the first teacher who got the students to take a trip to Washington, D.C. Mrs. Lowe and her students raised money and went to Washington, D.C. for the first time. She will always be remembered for that and each year every senior class has gone to Washington, D.C.

Mrs. Lowe taught under many different principals at Ragland High School. After Mrs. Lowe retired, she worked with the senior citizens for a short time and she said she enjoyed that project. Mrs. Lowe is the type of person who is always doing something and starting projects. Now Mrs. Lowe stays at home where she does some arts and crafts and relaxes.

The main purpose of my interview was to get Mrs. Lowe to tell me what it was like going to college during the Great Depression. When I asked her what it was like trying to go to college during that time, she said it was very difficult, especially from our community of Ragland. During the Great Depression, National Cement Company, where most men in Ragland worked, was shut down, making it difficult for families in Ragland to even have enough to live ~~off~~ of. Mrs. Lowe said she knew she wanted to go to college, but she knew she would have to work to get to go. She applied to Berry College

in Rome, Georgia, because she could work there to pay for her college and it was pretty close to home. At first she was not accepted, but then someone dropped out and she got to go in their place at Berry. Mrs. Lowe went to Berry as a work student; she worked full time in the college kitchen for one semester before she started to school. Mrs. Lowe said that by doing this, she appreciated her education even more. During the Great Depression most people who did go to college, like Mrs. Lowe, had to work for it or they could not go. The Great Depression put a big strain on all businesses and colleges everywhere. Mrs. Lowe could not understand all of those hard times fully, and she, unlike other students at Berry, did not mind working for her tuition. During the Great Depression Mrs. Lowe had to work for everything, even at home, so she did not mind working at Berry. At Berry, a person would work two days a week and go to school four days a week. The two days that you worked would pay for your board, lodging, clothes, and tuition. Berry also had summer work for students who wanted to earn extra money in the summer. I asked Mrs. Lowe what she thought the difference is between going to college then and going to college today. She said that in some ways it seems easier today because kids' parents make more money, but then again it is a lot more expensive now than it was during the Depression, so that could still make it hard for some people. Mrs. Lowe said that she thinks in some ways she was better off because she always had to work and she did not have time to play around like a lot of kids who go to college today. Mrs. Lowe said that she feels that she appreciated it more than kids do today, because most kids today do not have to work for their college. It took Mrs. Lowe four and one-half semesters to get her teaching degree from Berry. She said that she seldom had time to come home and visit her

*Need
some
paragraphs*

family and she missed them. The type of work Mrs. Lowe had to do was in the college kitchen. Her first job was sculery maid where she washed pots and pans for the kitchen. When she worked as dinner cook, she helped prepare the dinner; she also waited tables. Mrs. Lowe cooked for people who would come to Berry to work. She worked in the sewing room where she made the school uniforms that were worn. The girls sometimes wore pink uniforms; however, senior girls wore green uniforms. Mrs. Lowe also worked as a nurse. The regular nurse was gone for a week, and Mrs. Lowe did her work while she was gone. Mrs. Lowe said that most of the time she was either working in the kitchen or in the sewing room. Mrs. Lowe said that everyone at Berry had to go to church every Sunday. The only way you could get out of going to church or your classes was to have a written excuse from the college nurse stating that you were sick. Mrs. Lowe said that it did not bother her to have to go to church on Sundays, because she had always attended church at home. The church and everything were on campus at Berry, because during the Great Depression most people did not have cars and they had to walk to all of their classes and everywhere they went. The boys and the girls had separate classes, but they went to church together. Mr. Henry Ford, of the Ford Motor Company, donated a lot of money to Berry College that enabled them to build buildings and more things at the college. Berry had one of the largest college campuses at that time. Berry's campus included some thirty-five thousand acres.

Mrs. Lowe said that when she attended Berry, it was still a young college with only about two thousand students enrolled. The students had three minutes between classes. Sometimes they would have a class in a building as far as a mile away and they would have to walk to each building.

Of course, the teachers were not as strict about tardies because of the distances they had to walk. Mrs. Lowe said that as a rule, the faculty at Berry were very strict about things concerning the students. She said, "Really, all you did was work and go to class, so you did not have a lot of time to get in trouble." When you wanted to leave campus for any reason, you had to get a permit to do it or you could not leave. The type of work that the students had to do to earn their tuition was often farming and dairy work. The dairy barns were built like gothic buildings with steeples. The students raised turkeys and planted gardens. Mrs. Lowe said that one time she had to pluck the feathers off a turkey, and she did not like that job. Berry College had its own water system that furnished water for the campus. They also had their own brick plant. Some students worked in the kitchens; other students did delivery work; others worked in the sewing room and the weaving room where they made towels and cushions to sell to people to make money. Students also sold milk and butter to stores or markets in town. The food for the students was grown on campus. Mrs. Lowe said, "Nothing at the college went to waste. I guess the people could not afford for things to go to waste during the Great Depression."

Mrs. Lowe said that the students always looked forward to seeing the Ford family visit because Mr. Ford gave the school a lot of money for different reasons. Mrs. Lowe said that there was an equal number of boys and girls at Berry; there may have been a few more boys than girls. She said that 85% of the students at Berry were work students. Today, most students pay their own way without having to work, but Berry still has the student-work program even today. Mrs. Berry was the lady who started the school in an old log cabin on her father's plantation. She had an interest in children, especially poor ones who could not usually afford

to go to school. Mrs. Berry wanted to give them the chance for an education; that is why she did not accept children from wealthy families. Mrs. Lowe said that at the time she was there, there were no black students, but Berry College did invite black students to attend even before intergration. Berry was its own little town with stores and a Post Office. All of their clothes were made in the sewing room. The shoes and raincoat Mrs. Lowe had to buy were in the school store. The shoes were two dollars a pair, and the raincoat was two or three dollars.

Mrs. Lowe talked about the cottage where she lived on campus. She said each week each person had a different job. They had to bring in their fire wood, shop, clean, and cook the food. They had to keep the floors and house very clean.

Mrs. Lowe said that she never really wanted to do anything but teach, because she thought she would not be as good at anything else. Mrs. Lowe said that when she first started teaching in 1939, she made seventy-five dollars per month. Mrs. Lowe said that when she started teaching at the vocational school, teaching home economics, she made ninety dollars per month. She said she had to buy a car and her car payment was fifty dollars a month. Mrs. Lowe said she was paid less than one thousand dollars per month even though she had a masters degree in education and had been teaching for thirty-five years. Today, beginning teachers with only a bachelors degree start out earning about two thousand dollars per month. Mrs. Lowe said, "Times were very hard having to go to school during the Great Depression. I guess during the Depression, times were very hard everywhere; however , I believe that people were better workers back then because they knew they had to work to survive. People were not as concerned with material things back then as they are today."

As I was interviewing Mrs. Lowe, I reached the conclusion that she does not like the times in which we live today as well as back during the Great Depression. She feels that people back then focused more on the little things and that is what mattered most. Mrs. Lowe was very nice and I enjoyed interviewing her. I really learned a lot from Mrs. Lowe. When I think about all the hard things and work that she had to do while she was going to college, I do not think I could have done it. I do not think I could have lived during the Great Depression, but Mrs. Lowe says those were the best days of her life.

Great job
Neat person!
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and on editing
your work.