

Dr. Mary Frances (Polly) Shuford

Interviewer: Dr. Louis Silveri

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Tape I, Side 1

Silveri: Dr. Shuford, I'd just like to start with when you were born and where you were born.

Shuford: I was born May, the 23rd in 1897 and I was born on Orange Street in house down on the corner.

Silveri: In Asheville?

Shuford: In Asheville. And I'm certainly a native to this street, and this is one of the oldest streets in Asheville if not the oldest, in fact, when my father bought out here, this was the end of Asheville. This was the last street north.

Silveri: What do you know about your ancestors on your father's side? How far back do they go?

Shuford: Well, they came from Germany, and they settled in Pennsylvania and then in seventeen something or other they came down to Watauga County in... Hickory. They settled down at Hickory. And there was a whole bunch of Shufords down there. Still, you know, they all came from Hickory originally. And then in about 1800 the Shufords, my father's branch of the family, moved up here to Transylvania County. And then my father came to Asheville to practice law. He was born in Buncombe County too, but that was just sort of an accident. His father was a mill right and he was down here on a job, and his mother... he was born while the family was down here.

Silveri: I see. How about the maternal side now?

Shuford: Well, my mother was Julia Dean from Rome, Georgia and her father was a plantation owner down there. And her family had the plantation that was an original grant from the government, or rather from England. Anyway, it goes way back. Then when she was... They got that land, the Cherokee Indians were there. Well that farm remained in the family until just this last twenty-five years, I guess it was sold. My mother lived on the plantation and down there they had slaves, oh about twenty maybe, but those north Georgia farms were small. It was hilly country, mountainous country through there. And my grandfather was a captain in the Confederate Army. He was in prison for several years, two or three. Something like that. And then my mother came up here to visit relatives, and she met my father here.

Silveri: So, the Dean... Dean was a member uh, fought in the, uh, Confederate side during the Civil War?

Shuford: Yes.

Silveri: How about the other side of the family? Your father's side. Any ancestors who fought in that war?

Shuford: His uncles did, but my father's father was a farmer, so he was left at home to furnish food, and he was a little bit old for it anyway and he never did go to the war. And my father was just a small child when the war broke out. I think he was born in '55. Well, in '65 he was about ten years old. He remembered, very well, remembered the soldiers coming home, and told me about that. Now uncle Asberry lost his arm and there were two or three of the uncles were in the Confederate Army.

Silveri: And you do remember stories told to you about the war years, right?

Shuford: I remember my father telling about so many came through and they were so ragged and they were so hungry that my grandfather said that they couldn't feed anymore. Just tell them to go on. That there wasn't any food there for them. And one poor fellow came dragging up the road and my grandfather said to send word out to him, then he looked out and saw that it was one of his best friends that was coming, and so he sent the boys running down the road to bring him back, and my father remembered that. And what he remembered very well indeed was that my father's mother died when he was about... soon after the war, and left six children, and there was a widow Jones that lived in Asheville and had good farms and was quite well-to-do, and the widow Jones had six children with the little... The Jones's had been Union people. And my father said when they got his family, you know the Confederates, and he said when those two families got together the Civil War wasn't anything to what went on in that household.

Silveri: At least they didn't shoot at each other over it, right?

Shuford: No, they were too ferocious for that. But he was almost grown. He went to live with his sister anyway, until he was grown, and then went off to school... But he always remembered the Widow Jones very, very cordially because she was so kind and... But the families just didn't mix, the children weren't alike you know. Most of them, both families were almost grown and marriage occurred.

Silveri: Now where was your father living when the war ended?

Shuford: In Transylvania County.

Silveri: Transylvania County. How did the family adjust after the war? It didn't make much difference to them. They just wanted to farm as usual in the occupation of farming, didn't they?

Shuford: Well, it didn't make too much difference, because the war hadn't been through here. Now down in Madison County, I think it did make a difference. They carried the war on there as personal feuds you know. But not out in Transylvania, there were more Confederate people out there. It was a more prosperous county. And the intelligent people, you know, who came up here, they got the best farms and the Shufords kept on going until they reached Transylvania County where there's good bottom land, and they were smart enough to get a good farm. All of them did. Down on Little River. And the dumb, they stayed around here in Asheville and they tried to farm these mountains. And those that were even dumber went on down to Madison County. But I think you'd better cut that out, or I might get hazed if I go through Madison County. But that's the history of the whole United States. The intelligent ones moved on to the good land. I've just been out to Illinois and there are very intelligent farmers out there. They got the best land and they stayed with it and they made money with it... you know, those Germans.

Silveri: You know the history books say that the people who moved into the mountains back in the 18th century and early 19th century were independent minded people. They wanted to get away from the control of those on the eastern coast who wouldn't leave them alone, whether it be in religion or politics or an economic life. That they had the independence and courage to come up into the mountains where no one would bother them.

Shuford: Well that was true. My father often said his ancestors came up here because of the pasture land at that time and it just got too crowded for them down there at Watauga County. I don't know, they just "had walk in their feet" anyway. They wanted to move and come on, they were pioneers, you know, to move on up here. And then some of them were like my Uncle Jason. They just wanted to get away from people. And Uncle Jason, when it got crowded in his house or in his town anywhere, he'd just go out and climb a mountain and sit down on a rock. And stay up there by himself you know. He couldn't stand people too much and I think there are a lot of mountain people like that. They just don't like a crowd.

Silveri: What opportunity for education was available to your father in Transylvania County?

Shuford: Well, I heard him tell about walking five miles to school. They went to school a few months, until the boys were needed on the farm. And, the education that meant most to him was on court day, he would go down to Brevard and hang around the court house. That was to look into all the lawyers. Even as a little fellow he was going to be a lawyer. And that, he got a pretty good education from that.

Silveri: How many brothers and sisters did he have?

Shuford: My father, he had one sister and four brothers I think.

Silveri: Okay, a family of six. So it's not terribly typical of the mountain families. They're usually twelve, ten or twelve. He was in a small family I think of mountain (inaudible).

Shuford: Well, you see his mother died. I guess she died of tuberculosis, I don't know. Anyway, out of some complication with child bearing. Anyway, she was a young woman. And then Grandpa Shuford married again and the Widow Jones already had her six, you know, and that made twelve. That's pretty good. But the family broke up. The Shufords moved off and moved out. And then the Jones's moved out as soon as they got old enough. And they weren't college people. They didn't go on to school. But my father did. He went to college, and his queer old uncle, Uncle Jason was the one that helped him through college, Emory and Henry.

Silveri: You mentioned Jones. This morning I interviewed a lady by the name of Dorothy Jackson and her mother was a Jones. I don't know if there's any relationship there. Martha Myra Jones. Does that name ring any bells?

Shuford: No, I knew one of the Jones family, Aunt Patsy. And my father, when we were little, he would take us out to see Aunt Patsy and Uncle Josiah. And I remember as a child Aunt Patsy was very generous, and she loved children and she would always have some treat for us, you know, a big apple or a stick of candy or something and we always liked to go out and see Aunt Patsy. Anyway, she was very funny talking and always made my father laugh and he enjoyed Aunt Patsy very much. And one time we were out there, one Sunday afternoon, and my brother and I hung around, we looked around you know, for everything, for the refreshments to come in and Aunt Patsy didn't make any move towards giving us a treat. And some other people came in and, four or five of them, and the whole crowd was talking you know. After this the crowd got up and left, well, Aunt Patsy trotted back to the pantry and came out with a big bowl of apples. And my father said, "well Aunt Patsy, it's not like you to serve refreshments at the end of a visit." And she said, "Well, I wasn't going to give my apples to all that crowd." My father laughed at her about that, so she gave my brother and me the biggest ones and Daddy got one, but the rest of them had to go home. That house was down there, a little frame house, and it was just taken down about twenty-five years ago. Right there on the edge of uh, across from Victoria Road. I guess maybe, St. Joseph Hospital took it over and took it down. It was a quaint little place. It had a porch all the way around it. Do you remember that? The Patsy Jones, I mean the Josiah Jones house out there.

Silveri: It's down around where the Smith-McDowell House is, isn't it?

Shuford: Well right, no, it was on Biltmore Avenue. It was right...

Sarah [?]: It had a porch all the way around it.

Shuford: Huh uh. And George and I would hang over the banisters, you know, until we got this bit of candy or apple. And then we started a little campaign to go on home. Aunt Patsy was entertaining, but finally we wanted to leave.

Silveri: I want to go back to you father's education. He ever tell you what kind of a school it was he went to?

Shuford: He went to Emory and Henry. Emory and Henry in Virginia.

Silveri: Before that, when he first went to school. Elementary school. Did he go to a one-room school?

Shuford: Why, I guess it was. I don't think he said much about it. Or his early school days. He often told us stories about Emory and Henry. The boarding house where he stayed there. And the boarding house keeper who was so close and that one of the professors, Emory and Henry professors was staying there the time he was. He just kept drinking coffee and drinking coffee until the old lady couldn't stand it anymore and finally she said, "You like coffee don't you sir?" And he said, "Yes, I do. If I didn't, I wouldn't drink so much water trying to get some."

Silveri: Your father's education up to high school took place in Transylvania County. He must have gone to a private high school, because I don't think there were any public high schools back then. It must have been some kind of academy. What do you think?

Shuford: I don't know what he attended, but he was ready for college, and Uncle Jason loaned him the money to go, helped him to go.

Silveri: Do you know why he selected that college, Emory and Henry?

Shuford: I think it's a Methodist school. And a...

Silveri: It's in Virginia right?

Shuford: Yes.

Sarah [?]: (inaudible)

Shuford: Emory and Henry. It's still going strong now isn't it?

Silveri: You said he always had determined at an early age he was going to be a lawyer.

Shuford: Well, he got sick. The Shufords, tuberculosis in the family, now that, that was really, and all through the mountains, it was really very great scourge. And he got sick while he was at school. In fact he had never been a very strong child, I don't think. Afterwards, one reason he remembered his step-mother so kindly because she was, she favored him, you know, she was good to him because he wasn't very strong. But he came home from college. I don't think he graduated or got a degree, but then he studied law with some lawyers, in Brevard and in Waynesville. Judge Ally I think was the one he studied with.

Silveri: So, he was at Emory and Henry, oh, about... 1875 he would be twenty years old, so in the early 70s he was up at that college right. He came back and read law at Brevard and then was admitted to the bar...

Shuford: Or in Waynesville. I don't know whether he read law with Brevard lawyers or not. But Judge Ally, I think lived in Waynesville. And then there was some lawyer named Leb that he was connected with, associated with, and then he got to be quite a prominent young lawyer in Western North Carolina. He was judge of the Superior Court and I think at the time he was judge, he was the youngest fellow who had ever been appointed, elected to that position. He was in his early thirties.

Silveri: A Democrat all his life?

Shuford: Yes.

Silveri: When did he marry your...?

Shuford: Mother, Mother. He was thirty-seven when he married. Mother was almost thirty. She was thirty the next, the next month. So he was... Well, she came up here to visit. He was in a law partner of Johnson. Colonel Tom Johnson, and the Johnsons owned most of Asheville and that property is still in their family. So he was the most eligible bachelor and mother was visiting Aunt Ella, who was Mrs. Johnson. And of course Aunt Ella brought Tom's law partner around to visit and to dinner. So that's where they met and where they knew each other.

Silveri: Your father's name was Tom?

Shuford: No, my father's name was George.

Silveri: George.

Shuford: But his law partner was Tom Johnson. Colonel Tom Johnson.

Silveri: And your mother was up for a visit to Asheville from Rome, Georgia. Okay let's go back to your mother's side now. What kind of education did she have an opportunity to achieve.

Shuford: Well, after the war, as soon as they could, in the early 1870's, some men in North Georgia got together and established Shorter College. A seminary for girls, and she went there. Her sister went there and graduated there. Her mother went there and graduated, but she was just sixteen or seventeen when she graduated, but it was the best that the state offered you know.

Silveri: And it was not too long after that that she got married? Or was it...

Shuford: Oh, well no, she didn't marry until she was almost thirty.

Silveri: Oh yeah, uh huh.

Shuford: And my father was a judge at that time and they, Sarah Jean, get the wedding pictures of Mother and Dad, they're sitting... they went to Cuba on their wedding trip. It's on the mantle in there. Wipe them off, I'm sure it's dusty.

Silveri: Did they have a very long courtship?

Shuford: Seven years. My father whenever he weakened, Mother came back to visit Aunt Ella again.

Silveri: What kind of man was your father? A good sense of humor?

Shuford: Oh, he did, a wonderful sense of humor. He was a very dignified person though. And, no, that's my brother and me. That's it. Here's his picture right there, it's... There's my mother there. That was in the last five years of her life I guess. There's another picture of her up there. That's my brother there. He was a Congressman for this district.

Silveri: We'll have to talk about him later. I wanted to ask you who uh, let's see, when your father became judge was he appointed or elected, back in those days? Did the Governor appoint him?

Shuford: No, I think he was elected. I'm pretty sure he was. Now, my brother was a judge too, he was a Superior Court Judge and he got, he was appointed. And then I don't know whether he ran for that position and was elected or not. He may have been. But he had his eye on Congress. He wanted to go to Congress, and he did. It was very satisfying to him.

Silveri: How many years did your father serve as judge?

Shuford: It wasn't too long. I'm not sure whether it was four or eight.

Silveri: Oh, eight years. And a Superior Court Judge, which meant he had to travel around the state.

Shuford: Yes. But mother, as a bride, went with him. She traveled around the state with him. And was always wined and dined everywhere she went. And one story she loved to tell was that, well, she was very pretty, don't you see, and quite young looking for a thirty year old bride, and one lawyer asked the Judge to come to diner and bring his daughter. And Mother just loved that. She told that always. Daddy didn't think much about it.

Silveri: Do you remember any stories you father told you about being the Judge? (inaudible).

Shuford: Oh, yes. And some that were told about when he was a bachelor. One... He was absent minded you know, and one my mother told was that Judge Shuford had invited her to go for a carriage ride, and something came up in his business... he was just terribly busy, and when the time come to take his girl out on the carriage ride, he just couldn't go, he couldn't leave his business. And so he took the carriage on down there, and then the driver (laugh) you know, and told him that she could go on and take the drive. She sent the carriage back with a very cool note. It said the pleasure of the drive was to be with him, you know. Well that hadn't occurred to him. He thought she'd go off and enjoy the afternoon. (laugh)

Silveri: I see why he didn't get married until he was thirty-seven.

Shuford: You can see why he had to marry someone like my mother. And then they told another story, only he was, um he took a young lady to the theater, and it was raining very hard. Well, Daddy was always awkward. He'd stumble over his feet with great ease, and then he just had one eye, and that made him even more awkward, you know. Well, he was putting out for this young lady and he got her out of the carriage, and he raised his umbrella and he was taking her into the theater, and as they walked down the aisle, people started to applaud, you know, and he just sort of puffed up. And he thought, well hell, they're applauding the judge coming in you know, and then he got down to the seat, and was showing her to her place, she looked up at him and said, "Judge Shuford, will you please take your umbrella down."

Silveri: When he was judge, we're talking about the 1880s, about, when he was judge?

Shuford: Well, he married... yes, he was judge in the 1880s. He was married, I guess it was '92. I'd have to get the Shuford's book. My brother was born in '95. He either married in '92 or '93. And they had a Christmas wedding, that... did you know Mr. Charlie Webb? He was my father's best man. They all went down to this plantation.

Silveri: He was the owner of the...

Shuford: of Citizen's Times, uh huh. Charlie Webb was courting my mother's step-sister. She was just a beautiful girl. And Daddy thought it'd be so convenient for Charlie to go down there, you know, because he was courting Aunt Lu. And so he asked Charlie to be his best man. So the bride, groom, and Charlie go down to Rome, Georgia and then they had a terrible storm, and terrible rain, and high water down there. The C- River always got out and spilled over fields you know. That high water was just something they lived with. And it was at Christmas time, and the last time I talked to Mr. Charlie Webb he was laughing about that. They were in

the old hotel there in Rome, Georgia waiting to, they had to go down to the plantation on a train. And the railroad tracks had been washed out. And he said they were sitting there in the lobby, and some people who had had too much Christmas came in, and one fellow had a whole bundle full of Roman Candles, you know how they went off shooting everywhere, and so the fire got a little bit low, and this drunk just picked up the Roman Candles and threw the whole bundle on the (laugh) on the fire. And then they started shooting off, and all the people darted and got under the furniture and under the chairs. He said it was the funniest thing he ever saw in his life. And the bridegroom got out of the way. And the next day they had to take all the relatives from Georgia down to the plantation, and Mr. Webb says that there was some old ladies, dear old souls, but very tottery you know, and they had to get them off of the freight train that went so far and take them around through the mud and put them on another freight train that had come up to meet them and take them on down to the plantation to the wedding.

Silveri: Your father kind of rolled the circuit as a Superior Court Judge, so he must of tried cases in all possible states, huh?

Shuford: Yup, I guess he did.

Silveri: Did he ever tell you any stories, well, did he ever handle any uh, any uh, well known cases. Any uh, that caught the attention of the newspapers.

Shuford: I'm sure he did, because I... he was sick in his last years and he got to be very deaf and he had to give up his court room practices because of his hearing. And uh, once I heard him talking to my mother about his business right at that moment and what it had been, and he said, "Well, when I was practicing law here in Asheville, there wasn't an important case in this part of the state that I wasn't on one side or the other." And Mother was one of those that said, "Well, you're doing all right now..." I remember she comforted him. And he said, well, he hadn't, he hadn't made it in his last years. He'd been sick too much. And mother said, "Well, you've got the two finest children in the world." So, who dreamed about going about anything else? That was her treasure she wanted and she thought that was enough for him to be satisfied with.

Silveri: Did he specialize in things? Was he a criminal lawyer? Or did he care?

Shuford: No, he did anything that came along, but he specialized, well they didn't have specialists then, anymore than they had specialists in medicine, you know. They did everything that came along. But land cases. Whenever he'd go on a lot about something, mother would say, "Well, you remember that mountain land you sold. And, well, there's no use to go into that anymore." And his last important case was a land case though. Mountain land. But he really didn't have the health to try that. He got my uncle from Rome, Georgia to come up and help him.

Silveri: When did your father die?

Shuford: He died in 1920.

Silveri: 1920. He was born in '55.

Shuford: Yeah, I think he was sixty-four. I had gotten through college, and I've always been very thankful that I could know him, that I was an adult when I knew him best, you know. I could really appreciate him, and appreciate his fine character.

Silveri: So, how many children did your mother and father have?

Shuford: Just two, my brother and I.

Sarah Jean:: Can I just ask, does the Superior Court Judge the whole state, or just Western North Carolina?

Shuford: I'm sure he went over the whole state because at that time now, well, my brother did too. He tried cases down in Raleigh and around, but I've heard him tell about cases down in the eastern part of the state down in there.

Silveri: (inaudible) I wanted to begin now with your own memory of things. You said you were born here in Asheville, on Orange Street?

Shuford: Yeah, and we moved up here, well you see there was a depression, or a panic we called it then in 1998[sic], do you remember about that panic?

Silveri: The Cleveland Panic of the 1890's? Is that it?

Shuford: Well, it hit Orange Street pretty hard. It was 1898 anyway and my father lost a lot of property, and other people lost a lot of property, and in the loss and the recovery, while he sold that corner lot. That was his lot... there were four houses down there on the corner of Orange Street and Merrimon. That was his place. He sold that and then Doctor Millard had this place, and Doctor Millard either sold it or lost it or anyway, made an exchange at that time, and he bought this place up here.

Silveri: Which is on what street?

Shuford: Orange Street.

Silveri: This is Orange Street. Oh, so were talking about a couple of blocks here.

Shuford: Yes. Yeah, this is my small territory. We were talking about how the birds and the fish map out the territory, you know. Well, I've mapped out min; it's just right around Orange Street. (Laugh)

Silveri: Where'd you first go to school?

Shuford: To the Orange Street School, which was right across the street.

Silveri: It's no longer there?

Shuford: No, it was torn down and they built the Claxton School. It stood vacant for some years and during the depression they had the, what do you call it? the we-piddle-around, the WPA. They had...

Silveri: What did you call it?

Shuford: We-Piddle-Around.

Silveri: We-Piddle-Around.

Shuford: They had sewing classes over there, and that was head quarters, you know for the WPA. Then they tore it down and put that state building there.

Silveri: And this was the elementary school, and you went to this school for how long? On Orange Street.

Shuford: I went there until I went to high school, and then I went to high school which was over there where the old David Millard High School, and that was torn down just recently. But the high school I went to was, it

had been the Asheville Female College, and that old building stood there vacant for years and then finally the City of Asheville took it over and made it into the high school. But it was a charming old building and they had a grove of pine trees there. And we got along fine, especially on the days that the furnace broke down, which was all the cold days, and we got a vacation. We got to come home. So we liked it pretty good.

Silveri: The Doctor Millard you talked about, that your father bought this house from, was the one the school was named after?

Shuford: Yes.

Silveri: The same one. This is quite a large house, isn't it? How many rooms does it have?

Shuford: Oh, about twenty I guess. Counting everything.

Silveri: Was it originally built as a private residence?

Shuford: Yes. It was built in about 1885 I think. Just after, when this section had recovered enough from the Civil War to put up a big house, you know. It wasn't a mansion. It was, but it was uh, it was as good as the people could stand at that time.

Silveri: Do you know who originally built the house? What the company was?

Shuford: No, I think it was Henry and Malone. They were contractors. And I don't know who lived here first, but it was already built when Doctor Millard bought it, and he had several boys. Well, the Charlton Millard Hotel was named for one of his boys.

Silveri: But you grew up in here.

Shuford: Yeah, I grew up here.

Silveri: And twenty rooms. You and your brother had twenty rooms to run around in, right?

Shuford: Oh, no. Mother, no no. Mother took boarders. And it was a boarding house, and that was what the young lady from Pippa Passes wanted to find out about. The boarding, early boarding houses in Asheville.

Silveri: Did she start carrying boarders in as soon as the house was bought?

Shuford: No, she started before that. She started having boarders as soon as my father lost a lot of money in the panic, you know. And she, oh well, they took in boarders because there wasn't any other place for people who came here to stay. Except in the homes of the people, in the larger homes, you know. And W.E. Shuford, do you know the Shuford family? John Shuford? W.E. Shuford came here as a young fellow, and he was my father's cousin and he was one of mother's first boarders. He came, just naturally came to stay with Cousin George, you know. And there was no other good place. And nobody had an apartment... rooms, they lived with the family.

Silveri: It must have been a fascinating atmosphere for children growing up, to meet all these people coming to live. Did you feel that way?

Shuford: Well, it was very satisfactory. My mother ran a very good place. It was just the home place, you know. Everybody was a star boarder here. My father especially. He was the star boarder. And then, well, I

guess it sort of taught my brother and me to behave, especially at the table, we had to, my little grandson says, "You want me to be a human being?" So mother always made us be human beings when at the table.

Silveri: How many, at capacity, how many boarders were in the house? Do you remember?

Shuford: Well, it just sort of depended on the season. In the summer, mother would stack them up. She really put them in here. And there were four big rooms upstairs, and one bedroom downstairs that she could take people in the house. And then she got rooms all over the neighborhood. Well, sometimes she'd have to have two dinners, or two meals served, and she'd have to serve the children first, which was alright with us. And then she'd have the grown people next, which was alright with the grown people, you know. And she had a marvelous cook: Lina Collins. And she had a marvelous garden. And this young lady from Kentucky asked what these summer boarders did for entertainment here. And I said, they came down, sat on the porch and waited for dinner to be hollered. It's all I ever saw them do. And after they got through with dinner, they sat around and waited for supper. Eating was entertainment. Mother never did anything to entertain them. They'd get up card games. Other women would have their embroidery, but these people would come up from Georgia, and Florida, and Mississippi, and they stayed all year. There's no air conditioning down there then you know.

Silveri: What would be the cost around the turn of the century for living here?

Shuford: Oh, five dollars a week, and then in the winter, mother had school teachers and business people. Because the summer crowd just moved out. As soon as school started down south, they had to all go. In the summer I guess she got ten. Eight, nine, ten or twelve. Something like that. Not too much. She stacked them up in the rooms, you know. They came here because it was reasonable... they could stay all summer. And they also came, and the people from Georgia, they came because there was a certain status, you know. Southern Aristocracy, they all stuck together. And they knew Julia Shuford, Julia Dean from Rome, you know, and Georgia. So, fellow birds of a feather flock together.

Silveri: That's interesting to hear you speak about, because what really comes to mind is what Tom Wolfe wrote about his mother's boarding house. (inaudible)

Shuford: I think that's why Mrs. Anderson was interested in the boarding houses. My mother ran a different sort of place. And we're a different set of people from Mrs. Wolfe. Well, that was a good... Thomas Wolfe's family, the Westalls were good people, you know. She was a Westall. And now Mrs. Annie Westall is one of my best friends. And the Westalls have a fine position in Asheville, but Mrs. Wolfe, she was just a little bit too stingy for them, you know. And she cut the corners too much. She had more working people. I don't know exactly what she did. To tell you the truth, I never read much of Tom Wolfe. No.

Silveri: You knew Mrs. Wolfe, didn't you?

Shuford: No, no I didn't know her. Tom Wolfe was a few years younger than I. And I was at away college when he was in high school. I might have known him. We might have gone to school together, but we didn't... Mother didn't know Mrs. Wolfe; Mrs. Wolfe didn't know mother. They didn't ever know each other. Though they lived right down there, you know. Mother was, her friends were in the Baptist Church or they were the first settlers of Asheville, you know. My father's friends and you see, he was a prominent lawyer before he married. And Mrs. Wolfe was scratching along, and her husband drank, and it was a very different kind of place.

Silveri: You mentioned Baptists. Was your family closely identified with the church?

Shuford: Well, my mother was. Well, I guess mother was a Baptist, and she wouldn't give up her church, and my father was a Methodist, and he used to say he was a low church Methodist, which meant that he was low down in the church. And his deafness kept him from going to church a great deal, but his nieces, who lived

with us, they went to the Methodist Church. And when my mother took George and me to the Baptist Sunday School, well, when George got to be a teen-ager, he didn't like the Baptist Sunday School, and he did like the Methodist Sunday school, and he liked Mr. Jones, who taught the teen-age boys. He thought that he was one of the finest men he ever knew, and the boys just adored him, and so he wanted to go with his "gang" to the Methodist Church, you know. And then my cousin Flora was going there, so he just went with Flora. And mother said alright, if he wanted to change, didn't want to go to the Baptist Church. But I stayed with mother. I stayed a Baptist. And then Shorter College was a Baptist school. I went to a Baptist school.

Silveri: What relatives lived right around in here? Or in Asheville, on both sides of the family?

Shuford: Well, none of mother's relatives. They were all down in Georgia, but W.E. Shuford's family lived here, and all the Transylvania Shufords were relatives. My grandfather had a family of seven or eight. I'd have to count them up to find out just who they were.

Silveri: So, you finished your uh, you finished at the Asheville High School, and where did you go from there?

Shuford: I went to Shorter College in Rome, Georgia. The same school my mother had gone to.

Silveri: Okay, was that a four year college?

Shuford: Yes.

Silveri: What were you majoring in there?

Shuford: I majored in chemistry and my minor was biology. In the sciences. I simply could not learn a language. I have a very poor memory and I never could learn the vocabulary. I went back and taught a year at Shorter College in uh, while I was there I assisted in the science department. But I also studied literature and history that year.

Silveri: Story about... Story your father told about a country lawyer, right?

Shuford: Well, he said, "Gentlemen of the jury, as the poet said, I forget what poet, but as he said, I forget what he said, but anyway, gentlemen of the jury, this fellow is innocent, just as that one was." So always when daddy got a little bit absent minded and couldn't remember names, he'd say, "As the poet said, and I forget which poet, but as he said, I forgot what he said, but anyway," and that's the way I am now. I cannot remember names, and who wrote that book? It's um, Mrs. Mary James brought it here for me to read. And I was much taken with it, because I thought that it was just first-hand history. He went through Georgia and South Carolina and part of North Carolina. And although he gave the North Carolinians a bad name; he said they were just the laziest, scrawniest people he had ever seen. That was in the Piedmont region, you know. And he didn't see the best of them. But anyway, there were some here that were like that, you know.

Silveri: You mentioned your father lost an eye.

Shuford: He lost an eye when he was a child.

Silveri: In an accident?

Shuford: No, I think it was some infection in his eye. And of course medical care, well, it just wasn't much of anything. And so he lost his eye in childhood.

Silveri: Let's go back to the... You decided you wanted to go to college. But had you thought of studying medicine before you went to college?

Shuford: Oh no, I didn't decide on going to college. I went to college as a matter of course. No one ever thought of anything except going on to college, you know.

Silveri: You mean back in those days...

Shuford: Well, in my days. And my father sent his nieces to college. And he made it very easy for them to get a good education. Her grandmother [Sarah Jean] was his niece and he put her through school. She went to Nashville, to, what's that school?

Sarah Jean: Vanderbilt

Shuford: Uh huh. It was Peabody then. Peabody.

Silveri: What year did you start at Shorter?

Shuford: 1914. I finished high school in 1914.

Silveri: So you went there without any thoughts of studying medicine.

Shuford: Well, I...

Silveri: Until later on, right?

Shuford: I was just going to study whatever they offered. And, but I had majored in science in high school, so I took all the chemistry and all the biology that they offered, and then what else they required. And they required some math, and I put up a fight against that. I said I'd already had it. Well, I don't think I had, but I talked the school, the president of the school into letting me go into second year math, see. Into calculus, that's what comes next? He wanted me to repeat the geometry. Well, I should have repeated it, because I didn't...I never... and I was good at math, and that made me, literally made me drop out of math. I never did do much math after that.

Silveri: When you finished, did you say you started teaching school?

Shuford: Well, no. I finished, I got through in, I went to summer school. To Chicago to summer school. Just because it was a good thing to do and lots of fun. And I thought I'd like to study in a big university. And the teachers I'd had had been to summer school in Chicago and talked a lot about it. So my room mate and I went up there to summer school. And then I came back to Shorter, and the first thing I knew I was just almost through my work at Shorter College. And by speeding up a little bit, I could get through in three years. And so mother urged me to do that. And I was having a good time down there and I was... I found a letter I wrote the other day about that, that I thought I just wouldn't get through in three years. I just sort of piddled along, you know. Tread water. And then stay with my class, and be with the girls I'd started and then loaf along, and not do much of anything, but to just have a good time. I wrote home, it's what I did to just have a good time down here next year. And she wrote back and said, "Well, I think, if you'll go on and get through this year, that I could manage to send you to the university in New York. To Columbia University. And you could..." "

Tape I, Side 2

Shuford: ...do graduate work there." Well, I just couldn't resist going to New York and doing graduate work. But then you see, that was 1917, and then there was first World War I. And that just complicated everything. And I dropped out in 1917-18. We couldn't manage it that year, but Mother and Dad wanted to go south for the winter. And I went south with them until I got back to Shorter College, and I got with my buddy-buddies down there, and my cousins, and got to having a good time again, and I decided I'd rather stay there. And I went out to teach at a country school. I learned more about poor white-trash Georgia, Georgia poor white-trash, than I'd ever known before. I'd never known people like that before. You know, the very poor.

Silveri: What year was this? This was 19...

Shuford: This was the spring of 1918.

Silveri: Okay.

Shuford: And then it was just so cold and so muddy out there in the country, that I came back to Shorter College to get a good hot bath. And I was there spending the weekend up at Shorter College, when the President offered me a position there as Assistant in the Science Department.

Silveri: I want to get back to your teaching in that spring. What was the place you taught at? What was the name of the school? Where was it?

Shuford: It was in North Georgia, and it was right in the middle of a corn patch. It was right in the middle of the mud, and it was close to Summerville, Georgia. And I forget the name of the little Post Office there. Sometimes... My cousin was teaching there and she needed an assistant, and since I was just hanging around doing nothing, she asked me to go out there and help her with it. So I did. And it was a very primitive school.

Silveri: Was it a one-room school house?

Shuford: Yes. She had her classes and I had my classes. She had the first, second, third class, because she said she needed work in the first, second, and third year. And I had the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade. Well, if those students learned anything, I don't know what it was. I learned that the school could burn down very easily, because one day the pipe slipped out, you know, and I looked up. The biggest boy in the room pointed it out to me, you know, and that pine wood around that pipe was just beginning to blaze up. And I didn't... I thought I'd rather teach at Shorter College. I couldn't climb up on the roof and put out a fire.

Silveri: So this was just for two months in the spring time that you taught there?

Shuford: Yes. And just to help Marion. But you know, that school was so bad. And the necessity was so great, that in the next year or two they had consolidated school and took all those kids to a good, big school building. And had a bus.

Silveri: How many children were in that school?

Shuford: Maybe twenty, something of the sort.

Silveri: What was wrong with it, that you say it was so bad?

Shuford: Oh, well the teachers were so bad. I didn't know how to teach five grades all at one time, you know. And the time was so bad. The children, some of them, got there at seven o'clock and they stayed until after five. They'd come up and talk to the... read the lessons before the teacher at seven o'clock and then hang around until five. And Marion didn't know anything about teaching school.

Silveri: I imagine the pay was very low if (inaudible) school.

Shuford: Yeah, I think I made about twenty dollars out of it, but it was the first money I had earned. I was quite pleased with it. Gave me a little spending money down there to plunk around at Shorter. But then I went to teach science, assistant in the science department, and my pay there was, Dr. Van Husten said, "Well, you can have free tuition if anything, your room and board and your tuition if you want to study anything else." Well, I'd rather do that than do nothing. And so I studied English, and literature, and history. And piano, I tried to learn the piano. I thought I'd see if I could, if it was possible for me to learn to play the piano, and I found out something and I learned it good, and that was that I could not learn it. (Laugh) I could not play and I did not have any skill in my hands and I never tried to play anything after that.

Silveri: Um, I'd like to talk a little bit about the first World War. What was the reaction in the family about that war, having the German background?

Shuford: Oh, we had forgotten the German background for a long time. That was just, we were Americans you know. And my father's mother was of English decent. Mother's people were English now; English and Irish, and everything. We were really just Americans. No, we had no feeling against the German background. In fact my father said, my ancestors had sense enough to get out of Germany. They left there because they didn't like the military system. And I think Brach's family did the same thing. They came over to America because they didn't want that militarism of that period, you know. Back in the early 1700s. I forget which war it was they were fighting. Before all that time, it was the Hundred Years War, or the next Hundred Years War. They always had a war going on.

Silveri: Do you remember whether the war had very much of an impact on your family or Asheville or...?

Shuford: Oh, it had a tremendous impact on my family because my brother was in his senior year at the University of Georgia, studying law, and he had to go in the spring of 1917. And he didn't even get back to the graduation exercises at the University of Georgia and the University gave him his degree. He trained down at Greenville and he trained at Camp Gordon, close to Atlanta. So we were very much involved by it. And then all the other young fellows, boys that we'd been in high school with, they all had to go. It didn't really affect my father and mother much, by that time mother had given up the boarding house and she'd rented the house out. So we weren't living here.

Silveri: How long did you spend as an assistant there at Shorter College?

Shuford: Just that first spring. The spring term. I didn't think I was very good at it, but they had a very good teacher who directed the work.

Silveri: And then you went back to the college, and you became an assistant after college.

Shuford: Yes.

Silveri: And how long was that?

Shuford: Well, that was just the spring term. I finished out that spring term. Mother and dad, we started south after Christmas. Oh, that winter in 1917 and early 1918. It was the worst the South had ever had. And all those boys out there in camp and in tents, you know. And we stopped by to see George, who was at the camp at Greenville. The grapevine told it that some boys froze to death down there that winter. It was just a terrible winter. They'd had enough war by the time they had gotten into it, really.

Silveri: Did George go into France?

Shuford: Yes. And all that graduating class, he went into officer training class, you see, right from college. And he came back as a first lieutenant and went in as a second lieutenant. He said he would have been made captain in the next two weeks, but the war closed. I guess the Germans heard that he was going to be promoted, and that was too much for them.

Silveri: He came back unscathed?

Shuford: Yes. Except emotionally. I don't think any of those men ever got over it.

Silveri: Well, what did you do then?

Shuford: Oh, I went on to Columbia University, as I had planned. I was just a year late. But Mother promised that I could go on and do graduate work. So, I went on up to Columbia University.

Silveri: Graduate work in Chemistry?

Shuford: I did work in Bacteriology. And then I, I hadn't known much about hospitals or laboratory work, but then I got into hospital work, and I studied to be a laboratory technician, you know. And Mother and Dad came up there. We took an apartment, and they came up there and stayed with me that winter. And I was still writing a thesis when they wanted to come home in the spring, and so I stayed on in New York and finished my work up there, and then I came home and opened a laboratory here in Asheville. Had my own laboratory.

Silveri: You had, you completed a master's degree, or you had a master's degree...?

Shuford: In bacteriology.

Silveri: You came back to Asheville to open a lab. And where was that located?

Shuford: It was in the Coxe building right there where the craft shop is, you know, and the... What else is in there? There's a florist shop in there now, and Dr. Glenn [E. B. Glenn] and Dr. Cotton [C. E. Cotton], and who else. Dr. Higgs and Dr. Meriwether [B. M. Meriwether]. Four Doctors had their offices in there and I took the back room to make that into a laboratory. And there's another firm of doctors. Dr. Smith, Bernard Smith [B. R. Smith], and Dr. Lynch [J. M. Lynch], and Dr. Adams [J. L. Adams] were all on the other side. Well, I cut a door between those two offices and I had to work from those two sets of doctors, you know.

Silveri: What year was it that you opened your lab?

Shuford: About 1919 I guess.

Silveri: There was a flu epidemic then, wasn't there?

Shuford: That was in '18.

Silveri: '18. You remember that?

Shuford: Yeah. My mother came on up to New York, and Dad was to come up later. He wrote her that he was going to get out of here. Everybody in Asheville was dying of influenza, and he thought he'd just leave Asheville. Well, he got up to New York, and it was just terrible in New York, you know. But none of us had it. I didn't have it, and George didn't have it in France. None of us Shufords had it. But it was pretty rugged up there.

Silveri: For how long did you have your lab operating in Asheville?

Shuford: Later, when I went back in 1922 I guess, I went back to study medicine. After I did laboratory work, then I knew what I wanted to do. I wanted to study medicine. And my father was, encouraged me in it. In fact, he gave me the idea first. He said, "If I had the money, you might as well be a doctor instead of fooling along with this sort of thing, you know. If I had the money, I'd put you through medical school."

Silveri: How'd your mother feel about it?

Shuford: Well, after him she said, you piddle around, you know. A PhD., your "Pencil Hanging Down." But she was willing, and my brother objected more than anyone, for my studying medicine and going off to medical school, you know. And he said, "Well, why don't you just stop her? Tell her she can't go." And mother said, "I wouldn't do that. I don't know what it means to her."

Silveri: What was the reason for your brother being opposed to it?

Shuford: Because other girls didn't do it. And he was willing for me to live in his home and we were... My mother and George were living here. George got married in '22. Married the first time. I don't know why he was opposed to it, except that he'd just sort of been chronically opposed to everything I did all my life. (Laugh)

Silveri: He was practicing law in Asheville then?

Shuford: Yes, because he came home after the war and he worked for Sarah Jean's grandfather for just about six months. But he didn't like having a boss. He'd studied law, and he decided then he'd go on into it. Practicing law. He went back down to the University and studied up a bit, and passed his law exam, opened his office here.

Silveri: So, you made up your mind; you wanted to study medicine. You then entered Columbia University for school?

Shuford: Yes. That was about 1922, I guess.

Silveri: Were there any women doctors in Asheville?

Shuford: Yes, Dr. Margery Lord was here. [Dr. Margery Lord, City Health Officer for fifteen years from 1939-1954] And an eye specialist had been here. Dr. Merrimon. She fitted my first glasses when I was just a little girl. It wasn't striking out for woman's liberation at all, not at all. I studied medicine because I was interested in it. Because it was a challenge, and I wanted to know. I'd study a science now because I want to know.

Silveri: Was Dr. Sprinza Weizenblatt practicing here?

Shuford: She came here when I was away at medical school. [Dr. Weizenblatt is listed in the 1930 Asheville City Directory].

Silveri: You got to know here later on.

Shuford: Oh, very well.

Silveri: Maybe we can stop a while and talk about Asheville in those years, before you went to medical school. What kind of a town was it?

Shuford: Well, it was just a nice Southern town. With the difference, there were the tourists here. The summer people who came every summer. But I remember as a girl at high school, the whole vacation, I just went from party to party. Everyday there was a card party or a dance or something. Just a gay time. And Mother didn't expect anything else.

Silveri: You said that the difference is that it was a tourist area in the season, so you had an influx of people from different parts of the country which made Asheville kind of more of a cosmopolitan city than other southern cities.

Shuford: Yeah, but in this place here, our home, we had the summer boarders. And we had some very delightful friends that came back here year after year. And we had some very delightful friends, I still keep in touch with them, that just lived here with us.

Silveri: Was there much hiking in the mountains in Asheville?

Shuford: Well, yeah. That was our chief fun for the high school gang. My brother and me, we went on camping trips. One of our favorite places to go was Craggy, to see the rhododendron in bloom. And I've got some very funny pictures of all of us, those young high school students. All that crowd, they're all getting old, those that are not gone, you know. I don't know how many of the oldsters of Asheville you know.

Silveri: The names, the names would be popping up, the family names. Did you have any difficulty when you applied to Columbia University, to enter for medical training, because you're a women?

Shuford: No, they were taking ten percent, and I had studied bacteriology there, and I had done very well in it. And I studied something that I could learn, I avoided anything I couldn't learn. So I did very well, working for my master's degree. And so when I wanted to go back, I just went; registered and went. But I didn't enter the medical school right at once, because I went back and they wanted me to repeat the bacteriology that I had had. And I didn't do, I didn't want to do that. So I just selected the courses that were necessary, you know, that would have been first year medicine. And I talked to Dr. Zinsser, Hans Zinsser, did you have know his book? He wrote As I Knew Him. ["biography of a bacillus," first published in 1934] But he was a bacteriologist and a very brilliant fellow, and a very charming fellow, and very good story teller. And all of that made him a good teacher. And I consulted him on whether I should work for a PhD. in Bacteriology, or whether I should study medicine. And he said, "Well, study medicine. If you work for a PhD. in Bacteriology you have to take all those medical courses anyway." You have to have the medical knowledge. All that the doctors know, you'd have to know. And you wouldn't have any degree, and your work would be limited, you know, to teaching or research. But if I had an MD degree, I just could have clinical work and do what I please.

Silveri: You spent four years at Columbia Medical School?

Shuford: No, I went there two years, and then I wanted to go on, be allowed to go on and take advanced studies. Well, they had a law in New York that you had to have five years, I think, between the time you registered in a medical school and the time you graduated. It was either five or four. Anyway, it was a certain number of months. Well, I would have gotten through again before that time was out, if they gave me credit for my bacteriology. Well, they had to do that, because I had specialized in that, you know, but they wouldn't give me credit for that time. And so I said, if I just have to mark time up here, then I'd rather go to Europe and do something else. And... that's a little more fun than just hanging around a laboratory, you know. So that's just what I did. I went to... And when I was in Europe, I went to the University of London and studied medicine there. But the medical school didn't compare with what we had in the United States, so I just threw that up.

Silveri: What years were you at Columbia, for the medical school?

Shuford: '22, '23, '24. And in the fall of '24 we went to Europe. And we were over there in '25. '24 and '25. We spent a year in Europe. Well, I dropped all the studies, and we just traveled. We went to Switzerland, Spain and...

Silveri: Well, before you did that though, you had already qualified for the medical degree, except for taking the exam?

Shuford: No, I just had two years. But I had transferred then, and I applied for internships at the University of Chicago and they accepted me in 1924. I was telling Sarah Jean this last night. And they accepted me to enter the school the last, the clinical years, in 1924. Well, I wrote them and told them, "I have an opportunity to go to Europe, and spend a year in Europe, and could they just delay that and let me enter the next fall?" And the dean wrote me and said, "Yes, that there's a possibility that there won't be an opening at that time, but if there is... then I would still be accepted." And he said, "When you come back, we will be glad to see you." So, I got into Asheville, and I wrote them that I wanted to go, and he wrote back that there were no vacancies. That I couldn't come. And so I went anyway. And I got there, with that little letter he had written me, you know, and I went in to see him and asked him if there wasn't, by some chance, some women who had dropped out. Well, by chance there had been. And he said, "I guess we could take you, but you see here I," he read the letter, you see, "here, what it says is that there's a possibility that you wouldn't be admitted." And I said, "I didn't pay any attention to that paragraph. I think I read the last paragraph that said, 'When you come back, we will be glad to see you.'" (Laugh) And he had to laugh. And I think that's what got me in.

Silveri: But the interesting thing is that both of these medical schools had quotas for women. Ten percent at Columbia and Chicago also had a quota too. Which is interesting because it's an indication that they still weren't completely open to the fact of women in medical classes. In other words, accepting anybody who's qualified, regardless of sex.

Shuford: No, they didn't do that. No, it was ten percent, and Harvard did the same thing. They permitted ten percent. But in England there were more women than men in some of the classes. And certainly there were fifty percent, of the student body was women.

Silveri: Did you take every class that was open to any other student in medical school? In other words, I've read stories where some of the medical schools, the women were not allowed in with the male students in terms of the urology classes. Did you ever encounter anything like that?

Shuford: Oh no, we just went, kind of right along with the rest of them. I didn't feel at all like there was any prejudice against me for being a woman or that... that wasn't even a handicap. As I say, they said honorary throughout. It was just taken over by the Jews and the Blacks and the women.

Silveri: Well, while you were at medical school did you make a determination to what kind of practice you wanted to get into as a doctor? Or what kind of specialty?

Shuford: Well, general medicine. What I had planned to do, and what I hoped to do, I would be associated with the university and I could then have researched and teaching and clinical work. Those three things. And I applied for an internship at the New Billing Hospital, which was the University of Chicago, and it had just opened up. I was one of the first students, the first year they had internships there. And I just lived in the hospital. I applied there and got the position. But I got sick. Always the Shufords have to poop out a little bit. And I got sick and had to come home; I did come home. But even then it was right satisfying. They didn't accept my resignation, they gave me a leave of absence.

Silveri: Did you finish the internship?

Shuford: No, I came home. That was in 1928. And I was sick for, for a long time. And I wrote them in and when I saw I was going to be sort of feeble and couldn't stand up to the work as an intern. I wrote them in and resigned. And then later, when I wanted to go back, the depression was on. You couldn't get in a hospital, you couldn't work for nothing, you couldn't do anything. So I just stayed in Asheville. And here I am. My story, I don't believe that's of much universal interest you know, my illness. In fact, I've kept quiet all these years about not being too strong because if your doctors sick that, nobody wants a sick doctor, you know. They don't come to me to hear about my ailments. They want to tell theirs. So I never, even when I was in the hospital I wouldn't let it be publicized. People, I was just out of town, you know. I didn't want the name of being sickly. And I still don't because I'm still seeing patients over here. I'd like them feel that I'm, well, they can see me walk and be sort of lame, but they don't know just how lame, you know, or how incapacitated I am, or how not being capable now of getting around and taking care of them. I just have to tell them I can't do that work. They'll just have to go to a different doctor.

Silveri: When you were away studying, did you miss the mountains? Were you anxious to get back?

Shuford: I was so interested in what I was studying and the work that I was doing and humping along trying to get through medical school, no, I didn't miss the mountains much. I didn't miss Asheville much. I planned not to live here. I planned to live either in New York or Chicago. I planned to live close to a large university.

Silveri: Well, when you did come back home, it was 1928 or '29, came back home, and you rested for quite awhile here and then, when did you begin to pick up and decide to go take your medical board?

Shuford: I couldn't get into practice, back into practice for six years. But I had finished, before I had finished, at the University of Chicago, you had to have a year's internship before you got a degree, and I went from February to August interning at the Billings Hospital and then I just couldn't go on anymore. I was sick and told them I would resign, and come home and start over again sometime. And Dr. McLane, head of the hospital said, "well, we'll give you a leave of absence." Which I thought was very nice of him, and something of a compliment. Quite a compliment because he wanted me to come back and finish my (inaudible) there. Well, you see, I was exactly where I wanted to be. I was connected with the University Hospital, I would have had clinical work, I would have had research work, I would have had frequent vacations and time off. It wouldn't have been such a heavy load to carry, you know, like a practice where you had to support the whole hospital, and support your office and support your nurse, and support everybody you saw.

Silveri: Well, were you already, when, did you have to pass your board before you become an intern?

Shuford: No.

Silveri: Oh I see.

Shuford: You could pass some of them. But I didn't. I was waiting until I got through to take them all in North Carolina, all in where ever I was going to be, take it all at one time. And well, I was sick for two years and really couldn't work in that time. And when I came up for air, depression was on. You couldn't find place. And I wrote back to the University, well when I saw that I wasn't getting well in a hurry I wrote back to the University and resigned, which was a big mistake because then when I was better, and during the depression, I wrote them and then they said, well there was no place for me then at that time. And there I was without any internship, and I had to finish a year's internship before I got my medical degree. Before I could get my North Carolina license.

Silveri: Well, when did you do that?

Shuford: 1934. And I interned in a private hospital here, Northern Hospital, and it wasn't accredited, and they'd never give me credit for an internship in a place that small, but I just wrote them, and that was all I could get

and if they wouldn't give me credit for it, well, I just practice medicine without it. I couldn't... I'd do some scientific work without it. And so, I usually have pretty good luck if I write a letter. And they accepted that. I meant to break their hearts, you know, tell them I've been sick now for five years and couldn't get started and the depression's on and I couldn't get a hospital place and the University was helpless to get a hospital place for me and this was the best I could do. Well, they said alright. And they did, they gave me my degree after I finished a year at the Northern Hospital.

Silveri: And that was in 1934 and then you immediately went to take your medical boards in North Carolina?

Shuford: Yes, and that's when I knew (inaudible: Irma Henderson?). We went down there together. And Irma was so (inaudible) and did so well and she was just beating all the boys. And I just couldn't pass that anatomy, not to save my life, and so, well I guess... well you got to use your wit if you're getting through this world, so a very kind professor came by me and I said, "Well, it's been a long time since I've had this" or something to this effect. And I said, "I've been sick and I haven't been able to keep up with this medical work, but I passed it alright at the University, you know. And he took... the more I look at that anatomy exam, the sicker I got too. And he took a long look at me and he said, "well, you don't look very well." So I passed it because I didn't look very well.

Silveri: You hung out in Shingles then, in '34 or '35?

Shuford: In '35 I think I opened up my office. But it was awfully hard to get started because it was during the depression and, well, I couldn't get work anywhere. I wasn't known here as a physician. And that was a small hospital, and small private hospital that I'd worked in. They had no room for another physician on the staff. And Dr. Ingrathaw(???), Louise Ingrathaw, was really very friendly and helped me. But what I did, I'd been a laboratory technician before, so I opened up a laboratory first and to be sure that I'd have enough money to make it on I asked around to see several doctors. And they paid me so much a month to do all their work, no matter what it was. It wasn't on a fee basis. They just guaranteed me so much work a month. And I got started like that. But then, you can't do two things. As soon as people started coming to me as patients, the doctors didn't want me to do their laboratory work. And I can understand that. I couldn't do both. I either had to specialize in pathology, in the laboratory work, or I had to be a physician. Well, I wanted to be a physician. I didn't want to do the laboratory work. I studied medicine to get out of that.

Silveri: And how long was it before you could be a full time physician?

Shuford: Well, in a year or so, I think I stayed in that laboratory, maybe I would say two years, and then Louise Ingrathaw said she couldn't work, she couldn't work very hard and if I'd come and do her laboratory work, she would give me, let me have part of her office, and she didn't want, there was (inaudible) during the day, and she wasn't there, and when she wasn't there, I could see patients. And then anything that she didn't want, she turned my way, which, that was the way to get started, you know.

Silveri: Where was your office located?

Shuford: At that time, it was in the, well, I started the laboratory in the Flat Iron building because there were physicians there who gave me work to do and then I went to the... [tape stops]

Silveri: We were talking about where your office was after the Flat Iron building.

Shuford: Oh, I moved to the Haywood building with Dr. Ingrathaw and after she had to retire, the firm she was with, other doctors from that office wanted the whole office, so I moved farther down the hall in the Haywood building and then I moved to the Arcade building. Then war was declared and the government took over the Arcade building for the (inaudible) and then I moved up to the Weaver building and there I stayed until 1962.

Silveri: What was Asheville like during the depression years? Did it hit bad?

Shuford: It hit very bad. The Central Bank failed. All the banks were closed except for the Wachovia. And the city of Asheville had money in the Central Bank and nobody got a dime from that bank. And it was a very sad time, and we hadn't gotten over it yet. There was eight million dollars lost I think. Well, that was a hard blow for a town. And the Mayor committed suicide and the banker that lived on this street committed suicide and I think there was one or two others. I don't know. At that time I was in New York. I was spending a few months in New York and didn't hear about it. Mother wrote me about it and said, "it's so sad here. I'm glad you're up there and not here to know about all of them." Failure and trouble.

Silveri: It was bad in New York too.

Shuford: Well , it was bad everywhere.

Silveri: Everywhere, yeah. Well, then you came back and sat tight and began your medical career, wouldn't you say, it was just a bad time to begin anything. But fortunately, as a physician, you could, you're self employed. You could begin a practice without depending on anyone else. You didn't have to go anywhere to look for a job. People would come to you in need of medical assistance.

Shuford: Well, that's where Louise Ingrathaw helped me. She had to retire, her health was poor, and, but before she retired, if there was anything that was very hard, or that she didn't want to do, she'd turn it over to me. And the first thing she turned over to me was at six in the morning, a colored girl had phoned her that she had a very bad pain, was nauseated (inaudible) very sick. And the lady she worked for said she was extremely sick and would Louise come to see her. Well Louise phoned me and said, "well, here's a case for you. You can go to see this girl." And she was in the servants room, she spent the night there, in her employer's home. So I went out to see her, inexperienced as I was, it was appendicitis or (inaudible) it was easy to tell. Then I tried to get in the hospital here in Asheville, and that's another story. I didn't want to give up my entire practice right at the hospital door and that's what it would have been, because the colored people could get in the hospital if they had the money to pay but they didn't have a dime.