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4-21-1975

## Interview with Mary Denny Matthews

Mary Denny Matthews

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**LOUISE PETTUS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS  
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**Interview #016  
MATTHEWS, Mary Denny**

**MATTHEWS, Mary Denny**  
Class of 1919, Winthrop Employee

*At Winthrop:* 1915-1919, 1920-1942  
*Interviewed:* April 21, 1975  
*Interviewer:* Ann Yarborough Evans  
*Index by:* Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard  
*Length:* 01:03:26

Abstract: In her April 21, 1975 interview with Ann Yarborough Evans, Mary Denny Matthews shares her experiences as a student from 1915-1919 and her career at Winthrop from 1920-1942. Matthews lends stories of student life and how WWI shaped Winthrop. Matthews also explains why she decided not to teach and instead have a career at Winthrop. Matthews concludes her interview with details on the strike at Winthrop for equal pay for women. This interview was conducted for inclusion into the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections Oral History Program.

Keywords: WWI, Great Depression, Practice Teaching, Winthrop Training School, Rules and Regulations, Railroad tracks on campus, Artist Courses, Clubs

**Interview Session (April 21, 1975): Digital File**

**Time      Keywords**

00:00:00 *Start of Interview*/Interviewer's Introduction

00:00:20 *Question:* Why Winthrop? *Answer:* Won a state scholarship from Aiken County. MM admitted late. MM says students' social life was built around World War I. Tatler was affected by the war. Students wrote letters to soldiers.

00:02:38 *Question:* Clubs? *Answer:* Literary societies. Smaller clubs in the dorms. Students traveled by train. MM recalls train rides. D.B. Johnson used to take students to the state fair. "Big Thursday." A crew from the dining room served dinner on the train.

00:07:24 [no question] Nature on campus. Students had to sign in and out of campus. Street cars in Rock Hill. Recalls a story about having to push the street car. Chaperone hired for the campus – kept an eye on the students. Senior year – practice house. Home Economics students had to manage a house – housekeeping, cook, budgeting, and

morning watch. Students had to learn how to milk – all students.

- 00:13:30 [no question] Students in the practice house would go to the attic at night. MM refers to pictures – train leaving for the state fair. Blue Line photos. Sophomore Classes Night – students dressed like faculty members.
- 00:18:30 [no question] Thanksgiving dinner on campus. MM had to take minutes at Board of Trustees meetings. A big topic at a meeting was whether or not students were required to eat meals at assigned times. MM describes foods – bananas with mayo and peanuts. Rules and regulations: students couldn't keep lights on after a certain time – night matron kept tabs on students.
- 00:23:50 [no question] Professor Tommy Thompson. Remembered students' birthdays. MM taught phonics and English.
- 00:29:30 [no question] Sunday night chapel was required. Students didn't want this to be a requirement.
- 00:31:30 [no question] Teaching third grade at Winthrop Training School. Daisy Chain. Pageants.
- 00:35:20 [no question] MM decided to not teach. MM not comfortable disciplining students. Jobs were opening for women. Assistant bookkeeper at Winthrop.
- 00:40:35 [no question] Another job: administering loan funds.
- 00:43:24 *Question:* Worked at Winthrop during the Depression? *Answer:* Yes. MM worked in the business office. Winthrop had more students, so more office help was required. MM describes her work. Carnegie Foundation.
- 00:47:40 [no question] Commencement. Parents came by train and stayed in the dormitories.
- 00:48:20 [no question] Rainy Sundays. MM recalls looking at old newspapers for amusement. Ida Jane Dacus.
- 00:50:30 *Question:* Faculty/staff functions? *Answer:* Reception for new faculty. Artist Courses. Receptions held after Artist Courses.
- 00:52:30 *Question:* Effect WWI had on Winthrop? *Answer:* MM speaks from a student's perspective. Refers to the 1918 and 1919 Tatlers. Patriotism.
- 00:54:00 *Question:* War effort on campus? *Answer:* Students helped make bandages.

00:54:50 *Question:* Women in managerial positions? *Answer:* In 1921, MM was promoted to secretary to the Board of Trustees. Female department heads weren't making the same amount as their male counterparts. Female department heads decided to strike. The male department heads argued that they had families to support. Female department heads argued they were helping their parents. Leader of the female department heads was relieved of her duties. No tenure. Dr. Joynes gave money to build Joynes Hall, so Winthrop teachers would have a place to live.

01:00:10 [no question] Continues talking about teachers who were fired. St. Michael's Church in Charleston. Charleston trip. s

01:03:26 *End of interview*