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Interview with Peggy Hunter

Peggy Hunter

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Hunter, Peggy
Undergraduate alumna from the Department of Education.

At Winthrop: (Undergraduate) 1968-1971
Interviewed:  June 19, 2013
Interviewer:  Martha Manning
Index by:   Ismail Lee
Length:  32 minutes 49 seconds

Abstract: In her June 2013 interview with Martha Manning, Peggy Hunter detailed her thoughts and memories of her experience here at Winthrop. Hunter spoke of the time period 1968-1971 with an emphasis on the follow topics: Student teaching, Winthrop traditions, and college life from the perspective of a non-traditional college student. Hunter also discussed how Winthrop’s student teaching program had prepared her for a career in teaching. Hunter gives praise as she reminisce and reflect on how Winthrop has grown. This interview was conducted for inclusion into the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections Oral History Program.

Keywords: Student teaching, Coeducation, Integration, Traditions, microfiche, student life, General education, PE requirements, placement test, NTE, Cultural events, Cadet, College Professors, Strom Thurmond, tuition

Interview Session (June 19, 2013): Digital File

Time  Keywords
00:00:00  Start of Interview/Interviewer’s Introduction: We’re here today to conduct an oral history interview with you and it’s being conducted at the Louis Pettus Archives and Special Collections. I am Martha Manning, the one doing the interview. It’s now 3 o’clock and it’s June 19, 2013.

00:00:29  Question: The interviewee is… Answer: Peggy Hunter.

00:00:33  Question: And you are from? Answer: Rock Hill, South Carolina.

00:00:37  Question: Good. Before we get started with things that you will be saying, I want you to be sure that you know you’re being recording. Answer: Yes.

00:00:46  Question: Do you give your permission? Answer: Yes.
00:00:48 **Question:** Good. Peggy, why did you decide to come to Winthrop? **Answer:** My main objective was to be a teacher.

00:01:02 **Question:** You love children? **Answer:** Yes, and I did not start Winthrop right out of high school. I married and had a child. When I started Winthrop I had a three year old daughter. I knew I wanted to teach and I wanted to finish Winthrop. I wanted to start teaching when she started 1st grade, so I only had three years to do it in.

00:01:23 **Question:** What years were you here? **Answer:** '68 and finished in '71.

00:01:30 **Question:** You got student teaching in and everything in that length of time? **Answer:** I did summer school both summers and carried the max during the summer. I think I carried 18 hours, not 18 hours; I carried two classes and PE class during the summers. I carried 18 hours each semester other than my first semester.

00:01:56 **Question:** You must have gotten a lot of help from home. **Answer:** I did, my mother in law took care of Beth, my daughter, while I was in school. Well, we worked it out. Butch was on 2nd shift so he had her in the mornings and Butch’s mother had her in the afternoons, so that way I could study.

00:02:15 **Question:** How old was she? Three you said? **Answer:** Three when I started and after about a year Butch’s mother couldn’t keep her anymore, so there was a lady up the street from us that kept mostly teachers’ children, Inez Campbell, and she started keeping Beth. She would keep her all day.

00:02:36 **Question:** So you could study? **Answer:** So I could go to classes and then have study time.

00:02:42 **Question:** Did you have to take any kind of entrance exam or anything like that to be accepted here? **Answer:** When I had finished high school I had already done my SAT, and I had not been out of high school—it was still valid, so I did not have to do that again, but you know, when you start, and I guess they still do, we would take tests like math tests to see where we could be placed. I was going to have to—then you had to have a foreign language and French was mine, so I had to take a test for that. I think there was also an English test that we took and that was just to help put you in the right class.

00:03:24 **Question:** To put you where you would function well? **Answer:** Right.

00:03:27 **Question:** Good. OK I’m skipping some of these questions because you didn’t live on campus. **Answer:** No.
00:03:35  Question: OK, did you ever see the annuals from the early Winthrop days when they wore the uniforms? Answer: I had seen some of the pictures, but I don’t know that I ever sat down and went through an annual.

00:03:49  Question: Do you think you would have liked to have worn those? Answer: No [laughter], when I started Winthrop we were just—women were—just beginning to wear pants. That was in ’68, that was becoming acceptable then and so—

00:04:05  Question: In an earlier interview they couldn’t even wear pants to class. Answer: Right, and while I was at Winthrop men started taking classes.

00:04:16  Question: How did you feel about that? Answer: I thought it was great because you know with me if I had not had a local college it would have been really difficult for me to go back to school at that stage. The men that were coming at that time were men mostly who work and are already in a profession or had a job so—and this was right after integration too. I had not gone to elementary school or high school during integration so you know those were two new things to me. I think with my being here during—after, well integration had already started and you know it was smooth then, but I think that certainly helped me when I started teaching.

00:05:05  Question: Because you had already experience it? Answer: Right, it was the norm to me when I started teaching.

00:05:15  Question: Do you have any remembrance of people talking about the Blue Line on Sunday morning, getting ready for church? Answer: Yes, that was a Rock Hill tradition forever and I remember hearing talk about that and I think then they would go to one church and even later, and I was trying to think of when I started if—they didn’t have the Blue Line, but they had—and then they would just drop off to various churches.

00:05:44  Question: To which denomination they were? Answer: Right.

00:05:47  Question: Were students required to go to church? Answer: When I was at Winthrop they weren’t, but I imagine that when they had the Blue Line they probably were because they had a lot of, you know…

00:06:00  Question: And they were inspected. They wanted to have a good image in the public. Answer: Right, and since it was an all-girls school, you know, the image was even more important I think.

00:06:16  Question: You said you took PE in the summer. Did you have to change into PE clothes? Answer: Oh yes, we had our outfits, and when I started Winthrop they still had the rule that you had to be able to swim to come to Winthrop and so I could not
swim. So, I had to take swimming with Ms. Upchurch and to me that was the hardest class I took at Winthrop was swimming.

00:06:46 Question: Were you afraid of the water? Answer: I wasn’t really afraid of the water; I just had never been in really deep water and so—but I did, I learned to swim.

00:06:59 Question: I don’t think I would have gotten my diploma. Answer: I got my beginners button in swimming, but um…

00:07:07 Question: Tell me about the swimming suit you wore. Answer: We could wear our own swim suits, but we had to—and I can’t remember what the shorts and the top looked like, but I’m sure they weren’t flattering, but we did. I would come from Withers building over to Peabody then to swim. Then, after swimming class, I would have to come back across to Withers for another class because I had classes. I usually had my classes back to back so I would have free time to study. When it got to being October/November it was tough to have to get—

00:07:45 Question: To have to get there fast. Answer: To get there fast because I think we had maybe 10 or 15 minutes to change.

00:07:49 Question: To change clothes and everything? Answer: And to get to class.

00:07:52 Question: And you were walking? Answer: Actually, I was driving. Then, there were a lot more parking places on campus so I could generally find a parking place close and I think I was only stopped once for speeding and he let me go [laughter] because I told him, you know, I just got out of swimming and I’ve got to get to class right away.

00:08:15 Question: Did you ever eat any food here if you were here all day? Did you go out for lunch? Answer: I didn’t. I would usually bring a sandwich or something and I would—the student center was built then and I would spend my lunch time in the student center and there were other day students and we would just kind of sit in the student center and eat our lunch and maybe study a little bit or go to the library. I spent a lot of time in the library.

00:08:42 Question: Did you learn or have to be taught how to use the microfiche program? Answer: Yes.

00:08:50 Question: They had a class to teach you that? Answer: No, actually it was the librarians that showed me how to do it.

00:08:58 Question: And you found that most helpful? Answer: It was helpful in doing your research or papers.
00:09:05  **Question:** Did you enjoy doing papers? **Answer:** I did. I think that the papers that I enjoyed most was when I was in language arts class. It was a literature class where we wrote and it was you gathered facts, but the gist of the papers were your opinions and I enjoyed doing that.

00:09:31  **Question:** Children’s literature was one course that you did? **Answer:** Right. Yes, you had to take children’s literature.

00:09:36  **Question:** And you reflected on everything that was written in that little poem or story? **Answer:** Yes, and you sort of interpreted it.

00:09:45  **Question:** That was fun wasn’t it? **Answer:** It was.

00:09:47  **Question:** Do you remember who taught it? **Answer:** You know I can’t….um…gosh. I can see her, but I can’t think of her name because she played baseball for Neely’s Creek Church and I cannot—her first name was Frances…Herhomtz!

00:10:03  **Question:** What? **Answer:** Mrs. Herhomtz

00:10:05  **Question:** Herhomtz? **Answer:** Herhomtz. H-E-R-H-O-M-T-Z.

00:10:09  **Question:** And she made that class interesting? **Answer:** She did. She loved books and so you know, a person that loves books, they can teach a literature class more easily.

00:10:21  **Question:** How did you do with your basic subjects like English and math before you got into your main course? **Answer:** I did well. I made, you know, mostly received As and Bs. I made a C on that swimming class. That was the only C I made while I was at Winthrop. My freshman year I guess—the second semester was English class was mainly literature and I had a graduate assistant for that class and she was excellent. I just thoroughly enjoyed that class under her. I had Dr. Aplin—Judith Aplin, I taught with her later on at Bellevue [Elementary School], his wife, and he taught math here at Winthrop.

00:11:12  **Question:** And what was his name? **Answer:** Dr. Aplin. A-P-L-I-N. Tall man, thin and just brilliant and um…

00:11:22  **Question:** What math did you take? **Answer:** I can’t remember.

00:11:24  **Question:** Algebra or Trig or…. **Answer:** No, I think it was an algebra class under him because it was kind of difficult and I think he realized after a little bit he was teaching above our heads and he kind of brought it down.
00:11:42  
**Question:** That was accommodating. **Answer:** It was, yes.

00:11:46  
**Question:** Did you ever have a class that they graded on the curve? **Answer:** I don’t think the whole class was graded on the curve, but I definitely had tests that were graded on the curve. With South Carolina history and I’m trying to think of who else…Dr. Crowson…

00:12:08  
**Question:** Were they essay questions mainly or multiple choice? **Answer:** No, his South Carolina history class was multiple-choice, but those mainly on the curve I think were those that were a combination. Most of the subjects, you know, the tests were a combination of multiple choice, true/false and some discussion.

00:12:35  
**Question:** How much studying do you think you did after leaving class to prepare for the next class? **Answer:** A lot. I had been out of school almost 10 years, not quite 10 years, and the reading, the amount of reading, especially in histories and the English classes and when you got into your psychology and stuff like that—the reading was tremendous so, um, you did, it took a lot of time out of class, so that was one reason I let Beth stay in daycare all day so I would have study time because I did not use night time—at home time—for study time because then Butch was there and Beth was there.

00:13:27  
**Question:** And you got everything done? **Answer:** During the day.

00:13:31  
**Question:** You were lucky. **Answer:** Well I really was. Now, if I was writing a paper sometimes I would have to type it.

00:13:44  
**Question:** Were there any requirements that you had to attend a chapel program? **Answer:** We did not have to attend a chapel program, but we did have to attend extracurricular activities.

00:13:58  
**Question:** Like guest speakers? **Answer:** Guest speakers and things like that over in Tillman Auditorium.

00:14:04  
**Question:** Do you remember any of those? **Answer:** I cannot remember any of them, but I do know that I think we had to attend maybe at least three a semester or three a year, something like that and you had to have proof that you had attended.

00:14:20  
**Question:** Did you have to write them up in any way, to report? **Answer:** I cannot remember how we reported, if we had tickets that we brought back to the professor or what but we had to. We definitely had to have proof that we had been there, maybe getting the program signed or something.

00:14:40  
**Question:** Were you a member of any kind of club? **Answer:** I wasn’t. Being a day
student I did not join any clubs.

00:14:48 Question: What did you take in PE besides swimming? Answer: I took swimming and I took volleyball and bowling. I took volleyball in the summer and Mrs. Salo who was a dance teacher taught volleyball. So we did all the little dance stretches before volleyball, but just thoroughly enjoyed her. She gave us a piece of advice that I have never forgotten.

00:15:14 Question: And what is her name? Answer: Salo. S-A- L-O. She was a single mom. She had raised her son by herself and divorced her husband.

00:15:23 Question: Was she a Mrs. or a Ms.? Answer: She had been married, but she told us, she says, “you get this education because that is the one thing that nobody will ever be able to take away from you.”

00:15:38 Question: I’ve been told that too. Answer: I can see her, she was just a little short lady and standing there telling us that.

00:15:46 Question: Did you ever go into the public classroom before you went in to student teaching? Answer: Yes, I went to um…

00:15:55 Question: Cadet? Answer: I can’t…they didn’t call it that then of course. Ours was observation and participation and I went to Finley Road [Elementary School] and did mine in a second grade class I think it was.

00:16:08 Question: In second grade and you ended up first? Answer: Ended up in first and did my student teaching in third, so I was really apprehensive about teaching.

00:16:17 Question: I did my student teaching in second and I taught second twice. All the other I had first. Answer: I did…well; my first year of teaching was what they called a multi-leveled class now. I had a first and second grade combination.

00:16:39 Question: So you taught in groups? Answer: I did, and I can remember when the principle—I mean this was my first year of teaching—and when he told me I was going to have first graders, that threw me for a loop. I told him, I said you know, I’ve always said I would never teach first graders and I want you to know right now if I ruin them it’s not my fault, it’s yours. Then, he told me after school had started the re were not enough students for me to have a whole first grade and that’s when he told me I was going to have second graders also, but he gave me the better second graders and we had just a marvelous time because that was when first grade went home right after lunch for the first six weeks and so I thoroughly enjoyed my few second graders. I think I had about eleven second graders and eleven first graders. Being that I had a small class and then when the first grade started staying all day we would—we could
do things like geography and health and science together so we just had a ball.

00:17:47 Question: You didn’t think you could do it? Answer: Oh no, it scared me to death.

00:17:51 Question: But you did. Answer: I did and loved it.

00:17:54 Question: Can you think back and think about the professors you had. Is there one particular one that stands out? Answer: Yes, Dr. Massey that taught history. M-A-S-S-E-Y. She was Elizabeth Massey.

00:18:11 Question: She taught what? Answer: History. She was the best history teacher and she almost made me want to be a history teacher, but there were just so few positions that I knew that I would do better in elementary. Dr. Viault, V-I-A-U-L-T, he came after the year that I started in ‘68 and he taught, I guess it was United States history, but it was just the big lecture.

00:18:44 Question: How many were in that class? Answer: It was huge because it was in the Tillman Auditorium.

00:18:49 Question: And this was US…? Answer: US history.

00:18:52 Question: They were both history teachers that you liked the best? Answer: Right. I think his was world history. I think in freshman year we did world history. Dr. Massey was US in my sophomore year, but they were both just excellent teachers and of course I remember Dr. Littlejohn from education and psychology and um, what was his name…he and his wife both taught in the education department. Oh…I can’t think of their names right now—Rassulton [spelling?].

00:19:26 Question: Rassulton? Answer: Yes. I had both of those and they were just super teachers.

00:19:33 Question: They really got interested in you. Answer: They did and they shared a little of themselves with us you know and I think that always made a difference.

00:19:48 Question: Did they have a reading lab if you took a reading course? Answer: They were just starting a lab when I finished.

00:19:59 Question: You go in and have reinforcements on different verb tenses. Answer: Yes.

00:20:05 Question: I was given a placement test. I didn’t have to go to the lab, but I went for curiosity to see what it was and whatever you had missed you went in to get reinforcements. Answer: Right and we took a test to see and somebody had let me borrow their notes and I studied and studied so I did not have to go to the lab.
Question: I didn’t either. Answer: Yes, because I—and I can’t remember the professor that was the one that this was for—but I was working on my masters that day.

Question: I was here in the 70s and I remember that class. Answer: Yes, that was in the 70s because I had already got my bachelor’s degree and this is when I was working on my master’s.

Question: And she was standing up there handing out the papers. Mine just didn’t come and didn’t come and finally she said, “I have one left” and I went—she said we have one that does not have to go to lab. Answer: Wow.

Question: So I felt really special. Can you relate to anything where you felt really, really special in a class? Answer: I can’t, no. I think you know in most of the education classes you know I just felt…

Question: Real comfortable? Answer: Real comfortable, yes, and knew that was—well, I just knew that was where I should be. That I was doing what I was supposed to do.

Question: That’s starting on your junior year? Answer: Yes.

Question: Got all those hard things over with? Answer: Right.

Question: That math and language mainly and you did student teaching at which school? Answer: In Fort Mill. The school is no longer there. I can’t remember the name of it now but it’s—in fact Mrs. Hope was the teacher and this was her last year. She was getting ready to retire and then we did our student— it was called student teaching then and it lasted six weeks. I was her fourth student teacher that year.

Question: She must have been good for wanting to do that. Answer: Right, and um, when I came, you know they had already finished the Social Study Book. They’d already finished the science book.

Question: This was hard on you? Answer: It was. I had to write units. I had to come up with—but you know I just felt like it was trial by fire and it really prepared me for the classroom because she—I was not there a week and she was letting me take over.

Question: She saw the responsibility that you could do. Answer: Yes, so you know I had the class. She would stay in there sometimes, but sometimes she would not.

Question: And how many students? Answer: Oh she must have had close to thirty. It was a large class.
Question: I’ve had thirty two. Answer: This was a large class and um…

Question: Do you think your student teaching prepared you for your class? Answer: Yes, mine did because I think of the situation of Mrs. Hope and you know kind of just saying “ok it’s yours now” and like I say I did not—and they did not even have a teachers’ guide. They had a basal, but no teachers guide so um…

Question: You ad-libbed it. Answer: I really did. Like I said, I had to write units for social studies, for science and health and the spelling book was the only thing I think that they had not finished and the basal.

Question: Spelling? Answer: Spelling book and the basal so I was able to use those, but as I said we had no teachers’ guide for the basal.

Question: How about the math? Answer: With the math we did…I did have the…

Question: A book to go by? Answer: Yes.

Question: So when you got a regular job it was easier than what you were doing as a student teacher? Answer: [laughter] It was. Yes, because I had teachers’ guides for everything then.

Question: To tell you what was most important—to be the skill of the day? Answer: Right.

Question: OK, some of these questions don’t relate to you about how you would spend your weekends and rules of dating and all that. Answer: There was no dating [both laugh].

Question: You already went through that. Do you think that what you got at Winthrop prepared you for your profession? Answer: I do. I really think that the student teaching was the best, but they placed you in the student teaching and I was placed in Fort Mill. They were going to put me in Great Falls, but they had overlooked that I was married and had a child. So, I went to them and told them that I could not stay in Great Falls; that I would have to commute. They said “oh, we’ll place you somewhere else.”

Question: That was very accommodating. So you praise Winthrop, don’t you? Answer: Oh yes.

Question: They went right out to help you in every way they could. Answer: Absolutely and really I think the classes—they give you background and when they
send you into the actual classroom that’s—you know, they’re providing you with that.

00:25:49  **Question:** You can apply what you’ve learned?  **Answer:** Right and you see what the situation is.

00:25:55  **Question:** Do you think you learned the skills or the information that you had to pass the N.T.E.?  **Answer:** Yes, without Winthrop, you know, without the classes I would not have been able to pass the N.T.E.

00:26:12  **Question:** So, you praise Winthrop?  **Answer:** Oh yes, most definitely, because like I say I got my bachelor’s here and then went on and got my master’s and went on and got my thirty hours.

00:26:23  **Question:** Same here. Isn’t it wonderful?  **Answer:** Well, I think we’re just fortunate that we do have a university, or college then, right here so convenient for us and I’m speaking as a home tilled Rock Hill person. I enjoyed it. I probably would have felt more a part of the social side if I had been on campus. I didn’t feel like I was a part of the social side but like I said—

00:26:56  **Question:** You had duties somewhere else  **Answer:** Right, but there were—

00:27:00  **Question:** And they were not mandatory.  **Answer:** No, and there were other girls who were day students and I don’t think they ever realized that I was that much older than them you know when we would meet in the student center—

00:27:14  **Question:** Did you stay together?  **Answer:** Sometimes we would in the student center and in some of the courses, I think in children’s literature, there was a project or two that you did with partners.

00:27:27  **Question:** You worked in teams? Would you rather work alone or with someone?  **Answer:** I enjoy working with someone if you’re compatible and they’re going to do their part.

00:27:42  **Question:** But if not you’d rather do the whole thing?  **Answer:** I would much rather have the responsibility of doing the whole thing. It’s frustrating when you’re with somebody and they’re not taking their fair share of the load, but mostly whoever I worked with they were here to get their degree and to teach too.

00:28:07  **Question:** They were interested in getting it done right.  **Answer:** Right.

00:28:13  **Question:** What do you think about the image of the school today? Do you hear anything going on that—I know it’s a lot different now.  **Answer:** It’s a lot different. I don’t really hear that much negative. The only thing that you hear negative about is
when there’s a crime on campus or a crime against one of the students but other than that um…

00:28:38 Question: The image is still firm. Answer: The image is firm and I think Rock Hill is proud to be a college town, a university town, and that’s why they’re wanting to develop that knowledge quarter to bring Winthrop into a more integrated part of Rock Hill.

00:28:56 Question: Have you studied the beginning of Winthrop? Are you aware that it started in Columbia? Answer: Yes, and to me one of the amazing things is that the small number of presidents that it’s had.

00:29:14 Question: Who was president when you were here? Answer: I think it was Charles Davis.

00:29:17 Question: Mine too. Answer: At my graduation Strom Thurmond of course came and as we were lined up out in front of Brynes he popped out of the line shaking hands and he and Nancy were—she was still really young—and I remember her and she had on a very matronly dress. It had big flowers on it and she wore a big hat and I can remember her remarking as she came along behind him, “I can just barely keep up with him, he has so much energy.” [both laugh] Answer: That was just building him up.

00:29:54 Question: Drawing his picture wasn’t it? Answer: Yes, absolutely.

00:29:57 Question: She planned that [both laugh]. Answer: Yes [still laughing]

00:30:02 Question: That’s cute [still laughing]. Answer: I can just see him walking down that line shaking hands and she kind of lagged behind, you know.

00:30:10 Question: And that was all pretend [both laugh]. How fun, how about that. Do you have anything else you’d like to add? Answer: No, I think we’ve just covered a lot, but you know I think Winthrop was one of the highlights of my life and then tuition was so reasonable you know that, um…

00:30:36 Question: Have you studied what the first students paid? Answer: No.

00:30:40 Question: I read—they gave me stuff to read to get the rules—the first students that came here on this campus paid $139 a semester. Answer: Well, you know when I went it was just $400 and something a semester. Well, when I started it wasn’t even that. It was $400 and something my last semester.

00:31:01 Question: This might have been for the year. I’m sorry, for the year. Answer: Yes.
00:31:06  Question: I believe it was. Answer: Yes, so it was if you were a home town girl and didn’t live on campus it was just a very reasonable amount for a college education.

00:31:17  Question: I think they were accommodating. Answer: They were.

00:31:21  Question: They wanted to build the society and produce what this town needed. Answer: Right.

00:31:30  Question: They wanted teachers who were ready to handle their children. Answer: Yes and it was a great opportunity for me.

00:31:45  Question: I don’t know of anything else that we need to talk about. I think we’ve covered everything that you were involved in. All this stuff about dating and rules and dorms and all that—you far passed that. Answer: Yes, the only time I really went into the dorms was when it was a rainy day and we would cut through the dorms and get to Tillman and to go back towards the other buildings so…and I can remember some of the girls saying that some of the ladies, the maids and things, if the men were cutting through the halls they would holler “man on the hall, man on the hall!” Personally I never encountered that, but it was a good, good time in my life.

00:32:37  Question: I have that at the top of my list too. Well I appreciate you coming. Answer: I was glad to do it.

00:32:49  End of interview