

January 2008

Interview with Emily Janis Wade Ayres

by Margart Skovira

[Text enclosed in brackets [ ] is not on the audio, but is included here for clarification]

**Margaret Skovira:** This is Margaret Skovira. I'm here with Janis Ayres in her home in Brownsburg, Virginia. It's January 14, 2008. And Janis, can you tell me your full name and when you were born?

**Janis Ayres:** Emily Janis Wade Ayres and I was born April, the 21, 1934.

**Margaret Skovira:** And how long have you lived in Brownsburg?

**Janis Ayres:** Since 1966.

**Margaret Skovira:** Okay. So you weren't born here. Where were you born?

**Janis Ayres:** I was born about three miles from Brownsburg [in the McElwee Chapel area].

**Margaret Skovira:** Oh.. well, you didn't come a long way then?

**Janis Ayres:** No, I didn't come a long way but I lived there until I moved to Brownsburg in 1966 when we bought the [Finley] Patterson's farm at the Hays Creek Bridge. And I still live at the same location. [My daughter] Kim married Scott Heslep in 1979 and my husband, Jim, died of a heart attack at church in 1995.

**Margaret Skovira:** Okay. Janis, tell me who your parents were?

**Janis Ayres:** Elizabeth Swope Wade and [Harrison] "Bud" Wade.

**Margaret Skovira:** And where did they live before they moved here to Brownsburg?

**Janis Ayres:** [They never lived in Brownsburg.] My mother, Elizabeth, lived about three miles from Brownsburg, below the Rockbridge Middle School [1200 Sterrett Road]. And she came to stay in Brownsburg when it was Brownsburg Academy. And she either rode a horse or drove a buggy or walked. And she graduated in 1925.

**Margaret Skovira:** And your dad?

**Janis Ayres:** He went to Brownsburg but I'm not sure whether he graduated or...

**Margaret Skovira:** Do you know when he was born?

**Janis Ayres:** 1901.

**Margaret Skovira:** And that's Bud Wade?

**Janis Ayres:** Bud Wade.

**Margaret Skovira:** Okay. And I don't think you really told me why they moved here.

**Janis Ayres:** They didn't live in Brownsburg. They lived in the area.

**Margaret Skovira:** Oh.. when you moved here, they didn't move.

**Janis Ayres:** No. They lived in-- they still lived in the McElwee Chapel area. That's where my daddy was-- my daddy and my sister and myself were all born at the same place, same location.

**Margaret Skovira:** What's your sister's name?

**Janis Ayres:** Betty Jean [Wade].

**Margaret Skovira:** Betty Jean Wade?

**Janis Ayres:** Mohler, Betty Mohler, she married George Mohler.

**Margaret Skovira:** Okay. And do you know who your grandparents were, your father's parents?

**Janis Ayres:** Harrison Love Wade and Virginia Catherine Swisher Wade. [Maternal grandparents were William Henry Swope and Carrie Cornelia Blackwell Swope.]

**Margaret Skovira:** And they were living at this place where your daddy and you were born in. Okay. When you moved here, what brought you here?

**Janis Ayres:** Well, as I said earlier, [we liked Brownsburg and it just happened that the Patterson farm was for sale.] We bought the farm from Betts Patterson.

**Margaret Skovira:** Was this after you were married?

**Janis Ayres:** Yes. We got married in 1957.

**Margaret Skovira:** And your husband's name? I know you said.

**Janis Ayres:** James Hansford Ayres [ph?].

**Margaret Skovira:** Okay. Did you come here to farm?

**Janis Ayres:** Sorta. I guess. We were small time farmers. We both worked at VMI full time. I worked in the athletic department for 28 years and he worked in the biology department for 20 years. So we just had cows, a horse, pigs, sheep. And then after our daughter, Kim, married a farmer, Scott Heslep, we just let him do the farming.

**Margaret Skovira:** I see. Good idea.

**Janis Ayres:** He had all the machinery.

**Margaret Skovira:** Oh.. okay. Tell me about your first memory of Brownsburg.

**Janis Ayres:** Well, I was vaccinated in the basement of the now Dick Anderson home [2671 Brownsburg Turnpike] before I started to school. And the fun thing to do was come with my daddy to

his barber shop and go to the phone office, which was located over the bank [2711 Brownsburg Turnpike] and watch Miss Mattie Wade work the switchboard. Now, that was really interesting.

**Margaret Skovira:** Why was that interesting?

**Janis Ayres:** I don't know. She'd pull out all of these wires and plug them-- you know, plug them into [the switchboard] -- and they'd light up and people would call. She'd transfer the calls. I don't know. It was just interesting to see it all light up and [how she'd answer the calls.]

**Margaret Skovira:** And she did it all by herself?

**Janis Ayres:** She did.

**Margaret Skovira:** Wow! And where was your father's barber shop?

**Janis Ayres:** When he first started in 1922, he started lathering up faces for Mr. Harlow who was a barber in Brownsburg and that led to his opening of a barber shop in the back of Supinger's Store, which is now, I believe, Old South Antique Store. And in between haircuts, he would drive a school bus, which was privately owned. He'd pick up the kids and he'd let 'em off at school and then he'd run to the shop and cut a few heads of hair and then take 'em home. And he thought it was a blessing. And he was pretty busy when Brownsburg was a thriving community. And in the 50's after John Layton Whitesell moved the post office to his grocery store [2664 Brownsburg Turnpike], Bud Wade's Barber Shop was moved up the street into Dr. Tom Bosworth's building [2707 Brownsburg Turnpike], which is now owned by Catharine Gilliam.

**Margaret Skovira:** The house she lives in or the building...

**Janis Ayres:** No, the building beside of it. That's where the Post Office was. And John Layton [Whitesell] moved it up to his store when he became the postmaster. And daddy also had a pool table in his shop, he said, for the boys and the men-- to give 'em something to do while they were waiting for a hair cut. And he used to say that on Saturday night, it could get pretty-- they could get pretty rowdy. And they've had a few scraps but nothing real big. If they were little fellows, he would step in and break it up. And I even heard that he could pitch them out the door if they were little. But if they were too big to separate, he'd just let them fight it out. And then in 1982 when he was 81 years old, he closed the shop. And my daughter, Kim [Heslep] moved daddy's chair and pool table to her house.

**Margaret Skovira:** Does she still have them?

**Janis Ayres:** She still has them and all his supplies.

**Margaret Skovira:** So he started, I think you said, in 1922 working for someone else.

**Janis Ayres:** John Harlow.

**Margaret Skovira:** And where was Mr. Harlow's shop?

**Janis Ayres:** I'm not sure. And I've tried to find out, but I don't know where he started.

**Margaret Skovira:** Was he still in business when your father opened his own shop?

**Janis Ayres:** I don't think so.

**Margaret Skovira:** So he started his own business then?

**Janis Ayres:** That's right.

**Margaret Skovira:** Now when you came to Brownsburg, you went to the phone office because you liked to see the operator work there? Did you...

**Janis Ayres:** That's when I was a kid.

**Margaret Skovira:** When you were a kid. Did you ever hang around the barber shop or was that strictly male or what?

**Janis Ayres:** It was mostly men but daddy did cut women and girls' hair too. But no, I'd usually-- if I came, I'd go up there [to the telephone office] and watch her [Miss Mattie on the switchboard] or tinker around doing something else.

**Margaret Skovira:** Okay. Did you go to school in Brownsburg as well?

**Janis Ayres:** I did. I started at the Brownsburg School and I graduated in 1953.

**Margaret Skovira:** And did your husband go to school there also?

**Janis Ayres:** He did. He also graduated in 1953. And he went into the Air Force for four years. And then he came out and worked for the [VMI] Biology Department for 20 years. And I remember when we went to Brownsburg, we had a good-- well, I thought it was a good girl's basketball team. Of course, we won two district titles which was pretty good for a little school. And we got those basketball necklaces and I think that-- which a lot of the girls still have today. And we thought it was big time playing our district games in the VMI field house because it seemed huge compared to a very small gym.

**Margaret Skovira:** I can imagine. So that was in the early 50's that you were the championship basketball team. That's great. What do you-- what people do you remember in particular from your school days in Brownsburg? Do you remember any teachers particularly or any of your classmates who were particularly entertaining?

**Janis Ayres:** We had 17 in our [graduating] class. And I remember when we were in grade school. we had a principal named Miss Trimmer. And you could hear a pin drop when she walked down the hall. And if the boys were making noise in their bathroom, she would knock on the door and go in. She really was a disciplinarian. And the gym floor, we had to walk around. We couldn't walk on it with our regular street shoes on. And then Mr. [Dan] Burger and Mr. [Clarence] Fitzwater.

**Margaret Skovira:** And these are all teachers?

**Janis Ayres:** Teachers.

**Margaret Skovira:** Who was your basketball coach?

**Janis Ayres:** Miss [Keyes] McManus and Miss Jones.

**Margaret Skovira:** And did they teach as well?

**Janis Ayres:** They did. And they lived in Lexington, I'll think of some more teachers. And then Mrs. [Frances] Buchanan who lived in Brownsburg [2623 Sterrett Road]. And Miss [Elizabeth] Ward, one of my neighbors [2763 Brownsburg Turnpike], did not teach me but she taught the first grade in Brownsburg at the same time. And then I remember Mrs. Williams taught us in the third grade. And I

remember if you didn't know your multiplication table or any of the states or capitals, she'd draw a little circle on the board and you'd have to stand up there and put your nose in it until you could learn. She was a disciplinarian, too.

**Margaret Skovira:** I guess so.

**Janis Ayres:** Most all of the teachers were.

**Margaret Skovira:** Now was it because of your basketball that you worked for sports at VMI or was that just a coincidence?

**Janis Ayres:** That was just a coincidence. I graduated then I went to Dunsmore Business College. And after I graduated, I was looking for a job and there happened to be an opening in the athletic department. So I worked there and then Cadet Affairs for 28 years. So it was a good place to work.

**Margaret Skovira:** Yes. That's what I understand. Where do you want me to go next? One of these questions is about World War II. Did you have anything-- any memories of World War II?

**Janis Ayres:** No.

**Margaret Skovira:** Okay. We were asking about changes during the time you lived here but that could include changes since the time you came here to go to school, you know, as a child. And by the time you moved here in the 60's, was it very different? It must have been.

**Janis Ayres:** Oh.. yes, but I can't remember all of them. As I said, they had the switchboard in the phone office and then when we moved, they had the telephone system. It's changed several times. And of course, the Post Office was moved down the street to John Layton's and then to the present location [2741 Brownsburg Turnpike].

**Margaret Skovira:** When you came here in the 60's, were there still stores in Brownsburg?

**Janis Ayres:** Huffman's Store [2712 Brownsburg Turnpike] and John Layton's [Whitesell's] store [2664 Brownsburg Turnpike], I believe were the only ones.

**Margaret Skovira:** And the Post Office.

**Janis Ayres:** And the Post Office was in John Layton's [Whitesell] store until he retired. And I'm not sure what year he retired.

**Margaret Skovira:** And your father was still running a barber shop, you said, 'til...

**Janis Ayres:** 1982.

**Margaret Skovira:** ...'82. So he was still-- had a business. Was he still driving the school bus?

**Janis Ayres:** No. No. I've forgotten what age he quit driving the school bus. And my mother was his substitute, so she started driving.

**Margaret Skovira:** Oh.. good.

**Janis Ayres:** The water system.

**Margaret Skovira:** Okay, tell me about the water system.

**Janis Ayres:** Well, when we moved here in '66, most of the houses were supplied water from Rees's Spring.

**Margaret Skovira:** Do you know where that was?

**Janis Ayres:** Is was where the West Airlie Farm is now. And it was gradually getting lower and of course, people used a lot more water back in '66 than they did in the 40's and the 50's. So in August of '66, 17 families using the water met at the Brownsburg School and we discussed what we could do. Instead of every family diggin' a well, it was decided that we'd form a corporation and buy stock and dig a well. Back in November of 1966, Jack Heslep who worked for the Cunningham ladies [Alice, Helen, and Margaret] reported that the Cunninghams who owned land in Brownsburg, were willing to give the corporation land with a well already on it. Their masons built the brick building for the electrical supplies. And that's how the Brownsburg Water Corporation got started. And now, the corporation has three wells and 30-some users. One of the first stockholders and user was Miss Margaret McCormick who lived where the Brownsburg Museum is today [2716 Brownsburg Turnpike].

**Margaret Skovira:** Oh.. yeah. Now, you said they built a brick building for the electricity. And is that still in Brownsburg?



**Janis Ayres:** Yeah, it's still-- we still use it. It's right up the sidewalk from [Walter] Lunsford's [2651 Brownsburg Turnpike].

**Margaret Skovira:** Okay. And did they put in the piping too at that time?

**Janis Ayres:** Everybody had pipes running from the spring. So they just connected it up there and disconnected it from comin' down the road. [Supplementary note from Janis Ayres: The corporation put in new pipes from the well to the old lines which were already in use. Since then, most all of the old pipe lines have been replaced. Also, a line was laid part-way up Sterrett Road so those people could hook on, and that's how we now have 30-some users.]

**Margaret Skovira:** And tell me again when was this done?

**Janis Ayres:** 1966.

**Margaret Skovira:** Well, that's a real plus for the community to have that.

**Janis Ayres:** It sure is. But now it runs by gravity and when the current's off, we still have water.

**Margaret Skovira:** And do you get good water pressure, your showers and all? Are they just fine?

**Janis Ayres:** We do.

**Margaret Skovira:** Good. That's interesting. That's something I hadn't heard from anybody else. That's very interesting. And there was something else that you wanted to tell me about besides the water. Do you remember? Maybe it was your barber shop.

**Janis Ayres:** The barber shop, yeah. That's the two things that I knew more about.

<laughter>

**Janis Ayres:** And anything else that went on in Brownsburg-- working full time and trying to farm just the three of us, it's, you know...

**Margaret Skovira:** The three of you being your husband and your daughter?

**Janis Ayres:** Mm-mm. Well, it kept us pretty busy and we had a big garden.

**Margaret Skovira:** Did you put up a lot of vegetables?

**Janis Ayres:** We did. That's the one thing I miss today. My husband was a good gardener and he'd come in any time and a bushel of beans would be there. And we'd have to fix them and freeze them, can them or whatever. And now, since I'm the only one here, I don't do all that work. When somebody comes, I don't have much to eat because I don't freeze and can like I used to. And I remember when I was at home, when we we didn't have electricity and company would come and we'd have-- mom would have to go out and catch a chicken and kill it and fry for lunch. I don't think I could-- I'd never do lunch today, if I had to do that.

**Margaret Skovira:** She didn't teach you how to do that?

**Janis Ayres:** Well, I could do it but I don't think I could-- we might have supper but not lunch.

<laughter>

**Margaret Skovira:** Yeah, I guess so. I'm gonna stop a minute. Tell me about your neighbors.

**Janis Ayres:** Well, 1966, Dr. [Richard] Hutcheson, a former pastor of New Providence lived across the street [2766 Brownsburg Turnpike]. And Elizabeth Ward, who was a long time teacher, lived beside of me [2763 Brownsburg Turnpike]. And Mrs. Jim [Sallie] Wade out back [44 Hays Creek Road] and she gave piano lessons to a lot of young people. And they would just walk down from school and take the lessons and walk back and catch the bus home.

**Margaret Skovira:** Was she a relative?

**Janis Ayres:** No. No. And Bernice and Harvey [Nye] and I lived across the creek [2843 Brownsburg Turnpike]. And they moved to Brownsburg the same year we did.

Q Okay. Tell me about the-- I'm not gonna say it correctly, the McElwee Chapel.

**Janis Ayres:** Well, I grew up in McElwee Chapel and I still attend there.

**Margaret Skovira:** Is that a Presbyterian Church?

**Janis Ayres:** Presbyterian. We're a branch of the Bethesda. We have the same minister but we just have services-- we have Sunday school at night and preaching at night and they have it in the morning.

**Margaret Skovira:** Where do most of the parishioners there come from? Are they right in that neighborhood mostly?

**Janis Ayres:** I mean the people from Brownsburg church-- I've only ever heard of people going to New Providence. So I wondered where the line was then.

**Janis Ayres:** I think it's sort of where you want to go.

**Margaret Skovira:** All right, Janis, tell me about the McElwee Chapel and how it came to be.

**Janis Ayres:** Well, in the early 1900's, William McElwee, who was the pastor at Bethesda Presbyterian Church would come to the Oak Hill School, which a lot of-- I didn't go to school there but my sister did in the first grade. And he thought that they had enough people participating in services there that they could buy-- could build a church of their own, so all of the people that went there got together. They cut wood and logs and had them planed and they built the church.

**Margaret Skovira:** And this was in what year?

**Janis Ayres:** 1905 was when they finished it.

**Margaret Skovira:** And you said your grandparents had a part in this?

**Janis Ayres:** They did. Harrison Love Wade and his wife, Virginia Catherine – she was a Swisher before she married granddaddy. And she would go around in a buggy and collect money or whatever else they needed to build the church. And that's how I got into McElwee Chapel and that's why I go there today. And it was sorta funny when we moved here, a couple of the people came and visited us and said that the house we bought went to New Providence Church and we'd have to go to New Providence now. And my husband said, "I don't think so." He said, "I didn't see that in my deed." And so, he said, "I think we'll continue to go to McElwee" <laughs>.

**Margaret Skovira:** So your husband had gone there too all his life, is that right?

**Janis Ayres:** No, he went to Bethesda. But after we got married, then he started goin' there. It's a small-- we only have about 20, 30, 35 and it's the people that live in the community and are-- have family buried in the cemetery.

**Margaret Skovira:** And you have a window over there. Tell me the names on the window that your family gave.

**Janis Ayres:** Elizabeth and Bud Wade [my parents, Betty Jean and George Mohler, Janis and Jim Ayres, Kim and Scott Heslep, and granddaughters Julia and Toria Heslep].

**Margaret Skovira:** Your parents.

**Janis Ayres:** My parents and my sister and her husband, Betty Jean and George Mohler and Jimmy and myself, and Scott and Kim, my daughter.

**Margaret Skovira:** So that's your whole family basically?

**Janis Ayres:** Yeah, and Julia and Toria Heslep.

**Margaret Skovira:** And who is...

**Janis Ayres:** Kim's daughters.

**Margaret Skovira:** Okay.

**Margaret Skovira:** Okay, tell me about life during The Depression as you remember it.

**Janis Ayres:** Well, I was only 6 years old so I don't remember very much. And I don't think it affected our family because we raised just about all our food and we burned wood and used it to cook with.

**Margaret Skovira:** Did you collect wood in the woods when you collected your own?

**Janis Ayres:** We did. We cut our own wood. So we didn't have much connection with the outside world.

**Margaret Skovira:** Did you have cattle and chickens?

**Janis Ayres:** We did. We had chickens and hogs and cows because momma and I milked eight cows. And I'd milk four and she had milked four. And we have to carry the milk to the house and go back and get more buckets. And then before we went to school every morning, I had to milk those four cows and separate the milk. We had a hand separator. You had to turn it by hand. And then after we finished, we'd take the milk down to the hogs because we lived on a hill and everything we did was at the bottom of the hill. So we got our exercise, you know. And then we'd take the cream to the spring because we didn't have a refrigerator, so we put it in the water to keep it. And we sold the cream. And then I'd have to come back to the house, wash the separator, get it ready and then I'd have to take a bath, eat my breakfast and be ready to catch the bus by 7:30.

**Margaret Skovira:** Wow!

**Janis Ayres:** And then if we had basketball games or whatever after school-- I had to be my share of the work. When I got home, it was waiting for me. I had to do that before I could go play basketball.

**Margaret Skovira:** So would you do that before you played basketball at night?

**Janis Ayres:** We would. Mm-mm. We would. And sometimes, we even had to walk to <inaudible> or Brownsburg and catch the bus.

**Margaret Skovira:** Now what kind of bus would that have been?

**Janis Ayres:** A school bus.

**Margaret Skovira:** That would take you to your game?

**Janis Ayres:** And then at night, they'd let us off at Bustelburg. I had neighbors that also played. And we'd walk home and we'd always run by McElwee Chapel. And so, they said, "Why do you run by McElwee Chapel 'cause those people are dead and they won't hurt ya?" But we did.

**Margaret Skovira:** It scared you somehow, I guess. When you said you took the milk to the hogs, does that mean you fed the milk to the hogs and you only saved the cream to sell?

**Janis Ayres:** That's right.

**Margaret Skovira:** Did you drink milk yourself?

**Janis Ayres:** We did. And the fun thing was when you were milkin' and you had company, if somebody was standin' there with you, you'd squirt the milk...

<laughter>

**Janis Ayres:** ...in their mouth or in your own. And you milked whether it was rainin', snowin'...

**Margaret Skovira:** Well, the cows have to be milked, don't they?

**Janis Ayres:** That's why I wouldn't want to run a dairy. And I'm glad I don't have to do that. When we moved to Brownsburg, we didn't milk cows. We had them but we didn't milk them.

**Margaret Skovira:** Did you grow them for meat?

**Janis Ayres:** Yeah.

**Margaret Skovira:** Who did you sell the cream to, do you know?

**Janis Ayres:** Clover Creamery in Lexington.

**Margaret Skovira:** Now how did it get to them?

**Janis Ayres:** Somebody would come by and pick it up and take it. And you'd get a dollar or two for the cream.

**Margaret Skovira:** Now we started all this with the Depression. Is that how you had cash in your family, was from the cream you sold?

**Janis Ayres:** It was and then daddy working, cutting hair and driving the bus.

**Margaret Skovira:** Do you know what he charged for a hair cut in those days?

**Janis Ayres:** I think it was 25 cents for a haircut and 10 cents for a shave.

**Margaret Skovira:** "Shave and a haircut two bits." I remember hearing that somewhere. And he drove the school bus. You said it was a private company that ran the school bus?

**Janis Ayres:** They were privately owned.

**Margaret Skovira:** Oh.. so it was-- he owned the school bus?

**Janis Ayres:** He owned the school bus.

**Margaret Skovira:** So who paid him to take the children?

**Janis Ayres:** The county. And I had forgotten what year the county took over the bus routes. And then my mom, when she retired, she was still driving but she was driving a county bus.

**Margaret Skovira:** Did they buy your father's bus when they took it over?

**Janis Ayres:** No, it was pretty old, I think, because I think they got new ones.

**Margaret Skovira:** Interesting system. What have I not asked you?

**Janis Ayres:** The bad thing that happened while I lived in Brownsburg was one, was they closed the school, the Brownsburg School, and tore it out.

**Margaret Skovira:** Do you know when that was? Do you remember? Did Kim go to the Brownsburg School?

**Janis Ayres:** She [went to Brownsburg when it was an elementary school but] graduated from Rockridge High School. She went to Brownsburg-- they changed, and I'm not sure-- you'll have to find out, what years they changed Brownsburg to a middle school. Before it was closed, it was a middle school.

**Margaret Skovira:** Oh.. okay, but she went there to elementary?

**Janis Ayres:** Elementary and then she went to Rockbridge for high school.

**Margaret Skovira:** Oh.. okay, but she went-- now where did she go to elementary school?

**Janis Ayres:** Brownsburg.

**Margaret Skovira:** So she went all the way up to, what, eighth grade in Brownsburg?

**Janis Ayres:** I think the seventh. I'll have to check on that. I'm not sure but I think it was.

**Margaret Skovira:** But later-- by the time they closed it, they didn't have the elementary school there anymore?

**Janis Ayres:** No, they closed it when they made Rockridge Middle School and built the high school up in Lexington.

**Margaret Skovira:** Why was that a bad thing, that this school closed? What do you miss about having this school?

**Janis Ayres:** I don't know. It was a landmark. It had been there since 1938, I think was the year. And we went to school there and it's just kind of sad [and I could see it from my house].

**Margaret Skovira:** I think you told me that the Oak Farm School...

**Janis Ayres:** Oak Hill.

**Margaret Skovira:** ... Oak Hill School was moved there. Tell me about that.

**Janis Ayres:** It was below where McElwee Chapel is. And a lot of the children went there for grade school. I'm not sure, maybe first and second, third grade.

**Margaret Skovira:** Was this your parents who have done that?

**Janis Ayres:** No.



<brief gap in audio>

**Janis Ayres:** <inaudible> because she worked there.

**Margaret Skovira:** We were talking about the Oak Hill School but we will come back to that at another time. Janis, you said there was one other bad thing that happened besides the school closing and that was.

**Janis Ayres:** The bank-- losing our Bank of Rockbridge.

**Margaret Skovira:** Okay. Was that something-- did you do a lot of business with the bank?

**Janis Ayres:** I didn't. I banked in Lexington because I worked up there every day. But our cemetery, McElwee Cemetery, had their account there, so I did deal with it.

**Margaret Skovira:** And so, they had to move that account somewhere else?

**Janis Ayres:** They went to Fairfield and now it's BB&T I think. It's changed hands.

**Margaret Skovira:** Many times, I think, for all those things. Okay, what else can we talk about about your experiences in Brownsburg? Who were your friends in high school or grade school if you remember? Any people that are still around?

**Janis Ayres:** Edna Mae Withrow. She married a Kirkpatrick and she lives in the Alone Mill area. Janet Reese [Moneymaker] who lives outside of Brownsburg [952 Hays Creek Road]. Ann Swisher Beard [who still lives in the Brownsburg area at 3475 Brownsburg Turnpike, Doris Blackwell Lunsford who also lives in Brownsburg at 2651 Brownsburg Turnpike and Jo Swisher Heath who lives at 2693 Brownsburg Turnpike].

**Margaret Skovira:** You went to school with Ann [Beard]?

**Janis Ayres:** Mm-mm. In fact, we played basketball together.

**Margaret Skovira:** That's pretty amazing to have such a good team from such a small school really.

**Janis Ayres:** It was.

**Margaret Skovira:** Did most of the girls like to play basketball?

**Janis Ayres:** They did. And we didn't play-- we didn't have a team when we were in the grade school. We just played and we had outside baskets and an outside court. And we played volleyball outside and then we had a softball team. We didn't have many sports but basketball was the one that we just happened to have a lot of good girls— [Doris Blackwell Lunsford and all the ones I named above were on the winning team with me.]

**Margaret Skovira:** And did the boys have a team also?

**Janis Ayres:** They did. And they did really well too. I don't think they won district-- that many district titles but they did.

**Margaret Skovira:** Now, when you played basketball, you played the old half court rules, right?

**Janis Ayres:** We did.

**Margaret Skovira:** Can you tell us about that for people who aren't as old as we are but remember it? What were the girls' rules in basketball?

**Janis Ayres:** Well, you couldn't go-- we had three forwards and three guards and you could just go to the half court line and that's all. So you didn't have to run the whole court. I'm not sure I could play basketball today and run the whole court.

**Margaret Skovira:** But you could have then?

**Janis Ayres:** Yeah, I could have then. That's right. But it was easier because you just had three-- six people on one end.

**Margaret Skovira:** Yeah, today it's only five even for girls, right?

**Janis Ayres:** Five.

<overlapping conversation>

**Janis Ayres:** <inaudible> but it just seems like it's easier unless your court was big <inaudible>.

**Margaret Skovira:** But you said the court at VMI seemed so big. Was it actually bigger or was it just...

**Janis Ayres:** I'm sure it was.

**Margaret Skovira:** It was. The boundaries and all are bigger. That must have an adjustment to play there.

**Janis Ayres:** It was.

<laughter>

**Janis Ayres:** You used a lot more energy.

**Margaret Skovira:** Did you play any other sports?

**Janis Ayres:** Volleyball and softball but those were just an average team out there.

**Margaret Skovira:** But you played against other schools.

**Janis Ayres:** Yeah, we played Fairfield and Natural Bridge, Goshen, Effinger, [Millboro and Spottswood]..

**Margaret Skovira:** Did they give letters in those days? Did you have athletic letters? Did you get letters?

**Janis Ayres:** Yes, we had sweaters.

**Margaret Skovira:** Janis, tell me about how your family got places when you were a kid.

**Janis Ayres:** Well, we had a car. I mean as I said earlier, we had the school bus which was privately owned. Of course, as a kid, we didn't do much goin' except to school and church maybe visit kin people. We raised just about everything we ate. And we had a big garden and chicken, hogs, sheep and cows. And we picked berries and cherries. We'd got to Wade's Store in Bustleburg on a Saturday night and take eggs or chicken or cured side meat or hams to exchange for sugar, coffee or cheese. We would take grains to Harold Wade's Mill where Bill Dunlap lives [803 Hays Creek Road] now to have ground into flour and cornmeal.

**Margaret Skovira:** Anything else? Did you ever go to Lexington as a child or did you stay out in the country?

**Janis Ayres:** We went to Lexington and Staunton but not very often. It was a treat.

**Margaret Skovira:** Was it?

**Janis Ayres:** Now it's an every day occurrence <chuckles>.

**Margaret Skovira:** But not such a treat, right?

**Janis Ayres:** That's right.

**Margaret Skovira:** Okay, thank you. I'm going to-- we're going to stop now. We're going to come back and talk some more. But thank you, Janis, for all you've told us. It's really been interesting.

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