

Lancaster County Historical Society  
Oral History Project

Interviewee: Gerald Bruce  
Interviewer: Elizabeth Falck  
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Transcriber: Ariel Kornhauser  
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B: This is an interview with Miss Elizabeth Falck, a person who has been a resident of Lancaster County since the age of two, and, since her parents were born in Lancaster and she's lived most of her life here, I think she considers Lancaster her home, and considers herself a native Lancasterian.

The interview is taking place at the Lancaster County Library. Today is April 20, 1976. The interviewer is Gerald Bruce.

Miss Falck, you lived on James Street, is that right?

F: Yes, the corner of James and Pine.

B: Could you tell us what it was like growing up on James Street?

F: Indeed, I can. The seminary was there and the college was there with the [Gerthean?] Library and the other Library (I for- [?]), and no science building, beautiful campus, and tennis courts. Beyond the seminary, there were nothing but fields covered with weeds, all the way down to the Harrisburg Pike. And from that corner, we could look down and see the trains from the Pennsylvania railroad. Especially in the evening when there's smoke and so and so forth as they went back and forth. We could also hear the whistles very, very clearly. It was always a bit thrilling to hear those whistles signaling off there in the distance especially when there's a storm coming up; kind of scared you. (*Laughs*)

Across from the seminary there was a plot. Apple Orchard it was called, not on account of the fruit, but on account of the family of Apples who owned the orchard (*B&F laugh*). It belonged to the seminary, and later the seminary built two faculty houses there, next to their president's house on James Street, which was Dr. Pummel's house.

Well, it was an ideal place, James Street, for the gang of children that seemed to gather there. Down at the corner of James and Pine there was a telegraph pole, where summer evenings, we gathered to play "Run a Mile" chiefly. It was our favorite game, and you counted by fives up to one hundred and you said, "Run a mile. I'm coming, ready or not." And you had to run a mile. Well, that's what was said.

Now, an ideal place as dusk fell, to hide, was the seminary campus, because they had big bushes. And in spite of the street lights, you could lie in the shadow of those bushes, and we soon found out that people could pass us within five feet and never see us! And so that was a splendid place. So, the idea was, of course, was that you have to rush when you saw the person who was it, some distance from that pole. You made a dive for it! He saw you start, and ran with you, or after you, you hoped, and whoever touched it first was safe or was "it" for the next time. So this was a great game.

That was one game, but we were pretty noisy children, and we were not allowed to play noisy things on Sunday. The James Street, was kind of a... Well, a couple of faculty residences, you know, and the superintendent of public instruction, Dr. Nathan Schaeffer, and his brood lived there, and there were parents who had ideas about things. And so on Sunday, we'd gather in the seminary campus, and on the steps, and play "Colors." Which, I suppose, everybody knows. You decide on a color, and when your name is called you have to run to a certain point and back again before the person who is it can catch you- can catch up with you, you see. That was comparatively quiet, but more quiet than any other was "Statues." And in "Statues," the person who was it turned his back, and all of you, who were some distance away, began moving slowly up toward him. And when he suddenly turned, you stopped in exactly the pose you found yourself- With one leg up, or one arm up, or half crouching, or what ever. Oh, it was... If he saw the least movement out of you, he called, and you were out for that time. And the idea, of course, was to get there and across the line without him seeing you. It was an extremely quiet game, and it met the parents' approval.

Beside that, we had a great deal of pleasure, that James Street gang, helping the builders. All of the College Avenue, in my childhood, from Dr. Dubb's house, which was the corner, and the house of the campus up there. I mean, opposite the campus on the corner of College Avenue and James, from there on, it was a field: nothing there. And, after a while, they decided to build that row of College Avenue houses that are still there. Well, we helped by walking rafters, which was one of our greatest delights, walking from one rafter, with the hole down between, you know. And, the workmen didn't quite approve of that, and we were chased, very frequently. But every chance we got, we walked rafters. And then later, at that time when I was very little, there was no Franklin and Marshall Academy, at all. Well, they built a brand new building for it