

Buckhead Heritage Society

Oral History Project

Interview with Tina Collins Eib

June 18, 2012

Interviewer: Erica Danylchak

ERICA DANYLCHAK: This is an interview with Tina Collins Eib of Columbia, South Carolina. Ms. Eib is a native Atlantan and grew up in the Buckhead community. She studied English and drama at South Carolina and she became a drama teacher, playwright, drama producer and drama director. The interview is being conducted on June 18, 2012, at the Mathieson Exchange Lofts. The interviewer is Erica Danylchak, representing the Buckhead Heritage Society of Atlanta, Georgia. I want to thank you so much for joining me this afternoon. I'm really looking forward to our interview.

TINA COLLINS EIB: Thank you, Erica. I'm thrilled to be here.

DANYLCHAK: Tell me when and where you were born.

EIB: I was born on February 28, 1944, at Piedmont Hospital here in Atlanta, Georgia.

DANYLCHAK: Can you tell me a little bit about your family?

EIB: Both of my parents were from Georgia, my mother from the Carrollton area, my father near Cartersville, in a little town called Pine Log. And they moved to Atlanta, first the Virginia-Highlands area, before I was born. Both of my older brothers were born in the Virginia-Highlands area, on Greenwood Avenue. And then they moved to the Buckhead area right when I was born. I think I was three weeks old, so I guess that considers me a native Buckheadian.

DANYLCHAK: Do you know what motivated them to move to Buckhead?

EIB: You know, I'm really not quite sure. Probably they were outgrowing the house they lived in in Virginia-Highlands. Because my father started his own meat packing company, but it was on Howell Mill Road, so, you know, it wasn't all that close to either one. I'm not sure exactly why they moved to Buckhead. Probably just heard it was a great place to live. Although it was much more country in those days.

DANYLCHAK: Can you tell me a little bit about your father's business roots, and his establishment of the Southeastern Meat Company?

EIB: He had worked, prior to establishing his own company he had worked down the street on Howell Mill at both the White Provision Company and Swift & Company. Both of those

buildings are still there, of course with other uses now. And his original building at, oh, I think it was 419 Howell Mill Road, but anyway, it's still there, used in a different purpose now. It still has a wonderful graphic advertising painting on the outside of the building denoting that it was at one time Southeastern Meat Company, and a historic marker in front of it, which we're all very proud of. But of course that whole area was the meat packing district. He grew up on a farm and I think he'd just always been interested in cattle and other types of domestic animals and edible animals. That just became his whole life story. Later, when my brothers were both grown and had been educated, they both went into business with him at that location too. Then I would come in in the summers after college and be part-time secretary sometimes.

DANYLCHAK: How long did that company . . . ?

EIB: It started in 1944, which was the year I was born, and it ended—let's see, my father died in 1990 but my brothers kept it going for about five more years, so probably until about 1995, I would say.

DANYLCHAK: Can you describe the houses you lived in in Buckhead when you were growing up?

EIB: The first house was at 4117 Peachtree Dunwoody Road. It was a white brick ranch style home, about where North Stratford came into Peachtree Dunwoody, which was probably about a mile and a half north of Peachtree Road, where Peachtree Dunwoody comes into Peachtree Road. And it was just a nice little modest brick ranch, very heavily wooded behind it, that went down, sloping down to a creek, and sloping up on the other side of the creek, still wooded, it came to Club Drive, which ran behind us. And one of my very closest friends to this day, in fact I'm having lunch with her this afternoon, lived in the house directly behind us on Club Drive. We met when we were about two years old in the backyard, and have remained friends these many years. The next house was only about maybe half a mile north of that house on Lorida Drive, and Lorida Drive ran between Peachtree Dunwoody on one end and Wieuca Road on the other. And our house was about maybe the third or fourth house from Peachtree Dunwoody. We built it. I think my parents built it about 1953. It remains there today. It looks exactly the same. The people that bought it haven't seemed to change it very much, which is kind of cool.

DANYLCHAK: Were a lot of the ranch houses in that area built around the same time?

EIB: Yes, I think they were. On Peachtree Dunwoody, probably most of those houses were built in the maybe late '30s, early '40s. The house that we moved into there was already built and we added onto it. The house on Lorida my parents built from scratch. But, yes, and there weren't that many—where 400 [toll road] crosses over near Lorida today, we had known that that was coming for twenty years before it was ever built. And my parents kept thinking that they might have to move. But that project was put off for some years. But that was the route, it was all wooded right there, between our house and McClatchey school, D. F. McClatchey, which is no longer there. I was the first class to attend D. F. McClatchey School, in the seventh grade. Of

course, I could walk to school, or sometimes run, if I was late. And a lot of my friends went to that school. But prior to that I had gone to R. L. Hope, which is practically across the street from where we are right now, or close, and then I went to Sarah Smith for two years. And then they built D. F. McClatchey, which was practically next door to me.

DANYLCHAK: You had mentioned in one of your emails to me about a memory you had walking between your home and McClatchey school. There was a cemetery. Can you describe that, where it was and what it looked like?

EIB: Yes, I can. And I'm real curious to know, it would be about where 400 crosses today. But I wonder if they left it there. Even then we knew it was old. And that was in 1956 that I went to school there, and '57. But it was a small cemetery. We had heard that it was of African American origin and that there had been a black community right in that area. None of the remnants of that remained but the cemetery. And probably, it's been a long time, but I'm guessing there were no more than ten or twelve graves there. Even then we could tell that it was not new. So I have no idea how long that had been there.

DANYLCHAK: Do you remember what the markers looked like?

EIB: They were very plain. Some of them had names on them, but I have no idea what they were. But just very plain, like stone markers. Sometimes even just a rock, perhaps. Nothing elaborate whatsoever. We were always kind of spooked by it, because it was a cemetery and it was in the woods, you know. As Loridans ran along as a street, it was up on a little raised hill, so you didn't notice it unless you were looking for it, or you were playing in the woods back there. But we all knew about it. No one ever disturbed it or anything like that. Would you like me to tell you about the other community?

DANYLCHAK: I would.

EIB: When we were living on Peachtree Dunwoody, like I said pretty close to where North Stratford came in to Peachtree Dunwoody, there was a home directly across the street from ours, just a nice little home, but behind them there was a community of black people. Very small community. Maybe five or six houses when I was a child. Perhaps it had been larger at one time. I would go up there, it sat on a little hill too, as a child and take food. Actually, I assume my parents knew it, but I would just go get food out of the pantry, because I knew that those people were poor. And one of my most sad memories is one time when I took some food up there, I have two, I probably was about eight years old. But my mother was even then a fabulous cook, and even a gourmet cook, and she kept unusual things in the pantry. I didn't know what they were. And I remember one time I had a can of artichoke hearts, I had no clue what they were. I'm sure no one else did either. But I put those in the bag, and I remember taking them. And they were really just pitiful little shacks that were back there. And I had this bag. And I knocked on the door and nice people opened the door, and I put the cans on the table. And I remember very well them staring at the artichoke hearts trying to figure out what they were, but I didn't know

either. But the sad part was, the gentleman said to me, he said, “Thank you. I feel like Santa Claus has come today.” But he said, “We don’t have a can opener.” And I remember even then I thought, “You don’t have a can opener?” And I can remember vividly he finally got a penknife out of his pocket and started to pry it open, that particular can, to see what the artichoke hearts were. But that community, of course, is long gone. But there was a little community there as well.

DANYLCHAK: Does the name Willis Town ring a bell? Was that what it was known as, do you know?

EIB: I don’t know. I do know that across the street from that little community there was at one time a dairy farm. And I think it was called the Carmain Dairy, because Carmain Road also ran right off, right back there. And my brothers have told me that they remember, I’m not sure if the dairy was still in existence or if it had just closed, but they remember finding lots of milk bottles on that property that said Carmain Dairy. So that’s about where everything was located.

DANYLCHAK: You had mentioned to me in your email that one of your earliest memories was of Molly’s Beauty Parlor, which was right down on Peachtree Road where the triangle park is now. Can you tell me a little bit about Molly’s Beauty Parlor?

EIB: Well, my mother was a regular. She was there every week and often, almost always took me with her. It was on that triangle as I said, one of the first of the little shops. Of course, the triangle wasn’t big, but I was a child. It seemed big to me. The main thing I remember was the smell. Because back in those days ladies would get permanent waves. And the smell of that solution that was put on people’s hair was horrible. I never had to do that because I had curly hair. But they had these contraptions. They were like a big metal hood thing that had wires that came down, and the curlers were on the end of the wires. They hung off of them. And they would put the solution on the ladies’ heads, some kind of liquid solution, and then hook up these curlers all over their head, and then turn on something. I mean, you’d think they were going to be electrified. And that somehow curled their hair. That’s the . . . and I remember sitting there, and your eyes would water because the solution would, you know, kind of sting in the air. But that was a very popular Buckhead ladies’ location. Once in a while I would have my hair trimmed. I remember that from very early.

DANYLCHAK: Did you do most of your errands and shopping right there in the kind of central shopping business district at Peachtree and Roswell?

EIB: A lot of it was done there. But our grocery store was--there were two places that were a little bit closer to where Peachtree Dunwoody came into Peachtree Road. One was the Northside Drug Store, which is directly, or would have been directly across from where Phipps Plaza is today. And next door to the Northside Drug Store was the Matthews Supermarket. And Mr. Matthews was a local vendor, grocer, and he had several locations in Atlanta, but that was a very prominent one. And so we shopped at both of those places frequently, and then in to Buckhead. I

remember Pinckard's Cleaners was in Buckhead on that same triangle. Crystal's Junior Deb Shop was a little young ladies' clothing store. I bought a lot of my clothes there. Jacob's Drug Store was on the very corner, I guess the apex corner, of that. Later changed to something else. And even though there were two other drugstores right there in Buckhead, Wender & Roberts and Hitchcock & Simmons were both right near, there were three together, and . . .

DANYLCHAK: Which was the most popular hangout?

EIB: Wender & Roberts, for sure, which later moved down to the West Paces Ferry Shopping Center, where it remains today. And so I guess those were the three. I'm trying to think, back in that day, what other shops there were, because most of my bigger memories are when I was a teenager, and I went to North Fulton High School, which was right down the street, so we hung out in Buckhead. Oh, the Buckhead Theatre. I didn't mention in my earlier talk with you that every Saturday morning from about the age of maybe nine, eight or nine, all the mothers would drop their kids off at the Buckhead Theatre about noon, every Saturday, every Saturday. And we would stay there all day long, until about five or six o'clock when they would come back and pick us up. And we would watch the movies, and then we'd wander outside and walk around, and then come back. It was so safe, nobody—and that was another way where we got to know, even most of my closest friends in the early years in grammar school went to R. L. Hope. But we got to know kids from Garden Hills grammar school, and a few others in the area, because we all hung out in Buckhead every Saturday morning. It later changed, when I was in high school, to the name of the Capri Theater. And I understand now it's back to the Buckhead Theatre. Then it was the Roxy and then it's back to the Buckhead Theatre. I think a note of interest is that our son, our only son, Eric, when he was in his late twenties, maybe even middle twenties, he was a partner along with three other young men, in a very popular nightclub in Buckhead called the World Bar. And it was, for ten years it was located in the old Woolworth's store, which was right in the heart of Buckhead even as I was growing up. And it was directly across from the, let's see, it was about where Wender & Robert and Hitchcock & Simmons and then the Woolworth store were, and then the Buckhead Hardware Store and then the Buckhead Men's Shop. So it was across the street from where the café, restaurant, is it Nava? It's a Mexican sort of thing, about right in there. And he would go downstairs sometimes while he was working there and find a lot of the stuff left over from the Woolworth store, from the '40s and '50s.

DANYLCHAK: So, and we've heard this before, most people, when they say Buckhead, they mean that commercial area right there at Peachtree and Roswell. Was there a particular name that you associated with the area where you lived on Peachtree Dunwoody or Loridans?

EIB: Well, it was still within the Buckhead census perimeter. Because I've recently looked at that. And it was all those, about to Loridans and just a little bit past that was still considered the Buckhead area. But it's funny you ask that because about where Phipps Plaza is today, maybe starting with where Peachtree Dunwoody comes in to Peachtree Road, and up until what we think of as the Buckhead business district, that area was called Sunnyside. And I bet a lot of

people have forgotten that. But I never have known why except that the old Phipps estate, which is where Phipps Plaza sits today, was the most beautiful, I don't know how many hundreds of acres the Phipps family had there, but there was a big white picket fence that ran along Peachtree Road in front of the Phipps estate, about where, it started about where Wieuca comes in to Peachtree today. And running all, well, until about where the Lenox Towers are today. That was all the Phipps estate. But the home, which was a mansion, sat way back off the road. There was wooded area, but you could still see the mansion back there. And maybe they called their estate Sunnyside. I'm not sure. But that was known as Sunnyside. And we always thought of Buckhead as almost as far down Peachtree as to where Brookhaven started, from about, almost where Peachtree Battle is down to Brookhaven. People sort of generally thought of that as the Buckhead area, although it was really as you said the business district that was identified mostly as Buckhead.

DANYLCHAK: Going back to your family, can you describe a typical family dinner in your household?

EIB: We always ate exactly at 6:30. You better be there. And because I was by far the youngest of my two siblings—my oldest brother was sixteen years older than I. And my next oldest brother is nearly ten years older. So in essence I grew up almost as an only child. My oldest brother left home for college when I was four, and my other brother left home when I was maybe in the fourth grade. But anyway, a typical dinner would have been at 6:30. My mother was a fabulous cook, amazing for her day. We still call her the Martha Stewart of her time. Don't know where she learned all of her amazing skills, but she could cook both just down-home country cooking and also very gourmet cooking, thus the artichoke hearts. And she always decorated the plates, even for just my father and I, with little parsley flowers or a pickled apple or something that you would see today in a high-end restaurant. We just thought that was normal. We didn't know people didn't do that. But she was an amazing cook and we ate very well—unfortunately [laughs]. We learned, you know, now people are talking about farm to table cooking and everything's organic. And, of course, my father owned a meat packing company so we always had meat. But everything was organic in those days. We didn't know from processed. So we ate very well. We always had iced tea, at every meal, homemade iced tea. And my mother grew mint in the garden so we always had mint and lemon with our iced tea, which I think is funny. The mint seems to have disappeared from the table these days as far as iced tea. And always homemade breads. Nearly always a dessert of some sort. She was just an amazing cook. And everybody, we had lots of family reunions at our house, people would come for her food.

DANYLCHAK: You mentioned to me in your email that your parents often had Governor Talmadge and his wife for dinner. Do you remember any of those dinners?

EIB: I do. I was very strongly admonished as to how to behave when they came. The reason they were such good friends was because his wife, Betty Talmadge at the time, owned her own ham company, and it was called the Talmadge Ham Company. And they had a home down in

Lovejoy, Georgia, which is where they lived when they weren't in Atlanta. They had two sons, one of whom was my age and whom I dated quite a bit in high school. He went at that time to Georgia Military Academy, which is now Woodward Academy. But they came frequently, they were good friends. And we went down to Lovejoy frequently, to their home. And I don't know who's going to hear this story, because some of them are still amongst us, but one funny story that I've always laughed about is whenever we went to Lovejoy I had to be on my very best manners. And we were sitting at their table one night, and Mrs. Talmadge had done a wonderful meal. She was a great cook too. And I had been told, you know, exactly how to sit and behave myself. And one of the boys, the one who still remains, reached over in front of me and knocked my water glass down, all over me. And I remember I was just totally shocked. And my mother was looking at me over the table like "don't say a word. It's perfectly fine." That's just one of my early memories. Another one I'll tell you quickly is one time when they were at our house. Obviously my father served steaks a lot, since that was his specialty. And when the steaks were presented at the table, Governor Talmadge, who might have been senator by that time, I'm not sure, said, "Do you have any A-1 Sauce." And I said, automatically, "Oh, we don't use any sauce on Daddy's steaks. That's not right." And my father just about died, because . . . if you wanted to put salt on it it was fine. But those are just some family stories.

DANYLCHAK: I want to go back to talking about your school days. You mentioned the schools that you attended. Can you tell me about, let's start with R. L. Hope. Describe the school a little bit to me, what you remember of the school and maybe one of your favorite memories from your days at R. L. Hope.

EIB: It's funny how you remember smells. And I can remember what it smelled like walking into the school. It was not an unpleasant smell, but it was the smell, I think, of what the janitors used to put on the floors. They were wooden floors. The janitors in the schools had these long brooms. They would put sort of like a sawdust on the floor that maybe had oil in it, and push it around on the wooden floors to keep them shiny. If somebody was alive today that was one of those people, they'd probably look at me like what are you talking about. But that was what I saw in my mind. And that had a certain, not unpleasant, odor, but that was only associated with the school. R. L. Hope had been there a long time. I don't know how long. But anyway, so it was not a new school. But it was very attractive. It had individual classrooms, of course. It had the old-fashioned desks that were wooden desks that you had to slide into on a little bench. Gosh, that sounds so old. And I remember the teachers all being very good, and a wonderful big playground behind it. And old oak trees, big oak trees. Just a very pleasant experience at R. L. Hope. They had a big Halloween carnival every year, and everybody looked forward to that. It was more than what typically would be done today. There were all kinds of foods and there was a flower show, children, girl children would learn how to make flower arrangements and they were judged, and there was a cakewalk and people would make cakes. It was just kind of a fun day. Nice school. But at a certain point, I guess it was probably when we moved onto Loridans, even though it was very close to our Peachtree Dunwoody home. Sarah Smith suddenly seemed

closer, or I was in their district. So in the fifth and sixth grade I transferred over to Sarah Smith, which I understand is still a thriving school today. And then in the seventh grade they had just built McClatchey, which was practically next door to our house. So that's why I went to those three schools.

DANYLCHAK: What was McClatchey like?

EIB: I thought it was great. Of course, it was brand new the year I was there. It was all on one level. It was a very modern looking school in its day. And every classroom was color coded according to the grade you were in. If you were in the first grade it was maybe all, there were usually two rooms for each grade, two teachers for each grade. And so, like you were in the seventh grade, you had green rooms, which I happen to remember that we did. And that is the first grammar school I had ever attended where we had a male teacher. He was, and it was seventh grade. He was not my teacher, he was in the other classroom, but Mr. Fabian was his name. I thought that was most unusual. And everybody thought he was just great, a great teacher. I had the other teacher, Mrs. Attaway, and she was very good too. But that was, perhaps even still today, somewhat unusual, I don't really know, for elementary school. It was a really nice school, with a huge playground behind it, very nice.

DANYLCHAK: Can you tell me about the sororities and fraternities that were at North Fulton High School which you attended thereafter?

EIB: Yes. They had actually stopped the sororities and fraternities before I got there. Although when my brother was there, they had regular, just like they would in colleges, they had regular sororities and fraternities. He's told me about his experience. They all had Greek letters, and they all had initiations and invitations and what have you. And I think that it got too exclusive, especially because even then Buckheadians thought of themselves as being somewhat exclusive. So it probably was a little elitist, and they did away with it. But, when I got to North Fulton, my first year, and back then, I don't know how long this went on, maybe forever, but North Fulton started in the eighth grade. There was no middle schools or junior highs. So you went to high school in Buckhead from eighth to twelfth. Really quite a diversity, and I never thought that that was a great idea. But anyway, we had, although there were no exclusive clubs at North Fulton, there were clubs where you had to meet certain requirements, maybe grade-wise, like the Beta Club or the National Honor Society or whatever, which I was not in [laughs]. But there were no exclusive clubs as part of the school. But outside of the school, this may be what you're talking about, we did have, which we didn't think anything different about them, there were clubs for girls, depending on your age grade, that were basically dance clubs, in that we held two or three dances each year. Had nothing to do with the school, and only certain girls were invited to join. And one was the Southern Belles Cotillion, quite a name, one was the Dixie Debs, we were just talking about this with some friends the other day, and the other one was the Junior Duchesses. Talk about elitist names. And the mothers somehow, you would get a formal invitation to be invited to join this club, so it was elitist to some degree. And the dances were usually held at the

Cherokee Town Club or the Piedmont Driving Club or, I'd forgotten, but there was the Atlanta Athletic Club, which was downtown, but that was one of the places. There was a wonderful old, they called it a garden club, but I'm not sure exactly what it was. It was at the end of, near Carmain Drive and North Stratford, there was an old clubhouse back there.

DANYLCHAK: Peachtree Gardens.

EIB: Peachtree Gardens, that was it. And we had lots of dances there. It was very romantic. It was a beautiful setting.

DANYLCHAK: Could you describe Peachtree Gardens to me?

EIB: It was a big, white, one-level house, I mean, looking, wooden, that had a terrace on the back. It was kind of, in my mind, like something you'd see from an old '30s or '40s movie, where they would have these beautiful dances on the terrace. And there was an orchestra stand, and there was always like a sixteen-piece orchestra there, which was just wonderful. And the girls would really dress up in their most formal gowns, and the boys with their white dinner jackets or tuxedos depending on the time of the year. I have to just digress for a minute and tell you that when I think about this now it blows my mind, that we were so privileged to grow up in that kind of a—first, a neighborhood like Buckhead. And we didn't even know. It's not like we were all real snooty. And nobody's parents were millionaires. But it was the time, it was that magical '50s and early '60s, where everybody was somewhat prosperous and safe. I just still can't get over it. My son just thinks it's amazing that we grew up like this. But anyway, back to Peachtree Gardens, it had a nice little parking lot, and it was in a beautiful wooded setting. I think that club has probably long been torn down. There was also a little small pond next door to it. It was probably a drainage ditch, but we thought it was attractive. But it was, even then we thought that particular setting was very magical. So we had several of our dances there. Cherokee Town Club was pretty magical too. It was in its early incarnation. But it had been a mansion on West Paces, so it was still lovely. . . those were really special times.

DANYLCHAK: When you were at North Fulton, you told me that you formed a sisterhood with your closest friends. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

EIB: Most of us, there were thirteen young ladies, and most of us had known each other since kindergarten, although through the years, between kindergarten and North Fulton, eighth grade, you know, some had moved in and what have you. But we sort of formed a sisterhood in eighth grade and we added one or two as the years passed by, because most of us saw each other all the time anyway. The majority of us went to Peachtree, first it was called Peachtree Road Presbyterian Church, which was on the corner of Mathieson Drive and Peachtree Road, and then about 19--, I'm guessing here, maybe '59, that church moved onto Roswell Road, where it remains today. And it's now called and it was then, the Peachtree Presbyterian. They just dropped . . . Road. And so a lot of us went to Sunday School there and a lot of activities there, and already knew each other, although some of the girls went to Garden Hills Elementary. But

we still saw each other at church. And then a lot of us were in the same Brownie and Scout troops together. Many of our parents all knew each other through maybe some local club like the Rotary Club or the Lions Club or the country clubs. So we were just almost already a family, although we began to pick and choose who was going to be in this little special sisterhood, which we called the DGHRs. And we pledged that we would never tell anybody ever, ever, what those letters meant. Some of us just got together last Saturday and several of them said to me, “You’re not going to tell Erica what that means, are you?” And I said, “I promise not to.” But we stayed together all through high school. And we still are together today. We still see each other about once a year. We live all over the country now. A few still live in Buckhead, too, actually. But we get together now once, at least one weekend out of every year, wherever we can. All over. Mainly the East Coast somewhere. And our children all know each other. It’s really pretty special. But what I was going to say about that is that we, one of the really cool things about it was you always had this group of women available to you, just like sisters, except better, who were such a support system. You know, the teenage years are so full of angst and you’re breaking up with somebody or you don’t have somebody to break up with or whatever it is, you knew that every weekend you were not going to be sitting home in your room by yourself, because every single weekend somebody had a spend-the-night party at their house. And even if you did have a date you would come back to their house after your date, which was always fun for the rest of us. But, anyway, it was just great. And you were never lonely. We didn’t suffer the horrible feeling of being left out of things, because we were such a group. I think that’s amazing too. We talk about that quite frequently when we get together. And in my notes to you I had said that two of the women actually married Buckhead boys, but I’d forgotten, there are actually three who did. So that’s kind of cool. And as I said, we still keep very much in touch today.

DANYLCHAK: What kind activities did you all partake in?

EIB: I can’t tell! [laughter] It was all in good fun. There is one thing that they asked if I was going to tell you, our most infamous evening. One of our friends lived over near Land O Lakes Drive, near Sarah Smith School. And we were having a spend the night party that night. We were probably juniors in high school, about that age, sixteen or so. And we all had on our pajamas. It was about two o’clock in the morning, and we for some reason decided to walk to the Swan House. In our pajamas. And we knew the back roads to get over there. As the crow flies it’s really not that far. But we did have to cross over Roswell Road and get over to Habersham. And we walked all the way—of course, this was before the Swan House became the Atlanta Historical Society. People were still living in it. In fact, a little note, we called it, we didn’t call it the Swan House. We didn’t know that was what it was called. We called it the House of Two Lights, because, and we later found out, at the very top of the Swan House, on the third floor, there are, there’s two, I forget what you call them, but there are two prominent windows that sort of stick out. It has a name but it’s escaping me what you call them right now. But those two lights at the top of the Swan House were always on, every night. Well, later, heard from somebody—I think the Inmans lived there—that two of the elderly Inmans only slept in the

bedrooms on the top of the house, and that those were no doubt their bedrooms. But we didn't know that. We just thought it was spooky. So we walked all the way there, at like three o'clock in the morning, with our pajamas on. It was in the summertime because we had on those little baby doll pajamas that girls wore back in the day. And we got there and those two lights were on, but there were a bunch of bushes at the entrance. Of course, it was a private home, but you could still walk up the driveway. There were no gates. So we walked up the driveway, and another light—somebody realized, they might have had a security system, I don't know. We didn't hear anything, but another light came on. And we all ran back down to the bottom and got behind those, probably boxwood bushes, and had to stay in there because a police car came by. Someone had called the police. But they didn't see us because we were inside the bushes. And we laughed at that, first about how stupid that was, and second, what would have happened. They probably would have just put us in the car and taken us back home. That was probably the most infamous thing we did. We did go down to the Varsity a lot once we were driving. And to Zesto over on Piedmont Road. That was a big hangout for North Fulton kids. Zesto in Buckhead also. I don't know if that one's still there or not, but the one on Piedmont Road is.

DANYLCHAK: Where was the one in Buckhead?

EIB: It was almost, it was sort of catty-cornered across from the Buckhead Theater. What's that little short street that comes from Buckhead to Roswell? I don't know if it's still there. It's where the park would be now.

DANYLCHAK: Sardis Way?

EIB: Yes. It was on the corner of Sardis and Roswell, near the Cotton Exchange Building, which I know is still there. We just did silly, fun things, nothing outrageous. Well, I won't say nothing outrageous, but nothing I can tell you about. Not too bad.

DANYLCHAK: You mentioned to me in your email about local department stores offering special classes for Buckhead girls. Can you tell me what those classes were and which ones you attended?

EIB: I probably attended all of them, because my mother made me. Regenstein's was a wonderful store in Buckhead. It was locally owned. The Regenstein family were very prominent Buckhead folks, and they owned, I think there was a Regenstein's downtown as well. The one in Buckhead was approximately across from where the Methodist church is today, on Peachtree. What is that church called? [Peachtree Road] United Methodist Church. I can't think of what it's called. But anyway, there's a little strip shopping center on Peachtree Road, and that's where it was. It was a fairly large department store, women's, I don't think they had men's clothes. Upscale. But they offered a charm school for young ladies in Buckhead every year, and I think maybe even twice a year. We would go. I think you had to probably be in the eighth grade. Anyway, they had models, real models that would teach the classes. And, you know, just teach you how to talk to people and how to sit. We always had to sit like this. It looked like we were

holding something illegal in our hands. And you could never cross your legs, that was not acceptable. Because girls always wore dresses back in that time. And how to eat properly. I mean, what fork and knife to use, that sort of thing. And how to be charming. And at the end of the class—I recall that it met on Saturday morning for six weeks. Oh, and they would show you what clothes were appropriate for your body type and how to fix your hair for your hair type. And if we were starting to wear makeup just how to apply that tastefully. At the end of the six weeks they had a real fashion show in the store where they built a runway. And the girls would all model clothes from the store. And people would come from all over and watch. Sears also, when it was first built, the old, what we thought was the new Sears, it was built on the corner of West Paces and Peachtree Road, they had a charm school too. I don't think I did go to that one. But probably all the others. There was another prominent store, locally owned, that I forgot to mention. It was called J. P. Allen. And J. P. Allen was located, when Lenox Square was first built, which was probably about 1957 or something, in there. It was a lovely store, similar to Regenstein's. They also had a charm school. And then if you were a Scout, a Girl Scout in Buckhead, maybe that's where we all went. We went from our Girl Scout troop, I can't remember. But we had people come in and show us how to be charming and how to wear makeup. So not that it always worked, but nonetheless, the stores were big—oh, today I was thinking as I was driving down Peachtree. A very prominent jewelry store locally was called Maier & Berkele. And I saw something today that said the Brown Company. I don't know what that is, but that's on Peachtree near Piedmont. And Maier & Berkele had several fine jewelry stores. And every year, I don't know when they stopped this, they would give the seniors of all the high schools in Buckhead—Northside, North Fulton, Dykes High School, which was in existence at that time, probably Lovett and Westminster as well—they would give you, the girls, a silver, it was a replica of a silver spoon, in a pattern that you might choose if you were getting married. And it was a pin, like a brooch. And in my high school class, I think maybe of '62, we all had those on in our senior pictures. The girls did. I don't know if they gave the boys anything or not. But I think my point is that the community here was very involved with the schools. They wanted to make sure that as you grew up and got married and stayed in Buckhead, hopefully, you would still patronize. Huff's Furniture Store was here, on the corner of, real near where we are today, in the little strip mall across the street from Mathieson Drive. And they were a local family. Everybody bought their furniture at Huff's. The White House, which was a place to eat, a restaurant, I think they have just gone recently. But they were a part of Buckhead history at the time. There was another restaurant at the corner of Mathieson and Peachtree called the Dixie House. And that was probably in the '50s. They were very popular. I'm running on here. I'm sorry.

DANYLCHAK: You mentioned Lenox Square. How exciting was that when that opened? Did you all start to do all of your shopping there instead of downtown Buckhead?

EIB: Tremendous. Well, that was definitely the beginning of the transition for Buckhead, there's no question, looking back on it. Everybody went to Lenox Square when it was new. It was so

exciting. We had never seen anything like it. As I recall, it was the first major mall shopping in the South when it was built. It was, of course, not covered at that time. It was open air. And Rich's and at that time called Davison's, which later became Macy's, was there, and a lot, it was a two-level, now I guess it's three levels, but it was just two levels at the time. Most of the major stores, even some from downtown Buckhead, moved there. That Crystal's shop that I mentioned before, closed in Buckhead and moved to Lenox Square. Anyway, going back for a minute, because my father was in the meat business and later other provisions for restaurants, he knew just about everybody that had a restaurant in the whole city of Atlanta. Because his was the most popular of the meat provisioners. So as part of his job, he thought, which was great for us, we ate out all the time. He felt that was part of his good will to his customers. So that was lucky for us because we ate in everything from the Varsity to—he and Frank Gordy were very good friends at the time, when the Varsity first started, well, not when it first started but when we were kids. And Yohannan's restaurant was one of the big restaurants in Lenox Square when it opened. And Daddy was a very good friend of Mr. Yohannan, who owned the restaurant. It was very upscale, one of the first in the Buckhead area that would be like a New York restaurant. So we ate there frequently. And Hart's restaurant, I don't know if you've had anybody mention that, was the other upscale restaurant. It was on Peachtree Road near the Garden Hills area now. What was the original question? [laughs]

DANYLCHAK: I was asking you about Lenox.

EIB: Lenox, yes. We spent a lot of time at Lenox. It sort of transitioned from meeting at the Buckhead Theatre on Saturday mornings to meeting at Lenox Square on Saturday mornings. Most of us by that time were in the eighth grade or so and we could hang out there most of the day. So it was great. And there was a movie theater there and a bowling alley, and just plain fun things to do. We just enjoyed it.

DANYLCHAK: Well, let's transition from that to church. [laughs] You mentioned Peachtree Road Presbyterian. I'm particularly interested in your memories of that and the move from the church that was here on Mathieson Drive over to Roswell. As we were coming in today you pointed out the little building that used to be behind it, which was the Sunday School. Can you talk to me a little bit about Peachtree Road Presbyterian and what that looked like on Mathieson?

EIB: Yes. There are pictures of it online somewhere, I've seen them. But it was a grey granite, I've always heard from Stone Mountain granite built. It had been there for quite a while before I was born, but I was literally born into the church rolls. My parents were already members there, and one of the reasons they were was because I had an aunt that lived over on East Paces Ferry, and she was the church secretary there. And so she sort of talked them into changing from Methodist to Presbyterian because it was sort of her church. And so both of my brothers grew up in that church as well. It was a beautiful, sort of gothic looking church, not huge, just a medium size, right here in the heart of Buckhead. And then that little building, which remains today, was what was called the Sunday School building. And most of the Sunday School classes met in that

building. It had two stories. I saw today, it looks like there's an addition on the back and I don't think that was there from the beginning. It could have been. But behind that building, I was kind of peeking today, was a big playground. And although I went to R. L. Hope in kindergarten, they had so many kindergarten classes that they had to push one over here. So I actually went to kindergarten in that building and in that playground although it was part of R. L. Hope school's kindergarten. Kind of interesting. It was a lovely church, nice grounds. Lots of Scout troops met there. There was a little Scout hut on the property. And in the back of the church there was a concrete area that sort of looked like a tennis court but it wasn't. I guess it was just a playground. But it was beautiful. And then on the side it was obviously Mathieson Drive, right here, and it's hard to look out this window and see that it was the same place. But then the shopping center that still remains there on the corner of Mathieson was there. But there was a drugstore there on the corner. And I can remember, between Sunday School and church some of the kids would run over to the drugstore and buy candy and then come back for church, and sit there and eat it. But it was a lovely church. The pastor at the time was Eugene Wilson, Eugene T. Wilson. And then that changed. And then the church outgrew itself. As Buckhead started expanding it just became huge. And so they built the property over on Roswell Road which is now just huge. That was the actual church that my husband and I were married in, the one on Roswell Road.

DANYLCHAK: And where did you meet your husband?

EIB: At the University of South Carolina. He was a football player there and I had been warned to stay away from the football players. And, of course, he was one of the first people I met. But he had already been there several years. And I had been there maybe two weeks when I walked into the cafeteria one day. And the football players all ate together, in a separate part of the cafeteria. They called it the Animal Cage. But I happened to glance over there this one day, and he was looking at me with this huge smile on his face. He kind of winked at me. And I thought, "Oh, my." So I kept on, and the next day when I came back, he was there again. And this time he got up and came and sat down at my table and introduced himself. And that was it. We've now been married forty-seven years. But I always told him, he had already been in college for two years and dated all these people. I met him two weeks after I got there. But it seems to have worked.

DANYLCHAK: And what led you to South Carolina and your majors, English and drama?

EIB: Well, I've always been very interested in drama. In fact, my parents put me into acting lessons when I was about five years old here in Atlanta. I studied with a woman who was very well known in Atlanta at the time. Her name was Faye Druitt Harrison. And she had a studio, an actors' studio, for both children and adults. Let's see where it would be. Well, it was on Peachtree Road but it was down further, almost to town. I can't remember exactly where it was. But I studied with her from about the age of five until I was about fifteen, and was in a lot of local productions. And I just loved it, and I still do. And also my parents had season tickets to Theater Under the Stars, which met at Chastain Park Amphitheater. So we went every summer to

every production, and I just felt like I was in every one of them. I was just enamored of them. And I've just always loved theater. And when I was at South Carolina, the reason I went there in the first place was not because of the theater but because my best friend was going to school there. That's the way I chose. Most of my friends were going to the University of Georgia, and I decided that I was going to branch out and go somewhere else. My best friend that went there dropped out after the first six months, so, but I didn't care, I had Richard at that time. Anyway, that's how I ended up in South Carolina. The kind of odd thing about that is that after we graduated from school, we stayed there for another year. Richard had gotten a job. Then we moved back to Atlanta, moved back to Buckhead, and then he got a job in Conyers, and we decided to move to Athens, which wasn't too bad of a drive. And then we got another job back in Columbia, which is where we live now and have been for ten years. So we have made a full circle, which is kind of funny.

DANYLCHAK: Can you tell me what your favorite job is that you've had?

EIB: The most recent one. I'm recently, well, four years retired from teaching high school drama. And I absolutely loved it. And I still have a drama group in my church, sort of a drama ministry, which I do from time to time. But I love teenagers. I always have. I love working with them. I love watching them prosper and gain self-confidence, and theater is a great way to do it. You don't have to be, obviously, an actor. There are so many different roles in theater, from lighting to sound to prop guy or whatever. I write a lot of the plays that I do, because, especially in high school I had a hard time finding plays that were appropriate. I taught in a Catholic high school, and some things were out of bounds, as well as I never like to turn somebody down. I would have auditions and I would have fifty students and I would have ten places in the play and I thought, "I just can't break their hearts." So I would end up writing a play with fifty parts in it. But I love doing that. I just love it. In fact, we went to a play the other night out in Cumming at the Cumming Playhouse, had a friend who was in the play. I just turned to Richard and I said, "Oh, I really miss doing this. I've got to get back to doing this somehow." I just always have loved it. I see it as a wonderful way to develop self-confidence.

DANYLCHAK: Well, you've covered quite a bit of ground in the last hour. Is there anything that I've missed that you really wanted to tell me about today?

EIB: I think that I lived in Buckhead, and in talking with my friends, we all agree, in a very magical time. It was just like a time out of history. The war, World War II was over, Vietnam had not yet started. The country was at peace, and people were prospering again. The Depression was somewhat forgotten. And this particular part of Atlanta was, and I'm going to jump back and say, there are certainly groups of people who would not agree with this. Because it was exclusive, the whole time era was exclusive. Not a great time for black people or people of any ethnicity other than what we were at the time. We did not really get that. It was--I need to say that. We didn't understand that. We certainly do now. But we lived in a fairy tale time. And all of the kids in Buckhead, if you didn't know each other, like from Northside or Westminster, you

knew their sister or their cousin or their best friend, so we felt like a real true community here in Buckhead. And as I mentioned before, most of the store owners recognized you when you came in. They might not have known your name but they'd see you very frequently, or your parents. Restaurants were the same way, churches were the same way. Often the churches would get together for a big picnic or something. It was just a real small town with a very prosperous edge to it. Most of us had no clue how fortunate we really were. But also, another thing real quickly is that, starting from about maybe the seventh grade, you could hop on the Number 3 Oglethorpe bus and go downtown as a child and feel perfectly safe. Go to Rich's or Davison's or eat lunch at the S&S Cafeteria, you know, with a friend, or go to a movie. No parents thought anything about it. There was just no real crime that we knew about. So I totally admit that the Buckhead that I have been describing only existed for a short time probably. But as a result of that we all still, those of us who are still talking to each other, still talk about what great days those were.

DANYLCHAK: Well, they sound like amazing days to me.

EIB: They were.

DANYLCHAK: And I thank you for sharing some of those memories with me today. This has been an absolute pleasure for me.

EIB: It has been for me too. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to do this.

DANYLCHAK: You're welcome. Thank you.