

VOICES OF THE CAPE FEAR

Recorded and Edited by
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INTRODUCTION

The idea of producing a series of recorded interviews of local people originated in January 1994. It occurred to me then that a good deal of information about local events and history in the twentieth-century would be lost with the deaths of certain people of our citizenry who had lived over this past nine and one-half decades. I experimented with some trial interviews to become acquainted with this process and then made a firm decision to proceed as soon as possible recognizing current commitments. I discussed the project with David Paynter of the New Hanover County Library and he encouraged me to do the project saying that it is needed and would be welcomed as an addition to the reference sources of the library.

The first group of people considered important to see were those in the age group of the eighties and above. I soon realized that this was too narrow an area and that people who had contributed substantially to the cultural and business life of the area should be also selected, as well as those who had experienced a particularly important segment of the community for a stated period of time. I further realized that some people I would normally have considered important to see had already died. So, in several cases, I interviewed members of their families as a means of including their contributions. This thinking process finally produced a formula and a profile of those whom I would like to interview. It became difficult to make the individual selections because of so many qualified persons; so it became a matter of choosing those with whom I was acquainted who would do well on interview. The number also had to be considered and I settled on thirty to thirty-five interviews as being a number sufficiently large to include a wide cross-section of New Hanover County's various facets of business, education, activities, etc. After a number of the interviews had been done, I realized that there was information that I knew from

my own time in Wilmington that began in 1936 which was not being given, so I recorded a tape of simple information and experiences of my own. I hope this will not be considered as self-advancing but a supplement to the interviews.

I would like to comment on the interviews. These were conducted in homes, offices and other places sometimes under less than optimum conditions. Therefore, there are background noises and interruptions occasionally that occur which make the tapes imperfect technically, but the conversation is not lost. Please be understanding in this regard.

An attempt has been made to index the tapes in two ways to make them more useful to the researcher or listener. These indexes follow this introduction.

It is hoped that this effort will be worthwhile in providing a unique and permanent record of these people since it is recorded in their actual voices on specific dates and at known places. My thanks for the fine cooperation of those asked to participate.

Samuel D. Bissette
November 1, 1995

Voices of the Cape Fear - Index

The original audiotaped interviews were indexed separately to indicate interview date and content. These two methods have been combined below. In addition to the 34 interviews there is a two-part self-interview in an appendix in Volume II.

Volume I

Beery, William B., Jr. - June 30, 1995 - Merchant and Civic Leader

Biography --- Genealogy of Beery Family --- Story of Belk-Beery company --- Business life of Wilmington from fifties to eighties --- Observations on significant community events

Benson, Dr. E. Stuart, Jr. - September 1, 1995 - Retired Dentist

Early Childhood in Wilmington --- Father's drugstore in the center of Dry Pond --- Stories about life during the Great Depression --- Biographical stories --- Certain people remembered

Block, Hannah - June 15, 1995 - Political and Community Leader

Story of arrival in Wilmington --- Post World War II days ---Block family ---Background of the Azalea Festival for decades --- Political career --- Acquaintanceship with names of the day --- Historic District development.

Boney, Leslie N., Jr. - July 31, 1995 - Architect

Leslie Boney, Sr. and the Boney family ---The Boney architectural firm --- Biographical activities at local, state and national level --- Review of significant projects.

Brooks, William J. - August 11, 1995 - Retired Athletic Director UNCW

Early biography --- New Hanover High School days --- Event description of development of athletic program at UNCW --- Review of sports figures of the past --- The career of Leon Brogden --- Baseball at UNCW.

Burney, John J., Jr. - June 19, 1995 - Attorney and N.C. Senator

Father was Judge Burney --- World War II experiences --- Local legal experiences --- Life as a criminal lawyer --- Activities with UNC --- Anecdotes of several sorts --- Political.

Cameron, Daniel D. - October 30, 1995 - Businessman, Politician, and Philanthropist

Cameron family --- Early years --- World War II experiences --- Business life --- Mayor --- Community business development --- All-American City --- Comment on events of note.

Cashman, Diane Cobb - August 24, 1995 - Author and Historian

Personal history prior to Wilmington residency --- Published works since arrival in Wilmington --- Local historical interests --- Lower Cape Fear Historical Society history --Future projects and those in progress.

Corbett, Albert - August 11, 1995 - Manufacturer, Politician, and Civic Leader

Story of Corbett family from Atkinson --- Waddell Corbett --- Corbett Industries --Story of

Airlie Gardens --- Description of national businesses of Corbett Industries --- Local background of seventies and eighties.

Crouch, Auley M., III - September 2, 1995 - Attorney

Background of the family of Dr. Auley M, Crouch from Roberdell, N.C. --- The Crouch Clinic of Dr. Crouch and two sons, Doctors Walter Lee and Auley M. Crouch, Jr. --- Family History --
- Anecdotes --- Persons close to Crouch family.

Davis, Peter R. - August 9, 1995 - Merchant, Politician and Community Leader

Family background of J. Holmes Davis Family --- Delgado and Spofford Mills --- Political involvement in New Hanover County --- Observations on local events --- Business and civic life of Wilmington.

Dobson, Helen E. - August 14, 1995 - Teacher and Musician

Local educational background --- Musical background of Wilmington --- First Baptist Church --
- Stories of Henri Emurian, organist at First Baptist ---Some observations on Wilmington events since the twenties.

Dorsey, W. Kendall - March 4, 1995 - Educator, Author, and Historian

Early days of Wilmington College --- Creating audio-visual programs for state Board of Education --- Bijou theatre --- Freedom Foundation of Valley Forge award winner ---Sound and film innovator --- Active octogenarian.

Fales, Dr. Robert M. - June 21, 1995 - Physician and Historian

Early Wilmington Days --- Recollection of events --- Medical experiences --- Popular anecdote --- Books written.

Fox, John Harper - June 30, 1995 - Retired, Baking Products Manufacturer and Civic Leader

Early Wilmington days --- Fox Bakery business --- Civic events in Wilmington's past ---UNCW --- Battleship North Carolina --- Cape Fear Hospital history --- Wilmington's business history --
- Connections with many civic organizations --- Financial community.

Huggins, Everett - June 7, 1995 - Retired Jeweler

Early downtown history --- Wilmington families of the past --- Lifetime resident of Historical District --- History of jewelry business --- Anecdotes and remembrances of Wilmington's past.

Laney, Emsley A. - August 25, 1995 - Retired Banker and Civic Leader

Early biography --- Arrival in Wilmington 1929 --- Starting and history of Morris Plan Bank --- Depression experiences --- History of banking in North Carolina --- Anecdotes --- Board of Education history for many years --- Civic experiences.

Lee, Estelle Carter - August 2, 1995 - Shipping, Civic Leader, and N.C. Secretary of Commerce

South Carolina origin --- UNCW years --- Shipping in Wilmington --- Civic events and activities --- Local and state political service --- Philosophical observations on Wilmington and Cape Fear Area.

Volume II

MacRae, Hugh, II - August 7, 1995 - Real Estate Developer and Investor

Biography --- Business and real estate development --- Hanover Center ---South Oleander --- The Oleander Company --- The Hugh MacRae story of his colonies --- Linville --- The Hugh MacRae family.

Morrison, Winifred Shepard - August 13, 1995 - 98 Year-old Citizen

Life in Wilmington early in the century --- Seventy-five years at Wrightsville Beach --Events remembered --- Observations on approaching 100 years of age --- Facts of daily living as it was through the years.

Murchison, Wallace C. - June 9, 1995 - Retired Attorney and Civic Leader

Early biography --- Murchison family history --- Legal practice in Wilmington --- Various civic activities --- Remembrances of legal background of area.

Pennington, James C. and Anna Feenstra - August 22, 1995 - Cape Fear Aviation Pioneers

Family backgrounds --- James C. known as "Skinny" --- His wartime flying experiences in China --- Her early flying days --- History of aviation in New Hanover County --Beginning of New Hanover County Airport - Bluethenthal Field --- Other aviation information.

Perry, Mrs. Albert F., (Marie) - August 22, 1995 - Long-time Wilmington Resident

Beginnings of the Albert F. Perry family --- Arrival in Wilmington --- Memories of the many decades of Wilmington life --- Perry family --- Details of Perry Insurance building on Princess Street --- Albert F. Perry's career.

Pierce, Mrs. Marilyn de Vany - August 24, 1995 - Amateur Genealogist

Personal history --- Relationship with the Beery family --- Anecdotes and information relative to the Beery family and shipyard during the civil war --- Memories of events in the life of Wilmington.

Reaves, Joseph R. - September 18, 1995 - Realtor, Contractor, Developer, and Civic Leader

Wilmington native --- Early days --- Wartime experiences --- Business career in fifties to eighties --- The story of the Cotton Exchange --- Civic activities --- Observations on Wilmington.

Rehder, Henry B. - February 1, 1995 - Retired Florist, Civic Leader, and Botanical Expert

Formation of Rehder Florist --- Rehder family history --- Formation of N.C. Azalea Festival --- European travel conductor --- Lutheran church ---present activities at age 84.

Schwartz, Benjamin D. - July 21, 1995 - Retired Furniture Merchant, Investor, N.C. Senator, Politician, and Civic Leader

Schwartz family history --- Jewish religious history in Wilmington --- Civic activities --Board Chairman and other activities UNCW --- Mayor of Wilmington ---Anecdotes.

Sisson, Alice Borden Moore - September 11, 1995 - Community Benefactor and Social Service Pioneer

Family history --- Descendent of Roger Moore --- Early worker in Social Service organizations --- Explanation of her work as a licensed therapist --- Family Service ---Wilmington lifetime observations and stories.

Sprunt, Kenneth M., Sr. - July 25, 1995 - Businessman, Civic Leader, and Horticulturist
Background of the Sprunt family --- Biography ---Story of Orton Plantation --- Oakdale Cemetery --- Various observations and information on the local area.

Von Oesen, Henry M. - August 8, 1995 - Retired Engineer, Civic Leader, and Military Officer
Born in Wilmington and early days --- Military career --- City of Wilmington --Formation and history of Henry M. VonOesen and Associates --- Projects of firm --- Local engineering history --- Remembrances and miscellaneous information.

Wagoner, Dr. William H. - June 12, 1995 - Retired Chancellor of UNCW
Circumstances bringing him to Wilmington --- Board of Education --- Detailed background of the development of UNCW --- Anecdotes --- Raleigh political history associated with UNCW.

West, Wallace L. - February 20, 1995 - Retired Educator and Civic Leader
Wilmingtonian - Lifelong involvement in local education --- Principal New Hanover High School --- Involvement in Lions International --- Wilmington Executives Club formation and Secretary 40 years --- First Baptist Church.

Williams, Dr. R. Bertram, Jr. - March 1, 1994 - Retired Surgeon and Civic Leader
Early Wilmington background --- Education and family --- Excellent description of life in Wdmington prior to World War II --- James Walker Memorial Hospital --- Civic events commentary.

Woodbury, Louie E., Jr. - August 30, 1995 - Insurance Firm Founder and Civic Leader
Wilmington beginnings --- Family history --- Founding and story of Woodbury and Company -- - Cape Fear Memorial Hospital story --- Various civic affiliations.

Appendix

Bissette, Samuel D. - August 17, 1995 -, Part I

High school days --- Early days working with Peoples Building and Loan Association --- Wilmington during the 1950's

Bissette, Samuel D. - April 19, 1996 - Part II

History of Savings and Loan industry --- Peoples Building and Loan history --- Wilmington personalities - Civic life in Wilmington