

RICE-CORNELL-BROWN PROPERTY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW ONE

NARRATOR: ELEANOR BROWN HALL **INTERVIEWER:** REBECCA SEARS

DATE: JULY 12, 1998

I: If you could just go ahead and state your name on the tape at the beginning.

EBH: Okay, my name is Eleanor Brown Hall.

I: And...how long have you lived on or owned this property?

EBH: Well, I moved here in 1927 when I was about two. And when my father had had the house built on Rice Branch Road and...we moved from Washington Road in Asheville and he had bought two parcels of land on Rice Branch Road here in Beaverdam...and we lived in the house he had built and used the Rice house for a summer house—for company and kinfolks to spend the summer in.

I: Okay. And do you still live on the property at any time during the year?

EBH: No, not really. I was here...I lived here for a month and a half last year. Um, but that was because I came out to stay for a week and I just couldn't pull myself away until it got so cold I had to.

I: And then what is the...what is the cabin and the land used for nowadays?

EBH: For now it's just...it's used for company, for parties and fun things.

I: You mentioned something about a square dance that you hold. Is that something that you do? Could you talk about that?

EBH: Well, we've had lots of square dances over the years. My brothers and sisters and then company parties have been given here from the early twenties on up through the forties. And we have had...there've been lots of club meetings here from the high school grand children who...when in their classes would always want to come out for their functions that they had—dances and picnics and things. And then lots of Boy Scout meetings and... But then company parties of the Three Mountaineers and the Brown Book Company and Treasure Chest that the family was...that's what they did. Their business or those things. And...and it was always interesting to meet the folks who represented, say, the Three Mountaineers. They would come here and we'd have barbecues or suppers and things. And the representatives from out of town...from Washington state and California and New York. Well, they were impressed with how dark it

0019

*Brown family
moves to Rice
Branch Road*

0117

*Uses of cabin
during Brown
ownership:
square dances,
Boy Scout
meetings, and
company
parties*

0277

People and relatives who stayed at the cabin in the 1930s and 1940s

got at night because they had never been anywhere without streetlights, you see. And then you can hear all the nice night sounds and all... and the birds and the different things. But I think it added lots of... some local color to the people. There've been a lot of kind of different folks who have been through. But our family connections who would come and stay... the preachers and the families would either bring their children and all... or then when their children got married they'd come for their honeymoons here. And... but they'd stay during the hot months in the summer. Dr. McLarty. He was a Methodist preacher and all three of his sons were Methodist preachers and so they would come here in the summer and just... for vacations. And then my Uncle Edwin owned property up at the head of Beaverdam in between Webb Cove and Lynn Cove. And he built there the year before daddy built on Rice Branch. And so... that made it nice to see our cousins from back and forth.

I: So has the cabin and the property surrounding it been... was it a sort of social center for, you know, the local community?

EBH: Well, mostly for the family. But before that... before we... before daddy bought it in 1921 when the Rices had it, it was very much a... a sort of a center, I would say, because the Rices had... were kin to so many folks in the Valley and... you know, they had lots of weddings and things here and a lot of the extended family for children of James Overly Rice. All of those... well, the Palmers and the Jones' and the Hendersons and all... and Rices. And then there were Stradleys and Kimberlys and all their families. And the Wolfes. You see, James Overly's wife was Mary Elvira Wolfe. And you see the speculation was that perhaps there was already a cabin close to this one and that they lived in maybe an older cabin while this was being built because I think the early census before the fifties lists them as already being here. They just are not sure whether this house was built prior to 1950. But they were over here in 1839.

I: And then when you were growing up here, what was your favorite event that was held here or favorite thing that...

EBH: Oh it was...

I: ...maybe sometime when relatives came.

EBH: Oh, it was all killin' time 'cause I got to stay out of school! That was so different from anything that we'd ever known. And, you see, mother'd let us stay home when they... when Mr. Scarborough, the next door neighbor... we had a pig... and he did his... and they did it down here in front of the boxwoods where it was... I know two or three

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Rice family: history and use of the cabin in the mid- to late-1850s.

0477

Growing up in a rural area and the neighboring Scarborough family

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years and then up next door at the Scarborough property, too. And to see all that was...and then, you know, my brothers and sisters all went to school...to Grace down the road. And I went to St. Genevieve's. So that was real different from...cause none of the kids I went to school with were very rural. They didn't know a great... And mother always had nice birthday parties for, you know, and they would come out. You know, they'd all... She would bring children out for...to spend the day or to spend the night and it...it made it nice...it was something different from most of my friends. Their way of life was a little different from mine because I wouldn't take anything for having grown up out here. I mean, you know, children then, I don't believe they got bored like they do now. And it was...there's something interesting going on all the time.

0591

Apple butter-making parties held at the cabin

I: And you mentioned to me a little earlier about making apple butter and things like that here. Can you just talk about that a little bit?

EBH: Well, after my husband and I... We've lived here three different times over the years since we've been married. In fact, we'd been married a year and we moved out here and lived a year until it got so cold that we had to move. We rented a house in town. But it's...this house...you know, cutting heating with fireplaces, at best, unless you have a big stockpile of wood... It takes cutting all day and then you burn it all, you know. But when our child Lelia was about ten we started moving out here in April every year... March...well, April really. And we'd stay through October and make apple butter every fall and have lots of folks to come. And party the night before to peel the apples and get them ready to put in the pot—big copper pot in the front yard—and it's on a stand and... You know, we've lived all over North Carolina. Lots of friends would come from out-of-town plus cousins from South Carolina and different Ramsey cousins mostly and...would come and bring their children. And we'd have covered dish lunch and...and we'd have, you know, music, banjo, five-string banjo and guitar and various things. Whatever anybody played. Lots of music. And...but we'd just invite up all of our friends and then all the cousins and things would be in school various places all over the state and other states, too. And they'd come with their boyfriends or girlfriends and it was just something different. And then we'd also have lots of...when our friends' children got married we'd have wedding parties here and we'd always put up a dance floor and have square dances with lights

0728

Square dances held at the cabin

strung...colored lights around the dance floor and the Stoney

0758

Square dances, contd.

Creek Boys would come and play. Their band's real good for square dancing. And we'd have a good caller. But usually we would have about six couples who would go in together and have a big party for whoever was getting married. So that was always fun! We'd have parties to get ready for the... to make the plans for the square dance, and then after it was over we'd have another party to take all the lights down and store the dance floor and everything! But then a lot of people in... around Asheville who've had these parties and remember them, I think, with nostalgia.

I: Is it special for you to be able to have those kinds of reunions and gatherings and parties and things...

EBH: Sure!

I: ...on...on your family's land?

EBH: Well, it is because it's different... We had our first Brown family reunion last year. And the picture over there (points toward mantelpiece) is one that Ben Porter came and took of... panoramic... used his panoramic camera and took of that. And so we're going to have one every year, too, from now on. It means a lot because of the connection with... my brother came and brought two of his children and their husbands and their children. And my sister lives here and has grandchildren and children in the area. And, so, and then we'll have a Ramsey... the Ramseys come this August. Gonna have one for them. And then my daughter and her husband stay here when they come up from Shelby in the summer. And then my grandchildren are havin' house parties here. This spring my granddaughter who's seventeen and a senior in high school brought six girlfriends up and they just... you know... they thought it was wonderful being here in the mountains. We all had fun... I just turned it over to them. Got a lot of food in... But it's nice to have somethin' that's sort of different for people to remember, I think, because so many things you spend time doin'... kind of everything's the same, you know. There's always somethin' odd goin' on here.

0810

The importance of family land

I: It sounds that... it's not just important for you, but you know, you're talking about your granddaughter being able to...

EBH: Yeah, I think it's real meaningful to the young people to have something that stays the same more or less. And it doesn't change. If you can... I'm against change in some ways but I think you need to depend on some things to stay the same if you can do something about it.

0908

The importance of family land for younger generations

I: There were additions made on the house in 1927 and then some time in the 1950s?

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*Additions
made to the
cabin by the
Rices,
Cornells
and Browns*

EBH: That's right. The first addition was made in 1890 by Mr. Cornell, who married...I don't have her name on the tip of my tongue...but one of the daughters who had stayed here during the Civil War. You know, he was here during that time. But he came down from New Jersey, I believe? And worked for the cheese factory on Beaverdam Road. I think with Mr. Baird they had it...and met the Rice's daughter and they were married and lived here because James Overly had died in the Civil War—her father. And so this...she inherited this part. Her father had...oh, and her mother lived with them here, you see. She was still livin'. And so there were, I think, nine parcels of land out here divided up. And this was the...her property. And Mr. Cornell spent a lot of time and money and had the...in 1890 and had the big bedroom and the three little...the long lean-to at the back built.

I: And then the changes that were made while the Brown's owned the property...did that reflect a growing prosperity or growing ability to add on to the house?

EBH: Well, it did. The Cornell did. But when my father, Hugh Brown, bought the property and added onto it, he did it mostly to have...for summer. You know, for kinfolks to come and stay and use it for a vacation house. And...because it was never...since we've had it it was really never winterized for year-round living. It was strictly for vacations and that.

I: Were the kinds of things...like electricity and plumbing were put in in...

EBH: In 1927.

I: In 1927. Was that characteristic of other families in the Valley? The changes being made?

EBH: Yes, yes, it was. You see, that's when Rice Branch Road was paved...around 1926 or '27 and the water line was put up here then and the sewer. And that's when they moved the creek so close to the cabin. Because...and the sewer line was put right beside the cabin. But the water line goes up the road. And...that's...at that time it...things in Beaverdam changed...started changing a lot. I have an interesting picture. Did I tell you about that? When they used to have the road? The people from the various areas around in the county would have a Saturday when they worked on the state roads, I guess. State or county. Anyway, I have a picture of the governor. I think it was Locke Craig. About that time he was governor of North Carolina. And then we have a number of apple orchards up Webb Cove, Webb's orchard, and all. The picture's real good. It shows kids and the older men in the community and bushels of apples, you know, in the picture.

1114

*Beaverdam
Valley
community in
first half of
the twentieth
century*

And then various men from town in their white shirts who were in the picture, too. But that's just somethin' that's kind a nice to have. Some of the older people like the Stradleys...one of the Stradleys is in the picture and they owned property up at the end of Rice Branch Road until three or four years ago. And, in fact, they owned a lot of the mountain joining the Rice property...at one time. And I think at one time, then, part of that went to First Baptist church.

I: What are your first memories of this cabin here?

EBH: Coming across the road carrying (laughs)... What do you call what you mix up to feed calves? I'd carry a bucket across there. I had a calf named Dolly Varden. There was a barn back here and pigpen and...and little out buildings. And my little calf lived up over there and I had to carry... I remember what it smelled like, now. It's amazing this stuff that you'd mix up, you know! And the pigs weren't over here...the pigs were way back up the hillside behind our house. But this was such a pretty heifer. And then I remember the fruit trees...and climbin' in the apple trees and all, and fallin' out and breakin' my ankle. And, you know, I was always havin' somebody from town come, you know, to spend the day and night. What fun we had! We'd just run all around and play because the whole hillsides were down. It was open—cattle grazed in there. And mother would...they'd ring the bell when lunch was ready. This bell that's right out here by the porch was over at our house. So all four children and who else...and the dogs and all would all come at noon when the bell rang. And...and we...the nice thing, too, was the neighbors next door up the road...the Scarboroughs...because they were like grandparents, you know. It was just real nice livin' close to people, and, you see, being...feeling a part of the horses and cows and chickens and guineas...and the sleds. Mr. Scarborough bought this whole acre of stone that's lying out here next to the house—the stone are—to build...daddy was gonna build on the mountain and he brought all of that with a team of mules...or maybe it was just one...and a sled. And he would get those with leverage...with a bar or a crowbar or something...you know, and haul them all—just one man—off of the mountain at the same time that they were bringin' the stone for Grove Park Inn from up Webb Cove...all this cove around to Sunset.

I: So that was one thing I wanted to find out more about...was your relationship with the Scarboroughs. I understand that Winfield Scarborough...

EBH: Mm hmm, that's my good friend Jane Pearson, who

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Memories of growing up near orchards, livestock and a small farm

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Bringing stone down from the mountains for the Brown house (which was never built)

1361

Relationship with the neighboring Scarboroughs

1371

The importance of neighbors in Beaverdam Valley

still lives in the house up there. You see, her father was Winfield.

I: And he took care of the affairs of the farm?

EBH: He...well he had his own farm but we always had a little garden down here in front of the boxwoods and he took care of that. And then he also... 'cause daddy didn't do anything like that. He would leave early in the morning to go to work and he wouldn't get back until late and then he'd usually... especially during the Depression... he would end up up Rice Branch because we were the only ones with a telephone and anybody sick would call him at work with prescriptions and he'd always get whatever they needed and bring, you see, to 'em.

I: So what was it like having neighbors close by that you were so close to?

EBH: Oh, it was wonderful! Especially these neighbors because they included us in everything they did. Like birthday parties for Grandpa Scarborough whose birthday was on the same day as my brother, you see. And all the big tables covered with white cloths in the yard and all the good food and cakes and things. And, you know, just going there and feeling a part of it was wonderful!

I: What meaning or value does this land have to you personally?

EBH: (Pause, laughs) Well it's hard to say. It really is. But...it's certainly worth saving. And you feel that there's so little of it left.

I: Particularly in this area...

EBH: Well, that's right.

I: ...or in general?

EBH: And in general. I think all over that people... our lifestyles change so, and I realize you don't want things to stay the same, but I think as long as there are a few places that can stay the same and young people can see it and have a chance to walk along and see plants and trees and creeks and things. And that's why I think greenways are so important, you know.

I: How has your family's land changed in the time that...I mean, it used to be a working farm.

EBH: Well, since I've known it...of course the hillside... the hills... the hill behind the cabin has all grown up so. The cows kept it down. The cow paths, you know, I can remember those so well because they came right around the hill back of the kitchen and then farther out was the outhouse that was still there when we bought the place.

And... then... up on the top where it's flat where we moved

1440

Changes in lifestyle and attitude over this century

1495

Changes to the Brown's cabin and land

1529

Browns' use of the land as

1556

The Rices

1596

Eleanor Brown Hall's quest to preserve the cabin and land for future generations

1671

Natural history of the area

the other cabin now, you know, we used to go up there and play and put out small stones that were up there. They were white. What? Flintstones? ... And all, and build little playhouses and things. And it was all open and flat. Pick up chinquapins! Oh, we used to have so many chinquapins. And there were so many chestnut trees up there... huge chestnuts that some are still lying on the ground. And... it's... And there are several springs. There was a log cabin on part of the property back and around the hill where one of the folks from up the road would come. He fought in the Civil War and he had come and stayed in that when he came home from... I think he fought for one side at one time and maybe the other side at another time. But he would hide out there and stay. And I think that the next door neighbor has a picture of that little cabin. And I did tell you that the Wolfes were... Mary Elvira, the wife of the man who built the house, was a Wolfe.

I: Right. Do you think that... you seem to think that the land and the cabin are important because they're... they're stable. They, you know, they stay the same in an environment that's changing very quickly. Do your siblings share this viewpoint?

EBH: Oh, I'm sure they do. Yes. And... but they just can't be as close as I am because they don't live here. My sister lives here but her... you know, and she brings her grandchildren out here and sees to it that they feel a part of it, you know. But, you know, I don't have the responsibilities other people do. And so I can spend more time tryin' to see that. And if I let it, it would drive me crazy thinkin' of what all I want to do, you know, but I think that as long as the vines don't pull the big trees down and all, whatever's there will stay there as long as it isn't washed away by the creek overflowing through and washing it out. But, you know, I feel as long as the land is there, surely it can stay as long as we can pay the taxes on it.

I: What has the land given you over the years?

EBH: Well, it's just a sense of comfort, kinda.

I: And you think that...

EBH: But I spend a lot of time walkin' around and hiking and looking at it. And trying to... I go and look at the pink ladyslippers during the spring and I go and see the various wildflowers where I know they're growing.

I: And is that something you'd like, maybe, your grandchildren to be able to do?

EBH: Oh sure! I take them to see that. And the path is still there. When we had the horse, the trail... we had a trail that was fairly open... but you know, trees fall and the pine

1700

Natural history, contd.

beetles got in here about twenty years ago. And then they all fell but they're going back to the earth. And so it's nice. One nice thing is having the house that I rent to other people and seein' them enjoy it. Because I've been lucky to have people who've appreciated seein' the red fox and the coons and the possums and the various things that come around. I haven't seen any black bear...they're all on the other side of Beaverdam. And I think that the people up the road who are kin to the Rices...the ones who are left up there...I think that they kind of like the fact that the house is being preserved, you know.

1734

The importance of preserving places

I: That's the next thing I was going to ask is...if you feel like there are people out there or around here that share those sentiments.

EBH: I think they do. And, you know, it's amazing. I think they have a sense of protection...feeling of protection...wanting to protect it. Hopefully.

I: What are some of the primary landmarks or natural features of the land that you like, or, that are special to you?

EBH: Well, as far as the whole area. I think it's nice to... You know, Rice Knob and the different landmarks that were meaningful to the folks who lived here originally.

1780

BREAK

(BREAK)

1830

Finding native American artifacts on the Brown property

EBH: I mentioned Wilma Dykeman Stokley and the book she wrote. Her uncle, Mr. Dykeman, Jerome Dykeman, used to take various kids...groups of children from the Valley and he took them hiking all over the Valley, you know, and would point out the landmarks to them and all of that. And my brother...I didn't go with them but about once. But the boys would go and, you know, hike up to Buzzard's Rock and you know, and Iron Ore Ridge and all those different landmarks around here. And, you know, people came in here looking for the iron originally. Oh, and it's been interesting looking for the Indian artifacts here. And, when this last work that I had done on the cabin; when they tore down the kitchen and were digging they had to dig out so much ground and all. They found a tomahawk and we had always found so many. I have bunches of arrowheads and is it sherds... shards? The pottery with the little design on it and all? And so they came from...the Moore fellow from Archives and History. He sent a group out and they sifted. But, you see, there's no undisturbed land here, so it was difficult to really find anything. But the Indians definitely were here. And my neighbor...the Scarborough land? Just this past week they

1898

*Memories of
threshing day
at the
Scarboroughs*

have had a bulldozer in and they've done all this business up there. And so I was askin' her about...she used to always find so many arrowheads and things up there and I just know there must be a lot of them lying around up there. Anyway, it's...Oh, another thing that was interesting to me, you know...the threshing machines would come when the fields were ready to be mowed and then they'd bale the hay and Mrs. Scarborough would have the tables all out under the trees and feed the men who would come and work. And that, I have pictures in my mind of what that was like.

I: So did people in the community do that all at once? They would go from farm to farm?

EBH: Yes, and the threshing machine would go from farm to farm. That's right. So we were in on that. Which was special, you know.

I: Did you help make food...

EBH: I didn't. But now when we'd kill the pigs, you see, I can remember Mrs. Scarborough and I can remember how they would separate the different pig parts and make liver mush and all that. And then she'd make the sausage patties and can them in jars and then she'd do some in the, you know, the links. Oh, tongue and liver mush. All that! And, you know, that was just somethin' real different for us because our families didn't do anything like that that I knew of.

I: Did you spend time at Rice Branch Creek when you were younger?

EBH: Oh yes!

I: Tell me about that.

EBH: Well that was fun because, you see, it's just right here and at that time it was level. We could just run straight across it. And I have neat pictures of what it was... Oh, and I want you to see the scrapbook I fixed about the whole cabin. Make a note. Good! But the creek, we always dammed it up and looked for garnets, you know, and we didn't worry at that time at all about whether it was clean or not. And I'm sure there was a lot more going into it at that time than there is now. And we didn't seem to get sick from it, fortunately.

I: So is that one of the things that has changed?

EBH: Well, all of our kids play in it still. But a lot of city children, I don't know that their parents would be too keen on having them... Although I did call Karen Cragnolan at Riverlink...or, no I talked with the other lady that you're supposed to call if you wanted to have your creek be a checkpoint. And they said that they checked Beaverdam Creek at Beaver Lake and if anything was goin' in up here

1936

*Slaughtering
of the hogs at
the
Scarboroughs*

1976

*Memories of
playing in
Rice Branch
Creek and
how the creek
has changed*

2042

*More
childhood
memories
about
growing up in
Beaverdam
Valley and
playing on
the family's
land*

that it would show up. So I can't do anything but just assume that that's... That there isn't anything harmful in it.

I: Where did you used to play when you were a child? Where were some of your favorite places around here?

EBH: I just loved the backside of the hill right behind this place and down to back of the cabin we moved because the sun comes in there in the afternoon and it's real warm. And in the dead of winter you could go up there and take a picnic, you see, and it would be real warm and nice. And of course I never did mind going off by myself on picnics and reading and sewing and doin' things and lookin' at things, you see. But I guess it depends on the person. And then my brothers, you know, they grew up and had lots of fun out here. And daddy built... had the playhouse built for me. And I cooked in it and he had a little miniature iron cook stove for me in the fireplace and fixed and all so it worked! And from the time I was little I could, you know, they let me build fires in it and cook applesauce and green beans and stuff. And... but Hugh and Edwin, then, had a camp cabin on top of the apple house that he had built for them with bunks in it. And so they'd have their friends out to that for sleepovers when they were little boys. You know, it's like tree houses and things but we just had cabins and playhouses and... we had Acton bars. We've got pictures of the different things like that. But... that and the birthday parties Buddy used to have. Santa Claus would come and... because my birthday's the thirteenth of December. But I remember sitting on the porch out here and my aunt from Montana tryin' to teach me to play the guitar and to play Suwannee River. And I never could! I'm not musical at all! How I ever have a daughter who plays the harp, and a granddaughter, I don't know. They have to work their toes and their fingers both at the same time. I couldn't even move my fingers.

2133

*The value
and
temporality of
family land*

I: Was this land something you took for granted at any point in your life? When you were younger? Has your perception of its value or whatever changed?

EBH: Well, I guess it has because I have a... I've learned more and understand how it can go at the bat of an eyelash. I mean, I've always... when I was in college I would hear about fires and wake up and wonder if it was going to be... if the fire was gonna come over the mountain and burn it down or somethin'. I've always, you know, my life kind of centers around it. Always has. In fact, just last week I went to talk to the man on Chatham Road at the fire department to make sure he understood how the fire department would come in to fight a fire on the hill up at my rental house because... And

2173

Fighting fires on Beaverdam Road

he said, "Oh, it's 575 Beaverdam. That's no problem!" And I said, "But it is! You know, I believe you ought to drive out and see it." And so he was going to. And I had been with some two or three years ago and he later told me that I should make sure every year, too, that they understand that you can't drive out there. That the only way to fight it would be go up Rice Branch and down to the first road to the right and get a hose in from behind. And, you know, you just kind of have to think about things like that.

I: How do you think that younger members of your family will use the land in the future?

EBH: Oh, I don't want to think about that because they don't live here! And they have property. They have so much property in Cleveland County. They have property that they feel their granddaddy wouldn't part with an inch! They feel so attached to that and the house that's on it... the old log house that's... And then they have property at Reems Creek.

A cabin that was built up there that was part of a group of cabins that people used for summer cottages that they just love, you know? And if they can get the water going there... well they've had it since they've been married. I don't know what this... what'll happen to this if it needs to be... It needs to have somebody who can take it over, really! You know, you don't go on forever. But I don't know. I just sort of push it aside and try not to think about it except for getting some, hopefully, some restrictive covenants maybe put on it so that it can't be developed for condominiums. I think that, you know, I think that it's a gift and it needs to be preserved.

I: How have the attitudes and practices of the Beaverdam community regarding land and use of land changed...

EBH: Well, you know, back about fifteen years ago or whenever the Beaverdam Council was started, that came about because the property at the foot of my driveway was to be sold or to be built on. A nursing home was gonna be developed. And I didn't realize this, really, until the other day when somebody said, "Well Eleanor, you know that property... that's why the Beaverdam Council was formed and all." To keep additional buildings from being built right there on Beaverdam Road. Because all of the people had their little homes around there and I think that... but that was someone... one of the older residents of Beaverdam. I don't know, I think that people who are buying in Beaverdam now... It's pretty to them, I'm sure, but I really... I would hope that they would care but I wonder if they care about it. Because the last people who bought on Rice Branch Road and are building a house down at the corner of Beaverdam,

2235

Concerns about the future of the land and cabin

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The Beaverdam Council and post-1950s development in the Valley

you know, it didn't bother them to think about going into the sewer line and putting a whole lot of other houses on the sewer line.

2371

END SIDE
ONE

(END SIDE ONE)

But it is not like the country now. Of course it depends on where you're coming from, and all, but before long it's gonna have lost anything...any of its reason for being and being a rural area. I don't expect big farms, but still, it isn't going to be green anymore!

I: Are there a lot of people moving in from, say, out-of-state?

EBH: Mm hmm.

I: Also movement within North Carolina?

EBH: Well, I don't know really who's... But they're coming from all over the country. They're coming to the condominiums, you see. And then there are people who are buying on the hillsides and putting little houses in. And in spite of the rules and regulations against mobile homes people are...they're coming in! I don't know, I think they're just supposed to come to lots that are large enough for a home. At one time they were just supposed to be moved in on property that had belonged to original Beaverdam people. I have a copy of the ordinance here. But they really...they have a good group, the Beaverdam Council is. And I would hope that it wouldn't expand for any reason because it serves such a good purpose, I think.

I: Now I understand that the housing boom...a lot of the development started in the 1950s particularly in this area. Is that...

EBH: Yes, I guess so. But it's just boomed in the past ten years here up in Beaverdam. And ten years ago they were sayin' they couldn't put any more houses because the road wouldn't take the traffic. And when they built Beaverdam Run they had two-car garages. They talked about the number of cars and they said there wouldn't be enough room on the road for them. Well now, mercy, they're just puttin' all kind of other... I don't know what's happened to all the studies that have been made, you know, it's just... And where all this...

I: In the 1950s when this started, was it expected? Did it come as a surprise to you that so much...the development started accelerating?

EBH: Well, you see, we didn't live here then. We didn't move back here 'til '62. And I would think most of the

2379

*Changing
physical
geography,
residential
composition
and attitudes
in Beaverdam
Valley*

*Beaverdam
Valley
families,
including the
Glenns,
Medicus',
Bagwells, and
Wards*

development has come since then. And I know that all the condominiums, I believe, have been built since them. The Beaverdam Run and the Timbers and the Creekside and the Aberdeen Meadows and all that.

I: What are some of the main things that you remember as being special about the people that lived in this area... when you were younger?

EBH: Well, you mean the people who had always... whose families had always lived here?

I: That and then, just, when you were growing up, the surrounding community.

EBH: Well, I just... I remember going down across Beaverdam Road and up to the Bagwells who lived up there. And going up to get... to Mr. Ward's to get the eggs and butter. To get butter. Mrs. Ward made wonderful butter! And Mr. Ward hand split all of the oak shingles for our house... log house that we put up on the hill behind this cabin. And, you know, I can remember going... And this has just been back twenty years ago that he did that. But I remember years before that getting butter from his wife. Then there was Mr. Heide and his wife, who lived down there. Jane, my friend next door, remembers them a lot better than I do. But there was Fes Glenn who lived up here and Mrs. Glenn was kin to the Rices. His wife, beautiful lady! And Sybil, the daughter, still lives up there. And then my friend Ragland Medicus and his wife Betty still live down where the Medicus' lived on Wolfe Cove Road. And we used to play together. Ragman would come up... And he goes to Central Church—he and his wife—they're real active there. And then there was Judge Weaver, Guy Weaver, who lived down right next to the cemetery and Freddie Ellen and Ethel Terrell, his daughters, we'd play. And I remember they were always in the Rhododendron Parade and the Rhododendron Festival. In fact, they dressed up like cupids as... his mother and father... when they were little! I mean this was back in the thirties... and would ride the floats and everybody talked about how cute they were. Oh, goodness.

I: Was your family well acquainted with people in the area?

EBH: Well, with those people, you know. But they were all people who worked in town, you see. But they still, you see, they had connections here. Now the Weavers aren't still around but I just remember playin' with them when I was little. I'm probably not thinking of somebody... The main people we saw were the Scarboroughs that lived here next to us. And there was William and Walter and Jane. And you see, since... even in later years we would go to West Virginia

2903

*The
Scarboroughs*

with Jane Pearson, who lives next door. My husband would drive us up there and we'd go up there to their grandchildren's weddings and things. They'd settled up there. And, I mean, you know, it just was said all over the Valley that this couple, Mr. and Mrs. Scarborough, were the finest people that had ever lived around here. I mean, they had their finger on every family in the Valley and when anyone was sick, they were there to help. And when anybody needed to go anywhere or have anything done, you know, they were the ones who did it. And it was... they're just a real unusual family.

2973

*What it
means to be
able to return
to the cabin
and land for
vacations*

I: And with the large influx of people that have come into the area is there much of a sense of community? Maybe a different sense of community?

EBH: It's changed. When Jim and I lived in Wilmington and would come up here for vacation it was always fun back in the 50s and all because you'd know on Saturday night at the community center they were havin' square dances and it was fun, you know, in the summer. And we would always stay here, you see. Mother'd open up the house and get it ready for us and we would... All of our vacations were spent coming up here and working here and... You know, it's always been... I never could imagine. We took one vacation, I think, in about forty weeks! We went to Europe! Had to get away from the country and Wilmington! And we stayed a month and a half. I thought, "I think I'll just stay!" My daughter's going to France tomorrow and I thought, "Oh honey, you'll see how wonderful it is over there." And it's just simply because it was the only time, I think, in my life I've felt removed from responsibility. Isn't that an awful thing to say! As much as I love it here, it was such a nice leave.

3066

*Anecdotes
about the
volunteer fire
department*

I: Does that community center still exist?

EBH: Yes, and you can rent it for sales and things. But the fire department is there. It's the Reems Creek fire department now. We used to always contribute to the community fire department. The... what do they call it?

I: Volunteer?

EBH: Volunteers. And you see then they would come up and burn off your piles of brush and things for you. And do things like that. They kept their finger on everything. And I used to think all the little boys in the neighborhood should... I didn't object to all back early... to their camping out on the mountains and all of that. And finally they had to come... the police chief came and said, "Ms. Hall, you've just got to stop these kids, now! Enough's enough! We're always having to

3152

*Finding a still
on the family
land*

go out there. They start bakin' their potatoes in the ground and the woods'll caught on fire and we're always havin' to..." And, you know, they knew exactly how to go to get in to the woods to keep the fires from... But then I didn't understand, at that point, you know, forty years ago, how that was makin'. And I didn't know that it was settin' the woods on fire, ever. They didn't write me. But that was about, like, back when I was real young. I'll never forget the police coming to the house and mother havin' to go off with them to come out here because they'd found... someone had a still... and they'd found this where they were... They found all these bottles of white lightning that were stored up here on the side of the mountain on her property, after daddy died! And she said, "Oh my goodness!"

3180

*Effects of the
Great
Depression
on the Brown
family*

I: I understand that Asheville was hit fairly hard by the Great Depression in the 1930s. Were people, were your friends and everyone... I guess the townspeople that you knew. Were they supportive of each other?
EBH: Yes. They were. In fact, my father was real good to all the people. And the thing I remember is that I know, you know, they lost all their land and yet I was never made to feel that we were lacking in anything. Nothing was ever said about the fact that we might have been on a shoestring or something, you know, and losing the family businesses, which we still are at this point. But anyway, it was nice not to have the pressure. You know, some people poor-mouth all the time. But I can just remember that my daddy was real good to the people in the neighborhood who had a lot less than we did.

3267

*Memories of
when Eleanor's
uncle was
mayor of
Asheville*

I: How did people help each other out during that time?
EBH: Well he happened to be the one with the car, you know, who worked in town and could buy medicine and bring to... with medicine. That's what he did as far as anything that was ever passed on by word-of-mouth to me. And of course I had... in the years since then... my uncle was mayor of Asheville when all that happened. When the city incurred such a big debt. And it is... that's been something that I have been made aware of. With people fussin' and talking about the big debt and now I go to forums and hear them talking about incurring debt for playgrounds which I firmly believe young people should have and all. But I think about how much it'd have cost to build all the things that were built when Uncle John was mayor. If it hadn't been built then, we'd have never had it. Debt or no debt. They never could have afforded to build the City Hall and the Asheville High School and the tunnel and all those recreation

park. They talk about the park and all that. Well I remember going when I was a child and how wonderful that was. You see, we lived out here, but, you see, our idea of fun was to take a picnic and go to the rec park. And it was ten miles exactly. It was like a different world. But then I'd get on the bus and go there swimmin'. Life has changed a lot.

I: Could you tell me a little bit about the Brown Book Company? I understand that you had a book company...

EBH: My Uncle Edwin had that. And it started out on Pack Square. Oh, I have a letter written to my father when Uncle Edwin bought the property and built the bookstore down on Pritchard Park. Moved it down there. And he talked about the post office, I think, being there on Pritchard Park and various things he could see from the window and all. But then in later years, I'm always meeting old people now whose first job, you know, was there, and that sort of thing. But I was the only member of the family who didn't work there. My brothers and sisters all would work there after school and all. But it was a big... and they had a wonderful books and office supplies, too, you see. And then daddy had a hardware store, the Asheville Hardware Store, which was on Broadway and the Brown Hardware Store and then the Asheville Hardware also was on Lexington Avenue. That's a change! Now if you want to talk about a change... I know he couldn't believe Lexington now! All those people havin' so much fun. It was just people working hard and bringing their produce to town back when he had the hardware store.

I: So your uncle ran the business essentially?

EBH: Uncle Edwin? Yes. My father didn't have anything to do with the Brown Book Company. It was his... The Brown Book Company was Edwin... Uncle Edwin. And Uncle Edwin and daddy had originally, you see, bought property out here. And Uncle Edwin's the one who had the house up... And it's still up there, the pretty house at the intersection of Webb Cove and Lynn Cove on the hill.

3356

*The Brown
Book
Company*

3422

*The Brown
and Asheville
Hardware
Stores*

3469

*The Brown
Book Company*