

Doris Giezentanner

Tape I, Side 1:

[1] She was born in 1926, one of 8 children. Her parents lived in Woodfin and her father worked for CP&L but decided to move to an old farm house on 75 acres in Red Oak so the children could have farm life. Since they lived within a mile of the school they were not entitled to take the bus and she walked through rain and snow many times. [Elizabeth Jane Patton, Gerome Patton]

[33] She does not remember the Depression but her parents talked about hungry families.

[45] She remembers a man with a wife and baby knocking on the door. Her mother fed them and they sat around the fireplace getting warm before spending the night. They were given warm clothes to wear on their way to Marshall to stay with family. Going on welfare was the last straw for husbands who could not find work.

[65] There was a lot of talk about the New Deal and, though her parents were Republicans, the President gave the country hope. [Franklin Roosevelt]

[75] Her two grown brothers joined the CCC in Bernardsville. They boarded in the camp, were trained and received a little money. The young men filled gullies and planted pines. She remembers the WPA, but the family was not involved (see Hollifield tape). [Cecil Patton, Clyde Patton]

[94] Her older brother drove her to Morris, TN to see the TVA dam.

[100] There was no electricity on the farm though they had had power in Woodfin.

[111] Her mother and father, and later all the children, took care of 50 cows (the milk was picked up by truck every other day), raised 100 turkeys, chicken, hogs and beef. The ham was cured in a log house. Country butter, which her mother churned, was sold to neighbors and relatives. Each year her mother canned 300 to 400 quarts of food which was shelved in the cellar. From grapes she made juice and jelly. Aside from coffee and sugar, they were self-supporting. Clothes were made from the beautiful material the chicken feed was packaged in. She said they "didn't want for anything." They were "really rich and didn't know it."

[171] She was required to go to church three times on Sunday - the Methodist Sunday School with her father, the Baptist church and at 3:00 the Presbyterian church with Dr. Dendy (enclosed). [Rev. Henry B. Dendy]

[187] After her two older sisters left home she, the only daughter at home, made the beds and washed all the dishes before school.

[195] Her mother's sister took in the two oldest girls while they worked at Beacon in Swannanoa (photo). One sister, now 78 and still nursing, lives in Waynesville. Her sister Louise died. [Lula Edmonds, Nel Patton Halloway, Louise Patton Davidson]

[211] She wanted to join the nurse cadets but her father persuaded her to go to Blanton's (enclosed), and she was trained as an executive secretary taking shorthand at 130 words a minute. She worked part time for Tench Coxe (enclosed). [Tench Coxe]

[225] In 1941 war was declared and her three older brothers enlisted (all came home). Just before her older brother left he took her, then 14 years old, to the Red Oak School and taught her to drive so she could chauffeur her father who was called back to CP&L. [Clyde Patton, Cecil Patton, Boyd Patton]

[245] The family had an Atwater Kent battery radio and she listened to programs. She doesn't remember when the electricity was brought to the house. She helped her mother clean chimneys of oil lamps. They had a comfort stove with a tank on the side for warming water. The only heat in the house came from the stove and two fire places. In the morning, her father built the fires with wood, put on water for coffee and went to milk the cows. Her mother would follow to help milk and feed the cows and chickens. [Amos and Andy, Eddie Cantor]

[295] The well was 130 ft deep and a bucket was raised by winding a pulley. They continued this method until after she was married and moved to Tennessee. The children took turns bathing in the big tin bath tub in the kitchen.

[320] Perishable food was kept in the basement on the ice chest. Fifty pound blocks of ice were delivered every other day.

[340] The children were allowed to have parties and gave square dances. Punch came from home-grown grapes. It was not spiked! There was bootlegging in the area and her father was tolerant but he did not drink.

[364] Clyde and Cecil entered the service on the same day and Boyd followed the next day. Her father had been in the Spanish-American war and, though proud of the boys, remembered his experiences and knew that all three, who were in the infantry, would be in the D Day landing. [Clyde Patton, Cecil Patton, Boyd Patton]

[397] Her husband had served in the Navy in the South Pacific and when they married they went to the University of Tennessee where he studied law. She got a job in the University library. After graduation they returned to Asheville and lived with her parents until he passed the North Carolina Bar. They moved to an efficiency apartment on Liberty Street (no longer there) and she worked for a CPA until she was 8 months pregnant. John had to struggle to get started. They lived in Royal Pines and she went to work for him for two years. Deborah stayed with a friend in a day nursery. She now has three daughters. [John Giezentanner, John Ashe, Deborah Giezentanner Koontz, Megan Wallace, Heather Koontz, Elizabeth Koontz, Ashley Ann Koontz]

[500] Both Doris and her husband did a lot of civic work in their free time.

[512] They built a house on Golf View in 1957 where they lived 11 to 12 years, during which time their son was born. [Johnny Giezentanner]

[537] They all wanted to live in the country and John found property belonging to Rice where 50 wild ponies roamed. He bought 10 acres, a road was put in and in 1969 the house was completed along with an apple orchard, a garden and grapes planted. [Herbert Rice]

[590] At age 43, John suffered from a cerebral hemorrhage and died three days later.

Tape I, Side 2:

[2/1] At the time of John's death her son was 12 years old and her daughter had just started college. They had been in the house just one Christmas. She had a house to pay for and children to educate. She was determined to stay in the house.

[2/12] John had worked for a year on plans to incorporate Woodfin, going into Raleigh at his own expense and working with interested local people. The lines for Woodfin boundaries were drawn around her dining room table. [John Stevens, Herschel Harkins, Claude De Bruhl]

[2/36] Woodfin did not want to be annexed by Asheville and pay their taxes. The area had about 15 plants and good water. The people met with Weaverville people for advice and held an election which passed overwhelmingly in favor of becoming incorporated. (Population 2,819 today)

[2/51] Doris was asked by 4 men to submit her name for election to run for Alderman. She won, served four years and was re-elected.

[2/60] In the middle of her service as Alderman she was asked to work as secretary to the Inter-Agency Narcotic Squad. This was in 1972 when drugs were first hitting Buncombe County.

[2/86] In 1976 she ran for County Commissioner, was elected and stayed on for 16 years.

[2/92] For her first election she spent \$47 of her own money for cards to hand out and filing fee. A County Commissioner earns \$3,500 a year. As high vote getter she was Vice Chairman and was also selected as a District 16 supervisor, entitling her to be on the State County Commission Board. She served seven years on that board, driving to Raleigh once a month.

[2/129] The County Commissioner took concerns to the State Board and then the governor and legislature addressed the issues. Two issues she was involved with were: raising of state taxes and ridge laws (see Mary Lloyd Frank and Norma Price).

[2/142] She was chosen to represent Ratcliff on the Land-of-Sky Regional Council (see Robert Shepherd tape) and became vice chairman of that board. She would have been chairman but Ratcliff, who had been absent for a long time, returned. She served 25 years and may return. The building belongs to Sternberg. [R. Curtis Ratcliff, Jerry Sternberg]

[2/196] When she was a child she knew Robertson who was superintendent of schools. He was largely responsible for the needed consolidation of schools (see William Williams for Xerox material) which affected the small communities. She feels the heart was cut out of the small areas - Red Oak, Juniper, Barnardsville, Flat Rock - and the churches were unable to fill the role. [Thomas C. Robertson]

[2/214] In her last year as a County Commissioner many small schools were slated to be torn down. Dr. Yarborough, superintendent of the Board of Education agreed to appoint a committee to consider ways to retain the buildings which had meant so much to the communities - i.e. for holding plays, dinners, parties, fund-raising dinners to pay for sports equipment. The committee members went into the communities and it was agreed that the school board would turn the schools over to the commissioners, who would in turn, turn them over to the communities. [Dr. Eugene Yarborough, Hal H. Zeugner, Zeb Sheppard, Thurman G. Dewese, Jesse Ledbetter]

[2/248] She received the Woman of the Year award for her work in saving the school buildings (see photo).

[2/304] Buncombe is a large county and a commissioner's job was to go into the community where there was a problem. An example was the placement of a new landfill. There is one in the North (see enclosure) which had "paid its dues."

[2/320] Landfills deteriorate a community. There are new laws on compacting and treatment but when she was first a commissioner "anything went" - tires, paint, asphalt shingles. There have been vast changes since 1972: cardboard is recycled, A-B Tech has a time when chemicals and sprays can be collected, tires must be split, or they will work up to the surface. The only way a landfill can be used is for recreation - golf course, ball courts.

[2/382] In New Hanover, a big unit in an open field away from the city, burns dumped material. However, the ashes are dangerous.

[2/403] Our lives have been damaged by pollution and run-off. The French Broad River has been cleaned up a lot thanks to the French Broad River Foundation and RiverLink (see Cragolin and Webb tapes). [Jean Webb]

[2/425] In her years of service she has done a lot for the teachers and worked to get teacher's pay supplemented.

[2/464] The schools remained empty for years and when they were accepted by the communities they were restored and became a vital focal point for the small areas with dinners, a flea market, a place for older residents to meet, and A-B Tech has held classes for senior citizens.

[2/515] Weaverville is a municipality like Woodfin. They also incorporated so they would not have to pay Asheville taxes.

[2/533] Doris is also concerned about a proposed quarry in Ox Creek (no info in Pack files).

[2/561] Sites for landfills are selected by engineers - not commissioners - and the state can override any local decision. Swannanoa, Leicester, and Biltmore Forest have been selected for future sites. Commissioners are resented when they attend neighborhood meetings, though the decisions are not in their hands.

[2/595] Sandy Mush fought to prevent an atomic plant being placed in that area. She worked with them.

Tape II, Side 1:

[II/1/1] Doris and her husband moved into their Woodfin house 26 years ago. They had always been active in civic work and, with 8 to 10 people, worked around their dining room table planning the incorporation of Woodfin. [John Giezentanner]

[II/1/25] In 25 years, since incorporation, many changes have taken place. There is a Police Department, Fire Department, Garbage pick-up, beautification projects (see enclosure). The planning board specifies where mobile homes can be placed. There is now a rest home, new apartment houses, condos and a new motel on the property. There is still room for growth.

[II/1/45] A new restaurant is planned, there is a shopping center, large Food Lion and beauty shops.

[II/1/60] When the new highway, linking the city with Tennessee, is completed in 4 years there will be tremendous growth in the north. Weaverville will be cut off and not experience this growth.

[II/1/83] The Woodfin elementary school is crowded. After 4th grade students go to either North Buncombe or Erwin.

[II/1/98] Although Woodfin is divided by Merrimon Ave, there is no problem getting together to work over common problems.

[II/1/125] The cotton mill houses (built for the workers and later sold to them by the mill) [see Hilda Sands re: mill and Matthews re: Preservation Society] are being upgraded with Federal funds (see enclosure). There are several industries on the river - Ethan Allen Furniture Company (see Robert Morgan) antique store, Young Brothers (tour busses - see enclosed) and Mill's Parachute Manufacturers (see Hilda Sands tape).

[II/1/160] The Firehouse, next to the community center, is 10 years old. The new Town Hall houses the office of the Alderman, Town Clerk, Police Department and rooms for meetings. Buncombe County taxes are taken care of by Taylor. [Elizabeth Taylor]

[II/1/198] The Metropolitan Sewage [Treatment Plant], owned by the State, is on Woodfin property (see P. Greer Johnson), formerly managed by Johnson and now by his son-in-law. [P. Greer Johnson, William Mull]

[II/1/217] Woodfin has its own reservoir and water from Reynolds Mountain but this is not sufficient to meet current needs. Asheville currently sells Woodfin water and won't allow any more "tap on's." Water table, enabling well drilling, is up, but if there were another drought as occurred in the 80's, Woodfin would be the first to be cut.

[II/1/239] Many years ago Asheville wanted to buy Woodfin water, now the only way Woodfin can grow is by buying Asheville water. It is anticipated that Asheville will buy from Henderson County. Mars Hill and Weaverville are going to the Ivy River.

[II/1/268] The day after her husband died Doris' well went dry. Woodfin let her run a private line to the mountain. Her daughter, who lives down her road, shares this line. She has lived here 18 years in a big log house in the middle of the woods.

[II/1/313] When she was an Alderman for Woodfin she could be in town at her job in 8-10 minutes. She did her Woodfin work at home. As a County Commissioner she had an office in the Court House. She resigned her paying job at that time.

[II/1/355] She wouldn't accept any money when running for position as Commissioner the first time. The second time she raised \$347 and the third time a little over \$1,000. The last time she raised \$2,500 and the men were spending \$30,000 to get elected. She always had issues to support and the people were behind her: i.e., labor, environmental protection, education, the river. She was invited to group meetings to speak. She joined the Toastmistress Club and recently had a 30th reunion. Hyde's wife was in the group, but her husband, State Senator, was a natural born speaker. Kay was office manager for 6 doctors. Doris was the only one in the group who was in politics. [Kitty Hyde, Herbert Hyde, Kay Lasher]

[II/1/455] Woodfin residents worked for a year organizing and were supported in Raleigh by the Ramseys and while they were not supported by Harkins and Stevens (see "Cissie" Imogine Stevens tape) they were given permission to hold an election. [Liston and (see end) Claude Ramsey, Herschel Harkins, John Stevens]

[II/1/497] Woodfin was incorporated after her husband's death. She was asked to run as Alderman and resigned her post when elected to become a commissioner.

[II/1/519] In 1976 the Board of Commissioners was expanded from 3 to 5. As high vote getter, she was vice chairman. She, after serving for a while, stepped down to give others a chance to be vice chairman. Now the office is held for a year [on a rotating basis, I believe]. The chairman runs on a separate election. Rainey is resigning and Sobol will be chairman (enclosed). [Eugene Rainey, Tom Sobol (see enclosed)]

[II/1/555] Her time as chairman was very busy as Ratcliff became ill. He was out of work for a year or more (enclosed). [R. Curtis Ratcliff]

[II/1/582] She raised money for her 3rd and 4th election by having benefits - tickets 10 cents each. Twelve people were running in her last campaign. Election does not benefit the winner financially but helps an attorney's reputation.

Tape II, Side 2:

[II/2/1] The Child Fatality Commission, under the speaker Bruebecker is going to recommend that a law be proposed prohibiting 16 year olds from driving between 9 p.m. and midnight unless accompanied by a family member. She started driving at 15 and was careful but many young people are not (enclosed). [Harold Bruebecker (enclosed)]

[II/2/28] She is not presently associated with Woodfin but frequently talks with the mayor who has recently been reelected (see enclosure).

[II/2/35] Many of the senior citizens in Woodfin had been workers in the cotton mill and purchased their houses from the mill owners. They meet with the others when there is a local problem to be solved.

[II/2/69] However, the residents on Audubon Drive, an area developed by Corbin 25 years ago, stick to themselves unless they are affected. They opposed the construction of a tower for car phones as this would affect their TV reception. The residents in this area are not natives but doctors and lawyers who work in town. ["Bud" Corbin]

[II/2/95] Aside from the group living on Audubon Drive, most residents in Woodfin have lived here most of their lives and brought up children here (enclosed).

[II/2/111] The Community Center was built when she was on the board and offices as well as the Fire Department were housed there. Parks and Recreation are under the auspices of the county (enclosed). [Trisha Crisco]

[II/2/145] Every department has trained workers and volunteers. The Police go through A-B Tech training (see Harvey Haynes). There is no jail in Woodfin. Small municipalities rely on the county.

[II/2/162] The Land-of-Sky Regional Council furnishes man-power for studies that need to be conducted in the municipalities and receive small donations from them. (see Robert Shepherd tape).

[II/2/200] There are several small municipalities like Woodfin that do not want to be a part of Asheville: Black Mountain, Montreat, Weaverville, Skyland and Biltmore Forest.

[II/2/221] She is glad she has had her years of service. The most interesting part of her experience has been in working with people. She has to stand for something, like Norma, and respects the fact that everyone needs to be heard. [Norma Price, Pat Price]

[II/2/261] In the future she would like to work with "women and children" issues but not as an elected official. Single working mothers need help. In the last month she has had two women call asking for ways to find husbands who have disappeared. She can't understand why the Social Service Agency with computers can't trace the fathers down.

[II/2/327] She has worked with Narcotic Agencies and feels that drugs are a factor but the basic problem is the breakdown of homes. The children aren't getting what they need. Twenty years ago Ellenberg, former clerk of court, collected funds from runaway fathers for child support. The Social Services Director today is Underwood. Offices are now in the old Square D buildings (enclosed). [Ray Ellenberg, Calvin E. Underwood]

[II/2/407] Mothers can get assistance by turning to the YWCA Resource Center (see Lynn Troutner tape) and ABCCM (see Scott Rogers tape).

[II/2/425] here have been many changes in attitudes during her life. She feels that people are coming back to their desire for a family life and cites the ecological movies and changes in TV programs.

[II/2/488] She thinks that when more water is available Woodfin will grow. There is a need for industries that pay more than minimum wages. Weaverville has several high-paying industries (see Karpen tape). There are empty buildings by the water that can be used.