

Ortez Devoe (Lacy) Griffin Jr

Side 1:

[1/1] Private planes come in for service. They may call ahead or simply arrive with no reservation. They can tie down for the night or go into a hangar - one night free. The charge is for fuel. There are also 50 individual T hangars where the plane can be left while business is transacted in town. Owners, personal and corporate - can keep a car in the hanger to use or can use rental cars. There are no long-term leases - simply month to month. Currently 40 planes are accommodated in individual hangars.

[1/28] Hendersonville has the same type of facility. The Ritter airport off Brevard Highway has a strip for 10 planes.

[1/34] he old Asheville and Hendersonville airport was built in 1960. The "fixed base" moved to the present location in 1961. He and another man flew 21 planes over in 1 day.

[1/44] There is going to be a drag strip on the old airport. A race is coming up on Sunday - planes will be removed the Friday before.

[1/47] Steelcase and later Eaton bought the old property. There are 3 or 4 planes there now.

[1/55] He has been involved since he was 14 - he is now 71. He remembers when the WPA started preparing the land. The Reed construction business was running it at the time. He went out every Saturday and Sunday. There was one runway and then 3 which were paved 4000 feet. [Mark Reed]

[1/67] At one time it was planned to put the airport on the Biltmore Estate, however it is better where it is because of the approaches.

[1/77] He was working on flying time (getting required hours) and McMurray (who was running the Asheville-Hendersonville airport "fixed base") picked him up when he was out of school so he could work full-time for him. He went to Biltmore College for 2 years and got his instructor's certificate when he was 18 - one of the youngest at the time. [Paul McMurray]

[1/93] The government was paying for his training through the Civilian Pilot Training program. He tried to join the service, but, being color blind, was put in the reserve and sent to Athens, GA, to instruct navy cadets at the university.

[1/100] The school closed and he went to Orangeburg, SC, where he trained French cadets (France was invaded so their cadets were sent here to be trained). He could speak no French but had an interpreter. He used his hands and demonstrated. They all did well.

[1/116] When the war ended he decided to be a corporate pilot and spent three years in New York before returning to Asheville.

[1/123] He flew for the Morgan Manufacturing company and then returned to the A&H airport where the Asheville Flying Service was started. He trained pilots and ran the company which he bought when McMurray died. He and his wife sold the company seven years ago to Piedmont Aviation. Piedmont was bought by US Air. Piedmont and Asheville Jet found out there was not enough business for both so Piedmont sold out. [Col. Robert T. Morgan, Paul McMurray]

[1/141] There is too much deregulation practiced in the country. Companies get in competitive areas, lose money and have to get out. This is happening with phone companies now.

[1/167] He thinks a boarding tax is a good idea. It was brought up in the past and declared illegal but it is going to be proposed again - \$3 a person - less than 10% of local people use the airline and should not have to carry the burden.

[1/194] Funds for the Asheville Jet come largely from 5% of the fuel going into commercial lines. The rest goes to the authority to run the airport. The authority, appointed by Buncombe County Commissioners and Asheville city council, regulate rules for the airport. Hendersonville has no authority over the airport since they were separated.

[1/226] There is discussion of expanding the airport so there will be parallel runways. He feels that this is not needed because in 25 years they have never had two planes land at the same time.

[1/236] Planes have to keep flying to make money and the big ones can't afford to stay overnight. Larger planes can physically get in as far as length is concerned - it is the weight on the runway that is the problem. He anticipates that in the future smaller, commuter type planes will be used extensively.

[1/286] The government, which pays the biggest proportion of the airfield expense, has a certain amount allocated for airports. If it is not spent here it will be spent someplace else. He feels that, since it isn't needed here, it should be spent someplace else.

[1/305] Asheville Jet was built three years ago - he said it is first class. [Tom Nash]

[1/330] The terminal building and land cost \$2,250,000 and is owned by the city. A piece of land was bought from the Boy Scouts. He feels they have all the space needed. The government rents space for the Weather Bureau and if pilots want a briefing, they have to go to them to get it - can't get it by phone (doesn't know why).

[1/421] Money is made on the sale of fuel. Corporations, as a rule, buy fuel at home base to save money but still want facilities - ice, coffee, cars. Asheville Jet makes some money on charters and training students.

[1/496] Wolcott was with the airport (director of the city's Department of Aviation) since day one. Weir ran the town. [Billy Wolcott, Weldon Weir]

Side 2:

[2/5] He was born in 1923 in the Biltmore Hospital. His mother was a nurse. His parents separated and he lived with his grandparents, attending Biltmore School. He drove when he was 14 and went to the Asheville Airport every Saturday and Sunday. He would also slip off from school so he could fly. [Bob Shuford]

[2/27] He carried newspapers through Biltmore Forest on his bike. Knew the policeman and with a friend was locked up in the Biltmore Forest Jail as a joke. He knew Charles "Choo-Choo" Justice. [Charles Justice]

[2/48] He flew a plane off Kenilworth with a pilot towing an advertising banner. This was not profitable. He taught Mr. Bill (of TV) to fly. Terrell writes this up (enclosed). [Bob Terrell, Bill Norwood]

[2/63] He made money "barn storming" and taking the manager of K. Woodie pipes around to get briar wood for his pipes. He put on air shows and took people for rides at \$1.50 to \$2 a ride - doing stunts and flying upside down.

[2/88] Before the war he flew people sightseeing to South Carolina. [Kenneth Arnett]

[2/100] One customer wanted to jump with a parachute and landed 5-6 miles from the airport and had to be retrieved by jeep.

[2/112] He used pipes for training and then sold them. He sold a few Beechcrafts - one to Enka. [Paul McMurray]

[2/120] The charter business worked well, he employed 2-3 pilots. Enka was one of his biggest accounts. The president spent between \$35,000-\$40,000 a month. Now that BASF has taken over the plant the planes have been removed. There are few corporate planes at the base now. Nash has a Falcon. A couple of people with race cars have planes here. [J. Key Putney, Mr. Stole, Mr. Nash]

[2/149] The Memorial Mission Hospital has its own plane. This base has nothing to do with the fire department but a few charter planes picked up firefighters to go to Colorado. Some went on the commercial airlines.

[2/166] He owns his own plane and is now a consultant and works with customers.

[2/177] When he was in 10th grade he played a trick on his teacher. Whenever a plane went over the school he always went to the window. One day Mrs. Torn had to leave the room - he rushed down the stairs and outside and stretched out on the grass. The students said he fell out of the window. He went to the principal's office for this. [Mrs. Torn]

[2/214] He doesn't remember Lindbergh's flight but does remember the baby's kidnapping. [Charles A. Lindbergh, Bruno Hauptmann]

[2/242] We discuss early stores (Avery Drug Store) Biltmore Hardware store and Ingles. [Bob Ingle, Mrs. Lingerfelt Simpson]

[2/268] He didn't like school when he lived in Oakley and often caught a train and went to Biltmore or walked there (now Sheriff's office).

[2/279] During the Depression he would jump on a train and throw coal off. On Busby Mountain they could get apples (see Maxwell and Lee tapes).

[2/287] Some of the people in Biltmore Forest lived well but some didn't pay bills and Trantham's store went broke. Food was brought to the needy at Christmas. [Roy Trantham]

[2/306] He belongs to the Asheville Country Club but plays all over - golf is a rich man's game. Clark was the pro at Biltmore. [Mr. Clark]

[2/317] He delivered papers to the club house in Biltmore - some people gave him pie.

[2/325] He remembers Biltmore Village and the people who lived there. The soda fountain and the drug store and the beer parlor across the street (see Mary Hyde

tape). [1956 Asheville City Directory: Plaza Cafe (Thomas Arakas), 71/2 Plaza; Biltmore Drug Store, 1 Kitchen Place] [Lloyd M. Jarrett, Thomas Arakas]

[2/355] He went to an airport on the river when Owen owned it - he was a dentist but loved planes and was a "character" (see enclosed 1/26/69). [Dr. James E. Owen]

[2/370] He feels that Weir did more for the city than anyone. He got work done without hassle. [Weldon Weir]

[2/390] The only thing that Wolcott was interested in was the airport. The authority was formed and leases agreed on for 20 years. This was renewed for another 20 years. [William "Billy" Wolcott]

[2/403] Before the war he taught flying to college students and ran business people to Raleigh and families to Myrtle Beach, bringing the fathers back to work.

[2/428] Transportation for pilots is provided by rental cars, U Haul, or taxies. Food can be ordered or obtained at the terminal.

[2/457] He discusses storms - how they are anticipated and the kind of machinery carried to enable pilots to let the ground crew know where they are and receive information. If a plane runs into a mountain there is nothing that can be done unless it can be sighted.

[2/514] There is a good fire department and have not had to call on Skyland or Fletcher. He said the Lord had been good to him.