

## **Jessie Huff**

### **Side 1:**

She was born in Mars Hill, NC. Her grandfather built the first brick building which is still standing. The bricks were made from the land and when ran out of money to pay for construction, an old colored man, who belonged to the Marshbank family, said he would go to jail and stay until funds could be raised to finish the building. He is buried on the campus. [Edward Carter, Thomas Anderson, Mrs. Marshbank]

[24] Her uncle was the first Dean of Mars Hill College. He was head of the English Department and had done his undergraduate work at Chapel Hill. Dr. Roister was on the Southern Association of Colleges and Mars Hill qualified and has remained a member. [Joseph Huff, Dr. Fitch Roister]

[33] When she was in college Joseph was called to two small colleges to help them get accredited. [Joseph Huff]

[40] Her great grandfather told Uncle John to see if he could get 2 teachers from Asheville. He went to Melvin's home. Aunt Susie had been in school with Helen and Jennilee in Columbia and they were suggested. They were to become the first highly educated teachers. Helen was the principal and taught Latin and the Scriptures. Jennilee taught music and speech. Their brother-in-law was James whose nephew was Woodrow. (1854 or 1856) [Edward Carter, Melvin Carter, Susie Carter, Helen McMasters, Jennilee McMasters, James Wilson, Woodrow Wilson]

[77] Aunt Kate Woodrow came to Mars Hill and grandfather gave her a 5-acre lot and she built a boarding home for her relatives to come and spend the summers with her. [Kate Woodrow]

[81] She remembers Woodrow, his first wife Ellen and Jessie because she had Jessie Huff's name. Jessie married Francis whose son was the dean of the Cathedral in Washington DC. [Woodrow Wilson, Ellen Axson Wilson, Jessie Wilson, Francis Sayer]

[91] Another teacher at Mars Hill who taught her parents was Hufam. [Hufam]

[93] At that time there was only one church on campus and White was the Minister. [Dr. Johnny White]

[100] Her mother's people were northerners. Jessie is descended from Governor Bradford's wife whose father was Brewster. They came to South Carolina and her great grandfather died in the Union Army. She is not a real southerner and never saw the reason for the Civil War. She wouldn't join the U.D.C because she "thought you should forget that we had been a divided country." [Anne Bradford, Elder Brewster]

[114] Her mother and father graduated from Mars Hill, which was then a prep school. Her father went briefly to State College but because her uncle Joe was in poor health he was sent to Chapel

Hill, where he earned 2 degrees, so he could make a living. All his children had graduate degrees.

[133] She studied music with Stringfield who started the NC Symphony Orchestra. She played in concert every week. [Lamar Stringfield]

[153] She has a degree in Piano from Mars Hill, went to Chapel Hill, Salem College and before going to Oxford University attended Meredith College.

[169] When the banks failed she came home and taught music at Ira B. Jones School (then Grace School) for 40 years. The school was accredited to the 12th grade and accepted into the city. The principal who followed Ira proposed that the school be certified as one of the best schools in the nation. This is written on front of the building (when I went to school to take snap shots, sign no longer on front of building - 1996). [Ira B. Jones]

[192] She went in 1932 on a study tour following the route of Lewis and Clarke starting in Iowa and ending in Los Angeles [some confusion on two tours].

[265] There was a doctor on the tour related to the colonel who had a home where the Clyde Savings Bank now stands. [Colonel Woodfin]

[283] She mentions her grandparents back to her great-great grandfather who fought in the Revolutionary War. She is the 8th generation in this country and a member of the DAR. [James Jenning, James Robert, James Howe]

[329] Randolph owned land which was not taken from him (following the Civil War?) and is buried not far from Mars Hill. [John Randolph]

[345] She never went to undergraduate school but attended a "subscription" school taught by her father's cousin. Ten to 15 students who attended this school became principals of prep schools or Jr. Colleges. [Miss Carter]

[367] In college she was taught by a famous teacher. [Mary Theodore Whitley]

[423] When she went to the Olympic games (1932) she was arrested at the Mexican border (pending identification) and saw Rita Hayworth and her father dance. [Rita Hayworth]

[457] She knew the newspaper woman who wrote the AAUW history. She was secretary under two AAUW presidents for 7 or 9 years. [Margaret Young, Madge Crump, Leontine Plonk]

[499] A woman who organized the AARP attended Jessie's book club and brought with her a woman whose son finished the cathedral [San Francisco, I believe] in a year. He died on the desert. [James Pike]

[543] Mrs. Andrus joined the local branch. She started the AAUW Teachers Retirement Fund. [Mrs. Andrus]

[560] The man who started the Biltmore gardens - before Beadle - gave a talk with slides. When the lights were out some of the ladies left but the Westalls and Marion stayed. [Chauncey Beadle, Annie Westall, Mary Westall, Marion Green]

Re: Annie Westall.

[580] "She (Annie Westall) was the most wonderful character you ever saw. When they organized the Friends of the Library down at Chapel Hill, she went to the Kiwanis Club. Our Mr. Jones (Ira B. Jones) was president and every single one of the men joined." [Annie Westall, Ira B. Jones]

"Mary was different. They both graduated from Randolph Macon. Mary was a scientist and when I had a problem to ask, I always asked Mary, and she always had the answer." They were in the lumber business. They came from Yancey County where Jessie's grandfather came from. Her grandfather married a Ray. [Mary Westall]

## **Side 2:**

Mary Hyde and Jessie look over AAUW files and mention names.

[2/83] Roberts had a private school below Trinity Church (down the block [37 Ravenscroft Rd.]). Shoenberger Hall. The bishop's residence. [Mr. Roberts, Bishop Ribens]

[2/97] Jessie's grandmother inherited land and gave her father 20 acres. He built a house and the plan was so well thought out that 20-30 more houses were built using the same plan. His house burned before WWII.

[2/113] Her grandfather bought a show place near West Buncombe School from liquor people. There were barns, four buildings, stabling for at least 100 cattle and a house. This was given to her father and they stayed 3 or 4 years. They had an incubator which caught on fire and burned the house. [John O'Donnell]

[2/145] The family then moved to Fletcher in the 40's.

[2/147] There was a summer school where the Mission Hospital stands and one of the buildings was incorporated in the building. This was before Jenkins came (minister) and Neil said that he would move out and let the family have the rectory. They stayed 12 years. [Dr. Calfi, Mary Theodore Whitney, Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Neil]

[2/176] Her mother wanted to move because of fears of being blocked from the city when the river overflowed its banks so they moved to Jessie's present house in 1944.

[2/178] This house was built by President Polk's cousin Frank who had TB. He was a law partner with Davis. It had a widow's walk so he could see the mountains. Polk was a law partner with Davis whose great grandson was in WWII with the lawyer in town (just retired). [James K. Polk, Frank Polk, John Davis, Harold Bennett]

[2/187] Wilson borrowed money from Curtis Bynum (the husband of Florence, an AAUW member) to renovate the house. He removed the widow's walk and made the roof flat. He went into debt but Bynum let him have the money anyway. Wilson bought a Cadillac from Richburg and left the keys under Bynum's office door and said, "It's yours." [Jim Wilson, Florence Bynum, Curtis Bynum]

[2/211] She started teaching at Jones (then Grace) School in 1929. For 12 years she rode the bus from Fletcher (changing at Pack Square) but was able to walk from present house. Her father wouldn't let her drive on the roads so for part of this time she had a chauffeur. This was expensive because of dry-cleaning (?) and the gas bill was tremendous. She thinks he must have been bootlegging. She sold her car to him.

[2/229] Her mother had a good car and had a slight accident. She returned home to announce that a man got one hub cap but she got two of his! Her father said to get rid of the cars and they never had another.

[2/240] Her father had 40 acres of pasture for his beef cattle. There weren't woods around at the time.

[2/251] The house, built after the Civil War (1898) originally had a lake and dam. The interior walnut was so hard that it took two days for the decorator from Bon Marché to drive the nails for the Venetian blinds. Both the wood and bricks for the fireplace came from the land.

[2/293] The members of the AAUW have all been active. The first members were prominent citizens. Over the years there were problems with paper publicity. Some publishers were prejudiced against women. She wrote a letter: "AAUW has given more than \$100,000 to help Asheville and we don't see why we have to be put in with the tea sippers in the paper!" [Annie Westall, Mary Westall, Rosie (Mrs. Julian P.) Kitchin]

[2/359] When May died, Louis wrote a fine letter which was published on the editorial page. [May (Mrs. Clarence) Blackstock, Louis Thompson]

[2/361] Pauline was an active member and Murray was in one of her classes. She also taught dance at the Highland Hospital. Zelda was not in her class. [Pauline Smathers, Arthur Murray, Zelda Fitzgerald]

[2/379] A member of the AAUW was part-time secretary for Scott. He lived at the Battery Park Hotel and walked by Jessie's house going to the hospital. He was denied burial in his family lot in Baltimore and considered a disgrace. [F. Scott Fitzgerald]

[2/410] Jessie was active in collecting 10,000 books for soldiers and for the Refugee Shop and, while this gave the AAUW good publicity, Rowena said that, because help was hard to get, the shop would have to close. [Rowena Cassat]

[2/434] Today older women are running the AAUW but when she joined 1/3 were recent graduates. Students in college were urged to join on graduation. She was busy with church activities and, with her car, attending ball games.

[2/460] She was with Kanuga for 40 years. This is a religious conference center where, during the summer, programs for all ages are held. They read church writers. Over the years 10-15 bishops have started there.

[2/501] She went to college 7 years and was to have written on Byron but, not liking his style, wrote on Shelley instead.