

Mary Hyde

Side 1:

Mary and her husband moved from Chicago in 1980 to Spooks Branch. She is a nurse by profession and, finding the people in her area completely "family oriented," moved to Ballantree and for a period of time worked as a volunteer to meet people.

[27] She worked part time for the Red Cross, traveling around the country and became active in the AAUW in 1985.

[32] She instigated a Food Fair as a fund raiser and needing an area that was flat with parking facilities, chose Biltmore Village as a site. Cram, the owner of the New Morning Gallery brought the idea before the Merchant's Association. It was suggested that the Fair take on a historic flavor and Mary searched out Biltmore Village history. [John Cram]

[60] Mrs. Stephens was born in Biltmore in 1905. Her father-in-law bought the Village from Mrs. Vanderbilt. (see file) [Eleanor Stephens, Edith Vanderbilt]

[67] There was a small display of articles pertaining to early Biltmore history on the church porch the first year; the second year the articles were moved inside and the third year the building that had originally been the Post Office, housed the items. Because of rain and falling off of attendance the project was discontinued.

[92] It was suggested that a small museum be established and a space was offered in the top floor of the Fireside Antique building. A board was established. A form 501-C-3 (not-for-profit) certificate was obtained in the fall of 1989. [Father Cornelius (Neil) Zabriskie, Roy Trantham, Nancy Cecil, Pickering, Patricia (Pat) Shuttles, Jean Ritchie, Lynnell Goacher, Mayor Louis Bissette]

[126] A walk-through pictorial museum was established. A grant of \$1,500 was obtained from the Community Development Fund; however, with the grant came the requirement that the museum be handicap accessible.

[138] The rents in the Village were high and the museum not large enough to charge a fee. Cram had a building he was using as storage and let the museum use part of the ground floor - with a window. [Walter McGeachy, John Cram]

[157] A \$2,000 fire wall (fire regulations demanded it meet specifications) was constructed separating the storage area from the museum area (14.5' wide by 25' long, plus a display window). Since opening in May there have been approximately 3,000 visitors - mostly tourists. [Robert Griffin]

[195] Biltmore Village was built originally as simple family residences to be rented. It was built and owned by Vanderbilt (except for All Soul's Church) and remained in the family until two years after his death. [George Vanderbilt]

[200] The village was purchased by Stephens in 1919 - he was owner/publisher of the Asheville Citizens. Following the building boom and collapse of the Central Bank the property was devalued. [George Myers Stephens]

[225] The Gray Real Estate Company bought the houses and used them for rentals. In 1962 they were left to the grandchildren who started selling off corner lots. Fred Gray, Mabel Gray, Bob Gray, Dick Gray]

[248] The drug store was sold and the owner simply walked off leaving artifacts now in the museum. The area is now totally commercial (with the exception of one person). [Dr. Lloyd Jarrette]

[260] The Merchant's Association is a loose organization. There is no paid employee but the members band together, contributing according to their footage, in order to advertise. (see enclosures). One hundred thousand brochures are distributed each year.

[286] There is so much to see at the Biltmore House that visitors are often too weary to visit the Village - but the house is the biggest reason for the existence of the Village. Out of the 5,000 who visit the house perhaps 500 visit the Village.

[301] The museum and the Biltmore House employees have a good sharing relationship. [Susan Ward, Dini Pickering]

[334] The Biltmore House has an oral history program involving people who worked on the estate. Mary also has tapes. [Susan Ward]

[369] The AAUW has a taping project - some relate to the Village. [Eleanor Stephens]

[395] Vanderbilt's mother had been daughter of a minister and the family gave generously through the church. He built the All Soul's Church rather than including a chapel in his house, which is often done in Europe. [George Vanderbilt, Richard Morris Hunt, Frederick Law Olmsted]]

[413] Before the house was finished, Mr. Vanderbilt gave funds to the Negro Community in New York [?]. Mary thinks that the YMI was used mainly as a bathing facility for black males as the All Soul's records show 3,000 baths were taken one year. There were instructions given to women who would become maids and a black kindergarten was provided. [George Vanderbilt, Charles McNamee]

[470] All Soul's Church was completed in time for the house opening in 1895, (Dr. Swope was the first rector) but on his way to the consecration in 1896, Vanderbilt learned of his mother's sudden death in New York. He did not attend the consecration, returning to NY instead. [Dr. Rodney R. Swope, George Vanderbilt]

[498] All of the church's expenses were born by Vanderbilt. Even the Sunday School collection was given away.

[519] Swope was given a house, \$4,000 a year and carte blanche to start organizations, women's and men's groups, a parish visiting group. The after school ladies tea was called the "Happy Hour" after Miss Drinker (a social worker). [Dr. Rodney R. Swope, Miss Drinker, Mary B. (Mrs. Rodney) Swope]

[565] George married Edith in 1898 and she became very popular in the city. She was a member of half of the clubs and involved in hospital work. [George Vanderbilt, Edith Stuyvesant Dresser Vanderbilt]

[592] As a memorial to his cousin who had visited him and later died, Vanderbilt built the Clarence Barker Hospital. [Clarence Barker]

Side 2:

[2/11] The Hospital grew from 12 to 50 beds. There were two regular nurses and a superintendent. [Adeline Orr]

[2/22] In 1901 a school of nursing was established, grew until 1947 when it merged with the Memorial Mission, and then became a nursing home (see Griffin tape). The Student Nurses Home was purchased by Robert Griffin and is used for his architectural firm. Space is also leased to the NC Department of Archives and History. It is a Smith building. [Richard Sharp Smith]

[2/32] There are three Hunt buildings in Biltmore Village - the Parish House, the Church, the Railroad Station, and the Estate Office Buildings. These were finished by 1895. [Richard Morris Hunt]

[2/38] The hospital functioned as a polio clinic in the 40's and 50's. Later Thoms took over this function (see Kenneth Partin tape and Nancy Seymour tape).

[2/52] The YMI was built under the auspices of the Vestry of All Soul's Church and sold to the black community in 1907. The facility deteriorated during the Depression but funds were raised and it was hooked on to the Pack Place project as another facility. Five hundred thousand dollars were raised to refurbish the building. The Goombay festival raises funds for the YMI Cultural Center. Part of the building was used as a library before integration. (see Haith tape). [George Vanderbilt, Johnny Baxter, Wanda Henry Coleman]

[2/95] The recent death of Florence Ryan is discussed. Mary tells story of her preparation for her driver's license test when she was 96 (she died age 99 - see her tape). She took 2 courses in defensive driving and memorized the book and eye charts. Mary saw Florence at a meeting and, realizing she was ill, contacted the Princess Ann Hotel. Her daughter was informed, came and placed her in the Highland Farms Nursing Facility. [Florence Ryan, Nanine Iddings]

[2/127] Mary said it was Florence's sister who made Florence's work possible. She took care of their mother, an aunt, the four children, the house, and also worked (see enclosure - House at 74 Wembley). [Nanine Iddings]

[2/135] The Vanderbilt and Cecil History is recounted. Cornelia born in 1900 married Cecil in 1924. George was born in 1925 and William in 1928. The parents divorced in 1930 and the sons, who spent much of their lives in England, returned to Asheville - George was involved with the Dairy and William (Bill) marketed the house as a tourist attraction (see enclosures for accuracy). [Cornelia Vanderbilt, John Francis Amherst Cecil, George Cecil, William Cecil]

[2/180] Bill was told that a private home couldn't be marketed. [David Rockefeller]

[2/187] Both families work hard in their community. Nancy is a volunteer at the Memorial Mission Hospital and on the board. The members are extremely accessible and involved in many local activities. [Nancy Owens Cecil]

[2/206] Bill and George have divided the estate holdings. The dairy was sold to Pet Milk and the processing plant torn down. Property was sold and or developed i.e. Biltmore Square Mall, Harris Teeter Complex and a new development called Brayside. There are plans for a long-term development of 1,500 acres into Biltmore Park. [William Cecil, Deenie Cecil, Bill Cecil, Jr., George Cecil, Jack Cecil]

[2/235] Mary reviews the building of the Akzona building on Pack Square in the early 80's. It is now the headquarters for the Biltmore Corporation, which used to be housed in Biltmore Village. [Claude Ramsey, William Cecil]

[2/260] Mimi is a lawyer, active in democratic politics, has run for office, was active on the school board and public radio, and is a fine horse-woman. [Mimi (Mrs. William) Cecil]

[2/277] Jack is involved in furthering the efforts of the new project "Handmade in America" which hopes to center the craft industry in this area. [Jack Cecil]

[2/285] Edith was a charter member of the NC State Automobile Association, was on the State Board of Home Extension Services and started the Biltmore Industries. The Industries grew out of the Boys Club held in the Church Parish of All Soul's under the minister's wife. In 1905-1906 the craft-training group was called the Biltmore Estate Industrial School. Miss Vance and Miss Yale, who had met at the Moody Bible school, were sent to England to learn weaving and carving skills. The Industry was subsidized for \$385.62 a month and the ladies each earned \$72 a month. The homespun fabric was sold to Saks 5th Avenue shop and an item on the Society page told of the yellow dress Mrs. Vanderbilt had worn which cost \$25.00. [Edith Vanderbilt, Mary Swope, Miss [Eleanor P.] Vance, Miss [Charlotte L.] Yale]

[2/335] The concern was later sold to Seely - first as a tourist attraction for the Grove Park Inn and then as a business (see Parham tape.) [Fred Seely]

[2/346] As jobs became more plentiful it was no longer possible to get people to master the handmade technique. The woodworkers ceased functioning before WWII. The weaving industry also suffered because: 1) The Southern Highland Craft Guild said the product could not be called "homespun," as motors were used on the looms and 2) the width of men's suiting changed from 42" to 54". The looms, being made of wood, could not be adapted. The shop was bought by

Harry Blomberg and opened as a gift shop in the 60's (See Phillip Merrell). Harry's son-in-law has made it into a first rate gift shop (enclosure). [Harry Blomberg, Buddy Patton]

[2/390] Jesse Ray wore his 1956 suit (with ticket inside giving the date) for our interview (see Jesse Ray). [Jesse Ray]

[2/399] Some white homespun was given to the then President when he visited the city. [Fred Seely, Franklin Roosevelt]

[2/411] Asheville is growing, especially towards the south where the land is flatter and in time the development will be solid to Hendersonville. Despite the closing of many plants, people are moving in - mostly retirees.

[2/436] There is a growing community of retirement homes. The Highland Farms, developed 20 years ago, is a full service facility (see enclosure). The Givens Estate also offers single rooms, apartments, facilities for assisted living, nursing and skilled nursing care. Some churches run homes i.e. Deerfield and Givens, some are for profit, i.e. Highland Farms. [Dr. Limbert, Chet Prentice]

[2/510] Because there are so many facilities the waiting lists are not long. Organizations that accept Medicare and Medicaid take applicants from the public at large. [Deerfield does not accept Medicare as payment.]

[2/523] Mary mentions the UNCA programs for seniors. (see Cissie Stevens tape).

[2/539] Income in the area was divided into three areas 1/3 industry, 1/3 apparel, 1/3 tourism. As of now, apparels are out; industry is going out i.e. Coca-Cola, Square D., Westinghouse. Factory jobs pay \$7-8 an hour. Retirees bring in money, brains and activity. The area will, she feels, continue to lose industry. This is why "Handmade in America" is catching hold (see Patty Schleicher's tape). [Becky Williams]

[2/587] She sees, while working in the Biltmore Museum, people seeking jobs. A 5 hour-a-week minimum wage job was advertised and there were 30 applicants - some with masters.

Tape II, side 1:

Unemployment is a national problem. Asheville Industries, a division of drafting and engineering for ship-building out of Newport News, has closed and 500 people have been laid off. The wives of doctors and lawyers and other qualified people can not find employment.

[II/1/37] People wanting to move to a retirement community are often unable to sell their homes. There is, however, a better market right now. The aides working at Highland Farms (where she is a nurse) live in trailer parks.

[II/1/45] The poor people who live here are able, on an income of \$15,000 a year, to live a life-style of a city dweller in another area on \$30,000 a year - by using the old mountain skills, growing and canning vegetables, heating with wood logged on the property and bartering.

[II/1/87] Mary compares the areas of the city. 1. North - middle to upper level income - executive or senior executive, old Jewish families. 2. Montford - remnants of Greek families - in transition. 3. West Asheville - small, blue-collar neighborhoods with well-kept yards. Many churches. 4. East Asheville - a little older with new developments. No definite flavor. Churches and grade schools. 5. South of Biltmore - middle income, more people moving from the north, business transferees.

[II/1/133] She grew up in Chicago, and is amazed to find families here going back 5-6 generations.

[II/1/158] The Biltmore Forest is made up of a few old families but on the whole upwardly mobile doctors, lawyers, and storekeepers. A few Jewish have moved in, in the past 5 years but still no blacks.

[II/1/171] The black community is confusing. Blacks are rarely seen at concerts or plays but turn up at UNCA functions featuring national touring black groups. Other than that and the tremendous turn out for the Martin Luther King Jr. breakfast, they are mostly involved with their churches, fraternities and sororities.

[II/1/193] There are a few prestigious clubs - the Vetust Club (see enclosed) for women and the Pen and Plate Club. (See Roger McGuire - separate folder with 3 addresses re: Asheville) She belongs to a book group organized in 1895. The Civitan and Rotary Club are not invitational.

[II/1/229] The country clubs are by invitation only. The Biltmore and Asheville Clubs entrance fees range from \$9,000-\$15,000.

[II/1/265] There are several blacks in high positions in the city. [Albert Whitesides, Charles Penny, Dr. Otis Michael, Dr. John Holt]

[II/1/305] She is a member of Rotary in the Arden area. Despite national bylaws a woman was refused admission in the Hickory Rotary.

[II/1/315] She has been taping for several years and will make her tapes available when they are indexed and reviewed.

[II/1/366] She and her corps of 23 volunteers are in the process of organizing and inventorying the museum.

Tape II, side 2:

[II/2/2] She would like to copy a project she has seen in Illinois - A "passport" - a list of local museums giving hours, price, contents with a page to be stamped when a child visits one of the

sites - with a little reward at the end. These could be underwritten by a concern such as McDonald's and distributed to 4th grade school children.

[II/2/22] She names her volunteers (enclosed).

[II/2/51] She was given many items for her window display when Griffin opened his office in the old Biltmore Hospital. [Robert Griffin]

(Enclosure)

[II/2/62] The merchants are increasingly interested in the Museum and the stores are mentioned on the back of the brochures (see enclosed).

[II/2/68] A three-part series on interviewing was offered in the Lord Auditorium and videotaped. This was underwritten by the NC Humanities Council for \$800-\$900. She had these tapes copied for us and are in the UNCA Southern Highland Research Center Files. [Maggie Lauterer, Susan Ward, Johnny Baxter, Milton Ready]