

Grace Kouns

Side 1:

[1/1] In 1945, Ava Keener and Beulah Harrison decided, after attending the Westminster Antique Fair in New York, to start an antique study group in Asheville. Eight women were asked to join to study and write papers. The membership was limited to 24 and the requirement was to write a paper regarding a specific antique one year and to entertain the members the next. [Ava (Mrs. Frank) Keener, Beulah (Mrs. W. S.) Harrison, Mrs. Harold Ball, Madeline (Mrs. George) Pennell, Mrs. Charles Hunter, Mrs. Hugh Brown, Ruth (Mrs. Edgar) Turbyfill, Shirley (Mrs. Walter) Britt, Rossie (Mrs. Julian P.) Kitchin, Myrle (Mrs. Burgin) Pennell]

[49] The name "Vetust" was suggested by the member who taught Latin at the Biltmore School - it means "old." [Mrs. Julian P. Kitchin (Rossie)]

[40] Over the years new members have been added as others retired. A total of 64 have joined but the limit of 24 has been maintained though there is a waiting list.

The first fair was held at the city auditorium and managed by the man the founders had met in N.Y. He was in charge of the yearly fairs from 1946-1963. [Mr. Nutall]

[68] Grace joined with Mrs. Wright in 1947, there had been one fair and the group was well-organized. She is the group historian and is in the process of compiling material. [Pearl (Mrs. Joel) Wright]

[75] The fair has always been held in the auditorium - later the Civic Center, and many dealers as well as the public look forward to the yearly event. Five of the old dealers returned this year. [Kate Skelley (of Oklahoma), Tim Wood of Florida]

[95] There are very few genuine antique pieces available now. Every year members of the club buy something for their homes.

[105] When the fair started, the city manager, feeling this activity was a service to the community, charged no rent. As time went by, it was necessary to start charging - lights first. From zero rent, it has now gotten to \$5,000. Because the number of dealers, who pay for exhibition space, was increased from 40 to 70, the club still makes money. This however, is hard on dealers where there may be a "sea of silver" and some dealers sell nothing. There is also a concern about the quality of items on display. [Weldon Weir]

[126] The club has donated money to Pack Place and it is possible that the number of dealers will be reduced and the fair given there.

[140] Dealers like the show because they see each other and sell to one another. Quality of goods shown is monitored but, because antique jewelry is rare, the bars were let down in this area.

[176] There is little primitive furniture for sale and tools are in short supply.

[187] Dealers come from nearly all over the US - mainly from Texas, New York and Florida.

[203] The purpose of the club was never to make money but to write papers. She is going to try to collect papers for the club history.

[250] Tonight there is a picnic for members at the Governor's mansion. In the beginning meetings were held at 8:30 to accommodate members who had shops but, after a bad experience, the hour was first changed to 3:30 and now 2:00 with refreshments. [Westbrook Murphy, Margaret Blackard]

[265] There is an executive board made up of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, parliamentarian and an Antique Fair Board.

[277] Because of the effort and age of members, a younger group was formed. They are the daughters and daughter-in-laws of members and have no interest in raising money. [Mrs. Hugh Brown, Eleanor Hall, Mary Ida Spraugan, Nancy Worley]

[323] Several methods have been used to manage the fair. After Mr. Nutall, Ava Keener and Hazel Hunter were in charge. When Hazel died in 1972, Ava selected Hazel's daughter-in-law (not a member), who ran it until 1978. In 1979 Shirley Turner ran it and this year three men ran it. Mr. Nutall gave the club \$500 and 10% of the proceeds. [Ava Keener, Hazel Hunter, Shirley Turner, Mr. Lee Long, Mr. Fred Bishop, Mr. Sullivan]

[387] The fair will probably remain as is until the 50th anniversary.

[391] "The object of the club will be the study of antiques and subjects of historical interest and aid the city in charitable and civic advancement." Many gifts have been given over the years; i.e. luncheons in the school rooms, Salvation Army, money to orphanages, school scholarships, a girl in Korea, the Smith-McDowell House and Thoms Rehab during the polio epidemic. (a washer and dryer were given at a reduced rate) Mrs. Brown was related to Irene Wortham (school) and matched any contribution. [Frances McDowell, Louis Lipinsky, Irene Wortham, Mrs. Brown]

[486] The Smith-McDowell house, she believes, will only be successful if a foundation is established. The Historical Society seems to have taken it over [she asks me to turn off the tape but says the same thing.] She has always looked after the finances of the club.

[520] She has been in business all her life and ran a motel until she was 79 - details on side 2.

Side 2:

When the Vance House was restored, a committee from the club picked out each item of furnishing and bought a blanket chest as a memorial to Mrs. Griffin [Her husband was a founder of Appalachian Hall Psychiatric Hospital.] [Zebulon Vance, Rossie Kitchin, Ava Keener, Hazel Hunter, Mrs. Hugh Brown, Edith (Mrs. William Ray) Griffin]

[2/20] Every year the club financially helps children. They planted bulbs in the hill leading to the tunnel and gave \$800 to the Botanical garden. Membership dues are, however, only \$3 a year.

[2/37] Members were surprised at the success of the fair and will hold it together for the next two years and hope to interest the younger people to take over or get a promoter.

[2/53] Other Asheville dealers are very supportive of the fair and advertise in the program. Originally the fair filled a real need in the community. Now owners of antique shops go to Europe to buy.

[2/70] She was in business since graduation. Her husband was in politics, making a change in 1930 when he bought the Asheville Livestock Yard. He died when he was 42. Kahns Manufacturing Company bought the land where Days Tobacco Warehouse is on Lyman St.

[2/87] The stock yard was a huge success, grossing 6 million a year. All major meat houses were customers - Armour - Swift - Valley Dale. Cattle, sheep and hogs were housed, shown in a ring, and auctioned - (2-3, one head at a time). Twenty-five men from Madison County worked there.

[2/115] Her husband had owned a sheet metal shop; his father had an air conditioning business. When in 1929, his father went broke, rather than take bankruptcy (then considered a disgrace) he put up his own business and went to Raleigh purchasing meat for the prison system. [Ralph McLean]

[2/150] She came to Asheville in 1924, age 16, and went to the Grove Park School for Girls, which later became the Plonk School. Allene, daughter of Dr. Reynolds (encl.) (who was a famous doctor who opened the Grove Park Community) was a bridesmaid at the Vanderbilt wedding. [Allene Reynolds Ball, Cornelia Vanderbilt, Dr. Carl Reynolds]

[2/166] She intended to go to Bryn Mawr College but was ill and her aunt, and uncle by marriage, who were living at the Manor, had her come to Asheville (she had TB) for a year. Her aunt took her to Bryn Mawr but the cold weather was discouraging, and it was decided she would go to Greensboro, NC (Woman's College). Her sister was at the Woman's College and brother at VMI. [Mildred and Carl Bamford, Ruth Wolcott Barfield, William ("Billy") Wolcott]

[2/263] The doctors met Ralph [Grace's first husband] and he was hired to go to Raleigh. He was put in charge of purchasing meat for prisoners under the State Department of Hygiene. [Ralph McLean, Dr. Huffines, Dr. Eugene Carr]

[2/275] Animals came to the Asheville Livestock Yard from all over Western North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. They were weighed, numbered, sorted and graded. Bidding started at 2 p.m. Friday, commencing with the milk stocks.

[2/295] Animals were trucked out - or put on cattle cars for Chicago. Fall was the busiest time but the Livestock Yard functioned all year. When her husband died she sold to the Robinson's in Canton. [According to the City Directory she continued to run Asheville Livestock and Implement Co. after her husband's death in 1951 until 1965, first with the assistance of her

brother Billy Wolcott, and then with her second husband Douglas Kouns] [Ralph McLean, Robinson]

[2/362] She married a widower with two daughters (10 and 13). He was with the Chamber of Commerce. We discuss Lou and the movie "The Swan." [Douglas Kouns, Lou Harshaw]

[2/370] She was living on Edwin Place, and, during the shooting of the movie, Grace exercised by walking up and down the street. [Grace Kelly]

[2/379] She now lives in Woodland Hills, an area formerly owned by the Baird Estate and developed by Barfield, former husband of sister Ruth. The lake is named after his grandchild. (see clippings re: Chamber of Commerce) [Baird Family, Jack Barfield, Ruth Wolcott Barfield, Lisa]

[2/427] Billy Wolcott has probably had more to do with the city over the years than any other person alive. Since he is still in office as city clerk, he did not want to be interviewed. (see Mary Ellen Wolcott for a little more about him - not much!) [William Wolcott Jr.]

[2/427] He has been with the city over 50 years. For the city he bought all the ground around the airport and was the first Director of Aviation. He tried to buy all the land from Cherry Street and bought the Motel Heart of Asheville for the Civic Center. When Uncle Carl and Aunt Mildred were married in 1925, Carl owned all the theaters in the city as Vice President of Paramount. He came here for his health. Billy worked in the movie houses for his uncle in the summers. He is a civil engineer and worked on the North Fork Dam, which used to have the best water in the area. [William Wolcott, Sam Fischer, Mildred and Carl Bamford]

[2/500] Her son-in-law is on the Buncombe County Water District Commission which is looking for a new source for water. [Charles R. Worley]