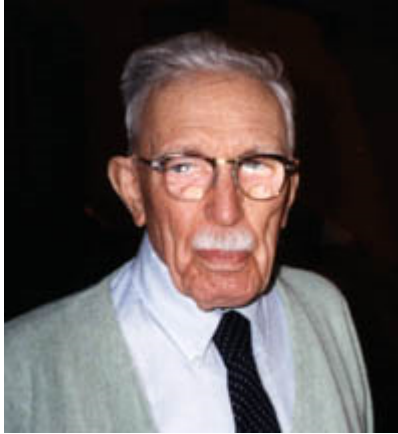


Interview with Anthony Lord

Interview date: January 18, 1993

Interviewed by: Dorothy Joynes

Interview location: Anthony Lord's Montford residence in Asheville, N.C.



Anthony (Tony) Lord

Dorothy Joynes (DJ): January 18, 1993. Dorothy Joynes talking with Anthony Lord in his house where you say you weren't born but you were brought here as a baby. Is that it?

Anthony Lord (AL): Yes.

DJ: And you still have right by your house your foundry. I was surprised.

AL: It was not a foundry. It was a blacksmith shop.

DJ: Well, you called it a foundry didn't you?

AL: No, we called it a forge. Flint Architectural Forgings it was called at the time.

There's a difference. Foundries pour massive metal into a mold. Blacksmiths forge hot metal, but not massive metal, into various shapes.

DL: How did you heat it? Did you have bellows?

AL: We had a regular blacksmith's forge. We had coal fire and bellows and a blower.

DJ: Is it still there?

AL: Oh, no. It's gone these many years. I wish it were.

DJ: You had some wonderful work that was on display in the art museum in 1984.

AL: Yes we had some stuff up there. We had a floor lamp that we had made that the museum owns.

DJ: Do you have other pieces around town?

AL: No, not odd pieces. Most of the stuff we made went to Yale University and the Washington Cathedral. Some went to All Saints Church in Massachusetts. In Biltmore Forest there's a house now occupied by Hampton Fraley on Eastwood Road for which we did a good deal of grill work around the porch and we built a couple pairs of doors. It was done just about the time of the kidnapping of the Lindbergh infant. These people had a baby and they were able to do this. They wanted to make the house as secure as they could. We did this stuff to help them do that.

DJ: There's a lot of demand for this kind of work now isn't there because of all the break-ins all over the country?

AL: Yes. Of course, this all had a practical value but it also had a decorative value. It was good looking stuff.

DJ: Were you doing your architectural design at the time or was this all iron work?

AL: At that time it was all iron work. That was the period of the Depression. Nobody built anything and architects were completely unemployed.

DJ: You were interested in our picture of the little boy weren't you?

AL: My father was an architect.

DJ: You had said at one time that it would have been nice if it you had Lord & Son but instead it was Lord & Lord.

AL: That's right, it was.

DJ: Did you work with him?

AL: Oh, yes. Indeed I did. He died in 1933 so I did not work with him very much.

After that there was nothing in the office for some years. I divided my time between piddling in iron work and trying to sell it and trying to find a market for it. I suppose that would be called marketing now. Marketing representatives now are just salesmen.

It's just a fancier name. I'm sure they get paid more.

DJ: Selling will get you through any door.

AL: I went to New York and New England for a good year. They had trains up there when I went so it was a good reason to go. I had a good connection with some of the chaps I'd gone to school with who were working for Rogers at the time. He was doing the new housing at the colleges.

DJ: It's a good feeling to go back isn't it?

AL: Yes, it is.

DJ: When did you start with Six Associates?

AL: We started the Six Associates in 1941. Charles Waddell, who was the father of Eleanor Stevens....

DJ: Who was related to the Country Day School...

AL: They were both there. She was the librarian. Their daughter is a librarian in the public library in Knoxville, Tennessee. Married to a Johnson. They have three daughters. One of them helps me out sometimes. Helps me sort my things out. She is very kind and is a wonderful person.

DJ: That's a good combination, to have that kind of help and like the person.

AL: Lovely person and lots of fun.

DJ: You had more involvement in building in 1941, didn't you?

AL: I did several houses in the late '30's. In '39 I did some commercial work for the Citizen-Times building. There was quite a lot of activity. Of course, the war shut all that down. You couldn't get any materials.

DJ: What did you do during that time?

AL: That's when we started the Six Associates. When the war broke out none of our firms were big enough to handle any big government building contracts.

Six of us...Charles Waddell, William Dodge, Stewart Rogers, Erle Stillwell, Henry Gaines and myself...that was the six of us. We pooled our resources and went after what work we could get from the Army...from the federal people. The first thing we did was the hospital out there at Beetree there at Swannanoa General Hospital. Later it was called Mooretown Hospital. It's now the state correction center for juveniles. It was a 1,750 bed mobilization type hospital. They were little wooden building villages. It was a standard plan. But they had to be adapted to each location. They were all based on one concept or general plan. We did one in Nashville, Tennessee and we did one in Thomasville, Georgia. That kept us busy for a couple of years. We did some airfield work for them. Then that program wound up. Some of the chaps...Stewart Rogers...went into the service. The rest of us tried to get into the service but they wouldn't have us. We puttered around here and did gardens. When the war was done we got back together. At that time the Associates became active as a firm. We did quite a variety of institutional and industrial work.

DJ: You did residential also?

AL: Not much. One or two members of the firm did residential work at that time.

We tried to avoid it.

DJ: Tell me, why did you try to avoid it?

AL: That's a whole long story.

DJ: Too many ideas and changes?

AL: Oh, no. I did two or three neo-Georgian adaptations for houses. They did not make sense. They represented something which did not exist. They represented certain quandaries of a whole different leisure of life. You built them for wealthy people who later wished they hadn't built them.

DJ: Because they had no servants?

AL: They had no one to keep them going. I got so I wouldn't do it. I wouldn't build those things. That would have been the easy thing to fall into. I didn't. It was a matter of educating every client that you got to what architecture was about.

DJ: Putting their ideas with your ideas and feasibility would be a complex situation.

AL: They wanted white columns across the front and I had to talk them out of that. I would anyway. That column represents a year of education for their kids.

DJ: The columns were pretentious on some houses. Did you ever do a church?

AL: Oh, yes.

DJ: It always seemed to me that the most conservative groups had the most advanced architectural style. How do you explain that?

AL: Good salesmanship on the part of architect. I don't know.

DJ: Was the idea that they would get more parishioners?

AL: I don't think so. I did some churches down by Hickory...

DJ: With a church you had the same problem of educating a whole group of people.

AL: Yes. Any of these things where you had to work with a large committee are difficult.

DJ: What kind of work did you enjoy most?

AL: Blacksmithing. There's a bigger satisfaction in making a useful and decorative thing that feels good in the hand. I enjoyed that work. I had five people working out here in the shop.

DJ: Were they apprentices? Did you train them?

AL: Some of them taught me a lot and I taught them a lot. They had no notion of design of stuff but they had technique. Some of them were accomplished technicians. They could produce what I designed. They taught me how they had produced it. I gave them some ideas about design.

DJ: I was interested in the design for the door handle. It looks like you could put your hand on the body of a griffin.



example of a griffin

AL: It does feel good in the hand.

DJ: Tell us what you say about human space and the road and the building being comfortable for people. Tell me about your building of the library at the university.



UNCA RAMSEY LIBRARY

AL: That building was shared between Bill McGee and myself. He had a lot to do with that, too. He was one of the design folks at the Six Associates. He was later the president of the Six Associates. He was a very gifted man. It came out very well.

DJ: It's a handsome building.

AL: The front doors used to be painted a wonderful red. They have faded out to a pink. I wonder, have they repainted them red again?

DJ: When I go up there I go into an entrance on the side because of the asbestos that was removed.

AL: So you don't notice the doors?

DJ: It's closed off with the yellow strips, the kind the police put up to keep you out of these areas.

AL: Oh, really?

DJ: Well, they took the asbestos out of the building. So where I go in now I'm not able to see as much of the library as I would like to. When you go into a building of this sort like hospitals and churches you have to know about flow and patterns of all of these different types of buildings don't you?

AL: You have to work it out, yes.

DJ: Each building having a different use and different problems to solve.

AL: Yes, each activity has its own set of requirements and details. Book stacks have to be spaced nowadays far enough apart to let somebody in a wheel chair to go down between the stacks. So you can't put as many books. These things change, the building codes and the public authorities. All states have building codes requiring this, that, and the other about fireproofing and safety exits next to the people in case of fire and about fireproofing and so on and so on. For instance, you are not supposed to build a flight of stairs more than twelve risers without a landing so a person doesn't climb a great long flight of stairs. He climbs up so, then he goes horizontal, then he climbs again. These things are all in codes.

DJ: Every time I go the childrens' library I count the steps. I thought I counted thirteen from one riser to the other.

AL: It may very well be.

DJ: While I'm talking about stairs, long before I knew I was going to a chance to talk to you, I looked out the window of the childrens' library and said, "Do you realize that you have a curly willow out there?" The woman said, "I don't think you call it that but I know what you mean. It's wonderful for flower arrangements." Then I realized that you were Mr. Tree. So, that's your tree isn't it?

AL: Yes, we put one in there. It's a contorted willow. A cold spell killed half of it. The rest of it pined away. So they took it out and put another one in there. It's doing very well.

DJ: There's a leaf on it just ready for a flower arrangement. Ed Sherrill said you were having trouble with your ivy. He said you wanted ivy on your garden wall.

AL: Yes. It's hard to get it started. We have got some Virginia creeper on it. That changes color in the fall and it grows much faster. The trouble with that wall bed space is the soil is only about that deep. The wall comes down and it has a concrete toe that sticks way out into the garden. Then it has a big extension from the back that comes out under the street. Then it has the toe sticking out under the garden. Those cross tie timbers that make up the little bed along the wall are not bedded. There just isn't very much earth there and what is there is probably exhausted. It ought to be pulled out and replaced.

DJ: Sometimes it's possible to go down through the cement to get down earth but I don't think the earth is very healthy down there. There is not much nutrient in it.

AL: Well, it may not be and there's not very much of it. Those toes are this thick. That's all structural. It has to keep that wall from turning over.

DJ: I've done it through Macadam driveway and put some plants down that way.

AL: This is the foundation of the retaining wall. There's a little stage down there. I don't know if you've noticed it under the bridge to the entrance.

DJ: How do you get to that?

AL: Go down into the court yard and there it is. It is unused. There's a door out there from downstairs.

DJ: It was locked.

AL: There's a padlock on the gate. You will have to get a key for the padlock. I used to have one. I may not have kept one.

DJ: The Lord Auditorium was something I discovered soon after moving here. I had no idea that I was going to be able to talk to Mr. Lord himself. Tell me about the Lord Auditorium. You had been working toward developing an extended library for a long time. You were chairman on the board for a long period.

AL: I had been on that board for forty five years...fifty years. It's been a long time.

When we were up on the Square we took the basement of that little old building up there.

It was stacked full of back issues of the *New York Times*. Just bales of back issues.

The pipes were fairly low for the plumbing lines and heating lines down there. We were

able to raise those and get a little more headroom there. We could buy the *New York*

Times on microfilm. So we hauled all the old *Times* out to the dump. There was no

recycling in those days. We made ourselves a little exhibition room. That was the start of

it. We built two boards on the side and lighted them nicely and we borrowed pictures

from several large industrial firms in this country. Dupont and General Motors had

several collections of paintings which they had acquired. They were good pictures. These

were recognized moderns. They would ship them to you. You would uncrate them and

unpack them and hang them. At the conclusion of the show you would take them down.

Of course, you had to carry insurance on them. You packed them back up and paid the

transportation to the next place they were going. We did that for a long time and we had

some really exciting stuff up there. We used the room also for lectures. We collected

enough money from the local investors and individuals to buy a Steinway piano. The

piano is in that room now in the new auditorium. We had piano recitals every year. Well

known people would come and play for us. The Friends of the Library would raise money to pay these folks.

DJ: Was John Bridges working with you then?

AL: John Bridges was working with us part of the time but not when we established the exhibition room or when we borrowed these paintings. He came back while we were doing that but by that time we had somebody in charge of the room. When he came back he took over the room. He took over the display of the photographs and prints.

We did put material on the wall in the new auditorium so you could hang pictures. It has never been used that way.

DJ: Is it because the Museum of Art is doing enough?

AL: I don't know why. I had not pushed it. I thought we got pictures of the type the local museum somehow didn't already have. I mean I think there's room for both of them.

DJ: It's an excellent place for the modern artists to show off their work for sale.

AL: Well, you can't do that. You can't sell things in there. It's a public institution supported by tax payer money. If you let Joe Doaks blow his oboe in there somebody else is going to want to blow his bassoon in there. "A" may be a good oboist and "B" may be a terrible bassoonist. One you would like and the other you wouldn't.

DJ: They would have to have a screener.

AL: So you don't have any. You don't want Doaks 2 going around his nose out of joint because they won't let him play his horn in the public library.

DJ: You would have to have a screening committee for the shows.

AL: Well, I think they have got troubles enough without having to do that so there are a lot of complications.

DJ: I like the collection you have now. The copies of the masterpieces that can be rented out. You can take them home.

AL: Oh, yes the paintings. That is a nice collection.

DJ: It's a great way to educate children. Every night for several weeks, before you go to bed, you say that's a Rembrandt. I did that with mine. I was taking courses at the library and going in every week. I would pick up a picture each time and take it home.

AL: Yes, that's nice. I have looked through the rack but I've never taken any home.

DJ: You have to have a special place saved at home where they can be taken for just a short period of time.

AL: I think most rooms, including this one, didn't have anything hung on the walls.

I went with the pattern on the rugs and the amount of junk in here. There was enough stuff in here without putting things on the walls.

DJ: Your brass clock is so handsome.

AL: Yes, it is.

DJ: When my husband was on the Friends of the Library board in Santa Barbara he was interested in seeing them start a collection of tapes. The lady on the board did not want tapes there because it was a library and a place for reading. When we came here I was so glad to see you had tapes and v.c.r. tapes.

AL: We used to have records for years but they didn't last. They were perishable. Then we had musical tapes and now we have compact discs.

DJ: You have a beautiful collection. Jim was telling me of the run on books when there is a TV series. In other words, the tapes and v.c.r. tapes and television are not taking away from the reading public. People are still getting books to go with these series.

AL: We often buy a considerable amount of popular books when they come out and they are pretty lightweight stuff that circulates for a while and then gradually no one looks at it for a while. Then they make a movie and we have learned that we cannot throw those things away. We take them down and store them in the basement and then they make a movie out of it and they flock back and ask for the book the movie was based on they take the book out again.

DJ: When Mary Parker was getting people together for a book sale that I was able to get into the back of the Lord Auditorium into the stacks. I was impressed with the number of books that you have back there. Is that what they are kept for?

AL: Some of the books are housed back there. They accumulate books there for the book sale. They were also betting that there would be a movie so they kept the books.

DJ: You became involved in the library while you were working with the Six Associates and your interest with this was all the way through and you could see the need for a new library. Can you tell me how that came about?

AL: Even before I was on the library board the library was packed to overflowing. They needed a new library when I got on the board. We spread out from that building. Right next to it on the left was a little ice cream parlor. They called it Blue Bird Ice Cream. They quit and we got that property and put in a children's room. That made a good children's room. It had a big plate glass window. You could see in and see the books and the children. There was also a glass door. There was no check on that door. The wind blew it shut with a terrible bang and smashed all the glass out of it. That next night a couple of drunks engaged in an altercation and banged into the plate glass window and broke it. The police went down to see Miss Ligon. The police said that as

long as this place was the Blue Bird Ice Cream Parlor and the little night club upstairs there never was a speck of trouble with this place. Now the rowdy library people moved in here all glass gets broken.

DJ: So you knew your time on Pack Square was coming to an end.

AL: So we took all that over and the first floor and basement of the Central Bank area and one more store down the street. We had an awful time. We had plenty to talk about.

DJ: The traffic was very difficult going from one place another with all the stairs.

AL: Yes, there was no elevator. It was spread out but it was still a terrible lack of space. We hunted locations for a new library. We made as much public fuss about it as we could. Finally, what happened was, we went along with that parking garage behind us there. If that hadn't been in the works we might not have a library there. An agency was located right where the library is now. They owned the strip of land behind it which fronted on Rankin Street. The two pieces of property worked together. They finally acquired the land. Then when Mr. Nixon was president he started this revenue sharing plan of turning federal money over to city and county units without many strings attached to it. They could do what they felt locally was desirable. We persuaded them that year for the county and the city to each put up half the cost of the library building. That was federal money. They didn't borrow any money. There is no debt on that library. There is no bond retirement or interest payments on borrowed money at all.

DJ: John Bridges indicated that it was paid for before you moved in.

AL: It was.

DJ: Incredible. You said you made a lot of noise about needing another library.

How did you do about that?

AL: The publisher of the newspaper was a good friend of mine.

DJ: That helps.

AL: He was very helpful. We would get pretty desperate. When things got bad he would publish stories about the library.

DJ: What was his name? Was Nancy Broward working for him at that time.

She interviewed you about '77 or '84.

AL: Nancy...you mean little columnist gal? Yes, she was writing a column for the paper then. She wrote a column about the library.

DL: You were able to keep it before the public.

AL: We did the best we could.

DJ: Did you have the Friends of the Library at that time?

AL: Oh, yes. The Friends of the Library goes back to 1922 or '23. They were even before that. I think during the first world war the United States had an association called Books Across the Sea. A lot of books were sent to England probably designed for the American troops in the European theater. It was the foundation of the networks that help the library. That started about the middle '20's. Yes, it's had its ups and downs but a lot of people have taken an enormous interest in it statewide. It's now a force in North Carolina. It's going to be very necessary that it turns out the troops here because there's a bill that will come up in this next legislature to make changes in the way the state funds are funneled to the library. The way it is now there is state aid for construction and maintenance of public libraries which is doled out depending on need. For some little country libraries the state aid might amount to half of their annual budget. With us it might amount to 10 or 12 percent of our annual budget. With some little fellow it might

amount to 40 or 50% and if it got cut out off he would be out of business. We could manage if we had to. We would have heavily reduced service but we could live. Some of these other fellows would disappear. What this bill would do if enacted, the state aid for the local library is available only if the local support for the library equals or exceeds the support given the library the previous year. The local money has to be as much or more than it was the previous year before they get the state aid. Otherwise, they do not get any state aid. If they drop back the state does not give them anything. Of course this makes them very eager to hold the line. It's enough money to make it very interesting to get it every year. If they took that restriction off the local folks wouldn't have to support the library and the state could stop supporting it. The library business would be dreary.

DJ: Does the city give any funds?

AL: No longer. The city almost totally funded the library for many years. The county put in few thousand dollars a year mostly for little branches. Then they gradually increased their share. Then we had a long lasting wrangle about water prices and water works and maintenance between the city and the county. As part of the solution the city did something about the water system that helped the county out. The county assumed management and funding of the library and of certain other activities which had been jointly supported. So now the library is totally supported by the county.

DJ: So in this day and age it is not going to be subsidized by anyone else except by the people who are contributing or money that can be raised by the library.

AL: No, the state aid is contingent on Buncombe County appropriating tax money to meet the library budget.

DJ: How does a library raise money?

AL: Just like everyone else. They try to get bond issues passed.

DJ: You have a certain amount that comes in from late due book returns. You have membership from the Friends of the Library. You have a library selling books that will bring in some money. But you need a lot more than that.

AL: The book sales...that money goes to the Friends. The Friends use that money to finance lecture series and concerts and displays.

DJ: So it is supplemental?

AL: Yes it has nothing to do with the library budget. That's totally independent of the library budget.

DJ: I see. Are there about 100 employees with the library?

AL: They've got a two million dollar budget.

DJ: There is something I came across called the Library Trust fund.

AL: Yes. We got that started after we got the building built. The idea was that there would be a little reservoir of money which could not be drawn upon by the public funding authority. That money could be spent only for expenses incurred which are not normally funded by the county and state. It's for extra things. Things that don't ordinarily go in the budget. That's what that money is for.

DJ: For new kinds of machinery?

AL: No. I think any kind of library machinery falls under the regular budget.

The computerization of our collection is being paid for by the county and by the state.

No, that's not what the trust fund is for. The trust fund is for things like this: a number our employees are trying to better their conditions. If they are clerical workers but do not

have their certificates as librarian, in other words, have not been to a school of library science and gotten a degree, they are clerical people and they do as good as anyone else but they don't have the title. We've devoted some of that trust fund money pay for travel for those people to go to workshops or tuition for some short course or that kind of thing. It is spent on staff improvement and, therefore, library improvement. Employee improvement just raises our whole level.

DJ: I was interested in the fact that you're computerizing now so you're not doing your clipping files anymore. That started about two years ago. Now it's all on machine.

AL: I'm not familiar with that.

DJ: A clipping file is so easy to go through. I discovered how you can look up an article in the newspaper with the printout that they have now. It saves cutting up and pasting and a lot of time that way. It's very interesting reading the newspaper on one of those screens rather than having it in your hand. Putting all those card files on a machine would not be much fun. Each one of those changes means an increase in your demand for funds.

AL: Well, they all cost things you know. I don't know if they save much employee time. Computerizing things is not going to actually cut the pay or reduce the number of employees or cut the payroll but it is going to be a lot more of service to the people because it is going to be much faster and easier to find things.

DJ: It means you are going to have to have more of the machines for people to go and look it up on the microfiche machines.

AL: Well they can find a book so much easier than they used to. They can also computerize circulation. If the book is out they can find out who has got it and when it is due.

DJ: Tell about the Sonley Collection.

AL: The Sonley Collection is gone. We sold the Sonley Collection.

DJ: How did that come about?

AL: The Sonley Collection...oh my gosh, lady...this is a long story. I think there are probably papers about this that you ought to read. The Sonley Collection was left to the library in the '30's . It was a collection of a lawyer here, Foster Sonley, who, in his will, left it to the public library for use by well-conducted, non-smoking white people.

DJ: Could they drink?

AL: (chuckling) That thing, of course, caused us a great deal of pain. We had for many years a colored library on Eagle Street or Market Street. Separate but equal.

That collection was a thorn in everybody's side. Nobody liked that. We were afraid to violate the will because the heirs could require the collection to be sold and lost to the library. We were scared that would happen. So we finally decided that if we can't let everybody use these books up here, let Mr. Sonley's heirs come and get them. We had two or three people protest. So that was that.

DJ: You get tied up with the unconstitutionality of it, too.

AL: Well, that was a long time ago. The collection was a very general hit-or-miss collection. There was a lot of stuff about North Carolina and a lot about the Cherokee Indians. There was a lot of stuff about the flora and fauna of this part of the world. Sort of dry. But then there was an enormous amount of other stuff. I think when Mr. Sonley had this collection at his house and he had books stacked up in his rooms. He had to walk through little paths around his piles of books. What collectors will do is they will buy somebody's whole library from the heirs or the settlement or some sort in order to get

three or four volumes that they know are in that library which are of value which they want. So, Mr. Sonley had a lot of junk. He had four or five sets of Norman Scott's *Waverly* novels. And all of Dickens over and over and over. A lot of that kind of stuff. He also had a few very valuable items. But they were not things of general interest. The whole thing was falling to pieces. They had not received any care. When we got it the only place we had to put it in this town was up in the top of the city hall. I think the roof leaked on it some. I think there was some water damage there.

DJ: How many volumes were involved? About a thousand?

AL: Oh, gosh. Many, many thousand.

DJ: So you really had a storage problem.

AL: Oh, yes. I want to say 40,000 volumes.

DJ: And you had a buyer for that collection?

AL: Yes. We sold it to a book dealer in Chapel Hill. It was hard to decide to do that. People thought it was such wonderful stuff. It would have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to put those books in useable condition. The backs were missing. Pages were falling out. The spines were decaying. They were going to dust. They were not useable. You could find things in them but the public never had access to them. We could not let anybody down there to plunder around in there. They would have torn it to shreds. Never-the-less, people had put a lot of time into it, studied it, classified it, cataloged it. There was a publication which George Stevens printed called *Leaves From Sonley* which represented the study made as far as it got of the materials in the library. If you are interested there are copies of that in the library.

DJ: I'm going to look it up because I have heard of the Sonley Collection and you said it was complicated and I am so glad I asked. I had no idea there was a story like that behind it.

AL: You have gotten my story. You will get a different story from somebody else. There ought to be quite a difference .

DJ: I had a feeling it was like walking in church. The library had the Sonley Collection and that's fine but I still don't know what it is. So now at least I have your story and I think that's pretty authentic.

AL: I shared this reluctance to let it all go. In fact, when they decided to sell it, I hoped we could keep one specimen thing out of it. We had one particularly handsome volume which dealt with the early colonization of North Carolina. It was a book of very great value. I hoped we could put that in a case and keep it here and let people look at it.

The board considered who was going to look at and would know anything about it.

One person in a thousand would have some idea of what that thing is about. How often would that person come to town and look at it?

DJ: Wouldn't it be fun to know what Chapel Hill is doing with it? They are probably having the same problem with it.

AL: They are selling it I expect. It's worth a lot of money. Other people might tell you old Lord is crazy. Here's how it really is. The dear lady who looked after it years called me up and said that the character of the library is destroyed and now it is just a common old ordinary library. She was perfectly genuine about it. She thought we had done a horrible thing and sold our souls for a piece of silver. Well, we did. Now we've got that fund and we are getting part of the income of it. It's under the jurisdiction of the courts of

North Carolina since we had to break the will to sell the collection. For a long time we could not get any response out of the judge who had the say in this matter. Finally he let it be known that we could have enough money to carry out a report which he asked us to have made as to what we ought to do with it. So we got enough money to pay the man who made the evaluation report. Annually we now get an amount from the trust fund which has nearly a half a million dollars in it. We get a quarter of the annual income earned by the trust fund. It is spent on the restoration of the Carolina section. We did not sell it all. We kept the North Carolina stuff. It is up there now on the shelves and some of it is falling apart. But we are now able to get the money out of it to get that fixed. There's a lot of genealogical stuff.

DJ: And the Cherokee Indian information?

AL: I expect there is some. I don't know.

DJ: Tell me about the branch libraries and the book mobile.

AL: Yes. They were talking about the book mobile on the radio. Did you hear about it?

DJ: No.

AL: They had a broadcast on in the morning about the book mobile librarian and the driver. It was a very nice job.

DJ: Where do they go?

AL: All over the county. They used to stop at houses in remote coves. But coves are not as remote now. People can now get out and get to the grocery store. We decided if they can get out and get groceries they can get books. So we don't go back up in where the trees are down across the road and the librarian has to chop the trees to get the book mobile through. We go all kinds of places. We stop now at retirement establishments and

nursing homes for example. There are fewer stops than there used to be but there are a lot more books handled at each stop.

DJ: It is quite a service.

AL: It's a wonderful service.

DJ: You can put in a request for something for the next time.

AL: It's a long time before they get back sometimes. Maybe a month. Some libraries will mail books but it's quite expensive.

DJ: It would be quite expensive.

AL: We don't charge anybody a thing unless they don't bring their books back.

DJ: Are you pretty successful with that?

AL: I don't know

DJ: Every time I check a book out they look up something. They must be trying to find out whether I'm legitimate or whether I have a book overdue. There must be some way to not let these defaulters default again.

AL: People accumulate a lot of books somehow. I don't think they do as much as they used to. Some steal books. They just carry them off. They've got that alarm thing now which seems pretty effective.

DJ: The art books used to go out like crazy without the alarm. You cannot graduate at certain colleges unless your books are all turned in.

AL: That's fair enough.

DJ: It is fair enough. But it's interesting to see the change just in our lifetime from free access of library books to now an art department has closed their doors. Then the library knew you from when you were a child. As John Bridges says he grew up in the library.

He went with his mother. The library was as much a part of his life as the theatre.

Tell me about the branches. Where did you start putting in branches in first?

AL: The first branch we had was...of course, we had that colored branch down there on Market and Eagle. As far back as I can remember the first branch we had, other than that one that was right there by the back door of the Pack, was in West Asheville. We had a board member from West Asheville, Mrs. Anderson. Mrs. Anderson said we needed a branch in West Asheville and she said it long and loud. She had some pull with the city. They had friends or relatives that were city officials. Anyway she had some pull there in West Asheville and managed to get this branch there. At that time they were building also branch fire stations so the library occurred as part of the fire station so the library occurred simply as a part of the fire station with the fire station part being quite large and the library part being quite small. They were centrally located as was the fire station. The next one we did was out on Merrimon Avenue. That was the second one. Then we did one in East Asheville out on Highway 70 there before you drop down the hill to Gudger's bridge. You know where it is.

DJ: Yes.

AL: That one was a combination. Then the people in Black Mountain had a little library of their own. Weaverville had a library of their own. The people in Swannanoa had a little library. The people out south of Asheville very much wanted one. So, Weaverville's had been a town library and we took it into the system. Black Mountain was the same way. We built a new library in Black Mountain. It still gets revenue from the town. I think Weaverville gets money from Weaverville. Swannanoa is a little iffy. It hasn't been much use but I think they have built it up. There's more enthusiasm than there was.

They've spent some money fixing it up. It's going very well.

DJ: So you are spread all over now. I hate to say this but we're almost off tape. I wanted to thank you very much. You've covered a lot of territory and we haven't even talked about your art work. This has been a delightful time but I didn't want to catch you in the middle of a sentence so I thought I'd better stop us now and say thank you very much.

TAPE ENDS

ADDENDUM from Henderson County Historical Society website

Erle Gulick Stillwell was born in Hannibal, Missouri on August 29, 1885, the son of Amos John Stillwell and Frances Anderson Stillwell. He attended the U. S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, and then studied at the University of North Carolina, Cornell University, and the University of Pennsylvania. In addition to his academic studies, Stillwell traveled extensively in England, Scotland, France, Italy, and Greece. He visited Hendersonville in 1905 and decided to stay. In 1907 in Hendersonville, he married Eva Douglas Smith. Eva Smith was the daughter of William A. Smith, the developer of Laurel Park just outside the city limits of Hendersonville. In 1916 Stillwell opened an architecture practice. He became a member of the American Institute of Architects in 1916, and served as Treasurer/Secretary of the North Carolina Chapter from 1917 to 1921, and again from 1934 to 1937. Stillwell also served as president of the North Carolina Chapter from 1922 to 1923, and again from 1942 to 1944. In 1942, he became a Fellow in the American Institute of Architects. Stillwell continued in private practice until 1942, when he became a founding partner in the **Asheville-based firm, Six Associates**. Only the larger firms were being granted government work at the time, so Stillwell joined with Charles E. Waddell, a civil engineer, and architects Henry Irven Gaines, **Anthony Lord**, William W. Dodge, and Stewart Rogers to form the company. The company was, and still is, located near Biltmore between Asheville and Hendersonville on Highway 25. Stillwell continued for thirty years as part of Six Associates, retiring in 1971. In addition to his architecture practice, Stillwell was an active member of St. James Episcopal Church in Hendersonville, along with several clubs including the Masonic lodge, the country club, and the Kiwanis Club. Eva Stillwell died on November 12, 1971 and Erle Stillwell died on October 22, 1978.

Erle Stillwell's early practice of architecture took place during one of the most economically rich times in the history of Hendersonville. Among his clients were some of the most prominent businessmen and women in the city. In Hendersonville and the surrounding area, Stillwell designed the Michael Schenk House (ca. 1910), an addition to Rosa Edwards School (1912), the Queen Theater (1915), a bungalow for Dr. J. L.

Egerton (1917), the Kantrowitz bungalow (1917), St. James Episcopal Church (ca. 1917-1919), the Gillican Residence (1919), the F. A. Ewbank Residence (1920), the Brownlow Jackson Building (ca. 1920; 1926), First Bank and Trust Company (1922), State Trust and Citizen's Bank (1923), First Baptist Church (1923), Hendersonville High School (1926), Blue Ridge School for Boys (1926), the A. Patterson Residence (1926), the A. A. McCall Residence (1926), alterations to the R. P. Freeze Residence (1926), bungalow for F. S. Wetmur (1926), Hendersonville City Hall (1927), Etowah Grade School (1927), Citizen's National Bank (1928), Edneyville Grade School (ca. 1920s), Flat Rock School (ca. 1920s), Fletcher Elementary School (ca. 1920s), Mills River District Public School (ca. 1920s), the Tuxedo School Building (ca. 1920s), W. M. Sherard Residence (ca. 1920s), the Hafford Jones Residence (date unknown), a showroom and service station for Hendersonville Brick Company (date unknown), the Ewbank & Ewbank office building (date unknown), a store building for Ewbank Brothers (date unknown), and the E. W. Ewbank Residence (date unknown).

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