

Robert and Linda Morgan

Side 1

Background - Phone calls - Linda is repeating the story of an accident she had in the parking lot of the Merrimon Post Office. She is in the kitchen and comes back and forth with brochures (enclosed).

He was born in 1918 and lived on Edwin Place. His father came as a general manager for a furniture company. Two homes were built by company employees on Sunset Parkway - one for him and the one next to it for another executive. [David Bradley Morgan]

[19] When Biltmore Forest opened up, he built the 8th house there, where the family lived until he lost most of his money during the Depression.

[24] His father had moved from the Woodfin plant he had been managing and, with some friends opened a plant in Black Mountain. With the Depression the plant was shut down.

[32] His mother was a friend of Cornelia Vanderbilt who, realizing they would probably lose their house, offered a home on the Biltmore Estate. He could hunt, fish and hike. His first school was Newton - to the 6th grade - and talks of Mrs. Snowden who was strict but loved by all his generation. She lived in Kenilworth (25 Forest Hill Rd.). [Mabel Bork Morgan, Cornelia Vanderbilt Cecil, Mrs. Mabel Snowden]

[49] He attended Episcopal High School for a year. His brother had graduated from there. While he was there his mother died (see enclosed). [David Morgan Jr.]

[60] His mother had continued friendship with Cornelia and accompanied her to Europe. Cornelia made arrangements for his sister to go to school in Switzerland while they were traveling [Jack Cecil stayed here]. [Cornelia Vanderbilt Cecil, Jack Cecil, Peggy Morgan]

[65] His father couldn't afford to send him back to Episcopal High School, (his brother was at Chapel Hill) so he went to live with an aunt in Indianapolis, Indiana. He went to Short Ridge High School. He played basketball but returned home because he missed it.

[75] He went to Christ School for 2 more years and was now preparing for college. The Depression had passed but he decided he didn't want to go to college.

[82] He worked in the furniture company for one winter and decided he would go to college.

[87] Before his mother died, she had started an exclusive dress shop in Washington, DC. After she died his sister ran it. He went to Washington, lived with his sister in her apartment over the shop, attended a cram school - the Emerson Institute - and was valedictorian of his class. [Peggy Morgan]

[101] He wanted to go to Wharton School of Finance in Philadelphia. His brother had graduated from the University and was working with his father. A wealthy friend from Hickory helped financially and he graduated from the University of PA. [David Morgan Jr., Harley Shuford]

[115] Flying was not a big interest of his, and though he had a scrapbook with pictures of Lindberg's crossing, he had never been stormed or spent time at the airport. He was a great history buff - his minor in college. When he realized that the US would be in the war, he knew that he didn't want to be crawling around in the infantry and he didn't want to be on the ocean. [Charles Lindbergh]

[146] He applied to be a pilot at Langley Field in VA. An eye specialist said his left eye was not 20/20, gave him an ice bag to hold on his eye for 10 minutes, gave the test again and passed him. (This caught up with him again). He was accepted in 1940 but there were so many applying there was no place to be trained. His father called his friend, Senator Bob Reynolds, and in 2 weeks (spring 1941) he was in Camden, SC. [Bob Reynolds]

[181] As he was about to get his bars his left eye was again detected as not being 20/20. He was offered the chance to "wash out," become a civilian aviator and make a handful of money or join the army air corp.

[195] At a reunion he ran into the man who had taught him to fly. He said Morgan wasn't taking the lessons seriously and told him that he couldn't afford lessons so taught himself to fly by practicing with a broomstick. The Government was spending \$20,000 on each pilot.

[221] He took basic training in Augusta and was given the choice between fighter and bomber. His friends thought he would pick fighter because he got so many speeding tickets. He chose bomber because he wanted company and was glad to have a navigator. He got his second Lieutenant bars and wings in 1941, just after Pearl Harbor.

[257] [I told him I had stopped in to the furniture store as it was closing and met his nephew. I also had a copy of the NewsBreak he is publishing. I asked him about his brother - enclosures]

He lived with his family on the Biltmore Estate in a big, white house (still standing) above the dairy. When his mother died his brother was in college and his sister in Washington. He and his father moved to a very small house in the garden wall called the gardener's house (still there). There was no electricity so they used kerosene lamps, and the fireplaces. He said it was cozy and he had the advantage of being able to take flowers to his teachers and girl friends from the garden. He knew Eleanor Waddell Stephens (see her tape). [David Morgan, David Morgan Jr., Peggy Morgan, Eleanor Waddell Stephens]

[291] He briefly worked for a multigraph company in Cleveland and was told to come home and meet his brother's princess. They met at the little cottage - said she was different, unusual and beautiful. (See enclosure). His sister met an Englishman in Washington, married and went to England. She died in the late 40's of polio. [David Morgan, Daria "Dolly" Obolensky Morgan, Peggy Morgan]

[316] His father with money loaned by a good friend, bought out the other stockholders in the furniture store in Woodfin. His brother joined him to manufacture war materials. They ran the Black Mountain and Woodfin Plants at the same time. They manufactured some items used in the Oak Ridge Plant in Knoxville. They also made ammunition cases and boxes for beer to be shipped overseas.

[343] When the war was over, he was asked to stay in the service but, realizing he wouldn't want to be a civilian military man, stayed in the reserve instead.

[353] He worked in the Woodfin plant. Everyone wanted furniture. They made 18th century solid mahogany, French provincial and the famous modern "trend makers" that went over so well they had to hire designers and draftsmen and sold all over the US. Shuford bought the Woodfin plant. [Harley Shuford]

[390] His father worked in the Black Mountain plant until nearly the day he died. The Black Mountain plant made parts, which were shipped all over the country and also to the Woodfin plant where the final product was assembled. [He shows brochures - see enclosure].

[410] His father started the procedure of making parts to be sent to other companies to be assembled. He had started by making caskets and parts for cars. Packard Motor Co. later shifted to synthetics and metal (for floorboards, trim, instrument panels, etc.) It was less expensive to ship parts than assembled products. Now the plants are using the same procedure. He ran the plant, his brother handled sales and his father public relations.

[443] When his father died, he and his brother decided to separate. They had, in the meantime, opened a plant in Old Fort which they sold to Ethan Allen. The Black Mountain plant was sold to Drexel.

[455] He got a Volkswagen dealership in Martinsville, VA and commuted by plane.

[462] He used to play golf with Graham and was a great admirer. One day Graham wanted to go to Charlotte and he took him out in a Beachcraft twin engine. He had a little trouble but said "Don't worry about it Billy, with you in here we can get it all right." "He is the only man I've ever met in my life that comes close to living the life that he preaches." [Billy Graham]

[485] During the war, after 25 combat missions, he was sent on a public relations tour. One of the stops was Asheville. There was much "to do" about his being here - parades, etc. When he flew from the airport he decided to "buzz" the city a little bit, so by tipping his wing he was able to fly between the courthouse and the city hall.

[a squirrel is on top of the bird feeder and Linda remarks about it]

[516] When the Germans stopped building the VW "bug" it started going down hill. He was also sales representative for the same kind of company they had at Black Mountain. He was selling Ethan Allen until they decided to build their own plant (enclosed).

[538] George's father was a friend of his father and he decided to join their Real Estate firm. He has been with them for 18 years. [George Beverly]

Side 2:

Linda is planning on taking a group to Russia. She is an Air Force child and has lived all over the US. She focused on aviation in 1974 (age 21), got her license and became involved with the Women's Pilots organization called "Women 99."

[2/14] She works with the International Council of Air Shows which meets annually in November in Las Vegas where performers come together with the producers and acts are scheduled. This is like a talent show where performers are booked. A lot of what she did was volunteer work - going to meetings and attending conventions promoting the Women's Pilot Association.

[2/29] In 1985 there was a flying team, called the US Precision Flight Team, which had been sponsored by the Aircraft Pilot Association until 1984 and the women's pilot group inherited the sponsorship of this team. They had not been told that they were to host the sixth world Precision Championships. She had been a travel agent and sales representative and when she knew there were going to be 16 teams coming from 16 countries she knew there wouldn't be anything for them to do at night in Frederick, MD. so suggested they go to Disney World. The Holiday Inn was reserved for 2 weeks and the detailed international requirement regarding transportation, meals, etc. were worked out. The city got behind the plan called the "Olympics of the Sky." It is financed by the pilots.

[2/100] She wrote an article for Autograph Times. Autograph collecting has become a multi-million dollar business in this country.

[2/104] (Backs up to the competition) - They had \$100,000 budget and made \$232,000 - all done on faith - her part was the tour and travel part - others did spotting planes, etc. When it was all over it was suggested she do this for a living so she started getting into special event planning. In 1987 she put on Lindbergh Day in Atlanta. She put something together with nothing to go on.

[2/141] She was contracted by Sun and Fun Air Shows in Lakeland Florida, sister city to Oshkosh, who needed someone to put together their evening programs. A week long "fly-in" - 450,000 people. She booked speakers and entertainment. In 1990 she saw "Memphis Belle" and booked Bob and his co-pilot. They were married in 1992.

[2/169] Bob didn't have a clue as to how famous and marketable he was as a personality.

[2/174] Before this time she worked for Gina who flew around the world non-stop. She wrote speeches for her, went to air shows, sold books and photos and booked appearances. This is what she is doing for Bob. She said, "Stick with me honey and I'll make you a star." [Gina Yeager]

[2/188] When she lived in Chicago she worked in the Playboy building and when she saw the issue with the "Memphis Belle" in it she called the editorial office and got 35 copies (see enclosed).

[2/203] She learned about the value of the material he has regarding his flying experiences and has been getting it together and putting it in acid free paper. His father had saved papers from the war period which she is preserving.

[2/260] The "Memphis Belle" was famous in 1943, but who would have thought that in 1990 this movie would come out and get it started again. She was looking for people for Sun and Fun and found Scott through God is my Co-Pilot and she found the first lady test pilot. [General Robert Scott]

[2/275] Regarding the movie, Robert said Wyler made the original documents and his daughter wanted to make a full movie. She corresponded with Bob and tried to get a company to do it. Columbia started working on it but was bought out by the Japanese. Warner Brothers got interested and the script was sent to him for comments - they paid no attention! The crew members (8 of the 10 still alive) were invited to England, while they were filming to meet the men taking their parts. They enjoyed this but their suggestions were ignored. [William Wyler, Katharine Wyler]

[2/310] Regarding authenticity he said there is nothing wrong with the combat scenes but the crew never acted on the ground or in the air as depicted. In real life the men were all business, even on the ground. They didn't socialize or talk back, joke or play music. This hurt the film and was ridiculed by WWII pilots - but sold more tickets.

[2/331] He speaks to high school and college students about the history of WWII and is amazed at the history they are being taught. The Smithsonian Institute was way out of line when they presented the dropping of the Atomic Bomb in an entirely different light than really took place. Dropping of the bomb was carefully thought out and saved hundreds of thousands of people who would have been killed invading Japan. He ran into a Navy captain recently who said his ship was standing by with 400,000 body bags.

[2/361] He tells the young kids that everybody was behind that war. Linda says she will be 50 this year and sees a generation gap between her high school and today's teenagers. She feels there is apathy among the young and a breakdown in the family structure. For the first time in our history two parents have to work to support a family. This creates all kinds of problems. The media is full of violence and child abuse. The whole nation is inundated with lack of feeling for our fellow man (see enclosure). [O. J. Simpson]

[2/391] He found the students very indifferent. Regarding the fire bombing of Japan he said that the 54 square acres in Tokyo were vital because (1) The activity there proved the people weren't ready to capitulate and (2) Whereas in Europe areas could be strategically bombed, in Japan the vital areas couldn't be seen. One student stood with an arrogant posture and said, "How did you feel about killing all those innocent victims on the ground in Tokyo." He replied, "Son, I

remember Pearl Harbor. It didn't bother me a bit. Does that answer your question?" (see enclosure)

[2/420] Regarding Linda's letter to the editor about the promotional ad for a compact disk (see enclosed), she said that it was a sacrilege to the Memphis Belle and is another example of the change in attitude and lack of respect.

[2/469] She moved here from Chicago and finds the slowed-down lifestyle here wonderful. She is appalled at the lack of values in the young.

[2/495] He said that the "marketability" of his experience is not important but he enjoys running across old friends and meeting new ones in the aviation groups. He belongs to the Air Force Historic Society and an Air Force Association but doesn't go to a lot of meetings. He enjoys speaking to groups.

[2/528] He knew Lacy when he was just beginning to fly. He drove his father and brother on business trips (see Griffin tape). [Lacy Griffin]

[2/582] Linda is keeping scrap books of all material pertaining to Bob and is especially proud of the letters from the little fans. She tells of a young boy who was keeping scrapbooks about the Memphis Belle. They looked him up when they were going to an air show near Wilmington. She answers all letters.