

Edith Overby

Side 1:

She and her husband lived in Washington D.C. He was with the government and she worked in industry. They drove to California searching for a good place to raise their son. Then, remembering this area where they had previously vacationed, they came to Asheville.

[17] She met and was interviewed by the General Manager of WLOS in 1962 and has been here ever since. She had to learn a "whole new language." [Morton Cohn]

[26] She tells the background of the station - It was bought in 1950 and run from Florida (see History enclosed). It all started in 1954 as a radio station in Battery Park Hotel owned by Britt. Permission to put a transmitter on top of Mt. Pisgah and secure a license from the government was obtained. The lines were taken to the mountaintop by helicopter and there are stories of the chief engineer touching two lines together. People lived up there 24 hours a day. There is a railroad up the side used to this day [I thought it was an old logging line - see Craggy Ingle] It can be seen from WLOS windows. [Col. Mitchell Wolfson, Charlie Britt]

[51] When she came to the station there were 4 in the news department and now there are over 40. Then the film was black and white. With the coming of color the building had to be expanded. The design blends with the original building. The company wanted to buy the Curtis Bynum (200 Macon Ave.) house next door (see Katharine Bynum Shepard tape). [Beverly Grant (architect), Robert Bynum]

[64] The house was built by Dr. Battle, known for his work with TB patients. He never lived here but his descendants vacationed from Raleigh. Then the house was bought for the station. [Dr. S. Westray Battle]

[74] The station owners always had a Christmas party for the staff and their children. For a number of years it was held at Grove Park but the custom changed 10 years ago, as there were fewer children in the staff. [Frances (Mrs. Mitchell) Wolfson]

[89] The Wolfson Family lived in the Beaverdam area and owned the Beaver Lake golf course. The Colonel was Mayor of Dade County, Florida, and while he thought of himself as a resident of Asheville the natives, since he was only here 4 months a year, looked on him as an outsider and blocked things he wanted to do. He wanted to expand the golf course and build a clubhouse. He wasn't given permission to do this - but it came later.

[108] She remembers when the TV stations joined the theatres to try to stop cable TV (see Gibbs tape re: theatres - though he doesn't mention this - it took place in 1958). Now stations work closely with cable despite the fact they are still in competition for advertising dollars. [Samuel L. "Sam" Irvin (Irvin-Fuller Theaters)]

[127] WLOS has been with ABC ever since the beginning. CBS and NBC stations are seen though Spartanburg, SC and Greenville, SC stations.

[137] No longer are stations mandated to give a certain amount of time to local needs and charitable drives but the needs of the community come first - employees are encouraged to become part of the community, serving on boards. [Meredith S. Thoms, Jim Conschafter (manager)]

[161] Lauterer, a former TV personality is running for office and no longer with WLOS (see enclosure and also video program sponsored by AAUW with Milton Ready and organized by Mary Hyde. (See Hyde and Ready tapes - also John Baxter interview by Silveri). [Maggie Lauterer]

[180] While stations are no longer expected to give a certain amount of time to the community, a file is kept and reviewed when license renewal time arrives.

[200] A former editor [WLOS announcer] presented honest, forthright news about the city 5 days a week. He fought against corruption. It takes a unique person to do this. His death was a loss. [Arthur L. Whiteside]

[225] There is a strong competition for the advertising dollar but there is a good cooperation with other media - the paper - radio - on such activities as the Food Drive, Blood Drive, Literacy Campaign, United Way Campaign, etc.

[258] WLOS covers Greenville, SC, Spartanburg, SC; Anderson, SC; and Asheville NC. There is an office in Anderson and a satellite, which rebroadcasts over channel 40 (because of mountains and signal capacity) and a sales office in Greenville to take care of local clients. National advertisers work through the Asheville office.

[290] The station has its own commercial department to deal with local advertising i.e. Ingles and Toyota.

[301] Live shows, such as Bill's Bus (see enclosure) and children's entertainment with guests take a lot of work and do not interest advertisers who want more audience coverage and longer commitment. Fashion shows held at noon at Grove Park are less successful than news reporting. [Bob Caldwell, Bill Norwood, Brenda Burch]

[342] Broadcasting equipment is increasingly complex. She has been here 33 years and there are technical changes every day - from the manual typewriter to computers, black and white to color, 1-inch tape to VHS Beta Cams. The company belongs to national organizations and is constantly upgrading material. There is a van to cover sports events and went to Charleston when the hurricane hit. The Kennedy funeral was covered (see photo). [Jack Kennedy]

[406] The public is very alert to changes in programs and format and ready to let the station know (directly or through the paper - see enclosed). Their letters are always answered and explanations given. The news is given at 6 am because more numbers wanted it at that time. [Bob Caldwell, Brenda Burch]

[477] The public has been asking for "Family Sensitive" time - news at 5 and 6 in the evening when families are eating dinner - and now they have less violence over food [but oh! The ads - see enclosed!].

[488] Heads of the various departments meet weekly to share concerns and try to work out what is financially feasible to meet the needs for the largest population.

[519] Rating surveys poll audiences three times a year.

[535] ABC is a great competitor with NBC and CBS - the greatest and hottest right now is Oprah while they compete with the paper and radio, many of the same people want to see it "live" and in action. The TV helps make social change take place - made more people carry food to the United Way.

Side 2:

Blacks have always been part of the TV Crew. A young black man started out as a janitor and retired as a photographer 22 years later. Stroop was part of the news production team. She had always expected to see separation of blacks and whites and stressed that the only qualification was ability and willingness to keep learning. Darcel is a good news anchor, the top engineer is black , and there are Orientals in production. They "don't care who you are but what you can do."
[Bill Stroop, Darcel Grimes]

[2/49] Students come for internship and, while there is no guarantee of a job, many come back and are on the staff.

[2/56] When she came to the station an employee did not have to have more than a high school certificate. Now, because of the complexity of the business, a college degree is required.

[2/60] Darcel's parents live in Washington DC but she stays here because she loves the area. Bob came from Madison but wants to live here. [Darcel Grimes, Bob Caldwell]

[2/72] There were racial problems because of bussing but there were more demonstrations in Greenville, SC than here.

[2/91] Bob was hired as he came in the door because his voice comes across so well. He has been Bozo the Clown, weatherman, and has had an outdoor series. He loves the area, has a lovely family, daughters and grandchildren (see enclosure). [Bob Caldwell, Bill Norwood]

[2/119] The Creative Service Department writes scripts and shoots commercials for clients. She has seen the growth from pen and pencil art through graphic machines. The files are tremendous and pieces are put together after a script is written. The Christmas program for the Biltmore house is being developed now. The snow from last month was filmed for part of this.

[2/167] The essence of stories on the 30-minute news show must be broken down into segments. A lot of film is used in order to get the essential shots. It takes longer to write a one-minute editorial than a 350-page paper.

[2/184] In 1962 there were 18-20 people in the studio. Today there are 112. The volume of sales has increased, there are more local programs, more news than entertainment, more hours of the day covered, more local live coverage - all of this takes more people.

[2/192] The station is on 22 hours out of 24. ABC covers a portion (see enclosure). Certain programs pre-empt any other scheduling i.e. live town hall, Billy Graham Crusade. The station is given certain 30-minute breaks where they put on the commercials they have sold. Advertisers vie for the audience they want to reach.

[2/266] Newscasters used to be "straight laced" in their presentation. Today they are more friendly but good taste is important - not too much levity. Surveys are taken to determine what the audience wants. The more people watch, the more advertisers dollars come to the station. A survey of 15 years ago would be very different from one done today.

[2/311] She wore white gloves and a little blue hat when she came in for her interview. Times have changed.