

## **James Parker**

### **Side 1:**

While looking at a photo on display at the Art Museum of the 1916 flood he remembers looking at the old depot from an elevation reached by stairs with a bridge going across. He also remembers going by trolley from his home on Charlotte (enclosed) to Pack Square to transfer, down Patton and South French Broad, to the circus. It was like a roller-coaster ride. He doesn't remember the name of the steep hill (it was not Clingman Ave. and could have been Vernell Ave., which no longer goes through to the river.)

[37] He and his friends considered going to the Orange Street School a treat and a distinction. It closed 30-40 years ago (see enclosure). He went to David Millard and then Asheville School for Boys. There were about 150 students attending when he was there. He graduated in 1936, has always kept in touch with the school as he drove by it every day on his way to work. He has been friendly with the headmaster and hopes to attend his 60<sup>th</sup> reunion. Asheville School and Christ School were always athletic competitors. The "blues" and the "greenies" (see enclosed). [John Tyrer]

[64] He went to the University of Chapel Hill and, having been encouraged by his physics teacher in Asheville School and receiving an award, he decided to go on in that field. In the summer he went to the Bureau of Standards in Washington, DC for \$15 a week. He had clothes left from school, paid \$12 for room and board and stayed for three months. Later he went to the Naval Reserve Laboratory for \$1,600 a year and stayed 7 years, working first on harbor protection using cables under the water to detect magnetic fields generated by boats. This was before radar. [Mr. "Pop" Eastman]

[97] In Washington, during the war, he was a blackout warden. He got to know a lot of people but did not consider Washington important enough to attack [whereas Sally Middleton Ellington's father moved his family back to Chunn's Cove from Charleston].

[105] He was sent to Alaska to study the effects of static electricity on aircraft, which interfered with radio communication, particularly in thunderstorms.

[154] On April 15, 1944 he married an Asheville native who had been working as a draftsman for Ford Instruments in Long Island. Prior to this she had been working in advertising in the News Press. She had also worked in a Charleston newspaper and was a skilled draftsman. [Anne Lynch Parker]

[165] His father died in 1944 (see enclosure). He was the baby of the family. Katharine (see her tape) lived not far away, was friends with his sisters, and had to take care of him. [Haywood Parker, Katherine Shepard]

[178] He got to know his father while in college. His father, who was warm but formal (his mother always referred to him as "your father" or "Mr. Parker," never "Haywood") graduated

from Chapel Hill in 1886. He came to visit his son in college, and a warm bond was established. [Haywood Parker, Josie Buel Patton Parker]

[191] The 95 Charlotte Street house was built in 1886 by his mother's father. He also had built an impressive house on the east side of Biltmore and called the Henrietta (now site of a fork lift operation). [Thomas Walton Patton]

[214] The Charlotte Street house, where he grew up, was a farm. Haywood Jr. had to milk the cow. The barn and stable became, in time, an attractive nuisance and had to be removed.

[226] Ingles Supermarket had planned on rebuilding their burned store (see Sargent tape) and including several acres around the original lot to make a "mega" store (see enclosure). This plan caused a great deal of distress to the neighbors. All the Parker children and grandchildren think of the house as the homestead and all gather there for Christmas.

[239] After the war he decided to go back to the University and get a Ph.D. in Physics. Enka had begun developing research and he worked with them for 30 years. He found creating textile from petrochemicals and wood fibers fascinating. The Buckeye Chemical Corp. harvested and pulverized pulp from pine trees which was then dissolved, pressed and spun at Enka. In 1952, while there was less concern about non-renewable resources than there is today, trees could be grown and harvested for this purpose.

[292] DuPont was always leader in all textile manufacturing and sold to the same markets, but Enka was quite competitive.

[318] During the war all companies went into the manufacturing of tires for the military. For this period companies shared their knowledge and then went back to being competitors. DuPont came out with nylon for tire reinforcement. There was a big see-saw between nylon and rayon. Nylon was tougher but tires developed "flat" spots when the car stood for any length of time and had to be run for a few minutes before the thumping stopped. Rayon was more stable and was popular on the original equipment (new cars) market.

[348] His work was in physical research. He studied materials with an eye to good quality before it got into customer's carpets, conveyer belts or tires. A fleet of autos was used for testing in Nevada. The enterprise was underwritten by a combination of companies. He spent two summers in Carson City.

[392] There were four or five physicists in his department doing testing. He got most fun doing x-ray analysis of the fiber structure.

[454] He left before BASF acquired the facility, retiring in 1983. He rented some space from them to work for a small wire and cable company.

[476] The Akzona building on Pack Square was late in coming. The company was from the Netherlands and AKU was the parent organization. The Dutch word for artificial silk worked out to ENKA.

[498] The company cared about the people brought to this country. They set up a Mill Village (see enclosed). They were highly educated, cultured and a great contribution to the city. Enka was one of a few companies hiring during the 1930's so, while the air smelled like rotten eggs, the natives knew it smelled like money. It changed the complexion of the city and was a major factor for many years.

[533] France had been spinning silk until a disease attacked the silk worm. Pasteur studied the way the worm ate and digested mulberry leaves and tried to do this artificially by soaking the leaves in acid and spinning it. Later other cellulose plants were used successfully. Spiders make six or so different silks - for spinning their webs, wrapping their victims and ropes for swinging from one place to the other with the breeze. Fibers can be a great deal of fun. [Louis Pasteur]

## **Side 2:**

He and his wife became interested in gems when they went on field trips with her sister and brother-in-law in Washington. After going on several field trips in Asheville they became hooked. [Bob and Betty Williams]

[2/10] When Colburn died in 1959 his family gave what was left of his collection to the mineral society which set up a museum in the NC State College Mineral Research lab in 1960 (see photos). [Burnham Colburn]

[2/18] Rockhounds go on field trips in caravans of 20-30 cars at a time. Sometimes they go on overnight excursions looking over old worked out mines.

[2/21] Members of the club acted as hostesses in the museum. Several weeks ago he ran into a benefactor who had donated a bushel basket of sharks teeth. He was visiting his son in school in 1961, ran into the museum during a rain storm, saw the exhibit and sent the teeth. He later made a contribution of a sharks jaw which was almost large enough to walk through and made the magazine cover. Davis was curator/hostess at the time. [Harmatuk, Alma Davis]

[2/51] People who are interested in minerals are usually interested in fossils as well, though there has always been a debate as to whether fossils belong in a mineral collection. Because of space for the gems, the fossils may have to ultimately go. Petrified wood is both. [Oxford Dictionary: "thing preserved in the earth and recognizable as remains or vestiges of plant or animal of past ages."]

[2/66] Dot told me about the different minerals in NC. There are 320 different varieties. Mining for gem stones is pretty much over but there were gold mines in South Carolina. Colburn reopened a mine in Taylorsville in Alexander which was developed in 1880 by an ancestor of Stevenson, the United Nations Representative. [Dorothy Hussey, Adlai Stevenson]

[2/87] Many gems were discovered by people looking for gold. In 1799 a 14lb chunk of gold was found by a young boy who was fishing while his parents were in church. They took it to a jeweler who specialized in silver and said it was worthless. The family used it as a doorstep until

three years later it was taken to another appraiser and he was paid \$3.50 for it. Later he renegotiated. [Conrad Reed]

[2/115] Prospectors flooded into the area in 1802 and gold rush towns were built. In 1828 gold was discovered in Georgia. The only people who made money sold buckets, shovels and liquor. From 1802 to the 1820's gold was panned and screened but when Ballinger, working up stream started to dig, real mining began. There are mines going some 300 ft deep under Charlotte. It however is considered played out and the surface is more valuable. [Ballinger]

[2/150] In 1828 a private mint was started outside of Charlotte. The contents were of a higher standard than coins minted by the government. Beckler coins are valuable items. The museum has a few. [Beckler]

[2/161] In 1849 the miners went to California and then to Alaska. Frequent attempts have been made to go back to the old mines now that the gold price has gone up.

[2/171] One of the richest operations took place in Marion and Rutherfordton during the past 10 years.

[2/178] During the Depression mica mines were very important (see George Coggins tape). This is how Spruce Pines got started. Clingman, a lawyer, politician, and Brigadier General, was commissioned to find mica. He discovered a huge pocket but had to leave for a period of time, instructing his foreman to cover it up. A wagon driver, who worked for a company that made stoves, told the owners about the find. The stove company moved its operation to what is now Spruce Pine in 1880 and started operations. The biggest attraction now is feldspar which is used in making pottery. [Thomas Clingman, Heap and Clapp Stove Company]

[2/214] After church he was talking with some friends about the museum and suggested that they all go over to see the exhibits. Catherine, then 8, talked about getting a moon rock for the museum. Her mother wrote to her congressman, the FBI checked out the area and the rock was sent to the museum to be displayed for two weeks. It was a big event. The Sheriff went to pick it up, parties were held - a moon rock festival in the Lipinsky Auditorium. It was exhibited in schools and hospitals. [Emily Carr, Eugene M. Carr Jr., Catherine Carr, Roy Taylor, Sheriff Thomas Morrissey]

[2/280] Later another rock from the moon was displayed but by this time a rock itself would not have drawn the crowd so the models of a moon lander, space suit, and rocket were added.

[2/290] The map of NC showing distribution of minerals by pressing buttons for lights to indicate amethysts, rubies, sapphire location was drawn by his wife in their basement. She learned the map backward, he said.

[2/305] He has not taught student classes lately but said that in the past their special interest was in the "off beat" items - rock that bends, rock that floats, and the inside of the dull looking geode - until it is turned to see the crystals inside. They are always interested in gold.

[2/324] The Spanish came here looking for gold. If they had gone 100 miles east they wouldn't have let go of the land so easily and the history of the Southeast would have been different.

[2/339] Long ago there was a recognition that South America seemed to fit into the West Coast of Africa. Later it was found that flowers, plants, trees and rocks were similar on both sides of the Atlantic. A German meteorologist thought continent plowed through the surface of the earth. After WWII with the use of the newly developed sensitive instruments plate tectonics was discovered. [Francis Bacon, Alfred Wegener]

[2/387] One idea he wants to get over to students is that science isn't all knowing and certain. If it was cut and dried it wouldn't be any fun. You have to learn the fundamentals and then constantly question.

[2/440] He remembers the Depression, the bank failures of 1929, the buying fever. Wolfe's mother was caught up in and is reflected in Look Homeward Angel, sidewalks, fire hydrants, and curb stones for developments that never developed. [Wallace Davis, Thomas Wolfe]

[2/480] He remembers McCormick field but, because there were so many children in his family and in the neighborhood, play activities centered around his home. He didn't go to town much until he was with the Troop 11 Scout Group that met at Trinity Episcopal Church. His troop later folded [Mrs. Chiles had a troop in Kenilworth - see Chiles tape]. Dick was best man in his wedding, lives in Annapolis but came to his and Anne's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Troop 8 was "most substantial" [still is - see enclosure] and goes way back. There was a reunion last fall. His son was a member and he worked with them. There is an impressive list of alumni from the troop - doctors, mayors, etc. [Leah A. (Mrs. Jake) Chiles, Richard ( Dick) Chiles]

His daughter went to school of the Arts in Winston Salem, has her own business in New Port News and makes ("builds") costumes for Star Trekiees (people who gather dressed as actors from the TV show.) His son also went to the School of the Arts and works with a sound shop on Merrimon Ave [Musician's Workshop, 319 Merrimon] for Dosier. [Anne Duff Parker, James Parker Jr., John F. (Frank) Dosier]

(By phone - his grandchildren by James Jr.) [Amanda Parker, Nicholas Parker, Andrew Parker, Zackery Parker]