

Charles Sluder and Tammy Taylor Gaddy

Side 1:

[1/16] Charles didn't know his grandfather but mentions his uncles. Three Sluder brothers came from Germany and bought 100 acres in Alexander. They each had large families (about 13 children). One built the first turbine in the area (washed away in 1916 flood) which sawed wood and ground grain. They rendered lard and collected ash to make soap. They mended their own shoes and didn't buy anything but salt and pepper. [Jim, George, Whit Sluder (uncles)] [Later by phone: his parents were Ezra and Annie Hawkins Sluder; his maternal grandparents Frank Hawkins and Maggie Netherton Hawkins; his paternal grandmother was a Netherton]

[1/68] The produce not needed on the farms was sold. They always raised hogs, chickens and turkeys. They dried fruit from their trees and pressed molasses. Meat was kept in the spring house and water from the spring was brought on a trough for the farm animals.

[1/87] Drovers from Tennessee, with hogs, came through the property.

[1/92] The binder for the wheat was a great invention. Wheat boxes were attached to the truck to take to the mill. The first car was a model T with no top. It had to be cranked and belonged to a neighbor. [Oscar Dunket, Arthur Rogers]

[1/119] Produce was peddled on Wednesday. Rabbits brought 25 cents each and quail 50 cents. The people were honest, selling their best and covering regular rounds - Market Street and Biltmore. His mother would stop off in Woodfin with some friends and set up shop to sell eggs and butter. [Homer and Shorty Calahan]

[1/167] He listened to the radio singers before the singing group with his wife was started. [William Reed, Lova Sluder]

[1/175] There was no money, electricity or running water when he was growing up. For Christmas the children received an orange and fire crackers. Later they were given 32 caliber cartridges for their rifles.

[1/190] He and his brother started out early in the day, pumped water for the cows and took turns with the rifle shooting rabbits. Everyone ate well. Rings were put in pigs' noses so they wouldn't root and when they were fattened they were slaughtered, salted and hickory smoked. [Frank Sluder]

[1/218] He was a boy when his father started raising tobacco. It was flue cured, which meant the fire had to be tended day and night. It was shipped to Tennessee and didn't bring enough to pay for shipping. He decided to go on "line" work [electric power lines].

[1/240] Tobacco is now a cash crop. Burley tobacco is air dried and is easier to pack down.

[1/256] The government got control of the market when it was bringing 1/2 cent a pound in order to regulate it. At first allotments were measured by the feet, later it was by the pound.

[1/275] His father worked in Winston-Salem. He feels that anything the government gets involved in "gets messed up." The County Commissioner would give him his allotment. He never worked for the government but through his line work he worked on government jobs. [R. Curtis Ratcliff]

[1/315] The farmers rotated corn shucking sessions. The general "fee" was half of a cigar or a jug.

[1/335] He was on the first string of the baseball team at West Buncombe High School. Box suppers were held to pay for equipment. The team played Elk Mountain and the cotton mills. He wanted to be a professional player but hurt his arm and went on line work instead.

[1/380] He was with CP&L in the 30's and worked with them until he went to work at Oak Ridge. Truman toured the area after Roosevelt died and people didn't believe he was President (story?). He crossed some wires while working on the lines - the horns went off and people thought it was announcing the end of the war. The general told him to turn it off! [Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, General Pullman]

[1/428] In Florida and New Orleans he worked for CP&L and then for Haynes. [M. B. Haynes]

[1/467] The farm got electricity in 1940. The blizzard in the 1930's didn't bother farm activities but the one in 1993, where everyone depended on electricity was more disrupting (enclosure).

[1/506] Tammy said that the high power electric line that goes through the center of the farm reduces the property values and concerns some because of link of electric current with cancer. The farm electricity comes from West Asheville.

Side 2:

[2/5] When the farm got its first phone they were on a party line. The kids would play music to each other over the line and he couldn't phone in when he was working late.

[2/38] The Biltmore Estate had a ring box with phones from their dairies. He kept them functioning.

[2/49] Tammy's parents in a farm down the road now have all the farm cattle - Holsteins and Guernseys.

[2/53] He was born in a 2-story farm house which was torn down when the present house was built (picture enclosed). The cedar shingles are a new addition. Stone for the building came from the Beaucatcher cut in 1976-77.

[2/75] The tunnel through the mountain was inadequate and cars backed up before the cut was opened. There was a lot of blasting and rocks were free to be picked up after 5 pm (before that there was a charge).

[2/90] Tammy tells about a drive-in theatre which showed westerns where the Greyhound [bus station] is now located.

[2/107] On Friday nights the family went to a drive-in in Woodfin. One night while the kids were eating popcorn and his wife was talking to a friend, his bottle of home brew blew - he didn't know what to do with it so shoved it in his boot!

[2/125] During prohibition the men used a warm silo as a place to season their beer. A girl told grandma - she went out and broke the jars - later realizing they were her fruit jars. She liked to drink "still" beer. [Nilin Jeff]

[2/163] Bailey was a railroad policeman becoming a sheriff of Madison County during prohibition. He said, "I didn't stop them from making whiskey but I sure did run the price up on it." [Jesse James Bailey]

[2/185] He tells about making wheels for a sled or wagon to carry hogs in. They were transported to the scalding barrel.

[2/223] Jesse and his deputies broke stills in Madison County - if anyone had a scalding barrel they thought you were making whiskey. Jesse had a guitar that belonged to Jimmy Rogers. [Jesse James Bailey, Jimmy Rogers, Will Rogers, Roy Rogers]

[2/228] There weren't any hobos in this area. Some hung around the water tanks in Asheville. The train was going too fast to get on in this area until it reached the Alexander grade. Jesse's job was to protect the cigarettes going west from Winston-Salem. Roll-your-own cigarettes were called "Hoover Dust." [Jesse James Bailey]

[2/267] There was a hobo village in Knoxville. He tells about riding the rails and the construction of the cars that enabled the men to climb on top and slow the trains down. This was before there were air brakes. There is a "shoot" for runaway trains in Saluda - a train is there now. [Dick Hawkins]

[2/303] In Trenton, NJ, during a professional ball game he injured his arm. The manager came from Asheville. ["Struttin" Bud Chaney]

[2/313] Tammy tells the family story of Union soldiers who took the family work horse and cows after camping in the house and demanding to be fed. The mother told the children not to worry, that she would get the livestock back. The soldiers were found up the road - poisoned.

[2/371] A tree was cut down and silver dollars were found in it. [Tom Hays]

[2/376] The roads were paved with sand and gravel from Sandy Mush and Newfound.

[2/393] Tammy and her father collected arrowheads (see photo) from the farm and researched the age of their finds in Cherokee. The oldest are the most perfect - going back thousands of years - because with the introduction of metal tools through trade, workmanship got sloppy.

[2/447] Tammy tells about her singing groups. The Alexander church had the best group and during a service 1 ½ hours would be spent in singing and half an hour for the sermon. Tammy's was a musical family - they sang all the time. The family cut an album, "The Followers," with Kevin and Kenyon (Clark brothers). After "The Followers" broke up, "Kings Boys" with Fox, sang together. [Jeannette Sluder, Kay Sluder Taylor, Gail Parris Letterman, Kevin Clark, Kenyon Clark, Eldridge Fox, Lova Sluder (wife of Charles, died 1972)]

[2/509] There are not as many singers today but, during the big snow of 1976, all the kids got together and sled on the big hill until 2 am. Jeeps parked around the rim gave them light and a ride up. [Tammy gave us 2 records of her group.] [Rex Neilan]

[The family also sold produce to the Farmer's Market and Ingles.]