

Sorrells Family

Side 1:

[1/1]

Albert - 66 - retired. Lives in Skyland, raised on Gash's Creek, ten in family, five boys served in WWII in Navy. He went in 1944 and out 1946. [Albert Sorrells]

Alan - 70 - retired. Lived all life in area. Went to Rose Hill School to 4th grade, then Oakley School. Was in 4th Marine division. [Alan Sorrells]

Ray - 71 - started Rose Hill School in 1929 where he stayed until it closed down. Went to Oakley. Served in the Navy. [Ray Sorrells]

Jay - twin of Ray - attended Rose Hill School 6 years. Served with brother 2 ½ years in Navy until 5 Sullivan brothers were killed on the USS Juno, then brothers split up. Served total of 5 years.

These gentlemen are cousins. They have always lived close to one another and are great friends. We met on Albert's porch.

[1/56 They were all raised in the country, all Democrats. Their great grandfather was killed in the Civil War. [Frank Sorrells]

I learned about Rose Hill School from Harley Ownbey (see his tape) and this led me to the Sorrells. [Harley Elmer Ownbey]

[1/105] Alan - Times were hard in the Depression. They raised their own food and worked the fields after school. He hated school and he and another boy tried to burn it down by piling leaves on the side and setting them on fire. A girl saw it and stopped it. At another time a teacher told him to get a switch for whipping - he was advised to "ring" it with a knife and it flew apart with the first swat - he had to get another. Rose Hill School had 2 rooms (1st to 4th in one room, 5th to 7th in other) outside toilets with a well and a pump. His father had the only phone in the county as he worked for the state. He describes the party line (see Ingle re phone). [Alan Sorrells, Mrs. Freda Wilson Gudger, Lucius "Craggy" and Esta Ingle]

[134] School teachers lived in the community in bad weather.

[1/141] His father helped the teacher get her job. She had a model A coupe. He was afraid of principal when he visited, so hid. He tells stories of a lost watch (in a privy) and lunch switching. [Mrs. F. W. Gudger, Principal Terrell]

Jay - Quality Bakery on Pack Square sold cream puffs for 5 cents. [Jay Sorrells]

Ray - walked 7 miles to get one. He used to work for 5 cents an hour and would walk to Asheville to see a movie over and over. There were few cars - they skated down the road. Cattle were driven down the road to Biltmore and covered wagons went through every now and then. Farmers sold wood (50 cents a load), milk and butter. Often there were no sales and they had to return home. He was busy raising a family and did not use his G.I. bill. [Ray Sorrells]

Alan - by writing a 1,000 word essay he was given a diploma and used his G.I. bill to train in radio and TV repair. The company he worked with had to match his pay - this angered his employers who could have hired him for less. Once he was signed up he couldn't be fired. [Alan Sorrells, Dr. Martin Nesbitt]

[1/332] Alan - A. C. Reynolds was superintendent and Tom Reynolds taught algebra (see Tom Reynolds and John Reynolds tapes). [Harry Truman, A. C. Reynolds, Tom Reynolds, John Reynolds]

[1/355] General - during the Depression people in need took a white sack to the court house to get food - but they felt ashamed. Now people act like it's "something big to get food stamps - no pride in it." Most people in the past wanted to work.

[1/375] During their early years there was no contact with city people. Old-age assistance was available from the county for burial and the Old County Home was on Leicester Highway.

[1/391] There was only one black family in the area. There were ten children and the father worked in the tannery on the river. There were watering troughs for houses every 10 miles. A Jewish family lived on Webb Creek. Farmers came from Rutherford County to sell watermelons and sometimes had to practically give them away. [Robertson family]

[1/417] When the Asheville Bank went broke Ray and Jay lost \$6.00 each. They thought their piggy banks at home would go broke too so broke them!

[1/433] Today teenagers won't pick up a penny but kick them along [7/19/94 - on TV it was announced that banks are low on pennies and buy them for \$1.06 for a hundred - asking the people not to keep them out of circulation!!]

[1/439] The school house also served as a community church. Money was stolen (\$30-\$40) and parishioners went to Tennessee to get the thieves.

[1/465] The minister came from Oakley once a month. He didn't take money for his service and earned his living delivering lumber for an Asheville lumber company. [Pastor Whittaker]

[1/484] Once or twice a year there would be a "pounding" - everyone came with something to eat to give to the minister.

[1/493] There was a song leader with a piano.

[1/506] The WPA built US 74. The boys sold milk and butter to the workers - 5 cents a quart - which they gave to their mother. Without the WPA the people would have starved. They built the airport and baseball fields for schools. The old tannery went out - Sayles was in business (see enclosure) and Enka came in 1929. There wasn't much industry. The VA Hospital at Oteen developed and some people came to be close to patients.

[1/576] Oteen was strictly for TB. Parents were concerned for children's health. Albert was a deputy sheriff, and a TB patient who would not go to the hospital was forcibly taken to Black Mountain and put in a cell.

Side 2:

[2/1] Jay - After the service he worked at Oteen until 1957 - resigned and worked for Eastern Water Co. for 3-4 years, then Thrash Refrigeration. He worked for Overnight Transportation Trucking Co. (Sweeten Creek Rd) but was fired. He then worked for McLean Trucking Co. from 1981 until it went out of business.

[2/14] The government deregulation rule was devastating for the trucking companies. McLean was regional, small and unionized. The most profitable routes were exploited and the competition was too much.

[2/20] Ray - married in 1946 and worked for the Oteen fire department after 6 months with Carolina Power and Light. A son was born in 1949 and a daughter in 1959. He retired in 1976 at 52 when the fire department was contracted out to the city. The firemen went to Charlotte once a year for training. He remembers Hoyle who was a "mascot" and owns the Hoyle Stationery Store, "the best clip shop in town" (see tape). He feels the "city came and took his job" and the tax payers are suffering for this move which was politically motivated and less effective. He discusses veteran care. [James "Red" Hoyle, Kennedy, Johnson, Carter, Nixon]

[2/148] Alan - married while in the service and worked first in radio and television, then for the Southern Railroad where he was laid off. He worked for American Enka for 2-3 years and then became a riveter for Dave Steel. He describes the technique for catching hot rivets (see Dave tape and picture in brochure of funnel used). He remembers listening to old radio programs. He has one son in Roanoke, VA and a son in Oteen who is a guard. [Hyman Dave, Amos and Andy, Lum and Abner, The Shadow, Little Orphan Annie, Flash Gordon]

[2/250] The Sorrells were all raised together and 40-45 family members gather for a reunion the last Saturday in August.

[2/259] Albert - is the youngest in the group and the last to join the service. His parents were proud. Before the service he worked for Sayles Biltmore Bleacheries after school for 25 cents an hour working up to 40 cents. After he returned he didn't get his old job back, which was required by law, he worked for a while and then quit. He said he joined the "52-20 club" (the government gave veterans 20 cents a week for 52 weeks).

[2/340] For \$30 a week he worked at Ivey's department store - this was a 6-day week - not open on Sunday.

[2/344] Blue laws (Sunday closing of stores) were in effect for many years. Eckerd's was sued for selling something non-essential on a Sunday. Groceries could be purchased. Parents were strict about Sunday activities - the children couldn't play games and cards were never allowed.

Albert didn't know what dice were until he went into the service. He thought the devil would get him when he went to the movies when they were finally opened on Sunday.

[2/402] Albert - Between 1948 and 52 he worked at an Esso Station. He was with the Highway Patrol for a short time but returned home to help his mother when his father died. His father had known the sheriff and he became a deputy, a job he held for 10 years (see Louis Silveri tapes on Bailey). [Jesse James Bailey, Lawrence. E. Brown]

[2/437] The laws were different when he was a deputy - he always kept a warrant in the car - this saved him from having to go to headquarters in the basement of the court house - and most people couldn't read. He became an investigator, the same as a detective, 9 of the 10 years. Brown was defeated by 146 votes in 1962 by Harry Clay. [Lawrence E. Brown]

[2/449] Albert went to work in the tax office \$3,200 a year, 12 hours a day, 6 days a week. When Morrissey was elected in 1970 he was chief deputy for 3 years. For 16 years he was land agent for Carolina Power and Light for 16 years, retiring in 1968. He knew Bailey since the 50's. There were plans to build a nuclear plant in west Buncombe and he did title work. He needed someone who knew the area and they drove over the land for many days. Bailey gave him a silver dollar bearing the date of his birth (1888). He asked him to be a pall bearer, saying he had outlived 6 sets. Albert took early retirement. His first wife died in 1967 and he remarried in 1968 to a woman with a son the same age as his. He is active in the Masonic Lodge and the Biltmore Baptist Church. [Tom Morrissey, Jesse James Bailey]

[2/526] He saw two desperados who killed a policeman. They had robbed a bank. The chase started at the Bleachery in 1936. It took two years to catch them. They were executed (see enclosure). [Wash Turner, Bill Payne]