

## **Bob Terrell**

### **Side 1:**

[1/8] He has written about 30 books - some are with his publisher.

[1/14] He was born in Sylva, NC, attended Western Carolina University four years, changed his major and started writing for the Sylva Herald. On March 18, 1949 he went with the Asheville Citizen-Times as sports editor.

[1/30] He took a course in journalism in college but taught himself to write by studying the Herald Tribune and Reader's Digest. One of his first assignments was to cover the old baseball pitcher who pitched 500 games. He covered sports for 18 years and 5 columns of general interest for 18-19 years. [Cy Young]

[1/51] Since retiring from the paper he has been doing contract work. People used to bring stories to him and, when he was with the paper every day he had a constant flow of material - he was on duty 24 hours a day. He had plenty to write about.

[1/64] He never crossed paths or areas with other writers - they all had different angles. [John Parris, Nancy Marlowe (formerly Nancy Brower)]

[1/78] When he joined the paper he thought he was in heaven - it was the most exciting place in town. Today reporters don't cover their beats as they did and, in the 1960's if it wasn't a catastrophe or a meeting it wasn't news. The Citizen-Times has a large staff and they wait for the news to come in. They used to go out looking for the little stories "If it isn't bad, it isn't news." He looked for the good side. [Gertrude Ramsey]

[1/119] Times have changed. It's tough bringing up kids today. Television links the world together and the California earthquake has a devastating effect on everyone. It is not the fault of the media. Movies have proved that the American people want violence shown.

[1/151] He took early retirement because he didn't like the shape of journalism. He left working for the paper full-time in 1986. He had started writing books and, by agreement with the paper, worked with Billy Graham for three years. He decided to write western novels - one has been published and three are with his agent. He still does a weekly column for the paper and is working on a magazine section for "D-Day" anniversary (WWII). [Billy Graham]

[1/174] Regarding his writing style, he says that he handles conversation and humor well. He learned how to write action through his years as sports editor. The Herald Tribune has gone out but he still reads the Reader's Digest for its simplicity of style. One day he used a "fancy" word and the former manager of the civic center called him on it. The executive editor of his publishing house said, for his dust cover, his style "defied description." He wrote whatever style the story dictated. He reads 3-4 books a week - he reads for style. [Ralph James, Dick Williams]

[1/234] He was born in 1928 and the Depression made an impression on him. By lamp and firelight he fashioned a little book from a roll of paper his father gave him and by the time he was 12 he knew he wanted to write. The owner of the Sylva Herald paid him 50 cents for a story - whether it was 7 or 17 inches long. He covered court cases, weddings, funerals, sports and Gray sat down with him and went over his work with him. When he was working for the Citizen-Times, Gray asked him to take a leave and write up the history of Jackson County, for its centennial He never went into anything that he didn't study. He took the attitude of "what can I learn from this?" He trained himself to look for the unusual and ride lady luck. [J.A. Gray]

[1/297] During the Korean War he joined the infantry but was sent to Fort Ord, CA, to do paperwork. He got tired of writing "cook of the week" and "orderly room of the month." He almost had a chance to replace a retiring writer for the Stars and Stripes but his colonel wouldn't let him go. He managed, however, to go to Desert Rock, Nevada, where he watched 11 atomic bomb explosions in 1953. [John McPartlin]

[1/389] He reviews the story of the city's first bacteriologist. Dr. McCormick rid the city of flies at the beginning of the 20th century. Asheville had 15 restaurants, 16 saloons, 18 livery stables, and 20 churches. The livery stables were controlled and city kids, armed with fly swatters, offered to kill all the flies in a house for 10 cents. National news was made. McCormick was a great story teller and a character. He died in 1923 and, when the new baseball park opened, in 1924, it was named for him. [Dr. Lewis McCormick]

[1/438] The first professional baseball team was formed in 1909. The players were outfitted by the local pawn shop (see Finkelstein tape). Before the 1924 field was built the men played at Riverside Park - until the 1916 flood, and then Oaks Field (McDowell, Choctaw and Southside). [Leo Finkelstein]

[1/475] For three years the baseball league folded (1955) and the city manager rented it to Lowe who sent in 2 men to turn the field into a track for car racing. Some great drivers came and it was popular but caused too much noise (see Ownbey tape). Baseball was brought back and the Community Baseball Incorporated was formed. [Elmer Ownbey (told me about it in interview), Weldon Weir, Jim Lowe, Charlie Combes, Dobe Powell, Banjo Matthews (driver), Toy Jones (built cars), W. Fleming Talman]

[1/522] Probably the greatest football player North Carolina ever produced came out of the Asheville High School. For 2 years the team was undefeated. In 1943 he went into the Navy and then to the University of N.C. [Choo-Choo Justice]

[1/545] Swimming meets were held in the Olympic pool at the Manor Inn. The paper covered these (see Walter Boland tape and enclosure). [Nancy Merki Lees Cory Boland]

[1/581] There was a full season of polo in 1949. This seemed strange to the people here.

[1/588] Talented riders came for horse shows for 6-8 summers. An equestrian Olympic team came from Tryon in 1956. There is a pony club here. He, however, mostly covered the baseball, football or basketball games (see Jane Bingham and Wanda Stanard tapes). [Jane Bingham]

## Side 2:

[2/3] Swimmers from the Amateur Athletics Union (AAU) went from the district to state, national and possibly Olympic level. Mary, daughter of Wayne Montgomery (a doctor and former mayor), studied with Nancy Boland (wife of Walter Boland - see his tape and enclosure). [Nancy Merki Lees Cory Boland, Mary Montgomery, Wayne Montgomery]

[2/17] Tennis was popular. Tilden played here. [Bill Tilden]

[2/20] Golf has always been popular. The women's Land of the Sky Ladies Open drew crowds. Today prize money is so high that it is difficult arranging tournaments. Most sports boil down to how much money they must pay out to players.

[2/38] Even before the 1954 Supreme Court decision regarding integration, blacks were playing with the Tourists. Several, with coloring so light they "passed," played for a season. He saw their passports from the islands stamped "negro." The first dark-skinned black with the Knoxville Smokies played against the Tourists in 1954 with no incidents. He always covered the players in the paper in the same way and people respected what he wrote. [Aldo Salvant]

[2/57] The basketball coach at Western Carolina liked tall players, went to see a visiting team from Chattanooga play Stephens-Lee, only to discover that the real find was a local player. Logan went on to the All American team in 4 years and was second only to Michael Jordan. He packed the auditorium and tickets had to be purchased weeks in advance. The color line was broken! [Jim Gudger, Henry Logan, Michael Jordan]

2/103] The black baseball catcher went on to play in major leagues. [Jesse McFarland]

[2/110] Ray [Funeral Home] sponsored a girls' softball team which won many awards (enclosed). [Jesse Ray]

[2/113] At Stephens-Lee, before integration, a great black professional baseball team called the "Asheville Blues" drew as many white spectators as blacks. There were other well-known black players. [Clarence L. Moore, Willie Mays, Hank Aaron, Satchel Paige, Jackie Robinson]

[2/125] A good baseball team is always good for the economy and during the 3 years Asheville didn't have a team the revenue to hotels and restaurants was missed.

[2/132] Basketball is mostly a high school and college sport. Logan played 5 years. [Henry Logan]

[2/146] High schools play on various scales - local conferences, district and state. They compete on various levels.

[2/150] Boxing used to be big here. Monthly fights - called "smokers" because of the haze from smoke. A gym was set up in the old Earl Hotel. Pappy Galt became a world champion. [Ted Ball, Pappy Galt]

[2/162] There were weekly wrestling matches in the auditorium. When the civic center was opened in 1974 the first match filled the house. They still come in. He loves to talk with them. Many are former college men and well-trained. The villains are the friendliest.

[2/182] Women wrestlers draw a large crowd.

[2/192] Sports are always big on TV but doesn't hurt the major leagues. The general manager is a good promoter and attracted over 100,000 a year here. The paper has had a sports section since the 1920's [Larry Pope, present editor, used to be sports editor]. [Ron McKee]

[2/208] Motorcycle racing on the Asheville-Weaverville speedway was short-lived because of two deaths. Autos raced on the track with no problem. A retaining wall was built and the track paved. It went out 20 years ago and the new North Buncombe High School is on that property. At one time there were two tracks. Now there is only one on Amboy Road. He was sports editor of the paper until 1967 when he concentrated on local sports.

[2/254] Sumner, who owns the Stamps Quartet, is in the Guinness Book of Records for singing the lowest note (double low "c"). He heard the group in 1949 and was thrilled and in 1971 wrote the life of J. D. Sumner - his first book. Sumner helped Elvis and backed him wherever he went. The book was brought up to date to include Elvis - then the Elvis section was removed to sell separately. Later it was re-incorporated. It is still selling well. [J. D. Sumner, Elvis Presley]

[2/314] In 1977 he covered a crusade in depth when Billy Graham came to town. Attendance records were broken in the Civic Center and he was asked to cover his Eastern Europe tour. The paper agreed and still paid his salary. He went on to the Philippines and India, Poland, and in 1984 the Soviet Union. He wrote a 213 full-color picture book. [Billy Graham]

[2/367] He left the Citizen-Times and toured with Billy for three years, writing books that were given away on the crusades.

[2/393] He has made 17 trips to the Holy Land. The first was in 1973. Wilcox opened a travel agency, running busses to Atlanta for the games. Bob mentioned this in the paper and Glenn asked him to go to Israel with him. Bob decided he would find a fisherman and a shepherd to write about. He wrote a series of seven stories which were covered on the front page of the paper. [Lucuis "Craggy" Ingle, Glenn W. Wilcox]

[2/435] He went again in 1974 and in March 1975 decided to do his own trip. An apple farmer and his wife at the last minute decided to bring their daughter along - they married in 1976. In 1978 Ezekiel was born and, 14 months later Jacob. He gave them these names because as a child he liked the nicknames! [Vivian Moss Terrell, Zeke Terrell, Jake Terrell]

[2/489] Fathering three sons is his greatest accomplishment.

[2/502] Bobbie was a Baptist preacher for the Church of Christ. Billy, of the Merrimon Baptist Church, asked him to take over a satellite church. There were 9 members - now, two years later,

there are 180. Zeke and Jake are baseball players. It's tough bringing up kids today. [Bobbie Terrell, Billy Cline]

[2/527] By now he has taken over 700 people on tours. He has had the same guide and driver for 15 years. One is a Christian and an Arab, the other is a Muslim. Arabs won't throw stones at an Arab bus; Jews won't throw stones at all. They have toured all around the Mediterranean. [John Assad, Lusa Moses Abdulah]

[2/594] He hasn't retired - just changed jobs. He loves people - never met a person he didn't like [...and it shows...what a treat to know him.]