

Jean and Robert Webb

Side 1:

[1/1] Robert's grandfather graduated from Chapel Hill, taught, and became an attorney. He was later a US senator and a US marshal. He bought the Asheville Times which merged with the Citizen Times. He worked hard to have a Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Efforts had been started in 1885 and the park was dedicated in 1941 (see file - his booklet My First 58 Years). [Charles A. Webb, President Woodrow Wilson]

[1/46] Robert's father grew up on Chestnut Street. There were 4 children and when his wife died he remarried. [R. Stanford Webb]

[1/70] The motto of the paper was "Uplifting and Building of Western North Carolina." [Wayne Montgomery]

[1/73] Robert was brought up in Montford (125 Tacoma Circle) and describes the area as a safe haven.

[1/101] Jean was born in Buncombe County and celebrated with the Bicentennial as a descendent from first white settlers that came into the Indian territory. Davidson, his wife, daughter and a slave settled in Christian Creek in Swannanoa Valley. He went up to get the cow, the Indians had moved the bell (to trap him) and when his wife heard a rifle shot she, knowing he had left his rifle at home, knew to escape to Old Fort (also called Davidson's Fort). Samuel Davidson was married to an Alexander. His brother William Davidson and the Alexanders found Indian party, killed them and settled here. She is related to Williamson. Her grandmother was Addie Davidson Williamson whose father was Alan T. Davidson. They had good relations with the Indians and there is a story that when Addie was a baby a Cherokee mother swapped babies as a "joke." The mother ran after her and re-swapped. During the Civil War, when the men were gone, the family moved to South Carolina and then came back. Addie married a gentleman whose father had a furniture place. Her grandfather was with Wachovia Bank. [Samuel Davidson, Ruth Davidson, William Davidson, Patton Alexander, Adeline "Addie" Davidson Williamson, W. D. Williamson]

[1/163] The whole family lived on Pearson drive - from Watauga St. to Hibriten Dr. There were 5 homes. She lived around the corner on Rosewood; Susan (with Quality Forward) lives in the house Jean's family had moved into (265 Pearson). The Morrison house burned. Her grandmother's house (301 Pearson) is still there. [Susan Roderick (was Susan Mayer)]

[1/181] Jean describes Montford. The road went all the way to the water [French Broad River] but she wasn't allowed to go down. Her older sisters had a pony.

[1/192] Robert: Bingham School moved here from Mebane, NC in early 1890's - no connection with Jane Bingham. [In 1890 according to Mitzi Tessier, Asheville: a Pictorial History].

Jane: Her uncle went to the school. It closed 50-60 years ago. [Nemo went to Chapel Hill].
[James "Nemo" Coleman (photo)]

[1/204] Robert went to Asheville School for Boys for 6 grades (there were only 6 grades: grades 7-12). He was a trustee and during his tenure the school became co-ed. Now it is boarding co-ed for 4 years. There have been day students for some time (20 years or more).

[1/216] Asheville School formed in 1900 by two men from Cleveland who wanted to form a boarding school. His father, uncle, brother, son and niece graduated. [Newton M. Anderson, Charles A. Mitchell, Mandville Webb (uncle), Charles Webb (brother), John Webb (son), Amy Webb (niece)]

[1/229] There have been few headmasters and they have served twenty years or more. He feels the community does not know much about the school. [William (Billy) Peebles III, John L (Jack) Tyrer, David R. Fall, Howard Bement, Newton M. Anderson]

[1/241] Christ School is a rival and also very fine but a different type.

[1/245] When he attended Asheville School all privileges were determined by grades and behavior.

[1/259] He had been on board of Asheville School for 12 years. They had girl day students at that time.

[1/270] He went on board after the period of rebellion. The headmaster kept dress codes and standards were maintained but some rules were modified. [Jack Tyrer]

[1/304] Jean went to old Montford School (which had been a Civil War hospital) through 6th grade (now William Randolph School on same location).

[1/312] Jean: Mother teaching at Country Day (then on Victoria Road) after her father died. She went there through 9th grade and then to the old Lee Edwards (now Asheville High). [Mary Manley Williamson]

[1/323] Jean: Laura went to Country Day and Julia went to public school. [Laura Webb, Julia Webb]

[1/327] Robert competed with Christ School students when in Asheville.

[1/340] Robert: There is an active parents association and alumni association now but not when he attended Asheville School.

[1/348] He went to Chapel Hill and joined Naval ROTC. Had reserve commission but with Korean War was assigned for 2 years to mine sweepers.

[1/362] He and Jean married during his last nine months of service and traveled up and down the Eastern seaboard.

[1/371] Jean and Robert: started dating between senior and junior year. Had good time growing up.

[1/387] Jean describes high school age.

Robert: People didn't "pair off" but had a good time. Pritchard Park was the hub of downtown. Post Depression era. People enjoyed doing simple things. No cars. Movies and gathering at Eckerds.

[1/449] Robert: Christmas time festivals described.

[1/456] Jean: Downtown gone for retail shops but will be a center for festivals and specialty shops.

[1/466] Robert: Pack Place makes a lot of sense. A wonderful attraction.

[1/479] Jean: She went to Women's College [now UNC Greensboro] and then Chapel Hill. Majored in history, married and had 4 children. She has been involved in the Jr. League and the community and First Presbyterian Church.

[1/512] When her youngest son was 15 she worked as Executive Director of Quality Forward (5 years). She had worked with Quality '76. Describes programs - anti litter, Sunday in the Park. Cultural events taken to county (enclosures).

Side 2:

[2/3] Jean: Quality Forward is a county organization, not identified as an Asheville event. Programs went into community and are broadening cultural horizons. Still going on in the summer. They move around to different locations.

[2/24] A scientific way of developing a baseline for litter and trash was developed and is checked each year. "Let's Can It," a project for obtaining containers. Merchants participate. The city does a good job of emptying. [Janie Wilson]

[2/50] Robert went into his father's office in 1955 on 14 Church Street, bought and moved to 1st floor then expanded. Later moved next door when Beverly Hanks moved to new building (Charlotte Street). Four years ago moved to Ashland Ave (216).

[2/63] At first he wanted to stay in Navy but decided to go into father's insurance business.

[2/71] His father had an office in the Grove Arcade, then Wall Street and the Miles Building.

[2/79] Robert: Every business has changed. More competitive, not same loyalty. Still a good business, they have done well and grown but the market is soft right now and the solvency of companies he does business with must be looked at seriously.

[2/101] His first activities were with the Junior Chamber of Commerce. They met at the George Vanderbilt Hotel. Used to be beautiful but facade replaced. Battery Park was also renovated. [James "Red" Hoyle, Maurice Puckett]

[2/126] Robert took pride in the Mountain Youth Jamboree. Jaycees did leg work. Had a track meet, soap box derby, owned and operated Recreation Park swimming pool. [Hubert H. Hayes, Leona (Mrs. Hubert) Hayes]

[2/151] He was with Asheville Housing Authority and the Redevelopment Commission during merger. There was a lot of feeling as people were dispossessed and a lot of blighted area removed. Neal was going to be head of whole thing but went into real estate and Jones took over and did a marvelous job. He served 1969-1973. [Neal Hanks, Jennings Groom, David Jones]

[2/184] After 5 years he got off committee. There was a lot of feeling after the merger and need for new blood.

[2/197] Robert: They learned how to listen to people in the housing projects. He got in on it toward the end. There was a lot of distrust but the leadership was excellent. His office is located in a redeveloped area. [David Jones, Larry Holt, Peggy Shook]

[2/242] Jean: In 1979, along with cleaning up streets they had their first river clean up with senior Girl Scouts and canoes. This was a hold-over from Quality '76.

[2/253] The French Broad River Foundation was formed in 1983. It was assisted by and housed in the Land-of-Sky building. When Federal funds dwindled, the owner of the building let the office remain and funds were obtained from the Reynolds Foundation. An office is now rented in the old Memorial Hospital building at 70 Woodfin Place. [Bill Aker, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, Robert Shepherd]

[2/309] She is now chairman of the RiverLink Board (an outgrowth of the French Broad River Foundation). This deals strictly with urban Asheville and covers six miles from the Amboy Rd. bridge to Broadway. The Foundation deals with four counties and the two organizations complement each other. The RiverLink river front plan was the result of a national landscape architect and architect (ASLA and ASID) working together with a \$1,500 grant from the Garden Club Council and producing a mock up in 1989. The first phase of a greenway will be finished by 1993. This will be by the Amboy Rd. bridge on the west bank. [Karen Cragolin]

[2/369] When Jean had been chairman of the French Broad River Foundation a park was dedicated to her. The Department of Transportation, CP&L, Sea Bees and several corporations worked together to make this a community effort. The park belongs to the county park system where it is maintained and covered for liability. [Bill Cecil]

[2/405] Jean: The western side of the river will be city parks covering a four mile loop and should be completed in two years.

[2/422] Jean: Programs held in conjunction with the Center for Creative Retirement introduced the community to the plans. [Wilma Dykeman]

[2/426] The term River "Link" is a symbol of the 20-25 organizations on the board.

[2/474] Robert: The sign ordinance is discussed and the ruling which grandfather's signs for 7 years (at which time they are to comply with the rules) may be watered down by the current City Council. [Wayne Kinser]

[2/547] Robert: Tony Lord was the first one to push for tree planting. This is now being taken care of by Quality Forward. [Tony Lord]