

Interview of John Knox, IV

- Q: This is an interview with John Summerville Knox, IV of Atlanta, Georgia. The interview is being conducted on November 1, 2009, at the Knox residence. The interviewers are Wright Mitchell, Chad Wright and grandson John O. Knox, Jr. representing the Buckhead Heritage Society, Atlanta, Georgia.
- A: I would very much like to have a copy of that. I just wanted –
- Q: You will. You'll get a digital copy of the DVD as well as CDs, so you can listen to yourself.
- Q: Tell us a little bit about where you were born, where you grew up.
- A: I was born at Wesley Memorial Hospital which is now Emory University Hospital.
- Q: Downtown?
- A: The building is still there, the main building at Emory. We were living at the time in the Knox apartment there on Peachtree at Pershing Point. My grandfather was, I think, probably the biggest real estate person in Atlanta from about 1895 to the Depression. He built hundreds of houses, buildings and many apartment houses that are still up around town.
- Q: That was Fitzhugh Knox, correct?
- A: That was Fitzhugh Knox, yes.
- Q: Any specific neighborhoods he focused on, or was he all around?
- A: He was one of the first builders in Inman Park and he built the second house on Piedmont Avenue in 1906, which he said he built it there because it was halfway between Piedmont Park and St. Luke's Episcopal Church, which you could walk each way, so that was a very big, 11-bedroom colonial home with columns and all that. It's still there, by the way, 894 Piedmont Avenue.
- Q: Where is it in relation to the Driving Club?
- A: It's towards town from the Driving Club, about six or eight blocks.
- Q: Called Knox Hall.
- A: Called Knox Hall. It's now an apartment. He had nine children so it had to be a big house. So that's where that was.
- Q: It's now apartments?

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A: It's now divided into apartments, yes.

Q: What are they called?

A: Knox Hall.

Q: Knox Hall?

A: Mm hmm (positive).

Q: I drive by there every day.

A: And so, I was born there in one of the Knox Apartments. It was at Pershing Point near the First Presbyterian Church. My mother was Marianna Goldsmith and she had lived at East Lake in the summer and in her father and grandfather's apartment at the corner of 11th and Peachtree in the winter. People in Atlanta lived at East Lake in the summertime and in Atlanta otherwise. Oddly enough, he was J.W. Goldsmith, her grandfather, who was also in the real estate business, one of the other people. He built the first apartment in Atlanta which is gone now but it was next to the High there on 15th and Peachtree at Peachtree Circle. It wasn't just an apartment; it was really a high class place with crystal chandeliers and that sort of thing.

Q: When did your family come to Atlanta? What generation were you?

A: Well, Fitzhugh Knox came to Atlanta in 1880 from Virginia, but the Goldsmiths were here, my mother's mother's family were here way before the Civil War, all of them. Fact is, I had two great-grandfathers fight in the Battle of Atlanta.

Q: Is that right?

A: Yes, they were great-grandfathers, not grandfathers. They were in the Georgia Military Institute in Marietta and they were teenaged kids that were called out as Sherman approached. We have the list of people who fought in that battle and what happened to them. They followed Sherman all the way to Oconee River, I think it was. About 20 years ago, I think Walt Disney bought that story. Never used it because it was so sad, kids getting shot.

Q: Yes, not your puppy dog story from Disney typically.

A: Yes.

Q: Were they wounded in the battle?

A: Oh, yes, there were some of them that were killed.

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Q: But your grandfather, your great-grandfather?

A: No, either one of them was – one of them died of tuberculosis afterwards and the other one, he developed – was a developer in Atlanta in the '70s and '80s.

Q: So you have some deep roots then in the area it sounds like.

A: Yes.

Q: So you were born in Pershing Point?

A: Yes, I'll go back to where I was. That was my mother and father. Immediately my father started building apartments just like his father. He built one at 2814 Peachtree when I was one or two years old, one year old. That apartment is still there. That's –

Q: Approximately where is that on Peachtree?

A: It's near Houston's on Peachtree. The lot was bought –

Q: So that would've been one of the first apartments built in Buckhead perhaps?

A: I think so, yes. We didn't call that Buckhead. That was a long way from Buckhead.

Q: Yes, but it is now, exactly. It is now.

A: Yes.

Q: Do you remember the Colonial Hotel?

A: It was the -- yes, that was the Blackmun Sanitarium. That was Blackmun Sanitarium for people with nervous diseases and so forth.

Q: Before it was the hotel?

A: It became the Colonial Terrace it was.

Q: Colonial Terrace, that's right. I did not know it was a sanitarium first.

A: Well, we were between Colonial Terrace – we were – actually, if you know where Wachovia Bank is, right near Houston's. That is the lot my grandmother's house was on.

Q: Really?

A: Yes.

Q: What did that house look like?

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- A: It was a Dutch Colonial. When they left East Lake, they built that house right there on Peachtree. By the way, they lived next door to Bob Jones at East Lake and my mother was a lifelong friend of Bob Jones and I knew him well as a kid. So, anyway, they built that house for her, my grandmother, because she was a widow with four kids, so that's where more or less I grew up. They built the apartment right next door.
- Q: So about what year was that?
- A: I guess '26, '27, something right in there.
- Q: With the Buckhead Heritage Society, obviously, the creation of Buckhead as we know it, it sounds like that was the march north up Peachtree –
- A: Absolutely.
- Q: -- towards to merge what was Roswell and Peachtree then –
- A: Well, my grandfather Goldsmith, my mother's father, had made the big league. He and Charles Black started the Tuxedo Company. Those were unpaved roads and they cut in Blackland Road, Tuxedo Road, and they were partners in that.
- Q: We actually have the original sales brochure for that development.
- A: 1911 about?
- Q: Yes, somewhere around that time, because Wash Collier owned all of that land and he wouldn't sell it and so people wanted to grow toward Buckhead, but because he owned all that land and wouldn't sell it, they kind of had to go off to the east and west. Maybe your grandfather bought some of that land from Wash Collier. Do you know?
- A: I do not know. That was before I was born. That was in 1911 when that was started, but he was a partner with Old Man Black and his son Charlie Black. By the way, he was golf champion in Atlanta for about seven years running.
- Q: They were related to Dameron Black, right?
- A: I don't think so.
- Q: I don't they think are, actually. That's a different family. Do you remember when those homes – that area just north of the Amtrak station as we know it now. It sounds like –
- A: North of what now? I'm a little hard of hearing.
- Q: Of the Amtrak station?

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A: Oh, yes.

Q: So that area, as it developed –

A: You mean Brookwood Station?

Q: Right. So Brookwood, right, exactly, Brookwood Station.

A: You know, now Deerfield Station, that's where Seaboard crossed Peachtree right there. That was Deerfield, or the Seaboard, as Brookwood [unintelligible]. And that's where you got on the train there, on Peachtree, and the track there which is not used now at all.

Q: Obviously, Interstate 85 wasn't there, so was that just an even road at the time? Did they cut all that area out on 85 to go under, next to the train station?

A: That was way up from where I lived. That was already there. When was Brookwood Station put in there? I think that was before that, but of course it was way before 85 was put in there.

Q: But to put the interstate in, what did they have to do? Did they have to tear down –

A: They did a hell of a lot of blasting. I remember that. Shook a lot of places, I remember that.

Q: So around, it would've been your grandmom's house –

A: Yes, that was kind of a semi-rural house. I told John All we hunted quail in the back. Quail would cross Peachtree and we'd walk across and shoot them right there. We had two coveys spotted out there right back of her house and in back of that was Clouds Dairy Farm, which was a part of where Colonial Apartments area.

Q: Clouds, how do you spell, C-l-o-u-d?

A: S, Clouds.

Q: They had a grocery, right, didn't they, as well?

A: I don't remember his grocery.

Q: Right there at Brookwood Hills, when you came out –

A: No, not Brookwood Hills. This is down by Bennett Street. He lived at the end of Bennett Street. Also the Kennedys lived down there. They had about 9,000 children and they all looked alike. They were poor folks. They were really poor folks.

Q: Was Peachtree paved?

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A: Yes, it was paved and there were tracks there and cars had to be careful not to get caught in those tracks. They'd turn over, and so you had to be careful driving there.

Q: Trolleys.

A: Of course we had cars, but there was a lot of wagon – not a lot, but some wagon traffic. You know you get the – the bread man would come and he'd bring his horse and the horse was trained. He'd go from one house to the next and he'd stop and deliver the bread and go to the next house.

Q: Where did you buy groceries and things?

A: We had – Campus was a big deal then. The main store was what I call downtown where the Crawford Long Hospital is now. They had a store in Buckhead and two or three others. They delivered in Model A Fords, so that's where we had most of the groceries. Of course, the vegetable man would come around and he was in a wagon, too, and he had chickens as well as vegetables. You'd pick out the chicken, wring its neck right there. That's the way we did that.

Q: What was the name of the store, Campers?

A: Campers. That was a big – I think eventually he had about six stores. One of them was in Buckhead near where the ice plant was.

Q: Where was the ice plant?

A: The ice plant was there at, I'd say Pharr Road and Peachtree on the southwest corner.

Q: About what year was that?

A: '30s.

Q: Do you remember, did you go to Fred's Fruit Stand?

A: Oh, yes, he lasted until after the war, I think. And the Candy Kitchen was the main thing next door.

Q: I've heard about the Candy Kitchen. I know about –

A: Well, the Candy Kitchen was a little old stucco house next to Fred's and in back of it was nothing but a tangle of woods and stuff like that where the shopping center is now.

Q: So you grew up in Brookwood Hills, right?

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- A: No, I grew up in my grandmother's house and in the apartment next door that we were just talking about.
- Q: I probably confused you on that by saying he raised his family. My father –
- A: Yes, my family, after I grew up and after World War II I lived in Brookwood Hills.
- Q: So describe a little bit of growing up there at your grandmom's house. What would you do? Would you guys ever go up to Buckhead? Was there a reason to go up there in the '30s, '40s?
- A: Well, I would walk to E Rivers for one thing, when – one or two or three grades.
- Q: Which is where you went to –
- A: Grammar school.
- Q: -- grammar school. Is it the same location it is now?
- A: Yes. And there was a little real estate office was Mrs. Bloodworth [unintelligible]
- Q: Did you go there?
- A: Yes, I went there.
- Q: How many people were in that?
- A: About seven or eight or nine, ten, something like that. I got a diploma that says graduated in 1930.
- Q: Do you still have that?
- A: Yes. It was only about, less than a quarter of a mile, so it didn't take long. Sometimes I played hooky and raised hell and they'd really get worried.
- Q: What would you do when you raised hell?
- A: Well, I'd just be missing in action.
- Q: What would you do?
- A: I don't remember what I did.
- Q: Did you guys play in Peachtree Creek a good bit?

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- A: Even then it was pretty stinking, yes. But we had the beautiful sight, every 15 minutes or so, the disposal plant going off like a big thing. We could look across the Peachtree Valley from my grandmother's house and see it. It was located when Bitsy Grant tennis courts are, and it would flash up every 15 minutes.
- Q: And what was that? That was –
- A: Sewer disposal plant. They were aerating the sewage.
- Q: Just recently Ed Dougherty gave me a map of Buckhead, a topographical map from 1927 and I was looking at it. It had the sewage disposal plant on it. It's called the Peachtree Creek Disposal. It was the first time I'd – interesting you brought that up because I wasn't even aware that there had been a sewage treatment plant in Buckhead until a week ago.
- A: Buckhead to me was an area not more than 50 yards from Peachtree and Paces Ferry and Miller's filling station. That was about it, where Cal Cates hung out. He was the man.
- Q: Who was he?
- A: He was a little man that – Cal, he was police. He was a big police for Fulton County North, and he had braid on him like an admiral. He was the stuff.
- Q: The bug?
- A: I guess. I don't know.
- Q: Was that what they called Cal Cates? The game –
- A: Oh, the game, everybody played the bug with all the servants. We all – kids played that.
- Q: For some reason I relate that to the police for some reason.
- A: Well, you – Cal Cates you relate to hauling liquor because he controlled the entrances to Fulton County, Powers Ferry Road, and that's where you got across where the bootleggers from Dawsonville would come in on Powers Ferry and through Paces. Actually, he was the man that controlled the liquor coming into Fulton County. He was kin to all the Cates that you see right now.
- Q: Would they drop it off in Buckhead or would they keep on going down Peachtree?
- A: No, they would haul ass to black town mainly is where they got rid of it. Later on, when I was in high school and old enough to drive, the drivers would come down and drop off the stuff and before they picked up a load of sugar to take back, we'd race them for money on Northside Drive. We'd beat the hell out of them, too, because we had – my good friend, Sonny Hood, his father had a truck line and he built a special car when I was

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in high school. Had the first V-8, Ford V-8 that came out was a V-8 Mercury and he put it in a Model T frame. It was so light it was like a rocket ship. It beat all those guys.

Q: Beat the bootleggers in a race? Is that what you –

A: Oh, yes. They would race on Saturday and Sunday at Lakewood.

Q: How about the Buckhead people that wanted whiskey? How'd they get it? From these bootleggers?

A: I don't know where they got it. Of course I wasn't buying whiskey when I was – but later on, you could get whiskey right here at Vinings. You go right across the bridge there and you rolled up there in the woods and blew your horn, a guy came out.

Q: Is that right?

A: Yes. You told him what you wanted. He went back in the woods and came back for it.

Q: Is that where Canoe currently sits, the restaurant?

A: No. I remember doing that further up by Vinings Inn, but where Canoe sits and where your dad's house – that's straight down there. That's where the two warehouses were at the end of that. It was unpaved. Over the bridge, that was –

Q: Down Cochise Drive?

A: What? I don't remember Cochise even being there. I just remember Paces Ferry across the bridge was not paved.

Q: To the left, across, there were two brothels down there.

A: Yes.

Q: Did the Buckhead men frequently those brothels?

A: That's not part of this conversation. I don't know that –

Q: We're not saying you. Theoretically. You don't have to give names.

Q: Did you go to Robinson's Tropical Gardens?

A: Oh, yes. I took your grandmother there for her first drink when she was 14.

Q: When did you start dating?

A: Oh, I don't know, 15, 16, something like that. But that's an interesting place.

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Q: Tell me about your wife. Where did you guys meet? We'll come back to Robinson's Garden. How did you meet to ask her to go on that first date?

A: I had a good friend and that was his sister. [unintelligible] and I met her on the badminton court.

Q: The badminton court up on Piedmont?

A: Oh, no. I played in that one, but everybody had a badminton court.

Q: So badminton was big back in the day?

A: Everybody had badminton. Few people had a tennis court. We had a tennis court, but it was built – by the way, we found a big shell right there, because it's part of what, Peachtree Creek was a battle, and many bullets all around there which I have right here.

Q: Have a nice collection of muskets.

Q: So you found a bunch of stuff all around –

A: I got a shell this big right by the front door there, I found in the back yard there at Peachtree.

Q: Putting in the tennis court?

A: Building the tennis court, yes.

Q: So you just find stuff in the fields?

A: Every time it rained, you'd see bullets out.

Q: That's interesting. Did your wife go to school with you?

A: No, she went to Western Seminary.

Q: Where'd you go after E Rivers?

A: I went to North Fulton after I finished E Rivers. My father sold that apartment that we lived in next to my grandmother and built another one on Peachtree up in Buckhead.

Q: Which one was that?

A: That's at 2814 right at Rumson Road and Peachtree, kind of back of the cathedral.

Q: What was up there at the time? Was that still kind of country –

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A: Well, there was no church there where the cathedral is now. It was sort of a pavilion that the Andrews had. They had it – it was very nicely built. Had a cover on it and a tile floor but open on all sides. It had a tile floor for dancing and all that.

Q: Had a good view, I guess, down Peachtree?

A: Oh, yes, it had a good view. High ground right there at dead man's – what'd we call it? Dead Man's Curve.

Q: Where Peachtree turns right in the cathedral [unintelligible]

A: That's where Harry Fleming got killed. He was at E Rivers and Fritz Orr with me, and he got hit by a bicycle right there when we were about 12 years old.

Q: He got hit by a bicycle?

A: No, he got hit. He was on a bicycle and he got hit by a chauffeur driving a car up Andrews. But anyway, I remember when he built that apartment I just mentioned, then we moved into that one right at Rumson Road and Peachtree, which is really in Buckhead. What else about that? The Andrews property backed up to us and the horse trails back there. A lot of people rode their horses back there. My friend Sonny Hood lived in one of the apartments there in that apartment. He had a pony and so we rode back in there all the time. That's one of the best things we did. And when the pony got loose, we had to let us out of E Rivers to go catch that thing. He'd be eating grass in the middle of the railroad car tracks out in Peachtree.

Q: What do you remember about the Saddle and Sirloin Club? Were they around?

A: No, I don't remember anything about that.

Q: It was a riding group in Buckhead. I'm not sure –

A: Well, I remember a lot of people riding horses but I don't remember what they were. I was just a kid then.

Q: So would people ride their horses up into Buckhead?

A: No, there were trails back through the woods where the history center is and in back of Andrews Drive all the way up to Peachtree.

Q: Do you remember the old Harmony Grove Cemetery on Paces Ferry?

A: Sure.

Q: Do you remember ever seeing a church there?

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A: No.

Q: Never remember a church?

A: No.

Q: We've always wondered where the church stood. We can never figure that out.

A: No.

Q: What kind of shape was it in?

A: Weeds and big bushes. But, going back to the apartment, like I say, there was nothing where the cathedral is now and I remember when the pro-cathedral was built in that place, I think it was around 1933, when pro-cathedral was a wooden simple church and Raimundo de Ovies was the Episcopal preacher there.

Q: Is that where y'all started to go to church when they built it?

A: Well, we always went to St. Luke's, but that was close by so I went there some, if I went at all. But anyway that's where I went. I remember Raimundo saying when they dedicated that wooden thing, he said, none of us will be alive when they build the cathedral that will be here. And of course it was built right after World War II, and they tore that down and built it right after that.

Q: So what did Buckhead – in the '30s and '40s, what did that stretch up to between E Rivers and Buckhead look like?

A: Some very substantial folks built houses in there, all on the west side because that's where you built, on the west side so you see the sun up in the morning and set in your back. That was – I can remember Travis Hill or Walter Hill that gave a lot to the art museum, and the Clark Howells lived there and the Spaldings lived there. And of course the Havertys lived where I used to live. They were up the hill. We call that the Haverty Hill, but now it's Piedmont Hospital hill.

Q: I've heard that the KKK had their headquarters –

A: KKK had several homes and the headquarters was the white building there in Buckhead there. It's now a condo I think. That's where they made all the sheets and all that stuff. It's still there.

Q: Which white building?

A: It's a white building –

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Q: Cotton exchange.

A: Cotton Exchange, that's where they built the Cotton –

Q: Irby Avenue would dead end right into –

A: Irby Avenue is right into it.

Q: I heard that there used to be a house where Christ the King is now --

A: Yes.

Q: -- that they used as their headquarters. Do you remember –

A: Well, that's where one of the so-called – what'd they call the head guy of the Ku Klux Klan, wizard or something. That's where one of them lived, but there were several other houses. The art deco house on Peachtree Battle was one at one time and also the one two doors from us on Peachtree was one, which I had a big time with because they had an escape tunnel out the back for some reason, to get away from something.

Q: They really did have one.

A: They had a long ditch which they had put old junk doors and stuff and piled those, so there was a tunnel to get the hell out of there, and us kids really liked to play in that.

Q: Used to climb up in there?

A: Yes.

Q: So that would've been two doors north or south?

A: South. It was between our house and where Houston's sits now.

Q: One of the stories I always heard growing up was that the house you were talking about, the art deco house on Peachtree Battle, that there was a tunnel that ran between that house and another house on the other side of the street that was owned by another Klansman.

A: I never heard anything about that.

Q: I don't know that there's any truth to it. I just always would hear that growing up.

A: The Klan was a different thing then. To be anything, you had to be a member of the Klan, really, and all the police, all the politicians, everybody was a member of the Klan, the supreme court, everybody. I remember particularly when I was about eight or ten years old, they had a parade down Peachtree and there was enough to fill it up all the way from Buckhead to Brookwood, that many people, thousands of people in white garb.

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- Q: Was it well attended by the people watching the parade go by? Was there a lot of spectators?
- A: There were a lot of people there. I'd say there were more people marching than watching. I'd say, just guessing, there must have been, a rough guess, 10,000 all in garb. It was like the masons where they would have a lodge and every day in the paper they would have where the lodge meeting was going to be, and they would have a picture of the guy dressed up in Klan uniforms on a horse holding a torch and it would say, the Klan will meet such and such place. That was in the paper every day.
- Q: Do you remember the black community, Macedonia Park? It was over there where Frankie Allen Bagley is now?
- A: Yes. The story I always heard about that is they were the ones that were run out of Dawson County when that murder thing occurred in 1913, I believe it was, and all black people were run out of Dawson County in Model T Fords and they wound up there. That's what I thought. That's hearsay as far as I'm concerned.
- Q: Did the KKK hassle the black folks that lived in Macedonia Park and Johnstontown and those other areas?
- A: As far as I know, they didn't. Their pitch was preserve law and order. They had good people in there. Justice Black of the Supreme Court of the United States was a member of the Ku Klux Klan. And who's the senator from West Virginia now? He was a member of the Ku Klux –
- Q: Byrd.
- A: Byrd, yes. It was not what it wound up to be. Let me say this: none of my family ever had anything to do with it and thought they were kind of kooky.
- Q: When did sentiment kind of change, did you feel? Was it after the war when it kind of started to die down a little bit?
- A: What kind of sentiment?
- Q: Well, again, when they had the big parades. When did you see fewer and fewer people –
- A: They were not anti-Negro parades, but they were held out to be so.
- Q: When did you see it start to kind of come apart and lose its influence?
- A: That was right before the war. They had a big deal, some politicians trying to make hay out of fighting the Klan. One of them was Ellis Arnold and they got Duke – I remember Duke, the prosecutor –

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Q: They kind of ran Buckhead it sounds like.

A: Ku Klux Klan?

Q: Yes.

A: I don't know if they – everybody was in it. They ran everything. I don't mean – the lower classes – that sounds horrible to say that, but the working stiff, they were all the ones, the police, the firemen, those kind of folks.

Q: So what was the perception of Buckhead when you were growing up? It sounded like you moved up Peachtree as it developed.

A: Yes.

Q: What finally combined do you think Buckhead, sort of the psyche of Atlanta, of bringing it all together? When do you think that happened?

A: It didn't really – seemed to me it didn't really grow much until later years. It was just a crossroads there where you went to get your hair cut maybe and we always went to Buckhead Theater every Saturday afternoon. Didn't miss that.

Q: How much did it cost to go?

A: Cost a dime.

Q: What kind of shows?

A: There was Tom Mix and cowboy shows and serials.

Q: How would you get up there, would you walk or –

A: Walk

Q: -- take a trolley?

A: Walking distance, just a little ways.

Q: Did you ever take the streetcar?

A: Oh, streetcars, yes, we took them all the time and pulled a lot of tricks on those streetcars.

Q: Like how? What kind of tricks?

A: Well, the easiest one, just to pull them off the trolley and run.

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Q: I thought you were a perfect angel.

Q: Pull off the thing that connects to the –

A: They run on a little wheel that ran along the trolley. We'd run out and pull it off and they'd have to stop and get out and put it back on. And then the worst thing we did was when the trolley would come around the corner at Dead Man's Curve headed towards town, there's a long straightaway there, and we would be there down where Lindberg comes in, and we would have a Fourth of July rocket in those rails and start that rocket and it would zip through that – go up towards the cathedral. The streetcars were full of the maids and the cooks and they would all get out and run.

Q: I want to hear the other part of "we" here. Who was doing that with you?

A: That was Sonny Hood and some of their friends. And the black women, they'd look because they hated the trolley drivers and the trolley drivers hated them, or at least that was the deal. So they would just laugh and go on when those rockets would come up there.

Q: Were you close in age to James Dickey?

A: I knew him well. He was on the football team with me at North Fulton.

Q: Talk a little bit about North Fulton. Who were your friends there?

A: Well, not many people know that, but Flannery O'Connor went to North Fulton. Did anybody know that?

Q: So James Dickey and Flannery O'Connor?

A: Yes, and Olive Ann Burns, and Jack Davis was a real good friend of mine.

Q: The artist?

A: Yes. I and Sonny Hood started an underground newspaper at North Fulton called the Bulldog, and we named Jack Davis our art director.

Q: That was a wise selection.

A: And it was just the year before last they had something on jacket, the history center, and they had that Bulldog there showing him as the art director.

Q: Did James Dickey write for you?

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A: Oh, I palled around with him a lot. He was a TKO at North Fulton. Everybody had fraternities, high school fraternities. This is – I got this out of the list of the high school North Fulton TKO is a list of everybody that went and their dates.

Q: I've heard of the Pinks and the Jells. Was that your age group?

A: Absolutely.

Q: What were the Pinks and Jells compared to the fraternities?

A: Well, the Pinks were just people who the Jells went to see after school. It was just the gals everybody – we were chasing around after them and we just called them Pinks. And Jells, and I was really surprised that the lady, Siddons that wrote Peachtree Road, she didn't know what the Jells were when she wrote that book. The Jells were people that got grape jelly on their shirts because the first thing you did when you went over to see a girl, you get a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and that's how they got the name Jell.

Q: Was there an initiation or anything to become a Jell or –

A: Oh, no. There were big initiations for the fraternities.

Q: What kind of things did they make you do in the fraternity?

A: Beat the hell out of you. Take you out in the woods and make you lower your pants and beat you with a belt.

Q: Big time names on that list, a who's who.

Q: How long would they haze you before you became a member?

A: I can't remember. Not too long. We had dances around town. One of them we had at Garber Hall which was, Jan Garber was a big orchestra back then. We had dances at Garber Hall and Brookhaven. I can't remember if we ever had any at the Driving Club, but we had them at Brookhaven and Garber Hall.

Q: What was school like at North Fulton?

A: I didn't go for it too much. It didn't go for me too much, either.

Q: Was there a big rivalry between North Fulton and Northside?

A: Northside wasn't there.

Q: It wasn't?

A: No. Our rivals were – our big rival, of course, was Boys High.

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Q: Where was Boys High?

A: Boys High was there at the northern edge of Piedmont Park and Monroe Drive. Tech High was there, too.

Q: The Jells were different than the fraternity; is that right?

A: Yes. It had nothing to do with fraternities.

Q: How many different fraternities were there?

A: Well, there were a bunch of them. I can't recall, but about four or five men's and then there was three or four girls sororities, but I'm just – Sigma Nu I think was one of them. But anyway, TKO was the best one.

Q: The last Tally Ho that just came out had an article about those fraternities and sororities.

A: What did?

Q: The Driving Club publication, the Tally Ho, that comes out quarterly. There was some mention of those fraternities and sororities at local high schools.

Q: So in the '40s with the war, were there any stories, any folks going off to fight that you remember that maybe had some good stories to tell?

A: I was in the class of '42 at North Fulton and I didn't become 18 until September, so I had to wait until September to get in, so I signed up in September in 1942 and trained for 30 months to be a naval aviator and I learned how to fly in a carrier squadron of Curtis [unintelligible] and we were shipped to the Pacific, and when we got to California, getting ready to get on a ship at Port Hueneme and they dropped the bomb and that was the end.

Q: Did any other guys from Buckhead serve in your squadron?

A: Not in my squadron, but I went in with them. They served along with me. Several didn't make it from North Fulton in the Naval Air Corps, all in training. Nobody got killed in combat because there really wasn't any combat.

Q: Dickey was a pilot, wasn't he?

A: Who?

Q: James Dickey was a pilot, I think.

A: I'd take that with a grain of salt.

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Q: He claims he was a pilot.

A: Yes. Well, let's see. He was – what was I? I'm trying to think of – well, it'll probably come to me.

Q: Wasn't Oglethorpe an Army barracks at the time?

A: No, it was – a naval air station was out there where Peachtree DeKalb Airport is now.

Q: Is that where you trained?

A: Actually it was – oh, no. I trained in the Navy at the primary Memphis Naval Air Station and then I flew out of Miami and around places like that and qualified for my carrier, and then to the West Coast.

Q: So when you got back from the war, you went to law school; is that right?

A: Yes.

Q: And you went to law school –

A: I went a while down to Georgia State and then got enough credits to get in law school and I went over there.

Q: And what did you do after your degree?

A: Well, I practiced law a little while and there wasn't any money in that, too many lawyers. And then I went with the Coca-Cola Bottlers Association and was there for 35 years.

Q: What did you do with them?

A: Well, I just kept my nose to the grindstone and did what we did and became Executive Director in '60, around 1960. And then I was involved more with the litigation and protecting the exclusive franchise in the Coca-Cola business and spent a lot of time in Washington. I even had an apartment up there for a while. But it was a fine organization. We had 100% membership of all the Coke bottlers in the country. At that time, when I first went with the Association, there were 1100 but now I think there are only about 150, around that.

Q: Were they just national bottlers or international?

A: Only national. We did have one, I think, in Bermuda or some place like that but it was only national.

Q: So how was the relationship, because the bottlers are independent, correct, from Coke?

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A: Yes.

Q: So you sat atop the organization that oversaw those 1100, kind of kept them –

A: Well, that was their business association and they had contracts with the Coca-Cola Company to bottle the product.

Q: Any good stories from working with Coke?

A: That's a whole another thing. That's another day from the Buckhead story, but one Buckhead story that involved that was the headquarters of the Association in the '30s was, for a while in the '30s was in the Buckhead Theater building. Old Man Beech, who was my predecessor, I remember we used to harass him a little bit up there and he used to chase us around. I got his job later.

Q: Back up to Robinson's Tropical Gardens. You said you took your wife there for her first drink. Tell us what – you said you were 14, 15, 16.

A: Well, it was a very bad thing, really not supposed to go there.

Q: What would y'all do? When you would go out on dates, what kind of stuff would you do?

A: There wasn't much to do but go to the movies or go to the Varsity or something like that. That was about it.

Q: I heard the Varsity was kind of a rough place back in those days.

A: I don't know that it was. I remember it way back when it really wasn't much bigger than half this room, about three people could stand in it. It was just an over-the-counter thing. I don't remember it being rough at all ever.

Q: What was the best restaurant in Buckhead back in the '30s or '40s?

A: I don't think they had any. Colonnade. And it wasn't like the Colonnade is now, but it was good.

Q: Where was that?

A: Where the Gold Club used to be.

Q: Do you remember when you would go out to Robinson's there being a paddleboat out there on the river?

A: I don't remember that.

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Q: What exactly –

A: I didn't spend a lot of time out there, once in my life I think.

Q: I've just heard a lot of people your age, my father's age, talk about going to Robinson's and I've never really figured out –

A: That was the thing. You didn't –

Q: What went on there? What was the –

A: It was just a bar, and you didn't go to bars.

Q: Dancing, I guess?

A: Yes. Well, it got to be – and you've got whiskey when you couldn't get whiskey because of Prohibition.

Q: It sounds like all you had to do was run up the hill and honk your horn.

Q: I just can't show my daughters this video now because you're saying their great-grandmother was drinking.

A: Well, I don't think she drank the whole drink. It was just this much.

Q: The bridge, I guess, was the old trestle bridge.

A: The trestle bridge, yes. I had some notes that might bring something. I told you about they lived at East Lake next to Bob Jones. Oh, a couple of things, that during the '30s would be interesting. Letourneau Company – I think they were from up in North Georgia, I can't remember the town, but they built heavy equipment and they were building it for World War II and they put a bridge at Peachtree and West Wesley right where – a steel bridge, temporary steel bridge on Peachtree so you could ride up over Wesley and Wesley could go under with no electric light.

Q: Is that right?

A: Yes.

Q: I never heard about that. Right by your house.

Q: Right before Dead Man's Curve. How long was that there?

A: Months. It wasn't there a year, but it was there for months.

Q: So it was more just for an –

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A: I don't know why it was there. I assume that it was there because they were peddling stuff to the government. Stuff went all over Europe on our invasion with Letourneau Company.

Q: Was it somewhat – something to show how effective this piece would be?

A: I suppose that –they put it up there and it lasted for months with no light. There didn't have to be a light because Peachtree went over and Wesley went under.

Q: I'd love to find a picture of that. That'd be a very –

A: Yes. Another recreation thing that they had in Buckhead that was not long-lived was a rollercoaster that you drove your car on. You can imagine that didn't last long.

Q: Where was that?

A: That was right next to the Alhambra Apartment, between there and –

Q: Right near North Fulton then.

A: Yes. It was just a big platform that you drove your car up and it was rough, very dangerous and it didn't last very long.

Q: Would you pay a dime or something to do that?

A: I've forgotten.

Q: Whatever it was, it was too much.

A: Too much.

Q: I've seen in old maps a racetrack in Buckhead. Do you remember that?

A: Well, there was a racetrack at Robinson's Tropical Gardens. Just as you went over the bridge to the left there was a big racetrack for years.

Q: A dirt racetrack?

A: A dirt automobile racetrack.

Q: Did you ever go to the races out there?

A: Yes, but not much. The place to go was Lakewood.

Q: What about Mooney's lake?

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- A: Oh, yes, went to Mooney's Lake quite a bit. It was over where the railroad crosses Piedmont.
- Q: What went on at Mooney's?
- A: Just a big old lake with a lot of people swimming and they had a cable which I remember, had a pipe on it and you grabbed that pipe and rolled down that cable.
- Q: It's just right over where Broadview –
- A: Broadview Plaza. It's right next to where Piedmont goes under the railroad there.
- Q: How big was the lake?
- A: I don't know. It was two or three acres. It was a pretty good sized lake.
- Q: Did you guys fish and hunt a lot still in Buckhead? Were there still fields on Saturdays that – you rode your horses, but would you go quail hunting?
- A: Well, we had our dove field there back of my grandmother's house which was part of Cloud's farm. We hunted quail and dove there.
- Q: Is that where Bobby Jones' golf course currently is?
- A: Yes, and Colonial Homes Apartments.
- Q: Lots of wildlife, I guess, back then?
- A: Oh, yes. My uncles went on a trip in a car out west and they brought back some coyotes and let them loose and for about a year they were out there yapping. I think they were reproducing and everything back there.
- Q: And then we got rid of them for 50 years –
- A: They're still there. Let's see what else I have on this. Oh, they didn't have fundraisers back then because everybody was broke.
- Q: Kind of like now.
- A: It was sort of a badge of honor to be broke. That was across over, a holdover from the Civil War because everybody was broke. If you had any money, they were suspicious of you, and so didn't have any fundraisers. You asked me, in your list you had something about crime. I guess you know about George Horace [phonetic] and Dick Gallegly [phonetic] and all that.

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Q: Tell me about that.

A: I don't know. I'm not an expert on that, but they were two KA's at Oglethorpe. By the way, the KA chapter met at my grandmother's house, so I knew them both. They were wild kids that decided to rob places for fun and they robbed a grocery store at the corner of Monroe Drive and 10th Street and killed the guy in there. It was something other than just a regular old crime because one of them's father owned the Atlanta Journal and they were well known in high group, big people in Atlanta. So that was big in the papers for a long time and that went all the way – I think it was in the papers up until World War II and continuing.

Q: Do you remember the Raffaele murder?

A: Oh, yes, that was on Howell Mill down at Peachtree Creek.

Q: Do you remember the mill? Do you remember there being a –

A: Not in the mill, no. Old millstone down there, I think. Let's me see if I wrote some other things down here last night. It got late. Oh, I got to know Margaret Mitchell real well.

Q: Tell us about that a little bit.

A: Well, she had something going for the Navy because the first cruiser that was scuttled at Guadalcanal killed a whole lot of Navy people that she knew because she was there at the christening of that ship. It so happens that when I got my wings in the Navy and came home, I ran across her at the Driving Club and for some unknown damn reason, she grabbed me and we talked for about an hour. She knew my father. They went through 10th Street School and all that and she knew who I was, and so I got to talk to her quite a bit.

Q: She was a celebrity at that point.

A: Yes, she was, but she had been known by my mother and father, particularly my father because they went through grammar in each grade together.

Q: Did your father go to Boys High?

A: Yes, he was, as I mentioned, he was a football star. He was captain of the Boys High team four years in a row and went on to Oglethorpe. All that's another story, though. My Uncle Jerry raised chicken on the side because his father fought chickens out there on Tuxedo Road where Tuxedo and Blackland come together.

Q: Was that legal or illegal at the time?

A: It's always been illegal, hasn't it?

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Q: I didn't know that.

A: I mean, I don't know. Was it legal or illegal, I don't know. But anyway, Jerry had chickens and so I copied him and got chickens and we were always doing tricks on people and we would open the door of the theater and throw those chickens. They were flying chickens. They were bantam chickens because they could fly, you know, so we'd throw them in the theater and oh, man, cause a lot of –

Q: Was that up at the Buckhead Theater?

A: Yes, that was one of them, yes. Garden Hills was another one. And we started doing that at the restaurants, too. That didn't go over well.

Q: I gather cock fighting must have been fairly common in Buckhead, was it?

A: No. I didn't have any part in it, just heard about it.

Q: I know Dickey, his dad raised chickens to fight with at his house on West Wesley.

A: Well, my grandfather did for sure because he was a real sporty type fellow. He raced automobiles and he – fast company.

Q: How many siblings did you have, brothers and sisters?

A: Just had one brother who was 12 years younger than me. Let's see, what else here. Candy Kitchen, Miss Bloodworth's, talked about that.

Q: The Candy Kitchen was the one behind Fred's Fruit Stand?

A: Next door to it.

Q: Next door?

A: Mm hmm (positive). Fritz Orr Club. I guess we got a lot about that.

Q: Tell me, did you go to the camp?

A: No. Well, I did go to Montana for one session but mainly we were in the first Fritz Orr Club. He didn't have a place to meet. We met in Clark Howell's front yard and –

Q: That's up at the corner of –

A: West Wesley.

Q: -- West Wesley and Arden.

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A: Right. We met in the front yard and also at Billy Applebee's, in his house down on Rivers Road.

Q: So what did y'all do when you met up on that corner?

A: We played different kind of sports, football, whatever we could. Fritz always had something to do. It was racing or something.

Q: Did you ever play football out at the Ottley property up by Lenox?

A: No, I never did. I knew where it was and I remember the kidnapping. That was a big deal. Oh, and one thing I jotted down last night about newspapers and how when an extra would come out, they would give the guys the papers downtown and they would fan out from downtown selling the extras and they would run out that way. I thought that was real interesting. Also, the fruit salesmen that sell fruit, yell to let you know they were there so you'd come out and buy their strawberries or whatever there was.

Q: When you let these chickens go in the theater, what would people do? Would they panic?

A: Widespread panic.

Q: How many would you let go?

A: As many as we could before we got caught, before we could run.

Q: Did you collect the chickens, or just leave them?

A: Well, no. We'd come back way later and get them. Let's see, we talked about KKK and you know about Rolater Springs and all that.

Q: Tell me about Rolater Springs.

A: Rolater Springs was there on Paces Ferry where it crosses the creek where that filling station is now. They had a water business, trucks that hauled water all around to people, and those big glass bottles of water. Also next to them was a man who did clay, the clay stuff.

Q: The Rolater clay. Would you go buy bowls and stuff?

A: We as kids just bought the clay and went home and made stuff with it. We did that a lot, just bought clay from them. And across the street there was the Cave, Prohibition Cave. It was Cave Road.

Q: What went on in the cave?

A: That's where they put, hid the liquor, where they hauled in. The Cave Road is still there.

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Q: And it just stops because of the interstate –

A: The interstate blocked it off.

Q: It used to come through, right?

A: Yes.

Q: All the way to the cave?

A: You know where Cave Road is?

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Well, that's where – we went to the cave.

Q: There was a cave?

A: Yes.

Q: Where was the cave?

A: Across the street from Rolater's.

Q: Was it on Nancy Creek?

A: No, it was on Paces Ferry.

Q: So it's kind of like where the Amli Apartments currently are?

A: Yes, right there where you all stayed at one time.

Q: Where I stayed when I was renovating my house.

Q: It's not there anymore. That's where it was.

Q: And that's where the pottery factory?

Q: Was that a manmade cave or was that a natural one?

A: I think it was manmade, definitely manmade.

Q: I've never heard that. And so if you wanted booze, you would go to the cave?

A: No, I think it was more where they stashed it where they would know where it was.

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Q: That's really interesting.

A: And the Buckhead shell, music shell, do you know about that? The music shell was at the corner of – well, it wasn't on any corner. It was where Buckhead Avenue comes into Peachtree from the opposite side and it was a music shell that was built for a symphony orchestra, which Buckhead had a symphony orchestra run by Enrico Leide. It was popular at one time with people who liked symphonies. So you hadn't heard anything about that?

Q: No, I didn't know where they played. We interviewed a woman, Ruth Allen Smith, Dabney Smith, and she was a violinist and she played at the Buckhead symphony.

A: She played in it.

Q: She did, but she didn't elaborate when we asked her about where and what they did, she didn't say too much so I had no idea. How long was that standing there?

A: Several years, but not long, not more than three or four years.

Q: Were they funded by the Buckhead community?

A: I do not know how they were funded, probably by contributions. That's the only way I know.

Q: Did you ever go see a show there?

A: I wasn't much into symphony.

Q: That's really interesting. We talked a little bit about the E Rivers fire. What is the story you heard about why it burned down.

A: The janitor was trying to burn out a wasps nest. They'd been oiling those floors for years, so it really went up.

Q: So what did you do when it burned? Where did you go to school then?

A: That was after the war, wasn't it? Yes, that was after.

Q: Some of the stuff I found fascinating and I know you didn't live maybe in specifically what's exactly Buckhead Crossroads, but you lived where the current Houston's is, basically during the Depression. Is that accurate?

A: Yes.

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Q: What was that like when you had a house and [unintelligible] were fortunate, but what did you see?

A: Yes, that's real important, I think, because there were a whole lot of people, as you know, that just didn't have anything to eat, and there were families were walking around. They came off the Seaboard railroad track. They were riding the rails, some of them, and they'd come up to the house and my grandmother would make sandwiches for them out in the yard. They'd sit out in the yard. She'd feed them. That really got to you. She thought her house was marked because so many people came to the house. But they were following the railroad tracks and they were mostly white people. Most of them single men but every now and then you'd see a family come up there and she'd feed them.

Q: And they called – I heard the word hobo is actually short for homeward bound.

A: Yes, I guess.

Q: What was Buckhead like during the Depression? Did growth stop? Did development stop?

A: Everything stopped. It went down to -- you think this is something, I mean it stopped. Everything stopped. Mainly for the early part of the '30s and it really stopped until the war came on. That's the only thing that got us out of it. All that stuff Roosevelt did maybe helped some, but it didn't end it.

Q: So what did your dad do during that time to provide for the family?

A: He didn't do much of anything. My mother had inherited some money and we lived off that and also she worked at Davison-Paxon's for a while, for a good while.

Q: Did y'all go back to being more self-sustaining, growing stuff in the fields behind the house?

A: Oh, no, we didn't get down to that, but could have.

Q: When did your dad sell off all the properties he had developed?

A: My grandfather.

Q: Your grandfather, I'm sorry.

A: Well, he did so well in the – 1895 on, he handled most real estate transactions that happened in Atlanta. Asa Candler was one of his main clients. He developed the Coca-Cola Company properties and he started building a commercial building downtown for J.P. Allen Company and then he branched out to building houses on his own. He built them all through Brookwood Hills and Ansley Park and all over town. Then he went into apartments and the Depression stopped it just like that. So he was always ranting against

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the New Deal and Roosevelt and the Atlanta banks sending their money to New York instead of lending it locally, and writing letters to the newspaper. That didn't get him anywhere. The last apartment he built was in 1940. They're still there on Peachtree Memorial Drive on down through there, at 2260 Peachtree, on that corner.

Q: Back behind Panerra Bread.

A: Yes, but 2260 is on Peachtree. Of course the two my father built are still there, too, 2814 and 2260.

Q: Did they design the homes or did they enlist architects to design?

A: They designed them. My grandfather did, he used to fancy himself a great scholar. He would get out all these books on architecture and all that kind of stuff, and he was a layman, really. But he would put all sorts of fancy Greek stuff on those apartments.

Q: They're well built. They've got the nice hardwood floors.

A: They're still there.

Q: People like those units.

Q: Do you know which homes, residential homes he developed?

A: No, I don't.

Q: It'd be interesting to compare those, the styles.

A: I don't think that they were the big, expensive, fancy homes.

Q: Do you remember when Brookwood Hills was developed then? Was that neighborhood already there?

A: No, that was before my time. After the war and I finished law school and all that, we bought my wife's family home there in Brookwood Hills and lived there for about 20 years.

Q: Where was that? Which street?

A: Woodcrest Avenue, 40 Woodcrest Avenue.

Q: My father grew up on Montclair. Walter and Evelyn are the parents and then there was Billy, Walter and Wade Mitchell. So Walter probably is closest to your age and he went to North Fulton. Boo, they called him. They said that he was number 30 in football and one game they were playing, they used the chalk lines, and he fell and it put a line right on the 3 and so all game he ran around and it looked like it was BO, Boo, so they just

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started calling him Boo and it stuck to this day. But I gather Brookwood Hills was a fun place to live.

A: Oh, yes. George Uni [phonetic] lived right next door to them, I think.

Q: The Mitchells.

A: Yes. We all had nicknames. George was Oink. He didn't like that, though. He thought we said he looked like a pig, and I was Goop. We had Itch.

Q: How'd you get the nickname Goop?

A: Well, that was a cartoon character who was a bad little boy who didn't do what his mother and father said. He didn't brush his teeth, didn't wash his hands, and his name was Goop.

Q: Did you know that?

Q: Yes, big Mark Pope, the last time I saw him said – big Mark Pope, John Pope's grandfather, Brad Pope's grandfather, he said, how's Goop doing? Do y'all talk very much?

A: I haven't talked to him in a long time. But we had Oink, Itch, [unintelligible], and several others. John Tallman was in that group, too. We called ourselves Bears. We had a car, big old Pierce Arrow car. We called it the Bear car and we drove all around in that thing, had a lot of fun.

Q: Who owned the car?

A: I think Tallman owned it. It could've been Travis Hill. I believe it was Tallman.

Q: I was going to ask you, shooting the fireworks up the streetcar tracks and letting the chickens go in the theater are fantastic stories. What else did y'all do for fun that's kind of along those lines that you feel at liberty to disclose?

A: Well, I don't know. I was trying to think.

Q: I liked the bird hunting on the west side of Peachtree. Is that kind of near where Nacoochee Place? Did you get up in that area, too?

A: Near what?

Q: Near where my mother currently lives, Nacoochee Place, down there in the bamboo or where that currently is, near Peachtree Creek, or was it more where Bobby Jones Golf Course is?

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A: No, we did cross the creek when we were chasing birds, had to wade across the creek, but didn't do that much.

Q: What did Peachtree Creek look like then compared to what it looks like now?

A: Well, it didn't look a hell of a lot different really.

Q: Was the water any clearer or was it always kind of –

A: It was muddy and gunky. It really was.

Q: Did you ever fish out there?

A: Yes. Who caught a trout out there?

Q: My brother.

A: Yes.

Q: In Peachtree Creek?

Q: Yes. Charles Lee and English Pope, [unintelligible] Kirkpatrick were down there [unintelligible]

A: And your dad found an alligator down there.

Q: I think people would have them as pets and if they get longer than –

A: It was a pretty good sized one he said, yes.

Q: You found a bayonet in that creek, didn't you? Don't you have a bayonet?

A: No, my father found that at the Battle of Atlanta, where he says there was a whole lot of trash left over from the Battle of Atlanta and he found that.

Q: For some reason I thought that came out of the creek.

A: I think – man, I've really talked too much here.

Q: No. I've enjoyed it.

A: Peacock Alley was a good restaurant. The Pig and Whistle, called the Pig Shop.

Q: Where was the Pig and Whistle?

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A: Pig and Whistle was across the street from Colonial Terrace. There was another Pig Shop on Ponce de Leon, but that was the best one because that's where Blind Willie would hang out. We'd take Blind Willie home sometimes.

Q: Who was Blind Willie?

A: Blind Willie McTyre. You don't know who he was? He was very famous.

Q: Musician?

A: Musician, absolutely.

Q: Blues, and –

A: Yes, sure.

Q: And there's a bar named after him in Virginia Highlands.

A: Yes, Virginia Highlands. It was Blind Willie's.

Q: Now, would this be a – would've been a barbecue joint?

A: Pig and Whistle?

Q: Yes.

A: Yes, it was, but it was higher up kind of.

Q: What about Peacock Alley? What kind of restaurant was that?

A: That was upscale. That was pretty nice.

Q: Where was it?

A: It was where later Crossroads was, where West Peachtree and Spring Street come together. You could get a steak in there for 98 cents. I remember that plank steak for 98 cents.

Q: Sounds good.

Q: Ninety-eight cents.

A: Gas was 15 cents and you'd get a loaf of bread for a dime. It was great when the circus came to town. Never went to the circus, though. Let me see.

Q: Where would the circus tents set up? Downtown, or would they set up –

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- A: It was set up off of Highland Avenue, somewhere over there. But we used to have more fun watching them set it up than going to the circus itself. That was just real –
- Q: Would they march down Peachtree?
- A: Yes, they had a march.
- Q: But you would go to Athens and you'd go on the train?
- A: When?
- Q: When you went to law school.
- A: Oh, we went in the car.
- Q: He went to Georgia law school. He said started –
- Q: Started at Georgia State – oh, okay.
- Q: How did you get back and forth to Athens?
- A: In a car.
- Q: I've heard people talk about taking the train.
- A: Well, we used to go to the ball game, football game over there on the train, which was just a party both ways.
- Q: Still is. They still run a train up there.
- A: Do they really?
- Q: They do, for the game. So that wasn't a necessity; it was just an excuse to party?
- Q: Probably quicker, though, I would imagine.
- A: We used to do it in about, seems like to me, about an hour and a half.
- Q: The teams used to go up there on the train.
- A: Oh, the big – [unintelligible] my grandmother, older people would talk different. She'd say, instead of thank you, she'd say much obliged, and I declare. She'd say I declare all the time. It was things like that. And we didn't call it grits; we called it hominy, and it wasn't the Yankee hominy, it was grits but we called it hominy. And we didn't call quail quail, we called them partridges.

Interview of John Knox, IV

Q: When did that all change, hominy to grits?

A: It changed in the early '30s.

Q: Did you ever hear how Buckhead got its name?

A: Only what everybody else hears. Somebody put up a buck head up there. People that were there a long time, Menhenicks and other people that were sort of pioneers out there.

Q: What was right there at the triangle, the earliest you can recall?

A: Well, there was a building there and it became Wayne's Drugstore at one time, but that's the only thing I remember.

Q: Wender and Roberts. Can you talk about Wender and Roberts Drugstore?

A: Oh, that was a bad situation. Dee and I, Desells [phonetic] and I were good friends and we were about eight or ten and we went to the Buckhead Hardware. Each of us bought us two air pistols and we went next door, went in Roberts to get a Coke and he laid his down on the counter and it went off and broke the glass back of the thing. That was a thing to remember.

Q: Who was that?

A: Desells. I mean, both of us had it, but he put his down and I still think a part came off the inside of that thing, but nevertheless, it was a great bad thing there.

Q: So who paid for the glass?

A: We were incarcerated there until Mr. Harrison could come.

Q: Did you ever go to Springlake Pharmacy?

A: Yes, I remember that, but that was much later.

Q: I went there.

A: Well, I'm about run out of steam, I guess.

Q: I love your fraternity list. Is this your copy?

A: That's the only copy I've got. I can make a copy here.

Q: I'll make a copy and take [unintelligible] because that's an interesting list.

Interview of John Knox, IV

Q: Do you mind if we have a copy of that?

A: No, you can have it. You want to turn that off?

Q: Do you all have anything specific at all you didn't hit?

A: One trick we did, we all went down to see Sally Land who was at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933 doing a naked dance with a bubble. She had the bubble and she came to the Atlanta Capitol Theater. Somehow we snuck in there as kids and we had a pea shooter. We tried to break that bubble. We got thrown out of there.

Q: I didn't know we were going to have a rated R video.

Q: Where was the Capitol Theater?

A: There were two of them, two theaters next door to each other, Capitol right next to Davison's. Capitol and one other. I can't remember the name.

Q: You were going to try and pop the bubble, huh?

Q: See what was underneath that bubble?

A: Yes.

Q: So was there the Garden Hills Theater then also the Buckhead Cinema? They're two – so the Roxy was –

A: Roxy was the Buckhead Theater. And in second grade, we put on a – they put on a show for us. I mean, we were on the stage doing something in the second grade. I remember that. Dr. Crossett had his office there. He was a dentist in that building.

Q: When was the Garden Hills Cinema built? Do you know? Was that much later?

A: It was built in the '30s, too.

Q: Was it operational?

A: Yes.

Q: So you'd go there, also, then?

A: It seems to me that was later, much later.

Q: Interesting. And you mentioned Bobby Jones. Was there any good stories about him that you remember?

Interview of John Knox, IV

A: No, except that you called him Bob. You didn't call him Bobby, and I didn't call him either one. I called him Mr. Jones.

Q: Did you ever play golf with him?

A: No. I was too young.

Q: He lived off of Northside, right?

A: He had one house on Northside – oh, no, on Tuxedo. And then he had another one – well, his house ran through Tuxedo and Northside. And the other one, he moved across the street up on a hill. That's where he died, in that house. And it was his son, Bobby Jones, Jr. who went to Pittsfield, Massachusetts, had the Coke plant in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. He was a good golfer, too, but he died of something at a very young age.

Q: Sounds like you met some interesting folks in that time period, Margaret Mitchell, Bobby Jones, James Dickey.

A: Yes.

Q: Yes, when you read his fraternity list here, too, you'll see some other recognizable names on there.

A: Oh, and he really was a big thing, was marbles. You know, we shot marbles, and everybody had a flour sack which was about this big. You'd hang it over your belt and you played for keeps. If they found out about it, they didn't like it. You played for keeps, you had a big old flour sack full of marbles.

Q: So is that where the term, playing for keeps, came from?

A: Yes.

Q: Was from marbles?

A: Yes. You played for keeps, you get to keep the marbles you knock out of the thing.

Q: Interesting.

A: And you had a glassy, which was a clear glass marble. You had a steely, which was like a ball bearing, and you had –

Q: What would you do with the steely, because that seems like that'd be hard to pop out of the circle?

A: Yes, well, it was hard. It was a different kind and we had several other kinds I can't really think of right now.

Interview of John Knox, IV

Q: So you were basically gambling? You were gambling with your marbles?

A: Yes, oh, yes.

Q: Speaking of gambling, what was The Bug?

A: The Bug was the middle three letters of the stock exchange volume for that day, and you could play it three ways. The volume, say, was 260,537,000. 537 would be the bug for that day and you could play numbers 0 to 999 and you could box it where it could go straight, either way.

Q: Was it [unintelligible] the game or was it just informal among different –

A: Anybody could bank the bug.

Q: Who was the bookie?

A: Well, they had guys in the black community that would do it and get all the maids and everything. They liked it. Just the bug.

Q: But everybody played, it wasn't just the blacks?

A: Not many played, mostly the blacks played, but it was a real rip off. I mean, you put in a dime and I think you won five dollars or something. Your chances were one in a thousand because it was 0 to 999.

Q: The folks that worked for your family, where did they come from? Which area of town?

A: Well, my grandfather Fitzhugh came from Virginia.

Q: When you were living on Peachtree, the people that would come and help out the family, the blacks; where did they live?

A: Where did they live? I can't tell sections, just in the black section of the town.

Q: How was the relationship back then in Buckhead? Was it mostly professional or was there a lot of family sort of integration?

A: Well, there were long time retainers, somebody had been with the family for God knows, forever. And then others just weren't, but it was definitely a segregated society.

Q: Do you remember any segregated establishments in Buckhead? Were there some black only establishments in Buckhead?

A: Well, that section there on Arden Road and then the other section there we talked about earlier, whatever it was.

Interview of John Knox, IV

Q: But the shops in Buckhead, would it all be mostly white?

A: All white as far as I know. Well, I think I'm about giving out of steam.

Q: Thank you so much. Yes, it got late.

[End of recording]