

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

11/12/07

Peggy Van Scoyoc (PV): Today is Monday, November 12, 2007. This is Peggy Van Scoyoc and I am here today with Mr. A.J. Bartley of Cary. We are going to talk about his life and his farm here in Cary. So we started out this morning, you were telling me that you originally came from the Midwest. Where were you born, where did you grow up?

A.J. Bartley (AB): I grew up near the capital city, which is Jefferson City, Missouri. Calloway County is across the river from the capital. That's where I was born, on the farm. I spent the time there until when I finished grade school. We had one room schoolhouses. When I reached the point where I could go to high school, the high schools were twenty, twenty-five miles away, and the roads weren't all paved and rough.

PV: How did you get there?

AB: We had an aunt in Jefferson City, Missouri. That was the next county just across the river. She had a big, magnificent home right on the river there, right by the railroad tracks. She taught in grade schools, and her husband died. So she was there by herself and she changed the house into different apartments, one she occupied. She had a senior citizen that she left him live in the basement and fire the furnace for her. What happened is, she said well, if I would come to live with her in an apartment, and I believe my sister, I had stayed one year after I got out of high school, and she had finished high school, so both of us went over there and lived in the apartment with her. Our parents, of course on the farm, they sent in food and all kinds of vegetables and meat and everything like that. That was their way of paying her. At the same time since I was in high school I got a job working there.

I finished high school there. I found a job at the college. Then since I finished junior college there I went across the river. There was the University of Missouri was there. I have four

or five degrees, and they were in various things. I was interested in history and I was interested in political science. I was interested in government. I also had a degree, an MBA which involved education and business, and church too.

I got a job when I was a student there. During the Depression, you had to work. I got a job where I kept the bacteria for a man that taught a course in bacteriology. All I did was keep the bacteria specimens and everything that you needed. I was drafted into the military in 1941, and was in four years. When I got drafted, they said, "Look, you've got all this experience. We're going to put you in the medical corps." I went into the Army medical service. They sent me to a special training place in the Great Lakes. They had a medical school, and they put me through that. When I came out, I was a commissioned officer. Then they said, "We're going to send you overseas." I was sent to Burma. They needed to build a hospital over in India. So that's where I ended up. We had all kinds of American units coming over there to do various things. I spent four years on that Burma assignment. We built hospitals all up that coast there.

PV: Were these American soldiers that they were treating in these hospitals?

AB: Yes, American soldiers.

[After the war, the University of Missouri] took me into the college of business and management. They said they needed me to help teach there. So I joined the faculty there.

I taught all kinds of courses in North Carolina State University which, of course, was an engineering school. But it was teaching all kinds of things. I taught economics and business and a whole series of courses.

Jon Bartley (A.J.'s son) (JB): You came here in 1948 after you finished your masters degree in Missouri. You moved here and joined the faculty at State to teach. You taught from '48 until 1976 when you retired.

PV: When you arrived here in this area, when did you acquire the farm?

AB: When I got to North Carolina State, it was right after the war and they didn't have many facilities, just enough for the students. I was able to live on the campus for a couple of years until they built more facilities for students. That's when we got out of town, right on the edge of Raleigh. I decided when I was teaching there that we'd like to garden. We grew up on a farm, so we decided that we would look for a piece of property. This one estate was dominated by a family or two. They had been in the southern part of the state and then they had moved up to Raleigh. So they had dominated the area to a great extent.

Their farm had several hundred acres in it. I moved there when I bought it because it was a short distance from the university and they had built some of their new facilities right on the edge of it. I got the land at a very reasonable price from a retired military man. These retired military would spend the summer up in Maine and then they would go down to Florida in the wintertime.

This plantation, their old house, was available for sale. One of those veterans had bought it. I don't think he had paid a lot of money for it. This man married two sisters. One died and he married the sister. He had, I believe it was eleven children. In those days, when the man was moving into this area that they didn't have a lot of the facilities that they needed. For instance, they didn't have public schools. This man with the eleven children, the last child I think had a physical and mental handicap. So there wasn't any public schools, so there were two sisters in the crew who said, well, we're going to start a home for children to educate them. They had a system and they'd run it just like a real school. So they attracted to the grade schools.

PV: So these two sisters set up and ran the school?

AB: They would have ten or twelve in a special house for them, or they had them on the farm there. They had a facility where they could have it. At this house that they had, there was a young man and he was married and had a wife and child. First thing, they built a little cabin with a fireplace in it. There was one room and a porch, no other facilities. There they lived in this one room place. While they lived there, he ordered the building of the house. He wanted a big house and so that was the main attraction was that house. It was a two story building with a fireplace, they had a chimney on both ends. There were two rooms upstairs and two rooms downstairs. Then there was a stairway in the middle. Then on the back of it they added a room that would be used for miscellaneous purposes where you could get together.

This cabin that this man had lived in while they were building the house, they made a kitchen out of that and so they cooked all the food out there. Then it was carried into the house for them to eat. Later on, the retired military man who went from Florida to Maine bought this house. He was going to convert it into a hog farm. He had some other livestock, but he was going to have a hog farm. For some reason, I'm not sure, after a couple of years of trying to manage a farm there, I don't know if he'd had enough experience to farm or not, he decided that he would sell it. So that's when I made a deal with him and bought the place.

I was teaching then, and I didn't have time to take care of it very well. Of course he had a big lawn and some enormous trees. We could raise fruits and berries. A lot of that was already there, and we could take advantage of that. We, of course, were limited at first in farming. After all, my wife was teaching all the time and I was too. For one thing, I didn't have time to mow the lawn or the big pasture out there, so I bought a flock of sheep. We used the sheep to keep the grass down. We had lambs and all the neighbors would bring the children by to see the lambs. The sheep had to be sheared and of course the wool was in demand. They had built a place

nearby there where the women in the community made things for sale. They took the wool in this store they had, where the women taught spinning and weaving and they also taught how to handle the sheep wool.

PV: So you sold all of your wool to this shop?

AB: Oh yes. Eventually though, the store gave way, moved away. We still had the sheep, so we could sell the lambs. We had a young man nearby. His father ran a textile mill, but this boy said he didn't want to have anything to do with the textile mill. He was crazy about horses. What he did, he went to North Carolina State University and took an agricultural course, and then he got a job with horses. So he took over the sheep business. He went around and took orders from restaurants and hotels for lamb meat. The slaughterhouse wouldn't slaughter them until he had them sheared, so he had a couple of sons that he taught to shear the sheep. Then he would take an order for ten, fifteen or twenty a week, and he would have those slaughtered, and then he would deliver the meat to the restaurants. So he is still doing that. We got rid of the sheep eventually.

PV: What did he do with his wool once he sheared his sheep?

AB: When he sheared the sheep, you can sell it, but they had other people raising sheep, and they all had sheep dogs. So the farmers would have a get-together with their dogs once a year. So that was other competition. Eventually, he got a job with the university at North Carolina State where he had worked and he still raised the sheep on his twenty acres.

Then we had a lot of Mexicans who moved in here illegally, you know. They all have a religious ceremony when they butcher sheep, so they would come by and they would have a pickup truck, for instance. They would take the sheep's legs and put them there and drive off

with it. Then they would have a ceremony when they slaughtered the sheep. He no longer had to worry about carrying the sheep, getting the orders and all that. It was taken care of that way.

PV: What else did you have on your farm once you sold your flock of sheep? You had fruit?

AB: We shipped fruits and vegetables and just about everything you can raise on the farm, I guess.

PV: Did you have people that you hired to do all the work?

AB: No. I did the work, most of it myself. Most of the work you do in the fall and winter. We had to think about taking care of stuff, as well as my wife was teaching all these times, and I was. So we had to be careful with our livestock that we had. We mainly had cattle, and not many of them.

PV: Were they dairy cows?

AB: Yes, we had dairy cows. When we first came there before we had the cows, there was a fellow that ran a dairy. At that time, the farmers would raise the cattle and they would have the milk, and then this firm would come by and pick up the milk every day. Or you would have a dairy farm, like that. What they did was they would deliver milk to you. But we never got into that too much. We didn't let the herd get over thirty or forty head. That's the way we were able to do the teaching and all that. We had chickens. We still kept a few of the sheep to keep the grass down in certain areas. I think we were mainly interested in the fruits and vegetables. The fruit trees were already there. We tried to develop things that we had raised in Missouri growing up and that we already knew about, all garden facilities.

North Carolina hadn't developed yet like it is today. They were all farmers and when we went there they were raising tobacco and cotton.

Right now you see the farm where they are going to make a park out of it.

PV: How do you feel about that?

AB: I've encouraged that, I'm impressed with that. [The house is still there.] That's the main thing, it's still there.

PV: The little log house that the people originally lived in, is that still there? The kitchen house?

AB: That's still there too. What they did with us is, everything exploded. Where we lived on a country road, the people there with tobacco and textiles going out, they had to get into something else. So what these people did was they sold all these farms that they no longer used for tobacco and textiles. Then the developers came in. So the people kept their house and the garden, maybe and sold the rest of it. Pretty soon the road that had been so free before now was not, it was all clogged up with houses. They built the houses so close together that they could shake hands with one another, just a driveway between them. We said, we don't want that to happen to us. We had these old trees that were three or four feet thick and a hundred years old. The yard had the squirrels running across it. We had a couple of ponds, or lakes. We added fish to them, we liked to fish. We hunted squirrels and rabbits. In fact, a man gave us a coon hound. I didn't want it. He raised them and he gave this one to me. We lived on a ridge with farms and everything, and then on both sides there was a wooded area with a stream. Of course, coons are generally around the streams. I would take the hound down and there was a road running between them, and I would take him across the road and come back the other way. One time there was an old house and barns for tobacco that was no longer in use. Of course the animals had gone under them and in them. After I had crossed, this dog turned around and went back, and he got run over. Of course, we had sheep dogs all the time too. And we got a little dog that runs rabbits and

tree squirrels and that sort of thing. It's a very nice dog to have at your place. They would also run rabbits across the road and get killed.

The deers would come in. When the population exploded here, they would always move into the wooded area, they liked that. So the woods were full of homes and the deer, that's where they had stayed. So that created a problem for the deer. I woke up and looked out the window in the morning and here were deer running across the yard. They would eat your garden up.

We didn't want to have horses, even though everybody else would have horses to ride. We had a tractor and all the equipment that went with it to do the farming. I didn't have very much time and I needed equipment to do it with. Most of the corn we raised was for roasting ears to sell to people or use ourselves. We had some geese. We raised turkeys too. They were mostly for our own eating. We had to keep it down to where we could control it. Having a tractor with all this equipment and a place nearby where you could have it repaired if you needed to. It's still there. We had a smaller tractor. I bought one right after I bought the farm. It wore out and we bought a bigger one.

PV: Your son was telling me that you used to cut little trees out of the forest and then you would tie your bean stocks up to them in your garden?

AB: Oh yes. You cut bean poles, that's when you want to raise butter beans. You could raise green beans, but generally it is butter beans or peas.

PV: So you would actually go into the forest and cut these little trees for poles?

AB: Oh yes. When you're on a farm and you've got a pasture you have to keep the trees and that down. You want some, but others you don't have. You have to spend quite a bit of time keeping them down. That's part of owning a farm. If it is some kind of shrub or tree that you can't sell for lumber, then you don't want it.

This plantation was 195 acres, all on one side of the road. That's where all the farming was done, and pastureland where we had the sheep and cattle. Then you've got the other two to three hundred acres across the road. This plantation was cut in two. That half of it was all trees that wasn't cultivated. There is a place there where they have a pond or lake on it. The place where all the forest is, I turned that over to my son. It had several hundred acres that was all trees. My son went down there where there was a pond and built a house.

That place up on the ridge is where the Indians used to locate their quarters. Up there in the field across the road, when you cultivate it, you would pile up all these arrowheads and everything. So that part of the farm was a hill. A lot of other places you would have more flood water and weeds in there. Up there, it was different. All of it was trees. What they've done now is, my son's house they said it would have to come down. Now they've cut it down to 37 lots. The company that built the houses have developed it. My son had to build a new one. They put roads and water in there now. [They're building in among the trees. This is adjacent to what will be the park now.]

On the north side, where the park is going to be, there used to be a small home there. Not the fellow with eleven children, but the one right next to him, that man set the record. He had fourteen children in his family. He married a couple of times. He ended up as a barber. Some of his children have kept the property and built their homes there.