

SUMMARY OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NARRATOR: David Martin

INTERVIEW DATE: September 28, 2010

WHERE CONDUCTED: Mr. Martin's office at South Hills Mall

INTERVIEWER: Peggy Van Scoyoc

PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW:

The purpose of this interview was to capture local history of North Carolina, with focus on the town of Cary and the old Cary High School by recording the knowledge, memories and impressions of the narrator.

SPECIFIC FOCUS OF THE INTERVIEW:

David was born in 1928 near Creedmoor. His mother was widowed twice. She had three children to her first husband, and ten years after he died, she married David's father and had four more children. His youngest sister was not even born when their father died. The three older children were grown and gone by the time the family moved to Cary in 1936. David claims he was the poorest boy in Cary growing up. He earned money in every way imaginable, and describes many of them. By the time he was eleven, he was bringing in more than half the household income. He talks about his favorite teacher when he was in the sixth grade and how she changed his life. David served in the Coast Guard, then went to UNC-CH on the G.I. bill. He became a developer and built the first mall in Cary – South Hills. He continues to develop property and build new enterprises.

NOTES ABOUT THE INTERVIEW TAPE:

The interview was recorded on a Zoom H2 digital recorder. The Interview Index lists subjects in the order they were given in each of the WAV files.

Digital Recording

9/28/10

Peggy Van Scoyoc (PV): Today is Tuesday, September 28, 2010, and I am in the offices of David Martin. We're here today to hear about his memories and his life. So we were just talking a bit about the old school. You were saying that the building that stands at the head of Academy Street was always a high school.

David Martin (DM): That's correct. It did become the junior high for the last maybe twenty years of its existence. I graduated from that high school in 1945. I was around when the old one was torn down. The old one was torn down and then this was built in its place. This morning, I've got news for you, I found the cornerstone. And it says this. The cornerstone is 24" wide, 12" high, 10" deep. It's heavy. But it says, "Cary High School, first state public high school in NC. It was established April 3, 1907. This building was erected in 1913." Now we're talking about the cornerstone that was in the building that was erected in 1913, and it was torn down in the late thirties or early forties. So now...

PV: Now how did you come across the cornerstone?

DM: I wish I had checked my dates. I can check back. But it was a boarding school before it became just a regular high school for local people. People used to come from all over the state and they boarded in those dormitories. There was one on the side toward Walnut Street and Kildaire. Then I had a part in tearing that down because I was a kid and they paid me to clean the brick because they were tearing it down. Back then you didn't waste anything. So I had a part in that. But then later I finished high school there. I think I was in grammar school when that was torn down. But after I finished high school, I went into the military. When I got out, I was a contractor, builder, and the state paid me to tear down the old gym on Faculty Drive, not the old gym, the old teacherage. And before that, it was a boarding school [dormitory] before it became a teacherage. And I lived in that place because I was, when I got out of the military, my mother was cooking for the teachers that stayed there and we lived there. She lived upstairs and I lived in the basement. By the way, that basement also was

used as part of the school system. I was talking to someone just recently, and he told me about that. So it has a little bit of history.

PV: Do you know when the teacherage was torn down?

DM: It was, I tore it down in probably, I'd have to check my dates, but I think it was torn down around in the fifties.

PV: In the early fifties?

DM: Yes. And like everybody back then, I didn't throw anything away. I built an office building at 3700 Western Blvd. out of the material out of that building. It's a three-story building next to McDonalds. Mine is on the corner of the Western Blvd. and Gorman Street.

PV: So the whole three stories, you were able to cover with the bricks?

DM: With the wood, I framed it with the wood and bricked it with the brick. But my son-in-law recently made it look a little better by painting it, so it doesn't show the old brick. But I used brick out of the old teacherage to build numerous houses in the Cary area. You know, brick veneer uses a whole lot of brick because the walls were very thick. It produced a whole lot of material I could use in building. I developed Triangle Forest in 1959. That's out on the old Cary Highway just before you get to the Cary Parkway. In fact, the street through that is Marilyn Circle. I named that circle for my wife. Her name is Marilyn. Joe DiMaggio married Marilyn Monroe the movie actress, but David Martin married the real Marilyn. We built a house out there recently, about three years ago. A little fellow working with me said, "How much did you pay for this lot?" The answer, for a half acre lot, a full half-acre, was \$100, because I paid \$200 an acre for the whole farm. I paid \$12,000 for a 62-acre farm. I built a number of houses in there and veneered them with those old brick. So they've got a history in a sub-division. Well, it's one of the oldest sub-divisions around Cary. There have been many, many built since then. But it had a little history there, all over my neighborhood.

PV: They just recently found the foundations of the old teacherage, and they're trying to figure out when the building was torn down. I guess part of the foundation is still there, buried in the, as they're digging things up to restore that building, they found the foundation.

DM: Yes, and it would be fairly easy for me to go back to the county records. Because I remember as I was tearing it down, I used some of the materials to prop up some walls that were very high on a house I built on Reedy Creek Road. So I could pretty well put a date on it. I can probably put a date on it from a record of the house over there, or not the house, the building on Western Blvd. at Gorman, the office building.

PV: and it's still there.

DM: Yes. And I also, by the way, I built the first shopping center in Cary. I was at church one morning and Mr. Raymond Morgan, who was the manager at Hudson Belk downtown and was a deacon at our church downtown, First Baptist in Cary on Academy Street, one block from the building we were talking about it. He was standing under the shade of that tree right there that you see on the card of our church.

PV: Right in front of the Baptist Church downtown.

DM: Yes, and he motioned me over and said, "David, Cary is beginning to grow." Back then, you know, when I got to Cary there were about 1,200 people there. And now it's over 140,000 people there. Anyway, he said, "David, Cary is beginning to grow. One of these days somebody is going to build a shopping center out here. Have you thought about it?" No, I had not thought about it, but he planted the idea. I got to looking around and heading up to the site out here that you're sitting here interviewing on me right now.

PV: in South Hills Mall.

DM: And the service plaza over there was the first thing. That has the brick from the dormitory. See, I hauled them out here when I was tearing it down. It was a lot of bricks, many tons of

brick. And we would clean them up and use them at various houses we built and that office building I told you about. That service plaza was built out of those bricks.

PV: Now what is in that service plaza now?

DM: When I built it, the main thing was a grocery store. And then probably 20 or 30 other stores, a lot of different smaller stores in there. And then we built the, I'd have to check on that too, we built the motel there and that was the first large motel in town. In fact, in the *Around and About Cary* history book, there is some mention in there of when we built and what we built. We built the first twin theater in Cary, and we built the first chain restaurant in Cary. That was a Hardee's. Cary was just a sleepy town, and we built a lot of things like that.

PV: Now when did you build the first building for this shopping center, for South Hills Mall?

DM: I believe the first, I started up on the corner coming this way. It was in the, I think the early sixties. I might be there from '60 to '65 was about the time we were building a little bit of everything. A lot of these Cary boys came out here and helped me build it, when they were teenagers out there working. Now I know a man that has a very high position with a company and makes a great salary. But he got his start in construction when we were building the service plaza and the motel out here. Now that was the first two... anything above, we had a lot of little one-story buildings, See, Cary used to have Highway 1 and 64 coming through town.

PV: Down what is today Chatham Street?

DM: Chatham Street, that's correct. And we didn't have any traffic lights. We thought we had really arrived when they installed a traffic light that you could push a button and stop the traffic. I think the state did that for us because we couldn't afford it. They did that so that we could cross there in case of fire, because half of Cary was on the other side of that. Now, to tell you how circumstances where, many times we would have to pull the truck off to get it started because we couldn't even afford to put a new battery in on the truck we had. At the same time, the chief of police was the chief

of the fire department, chief of the police, kind of like the town manager too, and he used his own person car to read the meters, for the water meters in Cary. He wore out three or four sets of hinges on his car getting in and out to read the meters. And he was all over. He was a one-man show and did a great job. We had one man who rode the dump truck. I could tell you about the man driving the dump truck was his assistant chief, you might say, and the only other policeman. He would chase people down coming through from up north, you know, going to Florida maybe, on Highway 1. He would chase them down and give them a ticket on a dump truck. It was a colorful past for Cary. Great times.

PV: So you've had a real hand in building Cary into what it is today.

DM: A little bit. Cary has come a long way. I'm still telling people, the only place you can go better than Cary is heaven.

PV: Well, I agree with that. Now let's go back to the school a little bit. So now, well, let's start out going a little further back than that. Tell me about your background, your parents and your family. You were not born in Cary? Or when did you get here?

DM: No I wasn't. I think we move there in '36 or '37. We rented a house on the corner of Kildaire and Pleasants Road. We lived there. It costs \$12.00 a month in rent. During the war, every speck of land was used for gardening, side yard, front yard, everywhere. It was a matter of surviving. We had running water. You'd grab a bucket and run out to the well to get it. We had a running toilet too, you'd have to run out to the privy house out in the backyard to use the bathroom, you might say. Tough times. And I've dug toilet pits for when they get full, I would dig another one. I'd make a lot of money, I made \$5.00 for digging a pit hole.

PV: How deep did you dig them?

DM: Oh, probably four foot.

PV: Four feet down and just slightly smaller than the structure that was going over it.

DM: Yes. Cary's come a long ways. Back then, people didn't have cars. Very few people had a car. I'd see the men with their lunchbox walking downtown to get on the old bus to go to the highway shop. And I learned something too. I learned that people that lived to retire and retire and I'd see them rocking on the front porch for just two or three years and they were gone. In other words, inactivity is not good. I am now 82, and I still work every day but Sunday.

PV: We're not going to catch you rocking on the front porch, are we?

DM: No, well, I might at the end of the day after my job's over.

PV: So where were you born?

DM: I was born in Randolph County, and then moved to, my mother was from Granville County. See, my mother was a widow before the last child was born. So when we moved to Cary, there was nobody, black or white, as poor as we were.

PV: How many children were in your family?

DM: Well, she was married the first time, her husband, she was an O'Brien. She had three children to that marriage, and he died in 1918 in the flu epidemic. And then about ten years later she married my father and she had four children by that marriage. When I was ten years old, I would be picking blackberries and selling them all over Cary for five cents a quart. Now they're \$3.00 a pint. That's \$6.00 a quart. I was getting five cents. And then I couldn't sell all of them, it was such hard times. If we didn't sell them, we'd can them. We'd end up with 200 quarts of blackberries sometimes. If you eat 200 quarts of blackberries from one season to the other, you'd about turn into blackberries. When we got married, my wife brought home a can of store-bought blackberries in a can. I said, "Honey, if you don't ever bring another blackberry here it will be too soon."

PV: You got your fill.

DM: I did. It was tough. I sold () salve, Lancaster seeds. I sold direct newspaper, then I got big enough to get me a route of the Raleigh Times. I had 21 customers in Cary when I took it, and in

nothing flat I tripled it. I got it up to 63 customers, that you would knock on every door trying to sell your paper. And they were very gracious and responded to help the poor orphan boy along. I brought over half the money in our house when I was 11 years old.

PV: You were bringing half the income of your house...

DM: Over half.

PV: Over half, when you were eleven years old?

DM: That's correct.

PV: So your father had died by that time as well?

DM: Well, let's see. My youngest sister who is now in her late seventies, she was not even born. So it's been, it was tough. And the good people of Cary, Mother would say when we were down to nothing to eat for that night or something, and Mother would say, "The Lord would provide. The Lord will look after his own." I'd think she was crazy because we needed something to eat. But you know, the good people of Cary, somebody would show up and bring us something, the poor widow lady something to eat for all those children. It was just a wonderful experience to know that people care and help you.

In fact, let me tell you something about my favorite teacher in through grammar school and high school. I was in the sixth grade at the elementary school that I told you was already torn down a number of years ago. Her name was Julia Rand Woodard. She was kin to the Gregorys of Gregory Poole Equipment Company. She was sister to the Gregorys. Anyway, we had, the grade mothers would give our class, say, a football. And then when we graduated up to the fifth grade or the sixth grade we carried the ball with us. The little front boys would decide who could play with that ball where you choose up sides. But Julia Rand Woodard broke up that little group of front boys controlling that ball. She would say, "I believe in democracy, don't you?" And she would let different boys, every week two boys would be captain of the team to choose two teams to play ball against each other. And one

week, the poorest boy in Cary had the privilege of being the captain of a team. She gave me some thoughts that maybe I could make it in life. I wouldn't have to stay on the bottom of the round all my life. Another thing she would do, she would bring a little radio when the president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was making a speech. She'd bring her little radio and set it on her desk. And this is the way she would talk. She said, "Listen, listen, this is history being made, right now!" And she made her teaching come alive. She developed people into useful citizens. So she was my favorite teacher all the way through grammar school, high school and even when I went to Carolina. She was still my favorite teacher of all times.

PV: Wow, well deserved. She sounds like she was a wonderful teacher.

DM: She was.

PV: And took care of all of her students, equally. Made sure everyone was treated equally.

DM: And classrooms were a whole lot bigger than they are now. She didn't have an assistant either.

PV: Do you remember how many kids there were in your class?

DM: I'm not positive. I guess records could show it. But I thought we had about 40 in a class.

PV: That's a lot.

DM: Yes, she did a good job.

PV: She sure did. I love that story. Now your daughter, Donna, told us that you had a great story about a cow. Tell me about the cow when you were in school.

DM: Well, I had, at one time I had two cows. I would stake them out, out around the school property, not in the middle of the field there, but around the outer edges. Then I'd run home at lunch and water the cow, and then stake her out to another place. We didn't have a pasture. Then I would have to run all the way home and do that, and then I'd run all the way downtown and thumb to Raleigh to work in the Piggly Wiggly grocery store in Raleigh. I didn't have time to go to study periods. I'd

take the last two periods as study periods so I could skip those to go to work. And all I got out of school was what I'd learn on the class. I didn't have time to study. I didn't even carry a book home but once or twice the year I was a senior, and then I didn't have time to study it. You see, I would go and do that. By then I'd gotten into the chicken business and I'd begun to develop the chickens, and milk the cow and all this. In other words, it was from noon to way after dark that you had something to do. But it was a great experience. I wouldn't take anything for having to work, and learn to work.

PV: Boy, did you ever. Now did your teachers forgive you having to turn in homework? Did they understand the situation so they didn't penalize you for not doing your homework?

DM: Well, I guess they knew my situation.

PV: So you got through all your classes, and you graduated from high school.

DM: Yes, by the skin of my teeth. But just like history, I remember you'd have four topics, a paragraph. The teacher would start on one side asking you. I'd just read ahead of them and I could answer anything asked because I'd just read it. But it didn't stick like if I had studied the night before. So I'm just a little old country boy that the town has just grown up around.

PV: You grew it up by building a lot of it.

DM: I'm just a little cog in a big wheel. I knew everybody in town by name and I knew every dog in town by name. I went knocking on the doors doing something for them. Dr. Yarborough was living and had his office in the house right across from First Baptist, on the corner of Park and First Baptist, and I would do his garden. Everybody including the doctors had gardens back then. I'd tend the garden. But one thing they had me doing that I didn't like was, Mrs. Yarborough would have me plant those beautiful flowers around her house. I thought that was foolish because you couldn't eat them. Everything was dedicated to survival. And it was tough, but it was a great learning experience. Now you talked to Donna?

PV: Well, she sent us an email and said, "You need to talk to my father. He has some great stories about the school." And she mentioned the cow, so she's the one. I had a number of people recommend that we talk to you. So she was just one of them. Guy Mendenhall recommended we talk to you. Bob Heater, and a number of people. So here I am.

DM: I remember one morning when the cow dashed out. I didn't lock the gate and I was milking the cow. And the cow was housed in a garage there, just a little one-car garage, you might say. But the cow was in there, and the feed room and the eggs, I'd milk the cow. That morning, the cow got away. I chased her all over the hillside. Every time I was taking a breath, it was just like a knife cutting through my lungs, I was so out of breath. I got that cow back home and I took a strap, a leather strap and I was beating that cow. My mother came out there and got all over me about doing that. To think that she had raised a son that would mistreat a cow. And she got so excited that she had a heart attack. I promised the Lord that I would never whip that cow again if he would just let my mother live. And she lived. But I'd sell the milk for ten cents a quart.

PV: That phenomenal. So now, did you also, you rented mules to help plow fields?

DM: Yes, I would rent Mr. Bob Sauls' mule and I'd pay him a quarter an hour and I'd get fifty cents an hour for plowing the garden. So I thought I was a big boy when I could make as much as that old big mule was making.

PV: So you were plowing gardens all over Cary when you were young?

DM: When I could. But now, I also plowed Mr Sauls, he had about 16 acres of corn and I would plow the corn. Mr. Sauls, Mr. Bob Sauls. And his daughter, Mildred. He had three girls, and the youngest one was Mildred, and she and I were in the same class. She thought it was beneath her dignity to be out there cropping soda around the corn while I was plowing. She was not a happy camper. She was unhappy doing that kind of work. It was beneath a woman's status in life to be out

there in the field. It was one of the great experiences all over Cary. I can say I knew everybody in Cary.

PV: Do you remember any of the other classmates, and are any of them still around Cary?

DM: Not many of them. Most of them have gone on to glory. Mr. Joe Grissom, we were good friends.

(End DMartin1.WAV file, begin DMartin2.WAV file) I went by, I hadn't seen that cornerstone in years. I went by and looked at it this morning.

PV: Now where is it?

DM: It's at a man's house that's in my neighborhood. He used to work with me. We were together for fifty years, and he had it up there. I told him the other day I wanted to pick it up and maybe I could contribute it to the cause, you know. He said, "You'll need some help because it's heavy."

PV: That would be fantastic. I bet the town would be happy to help with that if you were willing to get it to the town. As they're building that building, they might be able to incorporate it somehow. That would be great.

DM: Well, it might be... I thought of that, this little turn-around at the end of Academy where you'd make a U-turn around the front steps. It might be good to incorporate it into that thing because it's right on that site where that building is. It's where the next one was built. I think it would be part of history.

PV: It definitely would, it absolutely would. We want to preserve as much history of that site and that building as we possibly can. So much of Cary was built around education and that building, so it's very precious.

DM: Yes, we were pioneers in education.

PV: Indeed we have been, all along. So that's just super.

DM: You know, wisdom, knowledge is power. In other words, when you absorb the teachers' words, the books, that gives you power. But wisdom is using that knowledge timely and correctly. So it's, we need education.

PV: We definitely do. So after you graduated from high school, you went to UNC?

DM: Yes, I went over there on the GI bill. I may, while I was over there I bought a house in Cary. First, while I was in the military, I was working for Miss Nanny Leach, diagonally across from the First Baptist Church there on Academy Street, right across from Dr. Yarborough's house. I worked for her. She was a retired school teacher. I went to work for her in the hot summertime. And we were building chicken floors. She had maybe a dozen chicken houses. She would have dirt and sand hauled in and take them and put them in layers to create, that's the way they used to build roads too. You'd make a layer of the clay, and a layer of the sand and you pack it, make it hard. And that was the kind of chicken house floors we had. I started working for her for ten cents an hour, and she would try to get me to put down that shovel and rest. I thought, when you hire out for somebody, you work every moment. I didn't know you had breaks. I thought you were supposed to work. And she'd try to get me to put it down and rest. I'd be perspiring and maybe about to fall out. But I kept working. So the first payday, she paid me twelve and a half cents an hour instead of ten. I got a two and a half cent raise. And I've learned, if you apply yourself, people will hire you.

I've been in over sixty different businesses and one of them is the car business. I went to a car dealer downtown and applied for a job. He told me he didn't need anybody, but I could fill out an application and he'd call me if he had an opening. So I went into a little booth and filled out the application. I went out and handed it to him. He looked at it for thirty seconds, looked up and hired me on the spot. I'll tell you what he saw he liked. It said, what salary do you expect, on the line. I put none. I printed real large, NONE, and in parentheses (I prefer a commission. That way I write my own paycheck.) And he hired me on the spot. The first month I became their top salesman. I know one man

had been there eight years, had a lot of repeat business. I didn't know as much as he did. I didn't know the product like he did. I didn't know how to sell like he did. But if I heard somebody say, I've got to work tonight, and they didn't want to work, I'd say, "I'll work in your place." Now I'd just work longer, harder hours. If you work and apply yourself in America, you can get ahead. So I've been blessed with a good work ethic.

PV: Yes, you sure have. That's a great story. Tell me about your chicken business. You mentioned it a few minutes ago. When you were still a boy you had a chicken business?

DM: Yes. Well, let me tell you about that. I had a Raleigh Times newspaper route, and I was delivering some papers to an Esso station, now they call it Exxon. It was at the corner of Reedy Creek and Chatham Street, right on the corner there. There's a car lot there now. They had a lot next to them that was grown over with weeds and briars and they were cleaning it up. And a trade sign out there, on a four by four, it had a four foot square sign on each side. They were seamed on the edge for windage. When they tore that sign down, the man there gave me those two trade signs. And I carried them home, because back then you didn't waste anything. I figured I could make something out of those little signs. Then there was another man there named Garland Jones. He was the superintendent of a construction crew, when they were building the stadium behind the high school. They had a raceway around it that had forms and they put concrete in it to outline the raceway. He gave me the forms. I pulled the nails out and straightened the nails. I scraped the wood off and I built me a house out of used wood, used nails and trade signs. Back then people would build, I'd see farmers, they'd have a big barn, eight, ten foot high, and they'd put the chickens down on the ground. And they'd put a pan of feed in there and they'd get in there and scratch it like crazy. I thought that was rather wasteful. But what I did, I figured if I made a double-decker out of it with a drop board under it so I could rake it out and keep it clean, I made a double-decker out of it and it was just four-foot square. Then each one was less than two-foot high. But I would sell them for fried chickens, you know, before they got big

enough to bump their head. I built that house and I put the feed on the outside. And I got me some orange crates. Orange crates were thicker than they are today. And I split them up into little slats, and they'd stick their head through that to eat and they didn't waste a bit of that food. Then when I got it built, I didn't have a nickel in that chicken house.

But what I did, I went down to the Cary Hatchery. It was at the corner of Harrison and Chatham Street, where the drive-in windows are for the Fidelity Bank down there. I went down to the hatchery and I picked out fifty of the best sick chickens I could find. If they were crippled or weak, they'd throw them away. They'd crawl them and throw those that couldn't often live, and throw them away. I picked out fifty of the best sick chickens I could find, and I'd feed them with a medicine dropper. I even put sulfur in there because Mother used to give us sulfur for a lot of different ailments. Sulfur, dried sulfur. You'd take it for medication. And I probably gave them enough sulfur to kill them. I think just the Lord honored my efforts. And I raised 48 of the 50 sick chickens, which was a decent mortality rate back then for healthy chickens.

And I made enough off of those to buy an old construction building. When they tore down that house where I told you I have the cornerstone, they took some of the old timbers of heart pine and they built a construction building. They had sold it to Bill Smith who had a Texaco station down there where the Cricket station is now at the intersection of the Durham Highway and Chatham. And it was on the right side where they rent trailers or something there now. It's on a hill there. I made enough money on those chickens to buy that house that cost \$8.00. Then I jacked it up, borrowed Mr. Dan Craddock's... he used to own this property where the elementary school is now. He used to be right there. He was a railroad man. I borrowed a railroad jack from him, carried it over there on my bicycle. It's amazing, you think of a kid my size being able to carry a railroad jack. But I worked all my life and I was a young man. I carried it on my bicycle over there and jacked it up. Truck backed under it, laid it down. Mr. Holloman... You remember that house in Cary. Doug Holloman lives on the corner

of Urban and Chatham. It's the house with a pretty lawn, always pretty there on the right. That's Doug Holloman. His daddy had two trucks. One he delivered ice, had his men deliver ice all over Cary for iceboxes. And not many people had refrigerators. Then he had another truck, much nicer, and he delivered feed to people. The hatchery also had feed, they'd sell feed to people that had chickens. About everybody raised chickens, a lot of them did. In fact, his daddy had a nice truck, and he charged \$1.50 an hour to use that truck. I jacked that house up, the big house.

PV: How big was this house?

DM: It was about 8 foot square, sixteen foot long probably. Then I jacked it up, he backed under there and we carried it down and put it out from the house in Mr. Joe Smith's pasture. I was in the chicken business, sure enough then. It cost me \$1.50 to move it, it took one hour. I threw those concrete blocks that I used to hold it up while it was jacked up. I threw them in on the inside after we got through jacking it, he drove it over there, we unloaded it, jacked it up and drove out. It took one hour. That was a miracle. A kid can't do that.

PV: So it cost you \$8.00 for the house, and \$1.50 to move it. So for less than \$10.00...

DM: And then what I did, I went to the Durham Farmers' Exchange, and got all the chickens, I made a battery of, I had decks of them. I got the chickens on consignment from a place in Durham. At the end, when I got through raising them, they'd pick them up and give me a profit on them.

PV: So they'd give them to you free, and you fed them and raised them, and then you gave them back and they shared the profit with you? That's great.

DM: Yes. It's just great to be able to use your mind and think, and then use your muscle and work. I've seen a lot of people that are always praying and never working. I believe in putting feet to your prayers, and the Lord will honor and bless you. But if you don't, you're in trouble.

PV: Now did you have any brothers that were helping you with any of this?

DM: I had one brother and two sisters, the Martin clan. The older ones, the O'Briens had moved out during the Depression, they got married and so forth. Mother had four children. My brother was a little older, but he didn't take an interest in things like that.

PV: That's quite a story.

DM: He was much smarter than I was, but I worked harder.

PV: That's incredible. Whew. So you had mentioned to me on the phone that you probably somewhere in your youth you worked on Kildaire Farm, the actual farm? What did you do there?

DM: Yes, what needed to be done, cleaning the barn or whatever. I remember when I was twelve years old, I had a mule that I had to carry to the blacksmith shop which was next to that hatchery down there. I carried him down there to get Mr. Hunt's group to put horseshoes on him. You know where the McDonald's is down there, just below McDonalds you probably never noticed it,

PV: On Kildaire (Farm Road)?

DM: On Kildaire, right below there there is another restaurant there. Anyway, there is a roadway underneath Kildaire that you never noticed it. It used to be that deep, then it's been filled in and then you drive a tractor underneath there. It was a dirt road. That old mule, I was trying to get him to move out and he put on brakes and threw me over his head. Then he backed up, and if he'd come forward he would have trampled me to death while he was looking at me. He got down to () that mule, you don't have to give it up, after you get up and start over. I don't go back to the boss and say, I can't do this, because he'd let me go. I was right down there and I was holding the mule by his hind foot, so he got one nail in the shoe. The mule got to wiggling, and the sharp... have you ever seen a nail for a horseshoe? They're very sharp. They're sharper than that right there and it's kind of square-shaped. And he got to moving, and a twelve-year-old boy just couldn't hold that mule. When I had to turn him loose, that thing ripped me open right there on my hand. You know, even that was a good experience. You never give up because you have adversity. I don't ever give up.

PV: Obviously. So now how did you get the cows and the mules? Did you earn the money to buy them as a kid?

DM: I don't remember how we did it. Of course, all my life I didn't spend every cent I made. I learned to save. In fact, let me tell you this. () I have never owned for my personal use a new car or a new truck. I buy an old one because I came up the hard way. I have never been in debt for anything that depreciates in value. If I can't pay for it, I leave it there. That will make you more conservative in your approach. You know what our state motto is? It's (), which translated says, "To be rather than to seem." People that buy a new vehicle every year seem they are prospering but they are staying on the bottom.

PV: and burying themselves deeper.

DM: Yes, that's the American way. And they advertise nothing down or zero interest for the first year or two, and they are just hooking people up to something that will keep them on the bottom. I don't think we ought to do that. So I live not to go into debt.

PV: You learned that lesson early on too, didn't you?

DM: I bought a car for my wife. I had to get her something, and she thinks she ought to have a new one. I'll buy one occasionally, I'll take the old one. I don't need it because I'm not trying to impress anybody. I don't want to impress anybody.

PV: That's great. So you just missed World War II, but you went into the military right out of high school?

DM: I was considered a World War II veteran, but the war was winding down. I was in the U.S. Coast Guard.

PV: So Japan was still going on when you graduated from high school. The Pacific was still...

DM: When it was declared over, I didn't ever... I was in the Coast Guard and I didn't go overseas. The furthest I ever got was the northern banks of Cuba, just up and down the coast. But I

learned some great things in the Coast Guard. In fact, I'll give you a news article in 1961, it shows me and my wife and our three children at that time. Later we had six. They took our picture. I designed and built the first swimming pool in Raleigh for an apartment complex. It was, I mean that's an old story and that's not about Cary.

PV: But still. So you built the first apartment complex, the first pool for an apartment complex.

DM: I was in the Coast Guard, you see. In the Coast Guard, one man has to cover more trades because you have fewer men on a small ship than on a big ship. In the Navy, you have one man that does diesel engines, another gasoline, another the machine shop, another welding, another fuel flow, a lot of different topics designated in one field. I had to know them all, and that was a blessing.

PV: So they trained you in many, many different aspects of a ship?

DM: Yes. In fact, the swimming pool is right near fifty years old, forty-nine this year. The man that inspects them, he's been doing that for thirty years, he's retiring this year, I believe. But he said he had never inspected a pool that had clearer water than ours. See, I knew something from that fuel flow. I bought me three old tanks from a junkyard. I had to cut them down so they would go in the space I had for them. I put a lid on them like a port on a ship, you know, where you close it. I put stone, sand and create a filter system like that. It's what we called an open-head pump. The average person that does swimming pools, he doesn't know the difference in a closed head, and they used closed head. I used open head. And you can put three times as much water. So I used a one-horse pump and they use a three-horse. That works, and it's still working. The man said it's the clearest water he's ever seen.

PV: So you still own that apartment complex and pool? All these years and it's still fine, it's still working fine.

DM: Yes. By doing that, I had people waiting in line to get in. I did not have one vacancy when I had these 65 apartments. We've got several hundred now. But I had 65 apartments, and in five years I did not have the equivalent of one month's vacancy out of all of them. People were waiting to get in

there because I had a swimming pool. I wasn't greedy either. I had a spring that I used, a spring of water. That spring water tastes better than anything you can get out of a city spigot. And I put the well system in, the pipes. I used a tractor and dug a trench, put it in there and covered it up. I mean, and that's a whole lot more efficient than digging it by hand. You learn to do those things.

PV: Wow, that's fantastic. So you've developed housing developments, you have apartment buildings and complexes. You have a least one mall, if not more. So you've developed a lot of different things in your long career. Do you own any other malls or shopping centers, more than South Hills? You do? More in Cary or...?

DM: Yes. Well, Raleigh, and I've got places that I will develop. I'm not through.

PV: You're not through yet. You were talking, you are looking at a 62-story building or something?

DM: Who told you about that?

PV: You did. So what is that about? Is it a for sure thing, or are you just still in the talking stages, or...

DM: I guess I need to show you. You don't want this stuff, do you? I've got other things.

PV: You can show me later, I guess, after we turn the tape off, but it's exciting that something like that might be coming to Cary.

DM: I'm a dreamer. The Bible says in Proverbs, "Where there is no vision, people perish." So you have to have a vision. I had to have a vision for this place or I couldn't have built it.

PV: Well, and it keeps evolving.

DM: Do you see this brick here?

PV: Yes, the brick inside the mall?

DM: It was handmade by prisoners maybe a hundred and forty, fifty years ago. They tore down central prison and built a new one. They were built out of handmade brick. They threw these away.

They were knocking all that Dix Hill, on the hillside, close to Western Blvd. I went over there, took a couple men with me. I was picking out brick, and throwing them up there and they were putting them on the truck. Do you see them?

PV: They're beautiful. They're absolutely beautiful.

DM: Colorful. ()

PV: Just haul them away.

DM: And you know, see this curve?

PV: Yes, this curved glass for your office?

DM: I built it. I'd seen a house with something like this and it was going to cost me \$10,000 for not even about a third of this much. I did all these for probably, I doubt if I had \$1,000.

PV: Wow. The curved glass and everything, and the supports and the whole thing. They're beautiful. You can see the whole mall from up here. You're keeping an eye on things.

DM: That's right. You have to improvise.

PV: You're a designer on top of everything else.

DM: We've, well it was a mall, and then a de-mall. Now they've got Rose's back trying to re-mall. They're waiting on Burlington to put that check-out back there and generate more synergy.

PV: Is Burlington Coat Factory going to be moving out, or are they expanding?

DM: No, they've got five more years on their lease. They can stay if they want to. If they'd leave they'd do me a favor because I could rent to someone else for more money.

PV: So now how long as Rose's been back in been here.

DM: About a month or six weeks. I don't know.

PV: I was just walking around down there. It's beautiful, big store. Very big. So you enclosed part of what had been the open, kind of central isle to create that space, right? Just using it all. That's great. So you probably don't much concern about the growth of Cary. You're actually making it work

to your advantage, it sounds like, even now. Some folks who have lived here a long time aren't real comfortable with all this growth, but how do you feel about it?

DM: I've heard some of the old Southern boys get somebody from around New York City. Some of those are a little bit harsher than... Where do you come from?

PV: I was born in Pennsylvania, but I spent most of my life before I got here in California.

DM: Well, Pennsylvania and upstate New York, they're pretty much like we are. But around the Bronx and the big city, it's a dog-eat-dog world. They look at things a little different from the way we do. And some of my friends, some of them come across, the Southern boys, as know-it-alls. They're running their mouth, and some of my friends say, "Yankee, why don't you go home." You know what I tell them? I tell them, "I want to thank you for coming down here and helping me out." And then maybe I'll tell them a little story about when I was building my wife a house, and the little Mexican fellow said, "How much you pay for this land?" And the answer: \$100. And why did it go up? Because my friends from the up north came down here and built the values up, and I love them for coming and helping me. You don't bite the hand that feeds you. () I don't have an acre out here that I paid over \$1,200 an acre for. And I've been offered \$1 million, and they'd take it all and do what they did at North Hills, and tear it down, start over. A million dollars an acre. I've been blessed. I own a farm over in Apex and I paid \$1,300 an acre. You know what went right next to me? A Walmart. They paid \$280,000 an acre. I was offered \$200,000 before they started building, but I knew they'd already bought it. I said, I think I'll wait on Walmart because whenever they go somewhere, the land around them grows up. If they paid \$280, I don't worry.

PV: But you have the foresight to realize that.

DM: Well, I just, I guess you might say, I might be a visionary. I like to plan ahead. I got me an apartment business. I had bought a house, it was a duplex, is on the corner of Dan Allen Drive, that's the entrance into State, you know, and Western Blvd. Back then it was just two lanes for us to move

down. Dan Allen was just a double street, you know, and no lights on either one of them. I bought a house over there from State. They had to put it up for sale, I bid on it and I got it. I cut one half in two and moved it into Cary. In fact, I still own it, and I'm still getting rent from it. But I moved it into Cary. The other half didn't have, the two bedrooms were wide open because I carried the partition with me to Cary. So that was before I got married. I got married on June 26, 1954. Anyway, I was living in one end, the end that the living room and kitchen was on. I lived there, just camping out. I didn't have water, sewer, anything, lights. And I worked night and day, so I built me, took scrap, built me a fire and jacking it up because you had to jack it up so you could have a truck back up under it to move it. I got it jacked up, I was jacking it up and all of a sudden it looked like it was moving, and the high flames were flickering. I had to stand still. Is it moving, or is it just the flames flickering there. I stood real still, and it was moving. I had to get out of the way of it to fall. And one end was down in one corner, it was all twisted up, and two ends were wide open. It was a mess. You know, the old saying, "When you get a lemon, start a lemonade stand." Well, when you have a problem, look for the opportunity. I knew they were going to sell the other buildings. They were running an ad in the paper and you could bid on them, in sealed bids. People would come over there to see those houses and bid on them. They'd walk around that mess I had and they'd walk off shaking their head. Not one soul bid on those other houses. And I got those houses for \$300. A whole house, that's two apartments. Two apartments. Moved them down Avent Ferry Road, and that's how I got started with University Apartments. It was just an opportunity. And too many people, when they have something bad to happen, oh that's the end of the line. I look for the opportunity.

PV: That's a great story.

DM: And I still have them. In fact, I got some of the old brick over there. But, anyway, when I built those apartments, one day up towards Western Blvd. I was going down Avent Ferry, there was a fellow I'd seen walking up and down the road. He didn't have a car. I stopped to give him a ride. Just

stopped to give him a hand. But he told me he used to live on that property I just bought. He said, “You’ve got the best spring of water I’ve ever seen at your place.” I didn’t know it. See, I just stopped to give him a hand, and I was blessed. He told me where it was. It was at the base of the biggest tree out there. He said he used to live at the house up under that tree, and in the hot summertime, if I couldn’t sleep, I’d go down and get me a cool drink of that water and sleep like a baby.” And it was privet bushes all over, those prickly bushes, but I could see the spring that runs through our property. I could see that little tributary from that spring, water was running out. So I had to plow up through there and knocked the bushes down so I could get to it. But it was a spring in solid rock. I just healed it out a little so I’d have a little reservoir.

That man who lived right down here on Avent Ferry Road had a pump to go bad. He sold me his old pump for \$5.00. I went to Burke’s Hardware and got me two five cent washers to put on it and I had me a good pump for \$5.10. So I put that in, and then I dug a trench and put this little, cheap black pipe in to serve those houses. Later, I realized as I was headed home, I needed more water, so I went to the town of Zebulon. They had a big old tank car that they hauled... you know, tank cars on the railroad they would have those great big old tank cars, hold about 6,000 gallons of water. That was the water supply of storage for Zebulon. But they had gotten prosperous enough to build a tank overhead. So they sold me that for a little bit of nothing, and I brought it down there and I drilled a well. And after drilling the well, the spring went dry because I got the spring water. I think that has something to do with the health man, plus the good filter system. He says it’s the clearest pool he’s ever examined.

PV: It was coming from that spring.

DM: Yes, and its 49 years old, and it’s still got that tank supplying that water. You know, I didn’t have () I had the water, didn’t cost me anything. I had to have it for the pool. But as I added on more apartments, I just kept tapping into it. Now, I didn’t have but one well. Municipalities require two wells, so if one goes bad you’ve got another one. How did I get by with not having another one,

and it never give out of water. I put a big air pump, like you have in a service station, great big old pump, and during the peak periods at night and in the morning when you're getting ready to go to work, the pump was just 20 gallons a minute, it wouldn't keep up. So when it started dropping, I had it regulated so that would come on and pump air in it until the pump could catch up. I didn't have city sewer or water out there then. So I was able to keep it going. It never gave out of water. I just had a back-up plan, and it worked. And here's the...

PV: So this is an article about the first swimming pool in Raleigh, the original apartment owners. There is a picture of you, your wife and three children in the pool, or at the pool. It's beautiful, big square pool. It's got brick around the edge. So it's beautiful. How deep is it at the deepest end?

DM: I reckon it's about ten foot. We've got a ledge around the deep end so that you can be swimming in the deep end and you could stand up on the ledge. I've never seen one like that.

PV: Very smart.

DM: It just made sense to do it. I never designed a pool before, but you just use the brains the Lord gave you.

PV: It's beautiful. Oh, this is great. And it's still there. Well, many people have copied your idea, I'm sure.

DM: See, right there it says, read that type there.

PV: A \$5.00 water pump, free spring water. No vacancies in five years.

DM: I mean, not even one total vacancy. In other words, if I was getting back then, maybe I was getting \$200 a month. I don't know what, I don't remember now. So now it's over \$500 a month. But I got maybe \$200 a month, but they did not have to buy water from the city, the city services. It was free, I didn't charge them. It didn't cost me. And it worked. Let me tell you something else.

About the time that happened, I was at... () church about this time, just before I opened that pool. See, we had three children at that time, now we've got six, and now we've got twelve

grandchildren. We've been blessed. Anyway, I was at church at Athens Drive, across from Athens Drive High School, it was called Boulevard Baptist back then. I was in that little building up there on the site. There's two buildings up there, the one nearest to Cary was the first building. One morning I counted in one section 35 women and 7 men, and the thought came to me, where are the men? I thought, if it weren't for our women keeping us together spiritually, we'd go to hell in a hand basket in America. But I'll tell you what I promised the Lord that morning. As long as I had good health, I would be in his house every Sunday morning. It used to be, she'd have those three kids dressed, ready to go, somebody would call me, the heat was out, this, that and the other. I'd be crawling down under the house and let her go to church with the kids. You know, when I made a commitment to be in God's house every Sunday morning, I quit getting calls on Sunday morning. That's the way the Lord works. I mean, he's just been so good to us. So during that time, during that five-year span, from that day forward, first I gave a man a ride and discovered a supply of water. Then one grade, I didn't charge them for the use of that water, and saved them money.

PV: The article says that you also didn't raise the rents when you opened the pool in the apartment either. So they got free use of the pool, which was a big blessing for them.

DM: Yes, so anyway, during that time, that five-year period, I acquired this land out there and started the first shopping center in Cary, the first in Raleigh and Cary was a little later. I didn't open that until '71 or 2, I think. During this time, the Lord blessed us. You can't out-give God. He's been good to us.

PV: That's great. This has just been a wonderful, wonderful interview. I want to thank you for taking the time and telling me all of your stories. So, you've had quite a life and you've contributed a huge amount to Cary, and so we thank you. And you just did again by giving us your stories.

DM: It's been my pleasure and my blessing, what little I've done. I'm just a little cog in a big wheel.

PV: Well, you're a mighty strong cog, that's for sure. So thank you so much for sharing all of your stories and your memories with us today. I really appreciate it.

DM: My pleasure, my pleasure.

END OF INTERVIEW