

SUMMARY OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

NARRATOR: Robert (Bob) Heater

INTERVIEW DATE: October 24, 2011

WHERE CONDUCTED: Mr. Heater's Home in Cary, North Carolina

INTERVIEWERS: Ellen Turco, Circa, Inc.
Peggy Van Scoyoc

PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW:

Ellen Turco, from Circa, Inc. was hired by the Town of Cary to conduct a survey of historical buildings in Cary to update the town's inventory. She, and Peggy Van Scoyoc, visited with Bob Heater to learn more about early housing developments that were built in the 1950s and beyond. Mr. Heater's father, R.O. Heater built the first housing development in Cary, called Russell Hills. While talking, they were looking at a number of maps and plots that Mr. Heater owns. He gave most of them to Ellen, who promised to make copies and return the originals to him. She planned to have a copy made for the town as well as one for her firm to support their survey.

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

10/24/11

Bob Heater (BH): See Heater Alley, that sub-division down to here. I can't pick up the exact break-off point. I don't know how that got in.

Ellen Turco (ET): That was later, I'll bet, because they probably didn't do cul-de-sacs back then. This general area...

BH: Yes, this street and that street, we called that Veteran's Hills. He did that right after the war and sold the lots to veterans.

ET: Well, that's the date, but it's not necessarily correct, so don't...

BH: Bill Keener can tell you exactly, because he built the house on... My brother-in-law built the house on this corner facing south.

Peggy Van Scoyoc (PV): Now what streets are those?

BH: That's on the corner of Fairview Road and Keener Street. Right behind that house, Bill Keener built a house facing Keener Street. And he is still living in it right now. His wife's in the hospital and he's staying with her in the hospital, but that's still their home.

ET: And were these done with V.A. loans, or government financing somehow?

BH: I don't know how they were financed. They probably were. One way I reckon you can do is to look up, you know how to get to the county's Register of Deeds?

ET: Yes.

BH: Get to the Register of Deeds, and get William B. Keener and see when he acquired that land and got the deed.

ET: So he acquired this little piece.

BH: He acquired that one lot.

ET: Oh, just the one lot. So your dad acquired a piece and then he made the lots?

BH: Daddy bought all this land raw. I surprised they still got that Heater Alley on there, but that was named on the plans that were drawn. Some of these up there were already built on. But he put in this street and this street and that alley. That street, maybe it went down to Coronado Village, but I just don't remember a cul-de-sac in there.

ET: You know what – I bet maybe there was one house on that lot, as far as maybe...

BH: Well, there were a lot of houses in here. These belonged to black families right here, these interior lots.

ET: And what is that, is it a mobile home?

BH: No. They were just typical old black family houses.

ET: Shotgun houses?

BH: No, they were not shotgun houses. These were probably lot lines. These could be 25' lots. A lot of times people would develop in 25' lots, and you could buy a lot full of them. Bob Pleasants owned those. I don't know when he bought them, but later on he sold them, I'm sure.

PV: Now what streets are those that surround that area?

ET: Walker, Waldo, Hunter and East Park.

PV: I interviewed Bertha Pleasants Daniel, and if I'm remembering right, she told me her father developed that area right behind, south of Walnut and Kildaire Farm, in that area.

BH: South of Walnut?

PV: Kind of across from the elementary school.

BH: Here's Walnut. South of Walnut and what else? Kildaire Farm. So you're talking about right in here.

PV: In there, and that was before or during World War I.

BH: Here is Pleasants Avenue.

PV: Yes, there you go. So he was developing houses...

BH: And that was there when I was a young'un. I don't know if you want anything prior to '54 or not?

ET: Sure.

BH: If you want to get on back there, we'll do the best we can. Byrum Street was the other side of that property. Now in here, I don't know. A family was living in that way back yonder, where that red block is, the Breeze family. On that corner, that house is still there. It's been modified. Later on, this street was put in, right here, which was an extension of Walker Street, where it butts up against Byrum. Apparently somebody bought that land and opened this up for them.

ET: This wasn't veteran's housing that either of you know of?

BH: That would come quite a bit later.

ET: So talk a little bit about the story of Russell Hills.

BH: The story: J.K. Coggins had an option for it, of roughly 35 acres.

ET: Was it farmland or timber, or?

BH: It was mostly timber and some, nothing there by weeds at that time. He backed off of it because of a flaw in his title that said that a certain Ms. Gray got out of an insane asylum and the Gray property was to be sold to send her to college. At that time she'd been in there 30 years. It wasn't much of a

flaw. So before he turned him loose, Daddy talked them into turning it over to him. Daddy got title insurance on it, and bought 35 acres for \$1,000. Sold the timber the next day for \$600. So he had \$400 into 35 acres. He started to sell lots. The first two he sold for \$800, the next two for \$1,200, and the rest of them for \$2,000.

ET: Did he sell them directly to a property owner who would then build their house?

BH: They were selling all kinds of ways. Some people bought them individually. Those first four were bought individually. Then some others were bought individually. And some builders would buy sometimes an individual lot, or might buy four or five at one time. They were selling like hotcakes.

He got his name, because Daddy put a water line in there and paved streets. And it used to be, the drugstore stayed open until 9:00 at night, and Daddy'd go down there after supper. And they'd say, "Russell, how are your hills coming?" That's where it got its name from. They said, "You going to lose your hat, you'll never be able to get enough money out of those lots over there to pay for that pavement and water line. Well, he did.

ET: Now, did your father ever build any of that? Did he ever contract to build the houses?

BH: He built one house for a woman at cost somewhere else. I can tell you where it was if you want to know.

ET: In Russell Hills, or..?

BH: No. It was up here, right, almost across the street from where we lived on the corner of Dry and Harrison. She was a widow. She had two children. If you want me to put my finger on it, I'll try to.

ET: Yes, just so I can orient myself here. The corner of Harrison and Dry...

BH: Well, it would be, is that the corner? It would be that first lot right there. The white one. She was a widow or a divorcee, I don't know which. I think a widow.

ET: So he did that for her as like a favor, or?

BH: Yes, he did it, and I did a lot of the work in it. I lost a lot of my toes on it, and I didn't get any money out of it.

ET: So you didn't do it again.

BH: Other than that, I've build four or five houses. Two, four – I've built four houses. Two of them in West Russell Hills, one in Russell Hills and one in Greenwood Forest.

ET: And you did that to sell them?

BH: I did two specs. I built one for one of my employees at cost. And the last one I built was at cost for a church parsonage. I just enjoyed building houses. That's creating things. I enjoyed doing a better

job than most houses were built. At that time I was settling around Durham and I saw how a lot of the houses were built to a minimum, almost. I wanted something better than that. There just was not a whole lot. Do you know what a purline is? A purline, when you build a house and you've got the studs, as you get halfway up and you put a 2 X 4 between the two studs and nail them to them all the way across, that's the purline. That's to keep them from twisting and to give them a little more strength. But stuff like that, it's just lots of little things.

ET: And who were some of the other builders? Can you remember the names of some of the builders that worked in the area?

BH: I don't remember them now. It's been so long. I can tell you who built mine. I built one, had my one built on the corner of Roberts Street and Heater Drive. If you knew my name you knew my street. That should be, here's Heater on this side of the park at Robert, coming up the hill is Heater.

ET: Which one was yours?

BH: I was on that corner right there.

ET: So that was where you lived?

BH: Yes, and I lived there thirty years. Paid off my mortgage. It cost me \$17,800 and Daddy gave me the lot. Claude Smith built it for me, he was a builder. He wasn't a mass builder, but he was an extremely good builder. He built, I'm sure, a lot of houses around. He died early. Russell Hills built out fairly fast. There's one in here () This is the south portion of () subdivision of Russell Hills. This was done in '54. This is a re-division of portions of it.

ET: Explain to me, I'm a little bit confused when people talk about Russell Hills. Do you just mean this area, or can you talk about West Russell Hills, and I know this map is not right.

BH: This was what we considered Russell Hills, and it stopped right there. This is it, and this long. That's Heater Park, and then up here was also... it went down to the back of these lots and stopped. West Russell Hills was here.

ET: So what does this say? Something Hills, does that mean anything?

BH: This is Ridgecrest. Daddy stopped right here. This property, Montclair, was done, I think, before the war. Then it was subdivided. It goes way back.

PV: Was that done by your father or by someone else?

BH: No, I don't know who that was done by. There used to be a house right here in this red circle.

ET: Is that where the dairy farm is?

BH: That was the dairy house. Then the barn right beside it is still there. West Russell Hills was the pasture for that dairy. That would be from here, that's Ridgecrest, that side of Ridgecrest over to it bumped up against Russell Hills, which would have stopped right here. This street stops right here. That's the continuation of Roberts Street and any of these is not connected.

ET: So when we talk about the original Russell Hills, you're actually talking about this area. And then West was this area?

BH: It says Russell Hills, Extension I. I'll give you a copy of the deeds, if you want them.

ET: Do they have plats with them?

BH: I can give you plats on all of them one way or another. That's what I got this out for. But some of these, the reason I'm reaching for these, was to pick up dates from. This plat was done in 1954, this part of Russell Hills. Here's the cemetery. This name here, they've extended the name of Harrison Avenue on through here. ()

ET: And your father donated some of the land for that cemetery?

BH: Some of it.

ET: Some that was already there?

BH: I'll show you on a map. There's lot numbers at the very end that they basically made from headstone to headstone. () This is Extension I, and it stopped at the back of these lots. Then it became whatever.

ET: Was this your dad's project down here too?

BH: Well, to give you idea of how fast stuff was growing? Daddy had an option right at 100 acres, which is Wishing Well Village, and it goes on over further than that too, for \$200 an acre. Jeff Sugg had developed... walked into the office and offered him \$500 an acre for the options. So he sold them, and then Jeff developed it out from there. He went over to Maynard Road and then he got the man who he got that option from. He got that, and this was called Burt Road subdivision, and that went over to Kildaire Farm Road. He developed a shopping center in there. Jeff did that.

ET: Burt Road?

BH: That's what they used to call it.

PV: So Wishing Well Village was Jeff Sugg's?

BH: Yes.

ET: This looks later, because of the colors, if that's right.

BH: That was a probably separate. The one I was talking about would have been starting right here. This dark blue, although I think the land went out to Norman Street, I think went all the way out to old #1 on West Chatham. I know I sketched streets on maps like I thought they would work. Jeff looked at that and that's when he offered me the \$500 an acre for the options. So that was the Russell Hills extension, was Daddy's first one, first extension. Heater, Russell Park, Russell Hills and Russell Hills extension, this would be Russell Hills extension III, but Jeff changed that. Then he got the land which was West Russell Hills. But the town stopped us. Daddy used to keep five foot in back of the lots that he didn't sell. And that way, if somebody else wanted to go out from West Russell Hills is, and he told me if they took the same covenants on it that he had on Russell Hills, he'd do it. But they wouldn't put the same covenants on it, so he went down to sell them that five feet, that block through there. So they didn't develop, so later on we got it.

ET: And is that this? All this area?

BH: No. West Russell Hills is right in here. It's marked here Carl? Hills. But we stopped at Ridgecrest, that's Ridgecrest right there. That portion of that light blue was what we called West Russell Hills. I've got a map of it.

ET: Then what is all this labeled Sevon? Heights, but does that mean anything to you, or no?

BH: No. I don't know who did it. I think Jeff did that, but I'm not possible. Jeff had the good financial backing. I don't know if you're familiar with the name Bob Holding or not. () Bob Holding Sr. was the head man of First Citizens Bank when I was young. Bob Jr. worked with the bank, and he also started Fidelity Bank. He went to school with Jeff. They both went to school in Smithfield. So he was backing Jeff financially. And that makes a whole lot of difference in development. This was from the 1950s. This was Heater Park, Dry Avenue right down through here. It goes right on into West Russell Hills. See that five foot left right there. This was already there. He bought that from somebody else. () This is that land, right up on the hill right above the park.

ET: Now if this was done in the fifties, then this was before RTP? So what was the growth? It wasn't RTP growth. So was it post-war, people coming back from the army?

BH: This is when the map was made. Let's get a little later after that. I'm getting my maps mixed up here. () The park started, first one that I can remember. I can't remember when, but I wrote it down. The first one that came there to the best of my knowledge was Chemstrand, of any size.

ET: And that became Monsanto.

PV: And they came in the late fifties, didn't they? Or when did they come, right after the war?

BH: They came, I'd say in the early fifties. I don't know for sure of that. I remember asking the man, and I don't remember who he worked for, maybe he worked for somebody in Research Triangle Park, why he bought in Cary. He bought on the other side of old 54, beside Harrison Avenue. He said you could get the same house here for \$10,000 less than you could in Raleigh. At that time, \$10,000 was a lot of money.

PV: You could almost buy a house for that.

ET: So do you have any idea when Chemstrand came? How many people came? 500 or 1,000?

PV: Olene Ogles is on our board. She came, her husband ...

ET: And they came from the mid-west somewhere?

PV: I'm not sure where they came from, but he was brought in to work at Chemstrand. So we can ask her.

BH: If I was trying to run that down, I would go to the News and Observer and ask them to pull out their material and see when the write-up was and see how many people they expected to employ.

ET: So you think that this development was because of those first wave of Chemstrand people coming?

BH: No, that was being sold to local people. Cary's always done a lot of growing because of the ease of getting from here to State College. I grew up with a professor on each side of me from State, and right across the street was the assistant secretary of labor for the state, so it was most of the people employed either by either State College or by the state in Cary back them.

PV: A lot of people were employed by the Department of Transportation, I think, too, weren't they? That lived in Cary.

BH: Well, that was the state. You want the covenants?

ET: Sure. I can copy all of this stuff and give them back to you.

BH: I can give them to you. This says 4/52, so that's when they recorded the covenants for Russell Hills.

ET: '52? And that would have been right before they started building, correct?

BH: Before we sold anything. Here is Russell Hills. And then here's the next set which is basically a continuation of the other, probably almost identical, Russell Hills Extended. And the dates should be on those.

ET: '55?

BH: Right. That's Russell Hills Extension. That's when they put those on. This one, when you put the covenants on, that's before you start selling anything, so that give you a clue. That's the reason I got those out, because it gives you a clue of when stuff was occurring. I don't know what all you're after, but it might interest you, how the names of the streets came about, and the extension.

ET: That would be very interesting.

BH: In Russell Hills, they were named after family. Daddy's last name, my first name, and Mother's last maiden name, Connor. That the one that they changed it, and extended. You get away with that and that became Harrison. You'll see it on some of the maps as Connor.

ET: That's good to know so I won't get lost.

BH: And then when you get into the extension, the telephone company was on strike and we had it mapped out, and the streets had to have trees cleared off of them. So Daddy got a man that he knew here that was a member of the union with the telephone company, and put him as the superintendent, and he got in on the strike. They came in and cleared all the trees off the streets, and brush. Daddy put heavy equipment to come in. It was three streets named after my three sisters, Ann, Marjorie and Dorothy.

ET: Anne with an E?

BH: No. This map does not show, for some reason, does not show the park. The Presbyterian Church bought this property and had no access to it. This was Russell Hills, and here is Russell Hills extension. So we made a bargain. We swapped this parcel to the church in order to get this parcel to get through over here.

ET: Is the church here still? Cary Presbyterian?

BH: Yes. It is still there. It's on the corner there. It takes up all that, its right in there and actually faces...

PV: Is it off of South Harrison, or no?

BH: See, this was Connor, and they changed it to Harrison. It came over to Harrison and then switched over to, this is either Union or Griffis. He wanted to name one street Union Drive after the union and one Griffis after J.C. Griffis, who was the union man who ran the crew.

ET: So union after, it's not a Civil War reference. It's a labor reference.

BH: The labor union for the telephone company. I don't know what you're getting this information together for. I'm just throwing everything out and let you say what you want and what you don't want. But this was not in 1955, so that told you it about sold out in Russell Hills. We needed to keep going.

ET: So you were selling fast then. So you sort of went, as this would fill up then you would continue.

BH: Yes.

ET: And then is this a good time to talk a little bit about the cemetery?

BH: It's time. I have a map in here somewhere of the cemetery. I can show you how it was laid out and I can also show you where it came from. This was an area one, and whoever did this made a great big mistake. They've got Harrison Avenue here and Dry Avenue over here, and they're perpendicular to each other.

ET: And they're not.

BH: I think what they did, Dry was coming down here and I think he just assumed it went on around there, but that's really West Street. Our house was over here. Mr. Coggin who was a professor at state lived right here. Daddy bought this. There was a house on this one. We moved it over to there, took the house that was over there and moved it down here. That house has got two-story tall columns on it, on the corner of Park Street. They've got this Ridgecrest, and this is not Ridgecrest.

ET: I don't know if this map is going to help me very much.

BH: Well, Ridgecrest comes off this way.

ET: So where are we on here? Oh, there's Ridgecrest.

BH: Ridgecrest goes up and down this way. Dry Avenue there. That's it right there. See how it... and that's Park Street. They've got it on here as Ridgecrest. See here it says West Park. Here's Ridgecrest down here. See where it came into it there? He picked it up off of that. You've got Ridgecrest down here.

PV: Were any of the houses that you moved kit houses?

BH: No. You want me to start with the kit houses now, or you want me to keep going?

ET: Can we talk about the cemetery since we're over here, and you said you might have a map for that.

BH: I'll have to go get that one.

ET: Let me show you what I have. I don't know if it's going to be helpful.

BH: You might have the same thing I've got inside. She copied mine but she photocopied it in two sections.

ET: This is one that the planning department made, so this has all the plots as they are now. You've seen this one?

BH: Yes, I'm familiar with that. That's the one they just went over and made. And the one I worked with is a surveyor's.

ET: My main question is, I don't need too much detail, but what was the original part that was already there? I guess it would be the oldest part of this scenario.

BH: These down here.

ET: A, B, C, D, and E?

BH: Yes. And there were people buried along here. Back in the Jones section over here, I think he was the one who gave the land to the town for the cemetery. White Plains Jones. Are you familiar with White Plains Jones? But there are several people buried along here that bought, or he gave it to them, I don't know which. They had nothing to Jones that she offered to give some to Daddy for his family. Now we're talking about from here down to here.

ET: So the whole K area. She's the one in charge of the cemetery?

BH: This is not the one I'm looking for. This was is the surveyor's map. This is the one we kept. This is West Russell Hills, do you want that? That was done by the gas company, and they gave the top of it to Daddy. This is another one that needs redoing.

ET: Just re-change the lot lines or something?

BH: Yes. Here's Russell Hills extension, a big map, and I have a small one. Which would you rather have? This is full size.

ET: I'd like the big one, that I can see better.

BH: It's yours. That's West Russell Hills.

ET: And I have no problem making copies of all of this if you want copies of them.

BH: I think that's West Russell Hills. ()

PV: It says, Russell Hills Extension.

BH: This was redone by a man who bought two lots in Russell Hills.

ET: And built one house on two lots?

BH: Yes. () Here's one of the cemetery. This is part of it. Right in here. This was part of Russell Hills, and this street is marked "proposed" because later on Williams, I can't think of his name now, developed what they call Pine Valley subdivision. I don't whether you got that map.

ET: Right here.

BH: Yes, you see how it stopped right there. This is the extension I was talking about right there. See how that fits this? See that gray section, right here. See, it's the same shape as this and butts up against the cemetery. I got this out to show you how Pine Valley connected into Russell Hills, and then used

the name he put on a street in Pine Valley. () You see in the cemetery, this part that is kept in white? That's this. Daddy retained this,

ET: And that's for your family area?

BH: Yes. They have done away, apparently, on that map with the street. Is that shown as a street, right where your finger is?

ET: It looks like a walkway, path.

BH: They put a walk in there and that's why they cut it down from that.

ET: So was this your family's area too, or just here?

BH: Just up there.

PV: So this is above K, next to A.

BH: This I don't think we had back here. One reason I think, was because I know people buried up here. But this is the layout of the lots. These were 5 X 10' so it was 20' deep across there. It used to be, it had a 41' street where that walkway is. And the town has completely closed it now from selling plots in it. And you see, the other one going away from me along 8' wide walkways, so you could walk down and not have to walk on top of graves to get to graves.

ET: So what was this burial area, the first part, A, B, C, D, and E? Was that just from the town of Cary at earlier times, or were rural people buried here? Or was it associated with a particular church?

BH: That was earlier times, and I was told it was given to the town. It is very unclear. You can try looking up the Cary Cemetery Association and see if they have the deed. I do not remember, and the people who would know are dead.

ET: Do either of you know about how old the oldest burial is in there?

PV: It's way back. I think it's late 1700s. Maybe early 1800s.

BH: I'd have to look and see, but it goes way back. They told me, when he gave that to them, he left people who lived in town just come over and pick out where they wanted their lot. And a lot of them put a rock wall around it, or a fence around it and it was there. That's the old Cary cemetery. Daddy, when he bought Russell Hills, acquired this land. At the same time, he and some others started the Cary Cemetery Association. Because the cemetery wasn't kept up and they knew they'd need some money. He gave them that so they'd have some lots to sell to get money to keep it mowed, keep it looking decent. And they had it surveyed. The surveyor went through and tried to locate every grave and put it on the map. () and I went through a real battle with () cousin, because she thought there was a family plot, and it was our family plot, not her family plot. Anyhow, that got settled.

ET: So this is the newest area, and this area you were saying, there were sort of random burials that were old. And do you know when J came in?

BH: Yes, () I think this is it right here. There's the deed to it. We bought that from the Northcutts end. It still had graves planted on it from way back yonder, but they were whole-sized. We wanted to replant it and sell lots on it, and the town refused to let us do it.

ET: You wanted to use it for housing?

BH: No, we wanted to use it for burial sites. You can get a heck of a lot more out of grave sites than you can get out of housing lots. The town wouldn't let us do it. This is getting a little bit nasty, but the truth is the truth. The mayor pro-tem's son was in a wreck and got killed. Do you remember that?

PV: No, that was before my time.

BH: Well, they didn't have anywhere to bury him. So the town real quick bought that from us. They got a lot in there and he buried his son in there, and they opened it up and sold plots in it.

ET: And you acquired it in '67, but the town acquired it soon after?

BH: Yes, fairly soon after that. I'd say within the next probably five years or so. It was roughly an acre. () Do you still want more information on the cemetery?

ET: No, that's good.

BH: () This is an indication of Cary's beginning to grow. On September 30, 1952 Daddy bought this lot, and this is the deed to it. You know where the service station is on the corner of Chatham and Academy? Just toward Raleigh there's a shopping center strip. This was the front part of that strip, and he bought it and put a service station on it because there was a need for it. The town was growing. And Esso took a 20-year contract on it.

ET: A mortgage you mean?

BH: No. They leased it for 20 years.

ET: Wasn't it like an Amico, or?

BH: It was a lot, it was an Esso. Esso was before your time. It is now Exxon. They used to do that. I think it might have been 25 years. But their lease was enough that it would pay for Daddy to get a loan to buy that lot and have money left over. That was an indication of the growth that was taking place that they liked that service station location and they wanted it. So there is that.

ET: That's good because I was interested in that service station. That was one of the ones I was going to show you a slide of when my slides weren't working.

PV: Okay. Is the service station still there? If it was right next to the...

BH: No. You know where the theater is. I'm talking about right across the street from the theater.

PV: Oh, in that, what looks like a brick office building?

BH: It's a shopping center, strip shopping center going perpendicular.

ET: I was thinking you were talking about Academy and Chatham. There's a service station there now.

PV: Well, there's the little old service station on the corner.

BH: That's at Academy Street. This was where that... see the strip shopping center goes back in there.

ET: So you're not talking about the gas station that's here?

BH: No. That must have been there when I was a young'un, just a little small place. The man that operated it, owned it, I don't know whether he owned it or not, was lazy as all get-out. His wife did all the work. She pumped the gas and changed the oil and that was almost unheard of back then.

PV: Didn't she also have a, she was a seamstress and she had a sewing business in there so that she could help him with the service station and then she sewed in the back room.

BH: And after he died, she was looking after a man who lived up the street here. He died, he was quite wealthy, and left her, I was told, a good sum of money. I hope he did because she was a wonderful woman. You want that deed?

ET: Yes. Anything you don't want, I'll take. We will take good care of it for you. So is that the extent of what your family developed, was...

BH: No, there's at least one more. See Madison Avenue? These streets in here, Oakwood Heights.

These color codes are dates, aren't they? He sold a tract right in here to a manufacturer. I can't remember the name of it now. Then it would have been ready to develop, this area in here. I think his name was Ollie Spinghauer (?). He came in and bought them all from him in one crack.

ET: He was a developer, builder?

BH: I think he did both.

ET: So was this part also the earliest part of it, or is that something else, those colors down there? That colored section, King, Crest and Murphy, does that mean anything to you?

BH: No, that was from over here, that came in over here to start with and came over there and got in.

ET: Would you call that Oakwood Heights, or no?

PV: Is that part of Duchess Village?

BH: It's hard to tell. It's not cohesive enough to know. But that land that Daddy had was right there.

And he sold that land to industry and then the rest of it we were going to develop into lots and had the

streets. I don't know how far along we were when Spinghauer came along and bought all of them from us.

ET: So he pretty much finished it out. And then he handled selling the lots.

BH: I don't know what he did with them. He might have built the houses on them.

ET: And then, is this area, it says something?

BH: That's entirely different. That's old Cary in there.

ET: That's right, Hillsboro. () There's a couple of bungalows, and...

BH: Some of the houses on Maple Street, see they changed the name some in here.

ET: Now does this Montclair name mean anything to you?

BH: Yes, there's houses over there on West Park Street.

ET: That must be early too then. Pretty old, old Cary.

BH: Yes, Those were all in there and the streets were all in there when I was too early for memory. My pigs used to, when they'd get out would run over there. I had a pig, you know where Heater Park is? I had a pasture for him. And he got out one time and I started to call him, and he came over the hill on West Street. I could hear him coming down that hill. He came on in, I called him and he crawled right back into the pasture.

ET: So I talked last week with Jerry Miller. He said that he designed a lot of the houses all over Cary.

BH: He was building, a lot of people were buying plans from him.

ET: Buying plans. Were there any other companies or individual architects that you know of that people bought plans from?

BH: Well, Bill Keaner, probably.

ET: Was he an architect?

BH: Yes. He had a place in Durham. You know, there were so many, it's hard for me to tell.

ET: I just wanted to know if any names stuck out.

BH: A developer's name, and I put it down somewhere – Medlin. () Let's go down to Walnut Street, Greenwood Forest. He developed Greenwood Forest. And I think Mr. McLaurin worked with him on it. McLaurin built a lot of houses here.

ET: And he was a builder?

BH: He was a builder, and I think he developed with Medlin, or maybe Medlin developed for him.

When talking with Jerry Turner, () Jerry Turner was telling me that he talked, when Maynard Road was coming around, () he said he talked to Mr. Medlin who was going off, and planned to just keep

on going here, to save that amount of land for that loop. So Stonybrook Estates apparently was originally would be part of Greenwood Forest. But the loop changed it.

ET: Cut it in half?

BH: The last thing Daddy tried was Pine Valley is beside the cemetery, we had an option on that and this area here, MacGregor Downs, signed by one of the owners. But the other owner wouldn't sign it. Since they lived catty-corner across the street from us, and they were both up into their nineties, we didn't push it. When the other one wouldn't, he tore it up, just did away with it. He could have held it until they died, and then he would have still had one half-interest in acquiring it. But you don't do that to your neighbors. That was his last stand at development.

ET: And why do you think he decided not to do it anymore?

BH: I don't know, but I wish he had because he would have made a heck of a lot more money doing that than we did in the well drilling business.

ET: So really it was not a long period that he did that? Ten years or not even?

BH: No. Something like that. Maybe fifteen. We bought and sold stuff. That motel next to where Rogers' Restaurant used to be.

ET: Is it the Circus Restaurant now, or was it closer into town?

BH: Closer into town, almost across from the theater. The motel still looks like a motel facing Academy? We bought that and kept it four or five years and sold it and made about \$10,000 profit on it.

PV: Was the building on it when you owned it, or just the land?

BH: The building. What we started doing then was buying old houses and moved them and fix them up. The one on the corner across from Ashworths, catty-corner from the bank where that brick building is, is an appliance store, across from the Fidelity Bank, catty-corner, across the street from that service station on the corner of Academy and Chatham, there's an appliance sales place. There was a house there, two-shaped house. Glen Hobby bought that lot and land to build that appliance building on it. They were going to tear that house down and Daddy said, "How much can I buy it for?" He said, "\$50.00." Daddy said, "I'll take it." We went there and sawed it in two, moved it and all, moved it down on West Street. () Right in here. Daddy bought a lot there, and we moved it down there and set them up side by side and built a big room between the two sides and made an H-shaped house out of it. We dressed it up, refinished the floors, worked over the siding on it and made it look good, and ended up we had \$5,000 into it and sold it for \$10,000.

ET: And that's still there, correct?

BH: Still there.

PV: Now was it originally the Catronis Shoe family's house, the shop that you bought and moved?

BH: Yes, the Catronis Shoe Shop. That was where it was.

PV: So it still exists, it just was moved.

BH: Yes. () Well, it just made it a bigger house and a very simple thing to change it. And it worked good. And another one, something similar to, on West Chatham. () There was a house on there that was real long and it looked awkward because it wasn't deep and it was on a relatively small lot. We bought that thing and cut about 20' off the end of it, and sold it. I don't remember what the property made on it, but that made a bungalow looking house out of it. And that house is still there.

ET: And that's on that lot, or somewhere else?

BH: It's on right about there. I think it's about the only house in that block on that side. I can't remember what's on the corner. But that's two houses bought. And I told you earlier about moving the ones on Harrison, down to, one across Park with the tall columns. And then moved the one that was sitting there down behind it. And they're both still there. So that's two that were moved. I thought that motel, that's no longer there, on the corner of West Chatham...

ET: That was only recently it was torn down, correct?

BH: I bought it and the seller, and I asked 80% of it. I went to the bank and they loaned me the other 20%, so I had 100% financing on it. I paid \$100,000 for it. Put sisters in it and they didn't like that. Said it was losing money. Well, it was losing money paper-wise because of depreciation but it was carrying itself. So I got tired of them fussing, so I said I'd take it on back. They said okay. So I took it all back into my name. Later, I succeeded in selling that motel for \$200,000. So you buy and you sell. I bought some land over on the left-hand side between here and Morrisville. The old road to Pittsboro went through there with the cobblestones still in it when I had it. It was 96 acres, I believe it was, for \$25,000 (\$2,500?), and borrowed the money to buy it on a 90-day note. So I had to do something in a hurry. I got a so-called friend to approve the timber. He said if you strip it you might get \$1,800 for the timber, but I didn't have enough to make the difference. I was 18 then. Daddy had to endorse the note with me. The realtor came along wanting to sell it and I said, "Get me \$3,800 and you can have all the timber over it." In less than a week he had it sold for \$4,400. Mr. Harry of Harry, Sash and Doyle is the one who bought it. He sold the timber off it and got \$3,600 for the timber. The thousands or hundreds didn't make any difference. It was the fact that my friend lied to me. That was a hard thing to

swallow for him because he was a professional timber crewser. He bought land for timber for the Continental Can Company. And he was setting me up to buy that land from me for nothing. Then before the biggest commercial industry people in Raleigh, and Daddy and another man named Carey were setting up to back a man who was making preserves here, Blackman preserves and they were good, selling like hotcakes. He needed money to expand so they set up a corporation, and it sounded good to me, so I ended up with an \$800 profit after taxes. I put \$500 of mine in that business. And the man who owned Pine State Creamery said he'd have his auditor check the books every month. Six months later he called, said I'm sorry, I forgot. I just had him check it and it's bankrupt. He offered to give us all our money back and all of us said no. There was nothing for me to save. But I lost that \$500. I ended up with about \$300 profit left.

ET: How did you wind up in this neighborhood? How long have you been here?

BH: I've been here about 27 years. I sold my house in Russell Hills, I'd been in it for 30 years. Then I looked at, my wife and I had been looking for five years for a contemporary house, a traditional house, one level, and she wanted a bay window that faced south. I heard about these so I went and looked at the plans and he showed them to me, of how he was going to put the houses on. This is the one that had the bay window facing south out of the kitchen. I came back there and said, if you want, we'd better take that one because we hadn't been about to find one in five years. So I contracted with him while it was under construction. That's why I ended up with this house.

ET: So you're the first owner then?

BH: Yes.

PV: It's beautiful.

ET: It seems like when I drive around here, it's pretty much all ranch, one-story houses, because the lots were big enough that you could...

BH: Also split level. My house is a split level because it fit perfectly on the lot.

ET: But not really any two-story.

BH: No, two-story weren't in vogue then.

ET: Do you have any of Jerry Miller's plan books?

BH: No. I've ask around. Let me go through the rest of this stuff.

ET: Okay. Because he said when I visited him last week that he'd thrown them all away.

BH: That's Kildaire Farm, the master plan. That's where the dairy was.

ET: Is the old dairy on here, do you think?

BH: Well, all this was pasture. The dairy was right up here.

ET: Oh, that's it right there, that building.

BH: And I don't know how I came up with this, but I had it and thought you might want it.

ET: It's a little bit out of the time we're studying in this phase, but it's certainly... I will take all these things and they'll go on file at the Page-Walker or somewhere.

BH: This says '89, and you said from the late '70s. So I figured that this was the beginning. They got the photo, I expect, from the town. But you can have it. () There is West Russell Hills.

ET: '62, okay. Cemeteries?

BH: () This is what I think Daddy gave to the cemetery. If the plot went up there I don't know. See, there's the street coming in.

ET: You know what, is that the L shape of the blue section at the bottom? This is the old cemetery and the new section sort of went like that, around. And that must be the section, remember, there were some burials in there?

BH: Yes, that says 1968. This would have been one of the last extensions that the town bought. If you want to mark it so you'll remember what it is, or whatever you want. I don't want it. I've got copies of some of these plats. This is West Russell Hills.

ET: Is that the one we just looked at, or is that another section? Oh, West Russell Hills.

BH: Right. See, it's oriented, if we want to say north is that way, here's Dry Avenue coming down here. The Ashworths used to live right there. This is Ridgecrest. It came around, remember me showing how it came off at an angle and came around? And here's West Russell Hills.

ET: What are the checks? Just your notes for something, probably sold maybe?

BH: We found in looking that the surveyor, starting here, one surveyor who surveyed this and the surveyor who surveyed Russell Hills were twenty feet apart at this end. So that left all that land in no-man's land. So we went there and quit-claimed a deed that had a lot that backed up to that, from either one side or the other, if they wanted it. And they all of them did. That at least got straightened out.

ET: At least assigned it to somebody.

BH: Alright, there is Russell Hills Extension. There's a big map here, if you want it.

ET: That's just like a re-combination, maybe?

BH: Yes, that's a re-do. Park Street, extension of West Street. And that's where we put the house that we moved and made \$5,000 on it.

ET: The one with the columns?

BH: No. That one is up here on the corner. () Here's the cemetery. That says Connor which is now Harrison all the way. () This is the Taylor lots. You want something done to them. It had a well behind them that the town owned. This is where you went from Russell Hills to West Russell Hills. () This is where it came around the cemetery and that's Russell Hills.

ET: () and the south portion of Russell Hills. Okay.

BH: () Maybe I ought to go get the rest of these old maps out. That's a re-subdivision, 1950. That's the park. Right here is where I lived, on this corner. This is Robert Street and that's Dry Avenue. This is Heater Drive.

ET: And these are just lot numbers, do you think?

BH: Yes.

ET: This says Reserved. Why was that reserved?

BH: We had our shop over here.

ET: For the well drilling?

BH: Yes.

ET: Have we gone through them all? This is great. We don't have any Jerry Miller plans. We'll have to get some of those, if you can think where those might turn up.

BH: I'll ask Jerry Turner if he had any.

ET: Did you have questions about kit houses?

BH: Yes, you mentioned that.

ET: Yes, is that any, that wasn't something that sounds like you really did that you were building. They were more...

BH: There were two houses that were built, to the best of my... I don't know when. There was an old development. It might show on that map as such. I don't know if you can pick it out on here or not. You probably can, near the corner of Dry and Harrison. () Page 3, there's one house, here's one on that lot. I think it's those two. I was told they were Montgomery Ward houses. They were originally shot-gun houses, but this one had been added to extensively. That one I'm not sure of, but I know this one has been almost doubled in size.

ET: Since it was a kit house? Since it was a Montgomery Ward houses built and now they're expanded.

BH: Yes, and built. One I'm not sure of, and I don't know how to tell you. Somebody said that Daddy built the house on that corner. And I know he didn't. They said he built a Sears and Robuck house on

it. He built a house on this, the second lot here, the red one. He built that one before I was born, because I was born in that house.

PV: So this is on Dry near...

BH: Yes. And my sister was born, she'll be 87 next month. Dorothy. She and I both were born in that house. All of us are about four years apart. We were born in that front bedroom. And Jean Ladd was born in the house right next to it, which is a frame house going up the hill. Mr. Meekins (?), who was a professor at State lived here.

ET: Here, that long, skinny one?

BH: Yes. And we lived, Daddy, this was the house that I think was built in '22. Daddy bought it later. We moved out to the Jones house on Highway 54, while I was about two years old.

PV: Oh, the Nancy Jones house?

BH: Yes. I think Daddy went bankrupt in '30, and I was born in '29, so he probably lost this house in bankruptcy, made a diamond(?) and then came back and bought this one. And that's where I grew up in, and my younger sister was born there. She was four years younger than I was. And that was that. Whether that was or not, I don't know. I never heard him say whether it was a shot-gun house.

ET: Do you think they were built, bringing the kit houses on the railroad? They'd bring all the pieces on the railroad?

BH: They were probably shipped in by railroad back then, and then loaded onto a truck and carried. They usually came in in pieces, and everything was pre-cut, I believe. I'm not sure of that. But that was my understanding of the way they did them then. And they'd come in and you had to find, everything was marked where it went. Everything was pre-cut and you just had to assemble it.

ET: And if you go, I can probably go find a Montgomery Ward catalog, and if we knew what those houses looked like when they were built, you could look up, figure out what model, and the name.

BH: One of them may look the same now, or it may not. It used to belong to Everett Sanford in my earliest memory, the one that was still looking like a shot-gun. Now if you want me to get into where people lived, and who lived where, I'll try to do that. It's up to you.

ET: I think just for now I need to go back and sort of process all this subdivision information, and get it typed up and get that straight in my mind.

BH: Buck Jordan did a lot of developing around Cary, and in later time, I'm not sure when he started. But he developed where the shopping center is. He developed that shopping center.

ET: Which one?

BH: Cary Mall. If you're looking at Maynard Road, he bought land all around it. They used to call that Political Road. The man who owned Carolina Building Supplies sold building materials to the builders was one of the highway commissioners. And he got that Political Road put in there, and it was through builder's land after another. That's why they called it Political Road.

ET: This has been very helpful to me. I appreciate your time. Whatever you don't want, we'll make sure it gets a good home.

BH: Jerry said, that it used to be what was community planning in the conservation development department kept plans on most zones. And that he was pretty sure they did some zoning for Cary in the early days before they did this.

ET: This would have been the county?

BH: The state. And Jerry worked for that department for the state before he went out on his own. He told me, he said if you need to talk to him he'd be glad to have you call him and he'd try to tell you anything he could. But one thing that is interesting to me was, when this was done, he said in the late '60s and early '70s, here is where we are now, MacGregor Downs, which were the only plans at that time.

ET: But there was nothing built here? A few things maybe?

BH: I don't remember when. I just know I made a big mistake by not buying one of the lots when you could buy one for \$10,000. One up there they wanted \$400,000 for, that's still empty.

ET: Well, there's some few that are lit up with the light blue color on the map, but they might have been torn down. I don't know if they tore down a lot of houses in this area and built new ones.

BH: No, I think that was all woods and farmland. Mr. Holloman who used to own it, the one that we had half the option on, they farmed that. I found a mule shoe out here when I was out working in my garden one day, so I know, and you can look at the pine trees just about and see where they were almost all pines. That's when it was almost all farmland or pastureland.

PV: That was all the Holloman farm originally, wasn't it?

BH: It wasn't actually a farm in my earliest memory, because they already lived across the street catty-corner from us in my earliest memory. But I know that they had farmed there before. That was their property.

PV: Didn't they have land that went up near Cornwall as well, up in that area? Or is it just the same land and it went all that way?

BH: No, that was the land that Pine Valley subdivision is on. They had that.

PV: They did have that, as a separate piece of land?

BH: Separate piece of land but that's what that one and this one was what Daddy had the option on, signed by one.

ET: It seems like there was a lot of land around here that just wasn't farmed anymore. Was that because it had been, early in the 30s and 40s and 20s that it had all just been farms and it wasn't profitable to farm it anymore because the soil was used up, or...?

BH: I don't know why. I expect he quit farming on that because of his age. Because they were, of course when you're young, everybody looks old. But they must have been at least in their late 70s, early 80s when they were living across the street, catty-corner from us. So that meant they had moved off of it earlier. If the Maynard farm was farmed right regular, and it was, you know where the state employees' credit union is? That's on part of that Maynard farmland.

PV: On Harrison?

BH: No, on Walnut. And there was another Maynard family, I reckon they were cousins, I'm not sure, on Kildaire, right across from where Pine Valley now comes into it. That was one of the Maynards. And it was three or four brothers that had adjoining farmland that went almost from Walnut Street almost to old US 1. They had so much of it. It was three or four of them in there. So they were farming that, and Mr., I can't think of his name now, a man who lived roughly on the corner of Maynard and Walnut. He had a cow farm, it wasn't a dairy farm. He had been hurt in the war somehow, and he talked as loud as he could talk. I tried to buy that from him and develop it, and he wouldn't see it to me. I think Buck Jordan finally got it from him. The first, what is now the big bank from Charlotte, the one that's the biggest in the nation, used to be...

ET: Wachovia, or?

BH: No, the other one.

PV: Wells Fargo, Bank of America, First Union?

BH: No. The one that's still in Charlotte. () But they wanted that corner of Maynard and Walnut, the northwest corner, and they didn't want to approach them directly. Somehow they got around me and wanted me to approach and see if I could get that corner for them. I think they wanted \$125,000 for it. I'm not sure of that amount. But they said, that's ridiculous. Later on they bought it and somebody told me they paid close to \$1 million, but that's hear-say. I don't know what they paid. But I've bent y'all's ears enough.

PV: This has been fantastic.

BH: It's making me get back in memory because on the 15th of December I'm supposed to speak to a Rotary Club and I want to speak on old Cary.

PV: Well there you go. Maybe we wetted your memory. So on a completely different topic, if I could pick your brain a little bit more. The old Cary Theater that the town is about to restore. What memories do you have of it?

BH: Well, it was the first one in Cary.

PV: Do you remember going to it.

BH: It never was real successful. The boy that inherited it works out at Joseph A. Bank.

PV: Yes, Randy Chandler, we interviewed him.

BH: His daddy built it. I think his daddy owned more than one theater. We thought we were big time. Cary was, used to be a bus that the state highway department ran from Cary to the highway shops there across from, then it was in where the fairgrounds is, which is now across from where their shops are. That bus had so many people working in Cary that worked over there that they ran that bus to transport them to and from. People in Apex would come to Cary to get on that bus to go there.

ET: There really was a lot of relationship between Cary and sort of that western Raleigh, in terms of employment, people working for NCSU and downtown.

BH: At that time you could work for the state, state college, the DOT and state. I probably, of the whites in Cary I would say probably 90% of them, the males, worked in one of those two, either state college or...

PV: If they weren't farmers, that's where they worked.

BH: Yes. () used to be head football coach and he lived in a house at the corner of Park and Harrison. He used to come up to our house and play pool in the basement at night. There were several – the basketball coach that died, he lived about four doors up the street here. () lived over here, and the other side there was a lake while he was here. They just came back because it was real convenient to get to.

PV: So now, many years ago Anne Kratzer interviewed you several times. I've treasured those interviews. In those interviews, you said that you used to see movies at the elementary school. What was the high school then. I think you said you saw your very first movie there. Okay, do you have an idea of what timeframe they were showing movies at the high school?

BH: They tore that high school down about 1938, so it had to have been before '38.

PV: So it was in the old building?

BH: I was born in '29, so that will give you an idea that I was a young'un. I probably couldn't have been over eight years old. It had a balcony and we'd sit up in the balcony and saw *The Last of the Mohegans*. It was a series, I remember that. For some reason that sticks in my mind, but that was one of the shows they showed. There used to be, I'm getting into something because I'm making notes to use to talk about when I talk about old Cary. You know, Cary had an academy way back, a privately owned academy. And then they built that brick building. And they had a dormitory for boys and a dormitory for girls. In the teens, you would find people going through there from South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, and a lot of them from Raleigh and Millbrook which used to be outside of Raleigh, Garner, Apex coming to school in Cary because it was the closest high school. They had that private academy there. They tore down the boys' dormitory just about the time they tore down the old high school building. But they left the girls' dormitory, but they switched it over and made a teacherage out of it. They rented apartments to teachers then. That building stayed there for many many years, way up past the building that's there now. I was told, I don't know how true it is, that the gym there was given by the town to the school. Whether that's true or not, I don't know. That was before my time. But it wouldn't surprise me because it was hard to get anything. I went to the second grade there and my daughter came along and she went to the same teacher in the same room in the second grade.

PV: That you had had?

BH: Yes. And that teacher, every time she would see me, Ruth Cathey Fox, and if she was introducing me to somebody, she'd say, "And it used to be, when I'd go up the aisle beside he seat, when I'd go by he'd reach out and pat me on the fanny." She loved to tell that.

PV: Do you remember doing that?

BH: No. But she gave me my dog, I remember that. She gave me my dog Tony. Everybody in Cary knew that dog's name. He used to go down and sit on his hind legs and beg with his front feet hanging down in front of Glen Hobby's grocery store. He finally got ran over over on Highway 54. Now they call it Durham Highway or Durham Street, something like that. But he traveled all over town. She was a good looking woman. She lived into her nineties. She just died four or five years ago. The older you get, the more your memory goes back. I still, the one that I think is the most unusual concerning me was, at 15 it was me and the police chief and a butcher were the only ones that fought fires in Cary. When you talk about sending a 15-year-old to fight a fire, and they dropped the age from 16 down to 15 to get a driver's license during the war because there was such a shortage of people could drive. I

was driving a semi unit all over North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia when I was 15. And I look at a 15-year-old now and I say, how in the world did Daddy do that.

PV: You grew up faster in those days.

BH: You had to. We had most of the people we had working. There were convicts that were paroled for a day, and alcoholics and the elderly. And that's where we had to get most of our workers.

PV: Because everybody else was in the war, right?

BH: Yes. We were drilling wells galore for airports all up and down the coast in North Carolina. Particularly Cherry Point, we drilled 106 wells at Cherry Point alone. They had three separate water systems in case two of them got bombed out they'd still have another one. And where the Raleigh/Durham airport was, that was two counties and towns bought that land and had them rough graded, I think some runways for it. Anyhow, the war started and the Air Force came in and took it over. It was an air base during the war. I used to drive out there on that when I was 14, working out there in the summer. The Highway Patrol warned me, but that was federal controlled land then and the SPs were happy with me driving. The first plane landed out there was a private plane flying over. Something happened to his engine and he had to land. He looked down there on the smoothest looking part of the runway is where he decided to land. Well, the reason it looked smooth, it was a puddle of water, or a big puddle of water, and he landed in it. It nosed over, didn't hurt him but gas was running out of his tanks, and the farmers started coming out of the woodwork with cans to catch that gas. It's funny how you remember stuff like that.

ET: So when is your Rotary talk?

BH: The 15th of December, I believe it is. I'm making some notes as I think about them, on cards.

PV: That's a good story, though. That's a very good story.

BH: That truck we had then was a '32 Chevrolet, and most the time when we had a fire, we had to get the town dump truck up there to pull it off to get it started. They said we needed to save newspaper during the war. The only trouble was, they didn't tell anybody what to do with them. They collected them, and the town didn't have anywhere to put them, so they put them in beside the fire truck. And you used to have to climb over the newspapers to get into the fire truck.

ET: Thank you so very much, Bob. This was wonderful. You were a great help. I'll have copies made of these maps and plots and return the originals to you. We really appreciate all this information and your time today.

END OF INTERVIEW