

Interview

with

KENNETH D. CAPES

November 28, 1994

by Patrick Huber

Transcribed by Jackie Gorman

The Southern Oral History Program
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

KENNETH CAPES
NOVEMBER 28, 1994

PATRICK HUBER: The following is an interview by Patrick Huber with Ken Capes at the Warren Drug store in downtown Mebane, North Carolina, on November 28, 1994. The following interview is being conducted for the Southern Oral History Program and is part of its Oral History of the White Furniture Company Project.

I thought that we might start out the interview today, Ken, by having you tell us where and when you were born and a little bit about what your folks did and if you had any brothers and sisters.

KENNETH CAPES: My name is Ken Capes. I was born in Burlington around the Burlington mill village in 1941. I had a couple of older brothers. Everybody in my family has at one time worked for a mill, for the Burlington Mill. I grew up there. Went to school in Burlington. Went to UNC and got a B.S. degree in pharmacy. Worked my first three years in Mebane. Moved up the road to Haw River and worked twenty years and moved back to Mebane and have been here another twelve years. Pretty familiar just more or less with this particular area. Had parents that moved to Burlington because of the mill there and raised up pretty close.

PH: Did you work in the mill as a teenager before you went to UNC?

KC: Worked in the mill while I was at UNC. They were good enough to give me a job the first two summers after I was out of high school. Worked in the chemical lab there and really enjoyed it as a matter of fact. [laughs] But this didn't really feel like that was the place for me for the rest of my life.

PH: When did you say that you first came? What year did you first come to Mebane?

KC: I came to Mebane in 1964. We moved--. We had been married probably six months or so. I had been working at my apprenticeship out in Graham. I got through

with my apprenticeship and I worked there for those guys for about six months, maybe, then came to Carolina Drug here in Mebane. I worked for Mr. Jim White, who was sort of a landmark here himself. He started the drugstore in 1933. And the fact that the store itself just closed down this year, but came and I got my feet wet there and, like I said, moved back up the road to Haw River, but we kept our Mebane ties by staying in the Mebane church. We joined the First Baptist Church when we came to Mebane and rather than switching churches--. We lived more or less halfway in between Haw River and Mebane anyhow, so we sort of kept our bonds with Mebane even while we were up there.

PH: And then when did you return to Mebane for the second time?

KC: Been here--. This makes twelve years, '82, I guess.

PH: In '82?

KC: Uh, huh.

PH: To start out generally, do you have any impressions of the White Furniture Company when you came to town?

KC: Yeah, well, it was kind of, well, sort of almost familiar to me in that a lot of the same principles or the way they did things at White's were the way that they had done things in the cotton mills there that we had grown up around. If a parent worked there and his kid got old enough to work, it wasn't much question about where he was gonna work. If his daddy worked at White's, the daddy would go talk to Mr. White and pretty soon the son worked at White's. And I was much the same way at Burlington Mills, you know. You had families that had maybe as many as five members of the same family working in the mill there when mom and dad worked there. I saw the same thing down here. Basically, it was men and their sons, rather than the daughters and mothers like it was in a mill setup, but I saw that and it sort of always amazed me that you could almost tell when they come in the drug store where they worked because chances are they were missing a finger here and there, you know. Those same guys, though, that had accidents

and lost limbs or lost fingers would still--as soon as that boy was sixteen--talk to Mr. White about getting him a job.

Like I say, there's just a lot of similarity between--. I guess it just goes back to what a community is built around, for what I understand or for what I can see, basically, Mebane was built around White Furniture Company just like the portion of Burlington I grew up in was built around Piedmont Heights or Burlington Mills in that area. It's probably more the way times were, you know, than anything else. Not much mode of transportation, you know. You lived close to where you worked so you could work, you know. [laughs] And I saw a lot of that. As far as with White's, maybe that's how it started out and it just got to be a loyalty type thing, it appeared to be.

Of course, Mr. White was good to the people, I mean, he was not aloof in that he didn't mingle. I mean, he could come through the plant, you know, and probably call names. I don't know. I always liked him. He seemed like just regular folk.

PH: He would come in here occasionally to the drugstore?

KC: Oh, yeah, well, he has been in here, but he is not as well now as he once was. He doesn't get out as much as he wants to, but he used to when I was working in the beginning at Carolina Drug. He was in there, you know, regularly. I don't know, maybe because he owned the building. [laughs] Because, no, he did. He owned basically downtown. Like I said, he'd come in here in his overshoes and coveralls. He had been out messing with some horses or whatever. He was regular folk. That's what impressed me about him.

Of course, the mill itself, the furniture plant itself was a--. Dynasty is not the word, but it passed from generation from generation, you know. He seemed to fit in with what I knew about the rest of them. And, of course, it was that way up until they sold the plant. Of course, his health was going down then.

PH: What kind of reputation did the White family have among, you know, just in town?

KC: Yeah, well, as far as I know, they were well-liked. Mr. White, see--. When I came the patriarch or the head man of the organization was Mr. Steve White. His dad had died. They lived here in town. They mingled here in town. They went to church here in town. His wife was a sweet woman as there ever has been, I mean, she took joy in helping him. I couldn't say nothing bad about them.

PH: Who were the other large employers in Mebane?

KC: Well, basically, when I came to town White's was the big employer. You had Craftique, which was probably almost comparable in size. You had Melville Furniture which was across the tracks. It was a little smaller. But furniture was the thing, you know, there weren't that many textile processes going on. We had Southerland Mills down here that was just--. Shucks, I don't even know who they are now. They were bought by Adams Milace and they're Brown-Wooten now. Thinking back, them, Dixie Yarn -- had a little hosiery mill over here on 119 North -- were the only things I can recall right off. But like I said, furniture was the main thing.

PH: Do you have any idea how many people worked at White's?

KC: I really don't. I really don't. There was a lot of folks come out of that building come quitting time. [laughs] But as far as numbers, I really don't know.

PH: What was it like around quitting time when the whistle blew? Can you describe that?

KC: Well, the streets would be--. Well, they didn't tarry, you know, like some folks like their work so well that they'll hang around and everything. When the whistle blew it was time to leave. I can get a picture of Friday's quitting time and payday. Every insurance man in Alamance County was there waiting for them when they come out of that building so they make sure they get that premium paid. [Laughs] I think that's one picture I get of quitting time.

Then you have just like you do today, of course, there's not that many places for them to hang out. Some of the locals hang around and panhandle or whatever when they get off work and got their money, you know, they're feeling prosperous at that minute.

It was sort of a bustling place down there, I mean, ever how many employees they had, it looked like the place was full when they came out. [laughs]

PH: You said that a lot of the workers would come into the store here?

KC: Oh, yeah, yeah. We had a--. Back years when I worked for, worked at Carolina in '64 or '65--that time frame--now we had a big lunch counter and when the lunch break would occur, you know, you'd be deluged. And, of course, even as recent as, say, five or six years ago or maybe six or eight years ago, we were the last of the hang-on's as far as a lunch counter in a drugstore, you know. The other drugstores had taken theirs out and whatever. So we would have a right curt lunch hour. We would have an extra girl to come in just to handle that and basically it was all White's. Of course, you would have--. It would be the same ones everyday, basically. The girls--a lot of them--would have their stuff ready, you know, when they got here because they knew what they were going to have.

Shortly before they closed down, they put a commissary of sorts in the mill down there, in the plant. That cut out--. We didn't have to have any extra help. We still had some of the regulars that came there, but, yeah, they were--. When lunch hour would come it would be like a scattering, I mean, they were everywhere. You could see them going everywhere, heading to Byrd's or to the deli or into one of the stores. They used to have a little--. Well, they do now where this deli is up the street there was a little sandwich shop in there some years ago. Just seemed like probably the most of them ate like that rather brown bagging like I was used to.

PH: Did you know a lot of the workers by name?

KC: I did, yeah. I probably would have to scratch my head to recall them, but, yeah, you--. It's like anywhere else, I mean, there's no--. I don't guess--. People are

different every where you go, but, yet, there are a lot the same. You know, they have their peculiarities, either they way they look or they way they talk or whatever, and you learn, you know.

And we still have some of those guys, some of the unique guys. They'll stop by every now and again, "You don't remember me, do you?" [laughs] "Yeah, you're the one I couldn't forget." [laughs] But yeah, they still stop in once in a while to let you know that they were one of White's, "You remember me when I worked at White's?" "Yeah, I do." Yeah, they had some characters, you know, you have characters everywhere you go and White's was no exception.

PH: Do you remember any in particular--without naming any names--some of the things that struck you about the people?

KC: [hesitation] No.

PH: Any joke tellers or--?

KC: Well, yeah, all of that went on. As far as picking out an individual that did more of that than another one, right off I can't recall anything.

PH: But they would come in and they'd talk to you?

KC: Oh, yeah, they would come in, and, myself, I would try to mingle because I would rather work right here dipping ice cream than I am up there any day because it's just more fun. I'd try to make my way up, you know, into the crowd sometimes and help the girls with the lunch counter and whatever. Yeah, basically, we all knew each other and knew who we were, one another.

PH: Did the workers ever talk about their work when they came in here--things that happened on the job--with you?

KC: Well, nothing more than, you know, just the usual stuff. They had one incident down there back in June of '66 when my wife was at County Hospital trying to deliver. One of the guys--one of the regulars that come in--he had let a piece of lumber slip and it caught him on the side of the head, just ripped him open, you know. So there

was only one doctor at that particular time on duty over there where we were, and he was up there with my wife trying to find a kid. He sat over there and bled and sat over there and bled and sat over there and bled. He called my wife--. So they called over there and asked him and said, "We've got an emergency down here." He said, "Can't handle but one emergency at a time. Got one over here right now." [laughs] So he wound up going around to one of the other doctors to get stitched up. I do recall that.

As far as pulling out anything else that was humorous right at this minute I can't think. But this guy never has forgot it. [laughs] He stills comes by. [laughs]

PH: How were the workers at White's generally regarded by the rest of the townspeople? I know that in mill villages they were stigmatized, the workers.

KC: Yeah, probably the same way. It was probably the same way. It makes no difference where you go or what position you take or whatever, we tend to segregate ourselves. Maybe look up or look down, but we tend to segregate ourselves. I think it wasn't any different here. The folks that worked at White's basically associate with the people that worked at White's or furniture workers or whatever. Didn't try to hob-nob or--. But probably the salt of the earth, I mean, they are probably the best folks around and, of course, like I said, growing up in a mill village that's the way it is. You know, you've got one group that looks down on mill workers or laborers. You've got another group that don't work at all, you know, that sort of look up to them. Basically, that's the way it was down there because they probably were not in the minority. They probably didn't feel much of a stigma about being a furniture mill worker or a furniture plant worker.

PH: Did you see any or can you think of any specific examples of a stigma being attached to them? Were they called--lumped together--called a certain name?

KC: No, no. The only thing that I do recall--an old white gentleman, he had retired--it was their Christmas Party and Retirement Party all lumped together -- and he had been down there all his life, ever since he was just a kid. He probably went to work before he was legally able to work. It was the only job he had ever had. He said, "You

know what?" said, "I just never been in a situation like that in my life." He said, "You know, he called me up there. Mr. White, he called me up there in front of that whole crowd and told them how long I had been there." You get the feeling that that was a real source of pride to be singled out by somebody like Mr. White, but I remember that. But as far as the neighborhood being categorized or called different names or different things I really don't--. Maybe it was because I had a deaf ear to that because I had grown up with it, you know.

I find that today that I am probably prouder of coming up in a time and in a situation and a community--what I came up in--than if I had come up with something. I had a lady come in here a month or so ago and she says -- I was getting her address and she give me her address and it was a mill hill address, and I said, "Well, Lord have mercy. I know exactly where you live." She said, "How do you know where I live?" I said, "I'm one of the original mill hill kids and I'm proud of it." We got to talking. I feel like that's probably the same way these folks feel now--a lot of them--that have gone through that and either retired or had to retire because it closed down. I know that there were guys that worked over there that took extreme pride in what they did. I had a guy come by and he said, "You know, it just worries me to death. They've stepped up production--.

[Interruption by DOUG ISAAC stating, he had a thing for Jason Troutman.

KC: Said, "They stepped up production, and they're moving that furniture by me so fast that I can't do my kind of job I want. I can't spray it like it ought to be sprayed because it is going too fast. "You get the feeling that really they took a pride in what they did. They wanted it done right whether they was going to get paid the same thing for it or not. Another guy that worked on the saws over there, he says, "You know, in order to do it right, you've got to take your time to do it right." He was talking about speeding up of the process and stuff.

I'm sure that there were those there that didn't care, you know. They were there to make it to Friday. And there were those there that wouldn't have worked for nothing, but they enjoyed what they did and they wanted it done right. I think that says something about a fellow and it makes no difference what he does if he's doing it to please himself as well as to get it on down the line.

I've fiddled around with a little furniture refinishing myself, and it's a good feeling, you know, when you get that thing down to where--. You know, "Man, this is something nice," you know, and you can't do it by just slapping something on there and sending it out. And it takes time. It takes practice, and it takes work. I think that by and large they probably had a group of people down there, at one time, that cared what the stuff was. And, of course, you can look in the catalogue or whatever when White was the name in furniture. They were getting enough money for it that they didn't have to ship it out, you know, in boxcar loads. They did it and did it right. They knew it was sold when they had it finished because there wasn't going to be anybody else that made a better piece of furniture than them. Of course, that's got to give a fellow a little feeling of, you know, making him feel good about himself.

It seemed not to be--to me--seemed not to be the same once the White family was out of it.

PH: It sounds as if from your comments that you had some idea of what the new company was trying to do with production by talking to the workers.

KC: Yeah. I think that, well, you know, I don't know anything about the furniture business or much about any kind of business, but I felt like they bought it to sell it. I didn't really think they bought it to be a furniture manufacturer in Mebane. They bought it to sell it and cut down on competition or whatever, and when they took it over, we're talking laying off a thirty-five-year saw guy that's worked that saw, the same saw now for years and years and years and years, and they lay him off and hire a guy that's never touched a saw to take his place. Somewhere down the line something has got to take a back seat. I

mean, you're not going to have quality that you would have had with an inexperienced person doing the work. Ain't no way.

That's some of the stuff that I saw, the speeding up of the conveyor to get that stuff, not just to get it made, but get it made and get it out, you know. You can't sand that thing right without enough time. You can't spray it right. You can't clean it right. I think that they came in, made the most of the White name, and probably saw the White name diminish some while they were doing that.

PH: Did a lot of workers that you spoke to also think that they just bought it to sell it?

KC: Well, I think it took--. It took a lot of them by surprise because, you know, White's been here since, what, 1891 or something.

PH: '81, yeah.

KC: Who in the world is going to sell White's, I mean, you know, that's like selling First Baptist Church, you just can't do it you know. And I think it took a lot of them by surprise, and a lot of them really didn't know anything about Hickory Furniture or Hickory Chair or whatever. I don't know that the most of them had any thoughts other than, "Am I going to have a job or are they going to replace me?" And they did replace a lot of "me's." Once they got in and some of the things inside began to change, I'm sure that may have gone through some of them's minds, and there were a lot, when the lay-offs began, got out on their own hunting something before it got to--.

As far as why they bought it, maybe they bought it to turn or to keep it what it was. Maybe to put a little more production into it, I don't know. Like I said, I don't anything about furniture business. I just know that you can hardly expect the same quality to come out of anything whether you're making a chair or whether you're dyeing cloth or if you're working in a drugstore, you can't do as good a job with inexperienced people as you can with experienced people. And usually the more experienced the better, you know. They

just went through that change of the older personnel down there which I thought was not right, but then again--.

PH: Do you remember how you first heard that the company was going to close?

KC: You mean when it was shut down?

PH: Yeah, when it was Hickory-White that was shutting down.

KC: It was probably one of the workers in the office or maybe it just sort of leaped out from somebody to somebody to us. [laughs] I don't remember directly anybody coming in and saying, you know, "White's is going to close now or whatever," but I know that the community sort of got a hint of it before it ever happened. Whether it was one of these Democrat leaks or not. [laughs] Until they did it, until it closed down, I didn't think they were going to do it. I thought that maybe they had a buyer or whatever--.

PH: Even after they had announced it you didn't believe it until--.

KC: I kind of felt like something was going to happen, but it didn't, and I guess as far as furniture goes that place is out forever. It's still the ideal place for that type of operation.

PH: How did the plant's closing down affect the downtown area?

KC: Downtown has been sort of fading for years and years. The advent of shopping centers in the '60s sort of killed Mebane as far as downtown business goes, but anytime you take or cut a hundred, two hundred employees two blocks away from your door, you're gonna hurt. I mean, there's no question about it. There is no way you can not hurt from it. It affected our overall business, and I'm sure it did everybody else in town. That's the reason you've got so many empty store fronts now.

When I came to Mebane in '64 there wasn't an empty store front in Mebane. Every place had a business in it. You had department stores and you had auto parts stores. A couple or three hardware stores, you know, but even before that plant closed we were seeing the demise of that. It just added to it, I mean, I don't know that Mebane would be

a vibrant downtown if White's had still kept going, but it would have been better than what it is now, yeah.

PH: How do you think in a larger sense the closing affected the town of Mebane?

KC: Well, you know, probably through the families that were in there, yeah. You had families that were rooted in the furniture plant that had to be uprooted and move away or change their whole--. You had some that were able to go to Craftique, but by and large I expect that most of them didn't and they had to find other kinds of work. A lot of them had never done any other kind of work, you know, it's--. When a man is fifty years old and he's worked in a furniture plant for thirty years and it closes down and you've got nothing around but hosiery mills or that type of thing, most folks don't want to learn you--teach you--how to do something in the hosiery mill if you're fifty years old and it's going to take you a couple of years to get to your max, you know. They'd rather have a younger person.

A lot of them had to move out or move away to find a job or a place that they could work. I'm sure that some of them moved probably toward the Greensboro or High Point areas to where there were furniture factories. I think by and large as far as how it affected the town or the area through here probably was more in that vein, in the vein that it was--. It affected the families and within the families more so than it did business or whatever. And, of course, when you lose families it does affect your community somewhat.

Probably the changeover from the White family to the Hickory family was almost as devastating as the closing itself in that some of the real older folks that had been there forever were gone at that time, and, you know, new blood brought it and maybe not the traditional type. So when they closed--. I guess what I am saying is a lot of the new folks that came in they weren't furniture folks to begin with. They were people that needed a job at the time and were hired. When the factory closed there, then furniture wasn't all that imbedded, you know. They could go out and do something else, and most of them

were younger. I think probably it effected that transition group as much as it did in the end when they closed it down.

PH: At about the time that they closed the plant Mebane was up to get the Mercedes-Benz plant. Do you know anything about that?

KC: Well, do I know anything about that? I know that Mebane was in line for a Mercedes plant. I don't think that the closing of the plant had anything to do with them not coming. I don't think that--. In fact, the only reason that it didn't come here was because it was bought, you know, and the people never will get it paid for. [laughs] Personally, I'm glad it didn't come here because I thought we were offering too much. But as far as the two things related I don't see any relation between the two.

It probably would have had a good work force selection, but they're going to have a good work force selection wherever they go, you know, because they're going to pay higher than furniture factory wages or mill worker wages, but I don't think there was any connection as far as the plant not coming here and this plant closing down.

I always felt like years ago that Mr. White sort of--. He owned a lot of real estate. And he sort of could control who was here and who wasn't here, you know. In that sense he had a work force here that if you were going to work for somebody else you were going to have to get out of town to do it, more or less. [laughs]

I have an idea, you know, in that era that's probably the way it was in a lot of places. Like say where I come from over there, the mill owned the village. I can remember my daddy buying the house we lived in for five hundred dollars. The mill owned the property the church was on and was more than generous to the church because the church kept them sober and able to work. Kept them pretty well content as a neighborhood or community.

I feel like maybe the Whites were somewhat philanthropic or whatever the word is. They -- you know, with scholarships to the schools and one thing or another. They were a--. They weren't like the corporation, you know, they had a sense of person about them,

you know. The whole group, not just the Whites, but they people that they had running it. The upper-- The management portion of it were folks that were a part of the family or had been there forever. And like I say, I think that the plant itself, the people that were in-charge, the supervisory -- from the top on down through the supervisory -- probably had a sense of community about them. And it probably was sort of promoted by Mr. White, you know, to keep them happy, to keep them working. That's not a bad philosophy in this day in time. You know, it don't make no difference what kind of business you're in, if you've got unhappy workers you're going to have below standard quality work, and you're going to have people that are looking to go somewhere else. He must have had that.

PH: What was the general impression of the Hickory company when they came in?

KC: Well, I don't know that anybody really took a special liking to them. They were impersonal. I met the guy that was, I guess, the plant manager once or twice. He wasn't that part of the community. He was in and out. He was there to do what they had sent him there to do to get this thing moving. I don't know that as far as fitting into the community or whatever or if the hierarchy of that company ever could have or would have.

As far as his personality or whatever, I guess, it probably would have been different if the place had been bought and maybe some of the people that were already there had been left to run it. It might could have made a go of it as far as that goes, but it really--as far as the people that came in to do it--not much of a personality there as far as a company personality.

When they came in and some of the first lay-offs occurred, it was like you could see the employees or whatever more or less walking on eggshells and really didn't know what they were going to do. That doesn't give you a very favorable impression of management, at least it doesn't me. I think maybe it was less than up front about some of the stuff.

PH: When you said plant manager you meant Robin Hart?

KC: I guess that's his name. I really don't [inaudible]--but the gentleman that came in to take it over. I was never in his company more than a couple of times. A the other guys, like I said, they were in and out. Of course, they were familiar with the community. They lived here and this guy--as far as I know--he never moved down here. I don't know.

A lot of people who would move from a larger community into an area like Mebane would probably scratch their head and say, why did I ever do that, you know, but I wouldn't. [laughs] I'm just the other way around.

PH: When you said that you think that the company was less than up front about some things, what exactly do you mean?

KC: Yeah, well, I'm talking about when they came in they knew that they were going to let these people go. I mean, there's no question, when they came here they were going to cut cost and raise profits. The way you cut cost is you get rid some of the people that have worked their way up to maybe two or three dollars over minimum wage, you know, and hire somebody for minimum wage. I think they knew they were going to do that when they got here. I think that--. Like I said, I think if they ever intended to make a go of it that was probably their downfall, you know, let them guys go on and do what they'd been doing for years. The Whites had never suffered any as far as selling their--.

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE A

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

KENNETH CAPES
NOVEMBER 28, 1994

KC: as far as, you know, I guess what I said, as far as when they came to town they didn't come right out and say, "Okay, we're going to go at this thing with a new game plan. It's different from anything you guys ever done and probably we're going to start with a whole new team." Rather than coming in and allowing them to wonder from week to week, "Am I going to be here next week?" Of course, there again, that probably doesn't make good business sense for a corporation, but I think that that was true in their case.

PH: I was curious when Bill Bamberger had the photo exhibit over there and Warren's Drug Store gave the ice cream cones to the former workers at White's. Whose idea was that?

KC: Well, Bill asked us what we would do or if there was anything that we would like to do. You know, that was something that was sort of unique with us because nobody else had a scoop of ice cream, you know, and it was something that was sort of a traditional type thing that--. I thought it was a pretty good idea because, you know, on Sundays, you know, a lot of--. A lot of the folks that were at White's if they go for a drive they always stop by for a cone of ice cream. We still have people that drive all the way from close to Chapel Hill to get a milkshake. Yeah, they still do, and I think that was sort of neat idea. I don't know whether we thought of it or Bill did, but we'll take credit for it.

PH: [laughs] It was a nice gesture. Did you have a lot of people that took you up on the offer and came over?

KC: I didn't work that particular weekend, but I'm sure there was several.

[There is an interruption again from Doug Isaac and he asks Ken a question about his job.]

PH: Did you go over to the opening to see the photographs?

KC: I went by. I really didn't have time to spend, but I thought it was a lot neater set-up than I had imagined it would be. It really was. I think the people that went were really impressed, whether they were workers or whether they had just come by to see it. I think they were really impressed. I don't really see how they could not be impressed because it put them right where they were. I mean, you know, it didn't dress things up. It didn't make them look any worse than they were. It was just where they were. I think that was really a tribute to those people, and I know that there was a lot that really appreciated that, something like that done and it wasn't done for the Whites, it wasn't done for Hickory. It was done for the folks. There were a lot of people that went through those doors. Now I don't know how many, but a lot of them went in to check themselves out in those pictures.

PH: Were you one of the ones selected to chose photographs?

KC: No, they came by here--Bill did--I don't know whether somebody had mentioned Mr. Oakley to help. I thought that was good. He and his wife--I think Ms. Oakley wound up helping--but I didn't. I didn't get to help with that. I wasn't uptown enough. [laughs]

PH: [laughs] Well, I think that is all of my questions, Ken. Is there anything that you didn't get to say that you'd like to say that will be on the record for evermore?

KC: [laughs] Time in memorial, huh?

PH: Yeah.

KC: No, again, I think that the White situation, as far as the factory itself, not necessarily the closing of it, if we look at that and we look back on a lot of our--those of us that grew up in the '40s--that we can see a lot of similarity there in any of the other

areas that we might have grown up in other than maybe agriculture that--. It put people together and for the most part those people are still together. I find that really satisfying just to go back through the old neighborhood that I--. I got about half mad here last year when they tore my house down. [laughs] Moved it. They didn't tear it down, they moved it. If I'm going anywhere on that side of town--. In fact, my daughter--. I just redid my dad's old house over in Burlington--she works at Burlington Mills--and it's right across the railroad tracks from one of the plants, but I go over there. I'll find myself going up and down some of the side streets up there that I've been over a million times and see it and talk to some of the same people that are maybe doing the same thing or still live over in that area.

Like I say, I think that basically that's sort of the White picture, too, that those folks that grew up in the White factory down there basically a lot of them are still here and are still basically friends and still associate and go to the same places and whatever. But there again, like I say, anywhere you go and you stay in and around people for that many years you're going to develop the same habits and the same likes and dislikes.

White's probably did as much for the town of Mebane as will ever be done for it. And probably not all out of that much generosity as knowing how to work a business and how to make it go since a period of 1882, '81. It seems like they had a pretty good handle on it.

PH: Well, I appreciate you doing the interview with me.

KC: I'm sure I didn't enlighten you much. You'd already--. You knew more or less--. You probably had the same thing told to you or a lot of it, over and over again, but I was glad to do it.

PH: Thanks.

END OF INTERVIEW