

John and Anne Chiles

Side 1:

John was born in the Biltmore Hospital. His mother was an artist and his father a developer from Lenoir where he dealt in furniture. Property was bought (previously the Patton farm) after visiting the old Kenilworth Inn when in the area on business. [Dr. Lynch]

[32] With no help from the city, which was considered too far away, a small suburb was established with own fire, police and sewer services.

[38] The hotel burned in 1909 and it was said a new one would rise out of the ashes. Financing from Canada made this possible and it was completed in 1917. (see enclosed-Kenilworth Inn Appalachian Hall, now Charter) The government leased it for veterans and then it was reopened for the public. The manager arranged for dinners and dance bands. Horse shows were held on the grounds. There were stables and a track for sulkies. Famous people were drawn to the area. [Roscoe Marvel, Jack Dempsey, Guy Lombardo]

[64] There were horse shows in Riverside Park. His mother won cups riding sulkies.

[77] His mother, a nationally known artist, came from an artistic family. Her father had his studio in Chicago and carved a plaque of his family - his mother was 8 or 9 (1893). [Leah Arcouer Chiles, Casmier Arcouer]

[93] His father died in 1926. He was 4 and his brother 4 years older. His mother was "something else." She became the first woman mayor in North Carolina. She taught china painting when she moved here for her mother's health. Chiles had a joint office with O. Henry and met his wife. [Dick Chiles, William Sidney Porter]

[113] With the Depression his mother had to go to work. His aunt was interested in genealogy and history - hence the street names from the Kenilworth castle in England.

[123] His father was successful in the furniture business but sold it to McFey (who has a house in Kenilworth) and also Hoyt (the Boggs moved into the Hoyt house. She is historian for the Kenilworth organization). [B.C. McFey, Hoyt, Walter and Marion Boggs]

[139] Kenilworth was an experiment and subdivision for the city long before its time. Transportation was difficult (his father used his horse) but the train brought people to the area.

[142] His mother and Cornelia Vanderbilt sponsored art shows. Cecil was active too. [Cornelia Vanderbilt, Lord Cecil]

[149] The Manor was the social focal point. His father didn't have much to do with cars but his mother was one of the first to have a car. She went to New York to get an Oldsmobile, and since there were no gas stations on the way, had to carry gas with her for her return - it took 7-8 days.

[166] His mother bought a Hupmobile from Kain, one of the Citizen publishers who opened a car dealership. She wrote him when she was having troubles with the car and he wrote back that the mayor's place was behind a desk not under a car. [Conway Kain]

[185] He describes his mother. She took his brother to see Lindberg. She took them fishing in the evening. She would drive to Florida and paint slogans on the side of the car about Land of the Sky. One of her best friends was an English nurse. She was hired to do design for the Treasure Chest which later became the Three Mountaineers (see enclosure) She painted an oil of his father which won ribbons. She was one of the first women photographers. His #2 daughter's daughter, Nancy has same type of personality and abilities. She remodeled houses in Kenilworth, helped put water and electricity in houses in South Asheville where there was a black community. Her service was at the Kenilworth Church and 20-25 colored families attended. [He does not know Johnny Baxter who has interviewed the black community and several of us are trying to see that his tapes are preserved.] [Charles Lindberg, Mrs. Hackney, Hugh Brown]

[230] The black cemetery (see enclosure) is covered with weeds. He knows two black families who took care of trash by the dam on Kenilworth Lake. [John Raxdale, Sadie Lawson]

[242] His father built the dam for \$75, 000 and it has recently been restored for \$90,000. The expenses are shared by owners around the lake. Once a year the Cram gardens, which were built by Ogden are open. His wife was librarian for Asheville School. [John Cram, Doan Ogden]

[264] There weren't any houses on the lake when he was young. When they lived in the Spanish house they had a cook and a chauffeur and yard man. With the Depression they moved to Forest Hill Drive.

[283] His mother tried to salvage what she could and was made mayor. This did not pay a salary. She tried to making a living off Kenilworth Realty Company. Two Caledonia was the Town Hall. The clerk did all the paper work and she held court once a month. The two policemen filled in as firemen when necessary and had a truck. She was Santa Claus at a Christmas and organized Easter egg hunts as well as teaching Sunday School at All Souls Church.

[311] Some of her close friends were Erb, who decorated the Battle house and the Vanderbilt house, and the Spanish house and Ronald Green, the architect, who did the Spanish house and the Boggs house. [Vincent Erb, Ronald Green]

[325] He used to go to Weaverville or West Asheville with his brother and grandmother. Tracks went from South Asheville to Biltmore. The ride cost 5 cents and transfer 15 cents.

[340] Activity stopped during the Depression. Houses stood vacant as people couldn't make payments. The Central Bank and Oteen Bank failed. Families, however, were closer and happier than ever. Children had scattered but now moved back home. His grandmother, who had learned to garden in a small area in France, grew enough vegetables to give some to the Salvation Army. The Wilsons lived on Kenilworth road. [Roland Wilson]

[376] Anne is a McDowell but from Marion and doesn't know if she has relatives here.

[384] Kenilworth was always integrated. Blacks worked in Kenilworth, Biltmore Forest and the Biltmore House. With the busses they could get anywhere.

[397] The flat area, now a park, used to be called "Brick Yard Flat." There were two quarries near #2 Caledonia and hotel material came from this. There was also a quarry on Sunset Mountain.

[430] When he was growing up most construction had stopped due to the Depression. Small Cape Cod style houses were put under the FHA just before WWII. He remembers several houses being constructed - Chief of Police and Capt. Hall (later Chief of Police) [Franklin Roosevelt, Charlie Dermid, Captain Joseph Hall]

[455] He and his brother were in the Navy. When he returned he was going to take a lot and build but found that the assets of the Kenilworth Realty Co. were sold on the Court House steps for \$1200. Several lots not in it but Chiles holdings were wiped out. [Ralph Arbigast, Wilson (from Tampa)]

[500] His father wanted a lake built in Kenilworth, though several men wanted a golf course. When he died the hearse went around Lakeshore Drive (it had not yet been filled) and he was buried in Riverside Cemetery. [John H. Lang, Dr. E.E. Reed]

[515] Anne met John while they were building scenery for the ACT. They dated several years and lived on Cortland Ave where their first child was born. He wanted to buy the Spanish house (see enclosure) and tried to negotiate with the owner and finally borrowed enough for a down payment. They had very little furniture but a neighbor lent them enough until they could collect their own. Many of their friends still live in the area and several years ago there were 200 people attending his 50th high school reunion. [Charleton Heston, John Spicer, Tom Posey]

Side 2:

When they moved into a 3600 square foot house from virtually bachelor's quarters, Anne was overwhelmed. Mrs. Erb offered her furniture - used their house as a storehouse. Three Mayflower vans filled the house with big beautiful furniture which they catalogued and returned as they bought their own. [Mrs. Vincent Erb]

[2/30] When the children came they wanted more room and a space to play. They moved to Butler Mountain and lived there 18 years.

[2/34] Anne said that John and his brothers had gone to St. Genevieve's and his mother had worked with the nuns. They sent their children there and was delighted with the training.

[2/47] He worked with a committee with the headmaster and the sisters to build a new building to replace the convent and grammar school. Gelder was close with the school. They studied the roster of students and found that 1/3 were Catholic, 1/3 Protestant, and 1/3 Jewish. They put on a dinner. Hazel, a Catholic made a great speech, so did Robertson and Blomberg, when his time came said he couldn't follow such great speeches but they all knew what they were there for and

it was "time to worship the check books." Close to \$200,000 was raised and Madonna Hall was built. (This is used for retired nuns now. I interviewed Mother Potts and Sister Winters there, see tapes). The gym and auditorium was built during the Depression. He hopes the contractor got paid but has his doubts. A-B Tech bought buildings (see Ruth Camblos and Frances McDowell tapes). The secretarial school was probably the best in the country (see enclosure). Anne taught 3rd grade at the school several years. [Dan Pinto, Mother Potts, Mother Seleznick, Bob Gelder, Frances Hazel, Reuben Robertson, Harry Blomberg, L.L. Merchant]

[2/115] When the family moved to the mountain, Kenilworth was going down. They had always been associated with the Kenilworth Presbyterian Church and he kept coming back as scout master for troop 14. He worked for Hajoca at the bottom of the hill and in time the vacant houses began to be filled with people coming in to work in the hospitals. Last week there was a block party on Westchester and Chiles - 150 children attended (see Kenilworth newsletter regarding another block party.)

[2/148] Scouting started in his mother's basement and he was the mascot (see enclosure). The totem pole was made by attaching faces to a locust log. This was used in a window display in the Enman Fur store, stored in the basement and forgotten, to be discovered by a terrified worker years later. Camp Daniel Boone on Pigeon River was the best located camp in the area. He was involved in camping up to 8-10 years ago but disapproved of the lessening of qualifications required for making "Eagle". There is a lot of competition for young boys time now - Little League, TV, etc. Kenilworth sponsors a troop now.

[2/200] His present house (enclosed) was built by a photographer for the Citizen Times who wrote Steam and Fog. [Frank Clodfelter]

[2/225] He made many trips to Philadelphia by train for Hajoca. (see enclosure) He was glad when he could fly. The children look forward to excursion trips to Old Fort. Asheville wouldn't have developed if it had not been for trains. Now that it is gone people must fly or drive I40 and I26.

[2/242] He was on the Board of Merchants Association and active in the Junior Chamber of Commerce. They won the a national award for three years. The "young group out of the service didn't know no better" and were very active (see Ralph Morris) they brought Polo games to Fletcher, ran the Recreation Park Pool when city couldn't handle it - were "gung ho" and into everything. Their office was in City Hall (see Lou Harshaw tape). [Tom Posey, Eugene Ochsreiter Jr., Bill Duckworth]

[2/283] Hardware store on square sold Delta tools and Lionel trains. Lingerfelt (see his tape) was one of the scouts in the picture. He was on the football team at Lee Edwards when Justice played. [Otis Green, Joe Lingerfelt, Charlie "Choo Choo" Justice]

[2/301] Asheville has some interesting people and his mother spent hours deciphering the people in Look Homeward Angel. [Thomas Wolfe, Junius Adams, James M. Westall, Jake Chiles]

[2/312] They raised their family in the mountains. Ted took a picture of kids and wrote " Family Life on a Mountain Top" (no copy in newspaper and when paper was put to microfiche it was omitted in error). He went to work every day by jeep. It was 7 miles to Biltmore. He and two sons started a development called Indian Falls Inc. It was started as a Christmas tree foundation but kids didn't want to cut weeds so they split the land and sold lots. When Richard returned they laid out roads. Anne wouldn't let them cut down trees. Most of his scout troops have camped there. Now, because of fire danger, they no longer do that. (Scouts meet at Kenilworth Presbyterian Church, enclosure). [Ted Carter, Richard Shoemaker (Assistant DA drew up contract for development)]

[2/370] They refer to pictures of children on the wall and name them. [Cathy, Nancy, Emily, John and Mary (twins), Trip (adopted grandson)]

[2/378] They all grew up on the mountain top. He knew about the water fall from going up with his nurse when he was a boy. Heard property was for sale. It had been owned by Weir. They went up with a lawyer but, when they saw a man with a dog and shot gun and what might have been a still, Anne said it was too primitive for her. They almost forgot about it until Anne, exhausted from Nancy's birthday party, said she wished she lived there. He went over to the owner that night and put down a payment - then put the Spanish house on the market. [Nel Hackney, Weldon Weir, Bud Marlar, B.K. Miller]

[2/438] Cathy won a donkey, the children had rabbits and dogs, Anne bought a hog, the children had quail and jersey cows were bought from Biltmore. They all learned how to work in a garden. John is now a Forest Ranger. [Dr. Richard Nailing, Paul Bishop, John Chiles]

[2/506] There were three Palonia trees on the property - this is a state registered tree - highest priced tree in country. Something happened and a court trial is pending.

[2/513] The house had 6 bedrooms and 5 baths. He drew the plans and cedar logs were sent from Washington. He got a carpenter to build it after cement foundation was poured. [C. B. Robinson]

[2/557] They talk about block party recently held. [Randy Barnett, Marion Boggs]

[2/583] They tried to buy the Spanish house back but haven't been able to. They rented and finally bought the house they live in now (see photo).