

PRESERVING OUR HISTORY: ROTARY CLUB OF GREENSBORO
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: WEEZIE GLASCOCK

INTERVIEWER: KATHELENE MCCARTY SMITH

DATE: September 18, 2008

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

KS: This is September 18, my name is Kathelene Smith, and I am at the home of Weezie Glascock for the Preserving Our History: Rotary Club of Greensboro oral history project. Good morning Mrs. Glascock, how are you?

WG: Good morning. I'm fine, thank you.

KS: Well - please tell me when and where you were born.

WG: I was born in 1940, in February of 1940, in a small little community called Glenwood, North Carolina, which is right outside of Marion, North Carolina, where my father was principal of the school.

KS: So you grew up in Glenwood?

WG: No, we shortly moved to Old Fort. My father was principal of the high school there. He died when I was four years old from complications from surgery on his forty-fourth birthday. And following that, my mother and my brother and I moved back to Monroe, North Carolina, which is where her family lived and all the Norwoods - the whole gang lived in Union County. So we moved back and I grew up in Monroe, North Carolina.

KS: What did your mother do?

WG: They were both educators. He was an educator, then she started teaching school after we moved to Monroe and taught first grade until she retired.

KS: You said you do have siblings?

WG: I have one brother.

KS: So where did you go to high school growing up?

WG: I went to Monroe High School and we had the fifties which was the greatest time of all to grow up. In Greensboro, interestingly enough, one of my best friends and one person who shared a party line with me on the telephone was Dr. Craven Williams who is presently president of Greensboro College, and Dr. Tom _____ and Jane Thomas. We were all in the same town and all in the same gang.

KS: Do you still keep in touch?

WG: Very close, we're very close.

KS: Oh, that's great.

WG: And this year we had our fiftieth high school anniversary in Monroe and it was just a jubilee. There was only forty in our high school class.

KS: So you were tight knit?

WG: So we were very tight knit.

KS: What was your favorite subject when you went to school?

WG: Well, as everybody in the fifties, probably learning to shag and going to Myrtle Beach was the favorite subject. But in school, history and geography and the social sciences have always been my favorites.

KS: When you graduated, what did you do next?

WG: We graduated. I graduated from high school in 1958 and came to WCUNC [Woman's College University of North Carolina] which, of course, is known today as UNCG [University of North Carolina at Greensboro.] And an interesting story of WC at that time, which people find fascinating today is, of course, we had to be in at 11 o'clock and there was a rule in the handbook that WC ladies - no alcohol could be consumed within fifty mile radius of Greensboro and the fifty mile radius, of course, included Chapel Hill. And so it was quite funny when you went to Chapel Hill to date because you were in the fifty mile radius, but I don't think many people counted the miles on the way back. And I went four years and graduated in 1962.

KS: What were your favorite subjects in college?

WG: At WC, it was still social studies and I majored in - sociology was what my major was in but I got my teacher's certificate in secondary history and political science.

KS: Where did you live?

WG: I lived my freshman year in Bailey Dorm. I was a Bailey girl. I lived my junior year in Bailey because my roommate was house president, and then I lived in Ragsdale one year and my senior year I was in Neil. And my senior year I met a Greensboro bachelor by the name of Luke Glascock and we've been married forty-four years.

KS: Wow, that's wonderful! When you were at school at Woman's College, you still wore the jackets at that time?

WG: Oh, yes. And an interesting story, we wore the jackets in the classrooms, they were a big deal and I happened to meet Luke, my blind date, because my roommate was president of the senior class and had an appointment with a gentleman named John Jester who was coming to sell our class, class rings and my roommate forgot about it and so when Mr. Jester showed up, the bridge game became the committee. And we went down to meet with him and we had to give up our bridge game for the afternoon to meet about the class rings and he's the one who just thought we were the cutest bunch he had ever seen and got us all dates with his roommates.

KS: Wasn't that fortuitous! [Both laugh]

WG: Yes, it was! But I loved my years at WC and of course, we had - our rules and regulations were not as they are today and it was a grand time for me.

KS: Now I would probably ask this a little bit later, but since you're a WC girl, I'll ask it now. Was it during your time that they had the sit-ins when the girls participated and it was such a big deal?

WG: When I got to WC, having grown up in Monroe which was a very small town, provincial like all North Carolina towns at the time. It was the year - I'm not sure it was the first year of integration, but I do remember that we had two African-American girls in our class which was quite a - this was 1958 and it was the most natural thing to me that they were - there wasn't any big deal about it. And to me though, having grown up in North Carolina in a small, small community, what struck me with a greater knowledge of new friends, and so forth, were the Jewish girls because I had not known any - had never met a Jewish person in my life and very few Catholics. Monroe did have a Catholic church, but Jewish girls - I never had a Jewish friend. So, to me, as an introduction to the big wide world of going to college, having Jewish friends had a greater memory to me than the African-American girls being there.

But our sophomore year was 1960, when the sit-ins occurred, and I remember at the time from WC down to the square in Greensboro is one mile. And today we all exercise. I walked three miles this morning, but at the time, to walk a mile seemed like a long way. And we would go downtown to shop, of course, and we'd eat at the S & W cafeteria. But we walked downtown and we

thought it was a long way but we would walk downtown during the sit-ins and we would go past the intersection. My little group that was going to see what was going on, would go past the Elm and Market Street intersection because we could stand there and look down to Woolworth's and as things grew that week, more and more people were coming and I don't know if we were advised not to go back down there but it certainly was gaining attention state-wide and nationally so we didn't go back downtown. But we didn't realize the implications of what was going on. We didn't realize the historical nature of what was happening.

KS: Did you know the girls who actually participated?

WG: No, no. I don't remember knowing them and if I did, I don't remember knowing who it was. I do remember my sophomore year which was this year, and I moved into Ragsdale and I remember the two African-American girls who were in Ragsdale were on the end of the first floor in two rooms with their own private bath.

KS: I had heard that. That is amazing. So you were right there during that time. What else do you remember about Woman's College that was special?

WG: I remember I was in student legislature and actually ran for Vice President of the student body. Didn't win. Can't remember who did. I remember Chancellor Singletary was the chancellor at the time and in student legislature I was on some committee and we decided that we were going to call on Chancellor Singletary and present to him the reduction of the mileage around Greensboro to which you could have a drink and come back. And so we got the committee together and we got an appointment with Chancellor Singletary and I remember distinctly going over and we presented our case that we were backward and our social were being stomped upon and so forth and that we thought that the fifty mile radius for drinking was absurd and whatever else. But we did it very - and I remember him sitting there looking at us and he said, "I'm going to tell you one thing. As long as the citizens of North Carolina are paying for your education, you will not be drinking and coming back on this campus." And that was it! [Both laugh] That did it.

And then at some point, there was another - we went back over there for something else that had to do with - I don't even remember because, you know, we certainly didn't wear blue jeans or shorts or anything. A lot of times we would wear our raincoats over our pajamas to class because we'd be late running across campus. There are pictures in the annuals of us in raincoats going to class knowing that the pajamas were underneath and the hair wasn't supposed to be rolled up so there would be scarves on our head. But something about boys coming to WC, UNCG, and he had the same feeling. He said, "This is a woman's college and we're not going to have boys," whatever he said. And we graduated in '62 and it was just a few years after that, of course, that they boys were coming.

KS: How did you feel about that; when they integrated boys?

WG: It took something away from the way it used to be and it bothered a lot of girls and the ones that it really mattered to would transfer to Chapel Hill because junior year you could transfer to Chapel Hill without having been a nursing student or something you could just go into the program. And so if it really mattered a whole lot, you could transfer and the ones of us who stayed four years really liked just having the girls around. It didn't lack for boys.

KS: You met your husband. [Both laugh] So after you graduated, did you date for a while?

WG: We dated two years. I went to Washington.

KS: D.C.?

WG: Washington, D.C. I ended up in College Park, Maryland, with four of my classmates at WC; Jane Bradley, Susan Collins, and Jane Wolfe. We had decided that we were going to move somewhere after graduation and teach. And so we looked at the - we were all teachers. You could be four things; you could be a teacher, if you were a woman, you could be a nurse, you could be a secretary and I had a friend remind me, she said, "Oh Weezie, you could be a bank teller. So there were about four things that women could do. And I had originally not planned to get a teacher's certificate and my mother sent my brother up here to Greensboro to tell me I had to get a teacher's certificate; I had to have that insurance policy. So, if I had it to do today in this environment, I would have gone to law school. And that's how things change. But I didn't and so we looked at the east coast from Miami to New Jersey and our decision would be based on who paid the most to beginning teachers, and we didn't want to stay in North Carolina. This is when we were really young. We were really going hog wild! We were going off, we were going out! So Dade County, Florida, and Prince George's County, Maryland, were the highest paid - paid the highest to beginning teachers and we knew that University of Maryland, College Park, was in Prince George's County. We ended up teaching in Prince George's County, but lived in College Park, right across from the campus and had an apartment. And we were just on top of the world making 3500 a month, which was the highest on the east coast.

KS: That's pretty good. That's amazing.

WG: And I saved fifty dollars a month and that was the way it was. But I dated Luke for two years and got married.

KS: Did you go into Washington D. C. a lot?

WG: We went a lot. We were there in College Park during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

KS: How was that?

WG: That was - I remember we were seeing it on television and hearing about it. We knew what was going on, but the thing I remember the most was the military buildup on what used to be Highway 1 coming right through College Park from Washington. I remember seeing the tanks and military vehicles and there were helicopters flying over and at some point, as I recall, this was happening on the weekdays when we were teaching and I knew that the weekend was coming up. And on the weekend, I'd be talking to my mother and I'd be talking to Luke and the idea was as soon as the weekend comes, get out of Washington; come home. Because the talk was that, you know, the big bomb was going to hit on the capital and they were telling people in the area that the radius of the radiation would kill people and all that and my family wanted me out of Washington. And the weekend came, and I would have to go back and look at the dates, but we drove all four of us, drove to North Carolina and it seems to me that during that weekend the crisis was averted because I know we came back on Monday. I think we stayed a day later, to go back to Washington.

KS: What an exciting time to live in Washington.

WG: It was. It was. And Kennedy was in the White House and I absolutely adored him and had met him.

KS: Really?

WG: Not in person. He had come to Greensboro campaigning and I had gone to the airport and had seen him at the airport. It was unreal to think back on it. So we were in Washington when the Kennedys were in the White House and all that was going on. I taught up there one full year and a half and came back to Monroe. I knew I was getting married and the fall that I was back of '63 is when Kennedy was killed; and I remember everything. I was teaching at Piedmont High School, Mr. Gann was principal and he came on the loudspeaker and said, you know, "Received word that the President has been shot in Dallas." And we all ran to the biology lab because the state of North Carolina had the new educational TV and biology was taught on TV and you could also get other channels. And we got Walter Cronkite and stood there and watched history.

KS: That's amazing. So you got married.

WG: Got married in '64 in Monroe and moved to Greensboro and moved to Kirkwood. Having being married to a Greensboro person, all the young people moved to Kirkwood which is still full of young people down the street from where I live now. We were in Kirkwood for ten years, had two daughters. One, Marty, was born in 1965 and Jenny was born in 1967.

KS: So you've lived in Greensboro ever since.

WG: Ever since.

KS: Well, how has Greensboro changed since you've lived here?

WG: Oh my goodness. In so many ways, I don't even know where to start. I think, certainly the growth of neighborhood and the outgrowth of what used to be a fairly small town. And I think, if I'm not wrong, back then I think that the population was about sixty to seventy-five thousand and this was '65. I may be wrong; it may be a little bit larger then. You really did - I didn't know everybody, but Luke and his parents, who lived in this house, this was his parents' house -

KS: Oh really! It's beautiful.

WG: So, then Luke was third generation so everybody knew everybody and it was - thinking back, it was a small town. It wasn't compared to Monroe, but it was if you had been in Greensboro. And the growth - not knowing people. The leadership - we knew all the leadership. The mayor would be Jim Melvin or whomever, John Forbis, who we'd know. And, of course, I remember Woody Durham was a good friend, he was out at Channel 2 and of course, Woody Durham has now been the voice of the Tar Heels for a hundred years, I don't know. But you knew everybody, then things started, you know, new neighborhoods and new developments and new everything started. I think one of the big differences, I thought about this, is that the leadership was connected to what I believe, had to be the impetus of growth in Greensboro. I had an office in Charlotte for awhile and I hear the comparisons all the time between Charlotte and Greensboro and Raleigh and what happened to Greensboro. And one of the things that happened to Greensboro during the period of time that the growth and development was occurring in the three towns in North Carolina, we lost the Piedmont [Airlines] hub. We could have had the Piedmont hub here. And I was working for Lucas Travel at the time and knew what Piedmont Airlines wanted to do and knew that they were not met with great enthusiasm by the airport authority and they went to Charlotte. And that affected the way people compare the three cities now. The other thing, I think the leadership of the big companies here, Jefferson Pilot being one of them, they didn't take the interest in the community leadership that someone like Hugh McCall did in Charlotte. And I think Charlotte is Hugh McCall's town and I think he made it what it is and I think there are those who live in Greensboro who could have made Greensboro, however you want to compare it to Charlotte. I think we ought to be like Charlotte, a lot of people don't.

KS: Well downtown is sure picking up.

WG: Yes, but that to me, and that's just a personal thing, I still think when you look at the growth of what all is happening in America, in Charlotte, in Raleigh, the downtown - Charlotte's downtown is different. Downtown is not like the downtown used to be and I don't know that it will ever be back. And recently in the Greensboro paper, it was talking about, there's no retail and the retail that's down there is not what you need to have somebody drive past the Wendover I-40 exit where you've got everything and come into downtown. So, as far as the social center and culture center, and art center, I'm very pleased with downtown. As far as a retail center where we used to go park our cars and get out and walk up and down the street and shop at Montalvo's and eat at S & W; I don't think that will ever be back. And I'm not sure it's bad, I mean, Friendly Shopping Center is downtown to me.

KS: It really is, for all practical purposes. What do you think about issues facing Greensboro such as population growth, we kind of touched on economic growth, leadership, race relations, and water shortage? Any ideas how those can be solved?

WG: I don't know how they can be solved. I think, and I used to be very vocal about it. When I worked for Lucas travel and then when I had my own storefront office, we were downtown in the 200 block of North Elm which is now the downtown park which is now City Park. That's where my office was and that's where I worked for twenty years and I was very involved in downtown. I was asked by the Chamber many, many, many years ago to sit on a committee and I've forgotten what it was called. I remember Ann Line Weaver was chairman of the committee and it had something to do with downtown growth. And I went to the first meeting and it was so discouraging because nothing got done. It was purely a black and white situation and anything that I thought was a good idea about the growth, it was a minority majority; nothing got done. And I know that has changed some. I still think there's a lot of it, I don't like the word racial, but race-based division on what's happening in Greensboro and I quit fighting that battle. And I don't blame - you can read the paper, you see about the county commissioners which I know don't affect downtown that much, city council last time. It's just like Congress now, they're thinking about themselves. I'm not pleased with the leadership much. And that's one of the differences when I talk about how it was forty years ago, thirty years ago, when the leadership was so connected to all of the parts of the city because it wasn't that spread out, I guess. I don't see a lot of connection today. The guy running for this district for City Council, Zack Methane, or whatever, I don't know him, I guess I could have gone to something and met him but I don't feel a big connections. I think Raleigh Perkins is outstanding and should be the next mayor. That's my hope.

KS: It is interesting how leadership does seem to be a thread that everybody has talked about and been concerned about for all of these interviews. Well, Greensboro is about to celebrate its 200th anniversary. What do you see in the future for Greensboro at this point?

WG: You know, I guess I hope that Greensboro - and this has been another - I forgot about fighting this battle all these years and I've quit doing it too. It is a little bit ridiculous to have Winston-Salem, High Point, and Greensboro sitting here so close together and not combining so many things they could do, one of being the symphony and I think that the symphony is playing together this weekend. I think there is so many things that we could improve on in all three cities if we would work together more; and I hope that will happen. I think it's real interesting about the Dell computer situation and Winston-Salem getting that and now we read the paper and it looks like Dell is in trouble like everybody else and may be closing down and then what does that mean about all of the incentives that were paid to them; will the state and Forsyth County get their money back. I think, you know, that the three cities should work more closely together and I hope they will for the future so we could produce some really major things.

KS: How do you think Greensboro can improve the quality of life for its citizens?

WG: I don't know that I can be specific. I think the greenway. I think anything to do with parks and health and fitness and the greenway that people will be able to use for their biking and their walking; I think that's good. I think that the health and fitness part of it is how I would see and hope Greensboro would improve for the future. You know, everything, we need the water, we need the - we don't need to be running out of water like we did last year. But those things, I don't know how to fix those, so if I can only say that's what we need, and I don't know how we go about getting them.

KS: Now you are a WC graduate, do you still have connections with the college?

WG: Pat Sullivan was in Rotary with me and a good friend and here I was president of the Rotary Club and she was the only other lady of the Board and we would wink at each other frequently. And the Craven Williams at Greensboro College Kent Chabotar at Guilford are all friends through Rotary Club.

KS: You were talking about people working together, what do you think colleges and universities should do to play a role in economic and cultural development of the community, or do you?

WG: I think they do. I think that the Nano campus, whatever UNCG and A&T are doing - and I think I just repeated who I know who are most of the presidents who are in Rotary Club; they're going to figure out how to work together. If they can do more - I think the early college at Guilford and things like that are just absolutely fabulous. What Terry Greer did when he was in Greensboro - I think he did a marvelous job. I didn't have children or grandchildren in the system and I know some people didn't, but I think if you list his accomplishments, they are just fantastic.

KS: What about politics? Have you ever dabbled in politics?

WG: No. [Both laugh] I did at WC and as I said, I would have liked to. I look back now and I wish I had. And someone asked me recently how you got to be a delegate at a convention and I said you had to be active in the party and actually the Democratic party and the Republican party do meet and have officers and you can be active in the party on a local level and the state level and that way you get to go the national convention. I wish I had, perhaps been active in the Democratic Party.

KS: How have you been involved in philanthropic causes and volunteerism?

WG: Over the years, I'm kind of not anymore, which is not a nice thing to say. When I was younger, I was very active in the Junior League and I did a lot of League work in various areas a lot with the Children's Theatre back forty years ago when it was called The Pixie Theatre, I was actually a Pixie. [Both laugh]

KS: Good for you!

WG: I was a Pixie and still have friends that remember that, and in just a lot of ways I did various things in the community. Then, in Rotary, it's been the same thing. No one single path and a lot of my Rotary work has been internal as far as the work and being an officer and that kind of thing.

KS: How did you get involved in Rotary?

WG: I had a friend. Well, women weren't allowed in Rotary until 1988. That's the first year Greensboro had a female Rotarian. I may be wrong on the year. It may have been permitted before that. But Vicky Guthrie, who was at the Center for Creative Leadership, was the first lady who was invited in the Greensboro Rotary and so in '93, Mike Hale was a friend of mine and he said, "Did you know you could be in Rotary?" And he took the steps to make it possible. So I was inducted in 1993. Then I did a lot the first few years with them on Ambassadorial Scholarships which in Rotary is the international scholarship presented to - anyway you have to be very outstanding and fluent in the language of the country you want to go to and you go study and it's a fabulous scholarship. So I worked - my main thing was working with the colleges getting candidates for the Ambassadorial Scholarship; interviewing them and working through that. And then I was asked to be on the board of Rotary and I didn't even realize I qualified for president. I had been on the board and then was president in '04 and '05 and was the first woman.

KS: That's great! So how have you seen Greensboro's non-profit sector change over the years?

WG: The whole non-profit picture has developed into such a thing that it was an evolution. I mean, now you can look at foundations - when you look at the classification of memberships in Rotary, is it a non-profit or not. That's used to be the way it was. When you see that people have gone to college to major in whatever you major in to be non-profit directors or know how to seek money as a non-profit. So the whole thing, it evolved and all of a sudden I thought, "Well that's a thing. The non-profit sector is now a thing." And the foundations that Greensboro has have contributed so greatly whether it is the Bryan or the Weaver or the Greensboro Community Foundation. The non-profit arts and that part of it has blossomed into a thing that I didn't used to even recognize four years ago as being there. I mean, you gave to the church and that was about it. When you say non-profit do you mean foundations and arts?

KS: Yes, anything like that.

WG: You know, I think the non-profits that aren't foundations like the arts and the United Way and those things are requiring an awful lot of financial support from the community and so far so good but I don't know how long that it's going to last - that these budgets can be met, because I'm not sure how. I guess it's because this is 2008 and we are in the middle of a hard time right now economically but we're getting it from the church and we're getting in from the United Way and we're getting from this, that, and the other and quite frankly, this week we've got Republican and Democratic Parties that call her every day wanting money. But we can't do it. We can't do it. And so I think the Rotary Club is not embarking on this carousel project and I worked with it, I was on the committee. And then asked not to be on the committee because I was going to be in the fundraising part of it and I felt like right now - two issues; one, I wasn't trained to asked people for the kind of money we're going to need and I think that's where the non-profit sector, and the fact that you're trained and there's a way to do all this, hit me. I don't know how to do it. I don't know how to ask for that kind of money and that kind of pledge and this, that, and the other. That was one issue and the other issue was I just didn't think that his was the time that we should be doing that and I know that the Children's Museum has this huge project and I know that the Weaver Foundation is involved and I hope it all works out but right now it's kind of fuzzy to me how we can support the arts and support the United Way and support our church and then support additional things that are happening in the community. It's just perceived, I perceive it as not being the time to go about asking people for more money.

KS: You've been so involved in the philanthropic area, but we haven't talked about your travel business. How did that come about?

WG: Well, I was married and had the girls, and my oldest daughter, Marty, was to enter first grade the year bussing started, and we lived in Kirkwood, and she was going to be bussed to Hampton. So, like so many people, I investigated private schools. And Greensboro Day School was a year old and had just moved to the campus on Lawndale Drive. So, I called up, made an appointment to take Marty out there to be tested for first grade, because she was through kindergarten. Anyway, long story short, she got in. So, when I took her out there I went by the office. No, I didn't. Yes, I did. Then I had one, Jenny, who would have been in kindergarten. Anyway, the day the four-year-old went to kindergarten I went by the office out there, and I said, "If you ever need a substitute I used to have a valid teacher's certificate, and if you ever need a substitute, I would like to substitute." And that was in '71. And they called me that night, and the sixth-grade teacher had been in a wreck and had brain damage, and I was there ten years. I went to the Day School the next day and taught out there for ten years. Of course, I went back and got my certificate renewed.

KS: What did you teach?

WG: I taught history and geography. Started in the sixth grade. And, then, the last few years I was in the upper school teaching history and geography and so forth. So, then in '79, I went to - we decided we were going to see if there was something else in the world I could do. And so, I went to talk to Jack Lucas at Lucas Travel. And told him I wanted to be a travel agent. And it all went back to the geography, history. I wanted to go see what I'd been teaching and doing and so forth and so on. And that all worked out. And, so, for the last thirty years - I worked for Jack ten years. Then I had my own store-front agency for fifteen years. Then in 2003 two or three things happened. Number one, 9-11 had happened. And, so, the travel business was not what it had been. And, then, also, I had - I always wanted to be a travel agent. I didn't want to be a business owner. And I had become a business owner with my own agency, and didn't like it. And, so, I thought when things got kind of down, "Why am I doing this when I could be planning the trips and putting the puzzles together," which I called planning. It's the game. It's putting the puzzle together. So, since 2003, I've been an independent travel agent working from my home office.

KS: That's ideal.

WG: It is.

KS: I'm at the end of my questions. Is there anything we haven't covered? Can you think of anything you want to add?

WG: No.

KS: Well, thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed today. I appreciate it. This has been delightful.

WG: Well, you're welcome. Thank you.

KS: Thank you.

[Recorder turned off]

[End of interview]