

INFORMATION SHEET

Interview Topic:

The purpose of this interview was to gain insight into the history of ECTC through the eyes of a World War II veteran. This interview will also provide information on how the GI bill affected ECTC as a college as well.

NARRATOR: VIRGIL S. CLARK

INTERVIEWER: LEANNE JOHNSON

DATE: October 2, 2001

PLACE: Home of Virgil S. Clark

Greenville, North Carolina

PERSONAL DATA:

Date of Birth: April 3, 1925

Spouse: Susan Clark

Occupation: Retired Air force Officer

BIOGRAPHY

Virgil S. Clark is a retired Air Force officer who served in the army air corps during World War II. Before he joined the Air Corps Mr. Clark went to ECTC in 1943. After the Bombing of Pearl Harbor Mr. Clark Joined the Air Corps for the duration of the war. Mr. Clark was stationed in Saipan for most of his military career during World War II. After Mr. Clark was discharged he ^{returned} ~~went back~~ to ECTC in 1947 to finish out his degree in ~~Business~~ Education. He attended ECTC on the GI bill. When Mr. Clark graduated he rejoined the Air Force for the rest of his career ^{life} ~~life~~. Then He retired in Greenville, North Carolina.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

This interview has given some insight on how veterans coming to ECTC on the GI bill affected the school as a whole. It also gave me a look into what life was like for students in 1947 –1950. However, I do not think the interview was as helpful as it could have been because I, the interviewer was not as prepared as I-thought I should have been. Also Mr. Clark evaded most questions asked with short sentences, just my personal observation. The interviewer and narrator although communicable did not develop a good enough rapport for a very good in depth interview. Probably due to the interviewer's nervousness, and lack of pushing for really in depth questions for fear of being rude.

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

The interview to start with went well. I met with Mr. Clark and His wife in their home in Greenville, NC. After introductions were made we retired to Mr. Clark living room because no outlet was available for the recorder in the Kitchen. The living room setting was comfortable but in a very formal and business like manner. I was not at ease while doing the interview, probably because I was nervous about interviewing someone. Mr. Clark also seemed at edge. I attempted to develop a kind of rapport with him while I was setting up the recorder. Mr. Clark did not seem overly receptive to my attempts. He was always very proper and formal in a stiff manner like most military men seem to be. I also seemed to run out of questions, which I did not think, was possible.

Interview Begins:

Initials, Side, Counter Number:

LJ 1 002

Interviewer: Mr. Clark will you please state you name and place of birth?

Virgil Clark, Born in Greenville, North Carolina on April 3, 1925.

LJ 1 006

What was it like living in Greenville?

It was a quiet peaceful town with no traffic. It was just a sleepy town mostly serving the farmers; we had very little industry. Most of it revolved around the farming

Did you live in town?

I lived in town. I was born about a half a block from the administrative building.

What did your parents do?

My mother was not employed she took care of the family. My first memory of my father is that he had sandpits he would pump up sand out of the river for building and roads and things like that. He had horses, a hauling service when the circus come to town he would haul the wagons off the train for the circus crowd. He would haul the wagons off the train for the circus. I don't have any real good memories of that. Then he got into the oil business he was an agent for the synthetic refining company, he kept the sand pit business for a long time and kept the stables. Then that finally got passé and times changed. I had three brothers and two sisters. One of my sisters died when I was about a year old. The only survivors are my sister and myself.

LJ 1 0010

What kind of education did you receive?

We went through the full twelve grades. I walked to school I went to what now is the Messick theater is, it turned into ^{be} the Wahl Coates school. It was a training school for teacher students at East Carolina to practice teaching.

Notes: I thought this was a particularly interesting piece of information and I wish I had asked more questions about it. But unfortunately I did not catch it until I got home and reviewed the tape.

LJ 1 0012

Where you expected to go to College?

We all went to college. My brothers, my older brothers went to Mars Hill and another brother went to Carolina and East Carolina and my ~~S~~ister went to East Carolina.

Notes: I found this to be a disappointing part of the interview ^{be} cause I failed to convey my question correctly. So I believe ^{Mr.} mister Clark didn't understand I wanted to know what his family stance was on going to college. I didn't realize my mistake in conveying the question ^{until} ~~till~~ I listened to the tape. I believe my interview didn't go as well as I hoped because of my own failure to convey my questions correctly.

LJ 1 0013

Did you go to East Carolina before you went into the military?

Yes, I was in a program in 1943 that if you took a test and made a certain score you could go to college and if you had a passing grade from a certain quarter or semester then you got a diploma.

Notes: Again an interesting and surprising bit of information that I completely over looked and did not follow up with more questioning. I ~~as an interviewer~~ ^{see} now that it was mostly my fault the interview did not go as well as it could have because I failed to

pick up on certain pieces of information. I wonder now what this program was exactly and who got to participate in it and why.

LJ 1 0015

Why did you join the military?

I volunteered because of the war they needed my service, I didn't know how bad.

My first opportunity was to go to Biloxi, Mississippi to Keesler air force base; it was Keesler field ^{at that} ~~by the point~~ in time. Then I went to Cleveland, Ohio for college training to be a pilot or hoping to be a pilot. Then I went to San Antonio, Texas to Lakeland airfield and tested to see if I could make it in the air force to be a pilot. So I had to select another field to be a gunner.

LJ 1 019

I got assigned to a ship for third and fourth echelon maintenance to Saipan. It was a liberty ship and we had merchant marine, navy and armed ^{army air corps.} guard. I was in the armed guard to protect the ship. ^{Iwo?} I got to Iwo Jima about 60 days after it all happened. Then I stayed around Saipan till I got to go home in January 1946.

LJ 1 023

When did you return to East Carolina?

I came back in February and I ^{enrolled} ~~came back~~ the spring semester.

Did you go on the GI Bill?

Yes, it paid for most my bills except for the incidentals, which are pens and notebooks and things like that.

Where did you live?

I lived with my parents, they had subsequently moved from rotary avenue ^h were I was born to East Fifth street. When I came back to school I stayed at my parents house till I graduated and went back to the service.

Were there other veterans who went to school with you?

When I started in 43 there was somewhere around 900 girls and ⁵40 boys. When I came back it started to equal out and then there were more guys then girls for a while.

Were there any dorms for guys or veterans?

Yes, they had some of them in places for them, in the Wright building and Wilson hall and the coach stayed in there as a baby sitter. We had a veterans club and I was a member the Kwanis club. They were the only two organizations I was in. Just honorary clubs, there were no fraternities there when I went.

What did these organizations do?

We just met every now and then and supported some fundraising. One thing we did is we supported a Black Minstrel show. That's when they have an ^{interlocateur} ~~interlocative~~, six to seven fundamentals, and dressed in black face. There's singing and joking and just general entertainment.

Notes: this was my favorite part of the interview because Mr. Clark sort of opened up and began sharing more of his experiences then he was before.

INTERVIEW CRITIQUE

I believe the reason I felt the interview went badly is because Mr. Clark was not as responsive as I had hoped. The whole time there I felt a little on edge. I thought this was due to my nervousness and I still do. However I also think the interview would ^{have} of

gone better if I had caught on to some of the subjects he was talking about and asked more in depth questions. Unfortunately I was not observant enough to have accomplished this. I believe if we had been in a better setting such as the kitchen it would have been easier for me to listen to what he was saying. The living room was nice for formal visitors but it put me on edge and the way the recorder had to be set up was not very comfortable for me or Mr. Clark so I believe. I think these may have been factors in my interview not going as well as it could have. Also I definitely need to learn how to do follow-up questions better than what I did. I think this was the major hindrance in my interview.