

Buckhead Heritage Society

Oral History Project

Interview with Norris A. Broyles, Jr.

March 8, 2014

Interviewers: Chad Wright and Dick Hall

CHAD WRIGHT: This is an interview with Norris A. Broyles, Jr. at his residence at 2525 Peachtree Road in Buckhead on March 8, 2014. The interviewers are Chad Wright and Dick Hall of the Buckhead Heritage Society. Mr. Broyles, thanks for having us this afternoon.

NORRIS BROYLES, JR.: Well, it's a pleasure.

WRIGHT: We appreciate you letting us in your home and telling us some stories. Your son had sent us some snippets from the past, and I think probably the best place to start is maybe go back a generation or two and just tell us how your family arrived in the Atlanta area and made their way to Buckhead. And who they are and what they did.

BROYLES: Well, I guess I'm about the fourth generation here. My grandfather was clerk of the Superior Court of Fulton County when it was on the fee basis. I think he was able to retire at a fairly early age. And he raised his family around Fifth and Juniper Street, and then bought property out on Peachtree Road. And I do not know the date that he built the house and moved to Peachtree Road.

WRIGHT: And what was his name?

BROYLES: Arnold Broyles. No other, no middle name. And my name's Norris Arnold Broyles.

WRIGHT: Approximately where on Peachtree did he buy his land?

BROYLES: He bought his land at 20--, right, practically on the corner of Peachtree Way and Peachtree Road, about a half a block away from here, north of here. And his property was, fronted on Peachtree Road and went down L-shaped out onto Peachtree Way. So in 1929 I was born in old Piedmont Hospital over near the stadium, and he gave the Peachtree Way frontage to my mother and father, and they built a house. My mother drew the plans, and had a carpenter build the house. And when they brought me home from Piedmont Hospital I started life on Peachtree Way. And then my grandmother died, after I was about five or six years old, and so we sold the house and moved up to, with my grandfather on Peachtree Road. And that is where La Grotta restaurant is now, that property. Mr. L. F. Montgomery bought the property after my grandfather died, and owned it until Ben Sims bought it and built Peachtree House, which is still standing there. La Grotta happens to be in the basement of it.

WRIGHT: What did the old house look like, architecturally?

BROYLES: It was a two-storey brick, just looked like everything else around there. So we had to move out. So we moved across the street to 2590 Peachtree Road. And that's really where I grew

up. And that happened to be right across the street from where I live right now. So I've been in sort of a rut.

WRIGHT: Well, you've seen it change a good bit.

BROYLES: Oh, yeah.

WRIGHT: Now going back to grandfather Arnold, there was, your son said that there was a myth that he was the strongest man in Georgia. Can you tell us a little about that?

BROYLES: Well, there was sort of a, that's what I was told, that he could chin himself with either, one arm, and he even worked as a surveyor one winter out in Montana. And another myth is that at the campfire that night this bear came into the camp. And he slept with a pistol with him. He rolled over and shot the bear. Until the day he died he slept with a pistol under his pillow. He had a library in this house on Peachtree Road, in the lower floor, and had volumes of books. He was called an authority on three subjects, and that was the Civil War, Napoleon, and, what's the other one? Well, I will think of it in a minute. But, oh, my gosh. Anyway, he read after he retired. He would sit in his chair in his sunroom there on Peachtree Road and he would read all day long. Africa was the third subject.

WRIGHT: Napoleon, Africa, and the Civil War.

BROYLES: Napoleon, Africa, and the Civil War.

WRIGHT: That's a broad . . .

BROYLES: Franklin Garrett used to go out and spend hours with him, sitting there talking with him. Although, he was born right about the end of the Civil War.

WRIGHT: Did he tell stories at all about some of the Civil War activities in Buckhead? Or around here?

BROYLES: No, none that I can recall. This is all second-hand stories that were told to me. And they may be myths.

WRIGHT: So what do you think drove him to Buckhead? I presume he lived in town and then moved out from there.

BROYLES: Right. I think it was just the thing to do. People were buying property and moving north of the city.

WRIGHT: Do you remember the trolley line?

BROYLES: Oh, I remember the streetcar running up and down the middle of Peachtree Road.

WRIGHT: Tell us a little bit about that.

BROYLES: Well, I had thirteen dogs in twelve years.

WRIGHT: Lost a lot to traffic.

BROYLES: They'd just run out and bark at everything, and we had a devil of a time keeping the dogs off the street. Those were the good old days when you didn't have to tie 'em up.

WRIGHT: So, describe the landscape a little bit when it was all residences back on Peachtree. The traffic, and what, were people out in their yards, was it reserved, can you describe all that?

BROYLES: Oh, yeah. Our front yard, we'd play all sorts of football or whatever, and I remember I went off on a winter vacation, and came home, and Norris had broken his arm. His brother Ed and Drew Beattie I think fell on him playing games out there in the front yard. Barrett Howell, one of my closest friends, lived up the street, along with Alec King on the same block, and we'd go back and forth between houses riding bikes. Clark Howell, Barrett's older brother, was there, and he'd have some friends, we'd just run up and down that block. And Poncie Ansley, Mrs. Bonneau Ansley wrote a book called "The Block." And she made all of us take a picture of our house and write a little squib about the house, because none of them are alive over there now. They're all condominiums. And our house was next door to Ivan Allen, Sr.'s, which was 2600. And that property was merged together and everything was torn down. That's where the condominiums 2600 Peachtree are now.

WRIGHT: Was that back when he was mayor?

BROYLES: No. This was Ivan Allen's father's house.

WRIGHT: OK.

BROYLES: Inman's grandfather. And Beau.

WRIGHT: Was it sort of an open-door policy amongst the families that lived on Peachtree?

BROYLES: Oh, yeah. Not, on that particular block, the doors weren't open to everybody along there, but when, but there were different families at different ages. But the Howells and the Broyles and the Bryans up there and the Flemings.

WRIGHT: Did you guys get in any trouble?

BROYLES: No, never got into any trouble. [laughter] Always good.

WRIGHT: I take it all of you guys went to E. Rivers?

BROYLES: I went to Lovett. Everybody else went to E. Rivers. And my mother insisted that I go to Lovett.

WRIGHT: Tell us about that, because that would have been one of the earlier, younger classes at "little Lovett," correct, on Myrtle Street?

BROYLES: On Myrtle Street. I had an aunt, my father's younger sister even attended Lovett, so, I've forgotten what year Mrs. Lovett formed that school.

WRIGHT: '26.

BROYLES: '26? So I was there. Well, first, I went to kindergarten down at E. Rivers. Mrs. Bloodworth's. I think everybody I knew went there. And I have . . .

WRIGHT: What do you remember about Mrs. Bloodworth's kindergarten?

BROYLES: I'll tell you what, several things. The first thing is that I have a false tooth. Frank Owens and I were playing soldier. And we had guns on our shoulder, and marching, and Frank pushed his gun back like that, hit me in the mouth. My baby tooth never really came in. They had to cut out whatever it was so I've had a false tooth all my life. And it used to be on a plate, where I could flip it, stick it out on my tongue and bring it back.

WRIGHT: So that gave real meaning to Mrs. Bloodworth's kindergarten.

BROYLES: I loved to do that. It really did. And then I took piano lessons there from Margaret Frazier. And so did my friend Barrett Howell, took piano lessons. And we had a recital. And as I recall the recital was at Mr. Maddox' home, out where the Governor's Mansion is now. And Barrett and I played a duet. I think the name of it was the, something "Patrol." I think we got a big hand for that. So those were my memories of Mrs. Bloodworth.

DICK HALL: How old would you have been then?

BROYLES: Oh, I took those piano lessons from the age of six to twelve. It didn't stick. I wish it had.

WRIGHT: Tell us about your time at Lovett, because you are the first person I think we've interviewed that was part of the Myrtle Street class.

BROYLES: Well, I remember very little about Myrtle Street. I just know that I was there, and we moved out to West Wesley when they built "little Lovett." And Mary Benedict was my second grade teacher. She was married to Bill Benedict and they had a flock of sons that are still around Atlanta here. And she was my second grade teacher. My friend Barrett finally left Lovett and went to E. Rivers. He had been trying to get to E. Rivers all along, and his family let him go. But I had to stay and tough it out at Lovett. In our seventh grade, there were five of us in the graduating class, three boys and two girls. There was, Jimmy Cain and Charlie McGee and myself, and Nona Childs, Cecil Maddox was the graduating class. Now, I was scheduled to go to Episcopal High School in Alexandria, Virginia, when I got out of grammar school. But there was no eighth grade here, and Episcopal wanted me to stay and take another year in Atlanta before I came there. So the only place for me to go was North Fulton. So, after being of a class of five, I was sent to North Fulton. That was quite an experience. Anyway, I lasted that year, and had a lot of fun, and made friends, new friends. Then I went off to Episcopal High School. So all during the high school days I have very little to tell about what went on around here.

WRIGHT: Well, you had some summers and some free time down here.

BROYLES: Yeah, but had to work.

WRIGHT: Where did you work?

BROYLES: Well, one year I worked in a warehouse down at the Davison-Paxon. One year I worked on a truck with the telephone company around, putting telephone poles in holes. And, gosh . . .

WRIGHT: Did you have a car? Or would you take the trolley? How did you get around?

BROYLES: Well, I didn't have a car until I was sixteen. So I'd take the bus, and so . . .

HALL: Can I go back to Lovett just a minute?

BROYLES: Yeah.

HALL: Your family insisted that you go to Lovett. What was the reason for Lovett being so important?

BROYLES: Private school education.

HALL: Meaning a better quality of, more thorough . . .

BROYLES: That's what, my mother felt that way. And she did not waver.

WRIGHT: And Miss Lovett was a neighbor as well, correct?

BROYLES: Yeah. She lived about four doors down from us, on the corner of Muscogee and Peachtree Road.

WRIGHT: Was your mother and Eva Lovett, were they friends?

BROYLES: Oh, yeah. They were friends. My mother was from Macon, Georgia. And my grandfather, her father, used to drive up and he'd come to the house and I'd greet him and he would call me, "How's my little boy from Buckhead?" And he would say, "Come on and get in the car." And we would go to, we'd go up to Buckhead to the Buckhead Hardware store. The Murray family owned that. And he would take me in there and get me to pick out somethin' I wanted. And, so, buy a game or something like that. And we'd go buy it. One day he came up and said, "I have a surprise for you." And he opened the trunk of the car and a little billy goat jumped out. He said, "Every boy needs a billy goat." He said, "Because they both are butt-headed and they both smell bad."

WRIGHT: How long did you have the goat?

BROYLES: Oh, my gosh, that goat jumped out of the car and ran down Muscogee and he disappeared. We spent all afternoon trying to locate him. Finally found him in the, I think it was a Rogers grocery store down at Peachtree Battle. He wandered in there and we were able to corral him, bring him back. He was in my backyard for God knows how long. He grew horns, big horns, and he would, cornered our next door neighbor, Mrs. Moore, in her backyard and we had to do something about it. So we gave him to Fritz Orr. And I'm sure everyone knows about Fritz Orr.

WRIGHT: Did you go to his camps?

BROYLES: Oh, yeah. And so we gave the goat to Fritz. And after a few years Fritz couldn't really handle him. He gave him to Cora Nunnally. And I don't know what's happened to Cora or old Bill. But that was my grandfather from Macon. He was a wonderful fella.

WRIGHT: What did your mom think about him bringing a goat to the house?

BROYLES: Well, there wasn't much she could do about it.

WRIGHT: Did he have a name?

BROYLES: Bill. Naturally.

WRIGHT: Now, there was some mention about a whiskey barrel that was busted back in the 19...26?

BROYLES: Oh, down on Peachtree Way, oh, what was the, whiskey man would drive up and he would bring a barrel in and my father would siphon it out into a bottle.

WRIGHT: And was this legal liquor or was this . . . ?

BROYLES: Well, I doubt it. The only thing I know is that the barrel was there and he put a hammer underneath it to steady the barrel. And he told me, he said, "Don't touch that hammer." And he walked away, and I pulled the hammer out and the barrel topped over and the whiskey started pouring out. So that's—the gentleman that delivered the whiskey moved to Ponte Vedra, Florida, and had quite a nice home there on the beach at Ponte Vedra.

WRIGHT: So who, about what year was this?

BROYLES: Well, when I pulled the hammer out we were down on Peachtree Way, so I was about five years old. So that would have been 1934.

WRIGHT: And was it well known, was the whiskey man well known . . .

BROYLES: Well known, and I'm trying to remember his name and it just, it'll come to me as you go out the door.

WRIGHT: And he'd make his stops and fill up and . . . Did he have a set schedule?

BROYLES: Oh, yeah. He was a very popular person.

WRIGHT: Do you know where he got his whiskey?

BROYLES: I have no idea where. I don't think they really cared where it came from as long as it was available.

WRIGHT: Tell a little more about Fritz Orr Camp. What sort of activities would you do?

BROYLES: Well, we had the Mites, the Midgets, and the Giants out there, depending on age classifications. We would go twice a week, as I recall. And the Mites two days a week, the Midgets another two days, and then the Giants. And we did just about everything. Fritz was a wonderful, wonderful person. And we had football and basketball. Those were the main things that I remember.

WRIGHT: Where was that located?

BROYLES: Well, it was located on Nancy Creek Road. It started off, I believe, in the Howells, well, it may not have been the Howells' yard, but he started his camp in somebody's front yard.

HALL: I think at Arden and West Wesley, which would be . . .

BROYLES: That would be the Howells, right there on that hill. That's quite a hill. Barrett and I used to ride horseback all around on that hill. They had horses and the barn back there. As a matter of fact, one day I rode my bike out to Barrett's and we saddled up the horses and we rode the horses to Lovett School. And we tied the horses up in the woods out back and then rode back.

HALL: Was that for school? For a school day?

BROYLES: Yeah, that was for a school day.

HALL: I bet Mrs. Lovett would have loved that.

BROYLES: Well, she's not, I don't remember whether she did or not, but anyway, we did.

HALL: And this would have been on the West Wesley school, "little" Lovett.

BROYLES: Oh, yeah. "Little" Lovett. But back to Fritz, I only remember the Nancy Creek operation.

WRIGHT: About how many kids would go to the camp? Was it a pretty big camp?

BROYLES: I would say maybe a hundred kids, not all Mites, but Mites, Midgets and Giants. I would guess it had to be pretty close to a hundred.

WRIGHT: Would they bus you in or would your parents take you?

BROYLES: Parents took us. It was great, it was a great way to make new friends. Along with other activities at that time in my life was dancing school. Margaret Bryan. Margaret Bryan had a dancing school on the second floor of the building in Buckhead that the Buckhead Theatre is in.

WRIGHT: She was there for a while too. And what kind of dancing would you do?

BROYLES: Oh, everything. Foxtrot, rumba. I loved the rumba, that was my favorite. The waltz. They didn't teach us the samba. May Haverty and I took, we went to Arthur Murray and we learned to samba. So, but Margaret Bryan never gave us a samba lesson.

WRIGHT: Where would you practice your art?

BROYLES: Well, we, that I don't recall.

HALL: Was this before you went up to school for high school?

BROYLES: Ah, yeah. This was before I went up there. No, this would be after that. I mean, I wasn't going to Margaret Bryan while I was off at Episcopal High, but we'd dance at fraternity dances and things like that. Just dance, whenever.

HALL: Did you attend any debutante coming-outs here in the city?

BROYLES: I did, Dick, but I just, I don't recall any of 'em.

WRIGHT: How did you meet your wife?

BROYLES: Which one? [laughter]

WRIGHT: Tell us about your wives then, I guess.

BROYLES: Well, I'm a very, very fortunate young man, that has been married to three lovely, lovely ladies. Number one, Norris's mother, we met in Charlottesville, Virginia. We were married in Charlottesville at the church there on the grounds of the University of Virginia. Number two, uh—Norris's mother, Nancy, and I divorced in 1978 or -9, somewhere in there. And wife number two was someone that I had known when I was in Virginia and she was at Sweet Briar. She, we both ended up divorced and bumping into each other thirty-five years later. So we married in 1980. And she died, and then I married this lovely Shirley that's sitting here in the other room, who was married to one of my roommates in college. She was from Richmond, Virginia, but lived in Baltimore with her husband, and he died. And so, we had known each other for fifty-something years, and so we decided that it might be a good thing to get together. So we did, in 1993.

WRIGHT: The state of Virginia's been good to you then.

BROYLES: Yeah.

WRIGHT: And Norris is your only child?

BROYLES: No.

WRIGHT: Tell us about your children.

BROYLES: No, Norris has an older brother, Ed, and a younger sister, Nancy. They are sixteen months apart, Ed and Norris. Ed went to Episcopal High School. And Episcopal's big rival is Woodberry Forest. So Norris went to Woodberry Forest. And the two of 'em growing up used to beat on each other and so we just thought we'd separate 'em. And it turned out to be the right thing to do. They have great respect for each other now. And so, I've been very blessed. I have three wonderful children. I'm very proud of Norris. He's built his architecture business all on his own. And Nancy has been working in commercial real estate and has just retired from that. And she's married and has one son, who will be thirteen soon. Ed lives up in around Seneca, South Carolina, and works for a building supply company. So that's my family.

BROYLES: With a sister. I have a sister that lives in Florida. She's seven years younger.

WRIGHT: Where did she go to school?

BROYLES: She went to Lovett.

WRIGHT: She was at Lovett also.

BROYLES: And then she went to Oldfields outside of Baltimore, and then to Bennett Junior College, where Norris's mother, Nancy, had gone. Then she married and lived in Cleveland, Ohio, and then in 1972 she and her husband moved to Naples, Florida, and started a travel agency there. She's been there ever since. Her husband died in '89.

WRIGHT: Was it pretty common for a lot of the children in Buckhead to get to eighth grade and then go off to boarding school? Or was that the exception.

BROYLES: There weren't a whole lot that went off to boarding school back then. But I think, I'm thinking of my friend Barrett who went to Woodberry Forest. He went from E. Rivers to Woodberry, and then home to Emory. I think he graduated from Emory when he was about sixteen or seventeen. Then went to work for the Atlanta newspaper that his family owned.

WRIGHT: So, as your youth, how did you spend your time in Buckhead? Did you go up to the village? What was considered Buckhead at the time?

BROYLES: Right. Buckhead was not what Buckhead is now. I think our city limits were around Palisades Road. And then, I've forgotten were the northern boundary of the city limits were. I think they're in Brookhaven now. But Buckhead Theatre, as we grew up, on Saturday it was sort of a ritual, we'd all sort of meet up at the Buckhead Theatre and go see Tom Nix or Buck Jones or a cowboy movie.

WRIGHT: How much did the movie cost?

BROYLES: Oh, I think the movie was ten cents. I remember allowance was twenty-five cents. And you'd spend ten cents to go to the movie and then afterward go over to Jacob's Drugstore. A story that I love to tell on Frank Owens. We'd go over to Jacob's and we'd order a Coca-Cola. And Frank would order a Coca-Cola without ice, because he'd get more Coca-Cola. He'd probably kill me for that, but anyway.

HALL: Now they would actually, the soda jerks would dispense it, correct? It didn't come in a bottle.

BROYLES: Yeah.

HALL: So you'd have the syrup . . .

BROYLES: Yeah, uh-huh.

WRIGHT: Where was Jacob's Drugstore located?

BROYLES: It's that park, right there.

WRIGHT: Where the diagonal park is.

BROYLES: Yeah. That was on Saturday, and then we'd have enough to put in the plate on Sunday.

WRIGHT: Where did you go to church?

BROYLES: Well, I went to St. Luke's, downtown. But I finally moved to St. Philip's because Norris and Eddie and Nancy were going to, they wanted to go to Sunday School there because that's where all their friends were. So I transferred from St. Luke's to St. Philip's at one time. But as we were growing up I might spend the night with somebody on Saturday night and they were going to Sunday School at St. Philip's, and I'd just go with 'em. So I went to Sunday School an awful lot at St. Philip's. And then in later years I joined All Saints, and that's where I belong now.

HALL: Was your family at St. Luke's, your parents? And previous generations?

BROYLES: Hm-hmm. Yeah.

HALL: So how far back did that go?

BROYLES: Mother, well, they were married in Macon, Georgia, and then I guess they were going to St. Luke's in 1925, somewhere in there. And I was there for many, many years. I was on the Junior Vestry at St. Luke's, but then I transferred to St. Philip's because of the kids and everything.

WRIGHT: How many people were at St. Philip's at the time?

BROYLES: It was nothing like it is today.

WRIGHT: Mostly Buckhead families?

BROYLES: Yeah.

WRIGHT: So when you got back from UVA, tell us a little bit about your professional life, what you did, how you socialized.

BROYLES: Well, when I finished Virginia I went to New York for a year, and worked on Wall Street. And then came back in 1953 to Atlanta to go to work for Beer and Company. It was a brokerage firm, stock brokerage firm out of New Orleans.

WRIGHT: How do you spell that?

BROYLES: B-double E-R.

WRIGHT: Just like the drink.

BROYLES: And my father was a partner in Beer and Company, and he ran the Atlanta office. And so I came back and went to work there. And then in 1956 they sold Beer to E. F. Hutton and Company. And so I was with E. F. Hutton and Company until 1988. In 1988 E. F. Hutton and Company merged with Shearson. And Shearson was in the business of acquiring all sorts of firms. They acquired the Robinson Humphrey's firm here in Atlanta. And so I stayed for a year and I was just, I didn't want to hang in with a big bureaucratic company, so I had some friends with Interstate Johnson Lane, a regional brokerage firm. So they invited me to come over there in 1989. And so I was with them until I retired. But the names changed again, because Interstate Johnson Lane was taken over by Wachovia. And then Wachovia was taken over by First Union. But First Union kept the Wachovia name. And then Wells Fargo came in and took over the Wachovia First Union. And that's where it is today.

WRIGHT: Do you have a pension?

BROYLES: I have a pension.

WRIGHT: They keep up with you.

BROYLES: I have a pension from Lehman Brothers, that went bankrupt, but the pension is still alive.

WRIGHT: That's good.

BROYLES: But Shearson spun off the Robinson-Humphrey's people and the E. F. Hutton people, when Lehman wanted to separate from Shearson. And so they put all of us over with the Lehman retirement program and health program, which was wonderful. And even though Lehman went into bankruptcy their health program was intact until this past year. So I'm on my own now.

WRIGHT: So what did you do with those companies?

BROYLES: I was a salesman. I was a stock and bond salesman.

WRIGHT: And you were selling to folks in Buckhead, all over Atlanta?

BROYLES: All over, wherever anybody would buy from me. I had a few clients away from here.

WRIGHT: How did you sell?

BROYLES: I'd just call up and say, "We think G.E. is ready to make a move, and you. . . ." It's more wealth management today than it was then. It was purely stock sales and bond sales.

WRIGHT: Would you entertain, take 'em to dinner, take 'em to lunch?

BROYLES: Yeah, yeah, but not a lot. There wasn't as much building of relationships then as it is now, really. It was just, it's a different approach, which is a much better approach, really.

WRIGHT: And you're a member at Peachtree Golf Club, is that correct?

BROYLES: Uh-huh, I'm a member of Peachtree.

WRIGHT: And when did you join there?

BROYLES: Well, I joined there in 1955.

WRIGHT: How old was it at that point?

BROYLES: It was built in 1947. My father was an original member. And so I played there until I went off to college and married and came over 21, so when I came back here in 1953 I couldn't play there. So I'd play at North Fulton at Chastain. There'd be a group of us, one of us lived near there. And so early in the morning he'd get up and go out there and put a ball in the tube that they would have, and so he would go up there about seven o'clock. And our ball would come up for tee-off time probably about eleven. And we'd finish about five. It was slow play. Mr. Charlie Black, who was one of the founders of Peachtree, he and the Board figured that they'd better get some of the younger people in, because the membership was all older. And so they offered a very nice deal to four or five of us. A much-reduced initiation fee, but we had to pay the dues. So in 1955 my friend Barrett and I joined, along with Roy Dorsey and Al Thornwell. Our fathers had been members and so that's why they offered it to us. So I'm the, I'm probably the longest standing member at Peachtree that's playing golf.

WRIGHT: Any good golf stories back in the day?

BROYLES: No, none that I can think of, really.

WRIGHT: What was the purpose of the club mostly? Truly for golf or was it more business related?

BROYLES: No, purely for golf. Mr. Jones, Bob Jones, I think he wanted to build something on the order of Augusta National here in Atlanta.

WRIGHT: And how many original members were there?

BROYLES: As I recall there were seventy-five original members. And then they took in another seventy-five. And then to really finish the course and everything they took in a third wave of seventy-five. So that's two hundred and twenty-five. And there are only two hundred and twenty-five golfing memberships now. We have more than two hundred and twenty-five members, but they don't really count the out-of-town, and they don't count what they call the emeritus. They are people that are no longer playing golf but want to continue being a member. So they give up golfing privileges.

WRIGHT: What's your favorite hole out there?

BROYLES: My favorite hole would be Number Four. That's where I had a hole-in-one.

WRIGHT: When was that?

BROYLES: It was on Memorial Day many years ago. I've forgotten when. I hit a seven iron. It took one hop into the hole. Now to go there and hit from where I hit that seven iron, I'd probably have to maybe hit a three wood or something today. I don't get the distance that I used to get.

HALL: Was there any special privilege after you got a hole-in-one? Did they make a big deal of that at the clubhouse?

BROYLES: No. They didn't make any big deal at all. I took the ball back and gave it to the pro, that he would send off to the manufacturer of that ball and they would do something. I have it downstairs somewhere. The thing, I was stupid, is that the hole is over water, so I took what we call a water ball, because if I knock it in the water, I don't want to lose one of my good ones. This one had a little gash in it, and I made a hole-in-one with it. Why I didn't put that in the [bag] and bring out a new ball and give it to the pro, I don't know! But that ball's down there with a smile in it.

WRIGHT: What are some of your fondest, just in reflection, some of your fondest memories of growing up? Any other stories of childhood you want to share? The horse riding story to Lovett is phenomenal. Is there anything else that you couldn't get away with these days in Buckhead that you did back in your day?

BROYLES: No.

HALL: Didn't you raise some animals on Peachtree Road? Didn't you have chickens?

BROYLES: Oh, we had chickens. And we had Bill the Goat. And dogs. I had thirteen dogs in twelve years. Had, uh, I had a dog named Bill. And we got another dog. And my mother asked

me, “Well, now, what do you want to name it?” I said, “I want to name him Bill.” She said, “You can’t name him Bill. Can’t have two dogs named Bill.”

WRIGHT: And a goat.

BROYLES: So, right, and a goat named Bill. So I said, “All right, well, I’m going to name him Joe Bill.” So I had this wonderful dog, Joe Bill. And then, they were all done away with. Many years later, when we were living over on Dellwood Drive, that was when Norris was, Norris was born when we were living on Dellwood Drive. We had a collie, and the collie would chase cars out on the street and bark at ‘em. But everybody in the neighborhood loved the collie. And I went to Europe in 1958. And while I was gone we had given the collie to George Montgomery, who took it out to his farm because the police had come to us and said, if we come here one more time, we’re gonna have to cite you. And so, when I came home, Norris’s mother had, I walked in the door and this little, white puppy comes down the steps. And they named him Joe Bill after my old Joe Bill that I loved. And he was a wonderful, wonderful dog. When we moved to Rivers Road he would go back and forth from my parents’ house on Peachtree to Rivers Road. He would go through everybody’s back yard and climb the fence, and he’d climb this fence and come up the back steps, and by scratching the door my father would let him in and give him something to eat. He may take a nap there for a couple of hours and then he was ready to go. He’d come back home.

WRIGHT: What was the address on Rivers Road?

BROYLES: 2528.

WRIGHT: Did you build the house?

BROYLES: No. It was a lodge that was built, one of the first things built out there.

WRIGHT: Tell us a little bit about that.

BROYLES: And we bought it from a fella named Lawrence Tompkins. Lawrence was an artist, and he was the brother of a fella named Henry Tompkins, who was head of Robinson-Humphrey Company here. And the house had a cobblestone driveway. You went across a little creek, and our drive split off to the right, and off to the left went to Colonel Willis Everett’s house. So we had these two houses up there with a driveway splitting off. And we added on to it and lived there until Norris’s mother died in 1993. We moved there in 1961. We loved that house.

WRIGHT: What was the architecture of it originally?

UNIDENTIFIED: It was a timber-framed hunting lodge.

BROYLES: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED: It’s still there.

WRIGHT: Do you know the history of it, who, obviously you remember the name of the owner you brought it from.

BROYLES: Mr. Rivers or something?

UNIDENTIFIED: I don't know.

BROYLES: I'm not sure. I sold it to Johnny Thompson, and Johnny and his wife Pat lived there for a little bit, and then I think their daughter lives there now.

WRIGHT: Was it made out of logs, or wood? Brick, stone?

BROYLES: Mainly wood.

UNIDENTIFIED: A stone foundation, and the original lodge room was timber, timber-framed and plaster.

WRIGHT: Did you hunt a lot growing up, in and around Buckhead?

BROYLES: No. Hunted a little bit in south Georgia in later years.

WRIGHT: How about Fred's Fruit Stand?

BROYLES: Oh, that was a popular spot. I said the Buckhead Theatre. Fred's Fruit Stand was another hangout.

WRIGHT: What did you get there?

BROYLES: Watermelon. I mean, you'd go to the movie and on the way home, at night, you'd just drive up there and park along Peachtree Road and get out and go sit at a long table, order a big slice of watermelon. And then, there was some sort of a candy store next door to Fred's Fruit Stand, that had all different types of bubblegum, candy, and all that stuff.

WRIGHT: Tell us a little bit about, your grandfather had a brother, correct? And your name actually sort of jumps, Norris jumps from one side to your side because of his brother. Is that right?

BROYLES: Well, no, he had a brother Nash, who was a judge, and . . .

UNIDENTIFIED: He's talking about Norris though. His brother Norris.

WRIGHT: Yeah, was there a . . .?

BROYLES: Well, his brother Norris was killed. He was, he hooked a ride on the train from school to ride a little way and then drop off. He fell off and was run over by the train and killed. That was Norris.

WRIGHT: Where did that happen?

BROYLES: Over there . . .

WRIGHT: In Buckhead though?

BROYLES: No, not in Buckhead.

UNIDENTIFIED: Next to Oakland Cemetery.

BROYLES: Yeah. And then he had a brother Nash, who was a judge here. And then he had another brother, Bernard, that, we don't know what happened to Bernard. He moved to California, moved his whole family to California. We've lost touch, although Norris . . .

UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah, he was the manager of the Cracker baseball club for a while, Bernard was.

WRIGHT: Did you go to some of the Atlanta Cracker games?

BROYLES: No, I never went to any. I'd go over the Athens to an occasional University of Georgia football game, back in the Sinkwich days. Oh, boy, they had a football team.

WRIGHT: Did you take the train up there?

BROYLES: No, we'd just drive over.

WRIGHT: Well, any reflections on how Buckhead has changed?

BROYLES: Buckhead was a little village, and you had a grocery store there and a, the Murray's owned the hardware store, and you had Buckhead Men's Shop. But even before that, everybody seemed to know each other. And that's not the case today. And, it will be interesting to see whether the village feeling comes back in when all this building is complete. But it's a very friendly, lovely place. I wouldn't really want to live anywhere else.

HALL: The grocery store, was it a chain?

BROYLES: No, independent. I want to say it was Kamper's, but I can't remember whether Kamper's was there or whether Kamper's was down at Brookwood Hills.

HALL: Do you remember the first chain that came in, the first franchise?

BROYLES: I think that was A&P.

HALL: At Paces Ferry? The one at Paces Ferry or the one where Colonial was across from the Sears Roebuck building?

BROYLES: That was Colonial stores there.

WRIGHT: Or Peachtree Battle? That would have been at Peachtree Battle, right?

BROYLES: Well, there was an A&P down where Publix is now. But that came later I think. I think Colonial was up there where Central Chevrolet was. And now we've got Publix there. And out at West Paces Ferry, I can't recall when that was built.

WRIGHT: Well, it's definitely changed a good bit since then, in the last five or ten years.

BROYLES: Oh, yeah. Buckhead's an attractive place to live. Now Buckhead is considerably a larger Buckhead now than it was.

WRIGHT: Do you remember when it was annexed in to the city? Was that a big deal?

BROYLES: Yeah, it was. But I just don't remember anything about it. The memory blurs with age. . .

WRIGHT: We appreciate it very much.

BROYLES: Well, I've enjoyed it.

WRIGHT: It's a great interview and some wonderful stories and I think you've laid the landscape of Buckhead.

BROYLES: Well, I'm flattered.