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The Clemson Class of 1939

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THE CLEMSON CLASS OF 1939

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
History

by
Lawrence Jerome Korth
December 2012

Accepted by:
Dr. Rod Andrew, Jr., Committee Chair
Dr. Alan Grubb
Dr. Jerome V. Reel

ABSTRACT

The Clemson graduating class of 1939 entered college in 1935, during the Great Depression. By the time they enrolled, even as teenagers, many of them had encountered the economic hardships and family disruption of the times. When they got to Clemson, they discovered a military school with strong discipline and regimentation. Shortly after graduation these same men were engaged in World War II. These three experiences, - the Depression, military training and World War II combat - combined to form a bond among these men that has carried forward for over 70 years.

Circumstance played a role in helping the Class of 1939 gain standing at Clemson. Clemson graduating classes typically present a major gift to the university on their 50th anniversary. Coincidentally, the Class of '39 had its 50th anniversary in the year Clemson was celebrating its 100th anniversary. The class wanted to do something very special to commemorate these events, culminating in the development of the Class of 1939 Award for Excellence and the creation of the Heritage Gardens project. These gifts have set the Class of '39 apart for their ingenuity as compared to many other Clemson classes. The Award for Excellence honors a Clemson faculty member each year and, through its honorary member program, creates a system that sustains the class and actually provides it with new members. The Heritage Gardens project is a multi-part effort to honor Clemson past, present and future. It, too, has an ongoing component that, in

conjunction with other Clemson graduation classes, will also project the Class of '39 into the future.

Three things have greatly contributed to the success of the '39ers. First, members of the Class have had three great bonding experiences, the Depression, Clemson military training and World War II. Second, the Class has also had the benefit of strong dedicated local leaders who have led long lives, creating a continuity of thought and action. Finally, the Class developed outstanding and innovative ideas that captured the attention of the university.

The Class makes no secret of its desire to continue its legacy, even after all of the original members are gone, and has designed its gifts and programs to achieve that goal. The question we are unable to answer at this time is what will happen when all of the original members are gone.

DEDICATION

For Joan

- Annoying critic
- Virtuously patient wife of 47 years

and Joanne:

- The real writer in the family

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
TITLE PAGE.....	i
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
1. YOU HAD TO BE THERE.....	9
2. BACKGROUND	16
3. THE CLASS ON CAMPUS.....	32
4. THE CLASS AT WAR.....	44
5. '39ER DIFFERENCE	51
6. MORE DIFFERENCE	68
7. TO NAME A FEW.....	85
8. CONCLUSIONS	98
APPENDICES	
A. ABBREVIATIONS.....	111
B. CLASS OF 1939 MEMBER INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS.....	112
C. CLASS OF '39 AWARD BASED HONORARY MEMBERS.....	114
D. CLASS OF '39 CONTRIBUTION BASED HONORARY MEMBERS	116
E. CLASS OF '39 AWARD RECIPIENTS.....	117
F. CLASS OF 1939 MEMBERS WHO DIED IN WORLD WAR II.....	118
G. CLASS OF '39 WORLD WAR II EXPLOITS.....	125

H. ROSTER OF THE CLASS OF 1939.....	131
I. INTERVIEWS.....	139
BIBLIOGRAPHY	224

LIST OF TABLES

	PAGE
1. 1935 Freshman Fields of Study	34
2. States of Origin	40
3. Fields of Study	42
4. Clemson Class of 1939 World War II Military Service.....	47

INTRODUCTION

I retired in 2005 and my wife and I moved from Atlanta, Georgia to Lake Hartwell, near Anderson, South Carolina. Although I found it easier than expected to adjust from a full time worker to a retiree, I still needed something to stay occupied and, hopefully, keep my mind sharp (such as it is). I first tried golf, and after realizing that that was an effort in futility, I began looking for something more constructive.

My wife noticed an item in our local newspaper outlining a statute that allowed South Carolina senior citizens to attend college at a greatly reduced cost. Qualifying senior citizens in South Carolina can attend state colleges for little or no tuition. Clemson University was only 20 miles away and I enrolled as soon as a semester became available. Book costs and parking fees turned out to be the major costs. Even so, it is the deal of the century!

I enrolled and took one course per semester for three semesters and began to realize how much I was enjoying the experience. In the early part of my retirement I had begun to read, primarily books on American history. I had always been interested in the Civil War, and was now expanding my scope. As a result, I decided to take as many history classes as I could under the senior citizen program at Clemson.

I then came to learn that, although a person could not earn an undergraduate degree (fortunately I already had one) in the senior citizen program, it was possible to

earn a Master's Degree. I applied for the master's program, and to my everlasting surprise, was accepted by the Clemson History Department. To this day I am not sure how I was approved, but will be forever grateful to those who did. The thirty hours of required study have been a truly wonderful and enriching experience, and through those classes, I have come to love the study of southern history.

At the first formal meeting of graduate students I attended, we were advised of the need to select a subject for a Master's thesis. I had assumed that eventually I would select a subject relating to the Civil War, but had nothing definitive in mind. At that initial meeting of first year graduate students, Dr. Rod Andrew, Jr. mentioned that there was a need for a thesis on the Clemson graduating class of 1939. I had no idea what that meant, but apparently I nodded my head somewhere while he was talking. Later that evening, I received an email from Dr. Andrew asking if I would consider selecting the Class of '39 as my thesis topic.

Not having a better idea, and not really understanding what I was getting into, I said I would be happy to write about the Class of '39. I was told that there was something special about the Class of '39, and it would be my job to determine what "Special" meant. In all honesty, it took me over two years to get the thesis part of my Master's experience under way, as I completed the 30 hour classroom requirement before giving the thesis much thought.

I had assumed that a thesis on a graduating class would be an entirely different type of experience than most thesis topics, and that proved to be true. The Class of '39 still had living members, about 40 of them. All in their 90s and two in particular still heavily involved in '39er activities, the Class of '39 was a living and breathing entity. Rather than in a musty dank museum basement, my research was often conducted in the Clemson University archives or in an interview with a '39er or someone closely associated with the class. I was able to meet the two living members who have been leading '39er activity for over 25 years, and became friends with each of them. That in itself was rewarding and enlightening, and will remain one of the most enjoyable memories I take away from this experience.

As I began to research my thesis, I realized how little I knew about alumni in general and the workings of a graduating class. Learning about a class had other educational value, as well. For one thing, I needed to learn a great deal about the history and culture of Clemson, something every student should know about his university. The history of the university played heavily in the culture, personality, and "specialness" of the Class of '39. The Clemson military heritage is a key element in this thesis.

Understanding the Class of '39 extended to a study of the South and South Carolina during the 1930s. As a non-native born southerner who has become very interested in his adopted region, engaging in a detailed study of the South in the 1930s

was exciting. History has a place in most any learning experience and that was very evident in this thesis.

The South of the early 1930s was the South of the Great Depression. It was also the time when the Class of '39 was in high school. Its members saw and felt the Depression in their daily lives and began what I believe was the first of several bonding experiences that helped make the Class of '39 "special", even though they did not realize it or know each other at the time. When they came to enroll at Clemson in 1935, many of them had already gained valuable life experiences.

Enrollment at Clemson created another shared life experience. In the 1930s Clemson was a military school. Wool uniforms, rules, rigidity, and strict discipline were the order of the day. Most cadets complained about the military orientation. Yet, out of this came a certain comfort. In the time of deep depression, these college students now had a clean bed at night, food on the table, and the stability of a daily routine. They also had each other, and learning how to navigate the regimen of the military atmosphere and absorb the new and advanced messages in the classroom began a second form of bonding that has carried forward for over 70 years.

The history of Clemson is a big part of the history of the Class of 1939. Chapters 2 and 3 are devoted to a brief overview of the university and what the '39ers found when they enrolled. This highly respected agricultural school had more enrollees in the schools of engineering than it did in agriculture. Thomas Green Clemson, Clemson's

founder, had foreseen this and provided for a school that was to specialize in the fields of agriculture and mechanical arts. Not all Clemson students in the 1930s were from the farm country. Many had urban backgrounds.

Chapter 4 outlines the Class experiences with World War II. This thesis suggests that World War II was step three in the bonding process that created the love we see in the class today. From the Depression to the military orientation at Clemson to the combat of war, this class had developed a love for itself and for its university. They realized the gifts they had received and they have spent decades since working to demonstrate those feelings on behalf of Clemson.

Chapters 5 and 6 are devoted to those things that make the Class different, from its internal structure, which includes the special category of honorary members, to the gifts the Class has presented to the university. Unlike many classes, the Class of '39 was not content to present mere brick and mortar gifts. This Class wanted to create honors and experiences that will continue to give over time. Memory and ritual are critical to the Class.

Most importantly, the Class wants the Class to live, even after all of the original members have passed away, and has, over 25 years, developed plans and programs designed to realize that goal. The Class of 1939 Award for Excellence (Award for Excellence), a gift from the Class, is a prime example of this philosophy and one of the few class gifts anywhere that honors faculty.

Chapter 7 mentions a small number of the Class by name and deed. This was done in the context of showing how the Class contributed to the revitalization of the country after the war, and was not, in any way, intended to signify that these were the only '39ers worthy of note. Certainly, some have done more individually for the Class itself than others; however, in the context of the times, this Class did its fair share in helping the country return to prosperity.

Chapter 8 presents conclusions. Is the Class different and special? I think the answer is a resounding yes. With a culture of love for the university and its professors, this Class has developed gifts and plans that honor the memory of the past and recognize the importance of the future of the school. Frank Cox, son of a '39er and himself an honorary '39er, says it best, "I think the administration holds them in high regard, the faculty holds them in high esteem." Either way, the Class of '39 has achieved something "special."

The process of writing this thesis took me places I had not imagined. I became very well acquainted with the Special Collections section of the Clemson Archives. I had no idea what a wealth of information was available in the archives, or how helpful the people in the Thurmond Center would be in helping me ferret it out. I also learned that the Cooper Library is serious when it says a book is overdue. My tuition may be low cost, but my library fines have not been.

Without question, the most enlightening and enjoyable part of the research for this thesis was meeting those people associated with the Class. Two prominent living Class members, Dr. Tazewell Senn and Dr. James Sweeny, provided much of the information contained herein. Either through personal interviews or through written materials that each has compiled, the Class of '39 is well documented.

And what a joy it was to get to know these men. Totally different in personality and approach, they each have an unqualified love for their Class and their university; and each has devoted decades of support to the Class and to Clemson. People who read this thesis will also become well acquainted with Tee and Jim.

In addition to living members, I also had the opportunity to meet and interview honorary members of the Class of '39. Honorary membership is a critical part of the '39er culture and philosophy, and is not simply a title. In the Class of '39, becoming an honorary member carries added responsibility. The honorary members I spoke to include a relative, Frank Cox, (son of '39er and former Clemson president Walter Cox); professors emeritus Clifton Egan, Dr. Donald McKale, Dr. Jerome Reel and Dr. Joel Brawley, and a '39er widow, Alma Martin.

All were eager supporters of this project and equally strong supporters of the Class of '39; and together they provided information that helped define "special" as it applied to the Class. Yet, they each have differing reasons for their thoughts and they

view the class from differing perspectives. It is hoped that readers will enjoy their thoughts and gain insights to them as they discuss the Class.

Yes, the Class is special, for several reasons. Those reasons range from an internal bonding that has lasted decades, an unqualified love of their university that has been passed down to all those who are associated with them, to dedicated leaders who developed ideas, programs and gifts that will empower the Class of '39 to live in the hearts of those associated with Clemson University.

CHAPTER 1

YOU HAD TO BE THERE

As it turned out, it was one of those things you had to see to appreciate. I had been warned it was going to be hot. It was. June is hot in the South Carolina Piedmont. And when I saw the upcoming Class of '39 program, I got even warmer. By the looks of it, I was going to be in the heat for well over an hour.

The reunion celebrating the Seventy First anniversary of the Clemson A & M College graduating class of 1939 took place on June 10 – 12, 2010. As is customary, the first part of the three-day reunion celebration was a memorial service honoring class members and/or spouses whose passing had come to the attention of the Class in the prior year. The memorial ceremony takes place under a large tent set up for that purpose in the Heritage Gardens on the grounds of the Clemson Botanical Gardens, near the Clemson campus.

This was my first exposure to the Class of '39. I was to learn there was an important reason for the ceremony and for its location. The Heritage Gardens is significant to the Class and its relationship to Clemson. I was also to learn there are reasons for the many rituals and traditions of the Class of '39. Sitting in the heat is just part of the process.

Of the approximately 40 members of the Class who were still alive on that day, six were in attendance at this year's reunion. All of them are now well into their 90s. This was no small memorial, and the ceremony began with a presentation of colors by a Clemson honor guard, followed by a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. The Class takes its military service, patriotism, and reunions seriously.

Several members of the Clemson faculty were in attendance. I would learn there was a reason for that, too. In spite of the heat, I counted upwards of 100 attendees, many whose ages were reflective of the fact the Class was celebrating its seventy-first reunion. In addition there were also some young adults. Children and grandchildren of class members were there too, along with honorary class members and observers, like me. There is a reason for that, too.

Scanning the program, I noted that there were twelve biographies, each a full page long, commemorating members of the class of '39.¹ In addition, there were seven similar biographies for wives of '39er classmates who had died over the last year.² I was to learn that widows of '39ers are considered necessary³ members of the Class, even

¹ *Clemson A & M College Class of 1939 2010 Reunion Program*, in possession of the author.

² Ibid.

³ James O. Sweeny, compiler, *Chronicles of the Class of 1939, Vol. 2* (Clemson University: Special Collections, Thurmond Center)

though Clemson was an all male college in 1939. Each of those biographies was read in full as part of the ceremony.

Because this was my first exposure to the Class of '39, I simply did not understand the significance of what was taking place. As I sat there, all I could think about was how hot it was and how long this was going to take. To my surprise, as each of the deceased members was honored, my interest level grew, and by the fourth or fifth reading, I was sitting up a little straighter and paying much closer attention. By the last of them, I was reading along in my program.

Also of significance was the fact the obituaries were being read by a member of the Clemson faculty. One of the gifts that makes the Class of '39 special is its annual recognition of an outstanding Clemson faculty member. I was to learn that the Class of '39 is the only class to recognize and honor faculty as part of its gifts to the university, and that is part of the long-term strategy of the Class to continue its existence, even after all of the original members have died.

A large wooden plaque has been prepared, and as each classmate dies, his name is inscribed on the plaque with a brass name plate. The plaque is nearly full now.

This was a stirring and moving program, giving me a glimpse of the values the class held, and how its members cherished the memory of their classmates. In his opening remarks, Dr. Tazewell Senn, Class president, dedicated this year's theme to love. In

reality, love and remembrance signify a large portion of the Class activities in all years and in all events.

At the conclusion of each biographical reading, the Guardroom Bell, located in the Heritage Gardens, was rung in honor of the deceased. It is necessary to ring the bell in honor of each departed class member and spouse. Everyone in the Class of '39 is given his or her due.

Rituals associated with the memorial service are repeated every year. A Tennyson poem is recited along with a prayer of remembrance honoring each of the deceased members and spouses. And finally, befitting a school with a long and valued military heritage, "Taps" is played at the conclusion of the memorial portion. The Clemson Alma Mater is sung to conclude the proceedings.

I began to see the heat did not matter, and I began to see why so many people were sitting under the tent. Following the ceremony, pictures were taken. The entire proceeding was video recorded, as they have been for many years. There is great ceremony whenever the Class is involved.

Everyone was then invited to attend a social hour, followed by the annual reunion dinner. The dinner function was held at a Clemson facility a few miles off campus. Dr. Senn presided and, even in his 90s, stood firm at the dais and gave his annual message. I was to learn Tee was not a shy, or brief, speaker and he uses every available opportunity to promote his beloved Class of '39.

As with the outside ceremony earlier in the day, the dinner function also had purpose. Each year the Class awards an honorary membership in the Class of '39 to an outstanding Clemson faculty member of that year. This is a coveted award. Not only do recipients value the recognition the award brings, but they also become honorary Class members, and embark on a level of participation in Class activities. I was to learn by meeting with several faculty award recipients that they take this honor very seriously. Although the actual award ceremony takes place in January, the recipient is also honored at the reunion dinner.

The main point of the evening took place after dessert. As might be expected, a vast majority of the Class participated in World War II and fought overseas. As might also be expected, not all of them returned. In some cases, these men left pregnant wives behind, and unfortunately, some of the children of those '39ers never met their fathers.

Three such children were honored at this reunion, and two were in attendance. I sat next to one of them at dinner. He, the son of a '39er and had himself already retired. One of the other honorees brought her granddaughter to the dinner. It became increasingly clear that these '39ers placed a great deal of importance on history, memory, and the need to maintain the Class of '39 as a living tribute. I was also to learn that their loyalty to Clemson is overwhelming.

The final ceremony of the evening involved a bottle of wine. Several years earlier, a bottle of (naturally) 1939 French wine was obtained from a vineyard in France by an honorary member and set aside by the Class.⁴ The plan was, when the time came, for the final two living Class members to open the bottle and toast the Class. The members decided not to wait for the time until only two members remained, and the bottle was opened on this evening with great ceremony and oratory.

The six class members in attendance were each poured a glass, participated in the appropriate toasts, and had a drink. Once again the value of ceremony and memory of classmates was evident in all that was taking place. Although there was a high degree of concern among the participants, the wine had apparently withstood its years of confinement and been pronounced fit to drink. (There was no concern that these 90-somethings were able to have a drink.) And everyone did. A lesser vintage was provided for those of us who were not members of the Class, and everyone participated in the celebration. Dr. Senn and others made several additional toasts, all relating to the Class.

Several new honorary Class members were inaugurated in a separate ceremony. I was to learn that becoming an honorary member is a significant and highly valued achievement. There are definitive requirements that an honorary member must meet.

⁴ Chateauneuf-du-Pape Domaine de Beurenard 1939, obtained from the vineyard by Whirl Miller, honorary member of the Class of 1939.

It is also customary to end the evening with songs led by another honorary member of the Class. These songs form a remembrance of their own and are an integral part of the proceedings. It was very evident that this class reveres its connection to Clemson University as well as its own heritage and legacy. I was to learn virtually all Class activities have those goals in mind.

An informal brunch gathering was held the following morning. Dr. Senn presided over a slide show depicting the development and construction of the Class of '39 bell tower gift, located on the Clemson campus. I was to learn that the bell tower was just one of a number of gifts associated with the Class of '39.

At that point I realized I did not know much about the Class or why it was held in such esteem by members of the Clemson family. However, following this reunion ritual, I knew I wanted to learn more and to better understand the history of the Clemson Class of 1939. Even more so, I wanted to understand how it came to be so revered.

Many graduating classes have come and gone since Clemson Agricultural College was formed, and many of them are held in high regard by the university. None, however, is more revered than the Class of '39. What makes one class special? To understand the reasons requires a study of the story behind the Clemson Class of '39.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND

Like most of the rest of the country, the South in the mid 1930s was still working to overcome the negative economic effects of the Great Depression. The country was simply struggling to return to an economic equilibrium. It was in this environment that the Class of '39 matriculated in the fall of 1935. Since most of the Class would have been of high school age in the early 1930s, they would have seen and felt the Depression on a first-hand basis, as young adults, prior to entering college. Their joint experiences with the Depression began the process that forms the bond uniting the Class.

Most people who are even slightly aware of the history of economic development in the United States are aware that as far back as the early 1900s, economic growth occurred slowly in the South.⁵ The economy moved forward to some degree after World War I, but in many other respects lagged behind the rest of the country. In addition, throughout America's history, the specter of a "different South" has been a constant theme.⁶ Although these comments are primarily aimed at

⁵ George B Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), ix.

⁶ James M. McPherson, *Drawn With the Sword* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 4-20.

economic differences, the South has also been noted for its philosophical differences from the rest of the country.

Economically, the South had been stagnant for a period of over fifty years in spite of efforts to make improvements. The New South philosophy recognized the need to make drastic economic changes; however the South was simply not able fully to accomplish one of its primary goals, which was to make quantum leaps forward in industrialization.

Segregation was an additional problem and the practice was prevalent throughout the South. White supremacy was still the order of the day. What economic progress that was occurring was taking place in the context of white supremacist attitudes. Jim Crow Laws prevailed.⁷

Then came the Great Depression and things got worse. By 1932, farm income, a major portion of the traditional southern economy, had fallen over 35% from 1929 levels.⁸ Cotton receipts had fallen almost 70% and general income was 42% lower than

⁷ Tindall, *Emergence*, 161.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 354.

it was just three years prior. As an example, cotton prices fell from 20.2 cents per pound to 6.5 cents during that same time period.⁹

Although agriculture led the South into the depression, it was soon joined by towns and industry. The Florida land boom ended; the economies of Asheville, North Carolina and other southern resort areas failed.¹⁰ Banks held worthless mortgages and, for this and other reasons, many banks failed. By 1931 southern per capita income was 67% of 1929 and by 1932 it was 55%.¹¹

The depression affected potential Clemson students in different ways. Jim Sweeny, a prominent member of the Class of '39, recalled that his family was not as adversely affected by the depression as were many. His father, also a Clemson graduate, was an engineer for the city of Anderson, South Carolina. As work dried up for the city, his father went to work for Clemson College. Jim and his family were doing

⁹ Ibid., 355.

¹⁰ Ibid., 359.

¹¹ Ibid.

well enough that he did not need to work while he attended Clemson.¹² Sweeny commented “My family paid my way, I didn’t work at Clemson.”¹³

Sweeny recalls that most of his new classmates were from farms and the Clemson agricultural school was a major draw for South Carolina high school graduates. The Clemson engineering school was also considered well above average by his classmates, and even though he was a Clemson legacy, he would have chosen to attend based on the quality of the engineering school alone.¹⁴

Sweeny went on to become president of the Class of ’39 after holding office in the class in his sophomore and junior years. He also became a prominent engineer for a major corporation, General Electric. In those days, it was not uncommon to work for one company one’s whole working life as Sweeny did.

Dr. Tazewell (Tee) Senn, also a prominent member of the class, has a different story to tell. He was from Newberry, South Carolina, a smaller town in the middle of the state. He was a farm boy and went to country schools until his mother made him go to

¹² James Sweeny, interview held at his home, Highlands, North Carolina on December 15, 2011.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

the town school in high school. From there he matriculated to Clemson College on an agricultural scholarship.¹⁵

His family had little money. Tee sold milk door to door, and his father had three jobs, including one as a night watchman.¹⁶ Yet, his family recognized the value of education and wanted him to go to college. Tee worked for as little as ten cents an hour while a student to help defray costs.¹⁷ When asked how much money his family had, Senn added “Nothing, we sold milk but they didn’t have any money, the mills were closed and everything ...”¹⁸

The depression was on everyone’s mind and affected everyone’s decisions, every day. A review of the Class indicates that, almost to a man, they were able to find jobs following graduation.¹⁹ For the most part, the jobs they found were commensurate with people who were educated. Had it not been for the advantage their education

¹⁵ Tazewell Senn Interview held at his home, Clemson, South Carolina on December 20, 2011.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Sweeny, *Chronicles*, Vols. 1 and 2.

provided, however, their circumstances would probably have been different as it was still a time of limited opportunity.

Yet, the depression actually bottomed out in the South sooner than in the rest of the country. From 1933 forward, the South had a higher index to 1929 financial markers than did the rest of the nation.²⁰ Southern industry continued to improve when compared to the rest of the country.

Of course, not everything was positive. Even the New Deal did not create, or restore, prosperity for the South. Neither agriculture nor industry (primarily textiles) was profitable during the 1930s. A world war was needed to accomplish that. Blacks did not gain much in terms of wealth or political standing in the 1930s. In fact, in some cases, the New Deal displaced black workers, an unintended consequence.

Politically, as a staunch Democratic state in a Democratic controlled country, several South Carolinians rose to positions of power in the Roosevelt administration. Among them was James F. Byrnes, who was influential during the Theodore Roosevelt administrations, served as Secretary of State under Harry Truman, became a Supreme

²⁰ Tindall, *Emergence*, 359.

Court Justice and, in 1950, Governor of South Carolina.²¹ Byrnes also played a role in the success of the university and was a Clemson trustee. His appointment as head of American war mobilization during World War II gave Clemson access to important officials in Washington.²²

In summary, as the Class of '39 matriculated, the South Carolina economy was still in poor shape. Clemson College, founded on a basis of agriculture and practical sciences, was a beacon of hope for the state. If more educated southern men could be produced, particularly in those fields where the state was deficient, the opportunity for economic growth would follow. The South and South Carolina desperately needed this growth.

Many Clemson graduates of the Class of '39 entered the field of education in South Carolina.²³ As a result, they were not only able to find viable jobs; they were also able to make contributions in an area desperately needed in the state.

²¹ Jack Irby Hayes, Jr., *South Carolina and the New Deal* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press), 2001.

²² Donald M. McKale and Jerome V. Reel, Jr. eds., *Tradition A History of the Presidency of Clemson University* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 169-70.

²³ Sweeny, *Chronicles*, Vols. 1 & 2.

During the '39ers tenure, Clemson was a male only school. Actually, it was white men only. It had a strong military flavor, and was called Clemson Agricultural College, not Clemson University.

The college was formed in conjunction with the Morrill Land Grant Act, originally passed in 1862 by the United States Congress, which provided for the development of agricultural and mechanical colleges in every state. Following the Civil War, southern states were eligible to take advantage of the Act and Clemson Agricultural College became a reality. Clemson Agricultural College celebrated its first graduating class in 1896 and 37 seniors received degrees, 21 in mechanical/electrical engineering and 16 in agriculture.²⁴

Over the next fifteen years CAC continued to grow in faculty, curriculum and in the number of attending students. Finding space for the students was an ongoing issue as the size of the student body grew. In some cases, students were turned away due to lack of suitable facilities.²⁵

²⁴ Helene M. Riley, *Clemson University* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 7.

²⁵ Jerome V. Reel, *The High Seminary*, Volume 1 (Clemson: Clemson University Digital Press, 2011), 152.

Clemson became the school with the largest percent of agricultural students of any land grant college.²⁶ By 1910 enrollment had reached 703 cadets, all but 12 of whom were from South Carolina. With World War I approaching, the National Defense Act of 1916 established the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC).²⁷ As a land grant college, a strong military environment had always been a major part of campus life. The act provided funds for ROTC cadets and the potential for an army commission upon graduation. During World War I, 698 former Clemson students served in the armed forces, 27 of whom died in the course of their service.²⁸

CAC continued to expand and grow and during the Presidency of Enoch W. Sikes, although much of that growth took place prior to the Depression. Sikes served from 1925 to 1940.²⁹ During Sikes' term, enrollment and faculty doubled.³⁰ Instructors with Masters Degrees and PHDs increased multifold, however Clemson remained among the

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 153.

²⁷ www.encyclopedia.com/doc/10126-National Defense Acts

²⁸ Reel, *Seminary*, 209.

²⁹ McKale, *Tradition*, 141.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 142.

lowest rated of land-grant colleges.³¹ Ten additional degree programs were added and Clemson received its much needed accreditation from the Association of Secondary Schools, an important and necessary step forward.³² The school changed and modernized its organization structure. A business manager was hired and a dean was established for the college. Additional land was acquired for off campus experimental stations.³³ Rules regarding discipline became more relaxed and there was more emphasis on the individual student. Admittance standards were toughened. CAC was moving forward with the times.

Enrollment and revenue for CAC fell during the Depression years; however, the New Deal brought new and needed construction via the Works Progress Administration.³⁴ As a result, CAC was able to grow its physical plant, if not prosper, during the Depression.

Additionally, it was during this period that the ever present and all powerful IPTAY club formed in 1934, reflecting the importance that athletics has long held for

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Reel, *Seminary*, 255.

³⁴ McKale, *Tradition*, 153.

Clemson.³⁵ By this time, intercollegiate athletics was a part of the athletics program, and several '39ers attended Clemson as a result of athletics, either on their own or through athletic scholarship.

An extremely important part of the history of CAC is the military tradition of the college and its relationship to the South. The South is often thought to have a singular military tradition and a high regard for the values that military training instills in young men. This includes respect for military institutions and martial capabilities even extending to the glorification of the Confederate Lost Cause mythology. This thought process may also account for the number of military institutions that were located in the South during this period, including Clemson, The Citadel, Virginia Military Institute, and Texas A & M, among others.

Rod Andrew³⁶ and John Hope Franklin³⁷ discuss this school of thought in their books on the subject of southern militancy and military tradition. Franklin, in particular, contends there are specific reasons why the South has a reputation for violence.

³⁵ Ibid., 157.

³⁶ Rod Andrew, Jr., *Long Gray Lines, the Southern Military School Tradition, 1839-1915* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

³⁷ John Hope Franklin, *The Militant South 1800-1861* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002).

Andrew indicates that southerners accepted military schools, and they were needed as a part of the South's educational makeup, particularly after the Civil War.

Historical scholarship suggests that there is reason to believe in a degree of southern militancy that separates it from other regions. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, in his book, *Honor and Violence in the Old South*, outlines how the values associated with an old world ethic of honor led southern white men to justify martial actions.³⁸ Of all land-grant colleges, those in the South were foremost in their adoption of the military provisions of the act. The military is a large part of the Clemson story.

As part of the land-grant charter, land-grant colleges were required to include some instruction in military tactics as a part of their curriculum. Although all land-grant colleges incorporated this into their curriculum, the schools of the South often went well beyond the minimum needed to meet the requirements. Clemson was in this category.

As stated in the Clemson Catalogue of 1935 -1936, "Clemson is a military school – not to make soldiers, but in order that students may learn the importance of loyalty and obedience to authority and acquire the habit of being courteous, sympathetic and

³⁸ Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Honor and Violence in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

punctual.”³⁹ That is a clear summary of the southern view of the value of military training. Southerners saw military education as valuable in improving the quality of the man, as a man, not necessarily in creating a soldier.

In discussions with surviving members of the Class of '39, there was virtually no acknowledgement or belief of a southern military tradition, nor was there a fondness of the military training they received while at Clemson. This may be a reflection of the fact that respect for the military was waning in general; however, it is more likely that these cadets were cadets simply because it was a requirement of the school. The new cadets were young and may have bristled at the idea of military discipline.

Jim Sweeny, a prominent member of the Class, is one case in point. Sweeny acknowledged that he had no personal history of military interest, and the Clemson military orientation had no bearing on his decision to enroll.⁴⁰ He accepted it for what it was, although he was not especially fond of it. Some of his classmates were “gung ho,”⁴¹ but he was not particularly interested. He did feel that the Clemson military

³⁹ *The Clemson Catalogue 1935 – 1936*. Special Collections, Thurmond Institute, Clemson University.

⁴⁰ Sweeny interview.

⁴¹ Senn interview.

preparatory program gave the United States Army a ready supply of officer material for World War II.⁴²

Tee Senn concurred with Sweeny's feelings as they related to a southern military heritage. He was not aware of one and it did not affect his decision to attend Clemson. He reported that he was not in the ROTC his first two years due to physical reasons, but then became a member.⁴³ Senn did not like the military orientation or restrictions, especially the barracks. He felt the underclassmen were slaves to the upperclassmen. Ultimately, in spite of those feelings, he became a Lieutenant in the U. S. Navy in Cryptography.⁴⁴

An officer from the United States war department oversaw campus discipline in the early part of the program. Known as the commandant, he administered discipline and demerits.⁴⁵ Yet, only the college president could suspend or expel a student. As might be expected, the system of dual authority often created issues between those men.

⁴² Sweeny interview.

⁴³ Senn interview.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Reel, *Seminary*, 149.

The military influence helped create a feeling of unity and oneness among the cadets. Those feelings were further developed as the Class went to war. The combination of Depression uncertainty coupled with the comfort and discipline of cadet life, and the unity developed by war experiences were to remain with the Class, and began to form the culture that has prevailed for 75 years. Although the military orientation at Clemson was ultimately eliminated, its heritage remains. The men of the Class of '39, in spite of their general dislike for the regimen, voice appreciation for the values and the bond their Clemson military experience gave them.

When the ROTC program came into existence as part of the National Defense Act of 1916, rules for the cadets were relaxed and a more traditional campus life ensued.⁴⁶ Still, as the Class of '39 matriculated, military rules prevailed, and cadet students continued to live in barracks, wore uniforms all day, ate in mess halls, and were subject to military inspections and discipline.

Today, it appears that Clemson has come to appreciate its military heritage in more modern terms, and works to capitalize on how powerful that heritage is as a part of the university. The Scroll of Honor on campus serves as a memorial and remembrance of those who fought and lost their lives in defense of America, and provides a definitive measure of how Clemson contributed. The university has helped to

⁴⁶ Riley, *Clemson*, 41.

create a bond and a feeling of pride among classes associated with military actions, and by its memorials presents an obvious reverence for the military and the university's military heritage. In so doing it passes that bond even to those classes not involved in a period of combat.

CHAPTER 3

THE CLASS ON CAMPUS

As the young men of the Class of '39 entered college in 1935, they found a campus that was growing and in the midst of a very positive period in its history. Although the substantial majority of the Class was from South Carolina, the class and its interests were varied. The following is a brief summary of the state of CAC and the Class during the period of 1935 - 1939.

By the time the Class graduated in 1939 Clemson Agricultural College was in its 50th year. Enoch W. Sikes, PhD, LLC, as previously noted, was college president and he was working to expand and improve Clemson. The faculty had grown to 163 professors.⁴⁷ The campus was now over 1,500 acres⁴⁸ and was a bustling community of young men. Extension programs had grown in volume and importance to the school, and they required more land. Clemson had, as far back as the 1930s, an excellent reputation and relationship with the nearby city.

A new student in 1935, as outlined in the Clemson Catalogue, was required to be at least 16 years old, be free of contagious or infectious disease, and have a certificate

⁴⁷ Ibid., 61.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 47.

of good moral character.⁴⁹ High school graduates who had a total of 15 units, with three in English, Math and history were admitted without an entrance exam. New cadets not meeting that requirement were required to take an entrance exam.⁵⁰

Room, board, laundry, hospital, class and lab fees, matriculation and student activity, tuition and uniform costs totaled \$379.65 per semester.⁵¹ Various funds were available, even then, for students who were unable to pay the necessary costs. The Clemson Catalogue lists at least five funds that were available in 1935.⁵²

By 1935, as the Class of '39 was enrolled, Clemson Agricultural College had graduated 23,600 students in its first 46 years. In addition, CAC had more graduates in professional phases of agriculture than any other southern school. These fields included teaching, research, extension activities, and other areas of agriculture.

Although often thought of as an agricultural college, it is interesting to note that of the 711 new cadets, including 65 advanced freshmen who enrolled prior to the fall of 1935, the largest number, 233, representing 32.7% of the class, enrolled in the school of

⁴⁹ Clemson Catalogue 1935

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

engineering. Twenty two percent, 158, enrolled in the school of agriculture. An additional 14 percent were enrolled in Vocational Agricultural Education, also reflecting the school’s agricultural heritage. A summary of enrollment by major field is as follows.

Table 1
1935 Freshman Fields of Study⁵³
Clemson Agricultural College

<u>Field of Study</u>	<u>Enrollment*</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Agriculture	158	22.2
Chemistry	19	2.7
Engineering	233	32.7
Gen. Science	91	12.9
Textiles	100	14.1
Voc. Ag. Ed.	102	14.3
Other	<u>8</u>	<u>1.1</u>
Totals	711	100.0

**It should be noted that the above numbers represent the entire freshman class of 1935 and do not reflect the final definition of the Class of 1939.*

⁵³ V. M. Shell and J. R. Harrison co-editors, 1939 Taps Yearbook, Special Collections, Thurmond Institute, Clemson University.

Students continued to live in barracks under strong military discipline. All students were required to participate in ROTC and, at the end of their junior year, had to attend a summer camp paid for by the federal government.

As Clemson evolved, a full range of activities had become available to the class of '39. Several student organizations and honor societies had chapters on campus. Organizations such as the Blue Key, a national honor fraternity, had a Clemson chapter. The Scabbard and Blade, a national military honor society, also had a chapter.⁵⁴ There was even a Central Dance Association that promoted dances for the school, although women for the dances had to be imported from not so nearby schools.⁵⁵

Additional fraternal organizations included Phi Psi, a national honor textile fraternity, Tau Beta, a national engineering honor fraternity, the Minarets, for architecture, and Alpha Zeta, an agriculture fraternity.⁵⁶ Fraternities were also available for chemistry and music, along with groups like the Jungaleers, the Clemson College Orchestra. The Jungaleers remain a Clemson staple and perform on campus to this day.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 342-352.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Locally, the Tiger Brotherhood was formed as an honor fraternity and Alpha Chi Psi and Sigma Phi were purely local social groups.⁵⁷ Clearly, in spite of the ongoing depression, the demands of military discipline, and the stress of attending college, the Class of '39 had its share of available enjoyable college activities.

Athletics has always been an important part of the Clemson culture. A full range of sporting activity was available including the major sports of football, basketball, boxing, track and baseball.⁵⁸ Minor sports included golf, rifle, soccer, swimming and tennis.⁵⁹ Athletic scholarships were available and several members of the Class attended CAC in this way.

As defined by the Class, and for purposes of this thesis, the Class of '39 is not comprised of only those students who matriculated in 1935. As mentioned, 711 freshman cadets were enrolled at CAC in the fall of 1935, including incoming freshmen and prior students reentering Clemson. These cadets, as they graduated, would normally comprise the Class. However, as the Class of '39 never felt constricted by rules or custom, it developed its own criteria for official Class membership. As defined by the

⁵⁷ Ibid., 356.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 282 - 305.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 308 - 312.

Class, the Class consists of anyone whose time at Clemson overlapped the four year period 1935 – 1939 and/or expressed a desire to be included as a member.⁶⁰ Anyone who fit those criteria was welcomed into the Class. The official roster as defined by the Clemson Class of '39 contains 385 names, although not all of them matriculated in 1935 or graduated in 1939. In fact, many did not graduate at all. The final Class of 1939 numbered slightly over half of the matriculating “freshmen” of 1935.

Graduation was not a criterion for becoming a Class member. The Depression, the impending war, and other factors prevented a large part of the class from graduating on time, or at all. Many students in this category were “lost” and are not counted in the Class roster. Even so, students who were original Class members, based on their year of matriculation and those who simply wanted to be associated with the Class, were welcomed and were “admitted”. The Class was wise enough to realize that those who were willing to donate money and/or effort on behalf of the Class should not need to have graduated or been a part of the fall 1935 incoming group of cadets, although the overwhelming majority of them did matriculate in fall 1935. From this point forward, all reference to the Class of 1939 will be to the 385 names listed on the “official” membership roster of the Class.

⁶⁰ Sweeny, *Chronicles*, Vol. 2.

Demographically, the Class was, as might be expected, predominantly from South Carolina. Eighty-two percent were from South Carolina. Twenty three cadets (6%) were from Georgia and 15 (4%) were from North Carolina. This grouping comprised 92% of the total Class.⁶¹ The remaining 8% was made up of at least one cadet from each of 17 additional states, including New York, Illinois and Pennsylvania, and additionally, one foreign country is represented, Columbia.⁶² Several of those from northern states were noted as athletes, and some had received athletic scholarships to lure them to the South. Even in the 1930s athletics was important to Clemson.

Twenty incoming freshmen hailed from nearby Anderson, South Carolina and an additional 20 were from Columbia and Charleston.⁶³ The remaining South Carolina cadets were from towns throughout the state, many of which were extremely small. Little pattern in terms of large and/or small cities was seen from those who came from states other than South Carolina, although a number were from the larger cities of Savannah, Georgia and Atlanta, Georgia.

⁶¹ Ibid., Volumes 1 & 2.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

Table 2⁶⁴

States of Origin

Class of 1939

<u>State</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
South Carolina	314	81.6
Georgia	23	6.0
North Carolina	15	3.9
Other Southern	14	3.6
Non-southern	18	4.7
Foreign	<u>1</u>	<u>----</u>
Total	385	100.0

Before discussing the implications of the demographic information, the fields of study for the class should be noted. With its reputation as an agriculture and farming school, and located in a state of high farm employment, a large enrollment in agricultural related majors would be expected. Although this is evident in the enrollment figures, Clemson's strong reputation as an engineering school would also attract students looking for a career in engineering. As a result, it was not surprising to

⁶⁴ Ibid.

see the distribution of major fields of study selected by the incoming class included a large number of both agriculture and engineering majors.

Many in the Class were unable to complete their studies, often due to pressing needs at home during the depression. As a result, fully 21% of the Class did not graduate in 1939, or, to the best of our current knowledge, at all.

Vocational Agricultural Education had the largest single group, with 50 graduates representing 13% of the Class. General Science, Horticulture, Agronomy, Architecture and Animal Husbandry were the remaining large fields of study.⁶⁵

The following table outlines the fields of study and graduation proportions for the Class.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Table 3
Fields of Study⁶⁶
Class of 1939 Graduates

<u>Major</u>	<u>No. of Graduates</u>	<u>Percent of Class</u>
Engineering	114	29.6
<i>Textile Eng – 42</i>		
<i>Electrical-23</i>		
<i>Civil-21</i>		
<i>Mechanical-20</i>		
<i>Agricultural Eng-5</i>		
<i>Industrial-3</i>		
Voc. Ag. Education	50	13.0
General Science	32	8.3
Horticulture	15	3.9
Agronomy	14	3.6
Architecture	11	2.9
Animal Husbandry	9	2.3
Other	59	15.3
Did not graduate	<u>81</u>	<u>21.0</u>
Total	385	100.0

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Clearly, the agricultural and mechanical/science heritage of the original Clemson charter is evident in these statistics. It is also interesting to realize that, in spite of South Carolina's reputation as a farm state, a high percentage of students were not farmers. The relatively large percentage of the Class that came from larger cities would also substantiate this conclusion.

Many were from farming backgrounds, and intended to return to a life of agriculture, yet, the highest single percentage of graduates were engineers. This may also be, in part, due to the fact many of the farm-oriented cadets had to leave school early to help at home on the farm, leaving the more well to do city oriented engineers to dominate the class roles.

Agricultural Engineering (a farm related field) was the largest engineering class.

Commencement exercises were held on June 5, 1939 and the commencement address was given by South Carolina Governor, Burnet R. Maybank. As the Class

Dr. Tee Senn, current president of the Class of '39, is not hesitant about telling the story of his first day at Clemson. Tee was awarded a scholarship in Agriculture. Unfortunately, he reported to school a day late, only to discover his scholarship had been awarded to another cadet. Tee's father demanded to see the president of the school, and was actually able to meet with him. As a result, although he did not regain his Agriculture scholarship, Tee was awarded a scholarship in Horticulture setting in motion a memorable and highly successful career in motion. Senn went on to earn a Master's Degree in Horticulture Physiology and a doctorate in Horticulture at the University of Maryland. Following World War II he returned to Clemson and, in 1960, he became the Dean of the School of Horticulture. In 1996 he was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award and the Clemson Medallion, two of Clemson's highest awards. Following his retirement he developed a radical new material, a natural plant growth element, which was expanded into a family business. Dr. Senn has written over 100 publications, including his autobiography. Apparently it paid to be a day late.

graduated, ominous signs were beginning to be seen in Europe. Germany was just a few months away from invading Poland and uneasiness was in the air. Nonetheless, following graduation, the '39ers found jobs, married, and began to start families. It would be two years before they were called to defend their country and freedom.

CHAPTER 4

THE CLASS AT WAR

There is a story that circulates around the Clemson community that says during World War II only the United States military academies and Texas A & M University had more men die in battle than Clemson. While it has been difficult to substantiate that story with hard proof; true or not, it typifies the Clemson military spirit. The Clemson military heritage is a source of pride, and ROTC members are still seen in uniform throughout campus.

The Class of '39 was also of this spirit, and the war may well have been one of the ties bound the Class together and continued to provide a basis for the group efforts that followed. Similarly, the Clemson community holds other Clemson classes from the World War II period in high regard. These classes have also made some of the most meaningful contributions to the school. War classes, '39ers included, have demonstrated strong loyalty to the university over time.

The recently completed Scroll of Honor, located on campus, is one more indication of the importance the military holds in the ongoing history of the university. The Scroll of Honor depicts every one of the 482 Clemson alumni who has died as a result of war.

The year the Class of '39 graduated was the year Germany began its European invasions, and although America was not involved in war at that time, a feeling of unrest was enveloping the country. The Class, as young men of military age and men who had received military training, surely felt that unrest as well as a fear and concern over what was on the horizon. Those feelings can easily contribute to a bond and sense of unity among participants. That bond and devotion to university was to be expressed by the Class in many ways in the future.

It does seem reasonable to assume that the military heritage and training the Class received at Clemson, coupled with activities taking place in Europe sowed the seeds of a life-long loyalty by the Class for its school and its fellow classmates. Those seeds blossomed in the combat that followed.

Of the 385 Class members, over 80% saw service during World War II.⁶⁷ Of those who did not see active service, the majority those were considered physically unfit or were credited with "home service". The overwhelming majority were in the Army, followed by the Army Air Force, the Navy, and even three in the Marines.

⁶⁷ Sweeny, *Chronicles*, Vol. 1 & 2.

Table 4⁶⁸

Clemson Class of 1939

World War II Military Service

<u>Branch</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Army	202	52.5
Army Air Force	75	19.6
Navy	24	6.2
Marines	3	0.7
Home Service	20	5.3
Non service	<u>61</u>	<u>15.7</u>
Totals	385	100.0

In spite of their prior military training at Clemson, a surprising number were inducted in the Army as privates, and fought in the infantry. This may be due to the fact the war did not begin for the United States until two years after the Class graduated, or in the case of those who did not graduate, several years after leaving school. Many were subject to the draft as their entry vehicle into the military.

After the war ended a large number remained in the military, primarily as reservists, for many years. All Clemson students, those who graduated as well as those who did not, had extensive exposure to the military style of life and may have been

⁶⁸ Ibid.

comfortable in that environment and/or wanted to maintain contact with the military.⁶⁹

Once again, the unity that military orientation brings can be seen in these actions and the unity of the Class over the years.

Class members fought in the D-Day invasion, on the ground, in the air and by parachute. Additionally, '39ers participated in the push through France, Italy, Belgium and Germany. A segment of the Class also fought in the North African theater. Many were also called to serve in the Pacific and China/Burma/India. The Philippines was also a common destination. In addition, many '39ers served at home providing essential goods and services to the armed forces and war effort.⁷⁰

At least 35 members of the Class were awarded a Purple Heart, and in three known instances, multiple Purple Hearts. A listing of known Class members who received a Purple Heart is incorporated in the Class Roster in Exhibit H.

Exhibit G depicts a selected number of individual war experiences, as recorded in the Chronicles of the Class of 1939. This is not intended to be a complete list of exceptional or heroic actions on the part of '39ers, but is intended to give the reader a glimpse of the type of war action that binds the Class together.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

At least two Class members also fought in the Korean conflict in the 1950s, one of whom, William H. Frazier, a highly decorated soldier, was killed in action on November 13, 1950.⁷¹

Unfortunately, 26 Class members died during World War II. Many of them were killed in action; however, at least two were killed in training accidents and two were killed while Prisoners of War on board unmarked ships sunk by the Allies.⁷² A brief biographical sketch of those who were killed in the war is included as Exhibit F.

As a percentage of those in uniform, the Class of '39 fatality rate was 8.6%, well above the overall rate of fatalities for U.S. service members. The Class of '39 is very proud of its contribution to the war effort, and the war contribution of each member of the class has been carefully researched and made a part of the permanent record of the Class of 1939.⁷³

⁷¹ Ibid., Vol. 1.

⁷² Ibid., Vols. 1 & 2.

⁷³ Sweeny interview.

Overall, 370 Clemson men who served during World War II were fatalities. The Class of 1941 had the largest number of men lost in World War II, 57.⁷⁴ Class members, as well as all Clemson casualties, are memorialized on the Clemson University Scroll of Honor, located on the Clemson campus.

Once the smoke had cleared, and people began to resume normal lives, the Class began its cycle of class reunions and the unity that had been born of their training and subsequent defense of their country began to manifest itself in their actions as a Class. Although it may never have been spoken in the years immediately after the war, the leaders of the Class had a strong sense of memory and honor based on cadet training and battle experiences. The culture of the Class of '39 was born.

That approach to memory and honor has been carried forward, and much of what the Class has done in this regard obviously stems first from the unity that Class members felt as part of a military school that prepared them for battle and then their common experiences in war. From their first day on campus, the military had been a constant and created a level of comfort and confidence. Their ability to distinguish themselves in actual combat gave them high regard for their college years.

⁷⁴ Dr. Donald McKale interview held at Clemson University on May 21, 2012.

Much is said of the “Clemson Spirit”. To Clemson students, especially those of the war classes, Clemson Spirit guides their thoughts and feelings toward their school. Wording on a plaque on the steps of Tillman Hall memorializes that spirit.

The Clemson Spirit

It was born in and nurtured by Clemson’s military years, and has flourished through the great changes that have since taken place. The Clemson spirit is a feeling among alumni of being connected by invisible bonds to classmates, to other alumni, and to their alma mater. It expresses itself in an instinctive camaraderie toward other Clemson folk, in a sense of pride in the school, and in a never-ending desire to make Clemson a better place for those who follow in their footsteps. May it ever be thus.

The Class of ’39 personifies the Clemson Spirit, and although it may not be verbalized, it is evident in their actions.

CHAPTER 5

THE 39er DIFFERENCE

Many Clemson graduating classes are known for good deeds initiated on behalf of the university. Classes are also known for their loyalty to Clemson. The Class of '39 is among the most highly regarded in Clemson history on both. One of the main purposes of this thesis is to discover and understand how this occurred and why it has continued for over 70 years. In fact, there are several reasons.

In order to evaluate the Class accurately it is necessary to understand its culture and its goals. Without question, the leaders of the Class of '39, and those most involved with Class activities, had, and continue to have, a strong devotion to Clemson. Many '39ers returned to the university themselves as educators while others of the class have supported the university in other ways.

Although the Class of '39 was pre-war at the time it entered Clemson, its members spent their early teen and college years in the midst of the Great Depression. Even to those not as severely affected, the Depression would have created a deep and lasting impression. Teenagers understood the meaning and negative effects the Depression had on family life and survival. The ability to go to a first-rate college, like Clemson, during this period itself could easily have created a bond to the school, as well as to classmates. The figures reflecting the number of students who were not able to finish school are testimony to the economic difficulty of the time.

Following graduation, the war years too created an additional bond among the Class members. So many members of the Class were in the armed services that the first Class reunion, normally held the fifth year after graduation, was not held in 1944. The first reunion was not held until 1949, a full ten years after graduation.⁷⁵ It is easy to understand how Class members would be drawn together by their shared experiences.

The generosity of the Class may also have been a reason for it to become special in the eyes of the university. The Class wanted to do something out of the ordinary on behalf of the university in 1989, the fifty- year anniversary of the Class.⁷⁶ Nineteen eighty nine also happened to be the centennial anniversary of the founding of Clemson. This created an additional and powerful motivation for the Class of '39 to do something extraordinary in recognition of this dual celebration.

The leaders of the Class also had consistent goals that drove their decisions. Whether stated publically or not, the Class of '39 developed and practiced a spirit and dedication that lived on even beyond the lives of the Class members; the Class of '39 wanted to continue to be active and would continue to be a part of the Clemson community. The dual anniversaries of 1989 gave them an ideal opportunity to put the means of accomplishing this by establishing the annual Award for Excellence. A full

⁷⁵ Sweeny, *Chronicles*, Vol. 2.

⁷⁶ Sweeny interview and Sweeny, *Chronicles*, Vol. 2

description of the Award for Excellence and other Class of '39 anniversary gifts will follow.

In order to develop a way the Class could continue to give to the university after the original class was gone, it needed to find continuing “members,” people who would continue projects and the spirit of dedication to the university. The Class is very proud of itself, its own activities, and of its participation in Clemson activities. The Class is self-promoting and not modest about its accomplishments. As a result, the more members it has, the better the Class is able to accomplish its immediate and long term goals. This has been accomplished by the use and creation of honorary members. By appointing honorary members on a regular basis, the Class contends that it is the only graduating class that continues to grow.

More specifically, the Class has created three uniquely defined means of determining who may become an honorary member. The first is contribution-based.⁷⁷ In this instance, contribution refers to participation in Class activities and assistance to the Class, not financial contribution. Reunion preparation, interest and participation in university affairs and other Class activities require effort. As the Class has aged, it needs help in these activities, even if only in the physical effort. Where notable effort by-non

⁷⁷ Sweeny, *Chronicles*, Vol. 2.

Class members is deemed worthy, the Class extends honorary membership. (See Appendix D)

One contribution-based honorary member, Cathy Sturkie, who was honored in 1998, has said “I believe in what the class stands for- the best of humanity.” When asked if she felt an obligation to be an ongoing contributor, as an honorary member, she responded, “Absolutely, to promote and cherish the values embodied in the class.”⁷⁸ Her comments are a case in point on how the Class philosophy is transformed into reality.

The second means for achieving honorary membership is award-based.⁷⁹ The Award for Excellence will be discussed at length; however, the recipient of that award is automatically granted honorary membership in the Class. (See appendix C)

Similarly, Dr. Donald McKale, former Clemson professor and Award for Excellence recipient says, “It certainly gave me a special feeling toward the class. And you do feel a sense of responsibility and tie to the Class, no doubt about it. And

⁷⁸ Response to questionnaire distributed at the annual Class of 1939 reunion preparation meeting held on March 22, 2012 at Pixie and Bill’s Restaurant, Clemson, SC.

⁷⁹ Sweeny, *Chronicles*, Vol. 2.

particularly the Class of '39 because of this perpetuating type of program that the Class has established to keep its ideas alive well into the future."⁸⁰

The third means is through family-based membership.⁸¹ When a classmate dies, his widow is elevated to the position of honorary member. It is a way the Class expresses its appreciation for the efforts of the family and enables the Class to maintain contact with the member's family. It also encourages the widow and surviving children to participate in ongoing '39er affairs. As their parents age, participation by '39er children will become all the more vital. The Class is focused on the future as well as the past, and perpetuation of the Class is one of the ways it encourages both goals. The Class defines wives' participation as necessary in order for the Class to continue.⁸²

Those who become honorary members are often as proud of their place as those who are original members. It has become customary for honorary members to take the lead in Class activities. This has become particularly true as the Class has aged and honorary members have assumed more of the duties previously performed by Class members. An honorary member hosted the 2010 Reunion Memorial Service under the

⁸⁰ McKale interview.

⁸¹ Sweeny, *Chronicles*, Vol. 2.

⁸² Sweeny and Senn interviews.

tent and an honorary member conducted the majority of the emcee duties for the functions that took place in the banquet hall. An honorary member took the lead in preparing the main program feature for the 2011 reunion and was the master of ceremonies for that event. These are all voluntary duties and are done for no reason other than a concern and a respect for the Class and its relationship to Clemson.

At some point in the not too distant future, the annual reunion discussed in chapter 1 will be conducted entirely by honorary members, which is exactly what the Class wants to happen, and has prepared to happen when the time comes. When asked what he thought would happen to the Class when all original members had died, Jim Sweeny replied “If what is in place takes place, reunions will continue to take place. Honorary members will lead them and children of classmates.”⁸³

When viewed from this perspective, it is easy to see how the Class is self promoting, generates self importance, and has established a means for continuation. Something that becomes very evident in a study of the Class is its devotion to itself and its members as well as its effort at self-preservation and continuation. Aware that at some point that all original class members will die, the Class has made, at great effort and with careful planning, provision to leave a legacy that will keep the Class alive in memory and in reality. This is being accomplished through projects that benefit the

⁸³ Sweeny interview.

university, which are visible throughout the campus, and will be discussed in detail. The growth of the Honorary Member category will perpetuate these activities.

The Class devotes a great deal of effort to ceremony and ritual. As noted, all of the events described thus far have been conducted with great pomp and circumstance. The Memorials under the tent come complete with printed programs and formal obituary/biographies. Rituals dedicated to the memory of '39ers and Clemson are a part of every memorial service. The annual presentation of the Award for Excellence includes a ceremony at the Clemson Bell Tower (itself a '39er project) and a follow up ceremony during the annual reunion. All of these, and other, ceremonies are part of the culture of the Class of '39.

Jim Sweeny has made great effort to track the events and whereabouts of each of the surviving class members.⁸⁴ Calls and letters to living members are regular occurrences throughout the year, and everyone who is a member of the Class is made to feel an integral part of the Class. Each member of the Class is mentioned in the Class chronicles and these Chronicles are now housed in the Special Papers at the Clemson

⁸⁴ Ibid.

University Archives. Provision was also made to update them as long as original Class members survive.⁸⁵

The success of almost any venture, be it a business or a social group such as the Class of '39, is usually directly traceable to the people who guide it. In this respect, the Class of '39 is no different, and much of its acclaim can be directly attributed to its leaders. As will be seen in succeeding chapters, it is not only what was done, but how it was done and for whose benefit it was done that has much to do with heralding the Class of '39.

A common and lasting thread for the Class of '39 and other graduating classes of this time period is World War II. It has been demonstrated that war veterans' close association extends, and possibly even grows, over time and should be considered a strong factor in this closeness as a group. War experiences cannot be duplicated, and hopefully never will. Yet they provide a lasting bond among the participants. Although that may not be the sole bond that has made the Class as unique as it is, it is a crucial one and deserves special mention. Tee Senn added, "And I think the war made us more

⁸⁵ Ibid.

appreciative. We lost a lot of good people. I think that made us brothers. We were more than just graduates of Clemson.”⁸⁶

Other Clemson war year classes have made notable contributions to the university; as well, further cementing the bond between the military and the university.⁸⁷ Actual combat serves to strengthen that bond between the men themselves, and the place where they gained their first military training, in this case, their college.

As mentioned earlier, the Class had its 50th anniversary in 1989, and coincidentally, The College of Clemson had its 100th anniversary in the same year. This provided the Class not only the opportunity to develop a class gift of significant proportion; it also created an obligation, in the mind of the Class, to develop a gift that would be a reminder of their special bond.

Also at this first reunion, although a Projects Committee was formed, class members agreed that no projects would be undertaken until the next reunion, scheduled for 1954.⁸⁸ Actually, it would be many years before a major project was

⁸⁶ Senn interview.

⁸⁷ McKale interview.

⁸⁸ Sweeny, *Chronicles*, Vol. 2.

initiated. At the 1954 reunion, members expressed a desire to keep in closer touch, and interim reunions were begun. The first of these was held in 1956 and every two years after. The regular five-year anniversary gatherings were held in 1959 and 1964.⁸⁹

It was at the interval between the 1964 and 1966 reunions that the first “class project” was conceived. Funds were collected to provide a burial marker on behalf of Clinton Cook, a classmate. Following a long and financially draining illness, he had not been able to afford a suitable burial. The Class raised the funds needed to bury him on Cemetery Hill.⁹⁰ It was also at this reunion that the first Honorary Members were selected. Included was the widow of the fallen classmate.

Reunions continued every two years from 1969 to 1975. It was at the 1975 reunion that a pattern for all future Class reunions was established. It was on Friday, June 13, 1975 that the first formal memorial service was held in the Horticultural Gardens, a tradition that continues.⁹¹

Reunions continued every two years through 1981. At that reunion, attendees decided to elect a permanent slate of officers. In the past, new officers had been

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

elected every five years. Dr. Senn was selected to the post and has served as president of the Class continuously since the election of 1981.⁹²

Golden Anniversary Gift

A nine-member committee of Class members was appointed in 1985 to develop a Golden Anniversary gift to Clemson for the coincidental major anniversaries in 1989 of the fiftieth of the Class of '39 and the hundredth of the university's founding.⁹³

Following several meetings at which possible gifts were discussed, such as scholarships and funding for improvements to preserve and improve the horticultural grounds, the committee settled on a final proposal. In addition to a series of scholarship endowments, the final proposal called for an annual award to be made to a Clemson faculty member for outstanding contributions to the student body, the university, and the community as a whole.⁹⁴ This annual award was to be called the Class of 1939 Award for Excellence. As Jim Sweeny, committee chairman, noted, this proposal was "appealing" to the committee and further work on the idea was authorized.⁹⁵

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Ultimately, the committee approved three major endowments plus a building project to be completed in conjunction with the Award for Excellence. The building project was to house the Tillman Hall Bell and provide a place to display names of the recipients of the Award for Excellence.⁹⁶

The award designation comes with a \$5,000 cash (in 1998 Dollars) prize for the recipient. It should be noted that the annual recipient is selected by the university Faculty Senate, not the Class, to avoid the appearance of favoritism. This, in turn, also creates an additional group of Class supporters, the Faculty Senate. The system is self-perpetuating, exactly what the Class wants it to be.

The overall significance of this endowment should be examined on several levels. This was the first Clemson award to recognize contributions of the faculty. Often class gifts had been in the form of brick and mortar, designed to memorialize the class as well as improve the campus and/or its appearance in some manner. The Award for Excellence takes an entirely different approach and recognizes the people who make the campus a unique and special place and rewards those who are responsible for the education for which the school was founded. It also provides a means for the Class of '39 remain an active part of the campus community every year.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

Early on, the Class of '39 decided that a cultural platform that emphasized recognition of its classmates was important and needed to be a part of all of its activities. The Class also made a conscious effort to find a way to keep the Class alive in perpetuity. Basic management theory says a successful team project needs collective agreement from the participants. By selecting a faculty member of the year, each year, the Class is building a base of people who, as honorary members, can carry on the name and good works of the Class. In addition, through this award, the Class enhances its reputation as a strong supporter of Clemson by recognizing and honoring members of the Clemson family.

Clifton Egan, former Dean of the College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities, and the 2000 Award for Excellence recipient states "Typically an award is a wonderful honor and then you put it on a shelf, tell your children and grandchildren about it, dust it off annually and it becomes part of your history. This award is a living breathing involvement with a group that is singular in their devotion to this institution. I guess one of the most profound things about winning it is that you learn how to be a Clemson alum when you join this class."⁹⁷

Dr. Alfred P. (Hap) Wheeler, department chair of biological sciences and 2002 Award for Excellence recipient, when asked how he felt about the award, said "I

⁹⁷ Clifton Egan interview held at Clemson University on April 23, 2012.

consider it the highest honor you can receive at Clemson. There are other awards for high achievement, but this one represents the true culmination of your efforts at Clemson.”⁹⁸

The success of the honorary member program is very evident. Prior to each reunion, preparatory meetings are held, a clean-up committee works in the caboose (more on that later) and in the gardens to prepare them for the reunion festivities. Often, Clemson faculty award recipients participate in this activity and perform such duties as dusting and vacuuming. This is above and beyond the call of duty for them, yet, because they feel a part of the Class, they are willing to do what is needed to preserve the Class and its traditions. By doing so, they become a part of the tradition and work to bring others to the class.

Award winners lead the annual reunion memorial service and serve as emcees for the reunion dinners. They often work behind the scenes to prepare for Class events. One award winner is currently working to get all living members to the next reunion. This is a daunting task, at best, and is reflective of the effort and dedication the faculty feels. In addition, award winners are made honorary members of the Class, further providing a core of continuing “classmates.”

⁹⁸ Conversation with Dr. Alfred P. Wheeler in his office at Clemson University on March 12, 2011.

Total funding needed for the Golden Anniversary projects was \$500,000, no small amount for any class.⁹⁹ To accomplish the funding, the Anniversary Committee sent letters to the Class members on a quarterly basis. This approach generated over \$400,000. A separate gift of \$100,000 by the children of deceased '39er Henry Avent provided the Class with the means to fully fund the project.¹⁰⁰

In addition, the construction project was completed and the Class of 1939 Bell Tower now stands on campus, between Tillman and Sikes Halls. Each January the annual Award for Excellence is presented to the recipient at the bell site. The name of the faculty member is also engraved on the bell tower.

The bell tower, itself a part of the Golden Anniversary project, displays the original bell that hung from Tillman Hall from the 1890s until it was replaced by the carillon bells in 1974.¹⁰¹ In addition to housing the names of Award for Excellence recipients, it also lists the names of '39ers who died in wartime service and contains a plaque explaining the significance of the bell. As a result, in addition to providing a traditional brick and mortar symbol, the Class created a living and lasting means of its

⁹⁹ Sweeny, *Chronicles*, Vol. 2.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

continuing contribution to Clemson. It should be noted that the tower was designed by class member William A. Carlisle, with help from then Dean of the School of Architecture, James F. Barker, current President of Clemson University.¹⁰²

In addition to the Award for Excellence, the Golden Anniversary gift included a scholarship endowment component. Proposed by Dr. Walter Cox, a class member and former Clemson President, this endowment was designed to provide four-year, full tuition scholarships based on merit; financial need was to be a secondary consideration for receiving the scholarship.¹⁰³ Ultimately, the university Scholarship Committee asked the Class for permission to make these awards to a larger number of students each year by reducing the amount of each scholarship. The Class agreed; however, the awards are still made on a four-year basis for each recipient. Through 2008, over \$200,000 has been awarded to students from this endowment. As of this writing, fifty-six students have received financial aid, and the fund balance remains sufficient to fund the scholarship program for many years to come.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

Every graduating class has pride in its gifts to its university and feels that those gifts fill a need and create a special bond between the class and the school. Often these gifts are of a physical nature and improve the campus appearance and/or functionality and provide a visual remembrance of the graduating class.

The culture of the Class is to be different, special, and important. Certainly, memory and honor of comrades is an important part of '39er culture, but may not set it apart from other classes. What does set the Class apart is the way it has provided for a Class that will never die, even though, ultimately, its original members will. The Award for Excellence will create new Class members indefinitely.

CHAPTER 6

MORE GOOD WORKS

Although the Award for Excellence was the preeminent gift of the Class on its Golden Anniversary, it was just a part of the effort expended by the Class in honoring the joint anniversaries of the university and the Class. In addition to the Award for Excellence, construction of the Bell Tower, and the scholarship endowment, the Class also envisioned a major ongoing component to the Golden Anniversary of the Class and the university's 100th graduation class. It, too, was in keeping with the Class culture of a gift that would require completion and maintenance well into the future.

The final component of the Golden Anniversary gift was the Heritage Gardens Maintenance Endowment. It might seem that the Award for Excellence would be the crowning touch for the Class in terms of significant gifts to the university. However, many '39ers might say that the Heritage Gardens project is the most significant due to its ongoing nature, its meaning to Clemson graduates, and its importance as a memorial to the history of Clemson.¹⁰⁵

The Heritage Gardens are, in effect, a package of individual pieces that, when viewed as a whole, form a picture of "Clemson past" while providing a useful and

¹⁰⁵ Sweeny interview.

ongoing gift. Even though “commissioned” during the Golden Anniversary period, work on several of the components continues today.

The Heritage Gardens Maintenance Endowment

The Heritage Gardens, the most ambitious of the Class projects,¹⁰⁶ originated with the Golden Anniversary Committee in 1989 and consisted of creating a park-like area beyond the caboose in what became the Botanical Gardens. The Heritage Gardens project is designed and dedicated to the preservation of the memory and accomplishments of those people and events that are significant in the evolution of the college and includes a combination of memorial and horticultural based exhibits. Once completed, the gardens would provide visitors with a visual display of the evolution of Clemson from its earliest days. The purpose of the Heritage Gardens Endowment was to provide funds for the maintenance of the Heritage Gardens.

Unfortunately, cost considerations made it impossible to complete even a portion of the Heritage Gardens in time for the Golden Anniversary celebration. As a result, the project was tabled for a period of time. The committee, however, generated final cost estimates for future consideration, as this was a project of great importance

¹⁰⁶ Tazewell L. Senn, *A Short History of the Clemson College Great Class of 1939* (no publisher or publish date listed), 37.

that needed to be pursued to its conclusion. Once again, honoring the past and providing for the future of Clemson were critical considerations to the Class of '39.

The class approached several area architects and secured estimates. Initially, costs were too high for the Class, based on its ability to generate funds. After a lengthy search for an architect who would work within the financial framework set out by the '39ers, the committee approached a Clemson professor, Lolly Tai. She agreed to work within the budget requirements of the Golden Anniversary Committee to generate plans for the Heritage Gardens.

Subsequently, at the 1992 class reunion the Class approved, in concept, each of the project segments. Also, at the 1993 reunion the Class approved the project at a total cost estimate of \$2,000,000.¹⁰⁷ Individual funding for the major elements of the project would come from sponsors from other classes as well as from '39ers. The Heritage Gardens project became a joint project of substantial proportion.

Significant elements of the Heritage Gardens plan include:

- The Caboose Garden
- The Grand Entrance
- The Cadet Life Garden

¹⁰⁷ Sweeny, *Chronicles*, Vol. 2

- Trellised Walkways
- The Founders Garden
- An Amphitheater
- The Gardens of the Presidents
- A Picnic Garden
- A Picnic Pavilion
- Restrooms

The Heritage Gardens has an ongoing nature, including the participation by other Clemson graduating classes along with a provision for future additions to the Gardens that the Class of '39 may or may not undertake. The Gardens project honors the past and the present. The Gardens project is consistent with the views the Class holds when making its gifts to the university and serves as a culmination of its efforts.

Caboose Garden – In the Heritage Gardens sits a full sized, actual, big red railroad caboose. It has its own set of tracks and is the centerpiece of a formal garden setting. As one might imagine, it is a major attraction to children, young and old. In many respects the caboose represents the beginning of the Heritage Gardens project and became the first tangible aspect of what would be a series of major gifts sponsored primarily by the Class of '39, along with the additional support of other Clemson graduation classes.

The caboose came from Southern Railway Company, a railroad that had served the South and CAC for many years.¹⁰⁸ Railroads were a symbol of the South and of the power and technology that fueled the growth of the United States. Railroads were also a strong contributor to the economic growth that followed the end of World War II.

Railroads were also a major form of passenger transportation in the early 1930s. In fact, it was the Southern Railway Co. that may have originally transported many of the Class of '39 to Clemson in 1935.¹⁰⁹ How could there be a more iconic symbol of any graduating class than something like a caboose in its memorial garden?

The caboose also comes with an interesting story. Over time, Tee Senn became close friends with George M. Williams, a fellow '39er and Clemson graduate, socializing with him at Clemson football games, Class reunions, and other events.¹¹⁰ Williams had risen to the position of Vice President and Treasurer of Southern Railway Company. He was also the Class of '39 president from 1964 – 1966 and was heavily involved in Class projects, including the Golden Anniversary programs.

¹⁰⁸ Donald M. McKale, *The Caboose, the Gardens, and the Clemson College Class of '39* (Tigertown Graphics, no publish date), 1.

¹⁰⁹ McKale interview.

¹¹⁰ McKale, *Caboose*, 20.

One Saturday evening in 1972, Williams was visiting at the Senns' home, and in the course of the evening, Tee Senn's wife, Marguerite ("Reet") Senn, commented about the Horticultural Garden and suggested how wonderful it would be if Williams and Southern Railway Company donated a little red caboose to the university.¹¹¹ That gift would surely enhance the garden and become a place of high note within the garden. The following morning, as they saw Williams off (on the train, of course) Reet reminded him of her request for a caboose.

The wheels were now in motion. Subsequently, even Clemson president Robert Edwards had a hand in the project, writing a letter to the Southern Railway Company requesting a caboose for Clemson.¹¹² In relatively short order, a suitable caboose became available and was delivered to a rail station near Clemson. At the garden site, railroad tracks were laid, heavy equipment was secured, and the process began.

Moving the caboose from its resting place to the gardens was a substantial undertaking. First, the wheels were removed and were set in place on the newly laid tracks. The caboose body was then put on a flatbed truck and driven to the garden. Although the outside of the caboose had been freshly refinished prior to delivery, the

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid., 25.

inside was a mess. Volunteers from the Clemson Horticulture Department completely refurbished the interior prior to its presentation to the university.¹¹³

Today, the Clemson caboose serves as a museum of the Class of '39. It includes pictures of the Award for Excellence recipients, photos of '39er events, plaques, awards and other memorabilia. Its image is used on Class letterhead, and a number of paintings, drawings and caricatures of the '39er caboose can be found on campus, including one by current Clemson president James Barker.

The caboose stands as a singular symbol of the Class of '39 as it sits amid the other projects of the Heritage Garden. Over 75 bronze plaques that were donated by '39er families in memory of deceased Class members surround the caboose. Those plaques also became a source of funds for the gardens project. The outside of the caboose is inscribed with the names of committee members, other people significant to the Class and those involved in the Golden Anniversary projects.

The Caboose Garden served as the starting point within the larger Heritage Gardens project. Additional parts of the Caboose project included ground preparation and a stylized bronze sculpture listing the names of all Class of '39 members. In

¹¹³ Ibid., 32.

subsequent years, the caboose was again refinished and the interior reworked.¹¹⁴ Stone walkways and wooden benches were subsequently added around the caboose, as was an irrigation system to water the landscaping that surrounds the caboose garden. The Caboose Garden was dedicated at the Class reunion of 1997 and presented to the university at that time.

Grand Entrance - The Caboose Garden was followed by the Grand Entrance project. The Grand Entrance serves as the entry way into the Heritage Gardens project. Donations not used on the Caboose Garden were used to fund the Grand Entrance. The entrance is notable for a plaza that extends into the parking area and leads to a set of stairs that guide visitors to the next project, the Cadet Life project.¹¹⁵ Two bronze plaques, one commemorating Walter Cox, and the other recognizing Professor Lolly Tai for her design work on the Heritage Gardens, help form the way in to the Grand Entrance.¹¹⁶ A third plaque honors Jim Sweeny for his tireless efforts on behalf of the Class and the Gardens Project. The Grand Entrance was dedicated on March 18,

¹¹⁴ Sweeny, *Chronicles*, Vol. 2.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

1997.¹¹⁷ Subsequently, a stone marker was built in the Grand Entrance area that contains a map of the gardens.

Cadet Life Garden - The Cadet Life Garden is a special gift not only for what it depicts, but also because it became a large joint-project among several Clemson graduating classes. The joint portion of the project was needed primarily due to the cost of the Cadet Life Garden. One suggestion early on in the project was to ask the Golden Tigers to sponsor the project. Golden Tigers are Clemson graduates who graduated at least 50 years earlier. However, since the Golden Tigers was not a formal organization, there was no one person or group who could commit to the project. An alternative approach was needed to engage the Golden Tigers.

Walter Cox was preeminent in setting the wheels in motion with the Golden Tigers by contacting several prominent Golden Tigers.¹¹⁸ It should be remembered that Dr. Cox was a '39er and also served as interim president of the university during the period of the formation of the Heritage Gardens project. The project was placed before a larger group of Golden Tigers in 1995. Later that year the project was approved by the full group of Tigers. A final oversight committee was established that included representatives from the classes of 1932, 1933, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1942, 1943,

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

1945, 1948 and 1955, and the project was underway. The purpose of this portion of the Gardens project is to depict aspects of early cadet life to those who are not aware of them, and to give those who are aware an opportunity to relive them. Memory, once again, becomes an important part of a project involving the '39ers.

Jim Sweeny, Class of '39, was selected as interim chairman of the committee. This was especially appropriate as he was a prime designer of the Gardens and an enthusiastic proponent of the project. Funding was accomplished by solicitation letters to the Golden Tigers. Walter Cox prepared a list of endorsers and T. I. Martin (Class of '37) generated a list of subjects to be depicted. A total budget of \$400,000 was needed to complete the Cadet Life Garden.

A total of eight solicitation letters were ultimately sent to fund the necessary parts of the Cadet Life Garden. These letters requested that each Golden Tiger to pledge \$125 per quarter for eight quarters, or a total of \$1,000 per person. Ultimately, the Class of '32 donated its accumulated class fund of \$6,000 and the Golden Tigers generated a total of \$175,000 toward the final goal of \$400,000. The Class of '42 donated its unused class fund, in the amount of \$150,000, and as a result, '42 class president Buck Breazeale became co-chairman of the committee.¹¹⁹ The Class of '42 shared sponsorship of the garden with the Class of '39. In addition to the donations

¹¹⁹ Ibid., Vol. 2.

mentioned above, over 300 smaller donations were received. These smaller donations were recognized with donor plaques that have been placed on the floor of the garden. At the conclusion of the fund raising, the Cadet Life Garden committee received a total of \$500,000 for construction and maintenance of the Cadet Life Garden.¹²⁰

Once funds were secured, construction began in 1998. The early phases of construction included a concrete floor slab and the stone display wall of the garden. These phases were completed in 1998. Work also began that year on the checkerboard garden floor.

By 1999 a plan was proposed for arranging a series of bronze plaques on the garden wall. These plaques outline important and significant events in the lives of early Clemson cadets, and preserve a heritage for those aspects of Clemson life that are no longer a part of the university, but were a large part of the Clemson classes that participated in the project.

The initial phase of the Cadet Life Project, the Guardroom Bell Structure (funded by the Class of '55), was one of special interest and importance to the Class of '39. Its purpose was to save the guardroom bell that originally hung on old No. 1 Barracks and was rung to alert cadets to gather for formation each day. The bell was no longer in use

¹²⁰ Ibid.

and in danger of being destroyed. On the base of the structure are plaques that discuss the guardroom and explain why it was of significance to the cadets and the college. One of the plaques outlines the significance of the guardroom bell as follows:

The Guardroom and Guardroom Bell

Atop old Number 1 Barracks, high above the Guardroom three stories below, the Guardroom bell was at the very center of cadet life. The guardroom was always manned by cadets assigned by the top cadet officers: two "rats" (freshmen) for running errands, the Corporal of the guard (a sophomore), the Officer of the Guard and the Officer of the Day (seniors). Their duties were to answer the only barracks telephone and to relay messages to cadets, to provide visitors with information and help, to maintain order, to ensure that the bugler sounded his calls on time, and to ring the Guardroom Bell for all information and for the first class of the day. All campus life marched to the tune of the Guardroom Bell, the same bell you see here. It was first rung in 1893 when the No. 1 Barracks was completed, and was deactivated in 1953 when No. 1 barracks was razed to make room for modern new dormitories.

This portion of the Cadet Life Garden was completed in July, 1997. The Guardroom Bell is tolled following the reading of each obituary at the annual Class of '39 reunion memorial service. As such, the Guardroom Bell serves not only as part of Clemson history but as a part of the ongoing '39er reunion ceremony. Tolling the Guardroom Bell is one of the rituals that is of great importance to the Class.

The Cadet Life Garden was dedicated during the 1999 Clemson class reunions. More than 500 alumni and friends of the participating classes, and others, were in attendance at the dedication ceremony. During the dedication, Dr. T. Senn represented

the Class of '39 as the Cadet Life Garden was officially turned over to the care of the university.¹²¹

Trellised Walkways - Two Trellised Walkways are also part of the Heritage Gardens project. The first walkway connects the Caboose Garden with the Cadet Life Center and the second connects the Cadet Life Garden with the Founders Garden. The Founders Garden is a project to be completed in the future. Each of the walkways is identical in construction and provides a peaceful continuity to the Heritage Garden atmosphere. Both of the walkways have a twelve-foot wide walking surface and the ten-foot high trellis is made of Western Cedar, a long lasting insect repellent wood. Each trellis is supported by twenty-two stone columns. These structures were also designed by Lolly Tai.¹²²

One of the walkways was funded by Ben McLeod, a '39er, as a way to honor the memory of his deceased wife.¹²³ His funding allowed construction to begin almost immediately so that the walkway was completed in time for the Class reunion in

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

1998.¹²⁴ The second walkway was also funded by a '39er, Harry Avinger, who wanted to memorialize his wife who had died in 1995. That walkway was completed and dedicated at the Class reunion of 1999.¹²⁵

The Cadet Garden does more than honor the Class of '39. It reaches a much broader audience and honors classes spanning many years. Yet, that too is a part of the '39er Class heritage in that it honors the university. These war veteran classes that participated in the Cadet Life Garden project all appear to have especially close feelings toward their university and are anxious to memorialize those feelings. Apparently these war classes are able to bond with each other and with other war classes. The joint project nature of the Cadet Life Garden is a demonstration of those bonds.

Heritage Gardens Amphitheater -The next portion of the Heritage Gardens project was the Heritage Gardens Amphitheater. Begun in 2000 and completed in 2006, the amphitheater was another gift of a '39er. In this case, Dorothy Montgomery, wife of '39er James Montgomery, provided the gift needed to create the facility.¹²⁶ Her gift came in installments and the construction was geared to match the arrival of the

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

funding, thereby allowing the stage to be completed ahead of the rest of the amphitheater and concerts to be held even before the seating section was done. Work on the top five tiers of seats was completed in 2004 and the facility dedicated the following year.

The finished project seats 400 people and provides a new venue for a wide variety of campus and public events. The amphitheater seems to honor the future and is much more interactive than other segments of the gardens. In most of the other projects, participants were exposed to the history of Clemson and the Class of '39. The amphitheater project is a part of the present as well as the future and has a celebratory feeling rather than the reverence seen in other portions of the Gardens.

The Picnic Garden – Although a grouping of tables near the Heritage Garden already existed, in anticipation of the need for additional picnic facilities and to assure that the area near the Heritage Gardens would remain attractive, the Heritage Garden Picnic Garden was created.

Eight stone tables are connected to the nearby parking lot by brick pathways that continue on to the Amphitheater and the future Garden of the Presidents project. The Picnic Garden was sponsored and funded by the Class of 1989.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Ibid., Vol. 2

Heritage Gardens Restroom – A not insignificant and practical addition to the gardens was the restroom, completed in 2008.¹²⁸ Funded mainly by the Class of '39, additional monies were provided by donations from friends of Clemson. Near the restroom is a flagpole given to the class of '39 by the Coleman family in honor of General W. S. Coleman, Class of '39. The Class flag is flown from this flagpole.

Future Projects – In keeping with its forward-thinking approach, the Class has blueprinted additional projects for the Heritage Gardens. The first is a picnic pavilion to be built overlooking the Heritage Pond, designed to create a facility protected from the weather for large groups. The entrance will be through a trellised walkway similar to those described earlier.

The Founders Garden is another project of the future. A cascading water feature will be the backdrop for a statue of the school founder, Thomas G. Clemson. It will display appropriate parts of his will and discuss the uniqueness of the Clemson Board of Trustees. Efforts to fund these future project by gifts from sons and daughters of the Class of '39 are in progress.

The Garden of the Presidents, to be sponsored by the class of 1962, is the final phase of the Heritage Gardens, and will occupy the largest space. Originally, each

¹²⁸ Ibid.

Clemson president was to have been honored with a bronze statue which was to have recorded significant events that marked the development of the school. Current plans call for a green area with a park like setting to accomplish those goals.¹²⁹ A pathway will mark chronological events in the school's history.

Although one of the purposes of this chapter has been to document the accomplishments of the Class, the greater purpose has been to relate these accomplishments to the goals and aims of the Class. Surely the Class realizes that few, if any, Class members will have an opportunity to see the completion of the Heritage Garden project. Engaging '39er sons and daughters, and even subsequent generations, along with honorary members, in the completion of the project is one more demonstration of the defining culture of the Class.

¹²⁹ Frank Cox interview held at his home in Clemson, South Carolina on May 18, 2012.

CHAPTER 7

TO NAME A FEW

Following World War II, the nation began a return to peaceful pursuits, and perhaps even more importantly, to prosperity. The economy, so depression-laden prior to the war, was now growing and better times were coming to the South as well as the rest of the country. The members of the Class of '39 were strong participants in the resurgence of the southern economy, as most of them remained in the South after returning from the war and many found jobs in agriculture and industry. Others in the Class left the South and contributed to the growing post-war economy in business and industry in other parts of the country. In many cases Class members returned to Clemson as faculty members.

It would be impossible to name and describe the accomplishments of every significant member of the Class of '39. Naming a few, however will provide a framework that will give the reader an idea of the contributions of the Class to Clemson, the South, and to the country as a whole.

Dr. Walter T. Cox - One of the most prominent Class members was Dr. Walter T. Cox. Cox was the third Clemson Graduate to become president of Clemson.¹³⁰ He was

¹³⁰ McKale, *Tradition*, 241.

appointed interim president in the spring of 1985, and subsequently named as a full president. He is noted for being an extremely loyal member of the Clemson family, as someone who worked in various capacities on behalf of and at Clemson University virtually his entire career.

Cox was born in Belton, South Carolina, not far from the Clemson campus, in 1918.¹³¹ A sports enthusiast, he played football at Clemson and as a student was also heavily involved in the military aspect of the college. He graduated in 1939 with a Bachelor of Science Degree.¹³² His Clemson working career began in 1940 as a football and baseball coach.¹³³ He was also the ticket manager, which would ultimately move him into other administrative university positions.

During World War II Cox served in the U.S. Army in the Pacific theater, returning to Clemson in 1943, and reestablishing himself in his prior positions.¹³⁴ In 1951 he was elevated to the newly-created position of Assistant to the President and Director of

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 242.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 244-245.

Alumni Affairs.¹³⁵ In 1955, following a university wide administrative restructuring, Cox became Dean of Students, a position he held until he was appointed interim president.

It was during Cox's term as Dean of Students that Clemson became coeducational and admitted its first black students. He is given much credit for a smooth transition to an integrated Clemson.¹³⁶ It was also during his tenure that the corps of cadets was terminated¹³⁷ and, by 1985, the university's enrollment grew to 13,000 students.

It was during a period of turmoil with the Clemson Board of Trustees that then Clemson president, Bill L. Atchley, was forced to resign and Cox was named interim president in 1985. He ultimately served 249 days; from July 1, 1985 to March 6, 1986.¹³⁸ It was during his term that construction began on the Strom Thurmond Institute.¹³⁹ He continued to serve as a special assistant to the president until his retirement.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 245.

¹³⁶ Reel interview.

¹³⁷ McKale, *Tradition*, 246.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 257.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 258.

Cox had a particular capacity to remember names, even though he may not have seen the person for ten years, and was well known as a 'people person'. As a result he often accompanied Clemson dignitaries on trips to meet donors.¹⁴⁰

In addition to his work on behalf of the university, Cox was also a major contributor to the Class of '39. Following his retirement from the university, he was an active member of the Golden Anniversary Endowment Fund Committee and Caboose Garden Committee. In addition, his leadership positions within the university provided the Class with a ready advocate when recommendations and gifts were being proposed. He is the recipient of the Honorary Doctorate of Humanities and Distinguished Service Award from Clemson in recognition of his contributions. He also has a life statue on the campus, the only Clemson president to be so honored.¹⁴¹

Dr. Tazewell L. Senn - Although he has been mentioned throughout, special mention in this chapter is also warranted for Dr. Tazewell (Tee) Leonard Senn. Tee is the face of the Class of '39. His tireless efforts on behalf of the Class and his forceful charismatic personality, particularly when it comes to promoting the Class and its goals, are well known throughout the Clemson Administration and Clemson University.

¹⁴⁰ Cox interview.

¹⁴¹ Sweeny, *Chronicles*, Vol. 2

Senn enrolled in the school of Horticulture in 1935, beginning a career in that field that continues to this day.¹⁴² Following graduation in 1939 and a stint in the Navy during World War II, he obtained his PHD in Horticulture from the University of Maryland, one of the most respected agricultural schools.¹⁴³ He returned to Clemson in 1959 and served as the Dean of the School of Horticulture from 1959 until his retirement in 1981.

The author was recently walking through the Botanical Gardens on the Clemson campus when he came upon a Clemson student pruning a tree who turned out to be a student majoring in Horticulture.¹⁴⁴ When asked if he knew of Dr. Senn, he replied “Of course, everyone knows about Dr. Senn.” Whether through his work as a horticulturalist or his efforts at promoting his beloved Class of '39, people associated with Clemson are very likely to have heard of Tee Senn.

During his tenure as Dean, the School of Horticulture grew from small beginnings to a vibrant and important part of Clemson’s program. It was through his efforts that

¹⁴² Senn, *Autobiography*, 10.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 152.

¹⁴⁴ March 12, 2012

the Clemson Horticultural Gardens became a reality, as well as many other projects associated with the school of Horticulture and the Class of '39.

Dr. Senn also founded a business that extracts seaweed from specific beds in Scandinavia and creates seaweed based products.¹⁴⁵ Another of his interests, as it was by Clemson's founder, is improving poor or depleted soils. Working with Chinese, Russian, and other experts in the field around the world, he has developed a product known as Nature's Nog that improves the ability of soil to grow crops.¹⁴⁶

Senn's efforts were also instrumental in creating the South Carolina Botanical Garden itself. Originally consisting of 12 acres, the Garden has grown to 375 and is now officially designated as the South Carolina Botanical Garden. The garden contains acres of ornamental plants and turfs. In addition, it includes hortitherapy areas for the handicapped, a Southern Living Home, a 17th century Huguenot house from the low country, a display depicting cadet life at Clemson, sculptures, time capsules and, of course, the caboose. For his service, Dr. Senn has been awarded the Clemson Medallion, the Distinguished Service Award, and the Volunteer of the Year Award by the university.

¹⁴⁵ Sweeny, *Chronicles*, Vol. 2.

¹⁴⁶ Senn, *Autobiography*.

Dr. James O. Sweeny - Born in Anderson, South Carolina, Dr. Sweeny entered Clemson in 1935 as a legacy following his father (Class of '06).¹⁴⁷ Sweeny is an engineer as was his father. In his senior year at Clemson he was elected President of the Senior Class, among other distinctions. Sweeny served in the Signal Corps during World War II until his release from active duty as a Major in 1945. He spent his entire working career with General Electric, primarily in the New England area. Sweeny had several assignments with General Electric and retired in 1976 as the Strategic Business Planning Manager of the Power Transmission and Distribution businesses.¹⁴⁸

It was following his retirement that Sweeny returned to the South and became heavily involved with Clemson and the Class of '39. He chaired the Golden Anniversary Committee and fathered the idea for the Award for Excellence. In addition he created the Class of '39 Chronicles, which contain a biographical summary of each of the 385 members of the Class, including their military histories. He has also been directly involved in several Class projects, to the extent of actual participation in the construction of the base of the Guardhouse Bell tower and Trellis Walkways.

Dr. Sweeny was named Volunteer of the Year by the Alumni Association and has been awarded the Distinguished Service Award. In 2010 he was granted an honorary

¹⁴⁷ Sweeny Sr. is credited with designing the Clemson class ring. Reel interview, April 18, 2012.

¹⁴⁸ Sweeny, *Chronicles*, Vol. 2.

Doctorate in Humanities by Clemson University. In addition, he is the long standing vice-president of the Class of '39.

Robert A Banister – Born in Greenwood, South Carolina, Bannister obtained a BS in Industrial Education from Clemson in 1939. He served in the Army in World War II and ultimately rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Reserve following the war. He later obtained his Masters Degree from Bradley University in Industrial Arts Education. Banister taught at Clemson from 1946 through 1966 and became the Director of Industrial and Municipal Relations. In addition, he became head of the Cooperative Education Program for Clemson, retiring in 1977.¹⁴⁹

Ralph W. Boys – Ralph Boys was born in Goodyear, Connecticut and obtained his Clemson degree in Textile Engineering in 1939. He was a career army officer serving in World War II and Viet Nam. During World War II he served on General MacArthur's staff in the Pacific. In Viet Nam he was an Army advisor to a South Vietnamese Army unit. Boys also spent four years in the Pentagon in Army Information. He retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and is a recipient of the Legion of Merit. Boys has been an

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., Vol. 1.

active member of the Class of '39 since his retirement, and is a regular attendee at the annual Class reunions.¹⁵⁰

Champ Jones – Champ Jones was born in Dacusville, South Carolina, and obtained his BS from Clemson in 1939 in Agronomy. Jones subsequently obtained a Masters Degree from Cornell University in Soil Fertility and a doctorate in Plant Breeding from Michigan State University in 1952. A long standing professor at Clemson, Jones was the Professor of Genetics at the university. He retired in 1981, and became a very active member of the Class of '39 as well as Class Necrologist.¹⁵¹

James W. Kelly – Born in Bishopville, South Carolina, James Kelley obtained his BS in Dairy Science in 1939. He was in the Army during World War II, subsequently obtaining his Masters Degree from Clemson in 1962. He retired as an Associate Professor of Dairy Sciences in 1978 and established his own business, the Kelly Cattle Management Service for Dairy and Beef Producers. Kelly served as the Class of '39 Necrologist and was very active in Class activity.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

Benjamin F. McLeod II - McLeod was from Clio, South Carolina and majored in Electrical Engineering while at Clemson, obtaining his degree in 1939. He worked his entire career with Pan American Airlines and rose to the position of Vice President of Communications. He also served as Chairman of the Radio Technical Commission for Aeronautics. He provided the funds for the first trellis walkway in the Heritage Gardens to honor his wife.¹⁵³

Algernon H. Snell – From Elore, South Carolina, Algernon Snell obtained his degree in Horticulture. Following his service in the U.S. Army during World War II, he became a citrus grower in Pasco County, Florida. Beginning with small acreage, Snell's citrus business grew to over 500 acres of orange trees, primarily in the Pasco area. He also worked for the Citrus Growers Association. Snell became the Executive Vice President and General Manager of Elfers Citrus Growers Assoc., and became Director of the Ellis First National Bank, Plymouth Citrus Products, Highland Exchange Service Company, Interior Seald-Sweet Shippers, and Florida Citrus Packers. He also served as President of the Class of '39 and now has a vegetable garden named for him in the South Carolina Botanical Garden.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Ibid., Vol. 2

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

Herbert J. Thomas – From Hodges, South Carolina Thomas graduated from Clemson with a BS Degree in Vocational Agricultural Education. Following service in the Army during World War II, he helped found the Holland Wire Products Company in Michigan. The company made steel springs for mattresses and Thomas is credited for innovative changes to mattress spring development. He was an active supporter of the Class, noted for large donations.¹⁵⁵

Frank W. O’Neal - Frank O’Neal was from Anderson, South Carolina and obtained his degree in Horticulture. He served in the U.S. Army in World War II and subsequently rejoined the Army in 1947, serving in Germany, Korea, Okinawa and France. He was a Transportation Officer for 20 years at Ft. McPherson, Georgia. During his time he was awarded the Medal for Human Action from the West German Government and the Chung Ju Medal with Service Star from the Republic of Korea and the Meritorious Service Award for Civilian Service from the U.S. Department of Defense. O’Neal served as Vice President of the Class of ’39 and was a member of the Golden Anniversary Committee.¹⁵⁶

George M. Williams - George Williams is from Savannah, Georgia and a Graduate of the School of Chemistry. He entered the Navy during World War II and

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

became Field Director, Veterans Claim Service for the National Red Cross. He went on to get his MBA at the Harvard University School of Business and became a financial officer for Gulf Oil Corporation. George later worked for Southern Railway Company rising to the position of Treasurer. He served as president of the Class of '39 from 1964 – 1966 and was very instrumental in obtaining the Class of '39 caboose.¹⁵⁷

The men discussed in this chapter were selected to provide an overview of the varied careers that members of the Class of '39 enjoyed following school. Not surprisingly, some pursued careers in the military, perhaps as a result of their introduction to military life at Clemson. The bonds of unity and brotherhood which began when they were cadets at Clemson, and continued through their experiences in World War II, may have created a desire to continue service after the war.

Many others were farm and agriculture oriented and pursued careers in that arena. Clemson's reputation as a highly regarded engineering school was also evident in the cross-section depicted, and finally, there was strong evidence that a career in teaching was popular, especially in agriculture-related fields.

Although definitive conclusions cannot be drawn from this limited sampling, it seems clear that the Class of '39 was a strong contributor to the economic growth that

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

spread across the country following World War II. Not all '39ers stayed in the South and they found success in varied careers in the North and other parts of the country.

Ultimately, as they retired and returned home, many renewed an interest in the Class, at about the time the Golden Anniversary projects were begun. As seen, several became contributors in time, energy and finances.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

The ultimate goal of this thesis has been to determine if the Clemson class of 1939 had special qualities not found in all graduating classes, and, if so, what those qualities were and whether the class of '39 is a leader in its field, and surmise why this class was remarkable. A summation of the material discussed thus far would lead one to believe that the class of '39 was, indeed, special.

Although the class of '39 was not a business venture in the customary sense of the term, it might be appropriate to evaluate the Class in those terms. Many highly successful ventures are closely associated with their leaders. Ford Motor Company is linked to Henry Ford and his assembly line process. Apple computers and innovative trend-setting communication products are seen by many as synonymous with Steve Jobs. Stated more simply, those ventures came about as a result of outstanding leaders and at least one unique and innovative idea that separated them from others. Great leadership and outstanding ideas produced the nucleolus of the companies mentioned above, which are also starting places for an evaluation of the Class of '39.

The circumstances surrounding the Class of '39 may have had a lot to do with the sheer willingness of the class to be major participants and contributors to Clemson. There is something about a group that fought in a war together (albeit not in one unit) that creates a special bond. The Clemson Class of 1941 is a war class with that special

bond, and it is also highly regarded for its efforts as a class. As a result, it may be said that there are three defining factors that set the class of '39 apart and have created the unity, character, culture and success of the Class. Those factors are:

- Its military heritage and war experiences
- Its exceptional leadership (by a few individual members)
- Its singular and innovative gifts to the university

Military Heritage/War Experience

Although there is more to the story, the relationship of the Class to its war experiences should not be overlooked. Dr. Jerome Reel, Clemson Professor Emeritus and honorary member of the Class, states that “War experience generates a reverence for classmates and memory and that extends to all they do. War classes may be a separate and distinct class- 1939 still stands out because of a continued desire to perpetuate their memory.”¹⁵⁸

Dr. Donald McKale, Clemson Professor Emeritus and Award for Excellence winner adds, “I think there were two experiences in these men’s lives. One was the Great Depression, and following right on the heels of it is this huge war. What you see

¹⁵⁸ Reel interview.

in these classes, is this feeling that these men were responsible to something a whole lot bigger than themselves. That included responsibility to their nation, to the American people, to Clemson.”¹⁵⁹

This would indicate there is more to consider than the cohesiveness that war brought to this, and other war classes. In fact, it was during the Depression that this class came to Clemson. As unsettling as the Depression was for many of them during this time, the discipline, routine, and continuity of cadet life gave them a grounding, a feeling of safety and belonging. For many, cadet life provided meals, a bed, and a security not perhaps experienced by many during those times.

Although they may recall that cadet life was not enjoyable, particularly the hazing and rigid discipline, they virtually have all looked back on those years with a certain fondness or nostalgia. Cadet life is one of the main segments featured in the Cadet Life Garden, and is a part of the Clemson heritage the classes involved in its presentation do not want people to forget. Bonding and a sense of unity are created out of joint experiences such as cadet training.

The Depression and cadet life form a prelude for the military action of World War II. The members of the Class did not go to war all at once. In fact, most of them

¹⁵⁹ McKale interview.

had been out of school for two or more years, had jobs, and were forming families before they were called to service.

It was when the war ended that Clemson reunions for the Class of '39 were initiated, and serious bonding began. Reunions of any group that previously shared some form of combat, or sports teams, or even business ventures, create an even deeper bond among the participants, giving them a unity and willingness to participate above the level of other groups.

Leadership

This brings the evaluation back to the things that separate the Class of '39 from other war classes. Overall, the Class had many members that were successful individuals in life and strong financial contributors to the Class. Several of them were noted in chapter 7. However, it takes more than successful people to separate one group from others.

The simple reality of the situation, as it relates to the success of the Class of '39, is it took a few excellent people who led *long* lives. It needed people who were driven to bring the Class to a special place and who were around long enough to fulfill the goals of the Class and bring long standing continuity to their projects. The Class had at least three key people who met those criteria.

Early on, Tazewell Senn became a driving force in initiating the actions that resulted in the accomplishments of the Class of 1939. Early reunion parties were held at his house, and he was, for decades, closely associated with Clemson as a teacher and a department head. Dr. Senn is one of those people who, when he wants something accomplished, persists until he gets it. He is a man of great charisma who uses his gift to achieve good ends. With an undeniable love for Clemson, his thoughts have always been about the school and his beloved Class. Dr. Senn is the face of the Class and his long life has enabled him to keep the Class in front of the Clemson family for three quarters of a century.

James Sweeny is another who must be considered as critical to the success of the Class. Following his retirement from business in 1976, Jim worked virtually daily for Clemson and Class activities. Innovative, highly organized, and detail-conscious, Jim has compiled "The Class of 1939 Chronicles" which contain a complete biographical history of each of the 385 Class members and their spouses. In addition, he has generated a second member page for each biography which outlines the military service of each classmate. These Chronicles are now part of the Clemson University Special Papers Collection and form a reference for anyone interested in the Class of '39. As with Senn, Sweeny has led a very long life, which has enabled him to maintain touch with the projects of the Class and to continue to provide leadership.

A review of the papers of Dr. Walter Cox in the Clemson Special Papers reveals numerous letters and communications from Sweeny relating to the Heritage Gardens project. Without this continuity over time, it would have been even more difficult to bring any of these projects to a conclusion.

It also helps to have instrumental people in the right place and right time. Dr. Walter T. Cox was a '39er and was also a president of Clemson University. Even more to the point, he was interim president at the time the Class was embarking on its Golden Anniversary Gifts. Correspondence in Dr. Cox's files indicate he was heavily involved in the projects and able to provide valuable support to the class in its efforts.¹⁶⁰

Frank Cox, an honorary '39er, says of his father, "Dad was able to sit down with people, say here is what they are trying to do. Dad was the guy who went around and made sure the door got open when it needed to get open or the paper got looked at and didn't get caught up in the bureaucratic shuffle. As a team they worked very well together, Tee and Jim and Dad."¹⁶¹

Prior to and following his term as university president, he was an active member of the Class and served on several committees that resulted in successful Class

¹⁶⁰ Walter Cox papers, Special Collections, Thurmond Institute, Clemson University.

¹⁶¹ Cox interview.

accomplishments. He too was awarded the Clemson Medallion and Distinguished Service Awards. He also has a plaque at the head of the Grand Entrance to the Heritage Gardens in recognition of his contributions to the projects of the Class. Although he is no longer living, Cox led a long life, fully devoted to Clemson and, coupled with Senn and Sweeny, formed the core of Class leadership that was in place for decades.

In addition, many others have been instrumental in moving the Class projects to completion. An often unnoticed, but important, fact is that many heavily involved members of the Class lived in or near Clemson. Frank Cox mentions, "I grew up with Tee's kids."¹⁶² They were educators and business people who were available and willing when the Class needed participation. This gave the Class a ready supply of people who were devoted to the Class and their tasks. However, without strong leadership the money and effort may never have been realized.

Throughout, only a few men have been named, although the Class had 385 members. It is common in many organizations that a few great leaders are heavily responsible for the success of the total. Don McKale added, "The class had a small

¹⁶² Ibid. and Senn interview also see p149.

number of men out front; each of these classes had a small number of active leaders.”¹⁶³

Innovative Ideas and Projects

Having the right people in place at the right time is vital to the success of any program. However, without significant ideas or projects, even the best people cannot be singularly successful. It is the projects designed by the Class and how those projects have been implemented that help make the Class unique.

Throughout this thesis, a consistent theme has been the desire of the Class to live and prosper even after all of the original members have died. That thought process alone is worthy of note and would separate the Class of '39 from others. However, the gifts of the '39ers were more than a grand thought process, they were actually successfully implemented.

When asked if honorary membership creates a feeling of responsibility to the Class, Dr. Reel replied, “Yes, to be visible when the Class asks – not real pressure – participation because I want to.”¹⁶⁴ This is the exact response an original Class member would hope to receive.

¹⁶³ McKale interview.

¹⁶⁴ Reel interview.

Clifton Egan adds, “Oh, yes. I don’t know how to be a member of something and not shoulder responsibility. responsibility isn’t frightening, a nuisance or a burden.”¹⁶⁵

The success of the Class continuation theory is very evident as seen by the involvement of these, and other, honorary members in Class activities. As an additional benefit, the university family, which includes the Faculty Senate, has become a large supporter of the Class through the Award for Excellence.

When asked if he felt the Class has a unique culture, honorary member Clifton Egan responded, “... It does, and I’ll say that an assumption of the class is that Clemson is a great wonderful unique university ... And then the other part of culture is the camaraderie, and I’m going to say fun...”¹⁶⁶ These comments again tie in the base of military heritage the Class received in its formative years, class unity, and the love they developed for their university and each other.

In response to the question on culture, McKale said, “It is a culture that is the very best of the ‘Clemson Spirit’. It is a bond tying these men together and it is that

¹⁶⁵ Egan interview.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

sense of responsibility ... The 'Clemson Spirit' is discussed on one of those plaques out in the Cadet Garden... The tie to the place is so strong."¹⁶⁷

Another consistent class theme has been remembrance of Class members and the past Clemson way of life. The memorial service at each reunion is a significant remembrance ceremony. A full biographical review is given each fallen classmate and spouse. The ceremonial tolling of the Guardroom Bell serves as a constant reminder to the Class for remembering ceremony among participants.

The Heritage Gardens is a highly stylized remembrance of the Clemson past and a venue of Clemson present that can be used by the public as well as the Clemson family. In addition, the ongoing nature of this unfinished project secures continuation of Class ideals for future honorary members' sons and daughters. In a very carefully crafted manner, the Class has combined unique and meaningful gifts and projects with its Class ideals to form a package that makes the Class of '39 special. The simple formula of a core of excellent people with strong core values, coupled with innovative and meaningful ideas, is a proven road to success. Originally tied together by its student and cadet war experiences, the Class grew beyond that and became a class noted for its ideas and contributions.

¹⁶⁷ McKale interview.

Although there is clear evidence that they succeeded in their efforts to present the university with gifts of great value, there is another question to be answered. Will the Class be able to continue beyond its members? The '39ers have put a strong legacy in place and have created a cadre of people to carry that legacy forward. Reel, however, is not certain of the future and feels "the Class will wither and perish as leaves on a tree."¹⁶⁸

Some are optimistic. To keep the Class alive, McKale commented, "It's got to be us (*honorary members*). We also have to have some who are real interested in leading us."¹⁶⁹

Frank Cox feels, "I think the commitment of the honorary '39ers will intensify. I think they will organize. I think they will get a charter. The group will become a more formal group. I do think they will endure."¹⁷⁰

Clearly, opinions can vary. Yet, the Class has prospered for almost 75 years and there may be every reason to believe it will continue. As of now, the initiative and

¹⁶⁸ Reel interview.

¹⁶⁹ McKale interview.

¹⁷⁰ Cox interview.

desire exists to keep the Class of '39 alive and well. Perhaps the unfinished projects can provide the impetus. The members of the Class have planned exactly that.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used throughout this paper.

'39 – Class of 1939

'39er(s) – Class of 1939

Class – Class of 1939

Class of '39 – Class of 1939

CAC – Clemson Agricultural College

Award for Excellence – Class of 1939 Award for Excellence

APPENDIX B

CLASS OF 1939 INDIVIDUAL ENDOWMENTS

Endowments

Mr. & Mrs. Henry E. Avent Class of '39 Endowment

Jane Morgan Avinger Heritage Gardens Endowment

Mary Johnson Cox Scholarship Fund

Charles A. Dewey, Jr. Endowed Memorial Scholarship

Ellis M. Ivey Family Endowed Economic Scholarship

Mr. and Mrs. James M. Kirk and Kathy Douglass ('72) Endowments

James Roy Martin III ('65) Endowed Scholarship

Dorothy H. and James B. Montgomery Chapel Garden Amphitheater Endowment

Bruce Albert Peeling Horticulture Scholarship

The Taze Leonard Senn Scholarship

The A. Harvey and Marty Snell Scholarships

Charitable Gift Annuities

Dr. Walter T. Cox, Jr.

Dr. & Mrs. Thomas F. Stanfield

Charitable Remainder Trusts

Mr. Joseph E. Dixon

Mr. & Mrs. J. Roy Martin, Jr.

Mr. Benjamin F. McLeod

Life Insurance Program

Dr. Walter T. Cox, Jr.

Bequests

Mr. Ellis M. Ivey

Mr. and Mrs. J. Roy Martin

APPENDIX C

CLASS OF '39 AWARD BASED HONORARY MEMBERS

1989 – Dixie G. Goswami –English

1990 – Joel V. Brawley, Jr. –Mathematical Science

1991 – John Ladd Idol, Jr. – English

1992 – Raymond C. Turner - Physics

1993 – Ashby B. Bodine – Nutrition

1994 – Cecil O. Huey – Engineering Graphics

1995 – Francis A. McGuire – Therapeutic Recreation

1996 – Robert L. LaForge – Management

1997 – Chalmers M. Butler – Electrical and Computer Engineering

1998 – Larry L. Bauer – Agricultural Economics

1999 – Judith M. Melton – Foreign Languages

2000 – Clifton S. M. Egan – Archatecture, Arts and Humanities

2001 – Jerry A. Waldvogel – Biology and Life Sciences

2002 – Alfred P. Wheeler – Biological Sciences

2003 – D. Kinly Sturkie – Sociology

2004 – Arthur P. Young – English

2005 – Benjamin L. Sill – General Engineering

2006 – Donald M. McKale – History

2007 - Alma Bennett – Humanities and English

2008 – William T. Pennington, Jr. – Chemistry

2009 – Webb M. Smathers, Jr. – Applied Economics and Statistics

2010 – Melanie M. Cooper – Chemistry

2011 - Richard S. Figliola – Thermal/Fluid Sciences

APPENDIX D

CLASS OF '39 CONTRIBUTION BASED HONORARY MEMBERS

1966 – Claud J. Hayden

2007 – A. Neil Cameron

1975 – John C. Mann

2008 - Jerome V. Reel

1981 – Ulysses S. Jones

2009 – Sandy Edge

1989 – Mark R. Eisengrein

Todd A. Steadman

Elton W. Shepherd, Jr.

2010 – James O. Sweeny, Jr.

1994 – Beth C. Farmer

Robert Sweeny

1995 – Lolly Tai

1996 – William N. Miller

David L. Senn

Virginia G. Senn

1997 – Jeannie Kelly

1998 – Cathy T. Sturkie

2000 – Adrienne L. Tucker

Carolyn Robinson

2001 – Mark S. Avent

Carol Talbert

Frank J. Cox

Byron K. Webb

2003 – Anne M. Grant

2005 – James R. Adkins

2006 - Michele B. Welch

APPENDIX E
CLASS OF '39 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Honorary Doctorate of Humanities – Clemson University

Walter T. Cox, Jr. - 1986

James O. Sweeny - 2010

Clemson Medallion*

Walter T. Cox, Jr. -1994

Taze L. Senn - 1996

Distinguished Service Award**

Walter T. Cox – 1965

William S. Coleman – 1971

Taze L. Senn – 1974

George M. Williams – 1978

James O. Sweeny – 2000

Volunteer of the Year

Taze L. Senn – 1988

James O. Sweeny – 1998

*The highest honor an individual can receive from the University

** The highest honor an individual can receive from the Alumni Association

APPENDIX F

CLASS OF 1939 MEMBERS WHO DIED IN WORLD WAR II¹⁷¹

- James H. Bracey – Bracey was born in Rives, VA, moved to Columbia, South Carolina and received his BS degree in Chemical Engineering. He entered the U.S. Army in 1942. He was married and had a son and daughter. Bracey died of an inflamed ileum on December 10, 1944.
- John W. Cathcart II – From Winnsboro, South Carolina, Cathcart earned a BS degree in General Science, and also received an MD degree from University of South Carolina Medical College. He was married with 1 child he never saw. Cathcart joined the Army in 1944 and was killed by a Japanese sniper on May 3, 1945 while serving as Battalion Aide Surgeon.
- Almo D. Chapman – From Fair Play, South Carolina, Chapman received his BS degree in Vocational Agricultural Education. He was not married. Chapman served in the U.S. Army and died in battle in the Philippines on July 23, 1945.
- Martin Crook – Crook was from Spartanburg, South Carolina and earned a BS degree in General Science. He was not married. Crook served in the Army, in the

¹⁷¹ Information for this Appendix was obtained from the *Chronicles of the Class of 1939*, Vols. 1 & 2 and from internet web site www.iiworldwarllmemorial.com.

Philippines. At the time of his death, he was a Prisoner of War on a Japanese freighter which was sunk on September 7, 1944. He perished along with 750 others on board.

- Joseph R. Cunningham – Cunningham was from Travelers Rest, South Carolina. He did not have a degree and was never married. Stationed at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, he witnessed the Japanese attack. Cunningham was on active duty in several locations, and never returned from a reconnaissance mission August 14, 1942.
- John L. Gaskins –Gaskins was from Timmonsville, South Carolina and earned a BS degree in Vocational Agricultural Education. He was married. A member of the U.S. Army, he had earned the rank of Captain before he was killed in action in Germany on December 9, 1944. Gaskins is buried in France.
- Clifford Gormley – Originally from Pawtucket, Rhode Island, Gromley earned a BS degree in Textile Chemistry. He was married and attained the rank of 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Air Force. He was a pilot instructor and was killed in a plane crash at the start of a routine training flight on June 16, 1943. (see Daniel T. Pope)
- Robert A. Guy – A native of Chester, South Carolina, Guy received a BS degree in Textile Chemistry. He was married and joined the Army. Guy fought in North

- Africa & Sicily and was killed in the battle of Monte Cassino, Italy on February 17, 1944.
- John C. Hubbard, Jr. – Hubbard was from Bennettsville, South Carolina. He did not earn a degree before leaving school; however he was married with one daughter. Hubbard was in the U. S. Army Air Force and was killed while taking off on a flight on January 29, 1945.
 - John T. Lyles, Jr. – Originally from Newberry, South Carolina, Lyles received a BS degree in General Science. He was an instructor in the U. S. Army Air Force, and a fighter pilot in the Pacific. He was reported missing on May 20, 1945 during an altitude test.
 - Joel McMillan – McMillan was from Saluda, South Carolina and earned a BS in Horticulture. Married with 2 children, McMillan joined the Army and was a Company Commander of a rifle company in Burma. After the war he transferred to HQ Chinese Combat Command as a combat liaison officer with the Chinese Army. Following that service, he returned home and ultimately committed suicide, a casualty of war.
 - Clemmons C. Miley – Miley was from Brunson, South Carolina, and received his BS degree in Horticulture. He was not married. On June 16, 1943 he was flying a P-40L plane in Florida and was killed in a mid-air collision with a similar aircraft.

- Lester L. Miller – Miller was from Hamer, South Carolina. He earned a BS degree in Vocational Agricultural Education. He was not married. A member of the U.S. Army, infantry, he saw service in several engagements. He was ultimately killed in action on September 22, 1944 in Europe.
- Daniel C. Morgan – A native of Welford, South Carolina, Morgan received his BS degree in Agronomy. Married with one daughter, Morgan was in the Army and was killed in action during the fighting at Anzio beachhead on May 23, 1944.
- Walter S. Nelson, Jr. – Nelson was from Savannah, Georgia. He did not receive a degree and was married. Nelson was a C-47 pilot in the U.S. Army Air Force in North Africa. While he was ferrying paratroopers to support the invasion of Sicily, was mistakenly shot down by the British Navy on July 11, 1943.
- Burrell F. Newman – From McBee, South Carolina, Newman earned his BS degree in Industrial Education. Married, he was a member of the U.S. Army Air Force, and held the distinction of being the first ever to pilot a B-27. While on a secondary mission was attacked by 2 German fighter planes and shot down on June 11, 1943.
- Max M. Nichols, Jr. – A native of Savannah, Georgia, Nichols received his BS degree in Chemistry. He was not married. Nichols was a bombardier in the U. S.

- Army Air Force and was shot down on a mission over Rangoon on December 1, 1943.
- Joseph B. Palmer – Palmer was born in Timmonsville, South Carolina and got his BS degree in Animal Husbandry. He was not married. Palmer was a U.S. Marine, fought in the Pacific, and was killed during the battle to capture Saipan on January 10, 1944.
 - Daniel T. Pope – From Edisto Island, South Carolina, Pope got his BS degree in Agricultural Engineering. Married with one son, Pope enlisted as an aviation cadet in the U.S. Army Air Force. By 1943 he was a captain and student pilot. His plane crashed on takeoff on a training flight on June 16, 1943. In a strange coincidence, that plane was piloted by a classmate, Richard Gormley, and two Clemson graduates died on that plane.
 - Henry A. Raysor – Raysor was from Orangeburg, South Carolina, earning his BS degree in Chemistry. He was married and a member of the Army. Raysor was killed on January 12, 1944 when an enemy plane dropped a bomb on a building he was in.
 - John E. Rowland – Rowland was from Hamer, South Carolina. He had not earned a degree and was married with one son. A member of the US Army 369th

Engineer Regiment, he fought in Guadalcanal and Manila. Ironically, he died in a jeep accident on September 9, 1945, one week after the Japanese surrendered.

- Francis H. Scarborough – From Mount Clio, South Carolina, Scarborough received his BS degree in Agricultural Engineering. He was not married. In the U.S. Army Air Force, he was sent to Manila, where he served with the infantry. Scarborough was captured on Corregidor by the Japanese on May 6, 1942, performed slave labor for 19 months, survived the sinking of two different Prisoner of War ships and was on. He ultimately died of the hardships of years as a Prisoner of War while in Japanese hands. He buried at sea on January 27, 1945.
- Frank H. Shirley, Jr. – From Westminster, South Carolina. Shirley was not married. He entered U.S. Navy in 1939 and was assigned to the USS Wake which was sunk in battle of Guadalcanal on November 15, 1942. Shirley survived, and following recovery, was reassigned to the Pacific. His ship was again sunk and he was lost at sea on November 16, 1943.
- Raymond A. Sloan – Sloan from Marion, South Carolina, earned a BS degree in Agronomy. He was in the U.S. Army Air Force and sent to the Philippines in 1940. Sloan was made assistant to the Chief of the Philippine Army Air Corps. Reassigned to the infantry, he died of wounds one day after promotion to Captain, on February 11, 1942, the first Clemson graduate to die in the war.

- Denny L. Starr – Starr was from Bamberg, South Carolina. He was married with one son. Starr was in the Army and was sent to England in time for the D-Day invasion. He survived D-Day only to be mortally wounded in battle near Cherbourg, France on June 25, 1944.
- James T. Whitney – Whitney was from Union, South Carolina and earned his BS degree in Industrial Education. He was married. Whitney was sent to the Pacific in 1944, fought in several battles on Guam, and died in action on August 3, 1944.

APPENDIX G

CLASS OF '39 WORLD WAR II EXPLOITS

This appendix is devoted to relating several Class of '39 World War II exploits. The individuals and events were chosen at random among the many such stories that were part of the Class experiences in the war, and are intended to give the reader a sense of the bonding among men that would take place in the aftermath of such events.¹⁷²

Charles Manly Aull

Pomaria, South Carolina

U.S. Army

Charles Aull served in the 2nd Armored Division and participated in the landing at Casablanca in November, 1943. He went to Sicily in July, 1943 then through Palermo in Italy. He landed in Normandy in June, 1944 and fought in the Cotentin peninsula through France into Belgium. His unit broke through the Siegfried Line in October, 1944 and seized Puffendorf and Barman in November, 1944. Aull participated in the Battle of the Bulge in January, 1945 and ultimately entered Berlin in July, 1945. He was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, Purple Heart and American Defense Medal.

¹⁷² Information for this Appendix was obtained from the *Chronicles of the Class of 1939*, Vols. 1 & 2 and from internet web site www.iiworldwarllmemorial.com

Marion C. Baldwin

Rock Hill, South Carolina

U.S. Army

Marion Baldwin entered active duty as a 2nd Lieutenant in December, 1941 and trained in the United States and England. As part of the 90th Infantry Division, he was committed to action in the Normandy invasion on June 16, 1944, the youngest battalion commander in the landing forces. While leading his battalion near the Merderet River, it came under heavy machine gun fire. Baldwin was seriously wounded and had to evacuate. Baldwin subsequently arrived in the United States in a body cast from his waist down and one arm in a cast. After extensive treatment in hospitals in Texas, he was discharged as a Lieutenant Colonel November 1946.

Thomas P. Baskin

Anderson, South Carolina

U.S. Army

Thomas Baskin enlisted as a private in 1942. He was appointed to Officer Candidate School and commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in 1944 and shipped to Europe also in 1944. Baskin received a Bronze Star and a battlefield promotion to 1st Lieutenant for leading initial attacks against the Siegfried Line in Germany. While in temporary command of Company A on March 8, 1945, he crossed the Remagen Bridge into Germany accompanied only by one other officer and a sergeant. This was ahead of the capture of the bridge by Allied forces. From 1944 to 1945 he participated in five campaigns in the European theater. Baskin was wounded on March 15, 1945 and released from active duty on March 2, 1946 with the rank of Captain and two Purple Hearts.

Ludy J. Blakely, Jr.

Ora, South Carolina

U.S. Army

Ludy Blakely served in the Pacific Theater of operations as a Company Commander, 37th infantry. He was severely wounded by machine gun fire while directing an attack on a dug-in Japanese machine gun nest. Although wounded, he refused evacuation and continued to lead his company until the mission was complete. For his efforts, Blakely received the Distinguished Service Cross, Purple Heart and the Legion of Merit. He was discharged with the rank of Major.

Willis C. Davis, Jr.

Greenville, South Carolina

U.S. Army Air Forces

Willis Davis enlisted in 1941 as an Aviation Cadet and received his wings in December, 1942. After further training, he was assigned to headquarters, Far East Air Command, in Hollandia, New Guinea. In June, 1945 Davis participated in the rescue of two pilots and a nurse from a remote mountain valley. In addition, Davis served overseas for a year in the Pacific theater.

Frederick A. Dunlap

Rock Hill, South Carolina

U.S. Army

Frederick Dunlap rose to rank of Lieutenant Colonel. His last two ranks were the result of battlefield promotions. In 1945 he was wounded by a German shell fragment in Duren, Germany which paralyzed him from the waist down and put him in a wheelchair for life. He received the Silver Star, Bronze Star with Two Oak Leaf Clusters and the Purple Heart.

Francis H. Scarborough

Mount Clio, South Carolina

U.S. Army

Francis Scarborough arrived in Manila in February 1941, assigned to the 57th Infantry Regiment of Philippine Division of Fort McKinley. In 1941 he transferred to the Air Force and trained as an Aerial Observer. He was relocated to Bataan and was among those on Corregidor when it was captured by the Japanese on May 6, 1942. He was at Prison Camp #1, Cabanatuan for four months, during which many prisoners died. On October 28, the prisoners boarded a transport ship and arrived at Daveo on Mindanao. For 19 months they performed slave labor at the penal colony. On June 6, 1944 Scarborough and the other prisoners boarded a ship for the return trip to Manila, arriving in October. On December 13, 1944 he and other Prisoners of War boarded the prison ship Oryoku Maru, which was sunk two days later by Navy planes. Hundreds of Prisoners of War were killed, but Scarborough survived. On December 25 they were placed aboard a train to San Fernando La Union in Luzon, where they were loaded on another ship. This ship was also bombed, in the harbor in Taiwan. Scarborough survived again. Along with other survivors he was put aboard another ship that was bound for Japan. On January 27, 1945, in the hold of the ship, Lieutenant Scarborough died as a result of the effects of his years as a POW. He was buried at sea.

Joseph L Shealy, Sr.

Lexington County, South Carolina

U.S. Army

Joseph Shealy entered the service in 1942. He landed at Casablanca, Morocco on May 10, 1943. Shealy served in the European-African-Middle Eastern Theater with the 82nd Airborne in the Glider Infantry. In his first combat mission, he air assaulted Sicily on July 9, 1943. For his service, he was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Clusters, Purple Heart, American Campaign Medal, World War II Victory Medal and the Army of Occupation Medal. Shealy was discharged with the rank of captain.

William H. Thackston

Anderson, South Carolina

U.S. Army

William Thackston reported for duty on February 11, 1942 and was subsequently shipped to Port Moresby, New Guinea, arriving on September 25, 1942. He participated in the Buna and Papuan Campaigns and also took part in the Saidor and Aitape Campaigns in 1944. As a Captain he landed with his unit on Leyte to participate in that important campaign. Thackston also participated in the landing on the Lingayen Gulf beachhead and the fighting along the Villa Verde Trail. He was wounded but returned from hospitalization to participate in the mop up operation. Thackston received the Bronze Star with V Device and a Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with Bronze Star, Purple Heart with Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, Distinguished Unit Badge, the Asiatic-Pacific Service Medal with Four Bronze Service Stars and others.

Charles F. Thomas

Aiken, South Carolina

U.S. Army Air Forces

Charles Thomas served as a Bombardier-Navigator aboard B-26 medium bombers in the European Theater. He flew 69 missions over Europe and took part in the Normandy invasion. Thomas received the Distinguished Flying Cross with Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster and Air Medal with Battle Stars.

John B. Wakefield, Jr.

Antreville, South Carolina

U.S. Army Air Forces

John Wakefield entered the U.S. Army Air Force in April, 1941 as a 2nd Lieutenant and received his wings later that year. He was transferred to England, and later that year, as a captain, was awarded the Air Medal personally by General Doolittle for performance of an extremely hazardous offensive involving transportation of paratroops into Tunisia. As a major, he took command of a new troop carrier squadron and was transferred to the Asiatic-Pacific Theater. His final rank was Lieutenant Colonel.

APPENDIX H

ROSTER OF THE CLASS OF 1939

Edward P. Abrams	John A. Adden, Jr.
Luther R. Ambrose, Jr.	Joseph F. Anderson, Sr.
Robert F. Anderson	William D. Anderson, Jr.
Thomas B. Ardis	Charles M. Aull, Sr. – Purple Heart
Thomas J. Austin	Henry E. Avent, Sr.
Harry C. Avinger	L. Charles Bailes
J. Robert Bailey	Thomas R. Bainbridge
Marion C. L. Baldwin – Purple Heart	Virgil A. Ballard
Charles D. Ballenger	Carroll F. Ballentine – Purple Heart
Robert A. Banister	Timothy W. Barrineau, Sr. – Purple Heart
John S. Baskin	Thomas P. Baskin, Jr. – Purple Heart (2)
Harris L. Beach, Sr.	William A. Beasley
Thomas E. Bell, Jr. – Purple Heart (3)	F. Dewitt Benson
Carl V. Black	Joseph W. Black
Guy E. Blackwell	Irvin C. Blake
J. Roger Blakely	L. James Blakely, Jr. – Purple Heart
R. Harper Blakeney	Furman G. Bobo
Hoyt U. Bookhart, Jr.	Harold W. Boozer
Theodore J. Boselli	Ernest O. Botts, Jr.
Stanley J. Boyd	William B. Boyle
F. Lee Boylston	Ralph W. Boys

Fred H. Bozard	James H. Bracey – Died in World War II
William E. Brackett, Jr. – Purple Heart	John F. Brailsford, Sr.
Rhett M. Bratton	Thomas W. Brice, Jr.
Ralph W. Bridge	George A. Brodie
Eugene R. Brown	William C. Bryan, Jr.
Frank J. Bryce	David E. Burress, Jr.
Richard H. Burton	James H. Byington, Jr.
William T. Cain	William B. Caldwell
Fred H. H. Calhoun, Jr.	Benjamin O. Cantey – Purple Heart
William B. Capell	William A. Carlisle – Purple Heart
Paavo Carlson	B. Frank Carruth
Robert G. Carson, Jr.	Willis S. Cason – Purple Heart
John W. Cathcart II – Died in World War II	T. Max Champion
James R. Chandler – Purple Heart	John F. Chandler
Hugh Chapman, Jr.	Dewitt Chapman – Died in World War II
Phillip B. Chovan	Louis A. Citron
Edwin E. Clayton	Charles S. Clyburn, Sr.
William O. Cofer	G. Ray Coker, Sr.
James M. Cole	Alan J. Coleman
Robert W. Coleman, Sr.	W. Desportes Coleman, Jr.
William J. Coleman	William S. Coleman, Sr.
J. Clinton Cook, Jr.	Henry M. Cooper
James F. Copeland, Jr.	Otis L Copeland, Jr.
Henry H. Cosgrove, Jr.	Henry M. Covington
James C. Covington, Jr.	Walter T. Cox, Jr.

Newell D. Crawford, Sr.	Martin Crook, Jr. – Died in World War II
David D. Crosby	Henry M. Crouch, Jr.
Fred E. Culvern, Jr.	George L. Cunningham
Joseph Cunningham – Died in World War II	N. Rhett Davis, Jr.
W. Cantey Davis, Jr.	Arthur J. DeLoach, Jr.
Patric Dennis	Charles A. Dewey, Jr.
Theron W. Dillard	Joseph E. Dixon
Roy M. Dobson – Purple Heart	Jules T. Doux
Phillip N. Drew	Guignard R. Dubose
Oscar S. Dukes	Frederick A. Dunlap, Jr. – Purple Heart
Frampton W. Durban – Purple Heart	John E. Duvall
Ryan H. Edwards	Andrew M. Evans
Joseph W. Everett	Harry Feinstein
James H. Ferguson, Jr.	Roy J. Ferree
Robert B. Fickling	John W. Finney, Jr.
Frank M. Fleming	John W. Flowers
Paul G. Ford	John W. Fortner
Harry E. Foster	Irvin J. Foster
William T. Foster – Purple Heart	James B. Frazier III
William H. Frazier, Jr. – Died in Korea	Talley D. Fulmer – Purple Heart
Arthur P. Gandy, Jr.	Pickens A. Gantt
Lawrence T. Garick, Sr. – Purple Heart	Arthur R. Garner, Jr.
John L. Gaskins – Died in World War II	William F. Gates, Jr.
Robert M. Geer	James W. Gibert
Harold C. Gibson – Purple Heart	Hugh A. Gilchrist

Backman H. Glymph	C. Augustus Goins
Clifford J. Gormley – Died in World War II	Johnnie R. Grantham
B. Zack Gray	Willard F. Grayson
William K. Greer	E. Wardlaw Griffin
Edward P. Guerard	Fred P. Guerry, Jr.
Joseph H. Guess	C. Guy Gunter
Robert A. Guy – Died in World War II	Myers T. Hambright, Sr.
Edmund B. Hammond, Jr.	George W. Hance, Sr.
Claude C. Handley	Kennett S. Harmon
Mayo N. Harmon	Jacob R. Harrison
James H. Harrison	Charles B. Hastings
John P. Hayes	Thomas H. Heatwole
Raymond A. Hemphill, Jr.	W. Thomas Henderson, Jr. – Purple Heart
Bennett L. Hendricks, Jr.	Carroll E. Hendrix
Robert L. Henry, Jr.	Henry K. Herlong, Sr.
Robert Hester	Robert C. Heyward, Jr.
Theodore C. Heyward, Jr.	Maurice D. Hiers
Edgar J. Hinson, Jr.	L. Clifford Horner, Jr. – Purple Heart
Thomas G. Howard	Joseph B. Howie
John C. Hubbard, Jr. – Died in World War II	W. Manchester Hudson, Sr.
D. Gregory Hughes	Frederick Hughes
Willard E. Hutchins	Donald M. Hutchinson
William P. Irwin	Ellis M. Ivey, Jr.
Richard F. Jackson, Jr.	Wister O. Jackson, Jr.
Claude E. Johnson	Floyd D. Johnson

Malcolm C. Johnson	Ellerbe P. Johnstone
Champ M. Jones – Purple Heart	Edwin M. Jones
Elder H. Jones	James S. Jones, Sr.
L. Franklin Jones	Malcolm H. Jones
D. Thomas Joyce – Purple Heart	J. Martin Kee
B. Hardin Keitt	James W. Kelly – Purple Heart
Edward H. Kerrison, Jr.	William J. Kienzle
Francis M. King	Alfred H. Kirchner
James M. Kirk	John J. Kirton
Forrest T. Knox	W. Lucas Lafaye
Jack M. Lapham	Paul S. Lawton – Purple Heart
Thomas O. Lawton	Perry E. Lee, Jr.
Wilmer L. Lee – Purple Heart	N. Ralph Lester
John B. Lipscomb	Elliott M. Loyless, Jr.
Thomas E. Lucas	Herbert H. Lusk
John T. Lyles – Died in World War II	James M. Lynes, Sr.
Richard M. Lynes	James D. Mackintosh, Jr.
Watson W. Magee	Peter M. Mahon
Josef P. Maroney	J. Roy Martin, Jr.
Robert H. Martin	Ladson M. Massey
Howard J. McAlhany	Laurens E. McAlpine
George H. McCarley	Robert Y. McCarter
Phillip H. McCorkle, Sr.	Kenneth J. McCown
Robert R. McCrary	James G. McCully
Eugene T. McCurry	Norman J. McFadden, Sr. – Purple Heart

Thomas M. McKeivin, Jr.	Benjamin F. McLeod
Joel McMillan - Died in World War II	Malcolm L. McMillan
Thomas T. McNair	Clemons C. Miley – Died in World War II
William F. Mile, Jr. – Purple Heart (2)	Lester L. Miller – Died in World War II
Priestley G. Mims, Jr.	William B. R. Mitchell, Jr.
William H. Monckton IV	James B. Montgomery
Cleon C. Moon	Fletcher L. Moore
James B. Moore	Thaddeus R. Moorner, Jr.
Daniel C. Morgan – Died in World War II	Robert W. Moss, Sr.
John B. Murphy	D. A. Mustard
Walter S. Nelson – Died in World War II	Burrell F. Newman – Died in World War II
George M. Newman	William C. Newman
M. Max Nichols, Jr. – Died in World War II	Paul W. Nichols
James B. Nickles	W. Bryan Northrup
Frank W. O’Neal	J. Walker Owens – Purple Heart
George D. Page	Norwood R. Page
Joe B. Palmer – Died in World War II	Horace C. Parker
Scott P. Patterson	Benjamin F. Pearson, Jr. – Purple Heart (2)
Francis E. Peebles	Bruce A. Peeling
Curtis W. Pennington, Sr.	D. Townsend Pope – Died in World War II
Mitchell R. Powers – Purple Heart (2)	Alexander H. Pregnall, Jr.
Jackson R. Price	Carl W. Prince
J. Ralph Pritcher	Morton Rabinowitz
Joel H. Radcliffe	Clarence W. Rainey
Francis L. Rawl	Henry A. Raysor – Died in World War II

George H. Rea	Ira C. Redfern, Jr.
William H. Rentz	Luther M. Rhodes, Jr.
Robert W. Rivenbark	Alfred D. Rivers
William A. Rouse	William E. Rouse
John E. Rowland - Died in World War II	Harry G. Salley
William Z. Salley	George C. Salvo
Melvin E. Sammons	Francis Scarborough – Died in World War II
Frederick E. Schroder, Sr.	Carl L. Schroeder
Blynn E. Scott	William C. Seabrook, Jr.
Taze L. Senn	Carroll D. Shealy
Joseph L. Shealy – Purple Heart	Vernon M. Shell, Jr.
Elton W. Shepherd, Sr.	Frank H. Shirley, Jr. – Died in World War II
John E. Simkins, Jr.	Stephen L. Skardon
Raymond A. Sloan – Died in World War II	Albert W. Smith, Jr.
Jacob K. Smith	J. Gordan Smith
Louie C. Smith	Harvey Snell
Alexander G. Speer	W. Harold Stokes
Richardson L. Stone	O. Keith Strickland
George C. Staley, Jr. – Purple Heart	Thomas F. Stanfield
Gaston W. Stanford, Jr.	Denny L. Starr – Died in World War II
Ernest C. Sturgis	J. Edgar Sullivan
Oren E. Sullivan, Sr.	Ralph J. Sullivan
William E. Summerbell	James O. Sweeny, Sr.
George P. Taber	John N. Talbert – Purple Heart
Thomas W. Talbert	Willie M. Terry, Jr.

W. Harold Thackston – Purple Heart	Charles F. Thomas
Eber H. Thomas, Jr.	Herbert J. Thomas, Jr.
Roy C. Thomas – Purple Heart	Fred A. Thompson
Barham F. Thomson, Jr.	John H. Tibbs
John R. Townsend	Heber V. Traywick
H. Phillip Troy, Jr.	Emory J. Vann, III
Claude L. Vaughan, Jr.	Jorge Vicaria
Victor V. Vickery	John B. Wakefield, Jr.
Carl T. Warner	George C. Waters
Lee E. Waters	J. Drake Watson
Phillip S. Watson	Robert W. Watson
Henry C. Whitehead	Francis M. Whitlock, Jr.
Asa P. Whitmire	James T. Whitney – Died in World War II
Jack L. Wilks, Sr.	Coker D. Williams
George M. Williams	Horace B. Williams
James C. Williams, Sr.	Loyal C. Williamson, Jr.
Donavan J. Willis	Joseph M. Windham, Jr.
William R. Wise, Jr.	Russell S. Wolfe, II
Charles Woods, Jr.	Leon C. Wright
Yates W. Wyant	Loran M. Yelton
Ernest L. Young, Jr.	T. Benton Young, Jr.
William B. Zeigler	

APPENDIX I
INTERVIEWS

Tazewell Senn Interview – December 20, 2011

Subject: The Clemson Class of 1939

Prior to the actual interview, we had some general conversation, and Dr. Senn began to talk about items relating to the class of '39. Those comments were recorded as well. They are as follows, to be followed by the question and answer portion of the interview. Dr. Senn's son David was present at the interview and made occasional comments to clarify some things said by his father. David Senn is also a Clemson graduate and an honorary member of the Class of '39.

Tazewell Senn: I'm the luckiest guy in the world and I just had three calls from three widows. That is unusual but I think it is well, well something because without the wives we wouldn't have been much, and so when you started talking about Florida it started me off. Mary Snell called and talked to me and that thrilled me to death. Her husband was Harvey Snell, he was in horticulture with me, worked his way through and all that stuff and later became a real man in citrus and fought the battle of The Bulge and all that stuff. But the thing about it is they have created quite a few scholarships in horticulture and agriculture and engineering. So, what I am really getting across as you can tell is I would like to have something in your thesis that you admire and respect the widows.

Lawrence Korth: That's a good point and that will be a part of it.

TS: Some of them are very active and some of the daughters and sons are very active. Now the other wives I would like you to get to are Alma Thomas. Now Alma Thomas is the widow of Herbert Thomas in Holland, MI. I'm jumping all around the (unintelligible) on you, but they have contributed immensely to Clemson. He did his low country boil and they didn't have a thing in Hodges, SC., and a poor family like me, but anyway he came to Clemson and finished his education and later ended up a multi-millionaire.

LK: What was his name again?

TS: Herbert... I think its Herbert J. But the thing I want to get across is some of us made a success, he did. He married Alma of course and they had multi millions. But anyway, Herb developed mattresses. He's the one you know that worked the spring that goes clockwise and counterclockwise and it doesn't settle down. I'm just pouring crap out on you.

LK: Well, one of the questions in here is who are some of the most important people in the class?

TS: I'm in Michigan right now, but Alma is there and she and her son have made considerable donations to a place called Clemson University. And this is on a sidetrack, Herbert is October 13 and mine is October 16, she owns a lot of property on the beach in South Carolina and she invited me and my family to come down and celebrate her 90 something birthday. But I thought that was very interesting as far as relationships. The next one is Tina Williams in Alexandria, Virginia. Now how does she fit in? Her husband was a good old country boy, worked in the greenhouses here and everything, but he ended up after the war and all that stuff in railroads and that's how we got the caboose. That's the guy who did it. And that's the widow. George ended up the VP of Southern Railroad. He made a fortune, and through Reet¹⁷³ and him he in turn gave us this caboose. He gave it to Reet; she in turn gave it to the class.

LK: Where were you living before you came to Clemson? What town were you from?

TS: Well I didn't live in a town; I lived so far out in the country we got the mail every Thursday. All my people were dairymen and we lived on the farm and went to county school and finally my mother was insistent that I go to town school but I only had one pair of shoes and guys used to say I was the keeper of the cows.

LK: In what year were you a freshman?

TS: 1935, September 1935. I came to Clemson on a dairy scholarship, but they had already given it because I was a day late.

¹⁷³ Reet is Tee Senn's first wife.

LK: I remember, they gave you a horticulture scholarship and your dad went in a talked to the president.

TS: Yes, Dr. Sikes. That changed my way of living thank god.

LK: The South, like the rest of the country was in the middle of the great depression. How did the depression affect you and your family?

TS: Well, we didn't have a pot to piss in, or a window to throw it out of, that's about as vulgar as I know how to do it.

LK: So you really had.....

TS: Nothing, we sold milk but they didn't have any money, the mills were closed and everything and I went over there and picked up a bottle and it was stinking like heck and my dime was for a quart of milk. And I came home and said I ain't gonna do it no more and my momma said sit down. "Did you see Mrs. (unintelligible) I said yes? Two little kids? I said yes. She said are you going to give those little kids some milk? I said yes maam. We didn't make any money but we didn't let kids starve to death either.

LK: And your dad was working the farm too?

TS: Oh gosh yes, he had three jobs. He worked the farm and at night he was a guard. Back in those days they had where the convicts and all stayed on the roads things like that. He was a night watchman I guess was the closest thing. He came from a family where his father was killed in the war of northern aggression. But my mother put limits on the family, she kept us straight.

LK: So your father's father was killed in the Civil War.

TS: Yes. We all came from Switzerland. But this thesis is not about me.

LK: That's right, but I want to talk about the South during this time and how bad the Depression was. So here we are in the middle of the Depression, but you are still able to go to college.

TS: Ten cents an hour on the National Youth Administration helped. I worked every weekend in the green house in the winter and cutting okra in the summer and working on the farm. I never went home. All of that money was so I could go to school. I never had money to spend. I only had one pair of shoes.

LK: So that plus your scholarship got you through.

TS: Absolutely.

LK: I think that's important for people to understand, like me. As old as I am, I didn't have the Depression. When I sit in class and we talk about the Cold War, these kids have no idea what that is. I thought I was going to die in a nuclear blast from Russia in the Cold War. When I was 10 years old I was scared to death. So I want to do a chapter on what was going on in the South and in South Carolina and how the New Deal was dealt out.

TS: I was an NYA, National Youth Administration.

LK: That's good to know and part of what I want to bring out here. Do you remember getting any benefit from any of the New Deal programs?

TS: At 10 cents an hour it would take a long time to go to school, but that helped me pay for things. The NYA helped out, I don't know how it all worked out but I got credit for working. It wasn't just a hand out; you had to work so many hours to get money. I never had any money, just the privilege of going to school.

LK: What made you and your family think going to school was a good thing for you. Did they recognize the value of education?

TS: Absolutely, as I say, my father didn't have the privilege. My mother did. When I was 4 years old, I was learning ABCs and everything. What my dad did, he worked with John Allen Johnstone, who was a member of the Trustees in Newberry a member of the Trustees at Clemson. My dad would take him to Columbia to be in the legislature. He played a very important role in my life in getting me to be able to work and work. I never got to go home. When I said I moved from the barracks to the green house in the fall of the year. And at the end of summer I would move back from the greenhouse back to the barracks. But it was the best thing I ever did.

LK: When all is said and done and you look back on this class of '39, how do you want people to remember the class of '39? What is it that you think they should think about or think of when they are thinking about your class?

TS: We were just a big family. Jim Sweeny was brilliant, but I still like him. We had it from top to bottom. As Jim probably told you, we had about 600 but not all of them are survived.

LK: Yes, we talked a little bit about that. I think my records showed about 644 freshmen came in but you're counting about 385 as class members, but not all of them started in '35. So the ones who wanted to be associated with your class could pick it. They could decide if they wanted to be class members.

TS: The thing about it, you have to look at people like Ben Scoden and people like that. They started but the milk ran out and they had to stay out a year. And then they came back. We are not heroes or anything like that. The thing about it is people worked in the dining halls in the (unintelligible) and everything else. The best experience and everything else is was. I love women but we were strictly all male. My grandmother told me don't go up there with those damn Yankees in Clemson. So I violated it and married a Yankee woman and voted Republican.

LK: When you first started at Clemson as a freshman did you think you were ready for college? Did you feel prepared?

TS: Oh yes, my mother insisted on that.

LK: So you felt comfortable that you could handle the class load and all that?

TS: Yes, I never heard of horticulture before that, I was in dairy. My mother insisted I take the hardest dang thing I ever had. If I hadn't broken my arm I never would have passed Latin.

LK: When was that?

TS: In Newberry High School. I went to country school and then I went to Newberry.

LK: Clemson had a big military flavor to it. Did that influence your decision to go to Clemson or not.

TS: No way, no way. They told me my blood wasn't right and therefore I could not be in ROTC, in my freshman year and sophomore year. And then when things got bad, guess what, they made me a lieutenant. I had to take four years in two years.

LK: The South has got a reputation as being, especially the men in the South, as being militant as being ready to fight. Did you think that was the case in the South?

TS: No way.

LK: That's interesting. I'll give you a story. When I first started taking all these classes in history, I got involved and I really like southern history. My professors keep telling me about this militancy in the South and I just don't necessarily buy it. Jim didn't think there was any militancy.

TS: In mine, I have proof. I was a lieutenant when I graduated after a year I left and went to Maryland and Tennessee and that's where I found my way and I became an ensign in the Navy. And then in the Navy I got to go to Holland. I still do cryptographics and I was invited up and I'm still involved and I got promoted to Lieutenant not long ago. And my territory is what it was when I left, North and South Korea, China and Japan. They said that's where the next world war would be. And that's where I'm still in cryptographics and I've got a thing back there to prove that I am still available in cryptographics, that I picked up at Harvard and MIT. So that is my part. It has nothing to do with me going out and killing Japanese soldiers. Nothing like that.

LK: So to this day you are a Lt. in the Navy in cryptographics. Now, your classmates, they didn't seem any more militant than anyone else? Were they rough and tumble guys?

TS: Swell Sweeny was one of these....because I was a private, but Sweeny, he loved that military stuff, and his boots and all. Yes, and one of my roommates had been in the National Guard, and he liked the military, and that wasn't for me. I'd rather work in the greenhouse or work on the farm than to drill. I did anything I could do to get out of the military.

LK: Most of your classmates were they farmers or what?

TS: Well naturally, there were more in Ag back in those days. Today we have no agriculture at Clemson. With Harvey Snell and all of them. My class were all Aggies and of course we had Jim Sweeny and people like that but I think the Ag boys.....

LK: There were more of them? And their families were farmers?

TS: Yes, absolutely.

LK: Were there a lot of kids who came from the cities or mostly farms?

TS: Even though some would major in engineering for example, yes we had a lot of Ag boys in there. All you got to do is read through the history of them to find out.

LK: One of the reasons I asked that question is that I was talking to; I don't know if you know, Dr. Grubb in the History Department. He said he came to Clemson when there were still Quonset huts. But he thought that most of the class would not have been from the farm, and I said golly, I have to think they are.

TS: You better believe it. I can go back and get a list of them. That book that we have tell where they came from. And you know, somebody came from Lydia, SC. That's a tobacco farmer. But I remember Tom Bell; he finished in so and so and ended up a pitcher in baseball. Things like that you know. Some farm boys were brilliant. They weren't all like us in Ag.

LK: Did you like it in the barracks?

TS: My tail still hurts on a rainy day. I'm bitterly opposed to beating your butt and all that.

LK: Was that sort of like initiation?

TS: Oh, yes, and then you were also a slave to the upper classmen. You cleaned up their room; you washed their floors, and carried their dirty clothes to the laundry. But then we got to be sophomores, I didn't treat them like that and neither did my roommates.

LK: Anything else about college life that you want to be sure I understand about what was going on in that time in the country, that time in the century.

TS: Well I'm prejudiced; I think I had some of the finest professors that ever took a breath. Like Dr. Edmond. I hated his guts, but he made a man out of me out of a molehill. And Mr. Musser was a Pennsylvanian, a Dutchman, and he was a quiet easy going man. He was head of the Horticulture Department, and when he said jump, I jumped high. And then Lord Collins was an agronomist and he was tough as hell but that's what we needed. Firm but fair. And it paid off late, you are sitting right here (unintelligible) he was head of pathology and I got ready after all the stuff and I got high minded and they talked me into coming back to Clemson from Duke and the University of Maryland and he told me you need¹⁷⁴ to build a home and Jack Armstrong¹⁷⁴ said I got

¹⁷⁴ May not be the correct transcription of the name.

some (unintelligible) I had looked; Mr. Saletto¹⁷⁵ said you ought to stay at Clemson. I'll buy some property out in Saletto woods (unintelligible) Armstrong said I got a place; there wasn't even a lake out here, over on Strawberry Hill, which is this. And so he said I'm never going to build there and he said you ought to have it. I said I don't have any money and there is a story and a story and a story after that. But if it hadn't been this teacher that taught me the path that led, I wouldn't be sitting in my home which I love here and I came back here. This is like dying and going to heaven.

LK: Let me back you up a little bit. So you came to school, you were going to major in dairy but you majored in horticulture. Now, what is horticulture?

TS: God's greatest gift. Go all the way back to the bible. Where do you think the burning bush came from?

LK: What were you learning at Clemson, you weren't learning how to grow plants, you were learning how to combine them, develop new plants what were you trying to do

TS: Breeding sweet potatoes to make the different plants and improve the aromatic experience of elixa, for example, the Clemson spineless okra. That type of thing. And I learned all of that, but what is the relationship of how plants grow. What makes plants grow? And that's when I got involved in chemistry, biophysics, and all those things. You know we have got photosynthesis, respiration. There is very little difference between plant and man.

LK: And you knew nothing about that when you came.

TS: Oh, God no. What did I know about chemistry, organic chemistry, biochemistry and all that? But I loved it and that is why I went to so many different schools to try to learn how to do something.

LK: So you got your bachelors degree here at Clemson. Then what?

TS: I started teaching; I started teaching my junior year. Labs and taught 201 sophomore horticulture. And then in my senior year I also did some seminars and then

¹⁷⁵ May not be the correct transcription of the name.

they advanced me and instead of paying me \$100 paid me \$112. And I got married, then they told me if I didn't go to graduate school they would fire me.

LK: Alright and where did you go?

TS: The University of Tennessee. We are in 1939 -1940 in that period.

LK: You got your masters degree there?

TS: No, Uncle Sam said you got to go boy. I went up there to graduate but they put me on the faculty. That was pathology, diseases and insects and all that stuff. And then I left there and went in the service and then from there I got involved in Harvard and.....

LK: And the service was the Navy?

TS: In the Navy.

LK: And from there, when you got out of the service?

TS: Came back to Tennessee. And I couldn't do too well, and they invited me to come back to Clemson and I did and that's where they told me I was doing so well that either I go back to school or they would fire me. I got involved in physiology and chemistry and all that. Went to the University of Maryland. Got my masters and then came back. I got happy as a lark after the war that child was born (pointing to his son David) and Tommy was born over there at the stadium that's when they told me to back to school.

(Some off the record sports conversation with David Senn)

TS: I love sports, I played baseball at home and I played Babe Ruth Baseball, and I was doing that but I threw my arm away if I pitched for the mills. I was in high school and got a dollar. I came to Clemson but Dr. Edmond thought athletics was for the birds. I would say we are going to play Furman and he would say "the hell with Furman, we are going to plant sweet potatoes. You aren't going and watch those monkeys run around." So instead of going into football and in my senior year I was highly in love with a young lady from Anderson. And her brother really enjoyed sports and all so, guess what, I had to let my roommate take my future wife to a football game and I was down in Edisto South Carolina digging damn sweet potatoes in football season. And when I wasn't there, I was cutting okra instead of going to games. I very seldom.

LK: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

TS: I had two brothers; my older brother never finished high school. He had football scholarship offers; they even gave him the helmet. But my younger brother majored in engineering.

LK: At Clemson?

TS: Yes. But he was the one who paid the price in the Bulge. But that's another story. I'm a miser as you can see back there. I collect coins, and I think I told you the story of my grandmother and me going up North and when we went up there she said there are two things I don't want you to do is marry a damn Yankee and vote Republican and she gave me a \$20 dollar piece and I still have that. And I violated that, I married a Yankee from Anderson and voted Republican. That's what I grew up on. I loved sports, as I say I worked with the mill teams. If I won a made a dollar, if I lost I didn't make but 50 cents. With the Newberry mill team. But the best thing that happened to me was becoming a Boy Scout. That was the thing, daddy built a swimming hole and the rich guys from Newberry came out there on the farm and go on in the swimming hole.

LK: Tell me about your brother, why were you in school and he wasn't?

David Senn: During the Depression he was talking about pitching but he won the most valuable player in the state championship game and he got a ball autographed by Babe Ruth.

TS: And also I had Confederate money and I had Indian head pennies. And a model T Ford. A lady, her husband died, and this was an open model T Ford and when I went to Clemson she said if you are a good boy and graduate I'll give you that. And so during the Depression, my brother he sold my pennies and he sold my model T Ford. But that's OK.

LK: Let's see, model T's were in the 20s, and we are in the late 30s.

TS: It was an antique. Back on the farm we had those old trucks where the (unintelligible) came up like that. Then I was driving the milk truck when I was 12. But we had to cut grain and everything else and haul it out. I'd much rather jump up and down on that truck than feed the pigs.

LK: How did you get involved with the class of '39 after graduation? How did you get tuned in?

TS: I think the thing about it was the fact of World War II. We got back and more or less some of them paid the price and that is why we have We have Walter Cox, T. Senn, Bannerston, Hughes, Kelly, and Champ. After the war we came back. I think we had 12 people who came back after the war because we had, what do you call that, you go to school and had the prefabs and all.¹⁷⁶

LK: The GI Bill.

TS: Yes. That's how we ended up, came back to mama.

LK: Had many of you not graduated?

TS: Yes we had graduated, but they came back on the faculty. Like I said, I was happy as a lark, but they said go to graduate school or they would fire me. Best thing that ever happened though.

LK: And from there you started having reunions?

TS: Yes, because things started to settle down a little bit and we started having reunions. Really we started in '49 was our first real thing. We probably had Bob Bannerston and Walter Cox and a bunch of us got together.

LK: Jim was showing me yesterday the Chronicles and '49 was the first.

TS: That was the real beginning.

LK: And then every 5 years for a while and then more frequently. Once that started happening how did all of this start to jell?

TS: Well because I live in Clemson, Champ lived in Clemson, Kelly lived in Clemson, Bannerston lived in Clemson and Cox lived in Clemson. And we started having them, we started having the reunions right here.

LK: By right here, you mean at your house.

¹⁷⁶ These were returning soldiers who came back to teach at Clemson.

TS: Yes. My dear wife, I have to give her a lot of credit. She loved everybody. We entertained people like Herb Thomas that we just talked about. If it hadn't been for those guys then we wouldn't have the caboose. We wouldn't have that comradamie and everything. And we started off have them every 5 years or something. Different guys were president and they would become president. Because I lived here and had a wife who loved to entertain. And she got the wives together and that's how we came those three ladies we talked about they were more like sisters and brothers and things like that. And not just because we were all in agriculture. And I think the war made us more appreciative. We lost a lot of good people. I think that made us brothers. We were more than just graduates of Clemson... the hard times the good times. All you have to do is read the minutes of the meetings and things we did. And then we decided if somebody hadn't helped us we wouldn't be here today. And that's how we began the scholarship program.

LK: How did that come about? How did you decide to do that?

TS: Well, because there were still some people that didn't have the money to go. Not everybody was rich. So our idea was, in fact I had a couple that worked over in the green house and did that like I had done and I said look, we've got to do that and Herb Thomas and those guys said, well hey, if each one of us gives a dollar or ten dollars or whatever it is and went in and the first thing they did is to set up a scholarship, a class of '39 scholarship.

LK: Was that part of the Golden Anniversary deal?

TS: Oh, yes. But we didn't say you give me \$50, you give what you wanted. Some of the guys even today name it the Walter Cox or Tee Senn or Joe Blow, you know, like that.

LK: So you went to the classmates and asked them for donations.

TS: And they delivered, and still are delivering.

LK: That is pretty amazing to me how that continues.

TS: Well that's the way with Doc Edmond, he never married, he hated women, he fell in love with my wife, and everything else. But he then, we created, after I was president of the horticultural, of the South Carolina and then of the national. And Joe Edmond said we are going to get scholarships. And we did.

LK: Why do you think the class of '39 is so well regarded as compared to other classes? There are two or three other classes that are special to Clemson, and yours is one of them. Why is that? When I go talk to the Faculty Senate they all love you over there. When I talk to people in the History Department those who know you all love you over there.

TS: Well, this is egotism on my part. Every time I started teaching a class after I got grown up, my job is to come in here and roll back the wall of ignorance surrounding the human race and I want to provide the shoulders from whence you can look into the great horizons of the future. And they would laugh and everything. That is what "roll back the walls of ignorance" and that still applies today. So many people we've got people who all you've got to do is read the paper.

LK: And I think the class of '39 does more projects or did more projects. Why did you do so many?

TS: Because we love Clemson, we love our profession. For example, I love horticulture, that's why we go out and I love people, people who are not as fortunate as I am. I can bore you to death with that because I used to have the saying we'd cover you from the cradle to the grave. Horticulture covers everything. I said we cover you from the cradle to the grave. This lady called me and says what are you doing for the blind. I said ah...ah...ah.... So I went over and worked with the school for the deaf and blind and other people said, well Tee, we would love to help you help the people who are blind. And today some of the most successful musicians are our offspring. That's the kind of thing we went through like Champ Jones for example he wanted to get somebody who was interested in things and Walter Cox and it wasn't just horticulture, it was other people who had ambition enough to help somebody.

LK: So it was many people who had ideas of the things they wanted to get involved with. And the rest of the class would contribute.

TS: Yes. And they still do, just like those three ladies. They made big contributions. And we love engineering and we love all the other things. That was one thing about the class; I don't think we downgraded any other department like somebody wanted. Ag. Education for example, or textiles or whatever. There were people in every field that needed help. If it hadn't been for somebody the help Elliott Lawless, he never would have graduated in textiles. And you can just pick them out like that.

LK: Is the most important thing you have done as a class the Award for Excellence?

TS: That's exactly what it says, Award for Excellence". The best is good enough. That's the way I feel about it.

LK: You gave me the three widows' names when I came in. Are there any other names besides you and Jim that I should be sure and talk to? Somebody gave me the name of Champ Bailey's brother, Joe. Would he be a good one to talk to?

TS: Yes. (Followed by general discussion of people still alive)for

LK: Someone told me I should go over to the Registrar's office and check the discipline records for you guys. What do you think I would find?

TS: Oh, God, well you'd find where I was kicked out of school because I hadn't paid my tuition.

LK: Well, that's not disciplinary.

TS: I got called on demerits and I had to go up there. And I blame old Jim Sweeny, I was a private and Jim Sweeny he come in there and he'd get up there, and heck, I didn't have time to clean up no damn room. He'd go up there and see dust on the door and I got demerits for not having a clean room.

LK: He did that to you, huh? I love it. He seems like the kind of guy who might do that.

TS: Oh, yes. Sweeny is one of the guys, brilliant, but every once in a while he likes to let you know by God. But he loved that military, you know, he loved that boot smell. But Jim, he was one of the best friends I ever had in my life, but he was crazy. You know what he did? He got on the boxing team. A little guy like that. Jim had more guts than anyone I have ever known. And also he loved that military. He got those boots I thought he was going to fall down with them. Those boots came up to here.

LK: And after school when the war started, most all of you went into the war?

TS: Far as I know. I was trying to think of somebody who didn't go. Harvey Snell was real short, but he got in. That's what the 30 barracks was, over there next to Calhoun that was our barracks. You would find guys like Snell and Senn and all others, we were privates, senior privates.

LK: Sounds like you might have had more fun than you think you did.

TS: When we got bad, they invited us in and made us little (unintelligible) our senior year, the last quarter, the last half. Like all of us, golly Moses we had to work, we didn't have time to military and all that crap.

LK: In my thesis I want to do a chapter on the most important people who came out of the class. Like Walter Cox was a former president, you, Jim is big in this. Who else do you think is significant to your class?

TS: All of them. Well Champ Jones got his doctorate; Bob Bannister is a big shot, Greg Hughes, J. W. Kelley, but the people who made money. All we ended up was academics but the people who made money was Harvey Snell, Herb Thomas and George Williams. Those were the guys, mean those were the guys, Jim Sweeny, they all were millionaires, the rest of us, we went on welfare. Herb did you ever think about staying in a bed and if you run the springs this way and that way. I mean he finished in Ag Education but he ended up in I would consider engineering, the design of springs.

LK: I know there are some people who went on to do some pretty great things and I want try to make mention of some of those.

TS: Also you got to look on the sad side, and I'll give you one example. A very good friend of mine, a guy who grew up the hard way, down in the middle of the state, Recede Dabert¹⁷⁷, and he was hard work, work, work, work, work, and he didn't have a pot to pee in or a window to throw it out of, and he loved women but he didn't know how to approach them, and so he went to NC State. He got up there and told this woman you're gonna marry me, and she said I ain't never going to marry a little squirt like you and he committed suicide. So, you have to watch these women. And I can just name names and David you can remember some of them who were just darn good people. Well, my good buddy, Dick Hann, my good buddy in Georgia, Dick always stayed in trouble and everything else, he has a heart as big as a mile.

LK: It would seem to me that it would be easy to stay in trouble then. It was sort of undisciplined and you all were undisciplined altogether, so getting in trouble was not a bad thing, it was just a way of life. Here's the big question now. What do you think is going to happen to the class when all of the original members are gone?

¹⁷⁷ May not be correctly spelled.

TS: I'm an egotist. I think David Senn, the families, those three widows, but then we got people who come over there, the Jones boys, the Cox boys, and I can go on and on and on of the family and then the widows.

LK: And you're thinking they will keep it going and they will have the reunions and the endowment funds.....

TS: Let's look at chip Egan and

LK: That's what I was getting to. Guys like Egan and Wheeler, Hap Wheeler.....

TS: Yes, they better, because we have a grant that is good for perpetuity.

LK: And who maintains that?

TS: Clemson. That's why it's going on. And we have people like Don McKale.

(General conversation about a letter that was sent to Tee by a widow)

TS: There was no black and white with us. My black guy, Monk, he worked on the farm. Back when I was a boy, I was going to tell you. They would have a sale at the store. For 15 cents you could get a can of Prince Albert and they would throw in a pipe. So my two brothers and a cousin, we got the money together and bought a pipe, I mean a can, and then we got a pipe and we were smoking that thing and my dad had found it and and ahhhhh when you take a 44 inch belt it kind of stings. Monk came up and said "Lord, Mr. Senn, how did those boys get my pipe?" He said, "Mr. Tee you're going to be a doctor one of these days and you don't want to control black men, can't you come home and help me." I said, "Monk, you know I will do anything I can for you." That is not just me, we got along fine. Guess what, when I started working in horticulture and everything, and we decided we were going to take in women, what did we do? I went out and recruited, I got girls. I even went to a place called Carolina, I went to the Botany Department, and I said I want to get some girls that would like to come to Clemson and study horticulture.

LK: Study or teach?

TS: I got them to come to Clemson to get a Masters degree. And that's when we got hortotherapy, big shots, and now one of them is the head of one of the hospitals down in Charleston and the other one, this happened back years ago, when I was still there, and I was working with the growers and, sweet potatoes now, down in Florence and this

guy came up to me and said, "Mr. Tee, I got a boy and I sure would like for him to come to Clemson." I said we got two others..

LK: You mean blacks?

TS: Yes, we are taking them now. And I said, you grow Clemson spineless and you grow tomatoes, you're a Clemson xxxxxx. He said I want my boy to go to Clemson. I said why don't we go to the farmer's market in South Carolina and get those darned xxxxxx to set up a scholarship? So we did. And, Louis Lenn was the recipient. He is the chairman of the board of trustees. But Lewis came to Clemson on a scholarship xxxxxx through his father selling vegetables in the farmers market in Columbia. We got them..."hey, don't you want to send him to Clemson?" There's no black or white, male or female, or anything like that.

(General conversation on black/females at Clemson and other unrelated topics)

LK: Why do you think Clemson gave you a scholarship?

TS: Cause Mr. (unintelligible) told them to.

LK: So you had a benefactor?

TS: And also I had cousins and I had an uncle, and I had another Senn that finished Clemson that ended up down at the University of Florida and he was originally there and he mentioned I should come to Clemson. I think when someone recommends you.....

LK: So it wasn't like you were just a guy who happened to stroll in from the farm. You had some things that were done for you.

David Senn: Don't let him fool you Larry, he was pretty dang smart.

TS: I have to put this plug in, one of the greatest things that ever happened to Tee Senn, my daddy built a swimming hole in Newberry for the Boy Scouts. The professor at Newberry College organized a rural Boy Scout group, and I had the pleasure of my father letting them swim there. And I got into scouts, trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, brave, clean and reverent. Now if you can beat that.

LK: Now where is your farm today is it still there?

TS: They put the by-pass out there and the Senn farm is gone. Because of the Depression, we lost everything. My dad went to work in two jobs, in the WPA, and I

helped him, and when I was in the 10th and 11th grades I was taking soil samples. This one thing that helped me come to Clemson, I was doing WPA soil samples and we sent them to Clemson for analysis.

LK: After the Depression, what did your dad do?

TS: He was a guard for the convicts. He also worked on the old Receda farm for a good while after he lost everything. And my mother, she ended up, she started working in sewing and everything and she became the buyer for one of the big chain stores in Columbia and Newberry. She would go to New York. She lived to be in her 90s. All of my father's people died before they were 70. Back in the old days people helped people.

The thing that I liked is you had to earn things. For example, I'm bragging, don't ever ask me to say a few words, that my father built the pool, we had the Boy Scouts, but Boy Scouts looked better if you got a uniform for them. So Hal Collins who ran the book store and also worked out of Newberry College, he said Senn, you have to have a uniform so you can get a job working at the county fair in Newberry and you can take up tickets and you can make more money there which will help you get through high school. I said I can't do that and he said you have been working out there where you drive by and get a hamburger. I said yes I do that after night. He said you are pretty strong aren't you? I said I don't know about that. He said, well you can shake up a pecan tree can't you. I said yes. He said, how about you picking pecans. You come back on Sunday afternoon; I said I could do that after church and Sunday school. He said OK. And he took me down there and he bought me a neckerchief, a shirt and my pants and I got a Boy Scout suit and I worked over at the fairgrounds. And that's what I mean about people helping people.

James Sweeny Interview – December 15, 2011

Subject: The Clemson Class of 1939

Lawrence Korth: I am talking with Jim Sweeny, Clemson Class of 1939. Today is December 15, 2011 and we are going to have a conversation. Where were you living when you decided to go to Clemson?

James Sweeny: In Anderson.¹⁷⁸

LK: And you were a legacy, Right? Your dad was a Clemson?

JS: My brother was a Clemson, my two brothers were Clemson.

(Conversation about a picture I thought Jim's son had sent me. In fact it was Tee Senn's son.)

LK: And you lived in Anderson for how long? You grew up there?

JS: I grew up there. I had all my schooling there.

LK: That's right, you went to Boys High School, is that right?

JS: That's right.

LK: it's no longer there. And, what did your family do?

JS: My father was a consulting engineer. He was the city engineer for Anderson and a bunch of communities in the area. And he ran a consulting business. He was the Chief Engineer for the State of South Carolina on the Santee Cooper project. A hydro-electric project.

LK: OK. So you come from a family of engineers.

JS: Yes. I didn't have but one way to go.

LK: You were a freshman in what year?

¹⁷⁸ Anderson, SC.

JS: 1935.

LK: In the South as was the rest of the country, still trying to recover from the Depression?

JS: Oh, yes.

LK: How did the Depression affect you and your family?

JS: Well, we kids worked while we were going to high school. One thing the Depression did was to dry up engineering work, and so in the very depths of the depression my father got a job teaching at Clemson on the staff. And that carried us through the worst years.

LK: So there were openings and he could get a job doing that, but there was no construction and no building, sort of like today.

JS: That's exactly right.

LK: So generally, your family was pretty OK?

JS: We were OK. We never suffered.

LK: do you remember any of your family getting any benefits from the New Deal? It doesn't sound like you needed any.

JS: No.

LK: did you get a scholarship to go to Clemson?

JS: No. My family paid my way, I didn't work at Clemson. And likewise, I paid my kids' way.

LK: How prepared were you for college. Do you think you were better prepared than most of your classmates?

JS: I wouldn't draw that conclusion. I thought I was prepared, but in comparison with my classmates I was on a par.

LK: You came from a professional level. What were most of your classmates?

JS: I would say from farm families. Most of them.

LK: So most of them were farmers, and in your view Clemson then had a good engineering program?

JS: They did have a good engineering program buy it also had a great agricultural program, which is why we have so many farmers there, and turned out so many good Vocational Agricultural graduates.

LK: The south has long been known as, or likes to promote itself as being sort of a militant society. That the men are virile and tough and defend their families. Do you feel this is a true depiction of southern youth or southern men?

JS: I would never have thought that, no.

LK: But yet, Clemson had a strong military heritage itself with it's.....

JS: Well it was all military at the time I was there. And that had nothing to do with why I went there.

LK: How did you like all that?

JS: I didn't like it or dislike it. I accepted it as, it's there and I'll live with it. I can't say I particularly liked it.

LK: Had to be in a uniform every day, all day.....

JS: In the dorms. Meeting calls to line up and do things.

LK: People telling you what to do. Now southern men don't like that.

JS: No. I think northern men don't either.

LK: How did your classmates feel about all the military orientation?

JS: Well it varied, some of them were very gung ho about it, a lot of them didn't like it to the extent that we had a considerable group seniors my last year who were not commissioned at graduation.

LK: And that was because?

JS: They just didn't like the military.

LK: The fact that the Clemson military program was so strong, when World War II came around did it give the Clemson graduates a leg up in terms of position they were going to have in the military?

JS: I don't think so. What it did was to provide the Army with an available group of officer material right away without the necessity of further training.

LK: Living in the barracks was just like living a dorm, except it was all bays?

JS: Right

LK: Where was the nearest place you could find ladies?

JS: Furman.

LK: That's a fair hike. Did you have a car?

JS: No. There were very few cars at Clemson.

LK: So, how would you get to Furman?

JS: (Makes a motion with his thumb.)

LK: Got it. (General laughter) When you look over the horizon and you see people like me who are learning about your class and others behind me, how do you want the Class of '39 to be seen? How do you want people to see you?

JS: Tough question. I would say, as one who loved Clemson, and wanted the best for the school, and appreciated what Clemson had done for us . I don't know what else to say.

LK: So, you want people to understand that the Class of '39 feels very strongly about their ties to the university because of what the university gave them.

JS: Yes, definitely.

LK: And you were in India?

JS: India and Burma.

LK: Did you like it here?

JS: No. (Laughter.) I would want to go back only for the first time.

LK: And that was in the '40s you were there?

JS: Yes. During World War II. You know you felt with every breath there were germs coming your way.

LK: After graduation, you went to work and you ended up in the North...

JS: Well, upon graduation I got a job with General Electric and was first on their test scores which took you to various places within the GE system. And then I would up in Pittsfield, MA, where I was at the time the war began, which means that's where I entered the service from. And when the war ended I went back to Pittsfield.

LK: Refresh my memory on Pittsfield. Is it on the western border?

JS: Yes. (General conversation about Stockbridge and the Red Lion Inn in Mass.)

LK: After Pittsfield.

JS: Well, I worked in Pittsfield until about 1959 or so, and they moved me to Baltimore to the insulator plant in Baltimore and I was there for a couple of years and back to Pittsfield. So those places were basically my GE experience.

LK: And you stayed there through retirement?

JS: Yes.

LK: Was Pittsfield a major area for GE.

JS: Oh it was, when I was there, there were four GE operations in Pittsfield. The largest was the transformer division which was about 30,000 employees. And there was an ordinance plant and an insulator plant and a flat iron plant.

LK: Now, GE was probably very heavily involved in making engines and things for the war. But that was not enough to keep you out of the war.

JS: That's right.

LK: And then, after you retired, that's when you began getting back interested in Clemson again?

JS: We retired to Highlands.

LK: What year was that?

JS: That was in 1977, and Tee Senn asked me to take over responsibility for deciding on our 50th anniversary gift to the school.

LK: You had stayed in touch with Tee along the way?

JS: No, not really, but we knew each other at reunions and we would come in contact. So he set up a committee and made me chairman of the committee which is the Golden Anniversary Committee. And really got me started and my continued then closeness to Clemson.

LK: This was in 1989?

JS: The Golden Anniversary.

LK: And from there, that led to all of the other things that have taken place. And the Golden Anniversary Gift was?

JS: Well, it consisted first of an endowment for the Award for Excellence, which is probably our most significant gift. And there was also an endowment for sustaining the Botanical Gardens. And there were also scholarships.

LK: Now the Botanical Gardens had been there before?

JS: They were the horticultural grounds before. That was kind of funny. When we were thinking about a gift, we thought that one thing we could do was set it up so they became a botanical garden. When word seeps through to the horticultural department at Clemson that somebody was thinking along those lines, they got busy and they set it up so that it became a botanical garden. But we supported the move.

LK: As chairman of the Golden Anniversary Committee, was it your thought to have the award of excellence? Was that your idea?

JS: Yes.

LK: Well, that's pretty spectacular. And from there you stayed heavily involved. The people I have in contact with the most are you and Dr. Senn. Who else would be good.... Are there any other people left who would be good for me to get to interview and talk to?

JS: About the only one I can think that would really have anything to say would be Botts. He's in Atlanta.

LK: Any of the award winners that are particularly close to the class?

JS: Yes, Chalmers Butler. Dr. Butler.

LK: Is Chip Egan still involved now that he has left the school?

JS: Oh, yes, oh Chip definitely. Chip has taken a leading part in preserving the memory of the Class of '39.

LK: what about Dr. Wheeler?

JS: Less so but he's among the ones.

LK: He got me involved last year calling all the class members.

JS: I remember.

LK: That was the first time I ever heard his name, so I wasn't too sure.

JS: I was also told that Champ's son, Joe might be good to talk to.

(General conversation about people who might be good to talk to.)

LK: And so then you became involved, and so from 1989 on it has been heavily involved for you. And I wanted to congratulate you on your recent doctorate. Was that because of all of your activities with the class?

JS: I think so. It has to be your activities or you're giving a lot of money, and I didn't have a lot of money.

LK: Well I think the activities are probably more valuable.

JS: You can buy those doctorates, unfortunately.

(General discussion about the amount of money the football coaches at Clemson are making relative to the salaries of professors)

JS: This thing tends to be self sustaining, to, you get a guy like the offensive coordinator that will result in Clemson getting the pick of not only better football players but

students. As a matter of fact, the athletic program contributes to the academic program.

LK: And better students want to go where there are better programs and better facilities.

LK: One of the chapters I was going to write was about some of the most prominent members of the class. Dr. Cox would certainly be up there. Who else in your opinion.

JS: Tee. No doubt about Tee. Tee is very charismatic, and it's that charisma I think that is important for the class being so much a unit.

LK: I think you are absolutely right. What I have come to think is that there are a core of you. You being one, Tee being one that kind of makes this thing move forward. And I think, as with all things, when you go back and look at great people, they cause things to happen.

JS: Frank O'Neal is another one. Frank is dead now but he was important in the coming together of the class and the work that the class as a class did for Clemson.

LK: Have you done some studies about heroes from the class?

JS: Oh, yes.

LK: I was thinking some of them may be worth a mention as well. The great majority of the class went to war, right?

JS: Oh, yes. I'll show you my chronicles of the Class of '39 when we get done here. I includes, as you saw in that thing, my biographies of all of my class mates and their wives. And alongside the biography of a classmate is his registration in the national World War II national registry, in which are described their World War II activities. As far as I have been able to get that information, all of that is recorded and available in the chronicles.

LK: Other than your upstairs, are the chronicles anywhere else?

JS: They are on line. You can go to www.iworldwarllmemorial.com, if you know the names. That's a government web site. If you access that program they you just have to put in their mane and where they came from and that person's experience will pop up.

LK: Is that where you go to get most of it?

JS: No, no, no. I give it to them. They only have what people give them. Well, that's not entirely true, but generally.

LK: why did the class take on so many projects?

JS: I don't think the class intended to say why don't we take on a lot of projects. What we did was what we felt was useful and good at the time. Actually there weren't so many projects. If you count the Heritage Gardens as one project, one long term multipart project that was a majority of what we've done. Aside from the 1989 Golden Anniversary Gift.

LK: Now do you count the Bell and all as part of the Heritage project?

JS: Yes, the bell is interesting. There are two bells. The bell that is in the Heritage Gardens now was the bell that was on top of the first barracks when we were there. The bell that called us all to(Phone rings).

LK: The most important project to you was the Golden Anniversary project?

JS: I would say the Heritage Gardens. I think it is because it is meaningful to the school. The Botanical Gardens are just a botanical garden, and there are lots of them around. But I don't know of any equivalent anywhere to the Heritage Gardens, which records the early days of the school and how it developed over the years to where it is now. I think it is unique.

JS: As a rule the class is all by itself. On occasion we have had joint functions.

LK: The Class of '39 stands above all of the classes. I see the class of '41, I see a lot of their material.

JS: There are several, the Class of '49 a great class I think. '42 was a very active class. '37 was an active class. Then I can't pick out anybody beyond that.

LK: So it seems like they are all in the war period or shortly after that. Is there something about that?

JS: Something that made it cohesive, I don't know.

LK: I sometimes wonder if the society today, that is more mobile, people don't stay in their jobs for great periods of time,

JS: That must have some effect.

(General conversation about society as it exists today and how it affects jobs and business.)

LK: What do you think will happen to the class when all of the original members are gone?

JS: If what is in play takes place then there will continue to be reunions. They will be reunions of the honorary members and children of classmates. That's the way Chip Egan sees it and he is trying to set it up so that that happens.

LK: I think that too, I think you will perpetuate. I think somewhere in there that is one of the main goals you all have is that there never will be an end to the class of '39's celebration of itself.

JS: That's right, it sounds a little egocentric.

LK: No, it doesn't. Interestingly enough, when I went to the first reunion a couple of years ago, I was told it was going to be hot and I was told it was going to be under this tent, so I went out there and looked at the program and I said, my goodness, are they going to read all of that. And by the time they started reading it all, I sat up in my chair and get much more involved and interested. And by the time it was over, it ended too fast. And this last time I went I was very anxious to go. You just get caught up in it, and that wasn't the dinners or other things. The one thing that I must have told 50 people, the last reunion when you had the children and children's children of people who had never met their fathers, that just gave me the willies.

JS: Well, right now, Hap Wheeler is undertaking to get back to the reunion this coming June, all of the living members that he possibly can. And he is actively at work on that and I think he is going to have a pretty good showing based on my conversations with the various living members.

LK: do you regularly call the living members just to chat or do you have a reason for calling?

JS: Yes. To see how they are doing.

LK: How many are left now?

JS: About 34 I think it is.

LK: I think it was around 40 last year. Several were in nursing homes, etc.

JS: Yes, that 34 includes people in all stages from advanced dementia to guys who play golf every day.

(Conversation about personal contacts each of us has made with living members and various unrelated topics)

We then began to review material Sweeny had sent me at an earlier time, which were a part of his chronicles.

LK: This is a listing of the class presidents. Harry Cosgrove was the first; it's amazing that you have photos of them. I know you want me to destroy this, but it would be wonderful material to have in the back of the book.

JS: And what I intend to do when I turn over these files to the Clemson Library is to include a disc with it. Unfortunately, everything I have is on Word Perfect, which makes it a little difficult. You use Word, I think.

LK: I sure do, yes. Like this section on the selection proceedings, that is really great stuff. The award for excellence, is that the one you would like to have as your signature event? I know the Heritage Gardens is more important as you see it, but the signature event is the Award for Excellence?

JS: Yes, I would say so. The Award for Excellence is considered by the faculty to be their highest award and I think it directly responsible for their being so involved with the class. So it has paid off in a number of ways.

LK: Somebody actually recognizes the value of what they bring.

JS: Well, the president does.

LK: I get the feeling that he is a good president.

JS: I do too. I think he is probably one of the best we have had, among several really top notch presidents. Barker, I think, has had a vision for the school that is better than anybody preceding him. But, not only that, he is (unintelligible) out.

LK: Do you still get emails from Clemson; are you on the email list?

JS: No.

LK: I am. So I get every email that he sends out, and I get every email that goes out about computers and everything else, the thing that I am very impress with is that he is very candid, very up front. When that thing happened at Penn State, he immediately sent out an email about the responsibility of people to do the right thing and doesn't back away from these issues.

(More conversation about emails, and candid communications.)

JS: I really think he will show up as, if not the top president we had, with of the top.

LK: Cox was an interim president.

JS: Yes, he was an interim president. He was actually a president, the Board of Trustees declared him president rather than just an interim president, but he was only in the office for about nine months. And, he was only there because of the difficulties that were raised by the previous presidents.

LK: Was that a period of high growth before that, a lot of buildings, a lot of indebtedness and things? Dr. Reel also has a class on the history of Clemson and I sat in on several. I am trying to remember the time frame.

JS: I am too.

LK: You have an honorary doctorate from Clemson, who else from the class has it?

JS: Walter Cox. Offhand I can't think of anybody else.

LK: So Walter Cox and Tee have the Clemson medallion?

JS: Yes.

LK: Do you have to have a doctorate to get that?

JS: No, of contributions.

LK: It's a money thing.

JS: No, it what you have done for the school.

LK: Now, Tee is a doctor because of his education.

JS: Yes.

LK: And he got that somewhere else.

JS: He got that at Maryland, I think.

LK: This is making more sense to me now. You got your volunteer of the year award in 1998 which would have been the Golden Anniversary project.

JS: Yes. No, Bill Ziegler, whose picture is on that thing has also been closely associated, and Bill's still living and living in Columbia. The problem is communication with Bill. He doesn't hear very well and he doesn't speak very well, any more. But he is someone to talk to if you could communicate with him.

LK: I was only grinning because hardness of hearing is not a problem for him only. For some of them I was screaming into the phone and my wife says, why are you yelling? Who else was at the last reunion?

JS: Boys. He's in good shape.

LK: Would he be good to talk to? Is he heavily involved or not so heavily involved?

JS: He has been a regular attendant of things but he hasn't been heavily involved. I don't think there is much that he can tell you that will add to what you already know and have.

LK: There is wonderful stuff here. The honorary members. We will need to have some of that in there. Ashby Burgess Bodine, that's a great name. If you were doing what I am doing as a project, what you want to be sure was included?

JS: If I were doing, the projects might be the focus.

LK: My hypothesis is that you and Tee and other leaders of the class are the ones who have elevated this class, and then under its own inertia, people like Chip and Wheeler and the others are caught up in the swell of this thing and carrying it forward.

JS: That's a good way to put it, it I think. I think Chip in particular has embraced the class and feels a real part of it.

Dr. Joel Brawley Interview – June 5, 2012

Subject: The Clemson Class of 1939

Lawrence Korth: This is Larry Korth and it is June 5, 2012 and I am interviewing Dr. Joel Brawley for the Clemson Class of '39 thesis I am preparing. Dr. Brawley is an Award of Excellence winner and, as such, is an honorary member of the Class. He is the second award winner. He is also known as the Class musician and serenades everyone at the annual Class reunions. Dr. Brawley's specialty is mathematics, and he has been teaching at Clemson since 1965.

Dr. Brawley, thank you for doing this, and I have a series of questions I would like to ask you, but please don't limit any comments you have to those questions. We want to get as much information about the class as we can.

LK: Tell me, how did you become involved with the class of '39?

Dr. Joel Brawley: As you said, I was the second class of '39 award winner. I received the award in December of 1990 and they told me then that I would be inducted into the class at the reunion in June. They also told me that I would have to perform during reunion weekend. Well, I think they were kidding, but I thought they were truthful. So I sang *Tiger Town* because I knew Walter Cox well and I knew Tee Senn as a professor. At that June reunion my wife and I felt very welcomed and we started attending all the 39er reunions. Later, we were asked to serve on the reunion committee. I want to show you this coffee cup. It is a gift, a favor, we received at the 61st reunion of the class. They give out favors every year. I have four of these cups that I use regularly. On the back is the committee. As I look at the names Frank O'Neal is gone, Marcie Kelly is gone (her husband J.W. had died a little before the 61st reunion and he was on the committee). Ellis Ivey is gone, Champ Jones is gone and Brooksie is in the Downs now, my wife Fran is gone, and so is Bob Bannister. So there is big turnover in that class. I knew all these people well. Both Fran and I were on the reunion committee for many years, and I still serve on it now that Chip has taken over. So I got involved with them in 1990 and it has been one of the greatest experiences of my life.

LK: Are you still actively teaching?

JB: Yes. Since my formal retirement in 2006, I have averaged teaching one class per semester. I thought I was not going to teach this fall, but they asked if I would teach our senior level course in probability class. I consider that course a plum and it may be my

favorite class to teach. I'd rather teach it than most of our courses because probability has pretty theory, it has a lot of practical applications and it uses a lot of the mathematics from the undergraduate curriculum. And, I just like it. They offered it to me, told me they need me, asked me what time I wanted to teach it and what book I wanted to use. So I said, "OK". That will likely be the last course I teach.

LK: Are you involved with any other classes, either to the extent of the '39ers or in general.

JB: No. However, I was named an honorary member of the Clemson Alumni Association in 2002. I was already an honorary member of the Class of '39 when I was selected for that honor. I don't think they realized then that I was already an honorary member. The lady who was president of the alumni association at that time was Kathy Hunter who had been a student in my probability class in the 1980's. Kathy has worked very hard for the university through the alumni association and IPTAY and is still very much involved. She has even received the "Distinguished Service Award" which is the highest award Clemson gives to its graduates. Only real Clemson graduates can receive this award. I believe that Tee Senn and Jim Sweeny are the only '39ers who have received it.

LK: What is your award from the Alumni Association, how do you earn that?

JB: It is just an honorary degree like that offered by the Class of '39. They usually select non-Clemson graduates who have made a contribution to the Alumni Association. They really didn't need to pick me because I was already an honorary member, but they did and I appreciated it. It was in 2002 when I had had my knee replacement. They were going to surprise me with the award at the August faculty meeting, but I was in the hospital then. So in October, they had a special surprise dinner meeting at the Clemson House and invited Fran and me. So I am not involved with any other classes but I do help the alumni association by giving programs to alumni groups from time to time.

LK: It was interesting that Dr. McKale is also a member of the Class of '41.

JB: He has got the Class of '41 Alumni Distinguished Professorship. My title was simply Alumni Distinguished Professor.

LK: Was yours from the Class of '41?

JB: No. My professorship was one of maybe 15 sponsored by the whole alumni association and not any particular group of alumni. Most of alumni professorships are

like mine. Not many have a named sponsor. Apparently, the Class of '41 decided to sponsor such a professorship. However, they wouldn't have been able to pick Don for it because a committee selects the recipients. Don just happened to be selected for the one sponsored by the Class of '41 and he has become active in that class.

LK: He is, and it made a good juxtaposition to talk about '39 versus '41. Two war classes - that was a nice surprise. Do you consider the Class of '39 special when you compare it to other classes?

JB: Oh, yes, they are special, very special. President Barker has mentioned them in his newsletters and there have been newspaper articles about this class. I think they have done more for Clemson than any other class. That could probably be verified, but I am confident it is true. And you wonder why are they so special? I think it is mainly because of their leaders. You have Tee Senn, and you know him, now at 95 years old he is out there still doing things for Clemson. He's got energy and he's got vision, much more than I could ever imagine having. And Jim Sweeny, the two that are living and still actively work for the class. They are the two, in my opinion, that are the most fundamental to the success of the class. In the 22 years I have been affiliated with the class, 1990 to now, I have seen a bunch of them go, but I have known a lot of them that who were in the class and did good things, but Jim Sweeny has a way of getting everybody involved. And, Tee Senn, too. It's funny how they can get people going. When Jim Sweeny was working on the Heritage Garden Plaza that depicts cadet life as it was when the '39ers were in school, he got me working on a math problem related to the plaza. He wanted to know the angles that the stonecutter needed to cut certain end stones. It was a trigonometry problem and I had fun working it out. I don't know if the stonecutter really used my calculations, but Jim did get me involved to the extent that I feel I made a tiny contribution to the plaza. Jim has a knack of getting people involved.

LK: Of all of the good things that have come out of this thesis, getting to meet people, and especially Jim; I hope he can be here he wasn't feeling so good. And he is just a really special guy.

JB: When you have leaders like Jim Sweeny and Tee Senn things get done. And there were others. When I was first on the reunion committee, Elliot Lawless and his wife Greta were the committee members and Fran and I enjoyed knowing them. After Elliot had a stroke, he could no longer attend the reunions. I miss seeing the many '39ers who were once active - most of them have passed away. We were good friends and I knew them real well. Twenty-two years is a long time and I have known bunches of people

who loved to return to Clemson and looked forward to the reunions every year until they could not longer come here. How many classes have reunions every year? Not many.

And did you see my ring? It's a '39er Clemson ring. Clemson graduates are all very proud of their rings and while I am not a Clemson graduate I am very proud of mine.

There is a personal story as to how I got my ring. I worked for the National Security Agency during summers for 36 years - that agency is in Fort Meade, MD and is involved with codes, cryptography and communications. Before I first went to the NSA was 1975, and my wife and I had been talking about selling our rings, our two from high school and my one from NC State where I went to school. We weren't wearing them and my college ring was big and even chafed my finger, so they were just sitting. Well anyway, when I was there in Ft. Meade for the first time, Fran sold the rings took the kids went to Six Flags over Georgia. That was 37 years ago, in 1975. So, she took the money and they stayed in a hotel where the boxer, Leon Spinks, was also staying. He was the heavy weight champion at the time. My children thought he was a snob, but they got to see him and were impressed. So my children gave me my Clemson ring in 2010, the Christmas after Fran died. Two of my children are graduates of Clemson, so I asked them, "What are you going to do with the ring after the old man croaks?" My youngest son said, "Well I guess, we'll sell it and go to Six Flags." This is an old style ring - it says Clemson A & M College. It's the official ring for 1939 and I wear it proudly.

LK: Jerry Reel told me that Jim Sweeny's father designed the Clemson class ring. I don't know if that is the design or not.

JB: I don't know, but it could be. I love my Clemson ring and I'm very proud of it.

LK: All I have is a couple of Class of '39 wine glasses.

JB: So, the first reunion you went to you didn't meet my wife did you?

LK: I don't believe I did.

JB: I believe she was included in the memorial service at your first reunion. That was two years ago. That was the first memorial you went to wasn't it? And she'd just died a couple of weeks before that. I will show you her picture.

LK: So, it's the leadership of the class that is important, and I tend to agree with you on that. And I also put Dr. Cox in there.

JB: Oh, yes, Walter Cox should have been in there. He was very big in helping get the '39er projects started and during his life always played a big part in everything the class did. I don't know why I didn't mention him earlier, maybe I was thinking of the living ones, but Walter was definitely one of the big three. He was an amazing man and was very kind to me and to everyone. There were many others who made very significant contributions, but in my mind Walter Cox, Jim Sweeny and Tee Senn were the big three.

LK: I am pleased to hear you say that, because that is what I came to also. What separates the Class from other classes?

JB: It is their leadership and their love for Clemson. Being a Clemson cadet wasn't an easy task in those days. The freshman rats caught heck from their older classmates. But they bonded, they loved each other, they took care of each other, and they all went to the war together.

LK: What you are telling me is familiar ground. I hear that a lot. Love for Clemson and love for each other. And the bonding, I am running some theories by you to see what you think. They started out being teenagers in the depression, a very unsettling situation, came to school and immediately became involved in military discipline, but that gave them three squares, a bed, an organized life, and began a bonding because of the things they had to do. And the war further cemented those three things; the depression, the school and the war really bonded that class together. And that created something, with leadership, has been able to continue.

JB: And many of them have been successful, too. When you are successful, you look back on the reasons for your success and the class felt the whole Clemson experience had a lot to do with their success. Maybe all of that goes together.

LK: I think one follows the other. I think you are right. As an honorary member, do you feel any responsibilities to the class? Do you feel responsible to do things?

JB: Yes and I think I should. I have served on the reunion committee for maybe 15 years and I take part in every reunion. I have been friends with so many in the class. I have seen a lot of them go. It's meant a lot to me - they have helped my life.

LK: How was that?

JB: The honor itself was important in my career and being a member of the class has made me feel an even more integral part of Clemson.

LK: Do the professors feel that is a real honor, among themselves?

JB: Oh, yes. The award winner is picked by the faculty - by the Faculty Senate - and not the administration. To be chosen by your peers is a wonderful honor. A few years ago, I think that maybe Jim Sweeny felt that too many faculty senators were getting the award as they complete service on the senate. They were very deserving, of course, but Jim did not want the award to be biased in any way. I was once on the Faculty Senate but that was over 20 years before I got the award. Anyway, Jim recommended that we change the rules for the award so that the award winner had to be a few years, two or three, out of the Faculty Senate before being eligible for the award. I served on that committee as did folks from the faculty senate and we changed things according to Jim's recommendation.

LK: I have always thought that his mind was a real important part. Tee's charisma, his forcefulness, and his history in the school. But Jim's mind really was important.

JB: He sees the big picture. I also know that he would like to see an administrator get the award since they are very important to Clemson. But that is going to be difficult to accomplish since the Faculty Senate votes for it. I think they generally view it as a "professor" award and are not looking to give it to an administrator. Still, I think Jim would like to see that.

LK: Do you think the Class of '39 is more concerned with memory and history than other classes? Maybe not all classes, but most classes. The reason I ask that is they have the Heritage Gardens and that is about memory.

JB: Oh, yes, preserving Clemson history, yes.

LK: And the bell tower, and ringing the bell at the memorial service, all of those things are very significant to me.

JB: I'm sure some of the other classes are concerned with history, but they can't be any more concerned than the Class of '39 and maybe the Class of '39 is more concerned.

LK: Yes, I do too. When I was talking to Dr. McKale, he said in many respects, because he is a history guy and he has two classes he deals with, he said the 41-ers do not have a memorial service and they do not have reunions anywhere near the scale of the '39ers. So it makes me think they do have this great concern. They have been doing this memorial service forever.

JB: I think things have kind of evolved. They would add a few things as they thought about it and it then became part of the program.

LK: What do you think the class wants as a legacy? How do they want to be remembered?

JB: As the Great Class of '39. I think they want to be remembered as a class that did many great things for Clemson, the most things.

LK: I think their love of Clemson is big.

JB: Oh, yes. I know Jim Sweeny and Tee Senn well and they did it because they loved Clemson and they knew they could make a difference. They truly appreciate what Clemson did for them. They worked hard on the gardens, the scholarships and they worked hard on the faculty award to make it the most important faculty award on campus. When you hear Tee talk about it, he will say something like "as we thought about it, what we remembered was our great professors and the people who taught us when we were students. And we wanted an award for the professors by the professors". So the class honors the students with scholarships, the professors with the award, and the university and future with the gardens.

LK: I don't know of any other award that honors faculty. I think that one of the things they want in the '39ers, is, when they are all gone, they want the Class of '39 to keep going. So having honorary members like you actually helps to add to the class. And nobody else really does things like that.

JB: As Tee Senn often says, "We are the only class whose average age goes down each year."

LK: That is a terrific thought process. Not a lot of people would even begin to think that. So the Award of Excellence will keep going on after they are gone. And the gardens are going to continue to get built. They started it, but others are going to have to finish it.

Why do you think the class is held in such high regard by the university?

JB: It is what they have done for the university and their strength in doing it. They don't need to be rewarded. They just want to do things, and they don't want anybody in their way when they are doing it. When you do that much for a university, people keep you in pretty high regard. And also men like Jim Sweeny, Tee Senn and Walter Cox

command respect. They are highly respected leaders. I can go down a list with many more '39ers I knew, and I respected them all.

LK: The people I have met I respect. When I meet people like you. This is a great opportunity. Most students would never get the opportunity to meet the professors I have gotten to meet.

JB: A lot of the '39ers were just farm boys and I have tremendous respect for farmers. AS farmers they had to know so much, how to fix things, how to take care of animals, how to get a good harvest, how to run a business, and how to work your tail off. Farming is a tough job. A lot of these guys came from farming backgrounds.

LK: That was an interesting thing that I discovered, that of the '39ers, more of them were graduated as engineers than agriculture. I think some of it was because so many farmers had to drop out and go home and help. I'm guessing.

JB: And maybe some of the farmers wanted to get away from the farm. Farmers are smart people, but they work hard. My dad grew up on a farm, so I am just one generation from the farm. I grew up in the city, actually a town, but in high school and early in college, I worked for my uncle at Brawley Seed Company. He ran a feed and seed company in Mooresville, NC, and he told me he was going to help me get through college. I was having a hard time finding the funds, and the way he helped me was that he gave me a job so I could earn my way through college. And I appreciated that. Many of the '39er had to earn their way through college. In working for my uncle, I had to deal with farmers all the time, either in the front retail part of the store or the back where seed was loaded and unloaded, cleaned, stored and shipped. They knew so much. I worked for my uncle in summers before my freshman year, after my freshman year, and after my sophomore year, and some after my junior year. I got married after my junior year.

LK: '39er culture. Do you think the '39ers have a culture? When you ask Tee, he says it's a culture of love and family. And everybody has their arms around each other. And I think that's probably reasonably close. I see it as a culture of 'never ending'. They don't want their class to ever end. They want to have been as a cut above, I mean they're not shy about talking about how great they are.

JB: You cannot do what they have done without some confidence and some ego. But that doesn't mean they are trying to shine the light on themselves either.

LK: What do you think is going to happen when they are all gone?

JB: The award will still go on. The funds are there so the award will go on. How things develop is going to depend on leaders. Chip Egan is a great leader. I couldn't do what he does. He is truly a fine administrator and he knows how to deal with people easily. And I've seen him make routine issues out of things that could have gotten a little sticky.

LK: But you do think the honorary members will have to step up.

JB: I think if we get leaders and honorary members who want to step up. But it is going to have to change when all the original '39ers are gone. The '39ers are so special to all of us, but that board of plaques we all see at the memorial service is filling up. I don't know how it's going to change, but it is going to change. Why does Chip Egan do it? Probably because he has a commitment to the class. But how long is that going to last in the future, say 20 or 30 years from now? I don't know what is going to happen, but just to have the award and the ceremony is special. And they will still have these little special things that they are setting up. You know, like the passing of the wine corkscrew. We might not do quite as much at reunions, but it will continue to go somewhat like it is now.

JB: What do you think about children and grandchildren of '39ers? Do you think they will be involved?

JB: You know, a few days I was talking to some a friend of mine in the choir, Fran Moseley. Fran's father was in the class of '39 and she told me that she, her husband, her mother Irene Cook and her two brothers were coming to the '39er reunion on Friday, so some of the children are involved. One of Fran's brothers is J.C. Cook, the new mayor of Clemson, who recently replaced Larry Abernathy who died a while back. Maybe they are going to start being more involved.

LK: Do you know how many '39ers will be there? And I know Hap Wheeler was trying to get as many as he could. And last year I called them all and tried to get them here and couldn't get any.

JB: I'm guessing Ralph Boys, Tee Senn and hopefully Jim Sweeny. And a few widows. That class loves to have a good time and they really enjoy each other and they inspire and make us honorary members feel welcome. And Tee's son David Senn is important to the class. If it weren't for David and Tee's wife Betty many things might not get done. Jim Sweeny's sons, Jim and Bob, are also important and help implement some of Jim's

ideas. Jim has a daughter too, but she doesn't often come to the reunion. She did organize a memorial service in Highlands a few years ago for Jim's wife, Jenny. Fran and I were invited, but Fran wasn't feeling very well, so I drove Tee and Betty and David to the service.

Walter's son, Frank, also does a lot of work for the class. The key leaders have been able to have their children or spouses help them get the things they want to do done. Cathy Sturkie is an honorary member who is extremely important to the class. She is retiring as faculty senate secretary, but I believe she will continue her large role in '39er activities.

LK: And do you think the children will continue to participate?

JB: I think so. David is an honorary member, Frank Cox is an honorary member and so are Jim and Bob Sweeny. Frank's view is that once all the original members are gone (primarily Tee and Jim), the class will get some kind of recognition from the university. I forget what Frank called it, but it will become an official group, not just a social club, but something official. The class will have a charter and will continue in some form. There could be fairly small reunions, as I believe Jerry Reel thinks, or the reunions could be extensive. But in order for them to continue anything close to what we have now, somebody will have to want it to happen and will have to work toward it. It is anyone's guess as to how the reunion in 2039 will be. If I sing at that one, I'll be a hundred and one years old.

LK: Tell me all about how your singing came to be. And the meaning behind it all. It's got ritual value now so I'd like to understand more about it.

JB: Soon after got to Clemson, I took guitar lessons from a professor in architecture named Ireland Regnier. He is 86 now and a young 86. He is a painter. I went to him and told him I wanted to learn how to pick a guitar. He said that if I learned to play classical guitar, I could pick anything I wanted. So he gave me five classical guitar lessons, and I worked very hard at it. I got to be fairly decent at playing classic guitar, but I don't keep in practice so I don't play out any more. But I also like country music, I like to pick and strum, and I like to sing. So when a retirement party would come up in math, I would write a song about the retiree to some familiar tune and I would sing it at the retirement party. I first started this in graduate school, when the math graduate students at NC State gave a little program for the professors. Anyway, I would write a song about the different people retiring. You heard the ones I did about John LaGrone

and Charlie Kirkwood at the retirement party last year. Those two songs were first done back in the mid-to-late 1970's. I came here in 1965 and probably the first retirement song I did was about Jonas Brown in the early seventies. And I have probably written 15 or more retirement songs and Brad Russell accompanied me in most of them.

And then in 1969 we had the "Faculty Follies" and my wife and I were in charge of a skit. It was a takeoff on the old Hee-Haw TV show. Coach Howard, the football coach, was in our skit and he played Junior Samples. You probably remember Hee-Haw. Fran played Loretta Lynn, I was Roy Clark, and the wife of the provost played Minnie Pearl. Some talented math graduate students and other faculty and staff members were also in our skit and they contributed a lot. We put on a 15 to 20 minute skit. That's how "*Tiger Town*" came about. I was not the only one involved in its writing, but I'm the one who preserved it; otherwise, it might have disappeared.

A few years later, when Fran was program chairman for the university woman's club, I filled in for a speaker who had to cancel. To introduce the program I gave on gambling and probability, I wrote and sang "The Roving Gambler". That was the first time I played for myself as I sang. At that time I was serving as a visiting lecturer for the Mathematical Association of America so after my singing to the woman's club, when I would be asked to speak to undergraduates at other universities and colleges, I would frequently talk about probability and gambling and sing "The Roving Gambler" to introduce my talk.

Then in 1983, a group of Clemson faculty, students and staff gave a program at 10 locations in the state called "We're Proud to Say Clemson". Claire Caskey and I were the two faculty representatives on that tour and I sang both "The Roving Gambler" and "Tiger Town" all around the state.

My most recent song is "*We Remember*". I first did that song two years ago at the dedication of the Scroll of Honor. Do you know what a scroll of honor is? You know the place across from the football stadium with the trees and the mound? There are many stones around that mound and on 481 of them are the names of the Clemson alumni who have lost their lives in the service of our country. I think 26 of the names are from the Class of '39. The Class of '39 bell tower also has the names of those '39ers who were killed in service.

One of the men working to making the scroll a reality was General Hap Carr (Ret.) who was in the Class of 60. Hap asked me if I would do a special song for that dedication ceremony. He knew that I did these kinds of things. So that is when I wrote and sang

We Remember. I felt a lot of pressure in writing this song. I first sang it on April 22, 2010. That was the last big Clemson affair that Fran and I attended together. She died on May 23, 2010.

Since then, I have had several occasions to sing it like at the class of '39 reunion in 2010, at Memorial Day in 2011 and for a group of "Wounded Warriors" in the West Zone at the request of Charlie Bussey. Brad and I will also sing it Thursday night to about 200 alumni at the golden anniversary of the class of 1962 and we will sing it on Friday to the Class of '39. So you've have heard it before, and will hear it again, along with "Passing Through".

LK: It is one of the rituals that is important.

JB: It's becoming a ritual. In the case of *Passing Through* I have many of versions. I have one version that I sometimes do in our church on All Saints Day and I have a similar one that I have done at funerals. The words of all these versions are different, but the chorus is exactly the chorus of the song that I first learned from a 1961 Pete Seeger folk song book. After all, we are all just passing through.

The first all Clemson version of "Passing Through" was done just after Jim Barker was named president in 1999. Debbie DuBose who was head of the alumni association at that time, and Kathy Sams, our university PR person, contacted me about writing a song for a big fund raising kick-off banquet Clemson was having.

So I guess it I've given you the gist of how I started doing my singing.

LK: So there is a version of Passing Through for the Class of '39?

JB: Yes. Over the years, I have done many different versions of the song at our '39er class reunions, but the last few times; I did the same version I do. It one does not have the verse about Frank Howard in it. (*sings a verse of the song*) I left it out of the 39er version but I have sung it for them with the verse in it.

People have encouraged me to record some of these songs and I need to get that done. I know I need to do that soon or I might not ever do it. I've got so many versions of "Passing Through"; I don't know which ones to record.

The song *Tiger Town* has a special verse dedicated to Walter Cox. It is to the tune of *Rocky Top*, which is the University of Tennessee fight song, but we first did that song a

Clemson in 1969 and the University of Tennessee adopted in 1972. I looked it up on the Internet.

When we wrote the song in 1969, Walter was known as Dean Cox and although he later served as president of the university, many students, faculty and staff called him Dean Cox until the day he died. The verse about him goes:

Once Dean Cox was called to a high rise,

A panty raid was in full bloom.

He was able to save the coeds.

But not his Fruit of the Loom

And Walter Cox loved that verse. I had the pleasure to sing it to him many times and he always had that great Walter Cox smile and laugh.

Another verse is:

When I die you can take me to Tiger Town

On cemetery hill, I'll rest.

Content to be forever in Tiger Town

Cause I know it's the best.

When we wrote that verse, I had no idea I would ever be buried on Cemetery Hill, but, later some gravesites opened, I applied for one and was approved. My wife is buried up there. Her tombstone contains an inscription related to "Passing Through", a song that she sang with me many, many times. The last line of the chorus is

"Tell the people you saw me passing through".

On her tombstone our children wanted only the phrase

"Tell the people that you saw us passing through".

That phrase means a lot to me.

Clifton Egan Interview – April 23, 2012

Subject: The Clemson Class of 1939

Lawrence Korth: Can you tell me how you first became involved with the class.

Clifton Egan: I had absolutely no awareness of the class other than the monument in the Carillon Garden. I did not know about their special history, I didn't know about their particular dedication to Clemson until I won the Award of Excellence, which I did in the year 2000, and that was a bit of a surprise too. I was nominated by a fellow faculty member who put the nomination materials together, but never in a million years imagined that I would be an award winner. By the year 2000 there had been eleven awards made and when you are on the faculty as long as I was you know most of the faculty who are tenured across the campus and so I knew all eleven of the people who had received the award. And, in every case thought it was a perfect selection and the Faculty Senate had done a really good job of picking them, never dreaming it could happen to me. So I won the award and the award is given at the December commencement service, so it was December 2000 when I received it.

And then I began receiving communications from the class, from Dr. Senn in particular, describing first of all that there would be the Bell Tower service in January, and in June there was a class reunion to which I was invited, and at that time I would be inducted into the class. So, I started to think of the Award of Excellence as the award that keeps on giving.

LK: That's significant to the class and to what your thought process is.

CE: So typically an award is a wonderful honor and then you put it on a shelf, tell your children and grandchildren about it, dust it off annually or whatever and it becomes part of your history. This award is a living breathing involvement with a group that is singular in their devotion to this institution. I guess one of the most profound things about winning it is that you learn how to be a Clemson alum when you join this class. It is not anything they set out to teach you, you can't help yourself because that's how they are, they are so devoted, and I think it exists in a category apart from the typical alumni alma mater relationship. To be honest with you, I have an undergraduate degree from a small college in southern Indiana called Hanover College, and I have a graduate degree from Northwestern University. Hanover is my alma mater but, in many ways, my school is really Clemson University.

LK: In large part because of the award?

CE: That's right, that just kind of grows on you as you interact with the class and as you start to interact with the new award winners and bring them along and help them understand what's special about the class and basically become an alum.

LK: That's absolutely on point to what I'm thinking. Is that this particular award creates an obligation and a feeling that it just doesn't end there. They are trying to promulgate themselves beyond themselves and this is the key way that they do that.

CE: That's right.

LK: Are you involved with any other classes to the extent of the '39ers?

CE: I am not. No. I can't rule out the possibility that that might happen, but no I do not have anywhere near the involvement with any other classes.

LK: Do you consider the class of '39 special as compared to other classes?

CE: I do. I think there is something about that year in history that is very special. In September of 1939, World War II began with Germany's invasion of Poland and it was a watershed year. I happened to be in the arts and it was a watershed year in entertainment because that was the year that "Gone With the Wind" premiered in December, and it was also the year that The Wizard of Oz came out, so it was a huge year in entertainment. For years I've been a fan of big band music and one of my most favorite recordings is of Bennie Goodman's Carnegie Hall concert. It was the first time big band jazz earned the legitimacy that Carnegie Hall represents among serious musicians and there is a recording of that concert I just love. So 1939 just strikes me as a special year. There are probably people who feel that way about other years, it's just for me and my interests, and my connections, it's a special year.

LK: If they are special what is it that you think separates them?

CE: Class leadership separates them. They have had a continuity of leadership particularly in Jim Sweeny and Tee Senn that separates them. And because of their longevity, their nearness geographically to Clemson and their commitment to the Faculty Senate, in particular. I think Tee was instrumental in the early years of the senate. I think he served as a senator and was involved when the senate was founded and really believes in the role of the senate as the faculty voice. So those two men, I think, created a kind of irresistible momentum for their class. And a lot of it is just

hosting. Tee hosted the reunions at his home for dozens of years. So I think when you have a couple of class members who are that devoted to their classmates and getting together with them and keeping in touch with them that created a momentum for that class. I do not know honestly of another class that has had that kind of nurture that they provide. They would not want to hear that. They are very self effacing men so they would say “no, that’s not something we think.”

LK: Jim in a more a quite way and Tee in a more up front way are right up front about how great the class is.

CE: But I don’t know how much credit they would want personally for

LK: I think they will both tell you they do not need any credit.

CE: But I think they are a huge factor in why that class is unique and special.

LK: That’s exactly what I think. In my conversation with Dr. Reel we tied in that they came from a war class. Coming back from war may have created some kind of a bond, but to me those two people plus Dr. Cox and longevity, it’s what you said, that cohesiveness of 75 years.

Do you feel any responsibilities to the class?

CE: Oh, yes. I Don’t know how to be a member of something and not shoulder responsibility. I mean I think that’s just a If you’re going to join then you better be willing to share your talents, your work and your abilities. So yes, I do feel a responsibility to them, and also I think as an administrator, which is the last half of my career has been as a higher education administrator, responsibility isn’t frightening, a nuisance or a burden. It’s a certain way of life, it’s what you do. So it’s not hard for me to say at a meeting, I’ll do that. So I have said that a lot. But you know it’s mostly helping those guys out. As they have gotten older I have basically wanted to make sure that all of the functions they perform relative to planning class reunions were transitioned to the honorary members, so that, as they got older, they didn’t have to work as hard to make things happen.

LK: And again, I think that is exactly in the game plan and that goes back to thinkers like Jim and Tee, how do we make ourselves be seen as different and better. And there is nothing wrong with that. They are very bold about that.

CE: The Clemson motto lately is “Determined Spirit” and those guys are great embodiments of that motto. They are competitive, with each other too.

LK: And I look through the papers of Dr. Cox and see all the letters that Jim had to write to coordinate the various classes to get things done. I would not have the patience to do that. Retired or not, at some point I would have thrown my hands up and said, “Here, you do your own gardens.”

You are also someone concerned with history and memory. Do you think the class is more concerned with memory than other classes?

CE: No, I don’t think so; I think every class savors their community and their past. But I think the class of ’39, I can’t tell you this with authority because I haven’t studied it, but every class at their 50th anniversary adopts a class project. I think that’s a Clemson tradition. Typically it is a project to benefit the university. In fact I think it’s always a project to benefit the university. But I think the class of ’39 had a spirit of giving back to the university previous to their 50th anniversary. The 50th anniversary awakens the class, first of all to its mortality, and also their debt to their alma mater, and so I think sometimes those 50th anniversaries are transformational for classes. They make people who weren’t aware much more aware of the needs of the university, what they can do to help and that kind of thing.

LK: One of the things I tie into this is the fortuitousness of the class’s 50th anniversary and the university’s 100th anniversary gave them a real special piece to work with. And then they went that extra step of saying not only do we want to do something for the university, but we want it to be ongoing and giving. And that’s where I think the Award of Excellence becomes so singular in what it does.

CE: That’s right. If you look at most of the class projects, they are brick and mortar and this class has three projects. They have the scholarships, many of which predate their 50 reunion. And then they’ve got the garden and all of the related new construction there and then the Award for Excellence. In all three of those instances they have created an enduring program, not an award, but a program of help to the university.

LK: What do you think they want as a legacy?

CE: You know, I think that class knew how to have fun. They were such great comrades, having been soldiers together. They loved each other’s wives and families, they were all male and nearly all of them were married, that family of cadets grew to a big extended

family. And when you talk to the living class members about the wives and widows of the class, they are really reverential about them, and think about them as part of their legacy. So, in that sense and they brag that because of the award of excellence their class is growing. So I think they have been very shrewd about perpetuating their class.

LK: That's exactly how I see it.

Why do you think the class is held in such high regard by the university? Because of the awards?

CE: I think the awards are kind of secondary to the universities regard for the class. I think this university has learned, especially in the last two decades, how profoundly powerful the military heritage of Clemson was as a part of this country. And, even though there are aspects of all- male, all military, all white that you do not necessarily parade as good, it was in another era. The military service in World War II makes it a class of heroes. Every single member served and many died and that can be said of other classes of the war era. With the scroll of honor, the university is memorializing that contribution to our country more and more and more. I think that's a great source of respect for this class.

LK: Do you think the class has a culture?

CE: Oh, sure it does, and I'll say that an assumption of the class is that Clemson is a great wonderful unique university that is central to the class. I think any member of the class shares that idea, that Clemson is uniquely special as a university. And then the other part of the culture is the camaraderie and I'm going to say fun again. I think Tee Senn made sure when that class got together they had fun.

LK: Do you think it was, "let's go get ourselves a caboose?" That's how I read that. Now you can make it a symbol, and say that railroads were driving the economics of the time. But it was also, what if we had a damn caboose?

CE: If I were to describe Tee, I would say fun loving was one of his qualities. He loves to kid and tease and he loves to surround himself with people who are good humored and active and interesting. It's infectious, and that's leadership.

LK: What do you think is going to happen when they are all gone?

CE: I think it is highly possible that when we get down to the final handful of members, less than ten members, that there is no assurance that that will include Tee Senn and

Jim Sweeny. I think the passing of the original members of the class is going to turn a page in class history that's really going to ramp up the responsibilities and involvement of the honorary members. And I think that is dawning on the honorary members. The inevitability of that is sinking in. I can't tell you right now what the character of the class will be in the hands of honorary members, except that I think everybody is thinking about that. Everybody is preparing for that. One aspect of it is that the award winning members, we have honorary members apart from award winning members, is that they are all career academics, they are all teachers. So they are likely to be more modest of means than the original '39ers who went into business and had the giving capacity to build endowments, and so on. I think the mark of the class into the future is less likely to be monetary and more likely to be other kinds of support for Clemson. I don't know what to tell you other than that.

LK: I had not gotten to that place, that's good.

CE: I don't mean to say there won't be any investment in Clemson from the class, but I think it will be different; it will be a different kind of service.

LK: In your view there will continue to be reunions and there will continue to be a functioning class of '39.

CE: Yes, and we have insure that by making a tontine by purchasing a bottle of wine to be opened and shared at the 100th anniversary of the class in 2039.

LK: And by "we" you mean the honorary members, both the award winners and the contributory members.

CE: And because the class has an annual winner and because there is an annual celebration of that winner, the class has a reason to gather. And also because they have made such a point of staying in touch with the families of deceased members, I believe they want to create an ongoing interest in those families to support Clemson and I think it will be the honoraries responsibility to keep engaged with those families.

LK: Even sons and daughters of '39rs are my age. It will need to be grandchildren.

CE: These will be the grandchildren of '39ers coming to attend Clemson.

(General conversation not related to the interview)

CE: There are rituals with that memorial service that they repeat every year. They read a Tennyson poem and they read a prayer of remembrance and they play TAPS. So the ritual elements of the memorial service are a part of the culture, and passing on the wisdom of the class. I reread those when I am getting ready to invite people to participate in the memorial service. Each year that I read them, like good poetry, they really resonate. The shape of that ceremony and the simplicity of it and the dignity of it are very impressive.

LK: Can you think of some things you would want to be sure got into a thesis about the '39ers?

CE: You are very fortunate to have Jim and Tee as a resource. No matter how hard they work to document and retain and tell the story, and they are working hard to do that, it's very important to them. When they pass on, there goes a lot of information that will never come out. So you are capturing information that otherwise would not necessarily You are performing a curatorial function that is very important because you can't make anything meaningful out of a blitz of information. You have got to curate information and make decisions about what to push forward and what to let go. I have come to admire curators so enormously because they are the way we understand the past. Historians are kind of curators, so the role you are playing, even though you may be restating things that are elsewhere, your point of view and your curatorial decisions are going to make a document that is very valuable.

Interview with Dr. Donald McKale, May 21, 2012

Subject: The Clemson Class of 1939

Dr. McKale is an honorary member of the Class of 1939, having won the Award of Excellence in 2006. He was a Clemson history professor, now retired. He co-authored a book about the Class of '39 which outlines the origin of the '39er caboose and caboose garden. One of the interesting facets of this interview is the fact that Dr. McKale, in addition to his relationship with the class of '39, also has a close association with the Clemson class of 1941, another revered class and another war class. Dr. McKale authored a book, Destined for Duty, about the class of 1941, as well.

We met in the Clemson Thurmond Center in the Special Collections section. In the interview there are references to material "here"; those references are to the Special Collections area where we met.

Lawrence Korth: Can you give me a little bit of your Clemson background?

Donald McKale: I taught here for right at 30 years. I came to Clemson in 1979, and my specialty is German history, World War II Nazi Germany. I retired in 2008, and then taught another semester because the history department hadn't appointed my replacement yet and they needed somebody to teach a couple of classes. I really taught right at 30 years. It's a great place to teach.

LK: And you still live in the area.

DM: I do.

LK: I have discovered that there is a little enclave behind the Esso Club; are you part of that group?

DM: I'm sometimes part of the Esso Club, but not the enclave.

(Some general conversation about the Esso Club.)

LK: How did you get involved with the class of '39?

DM: For years I had known Tee Senn socially.

LK: He would have been retired by the time you were here?

DM: He retired, I think, the year after I arrived here. I first got to know Tee when my wife and I became part of a dance club at Clemson. Tee and his first wife were members of the club and that's where I first got to know Tee. Then in 2006 I was selected a class of '39 Award of Excellence winner. So that's how I really became involved with the class and eventually Tee said he really wanted his wife's connection to the caboose known. He was very concerned the class of '39 be given the credit for what it had done in bringing the caboose here through her, in particular. Tee told me he had someone come up to him some years back and said that her father had been involved in bringing the caboose to Clemson, and gave him this long spiel about it and he said it really shook him up, because that is not how it happened at all, and he said we need to get this on the record. The class of '39 is real instrumental in that and Marguerite, his first wife, as the book points out, was really at the heart of all that. So, a couple of years I told Tee I would be glad to do the caboose book for him and for the class. I said if you have records I can use, that makes it a whole lot simpler and a much easier task for me to do. He said he did, and he gave me a couple of boxes of documents. And you have probably been through that drill before.

LK: I've got boxes stacked up in my shed. My wife says, "What are you going to do with all that?"

DM: But I did tell him that a lot of the material that he has relating to the class of '39 and probably also the Horticulture Department and a lot of his personal papers should be brought over here and you need to reemphasize that to him too if you get the opportunity. I think it's important that all that material find its way here.

LK: In fact I brought some of it over here when Dr. Reel was here and presented it to him and he, in turn, has incorporated it into the Special Collections here. And I have one more box I will bring over if and when I ever finish.

DM: That's important.

LK: I think so. Absolutely. You've probably seen Jim Sweeny's chronicles.

DM: Yes.

LK: That separates the class in and of itself, to have a person by person complete history.

DM: Yes. And what a nice thing for you in your work.

LK: Yes, it has been invaluable.

DM: That kind of topic, as you said earlier, really fits you well. Because a lot of the material is here. You can do the work right here. It's available and that's great. I'm happy you have done this and I know the class is too. I know Tee is very excited about your work.

LK: I hope it meets everyone's expectations.

DM: Well, don't worry about that, you need to meet your own expectation. In terms of how you, you're an historian now and how you see the records and how you see the evidence that you've witnessed and so forth and that is what is important.

LK: Chip was telling me how important it was that I curate the information to what I think. But I also want make sure that it is a very accurate representation. The interpretation I can make as I see it, but I want to be as certain as possible that what I am saying is correct.

DM: That's the thing the historian always wrestles with, it seems to me, you have a set of facts and how do you view them? What is your interpretation? And that's the historian's big challenge.

LK: I have a pretty fair idea of what in particular Tee, and Jim and Dr. Cox were trying to do as a triumvirate of people who had a lot to say about what happened in the class. Now I want to make sure I have the ties that bind, the culture and things like that.

Are you involved with any other classes to the extent that you have involvement with the class of '39?

DM: I did, and I have. Back in 1988 I was fortunate enough to receive a titled professorship given by the class of 1941. This is called the Class of 1941 Memorial Professorship, in the humanities. It was a titled chair, if you will, a professorship given by the class in honor of the 57 members of the class who gave the ultimate sacrifice in World War II. That class lost the most of any class here at Clemson. And it gave the money for that professorship in honor of those 57 who died and so I had over the years, since 1988, a very close tie with some members, not all certainly, a small group of leaders of the class much like Tee, Jim and Walter were to the class of '39, and I found that there really is a close connection among all of those individuals. They had the same attitudes and the same ideas about Clemson, feelings about the institution. And

they certainly had a tremendous loyalty to it and a desire and wish to give back, an appreciation for what the institution did for them. Which I think is pretty characteristic of that group of people through the 40s into the 50s. Certainly up through the time when the school was a military institution. You alluded to that earlier talking about Frank Cox and talking about the military life helping to bring these guys together. They all had to survive together. It wasn't easy.

(Some unrelated conversation.)

LK: Would you say, having good association with two war time classes, that the war time experience is a great unifier and helps character?

DM: Oh, no question. I think there were two experiences in these men's lives. And, of course, and you know what I am going to say. One was the Great Depression, and following right on the heels of it is this huge war. Almost all of these guys wore the uniform. It was very rare if one of the members of the class didn't. These young men, I think, were forced to grow up very quickly, and to mature very quickly. I kind of believe that that process, these events and the men and the events process really helped to kindle in these men a great sense of responsibility. I think perhaps maybe greater than normal because these weren't normal times. These were very different times. What you see in these classes, I saw in the class of 41 as I talked to the leaders of it, Roy Pearce, for example, is this feeling that these men were responsible to something a whole lot bigger than themselves. That included responsibility to their nation, to the American people, to Clemson. Because, after all, it was Clemson that really helped to launch these men in their careers, in their professional lives. And they were very appreciative.

They had come out of that depression and those were hard hard times, and I know I particularly heard some of the men from both classes say how much they thought about those of their classmates who didn't make it through the war. How they really in a way grieved their loss in the sense that those who lost their lives weren't able to enjoy the post war years and the good life that many of the members of these classes had.

LK: Do you consider the class of '39 special when compared to other Clemson classes?

DM: To me I think I would answer probably yes on one level and no on another. Yes in the sense that the class of '39 has been involved in something more than merely scholarships and money given to the Clemson Fund. What I think sets the class of '39

apart from other classes, particularly those military classes, 30s, 40s, early 50s, is the very unique tie that the class of '39 has had to the botanical gardens. And of course the driving force there is Tee himself, which the other classes didn't have. And the second thing, I think, that has really set the 39ers apart is this Award of Excellence. What a unique, very unique, thing for a class to develop. It is something that not only ties the class to the Faculty Senate, to the faculty of the university, this award for excellence, but also has done it in such a way as to help perpetuate through the award recipients the spirit of the class and what the class hopes to continue doing. I am sure you have heard much of this previously.

LK: In different ways. The conclusion I have come to is that this class is very concerned with memorial and history and past, but wants to preserve itself beyond itself.

DM: That's right.

LK: Somebody told me that this is the only class that is actually growing, and this is just an incredibly brilliant way to get it done.

DM: I know of no other, it would be interesting for you, if there is a way to do it, to look into this issue, is there any other instance of this in the United States where a particular class has attempted to perpetuate itself through this kind gift and honorary membership.

LK: I don't know of another case where they honor faculty as opposed to bricks and mortar and all the other things.

DM: In that respect the class is very unique and really outstanding and different. On the other side, the class of 1941, for example, gave an enormous amount of money, at least \$5 million, for scholarships, for the titled professorship that I held. They also gave the money for the Pearce Communications professorship. That is Roy Pearce, president of the class. A Columbia business man, he owned the Budweiser distributorship for the whole state, and also Pearce Young Angel Monarch Foods; you may have seen their delivery trucks around. He was a very successful Columbia business man. But also there is a class of 41 communications center over in Daniel Hall and I would say that probably the class of 41 is as close to the class of '39 in that sense, as any of the other classes are. But it is not the same, certainly. But it's as close as any other class in going beyond just the scholarships and the money given to the university. I think your point about memory and history really does strike the class of '39.

LK: There is a constant thread in my writing about that.

DM: They had that sense of history and that sense of the memory that you don't always find.

LJK: As an honorary member, does that give you a feeling of a sense of responsibility to the class?

DM: It certainly gives me a special feeling, a special feeling, as you say, toward the class. What's interesting is I am an honorary member of both classes. The class of 41 made me an honorary member of its class back in 1991, at its 50th anniversary, I think in part because I did the book Destined for Duty. I wrote the book Destined for Duty about the class of 41. It's a little short book about the class and I think the class members appreciated it very much. It's a nice thing to be an honorary member of two classes. And you do feel a sense of responsibility and tie to the class, no doubt about it. And particularly the class of '39 because of this perpetuating type of program that the class has established to keep its projects to keep its ideas alive well into the future.

LK: Do you go to the 41 reunions as well?

DM: The 41 reunions were pretty basic for classes of those years. There is not much left of such gatherings. There are not very many members still alive, only a handful of members. It's similar, in that sense, to the class of '39. Here again, the 41 class had reunions and got together, but they haven't had the memorial service like the class of '39. The '39er memorial service, to my knowledge, is very unique, something else that sets the '39ers apart. These are all very special classes. When you think about what the class of '39 has done. There is an old Danny Ford (the former Clemson football coach) saying, these are very very, Danny used to say "very very", this is very very unique, the class of '39 is, with the memorial service.

LK: That helps me categorize things. I am working in a little bit of a vacuum, I know what the '39ers do, but I don't always know how that compares with what others are doing.

DM: 41ers would get together and they would have a Friday night evening, usually at one of the motels here at Clemson, where they and their spouses would meet and they party. They might have a banquet on Saturday night, business meeting Saturday morning somewhat like the '39ers and then the banquet. That would be it, no memorial

service, and no kind of special thing like that. But they had a sense of camaraderie, no question about it. And they were great guys, just like the guys in the class of '39.

LK: Well I have come to the conclusion from the things that you mentioned that not only was the Clemson military experience important, but the depression before it as they were young adults, teenagers, and the depression caused great uncertainty. One thing the military experience at Clemson gave them was meals and a bed and sort of a comfort level, and instantly the war. And when all three of those pieces, when put together, created this bond.....

DM: It really did.

LK: That I don't understand. I have to try and wrap my arms around it because I don't have that.

DM: It is a bond and I think that is a great word to use. Really all of these experiences so tied these men together because there was that uncertainty through the great depression. And of course in war, insecurity and survival. Financial survival, family, then, boom, survival on the battlefield. And most of these men were thrown into Europe or into the Pacific and that wasn't easy. And it is out of that sort of thing that you created a situation in which, where once they got back, what I think they were fortunate in was not only surviving all that, but then the United States government provided veterans of World War II with the GI Bill. A lot of these fellows later finished their education. Some of them had not graduated from Clemson, some had. A lot of them used the GI Bill to go on and get the education they needed to help them finish; helping them start their careers.

LK: There was a difference in that the '39ers had a couple of years where they were working and formulating families. They were pulled away from all of that. I'm guessing the 41ers went straight to war.

DM: What they like to tell me was that they received in June of 1941 their diplomas out here in the amphitheater in the central part of campus, that's where they had graduation; they received their diplomas on one side of the stage and their military orders as they went down the stairs on the other side. Literally. So they were in it right from the start coming out of school. You are right; there was a little lag there for the '39ers.

LK: One of the things I noticed about the '39ers and you can help me with this, even with their training that they had received at Clemson, many of them were drafted, and many of them went in as regular infantry men, privates, whereas I am wondering if the 41ers went in as officers.

DM: More as officers, lower rank officers. I think that probably was the case. I think the 41ers, many of them were officers, I believe generally speaking, Larry, that's true.

LK: You are obviously concerned with memory and history; do you think the class is more concerned with memory than other classes?

DM: Very definitely.

LK: What do you think the class wants as a legacy?

DM: Clearly, I think, they want the legacy of being the great class of '39. But I think they are most concerned about continuing the things that they have begun, all the many different things we have talked about. The gardens, the Award of Excellence, the scholarships, the many different things that they have given us. I believe their main concern is that these things continue. That the cabooses stay there to remind people, not just the class, but of the history of the institution. It was through the railroad that these boys came to Clemson.

LK: When we talk about things like the cadet gardens, all those things have to do with preserving. To a man, to the 3 or 4 '39ers I have spoken to, they hated the military orientation, but they want it preserved.

DM: They want it preserved because they look back on it, you're right they didn't like it, who could, but look what it did for them. They know that. That's what they are really concerned with. I'm not so sure they are concerned with the class of '39 down the road, but they are concerned about that garden, the cabooses, the cadet garden, all of these things being preserved. Oh yes, preserved in their name, but that's not so much what they are concerned about, they are really concerned about the substance rather than the '39er name. That's the way I view it.

LK: I would think that is a good evaluation. And to me, that ties back in to how do you preserve, creating new members; you create the Award of Excellence, you bring in new members, you give honorary membership to contributors not just necessarily to award

winners. People who participate in the class and do things in the class. I think that is on point to what I'm thinking about the class.

LK: Why do you think the class is held in such high regard by the university?

DM: I think for many of the reasons we have talked about. Not only has the class given, but it is why they have given. And that's where I think the history and the memory come in. That is what makes it special. That's what we talked about earlier, and I believe that's what really makes the class special to the university and its leaders, especially Jim Barker, someone like that. A graduate of Clemson who himself is really focused in on those varied kinds of things.

LK: In your view, that regard is well deserved.

DM: Oh, of course.

LK: Does the class of '39 in your view have a culture?

DM: It is a culture, and we have talked about what it is. It includes all the things we have talked about. It's a culture that is the very best of the "Clemson Spirit". I'm sure you have heard the term "Clemson Spirit", and I am not sure I can define what that is exactly, but I know the '39ers talked about it. It is a bond tying these men together and it is that sense of responsibility we talked about earlier. The "Clemson Spirit" is discussed on one of those plaques out in the cadet garden, at the very end of that story. But I think it's a kind of culture, if you look at what these men said about the "Clemson Spirit". And they talk about it in the book of biographies, titled Nothing Could be Finer than to be a Thirty-Niner. You know that the book Tee and Betty Senn compiled, that data that the class produced. It is talked about by a number of the people in there who explain what it meant to them. And it's also on one of those plaques out at the Cadet Garden. And to me, that's the culture.

LK: And I see them, not in a bad way, as very forceful about themselves. They're up front about themselves, we are great and we know it and we want to show it to you. Those are not bat things, it is just their culture to me encompasses that. And here is how we are going to demonstrate it to you. We are not just going to give you a fountain; we are going to give you an enduring Award of Excellence because we appreciate what our professors did for us. We are going to give you the start of these gardens so that others will carry it on. To me that is how I see culturally what they are.

DM: And in the spirit of the tie to the place. The tie to the place, so strong. I'm not sure you would find it anywhere else. It would be interesting to know if anywhere else in the country you would find this kind of relationship of a class to its university, this kind of culture.

LK: They talked about love in the beginning, and I said OK, but now I am really believing them. I have come to really change my view on what this whole thing is.

LK: What's going to happen when all of the original members are gone?

DM: We will lose something. It is going to be tough to lose Jim Sweeny and Tee. They are the remnants of the driving forces of that class and we are going to miss them. The class has had a small number of men out front; each of these classes had a small number of active leaders. In this sense, what the class has done hasn't happened as a massive group. I saw the same thing in the class of 41 as you have in the class of '39. What I believe has to happen for this class of '39 spirit, for that aspect of the Clemson spirit to continue is for several honorary '39ers to step up, to lead the rest of us. Like a Chip Egan. He is a wonderful example. I think it is absolutely essential that he carry on, and that as we go on, we develop in the honorary '39ers that sense of responsibility to do that. But, you've got to have two or three leaders developing things, keeping the torch burning.

LK: Part of what I see in the success story is in addition to Jim and Tee, there were several professors who were '39er graduates who were living close together nearby and could do these good works together. Cox. Everybody was sort of right around here. And I think you are right, the honorary members are going to have to be the ones who keep it going and they're hopefully still mostly around here. I look at myself and say, if my dad was a member of the class of '39, it would now be my daughter who would have to do the work, and she is not real interested. She is 100 years away from this. To me that means it is going to have to be you.

DM: That's right; it's got to be us. We also have to have some who are real interested in leading us. You know there are different levels among the honorary '39ers, of dedication and so forth. Some will want to give money to help perpetuate things that the '39ers have started, and others will want to contribute in other ways. Particularly in organizing us and keeping us focused.

LK: I sort of see that as being the key. The money part, I'm not even sure the '39ers are expecting others to contribute money other than trying to keep these funds going, the endowments going and the things that are already in place. And maybe some sons, daughters and grandchildren who ought to contribute money. I don't know that I would see that as a responsibility of yours, but maybe coordinating reunions and putting pieces together. That's kind of where I would see it.

DM: Carrying on the memory through these kinds of projects.

LK: what else should I be considering?

DM: You have had a lot of good questions. To me I think you have hit the most important ones. You know, it's funny, I never knew, outside of the small group of leaders we have talked about in the class of '39, I never knew any other '39ers very well....Champ Jones a little bit. And it was the same way in the class of 41. I never really got to know outside of the small group of three or four leaders of the class, I never really knew any of the others. I met them; I would meet them at reunions, but just for a few minutes so I never really got to know them. I wish I could lend a little more perspective on some of the personalities.

LK: I feel a little bit like I am not doing as good a job on that myself, but when I get down to it, and I have talked to some of them on the phone, there is not a whole lot to glean quite frankly.

DM: Well, the nice thing you have that I didn't have in writing the class of 41 history that I did back in 1990-1991 is the '39er biographies, Jim Sweeny's these chronicles, those kinds of things.

LK: They are good documenters.

DM: What I had to do, in writing the history of the class of 41, was go through the alumni office and a lot of its records. Sit over in the alumni office and go through its written records. A lot of them now are on computer, back then they were in file folders over there, tons of them over in the alumni center, and I would just suggest that maybe you take a look at [Destined for Duty](#). Just take a look; it might give you an idea or two, maybe not, on how I had to handle it. Not only did I have to go through the alumni center records, particularly for the post Clemson years of the 41 men, I had a pretty good bit of information on them while they were here at Clemson because of the school newspaper, The Tiger. You could go day by day through The Tiger and learn about them

that way. So the chapters on Clemson are pretty thorough. But I had to send out questionnaires to the class members. And what I got back was not often very helpful, and sometimes I didn't get anything back at all. So I really had to look at other sources for the war years, what they did in the war, although *The Tiger* was helpful somewhat there, but I really had to piece things together. And you will see there really isn't a lot of information on the 41ers in the war, just a little bit of where they served and what they did after the war. I tried to include as many and as much material as I could get on them, but it was pretty lean; nevertheless, you might get a few ideas from the book.

Interview with Frank Cox – May 18, 2012

Subject: The Clemson Class of 1939

Frank Cox is the son of Dr. Walter Cox, Class of '39, who was also a Clemson president. Walter Cox was very active in '39er projects and, through his participation and influence as a Clemson administrator, instrumental in their success. He was a lifelong Clemson employee. This was the first time I had met Frank Cox, and as we sat down, he began to talk about his father. It took me a few minutes to realize he was proceeding with the interview, and I began to record and take notes about ten minutes into our conversation. The following is a transcript beginning when I turned on the recorder. At this time, Frank was talking about shared experiences the cadets had as they began their careers at Clemson, and how they led to the long term bond the Class of '39 developed. He was talking about hazing.

Frank Cox: You talk to every single one of those guys; they all had the same experience. Those bald heads, as rats, and the treatment they received by the upperclassmen the first semester also was shared experience. You know they beat their bottoms with brooms and they had to shine their shoes and do a lot of things, run to get them food and things. And this wasn't unique to the '39ers but it did add another shared experience that brought them closer together. How do you hide from the upperclassmen and do all those things?

Lawrence Korth: Like fraternity people today, hazing is not what it was when I went to school, but it was significant.

FC: Of course there has been some pretty dramatic hazing lately, at Florida A&M, but hazing has almost been eliminated.

Dad had a very good athletic experience here and this is a little known anecdote about my dad. He graduated and his father got him an appointment to West Point. After he graduated he had been commissioned a 2nd lieutenant in the U.S. Army. He goes off to the US Military Academy at West Point and at West Point the first eight weeks they have something called Beast Barracks. Are you familiar with Beast Barracks?

LK: No

FC: All of their incoming freshmen go up there- Plebes! It's kind of a militarization process. You learn how to wear your uniform and you learn how to march and drill and

you shoot rifles and you do PT and things of that nature. When he finished Beast Barracks he called his dad, he said, "Dad, I'm a 2nd lieutenant in the U.S. Army, I have finished four years of college and have my BS from Clemson. If I go to West Point four years, I'll be commissioned a 2nd lieutenant and have a BS from Clemson and West Point." He said, "I'm coming home." So he came home and that is when Coach Howard offered him a job. So he got his job at Clemson – Assistant Football Coach in 1941.

LK: This is before the war.

FC: He started work in the fall of 1940. He started work at Clemson as an assistant football coach. In 1951, the president was Dr. Robert Poole. Dr. Poole asked dad, by the 50s Clemson had begun to have enough graduates, but no organized alumni association. So they had no idea where the grads were and what they were doing. They had no idea about fundraising or anything. So they asked dad to help get the first alumni office started, or to get a register of graduates, or something of that nature. So dad took that over and he realized right away that he was not qualified, trained or experienced enough, so they went out and recruited a gentleman named Joe Sherman. And Joe Sherman was the first alumni director here. And Joe Sherman has got several books written about Clemson. And I don't know if you have time in your thesis work but it might be worth just doing a little research on the Joe Sherman books to see if he has any anecdotes about '39ers and some of those. Anyway, Joe Sherman took over and dad resumed some duties in the athletic department.

And then, in the year 1954, Dr. Poole called him and said Clemson is getting ready to do an assessment. We had the McKenzie group in here from New York and we are going to make a decision to go from an all male military college to a coeducational school. And dad served as the liaison, the facilitator with that group and the rest of the college at that time. And so dad worked with the study group through all their study and so forth. Since most military schools have an active duty military officer as the commandant, the disciplinarian, one of their recommendations was to hire a civilian disciplinarian. Dad was asked by Dr. Poole if he would do that on an interim basis until they could find somebody.

He did, and his title was something like Special Assistant for students, or something like that. He had a very benign title. They started a formal search to do this one of Clemson's established leaders was J. C. Littlejohn, he told Dr. Bob Poole "You've got the man for the job sitting in there right now, it's Walter Cox." So they changed it from an

interim job to, I think he was called the Director of Student Affairs, was his initial title, not even Dean.

LK: That sounds like something I read.

FC: He initially wasn't Dean. Larry, he had the job, if you cut a class or missed a class you had to go see my dad and get a written excuse like a principle. It's an old hangover from the military days, where there was so much control and coordination on any of that. Literally, for a number of years, every single disciplinary action that occurred, no matter what it was, my dad was involved. So you can imagine how many men and women that he had direct contact with, and so forth. So, very beloved because of that, but he understood that college students were going to do college student things, and fundamentally they were quality in the raw. They were potential. I think what he got more satisfaction from was seeing a kid make a mistake and grow up from it, and then go on to achieve. And over his life he saw so many people that he had disciplined or had to correct who later in life became very successful. And a lot of them were very fond of my dad because he did not kick them out of school, but gave them a chance to learn from their mistakes.

I have had a number of people who look at me and said "if it hadn't been for your father." So dad then had a many many year career. He became the Dean of Students and then he became the Vice President for Student Affairs. And underneath him he had all these student organizations – admissions, housing, band, etc. He even had the athletic department so he had a vast empire as he grew it. He literally grew it from himself and a couple of people. He had first the first dean of women, Susan Delony, and then he hired a dean of men (George Coakley), so he had a dean of men and a dean of women, he had a housing director and a Director of Admissions. He just had a big empire. And as he got older and they started bringing in new talent they divided his empire out to make it a little more manageable. They just needed more people because the mission had gotten so big. So dad, he continued serving as the student affairs director, and then in the mid 80s they had a real tragedy.

In 1985, Clemson's president and another officer were found guilty of an indiscretion and they both resigned. And the Board of Trustees came and asked dad if he would be the interim president. So he served as interim president for just a little bit less than a year, and Max Lennon came in and took his place. And then when he finished that....

LK: But he was, at one point, appointed full president.

FC: Yes, he was full president. They did the same thing with Phil Prince. He had all the power and authority of the president, he wasn't interim. But he wasn't going to be a 15 year term. They knew it wasn't going to be a full term. So he served as president and I think he did a few things during that time frame that are worthwhile. And you can probably find those.

LK: I think the Thurmond Center was started.....

FC: The Thurmond Center and Clemson was starting to have some people who had some financial capabilities and there were gifts that came in. Then he when he stepped down as president and became president emeritus, he went over to what was then the Emerging Development Office, and he served as the Acting Vice President for Development for a short period of time until they hired a permanent person. He did the same thing, he said, "Look, I'm not qualified to do this job, you need a professional." So they hired a professional. But he kept his office over in the Development office until he passed away.

And on many occasions he would go with the development officers whenever there was a donation. People would call up and say I want to give some money to Clemson, but I want to give it to Walter Cox. And they put dad in a car or put him on a plane and off they would go and get the check, and of course dad was so cordial and such good people skills. He would call these people on the phone and say I'm coming to see you and I am looking forward to it. He had these wonderful people skills.

Larry, I think my dad, beside having this remarkable ability to see people's potential, which he did. He understood that there were people who had it and those who didn't. It was just amazing, remarkable.

He never forgot a name. He had this extraordinary gift for names. We were walking out of a football game a couple of years ago, about a year before he died, and he had a hip replacement, so he had a little cane and wasn't too fast, so we were coming out and this fellow walked up. He said, "Dean Cox, it's so good to see you." And my dad called him by name, called his wife by name and he had three kids, and he called the three kids by name. So we got up to the car and I said, "Dad, who was that?" He said so and so and he from so and so, and I said when was the last time you saw them. He said about 10 years ago. I said "How did you know his kids names." "Well, I met his kids when they were up here." And that, I saw that over and over. My dad had this great recall for people's names.

(Conversation with Mrs. Cox)

I have two dad stories. Across the street from the stadium, have you noticed there is a memorial that they build in there, a little park that they built. Before they did that, and I'm not exaggerating, it was that deep in mud and water. It was a mud hole. They marched us pledges down there and made us do push-ups and all this stuff in the mud.

LK: What fraternity was this, by the way?

FC: It was Delta Kappa Alpha, which was a local fraternity. Now it is ATO. Fraternities started at Clemson in 1961. It was dad's idea to put fraternities at Clemson. He recognized that there was not enough social activity in Clemson and in the Clemson area. Believe it or not, and you may have seen pictures, right outside of Sikes Hall where the bus stop is now, there used to be thumbing. And they had a sign up there for Greenville, Anderson and you would go out there and see people thumbing all the time. Almost every weekend people would have to leave Clemson to have any activities at all, so he recognized that there needed to be some kind of social enhancements on campus. He got a couple of student leaders together and said you come in and make a couple of recommendations. Two or three of the student leaders had brothers that were at other schools that had fraternities. They went out and got their charters and came back and made a recommendation to dad that they establish social fraternities. The board of trustees agreed, but they said you can only be local; we don't want any national fraternities here. So they formed seven local fraternities. That was in 1961, in 1971 they approved for them to go national. And so all of these local fraternities morphed into this really interesting interfraternity Greek establishment Clemson has now, which is pretty mature and pretty good.

In 1964 I was a pledge, and we were in this mud, and my fellow pledges stripped me buck naked. And of course I couldn't find my clothes in all this mess. I'm completely naked, so if you're familiar with the campus, you know where the Physical Plant is, there is a little green space, and if you go up the hill, there is Harcomb Common there, there is a little hill and a brick dormitory there. At the top of the hill there is a wall, a concrete wall, well we were walking back up there. It wasn't disgusting because I was covered in mud and there were very few women on campus in the early 60s, so I ran up in front of this little group that was moving back up to the fraternity house and jumped up on the wall. Just as I jumped up on this wall, my dad comes walking up. He didn't say anything; the next morning I had a note on my door to go see him. He said "Son, I don't know

what you were up to, but running around naked on this campus is not the thing to do.” So I got a really serious counseling, if you would, from my dad on that.

So, fast forward to about three years later, 1966, I took a final exam and failed it. The professor was my dad’s best friend, Dr. Harvey Hobson; they grew up together in Belton and had been lifelong friends. So when I found out I had failed the course I want in to see Dr. Hobson. I had actually had a good average going into the final and did very poorly. He said he couldn’t in good conscience pass me, then he said, “Do you want me to tell your dad?” I said “I’ll tell him”, so my dad’s office was across the street, the old Chemistry Building, my dad’s office was over in the student union, not the new one. I go across the street and dad had a meeting, so I’m sitting outside his office for a good 20 minutes. The meeting breaks up and all these people come out, and my dad says, “What are you doing here?” I said “I’ve got some bad news I need to talk to you about.” Well, I go in and tell him what happened. That was not a pleasant meeting, calling me irresponsible, letting mom down, letting me down, letting yourself down, you know better, you had better upbringing than that. He said “I don’t ever want to see you in my office again. You understand me, or you are on your own.” It was one of those kinds of deals. While I was there, his secretary, stuck her head in the door and said “Dean Cox, you have a phone call.” So, he picked up the phone and it was Dr. Hobson. So they are talking and then he put the phone down and said, “OK, son, this is your last time, buddy.”

So, those were the only two times I had to go to my dad’s office for official Clemson student business. I got a little on the weekends too, a grade here or too many activities there kind of deal, but by and large I think one of the traits that dad demonstrated, and I’m sure he demonstrated it to students, was he instinctively and inherently believed that given opportunity these students would achieve. They would get through there, their maturing process. How do you get back from a bad grade? He was more encouraging than discouraging and more positive in his counseling than negative.

LK: I think that’s an important thing for an educator to believe, because the one thing I do know is as much as I enjoy being on campus, as much as I enjoy the atmosphere and young people, they are young people and they’re not mature and they say things that make you go like this..... But you realize that I did the same thing. Thought the same things, said the same things, felt the same way. And if you don’t believe that people are going to do better, than that’s the wrong place to be.

FC: And I think, to link some of this behavior back to the Class of '39, dad kept his ties with this group over the years. They had reunions and a few of them being here on the faculty and one of his assistants was Greg Hughes. Greg was the placement officer. I guess that's the right term. He helped students find jobs. He ran that, and Greg Hughes was a classmate of his.

I found this picture. There were quite a few of those classmates that were here. Champ Jones, Greg Hughes, Bob Bannister. There were quite a few of his classmates here. So they had this nucleus of cronies, if you would, and they were not only in the university but they were in the Rotary Club and in the church. So they had this very close knit group of men that had this social relationship as well as the professional relationship. So whenever they would have reunions or classmates would come to town it was accentuated a little bit. It became a bigger deal and they would get together and have a glass of bourbon, or what have you.

And Tee Senn and his wonderful wife, Reet. One of dad's successful classmates was George Williams. You have heard of George, he's the caboose guy. But he was a very successful official with the Southern Railroad. And so whenever they would go to Washington for a Clemson/Washington meeting or dad would go up to see people on the hill, there would be a Clemson Class of '39 get together, because George Williams would insist that all of the locals in the '39er group that were there. So it wasn't just big Clemson. Often times, when dad was out doing official business and things, there would be a '39er get together. So they kept that little.....

LK: Do you know what year this picture is?

FC: I have no idea, but I would guess, just looking at dad, if this building is the English building, it was built probably in the 50s, so this picture had to be sometime in the 50s. Tee looks awfully young there. And look at Jim Sweeny. That's a 50s picture I'm guessing.

LK: I read the book Traditions that Drs. Reel and McKale put together. And I read Dr. Reel's newest, it has a good bit about your dad in it.

FC: There is a chapter in that about dad. But I think, after he retired, from the Development office, and he had a very long career here. He started in 1940.

LK: He worked virtually all his working life at Clemson.

FC: He worked literally 55 years in the department. He kept his office over there in the Development office. He kept his correspondence there. He was a hand writer correspondent.

LK: When I look through the archives, I can see that. And I see that much of the correspondence has a personal nature to it. People obviously liked him. Even on business things there was a warmth in the communication you could just see.

FC: Are you in Special Collections over there with Michael Cole and that group?

LK: Yes.

FC: When dad retired, he had a dozen boxes of his files down here that he had brought from his office. He told my older brother, Walter Jr., there are two boxes I don't want anybody to get. One of those boxes was the firing of Bill McClellan and Danny Ford, all the correspondence around that. The other box was the firing/resignation of Bill Achley. So dad had, for lack of a better term, his personal files on all of that activity. So, about a year ago, Walter, my older brother, last year about this time, brought those two boxes up stairs, sat out here on the porch put those boxes on those tables there and went through them page by page. He put them all back together and said there is not one thing in here that would discredit those men, or Clemson or dad. So we boxed all those things up and took them over to Michael. Most of dad's papers, there are a few things downstairs; dad crafted a program here with the city. (Frank calls to his wife, "do you know when Town and Gown was established?") Let's just say mid 90s, the mayor at Clemson was Larry Abernathy, who was a Clemson graduate. Larry Abernathy and dad created a working committee called Clemson Town and Gown. Basically what he was trying to do was, in true spirit, make sure that there was communication about these young students and all the shenanigans they were going to pull and what the impact was on the town people. And, how should the town and the university work together and cooperate. So they established Town and Gown. Well, it's become a national program. It's a nice program.

LK: One of the things I've learned, as I learn about Clemson was, in its rankings, in all the various things they rank universities on, is it extremely high in community relations, and obviously has made an effort.

CF: This is something you might not know, and I just found this out recently and I grew up here. Clemson, when it was established, there was no town here. In the enabling

legislation, Clemson College was its own municipality. So, if you are a student of Clemson and you commit a crime on Clemson, and the Clemson University police stop you, Clemson University has its own municipal judge. And the law says if you live within five miles of the campus, you can be called to jury duty. So the local citizens can be called to jury duty to come over and sit on a jury in the stadium where the police department is there in that office right next to, adjacent to the stadium.

FS: do you want to go through your questions?

(Conversation about others to interview and other general conversation.)

LK: You became involved with the class as a result of your dad's activities in the class?

FC: That is exactly how I got involved. The South Carolina Heritage Gardens is a class of '39er project. In 2003 dad called me and said son, the class of '39 has this garden committee and we want to put some heirs on this committee. Some of us are getting old. I said I'd be glad to do it. So, I became an honorary class of '39 member of the Heritage Garden Committee.

LK: That's a good story.

FC: I sat on that committee and in 2007 Jim Sweeny asked me to take it over and be the chairman. I am now the chairman of the South Carolina Heritage Garden Committee. As such, I am really involved with almost all of the activities. When Chip Egan plans a meeting he calls me and I go. So I am part of the honorary group and I go to reunions and go to the Bell Tower when they do the dedication and nominate the teacher of the year and things like that. That's how I got involved. Dad asked me to be his replacement on this committee.

LK: One of the things I mention in my thesis is how important rituals and memory, and all of that, is to this class. And you just get swallowed up in it becomes, "Oh, I understand why they do that."

Do you have involvement with any other class beside the '39ers?

FC: Believe it or not, yes, the answer is yes. Just put classes 1961 – 1971. We formed a little group called the Grey Greeks. What the alumni office is learning now, is the military classes were so tight and they were able to organize. So when they had class projects and alumni reunions they had good participation. After the military classes went away, the reunions don't take on the same, so what they found was the people

had these affinity groups now. The Tiger Band and the basketball team and Chemical Engineering grads. The Grey Greeks is an affinity group and the alumni office wanted to do that to encourage fund raising, to encourage participation back in the university. I'm involved in that pretty much, almost to the same extent as I am with the class of '39.

(General conversation on LK's lack of bond with his university.)

LK: One thing I see is that many of you who are involved with the '39ers all live in the same area.

FC: I grew up with Tee's kids. David is a little younger than me. His oldest son passed away, Dickey, who was maybe the best athlete ever to come out of Clemson. He was two years older than me but he was an extraordinary athlete. He died from kidney cancer, young, about 55.

LK: Do you consider the Class of '39 special as compared to other Clemson classes?

FC: I do for a lot of reasons, and probably the single most is their commitment to what they believed in they took away from Clemson, which is the value of a Clemson education and the value of the unity of Clemson men. It's extraordinarily special what they have done. My brother tells me, he is the class of '64, that his class has donated more money than any other. Their 50 year anniversary is two years from now. He can't get anybody interested in doing anything. These guys, '39, said this is what we are going to do, they all raised their hand, what can I do, how can I help. So, their commitment to Clemson, and their commitment to each other is almost unparalleled by other classes.

Now there are a lot of classes that love Clemson and do good things, but they don't have the same commitment to each other. They are more, look what I did, look what I gave, not what we did for Clemson. That's what I think is one of the things that stands out different from others.

LK: I was at Tee's house with David. It was around Christmas time, and he brought out a card he had gotten from one of the widows. It said, here is a check for \$100, give it to a '39er who doesn't do as well as we do. One of the members. Here is a 90+ year old lady saying one of my husband's classmates may need some money. That's that special feeling.

FC: These wives are remarkably close to each other. And I think part of that goes back to Tee's Reet who was very social and very gracious. So was my mom. So there is a

great commitment to each other, as well as to the school, and I think that is where they stand out from other classes. There will be classes to come and there are some interesting dynamics that we are seeing now. Some of these classes of today are becoming close and generous. It will be interesting to see how they are in 50 years.

LK: You're right. To me there is a lot of wealth now in what is happening to Clemson. But still, it doesn't necessarily translate into the things you do, but what they are. When we talk about the Award of Excellence, what an enormously wonderful idea. If nothing else, that separates the class of '39.

As an honorary member, does that create a feeling of responsibility to the class, in you?

FC: Yes, it does. When I took over this committee, and you can put this into perspective, this class had their 50th reunion in 1989. IN 2007, which is almost 30 years later, they had not finished their garden project. Right before you pulled into the driveway, I was with a daughter of a '39er. She gave \$10,000 to this project that we are working on, and she said "I hope you can get some visible signs of progress before Jim dies." He has worked on this thing since 1989.

LK: There are letters in the files.....no man could have the patience that Jim has had to fight his way through all of the red tape.

FC: That's where I think dad helped as much as anything. Dad was able to sit down with the involved university people and say here is what they are trying to do, come on. But I will tell you one thing, there could have been a 30 foot concrete wall and Jim would have figured out how to get through it or over it. Dad was the guy who went around, and made sure the door got open when it needed to get open or the paper got looked at when it needed to get looked at and didn't get caught up in the bureaucratic shuffle. As a team they worked very very well together, Tee and Jim and dad.

LK: And I am of the opinion that not only is it wonderful to see that they are still working on their projects, but that was the design that they had in mind. That it was going to live beyond themselves. In fact, honorary members actually grow the class. They add members.

FC: Isn't that something.

LK: I just think that is singularly smart.

FC: You know, the committee I was going to last year went through a drill, how in the world are we going to approve somebody becoming an honorary member? Chip went over there (Faculty Senate) thinking it was going to be a big deal to become an honorary '39er. They all looked at him and said, "Are you kidding me? You guys all know what you are doing. Just tell us who you are going to appoint." There is something almost official about being an honorary '39er.

LK: I view it that way, and when I was talking to Chip, I know he views it that way. You can tell by how he defines what he sees as his responsibility.

FC: He's the honcho now, so he has awesome responsibility.

LK: And, he is not even associated with the university. I mean, he is, but he is not employed by them. He still has that feeling of this is a class that I am associated with and I have a responsibility to them. I give him high marks for all that. So, yes you do, and part of the reason is these ongoing programs need attention. Is that correct?

FC: Absolutely. And if you go over to the garden now and you walk around the garden you will see that there is a board that needs screwing in or that there is a plaque that has bird poop on it. How do we perpetuate the excellence of that class both through the scholarship program, but also through the physical images that are going to be left here for generations to come courtesy of this class? The garden has a cadet garden which symbolizes the first 65 years of Clemson's military experience, i.e., what it's like to be a cadet here. And then they're going to have a garden for the presidents, they're going to have a founder's garden honoring Thomas Green Clemson. They're going to have couple of other things over there, and a group 25 years from now is going to say here is the next part of this garden we need to do. The legacy of that will keep going.

LK: Is that something, is the cadet garden basically designed for the first 65 years. I didn't know there was a time frame, that's good to know.

FC: Basically what cadet life was like at Clemson.

LK: But it does, again, reaffirm the importance of the military heritage. It is real clear they don't want people to forget that. Although neither one, Jim or Tee has a great affection for it.

FC: It was not fun.

(Some general conversation about southern militancy)

FC: You almost endure going to a military school. My brother told me once, in the early history of the South the oldest son inherited the farm. The rest of them went to the military.

LK: Yes, that's correct. They went west or went into the military.

FC: There is a certain legacy of that. My brother is a reader. He is not an historian, but he reads a lot. He's a judge, a retired judge.

LK: So you are also concerned with history and memory

FC: Oh yes, and I have to do it for more than just the class of '39.

LK: Do you think the class of '39 is more concerned with that than other classes?

FC: Oh, yes. Far more concerned about it.

LK: Why do you think that is?

FC: It just goes back to the commitment they made to each other and the university way back when.

LK: The first time they read the role of remembrance.

FC: All of those things. When they started realizing what this class, the contributions they made the sacrifices they made, they said our class is going to be special and we are going to do things. And they had the leadership to do it, too.

LK: What do you think the class wants as a legacy?

FC: I think their legacy is faculty excellence, they want that. They must have had great professors at Clemson that really impressed them. They had nicknames for every one of them. I don't know if that's worth any of your time, but they did have all these nicknames for every one of them. So I think they realized the value that those professors played in their development life. So I think as they look at Clemson they want to make sure that the students that follow them really have that high faculty quality.

LK: I don't have closeness for mine.

FC: Your blood turns from red to orange. It tears me up when a video that dad did, it follows along the lines of a book that Joe Sherman did called Something in these Hills.

There is something about Clemson, that when you come here and live here and you get part of this family that you.....I'm not sure how much of them is in your research, but I would say that part of this commitment is a family matter. There is a family affair about all of this Clemson stuff. You really feel like you are a little bit closer to the people that are up here. Part of it is geography because you are isolated; you are not in the big city. But the professors tend to be more fatherly or more motherly or more family than they are just dispatched. I think that is one of the things the '39ers appreciate too.

LK: Tee will say, I asked him one time "What is it about you guys?" He said, "We are a family."

(Discussion about the Esso Club as it relates to the closeness of the professors at Clemson.)

LK: Why do you think the class is held in such high regard by the university?

FC: I think for a couple of reasons. One is, to be honest, they have had high visibility, with the faculty recognition and scholarship program. Dad played a minor role in this. I think the faculty has helped to elevate the esteem of the class, probably more than the administration. I think the administration holds them in high regard, the faculty holds them in high esteem. There is a little difference in that. Go talk to Neal Cameron and get him to tell you what he thinks about the class of '39. And then go talk to the president of the faculty senate and get the two different views. Is it Dan Warner? I don't know if he is still the president of the senate or not. Say, OK, what is your opinion of the class of '39? And he will tell you, high esteem, faculty excellence and everything

LK: Does the class have a culture?

FC: It would be hard for me to answer that because I have known so few of them. But I would think that they do. I would think they have a shared bond. I am not an anthropologist, to understand to understand enough about it. They did have a shared culture universe while they were here there is no question about it. They had a shared cultural process through World War II. As they left the war and went about their lives they shared the value of Clemson and the family and the brotherhood. So I think there are some cultural aspects to it, but I do think it's that strong military bond they had at school, and the times they grew up in, the Depression and all they went through enduring the war. And how they grew out of that and saw their fellow classmates

succeeding and doing well. So many various aspects it strengthened their bond and so forth.

LK: And one of the things you said. I had the fact but did not put it in the perspective you did, about so many of them being on the faculty and being around each other, I think there was something real magical about that.

FC: It was. And I think during those years as they built their vision of legacy and how they were going to approach it, they had that synergism of having insiders here to help do that. I think that helps, too.

LK: What do you think is going to happen when all of the original members are gone?

FC: I think the commitment of the honorary '39ers will intensify. I think they will organize. I think they will get a charter. They will get university group status of some sort, maybe get the president to approve them as, I don't have exactly the right term. But I think they will become, when Tee passes away, the group will become a more formal group. Right now they have to defer to Tee on everything. There are certain things he wants to hear and know, and certain things 'you guys handle it.' I do think they will endure, I think they will get to be more formal, they will have committees. It will become more of an organizational establishment and not quite the family.

LK: And it will be interesting to see if the kids and the kid's kids, who are really now people of an age to take responsibility. I could be Tee's kid, and I am already retired. But my daughter who is 45, she would be the one to get to.

FC: And we are talking about that already, about the next generation. How do we get the second generation? We have one or two who are Clemson 1985 to 90, one or two that are grads that are active. So, I see some perpetuation of getting to the next generation and so forth and a more formal organizational process. And in doing that, let's say in three years, Chip says, "Honey, I would like to move to Edisto." There has to be some succession organizational process, I think, for it to endure, and I think that is what is going to happen. That's my guess.

LK: But you are clearly saying that things will survive.

FC: Oh, yes.

LK: Maybe not as much gift giving and maybe not as much in terms of new projects. Do you see more new projects coming along?

FC: I can't predict that. I would probably say the garden project will endure and it will take on a generational process. One of the things the class of 64 wanted to do for their project was they were the first class to graduate as Clemson University. There is nothing on Clemson campus that signifies when it went from a college to a university. I think you will find as the next generation come along there will be certain significances that they will want to perpetuate. One of the things that is losing favor is statues. They want greening and green spaces.

LK: Will that affect the president's garden?

FC: No, the president's garden is going to have no statues in it. The founder's garden is the one with statues in it. The original plan for the garden of the presidents called for a statue of every president. Jim Barker said, "I don't want to do that. I can just imagine the fraternity pranksters and rivalries coming up and painting them or pushing one over." He said "I just don't want to have to do that." It will be more gardening and planning and things like that we will see across the campus. If you go across the street from the stadium scoreboard and see that park that they just finished, that's the kind of thing I think we will see next. We'll have some kind of class of '39 and recognition of Clemson's first president of the United States or something like that. So I think it will endure, I do. Because I think you will find people like Chip Egan and Hap Wheeler and some of these guys, they are proud that they can help.

LK: I have to give Hap, I first met him before last year's reunion and we were trying to call every living member. And I understand he is trying to get every living member here for the next reunion. God love him. Not only is that a hard thing, but getting them here and providing for their care and safe keeping. I have to give him high marks for doing that.

FC: I'm not sure he is going to get too many. When I was at the last meeting, not too many people are physically able to come.

LK: One of the things that I feel I will never be able to capture is some of the feeling because there are so few left to talk to. And I can't tell what 385 were thinking by talking to four. But still it's a pretty amazing thing to even have that many left.

FC: Well, that's a good project, I'll tell you that. And you can embellish that a little too.

LK: From what I thought it was to what it's turned out to be, I thought it was this, and it is really that.

Alma Martin Interview – June 6, 2012

Subject: The Clemson Class of 1939

Alma Martin is an honorary member of the Class of '39 as the widow of Roy Martin. She regularly attends Class reunions and is a strong supporter of the Class. Two of her children are Clemson alumni. Although not herself a Clemson alum, she wears her orange to reunions and has hosted members of the Class to gatherings at her home. She was interviewed to get the feelings of a widow.

Lawrence Korth: How did you meet your husband?

Alma Martin: We met at a square dance at the Baker Hotel in Mineral Wells, TX. That was the home of the Crazy Water Crystal. And, my uncle owned the newspaper. So I went to work for my uncle who owned about 6 newspapers in west Texas. I was a receptionist. I helped the society editor with her column; I really did a little bit of everything because I was a typist and had business training in high school.

LK: Tell me; was it love at first sight?

AM: No. In fact, my uncle made me go out with him to entertain these young lieutenants who had just come to Camp Walters. And I didn't want to go because I was working and, I just didn't want to go out that night. But I did go and that is how we met.

LK: And it just developed from there?

AM: Yes. He didn't call me for a long time and I thought well, I didn't make much of an impression. But he called me in about two weeks, and we started dating and we dated then for two years before he left for Ft. Benning to go into paratrooper training. We married in 1942. We went to Ft. Benning to live; I can't remember how long we were there. We went from Ft. Benning to Ft. Bragg in North Carolina, and that is where our first son, J. R. Martin III was born. Roy went overseas from Ft. Bragg, and I went back to Texas with a two and a half month old to stay with my parents while Roy was overseas for two whole years.

LK: He was a paratrooper?

AM: He was in the 101st Airborne.

LK: Did he like that?

AM: I think he did. He wanted to do something different in the Army. That was certainly different. In all including combat duty, he made 21 jumps. That seems like a lot, doesn't it?

LK: Seems like 21 more than I would make.

AM: And the funny part of that story is that they had a group at Ft. Benning that was going to make a practice jump. So he said you can come out on the field and you can see me make a jump. And of all the crazy things, he landed in a tree.

LK: And in all those jumps he was not hurt?

AM: He was only injured on one. That was the one. From Ft. Benning he came to Anderson to recuperate and that's when he proposed to me. And when he was able then to come to Texas and we married in Texas and then came back to Ft. Benning.

LK: After the war you settled back here?

AM: We stayed with my parents in Gatesville, TX, for the next two years that he was overseas. Now Roy wanted to stay in the Army when he came home, but he would have had to go back to the rank of staff sergeant and he wanted to remain a Major. His father talked him into coming into the roofing business.

LK: Why did he want to stay in the army? When he was at Clemson did he like all the military training he got there as a cadet?

AM: I think so, I think he liked that. He graduated in mechanical engineering.

LK: I think Jim Sweeny was a mechanical engineer, too. He was an engineer of some kind and I thought it was mechanical. Before he went into college, when he was a teenager, in high school that was during the depression, was his family OK during the depression? Jim Sweeny's father was an engineer and he was OK. Tee Senn was a farmer's son and they were very poor.

AM: The only thing about that is Roy did not talk about his experiences. I would not call that depression. I think it was thankfulness that he was not hurt. And he had a great desire to do a lot because he did come through the Normandy invasion and The Battle of the Bulge, all of that and was not hurt or lost his life. Therefore he became very civic minded.

LK: Was he always active in the Class of '39?

AM: He was when he first came back, but the business took a lot of his time and he didn't get to participate as much as he would have liked. I think he was president of the class one year.

LK: Being local would help get that done. It doesn't say here. It says he was the President of the NS – SC Roofing Contractors and the National Roofers Contractors Association.

AM: He went to the highest position you could have in the national roofing industry because he was NC/SC president, and then he became president of the national. And that is when we had some interesting trips. We made a lot of friends.

LK: And then he was on the Board of Directors of the Perpetual Bank. And Chairman of the hospital. In fact I told somebody one time I think he served on every civic board in Anderson.

LK: How did you get involved with the Class of '39?

AM: Being an honorary member. We have about 12 or 13 members or 14 members. They are graduates of Clemson and Roy was very loyal to his class. And I felt honored to be asked to be an honorary member because that is a different group of friends for me. And, I really enjoy being a part of it.

LK: Do you stay in touch with them?

AM: I'm kind of behind right now because I have had a lot of doctor appointments. But I am very fond of Betty Senn. I was a friend of Walter Cox and my husband was a close friend of his. And I knew Mary, his first wife. Betty Senn and I have become real food friends. And I have enjoyed meeting the faculty members.

LK: Me too, I have enjoyed meeting all of the people I have met.

AM: To me, it is a new group of friends for me, and I look forward to going. And I have close ties with Clemson because of my children and nieces and nephews that have graduated from Clemson. I had an aunt and uncle that lived in Clemson. They had the Clemson Jewelers. They were very close to Clemson because their son and my Allen were classmates and graduated together. So that was another tie.

LK: Did all your children go to Clemson?

AM: No, I've got two that went to Carolina, Steve and Louise. And Jim, or J Roy, our son that we lost in 1984 was a graduate; and Allen has been very active. He was on the alumni board.

LK: Has Allen done much with the Class of '39?

AM: No don't think so.

LK: When you were made an honorary member did that make you feel like you had a responsibility to work with the class and to help the class?

AM: Yes, and I wish I had been younger, because my age keeps me from doing as much as I would like to do.

LK: And do you think this class of 1939 is special, different than other classes?

AM: I think it is more special. I think from all I hear that the Class of '39 has been an example to other classes to give more and to do more. I don't know whether it is true or not, but I would wager that the class of '39 has done as much or more than any other class. Now am I right about that?

LK: You're pretty right. Class of 41 and class of 42 have done a lot, but the class of '39 is the only class that honors the faculty. Nobody else has ever done that. I think that sets the class apart because they had such a love for their school and a love for their professors that they wanted to them. They are the only class that did that.

AM: Well that is good.

LK: I talked to Don McKale. Do you know Don McKale?

AM: Yes, well he came here and interviewed Roy. To put something of Roy's experiences, I think, in a book he wrote. I've got the book but it was pretty technical.

LK: He wrote a book on the class of 41 and as a result, he is an honorary member of that class, too. So he is an honorary member of two classes. So he can compare them. He said that 41 probably gave more money, but '39 did more things.

AM: I have become very fond of Alma Bennett, the English professor. I'm hoping she will be there and Cecil Huey, he'll be there. He was a classmate of our Jim, when he was at Clemson.

LK: So Cecil Huey is an honorary member – faculty also.

AM: Yes. Help me remember and I will introduce you to him. He is a professor of.....I'm not sure. I want to say English, but I am not sure of that. Jim went all through school with him, and then they went to Clemson. So I've got several ties with Clemson.

LK: And Hap Wheeler. Do you know Professor Wheeler? He will be I think the master of ceremonies. Chip Egan won't be there this time. I talked to Hap Wheeler last year. I have gotten to meet a lot of people.

AM: That's good for you. Did you get to interview Dottie Wise in Greenwood?

LK: No, I didn't.

AM: She's not too well, but I have known her for a long time and she is a delightful person.

LK: She is another widow?

AM: She's a widow and an honorary member. So I am hoping maybe her son and daughter will bring her.

LK: They were trying very hard to get as many people as they could to this reunion. They have been calling and doing a lot trying to get people to come. I'm hoping we will see, last year we only had three, and I am hoping we will see more, because we just don't how much longer we will have them.

What do you think is going to happen when all of the original members are gone? When Tee and Jim and the rest are gone?

AM: I am hoping that the children of the Class of '39 would. In fact, if Frank Cox is there I want to talk to him. I think he is kind of loaded down with other responsibilities, but he and Louise have been on a committee together at Clemson. I don't know what it is. I am hoping the children will because it would be a wonderful legacy to carry on.

LK: Yes, and I think some of the professors who are honorary members should be able to help, too.

AM: Yes I wondered if some of the professors would carry on. I know there would not be the closeness, probably, as it is with the members. But there is such a wonderful theme of doing for Clemson, and if that could carry on, that would be great. Now we did a memorial for Roy and Jim. It's an iron and stone bench and it's engraved and it's right at the end of the caboose. It looks toward this arbor, in the Botanical Garden.

LK: So you think if the children and some of the honorary members step up a little bit that the class can continue to have reunions and survive and do things. It will be hard.

AM: It will be hard because I am finding it harder to go to different things. If I have one thing in the daytime, that is about all I want to do. And I am sure that kind of voices the opinion of others. Not that we want to give up on it and we will go to everything we can. Now I didn't get to the occasion in January. I think it is wonderful that they include the honorary members, it gives me a new avenue of interests and I do go back and remember a lot of the people who used to be at all the gatherings.

LK: It is interesting to hear you say that because it gives a woman's view of things, which is different than the man's view of things. It is good to have both sides. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the '39ers and your experiences with them?

AM: Well I did have a small gathering here at my house. That was in 2006 and we had Champ Jones, Walter Cox and Bob Fickling, it was a small group but they really had a good time. And I have promised Cathy, some time if she wants to get together with some of you all I would love to have any of you come; not necessarily at a regular meeting time, just to come and sit on the deck and watch the boats go by and remember.

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