

Oral History on Scott Candler, Sr.**IRH 134****46:11****Sue Ellen Owens****Walter Drake**

*The DeKalb Historical Society presents 'I Remember Hour', Scott Candler, Sr.
April 30th, 2003.*

Sue Ellen Owens

“Walt Drake has a particular love and passion for history and as many of you know tells wonderful stories and a wonderful history of Stephen Decatur and does programs quite frequently for us, for the historical society and also for Leadership DeKalb and for the City of Decatur. We’ve talked for a long time about wanting to do some reminiscing about Scott Candler Sr. You can’t really go anywhere in DeKalb where the man’s touch is not felt. Um, maybe not as visible to those folks who are newer residents, but for those of us who’ve even been around for about 40 years you know where SCOTT CANDLER SR. made his touch and the difference that he has made in this community. So, we’ve asked Walt to share some stories about SCOTT CANDLER SR. . Were very pleased to have generations of Mr. Candler’s family here and Walt will talk about that as well. Walt is an attorney with McCurdy and Candler, Appropriately McCurdy and Candler, which is where he gets the basis for a number of his stories. [He] was a resident of Decatur for a while, moved out, now he’s back. And he served as Mayor, which Mr. SCOTT CANDLER SR. did as well, so Walt is just hanging out with that Candler legacy and we’re really excited that he’s here to tell his story.”

Walter Drake

“It’s my pleasure to be here today to talk about Mr. Candler. When I look around the audience there are a lot of you here that knew Mr. Candler a lot longer than I did and probably know some fascinating stories about him that I don’t know and I’d be delighted to hear them and perhaps at the end of my little talk you will volunteer some of those stories or remember of Mr. Candler. Basically, what I’m going to speak about today is a talk that I give to the entering class of Leadership DeKalb. I generally give them a talk on leadership and it consists of a profile of 8 DeKalb County leaders. 2 of those leaders none of us here ever knew and that’s Stephen Decatur and Baron DeKalb. There may be somebody here that knew one of them, but I doubt it. But uh I do those profiles and to me it's very sig that both our county and our city are named after leaders, strong leaders and I present that to the Leadership DeKalb class and then profile for them 6 modern day leaders some of whom they have heard of and know of if their parents are here they certainly know of them, and I think you’re recognize most of those names. I profile Scott Candler, of course, SCOTT CANDLER SR., Robin Harris, Jim Cherry, Elizabeth

Wilson, HD and Dan Pattillo and I've forgotten the 6th one that I profile, but it will come to me in a moment.

But, I present those and I've usually found that the one that people seem the most interested in, whether they're new residents of DeKalb County or Decatur or long time, would be the profile of SCOTT CANDLER SR. He was a very colorful man, very interesting man. Great stories to tell about him and I think that's why people enjoy it. As Sue Ellen mentioned, a lot of the Candler family is here today and I hope they will volunteer some remembrances, or if I misspeak on anything, I know they will correct me, I hope they will correct me after this is over and not in front of every one. But Clark and Scotty, Mr. Candler's grandsons, are both here. They spent a lot of time in that house when they were growing up when they would spend the night with their grandfather and grandmother. Terry and Karna are here, Scotty and Clark's wives. Mrs. BJ Candler here, Mr. Candler's daughter in law, she will have a lot of stories I'm sure. And then the next generation of children of Scotty and Clark are her also here. I saw Charlie, and I see Blake, and Laura and Clark and I don't know whether, I think that's it, yea young Scotty, Scotty the fourth, is off in college at Wake Forest.

Most of what I'm going to tell you today comes from a book that was written shortly before Mr. Candler died called *Mr. DeKalb*. It was written by Morris Shelton who was a reporter for the [Atlanta Journal] *Constitution* at that time and it came out shortly before Mr. Candler's death. I had read that book when it first came out years ago and found it very interesting, and then I'd gone back and looked over it when I'd prepared my talks from time to time for my talks to Leadership DeKalb. But I hadn't done that for several years, so this weekend I went back and read the book and I recommend it to you, I think a lot of you probably have that and if you do I think you'd enjoying going back and reading it because it presents some great stories.

Looking out at the audience I see a couple of other folks, Judge Bell and Judge Peeler, both of whom knew Mr. Candler quite well and might have some good stories for you as well.

I want to read to you the dedication of this book that Morris Shelton wrote before I start because I think it sets the tone for the life of Mr. Candler. It reads:

'DeKalb County records show that two men who have played distinct roles in the county's history each have born the name of Mr. DeKalb. One of them was Johan DeKalb, a German military officer who fought on the side of the colonists during the American Revolution and for whom the county is named. The other Mr. DeKalb is Scott Candler Sr., a native southerner credited with laying the foundation for DeKalb County's staggering growth. Indeed, his impact on the bustling county next-door to Atlanta was so profound that after he left office in 1954 he was given the honorary title of Mr. DeKalb.'

And I think that is a very apt dedication. Mr. Candler was the one-member commissioner, my how things must have been easier to run at that point with just one, from 1939 to 1955, 16 years he served in that post. He was a very outspoken person, he

was a strong leader and he wasn't afraid of going in and getting things done. While he was in office for that period of time, which I believe is the longest anyone ever served as what is the equivalent of the CEO now, I think Mr. Candler holds the record for that. While he was there the county instituted a county-wide water and sewer system, countywide police protection, the library was expanded to become county-wide, parks and recreation department was expanded and parks were established all over the county, fire protection became county-wide, and sanitation became county-wide. Mr. Candler was responsible for building hundreds of miles of roads and for paving a lot of dirt roads because at that time a lot of the roads in DeKalb County were dirt roads. On the medical front, he played a leading role in the establishment of the Fulton DeKalb hospital authority and ultimately Grady and the services that Grady provides in the metro area and really throughout Georgia. He was responsible and in office when the county annex was built, some of you remember the county building that was right at the corner of McDonough and Trinity before the new courthouse was built and that houses the offices because at that time the old DeKalb County courthouse was bursting at the seams and Mr. Candler was responsible for setting up the county offices at that new location and then in 1967 the new courthouse was built and I believe that building was demolished sometime in the 70's.

During WWII, Mr. Candler was responsible for the establishment of the DeKalb County cannery while there were food shortages during the war. Mr. Candler provided that cannery while canning became a very popular thing. And in fact, a number of years later, 10 or 15 years ago they were thinking about closing it down and there was a tremendous outcry against closing that cannery and a lot of citizens had taken advantage of it.

Aside from his political contributions and his contributions to the county based on his office, Mr. Candler was the organizer and first scout master of Decatur troop 1 and that was the first Boy Scout troop south of the Mason-Dixon line. I have a particular interest in that my grandfather Walter Drake in Buford, Georgia started the first troop out there shortly after that, but Mr. Candler has the claim for establishing the first Boy Scout troop not only in Decatur but south of the Mason Dixon line. He also was state commander of the American legion, and three times he was commander of the Harold Byrd post, the local American legion post. He served on the Georgia Democratic Executive Committee, he was president of the Georgia Association of County Commissioners. After his political career, he was general manager of Stone Mountain Park and it's appropriate that we're right next to Curtis Branscome's house, and Curtis runs the park today. And I'll talk about that house again in a minute. Mr. Candler was director of the Georgia Department of Commerce and in the 5 years he held that post, over 1,000 new industries came to DeKalb County, I mean came to the state of Georgia. That was the forerunner of the Georgia Department of industry and trade. He was a member of the Georgia Board of Regents and I think that's very interesting because his son Scott Candler Jr. who was my senior partner and mentor, also served on the Board of Regents during his lifetime. Mr. Candler was also mayor of Decatur, and he was mayor of Decatur for 17 years, and I believe that is the longest anyone has been able to put up with the position. But he served and loved Decatur and I'll tell you a little about what he did there. He was a trustee of

Agnes Scott College, he was a trustee of Davidson College, that's also we see a lot of family ties there. Clark serves as a trustee of Agnes Scott College at this point and B.J. Candler serves on the board of visitors of Decatur, of Davidson College. Mr. Candler was the leader of the Scott Candler Sunday school class at Decatur Presbyterian for over forty years and the Sunday school room there is named after him. After he retired, one of the things that Morris Shelton mentions in his book is that he had some time for this formal garden that he loved and I don't know too much about this garden but it certainly is beautiful and Mickey and Jim have done a wonderful job with it. Scotty says it looks just like this when he lived here a number of years ago, but not too many people agreed with that, but Jim and Mickey have certainly restored it. Clark has found the actual blue print for this garden. I can speak for Clark because he's my partner. Clark has a very unique filing system. Nothing ever gets thrown away and he has everything, it's just finding it at times. But he managed to find it, but now he can't find it again but he does have it and he has promised he is going to present it to Jimmy, I mean Jim and Mickey and some point so they'll have the actual plans from this garden when Mr. Candler was here.

Mr. Candler was born on June 23rd of 1887 and I believe he was born right next door. He lived in that house, his parents lived that house and his grandfather lived in the next house down. This house was not built until 1924. Mr. Candler's father was Charles Murphy Candler. He was a lawyer who later served in the House, in the Georgia House and the Georgia Senate. His mother was Mary Scott Candler and her father, Col. George Washington Scott was of course the founder of Scottdale Mills and also Agnes Scott College, which he named after his mother. Mr. Candler's father's father and whenever I say Mr. Candler, I call him Mr. Candler, I call Mr. Scott Candler junior Mr. Candler, I don't call Clark and Scotty Mr. Candler too often, but whenever I say Mr. Candler, I'm talking about Scott Candler Sr. Candler's father's father was Colonel Milton A. Candler and he was a brother of Asa Candler, of Coca Cola fame. And of course, I've always heard the story that our Candlers here were related to Coca Cola family but not close enough to have any Coca-Cola stock. But Mr. Candler's father was Colonel Milton A. Candler, one of the several brothers of Asa Candler. And you might be interested there's an interesting biography that was just published about Asa Candler we heard a talk about the author at rotary a few months ago and I bought the book and I read it and it really is an interesting story about Asa Candler and Coca Cola.

Mr. Candler graduated from Decatur's Donald Frasier School for Boys in Decatur in 1903. He went to Davidson College, graduated and then he went to Atlanta law school and he finished Atlanta law school in 1912. After he graduated, he taught for a while at a military school in Virginia for a short period of time, and then he came back and taught for three years at the Donald Frasier School in Decatur. One of his students was Milton Scott, who many of you know of course and who passed away a couple of years ago I think at the age of 103 or 105, but Mr. Candler had taught him at the Donald Frasier School.

When WWI came along, Mr. Candler enlisted in the army. He received a commission as a second lieutenant, he rose to captain and he fought in France, he was wounded and received a purple heart and two silver stars. He returned to Decatur and I don't know a

whole lot about the period when he was mayor, from 1922 to 1939, uh I'm going to try to find out some more information about that, because as a lot of you know, I'm working on a sequel to Caroline McKinney Clark's book, covering Decatur from 1900 to 1999 and certainly Mr. Candler's reign as mayor will be an important part of that, but if any of you have any stories to share on that, if you remember that or have heard things, or know some material on that, I'd be delighted to find out about them.

As I mentioned I think that's the longest anyone has ever served as mayor of Decatur. While he was mayor, city hall where it's located now was erected. He saw most of the streets of Decatur paved. Six schools were built. The Decatur school system had started a little over a hundred years ago and six different schools were built while he was mayor of Decatur and of course the city commissioners and the board of education had a very close relationship at that time as they do now.

In 1939 when he had been serving as mayor for 17 years, CA Matthews who was the lone DeKalb County commissioner passed away suddenly and according to Shelton's book, Mr. Candler was drafted to run for that position. He had a very strong reputation and being a strong mayor and a good mayor of Decatur and a lot of people sought him out and said you need to run for this. And receiving that draft he decided to turn and ended up running unopposed and was elected.

One of the stories I skipped over one of the things I do know about when he was mayor, one of the good Mr. Candler stories is that one time, a train was coming through Decatur and blocked the intersection, I think it was the intersection right down here, as you come across the railroad tracks. And apparently it had happened a number of times and he was rather irritated about it so he had the police ticket the engineer and the engineer of that train was fined a hundred dollars and had to pay the fine and the trains moved more rapidly through Decatur's intersections after that.

Probably when Mr. Candler took office his biggest undertaking at that time was to develop the DeKalb County water system. Decatur had its own water system and the county I think had some of the infrastructure. Druid Hills was served by Atlanta, their water system, which apparently was very lucrative to them, but Mr. Candler went about thinking that the county if it were to develop should have its own water system, control its own destiny with that and he went ahead and forged ahead with the building of that system and a reservoir was built in north DeKalb and along with Julius McCurdy who was his close confidant and his legal advisor they challenged Atlanta for the right to serve Druid Hills and apparently it was quite a colorful battle and ultimately Mr. Candler and DeKalb County prevailed and they got to be able to service that area and the water system grew from there and always has been regarded I think as one of the things that helped DeKalb county grow so phenomenally during Mr. Candler's reign.

Mr. Candler was also in office when the water in DeKalb County was fluoridated and you may recall that that was somewhat controversial in this nation, a lot of people thought it was a communist plot or some other reason that the water shouldn't be fluoridated. But Mr. Candler was convinced apparently based on a story someone had told him about

someone that had some dental problems and then they started drinking fluoridated water and his problems went away so he was convinced this was going to be good for the people of DeKalb. Had it done, had the fluoride put in the system but had announced that it would be effective and the fluoride would be put in the system at some date a couple months in the future. So, the controversy went on and finally when the date came all kinds of people called and raised cane about the fluoride in the water and Mr. Candler told them 'Look, you've been drinking this for two months and now one had complained yet,' and the furor kind of died down. And that may have been typical of the way he did some things he went right ahead and did them and always thought ahead and had a very fertile mind for things of that nature.

I mentioned Julius McCurdy. Julius McCurdy of course founded Decatur Federal, was a prominent lawyer a wonderful person in this town and he was a very close friend of Mr. Candler. And they used to say that Mr. Candler as the head of the board of commissioners, as the only commissioner in DeKalb County would forge ahead and do things and then he would call on Julius to try and make them legal after he'd done them and if that didn't work, his chief exec assistant was a gentleman named Leon Country O'Neal and he'd go to Mr. O'Neal and Mr. O'Neal had a way of working things out if Julius couldn't get things made legal in some way. Country O'Neal would work things out or deny that Mr. Candler had ever done this and things would progress on.

One of the other accomplishments of Mr. Candler was the Peachtree DeKalb, the development of the Peachtree DeKalb Airport. That had been an old army post I understand during WW1 for training purposes and when WW2 came along, he leased it to the Navy where they did some training, then let the county take it back over after the war and apparently, they'd done some of the structure of the airport and it developed from there, and it too has been a great asset in the development of DeKalb County.

Mr. Candler was quite a people person apparently and I want to read to you on one of the passages from Morris Shelton's book about Mr. Candler which typifies a lot of the things I've heard about him it said:

During the days when Mr. Candler was in the old courthouse

And this was a recollection of Clark Harrison a lot of you of course knew Clark Harrison who later went on to be a commissioner in DeKalb County and the chairman. But Mr. Harrison was quoted in this book as saying:

'During the days when Mr. Candler was in the old courthouse,' Harrison recounted, 'the Negroes and the poor whites would be lined up outside his office in their overalls and print dresses waiting for him to see them and help them out in whatever way he could. Nothing delighted him more than for a widow lady or a poor black person to come in and ask for help. He would break his back trying to find them a job or assisting them with whatever problem they had. He enjoyed being a commissioner, I think he had a lot of fun doing it,' Harrison said.

And that to me typifies the style of leadership that Mr. Candler had. Also, Clark Harrison tells an interesting story in 1957 when Mr. Candler was out of office at that point and Clark Harrison was a young district commissioner this was before he became the chairman of the county commission. You may recall that's when the Russians launched Sputnik and that caused a lot of concern in this country. I remember I was a mere child then of course but I remember that there was a lot of concern about the teaching of science and how far behind we were of the Russians and people were in somewhat of a panic over Russian our biggest foe at that time in the Cold War having launched Sputnik. And Clark Harrison said that he was in office one day and the phone rang and this elderly lady talked to him and said 'Now what are ya'll going to do about this Sputnik?' And Clark Harrison thought to himself 'Well I hadn't really thought about that and I don't really think that's within our jurisdiction', but he tactfully told the lady, said 'Well I'm not quite sure what were going to do,' and she said 'Well I'll tell you one thing. If Mr. Scott Candler Sr. was still in office, we'd have done something by now!'

A lot of people had a lot of faith in Mr. Candler in being able to do virtually anything and I guess my favorite Scott Candler story the one I always tell at the talks to Leadership DeKalb and one that probably everybody here has heard is the story about the attraction of General Motors to DeKalb County to come here with their plant. One of Mr. Candler's main goals was to build this county of course it was a rural county at the time a lot of farms a lot of dairy farms particularly, but he saw the future and the future of DeKalb county as a suburban community for Atlanta but saw the need also for revenue and industry and employment and he set about trying to attract General Motors to relocate a large plant in the Atlanta area and he courted executives from Detroit had them down several times made commitments about the infrastructure they would need and at one of these meetings when he had them at the sight in Doraville and had gone through with them all the various things that would be done as far as infrastructure and water and whatever tax breaks were appropriate at that time and so forth apparently these execs from Detroit were every charmed by Mr. Candler and very impressed and said 'well we think this sounds real good now when's your governing body going to be able to meet to and approve all of these things you've promised' and Mr. Candler apparently paused for a little dramatic effect for a few seconds and then he kind of looked at them and he smiled with a twinkle in his eye and said 'we've just met.' And General Motors of course came to DeKalb County and was a great asset for DeKalb County.

When you look back at his major accomplishments and I alluded to a couple of these at the start, you go down the chronology of when he was in office, in 1940 we had the establishment of the DeKalb water works and this was the first county owned system south of Virginia. A lot of municipalities had systems, but Mr. Candler visualized a county as a big unit and doing thing son a county scale. In 1949, the DeKalb sewer system was made county wide under his leadership. I mentioned the Fulton DeKalb hospital authority, the DeKalb Peachtree airport, the expansion of the library system to make it county wide. The fire department, it went in his time form 1 fire station in the Druid Hills area to 9 fire stations in the county. The police department grew to be the second largest in the state. I think this is a statistic from the time when he left office we

had 57 police officer sand 16 radio patrol cars and those were pretty much state of the art at that time.

The parks and recreation department was expanded and lot of parks were developed county wide. I go every year to a Chapman family reunion in Lithonia my grandmother was a Chapman and we meet at this pavilion in Lithonia, in the city of Lithonia, and at that pavilion in that park there's a nice big plaque dedicated to Mr. Candler for his vision and his service to the people of DeKalb particular in the area of parks and recreation.

As I mentioned a lot of roads were built, we had the courthouse expansions. The sanitation department was made countywide and expanded and back then you had trash pick up two days a week.

After Mr. Candler left office, he had other interests and one of those was Stone Mountain. He was very instrumental in the assemblage of the land for Stone Mountain Park and the continuation of the work on the monument. He knew the Venable family and I think negotiated with them to get some of that land that was needed by the park and he served as the director of the park for several years.

Mr. Candler passed away in 1973 and I want to read to you an editorial that was written in the paper. I clipped out the obituaries and I have them here and they were some wonderful testimonies but not only were the written obituaries that mention a lot of the accomplishments that I've spoken of and the headlines being "Scott Candler led the way for DeKalb's great growth," "Shaper of DeKalb," "Scott Candler dies," and a lot of write ups and pictures from his early life and his later life, but this was an editorial on the editorial page of the Constitution and it read as follows:

Once upon a time, DeKalb was a quiet, rural area, centering around Decatur the county seat. During the late 30's, the citizens elected Scott Candler as a member of one of the old families, commissioners of roads and revenues. Mr. Candler looked around saw where the future lay and went to work. In single minded fashion he built an independent water system and with that as a base, went after industry and resident s from overflowing Atlanta. To water he added other urban advantages plus clean and efficient government. The results: today DeKalb is one of the wealthiest counties in the nation, the second in point of population in Georgia and one of the choicest places to live in the southeast. The credit of this is Mr. Candler's. He ran DeKalb for 16 years and ran it wisely. Now at age 85 he is dead but his good works endure.

And that was an editorial in 1973 from the Constitution.

In Morris Shelton's book there are some tributes to him and I thought I'd written down some of the people that made those tributes but I don't see them in my notes here, but I think I remember them. There were tributes in the book from Governor Marvin Griffin, from Herman Tallmadge, from Maud Burrus, from Julius McCurdy, and some other leaders complimenting Mr. Candler and praising him on his great service to DeKalb

county and his great leadership. And I truly believe he was one of the great leaders in this county and certainly deserves to be known as 'Mr. DeKalb'.

I appreciate your attention. Now I know there are some people here, Bill Breen, Judge Peeler, Judge Bell, lots of others, the Candler family that knew a lot more about him than I did. I only knew Mr. Candler in his last years. I'm very proud of my book he autographed it for me when it came out and inscribed it to his newest associate and although he didn't really practice with us at that time, he maintained his own office, I was very complimented with that inscription.

But if any of you have anything you'd like to add, you want to correct me, please do so very discreetly if I had anything, said anything wrong. But if you do have a particularly good Mr. Candler story I know everyone would enjoy it, or if the family has anything they'd like to add, that would be welcome."

Judge Clarence Peeler

I'm Clarence Peeler been a judge for several years. When I got back from the army, I was not a lawyer I'd had a year at Atlanta law school before the thing was over and when I came in I wanted to know if could take the bar exam and Dean Reese at Emory said "That the trouble with you young bucks you want to hit the ground running, go see Dean Hilke he's the dean of law school." I went to see him he said "Mr. Peeler I wouldn't profess to know, you go see Dean. Finster at John Marshal Law School and begot whatever he says tell him I told you."

So, I went down there and he says "Well, it's possible, just not probable. However, my bar reviews vehicle started and its 50 dollars payable in advance."

I took that, and this was in 1945 and my term of leave ended on the 12 and 13th of December 1945 and I took the bar exam about that time and on the third day of January 1946 I was sworn in as a lawyer. So, I went to work with Julius McCurdy and at that time I thought I was doing pretty well because those days money was sort of scarce and I had already had a child and I tried to see about that and Julius told me he knew I didn't really like handling anything that you have to study on to get a house and a lot. So, I went to over to, lets see, uh, it was, what was his name? Oscar Mitchell had been assistant solicitor general, now they call it district attorney or And he, when I came in there, I got the job because Oscar had left and the thing paid 200 dollars a month plus 50 dollars together. I took it and Oscar Mitchell had already gone but he helped me for about a month.

I met Mr. Candler knew him already because my mother was the executive secretary of the Association of County Commissioners. And she worked with him while he was both here and while he was acting as president of that association. While I was there you know at that time, when a lady had been divorced and had a child she could not collect her alimony or child support if the husband was outside of the state. What they had to do

then was get a grand jury to have him indicted and then send someone out to get the defender and one of the things you had to do then was go to see Scott Candler because that time you could not let anyone leave from the state or at least pay for it without his permission. And after a while, there were only two of us, we had four counties at the time, we had Scott and myself and DeKalb, Clayton, Rockdale, and Newton. And we had this change, you were able to file a petition here and put it on file and send the papers up to wherever the man was, and they would call him in and the money from him and send it back down here.

We also did not have a secretary, so I'm asking, I say "Roy why can't we get a secretary?" he says "Well, he don't have a way to pay for it, you have to ask Mr. Candler for it anyway, and I'm not going to ask Scott for it 'cause I don't want to give him the satisfaction of telling me no." and so I said "well do you have any objection to me taking it." He said "no, you can go on ahead and do it but I'll tell you right now you're not gonna do it."

So, I went down to see Scott and all of you who know him well will know he didn't really need a telephone because he talked loud enough to hear you most wherever you were. He had a number of people in his office and they left and he called me and said "Clarence come on in what do you want?" and I said "Mr. Candler, I said I need a secretary just as badly as I can," he said "I cant do it," and he said "I'm borrowing money now to pay those taxes come in." and I said "Well you know well I always have to come to you for some money to go out and get these people and bring them back". And he says "Yea and I always give it to you" and I says "Well now they've made a change in it" and I told him what the change was and he said "Wait a minute tell me that again," so I told him and he says "You mean we put in the papers and they send it up there and they send the money back here?" I said "yes sir that's exactly what I mean" And he says "Alright I'll have your secretary first of the month" and I said "Thanks" and that was it.

Scotty Candler

I'd always heard the story and I don't know how true it is and Clark might be able to help here but a long time ago in South DeKalb County there was a farmer that found a dead horse beside the road so he called the county and said you need to come out here and pick up this dead animal. And so, the crew went out and they got out there and said "No no we can't pick up anything but dead dogs out here we can't pick up this animal." So, they called my grandfather Scott and they got him out to the south part of the county and he looked at it he said "No that's a dog ya'll pick that up." So, they picked it up. Clark you got any tales? Charlie, you don't have any tales do you?

Clark this was I think a law house, the law office. Do you know the history? So, Jim is saying that was Milton Candler's first law office.

Somebody is speaking off-camera, off microphone

Clark Candler

I don't have cute stories really, you know we think of so many cute stories about Scott but none come to mind this second. But him on this property, we were just grandchildren so to us he was just our grandfather. We used to come over every Friday night. We'd give our parents the weekend off. We'd get dumped here on Friday night and then go to her mother's on Saturday night so they had the whole weekend off. I spent every Friday night in that house for many years. And you had your own room but I stayed in Scott's room and he was quite a snorer and I think I inherited that too.

I remember him puttering around down here in the garden by the time I was coming along he was too old to be doing serious work, like Jim and Mickey do in this garden but he would putter around down here some.

Do you remember coming home from Pritchett's and him driving through the garage a couple of times?

Scotty Candler

Yea and one other thing I do remember is we would come home a on Friday night he would come out here and get Quaker oatmeal and feed the fish and turn the water on and of course Saturday morning we would wake up and the goldfish would be floating all over the grounds.

Clark

He never remembered to turn the water off so the goldfish were down, somewhere downstream. And Georgia would let him know it. His wife was Georgia Candler, and she could be a topic all her own one day. But we would get Pritchett's cafeteria every Friday night. Does anybody remember Pritchett's cafeteria? Well I hate to tell what it is now. It was down on East Ponce de Leon across from the MARTA yard. But anyway, he would let us out at the door up here, and Georgia out as well, and then he would drive down this long driveway and turn into the garage and as he was getting on in years, I think on at least two occasions he hit the accelerator when he meant to hit the brake and he went right on through the back of the garage. The backside was brick, so that was a little bit of fiasco.

One other little tid bit of history that doesn't have anything to do with Scott, well it does have to do with Scott a little bit. Scott graduated from Davidson you said when he graduated from Decatur in 03 I think you said, yea 03. But he graduated from Davidson college in 1907 and his great grandson, he's going to hate me for saying this, he's accepted to Davidson now and he's going to be graduating in the class 07 also. So, there's certain symmetry to that. If he graduates! But he'll be a freshman next year and will graduate exactly a hundred years later than his great grandfather. As he told me though frequently he said "Dad that's no reason to go to a school."

But it's kind of neat anyways. Carter, I guess you don't know any stories? Terry you don't know any stories. Anybody else? Bill Breen you ought to come up here you know a ton of stories.

Bill Breen

Well I'd hate to try to upstage you guys.

Well the pony was something that Scotty would ride down through the back, the driveway of the house, I think where Penny and Harry live now, was open. Scotty sitting on the horse looked like a very great hero or soldier, anything. Turn around? Oh, well... now I've lost my train of thought. He tried his best to teach me how to ride a horse and I remember once I was on it and fell off, and I believe there was only one time since then I lost my wits enough to get on a horse.

I know a couple of stories about Mr. Candler Sr. I don't think I can tell here. One of the nicer ones was when Scotty, Clark's father my age, was a very good friend to me and of mine, was one of the good things that happened to my life, I went through the first grade with him and the rest of elementary school and had lots of good times with him. He opened a lot of doors for me; I think we had a lot of learning experiences together.

He told a story about his father... well he told a story about little Scotty back here I think he said Little Scotty was talking about which college he might want to go to and his father supposedly said to him he said "Well son you can go to any college in the whole country you want to, as a matter of fact there are one or two I'll pay your way for." He inherited some of his father's clear thinking. Mr. Candler Sr. was walking back from the garage one day and little Scotty and myself were at the end of this cobblestone drive way. There was a stone column, not the wooden one that is lying over there, Jim, but it was a stone column and I don't know where it came from or where it went to. Well it was a heavy one, we couldn't push it. Mr. Candler said "Billy, and Scotty I'll give ya'll a dollar a piece of you clean that column off." And we said oh boy that was a great deal that sounded to us. A dollar was a lot of money to the two of us back then at least to me. And we worked on it about an hour I think and decided that was an impossible job, so it just sort of died. Maybe it just got dirty and covered up, I don't know.

When I was practicing architecture earlier, uh later I had a job in Sandersville, Georgia. And a young, excuse me an older gentleman came to see me. He lived in Sandersville apparently and he had tried to get the job that I had, and the gentleman really was not an architect, he was a landscape architect. He told me, and I can't recall his name now, but he told me that he had helped design this house and that he had designed the garden back here. Now this garden today is very beautiful and it tells me that somebody's been working on it today and night I think to get the moss to grow on top of the water that's almost like a bible story. But the garden was different, it was a very formal garden, it just

had tons and tons and tons of perennials I guess they were and annuals. There were tall shrubs in a long row on either side and you didn't see much of the garden if you drove down the driveway. The little house that you've discussed and said was an office building, I have a hard time imagining that it was ever anywhere else than right there but I don't know. I don't know it was a house hay storage barn while I was here. It was full of hay and you had to be careful when you got in there that you didn't just get covered up with the hay that fell off. There was a gentleman that worked for Mr. Candler and kept this place up named Roy. Now I have no idea what his last name was, but Roy was a fixture round here and he was an elderly man that knew an awful lot about horses, about gardens, and about how to keep this place up.

And one other thing I remember in visiting Scotty, I used to come up for lunch frequently, but in the basement, they had the finest heating system I had ever heard of, ever seen, ever knew anything about. It was painted shiny bright red and it was a stoker, and it would take the coal and put it in the furnace automatically and I didn't have that at home so I thought that was pretty terrific. I better quit before I got in trouble.

Sue Ellen Owens

I heard one story and we'll close with this. Because I think it exemplified a time that some of us would probably wish we could go back to. It wasn't so bad having what some folks refer to as a benevolent dictator because you knew where you went you know how to get your answers, you didn't have to fool around and jump a lot of hoops it was either yes or now. Robin Harris kind of followed in that same tradition I recall. Jim Cherry, one of my favorite stories is Jim Cherry and Scott Candler Sr. together, and how they used their wits so we could get the 1967 courthouse, because they were having trouble getting people interested in floating a bond for a new courthouse, but people were very interested in having schools because DeKalb was the fastest growing county in the country in the 1960's and the school system was just growing by leaps and bounds and was rated number one in the whole country, so people were willing to float bonds for schools, just not for courthouses and justice centers and jails and things like that. So, Jim Cherry and Mr. Candler got together and the story is, and I heard this pretty much from Mr. Cherry was that he told Mr. Candler Sr. 'let's get together and say that this is going to be the headquarters for the school system because they are supporting the schools and we'll get your courthouse'. And they did, and when I applied to teach in DeKalb schools I had to go to the DeKalb county courthouse to the superintendent's office to apply to get my job in 1968/69.

So that was the sort of vision that Scott Candler Sr. and along with Jim Cherry during that era had to bring our county to where it is. So, the next time you drive by a library spread out all over this county remember that the person that started it was Scott Candler Sr., and admire the fact that we have the park that we have at Stone Mountain and that was because somebody had the vision: Scott Candler Sr., to create that authority. Or to sell a strawberry field so a hospital could go in or bring a craft plan, or a GM plant, that was the vision and the legacy that this man left. And I think it's kind of neat that we have

these two guys back here who are following in the steps of their father and their grandfather to lay their own legacy. And guys, man does that put a lot of pressure on you.

Thank you so much for being here in this lovely garden. Mickey and Jim thank you for sharing your garden with us for this historic occasion.

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