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HISTORY
PROJECT**



Capturing Memories from Edgecombe

Edgecombe County Genealogical Society



Albert Marion Pippen, born July 14, 1915, Edgecombe Co. Whitakers, NC, the son of Henry Lafayette Pippen, who was born in Edgecombe Co, Speed, NC and Glynn Andrews, who was born in Martin Co, Everetts, NC

Date: April 10, 1997

Interviewed by Minnie-Jo Fisher Gay

Interviewee Information

Name: Albert Marion Pippen, Sr.

Scotland Neck, NC

Telephone#

Birth Date July 14, 1915

Birth Place Edgemcombe County, Whitakers, NC

Genealogical Information

Father of Interviewee:

Name: Henry Lafayette Pippen

Birth Date: January 16, 1867 Birth Place: Edge. Co., Speed, NC

Death Date: November 28, 1932 Death Place: Halifax Co, Engield, NC

Mother of Interviewee:

Name: Glynn Andrews

Birth Date: February 28, 1882 Birth Place: Martin Co, Everetts, NC

**Death Date: August 1, 1977 Death Place: Cumberland Co, Fayetteville
North Carolina**

Notes:

MJFG: You tell me you were born on a farm in Edgecombe Co. Tell me where that farm is located and something about it.

AMP: Yes it is located East of Whitakers on State Road 33, it was Hwy 44. My dad farmed the Mayo Farm adjoining the Land Farm. He and Mack Braswell owned the farm, fifty-fifty. After he died, my dad could not get along with Mrs. Alice Braswell and she bought him out and he went to Enfield. My dad was Henry Lafayette Pippen and my mother was Glynn Andrews Pippen and she was born in Hamilton, NC and my dad came from Hamilton to this farm in 1904.

MJFG: Was he from Hamilton? How did he meet his wife?

AMP: He worked around Tarboro, NC. He was born on a farm near Speed and grew up around Tarboro and he left the farm and worked in a store in Tarboro. He apparently did fairly well in his business, whatever he was doing. When my grandfather Pippen died he bought out two or three of the properties they had in later years but he left from there and went to Hamilton and went in the mercantile business with his brother, Thurston Pippen. In so doing he was there for four or five years and that is where he met mother. She was born out from Hamilton and they were later married in 1903 and they had a child, Carroll, the first one was born there and then they moved from Hamilton to the Thomas Mayo farm in 1904. He did well with that, I assume, because he bought other farms and sold some because when I went into the office looking up genealogy on my family in Tarboro I found a whole page where H. L. Pippen had bought land and sold and bought some with others. Edward Weeks was one he bought some with. In fact, he bought it on the Edgecombe side of Fishing Creek as you come over the bridge at 301 all the way to the Bricks-Leggett Road. He and Edward Weeks had that together. Speculated on it apparently, because they did not keep it too long. He also bought his brother, Bill Pippen out of his inheritance and he bought part of Joseph Pippen, his brother, out and also financed his brother, Joseph when he went into farming. He bought part of Joe's farm and then financed it to farm the rest of it. He had a sister, Mary Elizabeth who married a Hobgood, down there and later on I think Leoland, a son got that farm. It was known as the Pippen Farm back then. I doubt it being called that now but that is where my grandfather, grandmother, and two of my aunts are buried. I found the cemetery and had a hard time finding it. I came down from Maryland where I was living and came back to North Carolina in August of 1989. Before I came down I began genealogy after I retired. I traced a good bit of my family and wanted to stay on my line, my dad and grandfather, Joseph John Pippen and great-grandfather, William Pippen. Also, when I started, genealogy I found the ship schedules and the first Pippen came over in 1634 on a ship called "Expectation". He was the only one that came then. Later there was another one, Joseph John Pippen, that came in 1640. They settled in lower Virginia in what is now the Bay Bridge Area going over from Norfolk to the Eastern Shore on the Cape Charles side. They catered to Virginia but some went back into Maryland. From the records I could find there are some Pippens still scattered up there and a lot of tales told.

I think they were looking for tobacco land because still in that area of Maryland you processed tobacco for twelve months and it does not have returns like it does here in N.C. in September. I think they wanted to get down here in N.C. and began to house tobacco like they do in Edgecombe County and where they settled in Speed and around Tarboro is beautiful tobacco land.

My aunt, Martha Knight, must have been wealthy because my dad worked with her off his dad's farm. Martha must have had a lot of slaves and the Knight cemetery is near Speed on the Tarboro side of Speed.

MJFG: You were telling me you had a brother who went to school near Gethsemane Church on the Mayo Farm.

AMP: Yes, Gethsemane Church was right up the road from the school building.

MJFG: That school building is where Gethsemane Church was organized in 1885?

AMP: That is right, a one room school. I took my brother, Carroll Pippen, back there in 1989 He walked around reminiscing. I also took his picture standing in the door of the building, that has since been torn down. Sister Beatrice and brother, Marvin went to school there and were close enough that they could walk through the woods to it. In those days they walked to school. A group would get together. My brothers and sister could cut through the woods but they went down the road so they could walk with the Etheridge children, who went across one field home. My brothers and sister went up the road.

You asked me **what we did in the country for amusement.** The families would get together at night and pull taffy candy, stewed sugar, water and vinegar, cooked hard. I can see it right now, they would get butter on their hands so it would not stick. They would pull it and be about a yard apart until the texture got a certain stage, lay it in a great long rope in the dish or on the table. When it dried you could take a knife and chop it off in pieces three or four inches long. On one occasion, my mother had a taffy pull and Carroll got some and put it in his pocket to take to school. Where he sat in school that pocket was on the side that faced the heater and began to melt the candy. He had told another boy about the candy and he wanted to buy some so he said he would sell him some for four or five cents. At recess, Carroll couldn't get the candy out of his pocket because it was melted. They went out and sat on the bank beside the school and Carroll pulled the lining out of his pocket to let the boy chew on it to get his five cents of candy.

Another time Carroll told about pigs under the school house. In the Fall of the year, after the crops were in and the peanuts were housed they would turn the pigs to roam the fields for fattening. In this case they went under the school building and Carroll and one or two more were asked to shoo the pigs out from under the building. So they went out and ran the pigs off. Carroll came in and sat down. It was warm in the room and that teacher looked down at him and said, "Carroll, I think you had better go out and clean your shoes".

He said it was one of the most embarrassing moments in his life, Carroll said if he could have gotten out of there, crawling, or any other way, he was so embarrassed he would have gotten out any way he could to keep anyone from seeing him.

MJFG: Where did you all go to church when you were a child?

AMP: Mostly we went to Whitakers (**Methodist Episcopal South**) but at different other times we went to Bethany Christian Church right down the road. Mr Brickhouse, is the pastor now (1997) and I told him that when I was a little fellow, probably in diapers, and the G. R. Gammons would come there, and they would take me to church but when I woke up I was in my bed at home the next morning. Mostly we went to the Methodist Church. My dad was Methodist and my mother was Baptist but it never seemed to conflict in any way in our home. We would go to Gethsemane and I remember going there on occasion, same as at Bethany. I told him the same story that I would go there and wake up the next morning in my bed at home.

MJFG: Was the church in Whitakers there on the corner of Pippen and White Street.

AMP: Right on the corner across from Dr. J. C. Braswell's home. You had no fans, except those in the back of the pews and on a hot day all the windows were up and the bees would come in, fly around all the ladies with the perfume on, hovering around. As a little boy I would wait for one to light but he never would.

MJFG: Who delivered you, which doctor?

AMP: I was born, early Wednesday morning, July 14th. They were digging Irish Potatoes, I've been told and my dad drove an old four cylinder Studebaker car into town. Bob Weaver, Chief of Police said, "Mr. Pippen came through town and the dust was rolling." I guess in those days he was going all of 25 miles per hour to raise that dust. He couldn't have been going much faster. He got Dr. Braswell, our family doctor and very good friends as well with my family. He got Dr. Cutchin who had just come to town as a young doctor and was working with Dr. Braswell. They came out together and delivered me and after I was delivered Dr. Cutchin brought me in and there was an old black lady on the farm named Carolina Lyons and she was the one who took me from the doctor and touched me before my mother did. All my brothers and sisters came in to take a look and see what I looked like. Mr Brother, H.L. was standing there and Dr. Cutchin said, "How do you like him?" H.L. stood there and said "I think we will keep him, **Papa will give you a check for him.**"

MJFG: Were you ever in service?

AMP: I was right at the brink of service and never got in. I went to work at the Navel Base for the Navy in Norfolk and that is where I remained for a good bit. I was in charge of receiving and inspection of materials, and pouring concrete on the runways and such as that. I was young but went into a very responsible job. Each time my draft came up it seems that the quota was filled and I did not quite have to go.

I had been dabbling in flying light aircraft over in Rocky Mount with a fellow named Melvan Knowles. I was going to take the lessons, later on I did learn to fly, but one of the men saw this on the record and asked me if I could fly and I told him I was beginning. He said well we can train you and when we got to the end of the line he had two pencils in his hand and the man from the Navy said, I want this man and tapped me on the shoulder, which suited me, if I was going to go in. He said this man is not really on the 4F class but he is right on the brink of it so we are going to wait and re-examine him and call him back. I came home and it dickered along and finally I said I am either going or I am not, I do not care which. Every time I was ready to go my draft was deferred.

My mother, was extremely nervous, and she marked me as being real nervous and at that time if I got the least bit excited it showed. This doctor in Richmond detected this and he said this boy is nervous and he is not putting on, he cannot help it. With my legs crossed and he hit my knee with that rubber hammer I almost kicked him out of the chair he said I know this boy is nervous.

About 1943 I went to Richmond for my physical and I was right on the borderline. I was working with National Biscuit and was getting ready to go into service, lumbered along with it and finally decided maybe I had just better go into the base and prepare to go. The commander asked me if I was going in or what. I said I am not going to do anything to stay out. I went back on my job and I got called again to go. My mother was visiting me because I was going to have to report that afternoon and she and my sister came up for dinner and while we were having dinner I got a telegram telling me not to report. The quota was filled. I had gotten to the place I did not care but I never did get into service. I went back to National Biscuit Company. They had a lady that had been filling in.

MJFG: Where were you in 1947? When did you transfer to Rocky Mount, NC?

AMP: They transferred me around 1947. They were grooming me for what we called a Special Representative. When Territory was run down and a person in my position would go in there and build it back up. They transferred me to Rocky Mount and I was on the road every day, long hours and there was a house for sale on Tarboro St, 1312, almost to the Fairgrounds. I did not know anyone there, had been gone and as a young fellow had never established credit and had a mother-in-law who could have helped me but I was leery. Wimberly and Gregory were in the real estate business and wanted to know if I could apply for a bank loan or whatever. I said well I have a good job, etc. and do not have any marks against me but am really establishing credit. They said we have a man who has some **money to invest**.

Kay Kyser was the person and he sat down and talked with me briefly and I told him my mother and dad had known his dad and were friends. We talked a few minutes and he turned to the man. He said, "I think this boy is all right, he can't leave town and take the house so I am going to put my money out." It was \$3,000. and was financed through Kay Kyser. When I left Rocky Mount I sold the house and paid all the notes off on it.

MJFG: Did you ever meet his wife, Georgia Carol?

ALP: I knew Georgia much better than I knew him, I talked with him casually once or twice. When I went into Rocky Mount as a salesman after the war and everything was still scarce, particularly sweet items. We had a ration list and on cookies we could not get but so many of them and "**Arrow Root Biscuits**" was a favorite child's cookie. It was a small package, seven or eight inches long, one layer of cookies and maybe about an inch high to two inches, six to a carton, and in those days the salesmen put up the merchandise in the Colonial Stores and Big Star and a fellow named Dave McIntyre, was manager and she came in one day and wanted to know if we ever got any and Dave said there is the man who can help you. She was a real nice lady, nice looking, and did not introduce herself. She wanted to know about Arrow Root Biscuits and I had not opened the package. I looked around, I thought I had some, I gave her a box, and she said I cannot have but one. I said well this is all we have and I have some other people who would like to have some. She said well my child likes them and the doctor has said feed her some and so I said, what the heck, here. I gave her the whole package. The manager said, after she walked away, Albert, do you know who that was? I said, no. He said it was Georgia Carol, Kay Kyser's wife. I said well, I have some of her money in my house. So the next time she came in which was a couple or three weeks later and wanted some Arrow Root Cookies and I told her, your husband lent me the money to buy my house not right out but in a round about way. So then we got acquainted and from then on she would come in and lean over so no one would hear and say, Albert, any Arrow Root Biscuits? I would say got you a whole carton put away back there and I would go and get them and she would check out. She was a very nice person. People thought the Braswell home across the street was the Kyser home, it wasn't. His was in a regular two story home right across the street, nothing fancy at all and the garage was next door. When Kay Kyser would come to town to see her the only way you could tell he was in town, the Cadillac he had the garage doors would not close. **The bumper on the Cadillac would stick out.** People would come down looking at the Braswell home and never see the Kay Kyser home.

MJFG: When you were a child what did your family do for fun?

AMP: Well, they done something of everything. Mr Morris Pittman, Mr. Lawrence L Pittman, Mr Joe Harris, Mr Edmundson, John Bradley and Lyman Draughan would have a watermelon cutting and all the families would go. The kids would play and the older folks would sit around and talk. Mr Edmundson grew big watermelons and they would have the melons cut and sliced by the time people got there. Just a nice time together

These were the ones who started **Woodland School**, before Claude Etheridge's store and Russell Weeks had a Cotton Gin and it was almost next door to that. It was a three room school. Mr. Gammon, Mr. Edmundson, the Pittmans, and H.L. Pippen, my dad, were the ones most instrumental in getting that school there. I started to school in Whitakers and we started at Woodland when I was in the second grade; G. R. Gammon, some of the Pittman boys, Fielding Pittman and all of us. Fielding was older than I but we all went there. It went from the first grade to the seventh grade. The seventh grade graduated and went to Leggetts School. Families stayed together constantly. There would be seven or eight families there.

In September, after tobacco was in and schools not yet started in those days, these farmers would have farm dinners, barbecue and brunswick stew, on the farm for the tenants and they would invite a lot of their friends around. The tenants all had the long tables out in the yard with the food on them. I was one who would always like to go and sit out there. It tasted better! **When the segregation was trying to end** and so forth, I told them up in Maryland and New York where I was located and lived a good number of years, I said I have no qualms about it because I some of the closest friends I have were the little black fellows on the farm. I ate with them and did everything. We took a slice of ham, dug a hole and put sticks over it and cook the ham over the coals. I had a little fellow who played with me and his family had worked three generation with the Pippens. His name was **Willie Lee Parker, his daddy was Charlie Parker and his mother Rhetha Parker**. Willie Lee and I built rabbit and possum boxes and "set" them on the farm and every time my dad would leave, he did not allow us in the tool box and to get that box unlocked on Saturday morning we would unlock the shed to get oils and greases to check the tractors, and cars and whatever. I would leave that lock hanging so that it look locked but was not. As soon as he would get in his car to go to Tarboro, which he would do regularly. But we were in Enfield then and he would go to Enfield and keep right on going to Tarboro still. We had a mule barn that was real high and had a tin roof. Next to the mule barn was the shed we kept the pickers under and the next shed was the wagon shed and the next shed was the lumber shed and by the time we had come down the incline and covered all those sheds and reached the ground I would say you would be about eight feet off the ground. We would get on the top of that roof in a burlap bag and wax it and start at the peak and come down and about the time we hit the bottom we would start watching maybe four or five feet from the bottom and the bag would slow down and stop, we would hit the ground running. **So I got my pilot, Willie Lee and we built an airplane**. We were determined it was going to fly. I knew it was going to fly. We had the railings cut in little 2x2 s and made the frame and even had the stick in there so that when you pulled it back the rudders on the back would raise or lower We did not have any flaps on the wings but we were going to control it from the rear end, I guess. We used barrel staves as runners, tied burlap bags around them and on the extreme center of this building, on top, it had the vent eaves and we took a rope and tied around that and kept hoisting that plane until we got it all the way to the top. It was along in August and the sun was hot we waxed that roof good and I gave my pilot the final instructions; he must have weighed 50 pounds wet. Anyway I got him in there and I told him about pulling those sticks to keep it up.

There was a fence a few feet from the shed and he needed to keep it up to go over that fence and to not go into the well. You lean and it will follow you. I knew it was going to fly. At the given moment I had a bag and I leaned over and cut the rope. (I'm sitting on a bag to go down behind him.) When I cut the rope I pushed him and kind of kicked it like to give it a good start. I can see that boy now going down, kind of humped over, bouncing and when it hit the bottom it must have gone all of three feet. It ran off the end, balled up and tore all to pieces. By the time I got down there and jumped off, he had jumped up and was getting out of the tangled up mess. His eyes were crossed. He was about half knocked out and fussing with me and real mad with me because I had pushed him. Like I had caused him to loose control.

MJFG: What about your mother's driving lessons?

AMP: Oh yes! **Mother was going to learn to drive.** My brother and I were sitting in the back, we were real small and Dad had Mother out driving this car, an old studebaker, a four cylinder, I believe. Mother was doing real well. I must have been four or five and I vaguely remember it. Got down the road a ways in the curve and Mother did not turn, she kept straight and my Dad hollowed, turn, turn. She did not turn and kept over in the honeysuckles and they were all around us. She got out and that was the end of her driving lessons. She never learned to drive a car. She never wanted to learn after that.

MJFG: Well did your dad ever learn to give signals??

AMP: If Mr Lyman Draughan was living and he could talk about it he would accuse my dad of being a poor driver. Mr. Lyman Draughan lived down towards the Gammon's (Draughan's Crossroads) and his home must be a mile off the road up there. They came to our house on a Sunday afternoon and visited a while and for some reason we were going back the way they were going, towards Mr Edmundson's home with them. At Red Hill, the road turns off towards Mr Draughans home and the Gammons. In those days, cars did not have signal lights and I am sure they did not have brake lights. To turn you stuck you hand straight out to turn left and moved it straight up to turn right and to stop you held you hand down with your palm to the rear. Mr. Draughan was ahead of my dad and gave the signal to turn and dad thought he was motioning him to come on by. About the time Dad gets to the curve Mr. Draughan turns in front of him. And they were there accusing each other of being at fault. I think that may have been the first accident with a car for either of them or in that section of the county.

MJFG: Your Mother carried a pistol in her pocket?

AMP: **My mother could out shoot Annie Oakley.** She carried a pistol all the time. My dad bought her a little 25 Automatic that had a clip you put into it and had some bullets that looked like they were gold bullets, like they were painted gold. She had a small shotgun.

My dad would go out at night and even deliver a baby just like a doctor because he had studied medicine some and knew what he was doing. If one was real sick they would come get him and mother had this gun for protection. Not that anybody would bother her but you never did know and my dad wanted her to be cautious about it. Mother had a shotgun she could shoot from the hip and kill hawks, not a 22, but a shotgun and hawks would come get her biddies you know what it sounds like when the old hen gives the alarm that a hawk is after her biddies and mother would grab that shotgun from the back porch and shoot that hawk from the hip.

One time there was a black man who came to our home when she only had the one child and he seemed to be trying to entice her to go back into the house. The baby was crying, she was scared but she had her hand on that gun in her pocket and she kept standing there and he kept standing in the door and finally an old black lady on the farm saw him there and one walked by another and by the time they reached the house there were three or four of them and **they put that black man in high gear**. So mother did not have to worry and at night when dad left she would hear a noise out in the yard and someone would say "Go on back to bed, Miss Gwen, I'm just waiting until the Capt. comes home, so he won't be worried." He was looking out for her and there are some of those people still around here today that is equal them. We had some of the finest in the world that lived there and some of them that lived for three generations working for Pippens. When my dad went to Enfield, two of them followed him, one was the Parker Family and one was the Pittman Family.

MJFG: Talking about chickens and hawks, did you ever kill a chicken?

AMP: I cranked him up but did not ever pop his neck, he would get up and take off like a model-T starting up. They would ask me to go kill a chicken but finally realized that I was torturing them more than I was killing them. I would wring and jerk him around and drop him down and he would shake at little bit and get up and take off. In those days when you had fried chicken you had fried pullets, not fried old hens and all this fat. We had a cleansing coop that must have been about 5 X 5 and stood about 3 or 4 feet high off the ground to keep anything from getting them and you cleansed them. You fed them corn. I remember when they started buying cotton seed meal for the cows. One time the cows ate hay the same as the mules. Farmers then was pretty much dependent on what you had on the farm, everything, people included. I never had to plow a mule a day in my life but I had to work in tobacco and sucker corn and tobacco and worm tobacco. I never was a good tobacco curer and they would not let me cure tobacco. I never learned to milk a cow so that was some of the jobs I got out of on the farm. I could do a lot of other things and don't think I put forth the effort to learn.

Dr. Spencer Phippen Bass, in Tarboro, you see it as S.P. Bass and he is related to us. I think his grandfather and my grandfather were something like first cousins and I think all the Pippens came down from Maryland. He was in the War between the States and he was injured up around Petersburg up in that area and stationed around Petersburg and they got a letter that he had been shot, and could come home but did not have any way. His wife, Dr. Bass's grandmother took a one horse wagon and one of the slaves and they proceeded all the way from Tarboro to Petersburg, Virginia to get him. When they got up in there they started in through the Yankee encampment up there somewhere and the Yankees took the mule and wagon away from her and she was stranded there. They were Southern people and there with this black man and they wanted to free him right away. He had more liberty to go and do and this black man got the word to Ulysses Grant up there what had happened and dogged if they didn't send back that mule and wagon and got Mr. Bass's wife and got him. Mr Bass had a bullet which was a ball in his stomach and he rode in that wagon on a mattress from Petersburg, hurting, all the way to Tarboro. I am quoting what the present day Dr. Bass told me and he and I have done a little genealogy work together and he would call me up talking and I said Spence you are running up a bill and he would say, "That's all right it is cheaper on Sunday to talk." They got the older Mr Bass back to Tarboro and he recovered so that he could get around but this ball was still in him and bothered him. I don't know what doctor took it out, it might have been his grandson. But he carried that ball in his vest pocket for the rest of his life.

When the bank in Whitakers went broke in the thirties and the talk was out the next morning about the bank "busting". The Phippen children were on their way to school and young Woodrow said, "I'm glad I was not around when the bank busted, with all those pipes and cement flying around everywhere!"



RELEASE

EDGECOMBE COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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(Signature)

Albert M. Rippen Sr.

(Date)

4/10/97

(Researcher's Signature)

Minnie Jo F. Gray