

Stories in Stone Mailing List Form

If you would like to be notified when *Stories in Stone* is ready for publication, Fill out this form and return it to the Umstead Coalition. Be sure to write legibly, and include your complete address.

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Return to:
The Umstead Coalition
P.O. Box 10654
Raleigh, N.C. 27605



The Umstead Coalition is dedicated to preserving the natural integrity and cultural history of William B. Umstead State Park and the Richland Creek Corridor.

“In words, drawings, and photos, *Stories in Stone* recalls the rural life of a bygone local community.”

In this book, over thirty people recall their experiences living or working in the area that would become Umstead State Park.

“Work hurts some people’s feelings,” says Agatha King Johnson, (b. 1914), one of the interviewees. “I think it’s good to work. When I was nine years old I could pick a hundred pounds of cotton. And there was a lot of grown people who couldn’t do it. I was raised to work. My daddy got cut in the saw mill when I was five years old.



Above, from left, Ebenezer schoolteacher Genevieve Woodson, folksinger Rebecca Jones, and Ebenezer Church pastor Jim Denton, ca. 1928. Genevieve inspired the community to build a Log Cabin Theater where her Camp Fire Girls gave plays and Rebecca sang songs. Professors from UNC Chapel Hill discovered these performers. The Camp Fire Girls won a drama contest sponsored by Carolina Playmakers founder Frederick Koch; musicologist Lamar Stringfield wrote a symphonic suite based on one of Rebecca’s folk songs, which he had the North Carolina Folk orchestra perform following Rebecca’s vocal rendition in Raleigh’s Memorial Hall.



William “Al” King, 1829-1926, was a community patriarch in the early decades of this century. He had considerable wealth in farm resources compared to most other Park area residents. The original of this photo is on linen.

[After that] my mother plowed and done whatever came to hand. I’ve been out there and broke the land a day at a time myself.”

Country Feet (1920s)

“In the old days children in the country didn’t wear shoes,” Agatha King Johnson says. “Once my sister went into town with my father. His shoes went ‘tap, tap’ on the sidewalk. She said, ‘Daddy, next time I come to town I want to wear shoes.’ He said, ‘Why?’ She said, ‘Because I want my feet to sound like yours.’”



“Stories in Stone” contains...

- Park area background on prehistoric Native Americans, early settlers, Civil War period, 19th century farm life, advent of farm engines and automobiles, availability of factory jobs in Durham; Great Depression, creation of the Park, dissolution of the farming community, early use of Park, condition of Park land today.
- 155 B&W photos of Park-area people & places.
- Three mapped walks through the community’s stone ruins and a tour of northern Park stone sites.
- Oral history from over 30 people.
- A wide survey of community culture: work, religion, entertainment, marriage, education, food, medicine, etc.
- Numerous property diagrams, cemetery layouts, genealogies, maps, and rustic line drawings.
- 185 pages, 8.5 x 11”, wire bound, w. plastic covers.

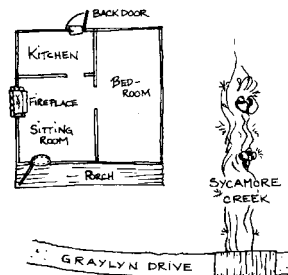


Diagram of Genevieve Woodson’s cottage on the northeast side of the Sycamore Creek Bridge, 1920s



Left, one of several property diagrams in “*Stories in Stone*.” Above, a hand-cranked corn sheller.

STORIES IN STONE



The Mallie and Quinettie King family, 1915

Memories from the Farming Community that Once Lived in the William B. Umstead State Park Area

A combined hiker’s guide and oral history -- former residents’ words accompany mapped walks through the community’s stone ruins. A book organized for the armchair traveler and the trail walker alike.

Produced by Tom Weber for the Umstead Coalition
Illustrations by Uli Gratzl and Cindy Hendren
Photos by David Howells, Erik Nygard & others
Foreword by Clyde Edgerton

Profits from the sale of *Stories in Stone* will be used to protect the natural integrity of William B. Umstead State Park. The Umstead Coalition may use pre-publication sales to raise funds for printing. **Only a limited number of copies will be printed. Fill out and return the form included in this brochure to get on our mailing list.**

STORIES IN STONE

Chapter 1: The Land and the People

Chapter 2: Trades, Arts, and Ways of Rural Life, 1900-1940

Introduction to the Walks
Historical/Narrative Highlights
Hiking Precautions

Chapter 3: Eastern Walk

Chapter 4: Bridle Trail Walk

Chapter 5: Southern Walk

Chapter 6: Northern Stone Sites

Chapter 7: How the Farms Became a Forest Park

Appendix I: Names, Dates, and Homesites of Speakers and Other Principals in "Stories in Stone"

Appendix II: Native American Culture in the Umstead State Park Area

Appendix III: The Story of a Country Church

Appendix IV: The Park Land Today

Appendix V: Department of Conservation and Development Biennial Reports — Excerpts About the Park, 1936-1956 (Creation to Dedication)

"This book recalls the Depression-era farming community that once lived in the William B. Umstead State Park area

"In 1935, many farmers living near the confluence of Sycamore and Crabtree Creeks in Wake County, N.C., were insolvent. Their land was exhausted and cotton prices had dropped. To rescue the eroding land and employ destitute people, the Roosevelt Administration decided to transform the area into a forest park. Officials cited the land's poor suitability for agriculture, its steep wooded slopes and creeks, and its proximity to large population centers as justifications for developing this recreational resource. The federal government began buying and condemning properties. Most resident families moved away. During the next several years, federal emergency relief organizations including the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) razed the farm community and began building the park we enjoy today. This federal project was a page of national history in our own back yard.



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"Today a few signs of the farming community still exist — furrows in the soil, stone ruins of mill dams, home foundations with nearby hand-dug wells, pits, ornamental plants that still bloom, and piles of broken china, rusted cans, roofing, and machinery. Here and there are family cemeteries and individual graves.

"Follow the mapped walks in this book. Look at the photographs and drawings and read the oral history. In the recollections of people from that bygone community you will find one root of our local culture. The memories, speech, and ways of the generations who once lived in the Umstead State Park area are part of the Triangle's core, its soul. As you become drawn into the historical flow, you begin to appreciate the spirit of those people. You can measure what our local culture has gained and lost. This knowledge is valuable both to Triangle area natives and to newcomers, which makes preserving Umstead State Park and the stories in its stones all the more worthwhile."

-- from the Introduction by Tom Weber

from Chapter 1, "The Land and the People"

"The farm we lived on was covered with rocks," says Edith Dickinson Highsmith



(1913-1998), who moved into the Park area with her family in 1919, when she was six. "My father built a sled [for hauling rocks], like a tobacco sled, that could be pulled by a mule. Our job when we came home from school was to pick up stones off that farm. We threw them down in a gully and almost filled that gully up."



from Chapter 2, "Rural Trades, Arts, & Ways"

On chilly nights, families would climb under heavy quilts, two or three children to a bed.

"We only heated with fireplaces," says Rebecca King Simpson (b. 1919). "And we would take something small, a baby blanket or something mama had there and warm it real warm in front of the fire, then race back to the bedroom and wrap it around our feet and stick them under the covers. The sheets felt like ice."

That's How Quiet it Was

Quinettie King (1894-1962) told her daughter that in the days before highway noise and jets, when she milked cows as a child, she could hear a girl a quarter mile away singing as she worked. Quinettie would listen and then begin singing in response.

Typhoid! A Family Crisis, 1911

"My daddy's death left my mother with two boys and four daughters," says Truma Warren Edgerton, daughter of farmer Israel Warren and mother of novelist Clyde Edgerton. "We had hard

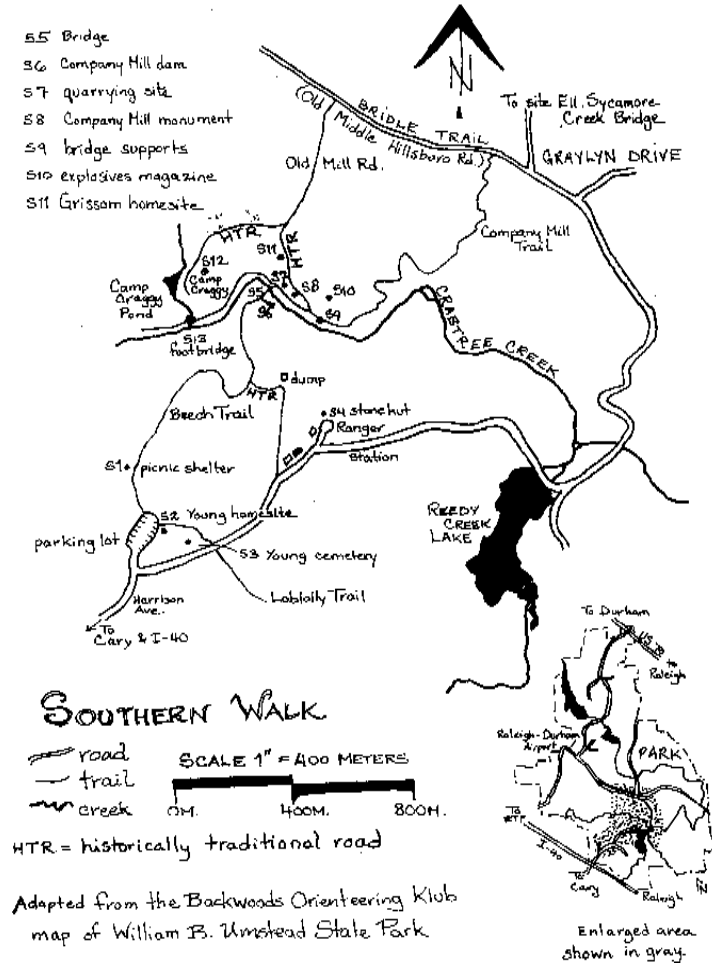
times because it was in planting time when these two deaths happened. So we hardly knew what we could do. Well, that's the way it was in the country."



Farmer Israel Warren (l) and son Luther died within weeks of each other in a 1911 typhoid epidemic.

"...And if, in this (another) age of blind greed, it is hard to get a handle on what is precious, it is in part because more books like this aren't being written, published, and read."

-- from Clyde Edgerton's Foreword to "Stories in Stone"



A farmer plowing in the Park area about 1935.

Opposite: One of the "Stories in Stone" walks