

### **DORIS BRAXTON FRYE: a biographical sketch**

Doris Braxton Frye was born in Greensboro in 1927 and graduated from Bessemer High School and WC-UNC, now UNC-G, where she received a business degree. She met her future husband through a college friend and married Avilon Frye, a serviceman in the US Navy, at the end of WWII. They had two children, Keith and Karen Anne.

She was hired as a typist for the public library in 1966, the same year the current facility was built. Over the next 26 years she progressed from secretarial work to research librarian by attending library workshops and gaining experience with library procedures. Part of her time as reference librarian was spent working with Miss Flossie Martin, a Davie County native whose mission was to establish a special collection of information to be used for historical and genealogical research. The Martin-Wall History Room was part of an expansion project completed in 1992, the same year Doris turned 65.



“Doris was ready to retire from full-time work at the perfect time,” comments Library Director Ruth Hoyle. “She was able to learn a lot about Davie County history by working with Miss Martin and by doing research; she also had a real interest in learning about history.” Funding was approved for a part-time position in the new History Room, and everything fell into place. She was hired to manage the ever-growing collection of genealogical records, photographs, newspaper clippings, memorabilia and other interesting artifacts (including a head stone), and to help people researching their own family trees.

Regarding her long career at the Davie County Public Library, Doris has especially enjoyed working with genealogical researchers for the last 13 years. Miss Martin was an inspiration to her, teaching her “the relationship between Davie County families, their kinship to each other and to the very early settlers here,” Doris said. “It’s been probably the most interesting work that a person can do – the variety and the emotional ties to families. You never know who’s going to walk in the door.” She has met and worked with “3 Daniels” over the years - present day descendants of Squire, Daniel and John Boone.

She’s helped people from all over the US, by phone, fax, mail and in recent years has “sort of eased into the computer age,” utilizing email and the Internet to accomplish what used to be unimaginable, coming from a time before there was even a copier. She remembers when the library got its first and only computer at the time. “It was really different in those days,” she laughs.

She has been “so impressed” with the wealth of information that Miss Martin and another local historian James Wall, worked to accumulate, with the help of other volunteers including Nancy Murphy. “When I came into the room, I inherited Nancy. She has made all the difference.”

Davie County Public Library  
Mocksville, North Carolina

Doris gratefully acknowledges all of the dedicated volunteers who work to organize and add materials to the files, not to mention keeping everything in order.

“I have said it would be great if we could do a ‘knowledge transplant’ so someone could know all that Doris knows,” Ms. Hoyle adds. “However, an important part of her job was organizing



the collection so that the information is available. She has also worked with her successor so that her good work will continue into the future.”

Doris looks forward to retirement at year-end 2005 and having leisure time to spend with family and devote to her hobbies of needlepoint, knitting and reading. A member of First Baptist Church in Mocksville for 60 years, she has been teaching Sunday school there since 1954. This year she and Avilon will celebrate their 59<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. They are the proud grandparents of three

granddaughters, Opal Frye and Grace Riddle, both in college, and Anna Mitchell, a pharmacist whose husband Michael is a Lieutenant in the Marine Corps, currently serving in Iraq. She also enjoys regular visits with her 100 year old mother.

After all the years of arranging the past in chronological order, when it comes right down to it, it seems that there’s no time like the present, and Doris Frye plans to make the most of it.

By Ellen Newman, December 2005