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6-5-2014

## Interview with Joe Stanton Johnson

Joe Stanton Johnson

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### Recommended Citation

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**LOUISE PETTUS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS  
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**Interview #303  
JOHNSON, Joe**

**JOHNSON, Joe**

Undergraduate student in the History department, minor in Political Science, librarian

*At Winthrop (Undergraduate): 1971-1975*

*Interviewed: June 5, 2014*

*Interviewer: Steve Blankenship*

*Index by: Erica Robertson*

*Length: 27 minutes 53 seconds*

Abstract: Joe Johnson discusses his growing up in the 1940's, his community service and his relationship with the late Gene Barnwell. This interview was conducted for inclusion into the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections Oral History Program.

Keywords: York County, 1940's, Generational Differences, Rotary, Ducks Unlimited, 4-H, Migratory Water Fowl Committee, Gene Barnwell,

**Interview Session (June 5, 2014): Digital File**

**Time      Keywords**

00:00:00 *Start of Interview*/Interviewer's Introduction

00:00:19 *Question:* What is your name and date of birth? *Answer:* Joe Stanton Johnson (address left out) for the educated people I was born 10 days after Pearl Harbor, but for those that drive foreign cars they wouldn't know. That would be December 7, 1941. Basic questions continue.

00:02:12 *Question:* Where did you receive your education? *Answer:* Clover High School and the University of South Carolina.

00:02:31 *Question:* What early jobs did you have? *Answer:* First paying job, was curb hopping at a drive-in restaurant, American thread swept floors at night on the second shift. While at USC worked at the state house and House of Representatives as a page, I left there and went to work at Central Chevrolet and then worked desk at town house motel. Worked my way through college or tried too, wasn't too good for the grades.

00:03:45 *Question:* How did you move into the automobile business? *Answer:* "Just to put it bluntly, I married into it". Left USC went into Navy for two, got out and worked for General Motors for a year. "While working at General Motors I got married, I

- happened to marry the Chevrolet dealer's daughter". His mother in law wanted him to work at dealership. Dunlap Chevrolet at the time. 46 years at current dealership.
- 00:05:23 *Question:* Tell me some of your fondest memories growing up in the York area?  
*Answer:* Growing up on the farm we basically lived off the land. On Saturday we would go get a big block of ice to put in our ice box. "One of the unique things about the old house, if you go back on the old documents some surveys will reference how far the courthouse is from points on Lincoln road, the main part of the house was log, so the old shingle roof was leaking and you had trouble walking across the floors, that room was called a courtroom, Grandfather was a constable we had a cellar in the house, there was a hole beside the bed and grandfather would run a chain from the bedpost to his prisoners so if they tried to escape he would wake up". Continues to talk about growing up, talks about daddy's belt and mom's hickory. "That's one thing we're missing in today's generation, we can't give a good whipping, and another thing, you were in church on Sunday I went 17 years without missing a Sunday".
- 00:12:01 *Question:* What else would you like to add to your...anything you want to? *Answer:* "I don't know, I've always been community service minded, very much dedicated to the Rotary and I work with Ducks Unlimited". Was in 4-H, became a state officer in 4-H, currently is vice chairman of the migratory water fowl committee. "I have had most jobs in the Church except the preacher; I'm a lifetime member of St. Paul United Methodist Church".
- 00:05:03 *Question:* Did you not want to run for city council here? *Answer:* "I live outside the city". Admires people who have run for office, but has also seen the abuse they take. "I'm not too political as to kissing someone's ass". Has been married 47 years, worked at dealership 46 years. "I can't relax, I always have to be doing something". Three children; two boys and a girl, lost daughter 4 years ago in an auto accident.
- 00:16:03 *Question:* You have any advice for these youngsters? *Answer:* "Just work hard and watch about your credibility". Would like to be remembered as a hard worker who did what he was supposed to be doing. "I hang around with young people, cause it keeps my mind young".
- 00:06:15 *Question:* So that leads us into the relationship with Gene Barnwell? *Answer:* When Gene came to town, the only thing prettier than his great big white house was his wife. He was friends with a cousin from years back, I got to know Gene through the business, and we just struck up a strong friendship that kind of evolved around as he went through his various political deals, we did not agree on everything, but we "conspired" on several things. Continues to discuss his relationship with Barnwell.
- 00:20:00 Johnson has to make a phone call.

00:22:24 *Question:* Just anything about Gene Barnwell? *Answer:* “Gene and I did a lot of stuff on the community side; I remember one thing we came up with was to eradicate drugs in York County”. Talks about how they wanted to have a number that spelled a word, but the one they liked the most the lady who owned it would not surrender it. Continues to discuss Barnwell, and how he admired him and the way he dressed. Discusses the good that Barnwell did for the community. Gets wound up over local issues. Continues to discuss Barnwell until the end of interview.

00:27:53 *End of Interview*