



Wanda English Jeffers 1985

WANDA ENGLISH JEFFERS

Bennettsville is located only 9 miles from the North Carolina line but is as deep south as Plains, Georgia. Going barefoot and wearing shorts downtown to dance at the Renezvous in the afternoon, dating and going to movies at night, parking on the golf course to "neck", eating hamburgers, and drinking a milkshake at Ye Old Tavern was what we did in the early 40's in the town where I grew up.

My father called square dances at X-Way pavilion near Laurinburg and did some calling at White Lake. Whenever he called, he took my brother, my mother and me and we used to watch them dance the round dance. Sometimes a couple would dance the "Shag" which was a fast upbeat, kick to the side, dip and slide back dance. My father did what they called the Black Bottom. My brother Skeebo English taught me the jitterbug which was rock twice, step twice and swing out, and this also included the Suzy-Q and trucking. All the steps are now smoothed down, danced to a slower beat and partners dance up and back instead of swinging around, however the new and the old dancers share the same love of dancing, and dedication to their era of dancing. I love it!

When I was 12 years old, I danced at the Masonic Temple in Bennettsville. I went to Ocean Drive, wore an old sailor hat with everybody's name on it and thought I was cool. The summer after my sophomore year at Winthrop College, Mary Nell Perry and I worked a while at Crescent Beach Hotel, stayed and worked at the Catalina Guest House serving breakfast and dinner. We danced at Roberts Pavilion with Ray Long, Ira Schmidt, Billy Jeffers, Jack Ward, Jimmy Batley, Bobby Rainwater, Jimmy Calcutt, Billy Jolley, and Sammy Atkinson.

The best female dancers I knew, who learned to dance at Boscobel near Clemson were Emily Trescott, and Francis "Stinky" King. One of the better male dancers was Ed Byers from Rock Hill. Winthrop during the war years and the Clemson Mid Winters were all a girl could ask for.

In September 1944 I met Billy Jeffers at Winthrop at Good Shop. We were married April 14th, 1945. The first Christmas after our marriage we went to 7 dances in 6 days. Billy and I will celebrate 40 years together on April 14th. Needless to say my dancing improved because I married the best dancer of them all.