

I have contributed some information on the Braddock family to the Amelia Island Geological Society web page. However, what I have learned about my ancestry through this web page is much more than I have contributed.

One item of information I learned was highly surprising and is worth sharing: Most everyone that grew up in Charleston, SC during the 1930's, 40's, and 50's has a favorite story they love to tell about some encounter they had with Pompey, one of the city's most colorful and best remembered characters of that era. I have mine and have been telling it for over fifty years:

Not long after my family moved from the Braddock stronghold of North Florida to Charleston, SC in 1941, some of my young playmates and I built a crude boat of scrap plywood. We launched it in Charleston's public lake and began rowing to the other side. By the time we got halfway across, it had sunk to the bottom. As we stood up in it in the waist deep water, we heard a shout from the shore. "You boys come on in! You're under arrest for swimming in the lake!" It was the plain clothes policeman all the kids called Pompey, who rode a red bicycle. In fact, when they knew they could get away with it without him catching them, they would yell, "Pompey ride the rooster, just like he use ter!" and run like mad. We answered back that we weren't swimming; we were in a boat. Not seeing a boat, he thought we were being smart Alecks and yelled at us even louder. Instead of heading toward him, we started wading in the opposite direction. Before we got too far, we looked up and, lo and behold, he had ridden his bike around the lake and was sitting waiting on us. We turned and started back the other way, and he took off on his bike to head us off again. Finally, we decided to stop and wait him out. After a long while, he rode off, and we came out and skeedaddled home, knowing he would come swooping down on us any minute. Learning more about his nature over the years and that he was the biggest friend kids growing up in Charleston back then had, I've often wondered if he hadn't been behind one of the oleander bushes along the lake having a good laugh at having made us wade back and forth half the afternoon.

Information I recently received because of the Nassau County web page has made the telling of the story much more interesting and has given its ending a surprising twist:

Barbara Apodaca, a Floridian now teaching school in Nevada, found my email address on the Nassau County web page while tracing her Braddock ancestry and contacted me. We began swapping genealogies of our respective limbs of the Braddock tree. One of the names she sent seemed vaguely familiar. By it, she noted, " My great-uncle Spencer Schill worked for the police department in Charleston for 20 plus years." I immediately went to one of my scrapbooks and found a yellowed old newspaper article: Yesteryear: Skaters and 'Pompey'. The article, a nostalgic piece written 20 years ago about the plain-clothes juvenile policeman, gave his name as Spencer Schill. When I tell this story now, I can add, "And now for the rest of the story: the man who threatened to arrest me almost 60 years ago was my 3rd cousin, twice removed."
Relations

Charleston Article
Yesteryear: Skaters and 'Pompey'
By W. D. CHAMBERLAIN, Assistant Editor

Television news pictures the other evening of Police Chief Reuben M. Greenberg roller skating merrily along South Battery reminded how much views on enforcement of some laws have changed over the last 40 or 50 years. A couple of generations ago Charleston girls and boys skated on paved driveways -- if they were lucky enough to live in houses with driveways -- or on streets especially designated as skating zones, meaning they were closed to auto traffic. To skate elsewhere on other streets or sidewalks was to risk having your skates impounded, maybe for as long as a month.

The impounder was most apt to be juvenile officer Spencer C. Schill, who usually ranged the peninsula on his bicycle, dismounting to make foot patrols or to ride in a police car only when circumstances dictated a change in tactics. Officer Schill, who usually wore a business suit and a felt hat, attire which accentuated the high profile he projected as he pedaled purposefully about.

Because boys will be boys, and resort to boyish logic, many regarded Mr. Schill as an adversary, an Establishment figure. To them he was "Pompey." His bicycle, for reasons long forgotten, was the "rooster." "Pompey ride the rooster!" the defiant ones would sing out in derision as Mr. Schill rounded a corner and coasted toward a line of illegal skaters or a pick up ball game in the middle of the street. Chases were short-lived, or sometimes not even attempted. Two wheels are no match for eight, especially when the eight are powered by young legs. Many a youngster who congratulated himself on having eluded Pompey by taking evasive action through backyards and down alleys reached home later only to be met on the stoop by Juvenile Officer Schill in serious conversation with one or both parents. Outrunning Mr. Schill was one thing, outwitting him was another.

In later years, as a police reporter, I came to know Juvenile Officer Schill better. I found out something that I wished I -- and my contemporaries -- had realized earlier. Officer Schill was not an uncaring kill-joy. He was a conscientious man trying his level best to do a difficult job almost single-handedly. He did not relish taking kids to court. He took them only as a last resort. He believed in talking to parents, in getting them to make minor miscreants shape up. He also believed there were far, far more mischievous boys than incorrigibles. Juvenile Officer Schill enforced the law (still on the book) against skating on city streets and sidewalks because - as conversations with him made quite clear -- he was motivated by the same concern that motivated the framers of that law: public safety. Juvenile Officer Schill was convinced that his primary job was protecting children. He dressed them down or wrote them up only when they resisted his efforts or disregarded his warnings.

Spencer C. Schill, 36 years with the department and 31 years as a Juvenile officer, figured that skaters and automobiles made a mighty poor mix, from the standpoint of safety. Were he still

alive (he died one month after his retirement' in 1953), Mr. Schill would probably say that nothing has happened in the last three decades to make him change his thinking. You kind of have to look out for youngsters, he'd probably say, until they are old enough to realize the consequence of what they do.