

# Country Boy

An Autobiography by

Charles Croffard 'Doc' Dockery

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# Introduction

Welcome to the life of C.C. (Doc) Dockery. Yup, that's me.

In this autobiography of Charles Croffard Dockery, I want to share some of the events, good fortune, misfortune, luck and spiritual guidance which have shaped nearly eight decades of my life.

I was prompted to do this when it became apparent that my mother, Mildred Marie Hurt-Dockery-York, was living her last few weeks on this earth. It was then that I realized I had let many, many years, too many, slip by without asking the questions which were now bubbling through to the surface of my mind. But, now it appeared to be too late as she was suffering from the advanced stages of dementia. During those precious times we would talk and I would ask questions but her recollection of the past was not as clear as it would have been years earlier.

At the same time, I looked back to realize that I didn't know my dad, Doctor Albert Dockery, as well as I could have even though he left my brother and me when I was eight.

I wondered if my children, Carl and Michele, my grandchildren Justin and Katharine, other loved ones and many, many friends I had accumulated over the years would someday look back and perhaps think that they would have liked to ask me some things about my life.

I thought they might.

One way to answer some of those questions after it becomes too late to ask them directly is to tell my story here.

The book has been organized by decade starting in the thirties when I was born in Elkin, North Carolina. To help put my life into a political, geographic and time perspective some very notable events are covered in each decade. For example, in 1933, the year I was born, the seeds for a world war were being sown as Adolph Hitler rose to power in Germany.

During the forties, most of what I'll be telling you happened on the farm of my grandparents on my mother's side where I grew up and learned to become a man at a very early age.

The fifties will highlight my U.S. Air Force career of eight years while serving in Texas, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Florida, Germany and Okinawa.

The sixties introduced me to a world of association management, magazine publishing, lobbying, and the introduction to what would become a very profitable adventure for me in the world of insurance.

The seventies would find me continuing my work in association management until I struck out on my own in 1977 to build what became a very, very profitable insurance business for me and my family with a company doing business in several states starting in Florida, branching out to Louisiana, Georgia, Oklahoma and Missouri.

My insurance activities would continue through the eighties which saw me become a member of the famous insurance empire, Lloyd's of London, and establish a reinsurance company in Grand Cayman, British West Indies and Bermuda. The successes could have come to an end in 1986 when I was in a tug of war with one of the most powerful trade associations in Florida to retain control of a large portion of my business. It was during the eighties when I sold the business I had formed in the seventies to an international brokerage firm. It was for more money than I ever dreamed I would have the opportunity to earn.

The nineties would present me with a challenge to defend myself against allegations by the Internal Revenue Service that I owed them money year after year. Finally, I did not want to take it any longer, refusing to pay what I felt I didn't owe. The result, I won and went on to cause legislation to be introduced in the Congress that resulted in the shifting of the burden of proof during IRS disputes from the taxpayer to the IRS. Today, the case is enshrined in a record of past court decisions. With business success came more and more opportunities to travel the world sightseeing and hunting.

The twenty-first century, rolling along into 2011, was another wonderful collection of years during which I became very politically active helping my wife Paula, proudly

watching her grow into an effective member of the Florida Legislature.

It was also a time when, out of exasperation with efforts to build a high speed rail system in Florida, I successfully got an amendment placed in the Florida constitution requiring that the system be built. Four years later, then Governor Jeb Bush, bankrolled with money from friends and corporations for whom he'd done many favors, successfully got the constitutional amendment deleted from the constitution. But that didn't happen before the Florida High Speed Rail Authority, of which I was a member, and which was created by the Florida Legislature as a result of the High Speed Rail Constitutional Amendment, paved the way for another attempt to build high speed rail in Florida after Barack Obama was elected president in the 2008 General Election and vowed to build a nationwide high speed rail system.

Despite some health problems after I reached my mid seventies, I am closing out the year 2010 and the beginning of 2011 with a continuing zest for hunting and new travel adventures.

It has been a wonderful life for which I thank the Lord, my family and friends. I look forward to facing and embracing the next decade with enthusiasm, purpose and perseverance.

I sincerely hope that you will enjoy sharing many of my exciting journeys through these past eight decades.

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