Everette’s Trucking: A Partnership for the Long Haul

By Al Secor and Ed Ward

Introduction by Al Secor

Ever wonder what life would be like as a professional trucker today? How about decades ago as a long-haul trucker without modern technology? No cell phones, no tracking devices, no pagers. Just pull on your boots and cap, fill the tank, jump in, and
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drive hundreds, sometimes thousands, of miles to destinations far and wide with just a truck and a map.

Woodrow Everette of the Pinetown community was a professional trucker and business owner of the highest quality whose career spanned all phases of trucking, both modern and primitive. He was indeed a self-made man who grew up shoveling coal from railroad cars in his early years to raise enough money to eventually buy his own trucks in order to begin what would become one of the most successful trucking businesses in rural North Carolina.

According to Mrs. Annie Everette, his wife of over 54 years, Woodrow lived the dream but not without a few setbacks. After he and Annie were married, he had just begun to get the business rolling when World War II commenced. As a result, he had to sell his six trucks and put the money into bonds. He was in service for two and a half years before he could return home and pick up where he left off. That’s just what he did. Soon thereafter, his business grew so large that he was able to hire lease drivers as well as drivers for his own trucks.

Days passed, months, and soon 52 years of trucking from 1936 until 1988 had sped by before Woodrow Everette hauled his last load and retired. He hauled almost everything over those years, from steel, grain, and lumber to fertilizer, coal, vegetables, and farming supplies. According to Mrs. Everette, “Woodrow’s ambition was that he was going to do it, and he did it!” She added, “He worked really hard, but he loved every minute of it.”

As Mrs. Everette shared her memories with us, Woodrow Everette emerged as a model for all of us who still value the American
This powerful tractor is made for the long haul
dream and cherish the work ethic. Woodrow Everette is proof that hard work still breeds success. As Mark Twain once said, "The harder I work, the luckier I get." Such could be the motto for Woodrow Everette and Everette’s Trucking.

Mrs. Annie has been my [Al Secor] friend and surrogate grandmother since I was just a small child. She will help us explore some of the challenges and glories of owning one’s own trucking business in a rural community all the way back to the days when trucking was just beginning. Join us now for a conversational ride with Mrs. Annie as she recounts the story of a wonderful man and the mile-markers of his dream.

Life: How did Everette’s Trucking begin?
Mrs. Everette: My husband, Woodrow Everette, started out with two old trucks just before we were married. He had an old yellow truck and an old black truck, which were kind of short. They were called ten-wheelers back then.

Life: Did he start the business when you decided to get married?

Mrs. Everette: No. He had been in the business before we even met.

Life: About what year did he start?

Mrs. Everette: It was in 1936. Woodrow lived just down the street from me. We met in 1940, and we were married in 1941.

Life: How many trucks did he have then?

Mrs. Everette: He had two then, but just before we got married, he bought a new truck. After we were married, he bought another new truck. He had approximately six trucks before he went off to war.

Life: He must have been a hard worker.

Mrs. Everette: Yes. He worked night and day. He even had the office telephone wired into the house so that when the phone rang in the office, it rang in the house too. That was pretty bad because you never knew when one of the drivers would have a flat tire on the road, a wreck, or overload charges. It was just a big job!

Life: When did he go to war?
Mrs. Everette: World War II. He was called into service in June, so he sold the trucks and put the money into bonds. Just before he went into service, our first child was born in February.

Life: How long did he serve?

Mrs. Everette: He was in service about two and a half years, and when he came home, he started the business again. He built the business up to the point where he could hire some lease drivers who owned their own trucks. He still had his own truck drivers, too. This kept him very busy.

*Big trailers are parked, waiting the' next loads.*

Life: When did he retire?

Mrs. Everette: It was in 1988, when he finally stopped.
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Life: How far did the trucks go?

Mrs. Everette: A few went as far as California, but most of the time the drivers would haul steel, grain, and lumber. Before he was married, Woodrow would shovel coal from the railroad cars to his truck to haul it.

Life: What else did he haul?

Mrs. Everette: He hauled junk from the farmers and sold that. He had official authority to haul most all of this stuff. He would haul tobacco, fertilizer, lime, or most anything, like apple sauce and canned goods for wholesale. As his business grew bigger, it was mostly lumber that he hauled.

It was a very busy time. His ambition was that he was going to do it, and he did it! He worked really hard, and he loved every minute of it. When something needed to be done in the garage, he stepped right in and helped do it. He had to do all his work from the beginning, but when the business got bigger and bigger, of course, he had to hire a mechanic. He would help the mechanic and tell the mechanic how to do it.

Life: Did the children join the business?

Mrs. Everette: Our youngest son was mechanically inclined, but our oldest son was more of a salesperson. They both dispatched and helped where needed. When the girls got out of school, they helped him, too.
Life: What were the most unusual things that your husband hauled?

Mrs. Everette: He would go around in the country, pick up scrap iron and tobacco, and sell these things.

Life: Did Mr. Woodrow talk much about the War?

Mrs. Everette: He lived in England, Germany, and France, but he did not talk about it much.

Life: Were there ever any hard times?

Mrs. Everette: He would sign a note to make it through the year sometimes, and I would worry; but he assured me that every-

*The original office, dating to 1936, is still standing.*
thing was going to be all right. It always was.

Life: How many of the children are still in the trucking business?

Mrs. Everette: One. Our son Steve is in Baltimore. He was the salesman of the family. My son-in-law also owns his own trucking business here in Washington.

Life: How many years were you and your husband married?

Mrs. Everette: Fifty-four and a half years.

Life: A marriage that long is a story in itself, especially for 1998, but I guess we’ll have to save that one for another time.

Conclusion by Ed Ward

First, we want to thank Mrs. Everette for sharing her memories of Mr. Woodrow Everette and Everette’s Trucking Company with us.

In 1936, Woodrow Everette filled the first tanks that lead to the realization of his dream—to own a trucking business in Eastern, North Carolina. With a little money, a load of faith, and a lot of hard work, Mr. Everette became one of the most successful businessmen in the hauling industry in these parts. His wife, Mrs. Annie Everette, shared his story with us on a raw, rainy February afternoon at her beautiful home adjacent to the business her husband founded and made successful over sixty years ago in the Pinetown community.
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One of the statements that really affected me and my co-writer, Al Secor, the most, was just how hard Woodrow Everette worked to maintain his success long after he had “made it” in the world’s eyes. Mrs. Everette stated that until he retired, Woodrow “worked day and night. He even had the office telephone wired into the house so that when the phone rang in the office, [no matter what the hour], it also rang in the house.” She added that Woodrow cared about his drivers and that whatever needed to be done, “Woodrow would step right in and help do it.” Mrs. Everette explained that the business got big, but Woodrow’s head never

![](image)

*Al Secor (left) and Ed Ward enjoyed Mrs. Annie Everette’s recollections of Everette’s Trucking.*

...did. Woodrow was a good businessman and a good working man.

Soon the business became a family business as both his boys and girls began to find their places in the business while they were

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growing up. According to Mrs. Everette "One son was mechanically inclined and another was good at sales while the girls dispatched and helped wherever needed when out of school." However, only one son remains in the trucking business today. Her son Steve operates a trucking business in Baltimore. However, Mrs. Everette added that she also has a son-in-law who owns a trucking business here in Washington.

It was certainly a pleasure to spend an afternoon with Mrs. Annie Everette and learn about a man who became a success the old fashioned way in Pinetown, North Carolina—he earned it. Mile by mile, truck by truck, year by year, Woodrow Everette lived his dream and still stayed close enough to his roots to realize he was wide awake throughout his wonderful journey.