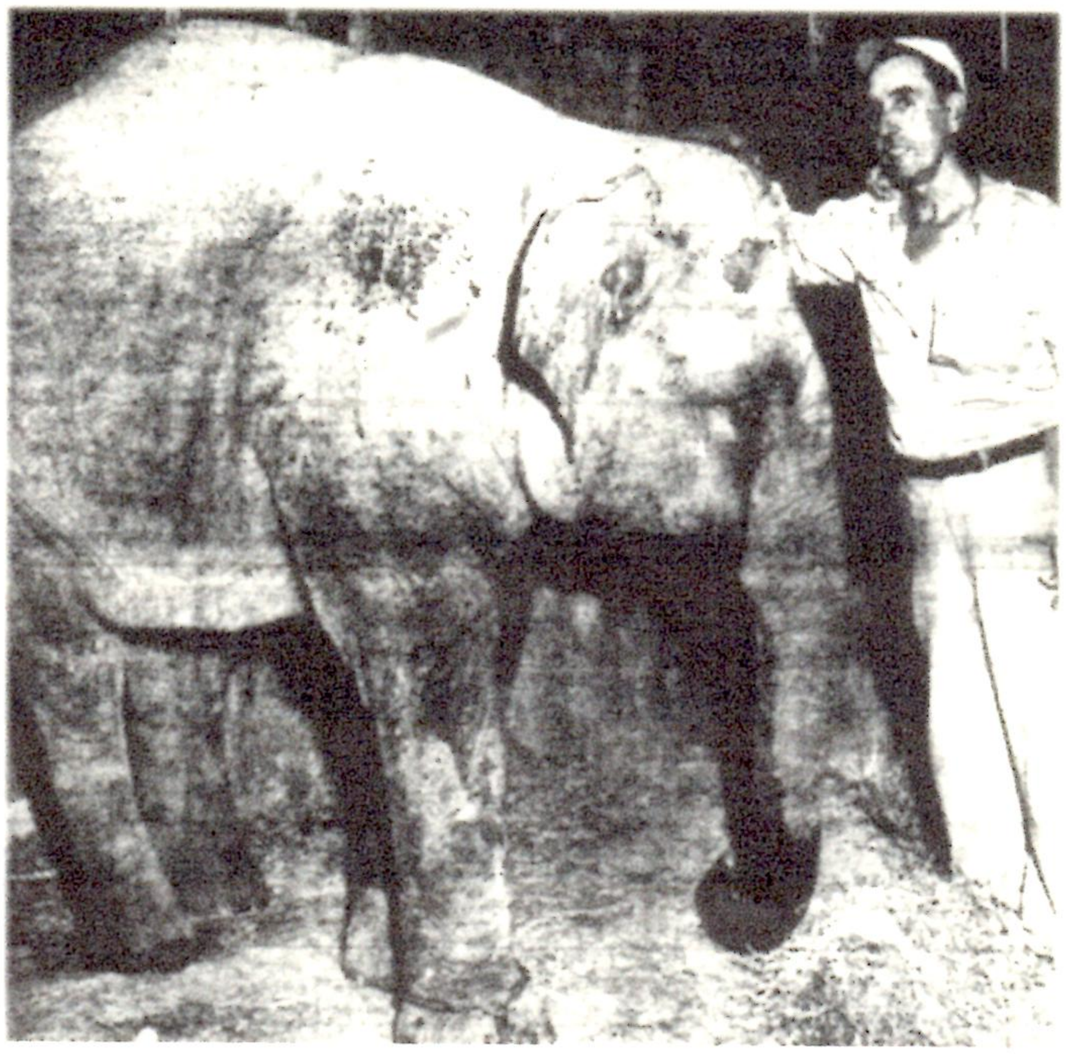
COMING SOON... MANGO SEASON Saison, ***Kamikaze Cat*** Black Lager, Electric Octopus Bangkok IPA

VICKI THE ELEPHANT

PEANUT BUTTER ALE

ABV 5.7% IBU 15 SRM 8



SOURCE: MICROFILM CAPTURE COURTESY OF CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG LIBRARY (Vicki aka Vickie/Vicky)

A Posthumous Nod to a Free Spirit

On Sunday, September 11, 1955, **Vicki**, a 6-year-old Indian elephant (that's 8 to 10 in human years) escaped from the Airport Amusement Park in **Charlotte**. This now-defunct circus was located on Wilkinson Boulevard, down a stone's throw from what then stood as the Douglas Municipal Airport.

For nine days, the 2,300-pound runaway foraged not far from her former circus life, moseying into nearby neighborhoods when she sought a break from her vacationing ways. Other elephants were brought in to lure Vicki home. Pit traps were bulldoze dug. Law enforcement statewide - and even a hunter from Africa! - came up empty-handed in recapturing the fugitive pachyderm. And yes, the global media had a circus with it. Even Vicki's handler Smoky Strickland had no luck. All would come to find out later that Vicki had escaped multiple times in the past, always without capturing the media's attention.

On Tuesday, September 20th, Vicki's nine-day jaunt came to an end when a former Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey elephant trainer named Louis Reed, Vicki's owner and friend Jack Partlow, Strickland, and a gang of policemen and civilian volunteers herded Vicki into a large enclosed field where the elephant pooped, figuratively, from the strain of group exercise. A pile of sweet grass was her only consolation. Two years later Vicki, whose immature feet required a good bit of time to heal (evidence indicates that her infected feet probably never did), was sold to Carowinds developer Pat Hall. Hall relocated/resold the wayward elephant to a little-known town northwest toward the Blue Ridge Mountains, a town named **Granite Falls**.

Vicki's new owner, **A.L. Lord**, was at the time custodian of the Granada Farms Zoo. Granada Farms - which had begun as a dairy in 1918 by Shuford Mills founder A.A. Shuford - operated for many years as a small zoo. Shortly after arriving at her new home, Vicki fell prey to an incurable infection. In humane fashion, the then 9-year-old adolescent (elephants hit puberty at 10-13 years in age) was euthanized. In 1976 Granada Farms, a former dairy, one-time zoo, was redeveloped into a golf course. Local old-timers attest that Vicki rests today somewhere under the Number Three fairway of Granada Farms: circus elephant bones under a golf course! With the release of our Peanut Butter Ale, **Granite Falls Brewing Company** celebrates the free spirit in all of us. The incurable, animal drive to break away from the herd on occasion, to explore and appease one's inner thirst for adventure.

The owners of GFB live a stone's throw from this burial site. We and our employees trumpet respectfully: "Hats off to you, Vicki, young girl, our one-of-a-kind neighbor! A free spirit who dared to break from the herd." (VICKI THE ELEPHANT. RIP 1949-1958)



Reference author David Aaron Moore and his article "Question the Queen City: When an elephant roamed Charlotte". CREATIVE LOAFING – The CLog. June 21, 2013. Thanks to the author for his telephone time. Thanks to Odell White, owner, Granada Farms Golf Course. Highly recommended - *Etched in Granite: The History of Granite Falls, N.C.* by Maxine McCall.