

Pat Brinkley

Side 1:

[I was scheduled to interview "Mac" but learned, on confirming the date, that he did not feel up to it. He is suffering from Parkinson's and suggested I interview Pat who told me about him and the Western North Carolina Development Association] [Morris (Mac) McGough]

"Mac" was born in Bastrope, LA with 8 brothers and a sister on a large cotton farm. He went to the University of Louisiana earning a BA and MA.

[18] He worked for the Dunn Chemical Co. doing agricultural surveys. The business men realized that not enough work was being done to improve rural living standards. He came to Asheville (see Chamber of Commerce enclosure) with Dunn to survey. He said that economic development was like a three-legged stool: industry, tourism (Cecil was one of the first directors) and agriculture. He took people from Asheville to Tupelo, MS to see their program. [George Cecil]

[35] The Western North Carolina Development Association was patterned after Tupelo MS. This year the Tupelo people came here to study this program - theirs had slipped a little.

[45] He was offered a position here in 1949. The rural standards were dismal - no paint on houses, no plumbing or electricity, unsanitary ways of canning, poor education. The Asheville Agricultural Council was part of the Chamber of Commerce and, after 30 years, went on its own as a private, non-profit separate entity working with state agencies with public and legislative support. At times he worked for no salary - he stayed with it for 37 years. [McGough]

[80] He had a manner with people, believing there was no limit to what a community can do if it wants to. He showed people how to organize and work together.

[108] The system of cooperation worked in Berea, KY in the coal mines and worked in NC with the Cooperative Extension Service. Farm agents go into areas to organize cooperative programs involving as many as 18 counties.. The county pays for support services and agents are paid by the State. There are agents in every county with an office. This framework existed before.

[133] People met in fields, basements of houses, churches, barns and schools to look at strengths and weaknesses. The results were phenomenal. The people are still organizing with enthusiasm.

[150] Every year close to 100 groups organize. Over a period of 45 years over 400 groups have formed in communities with less than 100 to more than 1000 people. A community is like a neighborhood - it sets its own boundaries and chooses its programs.

[172] Officers are chosen, tax-exempt status is achieved through incorporation, and fund raisers held to build play grounds and buildings - over 160 community centers have been built. This is done with community resources by having quilt shows, road-side stands, suppers, festivals, animal raffles, square dance contests etc. - anything to get the people together.

[200] Retirees from Florida bring ideas - one was a tea cup tea party. From this (tickets at \$10 each) came a contribution to the purchase of the present property.

[220] The role of the Development Association is to get the group started - set regular dates for meetings, decide on goals and generally organize.

[231] This is still a cooperative program. The Research and Extension Center in Fletcher, NC belongs to the University but the new building and new land purchase were spearheaded by the Community Development Association. (see enclosure) In the same way they work with the Department of Agriculture and the Farmers' Market. The WNC Agricultural Center is owned by the Department of Agriculture. The Mountain Research Center in Waynesville works with the Department of Agriculture and state employees work there - doing research on beef cattle, Christmas trees, and goats, and they are looking for alternatives to growing tobacco. (See enclosure)

[265] No single crop has been found as a substitute for tobacco, in terms of producing income. It is the #1 commodity in this area.

[281] The government gives tobacco growers an allotment, telling them how much land they can use for growing and paying a certain allotment for land not planted. This is to keep prices stable. The same arrangement is made with the sale of milk. (see Charles Sluder tape)

[305] Finding better ways of marketing and growing crops is a constant effort. Horticultural crops are the mainstay of the economy. Next come Christmas trees and ornamentals.

[322] Much of Western North Carolina is under the U.S. Forest Service which has restricted the amount of timber that can be cut. Graham County is hurting because 70% of the land is owned by the government. Pressed wood is being manufactured but there is still a lot of solid wood manufactured in NC. Most of the State's income comes from agriculture and manufacturing. In 1954 the agricultural income was \$50 million in all WNC - now it is \$430 million a year. There are no more than 10% of the farmers who farm full time, the rest supplement incomes in other professions.

[357] The young people, fearing they can't make a living on the farm, sell the land to developers. The loss of lands means a loss of a way of life.

[380] She has not had a farm background. Farming is unstable at best - subject to the weather, economy, mandates from the government, and machinery expenses.

[402] "Mac" established the Community Development Association to work with groups of volunteers with different commodities (horses, beef, dairy, horticultural crops and forestry) to help diversify and develop new markets. The items change over the years with changes in needs. Groups sponsor programs i.e. education for the young like 4 H clubs, sponsor contests etc. and work with the Extension agents. [McGough]

[439] The Development Association has diversified funding which has enabled it to survive where other non-profits have not. It started working with 18 county governments and the Cherokee Reservation. Appropriations are also received from the state and fund campaigns.

[456] The Association had office space in the City Hall for 39 years where the rent was \$53 a month. When the City Hall was being remodeled, a space in the Wachovia Bank building was donated for a year until new space could be found. A phone campaign was started by Dyson and the Farmers' Market was asked for some land. Everybody worked together and \$10,000 was raised. People feel that this is "our office." (see enclosed snap shots) This is a triple wide modular unit. An architect was on the board who adjusted the interior to fit office needs and a deck was built outside. The building is considered "temporary" and the land is on loan. [Charlie Dyson, Tai Lee]

[526] The Association Board of 62 members is diversified and represents many backgrounds with leadership abilities.

[540] Churches and schools are integral parts of communities. They all work together with the community centers. However, as small schools consolidate into larger schools, some of the community feeling is lost.

Side 2:

Pat said she had no background for what she is doing now. She, with a business background, was working in a psychiatric hospital. She wanted to make a change and was employed as secretary with the Development Association. The Farmers' Market was just starting and she was sent to communities to present programs. She had the "desire but didn't have the courage behind it" - "Mac" pushed her into it. When he was ill, prior to a major presentation, he insisted that she take over. She found she loved it. "Mac allowed people to be more than you ever dreamed you could be. That was part of his gift." When he had her take a public relations class, the instructors told her that she was "working with the grandfather of P.R." She made one of the highest grades. [McGough]

[2/68] After she had been with "Mac" for 9 years he decided to retire. There was a 9-month search period. "Mac" backed her - she applied - the only female in an all-male world - and she was employed. She felt she had a lot to prove. Now she is more comfortable. [McGough]

[2/104] "Mac" was on the Chamber of Commerce. The Farmers' Market, formerly held in town, needed a new location. The Biltmore Estate was willing to sell land to the State. The results exceeded all expectations as a tourist attraction, helping motels and hotels. Last year \$42 million dollars was sold in produce with 1 ½ million visitors from all over the country. [McGough]

[2/138] The Farmers' Market has several areas: 1. stands for farmers or family 2. space rented out on a yearly basis (chosen by bidding) 3. Seasonal stalls: i.e. water melons and pumpkins (see enclosure) 4. wholesale only - for restaurants and stores. There are places to eat and a nursery (see enclosure)

[2/161] The WNC Agricultural Center is responsible for the sales arena (see snap shots). The whole area belongs to the NC Department of Agriculture. The Development Association works with them. Many shows and activities are held in the Horse Arena - i.e., youth shows (beef, dairy, lamb) dog, cat, tractor pulls, rodeos, shows, special dinners. On the same land there is a diagnostic lab which is vital to the health of the livestock. [Dinna Shores]

[2/220] Years ago there was a State Fair in Hominy Valley which received some government backing. However, the people were not organized and people grew weary. With the purchase of additional land the first show was held this year (see enclosure). The theme this year was forestry.

[2/290] Three motels have been built close to the agricultural building, a small tack shop had expanded and the Holiday Inn prospers to the extent that during an event a waitress can make \$300 to \$400 in tips. The city has always worked with the center and Planning and Zoning laid out water and sewer lines. This area was annexed by the city. It takes time to work out a project such as this (see John Cort tape)

[2/360] When completed, the Arboretum will probably be one of the best economic boosts for Asheville. Tourists will take one day for the Biltmore House and stay over another day. Under the direction of Olson, the U.S. Supervisor for the Forest Service, 432 acres belonging to the state has been leased for 90 years and 237 acres can be developed later. Creech, retired from the Washington, DC Arboretum, was hired on an interim basis. Two and one half million people visit the educational center (see enclosure). There is a curator for the Bonsai collection (see enclosure). The education director offers programs for city people who can go for information. It is managed like any other campus, part of the NC University system. The director is on par with the UNCA Chancellor. [George Olson, John Creech]

[2/434] The Botanical Gardens differ from the Arboretum which means "place to grow trees" and is larger and more isolated.

[2/458] There is a computer program for landscapers who need information regarding soil conditions and types of plants suited for specific areas. In Fletcher there is a research station specializing in plants.

[2/473] Farmers must be better educated. The Farmers' Market and the Arboretum offer more than the community colleges can offer. The closest 4-year agricultural school is NC State. Farmers are facing a new world. They must keep up with new laws, advances in technology, long-term planning in financing and help in bookkeeping.