

## James and Elspeth Clarke

### Side 1:

Woodcock's name is mentioned at beginning of tape but not elaborated on - see enclosed re. his participation. When McClure died, Ramsey and Jamie were the only NC trustees of the McClure Fund. This came at a time when the emphasis shifted from the development of farm markets to supplying educational help to young people. [Julian A Woodcock (Jack), James G. K. McClure, Claude Ramsey]

[11] Ramsey had served on the State Board of Education for a number of years and was appointed to the State Board of Higher Education. He designed the scholarship plans. This is administered by Jamie, Jamie's son-in-law John, his daughter Annie and 4 others comprising the board. [John Curtis Ager, Annie McClure Ager]

[16] Grants from the Fund are given to students across Appalachia who qualify because of ability and family needs.

[35] The 2 1/2 million dollar fund generates the income for scholarship. McClure had annual campaigns but now the fund, along with contributions, is sufficient.

[49] Woodcock was on the Board of Trustees and was also involved in the Asheville Sinking Fund (See Katharine Shepard re. her father Curtis Bynum and the Depression). The annual income from the county and city of Asheville paid off the Depression debts. They knew, as friends, the people involved. [Curtis Bynum, Jack Shuford]

[59] For 8-10 years Jamie was associate editor of the Asheville Citizen working with Tribble. Stephens had gone before this time (see Eleanor Stephens tape) and Webb had sold the paper to the Multi Media. (see encl) [Hal Tribble, George Stephens, Robert Webb]

[69] He has seen changes in the paper since he worked there. One of the nice things about Ramsey was that when he saw something that was needed in the community he would write a letter and suggest an editorial. [Claude Ramsey]

[81] He came to Asheville in his teens and he didn't realize how deep the Depression was here. One half of the lockers in the Biltmore Country Club were empty. His family was not affected. He lived next door to Jane (see Bingham tape) [Jane Bingham]

[91] Elspeth said she had \$300 in the Central Bank. Her mother, traveling to the city by train, was advised to draw her money out. When she got there, people were lined up to take out their money. In the country the people had already been poor and were not as effected as the city people, who had been speculating and over extending themselves.

[116] When McClure started the Farmers' Federation in 1920 the average cash income for a farm family was \$86 a year. The Foundation filled a tremendous need and the cooperatives grew quickly.

[125] McClure had studied for the ministry but, while serving in a church in Michigan, had a breakdown and came to Fairview to recover. This house was bought as a summer home. He started organizing the farmers and, when he was called to serve in Lake Forest, IL, a delegation of neighbors asked him to stay here to help them.

[148] In 1921 he built warehouses in Newbridge and Fletcher and developed a marketing enterprise. The main idea was to develop markets. Farmers would sell to the warehouse and buy from the co-op. Carloads of hens were sent to NY and Philadelphia. A poultry processing plant was started on Valley Street. A co-op dairy plant marketed milk. The first tobacco warehouse was opened. The group helped start pulp wood sales with Champion, along with his friend Robertson, president of Champion. He developed a market for one crop after another. Hatching eggs were shipped by air to Cuba. At the end of the year members could receive cash or stock in the company. [Reuben Robertson]

[186] McClure got Jamie's father to come in 1930. He had heard about churches in South Carolina which had paid off debt by members raising cotton and giving to the church the income realized from one acre of land. This enabled the church to afford a minister and build a house for him. Up to this time churches could only afford a minister once a month (see enclosed). He worked with all Christian churches. [Dumont Clarke]

[206] In 1959 the Federation was having financial troubles. It merged with FCX. (See clippings dated 2/20/59 and 1/12/63 and We Plow God's Fields by John Ager enclosed.)

[220] The program started by the Chamber of Commerce [Western North Carolina Development Association, see Pat Brinkley tape] was a good thing. The same people were served and they were helped to help themselves by developing social groups that held meetings and had local projects: i.e. clean-up campaigns and erecting mail boxes. It was more social than economic. [Morris "Mac" McGough]

[231] There were plenty of churches in the area before the projects were started but the people learned how to organize and raise money.

[245] He had been working with Mrs. Dameron who told him that there was going to be a non-partisan election for the school board and suggested he run. He was running the McClure Foundation and working for the Asheville paper at the time. She said she could get Weir (the city political boss) to support him. [Mrs. C. E.. Dameron, Weldon Weir]

[256] Weir was a smart politician. Elspeth knows his sister-in-law. [Martha Weir]

[265] Marie told me that Jamie had given her his enthusiastic support. (see Colton tape) [Marie Colton]

[271] He served 8 successful years on the County Board of Education. He was elected chairman. The county commissioners were supportive - Owen was on the county board. Mimi also served. The legislature changed the system whereby elections would be by school districts. [Carry Owen, Mimi Cecil]

[284] He decided that this was the time to run for the legislature. He served two terms, ran for the State Senate and then Congress. He had contacts due to the Farm Federation and his father's work. People would say to him, "I don't know you, but your father was a good man."

[300] He was in Washington during the Iran Contra debates. By 1983 the children were pretty well grown. [He is putting logs on the fire]

[330] The Institute of Government was new in the 50's (see Mary Lloyd Frank tapes) Not many other states have this [training for new office holders].

[342] The Foundation is meeting the needs of a new era. Grants are now given to all community colleges and students can get technical training. The trustees represent the whole area. Holden was president of Warren Wilson College, Martha Guy is president of the Avery County Bank, Dave Graham is principal of the Arden School, and a doctor at the Murphy Medical Center. (Is on the board) Ramsey always wanted to help people training for nursing and Jennings is still on the board. Ministers are offered training in marriage counseling. [Dr. Ben Holden, Martha Guy, Dave Graham, Dr. Dick Jennings]

[415] The farm family life is changing. Farmers can no longer stay at home and support themselves.

[421] With the increase in the value of land, farmers are tempted to sell to developers. In 1956 an acre sold for \$50. Two years ago the same land would be valued at \$5,000 (see Pat Brinkley tape) Even rough mountain land is selling.

[449] McClure was asked by Scott to be chairman of a campaign to pass a \$2 million bond issue to build roads. Rural roads were built in the area. [Gov. Clark Scott]

[462] In the future he sees change in the McClure Educational Fund to include advanced degrees. A good system for offering financial help has been established whereby guidance counselors suggest that students apply for scholarships.

[487] It is harder and harder for people to live on minimum wages. He thinks Clinton will try to have the base raised. [President Bill Clinton]

[499] Some parts of the county are more needy than others. In 1946 there were only three indoor bathrooms in Clay County.

[517] Even though the pay scale is lower than Maryland and Washington, more teachers apply for jobs here than can be hired. The teachers get steadily better. Some of the best teachers came out of the old Normal School.

[557] This mountain area is a "whole generation ahead because of what the Farmers' Federation has done," according to Page, who was chairman of the trustees for many years. [Mr. Page, (his father) Walter Hinze Page]

Jamie puts wood on the fire and leaves.

[583] Elspeth said that one of the ways used for raising money for the Fund was by taking a string band to New York, to put on a picnic and show them mountain entertainment - in the Waldorf-Astoria.

## **Side 2:**

Regarding the conversation off tape: George's father, a farmer in Swannanoa, had been to college and was very helpful in forming the Farmers' Federation (see Coggins tape). [George Coggins, Allen Coggins]

[2/11] Her parents came here on their honeymoon. Her mother's father, who grew up in Martinsburg, WV, went to Chicago after the Civil War to try to recoup the family fortune. He advised her parents to come south because there was a better growing season for farming. They saw the house and decided it was the house for them. It was owned by an old retired judge who had married his young ward. She wanted to get away and influenced him to sell for \$6,000 to be paid over a two year period. The cost of putting in a furnace was taken off the purchase price. Quite a lot of land went with the house. [Judge Phillips]

[2/33] Nine wheel barrels of dirt had to be removed from the room we are in. The room had been used for curing hams under ashes. Gradually they restored things. Her father worked on the farm. Her father, a preacher, preached all over the neighborhood.

[2/33] He had problems selling his produce and got the idea of starting a cooperative in Fairview. Obtaining capital was a problem. Mrs. Vanderbilt was the first real contributor. His health recovered and he was called by his church to minister in Lake Forest, IL. The people here petitioned and overnight he decided to stay. He preached all over the area, even to the Cherokee Indians. She accompanied him to the various churches. He read the Bible to her every night. [Mrs. George Vanderbilt]

[2/61] Her older brother loved farming and planned to work with her father. He went to Hotchkiss and Yale on scholarships and ran a suit-pressing shop to earn money. Colton, who was one year behind, worked his way through college by running a laundry (see Colton tape). She went to Vassar. Her brother worked for their father until Pearl Harbor and died in the Coast Guard patrolling off the coast of Maine. She was in the WAVES, trained in MA. and then served in Washington. [Henry Colton]

[2/84] Jamie was in the Pacific for two years. He served in Washington and they were married. He wanted to go on with the cooperative so they returned.

[2/91] She helped with the Farmers' Federation in summers and when her father put on picnics she rounded up the talent. The picnics were for fun and entertainment but also to give the farmers information. The picnics were taken to NY to raise money for the McClure Fund. Watson, who started IBM believed in people helping themselves, and paid for the whole program. [Thomas J. Watson]

[2/116] The cooperative started before the Depression and then was needed more than ever.

[2/121] She tells the story of the occupation of the Civil War northern soldiers, the hoop skirt used to hide hams behind hand planed walls and the cook shaking her stockings over the soldier's eggs (see enclosed write-up). The Battle of Asheville (1865?) took place after the war was over but no one knew it.

[2/143] Regarding the wall paintings done by her mother: She said her mother saw covered wagons, not stage coaches. She got picture of the Albany Coach which she painted. In 1922 the highway was paved. Farmers would camp below the hill before driving to Asheville to sell melons. Her mother studied in France for a couple of years in the Wheeler School. She watched Monet paint his famous hay stacks in 1910 or 1911. [Miss Wheeler, Claude Monet]

[2/164] Her daughter, Susie, gives lessons in art in Fairview. [Susie Clarke Hamilton, Dr. William G. Hamilton]

[2/171] Her father always needed someone to line up talent for his programs and write up the meetings. She always enjoyed the job.

[2/181] Her mother died suddenly in 1948. She and Jamie were living in a little house down the hill. Mr. Huntley's daughter (now Mrs. Beard of Nashville) called, she came rushing up but her mother never regained consciousness. They decided to move into the present house and stay with her father. They had one child at the time - and then had seven more. [Mrs. Robert Beard, Susie Clarke Hamilton]

[2/199] The younger children went to the Fairview school, then Gibbons Hall and away to school. All children went on at least part scholarships to college.

[2/209] Their younger son works for a builder and lives down the hill. [Bill McCurdy]

[2/213] Their oldest daughter met her husband in London and they bought the old Lynch property down the hill. [Susie Hamilton, Dr. William Hamilton, Dr. Lynch]

[2/229] Jim works for a Japanese company and lives near Charlotte. [Jim Clarke]

[2/239] Annie lives nearby, grows apples, has beef cattle and is in the egg business. They have 4 boys (see Ager enclosed). [Annie Clarke Ager, John Ager]

[2/248] Dumont and Shirley are both lawyers in Charlotte. [Dumont Clarke, Shirley Clarke]

[2/249] Billie is a lawyer. His divorced wife lives in the Fairview house. Each child was given land. He lives in Fairview now. [Billie Clarke]

[2/250] She and Jamie celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary - a covered dish dinner at the Fairview community center with the old Federation band. All the children came. (see photo)

[2/267] There are friends who live down the hill from their house. Will was manager of the farm and his children played with her and her brother. They built a pond - later a doctor said it was polluted - and threw mud balls at the few passing cars. They all worked around the place - getting hay in and gardening. Her mother had some help until the Depression. [Will Boon, Richard Boon, Adeline Boon, May Boon]

[2/299] Her father often brought people home with him. Mr. Pratt of Standard Oil came to make a movie of the Farmers' Federation. At night he put his shoes outside his door and her mother shined them. He never knew she was the one who did it. [Mr. Pratt]

[2/307] They had some wonderful helpers. John had been with the family from the beginning and, after his first wife died, he married Matilda from New Orleans. She went back every summer and retired at age 70 after having helped raise all of the children. The family decided to drive to California in 1954. Matilda, age 72 and weighing 220 lbs, wanted to see her cousins and they took her along. Since this was right after Selma, Elspeth brought a gun along in case there was a problem in having a black with them. After setting camp a policeman appeared. She was afraid he would discover her gun but he had only stopped to say that her tent ropes were across a road. Jamie and Susan joined the group by air in Albuquerque. Then there were 10 in that station wagon. Matilda visited relatives in San Francisco, the group went to Wyoming and Jamie and Susie flew back home. [John Sharter, Matilda Green Sharter]

[2/405] Jamie did a lot for ecology. He saved the Horse Pasture River which was about to be destroyed to create a power station. He also worked to preserve the Panther Town Valley. The Duke Power Co. was very cooperative about this. He finally got the NC Wilderness bill through.

[2/423] Segregation didn't affect the area much. The blacks were in the city. Jamie was chairman of the school board during integration and it was pretty peaceful.

[2/433] She worked with Thelma whose picture was in the paper this morning. She was active with the YWCA after the two groups were merged (see Caldwell tape). [Thelma Caldwell]

[2/449] The Colton's house was sold to them by Jamie's father in 1972 when he remarried a widow, Elizabeth Dodge Huntington, and moved. The boxwood was given to Jamie's father and mother from the Sherrill's Inn and Elspeth delivered the chicken manure Marie Colton told about on the Colton tape. [Marie and Henry Colton, Dumont Clarke]

[2/484] Her family added a wing on to the house which gave one more bedroom and enlarged the kitchen. The outside stairs were part of the old inn. Her parents added the inside stairs.

[2/498] The little room off the study (where we are talking and in the photos enclosed shows the books, pictures etc.) is called the little study. [Sherrill's Inn] Was used by the stage coach drivers. There was no door from the room into the house. Her mother used to keep plants there. When her father was away her mother, with the help of a minister who used to work for them on weekdays, cut a door from the study. It was kept blocked up until Christmas day when her father was shown a note saying "push." He did and there was his study. [Rev. David Huntly]