

Margaret Dowdle

Margaret and I met through her life-long friend Katharine. [Katharine Shepard]

Side 1:

[6] She was born in Sylva, NC and visited her mother's relatives (see enclosure - Bryson) by train - the Murphy Branch. She wore a tag of identification when she was six and spent 2-3 weeks vacationing - going to local activities and the movies. She was always chaperoned in public until married. [Holmes Bryson (was mayor)]

[25] She married and moved to Franklin, NC where her children were born. When her husband died she moved to Asheville where her brother lived. Her mother was a house mother in Cullowhee. She registered as a first grade teacher in the county office and worked for two years in the Valley Springs School - 1962 - (The school is now called Estes.) [Charles Norman Dowdle d. 1959, Charles Marcus Dowdle, Caroline Hall, Mr. Tomberlin (asst. superintendent)].

[58] She was asked to teach at Eliada Home, taught there 12 years - 1965-1977 - and retired because of eyesight. Unlike the rest of the staff she did not live on campus. [Rev. Lucius B. Compton]

[86] There were 75 on the staff, two paid by the state (the home was half in Asheville and half in the county). She taught 1st through 4th and counseled children of all ages. Being a mountaineer herself she understood the children. Most of the staff came from the north and did not understand their problems.

[99] The children were "torn to pieces" when they came. These were not wayward children but came from broken homes. Some of the fathers were in prison, many had been sexually abused.

[145] Art and music were taught along with regular academics. Under Title #1 it was possible to obtain the best material for teaching. [Miss Donna Littlefield]

[168] The children respected the teachers. An hour was spent for lunch so that dining etiquette could be taught.

[190] The Physical Ed. building was given by Green and sports were taught by Miss Cameron, the daughter of the director, Mrs. Cameron. Mame Reynolds, daughter of Congressman Bob Reynolds, gave a dorm. The Lions also gave a dorm (see enclosure and tape by "Red" Hoyle). [Gay Green, Loraine Cameron, Mrs. Cameron, Mame Reynolds, Bob Reynolds]

[225] Parents could visit and many did. Science fairs, plays, and many activities were held. The director did not want to show these to outside schools (sensing that the children might be made uncomfortable). [Mr. Arch Cameron]

[234] There were classes for the children, kindergarten through 8th. They could then choose to go either to Erwin or the Asheville High School. Many ended up by working in the city.

[261] Dentists and doctors offered their services free.

[275] She was disappointed when the school closed in 1979 or 80 and families needing housing and wayward girls were taken in. It had started as a school for children from broken homes, many of whom had come through the court system. [Rev. Lucius B. Compton]

[293] She feels that society has changed. Some girls don't have a chance. The principal there now said they are thinking of starting a school again [Mrs. Alyne Frost]

[315] Homeless children now go to the Presbyterian or Baptist homes.

[339] Compton was a street preacher who built a log cabin in South Asheville and took in homeless children. He never asked for money but it flowed in and after purchasing land he developed the present plant. He had a farm, selling milk to the Biltmore Dairy. The girls canned, the boys milked the cows and worked in the garden. [L. B. Compton]

[390] At present Eliada is used for entire families and there is a day-care center for working mothers.

Side 2:

[2/95] The Westall Home - 232 E. Chestnut - was bought by Eliada Home Inc. for unwed mothers-to-be. The telephone company later bought it and there were plans for a park. Despite many letters of protest, Fuddruckers bought it. ("Red" Hoyle lost his sign space to that company also - see his tape - the sign is now in his "drive through" store). [Mary Parker]

[2/129] Eliada Children had many advantages. The superintendent of schools, Robinson, was being shown around the science fair by Cameron when the science teacher, in a loud voice, announced, "Oh! He's laid an egg." The teachers were strict but there were many activities and the children had a broad background. [Dianne Farmer, Mr. T. C. Robinson, Mr. Arch Cameron]

[2/163] There were no blacks in the early times but when the Federal Government gave allotment 6-7 were brought in. There was no problem in the school.

[2/174] In the Asheville High School there were riots with the police being brought in. Students from Eliada were frightened so sent to Erwin and, while there were bomb scares, they turned out to be false. She thinks the situation is getting worse all the time.

[2/195] She knows teachers in middle school who say the blacks and whites are having a lot of trouble. The blacks can't keep up and it's hard for the teachers and the children.

[2/201] She feels that integration started too late - it should have begun in first grade not high school. In regard to Head Start, she feels that it gave them breakfast and taught the children but didn't make so much difference - particularly in the south.

[2/218] She reviews her education. She quit college after 2 years and went to business school for 1 year. When her husband died in 1959 she was 42 years old. She went to the University of Greensboro with her daughter, working through summer and winter and was teaching in 1961.

[2/247] She belonged to a woman's club - "The Pilot Club" - which no longer exists in this city though there still may be a chapter in Hendersonville. This organization had speakers come for monthly meetings and members sent funds to CARE and HOPE.

[2/292] She is currently president of "The History Club" (enclosure).

[2/358] For two years she attended Camp Sequoyah in the Reems Creek area. She said that the girls were more trouble than boys so, after 2 years, it was boys only. [No one seems to know girls ever attended - see enclosed] [Mrs. C. Walton Johnston, Elvira Bryson]

[2/381] She swam in the Beaver Dam pool when she was 14 and said there was a club house. [Hyman Dave said no club house for swimming. I haven't found a photo.] Her cousin lived in one of the first houses on Lake Shore Park. Her uncle owned a store across from Roses in the area called Grace. (The Post Office is still called Grace.) There was a department store and coal store (see Craggy Ingle tape and Elmer Ownbey). [Mrs. Holmes Bryson, Holmes Bryson]

[2/337] Many people lost their homes during the Depression.

[2/352] She was disappointed when Bon Marché and Ivey's closed. She went to Atlanta to shop. She dislikes mall shopping but is learning.

[2/403] She hopes there will be a Farmers Market in the Grove Arcade (see Roger McGuire tape) and said the old Arcade Building was beautiful.