

Frances McDowell

Side 1:

[1] She was born in Asheville, 5th generation, attended school at Asheland Avenue and then Newton. In 1924 the family moved to Kenilworth. [Ellie Arthur, John W. Arthur]

[23] Her grandparents lived on Victoria Rd. and built the house about 1840. [James McConnell Smith]

[38] For 10 years she worked for the Citizens-Times and at the VA Hospital for about 30 years as Chief of the Finance section.

[46] Her sister wrote about grandparents and when she died in 1962 Frances became interested in genealogy. [Lipscomb, Pickens, McDowell]

[69] She fell in love with her cousin in 1951. She retired from the VA Hospital in 1973 and took courses at A-B Tech in history and genealogy. [Edward McDowell, Harley Jolley, Margaret Nichols]

[113] Western North Carolina Historical Association and the Junior League boards went to A-B Tech to acquire Smith-McDowell house. Lease signed for \$1 for 2 years in 1974. Work on renovations started right away. [Anne (Mrs. Nathan L.) Burkhardt]

[148] Restoration Committee was formed in 1975. Met with Chamber of Commerce. She was to be temporary chairman but still holds the position. She and Rudy worked together. They went to Raleigh to obtain funds and get advice. [Mack White, Ruth "Rudy" (Mrs. Joshua) Camblos, John Ellington]

[190] Three areas were necessary:

1. Support of Community.
2. Heartbeat - dedication.
3. A lot of money.

[230] State of North Carolina gave \$25,000 to be matched by community, the county gave \$8,333 and the city the same amount. Money was raised by concerts, fairs, picnics, antique sales, etc. [Peggy Bird, Private Foundation]

[243] Before grants and matching funds were given, preparations had to be made - drawings, research, photographs, plans. [Henry Wood, Henry Gaines]

[273] The first phase started with \$50,000. [Dr. Richard Jobst, Henry Gaines, Richard English]

[297] A 10-year lease was signed with A-B Tech in 1976. Because of state law this must be renewed on a 10-year basis.

[310] There was another appropriation made in 1977.

[332] The procedure for going to this Legislature and asking for money is described. [Jack Stevens, Mary Nesbitt, Bob Swain, Viola Stevens, Jack Cole, Johnny Baxter]

[359] Second phase raised \$200,000 which, did not have to be matched. [J. C. Crawford, Mary Nesbitt, Jack Stevens]

[401] Ribbon cutting and dedication. Told that there would be no more State funds. The responsibility for the house was up to the community. [Mrs. Hodgekins]

[420] Fundraisers discussed. Objects for the house were donated by the community. [Katharine Shepard, Robert Bunn, David Swain, Alexander Garrett, Dr. Charles Van Bergen, Mrs. McKee Dunn McKee, Frances McKee O'Brien, Brewster Chapman, Herman A. Gudger, Francis Gudger, Marjorie Rambeau, Mother Margaret Potts]

[518] She reads part of article from Mountain Living - Spring, 1976. Xerox in office of Smith-McDowell House. [Paula Thorne Gudger, Francis Gudger, Herman A. Gudger, Marjorie Rambeau, Mildred Beedle Fossett]

Side 2:

[2/4] Ribbon cutting described. [Walter Boggs]

[2/11] First employee was part-time. Two upstairs rooms rented to Junior League in 1981. [Mrs. Emmie Field]

[2/20] First full-time director stayed one year. [Elizabeth James]

[2/30] Fundraisers were discussed. At Christmas time shops were set up in the building. [Julie Rischer]

[2/57] Use of the small brick "dependency" is still unknown. There is interest in determining the garden plans. [Sister Kathleen Winters, Frederick Olmsted]

[2/83] Auxiliary for the house established with a separate board. The relationship between the board and the Historical Society (which acts as an umbrella) is described. The Historical Association gives awards for historical achievement and conducts tours. David Janssen is the new curator (1992). Patty is house manager. [James McDonald, David Janssen, Julie Rischer, Alice Hinman, Emily Quinn, Patty Descutner]

[2/135] Committees on the Board plan fundraisers along with the staff.

[2/140] The happiest day in her life was when she saw the house completed.

[2/157] She and her husband were 1st cousins. They went together 9 years and married in 1955. He loved the house as much as she did and cut the grass for 7 years (see photo). [Edward McDowell, Henry Arch Nichols]

[2/300] She hopes that the house will continue to receive endowments so that the only money that will be needed from the community will be for upkeep. Her mother left money to the house and she will leave one of her annuities. There is about \$35,000 in the fund now. [Pat Smith, Barbara Nesbitt, Dr. Francis P. Hulme, Mack White]

[Off tape she discusses Fernihurst and booklet she prepared - I am enclosing a copy and photos.]