

Kenneth Michalove

Side 1:

Born 1938 Old Mission Hospital. Grandfather peddled from house to house as far as Knoxville with horse and wagon selling house wares. He started the IXL Store ("I excel"), a fine china and silver store. He remembers going to the store on Haywood Street. It was about 12' wide inside and 50' long with two aisles. Leo was around the corner. [S. M. Michalove, Leo Finkelstein]

[38] He graduated from Springfield College in Mass. with a degree in Recreation and Physical Education. He married in 1959 and has 4 children. Two of his 7 grandchildren live in Asheville. [Sally, Roddy, Dannie, Marvin, Missie]

[49] Haywood Street used to be like the mall - everyone went to the center of town. Movies were 9 cents and popcorn 5 cents. His uncle was with the movies (see enclosure) and movies played a large part in Asheville recreation. It was fun growing up here - one could hitchhike all over town. He graduated from Lee Edwards High School in 1956. He went to the University of North Carolina and then on to Springfield. [Dan Michalove]

[64] He was in Durham during integration and, when he came back to Asheville, he worked for Opportunity Corporation as business manager (from 1964-68). The organization was just getting started and he was a part of many changes in the facilities, schools and housing.

[77] He worked on the Downtown Urban Renewal, which involved the Civic Center, and the East Riverside Development, which was primarily residential. These were the largest federally funded projects in the Southeast and were a tremendous boost to the economy.

[94] Ray came in the early 70's and rebuilt all the major parks with outside money. Before becoming city manager, Ken worked with all the Federal programs and worked with the county. [We discuss Logan Delany and the Model Cities program. Ken gave me Logan's number and I made contact but he died before I could have a phone interview.] [Ray Kisiah, Logan Delany]

[113] The method of doing urban renewal had changed over the last 20 years. In the beginning there was more emphasis on clearance than involvement with people and the projects were originally more like barracks.

[167] The projects are financed through rents charged and some apartments are subsidized by Federal grants. Larry and David have been a good team for 25 years (see Holt tape). The city is still getting Federal money for new facilities and renovations. Lee Walker Heights, one of the oldest, has just been rehabilitated. (See Dorothy Jackson tape). [Larry Holt, David Jones]

[195] New facilities are built as duplexes or four-plexes, not as they were in the 40's and 50's.

[201] Hillcrest was part of the Montford community and was there before the road system was put in. The placement of the 2 interstates is discussed. In the past the path of a road was determined by cost, not environmental factors. Norma (see her tape) said the present plans for

widening Broadway are an improvement over the previous plan, which would have taken it through Montford. [Norma Price]

[244] Every major project takes 20-30 years from idea to completion. Generally the public gets just a snap shot of what is going on and then reacts when change is scheduled to take place next door.

[260] The Hendersonville Rd. widening, which is just completed, took 30 years. The open cut (vs. a twin tunnel for I-240) took 20 years. There were 28 drafts for the water agreement between the county and city and it is still not the way it will ultimately be. (See Jane Bingham and Betty Lawrence tapes)

[280] The environment has been one of the key issues to be dealt with - water, sewage, road building, and pollution. Special interest groups are more prevalent than they used to be. Leadership may have been stymied in past years. [Weldon Weir]

[313] Community groups developed as a requirement for the Federal grants. Public meetings were held in homes, churches and community centers to discuss changes. This was a good time in Asheville because it created leadership for about 25 years. Now that these people are retiring there doesn't seem to be a way of creating a new leadership.

[I refer to the recall - see enclosure 12/22/93]

He feels that there is at the present time a concentration of people trying to satisfy special interest groups - not looking at the community as a whole. He does not see a long-range vision. The 2010 plan is not a "shelf document," it is an excellent enterprise and is being revised.

[372] Upheavals may be an opening for people to sharpen their focus and become more involved in community activities.

[383] He reviews the planning of the civic center placement. There was a ruling that, if the Federal government would give the urban renewal money, the city would raise the money for a civic center and locate it within a 1/2 a mile of the renewal area. Some people thought it should be in another place. He forgets the details; however Coggins brought suit and the case was in court for a year. [George Coggins]

[439] Westgate was the first mall. Downtown slowly closed down and deteriorated. "By the time people realized what had happened, retail trade had turned." "Today we can see it (downtown development) is going in the right direction."

[460] City officials had other priorities and didn't realize what was happening at the time. There were many changes - codes, the economy, integration, people wanted to live farther out and families had two cars. It happened gradually.

[507] The city could have controlled growth through water and sewer but tax base is important to a city.

[523] The Akzona building was looked on as an improvement which created a tax base as well as removing marginal buildings on Pack Square. The architect, J. M. Pei, is world-renowned. This was before the downtown began to think about design review and doing something with the older buildings. The Pack Place idea hadn't come into being.

Side 2:

Asheville has been fortunate in having a pristine water source. As the city has grown during the past 20 years it has been necessary to find new sources. The city owns over 20,000 acres of lakes and reservoirs and, because of the Sullivan Act is required to sell water at the same price outside the city limits as it does inside. An agreement was reached with the county whereby the county pays its share for the service it uses within the city: e.g. Civic Center, parks and recreation.

[2/42] Newly elected officials have discovered at the Institute of Government in Chapel Hill, that Asheville/ Buncombe differs from other cities, in that there are many exceptions to standard management procedures (especially the Sullivan Act) and that all employees are under the Civil Service System. This has been costly.

[2/54] The other part of the water situation is the sewer system, which, due to environmental restrictions, makes sewage disposal more expensive than water. He sees this as being more strict in the future. [P. Greer Johnson]

[2/69] Two years ago new legislation was enacted regarding the watersheds upstream and this affected the purchase of new watersheds for the French Broad River.

[2/81] Garbage disposal has been affected by State and Federal laws, i.e. leaves can't be put in with garbage. Pasteboard boxes can't be put into garbage by retail businesses. He anticipates that there will be a fee for service and people will have to separate their garbage.

[2/97] In the past the river wasn't thought of as a major resource to the community. Finally there was a "band of folks" that got together and developed a good plan. C P&L gave land for the park - a "win/win" situation. [Jean Webb, Karen Cragnolin]

[2/121] The hardships of the Depression held the city back until the late 50's. The changes of leadership and activities of the Chamber of Commerce developed a broader base - from agricultural to service, retail and manufacturing bases. The water system was expanded, roads built, the airport built. With the opening up of the Federal Grants, the development of A-B Tech and the University, the city developed a high profile. In the earlier days, there weren't resources. The Biltmore House was able, by advertising and charging, to become a house museum. The hotel and motel room tax is used to market tourism. [Bill Cecil]

[2/166] Liquor by the drink helped the city. Tunnel Road was the only way you could get into Asheville. Buck started on a shoestring and became the place to eat [1956: Buck's Restaurant, 115 Tunnel Rd.] - known for the Red Carpet Room (see his tape). Maloy had another drive-in [1956: Babe Maloy's Drive In, 26 Tunnel Rd.]. [John O. "Buck" Buchanan, George C. Maloy]

[2/180] The malls and the economy went away from Tunnel Road, partly because of the build-up in traffic. When I-240 was finished and the road was widened, Wal-Mart and Lowes moved in.

[2/204] WLOS with its broad service area has helped from news standpoint and for retail sales. WWNC has one of the largest audiences in the Southeast (see McGuire tape). [Roger McGuire]

[2/213] The newspaper was bought out by MultiMedia out of Greenville, SC . In early days the newspaper played a prominent role in the government.

[2/233] Major clubs, Lions, Kiwanis, were originally concentrated downtown and took a leadership roll. Now there are branches and they are not as cohesive.

[2/246] He misses the S&W and remembers looking at Mickey Mouse cartoons on the 3rd floor (see Marjorie Maxwell tape). Traffic and parking problems killed it, though attempts were made to revive it. The J&S and Piccadilly, where there is easy parking, are successful cafeterias. When the S&W was open there weren't many eating places in the city.

[2/260] Federal grants and the community development funds sparked the revival of the center of the city. Roger had a lot of tenacity along with about 10 other people in turning the attitude around. [Roger McGuire]

[2/295] Federal funds were used extensively to develop Wall Street. It took decay to happen over 25 years and now the center of the city is building up.

[2/307] The community went through a difficult time over sign ordinances. Issues were raised in the mid-70's and mid-80's. It took a lot of public input over 3 years to create an ordinance and its not over yet. The city put a 7-year time limit on signs but it looks like Council may consider changes to make it less stringent. [Lin Brown, Jane Bingham, Jerry Grant]

[2/344] Strouse Greenberg & Co., developers of shopping centers, wanted to create a downtown mall. Some wanted to preserve the old buildings and the proposal was voted out (see Walter Boland tape).

[2/361] The Preservation Society stresses the need for preserving old structures. He would have voted to take the Manor down but money was raised and the building preserved. (see Jane Mathews).

[2/379] He feels the proposed plans for the Arcade will go through and be successful. There are people living in town who need groceries. In the past the population was retired but new condominiums are being developed. (see McGuire tape). [Roger McGuire]

[2/407] Most of his work has been with city or county government in a variety of capacities. He has been a part of many changes over the past 30 years. When he left the job as city manager he went to work for St. Joseph's Hospital and he also had the opportunity to pursue time on the city council and serve as mayor (see Michael Keleher tape).

[2/440] With sale of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company to St. Joseph's, there was more room to carry out business activities. He operates several businesses - the Biltmore Center (a high-rise office building) the Summit Retirement Community, a Pharmacy, a Catering Service - for profit. St. Joseph's is a "not-for-profit" corporation and the money he creates goes to the hospital. All of the major hospitals do this as they are capped in so many ways with various regulations (Medicare and Medicaid) that they don't create profit but need machinery, etc. Mountain Health Inn (on the top floor of the Biltmore Center) has rooms for patients and families undergoing one-day surgery - less expensive. He anticipates collaboration between St. Joseph's and Mission.

[2/496] He credits his wife for raising their children, as he is a workaholic, rising at 3 a.m. and returning home late at night.