

Milton Ready

Side 1:

[1/4] He came to Asheville with his wife from Texas. Through his mother who worked with Champion Fiber in Texas he met many "tar heels" and was fascinated with their stories of the mountains. He graduated from the University of Houston and the University of Georgia. He loved American history and with Coleman wrote a colonial history. He taught at a Jr. College in North Carolina [Sylvia Ready, Kenneth Coleman]

[1/28] He was offered a job in the West and at UNCA. He arrived on a cold March day in 1972 and decided he would spend 5-6 years here because the school was small and isolated. He found this was a good place - students excellent - and has been here ever since.

[1/36] He was chosen for awards for writing on Georgia history in the Georgia Historical Quarterly.

[1/40] He was surprised that UNCA didn't care about local history but prided itself on teaching humanities and great classics to students who would move out to graduate schools throughout the country. No local history courses were being taught 20 years ago and UNCA was the only school that didn't belong to the Appalachian Consortium.

[1/54] During his 16 years with Highsmith he gradually introduced an appreciation of the region and the role Asheville plays in the 34 counties that comprise Western North Carolina. [Dr. William Highsmith]

[1/62] The people who should be given credit for starting the Southern Highlands Center are Whitman, who was librarian, and Bridges, Ready and gradually Highsmith. Greenawalt gave it a focus - that it should be on Asheville, Buncombe County, and 5 or 6 counties surrounding Asheville. That urban history, labor, economics, be studied and taught. Greenawalt was first director but stopped to write dissertation and teach after 4-5 years. Ready became director of Highlands Research Center. [Les Whitman, Bruce Greenawalt, William Highsmith, John Bridges]

[1/81] The groups that have done the most for the center are the blacks and the Jewish community. Both groups are unlike groups in other areas. The Greeks have not been as open. There were no Hispanics at the time and the Asians (Cambodia, Korea) have just started to come in. [There are Jewish interviews in the archives - copied by permission but without releases.]

[1/117] There is a Jewish Studies Center at UNCA. He was the first director. Prominent and not so prominent Jews have taken part and programs are given on Jewish and general topics open to the public. It was hoped the same cooperation could be established with the Afro-American community through the YMI Cultural Center, but this did not happen. The Jewish Studies group have their own separate board and want a special place in the library, using the University as an

umbrella. The group reports directly to the chancellor. [Joanne Lipinsky, Ruth Feldman, Julius Bloom, Harry Lerner, Leah and Morris Karpen, Richard Chess]

[1/183] Asheville/the courthouse/city hall have never made a wide-scale attempt to embrace the blacks, Jews, or Asians. The city needs to reexamine its values to promote education and business opportunities despite discrimination.

[1/208] He doesn't think there will be Korean or Hispanic representation on city council in the near future, but they are the fastest growing communities. They will find a way to promote themselves.

[1/218] Finkelstein is writing his own history (see his tape). [Leo Finkelstein]

[1/242] One very significant change he has seen in the past 20 years is that the "Progressive Consensus" that emerged in the late 60's and early 70's and lasted for 25 years has ended. There was a vision and an idea of where Asheville should be going re: integration, job opportunities, cooperation between communities, development of downtown Asheville, cooperation with the YMI Cultural Center, and the river front. A consensus that Asheville would get over its 1930-1950 image. The coalition, where the various groups worked together to promote a greater Asheville has ended. Tom Wolf (author - not Asheville) calls it the "great relearning." [William Highsmith, Rabbi Freeman, Jesse Ray, Thelma Caldwell, Doug Bean, Lou Bisette, Ken Michalove, William Moore, Wanda Henry Coleman]

[1/300] Many people are coming into the area with money and the problem is a matter of decision as to how to use it.

[1/323] There is contention on how to use the money which is still around. More money is coming into the county than city and there are changes there. The county has the "yuppies" - the "good ol' boys" are running the city (but Rainey represents values, is conservative and very religious). The present people (Carr and Chris) grew up during the "Progressive Consensus" period and have some legitimate complaints about what happened during that period. [Don Martel, Gene Rainey, Weldon Weir, Carr Swicegood, Chris Peterson]

Side 2:

[2/1] People have been moving from all over the country historically for the same kinds of reasons. They see Asheville as small, manageable, attractive and uncluttered. It is convenient to large cities, is better known and will be more attractive in the future. They will bring with them their patriotic and conservative values. They are in their 40's and 50's and represent the middle and upper middle class. They are interested in health and recreation, low taxes, police protection - not as much involved in funds for education. They will come in greater numbers and spread out into Madison County, Rutherford, Murphy. Henderson will be a hub.

[2/45] They will bring all kinds of interests - they want a cultural center, First Night, Bele Chere events centering on downtown, electronic equipment and videos. They are less concerned about clothes, image and cars.

[2/54] The county and the city have hated each other since day one. The core issues have centered around class, race and ethnic background disguised as economics. There will be increasing cooperation, in time, on such issues as water, roads, police protection and drugs. To a smaller extent on schools and education.

[2/71] By reading letters to the editor in the paper one sees West Asheville (white) hating the promotion of downtown which caters to yuppies and tourists. There is a feeling that North Asheville has better roads, sidewalks, and leaf raking. West and East Asheville have been left out. Black businesses on Eagle Street and YMI [Cultural Center] are resented. [Ken Michalove, Lou Bisette]

[2/89] Those who have been left out of the "Progressive Consensus" want to plunder Asheville (signs, river front) and [feel that] yuppie issues that have dominated Asheville for years have discriminated against them.

[2/93] There will be division because there is no vision - there is a desire to fire the city manager and those who have set aside funds for issues, they want to say, "we want to get our share." This has been brought about in part by failure of the liberal consensus to include these people and bring them along. Promote Pack Place but don't forget Haywood Street and East Asheville. [Doug Bean, Ken Michalove, Lou Bisette, Bill Moore]

[2/165] Neighborhoods are important and should be encouraged - Shilo, Biltmore Village, Kenilworth, Lakewood Park, Montford. [Ollie Reynolds]

[2/161] Southern Highland Research Center will have an increasingly important role as a research center. In the history department 5-6 of the 28 senior papers were on Asheville or Buncombe County using the resources there. There is a growing secondary literature that adds to literature about the region. It is hoped that this will also become a publishing center. [Louis Silveri, Johnny Baxter, Florence Ryan]