

Alice White

Side 1:

Alice was making Christmas wreaths in the basement. The heater goes off and on.

[1/6] She moved to Asheville in 1982 because of the scenic beauty. She had left a career as a Real Estate developer. She remembered Asheville as a child and wanted to fish.

[1/26] Pack Square was beginning to develop and she considered doing some pre-marketing for them but it was slow in getting adequate financing. [Schneider Nine]

[1/34] The Haywood Street redevelopment was the first real sign of downtown progress and she got involved with Armstrong in the spring of 1982, was general manager for 2 to 2½ years until the occupancy was 50% completed. [Robert Armstrong]

[1/49] Part of the purpose of the redevelopment plan was its historical aspect. The Federal government gave a tax advantage and there were guidelines to follow. The Preservation Society was not involved but was interested. The local construction company was Rice, the architect was Rogers and the designer was Long. Close to 75 people were employed. [H.M. Rice, John Rogers, Catherine Long]

[1/67] Three buildings were involved in the complex. These, with an added lot for parking, comprised the unit. [Lipinsky, Blomberg]

[1/76] The concept was to have an indoor atrium (this had been the interior of the Ivey's Department Store), small luxury shops, a restaurant and a hotel.

[1/93] There were many open store fronts and the center of the city had deteriorated. Asheville had always been the center of Western North Carolina shopping and business and people believed there could be a resurgence. There was no thought of competing with the malls head on. This was to appeal to the more sophisticated visitor who would be drawn to owner-operated retail shops with higher-end items, i.e. Elizabeth's, Gilded Lily, Chocolate Fetish (see Roger McGuire tape). After it was completed and partially leased, crafters from across the street rented space.

[1/134] A businessman hotel with an excellent restaurant was created. Richmond Hill was completed at the same time which offered some competition, but their location was less suited for the business traveler (see Mathews tape). She has not been associated with it for 8 years. A management company was hired.

[1/160] Leasing space was part of her job. Asheville is different from other areas in that it offers the different physical amenities to draw business but the statistics, which show how many people walk into an area, are low. However, because of its location, people drive from Marshall and Waynesville to shop here. It is the sales per month that determines whether a company will open here or not.

[1/212] She worked closely with the Chamber of Commerce and often brought people to town who were looking for manufacturing space in the country. The setting downtown, along with the airport and cultural advantages, is important in decision making for executives must be satisfied.

[1/243] Twelve years ago there was little space for downtown living. There is a shift and younger people are moving to the center of the city - however there is still a tend to live outside (Fairvev and Weaverville) for a rural atmosphere and tax advantage.

[1/266] When she was working, Pack Place was beginning and having financial troubles. It is a definite success. There have been several small spin-offs. The S&W is supposed to be renovated, the old Penny's building is to go under redevelopment. The flat iron building has had a facelift.

[1/290] Wall Street was a disappointment. Winston-Salem developers had many problems in the beginning.

[1/306] She had a small shop on Wall Street for two years as the parking lot was being constructed. People's pattern of driving and parking had to be changed. The lots are a hard tax burden to bear but worth the expense. There is little pedestrian traffic through Wall Street and car traffic direction has been changed [it may be changed again].

[1/325] She had the second shop on Wall Street but couldn't keep it going. [It is nearly full now].

[1/339] Leslie Anderson and her new group, the Downtown Development Association (city financed) strove to market central Asheville more successfully. She had been employed in Parks and Recreation until 1986 (see files with Roger McGuire tape). Alice was on the original board. This association is responsible for Bele Chere, Oktober Fest and Light up the Holidays. The majority of Biltmore Forest residents don't shop in downtown [however Roger McGuire says they are beginning to]. Despite its inconvenience, tourists prefer the city to the malls.

[1/384] The antique stores on Lexington Ave market themselves as a group and draw customers from all over the country.

[1/398] Although she considers the civic center too small there are a number of offerings - Home Show, Guild Fair, Circus, basketball, square dancing, etc. She feels that the efforts should be coordinated to tie in with what is going on in town.

[1/435] For its size Asheville is quite a cultural center - the Ballet, Symphony, Choral Society, theatre.

[1/453] She discusses her interest in wild brook trout fishing and hikes 5 miles for a fish 8" long. The Big and Little Snow Bird areas are always cold and clear with no pollution.

Side 2:

[2/1] We hear about water in the newspaper every day. People expect high quality. Industry is polluting and needed repairs have been delayed. In the past 10 years industry has used more of

the city water than planned and more than we have been told. We should hold off developing industries that need water until our household water gets the help it needs. Local bleacheries and dyeing companies cannot use the water now for their operations.

[2/40] The infrastructure of the water system has been neglected. Money was not spent on new pipes. She uses filtered water in her home - doesn't want to get plastic bottles. Water bills are high enough without buying drinking water. Her humidifier is stopped up from sediment [we use a \$100 distiller from Sears which removes all sediment and humidifiers - inside in the winter, on the porch in the summer].

[2/60] Regarding the widening of Broadway, she feels we are allowing DOT to decide our fate for us. A Broadway Task Force has been formed asking the council and DOT to take another look. The merchants would like to link UNCA to town, clear the corridor, remove dilapidated residences - but 7 acres of mature trees would have to be cut down. The group would like to see a park greenway developed which would create a livable environment, so that people could walk, ride bikes, and push baby carriages (see enclosure).

[2/112] She lived in Montford, likes its historical aspect and recognizes that it has been in a period of transition for 15 years. The people will need more help with better sidewalks and lights and loans for low income people (see Mathews tape). The problems are deep but there is interest. A big 4-lane corridor (Broadway) will kill it off - I-240 and 19-23 have cut off two sides.

[2/143] She likes the idea of the people in downtown area banding together. She also wants to see individual neighborhoods patronized by the people who live there - not walling them off so that cars are necessary.

[2/171] She likes the I. M. Pei building and feels that it shows the city not only has roots in the 20's but is for people in the 70's and 80's.

[2/184] She had to leave for Christmas!