

## **Where Have We Been? Oral History Excerpts**

### **1. Former Senator Lauch Faircloth (timeline\_grocery.mp3)**

Former North Carolina Senator Lauch Faircloth was a successful farmer and businessman before joining office in 1993. This July 1999 interview was recorded shortly after he left office. In it Faircloth discusses changes to North Carolina's agricultural economy following the end of World War II. Listen to the complete oral history here - <http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/I-0070/menu.html>.

“Sixty years ago, a grocery store carried a few in-season, locally-grown produce. If you wanted some in the winter, you canned it. Except for a very, very few, very, very wealthy people, that was produce. Maybe three percent of the population or one percent, more likely, had access to vegetables and fruit other than in the immediate season that they lived. At the turn of the century and on into World War One, fresh vegetables were unknown. The fruit and vegetable business really began to pick up after World War Two. People had traveled. The standard of living [improved]. They came back and they were not willing to go back into farming. They went to colleges by massive amounts and took jobs not related to agriculture. So all of a sudden there was a demand for produce, which has continued to grow to this day. So many types of produce that used to be strictly local items, all of a sudden — even in the last twenty-five years — have become nationwide and highly accepted and highly sought after.”

### **2. Jerry Plemmons (timeline\_electricity.mp3)**

Jerry Plemmons, a lifetime resident of Madison County, works for the French Broad Electric Membership Corporation, as a consultant on energy conservation and community development. In this interview, Plemmons reflects on the effects of development, particularly road construction, on Marshall, NC. He sees roads as both positive and negative forces - bring money and new people to communities, but also inviting environmental damage and ballooning property values, which drive out longtime residents. Listen to the complete oral history here - <http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/K-0506/menu.html>.

“Well, I can remember after the Second World War seeing the contract crews in the county building the lines out into the rural communities. There was electricity in and around Marshall prior to the war, but out in the outlying areas there was little or no electricity. I say little or no—CP&L had lined Hot Springs, where they served the resort community in earlier years. A few people right along that line were able to get electricity. Many people along that line that wanted electricity were not able to get it, because CP&L wouldn't run the lines very far away from that transmission line in Hot Springs.”

### **3. Jerry Plemmons (timeline\_fifties.mp3)**

“In the '50s in particular people in the outlying communities were just beginning to get cars and trucks, and things of that nature. It was not at all uncommon for people to work

five hard full days, and a half a day on Saturday, and then load up the family and the neighbors and whoever they could find that wanted to come to Marshall, and come to Marshall. And with all the through traffic that was coming through Marshall and all the local traffic that was coming into Marshall, Marshall on a Saturday afternoon was like most malls at Christmas. The streets were packed, and this was in the summer or in the fall—anytime during the year.”

#### **4. Sam Parker** (timeline\_sixties.mp3)

Sam Parker moved to Madison County in 1967. For a time he lived almost a double life, selling the land as a real estate broker and working the land as part of the back-to-the-land counter culture movement. In this interview, he discusses his initial decision to leave the comforts of city life for the simpler lifestyle of this mountain community. Now having returned to a more traditional lifestyle, Parker does not condemn the major shifts in development he has witnessed since moving to the county.

PARKER “So, in 1967 we—one summer day—drove to Wolf Laurel to look at the project. At that point in time there were few houses, no golf course, no ski area. 2,500 acres of virgin land, basically. Of course, Paula fell in love with the place. I quit my job at State Farm Insurance Company, [and] we packed up and moved into one of the log houses at Wolf Laurel. I got a real estate license and commenced to attempt to sell land—houses—for Wolf Laurel.

INTERVIEWER: So at that time, in '67, had that 2,500 acres already been purchased?

PARKER: Yeah, it had already been purchased. Now, it was all still raw land. Wolf Laurel—the thousand-acre section of Wolf Laurel—was the only area that had roads in it. There were a few houses built, maybe ten or twelve. The road to Wolf Laurel was not paved. The main road from the gatehouse to the top of the mountain—at that point in time a restaurant—was paved. But the rest was not. So we had to drive on four or five miles of unpaved road to get to Wolf Laurel.”

#### **5. Taylor Barnhill** (timeline\_eighties.mp3)

As a child Taylor Barnhill spent his summers in a rural North Carolina community and as an adult he has devoted himself to environmental activism hoping to preserve rural North Carolina wilderness and communities. As a member of the Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition, he works to rally communities around conservation issues, not only for the sake of the state's natural resources, but also to give local residents a renewed sense of place. In this oral history interview, which took place in November 2000, he expresses his frustrations at road building - in particular those projects related to the construction of Interstate 26 in Madison County, NC. You can listen to the entire oral history here - <http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/K-0245/menu.html>.

“Everything sped up. As new consumerism, a new kind of having money and the subsequent consumerism related to that came more into play, it replaced traditional values and things—making your own stuff, putting up your own food, working on your own truck to repair it and keep it in order. Now you could drive down to Freddy

Henderson's and he'd do it, because the road was paved. Or you could drive over to Flag Pond or wherever. Now I can get to that new store in Erwin, Tennessee, so let's go there and buy groceries. Glendora's business began to fall off, because she was the grocery store. So all of those shifts in consumerism and value placed on being able to be self-sufficient and do things yourself. Suddenly you didn't have to do them because you could go buy them. Not only did you have more money because you were working outside the county, but you now had, you could get there in half the time.”

## **6. Stan Hyatt** (timeline\_twentieth.mp3)

Stan Hyatt, the Department of Transportation's resident engineer on the I-26 project, grew up in rural Madison County. He discusses local and national history surrounding highway development and speaks at length about the I-26 project towards the end of the interview. He describes the corridor construction as a painful but necessary cure for the county's economic ills. The interview reveals Hyatt's nostalgia for the past and hopes for a balanced future. Listen to the complete oral history here - <http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/K-0249/menu.html>.

“The only missing link in this whole quarter now—from Charleston, South Carolina to Columbus, Ohio—is the nine-mile section in Madison County. Of course, thirty years ago there were more sections in Kentucky, Virginia, and other places of this quarter. But it's a natural north/south quarter that's moved commerce and people. I suspect if you went back to the history, it was an old drover's route a hundred years ago, where people drove cattle and pigs and turkeys and things like they did down along the Buncombe turnpike, down the French Broad River. I think they probably did the same thing across Sam's Gap, and so commerce has moved. It's been a natural quarter for over a hundred years. It became apparent, as these other sections were being completed on either end of Madison County back in the 70s, that this was or would be a missing link through Madison County that needed a more modern road than the old US 23 highway up Murray Mountain to Sam's Gap. That road was built in the mid-30s. I'm sure when they opened it up and had a ribbon-cutting back in the 30s you could just see the exubalation [slang for exuberance and exhilaration] on the faces of the people coming over the mountain from Erwin, Tennessee. But if you stop and look, they didn't have tractor-trailers then. The traffic count would have probably been a few hundred people a day, and today of course we have nearly 10,000 people a day and six to seven hundred tractor-trailer routes per day.”