

1861-1961

by  
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at the McLean Ball Park.<sup>1</sup> In 1946, the team was the "Brevard Blues", and in 1948, the team was known as the "Brevard Giants" of Charley Whitmire.<sup>2</sup> Frank Kilgore, Will Sharp, Edward Killian, and George Wilks, were some of the managers of some of the teams; the latter being probably the most successful before his death. In 1949, one of the local players, Arthur Hefner, Jr., joined the Philadelphia Stars of the Negro Major League and played several years.<sup>3</sup> William Anderson also played in the above league for a number of years with several different teams.<sup>4</sup> In 1946, the American Legion Post sponsored the teams. It seems that Jake Smith of Mississippi has managed the team since 1947.<sup>5</sup>

#### C. Community Center

The undertaking which deserves the highest praise from so many of the most responsible people and organizations of the town of both races, as well as well wishers elsewhere, is the Mary C. Jenkins Community Center, on South Carver and Oakdale Streets. The cooperation of the townspeople in making this a successful venture will remain, perhaps, for years, one of their most important civic contributions in the history of the county.

This project was conceived by Mary B. Kilgore while she was a student at Shaw University. After coming to Brevard, she started the project on its way, after a meeting at Bethel Baptist Church, by putting an article in the local newspaper in which she pointed out a great need for such a building.<sup>6</sup> The article met with a generous

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<sup>1</sup>Sharp, Documents.

<sup>2</sup>Times, May 15, 1948.

<sup>3</sup>Afro-American (Baltimore), April 30, 1949.

<sup>4</sup>Statement by William Benjamin, personal interview, May, 1960.

<sup>5</sup>F. V. Smith, op. cit.

<sup>6</sup>Statement by Mary B. Kilgore, personal interview, Aug., 1959.

response from various people of the town. In fact, before the project had been completed, this undertaking had been turned into a town and county effort. One of the early outstanding responses and contributions came from Mary C. Jenkins\*, whose husband is in the construction business, who gave the land. A land assessment of eighty-seven dollars was paid off by people of both races.<sup>1</sup> Although the project encountered some objections from some few people, the project got underway. At the Founder's Day Opening in the summer of 1952, the important guests included John Ford\*, the Mayor; the County Attorney\*, and State Representative, Ralph Fisher\*.<sup>2</sup>

In order for one to appreciate the widespread interest shown by many people of the town and county in bringing the Center to completion, a few significant donations are noted. The Times of November 18, 1945, noted a ten-dollar donation from M. B. Witmer\* of Montgomery, Alabama, living in New York, in which she noted that "...we have been too slow in recognizing our responsibility along this line...". An editorial urged the community to help raise \$3,000.00 "to establish a recreational building" and to "designate a colored residential section because it has outgrown the small area in which it is restricted."<sup>3</sup> The Times also noted plays given by the Colored Children's Playhouse for the benefit of the Center.<sup>4</sup> On November 13, 1952, there was a football game between Hendersonville High School and Reynolds High School of Canton for the benefit of the Center.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>M. Kilgore, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Times, Nov. 20, 1952. ✓

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., July 21, 1945. — No Transylvania Times w/ that date  
July 19 or July 26

<sup>5</sup>Sharp, Documents.

In an article in the Times of November 13, there was a report of a Song Festival at Bethel Baptist Church in which the sum of \$1,625.00 was raised for the Center. In this campaign, a Television set was awarded to Charles Sherman\*, aged nine, for his part in this fund raising. In March, 1952, the Monroe Wilson Post\* of the American Legion gave a benefit dance for the Center in which the Mayor and the Town Board joined "in an effort to raise funds."<sup>1</sup> A twenty-five dollar donation was given to the Community Center by Beulah Zachary\*, of Brevard, the Creator of the Television Show, Kukla, Fran, and Ollie, who was later killed in an airplane crash in New York's East River.<sup>2</sup> In 1958, a donation of \$500.00 from Harry E. Holford\* and wife, of Binghamton, New York, was the largest single gift.<sup>3</sup>

The Center has become a multipurpose service. A Library, which was started in 1952, had received 400 books by May, 1953, the gifts of various white people.<sup>4</sup> Mary Kilgore, having been given courses in Library Science by Ruth Bernard\* of Andrews, the County Librarian, became the Librarian of the Center.

In 1953, the Happyland Nursery and Kindergarten was started at the Center, with thirty-six children, in order to help working mothers.<sup>5</sup> An organization of Methodist Women\* played an important part in this venture, as well as did Mrs. Ralph Ramsey\* and Mary C. Jenkins\*. The last major addition to the Center occurred in 1958,

<sup>1</sup>Times, March 26, 1952. - No Transylvania Times w/ that day

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., May 15, 1952. - Not Found  
March 20  
March 27

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., May 13, 1958. - No Transylvania Times w/ that day

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., May 21, 1953. - N/A  
May 7  
May 15

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., July 30, 1953. - N/A

with the construction of a swimming pool, which the Times described as "the greatest accomplishment."<sup>1</sup> A picture, "Facing the Rising Sun", which traces the progress of the colored people since slavery, was painted by C. R. Riddle\* and paid for by contributions from white people.<sup>2</sup> Since 1952, Rockefeller Kilgore, husband of Mary , has been Business Manager. He, in addition to this position, is the Sponsor of a Rock and Roll Band, known as the Famous Tams, which has played in and around the town and as far away as Virginia.

The Center operates under a Community Center Board, with Deacon Cornelius Hunt as President and the following members: Edward Killian, James C. Wulpi\*, a retired Vice-President of American Air Lines; Freeman Daugherty, Arthur Hefner, Jr., D. C. Hall, Victor Betsill, Mary B. and Rockefeller Kilgore.<sup>3</sup>

This Center is believed to have been the first of its type in the state and from which others have been copied.

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<sup>1</sup>Times, Sept. 18, 1958.

<sup>2</sup>M. Kilgore, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.