



HISTORY

The History of Bill's Creek Community Center

Imagine the area around Bill's Creek Road in the early 1950's. According to Felix McDaniel, a teenager during this time, the area was very different than it is today.

- Many roads off Bill's Creek Road still were unpaved.
- Few families in the area had phone service and those who did, had a choice between a four- or an eight-family party line.
- There were only two televisions in the area - one privately owned by Oney Freeman and one owned by Wallace Earley who ran the Dalton General Store. Felix McDaniel remembers 50 men squeezing into the Dalton Store on Wednesday nights when the boxing matches were aired on TV.
- Most people in the area were farmers or tradesmen; a few owned businesses or mills.

This was the Bill's Creek community in the early 50's and the backdrop that brought together 75 local families in 1953 to form the Bill's Creek Rural Development Club, later to be known as the Bill's Creek Community Center Club. The purpose of the grassroot group was to encourage people to work together to build a better community. The Club, spearheaded by Virginia Wilson and Paul Dalton, soon realized the best way to achieve their goals was to build a community clubhouse.

The builders represent the Who's Who of the Bill's Creek area. Families whose lineage dated back to the 1700's with names like McDaniel, Wilson, Dalton, Howell, Norbitt and Flynn were just a few of the families who joined together in 1954 to start planning the BCCC.

Using the motto *Working Today for a Brighter Tomorrow* as a rallying cry to come together, the dream of a Community Center started to become a reality. The McDaniel family donated land, the Cheek family donated the timbers, and the Dalton family donated the use of their sawmills.

Verno Parton dressed the lumber, local truckers and farmers hauled lumber, and local carpenters, masons and other skilled tradesmen gave up their free time. Families would come out on building days to support the workers with food and the offer to help where they could.

To raise funds, farming families sold crops and community members held BBQ chicken and fish fry dinners. In short, a community of humble means sacrificed their time and income to build a better tomorrow.

Before the building was started, the group built a picnic area where not only workers came together to plan the project, but families would gather to support the workers. According to Felix McDaniel, who helped lay out and finish the hardwood flooring in the Center, the building process went smoothly.

Ralph Robertson, as lead carpenter, coordinated construction, as Ralph McDaniel remembers it. The Bill's Creek area was lucky they had almost all the trades needed. One exception was the need for someone to build the chimney. Eventually they found a person who lived off Cedar Creek Road to do the mason work.



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In 1957, the BCCC was completed, and quickly became a meeting place for the community. The picnic area and baseball fields were actively used. Church-based baseball teams would play against each other, bringing people from other areas into the community.

The BCCC won awards based on the Community Center's efforts and creativity at the Rutherford County fair in 1956, 1964, 1965, and 1967. In 1966, due to its success, a delegation from the WNC Community Development Program visited the center and toured the local area. Distinguished visitors included a former congressman, a representative from the Governor's office, the Mayor of Asheville, the Executive Vice President of the WNC Community Development Program, and many representatives from the State and County Agricultural Extension Offices.

In 2004 the BCCC received its 501 (C) (3), non-profit, status from the IRS. It has continued its social and civic activities, such as:

- Youth 4-H groups
- Roadside trash pick-up teams
- Neighborhood beautification groups who painted mailboxes, planted gardens, and installed Community Center signs

During the last 15 years, under the leadership of Jane Howell and VerAnn Kimbrough, the BCCC has continued to be used for a wide variety of functions. It is a place where neighbors have held family reunions, weddings, and birthday parties, as well as being used by civic and fraternal groups for meeting space and fundraising dinners. Each year the BCCC partners with the Bill's Creek Fire Department in fundraising efforts.

Ms. Howell says, the BCCC has a rich history and all neighbors, whether they are new to the area or have lived here all their lives should be proud of the it and should appreciate the sacrifices made by the families who built it.

The new BCCC officers recognize that the future, like its past, depends on community involvement. They feel that there is a renewed interest in the BCCC, an understanding that a strong Community Center will have a positive social and economic impact for all its neighbors.