

**OPPORTUNITY
AND
THE NORTH CAROLINA FUND**

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OPPORTUNITY AND THE NORTH CAROLINA FUND

Terry Sanford and other key figures in North Carolina during the 1960s began to recognize the high rates of poverty in the state. In response to these problems, they created the North Carolina Fund to give citizens throughout the state an opportunity to escape the harsh conditions of poverty. As a result, “The North Carolina Fund goal was designed as an independent, non-profit, charitable corporation to see and dispense funds to attack the cycle of poverty in North Carolina”.¹ Meaning the Fund would not operate to make any personal gains, but entirely to help North Carolinians break the chains of poverty that held them in captivity. Due to the lack of opportunity, many minorities in North Carolina were unable to obtain economic stability in their lives, unfortunately resulting in the repetitive cycles of poverty seen in each generation.

If it was not for an opportunity, blacks could have remained in slavery for another one hundred years. If it was not for an opportunity, “Jim Crow” could continue to control America’s legal system. Opportunity provides an individual with the chance to accomplish whatever he or she may desire in life. No individual should be denied their God given right to an opportunity; however, no obligation should be made to hand out opportunities to individuals who are not deserving of this fortune. Many programs were established under the North Carolina Fund to give citizens the opportunity to escape the

harsh conditions of poverty, due to the fact that many of these individuals had not been given an equal opportunity to succeed in life due to race and gender factors.

The North Carolina Fund realized in order to give low-income individuals an equal opportunity, an increment in education levels for them and financial support for the program must be given the proposed programs. In 1963 the North Carolina Fund received fifty-one proposals from communities across the state. However, in the decision process of choosing the eleven proposals to fund, the North Carolina Fund gave consideration only to the plans that brought interested citizens together analyzing community problems and that would create a new strength and attitude to resolve the problems of poverty.² This meant each proposal had to meet these regulations of the Fund in order to be selected. I will explore the reason why the North Carolina Fund chose to select the proposals they accepted. I will focus on Western North Carolina where each community had relatively similar economies and demanded the same opportunity. Proposals from Cleveland and Macon County will be examined in order to reveal the decision process of the North Carolina Fund. The Fund chose to provide an opportunity for Macon County, but did not choose to assist Cleveland County.

Agricultural Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund

The Agricultural Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund was established in Macon County to help boost the earnings of low-income and rural citizen's.³ This fund would grant the people of Macon County the opportunity they needed to achieve economic stability in their lives because of the enhancement in farming techniques pertaining to machinery and crops. A large number of residents in Macon County relied on agricultural practices. Farmers throughout the county had to travel hundreds of miles to sell their

crops because there was no farmers' market in their community. For many, hauling their crops, across the state did not allow them to make a profit. One farmer was described as having to drive his crops to Atlanta, Georgia, each year. He described his trips as disastrous because of numerous flat tires, hot engines, and bad weather; but it was the only way to support his family financially.⁴

There were many farmers in this area who experienced situations similar to those of this particular farmer. These farmers and citizens continued to live this agricultural way of life without financial success, because it was the only way nature provided from them and their families to survive. The climate was perfect for farming and the soil was embedded with nutrients in this region of North Carolina, which provided an agricultural way of life and gave these individuals an advantage in growing crops.⁵ As a result of unsuccessful journeys to sell their crops, some individuals thought the idea of bringing a farmers' market to their community, thus giving farmers a chance to sell their crops without having to drive hundreds of miles. This would bring economic benefits to the entire county. They also felt that this farmers' market would not only benefit farmers, but it would benefit others within their community by creating jobs.

Citizens of Macon County felt that this program would boost rural and low-income residents opportunity for economic success before mills and factories could ever have an impact in their community.⁶ In 1966 small industry employed forty percent of the population, while sixteen percent were employed in agriculture.⁷ Tourism had begun to have an effect on Macon County; and, as a result, farmers realized tourism could help preserve their agricultural way of life. Farmers felt that with the increasing numbers of tourists in their county, these individuals would be the best people at which to target their

agricultural market. Building the farmers' market would provide farmers a close place to sell their crops and would provide tourist with a place to buy numerous types of crops grown by the farmers of Macon County. These farmers preferred a program centered at improving their agricultural way of life, because they knew the establishment of factories in their county would gradually destroy the agricultural profession in Macon County, and they did not want this to happen. This agricultural way of life was not simply a profession these people had chosen, but farming signified their culture and continuously reminded them of their family history.

“If this was a project that seemed to earn profits through the sweat of poorly paid migrant laborers,” Julian Grigg observed, “I would not view this as a good idea, but I see that this program can help low income farmers.”⁸ Julian Grigg was the executive director of the Community Action Program; and in this particular case, the board of Macon County presented their proposal in a fashion which described how the North Carolina Fund's assistance would produce a dramatic change in their community. Julian Grigg's quote exemplifies Macon County's ability to make their proposal more appealing to the hearts of the decision makers within the North Carolina Fund.

The purpose of this program was carefully defined by Macon County as providing a location where growers could bring their vegetables and fruits for packing and grading, which in return eliminated the necessity for individuals to travel great distances to sell their crops. The Agricultural Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund committee put together important information depicting why their program would help the citizens of Macon County and gave substantial evidence. Macon County also presented adequate records

pertaining to the exact amount of money that would be necessary in order to ensure the proper functioning of the farmers' market.

For \$14,622, Macon purchased a prison farm for the farmers' market location, along with 65 acres.⁹ From this, numerous jobs would be created with the assistance the Agricultural Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund provided citizens of Macon County. A total of 225 people would acquire employment from the creation of the farmers' market. Positions such as packers, graders, mechanics, office personnel, and many other jobs would be needed in order for the farmers' market to be successful.¹⁰

An individual who had experience in the fields could make anywhere from \$200 to \$240 dollars a week. Experienced graders made \$100 to \$130 dollars per week, while experienced fruit and vegetable packers made the same.¹¹ Incomes less than \$3,000 dollars accounted for fifty-six percent of Macon County during the migrant season, but out of season, income less than \$3,000 accounted for eighteen-and-a-half percent during 1950-1960.¹² Migrant labor was a big part of this program because during this era in North Carolina, many people moved across the state following the different crop seasons in order to find work. Over 225 people obtained seasonal employment and seventy percent of them were in the low-income bracket. Ninety-seven growers participated in this program as well.¹³

However, in 1965 there were no applications filed by black or Indian farmers for packing plant jobs or growers. The board clearly stated, "if any minority would apply to participate in the program they would receive equal consideration".¹⁴ One year later in 1966, two vegetable growers who participated in the program were black. The low participation of blacks and other minorities is not astonishing because the percentage of

minorities living in Macon County during 1964 was less than two percent of a population of 15,000.¹⁵

Before the North Carolina Fund began to assist, conditions in Macon County revealed that many families experiencing economic struggles, because their agricultural profession was gradually diminishing. Therefore, these people, whether they were farmers or field workers, suffered financially and were unable to make any improvements. From their lack of economic stability, a cycle had begun to form in these low-income families. Cycles of poverty had begun to form because there had never been any means of opportunity for the citizens of Macon County to move beyond their current circumstances. The cycle of poverty refers to the shift of poverty from generation to generation. These farmers suffering from poverty had no means of becoming educated pertaining to the manner in which they grew their crops. They did not have the resources to enable themselves to understand the new techniques discovered that would improve their agricultural profession. Therefore, the farmers had no opportunity for further financial support that would ensure the proper functioning of their farms each year.

However, after the North Carolina Fund decided to assist Macon County in this project, growers gradually gained more knowledge from the newly discovered techniques pertaining to farming.¹⁶ Farmers were not the only individuals who were able to gain more knowledge in regards to farming. Field hands and other individuals who worked in various jobs related to agriculture were educated pertaining to agriculture techniques such as growing crops in bags for protection against the weather and animals. They were also provided modern advanced equipment to do their work, which in return produced more efficient and productive work from these individuals. After the program began to take

root in the county, more farmers had enabled themselves to receive financial support from banks and other lending services within the state.¹⁷ Most important, the North Carolina Fund provided an opportunity for the citizens of Macon County to become more educated farmers and individuals in regards to their agricultural profession. In addition, the North Carolina Fund gave these farmers the financial support they needed and because agriculture is a high risk venture, banks and lenders were unwilling to lend them money. Many of these farmers were either very young or very old, and, therefore, did not have the stability to operate their farm without any assistance. They needed educational guidance and financial support to enable them to reach the point at which they could operate their business as independently.

Macon County's Need

Macon County needed a program aimed at improving its agricultural way of life because farming was the chosen profession of many. However, finding financial support in this region of North Carolina was very difficult for many of the farmers, because many banks and other types of credit unions were unwilling to lend them any money. Banks were afraid to lend money to low-income farmers because of the high-risk associated with the agricultural profession. Part of the reason these farmers were not experiencing much success agriculturally was due to their lack of knowledge pertaining to new technical advances.

Several techniques were introduced to the farmers of Macon County through the funding of the farmers' market that would enable them to become better farmers, but the introduction of the trellis made the biggest impact.¹⁸ Trellises are vaulted frames made of wood and any other type of material that allow crops to grow from the ground onto these

frames as vines and, therefore, make picking easier for field workers. The introduction of the trellis allowed the process of harvesting crops to be done in a faster and more efficient manner because workers did not have to bend over to pick up crops. New techniques were also introduced regarding the manner in which they grew their particular crops. Farmers in Macon County were provided incentives to grow cucumbers in plastic bags, because research had been conducted suggesting that the use of plastic helped certain crops grow more efficiently because of protection from weather and animals. These farmers were provided \$50 dollars for plastic and fertilizer as incentives to try the newly discovered techniques.¹⁹ Financial support was provided for these farmers because of their low-income position in which they could not afford to take the same risks higher income farmers could take regarding new techniques.

The essential element from this program was that new marketing opportunities could be created for these farmers. Even though many techniques had been shown to improve the development and growth of certain crops, low-income farmers could not afford to try these techniques financially due to the risk of losing their entire crop. In order for the farmers to gain and use newly acquired knowledge pertaining to agricultural practices, financial support would have to be provided. The Agricultural Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund provided farmers with the opportunity of receiving financial support for their crops. In addition to providing financial support, the co-ops provided that these loans were made to the farmers at no interest.²⁰ Many farmers in Macon County were unable to receive loans primarily because they had no collateral to present to the banks. For some farmers, age and handicaps were the factors preventing them from receiving bank or other financial assistance. The Agricultural Cooperative Revolving

Loan Fund proved to benefit those persons who were under 21, single, and who did not have any other connections to financial support.²¹ In 1967 loans were made to five individuals. One of these individuals had lost a hand in an accident and had decided to attempt the cucumber trellis, but unfortunately he was not able to start in designated time and lost his F.H.A loan. F.H.A. stands for Federal Housing Administration, and their responsibility is to provide home loans to individuals who cannot receive loans from banks.²² Another family was simply very poor primarily due to their age. This particular farmer was under 21 and could not borrow any money from F.H.A. Because of his age he was seen as a high risk for F.H.A., taking on a struggling farmer. One farmer's calculations pertaining to the total amount of money needed from his loan was calculated incorrectly, forcing him to acquire more money for his crops.

A rural experiment was conducted in 1966; and during this growing season, low-income farmers were encouraged to use trellised cucumbers. Among the farmers who chose to participate in this experiment, two were illiterate, one crippled by polio, and the other individual was semi-retired.²³ Research was collected from this experiment and was used to help other farmers gain knowledge pertaining to their crops. This experiment also gave the insight that the trellis had to be changed in order to use it for cucumbers. Not only were farmers provided incentives such as money, but these farmers were also given a sense of pride, because they were responsible for helping the entire state of North Carolina find better ways to grow their crops. One farmer stated that he felt such responsibility and pride during the experiment that he stayed up all night in his field to make sure the irrigation system worked properly throughout the night.²⁴ Numerous programs grew out of the Agricultural Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund which gave

farmers and low-income citizens of Macon County the opportunity to succeed by providing loans, various funds, and education to obtain their rightful opportunity for economical stability.

Cleveland Association of Government Officials

Cleveland Association Government Officials was a program proposal of Cleveland County whose purpose was to offer quality governmental services to citizens.²⁵ Assistance from this program was designed to come from the Welfare Department, Health Department, Mental Health Clinic, Employment Security Commission office, and the school systems within the county. The Cleveland Association of Government Officials' main focus was on family. Citizens of Cleveland County began to notice the repetitive cycle of poverty among low-income families. Cleveland County began to realize, as did other counties, that part of the problem concerning poverty had a close connection to family, because poverty was a cycle shifted from parent to child throughout history. Therefore, CAGO wanted to place great emphasis on family. One unique idea presented through this program was for all assisting programs in Cleveland County to come together as one. This merger of all county programs would offer large resources to low-income individuals for financial assistance, education, and overall support in conditions which destroyed any existence of hope.

Cleveland County Need

During the 1960s Cleveland County was no longer rural, but was not entirely urban. The county was undergoing a transformation from an agrarian economy to an industrial economy.²⁶ Beginning in 1955, sixteen industries had chosen Cleveland County as their

home. Due to the arrival of industry, farm life began to decline. Cleveland County had been known as North Carolina's cotton "King."²⁷ However, the transformation from agriculture to industry brought into urban areas the untrained and unskilled people who were tenant farmers from the days of picking cotton. Cleveland County's low-income citizens had a difficult time adjusting. These individuals were not able to hold jobs and receive educational opportunities. As a result, poverty began to take root in many communities. Cleveland County during this period had health, educational, and welfare services that were fully prepared to assist the county because of the effect poverty had in their community.

Before the proposal of CAGO, few efforts had been made to focus on the community and family living environment for low-income families. Programs in the county had often attempted to assist selected members of a family without regarding their environment. No program had targeted the point at which the poverty cycle took root, which is at pre-school and school-age children.²⁸ In addition, no attempt had been made to find employment for the heads of the families and to help these individuals gain skills to find employment. The CAGO proposal would select families with preschool-age children to assist. The help of teachers was also important, because they would need to be able to identify those children who were suffering from these circumstances emotionally and physically due to their home life.

North Carolina Fund Criteria

Community Action Programs and proposals were developed from the numerous needs and ideas of residents within the communities of North Carolina.²⁹ Criteria for each of the proposed programs required that they include neighborhoods with large

concentrations of poverty stricken families. Open forum meetings would have to be organized within the communities establishing contact between the program staff and the community, which would hopefully bring positive benefits to the program. Open meetings also would provide the opportunity for the voices of citizens to be recognized and allow the leaders the opportunity to explain their suggestions to the public, giving the entire community the opportunity to review the problem.³⁰

The criteria for the Community Action Programs required the composition of the proposal to represent a large and varied proportion of each community.³¹ The membership within these programs also had to reflect the entire community. Within the organization were other committees reviewing and assisting each other to produce exceptional results. First, an executive committee would be established to review policy within the organization. This committee would be composed of at least one member of all committees, with the CAP director as the executive secretary.³² The executive committee would oversee the proper execution of the program with governmental agencies. Next, the personnel committee's duty would be to find well-qualified persons for all staff positions and encourage local citizens to work in the community.³³ They, as well, would provide and maintain public information and education to citizens in the community pertaining to the program.

A finance committee would oversee the financial aspect of the organization. Preparing for future needs within the community would also be a part of the finance committee's responsibility. Financial status reports would be required regularly by this committee and would be evaluated to insure the development of skills demanded by the people in the program.³⁴ The Committee on Matching Funds determined and acquired the

amount of local funds that was necessary to maintain the needs of the community. This committee would also be responsible for determining the long-range necessities for the programs and designing specific strategies for the people to meet these goals. The Planning Committee would finally review the needs of the community. This element of the Community Action Plan would assist and help direct each county's staff to draft proposals, review, refine, and coordinate with existing planning groups and agencies.³⁵

Numerous positions made up the Community Action Programs. The position of director consisted of being an administrator with exceptional training, good judgment, dedication to improving human resource development, and good communication skills with people.³⁶ The deputy director's primary requirements were to be able to take responsibility as the director at any time. Being a business administrator required the ability to construct the demands of the neighborhoods into program proposals by uniting leaders and community organizers. In addition, the business administrator would work closely with neighborhoods using creative knowledge to incorporate their recommended ideas.³⁷ The last position within the Community Action Program was the Neighbor Organizer; this person's job was to ensure active participation within the community and provide motivation to promote self-improvement in every individual.³⁸

A spreadsheet was created by the Fund labeling each proposal by county for grading purposes. The grading system operated on a three-point scale, three points were given for excellence, two points for acceptable, and one point for poor. Questions from the spread sheet consisted of: "understanding the local problem, comprehensive or proposed program, experimental or creative quality of proposed program, relevance of proposed program to local problems, practicality or feasibility of proposed program,

involvement of relevant public, private agencies, and officials, involvement of civic leaders, target groups, schools and educational programs, potential for interracial cooperation, quality of leadership, and the last category rated spirit, enthusiasm, and dedication of each proposal.”³⁹ Macon County received twenty-nine points from the spreadsheet rating which was the second highest amount of points received; only Durham and Carteret County received thirty points. Cleveland County was also one of the top twenty-one proposals, receiving twenty-seven, which was the third highest number of points received by a county.

Staff Evaluation

Enthusiastic and great leadership skills were the most noticeable characteristic of Cleveland County by the North Carolina Fund Evaluation Staff.⁴⁰ CAGO exemplified a complete understanding of their county’s poverty problem, admitting a large portion of the problem was due to the local government’s failure to address the issue. However, the leaders of Cleveland County planned to resolve the poverty problems by utilizing CAGO as a program that would give strong direction and ensure cooperation among all government agencies.⁴¹ While having support of government agencies presented a strong attribute, the staff viewed this as a weakness, because the viewpoint of CAGO would strongly reflect the ideas of the administration rather than the community, hampering the true understanding of poverty and the incorporation of ideas of the poor.

The staff clearly stated the community and administrative outlook of poverty are both important in addressing the problem, but both parties must work closely together in order to create an efficient task force. In the original proposal, the staff noticed that there was no representation of citizens’ groups or voluntary agencies; representation by all

citizens were a very important factor for the Fund.⁴² Twenty-two percent of Cleveland County was black; therefore, strong government control was seen by the Fund as presenting a smaller chance for black citizens to be represented.⁴³ The Fund brought this bias, to the attention of Cleveland County. However, “the dynamic leadership, enthusiasm of the community, and key governmental support gave Cleveland County a great opportunity to be selected.”⁴⁴ The specified weak areas within the program had to be addressed to allow the proposal to make the final selection stage.

Macon County presented a proposal that was very appealing and convincing to the evaluation staff. Members of the evaluation staff who took a visit to Macon County were very impressed by the local groups’ understanding of the social, psychological, and economic problems affecting their community.⁴⁵ They were also impressed with the leadership and enthusiasm the leaders possessed and their ability to work efficiently as a team to accomplish specified goals. The evaluation staff felt the program was a small range program that included an effort to help low-income mountain farmers through a cooperative crop program.⁴⁶ In addition, the evaluation staff also recognized the need to motivate farmers and citizens in the community to get involved in the proposed program. As a result, the staff recommended the need for psychological and sociological studies to be conducted that would display the thinking of the people within the community to help produce a more efficient program.⁴⁷ Macon County’s proposal was labeled a simple project, but needed improvement within the proposal. However, the spirit of the community was a very convincing sign that the program could be a success if the community could make the necessary changes. The evaluation staff stated that Macon

County's proposal required the least amount of assistance of all proposals and had the potential to have the biggest impact as a Community Action Program.

Short-Term Goals

Short-term goals of Macon County focused on relieving stress in the lives of low-income families that targeted the minds of these individuals. Since stress accumulated from not being financially stable, the program intended to get these individuals to believe they could obtain jobs. Once these individuals believed that with the right training and education they could get a job, then incentives for these individuals to take action from the skills received to enter the workforce would be necessary. Cleveland County leaders believed that by promoting incentives, they could get individuals to recognize their potential to be removed from poverty, and use their skills to break the powerful chain that had them constrained. The board believed changing the environment for these individuals meant creating incentives as a means to push these people not only physically, but also mentally. By changing the environment of these people, the program would reinforce hope, expectation, and enthusiasm about the future; and these would be instilled into their minds.⁴⁸ The board of Cleveland County seemed to believe that their efforts could not help these individuals receive the opportunity to gain financial stability, if these individuals did not believe themselves this program would help. In the 1960s improvements were being made in the American workforce between blacks and whites; however, in some parts of the South racial attitude changes were being made at a much slower pace than in others. As a result, the board realized that the work environment in which these individuals would be forced to work would have to improve in order to generate efficiency and productivity within the program.

The final part of CAGO's short-term goal included the youth of the county. Cleveland County's proposal stated the need to prepare preschool children in the proper way in order to prevent the difficult problems of poverty from continuing. The board of Cleveland County believed that if these children were given a proper start in life, this would provide them with an opportunity to avoid the same trap and conditions their family had fallen into.⁴⁹

Long-Term Goals

Long-term goals of the program were primarily focused on results, and the board was not as concerned with the amount of time it would take to reach them as to reach short-term goals. The families chosen by the program would be expected to have made progress from the conditions, such as unemployment and inadequate housing that they were initially surrounded by before participating in the program. The progress expected by Cleveland County did not simply mean that the person obtain a job if an individual previously was unemployed, but to that the staff could actually see improvements in these individuals' lives pertaining to their overall environment. This meant improvement in their home, job, and their children's lives. However, the board realized this could only be accomplished through a consistent educational process. Overall, the mission of this program proposed by Cleveland County was to "improve and enrich the total family situation in the lives of their citizens who were entrapped in vicious conditions of poverty."⁵⁰

Similarities Between Program

Each of these programs was proposed to the North Carolina Fund's board, because the individuals of these communities felt that if their proposal was accepted by

the North Carolina Fund, changes would occur for those citizens living in poverty. Both program proposers believed changes began with education. Both programs recognized education as the primary method to explain the proper steps to eliminate the suffering of poverty. A significant number of the people in each of these counties did not have the opportunity to obtain high levels of education. However, education was an issue that affected Macon County in a different manner from the way it affected Cleveland County due to the economic status of these counties. Even though these counties needed to educate their citizens in different ways, Cleveland County through the public school system and Macon County through vocational programs, the need for higher levels of education was apparent in order to remove these people from the economic situations that caused their suffering. Education was the missing link for these people; however, the process of educating these individuals was quite different from one another. The most noticeable similarity between the two programs is the opportunity that each desired to provide to every family participating in the program

Differences between Programs

The differences in the programs that are initially noticed is the color of people each program was designed to assist. Whites predominantly would be represented in the Macon County program and blacks and whites would be represented in the Cleveland County's program. Differences in ethnicity brought different attitudes and different opinions about the conditions caused by poverty. The individuals in Macon County who participated in the Agricultural Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund were primarily white farmers and field workers through the life span of the program. This was a major difference between the programs as well, because Cleveland County's program created

opportunity for all individuals in the low-income bracket whether they were black, white, Indian, or Asian. Therefore, diversity can be noticed as a difference, because Cleveland County's program proposed to include a wide range of individuals being helped, while Macon County's project would primarily benefit white farmers and field workers. This was shown through the files of the program, which stated no black or Indian farmers applied for assistance in 1965, but in 1966 two black growers participated in Macon County's program. Although no documentation supports this idea, this fact clearly describes that blacks in Macon County may have not been told or encouraged to participate in the programs during the 1960s.

Even though these white citizens in Macon County were experiencing life in the low-income bracket, their outlooks about the current situation and method for solving these problems were different from those of the citizens of Cleveland County. Cleveland and Macon County were both rural areas in western North Carolina, but Cleveland and Gaston County during this time were in the phase of shifting from agriculture to industry. The textile industry had overtaken Cleveland County's past way of life, in which agriculture provided economical stability. For this reason, education had different impacts in each of these counties. Citizens in Cleveland County needed equal educational opportunity, because their current way of life forced people to have different kinds of skills from those previously needed in an agricultural environment. However, for those individuals whose way of life was farming, converting their mentality from field to industry was a difficult task, which involved different kinds of education. Citizens of Macon County also needed their education to improve as well, but their education was centered solely on agricultural practices, helping them improve their ability to grow

crops. By contrast, the people of Cleveland County needed educational improvement in regards to math, science, and other academic fundamentals for the textile industry that provided their way of life.

Summary of Differences

The education process for citizens of Macon County involved teaching adults trade skills. These trade skills were taught through experiments using farmers and their crops, which presented better techniques for growing certain crops and, as well, made farmers familiar with new technology that made farming more productive and efficient. This educational process did not have as many steps as the educational process of Cleveland County. Cleveland County's educational process had to take root beginning with the youth. This educational process had to begin with the youth because of the advanced technology that was required in order to prepare these individuals to work in an industrial workforce. Since Cleveland County's economy was no longer dominated by agriculture, the skills used in the fields were no longer needed. The skills that were needed in the textile industry required a more advanced level of education mainly pertaining to reading and math skills.

Equal Playing Grounds

The Agricultural Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund in Macon County was granted assistance from the North Carolina Fund, while the program proposed by Cleveland County was rejected. A comparison can still be made displaying whether or not each of these programs' proposals was provided an equal opportunity for acceptance. The one way to determine whether or not these programs began on equal playing grounds

lies in the criteria of the North Carolina Fund used in their decision process. One advantage Macon County's program had over Cleveland County was that the voices of the citizens were represented by citizens, while the interests of Cleveland County poor were dictated by government officials. This aspect has to be taken into consideration, because the first difference that is noticed between these two counties is their minority population.⁵¹ The North Carolina Fund's mission was to, "enable the poor to become productive, self-reliant citizens, and to foster institutional, political economic, and social change designed to bring about a functioning, democratic society."⁵² While these words may have been the mission of the Fund, realistically in the South during the 1960s, every person associated with the decision process may have not removed all racial tension and fears against minorities. Cleveland and Macon County programs were started on equal playing grounds, but if we take a closer look at each of these programs separately, we can see that maybe these programs were not started on equal playing grounds. By analyzing factors in each of these programs, evidence could have been found showing the advantage Macon County had over Cleveland County. Although there is no documentation that time was a factor, it is apparent in these programs that time could have been. The North Carolina Fund took into consideration the feasibility of each program which includes the length of time it would take to see results of the programs. The Agriculture Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund in Macon clearly has an advantage over Cleveland County because results from educating farmers about specific crops and lending preparation from banks to ensure a successful growing season could produce results within a short period of time. The program proposed by Cleveland County would

not produce results as quickly because their projects involved a much longer process of steps being taken in order to move on to the next level.

Overall, Macon County's presented a proposal to the North Carolina Fund that would produce quick results due to the fact their project consisted of short-term goals, which in return would produce long-term effects in their county. Cleveland County's proposal presented long-term goals that would not produce quick results, but would also produce long-term effects in their county.

Money was also a factor that caused Cleveland and Macon not to be on equal playing grounds from the beginning. Macon County's proposal did not require as much money as Cleveland County's because of the length of the nature of the program. For Cleveland County, it would take years before results would be seen from their proposal, while Macon County's proposal would produce results in less than a year. Macon County's proposal presented a program to the North Carolina Fund that was not a long-term paternalistic program, while Cleveland County's proposal required long-term and paternalistic attention. Each of these proposals presented great ways to help the citizens of their county, but the North Carolina Fund had specific criteria these proposals had to meet.

Why Opportunity Is Important

No argument can be made against opportunity being the key component to obtain success. Every man or woman who has received success in his or her life would not have been successful without an opportunity. Whether opportunity is provided through family, wealth, vouchers, or any other factor, without an opportunity in life, a person's drive to become the best can be destroyed. No matter the color an individual may be or other

differences they may have, opportunity must never be denied. The North Carolina Fund insured a fair and equal consideration of each proposal they received from the numerous communities. “In order for me to get the same food, I have to sit at the same table.”⁵³ From the book “Praying For Sheetrock”, this statement clearly explains that ⁵⁴in order for a person to receive the same opportunity as others in life, every individual must not be denied his or her right to receive this opportunity. The North Carolina Fund provided the state of North Carolina with assistance to address the problems of poverty. The research gathered from Macon and Cleveland County’s proposal presents only facts concerning the selection by the North Carolina Fund. Macon County was selected was because their proposal met all the specified criteria of the Fund, while Cleveland County’s proposal was not accepted due to their failure to meet the entire criteria of the Fund. Even though Governor Sanford’s Fund was not able to help every citizen of North Carolina defeat poverty, it still had a tremendous impact in the lives of many North Carolinians. Governor Hunt stated at the memorial service of Terry Sanford, “Governor Sanford was a man constantly looking to make improvements.” While Governor Sanford is no longer alive, his spirit continues to direct the state of North Carolina as a model for other states, just as the North Carolina Fund provided during the 1960s.

¹ http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/n/North_Carolina_Fund/hist.htm

² *North Carolina Fund Annual Review 1966*

³ *Agriculture Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund*, NC Fund Papers, Subseries 4.3, Folder 3832

⁴ *Agriculture Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund*, NC Fund Papers, Subseries 4.3, Folder 3832

⁵ *Agriculture Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund*, NC Fund Papers, Subseries 4.3, Folder 3832

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- ⁶ *Agriculture Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund*, NC Fund Papers, Subseries 4.3, Folder 3832
- ⁷ *North Carolina Fund Annual Review 1966*
- ⁸ *Agriculture Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund*, NC Fund Papers, Subseries 4.3, Folder 3832
- ⁹ *Agriculture Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund*, NC Fund Papers, Subseries 4.3, Folder 3832
- ¹⁰ *Agriculture Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund*, NC Fund Papers, Subseries 4.3, Folder 3832
- ¹¹ *Agriculture Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund*, NC Fund Papers, Subseries 4.3, Folder 3832
- ¹² *North Carolina Fund Annual Review 1966*
- ¹³ *Agriculture Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund*, NC Fund Papers, Subseries 4.3, Folder 3832
- ¹⁴ *Agriculture Cooperative Revolving Loan Fund*, NC Fund Papers, Subseries 4.3, Folder 3832
- ¹⁵ *North Carolina Fund Annual Review 1966*
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