**Marvin Fowler Interview**

**Camille White:** [00:00:01] If you could tell me your name?

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:00:03] Marvin Fowler.

**Camille White:** [00:00:05] And when and where were you born?

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:00:08] I was born in Jackson County here on Cedar Creek, 1936.

**Camille White:** [00:00:16] And what was it like growing up here, or in this area?

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:00:22] Well it was when I was growing up really it was a, it was a farming area. And when I were in high school we had 27 in our senior class. So schools are small, they're still small. So... that's sort of like the way it was growing up it was a farming community in and so it changed later on more towards growing up it was sort of a farming community.

**Camille White:** [00:01:09] Where did you go to high school at?

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:01:11] It was called Glennville at that time. Glenville High School, which is Blue Ridge now. I in finished in fifty-four,fifty-five at Blue Ridge, Glenville High School. It was right on the lake there at Glenville.

**Camille White:** [00:01:39] And tell me about your family and their businesses here?

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:01:44] Well we, about all of worked in Brevard at the paper plant, cellophane plant, and then we started coming back to Cashiers and my parents set up a supermarket here and in sixty-four and my mother had a heart attack and I coded to come back and me and my wife here take over the business and really that was in sixty-four and she didn't die till ninety-three and she had a lot of good years and it really I didn't think she would ever board in her business and she worked another 20 years.

**Camille White:** [00:02:40] What was the name of that supermarket?

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:02:42] Fowler Shopping Center.

**Camille White:** [00:02:44] Is that building still there?

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:02:46] It's still there. It's still, it's, well I still own one of the buildings called Gracewear. It's a dress shop and then there's two more shops that was in that building and there are clothing stores right next to Wachovia Bank. So I was in the supermarket and my wife we had another clothing Store and then later it was a gift shop and then I had a brother that had a hardware store and then had no brother had a gas station. And we did pretty well over whole family was in business and we, we had, we had most of the business in town.

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:03:57] So...it was in fact for a number of years and stayed in the grocery store for oh I guess from the 40s to about 2000 when Ingles came in. We was doing a lot of different things of tree farming,and so we decided that we just still try to compete with Ingles we just do better time to retire, so we had four or five jobs and we just had four after we got rid of the grocery store.

**Camille White:** [00:04:47] How has Cashiers changed since you were born?

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:04:52] Well it's, it's... it's went from a logging community to a farming community as far as Glenville and Cashiers and then went from farming to a tourist industry and I've sort of thirty-six to now I've seen sort of seen all of it.

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:05:33] There was a big change and I know back when my father was in business in the 30s, he would haul gas used it in Toxaway off the train, haul it up with horses to Cashiers. There's about eight or ten cars and then he'd sale. They were tourists than and he would sell the gas for the A-Models. But he, he brought it to Cashiers in a horse and wagon. So that's way back.

**Camille White:** [00:06:15] So before your parents opened up that supermarket would you guys have to go into Sylva to get stuff...

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:06:23] No, there were, there were small, the small stores here. But it was, it, we would go...most people would go to town like Harrolds Supermarket. Some of those go down there once, twice a month and buy groceries.

**Camille White:** [00:06:54] How long did it take take it to Sylva that back then?

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:06:56] Well it was, it was...most time it's bout an hour, hour and a half. Back, know back our first vehicles that we had in the 40s was A-Models. And you, you say I went to Sylva and I only had two flat tires. So they, you just carried a pump and patches and you, you never didn't have not money to buy new tubes or nothing and if you just had one flat tire you done real good. And I had an A-Model and my cousin had an A-Model. And yeah we brag about I only had one or I just had two flat tires. So now that's a big change, but you just stop and take the tire off, but that's a lot, a lot of difference, some big changes there.

**Camille White:** [00:08:05] Besides working like in the family business, farming, logging, what would you guys do for fun up here since everything, like most businesses were in Sylva?

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:08:20] Well now... there's a place called Helens Barn in Highland. you haven't heard of it.

**Camille White:** [00:08:26] No.

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:08:27] It's a, it's a dance hall. Everybody went to Helens Barn on Saturday night. They would be always three or four hundred and they were a, a so that's where everybody if you was growing up it's where you were on Saturday night. And then High Hampton, they had a, it's big country club.

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:09:03] And the way they had, the way they done their help, they would bring them in from South Carolina, all over the place and they would come, the girls come and boys, mostly girls for the dining room. And they come and and spend all summer and they'd house and they worked the dining room. So we were growing up,we was always, they would come in a certain day and bout the time school was out. So the boys wanted to go down and see the new crop of girls come in and there'd be about 30 of them.

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:09:55] So that's something major growing up. It was, course there won't many boys that would come, but anyhow a lot of the girls come in and they married local boys but anyhow that was, that was you go to Helens Barn and then a lot of times you date the girls that come into work that summer. And that was two things in the course we had ball teams and we played ball on the weekend and that was about it. We'd go to Western Carolina when we were growing up, specially basketball games.

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:11:02] That was, thing we liked to do.Course it was... My parents wouldn't let me drive when I was in high school and I rode with other boys. But anyway we go to see Western Carolina play ball, that was another entertainment we had to go off the mountain. Once in a while we go to movies in Brevard. The movie was 10 cents and a ham sandwich was 15 so and a drink. So for quarter you got all that. So there's been a little change in that.

**Camille White:** [00:11:54] How has Jackson County changed?

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:11:57] Well it's, it's really...it's, it's changed a lot. With the tourist, you know you had Dillsboro and all through they're are pretty big in tourist and have been. So they changed from the Mead Corporation was a pretty big industry, you know the paper plant there. And then of course now Western Carolina was real small college now it's a big college. And then the, the 10th district per all the Western North Carolina the state departments in Sylva.

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:12:54] And then the hospital is a big industry and Southwestern you know a industry too. That's, they don't have the manufacturing plants but they've got, they've got a lot of good paying jobs with the colleges, hospitals, state department. So that's, that's affected the county. It gives them even though they've lost, they did have some textiles there in Sylva, they've lost those but they've got better paying jobs with the colleges and all the other and so really, now with Sylva and the Jarrott House in Dillsboro, they're pretty heavy on tourism too.

**Camille White:** [00:14:01] So and so it's, it's all changed sort of the same way. But we're, we've only got, we've only got mostly tourism, second homes. It's there, a lot of the homes, most of the homes around the country clubs are a million plus houses, so it's, it's changed a lot. People come here to vacation. It's, when we talked when you come up here and step out on the deck it is almost cold. Well that's what makes Cashiers much makes the real estate value. You can play golf in the summertime, in the sunshine and not, most time, not get hot. You got this cool breeze and if you go 15 miles in any direction it gets hotter. You come on top of the mountain you're and that's what makes the real estate. Most everything in Western North Carolina, if you get above 3000 feet, it's owned by the Forest Service and the government. And of course where is 4,100 hear and most everything above

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:15:56] 3,500 is, is, is belong with the government and Forrest Service and parks and all that stuff, so it's, there's just a few little spots that like Cashiers and Highlands and course Balsams a little bit cooler. These very few private land thats above 3500 feet and Cashiers and Highlands is one of them and that's what makes it so valuable, is the cool breezes.

**Camille White:** [00:16:41] What can you tell me about the farmhouse on your property?

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:16:46] Well we bought the, we bought the land in fifty-one and the fellow that built the house was Guy Zachary. And that, in the Cashiers area, the Zachary's were the first people that moved into was the Zachary family. I think they came up from South Carolina, so there's there's a lot, of the, lot of the historical places here, Most of them are. The Tolbert house and it's Zachary family, most of the real old settlers were Zachary's and but anyhow, we bought that and Guy Zachary was the one that built the house and he built it in well hundred, hundred years ago.

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:18:06] It was...and his son he went into the service, World War Two and he was killed. He was a pilot in the Air Force. He got killed in World War Two and after, after that they sold their place here and moved off the mountain and after their son was killed they, I don't reckoned that they didn't like it here much anymore.

**Camille White:** [00:18:53] So what year would you estimate that, that house was built?

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:18:58] It was, it was built...well it's a, it's about, it's about a hundred and five years old. So it was built in about...I think...it's built in 1912 I think. Yeah, I've got a sign of it. As you go by, you might want to take a picture of it. Yeah, 1912. So that's... the man bought the house from Guy Zachary, there's his son was killed in World War Two.

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:19:53] Well when it came up for sale, a man named Ken Moore, he just got out of service and they had what's called a G.I. bill in the government would help soldiers coming back from World War Two help them, give them a loan to buy farms. So they got a G.I. loan, this man did in both the farm,so it sort of ties, the war tied in and he kept it...I guess the fellow bought it from Zachary but he probably it bout 15 years and we bought it from him. That's, and what they done too Zachary's they, in 1912 they came in in the spring that year and put your crop out on the farm and farmed their crop, I don't know exactly what all they had. But back then everybody if you need a house everybody in the community just went and built the house and they build their barns that way.

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:21:23] So the ones in the community you built the house in the summer and then they moved here about Thanksgiving and they lived, they lived in a tent all summer while he's building the house. And they would, when they had a slack in their crops, you know, they'd all come and build some more on the house. But by the end of the summer the house was built and they moved in. But that's why...the nneighbors would get together and build houses and build the barns. It's... that's that got built in the... Any other questions.

**Camille White:** [00:22:17] I think that's all. Thank you.

**Marvin Fowler:** [00:22:19] You're welcome.