

The Permanence of Change

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Of all the laws which affect our lives and the world in which we live, none are more constant or immutable than the laws of change itself. From the moment that we came into this world until the moment we depart from it, we are in a constant state of change. Men struggle through the years to attain wealth and fame and in a brief space of time it is all gone. Cities, empires, and great enterprises rise, reach their climax and are gone. This is as it should be. One of you here tonight might possibly recognize the above as the opening paragraph of a paper delivered some years ago before this same group.

I love Hopkinsville, Christian County, Kentucky - and except for the years spent in pursuing my formal education and in the armed services, have lived all of my 49 years within her boundaries. I have seen great changes take place in her environs, her people, her institutions, her commerce, her educational system, her industry, changes from which there is no return - permanent changes.

These changes have been taking place since the day in 1796 when Bartholemew T. Wood first stopped his wagon at the East Fork of Little River, near where Chestnut and Anderson Grain Company is now located, formerly known as Cate's Mill, and much earlier as Wood's Mill. As he climbed Belmont Hill, his vision was not of a busy town, or a village, or a hamlet, but of a parcel of land, fertile in its soil, abounding in game, and whose streams were filled with fish. He sought the means by which he might earn a livelihood from the soil as all pioneers of necessity must do. He built his first cabin on the corner of what is now 14th and Campbell Streets and later a better house on the present site of Major-Dray Drug Store. His was a vision of agriculture as this was the means by

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which he could sustain his family. Thus Hopkinsville, the successor to the town of Elizabeth was first settled in the last years of the 18th century by one Bartholemew Wood. In 1797 the town of Elizabeth was chosen as Christian County's seat of government and in 1804 the name was changed to Hopkinsville. Many would separate the town of Hopkinsville and Christian County, when they begin to develop a story of change such as I hope to do in this paper. However, I profess to be a citizen of the United States, a native Kentuckian, a resident of Christian County, and an inhabitant of the City of Hopkinsville, the County seat of Christian County, Kentucky. Since the story of Hopkinsville and Christian County are so entwined I do not choose to attempt to separate them. Hopkinsville, of necessity, is the focal point of Christian County and therefore the center of the paper which I read. Established as an agricultural community, its agricultural base has spawned the means of livelihood and the leaders of both town and county for the greater part of its 174 year history.

In Judge W. T. Fowler's booklet on Christian County printed around 1915, an early booster of Christian County agriculture had this to say concerning the productivity of the farms of the county.

"If all the wheat raised in Christian County should be ground into flour and put into fifty pound sacks it would build a highway from the mouth of the Big Sandy to Land's End in Jackson's Purchase.

"If all the tobacco raised in Christian County could be made into Kentucky cheroots and Greenville Plug, it would furnish a smoke and chew for all the armies of the world for sixty days. It would suffice for one day for all the smokers and chewers of America and Europe.

"If all the hogs raised in Christian County could be combined into one big hog, he could stand with his hind feet on the Peninsula of Florida, and his front

feet ^{ON} the Isthmus of Darien, and with one root of his snout he could dig the Panama Canal.

"If all the chickens raised in Christian County could be combined into one big chicken and he could be a rooster, he could stand with one foot on the Rockies and the other on the Sierras, and when he crowed the rings of Saturn would jingle.

"If all the mules raised in Christian County could be combined into one big mule, and he possessed all the propensities of a genuine Kentucky mule, he could stand with his front feet on the border of Mexico, his hind feet over the line of the old Dominion, and could kick the head light off the Aurora Borealis."

This early booster ^{SPOKE} spoke eloquently of agriculture which has been the basis of Hopkinsville and Christian County's economy for the greater part of its history as a political entity.

In Perrins's history of Christian County published in 1884, he reported that Hopkinsville had never been much of a manufacturing center. The early industrial enterprises he listed were flour mills, tanyards, distilleries, brick-yards, a foundry, planing mills, carriage and plow factories, and an ice factory. Perrin posed the lack of industrial enterprises as a problem, since raw materials existed in such abundance so close to the city.

Hopkinsville has always been a trading center serving a large section of the Pennyrile and Purchase regions of Kentucky and Northern Tennessee. With the advent of World War II, the normal and traditional agricultural economy of the city and county was somewhat changed by the establishment of Fort Campbell on the Kentucky-Tennessee line. This was the first large scale transfer of fertile, productive agricultural acreage to non-agricultural uses. As time went on it became apparent that the establishment of Fort Campbell had signaled the beginning

of the establishment of a diversification in the economy of the town and county.

At this point I would like to emphasize that I do not predict the demise of total agricultural production within Christian County. I have derived from my research certain figures and facts, which I consider interesting and relevant to this discussion. Competent farm economists advise me that total agricultural production in Christian County in 1969 totaled at least \$25,000,000 and by 1975 this should reach \$30,000,000 without the advent of improved methods ^{AND} ~~DE~~ technology. Even with this 20% projected increase by 1975, Christian County has not reached its agricultural production potential. According to competent authority, we could produce \$50,000,000 from our soil resources if we farmed as intensively as some of our neighboring counties. We have the potential of producing 158,000A of corn and soybeans vs. the 60,000 acres we are now producing and we now have adequate facilities either now existing or ^{the} ability to expand ^{THESE FACILITIES} to market this increase of production. We, with today's knowledge of agricultural methods, could intensify land use from forage type operations to row crop with livestock not competing for land use. In spite of this potential to increase agricultural production farm population will need to be further reduced. We have more total acres available for crop production than any county in Kentucky. We are overproduced by several counties but Christian County has by far the largest potential. If Christian County was doing as good a job in crop production as Union or Daviess County we would have a 15,000,000 bushel corn crop vs. the present 6,000,000; and ^a 700,000 bushel soybean crop vs. the present 500,000; and a 3,000,000 bushel small grain crop vs. the present 1,500,000, and this again with today's methods. These figures could be increased by advancing knowledge and technology.

The rate of economic growth varies among communities. It is, as a rule, identified with the production of goods, services, and personal satisfaction. Growth is not a spontaneous thing, nor is it continuous. Like a field of corn, it needs to ^{be} tilled through effective planning and stimulated by effective action.

As a rule, economic growth and development are measured in terms of an increase in the quantity of goods and services produced and the satisfaction derived there from. Hopkinsville, Christian County, its officials, its citizens should now appraise their own productive history and analyze its own resources, both social and economic, prior to planning for the future - and herein in the word planning is the text of my paper. Because as our community grows it is most important that some direction be given to its physical, ethnic, cultural, educational, recreational, economic, and governmental growth and development. The changes that are taking place now and will take place in the years to come will be permanent changes and whether they are good or bad will depend in large part upon the degree of planning and thought which is given to it now.

It is necessary for Hopkinsville and Christian County in order to help themselves in a period of fast-developing change to-

1. Identify our growth problems.
2. Analyze our potential for growth.
3. Evaluate our strength and weakness in selected fields of agriculture, employment, population, education, housing, financial structures, and labor force characteristics. Such an undertaking will provide us with facts with which to appraise and plan for the future. At the same time, it should aid in the establishment of bench marks from which to measure progress in terms of realistic goals and objectives.

As we seek to develop greater stability and prosperity within our community we should endeavor to allocate our local resources in such combinations as to yield the greatest good for the greatest number of people. To this end it is desirable that we-

1. Take an inventory of the resources available.
2. Evaluate these resources in terms of growth potential, i.e., to increase the production of goods, services, and satisfaction.
3. Establish practical long view goals and objectives which will, when achieved, have lasting impact upon the social and economic well-being of Hopkinsville and Christian County, i.e., to have a multiple effect on progressive growth and expansion.
4. We need to establish priorities and activities to achieve the foregoing goals through long- and short-run programs.

As an example of the type of information which could be helpful in planning for the future growth of our city and county it is interesting to note that from 1949-1959 the number of commercial farms in Christian County decreased from 2,035 to 1,274, a ^{DECREASE} change of 761 or 37%. The projection is that by 1975 the number will have declined to 798. In this same period of time, while the number of commercial farms was declining by 37%, the value of farm products sold increased from \$8,763,000 to \$12,686,000 an increase of 45%. It was projected in this study that by 1975 the value of farm products sold would reach \$18,369,000. However, this figure has already been surpassed as previously noticed in 1969. In the years between 1950-1960 total personal income increased by over 260% in Christian County and the projection by 1975 is for an almost four-fold increase. In 1969 per capita income ^{of} ~~in~~ Christian County residents was \$3,805 and Christian County ranked second in the state of Kentucky in per

capita income and we are well on our way toward the projection for 1975 of a per capita income of \$4,410. Between 1960-1963 the number of Social Security recipients increased by 1,281 or by 33%. As of January 1, 1970, Christian County had a total of 6,700 Social Security recipients, ~~and~~ with total benefits of 5,550,000 dollars annually and a projection of 8,000 recipients by 1980. This is included here only to indicate the change taking place in the composition of our population among the elderly and as an indication of the necessity of planning for the future in regard to the needs and requirements of this segment of our population. Current projections of the total available labor supply by 1974 in Christian County (industrial labor) is 5,700 compared to a present industrial payroll numbering 3,575 and this includes many from adjoining counties. Retail sales, volume in 1969 reached a total estimated volume of \$90,000,000.00 which is some 33% ahead of what a 1963 study projected retail sales would reach by 1975. I could go on and on with figures which would show you more and more the dynamic growth which has taken place in our town and county in the last decade and quote you figures to show what is expected by the forecasters for the immediate years ahead. However, I hope that I have proved my point with the few facts enumerated above.

In a community such as ours there are many groups that are making constant forecasts and projections on the needs and requirements of the community for the future. There are state and federal agencies, universities, professional planners, railroad industrial development departments, utilities, business executives of local firms (including business agents, sales managers, directors, bankers, newspapers, trade associations, Chambers of Commerce, Farm Bureau, and others). However in our community there is no single cohesive body with city and county governmental powers, which is able to put together all the facts, figures, and projections in order that both the city and county might have a blueprint by which they

might plan for the future. I submit to you tonight that through intelligent planning the changes which will take place in the years ahead will be ~~most~~^{most} palatable, easier in transition, and cost the taxpayer less. However, any effort of this nature is monumental in its scope. It is not something which can be developed written up; substantiated by statistics, and put on a shelf. It would take the constant supervision of a continuing board of community leaders, both governmental and lay, to update and bring to the attention of properly vested legislative bodies, the changes as they take place or appear likely to occur. A project of this nature should be beyond political factions. It should include representatives from every segment of the community. It should have a paid staff to direct the studies, compile the results, and carry the fight for legislative approval (^{if} necessary) to the county judge and fiscal court, and the Mayor and City Council. Hopkinsville and Christian County is facing a Decade of great economic and social changes. Planning today will if good planning which is implemented show results no sooner than the last half of the 70's. But a start now with a continual and active commission cannot help but make the job of city and county government easier in the decades ahead - and here knowing full well the controversial nature of such a proposal - I would hope that somewhere in the planning and recommendations that we might come to a single unit government for the city and county. This will be more and more needed as the farm population shrinks and the county population becomes more and more urbanized.

I would hope that if such a joint city-county commission was to be appointed that it would include some visionaries with high aspirations for their city and county's developments. Men who would project themselves into the future, beyond their normal life expectancy. As I read and researched for this paper I was

greatly impressed by the biography of one of Christian County's most illustrious citizens of the past, Colonel R. E. Cooper. Col. Cooper was a visionary and an accomplisher. He was successful in his business enterprises but was also active in his community in the promotion of its interests. There is recorded in Meacham's History of Christian County, his appearance before the Kentucky Legislature of 1928 in which he succeeded in having a resolution passed memorializing Congress to build and erect a national monumental memorial boulevard to the United States soldiers and sailors who died in the Service. This memorial was to be in the nature of a war road, patterned after the Appian Way, built by Claudius Appius more than two thousand years ago from Rome to the sea.

This boulevard, in accordance with the resolution, in which the state of Kentucky was to provide the right of way, was to be built of concrete of enduring construction to be not less than 100 feet in width, beginning with the Lincoln Memorial in Larue County, passing through Mammoth Cave National Park Reservation to the Jefferson Davis Monument, and ^{TERMINATING} ~~termining~~ at Outwood. This boulevard was to be approximately 150 miles in length, and the state of Kentucky agreed to furnish a plot or tract of land of three acres adjacent to and fronting along the boulevard, and to deed same through trustees to be appointed, to each of the forty-eight states of the Union, requesting that each of the states would through a special act of their Legislature, build and erect a suitable monument to their dead, thus making it in fact a monumental boulevard to the greatest army in equipment and service of the World War; and memorializing their achievements in connecting Lincoln Memorial, the president of the Union, with the Jefferson Davis monument; the president of the Confederacy, terminating with their grandsons at the U. S. Veterans Hospital at Outwood, Kentucky. History has not recorded any further developments toward the realization of Col. Cooper's vision, but he aspired great things for his town and county and worked throughout his life for its betterment. We need men of his caliber and vision today to help us plan for tomorrow.

Hopkinsville and Christian County now have a three-fold economic base - agriculture, industry, and military. We can forecast with certainty that the first two will grow and expand in the years ahead to support the increasing population, and the third, the military, will furnish certain fluctuations in the overall economy as world events might dictate. However, by 1990 the high estimate of the population of Christian County is 109,406. The estimated 66,964 of 1970 (which can be updated as soon as the 1970 census results are published) will thereby be increased by approximately 60% in the next 20 years. Of this 109,406, 38,285 is projected as the population of the corporate area of Hopkinsville. It is estimated that 75% of the future residential development will occur outside of the existing corporate limits.

I have posted on the board the projected land use maps of both Hopkinsville and Christian County, both prepared by the Hopkinsville Christian County Planning Commission and incorporated in two separate volumes each dealing with the projections of their own political entity. The land use plans in themselves are a compilation of suggestions for use of the commission, city, and county governments, and various developmental interests, and individual citizens. It is of no value as a dusty volume unless it is implemented. Along with the implementation should come vision and imagination which in themselves can do much to add to the excitement and pleasure of living and working in Hopkinsville and Christian County. As I close I would reiterate that only through constructive planning can we provide clear-cut concise goals and orderly patterns to the permanent changes that are taking place today and which we look forward to in the years ahead. Our economy is growing and changing, and the key to our growth as a community will be the ability of our government to prepare for change and adapt to it.

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