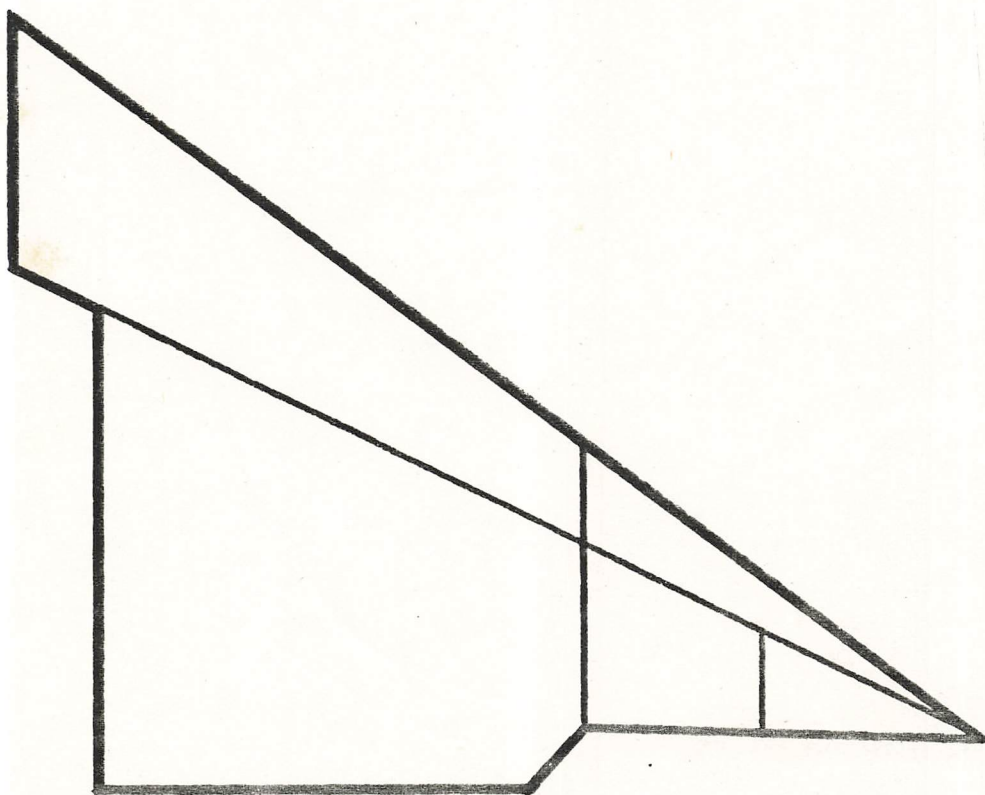


THE STORY OF DELTA PACE



THE HISTORY OF PACE

This is the story of a community which began near the turn of the century as a cotton and lumber town. It became a thriving town for about 30 years but began to decline in population and income after the Great Depression and World War II. Delta Pace is located in Bolivar County twelve miles East of the Mississippi River, and is comprised of a 65% black population and a 35% white population in a town of 697 people.

I. The Emergence of a Town

In the early 1900's the town of Arnold (later to be renamed Pace) was created in the midst of undeveloped timber and rich, undrained swampland of the Delta region. The parents of Major George W. Arnold acquired the property for the town in 1890. Major Arnold came to the Delta in 1891 and began marking off the town boundaries about 1900. Six families helped establish the community which had four stores, a sawmill, a building housing the church and school, and a depot. In 1909 Arnold changed its name to Pace, after one of the original settlers. There was another town called Arnold, and the mail kept getting mixed up between the two settlements. Paddlewheel boats and fully equipped cotton gins floated up and down the Bogue Phalia (an Indian word for beautiful stream) carrying logs to the sawmill. Ox carts were used to take the cut lumber away. The sawmill was torn down around 1912. As there were no drainage canals, roads were impassable in the winter and the railroad was the only reliable means of ground travel. The railroad took the cotton out for processing and brought in salesmen on passenger trains to stay in the 2-story hotel. A post office was built, more land was cleared and drained for farming, roads and streets were put in and some of the first brick buildings in the county were constructed. Pace was incorporated in 1923 and Mose Hyman served as the first mayor. Prosperous farm families moved into town and the population began to grow. An artesian well was dug in 1917 and operated until 1963 when it was replaced. Concrete walks were laid across the town in 1926. In 1925, the 2-story hotel on the main street burned down. In the summers, the youth dived off the foot bridges and swam in the Bogue Phalia.

II. The Declining Years

During the depression, the price of cotton dropped from \$1.00 a pound to 5 cents a pound. Farmers and farm workers sought federal employment. Some worked for fifty cents a day (sometimes in script) to dig trenches for septic tanks. Cotton crops diminished from year to year and of the four cotton gins previously in operation, only one remained. During this time, the bank closed. In

the early 40's the railroad tracks were removed. More people left Pace to fight in World War II or to seek jobs related to the war effort. Rice and soybean farming became more lucrative than cotton farming. Consequently, with the implementation of new drainage techniques throughout the Delta, the Bogue Phalia lost most of its water. It became polluted with drainage from the fields, sewage waste and silt. The population declined as more farms became mechanized and less local farm labor was needed. As the population decreased, school enrollment dropped and the high school was consolidated with a neighboring town. The high school building was subsequently torn down leaving the gymnasium which is now being used as a school bus barn. As late as the mid-60's many blacks in Pace continued to earn wages by working in the fields for the farm owners or by operating small, subsistence farms for their families.

III. A New Era

A Headstart program for Pace children began in 1965 with mobile classrooms and a play yard. In the early 70's the school system became integrated. The lower grades were enrolled at the Pace Attendance Center and the upper grades were bussed to a neighboring town. A black mayor was elected in 1973. A new, brick post office and Town Hall were built in the mid 70's. The town invited The Institute of Cultural Affairs to hold a Consult in February of 1977. After this, community meetings were held for four months and a comprehensive plan for Delta Pace was created which enabled the securing of federal funds for a major water and sewer system, improved streets and housing construction. During the first six months after the Consult, the park and other symbols were created. The preschool became the only operating preschool in Bolivar County. A new bridge is being constructed seven miles outside the town to provide fishing, picnic, and recreational space. Lake Bolivar County, seven miles outside Delta Pace is a 700 acre man-made lake created out of swampland, which has been stocked with fish. It attracts people from surrounding towns, some of whom ride into Delta Pace itself. The lake was the first such project in Mississippi to receive federal funds. Today, the townspeople are looking ahead to the development of an appropriate industry. Delta Pace is being looked upon as a model for the future by other small towns throughout the Mississippi Delta.

INDICES OF DEVELOPMENT

A. TOWARD ECONOMIC SELF-SUSTENANCE

INTENT: At the time of the Human Development Consultation the expressed intent of the citizens of Delta Pace was to move toward self-sustenance by stabilizing and revitalizing the economic foundation of the community. This was to be accomplished by diversifying the commercial base, increasing employment opportunities, and generating financial resources.

CONTRADICTIONS: All of the contradictions delineated in the Consultation Summary Statement are intricately related to the economic development of Delta Pace. Those which seem most directly related are: 1) restricted access to capital funds, 2) limited opportunities for gainful employment, 3) confined scope of business operations, and 4) narrow range of practical skills.

INDICATORS: Among the many indications of signal economic development, the following four were selected as representative.

1. Laundromat

The establishment and expansion of the Delta Pace Laundromat has provided a vital local service. Previously, townspeople had to travel eight miles to Cleveland or do laundry by hand. Begun in the spring of 1977, it was netting between \$60 and \$80 per month. In the fall it expanded to a larger facility with 12 washers and 6 dryers. It is now making an average of \$700 per month to be used for community improvements.

2. Increased Financial Investment

A total of \$1,816,050 investment has been secured from the private sector in the form of contributions and in-kind donations and the public sector in the form of grants for use in community projects.

3. Delta Pace Community Association

The Delta Pace Community Association (DPCA) is a non-profit local development corporation formed in December 1977. It has been instrumental in providing needed services such as the Delta Pace Voice (newspaper). The DPCA has also sponsored and/or supported groups working in Pace (such as the Youth Service Corps) and special events that have celebrated and honored individual and community efforts (Annual Awards Night).

4. Increased Community Employment

During the past three years, there have been at least 25 new jobs secured by the adult residents of Delta Pace, a 15% increase of new jobs since October, 1977. There have also been 21 part-time jobs for youth secured during this period of time.

LAUNDROMAT

The Delta Pace Laundromat was one of the first visible community efforts in the downtown area. With no individual able to undertake providing this commercial service, a community effort was made by what was to become the Delta Pace Community Association. The laundromat was first set up in old gas station with only a few machines. Even with limited capacity and cramped space, the first few months shower a net profit of \$60-\$80 per month and many people waiting in line several times a week. Having proved the feasibility of the service locally, the Delta Pace Laundromat was able to move into a larger facility. An ACTION mini-grant for \$5,000 was used to fix up the locally rented building. The new facility now has 12 washing machines and 6 dryers. The average net profit per month is now \$700. Not only Delta Pace residents, but many people in the surrounding area use this service saving many miles driving to the nearest laundromat.



DELTA PACE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

The Delta Pace Community Association was organized as a non-profit local development corporation in December 1977. The DPCA has coordinated the operation of the community laundromat. The proceeds are used for interest free loans, the community newspaper and support of other community activities. They have sponsored the (3) VISTA workers who work with the Youth Service Corps and the community garden project. They also provide transportation for people without cars into Cleveland to necessary family tasks through the use of the 12 passenger van. The 60 members are also responsible for the Annual Awards Night and the Annual Homecoming held on the 4th of July. The DPCA helped support the preschool and got the community involved in renovating a community building for community use. These activities have provided services for residents of Delta Pace as well as surrounding areas.

INCREASED COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT

Employment of Delta Pace residents has increased during the last three years with 46 new employment possibilities. The beginning of the preschool created 7 new jobs for residents of Delta Pace, offering the positions of teachers, aides and cook. Four mothers whose children are enrolled in preschool have received other types of employment. These women contrast to the 40 adult women in October 1977 under 65 years of age who were neither in school nor working. By utilizing public sources of money, the Town of Pace has employed 8 adults in community service positions. Twenty-one youth have been hired for summer employment for three summers through the Youth Employment Training Program. This has provided the youth with practical preparation for future employment and an opportunity for concrete community service. A community resident became self-employed when he began a local trucking company within the last three years with one trailer truck. He has recently expanded and has three trailer trucks and employs three other community residents.

| NEW EMPLOYMENT SECURED | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Preschool Teachers | 2 |
| Preschool Aides | 4 |
| Preschool Cook | 1 |
| Preschool Mothers | 4 |
| Youth Employment Training Program | 21 |
| Town Service Jobs | 8 |
| VISTA | 3 |
| Local Trucking Company | 3 |
| TOTAL | 46 |

INCREASED FINANCIAL INVESTMENT

In 1977 Delta Pace received grants of \$19,000 for expansion of community services. A \$5,000 ACTION mini-grant for expansion of the laundromat was secured and the preschool secured \$34,000 of inkind materials and \$11,000 from individuals and corporations for renovation of the preschool building. In 1978, the preschool received a Title XX grant for \$66,000 for operational expenses and salaries for community teachers. The grant was renewed in 1979 for \$66,000, the federal portion being \$44,000 with a \$22,000 local match. This \$22,000 was raised by the preschool from individuals and private foundations. As economic development came under serious consideration by the community, a \$20,000 grant was received from the Economic Development Administration for a technical Assistance Feasibility Study in 1979. In 1978, a \$5,000 mobile building was donated from the Board of Education for community activities. The community also secured a new 12 passenger van through the Community Service Administration for use in community service. The major source of capital for investment in Delta Pace was secured over the past several years for new housing, streets, water and sewer systems. A total of 1.6 million dollars has been committed by the Economic Development Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Farmers' Home Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency and through a local bond issue.

| FINANCIAL INVESTMENT SECURED 1977 - 1980 | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Date | For | Inkind | Individuals | Grants |
| 1977 | Laundromat | -- | -- | \$5,000 |
| 1977 | Preschool | \$34,000 | \$11,000 | -- |
| 1978 | Preschool | -- | -- | \$66,000 |
| 1978 | Mobile Building | \$5,000 | -- | -- |
| 1979 | 12 Passenger Van | -- | -- | \$15,000 |
| 1979 | Preschool | -- | \$7,000 | \$59,000 |
| 1979 | Technical Feasibility Study | -- | -- | \$20,000 |
| 1980 | Sewer System | -- | -- | \$794,250 |
| 1980 | Water System | -- | -- | \$211,800 |
| 1980 | Streets | -- | -- | \$272,000 |
| 1980 | Housing | -- | -- | \$316,000 |
| | Subtotals | \$39,000 | \$18,000 | \$1,759,050 |
| TOTAL | | \$1,816,050 | | |