

## MILL SHOALS COMMUNITY REPORT

OCTOBER 1980



#### FOREWARD

Since June 1978, the people of Mill Shoals have been participating in a comprehensive socio-economic development program as a demonstration of possibility for communities throughout the United States. With the Institute of Cultural Affairs, Mill Shoals, Illinois joined a network of communities around the world in creating a global demonstration of local development.

After two and one half years work as a Human Development Project, community residents and Institute staff gathered during the week of October 12, 1980, to chart their progress, to celebrate their accomplishments, to plan their future and to tell their story.

The following document was written as a result of that gathering. The first section is the story of Mill Shoals and deals with its history, indicators of change and future extension. The second section deals with the methods of development which include how visible changes are rapidly made, sustained and documented.

It is hoped that this document itself will be a sign and tool for other communities concerned with rapid, comprehensive human development.

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# THE STORY of MILL SHOALS

#### HISTORY OF MILL SHOALS

The history of Mill Shoals is the story of the development of a small farming community in the northwest corner of White County, Illinois. Stories from local residents and a recent study by the Department of Earth Science, Geography and Planning of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville were used as resources for this story.

#### EARLY HISTORY AND SETTLEMENT

A White County history of 1883 described the township of Mill Shoals as "54 acres of timberland abundantly habited by bears, wolves, wild turkey and deer." A long time resident and school teacher of Mill Shoals, writes that "long before the white men came to the area Indians chose the vicinity of Mill Shoals as an ideal settlement where hunting and water were plentiful." In 1801 the first white settlers rested on the banks of the Skillet Fork at this point on the George Rogers Clark trail. By the 1820's they had settled on the river bluffs to protect the community from the "Drowned Lands." The frequent and unexpected flooding of the plains has been a persistent and determining characteristic with the severest floods occurring in recent history in 1898, 1913, 1949 and 1961. Mill Shoals was named after a sawmill built at a shoals on the Skillet Fork River by William Reed in 1837. Another sawmill and a flour mill soon followed. The lumber trade continued to support the area for some time. Mill Shoals was incorporated in 1872, in a period of growth and stability. In 1870 the B & O Railroad built a spur line into Mill Shoals.

In 1892 the first real economic boom occurred with the arrival of the Hawkins and Smith stave mill. By the turn of the century, the population had mushroomed to 1500. Local residents remember the flourishing businesses that included a flour mill, saw mill, lumber business, tile factory, tomato canning factory, grain elevator, two hotels, an opera house, a saloon, a pool room, a drug store, a hardware store, a restaurant, two grocery stores, two doctors, a barber shop, a poultry house, and a race track. The railroad brought in the traveling salesmen, called "drummers," and teachers of piano and voice who circuited to Mill Shoals from Springerton one day a week giving thirty minute lessons in the resident's homes.

A fire in 1900 destroyed a major part of the town but the community overcame this setback. In 1902, Henry T. Adams invented the binder ring in his factory in Mill Shoals. The first bank was established in 1903, and a Farmers Mutual Benefit Association was formed in 1906 to raise and market livestock. The slump left by the depression of the 30's was eased somewhat by the discovery of oil at the onset of World War II. The post-war years saw businesses and population dwindle, as the county seats grew larger. By the late 50's and early 60's Mill Shoals was left without any significant commercial or industrial employment. The most devastating flood in the town's history occurred in 1961, causing nearly \$1,000,000 in damages. Now most Mill Shoals

on route 45. Three new churches have been built. A comprehensive plan was developed in cooperation with a planner from the University of Southern Illinois.

#### **FUTURE PLANS AND EXPECTATIONS**

Mill Shoals residents understand that while they have accomplished much, there are still major efforts required. The Mill Shoals Development Association plans to create proformas for locally initiated business ventures and seek possible revolving capital. while also continuing their search for potential new industry and market search for existing industries. The Town Board intends to design a Housing Assistance Plan with full input from residents to determine actual needs and desires, while exploring both public and private new housing alternatives. The Quarterly communitywide meetings will be continued, a full subscription and ad base for the Voice will be secured and long range preschool support mechanisms will be put in place. The Parent Teacher Organization plans to broaden its previous focus on elementary extra-curricular programs and support to include youth activities supervision. The community intends to hold more regular workdays and continue to strengthen participation in regular community events. Residents also hope for construction of a community center.

#### INDICES OF DEVELOPMENT

#### A. TOWARD ECONOMIC SELF-SUSTENANCE

INTENT: Over the past two and a half years, Mill Shoals residents have intended to insure economic self-sustenance by promoting industrial growth, developing local resources and increasing commercial services and by enabling community input and leadership in these ventures.

CONTRADICTION: Although all of the contradictions identified in the Consultation Summary Statement have an effect upon economic development, those which seem most directly related to the economic life of the community had to do with the dependence on sophisticated technology, the risk of capital investment, the story of the community's future and the appearance of public space.

INDICATORS: Among the many indicators of economic development, the following are representative.

- 1. NEW COMMUNITY BUSINESSES
  Several new businesses have started in Mill Shoals
  including a welding shop, a beauty shop, and a printed
  materials supplier for the lumber industry, and a gas
  station came under new management.
- 2. MILL SHOALS DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
  The Mill Shoals Development Association is made up of residents of the town and is designed to do comprehensive development in the community.

#### 3. SPACE MANAGEMENT PLAN

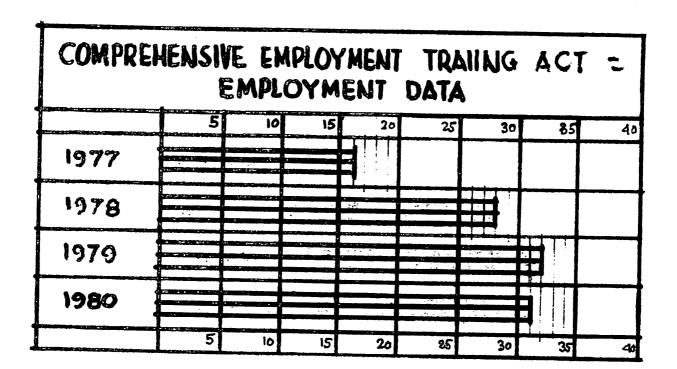
The community's space management plan was developed by the residents in a series of meetings in neighborhoods and town wide meetings and designed by a graduate student at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville Department of Earth Science, Geography and Planning.

#### 1. NEW COMMUNITY BUSINESSES

An ongoing concern of the residents of Mill Shoals is the development and encouragement of commerce and industry. Many basic commercial services have not been available in Mill Shoals for some time. The absence of business has been debilitating to to the community's self-image. At the time of the Consult several programs were aimed at this issue. Since then four new enterprises have been launched and one has opened under new management. A company from northern Illinois supplying printed materials for the lumbering industry reviewed alternative sites

At the same time a graduate student in city planning at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville was looking for a location in which to do a class project and was referred to the Mill Shoals Village Board. A series of neighborhood meetings were organized, and citizens in the five neighborhood groups were asked to state their vision for their neighborhoods and for the community, toward building a consensus for a land use plan. Next a community wide meeting was held to mesh the five neighborhood plans. Local people esperienced risk in daring to state concrete images for the future, and struggle together to make a plan that is realizeable. This work was printed and drawn for presentation to the Village Board and the Mill Shoals Development Association. These groups gave their consent to the plan, and the final draft was prepared. The formal presentation of the completed Space Management Plan was presented to the Mayor and community on October 12, 1980.

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#### INDICES OF DEVELOPMENT

#### B. TOWARD HUMAN SELF-CONFIDENCE

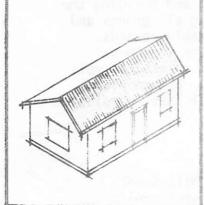
INTENT: The intent of the citizens of Mill Shoals for the past two and a half years has been to develop human self-confidence through reviving community spirit, enlivening village space and maintaining public order.

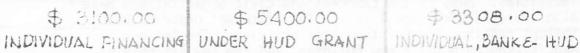
CONTRADICTIONS: Although all underlying contradictions effect to a greater or lesser degree every area of local development, those which appear most directly related to this dynamic had to do with the style of community relations, accountability for essential services patterns of community groupings and opportunities for significant engagement.

<u>INDICATORS</u>: Among the many indicators of human development the following are representative.

- 1. RESIDENTIAL HOUSING IMPROVEMENTS
  Nearly two thirds of the residential housing of
  Mill Shoals has had improvements with funding
  from either private or HUD sources.
- 2. TOWN RECREATIONAL PARK Substancial improvements have been made on a plot of land to convert it to a recreational park including facilities for picnics and recreational activities.
- 3. VILLAGE FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS
  A number of public and private facilities have been upgraded or cleaned-up improving the general appearance of Mill Shoals.
- 4. VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS
  Much of the community improvements have been done through organized or individual public work on a volunteer basis.
- 5. MILL SHOALS IDENTITY
  The general appearance of the town has been improved
  by putting up signs, cleaning ditches and lots
  and painting two murals.

### HOUSING IMPROVEMENTS 1978-80





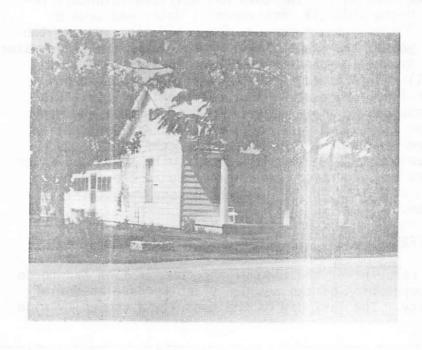


\$ 3100.00 \$ 5400.00



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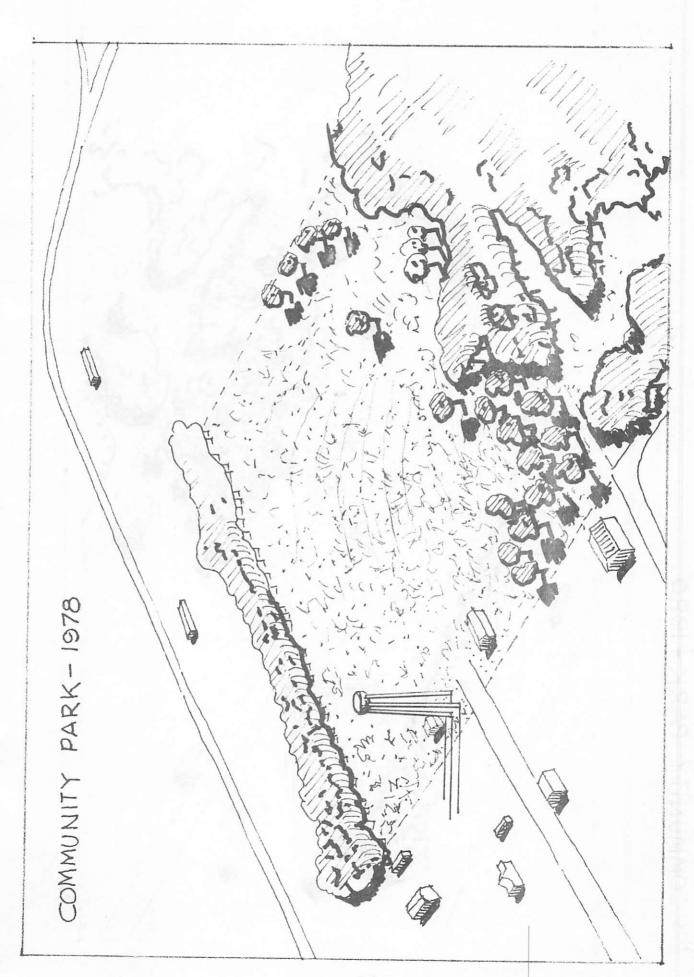
THIS IS TAKEN FROM A SAMPLE OF HOUSES OF MILL SHOALS AND ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST \$100, & REPRESENTS AVARAGE COST PER HOUSE. HUD GRANT INCLUDES ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.

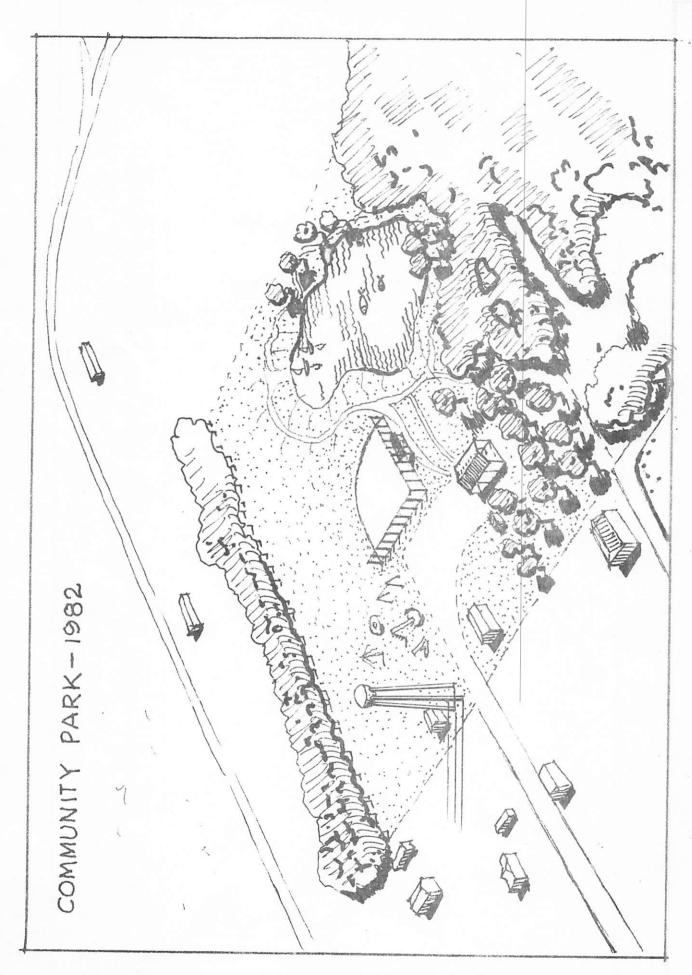


workday was held to clean sewer ditches. This led to an established weekly rythm of community workdays lasting until October of 1978. focused on projects yielding quickly visible environmental improvements. In the winter of 1978 several other workdays were held and in the spring of 1979 there was a biweekly series. Currently, workdays are planned and held on a "need" basis, in response to particular felt concerns or to boost particular projects, such as the park. Occasionally, service and student groups were asked to participate in the workdays. For example, a group of students from Purdue University spent a weekend with the community, living with host families and working with residents to paint the elementary school gym. In other workdays, the Ruritan Club repaired sidewalks and the Fraternal Order of Odd Fellows repaired and painted a downtown building. In response to these cooperative efforts, several individuals began on their own initiative to do needed projects like mosing the park, building dugouts for the ball diamond, keeping the ditches mowed, and cleaning and caring for the flower boxes constructed in earlier workdays. Other projects involving workdays have included painting and placing trash cans bearing the Mill Shoals symbol around the town, repairing the preschool building, putting up a mini-park, placing welcome signs on the roads into the town, creating signs for public buildings, and painting the Shell station.

#### 5. MILL SHOALS IDENTITY

The perceptual image residents have of themselves and their community is the most determining factor in the difference between towns where effective community development occurs and where it does not. The community's plans were intentionally aimed at doing the kind of activities that would eliminate factors in the community contributing to a negative self-image, and work for the emergence of new motivating symbols. Weekly workdays focused on eliminating environemental eywsores. Owners of property along highway 45 were encouraged to improve the appearance of their lots and buildings, and were offered volunteer assistance. Community residents mowed and cleared ditches, and removed years of debris. Now nearly every building with highway frontage has had at least facade improvements. Flower boxes were place along the highway. At all entrances to town, "Welcome" signs have been placed, bearing the town's "Rainbow" logo and the phrase, "Mill Shoals, A Great Place to be Alive." This logo has also been placed on the Town Hall, at the park, and on the preschool building. In the su-mer of 1978 a 40 x 12' mural was begun on the wall of the post office. An artist from the Chicago Area worked with a group of residents to create the design, then spent 428 hours of yolunteer time painting. The mural depicts the community through the four seasons, beneath large letters saying, "Mill Shoals Cares." The preschool printed and distributed post cards displaying and explaining the mural. These identity projects have served to improve the image of the community in the area.





#### INDICIES OF DEVELOPMENT

#### C. TOWARD SOCIAL SELF-RELIANCE

INTENT: The intent of the citizens of Mill Shoals for the past two and a half years has been to develop social self-reliance through increasing community education, providing citizen care and improving residents' health.

<u>CONTRADICTIONS</u>: Although all underlying contradictions effect to a greater or lesser degree every area of local development, those which appear most directly related to this area dealt with exposure to societal resources, access to health services, level of family income and the shape of human relations.

<u>INDICATORS</u>: Among the many indicators of social development, the following are representative.

#### 1. MILL SHOALS VOICE

The community newsletter, The Mill Shoals Voice, has become a source of information, news and education for the community.

#### 2. SENIOR MEALS PROGRAM

The Senior Citizens Lunch Program provides meals and fellowship for elders in the community and meals for those who cannot leave their homes.

#### 3. ANNUAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

A series of annual events have emerged to the point of being anticipated celebrations and festivities for the community and new events are being considered.

#### 4. MILL SHOALS PRESCHOOL

The Preschool provides educational opportunities for the children too young for public school and has become a service for mothers in the village.

#### 5. VILLAGE HEALTH SERVICES

Community health services have been improved through informative articles, a health fair and training events.

tions and delivery continues to be done by the former site manager. She also continues to plan the monthly "Birthday Dinners," asking community residents to bake cakes and organizing special entertainment. Other special programs have included films, games and presentations of poems and songs by the Mill Shoals Preschool and the Mill Shoals elementary school. A daily average of twelve persons enjoy the opportunity to gather together, visit and shareold time stories and concerns for the future. The monthly dinners draw 25-30 people. The program also provides a great service to those Senior Citizens who are unable to get out, as they receive a nutritious meal and a visit by the delivery person.

#### 3. ANNUAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

Another key cultural accomplishment has been the establishment of an annual rythm of community events and celebrations. As all activities and programs accelerated, there was a perceived need for quarterly community-wide meetings to coordinate the plans of the many community organizations and ensure that all arenas in the comprehensive vision were being addressed. These meetings have been well attended, allowing consensus tor activites to be an ongoing process. The seasons of the year in Mill Shoals are now marked by appropriate celebrations. The Annual Fall Chowder Day has now occurred three years consecutively. Residents donate meat and vegetables to make a sixty gallon pot of chowder, then gather to eat chowder and participate in sports events at the park. On Memorial Day a picnic, carnival and parade are now held every year. Music groups play continuously and various organizations provide food and game booths. In response to a concern about general isolation of churches from each other, interchurch celebrations were made a regular part of community life. On Thanksgiving the Christian Church invited other churches to a dinner. This catalyzed a Christmas family dinner with congregations supplying the meat and families bringing other potluck dishes. On another evening following the dinner, the church groups seperately but simultaneously go caroling throughout the community . The Easter Activities start with an interchurch sunrise service and breakfast, with an easter egg for the children. These regular community events have become the occasion for celebrating accomplishments and for building pride and spirit. By marking periods of time in the year they have provided imaginal "deadlines" for completion of community projects, preventing drawn-out efforts and maintaining development momentum and cooperative spirit. These events serve to symbolize the existing vitality of community life.

#### 4. MILL SHOALS PRESCHOOL

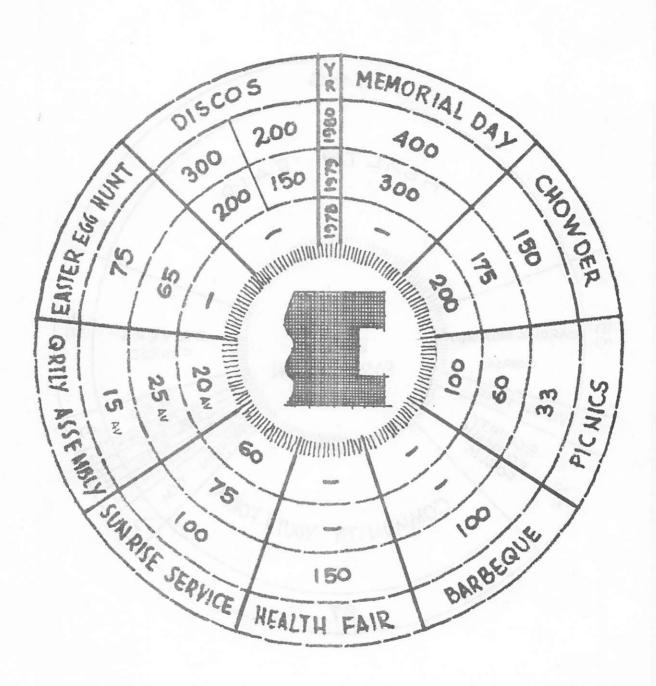
One of the major concerns expressed by the residents of Mill Shoals at the consult was the need to increase the awareness of the high priority for quality education from the preschool years through

adulthood. It was in response to this concern that plans were laid to begin a preschool education program in Mill Shoals. When an ideal facility became available in the fall of 1978, a proposal was made to a family foundation interested in local community development to purchase the building for use as a preschool. They decided to acquire the facility and they made it available, free of charge to the town for use as a preschool. The building was then renovated with donated materials and volunteer efforts to meet licensing requirean out-of-town consultant spent a weekend working with some of the mothers and future staff to build a comprehensive curriculum for 2-5 year olds. Other people in the community volunteered to do special projects for the interior, like sewing curtains and painting a mural. There was great participation in a fund-raising raffle held prior to the actual opening of the school, and a student recruitment effort built excitement as people looked forward to the opening day. This took place on April 16, 1978 with total enrollment of 14 students over a 5 day period and employing 3 resident women as teachers. children and parents have been delighted with the quality and creativity of the curriculum and with the well-equipped learning environment. During February, 1980, a Preschool Parents' Advisory Council was organized to ensure continuing support of the school and to assist in registration efforts. The Preschool has brought new awareness to the critical role that educational structures can play for people of all ages.

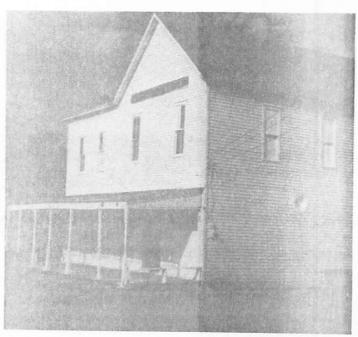
#### 5. VILLAGE HEALTH SERVICES

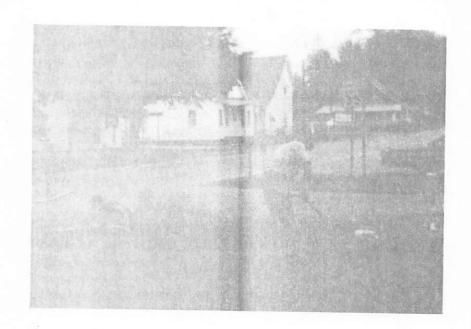
One of the most often expressed concerns for the social development of Mill Shoals has been the need for adequate and accessible health services. Following a health survey circulated throughout the community to determine the residents needs and suggestions for better health care, a health task force was formed. After reviewing the data, the group decided that the major issue that needed to  $\check{\mathbf{b}}\mathbf{e}$ addressed was the lack of knowledge of existing available services and of preventative health practices. A series of weekly articles were written for the Voice on subjects like accidental poisoning, allergies, emergency health procedures and more. A Community Health Fair became a major and successful undertaking. The purpose of the Health Fair was to provide free basic health screening, health education and a counseling and referral service for residents of all ages. Using manuals from the national Health Screening Council for Volunteer Organizations to assist in set-up of the fair, numerous organizations and health related groups were invited to participate. Seventeen groups were represented on the day performing screening tests for vision, hearing, glaucoma, height and weight, blood pressure, anemia, tuberculosis and oral health. The public health department provided the major portion of the testing along with a local optometrist, a dentist and a hearing specialist from a special education program. There were 150 people at the Health Fair with 70 participating in the health screening. During the month of the Health Fair, the Mill Shoals Ruritan Club sponsored cardiac pulmonary resuscitation(CPR) training through the Heart

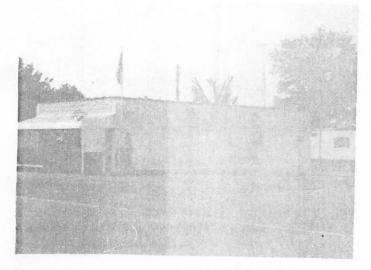
# PARTICIPATION IN REPRESENTATIVE COMMUNITY EVENTS

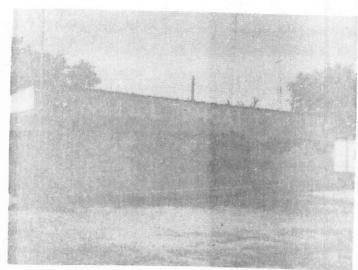












#### QUOTATIONS FROM MILL SHOALS RESIDENTS

We like the Voice news, its good for the town.

People seem to be caring more about what their places look like. There's more pride in the appearance of the community than there used to be.

The Senior Citizen program is good. There are lots of elders down in the main part of town--they enjoy it.

People are more aware of what's going on, We read the news events board at the Post Office. We've all cleaned up a lot. I think the project has made a real difference. People didn't know what they could get in the way of assistance and help with housing rehab.

I've had rehab work done on my home from this rehab project and I really did appreciate it.

It's a really nice thing this rehab project.

A show place.

...to show other small towns just how much can be accomplished by "guidance and help".

It has made it a village instead of just a group of houses strung along a highway.

The people of Mill Shoals now have a whole year's calendar of community celebrations and events. People plan and prepare for these events together like the Chowder Day where all the farmers gave vegetables from their crops. The ladies cut up the vegetables while the men set up the 65 gallon pot and did the constant stirring. All who participated enjoyed serving each other and sharing the fellowship.

#### E. FUTURE EXTENSION

The consultation document contained the original image for extending the availability of Mill Shoals development methods to other communities. Residents have visited communities in other parts of the nation and have participated in various training programs. The community has also had a creative impact on nearby towns in surrounding counties. The local Ruritan Club has helped initiate several new clubs in other small towns. These clubs have been responsible for initiating many local volunteer projects in their own towns. A slide show has been created for use in presentations of the methods and accomplishments of Mill Shoals' development, and has been shown by residents to groups in surrounding communities. Two Regional Economic Issues Forums have gathered leaders from many towns to look at shared economic development concerns and create proposals for addressing them together. The Mill Shoals Voice has extended its circulation to include Burnt Prairie, Barnhill and Springerton, the three adjacent communities, and has included advertising from nearby commercial centers. In addition, Mill Shoals is receiving increased attention from district public and private sector organizations and associations. They see the project development as a demonstration of how local initiative plays a critical role in social and economic development.

After more than two years of intensive social and economic development, it is clear that the Mill Shoals Human Development Project is prepared to move to a new phase. A community extension module was held to involve residents in building plans for continued local development and a more intensified outreach effort to include other towns. Task forces of citizens and consultants documented change in the community, visited surrounding towns of similar size and discussed possibilities for broadened impact with representatives of regional private and public agencies and elected officials. The results of the Community Extension Module Activities comprise this document.

Arenas of focus were defined for continued regularization of the rythm of community-wide quarterly meetings, building long-range mechanisms for self-sufficiency of the local newsletter and Preschool programs, exploring new housing construction initiative measures and further catalyzing new local commercial activity. Proposals were also created for stimulating youth activities, finding a community center location and deepening participation in community wide workdays. Proposals in these arenas were assigned for implementation to the Village Board, the Mill Shoals Development Association, the Parent-Teachers Organization and the Ruritan Club.

Outreach and extension will focus primarily on towns with 100-500 population in the four county surrounding area. The Southeastern Illinois area faces a boom in coal and oil production. While this will pring many needed jobs, the management of this impact will be critical for maintaining local control in the face of possible rapid alteration of social, economic and cultural patterns. While many resources are available to communities, the key will be

#### **VILLAGE of MILL SHOALS**

Mill Shoals, III. 62862

October 18, 1980

Mr. Mark Harvey, Regional Director The Institute of Cultural Affairs 3259 Lafayette Avenue Saint Louis, Missouri 63104

Dear Mark,

It has truly been a privilege to work with The Institute for the past two and one half years in Mill Shoals. I feel that in the past two and one half years that with the help of the ICA the Village of Mill Shoals has made great strides in betterment of the community, and has given the community the initiative to continue making improvements.

We wish you success in work with other towns.

Sincerely,

Paul Hopson

Village President

#### THE METHODS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Toward the Actuation of	PROGRAMMATIC CHA Comprehensive Human Development rams — nine structures — three dynam	nt Projects on the Local Level		
A ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LOCAL PRODUCTIVITY —Toward self-sustenance	B HUMAN DEVELOPMENT LOCAL MOTIVITY toward self-confidence	SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT LOCAL SOCIALITY toward self-reliance		
Enabling local— COOPERATIVE AGRICULTURE	Reconstructing local— LIVING ENVIRONMENT	Creating local— PREVENTIVE CARE		
expanded cultivation intensified production water delivery equipment pool	13 domestic housing 14 public facilities 15 village design 16 essential services	25 intermediate sanitation 26 total nutrition 27 systematic immunization 28 primary treatment		
Developing local— APPROPRIATE INDUSTRY	Catalyzing local— CORPORATE PATTERNS	Establishing local— FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION		
5 cottage production 6 agro-business 7 processing plants 8 ancillary industry	17 total engagement 18 community commons 19 consensus assemblies 20 corporate workdays	29 early learning 30 formal schooling 31 youth training 32 adult education		
nitiating local— COMMERCIAL SERVICES	Recovering local— IDENTITY SYSTEMS	Instituting local— COMMUNITY WELFARE		
9 common marketing 10 local merchandising 11 savings & loans 12 basic transport	21 community self-story 22 symbol systems 23 corporate rituals 24 village celebrations	33 family development 34 women's advancement 35 youth task-force 36 elderly engagement		

development when the task calls forth responsibility, cooperative efforts yield demonstrable results, and momentum elicits participation. But the human factor cannot sustain the development process so long as its focus is solely on one village. Very soon accomplishments begin to be noticed by neighboring communities, and residents find themselves being asked for advice and their self-help efforts come to be seen as a demonstration of what any community can do. With that awareness the impetus to excellence increases as does the concern to create events and programs which make the project's learnings more widely available. To the extent to which this process occurs, the spirit of responsibility, participation and cooperation becomes ingrained in the community and its continuing development is ensured.

major accomplishments and activities that were instrumental to the changes that occurred. The indicators of change are summarized, and the statistical data is collected from the citizens, from past reports and from public records in order to provide various forms of the community story. Personal interviews are also made to gather individual profiles, quotations, stories surrounding significant breakthroughs, photographic records and the legends that are part of the community's memory. All of the data is then shared at a community meeting for the final approval of stories and statistics.

For the purpose of documenting the changes in Mill Shoals from 1978 to 1980, three screens have been used: a set of discernment screens, a set of selection screens and an organizing screen. For the purpose of discerning what in fact has happened, the consult document provided the contradictions, the tactics and programs with which the project was begun. Each of these has been reviewed carefully to determine where significant breakthroughs have occured. As interviews have been held among community residents, their memories have emerged as a selection screen in that they have given weight to the effective impact of various accomplishments. The final selection screen, however, has been an intuitive grasp of what among the numerous documentable events in the project accurately represent the changes that have occurred in the economic, social and human arenas. The selected items have been held over against the Programmatic Chart as an organizing screen and as a chech on comprehensive coverage of all aspects of village life. The Programmatic Chart is the result of a gestalt of the programs of the programs of the first eight human development projects. It was refined after the next 16 and currently represents a major step towards delineating the dynamics and fundamental arenas of programmatic activity in any human community. This screen provides the basic framework around which the community's story is told.

**SCREENS** 

...

#### REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF DONORS

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Mrs. Mary Scheiterle
Mr. and Mrs. Herschel Upton
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wheeler

Mrs. Diane Wolff

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The development effort depends for effectiveness on a coalition of public, private, voluntary and local sectors, each bringing its resources to bear on a coordinated effort focused on a particular locality. That dynamic has been amply demonstrated in Mill Shoals with the generous support and participation of far more groups and people than can be listed. All supporters deserve more than appreciation. They deserve recognition as participants in a network which holds a promise for development efforts around the world. Of special mention are the Mill Shoals Village Board, The Mill Shoals Ruritan Club, Wabash Area Development, Inc., and VISTA whose support, counsel and advice have greatly advanced the rapid development efforts of Mill Shoals.