

Last month, we talked about the origins of the Tapply Thompspon Community Center. Starting in the mid 1920s, a man named Rev. A. Brownlow Thompson had envisioned a form of Bristol where there were abundant social opportunities for kids. A place like this was yet to be established, so it took much effort for his dream to become reality. A former member of his boys' club, Richard "Wink" Tapply, assumed the role of the center's first-ever director. Between the Reverend's initial drive for an improved community, and Mr. Tapply's dedication to that goal following his leave, the community center was founded to provide those opportunities for both the youth and the adult population of Bristol. Modifications and advancements made during the first 25 years following the center's establishment are still evident to this day.

During this time, an abundance of ideas to expand the center and broaden its range of activities were created. The 10 activities the center offered in 1946 during its beginning stages is incomparable to what it offered 20 years later. Varying from photography to the junior rifle team, 30+ activities were available in a fashion where there was something for everyone to enjoy. Outside of the daily events remarked on above, the T.T.C.C. also began to form annual events. It gave the public something to look forward to and enjoy with the rest of the community. These included holiday celebrations, the Winter Carnival, Spring Festival, and many more events.

Going outside of the building, the Kelley Park Playground and Fields served as an asset to the T.T.C.C. in organizing athletic activities and special events. Whether it

was softball in the spring or the ice skating rink in the winter, Kelley Park was constantly being accessed for extra-curricular fun.

Before Bristol and its surrounding towns had formed the cooperative school district we know today, most of the center's participants were Bristol residents known by the director in some way or another. Following this formation, students and parents of this new district began flooding into the center, and revelled in the opportunities it held. In these 25 years, membership in the center by both the youth and adults skyrocketed into the many hundreds. Rev. A. Brownlow Thompson and Wink Tapplys' dream of a successful recreational center that impacted the public had come true.

In 1967, a man named Charles Greenwood wrote a synopsis on the history of the then Bristol Community Center. To celebrate its 20th anniversary, Mr. Greenwood came up with the infamous text *History of the Bristol Community Center* in which he covered the center's origins and progress that it made during that time span. Much of his work was included in the research portion of preparing these articles for the T.T.C.C.'s 75th anniversary.

Barbara Greenwood, sister-in-law to Charles Greenwood, was one of the early participants at the T.T.C.C.. Not only was she a participant in her youth, but she continued to be an active member of the center in her adulthood, both as a participant and a chairman. After interviewing Mrs. Greenwood, we were able to better understand the changes the center made during its first 25 years, and what their impact was on the community.

“Wink Tapply started the Summer Program and got permission to use Kelley Park for events. At one point, U.N.H. had a traveling performance group for the summer-time and they would come and do plays for the community at the park. They would also have parades,” Mrs. Greenwood expressed when asked about events that were implemented to bring together the citizens of Bristol. “Wink Tapply was one that would try to involve as many people in activities as he could, and during the summer he would have the kids do parades. The theme would range from best-dressed to animals to fairy-tales. They would do parades around the square for everyone to see.”

We also asked Mrs. Greenwood about annual events that were introduced during this time. “One of the first things that stood out to me was the Winter Carnival celebration and dance. I had only been there for 6 weeks, and my class nominated me to represent them at the dance. There was a panel of ladies who would vote and decide on the girls, and I ended up being Carnival Queen that year. This dance was on Friday, and on Saturday they would have all types of activities and events for the kids to participate in. [Saturday night](#), all of the adults would have a dance at the community center, and I had to crown the lady that was the Carnival Queen for that group. It was astounding for me to be that involved so quickly. The community center has always done a fine job of constantly being inclusive and welcoming to newcomers.”

Concluding our interview with Mrs. Greenwood, we asked her for her prediction on what the community center and the town of Bristol will look like in 25 more years. In her response, she expressed hope and certainty that whatever happens will be positive and progressive. "I don't know if I could even answer that, because things stayed quiet for quite a few years following its formation. When computers and smartphones became more available, everything changed. I don't think I could even envision what this would look like in 25 years, seeing as things have changed so much in just the 70+ years that I have been here. But I do have certainty that the center and those that run it will only continue to grow and have a positive impact on the community."

Overall, it is safe to say that the first 25 years of the Bristol Community Center's running were progressive, effective, and meaningful. Through the implementation of a vast range of activities, the organization of annual events that brought the community together, and the utilization of public areas like Kelley Park for recreation, the community center was able to offer something for everyone. This idea of bringing people together and creating an inclusive environment was the foundation that the T.T.C.C. was built on, and continues to be fabricated from today.