

ABSTRACT

BLAZICH, FRANK ARTHUR. *Alert Today, Alive Tomorrow: The North Carolina Civil Defense Agency and Fallout Shelters, 1961-1963.* (Under the direction of Nancy Mitchell.)

From 1961 to 1963, the administration of President John F. Kennedy attempted to create a vast network of public and private fallout shelters across the United States. The North Carolina Civil Defense Agency (NCCD) during this period focused instead on emergency preparedness. Fallout shelters were a façade, providing funding that allowed the NCCD to quietly focus its efforts on emergency preparedness. While the state managed to provide fallout shelters for only eight percent of the population, this failure was not as damning as most scholars have assumed. In fact, the state agency used available federal funding to prepare the state for natural disasters and isolated, minor emergencies. State civil defense officials implemented improvements in communication networks, emergency rescue squads, and the professionalizing of fire and police departments state-wide. Citizens did not criticize the civil defense agency in North Carolina; following the Cuban Missile Crisis, there was no public backlash against the state agency. The crisis, on the contrary, validated the state's approach to civil defense. By focusing on emergency preparedness instead of investing in fallout shelters, local civil defense agencies were able to operate in accordance with the specific demographic, geographic, and financial needs of the county residents. Most people assume that the fading yellow and black "Fallout Shelter" signs are the only residue of the civil defense program in North Carolina. In fact, the professional development of the state's rescue squads, police and fire departments harkens back to the efforts of civil defense offices in the early 1960s.

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Alert Today, Alive Tomorrow: The North Carolina Civil Defense Agency and Fallout
Shelters, 1961-1963

by
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DEDICATION

To my family and friends who supported me in this endeavor,
and to those who made this document necessary.

BIOGRAPHY

Frank A. Blazich, Jr. is a native of Raleigh, North Carolina. From 1996 to 2000, Blazich attended William G. Enloe High School in Raleigh. He earned a bachelor of arts in history with highest honors from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2004. His thesis titled “Part of Us: The Relationship between Hoffman, North Carolina and Camp Mackall, North Carolina from September 1942 to September 1945,” won the George C. Marshall Research Library and Foundation Outstanding Undergraduate Thesis Paper Award in 2004. Following graduation he served for two years in the U.S. Air Force.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The seed of this thesis was planted back in 2003. While researching my undergraduate thesis, I made a mental note of the many holdings in the North Carolina Archives concerning “civil defense.” Years later in uniform, I worked as a historian in an office that once served as a vault for documents of the Strategic Air Command. In a corner of the office was a pile of fallout shelter signs that had once been posted around the corridors of the building. In June 2007 all of these memories returned to prompt me to begin researching civil defense in North Carolina, a topic that has taken me across the state.

Mr. David Chiswell at the Old State Records Center for the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources has been a constant companion in my research. He helped me with my searches through the records of the North Carolina Civil Defense Agency and remained a constant ear to my discoveries and inquiries, about the untold thousands of document photographs I amassed. The staff of the North Carolina Archives, the State Library of North Carolina, and the Outer Banks History Center answered all search requests promptly with the utmost professionalism. The archivists at the Southern Historical Collection and North Carolina Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library at Duke University helped me with the records of Senators Sam J. Ervin, Jr. and Benjamin E. Jordan.

Thanks go out to Ruth Sheehan of *The News and Observer* for generously mentioning my research in one of her weekly columns. Without her article, the oral interviews in this thesis would have not happened. From across North Carolina, the United States, and even far

off in Europe I received emails from citizens telling their stories and willing to let me interview them. I traveled from western North Carolina to the Outer Banks to talk about civil defense, fallout shelters, emergency preparedness, and life during the Cold War. I am forever grateful to all of the interviewees for the hospitality, warmth, and generosity. I hope my work does justice to the men and women I interviewed. This is their story.

Professors Joseph Caddell, James Crisp, Craig Friend, Joseph Hobbs, and Carolyn Pumphrey provided intellectual and philosophical perspective on this research project. Their input redirected my research to new source material, corrected gaps in the logic, and listened to the troubles, tribulations, and discoveries of the author.

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analyzing what all the puzzle pieces meant. Her editorial commentary and recommendations have been invaluable and helped me uncover a new perspective on how to research and write. No simple thank you is enough for what she has helped me achieve, but I know I would never hesitate for a second to work with her again given the opportunity.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEC – Atomic Energy Commission

BEJP – Benjamin Everett Jordan Papers

CD – Civil Defense

CONELRAD – Control of Electromagnetic Radiation

DEFCON – Defense Readiness Condition

DoD – Department of Defense

EMS – Emergency Medical Services

FCDA – Federal Civil Defense Administration

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency

FOSDIC – Film Optical Sensing Device for Input to Computers

GPO – Government Printing Office

GTSP – Governor Terry Sanford Papers

HCGO – House Committee on Government Operations

IRBM – Intermediate-range Ballistic Missile

JFKL – John F. Kennedy Library

MRBM – Medium-range Ballistic Missile

NCA – North Carolina Archives (Raleigh, NC)

NCC – North Carolina Collection (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

NC CDA – North Carolina Civil Defense Association

NCCD – North Carolina Civil Defense Administration

NFSS – National Fallout Shelter Survey

NSC – National Security Council

NSRB – National Security Resources Board

NYT – *New York Times*

OBHC – Outer Banks Historical Center (Manteo, NC)

OCD – Office of Civil Defense

OCDM – Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization

PF – Protection Factor

RACES – Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service

RBMSCL – Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library (Duke University)

Region III – Office of Civil Defense, Region III, Thomasville, GA

SHC – Southern Historical Collection (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

SIP – Shelter Incentive Program

SJEP – Sam J. Ervin Papers

SLNC – State Library of North Carolina

USDA – United States Department of Agriculture

INTRODUCTION

The first fact that everybody needs to remember is that Civil Defense becomes operational only at [the] local level...

- E.Z. Jones, North Carolina Civil Defense Agency director, January 1952¹

Navy Captain Howard B. Hutchinson was tasked in 1948 by the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project to assess the “physical feasibility” of conducting nuclear weapons testing in the continental United States. Codenamed Project Nutmeg, Hutchinson, a trained meteorologist, worked to determine the ideal locations where radioactive fallout would not be a risk to the American people, economy, or industry. Hutchinson concluded in his January 1949 report to the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) that the area between Cape Hatteras and Cape Fear, North Carolina was most favorable, due to prevailing winds and because “the waters of the Gulf Stream will remove the waste products to the open Atlantic.”²

At the dawn of the Cold War, radioactive fallout and the risks it posed were already being discussed in North Carolina. In November 1950, Congressman Carl Thomas Durham (D – NC) of Chapel Hill introduced the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950, which created the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA). The Act affirmed that the federal government should “provide the necessary organization and guidance,” but that each state was responsible for establishing and operating its own civil defense agency.³ In Raleigh, the North Carolina Council of Civil Defense was established in July 1950, and was renamed the

¹ “Defense Exhibit: North Carolina is Helpless; Civil Defense train to show what atomic warfare is like,” *The State*, 26 January 1952, pg. 11.

² United States Department of Energy, Terrence R. Fehner, and F.G. Fosling, *Origins of the Nevada Test Site* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2000), 40-42; David Stick, ed., *An Outer Banks Reader* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 55.

³ Thomas J. Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.: Bandid for a Holocaust?* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983), 27-28.

North Carolina Civil Defense Agency (NCCD) in 1951. From 1951 through 1973, this agency planned, organized, equipped, and prepared the civilian defenses of North Carolina against natural and manmade disasters.

Throughout the 1950s, the overall plan of the FCDA vacillated between either sheltering or evacuating the American people in the event of a nuclear attack. The North Carolina civil defense administrators stressed shelters, but the state did little else about them. Nationally, the debate over shelters would wax and wane, and it shifted from an emphasis on shelters to protect occupants from blast and heat to a focus on fallout shelters beginning in 1954. Civil defense funding during the Eisenhower years remained small and planning was ineffective, perhaps best remembered for the phrase “duck and cover.” Civil defense in the 1950s was disorganized and confusing, characterized by much discussion and debate but accomplishing little.

With the election of John F. Kennedy in November 1960, the federal civil defense effort changed dramatically. From 1961 to 1963, Americans witnessed one of the hottest periods of the Cold War. Brinkmanship almost caused the eruption of nuclear war in October 1962. During the Berlin Crisis of 1961, President Kennedy spoke to the American people about the need for a greater civil defense program, urging them to build fallout shelters. Following an address to a joint session of Congress, Kennedy obtained funding for a massive public fallout shelter survey, the National Fallout Shelter Survey (NFSS). This three-phase program began in late 1961 and continued, to varying degrees, into the Nixon administration. Its legacy can be seen today in faded yellow and black “Fallout Shelter” signs on the sides of buildings across the country.

Under Kennedy, the NFSS and an invigorated effort to educate the American people about civil defense and fallout shelter construction resulted in tremendous public debate in the second half of 1961. By October 1962, however, interest and public debate about fallout shelters had returned to pre-Kennedy levels. Over the summer of 1962, a larger, more ambitious Shelter Incentive Program (SIP) was defeated by a Congress skeptical of the merits of shelters. When the presence of nuclear missile sites in Cuba was revealed to the public on 22 October, fallout shelters and civil defense instantly became important for millions of Americans. But by mid-November, private fallout shelters returned to being ignored. The Kennedy administration once more proposed the SIP to Congress. To the surprise of many, the program was positively received and passed a House vote in August 1963. Shortly thereafter, Congressional committees and Kennedy's assassination in November contributed to the death of the SIP and the end of the fallout shelter era.

For North Carolina, the shelter era occurred at the same time the state civil defense agency was expanding across the state. Five freshly hired area directors, each responsible for the overall civil defense readiness of a sixth of the state, visited and studied all one hundred counties in the state. Unsurprisingly, they learned state-wide that fallout shelters were not wanted. Many counties lacked emergency medical personnel, professional fire and police departments, and even basic radio communication equipment. Faced with this information, unofficially the area directors and several other NCCD officials decided to deemphasize fallout shelters in favor of establishing and improving emergency preparedness measures statewide. While the newly established federal Office of Civil Defense worked on the NFSS and the passage of the SIP, the state civil defense agency utilized various federal civil

defense funding options to rapidly establish emergency communications networks statewide and oversee natural disaster-oriented planning for county civil defense agencies. The NCCD efficiently and effectively built a state civil defense program capable of managing crises.

Many historians have studied civil defense history in the United States, but very few have researched civil defense efforts at the state and local level. Recent publications have focused on civil defense nationally, using examples of state civil defense actions or events in states, but none has exclusively focused on state and local civil defense organizations. In all cases, the examples used to describe the American people are drawn from national publications such as *Time* or *Life*, the *New York Times* and other major newspapers, and federal civil defense publications. Although these are important sources and provide windows into the thinking of Americans nationwide, they do not tell the story of the state civil defense agencies, which had been ordered by the federal government to provide civil defense for residents.

Scholarship on the intellectual and methodological development of federal civil defense in the 1950s is both impressive and extensive. Valuable insight is found in *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture*, by sociologist Guy Oakes, and historian Laura McEnaney's book, *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties*. Oakes examines how the federal government used civil defense to strengthen a policy of nuclear deterrence. He contends that "Americans would accept the risks of nuclear war only if they could be assured that a nuclear attack on their own cities would not be too costly," and further asserts that civil defense served as a form of emotional

management for the American people.⁴ McEnaney employs a similar approach but explores how federal civil defense administrators sought to militarize civilian society to prepare it for nuclear war. She convincingly contends that the national debates and reactions to civil defense resulted in the adoption by the federal government of the doctrine of self-help, privatizing the home front and forcing citizens to be autonomous in protecting themselves with private shelters and other means.⁵

Culturally, the fallout shelter and the subject of nuclear Armageddon in America during the Cold War offers insight into why shelters were rejected. Historian Kenneth Rose made the shelter the central subject of his book, *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture*. Rose studies the role of fallout shelters in American film, television, and print media, analyzing why shelters, and civil defense in general, failed to catch on from the 1950s up until the Cuban Missile Crisis. Issues of shelter morality, scientific merits of shelters, and the immense fear and awe of both nuclear weapons and radioactivity are detailed. Rose concludes that “the main reason Americans rejected shelter building had to do with the troubling moral aspects of shelters,” aspects which encompass issues ranging from personal ethics to relations with neighbors to national identity.⁶ In an article in *American Heritage*, historian Walter Karp studied the intense dynamics of the

⁴ Guy Oakes, *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 6.

⁵ Laura McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 7.

⁶ Kenneth Rose, *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 10.

fallout shelter debates in 1961, using countless examples from across the country of how individual citizens struggled with the question of “to build or not to build.”⁷

Dee Garrison’s 2006 book, *Bracing for Armageddon: Why Civil Defense Never Worked*, studies the entire history of civil defense in America, from Franklin D. Roosevelt to George W. Bush. Garrison centers her work on analyzing the federal and public effort to develop defenses against nuclear war and why civil defense failed. She posits that nuclear deterrence and government secrecy drove the public to distrust the government. This distrust and skepticism of civil defense threatened the entire system of national nuclear deterrence policy.⁸ She builds on the assessment of historian Allan M. Winkler: “The struggle over civil defense reflected both the anxieties about atomic attack and the halting attempts to deal with these fears.”⁹

Scholarship on civil defense at the federal level provides significant perspective for understanding why civil defense and shelters failed. This scholarship does not, unfortunately, explain how a state government, assigned to protect citizens from disasters, attempted to implement civil defense. A focused, in-depth study of a state civil defense agency may hold clues about why the American people reacted negatively towards civil defense and, in particular, toward fallout shelters. Civil defense officials at local levels of government nationwide fielded questions from concerned citizens, distributed information, and witnessed exactly what the American people approved and rejected from civil defense.

⁷ Walter Karp, “When Bunkers Last in the Backyard Bloom’d,” *American Heritage* vol. 31, no. 2 (February/March 1980): 84-94.

⁸ Dee Garrison, *Bracing for Armageddon: Why Civil Defense Never Worked* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 4-10.

⁹ Allan M. Winkler, “A 40-year History of Civil Defense,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* vol. 40, no. 6 (June/July 1984): 16.

The underlying assumption of historians of civil defense has been if civil defense failed at the federal level, it inevitably failed at the state level. This is a significant assumption that has relied far too long on random examples from different states. Each state was confronted with unique situations and variables that influenced its civil defense program. A focused, comprehensive look at a state civil defense agency can test this assumption by providing information on just what did happen at the state level. Furthermore, it can broaden the narrow focus on fallout shelters and look at how civil defense funds were actually spent locally. Fallout shelters nationwide did not materialize, but shelters were only one part of federal and state civil defense efforts. The “other” work that civil defense agencies developed, such as improvements in communications, police, fire, and emergency medical services, has languished in the shadows. Whether or not non-shelter work failed or succeeded can be determined only by researching what exactly constituted this work, and analyzing the impact and reception of this work at the local and state level.

In terms of funding alone, civil defense and emergency management agencies have been small elements of government, ignored by politicians and taxpayers alike. From 1940 to 1996, the United States government spent \$5.5 *trillion* dollars (1996 figures) on the construction, deployment, defense, and development of its nuclear arsenal. Of this incredible total, only \$13.5 *billion* (from 1951 to 1988, in 1996 figures) was spent on civil defense.¹⁰ By comparison, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), civil defense’s successor, has a Fiscal Year 2008 budget of \$8 billion.¹¹

¹⁰ Stephen I. Schwartz, ed., *Atomic Audit: The Costs and Consequences of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Since 1940* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1998), 3, 324.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Budget-in-Brief: Fiscal Year 2008* (Washington: GPO, 2007), 19.

North Carolina's civil defense strength in the 1960s was in its ability to maintain communication and centralized oversight for the local civil defense offices. By orienting the NCCD efforts toward building emergency preparedness instead of fallout shelters, local offices and personnel were able to operate in concordance with the state agency with relative autonomy and optimal use of limited resources. The missile crisis in October 1962 validated the civil defense organization of North Carolina as a functional and efficient means to manage an emergency.

The story of civil defense in North Carolina has remained a forgotten episode in the state's history. Using the unorganized records of the state agency, untouched for over twenty years, a new perspective on the civil defense effort of the Kennedy administration can now be told. Fallout shelters, central to the federal effort, served as a façade that allowed the North Carolina Civil Defense Agency to focus its efforts on emergency preparedness. Instead of condemning the fallout shelter effort, North Carolina instead used the increased civil defense momentum and available federal funding to prepare the state for natural disasters.

This thesis will closely follow the actions of the North Carolina Civil Defense Agency from 1961 to 1963. Chapter One provides a brief background on the state and federal civil defense efforts in the 1950s. It then examines the role of the area directors and the debates about fallout shelters in 1961. Chapter Two studies the period from late 1961 until October 1962, and examines how the debates about the morality of fallout shelters, the National Fallout Shelter Survey, and the Ash Wednesday Storm all solidified the state emergency preparedness effort. The Cuban Missile Crisis and its aftermath, from October to

December 1962 are examined in Chapter Three. The Shelter Incentive Program and the political movements at the federal and state level in 1963 comprise Chapter Four.

During my freshman year in high school, Hurricane Fran roared through North Carolina in September 1996, inflicting over \$500 million in damages and giving me a two-week vacation from class. Nobody was prepared for the storm. The damage this storm caused in my Raleigh neighborhood, and the insecurity and disorder I witnessed is unforgettable. This experience exposed me to FEMA and led me to be curious about how Americans have prepared for and reacted to disasters.

Over the course of high school, I began to take an interest in the Cold War. In the countdown to the new millennium, the local television station and the newspaper shared stories about fallout shelters and compared these Cold War relics to the fears at the dawn of the year 2000.

Years later while researching for my undergraduate thesis, I came across files titled “North Carolina Civil Defense” in the military records at the North Carolina Archives. While conceptualizing a topic for my masters thesis, I returned to look at these records. As fate would have it, these records were for the World War II civil defense effort. Further research, however, uncovered the records of a state civil defense agency that existed from 1950 until 1973. These records would consume my research schedule for the next few months.

Initially, my objective was to understand the mere basics of the organization and just the overall topic of civil defense in North Carolina in the 1950s and 1960s. As the depth of information became apparent, this topic was refined to focus on fallout shelters in the years

1961 to 1963. This period contained a wealth of records about shelters and witnessed the expansion of the state agency. I reasoned these documents would provide me with a greater opportunity to define my thesis and present the opportunity for numerous interviews with former state employees or private citizens who participated in civil defense, or who built shelters.

After several months, two observations became apparent to me. First, the state civil defense agency did not build shelters independent of the federal government's shelter programs, and secondly, I was urged by interviewees to look beyond fallout shelters at emergency preparedness. Added impetus came from research on the Cuban Missile Crisis in North Carolina. I was left with the question of why the state did not build fallout shelters, and how did this relate to emergency preparedness? In attempting to answer this question, the overall picture became clearer.

Research into the state agency's work with emergency preparedness took me to the Outer Banks and an additional emphasis on natural disasters in the period from 1961 to 1963. Furthermore, I began to look into what political actions, if any, North Carolina's politicians took to promote or ignore civil defense. By this point, I formed my basic thesis and reedited the portions of my previous research to reflect the relationship between fallout shelters, emergency preparedness, and how this dynamic unfolded in North Carolina.

The hope of this thesis is that the lessons of the North Carolina Civil Defense Agency, during a period of intense civil defense/emergency management discussion almost fifty years ago, can help alleviate the effects of a disaster somewhere in the near or distant future. In this twenty-first century, natural disasters of unprecedented magnitude have killed

countless millions of people, from the Indian Ocean tsunami, to Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast, to earthquakes in China. In all cases, emergency organizations found themselves woefully unprepared to coordinate rescue and recovery efforts. Disasters can and will continue to affect mankind in the future, but by being alert and prepared for crises today, people can emerge alive tomorrow.

CHAPTER 1

New Funding, New Visions—Kennedy, North Carolina, and Civil Defense Plans, 1961

We must realize that we are not playing games. Our enemies are real – their weapons are real – and the possibility of a very real war is not as remote as many would like to think. It could happen today – or tomorrow – or never. We must not gamble on the future – as long as the threat exists that does exist – of conflict between countries too terrifying to contemplate.
- Governor Terry Sanford, 28 April 1961¹

In 1950, Americans concerned about the dangers of radioactivity were assured by the federal government that “even if you should get severe radiation sickness, you would still stand better than an even chance of making a complete recovery, including having your hair grow in again.”² Throughout the Cold War, the U.S. government sought to defend Americans by amassing an array of nuclear weapons capable of unleashing devastation unprecedented in the history of mankind. To safeguard American citizens and assuage their fears of a nuclear holocaust, the federal government created a civil defense organization to prepare the citizenry for nuclear war. All the individual states created civil defense units to implement the federal plans and operations. These state organizations blended federal guidelines and operations with their own existing agencies to take “all possible precautions, in advance of disaster, to enable...citizens to survive and to enable the government to continue to exist after crisis is over.”³

¹ North Carolina Civil Defense Agency (NCCD) Newsletter, May 1961, pg. 5, North Carolina Collection (NCC), Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC.

² National Security Resources Board, Civil Defense Office, *Survival Under Atomic Attack* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office (GPO), 1950), 12.

³ “Civil Defense Facts and Information for Public Officials,” February 1964, pg 1, State Civil Defense Agency Intelligence Section, Public Information Office, Department of Military and Veterans’ Affairs, Office of Civil Defense, State Civil Defense (NCCD), 1951-1972, North Carolina Archives, Old State Records Center, (NCA) Raleigh, North Carolina, Box 9.

In 1954, the public became aware of the deadly threat posed by radioactive fallout that could endanger their lives even if they were thousands of miles from a target site.⁴ Shelters to shield Americans against fallout were subsequently proposed as a practical defense. These shelters would seek to inhibit the effects of blast, heat, and radiation produced by a nuclear attack. They would not necessarily protect against the direct effects of blast, but were intended to shield citizens from the deadly effects of radioactive fallout until the radiation outside degraded to safe levels for exposure. During the administration of President John F. Kennedy, a nation-wide program was undertaken to facilitate the establishment of public and private fallout shelters. Two major addresses by President Kennedy in the summer of 1961 would begin a massive civil defense effort oriented towards fallout shelters, unmatched before or since.

NC Civil Defense Agency and Fallout Shelters—Background

Civil defense in North Carolina preceded the creation of the Federal Civil Defense Agency by several months. Governor William Kerr Scott created and activated the North Carolina Council of Civil Defense on 24 July 1950. The civil defense director, “subject to the direction and control of the Governor,” served as the administrator for the Council and was “responsible to the Governor for carrying out the program for civil defense in the state.”⁵ The North Carolina General Assembly changed the name of the council to the North Carolina

⁴ Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.*, 68-69. The publicity about the fallout caused public uproar over atmospheric testing and the threat of fallout to persons far from the site of an explosion. See especially Garrison, *Bracing for Armageddon*, 51-54; Oakes, *The Imaginary War*, 60-61; Rose, *One Nation Underground*, 24-27.

⁵ “North Carolina Laws on Civil Defense, Reproduced by the North Carolina Civil Defense Agency, Raleigh, April 1965,” NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

Civil Defense Agency (NCCD) in 1951 upon passage of the North Carolina Civil Defense Act of 1951, and provided funding for the hiring of additional staff.⁶

The agency coordinated the state's civil defense operations. The responsibilities were "to develop plans and operational capability that will provide for the best use of the State's resources to meet major emergencies arising from man-made and natural disasters. This includes encouraging and assisting in establishment of adequate Civil Defense organization in counties, cities, and towns." In conjunction with the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950, the NCCD was also tasked to train and educate the citizens of the state. Specifically, the state agency was expected to "promote and direct thorough and extensive community organization for common protection and orderly action" during disasters.⁷

On the morning of 1 March 1954, Brigadier General (later Major) Edward F. Griffin of Louisburg was inaugurated as the third director of the agency.⁸ Griffin was a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Wake Forest College, where he earned a law degree in 1923. He joined the North Carolina National Guard the same year. During World War II he commanded the 113th Field Artillery as part of the 30th Infantry Division in Europe and participated in five major engagements. In 1952 he received promotion to Brigadier General as commander of artillery for the division. He assumed command of the entire 30th Infantry Division and promotion to Major General in 1959, a post he held until

⁶ State of North Carolina, *1951 Session Laws and Resolutions Passed by the General Assembly at the Regular Session Held in the City of Raleigh Beginning on Wednesday, the Third of January, A.D. 1951* (Winston-Salem, NC: Winston Printing Company, 1951), 1009-1015.

⁷ "North Carolina Council of Civil Defense Summary of Operations, July 1950 – September 1952," pg. 1-2, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

⁸ "Brig. Gen. Edward F. Griffin Becomes Civil Defense Chief," *Durham Herald*, 2 March 1954. The previous directors of the NCCD were E.Z. Jones of Burlington, from 21 July 1950 to 6 January 1953, and Colonel William F. Bailey of Washington, NC, who served from 6 January 1953 to August 1953. The period from August 1953 to 1 March 1954 had an interim director serving, Mr. Russell Nicholson.

his retirement from the guard on 1 September 1961.⁹ Griffin witnessed the transformation of civil defense planning in North Carolina.

Civil defense in the formative years of the early 1950s underplayed the risk of nuclear weapons. In 1950, the National Security Resources Board (NSRB) released the booklet *Survival Under Atomic Attack*, which stated directly “You can SURVIVE atomic warfare.”¹⁰ Citizens need not worry about atomic weapons, for “just like fire bombs and ordinary high explosives, atomic weapons cause most of their death and damage by blast and heat.” Ground bursts, where a nuclear explosion occurs on or below the ground, would create dangerous radioactive fallout, but “a person could escape contamination by simply taking refuge inside a house or even by getting inside a car and rolling up the windows.”¹¹ An ordinary citizen using soap and water could cleanse themselves of any radioactive “ashes” they might encounter. The booklet concluded by reminding people “that blast and heat are the two greatest dangers you face,” and “while the lingering radioactivity...may be dangerous, still it is no more to be feared than typhoid fever or other diseases that sometimes follow major disasters.”¹²

Another book from 1950 offered similar advice. In *How to Survive an Atomic Bomb*, fallout was referred once more as bomb “ashes.” Author Richard Gerstell acknowledged “it

⁹ “Biographical Notes on Major General Edward Foster Griffin, Director North Carolina Civil Defense Agency,” 27 April 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 7. There are several different biographical sketches of the general, but the majority of this information is taken from the one biography. The others offer additional details such as dates of service for his legal, political, and military experiences. Griffin was an active member of the NC National Guard during this period, but not active in the US Army. See also “Brigadier General Edward Foster Griffin – State Director Biographical Sketch,” and “Major General Edward Foster Griffin – State Director Biographical Sketch,” NCCD, NCA, Box 7.

¹⁰ *Survival Under Atomic Attack*, 3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹² *Ibid.*, 30.

is true that this ‘fall-out’ stuff gives off rays and it can cause burns if you are exposed to it long enough. But it is not likely to hurt you.”¹³ Gerstell recommended men and women wear wide-brimmed hats to provide protection from face burns.¹⁴ Most important, he reassured his reader that not one person at Hiroshima or Nagasaki was killed or injured by fallout.¹⁵

American authorities recognized fallout as a potential hazard, but repeatedly downplayed the risk as something that could be brushed off or hosed down. Shelters to protect against blast and heat would provide protection from the bomb ashes and lingering radioactivity. The United States Strategic Bombing Survey report on the results of the Japanese atomic bombs emphasized blast and heat effects as the primary killers. For both explosions, the survey acknowledged that “there are no indications that radioactivity continued after the explosion to a sufficient degree to harm human beings.”¹⁶ Millard Caldwell, administrator for the successor to the NSRB, the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA), lobbied Congress from 1951 to 1953 for a bomb (blast and heat) shelter program to create public bomb shelters, and every time the proposal was rejected in its entirety.¹⁷ Bomb shelters would have to wait until the dangers of radioactive fallout were known and the country returned to peace after the Korean War. Blast and heat dangers could be handled without resorting to expensive shelters. Young children were taught by Bert the

¹³ Richard Gerstell, *How to Survive and Atomic Bomb* (Washington, DC: Combat Forces Press, 1950), 15.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁶ United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *Summary Report: Pacific War* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1946), 99.

¹⁷ Kerr, *Civil Defense in the US*, 46-54.

Turtle to duck and cover under their desks when they saw a bomb flash to protect themselves from burns and flying debris. Radioactivity was not mentioned.¹⁸

As director of the NCCD, one of Griffin's first duties was to assess North Carolina's civil defense preparations. On 14 April 1954, a mere six weeks after his appointment, Griffin gave a state-wide radio and television address to inform his listeners that "you should know that this state is woefully unprepared for any kind of attack." He continued, "In North Carolina, at present, we are not planning for evacuation of our target cities. At present there is no assurance that there will be more than a few minutes' warning. Our only concern with evacuation at this time is to plan how to take care of the thousands of people who will come or be brought across our borders...We will stay put and 'duck and cover.'"¹⁹

Griffin's appointment in early 1954 coincided with public awareness of the threat of fallout because of Operation Castle. Shot Bravo, a fifteen megaton thermonuclear weapon, vaporized the test island of Nam and produced a cloud of fallout that covered 7,000 square miles of the Pacific test area at Bikini Atoll. This fallout fell on 28 Americans and 236 Marshall Islanders, in addition to the 23 man crew of the Japanese fishing vessel *Daigo Fukuryū Maru (Lucky Dragon Number Five)* that had been tuna fishing 100 miles east of Bikini. Between two and three hours after the explosion, white, sandy flakes with the appearance of salt began to fall on the ship and its crew hauling the fishing equipment

¹⁸ Federal Civil Defense Administration, *Bert the Turtle Says Duck and Cover* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1951), n.p.

¹⁹ "Text of State-Wide Radio and TV Address Originating WPTF Raleigh – 7:15PM – April 14th 1954 – Brig.-General Edward F. Griffin, Direction N.C. Council of Civil Defense," NCCD, NCA, Box 10.

onboard. The fallout fell for several hours.²⁰ The crew returned to Japan on 14 March suffering from radiation poisoning, and news of the exposure broke on 16 March. Panic gripped Japan and the fish market bottomed out after it was revealed the contaminated fish in the ship's hold were sold on market.²¹ Radioman Aikichi Kuboyama later died from complications of his exposure on 23 September 1954.²² In November 1954, the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* published an article describing how the unexpected fallout, consisting mostly of pulverized coral, traveled extensive distances from the test site and posed a threat to anyone downwind of a nuclear attack.²³ Mere bomb shelters would not suffice against this silent killer.

The “official” denial of the fallout threat was finally broken in 1955, when the Atomic Energy Commission admitted fallout to be “an intensive and extensive threat.”²⁴ In response to requests from across North Carolina for instructions on fallout shelter construction, the NCCD released a statement on 13 June 1955, declaring “radioactive ‘fall-out’ is a new threat with an old answer.” Furthermore, “Civil Defense has always advocated shelters...as the best means of survival in the atomic age. Instead of being out-moded, by [the] Atomic Energy Commission’s disclosure [about fallout’s risks]...the shelter program is now a universal necessity. No family can afford to neglect to prepare one.”²⁵

²⁰ Ralph E. Lapp, *The Voyage of the Lucky Dragon* (New York: Harper & Brothers Pub., 1958), 31-36. This book details the entire fishing voyage of the *Fukuryū Maru*, the press coverage of the ship and crew, and the aftermath of their exposure. The actual boat itself still exists in Tokyo. Saved in 1976, it is the centerpiece of the Tokyo Metropolitan *Daigo Fukuryū Maru* Exhibition Hall.

²¹ Barton C. Hacker, *Elements of Controversy: The Atomic Energy Commission and Radiation Safety in Nuclear Weapons Testing, 1947-1974* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 149.

²² *Ibid.*, 158.

²³ Rose, *One Nation Underground*, 25-26.

²⁴ Kerr, *Civil Defense in the US*, 68-72.

²⁵ “Radioactive ‘Fall-out’ Threat Spurs Shelter Preparation,” June 13,” NCCD, NCA, Box 10.

Fallout presented a new challenge for shelter builders and civil defense officials. Fallout, particulate matter produced or thrown up from the ground in a nuclear explosion, absorbs radiation from the detonation and falls back down to Earth with an appearance of snow. Around fifty-seven grams of fission material is produced for every kiloton of fission energy yielded. While alpha and beta radiation can be stopped by a thin sheet of aluminum, gamma radiation requires substantial shielding. Fallout protection factors (PF) are defined as the ratio of gamma radiation exposure at a standard unprotected location to exposure at a protected location. The standard unprotected location would be a point three feet above a smooth plane uniformly covered in fallout.²⁶ People in a shelter with a PF of 100 would receive 100 times less radiation than an unprotected person. The higher the PF for a shelter, the safer the shelter would be for the occupants.

Fallout-specific shelters were cheaper and easier to build than bomb shelters designed to withstand blast and heat. The prolonged pressure pulse of a nuclear explosion made shelters capable of withstanding direct hits from blast and heat alone incredibly expensive to construct.²⁷ Fallout shelters only needed to protect the occupants by shielding them from fallout, making any American with basic building skills capable of protecting themselves. Thick enough walls of earth, concrete, timber, or steel could prevent gamma radiation from penetrating from one side to the other. Extensive testing by the U.S. government from 1957 to 1960, including testing shelters in actual nuclear explosions, produced the “technological

²⁶ John Dowling and Evans M. Harrell, eds., *Civil Defense: A Choice of Disasters* (New York: American Institute of Physics, 1987), 69-72.

²⁷ An atomic explosion does not have an instantaneous blast pulse like that of a conventional explosive device. A nuclear detonation blasts outward, then has a suction phase inward that stresses structures tremendously. See Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.*, 41.

basis” for the national shelter survey and the building information released by the Kennedy administration.²⁸ Though the shelters advocated for the American people would not be comfortable or able to withstand direct blast, they would provide protection from fallout and were simple enough for anyone to construct.

In March 1960, the Subcommittee on Military Operations of the House Committee on Government Operations held hearings on civil defense shelter policy, post-attack planning, and civil defense implications of missile base locations. Chaired by Congressman Chet Holifield (D – CA), the subcommittee sent out questionnaires to all fifty states and select cities inquiring about the status of fallout shelters. The returned data from 35 states and 66 cities reported a scant 1,565 home fallout shelters. Holifield noted that “those who examine the material will find, I believe, that civil defense throughout the country as a whole is in a deplorable state... Lack of progress applies to civil defense generally, but in the case of shelters particularly, it is evident to me at least, that the national shelter policy has been a failure.”²⁹ For North Carolina, General Griffin reported on 7 March 1960 that twenty-five home fallout shelters existed in the state, and two public buildings had shelters.³⁰ David L. Hardee, director of the Raleigh-Wake County Civil Defense Agency reported no shelters in the city.³¹

²⁸ Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.*, 102-04.

²⁹ House, Committee on Government Operations (HCGO), Military Operations Subcommittee, *Hearings, Civil Defense*, 86th Cong., 2nd sess., 1960, 3-4.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 317.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 317-18. Of note, the author conducted an off-the-record interview with a Raleigh resident who had a fallout shelter constructed in their basement in 1955. The shelter was visited by the author and is today used as a bathroom. Judging by the timidity of the shelter owner to talk on the record about the shelter, the likelihood of private fallout shelters existing to any degree in Raleigh at the time of this subcommittee hearing is strong; the number of such shelters presumably was small.

The number of shelters in North Carolina by January 1961 will never be known with any precision. The biennial NCCD 1959-1961 report stated proudly that “the State Agency has distributed more than 100,000 booklets containing instructions on shelter construction. There are now more than 1,000 shelters built and equipped in the state. Many others are under construction.”³² The NCCD built a prototype federal-designed underground fallout shelter adjacent to the headquarters building in Raleigh. Finished in July 1960, and dedicated on 10 August, the shelter was stocked by the Public Affairs Department of the Raleigh Woman’s Club and was one of eleven allocated to the state.³³ Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization funds were also allocated to construct larger community shelters for fifty people in Greensboro and Wilmington.³⁴ At the dawn of his presidency, Kennedy inherited a Federal civil defense program woefully short of fallout shelters in North Carolina and nationwide.

Kennedy and his Civil Defense Vision

In the spring of 1961, newly-elected President Kennedy initiated a massive program to create fallout shelters nationwide. A scant two days before his inauguration, the National Security Council (NSC) wrote NSC 6104/2 on “Measures to Provide Shelter from Radioactive Fallout.” The document pressed for increased emphasis on fallout shelters, in lieu of doubts about whether “any adequate anti-ICMB [intercontinental ballistic missile] system could be developed and deployed within the next ten years.” The council also

³² “State of North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, January 1, 1959 to January 1, 1961,” pg. 9, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

³³ Other OCDM prototype family shelters were constructed in Asheville, Elizabeth City, Lenoir, Salisbury, Shelby, Sanford, and Winston-Salem. Letter from Edward F. Griffin to Terry Sanford, 10 August 1961, Folder titled “Civil Defense – B,” Governor Terry Sanford Papers (GTSP), NCA, Box 27.

³⁴ Ibid.; NCCD Newsletter, July 1960, pg 1, NCC; NCCD Newsletter, August 1960, pg 1, NCC.

questioned the potential deterrence value of shelters. To accomplish a national fallout shelter program, “highest priority is placed on more direct involvement of the President himself... The President can set the tone of the expanded shelter promotion effort as cooperative, voluntary, and prudent.” The NSC concluded the federal government must use “aggressive action... to persuade States to provide fallout shelters in public buildings.” Furthermore, the federal government had to provide tax exemption for shelters and matching funds for the development of shelters in new and existing state government buildings.³⁵ This top secret report outlined the civil defense program Kennedy would unfold over the course of the year.

New Orleans attorney Frank B. Ellis, Kennedy’s appointed director of the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, was tasked by the President to review the functions, organization, and performance of the federal civil defense effort.³⁶ In a letter to President Kennedy on 20 March 1961, Ellis stated “it is our position that we should take advantage of the millions of dollars that have been expended in its [federal] establishment and that there has been created a launching platform from which, with improvements, affirmative plans and programs can be undertaken.”³⁷ Ellis worked feverishly to promote civil defense improvements, even planning a trip to the Vatican to meet with the Pope to curry favor for placing shelters in church basements.³⁸

³⁵ U.S. National Security Council, *NSC 6104/2, Measures to Provide Shelter from Radioactive Fallout*, 18 January 1961, available from the Digital National Security Archive online.

³⁶ Memorandum for Richard E. Neustadt from Mr. Frank B. Ellis, 3 February 1961, United States Executive Office of the President, Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, available from the Digital National Security Archive online.

³⁷ Letter from Frank B. Ellis to President John F. Kennedy, 20 March 1961, Executive Office of the President, Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, available from the Digital National Security Archive online.

³⁸ Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.*, 117.

Embarrassed and bothered by this stunt, Kennedy asked for a report on fallout shelters, civil defense, and the feasibility of both.³⁹ A May 1961 report from White House aides Marc Raskin and Carl Kaysen bluntly stated that the federal government should “either stop wasting money on civil defense or take it seriously and turn it over to the Department of Defense (DoD).” Support for this action came from the DoD itself, in particular Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, who believed shelters would complement active defense systems and add to the country’s military deterrence.⁴⁰

On 25 May 1961, in a message to a joint session of Congress, Kennedy outlined his civil defense plans for the nation. Kennedy elaborated on how

One major element of the national security program which this nation has never squarely faced up to is civil defense...
...there is no point in delaying the initiation of a nationwide long-range program of identifying present fallout shelter capacity and providing shelter in new and existing structures. Such a program would protect millions of people against the hazards of radioactive fallout in the event of large-scale nuclear attack...
...Such a program will provide Federal funds for identifying fallout shelter capacity in existing, structures, and it will include, where appropriate, incorporation of shelter in Federal buildings, new requirements for shelter in buildings constructed with Federal assistance, and matching grants and other incentives for constructing shelter in State and local and private buildings.⁴¹

The speech emphasized the basics of Kennedy’s program for fallout shelters. The shelters would add to the country’s deterrence capabilities and protect its citizens from radiation, but

³⁹ Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 613.

⁴⁰ Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 613-14.

⁴¹ John F. Kennedy, “Special Message to the Congress on Urgent National Needs,” 25 May 1961, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library (JFKL), Boston, MA. Note, in this same speech Kennedy made his famous proclamation that “First, I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth.”

not necessarily the effects of blast or heat. Unlike previous federal civil defense efforts, substantial funding would be allocated for shelters on the public level. Kennedy also noted in this speech that responsibility for the program would be assigned to the Secretary of Defense, and that the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization would be reorganized into the Office of Emergency Planning.⁴²

The reorganization Kennedy outlined in his speech gave civil defense serious teeth in the American bureaucracy. Executive Order Number 10952 on 20 July 1962 delegated to the Secretary of Defense the development and execution of a fallout shelter program, a defense program against chemical, biological, and radiological warfare, warning and communication responsibility, emergency assistance to state and local governments, and protection of emergency operational capability for state and local government agencies. The civil defense responsibilities for the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization would be advising and assisting the President in determining policy for planning, directing and coordinating, reviewing and coordinating civil defense activities of federal departments and agencies with each other and the states, and “determining the appropriate civil defense roles of Federal departments and agencies, and enlisting State, local, and private participation, mobilizing national support, and evaluating progress of programs.”⁴³ A White House press release regarding Kennedy’s order noted that Ellis would continue in his responsibilities for planning continuity of state and local governments and the natural disaster relief program, and that

⁴² Ibid. Sorensen goes into some detail about the difficulty appeasing Ellis and McNamara over civil defense jurisdiction. See Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 614.

⁴³ Executive Order No. 10952, 20 July 1961, Appendix 3A, HGCO, *Hearings, Civil Defense – 1961*, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1961, 379-80.

future legislation would change the name from the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization to the Office of Emergency Planning.⁴⁴

To direct the Office of Civil Defense, Deputy Defense Secretary Roswell L. Gilpatric tapped Washington attorney Stuart L. Pittman.⁴⁵ Kennedy announced Pittman's appointment as Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civil Defense on 30 August 1961, and he was confirmed by a Senate voice vote by 15 September.⁴⁶ A decorated Marine Corps veteran from the Pacific theater of World War II, Pittman was praised after his appointment as "bright and able," calm and collected, working "methodically from 7:30AM to 8:00PM" for civil defense.⁴⁷ For the rest of the Kennedy administration, Pittman would serve as the federal promoter, defender, and resolute leader of civil defense and the fallout shelter movement.

Five days after the transfer of civil defense to the Defense Department, Kennedy gave a radio and television address to the nation about the 1961 Berlin Crisis. In this speech, civil defense was mentioned again, but now with a far greater sense of urgency:

To recognize the possibilities of nuclear war in the missile age, without our citizens knowing what they should do and where they should go if bombs begin to fall, would be a failure of responsibility. Tomorrow, I am requesting of the Congress new funds for the following immediate objectives: to identify and mark space in existing structures--public and private--that could be used for fall-out shelters in case of attack; to stock those shelters with food, water, first-aid kits and other minimum essentials for survival; to increase their capacity; to improve our air-raid warning and fallout detection systems,

⁴⁴ White House Press Releases of 20 July 1961 regarding Executive Order No. 10952, Appendix 3B, HCGO, *Hearings, Civil Defense – 1961*, 381.

⁴⁵ "Molder of Civil Defense: Stuart Lansing Pittman," *New York Times (NYT)*, 30 October 1961.

⁴⁶ "Director Chosen for Civil Defense," *NYT*, 31 August 1961, pg. 17; "Civil Defense Chief is Confirmed," *NYT*, 16 September 1961, pg. 44.

⁴⁷ "Molder of Civil Defense: Stuart Lansing Pittman," *NYT*, 30 October 1961, pg. 19.

including a new household warning system which is now under development; and to take other measures that will be effective at an early date to save millions of lives if needed.

In the event of an attack, the lives of those families which are not hit in a nuclear blast and fire can still be saved--if they can be warned to take shelter and if that shelter is available. We owe that kind of insurance to our families--and to our country. In contrast to our friends in Europe, the need for this kind of protection is new to our shores. But the time to start is now. In the coming months, I hope to let every citizen know what steps he can take without delay to protect his family in case of attack. I know that you will want to do no less.⁴⁸

Kennedy's budget request was presented to Congress by McNamara. The requested amount of \$207.6 million dollars (in 1961 figures) included \$169.3 million to locate, mark, and stock shelters in existing public and private buildings, concentrating initially in metropolitan areas. McNamara explained to Congress that the basic aim of the program was to provide fallout protection for the maximum number of citizens in the shortest possible time and lowest cost. This meant that the emphasis of the program was establishing shelters in already existing buildings. By December 1962 an estimated 50 million shelter spaces would be identified and stocked at the cost of an allotted \$58.8 million. The \$58.8 million would stock only 30 million spaces, with the funding for the remainder of 20 million spaces to be requested later.⁴⁹ The U.S. Army Engineer School at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia would train personnel of architect-engineering firms, who would in turn train additional engineers and architects to work in two-man teams to survey buildings. The surveying would be contracted

⁴⁸ John F. Kennedy, "Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Berlin Crisis," 25 July 1961, JFKL.

⁴⁹ HCGO, *Hearings, Civil Defense – 1961*, 7.

through the Army Corps of Engineers and the Navy Bureau of Yards and Docks at a cost of \$93 million.⁵⁰

This funding appeal sailed through Congress, unlike previous civil defense budget requests. Kennedy's request passed through the Senate in nine days with only three senators opposing the bill, notably Wayne Morse (D – OR) and Ernest Gruening (D – AK).⁵¹ Six days later on 17 August 1961, the bill was signed by Kennedy into law.⁵² From 1950 to 1960, the federal civil defense programs had been allocated a total of \$532 million. In just over two weeks' time, Kennedy had secured civil defense funding that amounted to a third of its previous ten-year budget total.⁵³ With funding and a reorganized federal civil defense effort begun, the state civil defense agencies were now given the tools needed to build up civilian emergency preparedness for nuclear war.

Centralized Control, Decentralized Execution–The Area Network

McNamara testified before a House Subcommittee about state and local government civil defense organizations on 1 August 1961. The Defense Secretary remarked on the vast available resources that states and local governments possessed in trained personnel and equipment in police and fire departments, civil engineering and public utility offices. The states, however, had to organize these available resources for emergency operations, and McNamara added that “plans must be formulated now so that the surviving elements can

⁵⁰ Ibid., 10.

⁵¹ These gentlemen would be the only dissenting votes in 1964 against the Tonkin Gulf Resolution.

⁵² “55 Billion in Fund Bills Signed; 46 Billion for Defense a Record,” *NYT*, 19 August 1961, pg. 8.

⁵³ Boyce Wayne Blanchard, “American Civil Defense 1945 – 1975: The Evolution of Programs and Policies” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1980), 298.

operate independently and can reestablish communications with other survivors in order to reconstitute an organization after an attack.”⁵⁴

North Carolina’s officials had begun to think about emergency planning and resource allocation in the mid-1950s. The FCDA and the state of North Carolina had signed an agreement in May 1956 to develop for the state a Civil Defense Operational Survival Plan. The study, in four phases, had developed plans for evacuation, shelter and care of the civilian population from target areas in the event of war, and included running actual tests of the plans.⁵⁵ Co-directed by John A. Parker and James A. Webb of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the project had been financed entirely with Federal funds totaling approximately \$250,000. The operation planning process began on 1 June 1956 and was finalized and published 1 January 1958. Governor Luther H. Hodges had officially accepted the plans on 26 June 1958. The FCDA in the Southeastern region proclaimed the plans as “the most complete, most practical and operational plans prepared by any state in the region.”⁵⁶ The massive document, numbering over one thousand pages, would serve as the blueprint for county survival plans statewide.

Notable in the plans was the division of the state into six civil defense areas. These areas, designated “A” through “F,” were based on the North Carolina Highway Patrol divisions.⁵⁷ Every area would have a civil defense director who answered to General Griffin

⁵⁴ HCGO, *Hearings, Civil Defense – 1961*, 11-12.

⁵⁵ Press Release from the Governor’s Office, 31 May 1956, NCCD, NCA, Box 9; Untitled Press Release from NCCD, 31 May 1956, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

⁵⁶ Press Release titled “Survival Plans for State Completed – Project Goes into Final Phase,” 30 June 1958, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

⁵⁷ David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008; North Carolina Council of Civil Defense, *Civil Defense Guide for City and County Governing Officials and Civil Defense Directors in Planning and Developing Their Own Local Civil Defense* (Raleigh, NC: State of North Carolina, 1956), 35, NCA, Box 9.

to coordinate civil defense operations and carry out federal and state civil defense programs. Unfortunately, when the state Operational Survival Plan was published on 1 May 1958, the funds to pay for the area directors did not exist. On the floor of Congress in May 1958, however, Congressman Carl Thomas Durham (D – NC) of Chapel Hill sponsored bill H.R. 7576 to provide federal matching funds to state and local governments to pay for civil defense personnel and administrative costs. The bill was passed by the second session of the Eighty-fifth Congress. The following Congress appropriated \$5,000,000 for civil defense in Fiscal Year 1961, with \$113,000 allocated for North Carolina. Beginning 1 January 1961, the area offices began operation.⁵⁸

Directing Area A, encompassing the Outer Banks and the majority of the coastal counties, was David W. Spivey in Washington, North Carolina. Spivey, a recently retired U.S. Army Colonel, a veteran of combat in the European theater of World War II and in Korea, was living in Florida when he received a letter from General Griffin in November 1960 asking him to come to Raleigh. Spivey was hired in December 1960 and then went to the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization Staff College in Battle Creek, Michigan to train for his position in early 1961. In February 1961, Spivey was told “go out and set up an office in your area.” General Griffin’s instructions to Spivey largely consisted of “don’t let any of those [county] commissioners or anybody get mad at us and come calling to me.”⁵⁹ The state agency announced in the March 1961 newsletter that “area directors are anxious to make the

⁵⁸ “State of North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, January 1, 1959 to January 1, 1961,” pgs. 23-25, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

⁵⁹ David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008.

acquaintance of all directors in their respective counties, and are interested in extending the utmost cooperation.”⁶⁰

In 2008, Spivey recollected the ad hoc establishment of the area offices. Spivey, as far as the author is aware, is the only area director from the state agency alive today. Therefore, even forty-seven years later, his recollections are significant. It is reasonable to presume that the other area directors experienced similar challenges. Seated at his kitchen table, Spivey chuckled as he recalled the simple and direct instructions he received from the state agency about establishing his office:

General Griffin told me “tell old Blunt, Register of Deeds there [in Washington, NC], you see him and tell him to get you an office,” and so I saw him and he got me an office, upstairs over Dick’s Pool Room in an old building right downtown. And he talked to the city, and they agreed to provide their electricity for free, so I went in without charging anything, which lasted a year or so. I’d never been to Washington as a matter of fact until I came down a week or so ahead of this with Wallace H. Dawson [Logistics Office for NCCD].

He and I came down and we rode around the area for a couple of days and that’s when I decided on Washington. The next thing and problem of course was to learn the area itself. I spent a lot of time driving; there was a record supposedly of civil defense directors. Well, it wasn’t worth a great deal. These people existed, but I’m sure one or two of them probably didn’t even know their name was on the list. I of course started with what I had, and trying to get familiar with the area and trying to know the people. I made a special effort of meeting with all the county commissioners, getting to know them and them to know me, and so on.⁶¹

Area offices eventually became established in Washington (A), Wilson (B), Lumberton (C), Raleigh (Area D run through NCCD office), Statesville (E), and Asheville

⁶⁰ NCCD Newsletter, March 1961, pg. 3, NCC.

⁶¹ David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008

(F).⁶² Although designed for six directors, federal matching-funds only provided for five area directors. Area D was managed by Russell C. Nicholson, the Intelligence Officer for the state agency.⁶³ Meeting with local civil defense officials, county commissioners, mayors, and other community officials, the area directors built networks of contacts and began to coordinate civil defense functions and resources in accordance with the state agency, but also for the communities themselves.⁶⁴ Every area director had one secretary (called “stenographer”) and that was the extent of paid area office staff.⁶⁵ The state Highway Patrol troop, Department of Transportation, Social Services and state Health Department personnel located in each area provided additional manpower, expertise, and resources for the area directors.⁶⁶

Promoting Atomic Vacation Homes

Operation Alert (OPAL), an annual nation-wide civil defense drill with public participation, took place from 26-30 April 1961.⁶⁷ From 1954 to 1961, OPAL was held one week a year as a massive nationwide mock air raid drill, with millions of Americans either running to shelters, complying in evacuation exercises, or listening to scripted radio

⁶² “North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, January 1, 1961 to January 1, 1963,” pg. 5, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

⁶³ Ibid.; David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008. The five area directors were as follows: Area A, David W. Spivey; Area B, Wesley L. Ives; Area C, Victor W. Harris; Area E, Herman J. Sisk; Area F, Archie B. Noell.

⁶⁴ This will be discussed in detail in later chapters.

⁶⁵ Directory of North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Personnel dated 17 September 1963, NCCD, NCA, Box 9; David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008.

⁶⁶ David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008.

⁶⁷ The drills known as Operation Alert occurred annually from 1954 to 1961. See Garrison, *Bracing for Armageddon*, 113-114; Oakes, *The Imaginary War*, 84-104; McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home*, 50-52. Garrison talks extensively about the protests against Operation Alert in New York during the late 1950s up to 1961, whereas Oakes examines OPAL from the sociological and cultural angles.

instructions detailing attacks on cities in their state.⁶⁸ OPAL was intended to test civil defense plans at the federal, state, and local levels, identify weaknesses and provide experience for civil defense volunteers and professionals.⁶⁹ “Each Operation Alert was designed as a play, in the sense of both an exercise and a drama. The drama was framed as a grand national epic,” notes sociologist Guy Oakes.⁷⁰

The state civil defense agency tapped into the drama of OPAL 61 by promoting fallout shelters with a publicity gimmick. The state office, in conjunction with Governor Terry Sanford, sent out an announcement for “some lucky North Carolina Married Couple [to be] selected to live in the Governor’s Mansion as guests of the Governor.”⁷¹ The event was “designed to give Tar Heels [North Carolinians] a look into problems of survival in the event of nuclear attack” and was advertised as a “honeymoon” for a young couple.⁷² The chosen couple would enter on 25 April at noon and exit on the morning of 28 April, the day of OPAL when citizens would be asked to stay inside and take cover for fifteen minutes. After being interviewed about their experience, the couple would occupy the Governor’s Suite in the Sir Walter Hotel in Raleigh for Friday night and Saturday morning. While in the shelter

⁶⁸ Tracy C. Davis, *Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 33. The scripts for the mock radio broadcasts for several of the NC OPAL exercises can be found at the Old State Records Building in Raleigh.

⁶⁹ McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home*, 50.

⁷⁰ Oakes, *The Imaginary War*, 85.

⁷¹ Announcement for “Some Lucky North Carolina Married Couple,” GTSP, NCA, Box 27. This document was stapled to an untitled press release dated 3 April 1961, though the text is different.

⁷² “Charlotte Couple Chosen For Fallout Shelter Test,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 22 April 1961, sec. 1, pg. 18; “In Mansion Shelter – Honeymoon Deal Offered,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 5 April 1961, sec. 1, pg. 5.

the couple would send out press statements about their shelter experience to the state news media.⁷³

North Carolina had been the first state in the nation to build a fallout shelter for a governor, in the fall of 1959.⁷⁴ The shelter, in a corner of the Executive Mansion basement in Raleigh, was built using plans available to any citizen from the national civil defense headquarters. Using cinder blocks, the shelter measured seven and a half feet wide, eight and a half feet long, and seven feet tall. It could shelter six persons for a period of two weeks. The shelter had cost only \$282.25 to build for materials and labor.⁷⁵ Governor Hodges dedicated the shelter on 22 October 1959 amidst press and state officials. At a public viewing of the shelter, Griffin stated that “if we have trouble in North Carolina, we think it will be from fallout,” reiterating state civil defense plans to hunker down rather than evacuate.⁷⁶

Hodges, a member of the National Advisory Council on Civil Defense, addressed the assembled audience. He proclaimed how “everyone, even though far from a likely target and in our rural areas, would need shelter from fallout. The least expensive shelter...is the home-type basement shelter [the type at the mansion]... [it] can serve a dual purpose such as protection from hurricanes, tornadoes, and other severe storms.” Hodges continued, “Fallout

⁷³ Letter from Mr. Ted Davis, NCCD Special Events Chief to Mr. Hargrove Bowles, Director of NC Department of Conservation and Development, 10 March 1961, NCCD, NCA, Box 10.

⁷⁴ “Fallout Shelter Constructed At Governor’s Mansion,” NCCD, NCA, Box 9. See also “MEMO: General Griffin,” NCCD, NCA, Box 11. The initial document details the shelter’s statistics, but the latter memo concerns a request from the Office of Civilian and Defense Mobilization for information about the shelter noting “...this is the first – Maine has done something, but not a complete job and not in order as the N.C. one is.”

⁷⁵ Information Bulletin, Executive Office of the President, Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, “Fallout Shelter Constructed at North Carolina Governor’s Mansion,” 12 November 1959, NCCD, NCA, Box 9. This information is largely the same as the document titled “Fallout Shelter Constructed at Governor’s Mansion.” It is worth noting that the above documents note the cost just for the shelter in addition to the costs to equip the shelter. Those costs, for food and various equipment, totaled \$93.98.

⁷⁶ “Hodges’ Hideout Unveiled,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 23 October 1959, sec 1, pg 1, 6.

can threaten more people than blast and heat in a nuclear attack...we know that forces hostile to us possess weapons that could destroy us if we were unprepared. The weapons create a new threat – radioactive fallout that can spread death anywhere. No matter where you live, a fallout shelter is necessary insurance.”⁷⁷

Twenty couples applied for a chance to have an atomic honeymoon.⁷⁸ The lucky couple selected was Thomas and Barbara McAden of Charlotte. Mr. McAden, an Army veteran, was an interviewer for the Employment Security Commission in Charlotte while Mrs. McAden worked as the home furnishings editor for *The Charlotte Observer*. Her newspaper background probably had been the reason for the couple’s selection.⁷⁹ Barbara, in her application telefax, noted how she had “written stories on civil defense and wondered about the human translation of defense plans,” and how “we would...face the experience in a way typical of the majority of Tar Heels. We have never ‘roughed it’ or camped out. We’re used to comfort and shelter living would be strange to us as to most couples.”⁸⁰

The shelter they would occupy had no electricity, only candles and lanterns for light, while the only communication was a battery-powered radio.⁸¹ Since the shelter only had a chemical toilet, the couple was informed that “if they prefer, the McAdens may slip

⁷⁷ “Statement by Governor Luther H. Hodges at Opening and Dedication of Home-Type Fallout Shelter at the Governor’s Mansion. 12 Noon, 22 October 1959,” NCCD, NCA, Box 11.

⁷⁸ NCCD Newsletter, May 1961, pg. 5, NCC.

⁷⁹ Pronounced “Mc ADD-en.” Thomas died of a heart illness in 1963. Barbara, who had a BA from Winthrop College and a Masters in Journalism from Columbia University, left *The Charlotte Observer* after Thomas’s death and served as executive women’s editor for *The State*, South Carolina’s largest newspaper and *The Columbia Record*, both in Columbia, S.C. She retired from *The Virginian-Pilot* where she was, for many years, editor of the newspaper’s special sections. She died of cancer 9 October 2002 in Virginia Beach. Source: “Death Notices for Friday,” *Virginian-Pilot* (Virginia Beach, VA), 11 October 2002.

⁸⁰ Western Union Telefax from Barbara Brawley McAden to Graham Jones, Governor’s Office, NC State Capital, Raleigh, GTSP, NCA, Box 27.

⁸¹ Press Release from the Governor’s Office, 21 April 1961, NCCD, NCA, Box 10.

upstairs...and use the more elaborate facilities in the mansion.”⁸² Both Thomas and Barbara wrote of their first impressions, and Barbara thereafter wrote the remainder of the reports. Tom commented on the tight squeeze in the shelter and its Spartan conditions, “Never again will I take electricity for granted after being in darkness in a fall-out shelter.” He lamented having “no newspaper. The comic strip ‘Peanuts’ could help anyone’s morale and I can’t help wondering what Linus and Snoopy are doing.” This sacrifice aside, he concluded “despite inconveniences, shelter living is more comfortable than I had imagined.”⁸³

Barbara mentioned that they had brought books, magazines, a typewriter, and warm clothes when lighter clothing would have been more appropriate. The small confines of the shelter made for a stuffy atmosphere once two people moved in. She further detailed the shelter’s amenities, including to their “pleasant surprise, a small carpet on the concrete floor.” Barbara drove home the point that “We’re not here as a stunt. We’re serious about the test...Newspaper headlines and broadcasts of world news are staggering reminders that preparedness against radioactive fall-out is no joke. We’re convinced that this may be essential for our, and your, survival.”⁸⁴

Additional press releases detailed the cooking and eating arrangements of shelter life. Barbara announced that tepid soft drinks and canned foods were not bad, but “although our sense of humor sparks the austerity of our quarters, we don’t consider this test a joke. We’re

⁸² “They Go Underground for 2nd Honeymoon,” *Charlotte Observer*, 26 April 1961, sec. 1, pg. 1.

⁸³ “Report from the Fall-Out Shelter by Tom McAden,” 26 April 1961, NCCD, NCA, Box 10.

⁸⁴ “Report from the Fall-Out Shelter by Barbara B. McAden,” 26 April 1961, NCCD, NCA, Box 10. Morning Report.

very serious as we live in the shelter under simulated wartime conditions.”⁸⁵ The supply of canned heat (Sterno) for cooking, cleaning, and other uses became a problem as supply was rapidly depleted as was the supply of water in the shelter.⁸⁶ The final portion of the shelter report took a more serious tone. Barbara wrote:

We suggest stocking a shelter with games, cards and only a Bible instead of additional reading matter. The light from candles and the battery lantern, even when combined, is inadequate for reading the small print on books and magazines.

We have remained busy by writing two stories a day about our shelter life. We suggest that other shelter dwellers keep a diary, write short stories, work crossword puzzles or use any type of mental activity that will absorb attention and make time elapse quickly. Otherwise, each moment of isolation might seem an hour.⁸⁷

Was Mrs. McAden demonstrating signs of shelter fatigue? The mention of time extending itself speaks clearly of boredom and monotony. This passage highlighted the problems of shelter occupation, and Barbara noted what many Americans hoped, “that the simulated war conditions will never be more than that – simulated.”⁸⁸

Barbara and Thomas lived a unique experience for a few nights under the Governor’s Mansion. The event made front page news in Charlotte and Raleigh, and was covered in press across the state, but Raleigh’s *News and Observer* relegated the story to the last page of

⁸⁵ “Report from the Fall-Out Shelter By Barbara B. McAden,” 26 April 1961, NCCD, NCA, Box 10. Evening Report. Note, although this document has the same title and date as the previous one cited, this is a different press release and based on the information in it was written in the evening whereas the other was written earlier. This is based on the opening sentence “We are dining by candlelight under the Governor’s Mansion.” To clarify, this report is referred to as “Evening Report,” the former as “Morning Report.”

⁸⁶ “‘With Someone You Love,’ Fallout Shelter’s Not Bad,” *Charlotte Observer*, 29 April 1961, sec. 1, pg. 1.

⁸⁷ “Report from the Fall-Out Shelter By Barbara B. McAden,” 27 April 1961, NCCD, NCA, Box 10.

⁸⁸ “Report from the Fall-Out Shelter by Barbara B. McAden,” 26 April 1961, NCCD, NCA, Box 10. Morning Report.

the news section, titled “Couple Didn’t Follow All Rules.”⁸⁹ The article noted how the McAdens did not use the chemical toilet in the shelter but rather the servants’ bathroom in the mansion basement.⁹⁰ The May 1961 NCCD Newsletter sought to clarify misconceptions about the McAdens’s stay printed by the media. Notably, although the shelter had electricity, the McAdens chose to use candles and Sterno. The McAdens also chose to stay in the shelter, although “occupants *can* go outside a fallout shelter for short intervals.” The McAdens recommended an increase in the water supply and in the supply of canned heat for cooking and heating. The state agency acknowledged the valuable suggestions provided by the couple, and for their “unselfish contribution to Shelter Occupancy Research.”⁹¹

While North Carolinians read Barbara’s accounts in the newspapers, the McAdens's story was eclipsed by several Cold War flare-ups. On 12 April 1961 Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first human sent into space. The day before, the trial of former Nazi officer Adolf Eichmann began in Jerusalem. A CIA-trained army of Cuban exiles invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs on 17 April. Elsewhere in the world, violence increased between the French and Algerians in Paris, civil war raged in Laos, and the State Department reaffirmed U.S. support for the South Vietnamese government. These events, plus continuing tensions in Berlin minimized the press coverage of the McAdens's fallout shelter experience, but not its relevance. With fallout shelters and civil defense suddenly a hot topic nationally, North Carolinians began taken action, and asking questions.

⁸⁹ *The Raleigh Times* carried the story of the McAdens reemergence on the bottom of the front page for the 28 April 1961 edition. See “Moral: Love Shelter-Mate,” *Raleigh Times*, 28 April 1961, sec. 1, pg. 1.

⁹⁰ “Couple Didn’t Follow All Rules,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 29 April 1961, sec. 1, pg. 18.

⁹¹ NCCD Newsletter, May 1961, pg. 5, NCC.

Shelter Construction and Increased Concerns

OPAL 61 and the activation of the area offices took place before Kennedy's two speeches concerning civil defense. The McAdens's stay in the Governor's shelter was a notable example of the state agency promoting fallout shelters to those people who either lacked a shelter or were apprehensive about the feasibility of one. Nonetheless, North Carolinians in small numbers built shelters. *The State* magazine in March 1961 featured fallout shelters being included in new commercial buildings. The new First Federal Savings and Loan building in Raleigh and the new Wilmington People's Savings and Loan were the first commercial buildings in the state to be constructed with fallout shelters. The basement for the People's Savings and Loan would under normal circumstances be used as a vault, but it could also act as a PF 1000 shelter for 350 persons for up to two weeks. In Raleigh, the First Federal building basement shelter, providing up to forty inches of concrete, would double as a recreation room and kitchen when not sheltering people. Notable too, the article on the shelters emphasized the practicality of the construction, and the use of the shelters in case of hurricanes, tornados, or other potential disasters.⁹² After a visit to the new building on 10 November 1961, Governor Sanford was "certainly impressed...especially with the fall-out shelter."⁹³

While construction was commencing on the First Federal building and its shelter, Raleigh was actually being surveyed for potential fallout shelter locations. The survey, funded by the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, began on 15 December 1960. The

⁹² W.B. Wright, "Pioneering in Fallout Protection," *The State*, 18 March 1961, 33-38.

⁹³ Letter from B.A. Jones to Terry Sanford, 10 November 1961; Letter from Terry Sanford to B.A. Jones, 24 November 1961, Folder titled "Civil Defense - B," GTSP, NCA, Box 27.

federal shelter survey focused on the public and private buildings of the capital city of Raleigh. Seven men, all military officers, served as evaluators and their final report would be made available at the Raleigh Civil Defense Office so citizens could find out how much protection their homes and places of work and business afforded.⁹⁴ A total of \$22,400 was provided by the federal government for surveys to be conducted of existing structures to “determine the amount of protection from radioactive fallout they would afford in event of nuclear attack.” The objective of the survey was to establish “a guide for other cities and towns of the State to use in evaluating their existing protection.”⁹⁵ The survey inventoried all buildings (except federal) within the limits of the city and compiled a list of all existing and potential fallout shelters in the city (potential via improvements to the existing shelter).⁹⁶

The evaluators surveyed all of Raleigh from January to June 1961. After completion the results were printed and distributed to select officials and offices in Raleigh in October 1961 for “reference purposes,” but not the general public, contradicting earlier reports.⁹⁷ The survey concluded Raleigh had a daytime population of 115,512 citizens (nighttime population of 111,483). Before improvements, the total number of shelter spaces for citizens that would offer from fair to excellent protection against heavy fallout numbered 25,985, which would increase to 144,728 spaces if the existing structures were improved as

⁹⁴ “Shelter Study Survey of Raleigh, North Carolina Personnel Roster,” 13 December 1960, NCCD, NCA, Box 10; NCCD Newsletter, January 1961, pg. 2, NCC.

⁹⁵ State of North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, January 1, 1959 to January 1, 1961,” pg. 9, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

⁹⁶ Report on Fallout Shelter Survey, Raleigh, North Carolina, January-June 1961, pg iii, State Library of North Carolina (SLNC), Raleigh, North Carolina.

⁹⁷ Untitled Press Release, 4 October 1961, NCCD, NCA, Box 11.

shelters.⁹⁸ The survey recommendations are missing, but the data available indicates Raleigh potentially had space for all of its citizens to be protected from heavy fallout, with some extra room for the inevitable evacuees fleeing a nuclear attack.

The Raleigh shelter survey, OPAL 61, and coverage of commercial shelter construction efforts all emphasized fallout shelters as being important. Citizens, however, still appeared to lack concrete information on what exactly to do regarding shelters despite efforts by state and local civil defense. Gary C. Baucom of Monroe wrote Governor Sanford after Kennedy's July speech, asking for plans to build his family a fallout shelter, to which Sanford replied he knew of no plans at the present.⁹⁹ Robert E. Lau in Jacksonville asked Sanford to "help us obtain the funds needed for shelters all over the state and to insure that all citizens know, understand, and are prepared for the worst."¹⁰⁰ For W.A. Ellis of Raleigh, Kennedy's speech reminded him that "Raleigh needs more fallout shelters inside the city," and urged Sanford to vastly strengthen and broaden civil defense.¹⁰¹ Sanford, however, had been informed only weeks before Ellis's letter that a fallout shelter survey of Raleigh, the first for any city in the state, had been completed.¹⁰²

Gaps in the Defense—Problems, Doubts, Morality

By August 1961, Kennedy's emphasis on civil defense had raised awareness of fallout protection nationwide. The state agency in its August newsletter noted that "civil

⁹⁸ Report on Fallout Shelter Survey, Raleigh, North Carolina, January-June 1961, pgs viii-ix, SLNC. Figures are taken from a map in the back of the report titled "Fallout Shelter Survey 1961" at the top and "City of Raleigh, North Carolina" at the bottom.

⁹⁹ Letter from Gary C. Baucom to Terry Sanford, 26 July 1961; Letter from Terry Sanford to Gary C. Baucom, 11 August 1961, Folder titled "Civil Defense – B," GTSP, NCA, Box 27.

¹⁰⁰ Robert E. Lau to Terry Sanford, 29 July 1961, Folder titled "Civil Defense – B," GTSP, NCA, Box 27.

¹⁰¹ W.A. Ellis to Terry Sanford, 28 July 1961, Folder titled "Civil Defense – B," GTSP, NCA, Box 27.

¹⁰² William D. Morrison to Terry Sanford, 11 July 1961, Folder titled "Civil Defense – B," GTSP, NCA, Box 27.

defense offices are swamped with requests for shelter booklets and other information on home protection.”¹⁰³ Spivey and the other area directors by now had had several months’ experience working with local government officials implementing civil defense. County commissioners informed Spivey on repeated occasions that there was no money for fallout shelters. “We got our funding because of shelters,” noted Spivey, but nuclear defense was irrelevant in the poorer rural counties.¹⁰⁴

The area directors had worked and trained together since January. Once a month, the directors would meet in Raleigh and talk off the record about problems in the various areas. At one of these meetings, Spivey recalled the men agreed to “worry about something that can do some good in these emergencies, and that was building up emergency capabilities and communications.” Asked to elaborate on this discussion, Spivey continued:

What we were really saying was ‘what can we do to make an impact? We can sell emergency preparedness by selling stuff that is going to help, like better medical, better fire, better police and communications.’ And I said, ‘This is the way we can do the most for civil defense by having someone that is capable at coping with things when they happen.’ Some capability is worth a hell of a lot more than a few fallout shelters, and this was our consensus that if we want to be effective and do some good this is what we had to do.¹⁰⁵

General Griffin was apparently not entirely aware of this plan by the area directors, but other members of the state agency were informed of this decision to make fallout shelters secondary in importance to other emergency preparedness actions.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ NCCD Newsletter, August 1961, pg. 1, NCC.

¹⁰⁴ David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Clifton E. Blalock, interview by author, Durham, NC, 31 July 2008. Blalock corroborated Spivey’s account of the gentleman’s agreement to reduce shelter efforts in favor of emergency preparedness. Both men, when

Clifton E. Blalock joined the state agency in 1959 as the state Warning and Communications Officer. Born in Winston-Salem and raised in Durham, Blalock served in the U.S. Army Signal Corps through World War II, from Iceland to Okinawa. Griffin approached Blalock, then the North Carolina National Guard 30th Division Signal Officer, for the position with the NCCD. The job entailed providing emergency communications for local governments, the state government, and to establish a direct link with the federal government. At his home in Durham, Blalock corroborated the area directors' agreement. Blalock acknowledged that

nuclear defense was way in the background, so far as the local people were concerned. They were more concerned about hurricanes and forest fires... and if they found out that they could get some help in those areas then they were more receptive of this than they were for fallout shelters. There was no way in hell the area director could go sell a nuclear program to a bunch of local county commissioners. So they had to use what they could to develop the [civil defense] program. I agreed with them one hundred percent, because the... shelter plan was the nearest damn thing there ever was.

Griffin, noted Blalock, was not told of the area director's plans to lower the priority of shelters in favor of other actions.¹⁰⁷

Area directors still had to urge counties, in accordance with the state operational survival plan, to develop county emergency plans. By August 1961, forty-five counties still lacked survival plans.¹⁰⁸ These county plans generally would rigidly follow the outline of the state operational survival plan. For the Outer Banks, however, hurricanes and Nor'easters

asked if the state director was told of this answered no and explained that Griffin was more of a political figurehead for the agency than an integral component of the state's planning and development. Griffin may have been told, but if so there have not been any documents or sources indicating this.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ NCCD Newsletter, August 1961, pg. 1, NCC.

posed annual threats, unlike the possibility of fallout. David Stick of Kitty Hawk was elected as Chairman of the Dare County Board of Commissioners in 1960. He recalls civil defense in general mandated “every county to prepare a defense plan, and especially to go out here in my backyard and build a shelter since the Commies would hit here before they ever got to Raleigh. I felt this was the most asinine thing I ever heard.” Rather than pursue plans to ward against fallout, Stick secured permission to use the same survival plan outline, but oriented towards hurricanes.¹⁰⁹

In July 1961, Dare County Civil Defense director and Sheriff Frank M. Cahoon called a meeting of the Civil Defense Hurricane Committee to draft a new plan.¹¹⁰ Stick drafted the Dare County Hurricane Preparedness Plan following the meetings. The brief, three-page plan was designed to eliminate “confusing and overlapping advisories...and to vest in...the Dare County Director of Civil Defense – full and sole authority to issue advisories and warnings.”¹¹¹ The plan, Stick noted, was “the first hurricane preparedness plan in North Carolina, maybe any place.”¹¹² As fate would have it, Hurricane Esther, the fifth hurricane of the 1961 Atlantic hurricane season passed within 150 miles of the Outer Banks on 18 – 20 September 1961.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ David Stick, interview by author, Kitty Hawk, NC, 11 June 2008.

¹¹⁰ Letter from David Stick to Julian Oneto, 11 July 1961, Folder 11 – Civil Defense 1960s, Box 2 – Town of Nags Head, Outer Banks History Center (OBHC), Manteo, North Carolina.

¹¹¹ Letter from David Stick to Lawrence L. Swain, 22 August 1961 with attached Preliminary Draft of the Dare County Hurricane Preparedness Plan, Folder 20 –Civil Defense Program, Box 2 – Lawrence Swain Papers, OBHC.

¹¹² David Stick, interview by author, Kitty Hawk, NC, 11 June 2008.

¹¹³ U.S Department of Commerce, U.S. Weather Bureau, *Hurricane Esther, September 12 – 26, 1961: Preliminary Report with the Advisories and Bulletins Issued* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1961), 1. Available online at <http://docs.lib.noaa.gov/rescue/hurricanes/Qc9452e82h81961.pdf> (accessed 18 July 2008).

Stick's plan to shelter residents was being used to evacuate tourists from Hatteras Island for Esther when things fell apart. Stick remembered the confusion clearly:

I was heading to Manteo down the beach and I turned on the radio and there was a news report. All ferries across Oregon Inlet had been pulled out and sent over to Manns Harbor. The second report was that the Governor, Terry Sanford, had ordered everyone on Hatteras Island to evacuate. I worried more about that than anything that had ever happened in my experiences with hurricanes. I could see all of these tourists parked in their cars on the exposed beach, lined up for a mile on exposed beach south of Oregon Inlet when the hurricane hit. Fortunately it missed us, but it was frightening. Somehow or another they didn't get the word in Raleigh that we had a plan, and their plan called for exactly the opposite. It was too late to evacuate, and it was the season of the year when there weren't that many tourists on Hatteras Island.¹¹⁴

Fortunately, Esther passed by the Outer Banks without inflicting any injury or loss of life but lack of coordination between the local and state about emergency planning clearly illustrated issues far deeper than a lack of fallout shelters.¹¹⁵

Problems with communications did not effect Dare County alone. Spivey noted that when he began as Area A director, over half of the twenty-two counties, Dare included, lacked radio communications of any kind. Hyde County used a single, four-party telephone line for all of its emergency, police, and fire department communications. Very few fire departments existed, and those that did "generally consisted of an old tanker pumper with a handful of people."¹¹⁶ The state civil defense agency acknowledged the significance of these

¹¹⁴ David Stick, interview by author, Kitty Hawk, NC, 11 June 2008; "Dare's CD Storm Plan Disrupted," *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 21 September 1961. Stick did not indicate in his interview that he was discussing Hurricane Esther. The newspaper article matched his description almost exactly, and as such corroborated his account of events.

¹¹⁵ See Chapter Two.

¹¹⁶ David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008.

problems in September. Griffin and the agency welcomed “the overwhelming interest of citizens in fallout shelters and family protection,” but added that “survival will actually depend upon sound establishment of every one of the emergency services to such an extent that they can be implemented quickly when necessity demands.” Perhaps hinting at the unofficial plan to focus civil defense efforts outside of shelters, the September 1961 newsletter noted state civil defense offices were “pushing further development of Emergency Services just as fast as the changeover at federal level permits, which will benefit local level services to some extent.”¹¹⁷

Beyond this acknowledgement that fallout shelters alone would not be enough to make civil defense function, some of North Carolina’s leaders doubted the value of the shelters themselves. Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr. (D – NC) wrote “I have felt all the time that the only adequate defense against nuclear missiles must be found in interceptor aircraft...and in an anti-missile missile” that would destroy incoming bombers or nuclear missiles.¹¹⁸ Ervin did concede, however, that “it is advisable for the Federal government to give some attention to the feasibility of developing adequate fallout shelters.”¹¹⁹ Governor Sanford in October 1961 noted that “the most effective means of survival will be some system of disarmament.”¹²⁰ Disarmament and means to avoid the detonation of nuclear weapons altogether hint that North Carolina’s politicians realized shelters could provide some

¹¹⁷ NCCD Newsletter, September 1961, pg. 1, NCC.

¹¹⁸ Letter from Sam J. Ervin, Jr. to Mrs. John W. Dyer, 18 August 1961, Folder 2401, Sam J. Ervin Papers (SJEP), Southern Historical Collection (SHC), Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC, Box 50.

¹¹⁹ Letter from Sam J. Ervin, Jr. to Grady S. Patterson, Jr., 22 September 1961, Folder 2401, SJEP, SHC, Box 50.

¹²⁰ Letter from Terry Sanford to Francis Harper, 19 October 1961; Letter from Francis Harper to Terry Sanford, 28 September 1961, Folder – Civil Defense – B, GTSP, NCA, Box 27.

protection for citizens' survival, but optimism alone would not block the power of thermonuclear weapons.

Kennedy's July address to the nation gained even further importance thanks to media attention to fallout shelters and civil defense. *Life* magazine published a special September 1961 issue devoted to civil defense, and *Time* printed extensive civil defense articles in September and October 1961 that stimulated public discussion, notably on the practicality and overly optimistic outlook for shelter survival.¹²¹ Of note was an episode of the television program *The Twilight Zone*, titled "The Shelter." Rod Serling, writer and creator of the program, had been taking bids for a shelter in his own home, but abandoned the idea when informed if the shelter failed he was without recourse.¹²² First aired on 29 September 1961, the episode pushed the boundaries of what happens when there is only one shelter in a neighborhood with room for only three people.¹²³

The story begins with dinner party of neighbors celebrating the neighborhood doctor, Bill Stockton, and gently poking fun at his bomb shelter, the only one in the neighborhood. Suddenly a CONELRAD announcement interrupts the festivities, reporting that unidentified flying objects are approaching the country and that civil defense authorities have declared a yellow alert, urging all people to head to shelters. As Stockton and his family prepare their shelter, his neighbor and best friend comes over asking if his family can also use the shelter. Stockton says no, states he is sorry for his neighbor, and then locks himself with his family in the shelter. All the families from the dinner party then begin to arrive, pounding on the

¹²¹ Garrison, *Bracing for Armageddon*, 116-117.

¹²² Joel Engel, *Rod Serling: The Dreams and Nightmares of Life in the Twilight Zone* (New York: Contemporary Books, 1989), 223.

¹²³ Rose, *One Nation Underground*, 110-111; Garrison, *Bracing for Armageddon*, 118.

shelter door and asking for Stockton to let them in. Tempers flare as the neighbors turn on each other. Using a piece of pipe as a battering ram, the neighbors break open the shelter door just as the radio announces everything was a false alarm. The once peaceful neighbors, though spared a bomb, have Stockton musing if they have not destroyed themselves without one. Serling closed the episode prophetically: “No moral, no message, no prophetic tract. Just a simple statement of fact: For civilization to survive, the human race has to remain civilized.”¹²⁴

The episode posed the dilemma of what a shelter owner should do with shelterless neighbors in an attack. William F. Abee of Belmont acknowledged this specific episode in a letter to Sanford shortly after the episode aired. Abee, himself owner of a shelter thirty-five feet below ground, noted that in an attack

You will see how quickly I am swamped with those people that thought that they didn't need a shelter. It will be like it was in Twilight Zone last night... That can happen to us that have these shelters and that is one reason I am asking you now if you don't believe there should be some sort of pressure put on the people if they don't willingly build... shelters so that rush on us that have [shelters] won't happen as bad as it can now.¹²⁵

Abee's request for more shelters by invoking the threat of panic made an impact on Griffin, who forwarded it to Sanford's legal assistant, Joel L. Fleishman. Griffin wrote, “it is my opinion that such a statement dealing with the critical times and urging all citizens to prepare

¹²⁴ Gordon E. Sander, *Serling: The Rise and Twilight of Television's Last Angry Man* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), 181.

¹²⁵ Letter from William F. Abee to Terry Sanford, 29 September 1961, Folder – Civil Defense Bulletins, GTSP, NCA, Box 27. It should be noted that the actual quote from Abee was heavily edited to grammar. His letter could serve as a warning to editors and teachers alike.

for a civil emergency, by Governor Sanford would be most appropriate and helpful in our efforts to arouse the people as to their responsibility for survival.”¹²⁶

Sanford did not release a statement, but did send a letter to mayors state-wide urging counties to update and strengthen their survival plans, or to immediately begin to develop plans, “so that your constituents may have an equal chance of survival with citizens of other communities who have such plans.”¹²⁷ Stick’s experience showed him that communication foul-ups such as Hurricane Esther threatened the safety of coastal residents and that even the best plans could be nullified in an instant. Area civil defense directors statewide had decided to push emergency preparedness, communications, and improvements in fire and police departments rather than try simply to sell fallout protection to cash-strapped local governments. North Carolinians viewed fallout shelters as unimportant, panic-inducing, and expensive follies. Emergency planning in North Carolina therefore was two-fold: advocating fallout shelters for the federal government, and improving emergency preparedness communication networks and emergency response outfits at local levels for the state.

How and Where to Build the Shelters?

The push for fallout shelters saw citizens building shelters that were ineffective and dangerous structures. The NCCD September 1961 newsletter alerted the state directors of the need to protect citizens from contractors who did not build adequate fallout shelters.¹²⁸ A

¹²⁶ Letter from Edward F. Griffin to Joel L. Fleishman, 9 October 1961, Folder – Civil Defense Bulletins, GTSP, NCA, Box 27.

¹²⁷ Unaddressed letter from Terry Sanford, 3 November 1961, Folder – Civil Defense Bulletins, GTSP, NCA, Box 27; Letter from Terry Sanford to Julian Oneto, 3 November 1961, Folder 11 – Civil Defense, 1960s, Box 2 – Town of Nags Head, OBHC. This is the same letter as the unaddressed version in Governor Sanford’s papers in the NC Archives in Raleigh. No other official press release or letter addressing the issues discussed by Griffin and Fleishman has been found aside from the 3 November 1961 letter.

¹²⁸ NCCD Newsletter, September 1961, pg. 2, NCC.

press release from 1 September 1961 detailed this problem, with Griffin explaining that “complete protection can be provided by the equivalent of three feet of earth, 24 inches of solid concrete or 90 inches of wood thickness. If a shelter is constructed outside, that required amount of material must be on the top and on all sides.” The press release stated in closing that “it is suggested that the prospective shelter builder get bids from at least three contractors and advice from his local Civil Defense director before starting construction.”¹²⁹ Of note too were instances where the official Civil Defense insignia was being used illegally, either to sell or claim official Office of Civil Defense approval.¹³⁰

Needless to say, two-foot thick concrete walls were expensive to construct. Unfortunately for the majority of homeowners, in early August Griffin announced that the “cost of fallout shelter construction cannot be deducted from either North Carolina Income Tax or Ad Valorem Tax.”¹³¹ Considering the median family income in 1961 was \$5,315, any way to defray shelter costs was crucial to most citizens who were considering building one.¹³² Although the shelter in the Executive Mansion cost under \$300, it was built in a basement, thereby reducing the overall cost. The rise of suburbs after World War II featured single-story homes built quickly on flat, inexpensive land. This reduced the time needed to dig basements and allowed the construction of homes in record time.¹³³ For citizens without basements, or who rented or lived in apartments, shelter construction costs were considerably greater or outright impossible to meet. How many North Carolinians lived in homes with

¹²⁹ “Caution is Urged in Family Fallout Shelter Construction,” 1 September 1961, NCA, Box 11.

¹³⁰ NCCD Newsletter, November 1961, pgs. 2-3, NCC; NCCD Newsletter, December 1961, pg. 2, NCC.

¹³¹ “No State Tax Relief for Cost of Fallout Shelters,” 11 August 1961, NCCD, NCA, Box 11

¹³² Rose, *One Nation Underground*, 190.

¹³³ Thomas Hine, *Populuxe* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 44.

basements is not known, but those without them were at a distinct disadvantage for constructing a shelter.

Information on building shelters nonetheless was in high demand. Approximately 250,000 booklets on shelter construction were distributed in the state from 1958 to 1961. From 20 July 1961 to 20 August 1961, five thousand private shelters were under construction with an increasing pace for more.¹³⁴ The cost of private shelters was still out of the reach of the many North Carolinians. In October, the Veteran's Administration offered loans at an interest rate of 5.5 percent for the construction of family fallout shelters, and the Federal Housing Authority also made loans available for the construction of family fallout shelters.¹³⁵ Shelter equipment could also be purchased by citizens in North Carolina from outfits such as the Fallout Shelter Company in Charlotte or the Shelter Supply Company of Winston-Salem.¹³⁶

To help fill the shelter gap, interest turned to shelters in schools and neighborhoods. Civil defense planners estimated people would have no more than thirty minutes' warning before missiles or bombs would detonate. "This would not be enough [time] for parents to get their children quick enough to get to a home or public shelter and yet it would be just enough time to cause hysteria on the phones, streets, and highways in their efforts to protect their children," predicted E.A. Elkins in a letter to Sanford appealing for school shelters.¹³⁷ The Social Studies Class of Speight High School in Wilson asked Sanford if the federal

¹³⁴ "Civil Defense – The Fourth Arm of National Defense," 1 September 1961, pg. 6, NCCD, NCA, Box 11.

¹³⁵ NCCD Newsletter, October 1961, pg. 2, NCC.

¹³⁶ NCCD Newsletter, October 1961, pg. 2, NCC.

¹³⁷ Letter from E.A. Elkins to Terry Sanford, 30 August 1961, Folder – Civil Defense – B, GTSP, NCA, Box 27.

government would help in providing shelters in the school and community. The students remarked, “we want to grow up to be useful men and women in this dynamic society... Without fallout shelters, we feel that we could not fulfill our obligations to our community, state, and nation.”¹³⁸

The state agency did acknowledge the concerns of parents and school officials about the security of students. State civil defense officials, however, stressed the necessity to plan in advance, and to coordinate “at the local level – by the school and Civil Defense officials. Unless this is done and all parties concerned are informed and trained, the problem has enormous potential for creating panic.” Some communities were upgrading their school buildings to “afford protection from fallout for an extended period,” and the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization would provide up to \$250 for shelter construction.¹³⁹ High schools in Salisbury, Wilson, Morven, Wadesboro, Fayetteville, Wadesboro, Mount Airy and Wilmington received contracts for shelters in Fiscal Year 1961.¹⁴⁰ These shelters were a start, but few and far between. Most school officials had to work with what they had available, and fortunately, plans cost only inspiration, ink, and paper.

Plans would not be enough to protect Americans without the resources to build individual fallout shelters. In Washington, North Carolina, neighbors joined together to build shelters for neighborhood blocks. In October, Spivey inspected five community shelters in

¹³⁸ Letter from The Social Studies Class of Speight High School, Wilson, NC to Terry Sanford, 31 October 1961, Folder – Civil Defense Bulletins, GTSP, NCA, Box 27.

¹³⁹ NCCD Newsletter, October 1961, pg. 1, NCC; “State of North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1959 to 1 January 1961,” pg. 9, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

¹⁴⁰ Letter from Walter T. Milliner to Edward F. Griffin, 7 July 1961, Folder – Civil Defense – B, GTSP, Box 27; NCCD Newsletter, April 1961, pg. 5, NCC. Of note, three of the high schools were in Anson County, three *white* high schools according to the NCCD. Sadly, fallout shelters were not exempt from racism and segregation.

the town. One was completely underground with room for ninety; another for fifty was half underground and mounded over. Two other shelters had room for twenty and twenty-five respectively, and the final above ground shelter with double walls had space for a hundred.¹⁴¹

Spivey reminisced:

I lived just a little ways over here in a place called Runyon Hills section, and the Runyon Hills Group got together and said “We’re going to build a fallout shelter.” We had a good high spot up in Runyon Hills, well above the normal level here, about the highest area here. We got a bunch of the neighbors all to agree that we were going to build a fallout shelter, an underground one.

We had it sort of separated into two sections, one was for strictly sleeping. The idea was half would be sleeping and then the other half. All underground, had big heavy metal doors coming down to the steps, and we ran the air intake and stuff underground over to and underneath a person’s house who was a member of it.

Always was this concern of “what are you going to do when the non-members, or the neighbors, or the friends want to get in and you only got so much space. What are you going to do?” We never did have an answer. We stocked it with food and all, and uh water. We had a couple of bicycles in there that were mounted with their rear wheels so they could turn a generator which provided lights and ventilation for it, which also provided some exercise.

We had so much water in containers there, and for many years we had a person designated who had a month, and during that month he would make four inspections to check things over. We had a regular “exchange the water program” and finally we all agreed and donated the food and put in some more before it got bad and gave it to the Salvation Army. We did that a couple or so times, and eventually it went less and less and less over the years. After many years we eventually just filled it in.

The Washington, North Carolina community shelter effort was highly notable, both in the state and nationwide. In testimony to a House Subcommittee on Military Operations in

¹⁴¹ NCCD Newsletter, November 1961, pg. 4, NCC.

February 1962, Pittman recognized that “unincorporated associations in neighborhoods at Washington, N.C., have constructed, furnished, and stocked four community shelters.”¹⁴²

Conclusion

The Kennedy civil defense program changed the previously lackadaisical approach to shelters in North Carolina, at least initially. The funding for the area offices gave the state agency a tremendous boost in productivity and resource measurement. The state agency efforts like OPAL 61 brought attention to shelters, but this did little in terms of increasing shelter numbers. The state had numerous plans, but few concrete emergency preparedness measures.

The area directors talked with county commissioners and saw firsthand what civil defense measures had been taken; they assessed the needs of local government. State agency personnel recognized that the citizens did not want shelters as much as fire, police, medical, and communication improvements. These needs were further highlighted by the evacuation fiasco caused by Hurricane Esther. Kennedy’s speeches in May and July 1961 emphasized a need for greater nuclear civil defense action throughout the country, and accordingly provided a massive increase in funding. Area civil defense directors, however, decided to use shelter funds to improve the emergency preparedness of North Carolina for natural disasters as well as for nuclear civil defense.

State civil defense officials’ decision to focus on emergency preparedness occurred just as a new president took office who was able to secure substantial federal dollars for civil defense. President Kennedy’s speeches promised that the federal government would provide

¹⁴² HGCO, *Hearings, Civil Defense – 1962*, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1962, 19.

information on private fallout shelters and would survey public shelters. In North Carolina, as the state agency waited for federal action and funding, it encouraged schools, counties, cities, and towns to produce plan upon plan for survival. Without the means to implement them, these plans were largely worthless.

Hurricane Esther revealed how poor communication could cost lives. The storm, not even warranting a footnote in the North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Biennial Progress report, demonstrated clear lessons to David Stick and the Dare County Civil Defense office. The county Hurricane Preparedness Plan, created specifically to address the most likely type of disaster to hit the area, was employed swiftly by the county when Esther began moving up the coast, but the Governor's office apparently never received the plan. This almost cost the lives of the people stranded near Oregon Inlet.

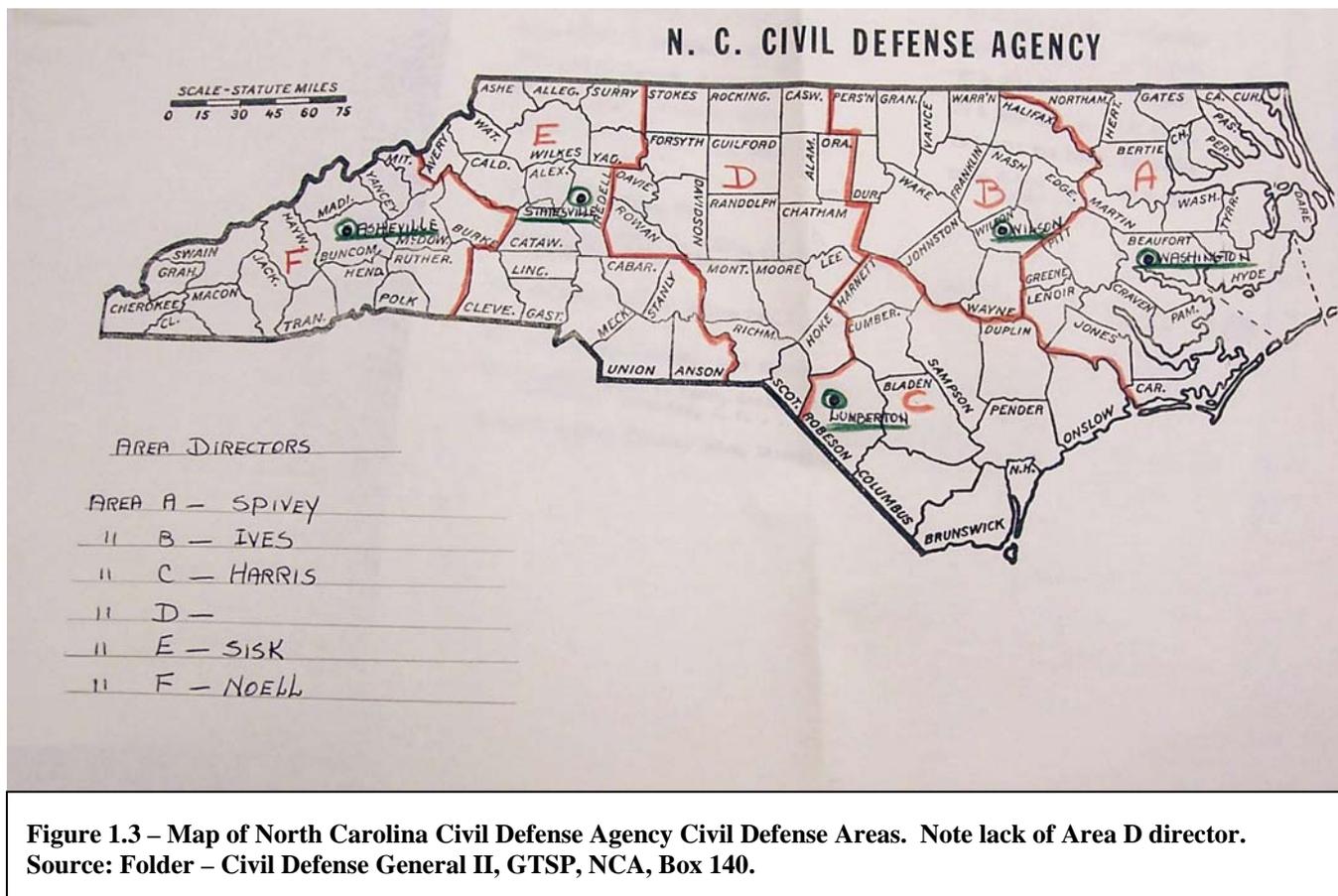
The year 1961 was in many respects a transition year for state civil defense. The state lacked effective emergency communication networks, trained fire departments, professional police departments, and trained rescue squads. The state agency wrote plans, encouraged the building of fallout shelters, and urged people to prepare for the possibility of nuclear attack, but it could not protect its citizens from a nuclear attack. Some civil defense personnel did, however, begin the long march towards building the state's emergency preparedness programs with the federal funds intended for fallout shelters.



Figure 1.1 – Fallout shelter supplies in basement shelter of the Executive Mansion, Raleigh, NC, 23 October 1959. Source: NCCD, NCA, Box 11.



Figure 1.2 - Major General Edward F. Griffin, Director, North Carolina Civil Defense Agency, 1954 - 1967. Source: Folder – Civil Defense Bulletins, GTSP, NCA, Box 27.



CHAPTER 2

Survey and Access – The National Fallout Shelter Survey across North Carolina, 1962

The key element in our new program is the fallout shelter. We expect community shelters to protect a large part of the population, but we recognize that many families, because of their location or individual preferences, will choose family fallout shelters. The Federal Government will join with states and communities, in a variety of ways, to help create fallout shelters.

- Roswell L. Gilpatrick, 14 December 1961¹

With fallout shelters garnering attention nationwide in 1961 and 1962, the Brick and Tile Service, Incorporated, in Greensboro decided to create their own fallout shelter plans utilizing North Carolina brick. The shelter, approved by civil defense for either above or below ground construction, used seven thousand bricks in the shape of a large arch. This design made the shelter “useful...as a dark room, children’s playhouse, storage room, [or] workshop. Besides fallout protection, the shelter provides refuge from natural disasters such as hurricanes and tornados,” touted the plans.² Similar home fallout shelters would be promoted across North Carolina in 1962 as the shadow of nuclear war loomed on the horizon.

To supplement, and, more accurately, compensate for the lack of home fallout shelters, the federal government implemented a National Fallout Shelter Survey (NFSS). This two-phase program began in late 1961 and was scheduled for completion at the end of 1962. An anticipated fifty million shelter spaces would be located, marked, and stocked as

¹ NCCD Newsletter, January 1962, pg 2, NCC.

² “Brick Family Fallout Shelter: For Protection Against Radioactive Fallout From a Nuclear Attack,” Brick and Tile Service, Inc., Greensboro, North Carolina, NCC. Although undated, the archive and the author believe these plans to date from the 1961 to 1962 period.

public fallout shelters in preexisting buildings nationwide.³ The North Carolina Civil Defense Agency (NCCD) worked diligently to develop a statewide public and private shelter network and prepare citizens for nuclear Armageddon, as well as to educate Tar Heels about civil defense. While the state prepared for man-made disasters, a natural disaster in March 1962 exposed shortcomings in the state's emergency preparedness.

National Fallout Shelter Survey – Beginnings

Following Congressional approval of funding for the NFSS in August 1961, the Office of Civil Defense wasted little time preparing the survey's logistics. An appeal for architects and engineers to apply for training in fallout shelter analysis and surveying was released in North Carolina on 10 October 1961. The state agency sought volunteers for the two-week training program (80 hours) that would be taught either at the University of Florida or the U.S. Army Engineer School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Thirty-three people would serve as the surveyors for the shelter survey scheduled to begin in December.⁴ The surveyors would conduct the entire shelter survey in North Carolina, canvassing the state's counties and communities.

Working in teams of two, the architects and engineers would conduct an initial survey on buildings that appeared to provide a protection factor of twenty and accommodate fifty people (at ten square feet per person). The shelters would have to have a protection factor (PF) of one hundred or greater and have a capacity for fifty or more persons. Each

³ The NFSS did not abruptly end with President Kennedy's death. The NFSS continued into the early 1970s. This paper will concern itself largely with the NFSS during the presidency of John F. Kennedy. See the end of Chapter 4 for more information on the continuation of the NFSS. See also Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.*, 142-43.

⁴ "Architect and Engineer Applicants Sought for Fallout Shelter Analysis Training Course," 10 October 1961, NCCD, NCA, Box 11.

person would be provided with ten square feet of space per person with ventilation, or five hundred cubic feet without ventilation, and provide one cubic foot of storage space for food, water, first aid and sanitation supplies, radiation instruments and tools.⁵

After the teams secured access from the owner, they would “get detailed data on all of the buildings surveyed, including dimensions, wall and floor thicknesses, size of window openings, and the like. From this, the PF of the basement will be calculated...those...with protection factors of 100 will be stocked.”⁶ The complete particulars of the program were sent out by the state agency to all the civil defense directors in the state in December 1961.

The Defense Department shelter survey would be implemented in two distinct phases. Overall, the survey goal was to “locate, evaluate, mark and stock acceptable fallout shelters in existing facilities.” Unlike the earlier Raleigh survey by the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization which took several months for one city, this new survey would be “completed as soon as practicable” for the entire nation, and required faster methods of analysis.⁷ The survey data would now be entered on Film Optical Sensing Device for Input to Computers (FOSDIC) forms so the central computers of the Bureau of Census could rapidly and efficiently process the data.⁸ The forms would minimize the estimated two hours of computation time by a professional engineer and reduce it to less than one second per

⁵ HGCO, *Hearings, Civil Defense – 1962*, 87th Cong., 2nd sess., 1962, 590.

⁶ “Federal Shelter – Survey Program Special Report (to National Association of State Civil Defense Directors),” attached to NCCD Newsletter, November 1961, pg. 5, NCC.

⁷ Department of Defense, Office of Civil Defense (DoD-OCD), “National Fallout Shelter Survey, Marking and Stocking Program,” 15 February 1962, pg. 1, HGCO, *Hearings, Civil Defense – 1962*, 87th Cong., 2nd sess., 1962, Appendix 8, pg. 579.

⁸ DoD-OCD, Region Three, Thomasville, Georgia, “Fallout Shelter Survey,” 3 November 1961, NCC. This document was stapled to the December 1961 NCCD Newsletter.

building.⁹ Acceptable public shelters would, over a two-week period, “keep the total radiation dose within tolerable limits.”¹⁰

The survey phases themselves had multiple objectives. Phase I for the survey had four objectives: surveyors would calculate the local population and inventory potential public fallout shelters; collect shielding data for computer analysis of PF ratings; produce data printouts for PF and shelter capacity for each structure; and secure shelter license or privilege agreements from building owners. For Phase II, surveyors would enter the structures and reexamine the shelter space recorded, marking shelters that provided PF 100 or greater; determine the feasibility and preliminary cost estimates for improving designated shelter areas; survey selected special facilities, such as mines, caves, tunnels, and subways.¹¹ Upon completion of both phases, the marked shelters would be stocked with supplies to provide each shelter occupant ten thousand calories of food and three and a half gallons of water for two weeks. Medical supplies, radiation measurement instruments, sanitation facilities, and engineering tools would complement the sustenance supplies provided by the federal government.¹²

Phase I ran from December 1961 to June 1962. Phase II began in July. Stocking of supplies would begin as soon as shelter licensing paperwork was completed.¹³ By June 1962, 97.6 percent of Phase I was completed nationwide. In North Carolina a total of 2,842 buildings had been surveyed, of which 2,141 were accepted and 457 licensed for use as

⁹ HGCO, *Hearings, Civil Defense – 1962*, 87th Cong., 2nd sess., 1962, 12.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 590.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 583.

¹² *Ibid.*, 591. For specifics on the supplies, see *Ibid.*, 602-11.

¹³ DoD-OCD, Region Three, Thomasville, Georgia, “Fallout Shelter Survey,” 3 November 1961, State Library of North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina.

public fallout shelters. The percentage of the state population that could be sheltered in areas with a protection factor of one hundred or greater was only 8.5 percent.¹⁴ The 1960 national census measured North Carolina's population as 4,556,155 persons, 1,802,000 categorized as urban and 2,754,000 as rural.¹⁵ With over sixty percent of the state living in rural areas and space for only approximately 153,000 urban citizens, North Carolina was grossly unprepared for nuclear fallout.

Major General Edward F. Griffin sent out a memorandum to all civil defense directors in North Carolina before Christmas 1961. He asked the directors to help the architect-engineer teams obtain the permission of property owners for building inspections. The memorandum included an attached "fill-in-the-blank" press release so the local press could spread the word about the program.¹⁶ Ten days later, the state agency released the names of the firms selected to conduct the survey, with the state divided up into nine districts, each with its own assigned architectural-engineering firm to begin the surveying at the start of 1962.¹⁷

Operation Shelter One and *Fallout Protection*

In January 1962 the fallout shelter survey began making its initial forays into North Carolina. By 22 January negotiations for contracts with architect-engineering firms for shelter surveying and marking had been completed. Firms from Raleigh, Charlotte,

¹⁴ DoD-OCD, *Annual Statistical Report, Fiscal Year 1962, June 30, 1962* (Washington, GPO, 1962), 1-7, GTSP, NCA, Box 140.

¹⁵ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1961, Eighty-Second Edition* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1961), 12, 22. Available from <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/statcomp/documents/1961-01.pdf>; Internet; accessed 17 January 2008.

¹⁶ "Fallout Shelter Survey and Marking Program to Local Civil Defense Directors from State Director of Civil Defense," 19 December 1961, NCCD, NCA, Box 11.

¹⁷ "Firms Selected to Conduct NC Fallout Shelter Survey," 29 December 1961, NCCD, NCA, Box 11.

Greensboro, High Point, Asheville, and Wilmington had been selected, and personnel from these firms had attended the DoD training course offered in 1961.¹⁸ On 17 January, Griffin announced that Raleigh had been selected as one of only fourteen cities in the continental United States to be part of a pilot test for the marking and stocking of fallout shelters. Known as Operation Shelter One, the project aimed at marking and stocking shelters in buildings offering protection for fifty or more citizens. L.E. Wooten and Company of Raleigh would identify and stock an estimated 25,000 shelter spaces in this operation.¹⁹ Lessons learned from this pilot program would be implemented for the entire shelter survey in the state.

Operation Shelter One was intended as a test run for the national survey. The operation's purpose, as explained by Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara was to "learn...what we need to know about the unpredictable practical problems in the operations" planned in the national survey, and thus avoid pitfalls when the full-scale survey began. The test run was to help determine "how to divide responsibility between the Federal Government and State and local governments."²⁰ Operation Shelter One meant Raleigh would be the first city in the state with marked and stocked *public* fallout shelters. The operation resulted nationwide in 141 buildings marked and stocked for 92,793 persons.²¹ In Raleigh, 12

¹⁸ "Nine Contracts Negotiated for Fallout Shelter Survey in State," 22 January 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 11.

¹⁹ "Raleigh Selected for Pilot Test in DOD Shelter Stocking Project," 17 January 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 11.

²⁰ HCGO, *Hearings, Civil Defense – 1962*, 87th Cong., 2nd sess., 1962, 13.

²¹ "Shelter-Stocking in 14 Cities is Set," *NYT*, 20 January 1962, pg. 7.

buildings were located, licensed, marked and stocked with space for 4,952 persons.²² All 4,952 spaces were in “state operated buildings.”²³

Kennedy promised in his 25 July 1961 speech to provide information to the American people about fallout and fallout shelters. Originally, a booklet was to be sent to every home in America, but by September 1961, cracks had begun to appear. Dr. James S. Wilkinson of Raleigh asked Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr. (D – NC) on 17 November 1961 about the booklet President Kennedy had mentioned in a press conference, noting “the American people are confused regarding shelters.”²⁴ The booklet raised considerable controversy among the president’s top advisors, scientists, and technicians.²⁵ The original draft, written by a *Time-Life* team, “contained terrorizing pictures, fatuous assurances, useless instructions, and an expectation of nuclear war,” recalled Theodore C. Sorensen.²⁶ Economist John Kenneth Galbraith reviewed a draft and told Kennedy “I am not at all attracted by a pamphlet which seeks to save the better elements of the population, but in the main writes off those who voted for you.”²⁷

²² “North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1961 to 1 January 1963,” pg. 21, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

²³ Memorandum from Governor Terry Sanford to All Department and Agency Heads, Having Emergency Assignments Under the North Carolina Operation Survival Plan, 24 October 1962, GTSP, NCA, Box 140; “4,942 Shelters Ready Here,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 23 October 1962. The figure of 4,942 is a typo.

²⁴ Letter from James S. Wilkinson to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 17 November 1961, Folder 2401, SJEP, SHC, Box 50.

²⁵ Steuart L. Pittman, “Government and Civil Defense,” in *Who Speaks for Civil Defense?*, ed. Eugene Wigner (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1968), 66.

²⁶ Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 616. Sorensen identifies the writers as “Madison Avenue specialists,” while Pittman notes “a talented *Time-Life* team of writers and illustrators.” A *New York Times* article identifies “a half-dozen editors of Time, Inc. as Pentagon consultants on the booklet and describes the various drafts of *Fallout Protection*. See Wigner, *Who Speaks for Civil Defense?*, 66; “U.S. Modifies Plan on Shelter Data,” *NYT*, 1 January 1962, pg. 7.

²⁷ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965), 748.

During a meeting at Hyannis Port, Massachusetts in November 1961, the booklet and Kennedy's involvement in civil defense were heavily discussed. All of the President's advisers in the White House and in the DoD, including civil defense personnel, met on 24 November to settle the matter. As the debate unfolded, Pittman noted "emphasis was placed on the necessity for the governors to agree to take responsibility for informing the public and giving direction." More importantly for Pittman, "the prospect of implementing a major civil defense program was clearly unappetizing to the President and his senior advisers." Kennedy did agree that if McNamara felt the civil defense shelter program was feasible, he could proceed with it.²⁸ After debate, the decision was made to edit the booklet from one hundred pages down to twenty-four, prefaced by a letter from McNamara, instead of Kennedy.²⁹ McNamara's introduction stated that "this booklet attempts to provide the facts" about what the American people "need to know about the dangers of a thermonuclear attack and what they can do to protect themselves."³⁰ Kennedy's public support for civil defense and shelters would be filtered through Pittman and McNamara.³¹

The booklet, *Fallout Protection: What to Know and Do About Nuclear Attack*, was published in December 1961 and made available to North Carolinians in January 1962. In a letter to the governor, Pittman informed Sanford and Ervin that the DoD would begin distribution on 2 January 1962, and to not release any information on or from the booklet

²⁸ Wigner, *Who Speaks for Civil Defense?*, 68.

²⁹ Garrison, *Bracing for Armageddon*, 125; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 748-49; Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 616.

³⁰ DoD-OCD, *Fallout Protection: What to Know and Do About Nuclear Attack* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1961), 3.

³¹ Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 616; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 749.

before 6:30PM, 30 December 1961.³² Originally planned at a printing of 60 million copies, after the Hyannis Port meeting only 25 million were printed, sent in bulk to U.S. post offices and local civil defense offices for public consumption.³³ The booklet, offering information for rural and urban homeowners on how to prepare their own private shelters, did not generate much interest in the state. Federal civil defense officials for Region III instructed the state civil defense offices not to display the booklet in post office lobbies, or post information about it. Any person who requested the booklet from a Postmaster would be given one.³⁴

The North Carolina Civil Defense Agency received only “a *token* supply,” and resorted to randomly selecting eight local civil defense offices to receive shipments of the booklet. The January 1962 newsletter acknowledged “*for the present*...refer persons who ask for the booklet to the local post office. It is a good booklet and will undoubtedly serve our purpose well.”³⁵ *The Raleigh Times* wrote of a “rather frosty reception” for the booklets at the city post offices, with only 700 out of 6,250 copies having been distributed in the first weeks of January.³⁶ Charlotte obtained 24,000 copies for city-wide distribution, but only 6,000 had been handed out by 14 February 1962.³⁷ The booklet was heavily advertised in Greensboro on WFMY-TV Channel 2, with 125 public service announcements aired offering

³² Letter from Assistant Secretary of Defense Steuart Pittman to North Carolina Governor Terry Sanford, 28 December 1961, GTSP, NCA, Box 27. Note, a copy of *Fallout Protection* was stapled to the letter, and stapled to the booklet was a note regarding premature release of the booklet’s contents; Letter from Steuart L. Pittman to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., undated, Folder 2978, SJEP, SHC, Box 63.

³³ “U.S. Modifies Plan on Shelter Data,” *NYT*, 1 January 1962, pg. 7; “Shelter Book Mailed,” *NYT*, 3 January 1962, pg. 31.

³⁴ NCCD Newsletter, January 1962, pg. 5, NCC.

³⁵ *Ibid.* [Original emphasis].

³⁶ “Not Much Response on Fallout Booklet,” *Raleigh Times*, 18 January 1962.

³⁷ “Fallout? What Fallout?,” *Charlotte News*, 14 February 1962.

to mail copies to viewers. A total of 798 requests resulted from the viewing area.³⁸ Another booklet, *Family Shelter Designs*, containing design plans for eight different fallout shelters, was released on 6 February 1962. Ranging in price from \$75 to \$650, these shelters provided families and communities shelter options, but only five million copies were printed.³⁹

Morality Issues

Throughout the fall of 1961 and into the early part of 1962, the American public debated, questioned, and ultimately rejected fallout shelters and nuclear civil defense. The moral dilemma for shelter owners surged to the forefront of the shelter debate in August 1961 when *Time* published an article titled “Gun Thy Neighbor.” The article gave examples where people were prepared to use deadly force to defend their shelters with statements on shelter ethics from Christian church leaders, both for and against the use of force to protect themselves before their neighbors.⁴⁰ North Carolina native Reverend Billy Graham publicly denounced “gun thy neighbor,” declaring “I couldn’t take a shotgun and sit in front of my shelter and shoot other people, nor could I see them dying outside. I feel I should be out with them.”⁴¹ Raleigh resident Ted Stevenson recalled the experiences of a neighbor who had built a substantial fallout shelter for his family. At the local Baptist church, “the neighbors wanted to know if an attack was imminent, could they come in to the shelter?” The shelter owners stated the shelter had room for only the family and that once the door was locked that

³⁸ NCCD Newsletter, June 1962, pg. 4, NCC.

³⁹ “U.S. Booklet Gives 8 Shelter Designs,” *NYT*, 7 February 1962. pg. 9.

⁴⁰ “Gun Thy Neighbor,” *Time*, 18 August 1961, pg. 58.

⁴¹ “Fallout Shelters are Scorned by Graham,” *Asheville News*, 12 March 1962.

was it. This caused a falling out among neighbors noted Stevenson, observing further how “people thought it was silly to have a shelter.”⁴²

The protective value of shelters was questioned by North Carolinians skeptical of government claims. An editorial in *The Wilmington Star* noted how “it is estimated that high megaton bomb explosions would cause fires and burns to humans many miles away from the actual blast scene. Thus, a shelter which would protect from fallout would be quite inadequate if it were in the range of fire and burns from a blast.”⁴³ This editorial harkens back to the problem of constructing shelters capable of withstanding blast and fire debated by the federal government in the 1950s.

As the debates about shelters occurred, confusion reigned about what exactly Americans needed to do to survive nuclear attack. The *Leaksville News* of Leaksville, North Carolina declared in November 1961

Almost everyone today is an amateur physicist and we all seem to know about fallout. True, we can build a fallout shelter. Tomorrow it may be obsolete and without a clearcut policy we, the citizens, are having to be our own Civilian Defense experts who will make our own errors and either sink or swim in proportion as we can recover from our errors and the results they produce. Who will foot the fallout shelter bill? Will the fallout shelter be obsolete as quickly as was the theory of evacuation?⁴⁴

Federal, state, and local civil defense units educated North Carolinians about fallout and shelters, but they failed to articulate policy with authority. President Kennedy, caught off

⁴² Carl T. “Ted” Stevenson, Jr., interview by author, Raleigh, NC, 3 June 2008.

⁴³ “Irony in Professor’s Shelter,” *Wilmington Star*, 11 November 1961.

⁴⁴ “Who Knows? They’re Not Telling,” *Leaksville (NC) News*, 22 November 1961. Leaksville, founded in 1797, merged in September 1967 with the towns of Spray and Draper to form the town of Eden, North Carolina. See “A Brief History of Leaksville, North Carolina,” Leaksville.com, <http://www.leaksville.com/leaksvillehistory.htm> (accessed 19 August 2008).

guard over the backlash over civil defense, distanced himself from the civil defense debates, promised to support McNamara and Pittman, but otherwise left it to the state civil defense agencies.

Letters to North Carolina's senators reflected the conflicting opinions among North Carolinians in early 1962 regarding the shelters. In Burlington, Elmer Workman told Senator Benjamin Everett Jordan (D – NC) that he “would like to go on record as being opposed to spending Federal money in any way shape or form on Fallout Shelters.”⁴⁵ R.S. Nooe wrote to Jordan and Senator Ervin that he believed “people cannot live together in public fallout shelters. Neither can they live together in private fallout shelters. These things are of no practical value, and the protection that you get in your own house or in your own apartment building is as good protection as you would get in a public fallout shelter.”⁴⁶ From the other extreme, Hattie Lyons, Gladys Hawkins, and Mattie Hawkins told Jordan they were all for fallout shelters. Jordan responded to Nooe and the three ladies, “I personally feel that the Federal government should explore the feasibility of using existing public structures, such as post offices, for this purpose [fallout shelters]. I do not feel that the Federal government should pay for the construction of private fallout shelters.”⁴⁷ The Vance County Voters' League informed Senator Ervin how at a meeting with the chairman of the Vance County

⁴⁵ Letter from Elmer Workman to Benjamin Everett Jordan, 9 February 1962, Folder – Defense Dept., Civil Defense, 1962, Benjamin Everett Jordan Papers (BEJP), Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library (RBMSCL), Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, Box 202.

⁴⁶ Letter from R.S. Nooe to Benjamin Everett Jordan, 13 February 1962, Folder – Defense Dept., Civil Defense, 1962, BEJP, RBMSCL, Box 202; Letter from R.S. Nooe to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 13 February 1962, Folder 3160, SJEP, SHC, Box 68.

⁴⁷ Letter from Hattie Lyons, Gladys Hawkins, and Mattie Hawkins to Benjamin Everett Jordan, 27 February 1962; Letter from Benjamin Everett Jordan to Hattie Lyons, Gladys Hawkins, and Mattie Hawkins, 2 March 1962 Folder – Defense Dept., Civil Defense, 1962, BEJP, RBMSCL, Box 202; Letter from Benjamin Everett Jordan to R.S. Nooe, 15 February 1962, Folder – Defense Dept., Civil Defense, 1962, BEJP, RBMSCL, Box 202.

Civil Defense Committee, “the citizens voiced a strong concern over the need for more public Fall-Out Shelters,” and asked Ervin to “exert every measure of influence that you are able to rally in support of this urgent need [for shelters].”⁴⁸

In Raleigh, the positive opinion of shelters shared by Governor Sanford and General Griffin were not in doubt. The March 1962 newsletter notes that “until somebody offers a sound alternative to the precautionary measures now advocated by our government, the shelter system will continue to move forward.” Griffin stated to the county and city directors that “the home fallout shelter should not be sidetracked in favor of public shelters. It is the basic component of the shelter system.”⁴⁹ The NCCD cited an editorial in *The Asheville Times* that compared private shelters to getting inoculated against disease. The editorial asked readers “would you not go to your family doctor and pay to have yourself and the members of your family inoculated, or would you say ‘it can’t happen here,’ and wait until the government provides mass inoculations paid for out of your tax dollar?”⁵⁰ To further defuse anti-shelter rhetoric, the state agency armed the state’s many civil defense directors with a “questions and answers” handout to clarify misconceptions or doubts about the survey.⁵¹

Nevertheless, uncertainty remained. Sanford received an appeal from the Vandalia School P.T.A. in March 1962 about the “welfare of our children in the case of atomic attack.” The letter cited the shelter survey of the school as awakening them all to the reality “that our

⁴⁸ Letter from James P. Green to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 15 February 1962, Folder 3160, SJEP, SHC, Box 68.

⁴⁹ NCCD Newsletter, March 1962, pg. 1, NCC.

⁵⁰ “Count Us Among Those Who Consider Survival Worthwhile,” *Asheville Times*, 31 January 1962. This editorial is cited in the NCCD Newsletter, March 1962, pg. 2, NCC.

⁵¹ “Nation Fallout Shelter Program – Questions and Answers,” NCCD, 1 March 1962, NCC. This document was attached to the NCCD Newsletter, March 1962, NCC.

school is not equipped to handle such an emergency, physically or psychologically. We are experiencing the frustration which comes from having a plan in which we have no confidence. We want you to propose legislation toward clearing up the muddy waters of uncertainty.”⁵² In a response for the Governor on 20 March 1962, Griffin noted how for the school, “the type and extent of Civil Defense preparations is entirely in the hands of the governing officials of county and municipal governments.” He added that the state office “can render guidance” if requested from the local offices.⁵³ The local civil defense offices, organized into areas, were the front lines for the shelter effort.

The Ash Wednesday Storm

In the early morning hours of 7 March 1962, an unusual extra-tropical cyclone, a rare winter Nor’easter blasted the eastern coast of the United States. Striking without warning from the North Carolina coast to Cape Cod, the “coincidence of high storm surges and waves in conjunction with high astronomical tides” [when the sun, moon, and earth were aligned to produce a Spring Tide, the highest tide possible] created a perfect storm. The storm caused damage estimated at greater than \$200 million and destroyed approximately 1,800 buildings along the east coast. It was christened the “Ash Wednesday Storm” due to its arrival on the first day of Lent.⁵⁴ The storm devastated North Carolina’s Currituck, Dare, and Hyde

⁵² Letter from Harry R. Connor, Mrs. O.B. Teague, Jr., and Mrs. J.W. Register, Jr. to Terry Sanford, 6 March 1962, Folder – Civil Defense, I-Z, GTSP, NCA, Box 141.

⁵³ Letter from Edward F. Griffin to Mrs. J.W. Register, Jr., 20 March 1962, Folder – Civil Defense, I-Z, GTSP, NCA, Box 141.

⁵⁴ Arthur I. Cooperman and Hans E. Rosendal, “Mean Five-Day Pressure Pattern of the Great Atlantic Coast Storm, March 1962,” *Monthly Weather Review* vol. 91, no. 7 (July 1963): 337; David Stick, *The Ash Wednesday Storm* (Kill Devil Hills, NC: Gresham Publications, 1987), xiii; “Tide Cycle and Wind Blamed in Flooding,” *NYT*, 8 March 1962, pg. 22; Stick, *Ash Wednesday Storm*, xi.

Counties. Dare County Board of Commissioners Chairman David Stick and NCCD Area A director David W. Spivey both found themselves in leadership roles in the disaster.

On 7 March, David Stick left his home on Colington Island before noon with his three sons, heading to Kitty Hawk School. Not a newcomer to driving on sand or through low water, Stick pressed forward in his Jeep station wagon to see what conditions were like before heading to the school.⁵⁵ In Kill Devil Hills, near the Avalon Beach bypass, his vehicle drowned out. “The stupidest thing I ever did,” stated Stick. “It was a box [the Jeep], and it was rocking back and forth. The water came up in the car and we watched a cottage over by the ocean disintegrate and then the various parts came by us on both sides, though fortunately none hit us.”⁵⁶ After an hour of terror, Stick’s vehicle was pulled to safety by a friend. Stick’s sons safely away, he headed to the school, the pre-designated disaster control center, and “from then on I didn’t leave that school for about two or three days,” noted Stick.⁵⁷

Back on the mainland, Spivey received word about the storm via HAM radio. The call came from an operator in Manteo early in the morning and was sent to another HAM, Max Silvers in Raleigh. Silvers relayed the message to Spivey about how badly conditions were deteriorating. “I threw a couple things in the car and took off, and I managed to get down there,” recollected Spivey. He met with Dare County Sheriff and Civil Defense director Frank Cahoon and “the big problem was that the Sheriff didn’t know, and I didn’t know, and nobody knew what had happened on the Banks, because there was no

⁵⁵ Stick, *Ash Wednesday Storm*, 64.

⁵⁶ David Stick, interview by author, Kitty Hawk, NC, 11 June 2008.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

communication. We didn't know if Ocracoke was still there or not.”⁵⁸ Ninety miles southeast of Cape Hatteras, near Ocracoke, the 501-foot Liberian tanker *Gem* broke in half at 7:15PM on the seventh, killing one aboard.⁵⁹ Hatteras Village was at this point an island itself, as the storm tore a 200-foot-wide, 50-foot deep inlet between Avon and Buxton.⁶⁰ With roads impassible, Spivey called for reinforcements.

Using the HAM operators, Spivey sent a message to Congressman Herbert C. Bonner (D – NC) requesting three helicopters from Cherry Point Marine Air Station to Manteo.⁶¹ Stick, along with Cahoon and County Commissioner Lawrence Swain requested an additional three helicopters sent to Kitty Hawk.⁶² Arriving on the morning of 8 March, Spivey and Cahoon “ran the area to find out whether Ocracoke was still there and who was what and where. It was the first time that we really knew how bad it had been torn up,” accorded Spivey.⁶³ Stick later added how “the bypass [U.S.-158] was washed out at Nags Head.” Residents flew in the helicopters along the banks to assist the crews in scouting for marooned motorists and other survivors.⁶⁴ Spivey got word to Highway Patrol Troop A Captain S.H. Mitchell based out of Williamston to send patrolmen to the coast and Lt. Colonel William E. Ingram of the North Carolina National Guard arrived with a contingent

⁵⁸ David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008.

⁵⁹ “Captain Tells How Waves Split Tanker in Storm,” *NYT*, 10 March 1962, pg. 17.

⁶⁰ David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008; Stick, *Ash Wednesday Storm*, 95. The inlet was three miles north of Buxton, but grew to six hundred feet wide and twelve feet deep after several months. “Park Service Asks Increase in Funds for Hatteras Dunes,” *The Virginian-Pilot*, 6 April 1962.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Stick, *Ash Wednesday Storm*, 92.

⁶³ David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008.

⁶⁴ David Stick, interview by author, Kitty Hawk, NC, 11 June 2008; Stick, *Ash Wednesday Storm*, 92-93.

of eighty-five guardsmen to set up check points, assist with rescue efforts and maintain law and order.⁶⁵

With the situation beginning to stabilize, the extent of damages warranted federal assistance. On 10 March 1962, Stick and the Dare County Board of Commissioners held an emergency session and passed a resolution requesting Governor Sanford declare the county a disaster area.⁶⁶ Sanford conferred in Raleigh with Griffin, and several other officials concerned with civil defense and natural disasters on 12 March to assess the situation. These officials praised the emergency plans put into action as the “best coordinated disaster program” they had yet seen.⁶⁷ Following the meeting, Sanford sent a telegram to President Kennedy requesting that a “Major Disaster” be declared for Currituck, Dare, and Hyde counties.⁶⁸ President Kennedy responded on 16 March declaring a “Major Disaster” for the affected counties.⁶⁹ The three counties joined counties in New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia as disaster areas caused by the storm.⁷⁰

With Presidential approval, federal funds began to flow to the counties. A total of 1,282 buildings were damaged in the communities of Southern Shores, Kill Devil Hills, Kitty Hawk, and Nags Head alone.⁷¹ Sanford informed Kennedy on 26 March that the state surveys

⁶⁵ David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008; David Stick, interview by author, Kitty Hawk, NC, 11 June 2008; Stick, *Ash Wednesday Storm*, 93-95; Press Release from the Governor’s Office, 12 March 1962, Folder – Civil Defense A-Z, GTSP, NCA, Box 264.

⁶⁶ Letter from David Stick to Terry Sanford, 10 March 1962, Folder – Civil Defense – Storm – March 7, GTSP, NCA, Box 141.

⁶⁷ Press Release from the Governor’s Office, 12 March 1962, Folder – Civil Defense – Storm – March 7, GTSP, NCA, Box 141.

⁶⁸ Typed copy of telegram from Terry Sanford to John F. Kennedy, 12 March 1962, Folder – Civil Defense – Storm – March 7, GTSP, NCA, Box 141.

⁶⁹ Press release from the Governor’s Office, 16 March 1962, Folder – Civil Defense – Storm – March 7, GTSP, NCA, Box 141.

⁷⁰ “Kennedy Extends Area of Disaster,” *NYT*, 17 March 1962, pg. 27.

⁷¹ “Damages Assessed in Dare,” *Virginian-Pilot*, 22 March 1962.

estimated damages to private property in excess of \$10 million dollars, and public property damages estimated at \$4.5 million dollars. A total of \$650,000 for Disaster Relief Funds through the Office of Emergency Planning was requested, which Kennedy authorized on 30 March.⁷² The funds were designated for use in providing “protection of health, debris clearance and temporary restoration of essential public facilities.”⁷³ Closing the massive inlet opened up north of Buxton required Sanford to request an additional \$475,000 in May 1963 to pay the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which Kennedy approved shortly thereafter.⁷⁴ Not including the funds to close the inlet, the Office of Emergency Planning approved \$519,599 for projects in Currituck, Dare, and Hyde Counties, as well as the State Highway Commission and towns of Nags Head and Kill Devil Hills. A total of \$475,923.03 of these approved Federal funds were spent to rebuild the areas damaged or destroyed by the storm.⁷⁵

After his work in Manteo, Spivey returned to Washington fully convinced that his main priority was to improve communications. Previously, Spivey would go to county commissioners and say “‘we got to do something about shelters,’ but they had so many problems that they didn’t have funding for shelters.” In Hyde County, the lone phone connection to Ocracoke was cut by the storm. Spivey worked with the county sheriff and convinced him to upgrade to a radio system. “I got with Motorola and General Electric and

⁷² Letter from Terry Sanford to John F. Kennedy, 26 March 1962, Folder – Civil Defense – Storm – March 7, GTSP, NCA, Box 141; Telefax from John F. Kennedy to Terry Sanford, 30 March 1962, Folder – Civil Defense – Storm – March 7, GTSP, NCA, Box 141.

⁷³ “North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress report, 1 January 1961 to 1 January 1963,” pg. 24, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

⁷⁴ Telegram from Terry Sanford to Thomas H. Goodman, 3 May 1963, Folder – Civil Defense, A-Z, GTSP, NCA, Box 264; Telegram from John F. Kennedy to Terry Sanford, 23 May 1963, Folder – Civil Defense, A-Z, GTSP, NCA, Box 264.

⁷⁵ Letter from Edward F. Griffin to Terry Sanford, 17 September 1963, Folder – Civil Defense, A-Z, GTSP, NCA, Box 264; “North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1963 to 1 January 1965, pg. 27, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

asked them to give me a bid for a base station and three mobiles [one for the sheriff and deputy on the mainland, and one for the deputy on Ocracoke] and I met with the county commissioners to see about finally getting some communication in the county.” At a total cost of \$2,000, the board of commissioners called in the treasurer and together worked out an arrangement with General Electric. With a down payment of \$500 and small \$50 monthly payments, Hyde County finally had a flexible communication system.⁷⁶

For Stick, the problem after the storm was communications as well, but in this case too much communication. “The Park Service had their system, the Highway Patrol had their system. We had gotten a new system for the county when I became chairman [1960], and everybody and his brother was walking around with a walkie talkie. It was just all very, very confusing,” explained Stick.⁷⁷ The radio network for the Highway Patrol also served as the civil defense warning network.⁷⁸ Part of North Carolina’s emergency communications systems was the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES), consisting of HAM radio operators state-wide who could be activated by local civil defense agencies in emergencies. Created by the Federal Communications Commission in 1952, the HAMS provided essential emergency communications in North Carolina during natural disasters.⁷⁹ Max Silvers, the state agency’s Radio Engineer, was active in RACES when he was hired by

⁷⁶ David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008.

⁷⁷ David Stick, interview by author, Kitty Hawk, NC, 11 June 2008.

⁷⁸ “North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1961 to 1 January 1963,” pg. 8, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

⁷⁹ “North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1961 to 1 January 1963,” pg. 31-33, NCCD, NCA, Box 9; John Covington, ed., “Amateur Radio Emergency Service North Carolina Section Emergency Plan,” American Radio Relay League, Inc., 2007, <http://www.ncarrl.org/ares/ncep.pdf> (accessed 20 August 2008). RACES still exists and is used today, along with the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES). ARES today provides almost all of the disaster and public service communications. RACES, as created by the FCC, only registered stations may contact other registered RACES stations authorized by the federal government. In short, RACES is restricted if activated in an emergency, ARES is not.

Clifton E. Blalock to assist him in building communications across the state. Silvers did the bulk of technical work in developing the local radio systems and working with the amateurs. Silvers work at the onset of the storm galvanized Spivey and civil defense into action.⁸⁰ By late 1962, over two thousand amateurs were enrolled in RACES in North Carolina and over seventy-five counties covered by these HAM operators.⁸¹

The Office of Civil Defense and the state agency together took part in an effort to upgrade the North Carolina Highway Patrol and state Forest Service radio networks in 1962. Blalock installed two-way radio systems from the state headquarters in Raleigh to all the area offices and had National Warning System telephone relays installed.⁸² The upgrade of the Highway Patrol communications network cost over \$500,000 dollars, with civil defense funds covering half of the cost.⁸³ As federal funds upgraded the Highway Patrol radio systems, the local civil defense offices acquired the old surplus radios. In Area A, all Spivey had to do “was get the locals to buy the crystals and Slim Davis, a radio repairman for the Highway Patrol in Williamston would convert them for me.” Spivey and the other area directors also worked with local governments to establish fire department communication networks. Linked with the county sheriffs and the Highway Patrol, sirens could now be activated through a dispatch center and eventually a paging network for the firemen was established to further enhance the system.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Clifton E. Blalock, interview by author, Durham, NC, 31 July 2008.

⁸¹ “North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1961 to 1 January 1963,” pg. 31-33, NCCD, NCA, Box 9

⁸² Clifton E. Blalock, interview by author, Durham, NC, 31 July 2008.

⁸³ “North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1961 to 1 January 1963,” pg. 7-8, NCCD, NCA, Box 9. Federal civil defense matching funds contributed \$280,000 for communication equipment alone during the 1961-1962 period.

⁸⁴ David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC 18 April 2008.

Following the Ash Wednesday Storm, the state agency and the American Red Cross reaffirmed a previous understanding on responsibility in disaster situations. The agreement was authorized by the Office of Emergency Planning and the American National Red Cross in August 1962. In natural disasters, the state civil defense agency was “responsible for the coordination of all groups, both public and private, participating in a natural disaster relief operation.” Community services, protection of people and property, warning, evacuation, and rescue were assigned to the state agency. The Red Cross would extend assistance and relief to individuals and families via food, clothing, shelter, and medical care. In enemy-caused disasters, civil defense held responsibility for execution of all phases of operations and the Red Cross would assist in planning for the protection and care of people. Red Cross and state civil defense officials signed the agreement in November 1962.⁸⁵

In the spring and early summer of 1962 the Ash Wednesday Storm acted as a catalyst for the area civil defense directors to push emergency preparedness action in North Carolina. Support for fallout shelters had been waning despite the release of *Fallout Protection* and the commencement of the NFSS in the first months of the year. Kennedy decided in January to retreat from open promotion of shelters, asking Americans to “concentrate on keeping enemy bombers and missiles away from our shores and less on keeping neighbors away from our shelters.”⁸⁶ Historians Elizabeth and Jay Mechling together concluded “by the spring of 1962, Americans were over their brief panic and the issue of fallout shelters again became

⁸⁵ “North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1961 to 1 January 1963,” pg. 31-33, NCCD, NCA, Box 9; Stick, *Ash Wednesday Storm*, 99.

⁸⁶ Hine, *Populuxe*, 138.

moot.”⁸⁷ Kennedy’s retreat and the apparent resolution of the Berlin Crisis contributed to over six hundred home fallout shelter firms failing nationwide.⁸⁸ The intense public discussions on fallout shelters in the fall of 1961 convinced many Americans that there would never be enough fallout shelters and that they were probably ineffective anyway.

In North Carolina, Blalock, who traveled all over the state working on communications, commented that local reaction to civil defense “varied from very worthy to we don’t want any part of you, particularly in the rural communities where they lived a simple life and didn’t see a need for a lot of this [emergency preparedness].” It was natural disasters that elevated the profile of the NCCD. “We had disasters before, but we didn’t have the media and the people weren’t informed and thus didn’t know about it. The media helped emergency preparedness,” emphasized Blalock. Media coverage of storms helped state civil defense officials to sell local governments on the need for emergency preparedness, “because,” as Blalock said, “most of the time the people that initiated the [emergency] program in most cases were a whole lot better informed than the average citizen who really didn’t give a rat’s ass one way or another.”⁸⁹ Fallout was foreign to North Carolinians, but not hurricanes, ice storms, floods, or droughts. Civil defense efforts in North Carolina began to crystallize by mid-1962 into establishing communication networks, strengthening ties with the Red Cross, and investing in emergency preparedness for common threats rather than the distant risk of nuclear war.

⁸⁷ Elizabeth Walker Mechling and Jay Mechling, “The Campaign for Civil Defense and the Struggle to Naturalize the Bomb,” *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 55 (Spring 1991): 124.

⁸⁸ “Boom to Bust,” *Time*, 18 May 1962, pg. 20.

⁸⁹ Clifton E. Blalock, interview by author, Durham, NC, 31 July 2008.

Summer 1962 – Survey Returns and NCCD Actions

North Carolina civil defense, despite the shift to emergency preparedness, continued to assist the federal government with the shelter survey. By May 1962, Phase I of the NFSS had been completed in the state.⁹⁰ A press release for “fill-in-the-blank” information was distributed to all local directors to inform citizens of the progress of the program at that time.⁹¹ The Defense Department data as of 30 June 1962 indicated 2,842 buildings had been surveyed across North Carolina. Of these, civil defense rejected 701, accepted 2,141, of which 800 provided PF 100 or greater, potentially providing 292,300 spaces. Only 457 buildings from PF 20 to PF 100 or greater were licensed with an unknown number of spaces. In terms of PF 100 sheltering, Phase I of the survey had identified space for only 6.4 percent of North Carolina residents.⁹² A number of counties surveyed had no suitable shelter spaces. Civil defense directors in these counties were informed “in any case, the citizens of the county should have the facts – about what *is* or *is not available*, what *can be made available* and what *is proposed for their best security*.” They were reminded that it was their responsibility in their areas to ensure that the citizens were protected.⁹³

Local civil defense organizations assisted the survey and encouraged private shelters. In Area A, Spivey coordinated press coverage for the survey in Washington, NC and Elizabeth City papers, as well as the local WFTN radio station and Channel 9 television. The survey found few buildings in the area capable of serving as shelters, but the process was

⁹⁰ NCCD Newsletter, May 1962, pg 1, NCC.

⁹¹ Memorandum from State Director to Local Civil Defense Directors on “Publicity of Shelter Program,” 30 May 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 11.

⁹² DoD-OCD, *Annual Statistical Report – Fiscal Year 1962, 30 June 1962* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1962), 6-8.

⁹³ NCCD Newsletter, June 1962, pg 1, NCC. [Original Emphasis].

smooth and no building owners were opposed to licensing their property as a shelter.⁹⁴ Some property owners did refuse to sign fallout shelter licensing or privilege forms to allow a shelter to be marked and stocked in their building(s). Wherever this occurred, private shelters were heartily encouraged.⁹⁵ In Johnston County, civil defense director J. Broadwell built an above-ground family shelter in his backyard and invited anyone curious or uncertain about constructing one to come see it.⁹⁶

Institutional fallout shelters became a means to fill gaps in the shelter system. Duke Hospital and University in Durham, Western High School in Elon, Kirkman Parks School in High Point, and the Onslow County Public Library in Jacksonville were selected for a pilot design study by the Office of Civil Defense for community fallout shelters.⁹⁷ Duke University itself developed a plan to provide shelter space for the entire university community of 25,000 individuals.⁹⁸ The Duke University Fallout Preparedness Committee, chaired by Dr. William G. Anlyan, was organized during the Berlin Crisis in July 1961. By 1962, they were able to provide space for 50,000 people, double the university community. Committee members included the university provost, vice provost and vice president, and sought guidance even from Pittman himself. The Gothic, heavy masonry university buildings

⁹⁴ David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008.

⁹⁵ Teletype message reproduced from Region III headquarters titled "Refusal to Sign Fallout Shelter License or Privilege Forms," 5 June 1962, attached to NCCD Newsletter, June 1962, NCC.

⁹⁶ NCCD Newsletter, June 1962, pg. 4, NCC.

⁹⁷ "Four N.C. Sites Selected for Pilot Study of Community Fallout Shelter Design," 14 June 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 11.

⁹⁸ NCCD Newsletter, June 1962, pg. 4, NCC.

were ideally suited for use as fallout shelters, providing PF 100 or greater protection.⁹⁹ This was the pinnacle of community shelter planning in North Carolina.

In June, fulfilling the promise by Kennedy from a year before, the state agency began improvements to the state's warning systems. The state agency announced that several of North Carolina's CONELRAD radio stations were selected by the Office of Civil Defense for fallout shelters to be constructed in them.¹⁰⁰ The purpose was to provide "fallout protection to specified radio stations in the broadcast network to permit effective national, state and local Civil Defense communications in time of emergency," presumably from the safe confines of a 150 square foot shelter eight feet high.¹⁰¹ A total of ten North Carolina AM radio stations were chosen in Asheboro, Charlotte, Fayetteville, Goldsboro, Laurinburg, Rocky Mount, Shelby, Winston-Salem, and in Raleigh, where there were two.¹⁰²

The fundamental problem remained, however, that there were not enough shelters in rural portions of the state. In Wendell, Frances Henderson's father, Jesse James Henderson, Jr., decided to add a fallout shelter when a new addition was built on the family home in the late spring of 1962. As an international tobacco broker, his work took him as far as the Soviet Union in the early 1960s. "He went to Russia, and back then the world was coming to

⁹⁹ Letter from William G. Anlyan to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 5 June 1962, Folder 3160, SJEP, SHC, Box 68; Duke University Fallout Preparedness Committee Progress Report #3, 25 March 1963, Folder – Civil Defense Bulletins, GTSP, NCA, Box 264.

¹⁰⁰ CONELRAD stands for Control of Electromagnetic Radiation, and was established by President Truman in 1951. President Kennedy replaced it with the Emergency Broadcasting System in August 1963. The Emergency Broadcast System was itself replaced by President Clinton in 1997. CONELRAD served as the national warning system to alert citizens of impending attack and as a mean to spread civil defense information.

¹⁰¹ "Message from Dial P. Sweeny, Director, Region III, Office of Civil Defense –DoD," delivered to the North Carolina Civil Defense Association Annual Meeting (NC CDA), 12 June 1962, Asheville, NC, pg. 6, attached to the NCCD Newsletter, Special Issue, 28 June 1962, NCC.

¹⁰² "Ten N.C. Radio Stations Selected by Federal Government For Fallout Shelter Construction," 13 June 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 11. See also "Message from Dial P. Sweeny, Director, Region III, Office of Civil Defense – DOD," delivered to the NC CDA Annual Meeting, 12 June 1962, Asheville, NC, pg. 6, attached to the NCCD Newsletter, Special Issue, 28 June 1962, NCC.

an end every other week in the paper and the Cold War was going strong,” noted Frances, “and I guess Daddy just got paranoid that there was going to be a nuclear attack. Not that he was a paranoid person.” The shelter, built of concrete block and thick poured concrete buried in the ground beneath the home, still has a functioning ventilation system and serves as a storage room. Frances joked about testing the shelter out “all the time” but her family never stocked it. A private architect designed the shelter, and it is unknown if they consulted Office of Civil Defense approved plans. Judging from the shelter today, it would certainly have provided excellent shielding from gamma radiation.¹⁰³

This well-built shelter was an exception to the rule that rural North Carolinians were unprotected. Local civil defense directors questioned the accuracy of the national shelter survey after the Phase I data indicated the dearth of potential shelter space in rural North Carolina. In July, Griffin affirmed that “it becomes increasingly apparent that suitable shelters identified by the survey...are located largely in population centers where the type of construction normally provides greater protection against radiation,” but he reminded the directors that the national program was meant to last five years. In the meantime, “since none of us may reasonably predict if, or when we may be subjected to nuclear attack...we must continue to advocate maximum construction of family and community shelters... For the foreseeable future the family shelter may be the only practical means,” noted Griffin, to protect rural citizens.¹⁰⁴ Considering the lack of targets in the rural portions of the state, the cost of shelter construction, a sense of isolation, and lack of public buildings, it is not surprising that few rural shelters were built. There was, however, the possibility of people

¹⁰³ Frances Henderson, interview by author and visit to site, Wendell, NC, 2 June 2008.

¹⁰⁴ NCCD Newsletter, July 1963, pg. 1, NCC.

building shelters and keeping them secret, or people who considered preexisting cellars as suitable for shelters and neglected to report them to authorities.

The Shelter Incentive Program (SIP) was to be the keystone for the grand, five-year shelter plan created by Kennedy and the Defense Department. Pittman had secured White House agreement and the approval of McNamara in November 1961 to recommend to Congress approval of \$700 million as “the first bite of a 3.5-billion dollar program to complete a nationwide shelter system in five years.”¹⁰⁵ Although Kennedy and his advisers had retreated from their initial drive for civil defense at the Hyannis Port meeting in November 1961, Pittman continued to believe that funding for the incentive program in 1962 was “a minimum follow-through on his [Kennedy’s] May speech.”¹⁰⁶ Special Counsel to the President Sorensen remembered Kennedy noting that although no shelter program could deter enemy attack, the President stated “I don’t want the survivors, if there are any, to say we never warned them or never did anything to save at least some of their families while there was still time.”¹⁰⁷

The incentive program, as detailed by McNamara to the House Subcommittee on Military Operations in February 1962, would cost \$460 million.¹⁰⁸ The program would partially fund the construction of public fallout shelters in health, educational, and welfare institutions; the Fiscal Year 1963 appropriation would create community shelter space for twenty million people. Each person would have a ten square foot space, and the program

¹⁰⁵ Pittman, *Who Speaks for Civil Defense?*, 68.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Sorensen, *Kennedy*, 616.

¹⁰⁸ The state civil defense agencies were informed of the Shelter Incentive Program before the Subcommittee hearings. Source: Memorandum from Office of Civil Defense Region III to all civil defense directors in Region III on Federal Incentives Program for Provision of Fallout Shelters, 1 February 1962, NCCD Newsletter, February 1962, Attachment 2, NCC.

would provide \$25 dollars per space, with the states funding the additional \$15 dollars, totaling the estimated \$40 dollar cost to build new shelter space for one person.¹⁰⁹ The shelters would have PF 100 protection, space for at least fifty persons, and be immediately available for public use in an emergency.¹¹⁰ The goal of incentive program, in conjunction with the shelter survey, was the creation or establishment of 233 million shelter spaces by Fiscal Year 1967 at a total Federal cost of \$3.5 billion dollars.¹¹¹

Congress dismembered the program. The Independent Offices Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, chaired by Congressman Albert Thomas (D – TX), a long time civil defense foe, eliminated the entire \$460 million incentive program request on 15 June 1962. Thomas’s negative opinions on civil defense were not changed by Pittman’s testimony emphasizing the imposing threat of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, Thomas took an unusual step and invited non-government witnesses to testify in opposition to civil defense. Representatives spoke to the subcommittee from several religious organizations, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, and the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, among others. The many witnesses informed the subcommittee that civil defense was an expensive failure and would provoke a war.¹¹² President Kennedy spoke about civil defense after months of silence on 5 July at a news conference, stating “I have talked to the responsible officials involved...I hope we will secure the money we

¹⁰⁹ HGCO, *Hearings, Civil Defense – 1962*, 87th Cong., 2nd sess., 1962, 9-10.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 29-31.

¹¹² “House Unit Rejects Request by Kennedy for Shelter Funds,” *NYT*, 18 June 1962, pg.1. For an excellent, in-depth look at the Thomas subcommittee hearings, see Boyce Wayne Blanchard, “American Civil Defense 1945 – 1975: The Evolution of Programs and Policies” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1980), 313-18.

requested [for the SIP].”¹¹³ Kennedy’s hope was not fulfilled, as the Appropriations Committee subsequently removed the incentive program from the Office of Civil Defense budget request, voting on 27 July 1962 to approve an Office of Civil Defense budget of \$75 million for Fiscal Year 1963. The committee stated “more study and research” was needed before approval of the incentive program could commence.¹¹⁴ The full House approved the committee report rejecting the SIP funding on 30 July 1962.¹¹⁵

In North Carolina, the state agency considered the House action “a severe setback.” Griffin urged local directors to write to their congressmen and senators “urging appropriation of funds for continuation of Civil Defense Programs at the present level,” adding the bill was still alive in the Senate.¹¹⁶ Letters in support of the incentive program had been arriving in the office of Senator Ervin. General Griffin, the North Carolina Congress of Parents and Teachers, the Duke Fallout Preparedness Committee, the Durham Mayor, and the Greensboro City Manager all asked Ervin to support the program.¹¹⁷ Rear Admiral Hamilton Howe, civil defense director for Winston-Salem and Forsyth County called the Federal civil defense program “reasonable and prudent.” After urging support for the incentive program, Howe closed by adding “I believe in a strong military force that the world knows can win any war if one comes; but I am also sure that we must be able to protect our people at home.

¹¹³ Memorandum from North Carolina State Civil Defense Agency director to local civil defense directors on Recent Press Releases, 10 July 1962, NCC; “President Urges Shelters Action,” *NYT*, 6 July 1962, pg. 6.

¹¹⁴ “Shelter Program Blocked in House,” *NYT*, 28 July 1962, pg. 1.

¹¹⁵ “House Refuses Shelter Funds,” *NYT*, 31 July 1962, pg. 4; Blanchard, “American Civil Defense 1945-1975,” 318-19.

¹¹⁶ NCCD Newsletter, August 1962, pg. 1, NCC.

¹¹⁷ Letter from Marie C. Perryman to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 2 May 1962; Letter from E.J. Evans to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 3 May 1962; Letter from Edward F. Griffin to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 3 May 1962; Letter from H.B. Hines, Jr. to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 11 May 1962, Folder 3160, SJEP, SHC, Box 68.

Any big war will at least subject this nation to widespread radiological fallout.”¹¹⁸ But the failure of the House to fund the bill appeared to sap the wind from the sails of North Carolina civil defense advocates: no further civil defense appeals are found in the files of Senators Jordan or Ervin. Following Senate hearings in August and compromises with the House, the final Office of Civil Defense budget for Fiscal Year 1963 contained \$36 million to continue the NFSS, but the SIP was effectively dead for the time being.¹¹⁹

With the end of the incentive program, the state agency focused its efforts on promoting home fallout shelters. As a means to reach out to persons in both urban and rural areas, the Office of Civil Defense created a civil defense action kit to assist local civil defense organizations in promoting shelters and civil defense planning. These “Organized Action for Civil Defense” kits were endorsed nation-wide by the Air Force Association, American Legion, AMVETS, Jewish War Veterans, Junior Chamber of Commerce, B’nai B’rith, Catholic War Veterans, the Optimists, and various veterans associations. Any of these organizations was likely to have a post or local club in towns across the state and this ensured the kits would be seen by a wide audience.¹²⁰

The information in the kit folder consisted of two booklets, *Fallout Protection* and *Family Shelter Designs*, three information bulletins from the Office of Civil Defense titled “Secretary Pittman Calls for ‘Balanced’ CD Program,” “Questions and Answers for Building Owners,” and “Report on the National Civil Defense Program,” a letter from Pittman for civil

¹¹⁸ Letter from Hamilton W. Howe to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 29 May 1962, Folder 3160, SJEP, SHC, Box 68. Howe’s U.S. Navy career warrants a brief notice. Shortly after midnight on 14 April 1942, Lieutenant Commander Howe in command of the destroyer USS *Roper*, sighted and sank the German u-boat *U-85* off Oregon Inlet, NC. This was the first U-boat kill in World War II by the U.S. Navy and earned Howe the Navy Cross for his actions.

¹¹⁹ Blanchard, “American Civil Defense 1945-1975,” 320-23; Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.*, 126-29.

¹²⁰ NCCD Newsletter Special Issue, 6 July 1963, pg. 2-3, NCC.

defense directors, and a suggested speech for promotion of the kit titled “Why Fallout Shelters?”¹²¹ The state agency received copies in August, and on 4 September had distributed copies to local civil defense directors. An appeal for feedback from the public regarding the kit was made by the Office of Civil Defense Region III headquarters.¹²²

Between 30 June and 15 September 1962, the shelter surveys had identified 1,534 more buildings in North Carolina with shelters that offered at least fair protection from heavy fallout. These shelters had a potential capacity for 348,645, providing protection for 7.7 percent of the population. Unfortunately, only 998 shelter licenses had been processed state-wide, only 541 more since data was first released about the survey in June 1962. Shelters with PF 100 or greater numbered a scant 368. From these licensed PF 100 or greater shelters, the survey had provided public shelter space for 2.8 percent of the state’s residents.¹²³ Although licensed to become fallout shelters, the necessary marking signs and supplies would not begin to be installed until early October. Barely eight percent of the state’s resident population had adequate fallout shelter space available, the vast majority of it unprepared for use.¹²⁴ By October 1962, thanks to Operation Shelter One, Raleigh seems to

¹²¹ Organized Action For Civil Defense folder and contents, 1963, NCCD, NCA, Box 7.

¹²² NCCD Newsletter, August 1962, pg. 2, NCC; Teletype message from OCD-DoD Region III to NCCD, 19 September 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 7.

¹²³ “State of North Carolina Council of Civil Defense Progress Report, January 1, 1961 to January 1, 1963,” pg. 22, NCCD, NCA, Box 9. The exact number of spaces in licensed shelters was 125,957.

¹²⁴ DoD-OCD, *Annual Statistical Report, Fiscal Year 1962, June 30, 1962* (Washington, GPO, 1962), 3-7, GTSP, NCA, Box 140. The NC resident population as of 30 June 1962 was 4,556,155. The percentage of shelter spaces was calculated by using the figures from the “State of North Carolina Council of Civil Defense Progress Report, January 1, 1961 to January 1, 1963,” that listed 348,645 spaces providing protection factors greater than 100. The state report did list 1,303,332 spaces with protection factors from twenty to ninety-nine, but since one hundred was the standard to provide fair protection in heavy fallout, this data was not used for calculation purposes. The OCD did lower the acceptable protection factor for fallout shelters to forty during the Cuban Missile Crisis as a means to boost the number of spaces available, but for purposes here it is not included.

have been the only city in the state with a substantial number of stocked shelters, and this was enough for only four percent of the city occupants!

The organized action kit did not break the apparent grip of apathy on North Carolinians which prevented them from building shelters. According to Blalock, state civil defense officials were ignorant of the survey, “they didn’t care and nobody understood anything about it.”¹²⁵ In late September the state agency requested feedback on the kit, but after analysis of the data the state agency reported that “no positive action has stemmed from any organization listed as recipient of the kit.”¹²⁶ Despite federal initiatives to promote shelter construction in 1962, citizens just were not building them in any noticeable number. In North Carolina, emergency preparedness, especially after the Ash Wednesday Storm, was the focus of the NCCD area directors and local civil defense agencies. Nonetheless, during the first week of October the state agency ran television announcements to promote the new city fallout shelters and the posting of shelter signs as a part of Phase II of the survey. Despite a headline of “Nothing New At This Writing,” at the top of the 9 October 1962 NCCD newsletter, less than two weeks later apathy would turn to anxiety and apprehension as the threat of Armageddon arose in the Caribbean.¹²⁷

Conclusion

The National Fallout Shelter Survey in North Carolina seemed to provide an excellent opportunity to create an extensive civil defense program of fallout shelters across the state.

This grand vision did not come to pass, however, and in October 1962 North Carolina was

¹²⁵ Clifton E. Blalock, interview by author, Durham, NC, 31 July 2008.

¹²⁶ NCCD Newsletter Special Issue, 25 September 1962, NCC; Teletype message from NCCD to OCD-DoD Region III, 12 October 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 7.

¹²⁷ NCCD Newsletter, October 1962, pgs. 1-2, NCC.

unprepared for the event of nuclear warfare. Griffin and Sanford voiced support for shelters, but these words failed to inspire more than handful of private shelter constructions. As Kennedy shied away from civil defense and Congress killed the shelter incentive program, the keystone of Kennedy's shelter strategy, North Carolina's civil defense administrators felt reinforced in their decision to funnel funds from shelters to emergency preparedness.

The Ash Wednesday Storm in March 1962 strengthened their resolve. While shelters were only useful in the unthinkable event of nuclear war, the storm revealed the state's immediate need for emergency preparedness. The storm showed that the state needed to develop emergency plans that had the support of the state civil defense agency and trained, equipped personnel. Local civil defense agencies needed effective communications, flexible emergency plans, and the cooperation of county commissioners and local governments to support such improvements. The storm assisted officials such as Blalock and Spivey in convincing many local governments as to the merits of emergency preparedness in rural areas of North Carolina.

Few people in North Carolina concerned themselves with civil defense during the first part of 1962. The shelter survey in 1962 provided limited federal funding and reemphasized that rural portions of North Carolina lacked any real protection. But Armageddon was almost inconceivable. People respond to immediate crises, not before. This pattern of behavior does not differ from emergency responses by Americans today to impending hurricanes or the recent financial instability or the new millennium changeover. Civil defense agencies in this regard conform with fire departments or any other specialized

government service. Unless they are called to provide their services, they remain largely unnoticed.

Thankfully, before October 1962 the NCCD did not have to respond to any emergency with the potential for nuclear Armageddon. The NFSS and the Ash Wednesday Storm together convinced state officials that shelters were not a plausible or efficient use of limited resources. This strengthened their commitment to focus on emergency preparedness. The real breakdown between civil defense and Americans, however, may rest at the local and state levels. The federal civil defense officials could not convince the NCCD and North Carolinians that fallout shelters for nuclear war were more important than emergency preparedness for natural disasters. North Carolina almost annually had experiences with natural disasters along the coast, but never had to address nuclear attack. Preparing for hurricanes and Nor'easters subsequently would be seen as having greater priority than building shelters. The shift toward emergency preparedness in North Carolina, however, would go largely unseen in the face of the national rejection of civil defense.

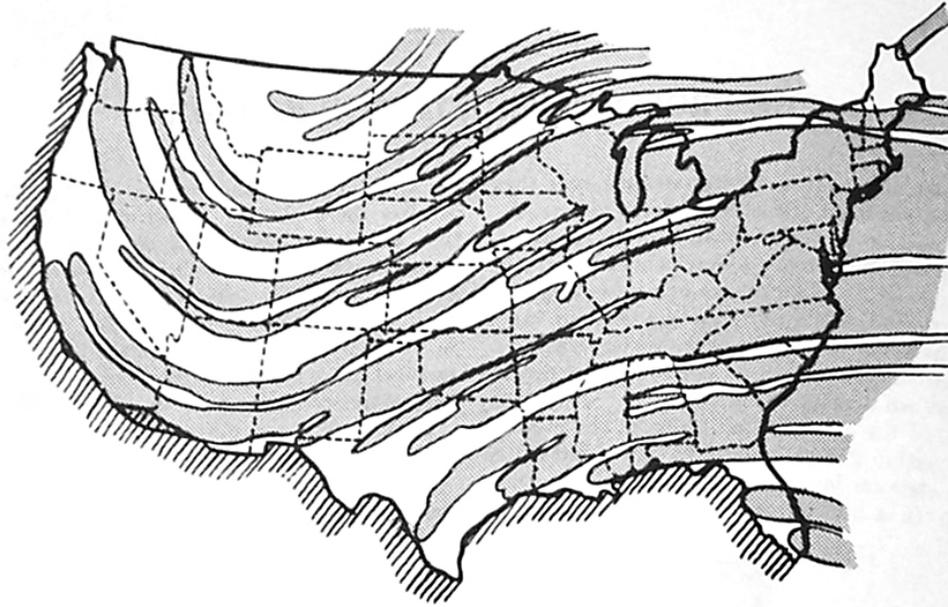


FIGURE 3.—How fallout could cover the Nation following a massive nuclear attack.

Figure 2.1 – Distribution of fallout by wind following a massive nuclear attack. Source: Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, *Fallout Shelter Surveys: Guide for Executives* (Washington, DC: GPO, October 1959), 2.



Figure 2.2 - Urban versus rural fallout shelters and "Gun Thy Neighbor." Source: *Shelby Daily News*, 14 November 1961.



Figure 2.3 - Fallout shelter sign placed as part of the National Fallout Shelter Survey on the building that houses the NC Archives and State Library of North Carolina. Source: Author's Collection.

CHAPTER 3

Accelerated Action—North Carolina Civil Defense Agency and the Cuban Missile Crisis, October–December 1962

We really ought to get some civil defense arrangements in those communities that are within the range of these things.

- President John F. Kennedy, 23 October 1962¹

When Marvin Owens visited his fallout shelter on the evening of 23 October 1962, he startled an opossum who “must have been appraised of the Cuban situation. Leastwise it was taking no chances,” according to the *Greensboro Daily News*.² This opossum, unlike the majority of North Carolinians and Americans, found protection when the world stood at the brink of nuclear annihilation. After the missile crisis, Major General Edward F. Griffin and the North Carolina Civil Defense Agency (NCCD) scrambled to identify and stock more fallout shelters in North Carolina. The state agency feverishly addressed requests from the Office of Civil Defense of the Department of Defense (DoD) to find shelter space for the over 4,550,000 people living in North Carolina.³

The goal of the National Fallout Shelter Survey (NFSS), initiated by President John F. Kennedy during the Berlin Crisis in the summer of 1961, was to survey, mark, and stock public fallout shelters in buildings nationwide for fifty million people by December 1962.⁴ Funded with \$207.6 million (1961 figures) by the Congress, the survey began December 1961 in North Carolina. The survey by October 1962 had located and licensed public fallout

¹ Telephone conversation between John F. Kennedy and Roswell L. Gilpatric, 23 October 1962, President's Office Files, Cuba General 10/23/62, Box 114A, JFKL.

² “Possum Found in Shelter,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 24 October 1962.

³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1961, Eighty-Second Edition* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1961), 12, 22. Available from <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/statcomp/documents/1961-01.pdf> (accessed 17 January 2008).

⁴ John F. Kennedy, “Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Berlin Crisis,” 25 July 1961, JFKL; Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.*, 120-21.

shelter spaces for only 2.8 percent of the state's resident population, and determined adequate space available for an additional 4.9 percent of the state's resident population.⁵ Raleigh, in October 1962, was the only city in North Carolina with a sizeable number of stocked shelters, but this was only enough for four percent of the city's residents.⁶ Most North Carolinians did not build private shelters, leaving the majority of the state unprotected from deadly fallout should a nuclear attack occur. The state, however, unofficially decided in early 1961 to shelve promoting shelters and instead emphasis emergency preparedness. The federal survey largely was the only effort to find shelters outside of individuals building them.

The Cuban Missile Crisis gave the state agency a chance to strengthen support for civil defense throughout the state. A frightened public needed reassurance and leadership as Armageddon loomed ninety miles south of Florida. Local civil defense units, dependent on the NCCD for guidance, were the linchpin for promoting and providing civil defense. The supreme hour for action was at hand for the state agency to inform, lead, and provide protection for the state. The need to improve the state's ability to survive fallout, "the weakest point of our plans for civil defense," according to Governor Terry Sanford, dominated the actions and discussions of the state civil defense officials from October to

⁵ DoD-OCD, *Annual Statistical Report, Fiscal Year 1962, June 30, 1962* (Washington, GPO, 1962), 3-7, GTSP, NCA, Box 140; "North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1961 to 1 January 1963," pg. 22, NCCD, NCA, Box 9. Available refers to spaces located providing a protection factor of one hundred or greater, but not licensed or marked for use as shelters. The NC resident population as of 30 June 1962 was 4,556,155. The percentage of shelter spaces was calculated by using the figures from the "State of North Carolina Council of Civil Defense Progress Report, January 1, 1961 to January 1, 1963." The report listed 348,645 spaces providing protection factors greater than one hundred as of 15 September 1962. The state report also listed 1,303,332 spaces with protection factors from twenty to ninety-nine, but since one hundred was the standard prior to the missile crisis to provide fair protection in heavy fallout, this data was not used for calculation purposes.

⁶ "North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1961 to 1 January 1963," pg. 21, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

December 1962. Although the crisis exposed substantial problems in the state's plans, civil defense in North Carolina was strengthened by it.

October–Quiet at First

October 1962 began quietly for the NCCD and civil defense in North Carolina. A headline of “Nothing New at This Writing” greeted recipients of the October 1962 NCCD newsletter.⁷ In Raleigh, Colonel John C. Thorne, director of the Raleigh-Wake County Civil Defense office, spoke to *The Raleigh Times* about constructing fallout shelters in new schools and public buildings. “Shelters may be compared in some respects to seat belts on an automobile or life boats on a ship,” noted Thorne, adding “they do not insure survival, but may – under certain circumstances – mean the difference between life and death.”⁸

Elsewhere in the state, Mount Olive dedicated a new civil defense building on 13 October 1962 and a day later Governor Sanford and General Griffin toured the Johnston County civil defense headquarters in Selma.⁹ Wilmington residents ate breakfast reading about how a B-52 jettisoned a 24-megaton thermonuclear weapon over Eastern North Carolina before crashing, and how five out of six safety triggers on the bomb had failed! Below this shocking article of 21 October 1962 was a mention of President Kennedy canceling a campaign stop and returning to the White House due to a “feverish cold.”¹⁰

⁷ NCCD Newsletter, October 1962, pgs. 1-2, NCC.

⁸ “Shelters Are Urged in Schools,” *Raleigh Times*, 5 October 1962.

⁹ NCCD Newsletter, October 1962, pg. 1, NCC; “Sanford Slates Civil Defense Tour in Selma,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 14 October 1962.

¹⁰ “N.C. Just Missed Blast From Bomb,” *Sunday Star-News* (Wilmington, NC), 21 October 1962; “Kennedy Cancels Campaign Tour,” *Sunday Star-News* (Wilmington, NC), 21 October 1962; The bomb incident involved the crash of a B-52 bomber on 24 January 1961 at Faro, North Carolina. Two Mark 39 thermonuclear weapons were released in the crash, one of which is still buried in a farmer's field in Faro. See Cliff Nelson, Nick Harrison, Andrew Leung, and Megan Butler, “Broken Arrow: Goldsboro, NC – The Truth Behind North

Kennedy caught his cold on 16 October 1962 when he was alerted to the presence of medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM) launch sites in Cuba. Reconnaissance photographs from 14 October 1962 U-2 reconnaissance aircraft overflights detected three launch sites with at least fourteen missile trailers for SS-3 and SS-4 MRBMs. The missiles, with a range of 1,100 miles and armed with nuclear warheads, could destroy Washington, DC (or anywhere in North Carolina) within thirty minutes of launch.¹¹ A reexamination of the 14 October photographs revealed the early construction of Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) launch sites southwest of Havana. Built for SS-5 missiles, each capable of carrying a five-megaton nuclear warhead 2,200 miles, these IRBM sites gave the Soviets and Cubans the ability to attack anywhere in the contiguous United States except the extreme Pacific Northwest.¹²

President Kennedy assembled a talented group of advisors, known as the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, or ExComm, to assist him in determining a U.S. response. A military strike to destroy the missile sites dominated early discussions of the committee.¹³ On 19 October, speaking to his gathered advisors, Kennedy noted that United States could attack the missile sites directly, but conceded that “there’s bound to be a reprisal from the Soviet Union, there always is – they’re just going in and taking Berlin by force.

Carolina’s Brush With Nuclear Disaster,” University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <http://www.ibiblio.org/bomb/> (accessed 31 March 2008).

¹¹ Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow, eds., *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1997), 47-49. The SS-4 Sandal had an estimated maximum range by US intelligence of 1,020 statute miles, but in reality was 1,300 statute miles. See Normam Polmar and John D. Gresham, *DEFCON-2: Standing on the Brink of Nuclear War during the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2006), xxiii.

¹² May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, 122-26. US intelligence estimates were also incorrect for the SS-5 Skean, which had an actual range of 2,800 statute miles. See Polmar and Gresham, *DEFCON-2*, xxiii.

¹³ May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, 97.

Which leaves me only one alternative, which is to fire nuclear weapons – which is a hell of an alternative.”¹⁴

October–Crisis in Action

On the afternoon of 22 October, the CIA informed the president that a total of four MRBM sites in Cuba containing sixteen launchers were now fully operational, and two additional MRBM sites with eight more launchers would be operational by 25 and 29 October. The three IRBM sites with twelve launch pads were estimated to be operational by December.¹⁵ At 7:00PM EST Kennedy addressed the nation, acknowledging the presence of Soviet missile installations in Cuba. Most frightening of all, Kennedy stated that “it shall be the policy of this Nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union.”¹⁶

North Carolinians responded swiftly and in unison behind Kennedy’s stand on Cuba. An editorial in *The News and Observer* of Raleigh praised Kennedy’s “forthright courage in facing an ominous threat to America,” and acknowledged “Khrushchev must know, as everyone must know, that in today’s war there would be even for the victor only ashes in the mouth.”¹⁷ Governor Sanford telegraphed Kennedy on the morning after his address, writing “North Carolinians support the President of the United States of free America...in your determination that Communist aggression shall not overrun the free Americas the way it

¹⁴ Ibid., 176.

¹⁵ Ibid., 248.

¹⁶ John F. Kennedy, “Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Soviet Arms Buildup in Cuba,” 22 October 1962, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston, MA.

¹⁷ “A Course of Courage,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 23 October 1962.

overran Hungary and other lands... We pray for peace. But we will fight for freedom.”¹⁸

Ominously following the editorial, an article in the paper noted “The state civil defense has 4,942 trial spaces for people in the Raleigh area in case of an atomic attack but they still have not been able to work out the problem of getting water.”¹⁹ In June 1961, Raleigh had a daytime population of 115,512 citizens (nighttime population of 111,483).²⁰ The article ended noting that “civil defense is expecting interest in private bomb shelters to rise since the recent Cuban crisis.”²¹

Civil defense agencies across the state began preparations for public concern on civil defense after Kennedy’s address. Governor Sanford prepared all state government department and agency directors for attack to be activated on the order of the governor in an internal memorandum on 24 October. The Interim Emergency Control Center for the state would be located in the basement of the newly constructed State Legislature building, “in the event of radiation danger.”²² The state agency office in Raleigh received several calls specifically about fallout shelters on the twenty-third, but the office acknowledged no specific action or change in operations would follow Kennedy’s television address.²³ The NCCD reassured concerned citizens everything was “going along as normal” and

¹⁸ “Press Release from the Governor’s Office,” 23 October 1962, GTSP, NCA, Box 140..

¹⁹ “4,942 Shelters Ready Here,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 23 October 1962.

²⁰ Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, *Report on Fallout Shelter Survey, Raleigh, North Carolina, January – June 1961* (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Civil Defense Agency, 1961), pgs. viii-ix, State Library of North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina. Figures are taken from a map in the back of the report titled “Fallout Shelter Survey 1961” at the top and “City of Raleigh, North Carolina” at the bottom.

²¹ “4,942 Shelters Ready Here,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 23 October 1962.

²² Memorandum from Governor Terry Sanford to All Department and Agency Heads, Having Emergency Assignments Under the North Carolina Operation Survival Plan, 24 October 1962, GTSP, NCA, Box 140.

²³ “More Tar Heels Requesting Information on Civil Defense,” *Charlotte Observer*, 24 October 1962.

recommended visiting any U.S. Post Office or local civil defense offices where civil defense publications were available.²⁴

In Greensboro, the city-county civil defense office received “a couple of hundred” telephone calls on the twenty-third. J.M. McGough, Greensboro-Guilford County civil defense director, urged people to visit the office rather than try to digest a forty-page pamphlet over the telephone.²⁵ The civil defense offices of New Hanover, Bladen, Pender, Sampson, Columbus, and Onslow Counties also found themselves struggling to provide information to worried citizens. The lack of shelters concerned these coastal civil defense officials, who possessed only 118 shelters in the region. Although New Hanover County had 101 shelters, only sixty-eight percent of these were marked, and none was stocked. Sampson County had four public shelters capable of housing 1,300 (to protect a population of 60,000). In Bladen County, civil defense and city officials informed the press that “plans are underway to provide public trench shelters, the only public protection available.”²⁶

The most efficient fallout shelter providers were state colleges and universities, acting independently of local civil defense offices. Wake Forest University assigned shelters for all 2,400 students on 23 October, followed shortly thereafter by Pfeiffer College, which offered space to students, faculty, and townspeople.²⁷ Duke University had developed a plan to

²⁴ “Cuban Crisis Boosts Calls to CD Agency,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC) 25 October 1962.

²⁵ “CD Office is Flooded with Queries,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 24 October 1962.

²⁶ “SENC CD in Buildup for Crisis,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, 24 October 1962. Bladen County’s shelter proposal appears to mimic planning by the Federal Civil Defense Administration of the mid-1950s. Testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee in 1955 by then FCDA director Val Peterson revealed plans to dig trenches two feet wide and three feet deep along public highways leading out of targeted cities for people to hide in, with boards or tar paper shielding the inhabitants from fallout. See Garrison, *Bracing for Armageddon*, 58-59.

²⁷ “Students Assigned Shelters,” *Charlotte Observer*, 24 October 1962; “Pfeiffer Announces C-D Plans,” *Charlotte Observer*, 25 October 1962.

provide shelter space for the entire university community of 25,000 individuals back in June.²⁸ In the middle of the crisis newspapers announced a fallout shelter test in Durham scheduled for 16 November 1962, where a hundred Duke and Durham residents would live in the campus shelters for twelve hours. Although the articles noted the test “is not related directly to the Cuban Crisis,” the announcement certainly alerted people in Durham where to go in case of Doomsday.²⁹ North Carolina State College assigned all students fallout shelter spaces in Nelson Hall and Carmichael Gymnasium, both stocked for 3,200 persons to live inside for two weeks. Reynolds Coliseum was not stocked but also could function as a shelter.³⁰ Bringing up the rear, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in conjunction with the Chapel Hill Civil Defense Program, designated thirty-one buildings on campus as shelters for 12,175 people. During the crisis, however, these shelters were not stocked or marked.³¹

Civil defense planning on college campuses, emphasizing fallout shelters for the resident population, was markedly different from public education plans for evacuation of the transient population. Campuses benefited from stronger, sturdier building construction. Basements, a centralized population base (students), a concentrated campus and the added benefit of centralized decision-making gave universities and colleges a huge advantage. Public schools, with bused-in students and facilities designed for limited occupation, faced substantial problems. The Cuban Missile Crisis forced public school administrators statewide

²⁸ NCCD Newsletter, June 1962, pg. 4, NCC.

²⁹ “Durham to Stage Fallout Exercise,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 25 October 1962; “Exercise,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 25 October 1962.

³⁰ “NCS Assigns Shelters Space for Students,” *Raleigh Times*, 30 October 1962.

³¹ “UNC Designates 31 Campus Fallout Shelters,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 4 November 1962.

to finally confront the issue of what to do with a building, or series of buildings, filled with young transient occupants. Historian Kenneth Rose notes that “a uniform civil defense policy among American schools never developed,” and North Carolina was no exception.³² School instructions for civil defense dated back to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction guidance from 1953. This booklet emphasized repeatedly the need for clarifying individual responsibilities for civil defense planning amongst communities, schools, and civil defense offices.³³

Individual principals shouldered responsibility for preparing a civil defense response at every school. On 25 October 1962, New Hanover County school officials offered the twenty-three public schools as fallout shelters. Each principal “would have to ‘use his own judgment’ in the event of enemy attack” to either evacuate the school or shelter the children in the schools themselves.³⁴ In Raleigh, principals again exercised authority for either evacuating or sheltering students. Drills for both activities were conducted at all the county schools. At Emma Conn School, Principal Russell Jefferson, warned about traffic jams, planned to have children walk home “if time permits.” Otherwise, students would be sheltered in the school, with Jefferson acknowledging “there is enough water in the pipes and hot water heater to last a few days and the food supply from the lunchroom would last possibly a week.” Parents were informed of these plans and asked for input. Raleigh’s newest high school, William G. Enloe High School, was built with a shelter area capable of housing 400 people, but here, too, school officials planned for students to walk home “if time

³² Rose, *One Nation Underground*, 134.

³³ State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Raleigh, North Carolina, *The Schools and Civil Defense* (Raleigh: North Carolina State Board of Education, 1953), 6-10.

³⁴ “School Officials Check Shelters for Students,” *Wilmington News*, 25 October 1962.

and distance permit.”³⁵ Wake County planned to bus children home, and if time was limited, “parents will have to drive to school for their children.”³⁶

Time and distance, with nuclear weapons ninety miles off the coast of Florida, could be measured in mere miles or minutes. Tar Heel nerves frayed state-wide to the all-too-real possibility of nuclear destruction raining down without warning. In Raleigh, police credited jitters with causing an unusual jump in traffic accidents, and in Cary a small fire brought the sounds of an air raid signal rather than the fire signal.³⁷ In Gastonia, civil defense director Ronald Heafner, after a day of answering frantic phone calls, stated “We seem to go from complete apathy to complete panic. If we could just educate the people always to be aware of the danger of an attack, and to avoid panic when there is a possibility of immediate danger, we would have accomplished a great deal.”³⁸ A power failure in Greensboro affected fifty families on the morning of 24 October, and “many wondered if the war had come to their neighborhood.” A blown fuse turned out to be the culprit.³⁹ On 31 October, the Raleigh Fire Department planned “Home Fire Drill Day,” and intended to sound all civil defense sirens in Raleigh, Cary, and Garner to give the alert signal for three minutes in the evening. Fortunately, someone, “due to the tense situation prevalent for the past several days,”

³⁵ “City, County Students Have Disaster Plans,” *Raleigh Times*, 26 October 1962.

³⁶ “Bomb Plans Set in Wake Schools,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 30 October 1962. Wake County Schools and Raleigh City Schools did not merge until the 1970s.

³⁷ “Lighter Side in Crisis is Seen by Area Behavior,” *Raleigh Times*, 26 October 1962.

³⁸ “CD Office is Flooded With Calls,” *Charlotte Observer*, 25 October 1962.

³⁹ “Power Fails; 50 Families Get Jitters,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 25 October 1962.

convinced the fire department not to sound the sirens.⁴⁰ Greensboro avoided this situation by deciding to only activate the sirens in a real emergency.⁴¹

Tar Heel tensions, perhaps amusing in hindsight, reflected the utter lack of preparation throughout the state. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civil Defense Stuart Pittman briefed President Kennedy on national civil defense readiness on the evening of 23 October 1962. A total of 92 million Americans and 58 cities with populations greater than 100,000 were within range of the SS-4 missiles. Pittman recommended lowering the protection factors for shelter survey buildings from protection factor (PF) 100 to PF 40, thereby creating for more shelter spaces nationwide.⁴² The shelter survey would be accelerated in marking and stocking existing PF 100 structures for public use. Ominously, in response to a question from Kennedy about protection against radiation, Pittman stated “if there will be fallout, the only protection that exists today is in the cities, and there’s little to no protection in the rural areas.”⁴³ Kennedy asked about evacuating cities in the Southeast, but Pittman opposed this action out of the fear of inducing panic.⁴⁴ Throughout the crisis,

⁴⁰ “Fire Drill Day Set Wednesday; Siren Tests Set,” *Raleigh Times*, 29 October 1962; “Sirens Silent Here Tomorrow,” *Raleigh Times*, 30 October 1962.

⁴¹ “Greensboro Siren Tests Suspended,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 27 October 1962.

⁴² Fallout, particulate matter produced or thrown up from the ground in a nuclear explosion, absorbs radiation from the detonation and falls back down to Earth with an appearance of snow. Around fifty-seven grams of fission material is produced for every kiloton of fission energy yielded. While alpha and beta radiation can be stopped by a thin sheet of aluminum, gamma radiation requires substantial shielding. Fallout protection factors (PF) are defined as the ratio of gamma radiation exposure at a standard unprotected location to exposure at a protected location. The standard unprotected location would be a point three feet above a smooth plane uniformly covered in fallout.⁴² People in a shelter with a PF of 100 would receive 100 times less radiation than an unprotected person. The higher the PF for a shelter, the safer the shelter would be for the occupants. See Dowling and Harrell, *Civil Defense*, 69-72.

⁴³ May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, 338-339. The 22 October 1962 meeting between Pittman, ExComm, and Kennedy was the only meeting discussing civil defense during the missile crisis.

⁴⁴ Alice George, *Awaiting Armageddon: How Americans Faced the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 62; Telephone conversation between John F. Kennedy and Roswell

Kennedy ordered civil defense officials to not place state or local civil defense programs on alert.⁴⁵

Although not on alert, the state agency accelerated activity on the survey. In response to Governor Sanford's internal memorandum for the state Emergency Operation Center, the North Carolina civil defense reported to the that it was "accelerating surveys of state buildings to relocate government departments in protected locations" on 25 October 1962.⁴⁶ Sanford met in the morning of the twenty-fifth with Griffin and again in the afternoon, this time with the five area directors to review civil defense planning across the state.⁴⁷ David W. Spivey, Area A director, recalled the meeting was more about Sanford wanting to know what capabilities the state had and where. Spivey noted "we all agreed that it was up to us to try to fan out and talk to the local governments and say 'let's be calm, check your emergency capabilities, your police, etcetera and make sure everybody's about as ready to cope with whatever might come along as you can, and that's about all we can really do.'"⁴⁸ For the

L. Gilpatric, 23 October 1962, President's Office Files, Cuba General 10/23/62, Box 114A, John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library, Boston, MA, available from Digital National Security Archive.

⁴⁵ George, *Awaiting Armageddon*, 43.

⁴⁶ Teletype Message from Office of Civil Defense Region Three to All State Civil Defense Directors Region Three, 25 October 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6. The OCD organized the states into eight civil defense regions. Region III included Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, and the Panama Canal Zone. Source: DoD-OCD, *Annual Statistical Report, Fiscal Year 1962, June 30, 1962* (Washington, GPO, 1962), 6.

⁴⁷ Press Release from the Governor's Office, 25 October 1962, GTSP, NCA Box 140. The Greensboro-High Point area was considered the most critical target for attack in North Carolina in the mid 1950s based on population and industrial capacity. See Federal Civil Defense Administration, *Target Areas for Civil Defense Purposes: Their Population, Principal Cities, Counties* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1953), foreword. See also North Carolina Council of Civil Defense, September 1956, *Phase One Report: North Carolina Survival Plan Project* (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Council of Civil Defense, 1956), 30, NCCD, NCA, Box 7.

⁴⁸ David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008.

next few days, Spivey burned up the roads in Area A, meeting with county commissioners in person or via telephone up to 11:00PM nightly.⁴⁹

The larger afternoon meeting was “a reevaluation of our plans,” noted Griffin, and he told reporters that no special plans for enlarging or altering the state program for preparedness in the event of attack were made.⁵⁰ A follow-up message to Office of Civil Defense Region III on 26 October was formal and nondescript, until the end: “North Carolina director briefing governor daily. Contacts maintained with all area and local CD offices. State Emergency Operation Center staff vacancies filled. State director reports overwhelming floods of calls and demands for CD publications in all cities.”⁵¹ Governor Sanford knew what the state had available, according to Spivey. “I believe he realized in his subsequent times with me that perhaps we, the area directors, probably knew more governing bodies and more people who were the ones who were going to cope with this thing, then anybody else we had,” remarked Spivey. The overall objective of the meetings, in Spivey’s opinion was “that we [area directors] were the ones to go out and do our best to calm the populace, say ‘look we are going to do the best we can, we are keeping at it, the Governor is calling the National Guard out to whatever extent might be necessary. Everybody has go to be prepared to work on their own and expect to be mostly on their own.’”⁵²

The information the state agency released to the state media presented an appearance of calm, professional, orderly action on the part of the state agency and the Governor,

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ “Sanford Sees CD Leaders; Gets Wire From JFK,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 26 October 1962.

⁵¹ Teletype Message from Office of Civil Defense Region Three to All State Civil Defense Directors Region Three, 26 October 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

⁵² David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008.

ensuring the citizens of the state that all was well. Lacking from these releases during the crisis is any information about fallout shelters. In Wilmington, an editorial in *The Wilmington News* appropriately titled “Some Goals for Civil Defense,” declared “Civil Defense build up in Wilmington and surrounding areas will have to be stepped up, and continued at an accelerated pace, if it is to come anywhere near being adequate to meet any emergency.”

The editorial continued:

It does no good at this time to criticize or complain about conditions within the CD, whether they are too far behind or whatever the argument. The point is now to work toward the goal of adequate preparation, and that should be what all communities should be striving for even in the face of possible emergencies.

The general shortage of sheltering areas is one of the biggest headaches facing CD officials at this time. But they should continue to challenge this situation, locating and designating public sheltering areas as is reasonably possible.

The hope is, of course, that they shall never need to be used. This is the same theme we used a year ago or so when Civil Defense programs were being initiated. The danger slackened, and interest began to wane. This time, we should see the programs through.⁵³

Hundreds of miles away on the same day, *The Charlotte Observer* ran a political cartoon [see page 138] sharing similar sentiments. A concerned citizen, having noticed a skeletal civil defense representative, asked “how long have you been out there?”⁵⁴ Despite previous shortcomings, county and city civil defense sprang into action and began marking and stocking fallout shelters with a degree of urgency not seen since in the summer of 1961.

Fallout shelters, marked, stocked, and located in populated areas gave Tar Heels some chance to survive. The shelter survey, by October 1962, was just beginning to mark

⁵³ “Some Goals for Civil Defense,” *Wilmington News*, 25 October 1962.

⁵⁴ Political Cartoon, “Well, how long have you been out there?,” *Charlotte Observer*, 25 October 1962.

and stock shelters nationwide. Many counties found themselves with a mere handful of shelters available to serve only a fraction of the county or city population. On the coast, civil defense converted two batteries of the Civil War-era Fort Caswell into fallout shelters capable of protecting 1,000 people.⁵⁵ The Greensboro-Guilford County civil defense office began marking 66 fallout shelters on 27 October 1962, enough to house 38,500 people.⁵⁶ Kenneth Williams, the director of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's civil defense office, however, merely announced "in case of an attack, people should take the best shelter available." The surveying and marking of shelters in Charlotte was "not nearly completed," he added, but it would be "sometime in the future." He closed on a reassuring note: "Charlotte is better off than most cities, the people in Washington tell us. We have made more progress."⁵⁷

Disconcerting as Williams's comments may be, indifference, apathy, or hopelessness still existed during the crisis. In Charlotte, city phone books listed six companies in the fallout shelter business (three of whom had gone out of business by the time of the crisis), and none of the remaining three reported a shelter sale by four days after Kennedy's announcement.⁵⁸ Raleigh supermarkets reported normal sales and no signs of people stockpiling food for shelters.⁵⁹ Gaston County, with 232 potential fallout shelters (but none marked or supplied), asked residents to not panic, for no one else in the country had received supplies either. Eventually, seventy-six shelters would be stocked to protect 42,943 residents,

⁵⁵ "Shelters Readied at Fort Caswell for Southport Area," *Wilmington Morning Star*, 25 October 1962.

⁵⁶ "City Council Acts to Guard Against Any Emergency," *Greensboro Daily News*, 27 October 1962. Situated within a 300-mile radius of Washington, DC, Greensboro was classified in the critical area of civil defense. Had Washington been attacked or President Kennedy declared a state of emergency, Governor Sanford was expected to follow suit, thereby placing Greensboro under civil defense martial law with full rationing in effect.

⁵⁷ "In Case of Attack, Stay Put," *Charlotte Observer*, 26 October 1962.

⁵⁸ "Fallout Shelter Work Isn't Picking up Much," *Charlotte Observer*, 26 October 1962.

⁵⁹ "Cuban Crisis Not Causing Grocery Stockpiling Here," *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 26 October 1962.

or 38 percent of the county population.⁶⁰ Furthermore, residents would have twenty to thirty minutes to find shelter and civil defense director Ronald Heafner doubted Gaston County would be attacked. “A house will protect you as well as anything from radiation,” declared Heafner, adding “and if your house is destroyed, nothing can save you.”⁶¹

In nearby Cherryville, Guy Eaker, Sr. and his family may have been the only residents with a fallout shelter. Eaker’s father decided to build the shelter after events in early 1961 convinced him that “something was going to happen.” Built over the course of a few weeks in April 1961 at a cost of \$2,000, the Eakers built the shelter for twelve people to live comfortably. Measuring thirty by forty feet, built with cinder blocks reinforced with steel rebar and poured concrete, the entire shelter was buried inside a hill. Two vents, one with a handcrank, provided ventilation. The shelter featured a hand-dug well for a constant water supply and had a commode that emptied into a nearby creek. Oil lamps provided illumination.⁶²

Cherryville, situated near several large cities, could have received substantial fallout if North Carolina was attacked. When hearing of the missile crisis, Eaker recalled “it was scary...I sort of really had my doubts about it [building the shelter] when Dad was doing this and talking about it. But when all this happened, and they had the missiles and everything down there I said ‘this can be it any time.’ That really scared me.” Despite the initial fear, Eaker felt reassured his family had a shelter ready to use, and since living in a small town

⁶⁰ “Gaston County Profile,” Gaston County Web, <http://www.co.gaston.nc.us/countyprofile.htm> (accessed 21 August 2008).

⁶¹ “Gaston Civil Defense Plans Will Be Made Known Today,” *Charlotte Observer*, 26 October 1962; “Gaston Civil Defense Efforts Accelerated,” *Charlotte Observer*, 27 October 1962; “20-30 Minutes – You Live or Not,” *Charlotte Observer*, 26 October 1962. Gaston County’s population was 125,000 in the 1960 US Census.

⁶² Guy Eaker, Sr., interview by author, Cherryville, NC, 25 February 2008.

meant that fallout, not a direct attack, was the main threat. The family got together to give everyone a share of the equipment and food to bring to the shelter. “We had plenty of food, mostly canned food, plenty of water, had our own well, so I think we could have stayed down there a whole month if we had to,” recollected Eaker. Eaker think that his family shelter was the only fallout shelter in Cherryville during the missile crisis, and as a substantial rural shelter it stands as an exception to the rule.⁶³

Why other families in Cherryville, or elsewhere in North Carolina, did not band together to build fallout shelters is commonly attributed to apathy or disillusionment with civil defense.⁶⁴ In Eaker’s opinion, the local news media did not inform or educate people properly about fallout and the aftermath of a nuclear explosion. If people had known the risks of fallout, “this would have made more people build bomb shelters if they [civil defense] had told them how serious it was,” stated Eaker. Money was tight for Eaker (having been married only a year) but pooling his money with his relatives made the shelter investment more financially feasible. Granted, Eaker kept his shelter secret. How many other people did the same will never be known.⁶⁵

The Cuban Missile Crisis climaxed on Saturday, 27 October 1962. The same day also bore witness to the start of a federal accelerated fallout shelter program. Since 24 October, the US Air Force’s Strategic Air Command, placed on DEFCON-2 alert by the authority of General Thomas S. Power, had 60 to 80 B-52 Stratofortresses armed with

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ The issue of apathy on the part of the American people is prevalent in civil defense histories for the United States and the issue of fallout shelters. For several discussions, see notably Margot A. Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove’s America: Society and Culture in the Atomic Age* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 234; Rose, *One Nation Underground*, 186-92, George, *Awaiting Armageddon*, 59-67; Walter Karp, “When Bunkers Last in The Backyard Bloom’d,” *American Heritage* 31 (February/March 1980): 84-93.

⁶⁵ Guy Eaker, Sr., interview by author, Cherryville, NC, 25 February 2008.

nuclear weapons airborne and ready to strike.⁶⁶ While over Cuba, a U-2 reconnaissance aircraft flown by Major Rudolf Anderson was shot down by Soviet air defense forces, and Anderson was killed.⁶⁷ Upon hearing the news, Kennedy asked “Well now, this is much of an escalation by them, isn’t it?” McNamara immediately responded by noting “I think we can defer an air attack on Cuba until Wednesday [31 October] or Thursday...”⁶⁸ In the midst of this tension at the White House, Pittman was speaking to the Committee on Civil Defense and Post Attack Recovery of the National Governors’ Conference at the Pentagon.⁶⁹

Pittman proposed to the governors a new, accelerated version of the shelter survey. The national civil defense effort would “move the program as far as existing resources will permit in a three months’ period.” Addressing the governors, Pittman optimistically stated

The reaction of the American people to the current international tension shows that as a Nation we are prepared to face up to and meet the recurring threats we live with. According to our reports, people around the country are turning their attention to the sensible measures of self-protection which make up the rapidly developing Civil Defense Programs of the Federal, State, and Local Governments. We are in much better shape than we were a year ago. This sharpened public interest in Civil Defense gives us new opportunities to move ahead on the program decided upon last year [shelter survey].⁷⁰

For existing surveyed buildings, the Office of Civil Defense procured over \$80 million worth of shelter supplies and 1,400,000 signs stockpiled in government warehouses to mark

⁶⁶ Polmar and Gresham, *DEFCON-2*, 244-46. Defense Condition 2 (DEFCON) is one measure above complete readiness for war. This was the only time in the entire Cold War that SAC, or any organization of the US military was placed on DEFCON-2 alert.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 149-150.

⁶⁸ May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, 571.

⁶⁹ Rose, *One Nation Underground*, 197.

⁷⁰ Press Release, “A Report on National Civil Defense Readiness By Steuart L. Pittman, Assistant Secretary of Defense to the Committee on Civil Defense and Post Attack Recovery of the National Governors’ Conference, October 27, 1962,” NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

shelters. Approximately 46 million shelter spaces would be stocked nationwide by April 1963, affirmed Pittman. Pittman gave statistics to support his assertion that civil defense was in “better shape than we were a year ago.” The Office of Civil Defense had shelter supplies for four million people in storage, shelter signs posted on 796 buildings (with a possible 640,000 spaces), of which 112 of these marked. Most importantly, public shelters were stocked and ready *for 170,000 people nationwide*. The federal civil defense officials decided to lower the standards of shielding from radiation from a protection factor of one hundred to forty, doubling the number of potential surveyed shelter spaces.⁷¹

Lowered protection factors would provide shelter spaces for more people, but would expose people to great risk. A PF 40 shelter was the minimum desirable protection for the United States as a whole. A common frame house provided only between PF 1.5 to PF 3 protection, and a common basement from PF 10 to PF 20.⁷² According to the calculations of physicist James W. Ring, a one megaton ground burst, with a constant 15 MPH wind would yield a “450 rem dose contour in an oblong patten 256 km long and about 64 km wide at 96 km downwind. This 450 rem dose is taken to be a lethal dose in 50% of the cases.” A massive nuclear attack on the United States covering all major cities would produce enough fallout for accumulated radiation doses of over 10,000 rems for two weeks. In a PF 40 shelter, occupants would be exposed to 250 rems and suffer from radiation sickness.⁷³ If the Soviets had launched a nuclear attack, some sort of shelter would probably have been

⁷¹ Teletype message from DoD-OCD Region III to NCCD, 30 October 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6; [Emphasis added].

⁷² Dowling and Harrell, *Civil Defense*, 72.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 80. A rem, short of Roentgen equivalent man/mammal, is a measurement of radiation dose received. The average U.S. citizen receives a dose of 0.2 rem annually. See *ibid.*, xvii.

preferable to no shelter at all, but exposure to fallout would certainly have killed millions of Americans.

The accelerated program proposed by Pittman consisted of six parts. They were shelter marking, shelter stocking, rural shelters, training, matching funds and surplus property for states, and stand-by military reservists for civil defense service. Lowering the protection factor of potential shelters from one hundred to forty would accommodate 110 to 120 million Americans nationwide. Shelter supplies would be provided only to PF 100 shelters (the previously surveyed 46 million spaces), and un-stocked shelters would depend on the occupants bringing their own. The Office of Civil Defense would intensify rural civil defense and fallout shelter efforts with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The department would provide technical civil defense help in rural areas, focusing particularly on “inexpensive shelters for people, and on methods for protecting livestock and crops against fallout.”⁷⁴ Short training courses in radiation monitoring, fallout shelter construction, and community shelter management would be conducted nationwide.⁷⁵ The Governors’ Civil Defense Committee, after Pittman’s briefing, unanimously adopted fifteen resolutions for all governors to follow, the fifteenth being “that each Governor should personally report to the Mayors and local government executives and to the people of his state with respect to these

⁷⁴ Teletype message from DoD-OCD Region III to NCCD, 30 October 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6. Rural civil defense efforts in North Carolina were assigned by the USDA to the Agricultural Extension Service at North Carolina State University in 1962. Rural civil defense in North Carolina was an ongoing effort since February 1960. See “North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1961 to 1 January 1962,” pg. 13, NCCD, NCA, Box 9; “State of North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1959 to 1 January 1961,” pgs. 9-10, NCCD, NCA, Box 9; For an excellent look at rural civil defense, see Jenny Baker Devine, “The Farmer and the Atom: The Iowa State Cooperative Extension Service and Rural Civil Defense, 1955-1970,” *The Annals of Iowa* 66 (Spring 2007): 161-94.

⁷⁵ Press Release, “A Report on National Civil Defense Readiness By Steuart L. Pittman, Assistant Secretary of Defense to the Committee on Civil Defense and Post Attack Recovery of the National Governors’ Conference, October 27, 1962,” NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

recommendations and the character of the need for fallout protection and other civil defense activities.”⁷⁶

Back in the White House, President Kennedy and ExComm reached a proposal for a peaceful end to the crisis. Kennedy wrote to Khrushchev on 27 October, pledging that if the Soviets removed the missiles from Cuba, the United States would end the quarantine and pledge not to invade Cuba.⁷⁷ On the evening of 27 October, Attorney General Robert Kennedy and Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin met in the Justice Department. Robert Kennedy gave Dobrynin the President’s letter and explained the terms.⁷⁸ In the morning of 28 October, Radio Moscow announced a message from Khrushchev, proclaiming “the Soviet government, in addition to previously issued instructions on the cessation of further work at the building sites for the weapons, has issued a new order on the dismantling of the weapons which you describe as 'offensive' and their crating and return to the Soviet Union.”⁷⁹ The Soviets and Americans managed to dodge Armageddon, and in the views of historian John Lewis Gaddis, the crisis “persuaded everyone who was involved in it...that the weapons each side had developed during the Cold War posed a greater threat to *both* sides than the United States and the Soviet Union did to one another.”⁸⁰

As the news of the end of the crisis reached North Carolina, more than 300 Wake County residents were attending a civil defense talk at Memorial Auditorium in Raleigh to learn about the risks of fallout and how to build shelters. Wake County Civil Defense

⁷⁶ Telegram from New York Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller to the Honorable Terry Sanford, Governor of North Carolina, 28 October 1962, GTSP, NCA, Box 140.

⁷⁷ May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, 603-04.

⁷⁸ Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton & Sons Co. Inc., 1969), 108.

⁷⁹ May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, 630-31.

⁸⁰ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Press, 2003), 78.

director Colonel John C. Thorne informed the audience that 40 buildings in Raleigh were capable of sheltering 35,000 citizens, but lacked supplies. “The current international crisis should convince us that a nuclear attack could come at any time and should serve as a warning to all to take whatever practical precautionary measures...to survive,” informed Thorne. The audience was instructed on how, by getting under a table covered by books or other massive material, they could protect against fallout.⁸¹ In the *Greensboro Daily News*, General Griffin declared North Carolina as “well prepared as any state in the nation,” and noted the state’s largest problem was “the apathy of our people” toward building fallout shelters which were “the essential thing to have.” Ironically, Griffin did not have a fallout shelter himself at his home in Louisburg, but was expecting “to have one very shortly.”⁸²

October–Post Crisis Responses

The end of the missile crisis brought a flurry of commentary relating to civil defense. Governor Sanford proclaimed on 29 October 1962 “I am well pleased with Civil Defense and I want to commend the thousands of Civil Defense workers across the State who for several years have been taking the time to train themselves to be in a position to protect all the citizens of the State.” Then, in acknowledgment of the National Governors’ Conference resolution to inform the state citizens on civil defense, Sanford proclaimed “only one weakness in our plans gave us concern, as it has concerned us for several years, and I think now that the immediate danger has subsided it would be well to discuss this with the citizens of the State...that concern...was for the ability of the average citizen to protect himself and

⁸¹ “Interest High in Civil Defense,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 29 October 1962.

⁸² “Civil Defense Chief Keeps Vivid Reminder,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 28 October 1962.

his family.” Sanford would elaborate in a radio and television address on 31 October 1962.⁸³ A subsequent press release emphasized that “the Cuban crisis may be over but the Cold War continues.”⁸⁴

At the end of the month, Governor Sanford and General Griffin met with Assistant Secretary Pittman at Region III headquarters to discuss the accelerated civil defense program.⁸⁵ Despite Pittman’s assurances of \$80 million in procured supplies, the shelter supply cupboard was bare at Region III headquarters, but the identification of shelter spaces was proceeding quickly. The Raleigh-Wake County Civil Defense Office announced that 53 buildings in Raleigh surveyed as part of the national shelter survey passed inspection to become shelters for 35,000 people, although only 31 building owners agreed to allow fallout shelters to be placed within them. The 31 buildings could house 20,000 people, once shelter supplies arrived 1 January 1963.⁸⁶ These buildings joined the others from Operation Shelter One, increasing the number of public shelter spaces in Raleigh to approximately 25,000. This increased the number of public shelter spaces for the city’s residents from four percent to twenty-two percent.⁸⁷

⁸³ Statement by Governor Terry Sanford, 29 October 1962, GTSP, NCA, Box 140. The governor’s office also mailed copies of the speech to all North Carolina newspapers to ensure the widest possible exposure of the information. Source: Memorandum to Local Directors, Area Directors and NCCD Emergency Service Chiefs from State Director, 1 November 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

⁸⁴ From the Governor’s Office for Immediate Release, 29 October 1962, GTSP, NCA, Box 140.

⁸⁵ Teletype message from Office of Civil Defense Region Three to Governor Terry Sanford, C/O State CD Director, Raleigh, NC, 28 October 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

⁸⁶ “53 Buildings Here Pass Civil Defense Inspection,” *Raleigh Times*, 30 October 1962; “51 Buildings Found Safe as Shelters,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 31 October 1962. The *News and Observer* headline is a typo. The article itself lists 53 buildings.

⁸⁷ The percentages are calculated using the day and night resident populations for Raleigh cited in the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization survey from January to June 1961.

The following day, Pittman informed all state civil defense directors that “the esoteric, emotional, and uninformed shelter debate dissolved in the realities confronting us.” Pittman continued, adding that “there is much to be done for our self-protection by each community,” for “having been reminded that we want and need all practical protection against nuclear attack, let us recognize that effective preparation takes time and effort during the quiet periods. It makes us a tougher nut to crack and that makes war less likely.”⁸⁸ State Director of Administration Hugh Cannon and General Griffin met with Pittman on the thirtieth and received a briefing on the six areas of emphasis for the accelerated program for the ensuing three months. Griffin and Cannon were instructed to “emphasize in all discussions ‘that the only connection between the Cuban situation and this three month undertaking is that the public has been reminded of the dangers of our times and a new receptivity to civil defense has been created which makes possible civil defense activities which are long overdue.’”⁸⁹

Governor Sanford addressed North Carolinians on 31 October 1962, urging preparedness while alleviating tensions. “If our civil defense is good enough to save the lives of most of you, then the chances of any enemy attack are reduced,” opened Sanford. He assured citizens that “there has been and will be no reason for panic and no need for hysteria in North Carolina. We are prepared, and we are strong, and we know what to do.” Thousands of North Carolina National Guardsmen stood by in case of any emergency, and

⁸⁸ Teletype from Department of Defense, Office of Civil Defense, Region Three, Attention to State Civil Defense Directors, 30 October 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

⁸⁹ “Six Major Areas of Emphasis Referred to in Report on National Civil Defense Readiness by Steuart L. Pittman, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civil Defense on October 27, 1962,” NCCD, NCA, Box 6; Memorandum to Local Directors, Area Directors and Emergency Service Chiefs from State Director, North Carolina Civil Defense Agency, 31 October 1962, NCC.

civil defense had offices in 98 counties across the state, advising and serving on the staffs of elected officials. The state, Sanford assured listeners, had tested the readiness of the North Carolina Emergency Operational Plans, counties and cities possessed such plans, and “every other state agency has a mission for the emergency.” After informing citizens of the existing civil defense preparations in the state, he began to discuss in detail “the weakest point of our plans for civil defense – survival in fallout.”⁹⁰

Sanford detailed to his audience that establishing effective protection against fallout in North Carolina rested on four assumptions: (1) that citizens possessed advance knowledge of where to go to avoid fallout, (2) that many Tar Heels could not afford even a fifty dollar shelter, (3) that people did not understand what fallout was, and (4) most importantly that people were not interested in shelters except during an emergency. Sanford explained what fallout and radiation were, and assured citizens the state could detect and report where and when fallout would appear. Sanford’s told citizens who could not afford a fallout shelter: “two feet of solid concrete or three feet of earth will give you almost absolute protection. Your imagination, a shovel, some boards or logs, can give you some pretty good protection, without spending any money. We called them foxholes in World War II.” Sanford, a paratrooper in World War II, attempted to tap into the collective memory of thousands of veterans in the state, but the analogy was flawed. Foxholes generally lacked roofs and were better suited to protection from blast than from fallout. In closing, Sanford reminded

⁹⁰ “Report to the People By Governor Terry Sanford Over Statewide Television and Radio Network, Raleigh North Carolina, Wednesday 31 October 1962 – 6:45PM,” NCCD, NCA, Box 7.

everyone how “civil defense is not based on fear. It is based on confidence in our strength, our knowledge, our ability to protect our nation and ourselves.”⁹¹

Reaction to Sanford’s speech was divided. Bob McNeill of West Jefferson wrote Sanford to “heartily commend you on the straightforward way you presented it.”⁹² In contrast, Allan P. Sindler of Durham felt “the only thing that can be said in defense of the misleading impression it [Sanford’s talk] deliberately created and the inadequacy of what passes for your policy on the matter is that North Carolina doubtless is no more unprepared to react to nuclear war than most other states.” Sindler continued: “the genuineness of any state civil defense program depends...on the effort (as distinguished from talk) to bring about a completed public and private shelter program of a magnitude sufficient to take care of most to all of the residents of the state.”⁹³

Sindler suggested a litany of potential shelter incentives, including tax deductions, laws for shelter construction in new buildings, and the sale of surplus federal government property to citizens. Sindler ends his letter to the governor by putting his finger on the problem of apathy:

...the source of initiative [for shelters] must come from political leadership, at both state and national levels. It is understandable, though not excusable, that public officials charged with responsibility for protecting the welfare of the people should prefer to take the easy way out on the civil defense needs of the people by mirroring the indifference, the wishful thinking, and the shortsightedness of the people. True leadership, however, cannot always follow majority opinion; it must lead opinion as well.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Bob McNeill to Terry Sanford, 31 October 1962, GTSP, NCA, Box 141.

⁹³ Allan P. Sindler to Terry Sanford, 1 November 1962, GTSP, NCA, Box 141.

In short, Governor, you are in a unique position in this state to do more than alert the people of North Carolina to the nature of the civil defense program. By policies, actions, and a demonstrated sincerity and intensity of effort, you can encourage, goad, persuade, prod, and move people and communities into doing what you know should be done to develop adequate radiation protection.⁹⁴

Governor Sanford (or his office) wrote Sindler a response, thanking him for his letter, but adding “none of this [NC civil defense work] will be worthwhile unless the citizens of the State accept their responsibility and the purpose of the program was to tell them that and to let them know what has to be done.”⁹⁵

A marked tension existed as to whether responsibility and leadership for civil defense rested with the individual or the government. Sanford and the state civil defense officials stressed repeatedly that citizens had a responsibility to protect themselves, to seek out information about civil defense and to invest their own resources in their own defense. Citizen action would thus strengthen the state’s civil defense plans as a whole. Historian Laura McEnaney argues that the failure by the federal government to provide shelters and a strong federal civil defense program resulted in the privatization of the home front. The financial burden fell on the citizen rather than the state, minimizing the leadership required of the state or federal government.⁹⁶

Sindler urged Sanford to take the lead and provide the means to build shelters, rather than lapse into complacency. Throughout the missile crisis, the local civil defense units were left to act independently. Some local civil defense agencies were more prepared than others,

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Governor Terry Sanford to Allan P. Sindler, 2 November 1962, GTSP, NCA, Box 141.

⁹⁶ McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home*, 7.

but the crisis revealed that the privatization McEnaney described persisted in October 1962. The NCCD and local agencies could do nothing throughout the crisis but urge people to remain calm and study what civil defense information they had.

November - Signs of Action

The NCCD, buoyed by a plan of action from the Office of Civil Defense and leadership from Governor Sanford, began a flurry of activity on 1 November 1962. Local and area civil defense officials in the state were informed of fallout shelter construction workshops to be held in five out of six civil defense areas of the state.⁹⁷ The workshops, which were to be held from 19 November to 24 November, featured university professors trained in protective construction methods instructing persons “holding some responsible position in a firm, industry, or local government having direct interest in building, planning, design or construction...and a willingness to assist local or state civil defense in giving advice and guidance to the public on shelter identification, construction or improvisation.”⁹⁸ A press release from the NCCD described the talks as covering “the entire fallout shelter problem,” for both community and family fallout shelters.⁹⁹

The workshops were the beginning of a civil defense effort hinging on local responsibility. General Griffin wrote in the November 1962 NCCD Newsletter. “I sincerely urge every local director to feel responsible for persuading qualified representatives of the construction industry to attend the nearest Shelter Construction Workshop.” The NCCD

⁹⁷ Memorandum to Local Directors, Area Directors and NCCD Emergency Service Chiefs from State Director, 1 November 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

⁹⁸ “Six Major Areas of Emphasis Referred to in Report on National Civil Defense Readiness by Steuart L. Pittman, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civil Defense on October 27, 1962,” NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

⁹⁹ “Five Workshops Will be Held In State on Shelter Construction,” 1 November 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

finally possessed enough copies of the Office of Civil Defense publications *Fallout Protection* and *Family Shelter Designs* to supply all local requests.¹⁰⁰ The newsletter added, “a major responsibility of every Civil Defense Office is *to be able to furnish* a copy of the instructions recommended by our Governor and President Kennedy.”¹⁰¹ The newsletter urged local directors to strike while the iron was hot.

Local civil defense heeded this advice with fallout shelter signs. Even today, the most visible civil defense actions in North Carolina remain faded black and fellow signs on buildings. Across the state in large cities are signs proclaiming “Fallout Shelter.” This was the way most of the public became aware of the existence of public fallout shelters.¹⁰² J.M. McGough, director of the Greensboro-Guilford County Civil Defense Office, after a 2 November meeting of a Joint Council on Civil Defense, lamented “the lack of cooperation of property owners or managers with the program of providing fallout shelters in buildings which are suitable.”¹⁰³ Fortunately, the Office of Civil Defense already had a solution ready to overcome this old obstacle.

The 30 October meeting with Pittman at the Region III headquarters remedied the marking problem by deciding to mark surveyed buildings “with oral permission from building owner or manager.” A signed license could be obtained later.¹⁰⁴ Sanford urged accelerated shelter marking on 8 November 1962. “The Cuban crisis clearly pointed up the

¹⁰⁰ Post offices had limited numbers of civil defense documents available *on request* (they were not on display). The state agency received limited numbers of the two booklets for the entire state, but not enough to meet demand during the crisis. See the section on *Fallout Protection* in Chapter 2 for information on distribution.

¹⁰¹ NCCD Newsletter, November 1962, pg. 1, NCC; [Original emphasis].

¹⁰² “City Council Acts to Guard Against Any Emergency,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 27 October 1962; “Raleigh Selected for Pilot Test in DOD Shelter Stocking Project,” 17 January 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 11.

¹⁰³ “Joint CD Council Seeks Federal Aid,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 2 November 1962.

¹⁰⁴ Recommendations for Accelerated Action In Marking Public Shelters Category 2 Through 8, 30 October 1962, Reproduced by NCCD, 31 October 1962, NCC.

necessity for this,” observed Sanford. “I sincerely hope that all property owners will cooperate fully in this effort by making their property available for the protection of their fellow-citizens in the event of grave national emergency.”¹⁰⁵

Fallout shelters, surveyed weeks or months before the missile crisis, received signs almost immediately after Sanford’s comments. Fayetteville beat Sanford’s announcement by two days, marking and designating the Cumberland County courthouse as a fallout shelter, the county’s first public fallout shelter, with space for 1,052 people.¹⁰⁶ Additional shelters had shelter signs affixed to them in Greensboro beginning on the sixth and continuing throughout the week.¹⁰⁷ Outspoken Gaston County Civil Defense director Ronald Heafner announced that marking of shelters in the county would begin 19 November for 76 shelters, potentially sheltering 42,943.¹⁰⁸ Wilmington and New Hanover County Civil Defense personnel marked 21 out of 34 shelters for 9,106 people by 17 November.¹⁰⁹ Wilmington also tabled discussion till January on turning the USS *North Carolina*, then (and now) a floating museum, into a shelter for 1,359.¹¹⁰ The 31 buildings in Raleigh reported previously as being designated fallout shelters received signs beginning 19 November, and marking of shelters for 56,913 more people continued well into December.¹¹¹ The headquarters of *The*

¹⁰⁵ Memorandum to Local Directors from State Director on Governor Sanford’s Statement on Shelters, 9 November 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

¹⁰⁶ “Fallout Shelter is Designated,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 7 November 1962.

¹⁰⁷ “CD Slates Shelter Workshop,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 7 November 1962; “Fallout Shelter Marked,” *Greensboro Daily News*, 12 November 1962.

¹⁰⁸ “Gaston CD Will Mark Shelters,” *Charlotte Observer*, 13 November 1962.

¹⁰⁹ “Fallout Shelters in City Total 21,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, 17 November 1962.

¹¹⁰ “Battleship Fallout Shelter Under Study By Commission,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, 5 December 1962.

¹¹¹ “Fallout Shelters Being Marked Here,” *Raleigh Times*, 19 November 1962; “Local Civil Defense Locates, Stocks Public Shelters,” *Raleigh Times*, 12 December 1962; “Fallout Shelter Areas Being Marked in City,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 14 December 1962. The *News and Observer* and *Raleigh Times* articles from December, several weeks after the November announcement of marking, both include lists of all the shelters licensed and “in the process of” being marked. Why the marking of thirty-one buildings took close to a

Charlotte Observer became the first building in Charlotte with a marked shelter on 27 November, the first of an eventual 158 public shelters.¹¹²

Local civil defense officials gained valuable momentum from the crisis for the promotion of emergency preparedness and encouragement for greater public involvement essential to finishing the shelter survey. The marking of public shelters, however, highlighted the need for greater private effort in civil defense. *The Wilmington News* acknowledged the work by the Wilmington-New Hanover County Civil Defense Office, writing “this program certainly has taken on new interest in the past month or so, but it is all too obvious that we are falling far short of being able to supply necessary protection...for the majority of the people in...New Hanover County.” The editors observed that “civil defense has to fight a game, and often losing, battle against public apathy.”¹¹³ Some citizens and communities heeded the call, organizing workshops to inform concerned and interested Tar Heels about civil defense. For example, the Charlotte Woman’s Club held two special programs in November, discussing fallout and the national warning system.¹¹⁴

The fallout shelter workshops announced by Pittman in state newspapers were not intended for average citizens. Each workshop would train one hundred to two hundred people, providing the nation 20 – 40,000 “quickly trained construction industry personnel to

month to complete seems fishy. Unfortunately, no other evidence has been found to explain this time discrepancy.

¹¹² “Observer Building is Fallout Shelter,” *Charlotte Observer*, 28 November 1962.

¹¹³ “Civil Defense: A Job to Do,” *The Wilmington News*, 19 November 1962.

¹¹⁴ “CD Programs Begin Friday,” *Charlotte Observer*, 30 October 1962; “City CD Official Explains Fallacy,” *Charlotte Observer*, 3 November 1962; “News of Bombing Would Be Fast,” *Charlotte Observer*, 10 November 1962.

support state and local shelter efforts.”¹¹⁵ By 9 November, Griffin reported to local civil defense directors that several national societies and organizations of civil engineers, contractors, and architects had agreed to support the Office of Civil Defense workshops. Griffin, acknowledging “to date there have been too few inquiries,” requested local directors to “please contact architects, engineers and construction people in your area who might be interested in taking this course and who might be of assistance to you.” Yet in the same memorandum, Griffin included the Office of Civil Defense Region III director’s comment that the workshops “*will not impart knowledge in depth. They will help dispel misinformation and build support for the shelter program within the construction industry.*”¹¹⁶

Initial mention of the workshops was concise and direct. *The News and Observer* in Raleigh listed the workshops as open to “qualified persons from firms, industry and local government interested in building, planning, design or construction.” County agricultural agents were urged to attend since rural civil defense had been shifted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture as part of Pittman’s accelerated program.¹¹⁷ In Charlotte, the local workshop was listed as “open to the public. Architects and builders are particularly urged to attend.”¹¹⁸ In Wilmington, “citizens who are not members of the professional building industry...may attend, but due to limited space...these individuals must be cleared.”¹¹⁹ The workshop itself was billed having grown “out of a revival in fallout shelter construction brought on by the

¹¹⁵ “Six Major Areas of Emphasis Referred to in Report on National Civil Defense Readiness by Steuart L. Pittman, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civil Defense on October 27, 1962,” NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

¹¹⁶ Memorandum to Local Directors from State Director on Shelter Construction Workshops, 9 November 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6; [Original emphasis].

¹¹⁷ “CD Workshops on Shelters Set in N.C.,” *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 15 November 1962.

¹¹⁸ “Fallout Shelter Workshop is Set,” *Charlotte Observer*, 16 November 1962.

¹¹⁹ “Fallout Shelter Construction Class Set by CD,” *Wilmington News*, 14 November 1962.

current Cuban crisis.”¹²⁰ When the NCCD released exact schedule information for the workshops on 14 November, the list of people “who can attend” increased to include local civil defense personnel.¹²¹

The regional differences in workshop attendees warrants some examination. The inclusion of the public in Charlotte, the state’s largest city in 1962, is peculiar considering the large number of engineers, architects, and construction industry personnel there. The support for civil defense in Wilmington may explain the inclusion of the public on a space-available basis. Raleigh invited county extension agents to prepare them for rural civil defense, but this is not mentioned in either Charlotte or Wilmington. As a predominantly rural, agricultural state, building stronger rural civil defense programs was essential to eliminating Sanford’s “area of weakness.” Why not more encouragement then for county agricultural agents? Whatever the case, the NCCD did not promote the workshops for the benefit of rural civil defense. After the workshops concluded, mention of them did not reappear in state newspapers or in NCCD publications.

December—Time for Recognition

The holiday season witnessed a substantial decrease in civil defense activity in North Carolina. Citizens focused on Christmas, Chanukah, and the coming of the New Year. Recognition of civil defense programs in cities and counties, however, proliferated in newspapers across the state. With the tensions of Cuba reduced and danger to the American

¹²⁰ “Civil Engineers from Fla. U. Will Speak in City,” *Wilmington News*, 19 November 1962.

¹²¹ Memorandum to Local Directors from State Director on Fallout Shelter Construction Workshops – Schedule and Other Data, 14 November 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

homeland a month removed, newspapers took time to analyze the role of local civil defense units.

The December 1962 NCCD newsletter opened with a message to all state civil defense offices from Griffin. Griffin described North Carolina civil defense goals for December:

We are proud that local Civil Defense in North Carolina measured up well under the pressures generated by the Cuban Crisis although, for more reasons than we care to contemplate, it is a blessing that attack failed to materialize. However, we sincerely feel that every director did the very best he could with what he had to do with.

As the atmosphere relaxes we must work with renewed incentive to strengthen our organizations, coordinate our emergency services, train more people and do everything possible to find space that can be used for shelter from radiation. Because this crisis has helped to remove the apathy that has plagued Civil Defense, there will be less excuse next time for shortcomings. Governing officials and citizens alike are more aware of the necessity to take the precautions we advocate and are looking to us for leadership in which they can have confidence. When another crisis comes, we must have more – much more – to work with for the protection of each community and its citizens.¹²²

Echoing Griffin, Governor Sanford issued a statement on 7 December 1962 comparing the attack on Pearl Harbor with the Cuban Missile Crisis. Sanford proclaimed how “the people of North Carolina should remember that recent events have underscored with dramatic force the need for accelerated action to increase our emergency preparedness.”¹²³

Griffin’s post-crisis statement is interesting for many reasons. Spivey and Blalock both noted Griffin did little personally throughout the crisis and was not necessarily aware of

¹²² NCCD Newsletter, December 1962, pg. 1, NCC.

¹²³ Statement by Governor Terry Sanford, 7 December 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

what local civil defense units either did or what pressures they faced.¹²⁴ How local civil defense “measured up well” is most likely window-washing and part of a larger “thank you” to local civil defense for keeping panic to a minimum, and keeping negative attention away from Griffin.¹²⁵ Furthermore, Griffin assumes the crisis permanently removed apathy towards civil defense, as opposed to temporarily relieving it. Nationally, historian Kenneth Rose concluded that after the crisis “what did *not* follow...was renewed public enthusiasm for fallout shelters.”¹²⁶ Amateur historian Allison Ring observed that after the missile crisis, the city of El Paso, Texas had “lots of debate, noble language, and plans for the future,” but retained “an inability to provide tangible protection and shelter for the here and now.”¹²⁷

On 12 December 1962, the state agency, Governor Sanford and General Griffin hosted William S. Lonnie, director of the Civil Defense and Emergency Service for Western Australia. North Carolina joined New Jersey, Maryland, Georgia, and California as state-level Civil Defense organizations studied by Lonnie. Lonnie’s civil defense study of the NCCD was included with studies of several Western European countries.¹²⁸ Sanford and Griffin later gave Lonnie a tour of the Governor’s Mansion fallout shelter, allowing Lonnie a

¹²⁴ David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008; Clifton E. Blalock, interview by author, Durham, NC 31 July 2008.

¹²⁵ Both Spivey and Blalock spoke off the record about General Griffin, describing the man, his demeanor, work ethic, and time as the state civil defense director. In both cases, what did emerge was that Griffin preferred to avoid the public spotlight unless absolutely essential, and did not like to deal with local civil defense matters. The area directors were instructed by Griffin to handle local civil defense matters and assuage local government officials to prevent them from contacting Griffin whenever possible.

¹²⁶ Rose, *One Nation Underground*, 201. [Original emphasis].

¹²⁷ Allison Ring, “El Paso’s Civil Defense Network in Crisis: History of Local Nuclear Preparedness Focusing on the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis,” *Password* vol. 52, no. 4 (2006): 197-98.

¹²⁸ Lonnie undertook a similar civil defense study trip from May to August 1968. During this trip, he studied civil defense activities and organizations in the U.S., India, Israel, Italy, The Netherlands, West Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland, and Malaysia. In his 1968 report, Lonnie included an appendix with the United States portion of his 1963 report. This material is used to detail his visit to the NCCD in Raleigh. Source: William S. Lonnie, *Report on Studies Made During Overseas Visit, May-August, 1968* (Perth, Western Australia: Alex B. Davies, Government Printer, 1968), 3.

chance to observe work on the shelter's expansion. Afterwards, Lonnie visited the state agency headquarters in Raleigh and received a briefing on civil defense organization and operation in the state by Griffin and other local civil defense officials.¹²⁹

Lonnie wrote highly of the state agency following his travels. The state of readiness for the NCCD was "colloquially expressed as 'bang on.' In more conservative terms the organization is geared to a very high state of preparedness." Lonnie noted that the state agency was responsible for all types of civil disasters, in particular seven "declared disasters" from 1955 to 1962. The organization of the agency was deemed "most impressive," and that "communications appeared to cover all possible contingencies with suitable alternatives in the even of partial loss of destruction."¹³⁰

Newspapers in North Carolina also gave recognition to civil defense and preparedness at local levels. Johnston County's Civil Defense Agency conducted a twelve-hour rescue training program glowingly described in *The Raleigh Times*.¹³¹ All members of the Wendell Rescue Squad were also featured in the *Times*, along with an article explaining the role of the squad and the local business support for the squad.¹³² New Hanover County's Rescue Squad received a large billing in Wilmington, acknowledging the squad's contributions and local support for civil defense and its contributions.¹³³ Both the Cleveland County – Shelby and Gaston County Civil Defense programs were showered with praise in

¹²⁹ "Australian Civil Defense Official at State Office," North Carolina Civil Defense Agency, 11 December 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6; "Civil Defense to be Studied by Australian," *News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 9 December 1962; "Aussie CD Official Studying N.C. Plan," *News and Observer*(Raleigh, NC), 13 December 1962.

¹³⁰ Lonnie, *Report on Studies Made During Overseas Visit, May-August, 1968*, 42-43.

¹³¹ "Rescue Work in Johnston County Serious Business for Participants," *Raleigh Times*, 8 December 1962.

¹³² "Wendell Rescue Unit Well Equipped," *Raleigh Times*, 24 December 1962.

¹³³ "County Rescue Squad Makes Good Progress," *Sunday Star-News* (Wilmington, NC), 16 December 1962.

The Charlotte Observer in late December. Cleveland County-Shelby Civil Defense Director Don Shields noted “we’ve had tremendous support from both the commissioners and councilmen and from industry here” for the acquisition of a \$100,000 civil defense control center.¹³⁴ In Gaston County, outspoken director Ronald Heafner shared similar sentiments, noting “everyone – especially industry – had gotten behind us since the Cuban crisis,” and acknowledged how two thousand Gaston County residents would take a medical self-help course in January 1963.¹³⁵

Acknowledgment of civil defense rescue squads is interesting. Fallout shelters were inert, but rescue squads which partially served as the precursor for the modern emergency response teams of today, were human. The Federal Civil Defense Administration tasked rescue squads to be “responsible for removing injured and uninjured people trapped in the wreckage of damaged or demolished structures.” When necessary, the squads would “render essential first aid during the period of release of victims and removal to the nearest safe location, where they can be cared for by...first-aid personnel.”¹³⁶ The New Hanover Volunteer Rescue Squad was supported by member donations, local business donations, and equipment and training provided by the local civil defense office. Local civil defense officials had secured federal matching funds for rescue equipment to help purchase vehicles and equipment.¹³⁷ Wendell’s Rescue Squad was equipped to “handle emergencies ranging

¹³⁴ “Cleveland-Shelby CD Stands Tall,” *Charlotte Observer*, 25 December 1962.

¹³⁵ “Cuban Crisis Speeds Gaston CD Program,” *Charlotte Observer*, 28 December 1962.

¹³⁶ Federal Civil Defense Administration, *Rescue Techniques and Operations* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1953), 1.

¹³⁷ “County Rescue Squad Makes Good Progress,” *Sunday Star-News* (Wilmington, NC), 16 December 1962.

from underwater rescue to automobile accidents,” and it operated directly under orders from the Wake County Civil Defense office in an emergency.¹³⁸

Local communities benefited from an emergency preparedness-oriented civil defense program with flexible, multi-purpose emergency teams of properly equipped and trained personnel. These rescue squads provided valuable public services in the capacity of civil defense, and unlike fallout shelters, communities could invest in a squad to benefit everyone, not just shelter a handful of people. By December 1962, 150 rescue squads were reported statewide. It is impossible to know how many emergency personnel had been trained statewide, but the fact that a North Carolina Rescue College in Greenville had trained approximately 200 personnel might be representative.¹³⁹ The mission of the rescue squads in North Carolina was to “locate, remove or release persons trapped under debris, in damaged structures of vehicles, administer immediate first aid sufficient to sustain life, and assist in arranging for evacuation of persons required further aid.”¹⁴⁰ Rescue squads in North Carolina served the citizens of North Carolina in normal times, and became an element of civil defense in times of emergency. During non-emergency times, the squads were assigned to the Commissioner of Insurance for the Department of Insurance.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ “Wendell Rescue Unit Well Equipped,” *Raleigh Times*, 24 December 1962.

¹³⁹ “North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1961 to 1 January 1963,” pg. 11, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 28. In the prior NCCD progress report, the Director of Highways was tasked with Rescue Service responsibility. Where the change happened is not known to the author, but by 1962 the Chief of Rescue Services was the Commissioner of Insurance.

¹⁴¹ Under state law, the governor and the governing bodies of North Carolina were authorized to “utilize the services, equipment, supplies, and facilities of existing departments, offices, and agencies of the State and the political subdivisions thereof to the maximum extent practicable.” The authority extended to all disasters and civil defense training purposes. Rescue squads were one of twenty-seven Civil Defense Emergency Services in North Carolina. The service directors were responsible to prepare their organization for emergency action. In normal times, the respective departments of the state government functioned for the governor, but in an emergency would revert to serving under the state civil defense agency. See *Ibid.*, 6.

The rescue squads were a beginning to the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) that exists today. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Spivey recalled that if an accident occurred the local funeral home would send their hearse out to bring back the victims, live or dead, and either drop them off with the local doctor or hospital or being funeral arrangements.¹⁴² The rescue squads were equipped with radio communications and began responding to accidents to free victims from the automobile wreckage. In administering first aid to injured motorists, however, “they started a roar with doctors,” noted Blalock, because now “people were able to just treat anybody without any training at all.”¹⁴³ In 1966, the U.S. Congress passed the Highway Safety Act, leading to the formation of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration within the Department of Transportation. The act, along with the EMS Act of 1973 instituted the EMS system and provided federal funding for the purchase of ambulances, communications, proper medical training for EMS personnel.¹⁴⁴ The North Carolina General Assembly in 1973 passed the Emergency Medical Services Act that authorized the creation of an EMS program. This EMS act professionalized many of the state’s volunteer rescue squads legally authorizing them to provide medical care and ambulance services.¹⁴⁵

In Wilmington, a full-page December article on fallout shelters trumped all other recognition for civil defense in North Carolina. The article included images of eight different

¹⁴² David W. Spivey, interview by author, Washington, NC, 18 April 2008. In smaller communities, hearses were used as ambulances because they were the only vehicle capable of transporting patients in stretchers. Committee on the Future of Emergency Care in the United States Health System, Board on Health Care Services, *Emergency Medical Services at the Crossroads* (Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2007), 32.

¹⁴³ Clifton E. Blalock, interview by author, Durham, NC, 31 July 2008.

¹⁴⁴ Committee on the Future of Emergency Care, *Emergency Medical Services*, 31-33.

¹⁴⁵ “Reference – North Carolina EMS,” The North Carolina Office of EMS, http://www.ncems.org/bkgd_ref.htm (accessed 24 August 2008).

types of private fallout shelters, ranging in price from \$75 to \$650, all with a protection factor of PF 100 or greater. The article opens: “considering it [nuclear attack] – thinking about it – is the first step in national preparedness... the fact you are reading this article shows that you have taken this first step.” The article describes the measures New Hanover County and the NFSS had undertaken to provide public fallout shelters. In it, New Hanover County civil defense director James B. McCumber compares private shelters to a soldier’s helmet: “a fallout shelter program admittedly provides an imperfect shield – just as the soldier’s helmet does not shield him from everything.” The shelter and the helmet, however, ensure enough lives are saved to assure “our Nation could recover” from a nuclear attack; therefore, both serve “a purpose that transcends his own survival.”¹⁴⁶

Conclusion

The Cuban Missile Crisis exposed the lack of fallout shelters in North Carolina to all its citizens. In the event of nuclear attack, Tar Heels could hope only that wind patterns carried deadly fallout away from the state. The shelter survey had located potential shelters in the urban areas of the state, but a lack of resources to mark and stock the spaces, coupled with a lack of cooperation by building owners, meant that a mere fraction of shelter spaces were ready for the crisis. Some private citizens heeded the call to build personal shelters and were well prepared when the crisis hit. Nonetheless, in October 1962, North Carolina could protect no more than eight percent of its citizens from fallout.

Governor Sanford and the leadership of the state civil defense agency handled the crisis and post-crisis period in a calm manner. Sanford and Griffin made careful public

¹⁴⁶ “Fallout Shelters Top CD Project,” *Sunday Star-News* (Wilmington, NC), 16 December 1962.

statements informing North Carolinians not to panic and reassuring them that the state's civil defense plans were ready to be implemented, if needed. The state agency, however, did little more than wait for federal guidance and leave the burden for emergency preparedness on the shoulders of local civil defense offices in counties and cities.

Local civil defense offices appear to have shifted their focus from fallout shelters to emergency preparedness in 1961. The missile crisis caught the local civil defense offices with limited fallout shelter programs, but with varying degrees of emergency preparedness resources, such as communication networks, rescue squads or professional police and fire departments. Public schools lacked evacuation or sheltering plans and did not coordinate with local civil defense until the missile crisis struck. Local civil defense educational efforts either did not take place or occurred too infrequently for people to remember what to do. Local civil defense directors publicly during the crisis informed the local media about what shelter spaces existed and other basic civil defense information.

North Carolina's civil defense leaders were realistic about their capabilities and limitations during the Cuban Missile Crisis, best exemplified by Governor Sanford's meeting with civil defense leadership on 24 October. Local civil defense units interacted directly with the public to educate and reassure citizens that the NCCD was ready to act if called upon. That the state agency had shifted its focus in early 1961 from fallout shelters to emergency preparedness was not known by the general public, who were still being encouraged to build shelters.

It is striking that despite the state's lack of preparedness, the crisis did not incur panic among North Carolinians, and local civil defense administrators witnessed minimal concerns

some had. It is difficult to explain this. It is possible that by October 1962, after more than a year of spirited national debate, most North Carolinians had simply made up their minds about fallout shelters. A few had decided to either build shelters or had become educated on civil defense matters; others had decided to not trouble themselves with civil defense altogether. The missile crisis seems not to have changed their positions.

In November, Pittman's accelerated shelter program and the lowering of protection factors from PF 100 to PF 40 meant more shelter space became available. Shelter supplies, scheduled to arrive in January 1963, would ensure more North Carolinians had some protection. Without increases in private shelters, however, the accelerated program produced little more than a superficial and "quick fix" answer to the problem of nuclear unpreparedness.

Following the missile crisis, North Carolinians were pleased with the performance of the state and local civil defense agencies. Little to no public backlash was leveled against civil defense in the media or in personal letters. Elements of civil defense received recognition in local newspapers. Local governments and businesses expressed or provided renewed support for local civil defense offices. This enthusiasm allowed the Accelerated Action Program to move quickly across the state, marking shelters and licensing new ones.

Fallout shelters, even after the Cuban Missile Crisis, did not take root. North Carolina's civil defense strength was in its ability to maintain communication and a centralized oversight over the local civil defense offices. Considering the unpredictability of disasters, uncertainty of public and federal involvement, and most importantly limited funding, the missile crisis validated the capacity of the civil defense organization of North

Carolina to control an emergency situation. This was accomplished through the use of communication networks, functional civil defense planning at local levels, and a functional chain of command from the Governor's Office to the county and city civil defense directors.

'Well, How Long Have You Been Out There?'



Figure 3.1 - Civil Defense's appeals for action were finally answered during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Source: *Charlotte Observer*, 25 October 1962.



Figure 3.2 - The Lee County Civil Defense Rescue Squad, circa 1962-1963. Source: Unlabelled scrapbook, NCCD, NCA.

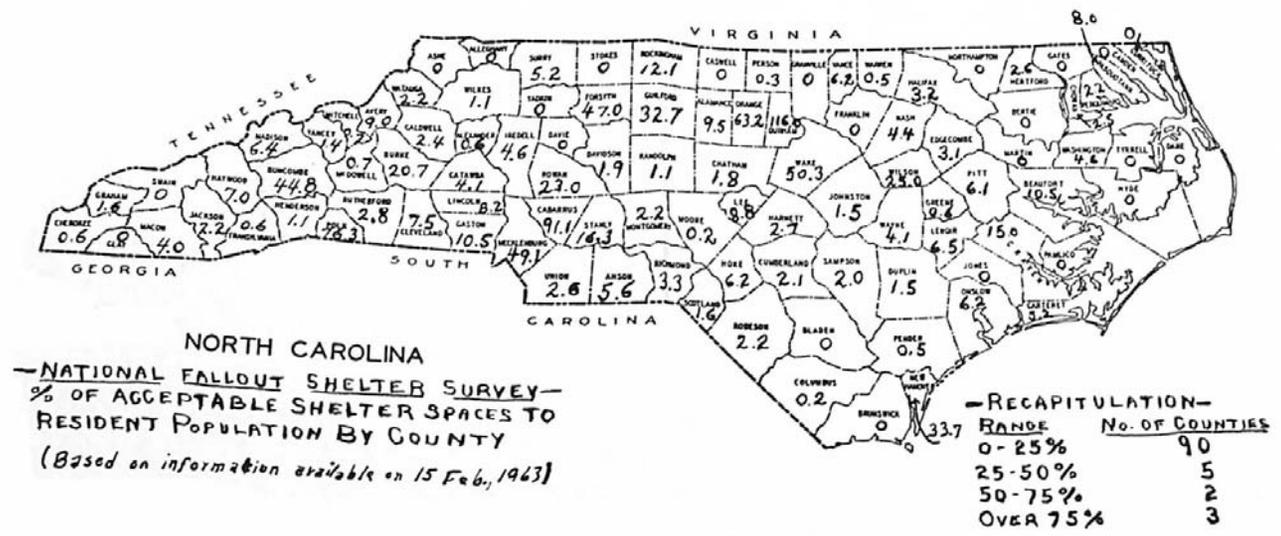


Figure 3.3 - NFSS Map of NC with Percentages of Acceptable Fallout Shelter Spaces per County as of 15 February 1963. Source: NCCD Newsletter, Attachment, April 1963, NCC.

CHAPTER 4

At the Brink of Success—The Shelter Incentive Program, 1963

Our people are asking, “Why should I spend money on a shelter when the Federal Government is not doing anything about it?”
- C.M. Hooper, 20 December 1963¹

In February 1963, Elizabeth City – Pasquotank County Civil Defense director W.J. Overman was informed that the National Fallout Shelter Survey (NFSS) found only 2,100 potential shelter spaces for the county’s 25,630 residents.² Undeterred, Overman went to work promoting fallout shelters and informing county residents just how many public shelter spaces the county had. He displayed fallout shelter models and civil defense exhibits in hotels and public buildings in Elizabeth City. He also had signs posted in the county listing how many people were without fallout protection to inspire them to do more.³ The solution to the shelter space issue for Overman and the entire state of North Carolina was the federally-funded Shelter Incentive Program (SIP). The SIP would provide funding to allow fallout shelters to be constructed in schools, hospitals, and non-profit institutions. On the heels of the results from the NFSS and the scare of Cuban Missile Crisis, the incentive program became the keystone for President John F. Kennedy’s civil defense grand plan.

Experiences from the Cuban Missile Crisis revealed cracks in civil defense nationally and in North Carolina. As the results for the NFSS became available at the state civil defense office in Raleigh, the disparity between urban and rural shelter space was more prominent than previously thought. The incentive program, as envisioned by Kennedy and the Office of

¹ Letter from C.M. Hopper to B. Everett Jordan, 20 December 1963, Folder – Armed Services: General, 1962-1964, BJEP, RBMSCL, Box 56.

² Document titled “National Fallout Shelter Survey Statistics,” 15 February 1963, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

³ NCCD Newsletter, August 1963, pg. 3, NCC.

Civil Defense, would generate 90 million new public spaces nationally over five years.

Together with private shelters, the NFSS, and shelter in federal buildings, the Office of Civil Defense anticipated nationwide fallout shelter spaces for 240 million people by 1968.⁴ This depended, however, on Congress approving the funds, and Congress's support for civil defense and fallout shelters had been long on rhetoric but short on cash. North Carolina's civil defense personnel would spend 1963 trying to convince the state's Congressmen and citizens to support the shelter program and the funds it would provide for the state's civil defense programs.

A New Year—Shelter Survey Results and Shortcomings

The North Carolina Civil Defense Agency (NCCD) began 1963 tested by the Cuban Missile Crisis from October 1962. "Every Civil Defense Director learned during that Crisis – if he didn't know before – that when danger threatens, citizens want – even demand – protection," declared state civil defense director Major General Edward F. Griffin in the January newsletter.⁵ Griffin, in stating the obvious, failed to acknowledge that following the missile crisis, shelter demand had returned to pre-crisis levels. With the New Year came word that the shelter survey completed all field work for Phase II of the survey. Fallout shelter signs were being installed state-wide and shelter supply requisition forms were being mailed out to all counties.⁶ Nationwide, the survey was 90.5 percent complete, and in early returns for North Carolina the survey found 503,345 shelter spaces in buildings with a

⁴ House Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee No. 3, *Hearings, Civil Defense – Fallout Shelter Program*, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963, 3075, 3096-97. The 250 million figure breaks down to 90 million spaces from the incentive program, 55 million spaces from private initiatives, five million spaces in federal and military buildings, and 90 million from the shelter survey (70 million in 1962 with an estimated 20 million more spaces to be located over the next five years).

⁵ NCCD Newsletter, January 1963, pg. 1, NCC.

⁶ *Ibid.*

protection factor (PF) of one hundred or greater. Factoring in improvements in ventilation and shielding, a total of 858,055 spaces would exist. The cost to improve the other approximately 355,000 spaces would be \$2,601,270, or roughly fifty-seven cents per North Carolinian.⁷

By February, complete data for North Carolina was made available. With improvements in ventilation, public shelter spaces providing PF 40 or greater could protect all the citizens of Charlotte, Raleigh, Durham, and Asheville. Ninety-seven percent of Winston-Salem residents could be sheltered, but only a scant twenty-three percent of Fayetteville residents. Though impressive for the state's largest cities, the county breakdown was disconcerting. Out of the state's one hundred counties, the survey found no shelter spaces whatsoever in twenty-one, and ninety had shelter space for less than twenty-five percent of their residents. Only three counties, Cabarrus, Durham, and Polk, had space for more than seventy-five percent of residents. North Carolina's 1960 census records calculated the population at 4,556,115 residents 1,802,000 categorized as urban and 2,754,000 as rural.⁸ The shelter survey found 899,200 shelter spaces of PF 40 or greater, and with ventilation improvements the figure increased to 1,282,500 spaces.⁹ Not including private fallout shelters, the survey found potential space for a scant twenty-eight percent of North Carolinians. Only forty-nine percent of these spaces were found outside of the state's

⁷ Letter from Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civil Defense Steuart L. Pittman to Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 2 January 1963, Folder 3508, SJEP, SHC, Box 77. The letter from Pittman includes a computer print out dated 15 December 1962 where the figures cited come from.

⁸ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1961, Eighty-Second Edition* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1961), 12, 22. Available from

<http://www2.census.gov/prod2/statcomp/documents/1961-01.pdf>; Internet; accessed 17 January 2008.

⁹ The figure of 858,055 was with survey data 90.5% complete. This figure is for the completed survey data, hence the difference.

six largest cities.¹⁰ An estimated 10,000 private fallout shelters provided spaces for an additional 75,000 citizens.¹¹

Notable was the lack of shelter space in rural areas. Following the Accelerated Action program and the reassignment of rural civil defense to the USDA, the NC Agricultural Extension Service at NC State College was assigned responsibility for rural civil defense in North Carolina in 1962.¹² Federal guidance accented “creating awareness, giving the facts and local alternatives, on stimulating rural people to make the best possible preparedness plans. The approach will be that civil defense preparedness is simply another factor that rural people need to consider in all their farm, feed, food, and home management plans.”¹³ The program was meant to provide only information and guidance, not materiel resources.

¹⁰ National Fallout Shelter Survey Statistics, 15 February 1963, NCCD, NCA, Box 6; Letter from Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civil Defense Stuart L. Pittman to Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 20 February 1963, Folder 3508, SJEP, SHC, Box 77. Both documents included identical figures.

¹¹ Press Release from the Governor’s Office, 19 February 1963, GTSP, NCA, Box 264.

¹² “North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, January 1, 1961 to January 1, 1963,” pg. 13, NCCD, NCA, Box 9. At the end of 1955, the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) established the National Advisory Council on Rural Civil Defense. The council was comprised of representatives from the FCDA, the American Farm Bureau Federation, National Farmers Union, National Grange, and over twenty other organizations. Council members met from 1955 to 1958 to discuss continuity of agricultural production and transportation of goods, continuity in civil defense programs between state and local civil defense agencies, and rural area readiness. In November 1959, under the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, the council was reorganized into the Rural Information Program, using the same organizations as before, but emphasizing greater public education. North Carolina’s rural civil defense program began in conjunction with this OCDM effort on 15 February 1960. The program was designed to “teach farm families how to protect themselves, their livestock, and their crops from radioactive fallout,” and “teach defensive measures against the threat and how to protect themselves by improving, constructing, and using those measures.” The NC Department of Agriculture, NC Farm Bureau, NC State Grange, NC Agricultural Experiment Station, and the NC Agricultural Extension Service all worked in cooperation with the NCCD to promote, educate, and implement rural civil defense in North Carolina. By the end of 1960, over ten thousand rural residents had attended local rural civil defense meetings across the state. See Jenny Baker Devine, “The Farmer and the Atom: The Iowa State Cooperative Extension Service and Rural Civil Defense, 1955-1970,” *The Annals of Iowa*, vol. 66, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 167-69; NCCD Newsletter, January 1960, NCC; “North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1959 to 1 January 1961,” pg. 9, NCCD, NCA, Box 9; NCCD Newsletter, February 1960, NCC; “North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1959 to 1 January 1961,” pg. 10, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

¹³ United States Department of Agriculture, *Fallout Protection Is Your Affair: As a Leader Reaching Rural People, YOU CAN HELP* (Washington, D.C. GPO, 1963), NCCD, NCA, Box 8.

Governor Sanford spoke to the General Assembly about civil defense for the first time on 7 February 1963. Sanford noted how “recurrent international crises and the grave dangers that face our nation in this nuclear age leave little room for doubt that realistic civil defense is essential to our continued well being and security as a free people.” After briefly listing what civil defense activities had taken place in the state, Sanford concluded that “nobody knows whether all of these defense measures will ever have to be used, but as long as there is any possibility that they will be required...the effort... is fully justified.”¹⁴ On 6 March 1963, he urged citizens to “redouble their effort” in allowing buildings to be licensed, marked, and stocked for use as shelters. Harkening back to October, Sanford acknowledged how “every citizen who will recall the anxious days of the Cuban Crisis knows that if a national emergency occurs we will need a lot more spaces than can be provided – certainly, we cannot afford to let any space that will afford adequate protection...go to waste because it hasn’t been stocked.”¹⁵

Following Sanford’s address to the Assembly, copies of the state civil defense agency progress report for 1961 – 1963 were given to each legislator.¹⁶ The report noted that of “immediate” need was “that tax concessions be made to owners of standard home fallout shelters or standard neighborhood shelters.”¹⁷ Also of note, the report listed detailed financial figures for federal assistance under the matching funds program. For the \$323,143.58 that North Carolina spent from 1 January 1961 to 1 January 1963, \$259,898.93

¹⁴ NCCD Newsletter, March 1963, NCC.

¹⁵ Press Release from the Governor’s Office, 6 March 1963, GTSP, NCA, Box 264.

¹⁶ NCCD Newsletter, February 1963, NCC.

¹⁷ “North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, January 1, 1961 to January 1, 1963,” pg. 25, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

was spent on communications, amounting to eighty percent of the total. An additional eleven percent of funds were spent on warning equipment. A scant 0.3 percent was invested in radiological detection instruments for fallout shelters, emergency operating centers, or radiological monitoring stations. Altogether, ninety-two percent of all the state and federal funds for civil defense from this reporting period were spent on communications or warning systems.¹⁸ The financial figures indicate how the state civil defense agency was investing heavily in emergency preparedness, but not directly investing in fallout shelters.

Nonetheless, on 13 March 1963, Senators Henry G. Shelton (D) of Speed, and Wilbur M. Jolly (D) of Louisburg introduced a bill entitled “An Act to Classify Individual Family Fallout Shelters for Purposes of Ad Valorem Taxation.”¹⁹ The act would subject shelters built to the criteria of the Office of Civil Defense to taxation “only to the extent that the appraised value of such shelter...exceeds two thousand dollars.”²⁰ An identical bill was introduced on the same day in the North Carolina House by Representatives Allen C. Barbee (D) of Spring Hope and Joe E. Eagles (D) of Macclesfield.²¹

The bill breezed through the Senate and was sent to the North Carolina House on 6 May.²² In the House, the Committee on Finances developed strong opposition to the bill on

¹⁸ Ibid., 16-19. The NCCD defined warning systems as “sirens and associated control devices” and communications equipment as “communications equipment with emergency generators.”

¹⁹ *Journal of the Senate of the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina*, 1963 sess. (Winston-Salem, NC: Winston Printing Co., 1963), 114. Of note is that Senator Jolly was from Louisburg, the home of General Griffin for almost his entire life. If General Griffin approached Senator Jolly about this bill is unknown, but the possibility exists.

²⁰ North Carolina General Assembly, “A Bill to be Entitled an Act to Classify Individual Family Fallout Shelters for Purpose of Ad Valorem Taxation,” 1963 Session, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

²¹ *Journal of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina*, 1963 sess. (Winston-Salem, NC: Winston Printing Co., 1963), 189.

²² *Journal of the Senate*, 1963 sess., 338.

the grounds that it would deprive “counties and towns of local tax.”²³ General Griffin appealed to local civil defense directors to write to their legislative representatives to support the bills, noting Governor Sanford himself supported it. “This is our last chance and the bill will be defeated unless we can get this Finance Committee to give it a favorable report,” pleaded Griffin.²⁴ In a separate fact paper, the state agency detailed the potential nuclear targets in the state. It stressed the urgency of remedying the fact that “many of our counties have no public shelter potential whatsoever,” and it warned that without any tax incentive, “this costly shelter program will eventually fall on State and local Governments.”²⁵ On 7 June the Committee on Finances reversed its previous stance and submitted the bill with a favorable report.²⁶ The House passed the revised bill on 14 June and the Senate on 18 June.²⁷ Governor Sanford ratified the bill shortly after passage by the Senate, and the bill went into effect on 1 January 1964.²⁸ The state civil defense agency hoped the bill “will help further construction of privately-owned shelters,” particularly in the rural areas of the state.²⁹

The Shelter Incentive Program–Brief Background

President Kennedy originally planned the SIP to accompany the shelter survey in the fall of 1961. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civil Defense Stuart L. Pittman outlined the program before a House of Representatives Subcommittee of the Committee on Government

²³ *Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1963 sess., 754.

²⁴ Letter to Civil Defense Directors from NCCD Director Edward F. Griffin, 30 May 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

²⁵ “Facts Pertaining to Senate Bill 132, As Amended, Which is Now Pending Before the House Finance Committee, North Carolina Civil Defense Agency,” 30 May 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

²⁶ *Journal of the House of Representatives*, 1963 sess., 847, 959.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 1096; *Journal of the Senate*, 1963 sess., 697.

²⁸ State of North Carolina, *1963 Session Laws and Resolutions Passed by the General Assembly at the Regular Session Held in the City of Raleigh Beginning on Wednesday, the Sixth Day of February, A.D. 1963* (Winston-Salem, NC: Winston Printing Co., 1963), 1184-85.

²⁹ NCCD Newsletter, July 1963, pg. 2, NCC.

Operations on 19 February 1962. The program as envisioned would supplement the survey's shelter spaces by providing financial assistance to nonprofit institutions engaged in health, education, and welfare activities. Pittman stated "that the combination of a significant amount of shelter space brought into operation under the survey, together with the stimulation of well-located community shelters in schools, hospitals, and similar institutions around the country, would... lay a base for coherent planning and development of integrated civil defense systems in communities throughout the United States."³⁰

The incentive program was outlined to Congress in 1962 as the shelter survey was fanning out across the nation.³¹ Pittman requested an appropriation of \$460 million dollars for Fiscal Year 1963 to construct new shelter spaces to protect 20 million citizens. The federal government would provide a maximum of \$25 per person sheltered, with ten square feet of shelter space per person at a rate of \$2.50 per square foot for any of the institutions that built fallout shelters. The shelters, meant to be incorporated into schools, hospitals, or in other nonprofit institutional buildings would have to have a protection factor of one hundred or greater and a capacity for fifty or more persons.³² With the cost to provide fallout shelter for a single person at \$40, the federal government would be providing up to 62.5 percent of the cost for fallout shelter construction.³³ Office of Civil Defense officials estimated the program could provide 100 million shelter spaces for \$2.25 billion over five years.³⁴ By

³⁰ HCGO, *Hearings, Civil Defense – 1962*, 9.

³¹ The 1962 version of the SIP is slightly different than the SIP proposed to Congress in 1963. Both versions of the SIP are summarized here so the reader is aware there were two different versions.

³² *Ibid.*, 10; Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.*, 126.

³³ HCGO, *Hearings, Civil Defense – 1962*, 35.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

1967, the Office of Civil Defense planned 233 million shelter spaces at a total cost of \$2.53 billion dollars, enough for the entire population.³⁵

While impressive and carefully orchestrated, the SIP was not to be in 1962. On 13 March 1962, House Independent Offices Subcommittee for the House Appropriations Committee chaired by Congressman Albert Thomas (D – TX) convened hearings on the Office of Civil Defense budget. During the hearings Thomas, a long-standing opponent to civil defense, asked Pittman if the shelter program had been authorized by Congress, to which Pittman admitted that it had not. Thomas’s subcommittee subsequently only approved a scant \$75 million for the most basic of Office of Civil Defense functions, completely removing funds for the SIP. The Senate Appropriations Committee was more generous and allocated a budget of \$185 million, with \$93.8 million for continued shelter survey work, research and development, and a program to construct shelters in federal buildings. Congress eventually approved an Office of Civil Defense budget of \$113 million dollars. An additional \$15 million in supplemental funds gave the Office of Civil Defense a fiscal year 1963 budget of \$128 million, with the SIP completely removed.³⁶

Aside from the completion of the shelter survey, the future of fallout shelters looked bleak. While private citizens could still build shelters, the completion of the survey would end federal efforts to provide some degree of protection from the threat of fallout in a nuclear attack. Thanks to the Cuban Missile Crisis, however, interest in fallout shelters increased

³⁵ Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.*, 127. The 233,500,000 spaces break down as follows: 70 million from the NFSS, 3.5 million from shelters in Federal buildings, 100 million from the SIP, and 60 million from private shelters.

³⁶ Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.*, 128-29; Garrison, *Bracing for Armageddon*, 125-26; Boyce Wayne Blanchard, “American Civil Defense 1945 – 1975: The Evolution of Programs and Policies” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1980), 320-23.

nationwide. The Accelerated Action Program would seek only to finish the NFSS at breakneck speed, but not provide additional spaces beyond the original objectives. The American people had been informed about fallout shelters by early 1963, but a public opinion survey at the time noted, they “had invested little in the issue” and were “waiting for the government (especially for the federal government) to equip them with places of refuge.”³⁷ The SIP was dead for 1963, but not down for the count.

The SIP Returns—The Introduction of H.R. 3516

On 9 January 1963 *The New York Times* noted that President Kennedy was planning a new appeal to Congress for fallout shelter funds. Termed a “scaled-down version of the ‘incentive payments’ plan,” the request carried a degree of urgency as a result of perceived “gaps in civil defense preparation highlighted by the Cuban Crisis.”³⁸ At the end of January, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara told the House Armed Services Committee that the Department of Defense (DoD) had concluded “fallout shelters for the population are absolutely essential to enable us to face the consequences of a nuclear war which might be forced upon us.” McNamara recommended \$175 million dollars be allocated for the SIP, the “logical next step following on the stocking of the surveyed shelter space...” The program would run for only a year as “a year’s experience is needed to make longer term assessments of local response to Federal assistance in financing shelter.”³⁹

³⁷ Gene N. Levine and John Modell, “American Public Opinion and the Fallout-Shelter Issue,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* vol. 29, no. 2 (Summer 1965): 279.

³⁸ “Kennedy to Seek U.S. Shelter Fund,” *NYT*, 9 January 1963, pg. 1.

³⁹ Teletype printout from Office of Civil Defense Region Three to North Carolina Civil Defense Director, 31 January 1962, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

On 7 February 1963, Congressman Felix Edward Hébert (D – LA) proposed bill a bill to “provide for shelter in Federal structures, to authorize payment toward the construction or modification or approved public shelter space, and for other purposes.”⁴⁰ Less than two weeks later Richard B. Russell (D – GA) and Leverett Saltonstall (R – MA) proposed a similar bill in the Senate.⁴¹ The bills were submitted the House Armed Forces Committee awaiting a formal hearing. The ink on the introduced bills was still drying when civil defense officials in North Carolina began voicing their approval.

Alamance County seized on the importance of the bill. In letters to Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr. (D – NC), Van R. White, the county civil defense director and Oscar W. Gammon, Chairman of the Alamance County Board of Commissioners, emphasized the county’s plans to build fallout shelters in schools. The bill would provide welcome material help, for “we are very short on public fallout shelter space in this county.”⁴² Guilford County Civil Defense Director J. M. McGough sent Ervin a letter saying that the Guilford County Joint Council of Civil Defense, endorsed by twenty-four civic organizations, called on the Senate for “favorable legislative action to be promptly taken on any request by the President authorizing legislations and appropriations for Civil Defense.”⁴³

The state agency, having finished up work on the biennial progress report, also contacted Ervin’s office. Writing Ervin in March, Griffin began by invoking the Cuban Missile Crisis, when “our people were frightened and frantic. Inquiries by the thousands

⁴⁰ *Cong. Rec.*, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963, 109, pt. 2: 2007.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 2501.

⁴² Letter from Van R. White to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 11 February 1963; Letter from Oscar W. Gammon to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 12 February 1963, Folder 3689, SJEP, SHC, Box 81.

⁴³ Letter from J.M. McGough to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 1 March 1963, Folder 3689, SJEP, SHC, Box 81. Of note is that the resolution was passed 1 November 1962, in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis. A copy of the resolution was sent to Ervin on 8 November 1962 as well.

were received by State and local Civil Defense requesting survival information and aid.” Griffin closed by noting that “the best defense of human life against ballistic missile attack is an adequate Civil Defense program with sufficient fallout shelters.” The \$175 million earmarked for the incentive program was essential for providing shelter space in the rural portions of the state. Griffin noted, that “our over-all program must make some provision for our rural citizens.”⁴⁴ In the April 1963 NCCD newsletter, Griffin acknowledged the survey confirmed fears that North Carolina lacked shelter space for four out of every five citizens. He pressed local civil defense directors to urge Congress to support Kennedy’s program, emphasize private fallout shelters, push for civil defense budgets at all levels of government, and inform constituents with “the facts frankly and at the same time spell out the alternatives to apathetic and fatalistic acceptance.”⁴⁵

Overcoming skepticism of civil defense at the Congressional level was of great concern. Ralph M. Cottle, the Duplin County Civil Defense director, wrote Ervin that his rural county lacked public fallout shelter spaces and he hoped Ervin could help. “This county humbly requests that you exert your every effort toward encouragement of a strong Civil Defense Program for our Nation, State, and County of Duplin.” Ervin acknowledged that “I shall give careful consideration to any legislation in the important area of civil defense.”⁴⁶

Ervin never voted on the incentive program, but he was skeptical of fallout shelters. In the summer of 1962 Ervin revealed in a private letter to then-WRAL-TV 5 Vice President Jesse Helms his opinion of the shelter effort. Ervin frankly stated to Helms:

⁴⁴ Letter from Edward F. Griffin to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 13 March 1963, Folder 3689, SJEP, SHC, Box 81.

⁴⁵ NCCD Newsletter, April 1963, pgs. 1-2, NCC.

⁴⁶ Letter from Ralph M. Cottle to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 11 April 1963 and Ervin’s response, 17 April 1963, Folder 3689, SJEP, SHC, Box 81.

I have read a good many articles on this subject and have listened to some of the people who profess to be experts on it. All I have read and heard has failed to convince me that there is anything of a practical nature in the proposal that the American people build fallout shelters.

In my judgment, we must develop an anti-missile missile and maintain a striking power through the agencies of intercontinental ballistic missiles stationed at strategic points in our country, long-range bombers, and Polaris missiles in submarines at sea which will deter any enemy attack or destroy any enemy in case it is so foolhardy as to initiate attack.

I think that any claim that we can survive through the agency of fallout shelters is a snare and a delusion.⁴⁷

Helms responded to Ervin's statement by acknowledging "I agree with your views 100 per cent regarding the practicality of fallout shelters."⁴⁸ North Carolina's other Senator, Benjamin Everett Jordan (D – NC), was more positive. Responding to a letter from Cottle, Jordan stated "I myself am interested in developing a realistic civil defense program, and I am certain that encouragement must come from the Federal Government in the form of financial assistance."⁴⁹

Before the Storm–NCCD Actions Prior to the H.R. 3516 Subcommittee

Kennedy, on the other hand, emerged from the Cuban Missile Crisis determined to promote fallout shelters. General Griffin, attending the National Association of State Civil Defense Directors Conference in Washington, DC heard first hand a message from President Kennedy to the association. Read by Pittman, Kennedy acknowledged he was "confident that there will soon be a careful Congressional review of the Civil Defense problem, and I

⁴⁷ Letter from Sam J. Ervin, Jr. to Jesse Helms, 5 July 1962; Letter from Jesse Helms to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 25 June 1962, Folder 2978, SJEP, SHC, Box 63.

⁴⁸ Letter from Jesse Helms to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 6 July 1963, Folder 2978, SJEP, SHC, Box 63.

⁴⁹ Letter from B. Everett Jordan to Ralph M. Cottle, 16 April 1963, Folder titled "Armed Services: General, 1962-1964, BEJP, RBMSCL, Box 56.

hope it will lead the Congress to the same general conclusions which have appeared inescapable to the Secretary of Defense and to me.” Kennedy added that the national civil defense program was a sound program, “sensible and necessary undertaking in which the Federal Government has clear responsibility to provide consistent and continuing leadership, including the necessary financial support...”⁵⁰

In May, Governor Sanford wrote to the heads of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees asking them to support Kennedy’s civil defense program. Data from the shelter survey fueled Sanford’s initiative. As of 10 May 1963, the survey had located 1,122 buildings in the state with a combined capacity of 833,411 persons. Only 720 of the buildings were licensed as shelters, and only 386 of these had been stocked with supplies for 201,277 people.⁵¹ Only thirty-five percent of the shelters providing PF 100 or greater were stocked. Sanford anticipated that the survey would eventually find 900,000 spaces, but this represented only a fraction of the over four million spaces needed for North Carolina.⁵²

Assistant Secretary Pittman wrote Sanford stressing the importance of the legislation before Congress. He cautioned how “opportunities to move ahead under existing authority are being fully exhausted, and the next state of the program, namely, the development of new shelter space at low cost, depends on this legislation and the appropriation of federal funds to

⁵⁰ Memorandum from NCCD Director to Local Civil Defense directors on “Message from President of the United States to State Civil Defense Directors (May 8, 1963),” 10 May 1963, NCCD, NCA, Box 6; NCCD Newsletter, May 1963, pg. 2, NCC; “Kennedy Confident About Civil Defense,” *NYT*, 9 May 1963, pg. 21.

⁵¹ NCCD Newsletter, June 1963, pg. 1, NCC.

⁵² Letter from Terry Sanford to Nelson A. Rockefeller, 14 May 1962, Folder titled “Civil Defense, A-Z,” GTSP, NCA, Box 264; Letter from Nelson A. Rockefeller to Terry Sanford, 3 May 1963, Folder titled “Civil Defense, A-Z,” GTSP, NCA, Box 264.

assist the states and communities to meet their shelter deficiencies.”⁵³ The stakes were never higher for the continuation of the fallout shelter effort. On 17 May 1963, Sanford sent identical letters to Congressman Carl Vinson (D – GA), Senator Ervin, and Senator Richard B. Russell (D – GA), Chairman of the Senate Armed Forces Committee. Asking for favorable action for H.R. 3516 and S. 844, Sanford lamented North Carolina was “woefully short of shelter space, especially in the rural areas,” but added “I feel confident that a similar situation, as to shelters, exists in the great majority of our states.”⁵⁴ Ervin replied that he would “bear in mind the impact of this legislation... on North Carolina’s Civil Defense program, particularly with regard to public fallout shelter space.”⁵⁵

The Long Voyage–Subcommittee Hearing on H.R. 3516

In May 1963, the House Armed Forces subcommittee held hearings on civil defense and the SIP bills before it. The hearings lasted over six weeks, featured testimony from over 108 witnesses, and evolved into the “most thorough examination of civil defense ever undertaken by a committee of Congress.”⁵⁶ Tuesday morning on 28 May 1963, Subcommittee Number Three of the House Armed Services Committee convened to begin consideration on bill H.R. 3516. Presided over by Congressman Hébert, the committee was the first to hold a full-scale hearing on civil defense. Hébert’s assured those present in the committee room that the hearing “will be held in an atmosphere of complete objectivity” and that the Office of Civil Defense would have ample time to present its program and answer

⁵³ Letter from Steuart L. Pittman to Terry Sanford, 9 May 1963, Folder titled “Civil Defense, A-Z,” GTSP, NCA, Box 264.

⁵⁴ Letters from Terry Sanford to Richard B. Russell, Sam J. Ervin, Jr., and Carl Vinson, 17 May 1963, Folder titled “Civil Defense, A-Z,” GTSP, NCA, Box 264.

⁵⁵ Letter from Sam J. Ervin, Jr. to Terry Sanford, 23 May 1963, Folder 3689, SJEP, SHC, Box 81.

⁵⁶ Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.*, 130; Federal Emergency Management Agency, *American Civil Defense 1945-1984: The Evolution of Programs and Policies*, by B. Wayne Blanchard (Washington, D.C: GPO, 1986), 10.

any questions.⁵⁷ Quoting former committee chairman Congressman Dewey Short (R – MO), Hébert noted “‘there’s no pancake so thin that it hasn’t got two sides.’ Let’s approach the hearing in this fashion.”⁵⁸

For the first ninety minutes, Philip W. Kelleher, Counsel to the subcommittee, read a prepared paper on the federal fallout shelter program and raised substantial objections, problems, and questions about civil defense and shelters. He raised questions and provoke thought, but “‘for the most part, the matters in it [paper] tend to be arguments against the shelter program.”⁵⁹ Pittman spoke next. He readily refuted several persistent criticisms to shelters. He explained the danger of fallout and defended the utility of shelters.⁶⁰ He asserted that the shelter program was not provocative to the Soviet Union, as the civil defense budget constituted a scant 0.6 percent of the total DoD budget.⁶¹ Pittman closed by asking “‘whether to face a crisis with a well-conceived plan to contain the psychological and physical damage of a nuclear crisis or a nuclear attack, or whether to look the other way until the last possible moment.”⁶²

As the hearings progressed in Washington, apathy continued to dog civil defense efforts in North Carolina. In June 1963, the telephone in office of Colonel John C. Thorne, the civil defense director for Raleigh, rarely rang for information. By this time, 85,000 shelter spaces had been found for the city’s 95,000 residents, although only 35,000 had been stocked

⁵⁷ House Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee No. 3, *Hearings, Civil Defense – Fallout Shelter Program*, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963, 3027.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 3028.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 3048.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 3055-56.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 3060.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 3161.

with supplies.⁶³ In a letter to Governor Sanford, Burke County Civil Defense director J. C. Sossoman wrote “the average citizen looks at it [civil defense] as something intangible and they allow themselves to become complacent and only think of the Civil Defense program or become interested in it when there is a crisis such as we had in October of 1962.”⁶⁴ The June 1963 NCCD newsletter echoed Sossoman’s sentiments, urging local directors that although finding shelter space “may seem like an insurmountable task, but it need not be – if we hammer away at the job of getting the citizens to face the situation and accept the facts.”⁶⁵

But people remained unconvinced. Mildred Ringwalt asked Ervin to stand against the civil defense legislation, for “only by building blast shelters would there be any chance of survival and these would cost between one hundred and two hundred billion dollars... any attempts to delude the American people into the thought that there is safety in shelters is a cruel deception.”⁶⁶

In Washington, however, as the subcommittee hearing progressed, opposition to the civil defense program began to erode among the Congressmen. A gradual shift developed among the members as the monotonous testimony of shelter critics was undermined by the objective, calm, and factually-supported testimony of Pittman and the Office of Civil Defense. By 10 July, the subcommittee had swung their support in favor of civil defense.⁶⁷ As the final witness for the hearings, Pittman asked the subcommittee to recommend amending the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950 to include natural disaster activities to

⁶³ “Doubt and Apathy Plague Plans of Civil Defense Groups in U.S.,” *NYT*, 2 June 1962, pg. 1.

⁶⁴ Letter from J.C. Sossoman to Terry Sanford, 20 June 1963, Folder titled “Civil Defense, A-Z,” GTSP, NCA, Box 264.

⁶⁵ NCCD Newsletter, June 1963, pg. 1, NCC.

⁶⁶ Letter from Mildred Ringwalt to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 25 June 1963, Folder 3689, SJEP, SHC, Box 81.

⁶⁷ Blanchard, “American Civil Defense 1945 – 1975,” 333 – 34; Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.*, 130.

further increase state and local civil defense by removing legal restrictions limiting federal aid to “civil defense operations concerned with wartime emergencies only.” Noting how state and local civil defense organizations played increasingly vital roles in natural disaster work, Pittman said “this has not only paid off in the relief of suffering and saving of lives, but has strengthened Civil Defense organization and capacity to perform in a wartime emergency.” He added that “a closer association of operations to meet both wartime and natural disasters will improve public understanding and public support of civil defense.”⁶⁸

The morning of 12 July 1962 the House Armed Forces Subcommittee Number Three unanimously agreed to report favorably on the fallout shelter program.⁶⁹ Chairman Hébert noted that the subcommittee was not referring to any particular bill, but rather the concept of fallout shelters, adding “we intend to write our own bill. We want it a tight one, a clear one, and one which keeps the Congress in constant control of this program.”⁷⁰ The subcommittee agreed the incentive program, as detailed in H.R. 3516, was too broad in scope and legislative authority. They subsequently reconvened on 17 July to draft a new bill. After rewriting the bill section by section, on 13 August the subcommittee voted nine-to-two in approval of the new bill, named H.R. 8042.⁷¹ For Griffin and the NCCD, the subcommittee’s

⁶⁸ Teletype message from Office of Civil Defense, Region III to North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Director, 11 July 1963, NCCD, NCA, Box 6; Memorandum to Local Directors, 12 July 1963, NCCD, NCA, Box 6; “Nation Held Able to Survive Bomb, *NYT*, 11 July 1963, pg. 1.

⁶⁹ “House Unit Backs Atomic Shelters,” *NYT*, 13 July 1962, pg. 2.

⁷⁰ Teletype message from Dial F. Sweeny, Office of Civil Defense, Region III to North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Director, 12 July 1963, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

⁷¹ Blanchard, “American Civil Defense 1945 – 1975,” 334-35; “House Unit Backs Shelter Program,” *New York Times*, 14 August 1963; *Cong. Rec.*, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963, vol. 109, pt. 11, 14779.

approval gave “new status and valuable government support to our efforts to build effective and realistic Civil Defense in North Carolina.”⁷²

New Confidence—H.R. 8200 and the House Debate

This new bill bore little resemblance to H.R. 3516. Acknowledging this to the press, Hébert affirmed “about the only thing that remains is the central theme or idea of a Fallout Shelter Program.” The SIP remained in H.R. 8042, funded for the sum of \$175 million for one year only, unlike the DoD program envisioned for five years.⁷³ As the House Committee on Armed Forces debated H.R. 8042, the state agency was striking while the iron was hot. The subcommittee’s favorable action, and unanimous endorsement of expanded civil defense efforts at all levels of government, “generated new confidence in civil defense... which we’ve needed for a long time” cited Griffin in the August newsletter. Nonetheless, he added “unless we want history to repeat itself, those of us who know how urgent the program is must let our voices be heard in the right places when the time comes.”⁷⁴ On 22 August 1963, Griffin sent out a memorandum to local civil defense directors outlining the key components of H.R. 8042 and declared that action to support the bill needed to commence immediately.⁷⁵

A day earlier, Hébert introduced H.R. 8200 to replace H.R. 8042.⁷⁶ The new bill added two new sections to the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950, section 206 on the incorporation of public shelters in “all structures existing or to be constructed in the future

⁷² Memorandum from NC CD State Director to Local Directors on “Press Releases on Armed Services Committee Approval of Civil Defense and Nationwide Shelter Program,” 15 July 1963, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

⁷³ NCCD Newsletter, Special Issue, 21 August 1963, NCC.

⁷⁴ NCCD Newsletter, August 1963, NCC.

⁷⁵ Memorandum from North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Director to local directors on “Getting Congressional Support for Shelter Bill and Related Civil Defense Appropriation,” 22 August 1963, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

⁷⁶ *Cong. Rec.*, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963, vol. 109, pt. 12, 15551.

and owned or occupied by any department or agency of the United States,” and section 207. The latter section outlined shelter financing for the SIP and reiterated that the funding, “authorized to be appropriated in fiscal year 1964 [would] not to exceed \$175,000,000 to carry out the purpose of this section.”⁷⁷ On 27 August 1963, the House Armed Services Committee debated the bill. After Vinson, committee chairman, indicated he would support the measure, the committee defeated two Republican attempts to cut the \$175 million for the SIP. With Vinson’s support, H.R. 8200 passed with a committee vote of thirty-two to four, with one abstention.⁷⁸

Meanwhile the Office of Civil Defense in Region III informed the state agency that since 1 July, the Accelerated Action program had stocked 224,458 shelter spaces at an average rate of 68,000 spaces a month. For 1963, the Office of Civil Defense allocated for all of North Carolina supplies for 566,000 shelter spaces.⁷⁹ Furthermore word came that Durham was the leading city in the nation for the NFSS, with shelter space stocked and ready for fifty-three percent of the city’s population. Washington, D.C by comparison had stocked shelter spaces for only 24.5 percent of residents. In August, the Southern Furniture Exposition building in High Point agreed to be used as a fallout shelter to protect up to 25,000 residents, and in Wilmington the museum battleship USS *North Carolina* began being

⁷⁷ *Cong. Rec.*, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963, vol. 109, pt. 13, 17266-27.

⁷⁸ “Atom Shelter Bill Gains in the House,” *NYT*, 28 August 1963, pg. 11; Blanchard, “American Civil Defense 1945 – 1975,” 335 – 36.

⁷⁹ Department of Defense, Office of Civil Defense, Region III Newsletter, August 1963, vol. 1, no. 7, Folder titled “Civil Defense – General,” GTSP, NCA, Box 264.

stocked with supplies for 2,143 residents. Ashe County also completed its operational survival plan, making it the ninety-first county in the state prepared for disaster.⁸⁰

Also in August, Yanceyville dentist Dr. Ludolphus G. Page began renting out his unique and elaborate fallout shelter as an “underground motor apartment.” Dr. Page, a highly intelligent and curious and inventive country genius, as recalled during an interview with his children, conceived the idea of his shelter during the Great Depression. “He thought the most efficient place to build a house was underground,” stated his son, retired dentist Dr. Graham A. Page.⁸¹ The reasoning for an underground house was that the earth would naturally cool and heat the rooms, while concrete construction would ensure structural integrity.⁸² The Great Depression curtailed Dr. Page’s plans, but the national shelter debate in the fall of 1961, Graham Page recalled, “just gave him the incentive to do something he thought about all along.” The underground house was designed in the form of a giant “X” and cost between \$2,500 and \$3,500 when it was constructed in late 1961.⁸³

The actual construction itself was extremely innovative. Using a ditching machine, the walls were excavated to a depth of nine feet and concrete poured in to form walls one-

⁸⁰ NCCD Newsletter, September 1963, NCC. In Durham, 60,000 spaces had been stocked; 35,000 spaces were located at Duke University, 8,500 at the American Tobacco Company, 9,000 at the Liggett and Myers Tobacco Company, and the remaining 9,500 dispersed among other business and institutions. Source: Address Delivered to the North Carolina Civil Defense Association Annual Conference, R.W. Grabarek, City of Durham Mayor, 9 September 1963, SLNC.

⁸¹ Graham L. Page, Susan Page Percy, and Pamela W. Page, interviews by author and visit to site, Yanceyville, NC, 7 August 2008. The interviews were conducted together as a group. The speakers are identified, but the interview is cited as one.

⁸² W.B. Wright, “How Doctor Page Built His Motor Apartment Underground,” *The State*, 17 August 1963, pg. 23.

⁸³ Graham L. Page, Susan Page Percy, and Pamela W. Page, interviews by author and visit to site, Yanceyville, NC, 7 August 2008.

foot wide, nine-feet fall, and roughly ten-feet long.⁸⁴ The roof for each room was arched, coming to a point in the center of the lobby where there was a periscope installed for the occupants to look outside the shelter, built immediately adjacent to Highway 158. The roof was made by mounding a small amount of dirt over each room, covering it with plastic, and then pouring concrete into steel rebar forming an eighteen-inch thick concrete roof, later covered with around three feet of earth. Once the concrete cured after a few days, a backhoe tunneled out each room. Plumbing was installed before the floor was poured and then the entire structure wired with electrical fixtures, and air conditioning. From start to finish, construction took two weeks.⁸⁵ The structure featured a combination electric kitchen / dining room, a full-sized bedroom, children's bedroom with two sets of bunk beds, a complete bathroom with hot and cold running water with a shower, and the spacious lobby was equipped with a television, electric heat and air conditioning, couches, and lounge chairs.⁸⁶

The Page family used the underground house in 1962 for a variety of purposes. Dr. Page frequently cooked in the shelter kitchen and held all sorts of gatherings in it. Susan Page Percy, then a high school upperclassman, “had all sorts of high school friends for parties in it. I was quite popular because my Dad had the fallout shelter. It was sort of adjunct to our house, and if we had extra people it was a place for them to stay.”⁸⁷ The hotel idea came about in 1963 as “sort of a hobby for him, like a bed and breakfast,” noted Susan,

⁸⁴ The “X” shape thus looked like the logo of the Red Cross. The exact length of the walls is not exactly known. The main lobby is ten feet wide and twenty-six feet long according to an original brochure the author was given by Susan Page Percy from 1963. The total length of the walls is mentioned in *The State* magazine article cited previously as 150 feet total.

⁸⁵ Wright, “Motor Apartment Underground,” *The State*, 17 August 1963, 23-24.

⁸⁶ Brochure, “For Rent: Page’s Underground Motor Apartment, Yanceyville, NC,” [1963], original given to author by Susan Percy Page.

⁸⁷ Graham L. Page, Susan Page Percy, and Pamela W. Page, interviews by author and visit to site, Yanceyville, NC, 7 August 2008.

and in August the NCCD referenced Dr. Page's creation in a special September newsletter. "Until such time as it is needed by his family, Dr. Page has arranged for it to serve as a motel since there are no public accommodations anywhere nearby."⁸⁸ In November, *The State* magazine printed an advertisement for Page's Underground Motor Apartment, "an amazing new adventure in comfort...underground!"⁸⁹

At the urging of the state agency, local civil defense directors contacted North Carolina's senators to urge them to support H.R. 8200. W.H. Wilford, civil defense director for Onslow County, wrote both Ervin and Jordan and detailed how his county civil defense program had trained and organized teams of volunteers in First Aid and Rescue, Radiological Monitoring and Decontamination, and assembled teams of medical personnel to undertake the sheltering and emergency care of displaced persons.⁹⁰ Wilford urged the senators to support H.R. 8200, but also to suggest that the bill "would not only help us to provide a goodly number of shelter spaces...but would also lend encouragement to the many volunteers and volunteer groups who have trained and who are prepared to serve in time of emergency."⁹¹

Above ground in Washington, the moment of truth for H.R. 8200 came on the floor of the House of Representatives on 17 September 1963. With seven out of North Carolina's

⁸⁸ Ibid.; NCCD Newsletter, September 18, 1963, pg. 2, NCC.

⁸⁹ Advertisement, "Page's Underground Motor Apartment," *The State*, pg. 24, 23 November 1963.

⁹⁰ If Wilford wrote to North Carolina's congressmen is not known. What is known is that when civil defense directors wrote to government officials, they generally sent the same letter to multiple people. This is based off finding letters from civil defense officials in multiple archives.

⁹¹ Letter from W.H. Wilford to B. Everett Jordan, 28 August 1963, Folder titled "Armed Services: General, 1962-1964, Box 56, BEJP, RBMSCL; W.H. Wilford to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 28 August 1963, Folder 3689, SJEP, SHC, Box 81.

eleven representatives in attendance, debate on the bill unfolded over two hours.⁹²

Congressman Clarence Brown (R – OH) began the debate by urging removal of the \$175 million allotment for the SIP before Hébert spoke up on defense of his bill. Congressman Chet Holifield (D – CA) supported Hébert’s defense by acknowledging “if there is a nuclear war, there is no military defense against the delivery of nuclear warheads on the United States,” and emphasized how twenty to thirty billion dollars was spent “to land a man on the moon, and hope that somehow in the process it will improve our defense posture.”⁹³ Hébert acknowledged in the debate that he shared a negative opinion of civil defense with Vinson before the subcommittee hearings, and “we felt we would be polite about this and have a hearing and let everybody have their say. Then we would bury the bill.”⁹⁴

After grabbing attention with his bluntness, Hébert emphasized whom the bill benefited. “While this program would save lives in the largest cities, the greatest benefit would be in the small cities and towns,” declared Hébert. Furthermore, he observed how “out of each defense dollar today we spend not more than one-tenth of one cent on civil defense.”⁹⁵ Hébert’s support touched off a wave of Congressmen rising in approval. Congressman Otis Pike (D – NY) spoke on how “civil defense in this country is at a crossroads and by our action here today we will determine what route our civil defense program will take.”⁹⁶ Twice the House rejected amendments by Ed Foreman (R – TX) to eliminate the \$175 million incentive program, in votes of 137 to 50 and 172 to 67. Frank J.

⁹² The Congressmen from North Carolina not in attendance were Harold D. Cooley, David N. Henderson, Roy A. Taylor, and Basil L. Whitener. Source: *Cong. Rec.*, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963, vol. 109, pt. 13, 17239.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 17242 - 43.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 17246.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 17247.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 17250.

Becker (R – NY) and Albert H. Quie (R – MN) had an amendment added to the bill allowing shelter equipment and supplies to be available for use in natural disasters.⁹⁷ With the majority in approval, the House took a voice vote and the amended H.R. 8200 was passed.⁹⁸

Passage of H.R. 8200 was enthusiastically greeted by the NCCD. Griffin noted House passage of the bill “has generated considerable optimism through Civil Defense circles that our ultimate goals may be reached in the foreseeable future.”⁹⁹ However, in response to letters from Guilford County Civil Defense director J.M. McGough and Harnett County Civil Defense assistant director N. Frank Lewis, Jr. asking for support of H.R. 8200, Ervin changed his previous statements of giving “careful consideration” when the bill entered the Senate Armed Forces Committee to the blunt remark “frankness compels me to say... that the evidence I have thus far heard concerning the efficacy of low-cost individual fallout shelters has not been very convincing.”¹⁰⁰ Granted, when given the same Ervin response, High Point Civil Defense director George M. Spinnett countered Ervin’s statement by clarifying how H.R. 8200 focused on the SIP and not individual family fallout shelters. Ervin reverted to giving “special consideration to the provisions dealing with shelter space in schools, hospitals, and other non-profit organizations.”¹⁰¹ Regardless of letters and enthusiasm, the odds were against H.R. 8200 in the Senate.

⁹⁷ “Fallout Shelter Plan Approved by House,” *NYT*, 18 September 1963, pg. 1.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 17280. For a good overview of the debate, see Blanchard, “American Civil Defense 1945 – 1975,” 336-37.

⁹⁹ NCCD Newsletter, October 1963, NCC.

¹⁰⁰ Sam J. Ervin, Jr. to J.M. McGough, 26 September 1963, Folder 3689, SJEP, SHC, Box 81; Sam J. Ervin, Jr. to Frank Lewis, 26 September 1963, Folder 3689, SJEP, SHC, Box 81.

¹⁰¹ Letter from George M. Spinnett to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 27 September 1963; Letter from Sam J. Ervin, Jr. to George M. Spinnett, 30 September 1963; Letter from George M. Spinnett to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 1 October 1963; Letter from Sam J. Ervin, Jr. to George M. Spinnett, 4 October 1963, Folder 3689, SJEP, SHC, Box 81.

The Swift End–Death by the Appropriations Committee

Although the House passed H.R. 8200 by voice vote, the bill still had to pass through the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Armed Forces Committee before even reaching the full Senate for a vote. The appropriations hearings for the Office of Civil Defense budget had been postponed due to the subcommittee hearings on civil defense. An Independent Office Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee first met on 11 September 1963, shortly before the house vote on H.R. 8200.¹⁰² On 7 October 1963, the House Appropriations Committee agreed to eliminate the \$175 million for the incentive program and an additional \$15.6 million for establishing fallout shelters in Federal buildings. A total Office of Civil Defense budget of \$87.8 million was approved. Committee chairman Albert Thomas (D – TX), stated the panel’s opinion on civil defense: “this program has been authorized since 1950. We haven’t changed our minds. We’re not building any fallout shelters, period.”¹⁰³ In one day the Appropriations Committee undermined the Office of Civil Defense and Pittman’s effort to finally achieve the SIP and placed the incentive program’s fate in the hands of the Senate.

The bill was not yet finished. Griffin sent out a memorandum to local civil defense directors on 11 October 1963 and boldly stated “*H.R. 8200 is not dead by a long shot, and we must continue our efforts to see it through.* It is most urgent that you contact your Congressmen – and both Senators – urging them to make the necessary appropriation for

¹⁰² Blanchard, “American Civil Defense 1945 – 1975,” 338.

¹⁰³ “House Panel Deletes Shelters Fund,” *NYT*, 8 October 1963, pg. 27; Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.*, 131; Blanchard, “American Civil Defense 1945 – 1975,” 340-41.

implementation of H.R. 8200.”¹⁰⁴ Over a period of three days, Ervin received letters and telegrams from civil defense directors of Johnston, Wake, Burke, Columbus, and Iredell counties asking for his support of H.R. 8200, to which Ervin replied that he remained unconvinced on the merits of the shelter program.¹⁰⁵ Pittman appeared before the Senate Independent Offices Appropriations Subcommittee on 17 October 1963 to push H.R. 8200 in the Senate and appeal the action of the House Appropriations Committee. On 28 October 1963, Senator Richard B. Russell (D – GA), Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, appointed a special subcommittee to consider H.R. 8200, chaired by Senator Henry M. Jackson (D – WA).¹⁰⁶

The Senate Appropriations Committee gave the Senate their conclusions on 13 November 1963. The recommendations included restoration of \$46.8 million for the NFSS stocking phase, but no funds for the SIP. The Senate accepted the report of the Appropriations Committee and the bills went to conference. The House agreed to restore funding for the shelter survey, marking, and stocking for Phase II. The incentive program, however, was not restored. Even if H.R. 8200 gained Senate approval, the incentive program would not be funded unless the Office of Civil Defense could convince the Senate to restore the funds.¹⁰⁷ In North Carolina, the state agency informed local directors that based on information from Office of Civil Defense officials, they are “warned... not to expect a whole

¹⁰⁴ Memorandum from North Carolina Civil Defense Agency director to local directors on “Status of Civil Defense Shelter Legislation in Congress,” 11 October 1963, NCCD, NCA, Box 6; [Original emphasis].

¹⁰⁵ Telegram from Wilson Jiggs Broadwell to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 16 October 1963; Letter from John C. Thorne to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 16 October 1963; Letter from J.C. Sossoman to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 16 October 1963; Telegram from Lathal R. Wayne to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 18 October 1963; Letter from J. Pierce VanHoy to Sam J. Ervin, Jr., 17 October 1963, Folder 3689, SJEP, SHC, Box 81.

¹⁰⁶ Memorandum titled “For Your Information,” from the DoD-OCD, Region III, 28 October 1963, NCCD, NCA, Box 6.

¹⁰⁷ Blanchard, “American Civil Defense 1945 – 1975,” 342.

lot of publicity about Civil Defense and shelter to emanate from Washington... so, in the last analysis, it is up to local directors to establish and maintain the best possible working relationship with local press and radio and furnish them with stories of local significance at every opportunity.”¹⁰⁸

The light for the incentive program was fading fast. Only weeks after this statement, President Kennedy was struck down by assassin’s bullets in Dallas, Texas on 22 November 1963. In a statement, General Griffin expressed the state agency’s opinion:

For all Americans, recovery from shock generated by the irresponsible assassination of our brilliant young President seems slow in coming. For those of us in Civil Defense it may take a longer time to regain enthusiasm for “business as usual.” From the very start of his administration, President Kennedy’s concern for realistic protection of citizens in case of thermonuclear attack was well known. His forthright support and efforts to establish a practical program afforded inspiration and much-needed encouragement to veteran Civil Defense workers throughout the nation. To all of us, the sense of loss occasioned by his death is deep and personal.¹⁰⁹

Governor Sanford wrote to Senator Jackson asking for favorable action on H.R. 8200. In this one last push, Sanford asserted “it is in my frank opinion that the best defense of human life against thermonuclear attack is an adequate Civil Defense program with sufficient protection from radiation. This protection is woefully lacking, particularly in rural areas, not only in our State but throughout the nation.”¹¹⁰

Jackson’s committee first held hearings in December 1963. The state agency published some hearing information in their December newsletter, mostly quoting the

¹⁰⁸ NCCD Newsletter, November 1963, NCC.

¹⁰⁹ NCCD Newsletter, December 1963, NCC.

¹¹⁰ Letter from Terry Sanford to Henry M. Jackson, 26 November 1963, Folder titled “Civil Defense, A-Z,” GTSP, NCA, Box 264.

testimony of Pittman and General Earle G. Wheeler, U.S. Army Chief of Staff. Pittman cited how all fifty governors, the AFL-CIO, National Academy of Sciences, the Reserve Officers Association, and numerous other Veterans and civic associations endorsed H.R. 8200. Speaking to the subcommittee, Pittman urged the Senate to “come to a firm decision this year on the future direction of the Civil Defense Program.” General Wheeler, representing the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who unanimously endorsed the bill, cited “recent studies of the vulnerability of the population demonstrate that a Civil Defense Program oriented on fallout protection can reduce the number of fatalities resulting from nuclear attack by tens of millions...” Senator Jackson, who referred to the bill as “controversial legislation,” was apparently not convinced.¹¹¹

Crucial to the continuation of H.R. 8200 was the support of President Lyndon B. Johnson. As hearings for the Jackson subcommittee finished in early 1964, the chairman indicated he would defer action unless President Johnson and his Administration indicated they wanted the SIP.¹¹² Pittman worked through McNamara to try to obtain the President’s position on the bill, but was forced to go before Senator Jackson without an answer.¹¹³ In March 1964, the subcommittee voted four to one to defer action on the bill for an indefinite period.¹¹⁴ Senator Jackson released a statement explaining the subcommittee’s action (written by Pittman to mitigate the lack of Presidential support on Office of Civil Defense morale):

This decision was based on several factors not necessarily related to the substance of the bill. Principally among them is the fact that ballistic missile defense and the shelter program

¹¹¹ NCCD Newsletter, December 1963, NCC.

¹¹² FEMA, *American Civil Defense 1945-1984*, 12.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹¹⁴ Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.*, 131.

have been closely related and it is believed that a decision as to both should be similarly related. Likewise, all programs involving the expenditure of Federal funds must be closely reviewed in the light of the current program of economy.¹¹⁵

The fallout shelter – anti-ballistic missile connection was a complete ruse in view of McNamara’s previous statements and actions, but the damage was done and H.R. 8200 was dead.¹¹⁶

The grand shelter plans of the Office of Civil Defense were snuffed out as quickly as they caught fire. With the death of President Kennedy and the end of H.R. 8200, fallout shelters fell out of favor for the DoD. In March 1964, Pittman resigned days after the decision by the Jackson subcommittee. On 31 March 1964, the Office of Civil Defense was reassigned from the Office of Secretary of Defense to the Office of the Secretary of the Army.¹¹⁷ The Kennedy fallout shelter-era was at an end. In North Carolina, by the end of 1963 a total of 620,000 shelter spaces were licensed out of a possible 843,000 spaces. Between 344,000 to 407,373 of the licensed spaces were stocked, but the owners of buildings with 120,000 spaces refused to sign licenses for use as public fallout shelters.¹¹⁸

Fallout shelters did not entirely fade away for the NCCD. The NFSS continued to function on a limited budget and identified 185 million shelter spaces nationwide by 1969 and 222 million in 1974. Due to a lack of funds, the stocking program was severely hampered and no funds existed to replace the supplies stocked in the early 1960s whose shelf

¹¹⁵ Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.*, 131; FEMA, *American Civil Defense 1945-1984*, 13.

¹¹⁶ FEMA, *American Civil Defense 1945-1984*, 13-14.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹¹⁸ NCCD Newsletter, December 1963, NCC. The newsletter notes OCD reports for 407,372 spaces, whereas reports from local civil defense officials total 344,000 spaces.

life had expired.¹¹⁹ In the final biennial report for the NCCD, as of 31 December 1970, 3,516,519 shelter spaces with a PF 10 or greater had been found; 2,242,148 were of PF 40 or greater. Of the PF 40 and greater shelters, 1,480,725 were marked statewide and 1,280,704 spaces stocked with supplies. Eighteen counties across the state had located enough shelter spaces for every resident.¹²⁰

All that remains today, over thirty years later, are a few old signs on the walls of buildings, large steel water barrels, boxes of crackers, and various other supplies moldering away in basements across the state. General Griffin, a tireless promoter of fallout shelters for North Carolina retired from the NCCD on 30 June 1967 at the age of 66 after serving as the agency's director since 1 March 1954.¹²¹ During the 1973 General Assembly, House Bill 1128, "An Act to Further Effectuate the Reorganization of State Government #3" was passed on 18 May. The bill created the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the NCCD became the Division of Civil Preparedness, effective 1 July 1973.¹²² Today the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management continues to be "committed to enhancing the quality of life in North Carolina by assisting people to effectively prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against all hazards and disasters", natural and manmade.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Kerr, *Civil Defense in the U.S.*, 142.

¹²⁰ "North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, January 1, 1969 to January 1, 1971," pgs. 1-2, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

¹²¹ Press Release from the Governor's Office, 19 May 1967, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

¹²² State of North Carolina, *1973 Session Laws and Resolutions Passed by the 1973 General Assembly at its First Session Held in the City of Raleigh Beginning on Wednesday, the Tenth Day of January, A.D. 1973* (Winston-Salem, NC: Winston Printing Co., 1973), 925-29.

¹²³ North Carolina Division of Emergency Management, "Division of Emergency Management – Mission," North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, <http://www.nccrimecontrol.org/Index2.cfm?a=000003,000010,000173,001678> (accessed 7 July 2008).

Conclusion

The year 1963 witnessed highs and lows for civil defense in North Carolina. Kennedy's assassination and the end of H.R. 8200 pulled the rug out from the NCCD after considerable effort, building from the results of the NFSS. Throughout the course of the year the state agency and the local civil defense organizations continued to assist the survey in the stocking and marking of shelters and encouraging fallout shelter efforts at local levels. The General Assembly passed a bill giving tax incentives for the construction of fallout shelters and local governments took efforts to support civil defense. At the national level, however, North Carolina's elected representatives were less than supportive for civil defense. For civil defense at the state level the necessary funding to continue the fallout shelter efforts of the Kennedy Administration hinged on a single bill, and when it died, the effort died.

Experiences from two weeks in October 1962 remained with civil defense officials well into 1963. Governor Sanford, General Griffin, and local civil defense directors repeatedly brought up the Cuban crisis in appeals for support. Monthly agency newsletters began promoting the achievements of individual cities and counties in the summer of 1963. Furthermore the NCCD was well-versed at keeping local directors informed on the technical aspects of fallout shelters and civil defense. If any of this information was sent to Senator Ervin, to change his opinion of the civil defense shelter program, is not known.

Politically the state agency made improvements in the civil defense efforts for North Carolina, but not in Washington, D.C. I did not research the records of North Carolina's representatives in the eighty-eighth Congress, but the records of the state's two senators do not contain much information speaking positively about civil defense. Senator Ervin, a

member of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, was in the best position to act for the benefit of North Carolina's civil defense efforts. Based on his letter to Jesse Helms in 1962 and his replies to civil defense letters in 1963, Ervin did not change his opinion that fallout shelters were more folly than substance. In the *Congressional Record* at no point did any North Carolina representative speak in the debates for H.R. 8200, or comment on civil defense at any point during the year. In Raleigh, the General Assembly took notice of civil defense. Governor Sanford's address and the distribution of the NCCD biennial progress report informed all legislators of the status of the NFSS and civil defense actions statewide. Passage of a fallout shelter tax break bill, as requested in the report, was a success for the agency.

The incentive program was vital to North Carolina's shelter strategy. Private fallout shelter construction was minimal at best, and the shelter survey had produced only small isolated pockets of licensed, marked, and stocked public shelters. Outside of the largest urban areas in the state, the vast majority of counties had little protection from fallout. With the state's nuclear survival strategy based on shelters and not evacuation, the shelter survey gave the state agency the data to persuade lawmakers of the need to act. The incentive program's support by Subcommittee Number Three and the full House gave the state agency a noticeable jolt of enthusiasm. Counties state-wide held new school construction in abeyance waiting for the incentive program funds to assist in construction.

For the NCCD, 1963 represented the end of an era of better funding and a clear Federal plan of action. Hampered by Federal cancellation of the SIP, the loss of a pro-civil defense president, limited rural shelter space, and limited political support for shelters in

North Carolina, the odds of successfully sheltering the state's population were long even at the best of times. In August through September 1963 the future was never brighter for the state agency and civil defense in North Carolina. By December the agency was in mourning and preparing local civil defense directors to expect little more than moral support and information from the Federal government at best.

The state agency appears to have moved beyond shelters. Over a million dollars was spent on communications from 1961 to 1963, approximately eighty percent of the federal matching funds for 1961-1962. Less than one percent of these matching funds were spent on radiological equipment, which was generally included in a fallout shelter. Although the official NCCD publications state that shelters were priority one for North Carolina, the financial data indicates that shelter spending was extremely small. For North Carolina, the death of the SIP removed the shelter defense as a viable, "public" strategy, but seemed to allow state civil defense personnel on the ground to continue working on aspects of emergency preparedness.



Figure 4.1 – Sign posted by the Elizabeth City – Pasquotank County Civil Defense Agency to promote home fallout shelters. Source: NCCD Newsletter, August 1963, pg. 3, NCC.

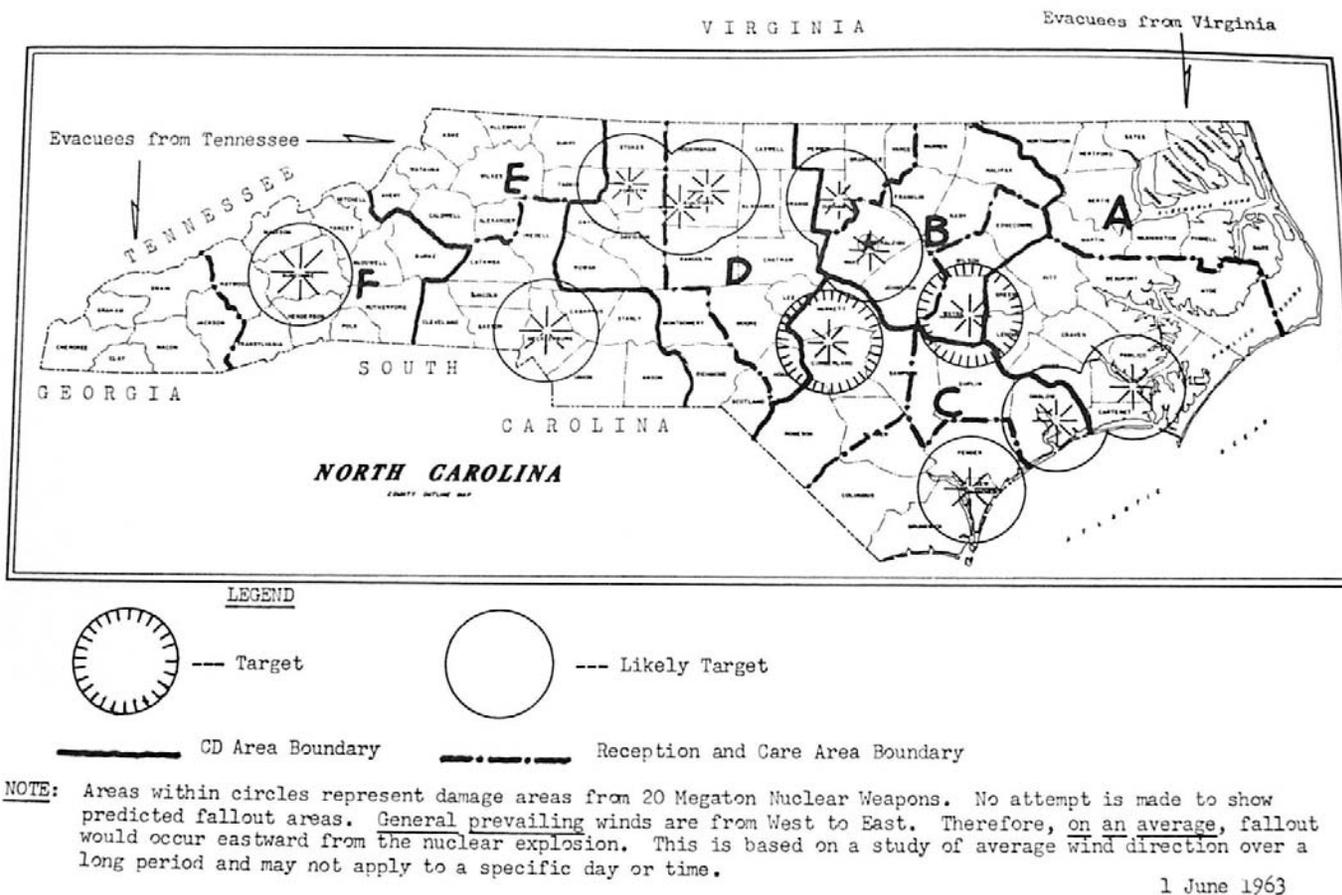


Figure 4.2 – Map of Potential Targets in North Carolina, 1 June 1963. Source: “North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1963 to 1 January 1965,” pg. 39, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.



Figure 4.3 – Photographs of the entrance and lobby of Dr. Page's Underground Motor Apartment / Fallout Shelter as it exists today in Yanceyville, NC. The structure was last used and maintained in 1971. The main bedroom is behind the chair in the foreground. The kitchen is to the left of the chair, the bathroom and children's bedroom to the right (the children's bedroom is immediately adjacent to the main bedroom). Source: Author's Collection.

CONCLUSION

Developments during 1963 and 1964... brought additional awareness to elected officials that in the nuclear age there is no substitute for preparedness on the part of civil government to protect the lives of its citizens. These developments have come about in spite of the unlikelihood that the necessity for Civil Defense will ever be accepted by the public mind except in the face of international crisis or major natural disaster.
- Foreword, "NCCD Progress Report, 1 January 1963 to 1 January 1965"¹

From 1961 to 1963, the Office of Civil Defense attempted to create a national fallout shelter program capable of sheltering all Americans from fallout within five years. This ambitious program was not fulfilled. In the summer of 1961, President John F. Kennedy was able to secure a significant amount of funding for civil defense, thanks in no small part to the volatile Berlin Crisis. This funded the National Fallout Shelter Survey (NFSS) and revitalized civil defense efforts nationwide. Months prior, the North Carolina Civil Defense Agency (NCCD) had finally begun to establish the area civil defense offices and fund the area directors statewide. This enabled the state agency to gather first-hand information from towns, cities, and county governments. Despite advocating fallout shelters in accordance with federal policies, the area directors learned that across the state shelters were not wanted. Instead, rural North Carolina needed emergency communications, emergency medical services, professionally trained and equipped fire departments, and rescue squads.

Area directors asked counties to write survival plans and build fallout shelters, but they also worked closely with a wide array of local officials to augment emergency preparedness. These five men established vast personal networks with local politicians statewide, giving the NCCD an intimate knowledge of what North Carolina actually had in

¹ "North Carolina Civil Defense Agency Progress Report, 1 January 1963 to 1 January 1965," foreword, NCCD, NCA, Box 9.

terms of civil defense. State civil defense personnel built up local emergency services and commenced integrating local civil defense offices to make a viable and efficient emergency network.

Two major crises occurred in North Carolina between 1961 and 1963, the Ash Wednesday Storm and the Cuban Missile Crisis. The former caused tremendous damage along the Outer Banks and underscored how important planning and emergency preparedness were. Counties lacked the means to communicate by radio, leaving only amateur HAMs to send messages for civil defense. Fallout shelters, by comparison, seemed to be luxuries. Financial records for the 1961 – 1962 biennium totaled over one million dollars (over \$6.3 million dollars in 2008 figures) spent on communications for civil defense in North Carolina. By 1963, the state had an extensive radio network linking civil defense offices, hospitals, rescue squads, police and fire departments. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, these networks relayed information from the state and federal civil defense offices and effectively managed the crisis by controlling the flow of accurate information to avoid the onset of rumors and panic. Communications from the state agency to the local offices and eventually to the individual citizens was supported by the use of the area directors and the chain of command for civil defense organizations in the state. Perhaps thanks in part to smooth, efficient communication, few criticisms of the state agency's handling of the crisis appeared in the local media, despite the state being unprepared for fallout. Emergency preparedness was proving its worth.

The missile crisis validated North Carolina's approach to civil defense as efficient and effective method to manage an emergency. Civil defense leadership during the crisis evaluated the state's emergency resources and decided to check readiness levels and communicate to North Carolinians that the NCCD was in control of the situation. Oddly enough, the most effective elements of the state agency, planning and the communications network, received little public fanfare. Despite the success of non-shelter civil defense programs, the virtues of fallout shelters continued to be promoted. Fallout shelters remained the public focus of the agency before and after the missile crisis.

In 1963, the returns on the NFSS revealed severe gaps in the state's shelter network. That spring and summer, Congress and the North Carolina General Assembly debated the merits of shelters. No one publicly, however, emphasized what emergency preparedness measures North Carolina had taken. These measures, at least in regards to public protest or backlash, appeared to not be a cause for concern or disagreement statewide. In April 1961 protests against OPAL 61 took place in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Illinois, and Minnesota.² Elsewhere in the nation, the city council of Portland, Oregon in May 1963 angrily killed their massive civil defense program after the city's civil defense personnel failed to warn the city of a windstorm which caused tremendous damage to the city.³ There were no civil defense protests in North Carolina at any point from 1961 to 1963, despite the state's dramatic lack of protection from fallout. Why was emergency preparedness never mentioned while fallout shelters received all

² Ibid., 113-14.

³ Garrison, *Bracing for Armageddon*, 128. Portland had built a massive, \$1.6 million dollar emergency operating center inside the side of a mountain, and stocked supplies for 500,000 people.

the attention? No concrete explanation has been found to answer this. The answer must be tentative.

The most likely answer is “follow the money.” The majority of federal funds flowed for shelters, not for emergency preparedness. Moreover, there was probably some disagreement within the state agency about the importance of shelters. Interviews with two surviving NCCD employees indicate that General Griffin continued to promote shelters even after the area directors had moved toward emergency preparedness. Furthermore, the publications and press releases of the state agency continued to accentuate the need for shelters throughout the 1961 – 1963 period.

This was a gradual movement, not a concerted plan. Before the Ash Wednesday Storm, local civil defense administrators used some of their human and financial capital to buttress the local emergency preparedness infrastructure, and after the storm they moved in a determined way to do so. This was what the citizens of the state wanted. Ironically, the local civil defense offices could not trumpet their accomplishments, either because of the risk of diminished support, or at the request of the area directors to maintain the shelter façade. Therefore, their useful work has been unrecognized while the “failure” of the fallout shelter program has been widely heralded.

Was the move towards emergency preparedness instead of fallout shelters really a concerted or focused effort, or in many respects a case of being at the right place at the right time? Funding for the area directors coincided with Kennedy’s election, his request for civil defense funds, and the Berlin Crisis. The rural residents of North Carolina had felt little need

for shelters while they did need many other improvements in emergency resources that directly affected their daily lives, notably fires or car accidents. In compromising shelters for emergency preparedness, the NCCD personnel were strengthening local civil defense capabilities and in effect waiting in a holding pattern while the federal government provided fallout shelters. The Ash Wednesday Storm, however, illustrated to the NCCD that its non-shelter work reaped valuable results and was both essential and desired in parts of the state. During the missile crisis, despite lacking fallout shelter spaces for over ninety percent of the state population, the NCCD emerged unscathed. Citizens did not protest the lack of shelter spaces or civil defense at the state or local levels. The mentions of civil defense in the press were positive of the civil defense operations in the state, and indicated that after the crisis civil defense actually received greater support in certain cities and counties. Furthermore, the state agency was pleased with the performance of the local civil defense agencies and no changes were made in the organization structure of civil defense operations in the state.

State civil defense officials in North Carolina recognized that they had to respond to issues directly affecting the citizens, be they car accidents, fires, or hurricanes. This conservative, realistic, and flexible approach to emergency management weathered the Cuban Missile Crisis and the end of the fallout shelter era. Furthermore, this strategy allowed local civil defense agencies, each with different demographic, geographic, and financial profiles, to operate in accordance with their own needs. The fallout shelters constructed in the 1950s and 1960s may have been deemed follies by some. These shelters, however, acted as a façade for the North Carolina Civil Defense Agency, presenting a front

that attracted federal funds but hid the bulk of the state's unofficial civil defense work. This allowed state civil defense personnel to reevaluate and establish North Carolina's civil defense fundamentals during the Kennedy administration.

These fundamentals were improvements in communication and warning capability for all counties, development of survival plans tailored to natural disasters in specific geographic areas of the state, and the professionalizing of police, fire, rescue, and emergency medical services. Funding for these fundamentals came from county and community governments, federal and state funds. Civil defense personnel and civil defense resources were devoted to ensuring that North Carolinians received the benefits of these non-shelter elements of emergency preparedness. Although fallout shelters have been the target for the bulk of criticism directed against civil defense in the United States for over fifty years, shelters in North Carolina were in essence a catalyst for the establishment of an emergency preparedness movement.

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