Southern Exposure
$4.50

Long Journey Home
FOLKLIFE IN THE SOUTH

Mittie Barrier, of Salisbury, North Carolina, completed this embroidered crazy quilt in 1920, and signed it with the initials of her maiden name, Mittie Belle Agner. Her designs reflect not the standard ornamental motifs of many such quilts, but scenes from her childhood in rural Rowan County. The detail here shows a gander attempting to bite a goat amid a swarm of chickens and geese. The background pieces were cut from her father's cast-off wool trousers, and were sewed against a square of overall material. The designs themselves were stitched in embroidery thread of a type no longer available, and people attempting to reproduce Mittie's work today are unable to match the texture of the original. Years of use and numerous washings have dulled the original brilliance of the colors, but time has not erased the traces of the extraordinary imagination and skill which went into the work. Mittie Barrier died on August 8, 1977, at the age of 83. The quilt has been passed down, as planned, to a granddaughter. This photograph was made during a research project on North Carolina quilts conducted by Joyce Newman and Mary Ann Emmons, supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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LONG JOURNEY HOME

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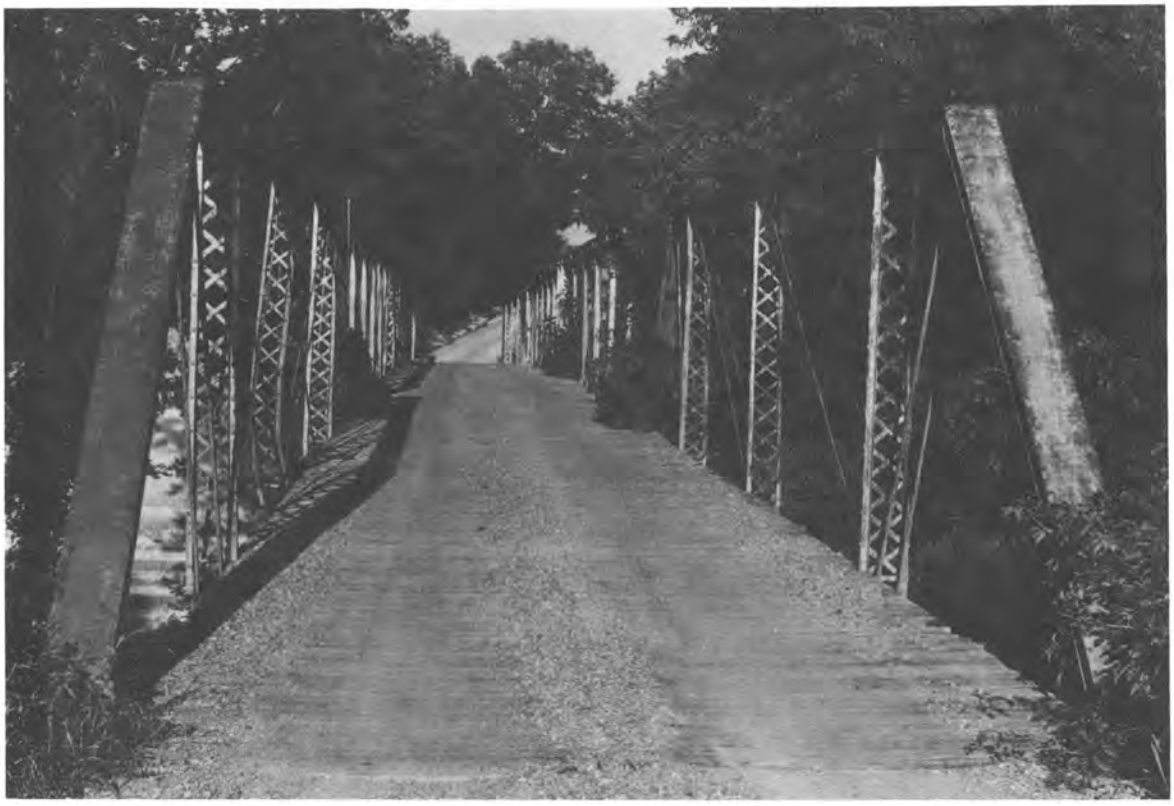

TWISTED LAUREL*

Just across the blue ridge where the high meadows lay
And the galax spreads through the new-mown hay
There's a rusty iron bridge cross a shady ravine
Where the hard road ends and turns to clay.
With a suitcase in his hand, a lonesome boy stands
Gazing at the river sliding by beneath his feet
But the dark water springs from the black rocks and flows
Out of sight where the twisted laurel grows.
Past the coal-tipple towns in the cold December rain
Into Charleston runs the New River train
where the hillsides are brown and the broad valley stained
by a hundred-thousand lives of work and pain.
In a tar-paper shack out of town across the track
Stands an old used-up man trying to call something back
But his old memories fade like the city in the haze
And his days have flowed together like the rain
and the dark water springs from the black rocks and flows
out of sight where the twisted laurel grows.

*Song by Tommy Thompson, from the Red Clay Ramblers album, *Twisted Laurel,* printed with permission of Flying Fish Records.

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by Allen Tullos

Two masters: Tommy Jarrell and Fred Cockerham, Low Gap, Va., 1970 (photo by Blanton Owen)

Glittering facades turn life into a spectator sport at Cherokee, N.C., 1977 (photo by A. Tullos)

This special book-length issue of *Southern Exposure* is filled with the stories and images of Southerners who live in a variety of Souths. Using blues and jook jive, folk of the Mississippi Delta describe a South quite unlike that which Texas fishermen reveal in their tall tales and jokes. The South of Grand Ole Opry stars Wilma Lee and Stony Cooper is different from that of Lorenzo Piper Davis, talented ballplayer for the Birmingham Black Barons of the Negro Baseball League. The Louisiana Gulf Coast of Cajuns and black French people is another South, as is Carolina's Low Country.

All these Souths with their stories, songs, sports, dances, religions, occupations, crafts and foodways reflect generations of diverse experiences and outlooks. Like garden seeds that are planted and culled for their special qualities year after year and then are passed along within a family, the forms of regional folk expression are the findings and keepings which sustain us and tie us to our history and to our sense of home. In spite of the onslaught of bulldozers, the sprawl of cities and the profiteering in everything from soybeans to condominiums, Southern folk traditions persist, offering a measure of distinctiveness and stability.

In the spring of 1977, Herman Kahn, nuclear gamesman from the Hudson Institute and author of *Thinking the Unthinkable*, delivered the keynote address for a Southern Growth Policies Board devoted to "The Future of the South's Economy." Kahn was pleased with what he saw. The unthinkable seemed irrepressible in this South which had built the Land of Oz atop North Carolina's Beech Mountain, offered a Biblical tourist park in Alabama with a "Walk-On-The-Water Ride," and boasted of an international city, Atlanta, which flaunts its new creed, "A City Without Limits."

His eyes shining like satellites, Kahn prophesied flush times for Dixie. Because of "the character of the people," the South would soon overtake the North in economic development. Northerners, he suggested, had become unwilling to labor, to take risks, to make sacrifices. They had even begun to question the wisdom of uncontrolled growth and the promise of salvation by technology. As certain of the future as he was unimpressed with the past, Kahn concluded his remarkable speech by looking to the year 2175 and to a world become Atlanta, where, barring bad luck, "mankind should be everywhere rich, everywhere numerous and everywhere in control of the forces of nature."

The forces of nature promise no more beautiful retreat than can be found in early May on US Highway 441 as it runs through the middle of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Here are free-flowing streams, swimming holes and backpacking trails. Winding amidst rhododendron and mountain laurel, 441 seems less a new-made road than a passageway to privacy and timelessness. But by August, mankind is everywhere numerous and in control. The highway becomes strangled with traffic, littered with fools and strangers, and moves to the rhythms of a thousand snapshots.

On the Tennessee side of 441 is Gatlinburg, city of 3,000 residents and 150 motels. Each year, Gatlinburg entertains a goodly number of the 9,000,000 tourists who come to the Smokies. Its streets are filled with hustles: Ripley's Believe-It-Or-Not, the Space Needle, Rebel's Corner, plus Alpine beer halls, ski lodges, cable car lifts, fairylands, gold rushes, cement trout ponds, wax New Testament gardens, mountaineer-burgers and 3-D rainbow panoramas.

North Carolina offers travelers of 441 the town of Cherokee. Advertising "Unusual Novelties," Cherokee is the home of caged bears, reservation Indians, bow and arrow sets made in Taiwan, imitation simulated leather saddlebags and lacquered scalawags. Try as it does, however, Cherokee remains Gatlinburg's poor cousin when it comes to garish fakelore. In the hills beyond, down the highway toward Maggie Valley and Asheville, spill second-home resorts, golf courses and billboard backwash.

Glittering facades that turn life into a spectator sport, Cherokee, Gatlinburg, Opryland and a hundred such amusements sometimes seem like all that is left of Southern culture. But there are other roads than 441 and other Souths than Hillbilly World. There are even other attitudes about the relationship between past, present and future.

One night not long after the Southern Economic Conference featured futurologist Kahn, I listened as banjo-playing philosopher Tommy Thompson of the Red Clay Ramblers talked about growth.

"Our music developed a step at a time. An early group that I was in – the Hollow Rock String Band – had a fiddler named Alan Jabbour who had learned a lot about tune traditions of North Carolina and Virginia. I learned from him. We never sang a song in that band and for two years I was happy just playing instrumentals. We were thrilled when the people from whom the music had come, master musicians like Henry Reed and Tommy Jarrell, liked what we played.

"Next, when we formed the Red Clay Ramblers,

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I was feeling a need to change, to be broader. Certain kinds of sounds appealed to me that were outside the older repertory. As our new band grew, we began to write a few songs and to use more material from the black tradition. Each step meant a tiny move away from an old-timey band that happened to exist in the 1970s instead of the 1930s.

"After a while I began to think that if you hadn't seen the steps we took, you wouldn't know we were an old-time band. But I was overreacting. We are part of a regional tradition because we worked like hell to assimilate it. We have tried to latch on to the most robust, good-humored, healthiest part of the musical, lyrical heritage we've had. However, you can't make a whole music just by hanging on to the past. You have to add something new."

To become a fine contemporary musician, Tommy Thompson began as an apprentice to tradition. In no rush to the future, he acquired his skills steadily and patiently. Not content merely to preserve old forms, he and the Red Clay Ramblers sought black and white sources, accepted new instruments and new rhythms and began to shape a music which would satisfy a present need. "Sooner or later," Tommy says, "we'll probably do a song that won't sound right unless it has a drum or an electric guitar in it."

photo by Gary Simmons/*Goldenseal*

Mrs. Eva Samples King in her living room on Twistabout Ridge in Clay County, West Virginia, with family portraits.

Key to the Highway

Amidst all the growth and rumors of growth which the twentieth century South has experienced, in spite of the balloons of rhetoric launched by New South boosters from Henry Grady to Herman Kahn, folk expressions have provided a touchstone with reality. The music of the blues arose with the oppression of the Jim Crow era. Blues realism, its anguish as well as its outrageous humor, said more about the Southern condition in the first third of this century than any number of nostalgic novels which lamented the passing of the Old South's darkey days. During the same years, white folksong in the Upland and Piedmont South reported, among other things, the tenor of mine disasters and gun thugs, the poverty and hopelessness on the farm and in the factory. Nancy Dixon sang:

> Every evening when I get home
> It's a big pot of peas and an old jaw bone.
> Hard times in this old mill
> It's hard times in here.

Blind Alfred Reed sang, "How Can a Poor Man Stand Such Times and Live?" To this scene, William Faulkner and Richard Wright were yet to come. Nor has such folk outrage disappeared.

One giant step down US Highway 72 from "The Space Capital of the Universe," as Huntsville, Alabama, calls itself, is tiny Mooresville – the first town incorporated in the state. For the past 90 years, this old plantation community in the rich soil of the Tennessee Valley has been the home of Frank Pickett, whose parents worked the nearby fields as slaves. More precious than moonrocks is the Pickett legacy of nineteenth century camp meeting spirituals which he still renders with great range and power.

> I'm living down here, Lord
> Living on borrowed land.
> Yes, I'm living down here on borrowed land.
> I'm rooted and I'm grounded, Lord
> I'm wrapped and tied.
> Going to wait on the rising sun.

I visited Frank Pickett one day during the Christmas holidays in 1975, and he sat and sang for hours while I recorded him. Then he talked of his being hired years ago by the Tennessee Valley Authority to "sing and keep lively time" for its laborers. He had sung blues. He had also sung worksongs to pace the flying axes of crews of men

photo by Michael P. Smith

New Orleans jazz funeral

as they chopped trees in teams. After he got religion, however, he quit singing these "reels" and began to sing only spirituals.

On a late-July night in 1976, after Frank Pickett and his young cousins had sung for the audience at the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife in Washington, I walked with him up Capitol Hill. He insisted on walking; it was his regular form of exercise. Frank was dressed in his everyday outfit: yellow tennis shoes, khaki pants which (thanks to the red suspenders) almost swallowed his small body, a white cotton long-sleeved shirt buttoned high on his neck and heavy eyeglasses with lenses as thick as the bottoms of beer bottles. He set a fast pace. Ahead, the Capitol dome loomed larger, brightly spotlighted, white, golden and spectacular against the nighttime blue sky.

Inside the Capitol, Frank closely inspected the displays of governmental curios, the rows of marble men who circled the rotunda, the armed guards in their uniforms and the richly ornamented and bejeweled case which held the Magna Charta, on loan for the Bicentennial. Then, standing in the center of this cathedral to the American Empire and looking upward into the skylight, up hundreds of feet toward the mural which depicts the ascension of George Washington, and which he could no more see than he could see his feet when he looked toward them, Frank Pickett laughed and said, "It's a hypocrite's heaven."

The Bozart Blues

Recently, in an article about Arkansas, the major Southern correspondent for *The New York Times* wrote, "A state that once regarded a corn-shuck doll as a work of art now has a number of serious painters and artistic craftsmen." Only a few weeks earlier, another *Times* writer had proclaimed. "Dixie is still no cultural oasis, but as they say in Southern art circles these days, some flowers are beginning to bloom in the desert."

Tired and unimaginative scraps from the half-century-old butcher block of *American Mercury* editor H.L. Mencken, these *Times* pronouncements reflect longstanding stereotypes. Accepting the prejudices of urban taste-makers in the North and East, Mencken sampled the South and spat it out. With a number of devastating essays about the "Sahara of the Bozart" (as he called the South), Mencken helped to terrorize several generations of Southern writers, intellectuals and historians.

Without the antagonism of a Mencken, there were other reasons why literate, ambitious and restless young Southerners abandoned their traditional cultures and adopted the standards of New

York, Philadelphia, Boston, even Baltimore. Some of these reasons seem natural enough – such as the urge of any generation to break free from the dogmas and rigidity of its forebears. And there was much that was worthy of emulation in Yankeeland – its writers and poets, its theatres, museums and universities, its American philosophers and its connections with the cosmopolitan heritage of Europe.

There were, however, other motivations, forces which made for feelings of inferiority. These forces were related to the South's peculiar relationship to the nation. From at least the time of Reconstruction until well into the twentieth century, the South served as a raw materials and resource colony of the North. In several longstanding instances (such as the coal fields of Appalachia or the steel mills of Birmingham), this relationship continues today. Peas in a pod, economic and cultural colonialism have their legacies. The trains which hauled the iron and timber from the South brought Northern manufactured products, styles of fashion, books and periodicals, and shapers of genteel opinion.

Whatever the combination of reasons, Southerners have often been ashamed of their distinctive accents and molasses speech, embarrassed by the high nasal sound of mountain music or by the bawdiness of the blues. We have often been blind to the beauty of the folk potter's or the chairmaker's crafts and to the vision of the quiltmaker's art. Never mind the emergence and genuine achievements of "hillbilly" bands; if Northern cities had symphony orchestras then, by God, Southern cities would have second-rate ones.

For many years, only a handful of researchers and fieldworkers tried to piece together the biographies and document the accomplishments of countless musicians, craftspeople, storytellers, preachers, singers, healers, dancers and cooks. Lately, as the number of these cultural detectives has increased, the patterns of folk history have begun to appear with the intensity and variety of a crazy-quilt. There is much here to admire. Southern folk creations have made extraordinary contributions to the arts of America. In the hands of someone like Pearl Bowling of the Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild, even the cornshuck doll deserves another look.

And Home

As new-made roads have broken down the isolation of folk communities in the Appalachians, Ozarks, Piney Woods and Sea Islands, the ferry, the mountain lane and swamp canal have given way. People of many regions and countries have traveled these roads discovering each other, comparing ways of life, lingering to trade recipes and remedies. Millions of migrants, hoping to escape the castes of race and class, have journeyed to far away cities or have traveled hard in search of richer farmlands. Other Southerners have been ordered half-around the world to fight a series of wars; those who came back saw the South through different eyes.

For many Southerners, the acceptance of a regional identity has been a long journey home. It has often meant a reconciliation to community, to family, to personality. Homecoming has meant an affirmation of some traditions and a rejection of others. With a Southern horizon filled with the ominous shapes of urban high-rises, nuclear reactors and strip mine shovels, homecoming may already be too late.

For a number of Southerners, those who have never seen beyond the boundaries of their bitterness or the limits of their sentimentality, home ground is an unyielding turf. Not only the crippled demagogues with their frantic flying of rebel flags, but also the misty-eyed painters with their bygones and sleeping dogs linger as reminders of strange fruit from the Southern past. Isolation and nostalgia, however, neither build community nor keep the bulldozer out of the living room.

That a regional culture needs an international dimension will seem unlikely only to those who have heard no grandmother say, "Sometimes the longest way around is the shortest way home." Just returned from a trip abroad, the Red Clay Ramblers' Tommy Thompson suggests the value, not only of musical exchange, but of all folklife when it embraces a larger world.

"During the summer of 1977," explains Tommy, "we made our first concert tour of Europe and the British Isles. We got great audience response everywhere we went. People really loved what we were doing. Sure, we heard an awful lot of American pop stuff of the AM radio variety on European jukeboxes and a lot of Muzak, but we felt a very distinct movement toward home music.

"Of course in Britain there's a musical scene – stimulated by the Irish movement – which runs from old-timers in pubs to the fairly conservative Boys of the Lough to more innovative groups like Steeleye Span.

"In France, the same kind of musical revival is getting started, maybe several years behind the British Isles. There are even a few folk bands beginning to make a living from their music. And the French are always very excited when Louisiana Cajun performers, like the Balfa Brothers, come to visit.

"No matter where they live, folks have to do with music what they should do with the past in general. They must recognize that change is inevitable, but they must also search for and build upon the best of their traditions."□

Tracking the Lost String Bands

photo courtesy of Barry Poss

Fiddlers' convention, Mountain City, Tennessee, circa 1924

by Charles Wolfe

In the fall of 1928, four men from New York drove a couple of dusty touring cars into Johnson City, Tennessee. At the foot of the Smoky Mountains and just a few miles from North Carolina, Johnson City was in many ways a modern town, with two newspapers, a collection of active civic clubs, a budding interest in tourism and a Chamber of Commerce concerned with the need for new industries. Yet it was rather remote, and the mountains surrounding it were remoter still; the old ways held. Medicine shows pitched their tents across from the courthouse, and the Klan advertised in full page spreads in the local *Staff-Chronicle.*

To the men from New York, Johnson City was backwoods — or as backwoods as they felt they could get and do their work. The men worked for the Columbia Phonograph Company, and they were in town to record some genuine old-time "hill country" music. Since 1924, the companies had found a strong market for such music in the South, and they set out to cater to this market. They first tried hiring trained singers to imitate country singers, believing that the real article was a bit too strong for anyone. They were wrong; their customers wanted the real thing. Next they tried bringing singers to the New York studios, singers like Charlie Poole with his "Don't Let Your Deal Go Down." But this was cumbersome and expensive, and made sense only if the singers had a large repertoire; many excellent ones did not. The only answer was for the companies to go into the South after the material, and by 1927 new recording technology made their journey possible. Hence the Columbia trip to Johnson City.

The man in charge of the expedition was Frank Walker, the director of Columbia's "Old Familiar Tunes" series. (Nobody called it country music then, nor did anyone call it "hillbilly" music — unless he wanted a fight.) His assistant was a little man named Bill Brown, who worked with the musicians to be recorded, loosening them up, offering them a drink if necessary, trying to make everything seem normal. Walker and Brown took rooms at the city's plushest hotel, the John Sevier, and put an ad in the local paper: "Can You Sing Or Play Old-Time Music? If so, call Mr. Walker for a tryout with Columbia records." The word spread, and soon Walker and Brown had their hands full of aspiring musicians from the nearby hills. The Grant Brothers, from nearby Bristol, recorded a song called "Tell It To Me," known widely today as "Cocaine Blues;" a string band called The Roane County Ramblers, from the other side of Knoxville, recorded a version of the original "Tennessee

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Waltz," a low, lilting mountain melody quite different from the later Nashville hit. Someone named Richard Harold sang about "The Battleship Maine" and the Spanish-American War. Family groups abounded: the Bowman Family, the Reed Family, the Hodges Family. Brothers recorded together; parents recorded songs and even their children recorded songs. One enterprising music store owner from Kentucky brought a whole truckload of musicians into the session. "We were herded together like cattle," recalls one bitterly. But most of the feelings were good, and the little makeshift studio which had been a cream separation station, rang with music far into the night.

First Decade of Country Music

Long before Nashville emerged as the center for country music, large numbers of semi-professional performers – string bands, singers, fiddlers, gospel singers – were recorded in small cities across the South by traveling field units of major commercial record companies. From 1925 to 1935, the first decade of country music, nearly all the recording was done at temporary field studios set up across the South. In some cases, a field recording unit would follow the pattern set by Walker in Johnson City. In other cases, field units sent advance scouts into a certain area to line up acts ahead of time. Regardless of the method used, the talent was there and willing to record – not with the idea of getting rich off of records (no one in the 1920s did that), but for the experience of preserving their music on wax.

This first generation of country music performers were folk musicians more than professionals; they were farmers, barbers, mill workers, mechanics, miners, sign-painters, people who made music on the side, for their own enjoyment, or for a Saturday night square dance or a church singing on Sunday. Some groups recorded in the field did go on to become full-time professionals, but not many; most of the groups recorded a handful of tunes and faded back into obscurity, leaving behind only their splendid "honest" music on the fragile 78 rpm records.

And what music it was: examples of Southern folk art at its best, its purest, its least self-conscious. Some of the older artists found by the field units were in their sixties and seventies in the late 1920s, and they had performing styles and repertoires that dated back to the Civil War. Years later the Library of Congress, under prodding from the New Deal, would begin to preserve the fast-vanishing folk music of the South by sending folklorists like Alan Lomax into the field with portable recording units. But 10 years earlier, the commercial record companies like Columbia, Victor, Vocalion, Brunswick and Okeh had done much of the same work, often with better equipment, and often more extensively – not because the music was folklore that needed to be preserved, but because it was a good, salable, commercial product.

The people of the South bought these records, and in surprising quantities: some "Old-time" records sold as many as 200,000 copies – a giant hit by 1928 standards. But for years people interested in folk music and Southern culture in general ignored these commercial records and their invaluable legacy. If a person was recorded by the Library of Congress, he was a "folk artist"; if the same person recorded for Columbia, he was just a "hillbilly singer." So the records languished, went out of print, were gobbled up by shellac drives during the War, and became collectors' items, preserved by a few dedicated enthusiasts and fans. It is only in the last 10 years that the richness of this commercial collection of folk culture has been recognized and accorded the proper respect and study. Many of the old records have been reissued on LPs, and new generations of listeners have been turned on to a pre-bluegrass, pre-Nashville, pre-country type of music that is matchless in its complexity, depth of feeling and invention. Despite the richness of these commercial phonograph archives, recent evidence suggests they don't reflect the full scope and complexity of the Southern string band music. Every region has stories of "legendary" local musicians who refused to record for various reasons. We know about dozens of artists influential in the development of the music in the 1900 to 1930 era who never made a record. There was north Georgia's Joe Lee, who had a lot to do with introducing the long-bow style into the driving Georgia fiddle music; there was Alabama's Bud Silvey, acknowledged as better than John Carson or Gid Tanner or any number of well-recorded fiddlers, who refused to record because he sensed, rightly, that the commercial companies were exploiting the old-time musicians. Kentucky's Ed Haley, celebrated in verse by Jesse Stuart and respected by nearly every major Kentucky fiddler, was similarly suspicious of the record companies, and afraid that a recording would only make it easier for people to steal his stuff. Ike Everley and Mose Rager, who started the Kentucky thumb-picking guitar style popularized by Merle Travis and Chet Atkins, never recorded anything of real significance.

The recorded legacy of old-time music may well

not represent the best musicians of the time – only the more outgoing, aggressive, or even opportunistic. Also, the companies themselves discriminated in odd ways. One talent scout didn't like the female voice, so he seldom recorded women performers; another didn't like "banjo songs" – songs done only with banjo accompaniment – and so he largely ignored those. Ralph Peer, the man who did more than anyone to commercialize the Southern folk music, eventually wouldn't listen to an act unless they had original songs which he could copyright. "No matter how good a group was," he later recalled, "if they didn't have their own songs, I didn't even see them." Columbia Records was fond of doing most of its recording in Atlanta, which meant that most of the talent came from north Georgia. Areas like the Ozarks, south central Mississippi, north central Tennessee, or the Kentucky barrens – areas which had fascinating musical traditions and styles – were woefully underrepresented on the commercial records of the day because the companies happened not to stage any field recording sessions there. Ironically, one poorly represented tradition was the music of the early Nashville area, the same tradition that generated the Grand Ole Opry. Until the mid-1940s, only one recording session had been held in Nashville; that was by Victor in 1928, and it was considered a failure. Nearly half the sides were never even released, and Victor never returned to document the early Opry tradition.

photo by Charles Wolfe

John Foster, now 78, looks for the first time at a Rounder LP record containing reissues of some of his 1929 recordings. Foster could not be located when the LP was recorded; he is now receiving royalties.

A Name On A Dusty Label

In spite of the shortcomings of these records – they were recorded under primitive conditions, and give a distorted picture of the variety and scope of Southern music – they remain our best link to genuine old-time *music*. That link, however, was not enough. As appreciation for the original sound grew, it became apparent that modern aesthetic demands could not be fully satisfied by the music itself. Listeners wanted to know more about the people behind the music. Today the artist himself is a culture hero, and modern LPs are lined with information about the artist or his image; magazines like *Rolling Stone* surround a release with yards of copy placing the album in "context." The old 78s had only a name on a dusty label, and often that name was phony. What could such a name from the 1920s tell a person of the 1970s? Who were these people who called themselves The Skillet Lickers? Was there really a Doctor Smith and did he really have a band called The Champion Hoss Hair Pullers? Which Scottsdale was The Scottsdale String Band from? What possessed a man named Fisher Hendley to record a strange tune called "Hop Along Peter" with a band he called The Aristocratic Pigs?

As interest in old-time music developed in the 1960s, it led to frustration. A small cadre of scholars, enthusiasts and musicians, armed only with the most slender of clues, began tracking down some of the names on the old labels. Among the pioneers in this area were Homer and Wilbur Leverett (well-known gospel singers), Mike Seeger (himself a leader in the folk revival), Rich Nevins and Dave Freeman (later to lead the reissue program for the old records), and Bob Pinson (Country Music Foundation), Archie Green (John Edwards Memorial Foundation), and Ralph Rinzler (Smithsonian Institution). Many trails ended in lonesome country graveyards, but some led to the performers themselves, alive and well, and, in a few cases, still performing. Artists like banjoist Dock Biggs, singer Tom Ashley (who

An anonymous early Tennessee string band at the turn of the century. Note the use of the cello, by no means uncommon in nineteenth-century folk string bands. Photograph from an old glass negative owned by Herb Peck, Vanderbilt U.

recorded "The Coo Coo" back in 1929) and fiddler Clark Kessinger, made successful comebacks after being "rediscovered." There were indeed people behind these old records, but it took patience, detective work, and a lot of dumb luck to follow the clues and ferret them out.

In the early 1970s, I began to gather material for a study of what I then called the commercialization of folk music; I wanted to learn just how these old records had been made, what the music business was like in the 1920s, and how the records (and record-making) had affected the musicians and their communities. I was living near Nashville, a seemingly logical starting place to track down the whereabouts of older musicians. But I quickly found that the musicians in Nashville were two or even three generations removed from the musicians of the '20s; to a veteran Nashville musician, "the old days" connotes the 1940s, not the 1920s. There was also a certain amount of historical parochialism; since many denizens of Nashville have convinced themselves that country music began in the city in the 1940s, few were interested in older musicians from other areas of the country.

About this time I also discovered that if you collated the "master numbers" of the old 78s – the file numbers assigned to the recordings before release – you could figure out what records were recorded at a particular session in Knoxville in August, 1929. Since travel was not easy in the 1920s – especially in the mountains – it was logical that many of the people in such a session would come from the surrounding area. This gave me a good geographical starting point for locating lost musicians. Local newspapers often wrote about these field recording sessions, some in great detail. Some newspapers in the South were pretty condescending toward music of this sort, but the recording activities in a sleepy town did make news. Thus stories often gave the names of the musicians and, in some cases, their home towns. Once you had a name and a town, it was sometimes a simple matter of checking with long distance information.

In other cases, it was not so simple. There was, for example, the story of the Tennessee Ramblers. This band had recorded in Knoxville in 1929, and had played in a fascinating style that featured Hawaiian guitar and fiddle leads. I had heard their rare original records at a friend's house, and we noticed that the only clue to the identity of any band member was the name "Sievers" listed as composer for one of the songs – and this might well have been some Tin Pan Alley song plugger. By coincidence, a few days later we were in the Knoxville area digging around in an antique shop and trying to bargain with the owner over some old records. The dealer began to talk about all the musicians he had known throughout the years and I was trying to figure out how to get him back to the price of the records when I heard the name "Sievers" fly by.

"Is there a musician named Sievers around here?" I asked.

"Yes, of course; doesn't everybody know about Mack Sievers and that band he had, used to be called the Tennessee Ramblers?"

We went into the back of the shop and the dealer called his old buddy, Mack, and pretty soon I was talking on the phone to a pleasant, articulate man who was giving me details about old-time music in Knoxville faster than I could scribble them down. He invited us to visit him the next day at his wife's cafe in Clinton, Tennessee, and he would tell us more, and ask his sister to come up as well.

We found the cafe without any trouble, and soon Mack and his sister, Willie, were telling stories about their lives as musicians in the 1920s. Like many early string bands, the Tennessee Ramblers had been a family affair; it had originated with Mack and Willie's father, Fiddlin' Bill Sievers. But there were some interesting differences. Willie, for example, did not go along just to sing harmony or dress up the act; she was a widely known guitar soloist, and her single-string solos won her a good many contests in her day. She was even featured in an early Gibson catalogue. Later that night Mack and Willie brought out their scrapbooks, and we brought out our session lists, and pretty soon we had rundowns on nearly everyone who had recorded at the Knoxville sessions – including a couple of blues bands. Mack had kept in touch with many of the older musicians in the area, and he telephoned a number of them for us, and even offered to go see them with us.

But the best was yet to come. Mack asked if we would like to hear how their band sounded today. I was dumbfounded; finding old musicians from the 1920s alive and alert is rare enough; finding them still performing was something one didn't even dare hope for. The Ramblers set up and began to play a delightfully eclectic mixture of old-time and swing-style music. Willie now played a big amplified National guitar, and Mack had traded his dobro in for a single-neck steel. In some numbers he picked up his father's old fiddle, or his five-string banjo, and in some numbers Willie sat down at the piano to romp through an old country barrelhouse number learned from Carl Martin and Howard Armstrong when they played on the Knoxville street corners long before they gained fame as Martin, Bogan and Armstrong.

"Mack asked if we would like to hear how their band sounded today. I was dumbfounded. Finding old musicians from the 1920s alive and alert is rare enough. Finding them still performing was something one didn't even dare hope for."

"We call ourselves the Novelty Hawaiians now," explained Mack. "When Father died, we decided we had to shift away from the older fiddle music, so now we play a little bit of everything. And we still get quite a few bookings a year in the area." In some ways the Sieverses have come a long way from the sound of the Ramblers; they have professionalized to some extent, and modernized, and they would probably offend bluegrass purists today. Yet Mack says, "The reason we played tunes like 'Hop Light Ladies' and 'The Preacher Got Drunk and Laid His Bible Down' is not because they were old or old-time sounding – back then we played 'em because that was the popular type of music. We played the way Dad learned to play way back there in the hills, but back then people wanted that."

The Perry County Music Makers

Another instance of dumb luck led to an even more interesting group. I teach at a university in middle Tennessee, and as a matter of routine I mention to every new class my interest in finding old-time musicians. Since the students are largely from rural Tennessee communities, this sometimes brings in unexpected dividends. In early 1974, I was putting the finishing touches on an essay about Tennessee string bands and had been puzzling about a strange group called The Perry County Music Makers. This group had recorded four sides in 1930, in the depth of the Depression, and their sales were almost negligible. Yet their sound was

photo courtesy Smithsonian Institution

The Perry County Music Makers performing at the 1976 Festival of American Folklife in Washington. Left to right: Bulow Smith, Nonnie Pression playing zither, and Virginia Claybourne.

unique; the lead was played on a strange stringed instrument that the label called a "zither." It obviously wasn't a zither as is traditionally known, but apparently some sort of dulcimer – which was often called a "zither" by careless writers of the time.

Bets were down that the group's name referred to Perry County, Arkansas. I had just written that the sound of the group suggested that Perry County, Kentucky, would be a better guess for their home. I had an elaborate chain of reasoning for this contention, but it was all blown to pieces one day when a student came into my office and said I might be interested in a great aunt of his who used to play in a band called The Perry County Music Makers. "A Kentuckian?" I asked hopefully. No, he and his family hailed from remote Perry County, Tennessee, a tiny county nestled up against the Tennessee River halfway between Nashville and Memphis. We set up an interview with his aunt, Mrs. Nonnie Presson, and her brother, Bulow Smith, who both lived in the area.

Again, I was hoping that Mrs. Presson and her brother would simply be able and willing to fill me in on the details of their career, where they learned their songs, how they came to make records. Again, I was pleasantly surprised. When we finally got to Bulow's house – we had to ford a creek to get there – we walked in to find Nonnie and Bulow set up with their instruments and ready to play; they had assumed that was why we were coming. Nonnie's "zither" was stunning; it looked like an autoharp with thyroid trouble. It *was* in fact modeled on a German zither, but had 52 strings and was three times the size; Nonnie had it custom-built in the 1930s so she could "make herself heard" in string bands.

The hollows where Nonnie and Bulow lived had been settled by German immigrants in the nineteenth century and Nonnie had been given a real zither when just a child, about 1913. Though she had never heard how a zither was supposed to sound, she took it and developed her own unique style, which took a little from church music, the popular ragtime and pseudo-Hawaiian pieces of the time and some from the emerging old-time music played at dances in the region. What resulted was a sound unlike anything I have ever heard; it was a shimmering, crystalline sound vastly different from the faint notes of the old 78s.

After we recovered from our initial surprise at hearing Nonnie's zither, we began to talk. One of the songs Nonnie and Bulow had recorded in 1930 was an original called "I'm Sad and Blue." It had been reissued on a modern LP and picked up by a number of younger bluegrass groups. In fact, a short time before we visited Nonnie, we had heard her song performed by the Red Clay Ramblers as they won first place at an Alabama fiddling contest. We had taped their performance, and Steve Davis, a fiddling enthusiast and editor of *The Devil's Box*, brought out a cassette to play for Nonnie.

"Listen to something," we said.

She listened, and heard a song she had written 45 years ago being sung in high bluegrass harmonies by musicians young enough to be her great-grandchildren. Nonnie's face lit up with shock and surprise, and she started to say something, but then cocked her head and started listening critically and intently. When it was over, she offered a penetrating and detailed analysis on how the Ramblers had changed the harmonies and timing, and how theirs compared with the original harmonies. It dawned on me that Nonnie, unlike a lot of the older musicians we had found, had not retired from the music, had not distanced herself from it. Although she had been working for years almost in a vacuum, playing for her own enjoyment and an occasional supper or dance, she still had a passionate involvement in the music.

In the late 1920s and throughout the '30s, Nonnie and Bulow had tried to professionalize their music. They played in everything from medicine shows to Nashville radio, and for a time had their own tour group – a venture which ended up somewhere in the Dust Bowl of west Arkansas. They returned to Perry County just before the War, and decided to "settle down." Nonnie kept going back to her music, writing songs she put in her trunk, or carrying them in her memory. Nonnie had much the same gift that A.P. Carter had: she could write a song so much in the folk idiom that it came out sounding like something that had been around for years. And when she and Bulow sang these songs – often helped by their niece, Virginia Clayborne – it sounded like a cross between the Carter Family and the Chuck Wagon Gang, with rich, full, low harmonies completely different from the bluegrass harmonies that so often pass for traditional music today.

We began to appreciate the real depth of Nonnie's creativity when Steve Davis and I decided to record the group for a record company Steve had recently started. Nonnie and Bulow hadn't been playing much together, but as they worked on the album, they began to recall old songs and even comedy routines that they had done years before. In some cases they couldn't reconstruct all the words of an original song, so Nonnie would dig into her trunk for tattered hand-written texts or, in a few instances, just compose new sections.

One of the songs they sang was an early version of "Truck Drivin' Man," one of the most popular Nashville truckers' songs. Their version was certainly nice, but we doubted that such a modern song would fit in the album. The next time we visited, about two weeks later, Nonnie said, "You said you didn't think we could use that other truck driving song, so I wrote us one of our own." They launched into their own version of a trucking song which captured beautifully the feeling of trucking 30 years ago, before the diesels and CB radios and air conditioning. Needless to say, the song went onto the album, and six months later had even made it into a scholarly paper on trucking songs.

In the summer of 1976, after some convincing, Nonnie and Bulow and Virginia took their music to Washington for the Smithsonian's Bicentennial Festival of American Folklife. There was a ruckus with Eastern Airlines about Nonnie carrying her zither up in the passenger compartment, but art triumphed again. Nonnie and her crew got to Washington and enjoyed it immensely. They couldn't get over the sheer number of good musicians at the Festival, and they stayed up half the night jamming, listening, and visiting with the musicians on the vast program. I think it was only then that Nonnie began to appreciate the uniqueness of her music. She and the band came back from Washington with many new friends, some of whom have continued to write and visit. These days Nonnie sits pretty much alone in her little house in a hollow near Pine View Community; her husband died last year, and her brother has been ill. Making a musical comeback at age 76 does strange things to your sense of reality, but Nonnie can handle it; she wrote, "For me, music is the thread that connects heaven and earth."

Keeping the Music Alive

Nonnie's story represents one of the bonuses of tracking down the founders of old-time music. The Perry County Music Makers had never been adequately recorded because they had the misfortune to peak during the Depression, when the entertainment business was at rock bottom. Only through a fierce determination did they keep their music alive all these years. How many people lacked that determination, and how much music died unre-

Roba Stanley, a superb singer from Georgia, was the first woman soloist to record country music with her "Single Life" in 1924. Until the author located her in Florida recently, she was unaware of her pioneering role in music history. Some of her original records are scheduled for reissue on a forthcoming Rounder LP.

photo courtesy of Barry Poss

The string band tradition – techniques of playing, songs and styles – passed from generation to generation through such informal gatherings as this outdoor performance, with children in the first rows and adults surrounding them and the musicians.

corded and virtually unheard? How many good old fiddlers finally gave it up just a few years before the renewed interest in their music that's now sweeping the South? How many are there like old John Foster, a fine singer who recorded some hauntingly beautiful vocals between 1927 and 1930, but who are now convinced that their only hope for performing lies in the modern Nashville style? Shortly after visiting Foster and playing him a reissue of some of his best works, he sent me a Polaroid picture of himself, sitting in a cowboy hat, string tie, flowered shirt, big electric Fender across his knees, "ready to go again."

Obviously, not all "rediscovered" folk musicians from the 1920s can still play. For many, the task of overcoming the years of neglect and inactivity is simply too great; even when encouraged, many simply don't have the energy to revive lost skills, and many others get discouraged in the face of their past excellence. I remember vividly one scene in middle Tennessee, at the home of an old fiddler who had recorded several long-bow styled masterpieces in 1929 and 1930. He had met us at the door with his fiddle in hand and explained, "I haven't had this old fiddle out of the case in 12 years, but after you called I got it out and warmed up a little. I can give you at least a tad of that stuff I used to play." For some 20 minutes he played both some of his old tunes and some more recent ones he had never recorded. The fiddling was a bit stiff, but we were learning about techniques and tunes, and enjoying it immensely.

Then someone suggested listening to some of our host's old 1929 records, which we had brought along on a cassette. Like many old-time musicians, this fiddler had kept none of his old recordings, and had not heard them in years. Strange things happen to people when you bring back the past that suddenly and vividly. Some act embarrassed, some try to act casual; some are moved to tears, and others listen intently with a super-critical scrutiny. This particular man belonged to the last category. He listened to all of his records we had on tape, then wordlessly got up, shook his head, and put his fiddle away. He didn't play any more for us that afternoon, and it took considerable coaxing to get him to play again at all. He felt that he could never recapture the precision and drive of those records made 45 years before, and felt foolish playing before people who defined his music in terms of those old discs.

Other musicians are past even attempting to revive their old skills, but this doesn't necessarily mean their music ceases to be a living force. There are many examples of younger musicians learning and absorbing the techniques of older performers. In the 1960s, during the folk revival, many young Northern musicians embraced Southern old-time music with a passion far greater than young Southern musicians. Even in Tennessee fiddling contests today, the most archaic-sounding string band music is apt to come from younger, and in many cases, transplanted Northern musicians. (Middle-aged Southern traditional musicians occasionally resent such efforts, and some refer to pre-bluegrass styles performed by younger pickers as "cave music.")

However, in a number of instances older recording artists from the 1920s have passed on their music to younger musicians from the same area and tradition. This is the classic pattern of transmission folklorists like to think occurs in most genuine folk music; it's quite rare today, though, to find the music being passed on without some degree of self-consciousness, i.e., without some notion on the part of the younger musicians that they are preserving some rare and fragile thing. In some wonderful cases, the older music is still

photo courtesy Barry Poss

The Johnson Family, from Gwinnett County, Georgia, pose for an anonymous photographer about 1920. We do not know what this family band sounded like, though one of its members, Earl Johnson (far right) later made numerous recordings with his own band.

meaningful and natural on its own terms to the younger generation of performers; the old sentimental songs are not seen as camp, the fiddle tunes not as antiques. It's just music.

This type of traditional survival is illustrated by the fiddle and banjo team of W.L. Gregory and Clyde Davenport from Monticello, Kentucky. I first heard W.L. and Clyde through Dick Burnett, a blind fiddler and banjoist who was one of the first Kentucky mountain musicians to record when he made "Lost John" in 1926. Dick was in his nineties when I met him in 1971, and was one of those artists who could not hope to perform again. His long-time partner, Leonard Rutherford, one of the smoothest fiddlers to ever record, had died in 1952, and I felt Dick's memories were the last link to the team's unique and archaic fiddle and banjo style. One afternoon while visiting Dick, we complained that it was sad that we had never heard the Burnett and Rutherford style in person.

"Well, I'll tell you," said Dick, "you come over here Sunday afternoon on the front porch and listen to this local veterinarian named Gregory and his partner pick. They play all our tunes, and they play 'em right. They should; Leonard and me taught 'em everything." He was right. We came that next Sunday, and we heard W. L. Gregory and his partner Clyde hammer out Burnett and Rutherford tunes for two hours. It was uncanny. They were Burnett and Rutherford incarnate. They even played the tunes in the same key as the old records and, as they played, Dick sat in the corner and sang snatches of "Willie Moore" and "Man of Constant Sorrow."

We later recorded two albums with Gregory and Davenport, and the team went to a number of folk festivals, spreading even further the music of Burnett and Rutherford. The "local veterinarian" has helped to preserve Burnett and Rutherford's music not because he is a folklorist, not because he is a self-conscious folk musician, but because it is music he and his friends in Wayne County have loved. We weren't surprised when we sold more copies of W. L. Gregory's albums in Wayne County than anywhere else in the country. We were glad to sell albums in Chicago and Boston, but it was also nice to know that there are places where an archaic string band style dating from the nineteenth century could still be appreciated by the culture that generated it.

In the last few years, we have found other instances of older groups transferring their style and music to younger groups in the same area, in the same culture. For instance, two Alabama coal miners named the England Brothers have absorbed much of the music of the Delmore Brothers, one of the classic singing duos of the 1930s. The Englands have just been recorded and are only now overcoming their surprise that there is an audience for a music they had preserved for their own personal aesthetic. Traditionally the old music is passed from father to son or from father to daughter, and is preserved as a sort of family heritage in addition to a broader cultural heritage. North Carolina fiddler Tommy Jarrell, known as the finest old-time musician in the country today, preserved the fiddle tunes and styles of his father Ben Jarrell who had recorded in the 1920s. Thus the trail to old-time artists can yield results even when the original artists are dead or no longer able to play.

Old Times Recycled

The music also survives through the phenomenon of the "reissue" record album: modern LPs that contain remastered tracks taken from the old 78s. It is almost impossible for a young fan today to

find the original 78 recordings by influentials like Charlie Poole, Uncle Dave Macon, or the Carter Family, and difficult to find the proper equipment to play it on if he does. During the last 10 years, various companies have answered this challenge by issuing colorful, well-annotated albums containing the best of the old 78s; there are some 200 such albums currently on the market, available in bluegrass shops, specialty stores, and through mail-order sales.

One of the first companies specializing in old-time reissues, and still one of the best, is County Records, operated out of Floyd, Virginia, by an ex-New Yorker named Dave Freeman. When Freeman started in 1965, there were only a handful of country reissues available. To his delight, Freeman soon found that his records appealed not only to young musicians, folklorists, and other record collectors, but also to the rural Southern society that had originally supported the music.

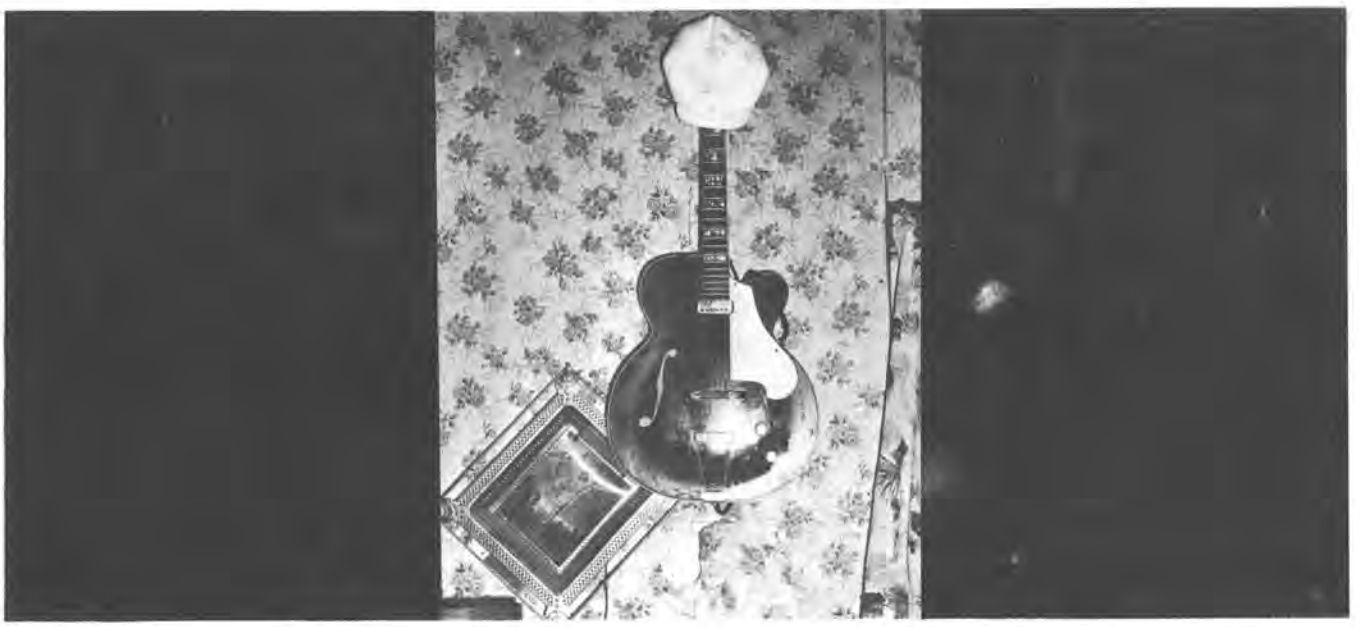
In 1971 a group of students from the Boston area, drawn together by their commitment to folk music and a desire to demonstrate its importance to their generation, formed Rounder Records. One of their first projects was to lease from a major company the rights to the recordings of Blind Alfred Reed, a skilled West Virginia singer who composed a number of strong populist protest songs like "How Can A Poor Man Stand Such Times and Live?" Rounder directed its records toward a young, urban, well-educated audience, but soon expanded to become a major influence on the music market of the 1970s. Other companies soon entered the picture, and today, fans have access to more authentic old-time music than at any time since the 1920s.

Companies like County and Rounder are intensely scrupulous about paying royalties to the old artists whose work they have reissued. Having his 50-year-old record on a modern LP and hearing his music praised by enthusiastic long-haired, bearded musicians of the 1970s can have a profound effect on a retired musician. In many cases the royalties from the modern reissues are the first royalties the performer has received. It was all too common in the 1920s for the commercial companies to pay a musician a simple flat fee, usually $50 a side, for making a record. Often he never knew how well his record was selling, or how far the record may have carried his music. In 1926, for instance, one major record company sold an average of 25,000 copies of each "hillbilly" record it released that year; the records were retailed for 75 cents apiece. This means that a typical record generated a total income of $18,750 between manufacturer and middleman, and that the company itself, wholesaling the record at 35 cents and absorbing a 50 percent production cost, would easily have realized a profit of over $4,000. This particular company issued over 80 records like this in 1926. A few performers who sensed the dimension of the exploitation insisted on royalty payments; and usually had to settle for 1/4 cent per record, if they were lucky.

No doubt the commercial record industry of the 1920s did preserve an immense amount of fine music, and they did provide a means for the music to develop into a viable art form, modern country music. But this same industry had an ugly, exploitative side which emerges when you look at the situation in human terms. Today, though, there's a new sense of what Archie Green calls "cultural ecology" which is bringing about a broader appreciation of Southern traditions. It's a recognition that "tradition" is not some quaint, fragile hothouse plant that's best admired behind glass, but rather a relevant, living force. People like Nonnie Presson aren't getting rich by being "rediscovered," but then that was never their motive for making music. Now at least they know someone out there is listening, and they know the benefits are flowing both ways.

Today, more people than ever before are interested in finding the older musicians, persuading them to play again, recovering their music and understanding their culture before it is too late. Musicians who were in their twenties when they recorded in the 1925 to '30 era are approaching their seventh decades. Soon the first generation of country musicians (or, if you wish, the last generation of pre-media musicians) will be gone completely. They will leave a lot of questions unanswered, a lot of songs unsung. And we do have a lot of questions for some of them, including some groups we've been tracking for years.

Where are the members of the Bird Family, whose glistening twin mandolin work anticipated bluegrass styles by a generation? Where are the Johnson Brothers, who pioneered the use of the Hawaiian guitar blues and became one of the first groups to try to copyright their own material? Where is the fantastic left-handed fireman who called himself Seven Foot Billy who played "Spanish Fandango" on his big Gibson guitar, and stomped off his fiddle band by saying, "Bust down!" Are they long since dead? Or turned into insurance salesmen? Or preachers? Or are they still quietly picking away on back porches, unaware that somewhere, someone is interested in their music? □



The Blues Family

by William R. Ferris

When I began my work in the Delta in 1967, I was told that it was "past strange" for a white Mississippian like myself to record blacks in their homes. I found it impossible to work with both whites and blacks in the same community, for the confidence and cooperation of each was based on their feeling that I was "with them" in my convictions about racial taboos of Delta society. When whites introduced me to blues singers, our discussions were limited to non-controversial topics since performers felt my tapes would be played before whites in the community. In fact, local whites who provided contacts were suspicious of my work and often asked to hear the tapes.[1]

One introduction marked the last time I approached blacks through local whites. A white farmer agreed to let me record a blues player who worked for him and told me I should come to the performer's home that evening. I arrived to find the farmer and several other whites in the yard admiring a rifle; they all had guns hanging from rear window racks in their pickup trucks. When the farmer saw me, he called the player by throwing rocks on the tin roof. The singer came out and sang several songs on his front porch while the whites watched him from their trucks. He then complained his finger was too cramped to play anymore, and when the whites left I made an appointment to meet him again. The following night, the musician played at length and toward the end of the recording session he became intoxicated, cursed his white boss, and told me that he really owned the farm where he worked. He said the next time I came to town I should eat and sleep at his home and swore I would be safe with his family:

Next time you come, come on to my house and walk right in. If I eat a piece of bread, you eat too. I'm the boss of that whole place over there. I don't know how many acres it is. You ain't got to ask none of these white folks about coming to my house. Anytime you come to my house and I ain't there, stay right there till I come. Don't leave. I'm coming back, cause I'm going to git some pussy and I'll be back in a minute. Any time you want to come down here, you drive to my damn house. Ain't a damn soul gonner fuck with you, white or black.[2]

After this incident I approached blacks directly and found that as long as I remained in their section of town I could work freely and effectively without interference from local whites.[3] When local police stopped and questioned me, I showed my Mississippi identification and was never arrested.

There were always exceptions to the patterns of segregation which stood out. While I interviewed Arthur Lee Williams, a harmonica player near Birdie, his white neighbor's children arrived for dinner. Williams explained that his children ate their supper with the white family, and on weekends they sometimes picnicked and fished together.

I usually recorded in black neighborhoods of small towns, and my experiences in Leland, Mississippi, suggest the pattern of my field work. I found a black cafe and asked an older man if there were any blues singers in the area. He replied, "Well, you might talk to Son Thomas. His real name is James Thomas, but he go by 'Son' or 'Cairo.'"

Nicknames are given by the com-

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munity, and those of blues singers usually related to their music. Nicknames such as "Pine Top," "Cairo," and "Poppa Jazz" are more important than surnames and often when I inquired after actual names no one recognized the person. I searched for William and Iola Jones for half a day before someone recognized them as "Jug Head" and "Don't Know No Better." The latter name was given because of Iola's strange walk, and their friend "Night Duck" was so named "cause he do more traveling at night than in the day. He go anywhere and don't be scared of nothing."

I found "Son" Thomas' home in a neighborhood known as Black Dog and asked his wife, Christine, if he was in. She said no one named James Thomas lived there, and asked why I wanted him. When I explained I was writing a book on the blues and wanted to include him in it, she admitted she was his wife and told me how I could find him.

I soon found Thomas and our friendship deepened throughout the summer. A good measure of our rapport was the response of his children, who were always more direct than their parents in showing their feelings toward me. When I first entered their home, they avoided me and rarely spoke in my presence. Later after I had spent many hours with their father, the children would run to the door and, holding my hands, lead me into their home, telling jokes and stories they wanted to record.

It was some time after our first meeting that Son sang blues with strong racial themes such as "Smoky Mountain Blues."

God forgive a black man
most anything he do.
God forgive a black man
most anything he do.
Now I'm dark-complexioned,
looks like he'd forgive me too.

As children showed their trust through physical touch, my deepening relationship with Son and his friends was reflected in their recordings of stories and songs which increasingly used protest and obscenity. After we became close friends, he recorded verses like:

Well, it's two, two more places,
Baby, where I want to go,
Baby, that's tween your legs
and out your back door.

Well when I marry, now I ain't
gonner buy no broom,
She got hair on her belly gonner
sweep my kitchen, my dining
room.

I say belly, belly to belly, and skin,
skin to skin,
Well it's two things working and
ain't but one going in.

Well I asked her for her titty, or
gimme her loving tongue.
She said "Suck this, daddy,
till the goodie come."

Expression of affection through physical touch was characteristic of the black community. Son took me to Kent's Alley and the home of his friend Shelby "Poppa Jazz" Brown who ran a blues joint for over 30 years. We shook hands and afterwards Gussie Tobe, a friend of Poppa Jazz, asked me, "Do you know what you just shook?"

"No. What?"

"A handful of love."

This warmth and verbal banter was repeated whenever Tobe came to Poppa Jazz's home. Poppa Jazz was 64, and when he spoke, he walked around the room dramatically gesturing and making boasts and threats before his seated audience. Once Tobe turned to me and said, "I want you to whip Jazz's ass for me. If you don't, I'm gonner go home for my shotgun and shoot the son of a bitch dead."

Poppa Jazz turned to me and said, "I'm waiting for him. I'm waiting for him."

He stood shirtless and walked around with his chest pushed forward. Tobe whispered loudly to me, "You wouldn't think that man's 80 and can walk around sometime without his cane."

Poppa Jazz answered, "Watch your mouth cause I'm your daddy, Boy. I'm your daddy."

Son then mentioned he had to dig a grave the next day for the white funeral home where he worked, and Shelby replied, "Another rich one gone. Boy, you gonner have plenty of money. Lend me a dollar."

Poppa Jazz was living with a woman he had married 30 years earlier who had just returned after a 20-year separation. While I was in their home, a local woman who had "stayed with" Poppa Jazz for seven years dropped by and seemed surprised to see his wife there. The visitor asked Mrs. Brown a number of questions about her relation with Poppa Jazz, and when she left, Mrs. Brown turned to me and said, "I told her quick who was running this house. She must have thought I was just a whore he picked up."

Mrs. Brown later told me of her experiences with the civil-rights movement and how she organized voter registration in her home town. Because of her bravery, she was selected to participate in the March on Washington in 1963 and described her experiences in detail.

Poppa Jazz saw that I listened to his wife sympathetically and began to tell me of the injustices he had known as a young man in Leland. He said blacks were considered "crazy" when they retaliated against a white. He left the South as a young man and lived in Northern cities because he was too proud to accept white intimidation.

He recalled one incident during his youth when he bought peanuts from a white man:

I wasn't nothing but a little boy then. That was in 1912 and I wasn't but 11 years old. They had this place that cooked peanuts outside, and you could smell them all over the town. I didn't have but one nickle that day and I told my friend, I said, "Man, I want some peanuts, and I'm scared to go over here to get them cause this man, when he sell you the peanuts, he kicks you."

My friend said, "Man, look. Go and give him the nickel. Get them peanuts and when you hand him the nickle, don't take your eye off him. When he raise his foot to kick you, grab it and that'll trip him. His head'll hit that concrete and you got it made."

So sure nuff I went on and give the man a nickle for the peanuts. When he aimed to kick me with his foot, I grabbed it, and his head hit the concrete. His momma was setting near him in a big chair, and she says, "The nigger killed my boy. Done killed my

boy."

Then all the white folks grabbed me. They put a gun on me and whipped me cause I did that. That night I walked that railroad all night with a Winchester, but I didn't see nothing. If I had of seen anything white like a chicken it would of been too bad. After that they called me the "Shotgun Kid."

Poppa Jazz tells another story of an old black man who killed the sheriff in Leland:

He was an old man and didn't live in no house. He stayed out in the woods, and he would come and get his hair cut in town. So one time he come to get his hair cut, and he went in there with a shotgun. Always carried a shotgun everywhere he'd go. He stood the shotgun in the corner to git him a hair trim and a shave, and when he got out of the chair to look for his shotgun, it was gone. He said, "Somebody done got my gun."

So they give it to him and he hit the railroad going back to where he stayed at in the woods. When the sheriff heard about him and the shotgun he went out there to get him, and the old man killed him. I was grazing my cows in that pasture and saw it with my eyes. Didn't nobody tell me nothing. I saw it.

When they finally got the old man, they put him in a box and carried him up there in front of the pool room. They put four cross ties on top of the box and poured five gallons of gasoline over it. When they started the fire, it blowed up and the old man come out of there running. He run right here to the hotel, and they got him again and put a rope around his neck and hung him where the red light is right now. The first red light in town. When they hung him there, I was on the railroad looking. They said, "Boys, get off the railroad."

I didn't go nowhere. I stood there looking. All my brothers and sisters was looking at him too, those what was big enough to see it. I left here after I saw all that stuff cause I didn't want them to kill me. I figured next time it was gonner be me. They didn't like me cause I'd fight. I'd kill anybody, white or black.

Poppa Jazz concluded, "In those days it was 'Kill a mule, buy another. Kill a nigger, hire another.' They had to have a license to kill everything but a nigger. We was always in season."

Poppa Jazz's home was a familiar part of the Leland blues community. His four-room house stood on Kent's Alley between Fifth and Sixth Streets. Set between "old" and "new" Highway 61, it was the heart of what James Thomas calls "the rough part of town."

During the day, visitors moved in and out of the home buying corn whiskey and asking which musicians would play that evening. Those who stayed to talk and tell stories sat with Poppa Jazz in the front bedroom which faced Kent's Alley and gave Jazz a full view of activities outside. Often Jazz would tell a story, then rush to a window to check the alley, declaring, "No bullshit. I ain't lying either. I ain't lying."

When night came, activity shifted to the back of the home as singers and dancers gathered in his blues room. The room was dimly lit, and there were no lights in the adjacent room where corn whiskey was chilled in a refrigerator. Poppa Jazz usually stood in the door between the two rooms and personally led customers to the refrigerator when they needed a drink.

His main guitarist, James Thomas, played in a back corner beneath a calendar with a color picture of Jesus and his disciples. "Little Son" Jefferson sat on Thomas' right and accompanied him on the harmonica. When asked how long they would play, Thomas replied, "Till late hours of midnight."

Guests sat around the room on chairs and a large couch or danced in its center. James Thomas was the main attraction, and as the evening progressed, the audience became more responsive to his music. Women would answer his blues line, "You don't love me, Baby" with "Yes I do, Daddy."

Poppa Jazz moved constantly, serving whiskey, talking to visitors in the blues room, and leaning out its side door to encourage groups in the parking lot to come in. Occasionally he danced alone or performed a toast in front of Thomas, then resumed selling whiskey. Jazz knew his customers well, and those prone to fighting were closely watched and asked to leave if they became too loud. After escorting a man out the door he turned to me and said, "That was a bad one. They tell me a woman shot his nuts off in Chicago."

Bluesmen like Arthur "Poppa Neil" O'Neil, Joe Cooper, and Eddie Quesie might play while Thomas rested, but they never replaced him as the main performer. When a third singer arrived, he would sit on Thomas' left and wait for a break in the music. Gussie Tobe sometimes sat in the third chair and sang his composition, "The Ohio River Bridge."

It was early one morning, when the bridge come tumbling down.
I say, it was early one morning when that bridge come tumbling down.
Well that Ohio River Bridge was tumbling down.
I told Cairo [Thomas], oooh, when the bridge was tumbling down.
I was out there that morning when that bridge come tumbling down.

James Thomas accompanies Gussie Tobe's "Ohio River Blues"

On that Monday morning, Baby,
even that Wednesday morning, too.
We was working out there, I told
the man in his office,
I said, "Look here, Mr. Mare," I said,
The bridge is tumbling down."

Say, you know where I was at? Le-
land, Mississippi.
Down here at Jazz's place. Yeah! [4]

In the midst of this scene, the blues community grew like a family with a kinship of love for music and good times shared together.[5] Until his death in 1974, Poppa Jazz was the central figure who held the Leland family together. As his name suggests, he became a father to aspiring singers like James Thomas, who was raised by grandparents in Eden. Thomas remembers how he first came to Leland on Saturday nights to visit his mother and sister.

James "Son" Thomas

James Thomas: *On Saturday nights, that would usually be the night that I'd come to Leland. I'd get off the bus and go and see my mother and sister there. Then I would go round to Shelby's club and he'd have boys around there playing the guitar. I'd go around and play some with them and then come back to the house.*

Shelby was a big man then. He had plenty of money. He'd hold his head way high then and talk loud. He'd have men hanging around there playing the guitar and everybody'd meet up there on Sunday for big jokes and drinking. They'd have a nice time round there.

Poppa Jazz: *That's true. Yeah, that's true. He ain't joking none. When I'd see Son coming I'd be glad. It was just like that all night long. You know, we didn't go to bed. Them there gals hung around me, you know, with that good liquor and stuff. They liked that. I started a jazz band and they started to calling me "Poppa Jazz." Well James, he come here. I knowed his mother and sister and all of them here, you know. And he came here one night. I had a joint open down there called the "Rum Boogie," He said, "I'm gonner play a number."*

"What's your name?"

"James."

I said, "Go on. I know you."

I knowed who he was. So he went on that stage and everybody liked him. I said, "Buddy, when you come back through here, you stop."

So everytime Son would come, he'd come over here and look for my guitar. He could play it. I'd be looking for him, too. That was when I named him "Cairo." You see at Cairo the water got so high, and he played that blues:

I would go to Cairo, but the water
too high for me.
The girl I love, she got washed
away.

He really rapped it. Everybody liked it. Everytime folks see me, "Hey, Man, you seen Cairo?"

"No, but he'll be here tonight."

"We'll be back then."

They sure did come. They liked to hear him play, and he could play all them kind of blues. I loved the blues all my life. That's all I ever like. And I ain't but 41.

James Thomas: *Little Son Jefferson and me, we would sing our theme song to welcome everybody to Jazz's place. We called him "Mr. Shelby."*

Good evening, Everybody.
Peoples, tell me how do you do.
Well, we just come out this even-
ing,
Just make a welcome with you.
Well it's all on the counter.
People, it's all on the shelf.
Well if you don't find it at Mr.
Shelby's place,
People you can't find it nowhere
else.

Then when we got ready to close down the place we would sing:

Good bye, Everybody.
You know we got to go.
Good bye, Everybody.
People, you know we got to go.
But if you come back to Mr.
Shelby's place,
You will see the same old show. [6] □

Footnotes

1. Problems of "social etiquette" are discussed by Bertram W. Doyle in *The Etiquette of Race Relations in the South* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1937)[Reprinted by Schocken Books, New York, 1971], pp. xviii - xix.

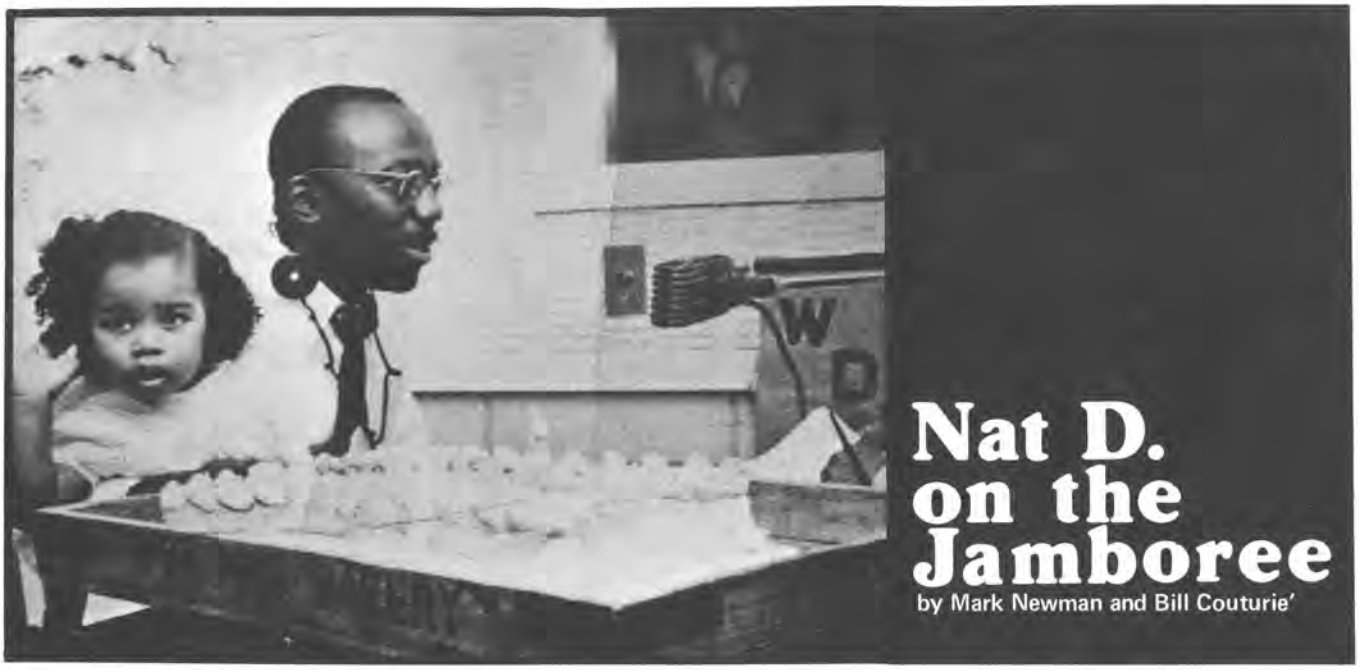
2. Anonymous Speaker. Earlier Mississippi studies which encountered similar racial problems are: Newbell Niles Puckett, *The Magic and Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* (New York: Dover Publications, 1968), p. xxiii; John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (N.Y.: Doubleday, 1949), pp. 32 - 40; Samuel C. Adams, Jr., "Changing Negro Life in the Delta" (Nashville: M.A. Thesis, Fisk Univ., 1947), pp. 5 - 6; and Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, *Deep South* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 15 - 18.

3. The dynamics of working in black communities are discussed by Roger D. Abrahams, *Deep Down in the Jungle* (Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1970), pp. 16 - 38; Elliot Liebow, *Tally's Corner* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1967), pp. 3 - 28; Ulf Hannerz, *Soulside* (N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 201 - 210; and James Mason Brewer, *Worser Days and Better Times* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1965), pp. 23 - 24.

4. Paul Oliver discusses other blues on Ohio River disasters in *The Meaning of the Blues*, pp. 268 - 69.

5. B.B. King compares the blues audience which gathered around the singers to a family: "Whenever I would sing and have these people gather around me like they did, then this seemed to me as a family. This is another thing that made the blues singer continue to go on because this is his way of crying out to people." B.B. King, New Haven, Conn. 1974.

6. This blues may be based on Sonny Boy Williamson's "King Biscuit Blues," which was broadcast on the radio each day from Helena, Arkansas. Big Joe Williams recorded a version on his *Traditional Blues* (Folkways FS 3820).



Nat D. on the Jamboree

by Mark Newman and Bill Couturie'

This is Nat D. on the jamboree and I'm down here to tell you something about how WDIA got kicked off, started rolling and started everyone to jumping, and I've been jumping ever since. So now you listen to me, I'm gonna give you a little history lesson.

Nat D. Williams, known in Memphis as "the Granddaddy of black jocks," sat sipping his coke on his porch swing, eyeing us through his enormously thick glasses and occasionally letting loose with one of his famous laughs. While his grandchildren peeked through the screens at us young white folks and our machines, Nat D. took turns lighting pipes, cigars and cigarettes – and skillfully weaving stories about his beginnings on radio.

As you twirl across your radio dial today, it is incredible to think that only 40 years ago black programming was revolutionary. In the 1930s and '40s, playing black music on radio was a new, often bitterly contested practice. Once it began, it grew rapidly, not as a result of altruism, but in response to the changing economic conditions of the South, as businessman Max Moore explains:

The Interstate Grocer Company was organized February 13, 1913. Mr. E.P. Moore, an uncle of mine, and Mr. W.W. Moore, my father, organized the company. Back in those days, the biggest operation that we had was from the farming angle. The large farmers had their own commissary and did their own furnishing to their sharecroppers. Naturally, they were interested in buying as cheap a merchandise as they could to furnish them with – for instance, flour and meal. That went on for many years before the chain stores moved into the small towns.

It begin to change up when the farmers begin to get rid of their day labor. Tractors and combines began to take the place of the old mule-drawn machinery. Therefore the labor begin to move away from the farms. Then the folks had a chance at buying a little better grade of food, particularly flour and meal. That was when we got interested in establishing our label. We come up with King Biscuit Flour.

After we got the flour and begin the distribution on it, we had the idea that it would be a good plan to do a little advertising behind it to get it moving. And that was when we thought about the radio.

Interstate Grocer Company's radio program, "King Biscuit Time," was first aired in 1941 on the Helena, Arkansas, station KFFA. The show featured the live blues of harpist Sonny Boy Williamson (also known as Rice Miller or Sonny Boy Williamson II) and his band. The response from the black community, who had never heard blues on the radio, was overwhelming. Sales of King Biscuit Flour increased so much that Max Moore decided to introduce a new brand of corn meal. He called it Sonny Boy's Corn Meal.

Although Sonny Boy died in 1965, the show – as well as the flour and meal – continue to be popular in the Delta region around Helena. "King Biscuit Time" still features Sonny Boy's recordings in a program format which now includes pop, soul, rhythm & blues and rock 'n roll.

The success of "King Biscuit Time" quelled the advertisers' and station owners' fears that "Negro radio" would cause a white backlash. Although KFFA did receive threats, they were far outnumbered by positive responses – and the resultant increase in revenue.

In Memphis, Bert Ferguson was closely watching the growing success of "King Biscuit Time." His station,

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Filmmaker Bill Couturié is an associate producer with Korty Film of Mill Valley, California. Mark Newman is a graduate student in American history at UCLA. This article is based on the research they did while producing the film King Biscuit Time *for the US Information Agency.*

WDIA, followed the country-and-western format common throughout the region's radio; but in the intense competition for a limited number of advertisers interested in reaching the predominately white C&W audience, he found his station failing. At that point, in 1948, he made a decision best left to Nat's description:

Mr. Bert Ferguson, who was out there at WDIA, had worked with me at "Amateur Night on Beale Street." He had heard of me down there on the Palace stage jumping and hollering and going on, so he thought perhaps I'd be useful on the radio. I think the big idea was that there wasn't enough people coming in to get those ads and things. He figured, well, now I'll do something that nobody else had done and maybe that'll attract somebody. So he decided to venture up with Negroes. I was the first Negro that he worked with, and he figured that I ought to be representative of all of them. Since he offered to pay me, I thought I'd be useful, too. They paid $15 a week. That was big money then. He told me to come out to the radio station. He would put me on my first program.

Well, he didn't put me out on the program soon as I got there; they gave me a whole week to practice. And I practiced, but I didn't have any blues records to play. I didn't have anything but records by white artists. We didn't have any Negro blues, feeling like they get down to you in your bed when you felt down low. So they told me to take some of those white artists and play them. And I never will forget the first one I played was an affair called "Stompin' at the Savoy." Well, "Stompin' at the Savoy" was all right, but it was a little too fast for me. Of course when I told them that I'd rather have some blues, they played some and listened. They said, "We can't put this on the air."

I said, "Why?"

He said, "It might be censored or against the law." There wasn't anything all that wrong about the blues from my point of view. It was just a case where they thought it wouldn't be so polite to give it to a general audience of people consisting of all kinds of people, black, white, red and green, so to speak.

My first radio program was a very, very serious situation. I had practiced for about two weeks getting ready to say what I was going to say when the man pointed his finger at me to start talking. And, of course, that day came. And when he pointed his finger at me, I forgot everything I

photo by Burton J. Sears

Max Moore (at left), president of the Interstate Grocer Company, and his wife Sammie sit with the memorabilia of their years as sponsors for "King Biscuit Time." Among the items on the board is a poster that featured the photo above of Sonny Boy Williamson and his band.

was supposed to say. So I just started laughing cause I was laughing my way away. And the man said, "The people seem to like that; make it standard. Keep laughing, Nat."

And I've been laughing ever since. (Laughter.) Well, that's the way I started.

Have you ever noticed that for a typical black man, in the South particularly, the first cover-up he takes is to laugh. And when he laughs that covers up a multitude of sins. And so I laid on out and laughed. I laughed for two reasons. First, I was covering up the fact that I had forgotten, and next I laughed because I realized that I had done lost the job and wasn't gonna get that new suit I wanted. But the man told me to come back tomorrow. I went back the next day and he says, "Start your program laughing."

I said, "Start laughing about what?"

"Man, start your program laughing."

Ever since then, except on Sunday when I'm doing the religious programs, I start off laughing. Laughing became a trademark for me, and it still is.

When the radio stations began to present more black programs, they had to stop and think about what kind they're going to do. Of course, Mr. Ferguson and the others who were the managers of the stations didn't know that there was a chasm between what they had been hearing and what appealed to Negroes. They didn't know who to get for these programs. So I began to look around the town to see what I could get. My biggest handicap was finding Negro talent that was suitable to put on the air at that time. Most of our programs were earthy. We got on down there where the guy lived, and we talked about things that interested people. Say, "Come here baby, tell me where you stayed last night, your hair's all nappy and your clothes ain't fittin' you right, tell me, where you been honey?" And she would go ahead and tell him. Well, that was the kind of singing we was doing. We sang about things like that.

A former high school teacher himself, Nat D. returned to the Memphis high schools in his search for prospective radio talent. It was in the schools that he found Maurice "Hot Rod" Hubbard and A.C. "Moohah" Williams, who still works for WDIA.

Later recruiting efforts were better organized. In the early 1950s, WDIA staged a "D.J. Derby," which gave blacks of all ages and backgrounds a chance to try their hand at radio. The men who came in first, Robert Thomas, and second, Jesse "Hot Rod" Carter, recount their experiences:

Robert Thomas: *I used to love radio. As a matter of fact, when I was growing up as a youngster, I listened to all the radio stations around town, and tried to pattern myself as a jock. There were some I had as my favorites and I used to practice with a mop stick, a broom handle, anything like that. I'm holding a microphone up in front of me and I'm rapping. But really it was a fantasy with me because I didn't think it would come to be. But it did, it came about. And as it came about, I found myself being what I had originally thought I wanted to be in the first place.*

I had gone off to school. I went to college. Forgot all about radio. Started to thinking that I wanted to become a dentist. And when I came home for the break once from school, my mother informed me that she had heard an announcement on WDIA that they were going to have something they called a Disc Jockey Derby, a type of a contest where you come out and audition.

There were 300 of us that came out, male and female. About 48 passed the audition test. A series of programs were to follow with each auditioner having 15 minutes of air time on A.C. "Moohah" Williams' show. A.C. had a Saturday show in the afternoon from about four until seven, or till sundown (the station was just a daytime station then). It was called "The Saturday Night Fish Fry," and around five o'clock was when he would begin the auditioners' portion. Each auditioner had a 15 minute segment. He would do his commercial spot and cue the control man when he wanted his next record. All he had to do was concentrate on how he would do his spot and go into a record, or how he would make the transition from a record to a commercial and go out of it. Everything was supposed to be connected to flow. And this was primarily what I had to concentrate on.

During the course of the audition, which was over about a four-week span, we had the preliminaries, the quarterfinals, the semifinals and the finals. And at the end of the finals, I was number one. I remember with me in that D.J. Derby was one of my cohorts who worked at KFFA in Helena, Arkansas; calls himself "Hot Rod" Carter. He came out number two.

Jesse Carter: *The way I got involved in radio was purely accident. I never had no intention of getting into radio. It didn't interest me at all. One Sunday morning my wife and I were tuning around for "Wings Over Jordan," a religious program on WROX in Clarksdale, Mississippi. The time had passed and we got instead a sanctified church. I heard the piano playing and I told my wife, "That sounds like my cousin, Johnny Strong." I said, "What do you know? My old cousin's on the air." I said, "One of these days I'm going to get on the air." Just like that. Just like you say, "Oh, I'm going to buy a new car next year," or something like that.*

I didn't think no more about it. I got into the cafe business. Let out a lot of stuff on credit and the fellas ran me down so low til I decided to shut the door. When I closed up I owed one salesman $28 for cigarettes. I talked to him, I said, "If you got any work to do over there, I'll come over and work it out." He says okay. I worked that $28 out driving a truck route on the Mississippi side. Whenever I didn't work I'd go on back home and turn my radio on. Once I heard an announcement come in over WDIA that anybody who wanted to learn to be an announcer, be up there that Saturday and they would give you a test. And if you passed the exam why they'd give you four months free coaching. I said, "Well, I'll take that." Just like that and that's just the way it happened.

It was kinda cold that first day I went up. I had to hitchhike, I didn't have no money. At the station there were only two other fellas there as old as I were. The rest of them was youngsters, all dressed up sharp. I was there with common things on and that old

Mississippi mud all over me. I said, "Shucks, I shoulda stayed at home. I know I don't have a chance."

Well, for the evening we was supposed to take our initial test. Mr. David James, the program director, had told everybody to be here at five o'clock. He said, "If you're not here forget it. The first rule in radio is don't be late."

I had to hitchhike that day, too. I caught a series of three rides from here to Memphis, starting out with a little woman over there in Mississippi, friend of mine. And I decided once not to go. She said, "Oh yeah, you go ahead." So I went on and I got in the studio about 15 minutes ahead of time. They thought I wasn't going to make it. When I sat down to the mike, we just had about two minutes, I guess, before we go on the air actually. Since all of them had little stage names, he asked me, "Whatcha gonna call yourself? Watcha gonna call yourself?"

I say, "I don't know."

Said, "Call yourself "Hot Rod."

"Okay, this is old Hot Rod." So they started to call me Hot Rod and it just stuck. Out of 46 contestants only three was picked. And I was one of the three. That's right. And after about five months, I came down here and got a job.

Hot Rod, at 68, still works a Sunday shift on KFFA where Robert Thomas, too, was first employed doing King Biscuit Time, among other shows. Within a few months, however, Thomas was hired away by WDIA to do a youth-oriented program – and it has remained his specialty ever since. Of course, black teenagers aren't into the same music as they were back when WDIA first started playing the blues. Today, as Robert Thomas notes, disco dominates the scene:

These teenagers got to not be into blues, you know. You start playing the blues and the youngsters would call up and ask when would you play some music? Youngsters couldn't relate to blues, and I think mainly the reason is because they were more music-minded. Blues was just simple. They just used a guitar, which wasn't popular then with youngsters as it has become now. You had a guitar and a big bass drum. Most of the blues singers weren't polished musicians. We'd play the top things then for youth appeal like the Eldorados, the Spaniels, the young groups that were coming out at the time. They called it rhythm and blues.

Now youngsters going to school, they're being taught music as it is. Then they're able to put it together and listen to others, how they put it together, then they can relate to it more. So that's what they're doing. There was a time when the kids just dance to the beat. But the kids have become more sophisticated now; they listen to what the vocalists are saying now. They don't listen if you just got a beat and there's no story there. Now you got to have both of them, both of those ingredients.

We watch the national charts pretty closely, and if it is doing that well across the country, we figure we're missing the boat if we don't play it. So we play it. There was a time we didn't play any white music at all, regardless of how great the record was. But like I said, the sophistication of the kids is going onward and upward, and the black kids, as well as the white kids, are buying white records. The trend is moving in that direction. It's semi-jazz.

Now we don't call our music jazz music for fear that some of our great blues listeners might tune out, you know, because they don't like jazz. They've heard one jazz tune and they didn't like it, so now they don't want to hear any other parts of jazz. But we are able to play this new type of music and it seeps into them and before they know it, they're snapping their fingers, patting their feet, you know, bumping up against the refrigerator listening to it unknowingly, and enjoying it, and at the same time it's jazz. So we call it disco. This is where the trend has been for, oh, the past couple of years now. So we hopped on the bandwagon and, by virtue of that, we are able to play a lot of jazz now, without calling it jazz.

The Southern black's economic plight has continued to change. The change in radio and music are symptomatic, and in many ways symbolic, of greater changes within black culture. One thing all change has in common is that it isn't free: something must be paid, something must be exchanged. Nat D. can't help but view this situation with mixed emotion.

There are other changes too. Have you ever noticed the change in referring to people like myself? We don't use the word Negro too much now. We say black. I don't know why a change was made, but we said black radio, not Negro radio. It's acceptable to me because I am black. On the other hand, I don't think it should be used to play anybody down. I think it was just a useful change and I, more or less, like it.

Have you noticed a definite change though? I have noticed it. What I mean by change; when you turn on a black program, the people don't use black approaches. They don't use black situations. Black's turning white now. Whether that's a desirable development or not, personally I don't know. I don't think so because I like to be what I am. I'm not mad about being black. I just figured the other cat is losing a whole lot of things when he doesn't accept me as a human being like himself. And the result is a lotta laughs that I get, he misses. He ain't tickled as I am, and I'm tickled because I think he's ridiculous in many respects.

Changes is coming about so fast now til I'm beginning to get a little worried again like I was at first. Negroes are not Negroes like they used to be. We using better English, and wearing better clothes, and we living in different areas, and we traveling. And the result is we are changing personalities, so to speak. We not the same people that we used to be and as we change whether we turn out to be something better or worse, I don't know.

Right now I'm saying that personally I'm doing all right. I've been having my meals regular. I been sleeping pretty good. I had some pretty good laughs. And who else, who can beat that? You can tell me somebody can beat good meals, good laughs, good feeling, you point him out to me; so I want to know how they did it. I'm gonna put it just like I used to say on Beale Street: I ain't mad about nothing, man, I ain't mad about nothing. So, what's you mad about pretty baby, you better get up, set up, and grin. You hear. Am I talkin' too fast? □

Folkroots

Images of Mississippi Black Folklife (1974-1976)

Roland Freeman is a Washington-based photographer whose work has been exhibited widely in this country and printed in numerous publications throughout the world. The Mississippi Folklife Project, from which these photographs are taken, was supported in part by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Above: Ned Weatherby, fife maker, Franklin County, Mississippi.

photographic essay by Roland Freeman

The Mississippi Folklife Project grew out of the research and documentary efforts of black folklorist, organizer and poet Worth Long and myself for the 1974 Smithsonian Institution Festival of American Folklife. Our exhibit for that Festival is now permanently housed in the Smithsonian and in the archives of the State of Mississippi Department of Archive and History.

Through the research, photo-documentation and exhibition of the Project, we wanted to record and help preserve the fast-disappearing aspects of the black cultural heritage. We learned that most of the previous work done in Mississippi had focused mainly on the Delta region; we chose to start in the 11-county area of southwest Mississippi. In a relatively short period, we found a rich tradition of folk art, including quilting, basketry, blacksmithing, wood carving, moss and cornhusk weaving, crafting of musical instruments and children's toys, clay and wood sculpture, gravestone making, yard sculpture, syrup and sorghum grinding. To the extent possible, I photographed all of these practices.

The deeper we got into the Project, the greater the historical significance it assumed. Time was literally the adversary of the culture and the people we were documenting. In the Project's first two years, six craftspeople we have worked with have passed. And on Memorial Day, 1977, Julius Mason, a blacksmith from Roxie and a dear friend and constant source of wisdom and encouragement, passed.

Now, you have to look long and hard to find traditional folklife practices. Most people who know how to make baskets are becoming arthritic, or getting cataracts, or having trouble finding white oak needed to make the baskets. Where there were once blacksmiths serving every community, now there is hardly one active in every other county. Whittling and wood carving scarcely exist, and people who once made hand-sewn quilts now use machines. The time once spent in oral traditions is now consumed with television-watching. The ability to craft most things that one needed, and of passing that skill on to the next generation, has lost its status and respect, especially among the young. Thus, when the existing craftspeople die, with them will go many of these practices. Understanding that dynamic was the main reason we started and continued the Mississippi Folklife Project.

We are presently in the Project's exhibition phase. A major exhibit of photographs and selected artifacts from the Freeman Collection of the Project runs from Sept. 6 to Oct. 16, 1977, at the Mississippi State Historical Museum in Jackson. Entitled "FOLKROOTS: Images of Mississippi Black Folklife (1974-76)," it is the first photographic exhibit by a black photographer mounted by the Museum. From Jackson, the exhibit goes to Alcorn State University in Lorman, Miss., then to the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society in Detroit, and to Indiana University, and then on an extensive national tour.

Mrs. Annie Mason, quilter, Franklin County, showing her grandson how the family has traditionally recorded names and birth dates in their Bible. Of all the people I've met during the project, she has one of the best family histories of photographs and other memorabilia. She takes great pride in saying she has a grandson in California who wants to preserve her house as it is, as a family museum, when she has gone on.

"I started working for a colored man named Mr. Gene Prophet in his farm shop when I was eight years old. By the time I was 10, I was sharpening plows for a nickel. At 14, I went to work for a white man who had a grist mill and blacksmith shop, and worked for him 22 years. I opened my own business right here in 1939 and continued until 1976. I made everything from wagon wheels to dog irons, and when lumbering came in, I made all kinds of equipment for them, and even had as many as five men working for me at one time. Now I'm just about like all those old-time things. I'm about played out. I had a stroke a little while back and still got a pain in my chest. I've been breathing this coal smoke too long. It's time for me to retire and let the old fire just burn out."

– Julius Mason, (1902-1977), blacksmith, Franklin County

"My mamma and daddy brought me out here round this river and lake when I was about seven. I done all kinds of work in my life, everything from raising cotton to public work. I worked all up and down the Mississippi River between here and New Orleans. I've been called all kinds of nicknames, from 'barrel house' to 'rough crawler.'

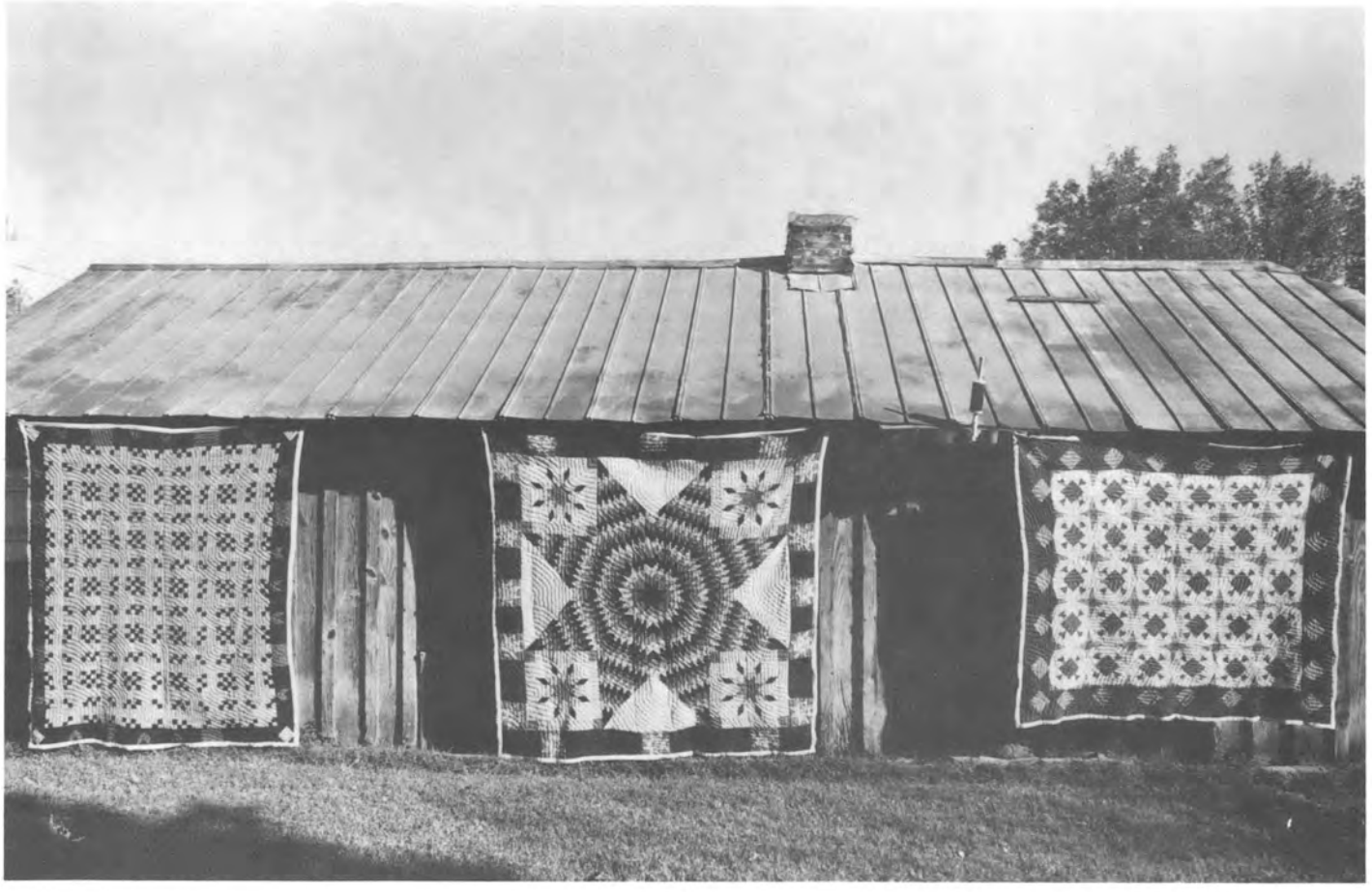
"Now I just fish here in the old lake. Once there was an awful lot of colored people all around here, but when those last high waters came in '72-73, just about everybody left here. I got cables hooking my house to them trees, and when the water rises, my house rise with it. And when the water went down, I'm still here. Old bossman said I could stay here as long as I wanted to."

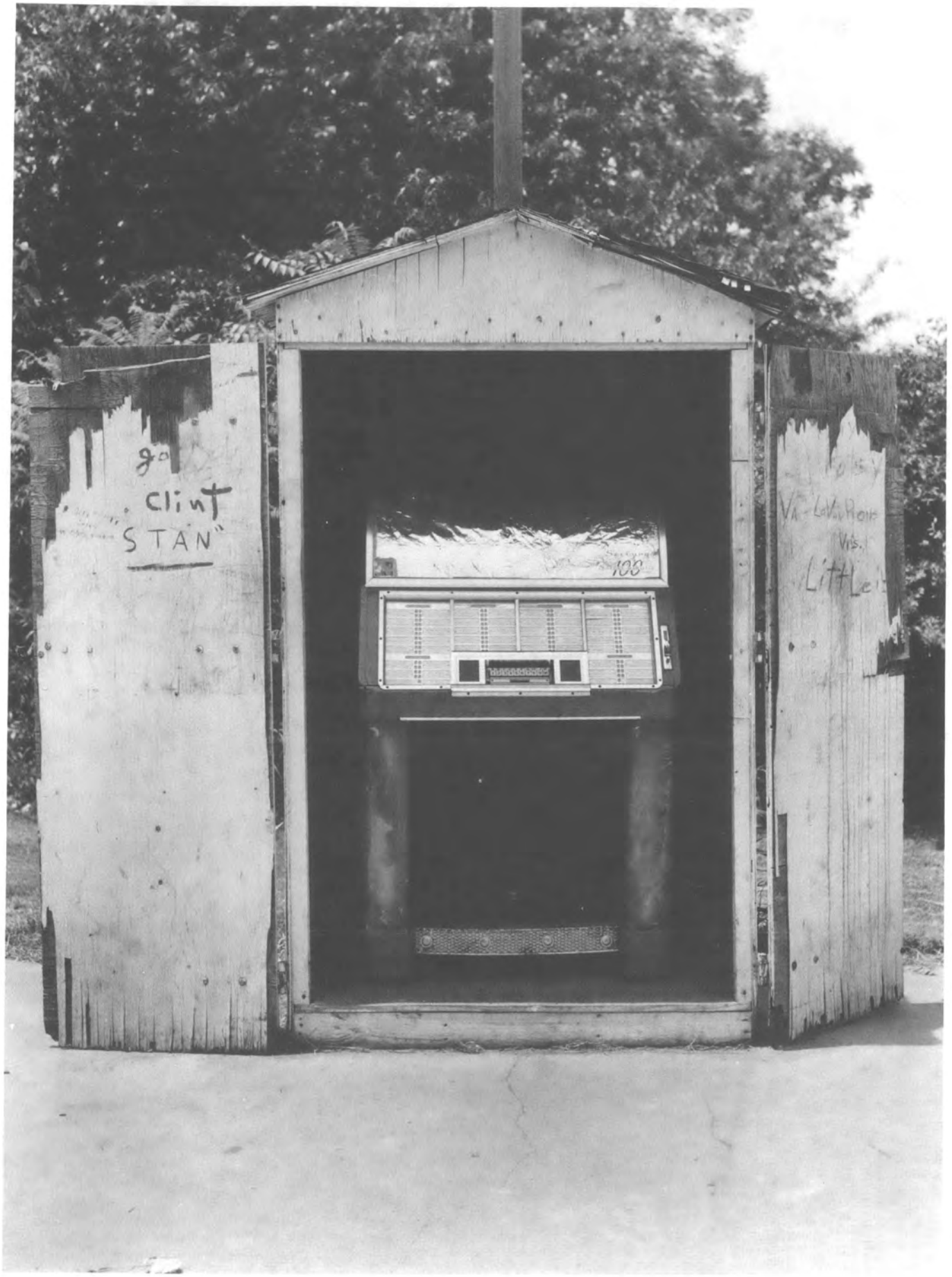
– Henry Butler Fields, riverman-fisherman-netmaker, Adams and Wilkinson Counties

"I started piecing quilts when I was seven or eight years old. First thing I pieced was a little nine-patch, and Papa made the biggest fuss over it you ever saw. My grandmama quilted, my mother quilted and two of my three daughters, Annie and Emma, quilt. Course they do that fancy piecing and quilting. I don't do any more quilting. My hands won't take it, but I can still piece up one of the prettiest spreads around."

– Mrs. Phoeba Johnson, 94, quilter, Wilkinson County

Opposite page: Mrs. Johnson's daughters, Mrs. Emma Russell (above left), Mrs. Annie Dennis (above right) and Mrs. Dennis' house and quilts (below).

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"STAN"

DIXIE ROCK : THE FUSION'S STILL BURNING

by Courtney Haden

The music died when Elvis joined the Army. Or when Little Richard found religion. The music went down with Otis Redding's plane — or was it Duane Allman's motorcycle. It was betrayed when Gregg Allman turned state's evidence against his roadie, or the day Phil Walden met Jimmy Carter . . . .

Rock music must periodically be pronounced dead to be rejuvenated. Southern rock, from which all rock derives, is a feisty form which has been killed off dozens of times in the last quarter-century or so. Yet no matter how often the critics or the social arbiters or concerned parents prepare the bier, the corpse keeps dancing back to life.

Though easily eulogized, it is less simple to determine the birth of Southern rock. The form's immediate ancestors, country-western music and the blues, as endlessly explicated by various pundits, have been performed in the region since before the turn of the century. With the advent of the phonograph, and then the radio, these musics were widely disseminated. Country music was broadcast as early as 1922 on Atlanta's WSB; by the time WSM aired the first *Grand Ole Opry* in 1935, the "hillbilly" sound was a national phenomenon. The blues, though broadcast less widely for racial reasons, were recorded earlier and more thoroughly than country; some artists recorded in the field around 1917, with dozens of labels like Okeh, Paramount and Vocalion making "race music" available throughout the country.

Wherever these musics fuse, one finds the idiosyncratic essence of Southern rock. In somewhat the same fashion that an atomic reaction begins when the unstable element reaches critical mass, thus did Southern rock explode when arbitrary color lines were crossed. Was country music the white man's domain? The first country artist recorded in Nashville was a harmonica-playing shoeshine boy named Deford Bailey, who was a member of the Grand Ole Opry troupe decades before Charlie Pride was born. Could only black men authentically sing the blues? Along came Jimmie Rodgers, "The Singing Brakeman," whose soulful singing was an inspiration for later bluesmen like Howlin' Wolf.

Southern rock, then, is a fusion of energy and emotion from the musics of both races, a unique form each can share. As the music transcends social barriers, it becomes the object of authoritarian disapproval, then a rallying point for those who would resist authority. This music demands some sort of response: turn it up or turn it off, and be cognizant that either choice is charged with a kind of political significance.

Certainly, the first practitioners of Southern rock had no such rhetoric in mind when they created the form. Greil Marcus, in his book, *Mystery Train*, argues a persuasive case on behalf of Harmonica Frank Floyd's claim to have been the first Southern rocker. A drifting street singer from Mississippi, Floyd was 43 in 1951 when he cut his first records for Sam Phillips in Memphis. In the years of rambling that preceded, the harmonica player had picked up musical mannerisms from black and white players alike. "People think I am a colored man," he told one blues collector, "but I really am white." His music, earthy country blues played at what came to be known as a rock tempo, had no particular color: it was a new sound altogether.

Sam Phillips was the man to see if one had a new sound in mind. At his small Memphis studio, Phillips recorded blues and country singers alike in search of one artist who would crack the complacent world of pop music wide open. His criteria were simple: "If I could find a white man who had the Negro sound and the Negro feel, I could make a billion dollars." Though Harmonica Frank and others failed to connect with the public, Phillips did discover a man to fit his bill: Elvis Presley.

As the story goes, Elvis was driving a truck for Crown Electric in Memphis when he cut his first tentative sides in 1953. He was 18, with a squeaky baritone voice and little else in the way of musical talent. His demo sides were unexceptional, but

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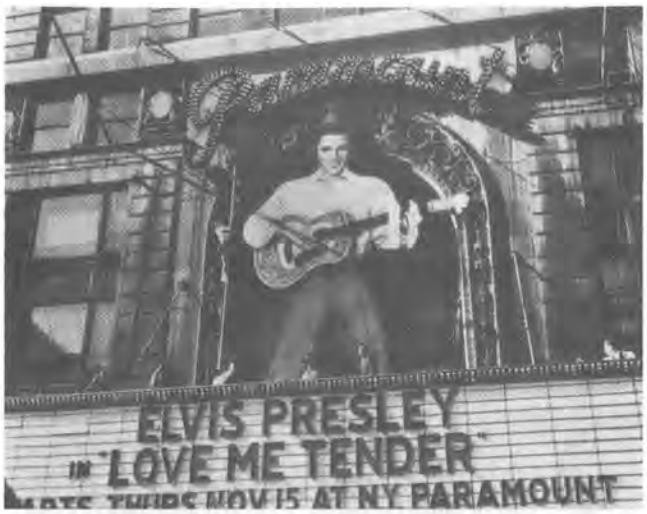
At various times a television producer and radio station program director, Courtney Haden currently edits Southern Style, *a weekly cultural tabloid in Birmingham, where he also engineers at Boutwell Studios, producing rock groups and radio commercials alike. He makes his residence in Tuscaloosa as best he can.*



Above: Elvis Presley starring at the New York Paramount. Below: Chuck Berry in 1957 photo at the peak of his career.

something in the boy's voice convinced Sam Phillips' secretary to press Phillips on Presley's behalf. Phillips acceded, bringing in electric guitarist Scotty Moore and bassist Bill Black to augment Presley's acoustic guitar and vocals in a formal audition.

The combination clicked. On Monday, July 6, 1954, Elvis and two sidemen recorded the first of the great Southern rock singles. After experimenting unsuccessfully with some pop standards, Elvis suddenly swung into a fired-up arrangement of "That's All Right (Mama)," a blues tune by Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup. Phillips missed the first take, but had his one-track tape recorder rolling when the trio tried the song again. The result was one minute and 54 seconds of the fusion Phillips had been looking for. It was extraordinary to hear the white boy sing so blackly; there was no minstrel distance from the emotions expressed. Perhaps the ease with which Elvis summoned up such anarchistic music scared Sam Phillips a little bit; all accounts of this epochal session describe the participants as being taken aback by their accomplishment.

If "That's All Right" occurred spontaneously, then recording a complementary flip side for the single was a painstaking proposition. Bill Monroe's bluegrass standard, "Blue Moon of Kentucky" was chosen as a change of pace, but Elvis transformed even the straight country arrangement, and the final product was an up-tempo groove that bore little resemblance to the original. Elvis crooned, shouted, and exhorted the sidemen to play fast and loud, and Phillips used an echoing recording technique to give an ominous edge to the proceedings.

Phillips took the finished tapes across town to Dewey Phillips (no kin), whose *Red Hot & Blue* program on WHBQ was one of the most popular shows in the area. Though the disc jockey usually played black blues exclusively, he decided to take a chance on Presley's version of "That's All Right," playing it about 9:30 that evening. The station was immediately swamped with telephone response, callers who wanted to know who sang the song and when it would be played on the air again. Dewey Phillips repeated the tune seven times that night, and finally dispatched friends to find the singer and bring him to WHBQ for an interview. Elvis was found in a movie house and rushed to the station, where on the air he was acclaimed as a new sensation. As the Presley phenomenon began, rock began to roll.

Sam Phillips held onto Elvis for a mere 16 months before selling his contract to RCA, but the sides Elvis cut for Phillips' Sun label may have been the best of his lengthy career. Those songs – collected on *The Sun Sessions* (RCA 1675) – capture not only the cultural components of the Southern rock fusion, but a sexual essence which no academic phrase can properly elaborate. Elvis was more than an exciting music-maker; with his long, brilliantined hair and sideburns, suggestively smoldering eyes, and a restlessness onstage that drove girls wild, he was an exciting visual personification of the new music. His video was as good as his audio.

Elvis retained a personal manager, one Colonel Tom Parker. The former Hadacol salesman recognized a hot property when he saw one, and took steps to insure that his client's career would be more than a flash in the pan, steering Elvis from the risks of his fusion music toward a more acces-

sible, less controversial pop sound. When Elvis left Sun, his records hit the top of the pop, country and rhythm-and-blues (R&B) charts, then subsequently dominated what came to be called the rock-and-roll charts from 1955 until he joined the Army. The rock records were released less often as Elvis' softer, balladic entries consolidated his appeal among women, and the Southern rock days can be said to have ended for Elvis after he moved to RCA in 1955. Ironically, Sam Phillips made only $35,000 on the RCA deal, much less than the hoped-for billion.

In the wake of Elvis, other hopefuls came to Sun from all over the South. There were the Arkansas country boys, Johnny Cash and Charlie Rich, Roy Orbison from Texas, Carl Perkins from right there in Memphis, Jerry Lee Lewis from Faraday, Louisiana, and many more. Sam Phillips recorded them all, in the process capturing some of the most energized music ever made: songs like "I Walk The Line," "Lonely Weekends," "Ooby Dooby," "Blue Suede Shoes," "Whole Lotta Shakin'" and "Great Balls of Fire."

Each of these artists left Southern rock for country sooner or later, and only Jerry Lee Lewis kept coming back to rock some more. Lewis came to record at Sun soon after being fired from a church piano job for playing roadhouse riffs during hymns. All of Lewis' recorded work seems tinged by hellfire, a Pentecostal rock whose good times are pervaded with a sense of certain damnation (or so, well into his cups, he once earnestly explained to this writer).

Though more loyal to the spirit of rock throughout his career than Elvis proved to be, Jerry Lee never surpassed Presley's achievements. When Elvis went into the service, Jerry Lee might have assumed the throne but for a morals scandal that erupted during an English tour. The Britons raised a furor over Jerry Lee's marriage to his 13-year-old cousin Myra, a stigma which effectively blackballed the rocker from the popular market for many years. The sense of frustration never completely left him. (Indeed, early in 1977, Jerry Lee was arrested outside Elvis' mansion in Memphis allegedly drunk and waving a pistol, demanding a meeting with Presley).

Millions of postwar adolescents with time to kill and money to spend adopted the new rock-and-roll music as their own, despite (or because of) parental disapproval. Record companies across the nation hurried to board the bandwagon, competing among themselves to discover new recording stars. In the South, activity was widespread; Antoine "Fats" Domino, who had been a successful R&B artist for seven years, had a rock hit in 1956 with "I'm in Love Again," the first of many Number One singles for the New Orleans singer.

Huey "Piano" Smith and the Clowns recorded in Jackson, Mississippi, for Johnny Vincent's Ace label, and connected in 1957 with songs like "Rockin' Pneumonia and The Boogie-Woogie Flu."

From Macon, Georgia, came "Little Richard" Penniman, who often used Fats Domino's sidemen to accompany nonsensical celebrations like "Tutti Frutti" and "Good Golly Miss Molly."

Though Southern rock was popular with the youth of America, its acceptance was by no means universal throughout the South. The implications of black music being sung for white kids were not lost on certain white racist organizations, many of which attempted to have rock banned as a pernicious influence upon impressionable Caucasian kids. At least one such group cited the NAACP as the evil force behind rock-and-roll.

The ugly culmination of this cultural antagonism occurred in April, 1956, when six men leaped onstage at Municipal Auditorium in Birmingham during a performance by Nat "King" Cole. The intruders, one of whom was a member of a White Citizens Council, beat the singer, later claiming to have acted on behalf of a boycott of "bebop and Negro music." Cole, one of the finest pop stylists of the time, belonged to neither category.

Record producers in the Northeast and West sought to cash in on the success of Elvis, Little Richard and the rest by releasing records that aped the mannerisms of Southern rock. Soon the charts were jammed with ersatz Elvis, and, to paraphrase an economic maxim, the bad music tended to drive out the good. By 1959, Elvis was in the Army, Jerry Lee was in disgrace, and Little Richard, having undergone a religious experience while aboard an airplane during an engine malfunction, had given up "sinful music" to sing in the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Southern rock had ceased to affect the teen audience as a national phenomenon.

Throughout the following lean years, Southern artists continued to appear upon the charts, but most were singing modified pop tunes, country or soul. The fusion of white and black which made Southern rock unique was dormant until the early '60s.

In 1962, Booker T and the MGs revived it with a hit instrumental called "Green Onions." Booker

Memphis-born Aretha Franklin made a hit with "Respect" which Otis Redding of Macon had written in 1965.

T. Jones was a keyboard player in the Stax Studio in Memphis, where he and the session players who made up the MGs (Memphis Group) backed up soul artists like Carla Thomas and Otis Redding. Few outside the industry knew that the bass player, Donald "Duck" Dunn, and the guitarist, Steve Cropper, were white, so well did their lyrical chops blend with the funk laid down by Jones and the drummer, Al Jackson. This time, the Southern rock fusion helped black singers cross over from the limited R&B market to the potentially lucrative rock market.

Berry Gordy's Motown label in Detroit had crossed black artists over first with slick, rhythmic productions, but Southern crossover records emphasized a mellow, bass-dominated sound in which the rhythm guitar could become a lead instrument. Had Motown been less popular, and had the Beatle-led British Invasion not begun in 1963, it is possible the widely-popular "Southern Groove" would have dominated the music of the decade. As it was, the Stax sound of the mid-'60s propelled artists like Sam & Dave, Wilson Pickett, Joe Tex and Otis Redding to the top of the rock charts, and it had a significant influence upon the British groups with whom it competed for public favor. Compare, for example, the Rolling Stones' version of "Pain in My Heart" with Otis Redding's original, or Otis' version of "Satisfaction" with the Stones'.

Otis Redding is a pivotal figure in this movement. Born and raised in Macon, Otis made maximum use of his gospel training and his love for Little Richard's music. His early recording efforts were unexceptional, but with the guidance of his manager, a college boy named Phil Walden, Redding learned to pace his headlong approach to a song; he could phrase fast and slow songs equally well. His first Stax release was "These Arms of Mine" in 1963, cut as an afterthought to a Johnny Jenkins session. Other hits followed: "I've Been Loving You Too Long," "Respect," and "Mr. Pitiful." Redding learned to deliver a song in person as well as in a recording studio (Memphis DJ and Stax artist Rufus Thomas was instrumental in this process), while Walden devoted himself to breaking Otis out in the rock market. Redding was the only black artist on the bill at the landmark Monterey Pop Festival in 1967, and undoubtedly would have become a national star of the first magnitude. However, a plane crash took the singer's life early in 1968, and Otis Redding's first Number One single, "Sitting on the Dock of the Bay," was released posthumously.

Prior to that tragedy, a New York producer, Atlantic Records' Jerry Wexler, had begun scouting the South for recording locations outside Memphis. The Stax musicians were undeniably great, and Wexler utilized their services on one hit after another, but he was dissatisfied with the working relationship he had with them. His search for a harmonious studio atmosphere ended in Florence, Alabama.

Rick Hall, a sometime session player and arranger, had established Fame Studios in his hometown, Florence, in 1961. His first big hit was Arthur Alexander's "You Better Move On" the following year, and with the aid of Atlanta music publisher Bill Lowery, Hall produced a number of hit records

thereafter for various labels. Unlike Stax, the session musicians at Fame were all white.

The first Number One record utilizing the "Muscle Shoals Sound" (a name perhaps derived from the fact that Florence had no airport, and producers and artists coming to the Fame Studios landed at Muscle Shoals) was Percy Sledge's "When A Man Loves A Woman," in 1966. It was a slow gospel wail cooking over a low funk burner, and it confirmed Jerry Wexler's guess that Fame provided the environment he'd been looking for. In 1969, writing in *Billboard*, Wexler gave his view of the Southern rock fusion: "the musicians are Southern country people who sort of turned away from country music and toward the blues, which doesn't mean they've abandoned country, but rather that they've turned from the tedium of the Nashville thing and into this more creative R&B thing, which stirs them."

Wexler has written elsewhere that one of his greatest challenges as a producer was revitalizing Aretha Franklin's career. Aretha was a gospel-pop singer from Detroit with an awesome potential untapped during her years at Columbia Records in the early '60s. When Atlantic acquired her contract in 1967, Wexler gambled the reputation of his company on the Muscle Shoals musicians. Aretha was used to working with explicit musical charts and strict arrangements for her accompaniment, and Wexler could not be certain that she would be comfortable working in the loose, almost improvisatorial atmosphere to which the Fame session men were accustomed. As it turned out, the artist and the accompanists worked fluently together, and their first collaboration was one of the landmark records of modern music, "I Never Loved A Man (The Way I Loved You)," released in 1967. The record zoomed into the Top Ten, broke Aretha's career wide open, and established the Muscle Shoals Sound as a viable entity within the music of the '60s. That single, by the way, not only saved Atlantic Records' reputation, but won producer Wexler several industry honors as Producer of the Year.

Because Rick Hall preferred to pay his musicians by the job instead of retaining them on salary, he lost many of his original session men. Some traveled to Memphis in late 1967 with guitarist Chips Moman to establish American Group Productions. Jerry Wexler urged New York musicians like the late saxophone wizard King Curtis to come South, where AGP helped English songstress Dusty Springfield create the best music of her career. Even Elvis Presley recognized the healing properties of the Southern Groove, using AGP facilities to record "Suspicious Minds" in 1968, a Number One single that did much to reestablish Elvis as the King of Rock.

Other former Fame sidemen set up shop in Muscle Shoals proper, establishing Quin Ivy Studios and Muscle Shoals Sound in 1969. The latter was staffed with what came to be regarded as the best studio band in America, informally known as the Swampers: Barry Beckett on keyboards, Jimmy Johnson on guitar, David Hood on bass, and Roger Hawkins on drums. These incomparable players have hosted sessions for virtually every notable in rock, from Bob Dylan to Paul Simon to the Rolling Stones, and at this writing show no signs of becoming jaded by success.

One Rick Hall find who did not start his own studio, but who came to be the major influence on latter-day Southern rock, was a lanky guitarist named Duane Allman. Duane and his brother, Gregg, a vocalist-keyboardist, came from Florida originally. While still teenagers, they scuffled in a series of short-lived bands with names like Allman Joys and the Hourglass until 1968, when the brothers split up – Gregg to seek a solo career and Duane to take his guitar prowess to the studios of Muscle Shoals.

Duane specialized in slide guitar, influenced by the playing of bottleneck guitarists like Elmore James. Unlike James, Allman played with a deft sense of melody, creating unique fills that made him popular at recording sessions, and eventually earned him the nickname "Skydog." His work on Wilson Pickett's cover version of "Hey Jude" came to the notice of the ubiquitous Jerry Wexler. It was Wexler who talked the late Otis Redding's manager, Phil Walden, into putting a band together around Allman's talents.

Walden created a label as well, founding Capricorn Records in Macon in 1969, with the debut album by the Allman Brothers Band as its first major release. The group Allman put together included his brother, who had given up the search for solo success to work once more with Duane, Richard "Dicky" Betts on second guitar, Berry Oakley to handle bass, and two drummers, Butch Trucks and Jai Johnny Johansen. This unusual configuration produced a refreshing new sound, relying as it did upon intricate twin lead guitars for soaring fills as a counterpoint to Gregg's rough, blues-based vocals. Underneath that structure flowed the rhythm section, whose twin drums

photo by Marshall Hagler

The Allman Brothers created a Southern Sound that has been carried on by groups like Lynyrd Skynyrd, above.

pushed but did not shove the music along. The formula was right. Whether reworking old standards like "Statesboro Blues" or exploring new areas of the Southern rock fusion, as in the jazz-influenced instrumental, "In Memory of Elizabeth Reed," the Allman Brothers made music like nobody else in the world of post-psychedelic rock.

Employing the successful formula with which he managed Otis Redding, Phil Walden gradually built the Allman Brothers Band into a regional phenomenon. The band was totally unpretentious onstage – Duane once told an interviewer, "We don't get paid to come out and dress up funny. We come to play." Their espousal of exotic (to Southern youth) love-peace homilies left over from the halcyon days of hippiedom, and their unswerving allegiance to Southern culture created a fiercely loyal following for the band. Never before had a touring band in the South, an integrated band at that, drawn attention to the sense of brotherhood felt by kids growing up in the region. The Allman Brothers gave credence to their reputation for social awareness by playing free for assorted community benefits in the early days of their career. The band's quasi-political activity, coupled with their admittedly superior musicianship, attracted the notice of trend-seeking rock journalists who helped boost the band into national prominence. Walden parlayed a grueling number of one-night stands into stints at the 1970 Newport Jazz Festival and Bill Graham's rock palace, the Fillmore Auditorium. A double album recorded at the latter not only caught the spirit of their music at its peak, but also provided Capricorn and the Allman Brothers with their first gold record.

Then, as had happened to Walden with Otis Redding, tragedy struck as his client neared superstardom. In October, 1971, Duane Allman lost control of the motorcycle he was riding on a rain-slicked Macon street and was killed almost instantly. The guitarist's death saddened but did not sunder his band, who, practicing the brotherhood they preached, vowed to continue playing as a unit, as Duane would have wanted.

The band struggled to complete a new studio album, *Eat A Peach*, as a memorial to Duane. Incredibly, almost a year after Duane's death, bassist Berry Oakley was killed in a similar motorcycle mishap. This time, the Allman Brothers Band rebounded from tragedy to record their most popular studio effort, *Brothers and Sisters*, from which "Rambling Man" became a Top Five single in 1973. That single, with its breezy highway lyric, propulsive rhythm and multi-tracked guitar lines, was hailed by many critics as the quintessential Southern rock single.

By this time, Southern rock was entrenched as a major trend in the otherwise directionless 1970s. The success of the Allmans' fusion saw executives from every major record label flocking to the South to find more of the same. Shrewdly, Phil Walden had signed up aspiring groups some time earlier, so that, when the trend came his way, Walden was ensconced as the virtual czar of Southern rock. His Capricorn label was home for, besides the Allmans, a country-rock ensemble called the Marshall Tucker Band, bluesmen like Johnny Jenkins (whose album *Ton-Ton Macoute* remains one of the neglected classics of its kind), soul shouters like the Wet Willie Band, plus Cowboy, Captain Beyond, and more. Of these, only Wet Willie lived up to the promise of fusion, blending a roadhouse rhythm section with the black-white vocals of Jimmy Hall. Like the Allmans, Wet Willie

had a compelling stage act, but their boisterous stage presence was completely unlike the low-key Allmans. It may be that Jimmy Hall's inherent sexiness, like Elvis' 20 years earlier, represented a threat to corporate status quo; for whatever reason, Walden never bothered to give the Wet Willie Band the build-up it deserved. After several disappointing years, the group left the Capricorn label altogether.

With his success, Phil Walden earned status in the business community, status that he attempted to translate into personal power. To that end, he cultivated the friendship of Georgia's governor, Jimmy Carter, among other politicos, and that friendship proved beneficial to both. Early in the Carter push for the Presidency, Walden organized rock benefit concerts featuring Capricorn artists, the proceeds providing a crucial cash flow for the financially strapped campaign. At this writing, Walden participates less actively in the administration of his label, and it is rumored that he will make a run for political office in Georgia.

Under Walden's absentee regime, and perhaps concurrent with the broadening of the label's scope to include non-native talents like Elvin Bishop and comedian Martin Mull, Capricorn has not thrived. The label's flagship group, the Allman Brothers, disintegrated for a number of reasons throughout 1975, and then, when Gregg Allman testified against his former road manager, Scooter Herring, in a widely publicized drug trial (during which it was revealed that Allman himself was a heavy drug user), the illusion of brotherhood was shattered for all time. Allman went on to a solo career seemingly no more successful than his first attempt in 1968; he became more famous as the husband of TV celebrity Cher Bono than as an accomplished musician.

Though no longer a dominant influence on the rock of the '70s, the Southern Sound is kept alive by Allman Brothers derivations like Jacksonville, Florida's Lynyrd Skynyrd band, or the Atlanta Rhythm Section, whose journeymen bid fair to pick up where the Allmans left off, with tunes like 1977's hit "So Into You."

Is the music dead once more? Will another such pronouncement bring the Southern rock fusion back to the forefront of the popular consciousness once again? Given the complacency of the current rock audience and its apparent willingness to listen to anything the radio plays regardless of its worth, it could well be that there is no place for the exuberance, the careless energy of Southern rock anymore.

And yet...this is the kind of complacency that Elvis Presley shattered the first time around, that an impatient Otis Redding stirred to life, that Duane Allman sought to turn on its ear. There is no shortage of the liberating energy of Southern rock; even now bearers of that peculiar force play their songs and raise their hell somewhere near you. Complacency is not safe while Southern rock is abroad in the land; ennui does not prosper. Let the fusion burn.

References

Of course, Southern rock must be heard to be fully comprehended. Obviously, it is hard to read words about the particular qualities of phonograph records and performing groups without experiencing them for yourself. So, do so. Several records can give you an especially good idea of what this fusion is all about. Besides Elvis Presley's *Sun Sessions* mentioned earlier, you might listen to *Elvis, Vol. 1: A Legendary Performer* for a succinct survey of his career. Otis Redding records are hard to come by since the singer's death, but a little judicious rummaging through local record stores should uncover an old Capricorn set called *The History of Otis Redding.* In the oldies bins you might be lucky enough to find a Stax issue called *Dictionary of Soul;* don't let that pass you by.

There are plenty of Allman Brothers Band albums around, and if you never listened to them before – as I write this, I am earnestly convincing myself that somebody out there has not – procure *Live at the Fillmore East* for an idea of what all the brouhaha is about. And should you want to take a rapid trip through latter-day Southern rock, Capricorn Records has, obligingly, released an album called *The South's Greatest Hits,* which isn't entirely what the title intimates, but is a nice collection anyway.

If you insist on living your musical life vicariously through the writing of critics, you could do worse than the following selections:

Christgau, Robert, *Any Old Way You Choose It.* Baltimore, 1973.

Gillett, Charlie, *The Sound of the City.* New York, 1972.

_____, *Making Tracks: Atlantic Records and the Growth of a Multi-Billion Dollar Industry.* New York, 1974.

Hemphill, Paul, *The Nashville Sound.* New York, 1970.

Marcus, Greil, *Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock'n'Roll Music.* New York, 1976. □

Chase That Rabbit

photo by Stephen March

by Stephen March and David Holt

It's Saturday evening on the green in front of the Buncombe County Courthouse in Asheville, North Carolina, and the people are sitting on the grass facing a roped-off area of the street. Beyond are two wooden platforms, one for the band and one for the dancers. A man on the band platform welcomes everyone to the weekly Saturday night "shindig" while the band — a fiddle, banjo, guitar and bass — tune up. Then the man invites everyone into the roped-off area to square dance. "Come on, folks, now don't be shy." The people come, timidly at first: children, old men with craggy faces, friends, lovers, fathers, mothers, neighbors. The dance begins with everyone holding hands in a big circle. Then couples break into smaller circles of two couples each and dance as the man on the platform calls out figures that have been passed down in these mountains from generation to generation.

The fiddle, banjo, guitar and bass wind into high gear; the man's voice is a musical chant:

Chase that rabbit,
chase that squirrel.
Chase that pretty girl
around the world.

David Holt, a native Texan, is coordinator of the Appalachian Music Program at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, North Carolina. He teaches and performs traditional music on a variety of instruments, including the banjo and hammer dulcimer. Stephen March, a West Virginian, has been a piano player in a bar, a photographer, a truck driver, a reporter, a farmer and a spare hand in a cotton mill. He is currently completing a novel.

The dance ends with everyone holding hands again in a circle. The people sit back down on the grass. A clogging team gets up on the wooden platform. The music begins and the cloggers dance, their taps resounding in the summer night air. They use the same figures the street dancers have used but their feet move on the platform faster than a juggler's hands. They smile, they laugh. The fiddle takes off on a wild solo. The people clap their hands, their faces as animated as the dancers'. The rhythmic clicking of the cloggers' taps keeps time with the music. Behind them the hills are big and blue against the dark sky of dusk. The cloggers convey a sense of continuity with the hills and with earlier generations who danced here.

Buck and Wing

"Clogging is a freedom dance, a soul dance," says Glenn Bannerman, the man who called the dance on the green and a 20-year veteran of teaching clog dancing. "It is caught, not taught," that is, it is best learned intuitively and is an expression of the individual clogger's skill and feeling.

Clogging is increasingly popular in many areas, but Buncombe and Haywood Counties in western North Carolina are a thriving center for the dance. Team clogging probably originated here a half century ago with the Annual Asheville Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, the oldest folk festival in the nation. Today, dance teams abound. Children learn clogging in grade school. Local teams compete with each other and dance all over the country, generating interest wherever they go.

There are two kinds of clogging teams: precision cloggers and traditional, or freestyle, cloggers. Precision cloggers do the same footwork in unison and follow prescribed routines. Precision clogging is dramatic and colorful and may emphasize elaborate costumes and choreography. Both kinds of teams may use traditional figures and music, although modern precision teams may use popular music as well. In traditional clogging the dancers keep time to the music but each dancer does his or her own individual footwork. The caller, or dance leader, calls out figures and the dancers respond, but their steps are improvised and free-flowing as they "beat out a tune" with their feet.

"I feel a wildness inside when I get to dancing," says Poochey King of the Southern Appalachian Cloggers, a highly successful freestyle team from Canton. "I'm not even conscious of what my feet are doing. I know what's going on with the team, music and beat, but I'm just doing what I feel." When she is not dancing, Poochey works as an insurance secretary for a real estate firm.

Freestyle cloggers say their way of dancing, compared to precision clogging, allows more individual freedom of expression and is more representative of mountain traditions.

"The clog dance is an effort on the part of people to get back in touch with their past," explains Flossie King, Poochey's husband, and caller for the Southern Appalachian Cloggers. "We try to convey our heritage, our way of life to the people. When we're doing a workshop, we try to emphasize that our dance represents the way we grew up and that we're proud of it. Folks today want to know more about how their ancestors lived; they want to have something concrete they can relate to their families.

"Folks down in the Piedmont had

dances," says Flossie, who works for Champion Paper Company in Canton, "but there was more to offer people in that area. They had theaters and plays. Here in the mountains life was harder and more desolate. Your nearest neighbor might live ten miles away. They had barn raisings and corn shuckings and then when the work was done they broke out the fiddle and they danced. That was a way for everybody to enjoy themselves. I think that's why the dance is still so strong in the mountains."

Clog dancing is a synthesis of two old forms of dancing, the square dance and the "buck and wing" or "buck dance," a solo dance which, when done well, requires consummate grace and rhythm. Old-time buck dancers danced on front porches, on parlor or barn floors, or on the bare earth. They danced with their arms hanging limber at their sides and their feet low to the floor in contrast to the dramatic high steps of today's precision clogging teams. They did not use taps and they often danced only to the accompaniment of a fiddle. The individual steps of the freestyle and precision clogging teams are derived from the old-time buck dancing. Many area dancers believe the buck dance has its roots in the folk dances of the English, Scotch and Irish immigrants who settled in the mountains. American buck dancing has been influenced both by black dancing — by minstrels and medicine show performers — and to some extent by Indian dancing, especially ceremonial dances. While not exclusive to the Southern mountains, the buck dance has been most prevalent here.

In 1975, folklorist Daniel Patterson of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill wrote that he had seen North Carolina buck dancing "done by both blacks and whites and know of its being done by Lumbees [southeastern North Carolina Indians]. I've seen it in the east, the Piedmont and the west."

No one seems to know for certain where the term "buck and wing" originated. The term was popular in Lancashire, England, in the early 1900s for step dancing in clogs, or wooden shoes. In a 1959 article in *English Dance and Song* ("The East Lancashire Tradition"), Patricia Stacey wrote that "clog dancing, as it has survived in the east Lancashire cotton towns up to the first decade of the present century . . . owes its form largely to the inventiveness of the mill workers who almost without exception were clog wearers. The sound of iron-shod clogs on cobblestones suggests a dance in itself and almost all the youths could perform a few steps."

In western North Carolina, the fast tempo of bluegrass music has made modern clog dancers dance faster than the old-time buck dancers, and PA systems force cloggers to dance more loudly to be heard. Freestyle clog dancing, however, in the old-time buck dancers' tradition, still emphasizes the individual's freedom to "cut loose." "We don't have a set routine," says Cora Mae Phillips of the Rough Valley Cloggers, a freestyle team from Canton. "We try to let the individual interpret the music with his or her feet."

How hard is it to learn to clog dance? Clogging requires a fine sense of rhythm and much talent and practice. Skilled cloggers dance with a multitude of shuffles, kicks and stomps, with no two freestyle cloggers doing the same thing. Clog dance instructors teach that there are two basic steps in clogging, however: the single step and the double step. The single step consists of a shuffle with the toe and then a stomp with the same foot, then repeating this motion with the alternate foot. The double step adds another "stomp" to the single step so that you have a shuffle with the toe, a stomp, then another stomp. Cloggers use the heel of the alternate foot as a timer and use an infinite variety of shuffles, "buck and wing" steps, kicks and flatfoot stomps. "The real joy of clogging," says Glenn Bannerman, "is being able to take the basic steps and use them any way you want to."

Traditional clog teams see their way of dancing as being vitally linked to their folk heritage.

"Go back to barn raisings and corn shuckings," says Poochey King. "When you got to the bottom of that stack of corn and the whole community was there, and there was a gallon of white liquor in there, too, you had folks wanting to dance. You had one dancer who saw his buddy over here showing off and he decides he is going to outdo him. Then you don't go back to the smooth dance (with steps shuffling on the floor in time with the music); then you come to what you are really feeling inside. That's where the clog dancers in western Carolina come from."

Heavy Heel

Clog teams have a heavier beat and emphasize the heel more than the old-time buck dancers did. Where did this heavier heel beat come from? Some dancers say the Cherokee Indians helped provide the heel emphasis, both individually and through their ceremonial dances.

According to Poochey King, "The Indians definitely influenced our dance styles. You watch the ceremonial dance of an Indian. It's a toe-heel, toe-heel movement. The fact that they were here and across the mountains had to influence our way of dancing. Indians married whites and the Indian blood was in the children."

Sam Queen, a descendant of Irish immigrants, was the king of dancing in the western North Carolina mountains until his death at 80. His team, the Soco Gap Dancers, was the most popular and successful of a number of dance teams that sprang up in the late 1920s and early '30s. Sam learned to call a square dance from buck dancer Bob Love, a black cook at a hotel in Sulphur Springs. Sam's team, wrote Bill Sharpe in 1958, "was perhaps the first of the Appalachian teams to proselyte and its exhibition and instructional dancing has converted thousands to the old folk dances."

Sam Queen's son, Richard Queen of Waynesville, North Carolina, a retired Congressional secretary, danced with his father's famous team for a number of years. Richard recalls that "the Indians and the Soco team influenced each other a lot because the reservation was just across the mountains. Our people were going over to Cherokee to dance for fun. We were going over there to dance in homes just like they were coming over here. We danced with the Indians more than anybody else. We had a natural closeness with the Cherokee."

Another popular and well known dancer of the '30s and '40s was Arnold Cooper of Cherokee. His team, the Smoky Mountain Dancers, was made up of both Indians and whites. Richard Queen recalls that the Smoky Mountain Dancers always danced with a heavy heel beat. "We called them the

Sam Queen's famous Soco Gap Dance Team pose in an advertising photo, circa 1939. Richard Queen is second from left, Sam Queen is tenth from left. Photo courtesy of Martha Moody Setzer.

Cherokee Indians, and they were always the hardest to beat in a contest. They could really pick 'em up and put 'em down."

At 84, retired farmer Cooper no longer dances, but his eyes light up when he talks about it.

"We called it square dancing," he remembers, "but if somebody wanted to buck a little he'd just do it and dance to beat the devil. I've seen eight or ten on the floor, at it at the same time. They'd just cut loose."

"Way back when I was a little boy my old daddy and mammy would push the chairs back and have a dance. I think dancing is just born in some people. When you hear dance music start it gets in your feet some way or another. When we chose a team, we looked for people who could keep time with the music. Isn't everybody who can do that."

Arnold, who is part Indian, remembers seeing Cherokees doing ceremonial dances at the Indian Fairs which began around 1912. To demonstrate how the Cherokees danced when he was a boy, he performs a ceremonial dance on his living room floor doing an Indian chant. "They didn't have anything but an old drum a-beating," he recalls.

Fun and Customs

Some stern, austere mountaineers often associated fun and enjoyment with sin. Arnold Cooper recalls that, when he was a young man "if you belonged to a church and went to a dance they'd probably church you [ask you to leave the church] unless you went to the congregation and said you were sorry." A 1948 *Saturday Evening Post* article about Bascom Lamar Lunsford, the founder of the Asheville Festival ("Minstrel Man of the Appalachians"), quotes a mountain woman telling him when he asked her to sing, "Let me get the young'uns out of the house. We make it a rule never to cuss or sing love ballads when they are in hearing."

Bascom, the article reports, bravely resisted efforts to repress the dancing spirit. "Whenever religious opposition arose, Bascom argued stoutly that it was not the dancing and the singing that were displeasing to the Lord, but the drinking and fighting that went on whenever people gathered for a frolic. But, he pointed out, they drank and fought wherever they assembled, even at the courthouse and the church."

Cooper remembers Bascom encouraging him and some other dancers to form a team for the Asheville Festival in 1927.

"Old Bascom used to come through the country now and then with an old banjer picking and singing. He got to talking a bunch of us into getting a club together and going over and having a contest dance in Asheville. We got together about four or five different teams. I took a team and a bunch of us went. They held the first one in the square, in 1927. They'd roped it off. There was an awful crowd of people there."

In the 1920s and the '30s, mountain dancers called what they did "buck dancing," "flatfooting" or "square dancing." No one seems to know when and where the term "clogging" began to be used. Rumor has it that the term may have originated when Sam Queen took his Soco Gap Dancers to Washington, DC, in 1939 to dance for President Roosevelt, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, of England. The Queen saw the Soco Gap Dancers perform and commented, "That's just like our clogging," and the press picked up the term and popularized it. At any rate, "clogging" became more and more popular during the 1940s.

The Soco Gap Dancers' White House performance was the crowning glory of Sam's career. A *Saturday Evening Post* article described the event this way:

"In 1939 the Soco Gap Dance Team, accompanied by the Coon Creek Girls from Pinchem Tight, Kentucky, appeared at the White House in a performance for the King and Queen of England. Bascom, who was leaning in a curve on the gold piano in the blue room picking his five-string banjo, noted that when Sam led his dancers into the figure called Walking the King's Highway, the King smiled broadly and the Queen was seen to pat her foot when the Coon Creek Girls rendered Sourwood Mountain. To Bascom this was proof of his long held contention that folks of high degree like mountain music as well as anyone else, when they hear it played properly."

Richard Queen recalls that in the early days of the Soco Gap Team "dancing was just an informal thing

photo Stephen March

Poochey and Flossie King (at left) lead other members of the Southern Appalachian Cloggers in a performance at the Saturday night shindig in front of the Buncombe County Courthouse in Asheville, N.C.

until Hayes Clark, a divinity student at Duke University, saw the commercial possibilities of it. Up until then we weren't charging anyone to dance. We'd just take up a collection to pay the fiddler. Then Hayes began selling tickets over here at Moody's Barn (near Waynesville). That was around 1934, and from that year on we were selling tickets and running square dances all over the area. We had a lot of good bookings after the War. We put on dances everywhere. There were tremendous opportunities for good bookings and good money."

Richard Queen does not like the changes that have come about in the folk dance. "All this costuming and precision clogging is killing the individuality of the dancers." He remembers that the 1939 White House performance was the first time the Soco Gap Team ever used costumes. "And I think that was because someone in Washington suggested it."

As interest in clogging increased, and as more and more teams were formed, the folk dance began to change, especially during the 1940s. Taps and costumes became increasingly common as the dance became more performance-oriented. Then in the late '50s, James Kesterson of Henderson County, North Carolina, began precision clogging. Kesterson, a professional dance instructor, wanted to modernize the dance, experiment with it and make it showier and more audience-oriented. His precision clogging team, the Blue Ridge Mountain Dancers, was expertly choreographed and very popular with audiences. During the 1960s his team won the Asheville Mountain Dance and Folk Festival five times. And the team was invited to the National Folk Festival in 1963 and the Newport Folk Festival in 1964 and 1965.

Precision clogging seems to be here to stay; the style is used by many teams of young people in the Asheville area. Often real precision is lacking, however, leaving only the sound of the dancers stomping out the same rhythmic patterns with no attention given to the music or to the subtleties of the dance.

Some folk festivals allow precision clogging but keep it in a separate category from freestyle clogging. Other folk festivals, which emphasize traditions, don't permit precision teams. The Asheville Festival began omitting these teams in 1970.

Clog dancing offers people a way to celebrate life as well as mountain traditions. "It's a good barrier breaker," says Flossie King. "We do a lot of convention work and dancing at colleges. Everywhere we find people who love to dance our dance."

Poochey King adds, "What's amazing is to go to a convention where everybody has coats and ties on, a real formal affair. We just take their hands and lead them out to dance. At first they hold back a little, but then they take those coats and ties off, and I guess they have more fun than anybody. People you wouldn't even think would like to dance."

Glenn Bannerman, caller for the Saturday night "shindig" on the Asheville Green, remembers going to a dance at Maggie Valley and seeing "a crowd of motorcyclists sitting out front on their hogs. They had boots, black leather jackets, hair slicked back on top — they looked like Fonzie. I wondered what that crowd was doing at a square dance, and I thought, "Oh boy, trouble." But when the fiddle and banjo started inside those men were off those hogs and into the dance with their partners. They were the soul of grace on that dance floor; they really knew how to clog dance.

"I've danced in New England, Canada, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland," says Bannerman, "and many times when I see folks dancing in these areas I can see that their style is similar to the old-time buck dancers in the Southern mountains."

The clog dance, like the mountain culture it is linked to, is changing, evolving. Not everyone is pleased with the changes.

In Western North Carolina traditional clog teams are quietly resisting organized efforts to standardize steps and terminology, to make the calls the same for every figure.

"If we're not awful careful," says Bob Phillips, caller for the Rough Valley Cloggers, "our uniqueness is going to be gone."

"You can go twenty miles from here," says Poochey King, "and find people who clog dance in a style different from our own, but they are still clogging." The names of figures and the styles of dancing vary from region to region in the mountains; traditional clog dancers are determined to keep it that way. □

FASOLA FOLK

Sacred Harp Singing in the South

by Buell E. Cobb, Jr.

Sacred Harp singing remains today one of the South's most remarkable folk institutions – remarkable in its persistence, in its unlikely amalgamation of customs and practices, and in its detachment from the life of change that goes on around it. The Sacred Harp began in the 1840s as a nondenominational form of sacred music, and survives today as vigorous community singing in many areas of the deep South. For those enticed by the message of its songs, its shaped note system, its minor-modal melodies and strong four-part harmony, it has become a way of life.

Most Sacred Harp singers would profess that they like other kinds of music too, but in practice they are not drawn to other musical styles – secular or sacred – because they cannot respond as deeply to a music, by comparison, so diluted. Instead, they follow a need that other kinds of music and fellowship do not satisfy, driving for distances, sometimes across states, to country churches or occasionally a county courthouse. Here at a kind of democratic songfest, in a weekend ritual much older than any of the participants, they recreate, from the tune book *The Sacred Harp* songs that are for them the purest sounds they have ever heard.

The oldest singers have observed in their own lifetime an evolution from this once widely popular four-shape music into successive stages: the seven-shape books like William Walker's *Christian Harmony*, with a more modern sound, and then the pervasive gospel music, with its elements of jazz and ragtime. But staunch Sacred Harp singers are not impressed by this ostensible show of progress. "When they change music," one singer remarked, "it's just like somebody being operated on; it just gets weaker and weaker every time."

Whatever the state of modern music, "weak" scarcely describes any representative example of the Sacred Harp. The demise of the shape-note phenomenon has long been predicted, and in truth the singing has already failed in many areas. But the Sacred Harp has been – and is – a sturdy tradition, self-sustaining and efficient, one which has overcome most of its own problems and outlasts most of its detractors.

The strength of the tradition is paralleled by the strength of the music and its participants. To sing as these people sing requires stamina. Their sessions normally last from nine or ten o'clock in the morning until two or three in the afternoon, and so driven are they that most put in at least four full hours of singing. Settling back to the severity of their wooden benches, they whip their voices up to a volume that billows and almost deafens, ringing off the dusty pine walls. Foot-stamping is impulsive and irresistible, and the arms of the singers swing up and down, keeping rigorous hold on the rhythm.

Before the words are sung, the participants run each song through with its *fa sol la*'s, a colorful jargon they negotiate with ease. They may sing, before they finish, upward of 100 songs from the over 500 entries

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Buell Cobb, who now lives in Birmingham, has been following Sacred Harp singing for 11 years. This article is taken from his forthcoming book **The Sacred Harp: A Tradition and Its Music** *(University of Georgia Press, 1978) with permission from the publisher. Photo above by Buell Cobb.*

in their stout, oblong book. And they do not go until they are drained, their voices hoarse — until they simply are not up to any more of a good thing.

Sacred Harp has never been a "performance" kind of music. The singers are not arranged in a line or a semicircle facing the audience. Instead the circle, or square, is closed, and the singers face in toward each other. Front-row privileges are accorded to visiting singers, and shy beginners are urged to come up and join the group. "Up front's where all the racket is," one singer offers as a friendly inducement, and even reluctant novices are drawn from the back by that kind of incontestable logic. Although those who come only to listen are left to fend for themselves on the back benches, they are not ignored. The singers yield to their requests for favorite songs like "Murrilo's Lesson" and "Rocky Road." And frequently a leader will select "Amazing Grace" with the explanation that "everybody in the house can sing on this one." Some devoted supporters never do sing at any of the sessions, but the act of participating is what gives this music its true appeal.

Sacred Harp singing is ultimately *group* singing. Solos and quartets would be out of place at a Sacred Harp gathering. And small groups of singers who represent their tradition by singing at folk festivals or church programs understand, if the audience does not, that what they are doing is at best a kind of substitution.

Still, the songs of the Sacred Harp are not entirely laid aside between the public meetings, where there are several singers on every part. In the late afternoon, couples sit on the home porch and thumb through the book, lightly harmonizing to tunes their grandparents knew. These are the songs they sing to themselves as they work and the songs they hear at leisure from the tape recordings made at Saturday or Sunday's convention.

The song book which gives its name to this tradition was first compiled in 1844 by two Georgians, Benjamin Franklin White and his assistant editor, E.J. King. But the unaccompanied singing style of the Sacred Harp has preserved folk elements — melodies, performance practices, a basic harmony, and even a life style — of early America and the Old World. In a limited sense, the Sacred Harp is a final stage of the singing-school movement which began in New England in the eighteenth century and gradually spread into the West and South.

Stitchery of a sacred harp singing by Ethel Mohamed of Belzona, Mississippi. Photo from the Smithsonian Institution.

Itinerant singing masters of colonial America taught young men and women part-singing with a musical scale represented by the sequence of syllables then popular in England: *fa sol la — fa sol la — mi — fa* (see Rich Kirby, "And We'll All Sing Together," *Southern Exposure*, Vol. IV, 3). Later, as an aid to sight-singing, a system was invented which gave each of the four syllables of the scale a distinct shape. (The standard symbols were a triangle for *fa*, a circle for *sol*, a rectangle for *la*, and a diamond for *mi*, the leading tone.) *The Sacred Harp* was one of the last of many tune books published in this four-shape notation. In many ways a synthesis of the earlier oblongs, this volume supplanted other four-shape books and eventually overshadowed subsequent publications of the same genre in the seven-shape notation.

For generations, the Sacred Harp tradition remained virtually intact, in part because of the singing schools — a week or two of singing instruction in the "rudiments" given annually by traveling singing masters. Although nondenominational, the tradition has shared a natural alliance with the Primitive Baptist church, many of whose members also sing from the old book. Shape-note singing was originally a practice of the Scotch-Irish, English, and German folk who settled the upland stretches of the Southeast. And the Sacred Harp was for some time an institution of the white Southerner alone. For as long as 100 years, however, the volume of songs has been enjoyed by groups of black singers in southeastern Alabama, northwestern Florida, eastern Texas, northern Mississippi, and, since the turn of the twentieth century, in and around Union County, New Jersey, where blacks brought the singing with them from the South. The black and white groups have traditionally remained segregated, and the different singing styles which have developed through this separation make the prospect of a consolidation remoter still.

I

Behind the structure of this tradition are hundreds of singings and "conventions" in scattered areas of the region — principally in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi and Texas, with a few in Tennessee. Here at community and regional gatherings on appointed dates throughout the year, the Sacred Harpers convene to sing for a day or two from one of the three revisions of their book now currently in use. These are referred to simply as the Denson book, the Cooper book and the White book.

The revision with the smallest following today is the White book: *The Sacred Harp*, "Fourth Edition, with Supplement," a 1911 revision by B.F. White's son, James Landrum. About nine annual all-day singings are held from the White book, most of them around the east Atlanta area with a few in the northwest corner of Georgia, remnants of the old North Georgia-Tennessee Sacred Harp Singing Convention.

The Cooper book, the *B.F. White Sacred Harp*, is published by the Sacred Harp Book Company of Troy,

Alabama. First copyrighted in 1902, this revision by W. M. Cooper of Dothan, Alabama, has gone through many editions up to the present. Singings from the book are found (along with those in New Jersey) in a wide strip along the Southern coast from Florida to Texas, including the western sections of Florida, the lower sections of Alabama and Mississippi, Texas, and perhaps still, parts of Louisiana and Arkansas. Since there has never been any central organization or even a common means of communication for this segment, the singers who use this book are divided into many area groups, each managing a number of singings in its territory and most publishing a separate directory of singings. The total number of annual sessions is at least 150, in addition to as many as 50 monthly night-singings. Included in this number are all black Sacred Harp singings except those in north Mississippi, where the Denson book is favored.

The sphere of the Denson book comprises the heartland of "fasola" singing: Georgia and the north and central portions of Alabama, as well as community areas in Mississippi and Tennessee. More activity occurs within this section, both in singing and in publishing, than in the others combined. The Denson book was based on the 1911 *Original Sacred Harp*, known as the James book in honor of its editor, Joe S. James. The James book was the standard revision for most of Alabama and Georgia until the 1930s. In 1933, the Sacred Harp Publishing Company, organized by Thomas J. Denson, purchased legal rights to the *Sacred Harp* from the James family. Under the leadership of Denson and his son Paine, the Sacred Harp Publishing Company brought out the *Original Sacred Harp* (Denson Revision) in 1936. New editions with revision followed in 1960, 1966 and 1971. The James book was used for singings in central and south Georgia until 1976, when the singers in that area made the changeover to the Denson book.

photo by Buell Cobb

Today over 300 annual singings take place in the Denson-book territory, along with over 100 monthly singings. A few pamphlets with a separate listing of singings are published in this division each year, but most of the sessions are recorded, with dates and locations, in the *Directory and Minutes of Annual Sacred Harp Singings*, a publication financed and distributed by the participants at the singings listed in the directory.

During the days when the various revisions were appearing – 1902, 1911, 1936 – there were many more Sacred Harp singings, and in a broader area, than there are today: how many more it is impossible to guess. Even today there are approximately 500 annual singings altogether (many of these two-day or even three-day sessions), as well as a couple of hundred regularly scheduled night singings or fifth-Sunday singings. The sessions proceed much the way they did a century ago, and, except for the songs that are sung, they vary little from one area to the next.

As each session gets underway, the singers take their places according to a square-shaped seating arrangement which divides the four harmonic parts: tenor, bass, treble and alto. The seating arrangement, by part, is a carry-over from the days of the old singing schools. So is much of the terminology used during the session. Each leader, for instance, directs the "class" (the singers) in one or two songs, which are referred to as a "lesson." And, as in the singing schools of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is not the upper voice part – the treble in this case – that carries the melody but the tenor. Both the melody and the treble part, however, are sung by men and women (an octave apart). The bass is sung by men exclusively and the alto, almost always by women.

Before singing the text to each song, the singers vocalize the syllables representing the notes, according to their shape. Through the use of these four shaped notes, the Sacred Harp folk can read music impressively well. But their strength is also their limitation. They cannot successfully sing music they are unfamiliar with unless it is transcribed in shaped notes, for they cannot otherwise conceive of the pitches. The solmization, then, once served a purely practical purpose: to "put the tune in mind" for those just learning to sing. But in time, the singing of the notes became a ritualized part of the song service, used with familiar as with less well-known melodies. Except in the case of long anthems, to which the singing of syllables might become burdensome, or songs used during the "memorial lesson" (songs to commemorate the deceased of the past year), when the jangle of *fa sol la*'s might seem frivolous, it would be unthinkable to these musicians to leave off "the notes."

This solmization – performed to a music which combines folk melodies, harmonies reminiscent of organum, and fuguing patterns long since obliterated from congregational song – helps to distinguish the Sacred Harp from the gospel singing movement. Many popular gospel song collections in the South, commonly referred to as "little-book" or "new-book" music, continue to appear in shape notes – seven rather than four – but these shape notes are rarely vocalized except in learning exercises. There are other differences more basic, if less obvious. Unlike the gospel music tradition, which fosters quartet and solo perfomances with everyone else listening, Sacred Harp music is music of participation, in which everyone is encouraged to sing; even the harmonic parts are relatively independent and melodic. And unlike gospel music, which fashions new songs in increasingly modern harmonic and rhythmic dress, the Sacred Harp has restricted itself largely to melodies which were transcribed in the 1800s, even the 1700s, many of which had been orally transmitted for centuries before that

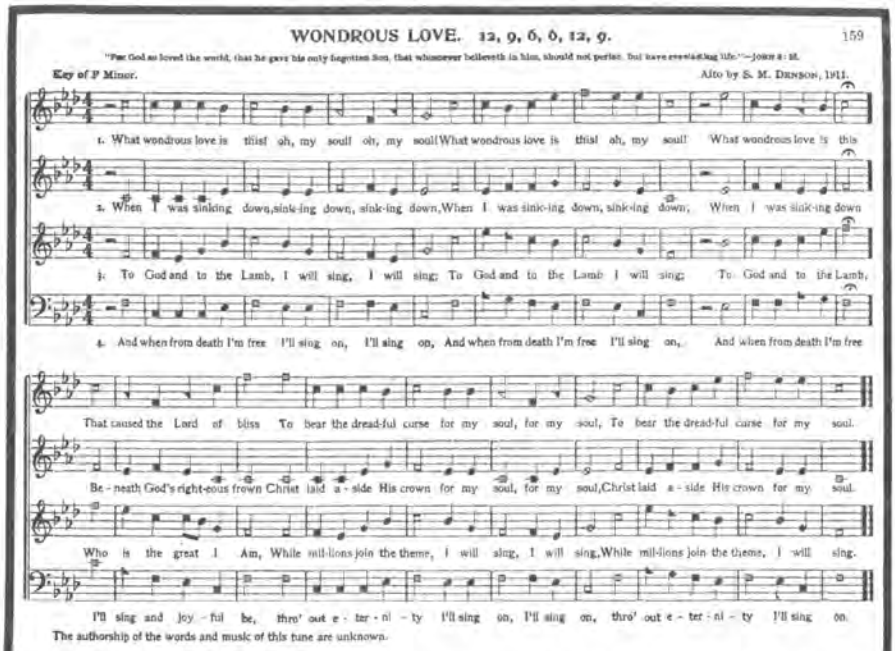
time.

The songs from the book are traditional, but the Sacred Harp — at least into the present — is not a bodiless, theoretical system of music. It is much a part of its own locale. Most of all, it is deeply rooted in a social pattern, a set of comfortable, efficient rituals that have gradually sifted down over the decades into a way of life that seems as natural to its followers as it seems extraordinary to those who stumble upon it from without.

The typical meeting place of the singing is a country church, perhaps of Primitive Baptist, Missionary Baptist, or Methodist denomination, borrowed for the occasion. This will usually be a simple, box-like structure that stands almost always in a cluster of trees close by a graveyard. The locality is significant; the singers are never far from a sacred context or from tradition itself, the pattern of lives of their parents and friends now gone. The inside of the church is often bare of decoration, with perhaps only a pulpit and podium at the far end and rows of benches that the singers arrange in the age-old formation. Seats for the listeners are left in two aisles facing the singers. The benches to the front are divided among the four parts, an open space left in the middle for the leader.

A chairman, elected at the beginning of the singing, presides loosely over the whole session, announcing the several five-minute recesses (normally one at the end of every hour), the "dinner" hour, and, if the singing is to have one, the memorial lesson, usually just before or after the dinner recess. The only other interruption in the singing itself is just before the closing song and prayer when the representatives of other singings in the area rise and announce their own sessions for the coming weeks. With the exception of these few interruptions, the day proceeds in such a fashion — song upon song, leader after leader with most or all of those present called on to lead one or more of the 80 or 90 songs in the session.

The sonorousness of the singing is always a surprise for visitors, even for those who have heard recordings. Despite the absence of organs, pianos or other instruments, the music these people make is loud and full beyond any newcomer's expectation. At times, the air is so dense with sound, it seems, as the singers sometimes say, "you could cut it with a knife." Back from the group, one hears voices that stray from the mark. (This is democratic music; anyone can sing without audition.) But in the center, in the midst of the terrific volume, it is as if the imperfections are burned away. When the singing is at its best, the timbre of voices on each of the four parts seems to fuse, and the chords that come through then are rich and true.



"Wondrous Love" as rendered in shape notes, from the 1971 Edition of *The Original Sacred Harp, Denson Revision*. Compare it with the version of Wondrous Love in a Primitive Baptist hymnal in the article, "In the Good Old Way."

The fundamentals of leading and singing, of reading music and keeping time, all of these are inculcated by a hardy rural institution that has remained much the same for over a hundred years — the singing school. It was after crop lay-by time in July and August, when the crops were "in the ground," that the big singing conventions and singing schools from the *Sacred Harp* were first held. (From this precedent, the summer months remain the greatest period of singing activity today). In the nineteenth century and in the first decades of the twentieth, singing "professors" taught a 20-day school at local churchhouses for room and board and wages. The singing teacher would likely use one household as his home base but would often stay at other residences in the community, too. And each day from eight until four he instructed his charges in the "rudiments."

The singing-school pupils were taught the major and minor scales and the three modes of time and their variations. They learned the markings they might encounter in the music and practiced singing and leading songs from the book. After the novices had completed their 20-day school, they were anxious to attend a real singing or convention and to take their place among the regulars. Often the whole

In the early morning before the volume has risen to its eventual heights, the more solemn hymn tunes are likely to be sung. By mid-morning the rhythm and volume have picked up, and the selections come chiefly from the revival spirituals and fuguing songs (often referred to as "class songs," or sometimes "convention music"). With these the strong rhythm is underscored by the patting of feet on the wooden floor.

II

class arranged to attend a singing together.

Although this experience was bound to have been exhilarating, it must also have given the youngsters some dismay. At the actual singing, they found the few songs they had become familiar with in singing classes lost in an endless succession of more difficult tunes. Having mastered the simple intervals and rhythm of the singing-school standard "Sweet Canaan," they wondered how they would ever work their way through the whirl of parts in "Bear Creek," one of the favorite fuguing pieces in the book. With time, of course, they would even feel competent enough to sing out on the anthems, like Billings' famous "Rose of Sharon," but it might take several stints in singing school, or much individual practice, to attain that proficiency.

Today the appearance of the singing school has changed somewhat, as the singers' style of life in general has evolved. The classes are now almost always taught at night, and they last for no longer than a week or two. If the teacher lives too far away to drive over for each night's session, he stays, as his forebears did, with families in the church community that hosts the school. The pay is usually from $50 to $100 per week, and since the teachers today do not depend upon the schools for a livelihood, some of them merely take up a collection rather than request a set fee. Normally the schools are not publicly advertised but are announced for several months in advance at churches or singing sessions in the area.

The method and content of the instruction have changed little since J.P. Reese held his sober singing schools in Coweta County, Georgia, in the 1870s and Tom Denson became a legend as a singing professor in North Alabama in the early twentieth century. Today, as earlier, the teacher works from a blackboard, drawing the scale and then pointing out the notes with a stick as the novices stretch their voices to reach the pitch. The students rehearse, by motion of the teacher's stick, the leap of intervals from the key note to the fourth, the fifth, the third. Sometimes the teacher will point out, note by note, a pattern of intervals and surprise the class into singing a tune they are already familiar with. To accustom them to singing in harmony, the teacher may have the girls sing the scale up and down and the boys follow, in canon, a few notes behind. Most of the youngsters begin on the tenor part and move to other parts as their sight reading improves and their voices naturally sort themselves into higher or lower ranges.

Each child, or set of children in a family, is expected to practice leading by coming before the group and directing them in a song. The teacher watches as the leaders keep time and is quick to intercept their hand motions if they miss the beat. Gradually the youngsters acquire the necessary technique. To continue beating time at the end of the chorus, for instance, sends the class back through a repeat. The hand raised in air, however, indicates that the leader is perhaps out of breath and that once through will do.

The singers recognize the importance of the singing schools to the continuation of their music, and they are willing, from time to time, to take up a collection and arrange for someone to teach the young in their community. Active singers in each area also try to make an appearance at the schools and lend their support by rounding out the parts. Some attend every night. Still, to look out over the intent faces of the young enthusiasts and hear their first attempts at the scale requires the stoutest optimism. The incipient songsters range from the musically apt to the hopelessly tone deaf. As their voices reach for the top of the scale, the spread of tones grows to a proliferation of discord. But the singers can smile with pride on these fledglings and their awkward excursions into the rudiments: a few out of this number will learn to soar.

III

Beyond the techniques and procedures, what is evident at the singings, finally, is a real sense of fellowship: an emotional bond compounded of mutual affection and appreciation and the knowledge that all are joined in a common cause. At each recess and at the noon hour the singers visit among

"Beyond the techniques of what is evident is a At each recess and at visit among the crowd Dinner-on-the-grounds, a is a great social hour as

the crowd, talking with friends and shaking hands with acquaintances. Dinner-on-the-grounds, a folk tradition worthy of comment on its own, is a great social hour as well as a communal feast. To the back or to the side of the church, local singers bring their boxes of food – meats, vegetables, cakes, pies, salads and bread – and the crowds wander along the tables filling their plates at will.

Altogether, the tradition is a curious blend of the sacred and the secular: from the hybrid nature of many of the songs themselves to the actual singing, whether in the "meeting house" or at a county courthouse or recreation hall. Noticeably, every session is opened and closed with prayer. For some of the singers this may be only a token gesture; for others the prayer is a meaningful moment, serving to tie all the individual expressions of song together and

photo by Robert Yellin

the sacred harp singings,
real sense of fellowship.
the noon hour, the singers
and talk with friends.
folk tradition in itself,
well as a communal feast."

proffer them as a tribute to God.

But there is a sense of pleasure for its own sake here, too. This is foot-tapping music. And the singers grin or nudge their neighbors when the singing is particularly good. The tenors eye the "tribble" admiringly when they can clip along at ease on a tune that runs high. Or both commend the bass class when it hits the fuguing songs with heft. Sometimes a leader, after finishing one song, will mop his brow with his handkerchief, then look across the page and say, "Now let's get that other one." And even though Sacred Harp singers are known for vocalizing the shape note sounds, one of their number will occasionally insist that they sing not so much by note as "by letter." "We just open our mouths," the explanation goes, "and let 'er fly."

Good-natured banter often fills the break between songs. When Mrs. Ruth Denson Edwards steps cautiously back from the leader's spot at a convention to her seat with the altos, her cousin, "Uncle Bob" Denson (along with "Aunt Ruth," the last of the old-time singing Densons), can't resist a tease.

"That was good leading," he says, ". . . for you."

"It was good for *anybody*," she retorts with mock seriousness.

And George Mattox, the irrepressible leader of the singings in Tennessee, urges Georgia and Alabama singers to attend an upcoming session with a traditional spiel on Tennessee hospitality: "We may not have much to eat, but we'll have plenty of Hardshell coffee. We'll treat you so many different ways, you're bound to like some of 'em."

Still, for all their joking, the hearty meals they partake of, their enjoyment of the music itself, the singers are sobered by the realities their songs teach. And they are plainly moved from time to time by the power of this music and its words. As some of the singers express it, they would not devote themselves so completely to this tradition if they did not believe in the moral power of the singing or feel its effects when they are together.

In a letter to the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine*, Lonnie Rogers, a leading singer from Roopville, Georgia, summed up the chief characteristics of a singing session as "love and fellowship, religious spirit and thankfulness. . . . These songs mean a lot to us; they are our way of getting closer to God."

And one lifelong Sacred Harp devotee justified her involvement with a single phrase. "It'll do to die by," she said with a smile that did not lessen her seriousness.

Such testimony, after many years of observation of Sacred Harp practices in Mississippi, led the late folklorist John Quincy Wolf to conclude, "Sacred Harp singing is an expression of the highest and noblest thoughts and feelings of which these people are capable – of what they believe and love and are in their best moments; . . . . perhaps more than anything else it is an expression of their total ideals and total sensibilities."

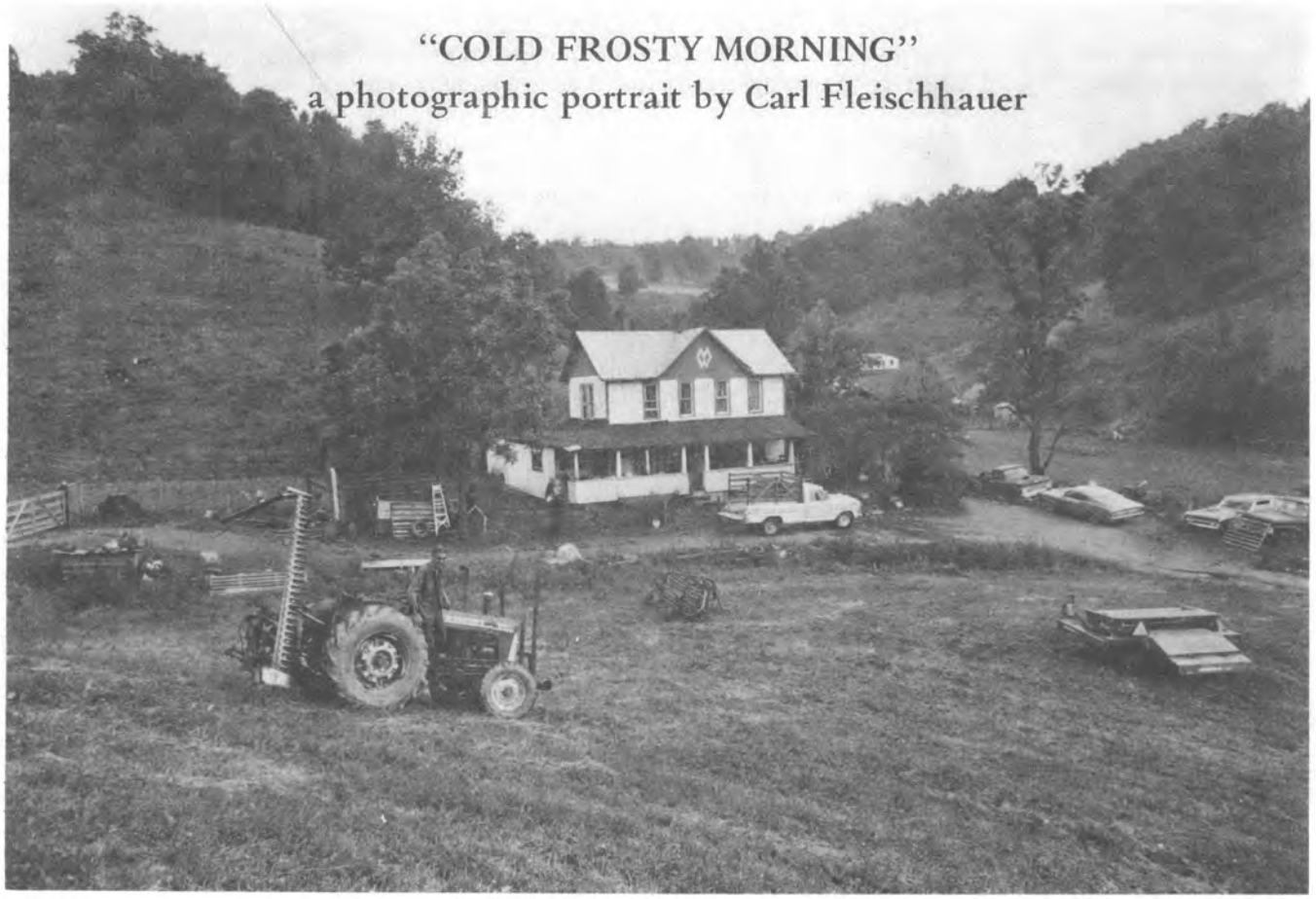
Throughout its history a close relationship has remained between the Sacred Harp and many small community churches. In earlier days a great many of these churches were serviced by circuit-riding preachers, and many still are today. The meeting house was used for only one or two Sundays a month, leaving the church building available for seasonal or annual singings, which became a part of the life of the church and its community. Many Southern rural churches still hold an all-day Sacred Harp singing once a year even though they now meet regularly all other Sundays.

In the preface to his 1844 volume B.F. White pointed out that "while the churches may be supplied from this work, others have not been forgotten or neglected; a great variety will be found suited to singing-schools, private societies, and family circles; in fact, the Sacred Harp is designed for all classes who sing, or desire to sing." These same claims were made by virtually every tune-book author of the time; but if the church never officially accepted the Sacred Harp, it did become and has remained, as White hoped, a music for the people, for those "who desire to sing." Into the beginning of the twentieth century, Joe S. James could say, "no song book taken as a whole so stirs the hearts of the people as does the Sacred Harp."

Today the Sacred Harp does not perform the important social function it did in James' day. And the scope of this tradition has dwindled from a whole region to these scattered bands of followers, altogether perhaps no more than a few thousand. But the singing seems no less vigorous. If no longer a prominent part of Southern culture, the Sacred Harp has persisted as a subculture of its own, drawing on the strength of family ties and on the appeal of a music and a system unreformed by time. "I belong to this band," one of the favorite refrains in the book, could serve as the theme song for these shape-note practitioners.

The sense of identity is significant. Sacred Harp singers, as a body, know who they are and where they are going. Most of them like to think they have a sense of which side of the river they will be on in the hereafter, too. That, of course, will be unveiled in time; but for now, they at least know where they will be next weekend. □

"COLD FROSTY MORNING"
a photographic portrait by Carl Fleischhauer



Melvin and Etta Wine live up a hollow at Copen, West Virginia, in Braxton County. Their ten children, seven sons and three daughters, are grown but many of them have settled nearby, and the Wine farmhouse is still lively with young people and grandchildren. Much community life revolves around the Copen Methodist Church, which has a permanent enrollment of 50. Melvin is Sunday School superintendent, the most important resident position in a church still served by a circuit-rider preacher who comes twice a month. Etta (on far left) and two daughters-in-law teach Sunday School; son Grafton (standing in front of Melvin, facing the congregation) is song leader; and teenage granddaughter, Kelly, sometimes plays piano.

Retired from 37 years in the coal mines, Melvin continues to farm more than 100 acres with the help of his family. Says Melvin, "My family helps make a living. I'd be a-working away from home– they'd raise the corn, they learned, learned to farm. And they'd put up the hay, what time couldn't be home. That meant something to me. And they've never changed from that. If I get in the need for anything, them boys'll come in and get it for me; the girls, either one, they'll help me to get anything we need. They help because they seem to have great love for us."

Here, the men butcher hogs – a six or seven hour process – while women prepare a dinner including fresh pork liver. Pictured above are Jerry, Grafton, Johnny, Bobby and Junior. At left are Linda White, Etta, Sarah, and a grandchild.

Melvin entertains at the 1974 Annual Braxton County Homecoming, with his son Denzil on guitar and some footwork from Hunter Young. The Homecoming brings residents and former residents together in a sort of superfamily reunion.

We had a fiddlers' contest come up at Burnsville. And I's just a boy about 16 or 17, and my dad and me both went down to play. Before we went, he told me, said, "Now you play one modern piece, 'When the Work's All Done This Fall'" – you know, that was a song, pretty popular right them days – "then you play one of them old-time pieces." Went down and played, and they had two prizes. One was for $5 worth of movie tickets, and one was for $5 in money. Went down there and when I played, I won first place. I played what he said, you know. Course the people liked that piece, they knew it real well as a song. Well, I won.

Come back home, and my dad said to me, he said, "I'd like to trade you this $5 worth of tickets for that money." Times was real hard them days. Five dollars was like $50 now. And I said, "No."

Now, he said, "You go to the show." I said, "Yes, but I play for that show down there. I get in free." See, I played between reels.

So, I said, "I don't need the tickets." "Well," he said, "I need the money." But I was holding onto that money; that's the first I'd won, you know.

Directly, he got aggravated about it. "Now," he said, "You know and I know that there ain't no boy that can beat me at playing the fiddle." I said, "No, I don't think I can beat you at playing fiddle, but that ain't what them fellas thought down at the show. They liked the pieces I played the best, and I got the money."

Oh, he got out of shape, but I wouldn't trade him. Finally I did take the tickets and let him have part of the money. It was kind of funny. Oh, he was a smooth fiddler, and it was just as easy for that man to play. It just seemed like it didn't bother him a bit in the world.

I like to get with a bunch and play for a couple of hours. You know, take turns with them. There's something about playing music– you can start, and it don't seem like you can hardly play at all, but when you get to listening and get somebody helping you real good, why just seems like it smooths off and you can just go right after it. Other times, it just wears you out. My dad put it like this: he said when you wasn't in shape to play, it was just like mowing with a dull scythe.

It's going to take the young people to pick it up. That's the reason why I play what I do a lot of times. I like to play for people who will pass it on, so's it'll be here for years to come.

– Melvin Wine

The photographs and quotes here are from Carl Fleischhauer's work in producing "Cold Frosty Morning" (Poplar LP 1, available from County Sales, Box 191, Floyd, Va. 24091), a record featuring the fiddle music of Melvin Wine; material for this essay was selected by Fleischhauer and Rebecca H. Browning, and edited for easier readability.

Carl Fleischhauer is the media specialist at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in charge of film, photography and recordings. He coedited "The Hammons Family" with Alan Jabbour, a record album published by the Library of Congress in 1973.

HOG HEAVEN

Fat signboard piggies run, dance and fiddle all along the highways of the Southeast. They point to neon wood-fires, urge you to "Watch It Cook!" and generally display gleeful enthusiasm for their own kind's sacrifice in the barbecue pit.

Restaurateurs would have you believe that Southern pigs, like people, take a lively interest in every detail of the preparation of this all-important dish. And Southern people, as anyone knows, take their barbecue very seriously. The ritual of barbecuing has endless variations from region to region, or even town to town. Yet in each locale, the resident experts will assure you that theirs is the only way, the only method yielding what is termed "true barbecue."

"People drive miles out of their way to eat here," brags Avant Taylor, long-time owner of Avant's Barbecue near Blackshear, Georgia. So saying, he serves up a sandwich of well-done sliced pork shoulder smothered in a hot gooey mayonnaise-based sauce.

Kathleen Zobel grew up in Apex, North Carolina, and is currently a staff member of the Institute for Southern Studies and co-editor of its weekly syndicated column, **Facing South.**

Back in 1931, Avant paid a man in nearby Waycross $100 for the sauce recipe. He claims it makes anything, "even tossed salad," taste better.

But you probably couldn't *pay* another chef $100 to let that thick, pink stuff anywhere near his barbecue. Like Charlie Watson, manager of Wilber's Restaurant in Goldsboro, North Carolina, a purist: "You'll mess a pig up if you start putting all that stuff on it." The only thing Wilber's combines with the meat is hot sauce, made by adding red and black pepper to a pot of boiling vinegar. The result is a very mild, moist and smoky dish.

These are two extremes of merely one dispute in the controversy-filled world of barbecue. Like many matters of opinion, it is made more troublesome by a lack of facts. Somewhat like religious tenets, barbecue sauces are touted as essential while, at the same time, being declared unknowable. Cook's and pitmen are masters of evasion when you try to wheedle an actual recipe out of them (Charlie Watson notwithstanding). "Why I wouldn't even know how to tell you to start," claims one South Carolina cook of 27 years' experience. "I just throw it in a pot, a little of this and a little of that. . ."

"Oh, so the sauce comes out different each time?" the gullible customer may ask.

"No, no, no!" The idea is outrageous. "It tastes exactly the same every batch!"

So, it's a matter of faith in "old family recipes" never to be revealed. Though one suspects that the parallel with religion applies here as well: the age, hype and mystery surrounding the sauce must affect its taste quite as much as a cup more or less of vinegar.

Another point for hot argument: Must the whole hog be used or do Boston butts alone yield the quality of meat fitting for barbecue? Again the answers vary radically, even within a single state.

The walk-in cooler behind Wilber's is hung with 90-pounders split down the middle and missing only feet and guts. "When our hogs are cooked," explains manager Watson, "we bring them in to the chopping block and peel them like you would peel a potato. You need the whole hog to make barbecue right. People like it best with a little of the fat and crispy skin mixed in."

But barely into the North Carolina Piedmont, at Huey's in Burlington, they boast of just the opposite:

Barbecue in the South

by Kathleen Zobel

photos by Kathleen Zobel / Montage by Mary Margaret Wade

shoulders alone are used, ensuring tender, moist and fat-free meat. "Our shoulders make the Rolls Royce of barbecue," Paul Huey maintains. "Our prices may be a little higher, but you're getting what you paid for—pure, lean pork."

The type of wood burned to make coals or ashes for the pits is yet another item of contention. Throughout North Carolina and Virginia, it's a given that hickory-wood smoking is the only proper method, and most advertisements claim its use.

"But you just go out back and look at their woodpile," reveals a more honest businessman. "You'll see a lot of oak and very little hickory. . .hickory's expensive and hard to find nowdays. Hell, I have enough trouble just keeping up my supply of oak. Hardwood, it must be. But it'd take a mighty delicate set of tastebuds to tell the difference between oak and hickory."

Down in eastern Georgia, the latter is openly admitted to be out of the question. So here the issue becomes, what kind of oak? Gator oak with its thick skin-like bark is the favorite since, unlike water oak, it yields heavy coals just right for cooking.

But should coals be used, or do ashes cook best? What is the optimum roasting time? How large should the hogs be? How far the racks from the fire? Must the meat be basted during cooking or only after? Is sliced or chipped barbecue the best?

These and many other fine points are the subject of endless hours' discussion amongst connoisseurs of the dish. Yet what seems to be most important, finally, is who is doing the cooking, and where and why.

Bill Dunham, for example, attacks his job as pitman, caterer and chef unlike anyone has before or since. The result is a totally individual meal, to say nothing of the show which accompanies its preparation.

Dunham and his kitchen are not hard to locate, once you've found the tiny, near-tropical town of Kingsland, Georgia, just four miles north of the Florida line. "You go up town, and you ask *anybody*, 'Where can I find Bill's Barbecue?' and they'll tell you," the massive black man accurately claims.

"We have a-a-all the dignitaries come down here — bankers, and doctors and lawyers, yes sir! Sometimes I don't have nothing *but* bankers!"

"Down here" is a small signless pit - kitchen - dining room - storefront combination, somewhat shakily constructed by Dunham himself. It is squeezed in between his son's barber shop on one side and an abundant garden on the other. Bill's brick-patterned, tarpaper-covered home is next door, and flowering plants and trees fill what little space is left.

The chef was taking the day off from barbecuing. "It's just too hot, and I've gotta help Mama here put up all these vegetables." However, he is always willing to lecture on his art, which he proceeded to do from a front porch armchair surrounded by pans of purple hulls and okra.

"When I first started off barbecuing 47 years ago, it was to throw a party for my timber crew, to give them a big blow-out, don't you know. We did that maybe once every three months; there was 77 of them, and I couldn't afford to carry them to no restaurant. So we'd buy a hog, and cook it here, the way the old Indian peoples did way back yonder. And then I kept going, kept going, until feeding became my business."

The Indian method consisted of burning a large log — live oak or water oak or hickory (but no black gum or pine!) on a grate until the coals fell through. These were shoveled into a deep hole in the ground, and the hog, which had been quartered,

was laid on a rack above to cook.

"But if there come a rain during that time, you're in trouble, don't you see. So then for a while we used a tent."

Nowadays, Dunham has the pit inside for convenience's sake, but still practices the Indian method upon request. It makes a colorful display at the many cookouts he caters for businessmen and politicians at resorts from Georgia's Golden Isles to the Florida Gulf Coast.

Mixing with the "dignitaries" and directing huge cooking operations are two of the greatest pleasures of Bill Dunham's work. He proudly tells of one event he catered for the St. Regis Paper Company of Jacksonville, where 5,000 people attended. "There were nine Greyhound buses, escorted by the Florida road patrol to the Florida line, then the Georgia road patrol took 'em on in to the party." Other enormous dinners have been prepared for the Georgia Bulldogs and friends, gubernatorial candidates and their allies, college deans, rich cattlemen's sons, and the Florida State Rangers. Barbecue Bill's fame has spread.

"I was sitting down at one party, talking to this man, and somebody across the room called me Bill. Well, I didn't know this fellow I was sitting with from Adam's house cat, but he says 'Are you Bill Dunham?' I says yes. *'Well,'* he says, 'they were talking about you up in Tennessee the other night!' "

Newspaper clippings and letters from the executive secretaries of pleased patrons illustrate the stories. In well-worn photos, we see Bill, magnificent in chef's white hat and apron, face shining with sweat and pleasure, while four or five assistants (including his wife Charity and various relatives) serve mountains of food to tuxedoed and bejeweled party-goers.

Dignitaries aren't the only ones who appreciate Bill's barbecue, however. Neighbors, friends, and relatives crowd the tiny Kingsland restaurant every weekend, picking up take-home orders, eating a plate there, or just sharing talk and a bottle with Bill in the back room. "I can't run them out of there," he complains contentedly.

Of course, he will not reveal anything about the recipe for his famous sauce. But, Dunham *is* willing to share some important secrets of barbecuing the meat:

With the help of a neighbor boy, a fire is started in the pit (really just a big brick fireplace right in the kitchen, with horizontal bars for the meat and a sheet metal cover to be leaned up against the opening during use). After three or four hours the wood has "burnt down *good*" to form coals, and a few cardboard boxes are thrown on to make a final blaze, cleansing the metal racks above.

Then it's time to lay on the hog, cut in quarters, *meat side down*. (This is a special trick of the trade, Bill lets it be known. There's no danger in telling it, though, since it takes more than mere knowledge to make a barbecue chef: "I can do it and it works, but the other fellow tries it, and he fails!") The temperature at the racks (positioned four feet—rather than the normal two-plus — above the coals) is 250 to 300 degrees, and the meat is left there for 40 minutes. Then, it's turned rib side down to continue cooking for six to eight hours depending on the thickness of the piece.

Most barbecue pits are separate from the restaurant, and are so hot and smoke-filled that pitmen are forced to watch the process through pyrex windows, or to wear goggles and masks on their quick dives into the cookhouse. But Bill Dunham watches the whole thing from the comfort of an overstuffed chair, with a radio and electric fan handily nearby.

The difference is made by his "cool" fire: the dripping of the grease onto the coals makes just enough smoke to flavor and cook the meat, but not enough heat to burn the pork and drive the chef away.

"If I gets too much fire in there, I've got me a bucket of water and I just go to fighting it. And then I sit right back down and watch it cook."

Burning the meat, or scorching it by basting with sauce during cooking are two of Bill's major complaints about his competitors. Another sin is using too heavy a sauce. "Some people put a-a-all that crap in it," he waves a hand in disgust, continuing in a language as distinctive as his cooking. "But if you do that, you ain't gonna be able to taste the meat! You gotta use your monocklins with cooking!"

Often served in conjunction with Dunham's barbecue is another favorite, "a thing they call The Brunswick Stew."

"Don't many people know how to make that. I mean, all kinds a people try to do it, but it's gotta be just right. . . " At this point he draws a yellowed and spattered piece of paper from a back pocket, and unfolds it gently along weakening seams. It has the appearance of many little worn blocks of paper, held together by threads, and reads:

15 lbs. beef	2 gals. catsup
15 lbs. pork	2 lbs. butter
9 lbs. chicken	3 bottles Worcestershire sauce
12 cans butter beans	6 bottles A-1 sauce
12 cans tomatoes	1 bottle hot sauce
12 cans sweet peas	1 gal. tomato juice
12 cans corn	1 can black pepper
15 lbs. potatoes	1 gallon mustard
4 lbs. onions	1 gallon V-8 juice
4 bell peppers	1 pkg. garlic season
1 stalk celery	1 whole garlic
1 box salt	

"Course, this is just my shopping list," cautions the cook. "I say, 'one can black pepper' but that don't mean put the whole thing in there. You can't buy a part of a can, so I leaves it up to you to figure out what's right."

Do hushpuppies and slaw go along with it? Bill is amused by the idea. "Hushpuppies is for catfish," he explains patiently. "I give the people what they want — light bread or rolls, mashed potatoes, baked beans, or potato salad."

Despite his age, 76, and the fact that "the Health Department hounds me some," Mr. Dunham shows no signs of slowing down.

"I make a good living." He nods meaningfully toward the nearly new pickup which carries him and his feast to and from catering jobs and pig pickings. "I've had three restaurants hereabouts offer me a job as pitman, but I turned 'em down. They wanted to give me less than $25 a week."

Bill plans to pass his business on to his children, when he gets old and tired enough. But for now, he's too busy enjoying himself while feeding the dignitaries.

The clientele is strictly working class at Avant's in Blackshear, Georgia. Not far from Bill Dunham's home, the scene and science of barbecue here might as well be a thousand miles removed.

At 10:30 am, construction workers pull their trucks into the dirt parking lot beside the small roadhouse-restaurant on the Savannah-to-Waycross highway, for a morning sandwich and beer break. The pine paneling, bar stools and mirrors make it clear that — though the establishment's been serving barbecue for 44 years — liquor is still its main reason for being.

"We were a package store about nine years before we started making sandwiches," says long-time owner Avant Prentice Taylor, or "The Doctor," as he's jokingly called. "In fact, we were one of the first to be licensed when Prohibition was repealed and Georgia voted wet."

But the place has gone through many changes since then. "First, we had groceries on all those shelves; we always had gas, and curb service. As the fella says, 'rag rugs, wash tubs, sewing machines, needles, and whatnot' — a general store."

The package store still adjoins, and there are living quarters and a kitchen in the back. "Many's the time somebody would come in and order a sandwich, and we'd have to get up from the dinner table to serve it. And the chicken'd get cold and the grits'd get lumpy, but that was the business."

Taylor's wife, mother and daughter have all worked here, too, at one time or another, but the family has long since moved out to a nice house down the road.

One can only imagine what Bill Dunham would say about Avant's claim to "the best barbecue in Georgia." The hamburger-bunned sandwiches, wrapped in paper "to go," are heavily laden with a thick, hot, pink sauce. A bag of potato chips and two pickles complete the serving.

During tobacco season, especially, Avant's does a booming business in barbecue sandwiches (the only form of the dish they bother with). For once, everyone has plenty of money; people bring guitars and banjos and there's music and dancing 'til four in the morning.

An occasional tourist, strayed from Highway 121 up from Florida, finds his way to the roadhouse, samples a sandwich, and then drives on. "The word has spread — people come here from hundreds of miles around, just to buy our sauce by the gallon."

Avant's does their own barbecuing, too, in a small outside pit next to the restaurant, but it's their sauce which is distinctive and responsible for their fame.

Local specialties like this ensure that barbecue will never successfully become incorporated into a large fast-food chain. (There have been some attempts, but progress is slow.) "Everybody's got their own idea about what barbecue should be," explains one student of the dish. "Usually you'll find that what a person grew up eating, that's the taste he insists is the real thing."

Accompanying foods also vary greatly from place to place. From North Carolina's formulaic slaw, hushpuppies and Brunswick stew, the fare in coastal South Carolina has become slaw, light bread and barbecue hash on rice.

The hash, as concocted by D&H Barbecue of Manning, South Carolina, is made of meat from hogs' heads and other non-choice parts. These are placed in a big pot, cooked down thoroughly, and then mixed with a little barbecue. "A lot of other things" (catsup, pepper, hot sauce, to name a few) are added finally, and the whole batch is simmered a while longer. It's a filling, cheap meal at $1.00 a pint, plus rice.

D&H has a small, barren cinderblock dining room with picnic tables and benches for the customers. The walls are decorated with drug-abuse posters and hand-written signs thanking people for cleaning up their own mess. Orders are given directly to the kitchen hands, through a window at the back of the room. But the main business here is take-out. From another window, also connecting with the kitchen, local people pick up barbecue and hash by the pound, half-hog skins for crisping at home in the oven, lard, cracklings and pig feet.

Here, as in many barbecue houses in the Carolinas, liquor in any form is strictly prohibited. The attitude goes beyond the region's normal Protestant-inspired disapproval of alcoholic beverages. It's a matter of principle, with complete loyalty to barbecue being required of the diner. If a man's interested in drinking, he's not going to be paying attention to the food, is the general belief. "Liquor and barbecue don't mix," D & H's owner, John Denny, puts it simply.

D & H is open only Wednesday through Saturday. Employees include "one colored man" (who watches the pits), "one boy" (who cleans up) "and two women" (who wait on customers).

Such utilitarian decor and frank hog orientation contrast sharply with some of the more upwardly mobile barbecue establishments in North Carolina.

At Huey's in Burlington, for example, hanging plants and stained glass screens reflect owner Paul Huey's belief that "eating out is a form of entertainment, these days. People want an escape and we try to provide it with our nostalgia bit."

Thus, the 31-item salad bar is mounted on an antique tobacco sled, and the elegant art-deco menu contains cute, self-conscious phrases about "Eastern Carolina Hawgs."

Huey (who majored in history in college) takes a genuine interest in "our Southern ethnic food." Fifteen hundred pounds of pork shoulder are barbecued under his direction here each week, and its flavor is rightly renowned. Yet somehow the pig seems very far away.

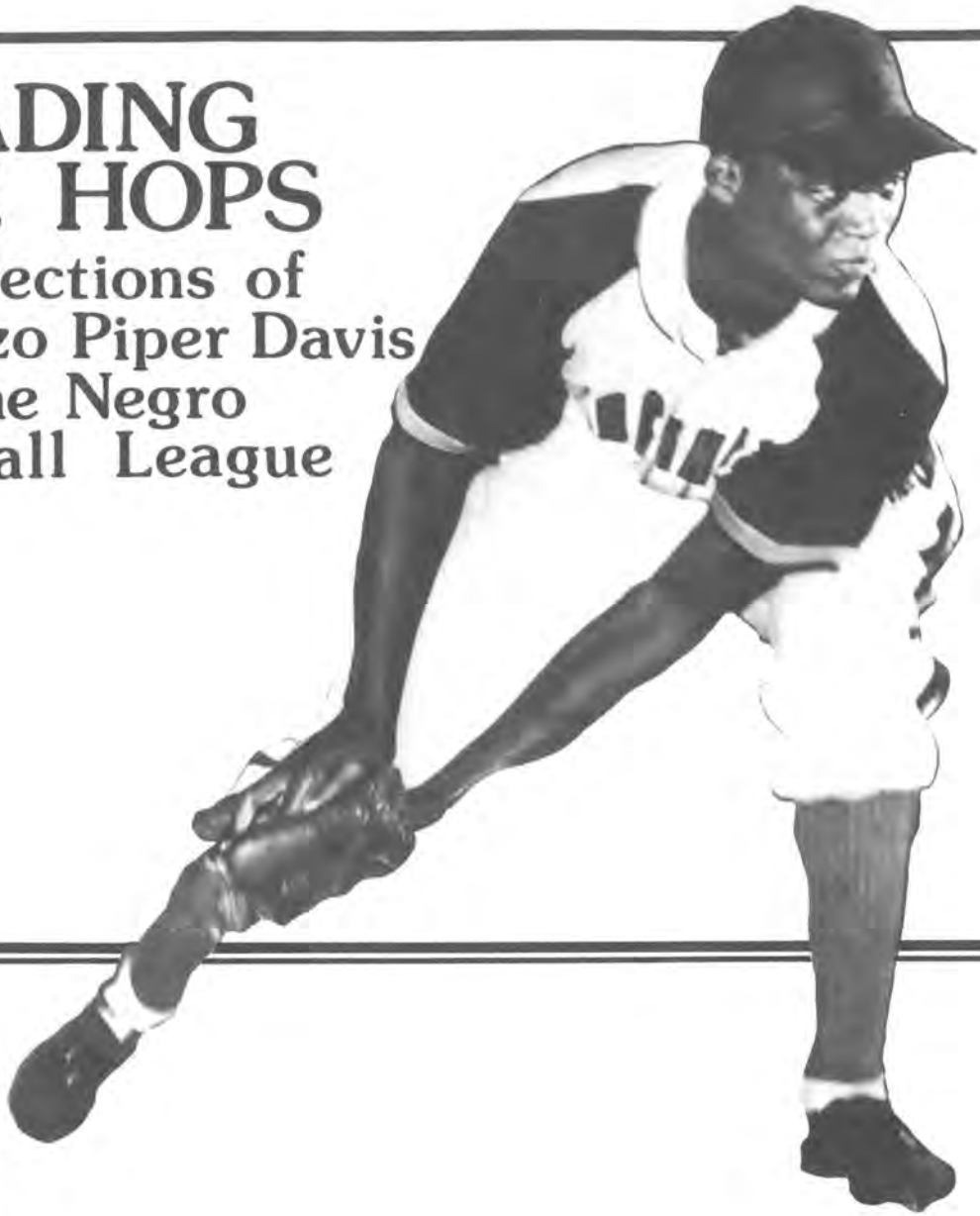
A lot of things have changed in barbecue lately. While the dish itself seems more popular than ever, Health Department regulations and the scarcity of hardwood have altered many of the traditional approaches to cooking and marketing. Most troublesome is the difficulty in finding men willing to perform the hot, strenuous and lonely work of running the pits all night. Pitmen are usually older blacks, who often tend farms in addition to their restaurant jobs. More and more restaurateurs are turning to gas or electric heat as a way out of the labor predicament. Besides being less trouble, it is a faster and cheaper method.

Others, thank the Lord, have their principles.

"People say you can't tell the difference," one manager of 15 years sniffs indignantly. "But I tell you, it's like night and day... If we have to give up pit-cooking, we'll close. That's all there is to it." □

READING THE HOPS

Recollections of Lorenzo Piper Davis and the Negro Baseball League



interview by Theodore Rosengarten

Lorenzo Piper Davis fielded ground balls like a nighthawk seizes grasshoppers. At the plate, he was a feared clutch hitter, a prodigious driver-in of men on base, a constant threat to hit the long ball. In his career with the Birmingham Black Barons of the Negro Baseball League, Davis starred at shortstop, second base and first base. He played in numerous all-star games and in three Negro League World Series. He was the League's most versatile player.

Yet his name is hardly known today even to close followers of the game. Why? Because he spent his most productive years on all-black teams, playing in cities in front of largely black audiences, or playing "out in the sticks." The white press paid little attention to him until Jackie Robinson smashed the color barrier and Major League teams began scrambling for Negro League talent. Davis was the third black ballplayer in modern times to sign a Major League contract. First Robinson, of the Kansas City Monarchs, signed with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Then Larry Doby, of the Newark Eagles, signed with the Cleveland Indians. Davis, of the Barons, signed with the St. Louis Browns.

But he never made it to the Big Leagues. Perhaps white owners felt he was too old to risk the investment; perhaps it was his bad luck to sign with a club whose owner wasn't ready to put a black ballplayer on the field. One thing is certain – Davis had the talent to play.

Davis was born and raised in Piper, Alabama, a coal town southwest of Birmingham. At fourteen, he became the youngest player on Piper's "first nine." He was so far advanced from boys his own age that, playing street ball, he had to catch for both sides because they wouldn't let him hit. After high school, in 1936, he went on the road with a barnstorming Negro team, the Omaha Tigers. With the Tigers, and two years later with a team from Yakima, Washington, he traveled all over the West and Midwest, playing local white clubs and black clubs, and catching the eye of rivals who

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Theodore Rosengarten's oral history of Alabama tenant farmer Ned Cobb (Nate Shaw) was published by A.A. Knopf as *All God's Dangers*, and won the National Book Award in 1976. Ted now lives in McClellanville, South Carolina.

wanted him to play with them.

Traveling was too expensive, too wearying, for the small and uncertain pay. So Davis came back to Birmingham, got a job with the American Cast Iron Pipe Company (Acipco), and played on Acipco's black baseball team in the City Industrial League. He stayed with Acipco from 1939 until 1943, when the Barons tempted him away.

Negro ball at that time regularly outdrew white minor league ball in Birmingham by several thousand fans per game. When the Kansas City Monarchs came to town, you might go to Rickwood Field and catch a glimpse of Satchel Paige's fastball. Or when the Homestead Grays came, you might try to follow the flight of a Josh Gibson home run.

Piper Davis became manager of the Black Barons in 1948. He continued to play every day, and he led the team into its last world series. The Negro League was waning, its best young players snapped up by Major League organizations, its fans lured by the spectacle of the black man competing in white ball. Amalgamation of white and Negro baseball killed the Negro League while it enriched the white-owned and -operated Major League.

In 1950, Davis got a shot to play with the Boston Red Sox. His earlier option with St. Louis did not pan out. This time he seemed a sure bet. But the dream chance ended with an implausible rejection. He began the season with Scranton, a Red Sox farm team in the Eastern League. He was leading the club in nearly every offensive department when, in the middle of May, the Red Sox cut him.

In 1951, Davis went out to play with Oakland in the Pacific Coast League (PCL), a minor league of the Major Leagues — white ball. He stayed six years in the PCL, then finished out his playing career in the Texas League, with Fort Worth. He returned to Birmingham in 1959 to manage a new Black Barons team in a realigned Negro League. The season ended shortly after it began; there simply was no market for Negro ball.

I grew up hearing that the old Negro teams were made up of clowns; not that the players didn't know how to play the game, but that they weren't serious about it. They were entertainers, mimics, Negroes. A black ballplayer was a Negro before he was a ballplayer. A white ballplayer was just a ballplayer.

My own experience flew in the face of this prejudice. We lived in earshot of old Ebbets Field, where the graduates of the Negro League first worked their baseball magic with the Dodgers. Could anybody say that Jackie Robinson took baseball lightly? Or that Joe Black and Roy Campanella gave the game anything less than their total effort? These were solemn ballplayers, determined to prove they could play, and playing to the best of enormous abilities.

Everyone could see this. Still, the myth of Negro clowning persisted in white circles. Major League baseball did not get around to placing former great Negro ballplayers in the Baseball Hall of Fame until eight years ago. In seven years — the committee to nominate former Negro ballplayers expired last year — only nine players were chosen.

The performance of black ballplayers in the Major Leagues came as no surprise to blacks. "We felt we could play," says Piper Davis. Black ballplayers did not suddenly become skillful, clever, or gentlemanly upon entering white ball. They brought with them a style of play developed in Negro baseball. It began on country fields and on the sandlots of Southern towns and cities; gained experience in the industrial leagues of manufacturing centers; and matured in a self-regulated Negro League.

"If you were black, you were a clown. Because in the movies, the only time you saw a black man, he was a comedian or a butler. But didn't nobody clown in the Negro League, but the Indianapolis Clowns. Whites wasn't calling it organized ball, but we had discipline. We played baseball!"

Whites claimed that Negro ball "was not organized ball," says Davis. His recollections reveal intense organization — though not in white terms of contracts and statistics. For example, transportation of the team from town to town had to be carefully arranged. You were black, so you knew in advance where you were going to sleep, eat and use the toilet, or you might find yourself out in the cold. The bus driver was the most valuable man on the club; he kept you rolling, he kept you safe.

Davis had a window on America, traveling with Negro ball. He observed everywhere the place of baseball in the local life. His history of baseball in Birmingham is a history of Birmingham told through baseball. Hearing it, then reading it, I perceived the awful exclusion felt by people wanting to partake of the national culture and blocked from doing it.

Piper Davis' recollections are taken from ten hours of taped interviews and notes. I visited Davis in Birmingham this past July, where he lives with his wife on the west side of town. Each of three interviews began sedately enough in the living room of the Davis home. After about an hour of feeling strapped in the chair, Piper would rise and take position near second base, bending slightly at the knees and balancing on the balls of his feet, pendulum arms making a small arc between his knees. Anticipating the pitch, he was gone at the crack of the bat to cover the bag — on the living room side of the dining room table. Planting his right foot, mashing the carpet, he relayed the ball to first, completing the double play. No one can tell me he can't make the play today, at 60, as well or better than the average Major League second baseman.

This was a meeting of a player and a fan. Yet, Davis was exceedingly modest about himself. He was eager to tell his story, and the record he wanted to give was an appreciation of the men he played ball with. In editing these recollections, I have left out much material about Davis' winters playing basketball with the Harlem Globetrotters. Piper Davis, the long and lean infield star of the Negro Baseball League, could also drive to the hoop with the best of them. But baseball was his first love.

(**Editors' note**: What follows are excerpts from the longer interview. Apologies are extended if any of the ballplayers' names are misspelled; every effort was made for accuracy, but because few Negro League members are listed in baseball source books, there remains a possibility that a name has been transcribed incorrectly.)

National Archive photo of black and white miners in 1930s. *"My daddy was a coal miner his whole life, 40-some odd years. . . My stay in the mines didn't last too long because I was afraid of em. We had four incidents – accidents in the mine. . . I told the man I wanted my time. I said, 'Just put down there, "Afraid of the mines."' He said, 'That's a good enough reason.'"* – Piper Davis

School ball, we didn't have a high school; they had a high school, we didn't. And the black school, the school children would consist of two towns, Piper and Kolina, which was both owned by the Little Cahaba Coal Company. Our baseball team in elementary school would play about four games, or five, during a season, against other black schools – West Blocton, Marvel, Montevallo.

One year they had a coach at the white high school who arranged for our team to play against theirs. Of course, some of em had a little age on us because they was up to the twelfth grade. Our catcher was a boy named Eugene Latham. He was our best hitter, our biggest man. But he wouldn't go up to the white diamond to play in the game. He was afraid of white people – he'd always been afraid of white people. So we lost the game.

My father was in the coal mine but he heard about it while we were playing. The trip rider would come out of the mine, and he went back down and spread the news, that the blacks was playing up on the white diamond. My daddy got home and told me he heard about we all on the white diamond.

"You better stay away from up there."

I told him, "They coming over to play us next week."

A home-and-home arrangement. And when they came to play us on our diamond, we beat em because our catcher would play then. We beat em on our diamond.

And after that, they got rid of that coach next season. A little bit too friendly with the blacks. At that time they called em colored, Negroes, nigras – see, he was white, he was at the white high school, and he even come over to our school and showed us how to mark off a basketball court; brought the rule book and everything.

I was born in Piper. My daddy worked in the coal mine all his life. Piper is about forty miles from here – Birmingham. They dig coal down there now from the top; it won't hardly be on the map. All that area is coal mines. You see this big mountain right here on the south side, that's ore right there. And when you get below Bessemer, it turns from ore into coal veins, and it runs all the way down. Used to have a row of little cities – not cities, we would call them camps, mining camps. Right in there you had Helena – Helena's still going – and Dogwood, Blocton, Marvel, Kolina, and Piper. Piper was the tail end.

All the mining camps had baseball teams. Piper and Kolina teams were united for a long time. We had what we called the first nine – that was the men, boys from nineteen, twenty, up. The second nine was boys from about fourteen up to eighteen. I was the star player on the second nine, but I'm the batboy for the first nine. So, one Saturday they were playing. And I'm the batboy in these overalls – that's all we could afford in those days. I was the batboy in overalls and the first baseman got hurt. They wanted to bring an outfielder in to first base and put a pitcher in the outfield that could hit pretty good. Now there was a fellow that was overseer; he would collect money to get the balls and bats, but he wouldn't have anything to do with the managing part of it. They were around there discussing it, and he said, "Put that little old boy over there you got. He can play just as good as the boy you say you going to put in."

So they put me over there. I was about fourteen then. I've played first nine ever since.

My daddy was a coal miner his whole life, forty-some-odd years. He worked five days a week, but during the Depression he would work two days sometimes, and then when it would start rolling, he'd have to work late – long shifts. I've seen him lay down – you see, they changed clothes at home, didn't have a bath-house. He'd get home about two-thirty or three o'clock, take a bath behind the stove in the kitchen and just lay down there and sleep

and go right back to work – he would only be there for just a short while. He had to get up about five o'clock to eat breakfast and walk to work.

My daddy played the guitar for the Saturday night fish fries. He played – and my mother was very religious; every Sunday she would ask somebody to go to church with her. She kept on, every Sunday morning she'd get up and she'd say, "Are you going to church with me this morning?"

And he'd say, "Naw –"

He played all Saturday night. So finally one morning, one Sunday morning, she asked him, "You going to church with me this morning?"

He said, "I believe so."

He went to church with her and he came back and gave his guitar away. Didn't play it anymore. I was a baby then, because when I got up some size to know anything he was going to church.

I had rules on me – I had to have the water in. The hydrant was in front of our house. I better have all the buckets full before I go to bed. The water I'd bring in would be enough so my daddy could take his bath. We had two buckets and a kettle – I had to keep those two buckets with water. And when he come in, I'd have em full.

I had to be home when my daddy come up out of that hill. The way he came home from the mine he had to walk a little incline. Sometimes I'd be playing over on the other side of the camp. We didn't have streets as such, we just had rows, a hill, and like that. "Up on the hill," or "down in the valley." Had a row of houses started from a flat and went down in the valley to a branch. We'd call that, "down in the valley." "Where you going?" "I'm going down in the valley to old Jim's house." Or, "I'm going on the L, I'm going in Number One quarters." They had a area over there flat like it was in front of our house; you could play catch and play stickball and stuff. I be over there playing but I'm watching. And when Papa come out of there, over the rise, I get my little balls and bats and go on with him home.

He didn't fuss at me too much about the time because he knew I'd be home if I could get away from where I was. My mother did all the fussing and spanking. I don't think my daddy ever put his hand on me. One time – I had to be home at five o'clock. Our house was about the fifth black house before you go out of the community. On the edge of the community, the timber truck people would live. They were white, people that hauled timber for the mines. Had three or four white houses, families, on that end of town. Closer to the woods, the most woods. You go the other way, you going to Kolina, Blocton, Marvel, and all like that, north of us. And you couldn't go across the river because the company didn't own that land across the river.

So one day the cotton picking truck came in from the country. He got to pass our house first, picking up cotton pickers. Then he went all in the L, in the bottom, picking up people to go pick cotton. I didn't want to go and pick no cotton. And my mother wasn't there noway. But when the truck came back going out of the camp, one of my buddies was up there. I asked him, "What time you coming back?"

He said, "Five o'clock."

So I ran and caught the truck. Went out there and picked cotton all day. I think I made thirty-some cents. When the man picked my cotton out he said, "Yours is too dirty."

I just picked up everything that I saw. That sun was going down, too; I knew it was around five o'clock then. When I got home they were eating. And I was supposed to be home when Papa come home. When I come inside that door, Mama met me. She had a strap, which my daddy would whup his razor on. That's what she had. She let into me with that thing– she didn't ask no questions what happened or nothing. She ain't taking no answer because there's no answer I could give her, I'm still walking and I wasn't there at five o'clock. Was no answer to give. She wore me out, she knocked me down ducking and dodging, and I fell down. Papa grabbed her, "Georgia, you going to kill that boy."

And that's the last whipping I got.

I would lay in bed and listen to ball games. Bull Connor – you heard of Bull Connor – well, he used to announce games for the Birmingham White Barons – because the black team was Black Barons. Southern Association club, minor league of the major league, all white. And he would announce at Chattanooga, Memphis – Chattanooga Lookout, Memphis Chicks, New Orleans Pelicans, Little Rock Travellers. They had eight teams in that league – Nashville – I forget Nashville's nickname – Knoxville Smokies. I knew em all.

I would listen to them on the radio. And when I left there and come up to Fairfield, I could get a Pittsburgh *Courier* then. The black paper. I'd get one every once in a while and I'd read about the black teams playing here in Birmingham. We used to take the Birmingham *News* – and they used to have a Blue Monday here, a lot of places be closed. In Birmingham the black ball club would play a lot on Blue Monday out at Rickwood Field. I'd get a chance to read about it in the paper.

Then I found out that the black teams from the North that was in the Negro League – like the Homestead Grays who was playing out of Pittsburgh – well, they was playing down this way because they had a lot of ballplayers from this area. The Philadelphia Stars trained in Mississippi. They come down here and maybe throw the ball three or four days; they would start about Tuesday or Wednesday, and play an exhibition game that Sunday. So the Homestead Grays would come down to Alabama, and the New York Cubans, northern teams from the Negro League, and they come down here in the spring of the year. Some of em would, and some of em would stop in Virginia.

The New York Cubans would have about seven or eight Cubans and the rest black Americans. They'd play winter ball and just come over to Miami. Dihigo, Vargas.

When they first come over here Cubans didn't want to be black. They didn't want to be recognized as black – and you couldn't blame them. Because in their hometowns they were Cubans; or they were Puerto Ricans, Panamanians. You didn't read in the paper about no black Cubans, no colored Cubans. They was all Cubans.

So these teams would come into the South to find their

ballplayers – Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama. The only towns that really had teams in the Negro Leagues was Birmingham and Memphis, in the South. Now Atlanta had a good ball club, New Orleans had a good ball club, but they was traveling teams. In the Negro Leagues at that time was Memphis, Birmingham, Indianapolis Clowns, Kansas City Monarchs, Chicago American Giants and the Cleveland Buckeyes. They were in the American division. New York Black Yankees, New York Cubans, Newark Eagles, Philadelphia Stars, Baltimore Elite Giants, Washington Grays that used to be the Homestead Grays – they was in the National division.

You take the Homestead Grays at the time Luke Easter was playing. Easter was from Mississippi; Buck Leonard was from South Carolina; Howard Easterling was from Louisiana; and the Bankheads, Sam and Dan, from right here at Cordova. Their second baseman, he was from right down here at Bessemer.

I went to the ninth grade in Piper, and the year before I left they raised it to the tenth. I left there in 1933 to come up to Fairfield and go to high school. My mother had four brothers there, and they worked in the steel mill. On my mother's side they had enough boys to have a baseball team. They *had* a baseball team, in the country, my mother's brothers. There's twenty-four children in all, and she's the baby girl of the first group. The second group, some of em is just as old as I am. Her mother died in childbirth with one below her.

They had enough to have a baseball team, and they had a diamond on their place. This was down – they call it Antioch now. It's about eight miles due east of Centerville. It's family property, and I take care of it now. I rent it out every year.

In high school, Fairfield, they begun calling me Piper. They used to call me Piper-Kolina, then they shortened it to Piper. Everybody calls me Piper, and always has since.

I wrote to the Philadelphia Stars for a tryout. I was finished with the twelfth grade then. And they wrote me back a letter for me to pay my way to wherever they were in Mississippi. And if I made the club they would reimburse me. So my daddy told me, "No, if you good enough to sign, if they want you, they'll come here and get you." He was very strict. Because when I started playing with Kolina, he told the man, "If you want him to play with you, you come and get him and carry him up there and bring him back to this house or see that he comes back to this house with a confidential man."

He was looking out for my conduct – didn't want me to get away.

My daddy said, "If they want you on those terms you don't go."

So I was at home one Monday morning. We would have mission meetings, our church would, and my mother would go to mission meetings on Monday morning. I was around the house and here come a car down the road and they all got out. It was about five or six ballplayers. One was from here, one or two from Blocton, one or two from Marvel. They came over to my house. A fellow from Omaha was getting up a club, and he heard that he could get a lot of ballplayers out of the Birmingham area. He had come here, and they told him that I was at home. My mother, when she came in, I was packing my bag to go. And I knew where they kept the money – in a little bag, a money envelope, and stuck it up in the pantry. I got me ten dollars out of there. And she came in – I was packing *her* bag – and she said, "What is all this?"

I introduced her to the fellas, and she said, "What are you going to do" – she called me "Baby."

I said, "I'm going to play ball with these fellas."

She said, "Well, how far are you going? Where is it?"

I said, "Omaha."

She said, "How far is that from here?"

One of the fellas said, "About eight or nine hundred miles or more."

At that time, railway travel was cheap. I said, "I already got ten dollars out of the envelope."

She said, "I don't think that's enough."

So she went in and got another ten dollars and gave it to me and said, "You always keep your train fare back home."

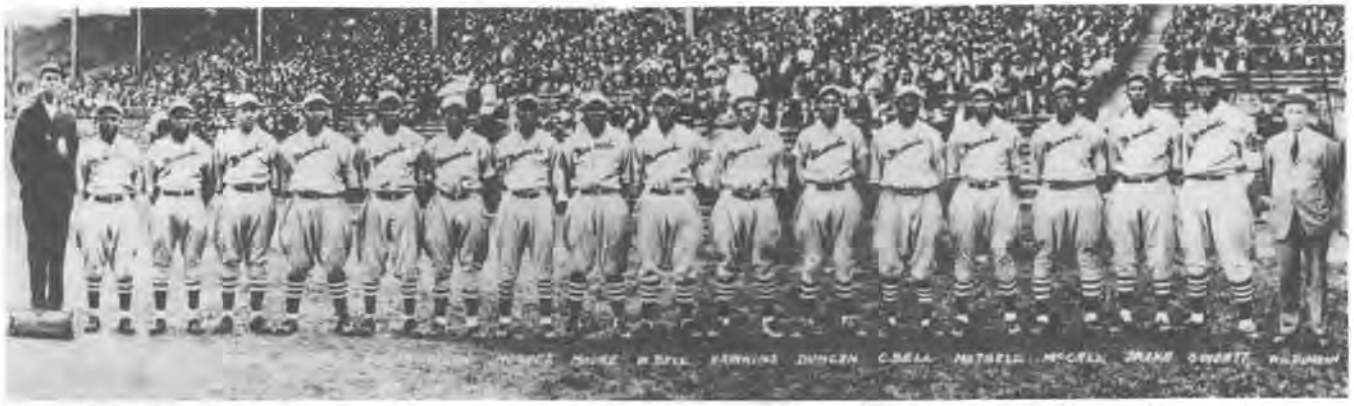
I said, "I sure will."

They came to my door and got me. My daddy had halfway given me his permission in just talk. He said, "You can go...." He never did want me to work in the mines. I worked in the mines a little – but when I finished high school, the mines was on strike. And I went to Alabama State College – it's Alabama State University now – in Montgomery, and he borrowed the money for me to go to college. I had a part scholarship for basketball, but that wasn't enough. So he borrowed the money for me to go to college. Come time for the next tuition, they was still on strike, and I knew he would have to borrow the money from the company. So I sneaked away from college in the middle of my first year, because I knew he would have to borrow the money for me to finish the term, and that would put him then maybe three or four hundred dollars behind.

So I came back. I wasn't doing anything. But I always wanted to make my own money. My daddy would give me the change out of his envelope every two weeks. Sometimes, if it was under thirty-five or forty cents, he would make it out fifty cents, or sixty cents.

So I told him to get me a job in the mine. He didn't want to get me in the mine but I kept on until he started me in the mine with him. That was the tail end of 1935 and the first part of 1936. My stay in the mines didn't last too long because I was afraid of em. We had four incidents – accidents in the mine. We were working in Number Two while they were cleaning Number One and a guy got hurt real bad. Had black boys for trip riders – they rode a trip. See, the miners would leave the top in cars and ride down to a certain point. Then they would all get out and walk to certain areas – they have guys digging coal in what they call a room, a cut-off, and they have guys digging straight ahead on the line what they let you down on. A coal vein runs on an angle. When they carry the coal, they got a motor up at the top end that pulls these cars up that come out from those rooms. And they got a man up there in a little old shack that pulls em up – he just sitting down on a stool, with an electric motor pulling up the cars.

Well, my little girlfriend that I was liking then, her



Kansas City Monarchs in first Negro World Series, 1924 — photo courtesy of the National Baseball Hall of Fame

brother worked in the mines at night, and he rode that trip up with them cars. He'd hook those cars up that the drivers would have pulled out from the rooms with a mule – they let mules down in the mine. And these rooms was just cut out of the wall of the mine. They about forty feet apart, and they go up so far till the coal gives out and you get back into rock. The room I was in with my daddy, when I went in that room I could stand with a three-foot shovel on the top of my head and I couldn't touch the top; but on the other end I was on my knees shoveling coal over here to my daddy, so my daddy could load it in the car.

So my girlfriend's brother rode the trip that night. When he'd pick up the last car, he'd load it down behind what they called a door – it's just a big curtain to turn the air in certain directions. He'd signal the guy on top – had two wires and he'd bring the wires together – "Peep" "Peep" – one for stop, two for slowdown, three to go, whatever they had; and stop the trip and get off and open that door so the cars can come through. And he's got his light shining to see how far he wants the cars to go. He stepped in the empty line – and they jumped the switch and come on his side and tore him up.

Jeremiah Nelson, he was a pitcher.

We went to work next morning, me and another fellow – we used to play ball together – would walk to work together, and his daddy and my daddy would walk together if the time was just right. And this fellow said, "You hear about Jeremiah getting killed last night?"

I said, "Noooo!"

We passed by the house and they had a light on. The guy next door came out and told us, "You hear about Jeremiah getting killed last night?"

Told him, "Yeaaaah!"

I went on to work. See, I would go up to the lamphouse and get my daddy's and my lamp. And I'm walking along that morning with a fellow's lamp that came home with Jeremiah and didn't tell us anything about it. I'm carrying his lamp back to the lamphouse, got it in my hand. I told the lamphouseman, "Here's Sam's light."

He said, "Put it on charge. He had to carry it home because he took Jeremiah home last night."

I said, "Just give me my daddy's because I don't want mine, I don't want my light. I'm finished."

I carried my daddy's light down to him in the car. All the drivers was on top anyway. They were getting ready to strike because they wanted a man to sit down in the mine and open that door. The mules had gone on into the mine, and the drivers sitting out on top. They went down about thirty minutes ahead of us because they walked down. So they sent for the superintendent. He came down in his pajama top, houseshoes. And his favorite word was, "No twenty-seven ways about it. I'm not going to hire one man to sit on his ass out there and just open that door."

I saw the drivers pouring their water out. I said, "Look like you coming home, too, Papa. I'm gone."

I went home and taken my bath when he got there, and I went down to the pay office and I told the man I wanted my time. He said, "I can't give you your time just like that. I got to have a reason."

I said, "Just put on there, 'Afraid of mines.'"

He said, "That's a good enough reason."

Signed my first contract with Omaha for $91 a month. We would travel out of Omaha – we trained in Memphis, we played one exhibition game against the Memphis Red Sox. They were in the Negro American League. But the Omaha Tigers was a traveling ball club.

Omaha had some ballplayers that went to the Homestead Grays, from off the club. Some of the local teams we played was farm clubs to the Negro League clubs. The little old club in Knoxville was the Memphis farm club. The ballplayers that didn't make the Memphis club, they sent em to Knoxville – let the man there have em, he paid em, contract wasn't such that he owned em or nothing like that, he just sent em over there so they could play.

When we trained in Memphis, I'm looking at the ballclub, and the ballplayers that didn't come with us on the road. The man asks me, what position did I want to play. I knew I couldn't beat the catcher because he played down there at Marvel, Alabama. I'm looking at the other positions – the shortstop was pretty good. I was a little lanky too. I said, "Well, I'll play outfield and I'll be a utility catcher" – because I used to catch a little in high school.

One Sunday during training, Memphis was playing the Monroe (Louisiana) Monarchs a exhibition game. And our shortstop was from that area. When they checked in the hotel where we were, he was there, and they borrowed him to play with them because they wanted to make a good showing. Monday morning he was sick. He made enough money to get drunk, and he was sick Monday morning, couldn't go to practice. Everybody else showed up for practice, the outfielders and whatnot, and I stayed in the outfield. But the next day the kid was worse. So the

manager came to me and said, "Hey, kid, look like I'm going to have to bring you to the infield." He saw how I was catching the ball in the outfield. "Look like I'm going to have to bring you to the infield because this boy is in bad shape."

We split with Memphis that next Sunday, and we left out of there Sunday night going to Omaha. The boy that was sick, well, as things are now I can say it was similar to cancer, because he had a bad throat irritation. We put him on the back seat of the bus, and when we got to Omaha that Tuesday evening, they called a doctor and the doctor came and sent him to the hospital. I think he lived about four days, and he died. I finished the season at shortstop.

I was eighteen years old when I left on the road traveling with the Omaha Tigers. Too much traveling and not enough money. Besides, they didn't finish paying us what little we were supposed to get. We just traveled, traveled. Started in from Omaha, played on up to North Dakota, then went on across almost to Spokane, then we came on back down through Idaho, Kansas, and places like that. Played white teams along the way, played black teams. Barnstorming with local clubs.

So I left Omaha and I come back to Fairfield, where I had finished high school. I got me a job at the tin mill, when they was building the tin mill out there. Fairfield had a baseball team – that was a TCI (Tennessee Coal and Iron Company League) team. TCI had two divisions; had the manufacturing division and then they had the mine division, ore division.

O, man, you used to have some teams around then, had some teams! Stockham had a club, Acipco had a club – they was rivals. Schloss Furnace, Westfield Sheetmill, Perfection Mattress, Ensley – was in the manufacturing division. Winona, Edgewater, they was in the ore division, mining division. TCI used to own all that, which is US Steel now.

You find an industrial league in Atlanta, but not as many teams as you got in Birmingham. But they had ball clubs and they had a league. They had a league in Memphis, an industrial league. But baseball teams wasn't as prevalent there – because this is a manufacturing town, and that's why it's so much baseball.

Our job played out because we almost got the building up. But they took my name to come back, in the shop. At that time a boy called me from Montevallo, one of the boys I played with in '36. And he asked me, did I want to travel at baseball again? I got laid off right after Christmas, the week after Christmas, and he called me. He called me, said, "There's a team from Yakima, Washington, and I got a letter – the man going to be here–"

I played with Yakima that year. They give me a contract – had a contract with all of em. They all give you a piece of paper to sign, a contract, which wasn't valid.

We played local clubs all up through the West, and sometimes we would hook up with another traveling club. We met the House of David – they played for a church out of St. Joe, Michigan, I think it was. They wore long beards – church team. We traveled with them a week or two.

But mostly it was local clubs. All towns, the big towns especially had a good baseball team and they would go to the semi-pro tournament in Wichita. That's the teams we would play. Well, we played the Lewiston, Idaho, club and they won the right to come to Wichita. And we were playing in Wichita a week or so before the tournament's supposed to start. And the Wichita team wanted me to play with them. I was there signing up, and Lewiston kicked.

"I would lay in bed and listen to ball games. Bull Connor – you heard of Bull Connor – well, he used to announce games for the Birmingham White Barons – because the black team was the Black Barons."

Lewiston had played them a exhibition game a day or so before the tournament and they kicked. They said I hadn't played enough games. So I couldn't play, they rejected me. So I caught up with our team again, and we were working ourselves on back to St. Louis. And a kid that started with us that year, name of Howard Easterling – now he was a good ballplayer – he left us because we weren't making any money. I left Yakima, too, when we came to St. Louis. I wasn't making that trip back to Yakima – we had come off of salary on percentage – and when we got to St. Louis, I said, "This is far enough for me."

There's so many ballplayers that played and got mad with baseball and quit because they couldn't make any money. Good ballplayers, but they couldn't make a living at it.

Come back home in '38 and got married – we've been together ever since. And I got my job at Acipco, A-C-I-P-C-O, straight out on Sixteenth Street, manufacturing plant, makes pipe, cast-iron pipe. It's short for American Cast Iron Pipe Company. I had broke my leg playing at Westfield, and I went to Piper to stay because I didn't want no expenses on me. So I went to my mother's to stay. And one of the fellows that worked up here at Westfield got me on. He told me they was going to hire that day. I asked the man, "Can I go up in the shop and get Censel Upshaw?"

He said, "Yeah."

So I went up and got Censel. He couldn't come out of the shop but he come to the back part, the employment place, and he knocked on the window and pointed the guy to me and said, "Baseball player."

That was enough for them. He call me up and I go on around the front and I get a job. But I had to work under my daddy's name, John Willy Davis, because I was a minor and they wasn't supposed to hire you under twenty-one.

After my leg healed – I was taking batting practice with the boys, and I was the scorekeeper, with my crutches. I came back at the tail end of the season. And we were playing Acipco, an exhibition game; they wasn't in our division. I was walking now, hopping, I'd thrown away my crutches a couple of weeks. I was getting ready to play.

Our manager asked their manager, "If I stand him on first base will the guys run over him?" – Negro ball was rough then.

He said, "No, we got a nice bunch of fellows."

First time up, I hit one in the road – in front of a

"Murderer's Row" for the Pittsburgh Crawfords in 1932. Manager Oscar Charleston talks to (left to right) Rap Davis, Josh Gibson, Judy Johnson and Jud Wilson. Photo courtesy, Baseball Hall of Fame.

schoolhouse – drove in one or two runs; next time up, I hit one in the school yard; and the next time up, I hit one up against the tennis court, in right center. So we had enough runs and they took me out of the game. The manager for Acipco, he eased around to me and said, "If you ever want a job, call me."

So, I didn't want to go out on the road again, and I was married – so I called him up. He said, "Yeah, come on out here tomorrow."

See, your better ballplayers were right here working, that had experienced the road a little bit. I played at Acipco with Artie Wilson, Ed Steele, guys that played later years in the Negro League. Powell, too, and Herman Bell, the catcher. We were on Acipco ball club. That's five Black Barons right there on the same company team.

My first season with Acipco was '39, but I started working there in the winter of '38. I stayed there until April of '43. I played four seasons with the club. See, the companies would sponsor teams for the amusement of the fans, and to have a baseball team competitive in name, what company could have the best team. They'd buy you everything – balls, bats, uniforms. They give you a trip and pay all your traveling; didn't have to worry, insurance and everything was paid for. Baseball players had two lockers, baseball equipment in one locker and work clothes, dress clothes, in the other one. It was a better deal than signing with a traveling club. That's why I stayed.

Acipco had a white team, too. All the companies that had a black team, they had a white team. Acipco's little second baseman, he rode – we called it the dinky; little old electric car come around and pick up special stuff – he drove that. And we got to talking one day. I said, "Look, if they would just lock us up in the field, don't have no spectators to harass anybody, we'd run you to death. We'd run you to death."

"O, noooo, O, noooo, O, noooo."

I'd played against white boys and I saw their type of ball. All the white boys that would play with Acipco, they wasn't good enough to make organized ball. Of course, a lot of em, the family wouldn't allow em to go off for just that little money – now this is the white part.

So, he said, "O, noooo."

And I said, "We'd run you to death."

And one of the boys was from my home town, Piper, Alabama, white boy.

We never played em. But one day a couple of weeks later, I saw em standing out there in the trees way down in left field below the stands. Out there peeping, three of em. We played Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. They played Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. And the day they were out there, Steele hit a couple of balls in the dump – it was a lime hole then, but they dumping in it now to fill it up. Come back a day or so later, the little second baseman came riding down on his little electric car.

He said, "Hello."

I said, "What'd you think? I saw you out there in that tree."

He said, "I don't know. It'd be a good battle."

I said, "We'd run you to death" – because Herman Bell had been on the road traveling. *I* had been on the road traveling with baseball.

My daddy didn't see me play ball until I came back here, started working with Acipco. I was on the road two years, and of course, he couldn't. And when I was at home, he wouldn't go to see no ball games in Piper and Kolina. He never did, my mother either. But she came to a ball game in Fairfield when my half-brother pitched against us.

My daddy came to see me play, I was at Acipco, first time he seen me play. And my boy was at the game that day. Of course, *he* had seen me play before. I hit a home

run that day. My boy was small, he was young, and he came to see me play. And I slid into one of the bases. Well, we'd have to go to the shop and take a shower, change clothes. And they got home before me. When I got there, my boy was hanging on the gate. And in the living room we had one of these old coal stoves, it was built up on legs about six inches high. My boy caught me by the hand, we went on in the house, and he just talking at me: "Hey daddy, hey daddy, here were you slide, here were you slide—"

He flew across the floor and hit the linoleum and slid up under the heater. I had to pick the heater up so my wife could pull him out from under there, because I didn't want to pull him out slow and tear him up. So she pulled him out from under the heater.

"Here were you slide, here were you slide."

My daughter was one of my favorite fans. She'd clap — and years later, one Sunday in particular, I was at bat, crucial time, and most of the fans knew that I was a clutch hitter; and she jumped up and shouted and a little clap she'd make — clap-clap-clap-clap-clap-clap — she said, "C'mon, daddy, c'mon, daddy."

And I missed the ball by a foot. I could hear distinctly out of the stands, "I wonder what's wrong with my daddy."

When I left Acipco in 1943, I was making $3.36 a day, five days, no money for playing baseball. They just give you time off; you got off about one-thirty. But before I left they dropped it to three o'clock. A lot of fellas was getting cars then, and things was getting — that's when they started getting a little rough and a little tight. They wasn't giving the black man as much as they had been. Because when I went there in '39, we got off at one-thirty—they used to get off at twelve-thirty, used to get off at lunch and didn't go back. Then they dropped it to one-thirty. The next year they lowered it to two-thirty. And the next year they dropped it to when you got off. A lot of sponsors stopped having clubs altogether. I don't know what brought on the change, really, but it was happening before the war and at the beginning of the war.

When I went to Acipco, they would have a picnic for their employees every Labor Day. We only had one, and they cut it out. And they used to give turkeys and things for Christmas — the year I got there they cut *that* out. Used to give every employee a turkey and bag of groceries for Christmas — and they gave you five or ten dollars, then a dollar for every year that you were there. So I wasn't there — I went there in October or November, so I didn't get but five dollars, or less than that.

Perfection Mattress, making mattresses, they cut out their club. They cut down the league to about six teams, eight teams. Then they started — say a guy would sell barbecue or something like that at the ballpark; then he would do most of the sponsoring. Then the teams, the hometown fans would chip in a bit and take up a collection at the ballpark.

Acipco cut their team out altogether after I left there. Two or three cut their teams out because of integration. Stockham's team almost went because of integration. The company felt they might have a little trouble, wouldn't get enough men to have a good club, enough whites who would play with blacks. Integration come out into the open and whites didn't want to play. You take a place like Hayes Aircraft. They had two clubs, and the year they said they'd integrate, the whites didn't have no club, they had black. Then the company kicked because they was sponsoring just the black employees. So they dropped the team.

They had to integrate, anybody, any of em that had government contracts. This was right before King made his movement, right at the top of it. This was after the war, in the '50s; but they started cutting back before the war.

We had more crowds at our games — because that's all people had to do then. You go out to the ballpark now, the two biggest rivals is Connor Steel and Stockham, Stockham Valve and Fitting. Used to be Acipco and Stockham. Stockham makes fittings for all type valves, and all sizes. But Acipco makes the pipe. Well, you go out there today it won't be three hundred people out there to see a ballgame. In my day, if we played Stockham, when we got to the ballpark, before hitting practice, the stands would be full. There would be standing room only after that. Gametime — folks would leave from around here — of course, they didn't live here then, lived on Center Street and that way on, down in the valley. White lived all up here then. You better not be caught up on this hill after six o'clock, they'd put you in jail for prowling or something like that. Call the police and they'd chase you home.

In '41, had a manager of the Birmingham Black Barons named Candy Jim Taylor. He come out to Acipco, we were playing one day, and *they* were here. He said, "C'mon, boy, and play for me."

I said, "What you paying, Uncle Jim?"

He said, "About a hundred fifty, a hundred seventy-five a month."

I said, "O, noooo, noooo, no way."

So, in 1942, a fellow by the name of Winfield Welch came here as manager of the Black Barons. He was manager of the Harlem Globetrotters, too. Well, I played some exhibition games with the Barons. He gave me five dollars a game — and I was making $3.32 at Acipco per day. And at Acipco we could play exhibition games against a traveling club until April 15th when our season would begin. And I played a little for Welch in '42. Five dollars a game, seven dollars for a doubleheader, seven dollars and a half. Now when he come back in '43, he gave me ten dollars a game. I'm not on the team, I'm just a ballplayer he wants to have on the club to play, to make a good showing. Ten dollars a game and fifteen dollars for a doubleheader. I went for that. Well, naturally, I'm going to play for him until April 15th. When it come down close to April 15th, he asked me about going on the road with him. He was baiting me up real well.

The ball team would hang around at the biggest black cafe here. Bob's Savoy Cafe. His name was Bob Williams. He had been in New York and stopped — like the old song say, "Stop at the Savoy." He had been in New York and he named his cafe Bob's Savoy. I played basketball for him — he'd have a basketball team around here. We were sitting there talking and Welch asked me about going on the road with him; how much he'd pay me — I think it was three hundred dollars a month, and two dollars a day meal

money. In the meantime, Bob who owned the place came around and made a statement to Welch. As I said, Welch was manager for the Globetrotters. Bob said, "That nigger can play basketball, too."

Welch said, "What?"

He said, "Yeah, he's my star player."

He gets on the phone and calls Abe, Abe Saperstein. See, at the time, Abe was in the background for the Black Barons. He'd get all the booking and everything for the club, '43, '44, '45. The owner was just getting a percentage out of it, because he was afraid of transportation, getting gasoline and stuff like that.

So he called Abe, and Abe said, "Give him three hundred and fifty dollars, if he can play basketball."

I went with the Globetrotters three winters. Played basketball for them '43, '44, '45. Summers I played baseball with the Birmingham team. I played outfield some and first base some. I left home as an outfielder, but the first baseman had to go in the army. So I came in to first base. In about the middle of the season – all games didn't count, just when you played a team in your league and your division. Like you played the Homestead Grays, that game didn't count, it was just an exhibition game. But the games you would play against teams in your division would count. We had lost four league games, and we were playing Memphis. And our shortstop – we had lost four before this one, this one made the fifth one, the first game of a doubleheader Sunday. We played those four games and he was in four of em, losses. He made an error in the fifth one, and we lost that one. So between the games of the doubleheader, the manager said, "Boy, you going to play shortstop for me. I'm sick of this."

I said, "Man, I haven't played any shortstop for years."

He said, "Well, you're going to play today. Come on, I'll hit you some ground balls."

I finished the season that year at shortstop. He moved the shortstop to third and moved the third baseman to left field. It was a heckuva infield combination. We won the pennant.

Birmingham was in the Negro American League. We played teams in the league and out of the league, also. We won the pennant in '43, '45, and '48 – I was managing in '48. And every time we'd win over here, the Homestead Grays would win their division out there. The year that Cleveland won, I think Newark won; and the year Kansas City won, I think Newark won. And each year the two division winners would play in the World Series, Negro World Series. Homestead Grays beat us every time we got there. We carried em to the limit in '43 and '45. In '45 we carried em to seven games, but that was the year we had a car wreck. Our second baseman got tore up. We were riding in cars some, too, then. Our second baseman got broke all to pieces; and the third baseman – we were coming home to start the World Series – he got a hole knocked in his head; and the catcher, one of our catchers– we had two pretty good catchers – he got his arm hurt; and our utility infielder, which was a good pinch hitter and a powerful hitter, he got his leg hurt. So we were shorthanded, but we carried em to the limit. We never did win a World Series.

We'd carry not over nineteen – seventeen, eighteen men. Six pitchers or less than that. You'd have four outfielders and an extra infielder, two catchers. You'd have pitchers who could play another position, like pitcher/first baseman. That's what kept many Negro pitchers from being real good pitchers, by playing two or three different positions. We never had over nineteen men, never. Our average team, when the team gets set, has about sixteen or seventeen. We'd have a twenty-two passenger bus, and wouldn't nobody be on the back seat unless it was the material man– the guy that was the extra bus driver and handled the equipment. Material man, equipment man; he did the extra bus driving and took care of bats and balls. He'd put on a uniform and he'd play catch with us, but he was an older man. He'd get our socks washed, for those that wanted to pay him. He'd make all the trips, and he and the bus driver stayed together in the same room.

We were going into a small town in Mississippi to play. And the bus wasn't running just right. The bus drivers had to be pretty good mechanics, which they were – some of em weren't nothing but bus drivers, but the majority of em was pretty good mechanics. And our bus driver, God bless him, he saved our lives many a day. He could drive, he could drive.

They ought to pay the bus driver more than they pay the players, and I imagine some of the clubs did. I know Rudd made about four, five hundred dollars a month. And that was just what the average ballplayer on our club made. Average ballplayer then was making three-fifty, four hundred dollars. But the bus driver kept you alive and kept it rolling. I've seen Rudd, Charlie Rudd – well, the bus wasn't running just right. One of the lift pins had broken, valve lifter had broken. And he said, "God almighty." We had a couple of hours to spare, and we were close; we had time to make up the miles if we could get some transportation to get on in there. He said, "If I could get just one thing I'll be all right."

We were close to a farm, and he went out to that farmer's fence. It had these long nails in there. He said, "I might get arrested." But he knocked that board off and got one of those nails, and cut the head off of it, and cut that keen point off, and stuck it down in the engine compartment. And he said, "We can make it to town with this, without losing too much pressure."

We made it to town and he bought a new lifter and he put it in while we were playing. He could drive!

A place where he could afford it, and the hotel had enough room, the bus driver stayed by himself. But places where the accommodations – like Greenwood, Mississippi, or Cleveland, Mississippi, and sometimes in bigger places – they had just enough rooms. Even the big towns, like Charlotte, didn't have no big hotels, they just had big houses. Just like Memphis. Memphis didn't have no big hotel for blacks until right before I left the league. Had big old apartment houses which they changed over to hotels. The place we stayed in Memphis for years was a big old apartment house right next to a drug store. Baseball players stayed in two rooms in the back. In the far room was the bath. Everybody used the same bath. Mostly all the hotels had a bath in the hall, including up to Indianapolis, Indiana. Chicago, New York, had the bigger hotels, the best hotels. Baltimore, we stayed in an apart-

The 1948 Birmingham Black Barons celebrate a victory in the locker room. It was Willie Mays' first year with the club. He appears here in the back row, third from left, directly to right of player with hat. Piper Davis was the player-manager of the Barons. He is fourth from the right on the last row, directly to left of player with hat; his uniform is partially visible.

ment-hotel. Philadelphia, we stayed in a hotel. That was the biggest hotel we'd stay in. Kansas City had a hotel. Some big hotels didn't want no ballclubs staying there. Worried that they'd keep up so much noise and tear it up. When they extended the block out of Chicago past Sixty-first Street, and they took over a hotel, a black guy we had met in Los Angeles was going to be the manager. He told us out there that winter, "I won't be out here next year. I'll be in Chicago." Told us what he'd be doing in Chicago. "But I can't take all of you. I'll take guys like Bassett, Wilson, Davis, Britton —" guys that he knew. So about six of us would stay there.

See, they wanted guys that was clean and dressed nice because they didn't want you sitting around the lobby of the hotel with a t-shirt on, or nothing like that. They got people like Joe Louis, Lena Horne, Dinah Washington, Lionel Hampton's big band, they staying there. What they cared about was the image they showed when they walked downstairs. "Because we got people with noted fame staying with us. We got to keep our image up."

The rest stayed down around Sixty-first Street on down to Thirty-fourth Street.

We knew beforehand where we were going to eat and where we would sleep. That was automatic. Club come in here, they know they going to stay at the Palm Leaf. They go to Atlanta, they going to stay at the Auburn Hotel on Auburn Avenue. You go to Kansas City, you going to stay at one of the two — they had two. They had one over there at the bowling alley; we stayed there most. Go to Tulsa, you going to stay at the little black hotel there — that's where I stayed when I was in the Texas League. You go to Shreveport, you know where you going to stay.

Today it's in the contract: A-accommodations, first-class accommodations. They stay in the top hotel now. We didn't have no contract as such in Negro ball. But it's in the organized contract, that's one of the clauses. When they started signing black ballplayers, they signed the same contract — called for first-class accommodations. But they didn't get it. That was on account of segregation. Of course, that was breaking the contract. But you know a guy wasn't going to go against his living — maybe you had one out of a whole hundred who would.

So the black boys — Satchel and them stayed at the black hotel in St. Louis when he was with the Browns. Because we were there one night, we had played there when St. Louis come in, and Satchel stayed at the same hotel we stayed. I think it was called the Crystal White.

Sometimes we had to stay in jails. I've stayed in jails twice. No place else to sleep. One time, the Globetrotters was put out of a hotel in Blackfoot, Idaho. One manager

checked us in, and the prejudiced manager put us out, the next morning. I used to kid the guys on the team, I'd say, "Man, they love me in the South. You fellas have been having the rough time. You don't know where to go up here. You get refused. But I don't ever get refused in the South because I know where to go. They got signs up for me to go. They got signs that say white go here and black go here. They look out for me. When I get on the bus they got signs say 'Negroes' and 'whites.' But you, here, you go sit down in a cafe and they liable to tell you, you ask em, 'Do you serve Negroes?' they say, 'No.'" That happened many times in the Midwest.

"Sometimes we had to stay in jails. I've stayed in jails twice. No place else to sleep. One time, the Globetrotters was put out of a hotel in Blackfoot, Idaho. One manager checked us in, and the prejudiced manager put us out the next morning."

The town we stayed in jail, we were playing in a fairgrounds. So we were walking from the jail – one thing, they fixed the place up where we could eat – we were walking to the place where we were going to play ball, and we said we'll go out here and lay on this hay for a while where these horses been and sleep some more. We were walking and we passed by some homes, and up the street a little way two white kids were playing in the front yard. Well, one got after the other one and they ran around the house, and when they come back around the house we were right there in the street facing em – three or four big black boys, men, right there. And that one that was in front saw us. He squalled out and ran back around the house and come in and was peeping out the window. He had never seen a Negro live, I don't guess, just on pictures. That night his father brought him to the game and got permission for the boy to touch us. He told the boy, "See there."

I left here my first year with the Globetrotters, 1943. I had it in my contract that I'd be home for Christmas. So they would knock off three to four days at Christmas time, used to. And one way home would be on you, and Abe would pay the other way. So I was home on Christmas. I had to be back the day after New Year. New Years Day, went to the train station that night, my wife and children there to see me off. And when they said, "All aboard," the black attendant put me up in the tail end of the car. He carried me around all the way through the car, and got to the section where the roomettes were, behind the toilets – and when he got to the end and had to make a turn, I said, "Hey, where you going, porter? We're through the car, sleeping quarters."

I had the drawing room, three beds for the price of three dollars and something a night. They give me three beds to keep me from sleeping in the compartment with whites.

And I told my wife, years ago, I had ideas that King had then, but I didn't have the will power to go through with it. I always made expressions when I'm traveling, I put emphasis on, "Officer, do you know where *I*" – see, he looking right at me – "can get something to eat?" I never said, "Can you introduce me to a place that they serve blacks?" or "where Negroes can get something to eat?" I'd just say, "Can you tell me where *I* can get something to eat?" And places, public places where we would go, like filling stations, and I couldn't use the rest room, I leave there, I tell him, "Take the gas hose out. Take it out." And I go somewhere I can use the rest room.

After all the incidents that happened, I would sit down and talk to my wife. I'd say, "Look, you all ought to stay out of those stores" – some stores you couldn't ride the elevator, same elevator as the white. I said, "You ought to stay out of those stores."

They could have shook it up way before they did because I saw the gleam of the dollar in the white man's eye. And I said, "I ought to have the FBI to go along with me and see how I am treated in transportation. But the FBI might be a Southerner; that wouldn't help me any."

Majority of black ballplayers, and those were just the mediocre ballplayers, all he was interested in was himself. We had some ballplayers, some good ballplayers, wouldn't even think a dime about giving a nickel toward the NAACP. All they wanted was that money. He didn't think about how good he could play. His desire is to get this little money right quick, in a half a year what it would take a whole year to make outside of baseball. Out of all the ballplayers that come in here, played with Birmingham, you got about four that you could walk in and say, "He's paying toward a house." Majority of them was renting. Because they didn't want to spend that money on the road and send home toward a house, majority of the Southern boys – unless they had families that were a little bit established, and the father in the background already had a little something toward a home.

When I was about nine or ten years old, I was sitting there one night, I said, "Papa, can you own this home?"

He said, "No, kid, I'll be paying rent on this house long as I live. Can't own this house."

I said, "I'm not going to stay anywhere where I can't have me a home so if I get in trouble I can sell it and have a little money."

I told him that when I was about nine or ten years old.

See, you would have your home here, and you playing ball away from here, your expenses is still going on right here. A lot of ballplayers just didn't want to do that. They'd pull up, take their wives with em. Some of em send the wives to stay close to the mother, let the mother take care of em a while, then send for em and let em come out to where they were.

If you have a home, your children can say, "Come up to my house." But if you didn't, they might be ashamed to have you. "I would have you up there, but that little apartment is too little." And I've always been interested in children and the whereabouts of children. I'd say, "You know where your child is?" That was one of my favorite statements. "You know where he is? You know he is between here and home?"

Our transportation broke down going into Omak, Washington, and we had to take a bus and leave one of our players with the car and trailer – traveling with the Globetrotters. So, called up the sponsor who was president of the Kiwanis Club, and also, he was an educator in the state system, and he was assistant principal of the high school. He was the sponsor. And he had us reservations at a hotel. But at the half of the game – we'd be playing cards, some

guys would be scanning a old funny book or something – I was sitting in the corner of the locker room and he came in. He said, "Your reservation has been changed."

I said, "Okay, we'll talk about it after the game. Of course, you going to take us there anyway?"

He said, "Yeah."

He took us to a old folks home. Give us the first floor – tall ceilings and had a grisly old heater in the middle of the floor. That's where they changed our rooms to.

The next morning he called me up and said, "Hey, we having a luncheon today." And if our transportation wasn't there he was going to take us over to the next town at four o'clock that afternoon. And he said, "Reckon you fellas would like eating with us?"

I said, "Sure." All road people like free meals because you don't have to pay for it.

So he says, "Well, we start at twelve o'clock."

I got em up. "Let's go fellas, we got a freebee today with the Kiwanis Club."

We went down and they had us on a stage. I'd never made a speech in my life, other than my graduation from high school. They introduced us – he introduced me and had me to introduce the Globetrotters. And when I introduced the Globetrotters, I sat back down. He got back up and said, "We're happy to have the Globetrotters with us. Mr. Davis introduced his club – you know what, I would like to have Mr. Davis tell us about some of the hardships they have in their travels."

Nothing – he hadn't said anything to me before. So I got up, and I'm trying to get myself together – it was all these rich farmers and all like that, bankers – and I'm looking around. I said, "I'm not a speaker. I've always been in sports, where you'd have on a basketball team, you got four more fellas to help you out. On a baseball team, you got eight more other fellas to help you out. But making a speech, you all alone."

I'm still thinking about what I'm going to say.

I say, "I notice you open up to the preamble of the Constitution of the United States whereby all men are created equal. Are we?"

Buddy, heads come out of those plates. Even the cook was sticking his head out. The waiters was stopping.

Then I told em, "You don't see the true Negro. You don't see him. All you see is actors."

Then I said, "We've even had reservations changed at hotels." And this was the hotel! But I didn't know it, I didn't know it. "We've never missed a date on our part."

And after I finished, one guy was out there from Georgia. If I'd made that speech in Georgia, I'd been lynched. I'd been driven out of town, at least. He came up and said, "Don't make that statement anymore that you can't make a speech."

The manager of the hotel came up. He said, "You had reservations here. I don't know why it was changed. But let me know when you're coming back. Drop me a card."

The sponsor asked me to come to a general assembly at the high school, that evening, at two-thirty. He said, "Tell the kids the same thing." I had a chance to dig up something then, and I told em – that's where the true Negro came in. I said, "All you see is Stepin Fetchit, Allison that plays with Jack Benny, Amos and Andy. But you never hear" –I had a chance to get up some names, think about some names – "George Washington Carver. They don't print too much about Ralph Metcalf, Eddie Tolan and all those guys. All you see is the black man in the movies. Because in some schools they don't allow Negro history to even get in. You don't know anything about the Negro that was making the clock, and making the coupling for the railroad car. You don't know anything about that. It's not publicized. A few of you may know, but you don't study it."

We were riding the bus, and our third baseman, if we rode all night and get to a town, he'd be standing up in the door so he could get a newspaper, run to the newspaper stand and get a newspaper. You'd hear some guy say, "I wonder what Joe Dimaggio doing this morning? Laying up in that big fine bed, done been out last night...."

One little old pitcher, he'd spend every dime he made, he say, "Always reading about them damn white boys, why don't you do something yourself."

I didn't make those expressions, but you had guys that would. I'd just sit back and think em. Because in Negro Baseball we slept in the same bed, like husband and wife. I slept in the same bed with Steele. When I started, Tommy Sampson was my roommate and then Ed Steele. We got along very well, yessiree.

First time I played against Satchel was right here at Rickwood Field, in Birmingham, Alabama. He was with the Kansas City Monarchs. Ed Steele and I were playing with Acipco during the regular season, and playing with the Barons until April 15th. Well, the Barons and the visiting club would change at the same hotel downtown, because you couldn't change at the ballpark at that time. No black club was changing out there, they was changing at the hotel. Palm Leaf Hotel, downtown on Seventeenth Street, on a corner above Brock's drug store.

So, we were all changing clothes up there and Satchel was getting a rubdown from a trainer that he carried with him. Carried the man around to rub him down and be his valet. Welch told him, the manager of Birmingham told him, "You better get rubbed up good, because we going to get to you today."

Satchel made a statement, said, "O, Welch, you got that same club you had down in Louisiana?" Was in a town that they had played earlier in the season.

Welch said, "Yeah. But I got a couple more that you haven't seen yet."

Satchel said, "Which ones are they?"

Welch said, "Those two right there."

See, I didn't weigh but about a hundred and seventy-some-odd pounds then, about to hit eighty. He looked at Steele, Steele was two hundred pounds, anywhere from a hundred ninety-five to two hundred pounds.

He said, "Welch, that one there looks all right; but that other one, he too little, he too little."

Welch said, "Well, I don't know. That's the one you might have to worry about."

We went out there at the start of the game, messed around and got some men on. Satchel was asking Welch, who was coaching at third base, which one was I, coming to the bat. I was hitting behind Lester Lockett, I believe. And he walked Lester Lockett accidentally on purpose, just missing

here and there. I came up and I said to myself, "I'll just take one pitch to see what his ball does."

He threw the first one overhand and it rose a little bit – a strike. I said, "O, it rises. Now I'm halfway set now." Because I knew the curve ball had to be a slower pitch than the fast ball. He threw the next one three quarter and it tailed off on top of me. I pushed it off over our dugout, foul. Satchel looked at Welch and said, "He's helpless as a baby now, Welch."

Then he put his Satchel windup on me, gave me his motion that he had, threw me a fast ball and I just looked at it. Pfffftt. Struck out. I really didn't see the pitch. It was fast.

Satchel's fastball was as fast as Feller's or faster, when he was young. I believe it might have been faster. Satchel had names for his fastball: fast fall, faster ball, and fastest ball. Changing speeds on his fast ball. You may recall, Satchel had a hesitation pitch. Pitchers was allowed any kind of motion they had at that particular time. He would bring his free foot over and let it hit the ground before he turned the ball loose. And he had a windmill windup. With nobody on he could wind up as many times as he wanted to. Some of Satchel's best pitching was when there wasn't many men on, when he could use that windmill windup. He could pop it. After playing with Satchel, I knew how and why he had gotten his pitching ideas and what he was doing. He was timing your pumps at the bat, your relaxation, and all like that at the bat. But he didn't know hitters, he didn't know faces. He wouldn't remember a face from time to time at the bat.

I played with Satchel, barnstorming, just barnstorming. We played against the Feller All-Stars a couple of times. One time, in Los Angeles, Feller and Satchel agreed they would each go nine innings, didn't care how bad either one of em looked. That's what they did. Satchel struck out about sixteen or seventeen, Feller got about fourteen or fifteen. But we got eight runs and beat em eight to nothing.

Satchel Paige in windup. *"the best pitcher I ever faced."*

Feller didn't have the stamina Satchel had. He wasn't used to so many innings, just three innings every day. Satchel was used to it; he could go a long time.

One year we went east – see, we would go on our eastern trip once a season. Kansas City was the first club that started going east. Of course, they had names, Satchel and everybody, and people'd want to see em. We went out there in '43 and we beat em all. First year we went into Yankee Stadium, it was a three-team doubleheader, and we beat the other two teams, we shut both of em out. We beat one by eleven to nothing, and beat the other about eight or nine to nothing. After that we were a kind of favorite out there.

So, this trip east we go with Kansas City. And we were playing a four-team doubleheader in Washington. Birmingham was playing the Grays, which was the favorite club – that was their hometown – the second game. Kansas City played the first game, but when Satchel got to the ballpark it was already the seventh or eighth inning.

He was a name, and Kansas City was a big name club, too. But he didn't realize that we had gained as much fame out that way as Kansas City had. Without him. So they agreed, since a lot of fans came there to see Satchel, to let him pitch for us. We were playing the Grays. That's how I got a chance to see him pitch against Josh Gibson and Buck Leonard in the same ball game. Buck Leonard hit in front of Josh. Satchel struck em both out, talking to em. He'd talk you out of a hit. Buck Leonard come up there and Satchel told him, "O, you a pretty good hitter. I'm not going to waste anything on you. Might as well get ready to hit." And he struck him out. Then he said, "Josh, that goes for you too. You too good a hitter, I'm not going to waste any time on you." He struck him out, too. Struck em both out and they knew he was going to throw fastballs. Buck Leonard was one of the best fastball hitters you want to see. Satchel's ball moved, and he could put it where he wanted it. Buck Leonard hit third and Josh hit fourth. That was their lineup the first world series that we played, and that's the way they hit most of the time.

Satchel was the best pitcher I ever faced, and the best I've seen. Because he had control; he wouldn't walk about one or two men a ballgame.

One night he didn't pitch three innings against us, in St. Joe, Missouri. That was one of the places Kansas City would play when they'd play at home. That night we beat em about nineteen to something. Satchel went out of there in the second inning. He didn't pitch his three innings. Because we were lightning em up pretty good – but they was catching em. MacLaurin led off with one right back by Satchel's head – leadoff hitter. The way he threw it, that's the way it come back, right by his head. I don't know what the next man did, but Steele – I believe Steele was hitting in front of me that night – Steele hit a shot. They caught it. I hit a long fly ball that Willy Brown caught. And old Satchel asked Welch, he said, "Hey, Welch, what you been feeding em, man?"

Welch said, "Ahhhhhhhhh, we going to get to you, we going to get to you tonight."

Satchel said, "I don't know about that because I aint going to be out here long, that's for sure." Because he was scheduled to pitch in Kansas City when they got there. So he didn't pitch but two innings.

Now it was sort of a fairgrounds ballpark, and it didn't have no dugout as such. They just attached em to the stands, at the same level. The bathhouse was down there even with first base. After Satchel went in to change clothes, he heard all the people hollering. And when the ballboy come running around there getting the balls, Satchel would stick his head out the door, say, "Hey, kid, what's the score?"

The boy'd say, "O, about five to nothing or one, favor of the Birmingham club."

A little later on, he'd hear the hollering, he'd say, "Hey, kid, what's the score now?"

"O, about twelve to something."

"Jesus Christ."

He told Welch after the game, "You know, that whuppin was for me. If I'd stayed out there they probably woulda done the same thing to me because they was hitting me."

Satchel was around a long time, just like Campanella was around a long time. Campanella started when he was about sixteen. If I'd a made my appearance in the Negro League when I started in traveling ball, I'd a been around a long time. Because I started when I was eighteen – traveling ball. Didn't nobody see me but country people. In our league we used to say that about a team that was traveling; you didn't play nowhere but out in the sticks. The only traveling club that played in big cities was the Indianapolis Clowns. All the other clubs would have to play out here in Bessemer, Tuscaloosa, Dothan, places like that. If they got in the big towns, they would have to play the big local club.

Once or twice a year, we would play a local club on the road. But they had known names, like Fort Wayne. That was the first local club we played in '43, close around where they live. We won the first game of the series, and they was advertising, "Black Barons, winners of the first half." We go in there to play them the second game and boy, we were looking worse than a sandlot team. Had one – you know, they got a star-ruler in every ballpark – and this fellow was up in the stands hollering, "Black Barons, my eye." The team had us about five to one. But our old favorite statement was, if you play a local ballclub, if you can just stay close to em you can beat em from the seventh inning on. Because they get tired. Take a local ballclub playing two or three times a week, they're never in top shape. And we started getting to em about the seventh inning. You talk about shots – shots was hit. We hit the wall and over the wall. The guy in the stands said, "Well, I think I'll have to take that back."

You don't hear too much about a lot of Negro ballplayers, good ballplayers, because the whites wasn't paying attention to em. Josh Gibson was known; he hit a lot of home runs, he was powerful, he was close to a city where he might get it in a white paper. See, all of our publicity came from two papers, the Pittsburgh *Courier* and the Chicago *Defender*. And if you didn't have anybody in your town with the initiative to send it in, they wouldn't get to know about you.

Take Sam Bankhead – best arm in baseball from shortstop. One time Cepeda's daddy was playing first base for us in Puerto Rico, and Sam at short. Well, Sam threw hard when he had to. A lot of players got a style where they just throw good enough to get the guy out. But when they really had to throw, they would fire the ball. That's one of the difficulties in white scouts scouting black ballplayers. Because they didn't throw the ball, they'd flip it. They'd fire it when they had to, then they would show it to you. After talking with white scouts and being with them, I found out all this. I'd say, "He got a good arm, he just won't show it to you. I believe he got a good arm, but he's flipping it all the time." Now me, out of the hole, at shortstop, when I go get a ball in the hole and going for a double play, I didn't throw it, I flipped it.

So, Bankhead threw one to Cepeda – this is Cepeda's daddy. He just threw it over there ordinarily. And when Cepeda going to put on his show – we call it, "sport it," or whatever term you might want to use – he stretched out, but the force from the ball wasn't much and he dropped it. Now he out there going to show Bankhead up. He talking in Spanish, but a couple of guys could understand Spanish and told us what he said. He said, "You got a good enough arm, why don't you throw the ball?"

I could speak a little Spanish, too. I said, "You hear him, Homey?"

Bankhead said, "Yeah, I hear him." And Cepeda was a little nasty, talking about "that s.o.b."

About the fifth or sixth inning, Bankhead got a two hopper. When he was going to throw hard, he'd tiptoe like a pitcher on a pitcher's mound, raise up on his foot and push off. Partner, he raised up on that tiptoe and threw that ball – never got very high off the ground. Cepeda's daddy, when he saw it coming, he started backing off and he caught it moving away from it. When we went in the dugout he put his arm around Bankhead and said, "You throw the ball like you want to all the time. You throw just like you want to."

A lot of good Negro ballplayers was over the hill when I came along. John Henry Lloyd, he played before my time. Mules Suttles, I played against him once in an exhibition game right here. I was working at Acipco then, and he was on an all-star team. Mules Suttles, first baseman, he was old then. I couldn't rate Cool Papa Bell because he was going over the hill when I arrived. I played with him once in an all-star game, and against him all other times with the Grays. Oscar Charleston, old man, they say he was a good ballplayer. I only saw him standing on the coaching line. Martin Dihigo, I played against him when he was with the New York Cubans; but he was old then. Luis Tiant's daddy was on that team. Good pitcher – but I didn't see enough of him, he was old then too. He still had the best move in baseball. He caught John Britton twice in one ballgame. First he got on base, Britton took his lead. Not as big a lead as he would ordinarily because we had been warned that Tiant had the best move in baseball. So Britton led off with a single right back by his head, but he didn't take the usual lead that he would have taken against any other pitcher. Tiant picked him right off. The next time up Britton walked, which was rare because he was a bad ball hitter. He took his lead off first, just about a step and a piece from the base, and he standing there saying, "I'm not going to get picked off this time." And he standing there when he got picked off. Didn't move until the ball was on its way. Got charmed.

Photo from *Only the Ball Was White*, by Robert Peterson, Prentice-Hall, 1970.

"The black boys always felt we could play. We just hoped that Jackie would pave the way – and he did," says Davis. **Above, Jackie Robinson makes his debut with the Montreal Royals with a homerun in Roosevelt Stadium, April 18, 1946.**

They have a statement on a ballplayer that played with Memphis, named Goose Curry – he was a comical ballplayer anyway. They said Tiant threw to first base, Tiant's daddy threw to first base, and Goose swung the bat. And said, Goose swung and the umpire called it a strike. Now he fussing because the pitcher threw to first base and the umpire told him, "You dumb enough to swing, I'm dumb enough to call it."

The longest ball I've seen hit – I couldn't say because I didn't see Luke Easter's ball *land*. Luke Easter hit a home run in New Orleans, that ball went out of the ballpark – show you how hard it was hit, and how far it was traveling – it went out of the ballpark about ten or fifteen feet fair, and when we last saw the ball it was about ten or fifteen feet foul. He hit that ball – we just sit right there and looked at it. Hit it off of Jehosie Heard, too, a left-hander. And he hit some of the hardest balls I've seen hit through the infield.

But Josh mashed the ball. My first time playing against him I was at shortstop, Horse was at third – and Welch, the manager, pushed me back. I was on the outfield grass. And he hit that ball down the third baseline, Horse Walker reached his glove at it, and it knocked the webbing out. Had two fellows, one black and one white, when they got hot balls they would holler – "Whoop." Johnny Jorgemson was one, the white one. Horse Walker would do the same thing. When you hit him a shot he'd holler – "Whoop."

Buck Leonard was more of a hitter like me. I was a line drive hitter. He didn't hit many home runs, as such. He'd hit eighteen or twenty, but he didn't get the publicity.

But he could hit. We were playing in Atlanta against the Grays. Butch Shuber was pitching. And Welch told him, "Make him hit the slow curve, and just goose it up there." See, we call change-ups "just goose it up there," in Negro ball. Butch Shuber pitching, Paul Hardy catching. And I was playing shortstop. First time he threw the slow curve, Buck Leonard pulled it foul, about twenty-five or thirty feet. Goosed him one up there. Pulled *it* foul. Paul Hardy got down – in those days, we didn't use but one finger for fast ball, two for curve, and three for the goosey pitch. So Paul Hardy put the goosey-pitch sign down, then put the curve down there. They had one sign for sidearm curve, and another sign for the overhand curve. Shuber shook his head. Hardy said, "I ain't going to the *one*." And he started over. Shuber shook his head. Now Paul Hardy comes out. He starts talking to Shuber, "C'mon, you know what the man said." I went up to see what was wrong, if they had changed signals or something and I didn't know about it. Shuber told him, "You just get back there and catch; that's all you do."

It's early in the ballgame, might have been the first time Leonard was at bat. I'm sure it wasn't no more than his second time at bat. Paul Hardy got back there and he stuck that one finger down and looked in the dugout on the third base side as if to say, "Welch, I'm not calling for this pitch. " He put that one finger down; Butch Shuber agreed with it. And the way he threw it, that's the way it come back. Looked like it ran up his sleeve. Threw his arm out there and that ball just whistled right back across his shoulder. Welch came right out, took him out of the game. Told him, "Goddammit, I wish it had hit you in the head. I told you not to throw him no fastball to hit."

I didn't class myself a power hitter. But still I'd hit eighteen, twenty home runs a year. I hit line drives, line drives. I could hit the long ball when I got ready.

One time our Birmingham club was out in San Jose, and we were off. Jackie came in there with an all-star team. And he borrowed me from our club, so I played with him that night. He had an all-star team, barnstorming, Jackie Robinson all-star team. They were playing major-minor leaguers.

And the score was tied. Top of the ninth, I believe it was. Jackie led off and he got on. He came to me and said, "Can you still hit that long fly ball like you used to?"

I said, "Yeah."

He said, "Well, see if you can wait till I get to third."

I said, "Okay."

He stole second the first pitch. The count on me got to one and one, and he went off second base like he was going to take off, and stopped. And when the catcher got up out of his crouch, Jackie gave him one of these numbers: he started toward third, stopped, and leaned back hard on his left foot like he was going back to the base, but he never did bring his right foot over. He just planted his left foot and got ready to push off. And when the

catcher threw the ball to second, Jackie took off to third and stole the base. I hit a long fly ball to Eddie Layton, and he scored. Then we got em out in the bottom of the ninth.

We always felt that we could play. The black boy always felt – a lot of em felt that he could play. We just hoped that Jackie would pave the way, which he did. Of course, the whites been playing against the blacks for years: in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and on the road in this country. Puerto Rico had a six-team league. Three teams had white ballplayers and three teams had black imports, they called em. Aint too many of the all-white teams won. Just to show you the situation: San Juan had two clubs. They called one Santruce and one San Juan. The San Juan club was practically all white because it was a rich club. Santruce, the area of Santruce was out in the slum. It seemed that they had all black imports. And Santruce always won. Mayaguez won with all black all the time. We won at Caguas with all black ballplayers – Quincy Troupe, Sam Bankhead, and myself, we won the pennant.

Jackie was playing with Kansas City when they signed him – the Kansas City Monarchs, with Hank Thompson, Willy Brown, Ford Smith, who went to the Giants. Jackie had to be twenty-seven when he broke into the Big Leagues. Joe Black was maybe twenty-five, twenty-six, because Joe Black had finished college. A black man in those days didn't finish college till he was about twenty-four, twenty-five years old. Because he skipped some time, Junior Gilliam might have been younger.

Often, the ballplayers that went to the Big Leagues was good ballplayers, and often they was thirty years old or better, and they made stars. There was some more Negro ballplayers that might have been just two years older that could have made stars. And then you got a whole lot of em that could have made the average major league ballplayer. When they first come into organized ball, all them was stars that was playing. Wasn't no black boys sitting on the bench.

The Negro Leagues started going out when the Big Leagues signed Jackie; that started them going. And when they signed players like Monte Irvin, Campanella, Newcombe, Gilliam, Artie Wilson. You take off our club right here, the Birmingham Black Barons, the guys that played Big League Ball, that played Major League ball, that had a cup of coffee in Big League Ball, that played Major League ball a little if they didn't play but just one game, they played enough to have a cup of coffee. Jehosie Heard beat the Yankees. Willie Mays, Artie Wilson, William Greason, Jehosie – that's four guys off of one club played a little bit of Major League ball, had a cup of coffee, we called it. Now triple-A ballplayers: Piper Davis, Ed Steele, William Powell, Sam Hairston; of course, Hairston's credit goes to the Clowns, but he played with us a little bit. And Alonzo Perry. And it's more than that. Because Newberry and John Britton went to Japan. They were two of the first three blacks that went to Japan.

Of course, they wrote that ours was not organized ball. And I knew it wasn't organized as such. That's why they treated us as they did. They knew our contracts weren't valid. Just like Willie – when Willie got with me, I told him, "Don't sign no contract, I aint going to sign you to no contract." Because I knew if I signed him he wouldn't have got as much money from white ball. "And don't let your daddy sign." See, in those days, black teams was signing minors, which wasn't legal by law. I knew all that.

"The Negro ballplayer gave Big League baseball the unexpected – daring. Because we loved the game, and we played more for the fans than for ourselves because there wasn't much money involved in Negro ball."

That's what killed the Negro Leagues. They started getting the better black prospects out of high school and out of college. Nobody to take the place of the older men finishing up. And they took all the best blacks, they took the best black. They paid for em after Doby, when they took em from the Negro Leagues. I didn't know how much they paid Jackie, but they stole Doby, they didn't pay too much for Doby. I don't know whether Newark got anything for him at all, but there was a big stink about it in the black papers. So they started paying for the rest of em. Boston thought they could do that with me. I told them they had to buy my contract from Tom Hayes, and we made a deal to that effect.

Baseball needed the black ballplayer. They wasn't drawing – they're not drawing that many blacks now, but they weren't drawing that. Do you know what the quota was? When the Dodgers let Joe Black go to Cincinnati, they said they had too many. The quota at first was three. It wasn't a written thing, but just among the owners, they said, "We'll have about three of em." But when they found out the situation, and good drawing power – it was good drawing power while it lasted, but now it's going the other way.

You take right here in Birmingham when our team was going strong. I'd go out to see a white game, you'd see about eight or nine hundred blacks. And we would have to sit in the bleachers. They give us the bleachers to sit in and just one little part of the grandstand that went behind the left field line; we had that for a quarter more. And when we would play our games we would give the whites about half of the first base side box seats, and about half the third base line. And then seats in all the rest all the way out. And they'd come. We'd get about a thousand white. Bull Connor stopped that, when he was in his rampage. He put the white out in the bleachers just like the Negro was at their games. That cut it down to two hundred fifty, three hundred white. That certainly cut it down. We had, we'd say, integrated crowds. Then it was a totally segregated crowd when they put em out in left field.

We used to outdraw the white team here. A good crowd on Sundays for them was forty-five hundred; an exceptional crowd was about six or seven thousand. That was when they played Atlanta; another of their rivals was Nashville. Our crowd, eight thousand was a good crowd, and our big crowd was eleven thousand and twelve thousand. People would come from as far as Piper and Montevallo, as far as they had a ballplayer on the club. And then you had the staunch baseball fan, just wanted to see a good game.

The Negro ballplayer gave Big League baseball the unexpected, daring. Because we loved the game, and we

played more for the fans than for ourselves because there wasn't much money involved in Negro ball. Of course, the black ballplayer wanted to make some money. He knew he didn't have a future – if he had a little ability to play ball he might – he didn't have but about two or three alternatives to go; either be a schoolteacher or work at factories. At that time – and it's still right now – you couldn't be head of anything, an organization, other than a cafe or a barber shop. You couldn't get a license to be a plumber, you couldn't get an electrician's license, a whole lot of things you couldn't do.

If you was a ballplayer and you could get the job done, you might not have that prettiness in it. So many Negro ballplayers had their own style of doing things. You might not think it was pretty, it wasn't all alike. They teach you today when you're coming to third base – which is proper – you get about ten or fifteen feet from second base, you get a sign from the third base coach as to what to do. You do that when the ball is behind you, but you don't have to do it all the time that the ball is behind you. You can still run – look at Jackie when he was running the bases. He was looking right at that ball. You looking at the third base coach and don't break your stride, he could tell you to hold up if the ball is going straight to a player. But he doesn't know if he's going to bobble it or not. But if you looking at him, by the time he bobble it – okay, the coach is telling you to hold up – you looking straight at the ball and the ball bounce up on the man, the third base coach got to wait to see what it's going to do and say, "Come on," but you still running.

You see Jackie, and there was a lot of Negro ballplayers who played like he played. Take Artie Wilson, he never let up. That's why he was such a good hitter. Artie Wilson was the best single hitter I've ever seen. And he hit just one way, third base, and he was a left hand hitter. He hit running, he was ready to roll when the bat made contact. Had pretty good speed – he wasn't a Jethroe, but he wasn't too far behind him.

Take me, I'd go to the ballpark and study. I could make the double play just like Joe Gordon. I could make the double play just like Jackie. I could make it just like Stanky. I could make it just like Bresenski – played a little bit with Philadelphia. Because I saw em play and I practiced all the different kinds of ways to make it. And one play I could make, there's not too many other guys could make it. It's true. The way I threw from shortstop. We had a couple of colored shortstops wanted to learn it but they couldn't. So not every style can be copied. And the play at second, I learned on my own. Because I could stop on a dime. A lot of times they used to tell me, "You going to break them damn skinny legs you got." On a double play, if the man happens to hit one to the shortshop, you got to go to second base at top speed. I could go to second base and just jam my foot right into the bag; it wouldn't cross on the other side. Jammed against the bag on the first base side and be throwing all the time. A lot of guys, their ankles wouldn't take it. They'd have to cross over, make that extra step going over. But I had my own way of going to the bag – I couldn't do it too well if they had bags that moved.

Now they teach you to get there in time, make it look like this, make it look sweet. You see em now jumping all up in the air on a double play in practice. That aint worth a dime. You losing a cut second to get yourself in a position to jump. You taking something away from your arm even if you got a strong arm. Look how the little black boy makes it from Philadelphia, lets em slide under his legs; boy from New York the same way. Now Joe Gordon used to throw from right on top of the bag, and he'd get his legs up. If you were nasty, he'd put that knee right in your chest. Protecting himself on every play.

Junior Gilliam wasn't experienced enough to do what I could do. I could hit a ball in the direction – talk about hit and run hitters, I was so sure of myself I could wait – I'm looking at the pitcher, the ball, the second baseman, the shortstop – to see which one was going to cover. I could wait that long, see which one was going to cover, then hit to the hole. But I didn't have a chance to do that in organized ball because they got signals, they tell you. On my own in Negro baseball I could wait for my own instinct as to where to hit the ball. Our game was always "run and hit," "run and bunt." I could bunt. I could drag bunt every once in a while when I'd catch the third baseman back, and get a hit.

Whites wasn't calling it organized ball, but we had discipline. Your team would cuss you out for not bunting if the bunt was on; they'd embarrass you. You had to make the plays. White ballplayers would have one expression and black ballplayers have another, but they talking about the same thing. Take a white ballplayer, he be keeping his eyes on the ball, but we be "reading the hops." See? The black man was throwing the slider, but we didn't call it a slider; called it a funky pitch, a horse-shit curve. Then he'd have a better curve. We didn't have an expression about no slider. You take Greason. Greason had a natural slider off his fastball. With a curve you throw your wrist a bit more. The slider would give you a chance to throw a little bit harder because you don't have to bend it. Joe Black threw it, Sad Sam threw it, but they didn't throw it as hard as they throwing it now.

If you were black, you was a clown. Because in the movies, the only time you saw a black man he was a comedian or a butler. But didn't nobody clown in our league but the Indianapolis Clowns. We played baseball. You'd have clubs – Kansas City put on pepper shows before the games started, guys out there handling the ball. Kansas City had the best team at handling the ball. Had Newt Allen, Satchel, and somebody else would be the three handling the ball. But when it come to clowning, didn't nobody do that but the Indianapolis Clowns. Now you know who clowns more than anybody they had in Negro ball then? Pete Rose. But they don't call Pete Rose clowning. That's hustle, Mr. Charlie Hustle. Okay. Mays was showboating! Mays was a showboat, but Pete Rose is Mister Charlie Hustle. You aint never seen a sportswriter yet said Rose was clowning, running to first base when he get a walk, just tear up running to first base. But when a black ball player do that he's showboating. That's one statement we all can make.

Whites didn't know that we played to get in the playoffs and the Negro World Series. We played to make that extra hundred and fifty, two hundred dollars that we were going to get out of the world series; or that seventy-five, eighty dollars we were going to get out of the playoffs. We played just as hard as they played. "Let's get em, men. Let's get em."□

Ola Belle (Campbell) Reed's Family Homestead, Ashe County, N.C., about 1910

A Voice From Home
Southern Mountain Musicians on the Maryland – Pennsylvania Border

by Charles Camp and David E. Whisnant

If you had wanted to hear the exciting music of Southern mountaineers in the late 1930s and '40s, you could have done far worse than to follow the Delaware-based North Carolina Ridge Runners through the country music parks, fire halls, and carnivals where they played nightly on the Maryland-Pennsylvania border. A decade later, a good bet would have been the New River Ranch at Oxford, Pennsylvania. In the early 1960s, local people – many of them second or third generation migrant Southerners – joined the college-student vanguard of the urban folk revival to hear local musicians and touring stars like the Stanley Brothers in the converted stockroom of a family grocery store called Campbell's Corner, also at Oxford. These days, most of the pickers and singers, most of the toe-tappers and reverent listeners, eventually turn up at Ola Belle and Bud Reed's house near Rising Sun, Maryland.

The half-century-long survival and continued vitality of hillbilly music in the Maryland-Pennsylvania-Delaware area is no historical accident.* It is a concrete cultural expression of a complex social and economic process that transplanted thousands of Southern mountaineers – scores of them fine musicians – to Maryland and Pennsylvania during the past half century or so.

For about two years, we have been trying to understand why and how and when so many of these musicians have turned up in the northeastern part of Maryland – especially those who came from the Ashe County, North Carolina, and Grayson County, Virginia, area. What music did they bring with them? What kind of music did they hear when they arrived? How did the musical styles and repertoires interact? And what can the story tell us about the problems of maintaining cultural vitality and continuity in the midst of intense and rapid social and economic change?

What follows is an interim report on what we have learned. At a personal level, it is the intensely human story of some fine musicians like Ola Belle, Bud, and David Reed; Ted Lundy and Bob Paisley; Arthur ("Shorty") Wood and other members of the North Carolina Ridge Runners; and the DeBusk-Weaver family. More broadly, it is a story of shifts in agricultural patterns, the building of dams

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* Although "hillbilly" has most often been used as a derogatory term or cultural slur, it is used here – as it is frequently used among natives of the Southern Appalachians themselves – to denote an awareness and proud acceptance of shared origins, values and cultural traditions.

and ordnance plants, the Depression, media-induced changes in taste, and large-scale economic dislocations and readjustments.

I

The families that left Ashe and Grayson counties – the Campbells, Lundys, Woods, DeBusks, Graybeals, and others – were part of several migrant "streams," most of which led not to rural areas like northeastern Maryland, but to big cities. Consequently, most of what is currently known about the migration of Southern mountaineers comes from scholars who have studied their movement into such places as Detroit, Cincinnati and Chicago.

Albert Votaw's account in *Harper's* of the hillbilly "invasion" into the Uptown area of Chicago in the mid-1950s is fairly typical of urban reactions to mountaineer migrants:

The City's toughest integration problem has nothing to do with Negroes. It involves a small army of ...migrants from the South – who are usually poor, proud, primitive, and fast with a knife....Settling in deteriorating neighborhoods where they can stick with their own kind, they live as much as they can the way they lived back home. Often removing the window screens, they sit half-dressed where it is cooler, and dispose of garbage the quickest way....[Their] sex habits – with respect to...incest and statutory rape – are clearly at variance with urban legal requirements ....On the job they are said to lack ambition....[Some] get wise to the practice of rent-skipping....Prone to disease...they tend to avoid immunization officers....

Reactions of Chicagoans to the "invasion" were well summarized by the remark of a municipal court judge who said "you'll never improve the neighborhood until you get rid of them."[1]

An aimless, quasi-primitive horde, scattering randomly from the ridges and hollows, and descending like a marauding army or a Biblical plague upon an advanced and orderly urban civilization, disrupting public order, clogging the sidewalks outside the welfare offices and day-labor hiring halls, blaring hillbilly music out the windows of rundown apartments and the doors of redneck bars, overhauling beat-up automobiles at curbside, lowering standards of decency in the community and SAT scores in the schools – migrating mountaineers, we have generally been given to understand, are a "social problem," a drain upon the public treasury and a strain upon liberal good will. Akron and Cincinnati and Dee-troyt City, Gary and Indianapolis and Chicago, Lexington and Louisville, Washington and Baltimore.[2]

Why did the migration occur? Despite the image of the mountains as remote and isolated from the currents of "modern life," it is precisely the intensive operation of those currents *within* the region that has produced a steady stream of outmigration for nearly a hundred years: the "push" of a played-out timber industry as early as the 1880s, and the "pull" of a new timber industry in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Washington state; the push of the Depression in the early 1930s and the pull of jobs in defense plants a few years later; the loss of jobs in the newly automated coal industry in the 1950s and the promise of jobs in the post-war auto industry; the push of Appalachian colleges and universities, and the pull of the Appalachian Regional Commission's urban-oriented "developmental" highways in the 1960s and 1970s.

As early as the 1930s, a few scholars began to study the migration of Appalachian people, sometimes urged along by pleas from urban officials for help in "understanding" and "managing" the new arrivals. Their work focused on the large-scale movements of mountaineers, their "adjustment" to urban life, and their adaptability as blue collar workers.

The US Department of Agriculture's 1935 study, *Economic and Social Problems and Conditions of the Southern Appalachians*, commented on migration within the region and noted an overall population *gain* (from 3.2 to 5.0 million) between 1900 and 1930, but paid no attention to outmigration except to suggest that there was "an excess of population in relation to economic opportunities inside the region." One chapter in Carter G. Goodrich's *Migration and Economic Opportunity* (1936) focused on 84 counties on the Tennessee-Kentucky-southwest Virginia coal plateau. Goodrich assessed the outmigration that was already under way, calculated that perhaps another 15 percent of mountain people should migrate, and suggested somewhat ambiguously that policy should focus upon "facilitating [their] spontaneous tendency" to do so.

As the tide of migration that both USDA and Goodrich advocated and predicted began to swell, scholars turned their attention to the question of mountaineers' adjustment to urban life, and their collective impact upon the urban "receiving centers." In a December, 1937, article in *Social Forces*, Grace Leybourne assessed the situation in Cincinnati. The facts she uncovered were directly contrary to the stereotype of the unkempt briar-hopper-ridgerunner-hillbilly who "came to get welfare" and behaved disruptively. The majority of Cincinnati's mountaineer migrants turned out to be young people who came to find work, lived similarly to their city-bred neighbors of comparable social and economic status, and yet bore the brunt of layoffs and seasonal workforce reductions.

Nearly two decades later, Roscoe Giffin inquired again into the "adjustment" of Appalachian migrants to life in Cincinnati. Using a larger sample and a more scientific method than Leybourne, Giffin found again that – insofar as participation in churches, clubs, lodges, unions and the like was indicative of "adjustment" – mountaineers were usually indistinguishable from city people within the same socioeconomic group.[3]

As studies of migration were progressively refined in the 1940s and 1950s, sociologist James Brown and others were able to show that, far from being random, migration actually occurred in patterned systems or "streams." Mountaineers from eastern Kentucky tended to migrate to southwestern Ohio (Cincinnati, Hamilton, Dayton); those from western West Virginia moved to central and northeastern Ohio (Columbus, Akron and Cleveland); those from eastern West Virginia found their way to Pittsburgh or the Maryland-Washington, D.C., area.

The work of the early scholars was useful in relating Appalachian migration to economic change inside and outside the region, charting the large geographical patterns of mi-

gration, and countering the stereotype of hillbillies in the city (which nevertheless maintained its vitality for another quarter century). But to understand the migration of Southern mountaineers to northern Maryland – and especially to comprehend its significance for music and musicians – one has to reach beyond the urban-oriented, "macro" studies of migration. The migration of which the Campbells, DeBusks, Lundys and others were a part was mostly a rural-to-rural and rural-to-small-town migration, and the "adjustment" to be comprehended involves musicians rather than blue-collar auto or rubber plant workers.[4]

As early as 1940, Woodrow Clevinger's study of Appalachian migrants in western Washington suggested that rural-to-rural migration was a healthier phenomenon than the rural-to-urban movement upon which most subsequent analysts have focused.[5] Clevinger studied some of the 15,000 refugees from the played-out lumbering areas of Appalachia who migrated to Washington state between 1890 and 1930 and settled in Lewis, Cowlitz, Skagit and Snohomish counties. Families settled close to each other, he found: the Silers and Slagles from North Carolina's Macon and McDowell counties settled in eastern Lewis County; the Amburgeys, Stampers and Adamses from Knott County, Kentucky, settled around Mineral; and the Moores and related families from Jackson County, North Carolina, gathered in the Skagit Valley village of Lyman.

Many of the migrants found work in the expanding timber industry, in agriculture, and in the development and management of public lands. They adapted traditional farming practices to the heavy rainfall and short growing season of the Northwest, substituted new crops for ones found unsuitable to the area (such as sweet potatoes and white field corn), transplanted some species of trees (such as black walnut) from their old homes to their new home, practiced their crafts and trades and taught them to their new neighbors, opened businesses, and got themselves elected to public office. Rather than social pathology, Clevinger found stability and a creative adaptation that left a profound imprint upon economic, social, political and cultural life in western Washington.

The impulse to maintain not only family solidarity, but also a larger cultural – and even political – identity appears to have been strong among the Washington state migrants. Clevinger reported that mountain music – ballad singers, string bands, and gospel singing – were thriving, and that local music festivals were being held. A more overtly political expression of cultural solidarity was in evidence between 1910 and 1920, when the Cowlitz Valley mountaineer migrants tried to separate from Lewis County and form their own county within the Cascade Range where they had settled.

A decade before they had been noted by other scholars, and several decades before they had become a normal assumption in similar analyses, two central facts emerged from Clevinger's analysis of Appalachian migration: the centrality of the family in establishing migration patterns, and the importance and durability of Appalachian cultural traditions within migration systems. Both facts are of crucial significance in understanding Southern Appalachian musicians on the Maryland-Pennsylvania border.

The centrality of the family has subsequently been explored in great detail by University of Kentucky sociologist James Brown.[6] For more than 35 years, Brown studied the community of "Beech Creek" in eastern Kentucky, and followed the migration of its citizens northwest to Ohio. Like several earlier scholars, Brown showed that, contrary to the implications of the stereotype (hillbilly jokes are abundant in Ohio cities), migration was a rational, purposeful, thoughtful, *adaptive* mechanism for Beech Creek people, 78 percent of whom went to Ohio to find work.

More important for understanding transplanted Appalachian musicians in northern Maryland, however, is Brown's demonstration that the "stem family" patterns and gives stability and continuity to the migration system. The roots of the migration "tree" (frequently parents and grandparents) remain in the mountains, while the stem (sons and daughters and their families) stretches toward the city, and the branches fan out into contiguous urban neighborhoods. Thus, instead of being swept along as an atomized particle in an undifferentiated tide of migrants, stripped of identity and cast upon his own resources in an alien environment, the individual mountaineer actually finds himself in a two-pole cultural and economic system, supported by and in touch with both the roots of his own stem family "back home" and the enfolding branches of its extensions into the new environment.

Although Brown's Beech Creekers moved predominantly to the city, his analysis appears consistent with the patterns of migration and settlement experienced by many hillbilly musicians in northern Maryland: families sent out their stems and branches, kin groups settled near each other in their new surroundings, community support networks established themselves, and values and cultural patterns remained vital through constant reinforcement drawn both from the "branch" system and a constant *sense* of being in touch with roots "back in the mountains."

II

One of the earliest migrations to the Maryland-Pennsylvania border area involved the Graybeal family, from just across the North Carolina border near Mountain City, Tennessee. Fred Graybeal now runs the Susquehanna Campground and music park just up the road from the Conowingo Dam–whose construction in the late 1920s was to attract other mountaineers looking for jobs. Graybeal's land was bought by his grandfather when the family came to Maryland around World War I. The Graybeals seem to have been part of a "pull" migration: conditions were not so bad back home, but Maryland farm land was preferable to the steep hillsides they were used to farming. Having money to buy land as soon as they arrived, the family became immediately respectable (perhaps partly because neighboring farms were owned by the Kilbys and the Goodmans, also from Ashe and Grayson counties), and apparently never felt the prejudice leveled against later waves of mountaineer migrants.[7]

The migration of Arthur Wood's family lagged behind that of the Graybeals by about 10 years, but the reason for the migration was similar: better farm land further north Wood was born in Ashe County, North Carolina, in 1910. In 1928, he and his parents – true to Brown's description of the stem-branch family migration pattern – followed the lead of some relatives who had migrated north some years earlier and moved to southeastern Pennsylvania.

photo by Harvey Wang

"The families that left Ashe and Grayson Counties, North Carolina – the Campbells, Lundys, Woods, DeBusks, Graybeals and others – were part of the migrant 'streams,' most of which led not to rural areas, like northeastern Maryland, but to the big cities – Akron, Cincinnati and 'Dee-troyt City,' Gary, Indianapolis and Chicago, Lexington and Louisville, Washington and Baltimore."

"My aunts and uncles lived up here, and they kept wanting my mother and father up here," Wood recalls. "So we just got on a bus and come on up. It was good farming in Pennsylvania, and down there farming wasn't too good. I lived in Maryland for a while after I got married in '34. We lived down there and I worked on a farm. Later we moved to Delaware and I got a job on a rich man's farm. I had an uncle who worked there and a good friend who worked there and they kind of worked me in. I worked for a dollar a day on the farm. That was big money in those days."

The migration of Ola Belle (Campbell) Reed's family came at about mid-point on the half-century span, and was sociologically and psychologically more complex because it was instigated by both push and pull factors. There was still attractive farm land to the north, but by the early 1930s mountain families were also leaving because the Depression had set in.

The Campbells had been in Ashe County for several generations. Although Ola Belle remembers a preacher who tried to raise money for his church by taking her and a friend on tour as examples of "poor destitute mountain children," the Campbell family was not destitute. Her father, Arthur Harrison Campbell, was a schoolteacher and storekeeper. There was no extra money, but hard work and frugality yielded sufficient clothes, food and shelter for a family that grew to include 13 children. During the school year the family lived in the little town of Lansing, but in the spring and summer they moved to a farm on the banks of the New River to raise the year's crops.

The Depression hit the Campbell family hard, as it did most of their neighbors. Uncollectable debts drove the store to bankruptcy, and the farm also was lost. Of all the rumors about places where things were better, the most reliable seemed to come from Maryland. Arthur Campbell had seen a bit of the state on his trips to Baltimore to buy stock for his store, and other Ashe County families had moved to northern Maryland farms and to work on the Conowingo Dam. A relative sent word back that farms up north could be rented for $65 a month. The oldest Campbell son went ahead to look for work, and soon sent news that he had found a job on a farm. The whole family prepared to move. Into a cousin's canvas-covered truck Ella Mae Campbell piled her other 12 children and a few belongings – bed covers, canned goods and clothing. Arthur Campbell followed a few months later. The family's first temporary home was in Nottingham, Pennsylvania, just across the Maryland line.

Ola Belle's first job (it was 1934, and she was 18) was keeping house for a well-to-do family for $2.50 a week. In a succession of such jobs, she felt the prejudice that accompanied the mass migration of mountain people looking for work. "No wonder you people down South never amount to anything," one rich woman told her. "You should be glad to have a place like this to come to." The general attitude, Ola Belle recalls, was "go back where you belong."

As a refuge from such hostility, and as an act of self-affirmation, mountain people turned to their families and especially to their music, two things they had always built their lives around. Arthur Wood remembers going to hear G.B. Grayson and Henry Whitter play when he was a boy in Ashe County, and music was a mainstay of Ola Belle's family. Grandfather Alexander Campbell was a Primitive Baptist preacher who was "churched" for playing his fiddle. Arthur Campbell played fiddle, banjo, guitar and organ. With his brother Doc and sister Ellen, he played in a string band. Uncle Bob Ingraham conducted singing schools in the mountains, and Uncle Herb Osborne brought back mining songs from his work as a miner in West Virginia. Since there was no radio or phonograph in the Campbell home, they made their own music. From her grandmother and her mother, Ella Mae Osborne Campbell (who was from Grayson County), Ola Belle recalls learning "Omie Wise," "Barbara Allen," "Come All You Fair and Tender Ladies," and "Wayfaring Pilgrim." These songs and the home gatherings at which they were sung formed the basis for the music that Ola Belle and other musicians of the migration era would later take north with them.

Campbell Family Band in Ashe County, North Carolina, about 1910. Front row, left to right: Ellen Campbell (Ola Belle's sister) and Rebecca Jones. Back row, Uncle Doc Campbell and Arthur Campbell (Ola Belle's father).

The North Carolina Ridge Runners, 1939, in the WDEL-Wilmington, Delaware radio station. Front row, left to right: Flossie Wood and Ola Belle Reed. Back row: Arthur "Shorty" Wood, "City Slicker" (WDEL announcer), Lester "Slick" Miller and Inky Pierson.

III

For the musicians who moved to the Maryland-Pennsylvania border between the wars, the adjustment to Northern ways had a musical as well as a social dimension. There are specific examples of the merging of the mountain music styles with the music which was popular in the Maryland-Delaware-Pennsylvania area, but the adjustment to a quite different set of performance circumstances may have been more significant. For many of the musicians, including Arthur Wood and Ola Belle Reed, music back home was more often played for family and friends than for formal audiences, and in schoolhouses or barns rather than music parks or Legion halls.

But if the stages were different, the demand for the mountain styles helped to ease the transition from informal gatherings to weekly bookings. Maryland and Delaware audiences which had been listening to the Grand Ole Opry and other country programs carried by WSM and WWVA were primed for the North Carolina Ridge Runners and other local bands composed of musicians fresh from North Carolina and Virginia. The recordings of Jimmie Rodgers and the Delmore Brothers had found their way into many Northern homes by the mid-1930s, and local Maryland musicians like Bud Reed, who had begun to learn and copy the sound of these performers, welcomed the coming of Southern musicians.

Fortunately for the North Carolina Ridge Runners, their audience demanded the tunes and the style the group knew best. Had they begun to play before these same audiences 15 years earlier, they might have found things to be very different. Many of the additions to the Ridge Runners' show, especially the introduction of a more polished Western sound, actually anticipated public tastes and helped to create a greater demand for this kind of music in the area.

The musical changes introduced by the Ridge Runners and other Southern bands took advantage of and took place within what must have been a nearly ideal climate for making music. There were two key ingredients in this positive climate. First of all, there were enough paying opportunities for musicians to make the prospect of performing on a regular or full-time basis a practical possibility. By the mid-1930s, there were scores of music parks and picnic grounds throughout southeastern Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware, each with a sizable audience of regulars and enough gate and concession money to pay and feed a house band. Some of the parks, like New River Ranch and Rainbow Ranch, were created by some of those who had moved north from the Carolinas and Virginia, but most were in existence prior to the major migrations of the 1920s and '30s.

Ola Belle Reed recalls these early parks and the change they represented from the music parks she had known in North Carolina: "Back home in the summertime we had carnivals – they were the main thing – and little parks. They were so little that the few times the Ridge Runners played down there, we would be the only show there. I remember one time we came back on a Monday after playing one of these parks, and Shorty and I couldn't speak. We'd played every half hour all day till the park closed. Up here the parks were bigger and there were more of them, especially in Pennsylvania. There weren't big music parks like that back home. The ones up here didn't always have seats, but they had a good stage, not anything fancy. They always had a good kitchen and stuff like that. Nothing like a park that you go to see, not like Disneyland by a hundred per-

cent. There were a lot of smaller parks that went out at the time. While we were on radio in Havre de Grace, we built Rainbow Park in 1950, then New River Ranch in '51. We'd have a national group and local talent. In the '60s, we left New River Ranch and went to work for Lawrence Waltman at Sunset Park in Oxford, Pennsylvania. We've been there ever since with our group."

Once the North Carolina Ridge Runners and other Southern-style bands began playing at some of the parks in Delaware and Pennsylvania, those parks which had not offered live music quickly realized their disadvantage and recruited local acts. This healthy competition between the parks led to the first bookings of Grand Ole Opry and other prominent country performers in Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania. In fact, the parks may have provided the only opportunity for artists of Opry stature to perform in the area, since growing public interest in Southern music had not yet convinced Northern booking agents and hall managers of the commercial appeal of these performers.

A second important factor in the development of a commercial market for Southern music in the Middle Atlantic was the exposure this music received on area radio stations. Not only were there many more stations in the Maryland-Delaware-Pennsylvania area than there had been in North Carolina and Virginia, but there were many more opportunites for local bands to audition for radio shows and, if contracted by the stations, perform for the larger radio audience on a daily or weekly basis.

Arthur Wood's first band, the Dixie Cowboys, began playing professionally as a result of such an audition policy at a small station in Pennsylvania: "The first group I worked with was the Dixie Cowboys — the Sturgill brothers, Ralph and Russ. They were from down South, but they played fiddle and guitar and got me to go up with them to WGAL in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. They wanted to get on this radio station because they had a country program every Saturday afternoon. So we went up there, took the audition and the man put us on the air the same day. So we started there and played for a while."

While many of the musicians we interviewed spoke of the influence of stations like WSM and WWVA on the development of their playing styles, the small Pennsylvania and Delaware stations such as WCOJ, Coatesville, Pa., WEEV, Reading, Pa., and WDEL, Wilmington, provided the key to a paying career in music and a crucial test for new material. The radio programs seldom, if ever, paid enough money to keep the musicians alive, but they provided a medium for the free advertisement of records and local appearances, many of which were arranged or booked by station personnel. Arthur Wood recalls that the Ridge Runners were popular enough to switch radio stations when they pleased, which indicates not only the popularity of the group but also the number of stations interested in the Ridge Runners' style of music.

It was no wonder, consequently, that many native Maryland and Delaware musicians, including Bud Reed and Deacon Brumfield, began to alter their own repertoire and style to come in line with the music of the Ridge Runners and other Southern groups. But except for a few recollections of the types of music played in the tri-state area prior to the Southern migrations, we have little to go on in describing just how this fusion of Northern and Southern music took place. Once the recordings of Southern performers began to be sold in the area and local radio stations began to play them, the musical complexion of the area changed dramatically and quickly. Some native Maryland musicians who picked up on the Southern style have told us that there was no live music in the area with the exception of church singing prior to the migrations. However, we have gathered some bits of information about the Maryland scene which may help to define the impact of the migrations upon native musical styles.

According to Bud Reed, the small groups in northeastern Maryland which played for dances and parties in the early and mid-1920s, prior to the major period of migration, consisted of guitar, fiddle and plectrum banjo. Bud identifies this particular line-up as a "Northern" one. Bands of this kind, in which Bud himself played, shared a number of tunes with Southern bands of the period, including "Golden Slippers" and "Soldier's Joy." However, their main bill of fare appears to have been music for dancing – waltzes, polkas, and schottisches. These dance forms, as opposed to Southern-style square or round dancing, have often been accompanied by the plectrum banjo as a second rhythm instrument with a resulting sound characterized by Bud and others as a "New England style." Although Bud and other musicians living in northeastern Maryland at this time had no more regular contact with traditional New England music than with Southern music, the instrumental line-up and the emphasis upon certain dance forms seems to suggest that Bud is at least partially correct in saying that the "native" Maryland style prior to the migrations was analogous to that of New England.

One key to the distinction between Northern and Southern styles appears to be the plectrum banjo. The husband of an acknowledged master of the clawhammer banjo style, Bud knows the difference between the way Ola Belle and other North Carolina musicians play the banjo and the way it was being played by Maryland musicians before the migrations of the late 1920s and '30s. Furthermore, Arthur Wood recalls that in the early days of the North Carolina Ridge Runners, he employed *two* banjo players: Ola Belle on clawhammer and Inky Pierson on plectrum tenor banjo. Wood says that he added Pierson, a native Marylander, to his otherwise all-North Carolina line-up because "the local folks seemed to go for it; it was how they were used to hearing the banjo played." In the course of conducting fieldwork for the Maryland Folklife Festival, we have come across a surprising number of plectrum banjo players in rural western Maryland whose repertoire – a combination of traditional and popular tunes from the turn of the century – may approximate that of the northeastern Maryland musicians Bud recalls. It is clear that the migration of a relatively limited number of Southerners into central and western Maryland was much more gradual than was the case in the northeastern part of the state, but whether this factor alone accounts for the survival of what appears to be an older style in western Maryland is hard to say.

In any case, the migration of Southerners to northeastern Maryland, Delaware, and southeastern Pennsylvania brought about a rapid and

New River Boys and Girls in Havre de Grace, Maryland, 1949. Left to right: Sonny Miller, Ola Belle Reed and Alec Campbell.

almost total change in the style of music performed by local musicians and played on local radio stations between 1925 and 1940. Apparently, there was not even a brief transition period during which native and newly-introduced styles competed for the support of the local audience, since recordings and radio had already begun to "soften" those living in the area to the musical migration which was to come.

IV

Each musician we spoke to had a different tale concerning his or her recollections of the movement north. There is little question that the acceptance of the music these people brought with them made the adjustment to the area a much less painful experience than might have been expected. For Arthur Wood and many others, what had been planned as a change of farm land from the hilly and increasingly depleted North Carolina soil to the rich flat fields of southeastern Pennsylvania and Maryland turned out to be a more disturbing shift from farm to factory life. Although Wood's father bought a small farm after moving north, he was eventually forced to take a job at the National Vulcanized Fiber factory where his son began working shortly after the move north.

Yet during this difficult time, there was one certainty in Arthur Wood's life: "I always had my music." Wood's reasons for forming the North Carolina Ridge Runners appear to have had as much to do with his consuming desire to play with musicians who shared his musical background and interests as his perception of a growing market for Southern music in the Middle Atlantic area. The music was not only the means by which Wood and his contemporaries opened doors of acceptance for themselves and their kind in the area; it also provided them with the opportunity to acquire some of the symbols of status displayed by their fellow workers and, perhaps more importantly, keep these symbols during the money crunch of the War years:

"During the war, I worked seven days a week and played an average of five nights a week. During the war, I worked two jobs and it was pretty tough when you didn't make much money working. Pretty hard to live. I bought a new car in 1939. When the music brought money, I would bring it home and give it to my wife and let her put it up to pay on my car. At that time I was making $14.40 a week. My superintendent told me he was going to have to put me on three days a week. He said, 'What are you going to do without your new car now?' I said, 'I'm going to keep it.' He said, 'How you gonna keep it?' I said, 'There's my music money.' And I paid for that car, too. Paid it off before it was even due."

Wood's story is not unique, but his strong determination to stay with his music and his willingness to work with an audience, playing their favorites as well as his own, has had more to do with the establishment of Southern musical styles in the Maryland-Pennsylvania area than any other factor or the contribution of any other individual. Ola Belle Reed, for example, whose own career has seen several decades of growth and change, looks back at her days with the Ridge Runners as a time of special comraderie and inspired music: "In those days the North Carolina Ridge Runners were the *main* band. They weren't the only band, but when they played it was like there was no other band you'd ever heard. When I was playing with them, I don't know where we got the strength to go on. I guess the music was the strength. We played every night, it seemed like, but the people never got tired of us. There was no group around here that could touch us."

Arthur Wood is the sort of figure around whom entire musical scenes are made. He made friends for Southern music, and this acceptance spilled over onto other local groups like the York-based 101 Ranch Boys. What made the Ridge Runners different from the local bands which followed their lead and maintained the group's constant popularity throughout the late 1930s and '40s was their wisdom in retaining the Southern style with which they had begun. In the beginning, the band had built its following from people who, like most of the members of the band itself, had migrated from North Carolina and Virginia. As Southern music became more popular in the Middle Atlantic region, the Ridge Runners won new converts, but never lost their original fans.

"We knew songs that had been out a while," Wood says. "We learned new songs, but we played in our own style, original style. We didn't play it just like they did. We played Southern style. In the Southern style the fiddle player played out the tune in long, smooth strokes. They didn't jump. The Northern music to me was jumpy. When they (Northern musicians) played a Southern song up here, they couldn't play it like we could. It was a different sound altogether. I've heard some of them play songs and I didn't know what they were playing. They were trying to learn them."

Beyond the music itself, one of the reasons for the continuous success of the Ridge Runners was Wood's considerable ability as a band leader. As was previously pointed out, he encouraged other members of the band to introduce new material, including Western swing tunes and arrangements, and put his assessment of the public's tastes first in his changes in the group's line-up. "On stage, I would always try to build everybody up. They all got the same buildup and they worked together. If we would be out in the crowd, we would mix with them and sign autographs." Perhaps more important was the respect and fairness with which he treated the members of his band. "Everybody got the same money; one fellow didn't get more than the other. I got in trouble with a union up in Lancaster one time. One of them

(union people) turned me in because he saw me pay off at the end of the week and I took the same money as the other players. They pulled me into the office and made me take two parts of the money."

Although Wood and many of the other musicians with whom he worked, including Ola Belle Reed, have never been reluctant to point out the Southern roots of their music, neither their music nor their personal lives reflect a consuming passion to return to the mountains they left behind. Wood has returned to North Carolina only a few times, and the Ridge Runners never took regular bookings anywhere south of the Maryland line. Ola Belle Reed has returned more frequently, but she has chosen to make her music in her Maryland home and to spread its message among those who live near her.

In many ways, the lives of these musicians have taken them away from their birthplace in much the same sense that the Depression era carried away their parents and kin to the North. But perhaps more importantly, one senses in the words of Arthur Wood, Ola Belle Reed, and their contemporaries a strong sense of identification with not only the music they have produced, but the pioneering achievement they have made in the creation of a new audience for their music. The degree to which these new listeners originally embraced and have continued to support Southern music is a continuing testimonial to the contribution the Ridge Runners and others have made. The pride Arthur and Ola Belle have in their music is one which derives from both the satisfaction of those special nights when the crowd would not let them go, and the recognition that much of the music being made in the area today owes a great deal to their efforts over the past 30 years.

V

Since the era of the Ridge Runners, the Southern Music scene has continually grown in northeastern Maryland and the adjoining areas of Pennsylvania and Delaware. Some of this activity can be directly traced to the migrations of the 1930s and the continued importance of some key musicians who took part in that experience, most notably Ola Belle Reed. But now the children of the '30s migrants are beginning to make their presence felt and are providing a crucial transition between the Southern music brought north by their parents and the newer commercial bluegrass style which is popular throughout the Middle Atlantic and Northeast.

Ted Lundy, Bob Paisley and the Southern Mountain Boys represent a hybrid of these styles in which fathers and sons make new music within a traditional mold. Bud and Ola Belle Reed's son David is a highly skilled and creative musician whose style and repertoire is based upon, but reaches beyond, the music with which he grew up. Fred Graybeal's youngest son plays with the Lundy-Paisley band and his daughter is part of a young bluegrass band, Fertile Dirt, which plays throughout the area. Whether these younger musicians will themselves move on to areas where their native style of music is less well known, or whether the era of exploration and colonization in Southern music is over, cannot be said. But the mixture of older and younger musicians in the area offers a positive outlook for the music of the region.

One of the more interesting examples of this mixture of generations, and one which reinforces the importance of the family in the Southern musical tradition, is the DeBusk-Weaver family gospel group. Until very recently, when the group began to perform for secular audiences and travel outside the Rising Sun, Maryland/Oxford, Pennsylvania area, the DeBusk-Weaver family was best known to outsiders as an important influence upon better-known local musicians and as one of the most highly regarded gospel quartets in the tri-state area. In a sense, the gospel setting of the DeBusk-Weaver family's music initially placed the group outside the scenes in which their music would be likely to attract a larger following. But the same understanding of and commitment to the native Southern style which motivated the Ridge Runners has gradually come to define the music the DeBusk-Weaver family makes and make clear its share in a common heritage.

The migration story which underlies the musical history of the DeBusk-Weaver family is different in many respects from that of Arthur Wood, Fred Graybeal or Ola Belle Reed. Donny Weaver is the only member of the family with direct ties to the Ashe County, North Carolina/Grayson County, Virginia area: "My family on my father's side is from North Carolina. They came up here about 1932, during the Depression. On my mother's side, they're from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania." Donny's father-in-law, Burton DeBusk, comes from Glade Springs, Virginia, a small mountain town near the southwest corner of the state where Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky meet. Bur-

101 Ranch Boys from York, Pennslyvania, in a 1943 publicity photograph. Clockwise from far left: Cliff Brown (fiddle), George Long (guitar), Andy Reynolds (leader, guitar), Coy (guitar), and Smoky Roberts (accordion).

photo by Carl Fleischhauer

A 1976 photograph of David Reed, Ola Belle Reed, and Bud Reed performing at the Brandywine Mountain Music Festival.

ton moved to northeastern Maryland in the late 1950s, following the lead of a brother and sister who had been recruited to work at the Elkton munitions factory in 1941. Burton's wife, Liz, is also from southwestern Virginia, and their daughter Linda, Donny's wife, was born in Virginia prior to the family's move north.

Donny Weaver is a distant relative of Ola Belle Reed, but their strongest ties are musical. As a boy, Donny recalls spending Sundays with his father listening to the North Carolina Ridge Runners play at Sunset Park. Later, he was influenced by Ola Belle and her brother Alec's performances with their band, the New River Boys and Girls, at New River Ranch, Rainbow Ranch and other parks in the area. Perhaps partly as a result of the musical interests developed during these visits, Donny was instrumental in convincing his wife, mother and father-in-law to pursue gospel singing as a family group.

The music closest to the DeBusks was that of the Carter Family, who lived just down the road from where Liz DeBusk grew up, and whose musical style was so strongly influential in Western Virginia and Kentucky. In addition to the Carter Family and the Chuck Wagon Gang, both of whose recordings were widely available during the 1940s, the DeBusks were also strongly influenced by groups performing in the Bristol, Virginia, area such as Curly King and the Tennessee Hilltoppers and the A.L. Phipps family. But while both Liz and Burton's families were highly musical, they did not take up music as a commercial or professional enterprise until a few years ago.

Since the family has begun performing for churches and other gatherings, they have had the opportunity to return to the musical traditions from which they came. The influence of the Carter Family can be heard in the group's instrumentation and sweet harmonies. On their latest recording, E.C. and Orna Ball, from the Ashe-Allegheny county area, lend strong and totally compatible instrumental support. The combination of these western Virginia and North Carolina sources attests to the continuing exchange of musical influences and ideas which typifies not only the music of the DeBusk-Weaver family, but the Maryland-Pennsylvania scene as a whole.

While the DeBusks and Weavers have come to accept their home in the Maryland-Pennsylvania area, this acceptance has been more painful and has come only with the recognition of people and sounds from the home left behind. Burton DeBusk is reminded of West Virginia by the people he now calls neighbors:

"I don't know why, but there's several things that will remind you of down there. The people, they're just good, friendly people in this area. And I guess it all goes back to the fact that most of them moved out of Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee and settled in this area. So that's why I guess it seems more like home."

Burton's wife, Liz, had a harder time adjusting to the area, but she rejected the pattern of several families she knew who moved back and forth between Maryland and western Virginia:

"There was one or two families I knew of that moved up here and moved back and then came up and moved back again, and they just couldn't get satisfied, I guess....My mother asked me how I'd like to move back down South, and I said, 'Well, I'm not saying I won't ever move back down there, but I'd have to get used to it all over again. All the people's grown up and moved away, all the young people that were little then are big people and I don't even know them.'"

The differences between the paths of migration followed by the DeBusk-Weaver family and other Southern musicians in the northeast Maryland area appear to have little to do with the way in which the group's music is identified and understood. Perhaps the nature of migration itself, and the bonding effect it exerts, overrides matters of geography and history. In any case, the music of the Debusk-Weaver family is more closely connected to that of the Reed family or the North Carolina Ridge Runners than are the different communities and traditions from which each springs. Ola Belle Reed's influence is certainly present in the DeBusk-Weaver family's music, but not so much as a musical force. Rather, she and the Ridge Runners before her have established a setting in which the traditions of a musical form need not be disguised in order to be accepted. Of course, as Burton DeBusk points out, the migration of Southerners to the area helped to provide a pool of listeners as well as players. However, what is at work in this area is not simply the performance of older traditional Southern styles by a number of migrated musicians, but rather a delicate chemistry of masters and apprentices, parents and children, traditional and contemporary ideas. This chemistry provides for the constant renewal of those parts of the musical tradition which speak clearly to both those who have journeyed and those who have yet to choose their path. □

Footnotes

1. Albert N. Votaw, "Hillbillies Invade Chicago, *Harper's*, CCXVI (February, 1958), 64-67.

2. Reactions of journalists, scholars and urban activists to the influx of Southern Appalachian migrants may be sampled in Todd Gitlin and Nanci Hollander, *Uptown: Poor Whites in Chicago* (1970); Joseph Howell, *Hard Living on Clay Street* (1973); a series of articles by J. Anthony Lukas in the Baltimore *Sun*, June 5-12, 1960; Hal Bruno, "Chicago's Hillbilly Ghetto," *Reporter*, June 4, 1964, pp. 28-31; and James Adams, "Appalachia Transplanted," in the *Cincinnati Post*, July, 1971.

3. See Thomas R. Ford (ed.), *The Southern Appalachian Region: A Survey* (1962), esp. pp. 35-84. In "The Adjustments of Mountain Families to an Urban Environment," *Social Forces*, XVI (March, 1938), 389-395, Morris Caldwell reported more "maladjustment" among migrants than among urban families, but his categories were seriously biased. According to Caldwell, having a large family, or a mother who worked outside the home, or a habit of not attending or contributing to the church were all evidence of maladjustment.

4. Representative studies of mountaineer migrants as workers in Northern industry are Erdman D. Beyman, "The Southern White Laborer Migrates to Michigan," *American Sociological Review* III (June, 1938), 333-343; Lewis M. Killian, "The Effects of Southern White Workers on Race Relations in Northern Plants," *American Sociological Review*, XVII (1952), 327-331; and William E. Powles, "The Southern Appalachian Migrant: Country Boy Turned Blue-Collarite," in Arthur B. Shostak and William Gomberg (eds.), *Blue Collar World: Studies of the American Worker* (1964), pp. 270-281.

5. The following discussion is based upon Woodrow R. Clevinger, "Southern Highlanders in Western Washington," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* XXIII (January, 1942), 3-25.

6. The following discussion is based upon James S. Brown, "The Conjugal Family and the Extended Family Group," *American Sociological Review*, XVII (June, 1952), 297-306; James S. Brown, et al., "Kentucky Mountain Migration and the Stem Family: An American Variation on a Theme by LePlay," *Rural Sociology*, XLV (March, 1963), p. 66; George A. Hillery, Jr., James S. Brown, and Gordon F. DeJong, "Migration Systems of the Southern Appalachians: Some Demographic Observations," *Rural Sociology*, XXX (March, 1965), 33-48; James S. Brown, Harry K. Schwarzweller, and J. J. Mangalam, *Mountain Families in Transition: A Case Study of Appalachian Migration* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971).

7. Information on family migration and the transplanting and development of hillbilly music in the border area is based primarily upon a series of taped interviews with Ola Belle and Bud Reed, Arthur Wood, the DeBusk-Weaver family, Fred Graybeal, and Deacon Brumfield. Interviews conducted May-June, 1977, by Charles Camp and David E. Whisnant.

DISCOGRAPHY

The following recordings provide examples of the Southern mountain music prevalent in the Delaware-Maryland-Pennsylvania area. Missing from this list are the two records made by the North Carolina Ridge Runners during the 1940s, which are unfortunately out of print. Since several of the records in this discography are pressed and distributed by the performers themselves, we have included information on how interested readers might obtain them. All are single LPs.

DeBusk-Weaver Family

The DeBusk-Weaver Family Sings Old-Time Gospel Favorites (1973)

Glad I'm on the Inside Looking Out (1975)

Rest at the End of the Road (1977) — with E.C. and Orna Ball and Bobby Montgomery

Available from: Donny Weaver
R.D. No. 3
Box 70A
Oxford PA 19363

The Little Wonders

The Little Wonders of Havre de Grace, Maryland (1974) Kaleidophone KS-801

The Little Wonders of Havre de Grace, Maryland Volume II (1976) Kaleidophone KS-802

Available from: Traditional Music Documentation Project
3740 Kanawha Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20015

Ted Lundy, Bob Paisley and The Southern Mountain Boys

The Old Swinging Bridge (1972) Rounder 0020

Slipping Away (1975) Rounder 0055

Available from: Rounder Records
186 Willow Avenue
Somerville, MA 02144

Ola Belle Reed

Alex Campbell and Ola Belle Reed and the New River Boys (Ted Lundy, Deacon Brumfield, John Jackson, and Earl Wallace)

Travel On (1955) Starday SLP 342

Ola Belle Reed (1972) with Bud, David and Alan Reed and John Miller, Rounder 0021

My Epitaph (1976) Audio-documentary: interviews plus 6 songs, Folkways FA2493

PURE COUNTRY:

photo by Barry Poss

Stoney and Wilma Lee Cooper on Wheeling's WWVA in the 1940s

Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper reached one of their most cherished goals in 1957: they were invited to appear as regulars on WSM's Grand Ole Opry, the undisputed number one country music show in America. Earlier "barn dances" had not survived with the same popularity or the immense listening audience provided by WSM's powerful clear channel station. To be on the Grand Ole Opry was to be a country music star. About the only place yet to recognize this fact was the city of Nashville, still slightly embarrassed by the hick image of its hillbilly musicians.

Wilma Lee and Stoney, like other performers who made it to the Opry stage in the '50s, strongly reflected their rural culture. Their musical roots were nurtured in the mountains and valleys of West Virginia, and their artistry was refined in a long apprenticeship of personal appearances.

Sue Thrasher, from Savannah, Tennessee, is a staff member of the Institute for Southern Studies and a veteran writer on country music.

For Wilma Lee, music as a way of life began while she was still in high school, playing guitar and singing with her family. Meanwhile, the image of old-time fiddler Arthur Smith performing on the Opry stage alongside the Delmore Brothers encouraged Stoney to take up the fiddle, with the hope that he, too, might one day appear there.

Their early career together – with the Leary Family in the waning days of the Depression and after their marriage with their own band, the Clinch Mountain Clan – is an old and familiar story: one-night stands in high school auditoriums, courthouses, drive-in theatres, and churches, and "live" shows on radio stations ranging from the relative obscurity of drive-in theatres, and churches, and "live" shows on radio stations ranging from the relative obscurity of WJJD in Grand Island, Nebraska, to the regional stardom of the Saturday night Jamboree at WWVA in Wheeling, West Virginia. Pure, traditional country music was their way of life; the Grand Ole Opry was where they had always been heading.

By the time they arrived in Nashville, however, country music was beginning a major change. Perhaps it was Elvis Presley (or Jerry Lee Lewis, Buddy Holly or Carl Perkins) who changed the music with a new, sensuous beat that suggested mere toetapping was not an entirely appropriate response. Or perhaps it was Chet Atkins, whose subtle introduction of choral background and strings took away hillbilly music's twang and gave the Nashville Sound some new respectability. Or perhaps it was just the fact that by 1957, people were no longer on the farms, dependent on the battery radio and the local high school auditorium for their entertainment; they were in the cities, working assembly lines rather than fields, and finding their entertainment in the honky-tonks and package shows.

More than likely it was all these things and a lot more. The fact is, the music was changing – floundering initially under the sledgehammer impact of rock 'n roll ("Who are those guys?!") and then searching desperately for the new respectability of cross-

Wilma Lee & Stoney Cooper

by Sue Thrasher

photo by David Doggett

and on Nashville's Grand Ole Opry at the Ryman Auditorium, 1973.

over hits in the pop market. Traditional country music began slipping away, and many of its performers faded into oblivion.

Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper hung on. Knowing and appreciating the loyalty of country audiences, they played and sang as always. To have done otherwise would have been to deny their heritage. When their record company tried to move them toward the "more modern," they simply "got out of there." They did not become superstars, but they did remain regulars on the Grand Ole Opry.

It was not without some pain, however, that they watched the changes in their beloved music, and it was with a growing sense of concern for the future that Wilma Lee noted recently, "It is getting harder and harder to hear *real* country music."

Their long career together ended in the spring of 1977 with Stoney's death from an apparent heart attack. Faced with an enormous hospital bill ($1000 a day for well over a month), and knowing, too, that music is her life, Wilma Lee is now winging it on her own. Driving the motor coach that Stoney taught her how to drive in an empty parking lot, she travels long distances by herself, camping out along the way. She has also put together her own band and is in the process of signing a new recording contract with Gusto Records.

The material below is taken from two separate interviews. The first, (appearing in regular type) was conducted with the two of them at their home in Nashville in March, 1974. The second (set in italics) was conducted with Wilma Lee in July, 1977. When I first talked with them three years ago, they spoke candidly about their own feelings and fears of what is happening to country music. When I returned to talk to Wilma Lee alone, I felt again the same honest examination, but this time with more urgency. Three years ago, and they spoke with one voice, expressing a fierce pride in their mountain musical heritage and an equally fierce determination to be faithful to that heritage. That, too, I found again in talking with Wilma Lee. And this time, it *is* more urgent.

The Leary Family

Wilma: Singing's all I've ever done: I started with my family. I was born in Valley Head, West Virginia, and was two years old when we moved to a farm six miles out of Elkins, so I was raised on a farm.

When I was a kid, my dad bought one of those battery radios, and we listened to the Barn Dance from WLS in Chicago. Now, back then, the local stations all had live entertainment. My dad liked Lula Belle and he would never miss Lula Belle. Then he would turn to the Grand Ole Opry to hear the Delmore Brothers and Arthur Smith. We listened to everything on the radio that was country music.[1]

In 1938, my family won a contest to go to the National Folk Festival in Washington, DC. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt sponsored that, you know. They had contests all over West Virginia, and they offered my family a job. Wanted us every day. My dad said we just couldn't do that because us girls were all in school, but we might come down once a week. So, we started down there on Saturdays.

"I guess the fear of being turned down for the Grand Ole Opry was probably the thing that operated biggest in our minds. We just hoped that sometime they would come along and ask us. And that's exactly the way it happened."

Fall came, and they talked my dad into working every day, so we had to move down there. My mother's brother, Uncle Laney, played fiddle, and when September come, he had to go back to teach school. That's when they hired Stony.

We were known as the Leary family – my mom and dad, two sisters, Jerry and Peggy, and Stoney on fiddle. I sang alto in the group and played guitar. Well, up and down the valley, we would pack a high school out, do a show, pack it again. Two shows a night. It didn't matter how big the auditorium was, we would always do two shows.

The family sang all religious. We three girls had a real good country trio, and we did the country songs. When Stony joined the band, he and I started doing duets. That "Salty Dog" that Lester and Earl done a few years back, Stoney and I used to sing that back then, and it was one of our most popular numbers.

That was in '39. We had a nice show. It was a good, clean, family show. Of course, we have always carried a clean show. Don't go in for that filth.

My sisters sung together for years as the Sunshine Girls, and worked all over the country until one sister got real bad sick, and couldn't work anymore. Then my sister, Jerry, came into Nashville and worked for Roy Acuff as his girl singer for about 10 years.

When we started, there wasn't many women singers in the business at all. Just a few. Back then, they always said that they couldn't sell a woman singer on records. So, I guess that discouraged most of the girls that sung.

Stoney: It was funny. They always said women singers wasn't accepted on records. It always bothered me. I knew that Wilma was the power of our group because her voice was stronger. I have always been a fan of hers.

Now, there was a woman by the name of Cousin Emmy. Terrific showman! Done well enough singing, and could pick the banjo like Stringbean. Oh, man, that clawhammer style, it was something! And she was good at it. Well, Decca tried her. She done "Ruby," the one that the Osborne Brothers had a hit on. She done a fantastic job on it, but they couldn't sell it. Now, they sold women singers in the pop field, and I never could understand why they couldn't sell women singers in the country field, but they just didn't do it. There were very few on record in the country field. I think I can probably say there wasn't over five girl singers who were doing so-so.

Live Entertainment

Wilma: *Stoney and I got married in '41 in Wheeling, West Virginia. My family was working there then. We sang with them until '42 when they went to Indianapolis.*

Stoney thought we couldn't raise a family – we had Carol, the baby – and be in this business and working on the road, so he decided we would just quit. He got a job working for Vaughn Beverage Company out of Wheeling. He drove a truck delivering pop. Now some of the material that has come out says he worked for a beer company, but it wasn't; it was a soft drink company. They had Squirt – it was a flavor between a lemon and a grapefruit – and then they had their own orange drink.

His run was "down the river" they called it from Wheeling. He would have to be on the truck and a-going at four o'clock in the morning and be down that river when the country stores and restaurants opened. And he wouldn't get in until midnight. So, he wasn't getting any rest, and it was hard work.

I was home in an apartment with Carol, just a-sitting around. I told him, "Stoney, if we could find us a situation where we could do a daily show and not have to work out on the road, we could find somebody to take care of Carol long enough for that."

So, Stoney spoke to an announcer friend of ours from Nebraska, and he said, "Out where I come from, the towns are so far apart, you couldn't work on the road." It was during the war and there was a tire and gas shortage. So, he wrote this friend of his at KMMJ, Grand Island, Nebraska, and they hired us. We bought used tires to make sure we would have spares to get

out there, saved up our gas rationing stamps, and went. I guess this would have been in '43.

We stayed there about a year, and then went to Indianapolis to join my family again. While we were there, the newsmen from WJJD Chicago were down in their airplane covering a big flood and heard me and Stoney on the radio. Back then the family would do a show, and then Stoney and I would do one. At that time, they were losing Bob Atcher and Bonnie Blue Eyes – he was going into the army – so they called and offered us that job. That was salary; we didn't have to work on the road then.

We was on the Breakfast Time Frolic, from 4:30 till 7:00 of a morning. Then Stoney worked a day in a defense factory. He was a foreman at the Gary Screw and Bolt Works. Gary, Indiana, right out of Chicago.

Then the musicians union went on strike. They were trying to force the Atlas brothers who owned WJJD to double the number of entertainers. The scale was high there and they couldn't afford to hire more, so they held out. We would go up to the radio station every morning with a program made out and be ready to go on the air in case they settled. We was getting our pay just as though we were working, and I think it went about three months. Finally, Mr. Atlas said they would not hire more people, and if the union couldn't go along with them on that, they would just have to let all the entertainers go. And that is what they did; the union wouldn't settle. That is when the Breakfast and the Suppertime Frolic went off at WJJD; there's never been live entertainers on there since. We were the last ones.

Stoney and I went from there to Fairmount, West Virginia, in '44 and worked there through most of '45. That's where we formed our band. We would work the territory out from Fairmont. Then we went to Blytheville, Arkansas, and worked there 13 or 14 months, and from there to Asheville, North Carolina, and stayed about four months. We came back to Wheeling in '47.

Wheeling Jamboree

Wilma: We worked at Wheeling for 10 years. Big 50,000 watt station.

Stoney: Yeh, WWVA. Wheeling is second only to the Grand Ole Opry. It is only about two years younger and, to my knowledge, in all the years they have carried a live radio show, it has never been dropped at any period.

Wilma: We was never home except for Saturday night. We worked everywhere. We always drove a limousine. When we finished a show on Friday night, we would leave right from there to get back to Wheeling. We had to make the Jamboree, so we would be there until we finished our show on Saturday night, and then be on the road again getting ready for the Sunday date. We worked every week like that.

Stoney: One of the acts we worked with at WWVA was Big Slim, a cowboy star. I think he was the one responsible for bringing Hank Snow to this country. He was really the best I have ever seen with trained trick horses. He could handle stallions with no more than a black thread. The audience couldn't see the thread, but he could handle that horse from at least 30 feet away.

Wilma: In high school auditoriums you would never see his cues to the horse. It was just like he was talking to it, and that horse knew what he was saying, and would do just what he said. Cowboy movies were big then. Gene Autry. Roy Rogers. Tex Ritter.

Stoney: That's right. The Singing Cowboys. We didn't have television then; it was on the screen. Gene Autry was red hot as a singing cowboy. Tex Ritter didn't stay out there long, but I saw him when I was a young boy. I remember in those fist fights how his hair would always fall down and just fly everywhere, you know. We admired those cowboys who could sing and pick the guitar. That's all they ever used. Oh, once in a while around the campfire they would have an accordian and fiddles and stuff, but most of the time it was just the guitar.

Then you had the Sons of the Pioneers. They were just beautiful. Cowboy music back then was part of America.

Coming With The Hits

Wilma: *We did our first record in 1947 in Asheville, North Carolina, with Jim Stanton. He had Rich-R-Tone Records. We did 16 songs in one night in a studio at WWNC's radio station. The first one was "What Can I Do" and I forget what the other side was. Next, we did "Two Little Orphans" and "Rosewood Casket." Then we came with "Tramp on the Street," and "This World Can't Stand Long" which was the hit. That's the one that Fred Rose heard.*

He came to Wheeling to see us, and that is what got us the contract with Columbia. We were with Columbia from '48 till I believe it was '55. We went in under Art Satherly. He was from England, but he really knew and understood country music.[2] *He retired at quite an old age, like in his seventies, and then Don Law came in after him. Well, Don Law was one of those New Englanders, you know, with a kinda "up-town-like raising." He recorded country, but he hadn't been around it and just didn't understand it.*

We were working out of Wheeling, and we got this song that had all the names of the people in it, "I Dreamed of Hillbilly Heaven." Stoney called Don Law, cause we was due a session, and said, "Don, I've found us a hit." We taped it and sent it to him, and he said, "No, that wouldn't sell nothing." It came out by Tex Ritter then and went to Number One. Well, that really made us sick. Then there was another one. Same thing. Same story again. And it made Number One. Well, that just really got us. So, Stoney said, "I'm just going to call him and tell him we want our contract back." And that's how we went with Fred Rose and Hickory.

I believe it was '55. Fred Rose said, "Well, I'm a small company, but if you want to go with a small company, I would be tickled to have you." We were still at Wheeling, but we would come down here to do our sessions.

He really understood our music. Now, I think, originally Fred Rose wrote pop songs, lived in Chicago. But he was one of those that could see the potential in something, and he made it a point to understand.[3]

We were with Hickory for about 10 years. Our big hits were with Hickory: "Come Walk With Me," "Big Midnight Special," "There's a Big Wheel."

Now, the reason we left Hickory – we come with the hit, but we lost our sales. Hickory was a small company; they had a lot of distributors that had ordered records and hadn't

Wilma Lee & Stoney Cooper and the Clinch Mt. Clan

paid them, owed them money. So when we come with our hits, Hickory held the record back, trying to force them to pay up and we lost our sales.

That's not really fair to the artist, so we left, and went with Decca. But Decca tried to take us over into the more modern, so we just did a couple of sessions for them and then got out of there. We didn't have no company to go to, but we didn't want that – rather have nothing. Since then we have recorded for Gusto and Rounder. We had just worked out a contract with Gusto for two records a year when Stoney died, and now I'll be signing with them.

The Grand Ole Opry

Stoney: In 1947, Wilma and I were in Asheville, North Carolina, to do a show with Red Foley. We talked backstage and he asked us why we didn't come to the Grand Ole Opry. He said, "You've got exactly what is accepted there, and I'd love to see you come." He was working the Opry then; this was before he moved to Springfield, Missouri, to do the Ozark Jubilee.

I said, "Well, if we knew how to come, we would."

I don't know; at that time we were just not very pushy. Well, let me retract that; I guess we were afraid to get a turndown. You see, in my mind the Opry was a goal, and I'm sure it was for Wilma. It was a goal when I was learning to play the fiddle and listened to Arthur Smith. He was a great fiddler. And it used to be for fiddlers; it wasn't just singers that starred on the Opry. Judge Hay would introduce those fiddlers, buddy, as Number One. Boy, they didn't have any singers. And when I listened to them on the radio, I could see so many things dance around in my mind – exactly how they were performing and what they looked like – without even seeing them. It was an image that was built up in my mind. And oh, brother, if I could just pick up there!

In a way, I like to hear the talk about a television show every Saturday night, and then another way, I don't think it can capture quite what it was. So many things, like "Lum and Abner" and a lot of those old shows were so good that your imagination was much greater than what they can bring across on the tube.

But that was our goal. The Grand Ole Opry.

I guess the fear of being turned down for the Grand Ole Opry was probably the thing that operated biggest in our minds. We just hoped that sometime they would come along and ask us. And that's exactly the way it happened.

Wilma: We worked a big package show in Richmond, Virginia, at the auditorium there. We were out of Wheeling, and the rest of the groups were all out of Nashville. The Grand Ole Opry manager, Dee Kilpatrick, was there and saw our act and called us the next week.

We were the first full group they hired. They had just been hiring solos and duets, but when they brought us, they let us bring our whole band, the Clinch Mountain Boys.

When we came in here, we were already booked for a year – all up in the Northeast, near Wheeling. A lot of them that had been here for several years wasn't working like we were. But we had come in here already booked; our dates were already set.

Then, we signed with Acuff-Rose and were booked by Jim McConnell. He just had us working! I'm telling you we drove . . . it didn't matter if the man up in Boston said I want Wilma Lee and Stony Cooper for Friday night, and the man out in Denver said I want Wilma Lee and Stoney Saturday night – that is the way he would book us. We worked in Denver on Saturday night and on Monday had to be in Brockton, Massachusetts, and just made it. He had us working all the time.

They had a lot of shows going when we first came in here. They had an hour early morning show, and then they had Noon Time Neighbors. Later they had an afternoon television show

that the acts that was in town would do each day. Then, of course, the Friday night Opry which we did at the WSM studio in the National Life Building. For the Saturday night Opry, we would come to the Ryman Auditorium. The performers who were in town and available would do the shows; that was the way they worked it. We did a lot of them.

You see, WSM is clear channel. Now WWVA was 50,000 watts, but it wasn't clear channel; it covered from Florida right up the eastern seaboard into Canada – came into Canada just like a local station – and carried over to about Detroit. It covered millions of people because it is so thickly populated up there in the Northeast. But Nashville, WSM, goes anywhere. So your advertising can be heard. That's the importance of it. It's the top show in country music. There is no other show that you can go to in country music that would be bigger than the Grand Ole Opry.

All the old standards were here when we came.

Stoney: Roy Acuff. Ernest Tubb.

Wilma: Hank Snow.

Stoney: Bill Monroe.

Wilma: Jim Reeves.

Stoney: Johnny Cash. I think he came in a little after we did. Porter Wagoner.

Wilma: Yeh. He came in about the same time we did. Bill Carlisle, the Wilburn Brothers. Let's see . . . Stringbean. Grandpa Jones . . . Dell Wood.

Stoney: Oh, they had, maybe not quite as many, but a goodly number like they do now. Marty Robbins, of course.

Wilma: Faron Young. Ferlin Husky. All the Carter Family, Mother Maybelle and her daughters. Carl Smith brought them here from Knoxville.

Stoney: Chester Atkins was with them when they came in here. He played guitar.

We came into the Opry at the worst possible time you could find, 1957. Rock 'n roll had just hit, and country music looked like it was on its way out. It was almost impossible to say that you played it or performed it. You could almost feel people draw back. It was a state of confusion like we often get in America.

Most of us failed to realize that country music was the earthy type music that would never leave, and that it didn't mean that rock 'n roll had invaded country music; it just meant that we had to make room for it and let it run its course. I think rock 'n roll will always be here, just like country music, because it has a good beat to it. But country music – nothing will push it out. It's bigger today than I have ever seen it in my life. It has quit being . . . well, you don't have to say it in quiet tones anymore.

Wilma: It's truly the American music, you know. The music of our country. It's what you call original.

I'm one of those believers in *basic* country music. That is what made the Opry true country music. Now I've noticed in later years they just keep that little few that they have of basic country. They're bringing in, in my estimation, too much of the modern, leaning too much to pop. And I think they are going too far that way. The scales are not going to balance, because that won't hold a show year after year.

Well, I say they need to keep the balance, to keep that tradition. You know, when you start recording, your A&R man, the first thing he does is try to change you to have hits for the jukebox. Hits! Hits! Hits! And as they do that, they lean you toward the more modern; they take you away from that what you can do, see. That happened to us with Decca. Stoney and I can just sing one way and that is it. You can't change us much.

Opryland, USA

Wilma: *I think they're just going to keep on until they get country music merged with the pop. That's what it looks like to me.* Real *country music – it's getting to the point where you will not be able to hear it. It won't*

photo by David Dyar Massey

Wilma Lee on the road, 1977

be played. Even like over here at the Grand Ole Opry, if you'll notice, the new acts they are bringing in are very far away from country. In fact, they ignore their country musicians.

That show was founded on pure country, the fiddle and then the singing when it come in with Acuff. It was founded on that. It was not founded on this new modern stuff. And I think if they are going to cater to anything, they should cater to what the foundation of the Opry was. Course, maybe I want to see our country stay. But that's the way that station and that program was founded, and I think they should protect it. They've got all the other stuff down there in the park [Opryland, USA].

Working the new Opry House is like working some big auditorium. It's not like the Ryman. You don't have the "feel"; you've lost the closeness to the audience. There was a feel at the other place, a feeling of being closer together, and up there you don't have it. Even among the entertainers, the closeness is gone. The backstage is entirely different.

They didn't have enough seating at the Ryman and there was no way, I guess, they could make it any bigger. But see, when they went out to the Opryland, they built, I think it was 400 more seats in the auditorium. You see, really, the thing was just to get it out there in that amusement park. That's right. Four hundred seats doesn't mean that much – not when you have overflow audiences all the time. They were really building a facility to accommodate these TV shows to come in. And then, they rent that auditorium to all kinds of shows. So, you see, it wasn't really the Grand Ole Opry they had in mind when it was built. It was built for big business.

The only way they could have kept that closeness to the audience would have been to build something similar to the Ryman, only larger. And not put it in an amusement park! Keep it out by itself, separate.

They're just letting the old Ryman run down. They took the seats out and fixed it where nobody could come in and do a show, and they won't rent it to nobody. They were afraid another show might go in there and they didn't want it open for competition.

"Working the new Opry House is not like the Ryman Auditorium. You don't have the 'feel'; you've lost the closeness to the audience. Even among the entertainers, the closeness is gone. The backstage is entirely different."

They were going to tear it down not very long ago and rebuild it in a smaller scale at Opryland and then have church services in it. Now I wonder who would be the minister of something like that? Who would be worthy to minister in that? Now, who could you imagine?!

The Future Alone

I remember years ago, a woman couldn't get on records. A record company wouldn't hire a woman – wouldn't record her. But now, some of their biggest money-makers are women.

Kitty Wells was the first. After "Honky-Tonk Angels" there was no stopping her. It showed the record companies that the people would buy women singers.

But they're still holding on to some of their old ways. Like the Grand Ole Opry, they won't let a woman emcee a 15 or 30 minute show. Well, you see, that is taking part of the opportunity away from her, and makes it harder for her to do what the man does.

I believe that women should have their equal rights. I don't think anybody should be held back on something. If they can do it, fine. Just because they're a woman doesn't mean they shouldn't be allowed to. There's some things I think women aren't suited for physically, like physical work. But in the arts, any form of the arts, there's no reason why a woman shouldn't have equal billing with a man.

My schedule this year is harder than Stoney and I were doing together. But I wanted to keep busy. I told the booking agent to book me anywhere that they wanted me. I got to keep busy; I get into trouble when I have time to sit and think. It's not good. And music is my life.

The audiences expect me to go on, and I know Stoney would want me to. The last few years, he hadn't really been in good health, and sometimes he wouldn't be able to go. Like here, doing the Opry, I'd say, "I'll just stay home tonight, too."

"No, No. You go. You work."

He'd make me go. So, I know he would want me to work now.

I had to hire a fiddle since I lost Stoney. I carry a dobro guitar; the dobro has always been one of my favorite instruments. We've used it for years. Then I have a five-string banjo and I play the guitar. The only thing I've got electric is the bass, but it's my only rhythm, see.

I find that since it's just me now, I'm really sticking with my traditional style of music. That's what I know; that's what I can do. I have no business trying to do something that I know nothing about. So, I'm going to stay the rest of my time – it may not be too long, you don't know what tomorrow holds – but the time I have left is going to be pure traditional. I'm proud of my heritage, and I'm going to be pure traditional. I'm proud of my heritage, and I'm going to stand up for it. □

Footnotes

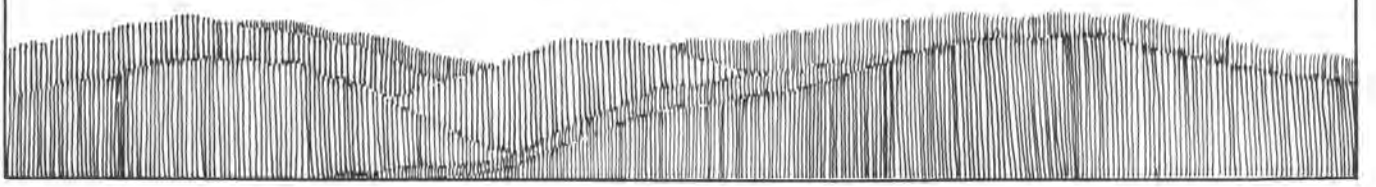
Information for these notes comes from Country Music, USA *by Bill Malone, published by the American Folklore Society, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1968.*

1. Lula Belle and Scotty (Myrtle Cooper and Scott Wiseman) were regulars on the WLS Barn Dance for over 20 years. Arthur Smith and the Delmore Brothers were among the earliest stars of the Grand Ole Opry at WSM. Smith, from Humphries County, Tennessee, was known as one of the great old-time fiddlers. Alton and Rabon Delmore, from Elkmont, Alabama, were popular for their guitar accompaniment that merged deep-South Negro styles and rhythm with traditional country tunes.

2. Arthur Satherly was one of the most important discoverers of hillbilly talent. Among others he signed Gene Autry, Roy Acuff, and Bob Wills and the Lightcrust Doughboys.

3. Fred Rose moved from the pop field into the country field in 1940 when he wrote 16 songs for Gene Autry. He later moved to Nashville to become the staff pianist at WSM, and in 1942, along with Roy Acuff, organized the first country music publishing house. One of the best known writers in the Acuff-Rose stable was Hank Williams.

IN THE GOOD OLD WAY
Primitive Baptist Traditions



by Brett Sutton

For most of this century, a parade of humanitarians, philanthropists, educators, administrators, politicians and businessmen have been attracted by the cultural resources of the Southern Highlands. Their projects have taken different forms, from early mountain folk and craft schools to the crassly commercial development fostered by the tourist industry. Some have worked to preserve traditional mountain culture, others to refurbish or replace it; few have been willing to leave it alone.

Much has happened since English folklorist Cecil Sharp's first ballad hunt in the early 1900s. Although Sharp's ground-breaking efforts provided the model for the collecting expeditions which followed, he hardly could have foreseen the effect that publicity would have on indigenous Highland culture. It is doubtful that early students of Appalachian folklife would have predicted that the local fiddlers' conventions of their day would eventually become nationally popular youth gatherings in the '70s.

It is not surprising that Appalachian folklife should have high appeal for this generation whose members, many of them, are beginning to feel trapped by our throw-away, commercialized, technocratic society. We cannot escape our culture, but we can turn to folk art for a reminder that civilization was created by people and not the other way around. Almost everyone benefits from a revival of interest in folklife. Even the people of the mountains themselves, though they have seldom been the primary recipients of the material rewards of national attention, have at least found a source of pride in their role as carriers of the Anglo-American folk tradition *par excellence*.

Such attention has not been without its price, however. Popularity breeds popularization and, sometimes, commercial exploitation, and for 50 years it has helped shape the course of Appalachian culture, building a public image of the mountaineer that often degenerates into a stereotype. Some of the fruits of the folk revival are worthy extensions of original forms; others are painful to behold, as a visit to some of the gift shops along the Blue Ridge Parkway will confirm. And at a time when "authentic mountain toys" are mass-produced, and old-timey fiddling contests draw youthful participants from the urban Northeast, little of mountain folklife survives in its original form.

The Primitive Baptist Church is one of the few cultural traditions of the region which has somehow remained relatively unnoticed. That an institution of such vitality should have escaped the attention of the folk revivalists is surprising – perhaps the result of the instinctive avoidance of religious issues by a secular-oriented culture. Whatever the explanation, such relative isolation from public scrutiny has preserved not only the substance, but also the context of an earlier era. In the language of the folklorist, the Primitive Baptist tradition is "uncontaminated."

Revivals and Resistance

The Lord laid his hands on me one morning. Ever since that day I been pointed fingers at and called the child of God.

Primitive Baptists believe in predestination and unconditional election. Salvation is granted only to the elect chosen by God before the world was founded, who may be made aware of their election through the gift of grace. Good works and mere human will are totally ineffectual in obtaining salvation, so the church does not actively seek new members. Grace is a beautiful mystery.

The church's sober, some would say gloomy, perspective on the world stems from its frank recognition that suffering is basic to the human condition. No one is immune from sin, and all human effort is powerless against it. Feelings of humility and alienation – universal in human experience – are understood as natural proof that only God's transcendent power can save souls. While this realization gives the Primitive Baptists a basic acceptance of powerlessness and travail, it does not encroach upon their humble joy in the unearned and unmerited gift of grace. Theirs is an honest, simple outlook, truer to the reali-

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The author, a graduate student in anthropology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, worked with the Primitive Baptists of southwestern Virginia under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

ty of daily life than the superficial optimism of many contemporary churches. A Primitive Baptist hymn acknowledges this curious balance:

Mixtures of joy and sorrow
I daily do pass through;
Sometimes I'm in a valley,
Then sinking down with woe;
Sometimes I am exalted,
On eagles' wings I fly;
Rising above Mount Pisgah,
I almost reach the sky.

Sometimes I'm full of doubting,
And think I have no grace;
Sometimes I'm full of praising,
When Christ reveals his face;
Sometimes my hope's so little,
I think I'll throw it by;
Sometimes it seems sufficient
If I were called to die.

Although they are strict Calvinists, the Primitive Baptists trace their history through a long line of nonconformist sects directly to the apostolic church described in the New Testament.[1] The Church's doctrine is founded on a literal interpretation of scripture; they believe that rickety man-made additions to Biblical commandments are false, and they especially object to the doctrine of free will which teaches that people can save themselves by choosing Jesus. The Free Will dogma had gained popularity in America as the cornerstone of the early nineteenth century revivalist movement, and it was in resistance to that movement that many churches consolidated their forces into what became the Primitive Baptist Church.

Upon this group of churches fell the duty of preserving the seed of the "good old way" against changing times. Southwestern Virginia was a major focal point of the creative activity which produced the Primitive Baptist Church, and remains today a center of the church's strength. The commitment to the autonomy of the individual church, along with relative geographic isolation, has produced a heterogeneous array of churches throughout the mountains of Southern Appalachia: along the eastern slopes of the south Virginia Blue Ridge and in the adjacent Piedmont black and white associations, as well as unaffiliated independents. Because of their autonomy and distrust of institutional structure, no single description of doctrine is applicable to all. The most conservative churches continue to reject all deviations from a strictly interpreted Biblical Christianity, including missionary movements, revivals, Sunday schools, radio ministries, church choirs, musical instruments in church, national governing bodies, seminaries, infant baptism and lavishly decorated church buildings.

Primitive Baptists have not made themselves popular by dragging their feet in the face of religious modernization; their unwillingness to help baptize the heathen and their refusal to acknowledge the ecumenical spirit of the times has occasionally made them the target of unreasonable criticism. And in recent years, some critics have accused the church of hanging onto ignorance and illiteracy and blocking needed social change in the mountains. But the image of the church being dragged screaming into the twentieth century is a myth. Although conservative in piety, members of the Primitive Baptist Church are not backwards in any sense of the word. They are modern people with a contemporary understanding of their world, who do not stubbornly resist all change for its own sake. What they do resist is any force which threatens the religious foundation of their world view.

Before the Foundations of the World

And I don't say I joined the church, because if the church don't join you first, there ain't nothing to it, the way I look at it. Cause I can join the church, and I can unjoin, but if the Lord join me to it, then I'll stay there.

Since the Bible teaches that God chose the members of the church before "the foundation of the world" and will gather them in His own good time, Primitive Baptists reject revivalism; they reject the whole concept of church growth. They see no point in campaigning for lost souls, and neither cajole nor coerce sinners to join the church. Once in the fold, however, members are highly committed and not likely to weaken. They may occasionally stumble into sin, as any mortal must, but such an experience seems to bring them closer to the church rather than drive them from it.

One product of such stability has been the maintenance of the social cohesion so necessary for the generation and preservation of folk tradition. Because religion is not merely a compartment of life, but life's entire justification, the church's influence encompasses the whole community. Church business sessions, held the Saturday before the monthly Sunday services, are occasions not just for the discussion of business matters related to the church, but for the airing of general problems troubling the community. The church members, as a body, are effective against forces which threaten to divide the community. If necessary, they can exclude defiant members from the fellowship of the church; more often they offer spiritual and material comfort to the suffering. Church funds are directed where the need is greatest: an ailing sister, a family hit by hard times, a visiting preacher who has traveled a great distance at his own expense (church leaders themselves accept no salary). Community attention and community resources are directed not outward to foreign missions or national associations, but inward to the community itself.

This concern for the local community, along with a determined resistance to change, has deflected the modernizing forces which have swept unimpeded through so much of secular mountain culture. Potent vehicles of change such as radio and television, mass publication of church literature, printed music, and the professional clergy, are excluded from church activities as human inventions which are neither necessary nor sanctioned by God. The only mass media used to a significant extent by the church members are religious periodicals, and these are peripheral because doctrine emphasizes the importance of the direct, personal experience of grace above all written material. Locally designed traditional forms predominate in worship and practice.

Narratives of Grace and Glory

I never will forget it. I was in West Virginia, in a coal mining camp. My brothers, they went in the mines to work. I didn't feel like going out to work that morning. I thought I was

natural sick. I said, "I'll stay at home, stay at the house here. You all go on to your work." They didn't want to leave me, but they went on to the work.

Long about nine o'clock, I laid down across the bed. And being laying there, a man appeared over me. He was just as white, as white as snow. And he walked right up over me, astride my legs, and looked right down in my face. And his hair was as white as lamb's wool, flowing out over his shoulders. And he had a white cloth over his head. And his eyes was just flashing like fire. And he was white, he was so white, his garments were so white. And I felt myself getting numb down in my feet, and death crept on up, crept on up. I was just sure I was dying. This man, he kept looking me in the face. And his eyes was revolving, just like fire in his eyes. I couldn't get my eyes away. I wanted to turn my head but I couldn't. I had to look right at him. Death come on up. I knowed when it hit my heart, I'd die, I thought. But it passed on up to my eyes. My eyes, they felt like they was full of sand, and I was about to close them. He reached right under there and he got a spear out. It flashed like lightning. A little dagger about that long. And it was gold, and it just flashed like lightning. He come down on me with it.

I didn't know nothing then for a long time. I laid there, I don't know how long. When the Lord brought me to, I was laying on a little bench all the way across the room. And I heard a voice, and it come from somewhere over my shoulder, and it spoke like this: "Arise now and shine, for the light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen in you." By that time, I was able to walk out on my own. It was a dark and dreary morning when I went in my room, but when I come out, everything looked new, everything was summertime, and the trees was green all around. The little birds was sitting out in the ends of the twigs of the trees, chirping just like they were offering thanks to God. I ain't never seen a morning so bright. About that time, I heard angels begin to sing, going back into the western part of the world. I heard them sing, "He done died one time, ain't gonna die no more."

At the heart of all Primitive Baptist expressive forms is the spoken word, normally uninhibited and improvisational. No written text other than the Scriptures, no published Bible commentary or tract, no recitation of memorized prayers or creeds, no formal responsive readings — none of these appear in the Primitive Baptist service. The primary medium for the

Woodcut from *God's Man: A Novel in Woodcuts*, by Lynd Ward, 1929.

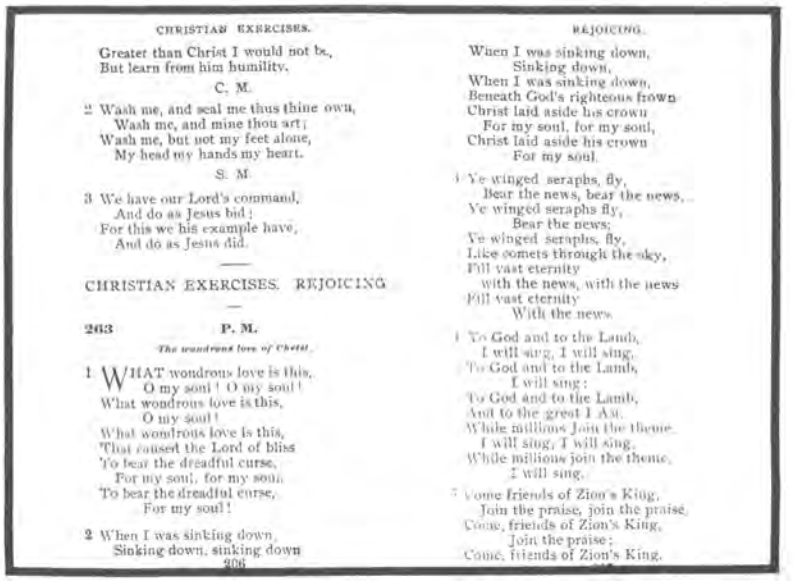
expression of spiritual truth is spontaneous expression, supported by all the creative vigor of 150 years of oral tradition. Worship is not standardized, but draws from each member whatever testimony, prayer, sermon or song has been given through divine inspiration. In practice, all members are not totally free to express themselves as "God commands." Women may occasionally give testimony in church and often are responsible for the leading of hymns, but are not permitted to serve as elders, lead prayer or preach.[2]

Oral historians have noted the extent to which people in rural communities cast the continuum of their lives into dramatic episodic narratives. There is no better illustration than the Primitive Baptists' narrated experiences of conversion and grace, the most finely formed product of their oral tradition. Although they occur initially as mystical private events, they are cast ultimately into verbal form, since no personal experience is really complete until it has been shared and, to an extent, validated through public testimony. In these vivid narratives appear spiritual beings — men in white, angelic messengers, monstrous horses which carry the mortal on tours of heaven and hell. There are cool mountain tops where the sinner is carried to reflect, lonesome roads where voices whisper hymns in the wind, stern commands out of angry skies, miraculous natural signs, divine revelations of the future. These are not artifacts, self-consciously polished by individual storytellers, so much as overwhelmingly personal experiences which become community property in the retelling. The shared spoken word is the raw material for a rich oral literature, no one's property and everyone's inspiration.

The conversion experience may be the heart of Primitive Baptist belief, but the sermon's the heart of Primitive Baptist practice. Since congregations may hear five or more sermons in a single meeting which lasts three or more hours — depending on how many elders are present — they develop a connoisseur's taste for the preacher's art. Never prepared in advance, each sermon is both a personal manifestation of the spirit and a highly organized rhetorical form which calls into play all the verbal and gestural skills of the preacher. God does not call a man to the pulpit without granting him the gift of inspiration that makes him a worthy outlet for the Spirit. To rely on notes prepared beforehand is to admit faithlessness.

A man who has been truly called by God to preach is transformed by the Spirit the moment he steps into the stand. An elder in the region who died not long ago was afflicted with a severe stutter which left him only when he mounted the pulpit and began to preach. Under the divine intervention of God, his words flowed powerfully and smoothly, and not until the sermon ended and the spirit left him did his stammering return.

Aflame with the gift inspired by God in the holy setting, a preacher may narrate his own conversion experiences or draw on communal material by rendering the experiences of others in his own words. He may create dramatic retellings of Biblical events, illustrated with gestures and expanded



CHRISTIAN EXERCISES.

Greater than Christ I would not be,
But learn from him humility.

C. M.

2 Wash me, and seal me thus thine own,
Wash me, and mine thou art;
Wash me, but not my feet alone,
My head my hands my heart.

S. M.

3 We have our Lord's command,
And do as Jesus bid:
For this we his example have,
And do as Jesus did.

CHRISTIAN EXERCISES. REJOICING.

263 P. M.

The wondrous love of Christ.

1 WHAT wondrous love is this,
O my soul! O my soul!
What wondrous love is this,
O my soul!
What wondrous love is this,
That caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse,
For my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse,
For my soul!

2 When I was sinking down,
Sinking down, sinking down

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REJOICING.

When I was sinking down,
Sinking down,
When I was sinking down,
Beneath God's righteous frown
Christ laid aside his crown
For my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside his crown
For my soul.

3 Ye winged seraphs, fly,
Bear the news, bear the news,
Ye winged seraphs fly,
Bear the news;
Ye winged seraphs, fly,
Like comets through the sky,
Fill vast eternity
with the news, with the news
Fill vast eternity
With the news.

4 To God and to the Lamb,
I will sing, I will sing,
To God and to the Lamb,
I will sing:
To God and to the Lamb,
And to the great I Am,
While millions join the theme
I will sing, I will sing,
While millions join the theme,
I will sing.

5 Come friends of Zion's King,
Join the praise, join the praise,
Come, friends of Zion's King,
Join the praise;
Come, friends of Zion's King,

Benjamin Lloyd, pictured above, and his book, *Primitive Hymns*, opened to "Wondrous Love."

by the addition of contemporary parallels. Each sermon is, to an extent, a personal statement, but there is much sharing of style and content among the preachers of a particular circle of churches. Many elders, for example, tend to draw on the same body of proverbial phrases:

I ain't got nothing to brag on, but I feel like I got something to die on.

Salvation is a gift, not a get.

If the devil is out there in the road, make him get in the back seat. If you let him in the front seat, he'll want to drive, and there's no telling where he'll carry you.

Come one, come all, come great, come small.

A preacher is like a radio: somebody's got to turn him on.

Our doors this morning are hanging on welcome hinges.

Though spoken from many pulpits, the spontaneity of the immediate context keeps these stock phrases ever fresh.

As the man in the pulpit warms to his labor, his prose may become melodic and poetic, flowing in a rhythmic chant that can be notated like music. It is not unusual, in fact, for the preacher to incorporate hymn stanzas into the already rhythmic text of the sermon. In the black church, the congregation may actually participate in such a sermon, shouting and singing in harmony with the elder. Conventional categories are useless to describe such an event; here, song and sermon flow together as one.

Hymns to Fill the Soul

A man can preach all day long, and if you don't feel it, it don't do you no good. That's the way that is. And you can sing, and if the Lord give you a spirit to sing, that singing is just as good as preaching. It fills you up all over; you get just like a new person in there. Yes sir, you get to where you just can't hardly sit on your seat. Make you feel right. That's right! Now, I have seen people preach, oh, I don't know how long, look like it didn't have a good effect on you. Just preach, didn't warm you up. And then a woman in there can just sing a song, and it just gets all over you. That's right! That's strange — it's a strange thing to say about it. It look like they can just sing a song, somebody can just pick up a song book and sing a song, look like that song just feeds you, and just fills your soul, right now. And that's the good part of it.

The Primitive Baptists are still using the same hymn texts which formed the backbone of the repertory when the church was founded in the early nineteenth century. The two standard hymnbooks, Benjamin Lloyd's *Primitive Hymns* (1841) and D.H. Goble's *Primitive Baptist Hymn Book* (1887), each one containing texts but no music, are still in print. The books contain hymns written up to the original dates of publication, but the core of each collection consists of the stern hymns of eighteenth century Christianity, many of them composed by such great English divines as Isaac Watts, John Newton and Samuel Stennett. Among some of the more liberal Primitive Baptist associations, lighter-hearted, buoyant gospel hymns have gained a toehold, but in most places they have not managed to drive out these sturdy old Calvinist workhorses.

Thumbing through one of these little hymnbooks, one does not find songs of complacent happiness or aggressive optimism, but rather hymns which express humility and fear before a powerful God, the leaden feeling of moments before grace, the terrible fear of damnation, the inscrutable mystery of God's ways. Texts which have long since been purged from regular denominational hymnbooks because of their pervasive gloom retain their importance for Primitive Baptists:

Hark! from the tombs a doleful sound!
My ears, attend the cry:
Ye living men, come view the ground
Where you must shortly lie.

The time is swiftly rolling on
When I must faint and die;
My body to the dust return,
And there forgotten lie.

Lord, what a wretched land is this,
That yields us no supply.
No cheering fruits, no wholesome trees,
No streams of living joy!

When sorrows encompass me round,
And many distresses I see,
Astonished, I cry, Can a mortal be found,
Surrounded with troubles like me?

Such hymns are sung slowly in unison, without musical accompaniment, to doleful tunes drawn from the collective memory of the singers. A large number of these tunes are unison versions of the three- or four-part hymns found in the shape-note song books published in the South during the nineteenth century. George Pullen Jackson has shown that the Southern song writers who contributed to these published collections drew heavily on the tune stocks of the Anglo-American folk tradition,[3] a tradition which also produced the Primitive Baptist music. But it cannot be automatically assumed from such circumstantial evidence that the Primitive Baptist versions were learned *from* the books. The overlap in the two repertories may simply reflect the fact that each had its origins in the same oral traditions of the early nineteenth century.

Whether the Primitive tunes have survived purely in oral channels, parallel to various written extensions, or whether they have enjoyed the stabilizing support of written collections at various points, they nevertheless survive today without benefit of musical notation and are subject to the shaping influences of regional and temporal variation. Some of the tunes are variants of secular tunes: one such tune used with the text "When I can read my title clear" is a member of the tune family associated with the ballad "The House Carpenter." Given the strength of Primitive Baptist singing and the large current repertory, it may contain once popular secular tunes which now exist only in the sacred versions, preserved under the canopy of the church.

Since the words are printed and the tunes sung from memory, texts and tunes tend to float. The same tune, usually nameless, may be used for many texts of the same metric pattern and, on different occasions, a particular hymn may be sung to several different tunes. Such flexibility is particularly noticeable in the black church, where old hymns have been grafted to spirituals, yielding hybrids of great vigor.

Although the experience of conversion and grace is a mystical, private event, it must be shared, and to some extent validated, through public testimony. In these vivid narratives appear spiritual beings – men in white, angelic messengers, montrous horses which carry the mortal on tours of heaven and hell.

In many churches in the nineteenth century, it was common for hymns to be lined out: the song leader chanted one or two lines, which the congregation then sang, and so on through all the verses. This practice, once a necessity in congregations where books were scarce, was abandoned by most churches as soon as books became more plentiful. For the most part, however, Primitive Baptists continued the practice as an honored tradition; it still thrives today among black congregations in general and is common among white churches located in some parts of the mountains.

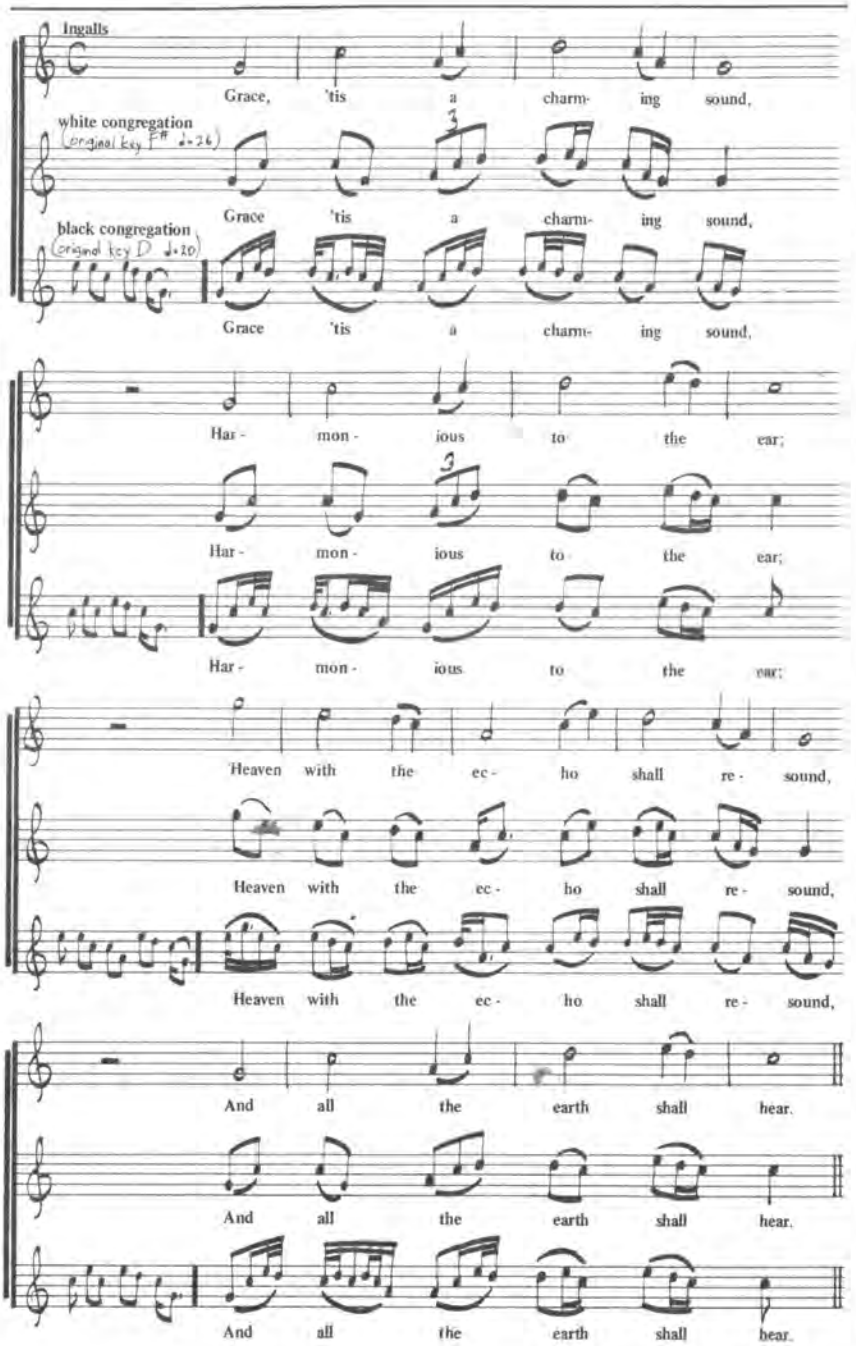
It is particularly interesting to note white and black versions of the same tune. As with many Southern denominations before the Civil War, slaves and masters attended the same churches, and it was not until the late nineteenth century that Primitive Baptist associations divided into black and white branches. If we can assume that there was a common repertory of tunes up to the moment of division, then the contemporary divergence between black and white versions is fascinating evidence of the shaping power of cultural contact on tune evolution. In general, the black versions are slower, more elaborately ornamented, and more heavily rhythmic, while the white versions are stronger in melody and more subtly ornamented. The size of the tune repertory is smaller in the black community (counting only the old hymns and omitting spirituals), possibly because they have never been preserved in printed song books.

Shape Notes and Singing Masters

This century has seen the modernization of Primitive Baptist hymn singing. It really began with the local and itinerant singing school masters of the teens and twenties who found a receptive audience among many of the mountain people. These schools, in which the teacher charged small fees for conducting week-long workshops in religious part-singing, were not sponsored by the Primitive Baptist Church and were frequently interdenominational. They attracted numerous church members, and with their rising popularity, music literacy spread and generated a demand among some Primitive Baptists for fresh material. Temptation came in the form of little paperback songbooks published in the same easy-to-read shape-note system of notation used in the schools. The books were sometimes sold by the teachers themselves, who occasionally served as agents for hymnbook publishers seeking to open new markets by introducing music literacy in rural areas. (It is important to note that these collections were significantly different from the old shape-note books which had never been used in Primitive Baptist services. The songs, the musical style, even the shape-note systems, were different.)

It must have been exhilarating for singers to find a brand new repertory suddenly opening before them. The new books contained hymns which differed considerably in style and content from the traditional Primitive Baptist music, and seem to have had at least a superficial attraction that initially won over Primitive Baptist conservatism. The old unison folk tunes had been built on the modal scales of British oral tradition, but these newer songs, many of them recently composed gospel hymns with lively tunes and sentimental words, tended to be in major keys and were straight-jacketed melodically by the tempered-scale harmonic demands of the piano on which many of them had

KENTUCKY



"Here are three versions of the same Primitive Baptist tune. One comes from a printed songbook, the others from actual services of black and white churches. Their differences graphically demonstrate how various singers can enrich a simple melody using different flourishes, emphases and tempo."

Here are three versions of the same tune – one printed arrangement and two separate performances by black and white Primitive Baptist congregations. The transcriptions are placed together here to facilitate comparison.

"Kentucky" is the name identifying this tune in John R. Daily's **Primitive Baptist Hymn and Tune Book** *(1918). But the Daily book is not used by the congregations whose performances are rendered here, and the tune is rarely given any name at all by the singers; it is unlikely that most members have a name for it. The earliest source for the tune is probably Jeremiah Ingall's* **Christian Harmony** *(Exeter, NH, 1805), where it is called "Delay." It is Ingall's version which is reproduced here. Daily's version, though formally more directly related to the Primitive Baptist Church, is written in three-four time, which is used less frequently among Primitive Baptists than common time. The text here is not the only one used with this tune; any short-meter text will fit.*

In the printed versions this tune is rather plain, but in actual performance, the singers enrich the simple melodic outline with flourishes and ornaments which are only partially reflected in these transcriptions. The black versions in particular are difficult for even the painstaking transcriber to reproduce on paper.

Both versions are performed very slowly, which allows for greater ornamentation but tends to obscure the relationship between the performed and printed versions for the casual listener. The white group averaged about 26 syllables of text per minute; the black group, a much slower 20 syllables per minute. The pacing is so slow that bar lines seemed inappropriate, so I have omitted them altogether. I have also transposed the performances into Ingall's original key of C.

Each live performance was given by a group of several dozen singers in rough unison without musical accompaniment. But since each verse produced a slightly different variation of the tune, and since each individual singer injected personal variations, these two transcriptions constitute only a generalized schematic approximation of the tune, not an exact rendering. – *Brett Sutton*

photo by Brett Sutton

been composed. Despite staunch resistance from traditionalists, the new hymns gained enough general popularity that "official" Primitive Baptist hymnbooks began to be published and adopted by some of the churches. The books included both words and music, and contained mixtures of new songs and traditional standards which occasionally received new four-part facades that made them quite unlike their former selves.

The singing school was thus one commercial wedge which succeeded in loosening the hold of religious folk traditions among the Primitive Baptists. Significantly, it was a relatively superficial modernization, and did not constitute a change in doctrine. And as it turned out, its success was only marginal. The new books never succeeded in driving out the old texts. The habits of tradition die hard, and having neither the accompanying piano (instruments were still prohibited in church by doctrine), nor the high musical literacy to bring off the four-part harmonies which were the main feature of the newer gospel songs, many congregations simply reverted to the unison, modal, ornamented style of the past. Some congregations which have committed themselves to music books have found that the old skills can dissipate quickly when neglected. But others, in the tradition of Primitive Baptist conservatism, have resisted the change, and have refused to allow note books into the church. In such groups, the traditional music is still alive, and the chilling old melodies are still delivered strong and full.

Songs to Keep and Songs to Trade

There's a lot of difference in singing. There's pretty singing, and then there's good singing. And good singing is better than pretty singing. I'll give you an illustration. A son had left home, and his father couldn't sing a tune. He could not sing a tune. In a few years, he returned home. And he greeted his mother and said, "Mother, where's Dad?" "Down at the barn, doing his work." And he went down, and when he got in hearing, his daddy was going over the words

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me;
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

And he said he walked around, and as he turned around beside the barn, his daddy had his head over, and he could see the tears dropping, each time he went over those words. Now, he said, it wasn't pretty, but it was the best singing he'd ever heard in his life.

There is no better evidence or explanation for the survival value and the expressive power of the old Primitive hymns than the fact that the songs live, not just in the church, but in the community at large. Just as Primitive Baptists have resisted the compartmentalization of religion, they have made the singing of its hymns a part of daily life. To hear preaching, you have to get to the church, but the songs are portable, and accessible even if you don't have a Bible handy. It is a rare member of the community who doesn't know, hasn't heard, or doesn't enjoy Primitive Baptist hymns, even if he no longer attends that church.

Most of the music in the home was just singing. Dad would sing in them old hymn books. Many, many mornings in the wintertime we'd get up before day, he woke me up singing some old hymn. Just about every morning, he would get up and get the fire started, and sing a hymn or two before breakfast. And then, during the day or during the night, he'd take a notion — and he'd have us children to help him at night sometimes — we'd gather around a little table with the oil lamp, and we'd all try to help. And that singing wasn't just in the house. We had neighbors who lived half a mile away, lived on a farm, and you could be out — there was no noise, no airplanes, no automobiles or anything to destroy the sound — and you could hear people singing sometimes, I guess, for a mile. The ladies'd be out sometimes about their work, and the men, and you could just hear that singing just echo from one hill to the other.

Because so much attention has been lavished on the secular folk music of the Appalachians, it is easy to forget that there were many families whose entire lives, including their music, centered around faith. The singing of the old hymns and the reading of the King James Bible accompanied church people literally from the cradle to the grave. There would be prayer meetings held in the evenings at members'

homes, and invalids and the dying would request songs of their children who gathered around their beds. But the songs were not always used in such somber, religious contexts. At times they were parts of lighter social occasions. Bean stringings and apple peelings provided an opportunity for people to get together and sing recreationally – not always or only the familiar ballads and secular songs, but sometimes the folk hymns that were used in the churches. Long trips by wagon, and later by automobile, were passed in group hymn singing. While Primitive Baptists objected to the use of musical instruments in church, there was no proscription against their use elsewhere in the community, and the hymn tunes occasionally found their way into string band arrangements. One local musician, Golden Harris, recorded a pair of Primitive Baptist hymns in 1931, singing and accompanying himself on the fiddle.[4] There are even reports from the black community of the hymns being used as work songs during wood chopping and plowing.

It is important to remember that these hymns, as units of oral tradition, were subject to the same forms of dispersion as other genres of mountain folklore. Traveling elders and song leaders, those who had special skill for remembering tunes and building large mental repertories, were the primary agents of song transmission. Song trading occurred with hymns much as with fiddle tunes. An elder visiting another church as a guest preacher might carry with him a favorite tune, and leave it behind when he left, having himself picked up a new tune or new way of singing an old one. The large annual association meetings which brought church people together from a large area functioned, in fact, as the ecclesiastical counterpart to modern-day fiddlers' contests. Song exchange continues today, the only concession to modernization being that some tunes are captured not by the memory but with a portable tape recorder.

Songs Which Keep the Memory

I'd been somewhere and was way in the night coming back. I was coming, and the moon was shining so bright, it was mighty nigh . . . you could pick up a pin almost. I was coming along ridge and wood, leaves and things all off. I was walking and singing. I never will forget the song I was singing was "Blue Moon of Kentucky." The moon was shining so bright, that just struck me, you know, in my mind. And don't you know, as clear as it was, something got over the moon. A dark cloud just overshadowed it, and I couldn't see nowhere. And a voice spoke to me out of that cloud. You know what it said? Called me by name, said, "You quit singing that song. The song for you to sing" – he pointed it out to me – "Is 'The time is swiftly rolling on when you must faint and die.'" And that scared me. That frightened me. I didn't sing no more of that other song. But I'm glad He took it away from me. I ain't got no more charm for them kind of songs.

The Primitive hymns are not just songs which must stand or fall on their own musical merits. They are integral components of a deeply internalized world view, and have a special staying power unmatched by even the best-loved secular song. The expressive range of the repertory is broad, and there is always a hymn one can turn to for special comfort in times of distress. Some of God's gifts, in fact, come in the form of music. One elder tells of two angels hovering overhead as he lay in bed, singing him one of the old hymns as a special message of salvation. Another heard the faint voice of a dead grandmother singing a hymn in the air around him as he worked in the field. Such "gift songs" are valued as emblems of grace, and none who receive such blessings will ever lose the sense of their special symbolic meaning.

Songs received from divine sources stand an improved chance of surviving in the oral tradition. But other factors are also influential. A song treasured as a spiritual gift by a member, and always led by him in church, becomes a memorial to him after he has passed away; it is sung at his funeral and for years afterwards in his memory. On the wings of such hymns, great church leaders achieve a kind of immortality in the oral history of the community. In one recent case, an energetic elder painstakingly reconstructed a tune which had once been the favorite of an elder now deceased, but which had since become virtually dead in the oral tradition. He consulted with those who knew scraps of the tune, and by applying his own musical skills, eventually patched them together. He brought the restored tune back into the tradition, to the joy of all, not only because a great old tune had been saved from extinction, but because the memory of a great church leader had been preserved as well. The tune now bears the name of the elder who had carried it for so many years.

It is hard for any so-called "folk tradition" to survive the rigors of modern life, and the Primitive Baptist community is no exception. But the Primitive Baptists have maintained stability and withstood the altering effects of time better perhaps than most communities with functioning oral traditions in the formal arts. As traditional expressive forms, the conversion narratives and the Primitive hymns have the same ingenuous vitality we admire in their secular counterparts, but are fed by a stronger root system. By adhering to the doctrine that personal contact with God is superior to any artificial or secondary communication, the church has placed itself beyond the reach of the mass media, and shielded itself against the commercialization which transformed the surrounding secular culture. In addition, the church values the old ways and considers them inherently superior to the products of a progressive mentality. It deplores change for change's sake. And finally, the Primitive Baptist community itself has remained strong and thus nurtures the process of oral tradition as well as its forms. Like the Amish, Primitive Baptists have kept folklife strong by keeping the original religious commitment intact. □

FOOTNOTES

1. Elder Cushing Biggs Hassell, *History of the Church of God, from the Creation to A.D. 1885; Including Especially the History of the Kehukee Primitive Baptist Association* (Middletown N.Y.: Gilbert Beebe's Sons, 1886).

2. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak" – I Corinthians 14:34.

3. George Pullen Jackson, *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1933). See any of Jackson's song collections for specific examples.

4. Golden Harris recorded "Dunlap" and "Parting Hand" at Columbia studios in New York City. They were released on the Indian Valley Label.

Children playing games

A Woman of the Hills

The Work of Maude Minish Sutton

by Daniel W. Patterson

Many North Carolinians in the 1930s would have recognized the name of Mrs. Maude Minish Sutton. She led the quiet life of a housewife and mother in a small town on the eastern edge of the Blue Ridge, but the Sunday editions of three major state newspapers regularly carried her "Blue Ridge sketches" and feature articles on folk song. She was occasionally in the news as an officer of the state folklore society or as a speaker on its annual program. She was known to have given her own song collection to Dr. Frank C. Brown for the publication planned by the folklore society. When the volumes of *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore* finally appeared (many years after Mrs. Sutton's death in 1936), they held 154 song texts and 112 tunes she had submitted, not to mention entries in categories like beliefs and games. The "General Introduction" to the first volume praised her as probably Brown's "most loyal, and certainly his most highly valued co-worker."[1]

Today Maude Minish Sutton is largely forgotten. In part this is because the *Brown Collection* did not serve her well. To take an example, her manuscript "Folk Games of North Carolina Children" – a collection of 119 games she recorded during 1927 and 1928 in Rutherford and adjacent counties – was broken apart and the games scattered among those contributed by other collectors. The editors put the game descriptions in Volume I and the tunes for the singing games in Volume V. They accidentally omitted the descriptions of eight of her 11 "Negro Games" and misattributed most of the tunes of this set. While intending Mrs. Sutton no injury, they managed to conceal the one piece of focused and intensive field work that she – or any other contributor – submitted to the *Brown Collection.*

Mrs. Sutton probably would not have complained. Although her letters show that from time to time she thought of trying to publish a collection under her own name, she gave up her title to her materials in the interest of Dr. Brown's project. She never really thought of herself as a folklorist. Collecting songs was her hobby, but what she most enjoyed was the teaching she did before her marriage and her work later with "Little Theater" in her home town, Lenoir. She had a knack for writing and did dream, like many young people in that day, of penning the Great American Novel. In the end, she turned to journalism, drawing chiefly on her experiences as a song collector.

The awakening of her interest in folk song was accidental, although it followed a pattern not uncommon among the contributors to the *Brown Collection* or among other amateur and academic folklorists of the day: her English teacher at Davenport College read "The Douglas Tragedy" in class. Maude immediately recognized the similarity of this British ballad to

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Daniel Patterson heads the folklore curriculum of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is the author of **The Shaker Spiritual**, *forthcoming from the Princeton University Press. The photographs on pages 108-112, by Bayard Wootten, are from* Cabins in the Laurel, *UNC Press, 1935.*

Southern Writers' Conference, 1935, Blue Ridge, NC. Maude Minish Sutton, is seated seventh on the left; across the table, seated sixth, is Rupert Vance; C. Vann Woodward is the fifth standing on the right.

an old song she had often heard from a mountain woman, Mrs. Myra Barnett Miller. After the death of Mrs. Minish when Maude was ten, Myra came and lived with the family for years as a housekeeper and caretaker for the children. She could not read or write, but she had a capacious memory and sang old songs as a matter of course as she went about her daily work. Thrilled by the discovery that Myra's songs had long histories and were printed as literature, Maude began, at the age of 16, to record them in a notebook. Later, when she took a position in 1917 as a rural school supervisor in Avery, a county deep in the Blue Ridge, song collecting was one of the few diversions open to her, and she made much of the hobby. Even after her marriage to Dennis H. Sutton in 1924, she never lived far from the mountains and often found time to hunt up singers.

The vogue of the day among the emerging class of American professional folklorists was to capture a specimen of song and to mount it on a page amid the paraphernalia of nineteenth-century textual scholarship. Mrs. Sutton set out with this as her model. She packed Kitteridge's one-volume edition of the Child ballads in her saddle pocket when she rode about in Avery County. Frank C. Brown reinforced this orientation in later years by writing to dun her repeatedly for stanzas of songs she had mentioned or for tunes.

Mrs. Sutton, however, moved beyond the gathering of texts. When she went to teach in the mountains she was a large, good-natured, young woman who enjoyed people and was alert to the comic side of her encounters. As she entered songs in her notebooks, she took to recording a vignette along with each text. These materials she later sent on to Brown. Some of her accounts appear in the published collection, but they are easily overlooked in the fine print of the headnotes. In any case the editors so excerpted and scattered them that they lose any effect they may have as a picture of the world within which she found the songs. Mrs. Sutton drew upon her notebooks for the more than 60 newspaper articles she wrote between 1927 and 1935; but these too lie scattered through bulky volumes that gather dust on library shelves.

Stereotypes and Mountain Culture

The best of what Mrs. Sutton wrote is worth reading, but one must not approach it unprepared. Her schooling was in a small North Carolina Methodist junior college for women, and in such a place in the years before World War I, modern literature to both teacher and pupil meant John Fox rather than Theodore Dreiser or Henry James. Not surprisingly, Mrs. Sutton's writing shows the influence of local color fiction. She tended to accentuate the quaint, indulge in word-paintings of mountain vistas, and sentimentalize her subjects. It was probably her reading of mountain stories that caused her – before she made her first trip to Avery County – to discuss with her high school class the "arrested development of our own mountaineers."[2] She went to Avery expecting the stereotypes of local-color fiction – "feudist, "blockaders," picturesque cabins, primitive superstitions – and of course found them. Her notebook describes, for example, one hike during which she and a gentleman friend met on the trail "a typical mountain procession":

> *In front stalked the lord and master, behind him the "dawg," behind that the wife "totin" the baggage, a basket and flour sack. "Bo" had my sweater and my arm and was his usual very attentive, gallant self. The mountaineer stopped, stared a moment, and burst out: "Mister, is yer woman sick?"*[3]

The stereotypes of mountain fiction were in fact matched by actual people and customs in Avery County. Mrs. Sutton found moonshiners. Granny women offered her love charms. She attended a "lassy bilin"' and went square dancing at a "frolic." But she quickly learned that mountain culture was more complex than fiction had shown her. She spent one evening in a cabin where "red pepper, beans, and cut up pumpkin strung on long strings, hung from the ceiling" and the woman of the house sat by the fire smoking a clay pipe. The host, who would shortly do time at a federal penitentiary for "blockading," astonished her with heirlooms from an aristocratic Virginian ancestor: his "great-grandfather's uniform of a colonel in the continental army, and a letter from Washington to him."[4] She knew well another mountaineer living on

land settled by his family in the eighteenth century. Far from being a cabin, his home was a substantial rambling two-story frame house. He ran a prosperous farm and proved to be traveled and well informed.

Mrs. Sutton came not only to share the mountaineer's resentment of writings that stressed the stereotypes, but also to repent of her own condescension toward the mountain people who did fit them. After criticizing the fiercely Puritanical outlook of one couple, she wrote, "I looked *down* upon the beauty of the cove where their home is – a far view. Maybe if I knew it from a daily struggle with its barren soil and grim sides my own soul would believe in such a harsh revengeful god."[5] In some encounters she got a flash of insight into how mountain people regarded her own cultural assumptions. Much as she appreciated ballads, for example, she could not work up enthusiasm for the mountain singing style, which she once described as being in "a nasal tone and so very strained that my throat ached in sympathy." She could not "see how a human voice can get the tone that the mountaineer women sing ballads in. It is as if the voice was placed in the upper part of the mouth and nose. It has charm, but never sweetness." Her sister Pearl – a trained musician who sometimes went collecting with her to take down the ballad tunes – was asked by a group of people at a home in the Brushy Mountains to sing a song. When she had finished, an old lady asked, "Do they learn you to sing so deep down at college?" Mrs. Sutton suddenly saw that these mountain people "liked her singing as little as she liked theirs."[6]

When Mrs. Sutton wrote of mountain life, however, her saving grace was her sense of humor. It makes her writing resemble the humorous sketches of the Old Southwest as much as the local-color stories she grew up reading. She drew her material from actual life and retouched it for comic effect. Like the early humorists she produced popular journalism at times fresher and more true to a regional culture than the efforts of many a fashionable literary figure. But Mrs. Sutton also shared some of the weaknesses of the early humorists. Though her ear for vernacular speech was good, she let phonetic spellings cloud her transcriptions of it. She was more skillful in presenting dialogue and sketching a character than in constructing a plot or integrating action and setting. In her authorial paragraphs, stilted diction and respectable attitudes sometimes incongruously intrude. In short, she could write a paragraph or page that has more liveliness or stern veracity than anything in such novels as *The Time of Man*, but her stories and articles are in the end neither completely successful as writing nor completely reliable as fact. Mrs. Sutton wished for informed criticism of her writing. A rather low-key Southern Writers' Conference in 1935, however, offered the only opportunity she ever had even for shop talk with fellow authors.

Castle Walls and Foot Pages

For the study of folklore, however, her writing has value. Few if any collectors of her day showed such interest in traditional singers and the place of song in their lives. One of her more intellectual friends – an astronomer and amateur composer from Vermont – claimed that his own music did not express himself but offered him simply an escape. From her own experiences with mountain singers, Mrs. Sutton concluded that their songs bore a more direct and simple relation to their lives. One lovelorn girl who sang about a jilted damsel who hanged herself "looked as if the heroine's solution of her problem had its appeal for her and her mother said, 'Lulu's been singin' too many lonesome tunes sence her trouble.'"[7] Mrs. Sutton believed the songs even played a part in molding a mountain girl's expectations in courtship. She took down one "warning song" that began:

Come all you fair and tender ladies
Be careful how you court young men
They are like bright stars of a summer's morning
They first are here and then they're gone.

She commented that this

lugubrious wail came well from Zorah. She's the type that any long lanky scoundrel with a gray Stetson on one side of his black head, and a devil in his heavily lashed black eyes could make a fool of. They are so vital that they have a certain easily explained charm, but there's no sense in the he's-got-to-sow-his-wild-oats attitude of these fool women. I believe these songs have a good deal to do with it. I've heard at least forty in this same strain.[8]

Many of the older women sang ballads from the early British repertory that seemed to contradict Mrs. Sutton's theory of the relationship between life and song. She puzzled over what meaning castle walls and foot pages and ladies with milk-white hands could have for these singers. The comments she quotes, however, show that the singers passed over these exotic features without notice. In anecdote after anecdote, their concern is with the behavior of the characters. All her main informants regarded the young lovers in the ballads as true to life and thought their actions typical of human folly.

One woman who sang Mrs. Sutton "The Nightingale" was amused by the heroine's comeuppance. The forward damsel first enjoyed her dalliance with the handsome soldier and then proposed marriage, only to learn too late of his wife in Fair Flanders and his children three. "That was a right peart gal," said the old woman. "I'll bet she never axes another man to have her."[9]

Another sardonic assessment of a ballad character came from Mrs. Ann Coffey, when Mrs. Sutton met her on the Yonahlossee Turnpike one summer afternoon:

She strode along with several boys and men, sons and grandsons. Her slat bonnet was folded in the middle and lay across her head . . . . Her smoky gray eyes had the film of age, but she smiled when I recalled myself to her and wanted to know if I were still "traipsin' over the country huntin' old songs."

She had "riccolected" one that I might like, she thought, and she stopped, sat down on a log and sang it for me. . . . The story was of a girl who loved too well and followed her lover as his "foot spade" through rivers, forests, across swamp and mountain to the home of his ancestors. His mother was puzzled at the beauty and charm of the page and warned her son that his wife might notice the "boy." I had my ballad book with me and showed the singer the original ballad.

"Lord, I don't know B from Bull's foot," she said. "If I had to git my songs from ballits like you do, I'd have to quit the practice."

"It would be mighty nigh as hard on the old womern to quit singin' as it was to quit stillin'," one of the men in the party volunteered. She withered him with a glance.

I read the ballad to her. Then I told her how old it was and how many generations of singers had sung it.

"Well, they's been a-many of a womern with jist about that much sense," the old woman observed. "When a womern gits her head set on a man she's apt to do any fool thing."[10]

It was another encounter with Mrs. Coffey that best confirmed Mrs. Sutton's theory of a direct relation between song and life in mountain culture. At a ball game one Saturday afternoon, two Brushy Mountain boys had gotten "likkered up" and quarreled over a girl. In the shooting that followed, one killed the other. The murderer was Mrs. Coffey's son, and he was put on trial for his life. His lawyer was a long-time friend of the Minish family and telephoned Mrs. Sutton to say that Mrs. Coffey was in his office during a court recess and had offered to sing her some ballads. Mrs. Sutton says that when she entered the office, Mrs. Coffey "was as friendly to me as she would have been to anyone, and greeted me with a calm, Howdy,'" She sat there, a "dark, impassive" woman with "smoky gray eyes" and "heavy hair coiled in a huge knot at the top of her head," her hair "strained so tightly from her forehead that it raised her brows, and gave her a slightly startled look."

The first song that Mrs. Coffey volunteered to sing was "The Gallows Tree":

Hangman, Hangman, slack up ye'r rope,
Oh slack it up fur awhile,
I've looked over yander and seed Pap a comin'
He's walked fur many a mile.

Oh, Pap, oh Pap have you bro't me any gold?
Any gold fur to pay my fee?
Er hev you come fur to see me hanged
Hanged high on the gallows tree?

One by one, father, mother and sister come to the condemned man and bring no gold. They come to see him hanged high. Finally his sweetheart comes declaring,

Oh yes, oh yes, I've brought some gold
Some gold fur to pay your fee,
My own true love shall never be hanged
Hanged from the gallows tree.

Mrs. Sutton writes that as Mrs. Coffey sang this song, her son's lawyer,

obviously moved, wiped his brow and I fidgeted in my chair and tried to ignore the fact that the ballad story was similar to her own.

She turned to the lawyer. "I don't think this song's right," she said, "I know the boy's mother would-a got up the money."

"I'm sure she would," the old man said in a choked voice.

Then she turned to me and asked if I had "The Ramblin' Boy." I told her I did not, and she sang the following eighteenth century highwayman ballad:

They call me the rude, the rambling boy,
Through many bright shores that I've been through.
Through London city, I made my way,
And I spent my money in a ball and play.

I married there a darling wife.
I loved her dearly as my life,
She caused me to rogue, to murder and steal,
She caused me to rob the king's highway.

I robbed them all I do declare,
I robbed them on James Island Square,
I robbed them of ten thousand pound,
One night when I was a-rambling around.

And now I am condemned to die,
For me a-many a poor girl will cry,
But all their tears can't set me free,
Nor save me from the gallows tree.

Mother says she'll weep and mourn.
Father says he's left alone.
Sister says she'll meet despair,
With a diamond ring and curly hair.

Come all young men take warning by this,
Never to marry a feisty twist.
She'll cause you to rob, to murder, and to steal,
She'll cause you to hang on the gallows tree.

The lawyer, veteran of a hundred mountain murder trials, was pale and trembling when she had finished. I was shaking and cold, but the woman, mother of a boy who was to be found the next day guilty of first degree murder, was calm and collected.

"Do you have the song about Jesse James?" she asked. I managed to say that I did, and my old friend looked as though he was delighted to hear that there was one murder ballad that I didn't want to hear her sing. He'd stood about all he could for there were very few mitigating circumstances connected with this particular case, and he had put up a marvelous battle for the life of her son.[11]

Mrs. Sutton says that one lawyer in the court later told her that Mrs. Coffey's "face never altered its expression for the entire trial – not even during the solicitor's final appeal to the jury nor the judge's charge – not even when the verdict of guilty of first degree murder was returned and the boy was sentenced to death. Her mountain reserve held her apparently unmoved."[12]

In all her travels in the mountains, Mrs. Sutton never met another singer she respected as much as Mrs. Ann Coffey, but it was the woman's character, not simply her songs, that impressed her. She wrote of Mrs. Coffey many times – first in the early 1920s in a poem that told how she was widowed as a young wife. A sheriff who had come to arrest her husband for moonshining shot him dead in the doorway. Between 1927 and 1935 she took Mrs. Coffey as the model for a character named Aunt Nancy, who figured in many of her Blue Ridge stories and sketches. All of these hover between fact and fiction. Some stories appear to be based upon Mrs. Coffey's anecdotes or attitudes, but dress them up as fiction. In others, Aunt Nancy blends the features and words of several ballad singers Mrs. Sutton knew, or has a role in a factual incident not originally involving Mrs. Coffey.

Between 1927 and 1935, she took Mrs. Coffey as the model for a character named Aunt Nancy who figured in many of her Blue Ridge stories and sketches. All of these hover between fact and fiction . . . . Taken together, the four sections of "A Woman of the Hill" form her most considered statement of what she had learned of the mountain character

"A Woman of the Hills"

The piece most clearly based on Mrs. Sutton's personal observation is the one that follows: "A Woman of the Hills."[13] Its first section reports her actual first encounter with Mrs. Coffey. In other more prosaic accounts Mrs. Sutton described the woman as having been dressed that day in drab gray homespun rather than in red calico with an apron of Alamance cloth. Her picture of the mob in the courthouse square must record a composite memory of those Court Week scenes. In the next section, the narrator talks with Lyin' Bill on the Yonahlossee turnpike. Their conversation may or may not be invented, but Bill's account is faithful to what Mrs. Sutton elsewhere reports of Mrs. Coffey. The third part of the story seems to be based on a lawyer's yarn, but no other mention of a scene like this appears in Mrs. Sutton's writing. The incident that composes the fourth and final section was invented. Mrs. Sutton served as school supervisor in Avery County, not Caldwell, where Mrs. Coffey lived. The setting, however, is probably a reasonably accurate, if romanticized, picture of Mrs. Coffey's home. Taken together, the four sections of "A Woman of the Hills" form her most considered statement of what she had learned of mountain character.

She also uses the sketch to show changes that had taken place in her own outlook. She had grown up in a county that rises from rolling foothills on the southeast to Grandfather Mountain on the northwest. At Lenoir, the county seat, the prosperous farmers of the valleys and piedmont mixed – and contrasted – with the "cove gulls" of the Blue Ridge and Brushy Mountains. This social gap grew wider when a railroad pushed into Lenoir in 1884, opening a possibility for the development of industrial wealth. Maude Minish's family had been farmers in the foothills (she once found a dulcimer in her great-grandfather's corn crib, six miles from Lenoir), and in the early years of the century her father helped establish furniture manufacturing in the town. He was for decades not only a business leader but "the best Democrat in Caldwell County," a power in local politics.

Men of the rising middle class in the county, although firm in their own values – their commitment to goals such as good roads, education, and progress, or to Methodism and the Democratic party – looked tolerantly on the back-country people. Mrs. Sutton charged that the middle-class women, on the other hand, tended to have aristocratic pretensions. They "fostered the tradition of the plantation life of the Old South" and "tried to cover up the fact that their ancestors worked with their hands."[14] This was a common Southern failing, and one that particularly irritated her when she encountered it at the Southern Writers' Conference in 1935. She tired of hearing all the talk of plantation fiction like *So Red the Rose*. At least in her later years, Mrs. Sutton was a Jacksonian. "I don't like any character in the early days of our country more than I do Old Hickory,"

she wrote; "he really believed in the ideals and desires of the common people."[15]

Her principles were rooted, no doubt, in loyalty to her father's traditions. Strangely enough, it was her love of ballads that actually carried her across the barriers of class and background. Though making no mention of balladry, "A Woman of the Hills" traces this development. The small child frightened by an alien hill-country matriarch grows into the young teacher who could appreciate the tradition her work helped to undermine. In actual life it pained Mrs. Sutton to see the effect of the schools. One old lady would scarcely sing ballads to her for fear she wanted to ridicule them. "She can't understand my interest otherwise, "Mrs. Sutton wrote. "She suffers from an educated (!) daughter-in-law who depreciates mountain culture."[16] In her ballad collecting and in the Blue Ridge sketches Mrs. Sutton makes recompense, leaving a report on a vanishing way of life. Ann Coffey had died. Her "cabin home is abandoned," Maude Sutton wrote. "It isn't far from the falls of Gragg's Prong of Wilson's Crest, and is included in the new boundary of the Pisgah National Forest. I hope the wardens and foresters will leave it alone and let it stand as a type of the homes that were built by the earlier pioneers."[17] □

Footnotes

1. Newman Ivey White, ed., *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore*, I (Durham, N.C., 1952), 18.
2. Maude Minish, "A New Way of Vitalizing the Study of History in Schools," *Current Opinion*, 62 (April, 1917), 242.
3. Maude Pennell Minish, [Ballads Collected in Avery County, 1917-18], I, [16], in The Houghton Library of Harvard University.
4. Ibid., II, 53.
5. Ibid., III, 39.
6. The Frank C. Brown Collection, Maude Minish Sutton Papers, "The Gallows Tree," p.2, in The Perkins Library of Duke University.
7. [Ballads Collected in Avery County, 1917-18], III, [48].
8. Ibid., [34].
9. Ibid., I, [38].
10. Maude Minish Sutton, "Blue Ridge Folk Songs: Kitty Wells," Raleigh *News and Observer*, July 25, 1935. Mrs. Coffey's Variant of "Child Waters" is not printed in the *Brown Collection*. Many of Mrs. Sutton's song notebooks have disappeared since her death.
11. "The Hangman," Raleigh *News and Observer*, March 24, 1935.
12. "Old English Folk Songs in Caldwell County," Lenoir *News-Topic*, April 28, 1927.
13. "A Woman of the Hills: A Blue Ridge Sketch," Raleigh *News and Observer*, Dec. 18, 1927.
14. "Coming Down My Valley," Lenoir *News-Topic*, Sept. 6, 1935.
15. "Coming Down My Valley," Lenoir *News-Topic*, Jan. 17, 1935.
16. [Ballads Collected in Avery County 1917-18], I, 16.
17. Raleigh *News and Observer*, July 25, 1935.

A Woman of the Hills: A Blue Ridge Sketch

by Maude Minish Sutton, 1927

I

It was the first Monday of Court Week in Lenoir, a long time ago. The back lots of all the stores were full of covered wagons, surreys, buggies, carts and all varieties of wheeled vehicles. Little camp fires still smoldered in these lots, for it was soon in the morning. A few belated campers were frying meat in iron skillets on these low fires. Others were hanging the skillets and coffee pots, in which they had cooked breakfast, on the high green sides of the covered wagons. The courthouse square swarmed with folks. Aunt Nancy had come down from her cabin home, under the sheer sides of the Grandfather, to attend court. She was indicted for "blockadin'." Her tall, spare figure was striking even in that interesting assembly. She wore a bonnet, a red calico dress with a very full skirt and a close-fitting basque. Around her slim waist she had tied a long full apron of tan and blue checked cotton cloth. She called this cloth "Alamance." She stood at the north door of the old square brick courthouse, which was in the exact center of the town square. Her smoky gray eyes watched the shifting crowd with an impassive stare. "Hoss traders" led their wares around in the crowd, or galloped them at full speed around the congested square and up and down the streets leading from it. Aunt Nancy's neighbor, "Lyin' Bill," led an old white horse, badly afflicted with string halt, near where she was standing. As he passed he said:

"I alus gits a leetle, jist a leetle, bit the best of the other feller in a hoss swap."

On the outskirts of the crowd an itinerant peddlar of "Ruteena" cried his wares. One red-coated Negro danced on the medicine wagon to the jig that another one played on a banjo. This unusual sight won little attention from Aunt Nancy. Her eyes roamed incessantly over the crowd, watching for the other members of her gang. They should have been there a long time ago. At last they appeared; three tall, rangy men of the same swarthy breed as herself. Their blue-black hair and smoky gray eyes proclaimed their

Gallic ancestry as loudly as did their determined sense of the rights of the individual. The four formed a compact isolated group at the corner of the steps. A short, very fat man, who spoke with a loud wheeze between sentences, formed an interesting contrast to the group of "hill billies" he was talking to.

They were all deep in a low-voiced conversation when a little child made her way timidly through the congested crowd and stole up the steps. Sent on an urgent errand from home to find her father in the courthouse, she was torn between fear and eager fascination at the crowd. As she was halfway up the courthouse steps she heard Aunt Nancy make this statement to the lawyer:

"I can prove by God that I never made nary drap of liquor on this side the Caldwell County line."

In startled terror the little girl paused and turned to look at the blue mountain sky. No sign of an avenging deity en route to earth to establish proof of Aunt Nancy's innocence was to be seen. Slightly reassured, but cold with fright she went on. A few moments later, reinforced by a protecting parent, she came back. Aunt Nancy was standing at the town pump, just above the courthouse, drinking from a tin cup, which was chained to the body of the pump.

"Papa, who is that woman?" the child whispered.

"The shrewdest person in Caldwell County," he answered.

"Please don't let 'em put her in jail," the little girl begged earnestly. "She's goin' to get God to come down to prove she hasn't made any liquor on this side of the Caldwell County line."

The hearty laugh with which her father greeted this remark puzzled the little girl for a long time.

II

It was 15 years before I saw Aunt Nancy again. It was on the Yonahlossee Turnpike one August Day. She was walking along with two men and a girl. The girl carried a tiny baby in long clothes and walked far to the rear of the men. Aunt Nancy, contrary to all precedent and good usage in the Blue Ridge, strode along ahead with the men folks, their equal in all things and so recognized by them. She had aged incredibly in the length of time, but so striking was the impression she had made, I recognized her immediately. Just behind the group was "Lyin' Bill" on the seat of a huge covered wagon, heavily loaded, to which were hitched four big mules. He stopped to talk.

"Isn't that Aunt Nancy?" I asked.

"Yes'm," he replied. "She's on her way home. You know the judge sentenced her to leave the State 'bout five years ago. The Governor has jist let her come home. I'm glad, fur hit purt nigh killed her to go. Her lawyer's been a workin' ever since an' this here new Governor, he's let her come home. Hit's a powerful good thing, fur the old woman was a grievin' her life away. She's the homiest body you ever seed any how."

"Where has she stayed?" I asked, watching the spare body of the old woman as she strode along the mountain road. Just as she turned out of sight down the side road that leads in a tortuous trail to Carey's Flats, under the side of the Grandfather, he answered:

"Yon side o' the State line, 'bout half a mile. She says she used to climb the Roan and look at the top of Old Grandfather an' jest lonesome fur home. Hit shore was a hard dost fur her to take."

"It's a wonder she didn't slip home," I said, with the pathos of that lonely figure on top the Roan gazing at her homestead heavy on my heart.

"No'm hit ain't," replied "Lyin' Bill." "Aunt Nancy give the Judge her promise an' she's alus been a fool about doin' jist what she said she would. Hit's a good thing they let the old soul come home fur she'd a mourned herself to death purty soon."

"Do you suppose she will stop making whiskey?" I asked.

"Not while her head is hot," he replied. "I'll bet they never catch her any more though. From now on she'll pick her crowd with better jedgement."

III

The trait in Aunt Nancy's character which so puzzled "Lyin' Bill" is responsible for her next appearance in this chronicle. She was on the witness stand in the Avery county courthouse, as a defense witness in another of the whiskey cases to which she was so accustomed.

The prosecuting attorney, with the stinging sarcasm of which he was past master, was subjecting her to a merciless cross-examination. In the course of this expert questioning he referred, with telling effect, to every case in which she had been defendant. She parried these thrusts with scornful skill and a wit fully equal to his own. Her lean figure was proudly erect. Her old slat bonnet lay across her lap and the fires of her indomitable spirit flashed in her smoky gray eyes. Finally, he referred to her lonely exile, "Yon side the State Line." It was a dramatic

moment. The spectators in the courtroom winced, for all of them knew the torture that this exile had cost the old woman. They sympathized with her keenly in this suffering, for the mountaineer understands the pangs of homesickness as few people do. A devotion to the particular cove in which his cabin stands is one of his dominating passions. The questioning solicitor had called Aunt Nancy, in the reference, "A menace to the peace of this great commonwealth." The words went home. With a tone of utter contempt she asked the judge:

"Air ye a tryin' me?" The lawyer for the defense grinned. The prosecuting attorney blushed. One of the jurors hid a smile behind his hand. His Honor was baffled, but he looked at the old woman kindly.

"No, you are not on trial," he replied.

"Then, they hain't nary bit o' use of that thar upstart a rakin' up ever thing I was ever accused of doin' and a blame sight I hain't done, and a tryin' to shame me into sayin' I lied about this here case. I don't lie. That thar old devil right down thar," pointing her long finger at one of the most distinguished members of the Western North Carolina bar, "has spoke agin me in four trials, but he knows I tell the truth. Don't ye?" in a tone of fierce challenge. The lawyer nodded his head. "Thar," went on Aunt Nancy triumphantly. "I never axed to come here today. I hain't even suspicioned of 'no crime agin this here commonwealth.'" Her telling use of the solicitor's pet phrase provoked a little wave of laughter in the courtroom.

"I come here, cayse ye made me, to help you and them thar juries over thar find out the truth about this case. Then he puts me on trial, tries to make a fool out o' me. Young man, you're a wastin' time. Smarter lawyers than you air hain't been able to do that. Have they?" again appealing to the distinguished lawyer who had vindicated her previous statement. This time he preserved a discreet silence. "Go ahead," finished Aunt Nancy, her good humor perfectly restored by the expression of her sentiments, "Cut yer patchin'."

The judge intervened and the district attorney excused the witness.

At a recess in the court's procedure, Aunt Nancy sought out the lawyer who had testified to the integrity of her word.

"I'm much obleedged to ye," she said. "You air the last person on Gawd's earth I'd a 'spected to say a good word fur me."

"Why, Aunt Nancy," said the courtly old gentleman, with the utmost courtesy. "I do not bear any malice toward you. It was my duty to appear against you. I never enjoyed it."

"Yes, you did, Gov'nor," contradicted the old woman of the hills, with a flash of whimsical amusement in her eyes. "You like a good fight well as I do. Air ye a runnin' fur anything now?"

"I am not," said the barrister stiffly.

"Well ye needn't hist yer tail on yer shoulder over me a axin' ye," she said. "Ef you ever run agiain, let me know an' I'll vote my crowd fur ye. They hain't nary 'nother durn lawyer in North Carolina got as much sense as I have."

IV

The last time I saw Aunt Nancy was at her home, a little cabin at the end of a tortuous trail down the sheer sides of Grandfather Mountain. The autumn day was as beautiful and as still as the day when the footsteps of God hollowed out the beautiful valley and bulged up the majestic mountain. We had followed the winding trail down from the Yonahlossee along a clear cold stream that plunged down the mountain from waterfall to pool, and from pool to waterfall. The path wound in and out, now by the stream, now back into the silence of the forest, now making its difficult way through a thicket so dense that the ground had not known the warmth of the sunlight for years. There were a few shortcuts along its dizzy windings, where the initiate "cooned" logs, swung from limb to limb of the great trees or climbed a stairway of jutting rock. Aunt Nancy's cabin, of big logs, was very near the last leap that the little stream makes in its hazardous journey down the mountain. The lacework of water on the sheer granite cliff was visible from her door. The cabin, nestling against the mighty wood, fitted into its surrounding as no other type of dwelling could. Aunt Nancy, shading her rapidly dimming eyes with a gaunt hand, watched our approach.

"You're a ridin' 'Walker's Express' today," was her greeting.

"May we rest here a little while?" I asked. "We are going over to the school but we are out of breath."

"Come right in," said Aunt Nancy hospitably. "I drapped my dishrag twice't this mornin' an' I knowed somebody was a-comin' hongry. They hain't no use o' ye a-goin' to the schoolhouse. Miss Molly's mammy died day before yistiddy and she shet down school an' went home. The younguns is a huntin' chestnuts an' galack all over the country. Set down gals, you must be half dead. That thar road is a back-breaker."

We sat down. A long low room with the sylvan charm of an utterly primitve dwelling. Every piece of furniture in the room, except the tiny cookstove, was hand-made. The chairs were ladder-backed and bottomed with woven withes of split hickory. A corner

cupboard, of dark red cherry wood, filled one corner. Across the opposite one was nailed a shelf of wide planks on which the cooking vessels of smokened iron lay. Between these corners was the huge fireplace of great slabs of great rock. In it smoldered a log fire between two big stones which served as andirons. A long table covered with a red oil cloth with two long benches thrust under it, was by the window opposite the door. In the back of the room were two handmade beds of dark walnut, their tall posts reaching nearly to the overhead ceiling. One of them was covered with a blue hand-woven worsted coverlid in the exquisite pine bloom pattern. The other was covered with a hand-tufted spread that was equally attractive. At the foot of one of them stood an old walnut chest. The heavy antique brasses on it were tarnished but very handsome. This was the only piece of furniture of any apparent value in the room. Folded and lying over the top of this chest were several quilts, beautifully hand-pieced in the "Log Cabin," "Star of Bethlehem" and "Rising Sun" patterns. The intricate handwork that it took to make these quilts seemed very foreign to Aunt Nancy's well-known habits, but this day was to reveal several other sides to her versatile personality. The room was spotlessly clean. The wide boards of the floor were white with innumerable scourings. The scouring broom, handmade, of the same kind of hickory withes as those with which the chairs were bottomed, stood under the shelf; by its side was a "bresh-broom" of sedge, tied with a string. Hanging over the high mantel was the handsomest deer head I ever saw. Another pair of widely branching antlers hung over the door. Laid across them was a double-barrelled shotgun, a powder horn swung by it.

Aunt Nancy gave us each a drink of water in a gourd, polished by long usage. She accepted our compliments on its sparkling coldness with calm pride.

"That thar comes from the best spring on the mountain," she said. "Hit's a bold spring and hit comes right out of the pyore rock."

I never saw a mountaineer who did not think that the water from his home spring was not the best on earth. It is a typical boast.

"I don't relish water away from home," Aunt Nancy went on. "All the rest of the water is brackish an' don't taste right to me. I'm glad you'uns got here soon as ye did. When I drapped my dishrag this mornin' I went out an' kotched me a little chicken and salted hit down in the spring house. Then my grandson fetched me a squirrel. I've got hit a parboiling now. Let me hole up a few taters in them ashes an' we'll have some dinner by the time the sun's a hour higher. Comin' down that thar Jacob's Ladder of a road must to a got you 'bout ready fur a few vittles."

"I'm very glad you can give us some dinner," I said. "We will be hungry before we get back to the road."

"They hain't never nobody left my house hongry ef they had any business in hit," she answered, and set to work preparing dinner. She cooked it on the tiny stove and on the fireplace. She prepared the entire meal with very little disorder. She worked with great deftness and the inherent neatness of the very efficient person. In a very short time she had on the table a delicious meal of fried chicken, broiled squirrel, sweet potatoes, roasted in the wood ashes with the flavor that only that kind of cooking gives, cornbread, made of water-ground meal, salt and water, baked in a three-legged skillet over the coals. It also had a woodsy flavor that made it indescribably delicious, dark-brown homemade molasses, golden butter, the inevitable apple butter which makes as regular an appearance as bread in the well-managed mountain home, sourwood honey, foaming milk as cold as the icy mountain stream which flowed through Aunt Nancy's spring box. We did ample justice to this delicious meal.

"I don't make many brags," Aunty Nancy replied to our enthusiastic praise, "but I shore can cook. They's mighty little satisfaction to be had in settin' down to a meal's vittles ye cook jest fur yerself. I'm proud when folks come. Some of my grandchildren would come an' stay with me ef I'd let 'em, but hit's a lonesome place fur young folks. My cow an' my pigs an' chickens is company fur me but they wouldn't hardly satisfy a young'un. I been a pickin' some galax, an' fern, an' sprays fur the last little while. I tended a purty good patch o' ground last year. I et my last mess o' sallit yestiddy, but I got a right smart chance o' taters, an' apples, an' turnips back in the tunnell. My son-in-law carried a purty good load of my cabbage to Lenoir last week. I'll sell off the apples purty soon. This here son-in-law says to me when he fetched me the money fur the cabbage:

"'Maw, some o' these days we'll find you here dead by yourself.' I told him that I 'lowed I'd have to travel that road by myself any how. Course I don't know what's a comin' by tomorrer's sun up. You don't nuther. When you're a ridin' 'round a twisty road, you don't know what's jist around the next bend, but you don't quit yer travellin' just becayse o' that. You're a goin' somers. They hain't no use of keepin' one o' them young folks shet up way up here with a old woman that wants to spend her time a studyin' back. Hit's yistiddy fur me, tomorrer fur them. My courtin's so fur back I jist ricollict hit when hit's so dark an' rainy I can't see to do nothin' but set. They're a thinkin' courtin' all the time. But, I've spent 76 year a learnin' myself all I could about folks, an' courtin' is one thing that don't never change. The crap o' sweethearts is as reg'lar as the crap o' leaves."

Here she lighted her pipe and asked us to come out and look at her trees. They were truly magnificent! A mighty oak shadowed the foot log over the little stream that ran by her dooryard.

"Ever' year when hit puts out," she said, in answer to our comments on the beauty of the oak, "I think hit hain't never been this purty before. God must to a put in more time studyin' out oak trees than any other sort. Looks like He hain't shore yit whether to have 'em shed their leaves or not. This here un alus keeps the most of hits old leaves till the new uns come in. Hit must be a sight o' satisfaction to The Almighty to look at the trees. They're the best day's work He ever done. When He's a studyin' over folks an' the way most of 'em messes up things hit must rest Him to look at that thar oak tree, er that big spruce over yonder. When I see them trees an' the water a runnin' down that thar rock I know why He was proud when He got through makin' the world."

A shaft of dazzling golden sunlight filtered through the big hemlock on her head as we waved goodbye from the road above the waterfall. Her gesture of farewell was as free as her soul. □

THE HOWARD-BAKER FEUD

Lee Howard

Now little lady
you are a going back
almost 100 years in history
and you cannot imagine
the changes I have seen in that time
You must rip up this blacktop road
and tear three quarters of those houses down
and make a forest full of poplars all in that bottom
and plant corn along that hillside
And remember at all times
that this were Bal Howard's land
all from Upper Crane down to the road
even the piece of earth my store is setting on
which he let me use for stabling his horse
when he journeyed by wagon into town
Now from the yon side of Big Creek down to Oneida
was George Baker's land
and straddling these two farms
like a big running snake
ran Cane Creek
and that was the very water
that Bal Howard floated his timber down
And a fine log he did fell
150 foot long and straight as an arrow
and that was what he and his boys did from dawn to dark
Working them hills right behind you
full of tall pine now until they were none but stumps
and the fencing put up for pasture
Well George Baker was still trying to make a go of farming
and this red clay won't grow a thing but weed
we all know
and Bal Howard was just getting fat
felling them trees
and his sons were growing tall
as many a man had to look up to
and Bal was teaching them law
and soon everyone knew
they'd be sheriff and judge too
And G. Baker's boys was the only ones who could of stopped them
And so 'bout the spring of '89
Tom Baker, George's boy, decided to take this into his own hands
He waited til dusk when he figured all had gone to supper
and snuck down to the bank where Bal had his logs tethered
waiting til the water sank to ride them down river to market
Now Tom reckoned he could put a big dent in their pocket
and bulge his out a bit if he sold them logs
not in Manchester where everyone would know they belonged to Bal
but on down to Beautyville
And so he would fix those high and mighty Howards
Well with the sun not yet fully down
Tom Baker cut the rope that tied the log rafts to the bank
and like a flash
was jumped onto the back of one
and floating them Howard logs pretty as you please
right towards Beautyville
Like a king he stood up there
and did not notice a man on the hill
watching him in full view
carry out his devil's work
And like a madman your grandpa
Israel ran down that hill
and was on the raft behind him
And you can believe Tom Baker
was not prepared for that
And Israel said "Pull your weapon Baker
for I aim for one of us to drop dead into this river"
and Tom replied "Now Israel a man can't shoot on water
Let us get onto the land"
Now your Grandpa being a fair man
and not convinced that Tom was
said "you jump onto the bank first"
And by now the sun is down
and the moon is full shining like God's own eye
at the two of them
pacing their steps
and holding their irons
So at Tom's count
Israel snapped his Colt
quick as a snake's striking tongue
but the poison did not hit
and again
it did not hit
And Tom's gun was silent as a tomb
and he called out "Israel my gun is jammed –
the damn thing is jammed"
and your grandpa being a fair man
said "Give me a look at it Tom"
but they neither one could make it work quite right
So your grandpa said
"It looks as though the Lord means
for us to both walk upright
away from here tonight
but mark my words Tom Baker
I gave you one chance for a fair fight
but I cannot promise neither me nor the Lord
granting you the same chance tomorrow night"

So that's the way it started
But 60 years and more dead
than two graveyards can hold later
little lady
that was not the way it finally stopped

Lee Howard grew up in the Kentucky mountains and now lives in Washington, D.C.

A Visitor's Recollections

by John Cohen

Editor's note: John Cohen has played many important roles in creating an audience for old-time music – as a photographer, filmmaker, field collector and musician with one of the most influential groups of the folk revival, The New Lost City Ramblers. In the following recollections, Cohen tells of his first trips into the Southern Appalachians, the people he met, and his continuing efforts to understand mountain culture. At a time when many young Southerners were rejecting traditional music, Northerner John Cohen and a handful of other visitors explored our heritage. Had it not been for collectors like John Cohen, Guy and Candie Carawan, Archie Green, Ralph Rinzler, the Lomax family and the Seegers, it is doubtful the desire for musical roots would have developed as it did. The photo above is the New Lost City Ramblers: (l-r) Mike Seeger, Cohen, Tracy Schwarz.

My first impressions of Southern music were formed during the 1940s. So was my initial image of the South. Those were the days of segregation and lynch-mob justice, and the obvious pride which the South took in its notorious racism could not help but color my perceptions. Yet I sensed the presence of different and conflicting messages behind the stereotypes which then passed for truth about that region's outcasts, black and white alike. Though Northerners deplored the racist stereotypes about black people, they accepted the popular image of white mountain folk – closed, inaccessible and hostile – without objection. In fact, as late as 1960, one of the first bluegrass concerts ever given outside the South, presented by the Friends of Old Time Music in Greenwich Village, elicted the reaction, "Wow – these are the musicians who dress up in white sheets at night!"

This "hillbilly" stereotype, rooted in our own ignorance and provincialism, was nurtured by the country music which blared forth from the radio after sundown, when under cover of darkness, stations like WWVA made their electronic penetration deep into the enemy territory of the North. The songs spoke of Honky Tonk life and cheating wives and husbands on the one hand, and of the longing for home, farm and tradition, on the other. I saw in country music the rural counterpart to the opportunity which professional sports gave the children of the northern ghettos – one of the few routes to success open to a poor kid. The music seemed suffused with glitter and commercial success.

By 1959, I was living in New York, on lower Third Avenue, in the midst of the abstract expressionist art scene, the birthplace of Pop art. My social life included parties with Red Grooms, Claus Oldenberg and Jim Dine; neighbors included sculptress Mary Frank and photographer/filmmaker Robert Frank. I was working on Frank's films ("Pull My Daisy" and "Sin of Jesus"), doing free-lance photography for magazines like *Life* and *Esquire*, playing banjo with the New Lost City Ramblers. Surrounded by painters, poets, musicians and writers, and friendly with the young Bob Dylan, I was on the edge of the birth of Pop art. With the money which *Life* magazine had paid for my photos of Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, I traveled on my own that year to eastern Kentucky to capture the feel of a depression in America.

I recorded local musicians, and photographed miners,

photo by John Cohen

Roscoe Holcomb, 1959

photo by Robert Yellin

Ralph Rinzler records street singer, "Paper Bags," in Nashville, 1964

family farms and the people of the region. On that first trip South, I heard a music which moved me deeply, a kind of music which was receiving very little attention, either in the world of commercial country music or in its own home community. The music of one particular musician, Roscoe Holcomb, hit me the hardest, both emotionally and spiritually, and I suddenly wanted to know what Roscoe had seen and experienced to be able to make that kind of music. When I returned to New York, I carried my eastern Kentucky photographs to Southerner Harold Hays, editor of *Esquire*. He was not impressed and rejected the photos, explaining that *Esquire* would be interested only "if the people were really dirty and starving." The music that I had taped and several of the photographs were subsequently issued on Folkways Records' *Mountain Music of Kentucky*. Hays and I may have been in the same place, but we were moving in opposite directions.

In those days, many people had the idea that the mountains were being overrun by folklorists dragging complete recording studios behind them. I remember one gig with The New Lost City Ramblers at the Gate of Horn (an early "folk club" in Chicago) at which a comedian got a big laugh with his sketch of an exchange between a folkorist and a mountaineer – both of them with their own tape recorders. But during this entire period, field collectors never numbered more than a handful. Public attention was captured by people like Alan Lomax, who swept through picking up the big chunks, and Kenneth Goldstein, who produced endless so-called "folk" recordings for Prestige Records, using nontraditional musicians. Yet there were only three or four of us looking for music at the community level – people like Mike Seeger and Ralph Rinzler, who were doing the initial collecting which would eventually lead to the national acceptance and appreciation of bluegrass as a legitimate field of study, a valid musical genre.

Folkways Records pioneered in this field, and gave us the freedom to produce anything we felt was worthwhile. We worked hard editing, researching, and annotating with a great sense of responsibility. And no audience. Relatively few records were sold, but people assumed that enterprises such as ours were financially successful. In its first year, *Mountain Music of Kentucky* sold only 440 copies. Yet when I went to visit Roscoe Holcomb several years later, the word in Hazard, Kentucky, was that 440,000 copies had been sold, and that I had kept all the money. I encountered the same misunderstanding some years later in Madison County, North Carolina, where I recorded *Old Lovesongs and Ballads*. It had only sold 50 copies in the year after it was released, yet on my next visit there, Doug Wallin, one of the musicians on the record, took a swing at me on his front porch for keeping all the money. Since he knew three people who had the record in his little town (I had sent copies to all the participants), he had assumed that it was selling equally well across the nation. The difference between commercial recording and folklore collecting was rarely understood, least of all by the musicians themselves, and became a source of misunderstanding which persists to this day in some quarters. The fact is that none of us ever received any payment for our efforts.

I mention these misunderstandings about our finances because they have been a source of real pain and discouragement to many of us who invested a considerable chunk

photo by John Cohen

left to right: Pete Seeger, Alan Lomax, Ralph Rinzler, and Mike Seeger, 1959

of our lives in an effort to preserve traditional music. A teacher of mine once said, "To distribute material goods is to divide them, while to distribute spiritual goods is to multiply them." As I see it, the underlying question is whether one views music and local traditions as either commodities or spiritual achievements. Since my first drive through eastern Kentucky, I have viewed traditional culture as a hidden spiritual resource, and my only aim throughout has been to share it with others, an enterprise which is its own reward.

In 1961, a couple of years after I had produced *Mountain Music*, I was driving through Kentucky once more. My friendship with Roscoe Holcomb had continued, and I was still curious about the forces which shaped his music. What were the tensions, contradictions and beliefs that made him who he was? On this trip the questions, sounds and images came together, and I found myself feeling a combination of things which I could not express or communicate through sound alone. So I decided to make a movie to bring sound and image together, to try to capture some of the music, culture and countryside.

In August 1962, Joel Agee and I moved to Daisy, Kentucky, where for six weeks – without the proper training or the best equipment – we filmed Roscoe and recorded his music. We worked in churches, homes, coal mines and train yards. Although the camera was often hand held, the people were less aware of us when we used the tripod; they thought we were surveyors. Music was the film's subject, yet the camera always looked over the musician's shoulder to catch the life around him.

Out of some self-inflicted respect for scholarship, I tried to include a sampling of every type of music: Child ballad, broadside, Native American ballads, banjo song, dance tunes and early country rock. We developed long lists of opposing traditions and forces, and tried to capture them on film. In Roscoe Holcomb's music there were certain tensions which produced a blending of blues and ancient ornamented, almost oriental-sounding music. His experience included not only the traditions of stoical Old Baptists who insisted on unaccompanied church singing, but also those of Holiness congregations who found Dionysian emotional release in shouting, clapping and playing stringed instruments. Roscoe's belief in old-time living – gardening, hard physical work and home-made music and dances – contrasted with the mechanization of the coal mines, juke box music and white bread and baloney sandwiches. His own kids listened to country rock 'n roll, and shunned their father's music. These tensions, along with the physical hardships and poverty of eastern Kentucky added an intensity and keenness to his singing.

When *High Lonesome Sound* was first released, I felt as if it had no impact at all, especially on the folk musicians and scholars around me. It was received poorly by Alan Lomax, and with little understanding by anyone except reviewer Paul Nelson in *Sing Out* magazine. However, it *has* had an effect on the subsequent generation of folklorists and filmmakers, and was an early part of the movement towards folk-film. It is now used in basic folklore courses at Indiana University and at the University of North Carolina. The phrase High Lonesome Sound has become the generic name for bluegrass-style singing. Nonetheless, I didn't receive any royalties until 1970, seven years after completing the film, and I have yet to recover production costs.

In 1967, with only a sense of personal commitment and a low budget, I began my second film, *The End of an Old Song*. I had met some powerful ballad singers in Madison County, North Carolina, in 1963 and had recorded them for Folkways Records. I was impressed by their seeming isolation from the influences of modern American culture; a sense of separation and the loneliness was embodied in the music and life of Dillard Chandler, who became the film's central figure.

Originally, I had planned to film Dillard singing an old love song on the front porch, showing the mountaineers and farm animals around, and then cut from his face to a gigantic audience of long-haired, counter-culture kids at the Newport Folk Festival where Dillard was scheduled to sing. My camera was ready, but Dillard never appeared at Newport; he was afraid to travel and unwilling to leave the mountains. So I returned to North Carolina that fall and completed the filming there. It was amazing to hear him narrate intimate thoughts of his neglected love life. The ease with which he sang old ballads belied the surrounding social emptiness. Listening to him, I could see a real connection between the singer and the subject matter of the songs. The frustrations of Dillard's life found expression only in his music, while he maintained a deadpan character – cool and removed from the changing world.

Good fortune brought me together with Helen Levitt – humanist, artist and photographer – and together we edited the film. From her I learned about the filmmaker's responsibility to subject and self. In fact, the connection between the film, the arts and society all became clear as a result of this first collaboration with Helen. She has saved me several times since in the face of distractions and diversions.

In the *End of an Old Song*, Dillard Chandler is pitted against the Jukebox; background music in a bar becomes a combatant. I find that the background music in our lives is our ambivalent enemy. On one hand, its soothing sound provides an artificial continuity to our life; on the other hand, as we sink into that sound, we are deprived of our own voice, and our own songs and made deaf to the voices and songs of others.

My most recent film effort, *Musical Holdouts*, is a tribute to those who have resisted the forces of the media in their music and life. It deals with a sampling of those American groups who have maintained their individual identity in an age of mass culture. The question is no longer whether these groups will survive; this film only celebrates the fact of their existence. The film includes short musical sections about black children in the Carolina Sea Islands, and home musicians in the mountains of Tennessee and Kentucky whose music flows into the bluegrass of Ralph Stanley. Cowboy singer Glen Orhlin sings at his ranch in Arkansas, and Indians in Oklahoma sing on the radio and at their gatherings. The film ends with the street musicans of Berkeley, California, playing mountain songs for busking – and an uneasy comparison between their constructed lifestyle and the inherited traditions around the older musical groups in the film.

Today it is wonderful to see a new generation of young Southerners becoming actively interested in their own musical traditions, and doing some exciting and significant collecting and performing. At the same time, however, I am disappointed by their apparent need to discredit the work that we did – which brought attention to that same music in the days before it was fashionable or even feasible to do so.

It is questionable whether this revitalized interest in musical roots and traditions (symbolized by the popular passion for fiddle conventions and bluegrass festivals) would have happened if the Yankees hadn't done their initial investigations. How affected were the present-day Southern folk fans by companies like Rounder Records, County Records and Folkways Records - all of them Northern-based? How much did they listen to the ideas of Ralph Rinzler, Mike Seeger and Guy and Candie Carawan? Without these collectors would we have had Doc Watson, Dock Boggs, Tommy Jarrell and the Round Peak musicians? Would the early history of bluegrass records be available, and would the revival of old-time music have happened without the reissues and recognition of County Records? And would Cajun music be as alive as it is today without the efforts of Ralph Rinzler, Chris Strachwitz and Mike Seeger, along with the Newport Folk Festival and the University of Chicago Folk Festival?

Maybe so, but I know it took a lot of effort to create a situation where young Southerners could view their own heritage for its own sake, and for its own environment. The counterculture and the new awareness which evolved in the 1960s contributed to the climate which exists today. The recognition that mass-culture America is inadequate and leads nowhere was the inspiration guiding this effort to re-define and sometimes re-invent all sorts of local traditions.

Having called attention to what had previously gone unseen and unappreciated, perhaps the role of such visitors from the North has been played out. Certainly the musical traditions of the South have rarely enjoyed such widespread popularity. And considering the present generation of Southern folklorists and field collectors, the tradition rests in competent and caring hands. But for a while, it seemed as if only a few visitors really cared. □

* * *

The High Lonesome Sound *and* The End of an Old Song *are available for rent or sale through Brandon Films, 34 Macquesten Parkway South, Mount Vernon, NY 10050.* Musical Holdouts *is available through Phoenix Films, 470 Park Ave. South, NY 10016. Recordings of Roscoe Holcomb and Dillard Chandler may be ordered from Folkways Records, 43 West 61st Street, NY, NY 10023 (for more on Folkway Records, see article by Bill McNeil elsewhere in this issue).*

1930s Federal Writers Project:

Collecting Gullah Folklore

interviews by Genevieve W. Chandler

Genevieve Chandler, 1976

Editor's note: *Genevieve W. Chandler was born in Marion, South Carolina on May 20, 1890. Since her family spent summers at Murrells Inlet in Georgetown County and then moved there permanently when she was 18, Genevieve acquired firsthand knowledge of the coastal country and its people. After several years of study at Flora McDonald College (now St. Andrews) in North Carolina, and art schools in New York and Liverpool, England, she returned to Murrells Inlet and taught in the local public schools. She married Thomas Mobley Chandler in 1922 and had five children before he died in 1936.*

Before her husband's death, Mrs. Chandler had begun working as a collector for the Federal Writers Project out of her lifelong interest in local history and Gullah folklore. With her husband gone, this work brought in needed money for the family. She continued collecting for the FWP until 1939, when she became curator of Brookgreen Gardens. Mrs. Chandler now lives in Murrells Inlet with her daughter, Genevieve Peterkin.*

In her brief tenure with the FWP, Mrs. Chandler collected a prodigious amount of material; the 30 items which make up the bulk of South Carolina Folk Tales, *published in 1941 by the University of South Carolina Press, are but a small part of the collection of her material on file at the Library of Congress and the University of South Carolina.*

William A. Stewart, Professor of Linguistics at the City University of New York, met Mrs. Chandler in the course of a National Science Foundation study of the history of Gullah, and was impressed with the work of "this great folklorist":

"While Mrs. Chandler received no formal training in folklore or field interviewing techniques, her work was exemplary. Of course, her impressive background knowledge (including near-native fluency in the Gullah dialect) had a lot to do with the quality of her collected material, but she also solved highly technical problems in sophisticated and insightful ways. For example, even knowing Gullah, how was a field-interviewer to get a verbatim or even near-verbatim version of rapid, informal speech without recording equipment? Her solution was to invent a sort of 'shorthand' — actually a form of speed writing — which collapsed individual word spellings (since these have normal Gullah forms which she already knew), thus allowing her to focus on sentence structure, which was less predictable. And in the case of unusual word pronunciations, she was able to expand the speed writing at that point to include the unusual vowel or consonant.

"In certain other ways, her lack of formal training actually helped: no one had filled her with guilt and self-doubts about putting down what she heard, and her view of folklore as something much broader than it is technically defined by academicians led her to include topics and types of oral material which, sadly, a more 'scholarly' interviewer would have ignored. I should also add that Mrs. Chandler knew most of her interviewees quite well, which accounts for their remarkable openness."

The following selection, and the one entitled "Calvin's Funeral" on page 164, were collected by Genevieve Chandler in Murrells Inlet during 1937. We wish to thank Ann Banks, compiler of a soon-to-be-published anthology of WPA material, for her assistance in locating Mrs. Chandler's field collection, and Professor Stewart for his background material and guidance.

**Gullah is the language of an estimated 250,000 rural blacks along the Southeastern coast from South Carolina to the Florida border. Although its origins and evolution are not clear, Gullah may have originally been brought to the mainland by slaves taken from the Caribbean island of Barbados.*

SEEKING AND COMIN' THROUGH

Verbatim conversation with Zackie Knox, age 28

You know, the devil a busy man! 'Fore Reb [Reverend – Zackie has it shortened to 'Reb'] 'fore Reb come over here, I didn't know what church was! Evelena say they going to run Revival to Heaven Gate next week and say she going to Mourners Bench. I say I ain't going – I going fishing myself – going in the Crick. My mind tell me, "Go on in the Crick get fish and let Evelena get 'nouf religion for me and her too."

Monday come. Monday evening I gone in the Crick. I got back home people just gone in the church. I could a gone in but I ain't gone.

Tuesday night come. Evie say, "Ain't you going to church tonight?"

I say, "If I get out the Crick in time!"

I gone on. I know I wasn't intentionally to go. Gone dragging along. Come out the Crick good time. Know Evie not home to fry my fish. Don't feel like frying myself. Give my fish to Miss Holmes. Know if they get cook to my house I'll have to cook 'em. Think I best gone on to Heaven Gate. Devil been have me blindfold, I sit down way back. Reb begin to call mourners. He say, "Anybody want to jine this church or any of us church, come on!"

Evie gone Monday and Tuesday she just get started. She hadn't come through. Took her Monday night and Tuesday night and all day Wednesday. Took me Tuesday night and Wednesday night and all day Wednesday. Took all two of us two days and two nights. I had chillun. I didn't know nothing 'bout 'em. Had to haul some from church. Had to haul me home one night. Eat. You don't study 'bout eat. Gone on home. Put me to bed. I wake up middle night. Gone over to that old house by Bethel Church where nobody don't live. Gone in Aunt Jane old house. Prayed. Gone in that old empty Bethel church. Prayed. Kept penetrating from Aunt Jane house to Bethel church all night. Prayed.

You feel like you got nobody in the world but you – you one. Things don't look changeable to you till you get over – come through. Some goes out in the middle night in the woods seeking.

Trees, leaves and all look different. Look like you been shut up in a box all you life and never seen things before!

(Isaac next one. He gone to seeking. Look like 'fore he die he lost it all.)

I gone right back to Bethel 'fore daylight and come to find out Isaac been all night praying in the back of the church! Whole bunch of us been seeking at the same time. Me and Lija and David and H.E. and Jinks and Isaac and Evie. They just had a regular young army. After that Reb holler, "Come on, Christians."

I got up from Mourners Bench singing.

"In me! In me!

"It is Christ the Lord in me!

"In me! In me!

"It is Christ the Lord in me!"

I got up with that song shouting. And Miss Sue sister child come through singing that. Most all come through singing.

Some'll fall out to the church like they dead. And maybe way middle night they'll wake up and whole crowd settin' round their bed.

Yes. The world a new world when I come through! All the tree leaves. [It was the fall of the year.] All the leaves look bright and new. Feel jest like you been shut up in a dark box a year and just turn out!

Jinks and H.E. nuster be together all the time. They carry Jinks home stiff one night and the next night he come back in the church door singing, "Soon, ah soon."

Some seekers have vision. I had one. After I did go to sleep – well I wasn't zactly sleep neither – He [the Lord] took me down to a road – seems like a long row of oaks – what He look like? You've seen His picture! Light was coming off from Him everywhere. They was that thing on His head – you know how it is – and light jest rayed off from that. Well He took me down this road and seemed like they was a big saw-mill biler [boiler] bury with the top sticking out the ground – had on it a heavy, thick led [lid], thick as that zinc tub there – and the led had the smoke and sut [soot] and all was biling out all round the edge – and I stood and looked at it and seemed like after a while a little black and red boy come out – run out that biler and he bade his hand to me and told me to come there! Then he run and sit right in that black smoke biling outer that biler. I stood way off and looked at him then I turned and walked off.

I seen one more thing. I seen a train. A black and greasy train. Come along down the road taking its time,

Slack-a-tack-a!

Slack-a-tack-a!

Slack-a-tack-a!

Slack-a-tack-a!

And it seem like Julie boy Williams hanging out the window and he call,

"Come here Zackie!

"Come here Zackie!"

And seem like I answer, "No, man!"

And I gone on. After while seem like I wake up.

The next year they got Henry down to the Mourners Bench. They carried Henry home stiff one night. His wife tried to turn him Baptist. All the time trying to get round the Methodist. They think they going to Heaven 'thout praying, but that's a mistake.

Reb done some wonderful work since he been here. Sent a lot of convert to Salem, St. Peter, Mt. Nebo, Gordon – besides all he took in the Methodist to Brookgreen and Heaven Gate.

drawing by Genevieve Chandler

DEVIL'S WORK: CONJURING LIZARD IN TH' HEAD

Verbatim conversation with Lillie Knox, age 35

I know that for a fact. Grandma was near bout crazy. She jess didn't care bout stayin home. Come us house. Weren't satisfy. Jess got uh wonderin mind. Not satisfy no place.

One day man come by, by th' name Obie Hines. He look like uh witch – funny shape ted [shaped]. Any how, ole man Obie Hines come by. Grandma wuzn't zactly sick, but she weren't satisfy. Obie don't know what ail her. She sick en she ain't sick. Sometimes she get in the road en put both hand on huh head en holler. She say,

"Feel ef I could clear mah nostril, would be all right. Feel addled. Got mah sense but I worry. Try to sneeze. Can't sneeze. Can't breeve tru mah nostril."

He went and nobody ain know whey he gone. En 'e come back that evenin and Grandma say,

"Ef sumpin [something] ain done fuh me, I'll not last uh week lak this."

En ole man Obie ax fuh uh hanker cher [handkerchief]. Gib duh ole man duh handkercher.

En he shake it en say,

"Kit! Blow yuh nostril!"

"Can't, man!"

"When I tell you to blow, ain't you feel sumpin run in yuh head?"

"Yass."

"Blow, Kit, blow!"

En she blow!

En if she wuz here live ter-day, she'd tell you. She blow en blow out uh lizard out her nose – small, slick black lizard! She kept it en show it tuh us young'uns. Grandma didn't blive in nuthin lak goophering ner conjuring ner nuthin. □

Folklife and Photography: Bringing the FSA Home

Introduction by Greg Day

I first visited the files of the FSA collection at the Library of Congress in 1969, expecting to see fine art focused on one of my favorite subjects, the people of the South. I had known for some time about the great wealth of photographs taken of rural and small town people in the 1930s under the auspices of the New Deal's Farm Security Administration (FSA). Here was the work of some of America's most gifted artists, a collection that contained over a quarter of a million images of American life, undoubtedly the largest and most articulate portrait of any nation or era.[1] *For four days I viewed thousands of photographs from throughout the region, filed under such general headings as "portraits of families," "gatherings," "small farms." And then, suddenly I got the message! For the first time, I felt and understood the doom and desperation that came from unending poverty, the oppression of an era that shaped the lives of my parents' generation.*

The documentary approach of the 1930s was not an artistic style but rather a philosophy that placed social consciousness at the center of the creative process. This philosophy valued artistic expression for its ability to communicate the plight of the poor and disaffected and to increase public awareness of a destructive political system that kept power in the hands of a few. For the first time in the history of this country, a large number of artists in a variety of disciplines including music, dance, theater, painting, photography and writing, sought a return to realism – to creative expression that derived its inspiration from the social context of the present, from the lives and dreams of the common man.[2] *The camera, as William Stott suggests in* Documentary Expression and Thirties America, *can be seen as a prime symbol of this documentary philosophy. Its technology brought it closer to the subject matter, to the daily life of the people. It derived its inspiration from the actual context of human experience and presented its message in a form that was accepted by the public as literal fact.*[3]

I returned to the FSA collection in the fall of 1976 to locate photographs that focused on the South Carolina Low Country's folk traditions – images that would be exhibited within the community that had inspired them. Among many photographs that were individually important, I came upon one series of such power that it transcended both time and locale. Jack Delano's photographs of the destruction of communities in the Santee-Cooper basin presents us with a message made even more important by the passage of time. Here we see the recolonization of the rural South by a coalition of big business and the federal government. Everyone and everything was required to move. The monuments and mementos of nearly three centuries of human settlement were scraped away to make room for a lake that was supposed to bring a new era of prosperity. Although difficult for everyone, the move was disastrous for the small farmers who were uprooted from lands they had cleared and had worked most of their lives to own. The valley's majority black population had, after the termination of slavery, obtained small tracts of land where they continued to farm and provide subsistence for their families. Powerless, they had no alternative but to move or be moved by the Army Corps of Engineers to uncleared and less fertile land elsewhere. Communities were divided and families resettled in areas separated by the vast expanse of water and more than 40 miles of road required to go around it. Delano's essay symbolizes the current plight of communities throughout the South whose very existence is threatened by "economic development" over which they have no control.

Jack Delano's experience as a member of the FSA photography group and his personal commitment to the documentary approach provides us with an important link to a tradition of social consciousness in the arts. In the spring of 1977 Jack Delano returned to the Low Country to speak about his photographs of the Santee-Cooper people, then being exhibited locally for the first time. What follows is a transcription of his presentation at the College of Charleston's Spoleto Lecture Series on May 26, 1977.

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1. Hilton Kramer, "The New Discovery of America." *The New York Times Book Review*, January 20, 1974, pp. 4,5.

2. Ibid.

3. William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties Ameria*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973) p. 77.

Greg Day is a photographer and anthropologist whose work in Southern folk communities has focused on aesthetic values and their importance to personal and social identity. Since 1971, he has been conducting ethnographic research among the Mt. Pleasant basket makers, an Afro-American community in the South Carolina Low Country. As coordinator of the Charleston Communication Center's Folk Arts Media Project, he prepared a series of photographic exhibits on the folklife of the Low Country from which Jack Delano's photographs and lecture presented here were drawn. He is currently completing doctoral work in anthropology at Rutgers University.

Recollections of the FSA by Jack Delano

Thirty-six years ago, I stood in a field just outside of Moncks Corner, South Carolina, photographing a tired old woman who was being forced to move from a 17-acre farm. A dam was going to be built there by the government, and her land was going to be flooded. She said to me, "I worked half-naked and barefoot to get this land and I got old getting it."

I don't know where the old woman is now, but I do know that her land and that of her neighbors has long been under water. I know also that since then I have been getting old, too, and as I stand here today I can't help thinking of the many profound changes in her world and in mine that the intervening 36 years have seen.

They have seen the death of millions of human beings in the most terrible wars in history. They have seen the destruction of entire nations and the painful rebuilding that followed. They have seen the dismemberment of colonial empires, the juggling of political boundaries and the emergence of proud young nations full of hope. They have seen the establishment of new social and economic systems different from our own, in large populous areas of the world. They have seen an increased respect for the rights of national minorities and some improvement in the relations between the races and between the sexes, as a result of the powerful protests against injustice and inequality in our country. They have seen the development of a new popular music, new trends in art, theater and literature. They have seen the scientific explosion that gave us plastics, electronics, the computer and the technology for landing men on the moon. They have seen a frightening increase in the pollution of our environment, and they have seen the mushroom cloud of Hiroshima spread throughout the world and permeate us with both hope and fear – hope that nuclear power would create a Utopia for our children and fear that it may bring about the utter destruction of our planet.

During all those tumultuous years the photographs of the old woman from Moncks Corner and her neighbors lay tucked away quietly in the files of the Library of Congress. The photographs had not grown old; they had

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Jack Delano now lives in Puerto Rico where he devotes his time to designing a children's museum for the city of San Juan, composing chamber music and symphonic works, teaching at the Conservatory of Music, covering special photographic assignments, producing educational TV programs and collaborating with his wife on book illustrations and other graphic arts projects. The Sonnabend Gallery of New York and Paris is preparing an exhibit of his FSA pictures to open in New York in the fall, 1977.

not changed. They had captured an instant in history and preserved it for all time. Today they enable us to relive that period, and they help us to understand what happened to a group of human beings in Santee-Cooper in 1941. But they also do much more than that. William Saroyan, the playwright, was once quoted as saying that drama was nothing more than people in trouble. If that is true, then the photographs of Santee-Cooper are also a human drama, perhaps a tragedy.

That these pictures today should make us think, remember, understand, feel, or wonder is, to me, an example of the power of documentary photography. It is also a tribute to the eternal quality of all art. The old civilizations of Egypt and China died many centuries ago, but the art created for the edification of their rulers and gods continues to dazzle us to this day. On rolls of papyrus, on the walls of temples, on gold ornaments and on clay pottery, anonymous artisans of ancient cultures recorded their history so that we, today might understand. Working with consumate skill and exquisite taste, they were the recorders/artists of their day. Theirs was a noble profession, and I am proud to consider it mine.

Today, we are not quite so likely to be ordered by our rulers to cover the walls of our temples with reliefs commemorating their exploits. We wait until they are dead and describe their achievements in films, video tape, photography and books. Perhaps more significantly, we no longer feel that only the deeds of nobles, princes and kings are worthy of being memorialized. We are increasingly becoming aware of the equal worthiness of all human beings.

In 1946, I began producing documentary educational films in Puerto Rico. We used no professional actors, only the farmers and the people in small towns who would make up our audience. I shall never forget the first showing of one of our films to a group of country folk one evening in the open air at a country crossroads. The shock of seeing people like themselves portrayed on the screen evoked shouts of derision, embarrassed laughter and a continuous barrage of comments. Centuries of domination by a ruling caste had so conditioned the people to feel inferior that they could not conceive of themselves being portrayed on a movie screen that had always been considered the exclusive domain of Hollywood's glamorous artists and stars. I was often to find a similar reaction from the sharecroppers, tenant farmers and farm laborers in the United States whom I wished to photograph. "A picture of me? Why me? I am nobody." But that was precisely the point: "You are somebody."

It was basically the concern for the thousands of "nobodies" in the '30s that led to the creation of the Farm Security Administration and the photographic project with which I was associated for three years. Those were troubled times in the United States. The Depression had wreaked havoc with our economy. Millions of people were unemployed in the cities. Men stood for hours in long lines waiting for the distribution of free bread and coffee. Farmers were destitute. Farm prices were so low that it was often cheaper to burn corn for fuel than to sell it on the open market. Years of abusive agricultural practices had changed some of our richest lands in the Western plains into a giant dust bowl. Thousands of families were forced into a mass migration in search of the basic necessities of subsistence. The government of President Roosevelt created an agency called the Resettlement Administration, later known as the Farm Security Administration, with Rexford Tugwell as its head, to help the struggling farm families by providing loans, relocation camps, housing developments and technical assistance. Tugwell, an economics professor from Columbia University who had produced a book illustrated with photographs selected by his associate, Roy E. Stryker, had become aware of the powerful impact of the photographs and their enormous historical value. When asked by Tugwell in 1935 to organize a historical section of the Resettlement Administration in order to create a photographic record of the work of the agency, Stryker readily accepted.

Fortunately for all of us, Stryker's vision reached far beyond the narrow limits of a picture file devoted solely to recording the accomplishments of a government agency. His staff at first consisted of one photographer, a gifted young student from Columbia University named Arthur Rothstein. Stryker gradually conceived of the project as an opportunity to create a pictorial history of all aspects of American life. Not a photographer himself, he nevertheless realized that to accomplish his aim he would need photographers possessed of a sensitivity to the social problems of the times, as well as a high order of artistic sensibility. The photographs taken by Arthur Rothstein and by such mature artists as Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, and the painter, Ben Shahn, were published in newspapers and magazines throughout the country. They helped to arouse the conscience of the nation to the plight of the migratory farm laborers and the landless farmers. They also aroused the anger of some Congressmen and politicians, who were not overjoyed to see the ills of their constituencies so effectively revealed.

Controversy was to plague the project always, but Stryker managed to gain friends as well as enemies, and even managed to wring some increased appropriations from Congress for improving the laboratory facilities and for increasing his staff. Among the new photographers were Carl Mydans who later went on to *Life* magazine, Russell Lee, Marion Post Wolcott, John Vachon and others, all of whom made great contributions to the rapidly growing file.

In May of 1940, I received the glad news that there was an opening for me on the staff since Arthur Rothstein had resigned in order to work for *Look* magazine; the salary was a fortune: $2300 a year, plus $7 a day per diem, and five cents a mile while traveling. My title was Artist Photographer, a new civil service classification created specifically for the Farm Security Administration. Preparations for my project assignments consisted of long talks with Stryker, reading, reading, reading and reading – history, sociology publications from the Department of Agriculture, and regional literature. I devoured all the material, and with a brief shooting script from Stryker in my pocket and with Ed Rosskam, the picture editor for FSA, as my guide, I set off for the countryside of Maryland and Virginia.

All my early years had been spent in a lower middle-class neighborhood in Philadelphia, the big city. Going to school meant long rides on a screeching streetcar, and playing games meant joining the boys on the asphalt street, or running around in concrete-covered neighborhood playgrounds. My con-

nection with agriculture was limited to a nodding acqaintance with a few maple trees that somehow managed to survive through the square holes in the concrete pavement. The word "land" meant little to me; like some exotic animal in the zoo, it was kept in a special place called Fairmount Park, where you might go see it on weekends or holidays. Now on my first assignment for FSA, I was beginning to appreciate how much more the word land meant to the farm families who depended on it for their lives.

During the years that followed, in a new car, loaded with photographic equipment and accompanied by my wife, Irene, I traveled throughout most of the Eastern states taking photographs and learning more about the country from the experience than from all the books I had read. We were often away from Washington for months at a time. We followed migratory agricultural workers as they moved north with the crops, from Florida to Aroostook County, Maine, on the Canadian border. In the Southern states we got to know tenant farmers, sharecroppers, farm laborers and mill workers. We photographed turpentine camps in Alabama, and prison camps in Georgia, Jewish tobacco farmers in Connecticut and Portuguese fishermen in Rhode Island, sugar cane workers in Puerto Rico, tomato pickers in Long Island, and chicken farms in New Jersey, and everywhere we learned. Irene, who had been a fellow student in art school, became my indispensable companion, easing our relationships with people, holding lights for me, taking notes, keeping a diary, and, thank goodness, criticizing my work constantly.

Our contact with Washington was through the mail. Letters from Roy Stryker kept us more or less informed about the doings of other photographers. The letters sometimes included long detailed shooting scripts of what we were to look for, usually ending with the remark, "but if you have any other ideas, go ahead and let me know." Just as we were learning from our experience, Roy Stryker was learning from us, as he often admitted. Our letters to him contained far more detailed information on our work than the skimpy captions we provided for the pictures. We would send our films into Washington to be developed and receive a quality report by telegram.

Occasionally, a telegram would ask us to call Washington on an urgent matter. Such was the case early in 1941, when we were told to come back to Washington to discuss a series of new assignments. The war by then was raging furiously in Europe and the Far East. Hitler's armies had already subjugated most of Europe and were blasting their way into Russia; German submarine packs were prowling the Atlantic; Japanese troops were pouring across China like a tidal wave. And the industrial might of the United States was dedicated to turning out tanks, guns, and ammunition for the beleaguered French, British and Chinese. The United States was still officially neutral, but it seemed only a question of time before we, too, would be involved in the war. The whole country was being rallied for such an eventuality. From coast to coast, in almost every state, a furious building program had been launched: Army camps, training camps, shipping depots, storage areas, shipyards, aircraft and munitions factories. To make room for all these installations, the government needed land from which thousands of people had to be evacuated. That was our new assignment: "get the story of the displaced families and the problems of their relocation: also, get the story of the thousands of workers settling in trailer camps and in shantytowns to work on the construction projects."

"That these pictures should make us even today think, remember, understand, feel or wonder is, to me, an example of the power of documentary photography. It is also a tribute to the eternal quality of all art."

Armed with credentials and ration cards for gasoline and tires, we traveled widely from area to area: Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, North Carolina, where tobacco barns had been converted into temporary living quarters; a trailer colony in Camp Williams; the construction of Camp Croft near Spartanburg, South Carolina; Pacolet, South Carolina, where prefabricated houses stood in various stages of construction; Camp Steward in Hinesville, Georgia; a trailer park at a new powder plant in Childersburg, Alabama; another camp in Caroline County, Virginia. Everywhere we found quiet groups of people, bravely accepting with dignity and courage the wrenching away of their friends, their lands, their homes and their families.

In medieval Spain, a troubador sang these words in telling of the departure into exile of a national hero, El Cid, and his separation from his wife and children: "thus are parted one from the other, as the fingernail from the flesh." In Watertown, New York, in 1941, here is what we found written in a childish hand on the blackboard of an abandoned schoolhouse: "I have swept and put things the way they used to be. I hope the government does not destroy the old building. It has been a good school to everyone around here that I know of, and everyone seems to like it here. They took the seats, drawers and other articles away, but it is still the same old schoolhouse that we went to. We are all moving away now. I will miss some of our neighbors. Maybe it will do the government more good than it did us. Well, I am going now and shall never be back around this part again. I live in South Rothen. My name is Mable Simson, Watertown, New York; RFD 1."

It was the coverage of these many relocation sites that brought us in March of 1941 to Moncks Corner, South Carolina. Some of the people who had moved out of the Army Camp area had expressed the hope of coming back "when the shooting is all over," as they put it. But the people of Santee-Cooper Basin knew that they would never come back, for their land was to be flooded as part of the Santee-Cooper navigation project. Many of them painstakingly took their houses apart and hauled the time-worn beams and planks by truck or wagon to the uncleared land near Bonneau, there to rebuild their homes and start life again. They took with them not only their houses, their kitchen utensils, their beds and their furniture, but even the bones of their dead to be laid to rest in freshly dug graves outside the soon-to-be-flooded area. Perhaps some of the people that I photographed in those days lie in that cemetery now.

I am glad that a record remains of the troubles they suffered. Powerless and confused in the face of an omnipotent, anonymous authority, they submitted to the upheaval of their lives with a poignant stoicism. I hope my pictures were able to capture some of their fortitude and dignity, yes, and even beauty.

Only a few months ago, I was stopped on the street in Puerto Rico by a man in his forties who asked me, "Are you Mr. Delano?" I said, "Yes." Then he said, "You won't remember me, but I remember you when you were a photographer for the FSA here in 1942. I was only 12 or 13 years old at the time, and my father, who was an information officer for FSA, served as your guide, interpreter and driver. What I have to tell is really not for you so much as for your wife, but I hope you will tell her. You see, on one of those trips we were standing on a hill watching you take some pictures of the landscape, when suddenly your wife exclaimed, 'My God, look at that beautiful woman!' I turned and looked about but could see no pretty young thing that a boy of my age would call beautiful. Then I noticed standing in the dim light of a doorway of a shack a thin woman, middle-aged, her weather-beaten face drawn and wrinkled, her eyes defiant but not unfriendly. That was your wife's beautiful woman. It meant nothing to me at the time, but as the years went by I never forgot the incident and it made more and more of an impression on me. Now this is what I want you to tell your wife. I am now 48 years old. I teach in the Law School at the University of Puerto Rico. I have two children, and I want your wife to know that her remark changed my entire outlook toward working people, toward the dignity of labor, toward women and the meaning of beauty. You tell her!" I told her.

Louis Hine, a great documentary photographer who died in 1940 and left us an extraordinary legacy of photographs of immigrants arriving in New York and of the exploitation of child labor in the mines and in the factories of the North, was once asked why the people in his photographs were always beautiful. His reply was, "I only photograph beautiful people." He was not being facetious. I think it is true that the struggle against adversity, the years of care and worry, the toil and drudgery and the constant battle for survival do bestow a kind of beauty on the human face and figure to which artists have always been sensitive.

There seems to be much confusion in the arts today between sentiment and sentimentality – a kind of embarrassed fear of showing other than aggressive emotions, if any at all. It may not be fashionable any longer to show sentiment or compassion in photographs or paintings, but I consider them indispensable elements in documentary photography. I reject the notion that a good photograph is no more than a beautiful image. To me it must also be a reflection of the human condition. There are many beautiful pictures among the FSA photographs at the Library of Congress, but their value goes far beyond aesthetic considerations. Nowhere in the world is there a comparable body of work devoted to the preservation of the history of an era. And it is gratifying to know that the pictures are accessible and available to the public.

My wife, Irene Delano, has been for some time an unpaid consultant to a group of youngsters who belong to a photography club in a blighted area of Ponce, our second largest city in Puerto Rico. The club had been organized by a group of well-meaning church women in an attempt to keep the children off the streets and involve them in some productive activities. They had succeeded in getting donations of obsolete Instamatic cameras from the Kodak company and some old films and some paper. Then came the question, "What shall we photograph?" Irene's advice left them a little shocked and uncomprehending at first: photograph yourselves, your lives, your neighborhood, your activities, your problems, weddings, graduations, funerals, picnics, ball games, your brothers and sisters, your pets; everybody and everything that goes on where you live. Week after week, the boys and girls between ages eight and 14 have been going out with their Instamatics and snapping away. They have published several calendars of their work, as well as a traveling exhibit showing life in their neighborhood; the exhibit was shown a year ago in the Metropolitan Museum and has been traveling the country and Puerto Rico ever since. Almost all of their pictures are touching and moving. Many of them are good, a few quite beautiful.

To us as documentary photographers in FSA, what to photograph was never a problem. The whole wide world was there trying to be photographed. We were in effect recording the history of our time, but we were doing more than merely recording. It takes more than a good cassette recorder to make good literature, and it takes more than an automatic camera snapping away haphazardly, to make good art. A documentary photographer learns to look at the commonplace and see the uncommon, to look at the ordinary and see the extraordinary, to look at the usual and see the unusual and to see it often in a fraction of a second. Perhaps that is one of the reasons for the distinction the FSA pictures are enjoying today. Perhaps it is also because we believed very strongly in the value of our work, and some of our dedication rubbed off onto the pictures we took.

We believed in it so strongly that we sometimes endured abhorrent situations in the conviction that the end would justify the means. We once stopped, my wife and I, at a small country church in North Carolina and asked the elderly black deacon for permission to photograph the service. There was some hesitation, and we could feel that he would much rather have us go away and let him alone, but after a pause he agreed. Our attempts to be unobtrusive must have seemed ridiculous with flash bulbs going off everywhere, electric wires getting tangled, and Irene standing on the pews holding extension lamps. We hated ourselves for being such a nuisance. At one point, I asked Irene to stand in front of the congregation and hold one of the lamps high so that I could get some back lighting. That was too much. She refused. She wouldn't and she wouldn't, but she did. We felt somewhat compensated for our anguish many months later when we found the pictures in publications by black writers.

The widespread use of FSA pictures in publications and exhibits gave us the feeling that perhaps our work was doing some good. There were many wrongs in our country that needed righting, and I for one believed that my photographs would help to right them. What more exciting assignment can one hope for than helping to im-

prove the lot of one's neighbors? There are still many wrongs that need righting, and I suppose there always will be. My hope is that so long as there are documentary photographers, they will be in there pitching for all they are worth. The lens of the camera: there has never been such an effective instrument for seeing us as we really are. It can be cruel and it can be compassionate; it can focus with equal sharpness on our folly and our wisdom, on our brutality and on our gentleness, on our arrogance and our humility, on our destructiveness and on our creativity. It can make us see our greed and our generosity, our contemptible abuse of the riches of the earth, and our reverence for the majesty of nature, the vicious excesses of our passion, and the noble achievements of our talent and intellect, and that is precisely what it should do!

Recollections of the Santee-Cooper Project

In their sensitivity to human dignity, Jack Delano's photographs of the Santee-Cooper people are a unique contribution to American photography. During the spring of 1977, Jack Delano's photographic essay, as well as the FSA photographs of Walker Evans and Marion Post Wolcott, were exhibited by the Communication Center in a variety of public settings in the greater Charleston area. While on exhibit in a large shopping mall, a woman viewer recognized her father in one of the portraits. Thinking back on those times, she recalls how her family's land was condemned and flooded, and how difficult the change was for those who could least afford it. What follows are her confidential comments drawn from a transcript of a taped interview made July 20, 1977.

Going back, giving you my thoughts on the Santee-Cooper project, well it's so hard to understand it really, when you see that lake. We could never forget anyway: if you lived through it, you could never forget. I was filled with rebellion and disgust, and I could see my parents suffer and I was too young to do anything. My daddy hated it and he never had anything good to say about it. About the only thing good that came out of that was electricity. That's the only thing we got. REA came through and put power lines all through the country but that could have been arranged whether they had the lake or not.

Daddy enjoyed working; he was brought up to work and that was a part of his life. He fought it when they condemned our place. I can remember it was hard, very hard, for him to get started. Daddy was a World War I veteran. He had been disabled because he had been gassed in the war. Back then, I think we lived on something like $30 a month. It wasn't very much; it was a little bit. Hard times, but luckily my mother's family was able to help us and we moved near Eutawville and lived on a plantation. I don't know how many acres Daddy got, but it was just a small farm. He had worked very hard to build a house; he had done it himself with the help of a carpenter and I can remember Daddy just getting started. He had his grist mill and he had peach trees. I can remember climbing on top of the grist mill and doing my school work. We were just getting fixed when Santee-Cooper took our place.

We were lucky. If your background was such that you had somebody to help you out and carry you on, fine. But I can certainly see why we've caused problems for our black race. Because they didn't have anyone. They had to take what was given. The government tried to relocate them, which they did do, but you just can't march away the years like that with a few pennies!

The road that we lived on was so beautiful. It was the road that led from Moncks corner through Pinopolis and Oh! It came down to this swamp, which I just loved, Ferguson Bridges swamp is what they called it. It was absolutely gorgeous with old oak trees. It was a scenic highway, the king had traveled it at one time, and they didn't take any of that into consideration. There isn't a highway today like it.

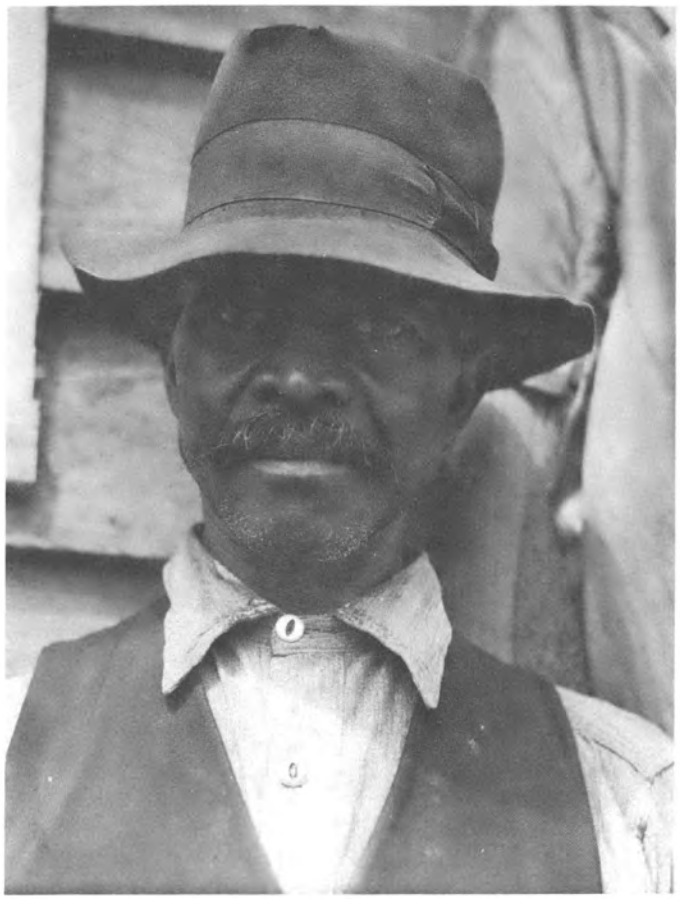
I knew Daddy's land was condemned because I came in from school that afternoon and got off the school bus and ran in just screaming, "What in the world!" Because they had come in and started cutting the big old trees in the front. We had a lot of big pine trees and they were all down! It was terrible because Daddy didn't really have money to go on to rebuild. He wouldn't accept what they gave him. It was just a little token. It took a long time for the settlement and then it wasn't what it should have been, not compared to what some people got for their land. And not only that, if you were in the darn little clique, you just made it in Berkeley County!

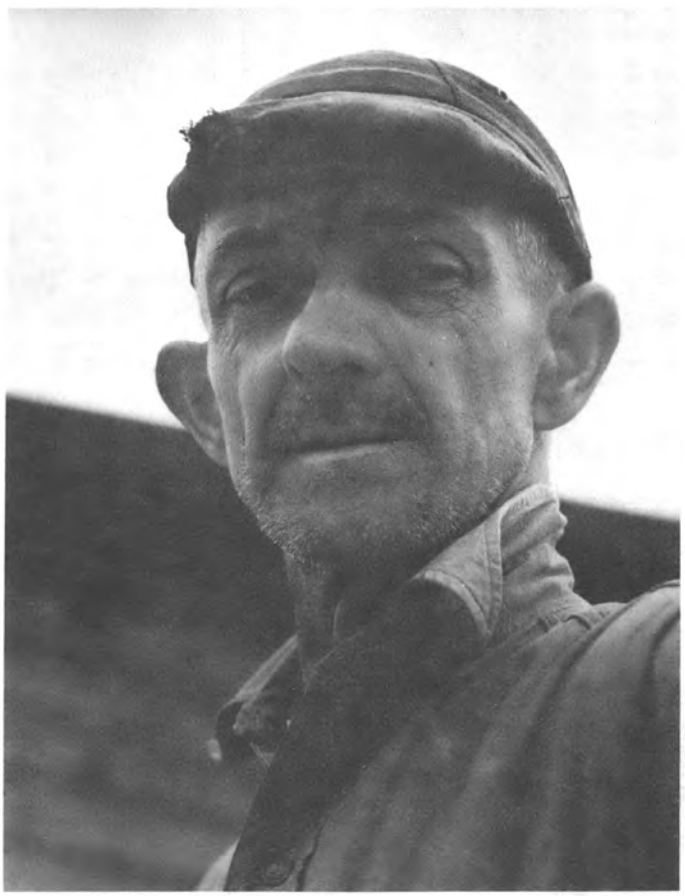
It irritates me to no end; it burns me up; it makes me realize that we had a Watergate way back there! We really did! The politicians were the ones who really profited by it – nobody else! They were supposed to return the land to the owners if they were not making use of it, and they didn't do it. There are people right now living in Moncks Corner who were executives in the Santee-Cooper clique, and the land had not been used and wasn't used by Santee-Cooper. Beautiful land overlooking the lake. And instead of returning that to the original owners, these big wigs were able to get it, I don't know how, but they're living on it. It is used absolutely for the politicians!!!

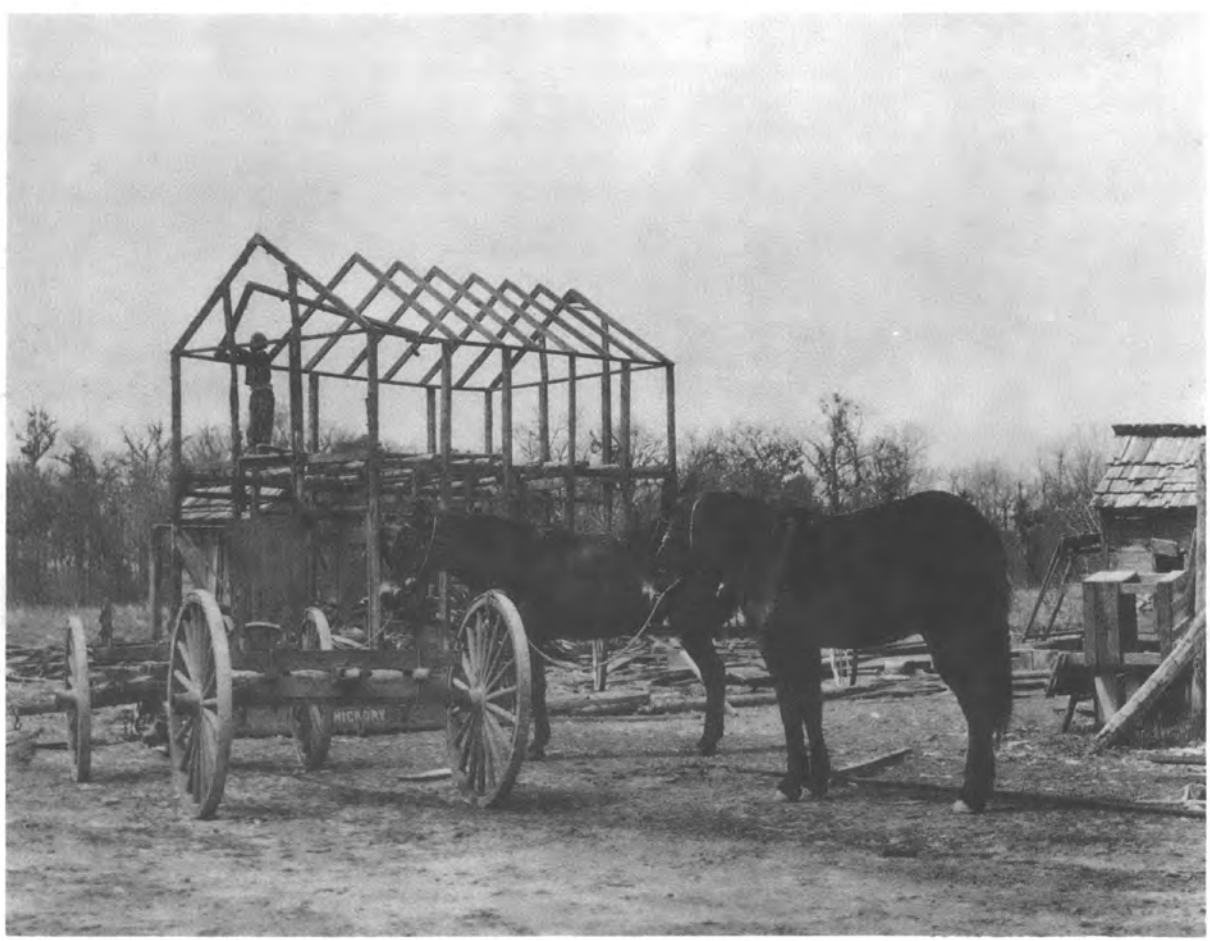
They have a place called Wampee where they can go and they can throw their big parties, they can bring down their elite. They can go and they can just live it up! It's a plantation and it's exclusive for them and for their friends! The clique of Santee-Cooper people, that little clique including, I'm sure, the senators and others, they have a private camping area. I've been there, and there weren't two campers in the whole camping area! And it was just for Santee-Cooper employees, which I think is wrong. I think if Santee-Cooper was going to benefit the community or the state, it's ridiculous to use it just for them. The Devil! It has nothing to do with the people who gave up their farms or anything else. And many an old person is in their grave today because of it. My husband's uncle died worrying over it. He didn't live six months after they condemned the property.

That's right! I mean, it's sad, a few people get to power, how in the heck I don't know, and really you have no say so. Your politicians are the ones that do it all. I can't understand how they get away with it. Even in the other sections of the country, you see the people, how they dislike it!

Jack Delano's photographs of the Santee-Cooper Basin, 1941 (from the Library of Congress FSA Collection). Above: "Negro women planting on a plantation in the Moncks Corner, South Carolina, vicinity." At right, clockwise from upper left: A small landowner, a Negro woman, a landowner and a farmer who were all forced to move from the Santee-Cooper basin to make room for the government-built dam.

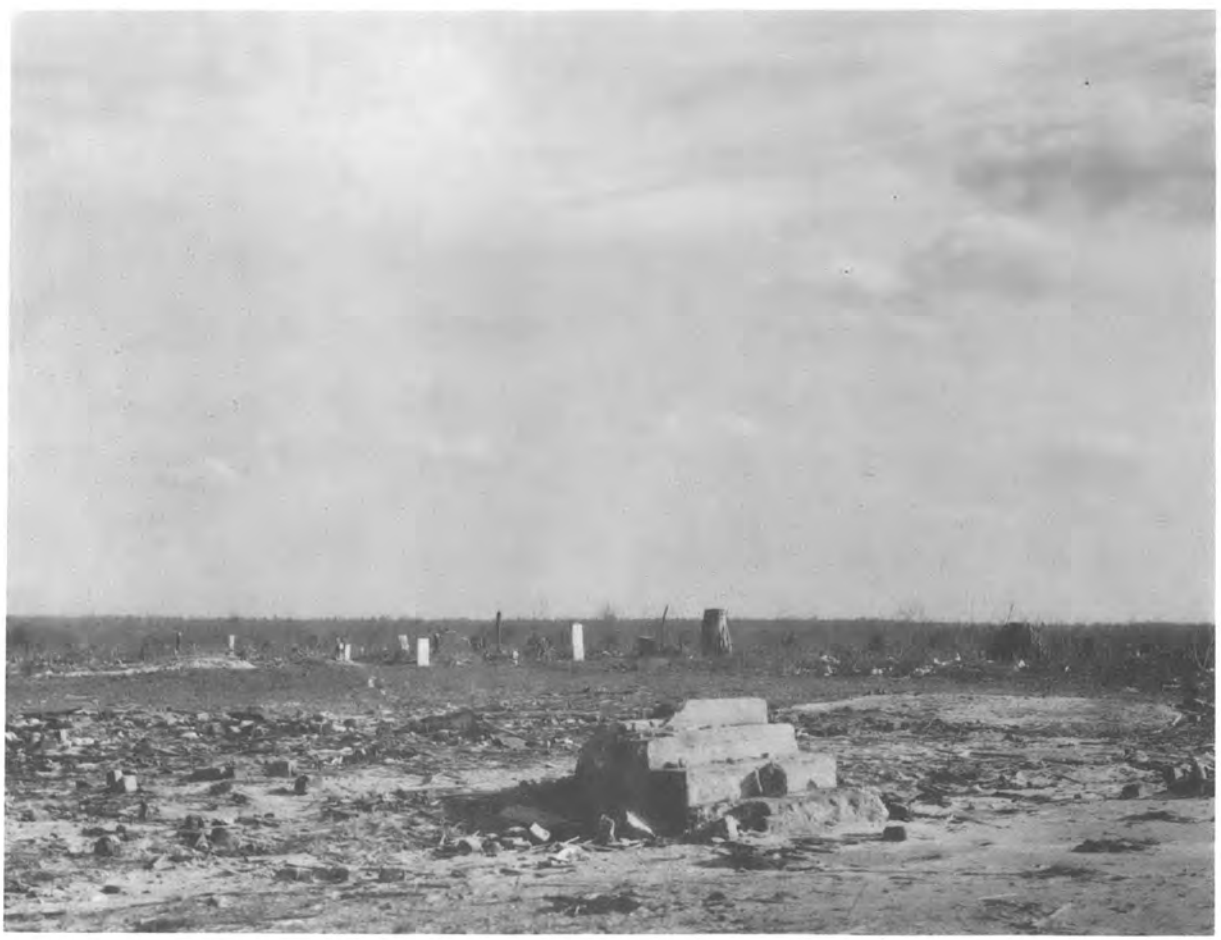






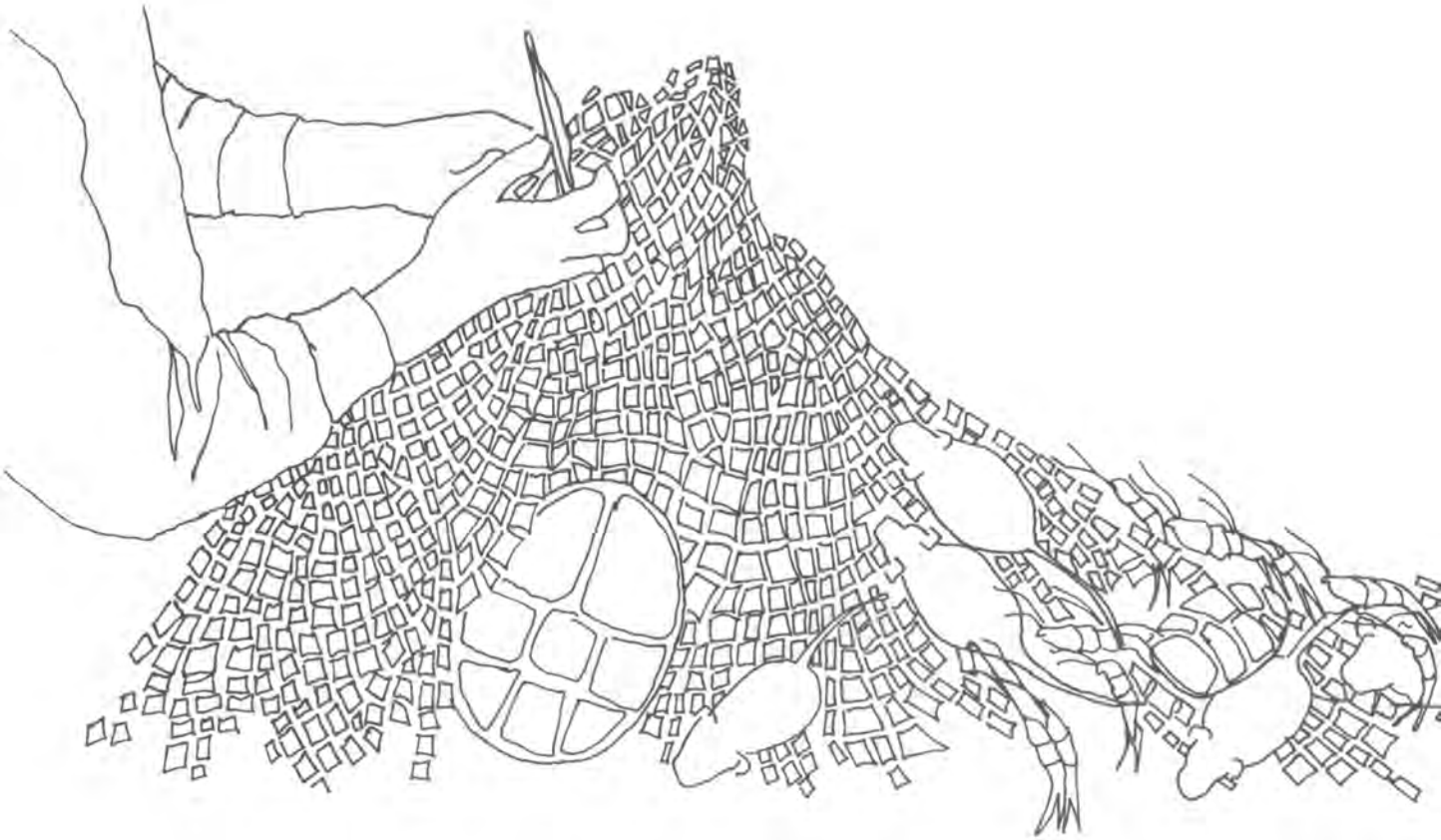
A family who has moved out of the Santee-Cooper to the Bonneau vicinity, S.C. Below, a house is being torn down to be moved out of the Santee-Cooper basin.

A tenant farmer and a woman with two children who were among those whose homes were in the basin area.



A church in Moncks Corner (above) and the remains of a church and graveyard in the Santee-Cooper basin area.

Above: The dead are moved with the living. All that remains is the cut-over land ready for the flooding. □



The bait-camp owner had talked for several hours to customers surrounding the stove in his bait store at old Indianola on Matagorda Bay, when he remembered one particular fishing trip:

I was staying in Houston then, and a friend of mine wanted to go fishing, so I told him that I'd wake him up in the morning. I'd blow the horn when I come by ready to go – I had the old Model-T car. So I went by there at two o'clock in the morning, blowing my horn. And he finally stuck his head out the window, and he says, "What in the world's all the racket about out there?"

"I told you I'd blow the horn. Let's go."

Neighbors began to cut up about all that horn blowing. So he come out there with his rigging, got in there, and we took off. And he said he's the one who knew exactly where to fish. Well, I didn't; we'd been going on down towards Galveston somewhere and that's all I knew of. And he says, "Hey, pull off right here." And I pulled off; there's old salt bunch grass. We's driving about five miles an hour; the fog was so heavy I couldn't do no driving. Couldn't nobody see anything; once in a while see the stripe on the pavement.

So I pulled off to the side of the road. He got out there, got his old dead shrimp bait out, and he placed one on his hook, and he says, "Ain't you gonna fish?" I says, "Man, I ain't never fished in a place like this, and I don't expect to start it now." So he just heaves his old heavy sinker off across the country. And I listened and listened. I never did hear any splash. So I thought, we'll just wait and see what happens. About that time, why his old rod just folded up. I said, "Oh my goodness, he's caught a Brahma bull just sure as the world."

He fought around there for a good bit, and brought it in, and it was an eight pound redfish. I couldn't believe my eyes, and I started trying to rig up, and he'd done hooked another one by the time I got rigged up. I heaved her out there, and I hooked one too, and we was fighting those fish in just like nobody's business. It got about eight or nine o'clock. We caught 15 or 20 big reds, and the fog lifted, and we was ten miles from the bay. We'd been fishing in a fog bank!

At this, the crowd laughed, shook their heads, and one man, hitching up his pants' legs, walked out the door stiff-legged. The storyteller laughed

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Patrick Mullen teaches folklore at Ohio State University, where he is also the director of OSU's Archives of Primitive, Ethnic and Folk Music. He is the author of several articles about the beliefs of Texas Gulf Coast people.

Texas Gulf Coast Fishing Lore

by Patrick Mullen

along with the rest of them. Despite his reputation as "one of the biggest liars on the Texas coast," Ed Bell can still hook eager listeners with his tall tales. One of the last of the old-time yarn spinners, he can talk for hours about local history and legend, eccentric characters and personal experiences, and spice it all with tall tales and jokes.

Ed's stories are tied to the coastal region; they are about fishing in the bays and inlets, and hunting on the coastal plains. They come alive with local place names – Matagorda, Powderhorn Lake, Port Lavaca, Pass Cavallo, Indianola – and with local characters such as Tex Wilson, an ex-Texas Ranger and the biggest liar before Ed came along, and Mac and Harvey Taylor, eccentric brothers who lived off the land and the sea. The tall stories attribute a mythic quality to the Texas coast: fog so thick you can fish in it, flounder so big a boat runs aground on it, a Jewfish so big it pulled a boat full of men out into the Gulf of Mexico, and game so bountiful one shot kills a thousand ducks, a thousand geese, a rattlesnake, a bear, a deer and nine quail. It's all part of the Texas tradition of bragging and tall tales, a tradition that provides a special means of expressing regional identity for Ed Bell and a few other coastal residents.

Not everyone on the Gulf coast has a regional identity, or is so closely tied to the region's history and culture. The society is too complex, too varied, too urban, and too industrial for that. From the beach to 40 to 50 miles inland where the coastal plains end, the 365 miles of Texas coast is home for many different types of people. The majority of the population lives in the urban areas of Houston-Galveston, Beaumont-Port Arthur-Orange, Corpus Christi and Brownsville, and most have jobs related to the huge petrochemical industry or other modern businesses. These people have only a tenuous connection to the natural physical features which define the coastal area, the bays and estuaries, the beaches and the Gulf of Mexico itself. For the majority of the people on the coast, these features are associated with recreation, sport fishing, boating, swimming and sunning at the beach. But commercial fishermen look upon these bays and the Gulf as their workplace, their livelihood, the life-source of their culture and their lore.

Two types of commerical fishermen – sea fishermen and bay fishermen – stand out from the majority of people along the Texas Gulf coast. Each group has its distinctive tradition. Thus, sea fishermen who face physical dangers and economic uncertainties in their work have a strong tradition of superstitions, customs and legends related to their jobs. Bay fishermen encounter less physical

Ed Bell
drawing by Frank Holyfield

and financial risks and consequently their folklore, like Ed Bell's, is characterized by tall tales, local character stories, and buried treasure legends rather than by occupational lore.

I. Bay Fishermen

Bay fishermen go shrimping, oystering and floundering in small boats, and know the local bays, lakes and bayous as well as most people know their backyards. They make up only a small percentage of the population of large cities, such as Galveston, Freeport, Corpus Christi and Port Isabel, but in the small towns of Sabine, Port Bolivar, Matagorda, Palacios, Indianola, Port O'Connor, Seadrift and Fulton, they are a prominent part of the local atmosphere. Some of the first permanent settlers on the Texas coast in the nineteenth century probably became bay fishermen. Their number kept growing, especially during the 1930s when the Depression caused people to lose inland jobs. They are mostly white Protestants, with a smaller number of Catholics; only a handful have European ethnic backgrounds.

Most bay fishermen are independent operators who own their boats. Their income is not large, but it is steady, and many own modest homes in working-class neighborhoods. They sell their catches to fish houses on the coast; a few own bait camps where they sell directly to sport fishermen.

Ed Bell's bait camp gives him a way to make a living – and, through his contact with sport fishermen, a way to tell his stories. If the tale is not about fishing, it's likely to be about the old-time residents of the coast he calls "beach people." Two old hermits, Mac and Harvey Taylor, who lived at Indianola during the Depression, typify the beach people in Ed's stories:

One old guy come down there, and he saw them living back in that brush, back over there. Said, "How in the world do y'all stand living way back in there?" Well, old Mac, which was kinda the imbecile, he says, "Feller, didn't you say you was from Austin?"

He said, "Sure, I'm from Austin. What about it?"

Mac says, "You live a whole lot further back in there than we do."

Now that gives you, I believe, a pretty good idea of the difference of people living on the beach and people living inland.

Oldtimers up and down the coast knew Mac and Harvey, or the stories told about them. Like Ed, the bay fishermen and beach people are the bearers of a folklore that articulates their distinctive regional traditions and links them to historical events and people. The people who live in the cities and work in refineries or chemical plants may have heard of Jean Lafitte, the pirate who headquartered his ships and men on Galveston Island, but they probably have never heard stories about the treasure he supposedly left behind. The beach people know and talk about it though; they know about Spanish explorers, and cannons filled with gold, and buried treasures, and fortune hunters.

One of the best treasure storytellers is Max Edwards, a retired bay fisherman who now mends nets. He passes the time in his net shop in Palacios, talking about the old days on the Texas coast. While his grandchildren play nearby his visitors sit on piles of nets, enthralled by stories of pirates, treasure maps, divining rods and almost discovered gold. He tells one story in which his own family is involved in a treasure hunt.

Up here on the Tres Palacios River, there was an old trading post and they used to come by and trade with that old man, and of course they was prairie schooners, and the stagecoach used to go past there, and of course they stop once in a while. An old man, an old woman and his daughter would run the place. Well, the old man and the old woman died, and they buried the money. That's when from there to Houston was a long ways, and they didn't believe in banks in them days no ways, so of course they buried it, and anyhow we went up there with Tucker, and my brother-in-law and my wife, they went up there looking for it. And them rods drawed to that spot about either ten or twelve paces northwest of that fireplace, and of course they went looking for it and went down in the hole and throwed the bricks up, pretty deep, and then lightning struck and scared them away. First it struck on the west side, and they waited about fifteen minutes and said, "Well, maybe it won't do it no more." Then it struck on the east side. Clear skies, said there wasn't a cloud in the sky. Scared them almost to death. Course, I don't know, it might be true; there's something to that that scares people away.

Edwards tells this story very seriously, grounding it in reality with names and historical detail.

Then, like any good storyteller, he counterpoints his serious tale with a humorous yarn:

An old sea captain, he was walking up and down the ship, the deck, becalmed, and he was looking. He wanted to get into port. So he reached in his pocket, and he pulled out a half-dollar, and he throwed it overboard, and he says, "Give me half a dollar's worth of wind." By the time he got into port, why, it blowed all his sails off with nothing left but the mast and the rigging left on it. And he says, "If you get that much wind for a half a dollar, fifteen cents worth would have been a plenty."

The seaman who buys wind is a familiar traditional figure in American folklore. Richard Dorson collected stories about him among fishermen in Maine, and the story exists in different forms on the Texas coast. Generally, sea fishermen's tales are not as lighthearted as the ones told by bay fishermen, and when they tell the "buying the wind" story, the tone is entirely different from the way Max Edwards tells it. A good example is this version told by Doc Moots, a Port Isabel retired sea shrimper.

This is a true story, and this was sailing boat days back there when that's all there was. And this fella had his wife and two kids on the boat, the way it was told to me. Now that's just a story that was handed down, but it's supposed to be true. And we had a place that we called Hell's Gate; I don't know where it got its name, but that's the name of that. It's where the Big Ogeechee and the Little Ogeechee come down and went into the sound. It was a cut there, and they called it Hell's Gate; it was just a cut you could go through. And this fella down in a sailboat, he throwed two bits overboard. He said, "Old man, give me a quarter's worth of wind." And it breezed up a little bit, and he said, "Aw, give me fifty cents' worth." And he threw fifty cents overboard, and it breezed up a little more. And he said, "If we're getting this much, give me a dollar's worth." And he threw a dollar overboard. And when he got to Hell's Gate, and he made the turn, the boat capsized, and he was the only one saved out of the bunch. He lost his wife and kids. Now that is supposed to be a true saying. It happened at Hell's Gate. But I mean that's an old, old story.

Doc Moots does not tell this as a joke; he believes it as a true story. It reflects his awareness of the power of nature and the sea and his sense of a supernatural force which he cannot understand except to know that it affects the lives of humans. It's an awareness which all sea fishermen seem to share from their experience of being in a boat surrounded by the vastness of the sea, at the mercy of violent winds and storms.

II. Sea Fishermen

Sea fishermen are shrimpers, snapper fishermen and pogie fishermen. Red snapper is one of the most popular eating fish on the coast, and pogies (menhaden fish) are processed into meal, fertilizer and fish oil for industry. But shrimping is by far the biggest and most lucrative fishing operation on the Texas coast. Some shrimping is done within sight of the beach, but many boats venture across the Gulf of Mexico to Campeche Bay on the Yucatan Peninsula. In general, shrimping trips last from a few days to several weeks, in marked contrast to the bay fishermen's one-day trips within the confines of the coastal estuaries.

Sea fishermen often come from families that have fished for generations. Most migrated to Texas relatively recently as the shrimping business declined in the old fishing communities of Louisiana, Florida and Georgia. As a result, sea fishermen have a stronger occupational tradition than bay fishermen, and have fewer ties to the history and culture of coastal Texas. They live in the larger ports, and are more diverse in their religious and ethnic background: there are Cajuns in Port Arthur, Italians in Galveston, Yugoslavians in Freeport and Aransas Pass, and Mexican-Americans in Brownsville. Pogie boats are manned entirely by black fishermen who live in Port Arthur; the only plant in Texas for processing pogie is in nearby Sabine.

Despite the ethnic variations, the extreme physical hazards and economic uncertainties of the sea fishermen's lives give them a strong occupational identity. They never know if a trip will bring a huge catch, an empty hatch, or a disaster on the open sea costing the boat owner thousands of dollars in repairs and lost time. It's a "feast or famine" life which may yield $40,000 per boat one year and net loss the next. While shrimping corporations grow and prosper with fleets of boats that can withstand economic fluctuations, many independent operators who own and run their own boats have been forced out of the business. In order to survive, some of the smaller shrimpers have banded together to form cooperatives. A captain may be independent or he may work for a company, but he and his crew must face the same dangers at sea – mechanical breakdowns, accidents to men, sudden storms and hurricanes.

The personal experience stories fishermen tell reflect the dangers of their occupation. Captain Roche of Port Arthur says:

Anything can happen on board them boats while they're working; boom can break or they can sink and get drowned. That happens every once in awhile. They'll lose a man overboard, and that's it, he's gone! I lost a man overboard off Port Isabel. We even had a line on him. In fact, he drowned right in my arms; it was so goddamn rough.

Captain Simmons of Aransas Pass recounts a similar experience. "I got in a blow in '56 in Vera Cruz that took the starch out of me. And I've had respect for the weather since then." The storm had 90-mile-an-hour winds and did $7,000 damage to his boat, but the most harrowing part of the experience for him was that one of his men cut the arteries of his arm during the storm and almost bled to death before they could get back to land. "I'm not too religious a man, but I prayed for that boy. And he stopped bleeding. You can take it for what it's worth."

Because of such economic and physical risks, sea fishermen see themselves as victims of chance. Some translate the uncertainty into religious terms and see God as the ultimate power they must deal with. Thus, their religion – whether Protestant or Catholic – is important to their work and is sometimes the focus of their legends. Doc Moots, for example, tells a story about a captain he knew who defied God and was consequently punished.

Old Man Swensen was a captain from Sweden. He come to this country when he was a young man. I first knew him over in Georgia and Florida when he was fishing over there. Then when we came to Louisiana he was over there. This fellow was on the boat with him, on a rigging on there, and they had some trouble – tore up a net, something or other happened, it went wrong. This Old Man Swensen, he grabbed a hatchet, climbed the mast, and says, "Come on down and meet me halfway, you old whiteheaded son of a bitch." Now, he done that, I didn't see it, but I know that's the truth.

Many fishermen tell this same story about different captains, and it may have happened more than once, but more likely it is a folk legend which projects a commonly held belief. Some fishermen condemn the captain: "He was a wicked man," and "It was just sickening to hear a man like that." They say that the captain was punished for his blasphemy:

He reached down and grabbed the hatchet and run up the mast. Said, "Alright, God," said, "Meet me halfway." And when he got halfway up the mast post, lightning struck. Broke it down.

Others say the boat "went down and never came back up. The whole crew was drowned." Whatever the ending, the fishermen seem to be warning themselves not to blaspheme God, not to question the supernatural which controls their lives.

Sea fishermen also have traditional customs which reflect their religious beliefs and their attempts to deal with the supernatural. They sometimes nail coins on the boat, put a coin under the mast when building a boat, or launch a boat with champagne to ensure good luck.

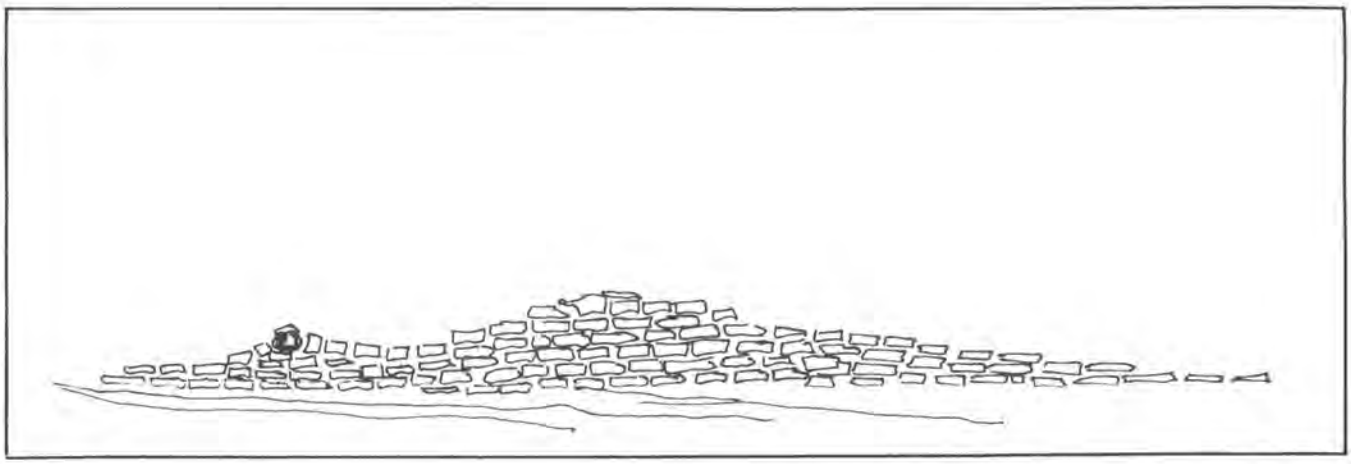
The most elaborate and pervasive custom is the blessing of the shrimp fleet performed once a year in several different ports including Galveston, Freeport and Palacios. Wives and families of the fishermen decorate the boats with colorful streamers, flags and even paper and cardboard figures. A priest in a motorboat blesses each shrimp boat. Often a parade of boats sails out of the harbor into the bay, and the best decorated boat receives an award. The day ends with a public shrimp dinner and a dance at a local church, where a queen of the shrimp fleet is crowned. In the growing resort port of Galveston, the blessing of the fleet has become a major tourist attraction; nevertheless, shrimpers here as elsewhere maintain the ceremony for their own purposes. "In the beginning we had no inkling of the tourists," says Captain Erwin, who has shrimped out of Galveston all his life. "We just didn't care about the tourists at all; it was for the boats." Captain Roche agrees: "This is not for the tourists; this is for the fishermen."

Captain Roche is Catholic and Captain Erwin is Protestant, but both observe the blessing as a religious ceremony which gives spiritual assurance that God is with them another year. Even Protestant fishermen who firmly believe Catholic rituals are pagan suppress their prejudice in order to share in the secure feeling the ceremony engenders. As with magic legends, the ritual incorporates the fishermen's belief in the supernatural in an attempt to cope with the uncertainties of their daily work.

Sea fishermen also have a multitude of superstitious practices to accompany the religious customs and magical legends: "If a man was hired on a boat, and he came on board with a black suitcase, they would turn him loose right then, and would tell him to get off the boat. All the old fishermans said it was bad luck."

"If you go on a boat and when you pick a hatch cover up and you turn it upside down, well that was hard luck."

The fishermen who believe in these superstitions frequently cite experiences to back up their beliefs. "I have never made a successful trip on Friday, and that's facts. . . . Last time I left the dock on



Friday was about five years ago and didn't make it no further than Sabine when the clutch fell out." One traditional taboo word on boats is "alligator."

I never did like nobody to say "alligator" on board. That's something that you heard, and it seems like every time that I was ever on a boat and anybody said it on there, I'd go out and tear my net or just something or another would go wrong. And I just figured I'd just rather have that said somewhere else and not on the boat. It just stayed with me.

Not all fishermen are this superstitious; the spectrum of belief and practice stretches from total rejection to total acceptance, and is shared by whites and blacks, European ethnic groups and Anglo-Americans alike. Each racial and ethnic group also has a few beliefs and customs peculiar to its own tradition. For instance, the black pogie fishermen believe that killing a sea turtle is bad luck; only a few white fishermen know this superstition. It could be related to a West African belief that turtles are sacred animals. Yugoslavian fishermen know folk cures for a fish sting which they learned fishing in the Adriatic Sea.

Older Italian fishermen have a magic ritual which was brought from a Sicilian fishing village. Yet third-generation Italians are only vaguely aware of the ritual. Chris Damico, who is 18 and works on his father's shrimp boat during the summer, describes it this way: "If you see a water spout and you make the sign of the cross with your hand, it will go away. I heard this from my mother who got it from her father in Italy." A fisherman his father's age knew more details of the ritual. "They used silver knives to get rid of, to cut the water spout. They make the sign of the cross with silver knives. Some kind of words were said with it." A 75-year-old fisherman who was born and spent his childhood and young adulthood in Sicily knew even more details.

Old-timers used to do the thing with knives and water spout. There was a special day when they had to learn the words, some feast day. They had to use special knives. Christmas Eve was when you had to learn the words. Had to use a white-handled knife. It was supposed to cut the water spout. Use scripture and holy attitude and make the sign of the cross. They said "tail of the rat" so that you might not harm any human beings. It was a secret thing for seafaring men. It was an elderly lady who said she had cut the spout.

The different superstitions, rituals, customs and magic legends are all expressions of the sea fishing community's anxiety over occupational uncertainties. Products of science and technology such as two-way radios, depth-indicators, steel-hulled boats and weather reports are accepted and used, of course, but these tools cannot ensure safe returns or bountiful catches. To relieve the anxiety that arises from the uncertainty, fishermen avoid breaking taboos, practice rituals and tell legends which testify to the efficacy of their beliefs. Sea fishermen realize that society in general scorns superstitious behavior, but their need for such beliefs is strong, and parallels similar practices of other high-risk occupations like miners and high-rise construction workers. One fisherman from Freeport expresses the widely held attitude of caution and rationalization: "You have so much bad luck in this business, there's no use tempting nothing." Another says, "It pays to be cautious."

Referring to the hatch cover taboo, a fisherman in Brownsville sums it up: "Let's put it this way; that hatch cover was built a certain way, and I don't turn it upside down. I don't believe it, but I still won't do it. There's no use pressing your luck."

Cajuns and Creoles: The French Gulf Coast

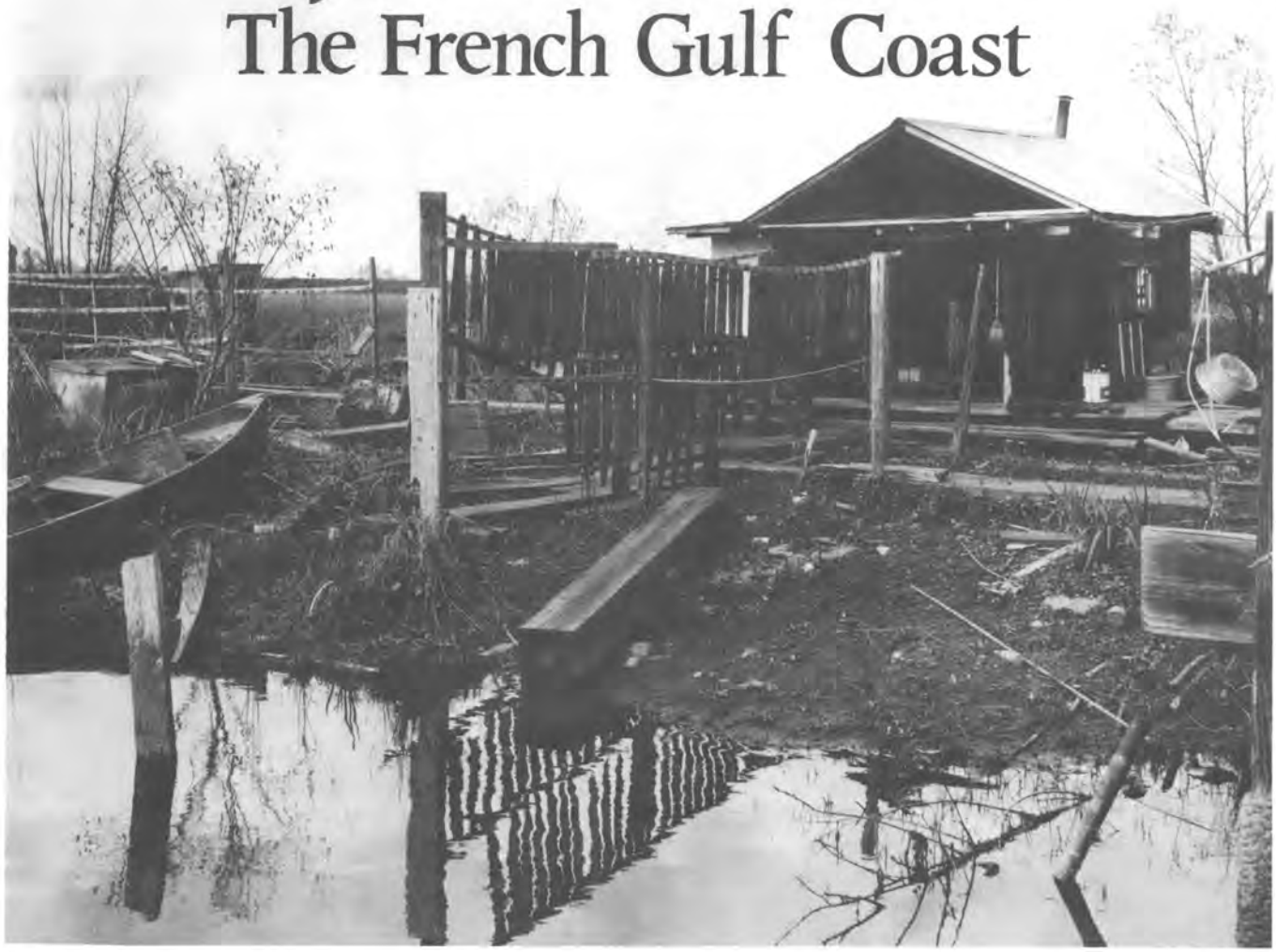


photo courtesy of LSU Press

by Nicholas Spitzer

"Gumbo" has long been a favorite literary metaphor for describing the polyglot culture of the Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi Gulf Coast. Like the people who populate the stretch of land from Biloxi, Mississippi, to Houston, Texas, gumbo takes many forms, from that served in fancy New Orleans restaurants to the blackbird-filled dish of some rural Cajun and black French homes.

In its essentials, gumbo reflects the cultural diversity of the area: the name itself is a West African term for okra; the sassafras filé powder, used for a flavored thickener, comes from the local Indians; the rice is raised by Cajuns, who learned the skill on a large scale from Germans; and in many cases, a Continental French or Spanish aesthetic determines how the final blend is cooked. It is this diversity within the overall French-influenced culture of the region that makes gumbo such an appropriate metaphor for the people variously labeled Cajun, Creole, Sabine, *mulatre*, redbone and redneck.

Cajuns who have entered the popular consciousness via Nashville recordings, such as Jimmie C. Newman, Joel Sonnier or Doug Kershaw, may represent the Cajuns back home as some kind of wild, mixed breed of pirogue-poling swamp people who wrestle alligators en route to the dance hall. But this is no more accurate than the common perception that the center of this enduring culture is the much publicized New Orleans French Quarter. The spirit of the performers who brought jazz out of that city in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (via the commingling of European and African traditions), or the more recent Caribbean-influenced pianists of the 1950s (like Huey "Piano" Smith and Antoine "Fats" Domino) has been relegated to Preservation Hall concerts and rock 'n roll revival shows. In fact, despite all its

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Nick Spitzer, currently a graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin, has done extensive field research along the Louisiana Gulf Coast for several years, most recently with the support of the Smithsonian Institution and the National Endowment for the Arts. Sabra Webber provided helpful comments on this article and Ed Miller designed and drew the map.

festivities and its impressive Jazz & Heritage Fair, New Orleans today is in many ways a typical American city, far less significant in the region's culture than in the past.

The real heart of the Gulf Coast French culture, and the area that powers its current revival, spreads through the low-lying countryside to the south and east of New Orleans, from Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes (counties) to the Texas border towns of Beaumont, Port Arthur and Orange. This is Cajun Country. Cajuns are not the only people here, but they set the cultural tone for everyone in the region: Indians, Spaniards, Germans, immigrant north Louisianans, Texans and Mexicans. As the map indicates, the core area of Cajun culture stretches from the Gulf of Mexico northward to Avoyelles Parish, where Anglo Louisiana begins; it reaches into Mississippi on the east and as far west as Houston (with its 26,000 French speakers[1]), but the center is the Louisiana bayou country. French Cajun and Creole are still the mother tongue for over half the people in some of these parishes. Here, for over 200 years, an astonishing array of traditions have shaped the Cajun culture, and it is here that a renewed pride in ethnicity finds strong support.

Multinational, Multiracial Beginnings

The first people of French culture to enter Louisiana were explorers from France and French Canada. The settlers that followed set up outposts at Natchitoches, New Orleans, and what are now St. Martinville and Opelousas in the Attakapan Indian area (see map). The Acadians came later, hailing primarily from northwestern France. They had settled first in the area of Canada now called Nova Scotia, establishing prosperous farming communities in the early 1600s. In 1718, France ceded this territory, known as Acadia, to the British.

After years of growing political instability, as many as 10,000 of these French-speaking Catholics were suddenly deported in 1755. Four thousand were dropped in the English colonies where they were generally rejected (except in Catholic Maryland). Others were sent to the French West Indies, to English prisons, or back to France. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 allowed those held in English colonies or in England to regroup in the French area of Louisiana.[2] In the years 1765 to '67, an estimated 1,500 Acadians entered Louisiana through New Orleans.[3] Another 1,600 came in 1784 after a 30-year trek.[4] It is this awesome and tragic migration that Longfellow chronicled in *Evangeline*, a poem which romantically tells the story of two lovers who promise to marry when they are reunited in Louisiana.

By the time the Acadians arrived, Louisiana was no longer a French possession, having been ceded to Spain in 1763. The Spanish saw the Acadians as hard-working settlers and provided them with water passage to lands west of New Orleans below the Atchafalaya Basin along the bayous Lafourche, Teche and Vermilion. Still others went up the Mississippi River into the area below Baton Rouge. The Acadians did not fit into the colonial "haute culture" of New Orleans, where people born of Old World Spanish and French parents were traditionally called Creoles.

Prior to 1800, other immigrants of French culture arrived, including noblemen fleeing the French Revolution and plantation owners escaping from slave uprisings in the Caribbean. By 1809, a total of 10,000 Old World French, black slaves and "free people of color" had also entered Louisiana.[5] Many followed the Acadians to the bayous, especially to St. Martin, Iberia and St. Mary Parishes, and up the Mississippi coast. Unlike the aristocrats of New Orleans, these latecomers mingled with the Acadians, as did some younger wealthy Creoles of New Orleans who moved to the St. Martinville area. Indeed, the territory around St. Martinville became an intriguing mixture of upper-class French, expatriates, blacks from the Caribbean, and the Acadians. A popular watering hole, it came to be called "Lè Petite Paris."

After 1803 the Americanization of Louisiana began.[6] Yankee planters from Maryland and Virginia entered the rich lower Mississippi River Valley and succeeded in driving some of the French planters out. North Louisiana was populated by Scotch-Irish people from Tennessee and the Upland South. People from Germany, the "German Creoles," settled an area on the Mississippi north of New Orleans, but south of the Acadian Coast.[7] Another group of Germans came from the American Midwest in the 1870s bringing with them the farm technology to make the Southwestern prairies profitable as rice growing areas. They also brought the Hohner accordion which is today an essential element of Cajun music. Both these groups of Germans were largely absorbed by the Acadians and began to speak French.[8]

In their brief tenure, the Spaniards managed to settle people from the Canary Islands, called Isleños, in St. Bernard Parish. Other Spanish settlements were on Bayou Teche at New Iberia, Bayou Lafourche at Valenzuela and at Galveztown (60 miles north of New Orleans). These settlements were composed of Malagueños and Granadinos in addition to Isleños.[9] Many Spaniards intermingled with the Acadians and were absorbed. A name like Rodriguez became Rodrigue, but a number of Spanish names remained intact, and Spanish is still spoken by a few people in St. Bernard Parish.

Meanwhile, the Atakapan Indians were largely destroyed or driven out of south Louisiana and east Texas; the Coushatta and Houma Indians survive today in the greatest number. The various mixtures of Indian, Cajun, and black are now called redbones and Sabines, with redbones found in western Louisiana from the Red River south, and Sabines scattered eastward from Houma to Biloxi.[10] Both these peoples have sometimes held themselves apart from Cajuns and blacks who in turn often look down on them.

Who, then, is a Cajun?

In the narrowest sense, a Cajun is someone descended from the original Acadians; but the very name change from Acadian to Cajun rightly indicates the impact of other cultures. Many Cajuns today represent the mingling of German and Spanish traditions, as well as the upper-class French, and the importance of Indians and blacks in shaping the Cajun language and art forms cannot be denied. In addition, there are also descendants from the early English and Scottish loggers, traders and swampers who now speak and consider themselves French.[11] In all these cases, the Acadian tradition remained dominant, perhaps because outsiders intermarried with Acadian women, who raised their children by the old ways, while Acadian men apparently avoided marrying "non-traditional" women.[12]

Blacks and Indians never completely entered Cajun culture. Although many

map designed and drawn by Ed Miller

This map of the French area along the Gulf Coast is based on a synthesis of traits: language use, family names, house types, and religion as represented in previously drawn maps by Meigs, 1939; Kniffen, 1941; Smith and Hitt, 1952; and Newton, 1975. Census data from 1970 was also used. The map does not account for many pockets of ethnic groups throughout the area. The portion defined by the solid line is what locals generally call "Cajun country," though, as I have noted, a variety of cultural styles are subsumed under this rubric. The area enclosed by the dotted line has French influence in all the traits noted, but the prevailing culture cannot be considered Cajun or Creole. Within the shaded area the language spoken is often Creole; outside that area, but within the solid line, various Cajun dialects are spoken.

PERCENTAGE OF "MOTHER TONGUE" FRENCH SPEAKERS IN FRENCH GULF COAST PARISHES AND COUNTIES

The figures below represent the "Mother Tongue" French speakers in each county; they are taken from the 1970 US Census. They do not include people who may speak French second to English, nor do they indicate all the persons who consider themselves to be Cajun or Creole who don't speak French.

Parish/County	Total Population	Mother Tongue French Speakers	% Speakers of French
1. Harris (Tx)	1,741,908	26,296	1
2. Brazoria (Tx)	108,312	1,243	1
3. Liberty (Tx)	33,014	1,267	3
4. Chambers (Tx)	12,187	1,252	10
5. Galveston (Tx)	169,812	3,184	2
6. Hardin (Tx)	29,996	567	2
7. Jefferson (Tx)	244,937	24,049	9
8. Orange (Tx)	71,215	5,337	7
9. Natchitoches (La)	35,219	1,500	4
10. Grant (La)	13,671	133	1
11. Vernon (La)	53,794	1,065	2
12. Rapides (La)	118,078	6,431	5
13. Avoyelles (La)	37,571	19,898	53
14. Beauregard (La)	22,872	657	3
15. Allen (La)	20,794	4,949	24
16. Evangeline (La)	31,932	24,222	80
17. St. Landry (La)	80,364	38,550	48
18. Pointe Coupee (La)	22,002	4,468	20
19. Calcasieu (La)	145,415	34,607	24
20. Jefferson Davis (La)	29,554	14,049	48
21. Acadia (La)	52,109	27,845	53
22. Cameron (La)	8,194	4,415	52
23. Vermillion (La)	43,071	29,843	69
24. Lafayette (La)	109,716	57,138	52
25. Iberia (La)	57,397	25,216	44
26. West Baton Rouge (La)	16,864	1,804	12
27. Iberville (La)	30,743	3,866	12
28. Assumption (La)	19,654	8,876	45
29. St. Mary (La)	60,752	13,279	22
30. St. Martin (2 bounded areas) (La.)	32,453	25,665	80
31. Terrebonne (La)	76,049	29,953	39
32. West Feliciana (La)	11,376	145	1
33. East Feliciana (La)	17,657	274	1
34. St. Helena (La)	9,937	69	near 0
35. Tangipahoa (La)	65,875	1,273	2
36. Washington (La)	41,987	276	<1
37. East Baton Rouge (La)	285,142	16,313	6
38. Livingston (La)	36,511	2,108	5
39. St. Tammany (La)	63,585	3,187	5
40. Ascension (La)	37,086	7,001	26
41. St. James (La)	19,337	5,686	23
42. St. John the Baptist (La)	23,813	5,265	20
43. Lafourche (La)	68,941	43,101	62
44. St. Charles (La)	29,550	6,700	22
45. Jefferson (La)	337,568	45,769	12
46. Plaquemines (La)	25,225	4,736	20
47. St. Bernard (La)	51,185	5,453	10
48. Orleans (La)	593,467	42,796	7
49. Pearl River (Miss)	27,800	149	<1
50. Hancock (Miss)	17,387	862	5
51. Harrison (Miss)	134,582	3,560	3
52. Jackson (Miss)	87,975	1,004	1

blacks and Indians now speak French and participate in modified forms of Cajun cultural life, they have socially never thought of themselves, nor are they thought of, as Cajuns. An array of social types was set up to describe the various racial mixtures found in New Orleans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. An 1889 dictionary of Americanisms follows these types in giving this account of the catchall word "mulatto":

> A name given to the offspring of a white and a negro. The word is Spanish, *mulato* from mulo a mule, or, as in this case, a mixed breed. Generally speaking, all persons with a "touch of the tar brush" are, in the States, called *mulattoes*, although experts draw very fine distinctions in the amount of mixedness displayed by any given example. The grades are as follows: – MULATTO, 1/2 black, white and negro; Quarteron [quadroon], 1/4 black, white and Mulatto; Metis or metif, 1/8 black, white and quarteron; Meamelouc, 1/16 black, white and metis; Demi-Meamelouc, 1/32 black, white and meamelouc; Sang-mele, 1/64 black, white and demi-meamelouc; Griffe, 3/4 black, negro and Mulatto; Marabou, 5/8 black, Mulatto and griffe; Sacatra, 7/8 black, griffe and negro.[13]

Meanwhile, in Cajun country, mulattoes with mixed Spanish, French, German and/or Afro-Caribbean blood also began to call themselves Creoles, and tended to acculturate other blacks with whom they came in contact. Thus, American slaves who were brought to Louisiana speaking English or Africanized English mingled with French-speaking blacks and became Creole in language and culture; for example, many adopted the religion of Creoles, which explains the paucity of black Baptists in south Louisiana compared to the number of black Catholics.[16]

Obviously, lighter skin color and more European physical features gave a person greater status.[14] In practice, mulatto mistresses of varying shades mingled publicly with European Creoles at New Orleans social functions like the Octaroon and Quadroon balls. The offspring of these liaisons (whether public or private) in New Orleans and elsewhere in French Louisiana began to adopt the name Creole to enhance their status and separate themselves from darker Negroes.[15]

With the increased numbers of children from mixed liaisons and marriages, both in New Orleans and the Cajun areas, the term Creole gradually shed its earlier identification with the Spanish and French upper classes and came to refer to blacks or mulattoes intermingled with the Acadian-French culture. European and Anglo groups in southern Louisiana were also largely absorbed by Cajun culture, and the major socio-cultural division that remains is between black and white French people, between Creole and Cajuns. However, the extensive relations between these groups over the years has made their differences more fluid than a rigid racial barrier may imply. For example, many Creoles speak what is in effect a black rendition of Cajun French; conversely, some Cajuns speak Creole, which linguistically is an Africanized French, described at its simplest as an European vocabulary within a grammatical and phonological structure mostly derived from various West African languages.[17] Many whites as well as blacks in the shaded area of the map speak this sort of Creole, although they refer to it by local names like *Français Nèg', Français Platte, Couri-Vini, Gombo* or *patois*. In its "deepest" form, French Creole is unintelligible to speakers of Cajun French (with its genetic relationship to Old World Provincial French).

Despite cultural overlaps, race remains a conscious factor in identifying the difference between Cajuns and Creoles. Cajuns often refer to all blacks – whether they speak Cajun French, Creole French, or English – as *les Nèg'* or *Mond' Couleur*, but they generally call blacks of lighter color (and obvious European or white descent) either *mûlatre* or *Creole*. Black French people follow a similar ranking, calling English-speaking blacks *Noir 'mericain*, lighter people regardless of language *mulatre*, and whites *Cajun* or just *white*. Thus, the grossest distinctions between and within groups are made on the basis of perceived race, a pattern following the general American Southern attitude toward race. For example, a Cajun in his late thirties told me, "When we were growing up, we thought *les Nèg'* were people just like us. It was only the private things we didn't do together like eat and church . . . if a colored man showed up at a dance, no one would care much unless he asked a white woman to dance."

The Land

Swamp and Coastal Areas. The durability of the French culture on the Gulf Coast has long been helped by the physical inaccessibility of a region laced with marshes and bayous. The early Acadian settlers turned the bayou itself into a kind of main street for commerce and travel, and it has remained a central feature of the Cajun community along Bayou Lafourche to the present day. This Bayou (see map) is still called the "longest main street in the world," and its pattern of closely spaced houses continues to reach northward toward the Atchafalaya Basin and southward to the Gulf Coast.

The original Acadian settlers placed their houses on the edge of the slow-moving channels – this movement distinguishes a bayou from a larger, water-entrapped swamp. Long, narrow plots extended behind each house measured in the ancient Gallic unit – *urpent* (about five-sixths of an acre)–still used today. This arrangement gave the new homeowner the advantage of being close to his neighbors with enough land for a garden behind the house and the cotton, corn, and indigo crops further back in the richer soil. Behind them lay the lower, wetter land suitable for raising rice, and finally the low swamp wood lots where small game and cypress were plentiful. Supporting themselves from these smaller environments, the Cajuns came to be called *Petites Habitants* in contrast to the French and Yankee plantation owners to the east on the Mississippi and west of the Atchafalaya Basin.

When growing sugar cane became profitable around the turn of the nineteenth century, Cajuns came in increasing contact with the plantation system. They did not generally own slaves, nor did they develop a landed aristocracy, but some did acquire fairly large holdings through intermarriage with Old French planters.[18] As the population area grew and Yankee planters moved in to corner the sugar market, many Cajuns, especially those along the Mississippi coast, were forced into the swamp area in the Atchafalaya Basin. There they often competed with Anglos from north Louisiana for a livelihood based on trapping, fishing and moss gathering (sold for furniture stuffing). Others moved toward the coast for both inland and Gulf fishing.

The relative proximity to the New

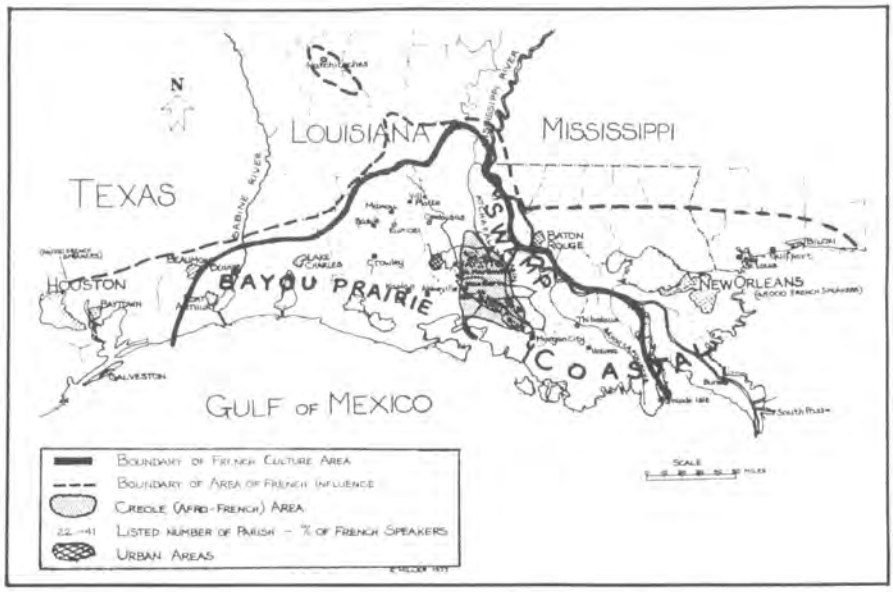

photo courtesy of LSU Press

Annual pirogue races, held on Bayou Lafourche.

Orleans market made coastal fishing by small operators a profitable business. In fact, until very recently, the independent fisherman's freshwater catch of catfish and crawfish in the swamps of the Atchafalaya Basin and the coastal catch of oysters, shrimp, and crabs overshadowed the large Gulf fin fisheries.[19] For generations, Cajun fishermen have been earning a living from their boats: the flat-bottomed, shallow-drafted *esquif* (skiff), *pirogue* and *bateau* for swamp fishing, and the larger, deeper keeled luggers and shrimp trawlers for the coast. But modernization has changed much of this self-sufficiency. The *pirogue*, originally an Indian-designed, hollowed-out cypress log, is now made of aluminum and fiber glass.[20] With refrigerated compartments, the trawlers and their crews can now stay at sea for weeks. Large companies have emerged which own fleets and hire Cajuns — and Anglos, Indians, Lithuanians, and Yugoslavs.

While the Gulf Coast centralized fisheries have blossomed, much of the swamp business has dwindled. The disastrous flood of 1927 brought in the federal government with a host of projects to contain the Atchafalaya Basin water flow behind a system of levees, and now most of the area's people reside on the outer edge of the levees, venturing periodically to camps in the swamp interior and returning to sell or barter their catches of crawfish, catfish, nutria and raccoon. While some swampers live in houseboats, they more often have a house on small blocks protected by the levee (the coastal dwellers usually have houses on stilts). Some of the houses have steady front porches while the rest of the house can float upward if the water rises. Since the Basin has been channeled by the Army Corps of Engineers to prevent flooding, it has steadily filled with silt, destroying fishing areas. To compensate, farmers and landowners have begun deliberately flooding fields near the swamp and throughout southwest Louisiana to create large catfish and crawfish "farms" or "pounds." These in turn have given rise to a complex system of land tenure involving merchants, processors, and a new species of "sharecroppers" who are in continual debt for supplies needed to harvest the next crop of fish.[21]

The combination of isolation, poverty, resentment toward the government for forcing relocation, and the subjugation to outside markets makes the people of the Atchafalaya Basin the least cosmopolitan of the Cajuns. Strangers are viewed with more suspicion here than in other areas of south Louisiana, and settlements often discourage visits or settlement by outsiders. In one tiny village on the edge of the Basin north of St. Martinville's sugar cane area, there are no black residents and an unwritten curfew insists that all black visitors must be out of town by sunset.[22] But just to the south, large numbers of blacks live in the sugar cane area of St. Martin, St. Mary and Iberia Parishes, and the Creole language of Africanized French is the dominant language for both whites and blacks.

Cane Area and Prairies. In many ways, the sugar cane area west of the Atchafalaya Basin is a transitional one

from the swamp and coastal subregions to the southwestern prairie. Plantation mansions, some delapidated, others in fine repair as museums and private homes, mingle with shotgun houses and a variety of sharecropper dwellings. The classic cypress Acadian house with double doors and *garçonniere* stairway on the porch (*galerie*) and picket fence, is especially visible along bayou roads. There is a feeling of the Old World in the French colonial architecture and town squares in villages such as Grand Coteau, Abbeville, and St. Martinville. A few members of the population today speak an aristocratic French – in juxtaposition to Creole or Cajun – and until the turn of the century, many read the language. Local historians such as Andre A. Olivier greet the outsider by reciting *Evangeline*. Light-skinned Creoles of Spanish, black and French background may live in meager circumstances here, but they treat guests with a gentility that is distinctly European. The contrast to the swampers a few miles to the east is remarkable.

Further west, the difference is even more dramatic. A sign over the entrance to a small bar in Scott, just west of Lafayette, says, "Welcome to the Scott Bar. Where Friends Meet and the West Begins." The crops in this area shift from sugar cane to soybeans, sweet potatoes and rice. The town of Sunset touts itself as the "sweet potato capital of the world," and Opelousas to the north has a yearly yam festival that crowns a "yam queen" and celebrates with a giant dance in the local "Yamatorium." This area westward into Texas was opened after the 1830s land offers made by the federal government; since wood was scarce, some Acadian-style houses were moved overland from the more plentiful timber regions of the swamps. The pattern of large, open square and rectangular plots contrasts sharply with the long, narrow bayou tracts in the swamp and coastal subregions. Here, towns do not have the French village aspect; neither are they built along bayous, nor closed-in as swamp settlements. Instead they are built on the main roads and rail lines where they receive some impact from Texas cowboy culture with its rodeo arenas, western hats and boots, and Lone Star Feed and Seed Stores. The land is open and flat, generally lacking the ridge and swamp aspects to the east. In the midst of sea-like expanses of flooded rice fields, the horizon is broken only by "pine islands."

Some of the most traditional Cajuns and black French live in these remote areas, and even the rise of local agribusinesses with large landholdings has not destroyed many traditional patterns of exchange.[23] The practice of giving a godchild son a pig or calf – tantamount to a savings bond in mainstream America – persists among Cajuns and Creoles. On a grander scale, entire communities cooperate to acquire heavy equipment, field flooding systems, and rice drying equipment.

In the bayou prairies, the tradition of *boucherie de compagne* still exists; groups of men contribute cattle and pigs to be butchered. Prior to the

photo by Nick Spitzer

Crawfisherman Hally Barras checks his traps.

photo courtesy of LSU Press

This traditional Acadian house is one of the few still inhabited.

photos by Nick Spitzer

Mass produced icons at factory in New Iberia, Louisiana.

Black Catholic home altars.

electric freezer, this meant fresh meat on a weekly basis, but it is carried on today largely as a social event, often within an extended family.

Many of the blacks in the rice prairies are far more "Cajunized" culturally than those in the Creole speaking sugar cane area. West of Opelousas is an area particularly known for its prominent Creole, locally termed *mulâtre*, population, many of whom own large tracts of land which they rent to whites as well as blacks. But throughout the area, Creoles speak a black rendition of Cajun French rather than Africanized Creole, and their music is more Cajun than Caribbean.

The bayou prairies also contain a few pockets of ethnic people who exist alongside the Cajuns: Robert's Cove is a German settlement where, on the Sixth of December, the feast of St. Nicholas is celebrated; Crowley and Jennings have English influence; Kaplan is named for a Jewish mercantile family. The Coushatta Indians are settled on a reservation in Elton; some of the older Coushattas are speakers of a Mississippi River trade language called Mobilian known to Indians, blacks, Spaniards, and French alike in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.[24]

Overall, though, the Cajun culture dominates. The area around Basile and Mamou is well known for its musicians: the Balfa Brothers, Ed and Bee Deshotels, and Nathan Abshire, as well as the late Amade Ardoin, the first black French accordionist to make records. French music radio programs blanket the area, broadcast at varying times of the day from Ville Platte, Jennings, Crowley and Eunice. The area has a number of dance halls, and Mardi Gras is celebrated enthusiastically here.

Folklife Traditions

Religion and Rituals. Although the Catholic church is the strongest religious force in the French Gulf Coast, local practices may vary greatly as folk beliefs are integrated into church teachings.[25] For example, many homes have blessed palms (usually magnolia leaves) placed in crucifix form over doorways to keep away bad luck and storms. They may also be blessed by the presence of numerous religious portraits, statues, rosaries, or perhaps an altar built with shelves for holy water and candles.

Most French communities have two Catholic churches, one black and one white. Although Louisiana has the largest per capita black Catholic population in the US, the priests for the black churches are generally whites from the North, French Canada or Ireland, who often view themselves as missionaries in an exotic land. Cajun churches are more likely to have local whites who have gone through seminary training in Louisiana. In some rural communities, the church is integrated, but blacks sit in a designated corner and take communion last.

The racial segregation of the church is mirrored in the different beliefs of blacks and whites, although, again, there is considerable overlap and exchange between the two groups. Black French Catholics usually build the most elaborate altars, with candles, prescription medicines, homemade medicines and holy water. They regularly display photographs of children and various rites-of-passage events, such as graduation and weddings, and occasionally of deceased parents or grandparents with attached prayers. The influence of West African beliefs is evident in the practice of placing ancestor portraits over doorways and using powders and potions to prevent harm from coming to the family, or to bring a member good fortune.

In some cases, such practices have been adopted by whites as well; for example, both blacks and whites use holy water to restore health, applying it to injured parts of the body or to the forehead of a sick person. And while many black communities have a particular person, usually a woman, who can affect the forces of good and evil (called *Mojo*), many Cajuns may also consult a black conjurer to help with a specific problem. Also called upon for help are *treateurs*, persons of either sex who treat physical problems with a mixture of Catholic prayers and such practices as the laying on of hands and the tying of knotted strings around the afflicted parts of the body.[26] Furthermore, some older blacks and whites believe in phenomena called *Feu Follet* and *Cauchemar*. *Feu Follet* is a light which, if seen at night, will make the viewer lose the way home. *Cauchemar* affects the sleeping

person by attempting to choke them or ride them if they are sleeping in an exposed position, have been unfaithful Catholics, or have done some wrong. Both of these supernatural phenomena are explained as the wandering souls of babies who died unbaptized. For the most part, however, the belief in *Feu Follet* and *Cauchemar* as well as the use of conjurers and *treateurs* is fading in all but rural areas. Other religious and social traditions remain stronger.[27]

Mardi Gras. The Mardi Gras festival occurs on Shrove Tuesday before Ash Wednesday and the start of Lent. It is most traditional in rural areas; generally black and white communities hold their own celebrations.[28] In all cases, the festival involves elements of ritual reversal: men who normally work, make mischief, chasing chickens and singing in falsetto voices, dressed in costumes, asking women for handouts, dancing together – all taboos the rest of the year. The event consists of men, called "runners," riding through the countryside, asking for *charité* in the form of live chickens, sausages, rice, cakes, wine, whiskey and cooking oil. Some items are consumed immediately while others are saved for a gumbo that will be served prior to the large dance that evening. Women are rarely runners – although some towns have a separate women's Mardi Gras on the preceeding Sunday – and wives stay home to control the handing out of *charitè*, in symbolic reversal of their usual relationship to the family "provider." The women also help prepare gumbo and are, of course, at the evening dance.

There are many differences between black and white Mardi Gras. The white groups usually sing a medievally-moded Mardi Gras song *en masse* or individually in a highly melodic form, while the blacks tend to have a call/response arrangement with a lead clown making the request for *charité* and his followers responding supportively. "Ouis bon cher mon camarade." Most white Mardi Gras feature "runners" on horseback, a symbol of wealth and prestige. Black Mardi Gras clowns usually ride flatbed trucks; their costumes tend to be homemade, while some of the white celebrants' costumes are elegant storebought silks.

Black Mardi Gras are more traditional because they are generally smaller, and the participants (25 or less) are more likely to be neighbors. At a huge rural Cajun Mardi Gras in Mamou (where there were 200 riders), a number of outsiders came along on horseback and the participants knew one another less well. Prior to the day's events in Mamou, the formal rules of Mardi Gras are read aloud in French and English. They include warnings to respect private property, to not carry concealed weapons and to act "traditionally."[28] In a nearby black Mardi Gras, the elders submerge the "rules" in allegorical statements and make no mention of observing tradition. The heightened self-consciousness of the white Mardi Gras reflects the fact that it once died out, was only revived in the 1950s, and now receives increasing attention from outsiders.

Despite the segregation of Mardi Gras groups, some events at this time may be more interracial than usual. At an outdoor church fair, for example, I saw racially mixed dancing late in the day after people had consumed a fair amount of alcohol. The musicians performing for the dance were black, while the majority of the crowd was white.

Mardi Gras is considerably less traditional in an urban area like Lafayette, where public drunkenness and general revelry overshadow older rituals. In Lafayette, the local Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce, and Knights of Columbus dominate the planning of the festival. Parades and floats are a main attraction, and a king and queen are crowned. Music and food are also central to the day's celebration, but people do not go door to door asking *charitè*.

Devout Catholics take the restrictions of the 40-day Lent period following Mardi Gras very seriously, and many give up certain foods and habits. Others may make some token sacrifice, but the general spirit of the religious season is strong enough to close most French dance halls, or at least cut back their schedule to one dance a week.

The Easter holiday, which ends Lent, is a time for family gatherings and church worship – even by those who otherwise rarely attend church. Relatives from as far away as the Cajun and Creole communities in Los Angeles and San Francisco may come to celebrate the family holiday, and most urban people on the French Gulf Coast will join their rural kin at the country homestead for religious services and fun. Among blacks, Easter eggs are often dyed green with the

photo courtesy of LSU Press

Young men in Mamou, Louisiana, provide entertainment for the farmers in return for their contributions.

photos by Nick Spitzer

Basile Swine Festival: (left) cake auction to raise money for an indigent ill person; (above) boudin eating contest, and winner.

boiled-down resin of the so-called *Pâcque* plant. Blacks and whites alike take hard-boiled eggs and tap them, trying to break the opponent's eggs. This "pâcqueing" of eggs is carried out in good cheer and the person with the unbroken egg may be called *le roi (la reine) de Pâcque.*

All Saints Day and Other Festivals. Prior to All Saints Day on November 1, black and white French Catholics visit their cemeteries (which are segregated) to clean, whitewash and decorate the graves. The raised, sealed vaults found in much of south Louisiana and the Gulf Coast are traditional in their style and function: they protect the remains of a body from high ground water.

At the graveyard, people may gossip about others who don't respect the dead. Actually, most people seem to feel that, except in unusual circumstances, the dead do not know what is being done; but the decorating tradition gives the living the comfort of knowing they too will be remembered. In the black French community especially, photos and other ornaments – even an accordion marking for a dead musician – are often added to the small vestibule that may be built into headstones. As with Mardi Gras, blacks and whites observe similar private traditions separately and in different forms, while public events – such as the church fair – are racially mixed and open to all comers, though whites tend to run the festivities.

A blessing of the cemetery followed by mass on All Saints Day completes the special tribute paid to the dead and signifies the release of souls from purgatory to heaven. The ceremonies follow Catholic doctrine, but they are also linked to certain harvest festivals. For example, the Basile Swine Festival in the prairies of southwest Louisiana coincides with All Saints Day and typifies the popular celebration of the hog as food and source of livelihood. The celebration includes two days of street dancing with one day devoted to rock 'n roll and another to Cajun music. On the second day, a *boudin* eating contest (*boudin* is a sausage made with pork and rice, stuffed inside hog intestine and served hot) commemorates a successful year of production. A greased pig chase provides more entertainment, and suggests the combination of hard work and luck needed for a good harvest. Finally, a cake auction, with the proceeds going to a worthy charity, encourages the audience to bid exorbitant prices, sometimes as much as $50, to demonstrate their generosity; in fact, sometimes money by itself is auctioned off at twice its value.

A variety of other celebrations occur throughout south Louisiana in the spring and fall, with many tied to lesser religious holidays. These festivals include: Rice (Crowley, Louisiana), Frog (Rayne), Crawfish (Breaux Bridge, Louisiana and Port Arthur, Texas), Shrimp and Petroleum (Morgan City), Oyster (Galliano), and Sugar (New Iberia). Increasingly, such events have subordinated their traditional natures to a publicity-conscious Cajun image which attracts large numbers of tourists. One such event, held in Port Arthur with crowds of over 100,000 people, was promoted in the local newspaper:

> **PORT ARTHUR** – This year's Cajun Festival, slated May 27-29 at the Golden Triangle Drag Strip, will have two new events – the Le Petite Mignon and the World Champion Frog Jumping Contest.
>
> Le Petite Mignon Contest is a mini Cajun Queen event for girls under age seven. Heading up the contest will be Pat Du Plantis, Audrey Porter and Helen Frederick.
>
> Though all the details are not yet worked out, the Louisiana jumping frog champion is scheduled to be here for the festival to take on all Texas challengers. A special highlight of the contest is that all contestants will be expected to wear costumes.

From the most traditional Mardi Gras to the Port Arthur spectacle, a public *joie de vivre* is expressed in festivals which clearly distinguishes French Catholics from their less extroverted Anglo Protestant neighbors.

photo by Nick Spitzer

Wilfred Latour and his Travel Aces play zydeco and *la la*, the black French version of the Cajun two-step, at Slim's Y-ki-ki. Latour is accordionist.

Joie de vivre is expressed in community consumption of large amounts of traditional foods, such as gumbo, shrimp and crawfish dishes as well as drinking and dancing. I have been continually amazed at the ability of Louisiana/Texas French people to dance and drink until the middle of the night and be back on the job at 6 a.m. This sort of behavior increases at festival times.

If beer lubricates the evening spirits then *cafe-noir* (drip made from various dark roast blends) cranks up the morning's activities. Mid-morning visiting of men on the job and women at home, with good humor and strong coffee served in demitasse portions, is as oft-reported by observers of the culture as it is ubiquitous. These visits must also be considered a component of the *joie de vivre* expression commingling coffee, conversation and comradery.

The public value, however, is meaningless without its contrast to other values in the importance of hard work, a stable family relationship, and religious life. Indeed the conflict between these values accentuated by tremendous changes in the society may be one explanation for problems of alcoholism that plague the area.[29]

Cajun Music and Zydeco. A wide variety of styles is subsumed under the term "French music" in south Louisiana. While men have traditionally made the dance music, women have carried on several forms of unaccompanied singing. In the past, when night visiting sessions or *veillee* were common, women's singing to friends and children was quite popular. Though individual repertoires would vary, many Cajun women sang old French ballads as well as humorous songs. The black French tradition overlaps somewhat here, but a large body of traditional Creole songs are humorous social commentaries on pompous wealthy men or town fools.[30]

Cajun band music, although rooted in the seventeenth century French dancehall, is fairly eclectic and includes material from the north Louisiana hillbilly repertoire, pop songs and blues. The old-time sound of fiddle and accordion backed by a triangle is fairly rare now, as are modal scales and tunings that sounded harmonics at each stop on the accordion for a vaguely medieval sound. Contemporary Cajun bands usually have single row, button accordions based on a diatonic scale with violins, rhythm guitars, steel guitars, bass, and drums. Amplified music is the rule, with acoustic playing limited to home events.

Since the 1930s, country and western has strongly influenced Cajun music in song choice, scale usage, instrumentation, and demeanor of performers. In one recent example, the hit song "Here I Am, I'm Drunk Again" is translated to "Garde Ici, Je Sou Encore." A hillbilly fiddle style is fairly popular, although the Cajun style is still distinctive and preferred. The steel guitar is also popular, but is usually played without melody solos using standard breaks in what has become an almost traditional Cajun steel sound. Accordionists are most likely to be group leaders although there are many exceptions.

Black French music shares with Cajun music many French tune sources, but the influence of the blues is also significant, especially in the cities. In the urban and rural Creole speaking areas, a decided Afro-Caribbean influence is also heard not only in the language of the songs, but in the rhythms as well. The black French version of the Cajun two-step is the *la-la*, which is faster and highly syncopated. The waltz, although less popular, is also rendered faster. Black French music features more play with rhythm, less emphasis on melody, some blues tonality, and instrumental differences. Most zydeco bands, for example, have a *frottoir* (metal rubbing board) played with thimbles, spoons or bottle openers. In some of the more Caribbeanized areas, notched gourds are used. The urban groups, unlike the rural ones, do not use violins, but typically add lead guitar parts, two and three row button accordions, and occasionally the larger chromatic piano accordion.

While Cajun music has felt the acculturative influence of country and western music over the last 40 years, zydeco has syncretized Afro-American forms such as country blues and, later, urban blues and soul. In Lafayette, Lake Charles, Beaumont and Houston, there are a number of black French clubs that compete for crowds with the soul clubs; some bands even play in both. Urban zydeco groups often sing rhythm and blues and soul numbers in French, which the people call " 'cordion music" rather than zydeco;

it is not as rhythmically complex as rural zydeco and is essentially black American pop music in French.

Because dancing remains an important social activity, musical taste and choice of club attendance may well be the most reliable way to identify different classes of black and white French Louisianans. The growth of club attendance is largely a post-World War II phenomenon. Prior to that time, the house dance was the most important regular rural social event. Even today, many dance halls retain a sense of home, family and friends that is linked to the time of *fais-do-do* or Cajun house parties. Black French dances continue to be called *la-la*'s or *zydecos* or sometimes just "French dances," to distinguish them from soul dances and rock 'n roll dances, while Cajun dances are simply called "French dances." From a number of dances popular prior to the Depression such as the mazurka, polka, hot-step, one-step, two-step, contra-danse and waltz, only the waltz and two-step have remained primary forms.

Cajun dances as events vary greatly in decorum. Some are for people just off work in their daily attire, others are in large old wooden-floored dance halls and require spiffy dress: polished boots and coats for the men, and carefully done hair for the women. Church dances are usually the most dressy and proper.

The character of black dance halls and clubs is also diverse. The rural clubs, like Cajun dance halls, are often family places where all ages come to dance, and where wedding receptions, anniversaries and benefits are held. Even in urban black French clubs this home feeling is stronger than in strictly Afro-American clubs. But some clubs are definitely upper-class places for lighter people, Creole or *mulâtre*. Indicating this class distinction, one man at a *mulâtre* club advised me not to go to another dance hall where soul music rather than zydeco was featured because the place was full of "town niggers and hoodlums."

With the increasing "melting pot" pressures of the larger culture, attending a Creole or Cajun dance hall is probably the most common expression of cultural identity. The individual selects the social group within which he can comfortably drink, dance, joke, work and marry. For black and white French people of all kinds, the dance is still the pre-eminent form of socializing in rural areas.

Language and Identity

The effect of acculturation on Cajuns greatly increased after 1930. Until then, they had tended to absorb the various groups they had come in contact with, partly by sheer numbers, and partly through relative prosperity and social strength. But the Depression seriously crippled many people who depended on a mixture of small cash crops, fishing, and trapping; and Governor Huey Long's road building program brought not only job seekers to the city, but outside forces into the countryside. In addition, Long's free schoolbook program—and other socio-economic pressures of the era—forced many Cajuns to learn English. The French language, which had long been a keystone to the Cajun/Creole culture, became considered a mark of illiteracy.

The influx of the oil industry, which provided many jobs to Cajuns, also hastened the demise of the traditional culture and its notions of the relationship of land and community.[31] Led by Texans and a few wealthy Cajuns, the industry turned more and more of the Gulf Coast into a wasteland for refining oil, sulfur and natural gas. Morgan City was transformed from a shrimper's town into a roughneck paradise of welders, pipeline companies, and contract drillers. Honky-tonks sprouted to soothe the "offshore blues." Lake Charles also underwent extensive industrialization with rural Cajuns pouring into it and other cities of the Texas coast. The daily contact with Anglo Texans and north Louisianans who came into the area seeking work had a significant effect on Cajun language habits and art styles.[32]

Cajun music, for example, from the '30s on, became increasingly influenced by hillbilly and western swing. The accordion fell into disfavor. French bands that played hillbilly music were in demand, and a fiddler from East Baton Rouge Parish named Harry Choates – whose identity as a Cajun is questionable – emerged as the definitive regional star of French Country Western. In 1947, his version of the traditional waltz "Jolie Blonde" – also known as the "Cajun National Anthem" – became a hit.[33]

While Cajun western swing bands and honky-tonk singers were springing up, the regional power of the Cajun culture was conversely being felt, especially in east Texas. Texans Link Davis and Moon Mullican recorded a number of songs either about Cajun country or in broken French with Cajun instrumentation. These versions of "Jolie Blonde" and "Big Mamou" departed considerably from tradition and invoked such romantic images as finding Jolie Blonde "on de bayou in de moonlight." Even more popular was Hank Williams' "Jambalaya" written when he was a radio performer on Shreveport's Louisiana Hayride.

Traditional Cajun music underwent

photo by Nick Spitzer

A Creole family at a dance in Opelousas, Louisiana.

something of a revival a few years later even as Jimmie C. Newman was taking the Cajun sound in modified form to the stage of the Grand Ole Opry. In the 1950s, the accordion evoked a new interest in the hands of men like Nathan Abshire and Iry Lejeune. Both were heavily influenced by blues, and Lejeune in particular was often dubbed the "Cajun Hank Williams."

Black French people, especially those in the Creole speaking parishes, were less affected by acculturation, due, at least in part, to racial discrimination and the fewer number of jobs available to them. When blacks did move to the cities, they tuned into Gulf Coast rhythm and blues provided by Fats Domino, Bobby Blue Bland, Lightnin' Hopkins, and Guitar Slim. Zydeco accordionists like Clifton Chenier and, later, Marcel Dugas, increasingly created a middle ground between black French music and black American music by playing soul and rhythm and blues on their accordions.

The rise of television did contribute to the undermining of French in favor of English. Today, nearly every rural home has a TV, and it is not unusual to see older people who speak primarily French watching programs broadcast in English. One fascinating result of television on folk culture is illustrated by two black French brothers who played a tune on their violin and accordion which they called "Granny's Two Step," and explained that it was taken from a TV show about "granny" – it was the theme from the Beverly Hillbillies.

Thus, the 1930s to the 1960s saw Cajuns and Creoles alike becoming less culturally distinct from other Southerners, but because of the isolating factors and cultural strengths, much that was traditional survived or was modified within tradition. When the current "revival" began, many ways of doing things were rediscovered rather than merely revived.

Nowhere is this rebirth more significant than in the urban areas which have lost relatively more of their cultural heritage. Lafayette (population 75,000) is a case in point. It is a minature melting pot of Cajuns, Creoles, retired farmers, Texas and Louisiana oilmen, businessmen with and without formal education, college students, Syrian/Lebanese merchants and old Jewish families. It is the current center of Cajun urban culture; tourist brochures dub it the "hub of Acadiana." It is a town of self-proclaimed seafood kings, mobile home kings, and furniture kings who resurrect a vestige of French royalty to sell their products. It is also a city intoxicated with growth in the form of fast foods, traffic congestion, and farm-swallowing suburban sprawl. Unlike Lake Charles, Morgan City, Beaumont and Port Arthur, Lafayette is not heavily industrialized. Oil operations here are mainly at the managerial support level for the drilling and processing done elsewhere.

Cajuns in Lafayette are largely middle class in their orientation, as they are becoming in smaller cities like Eunice and Opelousas with the continued influence of the oil industry. There are Cajun bankers, lawyers, dentists, and doctors in abundance – Edwin Edwards, the first Cajun governor, is a businessman from Crowley. There is also Lafayette's University of Southwestern Louisiana, the "Ragin' Cajun" school, with upwards of 10,000 students, and finally, there are the Quebec Government offices, and the offices of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL).

CODOFIL came into being in 1968 by an act of the Louisiana State Legislature, no small feat when one considers that the northern half of the state is Anglo and often disapproving of Cajun ways, and that the New Orleans politicians tend to ignore Cajun country. Although various groups such as "France-Amerique de la Lousiane-Acadienne" existed earlier, the movement to establish CODOFIL first took shape in the mid-1960s under the leadership of a non-Cajun, Dr. Raymond Rodgers. In 1966, as professor of social studies at USL, Rodgers wrote a series of newspaper articles urging the preservation and revival of French culture and language in Louisiana.[34] In the light of later developments, it is important to note that he shunned the teaching of standard French, arguing that the local varieties of French should be taught since they are the language of

photos by Nick Spitzer

Top: Lionel LeLeux, violin maker and local historian in LeLeux, Louisiana. Middle: This insignia on accordionist Bessyl Duhon's instrument case was created by an area carpenter. Bottom: Delton Broussard sings with his zydeco group at Slim's Y-ki-ki Club in Opelousas, Louisiana.

This is a poster for CODOFIL, a program passed by the 1968 Louisiana State Legislature, designed to preserve and revive the French culture and language in the state. Critics of CODOFIL claim, however, that the program doesn't teach "Louisiana French."

the culture. He also emphasized the advantages of increased tourism and trade that such a cultural revival could bring.

By the time CODOFIL legislation became a reality, lawyer and former US Representative James Domengeaux (1941-1949) became the figurehead of the new movement. Domengeaux, who has received the French Legion of Honor award for his efforts, has shifted the emphasis to the French language itself, although bills passed in 1968 had provisions for cultural enrichment including school programs of history and culture of the Louisiana French population.[35] The legislation empowered CODOFIL to direct oral French programs at the elementary school level as well as to make sure that French courses were offered in high schools throughout the state. Funding came from the federal government through the Bilingual Education Act, and Quebec and France sent additional teachers at their cost. There are currently about 230 such imported teachers supplementing those paid by state and local school board funds.

Although much of CODOFIL's activity was modeled after bilingual programs in Quebec, the fairly conservative Louisiana group was careful to remove the separatist rhetoric of the Quebecois and the anti-American feeling of some French nationals.[36]

The basic complaint is that CODOFIL programs do not teach Louisiana French. The standard international French is fairly distinct from the many Cajun dialects that contain archaic French as well as Indian, Spanish, German, African, and English words; and somewhat different phonology and structure. Standard French is even more remote from French Creole.

Additionally, by using outsiders to "develop" French in Louisiana, various cultural attitudes are brought in that may conflict with the local way of doing things. To be sure, not all the teachers feel that they are in the "boondocks" or that they are bringing Culture to the uneducated. Many are quite sympathetic and inject their perceptions of the local language and culture into the curriculum on their own. Still, it is difficult to view CODOFIL's work as a genuine cultural "renaissance" (as they term it) since, for the most part, local teachers are not being utilized.

Critics also claim that CODOFIL is not concerned with all the people who participate to varying degrees in Louisiana French culture. This is reflected in Chairman James Domengeaux's own restricted definition of the Cajun as a descendant of the original Acadians.[37] Although he is descended from French planters who settled in the Caribbean and thus doesn't consider himself a Cajun, he notes, "The Cajuns are perhaps the purest race of people in the United States today."[38]

Domengeaux and his cohorts are unswerving in their commitment to save French "maintenant ou jamais" (now or never), as one of their many signs posted about south Louisiana proclaims. However, in contemporary Louisiana French, the impact of the English language has been enormous, not just at the level of word use and pronunciation, but also in the deeper structure of grammar. Linguist Raleigh Morgan has written of "dialect leveling" in Southwest Louisiana whereby Cajun and Creole are increasingly reshaped to an Anglicized, Louisiana French.[39] Just as the many dance genres have been reduced to the waltz and two step, John Guilbeau has noted that once prominent tales, such as that of "Le Juif Errant" (Wandering Jew), are now only used in metaphorical speech, while knowledge of the tale or of its origin has been lost. In the realm of belief, the formerly popular notion of a werewolf or *lougarou* is now used merely to describe a noisy party or perhaps an animal in heat.[40]

Yet English language and American ways do not completely spell the loss of Cajun culture, if we take into account

Both Carter and Ford campaign posters appeared in French. Very few Cajuns or Creoles read French, but the use of English cognates made translation easy here.

the many monolingual English speakers in South Louisiana today who are proud to be Cajuns. In some ways, the area's most prevalent language is Cajun English which, with its own grammar and phonology, can be considered sociologically parallel to black English. For many it marks community and cultural boundaries. Along with Cajun French and Creole French it is a uniquely South Louisianan language.

One major problem facing supporters of standard French in south Louisiana is that Cajun French has been an oral language for a long time. Originally, some Acadian settlers did read and write French, but maintaining a regular course of instruction was impossible during the trek to Louisiana. The one exception was the occasional use of the French "catechism" into the nineteenth century.[41] French Creole has never been a written language and literacy in English alone is a problem for many Cajuns and Creoles. This is partly reflected in the need for a large remedial reading and writing program for incoming students at the University of South Louisiana.

The problem of coming up with a standard orthography for Cajun and Creole is a difficult one which adds strength to CODOFIL's argument for standard French. Still, a sympathy toward and understanding of Cajun and Creole dialects — a trilingual cultural approach — seems essential to a true revival. To this end, one local teacher without CODOFIL affiliation, Mrs. Phoebe Trotter at Carencro High School, offers a conversation class utilizing local dialects. Students can in sequential years take reading and writing of standard French. This innovative idea is popular with students and parents.

It would be wrong to deny any positive effect of CODOFIL. Their yearly music festival, *Hommage à la Musique Acadienne*, has done much to revive an interest in French music; and their programs have given a new respectability to the French language. However, to be effective, a movement must take many forms rather than be directed from the top down.

Not surprisingly, the most interesting and important things happening in south Louisiana culture are diffuse and reflect local sentiments.

photos by Robert Yellin

In Mamou, Louisiana, a French teacher and author, Revon Reed, is one spokesman for the local culture. Reed hosts a Saturday morning radio show which features live French music. The program is heard throughout the region.

Community leaders in small towns have worked for years in a variety of ways to make people aware of their culture. Revon Reed, a French teacher from Mamou in the prairies, has long hosted a Saturday morning radio show of live French music heard throughout the region. He has appeared as a spokesman in films made for French public television in Quebec and recently has authored his own book, *Lâche Pas la Patate* (Don't Let Go of the Potato), about French Louisiana.[42] In nearby Basile, fiddler Dewey Balfa has received federal grants to perform music in schools locally and throughout the South in addition to leading the internationally-known Balfa Brothers. Floyd Soileau of Ville Platte, starting as a disc jockey after World War II, has created Swallow Records

Cajun musicians Dewey and Rodney Balfa of the Balfa Brothers play at a radio broadcast dance from the Bear Cat Lounge in Basile, Louisiana.

which sells a variety of Gulf Coast musical forms. He also operates a pressing plant and publishing house which employs many locals. Soileau is justifiably proud of the "rural Mecca" for south Louisiana music that Ville Platte has become.

A number of people run private museums. There is a Cajun Hall of Fame in Port Arthur, documenting the great Cajun musicians as well as individuals like the record producer Huey (the Crazy Cajun) Meaux and Dudley LeBlanc – politician and Hadacol entrepreneur. In Lafayette there is the Acadian Village, where a number of traditional Cajun homes have been reconstructed. This is run by a local mental health organization which employs patients for the upkeep of the grounds. In tiny Loreauville on the edge of the Atchafalaya Basin is the small Louisiana Heritage Museum, largely the work of one concerned and now elderly woman who has assembled pirogues, hand-run sugar mills, a small church, and a number of homes.

Although bilingual educational television was supported at least as an idea in the 1968 CODOFIL legislation, the current French TV show with the most influence is a commercial morning program, *Passe Partout* (starting at 6:00 am), with its first segment in French. The program comes from Lafayette and features Cajun and Creole musicians.

Many locals sport T-shirts and bumper stickers that give some idea of the popular public aspect of Cajun culture today. Some say "Cajun Power" and "Proud Cajun" or "Proud Coonass." "Coonass," like hillbilly or redneck, was long a perjorative term, but like those other words it now has a new social power when used with pride by a Cajun, although some public officials have gone to great lengths to try to abolish the word. Others have responded angrily that "I was born a Coonass and I'll die one." Though various humorous etymologies of the word have been offered, it is hard to say how the term originated. The word "Cajun" itself was at one time an insult, especially when spoken by a non-Cajun. Sidney McGlaurie, a black Frenchman in his sixties told me: "When I was young, if the white man called you a nigger, just call him a Cajun back and you had a fight on your hands."[43]

Perhaps the most vital aspect of the Cajun revival is music. Local record labels like Swallow, La Louisianne, Goldband, Blues Unlimited, and Jin continue to find larger markets for both traditional and modernized French music as well as Gulf Coast rock and blues. Maison de Soul, a new division of Swallow, promises to be an outlet for zydeco.

Symbolic of a heightened awareness of all cultural forms on the Gulf Coast, young Cajuns have become big fans of the zydeco bands led by Clifton Chenier, Rockin' Dopcee, and Queen Ida, which now appear in white clubs. Gulf Coast rhythm and blues as played by Gatemouth Brown and Ernie K-Doe also enjoys a Cajun following.

Although Creole consciousness is not presently strong, within any community certain local leaders, politicians, and especially club owners act as spokespersons. It is difficult to say what shape a Creole revival might take since many rural people still live traditionally and those in the cities are lured by black American culture. However, many urban blacks who have rural French roots return home for major holidays and family events.

Some indication of an increased interest in black French identity is seen in a return of patronage to zydeco music within the Creole community. Although zydeco has been considered "too black" by Cajun radio programs and "too French" for most soul stations, sales of records are up and club attendance is also on the rise.[44]

The most prominent addition to the local music scene is the appearance of Cajun rock. One group in particular called Coteau may have found the Cosmic Cajun equivalent to Austin's Cosmic Cowboys and Macon's Southern Sound. The comparison is not unwarranted. Coteau combines high energy twin lead guitars with accordion and violin, playing waltzes and two-steps and a version of the Mardi Gras song that, in the words of one observer, "makes you wonder if you are in the seventeenth or twenty-first century." Coteau and a number of other groups (the Red Beans and Rice Revue, Bayou Drifter Band, and Beau Soleil) have brought young people back into the dance hall, the traditional location of social events. Coteau means "higher ground" in local French, and when you hear an improvised jazz-rock guitar lead over a fast two-step or a Cajun Reggae version of "Jambalaya," the mystical perspective of those two words becomes clearer.

With jambalaya (a chicken dish with a rice dressing) we come full circle, returning to the culinary metaphor which began my effort to share three years of fieldwork and friendship on America's French Gulf Coast. The power of the French revival grows from the survival, in scattered pockets, of traditional cultural forms and from the adaptation of old forms

to new circumstances. The strength of French Cajun and Creole languages combined with the presence of uncounted speakers of Cajun English, and with the renewed pride in ethnicity within an America now somewhat more comfortable with pluralism, suggests that the Cajun/Creole Gulf Coast will inevitably be unique for many years to come.

Footnotes

1. This figure is derived from the 1970 US Census Table 119 (Texas). It actually applies to all of Harris County in which Houston is situated. Black French people and Cajuns came to Houston mainly during World War Two to work in shipyards and defense industries.

2. Elizabeth Branden, "The Sociocultural Traits of the French Folksong in Louisiana," *Louisiana Review*, 1972, 1:2, p. 19. Numerous historical works dealing with Louisiana and the Cajuns in particular are available. For Louisiana, see Martin (1882) 1963, and Fortier (1904). Some highly romanticized accounts of Cajun history are by: Daigle, 1972; LeBlanc, 1966; Winzerling, 1955; Voorhies, 1911.

3. Emile Lauvriere, *Histoire de la Louisiane Francaise, 1763-1939* (Paris, 1940), pp. 413-414.

4. Branden, *op. cit.*, p. 19. Shiplogs detailing passengers in this second wave of Acadian immigrants to Louisiana have been studied by Milton P. and Norma G. Rieder, 1965, '67; Bona Arsenault, 1965; and Sidney Marchand, 1943, '65.

5. Branden, *op. cit.*, p. 20 and footnote.

6. The Louisiana Territory was again in French hands for three years, 1800-1803.

7. J. Janno Deiler, *The Settlement of the German Coast* (Philadelphia, 1909). This author wrote a number of major works about Germans in Louisiana. He generally laments their absorption by the Acadians, and shows various Cajun names of German origin: e.g., Toubs from Dubs, Weber from Webber, and Tregre from Traeger.

8. T. Lynn Smith and Homer Hitt, *The People of Louisiana* (LSU Press, 1952), p. 41.

9. Gilbert C. Din, "Spanish Immigration to a French Land," *Louisiana Review*, 1976:5:1, pp. 63-80, *passim.*

10. Smith and Hitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47.

11. See: T. Lynn Smith and Vernon J. Parenton, "Acculturation Among the Louisiana French," *American Journal of Sociology*, 1938:44:3, pp. 355-364.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 363.

13. John S. Farmer, *Americanisms Old and New* (London, 1889), p. 377.

14. The 1850 census did make the grossest distinction between Mulatto and Negro as Hitt and Smith note, *op. cit.*, their footnote on p. 33: "of a total free colored population of 434,495 in the United States in 1850, 159,095 (37%) were classified as mulattoes; of an aggregate in Louisiana at the same census, the free colored population totaled 17,462, of whom 14,083 (81%) were classified as mulattoes; the slave population equalled 244,809, of whom only 19,835 (8.1%) were mulattoes. Apparently the association between an admixture of white blood and free status were much closer in Louisiana than elsewhere in the United States."

15. For a complete discussion of this phenomenon, see Sister Frances J. Woods, *Marginality and Identity: A Colored Creole Family Through Ten Generations* (LSU Press, 1972).

16. An interesting institution in south Louisiana is the black French Baptist church. One of these in Eunice features a call/response service in French. Protestant blacks either came with Yankee planters or were converts of missionaries during the Reconstruction era.

17. Dorice Tentchoff, "Cajun French and French Creole: Their Speakers and the Question of Identity," *The Culture of Acadiana*, Gibson and Del Sesto, eds. (Univ. of Southwestern Louisiana, 1975), pp. 87-109, *passim.*

18. T. Lynn Smith, "An Analysis of Rural Social Organization Among French Speaking People of Southwestern Louisiana," *Journal of Farm Economics*, Vol. 16, October 1934, pp. 680-688.

19. H.R. Padgett, "Physical and Cultural Associations on the Louisiana Coast," *Association of American Geographers' Annals*, 1969:59, pp. 481-493.

20. See: William B. Knipmeyer, "Folk Boats of Eastern French Louisiana," *American Folklife* (Univ. of Texas Press, 1969), pp. 105-149, *passim.* H.F. Gregory, Jr., "The Pirogue Builder Vanishing Craftsman," *Louisiana Studies*, 1964:3, pp. 316-318. Although Gregory is somewhat pessimistic about the continued use of the pirogue and other boats, my own fieldwork and perspective reveals a modification of the tradition.

21. The best work on all these topics (occupation, cultural ecology, environment exploitation techniques) for the Atchafalaya Basin is Malcolm Comeaux, *Atchafalaya Swamp Life Settlement and Folk Occupations*, Vol. II in the Geoscience and Man series (LSU Press, 1972).

22. Personal communication via Patricia Rickels, Fall 1976.

23. For accounts of the cultural activities in the Bayou Prairie area, see: Lauren Post's *Cajun Sketches*, (LSU Press, 1974).

24. Personal communication from Emmanuel Dreschel, a linguist working in this area.

25. This problem is extensively covered from a Catholic historian's point of view in: Roger Baudier's *Catholicism in Louisiana*, (New Orleans, 1934).

26. Seraphia Leyda, "Les Treateurs," *Louisiana Folklore Miscellany*, 1961:2:1, pp. 18-27.

27. For treatments of all the phenomena see: Darrel Bourque, "Cauchemar and Feu Follet," *Louisiana Folklore Miscellany*, 1968:2:4, pp. 69-84. Also Patricia Rickels, "The Folklore of Sacraments and Sacramentals in South Louisiana," *Louisiana Folklore Miscellany*, 1965:2:2, pp. 27-44.

28. All the Mardi Gras referred to here take place in the Southwestern bayou prairie area. I have personally observed or have firsthand reports of Mardi Gras (black and white) in Soileau, Mamou, McGhee Cove, Church Point, Opelousas, Oberlin and Basile. A team of fieldworkers observed a series on geographically contiguous Mardi Gras in the above footnoted localities. This observation concerning the "rules" for the Mamou Mardi Gras was relayed to me by Joel Sherzer.

29. A Lafayette Parish traffic commission concerned with alcohol use circulates literature claiming that consumption of beer in that parish is twice the national average.

30. See, Mina Monroe, ed., *Bayou Ballads* (N.Y.: G. Schirmer, 1921). Also, Irene Therese Whitfield, *Louisiana French Folksongs* (N.Y.: Dover Press, 1939, 1969).

31. A particularly good account of the effects of such industry immigrants in recent times is John Western's account from the perspective of cultural geography: "Social Groups and Activity Patterns in Houma, Louisiana," *The Geographical Review*, July 1973, 63:3, pp. 301-321.

32. Conwell and Julliand do note however that some oil companies found it advantageous to have French speaking foremen who could get along best with Cajun workers on the oil rigs. *Louisiana French Grammar*, Janua Linguarum Series Practica, Vol. I (Hogue Mouton & Co., 1963).

33. For accounts of acculturation and revival of Cajun music see: Harry Oster, "Acculturation in Cajun Folk Music," *McNeese Review*, 1958:10, pp. 12-23. Also, Nicholas Spitzer, "The Louisiana-French Connection in Country and Western Music: Cajun Country/Western Music on the Texas Border," unpublished manuscript delivered at the 1976 meeting of the American Folklore Society, Philadelphia, Pa.

34. "Community Action Needed to Preserve French in Area," *Daily Advertiser*, October 23, 1966, p. 21. Also (title unavailable) *Daily Advertiser*, December 18, 1966.

35. See: Domengeaux's commentary in "Pelican, French Language Dying in State, Report," *Times-Picayune*, April 8, 1968. See Acts 408 and 409 in *Acts of the State Legislature*, Regular Session, State of Louisiana, Baton Rouge, 1968. For commentary on the legislation and CODOFIL's interpretation of it see "CODOFIL and the Cajun Ethnic Revival," unpublished manuscript by Tom Ireland, 1975, pp. 25-26.

36. Ireland, p. 27.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 27, and personal communication from James Domengeaux, Feb. 1977.

38. Domengeaux communication, *ibid.*

39. Raleigh Morgan, "Dialect Leveling in Non-English Speech of Southwest Louisiana," *Texas Studies in Bilingualism*, 1970.

40. John Guilbeau, "Folklore and the Louisiana French Lexicon," *Louisiana Review*, 1972, Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 45-54.

41. Conwell and Julliand, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

42. Revon Reed, *Lache pas la Patate: Portrait des Acadiens de la Louisiane*, Edition Parti pris, Montreal, 1976.

43. Personal communication from Sidney McGhlaurie, Lafayette, La., Winter, 1976.

44. Based on my own interviews with club owners, band leaders and record store owners.

The Ballad of Jack Nocentelli:

THE POET LAUREATE OF ELYSIAN FIELDS

by Jason Berry

I met old Nocentelli in the strangest way.

It was mid-December, a warm gray afternoon. Having returned to our sweet sassy city after a two-month odyssey through the South, I decided to seek out my ambassador to underground New Orleans, Prince Fatgot Guillermo.

The Prince is a lean, wiry man who changed his name in Spain, wears Panama hats, sketches good pastel portraits, plays the maracas on Sunday nights at Johnny Matassa's, and roams the city with the savvy of a shrewd street scout.

I parked in front of his house on St. Claude, not far from Industrial Canal bridge. The Prince was just getting out of his car. He roared out a laugh, threw up his hat, and sauntered over to my faithful '65 Chevy, now diseased from the long Southern trip.

"Where you been, man? I been looking all over for you. I was up there by the Irish Channel with Little Willie one night. We went banging on your door, dogs barking at us, all them neighbors thinking we was police and robbers, I mean we was there. Lady next door says you was off somewheres, up Nawth."

The Prince ushered me into the sagging shotgun house where they lived and which they'd soon have to vacate. "Some rich cat bought this place, so we gotta move. Wrecking man coming to tear it down. They gonna lay a parking lot, or something not for people to live in."

"Where's Little Willie?" I asked.

"He's in there," said the Prince, motioning me toward the front room. I followed the Prince.

I still don't know Willie's last name. He was a 17-year-old guitar player from Tallahatchie County, Mississippi. He had wandered into New Orleans a year ago; the Prince heard him play and began functioning as an unofficial manager of sorts. Soon city life scared the boy back to the country, and now, a year later, he had returned to give it another crack. The Prince and his family are not well off financially, but they are the kind of folks who open their doors to people they believe in; Willie slept on the front couch.

We entered the front room, where Willie was attacking his electric instrument in hopes of recreating the music of departed Jimi Hendrix; weekend nights, the kid played in a battered honky-tonk on Louisa Street, just off the River. This afternoon he was thundering away practicing to the sounds of a cassette recorder on the bed in the front room.

I liked Willie but wished he would pull the bloody electric wires out of the amp, forget Hendrix, get onto a wooden box guitar, and just be Willie.

Several hours passed. The Prince drifted back and forth from the kitchen, where he was preparing an elaborate pot of gumbo, to the front room where Willie and I debated the merits of natural versus electric music. The Prince started playing the maracas; Willie was thumping his feet on the floor, with the guitar balanced along his shoulder as he played with bands behind his neck. It wasn't a bad show.

Then someone I did not know entered the room.

He was a broad-chested man with thick, strong shoulders and a large stomach, hard as stone. He had skin the color of gold-brown honey and his hair, vivid white, curled back from his temples like a glorious silver mane. From the moment of his arrival, everything changed. Willie turned off the guitar, and sat attentively at his side. The Prince brought him a chair.

"This the fella I told you about," said the Prince to the old man, gesturing at me. "This the cat writes all the stories."

"Nocentelli," the old man identified himself, extending his hand. He had a powerful forearm. He must have been seventy, I thought, but he shook hands like a linebacker in his twenties.

"Jack Nocentelli," he said. "What you write about?"

I explained that a current project was research for a biography of Louis Armstrong.

Nocentelli nodded. "Satchmo, good man. I knew him, used to see him down by Rampart Street. He was OK."

I nodded, found a pen, jotted down his phone number on a card in my wallet, but Nocentelli was already

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Jason Berry is a New Orleans freelance journalist and the author of Amazing Grace: With Charles Evers in Mississippi. *His interview with Jack Nocentelli originally appeared in the New Orleans paper,* Figaro.

photo by D. Eric Bookhardt

The Prince and the Poet

involved in something else.

He took a cassette tape from his pocket, instructed Little Willie to remove Hendrix from the boy's machine, and put his own tape on.

"I write too," Nocentelli said. "Listen to this."

"We sat around the bed, listening to the scratchy tape, and the smooth, natural cadences of a ballad called, "In Lure of the Tropics." (I learned the title and recorded the poem myself at a later meeting.)

"That's it!" said the Prince. "This one of his. Listen them words. I mean, ole Jack is kicks!"

Willie was nodding his head in time with the steady, melodious sounds of the tape recorder. Nocentelli was tugging at my arm. "See, it's a logical and real story. About the old man, who met the young man when he came down there to Tropics, South America – "

"Let me hear it," I said.

The tape continued:

"From a limestone cliff I flagged a skiff
with a salt-soaked pair of jeans
and I worked my way for I had no pay
on a freighter to New Orleans."

Nocentelli was pulling at my arm again. "See, it's all the advice he can give, what the man done in his own life: he passing it on to this kid outa the States."

The tape ran out: I had missed most of it because Nocentelli was talking.

"You play music?" he asked.

"No," I said.

"Y'oughta see my boy play music. Leo. Y'ever hear of the Meters?"

"The Meters – band that plays here in New Orleans?"

"Same band. That's them. My boy, Leo. He plays lead guitar. Looks like me, Creole-looking. He got light-colored skin; plenty Italian blood in Nocentelli family."

"Leo Nocentelli, yeah. I've seen him play. That's your kid?"

Old Jack pounded a fist on his chest. "That's him. My boy."

We sat around the room, drinking beer and talking about music. The Prince wandered back to the kitchen and his gumbo preparation, moaning about the rich man with his wrecking ball. Through the smoke rings of a passed joint, Nocentelli explained his background.

His father was a Sicilian who had come to Louisiana near the turn of the century and married a woman who was part-Indian and part-black Creole. They lived in Donaldsonville. As a young man, Jack played banjo and sang in Prohibition honky-tonks throughout South Louisiana, particularly the Bayou Lafourche area.

Jack talked the whole night. Over gumbo in the Prince's kitchen, I cursed myself for not having brought a tape recorder. This old man spoke in such a naturally rhythmic voice; stories rolled off his tongue, one upon the next, and with his white hair and gold skin, he looked like a wandering bard in some exotic land.

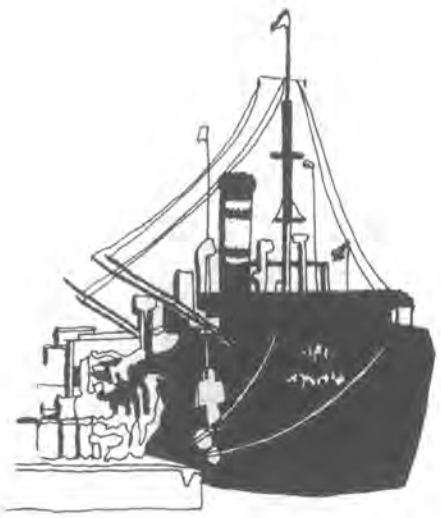
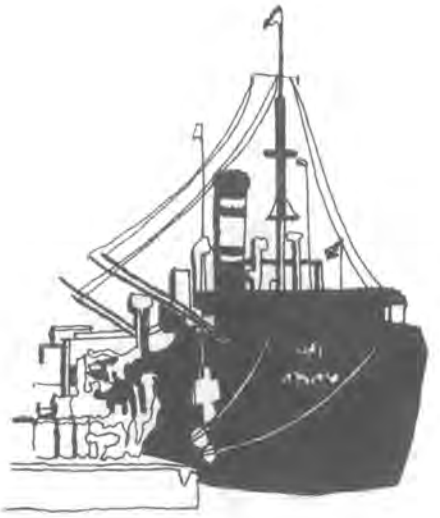
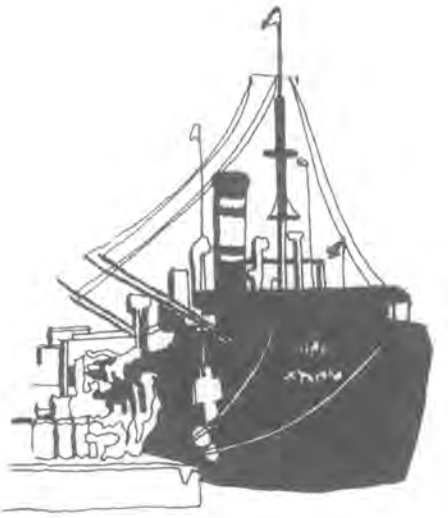
"My son, Leo," he explained, "my oldest boy. I bought him a little Mickey Mouse ukelele one Christmas. I was working doing cotton work, used to be gone all the time. And I came back, wrote him a little song, "It Ain't Gonna Rain No More" – just two chords, C and C-7. I put my family with most families I heard around here. He was playing it better than I could! Then I went to Werlein's, bought him a better guitar."

After dinner, the Prince and I drove Jack to his home on Elysian Fields, near Claiborne. He got out of the car, holding his cassette, grinning. "Come see me, Jensen. I got plenty more things to tell you. Got all kinds of poems, too."

Things changed quickly after Christmas. Little Willie fled back to Mississippi. The wrecking ball indeed demolished the house where Prince and his wife lived; they moved into the shotgun apartment parallel to the one Jack Nocentelli and his wife Earline live in, on Elysian Fields.

I visited Jack in late January to record his impressions of Louis Armstrong. As it turned out, he knew little about Satchmo beyond several routine facts of his life. He was uneasy in front of the tape recorder, too, and kept insisting that I turn it off so that he could explain what he was about to say, thus spoiling the spontaneity of his recorded speech.

I wanted Jack to recite the poem that I'd heard only in snatches the first night we met, but, since he was having trouble warming up to the mike in my hands, I started making small talk,

asked him some stupid question about politics.

"We need to be re-educated," he said, startling me. "And just like Lincoln said, be dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. That don't make you equal, 'cuz some small, some short, some dark and different colors. But you're created equal, and like he told you, life's livin' in the pursuit of happiness. That's what we don't do....Now happiness not promised to you, no man. Seek it, run for it, that's what the word pursuit mean. You got to get behind it, see you got to gain happiness. You wonder why I'm so happy? Because my mind is free. If your mind not free, you can't be happy."

"I wish you could convince more people of that."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Tell me about your poem." I said. "The one on the cassette."

He smiled broadly. "This poem, 'In Lure of the Tropics,' concerns an ole prospector, down in Tropics, South America. He'd been through the horn, doctors only give him six months to live. So while down there, fooling around, this young kid out the States happened to meet this old man. The old man questioned him: he told the old man what his aims was. He had heard so much about down there in the tropics, read his books and got his facts all together. So this old man looked at him and had compassion on him, and looking back on his own life ...he didn't want this young man to go through the same thing. Cause he seemed like an intelligent young man, and he advised him to go back, wherever he came from and cool the pill. So this is the story." And then Nocentelli read me the poem.

I gazed at old Nocentelli and marveled at the fires inside him; I felt akin to the wedding guest in Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," drawn out of my own world and into the story unraveled by this strange, multi-blooded, compelling soul. We played the tape back again and listened; so many questions I wanted to ask him, but the moment was pure as a crystal, and the sounds of his tongue were too haunting for me to do anything but listen.

We drank a few beers, talked, and I said I'd be back in a few weeks, after I'd transcribed the tape.

Mardi Gras came and I submitted to the seasonal seductions; winter into spring, and writing demands kept me away from the work I still had to do, transcribing the tape so as to be prepared for a second, lengthier interview with Jack, to discuss the references and sources of legend and fact in his verse.

In April, the Prince called.

"Hey man, you heard what happened?"

"No. What?"

"Jack – he suffered a stroke. He's paralyzed, half his body. Happened two days ago. He been asking about you, wondering where 'Jensen' was at."

"Oh no!"

I told him I'd be over that afternoon.

It hurt me so much when I first saw him that it was hard not to cry. He had lost 20 pounds and was laid back in a reclining cushion chair. His mouth was twisted, his right arm, the strong right arm he shook hands with, was feeble and motionless at his side.

I sat in his house that afternoon, while his wife, Earline, a deeply compassionate lady, answered phone calls and watched over two scurrying grandchildren.

The first day, Jack could barely speak. Each time he said something I couldn't understand, frustration built and he would clench his left fist, pound it softly on the armchair, breathe hard and repeat himself.

"You're still strong, Jack. You'll pull out."

He nodded slowly, held out his left arm. "Feel," he muttered.

I felt the muscle of his left arm, assured him it was solid. After an hour or so, he began to tire, and I said goodbye. Later that night, the Prince dropped me off at my apartment. "Ole Jack," said the Prince. "It's starting rough for him now. Real rough."

"You think he'll recover?"

"Sho he'll recover. He got the will to live, man. You see it in his eyes, like fire!"

II

Leo Nocentelli's life has changed considerably since The Meters began to record for national audiences several years ago. The band's famous song 'They All Axed for You' is a modern version of an old creole dance tune; it is played in black and white neighborhood bars all over the city.

The Meters enjoy a healthy follow-

drawing by Mary Margaret Wade

In Lure of the Tropics

Well, son, you've come to the tropics.
You heard all you had to do
Was to sit in the shade of the coconut glade
while the dollars rolled in to you.

They told you at the pirogue.
I suppose you got your six-stistics straight.
But listen what it did to another kid
Before you decide your fate.

Now you don't go down with a short hard fall,
It just sort of shoves along.
Till you lighten your load off the moral code,
Till you don't know right from wrong.

I started out to be honest
with everything on the square.
But a man can't fool with the golden rule
in a crowd that don't play fair.

It' a choice: of running a dirty race,
Of being an also-ran.
And your only hope is sneakin' dope –
The horse of the other man.

So I pulled a deal in Quayaquil
in an Inca silver mine.
And before they found it was salted grounds
I was safe in the Argentine.

Then I made short weight on the River Platte
while running a freighter there.
And I cracked a crib on a rich estate
without even turning a hair.

But the thing that will double-bar my soul
as it flops at the heaven doors
Was the selling of booze to the Santa Cruz,
and Winchester forty-fours.

So we made a raid with kindly aid
with some drunken crazy brutes
Who left a quibbling blazing mass
of a prosperous border town.

Then I was in charge of a smuggling barge
off the coast of the Yucatan.
But she sunk to hell of Cozumel
one night in a hurricane.

I reached ashore on a broken oar
in that filthy shrieking dark
While other score and two of the good ship crew
were converted into sharks.

From a limestone cliff I flagged a skiff
with a salt-soaked pair of jeans
And I worked my way for I had no pay
on a freighter to New Orleans.

Well I went from bad to worse.
Sunk as low as a man can go
that walk an empty street
with an empty purse.

But it's sort of a habit though:
the tropics will get you worse than rum.
You'll go away and swear you'll stay
When it calls and back you'll come.

Six short months went by
before I was back on the job,
Running a war on San Salvadore
with a black-faced barefoot mob.

I was General Louizianne Ostin-Vicks
at the head of a grand revolt.
And my only friend from beginning to end
was a punishing army colt.

I may have been a President now
or a priceless man of means.
But a gunboat came and blocked my game
with five hundred and ten marines.

But the star, as they say, that appeared by day
when you're down a deep black pit –
My lucky star found me that way
when I was about to quit.

It was fiery hot in a flea-ridden cot
I was down with the yellow jack
Alone in a bush and all but dead,
a maiden found me and nursed me back.

She came like that mighty man of old
and opened my bare brown eyes.
And upon me shown a clear new dawn
as I turned my face to the skies.

There was pride and grace in her fair young face
for in her was the blood of kings
And in her eyes shown a mystery of empire
gone from this world in things.

Mind you: I take no credit
in coming back to my own.
Though I walked again among honest men
I could not have done it alone.

So we spiced in a Yankee's meeting house
in the land of your Uncle Sam
So I drew my pay from the USA
I was an engineer here, at the Goethals dam.

But the devil sent his right hand man,
as I often suspect he would.
He took her life with a long thin knife
because she was straight and good.

Within me died hope. honor,
and all but a primitive will
Was to hound down on his blood raise trail
and to find, and kill and kill.

Through fever swamps and chilly camps
I haunted many a moon.
Till I found my man in a long pit pan
at the edge of a blue lagoon.

To chase with ardor and on a further shore
at the end of a two years' quest.
I left him there, with a vacant stare
and a dagger in his breast.

Now do you see these places in my arm?
Would you like to know what they mean?
They're left by the finger depth
of my training nurse, Miss Morphine.

Now perhaps you might say there was some drinking.
It's possible too you're right.
But at least it comes and drives away those things
That often stares at me in the night.

They give me a month to live.
A month or a year's the same.
For I haven't the heart to play my part
at the end of a losing game.

So son, if I was you
I would bid the tropics kind adieu
Go back again
among honest men!

Whatever you pay, whatever you say
Your stakes may be large or small
For the grapplers, the gamblers will gather your pile,
and the grasses will get it all!

ing in San Francisco, and are appreciated more in parts of Europe than in New York, as is often the case with New Orleans musicians. (Perhaps city roots in mother France call our music across the ocean for critical reception.)

Leo was on the road for eight weeks during the spring, and once he returned to the city, he disconnected his telephone so he wouldn't be interrupted. Daytime, he spends hours at Allen Toussaint's Sea-Saint Studio, where he writes songs.

"The old man looked at him and had compassion . . . . He didn't want the young man to go through the same thing. He advised him to go back wherever he came from and cool the pill. And so this is the story."

And just about every day, he visits his father and mother on Elysian Fields. Jack Nocentelli is a large figure in Leo's life. "I owe a lot to him. He took time to show me the guitar musically, gave me the confidence to play, to know I could please people. He gave me all that; without that confidence, you can't do anything."

Jack's writing was a backdrop to Leo's childhood. "I was seven or eight when he started reading his poems. At first, they were just words to me. As I got older, it took on something new. The old man took on words and made something original – it's his original poem.

"I picked up writing. He inspired me to do everything I'm doing. He showed me not to be afraid of music, not to be afraid of people – and the most important thing, to play in front of people."

Because of reporting assignments, I did not see Jack or the Prince again for more than two months. Just a few weeks ago, I sought out Jack again, not knowing what he would be like, fearing he might be worse.

Earline ushered me into the bedroom, and there sat Jack, in the same reclining chair.

"Where the hell you been?" he growled.

I sat down with a wave of joy washing through me. Here was the spirit reclaiming the man!

"You look great, Jack."

He snorted, then spoke slowly, with careful emphasis on each word. "Got a speech...th–"

"Therapist?"

"Right...Comes around...Tuesday ...Thursday...Help me...get it right."

"You're getting better, Jack. It shows, all over you, man."

He nodded. "Poem...you done any?"

"Yeah, I've got it transcribed now. Can you answer some questions."

He nodded.

"The character who tells the story in "Lure of the Tropics," the old guy, Ostin-Vicks: did you know him?"

He nodded, struggling to enunciate. "Down...down in Tropics, 'twenties ...cargo ships."

"So you met him down there. Did he tell you the whole story?"

He nodded no. "T-talking to...other cats. Then things...things happened to my own damned self...I put it all together."

"Jack, who was Ostin-Vicks?"

"Kind of a pirate...met him working on Panama Canal...he was – kinda cat who needed something, took it."

"Was he a sort of Robin Hood figure?"

"NO!" He bellowed the word, sat back and swallowed, composed himself. "...cruel, inhuman son-of-a-bitch. All it's true. All."

"So all the things that happened to him were real. And you put it in the poem."

Jack nodded. "Doctors tole him. . . was about to die. . . matter of days. . . he tole me. . . all stuff. . . then I made up. . . wrote out."

"When did you actually write the poem?"

"Later. Depression. . . Nobody had job. . . they don't put you in jail. . . cause they wouldn't feed you. They had jungles – jungles we call 'em; in railroad yards, by the tracks. . . Hoboes. . . I was hoboing, started writing it North Carolina, South Carolina, Illinois. . . in jungles, shantytown . . . Wrote it on anything, anything get hands on, sent pieces back to m'sister."

"Did other people tell stories in the jungles?"

"Yes, Everybody. . . ate. . . out of pots, over fire. Threw in what they could. . . Guys tole jokes to one another. . . pass time away."

"How long did it actually take you to write it?"

"Two, three weeks. Been camping around in my head long time before."

Now as we talked, his speech became less strained, words began to flow in careful rhythms, and his body, more limber than when last we'd talked, moved a little as he began to elaborate. He told me about another poem, "The Tramp," based on the misfortunes of a middle-class man, cuckolded, who fled to shantytowns in self-defeat. Then he talked about writers he loved.

"Dixon. Charles Dixon."

"Dickens?"

"Yeah. He talked about what it is, and not what's supposed to be. Every time. Then Shakespeare. In Caesar – Brutus: good, real, 'Lend me your ears.' He would have got fucked up for turning on him, but saying that, he got off the hook. Sherlock Holmes, Hemingway – I liked his damn writing too."

We talked for a while about other things, and then he returned to poetry. "Ending of a poem: I like it to be sad. I always did, I don't know – all my life. That's the way it's true."

It is August now, and in the evening, when tropic rains release the city from the sun's possession, steam rises in the street, blanketing everyone in odors of concrete and the scent of stones laid decades ago.

Jack Nocentelli passed on the poem to me, and it's my honor to record it. Each time I go see him, I realize that our friendship and the fact that his verse has reached a New Orleans audience doesn't surprise him much. Fate decreed it. Once, he said of the black Creoles in New Orleans: "Well, most families here got a musical background. Like a gene, you know: produces."

But the Nocentellis are more than Creoles. They are noble repositors of a melding of different races – Indian, Creole, Italian. Jack's second son, Angelo, is just out of high school and has started a band. A daughter, Rosalyn, has read and knows by heart many of his poems. Their father's words are drawn from different sources, many lands and travels, and the immemorial allegory of the human struggle to endure. □

by John Vlach

Illustration from *The Century Magazine*, 1891: "A Congo Chieftain's Grave"

Graveyards and Afro-American Art

Across rural Afro-America the cemetery is very special. Not only is it the realm of the deceased, it is also a storehouse of African-inspired memories. The belief that the dead can continue to affect the lives of their families and friends prompts many American blacks to take great care in the planning and preparation of a funeral. Strong feelings about one's last rites have led to the formation of numerous local black burial societies.[1] A proper funeral must be conducted with decorum and respect. The deceased should be honored and the remains treated with dignity and reverence. Custom required a "settin' up" or wake, followed by a procession of mourners, and concluding with the decoration of the grave in a manner which is directly linked to African mortuary practices.[2]

The decoration used in Afro-American graveyards is so different from what is commonly found in a cemetery that the graveyard may not even be recognized for what it is. A recent report of the University of South Carolina's Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology revealed that a proposed field site around Charlestown Landing had initially been rejected by a man who reported "that there didn't appear to be anything there other than some late nineteenth century and twentieth century junk scattered throughout the area . . . . late period garbage of no interest."[3]

The "late period garbage" turned out to be the decorations of a black graveyard. When white people hear the word cemetery, they think of neat rows of markers on a well-mown green lawn; but as William Faulkner noted in *Go Down Moses*, Afro-American graves in rural areas do not conform to this norm:

> . . . *the grave, save for its rawness, resembled any other marked off without order about the barren plot by shards of pottery and broken bottles and old brick and other objects insignificant to sight but actually of a profound meaning and fatal to touch, which no white man could have read.*[4]

The decorations on the burial mounds vary widely, though the most prevalent are pottery or pressed-glass containers. Other objects include cups, saucers, bowls, clocks, salt and pepper shakers, medicine bottles, spoons, pitchers, oyster shells, conch shells, white pebbles, toys, dolls, bric-a-brac statues, light bulbs, tureens, flashlights, soap dishes, false teeth, syrup jugs, spectacles, cigar boxes, piggy banks, gunlocks, razors, knives, tomato cans, flower pots, marbles, bits of plaster, toilet tanks.[5] These objects, when arranged on a group of graves, constitute a visual environment which in Afro-American tradition symbolizes the world of the spirits, often the spirits of ancestors. Far from being heaps of junk, such funeral offerings are sanctified testimonies – material messages left by the living to pacify the deceased and keep stormy souls at rest.

Given the strong belief in the possible return of ancestors, it is no wonder that graveyards would be treated in a special manner. As Sarah Washington of Eulonia, Georgia, explained, "I don't guess you be bother much by the spirits if you give 'em a good funeral and put the things what belong to 'em on top of the grave."

Her husband, Ben, seconded her opinion: "You puts all the things what they use last like the dishes and the medicine bottle. The spirits need these same as the man. Then the spirit rest and don't wander about."[6] Similar customs are followed in Mississippi where it is widely believed that the cup and saucer used in the last ill-

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Walker Evans-Farm Security Administration Photograph: "A Sharecropper's Grave"

ness, if placed on the grave, would keep the deceased from coming back.[7]

The belief in returning spirits is widely held among Afro-American folk. According to an Alabama resident, "Unless you bury a person's things with him, he will come back after them."[8] Their ability to return was clear to Jane Lewis of Darien, Georgia: ". . . we take what victuals left and put it in a dish by the chimley and that's for the spirit to have a last good meal. We cover up the dish and there's many a time I hear the spirit lift them."[9] More recently, a black woman in South Carolina who had been troubled by insomnia after her daughter's funeral, reported that the girl finally appeared in a dream and told her that she needed her hand lotion. The woman hurriedly placed the item on the grave. This solved the daughter's problem and her mother's insomnia.[10]

Many of the objects placed on graves are containers which have been broken in such a way that they still retain their outward form. For example, a pitcher may have the bottom broken out but, set on the grave, it will still look like a perfectly good pitcher. This practice protects the living, as Rosa Sallins of Harris Neck, Georgia, explains: "You break the dishes so that the chain will be broke. You see, if the person is dead and if you don't break the things, then the others in the family will die too. They will follow right along."[11]

Some commentators have suggested a poetic image for the ritual shattering of grave decorations citing proverbs – "The pitcher that goes often to the well shall at last be broken" – or, other lines like "the golden bowl shall be broken."[12]

These notions, however, ignore the deeper cultural motivation. The theory that such objects were broken to prevent their theft is also short of the mark, since the taboo against stealing from graveyards is still very powerful, as Jane Lewis says: "Sure it bad luck. Them dishes and bottles what put on the grave is for the spirit and it ain't for nobody to touch them."[13] In his literary ethnography of the Sea Islands, Du Bose Heyward describes how the mysterious "Plat-eye" attacks a white man who takes a half-pint flask off a grave.[14] John Combes observes a similar situation in contemporary South Carolina: "Within the present city limits of Charleston exists a black cemetery located in a black community in which all of the discussed traits [the placement of grave offerings] are still observed. Grave offerings not excluding coins remain undisturbed by the community *including* the children."[15] Apparently, then, objects do not have to be useless to be protected from larceny. Rather, they are broken because of customs remembered from African ancestors who clung to this ritual when all else seemed lost. The slaves who died escaped forever the bonds of servitude and returned to their ancestoral spirit home, which they knew in Christian terms as the "Promised Land."

The antecedents of Afro-American mortuary decoration are found all across West and Central Africa. E.J. Glave, who traveled through Zaire in 1884, wrote that "natives mark the final resting-places of their friends by ornamenting their graves with crockery, empty bottles, old cooking pots, etc., etc., all of which articles are rendered useless by being cracked or penetrated with holes."[16] His description of a Kongo chief's grave would not be out of place in central Alabama. In Gabon the same funeral custom occurs. In 1904 missionary Robert Hamill Nassau wrote:

> *Over or near the graves of the rich are built little huts, where are laid the common articles used by them in their life – pieces of crockery, knives, sometimes a table, mirrors, and other goods obtained in foreign trade. Once, in ascending the Ogowe, I observed tied to the branches of a large tree*

extending over the stream from the top of the bank, a wooden trade-chest, five pitchers and mugs, and several fathoms of calico prints. I was informed that the grave of a lately deceased chief was near.[17]

He also noted the taboo which protected such objects from theft: "however great a thief a man may be, he will not steal from a grave. The coveted mirror will lie there and waste in the rain, and the valuable garment will flap itself to rags in the wind, but human hands will not touch them."[18] More recent anthropological studies in the same region reveal that such practices continue to characterize African graveyards. Found on one chief's grave were 10 baskets, an iron pot, a large cloth, and ceramic figurines of an elephant, a tiger and a crocodile. Pottery objects are still broken, and people are generally afraid to touch any object set on a grave.[19]

The Akan groups of Ghana and Ivory Coast also honored their dead with ceramic ornaments, usually idealized portraits in terracotta. These masterpieces of the potter's art were but one element in an elaborate program of grave goods. According to Roy Sieber, "After dark on the last day of the [funeral] ceremonies, the hearth, the pottery and wooden cooking vessels and utensils, the shelter, and the terracottas were all taken to the royal cemetery and placed on the grave."[20] Similarly, among the Yoruba of Nigeria today, the deceased are often interred in the floor of the house and the site is marked on the adjacent wall by an embedded china plate.[21]

The particular selection of decorative materials on Afro-American graves can also be largely explained by studying such African religious practices and beliefs, especially the theology of Kongo religion. For example, the people of lower Zaire believe that deceased ancestors become white creatures called *bakulu* who inhabit villages of the dead located under river beds or lake bottoms. They may return from this underworld to mingle with the living without being seen and can then direct the course of the living; consequently, the stone figures set as guardians for graves (*mintadi*) are carved from a soft dense white rock.[22] Following this African aesthetic, the predominant color of grave goods in Afro-American cemeteries is also white, whether from china, porcelain, enamel, bleached sea shells, bits of plaster, or light bulbs. Furthermore, many of these objects are associated with water, the sea or the river. Most of the pottery and glass

"Negro Graveyard in South Carolina" by Jack Delano, FSA

objects are water vessels: pitchers, tumblers, cups, bottles. Sea shells have obvious water associations, and when placed on top of the grave, they create an image of a river bottom, under which lies the realm of the dead in African belief. Several patterns of arrangement are common: a few large conch shells may be set near the headstone or in a line from the head to the foot of the grave; small oyster and clam shells often frame the outside edge of the burial plot and sometimes completely cover the entire mound.

Afro-American graves may thus be read as a kind of cosmogram. The world of the living above, the dividing line of shells, the realm of the spirits beyond, not only under ground but under water as well. The tradition of shell ornamentation is so strong that even in areas far from the ocean (like Kentucky), shells are sought for decorative purposes. Sometimes shells and water containers are combined in one symbol of transition. In Conway, South Carolina, I found a grave with a glass pitcher on it. The bottom of the pitcher had been knocked out and the vessel had been set down over a conch shell.

Mirrors also may be considered water symbols; their smooth, reflective surfaces capture some of the characteristics of a river or lake. At Sunbury, Georgia, a grave at the First Baptist Church has a large mirror (about two-by-three feet) set into a concrete slab that covers the top of the burial mound. This may well be another, more dramatic way to represent the watery transition between life and death.

Another funeral custom traceable to Africa involves the sacrifice of a live animal, often a chicken, to the spirit of the deceased. This ritual was carried on in many black communities in the South, but is particularly well-remembered in Georgia. According to Shad Hall of Sapelo Island: "They kill a white chicken when they have set-ups to keep the spirits away. She [his grandmother] say a white chicken is the only thing that will keep the spirits away and she always keep white chickens for that in yard."[23] Chicken symbols also appear in grave decoration. In 1924, Homer Eaton Keyes found a black graveyard in Camden, South Carolina, which "fairly bristled with glass chickens." His photographs record pressed-glass hens set among oyster shells in front of a tombstone dated 1912.

New symbols consistent with the tradition, but reflective of new orientations in theology, entered Afro-American burial practice in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Clocks are now a very common grave offering. Large pendulum clocks were apparently used in the 1920s, but in later years small spring-wound alarm clocks have become more common. Most recently, professional morticians have provided styrofoam and floral constructions with clock faces on them.[24] There are two explanations generally given for the use of clocks on graves: they are set at 12 to wake the dead on Judgement Day, or they are set at the hour when the deceased passed away. The first belief is decidedly Christian in orientation, while the latter explanation demonstrates the relationship between the object and the deceased person. Whatever the reason, the inclusion of clocks, even if in styrofoam form, continues the older grave decoration customs.

Monuments and markers have also been incorporated into the grave decoration tradition. Commercially made stones of granite and limestone are now commonly used, although numerous homemade concrete and wooden markers are still very prevalent. One vase from South Carolina dating from the 1880s is covered with the kinds of objects that are usually scattered on the surface of a grave. Shells, bits of glass, coins, a pill bottle, a ceramic statue and other odds-and-ends have been stuck with plaster onto a brownware jar, in a three-dimensional rendering of a normally flat environment. Set on a grave this decorated jug could be read as either a superior grave offering or a tasteful monument. Concrete grave markers strike a neat balance between commercial headstones and the customarily scattered clusters of burial offerings. They are usually tablets which are inscribed while the cement is still wet with the name and dates of the deceased, often in a rough, uneven hand. For example, the tombstone of Colin Baken in the Palmyra Baptist Church at Sunbury reads:

COLI
ИBAK
ЕИ

Without careful reading the words are indecipherable.

photo by Muriel and Malcolm Bell

"Graveyard Sculptures by Cyrus Bowens, Sunbury, Georgia"

Other Sunbury graveyards also have many tombstones with decorative motifs. At the First Baptist Church cemetery, Chaney Bowens' stone has a dove on it, Rachel Bowens' marker has a hand imprinted on it with a mirror set in the palm, and Aaron Bowens' headstone carries an automobile headlight. Over at the Palmyra Baptist Church, many concrete markers have broken pieces of glass imbedded in them, often backed with pieces of white paper. Thus, even though concrete grave markers are obviously a twentieth-century development, novelty does not override tradition, but merely provides a new format for its expression.

Wooden markers never last long since the weather and termites eventually reduce them to splinters, but those that do survive sometimes stand as a mute witness to the abilities of their sculptors. Ideally, each grave has two markers: a larger more elaborate one for the head and a stake with a notch in the end at the foot.[25] The head marker is a slab of wood, one-inch to a half-inch thick, shaped into a human form with the head, neck, shoulders and torso minimally represented. Such markers are appropriate icons of lost human life; they indicate the outlines of the body but give no details. When bleached by the sun, these markers appear almost cadaverous.

These simple wooden markers often provide a traditional foundation for other more elaborate grave sculptures. In addition to concrete markers, Cyrus Bowens of Sunbury also created a group of large, imposing wooden sculptures which dominate his family plot. The central piece in this group is a rudimentary human form similar to the commonplace wooden headboards. Standing almost five feet high, it consists of a round head on a cylindrical post, a three-dimensional treatment of the normally flat marker. The relationship of this unique sculpture to communal custom is similar to the relationship between the previously described funeral vase and the arrangement of grave goods. The head has oval eyes and a thin line for a mouth; even in three dimensions, this monument is still a minimalistic sculpture. Its central importance is indicated by the bold capital letters spelling BOWENS across the front of the post. The two flanking pieces, now lost, were

CALVIN'S FUNERAL

told to Genevieve W. Chandler by Lillie Knox of Murrells Inlets, S.C., 1938

Weren't no use havin' things like they done. They knowed that was hard clay. Ought to set Calvin hour for twelve. Havin' the funeral preached at three! It'll be nine tonight 'fore they get that boy covered.

[The graves – mounds of brown oak leaves – were marked with articles loved or used by the departed. One had a clock on it; one, a bottle of medicine and the spoon last used.]

Diggin Calvin grave cross the world. He have to lie north and south. Make the grave north and south when a man drownded. He had a struggle! Never put them east and west. Anybody can come here and see that grave and know that person was drownded

Was to put Calvin to Laurel Hill Cemetery but the new kennel (canal) cut the graveyard off. Old Aunt Margaret wanted Calvin put to the church, but nobody been put to the church yet; they haven't started off the new graveyard. To start off a new buryin' ground, you got to dig a grave and bury a log – just like it was something. The old slavery time people say this must be done; if you don't do it this way, the first one buried lie callin' for some one to come keep 'em company, and call so till they soon have the cemetery fulled up. Old Miss Blanton said she knew a man over in Horry, and he said he wasn't feared to be the first. So when he died, they was a church to the foot of the hill he lived on, and they never hadn't started a cemetery, so they put him away there – the first one. In less'n a year, he had called six members of his family.

They warn't no use in makin' Calvin funeral so sad. If I'd a-preached it, I would not a-made it that-a-way.

Satan try to steal my crown!
Satan try to steal my crown!
Oh, the sheep on the right,
And the goats on the left,
We'll never run to-gether anymore!

both serpent-like forms. With these sculptures, Bowens took advantage of the natural shapes of branches. In the piece to the right, a forked limb served as a pedestal for a curved branch which was pointed at one end and had a knob at the other. When set on the pedestal, the knobby end suggested the head of a snake, the slim end the tail. The other piece rose 12 or 13 feet into the air.

The main element of this sculpture was an oddly formed piece of wood (perhaps the trunk of a sapling that got bent around a larger tree). It started at the bottom as a thick shaft, then turned abruptly into a horseshoe curve, and tapered for the last seven or eight feet into a thin rod. Several short pieces of wood were nailed on to this large branch, some within the curve and others at the top. The exact intentions behind this tall sculpture are still a mystery, but its similarity to the snake sculpture suggests that all were once parts of a unified artistic vision. One final assemblage, set a little distance from this trio of sculptures, served as a bracket holding a sign bearing the names of the deceased members of the Bowens family; it too repeated the bold curve.

It is tempting to recall the dominance of reptile motifs in Afro-American woodcarving and view these sculptures as another instance of the use of the snake motif. (An iron grave marker from the Talladega Forest in Alabama has a rod twisted into a snake-like form in an apparent attempt to spell out the name of the deceased.) But Bowens died in 1966 before anyone could ask him about his designs. If we consider his work in the context of the traditional grave sculpture, Bowens' central figure appears to be a close approximation of the commonplace wooden headboard. Once he finished this name-bearing title piece, he abandoned the somber restrictive convention that controlled the making of the grave markers. All of his other pieces are characterized by his use of serpentine curves. Perhaps once the tradition was honored, the creative adrenalin flowed more wildly. All of this must remain conjecture, of course, for we do not know in what order the Sunbury sculptures were created. Only the simple pole and head statue remains as a hint of Cyrus Bowens' exciting vision for the cemetery, the world of the dead.

In summary, Afro-American graves are often indistinguishable from African graves because the religious beliefs which shape the attitude toward death, and therefore the way death is treated, are themselves not very different. R.H. Nassau reported that in Central Africa, "the coffin is laid with the face of the dead looking eastward."[26] Similarly, Elsie Clews Parsons says that coastal blacks in South Carolina invariably dig their graves "east to west, the head to the west," i.e., facing to the east.[27] The obvious continuity results form a shared concept of the cosmos—that the world is oriented east to west following the sun. Black cemeteries throughout the South (that is, from the Atlantic to eastern Texas and the Gulf Coast to Kentucky) express a distinctly African religious and aesthetic perspective. A comparison of graves documented by Farm Security Administration photographers in the 1930s with graves decorated today show how stable the tradition has been in recent decades. Graves continue to be decorated the same way they were forty, sixty, maybe even a hundred years ago. The custom is not even confined to the South, for grave goods appear also in the cemetery at Sandy Ground, a black settlement in Staten Island.[28] The northward urban migration of blacks in the twentieth century has caused many Afro-American traditions to change. But values and behaviors associated with death are so strongly felt that they manage to survive the pressures of social crises and perhaps serve as a vital source of ethnic identity and strength. The realm of the dead truly has an impact on the living.

Footnotes

1. For an example, see Julia Peterkin, *Roll Jordan Roll* (New York: R.O. Ballou, 1933), pp. 280-282.

2. See account of the burial given by ex-slave Lucinda Davis of Tulsa, Okla. in Norman Yetman, *Life Under the "Peculiar Institution": Selections from the Slave Narrative Collection* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 84.

3. John D. Combes, "Ethnography, Archaeology and Burial Practices Among Coastal South Carolina Blacks," *Conference on Historic Site Archaeology Papers*, Vol. 7, (Columbia, S.C.: Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1972), p. 52.

4. William Faulkner, "Pantaloon in Black," *Go Down Moses* (New York: Random House, 1955), p. 135.

5. H. Carrington Bolton, "Decoration of Graves of Negroes in South Carolina," *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 4 (1891), p. 214; Ernest Ingersoll, "Decoration of Negro Graves," *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 5 (1892), pp. 68-69; Henry C. Davis, "Negro Folklore in South Carolina," *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 27 (1914), p. 248; Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society, Vol. 16 (1923), p. 214; Lydia Parrish, *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands*, 1942 (rpt. Hatboro, Pa.: Folklore Associates, 1965), p. 31; Margaret Davis Cate, *Early Days of Coastal Georgia* (St. Simons Island, Ga.: Fort Frederica Association, 1955), pp. 207-215; Paul G. Brewster, "Beliefs and Customs," *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore* (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1964), p. 260.

6. Georgia Writers' Project, *Drums and Shadows: Survival Studies Among Georgia Coastal Negroes* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1940), p. 136.

7. Newbell Niles Pucket, *The Magic and Folk Belief of the Southern Negro*, 1926 (rpt. New York: Dover, 1969), p. 104.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

9. *Drums and Shadows*, p. 147.

10. Combes, "Burial Practices Among Coastal South Carolina Blacks," p. 58.

11. *Drums and Shadows*, pp. 130-131.

12. Ingersoll, "Decoration of Negro Graves," p. 69.

13. *Drums and Shadows*, p. 147.

14. Du Bose Heyward, *The Half-Pint Flask* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1929).

15. Combes, "Burial Practices among Coastal South Carolina Blacks," p.59

16. E.J. Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," *The Century Magazine*, Vol. 41 (1891), p. 825.

17. R. H. Nassau, *Fetichism in West Africa* (London: Duckworth, 1904), p. 232.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Andre Raponde-Walker and Roger Sillens, *Rites et Croyances des Peuples du Gabon* (Paris: Presence Africane, 1962), p. 107.

20. "Kwahu Terracottas, Oral Traditions and Ghanaian History" in Douglas Fraser and Herbert Cole, eds., *African Art and Leadership* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1972), pp. 178-179.

21. Personal Fieldwork in the vicinity of Ile-Ife, Nigeria, 1974.

22. Georges Balandier, *Daily Life in the Kingdom of Kongo from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), pp. 234, 251-252.

23. *Drums and Shadows*, p. 167.

24. Combes, "Burial Practices Among Coastal South Carolina Blacks," p. 59.

25. Mason Crum, *Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1940), p. 97. Arthur P. Bourgeois, in a personal communication, April, 1977, observed among the Yaka of lower Zaire that stakes with notches were used to mark the foot of several graves of people who had been struck by lightning.

26. *Fetichism in West Africa*, p. 218.

27. *Folk-Lore of the Sea Islands of South Carolina*, p. 215.

28. Robert Farris Thompson, "From Africa," *Yale Alumni Magazine*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (1970), p. 19. □

Nine Generations of Potters

THE COLE FAMILY

by Dorothy Cole Auman and Charles G. Zug, III

On May 17, 1876, a resident of Randolph County, North Carolina, wrote to her niece to describe a buggy excursion to the pottery of Evan Cole, located about four miles east of Whynot near the Moore County line:

Dear Niece Anne,

This leaves us well ecept Paw. Winter has been rough on him and we are all joyed for the warm spring to get crops in. . . .

I went with Rossinah to the Cole pottery shop past week to get somethings for setting in her house making. They are distant kin to us by Aunt Rach that you never knew but herd us talk of was Marks wife. Sallie was airing beding and showed us one of old Aunt Rach covers that was so fine work but old and worn and not in use for it covered Rafe when he passed. Rossinah got a stone churn and milk pans and pie dishes and saw a teapot but did not buy that. I got you a cake mole with blue decorate since you admired mine so long. Hope you do like it well.

Coming home the buggy wheel ran into a mudrut and stuck but John came by and moved it out fortunately we was not damaged just muddy. We laughed heartily for John told we had more mud on us than it took to make our ware. We look for you in June. Write when you can.

Your loving Aunt Rebecca W.[1]

Although the known history of the Cole family begins two centuries earlier, Aunt Rebecca's account provides a fitting introduction to their activities. With considerable humor and detail, she presents a rare firsthand portrait of a rural pottery shop and its mean-

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Dorothy Cole Auman, potter in the Cole tradition, has spent many years researching the history of folk pottery in North Carolina. She and her husband, Walter Auman, operate Seagrove Pottery and the Seagrove Potter's Museum. Charles Zug teaches English and folklore at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Ms. Auman and Dr. Zug are working on a book about the North Carolina pottery tradition.

photo courtesy of Smithsonian Institution

Dorothy Cole Auman demonstrates turning a pot at the 1976 Festival of American Folklife in Washington, D.C.

COLE GENEALOGY

William
c. 1739 -
Stephen
c. 1759 -
Mark
c. 1779-c. 1835
Mathew
Michael
c. 1797-
Raphard
1799-1862
Raphard, Jr.
1827-1867
Evan
1834-1895
Willis
1837-1865
Franklin
1857-1919
Ruffin
1859-1931
Evan, Jr.
1862-
Marshall
1864-
Alfred
1866-1943
Jacon
1869-1943
Lorenzo
1871-1939
Charlie
1887-1967
Arthur
1892-1974
Everette
189?-1974
Clarence
1906-1937
Herman
Vellie
Nell
Wayman
Thurston
1920-1966
Dorothy
1925-
Neolia
Celia
Virginia Shelton
Walter Auman, Jr
1950-
Margaret Shelton

ing to the people of the region. Perhaps most noticeable is the close personal relationship between the potter and his customers. Not only does Aunt Rebecca appear to have been an intimate friend of Evan's wife, Sallie, but she accurately refers to Evan's father, Raphard, and grandparents, Mark and Rachel. No less significant are the wares Rossinah purchased "for setting in her house making." The stoneware milk pan could be filled with fresh milk, covered and placed in a springhouse, stream bed or other cool place. When the cream had risen, it was scooped out and poured into the stoneware churn. Once transformed into butter, it became part of the fruit pies and other concoctions baked in the lead-glazed earthenware dishes. Other wares that might have tempted Rossinah included pitchers, jugs in varied sizes for vinegar or molasses, and large storage jars for preserving meats and vegetables.

While Evan's products were utilitarian and essential to an agrarian culture, Aunt Rebecca's comment on the cobalt-decorated earthenware cake mold suggests their aesthetic possibilities as well. Although painted, incised or applied surface ornamentation is rare, this type of pottery possesses a powerful sense of form, and exhibits considerable variation and vitality. Most of the pieces are graceful and sinuous in shape, with well-flanged lips, simple strap or lug handles, and perhaps an incised band or two to accent the break between the shoulder and belly of the piece. With earthy tones ranging from rust and brown to cooler greens and grays, each pot remains close to the clay soil from which it sprang; in fact, its natural qualities are enhanced by the lead and salt glazes put over it. Finally, many unintended effects add to the beauty of texture: the shower of fly ash over the mouth and shoulders; the grassy, green drippings from the roof of the kiln; and the varied colorations resulting from the alternating atmosphere of oxidation and reduction within the kiln. In all respects, this was an intimate, familiar pottery, made not to be placed on a shelf and admired from afar, but to be held and touched and used daily as an integral part of the lives of a rural people.

As the major figure in the fifth generation of Coles in America, Evan occupies a central position in the history of the Cole potters. The simplified genealogical chart – one restricted to those who played a major role in the pottery business – suggests the range and vitality of this remarkable family. For nine generations spanning 200 years, the Coles have turned pottery in North Carolina. Moreover, the tradition continues today, as three large shops produce thousands of pieces each year: the Cole Pottery, Sanford, Lee County; J.B. Cole's Pottery, in the northeast corner of Montgomery County; and the Seagrove Pottery, Seagrove, Randolph County. Assuredly, their products and technologies differ from those of Evan one hundred years ago, but their links to the past are still firm and their work as craftsmen no less important.

Early History

The Coles trace their ancestry back to England, and although no direct links can be established, there is firm evidence that potters of this surname were at work in both England and Wales. In Staffordshire, for example, Mary Cole of Woolstanton married William Adams, an "Earth potter," on September 12, 1771. Subsequently, Mary's younger brother, Caleb, joined forces with his brother-in-law and formed the firm of Caleb Cole & Co., which operated into the early years of the nineteenth century.[2] Even earlier, on September 19, 1764, in Swansea, Wales, William Coles obtained a lease to erect the first pottery in that area. Although he was not a potter himself, Coles established a successful business which produced utilitarian earthenwares for domestic use – "such crocks as bread pans, pitchers and baking dishes [which] would find a ready market in the town and its vicinity" – as well as more elaborate creamware and stoneware forms. William's son, John, remained a partner until his death in 1799, and the business continued until 1870.[3]

There are a few tantalizing shreds of evidence in *The Records of the*

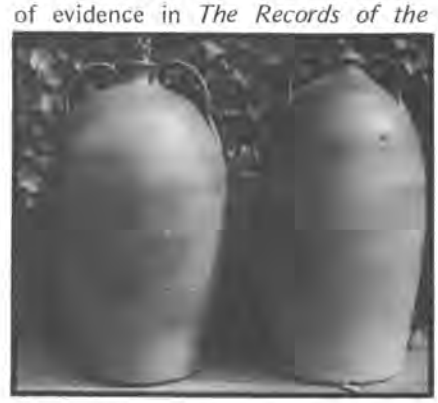


Figure 1: Two five-gallon, stoneware syrup jugs made by Ruffin Cole. Height, 19½ and 20¼ inches, circumferences, 35 and 33½ inches, respectively.

Figure 2: The three middle generations of Cole potters – (from left to right) Ruffin, Raphard and Evan.

Virginia Company of London that suggest that on December 4, 1619, a John Cole and a William Cole landed at Jamestown from the ship *Margaret* out of Bristol, England.[4] Bristol was, of course, both a pottery center and an important port in the export trade. Just what craft the two men practiced is not mentioned but the Virginia Company was most certainly bringing in potters at this time. Moreover, the Tidewater clay was suitable for the manufacture of earthenware, and there is solid evidence that such wares were being produced in this vicinity shortly after the middle of the seventeenth century, and possibly much earlier.[5]

While some of the Coles remained in Virginia, others appeared to have turned to the new lands available to the Southwest. The earliest recorded evidence shows a William Cole owning land in the North Carolina Piedmont by the middle of the eighteenth century, and an apprenticeship bond of 1792 names him as sponsor for Jacob Fox, who came from Bucks County, Pennsylvania to learn the potter's trade. Fox became the first of another large family of North Carolina potters. The bond clearly indicates that William Cole was an established potter by this time.

Exactly what type of pottery William Cole might have made at this date remains sheer speculation, but it is reasonable to assume that he was producing lead-glazed earthenwares. Common forms would have included pitchers, pans, bowls, dishes, jugs and jars, usually in earthy tones of brown, red, orange or yellow. The glaze was probably produced by grinding lead ore in a simple stone mill, mixing it with water and applying it to the interior of the vessel. Even less is known about the early kilns, though they were likely quite small and shaped like a beehive, perhaps three feet high and five feet in diameter. The wares were fired through one or more fireboxes under the kiln floor, and the flames simply rose straight up through the top of the kiln. Fired to relatively low temperatures, at best 1800° F, earthenware remained rather soft, brittle and porous. At some point during the early nineteenth century, the potters began producing the much stronger, more vitreous stonewares, which were fired to much higher temperatures in large groundhog kilns. However, they continued to produce some earthenware – particularly the ubiquitous "dirt dish" – well into the twentieth century. As Aunt Rebecca and Rossinah well knew, earthenware has one advantage over its stronger relative: it withstands thermal shock and thus is more suitable for cooking.

Logic would suggest that William's son, Stephen, was also familiar with the craft, but again there is no evidence to prove this. However, two of Stephen's sons are known to have been potters. Mathew moved to Buncombe County by 1798 and made pottery in the Reems Creek area. According to family tradition, he later made ware with the Penland family, whose business continued until about 1944. Mark, earlier referred to in Aunt Rebecca's letter, remained in the area later known as Whynot and died there about 1835. Much more is known about Mark Cole's sons, Michael and Raphard (or Raford), and their activities as potters.

The Traditional Potters

Michael and Raphard settled side by side in the Whynot area, making ware together as well as tending their farms. Michael later sold his land and moved to Tennessee, but Raphard remained and raised a large family. As late as 1939, the log house in which he lived was still standing, surrounded by the foundations of his various outbuildings: a barn, springhouse and smokehouse. Some 200 yards east of the house was a rectangular depression in the ground measuring approximately 20 by 8 feet. According to C.C.

Cole, a great-grandson, this was Raphard's groundhog kiln, the earliest one known in the area. A few burned rocks, as well as earthenware and stoneware shards, were uncovered, suggesting that Raphard was producing the same types of utilitarian wares that his son Evan was to sell to Aunt Rebecca and Rossinah.

Of the seven children, three sons followed the father's craft: Raphard, Jr., Evan and Willis. Moreover, two of the daughters married potters in the Craven and Hancock families, and a third married a wagoner. Raphard, Jr., hauled their wares by wagon to the eastern part of the state, and eventually married and settled near Whiteville, Columbus County, about 45 miles west of Wilmington. Willis, the youngest child, also married into the Craven family and made ware with Evan until he died at an early age. The pivotal figure here, however, is Evan. In fact, in two respects, he did more to perpetuate the Cole tradition than any other single figure. First, in 1854 he married Sarah Jane Luck ("Sallie" in Aunt Rebecca's letter), and they proceeded to produce no less than seven active potters: Franklin, Ruffin, Evan, Jr., Marshall, Alfred, Jacon, and Lorenzo (Wrenn). Second, with the assistance of his seven sons, his father-in-law William Luck, his brother-in-law Henry Luck and a neighbor named John Chrisco, he established what was probably the largest pottery shop in the region. Apparently little of the ware was signed; the cream-colored stoneware bottle in Figure 3 is the only known product of the shop.

Figure 3: A stoneware bottle produced at Evan Cole's shop and stamped Cole & Co. Height, 9¼, circumference, 13 in.

While local inhabitants such as Aunt Rebecca and Rossinah purchased wares directly from Cole & Co., the bulk of the production was carefully packed in wheat straw and shipped to distant villages and towns. Even with the Plank Road (which ran from Salem to Fayetteville and passed through Seagrove) and later, the railroad, travel was slow and arduous. John Chrisco was a well-known wagoner, and the following comic anecdote hints at some of the actual problems he must have encountered in moving the Coles' wares:

*It is told that Little John Chrisco would meet another team head-on, and being a burly sort of fellow, would yell out quite loudly, "If you don't move your wagon I'll do you like I did the last one I met." At such vigorous threats as this the other wagoners reluctantly moved over and John proceeded on his way. After moving out of the mud grooves with much effort, one man cautiously asked, "And what did you do to the other fellow?" John was far down the road when he answered, "Well, I just moved over and let him pass."*6

As Cole & Co. gradually extended its markets to the east, the sons took over the production, and Evan concentrated on the sales. The sons packaged and shipped the ware by railroad to depots such as Ivanhoe, a small community near Wilmington. Evan picked it up and peddled it from his wagon; by 1885 he had developed a network of regular customers in this region. In fact, family tradition relates that it was here that he died in 1895. His loaded wagon had become stuck while he was crossing a creek, and in trying to dislodge it, he became chilled. He went to a nearby farm and asked for assistance but died of pneumonia before a doctor could see him. It was nearly a month before the family received the bad news; Evan, Jr., and Will Garner had to "hitchhike" down to the coast by catching rides on wagons to retrieve Evan's wagon, horses and bag of money.

With Evan's death, the output of Cole & Co. fell sharply. The loss of the eastern markets meant that the sons had to depend on local consumption, and before long they began to look for new opportunities. Franklin set up his own shop and engaged Ruffin as a turner. Evan, Jr., and Marshall joined a turpentine distillery and Alfred went into the lumber business. Finally, Jacon and Wrenn hired out as journeyman potters for other established shops in the area.

Evan's sons represent the last generation of Coles who can truly be labeled "traditional" potters. Almost exclusively, they made the familiar utilitarian forms in earthenware and stoneware, and they gathered, prepared, turned and fired their raw materials using the time-honored technology of their forebears. A general sketch of their methods is necessary at this point in order to emphasize the changes which occurred in subsequent generations.

During the late 1890s and early 1900s, Jacon and Wrenn did all of the turning at the Baxter N. Welch shop located at Harper's Crossroads, Chatham County.[7] Figure 4 is a truly remarkable photograph of the shop and its various components, taken about 1900. Wrenn can be seen standing in the doorway of the shop, and just to the right are Baxter Welch, his children, Lola and Earnest, and his father Wesley Welch. At the left of the shop is a wagon full of freshly dug clay with a shovel sticking out of the top of the load.

There were at least three clay pits in the immediate vicinity; Baxter owned one of them and leased another for 99 years for the very reasonable sum of one dollar. Digging the clay was a laborious process. Having located his claybed by sinking a series of test holes, the potter then had to clear off the brush and trees and take off all of the topsoil to expose the vein. Next, he would loosen the lumps of thick clay with his mattock, and shovel them into baskets or, better, the wagon, if it could be maneuvered close to the digging area. Figure 5 shows the Welch crew digging about four feet below the surface in one of the local claypits. No less than six men and one "supervisor" are at work filling the two-wheeled cart. The lunch baskets and jugs above the diggers attest to the fact that this was frequently an all-day task.

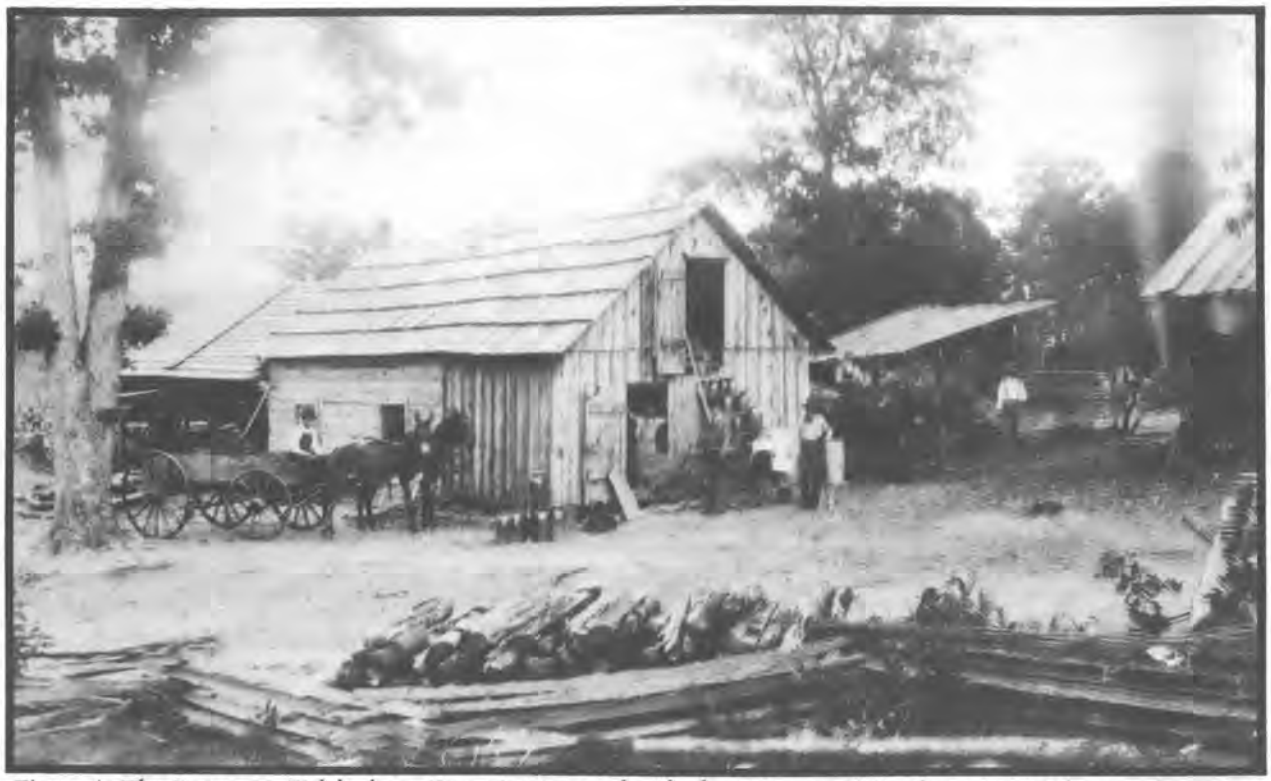


Figure 4: The Baxter N. Welch shop, Harper's Crossroads, Chatham County, N.C., about 1900. The raw clay arrives by wagon at left, the kiln with smoke rising from its top is at right, and finished pots are in the center of photograph.

The raw clay was transported back to the pottery where it was shoveled into an open bin, usually adjacent to the shop. Here it was beaten and chopped into small lumps and allowed to weather. Next, it was finely ground in a pug mill, a vertical barrel some three feet in diameter which contained a revolving shaft into which were driven wooden pegs or metal knives. The pug mill is about the only major piece of equipment not visible in the photograph of the Welch shop, but it was likely located to the left or rear of the clay wagon. In appearance very much like a syrup mill, it was powered by a horse which was harnessed to the end of a long wooden sweep and urged to walk endless circles in order to grind the clay. Large "bolts" of clay weighing 30 to 50 pounds were then extracted from the mill and stored in a cool, moist location inside the shop. With further aging, the clay was ready for the potter's wheel.

The Welch shop appears to have been a log cabin with a framed, board and batten extension to the front. The spacious loft is full of greenware, leather-hard pieces ready for firing in the kiln. Jacon and Wrenn's wheels – or "lathes" as they were frequently called – were located inside the windows. Moreover, there was a low narrow brick drying oven about 20 feet long, over which shelves were probably constructed to hold the greenware. Typical wares are displayed in front of the shop: tall, narrow churns, jugs of varied sizes, and crocks or storage jars. None of the pieces appears to have been stamped or signed with the maker's name, and the only decorations used were a series of incised bands around the shoulder and a large number indicating the capacity in gallons.

All of the wares produced at the Welch shop were salt-glazed in the groundhog kiln at the extreme right; a close-up is provided in Figure 6. The kiln measured about 20 by 8 feet and was three to four feet high inside – all very typical dimensions. This left the potter a setting area inside, which was about 12 by 6 feet high at the center of the arch. The potter entered the kiln at the near end by crawling across a board over the deep firebox. Once he had filled the kiln with greenware, he constructed a temporary firewall of brick at the front of the setting area and then backed out of the kiln.

Wood for the firing is visible in the foreground of Figure 4 and usually consisted of four foot slabs (for which Baxter Welch paid 50¢ per cord). The potter would bring the heat up very slowly at first, in order to avoid cracking the wares. Near the end of the firing, which usually lasted about 15 hours, the temperature would reach about 2300° F, and a huge sheet of flame would run the length of the kiln and out the chimney. At full heat, the potters would pull the bricks out of the "peep holes" along the top of the arch and toss in handfuls of salt. As A. R. Cole recalled:

"There'd be about three rows of these on each side of the kiln. This is where you'd throw in the salt when you started to blast at the very end of the firing. We'd measure out the salt in milk crocks....You'd salt it and then blast again – about three times'd get a good coating."[8]

In figure 6 the bricks protruding from the peep holes are clearly visible, and there are two milk crocks full of salt just to the right of the kiln. The thick, rolling black smoke suggests that the potter may well have been "blasting" at this point. This was usually accomplished by throwing "lightard" – pine knots full of tar – into the firebox to rapidly elevate the temperature. The tremendous heat would cause the salt to vaporize instantly, and a glassy coating of sodium silicate would glaze the surface of the

Figure 5: The Welch claypit, about 1900. Figure 6: The Welch groundhog kiln. The forked sticks are used to erect a temporary shelter when the kiln is not in use.

ware.

Children frequently assisted their parents in all phases of production and at times were naturally hasty or irresponsible. A typical example is A. R. Cole's shortcut method of salting his father Ruffin's wares:

I've thought about it many a time, and it almost scared me now how us younguns would pick up a gallon of salt and go down one side of the arch putting it in and then rather than walk around the back of the chimney to get to the other side, we'd run across the top of the kiln to salt the other side. Twenty-three hundred degree or so hot – and they'd get a little shaggy those old kilns, just ready to fall in. Ought to have had more sense but we's just younguns then. We'd not do it if my Daddy was round or he'd skin us.[9]

Baxter Welch closed his shop in the early 1900s and spent the remainder of his life as a salesman of agricultural machinery. His specific motives for closing his business are not known, but as an able businessman he must have sensed the decline in demand for the type of product he sold. Cheap containers made of glass, metal and whiteware were rapidly displacing his stoneware vessels. The ready availability of commercial dairy products and sugar eliminated the need for churns, milk crocks and syrup jars. Improved methods of refrigeration and transportation made large crocks for pickling and preserving much less important. And finally, a series of Prohibition laws starting in 1903 drastically reduced the demand for jugs. Altogether, the traditional pottery industry was in serious decline at the beginning of the twentieth century; but in the next several decades, a rapid if unforeseeable chain of events was to renew and reshape it. And the Coles of the next generation, notably the children of Ruffin and Jacon, were foremost among those who adapted to the evolving tastes and technologies.

Transition and Renewal

One of the first to benefit from the changing conditions was Franklin Cole, who built his first shop in 1896 some four and a half miles north of Seagrove. One night, according to family tradition, he dreamed of a large mass of white clay, and the next day he went off in search of his vision. Incredibly, he discovered a large body of white-burning stoneware clay on a farm just north of Seagrove, and he soon traded his land for that containing the valuable deposit. The white color of his new wares proved very popular, and there were two other advantages to the move as well. First, he was now located near the newly constructed railroad depot and so began shipping stoneware to merchants in the eastern part of the state. Unlike his father Evan, Franklin insisted that the buyers pick up their orders themselves at the depots, thus eliminating the roving salesman. Second, he was situated on one of the major north-south roads, and travelers headed for resorts in Pinehurst or Florida would stop at his shop. However, he made little concession to the new forms and glazes requested by the travelers and in 1922 sold his shop to the Auman family.

Franklin's brother, Jacon, proved more innovative. For some 25 years he had worked as a journeyman potter and thus had the opportunity to observe the success or failure of many different shops. Much of the time, he had turned for Franklin, where he must have realized the need for new wares and marketing systems. About 1922 he established his own shop in the very northeastern corner of Montgomery County, three miles south of Seagrove and less than a mile east of US 220. At first he began producing the familiar utilitarian stoneware in a groundhog kiln and selling it by wagon to surrrounding towns. Before long he began adding more decorative wares colored with cobalt blue, such as the bowl in Figure 8. Although common in the North in the nineteenth century, cobalt was rarely used by the Southern traditional potters, both because it was expensive and the competition did not warrant such decorative efforts. A more important development occurred in the late 1920s and early 1930s when Jacon gradually dropped the old salt glaze and began using brightly colored commercial lead glazes. Initially he fired them in his groundhog kiln, but soon that was abandoned for a larger, upright kiln in which his wares could

Figure 7 (at left): An elaborate stoneware jug from the Welch shop, inscribed "G. W. Bright his jug 1900." Bright was one of the wagoners and apparently carried this piece on his trips. Height, 10½, circu. 19½ inches. Figure 8 above is a blue stoneware bowl by Jacon Cole. Height 3, circumference, 7½ inches.

be stacked in saggers (an open-walled clay container used to protect wares during firing). This new kiln was fired with wood, the fuel he had used all his life, but after his death his children converted it to oil.

With the shift to new forms and bright glazes, Jacon's markets now extended to such areas as Pinehurst and Blowing Rock, North Carolina, and Miami, Florida. To promote such distant sales he began to issue catalogs; a typical page from one published about 1932 appears in Figure 9. There were a total of 524 different forms available, ranging from the smaller items such as pitchers, creamers, mugs and candlesticks to huge classical urns up to 3 feet high. "Any article shown herein," the catalog states, "may be supplied in any of the following colors: yellow, white, rose, dark blue, Alice blue, periwinkle blue, turquoise, blue-green, enamel green, peacock blue, blue and white, orange, rust and antique." The catalog also included a roadmap of central North Carolina designed to steer any interstate traveler to the shop. Jacon's operation thus differs markedly from his father Evan's pottery or that of Baxter Welch, where the forms were severely limited, the glaze was salt, and the market was essentially local.

For all of the innovations, J.B. Cole's Pottery was and still is a family industry. In his catalog, Jacon declared, "I have made pottery all of my life, and so did my father before me. Then I taught my son and daughter, whom you see at their wheels. Later as business increased, extra workers were required. So I taught my two sons-in-law, making four moulders in all now."

Figure 10 shows his children Nell and Wayman turning at the shop; note the familiar milk crock being used for water as well as the treadle wheel. Another son, Herman, operated the Smithfield Pottery in Smithfield, Johnston County, from 1927-1942. He even constructed an enormous bottle kiln for firing his lead-glazed wares, but the cost of the building and running it, as well as World War II, put him out of business. Today J.B. Cole's Pottery continues to operate on the original site, guided by Nell, Wayman and one of Jacon's granddaughters, Virginia King Shelton. As such, it is now the oldest continuously operating shop in the Seagrove area.

As for Evan's other sons, Alfred ran a shop near Carthage, Moore County, while Wrenn remained a journeyman potter all of his life. After the Welch shop closed, Wrenn worked at the Auman Pottery and then leased Joe Steed's Carolina Pottery at Candor, Montgomery County. In his later years he turned at the C.C. Cole Pottery which was owned by his nephew. Ruffin also worked for many others – among them the Wrenn Brothers, J.D. Craven and John Chrisco – but in 1898 he established his own shop near his father's location and produced traditional stonewares. Here he trained his four sons – Charlie, Arthur, Clarence and Everette – all of whom later ran their own shops and contributed greatly to the evolution of the industry.

Clarence took over his father's shop about 1925 and added new forms and lead glazes to the old line of stonewares. In particular, he was a skillful mechanic and devised a number of labor-saving devices. For example, he used a Model T Ford to power his clay mill which, unlike the old horse-driven pug mill, was now aligned horizontally. In many unexpected ways, the rise of the automobile proved a boon to the pottery industry, and many shops operating today use engines, transmissions and differentials from the 1920s and 1930s to power their equipment.

Everette worked with Clarence and then about 1927 erected a shop at New Hill, Wake County, with his brother Charlie. Here they continued to experiment with the new lead glazes. Everette closed his shop in 1933 and returned to his father's home where he worked with his brothers. Later he produced cement and plastic garden ornaments at Candor.

Arthur, or A.R. Cole as he is best known, opened his first shop in southeastern Randolph County near his father Ruffin's property about 1915. Here he both farmed and made ware, and during the late 1920s began to try the lead glazes, just as his brothers were doing. Apparently, he realized that he could not develop a sufficient market in this somewhat remote location, and so in January of 1934 he moved his family to the side of US 1, just north of Sanford in Lee

Figure 9: A typical page from the catalog issued by J. B. Cole's Pottery, 1932.

Figure 10: Nell and Wayman Cole at work, as illustrated in the 1932 catalog.

Figure 11: A one inch high, green candleholder produced in quantity at the C. C. Cole Pottery for the Carolina Soap and Candle Co. in Pinehurst, N.C.

County.

The move was very carefully planned; many years later he recalled: "When I came down from Seagrove 37 years ago, I drove up and down this road from Wake Forest to Southern Pines looking for a good spot....I knew they'd be building up Ft. Bragg and all and that a lot of traffic would have to come by here."[10]

The decision to leave the Seagrove area must have been a difficult one, but it proved highly successful in terms of sales and reputation. In fact, in 1970 the Sanford Telephone Book featured A.R. on its cover, deeply engrossed in turning yet another piece of ware.

His shop was originally known as the Rainbow Pottery, but about 1940 he bought out his partner and began to stamp his own name on the ware. He was assisted in his work by his seven children, as well as journeymen such as Jack Kizer, Elvin Owens and Charlie Teague. Originally, he used a wood-fired groundhog kiln but converted to oil in the mid-1940s. In 1972 he was forced by the State Highway Commission to move his shop about a mile down the road to make way for a new highway and interchange. He managed to rebuild the entire plant — even the large, upright kiln — almost exactly as it was, but the effort was enormous and probably contributed to his death just two years later. A.R. was perhaps best known for his spatterwares and a red-orange glaze, the secret for which was lost with his death. In October, 1975, Celia Cole Perkinson and Neolia Cole Bass and her husband reopened the shop as the Cole Pottery and except for that red-orange glaze, are continuing their father's tradition.

Ruffin's oldest son, Charlie or C.C. Cole, took over Clarence's shop at the old homeplace in 1937. In 1940, he relocated in the Westmoore Community in Western Moore County, where he made ware with his children, Thurston and Dorothy, and his brother Everette. Thurston was a particularly rapid and skillful turner and could produce up to 1200 small pieces of pottery per day. As a result, the C.C. Cole Pottery probably produced more pieces than any other shop in the area between 1940 and 1965. Some items, such as the candleholder illustrated in Figure, 11, were sold on a contract basis through the Carolina Soap and Candle Company in Pinehurst. From his experiments with the lead glazes, C.C. developed a multi-colored glaze somewhat similar to the English Wheildon ware as well as a Roman Black. He was also the first in the area to build an oil kiln and crush his clay with a hammer mill.

C.C. Cole died in 1967 and his pottery closed four years later, but his daughter, Dorothy, now operates a shop with her husband, Walter Auman. Located on US 220 just to the north of Seagrove, the Seagrove Pottery hosts the Potter's Museum, a unique collection of two centuries of North Carolina pottery housed in the old Seagroves railroad depot. Built into the hillside next to the Museum is a full-sized groundhog kiln, the type favored by so many earlier generations. Inspired at least in part by C.C. Cole, who was always deeply interested in the potters' history, Dorothy and Walter have spent almost as much time collecting artifacts and historical documents for the Museum as they have making pottery. At the formal dedication on October 5, 1969, the audience of 600 included more than 50 active potters, indicating that the heritage the Museum preserves is yet very much alive.

A Family Heritage

As brief as it is, this history of the Coles reveals a consistent pattern of modernization. The key transition period from the traditional to the contemporary was clearly the 1920s and 1930s, when the seventh generation introduced several changes. New forms were added to the older domestic pieces: garden wares, tourist items and "art" pieces (much of the current production, regardless of its intended function, ends up on the mantels or display shelves of the purchasers). And

within each category, the potters created an enormous variety of shapes, colors and textures which would appeal to an increasingly heterogeneous clientele. Second, modern, mechanical, labor-saving machinery came into use: hammer mills, oil kilns, electric glaze mills and many homemade power sources ingeniously adapted from the automobile. Moreover, a wide range of glaze ingredients was now available from commercial suppliers at competitive prices. Finally, the entire marketing system was drastically altered. Shops were moved from country roads to major highways, catalogs with elaborate illustrations were issued, and wares were often retailed at craft outlets hundreds of miles distant.

Despite these necessary innovations, the Cole potters retained many ties with the methods and attitudes of their forebears. Each shop digs its own clay and hauls it back to be prepared. Many years ago, A.R. Cole wisely purchased a five-acre tract in Johnston County which contains a rich deposit of clay. Today, when the stock runs low at the Cole Pottery, a fresh supply is dug out with a back hoe and trucked back to Sanford, where it is ground in a small commercial mill powered by A.R.'s 1928 Dodge. And for all the modern materials and devices, the wares are still totally handmade: each form and glaze is unique, the creation of an artist-craftsman.

No less apparent is the importance of family and place. All three of the contemporary potteries are owned, directed and largely staffed by Coles, and the few additional workers are recruited from the immediate area. Two still operate in the vicinity of Seagrove, where William Cole initiated the tradition, and J.B. Cole's Pottery has functioned at its present location for well over half a century. Because the practice of wholesaling – which was prevalent from roughly 1930 to 1970 – has been abandoned, almost all of the customers come to the shops and see the pottery being made. This results in a close relationship with the customers, most of whom return to buy more wares and also comment on their utility. A wife, for example, reports that her husband cannot work his index finger through the strap handles on the mugs; immediately the potter enlarges the opening. The potters, in short like to know the people who use their pots, and benefit from both the criticism and admiration of their craft. The customer, in turn, knows the craftsman personally and understands the process which produced his dish or vase. In all, the relationship is little different from that between Evan Cole and Aunt Rebecca and Rossina over a century ago. In fact, because of the crude transportation facilities (so well illustrated by Aunt Rebecca's accident), the bulk of Evan's wares had to be wagoned out to distant towns, suggesting that a much more extensive craftsman-customer relationship may prevail in the contemporary potteries.

For 200 years, the Coles have tenaciously followed the potter's craft as a chosen way of life, observing the traditional practices, yet always willing to innovate.

In a brief analysis of two other Southern pottery "dynasties," the Brown family of Arden, North Carolina, and the Meaders family of Cleveland, Georgia, Robert Sayers suggests that in the rural South, potters were potters because they had no viable alternatives. Specifically, "anyone to whom pottery had 'got' at the age of five or six was probably pretty well stuck until more glamorous occupations coupled with a decline in the craft's utility came along." He sees the craft itself as essentially moribund: It was "held captive to a limited and poorly-championed technology, a slow inflow of new ideas, a local market which demanded a specific utilitarian ware for home use, and a unique social and cultural tradition that placed severe limits on male members of the family."[11]

While it would be foolish to take the opposite romantic extreme and simplistically assert that the Coles have always had pottery-making "in their blood," Sayers' findings in no way explain the persistence of the craft in the Cole family for over 200 years. Clearly, many positive forces have been operating: a sense of fulfillment in the creation of a particular piece; an awareness of one's special abilities and their meaning to others; a feeling of pride in one's heritage. And then there are the large numbers of Coles who continue the craft now that other options are readily available. While not an uncommon point of view on the part of anthropologists or sociologists, Sayers' interpretation is overly pessimistic and one-sided. Such economic and social determinism does little justice to the Southern pottery tradition and its major families. Ultimately, it tends to misconstrue – or at the very least, obscure – the true history of the Cole potters: their cleavage to traditional practices yet willingness to innovate, and above all, their tenacious adherence to the potter's craft as a chosen way of life.[12] □

Footnotes

1. The identity of the writer is not known, though she claims kin to the Coles. The letter was discovered among other papers at an auction in Randolph County and is currently at the Potter's Museum, Seagrove, N.C.

2. Letter of January 18, 1972, from Arnold R. Mountford, Director, City Museum and Art Gallery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, England.

3. W.J. Grant-Davidson, "Early Swansea Pottery, 1764-1810," *English Ceramic Circle Transactions*, 1968, Part I, pp. 59-65.

4. Ed. Susan Myra Kingsbury (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1933), III, p. 230.

5. See Ivor Noël Hume, *Here Lies Virginia: An Archaeologist's View of Colonial Life and History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), pp. 208-220.

6. Dorothy and Walter Auman, *Seagrove Area* (Asheboro: Village Printing Company, 1976), p. 104.

7. The photographs and information on the Welch shop were kindly provided by Mr. and Mrs. Gales Welch of Harper's Crossroads, Chatham County, in interviews conducted on March 9, 1977, and April 28, 1977.

8. Interview with A.R. Cole, July 15, 1973.

9. *Ibid.*

10. Rick Nichols, "Being Sorry Doesn't Help Sanford Potter A.R. Cole," *The News and Observer*, January 21, 1972, p. 6.

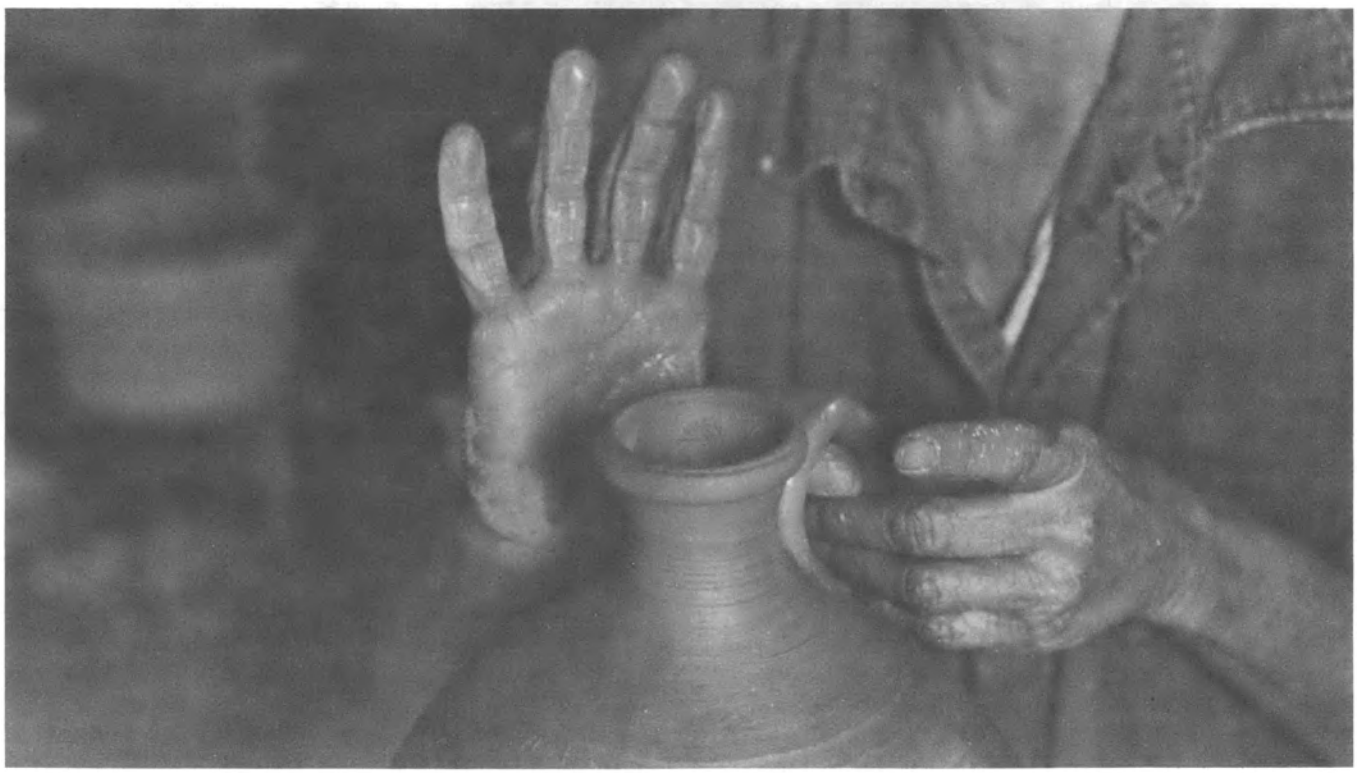
11. "Potters in a Changing South," in J. Kenneth Morland, ed., *The Not So Solid South: Anthropological Studies in a Regional Subculture* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1971), p. 104.

12. The authors wish to thank the University Research Council, the University of North Carolina, for research funds used to produce this study, and the many members of the Cole family who contributed the photographs, information and reminiscences so important to the reconstruction of this history.

ZEDITH TEAGUE GARNER (Sept. 3, 1926 - Jan. 16, 1976)
A Photographic Portrait by Jan Schochet

Zedith Teague Garner reopened the pottery shop of her father, Bryan Dewey Teague, in the mid-1950s after it had been closed for a decade following his retirement, and after she had raised her family. She was proud of her potting heritage, and kept the store open until her own death in 1976. Her mother was Bessie Lee Craven, making her an eighth generation descendant of Peter Craven, who came to North Carolina in 1760; her great-grandfather was J. D. Craven, one of the most prolific of all NC potters; and her great-great-grandmother, Elizabeth Fox, was a member of another major potter family. On her father's side, her grandfather, John Wesley Teague (1867-1916) was a well-known potter. Zedith's husband, Hobart, now operates the shop with the help of sons Daniel and J.D.

Jan Schochet is a free-lance photographer, writer and folklorist from Asheville, NC. The quote here is from the film "Zedith" produced by filmmaker Monty Diamond for educational television. Many thanks to Bill Hanah of UNC-TV for making the film transcript available.



I think I would make pottery if I just made my expenses because I like it. It gives you a sense of inner satisfaction. And most of all, the thing that really makes me happy, that I get very seldom, is a compliment from my dad. When he comes in and says, "Good," I've got it made. And yet he's the first one to criticize– if it's not right. He used to stand over me back when I started learning how to make pots, and that's been years ago. If I made a pot that wasn't up to snuff, oh boy, he could tell me about it. "Now you know that's not right! Tear that one up! Start over!" And how many hours have I stood and turned things, and when he'd come in and say, "Well now, that's a-looking better," you felt like you'd just won a battle. And sometimes you think, you know, "Well, is it worth it?" But there's always something inside that makes you stick to it. I guess it's self-satisfaction. And knowing that you do one thing and you do it well.

– Zedith Teague Garner □

FOLKLIFE RESOURCES

Southern Folk Music on Records

by W. K. McNeil

Not too many years ago, it was possible for any interested person to buy every album of Southern folk music issued on commercial records. That time is now past. Recently albums of traditional music have proliferated at such a rapid rate that it is difficult even to keep up with all the companies producing them; deciding what is best to buy of all this material is not easy. A majority of these records are issued by "minor" independent labels which cater to the relatively small but loyal audience for authentic folk music. Because these companies are small, potential customers may not know about their products.

The following survey identifies the most important companies which feature Southern folk music, their emphases, and some of their significant releases.

Having said that most good albums of Southern folk music are produced by small independent labels, we should mention several exceptions. RCA has over the years reissued at least a half dozen albums of the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers on its budget label Camden, and in the 1970s it reactivated the long defunct Bluebird label featuring double-album sets of the Monroe Brothers and the Blue Sky Boys.

Columbia has issued an excellent sampler of old-time music under the title *Ballads and Breakdowns of the Golden Era* and two volumes of Robert Johnson blues, while Atlantic Records has produced a Blues Originals series. Besides such exceptions, the "big" companies have satisfied themselves with the high volume sellers.

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Folkways Records

The oldest of the "minor" labels and the one with the largest catalog is Folkways Records, the latest of several record companies founded by Moses (Moe) Asch. The son of famed writer Sholem Asch, Moe established Asch Records in 1939; this firm and its successor, Disc Records, went bankrupt. In 1948, he and Marion Distler formed Folkways and from the beginning featured diversity in their releases. The nearly 1,500 LPs issued to date range in subject matter from readings of James Joyce to peyote ceremonies to electronic music to language instruction, but the company's main emphasis has always been on Southern folk and country music. Relatively few traditional performers from other sections of the country have appeared on the label. The non-Southern United States has generally been represented by singers like Pete Seeger, probably because for years the prime market for Moe Asch's records has been the East Coast folk revival scene.

One of the most influential folk music sets ever assembled, Harry Smith's six-LP *Anthology of American Folk Music*, is almost exclusively composed of Southern music with outstanding performances by Ernest Phipps, Dick Justice, the Carter Family, and Bascom Lamar Lunsford among others. In 1952, when Smith produced this set for Folkways, there was hardly an interest in 78 rpm recordings of the 1920s and '30s. Smith also included an exceptional booklet, witty and detailed, with his *Anthology*.

Folkways was also the outlet for the New Lost City Ramblers, the group which awakened a new generation of Americans to traditional music. (See John Cohen's essay beginning on page 115 of this issue.) The Folkways catalog also contains a number of outstanding albums by individual singers such as the three volumes by Dock Boggs (catalog numbers 2351, 2392, 3903), a reissue of Uncle Dave Macon (RBF51), an album by autoharp wizard Kilby Snow (3902), and *End of an Old Song* (2418) featuring ballad singer Dillard Chandler. In addition, there are several good LPs featuring more than one performer; these include *Old-Time Music At Clarence Ashley's*, volumes 1 & 2 (2355, 2359), *Doc Watson and Family* (2366), *Mountain Music Played On The Autoharp* (2365), and *Mountain Music, Bluegrass Style* (2318).

Unfortunately, there are also some quite embarrassing albums in the Folkways catalog. One is the Buell Kazee record (3810) which, incidentally, is composed of material Kazee initially intended not for commercial distribution but for the tape library of a field collector. Even worse is *Songs of the Ozarks* (3812) which includes nearly 40 numbers on its two sides. Generally though, Folkways albums are well-produced and well-documented, containing informative booklets which discuss both the performers and their songs. Folkways' commitment to this high standard of annotation probably spurred several other companies to

include such material with their albums.

Delmark

For some years Moe Asch had almost no competition in the folk music record market, but that changed in the late 1950s and early '60s when a blues and folk "revival" created a relatively large audience eager to buy albums of traditional music. Among the earliest of these companies was Delmark, founded by Bob Koester, a St. Louis record store owner interested in presenting some of the older bluesmen on LPs. Among the musicians appearing on Koester's label are Big Joe Williams, Sleepy John Estes and Yank Rachell. Koester later moved to Chicago, and his company's emphasis changed to urban blues although Southern-based musicians still appear on the label – one of the best recent examples being *Big Joe Williams, Nine String Guitar Blues* (627).

Arhoolie

A more prolific company arising during the "revival" era is Arhoolie Records, which has three subsidiary labels: Blues Classics, Old Timey and Folk-Lyric. Arhoolie was founded in 1961 by Chris Strachwitz, then a high school teacher who came to the United States from his native Germany in 1947. Strachwitz took his company's name from a Library of Congress record in which a black informant referred to a field holler as an "arhoolie." While traveling in Texas, he made a field recording of country blues singer and guitarist Mance Lipscomb, which became Arhoolie's first album. The success of this initial release led Strachwitz to issue five other Lipscomb LPs. He abandoned teaching to concentrate full-time on the record company. Soon Arhoolie's catalog contained albums by several other Southern blues musicians, including Black Ace (B.K. Turner), Big Joe Williams, Lil Son Jackson, Bukka White, Fred McDowell, John Jackson and Clifton Chenier.

Generally Arhoolie's records are high quality, but there are occasional clinkers such as *The Hodges Brothers* (5001) and *Joseph Falcon and His Silver String Band* (5005). Of the material currently available on Arhoolie, some of the best efforts are found on Mance Lipscomb's early albums (1001, 1023, 1026, 1033), the Fred McDowell albums (1021, 1027, 1046, 1068), the two-volume *Roots of America's Music* (2001, 2002) and *Folksongs of the Louisiana Acadians* (5009).

Strachwitz reserved Arhoolie for contemporary recordings of blues, jazz and some ethnic material. On Old Timey he reissues vintage country and Cajun material; of the items currently available in this series, *The String Bands*, volumes 1 & 2 (100, 101) and *Ballads and Songs* (102) are superlative. A four-volume set of *Louisiana Cajun Music* (108-111), a three-record anthology of *Western Swing* (105, 116, 117), and a two-album reissue of *J.E. Mainer's Mountaineers* (106, 107) are well worth purchasing. On the Blues Classics label, Strachwitz has made the previously unavailable works of such important artists as Memphis Minnie and Blind Boy Fuller accessible again. Finally, Strachwitz is reissuing releases of the Folk-Lyric label which he bought in 1970 from Harry Oster.

Recently, Arhoolie has branched out to include films on ethnic music and musicians by movie maker Les Blank. The most recent documentary produced by this coalition is the critically acclaimed *Chulas Fronteras*, an examination of Mexican-American music in the Southwest, but some of their previous efforts deal with Southern music and musicians.

Among specialty record company owners, Strachwitz is considered an excellent businessman. He now has about 200 albums in print and continues to promote his company through *The Lightning Express*, an irregular publication which features articles by Strachwitz about the music he issues and reprints of articles about Arhoolie. Beginning in 1973, Strachwitz offered a subscription program whereby individuals could pay a small fee and receive every record produced by Arhoolie during the coming year with 12 albums guaranteed. This made it possible to get the Arhoolie releases at about $2 per record. Some of Strachwitz's success, though, has been purely accidental; for instance he acquired the publishing rights to "I Feel Like I'm Fixin' To Die Rag," just before it became valuable property when performed by the rock group Country Joe and the Fish in the film *Woodstock* and on the movie's soundtrack album.

Folk-Legacy

Beginning about the same time as Strachwitz's Arhoolie and also in response to the ongoing folk music "revival" was Folk-Legacy. Founded in 1961 by Lee Haggerty and Sandy and Caroline Paton, this company was initially headquartered in Huntington, Vermont, but later moved to Sharon, Connecticut. In its early years, Folk-Legacy was heavily slanted towards traditional performers. Among its first offerings were very worthwhile efforts by the North Carolina musician Frank Profitt (1), the Tennessee ballad singer

Joseph Trivett (2), the Kentucky ballad singer Edna Ritchie (3), two volumes of music and song from the Beech Mountain, North Carolina, area (22, 23), and individual LPs by the late Virginia musician Hobart Smith (17) and the Lenoir City, Tennessee, singer Hank Ferguson (13). The latter is a very uneven record but, to my knowledge, the only one that explores the white prison tradition. Apparently, traditional singers did not sell enough for Haggerty and the Patons, so they gradually concentrated on the "folky" audience: their last 25 albums are all by revivalists. Nevertheless, the earlier records are still available since Folk-Legacy, like many small labels, keeps its entire catalog in print.

Melodeon, Piedmont, Biograph

Folk music authority Richard Spottswood was associated with Melodeon and Piedmont, two labels that arose in the mid-1960s. The former company issued 11 titles which ranged in variety from blues and jazz to old time and Cajun. Of particular interest are *The Stanley Brothers* (7322), which is a reissue of their Rich-R-Tone recordings, *Blind Willie McTell* (7323), a reissue of his 1940 Library of Congress tapes, and *Party Blues* (7324), which features some classic bawdy blues by various musicians including Blind Blake and Mississippi John Hurt. The company's reissues are generally more worthwhile than its new recordings, of which the most lackluster is *The Poplin Family* (7331). Melodeon, a subsidiary of Biograph Records, has had no new releases for several years. Piedmont has also been inactive lately after releasing six albums, including three by Mississippi John Hurt (1068, 13157, 13161) and one by the Memphis bluesman turned gospel singer, Robert Wilkins (13162). These four are the only Piedmont titles currently available, but they are all worthwhile.

Melodeon's parent company, Biograph, is headed by Arnold Caplin and is located in Chatham, New York. The company's primary orientation is blues and jazz, but some country music has appeared on their "6000" series and in the "8000" series of their subsidiary, Historical. Biograph's most interesting project is their effort to reissue the entire recorded output of the legendary east coast bluesman, Blind Blake. To date, five albums have appeared (12003, 12023, 12031, 12037, 12050). Also worthy of attention are the three volumes of Ma Rainey reissues (12001, 12011, 12032), a reissue of 1949 recordings by Blind Willie McTell and Memphis Minnie (12035) and some classic sides by the Original Bog Trotters (6003). Historical offers a five-volume set of *Rare Blues* from the 1920s and '30s; these recordings are indeed rare items – some good, some bad, but, almost without exception, interesting. Perhaps the most successful of Historical's offerings is a Richard Spottswood compilation, *Great Jug Bands* (36), featuring classics by the Memphis Jug Band, Jed Davenport and His Beale Street Jug Band, and others. At least two of the Historical country albums deserve mention: a sampler – *Traditional Country Classics* (8003) and *Uncle Dave Macon* (8006).

County

Among the most successful of the record companies issuing Southern folk music is County Records. The label was founded in 1964 by Dave Freeman, a former Columbia University student and railway mail clerk who started the business in his native New York City and has since moved to Floyd, Virginia. Freeman built up his business via a several-times-a-year newsletter which lists, reviews and evaluates all books and records available from County Sales, his own sales outlet. Of the three series produced by County, both the "400" and "500" are devoted to reissues while the "700" series is reserved for contemporary recordings of old time and bluegrass. Some of the outstanding albums are *The Stripling Brothers* (401), *The Blue Ridge Hallballers* (407), *The Delmore Brothers* (402), *Uncle Dave Macon* (521), four volumes of Charlie Poole and the North Carolina Ramblers (505, 509, 516, 540), two volumes of Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers (506, 526), a two-volume anthology of Mississippi fiddle music (528, 529), *Texas Fiddle Favorites* (707), *Benny Thomasson: Country Fiddling From the Big State* (724), anthologies of clawhammer banjo (701,717), and the various clawhammer banjo-old-time fiddle albums of Tommy Jarrell and Fred Cockerham (713, 723, 741, 756). Most of these albums also contain extensive notes.

Recently, Freeman has come up with a new sales scheme: the open house. These periodic weekend parties feature a bluegrass or old-time band and several record bargains, and attract hundreds of people from distant states, college folkies as well as country people. Significantly, the latter group represents the majority of County's customers these days.

Rounder

One of the major specialty record companies has been in business less than 10 years, and is operated not by

one person but by many. Rounder Records came into existence when several Massachusetts college students decided to form a communal enterprise. As the commune grew, it became a company. Despite periodic rumors of a move, the group is still stationed in Somerville, Massachusetts. The rapidity with which albums appear (their catalog now has over 100 titles) has contributed to some flawed efforts. Rounder records are usually technically excellent, but sometimes show haste in production and too little attention to repertoire. Thus, what might have been a great Clark Kessinger LP (0004) is merely a mediocre effort which sounds as if Kessinger's first cuts and tune choices were the ones used in the final pressing. Still, the Rounder Collective has produced some excellent material. Reissues include the multi-volume *Early Days of Bluegrass* (five have appeared in this writing, 1013, 1014, 1017, 1018, 1019), *Frank Hutchison* (1007), *Burnett and Rutherford* (1004), and *Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers* (1005). Of their contemporary recordings, *Ted Lundy and the Southern Mountain Boys* (0020) and Connie and Babe's *Backwoods Bluegrass* (0043) stand out. Also important are *Hazel and Alice* (0027, 0054). While their early releases tended to emphasize traditional music, more recently Rounder has expanded to include large scale studio productions of modern Southern folk music such as *J.D. Crowe and the New South* (044) and several by Norman Blake.

In its musical variety, Rounder's catalog is as wide ranging as Arhoolie's; the Collective has issued LPs of old-time, blues, bluegrass, newgrass, women's music, international, and contemporary folk. Most of their albums include booklets and extensive liner notes, and of all the small labels, Rounder has the most attractive jacket designs.

Rural Rhythm, Kanawha, Puritan

One of the most flamboyant personalities in the specialty record field is Uncle Jim O'Neal who owns Rural Rhythm, a company that offers everything from J.E. Mainer to Spike Jones. His advertising brochures say, "There is only one Uncle Jim O'Neal – often imitated, but never equalled," and go on to proclaim, "Uncle Jim O'Neal don't know any better so he keeps on producing old-time country music on records."

Over the years, O'Neal has produced albums by many old-time Southern musicians, including 20 LPs by J.E. Mainer, who for several years was the company's biggest seller. The earliest of these Mainer records are pretty good, but the quality diminishes with the most recent ones. In fact, it is stretching a point to call some of the later albums Mainer's because on some of them he appears as the lead musician on only half of the cuts. As with most O'Neal productions, the Mainer records suffer from having too much on the disc (sometimes as many as 24 songs), making the albums little more than bits and pieces. Some other Rural Rhythm titles of interest are a two-volume set by Curly Fox (251, 252) and six albums by Raymond Fairchild (146, 159, 170, 245, 254, 256), whom O'Neal calls the world's greatest banjo picker. That claim may be disputed, but most would agree that Fairchild's unorthodox fingerpicking style is unique.

One of the more sporadic small labels is Kanawha Records, which was started by Ken Davidson in West Virginia in 1964, moved to Florida, then to Ohio. Over the years, the company went from periods of great activity to inactivity and was rumored on more than one occasion to be out of business – only to bounce back with new releases. With the recent purchase of the Kanawha catalog by County, the label seems finally at an end, although County will be reissuing some of its better albums. Kanawha specialized in old-time and bluegrass, and the quality of its offerings ranged from good to awful, with the latter dominant in its final releases. Nevertheless, several Kanawha albums are significant. Their first LP, *Old Time Tunes From Clay County, West Virginia*, featured the late Jenes Cottrell and French Carpenter and was highly influential among the folk revival crowd of the 1960s. Shortly after the Cottrell-Carpenter release, Kanawha also scored with an LP that marked the return to recording by the late fiddler Clark Kessinger who had performed nearly 40 years earlier with his uncle, Luches Kessinger. The Cotrell-Carpenter album has just been reissued, but the Kessinger production is now available as County 733, *The Legend of Clark Kessinger*. Also important for its influence on the music revival was Kanawha's presentation of the Hollow Rock String Band.

Another label that has had its ups and downs is Puritan, established in Evanston, Illinois, by former University of Illinois student Dave Samuelson. Although the label specializes in bluegrass records, its most interesting releases have been old-time music and country blues. One of the company's first titles was an album by Jimmie Rodgers' one time backup band, the Tenneva Ramblers (3001); and its *Great Original Recordings of Harmonica Frank* (3003) contains all

the Sun issues by the great white blues guitarist, harmonica player and singer, Frank Floyd. Samuelson once told me that his goal was to issue records with an iconoclastic quality; in keeping with this desire he released on his Arbor subsidiary all of the recordings Charlie Poole made with the Highlanders (201). Listeners who know Poole from the material available on County and Historical are indeed in for a shock when they hear these very pop-oriented sides.

Old Homestead, Trix

In recent years, one of the most prolific labels specializing in old time and bluegrass is Old Homestead, operated out of owner John Morris' home in Brighton, Michigan. Among the 100 or so releases of the label, there are a few which are interesting. For anyone who loves great country singing, the reissue of *Molly O'Day and the Cumberland Mountain Folks* (101) is a must. The same claim can be made for *Wade Mainer Sacred Songs Reissue* (90001) and *The Bailes Brothers* (103). Southern music fans will also welcome *The Original Carter Family* (90045) from 1936 radio transcriptions, as well as *The Callahan Brothers* (90031), and the recent recording of Lulu Belle and Scotty, *Have I Told You Lately That I Love You* (90037). Other items of interest include several albums by Wade Mainer (90002, 90014, 90016), outstanding bluegrass on Charlie Moore's *The Fiddler* (90052), and Vern and Ray's *Sounds of the Ozarks* (10001). Old Homestead has been frequently criticized for its remastering and for the poor sound quality of many of its reissues, but this criticism has subsided in the past two years.

Most companies issuing recordings of Southern folk music lean heavily, and sometimes exclusively, on reissues. This is probably a holdover from the beginnings of folk music record companies when the artists who had recorded in the 1920s and 1930s were considered to be the really good folk musicians and the ones most worth hearing. Of those companies which do new recordings, most are devoted to contemporary productions by still living artists of the 1920s and 1930s. This is not the case with Trix Records, a relatively recent entry into the specialty record field. A blues label operated by Pete Lowry and headquartered in New Paltz, New York, Trix has featured both Northern and Southern musicians, but its most successful efforts have been with two South Carolina performers. *Medicine Show Man* (3302) documents some of the repertoire of medicine show harp player Peg Leg Sam (Arthur Jackson) while *Union County Flash* (3304) reveals the supreme artistry of the late Henry "Rufe" Johnson. The Peg Leg Sam album is of particular importance because far too little of the medicine show repertoire is now available, and it is an excellent companion to his recording on Blue Labor titled *Going Train Blues* (105) and a double album *The Last Medicine Show* (507/508) on Flyright, an English label. The Flyright release is an added bonus because it is a large recorded selection from an actual medicine show.

Yazoo

Among other minor labels, two are blues-oriented while two specialize in Cajun material. Of the blues companies, the oldest is Yazoo, formed in 1967 by Nick Perls and Bernard Klatzko. It was originally called Belzona, but Perls and Klatzko changed it to the present name to avoid confusion with the English label, Beltona. They started Yazoo to put out reissues of country blues records because they felt that most such reissues available at the time were poor. After a couple of years, Klatzko left and eventually formed his own company, Herwin. In 1970, Perls started Blue Goose as a subsidiary to Yazoo for contemporary recordings. Initially this label was restricted to blues, but Perls has now expanded it to include other types of music. Nevertheless, two of the most successful Blue Goose releases are country blues efforts; both *Sam Chatmon* (2006) and Tom Shaw's *Blind Lemon's Buddy* (2008) are by former Southerners now living in California who have retained their Southern musical style. Perls has a higher percentage of successes on Yazoo. Some of the most worthwhile albums are *Mississippi Blues* (1001), *Ten Years in Memphis* (1002), and *Frank Stokes' Dream* (1008) which, despite the title, is not devoted exclusively to the work of Stokes; also *East Coast Blues* (1013), *Charlie Patton* (1020 a double album), *Mr. Charlie's Blues* (1024), an album featuring the work of white artists, *String Ragtime* (1045), and *Furry Lewis* (1050), which contains the classic recordings of this Memphis bluesman. Yazoo has often been criticized for providing liner notes that are little more than lists of chord changes, but the music on these records is so good that it should not be missed.

Herwin

When Bernard Klatzko left Yazoo in 1969, he apparently had no intention of founding another record company, but he had been in the

specialty field too many years to remain out of it for long. In 1960 he had helped his friend and fellow record collector, Pete Whelan, with the Origin Jazz Library which, despite its name, was a blues company. Therefore, it was hardly surprising that after some personal financial changes in 1970, he founded Herwin Records. Klatzko's new company produces jazz, blues, religious, and ragtime reissues; its best seller to date has been *They All Played the Maple Leaf Rag* (402), which contains more than a dozen versions of the famous Scott Joplin composition. Some of the most important Herwin productions are *Henry Thomas* (209), the complete recordings of the Texas Songster; *Sic 'Em Dogs On Me* (201), which features some classic sides by various bluesmen; *Arizona Dranes* (210), devoted to the Texas ragtime gospel pianist and singer; and three volumes of early recordings of black gospel (203, 206, 207). Like most collector-owned companies, Herwin often reissues material because of its scarcity in the rare record market rather than its quality. *Fillin' In Blues* (205) with a number of non-essential tracks, is a perfect example of such a policy. This drawback is more than made up for by the fact that most albums have 14 to 18 cuts, far above the norm these days, and just about every release has excellent notes.

Swallow, La Louisianne

Back in the late 1950s, one of the premier Cajun record companies was established in Ville Platte, Louisiana, by Floyd Soileau, who spelled his name phonetically to get the label's name – Swallow. Among the titles currently in this catalog are selections by the zydeco king, Clifton Chenier (1002), modern Cajun sounds by Vin Bruce (6002, 6006, 6015, 6016) and Belton Richard (6010, 6013, 6021), and traditional accordion stylings by Nathan Abshire (6014, 6023). Swallow's most important albums, however, are *The Balfa Brothers Play Traditional Cajun Music* (6011), *The Balfa Brothers* (6019) and a Cajun sampler, *J'etais au Bal* (6020), which has an accompanying booklet containing extensive notes on and numerous pictures of the performers. Two releases that should be avoided are the Ed and Bee Deshotels offerings (6017, 6025), which are about the closest thing to a Cajun Burl Ives sound available.

Swallow's chief competitor for the Cajun market is Carol Rachou's La Louisianne label which concentrates on country-western-styled Cajun music, in contrast to Swallow which specializes in traditional Cajun. Among the La Louisianne artists are Doc Guidry, Ambrose Thibodeaux, Rufus Thibodeaux, Merlin Fontenot, and Vin Bruce. To date its most interesting productions are *French Music of South Louisiana* (103), *A Tribute to the Late Great Lawrence Walker* (126), *Cajun Country French Classics* (130), *Fiddlin' Cajun: Merlin Fontenot* (142), and *Jimmy C. Newman Lache Pas La Patate* (140). Like its rival Swallow, La Louisianne has some records that are downright awful; the prime example is *The Dusenberry Family* (136) which is a truly insipid 1950s "folky" approach to the folk music of French Louisiana. The liner notes on many La Louisianne albums also are far from satisfactory.

Testament, Starday, Adelphi, Rebel

Four other companies deserve consideration, although two have been inactive in recent years and the other two have done little with Southern music. Testament, a blues label founded in the mid-1960s by Pete Welding, is one of the inactive companies. In its catalog are offerings by Fred McDowell (2208, 2219), Johnny Shines (2212, 2217, 2221), and Jack Owens (2222) as well as a fine *Babies in the Mill* (3301) LP featuring the late Dorsey Dixon. All of these are mixed in with a large number of albums of Chicago blues. Most of the Testament productions are tasteful if not always exciting, but at least one is an embarassment. *The Legendary Peg Leg Howell* (2204) presents the Georgia bluesman late in life, demonstrating the faded abilities of an elderly musician. The album should never have been released because it only distorts Howell's reputation.

It is really incorrect to say that Starday has been inactive since, in recent years, the company has been busily going in and out of business. In fact the company just re-emerged for what must be the umpteenth time in the past 10 years, this time under Gusto Productions. Started in Texas in 1952, Starday became known as a bluegrass label during the years of the folk revival, but the sound of the cash register beckoned and the company switched to a number of third- and fourth-rate country and western singers. Then, after changing hands it returned to more traditional country material and musicians such as Sam and Kirk McGee, the Stanley Brothers, Grandpa Jones, Bashful Brother Oswald, and Lulu Belle & Scotty. The acquisition of the old King catalog enabled Starday to release recordings of such groups as the Delmore Brothers and Reno and Smiley. Many of Starday's albums have been reissued on Pine Mountain Records, a company operated in Barbourville, Kentucky,

by A.L. Phipps. In fact, even while Starday was still in business its best material was available only on Pine Mountain. Some of the outstanding Pine Mountain albums include *Blue Sky Boys "Together Again"* (257), *Blue Sky Boys "Precious Moments"* (269), *Molly O'Day* (267), and *Blue Sky Boys "Treasured Gems"* (305).

A prolific specialty record label is Adelphi, operated by Gene Rosenthal, one of the most controversial people in the business. Like many other owners of folk music record companies, Rosenthal was a graduate of the folk revival. His company, Adelphi, has not been discussed earlier because very few of its releases are of Southern folk music. Much of their output is oriented towards the Washington, DC, "folky" market; still, there are some interesting Adelphi releases. Perhaps foremost is a recent recording of Furry Lewis and Bukka White with one cut by Gus Cannon (1007). Fans of the late Gary Davis will be interested in his *O Glory* (1008) and admirers of Harmonica Frank will want his Adelphi LP (1023), although neither can be said to represent the best efforts of these artists.

Asbury, West Virginia is the home of Rebel, a company specializing in a broad range of bluegrass covering the the spectrum from arch-traditionalists, such as the Stanley Brothers and Roy McMillan, to the contemporary Seldom Scene and Country Gentlemen. Rebel's productions usually have very poor liner notes and annotation; their often garish album covers have a strong grassroots appeal. Since its birth in the early 1970s in Chicago, Bruce Kaplan's Flying Fish label became one of the most important for revival, newgrass and swing groups. Among their offerings are works by the Newgrass Revival, Hickory Wind, Country Cooking and John Hartford. Recommended are *Benny Martin's Tennessee Jubilee* (012), and two LPs by the best revival-oldtime group, the Red Clay Ramblers, who appear on *Stolen Love* (009) and *Twisted Laurel* (030).

Advent Muskadine, Mamlish

There are several specialty labels with only a few releases that should be briefly mentioned. At least five other companies are currently active which produce LPs of Southern blues. Advent-Muskadine of California is headed by Frank Scott. Advent is devoted to new recordings while Muskadine is a reissue label. One of Advent's most important releases is *Sorrow Come Pass Me Around* (2805), which is not a blues album but rather a collection of recordings of black religious music in Mississippi gathered by that indefatigable collector, David Evans. Another worthy Advent LP is Thomas Shaw's *Born in Texas* (2801), which features the ex-Southerner who has called himself "Blind Lemon's Buddy" because he purportedly worked with Blind Lemon Jefferson at one time. Muskadine has two reissues of outstanding blues on its *Joe Hill Louis "One Man Band"* (101) and *Down South Blues* (102). The former is devoted to the late Memphis musician while the latter highlights a number of artists.

Among the other blues companies, only Mamlish is a reissue label. It was started in 1970 by record collector Don Kent and reflects his fascination with blues lyrics. Important here are *Mississippi Bottom Blues* (3802), a sampler of several musicians including Freddy Spruell, one of the first country bluesmen on records; *Low Down Memphis Barrelhouse Blues* (3803), which is another album devoted to various artists; *The Mississippi Sheiks* (3804) and *Barbecue Bob "Chocolate to the Bone"* (3808), which features the Georgia country-blues artist. Mamlish albums have the added value and appeal of excellent liner notes.

Spivey, Ahura Mazda

Neither of the other two blues labels can be called active. Spivey was operated by the recently deceased blues singer Victoria Spivey. Most of her company's output was of Northern urban material, but at least one Spivey album is a very good example of Southern blues. This is *Mississippi Delta Blues of Mr. Shortstuff* (1005) which features Big Joe Williams and one of his cousins. The other blues label, New Orleans' Ahura Mazda, is concerned with Louisiana folk music and has to date issued four records of which three qualify for discussion here. Their initial release, *Scott Dunbar "Blues From Lake Mary"* (01), is the first full album by the Louisiana singer originally recorded by Bill Ferris, assistant professor of Afro-American studies at Yale. Actually it is misleading to think of Dunbar solely as a blues singer, and this record shows that he is firmly in the songster tradition which is generally thought to predate the blues. The other two pertinent Ahura Mazda recordings are the oft-recorded *Robert Pete Williams* (2002) and the infrequently recorded *Harmonica Williams* (2003).

Voyager, Vetco

Two other companies deserve mention in this discussion-survey. Both have well over a dozen releases but are primarily concerned with other regions than the South. Voyager, a company operated by Phil and Vivian Williams

and located in Seattle, Washington has a reissue of the *"Corn Licker Still In Georgia"* (303), a series made by Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers in the late 1920s and early 1930s. This album complements several other Tanner reissues available on other labels such as County and Rounder. Another Voyager release, *Comin' Round The Mountain* (302), documents the music of several Southerners who migrated to the west coast. Lou Ukelson's Vetco label is located in Cincinnati. Important are Vetco's *Songs of the Railroad* (103) which features the Roan County Ramblers and Vernon Dalhart among others, *Old Time Fiddlers*, Vols. 1 and 2 (104, 106) and *Uncle Dave Macon*, Vol. 2 (105).

Library of Congress

Of the noncommercial and institutional sources of recorded folk music, one in particular is worthy of note. The Music Division of the Library of Congress has produced, under a series of editors, a series of albums of American traditional music selected from the recordings deposited in the Archive of Folk Song. The earliest issues in the series were drawn from the disc recordings John and Alan Lomax made in the 1930s during their exploratory field collecting projects. The quality is not up to that of commercial discs recorded at the same time, but the roughness is compensated for by some excellent and rare recordings, many of which would not have been released, or even recorded, by commercial outlets. Recommended particularly are *Anglo-American Ballads* (L 1), *Afro-American Spirituals, Work Songs, and Ballads* (L 3), and *Negro Religious Songs and Services* (L 10). There are several later releases, all under the same title, *Anglo-American Songs and Ballads* (L 12, 14, 20 and 21), that contain a wide variety of Southern performances, recorded by various field collectors.

By far the best entry in the series, and also the most recent, is a two-record set, *The Hammons Family: A Study of a West Virginia Family's Traditions* (L 65-66), edited by Carl Fleishhauer and Alan Jabbour. The material is good and well recorded, and the notes are excellent; but what makes the set especially valuable is the variety of performances – vocal, instrumental, and narrative – it brings together from one cultural setting. This is the kind of thorough context-sensitive documentation that we need more of.

A recent project of the Music Division has been a special Bicentennial series of American traditional music. Each volume in the projected 15-volume series is based on a loosely-defined subject area, and a wide variety of recordings, old and new are brought together under that general heading. For example, Volume Three, *Dance Music: Breakdowns and Waltzes* (LBC 3), contains recordings by string bands from the Southern mountains and Texas, Alabama blues, Cajun music, as well as Czech-American and Swedish-American dance music. Some listeners will no doubt question some of the choices on these collections, but they are interesting productions.

European Companies

This survey would be incomplete without some mention of European companies issuing Southern folk music: Big Bear, Flyright, Leader, String and Topic. The first two are blues companies while the others have some old-time music in their catalogs. Big Bear's most interesting title is *Cousin Joe "Gospel Wailing, Jazz"* (3), one of the few albums currently available of the New Orleans piano master. Flyright, also in England, is operated in part by Bruce Bastin, who gathered much of his material while a student in the folklore program at the University of North Carolina. Flyright has a very extensive catalog of country blues, urban blues, and rhythm and blues. Among the artists recorded are Blind Boy Fuller, Brownie McGhee, Memphis Minnie, Guitar Shorty and Lum Guffin. *The Last Medicine Show* (507/508) has been mentioned previously. Others to include are *Carolina Blues: Blind Boy Fuller and Brownie McGhee* (105), two LPs of *Memphis Minnie* (108, 109), *Blind Boy Fuller, On Down*, Vol. 1 (110),

DISTRIBUTORS OF SOUTHERN FOLK RECORDS

County Sales, Box 191, Floyd, Virginia 24091.
Roundup Records, Box 474, Somerville, Mass. 02144
Southern Record Sales, 42 North Lake Avenue, Pasadena, Calif. 91101

RECORD COMPANIES PRODUCING SOUTHERN FOLK MUSIC

Adelphi Records, Box 288, Silver Springs, Md. 20907
Advent Productions, Box 625, Manhattan Beach, Calif. 90266
Ahura Mazda Records, Box 15582, New Orleans, La. 70115
Arhoolie Records, Box 9195, Berkeley, Calif. 94719
Biograph Records, 16 River Street, Chatham, NY 12037
County Records, Box 191, Floyd, Va. 24091
Delmark Records, 4243 North Lincoln Street, Chicago, Ill. 60618
Flying Fish Records, 3320 North Halsted, Chicago, Ill. 60657
Folk Legacy Records, Sharon Mountain Road, Sharon, Conn. 06069
Folkways Records, 43 West 61st Street, NY, NY 10023
Herwin Records, 45 First Street, Glen Cove, NY 11542
Kanawha Records, 2563 Bushwich Drive, Dayton, Ohio 45439
Leader & Trailer Records, 209 Rochdale Rd., Yorks, Greetland, Halifax, England
Library of Congress, Music Div., Recorded Sound Sec., Washington, DC 20540
Mamlish Records, Cathedral Station, Box 417, New York, NY 10025
Old Homestead Records, Box 100, Brighton, Mich. 48116
Puritan Records, Box 946, Evanston, Ill. 60204
Rebel Recording Co., Box 246, Mt. Rainer, Md. 20822
Rounder Records, 65 Park Street, Somerville, Mass. 02143
Rural Rhythm Records, Box A, Arcadia, Calif. 91006
Spivey Records, 65 Grand Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11205
String Records, 33 Brunswick Gardens, London W84AW, England
Testament Records, c/o Pete Welding, 507 Palo Verde, Pasadena, Calif. 91107
Trix Records, Box 750, New Paltz, NY 12561
Topic Records, 27 Nassington Road, London NW32TX, England
Vetco Records, 5825 Vine Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45216
Voyager Records, 424 35th Avenue, Seattle, Washington 98122
Yazoo Records, 245 Waverly Place, NY, NY 10014

Orange County Special (506), which presents various bluesmen from around Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and five volumes of field recordings including *Mississippi River Blues* (230) from Natchez, *Fort Valley Blues* (250) from Georgia, *Out In The Cold Again* (257) from Florida, *Two White Horses Standin' In Line* (264) from Texas, and *"Jack O' Diamonds"* (265), also from Texas.

Leader focuses primarily on British folk music, but among its numerous titles are *North Carolina Boys* (4040) featuring Grey Craig and Tex Isley, *Lonnie Austin and Norman Woodlieff* (4045), which showcases two former members of Charlie Poole's North Carolina Ramblers, and *Virginia Reel* (2053), which features the Camp Creek Boys from southwestern Virginia.

Topic is the other major producer of English folk music albums: and it also has quite a few more American releases than Leader, but a great many of these are of revival, not traditional, performers. There are, however, two Topic LPs to note, both reissues of titles that first appeared on an American label, Folk-Legacy: *North Carolina Songs and Ballads* (12T162) with the late North Carolina singer and musician Frank Proffitt, and *A Girl Of Constant Sorrow* (12T171) which highlights the Kentucky singer Sarah Ogan Gunning who now lives in Michigan.

String Records, owned and operated by Tony Russell, who also is the editor of the fine magazine *Old Time Music*, has an excellent reissue of some outstanding western swing bands titled *Beer Parlor Jive, 1935-1941* (801). Among the groups featured are Milton Brown and his Musical Brownies, Bill Boyd's Cowboy Ramblers, Cliff Bruner's Texas Wanderers, the Tune Wranglers, and Jimmie Revard's Oklahoma Playboys. This album shows great care in the selection of titles and great erudition in the very good liner notes. It may in fact be the best annotated Western swing album currently available.

In this brief survey, I have attempted to list only those companies with Southern titles currently available, but the rapidity with which small labels go in and out of business makes that extremely difficult to do. Nevertheless, the bulk of the material listed and discussed here is and will remain available for some time. □

Centers, Schools, Libraries and Archives

Center For Southern Folklore
by William Ferris and Judy Peiser

You live and learn,
Then you die and forget it all.
Ray Lum
1891-1976

Ray Lum, Mississippi mule trader and storyteller, died in December, 1976, but his colorful stories and philosophy will not be forgotten. For six years before his death, the Center for Southern Folklore followed Mr. Lum as he auctioned mules and related his earlier trades. Lum vividly recalled an era when "men loved horses," and today his life is carefully preserved through a film, record, and book produced by the Center for Southern Folklore.

As the South moves from its rural economy, folk traditions like those of Ray Lum are quickly forgotten. Southern storytellers, musicians, and craftspeople are an "endangered" part of our culture, and unless we preserve their history, America will soon be cut off from an important part of its birthright. The work of the Center for Southern Folklore is a promise to Mr. Lum and others that folk culture will endure and not be forgotten.

Founded in 1972 as a non-profit corporation to document the rapidly disappearing folk traditions in the South and to produce films, records, and books, the Center for Southern Folklore is directed by William Ferris, Associate Professor of American and Afro-American Studies at Yale University, and Judy Peiser, a documentary filmmaker with an M.A. in Film and Broadcasting.

Begun with only one staff member, the Center now has eight full-time and five part-time employees, and a well-equipped sound studio, darkroom and folklore archive. Subjects such as the blues, storytelling, folk religion and crafts are presented in carefully developed multi-media packages which include illustrated essays and transcripts to accompany documentary films, slide-tape programs, long-playing records and audiotapes. Over 2 million viewers have seen the Center's award-winning films, which have been shown in 700 libraries, museums, and classrooms throughout the United States and Canada and have been featured on the CBS Evening News, NBC Today Show, and in *The New York Times*.

The Center maintains a close relationship with the communities and people which it records. Photographs and film rushes are screened by the folk artists, and their reactions and comments are noted in the final editing. The completed film is premiered in their community and the artist receives a print of the film.

A major folklore archive has been assembled from field research and donations from private collections. Thirty thousand photographs and color slides, 1,000 hours of taped recordings, 200,000 feet of film and numerous pieces of folk art and crafts form the basis of the archive. The Center has developed a multi-media indexing system to organize and retrieve all of these materials. In August, 1976, the Center published a 350-page book that contains 170 photographs and over 1800 titles which are indexed and annotated.

Another Center publication is a series which features interviews and photographs from the Center Archives. The first issue, *Images of the South*, contains visits with Walker Evans and Eudora Welty in which they reflect on writing, photography, and the influence of folk materials in their work. Unpublished photographs by both artists are included in this issue. The second issue, *Folk Art and Crafts: The Deep South*, focuses on eleven folk artists and craftspeople as they discuss their work and its role in their community. Copies of the second issue will accompany an exhibit the Center developed with the Smithsonian Institution. Entitled "Folk Art and Crafts: The Deep South," the exhibit will travel throughout the US for three years beginning in the fall of 1977.

For a complete list of materials available from the Center please write: Center For Southern Folklore, Box 4081, Memphis, Tennessee 38104.

Foxfire

by Eliot Wigginton

It is already a reasonably well-known fact that *Foxfire* has something to do with Southern Appalachian folklore/folklife. The main reason for this is, of course, the visibility of a series of books that are compilations of articles that high school students in a 240-pupil Appalachian high school have been writing for the last 11 years for their magazine, *Foxfire*.

What is not so generally known is that the main reason for the existence of the project that produces these magazines is not primarily the narrow collection and documentation of a body of folklore and folk custom, but rather the use of this as a vehicle for making a cluster of desirable things happen in the lives of the students involved. Students who collect material for the magazine, for example, because there is an audience awaiting their work, have the motivational reason necessary to get them to begin to master language arts skills for the first time in their lives. Because in the process of putting together their articles, they must take and print every photograph, conduct every interview, transcribe every tape, organize every bit of material gathered, and then design and lay out the final magazine piece (to say nothing of running the business affairs of the magazine themselves), they find they have far more ability and competence than they have perhaps been led to believe by previous school experiences.

In addition, because of their role in contributing to the organization, students become *important*. Their efforts *matter*. They are needed; and this is a conviction that is absolutely vital for all kids to have if they are to believe that they, as adults, *can* matter and *can* make a difference.

And because during the course of producing articles, they must by necessity collect information firsthand in their own community rather than from already published materials, they begin to be aware of the fact that there's more to this notion of roots and community and home than they had previously expected. Because students operate within a relatively confined circle of adults and peers, I have never had one fail to come into the classroom after a series of interviews exclaiming, "I never knew we had people like *that* around here!" Or, "I never imagined there was anyone around here who still knew how to do that!" (Or, "I never even knew they used to *do* that!")

What is also not generally known about *Foxfire*, given the selective contents of the books themselves, is that the research the students do is not exclusively confined to the past. In fact, students sometimes become, through the vehicle of folklore, so concerned about their environment and their community that they begin to do lengthy publishable research into such pressing issues as extensive second-home development in their area, clearcutting on National Forest land, and the effects of recreation and tourism on the quality of life.

Center staff recording and filming Ray Lum, mule trader and storyteller.

Also concealed from the casual reader of the *Foxfire* books is the fact that the royalties derived from the sale of these books (all of which go into the non-profit, tax-exempt Foxfire Fund, Inc.) have allowed the expansion of this idea of folklife and community as vehicle into many other areas of the high school curriculum besides language arts. Additional staff members, paid by *Foxfire* (some of whom were once *Foxfire* editors who went on to college and then returned to work with us) have been hired to create new courses within the high school that are a part of other departments within the school.

A new environmental education course, for example, which has students studying their own physical environment firsthand as well as such traditional practices as planting by the signs, is now part of the biology department. A new Appalachian studies course is linked to sociology. A video course in which students film, edit and produce shows of community interest that are broadcast weekly over the local cable TV network is hooked up with the media sciences. The production of major diagrams for the magazine of such things as the workings of a mountain flintlock rifle or a fretless banjo are done as part of the drafting classes. There are many others, and in the future there will be even more, but in all the desire is the same: to bring areas of the high school curriculum to life and have them finally make some *sense* by using the surrounding community as the motivating vehicle, thereby creating an awareness of and a commitment to that community within the students involved.

What does this mean concretely for other educators? At about this point in every teacher workshop I do, I get questions like, "Fine, but how do we satisfy the back-to-basics administrators," and people begin to lose sight of the essential simplicity of what I'm talking about. Let me give you an illustration.

A ninth grade language arts instructor hits me with the "basics" argument. I say, "Look. When you talk

about basics, you're talking about a list of skills that you are mandated by the state to deliver to some kids. By the time your students leave your course, they are supposed to have mastered certain activities and concepts. What are they? Make a list and let's have a look at it together."

The list comes in and we look it over. "Now," I say, "let's imagine that for the teaching of most of these skills, you have no texts to fall back on. You and the students together have to dream up projects that are going to get those skills across in a way that they can be mastered. Now this may not work with all the skills you have listed, but we can find a number that it *will* work with."

We study it. One of the skills listed is the giving of accurate directions for doing something. I look at the teacher and say, "How do you usually handle this one, for example?"

The answer: "I usually assign a composition, recommended by our text, that has the students give a set of directions to a stranger that tell exactly how to get from the school to his home."

I say, "Fine. Let's forget the recommendations of the text and instead, have the students go home, talk to someone in the family, and come back with a set of exact directions for doing some traditional custom: catching and cooking a mud turtle, making lye soap, preserving pole beans for the winter, saving seed, making a rock sled, building a chimney – anything.

"And now let's go several steps further and assure the students that their directions are going to be published in some form so readers can try them out if they wish, and that they will also go into an archive so that they will be saved forever. And let's try to make cameras available to them, also, so that if they want to get a photographic record of the skill, they can do that also. Same with tape recorders and tape.

"*Now* what have we got in terms of that specific assignment making some real sense?"

That's essentially what happened in the creation of the *Foxfire* books. And if you want to meet some kids who know how to give exact directions, let me introduce you around.

Take another item on the list. Quotation marks, for example. And dialogue. How does one help a student create accurate-sounding dialogue, with quotation marks in place? Try having a student, instead of reading a couple of chapters in a grammar text and doing some exercises for homework, tape an interview and transcribe the tape. You get the tape and transcription for the archive, an article for publication, and another student keenly aware of dialogue and quotation marks. *And* dialect and expression ("Steep as a horse's face," is a figure of speech called a simile . . .) if you want to go that far.

And so forth. Nothing radical. Folklore and folklife and community as vehicle. It works, I know, with language arts. Having watched it and played with the formula for over 11 years, I have also become convinced that many other courses in the high school curriculum could follow suit.

The biology teacher who keeps his students in the classroom when there is a living, breathing environment 12 inches away through those windows (if there *are* windows in the classroom at all) is simply not doing his job. And when he ignores traditional uses of environmental materials (home remedies, plant dyes, insect control, soil enriching customs, various types of wood and what each is best suited for and how each was used within that culture), he is missing some of the most vivid, meaningful lessons available.

Similarly, the American history teacher who drags students through text explanations of the Depressions, WPA camps, labor unions, or the World Wars, and ignores the fact that the community surrounding the school is full of people *who were there*, is being almost criminally negligent. All the songs, the folklore, the experiences and the tales are left out, and what a loss.

So, the crucial principle guiding *Foxfire* is integrating community-based experiences into every part of a public high school's curriculum. Folklore is a vehicle for education. Inevitably, however, one realizes that dealing with the high school is not enough. The needs of students continue far beyond graduation. There is the problem of jobs, for example; a problem that is acute in rural areas like ours where parents hold most of the few jobs available. Our organization has been able to hire a number of people (we had 33 students and staff members on the payroll this summer), but not enough to come close to solving the problem. Most of the 200 seniors our own county's high school graduates each year are forced – often unwillingly – to move away to find work.

Where do they go? In most cases, to large cities. Dayton, Ohio, for example, is over one-third Southern Appalachian white. Atlanta is full of mountain people. One of the oldest and poorest neighborhoods in that city sprang up around the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill at the turn of the century. Named Cabbagetown, it is nearly 100 percent Southern Appalachian white. With the recent closing of the mill, jobs are almost non-existent. School dropout rates are extremely high among the neighborhood's children. So is juvenile delinquency. Go to Cabbagetown on any given weekday during school hours, as I have done, and you can't help but be struck by the fact that on every street there are school-age kids.

Three years ago, it became obvious that nothing could be more appropriate than for our group and a fine community organization there named Patch, Inc., to undertake some common projects. The idea of transplanted urban mountain families (many of whom have children who have never once been to the mountains!) and rural families cooperating on mutually beneficial efforts is one that still seems just consummately *right* somehow.

So staff members from both *Foxfire* and Patch began to get to know each other and to build friendships and explore some possibilities for cooperation. And we've tried a number of things together so far. Some of them have not worked out well, but many have. The most promising:

1. When we began to build an educational center here in Rabun County on our 110-acre piece of land, our original aim was to convert most of the 100-year-old log buildings we had purchased and were moving to the site into TV and recording studios, offices, and working spaces for students who wanted to carry on with major projects after school hours and in the summers.

As the center grew and took shape, a wonderful opportunity presented itself that we hadn't considered be-

Dave Pickett, folk toy maker, showing *Foxfire* editors how to build a toy chair.

fore: convert some of the buildings into staff housing and remodel the upstairs floor to provide separate accommodations for kids from places like Cabbagetown that might want to come up in small groups of two or three, accompanied by one of their own staff members, to work with us for short periods of time and become reacquainted with their cultural heritage. We prepared two buildings, and every time a group from Cabbagetown has come up so far, it has worked out beautifully. As the program develops, we hope to have some of our mountain students visiting there and staying with families to see firsthand what the urban mountain experience is sometimes like.

2. As a member of the State Arts Commission, I was able to get a small grant for Patch to help one of their staff members, Pam Durban, organize a group of young people to help her publish a combination cookbook/oral history of Cabbagetown as told by grandparents who had moved there when the mill began production. Published by Patch and printed photo-offset by an Atlanta firm, *Cabbagetown Families, Cabbagetown Food*, has now paid for itself completely and is earning money to finance another book.

The possibility for future cooperation is clear. Our kids in Rabun County could train Cabbagetown kids in collecting and publishing techniques, opening the way for a whole series of financially self-sufficient and salary-producing books. Pam also plans to use part of the income from the first book to purchase a small offset press that would be the core of a modest commercial business, employing some community people in the production of business cards, stationery and envelopes and brochures. We have already promised them our orders for such items in the future.

3. Joyce Brookshire, one of Patch's community directors, is one of the finest songwriters around anywhere. When I addressed the annual convention of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in Atlanta two years ago, I had Joyce and Pam come over and sing "Cabbagetown Ballad," one of Joyce's songs, as a part of the program (and as an illustration of the talent in all communities if teachers will simply get out there and find it and then make it a part of their classes). When the song was finished, all 2,000-plus members in attendance gave Joyce and Pam a standing ovation; and when I told them it was the first time they had appeared in public with one of Joyce's songs, they applauded all over again.

When we began our recording company this year, we worked out an agreement with Joyce to bring out her first album (and ours). None of her songs had been recorded before, though *Foxfire* magazine published the words and music to some of them to prepare our readers for the coming album. It was recorded at a local studio near here over a two-week period. Joyce gets half the profits, and *Foxfire* puts the other half toward other albums.

4. One of the most ambitious collaborations is slowly becoming a reality. For years, we have felt that we could create a new, job-producing industry in our county by offering a line of exact hardwood reproductions of some 20 different pieces of traditional Appalachian furniture. With the help of Roddy Moore at Ferrum College and John Rice Irwin at Irwin, Tennessee, we have moved toward the acquisition of our 20 "patterns." If the business develops as we hope it will, our employees here (most of whom will be high school graduates who have helped plan the project) would get the pieces finished *up to* the assembly stage. Actual assembly and finishing and marketing would take place in Atlanta, by Cabbagetown residents who also are jobless. Both Patch and *Foxfire* would share in the profits, reinvesting them in their own corporations.

Each group is free, of course, to develop its own related businesses that would be independent of the other. Patch is already developing an antique furniture refinishing division, and we are planning for complete assembly and marketing of a line of furniture in this part of the country so that our students can have the satisfaction of taking at least some of their pieces to completion.

I hope additional linkages will be developed, thus enriching both of our operations, as the above attempts become working parts of both of our groups.

The exciting thing for me above all this, however, above and beyond these specifics, is the fact that I know from experience that elements of folklore and folklife in the South can be used in creative ways – not just as ends in and of themselves to be examined and exclaimed over and preserved for posterity – but as means of revitalizing public high school education, creating jobs in jobless communities, and forging truly productive lines of communication and cooperation between organizations for the eventual enrichment of both. That's a long way beyond a collection of tapes in an archive.

For more information on Foxfire, write the Foxfire Fund, Rabun Gap, Georgia 30568.

Appalshop
by Marty Newell

About eight years ago, a few young people seeking to develop job alternatives in the coal fields of Appalachia established Appalshop, a non-profit filmmaking cooperative, to learn videotaping and moviemaking. Initiated as part of the Community Film Workshop Council, a joint project of the Office of Economic Opportunity and the American Film Institute project, Appalshop has evolved into a community arts and media workshop utilizing film, photography, writing, drama and music recording to document the life, culture and issues of the Appalachian region.

Community film workshops were originally established to prepare minorities for job placement in the television and film industry. No such jobs existed in Appalachia, however, and workshop graduates inevitably were forced to seek work outside the region, once they had concluded their training. Realizing this, early Appalshoppers were intent on putting their newly-acquired training to work at home. With an initial grant from CFWC, Bill Richardson, a Yale architecture graduate who had originally come to the mountain to design low-cost housing, set up the small storefront operation in Whitesburg, Kentucky, in September of 1969. Before the first month was over, Bill Adams, a projectionist at a local theater and part-time stock car driver, had shot "Mountain Motor Speedway," a portrait of local auto racing, and the first Appalshop film was in the can. Local high school students began coming around and started experimenting with video tape equipment, taping basketball games and community events. By January, 1970, Appalshop had completed "Woodrow Cornett: Letcher County Butcher," its first film product for distribution.

As these mountain young people filmed their surroundings they began discovering for themselves what living in the mountains meant. And they began to see the part they could play in keeping the Appalachian identity alive. Many wanted to document some of the disappearing customs and traditions of mountain life – the music, crafts, farms, coal mines and the affairs of everyday existence; cameras proved the perfect tools. By the summer of 1970, there were eight local young people working full time learning to use the equipment by actually shooting and editing films. The next Appalshop production was a contract film on Appalachian youth for the Appalachian Regional Commission, "Appalachian Genesis." In the fall of 1971, OEO funding ended and the shop was on its own.

In March, 1972, Appalshop received the first National Endowment for the Humanities grant for film training and production, and used the money to start the Appalachian Educational Media Project. The project's first film, "In The Good Old-Fashioned Way," was a film about the Old Regular Baptist Church, the spirit and faith of the "old regulars" and the impact of religion on their daily lives. Over the next three years, the AEMP produced a series of color films, exploring such aspects of mountain life as folk medicine, midwifery, cockfighting, moonshining, a one-room schoolhouse, music and crafts. The specific projects were chosen by the students themselves, who worked together on all phases of production. More and more contacts were made with folk around the mountains and the Appalshop received a great deal of local help despite the skepticism about filmmaking. "Folks were wary and did not like filmmaking, but once they learned who we were and who our kinship connections were, they became cooperative – not just cooperative, but outgoing in trying to help us do this stuff," recalls Herby Smith, an Appalshop worker. In the last few years Appalshop workers have produced a number of films on the coal industry and culture ("Stripmining and Appalachia," "The Buffalo Creek Flood" and "Nimrod Workman: To Fit My Own Category"), crafts and traditions ("Chairmaker"), and traditional music forms ("Sourwood Mountain Dulcimers" and "John Jacob Niles – Balladeer").

In the winter of 1973-74, the Appalshop folks began searching for other forms of expression. Jack Wright, a musician from Wise County, Virginia, was hired to coordinate "The Loft" project as a community cultural center to encourage participation by more people from the community. One of the most valuable artistic resources of the mountains is the music, including ballads, dance music and sacred music. Jack and other folk realized that it all deserved recognition and preservation. Funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Lilly Foundation helped develop a program for music recording and built and furnished a recording studio, June Appal Records. Once again, personal contact and lots of time are what made this operation work. Because many artists have had bad experiences with recording companies, we spend a lot of time with them about the whole process so they can participate in recording, producing and distributing their own albums. John McCutcheon, a young musician in Scott County, Virginia, has begun a project in the mountains to pull in many old-time musicians.

Roadside Theater is an outgrowth of the Appalachian Actors Workshop. Most of the early productions, like "Peter Pan" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream," were conventional stage drama and many of the actors became dissatisfied with such theater. Roadside has taken on the task of developing theater that made sense for that area and the Southern Appalachian region. Many of the young actors appreciated the theatrical heritage of the church services, music and storytelling unique to the region, and began drawing upon their own culture for material and inspiration. Roadside players began telling and performing the traditional tales they had learned while growing up, using the language and style common to mountain people. Says Jeff Kiser, one of the storytellers, "Being very aware of my culture and the mountain tradition of storytelling gives me a much, much brighter outlook for tomorrow. It would be a pretty big sin to let something as good as that die." The stories are such a common denominator among folks that both young and old have enjoyed them immensely.

In January, 1974, Susan Chestnut and other Appalshoppers began holding writing workshops, and in September the first year's writing and art appeared in the first issue of *Mountain Review Magazine*. It has developed into a quarterly journal to showcase poetry, prose, photography, art, reviews and general information about

the Appalachian region.

The still photography project (Mountain Photography Workshop) has held classes in several of the Artist-In-The-Schools programs and a show of some of the children's pictures will tour the state of Kentucky during 1977-78. Also, seven photographers from Kentucky and West Virginia are putting together a survey of the region which will tour the two states; a catalog of the show will be published by Guoman Press in spring, 1978.

The projects in Appalshop are many and varied, but it is more than just a lot of things under one roof. People work together with a sense of community; they make decisions together, do creative work and nitty-gritty work together. Everyone may not hold the same philosophies or political views, but everyone is committed to making Appalshop work.

Through Appalshop films, June Appal records, *Mountain Review Magazine,* Roadside Theater and Mountain Photo Workshop, we are reaching out to communities across the country, to people in and out of the mountains. Appalshop films are being used by hundreds of colleges, libraries, churches and community centers. A 90-minute television special, "The Appalshop Show," was aired nationally over PBS in January, 1977, and films have been used by many educational television stations and showcased in theaters around the country. Roadside has performed for thousands of people in community centers, schools, colleges and theaters.

As the work of Appalshop grows, people receive a new view of the Southern Appalachian Mountains to replace the stereotypes of mountain life and people. Old traditions are being recorded, and some new traditions of involvement and identity are being established.

For a list of records, films, magazine topics, etc., write us at Box 743, Whitesburg, Kentucky 41858.

Blue Ridge Institute of Ferrum College
by Roddy Moore

Ferrum College opened its doors in 1913 as a small institution designed to provide education for the people of the Virginia Blue Ridge. Ferrum's Blue Ridge Institute, dedicated to preserving the region's folk traditions, has helped turn the tables, and local people are now teachers as well as students. Organized in the early '70s, the Institute plays a major role in the ongoing effort to preserve the traditional culture of the Blue Ridge, and this year will coordinate the Smithsonian-sponsored Festival of American Folklife in Washington, DC, which features the folk music and crafts of Virginia.

The Institute exists because of the cooperative efforts of a number of groups. Ferrum College provides housing for the Institute offices and museum, land for the farm reconstruction projects, a core staff, and a basic operating budget. Funding for the Institute's projects comes primarily from a number of external sources, including the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, the Smithsonian Institution, the Virginia Landmarks Commission, and various other state agencies.

But the real key to the Blue Ridge Institute's success is solid local support. Everybody who participates has something to gain. Local donors of artifacts know their gifts will be well preserved and made available to the public, and will not be left to deteriorate in some dark closet or tool shed. Musicians and craftsmen gain exposure to a wider audience. Local job opportunities increase as members of the community are hired to move and reconstruct the log buildings for the farm museum, and to serve as consultants for a variety of projects. And local craftsmen are given the opportunity to preserve traditional skills by practicing them.

One of the Institute's most widely supported projects has been The Blue Ridge Folklife Festival. This one-day event held each fall, offers a look at life in the Blue Ridge from 100 years ago to the present. The festival features traditional crafts, cookery and music demonstrated by native people from the Blue Ridge with revivalists used only in supportive roles.

Another project, the Blue Ridge Farm Museum, will feature reconstructed farms from three different settlement periods of Blue Ridge history: a German farm of 1800, a Scotch-Irish farm of 1850, and a general culture "melting pot" farm of 1900. Work has already begun on the earliest farm on a site adjacent to the college; the reconstructions will use original log and frame buildings from each time period and a large exhibition building will house museum administration offices, restoration work facilities and permanent displays. The Institute's large collection of Blue Ridge artifacts, the Museum of Mountain Culture, will eventually be housed here. In the meantime, this collection of household furnishings, farm equip-

The Appalshop family in front of their workshop in Whitesburg, Kentucky.

ment, and musical instruments is on display at the Blue Ridge Institute building. The museum is open to the public, but large groups should contact the Institute to make visiting arrangements.

The Blue Ridge Heritage Library, another service of the Institute and a counterpart to the museum, is oriented more toward the scholarly community. This archive of historical and folklore research material includes books (current and out of print), photographs, audiotapes, records, videotapes, films and manuscripts.

In addition to these projects, the Institute has also generated interest in indigenous Blue Ridge music in cooperation with other agencies. One such program, "Blue Ridge Sampler," brings performers into public schools around the state to encourage the students' interest in their musical heritage through dancing, singing and music-making. The Institute is also working with Virginia Western Community College on a series of 26 hour-long radio documentaries on traditional Virginia music. The series, funded by NEA, is scheduled to begin next fall on the local National Public Radio affiliate, WVWR in Roanoke.

Another project in the works is "No More Crying," a one-hour film on black music in Virginia, including work songs, blues, and fiddle and banjo players. For this documentary the Institute has teamed up with WBRA-TV under funding from the Virginia Council for the Arts and Humanities. And the Institute is also coordinating production of "Banjos, Ballads and Blues," a monthly program on WDBJ-TV, Roanoke, which features half-hour segments of particular musical styles from the upland South.

The Blue Ridge Institute brings together resources and expertise in various areas of Virginia folklife and draws attention to the need for preservation of threatened customs. It has stretched a tight budget by cooperating with different groups and acting as a consultant to encourage accurate and thorough presentations. And it has expanded the conventional understanding of "folklore" to include a wide range of broadly defined mountain life styles. For more information about the Blue Ridge Institute, contact: Roddy Moore, Associate Director, Blue Ridge Institute, Ferrum College, Ferrum, Virginia 24088.

Photo by Peter D. Hartman/Blue Ridge Institute

Black square dancers and musicians as a part of film "No More Crying."

John Henry Memorial Foundation

by Ed Cabell

The black Appalachian is a member of an invisible culture. More than a million blacks live in the Highlands, yet their identity is all but eclipsed by the prevailing stereotype of the white mountaineer; their own special contribution to Appalachian culture is overlooked. The John Henry Memorial Foundation was organized to eliminate the misconception of the anomalous upland black, and to bring recognition and a sense of history and identity to this special cultural group. The Foundation is named for the legendary black steel driver whose work on the railroad tunnel through West Virginia's Big Bend Mountain in the nineteenth century became one of America's greatest legends, shared by whites and blacks alike. He is a symbol of the contribution of the black Appalachian, and through such cultural traditions the Foundation seeks to educate mountain minorities about their heritage and to encourage communication and understanding among all Highlanders, who, after all, share in the development of Appalachian culture.

The Foundation is active year-round, promoting workshops, sponsoring exhibits, collecting manuscripts and artifacts relating to black Appalachia, and searching out living bearers of the tradition. A major forum for this research is the Foundation's John Henry Folk Festival, held yearly on the weekend before Labor Day. The Festival features black performers from inside and outside the region as well as native white performers. The Foundation also plans a quarterly publication, *Black Diamonds,* as an outlet for research and a vehicle for communication. Several record albums featuring black performers from the mountains are in the works. For information, write Box 135, Princeton, West Virginia 24740.

Highlander Education and Research Center

by Guy and Candy Carawan

Throughout its long history, Highlander has emphasized the important role which local resource people can play in community-based activities. During the past ten years, when much of the school's work has been centered in Appalachia, we have worked with many of the region's singers, musicians, songwriters, storytellers, dance callers and people generally interested in Appalachian culture. We have always found it discouraging that many of these valuable resource people are virtually ignored at home. Singers and musicians who have traveled out of their region to the folk festivals and concerts in the North (many of them having been "discovered" during the folk music boom of the past 20 years) have returned home to find very little local support or appreciation for their skills and talents. Their music may be recorded nationally, but completely ignored by the local school system and other community organizations.

With this in mind, and with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, we developed a program last year which took us to rural communities throughout the mountains. We worked as "culture-facilitators," arranging visits by local folk artists to classrooms, community centers, senior citizen nutrition sites, and many other community settings. We used local musicians and singers for most of the program, and also brought in outstanding resource people from outside the region to teach their skills to local

"We have always found it discouraging that many valuable resource people are virtually ignored at home."

teachers and community workers. People like Nimrod Workman from West Virginia, who combines traditional ballads, hymns and numerous songs with his own songs about coal mining and other facets of everyday life; Ralph Tefferteller, a specialist in Appalachian play-party games and square dance teaching and calling; Bessie Jones from the Georgia Sea Islands, a treasure house of children's game songs and ring-plays drawn from the Southern black experience; and Hazel Dickens, singer and songwriter from West Virginia who has contributed some of the best songs about contemporary history and struggle in Appalachia. In every instance, once a program had been set up in a local school (often with only the hesitant endorsement of principal and administrator), there was a great deal of enthusiasm and interest in seeing it happen again.

Sometimes our work centers around community issues and needs – health, labor, environmental problems like strip mining or community development. When Hazel Dickens was with us, we went with a group of musicians to Stearns, Kentucky, where the miners have been on strike for nearly a year trying to obtain UMWA representation. We sang at a community picnic and rally, and then went out to the picket site where miners and their families joined us in a session of singing and dancing.

Using a network of friends and contacts over the years, we have set up programs in schools, senior citizen and headstart centers, and training sessions with teachers and other leaders who have begun to appreciate the cultural riches which exist in their own community. We are planning to bring these potential "cultural workers" together at some workshops in the future to share experiences and ideas, and to help them in setting up regular programs in their communities. For more information about the records and music books of the Carawans and their program at Highlander, write Box 370, RFD 3, New Market, Tennessee 37820.

Photo by Karen Kasmanski

Striking miners and their wives dance to music by Highlander staff, Stearns, Ky.

Tennessee Folk Arts Program

by Linda White

In recent years, various government agencies have begun hiring folklorists under such titles as "state folklorist" or "state folk arts coordinator." With the pinch in academic employment and the increasing number of graduates in folk studies, the trend toward using folklorists in administrative posts has sparked much attention. The interest in new careers among young graduates is especially high, as attested by the overflowing crowd at the 1976 American Folklore Society Meeting session on "Occupational Alternatives to Teaching."

There are some difficulties in crossing the line between academic and public service. For example, popular confusion about the meaning of folklore leads people to ask such questions as, "What instrument do you play?" But there are as many delights as trials awaiting a folklorist who enters the government, as my experience as Tennessee State Folklorist reveals.

I

The Tennessee Folk Arts Program was established in 1970, and functioned as an advisory panel to the Tennessee Arts Commission to review folk arts proposals submitted to the Commission. In 1973, some of the advisory panel members recognized the need for a staff representative, and in June, 1975, I was hired through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Tennessee Arts Commission.

My own background included a BA in English from Western Kentucky University, two years of teaching English and folklore in a Kentucky secondary school, and an MA from Western's Folk Studies Program. My field work spanned a variety of areas, including traditional architecture, music, dialect, Civil War tales, crafts, and, for my thesis, the woman's role on the Appalachian farmstead. Between the completion of my course work and thesis research, I served as an intern at the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, DC, and spent three months working with Alan Jabbour in the Folk Arts Program, observing the operation of a national arts agency, learning about grantsmanship, and studying trends in the folk arts field. This combination of administrative and academic skills proved very helpful as I faced my new job responsibilities.

Nevertheless, it was something of a shock, coming cold turkey into the directorship of a one-person, state-wide program. Even though I had mulled over the possibilities in my head, when I faced the realities of the job, I had to ask myself, "What *does* a state folklorist do?" Since the Pennsylvania and Maryland programs were defunct at that time, there were no patterns to follow.

After a week of concocting great projects for the Folk Arts Program on paper, realities began to sink in: (1) being the only staff member for a state-wide program was overwhelming; (2) priorities had to be thought through and established; (3) tangible products needed to be completed fairly immediately to justify the position's existence; and (4) untapped folklorists in Tennessee were willing to devote time and energy to building a strong program.

With these considerations in mind, I set out to create a permanent Folk Arts Program. I spent the summer of 1975 traveling across the state, meeting folklorists and folk artists, learning what they were doing and how I could be of assistance, evaluating festivals,

completing a promotional record album, and initiating future projects. It took a few months, but it was encouraging to see the pieces gradually come together as the program got underway.

During the first summer, I began working with the state school systems. Having been a teacher myself, I was aware of the needs of teachers who bring folk studies into public schools. I participated in several teachers' workshops and began assessing the possibilities of organizing a folk curriculum for use in Tennessee schools. The first step was to meet with members of the state department of education. After I spent considerable time defining the terms "folklore" and "folklorist" and getting nowhere, I began to realize the extent of bureaucratic confusion and poor communication. The point hit home when the officials informed me that "there were no folklore classes being taught in Tennessee schools," even though I had already found numerous teachers who were teaching some form of folklore in their classrooms.

Communications soon improved. Through newspaper publicity, workshops, the *Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin*, and other folklorists, the word spread that the Folk Arts Program was available for guidance in developing folk studies programs in the schools. The results were gratifying. Two Tennessee counties introduced combination folklore-video classes. Residency programs designed to bring folk artists into the schools were initiated across the state, and more workshops developed. The state department of education accredited a special course in folk studies which could be substituted for an English credit.

During the first year of the Folk Arts Program, I began creating a series of materials for public distribution. A promotional recording was produced, featuring selected music from the 1975 State Fiddler's Championship. Copies of the record, *Traditionally Tennessee*, were distributed to sponsors of the project and to others who might have an interest in the development of the Folk Arts Program. I also donated a supply to the governor's office for gifts to the United Nations delegates who visited Nashville last year.

A two-album collection of Tennessee music, funded by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Tennessee Arts Commission, is now in production. One of the records is devoted to traditional mountain music and the other to Delta blues, bringing into high relief the diverse cultural heritage of the state. Also, with the assistance of Charles Wolfe of Middle Tennessee State University and a staff of experts, we are preparing recorded tapes of Tennessee folklore for distribution to various radio stations in the state. These programs are designed to bring Tennessee's folklore to the listening public and to acquaint them with the objectives of the Folk Arts Program.

Future publishing projects are still in the planning stages. I hope, for example, to compile a folklore curriculum guide and text for use in public schools. Right now there is great need for such work; the success of the educational program depends on it. Other projected publications include films, slide shows and photographic exhibits.

Another concern has been the creation of a festival system in Tennessee. I spent most of the weekends of my first two "festival seasons" observing the activities at all sorts of "folk" festivals, the quality of which varied widely. Rather than attempt to revamp every festival in the state, I offered guidance when sought and provided examples for interested promoters to follow. I worked with the organizers of the State Fiddler's Championship and the National Storytelling Festival to establish them as regional festivals; and in October, 1976, I helped produce the first statewide festival, Tennessee Grass Roots Days, which brought together a wide variety of traditional craftspeople and musicians.

II

In another area, the Folk Arts Program would like to help researchers with the creation of a State Folklore/Folklife Archive. A number of individuals in the state have collected materials which ideally should be made available to everyone in a central location. Several university-based archives established in the past are no longer operational because of cutbacks in personnel. Unfortunately, the archival project is in limbo at the moment because of the usual difficulties (lack of facilities, staff and funding), but I hope progress can be made soon. Until then, long-distance phone calls and trips hither and yon await researchers of Tennessee folklife.

Finally, since the States Arts Commission is a funding agency, I spend part of my time helping groups obtain financial support - filling out grant forms, suggesting alternate sources of funding, advising grantees about useful research techniques, providing endorsement, and journeying into the far reaches of Tennessee to see the projects implemented.

I have been able to do some fieldwork myself, but because of my administrative duties to the creation of a viable, visible Folk Arts Program, I have not been able to do as much primary documentation as I would like. Fortunately, there are many outstanding field-workers in the state to record and preserve Tennessee folk traditions, but I am an avid field worker by nature, and I hope to devote more time to first hand research now that the program is on its feet.

So far, the Tennessee Folk Arts Program has succeeded in demonstrating its usefulness, but continued stable financial support is crucial.

The visible products of the program, and the publicity I received as I traveled around the state, helped lay the groundwork for the inclusion of the state folklorist's position in the Governor's 1977-78 budget. I visited many legislators to discuss the program, and presented them with copies of the record, *Traditionally Tennessee*. Their response was favorable, and the state funding was approved.

But just as state support seemed certain, the Art Commission was reorganized, almost eliminating the position of folklorist. Fortunately, the Arts Commission director realized the need for the program and found it a new home. The State Department of Conservation assumed responsibility for the State Folklife Program in 1977.

Once again, my funding situation is not settled since I now have to prove the viability of the position within its new environment. Fortunately, the move entails no significant changes in programming. I will be working within the Educational Services Division, and since most of my work is educationally oriented, I anticipate no major conflict of activities. However, I would advise any folklorist considering setting up a state program to investigate the sponsoring agency thoroughly and devote at least a year to the establishment of permanent funding sources.

For more information, write the Tennessee Folk Arts Program, Capitol Hill Building, Nashville, Tenn. 37222.

Goldenseal: A State Folklife Magazine by Tom Screven

When I arrived in West Virginia in 1971, I was struck by the vitality of the state's traditional culture and the variety of talent brought together in the quilting cooperatives and music and crafts festivals. While promoting the work of older craftspeople through the Arts and Crafts Division of the West Virginia Department of Commerce, I was also surprised to find that a larger than normal percentage of West Virginia's elderly citizens live in small towns and rural areas. Many people are still living who experienced the boom period in the early twentieth century when the timber, railroad, oil, coal and gas companies entered the mountains and the traditional culture underwent rapid changes.

Yet, despite this obvious talent and living memory of the past, I could find virtually nothing that documented the richness of the state's culture and its roots in the first decades of the 1900s. The lore of the older generation seemed precious and powerful to their children, grandchildren, and the state's many younger, newer homesteaders. Surely, I felt, there was a clear mandate to create a periodical that could remedy the longstanding neglect in preserving West Virginia's traditional life.

Through a series of conversations with various people, including Donald Page, Director of the Arts & Crafts Division, the idea developed to publish a periodical which could promote the state's traditional crafts and lore, if not explore the broader aspects of traditional life. Late in 1972, the board of directors of the Mountain State Arts and Crafts Fair at Ripley agreed to join the Commerce Department in supporting a trial year of publishing a bimonthly magazine. Called *Hearth and Fair*, the modest magazine was published in January, March, May and July, 1973. The last issue coincided with the Ripley fair and doubled as an elaborate program for it.

Reactions were favorable, so we continued publishing the next year. We reduced the number of issues to three, but made each one more substantial in content. For the March, 1974, issue, I interviewed and photographed a 90-year-old maker of cotton-rag braided rugs. The shock of her death as I was writing the article turned the piece into a plea for official attention to the need for documenting the state's traditional folklife before it was too late. The May issue was devoted to West Virginia in the 1930s, and July's Ripley fair issue contained interviews and articles emphasizing our fading culture.

That summer Governor Arch A. Moore, Jr., brought Norman J. Fagan back to head the State Arts and Humanities Council and to direct a newly created Science and Culture Center. Fagan had left the state for four years to work with the Kennedy Center in Washington and the National Endowment for the Arts. His return represented a new commitment for cultural programs in the state, and it seemed like an appropriate time to expand the idea of a folklife magazine.

With the encouragement of Donald Page, I showed Fagan the seven issues of *Hearth and Fair* and proposed that we publish a magazine devoted to documenting the state's traditional culture. He was very receptive and committed the Arts Council's financial support for a part-time designer, typists and modest honoraria for contributors. The Department of Commerce continued to underwrite the printing expenses and to allow me to spend time editing the magazine. Colleen Anderson, a VISTA volunteer with the Cabin Creek Quilts Cooperative, continued in her capacity as our graphics designer.

In April, 1975, the first issue of *Goldenseal* appeared, with a press run of 2000 copies. The name refers to a medicinal plant used by the Indians and early settlers which was once as popular as ginseng is today. To us, it symbolized the way our traditional culture was disappearing. From these beginnings, *Goldenseal* has steadily grown to its current circulation of 5000. All libraries in the state above the elementary level receive it free, and word of mouth brings in a growing number of subscribers.

Goldenseal's editorial policy contains a minimum of restrictions. We avoid fiction, poetry and photographic essays without an accompanying text; otherwise, we are open to many forms of documentation, from the writing of a homemaker interested in local history to the research of a professional folklorist. Our goal is not to provide definitive scholarship as much as to present traditions which have been neglected or which are fast fading, and to give fresh treatment to well-known subjects. Transcriptions of taped interviews have proved especially popular and occupy more of our pages than any other type of article.

As the magazine grew, it became obvious that a full-time assistant was needed for what had been essentially a one-person operation. With the demise of the Bicentennial Commission, *Goldenseal* also assumed new responsibilities as an unofficial clearinghouse for information about the study of West Virginia folklife. Fortunately, we were able to obtain another staffperson, Gary Simmons, a native of the state and a filmmaker at West Virginia University's public television station. We are now smoothing out our system of work and learning how best to use the resources of an expanding network of friends and talented contributors.

Goldenseal has attracted considerable attention from other states, especially among educators and government officials working in art, history and folklore programs. I have tried to share our experiences with them as they develop a strategy for launching similar publications, but I am inclined to see West Virginia as an unusual, if not unique, case. There is a widespread recognition here that West Virginia's cultural heritage has been ignored, distorted or romanticized. Consequently, a broad range of people have been keenly interested in seeing *Goldenseal* succeed. Mobilizing this support has proved the crucial factor in the evolution of a state magazine as "a forum for documenting West Virginia's traditional life." As of July 1, 1977, we became a part of Governor Jay Rockefeller's new superagency, the Depart-

ment of Culture and History.

The advantages of rooting ourselves solidly in the present by scrutinizing our past through the memories of our elders are many. And the print media provides a lasting and efficient means for communicating this information to a wide audience. We feel fortunate that *Goldenseal* has fulfilled this purpose as well as it has, and that it also serves as a model for other states to use in developing ways to preserve and disseminate information about their folklife. You can reach us at *Goldenseal*, Science and Culture Center, State Capitol, Charleston, West Virginia, 25305. Telephone: (304) 348-3982.

North Carolina Office of Folklife

by George Holt

On July Fourth, 1976, the Durham and North Carolina Bicentennial Commissions sponsored the North Carolina Bicentennial Folklife Festival at West Point on the Eno River. The Festival, which I coordinated, brought together an estimated 100,000 North Carolinians to share the music, dance, stories, cookery, games, craftwork, trades, and ways of living which have traditionally enriched and enlivened family and community life in this part of the country.

The local paper proclaimed that "not since the celebrations at the end of World War II had Durham people been so happily in accord."

The event's success was reflected in more than just attendance figures and publicity. The festival celebrated a cultural heritage far more diverse, alive, and closer to home than generally recognized. Five staging areas were designed to present most effectively the widest possible range of North Carolina's grass-roots culture. Three areas were devoted to regional programs – coastal plains, piedmont, and mountains – one was used for a children's program, and the "main stage area" accommodated larger audiences for concerts and public dancing.

In response to the success of the festival, the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources contacted me about establishing an Office of Folklife Programs to present, document, and encourage traditional cultural expression in North Carolina. A $25,000 grant was obtained to hire a director and begin planning a Folklife Festival for July, 1978. It is a modest beginning, but it represents the first significant public commitment to folk culture on the state level.

The Festival is not intended to be the sole, even primary, responsibility of the the Office of Folklife Programs. Rather, it is the first step toward a vital new program of the Department of Cultural Resources. In time the work of the section will take many forms. Among them will be festivals, performances, exhibitions, demonstrations, workshops, panel discussions, publications, films, videotapes, recording projects, archiving and cataloging. During the 1977-1978 period, the Office will coordinate the "Folk Music in the Schools" program, introducing public school students throughout North Carolina to traditional regional music and musicians through performance and discussion.

The Office of Folklife Programs welcomes your interest: write George Holt, Director, Office of Folklife Programs, N. C. Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, NC 27611.

Charleston, South Carolina Communication Center

by Charles Brown

Ernie Kovacs, the consummate comedian of television in the 1950s, once summed up his feelings toward the tube. He said that television was considered a medium because it was neither rare nor well done.

As director of the Communication Center, a community media/arts facility in Charleston, South Carolina, I have seen many videotapes produced by community people using the Center's portable equipment. Very few would be considered technically well done; but in terms of content, intimacy, and the power of communication, these community productions have qualities that are very rare.

As a documentary tool, video is not an end in itself, but a carrier of the impressions and points of view of its users. When it is used by professionals to record oral history and folklife, it records an outsider's perspective. The outsider produces a documentary, becoming at best a metaphor for how people interact and move through time. When video is used by community people to record their own traditions, the tool presents an insider's perspective. The insider produces a document, a product of his or her culture. Both are valuable perspectives, but the insider's is seldom recorded, primarily because insiders rarely have access to the tools of media.

Access is the underlying principle of the Communication Center, a project started in April, 1974, by the South Carolina Arts Commission, with assistance from the National Endowment for the Arts. We began by offering training workshops in the basics of video and encouraging those who attended to document friends and everyday occurrences. Novice tapemakers checked out cameras and recorders, and returned with interviews featuring their grandmothers, visits with former schoolteachers and personal tours of their homes. When these tapes were played back for the individuals involved, the effects were electrifying. People delighted in seeing themselves on television, nodding in agreement with each statement made by their electronic image.

When others viewed these tapes, the effect was equally jolting. People would volunteer their own versions of events and offer to be videotaped themselves. One white, middle-class man in the audience at a public video presentation offered a comment after viewing a tape in which a 17-year-old black girl conducts a tour of her home. The tape had just taken him from her living room, showing graduation portraits of her relatives, through the dining room and kitchen (a roast was cooking), to her bedroom, where she shares some of her poetry. "I'm so impressed with how open and natural this girl has been in sharing her home with us," he said. "I've learned things from her and about her which I could never have learned otherwise." When he heard that the girl and her mother were in the audience, he invited them to his house after the program.

Watching the responses to these casual yet intimate documents, shakily shot on street corners and in homes, the potential power of video in the community became clear: it gave people an entirely new way to view themselves and their surroundings. It answered the question, "What do I point the camera at?" with the inviting and challenging response, "Yourself."

The unique characteristics of video make it ideal for use as a documentary tool within a community. The ability to play back tapes instantly allows people an opportunity to decide

if they have been recorded reliably. The equipment can record many places and events in available light, capturing images which could not be documented otherwise. And with a capacity to record continuously for up to 30 minutes, video also expands the possibilities for recording in real time. Most ethnographic and documentary films are produced on equipment with one-half to one-sixth this recording time, and thus necessitate rearranging segments out of chronological order to adjust for this limitation.

"Video has the potential to supplant televison's 'vast wasteland' with highly personal, relevant images produced by and for the people."

But clearly the most impressive aspect of video for community-produced documents is the medium itself and how it counteracts the effects of its big brother, broadcast TV. The misuse of television technology is largely responsible for the devaluation of cultural identity in this country. The term "broadcast" has been taken too literally. To make each advertiser's message equally available to the largest market possible, the networks broadcast a steady stream of bland programming with each program essentially like the next. The effect is something close to mass hypnosis, making television the most pervasive and influential medium in history. The images it presents are the icons of twentieth-century America, and for those people who find little similarity between their lives and these images, the medium's message is clear: you are not made of the stuff which is valued by mainstream America.

When television does present a program which people can identify with, the effects can be powerful. Recently, a Center staff member was interviewing the father of a large black family in a rural community outside Charleston. A man in his sixties, he possessed a remarkable memory which included many tales told to him by his slave grandmother. He was laughed at for telling these stories by his children and grandchildren, who seemed content to let such tales of slavery die with him. But when *Roots* was aired, a dramatic change took place. The children became fascinated with the idea that this man possessed similar information about their own family. Television had unexpectedly validated their own heritage. They are now eager to hear and record his stories.
grandfather's stories.

photo courtesy of the Charleston News & Courier

Ray Harvey (r) and Randy Buggs interview Charleston blacksmith Phillip Simmons.

Unfortunately, this capacity to bring about such changes in people's attitudes springs from television's unresponsiveness in the past. After so much deprivation, viewers learn to be happy with what they can get. Video has the potential to capitalize on this power, to supplant television's "vast wasteland" with highly personal, relevant images which are produced by and for local people. Where television broadcasts, video "narrowcasts," providing the means for communication within a community without regard to the barriers of dialect and objectivity, and allowing individuals to portray their lives and experiences as *they* see them. It can relate oral traditions in the manner in which they have always been related, face to face, seeing the person speak, gesture and move.

Center Programs

Since 1974, the Communication Center has evolved into a facility with a major commitment toward recording the oral history and folklife of the South Carolina Low Country, and recirculating this material within the communities which generated it. Below are descriptions of some of the Center's programs:

East Side Video Team: During the summer of 1974, the Center hired five high school students from Charleston's East Side, a collection of low-income, black neighborhoods. The five kids were all members of their school's GAIN Project for students who have trouble with a conventional curriculum, and they had all been exposed to video through the Arts Commission's Filmmaker-in-the-Schools program. For

nine weeks the East Side Video Team roamed the streets, interviewing fishermen, cab drivers, and people sitting on porches. Then the tapes were played back for the participants and standers-by, for students, police and city officials.

This project gave these students an opportunity to develop their skills with video, and in the process, they learned a great deal about their community. One of the people whom they met during the summer was Philip Simmons, a Charleston blacksmith whose shop was right across from their school. Two members of the Team, Ray Harvey and Randy Buggs, continued to work at the Center during the school year and produced a documentary tape on Mr. Simmons. Their work caught the attention of another video group, the Public Broadcasting System, and "Studio See," a PBS children's program, produced a feature on Ray and Randy and their work with Mr. Simmons that was broadcast nationally this spring. Mr. Simmons used the tape which Randy and Ray produced when he demonstrated his work at his church's crafts bazaar.

Low Country Gospel Music: The Center's involvement with gospel music began with the production of the weekly radio program of a popular Charleston group, the Sensational Traveling Echoes of Johns Island. Eventually, we recorded and archived their music, conducted extensive interviews with group members, and videotaped the Echoes and other gospel groups performing in area churches. In the course of providing these groups with the media resources they needed to promote their music, we have been able to document Low Country gospel and spiritual traditions. Our archives now contain many videotapes with the Echoes and audio recordings of over 40 other local groups.

Low Country Folk: Oral history and folk material produced through the Center has had two quite different audiences: the people featured in the tapes, and an academic community of folklorists, anthropologists and historians. Through a grant from the South Carolina Committee for the Humanities, the Center developed a series of four "Low Country Folk" video presentations designed to provide a public forum for these two, often divergent, groups. Each program was attended by the craftspeople, artisans, and storytellers featured in the tapes, an academic panel, the people who made the tapes, and the general public. The format for the program was informal; we show a tape and then stop for discussion.

The academic panelists, who were scattered throughout the audience, facilitated discussion by placing the tape in a larger context of oral history and folklife. The tapemakers had an opportunity to show their work to a large and receptive audience. The people featured in the tape, often just the object of research, had an opportunity to comment on the tape and complement it with personal observations.

Folk Arts Media Project: The coil baskets made from local materials by black women on Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, are one of the oldest African craft forms still found in the US. Although these baskets and the craftspeople who make them ave become an institution in the area, very little information about the craft is publicly available. The Folk Arts Media Project, directed at the center by cultural anthropologist Greg Day and funded by the National Endowment for the arts, prepared an illustrated brochure which includes a history of the art, a description of how the baskets are made and how the craft was passed from generation to generation, and a map showing where they can be purchased. The brochures are distributed by the basket makers, the state's Visitor Welcome Centers, the South Carolina Museum Commission, and the state's Crafts Development Program.

The "Low Country Photographs" traveling exhibit is an example of this project's effort to identify and make available existing resources on the region's folklife. This series of exhibits consists of photographs of the Low Country taken during the Depression by the Farm Security Administration photographers, including Walker Evans, Jack Delano, Marion Post Wolcott and Francis Benjamin Johnston. (See the photo essay and speech by Jack Delano elsewhere in this volume.) The series has been hanging in Charleston public buildings on a rotating basis, and after circulating to museums throughout South Carolina, the photographs will be archived at the College of Charleston.

Future projects for the Folk Arts Media Project include the establishment of a media bibliography on the folklife of the Low Country and a series of videotapes on comparative folktales from black and white communities about the Battle of Charleston at the end of the Civil War.

People's Trust

All these projects were carried out with the active involvement of people from communities throughout the Charleston area. We are sensitive to the fact that past efforts to record folklore and oral history traditions here as elsewhere have often left people feeling abused and misrepresented. Since the Center opens for business each day in the community in which it works, we have evolved a working philosophy which we feel helps maintain the trust of local people with whom we work. For example, we impress upon novice tapemakers the importance of knowing the people to be taped and explaining to them the intent and use of the interview. Signed releases are obtained from everyone in any tape that is archived or shared with others, but our responsibility does not end here. We make a conscious effort to make sure the tapes are not shown in a context that would be embarrassing for the participant.

We have also taken seriously the question of compensating people who contribute oral history and folklife material to a collection. Until recently, the videotapes and audiotapes produced through the Center have been used almost exclusively for local purposes. When a tape was produced about a local craftsperson or performer, we tried to find ways to repay the person by promoting their work or talent. Thus, in order to produce a videotape on the Mt. Pleasant basket makers, we arranged for Mary Jane Bennett to conduct a series of classes in her craft. We also arranged a trip with Ms. Bennett and her class to gather materials needed to make the baskets. Ms. Bennett now teaches regular classes at a local art school, and she uses the Center videotape in her classes each semester.

This type of relationship has worked well in the past; but as our archives have grown and more people have wanted to buy or rent Center tapes, we have initiated a system that will allow participants to share in the income of the tape's sale or rental.

A guide to material for rent or sale from the Center is available by writing us at 153 King Street, Charleston, SC 29401.

Southern Culture Exchange Center

954 West Montrose Chicago, Illinois 60613 (312) 271-2171

Southern Culture Exchange Center by Judy McLaughlin

Chicago's Uptown has traditionally been an area where Appalachian people have migrated since World War II. The migrant's introduction to the city is generally characterized by inadequate housing and medical care, overcrowded schools, and one of the highest crime rates in the Chicago metropolitan area.

The Southern Culture Exchange Center (SCEC) was started by some community residents in 1973 as a place to meet together in an atmosphere which speaks positively of who and what we are. It is sponsored by Columbia College as an independent community program to preserve and develop cultural identity and pride in the Southern residents of Uptown.

The Center's regular weekly programs include free workshops in quilt making, whittling, weaving, rag doll making, wood carving, children's art classes, crocheting, creative writing and instructions in playing musical instruments. In addition, the Center holds daily high school equivalency classes and publishes an arts-oriented community newletter, *The Uptowner*, and a poetry book, *The Phoenix*. We also have monthly square and clogging dances.

An especially important part of SCEC's work in the community is a mural program under the direction of muralist Holly Highfill, Through this program, "ordinary" people participate in the creation and enjoyment of their own art. Our first mural, located in the heart of the Appalachian community in Uptown, depicts the journey of migrants from the South to Uptown. Two other murals have been finished, all painted by community children under the direction of Ms. Highfill.

The Center has begun to take programs to the community through displays, demonstrations, poetry readings and workshops in local libraries, public schools, half-way houses, senior citizen centers, community centers, and festivals. These events have helped to develop a conscious interest in the Appalachian subculture among the people of the urban North.

Since virtually no attention has been given to Southern arts, history and culture in the school curriculum, SCEC has developed an education program. Over the past year, staff members have conducted in-service teacher workshops in the Uptown public schools in an attempt to educate teachers about Appalachian culture. Plans call for the development of a resource library with materials on Southern history and culture which will be available to the community. When they come into contact with a white Appalachian migrant, people in Northern cities do not recognize that Appalachian people have a unique culture, and consider them either "wrong" or "funny." The Center aims to change that situation. Write Judy McLaughlin, Director, SCEC, 954 West Montrose, Chicago, Illinois 60613.

The Archive of the Festival of American Folklife by Frank Proschan

The Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife presents public performances of traditional music, dance, crafts, cooking, occupational techniques and other folklore. In the first ten years of the Festival, the program evolved eight program units:

a. Regional America: music, crafts, cooking from the various regions of the US.

b. Working Americans: traditional lore of working people, demonstrations of skills and techniques, narrative sessions recounting occupational techniques, and oral history of the labor movement.

c. Old Ways in the New World: folk music, narrative, foodways, crafts, and dance of ethnic-Americans along with their Old World counterparts.

d. Native Americans: traditional songs, dances, games, crafts, including discussions of history and current tribal events.

e. African Diaspora: black culture from Africa, Caribbean and US.

f. Children's Folklore: games, rhymes, songs, crafts of children.

g. Family Folklore: family customs, lore and narratives.

h. Transportation: application of Working Americans program with special emphasis on transportation industry.

At present, the Archive of the Folklife Festivals is being established by the Folklife Program, Office of American Studies. Shortly, most of the recordings of musical performances will be transferred to the Archive of Folk Song, Library of Congress, where they will be available for listening and duplication. The narrative and interview recordings will be transferred to the Smithsonian Institution Archive. Film and video footage will be transferred to the National Anthropological Film Center at the Smithsonian. Please direct all correspondence to the Folklife Program at the Smithsonian Institution.

Among the materials included in the documentary record of the Festivals are: field research data – written, photos, interview report cards; participant information – fiscal files, biographies; theory, guidelines, presentation plans, evaluations; chronological files and correspondence; resource lists, directories, staff lists, researcher lists; and logs and transcripts of tape recordings.

Sound and recording tapes include musical performances, field recordings, etc. – more than 5,000 reels – all completely catalogued, and interviews, narrative sessions, discussions, etc. – more than 3,000 spoken-word tapes collected by Family Folklore, Working American, and Ethnic American Collecting Projects.

More than 150,000 feet of motion picture film and 100 hours of videotape documentation of the ten Festivals are also being indexed, as are photographs

of both field research and festival presentation.

The Festival presentations and narrative and interview sessions were directed toward the elicitation of folkloric material, and the indexes and finding guides which have been prepared are generally oriented toward this information. The prime documentary resources themselves, however, contain a wealth of additional historical material which may not be noted in finding guides, log-sheets, or indexes. The collection would be useful to oral historians, historians, anthropologists, and others, especially those familiar with folklore theory and techniques.

At this writing, the Festival of American Folklife collections are not available for scholarly use because they are in temporary storage and are physically inaccessible. Until such time as the materials are generally available, inquiries are invited and will be accommodated whenever possible.

Most of the Festival documentation of individual persons is covered by releases signed by each participant, allowing use for certain educational and non-profit purposes. Use of the data for viewing or research study will be permitted in most cases. Duplication of recordings, photographs, and participant data will only be allowed if the intended uses of those materials is consistent with the signed releases.

Please direct all correspondence to Frank Proschan, Archivist, Folklife Program, Room 2100, L'Enfant Plaza, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560.

The Archive of Folk Song in the Library of Congress

The Archive of Folk Song was established within the Music Division of the Library of Congress in 1928. The work of the Archive has been materially aided by the establishment in 1940 of the Library's Recording Laboratory, now part of the Recorded Sound Section, which maintains and services the Library's general collections of published and unpublished recordings.

The earliest recorded and manuscript collections of the Archive were assembled by Robert W. Gordon, and included 600 early cylinder recordings of black and white American folk music. To this was added over 3000 pioneer disc recordings made by John and Alan Lomax in the 1930s. During this period the Archive also enriched its collections by taking advantage of an unprecedented opportunity to mount large-scale recording expeditions with assistance from foundations and government agencies, including the Works Progress Administration and the Resettlement Administration. Altogether the Archive collected 4233 disc recordings in the first dozen years of its existence. These recordings were cataloged, and the titles were published in 1942 with a geographical index in the *Check-List of Recorded Songs in the Archive of American Folk Song to July, 1940* (reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1971). Since 1940 recording expeditions by outstanding collectors and special arrangements with regional and specialized archives and museums have greatly increased the Archive's holdings. It presently houses over 26,000 recordings – cylinders, discs, wire spools, and tapes – containing over 150,000 items of folksong, folk music, folk tale, oral history and other types of folklore. In addition, the researcher will find thousands of 78 and 33 rpm commercial recordings pertaining to his studies in the Recorded Sound Section.

The Archive houses over 225,000 sheets of manuscript material, including the 180,000 pages amassed by the Federal Writers' Project, WPA, in its operations in the fields of folklore, ethnic studies and slave narratives. It maintains a reading room with over 2500 books and periodicals dealing with folk music, folklore and ethnomusicology, selected from the thousands of relevant items in the Library's collections. In addition to standard publications, it has assembled a sizable collection of magazines and newsletters of interest to folklorists and ethnomusicologists, as well as a variety of unpublished theses and dissertations.

Every region and every state of the United States is represented in the Archive's holdings. The collection is particularly strong in recordings from the Appalachians, the Deep South, the Ozark area, and Texas, but many other areas have solid representation. In addition to recordings of the predominant British-American tradition, there are extensive recordings of American Negro folk music and folklore, and many other ethnic groups. The Archive's collections of American Indian music are quite large, featuring in particular the 3591 cylinders of the Frances Densmore-Smithsonian Institution collection transferred to the Library in 1948, and several of Jesse Walter Fewkes' March 1890 cylinders of Passamaquoddy Indians, the earliest field recordings made anywhere in the world.

To make material in the Archive's recorded collections more widely obtainable, the Library publishes a series of long-playing recordings selected from the Archive's holdings; to date 66 discs of representative folksongs and tales have been issued. A list may be obtained from the Recorded Sound Section, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. 20540.

The reference services provided by the staff are of varied character. Congress, government agencies, the academic community, elementary and secondary educators, authors, publishers, and the film, radio, and television industries regularly draw upon the Archive's resources. The staff answers requests for locally unavailable information, for specialized bibliographies and directories (there are 120 such listings; a list is available upon request) for a tape duplication of Archive holdings, for photocopying of manuscripts, or for referrals to specialists in various fields. The Archive is located in room G-152 of the Main Building of the Library of Congress. Its hours are 8:30 - 5:00, Monday through Friday. No appointments are required except for listening. Telephone: (202)426-5510.

ARCHIVES OF SOUTHERN FOLKLORE AND FOLKLIFE

by Laurel Horton

Folklore-related materials are included in a variety of resource libraries. Some collections are publicly identified as Archives of Folklore; others are small office collections or are included in larger regional special collections. This listing includes those organizations and institutions which responded to an informal survey. For those planning to use these collections, writing ahead is *always* a good idea, since materials you want may be unavailable, or the local folklorist may be on a collecting trip.

James S. Rikoon, of the Indiana University Folklore Archive, is presently compiling a listing of folklore-

related archives throughout the United States and Canada.

Appalachian Collection, Belk Library, Appalachian State University, Boone, N.C. 28607; telephone (704) 262-2186, ext. 27.

The Collection includes over 10,000 bound volumes, a clipping file, slides, audiotapes, photograph records, photographs and artifacts. Several major ballad collections are indexed on cards. Artifacts include tools and household items.

Hours are 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday-Thursday, 8-5 Friday, 1-4 Saturday, 4-9 Sunday.

Bascom Lamar Lunsford Collection, Appalachian Room, Memorial Library, Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, N.C. 28754; telephone (704) 689-1244. Contact Laurel Horton, Special Collections Librarian.

Lunsford's personal library, manuscripts and recordings form the basis for a growing collection of recordings of Southern Mountain Music. Materials may be used from 8-5 Monday-Friday.

Council of the Southern Mountains, CSM Bookstore, CPO 2307, Berea, Ky. 40403.

An excellent 80-page "Catalog/ Bibliography on the Appalachian South," available from the CSM Bookstore for $1, includes sections on Folklore, Music, Records, Mountain Women, Fiction and other subjects. The Council also publishes the monthly *Mountain Life and Work* (subscription $5 per year), Drawer N, Clintwood, Va. 24228.

Country Music Foundation, Library and Media Center, 700 16th Avenue South, Nashville, Tenn.; telephone (615) 256-7008. Contact: Danny R. Hatcher, Director.

"Not open to the general public, but available to researchers by special appointment, the Library and Media Center provide the student, journalist, or scholar with a fine collection of research materials related to the history of Country Music. Early disc recordings, fan-club publications, newspaper clippings, music industry trade publications, 16-mm films, photographs, and video and audio tape form the core of the Library's holdings." This quotation is from an information folder available on request. The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, located nearby, is open to the general public as well as to researchers. The Country Music Foundation publishes the quarterly *Journal of Country Music.*

Folklore Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Ark. 72701; telephone (501) 575-4101. Contact: Samuel A. Sizir, Curator, Special Collections.

The University's Folklore Research Project from 1949-1965 provided the core for the Library's holdings of Arkansas and/or Ozark folklore. Copies of these tapes are also on deposit in the LC Archive of Folk Song. The University has a few small manuscript collections relating to regional folklore.

Published or bound material may be used on premises 8-5 Monday-Friday, 9-1 Saturday during semester schedules. Written application, obtainable on premises, is required to use the Folklore Collection and manuscripts.

Folklore, Folklife and Oral History Archive, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Ky. 42101. Contact: Patricia A. MacLeish.

Western Kentucky has a number of collections of manuscripts, tapes, and photographs on many genres, including folk speech, beliefs, folk song, narrative and material culture. Kentucky materials predominate.

Hours are 8 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 8-5 Friday, 9-4:30 Saturday and 2-10 Sunday during the academic year.

Folk Music Archives, 103 Hill Hall, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514. Contact: Dr. Daniel Patterson.

The Folk Music Archives houses over 1,500 commercial phono discs and 400 reels of field recordings, with an emphasis on North Carolina and the Southern United States. Materials may be used on premises. Hours vary, so write ahead.

Indiana University Folklore Archive, 504 North Fess, Bloomington, Ind. 47401; telephone (812) 337-5864.

This large resource and research center holds over 30,000 field collections primarily from Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Kentucky. Requests by mail, telephone or visit are welcomed. A printed guide to the Archives is available.

John Edwards Memorial Foundation, Folklore and Mythology Center, University of California, Los Angeles, Calif. 90024; telephone (213) 825-3777.

JEMF has records, tapes, correspondence, photographs, publications and other material related to American commercial phonograph records of folk music.

The collection is open to the public, but hours are variable. Call ahead and make an appointment. Simple inquiries from members answered free. Membership in the Friends of JEMF ($8.50 per year) includes subscription to *JEMF Quarterly* and other privileges. The Foundation also publishes a reprint series of important articles on American traditional music.

Louisiana Folklore Society, Department of English, University of New Orleans, New Orleans, La. 70122; telephone (504) 288-3161. Contact: George Reineike, Secretary.

The Corinne Sauceer Collection of discs and recordings of Acadian folktales and songs is on deposit at the E. K. Long Library.

Manuscript Department, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C. 27706.

The Frank Clyde Brown papers, from which the *North Carolina Folklore* collection was gleaned, include Brown's research notes, correspondence, cylinders and discs of folk tales and music, and other materials.

The Brown Papers may be used in the Manuscript Department from 8-5 Monday-Friday, and 9-12:30 Saturday. A descriptive guide is available. Short answer inquiries by mail are welcome.

Mississippi Folklore Society, Department of English, University of Mississippi, Jackson, Miss. 38677. Contact: George Boswell.

Mississippi Folklore is housed in several places. George Boswell has books and records in his office. Contact Edward M. Walters about recordings and films in the Mississippi Room in the University Library, and see Valerie Braybrooke for artifacts in the University Museum.

The Ozark Folk Center, Mountain View, Ark. 75260; telephone (501) 269-3857. Contact: W.K. McNeil, Folklorist.

A brand new folklore library, housing books, periodicals and recordings, has been added to the Ozark Folk Center's extensive facilities. Activities include a variety of traveling exhibitions, demonstrations, musical concerts and educational programs.

Weatherford-Hammond Mountain Collection, Hutchins Library, Berea College, Berea, Ky. 40404. Contact: Gerald Roberts.

This collection includes about 350 books on ballads and folksongs, and a fine collection of Appalachian fiction, some using folklore-inspired themes. A recent addition is a Sound Archive of Traditional Music on tapes and records. Berea's Appalachian Museum reflects aspects of folklife and material culture. Mountain Collection hours are 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

West Virginia Collection, West Virginia University Library, Morgantown, W. Va. 26505; telephone (304) 293-3240. Contact: George P. Parkinson, Curator.

This state history collection includes a large selection of books, pamphlets and periodicals on West Virginia folklore, about ten manuscript collections contain folklore material, over 200 tape recordings, and many photographs. A published *Guide to Manuscripts and Archives in the West Virginia Collection* is available for $5.

Hours are 8:15 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday. Write ahead if possible.

Folklife Bibliography

The Southern cultural tradition is unbroken and has not changed that much over the years, but the public consciousness of it certainly has, as the following book list demonstrates. Too often, early writers and collectors were interested only in fading traditions. Working under antiquarian and romantic models, they chased after the rarest ballads and black spirituals but ignored the thriving traditions of their own times. Not until the folk revival of the 1950s, for example, were string band music and blues fully recognized as major traditions of Southern art. Fortunately, many of the 78 rpm records originally issued in the 20s and 30s containing examples of those traditions still survived, or the bulk of the material would surely have been lost forever.

Music is strongly represented in this bibliography; it is the most popular of all folk genres. Narrative material, too, is well covered. But other subjects have only recently been acknowledged as worthy subjects for attention. Long neglected and only minimally represented here are such topics as material culture, dance, cookery and folk medicine. The major works which consider the Southern folk arts in their natural contexts instead of preserved in frigid isolation are only now beginnig to emerge. These resources are particularly important, because it is they that will breathe fresh life into earlier, more limited works. Included here are books now dated, as well as contemporary works, popular treatments of Southern culture as well as more rigorous academic writings. The goal is to present a selectio of the whole range of material available on Southern folklife. The large subject subject areas, miscellaneous collections, general studies and theoretical works are included under the "general" heading. Several major works on folklore not specifically Southern in their orientation have also been included here as background resources.

Special thanks to Brett Sutton for preparing the bibliography with Jim Overton and Allen Tullos.

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Banjo Newsletter, 1310 Hawkins Lane, Annapolis, Md. 21401. Monthly $6 per year.

The Black Perspective in Music, PO Box 149, Cambria Heights, NY 11411. Semi-annual, $5 per year.

Bluegrass Music Review, Kentucky Music Teachers Association, c/o Martin D. McKay, PO Box 211, Lancaster, Ky. 40444. Quarterly, $2 for non-members.

Bluegrass Unlimited, Bluegrass Unlimited, Inc., Box 111, Broad Run, Va. 22014. Monthly, $6 per year.

Blues Magazine, PO Box 855, Station P, Toronto, Canada M5S 2T1. Bimonthly, $7 per year.

Blues Unlimited, 38a Sackville Rd., Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex, England. Monthly, $8 per year.

Blues World, Amon Ra Fine Art Ltd., Meeting House, Frenchay, Bristol BS16 1NT, England. Quarterly, $3 per year.

Boston Area Friends of Bluegrass and Old-Time Country Music Newsletter, 238 Putnam Ave., Cambridge, Ma. 02139. Monthly.

Country and Western Express, Country Music Enterprises, 68 Golden House, Great Pulteney St., London W. 1, England. Quarterly, $3 per year.

Country and Western Roundabout, 21 Roseacres, Takeley, Dunmow, Essex, England. Quarterly, $2 per year.

Country Music World, Dodson Publishing Co., Box 3693, Arlington, Va. 22203. Semi-monthly, $5.95 per year.

The Devil's Box, Tennessee Valley Old-Time Fiddlers Association, Route 4, Madison, Al. 35758. Quarterly, $2 per year.

Ethnomusicology, Society for Ethnomusicology, 201 S. Main St., Room 513, Ann Arbor, Mi. 48108. Three issues per year, $15.

Folk Scene, PO Box 64545, Los Angeles, Ca. 90064. Monthly, $7 per year.

Folklore Feminists Communication, P.O. Box 24053, LSU Station, Baton Rouge, La. 70803. Three issues per year, $4.

Folklore Newsletter, University of Texas at Austin, Center for Intercultural Studies in Folklore and Ethnomusicology, SWB 306, Austin, Tex. 78712. Biannually.

Foxfire, Foxfire Fund, Inc., Rabun Gap, Ga. 30568. Quarterly, $6 per year.

JEMF Quarterly, John Edwards Memorial Foundation Folklore and Mythology Center, University of California, Los Angeles, Ca. 90024. Quarterly, $5 per year.

Journal of American Folklore, University of Texas Press, Box 7819, Austin, Tex. 78712. Quarterly, $3 per issue for non-members.

Journal of Country Music, Country Music Foundation Press, 700 16th Ave. South, Nashville, Tn. 37203. Quarterly, free to controlled circulation.

Kentucky Folklore Record, Kentucky Folklore Society, Bowling Green, College Heights Station, Bowling Green, Ky. 42101. Quarterly, $3 per year.

Living Blues, Living Blues Publications, Box 11303, Chicago, Il. 60611. Bimonthly, $3.60 per year.

Louisiana Folklore Miscellany, Louisiana Folklore Society, c/o Dept. of English, LSU-New Orleans, New Orleans, La. 70122. $2 per year.

Mid-South Folklore, Arkansas State University, Division of English, Philosophy and Languages, State University, Ark. 72467. Three issues per year, $4.

Mississippi Folklore Register, Mississippi Folklore Society, c/o O.S. Vickers, East Central Junior College, Decatur, Ms. 39327. Quarterly, $3 per year.

Mugwumps Instrument Herald, 12704 Barbara Road, Silver Spring, Md. 20906. Bimonthly, $6 per year.

Muleskinner News, Box 7A, Ruffin, NC 27326. Monthly, $7 per year.

North Carolina Folklore Journal, North Carolina Folklore Society, North Carolina State University, Dept. of English, Box 5998, Raleigh, NC 27607. Semi-annual, $2 per year.

Old Time Music, 33 Brunswick Gardens, London W8 4AW, England. Quarterly, $4 per year.

Pickin! 46 Ford Rd., Denville, NJ 07834. Monthly, $9 per year.

Reel Times, PO Box 4831, Austin, Tx. 78765.

Second Line, New Orleans Jazz Club, 833 Conti St., 340 Bourbon St., New Orleans, La. 70112. Quarterly, by membership.

Sing Out!, 270 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012. Bimonthly, $6 per year.

Southern Folklore Quarterly, University of Florida, c/o Roger M. Thompson, Anderson Hall, Gainesville, Fl. 32611. Quarterly, $6.50 per year.

Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin, Tennessee Folklore Society, Box 234, Murfreesboro, Tn. 37130. Quarterly, $3 per year.

Texas Bluegrass Association Newsletter, 6544 Balcer Boulevard, Fort Worth, Tx. 76118. Monthly.

Voices From The Mountains, 1538 Highland Ave., Knoxville, Tn. 37916.

West Virginia Hillbilly, Richwood, WV 26261. Weekly, $10 per year.

Western Roundup, Box 188, Kenmore Branch, Buffalo, NY 14217. Quarterly, $3 per year.

BOOK REVIEWS

Black Culture and Black Consciousness, by Lawrence W. Levine. Oxford University Press, 1977. 522 pp. $15.95.

> **"Got one mind for white folks to see**
> **'Nother for what I know is me;**
> **He don't know, he don't know my mind."**
> — From the author's preface.

In recent years, Afro-American history has assumed a prominent place in the national consciousness, luring the academic as well as the popular imagination. Here history provides real drama: Heroism in the face of degradation, joy despite cruelty, compassion amidst hate. Thus, Alex Haley's *Roots* finds scholarly resonance in such works as Theodore Rosengarten's *All God's Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw*, Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman's *Time on the Cross*, Herbert G. Gutman's *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, and, of course, Eugene D. Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll*. Addressing previously unasked questions, employing new methods, and exploring untouched sources, these historians of Afro-American life provide new directions for social and cultural studies.

That this outpouring of works on black history has not yet yielded diminishing returns is indicated by the publication of Lawrence W. Levine's *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*. An anecdote in the epilogue captures the importance of this work: "'In all the books that you have studied you never have studied Negro history have you?' an ex-slave asked an interviewer from Fisk University. 'If you want Negro history,' he insisted, 'you will have to get [it] from somebody who wore the shoe, and by and by from one to the other you will get a book.'" Perhaps more than any previous scholar, Levine has reconstructed black history from "those who wore the shoe." His highly readable prose and excellent choice of examples guide us through the rich oral expressive traditions of Afro-Americans from antebellum times through the middle of the twentieth century. Spirituals, gospel songs, work songs, blues, folktales, legends, proverbs, toasts, signifying, dozens, jokes, folk beliefs, hero traditions — these folk creations are the substance of *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*.

I.

Levine's work is an ideal companion to Theodore Rosengarten's *All God's Dangers* in the same way that a fine grained portrait is always rendered more meaningful by the pictures of ancestors and descendants contained in a family album. Rosengarten's Nate Shaw eloquently revealed the possibilities and limitations of the rural Southern black seeking freedom, dignity, the fruits of his own labor and the political consciousness to buttress those goals. Similarly, Levine also explores how blacks carved meaningful lives for themselves, retaining their self-esteem despite the onslaughts of white oppression. He points out that "the familiar urge to see in heroes only virtue and in villains only malice has an analogue in the desire to see in the oppressed only unrelieved suffering and impotence." This is not to deny the hardships inflicted by the white social order. The point is that blacks resisted social oppression with their own cultural weapons shaped from alloys of African and Anglo-American cultural materials. The sturdy individualism captured in Rosengarten's folk biography is complemented — as it was historically nurtured — by the group resources revealed in Levine's study.

Emphasizing this cultural response gives Levine common cause with Herbert Gutman and Eugene Genovese. All three locate the psychic salvation of blacks within the Afro-American community, not in an Horatio Alger model of plantation life like that of Fogel and Engerman. Yet Levine's thorough knowledge of Afro-American folklore allows him to steer between Gutman's tendency to treat black culture as isolated from the white social order, and Genovese's opposite inclination to lock culture and society into too rigid a dialectic. Moreover, Levine strikes a successful balance between evidence and analysis. His insights grow naturally out of his source materials, and the black folk whose story this is always remain in full view, never obscured by excessive emphasis on theory or methodology. *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* also avoids the trend in some recent works to patronize or romanticize Afro-American life.*

*For nineteenth century parallels to this patronizing of black ways see George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind* (New York, 1972) chapter 4 on the "Romantic Racialists."

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

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As Levine points out, the experiences of enslavement, emancipation, reconstruction, sharecropping, Jim Crow, migration and urbanization were matched by complex Afro-American cultural responses. While dealing incisively with the question of origins, Levine avoids becoming bogged down in sorting African from European elements of black folkways: "Culture is not a fixed condition but a process: the product of interaction between the past and the present. Its toughness and resiliency are determined not by a culture's ability to withstand change, which indeed may be a sign of stagnation not life, but by its ability to react creatively and responsively to the realities of the new situation." Many have recognized this development of a distinctive Afro-American style of life, but black culture's self-preservation through adaptation in response to new social forces is too frequently neglected. Thus, Herbert Gutman's insights into the stability of the black family (some earlier writers deemed it at best pathological and at worst nonexistent) are flawed because he leaves us with the mistaken impression that once Afro-American culture emerged, it became isolated from white society, changing little over time. Gutman implies that "Afro-American adaptive culture" was capable of only a single gigantic leap — the early synthesis of African and European heritages under the weight of bondage — despite the profound social changes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

II

Levine's work is too complex to attempt a summary here, but focusing on his analysis of two of Afro-American folklore's most salient products — spirituals and blues — gives us a sense of the sorts of questions he does ask and an insight into some historical contours of black folk history.

The communally created and recreated spirituals are Levine's main source for understanding slave religion. Blacks embraced white Christianity, but in the process they altered it and made it their own. While masters preached Christian meekness and humility from the Epistles of Paul, the slaves drew the strong imagery of their songs from militant Old Testament themes. Daniel, David, Noah, Jonah, and especially Moses relived

photo by Michael P. Smith

their victories in the spirituals, as the slaves identified themselves with the deliverance of God's Chosen People. Even Christ was incorporated into this selective Old Testament framework: "Ride on, King Jesus, Ride on, conquering King." Perhaps the most captivating image for blacks was the flight of the Hebrew children from bondage. As Levine points out, this identification with the ancient Jews signaled the slaves' ability to avoid psychological submission and retain a sense of group self-worth. The slaves' religious music denied white stereotypes of black unworthiness and depravity, while holding out hope for change, justice and ultimate transcendence.

Utilizing the music created by the slaves themselves, Levine's analysis of black religion differs from Genovese's in important ways. Genovese's main source on slave religion is the WPA narratives, recorded during the 1930s, by which time black religion had changed considerably from the antebellum period. Both authors agree that some measure of cultural independence was necessary for the slaves' psychic and spiritual survival, yet they diverge over just how much autonomy the slaves really had. Genovese forcefully demonstrates that master and slave shaped each other's consciousness — Afro-American religion was, after all, a form of Protestant Christianity. However, *Roll, Jordan, Roll* too often depicts Afro-Americans as culturally more dependent on whites than they really were. Genovese's characterization of black Christianity as a brotherhood of all believers which embraced whites as fellows in Christ finds little support from Levine. Indeed, many of Genovese's own sources point to the slaves' preoccupation with Hebrew stories of dramatic worldly deliverance. By using the spirituals, Levine gives us a more accurate picture of the exclusivity, even militancy, inherent in antebellum black Christianity. His interpretation explains so well the recurrent scene of black soldiers marching off to battle for freedom singing the very same spirituals they sang in the quarters.

Levine also argues convincingly that slaves did not simply use religion metaphorically; their spiritual beliefs cannot be explained away simply as the manipulation of sacred symbols for secular ends. The most striking characteristic of Afro-American Christianity in the antebellum period was its ability to merge the religious and the mundane through a traditional sense of sacred time. Utilizing the framework of Claude Levi-Strauss and especially of Mircea Eliade, Levine demonstrates that unlike most people today, the slaves refused to draw rigid barriers between the sacred and secular. Enslaved descendants of Africans continued to view humankind united with God and Nature — three joined yet discreet parts of a sacred whole. Like the gods of Africa, the slaves' God and His Biblical pantheon were intimate, personal, living presences, accessible through song, bearers of imminent hope, transcendence and rebirth:

Gwine to argue wid de Father
and chatter wid de son,
The last trumpet shall sound,
I'll be there.
Gwine talk 'bout de bright world
dey des' come from,
The last trumpet shall sound,
I'll be there.

Gwine to write to Massa Jesus,
To send some Valiant soldier
To turn back Pharoah's army,
Hallelu!

The retention of the sacred African world view and its sense of sacred time allowed the slaves to fuse the Biblical past, the conditions of the present, and their hopes for the future into a single reality. Not only the spirituals, but also spirit possession and the hypnotic religious drama of the "ring-shout" became means of ritual communication with the other world. Thus, "the preliterate, premodern Africans, with their sacred world view, were so imperfectly acculturated into the secular American society into which they were thrust, were so completely denied access to the ideology and dreams which formed the core of the consciousness of other Americans, that they were forced to fall back upon the only cultural frames of reference that made any sense to them and gave them any feeling of security." Rather than remain in a state of cultural limbo, Afro-Americans built a new black culture on the old African foundation, and so took psychic refuge from the destructive ravages of slavery.

Listening to James "Son" Thomas Sing Delta Blues

by Carol Cox

I think of blooming roots,
waking spiders,
bulky rusting stems;
of the digging and sorting
spring will do
if left alone.

Son Thomas singing on this
watery March night,
thick enough to fill up
warehouse doors,
fine screens built all over town
to keep out growth:

he tells us what it is
he's broken open every hour,
but not how many silver fingers
were replaced
after the ruin became too clear.

III

After emancipation, the position of blacks in American society changed in crucial respects. Slowly but surely, Afro-Americans became increasingly urbanized, non-agricultural and mobile. Levine traces the impact of these social changes on black consciousness through such folklore genres as jokes, toasts, dozens, gospel songs, work songs, even legends about famous black athletes. Most revealing for our purposes is his discussion of the blues, for like spirituals in the antebellum period, blues were probably the most unique and important aspect of Afro-American oral expressive culture in the twentieth century.

In structure, composition, style and content, the spirituals expressed a sacred communal message. Yet half a century later, the rise of the blues and decline of spirituals suggests a new, secular, less communally-oriented world view. The individual totally dominated both lyrics and performance as the blues focused on the singer's own experiences, emotions, hopes and fears. Changing social roles in the South, migration northward, and the propagation of an individualistic ethos by both Northern educators and such black spokesmen as Booker T. Washington all pointed toward the acculturation of Afro-Americans. Even the outpouring of so-called "race" records in the 1920s may be seen as the culminating penetration of white social institutions into black culture.

Yet, even as they embraced a more individualistic orientation, blacks clung to their old cultural style. Traditional vocal and musical elements such as falsetto, gruff voice, sliding and slurring, syncopation and polyrhythms remained. Most important, blacks retained much of the communality embodied in the spirituals. As Ma Rainey sang,

If anybody ask you who wrote
this lonesome song
Tell 'em you don't know the writer,
but Ma Rainey put it on.

Even modern blues performed by contemporary urban artists developed largely by the recombination of bits and pieces of traditional, communally shared phrases into new and ever-changing patterns. Thus, although the lyrics are pieced together by a single individual "writer," the process by which the spirituals were communally created and re-created was adapted to the blues.

Finally, Levine points out that the blues perpetuated the traditional African call-and-response musical pattern between lines of verse, between voice and instrument, and most important, between performer and audience. The audience participation at a blues session gives it a semblance of religious ritual. The blues event, Levine notes, "has definite sacred overtones in that it combines the elements of charisma, catharsis and solidarity in the same manner a church service does; common problems are enunciated, understood, shared, and frequently the seeds of a solution to them are suggested." In this way, blues took on some of the sacred functions of the spirituals, for blues "spoke out of a group experience: it made many individual problems — dislocation, loneliness, broken families, economic difficulties — seem more common and converted them into shared experiences." Even as blacks were becoming more acculturated, they were asserting their common identity and heritage.

It is through this sort of analysis that *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* helps us understand Afro-America's cultural heritage. Folk beliefs offered blacks a crucial sense of mastery and control of their world. Hero traditions provided cathartic release from social restraints, as well as role models for forthright action. Humor allowed blacks to laugh at themselves while safely unmasking the pretensions of their oppressors. Folktales provided vicarious victories, while teaching realistic, unsentimental lessons about the brutality of humankind, the ways of the strong, and the necessity of verbal facility, guile, and role playing for those who would survive, even triumph, in the world.

Perhaps most important, it is this adaptability of culture which needs emphasizing in future research. As Levine suggests, this seemingly paradoxical connection between acculturation and revitalization is not unique to Afro-Americans:

Blacks shared with a number of other ethnic minorities a deep ambivalence concerning the degree to which they desired to enter the mainstream of white American culture because they shared with these other groups a strong centripetal urge which continually drew them back to the central aspects of their traditions even as they were surging outward into the larger society. It was precisely because periods of increased opportunity and mobility posed the greatest threats to whole layers of black cultural tradition that such periods often witnessed important manifestations of cultural revitalization. The black experience may well help us to further re-evaluate the entire image and theory of the melting pot. It may help us to understand the process by which many different groups in the United States have managed to maintain a remarkably independent though only partially separate existence.

By its success, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* demonstrates the need for similar studies of other American sub-cultures to explore the dynamics of how and why groups diverge in their patterns of acculturation and revitalization. No doubt class status is important as is the relationship of ethnic culture to class and social mobility to cultural change. Moreover, future studies must also ask to what extent the black working class shares the same values as white ethnic (especially Catholic) or WASP workers. But for the present, Lawrence Levine's *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* provides both outstanding insights into the development of Afro-American culture, and a point of departure for subsequent research in folk history.

—**Elliott J. Gorn**

The Grand Ole Opry: The Early Years, 1925-1935, by Charles K. Wolfe. Old Time Music, 1975. 128 pp., $5.95.

Everyone knows the story of the Grand Ole Opry. One Saturday night late in 1925, George D. Hay, the "Solemn Old Judge" placed a septuagenarian fiddler named Uncle Jimmy Thompson before a microphone at Nashville's young radio station WSM; the station was flooded with enthusiastic telephone calls, and an industry was born. Hundreds of radio programs, thousands of personal appearances, millions of dollars in records sales and one amusement park later, country music has become a national obsession.

Charles K. Wolfe's engrossing account of the Opry's first ten years shows that decade to have been less purposeful but vastly more interesting than official histories have let on. Wolfe works to place the Opry in the context of Nashville in the mid-'20s. It was a city which was conscious of itself as "the Athens of the South," yet one in which there was a sufficient audience for old-time music — what some record companies more accurately called the "old familiar tunes" — to support occasional performances by traditional musicians on several local radio stations. The Opry itself grew out of just such a program. WSM had already broadcast a policemen's benefit performance live from Ryman Auditorium earlier in November. Included among that show's varied cast of popular and light-classical entertainers were Uncle Dave Macon and Sid Harkreader, soon to become regulars on the Opry, and another important fixture of the early Opry years, Dr. Humphrey Bate's band.

The Saturday night program which came to be known as the Grand Ole Opry grew fitfully over the course of the next year or two, sometimes faced with competition from Saturday night "barn dance" shows carried by other local stations, sometimes interrupted or threatened with extinction altogether by the growing popularity of network fare. Even in its earliest days, the Opry was never the musically pure evening of traditional string-band music of popular legend; its very beginnings were firmly rooted in a not-so-curious mixture of musical styles.

If the early Opry was not the only, or even the first, showcase for traditional music in Nashville, what was the secret of its success? Contrary to popular impression, records had very little to do with it. Our image of the Opry as the home of the most popular recording stars in country music, of Nashville as Music City USA, is of relatively recent formation. With the exception of Uncle Dave Macon, who had established a successful recording career before the program began, early Opry stars recorded very few sides, far less, as a rule, than many other popular white Southern musicians of the '20s. In fact, only one commercial field recording session — Victor's 1928 effort, which Wolfe carefully chronicles through anecdote and discography — took place in the city before the second World War.

Wolfe never really accounts for the success of the Grand Ole Opry, although he implies that WSM's more powerful signal enabled it to reach a rural audience larger than the more sophisticated and hence socrnful urban audience to which many of the smaller, weaker stations were bound. The National Life and Accident Insurance Company, which owned the station, saw in country music a way to attract a large rural market to its newly devised installment plan for paying insurance premiums, and promoted the one through the other. Agents often distributed Opry tickets to potential customers, and in the early '30s the company even published a pamphlet entitled *Fiddles and Life Insurance*.

Much of the author's own painstakingly assembled evidence, however, points to a more complex assessment of the phenomenon. To say, as Wolfe does, that country music appealed to rural audiences who adhered to it in the face of urban contempt contradicts much of his own data and exaggerates the popularity of traditional fiddle and string-band music in the South before the advent of radio.

Wolfe's research into the backgrounds of the individual performers reveals a varied group of men and women who shared one trait — a

failure to adhere to our stereotypes of Southern folk musicians. They followed a variety of trades, many distressingly unpastoral and even middle class. Dr. Humphrey Bate really was a physician. Uncle Dave Macon had owned a hauling company, and the Binkley Brothers were watch repairmen. Uncle Jimmy Thompson had been a farmer, but his niece, who often accompanied him, was a professionally trained semi-classical musician, and Thompson aspired to the sort of second career as a professional entertainer that Macon had achieved.

Their repertory showed the same sort of mixed character. They played traditional fiddle tunes, to be sure, but they played popular tunes of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries as well. Dr. Bate often divided his musicians into smaller specialized ensembles, like the Bate trio and Dr. Bate and His Hawaiian Orchestra, for this sort of work. And few groups adhered to our notions of string-band instrumentation either. Ukeleles, harmonicas, Hawaiian guitars, cellos, string basses and especially pianos — all appeared in one or another of the bands.

In fact, one might argue that these bands functioned in rural Tennessee society somewhat like those bands do which appear today at weddings, bar mitzvahs and the like. They played a wide variety of dance music designed to have the broadest possible appeal, from old fiddle tunes through the latest contemporary pop hits. Though their repertoires were traditional to varying degrees, the record companies' appellation "old familiar tunes," is more representative of the broad range of their material. These were popular bands like the jazz bands of the same era; though they occasionally borrowed from their swingin' counterparts, their audiences, their territory and their repertory lay mainly toward the conservative end of the musical spectrum.

In Wolfe's account of the Grand Ole Opry, we have the opportunity to watch the transformation of these local dance bands into the hillbilly ensembles which we now recall so fondly. As these local musicians became radio personalities, their ordinary names were swapped for more colorful stage names; Dr. Bate and his band became the Possum Hunters; the Binkley Brothers' band was renamed the Dixie Clodhoppers. Wolfe reports that Hay, who was responsible for much of this imagery, had a list of ridiculous, oafish-sounding names which he arbitrarily doled out to promising new bands who auditioned for the Opry.

Hay's purposeful fostering of this sort of image raises questions about the validity of the author's suggestion that the Opry's popularity was limited to an exclusively rural audience. It is unlikely that a truly rural audience would have required such an adulterated picture of rural life — at times idyllic, and at others buffoonish — to attract it to the Opry.

No one can deny, of course, that a large rural audience did exist. But the use of exaggerated rural images suggests an appeal to other audiences as well. Discussing the Opry's early success, Wolfe refers to the *"revival* in interest in the popularity of the old familiar tunes." (emphasis added). This implies that two other audiences may have been attracted to the music of the Opry, once its difference from the popular music of the times was exaggerated: first generation city dwellers recently removed from the country, who would perhaps have been susceptible to nostalgic evocations of the life that they had sacrificed to the apparent promise of the cities; and a wider audience of Americans who, as historians of the 1920s have pointed out, looked to the virtues of the simple rural life for an indictment of the evils of urban, immigrant-rife industrialism. To cite the scorn of Nashville's print media — which as Wolfe's citations show, was hardly unanimous in any case, is to miss the appeal of this countrified traditional music to these other audiences.

As time passed, the managers of the Opry sensed this appeal more strongly. They saw more clearly the advantage of emphasizing the unique qualities of Southern rural music, and they became more sophisticated, though not necessarily cynical, in the manipulation of this image. With the passage of time, it was easier for Hay, as it was for us, to celebrate the rustic days of the early Opry and to look upon it as a guardian of true "folk" music. Nevertheless, Wolfe provides enough evidence to suggest that the real secret of the Opry's success lay in Hay's ability to maintain a creative tension between a rural image and a broad program of music expressive of popular taste.

That one can find material for so detailed a speculation is a measure of the quality of *The Grand Ole Opry*. It is a major advance in the scholarship of country music, which continues to rely largely on strings of apocryphal parables. Wolfe has unearthed a phenomenal amount of new material about the Opry and its performers, a wealth of fascinating detail which will be appreciated by fans and scholars alike. Well-known performers are warmly portrayed, and those who have been slighted in past histories, like Dr. Bate or Obed Pickard, are restored to their rightful positions. The book is amply illustrated, although the documents and photographs could have been better reproduced and more conscientiously identified. Written in Wolfe's elegant style and supported by ample discographies, *The Grand Ole Opry* is an essential work for anyone interested in American popular and folk culture.

— **Dell Upton**

Our Southern Highlanders, by Horace Kephart. Macmillan, 1913; reprinted by the University of Tennessee Press, 1976. $5.95.

Our Appalachia: An Oral History, by Laurel Shackelford and Bill Weinberg. Hill and Wang, 1977. $12.95.

In the new introduction to Horace Kephart's *Our Southern Highlanders*, recently reprinted by the University of Tennessee Press, George Ellison maintains that the authors of virtually every book written about the Southern mountains since the publication of Kephart's volume owe and usually acknowledge a debt to him. It is a classic study, says Ellison, and no book devoted to the Southern Appalachians is more widely known, read, and respected. That *Our Southern Highlanders* has received such wide acclaim and exercised so much influence is testimony not only to its quality, but, as comparison with the just published *Our Appalachia: An Oral History* makes clear, is also indicative of popular images of Appalachia and the genre of books which have dominated the literature about the region.

Kephart, a writer and a naturalist, arrived in the Great Smoky Mountains

in 1904 and spent the rest of his life living and traveling in the Southern Appalachians. The first edition of *Our Southern Highlanders* was published in 1913, followed by an expanded edition in 1922. As Ellison explains, the book is a literary work that is at once historical, sociological and autobiographical. Kephart supplemented his first-hand observations with scholarly research, anecdotes, native comments and dialects, and photographs. At a time when little of substance had been written on the Appalachian people, Kephart's concern was to explain mountain people in such a way as to promote and understand their way of life and to encourage aid for them. His strongest chapters are those which describe the customs and beliefs of the people of the mountains, and the ways in which they adjusted to their rough environment.

But while there is much to admire in Kephart's work, there are also serious deficiencies in his portrayal of mountain life. Kephart was concerned with the "real" or "typical" mountaineer. He "found the southern mountaineer everywhere one people" — little farmers living up the branches and on the steep hillsides who possessed "traits and manners that have been transmitted almost unchanged from ancient times." Having concluded that all mountaineers are basically alike, Kephart chose to focus on "those features that seemed [to him] most picturesque." As a consequence, his book devotes more space to moonshining than to any other aspect of mountain life. There are also long sections on feuds, violence, dialect and some of the other "oddities" of the mountains.

Kephart defended and admired mountain ways and mountain people, though he admitted that he found them a "strange race." To understand them he believed it was necessary to "decivilize" oneself "to the extent of *going back* and getting an eighteenth century point of view." His portrayal has helped to build and perpetuate the stereotype of Appalachia as a classless society of quaint and backward people. It has reinforced the static image of mountain life as depicted by turn-of-the-century novelist, John Fox, Jr., and it set the tone for subsequent descriptions of mountain culture.

The shortcomings of Kephart's work are magnified by the reading of *Our Appalachia*. This book is a result of the work of the Appalachian Oral History Project, a four-school consortium based at Alice Lloyd College. The project began in 1971 with student and staff interviewers taping the recollections of mountain people throughout Central Appalachia. Laurel Shackelford and Bill Weinberg then used many of these interviews to piece together a remarkable oral history of the area.

photo by Susan Kuklin

The book is divided into three sections. The first, "A Simpler Time," deals with that period in Appalachia described in Kephart's work. It examines a time before railroads were built or the coal industry had become important, a time when Appalachia was an agrarian society. The second section, "A Culture Under Attack," comprises the heart of the book. It describes the encroachment of outside influences on Appalachia and the ensuing struggles. The final and weakest section, "Digging In," presents a brief discussion of several issues now facing mountain residents.

The shortcomings of *Our Appalachia* are inherent in the nature of the work. Some interviews naturally have more depth and provide greater insight than others. As a result, some topics, such as the history of union organizing in the coalfields, receive insufficient attention; others like the impact of textile mills are overlooked entirely. But in a region as diverse as Appalachia, it is impossible for one book to cover all topics of importance, and the many strengths of this oral history finally overshadow any weaknesses. The discussion of mountain politics is more informative than any treatment of that subject now available. And the second section provides valuable insight into how speculators acquired mineral and property rights in Appalachia, why mountain people sold these rights, and how mountaineers adapted to life in the coal camps. Don Anderson's photographs and the editors' introductions to the various interviews are excellent.

The book's greatest strength is how it counteracts popular stereotypes and myths about the Appalachian region. This collection of interviews offers convincing firsthand proof that the so-called "typical mountaineer" does not exist.

Instead, a realistic but appreciative portrait of mountain life emerges from these interviews with farmers, coal miners, teachers, politicians, welfare recipients, Regular Baptists and Presbyterians, those for and against strip mining or labor unions, rural and urban people, the poorly educated and college graduates. Kephart was a keen observer and his work is an important source for understanding mountain life before the industrial age hit Appalachia with a vengeance. But *Our Appalachia* reveals that Kephart's description is not entirely accurate. It is too romanticized. His characters are one-dimensional, "Yesterday's People," while the stories of Verna Mae Slone, Lewis Burke, Richard Jackson and others in *Our Appalachia* dramatize that Appalachians are also "Tomorrow's People." They have had to face many of our national crises — land abuse, corporate irresponsibility, migration, inadequate health and education systems, worker rebellion, political corruption, etc. — in harsher ways and well before much of the rest of the country. And given the constant assault on their culture they have coped remarkably well.

One can almost picture how Kephart's readers in the first part of this century responded to his work with amazement and excitement at the existence of such a "strange race" of people. Response to *Our Appalachia* will be much different. One shares in Sam Johnson's joy at how the Lord has changed his life; in Warren Wright's

anger about strip mining; in Richard Jackson's despair about the future; and in the hope offered by projects such as the East Kentucky Health Services Center.

There is much to recommend in both of the works reviewed here. But *Our Appalachia* is the more important of the two because it allows the people of Appalachia to speak for themselves. Far too often outsiders have painted an incomplete, misleading and, at times, destructive picture of mountain life. The insider-outsider distinction can be carried too far; works by outsiders with the sympathy and commitment of Kephart, John C. Campbell, and Robert Coles are needed and should be encouraged. But, just as blacks and women have spoken up in recent decades to dispel myths and stereotypes about themselves, it is now time for Appalachians to tell their own stories. *Our Appalachia* is a fine building block for this endeavor.

— **Steve Fisher**

A Return Visit: Joel Chandler Harris

by Bob Brinkmeyer

Joel Chandler Harris liked to call himself a "cornfield journalist." He was, of course, much more than that; he authored a number of novels and stories including the Uncle Remus tales, which are still in print almost 100 years after Harris published the first such tale in the *Atlanta Constitution* in 1879. But there is some truth to Harris' self-appointed epithet, for he was most at home when using the crafts of a journalist. His short and compact handling of the Remus tales was impeccable; but when he tried his hand at extended works of fiction, he seemed to lose control of his material, and became ensnared by the popular demand for sentimental characters and plots.

Harris' masterpieces, the Remus tales, are, in a sense, refined pieces of reporting. The sources for the exploits of Brer Rabbit and the other animals are the stories Harris heard from the slaves he grew up with in rural Georgia. And the Uncle Remus tales are accurate descriptions of life in the cornfield; the world as found in the animal tales of Brer Rabbit was no easy-going, mint-julips-on-the-veranda plantation existence. There was no sentimentality here: life was harsh and cruel and only the strong or the quick-witted survived. In the words of Uncle Remus: "'Zease an' trouble an' one thing an' an'er is all de time makin' de rouns, en de place where folks live at."

While Harris was the first white author to successfully mine the wealth of black folktales, some of which had a long African heritage, he was not the first to have the idea. Even though he developed as an artist amidst a tradition of white dialect writings like those by Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, Harris was more profoundly influenced by Irwin Russell, who published black dialect poems in the 1870s. Harris found Russell's work carelessly written but was fascinated by his use of dialect to delineate characters. Perhaps even more crucial to Harris' development was an article by William Owens, "Folk-lore of Southern Negroes," discussing and roughly outlining the significance of black folktales, which appeared in *Lippincott's Magazine* in 1877. Here Harris began to discover the literary value of the animal tales he had heard as a youth.

At the *Atlanta Constitution,* Harris worked with Henry Grady, a major proponent of the idea of a New South rooted in commerce and industry. Like Grady, Harris was concerned that reconciliation with the North was absolutely essential to the birth and growth of the "New South"; to that end, it was necessary to appease Northern distrust of Southern manners, mores, and traditions. The Uncle Remus tales – and his other works of fiction – were not written solely for this political purpose, but Harris did see them as part of an outreaching movement. And so did many others, including then-President Theodore Roosevelt, who, at an Atlanta luncheon in 1905, praised Harris' efforts towards reconciliation:

> Presidents may come and Presidents may go, but Uncle Remus stays put. Georgia has done a great many things for the Union, but she has never done more than when she gave Joel Chandler Harris to American literature....Where Mr. Harris seems to me to have done one of his greatest services is that he has written what exalts the South in the mind of every man who reads it, and yet what has not a flavor of bitterness toward any other part of the Union...I cannot too strongly express the obligations I am under to Mr. Harris; and one of those obligations is to feel as a principle that it is my duty (which if I transgressed, I have not transgressed knowingly) never as an American to say anything that could be construed as an attack upon any portion of our common country.

The frame in which the Remus tales are told clearly points toward political reconciliation. The venerable old black Uncle Remus often serves as a mouthpiece for orthodox white Southern beliefs, defending life on Old South

The Sea Birds Are Still Alive, by Toni Cade Bambara. Random House, 1977. 150 pp. $7.95.

It was a serious discussion about fairy tales and small black children, and people had pretty much chosen up sides. There were those who felt that fairy tales were relatively harmless and served a useful purpose by helping a child develop a capacity for fantasy and imagination. On the other side were those who stressed the racism and sexism that run roughshod through most fairy tales and advised that such literature should be kept away from black children as just one more negative force.

Toni Cade Bambara, a member of the panel whose presentations had somehow sparked the heated discussion, listened for a while and then she said, "I think we're missing the point here. Hiding books or television programs or movies or people from kids on the grounds that they need to be protected doesn't help them at all. Even a good parent can't be around to exercise the proper censorship all the time, so what we have to do is help our children develop the critical habit. We have to give them the tools to read "Goldilocks and The Three Bears" and see Goldilocks for what she is — a robber. We have to help our children develop a different perspective with which they can evaluate everything around them. If we can do that, censorship won't be

plantations and simultaneously satirizing those blacks who attempt to better themselves and assert their independence. Unlike his "ol' darkie" predecessor, Uncle Tom from Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* Uncle Remus is not destroyed by the slave-holding society, but is instead accorded respect and kindness. Harris' message to the North, in one sense represented by the little white boy to whom Remus tells his tales, is clear: the South is not so bad after all. The implications behind this message are even more far-reaching: the South is a fine place, worthy of readmittance to the Union; and there is really no need for the North to oversee reconstruction. The South, so Harris seemed to suggest, can look after its own internal affairs.

The attitudes found in the frame of the tales and those in the tales themselves, however, are at odds; and perhaps the resulting tension is one reason for the stories' vigor. While Uncle Remus spins a comforting web about the goodness of the old ways and the essential happiness of life (Remus has no bad memories, even though he lived through slavery), many of the tales he tells are filled with cruel and brutal struggles for survival. Beneath much of the humor for which the tales are well-known there is often, as in many of today's cartoons, a disturbing degree of violence and brutality which hints at a deeper and darker level of expression. And while the Remus tales are characteristically seen merely as entertaining children's tales (one finds them shelved in the children's section in bookstores today), Harris himself knew better: he forbade them ever to be read to his own children.

The world of the Remus tales is one where any ethical sense must give way to the more basic drive to exist. The tales center on Brer Rabbit, who, as Harris knew, represented a black man. "It needs no scientific investigation," Harris wrote, "to show why he [the American black] selects as his hero the weakest and most harmless of all animals, and brings him out victorious in contests with the bear, the wolf, and the fox" the rabbit becomes the folkhero of black Americans because his fate mirrors theirs: all the wealth and power belong to the other creatures. Stealth and shrewdness are necessary to advance, and Brer Rabbit as we see time and again plays the helpless fool, baiting the vanity of the other animals, only to achieve in the end what he's after. "Ef I ain't mighty mistaken, honey," Uncle Remus tells the little boy, "you wanter know how come Brer Rabbit kin outdo de yuther creeturs when he ain't got no tushes ner no claws, an' not much strenk'... Well, dat's de ve'y identical thing dat de tales is all about." Although Harris' audiences did not read the tales in this way, we find a stunning contrast in identities between Harris' two black characters, Uncle Remus and Brer Rabbit.

Only in the revising and reworking of these black folktales about animals could Harris break free from his own genteel tradition. In his other works his imagination remains enmeshed in the prescribed limits of sentimental literature. But in the animal tales, Harris explored a world often strikingly dark and disturbing, and real. Harris himself perceived this dichotomy between his two stances, as we can see in a letter to one of his daughters about the "other fellow" to whom he says he surrendered when writing stories:

> You know all of us have two entities, or personalities. That is the reason you see and hear persons "talking to themselves." They are talking to the "other fellow." I have often asked my "other fellow" where he gets all his information, and how he can remember, in the nick of time, things that I have forgotten long ago; but he never satisfies my curiosity. He is simply a spectator of my folly until I seize a pen, and then he comes forward and takes charge . . . Now, I'll admit that I write the editorials for the paper. The "other fellow" has nothing to do with them, and, so far as I am able to get his views on the subject, he regards them with scorn and contempt; though there are rare occasions when he helps me out on a Sunday editorial. He is a creature hard to understand, but, so far as I can understand him, he's a very sour, surly fellow until I give him an opportunity to guide my pen in subjects congenial to him; whereas I am, as you know, jolly, good-natured, and entirely harmless.

Because the emotional content of the tales is so atypical of Southern literature during that time, hardly any contemporary readers saw beyond the quaint framework and setting of the stories. And they had no reason to look any closer. Whites would naturally feel much more comfortable overlooking the tales' disturbing implications of black people's plight in the land of the free and the home of the brave. So they read the tales on a superficial level as mere humorous animal adventures told to a cute little white boy by an equally cute old black man. And they were comforted to know that blacks, like Uncle Remus, were happy and content with things just the way they were. It would be many long and bloody years later before white America would finally realize that it was Brer Rabbit, and not Uncle Remus, who was knocking at its door. □

necessary because they'll weigh everything against their own values, their own perspectives and their own program."

That is what *The Sea Birds Are Still Alive*, Toni Cade Bambara's new collection of short stories, is all about – defining and developing that new perspective; a perspective that posits black and third world revolution as a given, a necessity as vital, desirable and unavoidable as breathing.

Because she believes that the task of the black writer is to make revolution irresistible, Toni has accepted a functional view of culture as a revolutionary weapon. She is the kind of artist Nazi propaganda specialist Joseph Goebbels was talking about when he said, "When I hear the word culture, I reach for my sword." For people like Toni Cade Bambara, culture becomes an invaluable tool for communication of new and "subversive" ideas and any cultural product must be judged not only by how well it succeeds according to objective criteria of form, style and execution, but must also be evaluated carefully to discover how real, how plausible, how irresistible, that product has made a new life style dedicated to revolutionary change.

In her first book of short stories, *Gorilla, My Love*, Toni captured black life lock, stock and barrel and reproduced it complete with language, style, folkways, customs and jive talking. Despite her claim in that book's preface that she recognized the danger of an autobiographical approach and therefore dealt "straight-up fiction," her characters were so real and their essence presented so clearly that even after a first reading, each one lingered in the mind like the warmly held memory of a favorite cousin.

In *Sea Birds*, Toni shows that she has meticulously maintained the formidable artistic arsenal that allows her to create real people on the printed page. We only have to read the main character in "Medley" detailing the trappings of the blues:

> *"I ease back into the booth to wait for the next set . . . but feeling worried in my mind about Larry cause I've been through days like that myself. Cold cream caked on my face from the day before, hair matted, bathrobe funky, not a clean pair of drawers to my name. Even the emergency ones, the draggy cotton numbers stuffed way in the back of the drawer under the scented paper gone. And no clean silverware in the box and the last of the paper cups gone too. Icebox empty cept for a rock of cheese and the lone water jug that ain't even half full that's how anyhow the thing's gone on. And not a clue as to the next step."*

Or hear the young girl in "Christmas Eve at Johnson's Drugs N Goods" describing her mother's bought-it-hot-during-the-riot fur coat as part of her "Turn the School Out Outfit" which is reserved for those times when the mother must journey up to the school to make it clear to the teacher just whose child this is anyway. Or read the description of fine George Lee Piper:

> *"But we all know she watches Piper, same reason we all do. Cause Piper is so fine you just can't help yourself. Tall and built up, blue-black and smooth, got the nerve to have dimples, and wears this splayed-out push-broom mustache he's always raking in with three fingers. Got a big butt too that makes you wanna hug the customer that asks for the cartons Piper keeps behind him, two shelfs down. Mercy. And when its slow, or when Mrs. J comes bustling over for the count, Piper steps from behind the counter and shows his self, glistening fro and every inch of him fine. Enough to make you holler."*

We only have to read over such virtuoso performances and we whoop and laugh and cry and surrender ourselves completely. And that is Toni's secret and most effective weapon. She wants us to recognize her characters as people just like us. She is determined to show us – to *convince* us – that revolutions can be made by those people – people who eat fast food, hate cold weather, have problems with their lovers, their work and their children. Toni wants us to see that even in the midst of all that confusion, ordinary people can dream extraordinary freedom dreams and make a commitment that infuses their lives with new understanding and unshakable purpose. Her writing in *Sea Birds* attempts to make revolution not so much irresistible as accessible.

It is not an easy task. Even for a gifted writer like Toni, the risks are numerous. A revolutionary must of necessity have a new vision upon which to model the "new society." In order to be communicated, that vision must be expressed in words – in the everyday language of the people who are to share the rewards of that new society. Toni's characters have to convince us that these are really their revolutionary thoughts and not simply reflections of what the author would like those thoughts to be if she had more choice in the matter. Toni makes her task even harder because her characters are usually not card-carrying revolutionaries. They are just folks who have been touched in one way or another by a black art center in their community, a gele-wearing sister up the street, or one too many police brutality cases.

Putting revolutionary ideas and new perspectives into the mouths of these characters without breaking the rhythm of their speech or the logic of their lives at times takes Toni perilously close to artless, rather than artful, propagandizing. Most of the time she sidesteps the danger before it is around long enough to even make us uncomfortable. She is able to do that because her characters rarely explore ideas at length; they touch briefly upon a new insight and move on. They casually throw in an alternative value structure and keep gettin' up. In "A Girl's Story," for example, the main character distracts herself from her brother's merciless teasing by singing "real loud the Guinea-Bissau marching song the brother at the center had taught her" and the scene works.

Almost all of the failures are small ones. The only two stories that flounder badly are the ones where the political lessons are imposed on the lives and the language of the characters with little regard for the sensitivity of the process. The title story of the collection, "The Sea Birds Are Still Alive," attempts unsuccessfully to explore a revolution in progress in Indochina, and "The Long Night" brings the violence of the counterrevolutionary forces into focus. Both stories try too hard to make political connections for us, to bring home the message that the revolution of colored peoples against oppression is worldwide and inevitable and that the consequences of fighting that oppression are serious and deadly. The characterization, plot and language suffer for being so obviously relegated to second place.

But such failed experiments are inevitable for an artist who pushes against old rules and old forms to make a new kind of writing that can do it all – make us laugh, make us

cry, and transform us. Transformation is what Toni Cade Bambara is about. Transformation — from the gibbering, grasping, dangerously individualistic strivings of an oppressed and fragmented people, to the warmth, humanity, righteous indignation and love of a revolutionary people moving toward power and freedom. There is no other black author, male or female, touching so many vital areas of black life with such a deftly political and at the same time overwhelmingly affectionate hand. Toni Cade Bambara's initials are T.C.B. And she does.

— **Pearl Cleage Lomax**

Mothers of the South: Portraiture of the White Tenant Farm Woman, by Margaret Jarman Hagood. Norton, 1977. 252 pp. $3.95.

"For it is admitted," said Margaret Hagood, a young sociologist writing in 1939, "that the South must play a major role in reproducing the Nation and that its obligation to translate its cultural and economic potentialities into a national contribution is great." Today, nearly 40 years later, this assertion has been borne out in ways which few Southerners living through the Great Depression would have believed.

Southerners view the dramatic metamorphosis symbolized by Carter's rise to power with a complex mixture of pride, relief, regret and worry. Great poverty and inequity still loom large in the South, as in the rest of the nation, but many of the ancient social structures which used to contain it are gone forever. One of the most significant of these structures was the widespread and oppressive system of tenant farming. In *Mothers of the South*, a new edition of the 1930's classic social documentary, Margaret Jarman Hagood has preserved for us a vivid picture of how it used to be for millions of white Southern tenant farming women — women who bore the brunt of the almost overwhelming hardships of rural life during the Depression, and whose immense energy, industry and courage have gone for a long time unheralded.

Tenant farming today has almost vanished, obliterated by the rise of mechanized agribusinesses and the urban migration of rural laborers. But when Margaret Hagood set out in 1937 to interview 254 white tenant farm women in Georgia, Alabama, and the Carolina Piedmont, farm tenancy had "recently assumed in America the proportions of a Number One economic dilemma." By writing *Mothers of the South* Hagood hoped to alert the rest of the nation to the extremity of the tenant farmers' plight. Mothers, Hagood felt, were a crucial element in the situation; the South had the highest birth rate in the nation, and women appeared to shoulder the heaviest part of the hardships endured by tenant farming families.

The mothers Hagood met not only cooked, cleaned, washed, and nurtured their huge families, under the most primitive conditions and generally with little inside-the-house assistance from their husbands, but also normally put in a full day of backbreaking work in the fields as well. Hagood documents with great sensitivity and compassion the sacrifices demanded by this double role of homemaker and field hand, yet manages at the same time to avoid sentimentality. Her opinions and attitudes towards the women she interviews are clearly presented without obscuring the words of the women themselves or the great mass of factual material we are given. As Anne Firor Scott tells us in her fine new introduction to the book, Hagood's own early life on her family's Georgia farm allowed her to enter into the experiences of of the tenant farm mothers.

Hagood's portraits of the women themselves are supplemented by thorough documentation of the environmental factors which locked the mothers and their families into the backbreaking system of tenant farming. Eleven farms cited as representative of the many variations of the system are carefully described. We learn how tobacco and cotton ruined the land, yet how superstition, habit, ("We was brought up to do it"), and the need for cash perpetuated the tenants' dependence on these two money crops. We see how difficult it was for a tenant farming family to pull themselves up by their bootstraps to profitable owner status, since the landlords controlled the acreage allotments, the rent due for the land, and the cost of credit needed to buy equipment, seed and fertilizer. "Them that has," says one tenant, "can always fix it so the po' won't even have a chance to make anything."

The heart of the book, though, lies in Part II ("Mothers"). Here we are made to feel as nearly as possible what it was really like to be a mother of a large tenant family in the '30s, how *hard* these mothers worked. When we read about mothers cooking for their 13 children on wood stoves with water toted from springs down the road, and boiling laundry in huge pots over fires in the backyard, it scarcely seems possible that this book was written only 40 years ago. On top of these chores, of course, they spent a large portion of each day in the fields, bent over the cotton patch in the broiling sun or suckering the young tobacco plants. In addition, it was usually the mother's part to tend the chickens and cows and the vegetable garden. Often, during the summer months, they had to stay up half the night canning vegetables and fruit for the winter — several women reported canning 400 or 500 quarts in a summer! Add to these jobs the unending labor of raising an average of six children, and one begins to see why seven-eighths of the women interviewed told Hagood that they preferred field labor to housework. "In the field there's just one thing," said one woman, "and you can finish it up; but here in the house there's cooking, cleaning, washing, milking, churning, mending, sewing, canning, and always the children —

and you don't know what to turn to next."

Just as astonishing is how cheerful and unresentful these women remained. Most of the women talked freely to Hagood about their feelings towards their families, and Hagood was struck by the "spirit of cooperation and...absence of sexual antagonism" that existed between husbands and wives. This was true despite the fact that, as Hagood saw it, the women ended up doing more than their share of the work. None of the wives resented the pattern of male dominance in the family, which included such privileges as "totin' the pocket book" (managing the money), not having to work in the house, deciding where the family moved and what crops to raise. Hagood concluded that most tenant families worked too hard to have much time for the kinds of squabbles taken for granted in many more affluent homes.

Perhaps the most interesting and poignant sections of the book are those on child bearing and child raising. Here Hagood gives us fascinating, concrete details of the ways in which many children were born, weaned, toilet trained, and disciplined. Child bearing was an arduous and seemingly unending process which began about age 18 and went on often until the mother's health was ruined and her energies drastically depleted.

Mothers often told Hagood that they hoped there would be no more babies; yet very little contraception was practiced, and each new baby was adored by the whole household. *All* the children were wanted, once they arrived, and Hagood reports no instances at all of child abuse or neglect. Moreover, as Hagood says, (challenging the then-prevalent stereotypes of the tenant family shattered by poverty), "Bereavement of her children by death seems to be the hardest burden of all that the mother has to bear. Grief over the death of... a mother's twelfth baby is not in the least diminished because there are many other children left."

Mothers raised their children with lots of love and lots of "whuppings," trained them early to work hard and rarely had to punish them for neglecting a chore. Most of the children flourished emotionally (though many suffered physically from disease and malnutrition). Somehow, against all the odds, and under the weight of poverty and death and sickness and exhaustion, most of the mothers maintained a loving cheerfulness towards their children, and were proud of having brought them up. "There's one thing I *have* done, I *have* raised my children," was a typical comment, Hagood says; and some even managed to crack a joke or two about the difficulties involved: "How do I raise my children? I pulls them right up by the hair of the head."

Included in this new edition of *Mothers of the South* is a photographic section, done originally by Hagood and photographers Dorothea Lange and Marion Post in 1939, and prepared for this edition by Anne Firor Scott. Here we can see for ourselves a little of what Margaret Hagood saw, and are able to understand even more clearly her own attitude of compassionate respect towards the white tenant farming mothers of the South.

— Chris Mayfield

Baseball and the Cold War, by Howard Senzel. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1977. 298 pp., $10.00.

Long before the days of Alibi Ike and Casey-at-the-Bat, baseball was already a staple of America's changing folklore. Even its origins, tied to Abner Doubleday – and hence to Fort Sumter – seem interwoven with the nation's mythic past. As the culture has changed, so has baseball...or is it the other way around? The imagery of the summer pastime remains bucolic – hills and fields, pens and fences, paths and apples, horsehides and lumber – but the game itself is now played at night, under domes, on synthetic grass. The plink of metal bats is increasingly familiar on local diamonds, and even in the majors "the willow wand" may soon give way to "the reynolds rapper." Goodbye, Louisville; the machine has nearly taken over the garden.

It is in precisely this domain of revered but threatened ritual that folklorists, oral historians and material culture buffs find their most necessary and satisfying home. That is why I venerate the beautifully balanced Ted Williams bat on my mantlepiece as much as the brightly colored Sea Island quilt on my bed. And that is why, in the last ten years, the participant-observers documenting the rite of baseball have increased dramatically in numbers and seriousness; taking notes around the batting cage has acquired all the anthropological validity once reserved for studying tribal sacrifices on a Pacific island.

Whether primarily participants, like Jim Bouton, or primarily observers, like Roger Kahn, the diamondologists of the current generation have a special blend of devotion and detachment. Howard Senzel has these qualities and more. His new book, fittingly subtitled "A Soliloquy on the Necessity of Baseball in the Life of a Serious Student of Marx & Hegel from Rochester, New York," is the best thing to happen to children of the Musial-Mays-Mantle years since Brendal C. Boyd and Fred C. Harris created *The Great American Baseball Card Flipping, Trading and Bubble Gum Book* in 1973.

The dustjacket picture of a ballglove holding a hand grenade should have been fair warning to me to be alert ("on your toes all the time," as my high school coach would say) when I opened this book. For Senzel's soliloquy, like most, can be read on more than one level; he writes about more than one war. What plot the book has revolves around cold war

relations between the capitalist United States, now captained by an underhand-pitching Baptist, and socialist Cuba, still led by a hefty, bearded right-hander. As a youth in Rochester in 1959, Senzel had listened to the last game his Red Wings played in Cuba against their International League rivals, the Havana Sugar Kings, before politics slammed the door. For the next decade, he wandered in the ideological wilderness, returning home with the tough-minded belief that baseball was the circus of the empire, the opiate of the American masses. When he found himself sitting at a Pirates-Dodgers game one afternoon in the mid-seventies, he "saw the game as a quaint American folk ritual, and nothing else."

Maybe. But that folk ritual prompted Senzel to spend the next several years in a Haley-like search for his true political and social roots, trying to reconcile the International League of his boyhood, starring Rocky Nelson ("I will always remember him as the greatest baseball player who ever lived"), with the international league of socialism, where he first met Karl Marx. The long-pending detente between the US and Cuba becomes the metaphor and motive for this personal reconciliation. He imagines that baseball (and Senzel) will be crucial to the rapprochement. But there is such logic to his Luis Tiant-inspired fantasy that he finds himself scooped by Earl Wilson's gossip column and upstaged by Carter's future media man, Barry Jagoda. Now that Henry Kissinger has been allowed to throw out the first ball at a World Series game, can a friendly pitchers-duel between Carter and Castro, a home-and-home series in Washington and Havana, be too far off?

But Senzel has not written a political tract. On the contrary, his real war stories concern growing up in the 1950s, "the most boring years in the history of mankind." In the decade before pills, protest and pornography, many pre-adolescents found shelter, meaning and intense revelation through some church experience, but millions more received their high from the secular yet no less cosmic ritual of baseball. Senzel, like so many of us, was a true believer who lived his faith. He traded baseball cards, scrounged autographs, studied *Sport* magazine, digested the complete works of John R. Tunis, and attended the park of his choice several times a week. He despaired over any compromising of the faith, like Ronald Reagan's glossy misrepresentations in *The Grover Cleveland Alexander Story*, but he could be totally touched and uplifted by baseball as only the innocent can. "I remember seeing Eddie Kasko ordering a Seven-Up float with vanilla ice cream in the neighborhood diner," Senzel writes; "I had a not inaccurate sense of having seen it all."

Senzel's book has a particular resonance for me, since he and I are, so to speak, members of the same denomination. My hometown St. Louis Cardinals invented the farm system back in 1919, through the genius of Branch Rickey, and Rochester was the city that made it work. The two true apostles, Stan Musial and Red Schoendienst, had played for Rochester, and every season there was a new rookie ready to make the jump from the Red Wings to the Red Birds. From Rochester and St. Louis, Senzel and I had both cheered the achievements of Wally Moon, Bill Virdon, Ray Jablonski and Jackie Brandt; we had both booed the ineptitude of lumbering Steve Bilko. Not since freshman year in college have I written so many notes in the margin of a book. The author's intimate, enthusiastic style has a way of unlocking personal memories detailed and deeply felt, in the mind of any reader who knows that Hillerich & Bradsby is not a stock brokerage firm.

But the reconciliation of pre-adolescent baseball fantasies with post-adolescent socialist dreams is only a portion of this book; you need not revere Castro's organization, or George Sisler Jr.'s, to appreciate it. For on a third level, and perhaps the most suggestive, Senzel's book is less about baseball or the cold war than about the sea change that has occurred in American culture since World War II. Raised up in a postwar world where TVs were scarce and the local operator said "Number please," Senzel has come of age in a corporate empire where ball clubs, and everything else, have fallen into the hands of conglomerates. "I was raised on the fault line of the postwar era," Senzel states, as he contemplates the time warp that has allowed a few decent roadside diners to survive in the face of synthetic food chains. "I know it is not new to complain about who is in charge, but what is new is how in charge they are."

Some of Senzel's strongest passages revolve around this theme, and in them baseball serves as his "mirror." With the cultural historian's eye for telling incidents, he pinpoints Walter O'Malley's money-making, culture-denying transfer of the Brooklyn Dodgers to the West Coast in 1957 as the bursting of the bubble. Food and drink, sports and politics – on that day the movable-franchise meaning of American life lay painfully revealed to a new generation. From then on, you could never be confident to "have it your way," even at the ballpark. My New York roommate in college treasured a brick from Ebbets Field as a grim reminder of that fact.

Yet in the end, Senzel is stoical, even optimistic, about the power of baseball – hence culture – to endure corruption, co-option and oppression. His search has deepened his understanding and broadened his faith. As his soliloquy draws to a close, Senzel muses:

> When I think of all the minute details of my everyday life that have been organized against my satisfaction and in favor of corporate profits, I think that baseball has survived miraculously. It is still baseball. It has been commodified, but so has every other external factor of life. And when I think of the ways we wash, and eat, and sleep, and work, and play, I can see that baseball has come through this drastic change in the way we live, not unscathed, but intact....Baseball has been pickled by the corporate mentality, but it has been preserved.

Here is an author who understands folk ritual and who brings much-needed refreshment. I can admire him as fully as I once appreciated the food vendor in Section 32. "Get your red-hot hot dogs; get your ice-cold sodies here!"

–Peter H. Wood

Simple Justice: The History of *Brown* v. *Board of Education* and Black America's Struggle for Equality, by Richard Kluger. Alfred A. Knopf, 1976. 823 pp. $15.95.

Almost two of every five living Americans were born since the momentous 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawed racial segregation in the public schools. *Simple Justice* is "must" reading for the generation of Americans who have grown up in the aftermath of this decision. Richard

Kluger's well-researched, detailed history of the five cases known collectively as *Brown* v. *Board of Education of Topeka* is a unique contribution to the understanding of an event which, in his words, "marked the turning point of America's willingness to face the consequences of centuries of racial discrimination, a practice tracing back nearly to the first settlement of the New World."

Kluger combines social, legal and political history with human drama, written in elegant prose which at times approaches an epic novel. He constructs a rich mosaic of personalities and events which move in ever widening circles, from obscure people and places to the highest offices and some of the most prestigious leaders of the nation. Throughout, he never forgets that he is telling the story of many individuals as well as of a nation. He writes: "Many unheralded people persevering in widespread communities over long, hard decades contributed to what the Supreme Court decided on the seventeenth of May, 1954. This is, in large part, their story. In a larger sense, it is a chapter in the biography of a nation that has begun to understand that history may measure its ultimate worth not by the lilt of its slogans or the might of its arsenals or its troy weights of gold, but by how evenhandedly it has dealt with all of its citizens and how consistently it has denied dignity to none."

While the main theme is the massive onslaught against the constitutionality of segregation in the public schools, Kluger's work is also the story of a century-long, heroic effort by people who, in spite of devastating setbacks, violence, brutality and daily humiliation, nevertheless clung to their faith in the Constitution of the United States and in the use of the legal process to vindicate their rights. Kluger traces the background of this epochal struggle through the major Supreme Court decisions which marked it, from the *Dred Scott* case in 1857 ("a Negro has no rights which the white man was bound to respect") to the Supreme Court's early emasculation of the Civil War Amendments to the restrictive interpretation in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. By the end of the century, "the Supreme Court had nullified nearly every vestige of the federal protection that had been cast like a comforting cloak over the Negro upon his release from bondage." Perhaps the most humiliating blow from that Court came in 1896 when it ruled in *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* that state-enforced racial segregation was constitutional so long as "separate-but-equal" facilities were provided.

The remainder of the book is an account of the multi-faceted battle to overturn Jim Crow law led by the NAACP over nearly five decades. It was a battle fought at many levels, but one which ultimately could be won only by persuading the Supreme Court to re-examine and overrule its well-entrenched doctrine of the *Plessy* case. For Negroes, this meant agonizingly slow and piecemeal attacks on a case-by-case basis, showing in each situation that the segregated facilities were unequal or even non-existent. For Negroes, the legal struggle was also a bootstrap operation. There were few well-trained Negro lawyers to carry the fight in the courts, especially in the South where systematic segregation was rigidly enforced. Civil-rights law was not taught in the nation's law schools at the time. A highlight of the narrative is the story of Charles H. Houston, brilliant Harvard-trained lawyer, who in the early 1930s, with the backing of Howard University's first black president, Mordecai W. Johnson, and the able assistance of men like William H. Hastie, Leon A. Ransom and James M. Nabrit, transformed Howard Law School from a "part-time shoestring operation" into a creditable training ground for a corps of black civil-rights lawyers. Under the aegis of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Thurgood Marshall, his fellow Howard Law School graduates and their professors formed the backbone of the civil-rights struggle in the courts. In time they enlisted the sympathies and talents of scores of distinguished scholars and leading constitutional authorities to assist them in developing the evidence and legal arguments for the final assault upon the legality of segregation.

Throughout the work, the central narrative is studded with biographical profiles of the individual participants on both sides of the contest – lawyers, judges, governmental officials, local school authorities and community leaders, and the men, women and children determined to carry their cause to the Supreme Court despite intimidation and reprisals.

The story of how and why each case arose in the place it did is engrossing. For example, the first case to reach the courts came from Clarendon County, South Carolina – a most unlikely theatre in which to mount an attack against the awesome institution of segregation since it was an area "where life had changed least for black folk since the end of slavery." The case grew out of the refusal of the local white school authorities to grant a request for a bus for Negro children (although the white children and 30 buses) who had to walk nine miles to the nearest high school over low-lying roads so flooded in rainy weather that the children had to row a boat to cross them.

Levi Peason, a Negro parent who brought the suit, lost his case on a technicality, had his credit cut off by the white-owned stores and local bank, and that autumn watched his oats, corn and wheat rot in the fields because no white farmer would lend him a harvester. The Rev. J.A. Delaine, a minister and teacher who led the fight in Clarendon County, lost his teaching job; later his house was burned to the ground. Another case, in Prince Edward County, Virginia, was sparked by a strike of Negro high school students led by a spirited teen-aged girl named Barbara Johns who wrote to the NAACP lawyers and asked that they represent the students in their struggle for better schools.

One of the most exciting sections of the book reconstructs the behind-the-scenes deliberations of the Supreme Court (gleaned from the surviving notes of two justices) as well as the strategic role of Chief Justice Earl Warren in finally leading a badly splintered court to a unanimous decision in the *Brown* case.

Kluger's work can well serve as an important supplementary text in courses on civil rights. It is no detraction from the essential worth of the book, however, to point out one feature perhaps unintended by the author. In my reading, I was forcibly struck by the almost complete absence of women from the professional leadership of the struggle – a faithful reflection of the invisibility of women in mid-century America. *Simple Justice* is a drama in which, with few exceptions, the major actors at the highest

levels are males. It thus serves to remind us that a parallel drama of the renewed struggle against sexism is in the making and has yet to be written.

—**Pauli Murray**

The Shad Treatment, by Garrett Epps. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1977. 444 pp. $9.95.

The Shad Treatment is one novel most Virginia politicians will read this year. A thinly disguised account of the bitter 1973 gubernatorial race that pitted self-styled populist Democrat Henry Howell against Byrd Democrat-turned-Republican Mills Godwin, it will hearten Howell supporters, anger friends of the Organization, and convince everyone else that Virginia is still very much the "political museum piece" that V.O. Key described nearly 30 years ago. The Apple Farmer may be dead, but Junior and his friends carry on.

The novel's hero and narrator is MacIlwain Evans, campaign aide to Thomas Jefferson Shadwell, the populist contender. Scion of a prominent Richmond family, Harvard graduate and a University of Virginia Law School dropout, young Mac Evans throws himself into Shadwell's exuberant assault on the Virginia establishment in an attempt to come to terms with his own troubled heritage. Like Jack Burden in Robert Penn Warren's *All The King's Men*, he crosses class lines to ally himself with an "apostle of grass-roots politics." And like Burden, he learns a good deal about himself and his past in the course of the campaign. Though his candidate loses, Mac finally extricates himself from the entanglements of family and tradition. As he travels north at the end of the novel, he discovers "he is out, he is free, for him it is over. He leaves behind the graves of his brother and his father, their unsettled score of victories and defeats, debts, promises, and betrayals." In Mac Evans, Garrett Epps has created an appealing and believable character. Though neither as compelling nor as complex as Jack Burden, he is nevertheless real.

The strength of *The Shad Treatment* lies not in its characters, however, but in its dissection of the political and social life of modern Virginia. The novel captures perfectly Virginia's reverence for the past, the deep-seated conservatism, and what Key called "a pervading belief that the upper orders should govern." Few who have lived in the state will fail to recognize Howell, Godwin, the Byrds, the late J. Sargent Reynolds, former Senator William Spong, Democratic State Chairman Joseph Fitzpatrick, ex-Governor Linwood Holton, and other politicians who people the book. Epps' descriptions of the capital press corps, the Richmond newspapers, St. Cyprian's School, and the Confederate Club are equally telling. Himself the son of an established Richmond family and a former political reporter for the defunct *Richmond Mercury*, Epps knows whereof he writes.

The title of the novel refers to the process by which old guard members of the General Assembly eviscerate objectionable legislative proposals; like little shad, the bills lose their heads, tails and bones. As Epps implies, not only the upstart politicians but the people of Virginia have too often suffered the Shad Treatment.

Although it scarcely ranks with *All The King's Men*, *The Shad Treatment* is a creditable first novel. Epps does not always handle the flashbacks and the long stretches of exposition as gracefully as he might, but he has a good eye for detail and a good ear for dialogue. And he holds the reader's interest throughout. Virginians will especially enjoy *The Shad Treatment*, but anyone who wants to know why the Old Dominion went for Gerald Ford in the last election would do well to read it.

—**Cam Walker**

Books on the South

This list is comprised of works published since April, 1977. Book entries concentrate on the summer months and include new publications through September, 1977. Dissertations listed were accepted by universities for the Ph.D. degree and compiled in the Dissertation Abstracts Index *from May, 1977 through July, 1977.*

The entries have been placed under several broad and loosely-defined categories for your convenience. Mention of a book here does not preclude its being reviewed in a future issue. Unsolicited reviews of publications concerning the South or of general interest to our readers are always welcomed. Preference is given to recently released books.

Copies of the dissertations below are available from Xerox University Microfilms, Dissertation Copies, P. O. Box 1764, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. The cost is $7.50 for microfilm and $15 for xerographic.

ECONOMICS, HISTORY, AND POLITICS

"Administrative Role Orientations, the Environment, and Local Policy Outputs: Welfare in Georgia and Virginia," by Charles L. Usher. Dissertation. Emory University.

"Agricultural Change in the Northern Neck of Virginia, 1700-1860: An Historical Geography," by James B. Gouger III. Dissertation. University of Florida.

"An Analysis of Factors Affecting the Local Financing of Public Education in Kentucky," by Edward R. Wolfe, Jr. Dissertation. University of Kentucky.

"Bituminous Coal: An Export Base for West Virginia 1870-1930," by Thomas P. Breslin. Dissertation. West Virginia University.

"A Case Study of State Government Administrators in Mississippi," by Gary A. McGaha. Dissertation. University of Mississippi.

Charlevoix's Louisiana: Selections from the History and the Journal, by Pierre Charlevoix et al. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $10.00.

Church and State in Revolutionary Virginia, 1776-1787, by Thomas E. Buckley. University Press of Virginia, 1977. Price not set.

Class, Race and Worker Insurgency, by J.A. Geschwender. Cambridge University Press, 1977. Price not set.

"Class Stratification and the Politics of Development in North Carolina, 1865-1900," by Dwight B. Billings, Jr. Dissertation. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Coal in Kentucky, by Curtis E. Harvey. University Press of Kentucky, 1977. $7.75.

"Creation of a Slave Society: Louisiana Plantations in the Eighteenth Century," by James T. McGowan. Dissertation. University of Rochester.

Defender of the Faith: The High Court of Mississippi 1817-1875, by Meredith Lang. University Press of Mississippi, 1977. Price not set.

The Democratic Party Primary in Virginia: Tantamount to Election No Longer, by Larry Sabato. University Press of Virginia, 1977. Price not set.

"Development, Estimation, and Forecasting Accuracy of Regional Financial Models: An Application Within the State of Florida," by Martin M. Ebner. Dissertation. University of Florida.

"The Development of Coeducation in Major Southern State Universities," by Elizabeth L. Ihle. Dissertation. University of Tennessee.

"An Ecological Analysis of the Organizational Factor in the Expressions of Political Action: The Case of New Orleans," by Wilbur J. Scott. Dissertation. Louisiana State University.

"An Economic Analysis of Swine Production in the Tennessee Valley Watershed of Tennessee," by Robert M. Ray. Dissertation. University of Tennessee.

"The Electoral Bases of Representation in North Carolina: 1916-1972," by Hope M. Brogden. Dissertation. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"An Evaluation of Economic Benefits and Costs of Industrialization in Rural Communities in Texas," by Lynn L. Reinschmiedt. Dissertation. Texas A & M University.

"Explaining Economic Development in the Southern United States, 1880-1930: An Evaluation of Neoclassical and Neomercantilist Models as They Apply to a Backward or Developing Region," by Gary D. Martin. Dissertation. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"The First Nullification: The Negro Seamen Acts Controversy in South Carolina, 1822-1860," by Alan F. January. Dissertation. University of Iowa.

"The Galveston Movement," by Bernard Marinbach. Dissertation. Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

"God's Schoolmasters: Southern Evangelists to the Slaves, 1830-1860," by Janet D. Cornelius. Dissertation. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

"Grass Roots Perceptions and Use of Revenue Sharing: A Case Study in Region Seven of West Virginia," by Kenneth H. Yount. Dissertation. West Virginia University.

"Gubernatorial Politics and the Confederacy," by Kenneth M. Murray. Dissertation. Columbia University.

A History of Georgia, by Kenneth Coleman. University of Georgia Press, 1977. Price not set.

The History of Louisiana, Particularly of the Cession of That Colony to the United States of America, by Francois Barbe-Marbois. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $12.95.

"A History of Volusia County, Florida," by Michael G. Schene. Dissertation. Florida State University.

Industrialization and the Slave Economy: Antebellum Manufacturing in the American South, Vol. 5, by Fred Batman. Jai Press, 1977. $17.50.

A Kentucky Sampler: Essays From the Filson Club Historical Quarterly, 1926-1976, ed. by Lowell H. Harrison and Nelson L. Dawson. University Press of Kentucky, 1977. Price not set.

"The Location of the American Textile Industry," by Elbert L. Menes. Dissertation. University of South Carolina.

Master Index, Virginia Surveys and Grants, 1734-1791, compiled by Joan E. Brookes-Smith. Kentucky Historical Society, 1977. $25.00.

"Metropolitics and County Government in Texas," by Richard L. Raycraft. Dissertation. University of Houston.

"The Miners for Democracy: Insurgency in the United Mine Workers of America, 1970-1972," by George W. Hopkins. Dissertation. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"Monetary Expansion in the Confederacy," by John M. Godfrey. Dissertation. University of Georgia.

"The Neglected Phase of Louisiana's Colonial History: The New Orleans Cabildo, 1769-1803," by John E. Harkins. Dissertation. Memphis State University.

The Population of Virginia: Past, Present and Future, by William J. Serow. University Press of Virginia, 1977. Price not set.

Populist Vanguard: A History of the Southern Farmers' Alliance, by Robert C. McMath. W.W. Norton & Co., 1977. $3.95.

Portrait of a Decade: Roy Stryker and the Development of Documentary Photography in the Thirties, by F. Jack Hurley and Robert Doherty. Da Capo Press, date and price not set.

Portraits of White Racism, by D.T. Wellman. Oxford University Press, date and price not set.

Religion and the American South, by Donald G. Mathews. University of Chicago Press, 1977. Price not set.

"A Search for Identity: The West Virginia National Guard, 1877-1921," by Kenneth R. Bailey. Dissertation. Ohio State University.

"The Second American Revolution: South Carolina Politics, Society and Secession, 1776-1860," by Kenneth S. Greenberg. Dissertation. University of Madison-Wisconsin.

"A Sectarian Religious Organization in Heterogeneous Society: The Churches of Christ and the Plain-Folk of the Transmontane Mid-South," by Charles A. Scarboro. Dissertation. Emory University.

"Social Religion and the Memphis Sanitation Strike," by Selma S. Lewis. Dissertation. Memphis State University.

"A Study of Inmate Outcome in Kentucky," by Benjamin E. Robuck, Jr. Dissertation. University of Kentucky.

To Die Game: The Story of the Lowry Band, Indian Guerillas During Reconstruction, by W. McKee Evans. Louisiana State University, 1977. $4.95.

Toward a Patriarchal Republic: The Secession of Georgia, by Michael P. Johnson. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $15.00.

TVA: Democracy on the March, by David E. Lillienthal. Greenwood Press, 1977. $19.50.

Visions of Utopia: Nashoba, Rugby, Ruskin, and the "New Communities" in Tennessee's Past, by John Egerton. University of Tennessee Press, 1977. Price not set.

"The Washington County Schoolbook Controversy: The Political Implications of a Social and Religious Conflict," by Robert O. Goff. Dissertation. Catholic University of America.

White, Red and Black: The Seventeenth-Century Virginian, by Wesley F. Craven. W.W. Norton and Co., 1977. $2.95.

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Big Thicket Legacy, ed. by Campbell and Lynn Loughmiller. University of Texas Press, 1977. $12.95.

Comedians of Country Music, by Stacy Harris. Lerner Publications, 1977. $4.95.

The Deep South Natural Foods Cookbook, by Mary Lou McCracken. Pyramid Publications, 1977. $1.75.

"Ethnicity in A Native American Community [Graham County, North Carolina]," by Sharlotte N. Williams. Dissertation. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The Everglades: River of Grass, by Marjory S. Douglass. Banyan Books, 1977. $10.00.

Fishes of the Gulf of Mexico: Texas, Louisiana and Adjacent Waters, by H.D. Hoese and Richard H. Moore. Texas A & M University Press, 1977. $10.75.

Folk Tunes from Mississippi, by Arthur Palmer. Da Capo Press, 1977. Reprint of 1937 edition. $19.50.

The Forgotten People: Cane Creek's Creoles of Color, by Gary B. Mills. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $20.00. paper $7.95.

Foxfire 4, ed. by Eliot Wigginton. Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1977. $10.95.

Grand Ole Opry, by Robert K. Krishef. Lerner Publications, 1977. $4.95.

Louisiana Cajuns, photos by Turner Brown. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $14.95.

Marion Brown's Southern Cookbook. Pocket Books, Inc., 1977. $1.95.

Mexican Americans in an Urban Texas Barrio, by Shirley Achor. University of Arizona Press, date and price not set.

Midwives and Medical Men: A History of Inter-Professional Rivalries and Women's Rights, by Jean Donnison. Schocken Books, 1977. $14.95.

"A Multivariate Study of Religious Commitment Among a Sample of United Methodist Adults," by Gary H. Brown. Dissertation. University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

New Orleans Jazz, by Al Rose and Edmond Souchon. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $27.50.

The Outlaws, by Dave Hickey and Patrick Carr. Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1977. $4.95.

The Shawnee, by Jerry E. Clark. University Press of Kentucky, 1977. $4.95.

Shells and Shores of Texas, by Jean Andrews. University of Texas Press, 1977. $24.95.

Singers and Sweethearts, by Joan Dew. Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1977. $4.95.

The Southern Almanac, by Harvey Stevens. Hammond Inc., 1977. $1.95.

The Southern Junior League Cookbook, ed. by Ann Seranne. David McKay Co., Inc., 1977. $12.95.

The Story of Jimmy Rodgers, by Robert K. Krishef. Lerner Publications, 1977. $4.95.

Tales of the Tobacco Country, by Thomas A. Williams. New East, 1977.

Tennessee Strings: The Story of Country Music in Tennessee, by Charles K. Wolfe. University of Tennessee Press, 1977. Price not set.

Texas Gourmet Cookbook, by Lucille Yount. Educator Books, date not set. $4.95.

A Time to Dance: American Country Dancing from Hornpipes to Hot Hash, by Richard Nevell. St. Martin's Press, 1977. $10.00.

Yarns and Tales from Southern Mountains, by Joseph S. Hall. Hollywood Book Service, date not set. $3.50.

BIOGRAPHY & AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Alabama Bound: Forty-five Years Inside a Prison System, ed. by Ray A. March. University of Alabama Press, 1977. $9.95.

"Andrew Johnson and the Negro," by David W. Bowen. Dissertation. University of Tennessee.

The Arkansas Rockefeller, by John Ward. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $14.95.

The Correspondence of the Three William Byrds of Westover, Virginia, 1684-1776, by Martin Tinling. University Press of Virginia, 1977. Price not set.

Davy Crockett American, ed. by Richard M. Dorson. Greenwood Press, 1977. Reprint of 1939 edition. $13.50.

Down From the Hills, by Orville Faubus. Rose Publishing Co., Inc., 1977. $14.95.

"Edward Rutledge of South Carolina, 1749-1800: Unproclaimed Statesman," by Richard B. Clow. Dissertation. University fo Georgia.

"The Fighting Preacher of the Army of Tennessee: General Mark Perrin Lowrey," by Larry W. Kennedy. Dissertation. Mississippi State University.

The Gospel According to Billy, by Chuck Ashman. Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1977. $8.95.

Hospitality Route, by Al Guthrie. Published by Al Guthrie, 1977. $1.95.

"James Pinckney Henderson in Europe: The Diplomacy of the Republic of Texas, 1837-1840." by Steven G. Gamble. Dissertation. Texas Tech University.

Jefferson Davis: The Sphinx of the Confederacy, by Clement Eaton. Free Press, 1977. $10.00.

Jimmy Carter, by Charles E. Mercer. G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1977. $4.29.

Leander Perez: Boss of the Delta, by Glen Jeansonne. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $25.00.

Maverick Republican in the Old North State: A Political Biography of Daniel L. Russell, by Jeffrey J. Crow and Robert F. Durden. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $14.95.

Miss Lillian and Friends, by Beth Tartan and Rudy Hayes. A & W Publishers, 1977. $8.95.

"Palmetto Politician: the Early Political Career of Olin D. Johnston, 1896-1945," by Anthony B. Miller. Dissertation. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Presidents and Governors of Texas, by June R. Welch. GLA Press, 1977. $13.95.

Promises to Keep: Jimmy Carter's First 100 Days, by Robert Shogan. T.Y. Crowell Col, 1977. $8.95.

"The Public Career of Grace Towns Hamilton: A Citizen Too Busy to Hate," by Sharon M. Mullis. Dissertation. Emory University.

A Southern Baptist in the White House, by James T. Baker. Westminster Press, 1977. Price not set.

T: The Story of an American Indian. Dillon Press, 1977. $4.95.

Thomas Jefferson and His Library, by Charles B. Sanford. Shoe String Press, 1977. $12.50.

Walter Hines Page: The Southerner as American, 1855-1918, by John M. Cooper, Jr. University of North Carolina Press, 1977. $17.95.

Why Billy Graham? by David Poling. Zondervan Publishing House, 1977. $6.95.

The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery, by John C. Miller. Free Press, 1977. $9.95.

BLACK EXPERIENCES IN THE SOUTH

The African Link: British Attitudes to the Negro in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1550-1807, by Anthony J. Barber. Frank Cass & Co., 1977. $24.00.

Africans and Seminoles: From Removal to Emancipation, by Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr. Greenwood Press, 1977. $15.95.

American Socialism and Black Americans: From the Age of Jackson to World War II, by Philip S. Foner. Greenwood Press, 1977. $22.95.

"Anti-Heroic Perspectives: The Life and Works of Frank Yerby," by James L. Hill. Dissertation. University of Iowa.

Balance of Power: The Negro Vote, by Henry L. Moon. Greenwood Press, 1977. $16.00.

Black American Writers: Bibliographic Essays, by M. Thomas Inge et al. St. Martin's Press, 1977. 2 vols., $12.95 each.

Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920, by John Dittmer. University of Illinois Press, 1977. Price not set.

"Black Journalism in Virginia: Plummer Bernard Young, Sr. and the Norfolk *Journal and Guide* — 1920-1930," by Muriel H. Rhodes. Dissertation. Carnegie-Mellon University.

"Black Leadership in the Old South: The Slave Drivers of the Rice Kingdom," by James H. Stone. Dissertation. Florida State University.

The Black Playwright: An Annotated Bibliography of Plays, 1823-1977, by James V. Hatch and Omanii Abdullah. R. R. Bowker Co., 1977. $17.50.

Black Workers in White Unions: Job Discrimination in the United States, by William B. Gould. Cornell University Press, 1977. $20.00.

"Blacks in Mississippi Politics, 1865-1900," by Buford Satcher. Dissertation. Oklahoma State University.

"Day of Jublio: Civil War and the Demise of Slavery in the Mississippi Valley, 1861-1865," by Armistead L. Robinson. Dissertation. University of Rochester.

Desegregation From Brown to Alexander: An Exploration of Supreme Court Strategies, by Stephen L. Wasby et al. Southern Illinois University Press, 1977. $19.85.

"The Development of Education for Blacks in Georgia, 1865-1900," by C. T. Wright. Dissertation. Boston University.

"The Effect of the Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 on the Economic Situation of Non-Whites," by Gholam-Hossein Mashayekhi. Dissertation. Clemson University.

"Felton Gradison Clark, Louisiana Educator," by Iris J. Perkins. Dissertation. Louisiana State University.

If A Black Were President of the USA, by Farganeh Nejand. Exposition Press, 1977. $4.00.

Images of Africa in Black American Literature, by Marion Berghahn. Rowman and Littlefield, 1977. $16.50.

Images of the Black Preacher, by H. Beecher Hicks, Jr. Judson Press, 1977. $5.95.

"The Impact of Tuition on Equal Opportunity, Equal Access, for Nonwhite Students in Florida Community Colleges," by Dan L. Terhune. Dissertation. University of Florida.

James Baldwin: A Critical Evaluation, ed. by Thurman B. O'Daniel. Howard University Press, 1977. $8.95.

Military Necessity and Civil Rights Policy: Black Citizenship and the Constitution, 1861-1868, by Mary F. Berry. Kennikat Press, 1977. $8.95.

Mississippi Black History Makers, by George A. Sewell. University Press of Mississippi, 1977. Price not set.

"Modern Black Writers and the Folk Tradition," by Susan L. Blake. Dissertation. University of Connecticut.

Negro Almanac: A Reference Work on the Black American, by Harry A. Ploski and Warren Marr. Bellwether Publishers, date not set. $59.95.

Nigger in the Window, by Helen Lee. Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1977. $5.95.

Old Roots in New Lands: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on Black Experiences in the Americas, ed. by Ann M. Pescatello. Greenwood Press, 1977. $17.95.

"The Origins and Development of Black Religious Colleges in East Texas," by Lloyd K. Thompson. Dissertation. North Texas State University.

"Patterns of Imitation and Coming of Age in Black Literature," by Deborah Joan Long. Dissertation. Brown University.

Population Policy & the Black Community, by B. William Austin. Transaction Books, 1977. $5.95.

"The Protean Institution: The Geography, Economy and Ideology of Slavery in Post-Revolutionary Virginia," by Peter J. Albert. Dissertation. University of Maryland.

Pursuing the Pursuit, by Jon Eckels. Exposition Press, 1977. $5.50.

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