Southern Exposure

"Not No Easy Business"

Interviews with prostitutes...

and more...

The Atlanta murders

Mississippi folk artists

The making of a Southern belle

July/August 1983

$4.00

Editors: Maxine Alexander, Christina Davis, Ben Fewel, Bob Hall, Marc Miller, Joycelyn Moody, Joe Pfister, Linda Rocawich

Design: Jacob Roquet

Composition: Southern Types

Cover: illustration by Jacob Roquet

Special Thanks: Alice Ingerson, Ginny Lewis, Chris Mayfield, Page McCullough, Heather Mee, Chris Nichols, Margo St. James

The Institute for Southern Studies is a non-profit, publicly supported corporation working for progressive change in the region. In addition to publishing *Southern Exposure* and *Facing South* (a syndicated newspaper column), the Institute sponsors a variety of research, education, and organizing programs. At the center of each is an emphasis on (1) building effective grassroots organizations with strong local leadership and well-informed strategies; (2) providing the information, ideas, and historical understanding of Southern social struggles necessary for long-term fundamental change; and (3) nourishing communication and understanding among the diverse cultural groups in the South. Write us for a free brochure on the Institute's activities.

Southern Exposure is published bimonthly by the Institute for Southern Studies. Subscription price for one year (six issues) is $16 for individuals and $20 for libraries and institutions. Address all editorial and subscription correspondence to: *Southern Exposure,* P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702. Second class postage is paid at Durham, NC 27702 and at additional offices. Copyright ©1983, Institute for Southern Studies, 604 W. Chapel Hill St., Durham, NC 27701. ISSN: 0146:809X. Post Office Publication No.: 053470. Issues are mailed in January, March, May, July, September, and November of each year.

To reach possible new subscribers, we occasionally exchange our mailing list with other progressive organizations and publications. We believe you will have a keen interest in what these groups are doing, but if you do not want your name given to other groups, just drop us a note asking that your name not be included in future list exchanges. That's all there is to it.

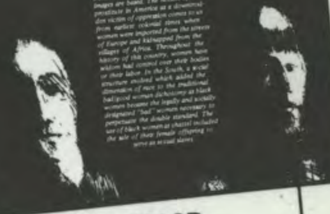
TRYING TO MAKE A LIVING

BY PHAYE POLIAKOFF

PAGE 14

TRYING TO MAKE A LIVING

The economics of prostitution.



LOCAL COLOR

INTERVIEWS WITH MISSISSIPPI FOLK ARTISTS

BY WILLIAM FERRIS

PAGE 36

LOCAL COLOR

Interviews with Mississippi folk artists.

Growing Up Southern & Sexy

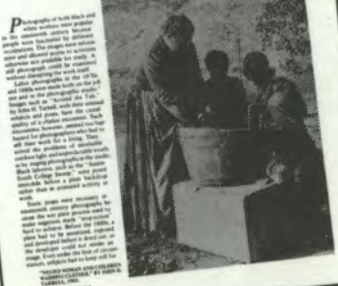
By Marie Stokes Jemison

I was a virgin when I got married. All my friends were too, or at least they never told me if they weren't. Nice Southern girls did not go "all the way." We just drove boys crazy, blowing in their ears,

PAGE 45

GROWING UP SOUTHERN & SEXY

A reminiscence of teenage life in Alabama in the '30s.



Building a new world

Black Labor Photographs

Text by Tom Beck

PAGE 52

BUILDING A NEW WORLD

A century of black labor photographs.

Contents

VOLUME XI, NO 4 JULY/AUGUST, 1983

DEPARTMENTS

2 **LETTERS FROM OUR READERS**

3 **READERS CORNER** Making it in rural America, *by Jonathan P. Sher*

4 **SOUTHERN NEWS ROUNDUP** Jesse Helms fans race-hate fires; Ole Miss sings Dixie; exit tests for kids; income gap widens

10 **VOICES OF OUR NEIGHBORS** Secret War, No More "Little Girl," The Apartheid Bomb

12 **FACING SOUTH** Okra: The Comic Vegetable, *by Violet Moore*

13 **RESOURCES** Ladyslipper; save your land; labor songs; and more

66 **REVIEWS** Folk writing, modern mountains

72 **VOICES FROM THE PAST** American heretic

FEATURES

14 **TRYING TO MAKE A LIVING** Exploring the economics of prostitution, *by Phaye Poliakoff*

19 **NOT NO EASY BUSINESS** Interview with a Virginia prostitute, *by Sarah Wilkerson*

24 **POETRY** *by Maxine Alexander*

25 **WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ATLANTA** The impact of the child murders, *by Toni Cade Bambara*

36 **LOCAL COLOR** Interviews with Mississippi folk artists, *by William Ferris*

44 **RETIREE'S LAMENT** Song, *lyrics by Roy Greer, music by Joe Pfister*

45 **GROWING UP SOUTHERN AND SEXY** A reminiscence of teenage life in Alabama in the '30s, *by Marie Stokes Jemison*

50 **POETRY** *by Beverly Burch*

51 **TO PRESIDENT REAGAN** A letter, *by Mary Brinkmeyer*

52 **BUILDING A NEW WORLD** A century of black labor photographs, *by Tom Beck*

56 **A CASE OF PREJUDICE** The execution of Maurice Mays and the Knoxville Race Riot of 1919, *by John Egerton*

FROM OUR READERS

Dear SE:

As a member of the Steering Committee of the Louisiana Survival Coalition I am outraged by your publication of Herbert Rothschild's attack on the organization ("Waging Peace," November/December, 1982).

As far as I am concerned, *results* in the struggle for social justice are far more important criteria than the number of people who show up for demonstrations. Mr. Rothschild's article notes that 1,000 people attended a Baton Rouge rally in April, 1981, to protest the budget cuts, and that 300 demonstrated in New Orleans when President Reagan visited the city in September of the same year. Where was Mr. Rothschild in December of the same year when Survival sponsored the first major conference in the South to organize the push to renew the Voting Rights Act? Sixteen member organizations participated. Conferees were treated to an outstanding speech by Georgia Senator Julian Bond on voting rights abuses in the South, as well as a call to conscience by former Tchula, Mississippi, Mayor Eddie Carthan. In addition to passing the hat and raising a substantial contribution for Mr. Carthan's defense, this conference pulled civil rights lawyers together from all across the state to organize a unified strategy to overturn Louisiana's first reapportionment plan. *It worked.* Survival's challenge was successful, resulting in 18 black majority legislative districts instead of 11. I emphasize that all of this happened *after* the date Mr. Rothschild's article claims Survival died, and well *before* his article was submitted to you. Many other significant victories have been won since.

Contrary to Mr. Rothschild's assertion, many white church organizations *have* made a significant effort to cross the race/class barrier. Like this Institute, they pay dues to the Survival Coalition and participate in its activities, even though Survival's board leadership and staff are black. We do it because it is right, and because Survival gets *results*. In addition to reapportionment, Survival has gotten *results* in reinstating poor people's AFDC benefits, *results* in persuading Louisiana not to implement a ridiculous plan of Medicaid co-payments, and *results* in registering new voters.

Mr. Rothschild is right about one thing, and that is the need for blacks and whites to stand together for justice. With our history of racism and natural human insecurities, black/white alliances are fragile. Mr. Rothschild's failure to inform himself before writing his report and your failure to do your homework before publishing it are grossly irresponsible actions that do serious damage to the efforts that are being made for justice in this state. I am shocked, angry, and astonished that you went forward with such a destructive report without checking your facts. I think you owe your readers a humble apology for the damage you have done. I further believe that journalistic integrity requires you to do another, more accurate portrayal of the Louisiana Survival Coalition.

– Rev. George F. Lundy, S.J.
Director, Institute of Human Relations
New Orleans, LA

Dear SE:

Several years ago I was introduced to your magazine by my son, Henry Kahn of Atlanta via Sue Thrasher. I have been a regular subscriber and enjoyed the writings and the sociopolitical slant.

The March/April issue just arrived and when I read the "from our readers" I was dismayed at the contents of letters that you chose to publish. You permit an avowed right-wing leader to air his anti-Semitic and anti-left-wing poison. Another letter of your choice challenges the existence of any progressivism in the South. Still another tries to widen the rift between East and West and in the process casts aspersions on the giant world peace activist, the tallest tree in the forest, Paul Robeson.

If your magazine is becoming a forum for the pros and cons and fails to take a strong stand on what I was led to believe you stand for, by opening up your columns to the worst opposition, then strike me out as a supporter.

The renewal card that I completed, before reading the above-described, will remain on my desk until I receive a satisfactory reply.

– Joseph V. Kahn
New York, NY

Dear SE:

I am old (78), retired, and tired of mass meetings, petitions, letter-writing, and other campaigns without a large political base, which can be dismissed with lip service or ignored in Washington.

Single-issue crusades such as ending the war in Vietnam simply evaporate when they fade from the headlines.

Now we have a large and growing *Freeze* movement which Reagan can probably muzzle by a grand pretense at negotiating.

The liberal element in this country is fragmented into hundreds of groups, which leaves them with little political power.

I want to suggest a campaign that could end the "gun barrel" diplomacy which is leading toward Armageddon. Perhaps we can set this country on a liberal course, and even save the world from destruction.

Start a vigorous campaign to *capture* the Democratic Party for liberal causes, using the *freeze* movement as a springboard. If and when this proves impossible, *split the party*. Promote a convention including all liberal groups and prominent liberal people. Form a new party, or, perhaps, join forces with one of the existing parties.

This party should run candidates for every possible political office except those held by proven liberals. We might win, and start improving the world. At least we would develop political strength and, hopefully, reverse the race toward mutual destruction.

I believe this must be done to prepare for the 1984 elections. By then, this country and the rest of the world will be close to economic and political collapse, and even closer to atomic destruction.

– William B. Follett
Angleton, TX

Making It in Rural America

– by Jonathan P. Sher

At first glance, the oldest child care center in Quitman, Georgia, doesn't seem unusual. The interior is bright and cheery. There are ample toys, games, and materials in each room. Children play contentedly or listen to music – improvising dances and clapping their hands as the spirit moves them.

And yet, this child care center *is* different. With the exception of the director, all the "teachers" are students at Brooks County High School. The view from the windows is not of the town of Quitman but rather of classrooms and athletic fields – for this child care center is located in the middle of the high school campus. Moreover, the facility itself was built by a construction team of Brooks County students under the supervision of their vocational education teacher.

Indeed, the whole idea of this center came into being when the school organized a group of students to learn about their own county's needs through talking with a cross-section of local residents. The students found that the absence of child care programs and facilities in Brooks County was hampering women's efforts to secure needed employment. The lack of child care was also causing other social, educational, and economic problems.

Despite the traditional rhetoric about rural schools being "the heart of the community," relatively few public schools show an active interest in community concerns and even fewer act to alleviate community problems in ways as tangible and direct as the Brooks County project. Thus, by creating this child care center and making it an integral part of the educational system, Brooks County High School has established itself as a pioneer in an exciting movement to strengthen the bonds between rural schools and the communities they serve. In fact, the Georgia Department of Education has recognized the quality of this program and made it the only one in the state in which students can become accredited as child-care workers upon graduation from high school.

The idea of school-based development enterprises [SBDE] is straightforward and simple. Schools (or other nonprofit educational organizations) create and operate businesses, services, and other useful enterprises designed both to enhance the educational and economic opportunities available to rural youth and to help schools become effective partners in the larger process of rural community development.

In some respects, the concept of educational enterprises is not a new one. Schools have long sponsored student clubs carrying out a wide range of fund-raising activities (car washes, bake sales, school carnivals, etc.) to support their activities. The essential characteristics distinguishing the SBDE idea are the scale and scope of work envisaged: the time frame of the enterprises; the relationship with the school curriculum; the composition of the student participants; and the connections with the surrounding community.

King/CPF

Traditional student fund-raising activities tend to be small-scale and modest in their scope. By contrast, the SBDE model strives to replace "pretend" businesses, such as those sponsored by Junior Achievement, with real ones largely staffed by students and other rural youth. Choosing and effectively managing a viable scale and scope of work are irreplaceable training experiences for potential rural entrepreneurs.

Traditional school work experiences have only a tangential relationship to the academic curriculum of U.S. secondary schools. In the SBDE model, the intention is to re-integrate the curriculum so that theoretical and practical knowledge are viewed – and dealt with – as two sides of the same coin rather than as two different coins altogether. This should benefit both the academically and vocationally inclined youth by giving them a common ground upon which to learn, share, and mature.

With the advent of large, consolidated rural secondary schools, the bonds between local communities and "their" schools have dramatically weakened. The SBDE model strives to re-establish the school-community connection through a decentralization of school activities, through a curricular emphasis to which parents and community leaders can relate, and through active involvement of students and faculty in the life of the community and vice versa. This forging of serious new partnerships could help the quality of education – and the degree of local support for education – rise significantly.

If school-based development enterprises are implemented properly, they will yield additional *pedagogical* benefits by restoring learning-by-doing to its rightful position of parity with textbook learning. *Psychological* benefits will also result from increasing the motivation, sense of responsibility, and sense of accomplishment among many more young people at a critical junction in their development. *Political* benefits could arise from restoring a sense of ownership and pride to local communities. *Economic* benefits could accrue to the whole community from creating a pool of potential rural entrepreneurs, providing effective employment training in rural areas, and generating new financial resources for the school. □

Jonathan Sher is Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies at North Carolina State University's School of Education.

SOUTHERN NEWS ROUNDUP

Would Helms spread race-hate to keep job?

The mud is already starting to fly in what promises to be a bitter fight for Jesse Helms's seat in the U.S. Senate. North Carolina's two-term governor, James B. Hunt, has not officially announced his intention to challenge Helms in the 1984 election, but he's busily building a multimillion-dollar war chest with the help of national Democrats, a series of fundraising parties, and his own political action committee.

Hunt's broad network of allies inside the state (Helms calls it "a political machine") includes substantial support in the same eastern counties that Helms considers his prime turf; and aside from a few terrible blunders (such as the state's burial of PCBs in Warren County), he has managed to avoid sharp controversy that would overwhelm his cultivated focus on upgrading education, efficient government and industrial recruitment.

Helms easily won reelection in 1978 with the help of a divided state Democratic party and $7.5 million from his national fundraising arm, the Congressional Club. Everyone expects the 1984 race to be far more fierce and expensive.

The Helms For Senate Committee is not even waiting for Hunt to declare his candidacy. This spring they began a series of sensationalistic advertisements aimed at tarnishing Hunt's Mr. Clean image by associating him with Yankee Democrats, labor union "bosses," and such black leaders as Julian Bond, Jesse Jackson, and Andrew Young (whom the ad describes as the "former U.N. ambassador who said the Ayatollah Khomeini was 'a saint.'")

A newspaper ad in early June showed six teachers – all black, from Washington, D.C. – holding "On Strike" signs. The caption read, "Jim Hunt's Union Payroll Checkoff," and the text described Hunt's support for a proposed state law allowing payroll deductions for school teachers as "a giant step toward unionization . . . the calling of strikes and general disruption of the education of our children."

In reality, the bill specifically bars deductions to organizations with collective bargaining status and Hunt has long opposed union recognition for teachers, although he has courted endorsement from the North Carolina Association of Educators, the 40,000-member affiliate of the National Education Association, which in some states negotiates contracts for teachers.

"Big Labor" is a favorite whipping boy for Helms, but his staff balks at the suggestion that any of the anti-Hunt ads appeal to racist attitudes among white voters. "That's just something they would like to do to change the subject matter," says Mark Stephens, treasurer of the Helms committee. The race-baiting intent is highlighted, however, by the fact that the ads have appeared no less than 14,000 times in 12 weeks *only* in predominantly white small-town newspapers and on rural-oriented radio stations. By avoiding the more liberal, urban newspapers and major television markets, Helms strategists are getting their message firmly planted before attracting attention that could blunt their impact. Thus far, Hunt has not directly criticized the ads (perhaps because negative advertising will be part of his campaign), and at least half of North Carolina has not seen or heard them.

"NOW THIS IS MY KIND OF POLITICS!"

The June 20 indictment of Lt. Gov. Jimmy Green for accepting bribes from an undercover FBI agent may pose no major problem for Hunt since the two men are well-known political opposites, but a Helms campaign that polarizes votes along race lines could hurt. With the federal trial of Klan and Nazi members involved in the Greensboro killings likely to begin this fall and a new surge of Klan cross burnings, marches, voter registration drives, and other activities across the state, the prospect of a race-hate campaign led by the U.S. Senate's top demagogue looms ominously over the Old North State.

Christians unwilling to accept gay rites

Members of Jackson, Mississippi's gay community worshipped together as a church for the first time on May 29, and by late July they expect to have their incorporation papers and nonprofit charter. But before the 20-member congregation, led by acting minister Kathy Switzer, could exercise its right to religious freedom, it had to face Moral Majority opposition.

The opposition began last March, immediately after the *Jackson Daily News* reported that the Rev. Gilbert Lincoln of Nashville, coordinator of the South Atlantic District of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches [UFMCC], had met with 26 homosexuals who were interested in forming a local UFMCC congregation. According to Lincoln, the UFMCC has over 150 congregations in the U.S. and 30 in seven other countries; 90 percent of its 25,000 members are gay.

Within a week, 10,000 people had received copies of a three-page letter from Mississippi Moral Majority president, the Rev. Mike Wells. The letter, enclosed in an envelope announcing "Homosexuals Invade Jackson, Mississippi," passionately exhorted "God-fearing Mississippians" to unite against the formation of "a sodomite church," to "say 'YES' to *traditional God given morality*," and to send money to help

the Moral Majority "begin buying time on TV to get the word out." Wells later urged supporters to finance a 60-minute TV show, which he estimated would cost $1,000 per minute.

Eddie Sandifer, spokesperson for the Mississippi Gay Alliance [MGA] and the son of a Southern Baptist minister, denounced the Moral Majority campaign as a publicity-seeking and money-making scheme. He denied that gays want to "invade" Jackson, noting that "we've been here all along." He later said that Wells hoped to "force gays back into the closet."

A series of front-page articles in Jackson's daily newspaper gave MSA added visibility, and despite an onslaught of vicious anti-gay letters-to-the-editor and personal threats against congregation members, the media coverage helped the Moral Majority's campaign to backfire. Wells has quieted down considerably since his initial attack, and his fundraising emphasis has compelled some heterosexuals – who were recently anti-gay – to tell MGA members they now recognize Wells as a hustler and threat to Christian values.

Meanwhile, the Rev. Lincoln, who is helping organize UFMCC churches across the South at the rate of a new congregation each week, awaits word from the National Council of Churches on UFMCC's request to join that body. That decision might be a while in coming. It seems some long-standing members have threatened withdrawal from the council if the UFMCC is accepted into the fold as an equal with others who follow a God/man who promised, "If one or two are gathered together in my name, there I am also."

Strip-miners and Watt caught, not reformed

James Watt's leasing of government-owned coal reserves at giveaway prices is not the only coal policy his department is losing money on. In more than 1,000 cases where strip-mine operators failed to abide by the requirements of federal environmental law, the Interior Department's Office of Surface Mining [OSM] has simply let the mandatory fines go uncollected. Most of the cases occurred in eastern Kentucky and Tennessee during 1978 and 1980, and the violations include severe pollution of streams, dumping surface mine spoil over sides of mountains, leaving "high walls" of spoil, and failing to reclaim the land with erosion-control grasses and mulches.

Two congressional inquiries charge Watt with leasing more than one billion tons of government coal reserves for $60-to-$100 million less than their true market value. The uncollected fines against strip-miners exceed $44 million.

In December, 1982, the Council of Southern Mountains [CSM] and Save Our Cumberland Mountains [SOCM] won a federal court suit which orders Secretary Watt and OSM Director James Harris to enforce provisions of the Federal Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977. The law requires operators to cease their affected mining operations until they correct previously cited violations of the reclamation regulations; these "cessation orders" carry a mandatory fine of $750 per violation for each day that operations continue in violation, up to a possible fine of $22,500 per violation.

"OSM could have used civil penalties to pin down operators who were trying to evade the law by claiming bankruptcy or by switching their corporation names," says L. Thomas Galloway, attorney representing the two citizens' groups. "If OSM forced operators to pay for mining's damage, they'd think twice about stripping and then abandoning a minesite."

The ways that strip-miners continue to abuse the land and wield their considerable clout are numerous, as the CSM can attest. On March 19, while escorting an NBC film crew from the site of the Clinchfield Coal Company, CSM members were confronted by R.L. Wallen, a mine superintendent for the Little Six Corporation which contracts surface mining for Clinchfield. Three days later, Wallen bought CSM's rented office in Clinchfield, Virginia, and gave the organization and its magazine, *Mountain Life and Work*, 30 days to leave. With the help of many friends, CSM has moved its headquarters to the privately-owned Cumberland Museum, and director Dan Hendrickson says the organization "will not back down" in its efforts to publicize and challenge the abuses of strip-miners.

The NBC film on strip-mining which CSM was helping document will be broadcast on the network's Monitor series in the fall.

Meanwhile, progress is slow in what has come to be called the "megabucks" suit to force the collection of strip-miner's penalty payments. District Court Judge Barrington Parker, who said Watt and OSM "flouted" federal law by their inaction, is monitoring their compliance with his orders, but even after Congress appropriated an

extra $500,000 so OSM could set up an enforcement office in Knoxville, none of the $44 million has been collected. In May, the Knoxville office finally opened.

Florida's exit test has captive audience

Public education's perceived failures have elicited widely differing responses of late. One of the most popular is an "exit test" that high school seniors must pass to graduate, and the state of Florida won approval of its version from the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta in May, 1983, just in time for the state to deny diplomas to about 1,200 kids who had otherwise completed the requirements for graduation.

The exam, which is supposed to test "functional literacy" – "funky lit," to the 18-and-under set – and other "basic life skills," has been attacked by many progressive educators who feel it punishes the system's victims rather than attacks its failure to teach kids such skills in the 12 years allotted. The testing program is similar to others in place or being considered in many other states, including several in the South. But Florida is the first to block any graduations with court approval, and the effects of the Florida decision are rippling far beyond the state's borders.

Critics say passing the test requires skills that the school system doesn't teach well – or doesn't teach at all. They also say it is culturally biased against blacks, who fail at a rate eight times greater than whites. Two percent of Florida's 85,000 seniors flunked the test; 62 percent of those failing are black, although only one-fourth of the state's seniors are black.

U.S. District Judge George P. Carr, who heard the Florida case in 1979, ruled that the disproportionate failure rate of blacks was the result of past discrimination and slapped a four-year moratorium on use of the test as a diploma requirement, saying 1983 would be the first year that seniors had spent their entire school careers in desegregated schools. Later, the circuit court went further, ruling that the state would have to prove the exam is a fair test of what students have been taught.

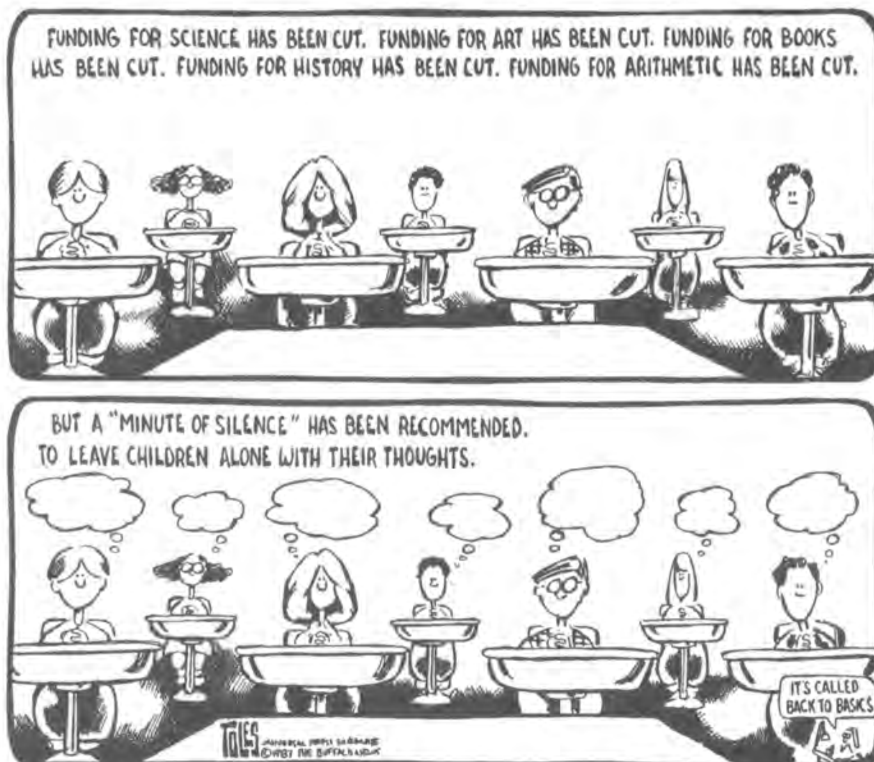
Florida then spent about $1 million to survey 43,000 teachers and produced a 32,000-page study which convinced Judge Carr that the skills tested were being taught in schools. In a later hearing, Carr also ruled against plaintiffs' arguments that vestiges of segregation (such as high suspension rates and unequal busing burdens) pose special obstacles to learning for black students and affect their performance on the test.

Attorneys Steve Hanlon of Tampa and Diana Pullin of Boston, who represent the students, asked the circuit court to stay Carr's decision pending appeal, but the court refused on May 18 in a two-to-one decision – despite dissenting Judge Phyllis Kravitch's warning that there are still close legal questions to be resolved and the kids denied diplomas now "will be irreparably harmed pending a resolution on the merits." So there was no relief for the 1,200 who found out only a few days before their commencement exercises that they would not get a diploma but only a certificate saying they had spent 12 years in Florida's classrooms.

There were, however, numerous sighs of relief emanating from the offices of educational officials in 15 to 20 other states with similar testing programs on their agendas. *Education Week* analyzed the reaction and found many who agreed with Stan Bernknopf, coordinator of Georgia's student assessment program. Said Bernknopf, "Obviously, we're very pleased with the outcome of the Florida case. We think that it reiterates what we've believed – that states have not only a right, but an obligation, to set criteria and hold people to those criteria, as long as it's being done in a fair and equitable fashion."

In Tennessee, where about 4.6 percent of this year's seniors did not get diplomas because they failed exit tests, officials say they avoided some of Florida's problems by making the test "strictly academic" with no questions regarding so-called "life skills."

One question these state education systems have not answered is what kids who can't read at an eighth-grade level (the level of the typical test) are doing in 12th-grade classrooms. Attorneys Hanlon and Pullin plan to argue their appeal of the Florida decision before the Eleventh Circuit as soon as a date can be set – in the early fall if all goes well.



SOUTHERN NEWS ROUNDUP

Oil money will endow major nutrition center

Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge became the recipient of the largest single donation ever made to an educational institution, a distinction previously held by another Southern college, Emory University, which received a $105 million gift from Coca-Cola boss Robert W. Woodruff in 1979.

LSU's gift, valued at over $125 million, comes from C.B. "Doc" Pennington, an 83-year-old independent oil and gas explorer who also operated an eye-and-ear clinic for many years in his native Baton Rouge. Pennington said he decided "to put all my eggs in one basket" so LSU could build a world-class nutrition center on a 235-acre site it owns in the city.

"The Louisiana soil and what is beneath it have been good to me," said Pennington. His concern for nutrition was piqued by his travels throughout the Third World where he saw many poor children. "Nutrition is the thing," he explained. "What we eat makes up our bodies but also helps determine our mental condition."

The planned Pennington Biomedical Research Center will include out- and in-patient care facilities, an animal care center, 17 laboratories, and a unique capacity to correlate animal and human dietary research.

Execs prosper, plan for fewer workers

While the earnings of the average working family declined for the second year in a row, the income for America's top executives posted new highs according to *Forbes* magazine. The leader, Frederick Smith of the Memphis-based Federal Express Company, made an astonishing $51.5 million in 1983, chiefly by exercising his warrants to buy the company's stock at 63 cents even though it sells on Wall Street for $78 a share. Such stock bonuses have become a routine way U.S. corporate leaders reward each other for achieving higher profits.

The practice of giving only the top managers bonuses has drawn pointed criticism from Japanese business leaders. They suggest the "me first" philosophy of American management alienates workers, stifles innovation, and ignores the real producers of increased corporate profits. Says the head of Sharp Corporation of Japan's new factory in Memphis, not far from Federal Express headquarters, "There must be a change in the way that management in the U.S. treats its employees. Americans think they can get a competitive advantage with efficient machines and equipment, but today it's the quality of people that makes the difference."

Salaries for Japanese chief executives typically exceed those of production workers by a ratio of less than four-to-one, a far cry from the American pattern which saw 175 of the chief executives on *Forbes* list of the top 800 U.S. corporations earn $800,000 or more in 1982. Japanese unemployment is also about a third of the U.S. rate because of the different attitudes toward a worker's job security. "In America, when sales drop, the first thing American management thinks of is laying off workers," says Mr. Hagusa of Sharp Corp. "In Japan, it is the last resort."

As if to dramatize Hagusa's points, U.S. executives at a mid-May meeting of the prestigious Business Council told the *New York Times* that they would not be rehiring many workers laid off during the recession, because machines can do the job better and cheaper. Edward Jefferson, chair of DuPont, said the company's capacity to produce synthetic fibers had doubled since 1973 "but the manpower to operate it is up only four or five percent because of mechanization and robotics." He said "just a few" of the more than 10,000 workers DuPont dumped in the recession would get their jobs back as sales pick up.

Interviews with the heads of AT&T, Union Pacific, General Electric and others led the *Times* to conclude that "the proportion of people who are more or less permanently out of jobs – the so-called structurally unemployed – could climb still higher than the current rate, which the Reagan administration estimates at 6.5 percent."

Like many other business publications, *Fortune* magazine regards mass layoffs with hearty approval: "Productivity has finally got on the right track after a long period of going nowhere.... Unemployment, still above 10 percent in April, undoubtedly has induced employees to accept changes in work rules

TOP EXECUTIVES' PAY FOR SELECTED SOUTHERN COMPANIES, 1982

Company	Home Office	Chief Executive	Total Pay*
Ashland Oil	Russell, KY	John R. Hall	$ 630,000
Burlington Industries	Greensboro, NC	William A. Klopman	542,000
Capital Holding	Louisville, KY	Thomas C. Simmons	836,000
Coca-Cola Co.	Atlanta, GA	Roberto C. Giozueta	1,178,000
Delta Air Lines	Atlanta, GA	David C. Garrett, Jr.	453,000
Diamond Shamrock	Dallas, TX	William H. Bricker	826,000
E-Systems	Dallas, TX	John W. Dixon	2,288,000
Eastern Air Lines	Miami, FL	Frank Borman	413,000
Federal Express	Memphis, TN	Frederick W. Smith	51,544,000
Halliburton	Dallas, TX	John P. Harbin	1,087,000
Holiday Inns	Memphis, TN	Michael D. Rose	807,000
Hospital Corp. of Amer.	Nashville, TN	Thomas F. Frist, Jr.	876,000
Humana	Louisville, KY	David A. Jones	1,612,000
Knight-Ridder News	Miami, FL	Alvah H. Chapman, Jr.	527,000
LTV	Dallas, TX	W. Paul Thayer	2,098,000
Norfolk Southern	Norfolk, VA	Robert C. Claytor	596,000
Pennzoil	Houston, TX	J. Hugh Liedtke	1,476,000
R. J. Reynolds Industries	Winston-Salem	J. Paul Sticht	2,333,000
Reynolds Metals	Richmond, VA	David P. Reynolds	602,000
Shell Oil	Houston, TX	John F. Bookout	1,771,000
Southern Company	Atlanta, GA	Alvin W. Vogtle, Jr.	451,000

**Includes salary, bonus, benefits, stock gains and contigent payments* (Forbes, *6/6/83*)

with reasonable good cheer and, indeed, to set higher standards for themselves." Fewer workers are making more products, but the real (inflation-adjusted) income of the average family has dropped 2.8 percent since March, 1981.

The message from American business seems plain enough: wherever the economy is headed, it's going there with the promise of bigger bonuses for top executives and the chilling threat of permanent unemployment for workers. Labor unions, Japanese capitalists, political leaders, community activists or anyone else interested in promoting a reformed "social contract" between workers and management could hardly ask for a more clear-cut challenge.

Old times there are not easily forgotten

Last fall, the first black cheerleader elected by the student body of the University of Mississippi announced that he would not wave a university-provided Confederate flag at football games. "My people have been oppressed by this symbol for so long," John Hawkins told a reporter. "To me it means slavery." Hawkins's refusal to carry the flag broke a 30-year tradition at Ole Miss and ignited a dispute that may bring significant change to the university.

Twenty-one years ago it took 25,000 federal troops to enforce the court-ordered admission of the university's first black student, James Meredith. Today there are 734 blacks among the 9,400 students on the Oxford campus; the prevailing racial imbalance is evidenced by only eight black members in a faculty of 503.

Following Hawkins's statement, university chancellor Porter Fortune, Jr., agreed to consider changing the university's policy toward the flag and found his office barraged with letters and phone calls from irate alumni. Under pressure from both sides Fortune waived an immediate decision and appointed a faculty committee to study the issue.

In October the Ku Klux Klan marched in the Oxford town square in support of the continued use of the flag. This spring 4,000 white students and alumni petitioned Fortune to save the flag, and the white-dominated student senate aired a resolution that the flag remain "until the stones crumble from the buildings and Ole Miss is a mere whisper in the wind." By April the yearbooks were out and inside was a photo essay on the year-long flag dispute, complete with photographs from the October Klan rally.

By April, the Black Student Union [BSU] had also presented Chancellor Fortune with a list of 13 demands, including an increase in the number of black faculty members and administrators, a black studies program, more money for black cultural programs, the hiring of a black affirmative action officer, and the removal of symbols offensive to black students, especially the Confederate flag, the theme song "Dixie," and the school mascot, "Col. Reb," a caricature of a white Southern planter. John Hawkins proposed that BSU members burn their yearbooks in protest. The motion was defeated but a rumor that the BSU was burning yearbooks spread across campus and triggered a march by 1,500 angry white students. By nightfall a remaining crowd of 600 gathered in front of the only black fraternity house where more flag waving and a chorus of "Dixie" accompanied racial taunts.

In the days that followed, the faculty senate urged the chancellor to make a decision that would "foster the spirit and substance of racial harmony." His hand forced, Fortune concluded that the university's sanction of the Stars and Bars must end. Ole Miss will no longer purchase and distribute Confederate flags to students and cheerleaders – as it has since the 1950s – but Fortune added that the university cannot legally ban anyone from displaying the flag.

Fortune acknowledged that the university's failure to attract and retain more black professors is "a cause of official concern and regret." Ole Miss has set aside $70,000 to increase the number of black faculty members to 15 in the near future and set a goal of 21 black faculty members for 1986.

Lydia Spragin, immediate past president of the BSU, said she hoped Fortune's announcement marked "a beginning to take action to solve problems and find some tangible answers to the problems raised by the black students." But since Fortune also declared that the use of Col. Reb as the school mascot was not racist and that officials would not bar "the playing or singing of any particular piece of music," it's still possible that Ole Miss is just whistling "Dixie."

SEEN ANY GOOD NEWS?

There's no reason to let us be the ones who sift through the press to choose the material to include in the Southern News Roundup. If you see a feature article in your local newspaper or a magazine that sheds light on what progressive Southerners are doing – or are up against – send it to us. Send the complete article, date and name of publication (with its address if possible) along with your name and address, and whatever additional comments or interpretations you care to include, to: Southern News Roundup, P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702.

Updates and short takes...

TEXAS LABOR VICTORY. By a vote of 175 to 11, workers at the A.W. Schlesinger Geriatric Center in Beaumont, Texas, elected to be represented by 1199, the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees. The union victory is the largest in the AFL-CIO's joint organizing drive in the Houston area (*SE*, Jan./Feb., 1982). The win climaxed two years of struggle following an election defeat which the National Labor Relations Board voided due to the employer's gross violations of workers' rights.

CARTHAN & TCHULA 7. The movement to free Mayor Eddie Carthan of Tchula, Mississippi (*SE*, Jan./Feb., 1983), has won several victories recently, including a suspension by Governor William Winter of his assault sentence and the dropping of other state charges against him and the Tchula 7. But Carthan is still in a federal prison camp in

Alabama, serving a three-year sentence for bank fraud. The conviction stems from two self-confessed swindlers who say they forged Carthan's name to a bank account at his direction. While that case is on appeal, Carthan faces another trial, beginning July 11, on federal charges of fraud related to alleged abuses in a government-sponsored food program while he was mayor. Carthan's lawyers say the charge is so "ridiculous" they had not taken it seriously at first. The previously reported controversy over the United Methodist Voluntary Service's assistance of the Tchula 7 has ended with the national Methodist church abolishing the agency's grass-roots advisory board and refusing to reinstate its staff director, Sheila Collins.

KLAN LYNCHING. When the beaten and sand-covered body of Michael Donald was found hanging from a camphor tree in Mobile, Alabama, two years ago, blacks and whites mounted the largest protest movement in that city's history (*SE*, Fall, 1981). Three white men arrested for the lynching were released in mid-1981 after a grand jury found insufficient evidence to indict them. Now the FBI has arrested two Ku Klux Klan members on federal civil rights charges, and one of them, 19-year-old James "Tiger" Knowles, has pleaded guilty and is expected to testify against the other Klansman as part of a plea bargain. Police Chief Winston Orr said he is "ready to continue the investigation to bring proper state murder charges," but black leaders are skeptical. Previous inaction by local officials shows they are "unwilling to prosecute a white man when a black has been injured," says NAACP branch president Dr. R. W. Gilliard.

CHANGE IN PLAQUEMINES. The first election in 16 years in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana (*SE*, March/April, 1983), brought a turnout of 77 percent of the parish voters and victory for Germaine Curley and Ernest Johnston, the first woman and first black ever to serve on the parish council. Johnston was one of the two plaintiffs in the court suit which successfully abolished the at-large council system that allowed arch-segregationist Leander Perez and his son, Chalin, to dominate this oil-rich parish south of New Orleans for half a century.

DUSTY CONTROVERSY. In the latest round of bickering over the 1978 cotton dust standard (*SE*, July/Aug., 1982), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) overcame the Office of Management and Budget's ideological opposition to the requirement that mill owners install engineering and ventilation controls to reduce cotton dust levels that cause brown lung disease. OMB wanted to settle for cheaper, less reliable remedies, such as breathing masks for workers, even though about 80 percent of the affected mills have already shifted to the new, more productive equipment.

Now OSHA is recommending its own changes in the standard that would (1) extend the deadline for compliance two more years to March, 1986, for nearly 30 mills producing coarse yarn; (2) exempt altogether such non-textile industries as warehousing, cottonseed processing, and waste processing which are now covered by the standard; (3) eliminate the provision which protects the wage level of a worker who is transferred to a less dusty part of the mill for health reasons; and (4) ease the medical screening and dust measurement requirements for mills with dust levels significantly below the standard. The Brown Lung Association, though strapped for funds, will protest the proposed changes at public hearings this fall in the Carolinas. So will the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, which is also planning to file a protest against Reagan's OSHA for failing to initiate on its own a single inspecton of a cotton mill in the two Southern states it directly supervises: Alabama and Georgia.

ORGANIZED LABOR TAKES A STAND AGAINST THE KLAN

As a movement composed of working men and women from a variety of ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds, we, the representatives of organized labor in the Southeast strongly oppose the activity of the Ku Klux Klan anywhere, and in this area in particular.

When it marches through College Park, Georgia on Satuday, May 28, the Klan will rely upon racial hatred and religious bigotry for support. Its goal is to turn worker against worker, black against white, Catholic against Protestant and Christian against Jew.

The Ku Klux Klan is no friend to the labor movement, and its activities not only threaten political democracy, but also the industrial democracy and racial justice that the labor movement has struggled for during its long history. Further, the divisiveness which the Klan fosters does not benefit the cause of workers, but only serves to blur their common interests, and render more difficult their efforts to bring dignity and justice to the workplace.

We encourage the working people of this area to work together in opposing the Klan and its activities, rather than seeking refuge in racial and religious hatred. It is time to reject the easy solutions of the past which resulted in tension, conflict, and loss of life. It is time for us to recognize our common problems and seek solutions which are not grounded in shame and hatred, but which reaffirm our solidarity and pride as workers.

- Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, Southern Region
- AFL-CIO Civil Rights Department, Southern Area
- American Federation of Government Employees, 5th District
- American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Local 1644
- American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Local 2072
- American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
- American Federation of Teachers, Local 1565
- A. Phillip Randolph Institute, Atlanta Chapter
- Atlanta Labor Council, AFL-CIO
- Amalagamated Transit Union, Local 732
- Coalition of Labor Union Women, Atlanta Chapter
- Communication Workers of America, District 3
- Georgia Federation of Teachers, AFT, AFL-CIO
- Georgia State AFL-CIO
- Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO
- International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, Southeast Region
- Laborers' International Union of North America, Local 438
- Local 218, Textile Processors International Union
- Printing Specialties and Paper Products Union, Local 527
- Service Employees International Union, Local 579
- United Furniture Workers of America
- United Steelworkers of America

THIS ADVERTISEMENT FROM ATLANTA-AREA labor organizations appeared in the *Atlanta Constitution* on May 28, the day Bill Wilkinson's Klan faction marched through College Park, a predominantly white working-class community on the out-skirts of Atlanta. Wilkinson has targeted Clayton County for recruitment over the last year, with mixed success and much publicity. The ad and a labor-sponsored press conference were praised by National Anti-Klan Network director Lyn Wells as "a step forward, a model of what others can do."

VOICES OF OUR NEIGHBORS

NICARAGUA

Secret War

by Gil Joseph and Ruth Minter

Three years ago at the ripe age of 10, Maria became a teacher. With other students, she left her home in Leon for three months to teach in the national literacy crusade. This year, a seasoned veteran, she went to the northern war zone to harvest coffee. Maria's brother, Tomas, is also at the northern border, armed and in the uniform of the Sandinista National Militia. Their mother directs a tailoring cooperative for former prostitutes back in Leon; their father, a doctor, runs a public clinic.

This Nicaraguan family is fully involved in the drive to transform Nicaragua into a country of peace, justice, and equity. But the family's current situation underscores the national reality: Nicaragua finds itself at war, an undeclared war in which the principal enemy is the U.S. Not only is his young son called upon to fight, but the doctor also finds medicines for the ordinary people he works with to be in short supply, since wounded at the front get first priority.

Maria, too, has felt the impact of the war. Two friends, church workers from Esteli who volunteered their services with her, were abducted from the coffee groves only a few kilometers from the Honduran border. Two youths who had escaped from the "contra" (counterrevolutionary) camp in Honduras brought news that gave little hope. They reported that the man and woman had been naked and terribly bloody when they were displayed to prisoners as examples of what would happen to Nicaraguans who would not cooperate with their "liberation movement." Friends have little hope that they are still alive.

A host of recent newspaper and magazine stories in the U.S. confirm Nicaraguan allegations that the "contras" – the majority of whom are former members of dictator Anastasio Somoza's dreaded National Guard – have received money, arms, and training from the United States, often through the agency of the Honduran military establishment. Although such covert operations in Nicaragua have been justified by the Reagan administration for the purpose of interdicting a sizable flow of arms which the administration alleges Nicaragua is providing to the leftist rebels in El Salvador, compelling proof of such traffic has never been provided. Moreover, the war now being waged against Nicaragua's people and economy has gone far beyond mere interdiction. As members of the recent Carolina Interfaith Task Force which toured Nicaragua from April 8 to 15, we were given a rare opportunity to observe at first hand the reality of the secret war in Nicaragua.

El Porvenir is at the end of the road northeast of the regional market center of Jalapa. There we watched a bus traveling a couple of hundred yards away on a Honduran road that winds along the border. One day earlier a hidden locale behind the road had been the source of devastating mortar fire. El Porvenir's rich tobacco fields and the barns drying the crop were razed. We walked through the still-smoldering ashes and twisted roofing of the barn. Yet much more frightening than the loss of valuable property were the severe injuries inflicted upon workers who had been sleeping in the house of the state cooperative. A grandmother with an eight-month-old infant as well as two other young grandchildren were all rushed to Jalapa hospital in critical condition. The mother of the children, still shaking like a leaf, showed us the blood-spattered walls of the house. "I was sure they were already dead; they were so badly hurt. I wanted to die too."

These workers know they are under constant surveillance from the Honduran hills at the end of their fields. Trenches on the settlement's outskirts and family bunkers have been dug. But when the attack came at daybreak, only

photos by Jeff Boyer

two soldiers were in the area to help the small local militia confront 200 contras. Far from resenting the heavy hand of the government in Managua, as the Reagan administration would have us believe, peasants in northern hamlets like El Porvenir look to the Sandinista army for protection against the brutal samocista commandos.

Yet the border is long, and the regulars cannot be everywhere at once. It dawned on us "gringos" that our presence might be all that was keeping the area free from attack that very day. Indeed, we were later informed that less than a half hour after we left the border a new attack began only a few kilometers farther east.

Over a month after our return home, many of us are still filled with anger and remorse when we think of El Porvenir. Reporting our findings to our churches, communities, and congressional representatives, we could only echo Thomas Jefferson's famous sentiments: "I tremble for my country when I think God is just."

In El Porvenir it was clear that part of the contras' objective was to disrupt the economy. Attacks have focused upon workers in the field rather than on columns of regular soldiers. Despite the ever-present fear, daily chores con-

tinue in the war zone. There have been several stages in the contra campaign. First, simple hit-and-run actions were combined with an attempt to recruit or kidnap new members. Then, efforts to disrupt the economy intensified. Now government leaders see a new phase in which portions of national territory will be contested for use as bases from which to topple the Sandinista regime.

The former National Guard, which is the main fighting force of the contras, includes many thousands who were imprisoned right after Somoza fell in July, 1979. They were released by the Sandinista government only to flee to Honduras and be rearmed. Nicaraguan sources testify to capturing weapons from these rebels that apparently were left behind by American personnel following joint U.S.-Honduran military exercises.

As we North Americans came to appreciate Nicaragua's current dilemma, we vowed to pass on the simple but powerful message which Sergio Ramirez, the coordinator of Nicaragua's Government for National Reconstruction, had given us: "When a powerful and rich country thinks a frail neighbor is a threat to its security, the results can be disastrous. We are the victims of an insane policy by the Reagan administration." □

Gil Joseph is an associate professor of history at UNC. Ruth Minter is a minister in the United Church of Christ in Indianapolis.

NEW YORK

No More "Little Girl"

A New York Supreme Court Justice was publicly reprimanded by the State Commission on Judicial Conduct for addressing Marti Copleman, a Legal Services attorney, as "little girl." In a case involving a woman who had been denied welfare, the judge twice addressed the attorney as "little girl," despite her objections.

The remark, in the view of the commission, "was clearly an epithet calculated to demean the lawyer." The commission called the judge's expressions "insulting, belittling and inappropriate in an exchange between judge and lawyer."

Copleman advised others to bring similar complaints, although it is a somewhat risky and very slow process. She filed the complaint in December of 1981, yet the public reprimand only came on February 28, 1983.

"It won't change the basic class nature of judges' attitudes," she said, "but it's nevertheless important to keep trying to educate them." □

– *thanks to* Guild Notes

SOUTH AFRICA

The Apartheid Bomb

On September 22, 1979, a U.S. satellite detected an intense flash of light off the coast of South Africa. The Carter administration refused to state categorically what many scientists and intelligence observers suspected: that South Africa had exploded a nuclear weapon. Carter equivocated because, after three decades, Western assistance in building South Africa's nuclear program had mushroomed.

Western collaboration with South Africa began in 1945 when Britain and the U.S. bought up all of that nation's uranium and totally financed the development of its uranium mining and processing industries. Later, under Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" program, the U.S. provided South Africa with nuclear training, its first research reactor (SAFARI I), and, until 1976, enriched uranium to fuel that reactor. South Africa then built its own research reactor by 1967. Both reactors are located at the Pelindaba facility: pelindaba is a Zulu expression meaning "We don't talk about this anymore."

The Pretoria government continued to expand its nuclear program and its ability to make nuclear weapons by building the Valindaba pilot uranium enrichment plant with U.S. and West German assistance in 1975. Valindaba means "We don't talk about this at all."

Western nations justify their investments as assistance to South Africa's *energy* program, yet "peaceful" nuclear power and nuclear weapons are two sides of the same coin. When the Koeberg power reactor, being built with French assistance and due to open this year, starts running at full capacity, it will produce enough plutonium to build an atom bomb every two weeks. The SAFARI I reactor already runs on weapons-grade uranium.

South Africa hopes to gain both political and military benefits from its nuclear program. Pretoria realized quickly that its survival could be prolonged if Western nations were dependent on its uranium supply. In addition, by threatening to use a bomb, South Africa could block international efforts to impose sanctions on it for its racist policies and could intimidate African support for the liberation struggle to eliminate apartheid.

The Reagan administration has increased nuclear assistance to South Africa by allowing exports of computers and other high technology. The U.S. has also recently negotiated with South Africa for the resumption of enriched uranium supplies, cut off when Congress passed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act in 1978. This assistance is part of Reagan's "constructive engagement" policy designed to provide Pretoria with increased economic, political, and military aid. Reagan's policy benefits South Africa at the expense of deteriorating relationships with black African nations. □

To find out more about the Apartheid Bomb, contact the Washington Office on Africa, 110 Maryland Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20002, which provided this information.

Facing South

a syndicated column:
voices of tradition
in a changing region

Okra: The Comic Vegetable

MONTEZUMA, Ga. – Southerners don't just casually enjoy their vegetables. They love them dearly and defend them passionately. They would approve adding a fifth verse to "America, the Beautiful" in which the black-eyed pea, the collard, and the butter bean received their due share of choral praise.

And... maybe... with reservations ... *okra.*

Okra is at once the most relished and most despised of the vegetables called Southern. By no means a "new" vegetable, it arrived with the first Africans to land on our shores. As they struggled to recreate on their rough new hearths something of the taste of home, okra became a favorite (with some) in cabin and big house, lending variety to the corn, potato, bean, and turnip cuisine of the farming frontiers.

Okra is now working its way North. I have reports from spies who say that in Chicago they have eaten young okra pods battered, deep-fried and dipped in mayonnaise. In Wisconsin you can get it dilled (as in pickle) – and in New York City, much to the surprise of a Greek-American Boy Scout visiting from Atlanta, it was built into a moussaka. "Jeeze, Mom," he protested, "eggplant *and* okra!"

Like the egg and the avocado, okra comes in attractive little packages. In France according to *LaRousse Gastronomique,* the pods are sometimes called "ladies fingers." The word "gumbo," used for a sort of stew that incorporates seafood, ham, chicken, tomatoes, onions, and peppers, is actually just another West African name for okra. The plant belongs to the mallow family and grows all over Africa and India, where, since earliest times, it has been cultivated as a garden vegetable.

It is the mucilaginous quality of okra that, for some choosy eaters, puts it beyond the pale. If boiled only a minute too long it disintegrates into a slippery mess. In gumbo this is a desired quality; it makes a thin stew into fork food. But by far the most popular way of preparing okra is to slice the pods into half-inch rounds, shake them in a bag with salt, pepper, and Southern cornmeal, and fry them in bacon fat.

illustration by Frank Holyfield

What fast food chains have done for the potato and the cabbage, through offering French fries and slaw, they may yet do for fried okra. In the Macon area several truck stops near the Farmer's Market sell "Fried Okra Snacks" by the paper scoopful.

Retired Southern executives tend to go in for kitchen gardening, and invariably include a half-dozen okra plants. Accompany such a hobbyist on a pea-picking tour and he will always stop by the okra patch, take out his pocket knife and carefully cut off a few tender young pods.

He will reminisce, "Mama always cooked a little okra along with black-eyed peas – she said it gave them flavor. Then she would lift the pods out and put them down on Papa's plate, along with his peas and rice and his chopped onions and pepper sauce." Now *he* is Papa, and his wife indulgently lays the okra over the peas when she cooks them. So, in small ways, we reconstruct our personal pasts.

It has always been a puzzle to me that some vegetables are funnier than others. Take corn. Wheat and rye and barley are never comic, but corn is hilarious. Cucumbers are sober vegetables while squashes bring chuckles. Rutabagas and parsnips are amusing. But, as an ingredient of Southern ribaldry, okra takes the prize: "Play that okra song – 'Slip, Slidin' Away!'" Or, to a child whose socks have fallen over his shoe tops, "What's the matter, kid? Been eatin' too much okra?"

One thing can be said for sure about this eccentric vegetable.

No one will ever dump a can of cream of mushroom soup over it and call it "lady finger casserole."

– *VIOLET MOORE*
writer & librarian
Montezuma, Ga.

"Facing South" is published each week by the Institute for Southern Studies. It appears as a syndicated column in more than 80 Southern newspapers, magazines, and newsletters.

RESOURCES

Save your land

It's been more than a decade since the Emergency Land Fund began publicizing the loss of black-owned land – millions of acres of it – and organizing landowners to hold on to what's left. But the crisis continues, exacerbated by the current farm credit crunch that is hitting whites as well as blacks all across the rural South.

So the time is ripe for the work of the Land Loss Prevention Task Force, started recently by the North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers, and for its newly published *Ten Ways to Save Your Land.* This practical 33-page guide explains the legal ins and outs in simple, readable, down-home prose. Read about different kinds of deeds and wills, tax lien sales and foreclosures, heirs' property, mineral rights, eminent domain, and bankruptcy. References are made specifically to North Carolina laws, but we think it would be readily adaptable (with some modifications) for use in other states.

Write the task force at: P.O. Box 179, Durham, NC 27702.

Ladyslipper

Time was, women who wanted to write and record their own music, work with other women, and maintain control of the end product stood no chance of success in the music business. But in the 1970s women started their own music industry. Still small, it nonetheless is alive and well, if often hard to find outside "alternative" stores. Access is easy, though, for those who know about Ladyslipper, Inc., a North Carolina mail-order distributor with the world's most comprehensive catalogue of records and tapes by women musicians, writers, and composers.

The catalogue's scope is broad; there are several hundred annotated entries, with feminist music taking pride of place. Classical music played by women is also here, along with folk, country, bluegrass, jazz, blues, and a smattering of punk, soul, reggae, and rock. Other items available from Ladyslipper include song books, calendars, T-shirts, postcards, etc., and spoken-word recordings – everything from readings by Gertrude Stein or Sylvia Plath to an interview with Eleanor Roosevelt to Ruby Dee's rendition of speeches by Sojourner Truth, Ida Wells-Barnett, Angela Davis, and other black women.

Ladyslipper is a nonprofit, collectively-run enterprise begun in 1976 and devoted to promotion of public awareness and appreciation of women artists. The catalogue is free, but send them some stamps if you can: P.O. Box 3124, Durham, NC 27705.

Votes and elections

A Georgia voting rights project has produced two filmstrips of timely interest as election furor builds. "So You Want to Vote?" is specifically geared to the Georgia Elections Code, with details on how to register and the procedures used in elections, and is designed to appeal to people who don't fully understand the voting process or feel their vote will not and does not make a difference. The strip's highlight is the story of how and why S.R. Hollinshed was elected the first black mayor of Marshallville, Georgia, a small farming community in the middle of the state.

The second strip tells the story of the creation, implementation, and meaning of the Voting Rights Act, including personal accounts by civil rights activists who were and are involved. "The Voting Rights Act: An Instrument of Change" is a tool to be used in civic halls and churches by community groups interested in voter education, as well as in high school or college classrooms.

Each is for sale for $50 by the Voting Rights Project of Georgia Legal Services Programs, 954 S. Main St., Conyers, GA 30207.

Labor songs, folklore films

Two new guides belong on the reference shelf of people interested in, respectively, labor songs and folklore. The Program on Workers' Culture at the University of Michigan offers a discography, compiled and introduced by Richard A. Reuss, of *Songs of American Labor, Industrialization, and the Urban Work Experience.* There's an annotated list of 148 record albums including such songs, supplemented by a song title index and a subject index. Finally, Archie Green adds an afterword touching on the setting of early labor albums, the larger meaning of labor songs, and other cultural questions raised by the songs.

Then we found labor songs on film by turning to the subject index of a new volume of the Center for Southern Folklore's catalog of *American Folklore Films and Videotapes.* We also found much, much more: if anyone needed evidence that interest in folklore, traditional life and customs, oral history, and so forth, has mushroomed of late, that evidence is here. The catalog includes films and videotapes released since the first volume came out in 1976 and newly discovered older ones omitted the first time around. Also included: a name-and-address list of distributors, along with the subject index already mentioned.

Order the discography from the Labor Studies Center, Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, University of Michigan, 108 Museums Annex, Ann Arbor, MI 48109. Prepayment of $4.75 per copy ($4 for 10 or more) is requested. The folklore catalog is expensive – $39.95, plus shipping and handling – but you could ask your public library's reference department to order it. Write R.R. Bowker Company, 1180 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036.

TRYING TO MAKE A LIVING

BY PHAYE POLIAKOFF

"I know the name of the game is survival and money."

– **an Atlanta prostitute**

Harlot. Hooker. Trollop. Whore. These words evoke either nervous laughter or serious social condemnation – but always images of the "bad" woman.

Public attitudes toward prostitutes and prostitution have been shaped by a combination of myth and history. And history has given us all the extremes upon which the myths and images are based. The notion of the prostitute in America as a downtrodden victim of oppression comes to us from earliest colonial times when women were imported from the streets of Europe and kidnapped from the villages of Africa. Throughout the history of this country, women have seldom had control over their bodies or their labor. In the South, a social structure evolved which added the dimension of race to the traditional bad/good woman dichotomy as black women became the legally and socially designated "bad" women necessary to perpetuate the double standard. The use of black women as chattel included the sale of their female offspring to serve as sexual slaves.

At the other end of the spectrum is the popular notion of the pampered, glamorous queens of the night. These women, too, have their historical counterparts in the select few who became celebrated as whores and madams in the boom towns and cities of America during periods of rapid growth. Many women went into the business for themselves, using their bodies as commodities. Some even got rich.

Regardless of the favorable or unfavorable circumstances under which these women labored, the underlying assumption was that women's bodies could be bought and sold for the pleasure and convenience of men. Practicing prostitutes are aware of this assumption and for thousands of American women, prostitution is work. Yet, due to social and legal sanctions, listings of jobs held by women seldom include prostitution.

The idea of prostitution as some sort of sleazy fun – rather than work – is encouraged by laws classifying prostitutes as criminals and by media images of prostitutes as happy hookers lounging in luxury apartments or walking the streets in expensive furs. Prostitutes have been looked upon as fallen women, lacking in moral upbringing and in need of decent employment. In fact, most prostitutes see their line of work as better-paying, and no more demeaning than welfare or the low-paying jobs usually available to women. In spite of the increasing number of women in the workforce, job opportunities are generally limited to traditionally defined "women's work," yielding an average income that amounts to 59¢ for every dollar earned by males. More than half of all the black women employed outside the home are working in low-paying service jobs or as domestics.

The voices of prostitutes are seldom heard. In 1980, Adina Back, Marianne Connolly, Phaye Poliakoff, and Barbara Solow collectively produced a three-part radio series in which prostitutes spoke about their work, their relationships with the public, and how they would like to see attitudes toward prostitution changed. The following article was adapted by Phaye Poliakoff from the radio series.

"I LIVE IN A WHOLE LOT LESS FEAR of a lot of things. Little fears like can I afford milk this week: or can I come up with the 22 bucks for my son to go to school? Can I pay the phone bill? I'm a single woman and a mother, too. If I were living on what I could make as a waitress I'd be frightened a lot of the time. I'd feel a great deal more pressure because I remember what it was like to live from one paycheck to the next."

"I'm not advocating that women should be prostitutes, but we want alternatives. Unfortunately, more women are going into prostitution because the economic situation is getting worse. You got two little kids. Welfare isn't really enough to survive, and it's humiliating besides."

"The way I became a prostitute was by finding my back against the wall and very little else to do but come up with a lot of money any way I could do it. I feel like there are an awful lot of women in America whose backs are against the wall. Battered wives who can't escape because they do not have the money to walk out the door with two or three kids – and where are they going to go? And when they get there what are they going to live on till she can get a job and an apartment and some money? So they get to watch their kids beaten or get to be beaten in front of their kids every day. Women in America have their backs against the wall more often than not."

"Why work so hard that when you come home, you just fall out because you're so tired? All right, for a woman to bring home 200 dollars a week – and that's a good-paying job for a woman – it's nothing for a woman in a bathhouse or on the street to make 200 dollars in an hour. It's hard to say, 'I'm gonna take this 200 dollars just cause I need it and I'm not gonna do it anymore,' so you quit that little job that took you all week to make 200 dollars, if you were lucky. If you had a college degree. But you got to have money to live. You got to have money to pay your rent, to buy your groceries."

Prostitution has many links to other work traditionally done by women. Women's roles at work often reflect their roles in the family as social and sexual providers. Just as the vital services performed by a woman in the home are often not recognized or valued in the same way as the work her husband does, the public job market places a lesser value on her services as well.

Several Atlanta prostitutes stressed the similarities they saw between prostitution and other work, including wifehood:

"What is prostitution? Selling of the body? To me, every woman is a prostitute in one way or another. I've been a housewife for 15 years. If I would be good to my husband during the week, like extra sex, I'd get extra money at the end of the week to buy a pair of shoes or a blouse."

"It's just as bad behind the bar [working as a barmaid]. Sometimes you get regular customers who come to the bar and they want to tell you all their problems at home and everything else. I have some customers who come in every day who don't have the slightest idea I do anything else besides tend bar. But it's just as bad with them as it is with some of my dates. They want to sit there for hours and buy you drinks, and they don't feel you should have to wait on anyone else. 'Pay attention to me. I've got this problem I want you to solve.' And you really don't want to be bothered."

"I worked at Steak 'N Egg for a while, and there's a lot of guys come up there regularly, just to sit and drink coffee. And when they want to pinch you on the ass, I thought, 'Hey now. Wait a minute. I'm not getting paid for somebody to pinch me on the ass up here. You leave me a 50 dollar tip for that cup of coffee or you keep your hands off.'"*

"I was working very hard in a restaurant. Working double shifts. Not making very much money. Being sort of abused as a waitress. And a girl I worked with said she'd worked in massage parlors and made a lot of money. I found I could work a couple of nights for what I had been making in a week, or I could work a week for what I could never have made doing anything else, unless I was a doctor or a lawyer. And I've never known what it was like to have money."

Almost anyone will tell you, "a prostitute is a bad woman." But why is she bad? One reason often given is that she makes herself available to more than one man. She oversteps the

*From *Frontiers*, Summer, 1983, "The Pebble Lounge: Oral Histories of Go-Go Dancers."

Illustration by Jacob Roquet

sexual boundaries surrounding women. And while some women may have more than one lover, or even many, a prostitute commits the final offense. She demands money in exchange for sex. She says, "I'm not doing this for love or enjoyment. I'm just trying to make a living." The separation of women into "good girls" and "bad girls" has allowed women's sexuality to be defined for men's needs.

"SEX GETS TO BE JUST LIKE WORKING in a factory or being in an assembly plant. It's just something you do. You close your eyes and do it. It gets to be an every day thing that doesn't bother you anymore. And if it does, after you look at the money it doesn't bother you anymore."

"Sometimes I don't enjoy it. It's boring. It's tiresome. It's a mental strain. It's having to deal with people that under ordinary circumstances, if you weren't doing this, you wouldn't have to deal with."

"I never thought I'd do it. I'd always been a prude. You had to go with me two months before you could touch me. But finally I did. I started working in the hotels at first, but I got barred from all of them. I got cases – busted, in other words. I never wanted to work on Peachtree Street; I thought it was cheap to walk the streets. But there's a way to do things. You can have some class about yourself no matter where you work. So from the hotels I went to the bathhouses, and then I finally went to the street. I work from my car. But even now, I have to get high to go to work cause I don't like to deal with the fact of giving my body to everybody. I don't mind blow jobs that much. I'm very good at it. But I can't stand to have somebody jumping up and down on top of me all the time."

"They're buying your time. They're not really buying you. Most of the women I met were fairly proud. They felt like they were doing a job, and they knew what they were doing."

"I think the most negative aspect is the social condemnation. The inborn negative aspect isn't that strong in the nature of the thing itself. I think it comes mostly from the way people see it."

Another occupational hazard facing prostitutes is arrest. Except in Nevada, where it is heavily regulated, prostitution is illegal. Clean-up campaigns, crackdowns, and street-sweeps occur with periodic regularity around the country. But which prostitutes get arrested? A call woman in Atlanta said that she felt very little fear of arrest. "They're not interested in women who work quietly and service wealthier clientele," she explained. Streetwalkers and black prostitutes often act as buffers for police action, absorbing the fervor of clean-up campaigns, while other forms of prostitution continue to flourish. This kind of selective enforcement, in some cases, helps to prevent women from moving out of the business.

"I was really angry about being arrested. It really hurt me a lot. There is always a risk, but when it happens – they treat you like a criminal. You're fingerprinted and mugged and all, and it's humiliating. They have all the power and they're doing this to you, just like you're a criminal."

"As I was working I got a case. A prostitution case. And I'm thinking, ain't no big thing. I'll get out of it, first offender, you know, 150 dollars, I can pay that now. But it's not like that. The bond is so ridiculous. They give you a 6,000 dollar bond. That's why we never have a win. Most of the time we're trying to get the bond lowered. How much do they think prostitutes make? Are they crazy? If we made that we wouldn't be out there but once a week. And in most cases, it is entrapment. The police have entrapped you. In my incident, he took his clothes off, he laid on top of me. He went through all of that. That was unnecessary."

"Do black girls get locked up more than white girls? The answer is *yes.* Go down to Decatur Street [Atlanta's city jail] and see for yourself. See how many of them are black and how many are white. *Yes!*"

"If you get a case, you say I'm just going to go straight after this. But by the time you get the money to pay the lawyer, you get another case. It's a vicious circle. So you can't stop. They fine you so much money – working in a straight job, you could never pay it. A 300 dollar fine *today.* A 500 dollar fine *today.* Or 30, 60, 90 days in the stockade. And the judge isn't going to believe you instead of an officer. There is no such thing as innocent until proven guilty when you go before the judge that first day. It's whatever he says you did, that's what you did."

Enforcement efforts are aimed mainly at visible prostitution. In 1980, Atlanta's Midtown Business Association took up street prostitution as an issue. A woman then working in one of the bathhouses in an area on Peachtree Street known as "the strip" recalled the tactics used in the resulting busts:

"These people went through all this trouble. They tapped my phone. Bugging the places. Busting the girls. I got busted six times in one week. I was in jail several times. They busted just about all of the girls one weekend. They set all of the girls' bonds at 20,000 dollars, okay? Then they called all of the bonding companies and told them that they couldn't make any bonds for 15,000 or over. They wanted to scare the girls. Keep them in jail over the weekend, hoping that someone would turn state's evidence. But, my God, there was nothing to turn state's evidence on. Apparently

it was just something for TV. Something to keep the public happy. It was really senseless. They didn't have anything else to do, I guess."

Because of their illegal status, a prostitute usually has no legal recourse if she is raped, robbed, beaten, or if a client refuses to pay. Angela Romagnoli of the National Task Force on Prostitution sums it up this way: "When a man wants to hurt a woman, who's easy pickings? Prostitutes. They are throwaways. They are not protected." An Atlanta prostitute agrees, and describes her own experience looking for police protection:

"Do you think I could get any protection? *Hell no!* We're streetwalkers. We don't have no rights. We shouldn't be out there. I met a man last night, driving a Mercedes Benz, money all over the place. He almost killed me. I blacked out three times – he strangled me. He kept screaming, 'I have so much money, what could anybody do to me? I could buy my way out of anything. The headlines would read: *Another Prostitute Killed by Wealthy Man. Good Riddance.*' When I finally got away and told a policeman, he says, 'Lady, I'll tell you what. Go to that Chevron station, and I'll radio for another car so you can file a report.' I said, 'A report? That man just turned the corner. You could catch him. I'll tell you what. Forget it. You go after your jay walkers and your traffic violations, cause you're not going to do a damn thing about it anyway.'"

Pimps of one kind or another have long preyed upon the illegal and dangerous status of the prostitute, offering a type of protection for a large financial cut. The brothel and the madam have been replaced by the street pimp, who is in turn being replaced by "legitimate" businessmen running escort services. Some of these are part of escort service chains, headquartered in major Southern cities.

"It consisted of an apartment where a bunch of girls would sit around the telephone. And there were a couple of guys who backed the thing with money. The people I worked for did certainly make a lot of money. They had the income of maybe five or 10 girls, maybe more, coming into them every night. Even after their expenses they made enough to make it worthwhile to them. Definitely more than any of us made.

"It's safer working for the escort service. And it's better money. And it's probably more socially acceptable in the eyes of the person who is picking you up. Which means it's safer and more money."

"When I first came to Atlanta and started to work at the bathhouses, it was 15 dollars for 30 minutes time with a lady. Whatever the man and the lady did in the back room was strictly between them.

"A lot of the girls on the street would love to work in the bathhouses. There just wasn't ever any room for them. Then you're out of the cold in the winter, you have showers, all of the comforts of home. Plus you don't have to run from the cops on the street. You don't have to worry about being taken in for loitering. It is a lot nicer when you can be in a place like this – a bathhouse, modeling studio, massage parlor – whatever you want to call it. It's a lot more protection. True enough, the man that owns the place, he did make a lot of money. But the girl took a lot less chance of being hurt."

"I've made up my mind. The security is worth it. I don't know anything about the escort services except for what I hear. Now I'd never work for one on Peachtree Street, that's out, cause I know they don't do nothing for you. But in Buckhead or Sandy Springs [wealthy Atlanta neighborhoods] or somewhere where they've got a lot of money, I wouldn't have to worry about catching no case, cause you know they're paying the police off. Ain't no way in hell they're gonna bust nobody in Sandy Springs. And they got prostitution in Sandy Springs."

Concrete options exist to eliminate the current legal double standards for prostitution. Legalization and decriminalization are the two options most often discussed. Legalization is a misnomer since the name implies that it would help women. Actually, legalization has come to mean heavy regulation, keeping men in control of prostitution and able to benefit even more from it. Decriminalization would repeal the present prostitution laws and would allow women to control their own means and methods of work. Most prostitutes favor decriminalization. Angela Romagnoli explains why:

"We need it decriminalized, not

photo courtesy of Margo St. James

MASSAGE PARLOR PROSTITUTES

legalized like it is in Nevada. The situation in Nevada is good for the capitalists, the person that owns the business and the customer, but not good for the women, unless that particular house-owner happens to be nice. Women aren't allowed to go into town. They are stigmatized. They work long shifts; it's like slavery or something. But it's legal, and it's for the convenience of men. They're making big bucks off it. But they tell you how much you charge, and they take a cut on your tips. We want to work out something where it's decriminalized – where the regulations and the licensings are worked out for the women's interests.

"If women are going to be prostitutes, we want to make the job better, with things like protection against rape, assault, and robbery. They need a place to go, a hot line, they need supportive services. We want services for women who want to get out of it. We're working for jobs to be upgraded all the way around, for all women, including prostitutes. If you decriminalize prostitution and raise women's economic status in legitimate work, you will see less prostitution. If women continue to earn 59¢ for every dollar, you will not see a diminution of prostitution. If I go and do a workshop on prostitution, mostly people just want information. They don't want to talk about strategizing. If you start talking about support systems for prostitutes, a lot of women get real nervous. It sounds like you are supporting prostitution. Not all women start to freak inside, but some do. Because prostitution is an issue that borders on everything in a woman's life."

Romagnoli went on to offer her perception of the fears and stereotypes now dividing prostitutes from other women, and how that might change:

"For women there's always been a lot of negative stuff surrounding sex because we definitely haven't had power over our bodies and our sexuality. I just don't want it to be dumped on prostitutes. I think it's really ridiculous, like the prostitute is responsible for perpetuating the sex roles. Any woman who is participating in the system in any way, you could say the same thing to. It's really bad that women are divided. This division keeps women from being powerful. If men can turn around and scare you by calling you a whore or a lesbian, then they can keep you doing what they want. It would be very bad for men if women got together and stopped feeling like they were separate from each other, if women who were living straight lives saw that prostitution was not that much different from what any woman has to do in order to survive. A prostitute is looked at as though she is the scum of the earth by other women. It keeps us from being powerful." □

Phaye Poliakoff is a news and public affairs producer at WVSP community radio in Warrenton, North Carolina.

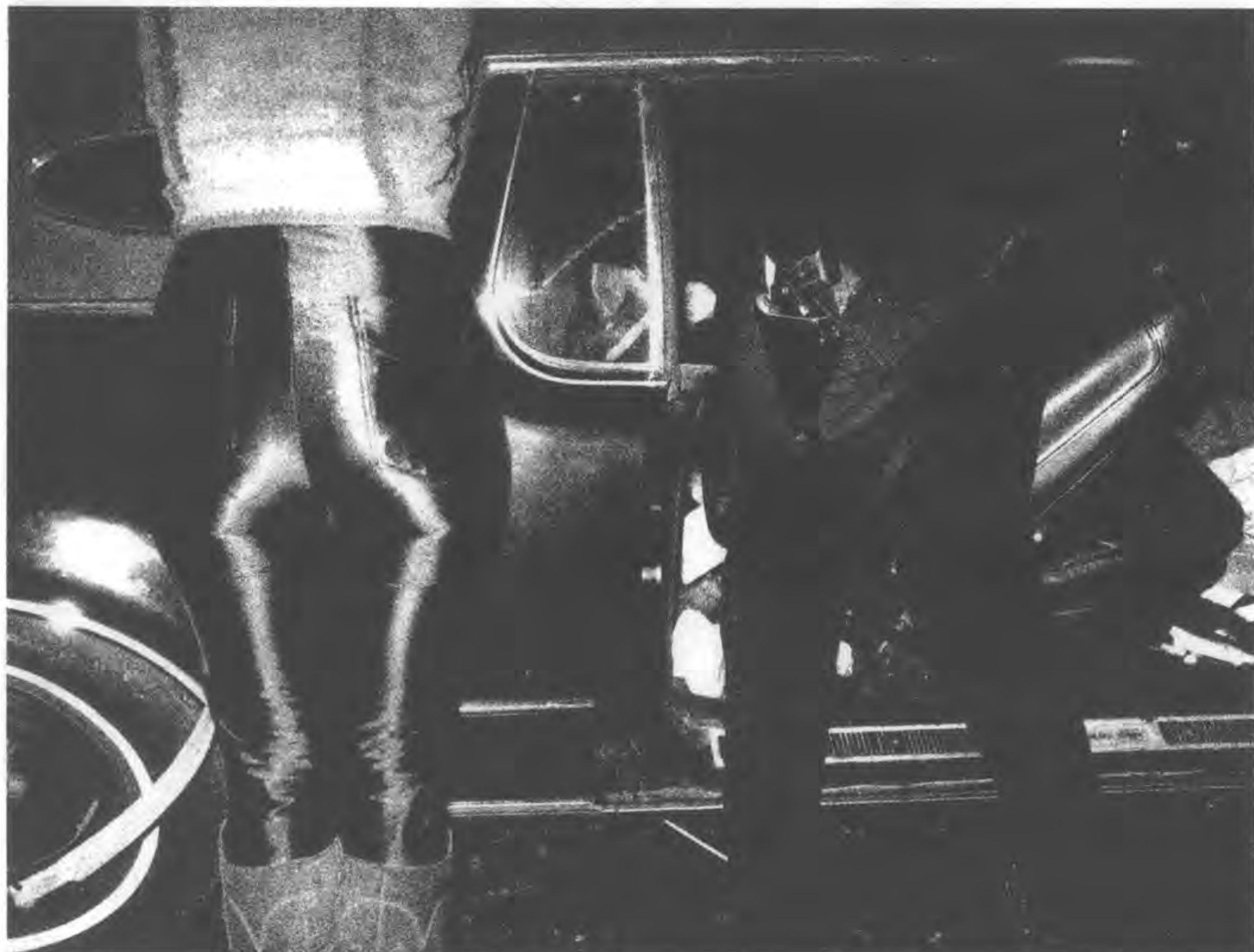


photo from Street Cops *by Jill Freedman. Copyright 1981 by Jill Freedman. Reprinted by permission of Harper and Row Publishers.*

NOT NO EASY BUSINESS

BY SARAH WILKERSON

"This is not no easy business. It's not like people think. Some people think, you know . . . a lot of men say, 'Oh, boy! If I could be a woman, I'd be rich!' It's not easy at all. It's not easy on your psyche. It's not easy on your self-esteem. It's not easy with being arrested. It's not easy getting bad customers. It's not the kind of money people think it is. Maybe you'll see one person a night, that's 50 bucks. What the hell."

– **Ronnie Turner**

If female prostitution is "no easy business," neither are the issues it raises. Traditionally, the sale of sexual services has been viewed as a form of sexual exploitation, inherently degrading to women. Nonetheless, some argue that prostitution should be decriminalized on the grounds that a woman's body is her own: her own property, and, quite literally, her own business, if she chooses to see it that way. The relationship between a woman's body, her self, and her personal freedom is at the crux of the public confusion over prostitution. To see this issue more clearly, it is essential to hear from those who are directly affected by social and legal attitudes toward prostitution.

Ronnie Turner is a 32-year-old streetwalker in Norfolk, Virginia. When she moved back to Norfolk from Pennsylvania, she was running from a bad marriage. Her husband beat her; when she realized he might kill her, she left. Turner was then in her early 20s, without a high school education, and already the mother of three children. In Norfolk, she hoped to find a job and make enough money to support herself and the child she brought with her. Under great economic pressure, she took a job in a massage parlor. The following year, the city closed the massage parlors and Turner lost her job. Within a year of arriving in Norfolk, she entered the business of prostitution. When interviewed in October, 1982, Turner was the only white woman among more than 40 regular streetwalkers working in the downtown area.

As Turner talked, the difficulties and dangers of prostitution became apparent. Most of the female streetwalkers in Norfolk have children who need to be cared for. Turner, for example, works on weekends while her child stays with relatives and she is adamant about receiving clients in her home only while he is away. Turner's son is not aware that his mother supplements her welfare check by prostitution, but keeping this knowledge from her child is a minor problem considering the major hazards of the business: robberies, rapes, arrests, beatings, and drug abuse.

The most telling evidence of these hazards is the gradual disappearance of female streetwalkers from the streets of Norfolk. The number and variety of streetwalkers in the downtown area changes depending on the season, the day of the week, and when the Navy men get their paychecks. What's surprising is that of the 40 regular "working girls," only eight are women. The rest are male transsexuals and homosexual transvestites, known on the streets as "he-shes."

The reasons for this scarcity of female prostitutes are extremely complex. In the early 1970s, Virginia laws were changed to allow men to wear traditionally female clothing in public. Male homosexual prostitutes had worked on the streets before these legal changes, but they have since become much more visible and numerous.

The growing number of he-shes has undercut the business of the female streetwalkers, partly because the he-shes generally charge less than the women. This increased competition has made it harder for women to justify the risks they take working the street.

Despite the dangers, many women like Turner continue to engage in this line of work. She and the other prostitutes are members of the community and rely on it for the success of their businesses. This is how they make a living, and regardless of moral judgements and laws, it is a business.

I'LL TELL YOU THIS, when you're losing your home and you're about to lose your child and your child don't have shoes or you're hungry, you learn you can do anything. You'll learn that you

can do anything, even if it had to be robbery. You'd do anything to eat. People have to survive and that's the way it is.

In my hometown, there was no kind of work there. I worked in soap plants, chemical camps, textile mills, shoe factories. That's the type of work. I've worked hard in my life. I've worked real hard.

Before becoming a prostitute, Turner worked at a massage parlor. She did not think of that as prostitution.

I WAS BEING PAID A WAGE. The man wasn't paying me to do it. I was being paid by the owner. You put it in your mind it was a part of the massage. You didn't just . . . you massaged the whole body. And I got 10 dollars for topless.

I remember the first time I did it [went with a man as a prostitute]. It was when the massage parlors were getting ready to close down and this man offered me 300 dollars and I needed the money *so* bad. We went over to this building and he was undecided whether I should do it, too. We got there and I said, "I can't do it. I can't do it!" We drove away and he said, "I don't want you to do anything that you don't want to do." I said, "300 dollars . . . take me back." Then I said, "No, I can't do it." We must have drove around four times before I got the guts to even go up there. And it was very simple. Here I had been with the man. I'd massaged him. I had seen him nude and everything. It just seemed . . . well, you know how society makes it seem.

photo by *Bill Shaw*/Fayetteville Observer-Times

It's hard to put a line on what is prostitution, you know? Everybody prostitutes theirself. Politicians, everybody sells theirself. Now, this is what I say to the men that say, "I never paid for sex in my life." I say, "Oh, yes you have. You take a girl to dinner. You take her to movies, and you buy her drinks. You've spent 40, 50 dollars on her. You take her home and then you still don't know. Maybe she still won't jump in the sack with you anyway. You're just playing on the odds." I say, "I don't want you to pay for my dinner. I don't want you to pay for the drinks. Give me the money, let me spend it the way I need to. I don't *need* dinner and drinks. I need to pay my bills." In the long shot, it's the same way. A man is paying for it. But they got a phobia about paying for it as putting cash in a woman's hand for sex. They'd rather do it the underground way.

My prices are more expensive than the other girls. One night maybe I'll make 200 dollars and some nights . . . I won't sell myself short. I don't know, something about that, I just won't do it. I guess it's keeping up my self-esteem, like I'm worth it. If I've got to do this, I've at least got to prove I'm worth something."

This lady I might work for [as a call girl], now she gets customers paying hundreds and stuff like that. I've got to give her 25 percent. Call girls get more businessmen. But the ones I got are 50 dollars.

I try to go with married men the most. I don't try to mess with no young sailors and stuff like that. I don't want to catch diseases and stuff. I got to be real careful because if you catch it and give it to some of your regular people, you're in trouble. I check out the customer pretty well. If they're not clean, they either go in the shower or they go out the door. I want a very clean person. I'm also a very private person. I don't do group deals and be in the same room with two men, stuff like that.

When you're with a customer it's a job. First of all, you've got to figure his mind out. Where he's coming from. Is he doing it for loneliness or what? Every customer's something different, you know. So all the time your mind is thinking, "I've got to do this this

way or got to do that that way." And trying to find their little, you know, things that turn them on. And it's so much thinking, keeping your wits about you that you're not really involved. It's very few times, I don't think maybe two, three times in my life, that I've had an orgasm with a customer and it's one I've known for a long, long time.

If they're nice guys, if I've known them for a long time and we get along good, talk, you know, talk and friendship, it isn't offensive to me. Sometimes it's very offensive to me. Sometimes I'll get somebody who I wouldn't even speak to normally. I don't mean to sound like a snob, but I wouldn't give them the time of day, and yet I got to give them my *body*. It's something you got to really steel your mind to.

But if it's a *good* customer, let's say it's a stranger, you tell him the price, he don't try to gyp you down first of all saying, "I ain't got that kind of money." He just goes ahead and accepts that. Then, you always have to get your money first hand. You always, you *always* have to be in control. *Never* let them get in control because then you're in trouble. If you don't get the money ahead of time, they might be a person that'll pay you, but then you feel like you've got to do an extra, extra good job and you've got to get them off.

Now, if a man drank too much and everything else, after a certain time you've got to say, "Look, I can't do it." But you've got your money and you've done your work for your money. That's just like painting somebody's house and they decide they don't like the color. They still got to pay you for doing your job. But if the

THE VICE SQUAD

There is a feeling of cordial toleration between the police and the streetwalkers and both refer to the situation as a "game." The following observations of an officer on the vice squad provide a telling perspective of the street society.

Officer: On a regular basis, right now the downtown area probably has eight regulars [female streetwalkers]. They'll have a few who will come in and try it, make some quick bucks and get out real quick.

Wilkerson: Are they organized at all?

Officer: No, they're totally unorganized. Let's say you arrest one of them. They'll say, "Oh, come bail me out!" One'll say, "Okay, Honey, I'll be right there," and that's the last you'll see of them because that's one less they got to worry about.

Wilkerson: How competitive are the streetwalkers?

Officer: The he-shes'll primarily have Monticello Avenue and the Steak 'N Eggs. That's their territory. And regular girls have downtown 100 block. That's their territory. And, lately . . . it used to be, "This is my territory," the women were here and the he-shes were here – now, they're sort of intermingling and they just seem to get along fine.

But, they're funny because every chance they get, they'll set the other one up. Let's say, Joseph Brown beats Candy Miller out of a trick. Look out, Joseph, because as soon as she finds you going somewhere now, she's gonna find a policeman and point him out and say, "Get him." Oh, they'll get nasty. They'll get in heated fights in the middle of the street over who stole a trick.

If you come into this type of job thinking you're going to do wonders for society and stop [prostitution], you're full of shit. But what you're doing is you're making a trade. See, a lot of these girls down here, when you get them on a charge, they'll do whatever the other person wants. You're gathering information on other crimes like murders and robberies because they know what's going on on the street. So, you'll put them on a prostitution charge and they'll give you somebody who's not a major, but a decent-sized heroin or cocaine dealer. Most prostitutes turn in drug dealers. Some of them will turn in somebody who robbed a bank who they know.

Wilkerson: So, in a way, you need the prostitutes as your undercover people, at least that's how they function.

Officer: No, we don't really need them . . . but they're nice to have around.

From the viewpoint of the prostitutes, they may not like being this useful to the police, but it is widely accepted as part of the "game." A good relationship with the vice squad is crucial to the success of Turner's business.

Turner: [The vice squad] is all right with me. Although when they bust me I don't like them very much. But we've since made buddies. My buddies down there, they leave me alone, but some of these new ones, I worry about them. I don't like the vice squad for the reason that I don't know which ones are the right ones or the wrong ones. The old ones know I'm not out trying to hurt nobody. I'm just trying to mind my own business.

Wilkerson: It seems like over 80 percent of the prostitutes are he-shes.

Turner: Well, the police run most of the girls out of town. They just have arrested them or harassed them. They're all in the penitentiary or something.

Wilkerson: Talking to the vice squad, they said they would rather have women working down there than the he-shes.

Turner: Then why did they arrest them all and put them in the penitentiary?

Wilkerson: They said they'd rather have women than the he-shes because the he-shes cut people. They're meaner and they end up with more people getting hurt.

Turner: Well, they're a man, too. And if a man messes with them . . . like, a woman will get the shit beat out of them. But, even though they're dressed as women, they got a man's strength. And some of them do rob because their business is harder than a woman's. It's harder for them to make money. If I'm down there, I'll get much more cars pulling up to me because I'm the only white girl down there. You're down South and a lot of white men don't want black girls. And, secondly, a lot of them know what they are and don't want to be with a man. On the other hand, a lot of them know what they are and go with them, too.

person has his money, you're obligated to do what you've got to do to get him to give it to you.

Never go without getting the money first. They try to steal the money back. Oh, it's just so much crap. You got to hide it good. And sometimes they'll beat you to get it back. And there's ones that lay out there and take you out and they'll give you the money and then they rob you of everything you made the whole evening. I remember when I used to make three and four hundred dollars and get robbed of it. You know there's no worse feeling: that you've worked hard all night and you're tired and have some idiot come and rob you for your money. That's why I bring everything home right away. I don't keep it on me when I'm working out there.

In addition to her dealing with customers, Turner is part of an undersociety, a combination of street people, the he-shes (who Turner says prefer to be called "girls"), and the police (see box). It's a tight-knit group because it is to each person's advantage to know everyone and keep track of what goes on.

WE'RE ALL OKAY TO EACH OTHER.

Now you got some shits down there that none of us like because they undercut or something. It's a code just like anything else. If I stand there and offer 50 dollars, the girl next to me would never, *should* never say, "Well, I'll take you for 40." She won't be on the street long. Somebody will do something to her.

photo by Bill Shaw/Fayetteville Observer-Times

We also look out for each other. Let's say I see a customer in a car eyeing me, a girl will come up, poke me, "He ain't got no money." Or they'll come up and say, "He's trouble. Don't mess with him." Same way with me, if I see one of the girls looking at a customer I've been with that's been trouble. You give warnings to each other. If you feel like it's gonna get trouble, you tell a girl to take the license number down, "If I'm not back in an hour, yeah, call the police." But we very seldom do that. We just try to let the person know ahead of time that we got the other girls looking out for us. If one of the girls don't show back up and something might be wrong . . . you know. It's a system of lookout. It's sisterhood.

We call each other friends, but we don't socialize with each other, really. A lot of them are roommates and everything, but I'm a lot of a different case. Most of the black girls that work out there, their kids stay with their mother. They're on their own. They can more or less take it or leave it. They can operate when they want to or not. They don't have to cover their back like I do with my family, with my kid and everything.

A lot of them are drug addicts. The drug and prostitution businesses almost always run together. They got to make money just like me to keep their habit, but they're *freer.* If I was free and didn't have my kid here, I could make a lot of money. But the kid'll be home this evening and I won't be able to work probably all week again. I didn't work last night, so I worked one night – Friday night. What the hell is that?

With the recent economic hard times, crimes against women downtown have become more frequent and violent. There are no big-time pimps in Norfolk and although some women have boyfriends or husbands controlling business and providing protection, most of the women are on their own. As the women point out, if customers are looking to rob or abuse prostitutes, they will usually pick up the women. Because women are generally weaker than the he-shes, they are also easier to arrest. As prime targets of bad customers and police officers, the women are disappearing from the streets by a process of elimination. In

July, the body of one known streetwalker, Joyce Bilups, was found mutilated in a Norfolk alley. The murder is still unsolved.

HONEY, YOU'RE ALWAYS A BIT SCARED. If you're not, you're stupid. If you're not scared, you'll let your guard down and that's when you're gonna get hurt. And you're gonna get hurt out here. I don't have any teeth.

[Joyce Bilups] was turning 10 dollar tricks in the alley and also she used to rob people, but her mistake was just getting the wrong customer. All of us will get the wrong customer one time or the other. I have spurts. I've had a weekend when I've had three trouble makers. I'll think I'm not *ever* going out there again. I'm so glad to get away. You know, I had a Yellow Cab driver rape me on the way home from work one night. Guy picked me up at Steak 'N Eggs at four in the morning. I haven't been out there for about a year and a half. I'm just starting to go back.

Although Turner isn't satisfied working as a prostitute, she is convinced that it is the best way for her to make enough money to support herself and her child. In addition to their living expenses, she is presently working to pay her boyfriend's legal fees as well as her own dental bills, which resulted when one of her customers beat her and knocked out her dental work. Her only mention of the future is that once she has a reliable car she may move up in the business to a position as a call girl. The changes she would like to see are not so much in her own life as in the treatment of people in her profession.

WHAT I'D LIKE SOMEBODY TO REALLY DO, study on, is why it's wrong; why the women are looked down on and degraded for being a prostitute, but it's all right for the man with the money.

Once in a while they'll put a girl [police undercover agent] on the street and if a guy propositions her they'll arrest him and he'll get a small fine. But not like us, we can go to jail so long. They can bury us. Especially if it's a second offense or something. Oral sodomy, a blow job, carries five to seven years. Something married people do daily is still considered against the law almost all over the United States. Even for married couples. Check your law books. Oral sex is against the law. It doesn't matter if you're a prostitute or a wife, it's just we're the ones that are getting the charges for it, and it carries a heavy charge.

I don't really want to see nobody go to jail no more than I want to see me go to jail. But I don't like their techniques; they catch you with a john, making him talk against you. And sometimes you haven't even talked about money yet and they'll say, especially if the guy's married, "If you don't say she did this and that, we're gonna run you in." Most of them are scared to death and that's how the cops can get them to say anything they want against you. So they get a statement from him that incriminates you immediately. He's gonna say whatever he can to get away from them and not have his family know what he's done.

I wouldn't like to see the johns arrested. I'd like to see them have different prostitution laws or have a different way of doing it. But we're not Paris, and I guess we never will be. It's just like Prohibition. It's something you're not going to be able to stop so why don't you try to deal with it in a different way. If you can't stop people from drinking, you're not going to be able to stop sex. A person who says you can is out of their mind. □

photo couresy of Margo St. James

Sarah Wilkerson is a free-lance writer living in North Carolina.

RESOURCES

On Mother's Day in 1973, Margo St. James founded the organization Cast Off Your Old Tired Ethics [COYOTE] which challenges public attitudes toward prostitution and seeks an end to the legal harassment and intimidation of prostitutes. St. James believes that the best hope for change is through court action. She points out that the laws against prostitution were codified on a state-by-state basis around the turn of the century. Various cases now being considered could lead to the eventual elimination of these prohibitive laws. A number of similar organizations have sprung up in various cities around the country and together they constitute a loosely affiliated national network. For information about their progress and activities, or to find out if there is an active group in your area contact one of the following:

HIRE (Hooking is Real Employment)
Doloras French
847 Monroe Dr. NE
Atlanta, GA 30308
(404) 876-1212

National Task Force on Prostitution
Margo St. James
P.O. Box 26354
San Francisco, CA 94126
(415) 381-3881

U.S. Collective of Prostitutes
P.O. Box 14512
San Francisco, CA 94114
(415) 558-9628

BY MAXINE ALEXANDER

LISTEN!!
LISTEN TO ME!!

they've poisoned the water
we can no longer drink the water
they've stripped the trees of foliage
they've stripped the beaches of dunes
and wage daily war against the rainforests
they are killing the seeds of the future
already the fruits of the earth grow twisted
and deceptively plentiful to the eye
our bodies reek
we are afraid to bathe
in the poisoned waters

and the fingers of our grandchildren no longer number five

PLEASE LISTEN!

they are terrorizing our people
with their barbarous medicine
with their shiny implements of death
and noxious drugs
the mother's breasts are dry
the babies are starving
they've poisoned the very womb
and hear me now
they've poisoned the *minds* of our people
some among us even bow down
and worship the monster
who devours the flesh of our mothers
drinks the blood of our fathers
and defecates destruction for our children's children
and o my earth my mother
poisons your sweet waters

so that the grandchildren's fingers no longer number five

CAN YOU HEAR ME!!

i say we live in fear
there are those among us wearing our faces
who have been trained by the enemy
to blind the eyes of our sisters
steal the hearts of our brothers
rape our daughters and teach our sons to kill for money
have we no shame
and haven't you seen
that the hands of the children
are not like the hands of the old ones
that the old ones live alone
at the mercy of our enemies
and it is not to our comfort
that they cannot see

that the grandchildren's fingers no longer number five

illustration by Dorothy Donohue

By Toni Cade Bambara

What's Happening in Atlanta

Atlanta earned the affectionate nickname "little New York" from blacks who bought the image of it as "a city too busy to hate," a mecca for black millionaires and a model for the New South. But a series of murders and abductions of black children, which first drew public attention in the summer of 1979, transformed Atlanta into a city of terror.

A year after the first body was discovered, an official Atlanta Police Department Task Force was finally set up in response to growing public outrage at the police indifference and the apparent class bias of Atlanta's black leadership toward the murder of children from poor, inner-city neighborhoods. Official figures claim that 29 young people, mostly boys between the ages of nine and 14, were murdered in the July, 1979, to June, 1981, time period. Wayne Williams, a black photographer, was arrested in June, 1981, and charged with two of the murders. He was convicted in February, 1982.

The Task Force was disbanded after Williams' conviction and authorities were reportedly satisfied that Williams was guilty of at least 24 more of the murders. The verdict is being appealed and the defense is expected to use information about the other murders that took place throughout the three-year period, particularly those that took place while Williams was in custody. Before, during and after the trial, a number of community forums focused on the discrepancies between "official" and "actual" versions of events surrounding the abductions and murders. There were community protests around the arrest, trial and verdict in the Williams case and the disbanding of the Task Force.

The black parents of Atlanta, who were primarily responsible for bringing the murders to public attention, organized their own campaign to stop the killings. Despite enormous public and personal pressure, the black community has continued to keep count of the dead. Many other girls, young women and young men have also been murdered, but excluded from the official death toll as not fitting the arbitrary "pattern" established by public officials. A number of families have petitioned the Attorney General for an investigation of the murders. The chief of police, in response to continued community and national pressure, invited a citizen's task force to assist in investigating the murder of seven women. Community forces hope to use this opportunity to reopen the entire case.

This article is taken from the prologue to Toni Cade Bambara's forthcoming book on the Atlanta murders (to be published by Random House).

You're on the porch with the broom sweeping the same spot, getting the same sound – dry straw against dry leaf caught in the loose-dirt crevice of the cement tiles. No phone, no footfalls, no welcome variation. It's 3:15. Your ears strain, stretching down the block searching through school child chatter for that one voice that will give you ease. Your eyes sting with the effort to see over bushes, look through buildings, cut through everything that separates you from your child's starting point – the junior high school.

The little kids you keep telling not to cut through your yard are cutting through your yard again. Not boisterous-bold and loose-limbed as they used to in first and second grades. But not huddled and spooked as they did last year when those low hanging branches swayed and creaked, throwing shadows of alarm on the walkway. You had to saw off the dogwood limbs then and dig a trench to upend the lawnleaf bags into. They looked, those heaps of leaves, like bagged bodies. You hum now and get noisy with the broom as you come down the steps so no child taking the short cut from the elementary school should get hysterical coming upon your own self in your own back yard. No need. Like adults, the children are acting as though everything is fine now, the terror over, the horror past.

Like adults, the children are acting as though everything is fine now, the terror over, the horror past.

One suspect charged with two murders. Case hanging literally by a thread – dog hairs and carpet fibers. But the terror is over.

It's 3:18. The group across the street that sometimes walks home with your child waves to you. You holler over, trying not to sound batty. They say they waited, shrug, then move on. A bus chuffs by, masking the view and drowning you out. You lean the broom against the hedges and play magic. If the next three cars that stream by sport one, just one, bumper sticker saying, "Help Keep Our Children Safe," then all is well, you figure irrationally. You wait out five cars, a mail truck, and a moving van before you spy a tattered sticker on an out-of-state camper saying "Help . . . Chil" in a weather-worn way. You run to the curb to hail a cab, though that makes no sense. A cab can't travel the route your child takes from school, can't cut through the projects or jump the ditch back of the fish joint. Plus, you're in your slippers and your hair looks like a rat's nest.

You run inside to phone the school. The woman tells you that there is no one in the building. You point out the illogic of that, an edge to your voice, and ask her to please please check, it's an absolute emergency. You can tell by the way she sucks her teeth that your name is known in that office. You've been up there often with your mouth on fire about certain incidents they call "discipline," you call "battering." You stalked the coach around the gym one sunny afternoon, a basketball in one hand, a frying pan in the other – visual aids for your clenched-teeth recitation: See now, Coach, this ball is what you're supposed to be about and this kitchen pan is supposedly what I'm all about, and if you don't quit beating up on these children. . . . He backed off in that sickening way that told you why his colleagues appointed him the Beast-in-Residence and why he went for it. Things weren't bad enough in Atlanta – the children, the

photo by Burnham Ware

To accompany Toni Cade Bambara's essay on the Atlanta murders, we have selected these photographs of children by Burnham Ware and Bob Herbert. These are not photographs of children in Atlanta.

community, the city in a panic – teachers were setting up hit lists, or "lick lists," as the Beast kept saying, backing into the ping-pong table asking, since it wasn't your child sent to him for paddling, what the hell is the matter with you?

What's your problem, the principal wanted to know when you broke up PTA last fall to demand some security measures. Not enough books to go around, the children stay after school to play catch-up in the library or lend-me on the stairwells vulnerable to a kidnap attack. The men elected to organize defense squads. But the principal said, "There will be no vigilante groups in my school!" City under siege. Bullhorns bellowing, "Stay inside!" Armed helicopters beating overhead. Young curfew defiers rounded up and hauled down to the Task Force office and badgered to confess to murder. Atlanta a magnet for every amateur sleuth, bounty hunter, right-wing provocateur, left-wing adventurer, do-gooder, soothsayer, porno film maker, crack-shot supercop, crackpot social analyst, scoop journalist, paramilitary thug and freelance fool. But there will be no bats and sticks in his school. So you went right off to nut city, cause the children have a right to some safety, good dreams. They've a right to childhood. They've a right to their lives. "Unladylike," the librarian whispered to the hygiene teacher. But how do you conduct a polite discussion about murder?

The woman, back on the phone and surly, tells you once more that no one is in the building. You tell her your name again, say you're calling from home, mention the time, insist she write it down. You hang up and interrogate yourself: Why did you do all that? Establishing an alibi in case something is dreadfully wrong?

The families of the missing and murdered children were subjected to interrogation, lie-detector tests, to media's sly innuendo at first, then blatant and libelous accusation. In December, 1980, parents were called in again to face the polygraph. Mr. Bell, father of Yusef, and a friend of Latonya Wilson's family were suspects for more than a year. Vera Carter, mother of Anthony Bernard Carter, was arrested, then released but grilled for two months. A young, poor black woman with only one child, one child? Highly suspect. And every so often the authorities leak little poison-pen messages – the parents are not above suspicion. Usually the FBI. Usually about the more outspoken critics of the investigation. You've noticed the pattern. You've kept journals for over two years. Whenever members of the Committee to Stop Children's Murders (STOP) speak around the country, marshalling support from groups ready to launch a mass movement for children's rights, the FBI goes into the parents-did-it number. Murderous parents, street-hustling hoodlums, and the gentle killer – the official version of things. In spring, 1980, just weeks before STOP's May 25 rally in DC, FBI agent Twidwell said to a civic group in Macon, Georgia, that in several cases the parents offed their kids because "they were such little nuisances."

You'd hoped that the parents would follow through with the defamation suit. You'd hoped that the DC rally would lay the groundwork for a National Black Anti-Defamation League with muscle. That the idea of a National Black Commission of Inquiry, discussed after King's assassination, would be put into effect. Were sure a National Children's Rights Movement would be mounted. You've been searching since for meaningful signs.

Every so often the authorities leak little poison-pen messages -- the parents are not above suspicion.

photo by Burnham Ware

So. You're standing there with one hand on the phone, trying not to squander precious energy thinking about all those speeches, pep talks, booths, buttons, green ribbons, posters, bumper stickers, profiling, missed opportunities. You need that energy to figure out what to do, who to call. Where the hell is your child?

It's 3:27 on your Mother's Day watch, and you can't go on standing there feeling helpless, scattered, enraged and crazy. Because next thing you know, you too will be longing for "normalcy." And you trust "crazy" way before that. So you snatch up the runner from the dining room table and wrap up your head, kick off your scuffs by the door and step into your clogs, dump your bag on the floor and scramble for key ring and change purse, and take off, running down the avenue like a crazy woman. You are a crazy woman. But you'd rather embrace madness than amnesia. A six million dollar investigation, and after one year – one man is arrested. And all over the city the sermons urge, "Let the Community Heal Itself." Amnesia rolls in like fog to blanket the city. Down come the reward signs. Off the stickers. Eight hundred police withdrawn from the neighborhoods. One hundred state patrolmen returned to highway duty. Road blocks discontinued. Community Watch Networks disbanded. Task Force personnel reduced from 170 to six. The State Consumer Affairs Office goes after the STOP committee to muzzle and disperse them. Judge Clarence Cooper puts a "gag" order on the suspect, the defense team, his family, witnesses, then literally goes out to lunch with D.A. Slaton.

All over the city the sermons urge, Let the Community Heal Itself. Amnesia rolls in like fog to blanket the city.

One man charged with two murders. Two out of 28 on the Task Force list. Two out of the 72 on the community's list. Let the community breathe again and return to normal.

You swing around the corner looking for someone to bite. It's 3:34 in the afternoon and a mad mother is running down the streets of southwest Atlanta, and no one is paying her any mind. Less than five months ago, in May, before Wayne Williams drove across the Jackson Bridge and a stake-out officer thought he heard a splash in the Chattahoochie, you would not have been running alone. Your alarm would have sounded throughout the neighborhood. One phone call would have triggered the block-to-block relay. Neighbors, bus drivers, store owners, on-the-corner hardheads would have sprung into action to find your child, a child, our child – even at the risk of being detained or arrested as many had, foiling abductions – but would have dropped all to risk anything – cause when death's been replaced by murder, it's no longer a family affair.

You race past the taxi shed, noisy in your clogs. An old-timer taps on the window and salutes you with a bottle of Coke. You flash him your face, a mask of distress, and point to the clock. It's 3:40. You've no time to see what he makes of this. That you don't hear him coming up behind you is the telling thing. So, he too is asleep on his feet. The infection has spread. Med fly in California. A tsetse fly epidemic raging in Atlanta. But you understand his craving for closure, resolution. He's a cabby.

In spring, 1981, when Roy Innis of or not of CORE held a press conference on the steps of City Hall, Innis claimed he had a witness who positively knew someone involved in the murders. A cab driver; a member of a sex-drug cult of devil worshippers involving some blacks and whites of prominent Atlanta families; a crazed cult engaged in narcotic-running and ritual murder. Once again the police

photo by Burnham Ware

canvassed the neighborhoods. Timothy Hill's folks met with the authorities; they recognized the picture: a cabby seen around their way on occasion. So cabbies, like karate adepts, Vietnam vets, owners of vans with carpeting, photographers who hang around playgrounds, little old ladies who maunder about in school yards, weirdos dressed like clergy and clergy, blind people tapping along the pavement signalling need, odd religious types, and cops – anybody who can lure or snatch a child to her or his death – start shrinking in size, playing invisible, until the Task Force issues an all-clear bulletin – Innis not credible, witness not reliable, information unrelated, cabby not a suspect. But several "independent" investigators persist in exploring that lead. But the monster's been seized says the media. Cabbies relax.

You jump the ditch back of the fish joint, squinching up your nose against re-fried lard, squinching up your toes to keep your clogs on. And you're wondering, just to keep your mind off the stitch in your side, what effect the pressure to get back to normal had on the families who identified the bodies. "It didn't look like Angel," Ms. Venus Taylor said. "So old, like she'd aged a hundred years in those six days." But the experts said the strangled, mutilated body was Angel Lanier, 12-year-old daughter of Venus Taylor.

"Experts my foot!" said the barber on Gordon Street, one of the customers arguing that anthropologists with just one stray bone can reconstruct a whole dinosaur, reconstuct a whole culture, tell you whether the women of that time wore drawers made of fur, or drawers out of hide. But no one else in the barber shop that day was convinced that there are experts of that ilk down at the county medical examiners. They get a body or some bones, a few teeth, a dental chart or medical record, some ground covering if they're lucky – that is if they arrive on the scene before the APD [Atlanta Police Department], GBI [Georgia Bureau of Investigation], FBI have trampled the site and tampered with the findings – and what do they do, these experts? They talk, drink coffee, jiggle the teeth around in the jaw, take photos, eat tuna on white, watch the clock, look over the Task Force list, and take a vote.

"So old," moaned Ms. Venus Taylor in March, 1980. "It's not my Alfred," said Ms. Lois Evans when the body found in July, 1979, was identified 15 months later as "Alfred Evans," described as having no pierced ear as her son had. "Can't be Timothy," said Ms. Annie Hill in March, 1981, when a body was fished from the Chattahoochie River, for Timothy had been spotted less than 24 hours ago. Mayor Jackson had echoed the report on TV, just hours before Police Chief Napper, head bowed, had to knock on the door with the terrible news. The experts had tagged the water-logged, decomposed body "Timothy Hill," the 13-year-old who'd not been put on the Missing and Murdered list until 19 days after his disappearance. He'd been dead, the examiners said, for at least two weeks.

Some bodies were so severely decomposed, the parents did not view them. They were given pouch burials: embalming powder sprinkled over the remains in a plastic bag. Other parents, on hearing that dogs in the woods had gotten to the bodies, could not bring themselves to make the trip downtown. A skull, a bone – Ms. Willie Mae Mathis sent her eldest son in her stead. Many in the community felt that the discouragement of body-viewing was calculated and had less to do with decay and dog-mauling and

One man charged with two murders. Two out of 28 on the Task Force list. Two out of the 72 on the community list.

photo by Bob Herbert

more to do with mutilation. A rumored Law Enforcement Assistance Administration [LEAA] memo, dated March 8, 1981, described castration in several cases, ritual carvings in others. A mortician's assistant reported in late 1980, odd needle marks on the genitalia of several. In the absence of any sense of public accountability on the part of the authorities, the community grapevine sizzled with possibilities. After Dick Gregory came to town, presenting his theory of interferon-collecting as a paramount motive, Venus Taylor made a point of yanking the sheets back and mincing no words: the head of the penis cut off in several cases, hypodermic needle marks on the penis of others. "No mutilation," the authorities insisted.

You veer around a dog lying on the sidewalk, asleep or dead you've no time to find out. You dare not look at your watch in your haste. Several boys from the high school are already shooting baskets in the projects. You wish you could hang around for a dunk or two. Wish you could think about something other than what grips you.

"Those bones are not my child." You feel for that mother shivering in the cold basement room of the county morgue, a bundle of bones in a steel drawer, a tag on the toe bearing a name that used to resonate in the park, soar over rooftops on summer nights of kickball, a name that used to ring out staccato-like to bam-bam accompaniment on the bathroom door for hogging all the hot water. The family urging Mother in hushed tones, teeth chattering, to stop holding out for a miracle now squashed. The social worker back at the house explaining that Mother is practicing denial, one stage in a heart-rending process from fear to shock to rage, guilt, denial, grief, release and healing. A friend of Mother's folding the laundry argues knowingly that the silent phone caller can't be the boy, just some crank getting his jollies. The mayor, commissioner, police chief come by to offer condolences, assuring Mother that the city will pay for the burial. The minister says no matter how Mother feels, it's somebody's child down there on a slab and there must be a funeral. The media with lenses and pencils and tapes hold a light meter up to Mother's face and ask what she'll wear to the event. Friends and kin come by to drop money in the plate and no one asks to see the books or the accountant or the license from the Georgia Consumer Affairs Office permitting the family to accept the offering. Neighbors set dishes of food on the table and pay their respects. All have lived through the horror with Mother, but now they want relief, release, a return to routine. So claim the bones, Mother. Have the funeral, Mother. Close the lid, Mother. Let the community breathe again.

One suspect, jailed. Two counts of murder, denied. Cameras barred from the courtroom, there've been enough skeletons on view. Let the community sleep again.

You're stepping through the high grass in the vacant lot one block from the school. You're on the lookout for dog shit, rats, snakes, and broken glass. You are systematically ignoring the pain in your side, the hysteria swarming like nausea, not to mention the bags of junket jiggling in your upper arms and thighs. You're out of condition. You miss yoga sessions, dance class, bike rides, walks. For more than a year, your child would not go out after school, even with you, even with you armed to the teeth with pistol, mace, and the Swiss Army knife she bought for camp last summer. You certainly could not leave her home alone where even the TV waged war

In the absence of accountability of the part of the authorities, the community grapevine sizzled with possibilities.

photo by Bob Herbert

– Be Careful! Watch Out! Trust No One! Killer on the Loose! Mental hygienists lamenting loudly – "A whole generation will grow up distrustful, withdrawn, permanently damaged." The media having a field day with reports on black pathology – past, present, future, imagined. "It's 10 o'clock!" blares the TV, "Do you know where your children are?" Hell, it's been 19 months, do they know where the murderers are?

Nineteen months. Scores of boys, girls, young men and women slaughtered. The Task Force office, the Mayor's office, and the media saying over and over the terror is past, the murders have stopped now that Wayne Williams has been jailed. But the word on the block is that at least four boys have been killed since the arrest, the STOP committee's estimate higher. Killed, found, and quietly buried. Down at the morgue, one worker recites policy for inquirers – "We hold an unidentified body for 30 days. If it's not claimed in that time, the city buries the body and that's it." Another worker says only three bodies of youngsters are known to her, then five minutes later, after a huddle with co-workers, disclaims any knowledge of anything, including her own name. You've seen sketches of white women in the papers with the query,"If anyone knows this woman, please call this number?" But the media's been suspiciously silent about black children found lately. And neither the in-charge-for-the-day worker at the morgue nor the officer down at Homocide will acknowledge the case of nine-year-old Amy Willis, strangled to death weeks ago. "There've been no killings that fit the pattern," is the official word. But pattern, connection, links were the very things denied by the authorities for so long.

You turn the corner, falling out of one clog and twisting your ankle. No sound comes out of your mouth though you pain, for there's a crowd in the street by the schoolyard, a blood puddle, and a book bag you know asprawl by the sewer. It stops your heart. Your lungs squeeze shut. Between you and the crowd of children is a woman you recognize from a Block Parent meeting last spring. She's escorting two cops from their car on the curb to an old Pontiac further on where three very loud, very angry Bloods – cords bursting from neck and temples, gums fiery red – bend a man in a suit back over the hood of the Pontiac. You look. He could be Latin, Middle Eastern, you don't really give a damn. You're busy trying to work the bellows in your lungs.

"Don't touch me," the man is saying, weaving this way and that to keep clear of the fists.

"You didn't even stop to see what you hit," one of the angry men hollers. His voice shoots up into falsetto, then breaks.

Down on the ground, one knee against concrete, your daughter is crouched, just now looking through a fence of legs. The school kids give way and you're rapidly there. She's bloody. You scream. All turn to support you, to assure you she's fine. She's cradling a cat who squirms in her arms. It tries hard to lick loose a makeshift bandage. So. All this time you've been frantic, they've been gathering twigs for a splint, cutting gauze from a Kotex, winding sticky, black electrical tape around a tabby's paw.

"Can't you see it's a school zone, chump?"

"This ain't the Atlanta 500." A punch is thrown.

"Take it easy," one cop says in no hurry.

"Calm down. Calm down."

Wayne Williams has been jailed, but the word on the block is that at least four boys have been killed since the arrest.

photo by Bob Herbert

You're calm. That is, you're on your feet, though your ankle throbs and you're ready to collapse. You rear range your face and try to act like a grownup while your daughter, talking in gasps, tells it all hurriedly. Hit and run, poor kitty cat, brothers stop mean man at the light, force car back in reverse, Block Parent calls Humane Society, they don't do vet service, mean man fusses at her for diving into street to save a damn cat, children gather and fuss back, angry brothers jump mean man, friends help mend cat, cops finally come, and how come Mommy you forgot to meet me for swim class? The Block Parent jingles keys in her pocket to get your attention, then raises eyebrows at you. Some mother, she mutters, leaving your child alone on the corner waiting to go to the pool. This is Atlanta, woman, where've you been? She talks out of the side of her mouth, her eyebrows doing most of the scolding. You drop your head. The cops write a ticket. One of the Bloods takes the cat. Another reaches round the cops to swipe at the driver.

It catches you in the back of the knees. November 16, Monday, first swim session, free too, parent's signature required, and your child's a fish. The Block Parent is right, where've you been? Your daughter hands you her book bag and helps you up the steps to the pool, teasing you for being so absent-minded, cracking on the table runner wrapped round your head, laughing at your overall tacky appearance. Has a grand time laughing at you. You let her, you help her. She's 11 years old and entitled. You are a mess.

The parents charged that the authorities kept the lid on the case to soothe the nerves of the Chamber of Commerce.

photo by Bob Herbert

For longer than you want to think about, stumbling to the desk to register, it's been hard to laugh freely. Though at your house there've been no nightmares, bed-wetting, fits of rage, uncontrollable tears, anxiety attacks, onset of asthma, depression, withdrawal, or any other symptoms mental health workers keep discussing in the media, there's been a definite decrease in the kind of clowning around that used to rock your household. At community meetings, child psychologists have been cautioning parents, teachers, youngsters alike to stay alert to changes in behavior, for the Atlanta holocaust has taken its toll. You've observed and you've marvelled at the resiliency of the young, their ability to maintain a firm but not clenched-fist grip on their senses. Your nephew one night let his macho mask slip to show you a scared little boy trying hard to be brave for the sake of his parents. Life is hard enough for grownups, he said, with all of their problems without worrying them further with a scarified him. In relating his feelings to your daughter, however, he camouflaged it all in the language of brag.

You jog around the pool as your daughter comes from the locker area, stuffing braids under her swim cap. It's time, you're telling yourself, to resume body work and get back to. . . . You can't finish the thought. You're wasted. You drop yourself down on the bench, greet parents, joke with older kids you know come to watch younger brothers and sisters splash about in the pool. You rummage around in your daughter's book satchel and smile. Once again she's mistaken your journal for her math notebook, same color. You wonder how she fared in fifth period with your Missing and Murdered notes.

You began the journal in September, 1979, when a few folks began asking, "What is going on?" The entries got lengthy in June, 1980, when the outraged parents, having organized STOP, camped out at media and law

enforcement offices demanding a special investigation of the "epidemic of child murders" that had gone on unchecked for a year. The journal ends in fall, 1980, after the explosion at the Gate City-Bowen Homes Day Nursery on October 13 that brought the case to national attention and provoked widespread speculation about the killers and their motives:

white cops taking license in black neighborhoods again?

the Klan and other Nazi thugs on the rampage again?

diabolical scientists experimenting on Third World people again?

white avengers of Dewey Baugus, a white child beaten to death in spring, 1979, by, allegedly, black youths (D.A. Slaton's theory at the time) going berserk?

demonic cultists using human sacrifices?

a child prodigy grown mediocre adult killing her/his childhood over and over?

a crazed Vietnam vet who couldn't make the transition?

UFO aliens doing exploratory surgery?

parents of a raped girl running amok with "justice?"

porno film makers producing "snuff flicks" for export?

a band of child molesters covering their tracks?

new drug forces wiping out the young, unwitting couriers of the old forces in a bid for territorial rights?

unreconstructed peckerwoods trying to topple the black city administration?

plantation kidnappers of slave labor issuing the ultimate pink slip?

Journal No. 2 you selected carefully from an arts supply store, a perfect-bound sketch book totally unlike your daughter's spiral notebook. The focus shifts from What's Going On? to Why Is So Little Being Done? The parents charged that the authorities dragged their feet and kept the lid on the case tight to soothe the nerves of the Chamber of Commerce and other business interests in Atlanta, the nation's third busiest convention city. Others, who shouted "ineptitude" one day, later argued collusion, cover-up, conspiracy – particularly after a look-alike of a sketched suspect observed at the site of a dumping, one of the few white suspects given media play, was found dead in a car with rope in the trunk signifying "fibers" and "strangulation" and was promptly labeled a suicide; particularly after authorities refused to air a phone call that accurately predicted the site of the next dumping – surely someone could have identified the caller; particularly after medical examiners charged that investigators had tampered with evidence; particularly after citizen search team members accused the investigators with failure to follow through on leads they unearthed; particularly after the hasty discrediting of the overwhelming body of evidence pointing to the cult. No investigation team, folks argued, augmented by numbers of flown-in supercops, assisted by so much souped-up technology and state and federal expertise, could be that incompetent except by design.

Chet Detlinger, ex-APD cop and current police academy instructor, offered the Rumpelstiltskin Complex as an explanation of the morass. Like the medieval dwarf with alchemist leanings who would transmute flax into gold, we all are under the spell of Hollywood/TV scenarists and academic criminologists who spin theories miles away from the beat, who convince us that police work is scientific, sophisticated, technological. The Los Angeles Police Department [LAPD],

Your nephew one night let his macho mask slip to show you a scared little boy trying hard to be brave for the sake of his parents.

photo by Bob Herbert

for example, has impressive paraphernalia – helicopters, sleek weaponry, computers, well-equipped crime labs, James Bond-type gadgetry. Yearly they produce a great deal of flax. The APD, in comparison, to paraphrase Detlinger, is a bunch of double amputees fiddling about with junk from the pre-wheel era, producing yearly very little flax. But neither, the point is, produces any gold.

In the latter half of Journal No. 2, you try to capture the Dodge City face-offs as gleaned from the media versions, as reported by the players, as interpreted on the block: jurisdictional disputes between officers and agencies of the various counties, between city and state and federal bureaus; bad-mouthing between the police and the community, between the Task Force, private investigators and community workers, between STOP and organizations fund raising, between the parents and city officials, between the media and the community. The cast of characters growing daily – psychics, suspects, bat squads, witnesses, hypnotists, dog trainers, forensic experts, cult specialists, supersleuths, visiting celebrities. Funds being raised for reward, for tracking-dogs, for burials, for computers, for armed helicopters. A lot of flax is woven. But no one produces any gold.

Black leaders not born of the fires of struggle are trotted out downstage left to doo-wop the cool-out chorus.

photo by Bob Herbert

By the time you cracked the spine on Journal No. 3, mail, money, camera crews, and letters of support and solidarity were pouring into Atlanta from all over the country, from all over the world. Reports came in too of escalated attacks on blacks that prompted you to shift emphasis from Whodunnit to What Does It Mean In Light Of What Is Happening To Us? The missing and murdered children of Atlanta, the butchered cabbies of Buffalo, their hearts hacked out. The slashed of New York, the stomped of Boston, the children of Trenton, disappeared. Black joggers felled by snipers in Utah, Oklahoma, Cincinatti, Indianapolis. White hunters in Springfield with no deer in sight shoot black men instead. In Chattanooga, Klansmen pick off five black women and flee. Michael Donald lynched in Mobile, a decomposed body found in Tuscaloosa, in South Carolina a five-year-old black boy on trial for his life, in San Francisco a white woman explains that she lured a nine-year-old black boy to her car and choked him, then stabbed him and cannibalized him too because it was her duty as a white mother. Armed training camps of Klan-type groups reported all over the country. The Algiers-Fisher projects under siege in New Orleans after cops break into the wrong apartment to execute drug dealers, the community charges they double-crossed them. Brutal cops being acquitted with regularity by all-white juries; civilian review boards systematically dismantled. Voting Rights Act under attack, the Freedom of Information Act being eroded, an executive order to give CIA license for domestic spying signed, community-based action groups and their sponsors harassed by the IRS and FBI. The Pickens County 2, the Chattanooga 5, the Greensboro 5, the Tchula 7, the Wrightsville 2. And while diplomats of the Klan visit fascists in the Pyrenees, break bread with forces in Italy, France, West Germany, Britain, rallying the psychopaths to annex the whole globe – and while fightback troops taking a courageous stand against imperialism/racism/etc. are being burned out – black students on Atlanta campuses debate whether to invite the Grand Dragon to speak for an $800 fee. The Reverend Abernathy breaks the deadlock by offering his church as venue and an ex-SNCC

veteran sets up the lights to film the event. Madness.

Your new journal sits open at home ready for notes on the Williams trial and the trials of the Techwood Bat Squad, definitely not the final chapters, says that segment of the community that will not go to sleep. "Scapegoat," says one grandmother, regarding Wayne Williams, "an excuse to close down the Task Force and scram." One father maintains, "Whatever the verdict, it won't close the books for me. I'm not that stupid." Camille Bell of STOP will work on the defense team. An odd mix of citizens are making common cause to raise funds for the Williams defense. "If we allow them to get away with this legal lynching," says community workers, "they'll clamp the lid down so tight, there'll never be a resolution."

Since June all official investigative energies have converged on Wayne Williams. The authorities and the media encourage the spread of the sleeping-sickness epidemic. It is quiet in Atlanta. Just an exhale, you're hoping, folks taking time out for a recharge is all. Too many questions are still unanswered. Too many stories not yet told. Too many cases never got to the Task Force. And there's too huge a discrepancy between the official version of things and the community's.

Official: Between summer, 1979, and summer, 1981, 29 cases loosely linked by race, geography and/or fibers include: one still missing boy, two kidnapped and murdered girls, six abducted and murdered young men, 20 kidnapped and murdered boys. Abductions ceased in June, 1981, with the arrest of Wayne Williams.

Community: Between spring, 1979, and fall, 1981, more than double the official count of cases are linked by race, class, geography and five apparent motive-method patterns: one missing boy, eight girls kidnapped and murdered, more than eight young men abducted and murdered, at least 24 boys between nine and 18 kidnapped and murdered, and at least 35 women abducted and murdered. Four of the boys, one of the girls and five of the women were killed while Wayne Williams was under arrest.

The grapevine report is that both Police Chief Napper and No-Rap Brown, as folks have tagged the Commissioner of Public Safety, have been responsive to out-of-town job offers. What then will happen to the Task Force, the investigation, if they pull out? And where are our armies and navies, now that war has once again been declared? Where are our soldiers on 24-hour, red alert combat duty – mobilizing, organizing, building coalitions with other downpressed communities, investigating, documenting, analyzing, defending, remembering, daring to see and understand?

Last summer, the Senate subcommittee on terrorism and security held its hearings to which we, who experience every brand of terror daily and experience no security of any kind at any time, were cordially not invited to give testimony about the war. The war waged on the highways and local streets of upper New York State as the FBI & Co. unleashed a reign of terror on the populace in an all-out attack on the BLA, the RNA, the Weather Underground and other "outlaws" who raise critical questions about the state's right to declare war against the people physically, politically, economically, socially, culturally. Legal lawlessness intensifying as the hunt for Assata Shakur and any other disturbers of the bogus peace, the insane order, moves south along the Eastern seaboard. A rural district in Mississippi is terrorized by helicopters thick in formation, crowding the sky, roads jammed for miles with tanks, patrol cars, vans of overkill-outfitted troops: an army of occupation come to arrest an RNA officer not on the scene. They shackle instead another RNA officer, the wife, Cynthia Boston, on evidence that would make an earnest law student drop out of school. They handcuff her knee-high infants called "desperadoes" by those who wage war.

FBI Director William Webster moves center stage to croon his theme song "Not Racially Motivated," the lyric composed when Vernon Jordan got hit, the song making the charts during the Atlanta holocaust – "Not Racially Motivated" – definitely no connection between acts of violence in one place and acts of violence in another, goes the refrain. Black leaders not born of the fires of struggle are trotted out downstage left to doo-wop the cool-out chorus, becool bequiet, eight to the bar. From the wings comes a punk rock group who call themselves white radical feminists, from the orchestra pit rise instrumentalists in tails who claim to be radical black sociologists; their routine the same, designed to inform us of the increasing insignificance of race in the current scheme of things. They go on the road with the Race Has Nothing To Do With It Show. We've heard it before from the apologists of the Tuskeegee Study when, from 1932 to 1972, 600 guinea pigs, all of whom happened to be black men, uh huh, were studied by government-funded scientists, but not treated for syphilis that ravaged them and their families. The doctors took notes while their subject chancred, festered, bled, passed on the disease, went blind, went nuts, then died. Six hundred black men chosen by government-funded scientists.

"It could just as well be a preference for blacks as a prejudice against them," said FBI Webster, speaking of the Atlanta children snatched, murdered, dumped. You're thinking about that mother in that cold basement room, the sheet being pulled back, the tag on the toe. You roll your daughter's notebook into a bat, eyes closed, telling yourself it's the chlorine fumes from the pool getting to you.

A cheer goes up from the back benches. A youngster is making his debut in the nine-foot depths, diving from the rim of the pool, coached by the lifeguard who now makes the most of this moment – sucks in, flexes his biceps, eight separate segments of abdominal muscles gleam in bas relief. You're appreciative. From the other end of the pool, the kiddies splash chasing a big red ball. You tune in again to the talk around you, grateful it's not about murder and not about normalcy. Your daughter calls you from the pool. You stash the notebook. You rise and look. She's doing an arms-spread, face-down float. As if practicing being dead. Should you applaud? □

Toni Cade Bambara is a writer and activist, whose most recent book is The Salt Eaters *(New York, Random House, and London, The Women's Press, 1982). She was co-editor of* Southern Exposure*'s special issue, "Southern Black Utterances Today" (1975).*

LOCAL COLOR

INTERVIEWS WITH MISSISSIPPI FOLK ARTISTS

BY WILLIAM FERRIS

These portraits of Luster Willis and Theora Hamblett grew out of fieldwork in the 1960s which focused on Southern blues and folk tales. The work grew from a conviction that significant folk performers would never be recognized by the general public unless recorded with photographs, film and taped recordings. It became increasingly clear that the best white and black folk artists worked from powerful, complex visions. Visual folk art was largely unexplored, despite its fundmental connection to verbal forms such as music and folk tales. Artists repeatedly point to memory, dreams, and visions as the emotional core of their work.

Willis and Hamblett represent a particularly valuable Southern perspective. They witnessed the change from preindustrial to space age experience; each remembers dirt roads where horses, mules, and wagons were the only transportation.

Throughout the narratives of Willis and Hamblett we are struck by the eloquence of artists reflecting on art and on the creative process. They discover images in their imagination and then shape them in their art. Each presents a clearly defined, thoughtful view of the creative process, and even more important each shapes paintings whose power goes beyond words. As we weave our thoughts with their own, we unfold a closer sense of their vision and help to allay Theora Hamblett's fear that her work may be interpreted apart from the vision which inspired it.

The technique of superimposition of materials is basic to the art of both Willis and Hamblett; both use surface texture to evoke certain responses from the viewer. Theora Hamblett accentuates trees in her art by using several layers of paint, placing red paint over yellow to bring the leaves to life. Luster Willis amplifies this technique in what he terms a "set-in." Willis paints and cuts out images which he then attaches to a darker background surface so that they will "show up better." For each artist, superimposition of materials increases texture and three-dimensional quality. Superimposed tactile surfaces moving beside and over each other animate these paintings with bursts of color and shapes, drawing the viewer's eye to unexpected, sometimes frightening images.

The human faces Luster Willis and Theora Hamblett create are accentuated by eyes which have a haunting stare – strongly reminiscent of old photographs, an important resource for both artists. Photographs offer a glimpse of ancestral faces and establish the expression of a person posing.

The voices and images of Theora Hamblett and Luster Willis offer a moving portrait of the South and suggest how landscape and season inspire artists to share real and imagined worlds with their neighbors. Their art is a special gift offered to friends, to those who know, who will understand. It leads us into a sacred place where we learn to see and marvel at familiar, everyday beauty transformed by the artist's hand.

These interviews are excerpted from *Local Color: A Sense of Place in Folk Art.* They were edited by Brenda McCallum at the Center for Southern Folklore.

Theora Hamblett

photo by Frank Fourny

From *Local Color: A Sense of Place in Folk Art.* Copyright ©1982 by William Ferris. Reprinted by permission of McGraw Hill Book Company.

photo by Bill Ferris

THEORA HAMBLETT

I love the countryside in Mississippi. Most all of the places that I paint are right around my home – near Paris, Mississippi. I have a whole room full of paintings in yonder of memories of my childhood. Many of them are set right in the yard lot of my old home place. It's gone now, but it was at O'Tuckolofa Bottom, up from Water Valley, and about 11 miles east to Paris. We had cattle and cows, sheep, hogs, chickens, and all like that. I've done three or four little paintings of Mama feeding the chickens. And I've done milking time at the old home place. And we had a chicken coop, a seed house, a big old barn, a little dairy, and a smokehouse.

There was something special about our old home place that we enjoyed. We had a lot of large oak trees in front of the house. Oh, they were four or five feet in diameter. I loved those old oak trees. On the north side of the house was the oak trees, all different shades of red in the fall. And on the west and southwest side of the house were the hickory trees. Those hickory trees were our delight and joy. When we left out there, there were over 50 scaly-bark hickory nut trees in the yard lot. In the early fall, oh, how we gathered nuts.

Papa died when I was 10 years old. And *he* loved his trees. They always said that the reason we had all those trees was that when Papa – he was an early settler in O'Tuckolofa Bottom – was clearing up the low land there, he would get the hickory sprouts and take them up to the yard lot and set them out. Long before I began painting, I loved the trees around my old home place. There was something about the trees – they were stable, always the same. I'd go off and teach school and come back. Those trees were still the same as long as we lived there. Of course now we've been away 30 years, and they have slain – that's what I call it – most all of those trees I admired so much. It hurt me when I went back out home a few years ago and found most all those old hickory trees gone. Now I doubt that there is even a dozen left. So I don't go back out there. I don't want to see that.

I grew up on the farm. I didn't know anything else *but* the farm until I was 16 or 17. Papa died when I was 10 and we were given enough to live on just one year. So I was 11 years old when I began hoeing. Of course my brother Hubert was 13 and he did the plowing – he made the first little crop that year. And I used to help with the lye-soap making, and I did a painting of that. We used to save the ashes from the fireplace through the winter, and put them in an empty flour barrel. We'd bring buckets of water and pour them on top, and the water would go through the ashes and come out as red lye. Then you'd put it in a wash pot with some hog grease, and boil it down over a fire to a strong thick lye soap.

The farm we had was over 200 acres. But much of it was not in cultivation, and we just made a little cotton crop that first year after Papa died. There came two weeks of rain the first of September, and almost ruined everybody's crop. We had about half a bale picked – the prettiest white cotton – when that rain set in. The rest of it got too dirty. I've done scenes of carrying cotton to the gin. We lived in the hills, see, and frequently they had to have three horses to get those wagons full of cotton up the hills. And often a little boy would ride on top of the wagon, right on top of the cotton.

I kept up working on the farm until I finished high school. I finished at Lafayette County High School with the first graduating class, in 1915. And then I began teaching that winter at a one-teacher school. And about the time I began teaching, my brother Hubert married. He went to Water Valley then and worked in the post office. And we just rented the old home place out then. That first winter after I graduated, the one-teacher school was very uninteresting to me, because I had gone to Paris School. It was a mile each day to walk to Paris School and back. We had to get there by eight o'clock in the morning, and leave at four o'clock in the afternoon. And there were quite a bunch of children, 150 children, with three teachers. It was quite a large school when I was growing up. But that has changed. It became a small little school, and now it's not a school at all.

photo by Bill Ferris

"Children's Games" by Theora Hamblett

I did a painting of Paris School, with the children playing town ball. Town ball is where you throw the ball in front of the runner, and that counts them out. It's not like you have to put the ball *on* them, if you throw it in front of the runner so it crosses his path he's out. But I never see children playing town ball these days. I guess they quit playing that long before I quit teaching.

It was in teaching the little fellows in the primary grades that I learned to love children. I had never been around little fellows too much. See, I was the youngest of all Papa's children. Papa had two families of children. There was just my brother Hubert and I of Mama's family. But Papa had 16 children all together. His first wife had 14 children, and Mama had just us two. His first wife died, and his first-family children married and was gone. And so he jumped up and married Mama when she was right young. So I didn't have too many other little fellows to play with when I was growing up, except when I was in school. And a lot of times I didn't join in with the other children playing. I stood off, and watched the other children. So it was in teaching school that I learned to love children.

And then there's a dream connected with my paintings of children's games. I had done my painting, "Heaven's Descent to Earth," and I wasn't satisfied. But I had just wore out all my strength and energy. I began to want to paint something else, and I prayed for something to paint. So I dreamed another dream of children. It was a long dream, but near the end of it, I was up in the mountains, out in the country. It was a weekday, and I heard some children laughing and talking, so I went out on the porch. They were near to the steps, and I said to them, "Why aren't you in school?" They told me they didn't have a teacher. So I said, "Well, I can teach you." And then at the end of the dream we were out in the schoolyard, playing games. So that was the birth of my children's games paintings. I guess that was just in my soul. I didn't take the hint right then that the dream was telling me to paint children's games. But about two years later I did my first painting of a children's game, "Drop the Handkerchief." Why, I don't know that in all my life I've been thrilled like I was thrilled over that painting.

So when you have one good thrill of joy you want to have another one. I don't have the same thrill now that I had with that first one, but I still enjoy painting landscape scenes with children in them. So it was paintings

photo by Bill Ferris

Untitled painting by Theora Hamblett

photo by Frank Fourny

of children that I did the most of when I did get to painting. I have sold, through this Christmas [1976], 225 paintings of children, mostly children's games.

My first vision was when I was away from home at school at Blue Mountain [Mississippi] and I dreamed one night of Papa. Papa had been gone seven years, but I dreamed of seeing

Untitled painting by Theora Hamblett

his face right close above mine. As he hovered over me that night, he said, "When you go home, I'll be with you." Well, that made me homesick. That was my first time away from home. I was just 17, and I had been away from home six or seven months. That made me so homesick that at the end of the quarter at school, I went home. Well, I didn't realize . . . that dream was so real to me. I was too young to think straightly. And I remember what happened when I went home. My brother Hubert had come to Water Valley [train depot] after me in a buggy. When I got out to open the gate and I looked toward the house, reality came over me that it was just a dream. When I got inside that gate, I realized that Papa wasn't really there. He'd been dead for seven long years. But, of course, I should have realized that there *was* something that made me want to go home. And that was the vision of Papa's face that has always stayed with me.

I've had visitors to come in and interpret my paintings terrible . . . in a terrible way. *Interpret,* I reckon that's the word to say, I don't know. I want people to know what *I* meant by the paintings. That's what caused me to write that little book *Dreams and Visions,* to tell my versions of the dreams. Of course I've painted a lot of dreams and visions – all that were given me while I was strong enough to interpret them right, what *I* thought was right. But now I've quit painting my visions because I'm afraid I won't get them just right. The Museum of Modern Art was the first to call my paintings *visions.* That was "The Golden Gate" they had. They called it "Vision." That was given to me when I was in my twenties. I never thought about it being a *vision,* to me it was just a *dream.* But when they named it a vision, *I* began to think of my dreams and all as being visions. But it hurts me for someone to come in and give their interpretation of one of my paintings, just entirely different from the way I mean it.

I don't really know why I have had these visions, but I have. I wonder if a man would confess all the visions that I have had. There are people who call my visions weird. But to me they are very real, and very true to life. I wish I could get some of my loved ones to see them. After I paint them, then I'm never bothered with that memory constantly coming back again.

Sometimes I'm afraid that the story behind my visions is going to be lost. I worry more about that, but I done the best I could. I feel like, well, we've got to take it like it is. It's one of those things. We have to take what comes. We can't go back. And so I just keep on trying to paint. The after-life is quite a mystery, but I think we will be busy in some way or another. Well, I just hope we find a home up yonder where we *can* keep on working. I don't want to stop working.

photo by Bill Ferris

LUSTER WILLIS

I was born in 1913 in Hinds County near Terry [Mississippi], but later on my parents moved to Copiah County right at this present place where I now live. I grew up here in Mississippi in the Crystal Springs and Egypt Hill community. I attended Egypt Hill Public School and joined the Egypt Hill Baptist Church. I've lived around here all my life. Mostly I used to chop wood, practice barbering, and work on the farm. In 1943 I went into the service and spent about three years. I was in Europe during World War II – in France, and up in Austria. Then I came back home and went back to the farm. That's about all of that part of it. I'm kind of retired now. I carpenter a little bit off and on. My health is not too good and my working is kind of limited.

When I was going to grammar school, I always liked to draw and make little sketches. I'd just see somebody or something that impressed me and I would try to draw it. At school they didn't teach that subject and I got chastised quite a few times for drawing in school but that didn't discourage me. I just continued sketching and trying to draw. I could draw almost anything. Mostly I would draw animals and flowers, and sketch faces of the children in school. That's the way I got started. Trying to draw somebody. Lots of them were funny pictures – usually I was trying to draw something kind of on the fun side to get a laugh out of. They got lots of laughs.

I've never taken a drawing course. I just took that up on my own. I had several offers way back, you know, in my younger days to take it up, but at the time I didn't have the money to pursue that course. I just went on through my own imagination. Some of the people in my pictures are just

photo by Jane Moseley

Untitled painting by Luster Willis

made-up characters, they're no particular individuals. They come to me through imagination. Sometimes I don't have any particular person or object in mind. I just draw something that I have on my mind and then after I get it painted out, then whatever it favors most, why then that's the name I apply to it. And then other times I'll sketch something particular that runs across my mind, and I see if I can paint it.

Lots of times I can be just sitting, and look out on the wall or somewhere, and I can see a picture – an image that resembles a flower or an animal or a face or something. I just fish it out of my mind and try to draw it, kind of through imagination. I sketch it and then try to place a person in with it, something like that. I did a picture about 20 years ago of a little boy that was killed here in Mississippi. They called him Emmett Till.* I think he was mobbed or something. They killed him and threw him in the river. There was a lot of talk and publicity about it. It's just one of those imaginary paintings, just something that rolled across my mind. Maybe I saw a newspaper clipping or something, and I imagined what it was about. I drew him in his casket in the funeral home, with people passing to view the body. I used to like to draw a lot of caskets and put imaginary figures in them. I think death is interesting because it's something that, sooner or later, we all will have to meet. In drawing a casket you get different reactions from different people. Some folks will come by and look at it, and wag their heads and walk away and say, "I wouldn't draw such as that." But I just love to try my hand at drawing a casket or something like that. I catch a kick out of it. That's just one of those imaginary things that I like to do.

I was sitting up one night, and I just pictured in my mind a story from the Bible. The one I had in mind was about Lazarus and the rich man. You know that Bible story was in my imagination when the panic was on back in '32. Lots of people were handicapped by not having enough food, not enough nothing. So later I made a painting to demonstrate what that Bible story really meant. I call it "The Rich and the Poor." I did it a long time ago. It might have been in the '50s or somewhere along there. It shows a fellow that's been chained down. He wants something to eat and all he can get is a bone. There's also a rich man, one of them big money men, a man that has everything. Instead of having a bone in his mouth he's smoking a cigar. He's burning up his wealth and the poor man has nothing but a bone. The rich man has the power to give or to release but he's not interested in the poor fellow down on his knees with nothing. I think what I had in mind was trying to make a comparison of the rich and the underprivileged. So many people have everything and there's a bunch that don't have anything. The poor man is

*Black teenager Emmett Till was murdered in September, 1955, in Leflore County, Mississippi. The murder, which was racially motivated, received wide publicity.

Cane by Luster Willis

photo by Jane Moseley

in that group that's handicapped. He's handicapped, chained down, not able to smoke – all he can do is hold a bone in his mouth. He doesn't have any meat, just a bone. The bone is rotten, it's not fit to be eaten, except by a fly . . . yet that's his way of life. He's like an animal because of lack of opportunity. He desires a better way of life, he desires something, but the rich man isn't much interested in giving anything up. He doesn't even have a smile on his face – all he's interested in is his big cigar.

I think I can see things and feel them with my imagination, then sketch them on a piece of paper. I think it helps me to understand people. I can understand why the poor man is like he is because he has been deprived, and the rich man is like he is because he has had it good all of his life. Maybe I'm somewhere in between there – I'm not the worst poor and I'm not the greatest rich, but in my heart I'm satisfied to be just in between.

I first started making walking canes back in the early '30s when the Depression was on and jobs were scarce. Without having a job, I just thought of what I could do on my own. I saw a fellow with a carved walking stick one day, and I wondered if I could make one. Whenever I saw somebody else doing something a different way, I'd try to do it too. So I just went out in the woods and picked me a tree out, and split it up, and tried it. Course I messed up quite a few, but by not giving up I was able to perfect a pretty good walking stick. During the Depression the panic was on, and almost everybody in the community was on welfare and the bucket brigade, but I kept the wolf away from my

photo by Jane Moseley

Untitled painting by Luster Willis

door with walking sticks, and that's the truth. I tried to place a stick in the hand of everybody around this community, which I did. Course I sold them very cheap – as low as maybe 75 cents, and maybe as high as five and six dollars for some. Some I put the names on, or wrote little phrases, and Bible verses, and different things. I've made lots of them over the years in different forms and fashions. I made them for a good long while, and then I found a job, so I sort of slowed off that and went into something else.

I just pick faces out of the hat to carve on my walking sticks. They're just familiar faces. If you can carve one that resembles somebody, then they're very easily identified. I did one of Mr. Ed Sullivan, and one of President Ford, and one of Lorne Greene. I also did one of Redd Foxx. He plays on "Sanford and Son" on the television. I just had an image of him in my mind, so I decided to imitate him on a walking cane. In carving I could get his image fixed in my mind, and he wasn't too much trouble to carve out.

I get my feeling for drawing when I get a little lonesome or something like that. You have to have that feeling to do something. I draw at night – usually in the wintertime and early spring when it's cold and you can't get out to do anything. I have nothing else mostly to do then and I just sit up and draw something to pass away the time. I can draw my best pictures when I'm alone, private. Usually when I'm attempting to draw something I don't want anyone looking over my shoulder. I want to finish it and then show it. Usually during the day I'm maybe busy with something or somebody is around to interrupt me. I might have a mind to draw something and I get about half way through and somebody comes in and disturbs me. Then I lose that thought or that interest and it might be weeks or months before I get that feeling again. I have the most peace and quiet at night. At night I can sit up as late as I want to without too much disturbance. Usually they all go to bed and leave me up. I'll be sitting up mostly by myself and painting. □

photo by Jane Moseley

Untitled painting by Luster Willis

photo by Bill Ferris

Luster Willis

William Ferris is the director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi in Oxford.

A RETIREE'S LAMENT

Lyrics by Roy Greer, a retired cotton mill worker and member of the Brown Lung Association
Music by Joe Pfister, Institute for Southern Studies

Oh me, oh my.
Too sick to live, too poor to die,
Too weak to walk, too fat to fly,
Oh me, oh my.

And on that final round-up day,
I dreamed the angels came,
And carted me away from here,
In someone else's name.

I hope they'll open up the gate for me,
I hope they'll let me in.
I forgot my Medicare card,
I wonder if that's a sin.

I don't know how they'll rate me,
Or what of me they'll think.
I helped to move a mighty barrier,
To get liquor by the drink.

Though the mills may keep on running,
The dust is here to stay.
It will make the workers sick at first,
Then take their lives away.

Growing Up Southern & Sexy

By Marie Stokes Jemison

I was a virgin when I got married. All my friends were too, or at least they never told me if they weren't. Nice Southern girls did not go "all the way." We just drove boys crazy, blowing in their ears, letting them feel our bosoms, then shutting the door in their panting faces. The war changed everything and saved a lot of prostate glands.

The Depression laid on strong in Montgomery, Alabama, in the late 1930s, and there was no money to buy anything or go anywhere, making for a slow and boring life for privileged white teenagers in a sleepy South between two wars. All the big migrations were yet to come and the people with whom we grew up were the friends we thought we would see the rest of our lives. We would be in each others' weddings and be godmothers to each others' babies, just like our mothers before us. Girls grew into women aping their mothers, and boys shouldered fishing rods and guns under the tutelage of their fathers, just like always.

Nothing much happened after school hours for girls in 1938, when we were 13 and full of beans. Competitive sports were for boys and we were content to cheer for the home team from the sidelines. Each pert or pitiful girl-child dreamed the only dream Southern girls knew to dream about the male sex: that the broadest available hunk of shoulders would swagger over and choose her to take to the drive-in and neck.

Too restless to sit before the radio, we spent a lot of our free time between the ages of 12 and 14 in Doc's drugstore, flirting and peeping at the dirty books the drugstore cowboys flashed around behind the shelves of Castoria and Sloan's liniment. The repulsive, cheap pictures of comic strip characters like Dick Tracy and Little Orphan Annie screwing each other gave us a charge.

With no money and nowhere to go, we often "parked" at the houses of friends who had families good for laughs and eats.

Miss Rose Herndon was my best friend Winkie's mother. Rose stayed in bed all day, a female sight not unusual in our circle. Rose suffered from punishing "migraines" whenever she exerted herself to go to the grocery or drive the car. After Winkie was born, she went to bed for good. When her husband, Sam, came home from the country club around nine or 10 at night, she departed her bed, put on a wrapper and cooked him a hot dinner, all the while cursing "bastard" under her breath.

photos courtesy of Marie Stokes Jemison

Sprawled on her bed, summer and winter, with us stretched out on the floor, Rose wove wonderful tales of her girlhood in a house full of sisters and the comings and goings of "beau lovers." Storytelling excited Rose. Her pale face took on a fevered pink, as she called out frequently in a bright, strong voice, "Loula, bring me a beer." She enjoyed visualizing us as grown-up ladies and often pulled me up from the floor toward the long gold-leaf pier mirror standing at the foot of the bed. Snatching my hair back or piling it up on top and bending her head to look critically, she would say, "My, but you are gonna be a knockout, sweetheart. Some man is gonna lose his mind over you." I believed her blandishments.

Rose never had any cash, but she could charge at the drugstore. Several times a week she would call out to Uncle T, the old black man who swept around and waited on Loula, "T, go get these children some ice cream and tell Doc to send me $25." A curious child, I questioned this arrangement. "What does it say on the bill, Miss Rose? Does it say, '$100 worth of ice cream,' or what?" "No, darlin," she added, "he is the banker for the neighborhood wives. If Sam complains about the amount of medicine charged, I just tell him my migraines were worse. How would he know the difference? He is never home." And he rarely was.

Rose had an Aunt Carrie, who rustled in to sit on the bed and visit. She was a tall, skinny, elegant old lady of around 50 when we were 12. We loved her visits when she swept in bearing the fresh apple muffins which were her cook's specialty. Dressed in romantic gray or purple chiffon that billowed out behind as she passed in front of the electric fan and was always just back from a cruise on the Nile or full of talk about her next archaeological dig in Greece, she dazzled us with her exotic glamor.

"Was Aunt Carrie ever married?" I asked Rose after that lady's flowing departure one afternoon.

"Yes, my precious, but long ago and not for long."

"How long?" we chorused.

"Less than a week," whispered Rose, averting her eyes.

"A week! What happened?"

Clearing her throat, Rose answered hesitantly, "It was one of those things you just don't ask. It was so long ago. I was your age and I remember. . . . "

"Go on, Mother," wailed Winkie.

"Well, something happened on the honeymoon."

"What was it?" insisted Winkie.

Rose could not bring herself to divulge Carrie's secret. "A beer, Loula." Panting a little and barely whispering, she lay back murmuring, "Darlings, I have a beast of a headache." Drawing a wet cloth over her eyes from a bowl of water on the bedside table, she signaled the end of that conversation, whispering weakly, "It was so long ago."

My friend Tina's was a fascinating house to visit because of her mother, Florida – a small, blonde china doll with a brain like a steel trap. This

was during the Depression, and Florida's land was in south Alabama with taxes to pay. The red-brick-columned "Beauvoir" – romantically placed among giant water oaks and hung with imported gray moss – was heavily mortgaged. There seemed to be no earthly way Florida could get the money she needed. But even with her worries, she found time to hope we would drive men crazy. She would often grab one of us as we ran through the house and gently pat our emerging bosoms. "My, but it looks as if these will grow into small cantaloupes, angel. You are going to drive the men crazy."

Florida's husband Oliver was a patrician loser who drank too much, and had "given up." On hot summer afternoons, Florida paced the upstairs hall in her girdle trying to think of a way to save the plantation. In the late summer of 1938, she found it. We sat on her bed while she packed lovely, thin, flowing pastel dresses and two big hats, decorated with roses. "I am going to Long Island for the weekend," she told us.

When she returned, she looked different, more relaxed. There was an air of mystery about her. When we asked if she had a good time, she looked obliquely at us as if she held a secret. That mystery was quickly solved. Within two weeks a short, portly and stern-looking older man, Mr. Hay, appeared in a long, chauffeur-driven, black car. Florida and her mother Gin had put on their long, filmy, low-cut frocks to entertain him on the veranda. It must have worked, for within three months Florida had divorced the loser and married a winner.

Mr. Hay had a town house on East 64th Street in New York City and a large estate in Locust Valley, Long Island. Florida's clothes got grander, her furs silkier, her body hung with jewels. The last time I saw her (she died of a heart attack soon after) was in the house on 64th Street. She was at one end of the long dining table and Mr. Hay was at the far end. I was sitting on her right. She proceeded to tell me that she simply could not stand Mr. Hay. He was tightfisted, she said. There was a house in Nassau she wanted, but he said no. About that time, Mr. Hay asked, down the length of the table, "Florida, what are you saying?" Butter wouldn't melt in Florida's mouth: "Darling, I was just telling Titter how much I loved you."

Lucy Belle Pearman was my second-best friend. Pudgy, fat, with a soft, white body that reminded me of a featherless pigeon, Lucy Belle (another only child) was the apple of her parents' eyes. Mr. Pearman, or Big Roy as we called him, did not appear to work and their source of income was a mystery. Somewhere along the way, I was given to understand that Big Velma, Lucy Belle's mother, had the money. Her people had bought land cheap down on the Gulf Coast where Panama City grew and down Mobile way, where the highway was coming through.

Big Roy might have worked at something, but he was always home when we got home from school about three, sitting in his undershirt by the radio drinking a beer. Our routine in their house comprised a dash to the kitchen to wolf down a piece of Big V's sunshine cake and a cola. Then back for a tease from Roy. "Come here, sugar," he winked at me. "Close your eyes and hold out your hand." Knowing well the next move, I still giggled and squeezed my eyelids together. "Here's a present from Uncle Roy," and he dumped warm ashes from his smelly cigar into my outstretched hand. This had been no surprise since the first time, but I went along with the "trick" because it

Florida paced the upstairs hall in her girdle trying to think of a way to save the plantation. In the late summer of 1938, she found it.

seemed a friendly gesture. It also gave Lucy Belle and me reason to release all that pre-pubescent pent-up energy. Screaming with laughter, the next move was to jump on him and swap tickles.

My father never had any time to take us anywhere but Roy Pearman did. Around age 13, we hit on a pastime that he enjoyed as much as we. The Red Light District was well defined in Montgomery, on the edge of "nigger town," and the trick was to drive slowly along the street with no car lights. The women stood in the doorways of the seedy houses barely covered by flimsy kimonos, their limbs in silhouette from the dim light behind. Occasionally men would stagger out, but nobody we knew.

In our still-small town, the names of these "ladies of the evening" as my mother delicately called them, were known to all. On Wednesday night when Velma and Roy played bridge, Lucy Belle spent the night at my house and we entertained ourselves by calling the "ladies." Holding a handkerchief over the receiver to muffle the voice, the caller attempted a low, male sound and whispered something devilish like, "How much does it cost under water?" Or, "Do you charge half price for midgets?" The poor victim was not destined to suffer long as we invariably got the giggles and hung up, so convulsed with laughter that we often wet our pants. We had no idea, of course, what these women really did or even how the sex act occurred. All our information was acquired by hearsay or from those dirty books passed around by the drugstore cowboys.

If I learned anything about sex at all in those protected years it was from my father and certainly not on purpose. Papa was a self-made man, an early rendition of a good old boy. From a plain south Alabama country family, orphaned as a baby, he was raised by older brothers and sisters, learning only to survive. After one year in college, the money ran out and he had to go to work. Good-looking, bawdy-talking, and oozing charm, he snowed the patrician lady who became my mother. She was soft, gentle, and submisssive, and never quite got over marrying a man with whom she had so little in common.

Papa was an earthy man and loved horse-play. Grabbing me in his huge farmer-like hands, pinning me hard against his chest in a steel grip, he blew in my ears, as I struggled helplessly, yelping with joy at the undocumented sensation. I never got too old to sit on his lap. Long after other fathers had self-consciously ceased this familial intimacy, Papa still pulled me down for snuggles. After age 12 and blossoming bosoms, it was embarrassing for me, but not for him. He never seemed shy that his breath came more quickly with me so close and for that I have come to be grateful. I learned what a man smelled like and what close proximity did in a hurry to his glands. My father taught me in a crude but valid way that sexual response is as natural as breathing.

When we got to be 13 or 14, the picture show took up much of our time. We'd sit on the back row of the balcony, learning to soul kiss in the blackness. When a boy's hand started to steal up the thigh it was time to slap him, be insulted (of course) but not leave. At roadside joints with names like Moonwinks and The Green Lantern, dancing close to Tommy Dorsey's "Marie," when a male hand got hot on my back and I was pressed so close I could feel something hard against my leg, I was satisfied. I had driven him crazy. That was what girls were supposed to do to boys.

"Do you know what boys do when they get all heated up?" Winkie asked one sweltering summer day, as we lay on our stomachs on the cool marble hall floor at my house. "What?" I asked, not really expecting her to know. "They take a room at the Jeff Davis Hotel. The cops don't bother the hotel, so the bellboy can bring in a couple of floozies." She wrinkled her nose in distaste. "It's cheaper than those old whore houses, you know,

the ones Big Roy used to drive us by. This way with one floozie, they can pro-rate expenses."

Then there were always those stories about the fellow who, after heavy necking with his date on the back seat, could stand it no more. Turning up his collar, he rushes painfully off to the whore house, only to return with a "social disease," which meant no nice girl would ever go out with him again.

Ethel was the most worldly girl in our crowd. She had been known to order a highball on a date; she read books like *Moby Dick* and had been to Chicago to the World's Fair. As we finished our sophomore year in high school, she announced, "I have had it with Hickville. I'm heading toward those bright lights up north." (When my father heard the news, he said scornfully, "Well, she can afford it. Her old man is the biggest mortgage banker in town. He foreclosed on all the widows and orphans who fell behind in their payments in these hard times.")

At the train station, when Ethel left on the old Crescent Limited, we cried and took on as if she was going off to slave labor in Siberia. At the long-anticipated spend-the-night party on her return at Christmas, she told us the big news. "I'm not a virgin any more," she proudly proclaimed, brushing her auburn pageboy into place. After our communal gasp, she continued smoothly, "Daddy reserved a drawing room for me on the Crescent, because I had some studying to do. I took my math book to the diner for dinner and there was this cute young steward. He offered to help me with that horrible 'trig,' and I could have used some, but," she laughed, "I didn't get THAT kind of help. After he finished up in the diner he came back to my room and brought a bottle of Early Times. We had a ball. He was really good at it," she said, rolling her eyes. Aghast, we stared speechless at our friend. Now she was different, nothing would ever be the same. All night long, from time to time, the shock flattened Winkie, Tina, Lucy Belle, and me, causing us to wail and weep hysterically for our friend's loss, while she lay sleeping with a smile on her face. Was it her loss we mourned, or all those pent-up emotions of our own? So much emotion, so few outlets.

Mother finally brought herself to tell me the facts of life, after a fashion, when I was 15 and had already learned all the wrong things. It was too late to tell me, "If you let him go too far, you will have a baby." Or "Sister, you know boys don't marry girls with whom they have had their way." This knowledge had been part of my bones, growing up Southern in the '30s. Unspoken, but rooted as firmly in the female consciousness as if in cement, was the dictum, "Nice girls don't go all the way."

The knowledge that such truisms had scant basis in fact made no impression on my psyche. Although I saw with my own eyes the 18-year-old bride, Bess Kirksey, bulge down the aisle of St. Martin's Episcopal Church behind her bouquet of Talisman roses at high noon, I was still shocked when the eight-pound baby arrived less than six months later. Mother defended Bess when Lucy Belle, Tina, and I came back snickering from the wedding. She said, "The child never had a chance; her parents are divorced. Her poor mother takes in sewing to try to support those three children. That sorry father just walked off and left her." I knew that to my mother and her generation divorce was indulged in only by lesser mortals with no social position to protect. Mother meant that Bess had not had a proper upbringing, so she did not know any better.

The only official word my friends and I received on sex was negative. The lifelines thrown to us by family, church, and school were inadequate and fraudulent. We were told that men were objects to tease, torment, tantalize, and use for a permanent meal ticket. Protected, sheltered, and lied to, we realized our main object was to get a husband. If we dangled our charms just out of reach before their hungry eyes, they would go out of their minds with desire for the unattainable, and *then* they might seek the prize through the one and only legal means, sacred marriage. □

At the spend-the-night party at Christmas, Ethel told us the big news. "I'm not a virgin any more."

Marie Stokes Jemison says she was raised to be a Southern belle. In December of 1955 she was moved to become inovlved in the Civil Rights Movement by the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Jemison lives in Birmingham where she helped create the Southern Women's Archives at the public library.

BY BEVERLY BURCH

5 years from home
— for Tennessee

Every year I am away
from you the ache changes.
It was everything at first.
Midnight blues. Letters, tapes
home. Photos on all my
walls. New poems. I tried
to keep you with me at all times.

Later I reminded myself I
would return. Time was now
just a matter of time. But
I miss you I miss you came
afterward. I want your backroad
green, your soft-fingered grey,
your rain in the valley.
I cannot love this brownness.

Still later and I know I'm not
going back. The ache lingers.
More subtle and fleeting, until
suddenly I am overwhelmed with
knowing. I never look at your
pictures no, but I do look for
you in my dreams. I wonder if I
am still welcome. I, your faithless
lover, whom you never will forgive.

The Prodigal Child's Homecoming:
California to Georgia, 1980

daughter of suitcases, she comes
glittering with new clothes, eager to see
them dazed by her strangeness

& stunned by her sharpness
of words, watch them cringe at their own
soft, southern sounds, shapeless, ashamed

flies home as a queen, sleek
in her pride & dream-blind, she is
swallowed defenseless

back in the belly
the loving beast leaves her crawling
recalling herself in this house
sees only her shadow
hiding bold in their eyes

chooses one faded dress
and goes to the table, her chattering
family, the feast in her honor
slips into the seat no one noticed
was empty

beaming, believing, they pass her
cornbread and chicken

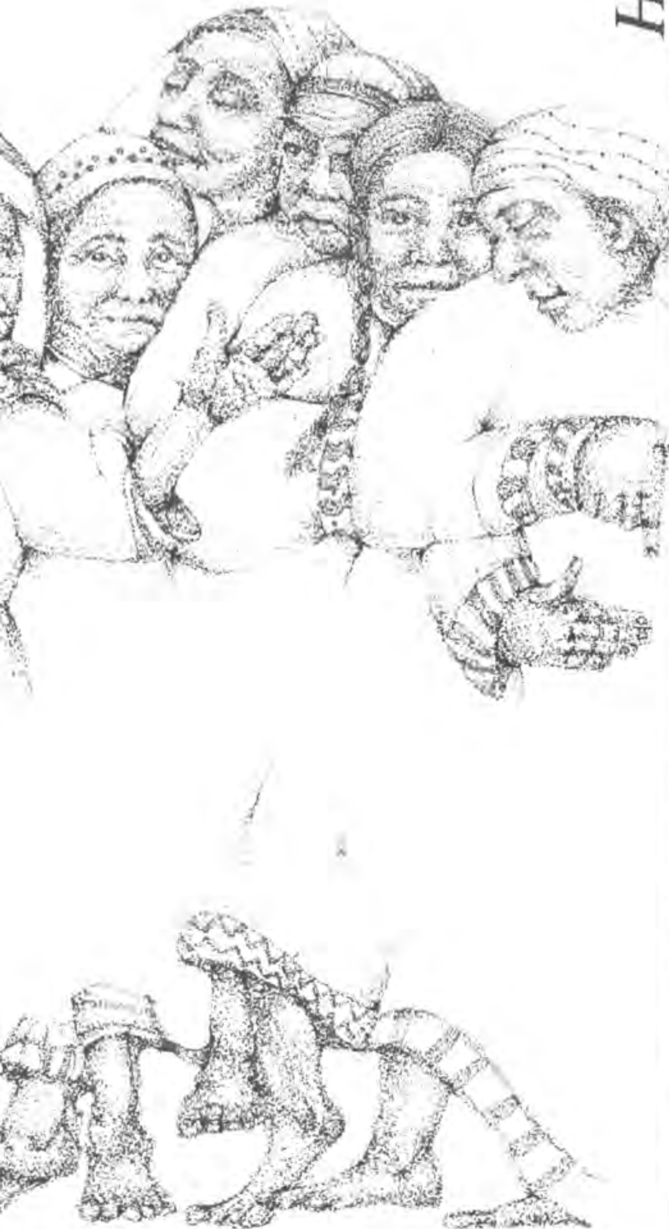


illustration by Dorothy Donohue

A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT

To President Reagan
I think that Nuclear
bombs are very very very
bad. So why do you want
to make more and more
of them. besides if you
kepp on makeing them you
will want to try them
out. So why don't you
stop makeing them. I
am a six year old and
I don't want to have
to worry adout them
being dropped. My sister
does not unerstand adout
them but she does know
that thay are bad.
from Mary Brinkmeyer
1107 wells street.
Durham NC. 27707

AND A REPLY

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 2, 1983

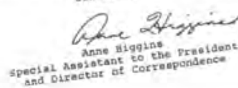
Dear Mary:

On behalf of President Reagan, I would like to thank you for taking the time to write to him.

The President hears from many young Americans each day who tell him of their desire to live at peace with all the peoples of the world. He is encouraged by these sincere expressions. He believes that it takes every American family to do the work of peace in their daily duties, no matter where -- on the job, in the home, at school. President Reagan is confident that together we will make peace grow if we are truly peacemakers in all that we do for ourselves, for our nation and for the world. You may be sure that peace is the highest aspiration of President Reagan and his Administration.

With the best wishes of the President.

Sincerely,



Anne Higgins
Special Assistant to the President
and Director of Correspondence

Building a new world

Black Labor Photographs

Text by Tom Beck

Photographs of both black and white workers were popular in the nineteenth century because people were fascinated by different occupations. The images were informative and allowed access to activities otherwise not available for study. A still photograph could be examined without disrupting the work itself.

Labor photographs in the 1870s and 1880s were made both on the job site and in the photographic studio.[1] Images such as "Around the Tub," by John H. Tarbell, with their unusual subjects and poses, have the casual quality of a chance encounter. Such encounters, however, seemed too haphazard for photographers who had to sell their work for a living. They solved the problems of unreliable outdoor light and unpredictable weather by staging photographs in the studio. Black laborers, such as the "Austin South College Sweep," were posed immobile before a plain backdrop rather than in animated activity at work.

Static poses were necessary in nineteenth century photographs because the wet plate process used to make negatives made "stop-action" hard to achieve. Before the 1880s, a plate had to be sensitized, exposed and developed before it dried out, or the developer could not render an image. Even under the best of circumstances, subjects had to keep still for

"NEGRO WOMAN AND CHILDREN WASHING CLOTHES," BY JOHN H. TARBELL, 1901.

seconds and often minutes. In making the photograph of "The Diggers," the photographer worked like a director coordinating a cast of actors on a set. Throughout the long exposure, the workers had to try to maintain a natural working pose, for any slight movement would have caused blurring.

The lack of respect for blacks in nineteenth century photographs is evident in "The Sewer Diggers." The camera is aimed down the long trench with a few workers selected and posed in the foreground in illustration of their task. These workers are not accorded the dignity of facing the camera as is their white boss, who stands at eye level. Similar in treatment is the image of "The Sweep," where the man is depicted as an interesting aesthetic object, to be appreciated as a type or curiosity rather than as an individual.

By the turn of the century, a gradual change was occurring in the way black laborers were shown in photographs. Prejudicial images were becoming less common. We see a stiff but unusually respectful image of black workers in the work of Frances Benjamin Johnston (1864-1952). Johnston worked on assignments for various publications between 1889 and 1910, and published several photographic studies of the Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes, where students worked their way through school in a variety of trades such as farming and construction. Although Johnston's work was often static in pose and style, her images remained human and attentive to individuality.

The most humanistic of early twentieth century photographers was Lewis Wickes Hine (1874-1940). Hine un-

LEFT: "GOVERNMENT CHARWOMAN," BY GORDON PARKS, 1942.

BELOW: "STUDENTS BUILDING STAIRWAY OF HOUSE, HAMPTON INSTITUTE," BY F.B. JOHNSTON, 1899.

derstood the dignity of human beings to an unusual extent. He gave up his job as a school teacher to work for the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC), an organization devoted to arousing public interest in an amendment to the U.S. Constitution protecting child laborers from abuse. Although Congress did not pass the amendment, the efforts of Hine and the NCLC convinced most states to pass protective laws.

Hine's photographic images were imbued with a poetic sense of human worth. He once said, "I wanted to show the things that had to be corrected. I wanted to show the things that had to be appreciated." [2] He was innovative in his systematic use of the camera as a tool of social reform.

LEFT: "AUSTIN SOUTH COLLEGE SWEEP," circa 1880s.

RIGHT: "WOODSMAN," BY DORIS ULMANN, 1920s.

BELOW: "A YOUNG OYSTER FISHERMAN, APALACHICOLA, FLORIDA," BY LEWIS HINES, 1912.

ABOVE: "BLACKSMITH JULIUS MASON," BY ROLAND FREEMAN, 1976.

BELOW: "SEWER DIGGERS, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA," circa 1880.

In the decade of 1915 to 1925, although large numbers of black workers moved to Northern cities and worked in industry, most blacks still lived in the South. Doris Ulmann (1884-1934) photographed Southern blacks during the 1920s with a romantic and artistic style, documenting the fact that traditional rural labor roles of Southern black workers had not changed.

Black workers, especially in rural areas, were strongly affected by the Depression, particularly by the high rate of unemployment. The Roosevelt administration fought the Depression with a barrage of unusual and experimental programs. One program, the Farm Security Administration (FSA), included a project devoted to making photographs showing the American public the extent of the economic and social difficulty. Nearly a quarter-million photographs made in both rural and urban settings depicted both the farms and the displaced farm workers. The FSA photographs showed new respect and concern for black laborers. The photographers included Gordon Parks, Marion Post Wolcott, and Russell Lee.

The most recent photograph here is of Blacksmith Julius Mason by Roland Freeman, an internationally known photographer born in Baltimore in 1936 and now living in Washington, DC. Working for years as a successful photojournalist, Freeman has also devoted time to recording black folklife. His images are personal yet informative. □

"Building a New World: Black Labor Photographs" is an exhibition originally organized by the University Library Gallery of the University of Maryland-Baltimore County upon the initiative of the African-American Studies Department. A travelling version of the exhibition was produced in cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution Travelling Exhibition Service (SITES). Tom Beck is curator of photography for the University of Maryland-Baltimore County.

[1] Blacks were rarely treated respectfully in Reconstruction Era photographs. These stereotypical images are not included here because they portray blacks in activities that whites considered typical but that, in fact, were not.

[2] Judith Mara Gutman, *Lewis W. Hine* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1974), p. 5.

A case of prejudice: Maurice Mays and the Knoxville Race Riot of 1919 *By John Egerton*

"Since the Civil War, Negroes in east Tennessee had been celebrating freedom. We had a history of thinking we lived among the best white people in the South. But when the summer of 1919 came around, we found out it wasn't true."

– 98-year-old Y.D. Bryant of Knoxville, in a 1982 interview

The administration of capital punishment in America has taken many forms since the beginning of European colonization nearly 400 years ago. Convicted criminals have been put to death by beheading, strangling, burning, pressing, sawing, hanging, shooting, gassing, poisoning, asphyxiation, electrocution, and lethal injection. No complete records exist to show how many people have been executed, but Watt Espy, a researcher in the University of Alabama Law Library, has documented more than 13,500 legal and official killings dating back into the early colonial period. (These should not be confused with lynchings, or illegal and unofficial executions. Statistics compiled at Tuskegee Institute indicate that an average of 146 lynchings a year took place in the United States in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, that 1,799 blacks and 196 whites were lynched between 1900 and 1962, and that the overwhelming majority of lynch victims were black men in the Southern and border states.)

Tennessee can be seen as a typical Southern state with respect to capital punishment. Espy's research shows that nearly 200 people, a majority of them black, were legally hanged in the state before 1913. In that year, an electric chair was installed at the main penitentiary in Nashville. The state legislature abolished capital punishment in 1915, but restored it four years later. Since then the state, which is 85 percent white, has executed 86 blacks and 38 whites, all of them males from the bottom end of the socio-economic scale. The last Tennessee electrocution took place in 1961. Thirty men are on Death Row in Nashville now.

Twelve of the 124 electrocuted Tennessee offenders – eight blacks, four whites – were residents of Knox County, which is more than 90 percent white. One of those Knox Countians, the eighteenth man to die in the state's electric chair, was 34-year-old Maurice Mays, a black man from Knoxville; he was pronounced dead at 6:16 a.m. on March 15, 1922.

THE TIMES

August, 1919: Fresh from victory in the war to make the world "safe for democracy," the United States seemed headed for an era of social progress on the domestic front, and Tennessee was a willing partner. Across the country, public education was reaching the masses; automobiles were replacing buggies, and paved roads were extending in all directions to accommodate them; the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution had been ratified as a national response to alcohol abuse, and the Nineteenth Amendment, giving women the right to vote, had been passed by both houses of Congress. Even the sensitive issue of race relations was receiving some attention, in part because black war veterans who had risked their lives for democracy were determined to share in its fruits.

Tennessee was not laggard. For nearly two decades, the state had been pushing to reach all its children with public schools. Tennesseans owned more than 75,000 automobiles – triple the number three years earlier – and

the development of a highway network was deemed second in importance only to the schools. Prohibition had been a statewide law since 1909. Women were already allowed to vote in state and local elections – and in 1920 Tennessee would become the state whose ratification of the suffrage amendment would make it the law of the land.

White moderates on the race issue in Tennessee (there being no liberals or radicals of note) were encouraged by the fact that lynchings and other atrocities by white mobs had declined from 10 a year to two, on the average, since the turn of the century. The Law and Order League was organized by a group of white citizens in 1918 "to combat the evils of lawlessness" – particularly lynching. And when Chicago was staggered by an outburst of racial violence in July of 1919, Tennessee Governor Albert H. Roberts welcomed black refugees from that city with these words: "We need the Negro here, and I do not fear that Tennessee will ever be the scene of such troubles as are now existing in Chicago."

Like the rest of the South, Tennessee lived by a rigid set of segregation laws and customs, but its white self-image was one of patient and kindly paternalism toward the black race. White supremacy was simply taken for granted, as if it were a divine right; as long as blacks were submissive to the status quo, unprovoked acts of aggression against them were publicly frowned upon as unkind, unwise, and unnecessary.

The state did not so much deny blacks the right to vote as it discouraged them with poll taxes and party primaries; likewise, educational opportunity was not denied, so long as it was dispensed in isolation from whites. The most benevolent white citizens of Tennessee in the postwar period tended to be fearful of just two things: the social elevation of blacks, individually or collectively, and the prospect of a sexual attraction between black men and white women. (Sexual contact between white men and black women was a widespread and long-standing occurrence, though it was seldom discussed publicly.)

If Tennessee thought of itself as different – more segregationist than its Yankee neighbors, but more tolerant and charitable than its Rebel cousins – then Knoxville could claim to be the most different of its cities. It was an urban oasis in the mountains, a busy city of brick streets and electric trolleys, of telephones and theaters and trains. "Staid old Knoxville," as an out-of-town editorial writer called it, was the principal city in a region that had stood with Lincoln and the Union in the Civil War, a region that remained staunchly Republican. The city's 80,000 people included fewer than 12,000 blacks – not even half as many proportionally as Memphis or Nashville or Chattanooga. The state university was also there, and it lent an air of serious and responsible maturity.

The last place anyone – least of all a Knoxvillian – might have looked for signs of impending racial violence was surely in this east Tennessee city where Mayor John E. McMillan, a Democrat, had denounced the Ku Klux Klan and gained a following among blacks as well as whites. The formation of a local branch of the NAACP – considered a radical and possibly subversive group even in the North – may have given Knoxville's white establishment some cause for concern, but the chapter was small and ineffectual, and it included none of the accepted local black leadership.

White Knoxville was quiet and complacent, proud of its supposed tolerance, sure of its basic goodness. Only an outrageous and sensational breach of racial laws and mores could have provoked either blacks or whites into violence.

And then, in the early hours of Saturday morning, August 30, 1919, a young white woman was shot and killed in the bedroom of her home. Before dawn, a black man had been arrested and charged with the crime – and the peace of Knoxville was no more.

Maurice Mays
Officially murdered by the State

photo courtesy of Fisk University Library

THE CRIME

Bertie Smyth was 23 years old when she moved to Knoxville from the mountains of southwest Virginia in 1915. That same year she met Daniel B. Lindsey, a 21-year-old carpenter and a migrant from neighboring Jefferson County. They were married in December, 1916, and later bought a three-room frame house at 1216 Eighth Avenue in north Knoxville.

In late May of 1919, Daniel Lindsey left Knoxville for a job in Akron, Ohio. His wife stayed behind, living alone in their home until mid-July, when her 21-year-old first cousin, Ora Smyth, moved in from her parents' farm on the Clinton Pike in Knox County.

Several weeks later, as the rainy and humid night of Friday, August 29, edged over into Saturday morning,

The crowd became a throng, then an angry lynch mob; it swarmed down Market Street in the hot and muggy air, headed for the county jail on Hill Street.

Bertie Lindsey and Ora Smyth were asleep in a double bed in the front room when someone entered. The women were awakened, and a pistol shot was fired, striking Bertie Smyth Lindsey in the chest. She died almost immediately.

After the intruder fled, Ora Smyth ran next door to the house of Emmett Dyer, a Knoxville policeman. Her frantic calls roused Dyer's wife, who let her in. As soon as she had told the couple of the shooting, Dyer called the police station and summoned help. By 2:30 a.m. – less than half an hour after the incident – several officers had arrived on the scene.

One of the policemen responding to the call was 37-year-old Andy White. He and the others questioned Ora Smyth, who identified the intruder as "a colored man" with a gun in one hand and a flashlight in the other. Patrolman White then got his superior officer's permission to go with three others in search of a man White considered a prime suspect. The man's name was Maurice F. Mays.

Maurice Mays, age 31, was a familiar and somewhat controversial figure on the streets of Knoxville. His light complexion, his dapper appearance, and his smooth manner had won him both strong friends and bitter enemies among whites as well as blacks. Handsome and articulate, he was often seen in the company of women of both races. Though he was married, he did not live with his wife – or with his mother and stepfather, Frances and William Mays. He was known to have connections among gamblers and prostitutes, and he was adept at delivering black votes to white politicians. He had a ninth-grade education – above average for blacks in that time and place. He had once been a pistol-carrying deputy sheriff, and before that, at the age of 15, he had been convicted – and quickly pardoned – for killing another black man.

One white person who especially disliked Mays was Patrolman Andy White, who on more than one occasion had been heard to threaten him for associating with white women. One who had a special fondness for Mays, on the other hand, was Mayor John McMillan; it was rumored about town that Maurice Mays was the mayor's illegitimate son.

White and his fellow officers went first to the home of William Mays on Campbell Street, a mile or so from the scene of the crime. There they learned that Maurice Mays had his own house at 313 Humes Street, a few blocks away in the same neighborhood. At 3:30 a.m., less than an hour and a half after the murder, the policemen found Mays in bed there.

He let them in, and White immediately asked to see his pistol. Mays pointed to a dresser drawer. White picked up the gun, a .38-caliber Smith & Wesson five-shot revolver. It was fully loaded. He sniffed the barrel and then put it back in the dresser. The police asked Mays a few questions, examined his clothing, and then, without telling him the reason for their call, ordered him to get dressed and come with them.

Mays got in the patrol wagon with White, the other three officers, and William Mays, who had followed them there from his home. They drove to the corner of Eighth Avenue and Gillespie Street, a few houses away from the murder scene. While Mays and his stepfather waited there under a street light with three of the policemen, Andy White went to get Ora Smyth. He led her out of the shadow to within a few feet of Mays and asked her if he was the man she saw kill Bertie Lindsey. She replied that he was. It was the only "lineup" Mays ever got.

Dawn was just breaking as Maurice Mays was taken on to the police station and booked for murder. Within hours, the one indisputable fact in the case – that a woman had been shot and killed in her own home – was embellished by an outpouring of rumor and speculation. A "flower of Southern womanhood" had been robbed, possibly raped, and certainly murdered in cold blood – and the man who stood charged with the crime was Maurice Mays, a notorious "bad nigger."

THE RIOT

By noon, milling clusters of agitated white men reacted to the crime on street corners throughout the central city. Their mood was angry, menacing; trouble was in the air, as palpable as an approaching summer storm. Sheriff W.T. Cate, in consultation with other criminal justice officials, decided to move Maurice Mays to a jail in Chattanooga for his own safety. The sheriff and some of his deputies spirited their prisoner away in a heavily guarded automobile to a nearby town and caught a train there for the 100-mile ride to Chattanooga.

Late in the afternoon, the scattered groups of men began to congregate in the downtown market square. Guns were everywhere in evidence. The crowd became a throng, then an angry lynch mob; it swarmed down Market Street in the hot and muggy air, headed for the county jail on Hill Street.

At the jail, leaders of the mob demanded that Mays be released to them. Deputies insisted that he was not there. Three times, delegations of men were allowed to enter and see for themselves that the prisoner had been removed, but the mob was not satisfied. Just before eight o'clock, in the last hour of daylight, fighting broke out in the streets, and shots were fired. Two squads of National Guardsmen from a nearby training camp had been called in to reinforce outnumbered policemen and deputies, but their presence seemed only to heighten the mob's anger. More guardsmen from the same unit – the Fourth Tennessee Infantry – were summoned, but their support was too little, too late. As darkness fell, the mob stormed the jail.

A telephone pole was brought up as a battering ram to smash down the main door to the building, and the men surged through the hallways. Most of the white prisoners were released, including three under murder charges; the black prisoners were

neither freed nor harmed. Law enforcement officials and militiamen defending the facility were quickly overwhelmed. From a store room, the mob seized a large quantity of confiscated illicit whiskey as well as all the guns and ammunition. In the sheriff's residence next door as well as in the jail itself, virtually everything that could not be taken away was vandalized and demolished.

Governor A.H. Roberts had been called in the meantime, and he ordered the entire Fourth Tennessee Infantry into the city and declared martial law there. The 1,100 National Guardsmen who responded, together with nearly 300 special policemen and deputies, joined the 200-member Knoxville police force on the side of law enforcement, but the mob still outnumbered them.

Responding to rumors that armed blacks were roaming Vine Avenue eight blocks away, the mob turned up Gay Street and headed in that direction. The intersection of Vine and Central Avenue was the heart of black Knoxville, the crossroads at which large numbers of blacks commonly gathered in the evenings. While the white mob was smashing windows and taking more guns and ammunition from hardware stores and pawn shops along the way, soldiers rushed to set up machine guns at Vine and Central and at other points in the vicinity.

Accounts vary widely on what happened in the battle that raged there into the night. Officially, the death count was placed at two – Joe Etter, a black man, and Lieutenant James W. Payne, a guardsman who was accidentally riddled with machine-gun fire by his own men. Unofficially, the count was much higher; one sheriff's deputy estimated that 25 to 30 men died.

By dawn a nervous calm had settled over the empty streets. Throughout the long night and on into the days that followed, the tyranny of the mob was gradually transformed into repression by the military forces. The effect on the black community was devastating. Blacks were placed under curfew, relieved of what civil liberties they had, and subjected to personal abuse by patrolling guardsmen. Homes were entered and searched, sometimes forcibly. All blacks entering the city by train were questioned and searched, and many were mistreated. Hundreds of black residents fled the city, some never to return. Between the violence of the mob and the repression of martial law, black Knoxvillians could hardly make a distinction.

Whites, on the other hand, were generally left alone by the authorities. Thirty-six white leaders of the mob were arrested and charged with felonies, but when they were tried before an all-white jury six weeks later, 31 of them were acquitted and the other five were freed after a mistrial was declared in their cases.

The daily newspapers of Knoxville and other Tennessee cities did not bestir themselves to deplore the outburst of white violence in any specific ways. On the contrary, the tone of the news coverage and the sparse editorial comment implied that Maurice Mays was guilty and that the crime was outrageous enough to justify the actions of the mob and the military. One state official, Senator John C. Houk of Knoxville, dismissed the violence as "merely a mob . . . a white mob engaged . . . in disturbing the peace." A month later, when racial violence erupted in the town of Elaine, Arkansas, the *Nashville Tennessean* blamed it on "organizations at work preaching the doctrine of social equality and urging the negroes to stand up for their rights." The *Tennessean* had made no editorial comment at all on Knoxville's tragedy.

But the force of law was much more swift and relentless in the case of Maurice Mays. From the moment of his arrest he had steadfastly maintained his innocence; the state, with equal steadfastness, moved rapidly to convict and punish him. A grand jury indicted him four days after the crime, the jury declaring that Mays had "unlawfully, feloniously, willfully, deliberately, premeditatedly and maliciously" assaulted and murdered Bertie Smyth Lindsey, "against the peace and dignity of the state." On Wednesday, October 1, 1919, a month after the murder, Case No. 508 – *The State vs. Maurice Mays* – commenced in Knox County Criminal Court.

KNOXVILLE, FOLLOWING THE RACE RIOT OF 1919

photo courtesy of Knoxville-Knox County Public Library

THE TRIAL

With Judge T.A.R. Nelson presiding, the names of 520 white men were drawn from the jury pool, and from them 12 were chosen to hear the evidence and decide the guilt or innocence of the defendant. Governor Roberts had appointed former Knoxville mayor S.G. Heiskell as special prosecutor to handle the state's case against Mays. He was assisted by R.A. Mynatt, the district attorney-general, and Fred C. Houk, a Knoxville criminal lawyer.

The defense team was headed by Reuben L. Cates, a former district attorney-general. His principal assistant, curiously, was Lincoln C. Houk, the father and law partner of prosecutor Fred Houk. (John Houk, the state senator who had dismissed the riot as a mere disturbance of the peace, was Lincoln's brother.) Three others "signed on" as defenders, but questioned no witnesses: W.F. Yardley and John W. Huff, two of the three black attorneys in Knoxville, and James A.

The prosecution failed to establish a motive, failed to show that Mays was ever at the scene, failed to prove that his gun had been fired.

Fowler, one of the city's best known public figures. Fowler had run for governor in 1898 and had served as a top official in the U.S. Department of Justice under Presidents Roosevelt and Taft from 1908 to 1913.

Clearly, Maurice Mays was not without able counsel. It was rumored at the time that the national NAACP was paying for his defense, but the temper of the segregationist times suggests otherwise. Another speculation now seems more plausible: that the white defense attorneys acted out of friendship for – or perhaps with payment from – Mayor John E. McMillan, a banker. (The story that Maurice Mays might be McMillan's son was never mentioned at the trial or in press coverage of it, although allusions to their relationship had been printed in the local papers some years earlier. On the afternoon before the Lindsey murder, Mays and his stepfather, William Mays, had been campaigning for the mayor's re-election. A week later, when Maurice was in jail, McMillan was soundly defeated at the polls.)

During the first two days of testimony 15 witnesses were called, including the husband of Bertie Lindsey, the doctor who examined her body, and several police officers involved in the investigation. But the most attention by far was paid to two people: Ora Smyth, the eyewitness, and Andy White, the arresting officer.

Under questioning by Attorney General Mynatt, Ora Smyth said that when she was awakened by her cousin's voice, she saw a Negro man standing beside the bed. He had a gun in one hand and a flashlight in the other. The man threatened her, she said, and told her to lie still, and she never moved. In the reflected light of his flashlight, she said, "I saw him in the face . . . I could see his face plain." Further, the young woman said, "He laid his hands on me . . . on my private parts." Bertie kept getting up, she testified, and the man kept making her lie down again; then she took a step toward the door, and when she turned to look back, he shot her.

Again, Mynatt asked Ora Smyth if she had seen the man's face clearly. She replied that she had, several times, as he changed the flashlight from one hand to the other. And was that man now in the courtroom? Yes, she answered firmly, pointing to Maurice Mays at the defense table. "Could you be mistaken?" Mynatt asked. "I could not," Ora Smyth responded.

After the shot, she said, the man came back and put his hands on her again, and she told him to "spare my life, but take my money." She directed him to the dresser, where he took some loose money and Bertie Lindsey's pocketbook. Then, she said, the man left the room and went out the back door. She then ran to the front door, she testified, and there she heard the man fall and get up in the dark yard, and in a moment she saw him run past and cross the street in front of the house.

An hour or so later, when the police brought a man to the corner of Eighth Avenue and Gillespie Street and asked Ora Smyth to come and look at him, she testified that she twice identified Maurice Mays as the killer. "By his form, by his face and by his voice, and his clothing," she said, she was positive of her identification.

In his cross-examination, defense attorney Reuben Cates concentrated on whether or not a flashlight in the hand of the intruder could have given Ora Smyth a clear view of the person's face. He asked no probing questions about the appearance or actions of the intruder, or about her identification of him under the street light. The questioning was quickly over, and Ora Smyth was never called back to the stand.

When Andy White testified, he claimed that his suspicion of Maurice Mays was prompted by his questioning of Smyth and her description of the assailant. He said he had then asked permission of Captain Joseph Wilson to go in search of Mays. In a patrol wagon driven by a black policeman named James Smith, White and two other officers went first to the home of William Mays and then to the Humes Street address of his stepson. It took several minutes of loud knocking and shouted calls, White said, to induce Mays to let them in.

White first asked for his pistol, and Mays said it was in the dresser. "I smelt a faint smoked powder on it," he testified, adding that he kept the fully loaded gun. White also claimed that Mays's shoes had fresh mud on the soles. He said that the officers then told Mays to get dressed so they could take him to "let some people see him."

When they arrived at the corner of Eighth and Gillespie, White said, he and another officer walked to the Lindsey house to get Ora Smyth. Then, according to White, the young woman twice stated that Mays was the killer.

During the officer's testimony, several disputes arose between the opposing attorneys – over whether or not White had coached Smyth before she saw Mays, over whether or not Mays had denied her accusation, and finally over Mays's alleged possession of photographs of white women. With the jury out of the courtroom, prosecutor Heiskell told the court he wanted to ask about such pictures. Mays, he said, "is a negro, considered to be such. His association naturally would be with negroes, and if he got to running after white women that would be something unusual, at least in this part of the United States. That would indicate . . . a state of mind in which the defendant was, that he was running after white women." Judge Nelson ruled that such evidence was inadmissible because it would "unduly prejudice the jury against the defendant and it would not throw any light upon the homicide at all."

Cates, in his cross-examination, drew from White some seemingly important admissions – that he had looked for but failed to find a flashlight in Mays's house; that he had not,

in fact, kept Mays's gun, but had returned it to the drawer; and that he had accused Mays of having a second pistol, the implication being that the first one appeared not to be the murder weapon. Cates also suggested that White had long held "unkind feelings" toward Mays, which White denied.

In fact, another officer did take Mays's gun to the station, but it was never positively identified as the murder weapon. The bullet extracted from Bertie Lindsey's body was never matched to that or any other gun, and no spent shell was ever found. No reports on fingerprints or ballistics or an autopsy were presented in evidence.

Lindsey's pocketbook was found in her yard, but it was not linked in any way to Mays, and no flashlight ever turned up. White and other police officers testified that Mays's trousers were damp – presumably from running through wet weeds – and that his shoes matched prints found in the mud at the Lindsey home, but the testimony was directly contradicted and shown to be highly circumstantial, even speculative. In the case of the shoe print, the prosecution contended that a badly worn left heel print matched Mays's shoe, but the defense introduced his only pair of shoes in evidence to show that the heels were barely worn at all.

As the trial entered its third day, Cates called White back to the stand for more cross-examination and attempted to show that he had nursed a long-standing grudge against Mays and was attempting to frame him for the Lindsey murder. White had focused his suspicion on Mays even before his investigation, Cates suggested. Anger rose on all sides, and the judge also seemed to be disturbed, but Cates persisted: "Before you ever had a description, didn't you . . . state that Maurice Mays had committed the crime?" White categorically denied having made such a statement to anyone at any time.

Shortly after that exchange, the state rested its case. It had failed to establish a motive linking Mays to the crime, failed to show that he was ever at the scene, failed to prove that his gun had been fired or even that it was of the same caliber as the murder bullet. There had been much discussion of muddy footprints and damp trousers and the faint smell of powder in his gun barrel, but the state's case held nothing of substance – nothing except the word of Ora Smyth that she saw Mays fire the shot.

The first defense witness was Mays himself. In a soft-spoken but confident manner, he described his activities on the day of the crime – an afternoon of campaigning with his stepfather on behalf of Mayor McMillan, an evening of casual socializing among black friends. Between 12:30 and 1 a.m., he said, he went home, undressed, read the paper, and went to sleep. At three o'clock, he was awakened by loud voices and knocking. He said he went to the door and found three policemen. They came in, searched his room, looked at his gun, asked him some questions, told him nothing; then, he said, they ordered him to dress and follow them.

JOHN E. McMILLAN, MAYOR OF KNOXVILLE, AND RUMORED TO BE MAYS'S FATHER

photo courtesy of Lawson-McGhee Library

His stepfather had arrived in the meantime and was allowed to ride with Mays in the patrol wagon. At a street corner in north Knoxville, Mays said, he waited under the watchful eyes of the other policemen while Andy White went alone to a house up the street. "Someone has been shot by a colored man," one of the policemen finally explained to him. When White returned with Ora Smyth, Mays said, she accused him of the crime. Then he said to the court:

"I told her she was mistaken. I said, 'Mr. White, please bring the lady back and let her look at me better than that,' and I said, 'Certainly I am not the man,' but she didn't come back."

Under questioning by Reuben Cates, Mays testified that he had known Andy White for three or four years, that White had been unkind to him, had cursed him several times, had called him a "little black son of a bitch" and a "little yellow negro." White hadn't spoken to him in four or five months, Mays said, and he quoted Jim Smith, the black driver of the police wagon, as saying that White "thinks you would do anything."

It was then S.G. Heiskell's turn to cross-examine Mays. Against repeated objections from the defense, some of which were overruled by Judge Nelson, the prosecutor established that Mays had three indictments pending against him, that one of them was for carrying a pistol, and that the pistol in question had been taken from him by the police. He also got into the record a hint that Mays had once shot and killed a man, and an assertion that he sometimes followed white girls.

Heiskell pressed hard with questions about Mays's whereabouts at the time of the crime, the condition of his pants and shoes when he was arrested, and his confrontation with Ora Smyth under the street light. He also suggested – and Mays denied – that he once had interfered with Andy White's attempt to arrest some men who were gambling in a cafe run by Mays.

The prosecution objected to three witnesses called by Cates. Judge Nelson sent the jury out while he heard the three, all white women, say that they had been assaulted in their homes by black intruders after Mays was in jail. One of the women said her assailant threatened to "shoot me like he did Bertie Lindsey." The judge excluded testimony from all three. The

On the night of his execution, Mays said, "I am to die to satisfy a few Republican politicians. Some Republicans told the governor he'd lose 20,000 votes if he helped me."

defense called 20 more witnesses to support Mays's claim of innocence. Among them was a 29-year-old black lawyer, George McDade, Jr., who said that he knew both Mays and White and that he had heard White call Mays a "little yellow son of a bitch" who was shielding thieves and ought to be put in jail. Another witness was Dave Saunders, a white police officer and former deputy sheriff, who said he examined Mays's pistol at the police station and detected no smoke or powder smell. Saunders also testified that he and his wife had conducted an experiment with a flashlight in a dark room and found that the holder of the light could not be seen. (Earlier, a police witness had claimed a similar experiment produced the opposite result.)

Perhaps the most effective witness in Mays's defense was James Smith, the black driver of the police patrol wagon and an employee of the department for 12 years. On the way to the Lindsey house to investigate the crime, he said, Andy White had "guessed Maurice Mays was the man who killed the woman." White hated Mays, Smith testified; he cursed him often, called him a "yellow bastard" and a "dirty nigger," and vowed to "catch him with his britches down and put him in the penitentiary."

Under cross-examination by Mynatt, Smith denied that he had a personal dislike for White. He claimed that others had also heard White curse Mays, but he declined to name them.

Some brief and inconsequential rebuttal testimony followed. Then the questioning was over, closing arguments were heard, and finally, late in the afternoon of Saturday, October 4, Judge Nelson gave his charge to the jury. The participants and spectators then settled back to wait for a verdict.

It was a short wait. In less than 20 minutes, the jury was back. They had found Maurice Mays guilty of murder in the first degree. The judge had already indicated that the penalty for such a finding was death.

The defendant, in the words of one newspaper, "maintained the most perfect appearance of calm." He was quoted as saying to those who had helped him in the trial: "I want to thank you all for what you have done for me, but I don't want you to get it into your head that I am guilty of the crime. . . . I want to proclaim standing here that I did not commit the crime. It is simply a case of prejudice."

Two weeks later, the defense moved for a new trial on five grounds: that racial passion and excitement in the community had prevented a fair trial, that defense testimony concerning three similar assaults had not been permitted, that the judge had incorrectly charged the jury, that the sentence had been incorrectly fixed, and that late testimony contradicting Ora Smyth's sworn statements had not been allowed.

In denying the motion, Judge Nelson asserted that Maurice Mays "had an absolutely fair trial. He was ably defended. He was given the benefit of every single doubt. The jury having heard all the evidence returned a verdict of guilty of murder in the first degree, and returned it in only a few minutes. And that verdict meets with the hearty approval of the court. I am convinced beyond a peradventure of a doubt that he is the man who committed the awful atrocious crime." He directed that Mays be taken to the state penitentiary in Nashville, and there electrocuted on November 28, 1919.

In separate statements made that same week, Judge Nelson and Attorney General Mynatt deplored the action of another jury which in the meantime had freed all of the white men charged in the August 30 riot. But in the case of Maurice Mays, both men appeared satisfied that justice had been done, swiftly and surely.

THE WAIT

The state took just 35 days after Bertie Lindsey's murder to arrest and convict the only suspect and prescribe his punishment – but two and a half years would elapse before it administered that punishment to Maurice Mays. Through appeal, reversal, retrial, and reconviction, renewed appeal, and final verdict, Mays remained imprisoned but ever hopeful – even confident – that his innocence would finally be declared. Three times he was taken from the Knox County jail to the penitentiary in Nashville to await execution, only to be returned to Knoxville for more waiting.

The Tennessee Supreme Court's consideration of the first conviction postponed Mays's November, 1919, execution date, and in January, 1920, the court reversed the conviction on a technicality in the fixing of the death sentence. More than a year later, on April 18, 1921, another criminal court jury was chosen to retry the case in the court of Judge Xen Hicks. The same two teams of attorneys returned to battle and called most of the same witnesses. Once again, Ora Smyth (the eyewitness, since married to a store clerk named Ray Parsons) firmly asserted that Maurice Mays was the man she saw shoot Bertie Lindsey – and just as stoutly, Mays repeated his declaration of innocence.

But the outcome was the same. On April 23, the jury found the defendant guilty of first degree murder and sentenced him to die in the electric chair. Six months later, the Tennessee Supreme Court affirmed the verdict, finding no trial errors and no technical flaws to warrant another reversal. The execution was scheduled for December 15, 1921.

In the meantime, Tennessee had elected a new governor – Alfred A. "Uncle Alf" Taylor, a 72-year-old Republican from east Tennessee. A former member of Congress, he had earlier waged and lost a campaign for governor against his brother, Democrat Robert Love Taylor. With his election in 1920, Alf Taylor inherited the final

responsibility for the fate of Maurice Mays.

As soon as the state supreme court upheld Mays's conviction, Taylor was swamped with letters, phone calls, telegrams, and petitions on the highly emotional and controversial case. Some urged him to permit no delay in the execution; others, with equal fervor, pleaded for reconsideration and reprieve. Taylor responded by appointing three prominent Tennesseans as a commission of "disinterested" counselors to study the case and recommend a course of action to him. He also granted a 90-day postponement of the execution – to March 15, 1922 – to allow petitioners for Mays to examine purported new evidence in the case.

Sentiment in Knox County was reported to be "about equally divided" between those who were convinced of Mays's guilt and those who believed he was innocent. The three-man commission concluded that he had committed the crime but suggested that he might have been insane at the time. Governor Taylor, saying that he had read the entire case record and listened carefully to all sides, announced that he would render final judgment before the scheduled execution date. He would, he said, be guided "by a sense of justice and conscience."

The weeks slipped by. Mays, ill and on crutches in the late winter of 1922, saw his hopes fading. Finally, on March 14, the governor ended a long silence. He had seen no new evidence to indicate that the court had erred, he said; therefore, he would not interfere with the verdict. Maurice Mays would die at sunrise.

The *Nashville Tennessean* reported that the decision caused the governor to be "besieged with visitors pleading for the life of the man convicted of one of the most brutal crimes in the annals of the state." One such petitioner was James A. Fowler, then a special assistant to the U.S. attorney general in Washington and formerly one of Mays's defense lawyers; others included prominent black Tennesseans who, the newspapers reported, had raised "a fund of $10,000 or more" to provide Mays with "capable counsel in his legal battle."

But these pleas were made to no avail. The governor issued one last statement concluding that "the responsibility for the fate of Maurice Mays rests with the courts and juries of Tennessee, and not upon me." Two criminal court judges, two juries, the state's highest court, an independent commission, and two governors had redered their collective verdict: Maurice Mays was guilty as charged.

"The only statement I have to make," said defense attorney James Fowler when all hope was gone, "is that they are electrocuting an innocent negro."

ALBERT H. ROBERTS, GOVERNOR OF TENNESSEE FROM 1918 TO 1920

photo courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives

THE EXECUTION

William Mays went to the death house in the state penitentiary to be with his stepson for the last time, and he was a tearful witness to the condemned man's baptism by two black Methodist ministers. With tears in his own eyes, Maurice Mays assured his stepfather once again of his innocence.

As the night wore on, Mays twice asked to be taken on to the chair. He had made his last appeals; he was resigned to the inevitability of his death. "I am to die to satisfy a few Republican politicians," he said. "The governor hasn't man enough in him. You might as well talk to a rock. Some Republicans told him he'd lose 20,000 votes if he helped me."

In his final statement, Governor Taylor had said that the case "turned upon the testimony of Ora Smyth," and that the defense had been unable to discredit her. "Therefore," he said, "she stands in the case unimpeached and unimpeachable." The defense attorneys had, in fact, passed up numerous opportunities to challenge the truthfulness of Ora Smyth.

Maurice Mays understood clearly that the young woman's testimony would determine in the end whether he would live or die. He had written an open letter to Ora Smyth Parsons, begging her to admit she was wrong. "My life," he wrote, "is to be taken from me solely upon your word alone. God knows and I know that I am entirely innocent. . . . After I am dead, it will then be too late, but God will teach, and may make your life miserable. He will bury it in your heart as long as you live that I died innocent upon your word alone." No response ever came.

In the early morning hours of March 15, people waiting in the death house with Maurice Mays said they heard him "pray to his Maker to cleanse the sinful hearts of men who have dipped their fingers in my innocent blood." Then, one newspaper reported, "It was almost uncanny, the way Mays fixed a smile on his face, walked to the chair from the death cell, and, upon sitting in the chair exclaimed, 'I am as innocent as the sun that shines.'"

At 12 minutes past six, the first electric shock was sent surging through his body. It continued for four minutes. When the current was turned off, the attending physician quickly determined that Maurice Mays was dead.

William Mays took his stepson's body back to Knoxville for burial. An estimated 2,000 of the city's 12,000 black citizens filed past the open casket at the Wheeler Funeral Home on Vine Avenue.

The "capital offense" of Maurice Mays was that in a society of unremitting white supremacy, he dared to assume the liberties of a white man. For that "crime" he paid with his life.

THE CONFESSION

For many months, the people of east Tennessee, white and black alike, found it difficult to rid themselves of the bitter aftertaste of murder and execution. In some quarters, Maurice Mays was remembered with contempt as "an underworld figure" and "a bad nigger." In others, he was praised as "a martyred victim of white racism." There would never be agreement on the question of his guilt or innocence, but on one conclusion there was virtual consensus: the "capital offense" of Maurice Mays was that in a society of unremitting white supremacy, he had dared to assume the liberties of a white man. And for that "crime" he paid with his life.

Assaults similar to the one that cost Bertie Lindsey her life continued in the Knoxville area for more than five years. By the end of 1924, a total of 32 such crimes had gone unsolved; eight women had been murdered and about two dozen others had been raped or robbed. At one point, a private detective claimed that a single white man had committed all of the assaults, including the one on Bertie Lindsey, but no convictions were ever obtained.

The segregationist status quo prevailed in Tennessee and throughout the South. Finally, in the fullness of time, the wounds of William and Frances Mays, of Daniel Lindsey, and of the city of Knoxville scarred over and healed. At length, no one spoke any more of the murder and execution that had stirred such emotions and caused such deep divisions in the community.

Then, in August, 1927, five and a half years after the execution, a 28-year-old white woman walked into the police station in Norton, Virginia, and calmly told the officer in charge that she was the murderer of Bertie Lindsey. In a signed confession, Sadie Mendil said that she had suspected her then-husband, John Roddy, of carrying on an affair with Daniel Lindsey's wife. Seeking revenge, she had put on men's clothing, blackened her face, and entered the Lindsey house, where she had shot Bertie Lindsey as she lay in bed with another woman. Then, Mendil said, she had made her escape.

The Norton authorities were impressed with the sincerity of the confession and with Sadie Mendil herself, who said she had decided to make the statement because of a "troubled mind and heart." But Knoxville police chief Ed M. Haynes quickly discredited her story, saying that "confessions" were commonly made after sensational crimes. There were, said Haynes, some serious discrepancies in Sadie Mendil's account of the murder. He advised the police chief in Norton to release her.

Four days later, a man who identified himself as Mack Mendil appeared in Haynes's office and said that his wife Sadie had given a false confession to the Norton police because she had "become temporarily demented from brooding over her baby," a two-year-old son who was being cared for by another family. That explanation satisfied the Knoxville authorities, and the matter was promptly considered closed.

THE LEGACY

Sixty-four years after Bertie Lindsey was murdered and 56 years after Sadie Mendil claimed responsibility for the crime, it was still possible to find a few uninvestigated leads in the musty pages of the Knoxville public record.

Some of those frail clues quickly evaporated. Ora Smyth Parsons and her husband apparently had moved out of the city after Mays was executed and could not be traced. Mayor John E. McMillan, for all his visibility at the time, is all but invisible in the city's recorded history now. Governor Alfred A. Taylor's public papers include none of the extensive and voluminous materials generated in his office by the Mays case. Attorney James A. Fowler left an extensive memoir, but it contains no mention of his role in defending Mays, nor any acknowledgment of the murder, the riot, or the execution.

And what of Sadie Mendil? She would have been 84 years old in 1983, and her son would have been 58. Were they still alive?

Before her marriage to Mack Mendil, Sadie had divorced John Roddy in

In 1927, five and a half years after the execution of Maurice Mays, a white woman walked into the police station in Norton, Virginia, and calmly told the officer in charge that she was the murderer of Bertie Lindsey.

a Tennessee mountain county courthouse. I found the record there, dated June 30, 1926. Along with her single status, Sadie had also taken back her maiden name. Then, in another county soon thereafter, she had married Mendil. Might she have eventually left him too, again resumed her maiden name, and returned to the rural county of her childhood and youth?

The name was a common one in that mountain community. I won't use it here; instead, I'll call her Sadie Brown.

In every courthouse office, I asked if anyone knew a woman in her eighties named Sadie Brown. Finally, a middle-aged clerk said the name rang a bell. She sent me to the next town down the road, and there I met a woman who seemed to recall the recent death of a Sadie Brown in yet another town nearby.

I called at the local funeral home. The records showed no funeral for anyone by that name. But, said the undertaker, "There's a Reverend Buell Brown around here. You might ask him."

When I spoke Sadie Brown's name on the phone, the Reverend Buell Brown's voice turned suddenly cool. Who was I, he demanded; why did I want to know about Sadie Brown? He found my answers unsatisfactory. "Yes, I know Sadie Brown," he said at last, "but I won't talk to you about her, or tell you where she lives. It's none of your business where my mother lives." He hung up.

I rushed to the local post office and asked a friendly clerk for directions to Sadie Brown's home. Within minutes I stood at the door, knocking. A short, white-haired woman appeared. "Are you Sadie Brown?" I asked. "Yes, I am," she replied. I took a deep breath and began to talk, spilling out the story as I had pieced it together, trying not to frighten or offend her.

She listened politely. Her pleasant expression did not change. I came at last to the key question: was she *that* Sadie Brown, the one I had described?

"That was my sister-in-law," she answered. "She was born Sadie Brown; I got the same name, but by marriage. She confessed that killing, but she didn't do it. She was afraid of her husband, Mendil. He kept her under close watch, and she wanted to get away from him, so she ran to the police and said she was the one that killed that other woman. They locked her up, and then my brother went and got her out, and that's how she got away from Mendil."

ALFRED A. TAYLOR, GOVERNOR OF TENNESSEE FROM 1920 TO 1922, REFUSED TO GRANT MAYS A REPRIEVE

photo courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives

I waited for her to continue, but there was no more. "What finally happened to Sadie?" I asked.

"She married again – and then she died about two years ago."

"Where did she die, and what was her name then?"

"She died in Knoxville, but I can't remember what her married name was."

I tried another tack. "The newspaper story said she had a son before she was married to Mack Mendil. Do you know where he is, or what his name is?"

"I think he may be dead too," she replied.

We stood in the shade of Sadie Brown's front porch, looking calmly at each other, showing no outward emotion. I glanced over my shoulder, wondering suddenly if the Reverend Buell Brown was on his way there. With a feeling of barely controlled desperation, I searched my mind for the right questions to unlock the mystery. No words came. The silence filled the space between us.

Sadie Brown stepped back inside. "Goodbye," I said lamely. "And thank you." The door closed. Walking back to my car, I thought about the whole story, the long-buried mystery, and wondered if I had found the end of it – or another beginning.□

John Egerton is a freelance writer based in Nashville. His new book, Generations: An American Family, *is being published this summer by the University Press of Kentucky.*

REVIEWS

Folk Writing: Books to Save Us

Cutting the Mustard, by Miles Carpenter. American Folk Art Company (310 Duke St., Tappahannock, VA 22560), 1982. 80 pp., $13.50 (plus $1.50 for postage and handling).

Howard Finster's Vision of 1982, by Howard Finster. Order from H. Finster (Route 2, Box 155, Summerville, GA 30747), 1982, 100 pp. $5.00.

– Susan Hankla

Many books bear epigrams taken out of the contexts of various samples of the literature of Western thought, as if by the ritual of first quoting established sources, the writers gain immediate alliance with the established literary community. Few writers feel substantial enough to shine on alone.

To speak from just the raw richness of living is a bold dare. How about something as subversive and strong as folk writing? For just as folk art is art not about other art, folk writing is writing not about other writing.

The recently published books by two of America's most famous modern folk artists let us glimpse firsthand the rich experience of America. Without knowing one another, Miles Carpenter, the 93-year-old wood carver from Waverly, Virginia, and the Reverend Howard Finster, the 66-year-old visionary preacher from Summerville, Georgia, have in 1982 brought into print two books which may prove exceptional in the history of literature and art, if for no other reason than that they provide us with a missing link to a part of America we do not often get to hear from in print.

Miles Carpenter, author of *Cutting The Mustard*, gives the reader a personal chronicle of our agrarian past in this autobiography, perhaps the first of its kind. Carpenter's lesson is a simple one: work hard and live a balanced life. It is a *deceptively* simple message; put it in the context of our consumer society, and the notion of being a creator instead of a consumer becomes revolutionary.

Howard Finster's book, on the other hand, is a work of the imagination, a novella, which becomes a vision and a prophecy for the '80s. Finster, who has a sixth-grade education, decided in the early '70s to devote his life to making sacred art. His book is unabashedly printed by hand in bold black on hand-drawn lined paper and illustrated and informed by this quirky Appalachian's voice-in-the-wilderness appeal to the modern world to acknowledge God.

In mainstream American culture, the arts (music, drama, dance, visual art, and poetry) have become drastically compartmentalized. Perhaps folk art will eventually give us access to an invisible poetry, a link with the primordial, where everything's alive.

The folk art experience is one of rejuvenation and mystery. Folk art has the same force of submerged poetry one finds in children, or in religion. And its strength is a tribal force, going beyond the personal to include us all.

Is there an urgency in the fact that both books were published independently of each other in 1982? A big clue is that the art world is now turning to and searching within for naive visions to acquire inspiration and renewal. The works of both Miles Carpenter and Howard Finster have already surfaced in the mainstream of contemporary art. Carpenter held his first formal show at the Brooklyn Museum in 1976. His work has also recently been shown at the Corcoran in Washington, D.C., and is also in the permanent collection of the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center in Williamsburg, Virginia. Howard Finster's work, part of the extensive archives in the Library of Congress, has also been shown recently in New York City's Phyllis Kind Gallery and in the New Museum, a branch of the New School for Social Research.

Both books convey important and responsible views to a world which needs to learn the secret of creative longevity from a 93-year-old Miles Carpenter, and which needs to get a grip on spiritual matters by partaking of the sacred space-flight vision of the 66-year-old Howard Finster, who has been preaching since the age of 16. Both books are needed now for they stand in startling contrast to the consumer society in which we have become entrenched.

CUTTING THE MUSTARD

Cutting The Mustard, the autobiography of Miles Burkeholder Carpenter, comes in the form of a folio-size photo album, with text hand-typed, published by the American Folk Art Company, an independent art agency in Tappahannock, Virginia. For those not fortunate to know a grandfather skilled in the various backbone trades of a struggling America, this book will add roots to their rootlessness in its accounts of life at the saw mill and in the small community of Waverly, Virginia, where Miles ran an outdoor moving picture show, and still operates an ice house (at one time so necessary to the town that he was not required to fight in World War I).

The book also chronicles Carpenter's evolution as an artist: a lag in the sawmill industry of the Depression days caused a creative upheaval within him and he started carving things from wood, holding to the ancient belief that there are creatures already in the wood, waiting to be released. After the death of his wife, the silence of their home urged up more images buried in memory – a childhood rhyme, for instance, about the lonely king who sat with knife and fork, waiting to be served. And what did Carpenter's carving set before the king but four and 20 wooden blackbirds, rocking merrily on the springs from donated ballpoint pens obtained by placing an ad in the local paper. This mechanical pie was a fanciful beginning to a long series of wooden inventions. Carpenter's first wooden watermelon, carved out of a sturdy log, maddened at least one customer of his ice house when he found he couldn't eat it. Other watermelon slices followed and other food, such as a wooden pumpkin. All these "trick" foods were a form of advertisement, art designed to draw a crowd to his vegetable stand by the ice house. Carpenter later got into the habit of driving around town with wooden figures in his truck. A rigged-up Indian man would wave at the citizens, who rubbed their eyes – did the Indian move? A skinny wooden lady-friend, Lena Wood ("she being lean and made of wood"), went with him everywhere in his old blue car.

Carpenter's art shoulders current issues with a freshness that evokes an immediate emotional and psychological response: "Nixon at Watergate," made in 1974; "The Kids," showing three kids, one white, two black sharing a slice of watermelon; and the poignantly interpreted "Wounded Knee," which he describes in *Cutting The Mustard*:

> After making the black-bird pie, I heard so much about Wounded Knee South Dakota where there was trouble with the Indians, and since I have made several indians Why not make a wounded knee indian boy.... I came across a tree trunk...I shaped it up, made a head and one foot, mounted it on a board with two crutches fastened under his arms. the broken limb was the wounded knee. Hence – when finished I had made a wounded knee Indian boy about 3' tall and all dressed up in clothes.

Cutting The Mustard presents a harmonious balance of work and play. Carpenter's instructions for how to cut the mustard read as follows:

> If you want to have a long successful life and make good of yourself and to cut the mustard you must do as follows.
> Don't drink strong liquor
> Don't smoke
> Don't chase around with women (not that I don't like them) but don't go too far,
> And
> Go to bed the same day you get up.

Carpenter includes in his book countless photographs of his family (he is eighth of 11 in a family of Pennsylvania Dutch), poems about pigs, excerpts from family records of crops, patterns from his wooden creatures, pictures of "monkey-dogs," greyhounds and his grandmother's quilts, and copies of recent newspaper articles about him. (He has just received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, making him one of the few living folk artists to receive this kind of federal support.) Living now for nearly a century, Miles Carpenter is blessed with the perfect name for a man of sturdy endurance. His book eloquently refutes the notion of the folk artist as man apart from his culture and times.

HOWARD FINSTER'S VISION OF 1982

Hand-printed and published by the Reverend Howard Finster, this is a new book of "begats" which takes place in outer space; it is also an extension of Finster's other sacred art. Sacredness is the condition he wants to underline. His art is all messages – letters to this world and no other, and to this time and no other. His vision strains his book to transcend the medium of print and become non-linear, for the text continues into the margins and between the lines, and is illuminated in a pre-Gutenberg format with drawings of the details of outer space and beyond, until the characters in the story reach the Heaven of Heavens, 200 light-years away, and three generations to come.

The book is written in the first

Miles Carpenter and his friend Catherine visit with Bells-Snickle, carved from Miles' childhood memory of his 19th century Pennsylvania Dutch Santa Claus.

person, and begins: "I fall into a preview of my life to live over again into a different plan as a great vison." Howard, the narrator, a character figuring into the plot, relates his death and the funeral in space, and goes on to tell the story of his offspring's children who carry on the mission, searching for those things which have always plagued men and women: "Is there a Heaven, and if so, where is it? Is there life after death?" Finster seems to know the answers, as the children of Spacy and Firelite, Farson and Longfellow, travel on into inner and outer space, to "visions beyond the light of the sun."

The book's last pages are collages made from newspaper clippings and snapshots which follow Finster's various professional advances: we find artist friends, published poems, and his family members. The reader sees Finster's life as a force spiraling and magnetizing a lot of other people during his adventure here as a "stranger." As a sign in his garden proclaims:

> I am Howard Finster A stranger from another world. My father and mother, my sisters and brother, my wife, my children, my grandchildren have really never figured me out for my kingdom is not of this world..."

A bittersweet feeling pervades this work by one who believes what is prophecied in that book of last things, *Revelations.* He extends his doomsday sermonizing to practical ends, citing our consumer culture as the culprit which denies the existence of God in man through war and a blatant disregard for ecology.

Born of a German, Appalachian heritage, Finster tried many poverty-streaked professions (T.V. and bicycle repair, clock and furniture making, preaching) before he first found himself in the realm of art. The year 1970 saw him starting to produce his "Paradise Garden" – a massive environmental sculptural theme park on the four-acre wilderness adjacent to his house, an old converted store in Summerville, Georgia. The "Garden" features recycled television sets, poured concrete cut-outs of familiar heroes (J.F.K., Hank Williams, Lincoln, George Washington...), sidewalks paved with trinkets such as pocket combs and cat's eye marbles, mirror bits, and dramatic messages everywhere; for instance: "I took the pieces you threw away and put them together by night and day/Washed by rain, dried by sun, a million pieces all in one." A minute spent in Howard Finster's presence there becomes metaphysical and mystical, meditative and disturbed, so one tends to believe him when he says he has flown to other worlds and that the afterlife is a real place just beyond the light of the sun.

Miles Carpenter and Howard Finster make art which takes responsibility for our culture. They are vital communicators and their books are two extraordinary manifestoes of hope borne on the muscular wings of creative endeavor. ☐

Susan Hankla's poetry has appeared in numerous periodicals. For the past eight years she has travelled as a poet-in-the-schools in Virginia. She is also a visual artist.

Modern Mountains

Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930. By Ronald D Eller. University of Tennessee Press, 1982. 272 pp. $23.50 hardbound, $12.50 paperbound.

– Lu Ann Jones

Southern mountaineers, among the poorest of America's poor, have been objects of pity mingled with scorn. Condescending stereotypes disguised as nostalgia and myths masquerading as facts have too often passed for the history of the Appalachian South.

According to the received wisdom, Southern highlanders are poor because progress bypassed their region, or because the mountaineers stubbornly clung to a traditional culture that prevented them from embracing modern industrial America and partaking of its fruits. Even the best-intentioned reformers confuse poverty's victims with poverty's causes.

Ronald D Eller convincingly refutes this received wisdom in *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers,* a careful study of the revolutionary redistribution of the region's wealth and power. Between 1880 and 1930, outland capitalists bought family farms for a pittance, exploited southern Appalachia's natural resources, and siphoned off profits into corporate coffers and personal bankrolls. "Progress" and "modernization" visited the mountains and left in their wake a largely landless people newly dependent upon public work in the coal towns, logging camps, or cotton mill villages.

Eller, an assistant professor of history at Mars Hill College, tells the story of this wrenching transformation with

muted passion. *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers* is more than a substantial contribution to historical scholarship. It represents Eller's own "personal odyssey" to understand the social and economic changes that uprooted his family from their ancestral home in the Blue Ridge country of North Carolina and Virginia.

The southern Appalachian drama began in the late 19th century, when the mountain slopes still nurtured vast stands of virgin timber, protected seams of coal, and provided a close but independent living for the farm families that owned them. A fluid social structure characterized mountain society. Mountain politics, organized around kin groups, were relatively democratic and enjoyed a high rate of participation.

Then came the revolution.

Speculators rode into the coves and hollows and paid a few dollars for the valuable land. Railroads snaked into the region, their ribbons of steel providing the crucial links between the Appalachian South and the hungry markets in the Northeast and Midwest. Finally, speculators and developers sold the land to the timber and coal barons. Outside entrepreneurs found able accomplices in an indigenous middle class.

As one east Tennessee developer, surveying the countryside in 1889, so bluntly exclaimed, "What a magnificent field for capitalists!" What a magnificent field, indeed. Absentee owners and corporate interests controlled the land's use and largely determined the former landowners' fate.

The concentration of land ownership was truly phenomenal in many places. In several southern West Virginia counties, for example, nearly all the coal was in the hands of absentee owners at the turn of the century. Just 13 corporations controlled more than 75 percent of the land in the section of western North Carolina that eventually became the Great Smoky Mountains National Park; one timber company alone owned more than a third of the total acreage.

Under such conditions, the mountains and the mountaineers were ripe for exploitation. Timber companies wantonly leveled forests and left behind hillsides ribbed by erosion in rainy weather and turned into tinderboxes in dry. Coal companies erected tipples, built their own towns and then paid meager wages to the miners who did the dirty, dangerous work of digging out the black gold.

Investors profited enormously. Wage workers suffered badly as they rode the national economy's roller coaster through cycles of boom and bust.

By 1930 industrial capitalism had wreaked havoc in the Appalachian South. Mountain agriculture had suffered grievously. Mountain society had become divided into distinct classes, separated by enormous differences in wealth and power. Mountain politics had come under the control of corporate interests and their local minions. Mountain people found their autonomy largely undermined.

If *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers* has a failing, it is that Eller tells us more about the exploiters than the exploited. One learns little about how miners and millhands resisted corporate domination and the suffocating paternalism of company towns. But resist they must have, in big ways and small, in order to retain a modicum of personal dignity and integrity. Otherwise, how does one explain the textile strikes that erupted in 1929 or the labor conflicts that rocked the coal fields in the 1930s?

Eller makes intriguing allusions to the ways in which mountaineers adapted traditional values to new circumstances, but he stops short of analyzing that transmutation. And there is a dearth of testimony from the mountaineers themselves — testimony readily available in oral history interview collections that Eller consulted but whose potential went largely untapped, and testimony readily available in industrial folk songs and lore.

One wishes, too, that Eller had written a short epilogue that assessed the effectiveness of anti-poverty programs and agencies like the Appalachian Regional Commission. Have such programs simply ameliorated southern Appalachia's symptoms without offering an effective cure for the region's poverty?

These shortcomings aside, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers* is a sensitive analysis of five crucial decades in the Appalachian South's history. Ultimately, it is a damning indictment of industrial capitalism. Eller, however, is no polemicist. He is a thoughtful historian who writes with enviable grace and whose work deserves a larger audience than that afforded by scholarly historical circles. □

Lu Ann Jones is a master's degree candidate in American history at the University of North Carolina.

Books on the South

This list consists of books published since January, 1983. Book entries includes works through July, 1983. All books are to be published in 1983. Dissertations appeared in the Dissertation Abstracts Index from October, 1982, to January, 1983. All dissertations are dated 1982 unless otherwise indicated.

The entries are grouped under several broad categories for your convenience. Mention of a book here does not preclude its being reviewed in a future issue. Unsolicited reviews of publications of general interest to our readers are welcome. Recent works are preferred.

Copies of the dissertations are available from: Xerox University Microfilms, Dissertation Copies, P.O. Box 1764, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 (800-521-3042).

ECONOMICS, HISTORY AND POLITICS – BEFORE 1865

Ambivalent Conspirators. John Brown, the Secret Six and a Theory of Slave Violence, by Jeffrey Rossbach (Philadelphia, PA: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press). $23.50.

American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North-South Dialogue, by C. Vann Woodward (New York: Oxford University Press). $7.95.

An Appraisal of the Negro in Colonial South Carolina, by Frank J. Klingberg (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press). $17.50.

The Attitude of the Northern Clergy Toward the South, 1860-1865, by Chester F. Dunham (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press). $17.50.

Au Texas: With the Great West and European Colonization in Texas, by Victor P. Considerant (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press). $32.50.

Black Slave Woman: Protagonist for Freedom, by A. Faulkner Watts (New York: Blyden Press). Price not set.

Colonial South Carolina – A History, by Robert Weir (Millwood, NY: Kraus International). Price not set.

Colonial Virginia – A History, by D. Alan Williams and Thad W. Tate (Millwood, NY: Kraus International). Price not set.

"Economic Development in Revolutionary Virginia: Fredericksburg, 1750-1810,"

by William Harold Siener. William & Mary.

The Evolution of a State, or Recollections of Old Texas Days, by Noah Smithwick (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press). $8.95.

"The Evolution of American Indian Policy: From Colonial Times to the Florida Treaty (1819)," by William Hilton Graves. Florida State Univ.

The French in the Mississippi Valley, 1740-1750, by Norman W. Caldwell (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press). $15.00.

History of Black Americans: From the Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom to the Eve of the Compromise of 1850, by Phillip S. Foner (Greenwood Press). $45.00.

An Independent People: The Way We Lived in North Carolina, 1770-1820, by Harry L. Watson (Chapel Hill: UNC Press). $11.95/6.95.

Lone Stars and State Gazettes: Texas Newspapers before the Civil War, by Marilyn M. Sibley (College Station: Texas A&M Univ. Press). $21.50.

Natives and Newcomers: The Way We Lived in North Carolina before 1770, by Elizabeth Fenn and Peter H. Wood (Chapel Hill: UNC Press). $11.95/6.95.

"Natives in a New World: The Catawba Indians of Carolina, 1650-1800," by James Hart Murrell. Johns Hopkins Univ.

"Negro Culture in the United States: A Study of Four Models for Interpreting Slavery in the United States," by James Calvin Morgan. NYU.

The Opening of Texas to Foreign Settlement, 1801-1821, by Mattie A. Hatcher (Philadelphia. Porcupine Press). $25.00.

Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836 to 1865, by Marc W. Kruman (Baton Rouge: LSU Press). $37.50/14.95.

Political Leadership in Jefferson's Virginia, by Daniel P. Jordan (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia). Price not set.
Anti-Slavery Thought," by Ronald Kent Press). $12.95.
Richardson. SUNY-Binghamton, 1983.

"The Treatment of Slaves and Free Blacks in the State and Local Courts of Tennessee," by Arthur Fletcher Howington, III. Vanderbilt Univ.

ECONOMICS, HISTORY, AND POLITICS – 1865-1983

"An Analysis of Growth Determinants and the Impact of Public Policy in Appalachia," by Kenneth John Havran. Univ. of Pittsburgh, 1981.

Appalachia and America: Autonomy and Regional Dependence, edited by Allen Batteau (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky). $26.00.

"Black Charleston: A Social History, 1822-1885," by Bernard Edward Powers, Jr. Northwestern Univ.

Black Liberation in Kentucky: Emancipation and Freedom, 1861-1884, by Victor B. Howard (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky). $23.00.

"Black, White and Gray: Working-Class Activism in Richmond, Virginia, 1865-1980," by Peter Jay Rachleff. Univ. of Pittsburgh, 1981.

"'Born-Again' Politics: The Persistence of Revival Traditions," by Timothy Alan Crippen. Univ. of Texas.

"The Brotherhood of Timber Workers and the Southern Lumber Trust, 1910-1914," by Geoffrey Ferrell. Univ. of Texas.

"Capital-Labor Relations in the U.S. Textile Industry: The Post World War II Period," by Barry Elliot Truchil. SUNY-Binghamton.

"Community in Transition: A Study of Mound Bayou, Mississippi," by Ronald Love. Boston Univ.

Depression and New Deal in Virginia: The Enduring Dominion, by Robert L. Heinemann (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia). Price not set.

"Determinants in the Funding of Black Minority Programs by Three Large Private Foundations," by Robert Paul Young. Univ. of Miami.

"Down Freedom's Road: The Contours of Race, Class, and Property Crime in Black-Belt Georgia, 1866-1910," by Albert Colbey Smith. Univ. of Georgia.

"Dying Hard, Dying Fast: The Know-Nothing Experience in Mississippi," by Cecil S. Hilliard Ross. Univ. of Notre Dame.

"An Empirical Study of Texas Justices of the Peace," by Dennis Lambert Toombs. Univ. of Houston.

"The Factors Influencing the Distribution of Black Physicians in South Carolina," by Milton Durant Griffin. Univ. of South Carolina.

"From Slavery to Serfdom: Rural Black Agriculturists in South Carolina, 1865-1900," by Graham Glennon. Northwestern Univ.

"A Growth Analysis of a Typical Farm Firm in Western Tennessee," by Virgil Parker Culver. Univ. of Tennessee.

"Harvesting the Crops of Others: Migrant Farm Labor on the Eastern Shore of Virginia," by Monica Lucille Heppel. American Univ.

"An Historical Study of Collective Bargaining in Escambia County, Florida, 1975-1979," by Ulysses Hughes. Florida State Univ.

"A History of Conservation in Texas, 1860-1963," by Stephen Chalmus Head. Texas Tech Univ.

Images of Texas, by William H. Gertzman and Becky D. Reese (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press). Price not set.

"Industrial Workers in the Mid Nineteenth Century South: Atlanta Railwaymen, 1840-1870," by Stephen Ray Henson. Emory Univ.

"Livestock Legacy: A History of the Fort Worth Stockyards Company, 1893-1982," by J'Nell LaVerne Pate. North Texas State Univ.

"Masters and Slaves, Planters and Freedmen: The Transition from Slavery to Freedom in Central Georgia, 1820-1880," by Joseph Patrick Reidy. Northern Illinois Univ.

"Mayoral Leadership Changes and Public Policy: Exploring the Influence of Black Urban Governance," by Sharon Michelle Watson. Northwestern Univ.

"The Medical Activities of the Reconstruction Bureau in Reconstruction Alabama, 1865-1868," by Gail Snowden Hasson. Univ. of Alabama.

The Montgomery Saga: From Slavery to Black Power, by Gladys B. Sheppard (New York: Vantage Press). $10.00.

"Oil and Gas Leasing of Texas State Lands: School Lands and University Lands," by Patricia Anne Malin. Univ. of Texas.

The Orphan: The Kentucky Confederates Who Couldn't Go Home, by William C. Davis (Baton Rouge: LSU Press). $8.95.

"Portrait of a Southern Community, 1849-1881: Family, Kinship and Neighborhood in Orange County, North Carolina," by Robert Charles Kenzer. Harvard Univ.

"Primitives on the Move: Some Historical Articulations of Garvey and Garveyism, 1887-1927," by C. Boyd James. UCLA.

"Quest for Equality: An Historical Overview of Women's Rights Activism in Texas, 1890-1975," by Judie Karen Walton Gammage. North Texas State Univ.

The Quest for Progress: The Way We Lived in North Carolina, 1870-1920, by Sydney Nathans (Chapel Hill: UNC Press). $11.95/6.95.

The Reshaping of Plantation Society: The Natchez District, 1860-1880, by Michael Wayne (Baton Rouge: LSU Press). $22.50.

Seedtime on the Cumberland, by Harriette S. Arnow (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky). $28.00/13.00.

The Selected Essays of T. Harry Williams (Baton Rouge: LSU Press). $19.95.

"Social Reform and Moral Uplift in the Black Community, 1890-1910: Social Settlements, Temperance, and Social Purity," by Julius Franklin Nimmons, Jr. Howard Univ., 1981.

"Some Southern Perceptions of the United Nations as an Instrument for Achieving Peace and Security," by Charles Edgar Sharp. Univ. of Georgia.

"Southern Two-Party Politics: Dynamics of Electoral Competition in the South Since the Early 1960s," by Alexander Peter Lewis. Vanderbilt Univ.

This Land, This South: An Environmental History, by Albert E. Cowdrey (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky). $23.00.

"Toward a Black United Front: The National Negro Congress Movement," by Cicero Alvin Hughes. Ohio Univ.

Traces of Texas History, edited by Daniel E. Fox (San Antonio: Corona Publ. Co.). $16.95/9.95.

"Uplifting the Race: The Black Minister in the New South, 1865-1902," by Edward Lorenzo Wheeler. Emory Univ.

"Violence as a Political Force in the Reconstruction South," by Ida Waller Pope. Univ. of Southwestern Louisiana.

Women in Texas, by Ann Malone (El Paso: Texas Western Univ. Press). $4.00.

"Women Who Dared: Northern Teachers of the Southern Freedmen, 1862-1872," by Allis Wolfe. City Univ. of New York.

"The Women's Movement in Louisiana: 1879-1920," by Carmen Meriwether Lindig. North Texas State Univ.

EDUCATION

"Alternative Programs in the Secondary

Schools of Texas," by Faith Anne Johnson. Baylor Univ.

"A Comparison of Perceived Leadership Styles among Presidents of Selected Black Colleges in the Southwestern and Southeastern United States," by Robert Vernon Cole, Jr. Texas Southern Univ.

"Coordination of Arkansas Public Higher Education, 1961-1978," by Diane Suitt Gilleland. Southern Illinois Univ.

"Disfranchisement, School Finance and the Economics of Segregated Schools in the United States South, 1890-1910," by Robert Andrew Margo. Harvard Univ.

"Educating the Country: Managerial Reform and the Promise of Rural Schools, 1890-1980," by Stephen Matthew Schewel. Duke Univ.

"Educational Quality in Arkansas Public Schools," by Lynn Hollis Nix. Memphis State Univ.

"The Effects of Fragmentation of the Florida Educational Lobby," by Norman Hugh Fergusson. Univ. of Florida.

"The Historically Black College: Its Relevance as an Urban Educational Institution," by Albert O'Bryant, Jr. Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

"The Last Door Swings Open: A Historical Chronology of the Desegregation of the University of Alabama," by George Dan Jones, Jr. Univ. of Alabama.

"A Little Circle: White Philanthropists and Black Industrial Education in the Postbellum South," by Roy Eugene Finkenbine. Bowling Green State Univ.

"Medical Education in Mississippi," by Lucie Robertson Bridgforth. Memphis State Univ.

"Policy Research Utilization in the Texas State Legislature: A Case Study of Student Competency Testing Legislation," by Peter Andrew Zandan. Univ. of Texas.

"A Political Analysis of Black Educational History: Atlanta, 1865-1943," by Marcia Turner-Jones. Univ. of Chicago.

"The Predominantly Black College: Changing the Role, Meeting the Challenge in Higher Education," by Evelyn Melvena Nash. Univ. of Kansas, 1981.

"Small School Districts in the Public Education Economy of Texas, 1979-1980," by Johnnie Louis Veselka. Univ. of Texas.

"A Study of the Comparative Process of an Administrative Agency and the Courts in Enforcing Public School Desegregation in Selected Southern School Districts from 1965 to 1968," by Robert Louis Urzillo. West Virginia Univ.

"An Update of Selected Provisions of Tennessee Education Law," by Linda Marie Crouch. Vanderbilt Univ.

BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

An Alabama Newspaper Tradition: Grover C. Hall and the Hall Family, by Daniel W. Hollis, III (University: Univ. of Alabama Press). $19.95.

Albert Gallatin Brown: Radical Southern Nationalist, by James B. Ranck (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press). $22.50.

Black Leaders: Texans for Their Times, by Alwyn Barr and Robert A. Calvert (Austin: Texas State Historical Assn.). $8.95.

Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, by Lewis R. Harlan (New York: Oxford Univ. Press). $24.95.

The Calhoun Family and Thomas Green Clemson: The Decline of a Southern Patriarch, by Ernest M. Lander, Jr. (Columbia: USC Press). $17.95.

"Charles Harris Wesley, Educator and Historian, 1891-1947," by Janette Hoston Harris. Howard Univ.

Father Divine and the Struggle for Racial Equality, by Robert Weisbrot (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press). $17.50.

"Frank McMullan's Brazilian Economy," by William Clark Griggs. Texas Tech Univ.

"Lillian Smith: Thorn in the Flesh of Crackerdom," by Pat Bryan Brewer. Univ. of Georgia.

"Mary McLeod Bethune in Religious Perspective: A Seminal Essay," by Clarence Genu Newsome. Duke Univ.

"The Metaphysical Confederacy: James Henley Thornwell and the Synthesis of Southern Values," by James Oscar Farmer. Univ. of South Carolina.

"Norma and Mel Gabler: The Development and Causes of Their Involvement Concerning the Curricular Appropriateness of School Textbook Content (Texas)," by Frank Edward Piasecki. North Texas State Univ.

"Parallel Lives: Black Autobiography in South Africa and the United States," by R. Neville Choonoo. Columbia Univ.

"Rabbi Morris Newfield of Birmingham: A Study in Ethnic Leadership," by Mark Cowett. Univ. of Cincinnati.

"Thomas Andrew Becker, The First Catholic Bishop of Wilmington, Delaware, and Sixth Bishop of Savannah, Georgia, 1831-1899," by Thomas Joseph Peterman. Catholic Univ. of America.

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

"African American Folk Revivals in Contemporary Black American Theater," by Donald Maurice Morales. SUNY-Stony Brook, 1981.

Black American Music: Past and Present, by Hildred Roach (Melbourne, FL: Krieger Publ. Co.). Price not set.

"Black and White Speech in the South: Evidence from the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States," by George Townsend Dorrill. Univ. of South Carolina.

"Black Artistic Enterprises: Exploring Career Alternatives for Minority Artists," by Carol June MacArthur. Columbia Univ.

"The Blurred Image: Documentary Photography and the Depression South," by Charles Alan Watkins. Univ. of Delaware.

Cooking Texas Style: A Heritage of Traditional Recipes, by Candy Wagner and Sandra Marquez (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press). $12.95.

"Family and Community Support Networks and Their Utilization by the Black Elderly," by Conrad Graves. NYU.

Generations: An American Family, by John Egerton (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky). $19.50.

Invisible Men: Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues, by Donn Rogosin. (New York: Atheneum). $14.95.

Jelly Roll, Jabbo and Fats: Nineteen Portraits in Jazz, by Whitney Balliett (New York: Oxford Univ. Press). $19.95.

"Just Like Brothers: An Ethnographic Approach to the Friendship Ties of an Urban Group of Elderly Black Men," by Hiram Abiff Nall. UCLA.

Local Color: A Sense of Place in Folk Art, by William Ferris (New York: McGraw-Hill). $11.95.

More than Moonshine: Appalachian Recipes and Recollections, by Sidney S. Farr (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press). $11.95/4.95.

"The Relationship of Black Preaching to Black Gospel Music," by Marion Joseph Franklin. Drew Univ.

"Southern Linguistic Variation as Revealed through Overseers' Letters, 1829-1858," by Opal Winchester Hawkins. UNC-Chapel Hill.

Southerners: The Social Psychology of Sectionalism, by John S. Reed (Chapel Hill: UNC Press). $17.00/5.95.

"A Study of Identity Patterns among Three Generations of Black Women," by Sherri Noel Coe. Northwestern Univ.

LITERATURE

"'Ambassador of God': The Preacher in Twentieth Century Southern Fiction," by Rosemary McCausland Magee. Emory Univ.

"Art and Politics in the Writings of Katherine Ann Porter," by Mary Phoebe Lyons. Univ. of Rhode Island, 1981.

"Black Positivism through Character Growth and Development in the Short Stories of Richard Wright," by Carolyn Olivia Liston. Univ. of Colorado.

"Comedy and Christianity in the Novels of Walker Percy," by Linda Whitney Hobson. Univ. of Alabama, 1981.

"The Dispossession of Personae Non Gratae: A Study of Faulkner's Relation to the *Other*," by Richard Feldstein. SUNY-Buffalo.

"The Fantasies of James Branch Cabell," by James Douglas Riemer. Bowling Green State Univ.

"Robert Penn Warren: In the Midst of the World," by Samuel Thames Lloyd, III. Univ. of Virginia, 1981.

"'The Singer in One's Soul': Storytelling in the Fiction of James Weldon Johnson, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, and Toni Morrison," by Valerie Ann Smith. Univ. of Virginia.

Southern Literature in Transition: Heritage and Promise, edited by Philip Castille and William Osborne (Memphis: Memphis State Univ. Press). $19.95.

"A Study of Prose by Nineteenth-Century Texas Women," by Carole Sue Bruce Wolf. Texas Tech Univ.

"Stylistic Decorum and Character in Faulkner's Snopes Trilogy," by Gregory Ralph Belcamino. UCLA.

"Towards a Definition of, and Critical Approaches to, Chicano(a) Literature," by Evangelina Mirande Enriquez. UC-Riverside.

VOICES FROM THE PAST

painting by Jim Dombrowski

American Heretic

When Jim Dombrowski, a young, Ivy League-educated chaplain, found himself falsely arrested and jailed as a party to the murder of the chief of police of Gastonia, North Carolina, during the violent textile mills strike there in 1929, he discovered the religious work for which he was best suited. He spent the remainder of his life waging an ardent war against segregation and for social and economic justice.

His strong leadership role in such organizations as the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee (which he helped found) and the Southern Conference for Human Welfare (and its affiliate, the Southern Conference Educational Fund), made him a target of a Senate subcommittee investigation and of constant attack by the Ku Klux Klan and the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Despite the attention given him because of his controversial career, Dombrowski was a shy, private person. In his last decades, he concentrated on his art, expressing on canvas the ideals he pursued throughout his life. By the time of his death at age 86 in New Orleans in May, 1983, he had made significant contributions toward social change as a civil rights pioneer, a theologian, a journalist, and a visual artist.

For more on the life and art of Jim Dombrowski, see "American Heretic," *Southern Exposure* Vol. X, No. 4, 1982.

"Underscores the never-ending struggle to secure equality of opportunity. A valuable resource for community leaders."
— Gerda Steele, NAACP Education Director

"A marvelous piece of work."
— John Merrow, "Options in Education," Nat. Public Radio

What Others Are Saying About Southern Exposure

"Fascinating reading, using the lives and thoughts of real people to explore subjects such as labor organizing, women's issues and civil rights."
— American Labor Education Center

"Penetrating, innovative coverage of topics you won't find covered in more traditional magazines."
— Atlanta Journal-Constitution

"I only wish my generation had started such a stimulating magazine as Southern Exposure."
— C. Vann Woodward, historian

"The best thing to happen to the South since the boll weevil forced an end to one-crop agriculture."
— Sam Love, Earth Day founder

"Visually, politically, in its range of voices, it is stunning."
— Adrienne Rich, author

"Enjoyable, powerful material, with first-rate reporting by some of the nation's best writers and activists."
— Alex Haley, author

Check It Out For Yourself.

Subscribe Now and Save 43%

"Chronicles the unwritten social, political and cultural history of a region often misunderstood."
— Rolling Stone magazine

"The best single source for keeping in touch with the changing South."
— Julian Bond

Get A Subscription And A Free Bonus!

SPECIAL OFFER Save 43%

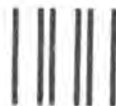
Send me a year of *Southern Exposure* (six issues) for only $16 and mail me a copy of one of your book-length back issues *FREE*. ______________________
give volume & number or name of issue desired on this line

☐ Please Bill Me ☐ Payment Enclosed ☐ This is a renewal

Name ______________________

Address ______________________

City ______________ State ______ Zip ______

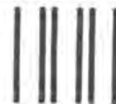


BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 938 DURHAM, N.C.

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

Southern Exposure

P.O. BOX 531
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA 27702



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 938 DURHAM, N.C.

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

Southern Exposure

P.O. BOX 531
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA 27702

NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 938 DURHAM, N.C.

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

Southern Exposure

P.O. BOX 531
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA 27702

Building Blocks for a Progressive Library

Send me the back issues of *Southern Exposure* I have indicated with a check mark in the boxes below. (See opposite page for descriptions.)

☐ I, 1 $3	☐ VI, 2 $3	☐ IX, 2 $4	☐ The complete library, all 25 books listed above – $65. A 25 percent savings! (The Index is also free.)
☐ I, 2 $3	☐ VI, 3 $3	☐ IX, 4 $4	☐ 10th Anniversary Issue: Encyclopedia of South. Life & Change $5
☐ I, 3-4 $3.50	☐ VII, 1 $3	☐ X, 1 $3	☐ One-year subscription $16 (circle one back issue as a free gift from us to you!)
☐ II, 2-3 $3.50	☐ VII, 3 $4	☐ X, 3 $4	
☐ III, 1 $3	☐ VII, 4 $4	☐ X, 4 $3	
☐ III, 4 $3	☐ VIII, 1 $4	☐ X, 5 $3	
☐ IV, 1-2 $3.50	☐ VIII, 2 $3	☐ X, 6 $4	
☐ V, 1 $3	☐ VIII, 4 $3	☐ Index of Vols. I-X $3	
☐ VI, 1 $3	☐ IX, 1 $4		

Total amount due: $ ____ ☐ Please Bill Me ☐ Payment enclosed

Name ____________________

Address ____________________

City __________ State _____ Zip _____

Building Blocks for a Progressive Library

Send me the back issues of *Southern Exposure* I have indicated with a check mark in the boxes below. (See opposite page for descriptions.)

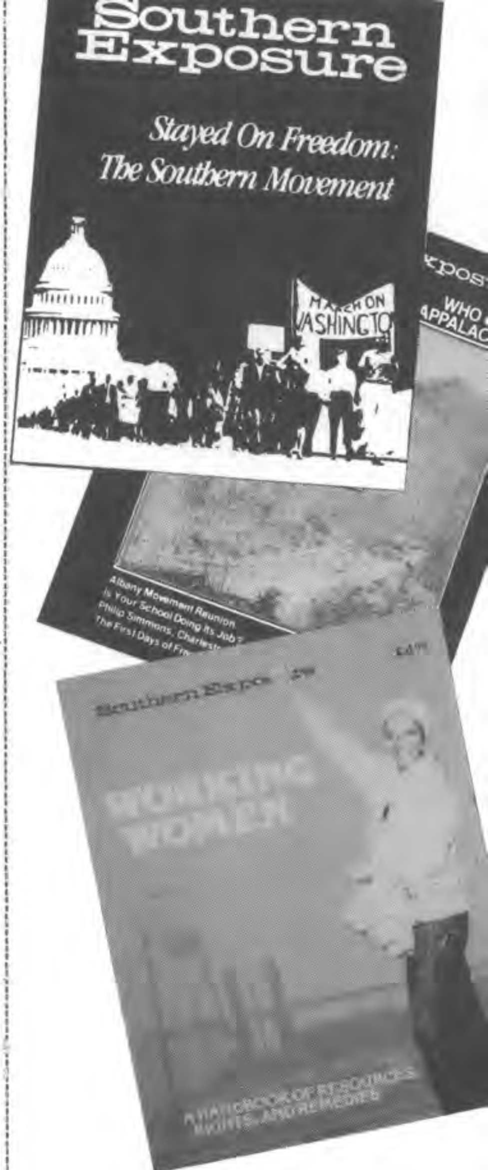
☐ I, 1 $3	☐ VI, 2 $3	☐ IX, 2 $4	☐ The complete library, all 25 books listed above – $65. A 25 percent savings! (The Index is also free.)
☐ I, 2 $3	☐ VI, 3 $3	☐ IX, 4 $4	☐ 10th Anniversary Issue: Encyclopedia of South. Life & Change $5
☐ I, 3-4 $3.50	☐ VII, 1 $3	☐ X, 1 $3	☐ One-year subscription $16 (circle one back issue as a free gift from us to you!)
☐ II, 2-3 $3.50	☐ VII, 3 $4	☐ X, 3 $4	
☐ III, 1 $3	☐ VII, 4 $4	☐ X, 4 $3	
☐ III, 4 $3	☐ VIII, 1 $4	☐ X, 5 $3	
☐ IV, 1-2 $3.50	☐ VIII, 2 $3	☐ X, 6 $4	
☐ V, 1 $3	☐ VIII, 4 $3	☐ Index of Vols. I-X $3	
☐ VI, 1 $3	☐ IX, 1 $4		

Total amount due: $ ____ ☐ Please Bill Me ☐ Payment enclosed

Name ____________________

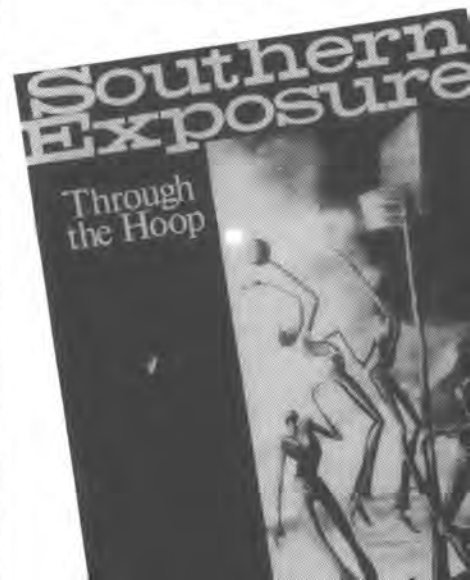
Address ____________________

City __________ State _____ Zip _____



INDEX

A comprehensive index of Volumes I-X, all issues, will be available October, 1983, for $3. It includes thousands of entries, by subject, place and person. (It is free with orders of the $65 set of issues.)



For the rest of the story, get the complete library of back issues.

Fill in the missing spots in your own *Southern Exposure* library, or make another reader happy with a gift of one of the classic book-length special issues. Each issue listed below is also listed on the handy tear-out card opposite this page. Just mark the ones you'd like and mail the postage-paid card to us; or include the card in an envelope with your check made payable to *Southern Exposure*.

The 10th anniversary edition featuring excerpts from all the issues below is also available for $5. You can receive a free issue if you buy yourself or someone else a subscription for $16.

THE MILITARY & THE SOUTH — I, 1
The C-5A exposed; the draft in the black community; converting the military machine; critics of the Pentagon in Congress; genocide and US foreign policy; a 40-page state-by-state profile of defense spending in the South. **$3**

THE ENERGY COLONY — I, 2
Appalachia's people, land and coal barons; the colonized South; Sunbelt Rimsters & Watergate; investigating utilities and coop control; a 40-page analysis of Southern utilities. **$3**

NO MORE MOANIN' — I, 3-4
225 pages of oral history of Depression-era life: organizing sharecroppers, coal mining battles, the 1929 Gastonia strike, UAW's first sit-down strike, slavery recalled, a socialist town. **$3.50**

OUR PROMISED LAND — II, 2-3
225 pages on agribusiness, cooperatives, black land loss, land-use legislation, mountain developers, urban alternatives, Indian lands. Plus a 65-page analysis of land-based industries. **$3.50**

BLACK UTTERANCES TODAY — III, 1
Edited by Toni Cade Bambara. The new poets & essayists. Black music, literature, folk art, prison writings, Pan-Africanism, children's books. **$3**

FACING SOUTH — III, 4
A 13-page interview with Julian Bond on the Movement; a 33-page review of textile workers; New South cities; Peg Leg Sam; the crafts of North Alabama; changes in tobacco. **$3**

HERE COME A WIND — IV, 1-2
225 pages of the modern labor movement: Farah, Stevens, Oneita, runaways, how workers are using OSHA and EEOC, a section on labor education, 30 pages on Harlan County (1930-74) and state profiles of unions, major employers. **$3.50**

GOOD TIMES & GROWING PAINS — V, 1
Fishing communities; Coca-Cola; granny midwife; Beale Street blues; growing up gay; railroads; celebrating Emancipation; neighborhood restoration; populism & Carter. **$3**

PACKAGING THE NEW SOUTH — VI, 1
New South politicians from New Orleans to South Carolina; Highlander Center under attack; Kentucky storyteller; Joan Little's trial and true story; inside J.P. Stevens; WPA narratives. **$3**

SICK FOR JUSTICE — VI, 2
A special on health care, including community clinics, Meharry Medical College, UMW Health Fund, Kingsport's pollution, anti-hookworm crusades, early medicine, Student Health Coalition, medical training, health industry. **$3**

PASSING GLANCES — VI, 3
New South Republicans; origins of the sit-ins; Beale Street bluesmen; Carolina Action; ERA in Virginia; Mississippi's United League; jazz's influence on literature; New South wealth. **$3**

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS — VII, 1
Exposès of Texas timber barons, Greenville's powerful, Burlington in Mexico, Lockheed's radioactive fall-out, and Georgia elite; plus utopias of the past, black politics today, Virginia Assemblies, Alabama suffragette, Agee revisited. **$3**

THROUGH THE HOOP — VII, 3
Spectacular book on Southern sports – from surfing to football, cockfighting to women's basketball, wrestling to horse racing, stock cars to bear hunts. Texas Longhorns, Frank McGuire, women runners, integration & sports. **$4**

TOWER OF BABEL — VII, 4
A comprehensive report on the South's nuclear power industry, from uranium mining to waste disposal, plus profiles of Southern utilities. **$4**

BUILDING SOUTH — VIII, 1
A book on builders and buildings, from black bricklayers before the Civil War to mobile homes to architect John Portman to the Army Corps of Engineers to planned communities. **$4**

MARK OF THE BEAST — VIII, 2
Complete coverage of the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, its history and strategies for opposition. Plus, a long report on union busters. **$3**

WINTER'S PROMISE — VIII, 4
Workers' owned sewing factory; racist terror in Forsyth County, Ga.; Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys; death row interviews; migrant labor & Jamaican cane cutters; Texas oil workers. **$3**

STAYED ON FREEDOM — IX, 1
A book on the Freedom Movement, 1955-now: memories of Montgomery, Mississippi, Greensboro, etc. Songs, interviews, photographs capture the drama of 25 years of struggle. **$4**

FESTIVAL — IX, 2
Insights into the most exciting strains of Southern literature today: Alice Walker and others; Cajun, Cherokee, Chicano, Appalachian and Lesbian writings; the South's storytellers. **$4**

WORKING WOMEN — IX, 4
A handbook of resources, rights and remedies for working women, featuring stories of successful organizing from the Norfolk shipyard to Appalachia coal fields, Memphis furniture factories to Atlanta office. **$4**

WHO OWNS APPALACHIA? — X, 1
The Appalachian Alliance's study of land ownership, plus how residents are fighting to regain the land. Also articles on the Albany Movement, life in Mississippi and Foxfire-style teaching. **$3**

COASTAL AFFAIR — X, 3
A glamorous book on the fun and controversy of the Southern coast: barrier islands, beach access, fishing villages, immigrants, endangered life, wetlands; plus state-by-state coastal profiles. **$4**

AMERICAN HERETIC — X, 4
Portrait of Jim Dombrowski, artist and activist; folksongs of the Tex-Mex border; Charleston's last days; literacy tests; Danville Movement; the Irish Tinkers in S.C.; photos and poetry. **$3**

PREVAILING VOICES — X, 5
One man's battle with a paper mill's pollution; rural workers organize; the ordeal of the Federation of Southern Coops; poems from Florence Reece; Dorothy Cotton interview. **$3**

WAGING PEACE — X, 6
A book on how to challenge the diversion of national resources from social programs to the military machine. Case studies, resources, facts and personal stories, plus profiles of organizing and defense spending in each Southern state. **$4**

THE COMPLETE LIBRARY
Get all 25 books listed above – over 3,000 pages of interviews, essays, investigative reports and stories of people working to improve life in the South. An award-winning collection, a wonderful gift for a loved one, or a valuable library for your own. **$65 – 25% off the list price!**

ONE-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION
Six issues, one arrives every other month. **$16**

Use the tear-out cards to order a subscription, back issue or complete library.