Southern Exposure

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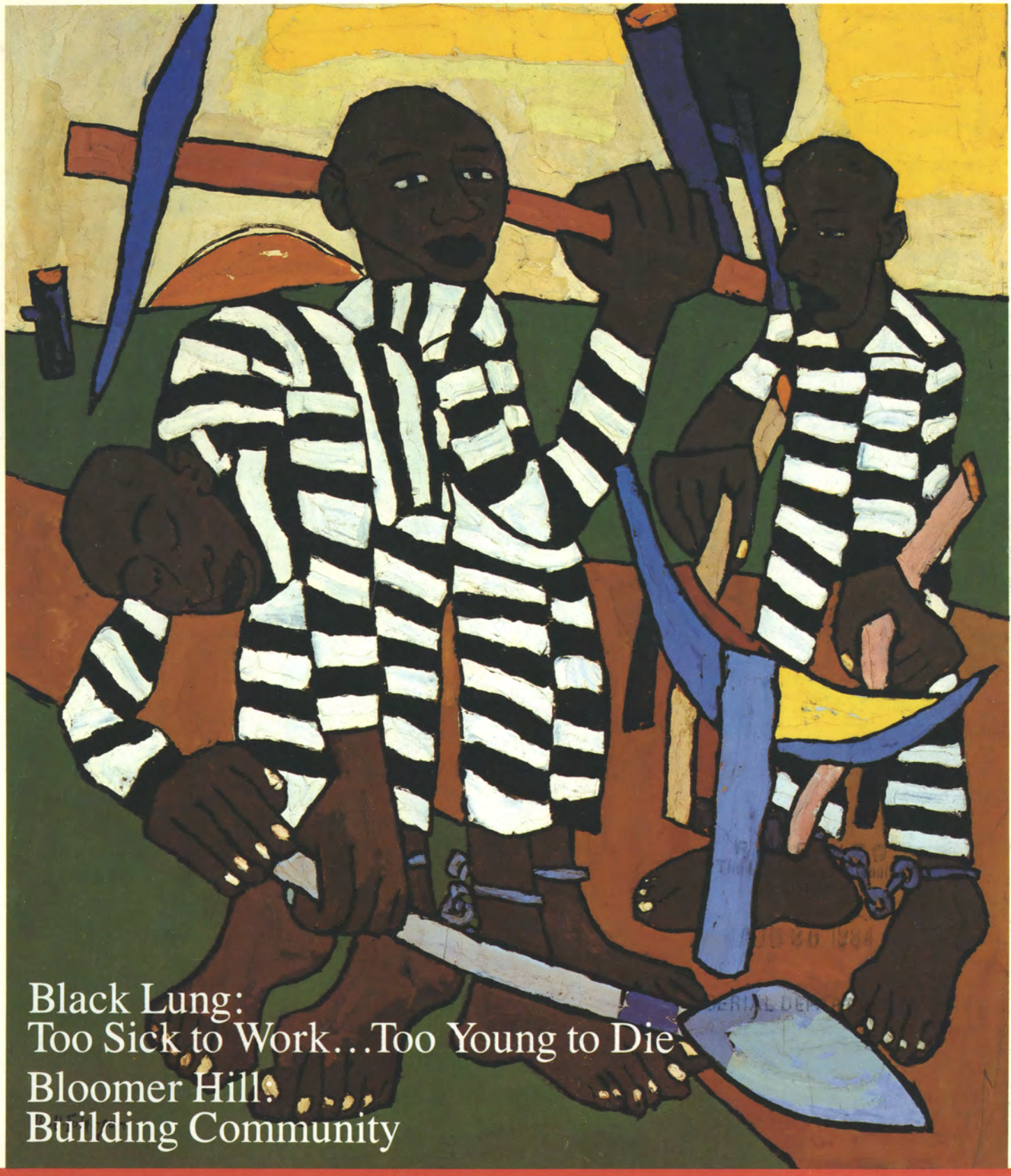

Black Lung:
Too Sick to Work...Too Young to Die

Bloomer Hill:
Building Community

May/June 1984 $4.00

Southern Exposure

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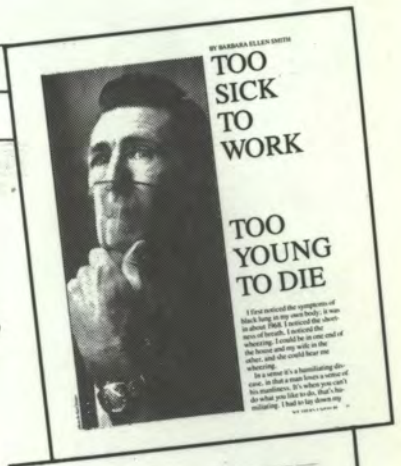
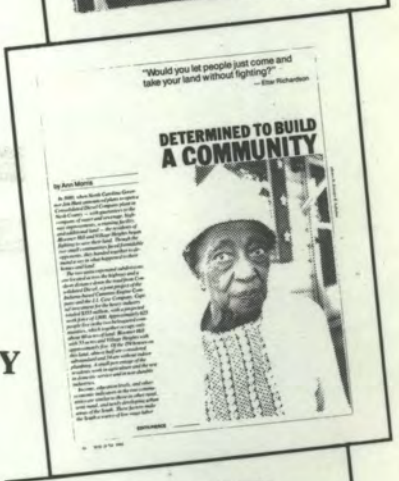
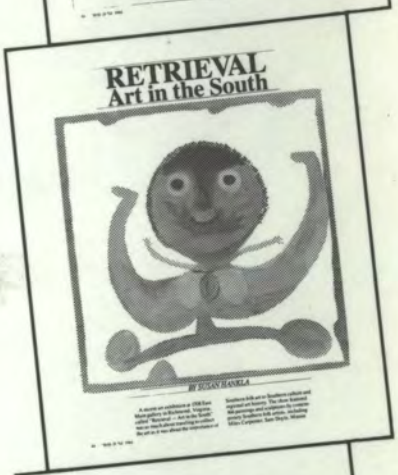
To reach possible new subscribers, we occasionally exchange our mailing list with other progressive organizations and publications. We believe you will have a keen interest in what these groups are doing, but if you do not want your name given to other groups, just drop us a note asking that your name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







Contents

VOLUME XII, NO 3 MAY/JUNE, 1984

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Cultivate that garden

Dear SE,

What a fantastic idea to do a whole issue on "Our Food." Congratulations! But I must say I was disappointed not to see one article about the first step in taking responsibility for not only controlling our food supply but also our health and the health of the earth — gardening.

Nearly everyone has a small space of ground somewhere that they can dig up and use to grow food. The materials to make compost are available everywhere...and once you start making compost, you'll be able to change your poor soil into soil that will feed you.

— Stevie Daniels
Managing Editor
Organic Gardening

Put me on your list

Dear SE,

It has been some years since writing or hearing from you folks.

While I was receiving ***Southern Exposure*** I became extremely impressed by the views of the magazine.

I have come to feel that any newspaper or magazine must be a reflection of its times. The idea should be to raise the level of consciousness of those that come into possession of it. I am pleased to say I was one that you helped to see things in a whole new perspective.

I am writing because I would like to be placed on your mailing list or if you have some prisoners' fund I would like for you to place me on its list.

Please give everyone on your staff my regards.

— Abdullah Malik Akili

Kudzu kreations

Dear SE,

I have enjoyed your magazine and other publications full of good ideas.

My husband and I moved to the mountains of western North Carolina a year ago after living in the wilds of northeast Washington State. In October we bought a 2½ acre piece of land, mostly southern slope, and covered with kudzu. We are trying to look at kudzu as a valuable resource rather than a menace to be obliterated, as most of the old timey folks around here do. We are committed to a no poison method of control. On this past Monday the State Forestry Service did us the favor of burning most of the old kudzu vines. Now we can see the actual contours of the land. But, I'm told in a few weeks kudzu will start to come back even stronger. Well, we plan to get a sheep and goat or two and fence them in an area to let them control the kudzu. And we want to try to make our own kudzu powder for culinary and medicinal use, weave baskets from the vine, use the greens to eat, compost it — make kudzu firelogs — we're open to any good ideas that are creative and practical.

However, I'm thinking maybe you all have a lot more knowledge on the subject than us. We have read *The Book of Kudzu* by Bill Shurtleff, but we want more detailed information on other people's tried and true experiences with using kudzu or getting rid of it in a safe ecological way. If you can help, please let us know.

— Jody Segal-Friedman
154 Old Dillsboro Rd.
Sylva, NC 29779

A diligent force inside

Dear SE,

Gail Rowland of the Florida Clearinghouse on Criminal Justice has been kind enough to forward your reprint, "The Case Against the Death Penalty," by A. Amsterdam to me along with the Institute's address. I am on death row here in Florida and have a sincere desire to be active in the cause against the death penalty. Since I am indigent, my lines of support can be appreciated by people of the same cause. With this in mind, I appeal to your Institute for as much information and help that you are willing to give. In return, I will be a diligent force from inside!

— Milo Rose

Faith in the governor

Dear SE,

In reference to the article by Jason Berry in your March/April issue entitled "The Poisoning of Louisiana," I would like to say that I am not responsible for the content of this article. I have certainly not mentioned Edwin Edwards as being the cause of health problems or didn't infer this in any way.

Governor Edwards spoke to the Sierra Club in Lafayette (during his campaign) and he did tell us he was certainly interested in the environmental problems in Louisiana. He personally assured us that he is interested and concerned about health problems and environmental problems in Louisiana. He said that he was going to solve the problems.

Yes, I have been collecting information on health problems in Louisiana — hoping to generate interest from doctors and other people to look at these problems and see what we can do to reduce the health risks.

I know that Governor Edwards will be true to his promise and help us in every way possible. We need to work together with our elected officials to look at the health problems we now have and to try to solve them as quickly as possible!

— Evelyn Allison
Lafayette, LA

WEST VIRGINIA, BORN 1863:
"The Bastard Offspring of a Political Rape"

— by Pare Lorentz

I was pleased to read the report by Kate Long about the progressive gains of the informal coalition in my native state of West Virginia (*SE* page 60, Jan./Feb., 1984), but I was startled, then shocked by her insouciant statements about the creation of West Virginia.

Miss Long says: "As is true in much of the South, the Democratic Party in West Virginia is fairly schizophrenic. The state was formed in 1863, when the western counties of Virginia decided to side with the North in the Civil War."

A comprehensive history of the reasons behind the creation of the state of West Virginia and the acts pertinent to it would require two volumes, but I send you herewith some material which might be of interest to your readers. I have found over the years that very few people upon direct questioning have any idea whatsoever as to the history of the creation of the state of West Virginia.

My grandfather Mifflin was one of those caught in the middle during those bitter times, because, while he was against slavery and had freed his slaves long before 1861, he was against the secession of northwestern Virginia. He was county clerk of Upshur County at the beginning of the War but left town to represent the Confederacy in Lynchburg, I've always been told.

My father's only sister, Bess Lorentz Wade, was our family historian, and almost a quarter of a century ago she delivered a speech to the Stonewall Jackson Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy in Clarksburg, West Virginia (in which town I was born). When she concluded the speech, one of the ladies present said to her: "Bess, that speech is too good for us old ladies. You should send it to that boy in the White House." That boy in the White House, of course, being John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

I feel, therefore, that while the speech was not too good for the ladies, it may be of interest to your readers and may provide Miss Long with some important

revelations about the history of the creation of the state of West Virginia.

One final remark to Miss Long, regarding her account of the citizens of western Virginia: Stonewall Jackson didn't recruit his troops from Mississippi and Louisiana. They came out of his hills, amid which I grew up. Over 8,000 men from northwest Virginia marched with him and Lee, as Mrs. Wade reports.

The following is an abbreviated version of the speech Mrs. Wade gave to the Stonewall Jackson Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy in Clarksburg, West Virginia on May 22, 1961, on the origins of West Virginia.

"Many definitions have been given of the State," she said, "some poetical, such as 'The Child of the Storm,' but my favorite is the one so often quoted by my Confederate father-in-law, the Reverend T.S. Wade: 'The Bastard Offspring of a Political Rape.' That really conveys the whole idea." (The Reverend T.S. Wade, from whose memoirs she quotes, was a boy combat chaplain in Stonewall Jackson's army. Subsequently he was one of the founders and the first president of Morris Harvey College in Philippi, West Virginia. He ended his ministerial life as pastor of the St. Paul's Southern Methodist Church in Clarksburg, West Virginia.)

The complete text of this speech, from which the following is excerpted, is contained in the book of memoirs "Lest We Forget" written by Bess Lorentz Wade and published in August 1968 in honor of her ninetieth birthday.

We take pride in our motto "Montani Semper Liberi" — Mountaineers are always free — as we recall our men have always longed and fought for freedom. What some of you may not know is that as early as 1776 the Continental Congress was asked to permit the western counties of Virginia to form a State. It was the Vandalia Company, a speculative land group who had a claim along the headwaters of the Ohio River, who petitioned the Continental Congress in 1776 to allow them to organize this area into a state to be called Westylvania; but, of course, they were denied the request.

When one studies the list of men who made up the group that met in Wheeling in 1861 to organize what they called the "Restored State of Virginia" it is to realize that a large percentage of them came from Ohio and states other than Virginia.

Another thing that many people do not know is that the first and the last battles of the Revolutionary War were fought on West Virginia soil, the first at Point Pleasant and the last the battle of Fort Henry, now Wheeling, West Virginia. The last conflict, that of Fort Henry, occurred on September 10, 1782, and was the last battle of the Revolution in which

the English flag was involved.

The first land battle of the War Between the States was fought at Philippi, West Virginia.

And now as we come to consider the situation and sentiments of the people of this section in the days preceding the formation of our state, I would like to quote from the historical sketches of my husband's father, the Reverend Wade, who rode as a boy chaplain in the 19th Volunteer Virginia Cavalry, and who was in a position to speak authoritatively on the subject, as he had lived through the days of which he wrote and knew conditions personally....

"To be a Virginian was no small token of honor especially in the early history of the proud 'Mother of States' and of statesmen, but this great mother herself seemed not to have expected much from the northwestern section of her fair domain. In fact this section of the State was from early Virginia history a vast wilderness which for many years was left almost exclusively to remnants of roving Indian tribes and to wild animals. It was literally the backwoods of the State and was on account of its situation slow in building up a civilization of civilized people. The growth was necessarily slow as the approach of adventurers was only from the East and their advance was retarded by every obstruction that wild mountains and an unbroken wilderness could throw in their way. There were no roads and perilous paths were slowly marked out, over which pack horses could bring in only scanty supplies for the pioneers who for the first period sought to occupy this country.

"By this process little settlements were built up in various sections, and finally some sort of county organizations began to be formed, but the movement was very slow. Meanwhile "Virginia proper" as it was regarded east of the Alleghenies, was enjoying great and growing prosperity in every direction. The great ocean ports were open to her all along her lines, and she had communication and commerce with other growing states both North and South. So it was that she gave little attention to the backwoods of her own domain. Public improvements reached this section late, and were doled out in scant measure. As a result a most unfortunate sectional prejudice developed bringing about unpleasant discriminations against the western section, not only in business and political matters but reaching the most unjustifiable pressure in the social realm as well.

WASHINGTON HALL, IN WHEELING, WAS THE SITE OF THE CONVENTION IN 1861 WHICH LED TO THE FORMATION OF THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA.

"It remained one of that ancient manifestation of sectional prejudice which prompted the question, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' As late as the sixties a man from Western Virginia with even a passable English education was the cause of no little amazement among certain exclusive people on the other side of the mountains. When a Northwesterner proved his ability to engage intelligently in ordinary conversation he was sometimes abruptly startled by the question, 'Do you say you are from Northwestern Virginia?' and when an affirmative answer was given the response came with increased emphasis, 'But you were not educated in Northwestern Virginia, were you?' and when that fact was also confessed the other party usually assumed the appearance of a large interrogation point, as much as to say, 'Can any marks of culture and refinement come from Western Virginia?' "

Among the reasons for the formation of the State should first be listed the Taxation without Representation issue. The people of the western section of Virginia

West Virginia and the Emancipation Proclamation

In the popular mind, the Emancipation Proclamation transformed the Civil War from a struggle to preserve the Union into a crusade for human freedom. But at the time it was issued, its actual provisions had already largely been enacted into law by Congress, which had provided for the freeing of slave-soldiers. The Emancipation Proclamation actually did not free a single slave, since the regions in which it authorized emancipation were under Confederate control, and since it was not authorized in the border states where emancipation might have been effected. The proclamation, did, however, tremendously boost Union morale, breed disaffection in the South, and bolster support in Europe for the Union cause. It also recognized West Virginia as a separate entity, although Lincoln had not yet issued the proclamation admitting the new state to the Union.

had long felt the injustice of paying taxes without receiving any benefits and with no opportunity to represent their section in the legislative halls at Richmond.

If the people from the mountain regions of Virginia could have had representation in the law-making body of that State and if its resources had been discovered and developments begun sooner it might have been another story. But "what is writ is writ." We cannot turn back the pages of history but we must conclude that the formation of the State of West Virginia was Virginia's loss and that she suffered it because of her high-handed treatment of her mountain folk, as well as because of the maneuvers of Northern politicians....

When all is said and done it must be concluded that the movement to form the new state of West Virginia was primarily a political and military matter. The military fact of the Civil War is that the people in New York and Boston were getting a little jumpy along about 1862. In his book, Russell, of the *Times* of London, spoke about how the bankers in New York and Boston assured him in 1861 that the war would be over in three weeks — what a familiar phrase! The advance of Jubal Early to the Potomac River gave Lincoln and his staff a great scare. This scare, among others, caused Lincoln to take various actions which, it would appear from what facts we have, troubled his conscience, and certainly the creation of West Virginia was one of these acts. If he had waited until Vicksburg fell and until he had his deal with General Grant, perhaps we would still be Virginians.

(The Grant story is very simple. After Vicksburg fell, the Western politicians wanted to run Grant for president. Lincoln called him in for a midnight meeting. Lincoln made Grant a full four-star general and Mr. Grant avowed he would not make himself a candidate for office. After all, 1863 was only one year from an election and Lincoln either had to start winning the war or worry about the gentlemen in the back room deciding to make some changes.)...

The measures that were taken to legislate the State into existence are well known. I quote briefly from the little pamphlet "Worthwhile Facts about West Virginia," with which every school child should be familiar:

"On May 23, 1861, Virginia voted to join the Confederacy. A meeting was called at Clarksburg, April 22, 1861, call ing for a meeting in Wheeling on May 12, 1861. At this first Wheeling Convention 24 Counties were represented. At the second convention June 11, there were delegates from thirty-five counties who founded the Restored Government of Virginia. The western counties voted to separate and the Convention framed a Constitution which had to be amended before Congress would accept it. Congress passed the bill creating the state of West Virginia December 3, 1862. President Lincoln signed it December 31, 1862 and issued a proclamation on April 20, 1863, for the admittance of West Virginia as a new state June 20, 1863."

Delegates to the Wheeling Convention were led by Francis H. Pierpont, who has been called the "Father of West Virginia." Afterwards he became the first Governor of the Restored State of Virginia....

Evidently much pressure was brought upon Lincoln to admit West Virginia as a state. He was tired and has been said to be often fumbling and confused. He had but six Cabinet members, three of whom voted for, three against, the admittance of the new state, so it was Lincoln's vote which decided the matter. It was Lincoln who tore the western counties loose from Virginia. Lincoln delayed the signing of the Proclamation some months because, as he remarked to his young secretary, John Hay, in words to this effect — history will not think well of this act of creating a new state through secession when I am presumably fighting a war to prevent secession and to preserve the Union.

He delayed issuing the proclamation for some time. Why? We remember that West Virginia was the only state that was admitted during the Civil War and yet there were a number of other states where a large percent of the population was opposed to secession. So why pick on Virginia? Could it have been the long-standing jealousy between the Mother State and the North that caused politicians to force his hand, and that he felt the necessity of making his own position more secure? Who knows?

A number of names were suggested for the state, among them "Kanawha" and "Augusta." Kanawha was the name used for the "Restored State of Virginia." Augusta would have been a logical name and it would certainly have avoided much confusion if "Virginia" had been left out. How many times in travels, both North and South, has the question been put to me, "So you are a Virginian?" and when I have answered, "No, I am a West Virginian" an explanation was always in order. Recently I had a fellow feeling for one of our West Virginians who when on a speaking tour was introduced so often as "The gentleman from Virginia," that he finally became irked and stated flatly, "I am not from Virginia. I am from West Virginia. Richmond is the capitol of Virginia. Charleston is the capitol of West Virginia. Virginia is a Republican state. West Virginia is a Democratic State. I am a West Virginian."□

Pare Lorentz is a documentary film pioneer, movie director and producer, newspaper correspondent, and author. His works include the classic prize-winning film, ***The River.***

War and peace in Atlanta city schools

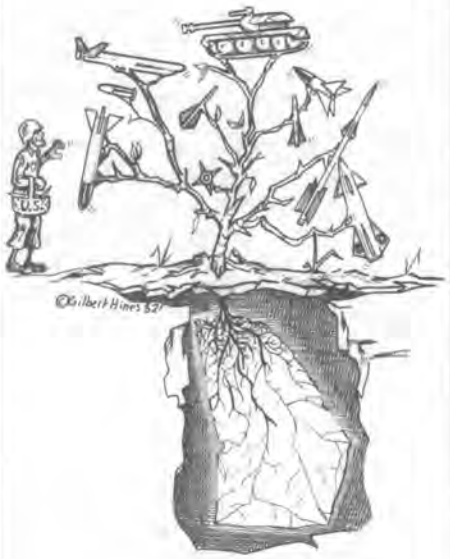
The Atlanta Peace Alliance filed suit in federal district court on April 16 against the Atlanta Board of Education in an attempt to gain access to area high schools equal to that now enjoyed by military recruiters. In June 1983, the alliance, made up of a coalition of six organizations, received permission from school superintendent Alonzo Crim to offer a free military information and referral service. But this decision was rescinded by the school board after a series of editorials appeared in *The Atlanta Journal* opposing the plan.

Dick Williams, conservative columnist for the newspaper, accused the peace alliance of "selling ideas, not careers." He also wrote, "There's a world of difference between groups recruiting ideological adherents and the military recruiting careerists." While jobs with the groups in the peace alliance are numerically limited, the coalition maintains that any job in the public interest which does not involve violence is a peacemaking job.

The plaintiffs in the suit include students, teachers, parents, and peace activists; they claim the school board action violates their constitutional right to free speech and a free press.

Prior to the school board decision to bar the peace teachers, the alliance worked out a four-point program for their activities: offering factual counseling material on conscientous objection, military life, recruitment fraud, the draft, draft registration, ROTC, and peacemaking jobs; class discussions at the request of a teacher, parent, or student on the military and military-related topics; setting up an information table on career days to present information on job training programs, student financial aid, and public interest internships; and placing a paid ad for counseling in school year books.

Military recruiters have historically benefited from unlimited access to public schools, according to Bill Hogan of the Chicago chapter of Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC), an organization which filed a similar suit in that city in January. "People lack any kind of training alternative. All of the dates we learn in history are dates of wars. But there



is a history of nonviolent action in this country. We have great examples of that in the civil rights and peace movements where classes and training were actually held to teach alternative methods of getting things done," Hogan says.

In spite of Atlanta's role in the making of that history, including a mayor who, as a congressman, sponsored a bill to establish a national peace academy, the military presence in the city is growing. Twenty-one of the city's 22 high schools participate in the Junior ROTC program — the second highest number of any school system in the nation. And the city boasts the third largest number of students enrolled in the Junior ROTC program.

The seven-member school board, five of whom are black, voted unanimously against allowing the proposed service. Brian Taylor, a spokesperson for the peace alliance, believes the school officials opposed the groups' access to schools because they "were afraid that we would encourage students not to register for the draft."

Emory Searcy, a black parent and one of the plaintiffs, found the vote surprising. "Our children should have a choice," he stresses. "They should hear about the realities of life in the military. Some of them [school board members] were veterans and know that black soldiers do not escape those realities. But no one person was strong enough to stand up to the opposition, though I had the feeling that in their hearts they knew I was right." With one-third of Atlanta's black youths just out of high school unemployed, Searcy is dismayed that the lack of viable job options for blacks makes it difficult to speak out in direct opposition to the military presence in the schools.

Searcy observed that the major opposition at the board meeting "represented a conservative white element — middle-class whites from North Atlanta." The black community, including the established black leadership, has remained silent on the issue of equal access raised by the coalition's suit, Searcy says. "Basically it's been a white initiative to get this information into the schools. Generally, the black community sees the military as a way to participate in the system, a way to get an education, a skill, get a job and training. They see Junior ROTC as providing discipline, they get a good quality uniform, and they gain a chance to move up in the ranks."

In the CALC suit in Chicago, a judge issued a preliminary ruling that the public schools are a free speech forum that must allow presentation of both sides of an issue. Should the judge decide for CALC after the Chicago school board presents its case, the decision will establish a legal precedent making it easier for groups to expose students to the alternatives to military careers. According to Norman Watkins of the Chicago CALC office, similar efforts are currently underway in West Palm Beach, Florida, and in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

photo courtesy of Library of Congress

Farmworkers gain sanitation in fields

"We consider these things to be fringe benefits rather than necessities," said Gaylerd Davis, head of the North Carolina Apple Growers Association, at a recent public hearing on federal proposals for field sanitation for the nation's five million agricultural workers. The "fringe benefits" which Davis and other growers are railing against include drinking water and handwashing and toilet facilities.

Hearings conducted across North Carolina during April and May served as a prelude to an upcoming national battle over the proposed Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards requiring sanitation facilities in the fields for farmworkers. Agricultural workers continue to be the only sector of the nation's work force to be denied federal protections guaranteeing access to water and toilets on the job. Throughout the month of June, federally sponsored public hearings in Washington, Florida, Texas, Ohio, and California will become the battleground for farmworker organizations that have fought for 13 years to obtain field sanitation from large growers.

When the Occupational Safety and Health Act was passed in 1970 requiring sanitation facilities for all workers, President Nixon's appointees in the Labor Department exempted the agricultural industry from this requirement. This move prompted the National Congress of Hispanic American Citizens and a number of other farmworker advocacy groups to file suit against the Labor Department in 1973. The *El Congresso* suit bounced around the federal courts for over a decade, and finally resulted in an out-of-court settlement in July 1982 setting a timetable for the Labor Department to propose regulations.

Despite the numerous studies documenting that farm laborers have the highest rates of pesticide poisonings, parasitic infections, and heat stress-related conditions, the Labor Department continued to drag its feet, and failed to propose regulations under the terms of the settlement. Faced with the threat of being held in contempt by a federal district court judge, the Labor Department finally came up with proposed regulations on March 1, 1984.

The proposed OSHA rules would only apply to farmers employing 11 or more workers who spend at least three hours a day in the fields. The regulations would require one toilet and handwashing facility for every 20 workers, as well as "readily accessible" drinking water within a quarter mile of the work site. Some 67,000 farm operators and 766,000 of the nation's five million farmworkers would be affected by the rule, which OSHA estimates will cost the agricultural industry about $19 million a year, or some 65 cents per worker per day.

Lost in the sea of cost figures, disease rates, and court-ordered deadlines are the basic issue of human dignity raised by farmworkers and their right to be treated as well as the animals on the farm and the crops in the field — all of which receive water on a regular basis. For many farmworkers and their advocates, the fight for field sanitation is yet another example of the legacy of slavery and the plantation mentality that continues to pervade the use of field labor in agriculture.

*— **contributed by Chip Hughes***

Women win fight against state DOTs

Beginning in Georgia in April, every state department of transportation in the country will be investigated by the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) to determine if hiring and employment practices in state road programs discriminate against women. The investigation comes in response to a complaint filed by the Lexington, Kentucky-based Southeast Women's Employment Coalition (SWEC) back in 1980. The complaint alleges a blatant pattern of sex discrimination within the nation's state DOT work forces.

The unprecedented series of investigations, which will include selected private contractors, was ordered by the FHWA at the direction of William T. Hudson, director of civil rights for the U.S. Department of Transportation and are scheduled for completion by July 15, 1985.

"We think this is good news coming from an administration where women have despaired in the hope of hearing any good news," said Leslie Lilly, executive director of SWEC. Lilly said that since the nickel-a-gallon gas tax increase passed in 1983, federal road money has been going out to the states

at a rate of over a billion dollars a month. "We are not talking about an industry where employment is on the decline, but a work force in which literally hundreds of thousands of jobs are being financed through the federal aid program. We want women to have an equitable share in the jobs provided by the federal commitment to highways," Lilly said. "In a work force that is over 95 percent male, it is evident that they do not."

SWEC's lead attorneys on the complaint, Marcia Greenberger of the National Women's Law Center and Betty Jean Hall of the Coal Employment Project, said that in April 1981, the then director of civil rights at the U.S. DOT, told SWEC the agency had no obligation to assure nondiscrimination in the federal highways program. "We believe this opinion was in obvious contradiction to the intent and meaning of the authorizing legislation of the department," said Greenberger.

Regardless of DOT's interpretation in 1981, the Federal Highways Act as amended in 1983 included a specific guarantee of equal employment opportunity on the basis of sex. Says Hall, "Getting the department to seize on this initiative was like taking them to the dentist — they would just as soon stayed at home and ignored the toothache. Once that amendment was passed, they sort of lost heart in acting like this wasn't their business. Now they are acting like it is."

Wendy Johnson, director of a special

SWEC project to improve jobs for women in the industry, said that after numerous appeals to Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Dole, several meetings occurred with top DOT civil rights and FHWA officials. According to Johnson, the department agreed to begin investigation of the SWEC complaint, targeting the review of the Georgia DOT as a "pilot" to obtain facts and test the department's methodology in conducting the investigations.

"The investigation," says Johnson, "will cover not only a review of state DOT hiring practices but also include pay, promotions, and opportunities available for women as compared to that being provided to male employees." She added that in some cases, the state DOTs are the largest employer in the state, and the employment review included white and blue-collar jobs — not just those in construction.

Women who believe they have been victims of discriminatory employment practices of the state DOTs are being sought as potential witnesses in the reviews by both SWEC and the department.

Merit pay bypasses Florida's top teachers

Amidst public clamor for higher quality public education, more state legislatures are instituting programs to evaluate teachers. These programs, which use merit pay to reward educators, are proving difficult to implement effectively and are drawing fire from teachers' associations. And such experts as Harvard education researcher Susan Moore Johnson warn that merit pay plans are "a stick disguised as a carrot.... Money will be lost. Teachers will be disaffected. The public will be cheated. And children will pay the price."

In Florida, where the nation's first statewide, performance-based reward system was implemented last year, numerous flaws have surfaced shedding insight into the shortcomings of merit pay. The primary problem there, according to *Education Week*, is the requirement that the bonuses go only to teachers with a master's degree specifically pertaining to the subject they teach. Among those thereby eliminated for bonus pay of up to $3,000 are 64 percent of the teachers chosen by their districts as "teachers of the year." The list of those disqualified from merit pay for lack of a master's degree includes the state's teacher of the year, Edith Smith, who was chosen during the first week in May. And Robert Bossong, Dade County teacher of the year, does not qualify for merit pay because there *is* no master's degree in his field of vocational education.

Bernice McSpadden, Bay County teacher of the year, is a trainer of the evaluators, but she also lacks a master's degree. "It's rather ironic, isn't it," says

"MERIT PAY IS ON THE BACK BURNER. WITH OUR REDUCED AID, WE'RE LOOKING FOR MONEY FOR REGULAR PAY."

McSpadden, "that you have to have a master's degree to get merit pay and you have to have a master's degree to evaluate teachers who want merit pay, but I'm allowed to train the evaluators."

In addition to classroom evaluations, teachers must pass an exam in their subject area. But by April, Florida Department of Education officials had reliable exams ready in only six of the 48 subjects in which the state offers teaching licenses. For the same reason, an Arkansas plan in which teachers must pass a test to keep their jobs may be delayed. Governor William Clinton is pushing the test as a key to getting Arkansas legislators to raise teacher's salaries. But even the state's head of the Department of Education, Don Roberts, is recommending a delay in the implementation of the tests.

Opponents of the merit pay plans point out that to be effective and reward good teaching, school boards would need to develop a prohibitively large bureaucracy. In addition, most plans have no provision to evaluate the people doing the evaluations.

Merit pay opponents argue it can also

be used for political and/or racial repression. Mary Futrell, president of the 1,675,000-member National Education Association, notes that merit plans often serve "to keep women's and minorities salaries depressed," and she thinks administrators might reward their personal favorites rather than the best teachers.

Judith Rhodes, director of the Atlantic Center for Research in Education (ACRE), was a teacher in Florida last year and consistently received good evaluations. But she objects to the program saying, "I was evaluated three times, and no evaluator stayed in my classroom long enough to tell anything." Rhodes charges that these pay plans are a quick fix proposed by lawmakers to answer public cries for improvements in education. Yet, she argues, because the programs offer pay raises to only a few teachers without raising salaries for the teaching profession as a whole, they will do little to attract higher quality or better trained people to the profession. The average starting salary for teachers in the U.S. is only $13,000 per year.

Most merit plans, in return for bonus pay, actually take good teachers out of the classroom several hours per week to work on curriculum development. "I wouldn't mind extra pay for working on curriculum during the summer," says Rhodes, "But I don't want to be taken out of my classroom during the school year to do it."

Even conservative critic Gilbert Sewall, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, believes that, "Such mechanical alterations as merit pay...give the illusion of rapid progress.... Yet excellence in education means more than mandating a third year of math or giving personable Mr. Cummings at the local high school a $500 'service award.' "

Who's better off now than four years ago?

Republicans plan to ride the wave of a self-proclaimed economic recovery back into the White House in 1984. But two government studies suggest more people have been hurt than helped by the combination of social service and tax cuts under the Reagan administration's Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) of 1981.

Tax and Budget Cuts: The Impact on Household Incomes

Projections for the 1984 calendar year. Numbers have been rounded.

	All households	$10,000 or less	$10,000-20,000	$20,000-40,000	$40,000-80,000	$80,000 or more
Gain from tax cuts	$1,090	$ 20	$330	$1,200	$3,080	$8,390
Loss in cash benefits	-170	-250	-210	-130	-90	-90
Loss in noncash benefits *	-100	-160	- 90	- 60	-80	-40
NET GAIN OR LOSS	$820	$-390	$30	$1,010	$2,900	$8,270

* Include food stamps, Medicaid, Medicare and housing subsidies

Source: Congressional Budget Office

This spring, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and General Accounting Office (GAO), two non-partisan investigative arms of Congress, released reports revealing that Republican policies have led to a shrinking of the middle class by helping the rich prosper while nearly doubling the number of families living in poverty.

The CBO report, requested by Senate Budget Committee member Lawton Chiles (D-FL), found that households with an annual income of less than $10,000 lost an average of $410 a year because of cuts in social programs; these same households gained only $20 from the much touted Reagan tax cuts. Households with incomes between $10,000 and $20,000 gained an average of only $30 from the cuts in social expenditures and taxes. In comparison, the nation's wealthiest households, with incomes of $80,000 or more annually, enjoyed an average net gain of $8,270.

The CBO concluded that Reagan's policies subsidizing the rich amount to a "raid on the federal treasury." It estimated that the government will lose $93.6 billion in revenues from the tax cuts in 1984, and the budget deficit will be more than triple what it was when Reagan took office. Economists predict the Reagan "recovery" could well collapse in early 1985 — just after the elections.

The GAO report, requested by the House Ways and Means Committee and released just four days before the CBO report, said that the 1981 Omnibus Budget law has indeed fulfilled its main purpose: save money on social spending cutbacks and reduce welfare caseloads. The number of families receiving federal aid has dropped from 3.6 million in 1981 to 3.1 million today. But in many ways the OBRA's "success" has proven expensive.

The GAO study, based on 12,000 individual case records and interviews with 688 welfare recipients, found that many poor people now work more hours at higher wages, but as a group former recipients have lost a hefty chunk of their monthly incomes — $115 in Boston, $186 in Memphis, $229 in Dallas — in addition to the loss of their eligibility for non-cash benefits like food stamps and Medicaid. Many of them cannot now afford health insurance for themselves or their children; and in increasing numbers, they are turning to private charities for help with money for food and rent.

With social program cutbacks under Reagan totalling over $110 billion between 1981 and 1984, American poverty is at its worst in 17 years — 15 percent

The Rich Get Richer, The Poor Get Poorer

Rank	1982 Income	'79-'82 Growth
1. Alaska	$16,257	43.3%
2. Connecticut	13,748	34.1
3. New Jersey	13,089	33.7
4. California	12,567	27.5
5. Wyoming	12,372	26.7
6. New York	12,314	33.6
7. Colorado	12,302	36.4
8. Maryland	12,238	31.3
9. Illinois	12,100	23.4
10. Massachusetts	12,088	34.8
41. Maine	9,042	30.6
42. Idaho	9,029	22.6
43. Kentucky	8,934	25.5
44. Tennessee	8,906	26.3
45. Utah	8,875	25.6
46. West Virginia	8,769	23.9
47. Alabama	8,649	26.5
48. South Carolina	8,502	27.7
49. Arkansas	8,479	25.7
50. Mississippi	7,778	27.0

source: Bureau of Economic Analysis figures

of the population. Moreover, during the past six years more than 24 million people have fallen from the middle class.

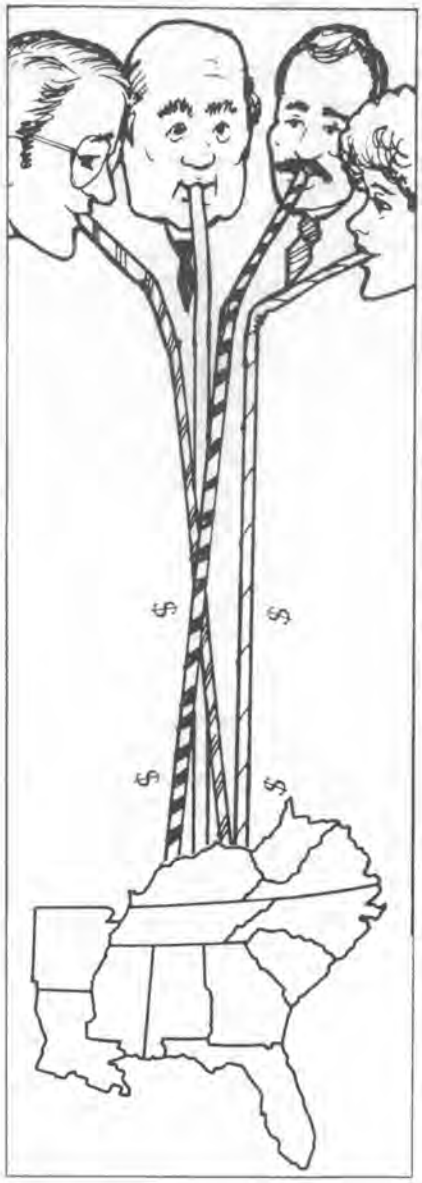
A report from the Bureau of Economic Analysis suggests how the widening gap between rich and poor affects the South. According to the bureau, seven of the 10 states with the lowest per capita income are in the South, and none of them managed to match the 28.3 percent increase in income posted by the nation as a whole between 1970 and 1982. Six of the 10 richest states, however, are increasing their per capita incomes at a rate faster than the national average (see chart).

Another study from the Census Bureau sheds light on how the South can continue to lag behind even though it is gaining thousands of new jobs. The report examined the 20 fastest growing and 20 fastest declining business fields in the nation; it found that 16 of the top growth industries are in the relatively low-wage service sector, like fast food restaurants, while 14 of the 20 disappearing job areas are in manufacturing. Production workers in the declining businesses earn an average weekly wage of $310 compared to $210 in the growth fields — or a net difference of more than $5,000 per year. So even though the South is getting more than its share of new jobs, they tend to pay lower wages than the old jobs in the rest of the country.

Banks ready to cross borders for more $$$

There is a war going on within the banking community over who will control the nation's wealth. Longstanding barriers to bank expansion across state lines are breaking down as big banks push for deregulation either through legislation or loopholes in the law. And, while there are now almost 12,500 commercial banking organizations across the country, some bankers are predicting only 100 such concerns will survive to see the year 2000.

The intensity of the battle being waged to allow interstate banking on a national level has set tempers flying in Washington. After weeks of hearings on the subject, Senate Banking Committee chair Jake Garn (R-UT) exclaimed, "I'm sick and tired of greed, hypocrisy, and selfishness. I'm getting to the point where I don't care which way it goes.... There are a lot of toes in the



financial marketplace that need to be stepped on."

House Banking Committee chairman Fernand St Germain (D-RI) has called for study of the effects of bank deregulation on consumers and businesses. He has chided banks for not serving the public interest saying, "If these institutions plan to serve only the affluent — as some have — there is little reason for working families to support government assistance for these institutions."

The nation's biggest bank, Citibank, is leading the way in the attack on regulations barring interstate banking. The parent of Citibank, Citicorp, has successfully exploited loopholes in banking legislation to begin interstate banking operations, and others have followed suit. Citicorp's expansion into Florida has set Southern bankers on edge. With its $140 billion in assets, the banking giant will have plenty of leverage wherever it goes, and there is concern over how this leverage will be used.

The coming of new "carpetbaggers" has prompted some Southern states to consider regional interstate banking as one way of staving-off a round of acquisitions by big New York banks. Bankers in New England have supported legislation in Massachusettes, Connecticut, and Rhode Island permitting regional statewide banking in an effort to keep New York banks out of their territory. Mergers between banks from these states across state lines have been approved by the Federal Reserve board.

Georgia's legislature was the first in the South to pass a law allowing regional interstate banking if other Southeastern states offered reciprocal rights to Georgian banks — the law goes into effect in July 1985. Florida and South Carolina are following suit with similar legislation to be effective in July 1986, and the North Carolina General Assembly is expected to settle the issue next year, if not this June. Kentucky's Senate also passed regional interstate banking legislation earlier this year.

This so-called reciprocal interstate banking, proponents say, will permit the expansion of the region's leading banks in time to make them big enough to compete with attempts by the big New York banks to enter the regional market and take over smaller banks.

First Atlanta and Southeast Banking Corp. of Miami have already bought each other's stock in anticipation of reciprocal laws that will permit their merger into one larger bank. South Carolina National has agreed to affiliate with Trust Company of Georgia and AmSouth Bancorp of Alabama once interstate banking begins among the three states. And a host of other banks are forming pacts and swapping stock, positioning themselves for the plunge into multistate banking.

Some opponents of such regional arrangements warn of the "balkanization" of the country's banks, but top Southern bankers say they are concerned about the siphoning of Southern capital out of the region, into national and international markets, thus leaving local economies starved for money. Alex MacFadyen, vice president of First Citizens Corp., based in Raleigh, North Carolina, says, "It has taken the South 100 years to develop some capital. If interstate banking comes, we think that capital could again leave the state."

And Arkansas banker, Marlin Jackson, chairman of the Security Bank in Paragould, says local bankers need to "stop Wall Street from raping and re-raping the highlanders (sic)." Jackson has gone so far as to challenge Citicorp chairman Walter Wriston to "choose his weapons and meet me under the oaks at dawn."

It is the feeling of these bankers, and others, that if out-of-state banks come into a community, they do so in order to take money out. Big bankers, for their part, argue that rural banks enjoy a virtual monopoly over access to loans in their community and consumers would benefit from more competition.

Bank executives at smaller banks also have reason to worry about thgeir jobs. Because of a loophole in current law, NCNB of Charlotte managed to enter Florida's prime market in 1981, and its aggressive expansion policies have now put the NCNB logo in over 150 Florida locations, while leaving a trail of fired or alienated local bankers. In the 18 months since it bought the $1.3 billion Tampa Exchange Bank, 80 executives have left because of "conflict over NCNB style," says a former vice president.

In the rush for deregulation and interstate banking, the consumer has had little chance to respond. Congress is currently considering legislation to make clear the rules of banking. But in this election year, with a shortened session and so much at stake in the passage of new banking legislation, it is hard to predict just what the new regulations will look like, and when they will be implemented. In the meantime, some big banks have succeeded in gaining a toe-hold in interstate banking while others are lining up in wait.

Electric co-ops face attack from two sides

Local electric cooperatives are a focal point of rural life across much of America, especially in the South and Midwest. Twenty-five million people depend on them for electricity and five million for telephone service. Co-ops are big employers in small towns; their meetings are often social occasions; their magazines are popular; their executives are "community leaders."

And they are under attack. From on high, the Reagan administration would like to destroy the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), a federal agency that finances the co-ops with low-interest loans. And in the South, where "rural cooperatives are one of the last remaining vestiges of institutionalized segregation" — to quote Steve Suitts, executive director of the Atlanta-based Southern Regional Council (SRC) — the attack is from the grassroots.

Co-ops are highly touted, especially by congressional defenders of the REA, as a working expression of grassroots democracy, but a growing number of their black customers are speaking up and saying that just isn't so.

Southern cooperatives are dominated almost exclusively by whites, even where large percentages of their customers are black: an SRC survey of 300 co-ops of the region found 30 blacks among 3,000 board members. Rate structures favor large users of power over homes and small farms, and the co-ops' employment practices, purchasing patterns, and decisions over where to expand services shows a lack of attention to the concerns of minorities and low-income consumers. In the last year or so, black members in several states have mounted challenges to the white power structure of their co-ops, and SRC has organized the Co-op Democracy and Development Project to help. In its first year, the project has not yet seen many blacks elected to co-op boards, but it reports activity in many areas.

One is a 13-county area around Greenwood, Mississippi, served by the Delta Electric Power Association. Blacks comprise about 40 percent of the membership; concerned about rising bills and co-op management, some decided to run for seats on the all-white board. When more than a hundred of them showed up at the annual meeting on April 12, 1983, the board declared that a quorum was not present, adjourned the meeting, and walked out.

Some 200 people remained, however, and they voted to reconvene the meeting and hold an election. An entirely new governing board was chosen, but the incumbents ignored the action. On June 14, using rewritten bylaws, the old board held another meeting; fewer than 40 white members turned up, holding 7,500 proxy ballots, and re-elected the 11 white incumbents.

Delta officials insist they acted properly and without bias, but the black members have filed a class-action lawsuit in federal court charging racial discrimination and asking the court to seat the board elected at the April meeting. Action is still pending.

Black groups have also organized challenges to the white governing boards of Dixie Electric in Baton Rouge, the Halifax Electric Membership Corporation in Enfield, North Carolina, the Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative in Chase City, Virginia, and the Twin County Electric Power Association in Hollandale, Mississippi. To hold them off, co-op officials have used various tactics including intimidation, manipulation of bylaws, scare tactics in the white community ("the blacks are trying to take over the co-op"), ballot-box stuffing, and instructing co-op staff to collect proxies for incumbents when they read meters or collect bills.

In Baton Rouge, where the black in-

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.

surgents teamed up with a local utility reform network, their coalition elected two black candidates and three white network candidates to a seven-member board. Elsewhere the old guard still rules. Some other legal challenges are under consideration, but more hope lies in future co-op elections. The past year of activity has taught the black activists much about how to play this game, and they promise to be back at the annual meetings, more experienced and better prepared for success.

Meanwhile, in Washington the battle over the rural co-ops' financial future continues. The REA began as a New Deal program to turn on the lights in rural America. Fewer than 12 percent of American farms had electricity when Franklin Roosevelt created REA in 1935, because private utilities saw no profit in wiring non-urban areas. By 1982, 99 percent of the farms had power, but the rural co-ops still need capital infusions. Even with the low-cost REA loans, they charge their customers rates about 12 percent higher than the national average. But the Reagan administration believes the need for subsidy is over.

REA is in trouble because it owes the Treasury $7.9 billion that it cannot repay. It borrows Treasury money at normal market rates and lends it to the co-ops at 5 percent interest, a figure fixed by law in 1973 when the Treasury rate was only slightly higher. Since then that rate has been as high as 14 percent and now is about 11 percent. Since last year Congress has been considering a bill that would forgive REA's debt and raise the interest on loans to co-ops to a higher variable rate.

REA administrator Howard V. Hunt staunchly opposes this bailout, and Agriculture Secretary John Block says he will ask Reagan to veto it if it passes. They claim the bill's ultimate cost to the government will be $21 billion. The Congressional Budget Office says it will cost $7.9 billion. The bill's backers say it will cost nothing. *Congressional Quarterly* says, "The REA issue is confusing. Each side says with utter conviction that the other is dead wrong about financial maneuvers so complex that they would be difficult to understand even in an atmosphere of sweet accord."

When the House considered the bill in March, however, none of this seemed to matter. In this election year, an overwhelming majority had those 25 million co-op customers on their minds and voted 283 to 111 in favor of saving REA. Their ranks included the Southern and Western "fiscal conservatives" who usually have budget cuts on their minds: only 11 of the 127 House members from 13 Southern states voted "no," and all represent urban districts.

The bill has yet to get a hearing from Jesse Helms's Senate Agriculture Committee. But if senators get a chance to vote on it this year, many observers expect them to heed the words of House Agriculture Committee chair Kika de la Garza of Texas: "We are speaking about light for rural America."

Updates and short takes

MORE GUN CONTROL. Voters in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and surrounding Broward County handed a rare defeat to the forces behind the National Rifle Association (NRA) on "Super Tuesday," March 13. County residents voted 63 percent in favor of an ordinance requiring a criminal-history check of all purchasers of handguns before they can

be issued a weapon. The NRA lobbied hard to defeat the ordinance and outspent the gun-control supporters by a margin of four to one. The Broward County vote was the NRA's first major electoral defeat in recent years. In 1982 the NRA worked to defeat a gun control measure in California. And in Massachusettes in 1976 they lobbied successfully to defeat a proposal to outlaw private possession of handguns.

INFANT MORTALITY. Southerners are living in an "infant mortality belt" according to a study recently released by the Food Research and Action Center, a nonprofit, public interest law firm based in Washington, DC. While the United States ranks number 16 in the world in infant mortality rates — 12 per 1,000 live births — all of the Southeast states, except Tennessee, have infant mortality rates above the national level. Alan Sanders, a nutritionist for the group, says infant mortality is "a problem of low-income whites and low-income blacks." The study shows that the rate of infant mortality for blacks is nearly twice as high as for whites. The national average is 9.9 for whites and 19.3 for blacks.

South Carolina has the worst infant mortality rate of any state (16.2), with only Washington DC showing a higher rate of deaths per 1,000 live births. Mississippi is the second worst state in numbers of infants dying before the age of one — 15.4 per 1,000 live births. Next comes Alabama's rate, 13.8 per 1,000; North Carolina at 13.7; and Georgia at 13.3. Virginia's rate is 12.9 and Florida's is 12.8. In all of these states, the number of infant deaths of babies born to white parents was below the national average, while the rate for black infant mortality was well above the average.

CLASS ACTION. Farmworker advocates in North Carolina won a major court victory recently when a federal magistrate recommended that a federal suit under the Agricultural Worker Protection Act (AWPA) be certified as a class action suit covering more than a thousand workers who were employed by the state's largest sweet potato grower, Carson Barnes. In a suit filed in August 1983, 12 migrant workers alleged underpayment of wages, illegal deductions, and substandard housing in Barnes's labor camps. (In November 1983, four legal services workers were arrested while inspecting Barnes's labor camps with a federal court order, but charges were later dropped.) The class action suit could represent one of the largest legal actions questioning the labor practices of a particular grower.

Facing South

a syndicated column:
voices of tradition
in a changing region

"I'm the Daddy of the Dee-Jays"

illustration by Frank Holyfield

"DADDY" JACK HOLMES

SUFFOLK, VA — The radio station manager told him, "Look, talk about Florsheim Shoes. Hofheimer's shoe stores has 'em."

So Jack Holmes, Virginia's first black disc jockey, told his listeners how good the footwear was. "Except," he recalls, "I called it 'Florshim.' "

The station manager's fury subsided after the store called. " 'Don't yell at him,' " Holmes mimics the shoe merchant's enthusiasm. " 'I just had to hire three more salesmen!'

"They told me I didn't have a radio voice, but that I came through like Arthur Godfrey," continues Holmes, a radio personality since 1947. His voice has sold enough products to fill the Yellow Pages.

At 72, "Daddy Jack" is southeastern Virginia's oldest on-air personality. But neither his voice nor his personality shows any sign of winding down. He's still in good shape, too — up at 3:30 a.m. and on the air from 5 to 9 at WRAP — where Holmes has done weather and sports for 25 years.

Holmes started in radio at WLOW in Norfolk, where he served in the Navy two years. The station was looking for someone to host a children's show. Several men, handsomely dressed, waited to audition. Along came Holmes, a bit ragged after driving his laundry truck for 10 hours.

"Reach, yes, reach for Sweet Peach Snuff," he ad-libbed. "Sweet Peach Snuff, do your stuff." He got the job. Holmes entertained the youngsters so well that the 15-minute spot soon became a half-hour program, and ultimately was extended to two hours. Later, he switched to spinning records, becoming Virginia's first black disc jockey.

He was known simply as Jack Holmes then. When he went up to 315 pounds, he was nicknamed "Jolly" Jack Holmes. He followed doctor's orders to lose 100 pounds; it took him three years. Now the patriarch dee-jay of Tidewater, Virginia, is the respected "Daddy" Jack Holmes.

Over the years there have been many changes. "In the early days they gave you a product, told you its name, its price, and where to get it. You filled in the rest. Now, it's all written down," he laments.

Back then, he played Nat "King" Cole, Billy Eckstine, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, and Louis Jordan. Eventually, rock and roll replaced jazz and swing. Holmes, an easy-going gentleman, played it, but says he didn't like "its wild beat" and "suggestive lyrics." Now he spins only gospel tunes.

Ironically, Holmes doesn't own a record player. Two gold records, however, adorn the home he shares with his wife Alice. One, "The Payback," is from James Brown; the other is Luther Ingram's "I Don't Want to Do Right." Holmes says proudly, "They gave them to me for helping them by playing their records."

He has had several other prestigious friends over the years: Duke Ellington, Chuck Berry, Otis Redding, Sam Cooke, Ray Charles, and all the Platters. "I was the only black on the radio, so it wasn't hard to meet them. And WLOW was the only black station in Virginia," says Holmes.

For a while, Holmes was a singer himself, on the road in the 1940s with white bands. "I went through all that going-in-the-back-door stuff," he recalls casually. "The rest of the band would stay in one place; I'd be in another. I didn't think much about it then. I just rolled with the punches." He went on to perform with the big bands of Claude Hopkins and Erskine Hawkins. Earlier he had sung his way through college. Now he sings with the Suffolk Community Male Chorus.

Holmes also experienced racism as a dee-jay in the '50s. "There were lots of phone calls — threats, sarcastic remarks, people telling me to get off the air," he remembers. "The police had to escort me. But while I was broadcasting I'd forget about it. I got wrapped up in the music."

Things have mellowed now: Holmes says most of his co-workers and fans have been supportive. He's proud of his endurance, and for him, the end is not in sight. "Dee-jays have come and gone," he observes. "I'm the oldest; I'm the daddy of all the jocks."

— FRANK ROBERTS
journalist
Hertford, NC

"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.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Portrait of a Peasant Leader

— by Stephen Vetter

White, sweet, granular...sugar is synonymous with pleasure. Yet each tablespoon for the morning coffee — when you consider the life of the cane cutter who produces it and the land that grows it — should leave a bitter taste.

To see and understand sugar, take the road that leads from the capital city, Santo Domingo, to Rivera de Payabo, a small village in the central part of the Dominican Republic. First you pass through the village of Yamasa. There you find the high energy of a Dominican plaza: the many kinds of vegetables, fruits, and grains muled in for sale in the market, the busy vendors and shoeshine boys.

Along the first mile of road leaving Yamasa, you see peasant farmettes (*finquitas*) with mules, chickens, pigs, children, and family gardens (*conucos*). The tidy houses of thatch and mud are colorfully painted.

The cornucopia thins out quickly as the first outcroppings of the tall, green stalks of sugar cane appear. To make planting and harvesting easier, all other crops and vegetation have been removed. Fifteen minutes from Yamasa and your eye is lost in a vast, monotonous sea of cane.

Following the road, you encounter the first *bateyes* — grim, gray barracks that house the cane workers. The low buildings stretch out parallel to the road. Some are made of block and appear newer and more comfortable, but most are old, wooden buildings with smudged, black interiors.

From the seventeenth through the early part of the twentieth centuries, sugar was called "white gold." And sugar did to many nations what gold did to small towns in the western United States: left them economically abandoned and broken. The Dominican Republic, like most Caribbean countries, has a great deal of acreage in cane. When world sugar prices are low, only the best lands are harvested, leaving the marginal lands uncut. Over the past three years, even the "best" lands have not been good enough: sugar has sold for nine to 11 cents a pound while costing approximately 16 cents a pound to produce.

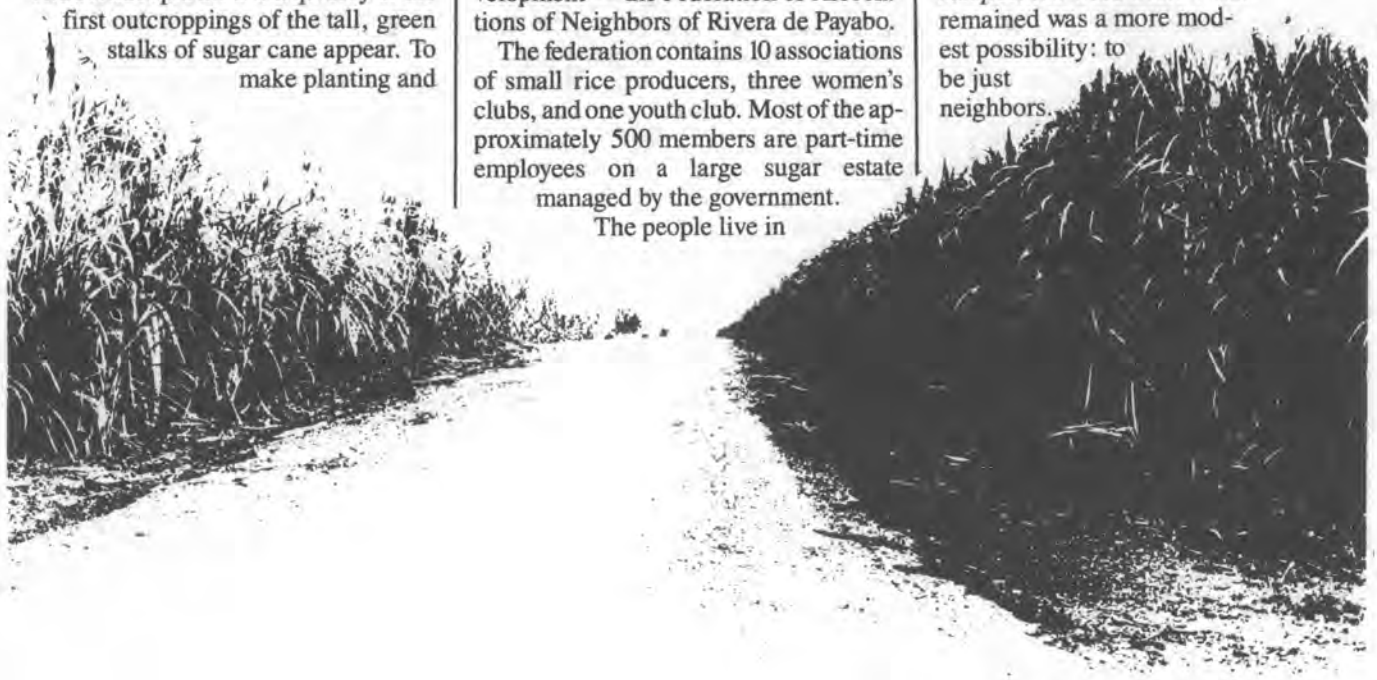
Yet here in the center of this cane-growing country flourishes a colorful and creative approach to community development — the Federation of Associations of Neighbors of Rivera de Payabo.

The federation contains 10 associations of small rice producers, three women's clubs, and one youth club. Most of the approximately 500 members are part-time employees on a large sugar estate managed by the government. The people live in crowded *bateyes* and grow rice on lands too marshy for regular sugar production. Members organized the federation seven years ago to improve their income and to develop local job opportunities for their children, who were migrating to the cities.

Associations of *campesinos* (peasants) are found throughout the Dominican Republic, but there is no other "association of *vecinos*," or neighbors. To the members of this particular group, *campesino* suggests a person with "everything": a small, simple house; a *conuco* to feed a family; and a rich variety of crops, trees, and animals with which to make a living.

The members of the Federation of Neighbors were once *campesinos*. Then, in 1953, the dictator Rafael Trujillo seized their lands for sugar production. The landscape was radically and rapidly reorganized: small farms were burned and bulldozed into one large plantation. By law, no crop besides sugar could be planted — not even a family garden — without the permission of the estate manager.

Those who had lived on the land had to choose between migrating to the capital city or remaining to work the estate. The people who stayed found that their days as *campesinos* were over. What remained was a more modest possibility: to be just neighbors.



photos by Stephen Vetter

The president and founder of the federation is Ramon Aybar. A retired primary school teacher, poet, and father of 15, Aybar remembers well the time before sugar cane. Like many rural school teachers, he became a community leader because of his intelligence and training.

His life exemplifies the region's history. He can never describe himself without first explaining where and how he has lived and what has occurred in the region of Rivera de Payabo:

"I was born close to the village of Boya. Not Sabana Grande de Boya, but Boya where the last Indians came to die. When I was young my father, Nuno, and my *compadre* placed me in school. You see, I wanted to learn to read and write. There I learned the basics — the written forms for table, mother loves me, mule, things like that. But after three years — when I was 15, around the year 1938 — my father brought me home to work in the mountains and hills around here because he was illiterate and didn't appreciate education. And he taught me to cut down trees. At that time, all of this area was a forest filled with animals. Some old people around here still remember the land the way it was in those years, people who still carry on their faces the battles with the authorities who brought the sugar plantations, people who are ignored by those who were born after the great eviction of 1953.

"The people who lived in this region worked hard. The place was so wild we all had to be great fence makers to keep the animals out of our *conucos* and homes. Because we had so much wood, we made strong fences: nothing unwanted could enter. And when we made these fences, we would organize work parties, which we called *convites*, among the men. And while we worked we sang.

"This all changed when the dictator Trujillo decided to plant this land in sugar cane. It was horrible what he did, and we could never understand it. In 1953 his henchmen came, and they destroyed my father's house. My father lost everything, and ever since then I have continued thinking about all that we lost. Everytime I see someone, I remember where they lived and the name of their village. And I try to point out where they lived, but all you see now is sugar.

"So one day, the day of Saint Ramon, I was dreaming during the early morning: I was talking with a friend. 'Yesterday, over there in the village of San Juan,' I said, 'See, over there.... not there, but much further over.' But my friend didn't know what I was talking about. He had forgotten what the land was like before the sugar. And in the dream, there was a big meeting, with a lot of people, and they were talking about how we should organize ourselves. When I awoke, I decided to do something and called a meeting at the school.

"We decided to start our first association, and we called it Amantes del Progreso (Lovers of Progress). Later, in Alto San Pedro, 49 members came together and formed Amigos del Bien (Friends of Well-Being). After that I was invited to Cabeza de Toro, but it was so far away by mule that I told them I could not return. I assisted other communities to organize, and eventually we had seven. That is when we decided to organize the Federation de Associaciones de Vecinos de Rivero de Payabo."

The first problem that Aybar convinced his neighbors to tackle was one that doesn't get a high priority among development planners — providing a decent funeral. Living on approximately $700 a year, peasants rarely have the $50 to $200 available to cover funeral costs, which can include providing food and drink to the mourners at a wake as well as purchasing a coffin and a grave. As they say in the countryside, "Morirse en el campo es mas problema que estar vivo." ("To die in the countryside is even more of a problem than to live in it.")

The federation started a funeral society. The simplicity of its plan was remarkable. Each participating member pays in $35 over time. When an adult dies in the home, the family is given $50 to cover the expenses; when an adult dies away from home and is buried in another part of the country, the family is given only $35 because the wake is less expensive. The society has 391 members and has disbursed a total of $1,333 so far to cover the costs of 45 funerals.

As the federation grew, it began to tackle more complex problems. For example, most members supplement their diets and incomes by cultivating rice in the swamp lands throughout the estate. These lands are available because they cannot be used for cane production. But once their families are fed, members have problems selling their crop at reasonable prices.

Aybar visited other agricultural programs and worked out a simple scheme whereby the federation would offer members mill and warehouse services for a low fee. The income from fees would go into a marketing fund which, as it grew, would allow the federation to provide "advances" for production costs such as seeds, fertilizer, and cultivation.

RAMON AYBAR

The federation tried unsuccessfully to finance this program through loans and donations. In 1980 the Inter-American Foundation provided a grant of $44,960 to purchase a rice mill, a small truck, and the materials to construct a warehouse and seven cement drying-areas for the rice. The federation covered part of the costs of the materials. Using *convite* — the tradition of pooling voluntary labor — association members met on weekends and holidays and constructed the central warehouse.

The marketing plan was simple and straightforward, but flaws developed, one of which was almost fatal. By law, all rice in the Dominican Republic must be sold through a national marketing board. The board, however, cannot always pay, and sometimes issues promissory notes. When the federation found that it would not receive cash for its rice, it attempted

FEDERATION DE ASSOCIACIONES DE VECINOS DE RIVERA DE PAYABO

— like other producers — to sell illegally at the local market. As a result, Aybar was jailed for two days, and the federation almost lost its truck.

The federation now cleans and dehulls rice but returns it to members who sell it individually. The federation earns less, and members generally receive lower prices since they can no longer negotiate higher rates for larger sales.

Although this marketing setback diminished the federation's return, some income was generated and channeled into other projects. In 1982, the federation established a savings program which currently has 1,700 pesos (U.S. $1,150) in deposit. Since there are no banks in the area, the cooperative offers members an important line of credit.

Ramon Aybar also represents his neighbors on non-economic issues of collective concern. In 1966, before the federation was organized, crop dusters hired by the estate sprayed herbicides over the cane fields and poisoned much of the water in the area. Seven people died, and many became ill. Aybar was just beginning to write poetry at that time. He headed for a church-run radio station and brought national attention to the plight of his people by reading his poems over the radio:

> Toy crop duster
> spitting out
> poisons that cover
> our food. Now
> people are asking
> who wants to live
> in Sabana de Boya.
> Neighbors just pick up
> and abandon this land.

This one-man publicity campaign failed, but over a decade later, when the federation was organized, Aybar repeatedly set up meetings with officials to discuss the aerial spraying. Inevitably, the authorities agreed to reconsider the use of planes and administer the pesticides by hand, but every time a new adminstrator was appointed, the crop dusters took off, and the federation had to confront the authorities once more. These confrontations took on new force as the federation began to hear from estate employees when the planes were going to fly. Federation members, armed with machetes, would hurry to block the runway.

Eventually the estate officials were forced to deal with the federation's concern. The aerial spraying continued but the planes flew less frequnetly, the more dangerous chemicals were banned, and the use of handsprayers increased. Without using violence, the federation had been able to display — to the authorities and to its members — considerable determination and group solidarity. As a result, many members now point with pride to this defense of their interests as an important victory for the federation.

Aybar's leadership stems from the quality of his vision. In his writing, poetry, and drawing he captures a unique feeling and understanding of Rivera de Payabo. He inspires and breathes imagination into his neighbors. One member explains that he "brings us enthusiasm and excitement about the future."□

Stephen Vetter was the Inter-American Foundation representative to the Dominican Republic and Jamaica for seven years, and now represents Brazil. This article is excerpted from the journal of the IAF, ***Grassroots Development****.*

A Step Backwards

The Inter-American Foundation (IAF), which provided funding for the rice mill and warehouse for the Federation of Associations of Neighbors of Rivera de Payebo, was itself the victim of a coup in 1983. In December, this semi-autonomous government agency asked its moderate president, Peter Bell, to resign. The move came soon after Ronald Reagan appointed enough new board members to change the direction of the agency, long known for its nonpolitical nature.

The right-wing aversion to the IAF is long-standing, primarily because — unlike most other development agencies — the foundation has for the most part avoided being tied to American foreign policy. Consequently many Latin Americans have remained willing to work with it; the IAF is, for example, the only development agency that Mexico currently allows to operate within its borders. Its independence from both Congressional politics and U.S. foreign policy allowed the IAF to continue funding a grant given to Nicaragua under Somoza, even after the Sandinistas came to power.

The current attack on the IAF, according to Pat Aufderheide's extensive article in the February 8 issue of *In These Times*, began with an "expose" published by the right-wing Heritage Foundation. That study by ex-CIA-agent Cicto Giovanni called for changes in the IAF because it showed "antipathy toward totalitarian regimes" and supported "projects designed to cause 'structural changes' in societies."

In the wake of Bell's dismissal, the future of the IAF remains uncertain Reagan clearly intends to tie the small agency to his Latin American policies . Few observers now expect the IAF to maintain the reputation for independence and effectiveness it built with the dispersal of 1,600 grants over 13 years.

— the editors

RESOURCES

Movement archive

It has always seemed a bit ironic that historians of the Southern freedom movement have to go North to find many of its most important documents, but there they are, in the capable hands of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. In the mid- '60s no similarly endowed Southern institution was interested enough to seek out movement material, and we must thank the stars that someone was, or much of what Wisconsin has would be lost.

Begun without fanfare in 1965 at the urging of local graduate students who had been civil rights workers in the South, the collection of primary historical material soon expanded to an archive on "the history of grassroots struggles against perceived social injustices or for fundamental social change." The society recently published a guide to the Social Action Collection describing and cataloguing the treasures to be found there. A few examples: the archives of groups and institutions — the Highlander Center, the Congress of Racial Equality, Students for a Democratic Society, and many more — and the papers of prominent activists such as Ella Baker, James Dombrowski, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Carl and Anne Braden. Perhaps best of all, the society found countless movement participants, never famous, who wrote letters home, kept diaries, and saved things. It's all there.

The guide is $12 from the society's Publications Order Department, 816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706.

The Bird is back

Back in the good old days, *The Great Speckled Bird* was the South's leading underground paper. One of the first — 1968 — it outlived *NOLA Express, Kudzu, protean/Radish, Space City News, The Rag,* and many others, until it too folded in 1975. Then a few months ago, some former staffers got together with a bunch of other people and decided it was time for the *Bird* to fly again.

In early May the first copies appeared. Old friends took one look and said it's as if it had never left. But, of course, it is different. For one thing, the four-letter words are gone. More important, the active participation of Atlanta's Afro-American Writers Cooperative ensures

THE NEW *BIRD*

that this will really be a multi-racial newspaper. It doesn't have a paid staff or even an office, and the future is iffy — financial support is urgently needed.

The promise is great, though. The paper will again focus primarily on Atlanta, but with activist-oriented international, national, and state coverage unavailable in the city's mainstream media. A sampling from the May issue: a zoning fight between Seaboard Railway and a neighborhood organization, Coca-Cola's closure of a Guatemalan plant where it has had union troubles, Haitian refugees in Atlanta and Salvadoran refugees near Athens, the Cherokee reunion in Tennessee, racism in Georgia colleges, and much more.

The paper is tabloid size, 24 pages, and it looks good. The promotional catchphrase is: "Give us the word. We'll send you the Bird." Send them $10 for 12 monthly issues — more if you can: P.O. Box 4532, Atlanta, GA 30302; (404) 524-4567.

Buy out the boss

As American industry continues to shut down plants and businesses, workers' attempts to buy out their owners become more common. The National Center for Employee Ownership estimates that about 50 buyouts have occurred in the past decade, over 90 percent of which seem to be succeeding. But a buyout isn't the answer in every case, and it's never easy to tell when it is. The center recently published *An Employee Buyout Handbook* to help workers considering a purchase evaluate whether they should pursue the idea. It's down-to-earth practical, with long lists of questions to consider, especially on the financial front. Also of note: a guide to choosing consultants and a list of organizational and professional resources.

Get the guide from the center: 1611 S. Walter Reed Drive, No. 109, Arlington, VA 22204; (703)979-2375. $12.50 to center members, $25 to others.

Good to have on hand in the same situation is *Union Experiences with Worker Ownership: Legal and Practical Issues Raised by ESOPs, TRASOPs, Stock Purchases, and Co-operatives.* Written by Deborah Groban Olson, a Detroit lawyer whose practice involves labor law and employee ownership cases, the 95-page booklet originally appeared as an article in the *Wisconsin Law Review.* As such, it is full of the legalese and footnotes beloved by scholars, but it's well worth wading through. Olson analyzes actual cases, discusses the practical issues and conflicts they raise, draws sensible conclusions, and proposes strategies. Order copies from the author for $6; $5 each on orders of five or more: 1005 Parker, Detroit, MI 48214; (313)331-7821.

A Personal Story

by Jo Carson

This is a story about stories. I've been collecting it for the last year. I tell my story, then I gather responses like walnuts, crack them open, and add them to the soup.

My story goes like this: I was in San Francisco earlier this year as part of a theater festival. At the end of the festival, we held a retreat. Others besides the performers were there — other writers, a poet, storytellers, I'm not naming names — but they were people whose work I know and respect. I felt most honored to be part of such company. There was an agenda for the day, not very specific, but I was interested to learn more about what these people had done and where they felt their work was going. But early in the day somebody said "I don't want to do this, I want to tell stories."

"Not tall tale kinds of things?"

"No," said the speaker, "I just want to hear what people did yesterday."

The focus of the group changed and there came some wonderful stories, not just about yesterday, but stories of things that had happened to people in their lives and I enjoyed the day — in my opinion, such stories are the most valuable of commodities to trade — but it was no different from what happens regularly around my kitchen table back in Johnson City, Tennessee, when friends drop by and we trade stories of things that have happened to us, some long past, some just yesterday, and the stories lead to all sorts of different conversations, but the centers of the evenings are almost always the stories.

I drove back into San Francisco that evening with a friend who lives there. He could not say enough about how good the day had felt to him, how rare it was he did that kind of thing, how wonderful the stories were. So I asked what he did when he and his friends got together.

"Oh, we go see something," he said.

"What do you talk about?"

"What we've seen or something."

"You mean you don't sit around over beer or coffee or dinner and talk about what has happened to you in your life?"

"Do you?" he asked me.

Well, it turns out I do, and when I got back to Johnson City I told this story to a friend from New York. "Oh, golly," she said, "I never did that sort of thing before I came here. Maybe I'd tell the funny stories, but my friends and I clung to one another for distraction. With the real stories, you engage. You have to."

Well, I carried this story to another friend, a woman who recently moved to Knoxville, Tennessee. It came up in conversation. She was telling me that she couldn't find a community that was willing to come over and have dinner and sit around and talk. Have dinner, maybe, but then you had to go out and see something, or go to a bar and listen to music, or turn on the TV. Nobody knew how to linger at the dinner table. "I feel like I don't have friends anymore," she told me, "I can tell you about the movies and the bluegrass bands, and I can name the people I saw them with, but I can't tell you much more about those people than where they are from or where they work."

Sometimes my friend from Knoxville calls on the phone. "Pop a beer if you've got the time," she says, "I need to tell somebody what's happened to me."

Every time I tell this story, further incidences along the same theme are added. There's quite a collection now. And from the vantage point of my kitchen table, on the basis of a highly unscientific survey, it seems like there are lots of places where people don't share their personal stories anymore, for too many distractions, for lack of time, or trust, or even just lack of opportunity.

At the risk of sounding very corny and simplistic, I'd like to recommend the telling of personal stories again. Invite a friend or two over and turn off the stereo and TV. If you need a name, call it a personal history consciousness-raising group.

It is those stories that give context to our separate lives, it is the sharing of them that makes friends and communities, and it is the telling of them that grows human roots□

*Jo Carson writes poetry, plays (**Horsepower: An Electric Fable** and **Little Chicago**, both produced and toured by The Road Company of Johnson City, Tennessee) and short stories. "I make my living as a writer when I can; when I can't I do something else."*

BY BARBARA ELLEN SMITH

TOO SICK TO WORK

photo by Earl Dotter

TOO YOUNG TO DIE

I first noticed the symptoms of black lung in my own body; it was in about 1968. I noticed the shortness of breath, I noticed the wheezing. I could be in one end of the house and my wife in the other, and she could hear me wheezing.

In a sense it's a humiliating disease, in that a man loses a sense of his manliness. It's when you can't do what you like to do, that's humiliating. I had to lay down my

hammer and saw, and those were the things I got the most pleasure out of. The next thing I liked to do was work in my garden; now my garden's the biggest weed patch in Logan County. There were times in 1971 when I was still working that it was difficult for me to get to the bedroom when I was feeling bad. Now, of course, that's humiliating.

— Willie Anderson

For well over a century, since the first large-scale coal mining in the United States, miners have gone to early graves with black lung disease. Physicians traditionally reassured their coal miner patients that they had a benign "miners' asthma," and suggested that their strangling symptoms of lung disease were due to a liking for alcohol, a dislike of hard work, or perhaps "fear of the mines." Yet there exists virtually no Appalachian hollow or coal town without at least one miner suffering from black lung.

In 1968, in West Virginia this contradiction erupted into a powerful movement, as the generation of coal miners exposed to the especially dusty mechanized workplaces of the post World War II period reached the end of their working lives. Facing retirement, these miners could look forward at best to a scanty pension of $115 per month — if they were fortunate enough to qualify — and daily activities increasingly limited by their struggle to breathe. In West Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, and most other coal-producing states, their occupational respiratory disease was not medically or legally recognized, so most were denied workers' compensation benefits.

Unaware of the tremendous upheaval their actions would set in motion, a few local union activists in southern West Virginia began to organize small meetings about black lung in the fall of 1968. They were opposed not only by the companies, but by the medical establishment and by a corrupt union hierarchy as well. But they also found support — initially from three sympathetic physicians, a handful of VISTA workers, and liberal reporters from the local and national media. Many others were converted to the miners' cause overnight, when the Consolidation Coal Company's massive Farmington No. 9 mine exploded on November 20, 1968, killing 78 people. **Joe Malay** *was one of the early leaders:*

Old Dr. [I.E.] Buff, he was doing stuff on black lung. So we wrote him a letter and he said, "You just name the time." I wrote to about 20 locals and I got one local to come. That was old Woody Mullins's, down here at Gallagher. Ten, maybe 12 people at the first meeting. These people here in District 29, they was scared to death. They was afraid of the union. They saw no one got shot, so they started coming.

Woody Mullins listened to Dr. Buff and said, "Would you come to my local and explain it?" We told Dr. Buff we'd try to get a better audience. So we invited Dr. [Donald] Rasmussen and a few other locals. But still, those first two meetings, 25 would have covered it.

A political strategy soon emerged from these meetings: the miners would wage a legislative battle for the recognition of black lung as a compensable disease under West Virginia's workers' compensation laws. Pursuing a legislative strategy without union endorsement required going to the general public in a bid for political support and funds to pay a lawyer to draft legislation. If they failed, the movement's leaders would be marked as troublemakers; retaliation from employers and union higher-ups could be severe. **Ed Blankenship** *(pseudonym) was still working in the mines in 1968, and remembers those fears well:*

Well, the first thing I heard about — they gave me a call they was going to have a meeting over in Montgomery, over at city hall. We had a meeting over there — about 15 or 20 of us. Everyone was afraid they was going to get fired. We needed $3, $4, $5,000 on Monday morning to pay the lawyer. I don't remember how much, but nobody had it. The main thing they was worrying about, the men was worried the company would come down on them, fire them.

Despite their fears and uncertainty, these few individuals decided to form a Black Lung Association to organize miners, spur community support, and provide a way to raise funds. **Woodrow Mullins** *was one of the founding members:*

We started the West Virginia Black

photo by Douglas Yarrow

CHARLES BROOKS (LEFT), FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE BLACK LUNG ASSOCIATION, AND JOHN RIDDLES

Lung Association [BLA]. We had to raise money for Paul Kaufman, the lawyer. Some were afraid we just couldn't raise the money. So we got down on the street [in Montgomery] — Charles Brooks and myself and Lyman Calhoun and a few others. We stopped on the corner and we said we could *not* be defeated. If we had to sell peanuts on the corner, we had to raise that money.

Charles Brooks [a black man who was the first president of the BLA] put up his house to get money for the lawyer. And we went around to locals. My local, they donated $1,000. Arnold Miller's local, they gave $1,000. Lyman Calhoun's local gave $500. Then others gave $100, $200, $300, like that.

We fixed up a table down there at the capitol. Dr. Rasmussen gave us a bunch of lungs. We just stayed in the capitol and lobbied, when we could. I borrowed a casket off an undertaker at Marmet; we put it in the capitol to show how many people, so many people were dying with it.

As a movement initiated by local union activists around a workplace issue, the first participants were all men, all members of the United Mine Workers of America [UMWA]. However, soon after the BLA became a community organization distinct from the union, meetings became public events and participation broadened. **Leona Hall** *became a leader of the movement in her area:*

In 1969, women wasn't going to as many things as they are now. When they formed the Black Lung Association out at Montgomery, it was all men. So Mr. Calhoun used to report in to me, call me and tell me all about what took place. See, Mr. Calhoun's wife was a cousin to my husband, and he worked with Mr. Calhoun at Burnwell, up on the creek. One day, Mr. Calhoun said, "Why don't you come to the meeting yourself?" I said, "I can't go, I can't go up there. That's just a bunch of men. No women comes." And he said, "Well, Mrs. Malay comes." So his wife and Mr. Mullins' wife and Mr. Sturgill's wife and me all started going.

BLACK LUNG RALLY IN WASHINGTON, DC, MARCH 1981

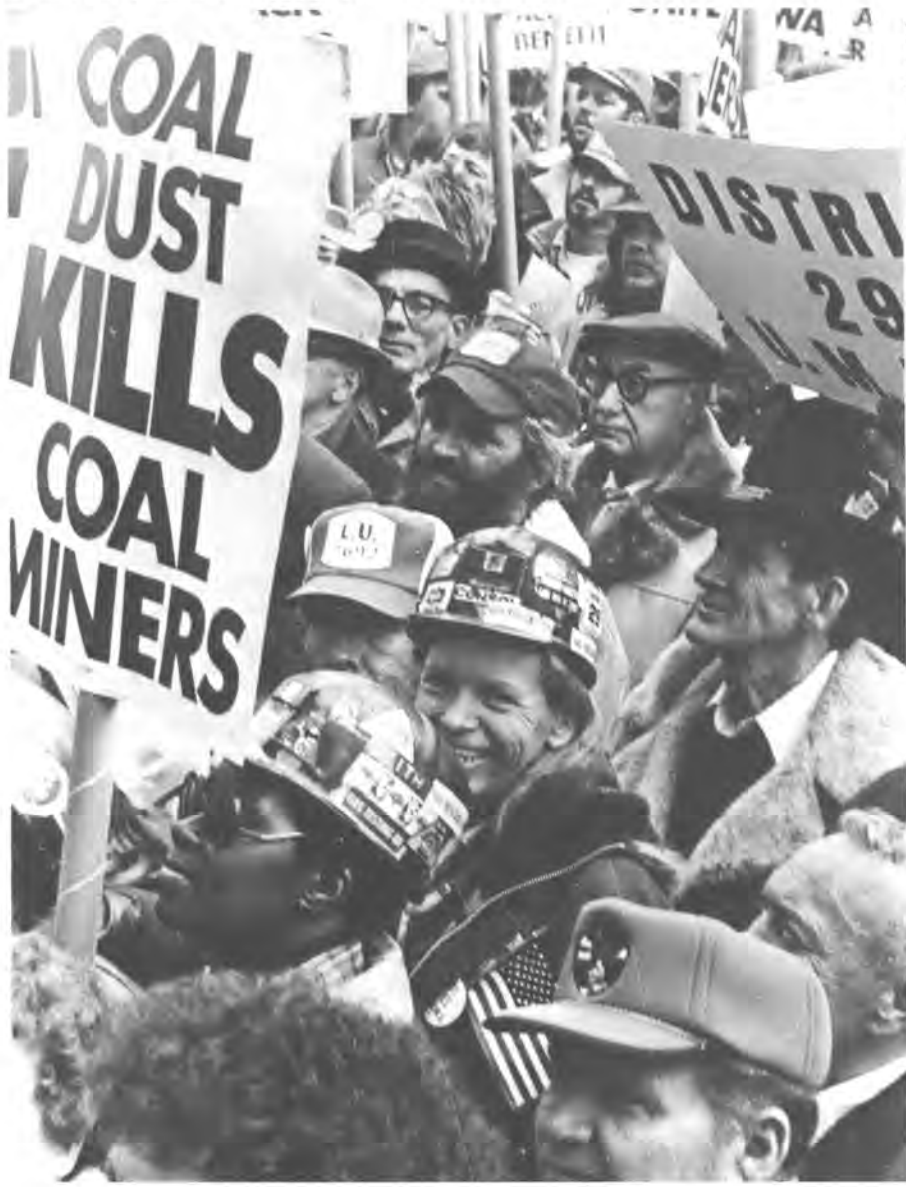


photo by Cosby Totten

Throughout the winter of 1968-69, black lung rallies in the coal camps of southern West Virginia grew in size and exuberance. Every weekend, miners, miners' wives, and widows met in churches, schools, local union halls, and — when there wasn't a place large enough to accommodate them — out of doors in the snow. The main attraction was usually a "real dog and pony show" put on by the physicians, who would bring along a set of real lungs from a victim of black lung. **Clara Cody** *remembers the impression the doctors' performances made:*

We would open with a prayer. Buff would take them lungs and act...well, he went a bit too far sometimes. It's like this, you see, very few people ever saw a set of lungs. He told the men about the bad lungs and he'd yell, "Feel 'em! Feel 'em!"

The rallies galvanized the spirit of unity and promoted the belief that people were entitled *to redress for the injustices they had endured, as* **Mildred Mullins** *recalls:*

I probably was fighting mad. 'Cause, you know what got me, you'd go to these rallies, there'd be these old men there, much older than my husband, couldn't get no breath at all. You'd think they'd go through the ceiling trying to get air. Before they'd get done telling you how dirty they'd been done, they'd be crying. Didn't get no pension, didn't have no hospital card, didn't have nothing to live on. Now, that gets next to you. It still makes me mad when I think about it.

THE BLACK LUNG STRIKE

By mid-February 1969, the West Vir-

ginia legislature was more than halfway through its session, and the BLA-drafted legislation remained stuck in the House Judiciary Committee, as did other related bills. The BLA activists became increasingly restless and concerned about the fate of their efforts. **Joe Malay**:

We tried going down to the legislature, lobbying down there, but Lord, you try to work all day and then drive to Charleston. You can't do it. But the coal operators, they was *living* down there, you know, their lobbyists were. So we just called a big strike. We just quit. Winding Gulf was the first that came out. They had some grievance they struck over. So, maybe to keep 'em from being fired, they said they were striking over black lung. That thing just steamrolled.

The wildcat strike spread quickly through the web of local unions across the state, and within three days, 10,000 miners were on strike. **Earl Stafford** *is a fourth-generation coal miner who became a leader of the movement:*

I went and picketed my mine and others went and picketed theirs. I come and talked to the president of my local and he called the presidents of other locals. He told the men what it was all about. 'Course, we had gotten it on the news so it was well known. So we went over to Itmann, over there to Boone County, Kanawha County, all over. If nothing else, we'd go up there, go to the mine and get with one man, whether we knew him or not, and explain it to him. And he'd say, "Okay, you boys go back to Mingo County or wherever you belong, and we'll take care of it here." The next day all the mines over there would be out.

Opposing the movement was an array of political powerhouses. **Craig Robinson,** *a VISTA worker in southern West Virginia, recounts the coal operators' reaction:*

The operators didn't want any change at all. They took the position that it was "galloping socialism." They definitely didn't want to pay people who had already been injured; they said it was unconstitutional. They said the real epidemic wasn't black lung, that there is a lung disease epidemic, but it's not caused by coal dust. It's caused by smoking and pollution.

Accustomed to calling all the shots within the union, district and international union officials also viewed the rank-and-file upsurge as a threat to their power. **Joe Malay**:

The district over here and the one in Charleston, District 17, they began fighting us. They were working against us. They called us communists; they said we was tearing the union up. Even in the mines they made fun of us. Thought we couldn't get anything, thought we'd gone crazy.

The leaders of the BLA did not publicly criticize their union officials. They stuck to the black lung issue and allowed UMWA president Tony Boyle to condemn himself by opposing an exceedingly popular cause.

About a week into the strike, in late February, a major rally in Charleston, the state capital, drew together the movement's supporters from around West Virginia. Three doctors — Buff, Rasmussen, and Hawey Wells — were joined on the podium by Congressman Ken Hechler, whose dramatic gimmicks rivaled Buff's. **Lonnie Sturgill**:

Ken Hechler's the only politician that fell in and tried to do something about it. He held up this bologna over his head and said, "This is what the coal companies are trying to hand us." Then he gave it to the guy who had the biggest family.

After the rally, the miners marched up the main thoroughfare in Charleston to the state capitol, along with their families and supporters. They crowded into the rotunda and galleries, symbolically taking over the legislature. Smaller numbers remained in Charleston in the days to come, providing a constant reminder of their strike. One legislator remembers vividly the stir the miners' presence caused in the capitol:

The galleries were packed, there was a lot of noise, a lot of talking. It was like sitting on a razor's edge. These guys, the miners, had been waiting in the galleries and they didn't know what was going on. They didn't understand about first readings and second readings and third readings and all this. Meanwhile, the big oaken doors had been shut, pulled on rollers. This wasn't like just closing any door, you had to roll these heavy things shut. And the state police were in the cloak room in the House of Delegates, all because the miners were there.

You have to understand the situation in there. It was really getting bad. I mean, if someone had stood up and said something really inflammatory, there would've been a riot. So I stood up and told the Speaker, "I see the doors are closed and there's an armed guard in the cloak room." I said, "Open the door so I can go out, 'cause if there's going to be trouble in here, I want to be out there with my friends." Well, that brought

photo by Earl Dotter

down the house.

Subsequently, some kind of a bill was reported out and passed. I kind of had the feeling that bill didn't do too much — was largely window-dressing. It was an awfully watered-down compromise. Of course, we received a lot of attention, a lot of publicity from the major news networks. But they cut the heart out of it. And the responsible people, meaning the people responsible for communication — which means the newspapers — they print a big headline, "Black Lung Bill Passes," but they don't say the heart's cut out, that it's no good, that it's not worth a nickel.

Miners remained on strike the day after the billed passed, March 8, 1969, and gathered in Beckley that evening for their final rally. **Don Rasmussen**:

It was at the junior high school, in Beckley. I've never seen a gathering like that. That place was just jammed and overflowing. Not only was it packed, but oh, the spirit! I remember there was one guy that got up and asked for a vote to go back to work. And I can't describe it, but there was a great big roar "NO!" — that they wouldn't go back to work. They were going to wait until the governor signed the bill.

The movement's leaders and advisers were in a difficult position at this rally. The legislation was merely a shadow of what they had sought, but the legislature was no longer in session and the strike was already three weeks old. **Craig Robinson** *recalls this predicament with frustration:*

It was clear at the rally that the miners wanted guidance in what to do. One person got up, told them to go back to work, that they had won a great victory, that they should go back to work. And then he turned to me, and I'll never forget it, he said, "It's not worth the paper it's written on."

Nobody took a strong position in that meeting. I didn't. I mean I made a feeble attempt. I said, "This is not anywhere near what we needed." But it was just too heavy a responsibility on anybody to keep the strike going. They got the bill out, named pneumoconiosis as an occupational disease. Nobody was together enough to think of an alternative strategy. The thing was: stay out 'til the governor signs it. Of course he was going to sign. But they thought they'd stay out 'til then, make a big show of force.

DR. I.E. BUFF

photo by Douglas Yarrow

Although the law itself was clearly inadequate, the strike and rallies marked a turning point and pulled together people who would continue to struggle for many issues in addition to black lung reform.

BLACK LUNG AND THE MINERS FOR DEMOCRACY

After the black lung strike — and partly because of it — the insurgent movement to reform the United Mine Workers of America began to blossom. In May 1969, Pennsylvania miner Joseph A. "Jock" Yablonski, drawing encouragement from the disaffection in West Virginia, announced that he would run a reform campaign against William A. "Tony" Boyle, then president of the UMWA. Yablonski paid with his life, and that of his wife and daughter, for mounting the first serious election challenge to a UMWA president in 40 years. Nevertheless resistance to the union hierarchy continued, as several people at the Yablonskis' funeral made plans to form the Miners for Democracy, and dedicate that organization to overthrowing the union's top leadership and reforming its internal structure.

The rank and file's increasing militance and agitation for union democracy and improved health-democracy and improved health and safety also elicited a response from the federal government. At the end of 1969, Congress passed the Coal Mine Health and Safety Act, detailing to an unprecedented degree, mandatory health and safety practices in the coal industry.

The act set for the first time in the U.S. a respirable dust standard — initially 3.0 mg per cubic meter of air — designed to prevent black lung, and established a federally financed program of compensation through Social Security for disabled miners and the widows of those who died from the disease.

The confusing and arbitrary federal rules governing eligibility for these benefits left thousands of claimants bewildered and angry. With a new focus on the federal compensation program, in 1970 the black lung movement entered its second stage as several young veterans of the 1960s War on Poverty began working with rank-and-file miners, miners' wives, and widows to form county-wide Black Lung Associations in southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky. Often the core members of the associations were lay advocates, trained by sympathetic lawyers and paralegals to assist claimants in their efforts to obtain federal black lung compensation from the Social Security Administration.

photo by Earl Dotter

The actual political purpose of the associations was somewhat ambiguous and later became a source of conflict: many young organizers viewed the black lung issue as a vehicle for maintaining an insurgent spirit within the union, while other activists stressed the BLAs' role in reforming laws and regulations governing the federal program. For the countless miners and widows to whom black lung benefits meant the difference between always doing without and a slim margin of comfort, the associations provided a concrete, much-needed service. For at least three years, until the election of Arnold Miller as president of the UMWA, the BLAs were able to pursue all three purposes simultaneously and quite effectively.

The hub of the early 1970s organizing effort was Designs for Rural Action (DRA), formed by a small group of community organizers in the spring of 1968. Its founders had all been involved in the Appalachian Volunteers, one small company in the War on Poverty. They established DRA as an independent organization through which they could raise money and continue their organizing in West Virginia. **Gibbs Kinderman** *was one of DRA's founders and chief organizers:*

The black lung thing, the strike in 1969, was a real spontaneous kind of thing, as far as I know. It never developed any organizational structure to keep continuing. There was no communication structure; the organization was practically gone. So we decided in DRA that our main priority was going to be the kind of thing that we knew how to do. That we could get people together, get them enough back together on black lung. But it was more using black lung to get at the union. The black lung thing everybody could agree on. We didn't have to directly attack Boyle; you could show by contrast that the union wasn't doing anything.

The black lung association — what was left of it — was so disorganized that they couldn't make a decision among themselves what they wanted to do. So mainly on the staff's feeling of who would be effective, we offered Arnold Miller the job as organizer. We knew he wanted to leave the mines; he was real sick. And also Arnold was somebody — it was real obvious — who could play the leader-of-the-miners role, and was also really good at relating to and dealing with the kind of workers we would be able to recruit in the office, college students.

At the center of each black lung chapter were a few lay advocates — frequently disabled miners, miners' wives, or widows — who were trained to counsel black lung claimants. A public interest law firm headquartered in Charleston, the Appalachian Research and Defense Fund ("Appalred"), trained many of these advocates. **Milton Ogle** *has worked with Appalred since its inception in 1969:*

People started applying for federal black lung benefits right after December 31, 1969, which was when the law was passed. As I recall, the first wave of denials came out in the fall of '70. It was pretty clear that here was a program, that if people didn't know what was happening to them, they were going to be taken. So we sat down and talked about the black lung situation. We agreed to allocate a certain amount of money for the first training session. There were eight or 10 people there and it lasted for about six weeks. What we had was so many days a week in this office; we went through the act, the regs, how do you do interviews, get medical evidence, what do you do with a coroner's report from somebody with a seventh-grade education who said that the man died of a heart attack. During the other days, they were out talking to people, picking up claims, and beginning to do cases.

Some who participated in the rallies and strike of 1968-69 became leaders of the local black lung chapters during this second phase. **Earl Stafford** *was one:*

In Mingo County, we usually had two meetings a month, the second and fourth Saturday or Sunday of the month. There for a long time, the building would be full — two or three hundred at a meeting. Then maybe sometime there wouldn't be so many, but they'd keep up with what was going on. Lot of people just couldn't come out. Then we set up a chapter in Dingess 'cause it was so far for them people to come.

We did an awful lot for people, me and Carl Clark both, we represented an awful lot of people on Social Security and black lung, too. All of the hearing judges we went before said we were doing a lot better than lawyers. Said, "You know conditions, you can explain the mines better." Lawyers never been in a coal mine. You know Jim Haviland? He'd

photo by Douglas Yarrow

come over here and we'd get a day care center or something like that and hold a training session. He taught us about all we know. But then he'd kid us and say, "You fellows know more about this than I do."

The black lung chapters borrowed some pressure tactics from the welfare rights movement in their efforts to force local Social Security offices to be more considerate and accountable to claimants. **Bill Weiss** *was a black lung organizer in Mingo County:*

At first we had some meetings with Social Security in the Logan office. They had an office to handle Logan and Mingo Counties, which was ridiculous. We couldn't even see the claims files then; we got that changed. One time, we went up there and gave 'em some demands; 30 or 40 people were involved. How'd it go? "We demand the right to be treated like human beings, not like dogs." Social Security wasn't prepared to administer something like that, where people knew their rights. There was all this built-in elitism. They were typical bureaucrats and resented people taking away some of their power.

National lobbying to liberalize the eligibility standards for black lung benefits brought the various BLA chapters together for strategy sessions and joint trips to Washington, DC. **Milton Ogle:**

From June of '71 on up until May of '72, there was the most effective grassroots lobbying I've ever seen. There were people, especially people who had gone through the training, who could cite chapter and verse of what was wrong with the law. They knew how to cite the weaknesses in the x-rays, in the cracker box breathing tests, in the mobile x-rays. There was a lot of good communication. All of these things seemed to be meshing together.

Helen Powell, *a black lung leader for many years, made countless lobbying trips to Washington:*

We had cars and buses going to Washington, then smaller groups going twice a month. We got donations from banks, car dealers, business people, anybody we could. We'd go in a group and just go from one office to another and not sign the guest book. If a Congress-

man recognized one person, he'd think we were all from his district. You know, when you go to Washington, they don't see you as a person, they see you as a vote.

We'd sleep in churches, or stay with friends. We ate covered dish dinners, peanut butter sandwiches. Right to this day, I can't stand peanut butter; I walk by it in the grocery store and gag. But despite all the peanut butter and cement floors, I would do it again. I have always felt that if you can do a thing, do it.

These months of lobbying paid off in the spring of 1972, when Congress passed amendments to the 1969 Coal Mine Health and Safety Act liberalizing eligibility for black lung benefits. Aware that their victory could evaporate if the Social Security Administration developed restrictive regulations for the implementation of the amendments, activists continued to lobby — this time not with Congress, but with the Social Security bureaucracy. **Gail Falk** *is a lawyer who worked many years for black lung reform:*

When the '72 amendments were passed, Social Security was writing the regs that finally came out in September. During that summer, there was this time when black lung people went to Washington and had this knock-down, drag-out session with Social Security. That resulted in the interim standards, under which many, many people were paid.

What I always thought about that was that the standards were outstandingly liberal in terms of people who were already disabled, but they let the permanent standards go, which kind of sold out the working miners for the ones already disabled. Which I think probably reflected the needs of the people doing the negotiating. Both Social Security and black lung people referred to that later and said it was the only time in history that Social Security sat down and really negotiated with black lung people.

Later that same year, Arnold Miller, a former black lung activist, was elected president of the UMWA. Other black lung leaders soon ran for district or international office in the newly democratized union; a few others were hired by the reform administration. **Joe Malay** *says that these promotions had mixed results:*

That black lung chapter there at Montgomery, we kept meeting there 'til Miller ran for president. After he got to be president I went to work as executive board member, and Leona Hall, she was working down in Charleston for the UMW Field Service Office. So that just about took all the people out of it. When you take away people who kind of lead the thing, you don't get much results.

Designs for Rural Action also closed its doors after the election victory of Arnold Miller and the Miners for Democracy. **Gibbs Kinderman:**

I guess probably if it hadn't been for DRA and the black lung work, the probability of Arnold Miller being elected president of the mine workers would have been a lot lower and the cast of characters running the union would have been a lot different. And then it brought people together, built collective strength to do something, changed the law. I don't know. Kept us off the streets. It had a lot to do with our age, with the times. In terms of raising hell and causing trouble it was the most effective thing I ever worked with.

DISSENSION AND DECLINE

Arnold Miller's election in the fall of 1972 marked the beginning of the third and apparently final phase in the recent black lung movement. Although many organizers and trainers of lay advocates either moved on to other causes or went to work for the union, others took their places. Generous "interim" benefits eligibility standards, established after the 1972 amendments, unleashed a flood of claims work and gave the Black Lung Associations a clear constituency; in some counties, the organizations were revived and new leaders emerged.

But political differences and weaknesses within the black lung movement also began to surface. On July 1, 1973, the U.S. Department of Labor began administering the black lung compensation program under relatively strict permanent standards of eligibility, and the coal industry, now potentially liable for new claims, contested virtually every application for benefits. Even a highly skilled lay advocate was hard-pressed to pursue a claim successfully; claimants turned increasingly to lawyers in what were often futile attempts to win benefits.

In addition to the burden this placed on the BLAs, there was disagreement about whether they should rely on the UMWA for money, organizational expertise, and leadership, or whether they should maintain an independent and

photo by Earl Dotter

possibly critical relationship with the union. Splits developed between UMWA members and those — such as widows — who were not UMWA members.

The BLAs' exclusive focus on compensation gave them a base of older workers, wives, and widows, but left the organization without a significant following among working miners, who came increasingly from a younger generation concerned about issues other than black lung compensation. Moreover, insofar as the BLAs succeeded in winning compensation claims and liberalizing the benefits requirements, they diminished their own base of aggrieved claimants. Each success meant one fewer person who needed the BLA. One by one, the chapters lapsed into inactivity, although even today a few stalwart individuals doggedly pursue black lung reform.

In 1973, **Grant and Penny Crandall** *came as law students to work with the Mingo County Black Lung Association:*

I'd say in 1973 the Mingo County Black Lung Association was probably in its most dynamic period, at its height. Right after the '72 amendments, a whole lot of claims were in fact getting paid. But by 1974, the organization was a bit smaller. The same four or five people were leading it, but they were getting tired. It was all based on the ups and downs of the claims thing. They agreed to let a few older people through in the '72 amendments, in exchange for a drastic cutoff. By 1974, it was pretty clear that they were really slamming the door in people's faces. Once you got sucked into that — into focusing on claims — then there wasn't much you could do. The number of turndowns was so high, demoralization was creeping in.

Benita Whitman, *who was a lay advocate based in Raleigh County, has similar memories:*

1969 was a mass movement, but by 1973 to 1975, people needed much more technical information. The lobbying became much more sophisticated. Some of what happened was that you had some people with a lot of knowledge, the lay advocates, but you didn't have a broad base anymore.

Recognizing that their strategy had to change, some black lung activists tried to forge closer ties with working miners. But by 1974, the BLAs were not the only groups seeking support from working miners for black lung reform. Delegates attending the 1973 UMWA convention, the first for the Miners for Democracy, arranged for union financing of black lung claims assistance and made black lung reform their top legislative priority. In the same year, UMWA president Arnold Miller established a Field Service Office in Charleston, West Virginia, and hired several black lung activists to staff it. The relationship between these different initiatives and the actors involved in each soon grew extremely complicated and difficult. **Gail Falk** *went to work in the Field Service Office in the fall of 1973:*

1977 MEETING TO DISCUSS HEALTH BENEFIT CUTBACKS

photo by Douglas Yarrow

Really, the first idea of the Field Service Office, it was to be Arnold's office, and it *was* his office — at first. That office was to be his base in the coalfields. For the first year and a half, there were like a hundred letters a day. They all said something like, "Dear Arnold Miller, please help me get my black lung — or my pension." Basically, dealing with the flood of letters became the principal day-to-day task of that office.

Linda Meade [first director of the Field Service Office] saw herself as identified with the black lung movement, with trying to keep it going. I don't think she originally anticipated or saw as inevitable any split or division, because she originally had a lot of loyalty to Arnold — as a lot of people did. They thought they were friends and would have access to him. It turned out that both organizationally and individually none of those people had any access to him.

During that year, 1973, a lot more things happened. It was decided that there should be a regional black lung meeting and that was scheduled for the high school in Pikeville. In November, the second week in November. One thing decided at the Pikeville meeting was that the Black Lung Association would send representatives to the UMWA convention the next month. That convention was probably a watershed in terms of splits between the union faction of the Black Lung Association and other people. Because after the convention mandate there was the UMW Legislative Department always in the black lung business, and also that convention was a very concrete thing that sort of defined people as in or out. It wasn't like other meetings where people could just come.

Underlying the squabbles over access to the finances and other resources of the UMWA were political differences within the black lung movement. By 1975-76, Miller's credibility was in a nose dive, lengthy wildcat strikes repeatedly rocked the Southern coalfields, and industry officials frantically turned to manage-

Black Lung and the Doctors

All my life, as far back as I can remember, I've known coal miners had a lung problem. My father, my husband, my brother — Lord, I've lived with it! Everyone was aware that there was a lung problem.

Okay, see: the doctors were very much company owned. There was a three-year time limit to draw what they called silicosis. These men mostly would go to a hospital owned by the company, to a doctor owned by the company, and they would not tell the man 'til three years was up, so they didn't get compensation. For third-stage silicosis, you got $3,000. $3,000 for a whole life spent in the mines is pitiful.

— Clara Cody

My dad retired in '48; he had 35 years in. He would come home and would be give out. I remember him coming home, layers of dust on him, and he'd stretch out on the porch. Everyone then would have to bathe, they didn't have a bathhouse. We would be feeding the chickens, cooking the dinner, and he still wouldn't be taking his bath. He'd be give out, couldn't breathe at all; he'd just lie there. They left him off on the other side of the road, and he'd have to stop two or three times before he could get here.

I think a lot of doctors, hospitals, they saw it but they were afraid to call it that. The coal companies sent all their business to the hospitals and clinics, and they were afraid that if they found too many out of a work force with it, the company would pressure 'em. I know it worked like that. They called it miners' asthma. They said coal dust was good for you. They said it was good for you!

— Bill Bailey

photo by Earl Dotter

DR. DONALD RASMUSSEN IN HIS BLACK LUNG CLINIC

BLACK LUNG VICTIM WITH A YEAR'S SUPPLY OF MEDICATION

photo by Earl Dotter

ment consultants, the federal courts, and eventually a collective bargaining offensive in their search for "labor stability."

The strikes represented in part miners' disappointment with and rejection of established, "legitimate" processes for resolving problems — such as collective bargaining, the grievance procedure, litigation, and lobbying. Some black lung activists identified with the radicalism they believed was implicit in the strikes; others continued to support the union's effort to lobby for legislative reform. **Joe Mulloy** *was a working miner active in the Beckley BLA:*

I remember endless debates in the courthouse down in Beckley over lobbying, strikes, letter writing. What it was was a difference in philosophy: was the Black Lung Association going to be a reasonable organization that goes for lobbying? Or was it going to be a militant, fighting organization? There was a lot of struggle around lobbying. That became the showcase of the International — lobbying — getting a bunch of crippled guys up there and march them around. There was a real difference between that kind of lobbying and the lobbying we did over getting the Department of Labor to declare a new election after Yablonski was killed. People went up and threatened and raised hell and said, "This is long enough. We're going to shut off your lights."

Conflicting goals and strategies within the black lung movement became unmistakably apparent in 1975-76, during a legislative campaign for automatic entitlement to benefits after a certain number of years' employment in the mines. When the UMWA brought 3,000 coal miners to Washington in 1975 to rally in support of the legislation, most black lung activists participated, but many were dissatisfied with the union's role. Some felt the UMWA was undercutting their leadership on the black lung issue; others believed the union was trying to direct their activism into legal, respectable channels — that is, lobbying.

In the early spring of 1976, some members of the Beckley BLA denounced compromises that had been reached in the U.S. House, and came back with their own tactic — a wildcat strike in support of automatic entitlement after 15 years in the mines. Other black lung activists, however, felt the strike was ill-timed. Confusion reigned for a week in southern West Virginia, and the wildcat strike fizzled. At the end of 1976, the U.S.

Senate defeated automatic entitlement in any form.

Due largely to UMWA lobbying and the persistent mystique of the power of the black lung movement, legislation expanding the black lung benefits program did pass Congress in 1978. But three years later, the reforms crumpled under the Reagan administration's demolition crew. Today, the rate of initial claims approval is approximately 3 percent, the lowest in the 15-year history of the program. In the perverse logic of the Reagan administration, this low rate is proof that black lung is no longer a serious or widespread problem.

photo by Earl Dotter

The setbacks of the late '70s do not diminish what the black lung movement signified and accomplished in its time. The Black Lung Associations drew together women and men, black and white, into the first mass movement over occupational disease occuring in the history of the U.S. They organized in both the workplace and the community, and successfully challenged the interlocking authority of a mammoth federal bureaucracy, conservative medical establishment, and miserly coal industry. Their efforts won financial benefits for almost an entire generation of older miners and some widows, many of whom would otherwise have been destitute. As part of the larger union insurgency, the black lung movement helped to reassert the voice of the rank and file within the United Mine Workers, and to open up its positions of power to a new generation of leadership — of whom Rich Trumka, elected UMWA president in 1982, is one example. Trumka is currently leading UMWA negotiations with the coal industry over a contract scheduled to expire in October 1984. He has a clear mandate from the UMWA convention to negotiate on the basis of no backward steps.*

Those who participated in the black lung movement have drawn from it many different lessons and conclusions. If they had it to do over, some would "do exactly like we did it from the beginning."

* In 1977, Miller headed up a new slate of candidates and narrowly won reelection as UMWA president. In 1979, ill health and the pressures of his position led Miller to turn over the leadership to Sam Church, his vice president and a former Boyle supporter. Rick Trumka defeated Church in a landslide election in 1982.

Others would change their tactics.
Craig Robinson:

If I had it to do over, I would think more in terms of building an organization at the beginning and in terms of developing leadership, rather than concentrating on just getting things done. I fell short there in building an organization and building leadership.

Benita Whitman:

The Black Lung Association, what they did was at a time when there was a vacuum in terms of meeting coal miners' needs and interests. They organized miners, wives, and widows in this region and represented their needs and interests. They made the coal companies accountable somewhat, but the way developed was to ask compensation for a loss. It wasn't [to prevent] the loss itself.

Some of the brown lung people have talked a lot with the Black Lung Association and have used that somewhat as a model. And I think I would sum up after these years of involvement that that's a mistake. You have to stress non-legislative goals or you have to talk about working people or changing conditions in the workplace, because it's always been cheaper to pay people rather than change the workplace.

The significance of the black lung movement extended beyond the coal fields. It marked the beginning of a ferment over occupational disease in other industries that continues to this day. Fifteen years ago, the grisly phrase "black lung" did not mean much to most Americans — nor did "brown lung" or "asbestosis." Some black lung activists recently joined with workers from other industries to form a "breath of life" coalition, dedicated to preventing the occupational sources of lung disease and compensating those already disabled by it. Indeed, a feeling of firm solidarity and even personal identification with all who face workplace dangers or struggle with occupational disabilities is one of the most moving and hopeful legacies of the black lung movement. **Willie Anderson:**

I don't care if it's the cotton workers, the steel workers, or the coal miners, nothing will be done unless you have the people aroused, under their own leadership. You don't get anything in this country unless you raise the roof off everything. And I hope they do. Because the black lung fight isn't really effective until we all — the asbestos worker, or the iron worker, or the textile worker, or any worker in this country — get the same amount of protection, the same amount of justice.□

Barbara Ellen Smith lives in West Virginia and was a participant in the black lung movement.

"Would you let people just come and take your land without fighting?"

— Ettar Richardson

DETERMINED TO BUILD A COMMUNITY

by Ann Morris

In 1980, when North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt announced plans to open a Consolidated Diesel Company plant in Nash County — with guarantees to the company of water and sewerage, highway improvements, a training facility, and additional land — the residents of Bloomer Hill and Village Heights began fighting to save their land. Though the two small communities faced formidable opponents, they banded together to demand a say in what happened to their homes and land.

The two unincorporated subdivisions are located across the highway and a short distance down the road from Consolidated Diesel, a joint project of the Indiana-based Cummins Engine Company and the J.I. Case Company. Capital investment for the heavy industry totaled $355 million, with a projected work force of 1,800. Approximately 625 people live in the two beleagured communities, which together occupy only about 60 acres of land: Bloomer Hill with 55 acres and Village Heights with approximately five. Of the 159 houses on this land, almost half are considered substandard and 34 are without indoor plumbing. A small percentage of the residents work in agriculture and the rest in domestic service and in non-durable industries.

Income, education levels, and other economic indicators in the two communities are similar to those in other rural, semi-rural, and newly developing urban areas of the South. These factors make the South a source of low-wage labor

EDITH PIERCE

photos by Jennifer R. Labalme

and cheap land for new industry — causing some economic and political observers to refer to Southern states as "domestic colonies." The struggle to build and improve their community is not unique to Bloomer Hill and Village Heights; similar battles are taking place throughout the region.

In the fall of 1983 Ann Morris visited Nash County to interview some of the principal participants in that struggle. And ***Southern Exposure*** *spoke to Phil White, a community legal educator with the Eastern Carolina Legal Services program, who provided local residents with technical assistance and moral support in their efforts to persuade county, state, and industry representatives to address their needs and grievances. White summarized his findings in a report entitled "Organizing Black Rural Communities in the South," from which he allowed us to draw.*

"We built this community from scratch."
— Katie Roberson

Alexander Evans was a teenager when his family bought one of the swampy half-acre lots in the community which is now Bloomer Hill. He remembers how they filled in the land by "hauling dirt, pushing it by a wheelbarrow," and "dumping in pine bark to soak up the water." After the Evanses built up the land, they constructed their own house, as several other local families had done before them. By the time the Evanses moved in in 1948, a community related by blood and hard work was sprouting up to replace the weeds.

For the next 10 years, the growing community remained nameless. In 1958 a new school was built to replace the one next door to the Evanses home, and a group of residents decided the community should buy the old one for use as an activities center. The residents belonged to a number of different churches, traditionally the centers of community activity in the rural South, and they felt they needed a common meeting ground right there in their own community to serve as a unifying force.

Individuals and families chipped in money to make a small down payment to purchase the building. At that time the group decided to name the building and the community Bloomer Hill in honor of Hugh Bloomer, who had made it possible for them to own their property.

In the 1930s when Bloomer bought a white house on a hill surrounded by 100 marshy acres near the town of Whitakers, North Carolina, he made known his plans to found a Jewish community there. As the story goes, he was run out of town after a controversial marriage to a member of the wealthy landowning Braswell family. When he moved North, Bloomer left the swampy estate to the Braswell family with the stipulation that the land be sold only to blacks. Some say he was a progressive man who wanted to help local sharecroppers own their own land, while others contend he did it to spite the bigoted whites of Whitakers.

Whatever his reasons, several sharecropping families living on the Braswell farm took advantage of their first opportunity to own land and purchased lots in 1945. And by 1958 the small and growing community had formed the Bloomer Hill Development Club. Katie Roberson, who was in grade school at the time, remembers how she felt about the decision to name the community: "Before that, there were lots of houses here, but when you came here all you could say was you were going home. Afterwards, you could say you were going to Bloomer Hill."

Walking through the community she loves, Roberson nods toward the large wooden schoolhouse. "That's our community center. We have everything there — gospel singing, preaching, discos, community meetings, day care, voter registration. We've had Sunday school there every Sunday for the last 23 years."

Roberson's classmate, Ida Cooper, also feels a strong affection for the community her grandparents helped found and says its history makes it special. "I look back at the type of people who came here," she says proudly, "basically, they were hard workers, determined to build a community. And eventually they did. The fact that we even have a community center shows how we band together." Cooper returned to Bloomer Hill several years ago to raise her family after attending college in Durham and living in Washington, D.C., for eight years.

Down the road from the community center is a fenced-in area with a tall concrete block in the center — Bloomer Hill's well. In 1969 the community members formed a water commission and borrowed money from the Farmers Home Administration to dig the well and build a water system. "That way we could have control over it ourselves," Roberson explains.

The houses in Bloomer Hill range from three-room wooden shotguns on concrete blocks, with outhouses in back, to brick ranch-style structures with two-car garages. The lots are small and most of the backyards have vegetable gardens.

At one end of Bloomer Hill is the railroad track separating Nash from Edgecombe County, and at the other end is U.S. Route 301. The community borders the Whitakers town line to the north, and the Consolidated Diesel plant to the south. Along the highway are Bloomer Hill's three businesses: a general store, a funeral parlor, and a barber shop. Roberson's parents own the one-room store, and today her mother is handing out sodas to three of her grandchildren. Business is slow at the store; it's not cold enough for sitting around the wood stove, and the older children aren't yet out of school so the video games are silent. A TV set sits on a chair in the middle of the dusty floor.

There's dust everywhere. Crews of men are digging trenches in the dirt road preparing to lay the red pipes that are stacked on every corner in town. Bulldozers are scooping up the sandy soil — soil Roberson says will remain in Bloomer Hill, "so if we ever need dirt again, we won't have to go out and buy it." The construction is the most visible sign of recent victories to gain improvements in the community, the result of a three-year fight for much-needed sewer lines, curbs, gutters, and asphalt streets.

"Questions of self-determination and power became real for the community for the first time."
— Phil White

Other successes are harder to see. "It's all black people here now," Roberson says. "One time we had a white man

buy land and put a slaughterhouse in. He was raising skunks, too, and it stunk up all Bloomer Hill. We finally had to run him out." The dilapidated slaughterhouse is now a prayerhouse, with a hand-lettered sign announcing weekly meetings.

On the edge of town is a grassy meadow which three years ago was an open landfill. Roberson explains that the importance residents attach to their community is reflected in their persistent efforts to get the dump closed. "Most of the people living in Bloomer Hill have their roots here. We remember how hard we had to work to build up the swamps, how we built the community from scratch. And so we just don't want to leave. That's why I'm still here today. Children stay to keep on with what their parents made." Roberson herself has lived here since she was a baby and is now secretary of the community club. "This place might not look like nothing to some, but to those of us who've lived here it looks like the best place ever."

For years Bloomer Hill's residents watched trucks from the neighboring, mostly-white town of Whitakers dump barrels of chemicals, dead animals, and other debris into the open pit. Worried about their children playing there, they wrote letters to the Whitakers mayor asking him to close the dump. When the mayor refused, they appealed to the Nash County Board of Commissioners, and a community delegation took up the issue with the Greenville Health Department. Still no action was taken. When PCBs were found in neighboring counties, Bloomer Hill citizens became even more concerned.

Residents continued writing letters, filing complaints, and pressuring the board to close the landfill. In October 1981, when still nothing had been done, a group of residents decided they would have to bypass local officials in order to get action. A group of approximately 20 representatives took an envelope of snapshots of the dump to Raleigh and met with one of Governor Hunt's aides. The aide wrote a letter to the Whitakers mayor threatening a fine, and within a week the landfill was closed. Later, the pit was filled in and grass planted. "Closing this landfill was our first successful fight," Roberson remarks.

The landfill was only one of several issues facing the people of Bloomer Hill during this period. The gigantic multimillion-dollar plant, Consolidated Diesel, was moving in next door, and residents could get no answers about what effect it would have on their community. Governor Hunt had gone all out to recruit the high-tech industry, luring it with promises of free water and sewer lines, land for expansion, and other benefits. When Consolidated Diesel announced its decision to locate in Nash County, Hunt exclaimed to an audience in the county seat of Rocky Mount that the plant would mean "Christmas throughout the year" for eastern North Carolina.

EVANS GROCERY STORE

Phil White, from Eastern Carolina Legal Services, disputes this oversimplification of the benefits of incoming industry: "One would think that the development of industry would bring with


EDITH PIERCE

it a higher level of social development and progress for the immediate communities," he says. "However, this has not always been the case, particularly for the rural black communities. Jobs, while they provide some cushion, are no absolute guarantee for the community's social progress. The majority of the Southern poor, in fact, who do work still are living at the poverty level due to the low wage scale. What is becoming a common occurrence in these communities, resulting from industrial expansion, is that the residents are being forced off their last bit of land, having their communities broken up, and scattering longtime friends, relatives, and the elderly from their only source of social and economic reinforcement, their communities."

True to this pattern, there were no presents under the tree for Bloomer Hill residents. In fact, the community was being used to help provide services for Consolidated Diesel, while its own rights and welfare were being ignored. In the excitement of snaring the industry, no one had bothered to tie down the logistics of who would pay for the water and sewer lines to the plant, or where the 47 acres for the plant's expansion would come from. Local municipalities were refusing to pay, and the county's answer was to ask Whitakers, the town nearest the plant, to apply for a $5 million Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG).

In the UDAG application, Whitakers asked for funds to pay for the plant's water, sewer, and land. The grant also requested $844,000 for improvements in Bloomer Hill and the relocation of 12 homes there. Because Bloomer Hill qualified as a "pocket of poverty," its inclusion gave the grant a better chance of being approved.

Though Bloomer Hill was included in the grant proposal, its residents were not informed about the application. They learned about it when an Eastern Carolina Legal Services advocate informed residents of a small notice in a Nashville newspaper about a public hearing. To apply for a UDAG, a locality is required to hold two public hearings in order to give citizens a chance to participate. When Bloomer Hill representatives asked the Whitakers town clerk why they had not been informed about these hearings, they were told that because the community was not an incorporated part of Whitakers, their participation was not guaranteed.

The community was angry about being excluded from the grant process, but was even more outraged that the grant application had even been filed. For three years Bloomer Hill residents had applied unsuccessfully for their own block grant, and each time county officials had denied them needed support. Now it seemed that the county was in collusion to push the Whitakers UDAG grant through at Bloomer Hill's expense. Residents worried about the impact of the grant, and were suspicious of officials who had a history of ignoring their needs and rights.

Even improvements the UDAG promised to Bloomer Hill were suspect. When residents asked Legal Services to study the grant proposal, their suspicions were confirmed. The "water and sewer improvements" mentioned in the grant would bypass the black community. To run the lines to homes would cost thousands of extra dollars which the grant didn't cover. The beneficiaries of the grant would be Consolidated Diesel and the white residents of Whitakers. But the water they would be using would come from Bloomer Hill.

Another sore spot was the grant's mention of relocating 12 homes to make room for Consolidated Diesel's expansion — the training school that the governor had promised the company. When White questioned the county commissioners about which homes were involved, he was told the proposal referred to 12 homes directly across the street from the plant. White pointed out that these constituted a separate community (Village Heights), not part of Bloomer Hill. But the officials foresaw this argument and had acted to incorporate the homes through rezoning. No one in either Bloomer Hill or Village Heights had been informed of the rezoning, and the two communities became allies when this information surfaced.

As details of similar behind-the-scenes planning emerged throughout the spring of 1981, increasing numbers of people in Bloomer Hill began to attend community meetings. Those who had for years fought against the landfill and for Bloomer Hill's own block grant were joined by their neighbors; soon monthly meetings became weekly meetings, and attendance soared to as many as 150 residents.

By May of that year, the Bloomer Hill Community Development Association, with Katie Roberson and Ida Cooper as newly elected officers, was convinced that evidence of bad faith in the county's dealings with the community was sufficient for them to demand a meeting with the county board of commissioners. When a date was set, the community club sent local children out on their bikes, knocking on doors to spread the word. More than a quarter of the town's residents drove the 30 miles to Nashville for this crucial meeting.

"The club had told everyone we were going to ask the commissioners some specific questions and that we wanted answers," Roberson recalls. "The whole community was behind us. We went in there, and had every seat taken, lining all up and down the wall, and even going out the door." The crowd was so large that the meeting had to be moved from the commissioners' chambers to the courthouse.

The commissioners were surprised by the show of community strength and solidarity, and by the tough questions: Why had Bloomer Hill not been notified of the public hearings about the UDAG grant? Under whose authority were the houses being relocated? What kind of

DAVIS BARBER SHOP

compensation would the residents receive? What impact would the increase in traffic have on the community? What guarantee existed that the plant would employ people from the area?

"We'd been sidestepped for so long that we finally just hollered out," says Alexander Evans, who was one of the representative speakers at the meeting. His uncle, Frank Evans, recalls, "We went in and made our position known. We let them know that either you do what you're supposed to do for us or we'll remember you at the polls. If you can do it for Whitakers, Battleboro, and other towns, then you can do it for Bloomer Hill. We just felt we'd been passed by for too long. We really should have gotten funds back in 1947 and 1948 when this place was developed. That's what happens in other areas. But being what they at that time called 'colored,' we never got what we deserved."

The all-white board gave no answers, and on most issues the commissioners said either that they didn't know or that the matter was outside their jurisdiction. The empty promise to "follow up" on the landfill problem was the only pledge commissioners made that evening.

Tempers flared at one point in the meeting when Bill Rose, an industrial development consultant for the commissioners, commented that the people of Bloomer Hill should be thankful; the commissioners, he said, were "getting them off the backs of garbage trucks."

"Everybody got upset at that," Roberson recalls. "It was racist, and we do have lots of people in our community in sanitation work."

Community representatives demanded and received an apology for Rose's remark. But the group left the meeting more determined than ever to get some answers and demand accountability from the elected officials. "We let them know the community was stirred up," declares Roberson. The unexpected pressure placed on the commissioners by the community's persistence, publicity around the issue, and the threat of violent retaliation against the black community by Klan elements among the white population began to have an effect on the board.

Two months after that meeting, the County planning director responsible for preparing Bloomer Hill's previous block grant applications resigned, as did one of the county commissioners. Both cited only personal reasons — not the controversy — but the Bloomer Hill residents knew there were other factors.

When the news came that the Whitakers UDAG application had been denied, the Bloomer Hill Community Development Association decided to try again for its own grant. This time the members' hard work paid off. They were awarded $738,000 to put down much-needed sewer lines and add curbs, gutters and asphalt to their streets.

Nash County's new planning director, Beth Shields, was instrumental in preparing the grant but she credits the community for its success. "It helped a lot having a very active organization," she says. "Their participation was impressive and important — sometimes we'd get 60 or 70 people out at a community meeting to talk about the grant. They also did a lot of legwork. They went out and did the survey themselves, and one of the members even went to a workshop on grant writing."

"Bloomer Hill got that grant because Bloomer Hill made it clear it was not going to sit back and be silent," adds Phil White. "They really educated themselves around the issues. The whole thing made the community much more conscious of itself. Real leadership was developed, and questions of power and self-determination became real for the community."

The community's effort to get the block grant taught Bloomer Hill important lessons, Frank Evans recalls. "It's been a hard-fought battle. There were funds coming in all around us, so it was frustrating. But the people stayed in there, plugging away. Everybody's learned that it takes patience, that change isn't going to happen overnight. The greatest lesson that was taught here is that it takes togetherness. We have our fussing and fighting — if you'd come to some of our community meetings you'd think we were all enemies, even brothers and sisters — but when we come out of that door it all stays in there. We've learned it has to be that way, that we have to stick together."

KATIE ROBERSON AND HER YOUNGEST SON

"We were like little bitty ants being stepped on by elephants."
— Bessie Pittman

Down the road in Village Heights, the families fighting relocation were learning a similar lesson. When the contents of the UDAG grant application became public, residents in the 12 houses across the street from Consolidated Diesel thought they might have to move to make way for a wider road. And they quickly joined together to oppose the relocation.

"When we bought the house here four years ago, we expected to live there all our lives," says Anniebell Bryant. "We just didn't think it was right for someone to come along and say, 'You've got to get up and go,' and you don't have any say."

At first the 12 families fought just for information. No one would tell them whether or not they had to move, or how much compensation they would get if they did. They met with county and plant officials, local businessmen, and bureaucrats from the state department of transportation, but got no firm answers. They waited for the state to condemn their homes, as it was threatening to do, but nothing happened.

Bessie Pittman remembers how difficult it was to be in such limbo. "We just kept going on, from meeting to meeting, not knowing for sure what would happen to us. All that upset and aggravation — well, it will just do something to your mind. We were just like little bitty ants being stepped on by elephants."

By the fall of that year, the people of Village Heights were tired of being stepped on. So when Governor Hunt announced that he was coming to the area for the groundbreaking ceremony at Nash Technical Institute, a college being built to train workers for Consolidated Diesel, the 12 families placed large signs in their yards. One asked, GOVERNOR HUNT: ARE YOU A GROUNDBREAKER OR A HOMEBREAKER? Another stated, THOU SHALT NOT STEAL, CONSOLIDATED DIESEL.

"We wanted to let people know we were there and weren't going to be pushed around." explains Anniebell Bryant.

As soon as the signs went up, the pressure came down. Worried about the impression they would make on Governor Hunt, local business and civic leaders, and county commissioners began badgering residents to remove their signs. Pittman was visited on the job at Nash General Hospital by one commissioner, and, though she doesn't talk about it now, the conversation was obviously threatening. "He tried to pressure her to take down the signs 'til she got so frightened and upset she didn't know what to do," remembers Alexander Evans, who went over to the hospital to bring her home. "But she didn't take down her sign."

According to White, other residents from both Bloomer Hill and Village Heights were similarly harassed on their jobs during the course of their efforts to obtain just compensation. Commissioner Bob Silas, for example, visited Katie Roberson's job trying to get her supervisor to put pressure on her to sell her home. "When she got off from work there were people there from the community to meet her. They put their arms around her and took her home," says White. He believes that the level of personal support was a crucial factor in the community's ability to maintain unity throughout the stress-filled struggle.

Pittman kept the sign in her yard for almost three weeks, as did all other 11

THE NEW LOCATION OF VILLAGE HEIGHTS

FRANK EVANS AND IDA COOPER

homeowners. Hunt made no comment on the signs during his visit, but the fact that he saw them was enough for her. "All we wanted was for people to know this was happening to us," she says. "We wanted someone to see." And see they did. Docey Alexander, a resident of a nearby rural community outside of Enfield, remembers that the Village Heights children were out every day after school carrying signs. "It was a shame what they were doing to them. Those little children out there. And I don't think they got nearly as much help as they should have from the people in the area who had a little influence. Most of them just kept quiet and let the children be the ones." She adds that the struggle was so dramatic that other people in the area may start to demand more from their local elected officials, including the black ones.

For the next year and a half, the Village Heights residents held out for a fair settlement. "Every time they made an offer, they'd say it was their last one," Bryant remembers. "But we didn't think it was fair, so we wouldn't accept." The local media criticized residents for procrastinating, but White explains that "just compensation has to be measured not only in terms of land, but in labor, which includes the labor involved in the struggle for that compensation."

By the time a compromise was reached in December 1982, the residents had won a package worth $650,000 — twice the amount of the initial offer. Under the agreement the families got to choose where they wanted to live and received public water and sewer service, a little more land than they had had before, and $6,000 each in aggravation compensation.

All but a few of the families chose to stay together, and moved their homes to a site half a mile down the road from the plant and the newly widened road. Most are happy with the settlement and new location, says Bryant, but she adds, "I don't feel we won, really; if we had won we wouldn't have had to move."

White puts the fight in a larger perspective: "Companies like Consolidated Diesel come in and displace blacks and other working people, but hire most of their labor force from outside the area. The temporary improvement sometimes brought by industry is often offset by the effects of displacement. It doesn't necessarily bring progress to all the people. The people of Village Heights won a defensive strategic victory. They forced the infrastructure to respond to them. Initially, neither industry nor public officials had any intention of dealing with them at all, they were just going to roll right over them." White is quick to point out that the fight isn't over yet.

Consolidated Diesel has hired only one of its 300 current employees from the Bloomer Hill/Village Heights area: college-educated Ida Cooper. She is also the only local resident the company has sent to Nash for training. At a recent meeting with plant officials, community members were told the company was looking not for applicants with a college degree, but for those with a "good attitude." The officials made no guarantees of more jobs, but instead encouraged the group to tell their neighbors to "treat their applications as a serious piece of work." Most of the meeting consisted of a plant tour and the showing of a promotional film.

Plant manager Ron Gratz says the company intends to choose the rest of its projected 1,000 workers from its "hiring area," which he describes as the "counties surrounding us, I don't know their

names." When asked about the company's affirmative action policy, Gratz at first said, "I'm not sure I want to tell you that," and then stated that the proportion of blacks in the work force "mirrored the racial make-up of the area," though could not say what that percentage is.

Roberson, who is now active in several different citizen's groups, filled out a Consolidated Diesel application herself in hopes of getting off workfare. Her application was rejected as were dozens of others from Bloomer Hill. She says the community wants to know why. "We want to know, if they're doing all this training, why aren't they training us? I feel like they could train some of our older people who're responsible and want to learn. I think I could learn it, but how can I learn it if they never give me a chance."

After years of questions, Roberson and her neighbors now know how to go about getting some answers. "There's a realization that we can do something about things we had written off before," says Ida Cooper as she looks back over the struggles of the past three years. "Before, the community just sat back and said, 'That's out of our control'; now people are willing to come and speak out and see what can be done."□

"There's a realization that we can do something about things we had written off before."

— Ida Cooper

Ann Morris is a staff writer for ***The North Carolina Independent.*** *Jennifer R. Labalme is a staff photographer for* ***The Independent.***

Artist unknown, possibly Jules (or Julien) Hudson, *Maid of the Douglas Family,* ca. 1840.

Beyond the White Columns

A Fresh Look at Painting in the South

BY PETER H. WOOD

OUR BIG MUSEUMS, LIKE OUR HIGH COURTS, MOVE WITH PONDEROUS SLOWNESS, RATIFYING THE STATUS QUO OR GINGERLY EXPLORING CONTROVERSIAL TERRITORY.

A museum director, like a judge, hates to get too far ahead of establishment values or fall too far behind; both preside over innately conservative institutions. For this reason, major exhibitions and their catalogues, like milestone court cases and their accompanying arguments, often provide an index of how far the powers-that-be have, or have not, come.

An important show, like a Supreme Court decision, can also steer debate, sanction fresh evidence, offer novel interpretations, and establish new precedents. And just as some legal verdicts prompt immediate explosions and others take time to be deciphered, certain museum displays are openly controversial while others reveal their full import only gradually.

I suspect the current traveling exhibition entitled "Painting in the South: 1564-1980," organized by the Virginia Museum, may eventually be recognized as something of a cultural landmark for the region, but the exhibition's first viewers found it a bit confusing. "In contrast to the Northeast," points out project director Ella-Prince Knox, "there is little public information about the painting traditions of the South."

The display of more than 150 works seemed unfamiliar and disconcerting to members of Richmond's upper crust who attended the gala opening last September. Wine glasses in hand, they squinted at miniature portraits and stepped back from enormous modern canvases, here and there noting a familiar artist such as Audubon. Perhaps too many were expecting a nostalgic portrayal of the South or an expansion of a show at Washington's Corcoran Gallery in 1960 called "American Painters of the

L. Scotte, *Mrs. Leonard Wiltz of New Orleans,* 1841.

James A. Cameron, *Colonel and Mrs. James A. Whiteside, Son Charles, and Servants*, ca. 1858-59.

South."

That exhibit highlighted Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, and Charleston, and focused on the plantation years between 1710 and 1865. Surely no one produced much "Southern Art" beyond the Piedmont or after Appomattox, many viewers must have reasoned, so shouldn't this new exhibition in the "Capital of the Confederacy" be a grander version of the previous show? After all, the cover of the Corcoran catalogue used Eastman Johnson's seemingly folksy portrayal of slavery known as *My Old Kentucky Home — Life in the South*, and the current catalogue cover features a slice of ripe watermelon on a black background from an 1820 still life by Sarah Miriam Peale. No wonder guests were expecting mint juleps.

But no one who opens the book or enters the exhibit sees much of Tara, for Margaret Mitchell did not put together this display. Instead, an unusual team of five scholar-curators drafted the chronological essays and selected the array of pictures now on tour. Their exhibit has already given museum-goers in Richmond and Birmingham something to think about, and it should reward and surprise anyone who finds the time to stroll through it later this year (see schedule, page 42) or to browse at leisure in the costly but definitive catalogue. Carolyn Weekley, Linda Simmons, Jessie Poesch, Rick Stewart, and Donald Kuspit, all national authorities on American art, spent several years on this project, and it reflects their impressive collective knowledge. It also reflects how the region's dominant self-image has shifted in the past two dozen years.

The guest curators invoke a wide-open definition of the people and places that have made up "painting in the South." They have declared the region's lively folk painting traditions off-limits.* And they have ruled out travel sketches, photographs, and the works of Southerners, such as Washington Allston, who went away to paint. But they have made room for Northerners who came south, including such well-known figures as Samuel F.B. Morse, Winslow Homer, Edward Hopper, and the members of the Black Mountain School. Just as the "southern light" of the Mediterranean has traditionally appealed to European artists, the luminous quality of the Deep South atmosphere has long attracted American painters.

More importantly, the curators have finally made space for the *whole* Southern landscape. While the familiar artists of the Atlantic seaboard still get their due, the less familiar painters of the Gulf Coast and the interior are highlighted for the first time, particularly in Jessie Poesch's essay on the South from 1830 to 1900. She explores Louisiana's French connection, as in Hippolyte Sebron's *Giant Steamboats at New Orleans*, and the movement from east to west, as in *View of Galveston Harbor* by Charlestonian William Aiken Walker.

Chincoteague ponies are balanced against east Texas dairy cattle. Alongside Virginia's Dismal Swamp and Natural Bridge appear north Georgia's Tallulah Falls and sunset scenes from Florida and Tennessee. An antebellum painting of elegant *Oakland House and Race Course, Louisville, Kentucky* contrasts with later pictures of a *Trapper's Cabin* on the Mississippi Delta, a *Bayou Farm* near Lake Pontchartrain, and the *jacal* of a Mexican girl near San Antonio. In one portrait from 1858 an "independent squire" named Jack Porter relaxes on his rustic porch in Frostburg, Maryland; in another from the same year Colonel and Mrs. James A. Whiteside pose surrealistically overlooking the Tennessee River at Moccasin Bend.

No single spot has been scrutinized more closely by an artist in recent years than the islands and shoreline near Ocean Springs, Mississippi. There, New Orleans native Walter Inglis Anderson lived to the age of 62. After his death in 1965, family and friends found that his remote cottage was literally strewn with colorful and vivid nature paintings on scraps of typing paper and even on the walls themselves. A small watercolor of crabs, entitled *Horn Island*, illustrates the intensity with which this Southern Thoreau communed with nature along his narrow strip of Gulf Coast. (See the feature on his work in *Southern Exposure*, Vol. X, No. 3, May/June, 1982.)

During our own generation, a sense of motion has augmented a sense of place. The South's modern painters are drawn to railroads as frequently as the region's musicians — sometimes even to the same section of track. (For example, in 1965 Arkansas native Carroll Cloar created *Where the Southern Cross the Yellow Dog*, a radiant orange landscape of the crossing at Moorhead, Mississip-

* See instead the catalogue of a recent Corcoran Gallery exhibition: *Jane Livingston and John Beardsley, Black Folk Art in America, 1930-1980* (Jackson, Mississippi, 1980), and the catalogue of an exhibit now at Chicago's Field Museum through December 1984, *African and Afro-American Art: Call and Response* (Chicago, 1984).

Anne Goldthwaite, *Springtime in Alabama*, n.d.

pi, immortalized in the jazz of W.C. Handy.) Of course the region's artists are drawn to all kinds of roadways as well, from the hazy four-lane in Victor Higgins's *Pilot Mountain* to the wet Florida straightaway of Martin Hoffman's *Open Road*. Blue Sky, whose highway wall murals enliven his home town of Columbia, South Carolina, and other Southern cities, is represented by *Air Brakes*, a mixed-media rendering of a trailer truck's rear end. The show's most recent picture, *K. C. Suzuki* (1982), reflects the biking fascination of Alabama artist David Parrish, whose father used to tour the region by motorcycle with a circus.

Nothing emphasizes the country road as the direct route to the soul of the South more clearly than the exhibit's largest — and perhaps most central — work, entitled *Symbols* (1971). Benny Andrews was born to a sharecropper family in Madison, Georgia, in 1930, and his stark 37-foot allegory is an Ellison-like comment on the theme of invisibility as determined by race and riches. Eleven panels wrap like a windshield around the viewers, who find themselves heading down a road as startling as Dorothy's in *The Wizard of Oz*. The huge oil-and-collage is owned by Wichita State University, but this certainly isn't Kansas!

Beyond the varied landscape are the people, and not surprisingly many painters and sitters included in this Southern gathering turn out to be related. Viewers raised to hunt genealogical ties will spot frequent bonds of kinship. In colonial South Carolina, miniaturist Mary Roberts was married to Bishop Roberts, who created a vivid prospect of Charleston at the time of the Stono Rebellion. Rachel Moore of that town, who posed for Henry Benbridge on the eve of the Revolution, was the mother of Washington Allston; Mrs. Leonard Wiltz, who sat for female portraitist L. Sotta in New Orleans in 1841, was the mother of artist Leonard Wiltz, Jr. In Civil War Virginia, Conrad Wise Chapman was the son of Alexandria painter John Gadsby Chapman. Among early twentieth-century artists, the Onderdonks from east Texas are father and son, while Ellsworth and William Woodward in Louisiana are brothers. With Maryland's remarkable Peales such links approach the absurd; works by five members of the family appear in the exhibit, and two other relatives are cited in the catalogue.

But the same show that proves Southern painting has existed beyond East Coast cultural centers also demonstrates that painting in the South has never been the sole province of an ingrown elite. In a society that discriminated from its inception in favor of well-to-do Caucasian males, you would expect such men to dominate any retrospective survey of the region's most exclusive art form. But they do not. They are matched at every turn, on both sides of the easel, by a variety of other Southerners who nearly steal the show.

Though Boston's Museum of Fine Arts omitted black artist Henry Tanner from its recent exhibit of American Masters until pushed to include him, the curators of the Richmond display needed no such prompting. They include a handsome family portrait from 1818 by Joshua Johnston of Baltimore and a little-known depiction of a Louisiana black woman, apparently by another "free person of color" named Jules (or Julien) Hudson.

Several famous twentieth-century black artists are represented, such as Romare Bearden, born in Charlotte in 1914, and Aaron Douglas, who taught at Fisk for nearly 30 years. So are less widely known artists, such as Georgian Benny Andrews and South Carolinian William H. Johnson (1901-1970). The striking picture *Chain Gang* (painted after Johnson's own arrest in his home town of Florence during the 1930s) illustrates the original blend of European and African influences, plus the strong personal vision, that characterize this brilliant Southern painter.

Women artists are also well represented. The pastel portraits of Henrietta Johnston, who died in Charleston in the 1720s, have long been to Colonial painting what Anne Bradstreet's poems are to early American literature. But many of Johnston's modern successors are less celebrated, such as Mississippi art teacher Marie Hull, Georgia seamstress Willie Chambers, and South Carolina local colorist Alice Ravenel Huger Smith.

When Clara Weaver Parrish from Selma, Alabama, was earning international recognition at the turn of the century, she painted a revealing portrait of the wide-eyed and intense young feminist Anne Goldthwaite, who had recently arrived in New York from Montgomery to pursue a career in painting. Many of Goldthwaite's later pictures, such as *Springtime in Alabama*, drew on the world she knew best. Another Montgomery woman, Zelda Sayre, took up painting shortly after she married writer F. Scott Fitzgerald in 1920. The story of

Alfred Boisseau, *Louisiana Indians Walking Along a Bayou*, 1847.

their trying marriage has often overshadowed her creative bent, but Zelda Fitzgerald painted revealing personal pictures until her tragic death in 1948.

On the other side of the easel, the social diversity is more striking still. The curators remind us that the same artists who have always seen the region's geographic variety have also had eyes open to its social diversity. The exhibit downplays heroic portraits of traditional icons. John Trumbull's painting of George Washington, owned by the city of Charleston, is included only in the catalogue.

Limner Charles Peale Polk, who earned much of his living selling likenesses of Washington, is represented instead by a curious and slightly unflattering portrait of Jefferson. Rembrandt Peale, who also painted Washington, is introduced through an impressive picture of fellow artist Benjamin Henry Latrobe. John Adams Elder, an aide in the Confederate Army best known for his portraits of Lee and Jackson, is featured through a genre painting of the interior of a sharecropper's cabin.

Where previous exhibits have ignored Native Americans entirely or given them only a textbook nod through such pictures as the English portrait of Pocahontas in Washington's National Portrait Gallery, this display begins to take fuller notice of the first Southerners. The extraordinary water colors by Jacques Le Moyne and John White that survive from the lost French and English colonies of the pre-Jamestown era are now too delicate to travel, but they appear in color in the catalogue.

Several nineteenth-century artists became famous painting Indians, many of them from Southern tribes. George Catlin visited Seminole prisoners at Charleston's Fort Moultrie, creating a dignified portrait of the military leader Osceola and a less striking picture (included in the exhibit) of the "first chief" of the Seminoles, *Mick-e-no-pah*. Also included is *Mistipee*, a young Creek painted by Charles Bird King in the somewhat precious and romantic style that appealed to the establishment in the era of Indian Removal.

More intriguing is an earlier painting entitled *William Bowles and the Creek Indians* (circa 1800), in which a white gentleman encourages several Indians to "take up the plow." The flamboyant Bowles lived among the Creeks for two decades after the Revolution and probably created this optimistic and self-serving image of assimilation. The exhibit's most suggestive view of Native Americans was painted by Alfred Boisseau at the age of 24. In 1847 the young Frenchman, whose brother worked at the French consulate in New Orleans, executed a somber group portrait called *Louisiana Indians Walking Along a Bayou*. The procession includes a father carrying a long rifle, a boy with a traditional blowgun, a woman carrying a heavy load, and a second woman with a small child on her back.

Women, single and in groups, white and nonwhite, of all classes and ages, inhabit the exhibition. Shortly before he died in the yellow fever epidemic of 1796, James Earl painted a prominent Charleston lady and her niece. A generation later Englishman William James Hubbard portrayed the daughters of Richmond's mayor in a similar double portrait. These staid young ladies make an interesting contrast to the motley gathering of children in Alexander Brook's *Savannah Street Corner*, painted near the end of the Great Depression, or the girl on a swing, soaring through dappled summer foliage in a 1981 picture by Maude Gatewood of Yanceyville, North Carolina.

Again, two of the exhibit's most impressive "discoveries" come from European-born artists working in nineteenth-century Louisiana. The Frenchman Jean Joseph Vaudechamp visited New Orleans every winter during the 1830s, and his painting of *A Creole Lady* is a handsome portrayal of an unglamorized and impressive local citizen. The same can be said for another possession of the New Orleans Museum, Francois Fleischbein's *Portrait of Marie LeVeau's Daughter* from the 1860s. Whether the self-possessed mulatto woman who posed for the Bavarian-born artist was in fact the legendary "voodoo queen," or her daughter, or someone else entirely, she is one of the most memorable and dignified personages in the exhibition.

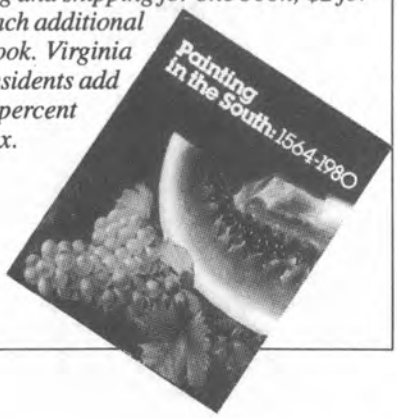
The significant place of blacks in the life and art of the South can be read from the exhibit's canvases, beginning with the work of an immigrant portraitist, Justus Engelhardt Kuhn, at the start of the eighteenth century. Kuhn's likeness of young Henry Darnall III and his servant, painted in Annapolis just as the slave trade from Africa began to expand (and a half-century before Kunte Kinte reached the same port), is one of the earliest American works to depict an African. The image combines the European tradition of "the black page" with the harsh realities of Chesapeake slav-

Attributed to Francois Fleischbein, *Portrait of Marie LeVeau's Daughter,* after 1860.

Painting in the South: 1564-1980

"Painting in the South: 1564-1980" has been exhibited at the Virginia Museum in Richmond, the Birmingham Museum of Art in Alabama, and the National Academy of Design in New York. It will next be seen at the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson, from June 24 to August 26, 1984; the J.B. Speed Art Museum in Louisville, Kentucky, from September 16 to November 11; and the New Orleans Museum of Art in Louisiana, from December 9 to February 3, 1985.

Order the catalogue Painting in the South: 1564-1980 *from: Virginia Museum Publications, Boulevard and Grove Avenue, Richmond, VA 23221. The price is $29.95. Add $3 for packing and shipping for one book; $2 for each additional book. Virginia residents add 4 percent tax.*



Robert Gwathmey, *Hoeing,* 1943.

Conrad Wise Chapman, *Fort Sumter Interior*, 1864.

ery, for little Darnall's young chattel is wearing the metal collar of a pet and is obliged to fetch the white boy's game bird like an obedient field dog. (Exactly such a dog can be seen in William Dering's Williamsburg portrait of *George Booth as a Young Man* from the 1740s.)

Black figures are almost as numerous as white in the exhibition's nineteenth-century pictures, and they actually predominate in the paintings chosen from the present century. Some are sympathetic versions of stereotypic scenes, such as John Kelly Fitzpatrick's colorful 1931 composition of a *Negro Baptising* in Alabama or Julien Binford's high-rolling *Crapshooter* from Fine Creek, Virginia, which won a national award from Chicago's Art Institute in 1941. Others impart particular artistry to everyday rural scenes — such as Howard Cook's print-like sketch of *Alabama Cotton Pickers* and Robert Gwathmey's stark and inspired *Hoeing* — or to urban scenes for that matter, as in William Woodward's *Old Mattress Factory* in the French Quarter of New Orleans and Alexander Brook's *Georgia Jungle* on the outskirts of Savannah.

If viewers are surprised that the Virginia display defines the South and its people more expansively than previous exhibits of the region's high art, they will be equally struck by the muted and reflective presentation of the "Lost Cause" of the Confederacy. There are no Civil War battle scenes or portraits of Southern commanders. Robert E. Lee himself is absent from the collection, and he appears in the catalogue only in an 1838 likeness of the young officer in federal uniform by Kentucky artist William Edward West. The one Confederate icon on display is William D. Washington's *Burial of Latane* (1864), widely distributed as a sentimental engraving after the war. It can be juxtaposed to the larger and less famous work of John Antrobus, *A Plantation Burial* (1860), which focuses on a black funeral in Louisiana and reduces non-slaves to minor figures.

Glimpses of the war itself come not through any monumental canvases, but through a series of small-scale and ruminative oils. Conrad Wise Chapman, a painter-turned-Confederate-soldier like Washington and Antrobus, was wounded at Shiloh and later sketched the fortifications at Charleston after his convalescence. His small, clear studies of the harbor batteries and the inhabited ruins of Fort Sumter are fresh and unromantic. (Unfortunately, a comparable little painting of the Byrds' famous Westover mansion in wartime by Charleston-born Edward Lamson Henry, who grew up in the North and served in Grant's army, appeared only in Richmond and is not traveling with the show.)

Along with centennial observances of the Confederate years, the early 1960s brought a new civil war to the South, and the ironies were not lost on discerning artists. In 1961 Larry Rivers, one of the boldest "history painters" of the generation, created *The Last Civil War Veteran*. Much as contemporaries once read their own meanings into Eastman Johnson's ambiguous *Life in the South*, modern viewers can draw conflicting conclusions from Rivers's picture. A superannuated soldier lies propped against pillows beneath Confederate and American flags, while his century-old uniform hangs above the bedside. Is he a diehard rebel refusing to surrender, still hoping in death to stir a resurrection of the Lost Cause? Or is he a healer who may, dying a hundred years after many of his colleagues, bring peace and reconciliation to a house so long divided?

A less blatant but equally challenging image was created two years later by Francis Speight, born in Windsor, North Carolina, in 1896 and still residing and painting in Greenville. His *Demolition of Avoca* shows the plantation home of a Confederate surgeon near Albemarle Sound being torn down so its owners, the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, can construct an experimental plant. Each viewer must decide just how handsome and significant the original structure, with its spindly columns, may have been. Was Avoca's (and the Old South's) battered condition in 1963 disheartening or overdue, a result of internal rot and fires or outside wreckers? Would the new structures on a changing landscape be a cause for celebration?

Picture exhibits, like court decisions, are never final and definitive; they always generate as many questions as they answer. And they do not always offer simple viewing, any more than judicial verdicts promise easy reading. But those who take time to peruse the Virginia Museum's traveling show as if it were a complicated legal case will find that it begins to affirm, however tentatively, a broader definition of the South's regional heritage. It establishes useful precedents and suggests new lines of inquiry in the ongoing process of cultural self-discovery.□

Peter Wood teaches history at Duke University. His most recent articles concern Winslow Homer's The Gulf Stream *and the French explorer LaSalle. He served as a humanities consultant to the Virginia Museum in the preparation of this exhibit.*

RETRIEVAL
Art in the South

photo by John Henley

BY SUSAN HANKLA

A recent art exhibition at 1708 East Main gallery in Richmond, Virginia, called "Retrieval — Art in the South" was as much about traveling to collect the art as it was about the importance of Southern folk art to Southern culture and regional art history. The show featured 166 paintings and sculptures by contemporary Southern folk artists, including Miles Carpenter, Sam Doyle, Minnie

At left: **MOSE TOLLIVER was born in 1915 in Pike Road, Alabama. He is a folk artist who paints in luminous colors on plywood and uses pop tops from beer cans for hangers.**

Evans, Nellie Mae Rowe, Howard Finster, S.L. Jones, Sister Gertrude Morgan, W.C. Owens, Juanita Rogers, Mose Tolliver, and Bill Trailor. All of these artists represent a "have-not" culture which expresses itself in paint, wood, and readily available cast-off articles.

This exhibit of retrieval art differs from other similar shows because most of the art was contributed by schooled artists who have, in their work, benefited from collecting it. It is also important to note that at the same time this show was taking place the Virginia Museum was featuring the show "Painting in the South," which spans five centuries of art history and is currently traveling major arteries of the South. That show did not attract the enthusiasm of local art critics nearly as much as "Retrieval — Art in the South." Roy Proctor, art critic of the Richmond *News Leader*, wrote: "There's more genuine Southern-ness in the two galleries of 'Retrieval' than can be found in the many galleries of the Virginia Museum's current blockbuster, 'Painting in the South: 1564-1980.' "

Folk art collector Jeff Camp, whose

S.L. JONES is a retired railroad construction engineer. He is in his eighties and lives in eastern West Virginia near the Virginia border. Jones started sculpting after his retirement. His method is to rough out the shape with a chain saw and then refine the sculpture with hand tools. His figures have been included in most major shows on contemporary American folk art.

photo by Jeff Camp

SISTER GERTRUDE MORGAN was born in 1900 in Lafayette, Alabama, and died in 1980 in New Orleans. She was a visionary black American painter and street missionary who dedicated herself to painting sacred art, and depicted herself as a "Bride of Christ." Consequently, everything in her home was painted white and she wore white clothes and never married.

photo by John Henley

collection figured largely in the "Retrieval" show, says "Back Roads" should be his middle name, since he's clocked over 500,000 miles while finding; buying; photodocumenting environments, crafts persons, artists, "you name it." The "Retrieval" show pointed to this need felt by many schooled artists and collectors to locate art with regional identity and visionary purity by traveling the back roads. This fervor for retrieval is possibly the most fertile cultural exchange now taking place in America.□.

Susan Hankla is a free-lance writer living in Richmond, Virginia. Her poems and fiction have appeared in numerous anthologies and magazines, and she has had two chapbooks of poetry published by small presses.

W.C. OWENS, a native of Roanoke Island, North Carolina, lived in close communion with his grandmother who survived for more than 100 years and was never a slave. Owens is in his late seventies. His current frustration is over the widening of Highway 158, which means his family graves will have to be relocated, since they sit perilously close to the highway. His house has been hit by cars. One even came into his living room. Nevertheless, Owens loves visitors.

photos by Robert Henderson

REVEREND HOWARD FINSTER, born in 1916 in Valley Head, Alabama, now lives in Summerville, Georgia, in an environmental theme park he has created almost entirely from cast-off articles. A preacher since the age of 16, Finster is a folk hero in the field of contemporary American folk art.

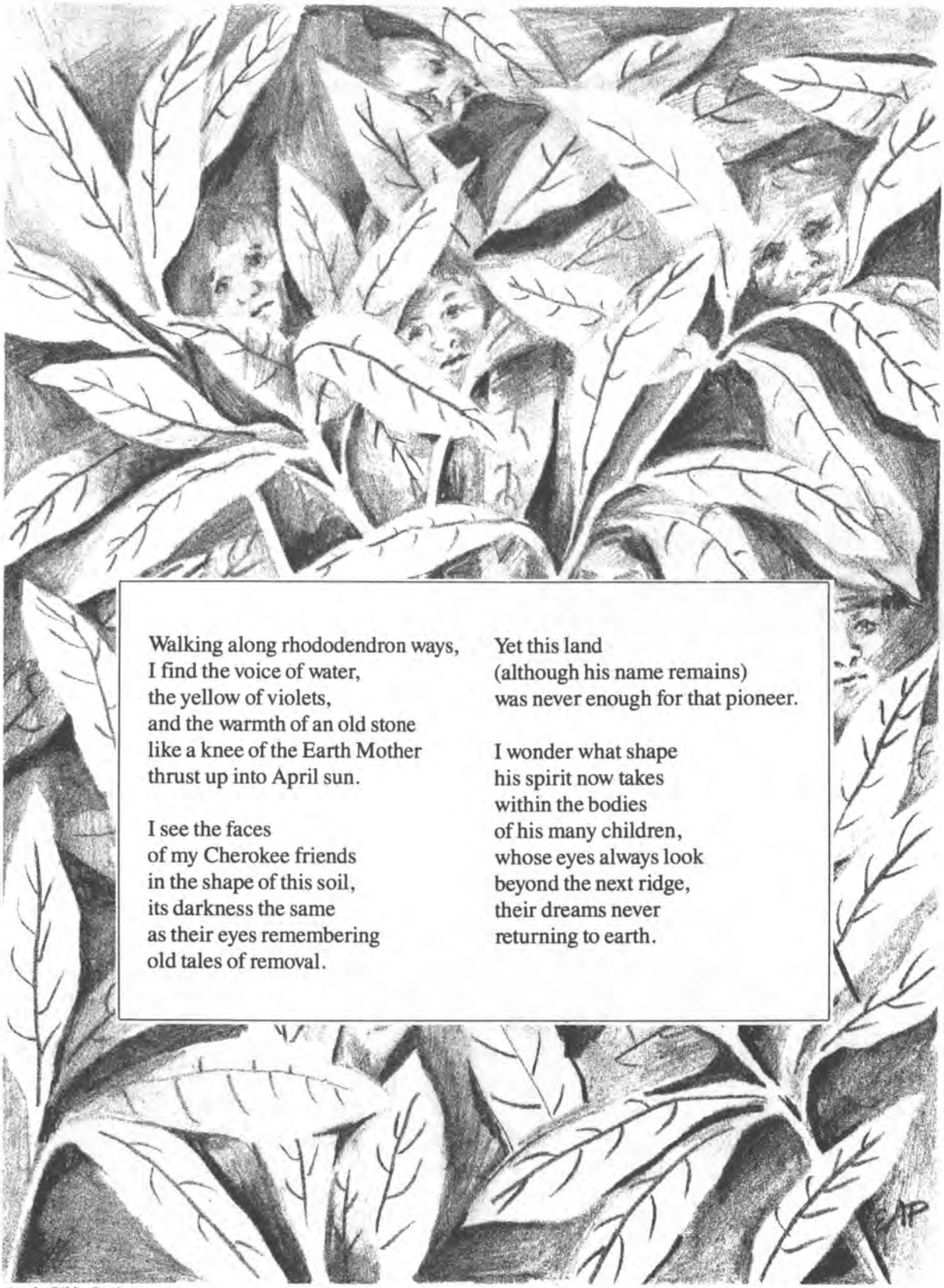
photo by John Henley

SAM DOYLE, born in 1906, spent his youth on St. Helena's Island, where he attended Penn School, the first school for freed slaves in America. He lived in an area which used to be closely connected with Afro-Americans, former slaves who remembered. His paintings depict people from the island, some of them legends, some just local characters. He paints on tin roofing, window shades, rocks, and wood. Many of his paintings are of Dr. Buzz, a voodoo doctor, always shown holding a real conch shell. When he held it up to his ear (according to Doyle), spirits would instruct him how to proceed.

photos by Willie Anne Wright

BOONE, NORTH CAROLINA

BY JOSEPH BRUCHAC



Walking along rhododendron ways,
I find the voice of water,
the yellow of violets,
and the warmth of an old stone
like a knee of the Earth Mother
thrust up into April sun.

I see the faces
of my Cherokee friends
in the shape of this soil,
its darkness the same
as their eyes remembering
old tales of removal.

Yet this land
(although his name remains)
was never enough for that pioneer.

I wonder what shape
his spirit now takes
within the bodies
of his many children,
whose eyes always look
beyond the next ridge,
their dreams never
returning to earth.

illustration by Libby Pankey

Ceremony for Minneconjoux

By Brenda Marie Osbey

etchings by Colette Delacroix

it was years back you know
down bayou la fouche
she named her daughter minneconjoux
so that people would not mistake
her indian blood

it was just a lean-to
right up against the water's edge
she said herself
that he would take her out in the damp
never inside
that's what she called it
taking her
she said when they did it out there
his two black greasy plaits
brushing her shoulders
his chest up
away from her
so he could smile down on her
it was not so far
from the slavery her grandmother
had raised her on
a creole woman
fanning herself
recording with her eyes
what happened to the other women
on le compte's land

it was 1943
he came
mostly just passing
in and out the neighborhood
looking just like a mardi gras indian
from off dumaine st.
that's what everyone said he was
until mama lou
called him up the front walk

and asked him what he was
and where he belonged to
he was a choctaw man
but mama lou says
she knew choctaws to be squat
and ducky
she told him about
l'il miz lincoln
with the choctaw blood in her
he repeated it
he was a choctaw man
this time adding
full-blooded
and picking at his teeth
with a sliver
of van-van she had growing
out there.
next day
he was up on the porch
conversing with mama lou
about hard-to-find-work
and low-down-white-folks.

soon after the season broke
he come to work for mama lou
that's when lenazette saw him
for the first time
he wasn't much lighter than her
with two plaits
and a woven head-band.
she come through the run-down page fence gate
and looked up at him on the ladder
what the hell was he doing
she meant to know?
he smiled
mama lou had hired him to fix up.
her face got evil when she asked him
who?
miz philemon he said this time
lenazette went up them stairs
and slammed the door
hard.

lenazette had just finished
from old madame markham's school
that winter he was
walking the streets
looking like a mardi gras
she was sixteen
and wore her hair in french braids
in two buns
on the sides of her head
that spring
he was fixing the windows one day
it was warm
lenazette was at the dresser
about to turn up her hair
when he called in for water
she brought it
not bothering to cover up
the white cotton slip she wore
when she leaned out
she said he could have tea
it had been on ice since last evening
he said
just water
he stood on that ladder
staring down at her slip straps
and again at her braids
i want to touch them
sometime
was what he said
she looked at him
your hands are dirty
he drank the water straight down
they can be cleaned

without much difficulty
he said.

mama lou paid him every week
and fed him once a day
i was to bring him water
when he asked
it began to be sticky
around the house
i wore a white cotton slip
and an eyelet bed jacket
i wore my braids down now
connected together at the ends
i have always liked things
connected together at the ends
after a while
we could talk
he knew french
i still spoke patois
despite mrs. markham's switchings
he understood me
but could only answer in french
that was the first thing
i learned from him.

one day
out on the back porch
i had these culottes on
and a white blouse
he'd come around for water
more than water

he said that mama had told him
about her mama
and le compte's place
we talked about that
about how me and mama
come to look like we did
and how i could go to markham's
but mostly we talked about slaves

and stolen land
he said the food was real good
i told him mama did the cooking
he said to let him comb my hair
i said it was already combed
he undid it without my say-so
i don't know how much mama heard
but when i looked up
she was watching him combing in my hair
when she called me in
i told her he didn't mean no harm
she looked out past me and said
i ain't told you a damn thing about harm
girl
not a god damn thing
days later
when i walked up on them talking
they hushed up

in june
i went with him to bayou la fouche
i sat sewing
while he built the house around me
when i asked how come we just had one room
he told me what-all we had to
we could do there
i was sewing dresses
there was ceremony
holding hands
down on our knees at the water
for weeks i waited
he never touched me
until that one-room was finished
after i lost the first child
he never touched me for six months
not like that anyhow
every night he'd take down my hair
and comb in it
that's when we started going outside

and that's how you come
when i let him
start to combing in my hair again.
he would look down on me
two oily plaits
slapping my neck
and shoulders
i would try not to look

mostly he worked at the riverfront
bringing home crates of fruit
vegetables
he never would eat rice
till he saw me feeding it to you

in the evenings
or sometimes early in the morning
before day
he would pull me by the hand

and lead me out to the sycamore tree
he'd just hold onto me
with his arms up on my shoulders
then we'd be down in the grass
and i could see his eyes
i used to tell him you might see
he said one day you would
when i reached up
i knew he was forcing me
making me need what i didn't want
and i started waiting for him to come
and start to combing in my hair
i would hear him mumbling
but i didn't want to know
didn't want to understand
what he was saying
i told him to stop it
and he wouldn't
i tried to move from under him
but his legs pinned me down

he was smiling
and mumbling
and making sounds
and when i saw you in the door
i told him to stop
and he wouldn't
and i picked up a stone
and beat him in his head

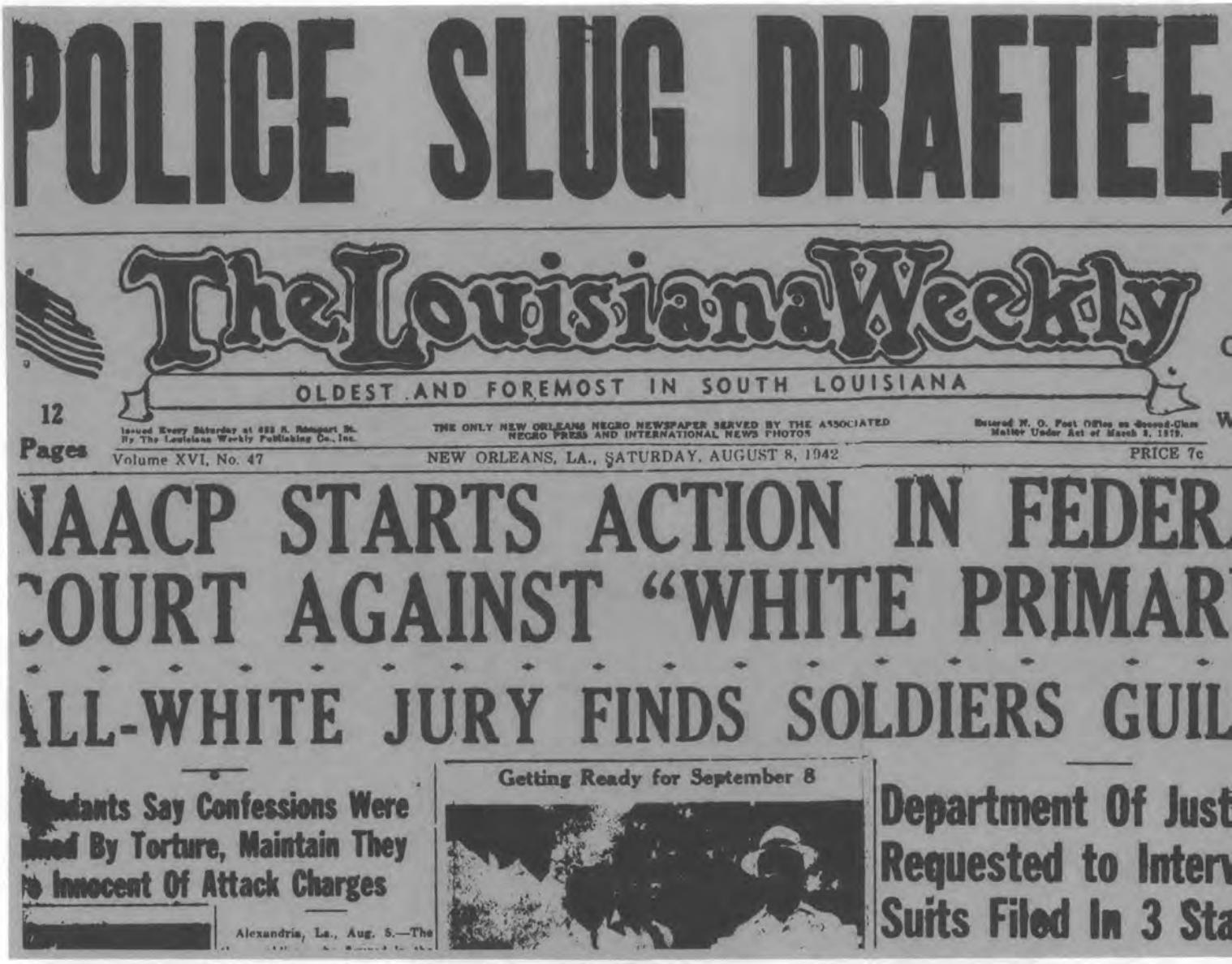
when i was ten
i left mama zette
to go live in the city
with mama lou
she had fine smooth hands
and she oiled my hair
when i was twelve
she cut it off
i asked her if it was because
that peterson boy climbed the fence

to talk to me
and put his hands in my hair
i asked her if it was because
my papa sat up on top my mama
holding on her braids
that's when she slapped me
i remember her face
when she slapped me
when she died
she told me mama
had been in charity
then jackson
i looked for papa
up at the bayou
la fouche was empty
the lean-to was not even locked
i found a woman there
her body nothing more
than a cedar switch
i have her picture now

on my bureau
she spoke low
sitting on the floor
sewing dresses
talking of child-having
and other ceremonies

i am minneconjoux
i live in the house on st. claude st.
i connect myself
to the used thing
i keep on my bureau
at mardi gras time
i stand on the walk-way
and watch the indians
dancing off dumaine.

Brenda Marie Osbey attended Dillard University, University Paul Valery, and the University of Kentucky. A native of New Orleans, she has taught French and English at Dillard University. Her poems have appeared in ***Obsidian, Essence,*** *and* ***Callaloo.*** *"Ceremony for Minneconjoux" is reprinted from* ***Ceremony for Minneconjoux, Poems by Brenda Marie Osbey (Callaloo*** *Poetry Series, 1983) by permission of the author.* *Etchings from "Untitled Night Scene No. 1," by Colette Delacroix.*



POLICE SLUG DRAFTEE

The Louisiana Weekly

OLDEST AND FOREMOST IN SOUTH LOUISIANA

12 Pages

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NAACP STARTS ACTION IN FEDER

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ALL-WHITE JURY FINDS SOLDIERS GUIL

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ERNEST WRIGHT: "PEOPLE'S CHAMPION"

— by Keith Weldon Medley

A bitter and violent strike by black New Orleans insurance workers in the autumn of 1940 produced a militant new generation of leaders and opened the floodgates for further labor organizing in the city. Most importantly, the strike laid the foundation for the rise of the People's Defense League, a group that author David W. Friedrichs calls "The oldest Negro voters league in the city and the 'daddy' of all significant post-World War II voters leagues to follow."

By the time the insurance strike was over, it had also propelled one man, Ernest J. Wright, into the forefront of black activism in New Orleans as a fearless and able mover of people. The story of Wright's ascent as a powerful leader parallels the victorious struggles of blacks and labor in which he participated.

In the summer of 1939, Ernest Wright accepted a position with *The New Orleans Louisiana Weekly* newspaper as coordinator of its recently launched Community Responsibility Program. The project aimed to present black people with a "clear picture of the conditions under which they lived and what they might do to improve them." These conditions were grim and worsening.

At this time the New Deal's Works Progress Administration was drawing to a close, and blacks across the country faced increasing unemployment and a segregated job market. Despite the labor shortage created by the booming pre-World War II weapons industries, 90 percent of the defense industry contractors refused to hire Afro-Americans. And the problems of housing and unemployment endured by blacks in the urban North were worse in the South where ra-

MOTHER

CIVILIAN COP'S BRUTALITY AT INDUCTION CENTER STARTS NEAR-RIOT; SCORES ARRESTED

A committee of nine persons, representing churches, civic organizations and labor unions, with a combined membership of thousands of persons, called on Brigadier-General Raymond H. Fleming, director of the Selective Service of Louisiana, Monday to protest the unwarranted and brutal beating of a draftee awaiting induction and his mother by officers of the New Orleans police force, which took place at the induction center Friday, July 31.

Sunday the New Orleans branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People adopted a resolution to carry the matter to the top officials of the U. S. Army, and several other organizations sent letters to Major-

civilian police officer appr... him and inquired why he h... the line. Without waiting ... the officer caught the draf... hand the police and pushed ...

Herman E. Lee ... beaten by three officers who ... stepped out of line to ... mother good-bye. He is ... being drafted to defend li... ty. After his mother wa... he took a 14-day furlough ...

cism was more blatant.

As a result, the late '30s and early '40s marked a resurgence in struggles to place equal rights for blacks on the national agenda. Labor leader Asa Philip Randolph's threat of a massive march on Washington in the spring of 1941 influenced President Franklin Roosevelt to form the Fair Employment Practices Commission, which forbade discrimination in defense-related industries. With Wright as its vice-president, the Southern Negro Youth Congress (SNYC) launched a drive to enlist 20,000 youths in a 15-state voter registration campaign to bring "Full Citizenship Rights to All."

The New Orleans black community felt the pull of this national movement. Randolph's Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters held its 1940 convention at the city's Municipal Auditorium, and a local SNYC chapter produced a play, *Don't You Want to Be Free*.

When the *Louisiana Weekly* initiated its Community Responsibility Program, the city "Old Regulars" of the Democratic organization, a fierce political machine, dominated state and local government. Robert Maestri was the power in City Hall, and Jim Crow was his right-hand man. Only 400 black names could be found on the voter registration rolls, black teachers were paid less than whites, and trade schools which trained youths for industry were open only to whites. Police violence was rampant and the *Weekly*'s front page regularly featured horror stories of police terror in the city's black neighborhoods.

Already a highly respected civic leader, Wright was no stranger to the community when he took over the series of forums that were the cornerstone of the Community Responsibility Program. He was the first black social worker hired by the city and he had chaired the board of the Sylvania Williams Community Center, a recreational and social club for uptown youths. Wright received his training at New Orleans's Xavier University where he was widely known for his athletic and scholarly prowess. Later, he received a scholarship to the University of Michigan to study public administration.

Wright's experience in social work contributed to the success of the forums. In addition to being an eloquent speaker, he was adept at counseling people on their day-to-day problems. The *Weekly* reported sharp increases in attendance at the forums after Wright assumed control. Every week in churches, community centers, and labor halls throughout the city, hundreds turned out as he spoke on the need to obtain the ballot, reviewed the latest local and national developments, and answered their many questions. One Sunday, Wright strolled into Shakespeare Park with a loudspeaker and began what was to become a regular Sunday affair. In the years to come, thousands crowded the park to hear Wright fill the air with electrifying orations.

The 1940 strike which propelled Wright further into prominence pit the four largest New Orleans black insurance companies against their agents who sought more pay and better working conditions. When talks proved futile, the agents contacted Wright, who then organized a branch of the United Office and Professional Workers-CIO as one of the first white-collar locals in the South. The company owners, led by Dr. Rivers Frederick, responded by stating flatly that they would never negotiate with the CIO. The agents struck.

The conflict snowballed into a city-wide battle for public support. The owners employed sound trucks, leaflets, and newspapers to discredit the strikers, Wright, and the CIO, while the agents appeared on Wright's Sunday platform in Shakespeare Park to explain their position. One Sunday, insurance agent Daniel Byrd produced a copy of a long-standing agreement among the four companies to keep salaries low. Byrd told the rally, "The companies found it necessary to organize, as they put it, for self-protection. How much more necessary it is that the agents organize." Willie Dorsey, the CIO's first black representative in the city, pledged the support of all the regional workers affiliated with his union, and Wright and others canvassed the black community in an effort to strengthen grassroots support.

As company income from policy collections fell, Frederick and his cohorts brought in agents from other parts of the state, equipped them with pistols, and ordered them to work the struck routes. In a countermove, the strikers accepted the expertise of two seamen, a former prizefighter called "Battling Siki," and dockworker "Poydras Street Black." The two belonged to the National Maritime Union, whose members shared a meeting hall on Decatur Street with the striking agents. The seamen scoffed at the ability of the college-educated insurance workers to deal with the strike-breakers, and they convinced the strikers of the need to take direct action against them. And they asked to be taken to the collection routes where the strikebreakers were working. By that evening, the scabs had been sufficiently discouraged from continuing their work by "Siki's" and "Poydras Street's" actions, and the companies were eventually forced to settle.

The next year, however, "Siki" and Poydras Street, along with Wright and Zachary Taylor Ramsey, the first president of Local 101 of the Insurance Guild, were taken to court on various assault charges stemming from the strike. Although Wright and Ramsey expected to receive probation in exchange for a guilty plea, the judge sentenced them to 60 days in Parish Prison. When the two were released, 5,000 people greeted them and held a massive parade down Canal Street to a victory rally at

Shakespeare Park. If the jail sentence was meant to punish Wright for his organizing efforts, he emerged unrepentant according to the *Weekly*'s account of the rally:

Standing behind the star-spangled blue field of an American flag and beside a sign which carried a line, "Down with Rivers Fredericks and His Gang of Traitors," Wright charged that he was the victim of persons with money who paid to have him jailed and a "lying scandal sheet of a newspaper" which called him a goon. He stated that the 60-day jail sentence was in reality an education, and that now he was willing to fight the battle of the people "until hell freezes over."

Wright continued to organize workers. In September 1941, he was appointed to the regional staff of the CIO and immediately enlisted 3,000 laundry workers making nine cents an hour into the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union. And in August 1942, Wright and five others barely escaped being lynched from the oak trees of Natchitoches, Louisiana, when they were trying to organize sharecroppers. By 1945, he would rise to become general secretary of the New Orleans Industrial Union Council-CIO representing 28 unions and 35,000 workers.

Out of the 1940 insurance strike victory came a new sense of black power in New Orleans, and with it a new organization, the People's Defense League (PDL). The league was the first group of its kind in the city and one that used many of the same strategies and objectives of the civil rights movements of the 1950s and '60s. Established in August 1941, the league adopted the motto "A Voteless People Is a Hopeless People" and mobilized voter registration drives, spoke out against white supremacy and police violence, and advocated the rights of working people. One former member, Oliver White, told a researcher, "The PDL was an organization that I would have said my prayers by." Wright became the league's promotional director. Ramsey, its first president, later recalled Wright and those times:

He was a household word in every black family's home. Wright was the first to organize mass demonstrations. During that time when you were talking about voter registration and marching on the registrar's office, there was no city, state, or federal protection. We marched on raw guts.

Wright made frequent use of raw guts, and the league emerged as the most outspoken critic of police brutality in the city. At the Sunday rallies in Shakespeare Park, he and chairperson Elizabeth Sanders brought victims of police abuse to the podium. For those who did not live to recount their experiences, the league held memorials and solicited money for their families. One such case was that of Felton Robinson, for whom the league conducted a "Memory Day." A mental patient with no history of violence, Robinson was killed in his home by a Twelfth Precinct policeman who fired two shots as the man lay helpless and bleeding on the floor while his wife begged the officer not to kill her husband.

When such incidents occurred, the league wrote protest letters to elected officials who conducted their obligatory inquiries and emerged with the predictable exonerations of the officers. After one particularly acute wave of police misconduct, however, Wright demanded a meeting with the mayor. When the mayor ignored him, Wright rounded up what he called some "thuggish looking Negroes" and made a more direct appeal. The incident is related by Dr. Daniel Thompson in *The Negro Leadership Class*:

He [Wright] is still amused when he recalls the excitement and frustration of the receptionists "when they looked up and saw all of us rough-looking Negroes waiting to see the mayor." At first they attempted to have the visitors wait outside in the hall until the mayor had concluded a "high level" conference. When they refused, the mayor's secretary rushed into his office and within seconds the mayor was out asking them what he could do. Whereupon, the leader told him that this was a committee from the Third Ward and they wanted to talk with him about police brutality. The mayor agreed to talk, but requested that the other members of the group wait outside. The leader refused, and all of them went into the mayor's private office. This leader reported that the mayor was so anxious to get them out that 'he promised us anything we asked for.'

By now, Wright was being dubbed the "People's Champion" by many in the community. Because of his influence, the NAACP appointed him promotional director of its membership drive. During the spring of 1942, Wright rode around in a sound truck through the Calliope-Rampart shopping area urging people to join the NAACP, to fight Jim Crowism, and to shop only where they were given respect. This infuriated white merchants, who called the police to arrest him.

Wright elaborated on his views of freedom's responsibilities to a large throng one Sunday in June 1944 inShakespeare Park during a PDL speech:

The big difference between you and me in this fight for rights is that I am not afraid to die for a principle and you are. I am not afraid to go to jail for a principle and you are. What we need is 10,000 unafraid men as members with their money paid who are unafraid to present themselves to vote and unafraid to present themselves for jobs to which they are entitled. We can't get anywhere by being afraid. Let's stand in our own shoe leather and "walk ye like men."

These exhortations by Wright and others did not go unheeded. During World War II the PDL, like most black groups across the country, wholeheartedly supported the defeat of the Axis while constantly pointing to the unarguable similarities between the rhetoric of the Third Reich and Southern demagoguery. In support of the war effort, the People's Defense League chaired a drive to raise $50,000 in war bonds and was instrumental in organizing Red Cross donation campaigns. Despite wartime efforts by blacks at home and in the battlefield, racist attacks intensified, leading to riots in Harlem, Detroit, and Fort Dix, New Jersey. New Orleans blacks were outraged when a policeman abused a black woman as she hugged her son good-bye at the induction center.

The PDL continued to grow; a downtown chapter was established in New Orleans's Ninth Ward in 1943, and in 1946 the league was expanding statewide. Meanwhile, Wright had developed a national reputation, addressing labor rallies in places such as South Bend, Indiana, and Detroit. He helped organize Mobile, Alabama, shipbuilding workers into the CIO, and was vice-president of the Louisiana CIO's Political Action Committee. Wright also began writing a syndicated column called "I Daresay," which ran for 15 years in black papers. And people referred to Shakespeare Park as "Wright's Auditorium," as he con-

tinued to speak forcibly on labor and political issues. On the electoral front, Wright accepted a post as general secretary of the Louisiana Association for the Progress of Negro Citizens, which was headed by the Reverend A.L. Davis and conducted ballot conventions throughout the state to encourage people to register and vote.

On the national level, the civil rights struggle was gaining momentum as returning black veterans of World War II rejected their status as second-class citizens. Scattered riots occurred across the country. In a small town north of New Orleans, World War II veteran John G. Jones was found hanging from a tree, his eyes gouged by a mob. Adam Clayton Powell, a young black congressman from Harlem who introduced a federal civil rights bill in 1946, spoke at a PDL gathering and told the crowd, "The war is over, the fighting has stopped, but the peace has yet to be won. The days are critical. The Negro must arise and make a challenge for his rights."

The league moved into a seven-room house on Second Street in February 1946 and set up the most intense voter registration campaign the city had ever witnessed. Buoyed by a Justice Department announcement that it would prosecute states which discriminated in registering voters, Wright formed a coalition with the Reverend A.L. Davis, Raymond Tillman of the Transport Union, and former insurance agent Daniel Byrd, who was now state president of the NAACP. Their goal was to put 20,000 blacks on the voting rolls by August 10.

By this time, the PDL had evolved into a highly organized force with ward leaders and precinct captains throughout the city. Their highly spirited membership drives were conducted by such groups as the "Ever Ready Team" of Eva Sylvester, Carrie Mitchell's "Faithful Few," and Moses Turner's "Atomic Squad." Dues were $1.00 per year as the league set its sights on a goal of 5,000 members. It also launched voter registration classes throughout New Orleans in bars, restaurants, barbershops, and churches. A women's division of the league emerged, headed by Ida Johnson with Edna Marie Wright, Ernest's wife, as secretary.

League president Richard L. Perry summarized the spirit of the times at one of the many voter rallies held in 1946: "Many barriers have been put in the way of the members of our organization to keep them from registering. These barriers are only stepping stones, however, because the Negro people are determined to participate in politics, and the devils in hell shall not prevail against them." Displaying this determination, one elderly man who was constantly rebuffed at the registrar's table, returned daily, telling Wright, "I got nothing but time. If they say it [the registration card] is wrong, you will see me tomorrow."

As the August voter registration deadline approached, the league organized fleets of cars, trucks, and church buses to ferry people down to the registrar's office. PDL members scoured their neighborhoods in search of potential voters. And Wright addressed an overflow crowd gathered in the league's auditorium on Second Street:

From the pulpits to the docks along the Mississippi River, in the labor union halls, on the street cars, in the corner grocery stores, barrooms and the fraternal halls, the importance of registering to vote is spreading like a forest fire.

The job of arousing the colored citizens to register and vote in all city and state elections is not completed. There is need for a great deal more education before the majority of eligible voters among us will have accepted their responsibility. But one thing is certain, the New Orleans Negroes are on the march and their political power will continue to manifest itself day after day!

Veteran *Louisiana Weekly* reporter "Scoop" Jones described the final days of the campaign:

Hundreds stood in the heat on the shady side of the Registrar's office on Lafayette and St. Charles Street Friday afternoon long before the opening of the office. Many of these people were still in line when closing time came, and were back again the next morning. Some of these were lucky to register, while others failed to get even to the registrar's desk.

When the final tally was made public, 4,716 blacks had been accepted; six out of 10 were rejected due to a "mistake on your card." Despite the failure to reach their goal, the PDL became an electoral voice which could no longer be ignored. That year two candidates for the school board addressed a league meeting and asked for the group's support. And a narrow upset victory by reform candidate Chep Morrison over Mayor Maestri proved the power of the black vote. Even Maestri's "Old Regular" machine conceded the emerging strength of the black voter and drafted a somewhat humble "five-point plan for the Negro."

By 1950, the People's Defense League had branches in 26 parishes (counties) throughout Louisiana. Black registration in New Orleans climbed to 26,000. However, when Wright established ties with Earl Long's "Old Regular" machine which controlled many of the state offices, his dealings in the seamy world of party politics led to a decline in his stature as a civil rights leader. Wright hoped to use the alliance to liberalize the voter registration office so more blacks could be added to the rolls, but his abandonment of his mass base in favor of a much maligned political faction caused his influence to deteriorate.

The PDL closed its doors in 1954, giving way to a host of other black political organizations aligned with then-mayor Chep Morrison and the emerging Civil Rights Movement. Wright, then in his mid-forties and with a growing family, had left in 1952 to work full-time for the Teamsters. In 1957, because of his role in the 1940 insurance strike, he became a subject of investigation by the Louisiana Committee on Subversion in Racial Unrest, a legislative body bent on linking the growing civil rights movement with foreign agents.

Although Wright never regained his earlier power, he remained visible in political and civic circles. In 1960, he was at the forefront of a group called Frontiers, Inc., which supported school integration efforts in New Orleans. And in 1963 he ran for governor and received nearly 40,000 votes in a campaign based on little more than name recognition. People remembered that it was Wright who pushed back the mountains to plant the seeds of black political participation. And before he died in 1979, Wright saw New Orleans elect Dutch Morial as its first black mayor. □

Keith W. Medley is the former co-host of the WYES television station show ***Nationtime*** *and served as a delegate to the national steering committee for the African Liberation Support Committee. A student activist at Southern University in New Orleans during the 1960s and '70s, his work has appeared in* ***Black New Orleans*** *magazine and* ***Facing South****. He currently lives and writes in New Orleans.*

Savannah Remembers

"...We Ain't What We Used to Be," photographs by Frederick C. Baldwin. Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences (P.O. Box 10081, Savannah, GA 31412), 1983. 88 pp. $5.50 plus $2 pstage and handling.

— by Linda Rocawich

Photographs by Fred Baldwin

BENJAMIN VAN CLARK LEADS A MARCH

The Civil Rights Movement "arrived" in Savannah in the summer of 1963, in the form of mass meetings, marches, sit-ins, voter registration drives, and predictable resistance on the part of the white establishment. Last fall, one of the establishment's foremost institutions, the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences, a museum housed in a graceful antebellum home that suggests an eighteenth-century Italian villa, was the scene of a moving commemoration of the movement's twentieth birthday.

Fred Baldwin, a white Savannah native who volunteered his time and camera to documenting the tumult of 1963, produced a major exhibit of photographs recording those events and catalyzed the collecting of oral histories of the people involved. The photographs are good, as evidenced by the samples on these pages — though they aren't nearly as good as Baldwin's more recent documentary work in Texas, where he has lived for the past decade or so, and where he now directs the photojournalism program at the University of Houston.

The visual exhibit alone would not constitute a particularly remarkable photographic documentary, as the artist is the first to admit. But the idea of finding and interviewing, 20 years later, the people in the pictures — and their eloquence in telling their stories — transformed the project into a remarkable documentary effort.

It was a new kind of project for the Telfair, a new kind of community involvement for the museum and its staff. And the exhibit, which was on view from September 14 to October 23, 1983, with funding by the city of Savannah, drew crowds that the Telfair had not reached before, crowds with black faces as well as white.

The catalogue is the permanent record of the event, reproducing in high quality 47 photographs and many pages of excerpts from the oral histories. More than 50 people were interviewed: black and white community leaders, demonstrators, many of whom were teenagers at the time, their parents who worried for their safety, city officials, judges, and police officers. The only segment that is missing is a representative or two of the groups of white thugs who taunted from the sidelines and tried to start trouble.

The project thus begins to provide the raw material for a history of Savannah's unusual story — a story of sit-ins and nonviolent protest that does not begin until three years after the Greensboro sit-ins; which proceeds over the summer months with many arrests and jailings but with little violence and injury; and which ends quickly as establishment resistance recedes and community leaders of both races negotiate the desegregation of restaurants, hotels, and the like, well before passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

By this capsule summary I do not mean to imply that Savannah neatly ended racism in the fall of 1963. But the city, in less than a year, went from typical Southern Jim-Crowism to what Martin Luther King called the most integrated city south of the Mason-Dixon Line. The memories recorded here provide many clues to how that happened, but they do not explain or analyze. (Baldwin and the Telfair's curator and assistant curator, Feay Shellman and Elizabeth Shatto — don't claim to have written the history of Savannah's civil rights movement. As Shellman writes in her introduction, "The text is primary material, not history.")

Obviously, a combination of factors was at work. What were some components?

Strong leadership by local black people was one. The names on most interviewees' lips, wherever they stood in 1963, are Hosea Williams and Benjamin Van Clark. In the period just before the events in question, Williams turned from NAACP-style legal challenges to a more broadly based voter registration drive, and then to this: "I had been conscious of Roy Wilkins . . . sitting in New York writing memorandums telling us how to get free. . . . How can he tell us to get free down here in Georgia? He's sitting up in New York in that big office in comfort and safety. And then I heard about this man Martin Luther King, Jr., that was leading the people. He was at the head of the line. He was saying, 'Come on, I'll show you how to get free.' And so I went to Montgomery to watch this guy

HOSEA WILLIAMS RECRUITS AT LONGSHOREMAN'S HALL

and how he worked. And nonviolence was a totally new thing to me. I was a very violent man all my life. And then I came back to Savannah and tried it."

Meanwhile Ben Clark emerged as a black student leader from marches and a boycott protesting the firing of the popular, outspoken principal of his high school. Many people emphasized how well Williams and Clark planned and coordinated, even orchestrated, all details of the various movement activities that summer — and how strongly committed both were to nonviolence. As Clark put it, "We would preach nonviolence into them so much until when they get on the street, all they knew was nonviolence."

The fact that everyone perceived these *local* men as the leaders also seems to have been a factor. Although Williams was inspired by Dr. King, King himself did not appear in Savannah until January 1964, after the community had desegregated public facilities. Andrew Young was on hand for the summer events, sent by SCLC, but wasn't seen as being in charge. The white establishment had no "outside agitator" to blame for its "troubles."

The city government was led by "moderates" determined to enforce the laws being broken in civil disobedience, but they seem to have been equally determined to do it with a minimum of fuss. Then, too, the establishment included business leaders more interested in keeping order in the city than in maintaining segregation, so they were willing to negotiate as soon as it grew clear that the marches and sit-ins were not going to stop until the demonstrators got what they wanted.

"The polices treat the marchers all right. See, Mayor Maclean, he told them not to bother them. He told them to protect them. If they didn't protect them, why then they wouldn't have no job."

dents, of course, and some police officers who, left to themselves, would have caused more. But, as parent and demonstrator James C. Middleton, Sr., recalls, "The police treat the marchers all right. See, Mayor Maclean, he told them not to bother them. He told them to protect them. If they didn't protect them, why then they wouldn't have no job."

Police supervisory personnel remember more worry over preventing violence by counter-demonstrators — and there were many — than over anything the marchers might do. Selective memory may well be at work here, but only a few demonstrators mention problems with the Savannah police. There was trouble in the jail with county officers, and there are some stories of beatings by state troopers, though; all was not sweetness and light.

Arrests were generally a civilized affair. Lawrence Mahany, the police captain in charge of handling the demonstrations, tells how it typically went: "All they would want was a few to be arrested at each place where they could justify whatever they needed to do and go to court and win their fight. And so what I used to do, I said, "All right, those who want to be arrested, stand on the right hand side and those who don't want to be arrested, just go ahead.'"

Things were different, though, once municipal judge Victor H. Mulling got involved. If the interviewers missed their chance to tape any white thugs, they did record the musings of this unreconstructed opponent of the movement. It is clearly wishful thinking when he claims that he "broke the back of the demonstrations," but he certainly tried. He kept the jails overcrowded and as unpleasant as possible. And he concentrated his efforts on keeping leaders locked up as long as he could — especially Hosea Williams, whom he describes as "a tremendously effective rabble-rouser."

At one point, Judge Mulling issued a warrant for Williams's arrest. Says Williams, "They put me in jail. All right, for every peace bond I needed a piece of property [that] was completely free of debt." For each bond, $2,500 was needed, and Judge Mulling brags that he eventually had 12 on Williams. When two were in force, Williams says, "My wife brought $5,000 worth of bonds down there and they said $7,500." He goes on to tell what happened when a propertied black man came down: "He had a stack of deeds, I mean two feet high to get me out. And he just asked the judge; said, just in passing, 'Judge, how long you think my property be tied up?' The judge said, 'If I have anything to do with it, the rest of my life.' So he took his deeds and went home."

Williams spent 31 days locked up, and he wasn't allowed to talk to anybody except an FBI man who came to see him every day. He says, "My only touch with the outside was I could hear those kids every night. Singing and marching. . . . Every night they was coming just to show." By the time Williams was released, the last march had ended and the negotiating had begun.

Fred Baldwin and the Telfair Academy — especially Feay Shellman, who ordinarily spends her time on the history of nineteenth-century painting and whom Baldwin credits with indispensability in creating the show and book — are owed a large debt of gratitude by the people of Savannah and the South for recovering

these stories. And the photographs, which Baldwin had long forgotten about until he discovered them in an old set of files, deserve wider exposure. The exhibit is boxed up and available to museums, colleges, public buildings — any place with the facilities to show it; arrangements are handled by the Southern Arts Federation (1401 Peachtree Street, N.E., Suite 122, Atlanta, GA 30309). We recommend it.□

Linda Rocawich is an editor of ***Southern Exposure.***

REACHING OUT, MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM 1964

New Orleans, Past and Present

The WPA Guide to New Orleans, by the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the City of New Orleans. Pantheon Books, 1983. 430 pp. $8.95/$20.00.

— by Archie Hobson

We owe much to the Federal Writers' Project (FWP). In some very thin years, it fed thousands of our cultural workers; this was its first rationale. It also nourished them intellectually: many who were not sure they were in fact writers discovered that they were; some found themes and material they would later put to good use.

FWP writers carried out a major, nationwide oral history project, interviewing in particular those remaining Americans who had been slaves. Warehouseloads of their regional and folkloric research are still being used and await further use. During the brief existence of the FWP (1935-43), these writers created volumes of Sea Island lore, Cape Cod anecdotes, ethnic history, biography, tall tales, recreational information, and more.

The heart of the FWP effort was "the guides." Each state was responsible for producing its own tour guide: a second FWP rationale was to stimulate travel in America during the Depression. Motor travel was coming to maturity, and many states went beyond producing a single statewide guide and brought out additional volumes on individual cities and even small towns.

Original copies of the guides are still cherished in thousands of home libraries, and revised editions appear from time to time in many states. Recently, however, access to most of the series has been only through mining second-hand stores or through the heavy ($50-$75) investment required for library reprint editions. Now Pantheon Books has reprinted five of the guides at popular prices, with two more due out this year. Of the five, a Southern volume is one of the best. The *New Orleans City Guide*, which first appeared in 1938, contains 430 pages of history, anecdote, local color, recipes, photography and drawings, song, Louisiana idiom, and more. This is a travel book, but do not wait to read it until you are on the city's streets.

Each guide contains two parts, the first made up of essays on history, economy, and culture; the second tours themselves. The books' particular charm and their value as portraits of the nation is contained in the tours, where literary movement through the landscape is mixed with comment on anything from unusual buildings to manufacturing processes to local superstitions. The guides' contemporary advocates noted that this juxtaposition of the disparate, made the books special; travelers using a WPA guide would have their eyes opened to the diverse and unexpected qualities of a state's landscape and people.

In covering the cities, though, the guides had to be highly selective. The *New York City Guide* (another Pantheon reissue), could give only 75 pages to Brooklyn, one of our most important cities. The New Orleans guide is outstanding partly because it managed to break through the limitations imposed by bulk of information and lack of space. Actual tours comprise less than half the volume, but they are buttressed by a folklore section in the form of a ramble (where the hand of novelist and historian Lyle Saxon, the FWP state director for Louisiana, is evident), on-scene depiction of religious sects, atmospheric description of noted restaurants, and other vignettes that maintain the feeling of a city stroll.

The travel industry is obsessed with currentness. Long before the FWP, it labored to keep up with prices, facilities, and fashions. Today, travel industry information tells which restaurants are popular and who takes Visa cards. But its "history" has become static: well-chewed-over stories of Andrew Jackson's 1815 activities; the names of famous men. *The WPA Guide to New Orleans* is different. It may be 45 years "out of date," but it tells a story that the travel industry's books don't touch. Jackson is here, as is the city's founder Sieur de Bienville, but so are the people of the city.

The New Orleans guide is a treasure for what it reveals about both the past *and* the present. Look into the guide and consider its handling of race; note where its writing seems insensitive or ethnocentric.

"BIG LESTER" HANKERSON CAPTIVATES HIS AUDIENCE

Ponder the effect of the FWP structure — in which each state had much control over the content of its own guide — on the interpretation of Reconstruction. (According to the guide, "The years between 1865 and 1877 were the blackest in the history of New Orleans.") Note the undeveloped state of knowledge of American music, but also mark where local description — of a spasm band, for instance — can make up for missing musicology:

A "spasm band" is a miscellaneous collection of a soap box, tin cans, pan tops, nails, drumsticks, and little Negro boys. When mixed in the proper proportions this results in the wildest shuffle dancing, accompanied by a bumping rhythm. You flip them a coin, and they run after you offering to do tricks for "lagniappe"*; and without waiting your approval, one little boy begins to walk the length of the block on his hands, while another places the crown of his skull on a tin can and spins like a top.*

If you're lucky enough to visit New Orleans with this guide in hand, buy a good street map (for some reason the guide contains no maps) and investigate urban redevelopment since 1938. Investigate the port and industries of New Orleans today, well-described in their 1938 aspects. Because of its vivid and detailed descriptions, this guide — like the others — has become a measuring stick for change in America.

New Orleans is a magnet, and this reissue has been selling well. But its qualities are shared by the whole guide series, each of which is a bargain at Pantheon's prices ($8.95-$9.95). Will others be forthcoming? Much of the FWP's liveliest writing is found in quieter places and has yet to be reprinted. Thus, while the Virginia guide might be said to be weighted down with the burden of Jamestown and the Revolution, presidents and the Civil War, the Arkansas guide is, to those interested in the lives of the nonrich and non-"historic," one of the best of the series. Some of the Southern volumes are strong in themselves (Mississippi, Florida, South Carolina); some are particularly interesting as indices of change (Texas, Atlanta, Houston). Can we hope that they will all soon be back within the reach of all of us?□

Archie Hobson lives in New York, where he is completing a book based on excerpts from all the WPA guides.

Sooner or later, the ocean will win

Living with the Shore. Series general editors: Orrin H. Pilkey, Jr., and William J. Neal. Duke University Press. $9.75/$22.75 per volume.

— By Mark I. Pinsky

With its "Living with the Shore" series, Duke University Press provides a considerable service for those who live along America's coastline — especially on the South Atlantic and the Gulf — as well as for the many others who simply love the beach.

Six of the 15 projected coastal guides, including ones on North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Texas, will be available by mid-1984. Currently in preparation are two separate Florida guides (one for each coast) and others on Alabama-Mississippi and Georgia. Duke has had the good sense to include in the series two updated reprints: *The Beaches Are Moving*, an overview and primer by Orrin Pilkey, Jr., and Wallace Kaufman, and *From Currituck to Calabash* (retitled *Living with the North Carolina Shore*), by Pilkey and his father, Orrin, Sr., and William J. Neal. Pilkey *pere* is a retired engineer; Pilkey *fils* is a marine geologist at Duke; Neal is a geologist at Grand Valley State College in Michigan.

As the series title suggests, the books are of greatest value to those thinking about living or building at the coast. They are very specific, and include numerous diagrams and photos. Yet a unifying theme runs through the whole series: when it comes to the beach, it's not nice to fool with Mother Nature; sooner or later the ocean will win, so the wisest course is not to tinker with the shoreline.

The villain of the series is a pattern of shortsighted, commercial overdevelopment of the coast, combined with a grab-by philosophy of private, beachfront homebuilding — which the authors refer to as "New Jerseyization." The conflict between those few who own or control America's beaches, a finite natural resource, and the many who would like to enjoy them is so great that the ensuing battles over surf and turf often end up in the courts.

Disputes involving developers, environmentalists, and individuals over who has access to the beaches and who may artificially alter them do not, strictly speaking, constitute a class struggle. Nor, according to Pilkey, Jr., and Kaufman, is it an altogether unequal one:

In the realm of beach property the "have nots" enormously overwhelm the "haves;" and since these "have nots" are generally well-fed, well-clothed, well-housed, and educated, they are more aggressive and politically powerful than those people we usually call "have nots." Typical of middle-American activism, the

battle for the beaches has been waged by legal swords and lawyer proxies for the combatants.

North Carolina's beautiful Figure Eight Island illustrates this unusual confrontation. Development on the 1,300-acre barrier island is criticized in both *The Beaches Are Moving* and *Living with the North Carolina Shore*. Yet its natural attractions pull Orrin Pilkey, Jr., to vacation there himself.

In colonial times, the island was owned by the same family which established the nearby (and still standing) Orton Plantation, where the movie "Firestarter" was filmed. Two hundred years later the property passed into the hands of a family of local developers named Cameron. Retaining several lots for their personal use, the Camerons sold out in 1971 to the Figure Eight Island Company, which went bankrupt in 1974.

For the next five years the island was owned by the real estate division of Continental Illinois Bank of Chicago, until the bank's Real Estate Investment Trust was, in turn, taken over by a California businessman named William Lyon. Throughout this turbulent period of boom and bust, lots were sold, houses were built, and a carefully cultivated mystique of wealth and exclusivity continued unabated.

Paul Foster purchased the first of his two lots on Figure Eight in 1967 for $12,500. The former foreign service officer built a beach house on the property as a retirement home and later bought a parcel facing the Intracoastal Waterway, where he built a second house as a rental property. By the time the parade of developers had passed and inflation had peaked, the lots alone were worth over $100,000 each. (Foster says he comes from that wing of the Democratic Party which believes that "people mean more than things," in sharp contrast to many of his conservative Republican neighbors. He even subscribes to *In These Times*. Yet he admits that he is not *that* different: "We're all pretty well off around here.")

In the early 1980s, Paul Foster helped organize and lead the climactic battle against William Lyon and the development company over the future of Figure Eight. The theater of operations wherein the former State Department official and a small army of residents took on Lyon, a retired general, was the New Hanover County zoning commission. When the smoke cleared, the homeowners and late-blooming activists had defeated attempts by the developers to construct high-rise condominiums on the island's causeway. Lyon put his own house, perched on the eroding north end of the island, on the market for $1.2 million and agreed to sell the remaining lots and facilities of the entire island to the homeowners' association, making Figure Eight a completely private community — including the roads and the drawbridge to the mainland.

The turnover was reported in the Fall 1983 issue of the island's newsletter, "Pieces of Eight": "For the first time the property owners are in a position to mold the community, control activities, and provide the pleasant lifestyle everyone seeks. This new regime, through willing participation and open communication, will accomplish our goals."

What are those goals and into what kind of community will Figure Eight now be molded? According to the shoreline guides, many of the well-constructed houses have been built on dangerously low-lying areas of the island. The guides predict that if the long-predicted "killer hurricane" hits anywhere nearby, not only will these houses be washed away, but the causeway leading to the private bridge may be under water before residents can escape.

It is also fair to ask *for whom* this community is being molded. The wide white beaches of Figure Eight, like most of America's shoreline, belong by law and common practice to the state, which holds them in trust for all of the people. However, the treacherous inlets at either end of Figure Eight make it impossible to swim to the island, and only property owners are permitted by the private security force to cross the bridge. As Pilkey and Kaufman observe in *The Beaches Are Moving*, this is a kind of welfare for the wealthy: "On an inaccessible beach the value of the environment accrues solely to the adjacent private property.... Given the ancient public domain claim to the tidelands, the rivers, bays and ocean, it may be argued that the person who sells a shorefront home...pockets a profit which is largely created by the public domain."□

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Books on the South

This list consists of books published through May 1984. All books were published in 1984. Dissertations appeared in the Dissertation Abstracts Index from October to December 1983. All dissertations are dated 1983 unless otherwise noted.

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

"The Black Community of Nashville and Davidson County [Tennessee], 1860-1870," by May Alice Harris Ridley. Univ. of Pittsburgh, 1982.

"The Common Whites: Class and Culture in Antebellum North Carolina," by Bill Cecil-Fronsman. UNC-Chapel Hill.

Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community, by Charles Joyner. Univ. of Illinois Press. $22.95.

"Free Workers in a Plantation Economy: Talbot County, Maryland, 1690-1759," by Jean B. Russo. Johns Hopkins Univ.

"Lifeline of the Confederacy: Blockade Running During the American Civil War," by Stephen R. Wise. Univ. of South Carolina.

"Late Prehistoric and Early Historic Chiefdoms in the Southeastern United States," by Chester B. DePratter. Univ. of Georgia.

North Carolina Planters and Their Children, 1800-1860, by Jane Turner Censer. LSU Press. $20.00.

"Rebellion and Realignment: Arkansas's Road to Secession," by James M. Woods. Tulane Univ.

The Salzburger Saga: Religious Exiles and Other Germans along the Savannah, by George Fenwick Jones. Univ. of Georgia Press. $18.00.

"Soldiers When They Chose to Be So: Virginians at War, 1754-1763," by James R.W. Titus. Rutgers Univ.

ECONOMICS, HISTORY, AND POLITICS — 1865-1984

"The Adjustment Process of Southern Appalachian Whites in Cincinnati, 1940-1979," by Stephen D. Wilson. Univ. of Kentucky.

"Appalachian Metamorphosis: Industrializing Society on the Central Appalachian Plateau, 1860-1913." by Randall G. Lawrence. Duke Univ.

Black Americans in North Carolina and the South, edited by Jeffrey J. Crow and Flora J. Hatley. UNC Press. $19.95.

Black Magnolias: A Brief History of the Afro-Mississippian, 1865-1980, by Robert F. Holtzclaw. Keeble Press. $13.50.

Blacks and Social Justice, by Bernard Boxhill. Rowman and Allanheld. $32.50.

"Cable Television Policy in Texas," by George E.P. Shaw. Univ. of Texas at Austin.

"Changing Mortality Patterns in North Carolina, 1920-1972: A Regional Analysis," by Givenda Head Rice. UNC-Chapel Hill.

"Community Power Structure in Atlanta: A Study in Decision Making, 1920-1939," by Kesavan Sudheendran. Georgia State Univ.

Cotton Crisis, by Robert E. Snyder. UNC Press. $19.95.

"Criminal Homicide in North Carolina, 1975-1977," by Steven J. Cosgrove. Univ. of New Hampshire.

"A Descriptive Analysis of Geographical Literature on the Black American, 1950-1980, as Perceived by Writers in Selected Major Geographical Journals," by William R. Morris. Kansas State Univ.

"Economic Hardship of Unemployment: A Case Study of Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas," by Steven G. Johnson. Louisiana Tech Univ.

The Everlasting South, by Francis B. Simpkins. Greenwood Press. $22.50.

"Glen Allan, Mississippi: Change and Continuity in a Delta Community," by Virginia Estes Causey. Emory Univ.

The Gulf Coast: Where Land Meets Sea, by C.C. Lockwood. LSU Press. $29.95.

"Hispanic Attitudes toward Crime and Justice in Texas: A Study of Perceptions and Experiences," by David Lee Carter. Sam Houston State Univ., 1980.

"Household Structure and Economic Change in a Rural [Kentucky] Community: 1900-1980," by Thomas A. Arcury. Univ. of Kentucky.

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A Centennial History of Southern University and A&M College, 1880-1980, by Charles Vincent. Southern University Press, 1981. $20.00/$13.00.

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LITERATURE

"Aesthetic Integration in the Works of Flannery O'Connor," by Martha E. Chew. Boston Univ.

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"An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism of Women Characters in William Faulkner's Fiction," by Patricia E. Sweeney. Fordham Univ.

"The Arkansas Fiction of Alice French," by Linda E. Rushton. Univ. of Arkansas, 1982.

The Authentic Mark Twain: A Literary Biography of Samuel L. Clemens, by Everett Emerson.

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Conversations with Eudora Welty, edited by Peggy W. Prenshaw. Univ. Press of Mississippi. $20.00/$9.95.

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"The Enduring Chill: Mother-Child Conflict in the Life and Work of Flannery O'Connor," by Anne Turnbaugh. Univ. of Illinois.

Faulkner's Early Literary Reputation in America, by O.B. Emerson. UMI Research Press. Price not set.

"The Fool: Character as Technique in the Novels of William Faulkner," by Cheryl Lynn Ware. Texas A&M Univ.

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" 'A Strategy for Living': Selected Autobiographical Writing by Nineteenth-Century Mississippi Women, with Representative Transcriptions and Checklist of Sources," by Lee E. Harding. Univ. of Southern Mississippi.

"Theodore G. Bilbo's Senatorial Career: The Final Years: 1941-1947," by Charles P. Smith. Univ. of Southern Mississippi.

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

The Black Church in Urban America, by Ida R. Mukenge. Univ. Press of America. $21.75/$11.75.

"Black Radical Consciousness and the Black Christian Experience: Toward a Critical Sociology of Afro-American Religion," by Gary R. Peck. UNC-Chapel Hill.

Bluegrass Breakdown: The Making of the Old Southern Sound, by Robert Cantwell. Univ. of Illinois Press. $19.95.

Blues from the Delta, by William Ferris. Da Capo. $25.00.

"Folkways and Cajun Identity," by Charlotte Paige Gutierrez. UNC-Chapel Hill.

"Grandparents' Perceived Roles in Urban Extended Black Family Relationships," by Addie W. Brown. U.S. International Univ.

An Introduction to Louisiana Archaeology, by Robert W. Neuman. LSU Press. $27.50.

"An Investigation of the Changing Role of the Revival Meeting in the Southern Baptist Program of Evangelism, 1947-1980," by Charles S. Kelley, Jr. New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Kentucky Country: Folk and Country Music of Kentucky, by Charles K. Wolfe. Univ. Press of Kentucky. $16.00.

New Orleans Jazz: A Family Album, 3rd edition, by Al Rose and Edmond Souchon. LSU Press. $35.00/$19.95.

Only the Ball Was White: A History of Legendary Black Players and All-Black Professional Teams, by R. Peterson. McGraw-Hill. $7.95.

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"Spirit and Polity in a Black Primitive Baptist Church," by Joel B. Sutton. UNC-Chapel Hill.

"The Theatre Management of Alexandre Placide in Charleston, 1794-1812," by Richard P. Sodders. LSU.

Welcome the Traveler Home: Jim Garland's Story of the Kentucky Mountains, edited by Julia S. Ardery. Univ. Press of Kentucky. $23.00.

BULLETIN BOARD OF THE SOUTH

Announcements

International Program Launched
The Rural Advancement Fund, International, operated by the National Sharecroppers Fund/Rural Advancement Fund announces the founding of the International Genetic Resources Programme.

The program addresses the problem of the loss of genetic resources in plants and animals, and seeks to build a broader network for educating about the dangers of monopolization of agricultural resources.

Founding Program Staff: Cary Fowler, Elaine Chiosso, and Pat Mooney.

International Genetic Resources Programme, RR1 (Beresford) Brandon, Manitoba, R7A 5Y1, Canada and PO Box 1029, Pittsboro, NC 27312.

CAL/NEH Taped Dialect Search
The Center for Applied Linguistics, with NEH funding, is compiling a list of collections of tape-recorded American English speech. The goal is to facilitate access to the untapped resource of privately-held tapes and to increase awareness about their importance to our cultural heritage. Later, the project will gather a representative group of recordings for a Library of Congress collection.

If you have recordings or want more information, write: Donna Christian, CAL, 3520 Prospect Street, NW, Washington, DC 20007.

Reparations
Black Reparations are your due. Act now! For more information send SASE to: African National Reparations Organization, 1330 North Bond Street, Baltimore, MD 21213. (301) 563-1533

Wanted: Selections from Contemporary Southern Women's Journals for an anthology.
Send 5-20 pages, typed with a photocopy of the original, to Agnes McDonald, Department of English, Atlantic Christian College, Wilson, NC 27893. At the top of each selection, note briefly what you feel is the focus. These are some of the topics of interest: Southernness, Family Work, Sexuality, Race, Class, Creativity, Spirituality, Friendship, Aging, Personal Growth, and Community. Journals that explore the issues facing the woman in her struggle for selfhood and meaning are sought. Please do not send material that simply logs events. Deadline for manuscripts is September 1, 1984. Include SASE. If you are not now living in the South, include a brief description of how you consider yourself Southern.

Growing Old Southern
Southern Exposure is seeking articles for a special issue that will explore the dynamics of aging in the South. We hope to promote an awareness both of the capacity of elders to organize themselves into collective agents and effective advocates of their own self-determination, and of the critical need for interdependence among all age groups. And we want to celebrate the survivors to old age.

Deadline for first drafts, queries, and graphics is June 30, 1984. Contact us at *Southern Exposure*, Aging, PO Box 531, Durham, NC 27702. (919)688-8167.

Events

Eastern Music Festival Season
Greensboro — The Eastern Music Festival announces its 23rd season, which opens June 23 and will continue through August 4, 1984, at Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina.

The festival is ranked as one of the largest music festivals in the United States. The six-week music education program for talented young people consists of over 50 musical events presented by professional and student orchestras and ensembles with appearances by internationally-known guest artists and conductors.

Returning to assist Music Director Sheldon Morgenstern will be Robert Helmacy, Carl Roskott, and Carolann Martin on the permanent conducting staff.

Season tickets are available to the public through the Eastern Music Festival office. Interested students may also make inquiries to Douglas Fair, Director of Admissions. Contact: Eastern Music Festival, 200 North Davie Street, Greensboro, NC 27401. (919)373-4712.

Southern Cultural Institute
The Southern Rural Women's Network, in cooperation with regional arts and community development organizations, sponsors the Southern Cultural Institute, July 11-21, 1984, for youth, ages 10-16, at Epes, Alabama.

The 10-day residential camp experience in Southern culture and arts has space for 30 students who will be admitted on a first-come, first-served basis. Tuition costs are $300 per resident student; $50 daily for the day camp program. Partial scholarships, based on need, will be awarded by the Southern Rural Women's Network. ALL TUITION IS DUE IN FULL BY JUNE 15, 1984.

Interested persons may contact: Elaine Peacock, Southern Cultural Institute, Southern Rural Women's Network, 4795 McWillie Drive, Suite 210, Jackson, MS 39206. (601)362-2260.

Jobs

Grassroots Fundraiser
Save Our Cumberland Mountains is a Tennessee grassroots organization tackling stripmining, property tax reform, toxic waste, oil and gas development. SOCM has a collective staff of six.

Duties: Managing grassroots fundraising program: 75%. General: 25% (responsibilities negotiable based on your skills and SOCM's needs).

Salary: $9,096 plus benefits.

Qualifications: Fundraising experience. Writing skills helpful. Organizing experience preferred.

Position Available: September 1, 1984.

For details: Peggy Matthews, SOCM, PO Box 457, Jacksboro, TN 37757.

Merchandise

Mountain Music
"12-Sring Moonrise," by John Stanfield; "Dillon Bustin's Almanac," by Dillon Bustin; and "Fields Where We Once Played," by The Payroll Boys are the newest records from June Appal Recordings. For a complete catalogue of records and cassettes, write June Appal Recordings, PO Box 743, Whitesburg, KY 41858. (606)633-0108.

Publications

Southern Neighborhoods
This bi-monthly publication of the community control movement in the South contains feature articles, regional and national news, resources, and more. Subscriptions are $6 for six issues; $10 for 12 issues; $16 for 18 issues. Send check to Southern Neighborhoods, PO Box 36250, Decatur, GA 30032.

Also available from Southern Neighborhoods for $3.00: *Fighting the Root Causes of Unemployment.*

The Making of a Woman Suffragist

Belle Kearney was a Mississippi woman active in the Women's Christian Temperance Union. In 1900 she published her autobiography, A Slaveholder's Daughter *(St. Louis: The St. Louis Christian Advocate Press, 1900), in which she explained how she came to be a strong advocate of the right to vote for women. The following excerpt can also be found in* One Half the People: The Fight for Woman Suffrage, *edited by Anne F. Scott and Andrew M. Scott (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1975).*

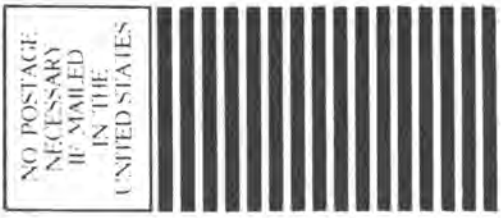
The freedom of my home environment was perfect, but I recognized the fact that there were tremendous limitations of my "personal liberty" outside the family circle. An instance of it soon painfully impressed my consciousness. Three of my brothers, the comrades of my childhood, had become voting citizens. They were manly and generous enough to sympathize with my ballotless condition, but it was the source of many jokes at my expense among them. On a certain election day in November, they mounted their horses and started for the polls. I stood watching them as they rode off in the splendor of their youth and strength. I was full of love and pride for them, but was feeling keenly the disgrace of being a disfranchised mortal, simply on account of having been born a woman, -- and that by no volition of my own. Surmising the storm that was raging in my heart, my second brother -- looking at me, smiling and lifting his hat in mock courtesy said: "Good morning, sister. You taught us and trained us in the way we should go. You gave us money from your hard earnings, and helped us to get a start in the world. You are interested infinitely more in good government and understand politics a thousand times better than we, but it is election day and we leave you at home with the idiots and Indians, incapables, paupers, lunatics, criminals and the other women that the authorities in this nation do not deem it proper to trust with the ballot; while we, lordly men, march to the polls and express our opinions in a way that counts."

There was the echo of a general laugh as they rode away. A salute was waved to them and a good-by smiled in return; but my lips were trembling and my eyes were dim with tears. For the first time the fact was apparent that a wide gulf stretched between my brothers and me; that there was a plane, called political equality, upon which we could not stand together. We had the same home, the same parents, the same faculties, the same general outlook. We had loved the same things and striven for the same ends and had been equals in all respects. *Now* I was set aside as inferior, inadequate for citizenship, not because of inferior quality or achievement but by an arbitrary discrimination that seemed as unjust as it was unwise. I too had to live under the laws; then why was it not equally my interest and privilege, to elect the officers who were to make and execute them? I was a human being and a citizen, and a self-supporting, producing citizen, yet my government took no cognizance of me except to set me aside with the unworthy and the incapable for whom the state was forced to provide.

That experience made me a woman suffragist, avowed and uncompromising. Deep down in my heart a vow was made that day that never should satisfaction come to me until by personal effort I had helped to put the ballot into the hands of woman. It became the mastering purpose of my life.□

THIS POSTER FROM ALABAMA'S SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION SHOWS WHICH STATES ALLOWED WOMEN TO VOTE

At ***Southern Exposure*** *we listen to the voices of many people for guidance and inspiration. We want to recapture the indomitable spirit of those who have spoken for human dignity, for egalitarianism, and for collective social action. We want to celebrate those ideals. We welcome submissions from our readers for this feature. Send ideas to: Voices From the Past,* ***Southern Exposure,*** *P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702.*



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