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ABSTRACT

This book contains selected presentations from a conference on urban Appalachians held in Cincinnati, Ohio, in September 1995. The papers present diverse perspectives on the migration from rural Appalachia to industrial centers, questions of Appalachian culture and identity, community development in Appalachian neighborhoods, and rural Appalachian people's adjustment to the urban experience in schools and other institutions. Chapters are: (1) "Roscoe Giffin and the First Cincinnati Workshop on Urban Appalachians" (Bruce Tucker); (2) "The Question of Urban Appalachian Culture: A Research Note" (Michael E. Maloney); (3) "Images and Identities of Appalachian Women: Sorting out the Impact of Class, Gender, and Cultural Heritage" (Roberta Marilyn Campbell); (4) "I Do What I Must: A Reflection on Appalachian Literature and Learning" (Patricia Ziegel Timm); (5) "'Disgrace to the Race': 'Hillbillies' and the Color-Line in Detroit" (John Hartigan, Jr.); (6) "Neighborhood Associations and the Planning Process: The Case of the Southside Neighborhood Organization" (Michael P. Marchioni, Lon S. Felker); (7) "The Role of Interest Groups in Urban Appalachia: A Case Study from Johnson City" (Lon S. Felker, Michael P. Marchioni); (8) "Creating a Community Vision for Johnson City, Tennessee" (Ellen Buchanan); (9) "The Presidential Election of 1992 in Appalachia's Urban Centers: A Research Note" (Philip A Grant, Jr.); (10) "Appalachian Migrants in Columbus, Ohio: A Personal Reflection" (Peggy Calestro); (11) "Pushed out the Door: An Intergenerational Study of Early School Leaving among Appalachians" (Patricia Ziegel Timm); (12) "Using Modeling Theory To Increase the Technical Efficacy of Appalachian Women" (M. Darcy O'Quinn, Shelby Roberts); (13) "Counseling Appalachian Clients" (Terry Delaney); (14) "Hard Times: Appalachians in the Ohio State Prison System" (Jerry Holloway, Phillip J. Obermiller, Norman Rose); (15) "Working with Appalachian Men in Prison: A Personal Reflection" (Rose B. Dwight); (16) "The Appalachian Migratory Experience in Literature" (Danny L. Miller); (17) "Contextualizing Death Representations in Appalachian Literature" (Jennifer Profitt); (18) "'Mountain Dreams': Using Drama and Autobiography To Enhance Literacy" (Marion Di Falco); (19) "Mary Lee Settle's Charleston, West Virginia: Artistic Sensibility and the Burden of History in

Urban Appalachia" (Jane Hill); and (20) "Learning through Stories: An Appalachian/African American Cultural Education Project" (Pauletta Hansel). Also included are an introduction and suggested reading list by Phillip J. Obermiller; "Identity: A Poem" (Brenda Saylor); and "The Snake Man: A Story" (Richard Hague). (Contains references in each paper and an index.) (SV)

DOWN HOME DOWN TOWN

URBAN APPALACHIANS TODAY

Edited by Phillip J. Obermiller

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For all those poets, artists, teachers, writers, organizers, and scholars who remember the mountains and call the city home.

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Preface

This volume opens with a poem that mentions black snakes and closes with a short story about a man who handles snakes. There was no plan to have snakes as bookends, but the coincidence is appropriate for a book about urban Appalachians. Early migrants to Akron from West Virginia were invidiously dubbed "Snakes" by the "natives" of that city, most of whom had migrated to Ohio only a bit earlier. That kind of reaction to Appalachians in cities around the country is one of the reasons the Urban Appalachian Council was founded, and why this book was published.

In September of 1995, the Urban Appalachian Council's Research Committee sponsored a three-day conference on urban Appalachians that attracted nearly two hundred participants from across eight states. The conference, held in Cincinnati, was organized around the theme, "Down Home, Downtown: Urban Appalachians Today." Continuing that theme, this volume represents a sample of the many and diverse presentations made at the conference.

The conference organizers operated on a principle of inclusiveness, inviting and accepting presentations from many different perspectives on a range of interrelated topics. This book reflects the same breadth and inclusiveness. While the federal government's definition of Appalachia ends at certain county lines, the contributors to this book regard Appalachians as sharing a heritage that includes a relationship to the geography of the mountains, but is not limited to it. Consequently, Appalachian people living in cities both within and outside of the officially defined region are considered urban Appalachians in this text.

The volume also includes a variety of styles and approaches to understanding urban Appalachians today. Some chapters are explorations of theoretical models while others emphasize more of a "how to" approach. Some report the results of technical research while other chapters are reflections on their authors' personal experiences. Some chapters quote from works of fiction to illustrate a point while others use interviews to let living people speak about themselves. Some chapters draw conclusions while others identify areas where more information is needed before understanding can begin. This rich mixture of styles and approaches is simple testimony to the reality that the truth about Appalachian people is told with many different voices.

Careful readers will note that these voices do not necessarily agree. The fact that there is a range of opinion on questions and issues facing urban Appalachians, however, does not indicate inherent confusion or weakness of thought. It is rather a sign of maturity and strength in a community when competing ideas are openly debated. For many of us, finding the truth is more a matter of process than proclamation. The contributors to this volume have shaped their own ideas while remaining deeply committed to the dialogue about urban Appalachians that leads to new insight.

Down Home, Downtown: Urban Appalachians Today has current and useful information for the full range of professionals—from activists to academics—involved and interested in understanding more about urban Appalachians.

- Readers with a focus on historical background will find the Introduction and the chapters by Bruce Tucker (1), John Hartigan, Jr. (5), and Jennifer Profitt (17) useful.
- Those of a literary bent are directed to the chapters by Danny L. Miller (16), Marion Di Falco (18), and Jane Hill (19), as well as to Brenda Saylor's poem that opens the volume and Richard Hague's short story that closes it.
- Educators will appreciate the chapters contributed by Patricia Ziegel Timm (4 and 11), Peggy Calestro (10), M. Darcy O'Quinn and Shelby Roberts (12), and Pauletta Hansel (20).
- For those involved in the criminal justice system, the chapters by Jerry Holloway, Phillip Obermiller, and Norman Rose (14) and Rose B. Dwight (15) are particularly relevant.
- Planners and organizers are directed to the chapters by Michael P. Marchioni and Lon S. Felker (6 and 7), Ellen Buchanan (8), and Philip A. Grant, Jr. (9).

- Those with a particular interest in cultural and social welfare issues will appreciate the chapters written by Michael E. Maloney (2), Roberta Marilyn Campbell (3), and Terry Delaney (13).

Some of the chapters cross both disciplinary and professional boundaries to address multiple interests. Taken as a whole, this volume exemplifies the coalition of interests and perspectives that inform the contemporary community devoted to understanding Appalachians in urban environments.

Editing a book of such diversity has been a challenge and a pleasure. I would like to express my gratitude to the conference committee for their support, and to each of the contributors for their participation and cooperation. A special note of appreciation goes to Pam Luttmers and Linda Weiner of *educational publishing resources* for their meticulous attention to the text.

PJO
Cincinnati

Introduction

Phillip J. Obermiller

Most of us have some sense where the Appalachian region is located both in the geography of North America and in the history of the United States. But our sense of Appalachia and its people is often tentative. The treatment of Appalachia in the standard texts and history lessons of our school days was tenuous at best. The sound-bite journalism of the evening news during the War on Poverty did not add much in the way of factual information. Images of Appalachia as a region characterized by stupidity and brutality have been disseminated throughout the popular culture by plays like "The Kentucky Cycle," sitcoms like "The Beverly Hillbillies," movies like "Deliverance," and cartoons like Snuffy Smith.

The films and videos produced by Appalshop and a growing list of books produced by Appalachian scholars do place the region and its people in a more realistic perspective.[1] Unfortunately, public awareness of these resources is quite limited, as is their availability to those who would pursue them.

In order to put the chapters of this book in context, this introduction will consist principally of a brief and highly selective historical sketch of the mountain region we now call Appalachia. By devoting just a few pages to the history of a region that has been described as "too big to ignore, too old to forget, too vital to abandon," many events have of necessity been omitted. Readers interested in pursuing the topic in detail may consult the list of suggested readings at the end of this section.

IN THE BEGINNING

The Appalachian mountain range lies across the eastern side of the North America, extending from the American South to the Gaspe Peninsula in Canada. As ancient as the geologic processes that created them, the Appalachias are much older than many other well-known mountain regions including the Alps, the Rockies, and the Himalayas. From a geological perspective, the Appalachias are close kin to the uplands of the North Atlantic rim, including the highlands in Newfoundland, Greenland, Iceland, and Scotland.

The Appalachias were home to indigenous cultures for centuries before European exploration and colonization began. Indeed, the Apalachee of northern Florida seem to be the source of the name commonly given the mountains on early maps. Mohawks, Senecas, and Eries lived in the northern part of the mountains, Shawnees in the west, Delawares in the east, and Cherokees, Creeks, and Choctaws in the south. Indian villages throughout the mountains were well-organized both politically and socially when the Europeans began to arrive. The native people had much to teach the newcomers including how to grow and use corn, how to travel through gaps in the mountains using established trails, how to build log houses, and how to fashion animal skins into clothing. In return, the European visitors provided tools, weapons, and fatal diseases for their Indian hosts.

Most Spanish explorers and French traders operated primarily on the fringes of the Appalachias, but English-speaking colonists seemed intent on settling the interior of the mountains. By the mid-eighteenth century, internal migration streams from the colonial east coast into the Appalachias were well established; New Englanders moved into the northern precincts of the mountains, while the Carolina Regulators fled British rule into the southern mountains. Veterans of the French and Indian War and, later, of the Revolutionary War moved to land grants on the Appalachian frontier. The availability of land in the mountains also attracted immigrants, principally Scots-Irish and Germans in the early stages, and, later, newcomers from France, Wales, and Ireland. These population movements put increasing pressure on the native people of the mountains, culminating in the 1838 Trail of Tears when thousands of Cherokee were forced from their mountain homelands by U.S. military forces.

GAINING ACCESS

Early routes into the mountains followed rivers, streams, and established trails. During the nineteenth century, these routes were complemented by roads, canals, and railroads. Settlement most often

took place near these transportation arteries and in the fertile river valleys. Latecomers and the poor frequently found the more desirable places taken and resorted to the remaining land higher up in the mountains. Similarly, development came earlier to the lowlands and more accessible areas. Commercial agriculture and urbanization (villages and small towns) came first to the valleys and only later, if ever, to the upcountry hollows where subsistence agriculture and family life were the primary forms of economic and social organization.

The mountaineers had a natural affinity for freedom and independence, and largely favored the revolutionary efforts to remove British colonial rule from America. Fighters from the southern Appalachias disported themselves well at the Battle of King's Mountain, an engagement that eventually forced Cornwallis, the British commander, to the negotiating table.

The American frontier moved past the Appalachias in the nineteenth century; settlers seeking homesteading opportunities skirted the mountains and headed for the plains west of the Mississippi. Major arteries were established to take homesteaders through the Appalachias rather than into them. Such major trans-Appalachian trails as Zane's Trace, the Wilderness Road, and the Saluda Trail led to towns that served as jumping-off points for western migration: Maysville, Harrodsburg, Boonesborough, and Nashville.

A BRIEF PERIOD OF SEPARATION

The period between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars was a time of cultural consolidation in the Appalachias. The principal source of population growth changed from immigration to natural increase, and social influences external to the mountains lessened in importance. While control remained in the East, political and economic issues kept the new nation focused on the South and the West.

Away from the national mainstream, the mountaineers developed appropriate value systems governing the practice of medicine, religion, politics, arts, and family life. Local politics involved families, not parties. Religious beliefs received legitimation in small sectarian groups rather than from large denominational hierarchies. Medical practice combined the best of available science with an intimate knowledge of the healing properties of native plants and homemade potions. Arts and crafts were the product of artisans and craftspeople with highly practical skills; mountain music had the same utility—ballads were simultaneously a way of remembering, teaching, and entertaining.

WAR AND SLAVERY

Given the Appalachias' size and central location, it is not surprising that much of the Civil War was fought there. Less well known is that the Union found widespread support among the mountaineers. The western part of Virginia split away to become West Virginia rather than fight for the Confederacy. Tennessee struggled through several votes before siding with the southern states. The Underground Railroad ran through Kentucky, and pockets of resistance to the Confederacy could be found as far south as the north Georgia mountains.

Slavery had little salience throughout much of the Appalachias. Most mountaineers esteemed freedom and independence, finding slavery at odds with their basic world view. Moreover, slaves were a relatively expensive form of labor, ill-suited for the small-scale economics of the mountain villages and farms. Where slaveholding did occur in the mountains, it was only in the few areas able to sustain large commercial ventures in timbering, mining, agriculture, or manufacturing.

The paradox of being in the Confederate states but not necessarily sympathetic with the Confederate cause left the mountaineers in difficult straits in the years following the Civil War. The War Between the States had ravaged the mountain region, destroying or damaging its modest infrastructure of roads, bridges, and schools along with crucial social networks that had built up over generations. Much of the feuding for which the mountains became infamous occurred in the decades following the war. But the feud era was perhaps not so much about vicious clan conflicts over pigs and property lines, as it was about a culture of kinship trying to impose some social and political order on the immense social changes caused by the war and emerging industrialization. The infamous Hatfield-McCoy feud of the 1880s, for instance, began on an election day when Ellison Hatfield was stabbed and shot at a Kentucky polling place.

The federal resources of Reconstruction were focused primarily on the deep South, ignoring needs in the Appalachias. The people of the region were left to recover according to the best of their abilities, which they did using the natural alliances of families and the common tools of the day, firearms.

APPALACHIA APPEARS

For better or ill, the concept of Appalachia as a region with coherent social and physical characteristics arose just as the smoke and disarray of the Civil War began to dissipate. References to a

physical region called "Appalachia" first appeared in the geographic literature in the 1860s. By the 1870s authors had discovered a new reservoir of *peculiarity* in Appalachia to complement interest in the intriguing ways of the wild west. Through the publications of local color writers such as John Fox Jr., "hillbillies" were added to popular American mythology alongside cowboys and Indians.

The same *peculiarities* (English dialect, family loyalty, literal interpretation of the Bible, lack of formal education, simplicity of dress and architecture, independence of thought and behavior) that attracted the imaginations of literary agents also caught the attention of religious and social welfare organizations. Intent on modernizing the mountaineers, these groups founded churches and operated schools throughout the mountains. To explain their mission to members and financial patrons, nearly all of whom were unfamiliar with mountain life, sectarian academies such as Berea College and charitable institutions such as the Russell Sage Foundation produced tracts that defined the Appalachias as a region and enumerated its problems. By the mid-twentieth century the federal government had weighed in with its own definition of the Appalachian region and a plan for ameliorating its economic problems.

Along with the missionaries, teachers, welfare workers, and writers who stormed Appalachia came the industrialists. These early capitalists saw great potential in a region rich in minerals, timber, cheap labor, and situated close to large urban manufacturing and marketing centers. All across the mountains commercial coal mines and sawmills sprouted up near the rail spurs that carried away their products; new towns soon sprawled along the tracks near the mines and mills.

CHANGES AND CHALLENGES

Following the Civil War social change occurred in the mountains at a dizzying rate; the Appalachian people made the transition from an agricultural to an industrial society in about 50 years. The spread of industrialization brought many families from mountainside farms into an urban milieu, albeit in small towns and villages within the region. Other groups were attracted into the mountain towns during the period between the Civil War and World War I by the opportunities they saw in railroading, mining, and timbering. Many self-sufficient rural farm families became loyal subjects of "King Coal," working in his mines, living in his towns, renting his houses, and buying dry-goods and groceries with his scrip. Speculation in rights to land holdings, timber stands, and mineral rights was widespread with ownership of these assets usually ending up in the hands of companies headquartered outside the region.

Railroads were important contributors to change in the mountains. Rail companies such as the Chesapeake & Ohio, Norfolk and Western, Louisville & Nashville, Clinchfield, and Southern all established lines in the mountains during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The railroads affected not only the economy of the region, but also its social composition. Black workers who had dug the right-of-ways for the railroads stayed in the mountains to dig coal. Other blacks had worked in the collieries of western Virginia and northern Alabama as slaves; after abolition these experienced miners "rode the rails" into the expanding coalfields seeking work. Still others were recruited in the deep South by the mining companies, loaded into boxcars and brought to company towns in the mountains were they were used as strikebreakers. Many European immigrants came into the coalfields in similar fashion, either as laid-off railroad construction workers or as direct recruits.

Conflicts between mine owners and miners escalated in the early twentieth century. The miners' attempts to organize unions or to negotiate through strikes often led to pitched battles, known widely as "mine wars." Sobriquets such as "Bloody Harlan" added to the public perception of mountaineers as violent scofflaws. In fact, much of the violence was done by individuals and groups directly or indirectly on the payrolls of the mine owners—armed thugs, private security forces, local sheriffs, and even state militia. As an emblem of their cause and a sign of solidarity, unionized miners often wore red bandannas around their necks. This unofficial "uniform" of a progressive movement was quickly stigmatized by elites as a symbol of people with reactionary and violent proclivities. To this day, the epithet "redneck" is misused consistently, often to malign mountaineers.

The Prohibition era (1919–1933) that followed the First World War had special significance for the image of mountaineers. Their ancestors had brought with them from northern Europe the skill of distilling grain crops into potent liquors. Rather than ferrying large quantities of bulk grain on the rivers and rapids that formed early transportation arteries, the mountaineers found it much simpler to condense several bushels of corn into a small keg of whiskey for transport to market.

The Whiskey Rebellion of 1794 provided an early test of the new U.S. government's taxing authority and a measure of some mountaineers' resolve. The insurrection took place in the hills of southwestern Pennsylvania when local farmers saw their livelihoods threatened by a new tax on rye and corn liquor. Twelve thousand federal troops were dispatched into the region to restore order.

Tobacco, timber, and beverages distilled from corn, rye, and apples were the traditional "cash crops" that added money to the mix

of subsistence farming and barter that formed the mountain economy. The advent of wage labor in the small industrial settlements throughout the mountains did not entirely eradicate these early economic strategies; with the layoffs that occurred during the Depression of the 1930s, producing "home brew" once again became a viable, if illegal, means of generating an income. Unfortunately, a venerable cultural tradition and a useful tactic for economic survival became distorted as the label of "bootlegger" and "moonshiner" was attached to mountain people.

The stereotype of mountaineers as unbridled producers and consumers of alcohol is belied by the fact that the mountain region has more local jurisdictions that prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages than any other similar area in the country. "Dry" counties are found in great abundance in the northern parts of Georgia and Alabama, in the eastern parts of Kentucky and Tennessee, and to a lesser degree in West Virginia. Moreover, the fundamentalist religious tenets espoused by many mountain people forbid the use, let alone the abuse, of alcoholic beverages.

Unfortunately the stereotypes of Appalachians developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are still perpetuated in the popular media today. Films such as "Hooch" and "Redneck Country County," the latter a 1976 Alex Karras film "packed with moonshiners, sheriffs, busty country girls, and chases," comic page characters like Li'l Abner and Snuffy Smith, and television programs such as "The Beverly Hillbillies" and "The Dukes of Hazzard" are all examples of how mountaineers are perceived by the mass media. The news coverage and documentaries of the 1960s and 1970s did little to dispel these images.

MIGRATION

There have always been people moving into the Appalachias, others traveling through the mountains, and still others leaving their mountain homes to settle in other places.

In the 1800s distinct migration trends developed from the Appalachias to the Ozark-Ouchita range, to the Texas hill country, and to the Klamath mountains of Oregon, as well as to timbering regions in the states of Wisconsin and Washington. During this period, many mountaineers also left the highlands for the mill towns of the Piedmont. In the last decade of the nineteenth century growing numbers of Kentuckians became employees of the Champion Paper Company in Hamilton, Ohio; in parts of Eastern Kentucky a suitcase was commonly known as a "Hamilton" and ticket agents there knew

where to route rail passengers seeking a "ticket to Champion."

Between 1900 and 1930 many mountain families worked as seasonal workers, following the vegetable harvest across Indiana and Ohio. Some of these families eventually made the move from field to factory; instead of picking tomatoes or pulling onions, they took jobs making canning jars and supplies in eastern Indiana.

The rubber industry in Northeastern Ohio also attracted many early migrants. By the early 1920s, tens of thousands of West Virginians were working in the tire factories of Akron, turning the "Rubber City" into "The Capital of West Virginia."

Following the First World War, immigration restriction laws put a premium on domestic labor supplies and Southern workers were heavily recruited for jobs in Northern factories. Bus lines ran from county seats in Eastern Kentucky directly to factory gates in Detroit. Mountaineers were especially sought by employers because of their presumed resistance to unionization; this faulty assumption was ultimately laid to rest with the election of a West Virginia native, Walter Reuther, to the presidency of the United Auto Workers.

The Second World War added substantially to the flows of outmigrants, with men and women volunteering for the armed forces or taking war-industry jobs in metropolitan areas outside the mountains. But it was the post-war economic expansion that sent millions of mountaineers into the cities. The automation of farming, mining, and lumbering meant fewer jobs across the mountains, while work opportunities in manufacturing, construction, and services multiplied in and around metropolitan areas. The post-war migration peaked in the late 1950s.

Most of the migrants did well economically, but often at great cost socially. Their labor was welcome, but their "ways" were not. Urban Appalachians encountered discrimination, sometimes in housing, sometimes in hiring, often in trying to get an education. Newspaper articles referred to the migrants as WASPs (White Appalachian Southern Protestants), SAMs (Southern Appalachian Migrants), or SANs (Southern Appalachian Newcomers). Street-level labels were more pernicious: briar, cracker, hillbilly, redneck, ridgerunner, snake eater, and swamp turkey, to list but a few.

Although frequently classified as "unskilled labor" by urban employers, the migrants in fact brought a tremendous inventory of knowledge, experience, and skills with them that they soon adapted to the urban workplace. Former miners had experience in clearing roads, sinking shafts, shoring up tunnels, and illuminating and ventilating the mines; they put these skills to work in the city as heavy equipment operators, construction workers, carpenters, and electricians. Machine operators from mill towns made the transition to assembly-line workers in local plants. Sawmill workers found jobs in

paper manufacturing and furniture factories. Women with no previous employment experience quickly adapted sewing skills to producing everything from mattresses to coffin liners; cooking skills took them to restaurants and commercial bakeries; and housekeeping skills brought them jobs in motels and hospitals. Appalachian women with more education took the traditional "pink collar" jobs of the day as nurses, teachers, and social workers.

Accustomed to self-sufficiency and possessing a strong work ethic, the Appalachian migrant family put all available workers—men, women, and older children—into the urban labor force. Most families overcame the social and economic barriers they found in the cities by either assimilating or by becoming bicultural. Many descendants of the first generation of migrants today are blue-collar workers living at the margins of the economy, getting along well enough during the good times and suffering greatly in times of economic downturn. A smaller but significant portion of the migrant families and their descendants abide among the urban poor, surviving the ravages of life in the social welfare system.

Whether still living in the Appalachian region or in the Appalachian diaspora, mountaineers are joined not by geography, or economics, but by a shared history. With a sense of that heritage presented in this brief introduction, the reader is invited to explore the rich social science literature listed in the background readings on the following page and in the chapters that follow in the balance of this volume.

NOTES

1 Appalshop (306 Madison Street, Whitesburg, KY 41858) is a non-profit arts consortium that produces films, videos, records, concerts, and plays about Appalachia.

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Identity

Brenda Saylor

I am from a twinkle in my mama's eye. That's what Daddy would say, his brown eyes laughing, his hands like small bear paws slapping at whoever was near him.

I am from places where there were more trees than people, where black snakes climbed chicken house walls and swallowed baby chicks whole.

I am from the hills that rang with mama's gospel songs, high pitched prayers to Jesus for safety, for favors, for God's sake forgiveness of sins.

I am from Erin and Bristol, Black Mountain and Black Star, from Corbin, Clarkston and Auburn. I am from Athens, Texas where I went to college full-time, from Minneapolis where I first saw a man with icicles on his beard, from Waco, Texas where I learned that the world could truly be flat.

I am from a womb that wouldn't open, that wanted to do it right but couldn't, from a womb that struggled to keep Papau out and Daddy in. It didn't work in either case.

I am from a place inside myself where the paint doesn't match and the walls are filled with words.

I am from a belief that things can change for the better, that people can change, that I can change.

I am from a Mama who taught me how hard change can be. She got Daddy out of the coal mine and into a car factory. Made him give up liquor and smoking. She decided that she could be a nurse and mother too, that she could make it on her own without Daddy, that she could battle drugs and depression.

I am from a daddy who didn't understand a thing about Mama, who gave up drinking and smoking but couldn't give up the ladies, who could fix anything with a motor, whose hands were best when locked onto metal.

I am from the men I have known. I find myself requiring less, sharing less, even with my son.

I am from the women who have befriended me, who have many of the same weaknesses as men but I can forgive more easily.

I am from dreams—mama's dreams, mamau's dreams and sometimes when I listen, dreams of my own.

May 1995

■ I ■

Appalachian Identity: Sorting It Out in the City

■ 1 ■

Roscoe Giffin and the First Cincinnati Workshop on Urban Appalachians

Bruce Tucker

More than 40 years ago, April 29, 1954, to be exact, the Mayor's Friendly Relations Committee and the Social Service Association of Greater Cincinnati convened a workshop to discuss the "Southern Mountaineer in Cincinnati." Over 200 participants—including social workers, civic officials, teachers, police officers, and church workers—heard an opening address by Berea College sociologist Roscoe Giffin and met in small group discussions, sharing ideas and experiences. The publication of a pamphlet, "A Report of a Workshop on the Southern Mountaineer in Cincinnati" in October 1954 made *The New York Times* as a news item,[1] and the report was distributed widely. Similar attempts to analyze the presence of mountaineers in Cincinnati over the next decade were largely based on Giffin's research.[2] This paper examines Giffin's research and ideas about urban Appalachians to explain the approaches followed and the paths not taken in social welfare practice in the period before the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964 and the development of community action planning.

I cannot help but think that Roscoe Giffin would be pleased by the sheer enormity of the research that since 1954 has increased the understanding of migration patterns and resettlement, Appalachian culture, health and education, neighborhood revitalization, and strategies for social work practice among urban Appalachians. However, he would also be surprised by the ongoing problems that urban Appalachians, activists, social workers, and researchers face, particularly the need for a focus on community activism. Giffin believed that the difficulties faced by mountaineers in the city would disappear within a generation or two. He did not think that systematic, social work practice was necessary or even desirable.

Roscoe "Rusty" Giffin held a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Illinois and did postdoctoral studies in sociology at Iowa State University. In 1949 he was appointed to teach sociology at Berea College, Kentucky, a post he held until his death in 1964. Giffin was a pacifist, a Quaker, and, much to his father's chagrin, a Kennedy supporter in 1960. At Berea, he was a member of the local chapter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a religious, pacifist organization dating from the 1930s that was dedicated to improving interracial relations and strengthening civil rights for African Americans.[3]

RESEARCH METHOD

Giffin's first exposure to mountain people occurred during the summer of 1945 when he and his partner, Florence, directed a work camp for high school students in Wolf County. After his appointment to Berea College, he began a field research project, a socio-economic study of the 631 people (121 households) of the Pine Mountain School district in southeastern Kentucky. The Pine Mountain School was the result of the consolidation of five district schools in 1949, and it shared partially overlapping boards with Berea College. The College was interested in obtaining data against which future social and economic changes could be measured and the influence of the new school program assessed. Giffin spent the summer of 1950 in the community, interviewing and supervising the distribution of a questionnaire. The final document was submitted to President Francis Hutchins of Berea College in 1952.[4]

THE REPORT

In the report, Giffin described a society straining to support a rapidly increasing population with dwindling resources. The Pine Mountain School district, he asserted, was characterized by a disproportionately high birthrate, estimated at 38 live births per 1,000 population, as compared to a national rate of 23.9 in 1949. In addition, the proportion of people under 20 years of age was high—56 percent of the total population—compared with a national rate of 34.4 percent in 1940. Further, he calculated a median household income of $1,660 per year when the national median was $3,000.

Neither available land resources or job opportunities, he speculated, could support this rapidly growing population, and considerable out-migration would be necessary. Indeed, he noted, significant migration had already occurred. In the summer of 1950, 121 households reported a total of 213 children who no longer lived with

their parents. Interestingly, Giffin found that migrants generally had less education than those who remained. He also indicated that of the 152 migrants who had left the district, only 18 had moved to states outside Kentucky.[5]

Two characteristics of the community caught his eye. First, in his description of values and attitudes, he suggested that residents of Pine Mountain had been slow to develop webs of interdependent relationships in the manner of modern American urban and rural communities. He particularly noted the near absence of formal organizations and a lack of participation in ones that did exist. Second, he noted widespread and often severe poverty and little resistance to it.[6]

Role of Culture

To account for this situation, Giffin offered cultural, geographical, and religious explanations. The people of the Pine Mountain community did not choose low levels of income and living, nor were they lazy, nor did they suffer from a "poor biological inheritance." Culture constrained them.

> Such levels are low because that is all that most of these people can be trained to achieve with the knowledge and resources which their society is able to place at their disposal....It is a culture which lacks the inanimate energy, the technological know-how, the capital, and the driving demands found elsewhere.[7]

Role of Geography

Second, geography explained why urban patterns of social organization, competitiveness, and interdependency had not evolved in the mountains. Giffin suggested that the absence of significant industrialization from the mountains, attributable to geography, also explained why Appalachia lagged behind the rest of the nation's development.

"...industrialism," he noted, "with its powerful engines for the creation of new desires and the alteration of standards of success, has by-passed this area."[8]

Role of Religion

Culture and geography alone, however, Giffin suggested, were not enough to explain why mountaineers were not actively involved in

shaping the future of their community.

> ...there may yet remain the question of whether these people have actually done the best they could with the resources available to them....Do they want what middle-class urban culture tells some of us is normal and American?[9]

Thus Giffin turned to a third line of explanation—religion—contending that

> the theology of the Appalachian area is a crucial matter in understanding and explaining the attitudes, values, and general pattern of culture of these people.

Borrowing from theologian Richard Niebuhr, he described Appalachians' religion as the religion of the "disinherited."

> Since heaven is the individual's ultimate home and since the end of the world is soon at hand, the hardships of this earth are to be accepted and poverty may be exulted into a virtue.[10]

Giffin called the religion of the mountaineers "salvation-centered," a term connoting inertness, resistance to self-improvement and progress, and standing still in time. In his view, mountain culture, whatever its peculiarities and positive attributes, was a relic.

MIGRATION

Giffin believed that the migration would continue, and that future migrants would be travelling further from home. He offered two solutions as a result of his research. First, he suggested that schools—presumably both in the mountains and cities—develop curricula that would assist children to make the transition from rural to urban living. Second, he proposed a federally financed system of subsidies to enable mountain families and political units to make larger investments in the health and education of children. Most of these children will spend their productive years benefitting other parts of the nation, Giffin reasoned, and therefore the government should provide a form of equalization payment.[11]

What is striking about Giffin's commentary is that he does not suggest that the aspirations of modern urban Americans were defined by geographical location, culture, or religion. By contrast, urban Americans functioned as autonomous individuals within a web of social and institutional relationships that Giffin thought were now

inherently American and which were absent in the mountains. Thus he saw nothing problematic to explain about urban American culture and behavior. The problem with mountaineers was that their behavior and fate was determined so fully by place, culture, and religion that they were rendered anachronistic in modern society. Perhaps his experience as a Quaker activist and a liberal democrat disposed him to see the striving for social and self-improvement which he associated with urban culture as a benchmark and mountain culture as inactive, problematic, and unmodern.

FAMILISM

When Giffin stood before the assembled participants in the 1954 workshop, he spoke about urban migrants largely on the basis of his research in rural Appalachia. First, he argued that mountaineers were familistic. By this, he meant both that mountaineers did not prepare their children to leave home and that they retained close ties to former homes in the mountains, visiting frequently. In addition, when mountaineers came to the city, familism impelled them to settle among their own kind, a decision which impeded their adjustment.[12] Perhaps most important, familism truncated the development of an identity as a member of "various social systems."[13] Giffin argued that mountaineers did not develop relationships as individuals with networks and institutions outside of their families.

COMPETITION

A second characteristic that marked mountaineers off from their urban neighbors, according to Giffin, was the lack of a competitive spirit. Children did not participate in organized sports, nor did they tend to join organizations. "In the urban setting," Giffin wrote, "such persons may well lack the strong success motivations and ruthless competitive striving so frequently found in our cities."[14] He noted that he had observed children at recess time in mountain schools simply sitting about and talking rather than playing an organized game. Although he admired what he saw as the leisured, sociable behavior of mountaineers, he argued that it was a liability in the city.

INDEPENDENCE

Third, Giffin suggested that mountaineers tended to be highly independent, a trait he attributed to the isolated living patterns of

mountain life. This characteristic generated a noticeable shyness among people in the mountains, but it could easily be transformed into violence upon a perceived infringement of rights. "Persons of authority" he wrote, "tend to be defined as threatening rather than helping symbols though accredited authority is usually paid its due."[15] Indeed, he suggested that only those urban mountaineers who had abandoned familism and accepted other systemic relationships could accept the authority of such figures as the police officer, judge, or teacher. Mountain culture, then, prevented mountaineers from developing interdependent relations, an attribute which Giffin considered essential for successful adjustment to the city.

FATALISM

Fourth, Giffin stressed that mountaineers were largely fatalist in philosophical orientation owing to their fundamentalist religious views. Although he found little disparagement of religion in the mountains, he also observed that religion did not serve as a catalyst for social action. The consequence of this religious disposition, according to Giffin, was that mountaineers were not inspired by their religion to contest the material conditions of their lives. Rather, fatalism disposed them to accept sickness, poverty, and misfortune as "evidence of virtue and assurance of salvation."[16] Thus Giffin described mountaineers as a people conditioned by their culture to accept rather than to challenge the constraints of their life situations.

Having described the central traits of mountain culture, Giffin then attempted to account for the difficulties encountered by mountaineers in the city. Were their problems the result of discrimination based on group identification by native Cincinnatians, he asked, or were they the result of the liabilities of mountain culture in an urban setting? Giffin answered that urban mountaineers did not adjust well because their culture had not prepared them for urban living. He acknowledged that mountaineers were subject to name-calling and feelings of rejection in Cincinnati, but he had not found evidence of discrimination in employment practices. He believed that mountaineers had difficulty in obtaining housing for the practical reasons that they had large families and were new to the city.

> Personally, I would conclude that their problems are largely a consequence of the various handicaps they bring with them to Cincinnati, and which, in interaction with the urban environment, result in the maladjustments as noted.[17]

ASSIMILATION

Giffin believed, however, that migrants would ultimately become urban citizens, undistinguished from their neighbors. Indeed, their transition would be smoother than other immigrants, he predicted, because as unfair as it seemed, their white, Protestant, British, or Northwestern European origins gave them an advantage over immigrants who were not of "'Old World American' stock." "The doors to the elevators in our socio-economic status system," he concluded, "will gradually open in full for these people."[18] This process would happen as mountaineers abandoned those characteristics which rendered them out of place in the city—fatalism, familism, rural individualism, and salvation-centered theology—and define themselves as urban dwellers who functioned as individuals within networks and institutions and free from family or any other corporate and unchosen identification. Social workers could suggest appropriate forms of behavior—regular school attendance, punctuality, cooperation with authorities, and modern habits of health and cleanliness—but they could not make the transition happen. He hoped that his analysis would help social workers and others understand the origins of the behavior of mountaineers, but he did not suggest (and the city did not develop) programs designed to meet the culturally specific needs of migrant mountaineers during the 1950s and early 1960s.

Two developments after the mid-1960s brought this non-interventionist brand of social work practice to an end. First, a virtual revolution in the theory and practice of community organization launched "community action," the involvement of residents in planning and implementing the revitalization of American neighborhoods in both rural and urban areas. Cincinnati's city and social welfare planners had been experimenting with community action since the mid-1950s, but the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act resulted in the development of a vast array of programs for African-American and Appalachian neighborhoods.

Second, by the late 1960s, Appalachian activists began organizing residents to demand improvements in neighborhood facilities and resources. Out of this movement emerged a new ethnic consciousness among urban Appalachians, part of a larger "white ethnic revival" in the United States in the 1970s.[19]

Giffin might well have been surprised by these developments. His focus on the mountains and mountain culture diverted his attention from the actual living situations of migrants in Cincinnati neighborhoods. The city for him was foremost a state of mind, the crucible of a modern, competitive striving, a forum for interdependent, voluntary organizations dedicated to social and self-improvement. In the 1960s, social workers, activists, and Appalachian advocates concerned

themselves with streets, schools, neighborhoods—the lived realities of urban life. Giffin's emphasis on mountain culture, however, was not lost. The "differentness" of mountain culture that he thought would disappear in the city became the basis of an Appalachian ethnic movement and indeed a continuing subject of concern 40 years after he addressed the first Cincinnati workshop on urban Appalachians.

NOTES

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1 "Study Completed on Mountaineers," *New York Times*, October 10, 1954.

2 See, for example, Russell E. Porter, "When Cultures Meet," 1962, and Father Aloys Schweitzer, "Who is Sam? A Friendly Study of the Southern Appalachian Migrant," 1964, both in Frank Foster Library, Urban Appalachian Council, Cincinnati.

3 For Giffin's role in the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), see FOR Papers, Hutchins Library, Berea College, Berea, KY. See Roscoe Giffin to his father, November 20, 1960, Giffin Papers, Box 1, Folder 3.

4 "Roscoe Giffin: Biographical Sketch," January 23, 1962, Giffin Papers, Box 3, Folder 6, Hutchins Library, Berea College, Kentucky; "People of the Pine Mountain School District, Harlan County, Kentucky," Giffin Papers, Box 1, Folder 13. Giffin reported his findings from this study in "Down in the Valley," Mountain Life and Work, 1 (1953): 39–46; 3 (1953): 33–40; and 4 (1954): 39–46.

5 Giffin, "People," 20–24, 24–28, 38–45; "Down in the Valley," (1954): 34–35.

6 Giffin, "People," 120–22.

7 Giffin, "Down in the Valley," (1954): 39–41.

8 Ibid., 41.

9 Ibid., 41.

10 Giffin, "People," 16, 19.

11 Giffin, "Down in the Valley," (1954): 45–46.

12 Giffin, "A Report of a Workshop on the Southern Mountaineer in Cincinnati" Cincinnati, 1954, typescript, 4–6.

13 Ibid., 38.

14 Ibid., 7.

15 Ibid., 12.

16 Ibid., 9.

17 Ibid., 46.

18 Ibid., 12.

19 See for example, Michael Novak, *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics: Politics and Culture in the Seventies* (New York: Macmillan, 1971).

■ 2 ■

The Question of Urban Appalachian Culture: A Research Note

Michael E. Maloney

At the "Down Home, Downtown Urban Appalachian" Conference, participants were asked to discuss the question of Urban Appalachian culture during lunch. Small groups were asked to respond to three questions. What is urban Appalachian culture? What cultural capital and resources do we possess? What biculturalism is required in our dealings with the mainstream? Out of 21 tables, 13 turned in notes which reflected their discussion. A summary of their responses tells us something about the views held by conference participants. It also provides insights into the needs of conference participants regarding future research and conference content.

WHAT IS URBAN APPALACHIAN CULTURE?

At the beginning of the discussion participants were given a broad definition of culture as including language, arts, institutions, patterns of social relationships, values and patterns of thought. Superficial elements such as dialect, dress, and food tastes were distinguished from more basic elements of culture such as patterns of thought. Culture was distinguished from ethnicity which implies a sense of common identity based on common ancestry, nationality, religion, and race.

Is it more urban or Appalachian?

Participants were able to make statements about the culture of urban Appalachians. Most felt that it was more urban than Appalachian. One group challenged the distinction between urban and rural, asserting that urban Appalachians are rural people living in cities and that, therefore, the word urban is a misnomer.

Is it distinct from the culture of other urban communities?

The most commonly mentioned feature was the emphasis urban Appalachians place on family life. Religion, basic values, and sense of place were all given honorable mention. One table pictured urban Appalachians as being people-oriented as opposed to the upward mobility orientation of other groups. This group felt that sense of story and shared experiences helped define urban Appalachian communities.

Is it distinct from that of rural Appalachia?

On this question the participation thinned out considerably. There were fewer responses. One group felt that, culturally speaking, rural and urban Appalachians are inherently the same. They have accepted adaptation to urban codes of conduct but most of their values remain intact. Another felt that "less class structure" in rural areas and "economic differences" in the city created a distinction. Another felt that the culture is carried on but is often "watered down" due to urban influences and poverty. Several groups thought that urban Appalachians bring a strong heritage but that something is lost to each generation.

COMPARATIVE RESEARCH NEEDED

Future research and conferences could benefit from studies or workshops that focus on the common elements of traditional societies which include family life, hospitality, religion, ritual, and language.

Conference attendees would not be encouraged to develop a list of traits unique to Appalachians but would rather come to understand the features of different types of Appalachian communities (for example, inner city, suburban, blue collar) in comparison to similar communities of other ethnic groups. For example, what are holiday traditions, burial traditions, patterns of family visiting among blue-collar Appalachians, Italians, Puerto Ricans, and African Americans. How do the school and work experiences of these groups compare?

Many participants in this conference were convinced that while Appalachian culture is strong among the first generation, much is lost by succeeding generations. We need community studies to test this theory. We might be surprised to see how much the fourth generation retains.

WHAT CULTURAL CAPITAL DO WE POSSESS?

Appalachians can teach urban America about "a sense of story, of shared experience." They can teach academics to listen, not analyze. Academics and others can gain a sense of rediscovering background and the two groups can share in cultural enrichment. Appalachians also share their sense of pride through literature, oral tradition, and artistic expression. Stories about Appalachian families and their values are "only recently receiving the recognition and celebration they deserve." To our surprise, leadership was also mentioned as among Appalachian cultural resources. The ways Appalachians communicate and share with each other were also mentioned.

The "stereotype" list came into play with individualism, stoicism, and fatalism. One table of participants worked with inner-city Appalachians and seemed confused by being asked to talk about Appalachian culture and strengths. Independence of spirit and stamina, and the resourcefulness of Appalachians were mentioned along with modesty and less commitment to the pursuit of material goods. The greater ability of Appalachian women to adapt to change was mentioned at two tables. Parents' ability to want more for their children was seen as an asset upon which to build as was possession of "urban survival skills."

DIFFERENT KNOWLEDGE BASES

Analyzing the notes kept by recorders at each table was an eye opener. One of the groups left the form blank saying they found the questions offensive and without substance. Another group, identifying themselves as inner-city (social) workers, could not distinguish between issues of culture and issues of poverty. There is a tremendous range in knowledge base of the people who attend conferences sponsored by the Urban Appalachian Council. Conference planners may need to keep this in mind as they design future programs. There always needs to be a track that assumes little knowledge and perhaps one that assumes a high degree of sophistication. One good topic for a future conference might be the one of class and culture.

HOW DOES BICULTURALISM AFFECT OUR DEALINGS WITH MAINSTREAM CULTURE?

At least two of the groups responding to this question felt the value of assimilation was debatable. There was some feeling that it was

inevitable—perhaps even necessary—and that if you were going to keep your culture it might be best to hide it. One group offered a vision of true biculturalism as preserving the integrity of both cultures.

One group was concerned about the class divisions among urban Appalachians as related to assimilation. This group felt there were positive aspects of Appalachian culture worth retaining (work ethic, family, and religious values). Another group saw both biculturalism and assimilation as inevitable in America. If there was an overall consensus it was that assimilation is prudent but that we ought to be able to know and retain the best of our heritage.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF BICULTURALISM

Most of the table discussion groups had no written comments on the question of biculturalism. Was this because most groups never got that far in their discussions or did they avoid the difficult or unfamiliar? This has been an important question in Appalachian Studies ever since Helen Lewis described the dynamic of biculturalism in "Family, Religion and Colonialism in Appalachia: or Bury My Rifle at Big Stone Gap."[1] Lewis maintained that in the face of the onslaught of outside capitalists and the missionaries of mainline churches Appalachians learned to be "two-faced" or bicultural and take their "hillbilly" culture underground where it is maintained in a family and church context. Participants at the conference were unable to flesh out this concept and make practical applications of it for individuals or organizations. It would make a good topic for a panel at a future conference.

CONCLUSION

Overall the questions posed to conference attendees provoked some worthwhile discussions at about half of the tables. What did the others talk about? They told personal stories or found other ways to respond to the information presented at the conference. The data from those who responded give us some idea of what kind of knowledge of Appalachian culture participants bring to these conferences and what their needs might be at future conferences.

NOTES

1 Helen Lewis, Sue Kobak, and Linda Johnson, "Family, Religion and Colonialism in Appalachia: or Bury My Rifle at Big Stone Gap," in *Colonialism in Modern America: The Appalachian Case*, edited by Helen Lewis, Linda Johnson and Donald Askins (Boone NC: The Appalachian Consortium Press, 1978); 113–39.

■ 3 ■

Images and Identities of Appalachian Women: Sorting Out the Impact of Class, Gender and Cultural Heritage

Roberta Marilyn Campbell

Appalachian women are often romanticized in the professional and lay literature as bold and strong in the face of hardships.[1] This romanticized image has little to do with Appalachian women's real access to economic and political power and, indeed, serves as a deterrent from considering such issues. Consequently, scholars and policy-makers often leave a concern for women out of research and planning activities. Such omissions can have adverse effects on women's lives. My analysis, derived from in-depth interviews of women living in and around the Appalachian mountains, is an attempt to identify key issues for study regarding Appalachian women.

IMAGES OF APPALACHIAN WOMEN AS A THEORETICAL AND POLITICAL ISSUE

The image of the strong, persevering mountain woman that overlooks women's real access to and use of power arises from the romanticized images of Appalachian women that both celebrate their supposed traditions as well as denigrate their supposed lack of modernization. The romanticization of Appalachian women is rooted in the prevailing stereotypes of Appalachian people in general, which are given credence by the media.[2] The inaccuracy of this image is exacerbated by the tendency for much research to assume that there are strong traditions of individualism, ruggedness, and fatalism among the Appalachian people that are carryovers from frontier days due to many years of isolation from the rest of the country.[3] These traits are not considered "modern" and are often used to support a "culture of poverty"[4] explanation for Appalachians' presumed backwardness.[5]

Similarly, understanding the interrelationship of gender and class, gender stratification, and the complicating influence of cultural heritage (all issues subsumed under the recent trend of interest in understanding class, race, and gender), involves avoiding the peril of affirming dominating interests' interpretations. Daly[6] refers to "class-race-gender sloganeering," implying the underlying theoretical dangers in trying to capture the reality of these ascribed statuses without reifying imposed concepts.

The problem of maintaining an intellectual grasp on ideas such as culture, gender, race, and class without "freezing" them in place as determining variables is best illustrated by some of the tension in feminist theory. Linda Alcoff warns of the tendency of those she calls cultural feminists to "essentialize" gender without challenging the dominant social construction of reality:

> Cultural feminism is the ideology of a female nature or female essence reappropriated by feminists themselves in an effort to revalidate undervalued female attributes.[7]

Conversely, according to Alcoff, a strictly post-structuralist approach to gender, in deconstructing any essentialized concept, tends to negate the real experiences of women that are shaped by—and which shape—their social relations. It would be more appropriate to look at gender identity as "positionality,"[8] that is, in terms of positions occupied within groups and institutions and how these positions affect opportunities and influence political identity. In other words, Alcoff is criticizing the polar tendencies to isolate "essence," or perhaps culture, as not only inherent but as an explanatory variable—this time as a reaction to women's inequality—and to overlook structural realities including political processes of attribution and reality construction.

> If we combine the concept of identity politics with a conception of the subject as positionality, we can conceive of the subject as nonessentialized and emergent from a historical experience and yet retain our political ability to take gender as an important point of departure. Thus we can say at one and the same time that gender is not natural, biological, universal, ahistorical, or essential and yet still claim that gender is relevant because we are taking gender as a position from which to act politically.[9]

Essentializing class is less of a problem because so many Americans are not class conscious. At the same time, class consciousness or "class identity" is thwarted, in part due to the pervasiveness of the belief in the culture of poverty.

The social constructions of race and ethnicity have been reinforced by political, if not theoretical, movements. Moreover, the question of whether Appalachians constitute an ethnic group is inconclusive, due, in part, to the impact that class position has on whether an individual is recognized as Appalachian.[10] Racial inequality has led to different experiences for and perceptions of African-American Appalachians.[11] For African Americans, in general, the culture of poverty thesis has a distinctive flavor, concentrated as it is on the breakdown of the family, unwed mothers, and welfare dependency.[12]

In the case of Appalachian women, some images of mountain women as strong—stalwart in the face of hardships—without a critical examination of the structural and cultural processes by which those hardships evolve, such as the gender inequity inherent in patriarchy, amounts to "essentializing" Appalachian women. Additionally, low-income Appalachian women must often defend themselves against the stereotype of the welfare-dependent single mother. In 1986, Sally Ward Maggard summarized the mythical, romantic views of women that existed in Appalachian literature and the consequences of omitting a focus on women in Appalachian studies:

> The "Daisy Mae" image of mountain women as ignorant, barefoot, and pregnant has been slow to die. A variation of this informs a ridiculing attack on Appalachian mothers by those social scientists who posit faulty child-rearing practices as the root cause of the region's persistent poverty.[13]

Maggard described additional myths of mountain women that include equating their experiences with family experiences and what she called the "Mother Jones" syndrome—a portrait of a "few-great-women-of-courage." Besides these assumptions, however, there is also a tendency for women's actual situations and behavior to be blended in with that of Appalachian men, especially in those pieces of research that deal with labor conflicts in the mountains.[14]

APPALACHIAN WOMEN AS ACTORS

As early as 1977, David S. Walls and Dwight B. Billings noted the need for "systematic attention to mountain women," alluding to Kathy Kahn's 1973 case studies of Appalachian women as the only existing attempt to speak to gender issues and the realities of women. Kahn's study is of individual "hillbilly" women—both in and out of the region—and their descriptions of their everyday experiences, including discrimination in an oppressive, patriarchal, capitalist society.

However, while the narratives delineate the psychological distress that poor women face in being subject to class and cultural stereotypes and describe real traditions of activism on the part of Appalachian women, Kahn, by virtue of her choice of respondents, risks perpetuating the stereotype that all "hillbillies" are poor Anglo-Saxon descendants, and reaffirming the existence of the proud, yet backward, traditionalist.[15]

Nearly two decades later, a significant research focus on Appalachian women is beginning to emerge, for example, Anglin 1993, 1991, 1990; Feine 1990; Gagne 1992; Hall 1986; Maggard 1986; Scott 1994; Seitz 1995; and Weis 1993.[16] I found particular insights relevant to my concerns in Judith Ivy Fiene's research on low-income Appalachian women's management of self-images, Jacqueline Dowd Hall's analysis of women's involvement in leading labor struggles in Tennessee in 1929, and Shaunna L. Scott's study of "Saintly Men" and "Sinner Women" in which she reveals that real economic choices can lead women to discard hampering traditionalist ideas.

Fiene reports the responses of low-income women and the "face-saving" techniques they employ when interacting with higher-status individuals. The significance of Fiene's study to my own research is her use of low-income women's subjective reality to understand their "larger social context, which includes the interplay of social stratification and the ideology of egalitarianism." By interviewing low-status women in their homes and participating in some of their encounters with higher-status individuals, Fiene concluded that these women believe they treat others fairly and are very sensitive to "put-downs" from "snobby people." Labeling offenders as "snobby people" and seeking a champion to defend themselves are means for handling "put-downs."[17]

The particular significance of Hall's piece is that she assumes women to be actors with real agendas, making real challenges to authority in a labor struggle. However, the paternalism inherent in a capitalist mode of production shaped and colored reports of women's participation in a 1929 textile workers' strike in Carter County, Tennessee. Whereas Hall unearthed the reality of dominated, but aggressive, fashionable, "modern" women workers, they have been "remembered" as barefoot and in sunbonnets:

> It is an illustration of the power of stereotypes, of how cultural difference is registered as backward, of how images of poverty and backwardness hide the realities of working-day women's lives.[18]

In analyzing events in a Appalachian Pentecostal church, Scott concluded that, "in the male-dominated field of coal-mining, class solidarity had been informed by and founded on patriarchy." Male church leaders, dubbed "Saints" by Scott, regaled against worldliness

and advocated going back to the old ways of community involvement. For them, sinners were those who had replaced their faith with "medical science, insurance, legal statutes, careers and education." "Of all the worldly concerns, however, wealth received the Saints' most consistent and hostile condemnations."[19]

Scott—building on the works of Dwight B. Billings and Robert Goldman and David Corbin[20]—interprets this zealous attack on worldliness, especially wealth, as a manifestation of the inheritance of patriarchally based class solidarity against owners of the means of production, namely coal operators. However, Scott finds that the casual dress standards afforded to Pentecostal men, which did not lessen their status in the community, to be particularly indicative of the patriarchal nature of class solidarity. Women faced much stricter dress codes with different consequences for their standing in the community:

> Pentecostal women, however, were not allowed to wear pants, blue jeans, shorts, short skirts, make-up, pierced ears, or short hair; and they could not curl or perm their hair. Their dress code was purposely old-fashioned and 'out of style', erecting many barriers between them and their non-Pentecostal friends. [21]

But local women, especially the younger ones, began to change their appearance to compete in and out of the community and therefore they were "sinners." Men began to lose their control, especially through losing their jobs. A particular event facilitating this change in relationships was the local preacher's embrace of a snake-handling cult. The "sinners" viewed this as evidence that the "saints" were all "nuts" and "bid farewell to the Pentecostal church on their way to a future that this church, in its present form, failed to address."[22]

Hall presents a striking example of the way in which dominant interests shape interpretation of historical events whereas Fiene reveals the mechanisms whereby a dominated group maintains self-esteem in a historically defined reality. Scott, on the other hand, while outlining the ideological, political, and economic dominance revealed in dress and discourse, shows how changes in "positionality" enable the dominated to challenge the social construction of reality. I find her observation that the "sinners" viewed the "saints" as nuts quite telling in this respect.

APPALACHIAN WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES AND SELF-IMAGES

My analysis of women's interpretations of their situations is derived from data collected for my dissertation on Appalachian

identity. Similar to Fiene, I employed the method of grounded theory, but with significant modifications. Pure grounded theory involves *theoretical* sampling in which the initial respondent's interview is recorded, transcribed, and the important code or codes conceptualized, before deciding on the situation and characteristics of the individual to be interviewed next (see also Peggy Bartlett, Kathy Charmaz, and Anselm Strauss).[23] Subsequent interviews are obtained in this manner and the theoretical focus refined until the researcher concludes that no new variants of these codes are likely to be found.

I modified the grounded theory approach for this study by using a selective sample of in-depth, tape-recorded interviews, analyzing the selective sample for significant variables, then proceeding to the theoretical sample. As the research questions evolved, so did the actual questions that I asked respondents. For example, as race began to appear to be important variable related to Appalachian identity, I began to ask specific questions related to race, prejudice, and discrimination.

In actuality, I did not sample for gender. In other words, I did not consciously select respondents on the basis of gender nor deliberately ask questions that would yield insight into gender distinctions. However, in reviewing the data I found significant examples of the way in which gender status influenced women's experiences and self-definitions. Of 33 interviews from individuals from Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia, roughly half are women of various ages, both black and white, living in quite varied situations and lifestyles. The names of all respondents have been changed in this paper.

One of the most notable realities that I discovered among these Appalachian women struck home with regard to my own experience. When I was a child my father acquired a teaching position in Gary, Indiana, and we lived there for about a year. While there I experienced overt discrimination by other children, which I believe was due to my Appalachian background. I was relieved and happy when we moved back to the mountains, but my mother was disappointed. While living in Gary she had been able to find employment and therefore a certain amount of independence from my father. Until many years later when she received a college education, my mother had found scant economic opportunities in the mountains, and—to her dismay—that is where my father always wanted to be. Short of leaving her family, there was little she could do about it.

Similarly, Polly migrated from Appalachia to Cincinnati in 1967 at age 27. Although she was dismayed by the city at first, now she is anchored in the community and involved in a local church which means a lot to her. She rarely goes down home.

In attempting to determine whether Polly felt any distinctiveness regarding her background, I came across an experience that I believe

is both gender- and race-related and determined the course of her life more than any other. Living in an urban area afforded her employment opportunities that she did not have in the mountains:

> *Tell me more about what it was like when you first moved here in terms of meeting people and things that might be different.*
>
> *Polly:* It's not no different than down in Kentucky. It's not different.... One thing when I first came up it was more easy for me to get a job when I first came up here. More easy to get a job.

Polly, who has a fourth-grade education, came to Cincinnati to work as a domestic, certainly not a high-status occupation and undoubtedly one that she was limited to because of her race, but one that made it possible for her to be somewhat independent and which shaped her relationship to the community.

Also, I was struck by the difference in attitudes regarding "place" between men and women in two suburban Ohio couples from the mountains. Jerry, a lay preacher, had a strong desire to return to Kentucky and serve his fellow mountaineers but claimed his wife did not. She said little during the interview but agreed with his assessment. Charlotte—a teacher and also a transplanted Ohio suburbanite—had no desire to return to the mountains, although she did lament the fact that she had to leave in the first place to find work. But her husband wanted to return. Based on her responses, this may be related to a lack of economic and social resources for women in the mountains, at least during the 1950s and 1960s when these couples migrated. As noted above, Polly had been unable to find even a domestic job back in Appalachia.

It is possible that these differences in attitude toward "home" may be based on awareness of discrimination on the part of males of a certain generation who were more likely to be involved in economic institutions in the city. But Charlotte's responses do not indicate this; she described real discrimination in searching for a job. For working-class males, however, job discrimination may be part of the dissatisfaction with living in the urban north. Possibly, gender and class are intertwined in explaining the realities of discrimination and attitudes regarding sense of "place."

In contrast, Ann—a retired white woman who had lived most of her life in the mountains of Appalachia, claimed that living in a city presented no real opportunities for her. But judging from her response, Ann—now about 70—was actually constrained from economic participation by childbearing, a reality for many women. And, like many women, Ann found teaching public school to be an occupation more accommodating to her situation than others:

Ann: Always in Letcher County. Taught school and had babies and went back to school enough to finish, I went to Alice Lloyd [College]. It was Caney then we called it. I got my certificate in two years and then it took me about 25 years to get the next two years but I finally got through. And I taught most all that time, sometimes I'd have so many little babies I couldn't, but most of the time I taught.

Later I asked whether she had ever lived out of the mountains:

Ann: Yes, during the war I lived in Ohio a year. That's when our oldest one was a baby, that would have been in the 40s. I got pregnant with our oldest boy and living in those cities there's nothing to do but sit there all day, that's not for me. So we came on back then and (pause) and then I had two more boys and I didn't teach for a while and then I started again and then had my baby girl and I had another boy.

Many respondents worked in traditional female occupations such as teaching, nursing, and clerical work. And, except for teaching, many of these opportunities were found only in recent years, reflecting the national trend for increased occupational participation for women in the service sector. The increased number of service jobs has meant more employment for women, if not income equality with men. What is also clear from Ann's responses, and from many of my respondents, is that access to education is crucial for economic success. Many of the older respondents such as Ann were married to men with less education who had been able to find blue-collar work most of their lives. Education not only meant opportunities for women in the mountains, but access to white-collar jobs for men and women in cities. For younger women, especially those with less than a high school education, it is difficult to gain sufficient income.

Jane, a recently retired, white widow living in the mountains of Kentucky exemplifies the importance of education as well as the importance of insuring educational opportunities for everyone. As Jane recounts in the following passages, her life changed considerably when others in her Appalachian community organized to provide social services and when her husband received disability payments for his work-related health problems.

Jane especially values her education and her ability to provide for her now-grown children. She was once dependent on a husband who was limited in his ability to look after his family. Jane makes no attempt to excuse him, although she tries to be fair. Oddly enough, her husband's limitations, at first constraining, ultimately resulted in her real economic liberation:

Jane: And it makes me angry, and it seemed like everything bad that ever happened to us was because of his actions and he was just, he was just on a big drunk that weekend. And that is why he fell off that bridge.

Is that what killed him?

Jane: No, that didn't kill him. That was in '62, but he never had a job after that. So I had to work. He drew his social security, then he finally got the black lung and I never had a car until—I never had a driver's license until I was 49, that changed my whole life.

Makes you independent?

Jane: Yeah, so I could get into my car and I could go, and he resented.... He was proud of me in a way, but he resented it because it made him feel little about himself, so I think he loved me and he hated me.

Jane retired from a mental health clinic in her eastern Kentucky county. I asked her how the organization had begun and how she had gotten involved with it:

Jane: It's a private non-profit and Gordon Combs is the man who's down in Breathitt County and he was—he started things like the health department, and started this, and he had a grant for one year to establish the agency. It was called Upper Kentucky River at first, and I just—I didn't even have my GED [General Education Diploma], I didn't even graduate. I only went to sixth grade, and so when it come on the radio that they were teaching the handicapped children—they was going to teach them how to get their GED so they could go get a job and so I heard it and I called over at the Board of Education and....I said, "Well I'd like—can anybody take that?"

I believe I was 42 when I got my GED. I studied! I used to do domestic work, I worked for lots of people really, other people, and my son used to say to me, "Mom, I hate to see you have to do this." I said, "Well, you don't need to feel bad about that. I'm glad I have the opportunity to earn some money." And my children maybe was what, five or six?...I got my GED and everything. I loved every minute of it. I studied, I loved every minute of it. And we went to Prestonsburg, because they didn't have a community college then...

So you went to Prestonsburg?

Jane: To get my GED and I did really good. I did better than people that had two or three years of high school. Because I loved it. I did and I

> remembered it...and then I taught myself how to type. They called me down to the vocational school. I couldn't type my name you know, just a little line without looking, and that was a requirement you had to have before you could take the training so I went to school two nights a week, and I learned how to type and I learned how to transcribe and I learned shorthand, and I learned all of that stuff and this is where I met this girl that was working for Gordon Combs. She said, "Get you an application." And my family was surprised you know, "I didn't know Mommy would get a job like that."

Jane was also proud of herself even though she believes in divine intervention:

> But you know what I attribute it to? I attribute it to the Lord. And then I attribute it to myself because I said, "Well, I'm going to get myself ready and I'm going to present myself for better things." And I have this saying, "I set my face like a flint and walked forward."

Jane's remarks indicate that another way gender and class may be related is the emphasis placed on acceptance of responsibility by the low-income mothers, both urban and rural. They wanted to assure me that they recognized their duties as mothers despite the economic limitations. They emphasized the values of thrift, hard work, cleanliness, and for setting an example to their children. Repeatedly these women asserted that they were "good mothers," claiming and/or describing activities that showed deep concern for their children. They were the kind of mothers who "went to bat" for their kids and got involved with their schooling, health, and other needs. I believe these women's preoccupations with their roles as mothers were influenced by the negative reputations of "welfare mothers" in a society that values the work ethic. Their self-consciousness was compounded by the stereotype of Appalachians as disproportionately poor and dependent on the public dole.

Aneen, an older, rural Kentuckian who had lived through some "rough" life experiences, sympathized with poor people and viewed them as victims of circumstances (much as she was). During the interview, she tried to convince me that she did not abuse the welfare system. She also stressed her real ambitions to get an education.

> I ain't really able to work. I've got my lungs is kind of bad where I've had pneumonia so much and I had a wreck once...and messed up my left arm and you know, I ain't able to do no hard labor. I clean house and stuff like that but that's hard work, too. If I can ever be able to get it [a General Education Diploma] I could get something, you know, that I could support myself.

Aneen also wanted her children, all girls, to receive an education, believing as she did that this would make a difference in their lives.

> Trish, my oldest girl, she goes to college. She lacks one more year and it'll make her four years and my oldest one's got two years, she's going to be a teacher. And when they first started she said there's old people—70 years old—going. I guess it's, some people ain't got nothing to do, you know, I don't blame them. Once you learn it, you've got it, and, Buddy, when you ain't got it, you miss it, you don't got an education. My daughter that just left here, she lacked one semester having her two year in and she wanted to get married and I cried and everything else, and she said, "I don't know why you push education so hard." I said, "When you don't got it you don't know what it's like not to have it."

Rita, an African-American divorced mother preparing for her GED, said she was trying to motivate her children to continue their education. She described it as an attempt to prove she was a good mother:

> Whatever a kid see you do, they will do. My kids see me as a perfect mother, trying to get her GED. So this going to cause them, "Hey! We got to hurry up and do something in school. We can't let her outdo us." And this is the attitude they have.

Carolyn, a recently widowed mother of five and a second-generation urban Appalachian, described her concern over her children's fate. Her responses suggest that women not only have the bulk of childcare responsibility, but they sometimes face somewhat hostile institutions in carrying out that responsibility.

> *Carolyn:* ...No, I go to my kids' school because my sons, my son that's here now he got suspended from school and I'm always going to school fighting for something....

Carolyn speaks of her late husband in loving tones. He apparently held somewhat traditional views about women's roles to which she acquiesced because of her own views about raising her children. She spoke of quitting work when she had her youngest, now a toddler:

> *Carolyn:* Uh-uh, I'm not working because of her. I want to watch her grow. Well, see, my husband when he was alive he would never let me work when my kids were little. Like when I had my son I started back working when he went to kindergarten and then I found out I was pregnant with my daughter and he [her husband] talked me into quitting and then I waited until my daughter got back in school and I worked. I worked part-time when my husband died. I was working like, I worked

every other month for like four weeks every other month and then I was off, but I usually worked third shift or first, you know I always worked one of the two. But he was always, it was either me home or him always. My mom too, she watched my kids, nobody has ever watched my kids but my mother.

Carolyn dropped out of school when she had her first child. She has recently attempted to obtain her GED but ran into problems juggling school and other responsibilities.

Carolyn: See, I don't have time to do the homework, you know, to keep the studying up that you need to do. I know I could probably go study a little bit and go take GED and maybe pass it....Now I probably couldn't because since I had a car accident I can't remember all that stuff no more, but before that, math, I could just do it like this, any of it, you know. I could do algebra but not super, but good enough to get by with, you know, to take a test, because I score real high in math. I was about one of the top students in the whole thing in math, if it wasn't just for my English, you know my grammar, that blew me. But I think a lot of people that's from the country has bad grammar, when they come to Cincinnati....When I came here I was what—third or fourth grade—third grade I think, so they should have taught me good grammar. It never was taught to me....I love to read kids books and I love to read to my kids, but to set down and read a thick book, uh-uh, cause you know, you don't have time. You read a few pages you got to quit and take care of the kids.

Poignantly, Carolyn explained, "I don't think the teachers teached us." The problem of getting an education in the present system continues for her children:

Carolyn: Still, I don't think some of them [teachers] do [teach]. Like see, my oldest son in writing at school, he had to write this story and he was supposed to put his periods and commas and all this, you know, it was on everything, cause it was on writing, right, and you're supposed, and they grade you on all that. Well, he came home one day with writing and on a piece of paper, notebook paper, regular notebook paper, he had a story all the way down but one period and that was at the very end and she gave him an A+, and my husband went to school and oh, was he mad!

Carolyn, like many of the women in my study, and similar to Fiene's respondents, acutely feels the need to defend herself against "put-downs." She does this by referring to "snobs" and by explaining that when she had to choose between her children and school, she plainly saw where her duty lay.

Carolyn: I can't stand a snob, you know, somebody that thinks they're better than you, cause there ain't nobody in this world better than you. You're all equal. They might have better stuff than you, but that might be because you choose not to have that good stuff. I can't see to put somebody down because of their looks, their race, or anything. I think you should live the way you want to live and be what you want to be.

That's kind of hard, to be what you want to be. A lot of people say you can do it if you want to, I don't believe in that cause lot of times you've things stopping you that you care more about. Like me, I would love to be a teacher, well I don't know, I used to love to be a teacher, but I made a mistake and got pregnant as a teenager but I didn't throw my kid off. I took care of my kid instead of taking care of me and bettering me.

Carolyn refers to a meeting that merged issues of Appalachian identity and women's identity:

How I found out about that meeting is the day before that ____ had called me and says, Carolyn, I want you to come to a meeting and speak. I go, "What about, what?" And I didn't know until I got there. And she told me and I'm going, "Wow!" But when it's the fight for kids, not just my kids, but our kids, I mean the whole Cincinnati area, if I can put my two cents in to help them more, I will. I'll fight for them. I'll go down fighting for them.

Many women in the sample, like Jane, are self-supporting without government assistance, or on their way to being so. Others are hampered by childcare responsibilities, especially single women. They will need assistance in paying for childcare and lack of education; past and present.

UNTANGLING MYTH AND REALITY AS AN ACTIVE AGENDA

Hall's analysis of the obscurantism of women strikers in Tennessee delineates the way the dominant controlling discourse can conceal women's active participation in historical events. Scott's study of "Saintly Men" and "Sinner Women" reveals that having access to opportunities enables women to see through ideological support of existing relationships.

Feine's study of low-income Appalachian women's management of self-images and my own research indicate that ideology that supports class differences yet denies the existence of class creates a no-win situation for low-income women. Such mythology can convince women who are disadvantaged that they must find a way to live

up to the image that individuals can and must be self-supporting. They sometimes do so by finding ways in which they do excel, for example, being a good mother, and do not always challenge the myth of equality for all. The belief in the sanctity of motherhood, is, in essence, a kind of opiate.

Some individuals have a clear understanding of reality versus myth. One respondent explained the problem of romanticizing Appalachian women. Stella is a white middle-aged, married, college-educated teacher in West Virginia who recounted a history lesson from grade school:

> I remember Mrs. Bozarth (sic) who supposedly killed six or seven Indians with a hand ax as they came through the door, and when I read that and: "Oh, wow, you know, some woman!" And then I thought why were these Indians simple enough to come through the door one at a time to have allowed this woman to kill them one at a time that way? Then I gradually realized someone had whipped that one up because it sounded good. But I think the legend or the image of the Appalachian woman is built on just exactly such hogwash as that. I think we've encouraged it and I think people have just sort of gloried in it, just like I think West Virginians and Appalachian people in general glory in being thought of as somehow more primitive, more uneducated and self reliant than others.

I would add that if people "glory" in being thought different, it is most likely a reaction to being viewed and treated differently and a consequence of discrimination, or as Alcoff calls it, "positionality." In some of the respondents' situations, teachers did not and do not teach, pregnant mothers were denied completion of their education, women had fewer employment opportunities, and women were dependent on spouses.

A recent personal experience serves to illustrate the fundamental necessity of organizing for change and for bridging, but not obscuring, the distinct experiences of people based on gender, class, race, and cultural heritage. In 1993, I attended a rally in downtown Cincinnati that was organized by the Urban Appalachian Council in conjunction with the Appalachian Women's Alliance. Cincinnati Mayor Roxanne Qualls spoke about domestic violence and the importance of organizing against it in such a way as to cut across gender, racial, ethnic, and class boundaries.

Mayor Qualls was responding to the "polyphony of voices" that are demanding an emphasis on cultural diversity, similar to the voices raised during the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Movement. Cincinnati's recent ordinance banning discrimination on the basis of Appalachian descent further indicates that organized efforts increase the ability to shape change.

NOTES

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■ 4 ■

I Do What I Must: A Reflection on Appalachian Literature and Learning

Patricia Ziegel Timm

For several years I spoke with women in one urban Appalachian neighborhood to learn about their own schooling and their efforts to manage the school experiences of their children. At the same time I immersed myself in fictional literature written by women from the Appalachian region—stories of strong, resourceful, mountain women including pioneers, miners, factory hands, textile laborers, and fast food workers. What intrigued me was the similarity of the voices of the women in the study and the women in the books. They speak of the same feelings, the same hopes for themselves and their children, and the same beliefs and values about their lives. My reading allowed me to enter ever more closely into the lives of the women of my research. I will share with you a few instances showing how the narratives of the women of the neighborhood study and the stories of women in regional fiction interact.

In my work I discuss the structural constraints on school completion of poor and minority children. I believe that the limited opportunity structure of both the market place and higher education contributes to their lack of school effort. A poignant example of the perceived association between education and job opportunities is expressed by the 10-year-old narrator of Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina*. In this portrait of growing up poor in Greenville County, young Bone reflects:

> Aunt Alma joked that the twins were too lazy to fart on their own, and sometimes I thought she was right. They were certainly dumb enough. Neither of them ever read a book or talked about anything but how rich they were gonna be "someday." Mama said you could tell they were starting to grow up by how silly they had become, that teenagers always

> got stupid before they got smart. I wondered if that was what was happening to me, if I had already started to get stupid and just didn't know it. Not that it mattered. Stupid or smart, there wasn't much choice about what was going to happen to me, or to Grey and Garvey [the twins], or to any of us. Growing up was like falling into a hole. The boys would quit school and sooner or later go to jail for something silly. I might not quit school, not while Mama had any say in the matter, but what difference would that make? What was I goin' to do in five years? Work in the textile mill? Join Mama at the diner? It all looked bleak to me. No wonder people got crazy as they grew up.[1]

Bone anticipated the life she observed around her. What happened would not depend so much on whether she was stupid or smart. Being smart was not going to get one ahead; making it through school, as Mama wanted, was not going to bring better opportunity.

The women of my study also reported that they did not see the economic value of completing high school. When asked about the connection between high school graduation and getting a job, one mother said to me:

> Well, there's higher jobs. But if my son is gonna graduate from high school, he's gonna get the same basic job that somebody else's gonna get. Most jobs come from the people you know. So, it doesn't matter whether they have a diploma or not. Like, we were downtown—my son and me—he doesn't want to do the paper route I've been doing for 20 years. He's talking to me about finishing school. I say, "What kind of job can you get and make a lot of money at, that you can get without a high school education?" He looked up, and these guys are washing the windows right on the building above us. "They make a lot of money, don't they, Mommy?"

The mother believes that getting a job has more to do with who you know than what you know. She and her son observe that there are good jobs that don't require school knowledge, and she is at a loss to convince her son that there will be economic rewards for school completion. The study parents understand that their children see little relationship between the jobs that are available to them and the skills schools teach. They also recognize that entry-level, low-skill jobs provide little opportunity for advancement. The mother quoted above told me that she did not want her 16-year-old daughter to take a job in a fast food restaurant. She believed that it was difficult to advance from an entry-level position, and that when young people start to help the family with a paycheck, there is no going back.

> If you work at a fast food place, you're gonna stay at that level. You're gonna want to go to work, so you're going to have to start higher. The parents ain't got money, and they're not working, so these kids go get these after school jobs. One reason I won't let her get a job is because, when they start making that money, then the family's better, but the kids are worse off.

In my neighborhood study, two-thirds of the respondents reported that they hold low-paying jobs in factories or service center industries; the others are employed in the informal economy. The jobs held by high school leavers and high school completers are the same. Like Allison's Bone, young people in the neighborhood witness daily the minimal economic returns for the hard labors of their parents. There is little evidence of a better role for themselves in a limited economic structure and they do not believe that sufficient money could be found to pay for college training that might bring them better opportunities.

This example illustrates the relationship of the economic structure and early school leaving. The hurdles that school policies and practices place in the path of Appalachian families may provide even greater obstacles to school completion. I do not believe that these barriers are created solely by ill-tempered teachers, malevolent administrators, or misguided public officials. But the failure of school staffs to attempt to understand the beliefs and values and traditions of poorer Americans is shouldered primarily by the parents and children of poor and minority families.

Parents and children describe a pattern of ill-treatment in the schools that includes the following accusations:

- They have been stigmatized, insulted, and called names by teachers and counselors.
- They have been excluded from school because of family responsibilities.
- They have been disproportionately and arbitrarily assigned to classrooms where expectations of students are minimal.
- Their communities have been held hostage to desegregation policies in the assignment of school closings and other services such as transportation and building maintenance.
- They do not receive essential academic counseling to pursue preparation for higher education.
- Their schools are characterized by bureaucratic and impersonal practices.

- The message they get is that the school does not belong to them; they feel alienated by the lack of a culture of care.

In *The Tall Woman,* Wilma Dykeman's classic novel of nineteenth century America, Lydia McQueen is the narrator. She had helped to bring a teacher to the community, and her children have gone to the new school for several sessions when weather and chores permitted.

> Riley Scroggs, who had come out from the county seat to teach in an empty shed on the Burke mill place, had seemed to Lydia a queer teacher, indeed. She knew that to spare the rod was to spoil the child, but the excess of Scrogg's temper sometimes led her to wonder if someone should enter a plea to spare the child to spoil a scholar. The stoop-shouldered, wizened schoolmaster seemed less interested in what the boys and girls learned than in what they did not learn: a misunderstood lesson called down as heavy a punishment from him as a mischievous trick or fault of character. Gib was the youngest child in the school. When the teacher whipped him one day for shuffling his feet while the second-book readers were reciting, he came home and announced to Mark and Lydia, "I hate that old teacher. Never another day am I a-going to his old schoolhouse." And in spite of his father's punishment and his mother's cajoling, he would not go back to classes. "I've set such store by a school," Lydia had said to Mark and her father, "but it seems like Riley Scroggs is turning the children against their books."[2]

One mother in the neighborhood study reported the following incident. She believed that her high school-aged son, who had been diagnosed as dyslexic, was being verbally abused by a teacher. She tried to explain that her son's actions were due to his frustration and his inability to learn and do the things that the rest of the kids do. When she wasn't satisfied with the school staff's response to her concerns, she involved the central administration and got a meeting scheduled where everything was laid out on the table.

> I told the Assistant Principal that I didn't like the attitude he had with me. You know, I was not trying to uphold my son for any wrong doing. That I would never do. If he had done something wrong, then he deserved to be punished for it. But he was not going to sit around and take verbal abuse over there either.
>
> I was just determined that I knew what my son's problem was. And I was not going to let any of these people walk on him. And I didn't. There were many occasions where I went to the schools, and I just took my son by the hand, and I simply walked out of the building with him and dared them to do anything about it.

Like Lydia McQueen, the mother believes in the importance of school for her children. There is an underlying conflict between her aspirations for her child and her beliefs about childrearing. Both fictional mother and study mother want their children to get an education. But they are not willing to subject them to rules and punishments that they don't understand. They want their children to complete school, but they expect to stand up for them against adversity. In the end, the pull of family beliefs is stronger than that of the school.

Many of the women in the study report that they simply never felt like they fit in. Attachment to school is a requisite for a persistent educational effort, and when the school values feel very different from family values, school bonding is unlikely to occur. The women whom I interviewed are attached to families, extended kin, and their neighborhood. At school, they believe they are asked to break these attachments.

A sympathetic account of teachers and teaching is found in Janice Holt Giles's *Miss Willie*, a novel set in the 1940s in Piney Ridge, a chain of hills in southeastern Kentucky. Miss Willie's classroom is appealing and home-like.

> Miss Willie had always taken pride in the comfortable, homelike atmosphere of her schoolroom, believing ardently that for small children, venturing so insecurely into the wider world, the school room should offer a measure of the feeling of home. So she had brought her little rocker and her hooked rug and her pots and green plants to school to give it a warmer and snugger look to draw in the horizons of the new world to a safer, more enfolding circle. She brought her knitting also, and many times when she sat in her little rocker, knitting, she watched a feeling of contentment, security, safeness, spread over the room, the purring, satisfied contentment of a child who can sprawl happily over his work because his mother sits nearby with her sewing. She believed all this was good.[3]

Something close to the kind of intimate understanding of folkways, beliefs, and practices of Miss Willie is essential if schools are to hold urban Appalachian children and families. Most of the women in the study neighborhood spoke about difficult transitions from small neighborhood schools. One mother recalled:

> You know, I was the kind of kid that was afraid to ask the teacher to explain this or that or the other. I didn't want the other kids thinking I was stupid. I think that probably started when I was in junior high school. I had done okay all through elementary school. It seemed like when I started junior high school, I was shy and backward. I was afraid to

say to the teacher, "Could you explain this to me more, so I can understand it better?"

Two sisters revealed their high school experience:

> There were a lot of fights, and you just felt uncomfortable at the school. And nobody cared if you were there or not. Everybody went until like the eleventh grade, and then it was just the common thing. We didn't all drop out at the same time. There was no social [life] at school. Maybe that was one of the problems. You went to your classes, and, basically, that was it. At middle school you saw your friends, and you were in classes with your friends, and you still had contact. Everybody was doing the same thing.

Without the strong attachment to school that comes from feelings of solidarity and a sense of shared joy, misery, or even indifference, individuals are likely to leave school. Whether school was disliked because of their discomfort or the attitudes conveyed to them about themselves, these women and girls withdrew from this alienating environment.

Appalachian women's strong sense of self, considerable energy, and childrearing competency were evident in the narratives of the study women and their fictitious sisters. They have persisted—despite constraints of poverty and public policy—to keep control of their families. Their refusal to give control to the distant schools remains an underpinning of their family life. In the words of one of the neighborhood mothers, "In the end, I do what I must for myself, and for my children."

NOTES

1 Dorothy Allison, *Bastard Out of Carolina* (New York: Dutton, 1992), 176.

2 Wilma Dykeman, *The Tall Woman* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 184–85.

3 Janice Holt Giles, *Miss Willie* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1951), 19.

▪ II ▪

Making Change: The Impact of Urban Appalachians

■ 5 ■

"Disgrace to the Race": "Hillbillies" and the Color-line in Detroit

John Hartigan, Jr.

Native white Detroiters in the 1940s and 1950s were no more prepared for the influx of white migrants from Appalachia than they were for the arrival of black migrants from Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. Both groups stressed to the breaking point the city's dwindling supply of adequate housing; they also became the core of the soon-to-emerge "unemployment problem." The response of native Detroiters to this influx of migrants is commonly referred to as "white flight," a phenomena that was repeated throughout the urban Midwest. What is generally not recognized, though, is the critical role that white Appalachians played in provoking this infamous demographic shift: white Detroiters fled from both the recently arriving black and "hillbilly" families.

"HILLBILLIES"

As an identity, *hillbilly* is a strange cultural artifact with a long, intriguing, and painful history. The meanings and uses, in Detroit, of this charged and loaded term provide a perspective on both the massive historical transformation of this city's racial order and the lives of the poor whites who remain behind in this "black metropolis." *Hillbilly*, in Detroit, referred first to migrant Appalachian whites who disrupted the conventionalized decorums that constituted the informally maintained color-line in Detroit at mid-century. Today, *hillbilly* is the term that many of these same migrants and their children rely upon as a primary means of self-designation. In its career in Detroit, *hillbilly* has shifted from a solely derogatory naming to a marked form of reference to a cultural tradition and a displaced people. In the

process, *hillbilly* has come to encompass a most unique range of references, which, taken together, reveal a great deal about the complicated racial past of the urban Midwest.

THE BRIGGS NEIGHBORHOOD

The history of white Appalachian migration to Detroit, and the story of those migrants and their children who remain in the city, is epitomized in the Briggs neighborhood, located just a mile from the heart of Detroit's downtown. In 1940, this area was home to over 24,000 people, dwelling in some 6,000 houses. Today, less than 3,000 people remain in this neighborhood where empty lots of overgrown grasses and garbage outnumber houses.[1] The devastation of Briggs is hardly unique in Detroit; what makes the neighborhood distinct is that it remains one of the few white-majority areas in this city that is now close to 80 percent black. While some of these whites were born in Detroit to parents who had arrived there around the close of the last century, a major portion of the remaining whites moved to this neighborhood from West Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky.

Why did these whites migrants and their children decide to stay in this part of Detroit when more than one million whites departed the city between 1950 and 1990? The answer involves a complicated blend of economic, political, and social factors, but one key ingredient is that these urban Appalachians felt little solidarity with the whites who fled. Based on their stigmatized reception as *hillbillies*, urban Appalachians formed few enduring social bonds with the Northern whites who were soon to pour from Detroit. The resistance of these white migrants to "assimilation" as a strategy for success in cities like Detroit has been well documented.[2] But the resulting situation, whereby urban Appalachians constitute a significant portion of the whites who remain in Detroit's inner city, has received scant attention.

In the course of conducting an ethnographic study of Briggs, from July 1992 through February 1994, I talked with a handful of the remaining whites who had been born in this neighborhood in the 1920s and 1930s.[3] They recalled an area that was self-sufficient, with stores catering to all their needs, easy streetcar service to and from downtown, and many bars for an evening's socializing. These native Detroiters traced a keen correspondence between the arrival of white *hillbillies* and the deterioration of both the physical and social conditions in the area.

PREJUDICE AGAINST WHITE MIGRANTS

In our conversations, these white Detroiters described with loathing how "hillbillies" arrived with no knowledge of urban ways; how they lived in overcrowded basements and garages; and how their "rude" and "violent" lifestyles produced a palpable change in the "character" of the neighborhood. For their part, *hillbillies* that I spoke with who arrived in Briggs during those early years recalled being refused service at neighborhood bars just as blacks, too, were banned. There are documented cases of white Appalachians categorically being denied rental units in Detroit.[4] Though not widespread, perhaps, such incidents underscore the aspect of native Detroiters' sentiment towards *hillbillies* that I found most surprising. White residents made a point of stressing to me that their resentment of "hillbillies" was "about the same as the black and white feeling was"; that "hillbillies" were as equally despised as were black migrants.[5]

In their narratives of "what happened" to the neighborhood, older whites used *hillbilly* as a term of boundary maintenance for a broader sense of white racial identity. Such references to urban Appalachians as *hillbillies* have to be seen in the broader contexts of the social transformation of Detroit; a context in which the significance of race and the implicit basis of racial identity was suddenly thrown into flux. It was not simply that Appalachian migrants, as rural strangers "out of place" in the city, were upsetting to Midwestern, urban whites. Rather, these migrants disrupted a broad set of assumptions held by Northern whites about how white people appeared, spoke, and behaved. Taken in concert with the social changes provoked by the explosion of the black population in the city, this shattering of assumptions was quite unnerving for native white Detroiters.[6] In this regard, Appalachians were stigmatized as *hillbillies* not simply for being out of place in the city, but because, as a multitude of poor whites living in dilapidated buildings, they disrupted the social conventions upon which the color-line in Detroit had been implicitly established.[7]

For native white Detroiters, the disturbing aspect of *hillbillies* was their racialness. Ostensibly they were of the same racial order (whites) as those that dominated economic, political, and social power in local and national arenas. But *hillbillies* shared many regional characteristics with the Southern blacks arriving in Detroit, which destabilized the fixity of Northern racial stereotypes. The similarity and differences embodied by *hillbillies* indicate that markers of race and class had become conflated within this most salient rhetorical identity.[8]

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Hillbillies began arriving in Detroit in large numbers during the 1920s.[9] Along with the traumatic effect of the Depression, and the increasing presence of Southern black migrants in the city, white Detroiters found the stability of their conventionalized notions of social difference—and the physical means by which that difference was ordered and contained by the structure of residential areas in the city—starting to erode. While up until the 1940s, blacks were confined through the strictures of racial segregation to clearly established residential zones, *hillbillies*, it seems, had a propensity to settle in neighborhoods throughout the center of Detroit. Since their arrival coincided with the rapid deterioration of housing stock and the increased problem of overcrowding in these neighborhoods, *hillbillies* were easily scapegoated for the decline of living standards among working-class whites.

1943 RIOTS

Hillbillies were also blamed for, and used to explain, untoward public actions by Northern whites in defense of the color-line in Detroit. During the race riot of 1943, native white Detroiters swarmed through the city's downtown and the eastside slum, attacking any blacks they could find. But the connection between these violent actions and "respectable" white Detroiters was untenable in the minds of most proper citizens. Hence, journalists and city officials insisted that it was the "rabble rousing," recent white arrivals from Appalachia who carried out the disturbances. In *Layered Violence: The Detroit Rioters of 1943*, Dominic Capeci and Martha Wilkerson lay bare the distorted nature of this effort. The following is from their chapter, "Riot and Reconstruction":

> the [popular] image of rioters remained one of black ruffians and...white newcomers. Hooligans and bums, said news columnist Kelsey, "ignorant Negroes and southern whites," remarked the east-side mayor, evoking images that news photos and, and for black participants, official studies would verify. Yet, public beliefs and formal surveys aside, those in the crowd possessed more than criminal faces and few migrant ones. Hoodlums and hillbillies made for easy scapegoats and sensational press, but they hardly reflected the reality of who rioted. [10]

Capeci and Wilkerson carefully detail how the projection of *hillbillies* as rioters covered up the social background of white participants in the riot, who predominantly were northern-born, long-time

Detroiters. Though whiteness was the object of defense and the basis from which white rioters derived their righteous sense of fury and contempt, it remained something unstable or fragile, easily compromised or corrupted through an open, public admission of association with indecorous, obviously racialized behavior. Hence *hillbilly* designated those whites who ruptured assumptions about public white decorum by participating in unruly street violence; they were set off as not part of the body of whiteness.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Hillbillies undermined an easy assertion of a conventionalized sense of racial solidarity among whites. The crux of the matter was a nebulous, but enduring, sense of cultural difference between Northern and Southern whites. Aside from the fact that they waged a vicious war against each other, the two groups have long found numerous, contemptuous means to differentiate themselves.[11] In spite of their shared epidermal markings, the cultural differences between Northern and Southern whites have long been read via bodily registers.[12] Elmer Akers, in the first sociological study of Southern whites in Detroit, described them in the following terms:

> The typical southern white is tall, slender, withy; he moves with a somewhat listless, slouching gait; his face bears a wooden inscrutibleness [sic], a slightly melancholy aspect; and his eyes meet you at a sidelong glance, with long, distrustful looks of inquiry. The smile of comfortable assurance and the frank eye of fellowship he does not have.[13]

In this regard, ostensibly white bodies legibly rendered subtle means of assuming naturalized orders of cultural differences between whites. In the accounts of native white Detroiters, I found that such means of drawing *intra*racial distinctions remained active.[14]

THE WAR YEARS

The animosity towards *hillbillies* in Detroit seems to have increased following World War II. In a survey conducted by Wayne State University the year Detroit's population peaked, one of the questions asked, "What people in Detroit are undesirable?"

The responses were as follows:

Criminals, gangsters, etc.	26%
Poor Southern whites; hill-billies, etc.	21%
Non-self-supporting, transients, drifters, etc.	18%
Negroes	13%
Foreigners	6%
People who had come lately	4%
Others	12%

With "hill-billies," the sense of contempt expressed by native Detroiters was specific and virulent. A sample of the responses to the above question were provided in the 1952 report by Arthur Kronhauser, *Detroit as The People See It*:

> Southerners or hill-billies—Detroit means nothing to them; they don't keep up their homes. They just come to Detroit, earn money, and go back home. They add nothing to the city.
>
> The hill-billy is sure a great detriment. He is not thrifty or a help; just a big brawler who cares not how or where he lives; repairs nothing and does nothing to beautify the city.
>
> The Southerns and the hill-billies who migrate here because of the higher wages. They are not permanent residents, have no pride. They do not keep up their homes so there are eye sores where they live.[15]

The "anti-Negro" responses that were listed are interesting, particularly because of a connection of "hill-billies" with "Negroes" that were drawn by respondents:

> The poor truck from the South—both white and Negro. They are not good citizens.
>
> Sure! The nigger and the hill-billy.

Kornhauser summarized the responses to this question as follows: "The number of references to recent Southern migrants and hill-billies appears to reflect a significant negative feeling in the city."[16]

The negative attitude towards *hillbillies* can be contextualized in two ways. First, during World War II, larger numbers of white Southerners arrived in the city than did blacks; in a direct sense, white Detroiters associated problems of overcrowding primarily with the arrival of Southern whites. Secondly, the response of white Detroiters largely mirrored that of black Detroiters who were contemptuous of the Southern black migrants pouring into the city. In a complex

manner, regional, racial, and class lines became conflated as Detroiters negotiated the rapid permutations of the implicit and explicit manifestations of the color-line.

THE MIGRATION PATTERNS

During World War II, Appalachian white (*hillbilly*) migration to Detroit far exceeded that of black migration. Between 1940 and 1944, Detroit received 142,120 migrants.[17] Over 110,000 of these migrants (78%) were white. Less than 20,000 of these migrants came from within the state of Michigan. Of the rest, 91,245 were white (75%) and 31,020 were "nonwhite" (25%).[18] Broken down regionally, in this period the Southern states, from Texas to Virginia, sent many more whites to Detroit than they did blacks. Between 1940–1944, 64,735 white Southern migrants arrived in the Detroit area compared to 29,975 nonwhites.[19]

While blacks arriving in Detroit were initially strictly confined to a few neighborhoods, migrant whites had the potential of settling in a number of areas. These neighborhoods, though, were all within the Grand Boulevard area, the zone that, due to its increasing dilapidation, was to provide the initial contours of the "inner city" in Detroit. This greater mobility or lack of restriction meant that these newly arrived whites would compete for the generally scarce housing opportunities in Detroit. Given the massive influx of people increasing the overcrowded conditions, the Southern white migrants presented a good deal of frustration to native Detroiters.

The intraracial prioritizing of class difference by native white Detroiters was hardly an anomaly; nor was it an interpretive response that wholly ignored racial matters. There are key resonances of that response with a similar intraracial prioritizing of class differences that occurred in the black community in Detroit prior to World War II. Native black Detroiters expressed an elaborate class-based contempt for the lifestyles and mores of the newly arriving Southern blacks in the 1920s and 1930s.[20] Indeed, the Detroit Urban League was established as a moralizing means by which to force migrant Southern blacks to conform to the decorums and conventions of black middle-class culture.[21] Historians have largely analyzed this intraracial class divide and conflict as a function of the color-line in Detroit, and of the struggle of elite blacks to maintain the status positions that they had long struggled to establish in the white-dominated city of Detroit.[22] The contemptuous response of Northern whites to the growing presence of rural, Southern white migrants in the city, most likely followed a similar logic, with an attention to maintaining the color-line. What black and white Southern migrants shared in common was

a host of cultural features, largely linked to their rural and regional upbringing that disrupted the singular attribution of a host of stigmatized, stereotyped features by white Detroiters to blacks broadly.

White Appalachian migration to Detroit continued strongly through the 1950s.[23] These migrants predominantly came from Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia. From 1955 to 1960, the only cities that received more Appalachian migrants than did Detroit were Chicago, Washington, and Atlanta. Through the 1960s Appalachian migration to metropolitan areas declined somewhat, but Detroit by then was the third most common destination of the migrants.[24]

Along with Detroit, other major industrial cities in Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois received large numbers of white Appalachian migrants. The city that received the largest influx was Chicago. There, anti-*hillbilly* sentiment was perhaps stronger than in Detroit, but there was consistency in the negative response provoked by this migration, a consistency that made the *hillbilly* invasion of the North recognizable nationally.[25]

HARPER'S "HILLBILLIES"

The stereotype of the *hillbilly* was nationalized during the 50s; the image of the reckless, ill-bred, "disgrace to the race," first surfaced in the industrial Midwest cities like Chicago, Cleveland, and Detroit, then was broadcast through national publications such as *Harper's*. *Harper's* announced "The Hillbillies Invade Chicago" in a 1958 essay by Albert Votaw that opens with this highlighted quote:

> The city's toughest integration problem has nothing to do with the Negroes...It involves a small army of white, Protestant, Early American migrants from the South—who are usually proud, poor, primitive, and fast with a knife.

Hillbillies stood out to Northern whites because of the way their mores and behaviors confused what had once been fairly stable caricatures of the differences between whites and blacks. Uncomfortably, the *hillbillies*, as with "white trash" in the South, bore the characteristics of laziness, poverty, and potential for violence that had unproblematically been exclusively equated with blacks.[26]

In his *Harper's* essay, Votaw summed up the disturbing aspects of these ostensibly white people:

> These farmers, miners, and mechanics from the mountains and meadows of the mid-South—with their fecund wives and numerous children—are,

> in a sense, the prototype of what the 'superior' American should be, white, Protestant, of early American, Anglo-Saxon stock; but on the streets of Chicago they seem to be the American dream gone berserk. This may be the reason why their neighbors often find them more obnoxious than the Negroes or the earlier foreign immigrants whose obvious differences from the American Stereotype made them easy to despise. Clannish, proud, disorderly, untamed to urban ways, these country cousins confound all notions of racial, religious, and cultural purity.

Exactly in this confounding of "all notions of racial, religious, and cultural purity" did the "hillbilly" disturb whites throughout the industrial Midwest. Votaw continued by listing the oft-cited "traits" of these members of the "inferior rural classes," their "motionless relaxation that infuriates bustling city people," their affinity for alcohol and violence, and a host of other opposed and out of place "habits." As with "ethnic" immigrants, the problem posed by the *hillbillies* was their resistance towards "assimilation."[27] Southern whites arrived with a spectrum of abilities and inadequacies that either facilitated or undermined their assimilation into mainstream white culture. Those that did not "assimilate," whether willfully or "ignorantly," those who failed to incorporate the cultural decorums maintained by Northern whites, found themselves highly stigmatized.

NATIONAL STEREOTYPES ACCEPTED LOCALLY

The image of the "hillbilly" was broadcast nationally in a number of forms, from TV shows to cartoons.[28] Academics, journalists, and producers of popular culture generated images of *hillbillies* that people in their everyday lives came to rely on to negotiate shifting boundaries around white racial identity in the United States. It was, in part, the national attention drawn towards *hillbillies* that made them so recognizable in Briggs. In referring to "hillbillies," I found native white Detroiters availing themselves of nationally produced images and stereotypes. I talked one day with Margaret, sitting in her kitchen. Margaret was born in 1927 in a neighborhood a few blocks to the north of Briggs. In 1958 she rented a house across the street from her current house, and she has lived on this block ever since. She rolls up her cigarettes from a can of Bugler tobacco in the morning before the arthritis gets too bad; she keeps them in an "antique" metal Philip Morris box with a sliding top.

I asked her if she remembered when the white Appalachians started to arrive in the area.

> I don't know...I guess there was some of 'em in here already. You'd hear a lot of them say, we're going back to West Virginia. Most of 'em that come up, they already had relations here. They already had somebody here that they knew....There was Ma and Pa Kettle.... [I laugh] that's what we used to call them. They were from West Virginia. But they moved up here a long time ago. We used to have a store on the corner, and they lived right next door. And finally the boys took the mother back South after the father died. But I think one of them came back up. Then there was the folks that owned that four-family flat, the one that was the first one to go. They were from the South. They sold and went back, and then it started deteriorating. Well, most of them were up here, y'know, then their relations came. Y'know, little by little. And a lot of 'em let their houses go. I think what it is, a lot of people weren't paying their rent. And you can't pay the taxes without the rent....Then we got Tobacco Road on the corner here, but they finally got burnt out.

The family she was referring to lived at the end of the block. I had noticed the house because it was in the center of a sprawl of kids and toys, garbage and car parts, with the tall grass growing up against the side of the house. I was hoping to develop ties with this family, but their house burned that winter and they never returned. Apparently the fire started from a wood fire that they were using to heat the house. When I first met Margaret in Ruby's Bar, this family was a topic of conversation while she was describing what was wrong with the neighborhood. She referred to them at the time and since solely as "Tobacco Road."

Margaret's account relies on two nationally circulated images of poor Southern whites; both are, in an objective sense, misapplied. She referred first to the comic figures from the popular Ma and Pa Kettle movies, which featured a family of "Okies" in their westward trek. The second image is drawn from Erskine Caldwell's novel, *Tobacco Road*, which is set in the lowlands of Georgia. Both images are regionally quite distinct from the whites who migrated from West Virginia. But the signifiers that became fused and mobile for Margaret are the transience of these whites, their large, sprawling families, and their poverty. Her key association for white Southerners is with the house on her block "that was the first one to go." She notes that, "a lot of 'em let their houses go," slipping into disrepair and gradual collapse.

There is a large house in between Margaret's and what is left of "Tobacco Road." It is the former home of Frank Navin, who owned the Detroit Tigers and the stadium where they played which, at the time (1912–1937) bore his name, Navin Field. Now the house is rented out to Shirley, a white woman who came up from Kentucky in the early 1960s. Each of her four daughters were born in different Northern industrial towns. Two daughters still live with her, each with

their black boyfriends and the children they have borne. The family in the next house towards Margaret's was dealing drugs. They spray painted the windows black after moving in, and, until the house was raided by police, the kids who lived there regularly exchanged packets and money with the drivers of cars that pulled up in front. After the raid, the older kids returned and burned the house down. Margaret, who owns the house adjacent to this one and just rents it out, said:

> In fact, I rented that place to one of the relations [in the Navin house] one time, but that didn't work out.

I asked if the problem was rowdiness, and she shook her head no, rubbing her fingers together:

> They couldn't get the cabbage....And in and out, in and out. They say they'll move in, they pay you for a little bit, then all of a sudden they're a few months rent behind. Then they take their time moving out. But like I said, there was a lot of 'em from the South here already, and, of course, they'd bring their relations up here, and move in, and they'd pile up...

Though many years had passed since her "Southern" neighbors had arrived in Detroit—indeed, as she noted, some lived in Briggs before she moved there—for Margaret and the other native white Detroiters that I spoke with, this group remained a distinct and somewhat alien culture.

The story of the prejudice held by Northern whites against Southern white migrants is not new; it is, though, generally dismissed as insignificant in comparison with the vicious manner in which these whites responded to black migrants.[29] The prejudice against *hillbillies* is further mitigated by historians who suggest that these whites were the ones who somehow "brought" racism with them to the North. To whatever extent conveying racism was part of the cultural interaction between Northern and Southern whites, it could hardly be sufficient to account for the residential segregation that existed in Detroit prior to 1940; nor could it account for the drastic manner in which whites fled their homes in the Midwestern cities as early as the 1950s. Nor would such a conveyance account for the way these *hillbillies* chose to remain in Briggs during and after the riot of 1967 (one of the worst urban conflict in our country's history), and long after Detroit became a black-majority city.

INTEGRATED NEIGHBORHOODS

Hillbillies have stayed in this part of Detroit for a number of reasons. For the generation that was born here, many now proudly claim this city as their home. Among those who made their way North in the 1950s and 1960s, the situation is a little more complicated. While the characterization of these migrants has largely been that they were searching for jobs and a "better life," the lure of the "big city" life was also undeniably a factor. To this day, most Appalachians that I spoke with pointed to the bars and the active street life as a key reason why they still prefer to reside in Detroit. The social enjoyment they continue to find in "hillbilly bars" is perhaps the most underestimated aspect of their lives in Motown.

"Hillbilly bars," in this part of the city, are some of the most integrated places in Detroit. In Briggs, the remaining "hillbilly bar" draws a crowd that is, quite often, as black as it is white. The corner jukebox ratifies the "mixed" nature of this social setting by featuring both soul and rhythm and blues hits alongside current and "old time" country and western songs. This racial mixing is something these whites have not only adapted to, but they also deeply appreciate the ability to socialize across race lines. Perhaps, as whites, these settings are easier to negotiate when they can rely on a marked and "out of place" or stigmatized identity of being *hillbillies* in Detroit.

In the course of my fieldwork in Briggs, I never heard these *hillbillies* use the term "Appalachian." In this regard, they seem quite distinct from the more politically conscious communities of urban Appalachians in cities like Cincinnati. The social and economic differences between these two cities are great, despite their geographic proximity. There is insufficient space here to either detail these differences or to elaborate on the distinctions between urban Appalachian modes of self-identification in these two cities. However, I hope that intriguing possibilities for such a comparison are suggested from the historical account that I have offered here of *hillbillies* in Detroit.

The purpose of emphasizing the role of *hillbillies* in Detroit's drastic social and demographic transformations is not merely to provide a more accurate historical record. Rather, the point is to stress that just as urban Appalachians were present at the "origin" of the urban crisis in Detroit, so too, they remain part of the population severely effected in these inner-city zones. Too often, the stark racial contours of urban crisis seem self-evident and obvious. However, even in Detroit, a city which has come to symbolize the problems of the "black underclass," urban Appalachians are present in the most devastated areas in the city; they, too, are disadvantaged by the debilitating effects of inner-city living. The "fact" of their whiteness did not

simply provide them with a privileged inroad to success in the past. Nor does their whiteness mitigate their present social and economic plight.

NOTES

1 Figures are from: Stuart Walker, *Changes in Population—1940–30 and in Dwelling Units—1940–38 by Detroit Census Tracts*, Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research Inc., Report No. 160, July, 1941: *Population (1930 Census) and Other Social Data for Detroit by Census Tracts*, Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research, Report 143, March 1937; 1990 U.S. Census of Population and Housing Characteristics.

2 In particular, see Ellen Stekert's account of how *hillbillies* remained an unassimilated population in Detroit in "Focus for Conflict: Southern Mountain Medical Beliefs in Detroit," *Journal of American Folklore* 83 (April–June 1970). Also, see Phillip J. Obermiller and Michael E. Maloney, "Living City, Feeling Country: The Current Status and Future Prospects of Urban Appalachians," in *From Mountain to Metropolis: Appalachian Migrants in American Cities*, edited by Kathryn M. Borman and Phillip J. Obermiller (Westport CT: Greenwood, 1994).

3 This fieldwork is subject of my dissertation, "Cultural Constructions of Whiteness: Formations of Race and Class in Detroit," University of California, Santa Cruz, 1995.

4 *The Michigan Chronicle*, the newspaper of Detroit's black community, almost gleefully reported the appearance of advertisements for rental properties insisting that "No Southerns" apply. The May 1, 1943, article, "Detroit Landlords Refuse To Rent to Southerns," announced that "Discrimination Finally Catches Up With Dixie Whites."

5 This quote is drawn from a series of interviews in the "History of the Hood" section of my "Cultural Constructions of Whiteness."

6 Only New York and Chicago received a larger portion of the black migration stream in the 1940s than did Detroit.

7 There is a stark contrast between Northern and Southern cities in how the color-line was maintained. Michigan had adopted non-discrimination legislation as early as 1885. Hence, the forms of residential segregation that developed in Detroit were of a more informal nature than in most Southern cities. Following World War II, an innovative social organization, the "homeowners association" was developed by Detroiters as a means to maintain strictly "white" neighborhoods. Though such an association was attempted in Briggs, this effort failed, largely because over 80 percent of the residents in this area were renters. See Karl E. Taeuber and Alma F. Taeuber, *Negroes in Cities: Residential Segregation and Neighborhood Change* (Chicago: Aldine, 1965); Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race, Industrial Decline, and Housing in Detroit, 1940–1960*, Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1992; Hartigan, "Cultural Constructions."

8 I have used the notion of a "rhetorical identity" to analyze the significance of such charged, pejorative terms as "white trash." See "Reading Trash: *Deliverance* and the Poetics of 'White Trash,'" *Visual Anthropology Review* (1992).

9 By 1930 there were 79,274 white Southerners living in Detroit (Elmer Akers, *Southern Whites in Detroit* [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1936]). They arrived in Detroit with an equally large migration of Southern blacks: between 1920 and 1930, 79,228 blacks moved to Detroit. During the 1930s, auto companies in Detroit sent "their labor agents to recruit hill-billies from Kentucky, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Alabama. These hill-billies are for the most part impoverished whites, 'white trash' or a little better from the rural regions....They have had no close contacts with modern industry or with labor unionism—this, of course, is there best qualification" (Louis Adamic, "The Hill-Billies Come to Detroit," *The Nation*, February 13, 1936). Also, see Erdman Doane Beynon, "The Southern White Laborer Migrates to Michigan," *American Sociological Review* (June 1938). The literature on the migration of Southern whites and blacks is quite broad. To contextualize the migration to Detroit, I have relied on the following works: Robert Coles, *The South Goes North: Volume III of Children of Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970); Neil Fligstein, *Going North: Migration of Blacks and Whites from the South, 1900–1950* (New York: Academic, 1981); James S. Brown and George A. Hillery, Jr., "The Great Migration, 1940–1960," in *The Southern Appalachian Region: A Survey*, edited by Thomas R. Ford (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1962); Pete Daniel, "Going among Strangers: Southern Reactions to World War II," *The Journal of American History* (December 1990); Joe William Trotter, Jr., ed., *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); Nicholas Lemann, *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991); Jacqueline Jones, *The Dispossessed: America's Underclass from the Civil War to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

10 Dominic Capeci and Martha Wilkerson, *Layered Violence: The Detroit Rioters of 1943* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1991), 31.

11 Burton Bledstein details the way regional differences between whites in the United States were used to articulate stark class divisions between these two white groups during the early 1800s (Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* [1976], 26–39).

12 On the tendency of white Americans, broadly, to recognize a physical basis for "Southern distinctiveness," see *Disease and Distinctiveness in the American South*, edited by Todd Savitt and James Young (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988.)

13 Elmer Akers, *Southern Whites in Detroit* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977), 6.

14 Akers noted, with bemusement, that "hillbilly" was used rather indiscriminately by Northern whites, who ignored the critical intraracial distinction that the term involved in the South. "Hillbillies" were "mountaineers" or "highlanders" in the South, and generally considered a "'better class' of Southerners" than the "white trash...lowlander.... The lowlander, if we may so denominate them, are much more likely to be lazy, shiftless, untrustworthy, slovenly, and devoid of self-respect" (Akers, 5–6). Akers stressed that there were few "highlanders" in Detroit, but the name remained the most popular designation for

Southern whites. Lewis Killian complained that "hillbilly" is still derogatorily used to designate "working class, white, southern migrants" in the Midwest (Killian, *White Southerners* [Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985], 97–119).

15 Arthur Kronhauser, Detroit as People See It: A Survey of Attitudes in an Industrial City (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1952), 45–48.

16 Ibid.

17 U.S. Department of Commerce, "Characteristics of the Population, Labor Force, Families, and Housing, Detroit-Willow Run Congested Production Area: June 1944," Series CA-3, no. 9; Record group 212, NA.

18 In this Department of Commerce report, "nonwhite" was identified broadly. Although "negroes" made up the bulk of this category, "nonwhite" "includes also Indians, Chinese, and persons of other nonwhite races. Persons of Mexican birth or ancestry who are not definitely Indian or of other nonwhite race are classified as white"(3–31488).

19 The 1940s did feature the second largest surge in black migration to Detroit, with black population growing by 151,387. But it seems that the brunt of this migration occurred in the latter half of the decade. The period that stands out in residents' reflections on the the neighborhood's decline are of the war years specifically, when Southern whites poured into the area.

20 The contours of this contempt generally followed longstanding stereotypes of rural folk held by urban dwellers, but additionally drew on racial dynamics. This "class" line was examined in a study directed by Forrester B. Washington for the Detroit Mayor's Interracial Committee (Washington, *The Negro in Detroit* [Detroit: Detroit Bureau of Governmental Research, 1926]). This study asserted:

> ...the type of Negro drawn to Detroit is, in general, of the rural, uneducated farmhand or unskilled laborer groups. (sec. II, 16)
>
> [w]hile there are no distinct class lines among the Negroes in Detroit, today, a line of demarcation is sometimes drawn between the "Old-Detroiters" and the "New-Detroiters." But with the growth in numbers of the Negro population caused by the influx of the rural southerners and with the consequent results that came out of this unadjusted class's attempt to adapt itself, a changed attitude on the part of the whites caused a change in the status of the Old Detroiters. The Old Detroiters recognized this and resented it, and this caused a tendency towards the establishing of a class line. The New Detroiter, in his turn, resented the attitude of the Old Detroiter. Unaccustomed to the northern mores he had come with the expectations of receiving a friendly welcome, and he was disappointed to find what to him was "a cold world." (sec. II, 19–20)

George E. Haynes, in the *Negro Newcomers in Detroit* (1918; reprinted 1969 by Arno Press and *The New York Times*), also noted the regional differences and resentments that animated this "class line." Detroit was not the only city where such an intraracial class line formed. Elizabeth Pleck examines a similar dynamic in the cities on the East coast Pleck, *Black Migration and Poverty: Boston 1865–1900* [New York:

Academic , 1979], chap. 3). Nor was this phenomenon entirely a product of migration to urban areas. Benjamin Wilson detailed the emergence of "a caste system" that distinguished recently arrived Southern blacks from blacks with longer tenure in rural Michigan:

> For the New emigrees, integration with the dominant oldtimers was virtually impossible, because they had developed barriers that purposely hindered the upward mobility of the Southern transplants. (Wilson, *The Rural Black Heritage between Chicago and Detroit: 1850–1929* [Kalamazoo MI: New Issues, 1985], 88)

21 This case is made in detail by David Allen Levine, *Internal Combustion: The Races in Detroit, 1915–1926*, Contributions in Afro-American and African Studies, No. 24 (Westport CT: Greenwood, 1976), chap. 3.

22 See David M. Katzman, *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), and Richard W. Thomas, *Life For Us is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915–1945*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

23 Richard Anderson, Commission on Community Relations, City of Detroit, "Detroit Population Mobility, as Reflected by School Census Data: 1949 to 1959," March 23, 1960, Urban Assimilation Committee, box 11, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

24 See Clyde B. McCoy and James S. Brown, "Appalachian Migration to Midwestern Cities," in *The Invisible Minority: Urban Appalachians*, edited by Wiliam W. Philliber and Clyde B. McCoy (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1981).

25 Lewis Killian tracked the negative reception of Southern whites in Chicago in "The Adjustment of Southern White Migrants to Northern Urban Norms," *Social Forces* 32 (October 1953). Also see Hal Bruno, "Chicago's Hillbilly Ghetto," *The Reporter*, June 4, 1961; James Maxwell, "Down From the Hills and into the Slums," *The Reporter*, December 13, 1956. Maxwell's essay begins with a white woman's long, furious complain about "those people." Then he notes:

> The woman in this instance was not a New Yorker denouncing Puerto Ricans or a San Franciscan belaboring Mexicans. She was, in fact, a resident of Indianapolis, and the subject of her diatribe was an ethnic group usually considered to be the most favored in American society—white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Her term for them was "hillbilly." (27)

26 I detail how the term "white trash" has operated as a means of marking the boundary between whites and blacks in this country in "Unpopular Culture: The Case of 'White Trash'," *Cultural Studies* (forthcoming, January 1997).

27 The sociological model of "assimilation" predominated in academic studies of the problems of "hillbillies." It extends from Grace Leybourne, "Urban Adjustments of Migrants from the Southern Appalachian Plateaus," *Social Forces* 16 (December 1937) to Killian's "The Adjustment of Southern White Migrants," in

1953. See also Denny Stavros, *The Assimilation of Southern White Factory Workers in Detroit*, unpublished Master's thesis, Wayne State University, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, 1956.

The United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit established the Urban Adjustment Committee to develop means of helping disoriented in-migrants from Appalachia who were arriving in Detroit's "inner city." This committee was disbanded in December of 1963. A staff report recommended disbanding the committee, noting "The apparently obsolete concepts of 'inner city' and 'urban adjustment' upon which service has been based... Vast population changes in recent years have dispersed many so-called problem families and the 'inner city' is now *only one* area in need of service rather than the one [emphasis added]." The report pointed out that UCS must recognize "Detroit as a problem area itself and not merely as a city that has within it well delimited problem populations."UCS Memo, December 9, 1963, "Community Affairs,"box 11, folder 13, ALUA. But as Stekert demonstrated, "hillbillies" remained an unassimilated population in Detroit.

28 A most thorough account of this popularization of the "hillbilly" stereotype is provided by James Branscome, "Annihilating the Hillbilly: The Appalachians' Struggle with America's Institutions," in *Colonialism in Modern America: The Appalachian Case*, edited by Helen Matthews, Linda Johnson, and Donald Askins (Boone NC: The Appalachian Consortium Press, 1978). Allen Batteau details the developed historical tradition in which images of poor, mountain-dwelling whites have ratified variously inflected images of Otherness for "America" (Batteau, *The Invention of Appalachia* [Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990]). Also see J. W. Williamson, *Hillbillyland: What the Movies Did to the Mountains and What the Mountains Did to the Movies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

29 Jacqueline Jones insists on this point: "as a group, Appalachian migrants to the North managed to overcome prejudices against them, prejudices that were superficial in their focus on speech patterns, clothing styles, and personal demeanor. In contrast, black migrants could never shed the liabilities associated with their skin color" (*The Dispossessed*, 239).

■ 6 ■

Neighborhood Associations and the Planning Process: The Case of the Southside Neighborhood Organization

Michael P. Marchioni and Lon S. Felker

Neighborhood associations are not new to Appalachia or to the United States in general. After visiting the United States in 1831, de Tocqueville wrote:

> Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of dispositions are forever forming associations. There are...a thousand different types—religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute.[1]

Indeed, the variety of organizations described by de Tocqueville have flourished to the present day. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the character of neighborhood organizations and to show how the Southside Neighborhood Organization has dealt with neighborhood problems in the past and at the present time.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

What is a "neighborhood association"? According to Logan and Rabrenovic, it is a civic organization with common interests of improving or maintaining the quality of life within the confines of a geographically discrete residential area.[2] The origin of modern neighborhood groups can be traced back to the 1950s; however, many organizations were founded during the turbulent times of the late 1960s and the retrenchment years of the late 1970s and 1980s.[3] The reasons for the establishment of neighborhood associations are as diverse as the people associated with them. Whether the concern is for the maintenance of the neighborhood school, commercial encroach-

ment, traffic problems, environmental quality, neighborhood blight or crime prevention, many associations are founded to address a single issue. Once a solution to the issue has been reached, the organization may become inactive or broaden its concerns and become a permanent entity.[4]

Neighborhood organization is a generic phrase which may include such groups as Neighborhood Improvement Associations, Community Councils, and Homeowners Associations. The differences in associations may vary dramatically from community to community, and the organizations may be as formal or informal as the neighborhood desires. Membership in the organization may be voluntary or mandatory, and the organization may be strictly informal or legally chartered as a corporation. For example, in the case of new housing developments in retirement areas, the corporate Homeowners Association is more the rule than the exception. The corporation is often chartered

> ...to establish a set of easements, restrictions, conditions and covenants which are for the purpose of protecting the value and desirability of the real property... [5]

Each member has one vote for each property owned and may exercise that vote on capital improvements, assessments or other issues which impact the neighborhood. These associations not only possess the legal authority to enforce their restrictive covenants, but they tend to have relatively large memberships, which can evolve into a considerable degree of "political clout."

Most neighborhood associations don't have the formal structure and legal powers of the aforementioned Homeowner's Association. Typically, they are voluntary organizations with an active minority and a non-participating majority. They may be homogeneous or heterogeneous in terms of socio-economic structure, life cycle, or ethnicity. In his study of communities within Seattle, Oropesa found that approximately 19 percent of the residents belonged to the neighborhood association and that newcomers to the neighborhood are the most active participants within the association. Possible explanations for newcomer participation were: the desire to establish social ties, being urged by other members to participate while they are enthusiastic, and to show their concern for group interests.[6] In most instances, neighborhood organizations lack the financial, organizational, and ideological resources necessary to compete effectively with more powerful political entities.[7]

THE THREE FACES OF THE SOUTHSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION

Johnson City, Tennessee, with slightly more than 52,000 people, is the largest municipality in the Tri-Cities M.S.A. It is a major service center for the region and contains a Veteran's Administration hospital, a regional municipal hospital and several specialty hospitals, and East Tennessee State University, a comprehensive regional university and medical complex.

Johnson City's oldest neighborhood is the Southside neighborhood—known as the Carter Addition and the "Tree Streets"—located adjacent to East Tennessee State University. The current boundaries of the Southside neighborhood are Roan Street on the East, University Parkway on the West and South, and Walnut street on the North. Within this relatively small area there are over 1,200 parcels of land, most of which are in single-family residential land use. There is a high degree of diversity in the size, character, and maintenance of houses within the district. The neighborhood contains a mix of large older homes, smaller post-World War II cottages, and an assortment of newer homes. The area also possesses one of the few remaining neighborhood schools near the core area of Johnson City.

An informal neighborhood organization was founded during the early 1970s. The group, known as the Southwest Neighborhood Organization (SNO), was concerned about deteriorating conditions within the neighborhood. Specifically, Montrose Court—a large (by neighborhood standards) apartment complex across the street from Southside School—was in poor physical condition. It was viewed by many neighbors as a center for drug use and assorted other socially unacceptable activities.[8] Since the building was in close proximity to the school, neighbors viewed it, and its inhabitants, as a threat to the safety and well-being of the local school children. In true Alinsky fashion,[9] SNO confronted and challenged the city to clean-up the blighted landmark. With the aid of federal funds, the apartment complex was significantly restored. Renovation of the structure meant the relocation of "undesirable inhabitants" to other areas away from Southside School, to the satisfaction of many residents. Since the principal reason for being was no longer viewed as a problem, the organization ceased to exist by 1977.[10]

Unfortunately, Montrose Court was not the only problem facing the neighborhood. During the 1980s, two additional threats to property value and neighborhood stability arose: 1) the conversion of single-family dwellings into rooming houses and apartments, and 2) the possible closure of the neighborhood school. By the early 1980s, five fraternity houses had been located within the oldest section of the neighborhood, and numerous large and small houses had been transformed into rooming houses and apartments.

In 1984, the neighborhood organization, retitled Southside Neighborhood Organization, was re-established to deal with its perceived problems. Although still somewhat adversarial in character, the neighborhood association appeared to have become more politically astute and better organized than its predecessor.

First, the neighborhood association petitioned the city to "down-zone" a portion of the neighborhood from R-3 (single-family and multifamily dwellings) to R-2 (low-density single-family dwellings). For Johnson City, the concept of "down-zoning" was revolutionary. However, through their persistent efforts, the neighborhood organization succeeded in 1987 in obtaining a more restrictive residential classification for a portion of the neighborhood.[11]

The second problem for the neighborhood association—potential closure of the neighborhood school—was a significantly more challenging issue. Since the south side of Johnson City is significantly smaller, both geographically and demographically, than north Johnson City, at-large elections tended to be dominated by representatives from north Johnson City. SNO had a choice of attempting to elect candidates favorable to their position to the City Commission or the Board of Education as their focal point. In 1988, they chose to back a slate of three candidates who were clearly for neighborhood schools (the A,B,C slate—Anderson, Bennett, and Corso). The candidates were elected and Southside School was considered for renovation.

In 1989, SNO decided to become a slightly more formal organization by adopting by-laws, electing officers and establishing standing committees. The organization attempted to broaden its goals to include: improved city services to the neighborhood, street beautification, and community block parties.[12] Although the words of the neighborhood president gave the impression that the neighborhood organization was expanding its focus and maturing as a public service entity, the organization lapsed into inactivity.

Reactivation of the organization did not occur until another crises arose—school relocation. By 1990, the Johnson City School Board had rejected the neighborhood school concept;[13] the size and costs of renovation for Southside School had been challenged by city officials.[14] In 1992, the Board of Education voted to raze the old Southside School and replace it with a new 400-student school at the same location. However, five members of the Regional Planning Commission, including the chairman, proposed relocating the school outside the neighborhood boundaries.[15]

The warning alarm had sounded and the neighborhood organization was reactivated, but not with the solidarity of the earlier organization. For a variety of reasons, including "down-zoning," the demographics of the neighborhood had changed. Many of the new

members were relatively young couples with school-age children and had lived in the neighborhood for less than five years. Conflict arose within the group. If Southside School was to stay at its location, by Tennessee law, its acreage needed to be expanded. Site expansion would necessitate the acquisition of approximately 10 houses, including that of a former SNO president. Relocation of the school to a site outside the neighborhood offered decision makers a cost-effective alternative, but also might promote neighborhood decline. After a significant amount of tearful debate, the membership of SNO voted to support keeping the school at its current location.

The third image of SNO began to emerge as the organization appeared to be energized by the influx of young, recently relocated families. Its attitude toward "city hall" was one of cooperation rather than confrontation. The mellowing of SNO coincided with the decision of departments within City Hall to work with neighborhood organizations to promote more effective planning functions. As Taub et al., indicated, neighborhood associations are being supported by local government because of legislative requirements for "community participation," to legitimize city actions, to gain neighborhood insights, or to use community groups to disseminate information.[16]

The city invited neighborhood association members to a variety of planning workshops on such issues as neighborhood quality and character (1993), bikeways and pathways (1994), and traffic calming measures (1994). City agencies also maintained open channels of communication with the neighborhood leadership.

With the occurrence of a traffic fatality within the neighborhood in 1993, the neighborhood asked the city for an increased degree of traffic control. The city, in turn, asked the neighborhood to prepare a plan for consideration by the City Commission. The Traffic Committee of SNO spent nearly five months working on a plan to reduce traffic hazards in the neighborhood. Its controversial suggestions met with stiff neighborhood opposition in the association's open forum on May 16, 1994. The Traffic Committee then began work with city staff members to produce a more acceptable traffic plan for the neighborhood. In a November 23, 1994, letter to Jeff Anderson, Johnson City Mayor, SNO President Thomas outlined the detailed accomplishments of SNO's Traffic Committee and city staff:

> The traffic engineers have been conducting traffic counts and research before implementing any changes and the current estimate is that they are approximately one-half to three-quarters finished. After these counts are finished, we have been told to expect some changes to be made. The changes being discussed include roundabouts, chokers, and other techniques.

> This process has been educational and challenging and the City has been forthright in dealing with our concerns at every step along the way. It is an example (perhaps one of very few) of how neighborhoods and City departments can cooperate to achieve a positive result. We have been very patient and are hopeful that we will see...changes very soon. I urge all of you to look seriously at this process and the chance it gives Johnson City to set new precedents as to how you can respond to citizen concerns.
>
> There are still a number of skeptics in our neighborhood who are convinced that the only way to achieve goals is to be confrontational. They subscribe to the theory that the "squeaky wheel gets the grease." If our efforts fail—that is, if another neighborhood's traffic problems are given higher priority because its residents protest vocally—the skeptics will be vindicated. Those of us who have been advocating cooperation and joint problem-solving will be dismissed as naive and ineffective.

Indeed, progress continued and by the spring of 1995 traffic calming techniques had been tested and by the summer of 1995 Phase One of traffic calming techniques was implemented in a portion of the neighborhood.

As traffic calming measures were being implemented, the city also undertook the task of making the neighborhood more pedestrian friendly. The sidewalk system for the neighborhood was scheduled for completion. The public works director and his agents spoke to the residents where sidewalks were to be placed. The city went to great lengths to preserve the old-growth trees within the neighborhood and to minimize any damage to residents' properties.

While the Traffic Committee was engaged in traffic calming design, SNO's Historic Preservation Committee began the process of gaining historic designation for the "Tree Streets" portion of the neighborhood. The proposed Tree Streets Historic District is comprised of 630 parcels of land and approximately 610 homes. This is the area of the neighborhood where SNO derives all of its membership—active and inactive. In fact, a debate concerning the name of the organization occurred in 1994 when new bylaws were developed and implemented. The membership, however, voted to maintain the SNO designation because of name recognition and past accomplishments. With assistance from East Tennessee State University's Geography and Art Departments and the city's Planning Department, the historic designation document was filed in Nashville; a decision is expected in January 1996.

Although the leadership of SNO changed in January 1995, the previous leaders remain active and the new leadership appears to be continuing the policy of cooperation with city administrators.

However, the organization is interested in increasing its visibility and has done so through a variety of techniques. First, the neighborhood sponsors an annual yard sale which has had as many as 124 paid participants (paid association members only number approximately 65!) and has attracted as many as 10–15,000 shoppers from as far away as Kentucky, Georgia, and South Carolina. Second, members of SNO religiously attend all City Commission and Planning Commission meetings. (Their membership cards are inserted into a plastic holder and serve as "badges" at the meetings.) Third, the membership is promoting community activities such as a community watch system, an "Eggstravaganza" Easter egg hunt for area children, a Christmas porch-decorating contest, and a SNOcial for membership and guests. Fourth, SNO is actively involved in supporting other neighborhood associations (a divisive activity, according to some members) and sponsoring events with these groups. Finally, SNO is also exploring the *possibility* of incorporation as a means to attract new members and increase its political visibility.

CONCLUSION

SNO has shown significant signs of maturation through its episodic, although lengthy existence. It has moved from a strictly informal group to a somewhat formal entity. Its vision is beyond that of the neighborhood itself. As the current President stated in an April 11, 1995, letter to the Greater Town Acres Homeowners Association:

> ...standing shoulder-to-shoulder...with fellow concerned and involved residents, we can be an important force in maintaining or improving the quality of life in our City.[17]

The neighborhood association is not interested in obtaining more resources than other neighborhoods; only its perceived fair share.[18] As Mansbridge states, the organization "...values equal power not as an end in itself, but as a means to the end of protecting interests equally."[19]

NOTES

1 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* 2 vols., edited by J. P. Mayer and M. Lerner (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), VII, C. 5, 485.

2 J. R. Logan and G. Rabrenovic, "Neighborhood Associations: Their Issues, Their Allies and Their Opponents," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 26 (1990): 68–69.

3 J. C. Thomas, *Between Citizen and City: Neighborhood Organizations and Urban Politics in Cincinnati* (Lawrence KS: University Press of Kansas, 1986), 3.

4 J. L. Arnold, "The Neighborhood and City Hall: The Origin of Neighborhood Associations in Baltimore, 1890–1910," *Journal of Urban History* 6 (1979): 3–30.

5 Crosswinds Development Corporation, *Declaration of Covenants, Condition/Restrictions and Easements* (Okaloosa FL: Author, 1988), 2.

6 R. S. Oropesa, "Social Structure, Social Solidarity and Involvement in Neighborhood Associations," *Sociological Inquiry* 62 (1992): 111–16.

7 L. Jezierski, "Neighborhoods and Public-Private Partnerships in Pittsburgh," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 26 (1990): 219.

8 G. K. Bailey, personal interview, August 21, 1995.

10 Bailey.

9 H. C. Boyte, *The Backyard Revolution: Understanding the New Citizen Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 449–52

11 R. Houk, "Planning Commission Rezones 'Tree Streets'," *Johnson City Press*, August 12, 1987, A1, 6.

12 G. Burkett, letter to Southside Residents, February 1989.

13 S. Watson, "Neighborhood School Concept Out," *Johnson City Press*, November 28, 1990, 1.

14 E. McClellan, "Southside Estimate Disputed," *Johnson City Press*, May 17, 1988, 1.

15 J. Wozniak, "Consensus Elusive on South Side Replacement," *Johnson City Press*, March 10, 1992, 1.

16 R. P. Taub et al., "Urban Voluntary Association, Locality Based and Externally Induced," *American Journal of Sociology* 83 (1977): 425–43.

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■ 7 ■

The Role of Interests Groups in Urban Appalachia: A Case Study from Johnson City

Lon S. Felker and Michael P. Marchioni

Interest groups in Appalachia are no different in many ways from pressure groups in other parts of the United States. They are motivated by similar issues and causes as are such groups elsewhere. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the problems and constraints of urban Appalachian interest groups. We will suggest some factors that contribute to the success or failure of such groups when they are confronted with the full force of "city hall." In the first place, it is necessary to differentiate between what might be called insider, elite-based interest groups and outsider, mass-based groups. The former are usually affluent and have full access to policymaking bodies and public officials. The latter do not. In the case of the elite-based group, there is a well-focused and well-financed organization that functions efficiently with minimal friction. The organization's policy goals are clear and well-defined. In the case of the mass-based outsider groups, the situation is very different. These groups tend to have an episodic organizational life and are poorly financed. They also tend to be broad-scope in their objectives, and are prone to internal dissension as a consequence of the diversity of sub-groups and the plethora of agendas.

Secondly, it must be acknowledged that these two categories are neither exclusive nor immutable. There are examples of elite-based, insider groups that are in transition to non-elite, outsider groups. And there are numerous examples of mass-based, outsider groups that are in the process of gaining access and becoming inside players. Sometimes leadership plays an important role in this process. A strong, dynamic leader can make all the difference in a group's successful achievement of its goals. Witness the role of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in the civil rights struggle, or César Chavez's contributions to

the migrant farm workers' union. Leadership can and does make a difference.

In the urban areas of Appalachia, there are both types of groups to be found, and there are also cases of transitional groups. In the Tri-Cities area of Northeast Tennessee, three sizable municipalities—Bristol, Johnson City, and Kingsport—generate interest groups that reflect the local political, economic and social issues affecting segments of the population.

CASE STUDY: CITIZENS FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT AND THE LANDFILL

Johnson City is the largest of the Tri-Cities, with a population of over 52,000. It has a regional public university, East Tennessee State University, with 11,000 students, a Veterans Hospital and domiciliary, and numerous medium to small manufacturing and retailing businesses, the largest of which is Siemens Electric, a German corporation which took over the plant just south of town following the exit of Texas Instruments in the early 1990s. Other significant businesses include Snap-On Tools, Harris-Tarkett, Inc., and numerous others.

With its own home rule city charter—one of 13 municipalities in the state of Tennessee to have one—Johnson City has a commission-city manager government. This is essentially a combination of a weak mayor system, in which the five elected commissioners select a mayor from among their number, and a city manager form in which a professional city manager is hired to act as the chief executive officer for the city. Since 1984, the city manager has been John G. Campbell, who previously served as director of community development and assistant to the city manager. Campbell has a civil engineering degree and a Masters of Public Administration from the University of Tennessee.

In the late 1980s, the principal landfill for the city, the Regional Landfill at Bowser Ridge, entered its final phase as an active landfill. Bowser Ridge, according to Johnson City officials, was approaching the end of its usefulness. The city began to explore alternative sites in 1989, and eventually focused on the General Shale property in an enclave surrounded by the city limits on three sides on the southeastern side of Johnson City, at the intersection of Broad and Main Streets.

This was in an area of the city where various small businesses—family-owned fast food outlets, small furniture stores, a discount grocery—and a major public housing area and Keystone Elementary School were located. Also near the site were many working-class homes. In short, it was an area characterized by poverty, poor

housing, lower-end retail, and a citizenry who had been largely absent from active political involvement in the affairs of the city.

The subsequent conflict that emerged between the city officials and the opponents of the proposed landfill sharpened considerably when it was announced that the city was in negotiation with Waste Management, Inc., a multi-billion dollar corporation, for construction and operation of the new landfill. This galvanized a number of groups within the city, including a group of educated and articulate people who had been active in environmental issues. The initial meetings of the group that became Citizens for Responsible Government took place in the home of Dr. Joseph Corso, a Political Science faculty member from East Tennessee State University. Corso had been active in local politics, winning city-wide election to the Johnson City School Board. The core group consisted of a number of Keystone area residents, political activists, and environmentalists. Corso and his wife, Phylis Johnson, opened their home to this group, which eventually numbered in the dozens. The group's first priority was to stop the city's drive to establish a landfill on the General Shale property.

The opening discussions of the group were free-form and wide ranging. They sometimes degenerated into gripe sessions, with members sharing horror stories about encounters with the bureaucracy at City Hall. Corso attempted to keep the group focused and moving toward a cohesive position on the issue, but this was not always possible. For one thing, the group was diverse and there were various agendas. Some environmentally sensitive citizens felt that the "dump," as the group members universally referred to the proposed landfill, would be an ecological disaster for the entire community. Others were more immediately concerned about their houses and property values. Still others were engaged in a long-term struggle with the powers-that-be at City Hall; this was merely the most opportune occasion to engage the struggle on a new and promising front.

The meetings and discussion sessions continued through much of Spring and Summer 1992.[1] There were efforts to protest the implementation of a contract between the city and Waste Management. These took the form of citizen "talkbacks" at regularly scheduled Thursday night meetings of the City Commission. Often such comment sessions led to heated exchanges between the commissioners and the opponents of the landfill.

The city had earlier initiated what were termed "neighborhood city hall" meetings, but many of these had been poorly attended, and little in the way of critical comment was forthcoming. One assistant city manager was later to remark to one of the authors that he was amazed at how long it had taken for the community to become aware of the city's plans regarding the landfill. While the local paper had carried stories, and news teams had dutifully reported on the

negotiations with Waste Management, the actual public reaction was late in getting off the ground.

When the Citizens for Responsible Government did become active, it took advantage of opportunities to educate the public on the dangers of landfills. Local radio talk show hosts, for example, scheduled shows devoted to the issue. Callers lined up to get various points across. None of these efforts deterred the city from signing an agreement with Waste Management, however, and the group's lack of success in stopping the contract led to a new phase.

By July 1992, Doug Carter, a local attorney and sometime political candidate, was emerging as a spokesperson for the group. His wife, Mickii Carter, was equally active. By this time the group had assumed the name of Citizens for Responsible Government (Citizens), and meetings were taking place at the Carters' furniture store near the proposed site of the landfill. The *Johnson City Press* began to run stories such as the following:

> Citizens held Johnson City Commissioner Dan Mahoney's feet to the fire Monday, demanding answers about the city's decision to put a landfill in an urban area and associate with Waste Management.
>
> After residents unsuccessfully sought to address the City Commission Thursday, Mahoney told a crowd in the lobby he would meet with them to answer their questions. They held him to that promise Monday, refusing to let Waste Management officials who were present address them and preventing city staff from talking for most of the three and a half hour meeting.
>
> "We want to see what you commissioners know," Keystone resident Lucille Dugger said. "We don't feel all of you know all of the answers. Dan, you ought to be able to answer all of these questions."...
>
> Citizens for Responsible Government is leading the fight against the proposed landfill. They say the location is improper because of its proximity to residences, streams and ground water. They also oppose Waste Management, citing its environmental record. [2]

That same month, Citizens also initiated a petition drive to garner support from federal, state, and local officials to stop the landfill's construction. In addition to seeking U.S. Environmental Protection Agency support through labeling the proposed site inappropriate, they also sought help from the State Attorney General and from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in determining if the landfill would harm low-income public housing developments in the vicinity of the site. Many of the state's elected officials were solicited, including Governor McWherter, U.S. Senators Al Gore and Jim Sasser, and Congressman Jimmy Quillen.[3]

Another focus of the Citizens group was local Tennessee State Senator Dewey "Rusty" Crowe, a Democrat from Johnson City. Crowe was first approached about the landfill during one of his frequent "meet the public" discussion sessions at the Johnson City Public Library. Crowe could have been a key player in the drama, but he took a wait-and-see attitude throughout much of the controversy, claiming that he preferred to wait for the State Attorney General's opinion on the legality of the contract between Johnson City and Waste Management.

By the end of the summer of 1992, much of the group's activity had become focused in the legal arena. Doug Carter had sent information regarding Waste Management to the State Attorney General's office. The Carters alleged in their communications with that office that Waste Management's various state affiliates had a record of unsavory dealings. Carter observed that a state law prohibited municipalities from entering into contracts and committing state funds with a business that had a record of pleading

> guilty or no contest or is convicted of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, mail fraud or other federal or state criminal laws. Such a violation has to be connected with a contract granted by a city, county or state.[4]

On the part of Waste Management, head of public relations, Meg McKnight, remarked that she was unaware of the status of contracts between Waste Management and municipalities outside of Tennessee. Furthermore, a statement from the firm contended that neither Waste Management of North America nor its Tennessee subsidiary had been convicted of a crime or pleaded guilty or no contest in connection with a case involving the state or a city in Tennessee. Nothing was mentioned in the statement of Waste Management's record outside the state. Mickii Carter told *Johnson City Press* reporter Jim Wozniak that the reports send by Citizens to the state showed "problems in states adjacent to Tennessee, and she believes the state law the group cites will apply to those situations."[5]

In late summer 1992, the Citizens unleashed an unsuccessful petition drive to have commissioners who had voted for the landfill recalled. Mickii Carter announced that she would not be satisfied until the group acquired 5,000 to 6,000 signatures. The group's leadership and rank and file appeared at the regularly scheduled commission meeting "to make the commission aware it had not disappeared," and members of the group booed several commissioners as they entered City Hall.[6]

Citizens also fought on the bureaucratic front. Under the Carters' leadership, the group used the notice and comment period to drive home its message of the disadvantages of the General Shale site and

raise questions of probity regarding Waste Management's operations. Replete with placards and signs, the group's members gave vigorous voice to their disapproval of the city's actions and the corporation's record. Testimony was given as to the past actions of Waste Management, of the potential problems of water contamination due to streams and rivulets that ran through the intended site, and the likelihood of air pollution due to the site's location to the east and above a major public housing area and elementary school.

None of these strategies ultimately proved successful for Citizens for Responsible Government. The combination of a powerful corporation with significant legal talent at its disposal, a divided membership whose members were not always in agreement with one another over goals and tactics, and a city government whose commissioners and city manager remained unified on the desirability of the landfill, all worked to the disadvantage of Citizens.[6]

THE CITIZENS AND THE LANDFILL: A RETROSPECTIVE

Today the landfill, known as the Iris Glen Environmental Center, is located at 1705 East Main Street in Johnson City. It has been in operation for some time now, and its distinctive pale yellow trucks roll down the streets of the city to and from the facility.

It is fair, we believe, to speculate on the reasons behind the failure of the Citizens to stop the landfill. The first factor was the group's late start in organizing and goal setting. The city had been contemplating the landfill for some time, at least as early as 1989. The group was formally organized only in mid-1992. The delay in organization proved particularly critical, as the group found it difficult to get its message across in such a short time.

Another factor was the diversity of the group members. The working-class and poor members who lived near the site and were the most visibly impacted by the city's decision were initially shocked and disorganized. It took some time for them to develop a coalition and a fully functioning effort. Corso served as an important leader and facilitator in the early stages, but the coalition of working-class poor and middle-class, relatively affluent environmentalists was an often uneasy and awkward one. It was not that the coalition did not function, it simply took time to get it working well and on track.

The assumption of leadership by the Carters signalled another change in the fortunes of the group. Doug Carter's legal background was both an asset and a liability to the group. When such a group changes its tactics from grassroots political organization and mobilization to legal and bureaucratic in-fighting, it is tacitly admitting that it has limited options and has chosen to fight on its opponents' turf.

When the opposition consists of well-heeled corporate interests, such an effort has limited chances of success.

Ironically, Mickii Carter is today not only a city commissioner but also Mayor of Johnson City. Her husband, Doug, spearheaded an attempt to change Johnson City's charter. The principal objective was to change the at-large electoral system to a ward-based system. The other members of the special charter commission defeated this move. Mickii waged a successful campaign for a commission seat in 1993. Since then, she has been joined by at least one other vocal critic of the city administration. But with only two votes on a commission of five, they have made little headway in changing policy or changing the city's administrative management team.

The story of Citizens for Responsible Government and the "Battle of the Dump" (or Iris Glen) serves to illustrate the problems an urban based interest group may encounter in fighting city hall. The Citizens group suffered from all of the limitations that a mass-based, outsider group has to contend with. Still, it gave a good account of itself in the short time it had to organize and confront the in group at city hall and Waste Management, Inc.

The story also demonstrates the importance of leadership as a crucial factor. First the Corsos and then the Carters attempted to guide the struggle against the landfill along certain lines. The Corsos saw the struggle in outsider terms, attempting to build a large, citizen-based group that would use the landfill issue as the catalyst for mass mobilization and consciousness building for multiple groups and myriad other issues for confronting the city hall group. The Carters, with a more insider perspective but equally politically astute, approached the problem as both a legal and a political one. They seem to have used "insider" tools and stratagems—such as lawsuits and "notice and comment" periods—to delay the city's efforts to move forward with the landfill.

Given the short time they had to organize, could either strategy have succeeded? Probably not. But a mass-based group, with little political access, is unlikely to make progress if it ceases to make every effort to build a broader coalition and mobilize every possible group. If such a group relies too heavily on insider, elite tactics—bureaucratic and legal tactics— it makes the fatal error of choosing the real insiders' turf on which to fight. Johnson City's political elite knew what it wanted: a new, professionally operated, state-of-the-art landfill. It got it.

There is a final, very interesting question. Will Citizens for Responsible Government transform itself into an insider, elite-based group now that it has representation on the city commission? And if it does, what will be its effectiveness as an articulator of the interests of many poor and working-class Johnson Citians?

NOTES

1 In addition to specific citations, material in this section was drawn from the following *Johnson City Press* sources: Tony Duncan, photo and caption, "Mourning: Citizens for Responsible Government held a funeral procession of sorts Saturday to mourn the death of Johnson City. The procession traveled along a possible route garbage trucks would take to the proposed regional landfill" (December 6, 1992, 4); Mark Rutledge, "Residents Voice Fears of Landfill," July 25, 1992, 8; Jim Wozniak: "Landfill Becomes Arena for Fight," May 5, 1992, 2; "Citizens Silenced on Landfill," July 15, 1992, 1; "Landfill Frustrations Aired at City Meeting," July 21, 1992, 1; "Citizens Group To Boycott Landfill 'Propaganda' Trip," August 6, 1992, 1 and 10; Citizens Voice Landfill Concerns," August 8, 1992, 6;), "Landfill Opponents Get Dirty over Reactions," September 27, 1992, 9; "Commission, Citizens Group Remain at Odds," October 4, 1992, 8; "Group Worries Use of Police Wasted in Protecting Landfill," November 8, 1992, 1 and 11; "Citizens Continue Probe, Protest of Landfill," November 15, 1992, 9.

2 *Johnson City Press*, July 2, 1992, 8.

3 Wozniak, "Citizens Group Petitions To Fight Landfill," *Johnson City Press*, July 28, 1992, 1.

4 *Johnson City Press*, August 7, 1992, 6.

5 Ibid.

6 Wozniak, "Opponents of Landfill Initiate Petition Drive," *Johnson City Press*, August 21, 1992, 1.

▪ 8 ▪

Creating a Community Vision for Johnson City, Tennessee

Ellen Buchanan

In 1994, the Johnson City Planning Department initiated a process designed to involve a representative segment of the population in the creation of a vision for our community. It is generally very difficult for the average citizen to articulate preferences in terms of development or what type of community in which they would prefer to live; however, it is fairly easy for them to respond to images of various types of development and design. Recognizing that fact, the primary tool that the city has used to date is a process called a Visual Preference Survey "Symbol" (VPS "Symbol"), a technique which was developed by A. Nelessen Associates.[1] The VPS "Symbol" consists of a series of slides, depicting various land uses, transportation configurations, and design scenarios, which are formally ranked by citizens on standardized evaluation forms. The results are statistically defensible and can be used to identify how citizen's presently view their community and what they envision for its future.

There are several ways in which this survey can be accomplished. A professional facilitator, such as A. Nelessen Associates, Inc., can be brought into a neighborhood or community to conduct a visioning process or city staff and/or community leaders can coordinate the activities either in large community meetings or in a series of smaller meetings. The City of Johnson City chose to conduct this exercise with various groups representing diverse segments of the community, guaranteeing a broad spectrum of participation. Some of the groups who have participated in the VPS "Symbol" include Board and Commission members, city staff, PTA members, Board of Realtors, Homebuilders Association, environmental groups, neighborhood associations, high school and college students, and Chamber of Commerce members. To date, we have conducted over 650 surveys,

representing in excess of 1% of the city's population. It is our goal to conduct at least 1,000 surveys before formalizing the results.

A VISUAL TECHNOLOGY

The technique used in the VPS "Symbol" is to display images which depict different types of development and various aspects of a community. We have used slides from Johnson City and from around the United States and Canada that consist of every facet of the built community, including land uses such as single family, multi-family, commercial, industrial; different densities and levels of intensity; urban, suburban, and rural development; different types of street cross sections; automobile oriented and pedestrian oriented design; and urban design elements such as landscaping, signage, lighting, overhead wiring, street furniture, and architectural elements. Groups are shown a sequence of 80 slides and given 3 to 5 seconds to rank them from -10 to +10. They are instructed to rate the images they find desirable and appropriate for the city with positive scores and those that they find undesirable with negative scores. Neutral images are rated as or around zero. The results are compiled and a second meeting is scheduled to discuss the results of both that group and all of the groups surveyed.

At the follow-up meeting, the slides are shown in 40 pairs that depict basically the same type of land use, street function, building type, or density but with different aspects which cause one slide to generate a positive reaction and the other a negative rating. There is always a considerable amount of discussion as to what elements elicit a positive or negative reaction. This follow-up exercise alone is instrumental in the realization by citizens that the ways in which their community is developing is not always reflected in their preferences. It also brings an awareness of just how negatively certain "everyday" features are perceived by the public without there necessarily being an awareness of that reaction.

LOCAL vs. NON-LOCAL SCENES

One excellent example of this occurred at the follow-up meeting with a Chamber of Commerce Leadership Class. Two very similar views of a section of Interstate 181 were included in the survey with the only difference being that one contained a billboard, an element that most people now take for granted as a part of our landscape. When these slides were shown side-by-side and the rankings reported as -2.8 and +4.4, one of the participants commented that was certainly

a costly billboard in terms of first impressions for people traveling through Johnson City. Most of the participants seemed surprised that a single billboard could have that much influence on one's impression of the landscape. As a result, they will probably be much more aware of these elements in the city.

As noted above, we have been using both local and non-local slides and have developed some concerns about the use of familiar images. As a result of those concerns, we are eliminating many of the local slides in an effort to minimize reactions which are based on personal knowledge of or an emotional response to a specific location. For instance, one local slide that would have ranked much higher in another city, ranked very low with a group of local university students. When questioned about their rating, they indicated that they were responding to adjacent, run-down properties, which were not visible in the slide, and to unpleasant dealings with the business owner. Consequently, we feel that a more statistically accurate conclusion can be achieved with non-familiar images.

OUTCOMES

The results of this exercise and the preferences of the community are becoming apparent even though we intend to continue the survey for a limited amount of time. Images of older and more recent neighborhoods with narrower streets, shallower front yards, sidewalks, and street trees consistently rank higher than the automobile-oriented subdivisions with wide streets and driveways dominating the foreground that have generally been the rule for the last 40 or 50 years. The more urban commercial districts, such as older downtowns that have been restored or have remained healthy, rank much higher than strip commercial or mall development. One very consistent pattern is that images with landscaping are rated high even if the development is somewhat marginal. In general, almost all images of wide, high capacity streets generate negative responses while narrower streets with landscaping and boulevards are ranked much higher.

A common thread throughout the results seems to be that people prefer a sense of human scale and proportion, something we have lost in the design of our communities since World War II and which is becoming even more pronounced with the current trend in retailing of the "big box" retail and the "power centers." One very obvious problem which has become apparent is that many of the images that elicit a positive rating could not be built under current subdivision and zoning regulations. This is not unique to Johnson City, but is common to most communities in the United States.

The responses we are finding in Johnson City are consistent with those in other parts of the U.S. where the VPS "Symbol" has been conducted. According to Nelessen:

> A critical observation after tens of thousands have participated in the Visual Preference Survey™ "Symbol"...is that there is an intuitive and fundamental insight which directs people to desire a small community.[2]

As of January, 1994, A. Nelessen and Associates had conducted over 50,000 surveys of people with a wide range of backgrounds and demographic characteristics. From these surveys it is clear that, given a choice, these people prefer more traditional, smaller communities rather than the automobile-oriented sprawl they are experiencing.

As a result of growing concerns with current development patterns coupled with the results we are seeing from the VPS "Symbol," the Johnson City Regional Planning Commission and staff have embarked upon a major revision of the Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Code. The city is currently experiencing a surge of commercial and residential growth with increasing conflicts between the various land uses. We intend to utilize the results from the VPS "Symbol," among other things, to broaden the community dialogue and build consensus as we attempt to define the future development of Johnson City.

We have already begun to address some immediate problems which have become increasingly apparent as a result of this growth and have used the results of the survey to justify changes in our zoning code. Among other things, the city has adopted more stringent and more comprehensive landscaping requirements, has adopted a new zoning district which will permit mixed uses in a more traditional setting with higher development standards, and is considering a highway overlay district which will require higher design standards along high visibility corridors. We have also begun working with neighborhood groups who are experiencing traffic problems in terms of volume and speed and have already implemented traffic calming measures in one neighborhood.

It is our desire to provide, at a minimum, the opportunity for the type of development to occur for which our citizen's have indicated a preference. This is a lengthy and complex undertaking which will involve many segments of the community if it is to be successful. The Visual Preference Survey "Symbol" has been a valuable tool in initiating and facilitating the necessary community dialogue by allowing citizens to articulate preferences in an unintimidating way and providing an entertaining and thought-provoking means for them to express themselves.

NOTES

1 Visual Preference Survey "Symbol" and VPS "Symbol" are trademarks of A. Nelessen Associates, Princeton, New Jersey.

2 A. Nelessen, *Visions for a New American Dream* (Chicago: Planners Press, American Planning Association, 1994), 81.

■ 9 ■

The Presidential Election of 1992 in Appalachia's Urban Centers: A Research Note

Philip A. Grant, Jr.

On November 3, 1992, the American people participated in a historic presidential election. Unlike most previous presidential contests, a controversial Independent candidate, Ross Perot, attracted enormous publicity and played a meaningful role in the outcome of the election. When all the ballots were tabulated, the Democratic challenger, Bill Clinton, defeated Republican incumbent George Bush. Perot, while finishing third, managed to poll a respectable 19 percent of the popular vote.[1]

This note will analyze the 1992 presidential election in a selection of Appalachia's urban centers. For the purpose of this paper, Appalachia extends diagonally from the extreme northeastern corner of Pennsylvania to west central Alabama, including portions of 11 states. Only 12 percent of Appalachian counties are primarily urban in character, and less than one-fourth of these counties have communities with populations over 50,000. This research note will survey the 1992 presidential race in Appalachian counties containing cities with populations of more than 20,000.

In 1992, Governor Clinton carried Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Georgia, while President Bush prevailed in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Alabama. Except for Georgia, the victorious candidate won his respective states by substantial pluralities.

Counties in Virginia are excluded from this note. While southwestern Virginia is definitely within the confines of Appalachia, no communities have a population over 18,420. Two other Appalachian states, Georgia and Maryland, each have only two counties with cities of 20,000 or more inhabitants. In these two states, the Appalachian counties had no impact whatsoever on the result of

the 1992 election. In Georgia, Clinton's precariously narrow margin of 13,714 was due to a spectacular showing in the heavily Black Fifth Congressional District. The Fifth District, embracing Atlanta, provided Clinton with an emphatic 90,183 plurality. In Maryland, Clinton's 7,839 deficit in the two urban Appalachian counties proved to be completely irrelevant. Clinton carried Maryland by 281,477 votes and Baltimore by 145,028.

Tennessee was somewhat similar to Georgia. While Clinton carried Tennessee by 92,629 totes, his triumph was mostly attributable to his solid performance on the overwhelmingly Black Ninth Congressional District in Memphis. In the Ninth District, hundreds of miles west of Appalachia, Clinton vanquished Bush by 83,232 votes.

The most distinctly Republican states within Appalachia in 1992 were North Carolina, South Carolina, and Alabama. Bush's impressive showing bolstered his victories in the Appalachian urban centers. He won these states by an average of 77,305 votes. While Clinton carried the counties that included Asheville, Gadsden, and Florence, he lost 10 of the remaining 13 counties containing urban centers.

Defeating Bush in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky, Clinton exceeded his nationwide proportion in three of the four states. Moreover, Clinton outpolled Bush within the urban Appalachia counties in these four states.

Pennsylvania was one of Clinton's banner states in 1992. He carried six of the state's urban Appalachian counties, enhancing his political fortunes there. The Arkansas Governor won the counties containing Pittsburgh, McKeesport, Newcastle, Johnstown, State College, Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, and Hazelton. The final tally in these eight counties was:

Clinton	484,160	(49.8%)
Bush	318,428	(32.6%)
Perot	168,134	(17.6%)

In the Appalachian part of Pennsylvania, Clinton led Bush by 165,732 votes (17.2%).

As in Pennsylvania, Clinton emerged victorious in West Virginia—the only state located entirely within Appalachia. Clinton triumphed in six of seven urban counties losing only Wood County (Parkersburg) by a slim margin. The official West Virginia result was:

Clinton	118,823	(46.7%)
Bush	93,457	(39.6%)
Perot	41,008	(13.2%)

Inasmuch as Weirton, Wheeling, Morgantown, and Fairmont are all in close proximity to Pennsylvania, the outcome in West Virginia was particularly surprising.

In Ohio, Clinton was the victor in three of the five urban Appalachia counties. Clinton's pluralities were quite noteworthy in Jefferson and Athens Counties—both of which are contiguous to West Virginia. The Ohio electoral statistics were:

Clinton	71,236	(44.6%)
Bush	54,392	(34.4%)
Perot	33,191	(21.0%)

While Perot's showing was comparatively strong, Clinton succeeded in outpolling Bush by slightly more than 10 percent in Ohio's urban Appalachian counties.

Kentucky has only two urban counties within its Appalachian portion. Clinton carried Boyd County by a significant plurality but lost Madison County by roughly 700 votes. Like Virginia, Kentucky has very few Appalachian counties that constitute urban centers. In these states, Clinton won 16 of the 22 urban counties and accumulated 696,808 votes defeating Bush by an aggregate total of 233,925 ballots.

Also, Clinton received 163,732 of his 447,323 plurality (36.5%) from the eight urban Appalachian counties in Pennsylvania and 25,367 of the Democratic candidate's 89,027 plurality (26.5%) from the 7 urban Appalachian counties in West Virginia. In Ohio, Clinton's victorious margin of 16,844 votes in the 5 urban Appalachian counties amounted to 18.6 percent of his 90,632 plurality. And, in Kentucky, Clinton's proportion of 45.2 percent in the 2 urban Appalachian counties exceeded his statewide proportion of 44.6 percent.

Although the populous states of New York, Illinois, California, and Texas received considerable media attention, the urban counties scattered throughout Appalachia also exerted a modest amount of influence on the result of the 1992 Presidential Election. Then-Governor Clinton succeeded in carrying 7 of the 11 states within Appalachia and 16 of the 22 urban Appalachian counties.

NOTES

1 Figures have been compiled from the following sources: *Almanac of American Politics, 1994* (Washington: National Journal, 1993); *America Votes, 1992* (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1993); *Congressional Districts in the 1990s* (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1993); The Department of Commerce, *City and County Data Book, 1994* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1994); The Department of Commerce, *Census of Population, 1990: Virginia* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1992); *Guide to U.S. Elections* (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1994); *The National Journal*, November 7, 1992; *The New York Times*, November 7, 1992; *Politics in America, 1994* (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, 1993); and *The Washington Post*, November 4, 1992;.

▪ III ▪

Figuring It Out: Appalachians and Urban Institutions

▪ 10 ▪

Appalachian Migrants in Columbus, Ohio: A Personal Reflection

Peggy Calestro

Nearly 20 years ago, a friend and I obtained a grant to research and write a book for the Columbus Public School system. Although the book was a guide for teachers, its primary audience was the thousands of children of Appalachian heritage in the city's public schools.

The reasons for writing this book were several. First, nearly one-third of Franklin County residents are first-, second-, or third-generation Appalachian migrants. The focus of the book, then, was on the significant number of Appalachian students served by Columbus Public Schools. Incredibly, it was the first book for this population.

Second, it was clear that Appalachian students were not faring well in the system. School drop-out rates in identifiable Appalachian neighborhoods produced extremely high numbers and percentages which never made it into the school system's statistics because Appalachian students often did not persist beyond what was then called junior high school.

In addition, it was clear from our informal discussions with public school teachers that many were puzzled by the behavior of Appalachian students and their families, and the attitudes of a few indicated a serious lack of understanding of or interest in Appalachian cultural norms. We heard occasional but disturbing comments from some teachers: "Those Appalachian kids just can't play sports," or "These students would do better if they weren't absent so often." We also learned that most of the in-service training Columbus Public School teachers had received about Appalachia was limited to a few Jack Tales, photographs of quilts, or perhaps a tape of Jean Ritchie playing the dulcimer.

Finally, we wrote our book for students, in the hope that they would obtain a more accurate picture of the significant Appalachian

contributions to U.S. history and to our national culture, and therefore might feel better about themselves, their families, and their heritage. In short, the book was an attempt to sensitize a large and often impersonal school system to one of the unique populations it served.

During the course of writing *Appalachian Culture: A Guide for Students and Teachers*, we surveyed nearly 500 teachers in the Columbus Public Schools. Almost 75 percent of those surveyed believed their Appalachian students were "academically underprepared." Sixty percent said Appalachian children had a "negative self-image," and 75 percent found their Appalachian students to be "shy and withdrawn."

At the same time, most teachers readily expressed their fondness for Appalachian children and their families and seemed interested in helping them stay in and succeed in school. While we were writing our book, we presented preliminary research to a group of preschool educators in central Ohio, teachers who taught three-, four-, and pre-kindergarten five-year-olds.

What we heard amazed us. Not one of the teachers agreed with the survey results from public school teachers of older Appalachian children. Teachers in preschool settings did not find their students from Appalachian backgrounds to be shy or withdrawn. Instead of negative self-images, Appalachian children were reported to have very positive self-images. They actively participated in classroom activities, were extremely verbal, and showed no signs of reticence to speak up in class or on the playground.

The reports from these preschool teachers led us to a disturbing conclusion: something was happening to Appalachian children between the ages of five and twelve which caused many to pull inward, to become passive observers in the classroom, and, eventually, to drop out of school altogether. And whatever the cause of this radical change, it most probably occurred in public schools—the one common denominator among Appalachian children throughout the city.

Since then, we have posed several possible reasons for these discomforting changes in Appalachian children. The first and most obvious is that someone—perhaps classmates, unknowingly or with malice—had made fun of the way Appalachian children talk. Rather than confront these teasers or bullies the way children from other cultures might, Appalachian children withdraw—both from the conflict, and ultimately, from speaking out much in the classroom.

Another possible explanation is that children receive "messages" from schools which conflict with values they hear at home, primarily around the issue of attendance. Schools demand regular attendance and punctuality, which may interfere with family trips or obligations. Many teachers reported that Appalachian girls are often kept home from school to care for a sick mother, or that entire families go home

to the hills to attend to an ailing relative. While teachers expressed sympathy with these family responsibilities, many wished the students would attend more regularly so that they could master their subjects and get the good grades they were capable of making.

Appalachian advocates urge schools not to make policies which place the student in the middle between his or her family and the school (a battle the school will never win). On behalf of Columbus Public Schools, it would admittedly be difficult for the system to remain very flexible in its tardiness and absence policies for 60,000 students. Nevertheless, we suspect it is a source of much conflict for Appalachian children and, ultimately, will cause students to leave the system entirely.

A third possible reason for the disappearance of bright and spirited Appalachian preschoolers is that as they grown older, they become less and less like their classmates. Whereas other pre-teens and teenagers move toward affiliation with the peer group, Appalachian children generally do not. Ties to the family not only do not lessen, but in fact, responsibility to the family may increase as the child moves through elementary school.

Such differences are very visible to Appalachian children. Instead of participating in an informal after-school get-togethers with friends, they go home after school. Although they might get invited to a party, they cannot attend because their family goes back to the hills on the weekend. The peer group never really takes hold. After a while, the children make the conscious choice to be with their family.

Whatever the cause of this withdrawal into shyness or their reticence to participate in classroom discussions, it is particularly urban and geographically non-Appalachian. That is, these behavioral changes do not occur in children who spend their school years back in the Appalachian region.

Ironically, our book became available to the system the same year that Columbus Public Schools initiated court-ordered desegregation. Students who had been in neighborhood schools within identifiable Appalachian areas of the city were now spread throughout the system. With demand for educational materials on African Americans, school curriculum committees hurriedly assembled a wide range of appropriate texts and reading materials on African-American literature and history.

Once again, it seemed, the school system chose to ignore its Appalachian component. Children who were both African American and Appalachian learned much about their African-American heritage, but little, if anything, about their Appalachian culture.

During the last 15 years, I have coordinated a number of in-service training sessions on Appalachian culture for public school teachers, social service agencies, and health care providers. I've enjoyed these

sessions, which have lasted from an hour to an entire day. They give me an opportunity to inform people who work with Appalachian migrants in Columbus about the history of the region, to help them understand the cultural origins of Appalachian behavior, and to celebrate the significant contributions Appalachians have made to our national heritage.

How many of us learned in history classes, for instance, about the Mecklinberg Declaration, or the Wautauga Association, or the Battle of King's Mountain? How many history books tell the real story of broad-form deeds, absentee ownership, or the actions of mine-owners toward miners who wanted to unionize?

Or, moving to the subject of science in middle and high schools, did we learn that there are plants and ferns in the Appalachian region that exist nowhere else in the world? What about the natural history of trees and the economics of timber-mining in the region? Wouldn't the chemical effects of stripmining be an interesting science project? What about so-called reclamation?

When we think of Appalachian content in public school curricula, we tend to think of music and folk-tales, with an emphasis on the oral tradition. But the possibilities of integrating Appalachian content into public school curricula are endless, and opportunities present themselves in every subject area.

Often after these training sessions, participants with Appalachian backgrounds will come forward to tell me that learning the history of the region has helped them understand their own behavior and the behavior of their families. Sometimes teachers or social workers will tell me that they still "go back home," even though the family may not have lived back in the Appalachian region for two generations. Most important, many urban Appalachians tell me they now feel better about themselves, which was the whole point of the exercise.

However good such individual conversations are, Columbus has not made much progress in the area of Appalachian awareness or advocacy. Very few Appalachian migrants who live here even identify with the term Appalachian. When questioned about their family origins, some will name a particular county in central Appalachia (the major source of migrants to Columbus), but most have no familiarity with the term Appalachian or prefer not to be labeled "from the hills."

Several years ago, in a conversation with an Ohio State professor, I gained a real insight into the ambivalence Appalachians have about their background. I had been delighted to learn he was from Letcher County, and expressed my interest in his being Appalachian. He told me in no uncertain terms that his family had never mined coal and were not, therefore, Appalachian.

Similarly, my friends who come from one of the 28 Appalachian counties of southeastern Ohio would much prefer to be called

"Ohioans" rather than "Appalachians." Appalachian migrants who have moved from their initial ports of entry into supposed nonAppalachian neighborhoods in Columbus, or into the suburbs of Franklin County, have told me they used to practice speaking so they could eliminate any traces of their regional accent.

I continue to volunteer in a predominantly Appalachian neighborhood in Columbus, where I work with teenagers. The director of the community agency for which I volunteer told me recently that he estimated 60 percent of neighborhood kids had dropped out of school by the ninth grade.

Housing conditions in this urban Appalachian neighborhood are very bad. The cold in the winter and the heat in the summer are unbearable. Lots of teenage girls have babies and no husbands, even though many choose not to apply for public assistance (both an admirable and poignant example of Appalachian pride).

If I could, I would bundle these urban Appalachian migrants up and drive them back to the hills to live. And I'd stay right there with them.

▪ 11 ▪

Pushed Out the Door: An Intergenerational Study of Early School Leaving among Appalachians

Patricia Ziegel Timm

Why is the early school-leaving rate in older, Appalachian neighborhoods so high? And, specifically, what circumstances surround the early school-leaving decisions of generations of urban Appalachian girls and women? I use *early school leaving* to refer to the departure from school of students who have not completed graduation requirements. School district officials and census data analysts use the term "dropout," but "dropout" is often understood to imply either personal and academic failure or recalcitrant behavior. I have chosen to use the term "early school leaving" to suggest a deliberate action, rather than a consequent one.

The Urban Appalachian Council has estimated that 67 percent of Appalachians in the inner-city neighborhoods of Cincinnati lack a high school diploma. When class and race are accounted for, low-income white women are the group most likely to leave early.[1] Little is known about why urban Appalachian women leave school early in such large numbers. Many of them are members of families who have lived for several generations in inner-city neighborhoods where deteriorating housing conditions, low wages, and minimal public and private investment prevail. Residence in the inner-city and minority group status in society raise questions of whether social class and neighborhood conditions present a barrier to the school success of urban Appalachian women.

Neighborhood is entangled with ethnicity and class, but it is also differentiated from these other constructs. It is a shared physical and social space where people are subjected to common experience and where they are at least loosely connected in common institutions. This raises the question of whether neighborhood quality of life—including both human interaction and physical prosperity—has an

association with educational attainment.

I collected and analyzed data in an Appalachian neighborhood over a five-year period. To learn as much as possible about the context in which Appalachian women made school-leaving decisions, I conducted lengthy interviews, collecting data from 50 families. I learned a lot about childrearing practices, family activities, and personal achievements. With the participants I reconstructed family trees, and listened to stories of growing up close to aunts and uncles, grandparents, cousins and other kin. I was interested in both their educational histories and their efforts to support the school experiences of their children. These interviews indicated that family ties and kinship networks largely shape the commitments of residents in the study neighborhood.

I spoke with kin-sets of women—mothers, daughters, grandmothers, aunts, cousins, and sisters—using their pattern of intergenerational interaction to learn more about their school experiences. Three mothers gathered their children, their siblings, and their parents and I listened in while they talked with one another about school. In this chapter I am going to discuss their school experiences in the context of three theoretical explanations for early school leaving: replication theory, neighborhood effects, and cultural dissonance.

REPLICATION

Proponents of replication theory hold that children will replicate the effort of their parents. I considered whether the early school leaving of study participants could be explained by the educational attainment of their parents. I found that school completion among the neighborhood residents is not related to the educational attainment of the preceding generation. The women in the study left school earlier than their parents, and their children are persisting in their educational efforts longer than they did.

NEIGHBORHOOD AND POVERTY

Is there a relationship between the educational attainment of a person and that of other residents of a neighborhood where he or she resides? I considered the significance of "neighborhood" and found evidence that there is a neighborhood effect on school completion. When residents moved away from the study neighborhood and raised their children in other neighborhoods, their children attained higher levels of education. Less than 15 percent of second-generation study

participants completed graduation requirements. It appears that the length of residency in the neighborhood adversely affected school completion.

In a national study of the association of neighborhood and both teen-aged pregnancy and school dropouts, one researcher found that in neighborhoods where only four percent of the adults held professional and management jobs the cases of early pregnancies and school dropouts increased dramatically.[2] I believe that there is a neighborhood effect on school-leaving phenomena.

Another factor closely associated with neighborhood effect is that of poverty. The economic conditions that challenged each generation of families came into play in school-leaving decisions. When the Depression set in the 1930s, families couldn't afford clothes or food, and young people left school to go to work when their fathers lost their jobs. One mother explained how, after they got their feet back on the ground after the Depression, their home was handy and the neighborhood kids stopped by after school for a bowl of soup before baseball practice:

> Their soup and all was sittin' on the table when they walked in. Everyday was soup day. The soup pot don't stretch that far no more.

Family needs have influenced the choices that young people make about early school leaving. The pull of family responsibilities is a fact of life for low-income people. School leaving was often directly related to the need to care for sick family members. The households of the study neighborhood, like those of the Appalachian region, usually include both parents and often include a single aunt or uncle, a widowed parent, or orphaned cousin. Additional relatives frequently live in adjacent or nearby households. Seventy-two percent of the 50 families interviewed reported that they have relatives in the neighborhood. During these interviews neighbors and kin frequently passed through, checking on someone, exchanging money or food, or just to visit. Extended kinship networks and friendship ties are the principle means by which the study participants get social support.

Another impact of poverty in inner-city neighborhoods is that community institutions are eroding and disappearing. In the past, social support systems extended beyond the family to social service centers, churches, recreation centers, shops, and places of work. In the study neighborhood merchants have fled to malls, industry to lower-taxed ex-urban land, churches to central city and suburban areas. Social agencies have consolidated and public services like recreation facilities and employment assistance centers have centralized and relocated outside of the neighborhood. Older, inner-city schools have been shut down, or are closed to neighborhood residents in order to

house magnet schools for alternative programs. Three neighborhood schools in the study area were closed in the late 1970s, two public and one parochial.

One of the study women talked about her fondness for the neighborhood elementary school:

> I can remember first grade. I could not do Ss right. So one of the kids that could do Ss right, gets up to the black board and shows you. The class didn't go on until every kid mastered that thing. That was the nicest part. Nowadays, if the kid is doing bad, the teacher will not help that kid at all. At the elementary school you had everybody from the neighborhood. So you were all doing the same thing, and you were all together. So you know, you just did it. And it was fun. You helped one another out with the stuff you didn't know. And then we went to the middle school, and that was like nobody cared whether you were there or not. We did not start skipping school until we were bussed out of our neighborhood.

When the children in this study were assigned to schools outside the neighborhood, there was a dramatic decline in attendance. The issues are multiple:

- Children may be uncomfortable away from home and family.
- They may be insecure in competition with youth from other neighborhoods.
- Parents have difficulty monitoring school attendance and performance.
- Struggling parents lack the opportunity to engage in their children's education.

In addition, when children reached the age where they were assigned to schools outside of their neighborhood, they made multiple school moves—trying one, moving out of the district to try something better, and back when the move was not able to be sustained. Most neighborhood youngsters have made intra-district and urban-to-rural and back to the city moves. Many of these children have fallen behind a grade level. School assignments to distant locations disregard family units and neighborhood communities which provide familiarity, access, and continuity.

CULTURAL DISSONANCE

Cultural dissonance theory holds that the skills, strengths, and values of minority and poor children are maladaptive in schools operated by middle-class representatives. The home and the school are the two primary spheres of a child's social life. In families children are treated as special persons, in schools they are members of a class; in families children have a significance in the present, in schools their status is future-oriented.[3] Schools are organized into large, complex units—both school sites and classrooms. Appalachians are accustomed to intense and close family units that work cooperatively to provide for every family member across generations.

Middle-class schools assume that a student's primary allegiance is to school; Appalachians will almost always place their first allegiance to family and kin. When school responsibilities conflict with family responsibilities, family will come first. The pull of family interfered with the school progress of many of the women of my study. Some had to take care of sick relatives, others had to help support their families. Many become parents and take on the responsibilities of raising children.

The school climate can be a source of strain for students. Social scientists and educators hold that the quality of relationships that adults in schools develop with students is instrumental in establishing the bonds that connect the students to the school.[4] On the other hand, many teachers, especially high school teachers, consider it essential to create a social distance between themselves and their students, asserting that this distance is important to help students "grow up" and become "independent."

School staffs often hold stereotypical views of low-income parents, based on their assumptions about poverty and family structure. This view has led middle-class teachers to view their students as culturally deprived and their parents as uncaring and ignorant of the value of education. Students report being called derogatory names based on their Appalachian heritage or the poverty conditions prevalent in the neighborhoods they come from. One of the women in my study contrasted two of her teachers:

> [The first, in elementary school was] really nice, a down to earth person. She didn't hold any prejudices against you...I was in—[she names her neighborhood]—that's the slums you know. The teachers at the middle school didn't want to bother with you. We had one that called us "River Rats." He said we'd never amount to nothing because of where we came from. He hated everyone from our neighborhood. He said it right out.

The prevailing assumption of many school staff is that Appalachian parents are not able to provide adequately for their children, do not care about the education of their children, and are unresponsive to school officials' attempts to get them involved.[5]

Most of the women in the study reported the negative effect of teacher attitudes toward them, and toward their neighborhood and cultural origins. One mother reported that the school administrators were not the best:

> You know, they had attitudes. I always thought that when you had a problem, you went into your assistant principal or your counselor to talk to 'em about it. That they were there to help you. Instead, you know we usually always got pushed out the door.

Virtually everyone in the study made references to their belief that the school's attitude "made you so that you don't care."

When Appalachian parents make efforts to support their children's school experience, they find that school bureaucracies require skill and persistence to negotiate. All three of the families in the kin-set conversations reported many efforts made by the women to intervene at the schools on behalf of their children. They became increasingly frustrated with school practices, reporting countless incidents when they went to school seeking to understand their children's academic and behavioral difficulties. After enduring long waits to get an administrator's time, they reported they had to go to even greater lengths to get their attention. One mother told about trying to get her ten year old daughter into summer school after the child had failed the fourth grade:

> You'd think they would be begging kids to get in summer school. I took her to summer school the first day. They kept her in the office all day. I went back. He said "No. She couldn't get in. You missed the deadline." I said that was the school's fault. They did not send papers home, and I'd already straightened that out with downtown. And I had to go back downtown. They knew I was coming by the time I got there. I was so mad. I would still be there, if they would not have put her in summer school.

Appalachian parents report teachers' and administrators' attempts to intimidate them. Professional elitism fosters the perception of parents as an intrusion rather than a resource. When schools are not able to reassure these families that they respect their wisdom and understanding of what is good for their children, home-school relationships are strained and home-school partnerships are impossible.

Appalachian parents usually do not seek to participate in curriculum and pedagogical decisions. They generally believe that teachers are responsible for education and best able to help their children learn. Their criticisms of the school and their efforts to be involved often center on non-academic matters. They believe that they know their children best and can help schools understand their children's behavior. But, they have seldom been invited into collaborative school planning and problem solving, so they do not share a sense of ownership of the school improvement efforts that have been undertaken. Their expertise as parents has not been recognized and valued.

Another conflict between middle-class institutions and Appalachian families is expressed in school goals. Schools are future-oriented and status-oriented. Participation assumes that one is preparing for a future and that one's place in that future is of importance. Residents of inner-city Appalachian neighborhoods look suspiciously on attitudes of self importance associated with education or income.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies that seek to extend and improve the educational experiences of urban Appalachian students will address the educational, recreation, health, and job training needs of community residents. Administrators, officials, and community leaders who set educational policy must focus on the complex needs of children and youth, and must understand them as members of a family and a community. In low-income and minority communities, the extended kinship network and family ties of neighborhood residents provide a foundation on which effective and relevant social institutions are constructed.

Family members must be participants in the full spectrum of school-based activities: program planning, discipline, governance, and tutoring. Parents and school professionals must share the responsibility for the school success of neighborhood youngsters. Schools need to reflect a climate of caring that reinforces the values of cooperation and responsibility (for self and others) that are central to family and community life. School programs need to follow student interests and enthusiasms, providing a pathway to acquiring skills and knowledge that lead the student to vocational goals and adult competencies. In such a setting, I believe, Appalachian youth will flourish and sustain the long-term efforts needed to acquire skills for adult life. Society will benefit from their educational persistence.

NOTES

1 M. Fine and N. Zane, "Bein' Wrapped Too Tight: When Low-Income Women Drop Out of High School," in *Dropouts from School: Issues, Dilemmas, and Solutions*, edited by L. Weis, E. Farrar, and H. G. Petrie (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1989).

2 J. Crane, "The Epidemic Theory of Ghettos and Neighborhood Effects on Dropping Out and Teenage Child-Bearing," *American Journal of Sociology* 96 (5): 1226–59.

3 S. L. Lightfoot, *Worlds Apart* (New York: Basic Books, 1978).

4 G. Wehlage, "Dropping Out: Can Schools Be Expected To Prevent It?" in *Dropouts from School: Issues, Dilemmas, and Solutions*, edited by L. Weis, E. Farrar, and H. G. Petrie (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1989).

5 Pat Timm with Michael E. Maloney, "Appalachian Students, Parents and Culture as Viewed by Their Teachers," *Urban Appalachian Advocate* 1 (February 1990). *The Advocate* is published irregularly by the Urban Appalachian Council in Cincinnati. This article was a synopsis of B. A. Starnes's work.

▪ 12 ▪

Using Modeling Theory To Increase the Technical Efficacy of Appalachian Women

M. Darcy O'Quinn and Shelby Roberts

Some college students are avoiding taking mathematics and science courses because they fear they do not have the potential to succeed. This is particularly true for women from the coalfields.[1] Removing the psychological barriers to these courses, then, is an important goal for an Appalachian college that enrolls a large number of female students.

This study describes a program designed to increase the technical efficacy of women students at one four-year Appalachian college. Specific questions addressed include: Do Appalachian women avoid technical programs more that their non-Appalachian counterparts? Will an intervention program based on modeling theory increase the technical efficacy of Appalachian women? Is modeling most effective when the model and the learner are the same gender? What resources are necessary to help Appalachian women succeed in higher-education technical programs?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The career goals of Appalachian women from the coal fields might be restricted by an absence of mentors who model the positive consequences of pursuing courses or careers based on mathematics or science. Role learning would be immensely time consuming if every behavior had to be enacted for the learner to experience its effects. People rarely learn roles they have never seen performed by others.[2] Role learning is achieved when the learner has the opportunity to observe over time and symbolically organize and rehearse the modeled behavior. Learners, however, do not enact all roles. Instead,

according to the theory, roles that are rewarded rather than punished would be more readily enacted.

From the learning theory model, Appalachian women who have the opportunity to observe models with rewarding technical careers, and who are rewarded by such models for imitative behaviors, will show greater interest in technical careers than Appalachian women who were not exposed to such role models.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on mentoring in higher education is conflicting and changing. For example, some theorists argue that mentors and proteges should be matched as to ethnicity and gender. Others, however, say that such a match is not necessary.[3] The duration of the mentor-protege relationship also raises questions. Levinson suggests in *The Seasons of a Man's Life* that the mentoring relationship lasts from two to ten years.[4] But Johnson, writing about undergraduate mentoring programs, describes the duration of the mentor relationship as about one year.[5] Still others say that a single encounter can constitute a mentoring relationship. In regard to the age difference between mentor and protege, Levinson notes that the mentor is usually eight to fifteen years older that the protege. Phillips-Jones,[6] however, discounts the importance of the age difference variable and uses the putative success of undergraduate peer mentors to substantiate the argument.

Even the notion of the reward system is debated in the literature. Some researchers describe mentors as selfless contributors to the personal growth of their proteges. Others recognize that both mentor and protege benefit from the relationship.

In sum, research on mentoring is in a developmental stage. Possibly, a clear and consistent description of characteristics of the mentoring relationship is lacking because the term mentoring might be used in many different ways. And while a standard operational definition of mentoring is missing and clear outcomes of mentor programs are yet to be found, mentoring on college campuses is growing in popularity.

METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive methods to explain the effectiveness of an intervention program based on modeling theory. To determine whether Appalachian women avoid technical programs, surveys were conducted. The effectiveness of an intervention program was

measured using in-depth interviews, observations, and telephone surveys. The resources necessary to help students succeed in technical careers were assessed by conducting in-depth interviews.

THE SAMPLE

This study was conducted at Clinch Valley College, a small four-year liberal arts college in the heart of Appalachia. Between 1992 and 1994, students who were enrolled in statistics, experimental psychology and research methods in the Social and Behavioral Sciences department were invited to participate in this study. A total of 24 students participated; all were psychology or psychology-sociology majors.

This study tried to answer the following questions:

- Do Appalachian female students avoid technical programs more than their non-Appalachian counterparts?
- Will an intervention program based on modeling theory increase the technical efficacy of Appalachian college women?
- Is modeling most effective when the model and the protege are the same gender?
- What resources are necessary to help Appalachian women succeed in technical programs?

Question 1: Do Appalachian women avoid technical programs more than non-Appalachian women?

To answer this question, surveys using both open and close-ended questions were mailed to a sample of four-year colleges in Virginia, Oklahoma, New York, and California. Results were desegregated by gender and geographical region. Findings support the notion that women, more than men, feel they can not handle technical programs. However, there was no evidence that Appalachian women feared such a curriculum more that non-Appalachian women. For example, a greater proportion of Appalachian women expressed an interest in science courses than did non-Appalachian women. However, few Appalachian women complete post-graduate programs in either science or mathematics.

Question 2: Will an intervention program based on modeling theory increase the technical efficacy of Appalachian college women?

The mentoring program had several different aspects. First, students contacted professors and experts who had worked with mentor programs at other colleges and asked for advice regarding the development of a mentor program at Clinch Valley College. Second, students contacted professionals with technical careers in the community and invited them to mentor freshmen. Third, students presented the program to freshmen and new transfer students during Spring and Fall orientation. Fourth, mentors and students were formally matched. That is, students were matched with a professional in the community in a career of interest to the student. Fifth, students invited speakers to the campus to describe to interested students what is like to be a physician, a psychiatrist, an attorney, an engineer, an engineer, and so on. Sixth, experts with national reputations in research agreed to come to the college to meet with students for a cultural exchange.

Finally, students met on a weekly basis with a faculty advisor to discuss modeling theory and plan program activities. During weekly meetings, the instructor encouraged students to assume responsibility for the mentoring projects, to cooperate with classmates, to express and believe in their own ideas, and to try new and challenging tasks.

The success of the program depends on which aspect of the intervention program is being considered. Formally matching students with professionals in the community was not successful. Students on the average, failed to pursue mentoring opportunities once they were matched with a professional. Students are more comfortable with less formal mentoring relationships that spontaneously develop as a result of mutual interests, values, and goals.

However, the process of asking professionals in the community to be mentors did have a notable impact on students. Students expressed that they were initially intimidated but overcame these feelings as a result of the kindness and support demonstrated by the professionals. From this experience, students learned that the so-called professional were more similar to them than they expected.

Face-to-face interviews and telephone surveys were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the weekly meetings. The majority of respondents (87%) indicated that the weekly meetings, which included ongoing contact with the instructor and periodic contact with professionals from the community and other colleges, increased their self-confidence and their ability to deal with different kinds of people. They also said they learned that others had lives similar to their own.

Note that students said that their self-confidence in general increased. They did not specify that their confidence in technical areas increased. However, students did express a new willingness to enroll in college-level mathematics. But this interest in college-level mathematics was qualified in that most students wanted reassurance that the mathematics instructor would be sensitive to their feelings of inadequacy.

Question 3: Is modeling most effective when the model and protege are the same gender?

This program was open to all research students in the social and behavioral sciences department at Clinch Valley College. The faculty advisor for the program was a woman who taught research, statistics, and experimental psychology. While a college student, this faculty advisor was a single working mother with three children.

In response to invitations to join the mentor program, a total of 24 students participated. All 24 students were women; no men joined the program. Further, the students who modeled the faculty advisor tended to be nontraditional students. As a result of this observation, it is suggested that gender matching might facilitate a mentoring relationship.

Question 4: What resources are necessary to help Appalachian women succeed in technical programs?

Findings suggest three resources that are critical to Appalachian women. First, there must be faculty who are sensitive to the feelings of technical inadequacy that these women experience. During the interview process, students told horror stories about their previous experiences in technical classes such as mathematics, science, and computer science courses. In a time when skills in these areas are critical to the financial independence of Appalachian women, students complained that teachers often ignored or ridiculed them.

Second, there must be nontraditional educational formats such as distance-learning programs and weekend graduate programs to meet the special educational needs of Appalachian women. The women in this study are bound to this area by their culture, histories, and extended families. And yet, while nontraditional educational opportunities flourish in more urban areas, few are available to women in Southwest Virginia.

Third, several women in this program researched sources of financial support for graduate education. Students found, while

foundations provide financial opportunities for minorities around the world, Appalachian women are not provided access to these opportunities. All of the women in this study indicated that they could not further their education without such support.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Over a six-month period, the 24 psychology or psychology/ sociology majors were exposed to a variety of mentors. As a result of weekly meetings with a faculty mentor, students expressed that their confidence increased especially in terms of their ability to express themselves and deal with other people. This was accomplished by:

- creating a safe environment where the women felt their self-esteem would not be damaged;
- providing positive feedback;
- giving students the opportunity to interact with professionals from technical areas who were supportive and nonjudgemental;
- demonstrating genuine concern for the students; and
- encouraging students to discover their abilities by trying new and challenging things.

However, raising self-confidence in terms of interacting and dealing with different types of people did not generalize to enhancing technical efficacy. The women in this sample continued to doubt themselves in these areas. To succeed in technical areas, Appalachian women need faculty who know how to teach mathematics, science, or computer technology to women who suffer from an inner sense of inadequacy in technical areas.

NOTES

1 H. Lewis, "Coal Miners' Peer Groups and Family Roles," paper presented at the American Anthropological Association, San Diego, 1970.

2 A. Bandura, "Self-Efficiency: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change," *Psychological Review* 84 (1977): 191–215.

3 Meznek, McGretam, and Garcia (1989); Moes (1989); Pounds (1987); Rowe (1989); referenced in "Mentoring and Undergraduate Academic Success: A Literature Review," *Review of Educational Research* 61 (1991): 505–32.

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5 C. S. Johnson, "Mentoring Programs," in *The Freshman Year Experience: Helping Students Survive and Succeed in College,* edited by M. L. Upcraft and J. Gardner (Englewood NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989), 118–28.

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Counseling Appalachian Clients

Terry Delaney

Generally speaking, people of Appalachian heritage are not visually recognizable as such. This is due, in part, to the fact that many cultures have blended into this one; Irish, African, Scottish, Native American, German, and others. This reality can be confusing when seen from a "purist" perspective in regard to culture.

There is also a "cultural denial," which may or may not be a conscious, cognitive process, found in many Appalachians as a result of educational, media, and so-called "humorous" degradation of the culture itself. This degradation of the culture is clearly seen in the acceptance of the stereotyping of Appalachians in the movie "The Beverly Hillbillies" and the cartoon character Snuffy Smith. It would not be acceptable for any other culture to be presented in such a manner. Attempts at humor which degrade Appalachians remain the only "politically correct" and socially acceptable "bashing" of a culture. Many stereotypes are not only accepted and taught but are also actually proliferated in formal education settings, for example, by negative references to "rednecks."

Therefore, it is quite common for clients, and even counselors, for that matter, to deny or at least not openly identify themselves as Appalachian. This leads to the need for appropriate questions regarding cultural background in an intake interview or assessment.

Counselors should remember that cultural traits exist on a continuum; they will be seen in varying degrees in individuals and families. The degree to which these traits are visible is impacted by:

- length of time, possibly generations, away from the region and its influences

- socio-economic pressures to "blend" in with the predominant culture
- strength of identification with the culture

CULTURAL ISSUES

A counselor's awareness of cultural issues is essential. Teaching clients their heritage is generally contra-indicated unless it is necessary to attain goals of the treatment plan. When that is the case, the type of work to be done around cultural issues should be clearly stated and defined as an objective in the client's treatment plan. A balance must be maintained in any setting and especially in a therapeutic setting, between the realization of cultural traits and the identity of the individual. This greatly reduces the probability of prejudice and stereotyping. For example, stoicism and extremely brief response, i.e., "yep" or "nope" is a characteristic of the southern mountain man. There are also some Appalachian men who will "spin yarns till the cows come home." Upon exposure to several of the first "type," the counselor must not yield to the temptation to believe that Appalachian men are difficult or resistant clients who will not open up in counseling sessions.

Identification with the client, first and foremost, as a person is extremely important in working with Appalachians. Discuss the client's role as a family man, spiritual, or religious man, or even discuss hunting or fishing, if they happen to be of interest to this individual, and, once a level of trust is established on a one-to-one basis, the male Appalachian client can be as open as any.

Primarily due to communication styles and language usage, many have, in the past, considered Appalachians "dumb." Those believing in this stereotype may find the following comments of interest:

> West Virginia U. has had 16 Rhodes Scholars, so has the U. of Chicago, North Carolina topped that by one. Duke has had twelve, Pennsylvania eleven, Kentucky and Tulane nine, John Hopkins eight, Indiana seven, Northwestern six and so on....in terms of the most exclusive and prestigious scholarship of all—the Rhodes Scholarship—West Virginia University rates very well indeed.[1]

Some have learned not to trust through their experiences with logging, paper, coal, and other industries. This lack of trust is magnified greatly when they are dealing with systems such as medical, educational, and social services. Be it true or not, the fear is that many of these systems are going to remove members of the

family, especially the children from the home. In some cases, this ends up being true and the lack of trust is strongly reinforced. The perspective offered is to realize that what you are seeing, in most cases, is caution rather than resistance.

COMMUNICATION STYLES

In many Appalachian families the eldest female present serves as the spokesperson. This is not to say that the eldest female is necessarily the decision maker. She is traditionally the archivist of the spoken family history. She will provide the most information and with the most reliable accuracy in an interview. It is generally expedient, when interviewing a family or several members of a family, to direct questions to "Ma-maw" (or the eldest female present) and let her answer. Insisting that a truant son or a substance-abusing uncle answer the questions themselves, while ignoring the eldest female, will not endear the counselor to an Appalachian family. Counselors can avoid making cultural or gender stereotyping—the "hen-pecked husband who can't get a word in edgewise" or the female who "rules the roost"—by being aware of this cultural communication style within families.

Another gender-related cultural trait is the reality that a single female will rarely, if ever, come alone to a session with a male counselor. This is not a lack of trust nor an indictment of a counselor's ethics; it is simply not proper for a single woman to be alone with a man who is not well known by the family. This is one example of the very strong moral values found in the Appalachian culture. The simple resolution to this dilemma is to invite the client to bring her mother, friend, or daughter along for the session. This setting, with one or more support persons present, lends itself to a much more fruitful session for several reasons. The two will, many times, give more information and, usually, quite different perspectives on the issues being discussed. There is also the case where the support person present will most often provide a method of confronting denial (minimalization and rationalization) which is much more acceptable to the client.

DIALECT

When a client from a different country who speaks little or no English comes into a counseling setting, everything possible is done to provide a method of understanding (interpreters, patient listening, repeating back what is said to verify correct interpretation, etc.).

However, if the person is from "our country" and they speak a different language, they are many times met with frustration and anger directed at the client. This communication "glitch" is even perceived, at times, as an intentional attempt to confuse or complicate the process. In the case of Appalachian clients, most of the colloquialisms or "quaint" verbiage are easily explained.

The most important aspect of language is vocabulary and the definition of words used in that language. Crew relates the following example of communication complications caused by different definitions of the same word:

> Many of the questions on the interview were Lykert-type items ranging from "very much" to "very little" or "very good" to "very poor." The problem was that in the colloquial language of the region, the word "very" apparently has an idiomatic usage, which is closer to what we mean by "fairly" or even "poorly." For instance, if you inquired about someone's health and they responded that they were doing "very well," they do not mean that their health is excellent, but quite the contrary, that they are just getting along.[2]

Dial reports other examples:

> Words like *a-studying* and *a-working* are verbal nouns and go back to Anglo-Saxon times; and from the 1300s on, people who studied about something, deliberated or reflected on it. *Nigh* is the old word for near, and *weary* was the pronunciation of worry in the 1300s and 1400s. The Scots also used this pronunciation. *Reckon* was current in Tudor England in the sense of consider or suppose. *Hit* is the Old English third person singular neuter pronoun for it and has come ringing down through the centuries for over a thousand years. All those multiple negatives were perfectly proper until some English mathematician in the eighteenth century decided that two negatives make a positive instead of simply intensifying the negative quality of some statement. Shakespeare loved to use them. *Ye* was once used accusatively, and *man* has been employed since early times to mean husband.[3]

These examples show the tracing of various cultures blending together into a rich and time honored "new language," if you will. It is the responsibility of the counselor to overcome any hurdles language differences bring to the counseling relationship. Rather than perceive the client as deficient in language, the more ethical approach is to simply identify the language gaps and bridge them. This is another opportunity to "meet the client where the client is."

Another issue in communication to be dealt with is accent or pronunciation. Again, Dial provides some insight:

> Pronunciation of many words has changed considerably, too. *Deef,* for deaf, *heered* for heard, *afeared* for afraid, *cowcumber* for cucumber, *bammy* for balmy, *holp* for helped, are a very few. Several distinct characteristics of Elizabeth's day are still preserved. Words that had *oi* in them were given a long *i* pronunciation: *pizen, jine, bile, pint,* and so on. Words with *er* were frequently pronounced as if the letters were *ar*: *sarvice, sartin, narvous.* It is from this time that we get our pronunciation of sergeant and the word varsity which is a clipping of the word university given the *ar* sound. Another Elizabethan characteristic was the substitution of the *i* sound for the *e* sound. You hear this tendency today when people say *miny, kittle, Chist, git,* and so on. It has caused such confusion with the words pen and pin (which our people pronounce alike as pin) that they are regularly accompanied by a qualifying word—stick pin for the pin and ink pin for the pen.[4]

Some understanding of the cultural influence involved in pronunciation differences should reduce the chance of prejudging someone as being poorly educated or "dumb," when they are merely using the linguistics they were born and raised with. This understanding may also lend itself to a little more patience in the work involved to facilitate communication between oneself and a client in counseling sessions.

ISSUES OF TIME

The issues around time are major ones. When a client doesn't show for sessions, or is consistently late for sessions, it is traditionally viewed as resistance to the process or inability to deal with major issues. These perspectives change when we look at cultures with an agricultural origin and consider a view of time possibly quite different than our industrialized perspective. Time to "agriculture-based" cultures flows; one event occurs after another is finished.

The seasons are a good example. Summer doesn't consider beginning until Spring has completed her tasks. The industrialized notion of dividing time for the function of measurement sets a date for Spring to leave us and Summer to be present. This concept of division and setting a date is quite foreign to these seasons and they rarely keep the appointments as mandated. We seem to be quite accepting of the seasons being late.

The translation of this metaphor to human behavior is not a very far reach at all. When a counseling session is set for 2:30 pm on Tuesday, an Appalachian client will most readily agree to be in the office at that time. (Appalachians are concerned with making sure the relationship, at this moment, is without discord and, out of politeness

and respect, will, indeed, plan to meet with you when your schedule dictates). When Tuesday rolls around, and they are tending to family, or other business, the automatic, non-cognitive, behavioral decision is to finish what they are doing before beginning what is next. Once that task is completed and they realize that it is past 2:30 pm, out of discomfort and embarrassment, they will most likely not arrive at the office. Misperceptions of this behavior can not only lend themselves to mistaken judgment about the client, but can even bring some counselors to inappropriate questioning their own professional ability and the quality of their rapport with clients.

If the setting is conducive, the most appropriate method to deal with this differential in time perception is to be more open regarding the setting of appointments with Appalachian clients. Replacing the 2:30 pm session with a statement that you "will be here for them Tuesday afternoon" will most likely provide a much higher compliance rate.

If the setting is not conducive to this approach—for example, a probation setting or a very busy counseling center where counselors have little say in their schedules—take the time to explain the reasons for the tight schedule. Identify with the client by stating that although it is a demanding schedule that you may not have control over, it is necessary. This will most likely induce increased cooperation rather than resistance.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

Many times it is difficult to discern a cultural trait from an economic necessity or a trait of a poverty-based group of people. There are a significant number of human behaviors which originate solely because of financial need. Appalachians may be the original recyclers. In the mountains, some folks throw nothing away because it can be used again, or parts can be used (not to mention the fact that there is no place to "throw it away"). Appliances in the yard were due to this fact, old whitewashed tires as flower borders or planters were no problem at all in the country. These same behaviors are generally not accepted well by neighbors in an urban setting. The same may well be true of composting, depending on the direction of the winds, both meteorological and political.

The last stereotype to be discussed here is an extremely sensitive one. There is a devastating and completely inaccurate belief that "incest is rampant in Appalachian families." This is totally unsubstantiated. In over 10 years of research through both literature search and intense questioning of anyone who has referenced this false belief, there has not been one statistically significant study brought to

the fore to support this statement. The continuation of this falsehood is seen in social service agencies, educational settings, and abhorrent attempts at humor.

The first obligation, on our part, in counseling, or any other profession, is to not damage our clients or customers of service and education. Continuing unsubstantiated beliefs such as this one, with the overwhelming amount of damage it does to individuals, families, and an entire culture, is well beyond the concept of unethical.

It has been said that the only difference between a lie and a story is that a lie is told to hide something and a story is told to share something. The same may also be true of the difference between stereotypes and cultural traits. It is the stereotypes that do severe damage to the stereotyped group as well as the person or system which perpetuates them and cultural traits build and strengthen both in the clear understanding of them.

In consideration of this concept, a new set of perspectives of the Appalachian culture and its strong and admirable traits can only build a counseling atmosphere of respect and openness which in itself will be more conducive to a healing atmosphere for all involved in the process.

NOTES

1 Ruel E. Foster, "West Virginia Hasn't Been Short On Brains—The Myth of West Virginia Lame Brains," in *Mountain Memories* IV, edited by J. Dennis Deitz (South Charleston WV: Mountain Memories Books, 1985), 157–58.

2 K. Crew, "How Much is 'Very'?," in *The Practice of Social Research,* edited by E. Babbie (Belmont CA: Wadsworth, 1986), 225.

3 Wylene P. Dial, "The Dialect of the Appalachian People," *West Virginia History* 30 (January 1969): 124.

4 Ibid., 125.

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Hard Times: Appalachians in the Ohio State Prison System

Jerry Holloway, Phillip J. Obermiller, and Norman Rose

Twenty-nine of Ohio's eighty-eight counties lie in the Appalachian region, and the presence of urban Appalachians living in Ohio cities outside of the federally defined region is well documented.[1] While the demographic aspects of general prison surveys typically account for race, Appalachian inmates are missed in such analyses.[2] Likewise, research on ethnic groups within the Ohio prison population has, to date, not covered Appalachian inmates.[3]

Although stereotypes of criminal behavior abound, little is actually known about the extent to which Appalachians comprise Ohio's growing prison population, which now exceeds 40,341 inmates.

This study, authorized by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, had the following research goals: 1) to determine the number of Appalachians in the state prison system; 2) to determine if Appalachian inmates have characteristics that set them apart from the general prison population; and 3) to recommend programs to meet any specific Appalachian needs identified by the research.

METHODOLOGY

A short survey instrument was developed, pre-tested, refined, and administered to a random sample (N = 1,150) of the state's entire inmate population. The survey was designed to identify African-American, Appalachian white, and other non-Appalachian and non-African American inmates.

The survey instrument was distributed to the 26 penal institutions operating in Ohio in March 1994. Copies of the instrument along with the names and numbers of the inmates selected for the sample

were sent to local prison officials. Prisoners selected for the survey were called out of the general population and asked if they would agree to participate in the study. Those agreeing to participate filled out the survey form in a prison classroom where pens and pencils were provided.

Of the 1,150 forms distributed, 510 (44.3%) were returned; it is assumed that the balance were refused by inmates. Upon examination of the responses, an additional 70 were rejected by the research team as unusable due to missing data (most of these forms contained nothing more than the inmate's name or number). The final number of usable responses then totaled 440, 38.3% of the forms distributed.

An inmate was coded as Appalachian if the respondent was born in one of the 399 federally defined Appalachian counties, or if the respondent had at least one parent or grandparent who was born in one of those counties. The research team took a conservative approach to the coding; in cases of uncertainty or ambiguity, the respondent was coded as non-Appalachian or unusable, depending on particular circumstances.

Respondents from Ohio's three women's prisons were coded as female. Respondents who identified themselves as "African-American" or "black" were coded as such; a similar approach was used for inmates who identified themselves as "Indian" or "Native American."

Once the ethnicity of the respondents was established through the survey, other characteristics were adduced through the inmates' "pockets" or official files. Information on education, prior employment, or in-prison history, for instance, came from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction databank.

As a test of reliability, key demographic figures from the survey were compared with existing data on the prison population compiled by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. For example, non-Appalachian females represented 7 percent of the sample, while females made up 6.2 percent of the entire prison population at the time of the survey. The percentages of non-Appalachian blacks and whites in the sample were 65 and 35, respectively, while the percentages of these groups in the total prison population were 55 and 45. When the predominantly white Appalachian population is added into the sample figure, the resulting racial distribution (51% black and 49% white) more closely resembles the distribution for the whole inmate population. Based on these and similar tests, we believe that the survey data represent the entire population within an acceptably narrow margin of error.

FINDINGS

The survey indicates a nearly exact one-third - two-thirds division within the prison population: 153 (35%) of the respondents are Appalachian, while 287 (65%) of those surveyed are non-Appalachian. Of the 153 Appalachian respondents, 58 (38%) were first-generation, that is, born in the Appalachian region; 79 (52%) were second generation, those having at least one parent born in the region; and 16 (11%) were third-generation, those having at least one grandparent born in the region. These figures indicate a large representation of first- and second-generation Appalachians among Ohio inmates. The first two generations represent 90 percent of Ohio's Appalachian inmate population, and about a third of all the prisoners in the state.

The Appalachian inmates do not have deep roots in Ohio. Although the great majority were born in the state, only seven percent of those surveyed had parents or grandparents who were also born there. A large proportion (62%) of Appalachian inmates in Ohio's prisons have family roots in Central Appalachia, a subregion that includes West Virginia and the eastern portions of Kentucky and Tennessee.

Analysis of the data from a geographic perspective show that 105 (69%) of the Appalachian respondents were born in Ohio. Eighteen of Ohio's twenty-nine Appalachian counties were represented among the Appalachian inmate population, with no county having a particularly heavy concentration. Appalachian inmates in the sample come from cities clustered around Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, and, to a lesser extent, Akron. By contrast, the non-Appalachian population in the sample come from places as diverse as California, Georgia, Alabama, and Jamaica.

In our survey of the entire prison population one out of four respondents were black Appalachians, with most being second-generation. The largest number of these inmates have their roots in West Virginia, followed by those from Alabama. This is consistent with the large number of non-Appalachian blacks in the inmate population who are also from Alabama. Finally, 13 Appalachian respondents described themselves as being of mixed ethnicity: white and Indian (9); black and Indian (1); black and Puerto Rican (1); and black, white, and Indian (1).

Slightly more than one in every 10 Appalachian respondents were women with nearly equal distributions in the first two generations. One third of the female respondents were black Appalachians. While nearly 10 percent of the Appalachian inmate population were women, only 7 percent of the non-Appalachian population were women.

The distribution of prison assignments among Ohio Appalachian inmates indicates that no particular pattern or clustering exists.

However, some institutions such as Chillicothe, Lorain, Madison, Orient, and Ross appear to have somewhat denser concentrations of Appalachian inmates. None of Ohio's "theme" prisons (for example, institutions for elderly males or for the mentally ill) appear to house large proportions of Appalachian inmates.

Many inmates are imprisoned for more than one offense. Out of the 851 crimes committed by the survey respondents, Appalachians were responsible for 301, or 35 percent, in keeping with their proportion of the total inmate population (35%). Offenses can be broken down by specific types: crimes against persons, crimes against property, sex crimes, violent crimes, non-violent crimes, and drug abuse. In every category but two, the Appalachian inmates varied only plus or minus 3 percent from the expected 35 percent. Appalachians in the Ohio prison system committed fewer drug-related offenses (20%) than expected, and slightly more (40%) sex crimes.

Prisoners often are isolated or segregated from the general prison population, either for additional punishment or for their own protection. The Appalachian respondents did not experience isolation at any higher rate than non-Appalachians. About 30 percent of both groups had at one point or another been placed in isolation. Second-generation Appalachians (33%) are much more likely to have been placed in isolation than either of the other two generations (26% for first, 25% for third), and are slightly more likely to have experienced isolation than the non-Appalachian group (31%).

Many inmates reported an occupation prior to being imprisoned. Their occupations can be categorized broadly as service, professional, technical, student, and other. Compared to non-Appalachians, Appalachians predominated in the service (68% vs. 62%) and technical (2.6% vs. .5%) categories. Non-Appalachians predominated in the professional (13% vs. 8%) and the student (3% vs. 1.5%) categories. Nearly two of every ten respondents did not have pre-incarceration employment. These individuals were receiving social security, unemployment or welfare benefits, or described themselves in unrepresentative street terms.

In the majority of cases, both Appalachians (50%) and non-Appalachians (45%) in the sample serve between one and four years. This is consistent with the experience of the general Ohio prison population, two-thirds of whom come in with a definite sentence,that is, they must serve exactly three or exactly four years. However, Appalachians are disproportionately represented among those serving sentences between five and nine years in length.

Appalachian inmates are better educated than both the non-Appalachians in the sample and the general prison population. When average Test of Adult Basic Education scores are compared for reading, math, and language skills, Appalachians consistently, if not signifi-

cantly, outscore inmates in the non-Appalachian inmate cohort. This finding must be tempered by the fact that average educational attainment is very low among both Appalachians and non-Appalachians throughout the Ohio prison system.

Ohio Prison Industries (OPI) emulate outside employment opportunities; the program trains inmates to produce over 150 items, from furniture to clothing. OPI workers are required to have a high school education, and the jobs are considered highly desirable among inmates because they pay more than the other types of work available to the general population. Appalachians (10%) are more likely to be found in OPI slots than the non-Appalachians in the sample (8%) or the general prison population (7%). The highest concentration of OPI workers within the Appalachian cohort are first-generation Appalachians.

DISCUSSION

The survey results indicate a large representation of first- and second-generation Appalachians among Ohio inmates. The first and second generations represent 90 percent of Ohio's Appalachian inmate population and about a third of all the prisoners in the state system.

Two-thirds of the Appalachian prisoners are native Ohioans and are more likely to come from the more urbanized areas of the state. One out of every four Appalachian inmates is a black Appalachian, with most of these being second-generation. Women and African-Americans have a higher than expected representation among incarcerated Appalachians.

Although often labeled as violent, Appalachians were not imprisoned for disproportionate numbers of violent crimes. Their low rate of convictions for drug-related offenses may indicate that while drug abuse may be spreading in some segments of the Appalachian community, drug trafficking is still not considered acceptable. More focused research is needed to understand this phenomenon, along with the slightly elevated rate of convictions for sex-related crimes among Appalachians.

Incidents leading to isolation seem to have the same relative frequency among both Appalachian and non-Appalachian inmates. Appalachian inmates do not seem to experience the effects of negative discrimination by prison staff in this area.

Some Appalachians in the Ohio prison system appear to turn their blue-collar occupational experience and slightly higher educational attainment (a high school diploma) to their advantage when competing for the select jobs offered by Ohio Prison Industries. This may

change, however, as first-generation Appalachians dwindle in number.

CONCLUSION

About one third of Ohio's prison inmates are from Appalachian counties, with the vast majority of these prisoners being either first- or second-generation Appalachians. Because an accurate state-wide census of Appalachians does not exist, this study could draw no conclusions on whether Appalachians are over- or underrepresented in Ohio's inmate population,

The study does establish, however, baseline data to assist the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction in its staff training program by clearly identifying the size, distribution, and characteristics of this cultural subgroup within the state's incarcerated population. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Training Academy might find it useful to educate Department employees about Appalachian culture, making them aware how this heritage manifests itself in the behavior of Appalachian inmates. The pretest interviews used to construct the survey instrument also suggest that deeper insight on the Appalachian inmate population may be gained by switching from quantitative to qualitative research methods, that is, exchanging large-scale surveys for in-depth interviews. Given the large percentage of inmates of Appalachian heritage in Ohio's prison system, further study leading to a better understanding of Appalachian inmates is warranted.

NOTES

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Working with Appalachian Men in Prison: A Personal Reflection

Rose B. Dwight

As an advocate for Appalachians, especially urban Appalachians, I have conducted educational training and made presentations to thousands of people in Ohio. Participants have ranged from second graders to graduate students—in both social work and library science—to fourth-year residents in psychiatry. Recently, I added prison inmates to this list.

In February 1994, a drug and alcohol counselor at a nearby medium-security prison asked me to organize a support group for incarcerated Appalachian men. Similar to most penal institutions, there were numerous programs for inmates, but there was nothing specifically for Appalachians. The goal was simply to offer men from similar cultural backgrounds a regular time to meet and talk. In particular, we were interested in helping these young men, ages 20 to 30, rediscover the positive and strong Appalachian heritage that we have in common.

Counselors, physicians, and psychologists working in rehabilitation programs had frequently complained to me that, while Appalachian men were great listeners, they were usually unable or unwilling to talk about their personal concerns in a group setting. For example, in Alcoholics Anonymous groups of 35, Appalachian men simply wouldn't talk. But my experience with the inmates was quite different.

BEGINNING TO TALK

To my great surprise and delight, 15 men showed up at the appointed time for our first meeting. I began the session by sharing

with the group that I was from West Virginia and that my experience was that most people who have roots in the mountains have values and ways of thinking in common. And then the men began to talk. Soon six and seven at a time were talking all at once; the discussion proceeded at an intense, non-stop pace for two hours. When time was up, the men were eager to meet again, and we have continued to meet every two weeks since.

Since the goal was to create opportunities for the men to talk about their common concerns and reconnect them to our strong Appalachian values, we loosely planned each session around specific value-related themes such as self-reliance, belief in tradition, family loyalty, and strong personal relations. To set the theme for each session and get discussion started, I used a variety of media.

CULTURAL THEMES

We watched a videotape of a CNN program about John Michael Montgomery, a country singer from Eastern Kentucky who was very popular with the inmates. The taped program illustrated the importance of family loyalty during adversity.

"The Box," a new song by Randy Travis, launched a discussion about how we feel about family and how difficult it is for many Appalachian men to express their feelings. For this session, I developed a take-away worksheet to help guide the men in recalling feelings connected to events in their lives. Items on the worksheet included:

- Describe a time when a person, a place, and an event made you really happy—on top of the world.
- Describe a situation when you know someone took advantage of you and you felt used.
- How did it feel when the tables were turned and you did the same thing to someone else, for example, a woman, teacher, parent, friend?
- What situation(s) make you scared?
- When have you felt jealous?
- When did you last feel proud of what you did?
- Describe some times when you felt hurt. How did you respond—anger, tears, or...?
- Can you remember a time when you got all worked up and then later wondered why you had gotten so hot and bothered over something so trivial? Describe the feeling.

Choices, a book of short stories by George Ella Lyon, has been a valuable resource. The story "Getting Away from It All" illustrates beautifully the gender role issues faced by Appalachian men and women. "Trucking," a story about Appalachian men and their trucks, moved the men in the group to share stories—and even photographs they had with them in prison— of their own trucks.

"Readin' Writin' and Route 23," an older Dwight Yokum song, reacquainted the men with the story of the great migration from the mountains to industrial cities in the North. Many had fond memories of their grandparents waiting up for them when the family would go home to the mountains for the weekend.

With permission from the group, I invited a local minister who is an Appalachian and a recovering alcoholic as a special guest at one session. The men really responded to his story of recovery; as soon as he left, they wondered when he could come back for another visit. Other future guests will include a Sexual Abuse Resource Prevention Coordinator from Planned Parenthood and an Appalachian social worker who is an expert on domestic violence.

DOWN HOME CELEBRATIONS

In addition to serious discussions, we have used special events for celebrations. The designation of May as Appalachian Month gave us the opportunity to bring in traditional Appalachian desserts such as stack cakes and fried pies. The men listened to country music and played cards and a game called TaKaRiDi. We celebrated Country Music Month in October with fried chicken, pinto beans and biscuits, cheesecake, and blackberry pie. The Warden of the prison was our guest for the event and we reviewed our goals for him. He was so impressed with the program and the men's morale that he recommended more celebrations.

After the Warden left, one of the men made a passing comment that a beer would sure taste good. I immediately responded by asking how a beer could make this celebration better—had we not had a thoroughly enjoyable time with much laughter, music, comradery, and good food? With irony in his voice, one man quickly answered, "Well, if we had some beer, by now we'd all be fightin' and pukin'!" It seemed that for many in the group, this had been their only experience of having a good time without alcohol.

"Christmas in Appalachia" was equally well-received. We celebrated with Kentucky Burgoo (with chicken, beef, and pork, not, alas, squirrel, deer, and rabbit), cornbread, buttermilk biscuits, two cheesecakes, and an apple butter and black walnut cake. We watched a videotape of a Reba McIntire TV special and then discussed how

hard prison is during the holidays. I reminded them that depression, anger, and disappointment are common feelings at Christmas time. I also reminded them of the deep sense of community we had created in our Appalachian group, making it a real family during the time in prison. I emphasized that we had to look out for each other and see if someone needs support.

A MEDIA EVENT

In November 1994, I was chosen one of Dayton's Top Ten Women for my Appalachian advocacy work. Folks from far and wide were fascinated with the prison "Appalachian Men's Group" and the local ABC TV affiliate asked to interview the men. When the TV crew arrived at the prison on a Sunday morning, all the men had fresh haircuts, their beards were gone, and their prison clothing was starched and freshly pressed. As the reporter interviewed the men, the camera carefully panned their faces. With the cameras still rolling, the men surprised me with a homemade thank you card for spending time with them. Off-camera, the reporter was so touched by the moment that she wept.

After the taping, there was plenty of time for the men to contact their families and tell them to watch for them on the evening news broadcast. We were the feature story—extremely well done—on the news. One of the men reported that three members of his family had taped the segment!

These prisoners exhibit many of the characteristics that I and many other Appalachians hold dear: having a sense of humor in the face of adversity, keeping in touch with their children, "making-do" in various ways, working hard, and showing respect for others. And they have certainly dispelled one negative stereotype of Appalachians—for the last 14 months, their housing unit has been chosen the cleanest in the prison!

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A Tale Worth Telling: Appalachians in Fact and Fiction

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The Appalachian Migratory Experience in Literature

Danny L. Miller

In "A Brief Bibliographic Essay on Urban Appalachians" in the seminal 1977 survey issue of *Appalachian Journal*, Phillip Obermiller made a brief reference to the fictional literature depicting the urban Appalachian experience.

> Two novels found to be quite effective in communicating the Appalachian migrant experience are Harriette Arnow's *The Dollmaker* and Gurney Norman's *Divine Right's Trip*.[1]

Two novels. This suggests that there is very little literature about the urban Appalachian population. And, certainly, while the existence of the genre of Appalachian Literature is no longer debatable, there has been very little if any recognition of the literature of urban Appalachians, the "invisible minority." *The Dollmaker*,[2] best known as a television special, is a notable exception.

In actuality, the experiences of mountain people living in towns and cities where they come in contact with city folks—the experience of Appalachian migrants in the city—is a distinctive fictional genre; there are many works which depict country people moving to town. Fiction about Appalachian migrants is a genre with a long history. As early as the 1870s, when the Appalachian mountain people became subjects for local colorists, there were stories which dealt with Appalachians leaving the mountains for the more "civilized" cities and towns of the "lowlands."

This literary genre is so well established that it is replete with recurring themes, among them, naturally, several entrenched in the pastoral tradition with its concomitant rural/urban oppositions. Some of these themes are: the city is corrupt and corrupts; the city is a place

of opportunities for advancement; the mountaineers lose touch with nature and all the positive things it stands for when they move to the city; the city dwellers' prejudice against the "hillbillies." There is, not surprisingly, an ambiguity involved in the experience of the Appalachian migrant. On the one hand, there is the sense that the mountaineers lose by leaving the mountains—they lose touch with themselves, their values, those things which have made them noble. On the other hand, there is implied a desire for "escape" which suggests that the mountain world is limited and the city offers more. In this chapter, I wish to survey some of the works dealing with the Appalachian migratory experience and the themes found in them.

THE LOCAL COLOR PERIOD

It was in the works of Mary Noailles Murfree during the local color period in literature following the Civil War that the mountain people first gained full stature as literary characters. In "Drifting Down Lost Creek"[3] (first printed in *The Atlantic Monthly* (1884) and then in Murfree's collection *In the Tennessee Mountains*), Murfree depicted one of the first Appalachian migrant heroes. Vander Price saved his retarded brother's life by confessing to a crime which the brother committed; Vander is sent to a prison in the lowlands. While in prison, Vander pursues iron working which he has only dreamed of in the mountains. When he is released from prison, he stays in town to continue his metal work. He marries a town woman. As perhaps the prototype of the Appalachian migrant, Vander changes dramatically —and negatively—from the man he was in the mountains:

> His ambitions were still hot within him, but they were worldly ambitions now....He had changed greatly: he had become nervous, anxious, concentrated....[4]

Vander's return to the mountains after ten years in the "outside world" is described: "[H]e often turned and surveyed the vast landscape with a hard, callous glance of worldly utility. He saw only weather signs. The language of the mountains had become a dead language."[5] Vander wanted to "escape" from the mountains but, as Murfree suggests, he has lost much in the process. Vander's "worldliness" is implicitly negative. The nobility he showed by taking the blame for his brother's crime has been replaced by worldly utility and an inability to feel the language of the mountains. Thus, even in one of the earliest works in which an Appalachian moves to the city, there is the implicit theme of the city's power to rob migrants of part of their humanity.

The local colorists often presented the stereotype of a woman who longed to flee the harsh life of the mountains. Perhaps the very first of these was Janet Rainsford in Elizabeth Haven Appleton's "A Half-Life and Half A Life."[6] Janet, a young woman from the Big Sandy area of Eastern Kentucky, loathes her dreary life and longs to "better" herself. After falling in love with a sophisticated outsider, George Hammond, who has come to the area to set up a lumber mill, but learning that he intends to marry a woman of his own class, Janet courageously leaves the hills and goes alone to Cincinnati (one of the major havens of the last century for migrating Appalachians) where she becomes a school teacher. Janet reveals her optimism about the future when she says that she was wrong to lack "faith in that world wherein [she had] found help and comfort [Cincinnati]."[7] Elizabeth Haven Appleton was herself an educator and from 1855 through 1875 she educated more than 400 girls in Cincinnati in her private school, Appleton's.

Lodusky Dunbar, in Frances Hodgson Burnett's "Lodusky,"[8] is another one of these women. "Dusk" is a beautiful temptress from the North Carolina mountains near Asheville whose greatest desire is to get out of the mountains: "'I've allers wanted to go away,' she said. 'I—I've allers said I would. I want to go to a city somewhar....'"[9] Paul Lennox, a sophisticated artist, breaks his engagement to Rebecca Noble and promises to take Dusk away. Eventually, however, he realizes that he has merely been seduced by her beauty. He leaves the mountains without her but with her threat that he will see her again. Two years later, in Paris, Lennox sees Lodusky as she makes a stunning entrance at the Opera House. She has "escaped."

Sometimes, as in Burnett's "Esmeralda,"[10] mountaineers are forced to leave the mountains against their will and long to return. Esmeralda's father has become rich as the result of the discovery of iron on his North Carolina mountain property. His wife suddenly becomes ambitious and takes the family to Paris where both Esmeralda and her father are miserable. Esmeralda was engaged to be married just a week before the iron was discovered, but afterwards her mother refused to allow Esmeralda to marry the mountaineer Wash. Wash, however, follows the family to Paris, is reunited with Esmeralda, and together they return to the mountains.

In Julia Schayer's "Molly,"[11] the city's destructive power is emphasized. Molly, Sandy, and their new baby live pleasantly in the West Virginia mountains. But Molly is haunted by memories of her brief stay in Richmond. When Sandy asks her if she has "'done hankering arter the city,'" Molly replies, "'What makes ye keep a-harpin' on that, Sandy? I aint hankered arter the city—not for a long time....Nothin' could ever tempt *me* to go to the city again. I hate it!'"[12] Into their newly peaceful world comes Dick Staples, a man who

had known Molly in Richmond. Dick has an "evil" and "cruel" countenance and is a sinister threat to Molly's peace. To escape his advances and his knowledge of her past, Molly kills Dick. Sandy discovers her past "sins" and leaves her. When he eventually returns to forgive Molly, it is too late; she dies just as he returns. "Molly" is based on the premise, which Harriette Arnow later articulates in *Hunter's Horn*,[13] that the city is a sinful place where dangers lurk, "a place of deep mystery, unknown and exciting, full of the dark dangers people said city life held for girls."[14]

These stories were continued in several novels in the early decades of the twentieth century in which mountain people leave the mountains and move to towns and cities where they are "civilized" by their contact with the "more cultured" outside world. In John Fox, Jr.'s *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*,[15] for example, the mountain girl June Tolliver leaves the mountains to become "cultured" enough to marry the outsider, Jack Hale. Later, June even goes to New York. Ironically, in a twist on the typical plot, when June returns to the mountains she appears more sophisticated than Jack, but they eventually are married.

In Fox's *The Heart of the Hills*,[16] two mountain characters leave the mountains. Jason Hawn and his cousin Mavis Hawn leave the Kentucky "rhododendron" for the "Blue-grass" of Lexington where they both attend Transylvania University. Jason becomes a football star. But Jason and Mavis both suffer the stigma of being mountaineers and find it impossible to bridge the great "chasm" that separates them from the aristocratic Bluegrass cousins Gray and Marjorie Pendleton, to whom they are romantically attracted throughout much of the book. Both Jason and Mavis come to the awareness that Fox attributes to Mavis: "Through eyes that had gained a new vision in the Blue-grass Mavis had long ago come to see herself as she was seen there."[17] Jason and Mavis eventually return to the mountains and are married. In almost all of these works, the implicit contrast between country and city shows the virtues and values of the country people to be superior to those of the city where materialism, snobbery, and corruption are frequently the rule.

THE FIRST URBAN APPALACHIAN NOVELS

The city's power to destroy something in the mountaineers is likewise depicted in the proletarian novels of the 1930s, perhaps the first works that could really be designated "urban Appalachian." In these novels, mountain people leave the mountains and go to lowland towns where they join the poorest ranks of working people. Among these novels are Grace Lumpkin's *To Make My Bread*,[18] Olive Tilford

Dargan's (Fielding Burke's) *Call Home the Heart*[19] and *A Stone Came Rolling*,[20] and Sherwood Anderson's *Kit Brandon*.[21] In describing *Kit Brandon*, Cratis Williams, Appalachia's preeminent scholar of literature, sums up the general features of these novels:

> Although [the mountaineers] are dominated by Scotch-Irish character, possess pioneer virtues, and cling tightly to their old fashioned individualism in their native coves and hollows, in the mills they are poor whites selling themselves as cheap and unskilled laborers to factories which have moved down from the North to "lap up the cheap labor of hillbillies." The mountain people are forced by circumstances to abandon their denuded acres, load their shabby belongings, their numerous children, and their slovenly wives into their creaking wagons and drive down to some mill town where the children go to work and the husband, too old for work in the mill, sits "at home with the fat wife."[22]

In Lumpkin's *To Make My Bread*, the McClure family, driven from their lands by lumber companies entering the South Mountains of North Carolina, go to the Piedmont textile town of Leesville (Gastonia). The novel shows the disintegration of the family as a result of their exploitation by the textile industry. Gastonia, North Carolina—as Winbury—is also the setting for Dargan's *Call Home the Heart*, a Marxist novel of social propaganda. These two novels describe the experience of the Appalachian as migrant who, as Williams says, is depicted as either "an angry worker protesting against exploitation by greedy capitalists, or a poor white either sinking into awful degradation or poisoning the gentle society into which he has sneaked."[23] Williams concludes that these books (he also includes Dubose Heyward's *Angel*,[24] Fox's *The Heart of the Hills*, and Arnow's *The Dollmaker*) should be "on the list of required reading for the social worker who seeks to understand the problems of the mountain migrants in adjusting to civilization in contemporary America."[25]

CONTEMPORARY URBAN APPALACHIAN NOVELS

It was not until the 1940s, however, that the urban Appalachian experience as we know it today really began. Beginning in the late 1930s, the country experienced the Great Migration of Appalachians from the mountains to the industrial cities of the North and Midwest, where they encountered the "modern" problems often written about by sociologists and historians.

According to Clyde B. McCoy and James S. Brown,[26] between 1940 and 1970 more than 3-million people migrated from the Appalachian region. In the 1950s, there were 1.5-million migrants, the majority

leaving from Eastern Kentucky and West Virginia. Kentucky's Appalachian region lost a third of its total population in the 1950s. More than half of the migration from Southern Appalachia from 1940 to 1950 was from West Virginia and Eastern Kentucky. These people left for economic and social reasons and flocked to the midwestern metropolises closest to them: Cincinnati, Dayton, Hamilton, Columbus, Cleveland, Akron, Canton, Indianapolis, Detroit, and Chicago. Cincinnati and a large area surrounding it was one of the major cities to which these migrants came, partly because it was the nearest large city to Eastern Kentucky and was closely linked to that region by highways. These migrants began arriving as early as the 1930s and by the millions from 1940–1970; by the 1990s at least two generations have been born in Cincinnati. One-fourth of Cincinnati's population has been estimated to be of Appalachian origin.

One of the first novels—if not the first—to describe this urban Appalachian experience is Harriette Arnow's *The Dollmaker*, published in 1954. It focuses on the Nevels family and their move from the rural Kentucky hills to Detroit during World War II. Over two-thirds of the novel concerns the experiences of the newly arrived "immigrant" family as they struggle, some more successfully than others, to adjust to life in the city and relinquish their hopes of returning home. Clovis Nevels and two of his children, Clytie and Enoch, are quickly assimilated. They learn how to use the new-fangled appliances, how to buy on time, and how to beat the system. Perhaps symbolically, Clytie and Enoch become avid fans of the radio, its soap operas and "The Lone Ranger." Reuben, the oldest son, cannot adjust and runs away back home to Kentucky, feeling betrayed most of all by his mother whom he sees as having given up her dreams. Cassie, the youngest daughter, is a victim of the city, killed when her legs are severed by a train.

Gertie, the wife and mother, has a much harder time adjusting. Perhaps Gertie never does adjust, although in the novel's climactic scene she prepares to help her family survive in the city by making and selling wood carvings while Clovis is out of work. The novel's ending is ambiguous and has been interpreted variously. Some critics see Gertie's destruction of her wood carving as the defeat of her dreams and artistic aspirations; others see it as a victory and a triumph of spirit which could have only occurred in the urban setting, a new environment for Gertie. Harriette Arnow has suggested a positive ending of the novel and the city's salutary influence on Gertie:

> You see, at home, Gertie loved the land, wanted a farm, and she could do the work and wanted to stay there, but she was not exactly accepted there, especially by her mother....But when she reached the alley in Detroit, she found all manner of people. She herself might be called "hillbilly" and the children might fight, but they all fought—but she

> became part of the conglomeration of people and in a sense she was more at home—I say only in a sense—she knew more kindness from her neighbors when she was in trouble....[27]

Gertie's ambivalence about the city may reflect Arnow's own attitude.

> I grew up within hearing of train and steamboat whistles [at Burnside, Kentucky], and most of the time I looked toward the world of which they spoke—Nashville, Cincinnati, Detroit, Louisville, Chicago. That world had taken most of my people and would I knew in time take me; it offered most.[28]

Arnow decidedly paints some of the positive aspects of the country and the negative aspects of the city in *The Dollmaker* (some critics see the country as the Garden of Eden versus the city as hell). Nevertheless, she also shows the negative aspects of country life (not enough work to support a family, not being close enough to medical attention, the strictures of narrow-minded fundamentalist religion) and the positive aspects of city life, specifically the involvement in a larger community.

The Dollmaker is obviously partly based on Harriette Arnow's own experiences. A native of the hill country of east-central Kentucky, she lived in Cincinnati from 1934 through 1939 and was well aware of the lure that the city held for struggling men in the hills during the Depression and later beginnings of WW II. She, her husband Harold, and their children lived in a Detroit housing project during WW II.

Several of Arnow's other works show an awareness of the Appalachian migratory experience. In *Hunter's Horn*, her second novel published in 1949, Cincinnati is seen as both a dream and a nightmare. It is viewed by some of the mountain people, such as Suse Ballew and Lureenie Cramer, as a place where one could escape from the poverty and restrictions of country life (in the same vein as the earlier stories of "escape"). However, the realities of life for those who follow their dreams are often harsh and frightening. Lureenie Cramer is obsessed with getting away from the hills. She eventually realizes her dream. Her husband, Rans, leaves the hills and gets work in Cincinnati, then sends for Lureenie and their children. In one of her first letters back home, Lureenie tells about "the two furnished rooms and how nice it was to have the electric and be able to go to the store every day and have different things to eat, but how Bill, the biggest child, cried to come back home so that he could have some place to play."[29] This is the first hint of Lureenie's (and especially her children's) isolation and loneliness, despite the material conveniences of the city.

Later Rans and Lureenie have a falling out and she returns to the hills. Admitting that her dream was flawed, Lureenie describes her stay in Cincinnati, as a hillbilly migrant, fearful, isolated, looking out on a wall:

> "In that furnished room they was nothen but what they called a gas plate—two burners—all a body could do was boil an fry, two things at onct....That furnished room now, it was in a house on a hill, a real steep hill, but the house was low down on the side, not high, an they'd made a wall tween the upstairs uv the house an the hill, and my winder looked agin this wall."[30]

Lureenie is "walled in" in the city and describes Cincinnati as being "smoky-like an foggy."[31] In Cincinnati, Lureenie has bought a radio, a symbol of her escape from the Kentucky hills, but when she returns back home she has no batteries for it, symbolic of her failed dream. Following the failure of her dream of escape and her disillusionment, Lureenie dies of starvation, madness, and childbirth in one of the novel's most tragic scenes.

Arnow's short story "Fra Lippi and Me"[32] and an unpublished manuscript "Sugar Tree Holler"[33] also describe the lives of rural Kentuckians living in Cincinnati. In the former, Arnow drew on her own experiences as a waitress at Cincinnati's Woman's Exchange. The latter is a highly autobiographical account of Arnow's courtship by her husband, their employment by the WPA Federal Writers Project in Cincinnati, and their marriage.

POST-MIGRATORY NOVELS

Harriette Arnow was the chief interpreter of the Appalachian immigrant experience. In later years, beginning in the mid-1960s, many novels centered on the assimilated migrants—not the immigrants—but their children who were born and reared in the city. In many of these works, as in most ethnic literature dealing with the second- and third-generations of immigrants (such as Chicano or Asian-American literature), the question of identity is of major importance, as is relationship to the traditional culture—pride or shame in one's past, the dualness of being part of an "other" ethnic group as well as part of the "mainstream."

Ruth Wolff's novel focusing on second generation urban Appalachians, *A Crack in the Sidewalk*,[34] is the story of Linsey Templeton, 13 at the beginning of the novel, who has to grow up and learn about life. Ruth Wolff was born in Northern Kentucky and died in 1982 at Ft. Thomas, Kentucky. She attended Newport (KY) High

School, Sullins College (Bristol, TN), and Western College (Oxford, OH). None of the reviews referred to the novel's characters as hillbillies living in the city or as urban Appalachians. For example:

> ...The Templeton family, poor but proud, are crowded into a three-room apartment in the wrong part of town where grass has long ago given way to pavement. It is a loving family though the strict Bible-reading father keeps his six children on a tight rein and considers almost every relaxation but music sinful. Most important of the children are: Kevy, the oldest daughter, whose beauty brings both opportunity and temptation; little Pleas, whose handicap is sometimes an embarrassment; and Linsey, the narrator, whose years from thirteen to nineteen cover struggles and joys in the family. Linsey might be considered a dropout but her lovely, though untrained, voice and her intimate knowledge of folksongs and mountain ballads offer hope for her future. Many older girls will thoroughly enjoy this unpretentious novel.[35]

Linsey lives with her parents, Andy and Gwen, and her siblings, sisters Kevy and Arlie and brothers Pem, Jody, and Pleas. The family has moved north from Eastern Kentucky to Brockton (Newport), just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati. They live over a feed store near the railroad tracks. Linsey and her older sister Kevy, on whom the novel focuses, become a part of the urban world around them, with its restaurants, stores, high school. When they return to the mountains to visit their grandmother, the mountain world is strange and alien. Even though they enjoy the green world, climbing trees, singing mountain songs with their new step-grandfather, they are glad to get back after the visit:

> Before we knew it, we passed the sign—"Welcome to Brockton, Population 14,000." As we went down the underpass a train crossed over our heads, whistling for the station where it didn't stop anymore. The whistle welcomed us back. We went up the grade and there was Main Street stretching out ahead of us....The awning was down over Drexel's store and upstairs our two front blinds were pulled all the way down as we had left them. The building looked naked and drab after the green hills and valleys. *But it was home.* (emphasis added)[36]

Even though the main character of this novel is an already assimilated second-generation Appalachian, many qualities of Appalachian life and values of Appalachians are retained by the Templetons: the patriarchal father's extreme conservatism and fundamentalist religiosity which prompts him to deny the family a television set; the family's accepting attitude toward the mentally handicapped little brother Pleas; and her father's and Linsey's love of

music. Linsey is confronted with the choice of two boyfriends, one upper-class. As a result of its sentimentality and focus on a teenage girl, *A Crack in the Sidewalk* is sometimes regarded as a young adult book. As a novel of the urban Appalachian experience, Linsey's struggle is one of identity and coming to terms with who she is, which includes her background.

Gurney Norman shows an awareness of the migratory experience in his stories in *Kinfolks*.[37] In "Home For the Weekend," for example, the Collier clan gathers at Grandma Collier's in Eastern Kentucky on Memorial Day. They come from all over, Junior from Cincinnati, Jenny from North Carolina, Evelyn and L. C. from Perry County, and the young nephew Wilgus from college in Lexington. Though they have left their mountain "home," these migrants, some to the city, still come back "home," even though once there they fight like cats and dogs over the least things. In the hilarious *Divine Right's Trip*,[38] Norman tells the quintessential story of a 1960s "acid freak" who goes back "home." The novel follows D. R. (David Ray, better known as Divine Right) Davenport across the country from California to Eastern Kentucky.

Section Four of the book is set in Cincinnati where D. R. had lived as an Appalachian migrant for ten years and where his sister Marcella and brother-in-law Doyle (a mechanic) now live in a middle-class suburb. The picture of Marcella and Doyle's life contrasts markedly with D. R.'s. They have apparently settled down into middle class life, while he is a "truth seeking freak." Doyle has joined the church, says prayers at the table, takes their two children to Sunday School, and works at a service station to support his family. Marcella and D. R. reminisce about "back home" and their Uncle Emmit who is dying. This prompts D. R. to head into the mountains, after his girlfriend Estelle, who has accompanied him all the way from California to Cincinnati, leaves him and heads back to the west coast. Many of the people whom Norman describes, like Marcella and Doyle, have assimilated into the urban world, although they still retain their roots and ties to the past and to their culture. Like D. R. and Marcella and Linsey Templeton in *A Crack in the Sidewalk*, they are trying to find out who they are.

Michael Henson, who has lived in Cincinnati since 1965, has published two works that use Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine (a major port of entry for Appalachian migrants to the city) as their setting and describe the lives of urban Appalachians. *Ransack*[39] is the story of Seth, another second-generation Appalachian. Seth is a restless, out-of-work man who just "wants to be left alone" so that he can figure his life out. The son of Appalachian migrants to Cincinnati, Seth has traveled a great deal, looking for himself. Returning at the beginning of the novel to Cincinnati, the only place where he ever felt good, he

becomes involved with a group of men who demolish houses for a living. He makes friends with Ray, Ever-Ready, Al, and others. As the crew ransacks the houses they are readying for demolition, Seth ransacks himself for his identity. By the end of the novel, Seth seems to be working toward his self-discovery, learning who he is. *Ransack* depicts inner-city violence, police brutality, pessimism, prejudice, and nostalgia for the mountains (Seth keeps remembering the hollows back home).

Henson's *A Small Room with Trouble on My Mind and Other Stories*[40] is a collection of short stories. The title story relentlessly follows Randall Martin from his boyhood in a coal camp in Eastern Kentucky to his death in the city. The relationship between Randall and his wife Rosetta and their poverty are realistically depicted, as is Randall's fierce independence and deep love of music, the one thing that Randall has always held on to. Even in death Randall sees himself as a winner because he has not allowed "them" to control his life after he has suffered several heart attacks and open heart surgery. He could never just give up and "take it easy." Several of the other stories in this collection deal with the lives of young men, "boys on the corner"—"young punks" who have to prove themselves by shouting obscenities at church-goers ("Outside the Church"), one becoming aware of his sexuality through an experience with a mysterious and pathetic transsexual ("The Fountain"), one trying to block out the persistent thoughts of his grandmother's impending death in the small apartment where the whole family lives ("Four Boys on the Corner"), one on dope who goes after some blacks who have attacked him ("They'll Kill You Harold"). "Blood Root" follows Lonnie, a migrant to the city, as he hitchhikes back home to the hills for his grandmother's funeral and then back to the city. All of these stories depict the dark side of inner-city life: fear, loneliness, drugs, prostitution, desperation, poverty, violence, as well as the search for identity among urban Appalachians. Henson's third work, *And We Are Not Saved* (unpublished), is set mainly in Uptown Chicago.

A different kind of urban Appalachian experience is described by Wilma Dykeman, who was married to James Stokely of the Knoxville Stokely canning family. The main character of Dykeman's *Return the Innocent Earth*[41] is the highly urbanized business executive Jon Clayburn, whose grandparents were of the planter class in the North Carolina mountains. The Clayburn family has risen through hard work and determination to control a successful canning company. Along the way, it seems, some of the second- and third-generation Clayburns who now control the canning business, especially Jon's cousin Stull, have lost touch with the earth, with their past, and with the virtues of their fathers and grandparents who built the company. The novel focuses on Jon's search to reestablish that connection. The

Appalachian mountaineers who have been the forefathers of these men and women—these city folks with their fancy cars, swimming pools, estates, and modern business problems—were of the hard-working yeoman or planter class. Their experience has been one of economic success in the urban world, unlike that of most of the people in Michael Henson's works.

Carol J. Scott's *Kentucky Daughter*[42] is in the tradition of Fox's *The Heart of the Hills*. In this young adult novel, Mary Fred Pratley leaves the Kentucky mountains to go to school in Hampton, Virginia. Mary Fred's father David has been killed in a mine disaster. Her mother Becky has been left a widow with four children. Mary Fred decides to better herself and help the family by getting better schooling in the city. She goes to live with her aunt and uncle in Hampton. At Hampton Junior High School Mary Fred struggles against the kind of snobbishness and prejudice that Fox's Jason and Mavis Hawn experienced. Mary Fred is ridiculed and at first feels very ashamed of her Kentucky background. She is especially ashamed of the brightly colored coat her mother has woven for her. (Her mother, Becky Pratley, is depicted as a talented mountain artist who weaves, carves, and makes cornshuck dolls.) Eventually, and expectedly, Mary Fred learns the real value of her background and to take pride in her heritage and her family. Mary Fred becomes more accepted at school when she stops feeling ashamed, joins the newspaper staff, and makes new friends. The novel ends on a note of promise and the affirmation of the Appalachian cultural background.

LITERARY THEMES

In the novels and stories noted above several general themes of the city experiences of Appalachian migrants are revealed. Among these are:

- the migration experience and the problems of adjusting (assimilating) which the mountain people experience. Although this adjustment is often painful and difficult, it is not always a terrible or negative experience and is sometimes pictured as a very positive one;

- values in conflict, often the simple, traditional values and virtues of the country people contrasted with the corruption and destructiveness of the city folk;

- the continuing connections and ties which are felt by the migrants for their "homes" and families back in the mountains;
- the prejudice often displayed against the "hillbilly"; and
- the search for identity amid cultural dualism.

NOTES

A shorter version of this chapter was published as "Country Comes to Town: A Survey or Urban Appalachian Literature" in *Now And Then,* 8 (1990).

1 Phillip Obermiller, "A Brief Biographical Essay on Urban Appalachians." *Appalachian Journal* 5 (1977): 151–52.

2 Harriette Simpson Arnow, *The Dollmaker* (New York: Macmillan, 1954).

3 Mary Noailles Murfree, "Drifting Down Lost Creek," in *In the Tennessee Mountains* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1884).

4 Ibid., 77.

5 Ibid., 78.

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▪ 17 ▪

Contextualizing Death Representations in Appalachian Literature

Jennifer Profitt

Through the centuries awareness and perceptions of mortality have been one means of interpreting culture, society, and ultimately self. We are born, we participate in life, and then we die. As human beings we recognize this natural succession. While this cycle of life may seem simple because of its constancy, it is not. Cultures and generations have developed complex practices and attitudes toward death that have served to define both the culture and death itself.

The customs and practices that accompany death in Appalachia are a distinctive assembly of rituals and beliefs. Some of these death customs can be traced to sixteenth century European Protestantism.[1] Most death customs in the region, however, have grown into and out of the personality of Appalachia itself. An historically high mortality and poverty rate has shaped the character of Appalachia, forcing an intimacy with death. Violence, disease, isolation, and the severity of daily life formed traditional Appalachia into "a country within a country," according to Jessie Stuart.[2] Appalachia's engagement with death and poverty has yielded adaptive methods of preparation for burial and manners of bereavment, as well as funerary and cemetery practices.

As the mortuistic values of America were moving toward using professional mortuary services, Appalachia's remained closely tied to the family. With little money for and no access to morticians' services, family and neighbors assumed total responsibility for preparing the body of the deceased and organizing the obsequies.

The literary products from this "country" of Appalachia reflect in a distinguishing way the rich, cultural uniqueness of this geographic region. The regular and prominent appearance of death in Appalachian life is authentically reflected in Appalachian novels,

short stories, written oral histories, and poetry. Appalachian literature is rich with descriptive examples of death and its effect upon family, neighbors, and community. "Death is a great event..." in Appalachia.[3]

DYING AT HOME AND THE DEATH VIGIL

The combination of isolation, unavailability of medical facilities, and poor diet made diseases commonplace in Appalachia.[4] The home was the facility for everything from obstetrics to critical care. According to Campbell in *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland*, the adults, children, healthy and infirm all shared the same bed so that "the spread of contagious and infectious diseases [was] naturally rapid."[5] Since physicians and pharmacies were inaccessible, "doctoring" became a shared responsibility among the community. Relying heavily on medicinal materials available in the mountain environment, most dwellings "had supplies of asafetida and camphor, as well as bags of dried herbs, leaves, and other materials for making all kinds of tea, salves, and poultices."[6]

In *Fair and Tender Ladies*, a novel by Lee Smith, the father suffers from a cardiopulmonary disease that eventually leads to heart failure. Hoping to alleviate his symptoms of poor circulation, the family makes the father a "pallet laying rigt up agin the fire."[7] The family attempts to ease the father's symptoms with Granny Rowe's medicinal home remedies.

> Granny Rowe has come to holp us, she chews tobaccy and spits it in the fire. Granny Rowe is relly my auntie I think not grannie relly. Grannie Rowe has give Daddy a potion it dont do no good, he has vomited yaller insted. Mommy is given him whisky and honey its bettern nothing as best but it makes him dreamy.[8]

Home remedies such as those administered to the father in Smith's novel were, in the daughter's words, "bettern nothing," but often insufficient in saving a life.

In her book, *Death in Early America*, Margaret Coffin writes, "We tend to deny death by ignoring it and segregating the experience from everyday life."[9] In Appalachia, death came with such frequency—literally into the home—intimately involving family and neighbors, that the mountaineers could neither ignore death nor separate it from daily life. Death was a chronic visitor, a commonality linking family and neighbors (often kinsmen) together.

Neighbors participated, usually without pay, in many instances of interaction in mountain social events "such as house raising, a barn

raising, land clearing, log rolling, corn shucking, bean hulling, crop planting or molasses making."[10] Neighborliness was extended particularly when there was a death. On learning of a death, neighbors "moved into helping roles with little formal organization."[11] Almost instinctively neighbors knew their responsibility was to "bring word" to the community, notifying all that a death had occurred thereby engaging the larger social support system.[12]

"Somehow," writes Will Campbell, "in Southern culture, food is always the first thought of neighbors when there is trouble."[13] James Dickson, in "Funeral in Appalachia" satirizes the ritual of the neighbors bringing a "covered dish" to the home where a death has just occurred.

> ...your entre into the ritual likely will begin with your hearing a knock at the door of the home visited by grief. In your efforts to do something helpful, you answer the door and before you stands a girl, twelve or thirteen years old, holding a covered dish in her hands...."Mother axed me to bring this over 'cause she said yawl'd be so busy and everything. She and Virgie said if ther's anything yawl want, just let us know. We're all sorry about everything." You should thank her softly and accept the meatloaf or baked beans or macaroni salad....Then, without delay, take the offering to the kitchen sideboard and place it beside all the other meatloaves, baked beans, and macaroni salads.[14]

When someone was believed to be dying, one of the most remarkable features of neighborliness was the practice of the "death watch" (also referred to as "sitting up" or "death vigil").[15] Dating back at least to medieval and Renaissance Europe, the death watch encompassed the practice of maintaining a continuous vigil at the bedside of the dying person.[16] In instances where dying was long and anguishing, the death watch served the practical purpose of helping ease the burden of the family. It also was a way for neighbors to show respect to the sick. Not participating was improper since it might be the final opportunity to spend time with the dying individual.[17]

PREPARATION OF THE BODY AND THE COFFIN

The role of the collective family included offering assistance in the many preparations required when death had occurred. Washing and dressing the body was the first task in readying the deceased for burial.

> Granny Rowe sent Ethel up to the spring for water whilst we undressed Daddy and when Ethel come back, we warshed him off. He was so little

> it was like washing a little bitty child, or a little shadder of a man, it did not seem like our daddy. And then Momma came in with the white wool burying socks and we put them on him, and his good black suit, and his tie, Granny wet the comb and parted his hair....[18]

Before embalming became an available service in Appalachia, coffins had to be made in a day. Often a friend or family member had to work through the night by candle or lamplight quickly to finish a coffin.[19] In one of her stories, "Melungeon-Colored," a chilling tale of murder within a family, Mildred Haun includes the following description of the hurry-up construction of a coffin. "All night me and Mos hammered on the coffin. Old rough planks that he tore out of the house loft."[20] Lacking polish and looking rough, these homemade coffins nevertheless "conveyed individuality; like homemade bread they did not have the appearance of mass packaging."[21]

THE WAKE

An assemblage of the members of the family and community, the wake, complete with food and liquor, is a notable example of the social character of Appalachian death customs. A character in *Fair and Tender Ladies* remarks on a wake and how "The house was the fullest of people it had ever been...Dove Yates and Troy Counts and Woody Elswick brung some likker, and the women brung food."[22] The crowd of family and neighbors is also seen in Lee Smith's description of Pricey Jane's very social funeral:

> So Alamarine was laying [Pricey Jane] out hisself and Mamma was a-praying and Granny mad as a wet hen when all the rest of them finally got there, Harve Justice with the pine to make the box, and old Joe Johnson, and Luther Wade and Hester Little, and all the Rameys and the Justices, Ratliffs and Horns and Skeens, and one-eyed Jesse Waldron hauled the liquor up there on a sled....[23]

Funerals provided an opportunity for families to come together. Thomas Wolfe describes this type of reunion in a passage from "The Great Schism." He comments that "...the only thing that will bring [the family] together is a wedding or a funeral; and it has to be a good one to do that."[24]

Although modified by the arrival of professional mortuary services, many wake traditions continue. At the wake, a curious mixture of superstitions and fundamentalism directs the behavior of death and mourning customs. Emerging from this amalgam of folklore and religion are the practices that most often shock the

sensibilities of outsiders. At an Appalachian funeral mourning includes such an enthusiastic display of emotions that outsiders can be quite taken aback. Grieving is "open and unashamed."[25] Emotions are at times almost physically overwhelming to some mourners. "Aunt Lou was disconsolate, became weak from mourning and sat in a rocker, unmoving and not speaking except to moan quietly, 'Oh, Bill, oh, Bill.'"[26] Social historian Philip Aries in his book, *Images of Man and Death*, writes, "Good taste demanded that people seem physically incapable of tolerating the separation from the deceased; and in most cases they did not need to force themselves—they would spontaneously behave as expected."[27] Typically, mourners produce much wailing. In *Oral History*, Smith writes about the pinnacle act of emotional mourning: "They had to hold Almarine back, I forget how many it took to do it."[28] The role of the anguished wake-mourner includes returning repeatedly to the coffin and throwing oneself across the casket in a frenzy of sorrow. The other mourners typically respond by "holding back" the grief-stricken mourner.

Other traditions, folkloric practices, and superstitions dictate the observance of attitudes and practices around death. Failure to respect superstitions would invite bad luck, bringing death before its time. A large cluster of superstitions comprises and surrounds the wake experience. Folklorists in such works as *Ghost Along the Cumberland* by William Montell and *Death in Early America* by Margaret Coffin have documented fascinating tales of wake practices.[29] During both the historical and modern wake, participants frequently review the days just prior to learning of the death. They glean their memories for "signs"—the special interpretations of nature, particularly the behavior of animals. The appearance and actions of dogs, chickens, cats, snakes, and owls have great significance.

> One day a bird—it was a little chickadee—got into the house, and I chased it with a broom. It flew from corner to corner and back again and butted its head into everything in the house saving the door. Ma looked at it. "Somebody is going to die," she said. "Hit might be your granny."[30]

When animal signs fail to explain death, wake mourners are behooved somehow to justify the occurrence of death. In the following excerpt from "The Death and Burial of 'Bonney Bill' Scalf," the role of weather in death is mentioned.

> "I know what killed him," his brother John said. "Last December a year ago, we had to gather up some logs up the branch and it was cold, nearly down to zero. We got wet, our clothes froze on us. When we couldn't work because of the ice on our clothes we had to quit. Bill got sick in a few

> days and was never really well again. I always said that day's work caused Bill's death."[31]

These inquiries are genuinely sincere and offered without malice. Appalachia has been a culture in which people typically died of accidents or diseases rather than old age. It is understandable how death could become viewed as "an unnatural consequence of something gone wrong."[32] To put meaning into a way of life that included such poverty and high mortality, many Appalachian people turned to a fundamental form of religion. Though mortality and poverty have eased in contemporary Appalachian society, fundamentalist beliefs continue. Fred Snuffer describes the importance of fundamentalism:

> In its own way, the fundamentalist religion spared the people from total failure. It creates a worthiness in their lives though they have not attained economic and educational success. "You may be poor as a church mouse, but God still loves you."[33]

Fundamentalism brings not only a purpose but explanation to the life of the Appalachian. According to fundamentalist thought, the frequency of death has explanations; death is God's will and "just one more cross to bear."[34] Describing how God's will explains death, Harriette Arnow writes this conversation in *The Dollmaker*. "...unlike Ruben's [face], [Clytie's] was not ugly in so, held no anger, no questions that could not be answered because there were no answers. She turned now to Ruben with a sisterly rebuke, 'It was God's will.'"[35]

The knowledgeable combination of Bible scriptures and the close, frequent exposure to death and dying created a unique view of death for the mountaineer. Like his or her ancestors, the fundamentalist is reassured that death represents the departure of the soul to a better place (II Tim. 4:6) and is merely an exchange for a new, heavenly body (II Cor. 5:1.) Bible verses such as John 16:25 ("He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; whoever lives in me will never die") reaffirm and anchor their beliefs.[36]

To perpetuate the memory of the deceased, photographs of the body were often taken at the wake. Encircling the casket, family and friends would proudly pose with the dead body.[37] By capturing the image of the loved one in death, relatives kept a carefully nurtured memory of the beloved dead. In James Still's *River of Earth*, the mother climbs up to the graveyard and declares, "I wisht to God I'd had a picture tuck of the baby so it could be sot in the arbor during the meeting. I wisht to God I'd had it tuck."[38] Photographs provided a visual record of the ultimate personal icon for personal remembrance and community veneration. If a family were too poor and could not afford a photograph of the body, the clothes last worn by the loved

one were preserved and treasured as many often do with family wedding dresses.[39]

BURIAL

As with the preparation of the body and coffin, grave digging was a community affair. Although both male and female had roles in preparing the body and coffin, participation in the honor of grave digging was exclusively male.[40]

Appalachian literature frequently includes references to the folk cemetery. Lee Smith describes how,

> Alamarine moved ahead of them all across the grassy bald to his burying ground. The sun fell thick as a blanket; trees won't grow on a grassy bald. The peak was the highest for miles and miles around: crowded by the wind swept field, it fell off in sheer cliffs on three sides.[41]

The grave stones at such isolated hilltop cemeteries reflect the culture of poverty. Unable to access or afford the services of professional monument makers, Appalachians engaged members of their own community as monument makers. Where money for a carved stone was not available, a concrete headstone would be molded in a form and set at the head of the grave. Inscribed on these homemade gravestones are epitaphs that yield information about local moods and popular attitudes toward life and death. Some are sentimental: "Our Carlton" (Sepulchral monument, The Old Cemetery, Laurel, Indiana). Others give bold, graphic details concerning the manner of death: "Drowned in the East Fork of the Whitewater River" (Sepulchral monument, Old Brick Church Cemetery, Brookville, Indiana).

MEMORIALS

For many rural and urban Appalachians, annual memorial services are rewarding, pleasurable, and interesting. Stemming from a respect for family and heritage, Appalachians continue to reconnect with one another by collectively participating in these memorial services.

Appalachian funeral and burials are two separate events. No matter when the death and burial occur, the funeral or memorial typically takes place in August. "Services over on the cemetery, Alice went up to the Reverend Isaac and asked him to come to the Stratton cemetery in August and deliver a memorial sermon for her late husband."[42] Historically, circuit preachers were most available in August which coincided with the harvest. Availability of food was

important because memorial services were an all-day event with, as Haun writes, "nearly everybody in the country" in attendance.[43]

> That first service on the Stratton cemetery, soon to be called by everyone, "Aunt Alice's meeting," was preceded by a hectic period of preparation. Aunt Lou came to help with the kitchen chores and brought two of her sons to chop wood for the stove in which the fire scarcely died. The women, among whom were two grown daughters of the deceased, assisted. Apples were peeled, pies and cakes bakepots and pots of food were prepared. The night preceding the service there was such a crowd at the Scalf home that many slept on the floor and the hardier boys bedded down in the corn crib.[44]

Along with much socializing, eating, and preaching, singing was a crucial part of the memorial day. Music has always been integral and central in Appalachian life and never more so than at memorial services for the deceased loved one.

> By ten o'clock the congregation having assembled except for stragglers, someone started a song and they sang from the Sweet Songster, their hymnal since early settlement days. In succeeding years the opening hymn was always "A twelve month more hath rolled around/Since we last met on this ground." The hymn that invariably closed the service for years was "God bless you until we meet again."[45]

Appalachian practices regarding death may appear unsettling to those outside the enclosed community.[46] Though perhaps distressing to outsiders, the death customs that have developed in this region "display a quality of realism, reverence, simplicity, and humaneness that is generally lacking in the American death industry that has evolved over the past century."[47]

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11 Phipps.

12 Mildren Haun, "The Look," in *The Hawk's Done Gone and Other Stories*, edited by Herschel Gower (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968), 318.

13 W. D. Campbell, *Brother to a Dragonfly* (New York: Seabury Press, 1977), 148.

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16 Lewis R. Aiken, *Dying Death and Bereavment* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1991), 96.

17 J. C. Campbell, 197.

18 Smith, 44.

19 Coffin, 99–100.

20 Haun, 109.

21 Phipps, 49.

22 Smith, 45.

23 Smith, *Oral History* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1983), 77.

24 Thomas Wolfe, "The Great Schism," in *The Hills Beyond* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941), 227.

25 Crissman, 73.

26 Henry P. Scalf, "The Death and Burial of 'Boney' Bill Scalf," *Appalachian Heritage* (Spring 1974): 58.

27 Philippe Aries, *Images of Man and Death*, translated by Janet Lloyd (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 243.

28 Smith, *Oral History*, 77. In my own family, on the occasion of my murdered Uncle Clayton Campbell's funeral, his wife repeatedly threw herself across the coffin, and relatives remarked afterward how she was "held back."

29 See William Lyn Montell, *Ghosts along the Cumberland: Deathlore in the Kentucky Foothills* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975).

30 Haun, 318.

31 Scalf, 58.

32 Aiken, 120.

33 Fred Snuffer, "Appalachia is Bicultural," in *Things Appalachian*, edited by William Plumley, Marge Warner, and Lorena Anderson (Charleston WV: MHC Publications, 1976), 103.

34 Smith, *Fair and Tender Ladies*, 41.

35 Harriette Arnow, *The Dollmaker* (New York: Avon Books, 1972), 43.

36 *The Holy Bible, New International Version* (East Brunswick NJ: International Bible Society, 1978).

37 Crissman, 74–75. Although filled with pictures of grandchildren, my grandmother's wallet was also replete with photographs of dead relatives laid out in their coffins.

38 James Still, *River of Earth* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1978), 177.

39 Such was the case at the time of my great-grandfather's murder during the Depression when, without the money for a photograph, my great-grandmother kept his bloodied clothes and passed them on to his descendants.

40 Crissman, 60.

41 Smith, *Oral History*, 86.

42 Scalf, 59.

43 Haun, 270.

44 Scalf, 59–60.

45 Ibid., 60.

46 Avery Gaskins, "The Poetry of Muriel Miller Dressler," in *Things Appalachian*, edited by William Plumley, Marge Warner, and Lorena Anderson (Charleston WV: MHC Publications, 1976), 146.

47 Phipps, 48.

▪ 18 ▪

"Mountain Dreams": Using Drama and Autobiography To Enhance Literacy

Marion Di Falco

This chapter briefly describes a project that used a social group work approach to enhancing literacy among Appalachian women. Social group work appears to be a valuable structure because the vast majority of students in Adult Basic Education and General Education Diploma (GED) preparation programs experience isolation due to social and economic oppression. A group format enables students to identify their relatedness to each other and to other women. It is a valuable component because so much of the activity in the GED programs is individualized due to the differences in students' competencies. From an educator's perspective, "As in all effective reading instruction, the focus in GED reading is on constructing meaning and applying that meaning to one's life."[1] Proceeding from these general assumptions and working as a volunteer, I instituted a dramatic reading group to simultaneously develop reading comprehension and personal development. I chose reading material that portrayed ordinary Appalachian women showing strength and courage.

Reading aloud, role-playing, and, later, reading parts in the dramatized version of one of the stories provided opportunity for discussion. At the same time, students were helped with vocabulary and grammar. The students readily identified with the situations and issues that many women face, as well as with the characters. The students recognized mothers, grandmothers, and other kin in the characters in the story. As they read and reacted to the material, they shared stories about themselves without any reluctance, frequently indicating that they were only vaguely aware of the history of their kin in previous generations. As the students read and shared personal stories, I gained insight into their world, their "urban" dreams, and the realities of their daily lives.

The main works used were "Mountain Dreams" by Coles and Coles and a dramatic adaptation.[2] "Mountain Dreams" tells the story of an urban Appalachian woman and her family experiencing the trauma of migration from the hills of Kentucky to two major northern cities. The play takes place in the late 1960s and 1970s, when jobs were more plentiful. In the depiction of the Morgans, one sees a functional family, contrary to stereotype, who survive by supporting each other and developing a new way of thinking.

The main character, Hannah Morgan, a woman raised in a fundamentalist religious tradition, in harmony with nature, struggles to reconcile the values and ways of thinking she lived by down the "hollar" and in the mountains with their new city life. In a scene early in the play, her oldest child, Pauline, questions her mother about their social and economic state. Hannah replies:

> It's God's decision where we're born and we shouldn't try to say what we want from Him or what we wished He'd done for us. He doesn't make sure that everyone gets treated equal, and we have no right to complain or to pout.
>
> ...Mamaw used to say that so long as you can find somethin beautiful to look at, you're rich, even if there are only a few potatoes left to eat and no more credit at the store. That's what she said in the hollar...it sure is hard to keep that in your heart here in the city when folks have so much.

The themes of the story parallel the findings reported in "Appalachian Women: Between Two Cultures."[3] McCoy et al. found a significant shift between 1962 and 1982 in urban Appalachian women's identification with their Appalachian heritage and "home." Migration speeds up the gradual movement away from traditions for people in most ethnic groups; the same has been observed for those moving from isolated rural areas to urban environments within the same nation.

> Appalachian culture requires that women fulfill the traditional roles of homemaker and mother, but the urban setting demands some transformation in decision making, in employment, and in marital relationships.[4]

Ways of thinking and behaving do not seem to work as women have taken on jobs outside of the home due to economic necessity and lack of supportive kin.

In "Mountain Dreams," Hannah begins to admire the relative wealth and ease of suburban women in the communities she passes through on the bus to work. At the same time, Pauline's thinking is

influenced by more contemporary views of women, and she tells her mother that she doesn't want to have children until she can afford them.

> Pauline, honey, you don't sit down and say you can afford to have a certain number of boys and girls: you have your children and try to do the best you can to be a good parent. If my mother and daddy had thought the way you'r talkin, I wouldn't be here talkin. I came along after five brothers.

The McCoy et al. study found that "Among second generation Appalachians, however, belief in the subordinate role of women appears to be changing."[5]

Hannah recalls her own mother admonishing her as a child.

> You sure are gettin big and strange ideas. You need to keep your mind on more important things. Like gettin yourself strong for the road ahead. It's no fun bein a woman, you'all find that out sooner or later, better sooner. You got to be ready to do for your kids when there's no food around, stand by your man when he's hurtin, when he's mean and nasty, as good as in times when he's smiling at you like you're honey on his biscuits. So, don't go gettin stuck up on me.

Hannah's gradual feeling of dissatisfaction with this expectation, reinforced by her fundamentalist Christian religious beliefs, leads to anger and ensuing guilt.

> Tim, every night about this time, you come in here and want to know if your supper is ready yet. You know I don't get home till after six, and it takes me time to get things put together. Don't I deserve to take a rest when I need it? At work I can't have a coffee break, when I feel a taste for coffee, I have to wait till the manager comes to tell me to get some coffee. At home, I can't set a spell to rest up after the day because you want your supper right away. The kids cain't wait till I get the laundry done so they can have clean clothes for school. No one's listening to me. There used to be a time Tim, when I'd be thankful for you to come in, plunk yourself down and stare at the stove likin it was goin to spit biscuits. I'd get speeded up in my work, not wantin to keep you waitin, knowin how hard you work all day. But I work too! I've been away from home as long as you have, workin as hard as I know how. So I deserve a little respect, too.

McCoy et al. also reported that in 1982, 84.4 percent of the women surveyed felt that their home was in the city, whereas in 1962 only 47.9 percent felt that their home was in the city.[6] Hannah, after a strange experience similar to a dissociative state, tells a friend:

> Maybe I'm missin home down the hollar. Come to think of it the last time I was back home, I actually wanted to come back to Dayton. Now, that scares me! How could I be thinkin this way. What's come over me, am I betrayin my kin like I've been so afeared of Pauline doin? Do I really like it better livin among these city folks, drivin around in their fancy cars, payin more attention to their appliances than to God Almighty?

Hannah's anguish intensifies as day-and-night dreams approach hallucinations. A crisis with teen-aged Pauline brings some of the changes into sharper focus for Hannah. Responding to her daughter's need for her help, Hannah begins to mobilizes her strengths. To be a good mother, as she was raised to be, requires some changes to match the changes in Pauline.

> Pauline tells me she'll never be the same again. It's strange, but since I heard her story the other night, I've been talkin a lot to myself—as if she's me and I'm her. I think Pauline's trouble has made me different, and try as I do, I just can't get back to my old self. I've talked to myself as strict as I know how. I've even tried to imagine how my mother or grandmother would have talked to me; just so I could come to my senses. I guess I really don't want to go back to the old way of doin things.

With trepidation, Hannah goes along with Pauline's request for help to visit an institution where she can continue her studies for a career in nursing without Tim's knowledge. When mother and daughter return home, Tim angrily wants to know where she's been and why she wasn't there for him. Hannah starts to succumb to her guilt about betraying her obligations to her husband and the "old way" of doing things, but half-way through her litany of apologies she starts to gain courage to openly assert her new attitudes.

> I never lied to you before this, Tim, I didn't think that you'd approve of what I was doin, so I couldn't tell you the truth. I almost lost myself. But I remember what the ministers always told us, "We are human beings, not animals, not stones, nor trees, nor pieces of potato cooked up and eaten. We have a will, we can find the goodness on different paths if the one we usually travel is blocked." I've been changing my thinkn on a lot of things, but I couldn't tell you.

> My mama once told me that if you're in a bad spot, all you can do is use your head and your muscles, and try to do the best you can. So that's what we've been doin up north. Now Pauline's path is leadin her to a different life, not a mountain life. And I'm not scared anymore, for her, or for me. I might even go back to school myself!

As the play ends, Hannah turns to Pauline, and says,

> Lately, in my dreams, the ones I have just before I wake up, I see myself on top of my favorite mountain, standing as tall as I can on my tiptoes bowin to no one; takin in big gulps of the thin air, and feelin good. When I wake up I say to myself what my grandma used to say to me: "Don't bow to no one, not in your heart." [as an after thought] A mountain dream like that will get me through each day at the check-out; I do believe that!

"Mountain Dreams" engaged my GED students' interest, both as a reading assignment and a dramatic reading. "Mountain Dreams" also has been used to teach social work students about Appalachian people, the "invisible minority" in the client population. College students studying in the helping professions would benefit from a view of urban Appalachians which dispels the negative stereotype, "hillbillies," a label which fails to see them as a group with a heritage, wisdom, and worth.

NOTES

1 Rena Soifer, et al., *The Complete—Theory to Practice—Handbook of Adult Literacy: Curriculum Design and Teaching Approaches* (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1990), 59.

2 All dialog quoted is from a dramatic adaptation of R. Coles and Jane H. Coles, "Mountain Dreams," in *Women of Crisis: Lives of Struggle and Hope* (New York: Delta/Seymore, 1978). The adaptation is by Marion Di Falco, "Mountain Dreams," unpublished, 1994, © 1995.

3 H. Virginia McCoy, Diana Trevino, and Clyde B. McCoy, "Appalachian Women: Between Two Cultures," in *From Mountain to Metropolis—Appalachian Migrants in American Cities,* edited by Kathryn M. Borman and Phillip J. Obermiller (Westport CT: Greenwood, 1994).

4 Ibid., 37.

5 Ibid., 38.

6 Ibid., 45.

▪ 19 ▪

Mary Lee Settle's Charleston, West Virginia: Artistic Sensibility and the Burden of History in Urban Appalachia

Jane Hill

Writing about literary works of history published by American women before the Civil War, Nina Baym suggests that these authors

> were demolishing whatever imaginative and intellectual boundaries their culture may have been trying to maintain between domestic and public worlds....Their work...contributed to the vital intellectual tasks of forging and publicizing national identity....[1]

Post-Revolutionary American educators were convinced and publicly argued "that...establishment of the American republic—demanded new kinds of women's work," chief among them, "conserving and building the new nation." In this paradigm, women were responsible for training future citizens. Tagged "republican mothers," the women encouraged to embrace this role "were required to instruct [children]...in the virtues that would sustain the nation and the patriotism that would defend it."[2]

Baym's insights also illuminate the historical fiction of Mary Lee Settle. Although not all 12 of Settle's novels are set in Canona, a fictional rendering of her native Charleston, West Virginia, many are. Among the stories told in the novels that make up her Beulah Quintet is the story of Canona's (and therefore Charleston's) evolution *as* a city.

The protagonist of the quintet's fifth book, *The Killing Ground*,[3] is novelist Hannah McKarkle, Settle's alter-ego. Her novels are Settle's four novels that precede *The Killing Ground* in the quintet. Therefore, careful consideration of Hannah McKarkle's emergence as a writer of history yields insight into Settle as historian and artist. In addition, such consideration extends Baym's ideas about women writers of

history to the present and reveals much about the development of an urban Appalachian community. As Settle's theories of history reveal themselves in *The Killing Ground*, the story of urban Appalachia is, to some extent, a story of gender and of the struggle to determine *whose* history will prevail.

Settle first attempted to tell the truth of Johnny McKarkle's death in *Fight Night on a Sweet Saturday*, published in 1964. The events of that novel have been incorporated into *The Killing Ground*, making the personal story resonate with history generated in the novels that precede the quintet's final volume. In the later, expanded novel, Settle theorizes about Saturday night's function in the culture of Canona: "On such nights the reins hung slack in the *women's* hands—even the downriver winds whispered against them, panicked them, aroused in the men a passion for freedom—just a little freedom..." (214 [Italics added]).

CANONA AND CANON LAW

The name of Settle's fictional city, Canona, encapsulates her message about urban Appalachia and gender. Canona can be read as a feminization of *canon*; thus, the city is ruled by canon(a) law, rules generated and enforced by women. Motivated in part by an overweening fear of change, these Canona women force their men and themselves into a situation that allows only the impotent rebellion of Saturday night fisticuffs. Hannah McKarkle, after 20 years of seeking the truths behind her brother's death, concludes that "impotent rebellion is a form of slavery" (180). Therefore, however well-intentioned the women may be, the long-term consequence of canon (a) law is a world that denies the essential ingredients of American strength and democracy. Those repressed elements inevitably manifest themselves with pressurized, destructive force.

The artist's job, if the artist chooses as her medium historical fiction about urban Appalachia, becomes not only a quest for truth but balance. Hannah McKarkle expresses that view of her art this way:

> But most of all I would carry that itch for balance...a quality that quarrels with itself, poised between democrat and slave owner, a dilemma all the way to our founding, that seemed so often to have no place in the pragmatic surviving days of living, but yet had had a place, had built a country, fused dreams into cities....
>
> It would be the armature, an ambiguity of steel, on which I have built my book[s]. (340)

Jane Gentry Vance articulates the ways in which Settle's ambitious historical vision requires that ambiguity of steel of both her heroes and her author-narrator self:

> [Her] aim...is to trace to its genesis the conception of liberty which shaped the political ideology of America....[she] uses the raw material of a near-lost history...to create a vast, magical, instructive fictional world.[4]

By linking Settle's fiction to a search for the genesis of American conceptions of liberty and to instruction, Vance connects Settle to Baym's republican-mother historians. But, through the implication that Settle is excavating something "near-lost," Vance also attributes to her work a critique of those women (and men) historians who precede her. Had the earlier historians been successful in their republican pursuits, the origins that Settle and Hannah McKarkle struggle to piece together would be part of the fabric of American education.

REPUBLICAN OR REVOLUTIONARY

A consequence of this subtle difference, or criticism, inherent in Settle's historical fiction is the revelation of how concepts of conservative and revolutionary behavior have shifted in our march toward postmodern, urban life. The republican-mother writers readily embraced the obligation to *conserve* our revolutionary spirit and ideals. The culture that produces Hannah McKarkle and Mary Lee Settle seems, on the other hand, obsessive about conserving a culture and a regional identity that fears nothing so much as even the hint of revolution. Therefore, unlike the women history writers who are their ancestors, Settle and Hannah are at odds rather than in tune with their female-dominated culture. They are trying to resurrect revolutionary ideals, which is—within their culture's dynamic—liberal, even radical, action. To some extent that resurrection is also an argument for the revitalization of the American male and a redirecting of the American female's power.

Their search for the near-lost origins of the American conception of liberty extends backward to England's Glorious Revolution. Johnny Church, the hero of *Prisons*, chronologically the first novel in Settle's quintet, is a soldier in Cromwell's army. Flashing forward to the late twentieth century, Church's West Virginia descendant Johnny McKarkle, Hannah's beloved older brother, represents the diminished stature of the revolutionary spirit that is his genesis. As Vance says, "In Settle's long view of American history, by the time of *The Killing Ground*...the male heirs have lost the integrity of [Church's] hard

choice [to be a principled adult]." Because, in the quintet's final volume, "the choice of freedom devolves to women," as Vance states, we can begin to piece together the complex pieces of Settle's historical puzzle.[5]

Perhaps *the* crucial piece, as revealed in *The Killing Ground*, is the effect of the move from rural to urban life on gender roles within the Appalachian culture. Certainly, that move itself, toward urbanity, involves a complex web of economic and other factors. My purpose here is not to examine that web, but rather to begin with the premise that certain Appalachian families in the twentieth century made the move to urban living. My focus is one consequence of that move—its effect on gender roles.

THE CHAPEL AS CELL

Within the text of *The Killing Ground* Hannah argues that her fictional works have been generated by a single image. In an interview with Brian Rosenberg, published in the 1989 *Southern Review*, Settle confirms that the Beulah Quintet arises from the "image of a man's fist hitting another man's face in a drunk tank."[6] The two men, Johnny McKarkle and Jake Catlett, are linked by blood and culture to Johnny Church. The city jail cell replaces the chapel where Johnny Church is held for execution, but both settings are, literally and figuratively, prisons. Johnny and Jake are imprisoned because they are drunk, but they are drunk because they feel imprisoned by their culture. On the Saturday night before Labor Day 1960, the distant relatives have connected, unbeknownst to either, at the new Canona Country Club, the city's first modern building, constructed to replace the former clubhouse, once a coal baron's mansion. Johnny looks through the clubhouse's wall of glass and sees Jake. Later, he calls Hannah in New York to tell her, "I saw this *giant* shadow across the glass front of the clubhouse. It was like the woods fighting back. It looked so free. I had to get out of the place" (192). When Hannah goes to visit her brother's attacker in his cell, Jake tells her about the same incident from his perspective:

> I got up and went down in front of the floodlight again. I was lonesome. I wanted somebody to notice me. It wasn't nothin' but that there. I knowed that land better'n they done and we was in the same place, only that glass wall between. I danced that shadow around didn't even nobody look up out the winder. (277)

His sense of isolation and social and economic imprisonment is mirrored in his richer, more genteel relative's response to the same

event, the same imagery. Yet the culture's construction of a reality that strongly discourages, if not forbids, dialog between the two men and the factions of society that they represent, and certainly doesn't train its young citizens for such interaction, leads to Johnny McKarkle's death.

This incident, central to *The Killing Ground's* loosely constructed plot, would suggest a bleak, naturalistic, socially deterministic reading of modern Appalachia were it not for Hannah's quest to understand *why* this event happened. After her jailhouse talk with Jake Catlett, she is as concerned with why it happened to him as to her brother. We might attribute this appropriately objective curiosity to her historical novelist's aspirations, but the broader concern is more personal. Hannah says, after she talks to Jake, "We faced each other, the razorback bone of the country, me stripped from the topsoil of training down to rock pride. . . . if it was brothers, I had more of them than a dog had fleas, a whole hard valley of brothers" (278).

TRAINING AS CULPRIT

In this passage, she reveals the true culprit—her training—as the source of alienation and conflict. That training has obscured from her, her brother, and their ilk the essential connectedness of Appalachian culture. Hannah's personal revelation must be made universal by tracing it back to its taproot, its common source; thus, the act of history, the research and writing to discover Johnny Church in his Puritan prison.

This brings us back to Baym's republican mothers, their original goal for the nation and its youth, and what that goal has evolved into in Canona in 1960 and beyond. Hannah's quest for the answer to her why leads her to consider the Native Americans who once lived on the land she calls Canona. Within that culture's mythology, she finds a metaphor for the city's effect: "I see a child's hands, even then, learn that a bird can be caged with twigs, and I see her beaten by her mother for breaking a taboo" (4). Three thousand years later, Canona mothers dedicate themselves to training children who will not break their taboos.

A war buddy of Johnny's makes clear to Hannah how pervasive these social constraints are, saying, "maybe all you folks is good for is dyin'. You sure as hell don't know how to live, unless you sneak off somewheres to do it" (294). Truth, for example, is taboo in the McKarkles' world. After Johnny dies, Hannah asks her sister Melinda, "Don't you want to know *why*?" Melinda's calm reply, according to Hannah, "the most honest words I ever heard her say," is "I don't want to know anything. I have to live here" (259). This willful

ignorance repeatedly manifests itself in females in *The Killing Ground.*

When Johnny comes home from World War II, his mother, Sally Brandon Neill McKarkle, plans a homecoming dance in his honor at Egeria Springs. She tells Hannah, "I think the best thing is to treat Johnny as if nothing has happened. We'll make it just like it always was. . . . Just put it out of our minds" (236). During the dance, Johnny is discovered having sex in a parked car, and his father is frantic to keep the indiscretion quiet because "After all, *we can't disturb the women.*" To Hannah, he speaks "as if he were saying one of the Ten Commandments" (240).

DOWNRIVER IS DOWNTOWN

Sally Brandon is a descendant of Beulah, the promised land. Yet she cannot wait to sell off the family land and move downriver into Canona. Her mother-in-law, Grandmother McKarkle, tells the McKarkle children that their mother believes "strait is the way and narrow the gate [that leads] to the Canona Country Club" (101). The conflict between Grandmother's traditional rural Appalachian values and Sally Brandon's more contemporary urban values manifests itself in their "tilt[ing] for [the children] in language" (230). Sally Brandon insists on calling the McKarkle home a place while Grandmother McKarkle insists that it is a farm. To her, "'places' were for people who didn't work their own land and bought up good pieces of property to spend coal money on living higher on the hog than their people had before them" (231).

The move from Beulah to Canona is layered in fictions that make moral judgments difficult. Settle suggests that the move toward the city was gradual and unconscious:

> In that narrow valley no Rubicon of decision was crossed. It was floated down, rather, to Canona, the center. "Downriver" had a finality about it which still exists. People were carried by the river to a more fertile promise, usually dislodged by two extremes, need and hope. (185)

Economic circumstance moves Sally Brandon and her family downriver. She confides to Hannah after Johnny's death, "All we brought down to River Street was pride and a few nice things...I don't know. God knows Mother tried. But Papa. He just lost air, lost..." (332).

Sally Brandon's father drives back upriver to commit suicide. Her only brother takes to drink and wraps himself in the politics that serve as refuge to failed Canona males, "hollering...that Hitler was right" (75). Hannah's father and her brother until he dies—a release for

which he thanks his attacker before sinking into unconsciousness—choose another course. They become the protectors of their women, as in the averted Egeria Springs sex scandal.

Read as historical commentary, Settle's work suggests that these men, once they move downriver, lose precisely the strength and revolutionary spirit that brought them to the British colonies, made them successful in their revolt against their colonizer, and allowed them to tap into the wealth of their region's natural resources. They sacrifice these essential qualities to protecting women and coping with their sense of caged life.

MURDEROUS GENTILITY

Father McAndrews, the family's rector, counsels Hannah after her brother's death and confirms her growing suspicion that Canona's women have created the destructive dynamic. The rector attributes his failures to "a barrier of nice women shutting my mouth with a million cucumber sandwiches" (318). He asks rhetorically, "Have you ever faced the dark night of the soul in Canona, West Virginia?" (318). The priest also recognizes that the culture's willful ignorance has controlled him: "If I had said what was on my mind they would have run me out of town. I simply was not strong enough to bear their hatred" (318).

The doctor who tends Johnny in the hospital plays the assigned male role by joining Hannah's brother-in-law Spud, "flanking [her], shutting [her] out of the room by the instinct of men to protect the women they have shielded with their lives against any harshness, hiding [them] from the back rooms of the world where fact was..." (217). However, like Father McAndrews, the doctor also propels Hannah on her quest for truth by admitting in a private conversation that Johnny is the victim of a special Canona brand of execution: "Genteel murder...is the slowest form of murder. There's no law against it and no cure for it, and it leaves no sign of guilt" (219).

In a great irony of American and Appalachian history, the source of this murderous gentility is what Puritan Johnny Church revolted against. Settle repeatedly emphasizes the destructive quality of our ongoing aping of British gentility, attributing our inability to do otherwise to a primitive psychology: "an imitation of the oppressor as primitive as the cannibal who eats his enemy to gain his strength" (293).

In the voice of Hannah, Settle underscores her point, casting as today's colonizers the kingmakers in the region's industrialization: "I had seen it all my life, a disease to which we never became immune, we mountain people....In our shy pride we had, without knowing,

imitated the strangers who took our land, aped the rapists" (142). Unfortunately, the seducers are ill-chosen, "the least seductive people in the world, sexless, brittle, and unkind" (143). What the seduced become is also clear to Settle's alter-ego Hannah: "I saw what we stood for. We, more Anglo than the angels, were models of decorum, we strutted before the apers; we, apers and aped in turn, destroying, not by force but by something more evasive, a turning away, an indifference" (146).

In a society in which men tend only assets in a safe-deposit box, in which healers of neither body nor soul can speak whole truths, in which women can survive only if they know nothing, who will step forward to revitalize and conserve?

THE ARTIST AS TRUTH TELLER

The answer of *The Killing Ground* is the artist, but to voice truth the artist must "break through a taboo against the truth as rigid as the forbidden name of God" (208). Hannah (Settle, too, of course) is a product of the same language deprivation that prevents her sister, her priest, and her doctor from voicing truth. Because there is safety in the smooth surface of silence, Hannah finds herself torn between the compelling *why* and the restrictive pull of the familiar. Her mother—the female—is the antagonist. Lying on the bed with her the night of Johnny's death, Hannah finds herself almost seduced by the oppressor again: "But for this time of this night, she is my city, my citadel, my seducer." Ultimately, Hannah revolts, resists the "safe and killing past" (323) that is the false citadel being offered. She becomes Johnny Church's *true* descendant.

One of the many fictions instilled in the McKarkle children is that their suburban hillside neighborhood is separate from Canona proper: "Already in our minds the lines were being drawn between city and sanctuary" (202). Thus, when Hannah defies her mother, resists the death-night seduction, and drives away from the citadel where Sally Brandon and Melinda have built adjoining identical Tudor houses, she must understand that the city is one connected place, not the separate spheres she has been trained to perceive. The connectedness is hammered home by what she finds in the jail, her "feral twin" (268), her blood-kin, Jake Catlett. She concludes that nothing more than "an accident, long past, of the inheritance of hill land and the inheritance of bottomland" (282) separates her from her relation.

Chance appears to have altered and be altering the literal surface of Canona as well. Hannah, four books and 18 years later, returns to speak at a fund-raiser at the old country club, which has been serving as a children's museum since the new club was built. The impetus for

the new club was the unpleasant odors wafting down from the mines that produced the money that generated the club. The museum must be moved because the ongoing processes of mining have made the old building's foundation unsafe.

Hannah recognizes the historical implications of what others see merely as real-estate transactions: "The coal boom at the beginning of the century made this tiny mountain kingdom. Now it destroys it, and the [old clubhouse-turned-museum] sinks as Rome sank, but not in centuries...in decades" (12).

The Canona women who have invited Hannah, the historical novelist, to speak remain willfully ignorant of what Hannah calls "this brutal century." They are, she thinks, "women to whom nothing has happened that is not personal," who are "the prisoners of the welfare of their parents, their husbands, the habits of privilege." And, despite having invited her to give a talk on what she's learned about what lies beyond the personal in their stories, according to Hannah, "they fear the exposure of facts as I fear the isolation of illusion" (9).

By this route we come to the ironic position of the artist in the complex social dynamic of urban Appalachia. The artist, as Settle construes the region, is the only candidate for revealing truth, but, to perform that vital function, the artist must break the rules. These women do not share Hannah's recognition, do not share Hannah's sense of their own obsolescence. They assure her, in fact, that they "were able to keep *some* control over the guest list" (17) for her talk. In introducing Hannah, Daisy tries to exert a similar control over her, saying about Hannah's work-in-progress, "We sure do hope you tell the real story, you know, our side" (39).

Hannah perceives in these women an "old brutality...a force as primitive as the mountain women who where their ancestors" (41). She feels its pull, the attraction, even a misguided compassion for their position, which is dangerous exactly in proportion to its falseness, its unreality. The genteel public admonition about how Hannah should cast the truth is made more explicit in an anonymous phone call she receives that night. One of her hosts says, "Why don't you write about nice people, my God, there are plenty of nice things to write about....What do *you* know?" (85). Later in her drunken rambling, the caller utters "a final cry, the most dangerous from her cornered species: 'You embarrassed us!'" (88). Then she hangs up, "as if she'd said it all, which she had" (88).

Hannah is not entirely alone in her quest for larger truth. Her childhood friend Candy tells her that "The best thing that happened to this valley was when your family threw you out on your ass" (59). Hannah's exile produced her books, expanded Canona's sense of self and truth. Candy sends her back out into the larger world, presumably to write *The Killing Ground*, if we stay true to the novel's metafiction,

imploring her: "You tell, honey. Tell everything. We're counting on you" (63).

As feminist critics have set about the task of retrieving and revising America's literary history, we have too often begun, consciously or not, with the premise that female characters must always be victim, hero, or both. Settle's examination of Canona women and their genteel rule of law reminds us that the true(r) approach to the important work of understanding gender in literature admits the possibility of woman as perhaps unwitting accomplice, even perpetrator in our culture's less positive (d)evolutions. If we do, indeed, tell *everything*, we must accept the consequences of that telling.

NOTES

1 Nina Baym, *American Women Writers and the Work of History, 1790–1860* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995).

2 Baym, *Feminism and American Literary History* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

3 Mary Lee Settle, *The Killing Ground* (New York: Scribner's, 1982). Hereafter, page numbers cited parenthetically in the text.

4 Jane Gentry Vance, "Historical Voices in Mary Lee Settle's Prisons: 'Too Far in Freedom,'" *Mississippi Quarterly* 38 (1985): 391.

5 Ibid., 412.

6 Brian Rosenberg, "The Price of Freedom: An Interview with Mary Lee Settle," *Southern Review* 25 (1989): 356.

▪ 20 ▪

Learning Through Stories: An Appalachian/African American Cultural Education Project

Pauletta Hansel

The Urban Appalachian Council (UAC) was incorporated in 1974 to advocate and promote positive recognition and a decent quality of life for Appalachian migrants and their descendants in the Greater Cincinnati area. Approximately one-third of Greater Cincinnati is urban Appalachian; of this population, approximately 12 percent is also African American. The UAC targets Cincinnati neighborhoods that are predominantly Appalachian and low-income. Many of these neighborhoods have significant African-American populations as well. In September 1994, the UAC initiated the Appalachian/African-American Cultural Education (ACE) Project in community-based education programs in the neighborhoods of East Price Hill, Over-the-Rhine, and South Fairmount.

ACE was begun to address several issues. Program participants and staff had identified as a concern a lack of knowledge of the history and heritage of their families and communities, which are predominantly Appalachian and/or African American. Both groups experience significant discrimination and disadvantage in a city where they constitute a large portion of the population. Mutual understanding and respect for each other's cultural heritage is critical.

ACE was also designed to address motivation issues that are barriers to educational skills. While adult learners usually realize that education is key to attaining specific goals, past educational experiences, and other problems prevent many adults from successful involvement in academic learning. ACE uses self-directed inquiry. It is based on the participants' cultural, community, and experiential backgrounds—their own lives—and so motivates adult learners to be involved in the learning process.

The goals of the ACE program include:

- Bringing teachers and students to greater awareness and appreciation of their own and their neighbors' cultural heritage as a way to help build self- and community esteem.
- Integrating cultural content into the ABLE/ABE/GED program to make the curriculum and practice more relevant to our students.
- Increasing students' motivation toward education as a way to reach not just short-term goals such as GED attainment, but also life-long goals.
- Providing a collaborative learning environment for our students.

THE PROJECT

During school year 1994–95, UAC adult education teachers participated in a series of workshops to gain greater familiarity and comfort with using whole language, story circles, story building, and theater exercises in the classroom.[1] Teachers and students worked throughout the year with Roadside Theater, an Appalachian theater troupe from Appalshop in Whitesburg, Kentucky, and Junebug Productions, an African-American theater troupe from New Orleans. Both organizations have extensive experience in helping communities and organizations use cultural education as a tool for change.

The primary focus of both theater groups' work with the education programs was to use stories as an entry point for learning about any number of subject areas. The teachers found the story circle process a particularly useful starting place. This process involves gathering a group in a circle and inviting each to tell a story. If there is a particular theme the teacher wishes the group to explore, he or she may state this at the beginning or simply start with a story from the teacher's own experience that touches on this theme. The guidelines[2] for the process are stated at the beginning of each story circle:

Story Circle Guidelines

- Ask for a volunteer (or assign by democratic process) facilitator/timekeeper who determines how long each person can speak and keeps the process flowing.
- Ask for a volunteer (or assign democratically) recorder. Emphasize there is no right or wrong way to record.
- Determine a direction for the process to flow, clockwise or counter clockwise.
- Be an active listener. Don't think about what you're going to

say while others are talking—"trust" the circle to bring a story to you.

- You don't have to talk if you don't want to.
- Silence is okay.
- Respect and record each story as told whether you like what is being said or not.

The story circle was used by the educational programs in a number of ways: to build community among the students, to learn more about each other's culture and community, and as an indirect way to discuss difficult issues such as race and poverty. The process was also used as a tool for academic learning. In numerous instances, the group would select one story and develop it as a writing exercise, working on spelling and grammar, and then move on to study some specific aspect of geography or science referenced in the story. (See pages 192 and 193 for examples of how the story circle generated a variety of learning topics and activities.)

EVALUATION PROCESS

As part of the first year of the ACE program, we undertook an evaluation project to assess the program's impact on the knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes of our teachers. Our initial evaluation questions were:

- What specific knowledge have teachers gained in terms of both cultural content and educational practice?
- How has that knowledge changed teacher behaviors and attitudes?

Assessment tools included pre- and post-tests on cultural content, observation of sessions, teacher interviews, teacher self-evaluation, and participant evaluations.

HOW IT WORKED

Teachers reported and exhibited greater familiarity and comfort with cultural subject matter. At the start of the project, teachers asked to be given cultural content—African-American and Appalachian history, literature, art, and related materials, curriculum guides, lesson plans—to use with their classes. After a time, teachers acted much more independently, creating the materials, using libraries, resource lists, and, most importantly, using their own and their students'

knowledge of family and community history as educational resources.

Teachers were tested on their knowledge of Appalachian history and culture at the beginning and end of the school year. The pre-test indicated that teachers were, in fact, fairly knowledgeable in this area, despite their claims to the contrary. While the post-test showed some gains, the primary difference was the teachers' recognition of what they already knew, reported through teacher interviews and demonstrated in the classroom work. Additionally, two of the three teachers post-tested wrote more about their own family background than in the pre-test, indicating increased identification of their personal histories with Appalachian history in general.

Over the year, the primary tool for increasing cultural knowledge was stories: history transmitted through the stories from Roadside Theater and Junebug Productions, and through the teachers' and students' own stories about their families and experiences. While this has been an extremely beneficial first step, teachers recognize the need to incorporate other tools:

> We [continue to need] more support from the cultural side. [We need] workshops specifically about Appalachian and African American culture: who we are, famous people, what cultures are like now. It was better to do it through our own stories first, that was the priority, but learning history [through other resources] is a way of reinforcing.

Teachers became more confident in their ability to facilitate group learning rather than relying on traditional teaching materials and activities. Evidence for this included the teachers' own reports as well as their increased use of story circles, whole language, and other non-traditional approaches to a variety of subjects. Using these new techniques was a particular concern at the beginning of the project:

> I have to say that at the beginning I was somewhat confused. I couldn't understand [or explain to the students] how their stories applied to [working to achieve] their GEDs. [Junebug's workshop] helped me to understand the story circle concept. Since then [we] have done quite a few stories.

Another teacher reported:

> I have come a long way in learning how to take any idea and turn it into an academic experience.

The story circle method was useful in this regard:

> We learned about (using story circles) to get people to write. We learned how to branch a story off to cover areas such a social studies, science, math, and writing skills.

Teachers reported greater familiarity and comfort with alternative teaching methods. For the first year of the project, teachers were primarily training in whole language, specifically as it relates to the story circle process. However, teachers related the story circle to other teaching methods as well:

> We as teachers here are convinced that the story circle/story method is more related to the cooperative style of learning than many others.

Although they were already using a variety of alternative methods, teachers expressed a need for additional future training in these methods:

> I would have liked more information on different teaching methods—that got left behind. But I can see "the big picture" now. I think I'm already practicing some alternative methods even though we haven't had a workshop. Probably its better to see the overall view first I'm "right brain." I need to see the whole thing. But I would have liked more seminars to help make sure I'm heading in the right direction. In my heart, I believe I am.

Another teacher also reported becoming more confident in the direction she was taking:

> I learned that I already did some of the things we were learning about in my class [before the project started].

Teachers showed increased desire and ability to treat students as equal partners in the learning process. As the project progressed, this became a goal for most teachers. Several remarked on specific gains in this area. One wrote:

> I've changed for the good in the last year. I'm not as fearful experimenting with unconventional approaches as the Story Circle. In the beginning the Story approach was intimidating to me because of the control issue. What I mean is that we as teachers need to relinquish control at times and become facilitators, not just teachers. It is a little scary at times to be unable to tell where the stories will lead—the finished result may not be easily determined.

These changes were especially evident as teachers and students

worked together to prepare a public sharing of their work. The lines between teachers and students blurred as they worked together to decide what stories or activities to present, who should play what part, and how the presentation should be organized.

Change is seldom painless. The public sharing included the work of three separate educational programs. One program's decision around how to share its work had to be revised to fit within the overall format. This caused concern for that program's teacher, who had tried to be especially consistent in allowing her students control of the process. She felt uncomfortable going back to the students to request a change and reported back to the group the students' chagrin at being told to change. Ultimately, the students presented in a way that was comfortable to them and fit the overall program. However, the situation raised the need to deal with the issue of supporting the needs of individual programs while supporting the overall project goals.

We also needed to address differences of opinion as to what degree of relinquishing control is desirable. One teacher reported:

> [The students now] have full control of all decision-making. They really are in charge of what happens in the classroom. Their leadership and decision-making abilities really have blossomed.

It was (and continues to be) necessary to explore the issue of leadership within the democratic or collaborative process. Most participants felt that the teacher must maintain a leadership role even while striving toward a collaborative learning environment and even while supporting the leadership abilities of others. Teachers reported and exhibited increased confidence in their own abilities as well as other personal changes. One teacher reported:

> I have to say through all this project, it has made me a more confident person. To believe in myself, to accept me for who I am, and that all I need to do is just DO IT!!... It doesn't matter if you don't know how to do it all, just do the first step.

Another said:

> The hardest part...was learning to accept others' styles and own sense of how to get things done. Accepting others' ways has been a big accomplishment for me...I (have become) a better listener. I understand the importance of listening.

The third teacher agreed:

> I listen more intently. I also work better with [her co-teacher]. [This project] has helped us have a common denominator.

Teachers reported positive advances for their learners. While we did not focus our evaluation efforts on students, teachers had begun to identify positive effects. First, teachers reported increased confidence and self-esteem among their students, the teachers' primary goal from the beginning:

> I'm proud to say the students are growing and there are visible signs of this. Many are taking more responsibility and becoming more assertive.

> [This] is a better way of learning. It has made the students' self-esteem raise sky-high. They are apt to do just about anything now.

Second, teachers reported that their classes as a whole were more motivated and productive:

> Students get along better with each other than before...There is unity in the classroom. Students are leaders in the classroom...not all the time, but more. They speak up more when we do things as a group.

Another teacher stated:

> We are also, as a class, closer unit. [The students] take it on themselves to teach each other... They inspire me to come to work everyday.

Third, teachers reported increases in academic achievement, especially in reading and language mechanics.

Finally, teachers reported that students were more aware and respectful of their own and others' cultural heritage:

> We [teachers and students] are understanding each other as we hear each others' stories. We understand our past, the differences between cultures, and that its all right to be different.

However, it is important to note that the teachers encouraged us to go further with the multicultural aspect of the project:

> I am not saying that we shouldn't educate within a cultural context. But, maybe we should do this within a larger context: an urban culture.

CONCLUSION

Our initial findings showed that ACE is on the right track. Teachers and students are finding that whole language, story circles, story building, and theater exercises are all useful tools as they work toward their goals. Teachers have identified finding ways to better integrate these activities as ongoing components of the educational program as an objective for the coming year.

> [I want for us] to continue to grow. [A next step is] to use storytelling as a way of teaching writing skills, using books as reinforcement for this.

Teachers identified a number of needs and concerns around this. First, the need for ongoing support and assistance, from UAC and from other resources, primarily for workshops on other teaching methods, particularly collaborative and cooperative learning, and on some specific aspects of Appalachian and African-American culture. Teachers requested resources on writing with students—moving from oral to written stories.

Teachers indicated the need for ongoing support from UAC's cultural staff, pointing to areas where the previous level of support had been helpful:

> [Having the Cultural Coordinator] pushing us on was good impetus. We need to [continue to] have some accountability and to come together to see how we are progressing.

Teachers also identified areas where the level of support has been less than adequate:

> We wanted to do our family histories but could not get anyone to come in. I was given a few names of people to speak to the class on various things but none of them [worked out].

Finally, while teachers clearly reported the desire to continue, there were concerns about their ongoing ability to expend the time and energy required, especially given the increased demand on them and their students through welfare reform and other mandates:

> To do these projects I need time to prepare and help with ideas we can carry out. In my class the students are expected to be in and out in less than six months. Now how am I going to get them ready for their GEDs and do these projects, too?

We will continue to struggle with these issues as we move forward to incorporate the teachers' objective to better integrate our cultural work with the academic curriculum. In school year 1995–96, we will begin to evaluate the impact the project has had on the curriculum and instructional program, and how those changes impacted students' academic and non-academic goals and progress toward them.

NOTES

1 The 1994–95 ACE participants were: Mike Brierly and Debbie Holmes, East Price Hill Adult Education Program; Mary Ann Roth, Bonnie Hood, and Phyllis Shelton, Appalachian Identity Center; Sandy Fisher, South Fairmount Community Center Youth Program; Debra Bays, ACE Project Coordinator; Ron Mason, Cultural Outreach Staff; Pauletta Hansel, Evaluation Coordinator.

2 Prepared by Mary Ann Roth, Cincinnati, Appalachian Identity Center, based on Story Circle Principles developed by John O'Neal, Junebug Productions.

An Example: Rashell's Story

RASHELL'S ORIGINAL VERSION

One day me, my brother, Cousin, Aunt, and Uncle went to Felicity And when we got there everyone deared me and my brother to jump off the cliffed into a lake but he almost drowned and me and my brother had to help him. then later on that day, me, my brother and cousin all went for a walk and we went to this stream because of all the rain there was some strong current and she was walking in the stream and fell me and my brother did not help her. She went about a 1/2 mile down the stream before she got out.

The students corrected run-on sentences, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling errors.

DEBBIE'S CORRECTED VERSION

One day my brother, cousin, aunt, uncle, and I went to Felicity. When we got there everyone dared my brother and me to jump off the cliff into the lake. Then my uncle jumped off the cliff into the lake and he almost drowned. My brother and I had to help him. Then later on that day, my brother, cousin, and I went for a walk. We went to a stream. Because of all the rain there was some strong current and Shaundra was walking in the stream and fell in. My brother and I did not help her and she went about a half a mile down the stream before she got out.

EXCERPT OF STUDY OUTLINE BASED ON RASHELL'S STORY

Felicity

A. What does the word "felicity" mean?

B. How did this place get its name?

C. What is the population of Felicity?

D. Where is Felicity located?

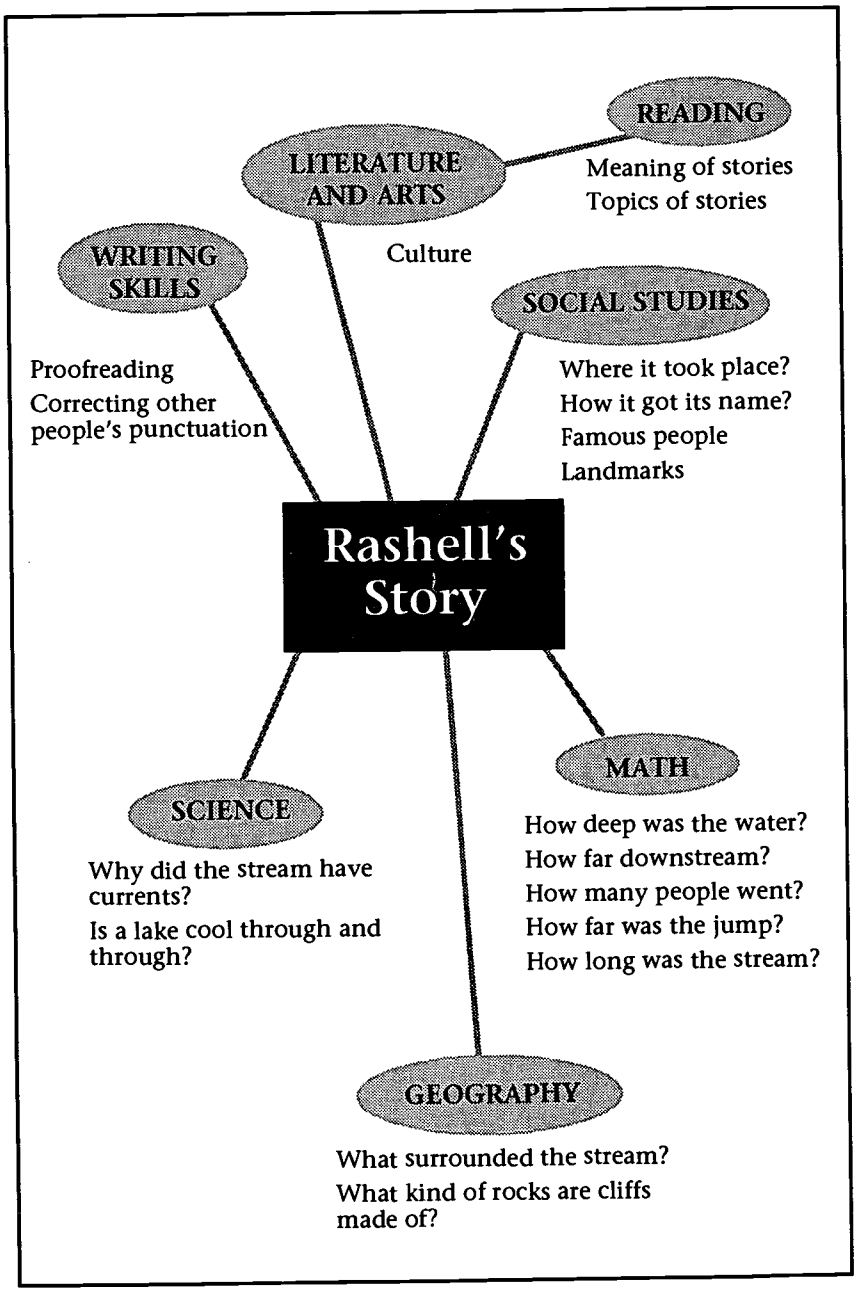
E. Is Felicity a city, town, or village?

F. Was or is Felicity specially known for something?

G. Any landmarks?

H. Are there any famous people from this area?

Learning Through Rashell's Story



The Snake Man: A Story

Richard Hague

When I was ten or eleven, the notion entered me to look for snakes. I had seen snakes before then, of course, but these sightings were accidental, unplanned: walking back through the woods on the way to Fox's Den or Sunshine Cave, I'd freeze in my tracks as a blacksnake appeared on the path before me, a glinting swiftness that dissolved in the shadows and light as soon as I had seen it, uncertain as a dream. Mostly, I'd doubt my own eyes, convinced that it had been only a shifting illusion, but then I'd find a length of shed skin between two rocks, and I'd pick it up and look at the sky through its scaled transparency, and wonder.

So I decided to firm things up a bit, to actually search out snakes, see them in their own places, and be convinced. I did not have to go far. Up the street from our house was a hillside lot, bulldozed out of the sandstone and shale, with a number of great flat rocks lying about. My friend and I chose one, hoisted it, and there, glory be, lay a snake. It was an Eastern Ring-Necked, a slim beauty of slate gray with a pale yellow ring just behind its head. Eighteen inches long, it lay in a loose S in a depression under the rock, and it did not flee. I nabbed it between my thumb and first two fingers, and it coiled calmly around my wrist like a cool bracelet, weightless almost as my skin. I took it home and kept it in a jar while my father and I built a cage from an old dynamite box and some porch screen. The snake lived, apparently content, in the cool shed all that summer until I turned it loose when school began.

A few weeks before that, a friend of my father's, Dutch Riesling, visited us. "I hear you got you a snake," he said. We walked back to the shed and I showed him the Ring-Necked, and he allowed as how it was a fine specimen, and rare. "Your Ring-Necked is a shy one." he said.

"Don't hardly ever see such, they're so quiet and secret."

We stared into the cage a while longer, and as we were about to leave, he reached up to his chest. "Course there's some snakes that ain't so small and dainty." With that, he pulled a three-foot pilot blacksnake out of his shirt, and I stood agape as it wound itself tight around his arms, coiling almost clear to his shoulder. It was a fine animal, sleek and dry, with a dark moist tongue that fluttered like a puff of smoke from its mouth, and with steady calm eyes and perfect round pupils, black as India ink. Dutch let me hold it, and I felt its heft, its actual muscled weight. Any lingering doubt I might have had about the reality of snakes was therewith dispelled. That blacksnake occupied actual space and time; I could feel its powerful vitality clenching on my arm.

Often after that, Dutch and my father and I would go on hikes, looking for snakes in the summer, or for fossils in the winter. One December, up on College Heights, we stood next to some huge boulders that had been torn out of the land by bulldozers clearing the place for the new university. The rocks were full of brachiopods, shiny gray fossils the size of a thumbnail or larger, their fan-shaped shells piled one atop the other, and millions of years old. Dutch chipped one out whole, and lay it in the palm of my hand. "That there animal has come a long way to get to you," he said. "You think on that hard, now."

In all the chances I had, in all the possibilities of men I could have met and been influenced by, it was two or three that luck would have me cross paths with as a boy. Forrest Buchanan was one. He was the namesake of the Forrest Aububon Club in Steubenville, and I still remember the talk he gave to the members one autumn evening in 1957. Pythons swallowed pigs, and brilliant hand-sized morpho butterflies floated through the Amazon forest he described—still the primeval one, forty and more years ago, not the ravaged staggering giant it is now, with bulldozers and roadbuilding machines scavenging its ruined wilds. I sat in the front rows amid the ladies in their hats and the gentlemen in their coats and ties, and decided that I, too, would go to the Amazon, dare to wade its piranha-infested rivers, breathe in that same incredible humid air, see all those jeweled wood-boring beetles. And I'd write it all down, and save it.

Mike Swartz was another. The father of my best friend, he hunted coons and collected helgrammites in the riffles of creeks—monsters we had not known even existed. Once, driving back from one of those trips, Mike had stopped in the road to pick up a blacksnake, a big one, and it had wrapped half of itself around his forearm and the other half around the seat frame of his truck. He'd had to drive back leaning wildly to his right, unable to shift gears, and his son Roger and I sat in the back of the truck, trembling.

And there was Dutch. He worked on the Bell Telephone line gang with my father, and had been a scout master for years. His easy familiarity with snakes, and his outgoing, laughing manner made him a favorite guest speaker in elementary school science classes, where he'd often pull off his snake-in-the-shirt trick. A serious outdoorsman, he camped every summer in the boondocks of Canada with his wife and boys. He was a welder, too, and along the walls of his garage workshop stood tanks of oxygen and acetylene, and sometimes when we'd visit he'd be working out there, crouched like a witch doctor in a shower of sparks. In the center of the garage for a season or two stood a 30-gallon galvanized garbage can, covered with a square of coarse hardware cloth weighted down with a brick. At the bottom of it, motionless, smelling vaguely of cucumbers, lurked a 30-inch copperhead.

Dutch was an old-timer, hand-building things and repairing them himself, still knowledgeable and enthusiastic about what many would call "the old ways." He knew the names of plants and birds, insects and trees. He knew, first hand, the ways of the weather, and the slope of land, and the suggestion of water a line of sycamores, seen from far off, made. He knew how to build a fire in the rain, and how to sleep comfortably on the ground. A native of a town scarred by industry, its skies ruddied by the glow and smoke of the mills, its creeks yellow with acid run-off from old mines, its hills stripped and barren, he nevertheless walked with his senses clear and his mind on Nature.

He probably has little idea of how much he and Forrest Buchanan and Mike Swartz and my father affected me, or how they made me aware of the other, secret lives—of titmice and nuthatches, of Ring-Necked snakes and katydids—that were carried on with a strange and exciting intensity just beneath the urban veneer of my place. Though a part of the working world, accepting the necessity to labor for others at a job, he never lost his ability to live really in his awareness of Nature and wildness. He held what seemed to me his most secret strength in reserve not for mere work, but for life. For him, that meant much more than the daily routine of the domesticated, urban human. For him, that meant keeping snakes, literally and figuratively, close to his heart.

Remembering Dutch and his reptiles, I am reminded that the world is not only a human place, but a place of a thousand other kinds of beings, voiceless, unlettered, but whose acquaintance is an occasion of growth and delight, even a deep kind of wisdom. Most of the life on this planet lives under a rock, or beneath the surface of the sea, in a burrow or crevice, or aloft in a windblown tree. I might have sleep-walked through life, if it hadn't been for Dutch and the others. I might have made the common mistake of thinking and living as if buying were always better than listening, that progress meant growing more

and more deaf to the voices of the forest or pond, that a microwave was always better than a campfire, that a roof was superior to the stars on a cloudless night, or that the best thing to happen between myself and a snake was distance.

NOTES

An earlier version of this essay appeared under the title, "Snake Eyes" in *Ohio Magazine*, April 1992. Used by permission of the author.

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Phillip J. Obermiller is a Center Associate at the Appalachian Center of the University of Kentucky and a Visiting Professor of Urban Affairs at the University of Cincinnati.

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