

NEWS

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LETTER

APPALACHIAN CENTER

BEREA COLLEGE

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Berea's Sound Archives: More Words and Music

Berea College's Appalachian Center has launched a program of recording (both sound and video) the songs and the thoughts of traditional musicians. This past summer Asa Martin, Fiddling Doc Roberts and James Roberts got together (for the first time in 35 years) to give a concert at Berea, and a video tape was made for the library collection. Another tape preserves a reflective and reminiscent conversation between John Lair, of Renfro Valley Barn Dance fame, and Bradley Kincaid, a radio ballad singer (and Berea alumnus). Both of these tapes were made with the assistance of the Save the Children Federation. Also, Buell Kazee was videotaped in a recent folk-song concert.

The Berea Library's Weatherford-Hammond Mountain Collection is also actively pursuing materials relating to music. Through the help of Kern Lunsford, Nelle Lunsford Greenawald and the Lunsford Collection of Mars Hill College (N.C.), the Mountain Collection has received recordings, notes, relevant articles and texts of the songs of Bascom Lamar Lunsford, a North Carolina ballad singer who has recorded more than 350 songs from memory. Another donation is from Jean Ritchie, who is copying tape recordings that she made in the British Isles, where she was tracing family songs.

Thanks to various donors and lenders, Berea's Appalachian Museum is displaying an extensive collection of traditional Appalachian musical instruments. A large and varied group has come on loan from Si and Kathy Kahn of Mineral Bluff, Ga. Asa Martin has loaned a fine homemade banjo, John Jacob Niles is lending a representative sample of dulcimers from his notable collection, and James Still has presented a Jethro Amburgey dulcimer.

The making of these recordings and the acquisition of the other kinds of materials are viewed as promising first steps toward the wide preservation and use of cultural material that might otherwise be lost. Students will play an important part in the process: the college is training them in the operation of video and sound equipment, in photography and in curatorial skills.

Buck Rogers, Strip-Mine Restorer?

A considerable splash has been made this fall by the announcement of a \$537,000 study of strip mining being undertaken (mostly with Appalachian Regional Commission funds) by the state of Kentucky. The announced

aim of the study is to discover ways of lessening the damage done by stripping and of improving methods of reclamation.

One part of the study aims at finding methods that will produce more coal and at the same time leave the land in better shape than is the case with present techniques. A reporter asked a U.S. Forest Service researcher whether such shining goals are at all realistic. "You can't completely sanitize mining," said the researcher, who is himself participating in another phase of the overall study. "But it's quite possible to do a better job of it. Actually, if what we know had been applied in the past, there'd be much less pollution than there is now."

The total study, the researcher explained, is broken into six "tasks": design of surface-mining systems (the shining goal just referred to); economic and environmental evaluation of selected surface-mining techniques; sediment-control research; slope-stability research (landslides, etc.); revegetation research (which shows which spoil is too acid for mining to be permissible); water-quality research.

Of the aim of finding a method that will produce more coal for less environmental damage, Kentucky's former acting reclamation director, Buddy Beach, said, "Maybe it's Buck Rogers, but it's worth exploring."

In any case, according to author-lawyer-conservationist Harry Caudill, "it's all a matter of markets" and the market for Eastern Kentucky coal isn't what it was a year or two ago. The Japanese, who used to import much of it, reacted to the Nixon surcharge *shokku* by switching to Canada, Australia and North Vietnam. Further, since the Japanese have lately cut down their purchases of Canadian coal, this same coal is crossing the border to ready markets like Detroit.

Humanities: Is There Room for Regional Cultures?

For the past year and a half, Lees Junior College (Jackson, Ky.) has been revising its curriculum with the very substantial help of the National Endowment for the Humanities. This grant (totaling, with matching funds, \$350,000 over three years) is enabling the college to recast its teaching program on the theme, "Man and His Total Environment: Focus on Southern Appalachia."

The college's successful application for an "educational development grant," as they are called, was based on the idea that Southern Appalachian people represent an ethnic minority and that their characteristics are distinct enough and valid enough to be worthy of perpetuation. The program "aims to increase the student's awareness

of his social and physical environments and to motivate him to assume the position of leadership which will allow him to effect positive change in Southern Appalachia."

At Alice Lloyd College (Pippa Passes, Ky.) another educational-development grant from the endowment (\$232,000 plus \$30,000 matching) is funding a somewhat similar program designed to develop new courses involving students with their Appalachian heritage. One of these courses uses drama as a teaching technique.

Together, the Lees and Alice Lloyd grants represent the great bulk (at least two-thirds) of the money laid out in the Appalachian South by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The only other sizable grant (\$117,000) has gone to the Appalachian Film Workshop of Whitesburg, Ky.

This pattern of grant-making seemed to make it evident that the NEH looked kindly on regional American cultures and programs designed to portray and perpetuate them. It was therefore productive of a shock wave in the mountains when the New York *Times* and *Time* magazine reported that Dr. Ronald S. Berman, new (since last December) director of the NEH, wanted to veto several grants and that the Alice Lloyd (but not the Lees) grant was among them. What did this portend? Was Dr. Berman, an avowed champion of humanistic excellence, seeking to eliminate such "regional culture" grants in favor of Shakespeare and Dickens? Or were his objections more specific?

Indeed they *were* more specific, said Wallace Edgerton, deputy director of the NEH. And indeed the Endowment is *not* turning away from regional American cultures. Since an early meeting of its advisory committee in 1966, he explained, when novelist John Ehle raised the banner of regional cultures, the NEH has unwaveringly supported them, and Dr. Berman is in agreement with this course. The problem really arises in a confusion between the purposes of the National Endowment for the Humanities and those of the National Endowment for the Arts. Both call for excellence. But where the NEH would support public performances of music, for instance, the NEH would support research by a musicologist.

Similarly, according to Edgerton, the NEH is not interested in supporting drama, good or bad, for its own sake. Instead, it is interested in the effective use of humanistic materials in teaching. If drama measures up on this score, well and good. If it is deemed not to do so, then it's likely to encounter opposition at NEH.

As Edgerton explains it, program applications having to do with regional American cultures are welcomed by NEH, which is as concerned with such cultures as it is with general culture. But the applicant should be sure that his primary aim is educational rather than artistic. It seems obvious, too, that the standards will be stringent.

Appalachia on Film: Myth and Reality

Movies, lectures, classroom discussion and lots of reading combined to make East Tennessee State University's summer film workshop what one student called "a complete success." Because of this success (one feature of which was the enrollment--150 students), the university plans to repeat the workshop next summer, according to the director, Dr. John B. Tallent.

One distinctive feature of the workshop was the fact that it was conducted in association with several "adjunct" courses--in art, education, English and sociolo-

gy. Plans for next year's workshop include expanding the adjunct-course offerings to other departments.

Themes taken up by this year's workshop, under the overall theme *Appalachia, Myth and Reality*, included myth and reality in film, religious fundamentalism, feuds and violence, legendary heroes, racial and ethnic minorities, economy and ecology, moonshining and other arts and sciences, damming of the waters, natural man, and mountain music. There was a movie for each theme (as a game, you might try matching the films with the themes): *Trail of the Lonesome Pine*; *Wild River*; *High, Lonesome Sound*; *Cool-Hand Luke*; *A Walk in the Spring Rain*; *Rich Land, Poor People* and *The Captive*; *Sergeant York*; *Inherit the Wind*; *Trail of Tears*; and *Thunder Road*.

The workshop seems to have had the interesting result of improving the students' image of Appalachia and its culture. "I am prouder now of my mountain heritage than I was before I attended the workshop," said one native of the region, while an immigrant to Appalachia observed, "I feel a new love for my adopted region as a direct result of my experiences these two weeks."

Information about the 1973 workshop will be available from the office of Dr. Tallent (Box 2317, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tenn. 37601).

Winter Folk School - "An Awakened Spirit"

If you're between the ages of 18 and 30 and have a "desire to learn and grow and a willingness to live and work within the mores of the community," you may be interested in the Winter Folk School conducted by the John C. Campbell Folk School of Brasstown, N.C. It begins in January and runs for five months.

With enrollment limited to 25 (both college and non-college persons), the school operates as an experience in group living. Seminars and lectures cover a wide range of subjects, there is ample scope for independent study, and there is plenty of attention given to activities like crafts, music, dance and gymnastics.

The experience, says the school, is a "different kind of education, holding that an awakened spirit is a vital, primary educational experience."

Full information can be obtained from John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, N.C. 28902.

Health Care on a Shoestring

Like many an Appalachian coal-mining town, Briceville, Tenn., was once fairly prosperous. When the coal mines were gone, however, no other industry came to take their place, and the soul-smothering ache of poverty settled deep in Briceville's bones.

But, in the face of disheartening odds, many of the people of Briceville are struggling to uplift their community. Their efforts have been bolstered by considerable outside help, but their most notable achievement is a project that they've conceived and carried out on their own. It's called the Briceville Health Center.

The idea for the center came into being over two years ago when a group of citizens banded together and organized the People's Health Council, following a health fair conducted by medical students from Vanderbilt University. For a long time the center was nothing more than a dream of the council, and even after considerable progress had been made there were still times when the



Brunner Studio

Appalachian Museum



How to Shoe a Horse, Make a Dulcimer, etc.

This fall Berea College's Appalachian Museum is conducting a series of crafts demonstrations on a number of Saturday afternoons. As the above pictures show, the demonstrations are held at the outdoor crafts area, beside a genuine mountain smokehouse which was moved to the museum grounds. The crafts being displayed include blacksmithing, saddlery, vegetable-dyeing and spinning. Other scheduled demonstrations cover a range of practical crafts--quilting, chair-caning, dulcimer-making, wood-carving, candle-making, the making of muzzle-loading rifles.

The young farrier shown is 14-year-old Dan Bowling of Richmond, Ky., who studied blacksmithing this past summer at North Texas Farriers School. Holding reins is leatherworker Elizabeth Balke of Berea. Vegetable dyeing is demonstrated by Jerry Workman of Berea. A noted practitioner of this craft, Workman is a former director of the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen. The "spinster" above is Colleen Ambrose, a Berea College student who is descended from a pioneer Appalachian family.

The Appalachian Museum, an educational collection of some 6,000 items of mountain life and lore, is open daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Sundays from 1 to 6 p.m.

Appalachian Museum



project seemed destined to fail. But the council members kept hoping and working, and on April 19, 1971, the Briceville Health Center opened its doors.

The center is housed in a specially outfitted trailer in the heart of Briceville, just across the road from the elementary school. Five doctors and a dentist donate their time to the center on a rotational basis. Dr. David Stanley and Dr. D.L. Dunlap, two surgeons from nearby Oak Ridge, serve more or less as general practitioners. Physicians who work with the center in specialist roles are Dr. William Hicks, a Knoxville pediatrician; Dr. John Burkhart, a Knoxville orthopedic surgeon; and Dr. Jack Rule, a Knoxville ophthalmologist. An optician from Vision Opticians in Knoxville accompanies Dr. Rule and fits patients with eyeglasses. The firm provides frames and lenses at cost to those who can pay and without charge to those who can't.

A large number of people in Briceville worked long

and hard to bring the health center into being. But nearly everyone in town agrees that the driving force behind the project has been Byrd Duncan, a sprightly 71-year-old former coal miner who is president of the People's Health Council.

The council has established the construction of a permanent building as its next goal. Some money has been raised for that purpose through bake sales and by selling--for a dollar each--cards that bear the printed message, "Buy a Block for the Briceville Health Center." "People have been awful good to us," says Byrd Duncan. "And we sure do appreciate everything they've done. This health center is the best thing that's ever happened to Briceville, and we'd be plumb ruined without it. But we need us a building awful bad . . . I may not know how right now, but somehow we'll git it done."

(Adapted from *Tennessee Valley Perspective*, Fall 1972)

Resources Project Guides Tennessee Research

At the University of Tennessee (Knoxville), research in a variety of specialized fields is aided and coordinated by the Appalachian Resources Project. Project staff members help faculty members and students develop research and development plans and attempt to secure funding from likely sources.

Although the project appears to cover the academic spectrum, its essential concern is the relationship of all these disciplines to the development of Appalachian resources. Impetus for creation of the project came from university faculty members interested in problems arising out of the mining, transportation and use of coal. A sampling of the project's concerns shows activities in such fields as air and water quality, crafts, land use, literature, music, plant siting, public health, resource-extraction techniques, resource utilization, rural and urban development.

Anyone interested in the work of the project may obtain published reports and other information from Dr. F. Schmidt-Bleek, Director, Appalachian Resources Project, Stadium Hall, Room 351, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn. 37916.

Church Leaders Form Task Force in Kentucky

Forty Kentucky church leaders of various denominations have established a Social, Economic and Political Issues (SEPI) task force with the declared aim of increasing the involvement of church members with issues affecting Appalachian poor people.

At the September 16 meeting at Hazard, Ky., the group elected Rev. Michael Smathers, a United Presbyterian minister, as chairman; Dr. Donald Graham (Disciples of Christ) was chosen SEPI coordinator for the state. The group joins other SEPI task forces already established in West Virginia, Ohio, Virginia and North Carolina.

SEPI is a component of the Commission on Religion

Marshall E. Vaughn, 1886-1972

Marshall Everett Vaughn, founder and first editor of *Mountain Life & Work*, died at Berea on September 28. Mr. Vaughn began *Mountain Life & Work* in 1925 as part of a county improvement program (the magazine was originally published by Berea College but later became the journal of the Council of the Southern Mountains). In addition to his editorship of *ML&W*, Mr. Vaughn was at various times in his career a school superintendent, secretary of Berea College, superintendent of Berea's extension service, editor of the Berea *Citizen* and Kentucky state representative.

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in Appalachia (CORA), a coalition of 17 denominations and ten state councils of churches. As a regional task force, it has sponsored what are called consultations on such topics as youth and poverty, hunger and malnutrition, self-determination for poor people, strip mining and welfare reform.

Purpose of the task forces, as described by Smathers, is "to develop support within the local churches so that the congregations can become a real effective voice of the mountain people. We hope to educate church people about the social, political and economic realities of the region."

Poetry from Pikeville

The Appalachian Studies Center of Pikeville College (Ky.) keeps the poetry presses humming. One previously announced book has recently become available and another is due shortly. The first is *Southern Season*, selected poetry of Alice Moser Claudel, who is a teacher and writer in residence in Maryland. The book is paperback, 94 pages, and sells for \$2.95.

The second book is *Cat Claws and Tree Bark*, selected poetry and prose poems by the late Virginia Casey Turner, a Berea College graduate who taught in Eastern Kentucky. This is a hard-cover book selling for \$4.50.

Eye on Publications

"*They'll Cut Off Your Project*," by Huey Perry (Praeger). In 1965 the author became director of the fledgling community-action agency in Mingo County (W. Va.). As he rapidly discovered, the "war" in "War on Poverty" was a well-chosen word. There were enemies on all sides, and they receive names and numbers in this lively chronicle.

Freeman, by Lillie D. Chaffin (Macmillan). The author of 1971's award-winning *John Henry McCoy* is back with another book for older children. Mrs. Chaffin, an Appalachian herself, knows the mountain people she writes about.

Only the Names Remain: The Cherokee and the Trail of Tears, by Alex W. Bealer, with illustrations by William Sauts Bock (Little, Brown). A slender book, actually the text of a television documentary, about the history, culture and demise of the Cherokee Nation in north Georgia.

Migrants, Sharecroppers, Mountaineers and The South Goes North, by Robert Coles (Atlantic-Little, Brown). Volumes II and III of *Children of Crisis*. A gifted psychiatrist and writer listens to poor Southerners and Appalachian mountaineers and shares their inner thoughts and desires and troubles. Coles conveys the anxiety and uncertainty that people face as they travel from one place to another following crops, or leave their homeland to seek a new life in the North.

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