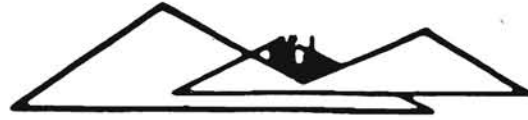


NEWS

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LETTER

APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE

Loyal Jones • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

Vol. 14 No. 1

Winter 1985

Looking Forward

March 29-31: Appalachian Studies Conference—"The Impact of Institutions in Appalachia"—Berea College. Papers and other presentations will reflect the stated theme in relation to such areas as religion, environment, education, handicrafts, politics, literature. For details write Anne Campbell, Appalachian Collection, University of Kentucky Libraries, Lexington, Ky. 40506.

April 3-6: Women Writers Conference, University of Kentucky, will be devoted to special presentations by a variety of women writers, many of them nationally recognized; workshops will be featured. Information from Appalachian College Program, University of Kentucky, 641 S. Limestone St., Lexington, Ky. 40506.

April 11-13: Fourth annual New River symposium, sponsored by the New River Gorge National River of the National Park Service, joined this year by the West Virginia Department of Culture and History; Pipestem State Park, Pipestem, W.Va. A serious conference for those interested in any aspect of the New River—physical or social—"from its North Carolina headwaters down to its mouth in West Virginia." Contact William E. Cox, P.O. Drawer V, Oak Hill, W.Va. 25901. The proceedings of the three previous symposia are now available (at \$12.50 each) from the same address; these are wonderful sources of facts about everything from Wythe County iron furnaces to the role played by the black fly in the ecology of the New River.

April 17: Grant-writing workshop for small organizations, with Bob Fink and David Peters; John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, N.C. 28902. Grant writing would not appear to be a growth industry, but perhaps there are still dollars to be plucked, private if not public.

April 18-20: "Folklife and the Public Sector," a national conference focusing on "the dual themes of assessment and prognosis" (we put that in quotes because if you asked us, we couldn't tell you what it means), Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Ky. 42101. For more information, you can get in touch with Bert Feintuch at WKU.

June 6-9: Festival of the Bluegrass, Masterson Station Park, Lexington, Ky. Bill Monroe, J. D. Crowe, et al., performing outdoors, with adjacent campground. For details, send SASE to P.O. Box 272, Georgetown, Ky. 40324.

June 10-21: Appalachian culture and writing; Rad-

ford University, Radford, Va. 24142. Gurney Norman will conduct a course and James Still will appear for a one-day workshop. Contact Grace Edwards, Box 5917, English Department, at Radford.

June 24-29: Ninth annual Appalachian Celebration, Morehead State University, Morehead, Ky. 40351. Music, dance, food and crafts. For complete information, contact the Appalachian Development Center at MSU.

June 28-30: Third annual conference and workshop of the Appalachian Writers Association, Morehead State University. Visiting editors, publishers and authors are expected to be on hand. Details from Garry Barker, UPO 907, Morehead State University, Morehead, Ky. 40351.

September 9-11: 50th anniversary conference, Blue Ridge Parkway; University Center, Appalachian State University. An across-the-board affair, expected to tackle everything from folklore to land management. Write Barry Buxton, Appalachian Consortium, University Hall, ASU, Boone, N.C. 28608.

ARC: After 20 Years

Just 20 years ago—the date was March 9, 1965—President Lyndon Johnson signed the act creating the Appalachian Regional Commission. Recently the governors of the 13 Appalachian states (as defined by Congress) met in Washington to honor the pioneers of the commission and to call attention to changes wrought in the region in the past two decades.

A highlight of the celebration was the presentation of medallions recognizing the work of the two late Presidents, John F. Kennedy and Johnson; former Senators Jennings Randolph of West Virginia and John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky; Senator John Stennis of Mississippi; former Representative Robert E. Jones of Alabama; Representative Jamie Whitten of Mississippi; the late Representative Joe L. Evins of Tennessee; Representative Tom Bevill of Alabama; former Governor Bert T. Combs of Kentucky; the late Governor J. Millard Tawes of Maryland; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., chairman of the President's Appalachian Regional Commission, a forerunner of ARC; and John D. Whisman, Kentucky's first representative to the commission and ARC states' regional representative for more than a decade.

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Regional statistics in which the commission takes pride include figures showing that in the 20 years the percentage of Appalachians living in poverty was cut in half and was moving downward toward the national figure (although there were serious setbacks in the recession of the early '80s). Two million new private-sector jobs were created. Per capita income rose from 78 percent of the national average to 85 percent. More than 57 percent of Appalachians had completed at least four years of high school, compared with 33 percent in 1960. Infant mortality (though troublesome—see accompanying story) was halved.

In recent years ARC has shown that it has as many lives as an adventurous tomcat, and as its report shows it is still proudly hanging on by one claw.

Programs, No Policy

Since World War II the South has undergone striking changes in such aspects of life as education and health (and, particularly in the past two decades, so has Appalachia, as some of the facts in the neighboring story show).

But a current report concerning the health of babies contains some dismal figures. Produced by a task force of leading citizens, the report reveals that 10 of the 11 states with the worst infant-mortality rates are in the South, and in spite of the fact that the national trend for years has been toward lower infant mortality, in 1981-82 the rates in seven Southern states either increased or showed no change. Too many babies are born to teen-age mothers, and too many of those are 14 or under. Only 71 percent of women in the South received adequate health care during pregnancy. And of all the children in the United States who have no medical coverage, more than half live in the South.

The report states forthrightly enough that "cuts in federally funded programs in the early 1980s have diminished some states' capacities to deliver comprehensive health services." The governor of South Carolina has observed that "this country has a lot of health programs, but it doesn't really have a health policy." Despite the budget-deficit situation, the governor believes that it's time to do better.

New Home for "Heritage"

Appalachian Heritage is not a new magazine—in fact, it's now 12 years old—but the next issue will be not only a novelty but very likely a collector's item. Founded by Alice Lloyd College, the quarterly of "Southern Appalachian Life & Culture" was preserved through the support of an independent board when the founding school decided to cease its publication. The Hindman Settlement School offered a home, with Albert Stewart, the first editor, continuing in that role.

Now *Appalachian Heritage* has found its third home, as Berea College has agreed to provide not only lodging but sponsorship. The first issue to appear under the new arrangement will be a double Winter-Spring 1985

number, scheduled for May 15. Succeeding the retiring Stewart is Sidney Farr of the Hutchins Library staff; Ms. Farr is the author of *More Than Moonshine*, an Appalachian cook-and-anecdote book, published by the University of Pittsburgh Press, as well the earlier *Bibliography of Appalachian Women* (University Press of Kentucky). Subscription is \$12 a year.

The forthcoming issue will include contributions by Jim Wayne Miller, Wilma Dykeman, Verna Mae Slone, John Stephenson, Jeff Daniel Marion, Bettie Sellers and Albert Stewart, and in a special feature Gurney Norman will interview poet George Ella Lyon. In a super-special feature James Still will provide a definitive answer to the timeless question: What is Appalachia?

Heritage will be published at Berea under the aegis of the Appalachian Center and the Hutchins Library. According to Loyal Jones, director of the center, 20 complete sets of the magazine (1973-1985) are now available to collectors at \$75 a set; orders are especially encouraged from librarians and archivists.

Summer Special

This summer's course from the Appalachian Center is an across-the-board look at Appalachian literature, history and music. Wilma Dykeman (literature) and Ron Eller (history) return, and they will be joined by Charles K. Wolfe, professor of English at Middle Tennessee State University and prolific writer on folk and country music (his collaboration with Grandpa Jones is noted on page 4 of this NEWSLETTER issue).

Wilma Dykeman—novelist, historian and biographer—is one of Appalachia's most renowned writers. Ronald D. Eller teaches history at Mars Hill College. His book *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers* won the 1982 W. D. Weatherford Award.

Course dates are June 10-28. For an application or any further information, write the Appalachian Center, C.P.O. Box 2336, Berea, Ky. 40404.

Sarah Gertrude Knott 1895-1984

During the Depression, the director of the St. Louis Dramatic League—a Kentucky-born woman named Sarah Gertrude Knott—became involved with various
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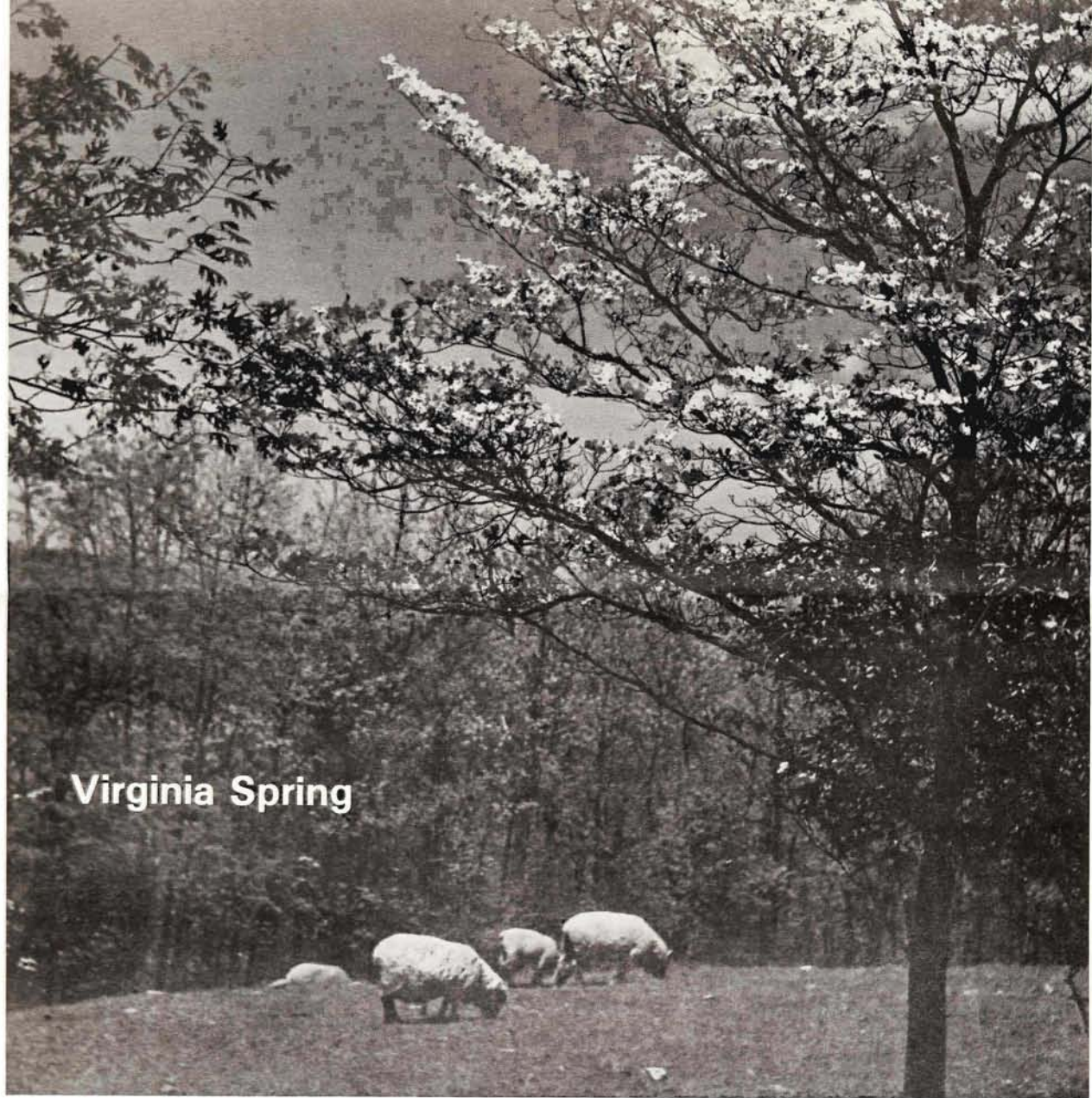
Letter

TO THE EDITORS:

The newsletter I've been receiving from Berea is without doubt the clearest, best-done, most interesting one of its kind I've ever read. Believe me when I tell you I have a broad base for comparison; I think I'm on every mailing list from here to Moscow.

AUDREY J. MORRISON
Louisville, Ky.

(We'll believe you—gladly. And thanks. Any more opinions out there, pro or con?—EDITORS.)



Virginia Spring

Earl Palmer

SARAH KNOTT *from page 2*

kinds of ethnic performers in the city. Seeing a need to keep the old songs and dances alive, she suggested and pushed through the establishment of what became the National Folk Festival. That beginning in 1934 launched her on 37 years as director of the festival, years spent in traveling from city to city, scheduling, promoting, directing, emceeing. And, as a friend put it, "How contagious was her enthusiasm as she brought together the cowboy singer, the Appalachian tale-teller, the town crier, the American Indian—and so many others with traditions that without her perseverance could have been lost forever."

This past November, following a long illness, Miss Knott died. She was 89.

EYE on Publications

Mountaineer Jamboree, by Ivan M. Tribe (University Press of Kentucky). Aside from the big annual music

jamboree in Wheeling and various private festivals held here and there across the state, West Virginia is not today a great force in country music. But, starting some 60 years ago, the Mountain State enjoyed an era as a mecca for singers and instrumentalists from all over America—thanks to the coming of radio. Little Jimmy Dickens, Hawkshaw Hawkins, Red Sovine, Molly O'Day, and, to be sure, Grandpa Jones were merely a few of the country-music stars who gained fame over West Virginia airwaves.

Mountaineer Jamboree traces the music story from the early folk ballads and instrumental songs, through the coming of academics—first with ear, later with microphone—and of radio impresarios to the post-war successes and on to the present day. The rise of Nashville and of TV meant the end for most of the local radio performers; young performers must now seek fame outside their native state. But the heritage remains. (The author, who teaches history at Rio Grande College in Ohio, notes that he was helped in his research by an Appalachian Studies Fellowship from the

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publishers of this NEWSLETTER.)

Southerners, by John Shelton Reed (University of North Carolina Press). Some years ago, one Jerry Lewis remarked on the "Tonight Show" that recently, while flying over Mississippi, he had used the rest room, thus "fulfilling a long-standing ambition." Even some of Lewis's admirers (such people are said to exist in various parts of the world) may have found that a little raw, as did the state's governor and at least one congressman. To the author of this book the story is of interest because of his focus on the similarity of white Southerners to American immigrant and racial groups; the outraged response to Lewis's mindless bit of babble suggested that Southerners "share the sensitivity to slights, perhaps exaggerated and self-defeating, of these other groups." Reed quotes Jonathan Daniels to the effect that "for good or ill, being a Southerner is like being a Jew. And, indeed, more needs to be written about the similarity of the minds and the emotions of the Jew, the Irishman, the Southerner, and, perhaps, the Pole, as a basis for the better understanding of each of them and of them all." Such thoughts became more commonly expressed after the beginning of the great "ethnic revival" in the late 1960s; this book, which comes with the inevitable portentous subtitle ("The Social Psychology of Sectionalism") represents a systematic examination of the idea. The subject is not the South but Southerners.

Everybody's Grandpa, by Louis M. "Grandpa" Jones with Charles K. Wolfe (University of Tennessee Press). Strangely, Grandpa Jones first became popular as a singer in the Boston area rather than in the South, and he didn't learn to play the banjo until after he had become nationally known. Nevertheless, he managed to survive these handicaps to become a double country star as musician and comedian. In 1969 came "Hee Haw," which, as Grandpa remarks, gave "some idea of just how much television could help our bookings." The network dropped the show in 1972 (wrong demographics), but the producers put it into syndication, where it apparently will stay forever.

Charles Wolfe, working with Grandpa's autobiography and with interviews, letters and observations, has produced a narrative that reads as if Grandpa had written every word.

Last One Home, by John Ehle (Harper & Row). A western North Carolina story, beginning at the turn of the century, when a storekeeper's son and a farmer's

daughter grow up, marry and start a family. The couple and children leave their small mountain settlement and try life in Asheville, where matters prosper. Pink, the husband, goes from success to success, as the next generation begins claiming more and more attention. At one point there is discussion of whether a daughter who's a great reader ought perhaps to date the town's other book omnivore, Tom Wolfe. The decision is no; young Wolfe probably wouldn't like a rival reader and, besides, he probably takes after his father. It's a family-and-business-saga kind of story, of the sort John O'Hara used to do, except that its people and mores are those of western North Carolina rather than of Gibbsville and Ivy League New York.

Sweet Hollow, by Lou V. Crabtree (Louisiana State University Press). A collection of stories set in the Appalachian hills fifty years ago. The author "portrays this world in all its rugged complexity, writing of the games of its children and the struggles of its adults, the wiles of its predators and the contentment of its livestock." The world in this stories is primal, far removed from the urban Asheville of *Last One Home*.

Minstrel of the Appalachians: The Story of Bascom Lamar Lunsford, by Loyal Jones (Appalachian Consortium Press). In 1970 Loyal Jones, director of the Berea College Appalachian Center, invited Bascom Lunsford to come to Berea to present a concert. In short order Jones's letter was answered by a phone call. "Why, I can't come up there," Lunsford said. "I'm 89 years old. You come to see me." Jones did just that, became enchanted with his host and wrote an article that led to his beginning the years of work that went into the present book. *Minstrel of the Appalachians* is, says Cratis Williams, "a thorough, painstaking and exciting account of the life and contributions of Appalachia's foremost practitioner, interpreter, and promoter of our traditional music and dancing. Sound in scholarship, enhanced by a wealth of over 50 photographs, and enriched by an invaluable sampler of ballads and songs collected and sung by Mr. Lunsford, the book moves as rapidly as a high mountain stream from the first sentence to the last. It is a microcosm of our cultural traditions." Lunsford was a man of parts—fruit tree salesman, English and history teacher, lawyer, newspaper man, politician. Those pursuits were all very well, but they faded when the "Squire of Turkey Creek" heard the siren call of music.

The music in the book is transcribed by John M. Forbes of Baker University, Baldwin City, Kansas.

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