

NEWS

LETTER



APPALACHIAN CENTER

BEREA COLLEGE

Loyal Jones · Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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OK Migrants

It's "selective perception" that gives a black eye to Appalachian people who move to cities like Cleveland. That's one of the conclusions of a report prepared in the Institute for Urban Studies at Cleveland State University.

The frequently held urban view of Appalachian people as "shiftless poor whites" simply doesn't fit the facts, say the Cleveland observers. The problem, they say is that "Appalachians with severe problems are noticed; successful Appalachians are not." That's the "selective perception."

According to the report, Appalachian people in the city are not more racially prejudiced than the average American, are not lazy, are not drunkards, are not high-risk employees and, once established, change residence only half as often as the average American family.

In short, most Appalachian folks do reasonably well. Such migrants from the region as Howard Baker, Patricia Neal and Allen Tate would probably agree.

Clinch Valley Workshop

Eleven Appalachian students are enrolled in Clinch Valley College's Summer Appalachian Seminar. The aims of the seminar are to develop a better understanding of the historical development of Appalachian culture and a better understanding of the major sociocultural institutions. The seminar is taught by James Axelrod, instructor of sociology at Berea College, and Dr. Helen Lewis, professor of sociology at Clinch Valley College.

The seminar emphasizes individual and group research, field trips and self-directed study. Members of the seminar are studying "struggle" literature and are interviewing musicians, coal miners, welfare rights leaders and other such persons in the region.

Costs of Coal

The University of Tennessee's "Costs of Coal" project--conducted by the Appalachian Resources Project--is studying its subject matter from four points of view:

- a) the demand for and supply of coal;
- b) the human capital costs associated with coal production;
- c) county incomes as affected by coal production;
- d) the direct measurement and costing of damages and abatement efforts in strip mining.

Point d) was recently discussed by two UT professors
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Workshop members visit craftsman William McClure

The Positive Side of Appalachia

For the past few weeks, 26 persons--most of them teachers in Appalachian high schools--have been taking a positive look at Appalachian culture and history in Berea College's first summer workshop in Appalachian Studies. The idea behind this workshop is that the communications media, by concentrating on the region's problems, have overlooked the achievements and contributions of Appalachian people.

The purpose of the workshop is not simply to make the teachers feel good but to give them knowledge and practical pointers that will enable them to develop Appalachian studies in their own schools. In fact, the final two weeks are being devoted to the developing of actual courses, including assembly of bibliographies and other teaching materials.

Participants observe that they didn't need to be sold on the fact that the region has numerous strong points,
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"Foxfire" editors receive Weatherford Award check for \$500 from Louis Iglehart, member of the judging committee and director of the University of Tennessee Press.

From left are student editors Gary Warfield, Claude Rickman and Stan Echols, and Eliot Wigginton ("Wig"), founder and supervisor of the "Foxfire" project.

Wig, Students Receive Weatherford Award

Originally it was a "quieting experiment," a somewhat desperate effort by a young teacher to bring order to his unruly high school classes. Now it is a national phenomenon, the inspirer of imitations, and an ornament of the culture it helps to preserve.

That's the story of *Foxfire*, the magazine produced at Georgia's Rabun Gap-Nacoochee High School, and of the two books made up of selections from it.

On April 25, Eliot Wigginton, the teacher who dreamed up the *Foxfire* idea, and three of his student editors—Gary Warfield, Claude Rickman and Stan Echols—came to Berea to receive the annual W.D. Weatherford Award for the most significant writing about Appalachia published in 1972.

Harvard University psychiatrist Robert Coles was also scheduled to be present to receive a Special Weatherford Award for his book *Migrants, Sharecroppers, Mountaineers* and other writings, but was kept away by bad flying weather.

The award was presented to the *Foxfire* group by Louis Iglehart, director of the University of Tennessee Press and member of the board of judges. Other visiting speakers were writer Wilma Dykeman, also a member of the judging committee, and psychiatrist David Loeff, winner of the 1971 award for his book *Appalachia's Children*.

The W.D. Weatherford Awards, which are made possible by funds provided by Alfred H. Perrin of Berea, are sponsored jointly by Berea College's Appalachian Center and Hutchins Library. Rules of the competition state that the award will go each year to "the writer of the work published anywhere in the United States which . . . best illuminates the problems, personalities and unique qualities of the Appalachian South." This writing may be a book, a short piece of any kind (including fiction and

poetry), or a series of pieces. The rules also provide for the giving of a "Special Weatherford Award to honor another work or body of work that makes an outstanding contribution to the understanding of Appalachian people."

The first award, presented for writing published in 1970, was won by Ben A. Franklin of the *New York Times* for his articles on coal-mining problems.

Anyone interested in further information about the Weatherford Award competition should write to Thomas Parrish, C.P.O. Box 2336, Berea, Ky. 40403.

OPINION

How Dry We'll Be

"Ravaged land," "moonscape," "obliteration of mountain communities"—terms like these are commonly used to describe the violence done by strip mining. But the following editorial comments on some of the other results of the practice. This editorial, which expresses a consternation that may well not be unique to Kentuckians, comes from the Lexington Leader, which has for many years been the state's best-known Republican newspaper.

Dr. Wayne H. Davis frequently writes letters to our Viewpoints column. In recent years he has made a national reputation as an environmentalist, and now offers additional evidence supporting our long-held belief that strip mining should be banned in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

He was discussing some of the many problems created by the mineral pollutions of our rivers and streams from strip mining. He mentioned the impact this could have on one of Kentucky's best-known industries—Bourbon whisky.



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but that—as Virginia Skelton of Jackson City, Ala., puts it—“I simply didn’t know enough to set up a course in Appalachian studies. Now I’m planning a six-week unit for a ninth grade English class.” Ginny Patch, one of the few participants not from Appalachia, feels that the workshop is an important cultural phenomenon. What she learns, she says, can be of direct value to her students in rural western Massachusetts. “I think this thing is going to boom,” she says. “It’s really needed.”

The workshop consists of two courses—Appalachian History and Culture, and Literature and the Arts in Appalachia. Participants earn graduate credit through the University of Kentucky, which is cosponsor.

Teaching talent has included Wilma Dykeman, regional fiction; Richard B. Drake, Appalachian history; Richard Warren, culture and history; Pat Wear, curriculum development; Jim Wayne Miller, Appalachian poetry; Lillie D. Chaffin, children’s literature; James Stokely, poetry; Cratis Williams, Appalachian speech, literature, history and music; Garry Barker, crafts; Ethel Capps, folk dance; Raymond McLain, music; Leonard Roberts, folk tales, and Eliot Wigginton, regional materials.

Special resources on the Berea campus include the Weatherford-Hammond Mountain collection of more than 6,000 printed and recorded items and the Appalachian Museum. The workshop is coordinated by the Berea College Appalachian Center.



Workshop schedule has included visit to nearby Renfro Valley (top l.). Among visiting experts have been Jim Wayne Miller (r. in top photo, with Appalachian Center director Loyal Jones and participant), writer Wilma Dykeman and poet James Stokely, and cultural historian Cratis Williams.



“Who would want to pay several dollars for a bottle of whisky made from strip-mine drainage in Kentucky when he can buy whisky made from good clean Canadian water?”

He also underscored the problems this increased, unwanted mineralization can create for the average Kentucky household. He estimated it costs the average residential water consumer \$72.35 a year—for more soap to produce lather, shorter wearing time for clothing, and increased damage to household appliances using water, and to plumbing. If the mineral-polluted water is undrinkable, the additional cost goes up \$90 a year for bottled water.

Contrary to what many urban citizens of Kentucky think, strip mining does affect them, as well as those citizens who are unfortunate enough to live near strip-mining sites.

Kentucky’s next session of the General Assembly, in January, should abolish strip mining completely in this state. Our land and our people have paid too high a price already. Our suffering will become worse if strip mining is allowed to continue.



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before House of Representatives subcommittees concerned with various bills that seek Federal regulation of strip mining. Dr. Friedrich Schmidt-Bleek, a chemist, and Dr. John Moore, an economist, spoke with some optimism about the possibilities of reclamation. But, they said, higher performance bonds and more thorough monitoring activities are needed. They called for bonds that would at least equal the actual cost of reclamation and for surveillance by aircraft and satellites.

The two urged a complete ban on surface mining in certain areas where revegetation wouldn't be successful.

Kudos

Wilma Dykeman has expressed her love for Appalachia and her concern for the well-being of the region's people in novels, magazine articles, lectures, her newspaper column.

The APPALACHIAN CENTER NEWSLETTER would like to salute her for one of the most recent—and most insightful—distinctions her efforts have won. The Tennessee Conservation League has chosen her as Conservation Communicator of the Year, in recognition of the message she brings to the public through her column in the Knoxville *News Sentinel*.

Similar insight was shown this spring by the awards committee of the Western North Carolina Historical Association, who honored Bascom Lamar Lunsford with their annual Achievement Award in recognition of his remarkable and all-encompassing contributions to the "preservation of the traditional music, songs and lore of Western North Carolina and of the Southern Appalachians."

For one of his achievements alone, Mr. Lunsford (now 91) would merit the adulation of folklorists. He has recorded more than 350 songs, with variants, for the archives of Columbia University and the Library of Congress, thus preserving not only tunes and words but the "authentic sounds of the traditional music of the Southern Appalachians."

Oral History Publications

Whether it's thanks to *Foxfire* or simply to a general trend of the times, it's the age of oral history in Appalachia. On hand to prove the point are two student publications.

One, *Recollections*, is published by the Appalachian Oral History Project at Lees Junior College (Jackson, Ky.). It draws on more than 300 interviews students have taped with residents of surrounding counties. The current issue (Spring 1973) features a long interview with Rev. Samuel Vandermeer.

The second publication, *Mountain Memories*, is an "occasional newsletter" issued by the Appalachian Oral History Project at Alice Lloyd College (Pippa Passes, Ky.). The principle, as might be supposed, is the same as that followed at Lees. We have no 1973 issue of *Mountain Memories* available, however, and would welcome one.

Wilderness Road Returns

Back at Berea's Indian Fort Theater this summer is the Paul Green outdoor drama *Wilderness Road*. The play, which originally appeared in the 1950s, returned in a new production last summer and incorporates further changes this year. It will run nightly (8:30), except Sundays, until September 2.

Eye on Publications

Return the Innocent Earth, by Wilma Dykeman (Holt, Rinehart and Winston). The new Appalachian novel by the author of *The Tall Woman* and *The Far Family*. The history of the Clayburn family is likewise the history of changing American economics and changing American values. But love of people and love of the land can survive.

Stand Like Men, by James Sherburne (Houghton Mifflin). After two Civil War novels (*Hacey Miller*, *The Way to Fort Pillow*), the author turns to the "Bloody Harlan" coal war of 1931, when the miners were struggling to "stand like men."

Carry Me Back: Slavery and Servitude in Seventeenth Century Virginia, by Robert S. Cope (Pikeville College Press). This is the newest offering from the busy publishers at Pikeville's Appalachian Studies Center; the author, a historian, is president of Pikeville College. The book is a detailed analysis of the "two outstanding labor systems in use in Virginia in the seventeenth century--indentured servitude and Negro slavery."

Kentucky's Last Frontier, by Henry P. Scalf (Pikeville College Press). This is the second edition of this detailed history of the great region that was once Floyd County, Kentucky. A labor of love by a local historian.

Foxfire 2, edited by Eliot Wigginton (Doubleday). If there were any reader of the CENTER NEWSLETTER who hadn't heard of *The Foxfire Book*, we would tell you all about *Foxfire 2*. But careful research shows that there is no such reader.

The Kingdom of Madison: A Southern Mountain Fastness and its People, by Manly Wade Wellman, with drawings by Frank Holyfield (University of North Carolina Press). About one of the most fascinating counties in the mountains, Madison County, North Carolina, which a native, Bascom Lamar Lunsford, called "the last stand of the natural people." Wellman captures the flavor of life there, now and in the past.

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