NEWS LETTER

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John Fetterman, Reporter

You never knew where in the Eastern Kentucky hills you might run into John Fetterman, reporter for the Louisville *Courier-Journal.* He moved widely over the area, looking, talking, but mostly listening. He was a remarkable listener, and mountaineers felt this and opened up to him.

"All I try to do," Fetterman once said, "is find out how ordinary people are touched by things going on around them and then tell the truth about it."

He won a Pulitzer Prize (one of his two) for local reporting in "Pfc. Gibson Comes Home," a story in which he caught and transmitted the feelings of the family, friends and neighbors of a Knott County boy killed in Vietnam.

And in his book ***Stinking Creek*** (1967), he captured in microcosm the culture of the creeks and hollers, though his purpose, he said, was "merely to meet and know a few of the people who live and work and loaf and hunger and pray along the banks of a little stream called Stinking Creek." No one has done it better.

In June, John Fetterman died. He was a quiet man and an inspired reporter.

EYE on Publications

Appalachia: Its People, Heritage, and Problems, edited by Frank S. Riddel (Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co.). An anthology designed for use in college Appalachian studies classes, growing out of the editor's own experience at Marshall University. The contributors are mostly familiar Appalachia hands.

Mountain Heritage, edited by B.B. Maurer (Mountain State Art and Craft Fair). A "resource book designed to produce understanding and appreciation of the cultural heritage" of West Virginians. It is divided into five text parts--on the wilderness, culture, language, music and religion--and two sections on songs and dances.

Voices from the Mountains, collected and recorded by Guy and Candie Carawan (Knopf). A really handsome soft-cover book, with photographs, songs, reminiscences, reporting, organized around several themes, mostly having to do with coal. There is also a look back at an enterprise that was called the War on Poverty. A criticism of the book is that the only pictures of the "celebrities" carry identifying captions.

1974 Annual Report of the Appalachian Regional Commission. Another picture-and-text book, with lots

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On Appalachian Politics, Development, History

Highlights From Berea's Workshop in Appalachian Studies

Berea College's workshop in Appalachian studies (described in the Winter 1975 issue of the CENTER NEWSLETTER) has just completed its third summer session--a lively round of lectures, discussion, music and other occasions for absorption in Appalachian matters. This year mountain politics and history received some pointed and pithy attention. The editors decided that this material was too good to keep to ourselves, and we therefore present this sampler from the workshop (remember, it is ***only*** a sampler; these highlights do not represent any kind of cross-section of the workshop as a whole, nor do they represent anyone's complete thought. They are simply selected opinions).

The speakers are James Branscome, formerly of the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Highlander Research and Education Center; Harry M. Caudill, Whitesburg (Ky.) attorney and author (***Night Comes to the Cumberlands);*** Helen Lewis, professor of sociology, Clinch Valley College; and Cratis Williams, acting chancellor of Appalachian State University.

James Branscome

The trouble with the Appalachian Regional Commission was pointed up in an article in this morning's paper. The ARC authorization bill was up before Congress, and Representative Joe Evins from Tennessee had slipped in \$2.5 million to build a crafts center in his district. The ARC staff did not know anything about it. They've been trying unsuccessfully for years to get money in the budget to develop small business enterprises. Their request was knocked out and the funds for the crafts center were slipped in by Representative Evins in committee. . . .

The problem of Appalachia is that the elected officials do not represent the people but represent special interests. . . .

The biggest myth about Appalachia is that it is underdeveloped. Appalachia is one of the most developed regions in the country. Consider the fact that 150,000 coal miners have died in mines, most of them in the region. The United Mine Workers of America was once the most powerful union in the country. The United Steelworkers were created by the UMW on miners' dues,

and so was the CIO.

Look at Oak Ridge, the Tennessee Valley Authority and NASA at Huntsville. The chemical complex in the Kanawha Valley has no equal, except perhaps in the Ruhr.

There are more institutions of higher education in Appalachia than in any other rural area of similar size--213 in 13 states, I believe it is--and yet there is more illiteracy. We have 10 percent of the population but 40 percent of the nation's illiterates.

The problem is not that we are underdeveloped.

Harry M. Caudill

We ought to recognize at the beginning that in the Appalachian Mountains there are two types of politics. One operates more or less in an economic vacuum in the counties where there is little or no coal, and where the old Eastern Kentucky still lingers. And then, of course, most important for Kentucky and for the rest of the nation, we have the politics of coal--the political situation, the political power structure and the political arrangements that prevail in the counties where coal is king. . . . This has brought to Kentucky and to the Appalachian region probably the most ruthless form of politics to be found anywhere in the nation, because coal county politics is a game people play for keeps. There the economic power and the political power are merged. The name of the game is cash, it's money, and whoever has the money in the United States generally wins. Whoever runs a pauper campaign loses. . . .

Now why do we need money? Well, the first thing of course is that in this society of ours there are a large number of people who simply have to be bought if you get them to go to the polls. Sometimes you go to them and give them money, sometimes you hire them to work at the polls, sometimes you do this or that. There are many ways you camouflage your approach, but the fact is there are many millions of people in America who do not vote unless they are paid to vote, and this is especially true in the Appalachian Mountains and I'd say across Kentucky. . . .

We had an interesting story break four years ago, I guess it was, when Wendell Ford was running for governor. As lieutenant governor, he is alleged to have flown to Wise County, Virginia, and met at an old inn there with a number of coal operators. This got out on Ford at that time and was reported in the press and was denied by all hands. The story was that Ford had agreed that he would veto any severance tax legislation in Kentucky in return for generous contributions and that 16 contributors had come forward on the spot with $5,000 apiece. After Wendell not only went back on his promise but got the proposed severance tax raised from 10 cents a ton to 35 cents a ton, the ardor of the coal industry for him cooled perceptibly, and when he voted for the strip-mining bill this spring it vanished entirely, so that coal operators began to tell all.

I think that brings us to a very important possibility in American politics: if the people are indignant enough and determined enough, they can override the contributors. That's exactly what happened with regard to the severance tax. . . . There was such great pressure out of Jefferson County (Louisville), where the people were paying most of the taxes in the state and were the only county in Kentucky that had most of their children on double shifts. They simply demanded that the coal counties start paying some revenues into the treasury. So under this pressure, I think, Ford went back on his promise and passed the severance tax despite the contributions. So an aroused people can compel the politicians to do what is good for the country notwithstanding the contributions, notwithstanding the commitments that are made. If we the people can muster the will to keep the heat on the politicians, we might get some effective pro-public legislation and administration from time to time, notwithstanding the tremendous sums of money that come up in the form of contributions. . . .

I think that it's very important for all of us to realize that in matters of politics and social problems and practically any field you want to speculate in, the Appalachian Mountains are a pioneer region. We were the first region in the country to have to face the economic problems resulting from a collapsed agriculture. Our land wore out because of the primitive agriculture that sent too many fields up to the heads of too many hollows. We were the first region to face a great industrial collapse. We industrialized to the point where every hill and hollow in more than a dozen counties practically had a coal mine in it. We became not, as people sometimes say, unindustrialized or underindustrialized, we became overindustrialized--overdependent. A collapse of that industry back in the late '40s made Eastern Kentucky again a pioneer region in experiencing the social problems that flow out of a collapsed economy. I think one of these days the politicians of the Appalachian Mountains and of Kentucky may have to face another great problem, and that will be what to do with a collapsed welfare system. After all, in the Appalachian Mountains we have seen the most complete development of the welfare state in the United States; it supports the highest percentage of the population to be found anywhere in the country. And also the Appalachian Mountains pioneered and developed the politics of coal and its allies.

Helen Lewis

There are three models I thought I would compare: what is generally called the ***culture of poverty*** model and another model which we might call the ***developmental*** (or underdevelopment) model, and then the third one would be the ***internal colonialism*** model. Now as to the culture of poverty model: Oscar Lewis devised this or was one of the responsible persons along with Herbert Gans in describing poor people in Mexico, in New York City, in Boston--people who lived in a life-style and had a set of values that seemed to these two sociologists to be different from those of mainstream, affluent, middle-class America. Lewis and Gans felt that people who lived in a real poverty situation for a long period of time developed certain kinds of attitudes and values that got passed on from one generation to another--that poor people became very apathetic and very fatalistic. They relied upon their family systems rather than upon other kinds of organizational structures. There were deficiencies in their culture and in their values which kept them poor. Well, this makes some sense. I think you do see third and fourth or even second generation poor people who seem to teach their kids not to have much motivation for achievement. They don't encourage their kids to go to school or they teach them to keep their mouths shut and not say anything, and they do pass on a kind of culture of oppression or culture of repression. But the problem with that model, it seemed to me, was that then people took it and devised programs to solve the problem and what they were doing was treating the symptoms. These people were fatalistic because they were in a situation

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Renfro Valley Celebrates John Lair Day

Country music performers from the early radio days and other friends gathered at Renfro Valley, Ky., on July 4 to honor John Lair, pioneer broadcast promoter of folk and country music. Rockcastle County staged the celebration, which was called an 81st birthday party for Lair, who produced music shows in the 1930s on WLS in Chicago and WLW in Cincinnati before returning home to create the famous Renfro Valley Barn Dance, which developed into one of the nation's most popular country music shows. Asked recently how country music has changed since the early days, Lair shot back, "When it changed, it was no longer country music."

Photos: Above--Old friends Lair and a well-known Kentucky colonel; below--Lily May Pennington, one of the original Coon Creek Girls; at right--bottom, Bradley Kincaid (facing camera) and Asa Martin; above, Asa Martin, Jim Gaskin and Earl Barnes; above them, B. Lucas, Jerry Behrens.

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where they could not achieve anything. So they weren't simply fatalistic, they were realistic. . . . .

When you use this to explain why the area is poor, then you end up doing the thing that Ryan has documented in a little book called ***Blaming the Victim***--you are blaming the victim for his own problems. You blame the poor folks for being poor because they think poor and act poor and train the kids to be poor. There are a whole lot of other reasons why they are poor, but this is still a usable model. I mean you can see the effects of poverty, of oppression, of being powerless--all the fancy words you want to use. But if you don't look past that to say why, then it seems to me you only see part of the problem.

The model I called the development or the underdevelopment model looks at the area from the standpoint of capital--of the lack of adequate resources and the need to stimulate growth and development. A lot of economists follow this. The Appalachian Regional Commission has followed it in looking at growth centers and what areas are growing and how you can stimulate economic growth. They'll say, "Well, the area is deficient in certain kinds of things like roads, so we'll build big roads. The area has too many people for the number of jobs, so we must facilitate migration." And they look and they see some people are thinking modern and some are thinking old-timey, and these modernizing people are very valuable in terms of socializing people to join the development process--encouraging people to migrate if we want them to migrate or training them for this kind of job if we need them for this kind of job--so that there's a lot of emphasis on putting capital investment in places where it's going to have the biggest payoff. . . .

The developers still don't care that in Dickinson County there is not a hospital. There is not any kind of public transportation, and the people are still hitchhiking or walking 20 miles to get to a doctor. So this development approach looks at certain aspects, at a kind of overall economic picture, and it does produce change when you follow the scenario.

The internal colonialism model, it seems to me, looks a little bit more at the process and structure through which some of these things happened. It gets more at some of the causes. It looks at the ways in which dominant outside industrial interests established their control and continue to prevent economic development of this subordinate internal colony. Appalachia is thus a colony economically and culturally subservient to outside mineral owners--true more of the coal region than of any other part of Appalachia. You can use this model to look at the uses that the region has served the rest of the nation for a very long period of time. You can look at tourism around Boone, N.C., and in north Georgia. You can look at the timbering that was done in the past and some that's still being done today. You can look at government agencies such as TVA and the mineral and energy policies that the government is planning today--the damming of rivers, the use of waterways. These policies look not at the needs of our region but at the whole country's energy needs. What I'm saying is that the area is used by the rest of the country in ways that produce some of the social and economic problems we have.

Cratis Williams

No history of Appalachia--the region--has been written yet. . . .

The best documents for writing a history of Appalachia are scattered around, and just finding the basic documents would in itself be a difficult task. And yet it must be done for this reason: Almost all of the states have good histories - the history of Kentucky, history of North Carolina, history of Virginia - but in all of these histories if Appalachia is touched on at all it is touched backhandedly, and it's very obvious in reading the history that the historian doesn't really know anything about the Appalachian portion of the state and that he's passing along the usual stereotypes without doing any really careful investigation.

EYE on Publications *from page 1*

of charts; it covers the activities of the commission for fiscal 1974, which ended a year ago, so it's not exactly current news. But anything that details the expenditure of a great deal of the taxpayers' money ought to be studied. According to the report, the commission is switching its attention from roads and other facilities to services (health, education, etc.) and to "working to help the Region prosper from the nation's increased need for energy, which Appalachian coal can supply, and to use this prosperity to attain developmental goals, while at the same time avoiding the damage to the environment that might result from this coal boom." Well, in the memorable words of Jake Barnes, "Isn't it pretty to think so?" But this neat trick has so far eluded everybody who's tried it, if anybody really has. Now, if the governors who make up the commission were to get *serious* about this. . .

The Webster Cookbook, edited by Joe P. Rhinehart with illustrations by Florence S. Rhinehart (Edwards & Broughton, for the Webster Historical Society). You don't have to be from Webster, N.C., to salivate at the sound of "Mrs. McNish's wild strawberry preserves" or "Mrs. Tilley's pickled okra," though in the latter case it might help a little bit. Anyway, these are only two of the items from the Carolina past that make up this collection, which was derived from old hand-written recipe books and scrapbooks. You can order the book from Mrs. Rhinehart for $6.99 (including postage). The Webster ZIP is 28788.

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