

# NEWS LETTER



APPALACHIAN CENTER  
BEREA COLLEGE

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## Two Summer Workshops

Berea College will host not one but two Appalachian Studies opportunities this summer. As usual, it will hold, in cooperation with the University of Kentucky, a Workshop in Appalachian Studies (this one, the sixth annual, will run from June 12 to July 21), and in addition there will be a Short Course in Appalachian Literature during the week June 11-17. The short course will be appended to the longer workshop to take advantage of the presence on campus of its specialists in Appalachian literature and to benefit from its other activities. Both groups will hear lectures by novelist Wilma Dykeman, veteran Appalachian scholar Cratis D. Williams, poet Jim Wayne Miller and others. The workshop will be directed by Loyal Jones and the short course by James Gage of Berea College.

The six-week workshop offers two courses, each for 3 hours of graduate credit through the University of Kentucky. They are History and Culture of Appalachia and Literature and the Arts in Appalachia. Other specialists in the workshop will be Richard B. Drake, historian; Pat Wear, curriculum specialist; Helen Lewis, sociologist; Stephen Fisher, political scientist; Persis Grayson, craftswoman; Joan Moser, musicologist; and Mike Mullins, oral historian.

Both the workshop and the short course are designed to help teachers prepare courses in Appalachian literature, history or other areas.

Costs for the short course are \$75, including meals. Participants may stay in Berea College dormitories (\$14.25 for the week).

The major portion of the costs for those admitted to the workshop is covered by scholarship, with participants paying \$175.00 toward costs, including tuition for graduate credit, room and board.

For further information write the Appalachian Center, at the address on this NEWSLETTER.

## Coal's Weakest Link

A team of analysts over at the Research Triangle Institute of North Carolina and North Carolina State University has concluded that the best way to move large tonnages of coal is by railway and waterway.

But waterways are, by nature, limited and as for the railroads . . . well, the team's report observes fatalistically, "substantial track mileage is being threatened with abandonment." Even if it's the best thing, it's being phased out. Therefore, "coal haul roads must bear an increasing load."

These analysts are not, in spite of their dispassionate language, ivory-tower types. They observe that coal roads are unsatisfactory as it is, without any more burdens being put on them: "Few of the roadways used for coal haulage in Appalachia were designed for that purpose. Human lives are endangered by travel on crumbling roads and on bridges strained by coal truck traffic." Some Eastern Kentucky roads and bridges are so deteriorated that "it is considered unsafe to route school buses on them." Unsafe for anybody to drive on going the other way, one might add, as well.

The remedy? Five billion dollars' worth of upgrading and maintenance -- if coal production of a billion tons a year, the Administration's goal, is going to be attained. Who should provide the money? A complex question, the report acknowledges. But in any case, the coal haul road "is probably the weakest link in the nation's coal supply system."

The complete report is available from Mr. Robert King, Appalachian Regional Commission, 1666 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20235. No matter what your view of energy problems, you should find the facts in the report of considerable interest. Ask for "An Assessment of the Effects of Coal Movement on the Highways in the Appalachian Region."

## Blast It!

Appalachia -- Science in the Public Interest, an enterprise based in Corbin, Ky., announces a workshop that should be of interest to everybody who lives in an area where strip mining is conducted.

"Surface Mine Blasting and Public Policy" is the title of the discussion, which is to be held April 4-5 at Cumberland Falls State Park, near Corbin. The announcement invites the attendance of "all interested parties such as concerned citizens, coal operators, lawyers, blasting experts, academic persons, victims, governmental officials, public



media, etc." If you belong to any of these groups (even the etc.'s) and would like to know more about the workshop, contact Ed Moss or Mark Morgan at Box 612, Corbin, Ky. 40701. The program is supported by the Science for Citizens Program of the National Science Foundation.

## Child Conference

Persons in a wide variety of fields may wish to note the fact that the third State of the Child in Appalachia conference will be held at Morris Harvey College, Charleston, W. Va., June 6-9. Cosponsors of the conference are the Save the Children Federation and West Virginia Governor John D. Rockefeller IV. For full information write SCF, Box 319, Berea, Ky. 40403.

## Reclamation Primer

Strip mining is a subject that arouses strong opinions. Some people say it should be forbidden, some say not. Some say effective reclamation is possible, others say not. Some say it's all right in some areas and kinds of terrain but not in others. And so on.

While the controversy rages (and that's the right word), U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service scientists at Berea are continuing to carry out a research program begun in 1962 -- multidisciplinary research into strip-mine reclamation. It is important to note that this program accepts strip mining as a given -- as, indeed, it appears to be. The purpose of the program, the Forest Service says, is to assure that efforts to reclaim stripped land succeed. Whether or not you believe such an aim can be achieved, you -- unless you're a scientist in one of the relevant disciplines -- are likely to find their work not only interesting but educational. Some of it, in fact, can be seen as constituting a kind of primer of reclamation.

The researchers include a geologist, civil engineers, a soil scientist, hydrologists, a microbiologist, a range scientist, foresters, a wildlife biologist, an economist and an analytical chemist.

The engineering research is primarily concerned with the stability of spoil banks and the physical, chemical and geometrical factors that determine the stability. Geologic data are essential for predicting the physical and chemical properties of the material. And you have to know the mineralogy of the material in order to predict changes under different weathering conditions.

An important part of the hydrology research is the effect of disturbing the surface on water quality, a prime aspect being the effect of runoff and leaching of soluble chemical pollutants from the spoil. For example, if an oxidizable form of pyrite is present, this can form sulfuric acid, which will break down many normally stable minerals. Another question has to do with the interaction of lime and fertilizer with the chemicals present in acid spoils; the

problems here, in fact, involve a whole range of such questions.

The chemistry of spoil material is of primary importance when one is attempting to revegetate an area. For a long time, for instance, it was simply assumed that the pH reading could tell one what to plant or how much lime to use. But the problem has turned out to be more complex than that. The physical properties of spoil are important, too. The types of material involved affect such properties as texture, size of particles, infiltration, water-holding capacity, bulk density and surface temperature -- all of which can foster or prevent the establishment and growth of vegetation.

Sedimentation is probably the largest problem arising from surface mining. Research has shown that the highest sediment yield comes during the first six months after mining and that it drops off significantly after three years. Hence the researchers are concerned with minimizing the first-period yield. Retention dams are generally used to trap the sediment. But what is the optimum capacity for silt basins? Where should they be built? Should they be temporary or permanent?

As for revegetation, what about microorganisms? Research is involved in such studies as the microbial activity associated with the use of wood fiber in mulching experiments; the role of organisms in the degradation of materials in stored soil that is later to be spread over the surface; and the use of mixed pure cultures of bacteria and fungi to determine the mechanisms associated with increased nitrogen content in leguminous plants.

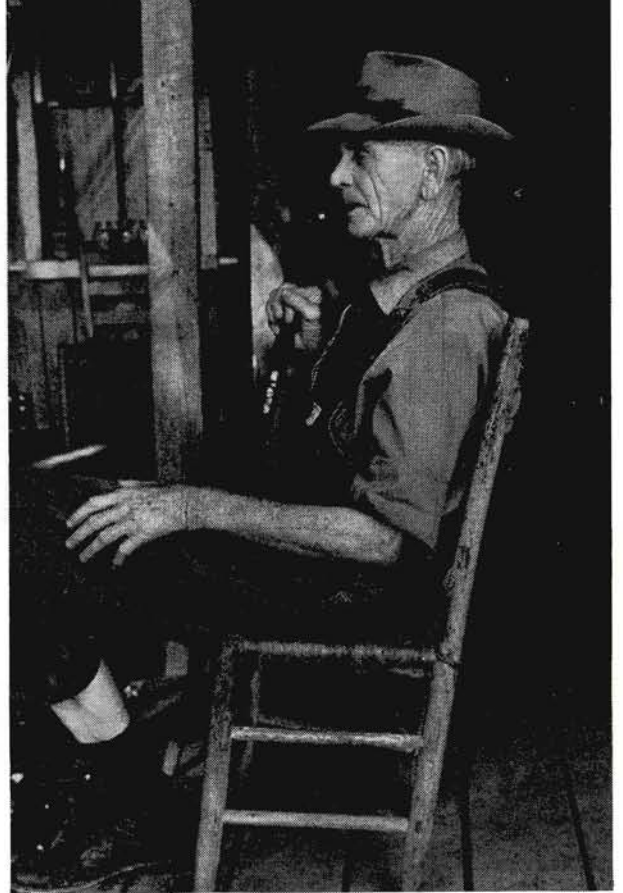
The specific points made here are simply a few of the many kinds of concerns with which the Forest Service research deals. What we have presented is, of course, not even a primer, actually; only the beginning of one. But it may serve to show the layman that there's more involved than simply rock and dirt and water. For the scientific facts herein, we are indebted to Willie R. Curtis of the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station at Berea; the distortions resulting from oversimplification are supplied by the editors.

## Appalachian Studies

In a meeting at Berea College on November 4-5, 30 scholars from seven Appalachian states agreed to establish an Appalachian Studies Conference. The purposes of the conference are:

- 1) to encourage Appalachian studies through an annual conference, a newsletter and *ad hoc* meetings as necessary;
- 2) to provide a forum for the exchange of research information;
- 3) to coordinate analysis of the region's problems across disciplinary lines;
- 4) to increase and spread knowledge of things Appalachian;
- 5) to be an advocate for Appalachian research;
- 6) to relate scholarship to regional needs and the concerns of the Appalachian people;





## Appalachia: Faces, Places

Dean Cadle, librarian of the University of North Carolina at Asheville, is one of the most sensitive photographic interpreters of Appalachia's physical and human faces. Readers of the Fall 1976 issue of the **CENTER NEWSLETTER** were introduced to his work. Herewith, a second selection from his gallery.

- 7) to support other organized efforts in harmony with the purposes of the Appalachian Studies Conference.

The planning meeting grew out of an Appalachian symposium honoring Cratis D. Williams in Boone, N.C. in the spring of 1976 (see **CENTER NEWSLETTER**, Spring 1976). The first annual meeting of the conference will be held at Berea College on March 10-11, coordinated by Steve Fisher of Emory & Henry College. Robert Scott, Federal Cochairman of the Appalachian Regional Commission, will be the dinner speaker on the evening of March 10. Papers will be presented at the meeting by Jim Wayne Miller, poet and essayist; John

Gaventa, political scientist; and Archie Green, folklorist. Included also will be remarks by novelist Gurney Norman, music by the McLain Family Band, poetry reading by Jeff Daniel Marion and workshops on various disciplines and interests. The registration fee for the meeting is \$15.00 (students free); meals are extra (\$7.72).

Although the primary interest of the organization and the meeting is in teaching, research and writing related to Appalachia, anybody who is interested may join and attend the membership conference. Regular membership is \$5.00, student membership \$3.00. For further information write Appalachian Studies Conference, College Box 1849, Berea, Ky. 40404.



## EYE on Publications

*Alabama*, by Virginia Van der Veer Hamilton (Norton -- American Association for State and Local History). The volumes in this bicentennial publishing project keep on coming from the presses. These books, as the editors point out, are not designed to be chronicles of events but are attempts to capture a kind of essence of each state's history. The author of *Alabama* is head (or chairperson, as they say) of the history department at the Birmingham campus of the University of Alabama. She makes it plain right at the outset that the people of the state have done themselves a great disservice over the years by succumbing to the "allure of Old Master and Mistress, their son the Confederate Hero, and their daughter the Southern Belle."

*North Carolina*, by William S. Powell. Another volume in "The States and the Nation" bicentennial series. The author, a North Carolina native, is professor of history at Chapel Hill. You won't find a great deal about the Appalachian part of the state here, but you can certainly enjoy a quick run-through of North Carolina's history as a whole.

*Georgia*, by Harold H. Martin. The byline on this bicentennial history should be familiar to any veteran reader of the *Saturday Evening Post*, to which the author was a regular contributor for many years. Here he introduces you to some paradigmatic Georgia characters like the old Populist and later racial fanatic Tom Watson and his subsequent emulator Gene Talmadge -- a Phi Beta Kappa who pretended to be a "one-gallussed, tobacco-chewing good ole boy from the forks of the creek."

*Kentucky*, by Steven A. Channing. The author of the fourth of this issue's bicentennial histories, who teaches history at the University of Kentucky, acknowledges in the preface that his task here is no easy one. "The Kentucky story and society," he quotes Dr. Thomas D. Clark, an eminent historian, "fall into parts which no one so far has been clever enough to mold into a single piece." Therefore, says Channing, "this bicentennial history is an interpretation of some of the principal themes and events that together shaped the distinctive, contrary, vexatious, and often admirable character of the natives of this commonwealth." Appalachian Kentucky is not slighted.

*Whiskey Man*, by Howell Raines (Viking). A first novel, set in hill-country Alabama in 1932, having to do with the relationship between a young university graduate and the local moonshiner, or whiskey man. Certainly all the familiar ingredients of southern

storytelling are here, but the author manages to do some engaging things with them.

*Stalking Blind*, by Steven Ashley (Dial Press/James Wade). A second novel, this one contemporary -- about a West Virginia sheriff dealing with a murder and some resulting complexities. The flavor is '60s rather than '30s.

*The Education of Little Tree*, by Forrest Carter (Delacorte Press/Eleanor Friede). Among the attainments of the author, who is a part-blood Cherokee, is his occupancy of the splendidly titled position "storyteller in council to the Cherokee nation." A novelist (*Gone to Texas*) as well, Carter here tells the autobiographical story of his own 1930s boyhood, spent with his Cherokee grandparents in their Tennessee log cabin amid hills and streams.

*The Grand Ole Opry: The Early Years 1925-35*, by Charles K. Wolfe (Old-Time Music). A soft-cover book from a British publisher (the address is 33 Brunswick Gardens, London W8 4AW). An attempt to separate fact from myth about the early years of the famed Nashville institution and to set it in the musical context of the era, *The Grand Ole Opry* is long on graphics (posters, programs and so on) and features photos of such trailblazers as Uncle Jimmy Thompson (the Opry's very first performer), Dr. Humphrey Bate, Uncle Dave Macon, Deford Bailey and George D. Hay, the former Memphis newspaperman who created the whole thing.

*Tennessee Strings: The Story of Country Music in Tennessee*, by Charles K. Wolfe (University of Tennessee Press). In this book Wolfe, who teaches at East Tennessee State University, has a publisher closer to home. *Tennessee Strings* is one of a new series of books, sponsored jointly by the Tennessee Historical Commission and the UT Press, that are written for the general reader; the editor is Paul H. Bergeron. You can get information about these "Tennessee Three Star Books" from the UT Press, 293 Communications Building, Knoxville, Tenn. 37916.

*A Guide to Appalachian Studies*, edited by Stephen L. Fisher, J. W. Williamson and Juanita Lewis (Appalachian Journal). This special number of the *Journal* presents a state-of-the-art report on Appalachian scholarship, writing and teaching, with contributions from scholars and workers in numerous fields. The book, say the publishers, "gives scattered scholars and teachers for the first time a text and a tool with which to fight for the recognition of their scholarship and their teaching interests." It costs \$5 but is free with a two-year subscription to the *Journal* (134 Sanford Hall, ASU, Boone, N.C. 28608).

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