

NEWS

LETTER



APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE

Loyal Jones • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Berea to Host Rural Hymnody Symposium

Berea College will host a symposium on rural hymnody (hymn-singing styles), April 27-29. Believing that church music scholarship has lagged behind other folkloric studies and that its time has come, Archie Green, peripatetic and overwhelmingly convincing folklorist, now at the Woodrow Wilson Center of the Smithsonian Institution, blew into Berea a year ago and sold William H. Tallmadge of the music department and Loyal Jones of the Appalachian Center on the symposium idea. A committee made up of Green, Tallmadge, Jones and Daniel Patterson of the folklore curriculum of the University of North Carolina put together a program and a proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities. An interested NEH processed and approved the request for funds with a speed that would put most government agencies to shame.

The program will be packed with scholarly papers but will include three singing groups and a special program by Arthur Schrader of Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts entitled "Songs in Vogue With the Vulgar." The papers will be presented by a variety of folklorists, musicians, musicologists and collectors. They are: "The Old Way of Singing: Its Origins and Development"—Nicholas Temperley, University of Illinois; "Thoughts on the Growth of the Old Baptist Song Repertory"—Terry Miller, Kent State University; "Hymnody of the Fellowship Independent Baptist Church of Stanley, Virginia"—Jeff Todd Titon, Tufts University; "The Pennsylvania Spiritual: A Research Report"—Don Yoder, University of Pennsylvania; "The Downeast Spiritual Reconsidered"—Alan Buechner, Queens College; "Jackson's White and Negro Spirituals: Thirty-six Years Later"—Dorothy D. Horn, Maryville, Tenn.; "Black Spirituals: A Manifestation of the Black Aesthetic Concept"—Portia K. Maultsby, Indiana University; "The Black in Jackson's White Spirituals"—William H. Tallmadge, Berea College; "The White and/or Black Spiritual and Rural Revivalistic Religion: A Study of Origins"—James C. Downey, William Carey College; "Wyeth's Wellspring"—Richard H. Hulan, University of Texas; "Peripheral American Hymnody"—Harlan Daniel, Chicago.

Daniel Patterson will chair the symposium. Darius L. Thieme, chairman of the Fisk University department of music, Archie Green and others will respond to papers and lead discussions. If you're interested in registering, write the Appalachian Center at the address on the outside of this NEWSLETTER.

Is Coal for Real?

A few months ago the *Wall Street Journal* set before its readers a picture of opulence in the Appalachian coal fields. William Preston, a miner living in Block House Bottom, Ky., "grills steaks and serves cocktails while his wife, Delores, entertains her country club friends inside the Prestons' \$120,000 ranch-style home.

" 'We enjoy the good life as much as anyone,' " Preston was quoted as saying. He was said to earn \$35,000 a year, with his wife adding \$20,000 from her job as a hospital supervisor.

Mander Johnson, a miner from Jenkins, Ky., "is the golf champion at the Elkhorn Country Club, where more than 75% of the 600 members are coal miners. Mr. Johnson plays golf nearly every day after work and on weekends. He also plays golf in Florida and the Bahamas 'a couple of times' a year."

These men are described as typical products of the post-1974 boom, which has produced a 50% increase in union miners' pretax wages and raised nonunion wages to a lofty \$23,000 average, with many reaching Preston's level. Does the oil crisis mean that the old coal boom-and-bust cycle has finally been broken? Has permanent, high-level prosperity arrived?

In today's volatile energy market, it would take a bold prophet to offer a categorical answer. But not long after the *Wall Street Journal* story appeared, TVA executives in Chattanooga sat down to open a record number of bids from coal suppliers; the number of firms seeking to sell coal to TVA was the highest in almost 20 years, and prices were frequently lower than those of three years ago. One coal broker said, "We've got 800 million tons of production and 600 million tons of demand out there."

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Before long, a TVA spokesman was saying that, contrary to general expectations, the coal industry might be going into another boom-bust cycle.

In February, a consultant from the Office of Technology Assessment of the U.S. Congress made an allied point. "There's not going to be the coal boom people are talking about," he said. "Eastern production is not going to increase by 1985. Most of the increase in production will be in underground mines in the west." In fact, he doesn't believe that production in the east will increase materially by the year 2000. However, his figures were challenged by an economist from West Virginia University, who expects Appalachian production to double in the next 20 years.

Early in February a worried Kentucky Senator Wendell Ford pressed Energy Secretary James Schlesinger about the President's apparent de-emphasis of coal in the 1980 budget. Schlesinger is said to have answered that he had lost out in administration councils but that what was involved was not an abandonment of coal projects but "merely a pause."

In January, Beth-Elkhorn Coal Corp. shut down a Kentucky mine, putting more than 200 miners out of work; the closing was said to be due to lack of demand. However, only a few weeks later Beth-Elkhorn announced that it plans to open a new mine in the same area.

A veteran Lee County (Ky.) coal operator says that things have in fact been slow but that he expects an expanding market in the next few months. The first part of his observation is borne out by the lament of J. J. Seay, a Southern Railroad superintendent. The railroad's Appalachia Division, he says, has hundreds of idle cars. "I just can't understand it," he says. "Some time ago coal operators were demanding empty cars. Now we have them and they aren't using them."

What does it add up to? An uncertain picture, obviously, but clearly not one of guaranteed widespread and perpetual opulence. Coal may indeed be the national ace in the hole, as it is often called, but it may be a card in an ebb-and-flow game.

Two Berea Workshops

This summer, for the third year in a row, Berea College will offer two opportunities for Appalachian study. If you have plenty of time to spend, you can attend the seventh annual Workshop in Appalachian Studies, which will run from June 11 through July 20. But if you can only spare a few days, you can take in the Short Course in Appalachian Literature, which will be held during the week June 10-16.

The six-week workshop will offer two courses, each for 3 hours of graduate credit through the University of Kentucky. The courses are History and Culture of Appalachia and Appalachian Literature and the Arts.

The one-week short course provides the chance for intensive study of Appalachian literature (without academic credit—a fact that shouldn't keep you

away) with some of the most knowledgeable persons in the field, including Wilma Dykeman, Jim Wayne Miller, Cratis Williams and Gurney Norman. This course will be directed by James Gage of the Berea English department.

The longer workshop will be directed by Loyal Jones. On hand, besides the persons just mentioned, will be Richard Drake, Helen Lewis, Leonard Roberts, Pat Wear, Lillie D. Chaffin, Alan DeYoung, Joan Moser, Persis Grayson, Stephen Fisher, Mike Mullins and Sibyl Clark. Lecturers of this caliber, together with the participation of outstanding students, have made previous workshops in this series notably successful. The experience has enabled participants to develop and teach a variety of courses and units in regional high schools and colleges.

If you'd like a brochure describing these programs, write to the Appalachian Center.

Bureaucratic Breakthrough

One of the greatest advances in the world of bureaucracy in recent years has been the addition of a modest little lower-case *m* to the initials of the Farmers' Home Administration. For years lay persons have been bemused at the fact that each of two entirely separate Federal agencies, both of them dealing with housing, was known as FHA. But now we have FHA (Federal Housing Administration) and FmHA. And, not content with adding an *m*, the FmHA is pressing on beyond the realm of orthography into new fields of substantive inter-agency cooperation. It has recently signed an agreement with the Appalachian Regional Commission to coordinate programs from the local level up. FmHA will restructure its district boundaries to correspond as nearly as possible to the 69 local development districts in Appalachia, and all FmHA nonfarm (whatever that means, exactly) rural development programs will be handled through those offices.

ARC Federal Cochairman Robert Scott views this agreement as an "important breakthrough in the President's attempt to make government work better." The breakthrough follows a breach made a few weeks earlier, whereby the FmHA, under a "water and sewer initiative," will actually join with four other agencies in using the same application forms and procedures in making grants and loans for rural water and sewer construction. The President's cause in this area is surely a noble one, and we realize that you can tell how tough the war is when you see the size of the engagements that are proclaimed as victories.

Appalachian Folklife

Some 14 tape/slide programs describing traditional Appalachian folkways—gardening, preserving foods, blacksmithing, coon hunting and the like—are

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Appalachian Faces

from the famous Doris Ulmann Collection

Two couples--Haden and Bonnie Hensley [above] and Serena and Abraham Lincoln Green--taken by Doris Ulmann in the Brasstown, N.C., community nearly 50 years ago. The Hensleys still live in Cherokee County.



By permission of the Doris Ulmann Foundation and Berea College

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to be produced by the Berea College Appalachian Museum under a new \$105,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The grant is a follow-up to an NEH-funded project that produced nine slide/tape shows dealing chiefly with craft processes.

Two of the new programs will be major (45-minute) presentations describing in some depth life in today's Appalachia, the aim being to "emphasize the evolution of traditional cultural patterns and to dislodge stereotyped notions about Appalachian life."

The project is directed by Harry Segedy, museum director. If you would like to rent or buy programs already available, or simply wish to know more about the project, write Joyce Hancock, Research Coordinator, Appalachian Folklife Project, C.P.O. Box 770, Berea, Ky. 40404.

Writers of Summer

It's probably not too early to begin thinking about the Hindman Settlement School's second Appalachian Writers Workshop, which will be held August 5-17. According to the announcement, the first week "will consist of a very structured program while the second week is strictly for those people who want to stay and write." A number of regional literary luminaries will be present, and registration is limited to 50 participants — so if you're interested, it would be a good idea to get your bid in soon. Write to Appalachian Writers Workshop, Hindman Settlement School, Hindman, Kentucky 41822.

EYE on Publications

Which Side Are You On? by John W. Hevener (University of Illinois Press). Few labor battles of the 1930s attracted more attention than the protracted conflict between the coal operators and the miners of Harlan County, Kentucky—"Bloody Harlan." Yet only now is a book-length scholarly treatment appearing. *Which Side Are You On?* tells how, under New Deal prodding, Harlan was organized—how the miners were converted to unionism and how the operators opposed it (and why they did so to such a violent degree). The book also tries to sort out fact from the abundant myth and legend.

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Berea, Kentucky 40404

Southern Mountain Republicans 1865-1900, by Gordon B. McKinney (University of North Carolina Press). After 1865, many mountain voters joined the Republican Party, and mountain people remained the only sizable group of white southerners in the party until the Eisenhower era. Many explanations have been offered for this somewhat puzzling phenomenon (after all, what did the Republicans ever do for Appalachian people?), all of them in the end seeming to be based on the idea, says the author of this book, that mountain republicanism was "almost an inherited physical abnormality, similar to possessing six fingers." But there's more to the story than this, he says, and he proceeds to tell it, demolishing along the way a number of widely held (and contradictory) notions dear to radicals and reactionaries alike.

Perspectives on Urban Appalachians, edited by Steven Weiland and Phillip Obermiller (Cincinnati: Ohio Urban Awareness Project). The subtitle sums it up: "An Introduction to Mountain Life, Migration, and Urban Adaptation, and a Guide to the Improvement of Social Services." The book is a reader, an anthology of articles, excerpts and original contributions.

Magazines

Appalachian magazines seem to come with the spring rains nowadays. Two new ones are announced this year. The Appalachian Institute at East Tennessee State University is sponsoring *Second Growth: Appalachian Nature and Culture*, which will "present ecological and cultural concerns of the Appalachian region expressed through written and visual art of the highest quality." The announcement does not state the planned frequency of publication, but you can find out this and anything else you'd like to know about *Second Growth* by writing to Frederick O. Waage at ETSU, P.O. Box 2551, Johnson City, Tenn. 37601.

The second magazine is *Appalachia/America*, "an analytical journal exploring Appalachia as part of an integrated world system." This magazine, which is to appear three times a year, does not seem to have any institutional connection. You can write to it at P.O. Box 1187, Morgantown, W.Va. 26505.

(NOTE: The Appalachian Center does not sell books. If you have any difficulty in obtaining a particular book, we suggest you contact the Council of the Southern Mountains Bookstore, C.P.O. Box 2106, Berea, Ky. 40404.)

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