

The Gravy Infusion

News, activities, and doings from the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center



Photos by Roberta Thacker-Oliver

Hope in Lee County, Virginia

By Erika Wilson, Junior at Berea College

Lee County, Virginia, where I grew up, is a predominantly white, conservative, and Christian county. For as long as I can recall, the close-mindedness I have encountered has made me feel sick to my stomach. There is a lack of mental health awareness, understanding of the LGBT+ community and other minorities, along with a history of drug abuse. Little did I know, my hometown had much beauty and diverse perspectives to offer.

Last year after George Floyd's murder, I was surprised to see protests supporting Black Lives Matter in the areas surrounding Lee County. Unfortunately, due to my work schedule, I was unable to participate in any, so I organized one where I live. I was pleased to see others in my community had the same ideals, they organized a vigil in Pennington Gap where I met Jill and Ron Carson, the cofounders of the Appalachian African-American Cultural Center (AAACC).

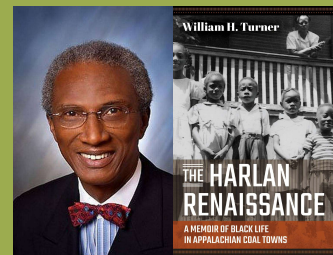
The AAACC is an old one-room schoolhouse built by Ron's great grandmother back in 1939. It is now used as a place to preserve visual, written, and oral histories of Black Appalachians. They host anti-racism workshops, speak at conferences across the country, and provide a space for conversations on how to resolve the racial injustices within our country.

After finding the center, the way I look at my hometown has been transformed. I see there is hope for bringing people together if we only take the time to listen and understand one another's experiences. More than ever, I see the people who are continuously silenced by the majority. I also see the beauty in the broken roads that we journey on. I never want to stop learning about others and being curious. I challenge all of us to keep seeking out new knowledge, especially among the people in our own communities.

Read Erika's entire article, learn more about the AAACC, and see more pictures of these events at our [blog!](#)

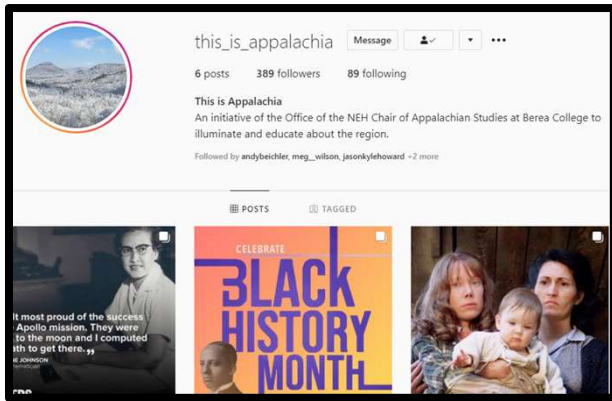
“The colorfully refreshing scenes of multiracial solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement stretches from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee, to Black Mountain in Eastern Kentucky, to Negro Mountain in West Virginia, and to the far northern endpoint of the Appalachian Trail, the White Mountains in New England.”

~William H. Turner



Learn more about his upcoming book [here!](#)

This is Appalachia



Do we have any Instagram enthusiasts in our audience? If so we have a wonderful new gallery for you to follow! It is called “This is Appalachia” an initiative by Silas House, NEH Chair of Appalachian Studies at Berea College, to illuminate and educate about the region. [Follow HERE today!](#)

Save the Date!

Hill Women: Hope in the Appalachian Mountains with Cassie Chambers

March 24, 12:00-1:00 <https://berea.zoom.us/j/92075182225>



To honor Carter G. Woodson, Founder of Black History Month, Berea College invited Dr. Ta'Keia Anthony, Associate Professor of History at Kentucky State University to speak at Convocation. You can view her presentation [here](#).

