

The Gravy Infusion



Where Are You From?

Here at the Appalachian Center we love learning about peoples' roots and where they grew up. As Chris Green, the Director of the Appalachian Center says, "When someone asks 'Where are you from?' they are also hoping that eventually you'll tell your story and how you came to be where you are. When we begin to understand how our stories and the stories of a place evolve and intertwine, we call that living history and we call that change. When we begin to feel those stories combining in our bones, we call that belonging."

Last month we put out a call for students to share photos and memories of people and places that hold a special place in their hearts. We received over 55 responses from Berea students who come from all over the world ranging from Hurricane, WV, to Kenya. We look forward to sharing their stories in coming months. For now, you can take a look at the map showing where they are from.



Excerpt from the poem
Flowing Waters

Within the human spirit
would seem
There is a something
that responds
To water in a
running wayside stream,
Something that
our life-flow bonds.

Everett Francis Briggs
West Virginian Poet

Honoring the Past: Appalachian Foodways



Berea Student Jordan Kelley and Interviewee Verneda Combs

Today we highlight a special project by retired Berea College Professor Margaret Dotson and her students. [Gathering Stories of Appalachian Foodways](#) is a collection of seventy-three oral histories from elders across Kentucky, West Virginia, and North Carolina.

The goal was to learn about how Appalachian foodways change overtime. This treasure trove includes stories about favorite family recipes, gardening, and cooking over wood stoves.

“We always seemed to have enough, but we never did have plenty.”

Randall Nelms, North Carolina

We invite you to take a moment, listen to some of these interviews, and hear their [stories](#). You might think about your own food traditions in your life. How are they similar or different from these accounts? Have you ever asked your parents or grandparents about what they ate growing up? What were their favorite meals?

Food brings people together. These stories have meaning. We applaud Margaret Dotson and her students for bringing these to light and sharing them with the world.

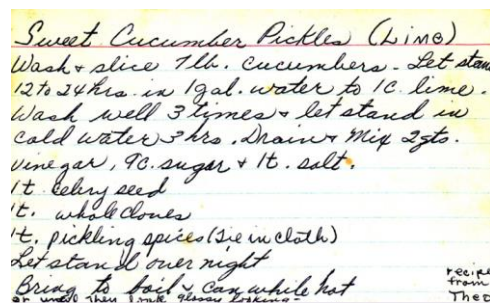


Photo courtesy of Alice Lawson

West Virginia Folklife

On the topic of foodways, the [West Virginia Folklife Program](#) is another fantastic resource. They curate [a bountiful archive](#) of current and traditional folklore from West Virginia, which is housed at WVU libraries. You can read and listen to hundreds stories from WV’s diversity of people like [Ruby Abdulla](#) (featured in photograph on the left). Ruby is an immigrant from southern India. She lives in Charleston, West Virginia, and is a skilled home cook and active member of the Islamic Center, preparing traditional southern and northern Indian dishes.

Be sure to check out this trove of Appalachian culture!



“I have traveled outside the mountains, but never lived apart from them.”

~ Denise Giardina