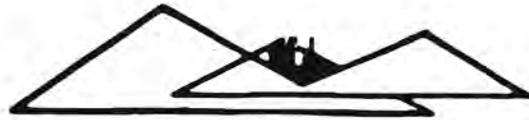


NEWS



LETTER

APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE

Loyal Jones • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Looking Forward

March 26-28: Appalachian Studies Conference—"The Many Faces of Appalachia: Exploring a Region's Diversity"—Unicoi State Park, Georgia. Participants are reminded that in the past "we may have overlooked the essential resilience and richness of Appalachian culture..."

April 10-12: 11th Southern Quilt Symposium, Hunter Museum of Art, Chattanooga, Tenn. 37403. As a salute to Kentucky quilters, workshop leaders have been chosen from that state's leading practitioner-teachers.

April 12-14: Third annual New River symposium, sponsored by the New River Gorge National River of the National Park Service; Center for Continuing Education, Appalachian State University, Boone, N.C. 28607. Cratis Williams will be the banquet speaker on April 13.

April 13-15: Art weekend (Wade Hobgood, Betsy Henn Bailey, Pamela Corley, Joyce Blakely), John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, N.C. 28902.

April 29-May 12: Spring Craft I, John C. Campbell Folk School.

May 11-12: Conference on Appalachian Research, Berea College (*see separate story*).

May 13-26: Spring Craft II, John C. Campbell Folk School.

June 15-17: Clog Campus '84, Clinch Valley College, Wise, Va. 24293. Contact Anna Breeding, Coordinator.

June 28-30: Fifth annual Conference on Appalachian Children and Families, Morehead State University, Morehead, Ky. 40351. Contact Linda A. Higginbotham, Division of Planning.

Appalachian President

On July 1, John B. Stephenson will take office as the seventh president of Berea College. His election to succeed Willis D. Weatherford was announced in late January.

What will be of particular interest to readers of the CENTER NEWSLETTER is the fact that the president-

elect's Appalachian credentials are unusual and impressive. Since 1979 he has been director of the Appalachian Center at the University of Kentucky; prior to that appointment, he had as a sociologist specialized in Appalachian studies. His book *Shiloh: A Mountain Community* is recognized as a classic among community studies. His most recent book represents an imaginative extension of the Appalachian idea; scheduled to appear later this year, it is a study of a mountain community in Scotland.

The chairman of the Berea board of trustees expressed pleasure at finding "someone like John Stephenson, who was born in Appalachia, got his education in Appalachia...and is a leading scholar on Appalachia." A native of Staunton, Va., Stephenson has an A.B. from William and Mary and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina. He came to Kentucky in 1966, where he served as professor of sociology and dean of undergraduate studies before assuming the direction of the Appalachian Center.

Summer Course

This summer's offering from the Appalachian Center will consist of a course in Appalachian literature and history. The teachers will be Wilma Dykeman—novelist, historian and biographer; Ronald D. Eller, associate professor of history at Mars Hill College and author of *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers* (which won the 1982 W. D. Weatherford Award); and Alan DeYoung, associate professor of philosophical and social studies at the College of Education of the University of Kentucky.

The dates of the course are June 11-29. Three hours of graduate or undergraduate credit will be available from the University of Kentucky.

Ms. Dykeman will discuss her own works and those of a number of other influential Appalachian writers—Mary N. Murfree, John Fox, Jr., Thomas Wolfe, James Agee, Jesse Stuart, Harriette Simpson Arnow, James Still and John Ehle. Eller will examine the industrial development of the region since the Civil War and the

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problems that led to mass emigrations and the 1960s War on Poverty.

More information, of course, is obtainable from the Appalachian Center.

Mellon Meeting

Interested in what's going on in Appalachian research? The Berea College Appalachian Center and the Hutchins Library announce a conference on Appalachian research, to be held May 11-12. Seventeen fellows who have participated in the Mellon Foundation-funded program of fellowships in Appalachian studies will read and discuss papers on their research or will present exhibits. Keynoting the conference will be J. Wayne Flynt, chairman of the history department at Auburn University and author of *Dixie's Forgotten People* (see CENTER NEWSLETTER, Fall 1981). The proceedings will be summarized by Archie Green, folklorist and labor historian, author of *Only a Miner*. Willis D. Weatherford, the retiring president of Berea College, will also speak.

The meeting, which begins at noon on May 11 and runs through the evening of May 12, is open to anybody who's interested in Appalachian research. For more information, get in touch with the Appalachian Center.

Welfare Freeloaders

A possible welfare scandal is brewing just across the Potomac from Washington, with some embarrassingly high-level public figures as the potential culprits.

It appears that the Secretary of Defense's private dining room has a staff of 19. Each meal costs the diner about \$2.87; the rest of the cost is borne by the taxpayers, who contribute an average \$12.06 per meal to make up the true cost of \$14.93. At the same time, as Lutheran Child and Family Services, Addison, Ill., points out, the federal program funding midmorning supplements of juice and crackers for children from poor families has been cut back, although morning snacks for 40 children cost about the same as the public welfare subsidy for one meal in the Pentagon's top-level dining room. If the dining room were run like any ordinary restaurant instead of as an organized handout, the taxpayers would save enough money to provide morning supplements for more than a million low-income children. Or, at least, snazzy lunches for a few.

For Railroad Buffs

Railroad buffs who find themselves near Brevard, N.C. might enjoy dropping into the U.S. Forest Service's Cradle of Forestry. What they'll find there is a completely restored Climax logging locomotive, possibly the only one of its kind in the world. These engines were specially designed and built for hauling timber up steep grades and around sharp curves. As Dr. Carl

Schenck says in *Birth of Forestry in America* (Appalachian Consortium Press), "Railroad logging was a highly specialized operation unbound by railroad tradition and established methods. Techniques and equipment were improvised as needed..."

EYE on Publications

All That Is Native & Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region, by David E. Whisnant (University of North Carolina Press). Bill C. Malone has called this book "the most perceptive and provocative book yet written on the culture of the southern mountains." Perceptive? Yes, quite. Provocative? You'd better believe it! Harry M. Caudill has applauded the book, declaring that one of its merits is that the author approaches the subject with no bias; however, this may really mean only that Whisnant's bias is so agreeable to the sage of Whitesburg that he didn't even notice it (although it must be observed that in his book noted below, Caudill here and there expresses views of Appalachian culture that seem the opposite of Whisnant's). In any case, we have to say that we've never yet seen or heard anyone commenting on this intellectual wonderland of Appalachia without revealing some kind of bias—usually a pretty strong one. Whisnant's is his zealous partiality for native Appalachian culture (he is not one of those who wonder whether there really is such a thing), which appears most strongly in his denunciations of those who present as "authentic and native" cultural material that he regards as ersatz and fofched-on.

All That Is Native and Fine looks at three examples of intervention by what the author calls "cultural missionaries"—the Hindman Settlement School, the work of Olive Dame Campbell and the White Top Festival (of "Anglo-Saxon" music and dance) in southwest Virginia. He concludes that though all three professed admiration for the native culture, they all "implanted" material and practices from elsewhere that were later sometimes presented or accepted as native. He is concerned with the way these practices affected the lives of mountaineers and with what role "formal institutions and forceful individuals [play] in defining and shaping perspectives, values, tastes, and agendas for cultural change." The book will surely startle, offend and anger a good many people. Perhaps it will also provoke discussion of an important come-lately concept, the politics of culture, and raise questions for all of us who labor in this Appalachian vineyard doing whatever is dear to our own hearts. Perhaps, too, it will generate responses in defense of those whom it has so skillfully gored.

Theirs Be the Power, by Harry M. Caudill (University of Illinois Press). Two years ago (CENTER NEWSLETTER, Winter 1982) we spoke of the flap that had just arisen over an unpublished manuscript called *Eastern Kentucky in the Age of the Moguls*. The University Press of Kentucky, the prospective publisher, had requested some changes and deletions; the author, Harry

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Early Days at Hindman

The Hindman Settlement School is one of the institutions examined in David Whisnant's "All That Is Native and Fine," which is discussed in these pages. The school, still doing business at the same old stand, is mounting a \$1 million fund drive, called the Carl D. and Verna Perkins endowment, in honor of the veteran Kentucky congressman and his school-teacher wife, both Hindman graduates. House Speaker Tip O'Neill was scheduled to host a tribute reception for the Perkinses on March 7, highlighting the endowment drive. If you'd like to support the school, you can contribute explicitly to the fund—Hindman Settlement School, Hindman, Ky. 41822.



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M. Caudill, had refused (though he *had* agreed to add a yard or two of footnotes); and the dispute had reached the press, thanks to an anonymous telephone caller. The biggest item of dispute was said to be Chapter 9, which was described as studded with ringingly unfavorable quotes about William B. Sturgill, a long-time leading coal operator (hence a top mogul) and chairman of the University of Kentucky board of trustees, and former Governor Bert T. Combs, a Louisville lawyer who frequently represents coal companies. Chapter 9, the university press is supposed to have said, must go; not a chance, Caudill is supposed to have replied—and, clearly, he stuck by his guns, because here now is the very same book, retitled, bearing the imprint of the University of Illinois Press and including the self-same Chapter 9, redesignated Chapter 10 and called "The Modern Moguls."

At the time we wondered at a publisher who "would expect, or even want, Harry Caudill to produce a cold, closely reasoned, elaborately documented factual work of historical analysis." That, we said, is "just not what a sermon is." And now that the book has arrived, that's exactly what it proves to be—a sermon, or perhaps a polemic with footnotes, tracing the story of the mineral-empire builders who created industrial Appalachia and in the process built great fortunes for themselves (or made substantial additions to fortunes they already had) and their inheritors, Sturgill, Combs and the rest. As always with Caudill's nonfiction tracts, it's a good read, lively, often amusing, sometimes infuriating as dark acts of malevolence are laid bare. But one must observe that in the embattled Chapter 10, though there are plenty of footnotes having to do with biographical facts and other matters of public record, the documentation is thin when the author is telling us what Sturgill and Combs do to work their will, and how they do it. But, as we say, the book is after all a sermon. A newspaper reviewer of this book observes that "maybe another historian could tell the story with more

detail, better objectivity and complete documentation, but no one will ever do so with more conviction. The country lawyer from Whitesburg is ever arguing his case, and he should never be silenced." Well put!

Generations, by John Egerton (University Press of Kentucky). This book, subtitled simply "An American Family," sets out to do an unusual thing—present the story of an obscure family from pioneer days to our own and thus "offer a fairly representative story of life as it has evolved in the United States." The author's first problem was to find a family that he "could present to readers as a metaphor for America." And there had to be some elders whose personal memories went back into the nineteenth century. Egerton was finally led to a small Kentucky Bluegrass town, to the home of Curtis Burnam Ledford (101) and Addie King Ledford (93). Out of their memories and those of their children, grandchildren and so on, the author has shaped his story of life through the generations. Whether he has succeeded in his aim of giving us America in microcosm is questionable—it was perhaps an impossible aim—but he has created an unexpectedly fascinating account of one family, Appalachian in origin, which by its very detail takes on the universality not of a statistical norm but of rich fiction.

The Stories of Breece D'J Pancake; foreword by James Alan McPherson, afterword by John Casey (Atlantic-Little, Brown). Actually, everything that needs to be said here about this book can be put into two words: read it! If Appalachia had never had any literary phenomena before, Breece Pancake could have gone a long way toward making up the deficiency all by himself; instead, a suicide at 26, he has left these 12 stories as his astonishing legacy. His Appalachia, of course, is not everybody's; it's a raw and brutal world of drinking and aimlessness—a one-class world—powerfully real, peopled by fox hunters, cockfighters, coal miners, broken-down prizefighters. The author obviously knew it well, from deep inside it—and, tragically, he too was caught up in its drinking and confusion.

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