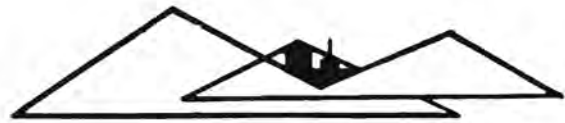


NEWS

L



LETTER

APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE

Loyal Jones · Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

Vol. 3 No. 4 · Fall 1974

The Way It Was

Donald R. Anderson, a photography professor at the University of Louisville, has spent the past year down at Pippa Passes, Ky., sifting through the archives of Alice Lloyd College. Out of more than 3,000 photos he has copied, he has chosen 30 to make up an exhibition called "From the Mountains" which is currently opening at the Louisville Free Public Library and will tour throughout the state under the sponsorship of the Kentucky Arts Commission.

The pictures, Anderson says, "show scenes of mountain families, logging, mining, railroad construction and early views of county seats in Eastern Kentucky." They span the years from the 1880s to the 1930s.

New Coal Tax Raises New Questions

"Take some more tea," the March Hare said to Alice, very earnestly.

"I've had nothing yet," Alice replied in an offended tone, "so I can't take more."

"You mean you can't take less," said the Hatter: "it's very easy to take more than nothing."

Considerable attention has been attracted by a brand-new tax imposed on coal operators by the fiscal court of Pike County, Ky., which produces more underground coal than any other county in the United States. The ordinance indirectly levies a tax of 10 cents a ton on all coal received or processed within the county for distribution outside the county. The explicit purpose of the tax is to raise money for building and maintaining roads and bridges. Such a tax is without precedent and therefore has stimulated debate about its legality.

It also, at first glance, stimulates wonder and amazement. A coal county putting the bite on its chief mover and shaker? It's rather as though Lassie should suddenly turn on Timmie. But then you see that the ordinance was drawn up with the active cooperation of the lawyer for the coal operators' association. And you recall that the Kentucky Department of Transportation is suing coal haulers in Pike County for some \$3 million dollars for road damages said to have been caused by overweight trucks. The controversy has turned on the question whether illegal loads are illegal.

Speaking of the ordinance, the Kentucky transporta-

tion secretary, Billy Paxton, says, "I definitely think it will affect the suit, but I want to know more about their intentions." To an observer, these intentions would appear to be to pay 10 cents a ton rather than reduce truck loads to legal limits.

However it comes out, Pike County may well get more than it gets now. It could hardly get less.

The Sound of Old-Time Music

Plans for Berea College's first annual Traditional Music Celebration--announced in the summer issue of the CENTER NEWSLETTER--are now complete. The dates are November 8, 9 and 10.

The celebration is being held both for the sheer fun



Musical veteran Asa Martin will be among celebrants

of it and for the advancement of music scholarship. "It will feature strictly old-time traditional music," says Appalachian Center Director Loyal Jones. "It's not that Berea is against the newer forms, such as bluegrass, but we feel that the old styles traditional to the mountains are not heard so much any more, and so we want to encourage them. Not only that, we want to introduce a younger generation to the amazing oral tradition of the mountains, and we want to help them learn to play in the old ways. To do this, we're going to have several workshops--in old-time banjo, fiddle and dulcimer playing. There will also be a symposium on traditional music.

to page 3

The Mountain Eagle---Singed but Still Screaming

American folklore is inhabited by a number of stock figures, like the poor boy who marries the boss's daughter, the riled-up pacifist who storms an enemy machine-gun nest, and the prostitute with a heart of pure gold. Not least in this company is the crusading editor, who lives and publishes by his convictions and not by the whims of his readers and advertisers.

There have been ferocious pacifists and so on in real life, and there have been crusading editors, too. A man who seems to be something of both is Tom Gish, editor of the *Mountain Eagle*, the weekly newspaper published in Whitesburg, Ky., up in the coal country. The motto of the *Eagle*, until very recently, was "It Screams!" A look through the accompanying "Opinion Sampler" will give you an idea of the *Eagle's* pitch. Since the mid-1950s, Gish and his newspaper have flayed the powers that be, locally and nationally.

Early in the morning of August 1, a fire swept through the *Eagle* office, destroying most of the paper's equipment and much of its library of photos and other materials about its region. Because the city slapped a condemnation order on the building a few days later, the *Eagle* is now produced in the Gish home and other temporary spots. The new motto is, "It Still Screams!"

Convinced from the outset that the fire was the work of an arsonist, Gish--ever mistrustful of governments and their representatives--accused the state police of being "too busy to undertake a thorough investigation at the time of the fire." However, Bill Young of the state

office denies the charge. "We knew it was arson as soon as our investigator charted the course of the fire that first day," he says. "In an investigation like this, we simply don't tell all we know."

Who would want to burn up the *Eagle*? Gish has been so embattled that it sometimes seems it would be easier to answer the question if it were put negatively. Gish reports an arson threat from a coal trucker, and a threat against his life from a local law-enforcement officer. And there are countless persons with whom the *Eagle* has clashed over the years.

Even TVA, a current *Eagle* target, got into the act. An *Eagle* story of August 29 quotes Lynn Seeber, TVA general manager, as saying "apparently jokingly" that "I checked all TVA employees to make sure none of them were in Whitesburg."

Gish intends to keep the *Eagle* screaming, but the estimated loss from the fire is \$25,000 and insurance will cover only \$10,000. He has asked readers for support (the *Eagle* has a wide circulation outside its home area), and a benefit bluegrass-music festival is scheduled for the evening of October 24 at the Red Barn on the campus of the University of Louisville (you can obtain particulars from William Grant at the U of L English department).

If you wish to hear the *Eagle's* screams weekly, you can subscribe for \$8 a year; the address is 120 West Main St., Whitesburg, Ky. 41858. And if you'd like to make a cash contribution, it will be gratefully--but certainly not slavishly--received.

OPINION SAMPLER

The following selections should give you an idea of the tone of the Mountain Eagle's scream and the controversies it gets into. They are excerpted from recent news and feature stories (not editorials).

The Appalachian Regional Commission

The Appalachian Regional Commission's road show which opens Oct. 1 apparently will play to a handpicked audience chosen to offer applause uninterrupted by any dissenting voices.

At one time, there was much talk that ARC wanted to get into a genuine "dialogue" with residents throughout the 13-state Appalachian territory . . . an effort to find out how the people of the mountains themselves think of the past and present ARC programs, and the directions the programs should take in the future. . . .

This has all been dropped, apparently at the demand of John Whisman, who is the states' representative at the joint federal-state commission. Whisman, according to one high-level ARC official, wants a charade instead of a hearing. He proposes to substitute a series of public meetings for the hearings. At the meetings, carefully hand-picked state officials, local development district officials, and others with a vested interest in continuation of ARC activities with little or no change would be the scheduled speakers. There would be no time for hearing just plain people's testimony.

Fact is, even if Mr. Citizen attempted to attend one of the meetings, he would have a hard time doing so, for

details of when and where are as carefully guarded as major atomic secrets.

. . . A high level ARC executive said the commission had taken off its gloves to expose itself for what it has always been . . . "a direct subsidy to industry and a deflector of Appalachia's real economic issues."

--Anita Parlow

(Not so, says the ARC's Amy Hardy in response to questions from the CENTER NEWSLETTER. The dates were not available because they were being set by the offices of the respective Appalachian governors, not by the ARC. Since that time, press releases have gone out to newspapers (daily and weekly) and radio and TV stations in each Appalachian state, with those in each state receiving a listing of meetings for that state; some of the dates were not firmed up as the NEWSLETTER closed this issue, but the first Tennessee meeting is slated for Johnson City on October 21, the first Kentucky meeting for Prestonsburg (Jenny Wiley State Park) on October 29. The commission says that half of each program will be devoted to discussions of questions from the floor. Local papers and stations will (or should) carry details about these important meetings in your area.--Ed.)

TVA

The TVA has launched a strong-arming contest with the U.S. Forest Service hoping to persuade the guardian of the public land to allow TVA to strip mine its extensive coal reserves in Daniel Boone National Forest.

At stake for TVA is 25 million tons of coal it owns in Red Bird Purchase Area of the forest, which has pre-

from page 1

"Old doesn't mean dull," Jones observes. To prove the point, the celebration will feature an unrivaled array of star performers in the traditional folk area. Invited to perform (or otherwise participate) are Bradley Kincaid, Jean Ritchie, John Lair, the Fraley Family, Lily May Pennington, Floyd and Edna Ritchie Baker, the McLain Family, Asa Martin and the Cumberland Rangers, Buell and Philip Kazee, Artus and Joan Moser, Lewis and Donna Lamb, the Berea College Black Ensemble, the Berea College Country Dancers, the Mary Clay Sweethearts, Bert Layne, Addie Graham and Rich Kirby, Judy Ritchie Hudson, and Lou Therrel, Byard Ray, and Betty Smith.

Everyone interested in traditional music is invited. Says Jones, "If you like ballads, string music, square dancing, hymn singing, and just good all-around old-time foot-pattin' pickin' and singin', just come to Berea College on November 8 and stay for the whole thing. As a matter of fact, you might come on Election Day, November 5, for the big square dance at the Berea Community School."

The coming Berea celebration follows in the wake of a summer of festivals of varied kinds. Three of these call for mention here.

The Cumberland Gap Jubilee. Sponsored by the Expansion Arts program of the National Endowment for the Arts, this was an ambitious-and, by all reports, highly successful-attempt to create a sort of total mountain esthetic environment on the campus of Lin-

*From the scene at Cumberland
Gap--some faces, some skills*

coln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tenn. Held during the Labor Day weekend, it brought together artists, craftsmen, musicians, filmmakers, puppeteers, all of whose cumulative efforts demonstrated for both natives and visitors the richness and complexity of regional culture. This jubilee was one of several festivals in different parts of the U.S. sponsored by the National Endowment, and was mounted by a special staff working in conjunction with the Federation of Communities in Service (FOCIS).

The John Henry Memorial Authentic Blues and Gospel Jubilee. It seems that 1974 is, in some respects at least, a year of jubilees. This one, another Labor Day weekend festival, took place at the Washington Carver camp (operated by West Virginia State College) at Clifftop, W. Va., and offered a mostly musical "serving of Black Appalachian cultural experiences as rich and satisfying as its soul food concessions." On the program were native African groups and U.S. jazz, blues, ragtime and gospel performers. This was the second year of the John Henry festival, which is planned as an annual event.

The Pioneer Days Festival. A Virginia get-together, this one was held at Clintwood on September 27-28 under the auspices of Fred Carter's Cumberland Museum and emphasized traditional activities like butter churning and blacksmithing. There was, of course, music and dancing too.



from page 2

viously been off limits to strip miners. If TVA has its way it soon will begin stripping operations in the forest, thereby beating the deadline of the anticipated federal legislation on strip mining which will prohibit strip mine operations on national forest land.

Last Thursday and Friday in an unannounced closed door meeting, which the Eagle learned about from sources within the Forest Service, the top brass of both agencies gathered in Knoxville to discuss possible mining of the Red Bird tract . . .

While TVA has consistently downplayed a June 27, 1974, Eagle report that the agency was preparing to strip mine the forest lands, the fact that the TVA board was able to attract John McGuire, the director of the National Forest Service, from Washington to the meeting and included a tour of its showcase reclamation project in East Tennessee for the Forest Service officials left no doubt about the agency's intentions.-- *James Branscome*

Local Law Enforcement

Four persons, one a deputy sheriff, have been arrested following the Saturday night shooting of a young Blackey boy.

The deputy, Johnny Caudill, has been relieved of duty pending outcome of an investigation of the charges, Sheriff Ruben Watts said. Watts said he personally is handling the investigation into the shooting.

(Caudill is the policeman who resigned from the Whitesburg city police force in a letter to the city August 5. . . . He gave as his reason for resigning "the continued harassment given me by the editor of The Mountain Eagle and others.")

New Plans for Union

Officials of Union College (Barbourville, Ky.) are currently completing the presumably agreeable task of deciding exactly how they will spend a \$1,358,000 grant from the U.S. Office of Education.

The grant, one of a small number that have been awarded to enable selected colleges to establish Advanced Institutional Development Programs, has an interesting aspect: the money is awarded on the basis of a general plan, and then the recipient school refines its program and submits it for final OK. This enables the grant to be used for program-development purposes as well as for actual operation. In the past, many aspirants for Federal grants of various kinds have been stymied by their lack of program-development resources.

What will Union do with the money? Officials say that the thrust of activities will be toward greater service to the school's immediate area. More students from

Published by
Appalachian Center/Berea College
C.P.O. Box 2336
Berea, Kentucky 40403

Appalachia will be sought, and more programs with a direct vocational emphasis will be instituted.

Reading for the Record

The University of Tennessee's Center for Extended Learning (in Knoxville) announces a paperback reading program "for the enjoyment of all who desire to know more about the culture and people of this area." The program is divided into three parts--"Appalachia Yesterday and Today," "Appalachia in Fiction I" and "Appalachia in Fiction II." You can order the reading package for any of these parts, or all three packages if you wish, and after you read the books you can get a certificate attesting to the fact from the University Library Services. The books are all by well-known Appalachian writers.

EYE on Publications

" . . . a right good people," by Harold Warren (Appalachian Consortium Press). A "cross-section" of Appalachia, consisting mainly of pieces written for the Charlotte *Observer* about mountain people, attitudes and habits. Included are photographs from the Doris Ulmann collection and from the contemporary work of Warren Brunner, Joe Clark and Kenneth Murray. The book, which really is a kind of Appalachian festival in itself, has a foreword by Loyal Jones and an afterword by Cratis Williams.

Bits of Mountain Speech, by Paul Fink (Appalachian Consortium Press). The material for this straightforward, alphabetically arranged compilation was gathered over more than a half-century, starting in 1910, and runs from "abide" (tolerate) to "you-uns," by way of "chuffy," "peartnin' powders" and several hundred others. The author is a local historian in Jonesboro, Tenn.

Dialogue with a Dead Man, by Jim Wayne Miller (University of Georgia Press). These poems on mountain themes constitute the poet's conversation with--and tribute to--his grandfather. Miller, a professor of German at Western Kentucky University, participates each summer in the workshop sponsored by the Berea College Appalachian Center.

MAGAZINE

Southern Exposure (Institute for Southern Studies, 88 Walton St. NW, Atlanta, Ga. 30303). Now in its second year, this quarterly publication--which appears actually to be edited at Chapel Hill--has as its aim the presentation of "needed insights and analysis into southern culture, politics, and economics." The most recent issue available features a variety of pieces on southern music.

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Berea, Ky. 40403
Permit No. 19