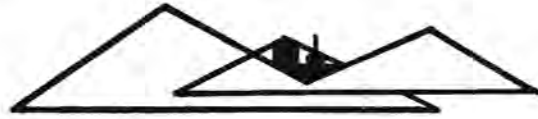


NEWS

LETTER



APPALACHIAN CENTER
BEREA COLLEGE

Loyal Jones • Thomas Parrish, Co-Editors

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Notes from a Summer Workshop

From June 13 to July 22 the Berea College campus was the scene of the fifth annual Workshop in Appalachian Studies (described in the Winter 1977 CENTER NEWS-LETTER), and the customary collection of regional luminaries was on hand as staff members and visiting lecturers.

The late P.F. Ayer, Berea sociologist and executive director of the Council of the Southern Mountains, used to say something to the effect that when a person speaks in public, what his audience hears him say is what he actually says, regardless of what he might think he says. With this point in mind, we thought we'd present some of the workshop sessions as jotted down by a student, Ken Moore, who has kindly allowed us to copy from his notes. We thought this approach might give you a bit of the flavor of the proceedings, and we therefore make no apology for not presenting excerpts from tapes.

The following selections are, we presume, a blend of direct quote and paraphrase, in the time-honored tradition of classroom scribbling. If any speaker wishes to disavow any of these comments, you may reach Mr. Moore through the Berea College Post Office.

Cratis Williams, Appalachian State University, speaking on Appalachian literature:

Since Harriette Arnow (*The Dollmaker*), Appalachian writing has spurted, although it has slowed down considerably of late. Arnow was the last great regional writer after William Faulkner wrote of the transition from the Old South to the threshold of the New. Appalachia is now at a similar stage. There is no great Appalachian writer today to record this transition

The mountaineer as we know him appeared in literature as a fictionalized, Daniel Boone-like character

The first mountain folk were literate. They named their sons and daughters after figures in the Bible and in classical literature

Appalachian literature has had four stages: local color, realism, romanticism, primitivism.

Jim Wayne Miller, Western Kentucky University, on education and identity:

Newest Center

Appalachia is really coming into its own, academically speaking, if the proliferation of Appalachian Centers can be taken as an indication of status. The newest such center to spring up is at the University of Kentucky, which has just announced receipt of a two-year, \$125,000 development grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. This grant follows an earlier \$35,000 planning grant from Rockefeller.

Planning for the center is in the hands of two veterans of the War on Poverty (if anybody remembers that conflict), Doug Arnett, the project director, and David Walls, planning coordinator. Arnett is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Duke, and Walls, once director of the Appalachian Volunteers, teaches in the university's College of Social Professions.

What will the center do? It will, says Arnett, be a "permanent research institute committed to the socioeconomic, political and educational well-being of the people who live in Eastern Kentucky and the multi-state Appalachian region." More specifically, it appears that the center plans to develop courses within various university departments and, beginning slowly, to engage in some service projects. It also announces its readiness to cooperate with other Appalachian programs.

The center will not technically come into existence until formal action by the university. However, the outcome hardly appears in doubt. University President Otis Singletary says that "we believe the Appalachian Center to be a 'natural' for this institution - and have really high expectations for it."

New Man at A R C

Readers who like to keep up with the doings of the Appalachian Regional Commission will be interested to know - in case you missed the event - that former Governor Robert W. Scott of North Carolina was recently sworn in as Federal Cochairman of the commission. This is the title given to the person who is the President's representative to the ARC. Scott, the fifth Federal Cochairman, is the first former governor to hold the post. Vice President Mondale, who administered the oath, was most enthusiastic, saying that "Bob brings a

special personal commitment and understanding of the Appalachian region" and that, as governor, he "always showed a special compassion and sensitivity to the needs of the underprivileged and the poor and those who lack the advantages most of us take for granted." Like the rest of you, the CENTER NEWSLETTER will from time to time take a look at the work of the ARC and try to discern how well these admirable qualities find expression in action.

WORKSHOP from page 1

Students in Appalachia need to know their culture. They have been deprived of this knowledge in learning United States culture. . . .

Area studies are a way of rediscovering America and doing away with high-brow and low-brow differences between people.

Wilma Dykeman, on literature and the Appalachian heritage:

We have to preserve our heritage. This is our treasure, these natural and human resources. If we don't, we'll be selling our heritage for a mess of pottage. . . .

Change has been going on in Appalachia for a long time, and we must make choices on the direction we want to take. . . .

Four distinctive qualities of Appalachian literature are sense of time, sense of place, sense of family, sense of the unique.

Harry M. Caudill:

The big corporations have really been making a lot of public decisions for quite some time now. . . . If Kentuckians don't make these crucial decisions (on coal, oil, etc.) they will be made by the marketplace. . . .

The manner in which money operates in politics is universal; it is not bound by state or national borders.

Steve Fisher, Emory and Henry College, on Appalachian political patterns:

The mountain area is considered to be predominantly Republican in states that are traditionally Democratic. Political machines still run a lot of counties, and the people vote along family lines and for the "good ol' boys." Patronage still decides who gets a lot of the jobs. The people are very suspicious of government and apathetic. . . .

Jimmy Carter did well in the mountains for four reasons: many people voted a straight ticket; Carter has a southern background; Appalachian people agreed with Carter on the issues (I call this the "right on" vote); a lot of people felt that Ford couldn't be counted on (I call this the "what the hell, anybody is better than Ford" vote).

David Walls, University of Kentucky:

In any social movement, the people who live in regions like Appalachia very seldom have full control of their destiny. Appalachians have to develop a self-consciousness and not be assimilated into the mass culture. . . .

I don't think that education is the major way

that change takes place. Look at the success of the labor movement and of the civil rights workers.

And there you have it - a scattering of samples from the workshop. If you have any queries not directed to Mr. Moore, you can write to the address on the outside of the NEWSLETTER. We'll do our best to answer them.

Remember the Miners

In May, Governor John D. Rockefeller IV of West Virginia appeared before the U.S. Senate subcommittee on energy production and supply and offered some unhackneyed, striking testimony on problems related to increased coal production in the United States. Some excerpts follow.

I am convinced that the major impediment to President Carter's 1985 goal of one billion tons of coal annually is neither an economic nor a technological problem; it is more subtle and more complex.

In examining the problem, let us begin by looking at what has happened to coal production in West Virginia in the past 10 years.

On an individual level, coal production in West Virginia has dropped from 17 tons per man day in 1967 to nine tons per man day in 1976, a drop of nearly 45 per cent in just a decade.

Total production figures complete the disturbing picture.

In 1967, West Virginia produced 152 million tons of coal with 43,000 miners. In 1976, we produced 109 million tons with 57,000 miners.

In the 10-year period, the number of miners increased by 33 per cent, while coal production decreased by 29 per cent.

The President's plan simply requires West Virginia to return to 1967 production levels.

Although this sounds like a simple task, we have much hard work ahead.

Let us look beyond the production figures themselves.

First, we must examine the extreme disharmony between management and labor in the coal industry. There is simply a total absence of mutual respect between producer and miner.

This lack of respect leads to frustration and ineffectiveness on both sides. And the end result is decreasing production.

Many of the difficulties in raising production levels will come to light when negotiations on a new (United Mine Workers) UMW contract begin later this year. Both sides will gather, and each will mouth the divisive rhetoric of the past.

Industry spokesmen will be faithful to the archaic notions of large land companies and coal operators; and union spokesmen will be careful to pamper the vocal few who threaten union control.

Industry will say:

"Wages are too high already, and work stoppages and absenteeism are driving coal production levels down."

And the union will respond:

"So what? Company profits continue to rise."

WEATHERFORD AWARD PRESENTED

Kai T. Erikson (left), director of the American Studies program at Yale University, receives the 1976 W.D. Weatherford Award certificate from Alfred H. Perrin, donor of the \$500 prize. Erikson was presented the award for his book *Everything in its Path*, a study of the aftermath of the 1972 flood in Buffalo Creek, W.Va. The award ceremony was held in Berea on May 3. Also honored was Harry M. Caudill, who was presented with a Special Weatherford Award for his writings.



from page 2

Although such statements are popular with the respective constituencies, they really do nothing to aid negotiations. Instead, they simply drive the wedge deeper between the miner and his boss at the mine site . . .

I don't claim to have an instant solution, but I do know that traditional principles are not getting the coal mined . . . Both sides need to re-think their relationship.

Increasing individual productivity is the basic goal. Both labor and management must pursue the goal in harmony. For if it is reached, both sides will surely benefit.

All the capital and new technology imaginable will not bring expanded coal production unless the productivity of the individual miner is increased.

I now turn to another fundamental issue - the individual miner and his quality of life.

Miners' wages have nearly doubled in the past 10 years. Today, the average miner earns around \$290 a week. Yet absenteeism and wildcat strikes are increasing.

Why isn't the traditional economic incentive of higher wages working?

Let's look at what the typical coal miner finds in his community.

Where does he live? In many places, the only housing available is a trailer or an old company house. The coal miner is well paid, but how can he spend his money? Certainly not for housing at the present time.

In West Virginia, for example, there are very few good housing sites available for the miner because of land-ownership patterns and the steep terrain. The result is that miners build on the only available land in the already overdeveloped flood plains.

It is not enough to offer a man high wages if he cannot find a decent place to live. High wages mean little if the miner and his family must live with the daily threat of devastating floods like those that ravaged southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky just a few weeks ago.

If we are to expand coal production in West

Virginia and in this nation, we must motivate the coal miner with an incentive; he must be given a stake in expanding production.

We must begin by providing the miner opportunities to improve his quality of life.

Government can no longer offer the approach of the past - an approach which denied a comprehensive flood protection system for the Tug Fork Valley in southern West Virginia because the cost-benefit ratio was too low. Today, as a result, millions of federal and state dollars are being poured into the same valley for temporary housing alone because of the horrible flood of recent weeks.

We must provide opportunities for good housing. At the state level in particular, government must develop more creative techniques to provide sites for housing and community development.

Government at all levels must help local communities develop the water and sewer systems, the health facilities, the recreation centers and the other basic services which the miner and the coal industry need in today's world.

In short, we must offer coal miners the chance to achieve living conditions which are now enjoyed by workers in other major industries in our country.

James R. Stokely

(1913 - 1977)

Just a few days after leaving Berea, where he had served as a visiting lecturer in the Appalachian Studies workshop, James Stokely died at his home in Newport, Tenn. We may well hope that he was not the last of the Southern gentlemen, but certainly there was never a finer one. Poet, prose writer, avid reader, patient researcher, gifted and engaging interviewer, he knew the South through his intellect and through his great variety of personal relationships; he lived in a fine harmony with the personal and physical and with the things of the mind and spirit. He was coauthor with his wife, Wilma

Dykeman, of *Neither Black nor White*, winner of the Hillman Award for 1957 for the best book on race relations, and of *Seeds of Southern Change: The Life of Will Alexander* and *The Border States* (in the Time-Life series).

His poetry was varied. The selections that follow are only a suggestion of this variety, offered here as a memorial in his own words.

News Item: 4000 A.D.

Found: one artifact
Of a gadget-worshipping culture,
Cave drawing of a giant firecracker
Which is presumed to have delighted
And extinguished the race.
One other clue in the same place:

A faded blueprint
Of a mammoth cellar of gold,
Which metal, it is rumored,
Had more value than poetry in those days.
Why did they bury their god of wealth?
Was it because of declining mental health?

A Clean Breast

The hills flame out their rich, October spell.
The dry-kiln embers and the yellow rusts
By day burn brightly on the great upthrusts
Which sink in darkness to a luminous shell.
These knobs are poised with a sculptor's pride.
In sinewy slant and quiet curve of reach
They tease the rib of legend, tilt the beach
Of inland seas where cloud-ships meet the tide.
Chained to a potter's wheel, man cups the breast
Which hovers him and feeds him with her brew
Of plums, wild grape and star-fermented dew
Which flows through veins of iron to shoreless rest.
Man's seed will pass, like fire, but what is death
If clay shall find its shape while still there's breath?

(Poems copyright ©1968 by James Stokely)

Subscribers, Friends

In the spring issue we published a little note suggesting that some readers might wish to become volunteer subscribers, the suggested contribution being \$1.50. Well, we're happy to report that we've received a

heartening response to this idea; a number of you seem to regard us as a useful publication, and we thank you. And, we might add, there's no time limit on contributions -- they're still welcome.

EYE on Publications

Our Appalachia, edited by Laurel Shackelford and Bill Weinberg (Hill and Wang). An oral history of Central Appalachia, the aim being to "let residents of the region tell their own story -- an opportunity they have seldom had." Lawyers, politicians, miners, horsetraders, teachers talk about their lives, telling tales that go back to the turn of the century, to the days of the barter economy and husking bees and survival by hunting and trapping. Coal speculators, tourists, do-gooders and other outsiders also figure in the story. *Our Appalachia* is described by Studs Terkel as "a lovely saga of survival."

Death at Buffalo Creek, by Tom Nugent (Norton). A 1973 work of investigative reporting by the man who covered the 1972 Buffalo Creek flood for the *Detroit Free Press*. Once again we are reminded that a coal company spokesman called the eminently avoidable disaster "an act of God." The book is an hour-by-hour account of what was in fact very much an act of man. How many other such acts, we wonder, are waiting to happen?

Redemption Denied, edited by Edward Guinan (Appalachian Documentation). The publisher of this book is an entity "created to present the authentic voice of the mountain people to a broader, mainly urban, culture" -- a description that fits the aim of this book itself. It is a reader made up of articles from a variety of publications.

The Cumberland, by James McCague (Holt, Rinehart and Winston). No. 63 in the "Rivers of America" series, which dates back to 1937, *The Cumberland* appeared in 1973. The river it celebrates begins and ends in Kentucky but flows mainly through Tennessee. The book talks about the beauty, the people and the history of the river and its country.

The Little White Schoolhouse, by Ellis Ford Hartford (University Press of Kentucky). A brief, informal look at the history of Kentucky's "common schools"; the book is a new item in the Kentucky Bicentennial Bookshelf. Dr. Hartford, a widely known educator who served as director of the state's Council on Public Higher Education, remarks that Americans might well strive "to obtain schools that fit and belong to their respective communities as did the little white schoolhouse."

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