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Now and Then, Vol. 01, Issue 01, 1984

East Tennessee State University

NOW AND THEN

Center for Appalachian Studies and Services/
Institute for Appalachian Affairs

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Mike Smith

FROM THE EDITOR

Fred Waage

Introducing *Now and Then*

I'm pleased to be able to present you with the first issue of *Now and Then*, the newsletter of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services. You can expect to see *Now and Then* appearing in March, May and December of each year.

Our title expresses the dual experience of Appalachian culture, looking back to the roots of its traditions, and following these traditions' continuity through the present, as they persevere or are deplaced by new ways of living, thinking and feeling.

As we are concerned with Appalachia then and now, so we wish to present both analytical and expressive insights into our region's nature and concerns. Thus this and future issues will contain expository material interpreting Appalachian culture past and present; it will also offer that culture itself in the form of imaginative writing and visual art.

This time, we would like to devote our interpretive section to orientation: What is the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services, and what role does it plan to play in our region? You will find below the director's discussion of these questions, and following that, profiles of the Appalachian studies projects to be undertaken by the initial recipients of the Center's Fellowships. In future issues the interpretive section of *Now and Then* will feature the work underway and completed of these and other Fellows. Here also, in this and in each subsequent issue, we will share with you a particularly interesting recent acquisition of each of the two curatorial components of the Center—the Archives of Appalachia and the Reece Museum—and other news of their activities. Beginning with the *next* issue, we will also have a regular review of a significant recent book on Appalachia which addresses a wide, non-specialized audience.

Uniting our two sections you will find the *Now and Then* centerfold: "before" and "after" photos of a single local area, revealing the changes that time has brought to it. In this issue we are also fortunate to have as a running motif photographs by Mike Smith, one of the 1984 Fellows.

Our cultural section this time is entitled "Appalachian Voices;" it features the work of Johnson City writer and performer Jo Carson. Appalachian writers are close to, and in many cases still part of, a tradition of spoken art. The first great literature of our area was not written, but passed along orally in stories and songs. The unique vitality of current Appalachian writing derives often from this living tradition of direct, immediate, idiosyncratic human voices. Our selection here captures the many keys of those voices.

Ultimately, the premise of *Now and Then* is this sense of a "living tradition." We speak for and to a proud culture which is flexible enough to contain much diversity within its unity, and to assimilate rather than being transformed by new ideas and institutions. But also for a culture which has problems—economic, social, environmental, aesthetic—which demand a continual re-confrontation and re-interpretation. Our goal is to engage the widest possible audience with both its difficulties and its triumphs—through nostalgia, immediacy and prophetic contemplation. We should seek to know, as Robert Penn Warren's wild geese do in his felicitously titled volume *Now and Then*, "The path of pathlessness, with all the joy/of destiny fulfilling its own name."

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Richard Blaustein

Leafing through my desk not too long ago, I came upon some early notes and memos outlining an Appalachian Studies program at East Tennessee State University. These dated back to the late sixties and early seventies, which made me reflect once again, as I have often done in the past, on the long and sometimes arduous path which finally led us to establish the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services during this past year. To be sure, there have been delays, defeats and dead-ends along the way, but there have also been overwhelming successes and solid accomplishments which have made it possible for us to reach this happy point. The internationally-recognized collection of southern mountain folksong and folklore initiated by Tom Burton and Ambrose Manning, their highly successful fall folk festivals which brought great traditional artists and performers to this campus, the exciting summer Appalachian film workshops which also featured major regional commentators and writers, the enthusiastic support which the university has provided to the Appalachian Consortium: all of these have been important steps along the path leading to the ETSU Center for Appalachian Studies and Services.

It would be nice if we could rest briefly and look back at the steps which have brought us this far but there is too much remaining to be done to permit that luxury. Thanks to the generous support given to this program by the university, private donors and Tennessee's Centers of Excellence program, we are just beginning to embark upon an ambitious five-year plan of personnel and resource development, grant-writing and public service which will hopefully enable ETSU to realize its potential as a major center for scholarly, artistic and humanistic efforts serving the Southern Appalachian region of which we are a part. *Now and Then* is a central feature of this effort. During the months and years to come, you will be learning more about what we have done in the past, what we are doing now and what we hope to accomplish in the future. Until now our strengths have mainly been in the area of cultural and historic documentation, media production and public service, and these activities will continue. Currently, our Center Fellows are working on a number of exciting new projects, such as a video documentary on the roots of Appalachian violence, a travelling photo exhibit of Appalachian places and faces, a documentary LP presenting the music of an outstanding southwest Virginia fiddler and songster, a gripping new drama depicting the Kentucky coalfield troubles of the Depression years and a second round of the nationally-acclaimed radio series "Down Home Music," which has been broadcast on no less than 90 National Public Radio stations all the way from Maine to Alaska. Along these lines, we will also continue to support special events and services such as performances by traditional teachers and administrators and films, concerts, exhibits and lectures which relate to Appalachian themes and concerns.

However, we are also hoping to move ahead into areas which have been less well explored. For example, we are interested in setting up culturally-oriented training programs for medical personnel and child welfare advocates. Another possibility concerns the value of collecting family history and folklore from the elderly as a therapeutic technique. In support of these activities, we will also be working to develop and expand academic offerings in the area of Appalachian Studies and Services. The potential has always been here; the challenge is to make this potential a vivid reality. With you here; the challenge is to make this potential a vivid reality. With your can bring credit to the university while serving the people of this region. We have come a long way but there is still a long way to go—new trails to be blazed, new territory to be explored. Join us.

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF APPALACHIA

Recent Events and Acquisitions

Norma Thomas

Washington County, Tenn. Court Records

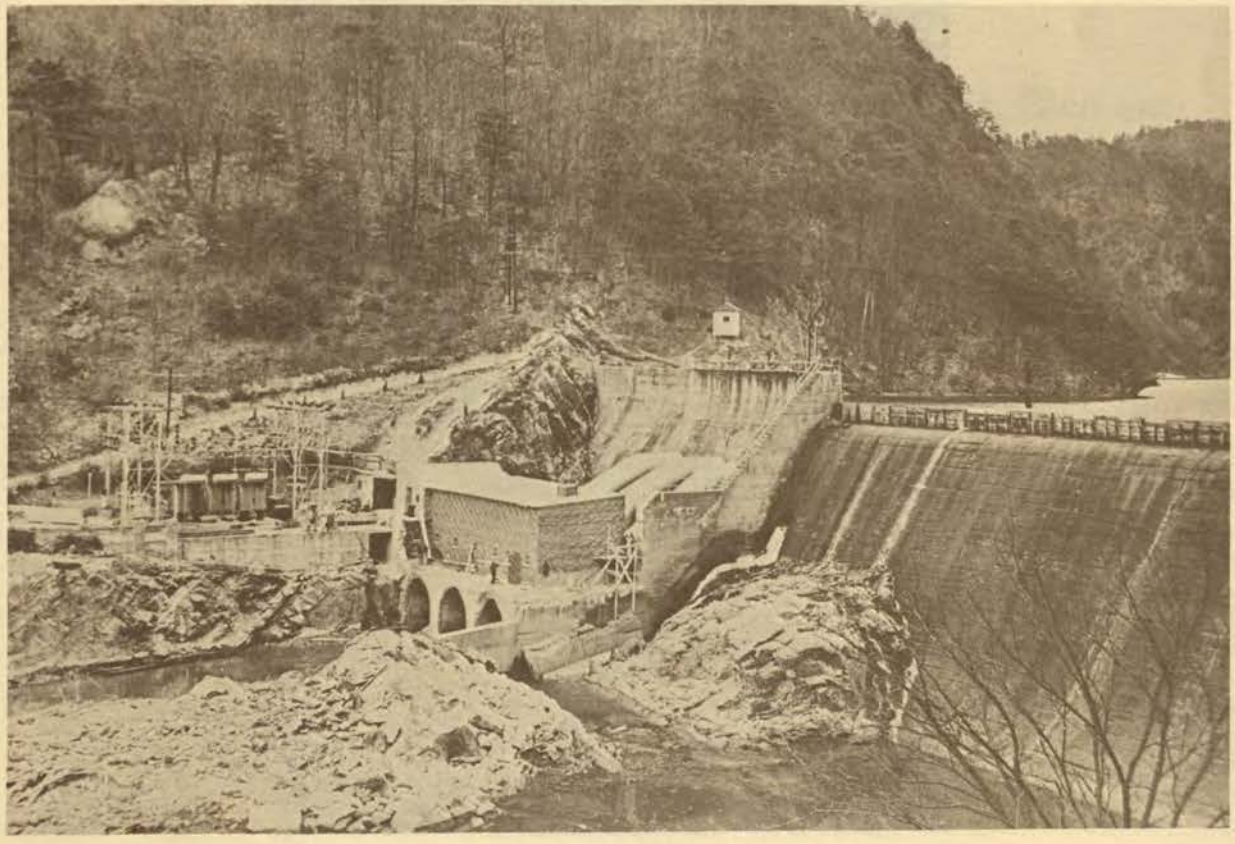
Recently, the Archives of Appalachia staff completed arranging the Washington County, Tenn. court records. These records are a valuable source for researchers interested in the history and development of upper East Tennessee. Spanning from 1780 to 1960, the court records contain the administrative and legal documents created by the Superior, County, Circuit and Chancery courts. The records reflect the operation not only of the courts but of the county's administrative offices and governmental bodies. A researcher would find records relating to elections, maintainence of roads and public property and supervision of the schools. The court records also provide information on such topics as divorce, care of the poor, education and economic development. In addition, this record group offers lawyers, genealogists and local historians material on specific cases, individuals, family histories and particular businesses.

New Staff Member

Norma Thomas recently joined the staff of the Archives of Appalachia as the technical services archivist. This new position is supported by the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services. As the technical services archivist, Ms. Thomas will supervise accessioning and processing manuscript and record groups in addition to working on the development of a unified automated indexing system for manuscript, vertical file, audio-visual and photographic materials held by the archives.

East Tennessee Light and Power Company

The East Tennessee Light and Power Company Records contain the financial and operating records of the East Tennessee Light and Power Company, which built and operated dams in upper East Tennessee, western North Carolina and southwestern Virginia, in addition to the records of the smaller companies which were purchased by the parent company. These records provide researchers with insight into the production and distribution of electric and gas energy in the region from the 1890s until 1945 when the Tennessee Valley Authority purchased the company. A researcher would also find valuable information on the relationship of the company with federal and state regulating agencies as well as with other companies in the region. Photographs and engineers' drawings are also included in these records.



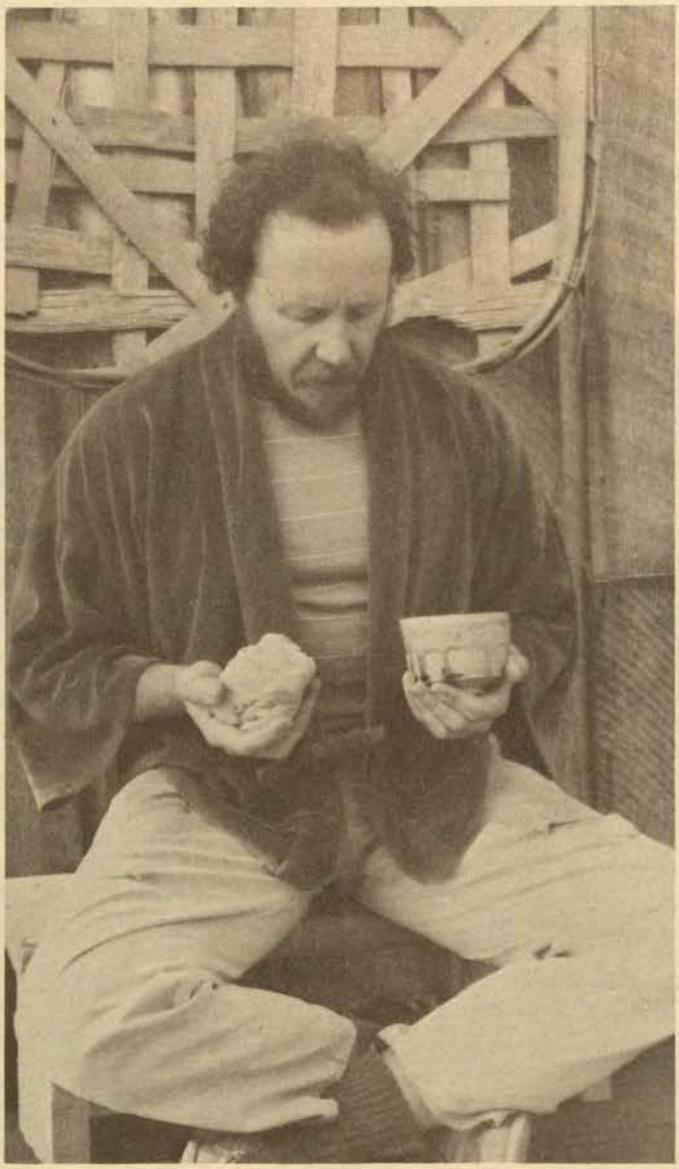
from the East Tennessee Power and Light Company records

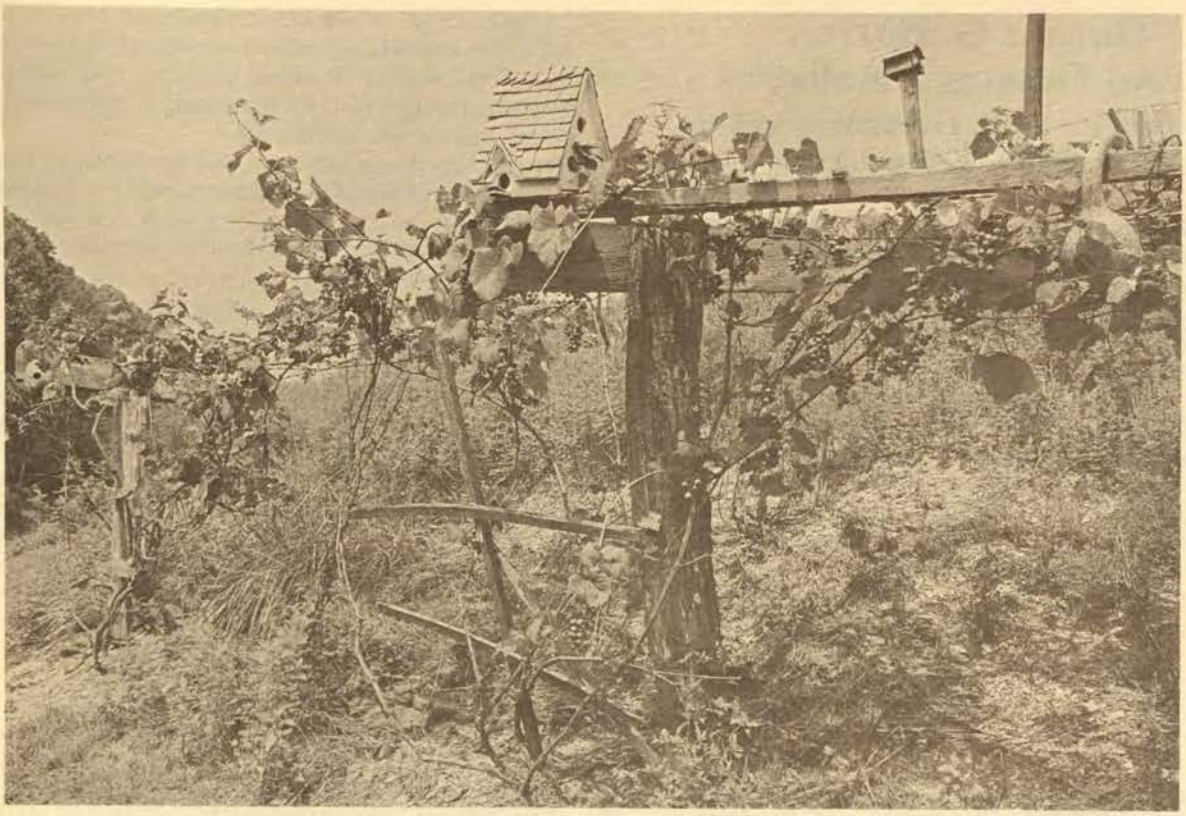
FROM THE REECE MUSEUM

Helen Roseberry

O.J. Bergeron of Maynardville, Tennessee exhibited his pottery at the Carroll Reece Museum during February and March of 1984. At the conclusion of this exhibit, he donated a piece of glazed stoneware pottery, "Sunburst", to the museum's permanent collection. Bergeron was born in New Orleans and has studied or worked with notable clay artists such as Howard Shapiro, Joe Bova, Jim Darrow and master potter, Shiro Otani. President of the East Tennessee Artists-Craftsmen Association in 1983-84, Bergeron, a master potter himself, attended the University of Tennessee as a graduate student in art. His ability and interest in working with children has been demonstrated throughout his career as he visits area public schools and lectures and demonstrates his craft. He was featured at the museum's 1984 Homefolks Festival, demonstrating use of the potters wheel.

The addition of the Bergeron wall tile broadens the regional pottery collection at the museum. Other pieces in the collection represent such artists as Charles Counts, Cynthia Bringle, Stephen Wing and James Hemenway.





Mike Smith

FROM THE CENTER
Fellows of the Center, 1984-85

Anndrena Belcher
Folk Arts Programs in East Tennessee Schools

Currently of Scott County, Va., Anndrena Belcher is a graduate of Northeastern Illinois University with a master's degree in Appalachian studies. She also has worked in arts-in-schools programs in several states. A native of Pike County, Kentucky, she "returned to the mountains" in 1976 and is currently a storyteller, singer, dancer and actress.

She will conduct school workshops in the upper East Tennessee area, particularly in rural schools which cannot otherwise afford to establish arts programs. These workshops are designed to enhance education through storytelling and other folk arts.

As well as enhancing elementary and secondary schools' curricula by integrating traditional Appalachian arts into them, Ms. Belcher's workshops will directly contribute to students' personal and intellectual development. For example, she says "storytelling can be used to improve reading skills, verbal expression and body movement," as well as building self-confidence and self-understanding.

Her workshops will also suggest folk arts activities which teachers can undertake after her departure, such as oral history projects, or performing groups. They will be a vehicle for developing a bibliography of educational materials on Appalachian history and culture.

Tommy R. Bledsoe
Biography and Recording: Charlie N. Osborne

Charlie N. Osborne is a 93-year-old resident of the Copper Creek section of Russell County, Va. Since 1905 he has been playing fiddle and banjo music, much of which has been passed to him by family members and neighbors. Tommy Bledsoe's project will involve documenting and recording the stories and music of this "singularly interesting man."

According to Bledsoe, "Mr. Osborne represents an accurate example of the style and repertoire of musicians of this area [in] the early decades of the 20th century. He is in good musical form and voice and exudes a spirit that translates well to recorded material."

The biographical booklet will chronicle Osborne's musical development and the influences that shaped it, and will also contain stories of his life. Copies and transcripts of all the materials collected will be deposited in the Archives of Appalachia. The Osborne recording will be issued and distributed by June Appal Records of Whitesburg, Ky.

A 1968 graduate of East Tennessee State University, Bledsoe is a self-employed musician, storyteller and actor, who has performed with local music and drama groups such as Home Folks Band and Roadside Theater, as well as in many places in the U.S. He has been active as an arts and folklife teacher in southwestern Virginia.

Thomas G. Burton and Thomas Headley

Documentary Film: Traditional Springs of Violence in Appalachia

Dr. Thomas Burton, professor of English at East Tennessee State University, and Dr. Thomas Headley, assistant professor of Communication, will be conducting research leading to production of a documentary film on violence in Appalachia, as well as a 30-minute television program for the Omni series, drawn from interviews conducted for the documentary.

Scheduled to be interviewed for the film are a wide spectrum of individuals involved in circumstances of violence at every level—from representatives of the legal system in Appalachia to perpetrators and victims of violence. Of particular interest will be the articulation of traditional values and beliefs which evoke violence—such as the defense of honor, ideals of manhood, sanctity of property—rather than specific, material, immediate causes of violence such as drugs or alcohol.

Burton sees the role of violence in Appalachia as in some ways unique and in some ways representative of violence anywhere in America. For example, although ownership of land is always an issue, there are in Appalachia specific traditions about land ownership which induce violence in certain areas.

The film, by virtue of its interview format, which presents personal experiences with violence rather than definitive analysis of its causes, is meant to be accessible to the most diverse possible audience in this area. Ideally it will therefore have a deterrent impact on violence itself, through heightening public awareness of violence as a problem.

Praise in Blackout

David Hopes

Lord, for the black I bless Thee.
For iced wind, power lines snapped
and night on the mountain.
For my headlights like the power of a god,
two blasts against it.
For eyes of farm cats kindled,
road to my door shot diamond.
For, Lord, iron and underrock,
trench, chasm, shut vault.
For now black suns igniting
in sky this blackness, so steady
from eastward the still-lit city
night hawk under storm-cloud,
wings outstretched,
stooping the centuries toward me,
in a second to engulf my hill.

Philip D. Leonard

National Public Radio Program "Down Home Music"

"Down Home Music," a series of 13 programs recorded at the Down Home Pickin Parlor in Johnson City, has been a tremendously successful music program on National Public Radio, being carried by 89 stations. Philip Leonard, program director of radio station WETS-FM, will use his fellowship to help support a second series of "Down Home Music," again consisting of 13 one-hour programs. This new series has already received partial funding from the Tennessee State Department of Tourism and National Public Radio.

The new series will be recorded at several locations in addition to the Down home—for example at the A.P. Carter Festival, and, if possible, at the Country Radio Reunion.

Jo Carson

Theodore Dreiser Photographic Archive

Jo Carson's fellowship will support her research, in various Appalachian archives, into the photographic record of Theodore Dreiser's visit to the eastern Kentucky coalfields in the 1930s. It is an outgrowth of the research she did for her play on this episode in Dreiser's life, and is an integral part of the play since the photographs will be used as a central feature of the set in its production. She has already made fascinating discoveries of Dreiser photographs in the Appalachian collection of the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville. The complete archive will be deposited in the Archives of Appalachia for the use of scholars and future producers of the play.

Mike Smith
Photography Exhibition: Potliquor

Dr. Mike Smith is assistant professor of art at East Tennessee State University. His exhibition entitled POTLIQUOR, will be held at Carson Newman College in March 1985, and will hopefully become a travelling exhibition shown in different, particularly non-academic, settings.

His photographs present many details of contemporary life in this area. They show us places, living-spaces and human-made artifacts that interest him personally.

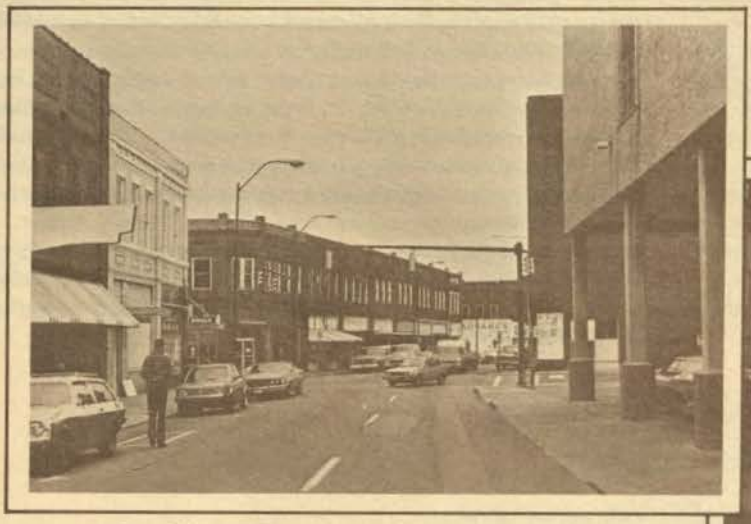
This idea of "personal vision" is emphasized in Smith's art—it is not the product of a particular aesthetic or social ideology, but of his personal sense of affinity for places he encounters with his camera, often on four-to-five hour motorcycle expeditions. He also avoids labelling his work as either "documentary" or "abstract"; it has non-representational qualities, but is best characterized by the sense of *process* implied in the sense of the title "potliquor".

Both a process of cooking and a sociocultural locale, POTLIQUOR can also denote social class. In cooking, the simmering of foods at low heat for hours releases all their juices, yielding a sort of liquor, a distilled extract of high quality and potency. As referring to a sociocultural locale, the term carries meanings related to legends of poverty and race.

Smith says use of the term as his theme and title "refers to a process of working related to both of these meanings. Each photograph included in the show is an extract of ideas, usually visual, derived from many attempts at variation. This process involves learning accomplished in a very slow, deliberate manner. It is like simmering perceptions into a pot of visual liquor. A coalescence or distillation. . . . I see it, my subject, as an abundance of raw ingredients for a tireless flame. The pure enjoyment of seeing, looking and being there where survival demands such powerful nourishment is my pleasure."

Mike Smith

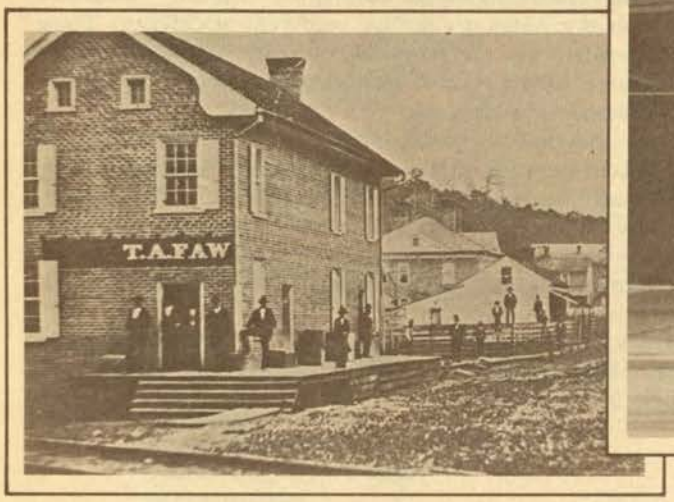
JOHNSON CITY NOW A

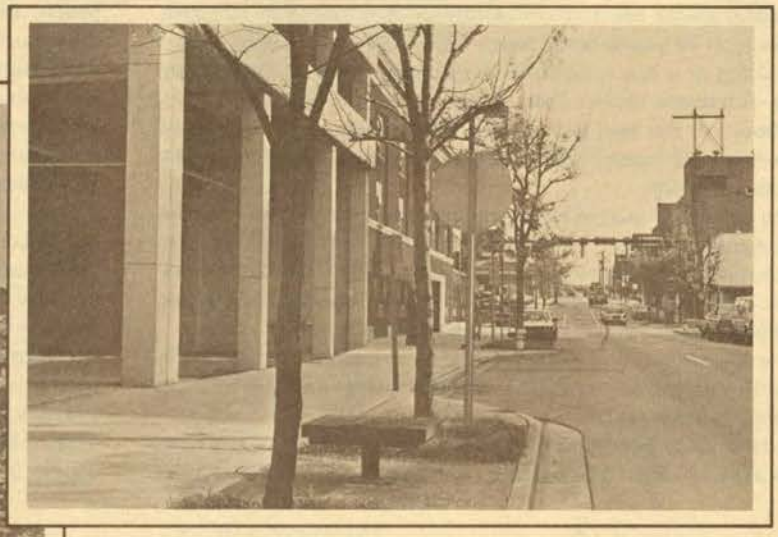


looking East on Market Street at intersection with Boone Street

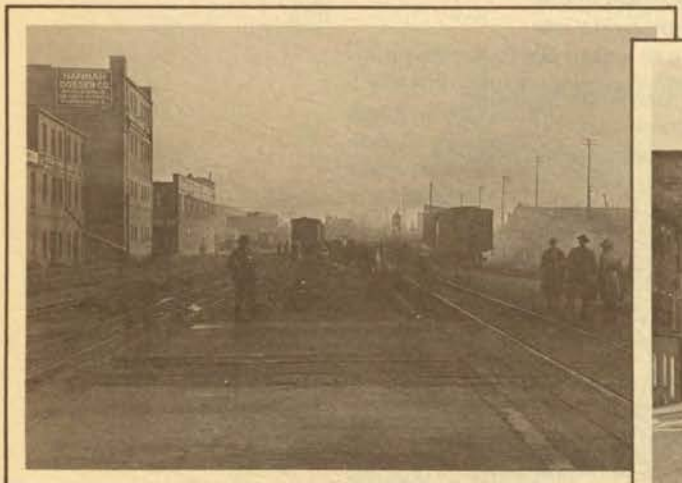
up Main Street from Fountain Square

AND THEN





Market Street at Parking Garage



railroad crossing between
Roan Street and Buffalo Street

APPALACHIAN VOICES

About the 'People Pieces'

Jo Carson

These poems are really a collection of monologues and dialogues with people I have met in the Appalachian region. Some of the individual pieces are from conversations that took three minutes; others took 20 years. Some began with just a phrase heard while I was sitting at a bar somewhere or standing in line at the grocery store. A few are almost direct quotes. For some, I pulled out my notebook on the spot and asked if the person minded if I copied down his or her remark. Other notions waited months before I knew how to use them.

The collection started because I began to hear the poetry in the language of the region. As a child, I remembered trying to educate my cousin who wanted to return to Indiana talking like we did in the mountains. We spent hours, days, but she still sounded more like an eight-year-old Scarlett O'Hara than anybody I knew.

The real lesson was learning to listen to words. It is difficult to admit to learning something as important as that a third or more of the way through life.

Listening has become a habit, maybe an addiction. At any rate, there are a whole lot of People Pieces, close to 200. Some are funny, some sad, some harsh. I have 60 or so that I really like and like to use. These days I read/perform these People Pieces in many different situations including schools, service clubs, citizen action groups, bars, Wednesday night dinners at the church, art festivals, you name it.

The pieces speak directly to issues because they are from real people, and they do it in a way that is not confrontational. They cross social and cultural lines of communication. Listeners find themselves understanding and learning from folks they are not even accustomed to hearing, much less paying any attention to. Those whose words I use are continually surprised, flattered, perhaps empowered, to find there is something important or beautiful or entertaining in what they say.

Sometimes I feel like I have a mission. Each time I get a phone call or someone stops me on the street (it happens regularly) and says. "You need to come by and talk with my neighbor," or "I got a story you ought to hear." the feeling is reinforced. These days, I have the privilege to speak for someone else. It wasn't planned or even dreamed when I began writing the People Pieces. It has just grown up that way.

Following pieces used with permission of *Southern Exposure* (from July/August 1982 issue) and *Appalachian Journal* (from Vol. 10, No. 2, Winter 1983).

Broke
is not sissy-footin' around
sayin' "I can't, I'm broke"
holdin' a twenty dollar bill
in your pocket,
or hollerin' about bein down
to the wire
with a dollar or two in the checkin'
and a whole wad's not been touched
in the savin's.

That's poor-mouthin'

Broke
is out of all liquid assets
includin' the ones in the pop-tops.

Broke
is crusin' the house
lookin' for somethun' to sell.

Broke is when I hock my daddy's rifle.
You can ask me where's the gun
and if it's down at Bud's
you know the times are bad.

Really broke:
Hock money's run out
and no more credit at the bar,
I sell whatever I'm drivin'.

Broke and in trouble with the law.
I put the red truck up
and borrow money against the title.

Never got down worse than that.

Law, you know who's living
down in Jack's old house?
Lucy.
And Jack
and his family
moved down where
George used to live
before he moved out to the country.

Well, George broke his leg
and come back
and moved in with his cousins
right next door
to where I used to live
when you all had the house
across the street.

Ritchies live there now,
where you lived.

Well, the people who lived
on the other side—
moved in after you left, I think—
live in my old house now.
has more yard.

Well anyway,
that house next door,
the one Lucy moved out of into Jack's old place . . .
Well, George ain't gettin' along too good
with his cousins right now,
and he's thinking about moving in.

It's gettin' to where
you can't give a person nothin' anymore
and it's too damn bad . . .

My neighbor could look
the devil in the eye
and say "no thanks,"
he didn't want to go to hell
while at the same time
tryin' to slip Jesus Christ
a couple of dollar bills
for the free gift of salvation.

He's a hard man
and he's about to drive me crazy.
Fifty cents he puts in my mailbox,
or a dollar or somethin'
and all I did was give his wife
a couple'a tomatoes
and a mess of old string beans.

And they ain't rich.

Yesterday I picked a half a bushel
a little ole zucchini squash
and I carried five or six over
and put 'em on his porch
with a note that said
"These are a present."
Present was underlined.
And today, there's a dollar
in my mail box!

The man don't understand
he's doin' me a favor
when he takes and
eats them damn zucchini
and when he pays me for 'em . . .
Lord, it's me ends up beholdin' to him.

Every time I get a little headache
my daughter tells me
I shouldn't take these BC powders.
She says, "Mama, you know
how that does your stomach."
And of course I know.
It gets my little ulcer all in a fit.

And then my daughter says
"Mama, you shouldn't drink that milk,
you know it gives you headaches."
And of course I know that
but I have to do something
for a little ulcer,
cause the BC's are so hard on it
and the milk gets down in there
and coats my stomach.

But then I am allergic to the milk.
Gives me headaches

And then I do have to go
and take another BC powder.

And then my daughter starts in about
"It's a vicious circle"
and "You're chasing your own tail."
That kind of thing.

What she don't understand
is that a person does
what they have to do.

And all that hecklin
don't help high blood pressure
the least little bit.

I was born three months before I's due
then I turned around
and got pneumonia
and then when I was nine,
I had leukemia.
I did.
I fell offen a horse
and broke my neck
and lived.
I went to war.
Since then,
I've wrecked two cars
and walked away,
clipped the wings off an airplane
landin it,
and run out of a house on fire.
I wiped out on a motorcycle
doin about a hundred.

I been married full four times
Middle two liked to a-killed me.

The fourth one's doin all right so far,
except she keeps a-tellin me
to be careful,
that I'm gettin old.

Some of these pieces were developed for Chatauqua 77, a show produced by The Road Company. The time with The Road Company gave me the opportunity to develop the form. Thanks are in order.
—Jo Carson

Mrs. Ellen Sue MacDowell Has a Thought or Two on the Way to Dress Rehearsal. (It's the Easter Pageant She Has Written to Showcase Her Daughter's Talent.)

John O'Brien

She is squinting down MacDowell Street
at a farm truck just pulled up by that
tacky local diner, thinking, there's a
stallion colt in need of gelding, there's
a little flesh that needs attending. And
she pictures that metal band, not much wider
than a wedding ring, that her stableman
clips around the works of field colts,
only good for looking at, and not much good
for even that. The way it makes that crazy look
go away, as if a candle had been snuffed out
behind their eyes. His father is foreman
at the mill, she thinks. Or maybe he'll want
a job himself someday. Wait and see.

R.B. Splain Returns From His Lamb Pen

John O'Brien

Well sir, things stay pretty much the same hereabouts.
Your lambs come in by end of March or so,
and some of them make it and then some just don't.
Has to do with something in the blood I'd say.
Or could be some just don't have a taste for life.
Kind of like people when you think of it, maybe.
Sure, come April you put your peas and lettuce in.
Later on some corn and bush beans and what-have-you.
Any kind of luck and you're eating out of garden
by Fourth of July. Or thereabouts in any case.
Folks ain't changed much either.
You get born and then you die. Lotta fuss in between.
Yes sir, it's like I say, pretty much the same.
Come fall you butcher up a hog or two
and press your cider. Sit back, wait the winter out.

Mrs. Ned Rowan Working in the Front Yard

John O'Brien

There's a MacDowell for you;
sashay by, dressed like a china doll,
and not so much as kiss my foot.
Off to some fancy masquerade I suppose.
Passed within three feet of me she did
and never said a word or took no notice.
Has more time for fancy horses than for folks.
He brought her up from Richmond way,
Some blue blood family too good for us.
Well that's just fine by me.
Money just gives people notions and
I could maybe tell her a thing or two
about her blueblood daughter an that Teeter boy.

Oh, It Be Once
Paul Weinman

Oh, it be once every while some youngun at books—school you know—would come up and ask me questions about what life was like. Danged but don't it always get me to swatting my knee and set at laughing like my side's to split.

Course, I'm careful in waiting till the door be shut and them to the steps.

I know them to be serious, their eyes all agawk, but it's nothing to me cept what I grew on up through. Besides, my pa, he'd already done most of what was to be. Cutting out trees like you'll never see. Digging and setting stone to cellar. Turning sod with rock as thick as its dirt.

An ma, her arm shrivelled, you know. Held me warm with it to no winter's breast. Them that ask hardly take note to that. I guess they're more worrying about pa cutting up God's country to cradle us . . . up there where the mountains left a space for potatoes and our hill-built home.

I tell them about ma and me being on our knees—pushing in spuds, pulling out weeds, praying together that them roots would grow all of fat heads. Potatoes, you know. And when it wasn't His will, why ma, she'd have dug, picked, pulled all kinds of weeds, berries, leaves and roots—saving them up for hard winter's blow.

But they like what of pa shooting that bear about to break down our door. Stringing up them rattling snakes like they were suspenders to dry. I guess that's all well and true.

Me, I got preference to us sitting at rough table holding hands. And them tears that showed when he looked up at ma head bent. Her with that arm and the way it held us all tight.

Not Exactly a Hermit
Paul Weinman

Sheevas wasn't exactly a hermit, because his appearance were enough to remember back on with uneasiness. Nor was he a normal kind of trapper and guide—for one spring he might bring in a heavy back of hide . . . another, nothing but his own in gaunt clothes long years from washing.

Wasn't a one who looked forward to his talk sticky with curse and complaint, though I couldn't say there was many but he showed up to but once—him never much returning to where's he'd been. Words of Sheevas sure did precede his sly body.

No one knew how many years he had, so his intent was a surprise when he walked in on Missus DeBeers while she was bent at hardwood board . . . splitting potatoes for frizzle.

My husband's at his lot cutting out tree, she said. Now take yourself to the shed and spit some hickory if it's food you want.

But his manner was not for that and he started talk hot-such like to set fry-fat asizzle. Sure it would have startled most women hearing amorous words from a stranger just walking into your house. Specially him with clusters of flies all about his hair all matted down.

Quick enough she called on the Lord to step between. And her knife hear the cry . . . sliced his ear clear off just as he stepped that one foot too near.

Sheevas looked down at the floor and back up at that woman. My gosh, he said . . . so that's what it looks like!

Well you just pack it to pocket, she said. Or I'll sever the other as sure . . . and put them both with potatoes to serve them up brown if you'll sit out at steps! Share one with my husband if you're asking for more.

No, that's enough, sighed Sheevas. He picked it up and asked if there was an extra Bible book he might have. Pay her back in muskrats come spring.

Now, whenever he comes on a house or town, even meeting another on trail—he'll take out that Book. Can't read himself, but has ear kept marking where the last had stopped left off. Ask you to read on.

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OUR NEXT ISSUE WILL FEATURE APPALACHIAN WOMEN WRITERS

contributors in all genres welcome
Deadline: January 15, 1985
send to Fred Waage, Box 24292
ETSU, Johnson City, TN 37614-0002

The Devil Dog

Annis Ward Jackson

Name's Boone Ramsey, and you just ask anybody in Watauga County, they'll tell you I ain't no liar! Course, I ain't nobody's pretty boy, and I got some years on me, about eighty-seven I reckon. And, I do sit here on these courthouse steps and, I guess I'd talk all day if anybody'd listen. But like I said, I ain't no liar!

It's kind of like I was a history book or one of them recording machines. I know everything that's gone on around her since way before any of you'uns was born.

How do I remember all that stuff at my age? Why, all I got to do is look around me and I see something and it reminds me of something else and purty soon the whole damned (pardon, ladies) story is swimming around in my head, just begging to be let out!

You take that black dog over there, yeah, the one walking with that blind woman. Now that looks just like the one belonged to a feller I knowed one time, way back yonder.

Roscoe Yates was his name, and as I recall, he was a right likeable person, until the time he chanced to heir a passel of money. Some old Aunt he hadn't heard from in years died down in Wilmington and left Roscoe all she had.

Up until then he was a working boy, just common folks like the rest of us. Never been married but spent a right smart bit of time over in Jefferson, sparking some widder he met at a 'lasses boiling.

Well, when Roscoe came into all that money, you ain't never seen nobody change as much nor as fast as he did! And, what got away with us was, he never went to spending and wasting and galivanting around, flinging his good luck in our faces. No sir, we could have took that easy! It was the way he got all secrety and quiet. Worked right on down at the kraut factory, running that cabbage chopping machine, like he still needed the money. Never did dress no better than he did before he got rich!

Then Roscoe got to where he started shying away from the rest of us and somebody said he plumb quit going to see the widder, thinking she was just out to take his money.

Before long, only time Roscoe was seen was going back and forth to work and to the bank now and then. Seemed like Roscoe didn't want no company and we stopped bothering him altogether cause we was never people to force ourselves on nobody.

Well, one evening, late November I think it was, Roscoe got waylaid! Thief knocked him senseless and stole a big roll of greenbacks that Roscoe was fool enough to be toting around in his overhall's pocket. They never caught the varmint, but Roscoe must have been mightly perturbed because the next thing we knowed, he had gone clean down to Winston Salem and bought hisself a dog!

Now, this wasn't no plain old hound nor beagle like what we was use to! It was the tallest, skinniest dog we had ever laid eyes on, black as stove polish, with pointy, unnatural ears that stood up like they'd been sugar starched. One of the boys talked to Roscoe and found out that it was a perfessional learned guard dog *and* that Roscoe was going back to Winston ever week, special to learn hisself how to get that critter to do his bidding!

With that we all give up on Roscoe. Figured he had plumb took leave of his senses, looked like he wasn't going to do nothing the rest of his life but take care of that money.

Things went on that way for a while. We all kind of lost track of the time. Roscoe went on walking to work every day, that big dog trotting along side him, turning its head back and forth to both sides of the street like it was just looking for somebody to jump on.

No, Roscoe never had no more trouble with thieves. The dog took care of that, all right! And if there was anybody left with any doubts about what that dog would do, they got over them in a hurry after a fertilize salesman bumped into Roscoe on the steps of the FCX and knocked him down. It was an accident, but Roscoe's dog tackled that salesman, had him on the flat of his back before you could blink your eye! Put them big paws on that feller's chest and held him down. Fierce growls rolling out from his throat and his lips curled back off them long shiny teeth! Don't know how long it would have been before he started chewing on that salesman, but somebody throwed a bucket of water on Roscoe and got him revived. He walked over and spoke to his dog and the dangdest thing happened! That snarling beast whimpered just once and backed right off that salesman. Went over and stood beside Roscoe, just as cool a a cucumber. Why, if that had been my old coon hound, he would have been bouncing around and baying for time eternal!

As you can see, that happening isolated Roscoe even more from the rest of the town. Soon, there wasn't a soul that would try to so much as speak to him when that dog was along. And, I don't believe anybody had been up to his house in nearly a year. That's why it seemed such a queer thing when little Addie Wells come running into the barber shop one Saturday, screaming about them awful noises she had just heard up at Roscoe's place.

Seems the younguns from Beulah Hill Baptist Church was selling greeting cards so they could replace the stain glass winder that was broke out when lightning struck an old white oak next to the church. The youngun that sold the most was to win a big prize. Well, Addie was a spunky little gal and she wanted that prize bad enough to go up to Roscoe's door and knock, even after all she had heard about that dog of his. When, she knocked, the door swung open and she could hear noises, said it sounded like her daddy's prize boar when he got a buckeye stuck in his windpipe.

Well, I throwed that barber's bib off of me and a bunch of us went running up there to Roscoe's. The door was standing open just like Addie said, and we could hear them noises so we went busting on in to the kitchen at the back of the house. The table looked like Roscoe had just begin to eat his dinner and got choked on something. A bone, I reckon. Ther was some stewed chicken on his plate. He had fell to the floor and was struggling something awful just trying to get his breath. Tried to speak but couldn't make a sound.

But, we hadn't give a thought to Roscoe's dog, and when we took to step into the room that beast charged us like the legions of Satan! The hair on his neck rose up and the skin on his back rippled, and them white tushes flashed in an evil grin. He stood hard and fast between us and Roscoe, and we knowed it would be certain death for any man that dared to get closer.

There we was, bound helpless, and we could see that Roscoe was sinking fast. Somebody in the back of the crowd yelled to get Roscoe's gun. Then sombody yelled back that Roscoe didn't own no gun. Hell, (pardon ladies), he didn't need no gun with a dog like that around.

Well, before anybody could fetch a gun or the law, or figger out what to do, pore old Roscoe laid right there and died, that devil dog still holding us at bay! That blasted demon that Roscoe had troubled so much with, killed him trying to protect him. That just goes to show you, folks, that a man can sure get ketched in his own trap.

What'd you say? Roscoe's money? Some cousin from down east come with proof that he was Roscoe's closest kin. Transferred all that money out of here and ain't been back since.

The dog? Well, some say it run off when it realized that Roscoe was dead. And, some would swear to hearing a gun shot right after they took Roscoe's body away. To tell the truth, there was a patch of fresh dirt under the crabapple tree out back the next morning.

But still and all, there's others say, late in the evening sometimes, if you look in the right place, you can still see Roscoe and that Devil Dog slipping along in the shadows of the street.

Course, I don't expect nobody to believe that, even if I have seen them myself, many times over. And I ain't no liar, just ask anybody in Watauga County!

Five Ways of Talking about a Flood

Fred Waage

Voice I

An't bin nothin like this afore,
an't never flooded up, I'll swear it,
an' us Counts folk has like to owned this valley
more years'n you can count, he! he!
Better look to all your stuff that floats, if I was you,
dunno 'bout that paper house of yours—
there's lots of heavy truck upstream that's
never been tied down:
wouldn't want no sawmill in your
bedroom, now then, would ya? he! he!

Voice II

Why sonny, I'll tell you,
this branch's been above those banks
seven times in the last ten years.
I'd never build here mesself, some people
ain't got no sense of nature; last time—
seventy eight—we had to swim in there
to get ol Granny Boyles—paddled her
out on top of her kitchen table
crowing like a turkey cock, all her wattles
quivering: "deliver Sabriny! deliver Sabriny!"—
that's her ol cat, hardly worth savin"—
then "deliver the cedar chest! deliver the TV!'—
deliver this, deliver that, me'n Billy got so good
delivering stuff on that ol table
we got us some booze an' towed around on it
all day long—water swelled the seams so well
in that ol dried-out table, Granny swears now
it'll last another hundred years, like her—

Voice III

Well, speaking as a duck, man,
and a Yankee duck—are you hearin' me?—
all this liquid element is copacetic,
out of sight—your dixie, rocky, cramped-up
creeks aren't quite what they're quacked up to be:
same old bugs, same old weeds, same old water snakes day by day,
and you dish me out the same old scratch . . .
I've known rivers, man, I've known lakes—
mergansers, pintails, plovers, man, up there
you can rub beaks with some new sweet species every minute!
It's boring, man, *boring*! I want more quacktion!
The dames here hides their nobs under their wings all day.
Minute the water goes down, I'm wingin' out of here.
Fly by night if I have to . . .
You heard about this burg down the mountains called Ducktown?
Sounds like my sort of a place,
Maybe I can catch some good jazz there . . .

Voice IV

Well, the way I feel, it cleans us out,
scours us and makes us new, you know what I mean?
It's like shedding skin, a new moon, or perhaps
the new plowing of an old fallow field.

Do you hear the kingfisher laughing in all this rain?

Carries away the rootless wood, windfalls, tires and trash,
weak places of the land, waste things of our world,
like a covenant renewed each time it comes so that as our Lord he
said: while earth remains, seed time and harvest, cold, heat,
winter and summer and day and night shall not cease.
See Berea Church down there, high and dry and white-steepled,
like—

What?

Like a picked bone you say? surely that's not right, I say it cleans
us out,
there's some as should not be living here,
and sure as shedding skin and the new moon,
God means some things to pass and some live on—

Voice V

The flood was really nothing—
a tugging at the legs,
grass combed one way,
water in the cellars,
stained family photographs,

nothing to Buffalo Creek:
the silent screaming faces behind glass sucked under bridges
forever,
the bolts of wood and glass shot through bodies,
the bereaved wandering dumbly over the numb raw earth that had
been their house,

and even Buffalo Creek was nothing,
nothing to the poisoned waters
filled with violence called Dioxin, PCB,
all down the Mississippi
shedding skins in modern ways
unto many generations,

nor is even that flooding anything
when one considers
all that moveth
in this valley
that is called the Earth
lies waiting rain of fire
to fall from clouds
that violent men have made
in their own image
to destroy every living thing which is upon the face of the ground
Into our own hands
have we delivered ourselves.
Better look to all our stuff.

Do you still hear the kingfisher laughing in all this rain?

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Mike Smith

NOW AND THEN

Center for Appalachian Studies and Services/ Institute for Appalachian Affairs

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