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1980

Archives of Appalachia Newsletter (vol. 2, no. 2, 1980)

East Tennessee State University. Archives of Appalachia.

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Recommended Citation

East Tennessee State University. Archives of Appalachia., "Archives of Appalachia Newsletter (vol. 2, no. 2, 1980)" (1980). *Archives of Appalachia Newsletter*. 6.

<https://dc.etsu.edu/archives-newsletter/6>

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Archives of Appalachia NEWSLETTER



VOL. II, NO. 2

ARCHIVES CHOSEN AS DEPOSITORY FOR THE CONGRESS FOR APPALACHIAN DEVELOPMENT

On March 21, 1980, Gordon K. Ebersole, Executive Director of the Congress for Appalachian Development, came to East Tennessee State University to attend the annual meeting of the Appalachian Studies Conference. He brought with him the official papers of CAD and deposited them with the Archives of Appalachia situated in the Sherrod Library on the University's main campus. Born in Nebraska in 1910, Gordon Ebersole first worked as a civil engineer on the Grand Coulee dam, and after World War II on the Missouri Basin project. Transferred to Washington, D.C., with the Bureau of Reclamation in 1950, he worked in the U.S. and abroad for ten years on Point Four resource development projects. His subsequent position as Staff Assistant for Area Redevelopment in the office of the Secretary for the Interior first brought him into contact with the problems of Appalachia.

Coming from his experiences in the West and as a man in sympathy with the development problems of the Appalachian region, Gordon Ebersole looked to Public Utility Districts modeled on the Washington and Oregon experiences as an approach to power development in the Appalachians. Beginning in 1963 Gordon Ebersole began his friendship with Harry Caudill. While Ebersole taught Caudill about public power, Caudill taught Ebersole about Appalachian politics. Following the publication of Night Comes to the Cumberlands in 1963, Caudill, Ebersole and other like-minded people began to discuss the establishment of an organization that would promote the cause of Public Utility Districts (PUDs) as opposed to privately owned power. In mid-September 1965, this group, including: Ebersole, Caudill, Tom West, Milton Ogle, Bill Blizzard, Paul Kaufman, Tom Gish, and Myles Horton, met in Bristol, Tennessee. Later that year, the organization was incorporated in West Virginia as the Congress for Appalachian Development.

The Congress, usually referred to as CAD, remained active for a number of years as one of the leading proponents of PUDs and tax reform in Appalachia. Its many distinguished members testified before Congressional committees, TVA, and numerous state legislatures. As Executive Director, Gordon Ebersole retained the papers and research reports of the organization. Though CAD lacked the private or public financial support to continue to operate as a lobbying effort and information source in support of public control of power in Appalachia, its impact has been profound on both the consciousness and politics of the region. CAD fought for the rights of the people of the region against the corporate controlling interests. Many of its members continue to work for the common good of the region as private citizens, university professors, and the administrators of other Appalachian grass roots organizations.

The papers of CAD are a major information source on the history of power and infra-structural development in the Appalachian region. Among the correspondents found in the collection are Harry Caudill, Tom West, Gordon Ebersole, Paul Kaufman, and Myles Horton. The Archives plans to approach many of these former CAD members for their papers relating to their work and efforts in this area. In time, the CAD collection and the papers of many of its major proponents, including its founding members - Ebersole and Caudill, will serve as an extremely important research collection to be used by students and scholars of the Appalachia.

GORDON EBERSOLE COLLECTION ESTABLISHED

As of this date only a small portion of the Ebersole Collection (as distinct from CAD) has reached the Archives, but we expect it before too long. These papers, including an extensive and detailed diary that Mr. Ebersole has maintained most of his life, chronicle the career of this remarkable man. Gordon Ebersole was born in Wakefield, Nebraska, February 23, 1910. He attended high school in Sioux City, Iowa and university at Wayne State College (Nebraska) and Iowa State College where he earned a degree in civil engineering. His professional career began in 1935 with the Bureau of Reclamation on the Columbia Basin Project in Washington State. During World War II, he received photomap training and subsequently served in India and the Far East with the 20th Bomber Command.

Following the war, Mr. Ebersole worked on various dam projects in Montana. In 1951 he moved to Washington, D.C. and assumed the position of assistant chief for the Division of Foreign Activities in the Bureau of Reclamation. From 1959-60, he served as Chief, Division of Technical Training, Operations Mission to Korea. Returning to Washington, D.C. in 1961, Mr. Ebersole was named staff assistant, Office of the Secretary, Department of the Interior. His primary responsibility in this new position was the administration of the Department's Area Redevelopment Program. During his tenure in this position, he came into close contact with the people and needs of the Appalachian region. His earlier training and experiences shaped his response to the problems of the area.

After his retirement in 1965, Gordon Ebersole helped establish the Congress for Appalachian Development and served as its executive director until 1978. Mr. Ebersole has busied himself since his retirement with further studies of human and natural resource development. He is also restoring an old (ca. 1840) grist mill near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He continues to travel widely, dabbles in family history, and thinks deeply about Appalachia and its development problems. His papers mark the career of a man in sympathy with the people of our region, their needs and their struggle.

APPALACHIAN OUTREACH PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

The Archives' Outreach Program is now in full swing. Thanks to funding provided in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities through the Tennessee Committee for the Humanities, Inc., the production staff has completed four slide/tape programs and has three more in various stages of completion. All of these programs are available to communities throughout Eastern Tennessee. The Archives provides the programs, the equipment, and a discussion leader, and all we ask from a local sponsor in return is a location for showing the program and assistance with publicity in the community. This free service is open to community organizations, public libraries, and senior citizen centers. Please contact, Laurel Horton, Outreach Program Coordinator, Archives of Appalachia, The Sherrod Library, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN 37601 (Phone: 615-929-4338/4365) for more information. We encourage our readers to share this information with appropriate groups in their own communities. Thanks for your help!

While we have a number of programs in progress, including slide/tape shows on Embreeville, Johnson City, and the Appalachian Farm, we have four already in circulation. To date, we have had dozens of bookings all over the region. Among the communities serviced or soon to be serviced by our Appalachian Outreach Program are: Johnson City, Bristol, Kingsport, Jonesboro, Erwin, Elizabethton, Blountville, Rogersville, Morristown, and Oak Ridge. Our four finished programs are listed below. Descriptions of other shows will appear in the NEWSLETTER as they are completed.

COUNTRY MUSIC IN THE TRI-CITIES is a 43 minute slide/tape program based upon the research of folklorists Charles Wolfe (author of Tennessee Strings) and Richard Blaustein. The program traces the history of radio and the recording industry in the Bristol-Johnson City-Kingsport area. It also explores the effects of modernization upon the instrumental and vocal traditions of Upper East Tennessee. The Carter Family, Jimmie Rodgers, the Tenneva Ramblers, and Tennessee Ernie Ford are among the performers featured in the show.

HANDS ALL AROUND: SOCIAL ASPECTS OF QUILTING is a 21 minute slide/tape program which explores some of the ways quilts and quilting have played important roles in the private lives and community activities of Americans from the era of early European settlement up to the present. Quotations from nineteenth century sources, appropriate musical selections, and contemporary oral interviews are blended with historical and modern photographs to create a colorful, lively and informative program.

PAT ALDERMAN: THE MAKING OF A LOCAL HISTORIAN is a 25 minute slide/tape program that focuses on the highly successful career of a noted local historian residing in Unicoi County, Tennessee. The program describes Pat Alderman's first adventures as a researcher and the various projects and publications that grew out of his efforts. Through narration, oral interviews, music, and contemporary and historical photographs, the program examines Alderman's work in the context of what history is and how it can be integrated with the study of regional folklore and natural history. The program also suggests ways in which others might further their own interests in the pursuit of community and local history.

HOLSTON COUNTRY HOUSES: PRESERVING THE PAST is a 29 minute slide/tape program that looks at various aspects of historical preservation, its importance and its benefits to the community. Through a series of contemporary photographs and interviews with people actively involved in historic preservation, this program examines the history and restoration of the DeVault Tavern (Leesburg, Tennessee), the Deery Inn (Blountville, Tennessee), Rocky Mount (Bluff City, Tennessee), and the Chester Inn (Jonesboro, Tennessee). The show also looks at the activities of the Jonesborough Civic Trust and provides basic information for those interested in taking up a restoration project of their own.

APPALACHIAN STUDIES CONFERENCE UPDATE

As our readers are undoubtedly aware, the Archives provided local arrangements for the Appalachian Studies Conference which met on the East Tennessee State University campus, March 21-23, 1980. We are pleased to report that the ASC meeting was all that we had anticipated. The Tennessee Arts Commission and the Appalachian Regional Commission provided substantial financial support for the enterprise, allowing us to offer ASC members a full performance of HORESPower by the Johnson City Road Company as well as nearly two hundred student scholarships. In all nearly four hundred people registered for the three-day conference and they brought with them another two hundred and fifty visitors. General response to the exhibits, meals, meal speakers, and sessions has been most favorable. For those people who did not attend the Conference but would like a complete program, write the Archives. We have a limited number of extra copies available. Also you want to keep in mind that if you did not have the opportunity to attend the ASC meeting, your membership in ASC (which is a part of the registration fee) needs to be paid for continued membership. Please send membership checks for four dollars (\$4) to Polly Cheek, Treasurer and Membership Secretary, ASC, P.O. Box 502, Mars Hill, NC 28754. The Proceedings of the March 1980 ASC meeting will be jointly published by the Appalachian Consortium Press and East Tennessee State University Press this fall.

NEW PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTIONS

During the last quarter, the Archives received two outstanding photographic collections that will among other uses assist us in the completion of two of our outreach slide/tape programs. The first set of photographs comes from Mrs. Burr Harrison, wife of the late Johnson City photographer. This collection includes some of the earliest photographs ever taken of Johnson City dating from the early 1880's through the Depression era. Among the subjects depicted in these photographs are Johnson's Depot and Store, from which Johnson City received its name, the first city train station, and various industrial buildings that have long since disappeared. Mr. Harrison always took special care in the preparation of his photographs. They therefore demonstrate considerable technical craftsmanship but they are also rich in content, well balanced, and quite appealing. The collection of approximately one hundred and fifty photographs will serve to complement the forty original Burr Harrison pictures already in our collection.

The second photograph collection comes to us from Jim Goforth, Chief Engineer for the Clinchfield Railroad. It appears that while the Clinchfield was under construction in this area between 1907 and 1912, the line hired a noted Unicoi County photographer, H.M. Deadrick, to photograph sections of the line and construction activities. Mr. Deadrick used a number of different cameras that employed glass negatives. Many of these negatives survive and are a part of the Clinchfield Railroad Collection here at the Archives. Through the use of large cameras and thanks to his own considerable proficiency, Mr. Deadrick obtained remarkable clarity and detail in his photographs. The Railroad compiled over two hundred and thirty of these photographs into an album and it was this album that Jim Goforth discovered and shared with the Archives. The collection includes a wide variety of natural, railroad, and coal mining scenes along the route of the Clinchfield between Spartanburg, South Carolina and Elkhorn City, Kentucky (ca. 1909) with special emphasis on Southwest Virginia, East Tennessee and Western North Carolina.

TWO MEDICAL COLLECTIONS ARRIVE AT THE ARCHIVES

East Tennessee Medicine Company. This collection originally belonged to a much larger artifact and museum collection donated by Dr. Bill Bailey to the Rocky Mount Historical Association. While the Executive Director of Rocky Mount has put the collection to good use in his museum, he graciously transferred the paper records of the nineteenth and early twentieth century Medicine Company including promotional literature, correspondence, business records, and diaries to the Archives. We are told that the pills and tonics have remained with Mr. Gerhardt and we encourage our readers to seek them out at Rocky Mount (in Piney Flats, Tennessee)! We should also add that the museum at Rocky Mount has just been remodeled and a new environmental control system has been installed. The historical site has in addition completed a number of other construction projects that have further enriched its educational and historical programs. All in all it is a remarkable place. We are most grateful for the papers of the Medicine Company and look forward to making them available to researchers this summer.

The Council of Nursing of Upper East Tennessee. This collection was donated to the Archives by Mrs. Micki Badgett, former President of the Council. The organization came into existence in 1972 in an effort by area nurses to share information and to promote professional development and continuing education. A series of workshops and seminars was held by the Council between 1972 and 1976. The seminars covered such topics as "diabetic nursing" and "cancer of the respiratory system." In 1976 the organization disbanded, its objectives realized. The collection includes all of the organizational papers, programs, minutes, and correspondence of the Council.

JOHNSON CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT SURVEY COMPLETED

A research project team headed by Richard M. Kesner and including staff archivists, Anne Sims and Susan Tannewitz-Karnes, recently undertook a records management survey for the municipal government of Johnson City. Funds for the survey came from a Tennessee Title I grant. During the course of the project, Susan and Anne interviewed city government personnel and conducted a records inventory of the city's archives. The project culminated in a sixty-six page final report. In this paper, the project team consider both the paper and automated records management problems of the City and provide both general and specific recommendations for the amelioration of confusion caused by current information handling procedures. The report also makes specific suggestions regarding the employment of a standardized filing system, microfilming procedures, and computer output microfilm. Both a bulk and a shelf-by-shelf inventory accompany the text. The City and the State have commended the Archives project staff for their efforts. Other East Tennessee municipalities may be eligible for similar services. Contact Richard M. Kesner, Archives of Appalachia, ETSU, Johnson City, TN 37601 (phone: 615-929-4388) for details.

ACQUISITIONS

Jessie Ackerman Collection. A resident of East Tennessee, Jessie Ackerman donated both her art collection and private papers to East Tennessee State University in the early 1930's. In February 1980, Ms. Ackerman's scrapbooks and correspondence were transferred from the B. Carroll Reece Museum (ETSU) to the Archives. Her papers document her travels as an officer and speaker for the Women's Christian Temperance Union and as an author. The collection also includes a number of interesting photographs and travel postcards from the early twentieth century.

Richard C. Austin Collection. For many years now, Richard C. Austin has run the West Virginia Mountain Project in conjunction with the Board of National Missions of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Mr. Austin came to the attention of the Archives as an active member and officer in the Congress for Appalachian Development (CAD). Those papers on deposit with the Archives of Appalachia relate to his activities with CAD and are complemented by materials in the Archives' CAD Collection. More specifically, the Austin papers address the problems of community organizing in the coal regions of West Virginia.

NEWLY OPENED COLLECTIONS

International Woodworkers of America, Local 5-313, Collection (four linear feet). The collection consists of contracts, contract negotiations, copies of litigation, minutes, correspondence, grievance records, local and regional union publications, financial records, and newsclippings. All of these records pertain to the history of the local and its members. The Union rank and file worked as employees of either Empire Furniture or Magnavox, Inc. located in Johnson City, Tennessee. The local dissolved in 1979 with the closing of the Magnavox plant. The collection provides a comprehensive picture of the union and its operation during the period 1963-1979 and sheds light on the nature of labor relations in Upper Eastern Tennessee.

Mickey A. Jilton Collection (.5 linear feet). This collection came to us from Mickey Jilton, an employee of Washington County, Tennessee. It includes a series of survey books and engineering specifications for street and sidewalk construction and the laying of sewage and water lines in Johnson City, Tennessee between 1907 and 1926. These works accompanied the era of rapid city development brought on by the coming of the railroad to Johnson City. The Jilton collection would be of use to researchers concerned with early twentieth century city planning.

Broadside Television Collection (six linear feet, 600 video tapes and 19 audio cassettes). This collection documents the rich folklore, musical, and crafts heritage of the Southern Appalachian region. The paper records pertain largely to the operations of Broadside Television, Inc. and its efforts to provide quality local and regional television programming. Its many accomplishments are best represented by the video records that comprise the largest single component of the collection. These tapes include studies of mountain craftsmen, music festivals, folk healers, and story tellers. The video as well as the paper records are thoroughly described and indexed in the collection finding aid. Researchers will find a wealth of hitherto unrecorded information in the Broadside Collection. The audio and audio/visual records have a variety of educational and research applications. Indeed, members of a production staff from Appalshop Films, Inc. visited the Archives recently to study the Broadside tapes for a film that they are currently preparing on the Carter Family. The Archives has facilities for viewing the tapes on its premises and will shortly establish a borrowing policy.

MINORITY AWARDS AVAILABLE

The Archives has access to a University scholarship program designed to assist Black Americans in the pursuit of an advanced degree in some field of the humanities or social sciences. The awards provide graduate assistantships of \$2,500 per year plus a waiver of out-of-state tuition. While completing his or her M.A. degree, each award recipient will receive training in public history and archival administration as well as practical experience in all aspects of archives operations. If you know of students who might be interested in this program, please have them contact the Director without delay. The University is presently awarding assistantships for the 1980-81 academic year; the money will go quickly!!! There is, however, a good chance for success, if you act today.

ARCHIVES EXHIBITS

With all of our concern about the Appalachian Studies Conference, we neglected to mention in our last NEWSLETTER the rotating exhibits that appeared between March and May in the Archives' display area. For those of our readers who ventured onto the ETSU campus, you were treated to a wide range of visual displays including: "The Early Twentieth Century Appalachian Farm" (March) drawn from the Archives' photograph collection, "Introducing Microforms" (April) a study of micrographic records and the types of microform services provided by the Archives and the Sherrod Library, and "Older Americans Month" (May) a display on the problems faced by senior citizens and the services available to them. This final exhibit was prepared by the staff of the ETSU Medical Library under the direction of head reference librarian Betsy Williams.

The summer months will usher in a series of photographic exhibits based upon recently acquired Archives photographic collections. "The Civil War in Photographs"

(June) will include a series of battle scenes depicting operations in Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina. "Building the Clinchfield Railroad" (July) will draw from the Jim Goforth Collection of photographs taken by Deadrick during the lines construction in 1909. "Burr Harrison's Johnson City" (August) will employ photographs from the collection of this extraordinary Johnson City resident. Each of these exhibits will be open to public view seven days a week during both day and evening hours on the first floor of the Sherrod Library.

CLINCHFIELD RAILROAD PROVIDES GRANT FOR COLLECTION PROCESSING

The Archives of Appalachia has been named the official depository of the Clinchfield Railroad. Since the initiation of the line in this part of East Tennessee (ca. 1907), the Clinchfield has contributed significantly to the economic development of the region. Indeed, George L. Carter, chief promoter of the line, gave Tennessee the land for the establishment of East Tennessee State Normal School (now East Tennessee State University). Eventually his home (now Cooper Annex) became an integral part of campus facilities. The records of the Clinchfield include a wide range of engineering, financial, business, and administrative records documenting well over a half-century of railroad operations. The task of collecting and processing these records is a major undertaking requiring a team of archivists drawn from the Archives staff. To defray the cost of these activities and necessary archival storage materials, the Clinchfield Railroad has pledged \$4500 to the Archives of Appalachia Fund in the ETSU Foundation. This generous financial contribution as well as the designation of the Archives as their official depository demonstrates the continuing commitment of the line to the fostering of historical activities in Central-Southern Appalachia.

STAFF ACTIVITIES

Laurel Horton: During the period ending May 31, Laurel has taken the Archives' Appalachian Outreach Programs to many Eastern Tennessee Communities including Bristol, Kingsport, Elizabethton, Erwin, Johnson City, and Jonesboro. In addition, she brought two of our slide/tape programs before the Country Music Association's annual meeting in Bristol, Tennessee, and the North Carolina Quilt Symposium in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Mildred Kozsuch: Mildred assisted in the organization and direction of a genealogical workshop that took place on April 17 and involved some forty-five local genealogists. The theme of the workshop was genealogical research in the British Isles featuring George Everton, editor of the international periodical, The Genealogical Helper.

Richard M. Kesner: On March 17, Richard presented a lecture and workshop entitled "Microcomputer Applications in Archives" as part of the annual training program at the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa. March 21-23, 1980, he served as local arrangements chairman for the Appalachian Studies Conference. From March 26 through March 28, Richard met with various agencies in Washington, D.C. concerning Archives projects and attended the annual business meeting of the SAA Task Force for Automated Records and Techniques. More recently, he has been invited to serve as Book Review Editor for Georgia Archive.

