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John Brown. At first perusal, the catalog selection seems broad-ranging but perhaps limited in creativity, as it closely adheres to those beloved antiques (coverlets, food safes) that have been consistently celebrated through the twentieth century for their significance in Kentucky. However, it is this very criterion for the selection of objects that elevates *Kentucky by Design* to its higher scholarly contribution.

More than a survey of Kentucky craft, *Kentucky by Design* offers the first comprehensive examination of the specific objects from the Bluegrass State included in the Works Progress Administration’s (WPA) Index of American Design. As adeptly described in both Madeleine Burnside’s introduction and Erika Doss’s essay “Regional Reputations, Modern Tastes, and Cultural Nationalism: Kentucky and the Index of American Design, 1936–1942,” the WPA Index was a New Deal program with the aim to “search for an authentic American style in everyday objects” (p. 1). Regional artworks were locally identified through museums, historical societies, and historians before a Washington, D.C., office coordinated what would be included in the pictorial archive. The WPA engaged unemployed artists to record the color, texture, and form of these American selections, resulting in the Index’s more than 18,000 watercolor drawings today held in the National Gallery of Art. *Kentucky by Design* pairs these watercolors alongside contemporary photographs in its catalog, clearly showing how these superb WPA artists elevated their task beyond rendering a three-dimensional object on a flat plane. A highlight of this publication, the vivid images show the sensitivity, depth, and emotion of true artwork.

*Kentucky by Design* successfully serves two purposes. The catalog delivers an overview of celebrated nineteenth-century craft traditions, with rich descriptions of patch quilts, Kentucky salt-glaze stoneware pottery, and a circa 1814 cabinet attributed to Abraham Lincoln’s father. Equally successful and perhaps more notable for the advancement of artistic discourse, the essays elevate this project by bringing antiques into a thoughtful study of twentieth-century modernism. *Kentucky by Design* does more than admire charming artifacts for charm’s sake, or even for just their own original craft and historical value. The publication makes a thoughtful and perhaps surprising connection between these historic antiques and their widespread inspiration to 1930s modernists in search of a new national modern art style.

A study of this book is certain to be completed with a visit to the companion exhibition of the same name, which will gather loans of many of the catalog’s objects, the wonderful watercolor renderings from the Index of American Design, and a variety of interpretive materials together at the Frazier History Museum in Louisville, Kentucky, August 4, 2016, to February 12, 2017.

New Orleans Museum of Art


Celebrating deeply rooted as well as recently revived and constructed cultural connections between Scotland, Ulster, and Appalachia, *Wayfaring*
Strangers: The Musical Voyage from Scotland and Ulster to Appalachia has sold remarkably well for a book published by a university press. Authors Fiona Ritchie and Doug Orr offer ebullient if at times romanticized interpretations of Appalachia’s indebtedness to one strain of the region’s diverse cultural heritage. Other significant regional influences discussed only briefly in the book include English, German, African American, and Native American cultures.

Wayfaring Strangers is, at one level, a companion book to The Thistle and Shamrock, Ritchie’s weekly National Public Radio show that has promoted the contemporary Celtic music renaissance since the 1980s. The Thistle and Shamrock website in early 2016 underscores the marketing ties between book and radio show, as the cover image for Wayfaring Strangers appears at the top of the site (www.thistleradio.com). Ritchie, a native of Scotland, was based for some years in Charlotte, North Carolina; along the way she befriended Orr, who for many years was president of Warren Wilson College near Asheville, North Carolina, and who founded the Swannanoa Gathering, an annual summer enrichment program offering workshops on Appalachian and Celtic music and related cultural topics. The Thistle and Shamrock may lack depth of cultural analysis, but that shortcoming is more than compensated for by host Ritchie’s passion for the music and her consummate taste in selecting recordings. A book cannot offer the visceral immediacy of radio, yet Wayfaring Strangers takes a similarly impressionistic approach, attempting to engage the senses through glossy color photos, other lustrous illustrations, and a companion compact disc with twenty recordings of traditional music from both sides of the Atlantic. (The CD is a pleasant if inessential “mix tape”—it features only two previously unreleased recordings.)

Not possessing a focused narrative, however, the book alternates between trying to interpret intercultural connections between Scotland, Ulster, and Appalachia and trying to present a general cultural history of Appalachia. In pursuing the latter effort the book engages in numerous generalizations, such as: “Those who call the mountains home are forever spellbound, according to Appalachian writer Emily Satterwhite: ‘Appalachia instills in its residents an abiding sense of place that fortifies those who stay and consoles, beckons or haunts those who leave’” (p. 176). This blanket assertion (partly borrowed by Ritchie and Orr from another source) ignores the fact that Appalachia is defined by valleys as much as by mountains; claiming such unified essence for the region’s residents—that they are united in being “spellbound” through feeling “an abiding sense of place”—is to engage in regional stereotyping.

Ritchie and Orr juxtapose their accessible if simplistically conceived historical writing with short expository pieces from other people. The section entitled “‘Voices of Tradition’ Profiles” reveals that the authors relied heavily on a small circle of contacts and interview subjects—prominent urban folk music revivalists as well as several regional culture figures associated with western North Carolina—to provide context and perspectives. Absent from this group of invited consultants, though, are several scholars who have long been central to this line of investigation, including such leaders of intercultural conversations as R. Celeste Ray, Thomas G. Burton, Richard Blaustein,
Michael Montgomery, and Billy Kennedy. Dialogue with these scholars might have introduced substantially more intellectual rigor and thematic focus to the book’s narrative and would have ensured a more nuanced interpretation of Scottish-Irish-Appalachian connections. Alas, Ritchie and Orr’s bibliography ignores virtually all thematically relevant published works by these scholars, mentioning only one journal article by Burton.

In their respective roles Ritchie and Orr have long been agents of cultural mythmaking, and *Wayfaring Strangers* is a compelling if ultimately compromised compendium of information, reflections, images, and recordings compiled to advance the myth of the Scottish-Irish-Appalachian cultural nexus. Given its popularity, its shortcomings in the realm of scholarship render the book more of a guilty pleasure than a serious study. While gaining a central place on numerous coffee tables, *Wayfaring Strangers* falls far short of being a definitive book on those complex cultural connections.

East Tennessee State University

TED OLSON


*Creating and Consuming the American South* joins two other edited volumes—*Creating Citizenship in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Gainesville, Fla., 2013) and *The American South and the Atlantic World* (Gainesville, Fla., 2013)—growing out of a series of conferences devoted to new and interdisciplinary perspectives on the region. In his introduction to the present collection of thirteen essays, Martyn Bone observes that the New Southern Studies emphasis on the constructed nature of the U.S. South has, after over a decade of scholarship, become a truism. He announces that the current volume seeks to “move beyond” this notion to examine the relationship between the imagined and the real South—to investigate how ideas about the region have shaped the social and economic realm and vice versa (p. 16).

The book has a narrow chronological scope, with most of the essays focusing on the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Yet if temporally limited, the essays are broad-ranging in their methodology, bringing the insights of literary studies, queer studies, cinema studies, dramaturgy, musicology, ecocriticism, and other fields (only one essay is penned by a historian) to bear on the question at hand. The volume’s topical and theoretical diversity may prove frustrating to readers searching for larger, cohesive insights about the relationship between the idea of the South and its reality, but this very eclecticism is part of the point. After all, scholars of the New Southern Studies have resisted imposing unitary interpretations on the region and have sought to explode the very notion of “the South.”

The three essays in the book’s first section provide historical and theoretical overviews of creating and consuming the South. W. Fitzhugh Brundage traces the history of Americans’ fascination with the South’s presumed authenticity back to its roots in the early twentieth century, when folklorists and others saw in the South a heritage to romanticize. Scott Romine examines the commodity fetishism of “contemporary southern foodways” and finds