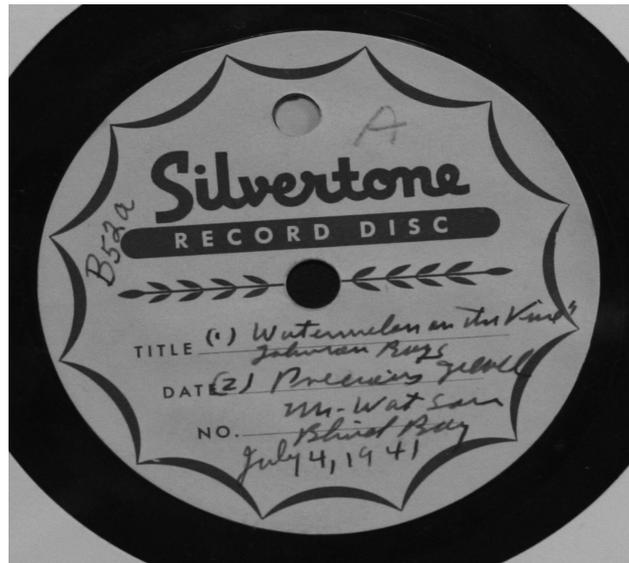


# J ournal for the Society of North Carolina Archivists



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**About the Cover**

The label from the first ever recording of folk music legend Arthel Lane “Doc” Watson (born 1923 in Deep Gap). Folksong collector W. Amos Abrams recorded this rendition of “Precious Jewel” at the July 4, 1941 Boone Fiddlers’ Convention. The aluminum core acetate disc is currently housed in Special Collections, Carol Grotnes Belk Library and Information Commons, Appalachian State University.

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# **Appalachian Special Collections and Appalachian Studies: Collections, Curricula, and the Development of Interdisciplinary Regional Studies Programs**

by Gene Hyde

## **Abstract**

The development and history of Appalachian special collections and archives is closely linked with the development of Appalachian Studies, an interdisciplinary body of regional research and corresponding academic curricula found in many colleges and universities in the region. Cratis Williams, considered the first scholar to give Appalachian Studies academic credibility, identified the need for Appalachian colleges to be “depositories of the history of Appalachia” that would also house “basic Appalachian collection(s) of those works that best portray the region, its people, and their history and culture” in their libraries. This article traces the development and history of a number of Appalachian special collections and libraries within the historical context of the emergence and development of Appalachian Studies. Appalachian Studies is an interdisciplinary field dedicated to researching the Appalachian region and its people, encompassing such diverse academic disciplines and subjects as history, literature, music, religion, economics, education, environmental studies, ethnicity, folklore and folk customs, labor issues, women’s issues, health care, community organizing, economic development, coal mining, tourism, art, demography, migration, and urban and rural planning.

Despite this broad reach into many other academic fields, Appalachian Studies emerged and defined itself as a legitimate academic enterprise in the 1960s and '70s, drawing and expanding on academic and activist elements already present in the region at the time. These academic and activist pursuits merged with the work of scholars such as Helen Lewis, who taught the first interdisciplinary course in Appalachian Studies at Clinch Valley College in Wise, Virginia, in the late 1960s and who was active in promoting social and economic justice in the region. Lewis and others brought an activist element to an existing academic tradition in Appalachian Studies that began in the 1940s, when Cratis Williams taught the first courses in what would come to be called Appalachian Studies at Appalachian State Teachers' College.<sup>1</sup> By the 1950s, Richard Drake and others were teaching Appalachian Studies courses at Berea College in Kentucky.<sup>2</sup>

As Appalachian Studies grew, so did awareness of the importance of Appalachian archives and special collections to research and curricula. Courses and academic degrees in Appalachian Studies are now found throughout the region, which is home to large and small archival collections of regional materials, many located at colleges and universities that offer Appalachian Studies curricula. This paper examines the relationship between these special collections and the academic discipline during the early development of Appalachian Studies programs and its allied scholarly society, the Appalachian Studies Association.

### **Appalachian Special Collections and Appalachian Studies**

In 1966, West Virginia University librarian and bibliographer Robert F. Munn identified the activist element then present in Appalachia and placed it into historical context by labeling it the latest “rediscovery” of the region by the rest of America. The following year Munn recognized that this “rediscovery” of Appalachia called for serious research on the region’s economic, social, and labor conditions, noting the need for regionally-based research collections to solve the “extreme paucity of reliable sources, both printed and manuscript” that existed in and about Appalachia.<sup>3</sup> Munn decried the fact that there was “distressingly little in the way of useful primary and secondary materials” available for historical research on Appalachia. Noting that such research materials were “normally collected and preserved in libraries,” he speculated that the dearth of regionally-based Appalachian collections could be attributed to a lack of scholarly interest in the region until “very recently.” While observing that most collections of Appalachian-related primary resources were housed in larger state collections and not in the Appalachian region per se, Munn optimistically noted that several schools in the region, notably Berea College and West Virginia University, already boasted strong collections of regional resources.<sup>4</sup>

Munn was a librarian and an Appalachian bibliographer, and he believed that “the bibliographer plays a vital role” in the development of useful secondary resources in regional special collections. He struck a prescient tone when he declared that “it is only a matter of time before we see the development of comprehensive collections on the

Appalachian region. All the necessary ingredients now exist: excellent basic history collections, several useful bibliographies, and, most important, a great and growing interest.<sup>5</sup> Even as Munn published his observations in *Mountain Life and Work*, librarians and scholars affiliated with institutions in the region were already developing Appalachian collections.<sup>6</sup>

One such institution was Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Carolina, where librarian Richard Jackson was developing the Stirling Collection out of a personal sense of responsibility to collect materials that would accurately reflect the region's history and culture. While his efforts were not specifically designed to support curricula, his collecting efforts would later form an important basis for developing Lees-McRae's Appalachian Studies minor.<sup>7</sup>

Mars Hill College had been collecting Appalachian materials since the 1920s, but their Appalachian archival collections began in earnest in 1968 when Appalachian musician and collector Bascom Lamar Lunsford gave a large donation of materials to the college. In 1979 Richard Dillingham was hired to direct Mars Hill's special collections. Recently, Mars Hill College hired Karen Paar, their first professional archivist, to help preserve and further develop their Appalachian collections.<sup>8</sup>

At Appalachian State University, Cratis Williams had been actively building a program in Appalachian Studies since the late 1950s. Williams was widely credited with instilling academic legitimacy on the field of Appalachian Studies. He began teaching folklore classes in what would later be called Appalachian Studies as early as 1943 at Appalachian State Teachers College, and his 1,661-page doctoral dissertation at New York University, *The Southern*

*Mountaineer in Fact and Fiction*, remains the definitive study of Appalachian fiction.<sup>9</sup>

With Cratis Williams's support and encouragement, between 1969 and 1975 Charlotte Ross developed the Appalachian Room at Appalachian State University into a significant Appalachian collection with the specific goal of supporting curricula. Like Munn, Ross and Williams understood the importance of a bibliography of Appalachian resources. Under the auspices of the Appalachian Consortium, Ross provided the energy and drive to compile the *Bibliography of Southern Appalachia*, which was published in 1976 and represented the most comprehensive effort to document available resources to date.<sup>10</sup>

The early 1970s saw several important developments in Appalachian Studies. The Council of the Southern Mountains, which was originally started in 1913 and by the late 1960s included social workers, missionaries, academics, and political activists, called for an "Appalachian Conference" to meet in 1970 at Clinch Valley College. While many members of the council saw this as the first of many "Appalachian conferences," the tensions between academics and activists resulted in series of unproductive shouting matches. Yet, as Richard Drake pointed out in 1982, tensions and differences are common in Appalachian Studies, "and a healthy scholarship has thrived on these differences." While the Clinch Valley conference was a failure, the seeds of further meetings dedicated to Appalachian Studies were planted.<sup>11</sup>

The early 1970s also saw the founding of three journals dedicated to Appalachian Studies. In 1972 the peer-reviewed *Appalachian Journal* was founded at ASU, with

Jerry Williamson as its editor. The following year witnessed the birth of the peer-reviewed *Appalachian Notes*, edited by Richard B. Drake, which had the stated purpose of encouraging interdisciplinary research. A third journal, *Appalachian Heritage*, was also started in 1973, but it took a more literary, less research-oriented approach. Jerry Williamson, who served as *Appalachian Journal* editor from 1972 to 2000, described another value of Appalachian collections when he stated that access to the Eury Appalachian Collection was “totally essential” in his role as *Journal* editor. He kept the *Journal* office in or near the collection, using it for fact-checking, finding resources, verifying quotations, and other tasks.<sup>12</sup>

The growth of Appalachian collections and their importance for Appalachian research drew the attention of *Appalachian Notes* editor Richard B. Drake, and he presented an annotated “Appalachian Resource Survey” over three issues in 1973-74. Drake noted that since Munn’s assessment of regional resources in 1966, “an increased recognition given to Appalachian studies and scholarship” had resulted in the emergence of “a number of fine Appalachian collections.” Based on results of a survey and selected site visits, Drake identified fourteen “major” collections in Appalachia, including those at Berea College, the University of Kentucky, Appalachian State University, West Virginia University, the University of Tennessee, and the University of Virginia, plus public libraries in Asheville and Knoxville, as well as eleven “major” collections outside the region. He also identified twenty-nine “significant” collections both in and outside Appalachia.<sup>13</sup>

In 1976, Mars Hill College hosted a number of Appalachian college and university administrators at a

“Conference on Appalachian Colleges.” At this conference Cratis Williams delivered a speech entitled “The Role of Appalachia’s Colleges in Appalachia’s Future,” in which he presented a blueprint for the development of Appalachian Studies in regional colleges and universities. In his speech, Williams cited a 1974 survey that indicated that only 25 out of 161 post-secondary institutions in Appalachia “were attempting to relate their curricula to the region in any way.” He declared that the overwhelming majority of colleges and universities in Appalachia stressed the values of a “larger American society,” rather than “the unique culture of Appalachia, the values of its people, its history, and its social and economic problems.” The Appalachian student who attended these schools was nothing less than “estranged” from his social, historical, cultural, and economic roots.<sup>14</sup>

Williams was part of a growing chorus of Appalachian Studies scholars and activists voicing discontent with mainstream American college curricula. Berea College’s Bill Best, in a call for more research on Appalachia from a local perspective, postulated that “traditional liberal arts college curriculums emphasizing Western Classicism may be little more than institutional bigotry” based on “a not-too-well-hidden assumption that Appalachian culture is inferior to the so-called mainstream society of this country.”<sup>15</sup> Activist and scholar Helen Lewis agreed that mainstream education had failed the region, and in 1969 she had called for Appalachian Studies programs based on “curricula...designed to provide students with knowledge, skills, and understanding to help solve problems” in the region.<sup>16</sup>

Like Best and Lewis, Cratis Williams considered it crucial that higher education institutions in the region

“identify themselves with Appalachia” and become relevant to residents through a curricula that would reflect “life as they knew it, culture as they perceive it, and problems with which they must deal.” Ideally, Appalachian higher education should affirm a student’s heritage while equally asserting the student’s position as a member of “the larger society.” This situation was so serious that, in Williams’s estimation, schools who failed to incorporate regionally-related curricula were “falling short of their purposes to provide education, research, and service in Appalachia.”<sup>17</sup>

Williams went beyond stressing the importance of regionally-based curricula for Appalachian colleges and universities. “The future of Appalachia will be determined,” he argued, “to a significant degree by the role taken by its colleges and universities,” and his vision included cooperation between college and universities, community service, the establishment of an Appalachian press, and the development of more regionally-oriented academic journals. He called for colleges and universities to expand regional research in a variety of disciplines.<sup>18</sup>

Significantly, Williams stressed the importance of Appalachian special collections. In particular, he mentioned the Weatherford-Hammond Collection at Berea College and the William L. Eury Appalachian Collection as examples of “centers of culture of their immediate regions.”<sup>19</sup> Williams had long recognized the importance of Appalachian special collections. Five years earlier, at the dedication of the W. L. Eury Appalachian Collection at Appalachian State University, he declared that the collection was “for the use of students and scholars who desire to study the local history, culture, and social problems of the region...It will become increasingly useful as we develop curricula relating to

Appalachian Studies.”<sup>20</sup> In that same spirit, his speech at Mars Hill five years later included a call for other schools to build similar Appalachian collections:

Appalachian colleges should be the depositories of the history of Appalachia. Every college in the region should make provisions for receiving, cataloging, and making available to its students, the people of the immediate region, and researchers from elsewhere documents, manuscripts, diaries, and other evidences of the past history, culture, art, music, literature, religion, and social customs of the region served immediately by the college. If a writer, an artist, a musician, a political figure in the region has transcended local fame, then the library of the local college should have in it a special collection relating to that person and display materials to provide exhibits from time to time to honor his or her achievements. In addition, each Appalachian college should have in its library at least a basic Appalachian collection in which the students and the citizens of the immediate region could find copies of those works that best portray the region, its people, and their history and culture.<sup>21</sup>

Later in 1976, a symposium was held at ASU to honor Cratis Williams, and it gathered together a critical mass of Appalachian Studies scholars. As activist and scholar Steve Fisher later observed, the conference “was a major turning point for many involved in Appalachian Studies.... For the first time, academicians who had felt isolated in fighting the battle for Appalachian Studies...

realized that there was a network of people fighting the same battle.”<sup>22</sup> The symposium led to the first annual Appalachian Studies Conference, which would be held in March 1978 at Berea College and would eventually evolve into the Appalachian Studies Association.<sup>23</sup>

The symposium also gave birth to the “Guide to Appalachian Studies” in the fall 1977 issue of *Appalachian Journal*, which was the first systematic examination and presentation of the state of Appalachian Studies scholarship. It featured detailed, annotated interdisciplinary bibliographies, notes, and observations about Appalachian Studies pedagogy and curricula. Scholars contributed essays and bibliographies in twelve different subject areas: anthropology, archeology, folklore, geography, history, literature, linguistics, music, political science, religion, sociology, and urban studies.<sup>24</sup>

The “Guide to Appalachian Studies” also contained an appendix entitled “suggestions for research.” Culled from questionnaires submitted by scores of Appalachian Studies scholars and teachers, this list of unattributed suggestions included more than fifty broadly defined research topics. While nearly all of these research suggestions implied the need for primary resources, several suggestions spoke directly to the role of Appalachian special collections in the research process. One suggestion called for each institution to create an audio and video archive of “traditional musicians, craftsmen, dancers, and old-time individuals,” and to catalog, store, and make these resources accessible. Another scholar suggested that “raw materials from local papers and federal and state reports containing county-by-county breakdowns” should be collected, adding that Appalachian Studies scholars “need much more material of a

concrete variety.” Continuing with the plea that “we cry out for a greater exchange of information regarding source material,” this same scholar begged for more intercollegiate cooperation between scholars and collections. Another suggestion called for a central genealogical “clearing house” to index and make accessible “a whole forest of family trees already compiled and waiting for systematic exploration.”<sup>25</sup>

The “Guide to Appalachian Studies” effectively initiated a self-defined “process of establishing a teaching and research network of Appalachian scholars.” The following year, an annual conference was created where Appalachian Studies scholars could share research, present papers, and exchange ideas. By 1978, a network of academic conferences, journals, shared curricula ideas, and bibliographic information was in place, and programs in Appalachian Studies began to increase dramatically.<sup>26</sup>

Between 1977 and 1981 new Appalachian Studies programs began to appear across the region. Appalachian State University offered its first undergraduate minor in 1977 and began the master’s degree program in 1980. Virginia Tech began its Appalachian Studies concentration in 1979, and Radford University offered an Appalachian Studies minor in 1981.<sup>27</sup>

Appalachian collections were also growing and expanding in the 1970s and early ’80s, and many collections were hiring professional librarians or archivists for the first time. At Appalachian State University, the early development of the Appalachian collection is closely associated with Cratis Williams, who began working with librarian W. L. Eury in the 1940s to build a collection of Appalachian materials. This process intensified in the 1950s as Williams worked on his dissertation, *The Southern*

*Mountaineer in Fact and Fiction.*<sup>28</sup>

In 1968, ASU established an Appalachian Room for regional materials in Belk Library, and the following year Charlotte Ross was hired to oversee it. Encouraged and supported by Cratis Williams, who was then dean of the graduate school, Ross worked from 1969 to 1975 to develop the collection and build the basis for an Appalachian Studies program at ASU.<sup>29</sup> In 1971 the Appalachian Collection was officially named for W. L. Eury. Its staffing was increased and a number of important collections were added, including the I. G. Greer ballad collection and field recordings, the W. Amos Abrams folksong collection, and the Jack Guy collections of traditional music and photographs. Eric Olson was hired in 1978 as Appalachian collection librarian, the first professionally trained librarian to manage the collection.<sup>30</sup>

Western Carolina University (WCU) had been gathering manuscript collections since the early twentieth century, but intensified its collection efforts in the early 1970s. By 1974, with the formal dedication of an Archives and Special Collections room in Hunter Library, WCU began to expand their collections, assisted in part by a National Historical Publications and Records Administration grant in 1978.<sup>31</sup>

Berea College, long-known for its collection of Appalachian materials, hired their first professional archivist in 1975 when Gerald Roberts was employed to oversee the Weatherford-Hammond Mountain Collection. Berea first created a discrete collection of Appalachian-related materials in 1914, which was initially housed in a closet. The Mountain Collection was created in 1925, and evolved into the endowed Weatherford-Hammond Mountain Collection in

1964. Archival materials had been added to the collection since 1914, and by the early 1970s librarians were complaining about poor staffing and inadequate resources to process and make accessible the collection of “regional or national importance.” Recognizing the need for professional guidance, Berea expanded their staff and added a professional archivist.<sup>32</sup>

At the University of Kentucky, the development of an Appalachian collection and Appalachian Studies curriculum came to fruition at the same time in 1977 with the receipt of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to establish an Appalachian Studies curriculum, a research program, and an archivist position dedicated to creating an Appalachian collection. The grant was written by Appalachian scholar John B. Stephenson, who was dean of undergraduate studies at Kentucky.<sup>33</sup>

The Appalachian collection was originally founded as a component of this NEH grant to support curricula in the new Appalachian Studies program and to develop a comprehensive research and reference collection to support outside researchers. Anne Campbell Ritchie was hired as the first Appalachian collection librarian through the NEH grant.<sup>34</sup>

The University of Kentucky’s Appalachian Collection had a mission to collect “items relating to all aspects of Appalachia,” including primary materials such as manuscript collections and oral histories as well as secondary materials like books, records, audiovisual tapes, and films. The University of Kentucky had an extensive Kentuckiana collection at the time, and Ritchie was permitted to move books from the Kentuckiana Collection of Special Collections, as well as from the circulating stacks, into the

Appalachian Collection, which was established as a separate room in the Special Collections building.<sup>35</sup>

East Tennessee State University (ETSU) President Arthur H. DeRosier Jr., who served from 1977 to 1980, was so interested in Appalachian Studies that he made Appalachia the theme of his inauguration. During his tenure, DeRosier started the Institute for Appalachian Affairs, whose staff initiated a curriculum in Appalachian Studies and developed research and public service components. DeRosier also started the Archives of Appalachia, which opened its doors in 1978 with a “cultural approach to the region,” and worked to collect social history and folklore.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to developing collections, librarians and archivists were also assessing the general state of Appalachian archives and collections in the region, and were developing methods for sharing information. During the early 1970s, the Appalachian Consortium fostered the cooperation of twelve regional libraries in North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia, as well as dozens of private collectors, to work with Charlotte Ross in the creation of the *Bibliography of Southern Appalachia*. In what Appalachian Consortium director Borden Mace called “a synthesis of effort, a unified approach beyond the capability of any one individual or institution,” Ross and her colleagues identified many Appalachian resources for the first time. The *Bibliography* included materials housed not only in college and university libraries and collections, but also many previously unknown publications tucked away in hundreds of local history associations and public libraries.<sup>37</sup>

As academic programs in Appalachian Studies developed, the University of Kentucky’s Anne Campbell Ritchie extended the interagency cooperative spirit that

fueled the creation of the *Bibliography* by hosting the 1978 “Appalachian Sources: A Cooperative Approach” conference at the University of Kentucky. While the *Bibliography* was primarily interested in locating resources, the “Appalachian Sources” conference was held as a response to the growth of Appalachian Studies curricula and the corresponding growth of research on the region. Recognizing that this presented new challenges in preservation, access, and acquisitions for collection administrators, the conference symbolized a growing sense of cooperation and a need for collaboration among Appalachian collection administrators. The conference gathered “Appalachian librarians, archivists, and bibliographers” from many different institutions who spent their time together “talking about how we could cooperate, collaborate, and expand access and resources within the region,” Ritchie related.<sup>38</sup> The Appalachian Sources conference represented the first significant step in forming a community of Appalachian collection librarians and archivists.

Another step in this ongoing process occurred in the early 1980s when the Appalachian Consortium established a Regional Collections Committee that provided a regularly scheduled forum for Appalachian collection managers and librarians to discuss ideas, share resources, and plan projects.<sup>39</sup> But perhaps even more importantly, the Regional Collections Committee conducted a survey of archival repositories in the region in the early 1980s, funded by a National Historical Publications and Records Commission grant. The results were published in 1985 as *Archives in Appalachia: A Directory*, which listed more than three hundred college, university, public, and private libraries as well as historical societies, museums, genealogical societies,

and other collections. Each entry provided contact information and basic data about the size, topical scope, date range, geographical scope, and types of materials held in each collection.<sup>40</sup>

The *Archives in Appalachia* survey also revealed that more than two hundred of the surveyed collections were administered by one person, who was often a volunteer or part-time worker with little or no archival training. In response to this, the consortium's Regional Collections Committee founded *The Curator: The Newsletter of Appalachian Regional Collections* in 1987 to reach the "public librarians, members of local historical societies, etc., who find themselves entrusted with material which they have not been trained to care for."

*The Curator* enhanced communication between the staffs at various Appalachian collections. Largely written by professional archivists and collection managers at Appalachian colleges and universities, *The Curator* featured "how-to" columns on conservation, handling of photographs and manuscripts, and other topics as well as a "question and answer" column where professionals would provide advice to archivists who lacked professional training. *The Curator* also included information about archival conferences and workshops, profiles of various Appalachian collections, and general news relevant to the archival community.<sup>41</sup>

Clearly, during the same time that Appalachian Studies was developing, Appalachian colleges and universities were recognizing the need, as Cratis Williams stated it, to collect and preserve "the past history, culture, art, music, literature, religion, and social customs of the region." According to *Appalachian Journal* editor Jerry Williamson, collection "bragging rights" became part of the informal

banter at Appalachian Studies conferences, as scholars and archivists associated with different collections would boast about their holdings and acquisitions. As Kentucky's Appalachian librarian Anne Ritchie said, "it was an exciting time to be in Appalachian Studies."<sup>42</sup>

As of the writing of this document, it has been more than forty years since publication of Robert F. Munn's "Research Materials on the Appalachian Region" and more than three decades since Cratis Williams discussed "The Role of Appalachian Colleges in Appalachia's Future" during a summer conference at Mars Hill College. The Appalachian Studies Association is more than thirty years old, and Appalachian Studies programs flourish in Appalachia: students can choose between four graduate programs, three undergraduate majors, and a dozen undergraduate minors in Appalachian Studies currently offered across the region. Appalachian scholarship has flourished, as Fred Hay's article in this issue describes.

Important collections of Appalachian archival material are housed at larger schools such as West Virginia University, Virginia Tech, the University of Tennessee, and the University of North Carolina. Many smaller schools also have significant holdings, including Emory & Henry and Ferrum Colleges in Virginia, Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, North Carolina, the University of North Carolina at Asheville, and many of the thirty-five Appalachian College Association members – and this list is by no means complete.

There are a number of signs that Appalachian collections are not only doing well, but rapidly growing and expanding. Radford University in Virginia created the position of Appalachian collection librarian in 2006, is in the

process of hiring its first full-time archivist, and is actively planning and developing an Appalachian reading room and archives. Mars Hill College has hired its first full-time professional archivist as part of a National Endowment for the Humanities challenge grant. Virginia Tech has restructured their special collections with an added emphasis on manuscripts and archives and is in the process of hiring additional archival staff. Appalachian State University built a new library in 2005 with expanded space and archival processing and storage facilities for the Eury Appalachian Collection. Digital projects are becoming more common, with such resources as Appalachian State University's "Documenting Appalachia" digital collection and Western Carolina University's "Craft Revival" collection using CONTENTdm to provide remote access to digitized collections.

Back in 1966, Robert Munn called for developing regional collections of "useful primary and secondary materials" within Appalachia that would be "conveniently located and well-organized" for use by researchers and scholars. "It seems only a matter of time," Munn predicted, "before we see the development of a number of comprehensive collections on the Appalachian region." For scholars and students of Appalachian Studies, the good news is that Munn's prediction has come true.<sup>43</sup>

*Gene Hyde (MA, Appalachian Studies, Appalachian State University and MS, Information Sciences, University of Tennessee) is Appalachian Collection librarian at McConnell Library at Radford University in Radford, Virginia, where he is developing the library's first Appalachian special collection and archives. He is the former curator of the John Quincy Wolf Folklore Collection*

at Lyon College in Batesville, Arkansas, and co-editor with Brooks Blevins of *Life in the Leatherwoods* by John Quincy Wolf Jr. (University of Arkansas Press, 2000).

## NOTES

1. Appalachian Studies courses can be subject-specific, such as an English class in Appalachian folklore, or interdisciplinary, which may incorporate such subjects as sociology, political science, and literature into the same syllabus.
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3. Robert F. Munn, "The Latest Rediscovery of Appalachia," *Mountain Life and Work* (Fall 1965): 10-12; Robert F. Munn, "Research Materials on the Appalachian Region," *Mountain Life and Work* (Summer 1966): 13-15.
4. Munn, "Research Materials," 13-14.
5. *Ibid.*, 14.
6. Munn, "The Latest Rediscovery of Appalachia."
7. Richard Jackson (former director of the James H. Carson Library, Lees-McRae College), tape-recorded telephone interview with the author, January 31, 2003; Stephanie D. Roark (director of the John B. Stephenson Center for Appalachian and Comparative Highland Studies, Lees-McRae College), tape-recorded telephone interview with the author, January 24, 2003.
8. Richard Dellingham, interview with the author at Mars Hill College, April 24, 2008.
9. Cratis Williams, "The Role of Appalachia's Colleges in Appalachia's Future, 25 June 1976," Cratis Williams

- Papers, W. L. Eury Appalachian Collection, Appalachian State University, Boone, N.C.
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  11. Logan Brown, Theresa Burchett-Anderson, Donovan Cain, and Jinny Turman Deal, with Howard Dorgan, "Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going? A History of the Appalachian Studies Association," *Appalachian Journal*, 31, no. 1 (Fall 2003): 30-85; Drake, "The Struggle in Appalachian Studies."
  12. Richard B. Drake, "A Strategy for Regional Studies: A Rationale for a New Journal," *Appalachian Notes* 1, no. 1 (1973): 1-7; J. W. Williamson, tape-recorded telephone interview with the author, February 21, 2003.
  13. Richard B. Drake, "Appalachian Resource Survey, Part 1," *Appalachian Notes* 1, no. 3 (1973): 13-16; "Appalachian Resource Survey, Part 2," *Appalachian Notes* 1, no. 4 (1973): 14-16; "Appalachian Resource Survey, Part 3," *Appalachian Notes* 2, no. 3 (1974): 15-16.
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**Manuscripts, Mountain Music, and Megabytes:  
“So Mote It Ever Be’: The Folksong Heritage  
of North Carolina’s Northern Blue Ridge  
Mountains”**

by Paul L. Robertson

**Abstract**

This article provides a brief overview of a pilot digitization project implemented by Appalachian State University’s Belk Library and Information Commons. The project consists of two former Appalachian State University professors’ ballad collections. This paper describes the creation and management of a CONTENTdm online database containing both manuscript and typescript documents and audio field recordings in both record disc and open reel audiotape.

**Grant Background**

In March 2006, the W. L. Eury Appalachian Collection, a division of the Belk Library Special Collections at Appalachian State University, received a Blue Ridge National Heritage Area grant to produce an online interactive database of two distinct folksong collections contained in our repository. Collectively entitled “So Mote It Ever Be’: The Folksong Heritage of North Carolina’s Northern Blue Ridge Mountains,” (hereafter referred to as SMIEB) the project is comprised of the collections of two past university faculty members: history and government professor Dr. Isaac Garfield Greer (1881-1967) and English professor Dr. William Amos Abrams (1905-1991). After initially considering designing our own online interface, the project managers decided to purchase the OCLC digital

collection management program CONTENTdm for use on this project. As part of the grant, an adjunct faculty member (myself) with a background in Appalachian-area studies and experience with both analog and digital media production was hired. At the expiration of the grant period, the university committed to funding the project until its completion. For the purposes of this article, I will refer to a distinct text in our collection as a “document,” regardless of the number of leaves that may comprise it. “Manuscript” will refer to only those documents that were written by hand, as many documents in both the Greer and the Abrams collections are typewritten and are consequently referred to as “typescripts.” The entire “Documenting Appalachia” project can be accessed at <http://contentdm.library.appstate.edu/index.html>.

### **The I. G. Greer Collection**

The older of the two collections, the I. G. Greer Folksong Collection, contains documents that are especially unique given the fact that Greer was one of the first ballad collectors in both the upland North Carolina region and in the larger Appalachian region as a whole. His work predates that of much more recognized ballad collectors like Cecil Sharp and Dorothy Scarborough (see Dr. Fred Hay’s article in this volume). Significantly, Dr. Greer was himself a native of the Zionville area of Watauga County, North Carolina, and almost certainly benefited from an established family and community network of ballad text informants.<sup>1</sup> Extensive genealogical research into the ballad informants of SMIEB by the project graduate assistant Amanda Hedrick connects Greer to many of the text informants in both his own collection and that of Abrams. While the majority of the

documents in Greer's collection date from 1900 to 1920, several nineteenth-century manuscripts, such as a meticulously illuminated 1853 manuscript of "The Rich Lady" and a somewhat less aesthetically impressive 1894 text of "Charming Beauty Bright," appear in the collection.<sup>2</sup> The audio component of Greer's collection is somewhat unremarkable. There are no field recordings. Instead, there are many commercially produced shellac 78 rpm discs from the 1920s. However, the collection does contain recordings of Greer and his wife, Willie Spainhour Greer, (an exceptionally talented dulcimer player) made for Paramount Records and the Library of Congress Archive of American Folk Song.

#### **The W. Amos Abrams Collection**

Dr. W. Amos Abrams, on the other hand, seemed fully aware of the academic value of his collecting. Dr. Abrams carefully labeled and inventoried both his collected texts and his audio recordings. With his acquisition of an open reel tape recorder sometime in the 1960s, Abrams embarked on a personal project to re-record the entirety of his field recording disc collection. Before each field recording, Abrams recorded himself providing information on the performers, the date, or the location of the recording. Often, Abrams also offered his own commentary on the song. These audio recordings are particularly valuable, as little of this information appears elsewhere in the collection.

Most of the more than seven hundred distinct texts in the Abrams collection date from 1900 to 1950, although the Moses Adams ballad book from the Dehart area of Wilkes County, North Carolina, (purchased in 1937 by Dr. Abrams) dates from the 1820s. As a side note, this particular

document has not yet been digitized owing to its fragility. The purchase of a new book scanner, the BookDrive DIY, Model B (Extra Large Format) with Canon EOS 400D (XTi) cameras, should facilitate a digitized copy of this exceptional document by early 2009. The Abrams collection also contains more than six hundred recordings made in the ten-year span between 1938 and 1948. Most of these recordings were produced on a portable disc cutting machine set up in the private residences of Abrams's informants or at regional fiddler's conventions attended by Abrams. As Dr. Hay mentions in his article for this edition, Dr. Abrams was among the first (if not the first), to record such Appalachian folksong luminaries as Doc Watson (Wilkes County), Frank Proffitt (Watauga County), Uncle Pat Frye (Yadkin County), and Horton Barker (Johnson County, Tennessee/Smyth County, Virginia). Yet beyond these better known musicians, the SMIEB project uncovered several unheralded yet nonetheless exceptional performers, like three harmony-singing sisters from the Valle Crucis area of Watauga County: Dixie, Ruby, and Roxie Burlison—all students at Appalachian State Teachers College in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Among the several recordings Abrams made of the Burlisons is a particularly haunting a capella rendition of "Barbara Allen."

### **Digitization Process**

A significant portion of this project involved the organization and preservation of the documents, even before the first document was scanned or the first audio recording transferred to digital format. To get a sense of the enormity of this project, consider that together these collections contain 1,400 distinct texts made up of around 2,200

individual leaves. The physical condition of these items varied from excellently preserved typescripts on heavy bond paper to the heavily stained, mangled, or faded nineteenth-century manuscripts written on low-quality notebook paper. These collections have had a somewhat tumultuous history, especially the Greer papers. Sometime around 1970, the entirety of the Greer folksong collection was laminated in plastic, an unfortunately common archival practice of the period.<sup>3</sup> To facilitate this lamination, pages were cut from bound ballad books acquired by Dr. Greer, thereby severely compromising an important contextual element of many of the titles. With one exception, the covers of these bound volumes were apparently lost or purposely discarded in the process, along with the invaluable informant metadata they might have contained. By reuniting separated texts and by using some handwritten page numbers, we hope in the future to reconstruct, at least in the digital sense, some of these compromised ballad books from the Greer collection.

Other challenges faced in preparing this collection included at least one instance where two leaves were laminated together, the text of the second leaf therefore hidden from view for years. Additionally, on some leaves creases and wrinkles caused by the roller laminate process obscured lines of text. Finally, the laminate will possibly lead to accelerated degradation of the documents.<sup>4</sup> After lamination, the ballad titles were then re-ordered alphabetically using whichever title happened to be written at the top of any given leaf. As a consequence, the final page of a multi-page ballad text in a ballad book might end up separated from the first page, as the removed leaf was re-ordered according to whichever titled song appeared on the reverse side. Obviously, some detective work was required to

reunite, in the virtual sense, these “orphans.” The final difficulty in organizing these documents occurred when both the Greer and Abrams collections were placed in a file cabinet in the W. L. Eury Appalachian Collection of Appalachian State University’s Belk Library, where they were open for public and what was likely unsupervised perusal. Predictably, irresponsible patron browsing may have further compromised the collection—a comparison of our current document inventory with Abram’s initial inventory revealed that several documents are currently missing. We have assumed that these documents “disappeared” during this period of open access.

For the purposes of this project, the documents were grouped according to the schema used in the authoritative Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore published in 1952 by Duke University Press. Our justification for this choice lay in the facts that Abrams was at one time Brown’s assistant in the latter’s ballad collecting work and that the Frank C. Brown Collection published many specific texts from the Abrams collection. The reason that straight alphabetization by document title does not work is evinced by the song group entitled “Broken Ties” in the Brown Collection.<sup>5</sup> The two variants from this song group in Abram’s collection are respectively titled “Blue Eyes” and “Broken Engagement,” despite their obvious textual similarities. Consequently, they were physically filed separate from each other. In SMIEB, these texts are now classified as “Broken Ties,” Variant 1 and “Broken Ties,” Variant 2, respectively. In assigning variant numbers to the documents in this collection, we tried to avoid potential confusion on the part of the researcher by adhering as closely as possible to what we assume was Dr. Abrams own variant

number system; on many documents in the Abrams collection, a handwritten number appears in one corner or another (for example, “Bonny Barbara Allan,” Variant 4). In most cases, we made this number correspond to the document’s variant number in our digital collection—although inexplicably some numbers were repeated within classification groups, forcing us in a few cases to dispense with our matching attempts.

The document scanning procedures of SMIEB are based on the *North Carolina ECHO Exploring Cultural Heritage Online* (NC ECHO) *Guidelines for Digitization* that are used in all current Appalachian State University Special Collections digital projects.<sup>6</sup> Due to budgetary constraints, the majority of the SMIEB Greer portion was scanned with a Hewlett Packard Scanjet 8250 that was already owned by Belk Library. Although an adequate scanner from a quality perspective, the size of the scanner glass (8.5 x 14 inches, maximum) prevented the project from fully adhering to the NC ECHO document scanning guideline that calls for a discernable border around a scanned leaf. This limitation was especially relevant to the Greer collection as the lamination borders prevented us from scanning many leaves in their entirety. However, we did strive to ensure that all the text of a leaf was included in the scan area. Before beginning the Abrams portion of SMIEB, the project purchased a Microtek Scanmaker 9800XL oversize scanner that allowed for the necessary border. It also allowed us the opportunity to scan the few large format documents that exist in the Greer collection.

The workflow of the scanning process includes an initial scan of a document leaf at 600 dpi (dots per inch). We try our utmost to do one scan and one scan only, as the intense light from the scanner can be very damaging to such sensitive documents. Using Adobe Photoshop CS2, we save this

unaltered image as a TIFF file (Tagged Image File Format), which NC ECHO deems reliable and not as prone to obsolescence as other graphic file formats. A copy of this file is then stored in relative perpetuity on an archival quality gold DVD. Eventually, these images will also be archived on a university-maintained file server. From this TIFF image, we use Photoshop to generate a 300 dpi JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) access image. This image file is the one we upload to the CONTENTdm “Documenting Appalachia” online database.

At this point in the project workflow, the research challenge of the project begins—generating the metadata for a given image. What follows is a field-by-field description of the SMIEB metadata and brief explanations of the information entered. The **classification title** associates the document with a scholarly classification—as already mentioned, in most cases this means the classification it was assigned in the Frank C. Brown Collection. Should a reference to a particular song not appear in the Brown Collection, we then turn to Vance Randolph’s *Ozark Folksongs* (1980 edition), John Harrington Cox’s *Folk Songs of the South* (1963 edition), or G. Malcolm Laws Jr.’s *Native American Balladry* (1964 edition) in the hopes of finding a reference to our text. We also include the number of this particular variant (and again, in most cases we try to retain whatever number Dr. Abrams assigned it). When copies (either typed transcriptions of original manuscripts or carbon-paper duplicates of original typescripts) that Dr. Abrams made of certain documents contain information (usually extra-textual, such as spelling corrections or added informant data) not found on the original we have included those as well with the designation “Copy.” The **document title** is the

title which was written or typed on the document itself. The **alternative titles** are other names by which this song is known. To collate these, we used the Randolph, Cox, and Laws scholarly sources mentioned above. Owing to the research difficulties we experienced in our own attempts to construct an organizational system, for the benefit of future researchers we try to be as exhaustive as possible in documenting these titles. The **informant** is the individual or individuals who are responsible for performing, speaking, or writing down this particular text. A significant amount of the effort expended on this project has involved genealogical research into the individuals mentioned in these documents. We were not content with the patriarchal “Mrs. Such and Such” given as the informant for many texts. Using census, birth, marriage, and death records from both the W. L. Eury Appalachian Collection and from local courthouses, we have attempted to make these references as complete as possible by including the maiden names and birth and death years for many informants. Such information makes it possible to grasp the familial and community interconnectivity of these songs. Information of this sort, such as detailing a familial relationship between one informant and another, is entered into the **informant note** field. If there is an **associated date** field, it indicates when the document was either written down or recorded. Occasionally, for titles that were originally published commercially in the nineteenth century, we have included the original publication date.

Other SMIEB database metadata fields concern the classification of the broader ballad group to which the specific text belongs. Like any other library record, we use the **subject** field to assign authorized Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) for the text. Although still

imperfect at the time of this article, the hyperlink function of CONTENTdm allows a user to click on a subject category such as “lovesickness” and immediately a list of all other documents containing this word appears. Added features of CONTENTdm will eventually allow us to present pull-down menus of such important SMIEB categories used as LCSH, geographic locations, and the names of frequent informants. The **scholarly classification** field provides the user with an authoritative reference or references for the ballad group—essentially a “for more information” aid. We provide references to the Brown, Randolph, Cox, and Laws collections when possible. As previously mentioned, in some instances the Brown reference is to the specific text in our collection. If this is the case, a parenthetical letter following the Brown classification number corresponds to the specific citation of the document in the Brown publication. We hope it is of great benefit to researchers that these published collections cross-reference each other so extensively.

The **description** field provides in detail the physical condition of the document leaves; hopefully it will explain any questionable elements visible on the document image such as holes, stains, tears, handwritten notations, numbers, and the location of the informant citations. Again, we attempt to compose these explanations in as exhaustive detail as possible. In some cases, it is impossible for us to discern the meaning (if any) of various notations or blemishes on a given document leaf. Nonetheless, we hope our intense scrutiny of the actual document may answer at least some questions about curiosities within these documents.

In some instances, a SMIEB document contains metadata concerning the original songwriter and original publication information in the fields for **creator** and/or

**source.** Much nineteenth-century popular commercial music entered the regional folk tradition with varying degrees of textual alteration.<sup>7</sup> One challenge that beset the project concerned the appearance of such song texts. For example, the Greer collection contains a 1915 manuscript of Charles K. Harris's "After the Ball" and the Abrams collection contains a 1900 manuscript of William Shakespeare Hays's "I'll Remember You in My Prayers." For the most part, these items are in the public domain (in fact, digital images of original commercial song sheets for some of the SMIEB texts are available online as part of the Library of Congress Music Division's online database, *Music for the Nation: American Sheet Music 1820-1860 and 1870-1885*.<sup>8</sup> The Abrams collection also contained typescripts of song texts published in a *Toledo Blade* newspaper column circa 1908. After corresponding with the newspaper, the project was granted permission to reprint these texts. Although not directly related to ballad collecting in the western North Carolina region, we felt that including such documents emphasizes the extent of Abrams research. Unfortunately, a few select items in the Abrams collection were left out of the digitized collection due to a failure to acquire copyright (specifically, transcripts of songs performed on CBS Radio's *School of the Air* program circa 1940).

The remainder of the metadata compiled for a SMIEB record is fairly self-explanatory and obviously utilized more for our own internal data keeping. We include the name of the project participant who scanned the item and the date on which it was originally scanned. In our digital archives (the gold DVDs and the eventual file server), each SMIEB document is accompanied by a plain text (txt) transcription file. These transcriptions appear in the

**transcript** metadata field and in the Web interface they may be viewed alongside individual leaves within a multi-page document. We hope that these transcriptions prove helpful to the student and researcher, particularly as many SMIEB documents are handwritten in flowing Victorian-era script or were quickly scrawled in pencil on a notepad. The words within the text transcription are interactive—clicking on one will provide the user with a sorted list of all the word’s occurrences in the SMIEB collection. At the time of this article, the CONTENTdm program contains a glitch that requires the use of html line breaks to ensure proper spacing of the transcript text. We have also discovered that transcription files will occasionally, and without explanation, fail to upload on the first attempt.<sup>9</sup> A second attempt has always proved successful.

### **Project Future**

The next stage of the SMIEB project involves the digitization and online streaming of the audio content in the Abrams collections. We were fortunate that the original audio recordings in both collections were excellently preserved, especially considering the fragility of the media itself. The Greer collection consists mostly of commercially produced (Columbia, Paramount, Victor) shellac discs that are quite heavy and remarkably durable unless dropped, in which case they shatter like glass. Because of copyright considerations inherent in the commercial origins of these discs, they will not be digitized. The Abrams collection, on the other hand, consists mostly of lacquer discs—for all intents and purposes candle wax sprayed onto an aluminum or, during the metal rationing of World War II, a cardboard core.<sup>10</sup> Owing to the inherent fragility of this medium, we are

hesitant to play these discs on a needle turntable, even with special archival quality needles. Having seen the state of some lacquer discs held in other repositories, our Abrams discs are in especially good shape and we wish to keep them in such condition. Although Abrams made his own copies of these recordings onto open reel audio tape sometime in the 1960s, the quality of these ranges from poor to mediocre, with skips, background noise, and fading as the main problems. However, as mentioned earlier, Abrams also recorded invaluable detailed commentary before each song. For that reason, we have transferred these recordings to digital format. We intend to “reunite” this commentary with high quality digital recordings of the original lacquer discs. To facilitate this, we have purchased the ELP laser turntable system, a rather pricey (approximately \$14,000) hand-assembled Japanese import that reads information from grooved record discs using two laser beams. The ELP produces high quality and, just as importantly, low physical impact digital copies of these lacquer sound records.<sup>11</sup> As CONTENTdm accommodates streaming sound files, these audio documents will be presented online with accompanying metadata in the same format as the manuscript and typescript files. We hope to have this portion of SMIEB complete by autumn 2008. Especially in regards to the audio portion of SMIEB, we are obviously learning as we go.

The SMIEB project is ongoing, with metadata enrichment continuing all the time. We intend to provide contact information for database users, such as researchers or local community members, who may have additional information concerning specific documents in our collection. Other features we look forward to adding in the future include an interactive map of informants to better understand

the geographic distribution of certain folksongs, biographies of prominent informants, and specific linkages to other collections with related materials.

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## NOTES

1. Travis Rountree, "'Down Out of the Far Past': I. G. Greer's Revisions of 'Black Jack Davey' & 'Beaulampkins,'" paper presented at *The Road Ahead: The Next Thirty Years of Appalachian Studies*, the 2008 Appalachian Studies Association Conference, Huntington, W. Va., March 29, 2008.
2. I encourage the reader to access the SMIEB section of "Documenting Appalachia" and view the specific documents mentioned herein.
3. Artwork Preservation Project, Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, *Guidelines for the Care of Works on Paper with Cellulose Lacquer Lamination*, <http://anthropology.si.edu/conservation/lamination/>.
4. Ibid.
5. "156 Broken Ties" in *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore, Volume Two: Folk Ballads from North Carolina*, ed. Henry M. Belden and Arthur Palmer Hudson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1952), 415-417.

6. *NC ECHO Guidelines for Digitization*, 2005 edition, ed. Katherine M. Wisser. These guidelines are now in a revised 2007 edition, available at <http://www.ncecho.org/guide/toc.html>. Certain guidelines may have changed since the inception of the SMIEB project. Should any changes affect SMIEB, the project will evaluate how best to implement them.
7. Cassie M. Robinson, *"Them Ole' Love Songs" : The Ballad and Country Music Tradition of Earl Silvers, from Green Mountain, North Carolina* (M.A thesis, Appalachian State University, 2004)
8. Music Division, Library of Congress, "Music for the Nation," <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/mussmhtml/mussmhome.html>. The SMIEB project is considering the feasibility of providing links to specific related documents in this database.
9. CONTENTdm technicians could not explain why this is happening. We suspect it is some sort of glitch in the functioning of our library file server. However, the whole matter is at most a minor inconvenience.
10. In the archival and audiophile world, this type of disc is alternately referred to as "acetate" and "lacquer." My choice of the term "lacquer" is arbitrary.
11. Official documentation from the ELP Corporation emphasizes the ability to their product to only play vinyl records. Some comments on Audiophile message boards also complain of the ELP's inability to read non-vinyl discs. The SMIEB project has had no such problems and we have been frankly ecstatic about the quality of sound reproduction from these discs. The only limitations we have encountered with the ELP are an inability to play discs that are not black in color (several of the recordings in the Abrams collection were made with clear lacquer and are therefore buff in color) and the necessity that the discs be meticulously clean before playing, as the laser will "bounce" back off any dust particles present. We have purchased a small vacuum cleaner which we use to vacuum the disc while on the platter before playing.

**Alleghania, Appalachian America, or  
Appalachia: A Region (re)Discovered, (re)  
Defined, and Documented**

by Fred J. Hay

**Abstract**

In this article, the author reviews the history of Appalachia as it has been variously perceived and relates to this history the development and current status of its documentation. The author predicts that Appalachian Studies is on the verge of a new wave of scholarship and documentation and speculates that the continued development of widely accessible digital resources will have an impact future scholarship.

Appalachia is named for the Appalachian mountain range that runs southwestwardly from Canada to the states of the Deep South. Hernando de Soto, the Spanish explorer, named these mountains for the lowland Native Americans who had directed him to them. (An account of De Soto's expedition and other early travelers' descriptions of the region are compiled in Primary Resources' microfiche collection, *The First Three Centuries of Appalachian Travel, 1540-1820*.) As early as 1569, the southeastern mountains were labeled "Apalechen" on Mercator's map. The modern word "Appalachia" first appeared in 1839 when writer Washington Irving proposed substituting "Appalachia" or "Alleghenia" for America in our country's name.<sup>1</sup> By 1864, the term "Appalachia" seems to have been dropped; the summary of the 1860 federal census, as published in Joseph C. G. Kennedy's *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*,

*Under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior*, labeled it the “Alleghany Region . . . from Pennsylvania, through Virginia, Eastern Tennessee, & c., to Northern Alabama” and described it as one of the country’s seven “Natural Divisions.” This publication grouped the Alleghany Region, along with the “Northwestern States” (Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota) and the “Pacific Coast,” as one of the “Divisions with Least Mortality.” “Alleghany Country . . . is exhibited by the statistics, as a region of great salubrity. It consists of high ridges running nearly parallel with the sea-coast . . . thus securing a pure atmosphere and other conditions favorable to the growth of a healthy and vigorous population.”<sup>2</sup> The Alleghany region was first recognized as a distinct cultural region located in the mountains and valleys of contiguous southeastern states by Minnesota journalist James Taylor in his 1862 book *Alleghania: A Geographical and Statistical Memoir—Exhibiting the Strength of the Union, and the Weakness of Slavery in the Mountain Districts of the South*.<sup>3</sup> Taylor argued that “Alleghania”—whose boundaries were remarkably close to twentieth-century descriptions of Appalachia—was of strategic importance to the Union because as a region with fewer slaves and small, subsistence-oriented farms, its residents were closer in sentiment to people living in non-slave states than those of the lower South.

During the latter decades of the nineteenth century, fiction writers such as Mary N. Murfree and John Fox Jr., now collectively known as “local color writers,” published stories about the southern mountains that implied but never specifically stated that the area was a distinct cultural region. It was left to William Goodell Frost, president of Berea College, to rediscover and rename the region “Appalachian

America.” In 1895, Frost announced to a teachers’ convention in Cincinnati, the “discovery of a new world . . . a new pioneer region in the mountains of the Central South . . . the mountainous back yards of nine states . . . one of God’s grand divisions.” Frost stated that during the previous year, while he and United States Geological Survey employee (and former Berea student) C.W. Hayes were examining maps, they discovered Appalachian America and mapped out its 194 counties. Over the next few years, Frost published a series of articles on the mountain people he characterized as “our contemporary ancestors.”<sup>4</sup>

Historian John Alexander Williams observed that in Frost’s description, “Mountain people were not just white, but the right kind of whites: bearers of ‘Anglo-Saxon blood.’”<sup>5</sup> In 1904, Kentucky passed the infamous Day Law, making racially mixed education at private institutions illegal and Berea abandoned its earlier noble experiment in racial integration, concentrating all its efforts on the education, uplift, and exploitation of “Mountain Whites.” Berea College developed an unprecedented concentration of scholars and resources focused on the region and, most likely due to their focus on Appalachia, the early periodical publications about Appalachia reflect a distinct eastern Kentucky bias.

The term “Mountain Whites” dates from this time. It was adopted by the Library of Congress (LC) and was widely used in the literature. The term “Mountain Whites” not only misrepresented the region by exclusion of nonwhite residents, but was resented by the white people living in Appalachia. As early as 1899, the Reverend Robert Campbell wrote of “the bad odor that always emanates from a class appellation that seems to imply peculiarity, if not inferiority,” noting that the term “savors of condescension.”

In 1914, another clergyman, Samuel Tyndale Wilson, repeated Campbell's observations, noting that the term was "objectionable" to those so designated, and in 1921 John C. Campbell declared the term "opprobrious." Yet, LC chief bibliographer H. H. B. Meyer compiled a brief "List of References on the Mountain Whites" in 1922 and it served as the approved Library of Congress Subject Heading for the residents of Appalachia until 2002, when Appalachian State University petitioned the library to change the heading to "Appalachians (People)."<sup>6</sup>

These comments from the three clergymen above are illustrative of the next phase of interest in Appalachia and its documentation. This phase is characterized by a great influx of white, mostly northern, Protestant missionary workers into the region. Just as Berea College changed its mission to accommodate legally-mandated racial segregation, northern charities did the same, often switching their focus from the lowland South and the recently enslaved to this mountain region inhabited by the last surviving pocket of "our contemporary ancestors." "By 1920, the high point of the mission school era in the Southern Mountains, perhaps 200 schools were in operation representing the mission concern of many individuals and at least 17 religious bodies."<sup>7</sup>

Appalachian bibliographer Robert Munn wrote of four major rediscoveries of the Appalachian region. The first was that of the local color writers of the late nineteenth century; the second rediscovery, running to about 1930, he characterized as being driven by the mission school movement.<sup>8</sup> Munn's first two rediscoveries correspond to the first two of folklorist William McNeil's "four eras of thinking about Appalachian folk life." McNeil's first era

included the local color writers and his second era, roughly 1900-30, was characterized by literature that viewed Appalachia as “a distinctive region but also as an area made up of people who were, in most cultural respects, Elizabethan. Although such works continue to the present day, the greatest number appeared during the years 1900 to 1930.”<sup>9</sup> Munn quotes John Day as referring to these earlier writers as “quaintness mongers” and “ballad pushers.”<sup>10</sup>

The individual who best characterized the mission school phase was the pioneer of Appalachian documentation, John C. Campbell. Campbell had been working in mountain schools since 1895, when in 1908 he began his work for the Russell Sage Foundation for whom he eventually served as director of their Southern Highland Division. Campbell was the driving force behind the establishment of the annual Conference of Southern Mountain Workers, which evolved into the Council of the Southern Mountains. (The council founded the first serial publication devoted to the region, *Mountain Life & Work*, which was published from 1925 to 1988.) Most important for Appalachian Studies was Campbell’s survey of the 257-county area that he defined as the Southern Highlands. This work is the foundation upon which much subsequent scholarship has been and continues to be based. Campbell’s monograph was published posthumously in 1921 as *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland*.<sup>11</sup>

The era of the mission school movement was also that of the search for cultural survivals. The search and salvage of cultural survivals by the Brothers Grimm in Germany and the elaboration and articulation of the concept in E. B. Tylor’s *Primitive Culture* (1871)<sup>12</sup> became the focus of considerable scholarly effort, ranging from the search for

pre-Christian survivals among European peasantries to the documentation of African cultural retentions in the African Diaspora by Cuban Fernando Ortiz, Brazilian Nina Rodrigues, and others.

The search for Anglo cultural survivals in Appalachia at first focused on the collection of Child Ballads –traditional English and Scottish ballads named for Francis James Child who compiled many of them into the five volumes of *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-1898). Josiah Combs in eastern Kentucky and I. G. Greer in northwest North Carolina were collecting ballads by the first decade of the twentieth century. More well known is the work of Englishman Cecil Sharp, who along with John Campbell's, wife Olive Dame Campbell, published their collection *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians* in 1917. Many other song collectors were also at work in these years, including John Harrington Cox in West Virginia, C. Alphonso Smith in North Carolina and Virginia, and others, culminating with Dorothy Scarborough's *A Song Catcher in Southern Mountains*, which was based on her 1930 trip to Virginia and North Carolina and published posthumously in 1937.<sup>13</sup>

The great number of Child Ballads found in the region led C. Alphonso Smith's editor Arthur Kyle Davis to declare Appalachia a "ballad territory": ballads, "like coal deposits, are to be found chiefly in the mountain area of each state, and the Southern Appalachian mountain region running through a part of Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama is a district far more homogeneous and far more significant in balladry than any state division."<sup>14</sup>

Though ballads were the primary focus of the effort

to discover and salvage cultural survivals, others collected examples from folk tales, quaint speech, and from other aspects of life in the mountains. Some of these were documented in the first nonfiction monographs describing life in the southern mountains during these years. Perhaps the two best-known today are librarian Horace Kephart's *Our Southern Highlanders: A Narrative of Adventure in the Southern Appalachians and a Study of Life among the Mountaineers* (1913), based on his exploration of the Great Smokies, and Emma Bell Miles's *The Spirit of the Mountains* (1905), an account of her life and acquaintances in eastern Tennessee.<sup>15</sup>

McNeil's third "era of thinking" ran from 1930 to 1950, and includes Munn's third "rediscovery" of Appalachia in the Left's discovery of the coal miners' plight in the early 1930s. Munn's fourth rediscovery was initiated by John F. Kennedy's visit to the region, and the subsequent media attention, during his 1960 presidential campaign. McNeil characterizes his third era as one in which the literature was concerned with "how the 'contemporary ancestors' were forsaking their 'Elizabethan' ways and adopting those of modern civilization."<sup>16</sup>

Munn emphasizes how his third and fourth rediscoveries did much to foster the activist spirit in Appalachia: "From writers like Theodore Dreiser in 1930s Kentucky to contemporary scholars such as Helen Lewis and John Gaventa there continues to a rich vein of both popular and scholarly activist literature for Appalachia."<sup>17</sup> Munn noted an upsurge in publications about Appalachia in the 1930s and 1960s separated by two decades with very few publications concerning the region. McNeil's third era and Munn's third and fourth rediscoveries overlap but do not

correspond to David Whisnant's first of "three relatively well-defined waves or phases of serious critical writing on the Appalachia region": "the first arose just after the close of World War I and reached from Campbell's *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland* (1921) through Allen Eaton's *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands* (1937) and on to the eve of the sixties with Marion Pearsall's *Little Smoky Ridge* (1959)."<sup>18</sup>

During McNeil's third era, Whisnant's first wave, and Munn's third rediscovery of Appalachia, the second important region-wide survey was published. *Economic and Social Problems and Conditions of the Southern Appalachians*, edited by L. C. Gray and published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1935, was devised as a means of updating Campbell's 1921 survey of the region. Gray, et al., is a collection of studies on various aspects of life in a region that was defined as those counties through which the 1,000 foot contour line was drawn on the topographic map—creating a contiguous area, not dissimilar to Campbell's—that included parts of nine states south of the Mason-Dixon Line. The USDA study emphasized economic and social aspects of Appalachian life rather than Campbell's greater focus on regional culture.<sup>19</sup>

The USDA study produced the second major bibliography of the region. Compiled by Everret E. Edwards and published separately as *References on the Mountaineers of the Southern Appalachians* in 1935, it built upon Olive Dame Campbell's bibliography published in *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland*. Campbell's bibliography had about 250 citations, Edwards' some 830 citations. The next major bibliography on the region produced by Munn in his fourth rediscovery was his 1961, *The Southern*

*Appalachians: A Bibliography and Guide to Studies*, which included 1,069 citations and referred to works chiefly published after 1935.

In 1913, the librarian Kephart complained that in 1905 he could not locate “so much as a magazine article, written within this generation, that described the land and its people. . . . Had I been going to Teneriffe or Timbuctu, the libraries would have furnished information a-plenty; but about this housetop of eastern America they were strangely silent, it was *terra incognita*.”<sup>20</sup>

Edwards, too, had difficulty finding information:

No single book or article affords a convenient and accurate history of the mountaineers or of the region in which they live . . . . For the years since the American Revolution we are less fortunate as the region has been dealt with only in separate fragments, by States, counties, or towns, or in discussions of special phases of American history, such as German and Scotch-Irish immigration. The history of the mountaineers can be fully comprehended only by obliterating the State boundaries that conceal the essential unity of their homeland, by correlating the special and fragmentary studies, and by filling the gaps in the material through further research in the primary sources.<sup>21</sup>

In 1961, Munn noted that there had been a great proliferation of publications concerning Appalachia since 1935 but that “the quality of this writing has in no sense increased with the quantity. Indeed, a strong case can be made for the statement that more nonsense has been written about the Southern Appalachians than any comparable area in the United States.”<sup>22</sup> The period from 1930 to approximately 1960 also

saw the publication in 1937 of Allen Eaton's *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands*, in which the author retraced Campbell's travels through the mountains documenting crafts tradition. In the 1940s, sociologist James S. Brown began his groundbreaking and ongoing work on the "Beech Creek" community in Kentucky.

However, most important for Appalachian documentation and the eventual development of Appalachian Studies in the region's colleges and universities was the work of Cratis Dearl Williams.<sup>23</sup> Williams (1911-1985), a native of Lawrence County, Kentucky, began to collect traditional ballads while still in high school. Later, working as a high school teacher, Williams finished his MA degree in English from the University of Kentucky. His thesis presented and analyzed 471 ballads and songs that he and his sister had collected in northeastern Kentucky. In 1942, Williams joined the faculty of Appalachian State Teachers College and in 1943 first taught his college course on Appalachian folklore and song. In 1961, Williams received a PhD from New York University; his 1,661-page dissertation, *The Southern Mountaineer in Fact and Fiction*, remains the definitive study of fiction about the region.<sup>24</sup>

Williams was the primary force behind the establishment of Appalachian Studies as a legitimate academic enterprise; the creation of the W. L. Eury Appalachian Collection; the *Appalachian Journal* (1972- ),<sup>25</sup> the premier scholarly serial for the field; the Appalachian Consortium, a multi-institutional organization for the promotion and publication of research on the region; and Appalachian State University's (ASU's) Center for Appalachian Studies and its undergraduate and graduate degree programs. A symposium organized to honor Williams

on his retirement became an annual event with its own sponsoring organization, the Appalachian Studies Association. The Williams symposium was published and is still useful as an important summary of the state of regional documentation in the mid-1970s.<sup>26</sup>

McNeil's fourth era (1950 to the present) "is dubbed here the age of functional studies, where the great concern of many authors was not only to describe aspects of folklore but also to consider the ways in which they functioned in Appalachian society."<sup>27</sup> McNeil notes his four eras are not perfect due to the "appearance of works in this last era . . . that take the viewpoints most prominent in the three earlier eras."<sup>28</sup> This fourth era corresponds to Whisnant's next two waves: the second that began with the publication of Harry Caudill's *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* in 1963 and ended in 1972 with the appearance of David Walls's and John Stephenson's anthology, *Appalachia in the Sixties*; the "third wave consisted of the latter work of such scholars as [Allen] Batteau, [Patricia] Beaver, [Dwight] Billings, [Ron] Eller, [Steve] Fisher, [John ] Gaventa, [Helen] Lewis, [Harry] Shapiro, [David] Whisnant, and others."<sup>29</sup> The group of scholars Whisnant lists are mostly from the social sciences, indicating a shift in focus from the study of folklore, song, and regional literature that characterized the earlier literature on the region. (Note that Cratis D. Williams, writing in 1961, developed a slightly different chronology of literature on the region: that produced up to 1880 mostly by explorers and travelers, that of the local color writers from 1880 to 1930, and lastly, Appalachians writing about themselves from 1930 to 1960.)<sup>30</sup>

During Whisnant's second wave and McNeil's

fourth era, the third major survey of the region was published. Funded by the Ford Foundation, this survey redrew Appalachian boundaries to make the use of existing statistical data more convenient, and in doing so created a smaller region by reducing the number of Appalachian counties in each state and by excluding all of Maryland and South Carolina. *The Southern Appalachian Region: A Survey*, edited by Thomas R. Ford, was published by the University of Kentucky Press in 1962. It is generally agreed that in the late 1960s, Helen Lewis taught the first interdisciplinary college class at Clinch Valley College (now the University of Virginia's College at Wise) in what is now known as Appalachian Studies. (The college also fired her for her activism and organizing on behalf of coal miners.) Several scholarly journals such as the *Appalachian Journal* and the now defunct *Appalachian Notes* began publication. Research and educational centers were established at Appalachian State University and East Tennessee State University and elsewhere, as were specialized libraries and archives at educational institutions both within and outside the region, as was the case with the Appalachian Library Culture Center founded at the Cleveland Ohio Public Library in 1973. Readers for classroom use like Ergood and Kuhre's *Appalachia: Social Context Past and Present* (1976) and Higgs and Manning's *Voices From the Hills* (1975) and even an activist, popular history, *Appalachian People's History Book* (1970) were published.<sup>31</sup> Following the 1976 seminar in honor of Cratis Williams, Fisher, Williamson, and Lewis edited a special issue of *Appalachian Journal*, "A Guide to Appalachian Studies," complete with scholars' and organizational directories, bibliographies, state-of-the-art essays, and historical overviews of Appalachian Studies as a

discipline.<sup>32</sup> During this period a number of oral history projects were launched, from north Georgia's *Foxfire* interviews to those of the multi-institutional *Appalachian Oral History Project* coordinated by Kentucky's Alice Lloyd College (original interviews and transcriptions are housed at the participating institutions that were responsible for the interviews and the project published a book, *The Appalachian Oral History Project Union Catalog*, in 1977 and a microform set of selected transcriptions in 1978). Another important multi-institution initiative was that of the Appalachian Land Ownership Survey, managed by ASU's Center for Appalachian Studies and funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). This survey examined every ARC county to determine who owned the land and natural resources and how much control of these resources remained in local hands.<sup>33</sup>

In the mid-1960s, Munn surveyed the availability of "research materials" on the Appalachian region. He found that most material was housed in state-oriented collections and in the larger Southern collections at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) and Duke University. At the time of his survey, Munn found only two strong Appalachian collections, Berea's Weatherford-Hammond Collection and West Virginia University's West Virginia and Regional History Collection. Munn predicted that other Appalachian collections would soon be developed in the region.<sup>34</sup> Seven years later, Richard Drake identified twenty-five "major" collections and twenty-nine "significant" ones. Fourteen of his major collections were located in the region while eleven of them, including the Library of Congress, were not. Four of the five most important region-wide Appalachian collections in 2008 were

listed by Drake among his “major” repositories: the aforementioned collections at Berea and West Virginia University, as well as Appalachian State University’s W. L. Eury Appalachian Collection and the University of Kentucky’s Special Collections. The fifth major collection, East Tennessee State University’s Archives of Appalachia, was founded in 1978. “Drake attributed this virtual renaissance in Appalachian regional bibliography and librarianship to an increased recognition and acceptance of Appalachian Studies and to a broader interpretation of what constitutes Appalachia.”<sup>35</sup>

In 1984, the Appalachian Consortium’s Regional Collections Committee sent a questionnaire to 947 regional institutions, including colleges and universities, public libraries, and historical societies, among others; 352 institutions responded. The results of the survey were summarized in *Archives in Appalachia: A Directory*, which described repositories in seven states (excluding Alabama and Maryland) that held materials related to the region.<sup>36</sup> The Regional Collections Committee also began publication of *The Curator: The Newsletter of Appalachian Regional Collections*, which was published on an irregular basis from 1986 to 1999. *The Curator* served as a forum for regional collections to share relevant information on the location, organization, and preservation of materials related to the region.

Remarking on the increase in literature on Appalachia after his fourth rediscovery, Munn declared in 1966 that the “sheer tonnage of writing on the Southern Appalachian alone is staggering.”<sup>37</sup> This tonnage was also being documented and codified in bibliography. Specialized bibliographies such as Lorise C. Boger’s *The Southern*

*Mountaineer in Literature: An Annotated Bibliography* (1964), Edward J. Cabbell's *Like A Weaving: References and Resources on Black Appalachians* (1984), and Sidney Saylor Farr's *Appalachian Women: An Annotated Bibliography* (1981) among others were published. (A subject search of the ASU online catalog for "bibliographies" and limited to the W. L. Eury Appalachian Collection identified 873 published bibliographies in April 2008.) New comprehensive, region-wide bibliographies were also produced during these years. The Appalachian Consortium's 1976 *Bibliography of Southern Appalachia*, under the general editorship of Charlotte Ross, has, according to consortium director Borden Mace in his introduction, 13,000 entries. The most recent successor to Munn's bibliography, West Virginia University Library's *Appalachian Bibliography 1980*, focused on the social sciences and education while excluding both fiction and specialized scientific and highly technical publications, included 8,205 citations. A number of special topic or special format bibliographies have been published in *Appalachian Journal* and the Appalachian Studies Association's *Journal of Appalachian Studies* publishes an annual "Appalachian Studies Bibliography." If we try to imagine all that has been produced since 1980, Munn's "sheer tonnage" becomes somewhat inadequate as even a gross measure of the literature on Appalachia.<sup>38</sup>

Whisnant's just emerging "fourth wave of scholarly writing on the region" was opened by the publication of three "excellent new books": Roger Cunningham's *Apples on the Flood* (1987), Altina Waller's *Feud* (1988), and Stephen Foster's *The Past is Another Country* (1988). "While drawing upon (and pursuing some of the questions central to)

‘third-wave’ scholarship, each raises the conceptual level of the discussion by several notches—by taking a historical perspective broader than that taken by any previous scholar (as in Cunningham’s book), by meticulous attention to documentary materials either unavailable to or overlooked by earlier scholars (as in Waller’s), and by questioning more closely than ever some premises, assumptions, and paradigms central to earlier analyses (as in [Foster’s] book).”<sup>39</sup>

Whisnant’s fourth wave seems to be peaking with important new works published in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Included among these, but not limited to them, is the first thoroughly researched, scholarly, region-wide history of Appalachia, John Alexander Williams’ *Appalachia: A History* (2002). Other volumes center on the emergence of regional environmental history, including Donald Davis’s *Where There Are Mountains: An Environmental History of the Southern Appalachians* (2000) and Timothy Silver’s *Mount Mitchell and the Black Mountains: An Environmental History of the Highest Peaks in Eastern America* (2003), in which he innovatively interweaves personal experience with research in archives and libraries to produce a new kind of environmental history. Still other studies focus on issues of race and gender, such as sociologist Wilma Dunaway’s several books reexamining Appalachian history in the context of race and gender. Publications directed at popular audiences include *The United States of Appalachia: How Southern Mountaineers Brought Independence, Culture, and Enlightenment to America* (2006), in which Jeff Biggers reestablishes Appalachia in the heart of our nation’s story rather than on the margins.<sup>40</sup> Many recent cultural studies focus on music

and have taken new directions. *Black Music Research Journal*'s special three issues published in 2003 and 2004 are devoted to *African-American Music of Appalachia*—a study that demonstrates not only black music's influence on white Appalachian music but also the important contributions made to every significant genre of North American black music, nationally and internationally, by "Affrilachians" (a term coined by African American and Appalachian poet Frank X. Walker and first applied to black Appalachian writers of fiction and poetry).<sup>41</sup> *African-American Music of Appalachia* also serves as a basic reference work, including Mark Freed's extensive bibliography and Australian researcher Bob Eagle's directory of black musicians, both living and dead, who were from Appalachia or spent time there. Eagle's directory, which also includes churches, recording studios, etc., is accompanied by the Mance Index, a remarkable tool for predicting the degree to which African cultural retentions survive, on a county by county basis, throughout the region.<sup>42</sup> New readers for classroom use have also been developed, including Richard Straw and Tyler Blethen's *High Mountains Rising: Appalachia in Time and Place* (2004) and the fourth edition of *Appalachia: Social Context Past and Present* (2002), now edited by Philip Obermiller and Michael Maloney.<sup>43</sup>

The scholarly association for the discipline, the Appalachian Studies Association (ASA), launched its bi-annual journal, the *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, in 1995. This title is often confused with ASA's earlier series drawn from selected presentations and delivered at its annual conference. These were published first by the Appalachian Consortium Press and later by East Tennessee State University's (ETSU's) Center for Appalachian Studies and

Services as the *Journal of the Appalachian Studies Association* from 1989 to 1995. The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) was created by the federal government in 1965. It created yet another map of the region—a political, not cultural or geographic one—which included additional counties in every state (as of April 2008, 410 counties). These additions were the southern tier of counties in New York, most of Pennsylvania, southeastern Ohio, and northeast Mississippi, but excluding the Shenandoah Valley counties and some Blue Ridge Mountain counties in Virginia. Scholars in Appalachian Studies, for the most part, ignored these obviously contrived boundaries and stuck with older definitions of Appalachia, usually Campbell's or the USDA's. Yet scholarship is subject to the whims of capital, and by the twenty-first century, new works about the region, often produced with ARC funding, used the ARC map. These include the first region-wide reference works: *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* (2006), edited by Rudy Abramson and Jean Haskell, and *A Handbook to Appalachia: An Introduction to the Region* (2006), edited by Grace Toney Edwards, JoAnn Aust Asbury, and Ricky L. Cox. The ASA, now headquartered at Huntington, West Virginia's Marshall University, broadened their constituency by—following the ARC map—incorporating these areas north of the Mason-Dixon Line into their definition of the region, subdivided as with ARC into Southern, Central, and Northern Appalachian subregions.<sup>44</sup>

Institutions are developing new curricular programs and library and archival collections. Virginia's Radford University has employed Gene Hyde to establish and build an Appalachian collection to support its well-established Appalachian Studies program. Lees-McRae College, under

the direction Stephanie Roark Keener, established the John B. Stephenson Center for Appalachian and Comparative Highland Studies to complement its already existing Stirling (Appalachian) Collection. (Note that both Hyde and Keener have the MA in Appalachian Studies from ASU, still the only graduate degree program devoted to Appalachian Studies.) New degree programs and Appalachian collections are currently being developed at North Georgia College and State University, Ohio University, and elsewhere. In 2003, Hyde completed his masters thesis in library studies for the University of Tennessee, *Appalachian Special Collections and Appalachian Studies: The Relationship Between Collection Development and Curricula in Interdisciplinary Regional Studies Programs*, in which he concluded that “curricula and collection development are related at each of the schools in this study, but the extent and depth of this relationship varies considerably.”<sup>45</sup> [See Hyde’s article in this issue for an updated look at his thesis findings.]

It is appropriate that the most extensive comprehensive Appalachian collection (collecting in all formats, age levels, and degrees of sophistication) is Boone’s W. L. Eury Appalachian Collection and that the largest Appalachian manuscript and photograph repository is Johnson City, Tennessee’s Archives of Appalachia. These two towns, once connected by the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad (Tweetsie Railroad), are both located in the former State of Franklin—the only independent republic to have been established in the region and the source of the famous Over-the-Mountain Men who defeated the British at the Battle of Kings Mountain. In other words, these two collections are located in the sub-region that is geographically, historically, and culturally, the very

heart of Appalachia.

Due to its history as a cultural and physiographical region but not a political one (despite ARC's political basis), Appalachia is decentralized and characterized, like its topography, ecology, flora and fauna, by great diversity. So is the region's documentation scattered across the region, nation, and the world. For instance, a researcher interested in earlier work on Appalachian North Carolina might need to visit Western Carolina University to examine the Horace Kephart Papers, Mars Hill College for those of song collector and folk festival promoter Bascom Lamar Lunsford, Appalachian State University to dig through the Cratis Dearl Williams Papers, off the mountain to UNC-CH to look through the John C. Campbell Papers, out of state to East Tennessee State University to listen to Thomas Burton's field recordings, out of the South to Harvard University's Houghton Library to read through Thomas Wolfe's Papers, or even out of the country to North London's Cecil Sharp House to examine his unpublished papers (some of which have been reproduced by University Microfilms International in the 1995 microfilm collection, *The Cecil Sharp Autograph Notebook Collection: Folk Words, Folk Tunes, Folk Dance Notes and Index*).

Even the use of manuscripts originally from a single source can force the researcher to travel to different repositories. One such collection is the Speculation Land Company Records. Revolutionary War veteran Tench Coxe acquired bounty rights to more than five hundred thousand acres in what are now Anson, Buncombe, Burke, Cabarrus, Cleveland, Henderson, Lincoln, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Polk, Rutherford, and Union counties in North Carolina. The Coxe family transferred ownership of the boundary to the

families of Bronson, Hoyt, and others. The new absentee owners arranged for the Reverend Thomas Butler Justice of Henderson County to serve as their local agent. Mr. Justice and his male descendants continued to represent the company until George Justice oversaw its final dissolution in 1930. Documents include land deeds, surveys, land plats, record books, business checks, court records, and business and personal correspondence. In addition, several of the Justice agents were Baptist clergy, and their papers include much of interest to the religious history of the area. In 2001-02, the Justice family donated this collection to ASU's W. L. Eury Appalachian Collection. The Speculation Land Company Records contain more than ten thousand items dating from 1775 to 1930 and occupies thirty linear feet. This unexploited collection (the appraiser estimated that it contains sufficient new material for six Ph.D. dissertations and seventy-five masters theses) was described by John Inscoc, the distinguished historian of western North Carolina and Appalachia, as "essential for all future work by historians of the North Carolina mountains."<sup>46</sup> Yet, smaller collections of Speculation Land Company records are also housed at Duke, UNC-CH, and the University of North Carolina Asheville, and researchers using this collection would most likely need to consult them as well.

As so often happens, changes in patterns of scholarship follow on the heels of changes in patterns of popular culture. For instance, innovations in the region's popular music are already well known; from Loretta Lynn's recording with the White Stripes to the recreation of the moribund black string band tradition by the Carolina Chocolate Drops to new kinds of bluegrass fusion such as the Avett Brothers, this change in the canon is evident.

Appalachian scholarship is on the verge of a new wave, phase, or era as well. And this new wave will only fully emerge as the bibliography and documentation of the region mature. Writing in 1982, Keresztesi claimed that we can “predict approximately how far the discipline has advanced in its evolutionary process” by examining its associated system of bibliography and documentation.<sup>47</sup> An important change in documentation and bibliography is the development of digital libraries, but it is too soon to predict in just what ways this will affect research and documentation or to characterize the emerging new wave of Appalachian scholarship. Nascent digital documentation projects from the Appalachian College Association’s Digital Library of Appalachia (<http://www.aca-dla.org/>) to ASU’s recently unveiled “Documenting Appalachia” [see Paul Robertson’s article in this issue] are already accessible worldwide, and only time will tell what impact they will have on the literature and documentation of region the next time Appalachia is discovered.

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## REVIEWS

**“Documenting Appalachia,” <http://contentdm.library.appstate.edu/index.html>. Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina. Reviewed June 9, 2008.**

“Documenting Appalachia” is a digital project produced by Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. The purpose of the project is “to provide off-site access to valuable research materials related to the Appalachian region and Appalachian State University.” This project documents the history of the Appalachian region through four collections: the W. Amos Abrams Folksong Collection, the I.G. Greer Folksong Collection, the Appalachian State University Historical Photographs, and the Appalachian Ethnicity Resources. It was developed in collaboration with Appalachian State University’s Center for Appalachian Studies, Appalachian Cultural Museum and the *Appalachian Journal*.

The Web site is well designed, uncluttered, and easy to navigate with links clearly indicated for serious scholars as well as casual users. Advanced search functions are available for researchers. The text is very easy to read and the use of color is restrained. There are six navigation buttons: “Home,” “About,” “Collections,” “Geographic,” “Classroom,” and “New Addition.” They are located at the top, which makes navigation from one section of the Web site to another very easy. The “Home” page welcomes the viewer, introduces the digital library and lists the contributors who assisted with the creation of the project. The current four collections highlighted in the project are

listed in the sidebar. The scope, content, and purpose of the project are located on the “About” page. This page also contains copyright information as well as a list of collaborators with links to each of their home pages. The “Collections” page provides links to the four collections digitized for the project and a “Search all collections” box with an advanced search option is available.

I searched several location names to see how easy it would be to get results, and it was very easy to use. The Web site uses the CONTENTdm content management system to display images and metadata for each item in the digital library. The user can zoom in and out on each image, and the accompanying metadata for each image is more than adequate.

The four featured collections in “Documenting Appalachia” are: the W. Amos Abrams Folksong Collection, the I.G. Greer Folksong Collection, the Appalachian State University Historical Photographs, and the Appalachian Ethnicity Resources. The “W. Amos Abrams Collection” contains more than seven hundred digitized folksongs, including traditional children’s ballads, nineteenth-century popular music, and works from local composers. These items were collected by William Amos “Doc” Abrams (1905-1991), who was chair of the English Department at Appalachian State Teachers College from 1932 to 1946 and editor of the North Carolina Education Association publications from 1946 to 1970. The I.G. Greer Folksong Collection contains more than one thousand manuscripts and typescript documents of nineteenth-century popular music, local musical compositions, and traditional children’s ballads. This material was collected by Isaac Garfield (I.G. or “Ike”) Greer (1881-1967). From 1910 to 1932, Greer was

a history and government professor at Appalachian State Teachers College. He collected folk songs with texts mainly from Ashe, Wilkes, and Watauga counties. The Appalachian State University Historical Photographs Collection is comprised of more than 2,700 images covering the entire history of Appalachian State University since its founding in 1899. Subjects include administrators, academic departments, alumni, buildings, events, local history, and student activities. The photographs are represented by thumbnails, which can be enlarged for easier viewing. Each image is accompanied by title, date of the photograph, subject, and a detailed description. Appalachian Ethnicity Resources contains more than seventy-five images of booklets, brochures, bulletins, handbills, letters, postcards, and student papers relating to people of various ethnicities in the Appalachian region. The items are again represented by thumbnail images, which are easily enlarged for viewing and identified by title, date, subject, and description.

One minor problem with this Web site is the lack of explanation for pages under construction, such as the “Geographic,” “Classroom,” and “New Addition” Web pages. Another is the lack of links from the featured collections to their finding aids. Researchers would find such links very useful if they wanted to conduct more in-depth research.

“Documenting Appalachia” is an outstanding digital project and should appeal to both the serious researcher and casual Web surfer. The Web site is well designed, well written, easy to navigate, and contains fascinating material relating to the Appalachian region. I look forward to future additions to this Web site.

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**“Mountain Grown Music,” <http://mountaingrownmusic.org/music.html>, Haywood County Library, North Carolina. Reviewed June 13, 2008.**

Digitization of cultural heritage materials has advanced rapidly in the past ten years. It is now possible to digitize just about any format, assuming one has access to the appropriate equipment. Libraries and archives all over the world are digitizing parts of unique collections as an efficient and effective way of making them available to the public. Digitization provides the means of sharing images, audio, and video of cultural interests such as music and music lore that have long been passed through oral tradition. The history of Appalachia’s traditional or “old-time” music, which is the focus of many documentaries, books, and Web sites, is a good example. Some experts believe that old-time music is in its second revival, and there is abundant information on the Web provided by academics, cultural institutions, and the musicians (both professional and front-porch pickers). With the Internet it is now possible not only to learn about and listen to the music but also to teach oneself to play through online video lessons and tablature.

“Mountain Grown Music” is a Web site dedicated to the music traditions of Haywood County, North Carolina. It was developed with the aid of an LSTA grant from the State Library of North Carolina and under the project management of the Haywood County Library director, Jennifer Pratt. The digitization project was the outcome of an earlier initiative of Haywood County cultural organizations to collect music recordings, taped interviews, photographs,

and other materials regarding Haywood County's traditional musicians and artists.

The Web site discusses the history of Haywood County from its founding and features local musicians from the 1930s to the present. In addition to the home page, the site is designed with six pages: "The Mountains," "The Music," "The Musicians," "The Instruments," "Calendar," and "About Us." "The Mountains" link provides a brief history and description of Haywood County with a map and links to other sites about the county. "The Music" page contains articles on the music traditions as well as links to other music Web sites. There is also a link to an annotated musician and song list where the viewer can hear the music. "The Musicians" link includes a list of the local musicians featured with each name linked to individual biographies. "The Instruments" page hosts a list of instruments traditionally used in Appalachian music. Some of the entries are linked to more detailed histories of the instruments, a few of which are accompanied by photos. "Calendar" includes local music events and links to event Web sites and "About Us" discusses the history of the project. Professional designer Julie Parker of Handwoven Webs, based in western North Carolina, created the site with content provided by the Haywood County Library.

Project director Julie Pratt states on the "About Us" page that "the committee envisioned a site that would describe the area, telling the history of aural and oral traditions, and underlining the impact of this heritage upon the community." The purpose of this Web site is to inform, and it is clearly a community effort to document and make available part of its cultural heritage to the public. The Web site does not treat the subject of mountain music in depth nor

does it provide a detailed and lengthy commentary on each of the musicians. What it does is introduce to the general public Haywood County's musical heritage. The project focuses on a narrow geographic area but links Haywood County to the Appalachian region. Perhaps there could be more links to surrounding counties, like Madison, that also have great music traditions. A good example of this approach is the "Carolina Music Ways" Web site (<http://www.carolinamusicways.org/>), which features Surry and five neighboring counties. There is an abundance of well-written contextual information on the history of the area, the music, and the musicians. Entertaining interview excerpts are incorporated into the biographies, though there are no transcripts of complete interviews available. The annotated list of songs is a nice addition; however the audio links were broken so I was unable to hear the music.

The style of presentation is consistent across all of the pages. Clear, crisp images of the musicians and the mountains provide a visually pleasing accompaniment to the nostalgic wheat background, with brown and Carolina blue text, though there may not be enough contrast between the blue text and the background color for people who have monochrome displays or color deficits. The images could also use captions. Some of the pages, such as "The Music," could use more images to break up the text. The pages are easily navigable, but a keyword search mechanism would enhance the site's usability. The navigation bar is placed at the top of the page and clearly identified links are dispersed throughout the primary content of the page. Most of the links to external Web sites worked, but some, such as the Mountain Heritage Center, were not accessible.

Overall, "Mountain Grown Music" is an attractive,

easily navigable, and informative digital display. Disappointment with the broken links and the inability to hear the music selections was somewhat offset by the contextual information provided. The site does not include information on the date created or the last date it was updated. Considering the broken links, I assume that the Web pages have not been updated in some time. Including complete transcripts of the musician oral history interviews and additional links to southwestern North Carolina music Web sites would also be an enhancement. There is room for improvement, then, but the site is valuable for its outreach and dissemination of history that would have otherwise been buried within an archive and accessed only by those who could physically go to the collection.

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**Waverly Lowell and Tawny Ryan Nelb. *Architectural Records: Managing Design and Construction Records*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006. 197 p. Plates, illustrations, bibliography, appendixes, and index. \$62.00 (nonmember); \$45.00 (member).**

Looking at architectural drawings, we can imagine the buildings they represent and think about the layout of the rooms and whether that plan would be good to live or work in. We can wonder who commissioned the design and what their purposes were. We can imagine who would find the design useful or attractive. Would this house make a good retirement home or would it work for a family with children? Is this building likely to house offices for lawyers or energy companies or does it matter? How does it differ from a factory or a storage building? Besides the pleasure we get from daydreaming about buildings, we know that blueprints

and other architectural records are important documents that can help researchers understand many aspects of our cultural, social, and economic history. They can also be used for practical purposes, such as the renovation or remodeling of existing buildings.

For archivists, however, architectural records are frustrating and difficult documents to deal with. First of all, their size makes them awkward to handle. They are hard to store and hard to transport. They also present difficult preservation problems. In addition to the preservation issues of temperature and humidity control, protection from mold, and other issues that apply to paper records, architectural drawings have additional issues arising from their size and the media on which they were created. Those of us who work at repositories that collect architectural records, or intend to develop architectural holdings, need to learn effective ways to preserve architectural records and provide access to them.

Waverly Lowell and Tawny Ryan Nelb's *Architectural Records: Managing Design and Construction Records*, published by the Society of American Archivists in 2006, will certainly help in that undertaking. An excellent starting point for those who wish to know more about collecting, preserving, and providing access to architectural records, the book contains chapters written by two archivists with extensive experience in collecting and managing architectural records. Waverly B. Lowell is the curator of the Environmental Design Archives at the University of California, Berkeley. Prior to her current position, Lowell was director of the National Archives, Pacific Sierra Region, and director of the California Cooperative Preservation for Architectural Records. She has also served as curator of manuscripts at the California Historical Society, curator of

historic documents at the National Maritime Museum, and as an archival consultant for a variety of architecture, educational, corporate, and public agency clients. Tawny Ryan Nelb is an archivist, records preservation consultant, and historian based in Midland, Michigan. Nelb has been co-instructor for the Managing Architectural Records workshop developed for the Society of American Archivists. She has also served as an instructor at the Campbell Center summer workshops to teach archivists and conservators about architectural records preservation.

The manual contains a brief history of western architectural practice; an overview of the creation of design records; descriptions of types of records; and chapters on appraisal, arrangement and description, preservation administration, identification and preservation maintenance of common visual media and supports, and research and use. There are also a gallery of color images; appendixes on doing neighborhood history, disaster response procedures for water emergencies, and standard series and subseries with examples; a bibliography; and an index.

One of the most useful features of the book is a chapter by Lowell in which she describes the design process and the kinds of records likely to be created at each stage of the process. In the following chapter, Nelb describes the types of project records in more detail. In Lowell's chapter on the design process, she describes the creation and uses of sketches, schematic designs, textual job files, presentation drawings, physical models, site plans and surveys, working drawings, photographs, brochures, and other records. She points out, for example, that "many sets of the final construction documents may be created so that copies can be provided to the numerous contractors and subcontractors"

and that “some of these extra sets may end up in the project files.” In addition, “the designer may make a reproduction of the original working drawings to take to the project site; these are often referred to as the *field set*” (p. 28). Changes made on-site are recorded on the field set and the annotated field sets serve as the final records of the project as completed (p. 29). Understanding how these documents are used in the design process will help the archivist make better decisions about which documents to keep and how to arrange and describe them.

In the next chapter, Nelb describes types of project records found in design and construction collections. In addition to describing their uses, Nelb describes the media most often used and how that has changed over time. For example, she says that “from the mid-nineteenth century through the late twentieth, design development drawings were generally created with pencil or ink on cheap paper or on thin, acidic tracing paper torn from a roll. At the end of the twentieth century, they may have been done by hand or digitally created using computer-aided design and then plotted with ink from a pen plotter or using an electrostatic printer. In the early twenty-first century, they are more commonly plotted using laser or ink-jet printers on paper or polyester” (p. 39).

Chapters by Lowell on appraisal and arrangement and description describe how these basic archival functions apply specifically to design records. The appraisal chapter contains generic recommendations for appraisal and an appraisal grid, which may be particularly useful. They will need to be used, however, in light of the more detailed explanation contained in the chapter.

Two chapters written by Nelb address preservation

issues for architectural records. The first addresses more general issues of preservation administration such as temperature and humidity, pollutants, mold, light, and disaster planning; general preservation issues and treatments such as flattening rolled or folded drawings, cleaning, adhesive removal and tear repairs, and encapsulation and backing, storage; working with a conservator; and reformatting for preservation. The following chapter discusses identification and preservation maintenance of common visual media and supports. Ranging from tracing paper with ink or graphite to paper mounted on muslin, cardboard, masonite or foam-core to vellum to drafting film to computer-aided design, each medium presents different preservation issues. Reproduction methods, including pricked drawings, blueprints, pellet prints, brownprints, diazos, sepias, photostats, digital files, and others, raise additional preservation concerns.

A final chapter on reference and use, also by Nelb, points out the particular issues of facilitating the use of materials, which are often large and fragile and which contain copyrighted material that may also be private. The design and layout of the space where large drawings will be used is particularly important. In addition, issues of privacy, fair use, copyright, and reproduction must all be considered. As in the other chapters, here Nelb shows how basic archival principles apply to these particular kinds of records.

Making decisions about acquiring and caring for architectural collections is an important responsibility for every archivist whose collections include architectural records or who is considering collecting architectural records. Whether the archivist is considering a space in which architectural records will be used, deciding which

records to retain, or addressing issues of storage, preservation, arrangement, or description, *Architectural Records: Managing Design and Construction Records* will be a useful addition to the reference shelf.

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**Nancy MacKay. *Curating Oral Histories: From Interview to Archive*. Walnut Creek, Calif.: Left Coast Press, 2007. 154 p. Notes, appendixes, glossary, and index. \$59.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).**

Anyone who has ever stumbled across a box of cassette tapes with little or no labeling in their collection and has a vague memory of someone mentioning oral history interviews or finds themselves looking at the seemingly disparate elements of a well- documented oral history project will appreciate Nancy MacKay's *Curating Oral Histories: From Interview to Archive*. MacKay's book tackles the issues associated with curating and archiving oral histories, a perspective that has not been explored quite in this way before. Most of the literature related to oral history provides information from the point of view of the oral historian planning and conducting interviews, but falls short of directly confronting the challenges of managing and caring for oral history collections. As MacKay herself points out in the preface, "All my investigations point to the information gap between the creators of oral histories and those who care for them. The need for standards, best practices, and a spirit of collaboration is essential as we move into the twenty-first century, to ensure that the work of oral historians is preserved as part of our cultural heritage. *Curating Oral Histories* is a step toward this goal" (p. i). And a good first

step it is.

The book is organized into clear and helpful sections that walk the reader through the various complexities of managing oral history collections and provide basic considerations to help prepare a curator to deal with the issues. The book also includes an introduction with a self-study to assess individual situations and five appendixes that include sample forms, a glossary, and a listing of resources and various professional organizations and associations to explore for further information. In her introduction, MacKay maps out her purposes and provides a framework for how readers should use and understand her work. She is careful to delineate the way she uses certain terms such as curator, archivist, and project manager as well as interview and oral history. These are typically printed in boldface and are included in the glossary at the end. The self-study that follows the introduction is a good starting point for those just beginning to deal with oral history collections and can serve as an effective reassessment for those with a longer record of managing such collections. MacKay also provides a framework for interpreting your answers to the self-study. This may be rudimentary for some, but it provides talking points and reminders of the necessary considerations. The chapters, "Setting the Stage," "Archives Administration," "Legal and Ethical Issues," "Recording Technology," "Transcribing," "Cataloging," "Preservation," "Oral Histories on the Internet," and "Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," are each clearly laid out and address the key issues of each area while providing basic information on how to work through them. While I found myself wishing for more detailed and thorough discussions of each area, especially legal issues, recording technology, and preservation,

MacKay does provide a good set of first considerations and further questions in each area.

Each appendix provides resources and examples for additional research. “Appendix A: Profiles of Oral History Programs” details seven programs around the United States and gives a breakdown of the key components for each one, including available funding and staffing resources, collection descriptions, whether or not interviews are transcribed, what the preservation plan is, and the specific challenges each faces. “Appendix B: Forms” may prove to be the most useful section of the book to curators, especially those struggling with developing new collections. The sample consent forms, accession forms, collection development policies, Internet usage permissions, transcribing and processing procedures, preservation planning checklists, and cataloging protocols are useful both as points of comparison for already established programs and potential templates for those developing their own forms, processes, and policies. “Appendix D: Resources” provides an extensive bibliography of both print and online resources related to oral history, primarily from an oral historian’s perspective: archival administration, legal and ethical issues, professional ethical standards, recording technology, transcribing, cataloging, preservation, oral histories on the Internet, published surveys, and online project guides. “Appendix E: Organizations and Professional Associations” provides information on a broad range of professional groups, from the Alaska Native Knowledge Network to ARMA International to the Center for History and New Media and the United States Copyright Office. In creating such a bibliography and compiling a comprehensive list of professional groups, MacKay provides the tools to delve

deeper into the topics she outlines in her own book.

*Curating Oral Histories: From Interview to Archive* is a good book for the reference shelf of any agency or institution charged with caring for oral history collections or considering developing such a collection. Although it does not provide definitive and detailed answers to many of the questions we all have when faced with such collections, *Curating Oral Histories* does provide a clear discussion of and a full framework for finding answers to the complexities related to caring for oral histories. MacKay's clear and simple style and her breakdown of the issues make a complex subject easy to understand and illuminate some of the more tangled issues. MacKay's book is a solid first step in developing the literature of oral history curation and will easily become a staple in any archival reference collection.

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The *Journal for the Society of North Carolina Archivists* seeks to support the theoretical, practical, and scholarly aspects of the archival professions by publishing articles and reviews related to curatorial issues (e.g., collection management and development), technical services (e.g., cataloging, processing, digital collections, EAD, preservation, conservation, etc.), and public services (reference, instruction, outreach) for special collections and archives.

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