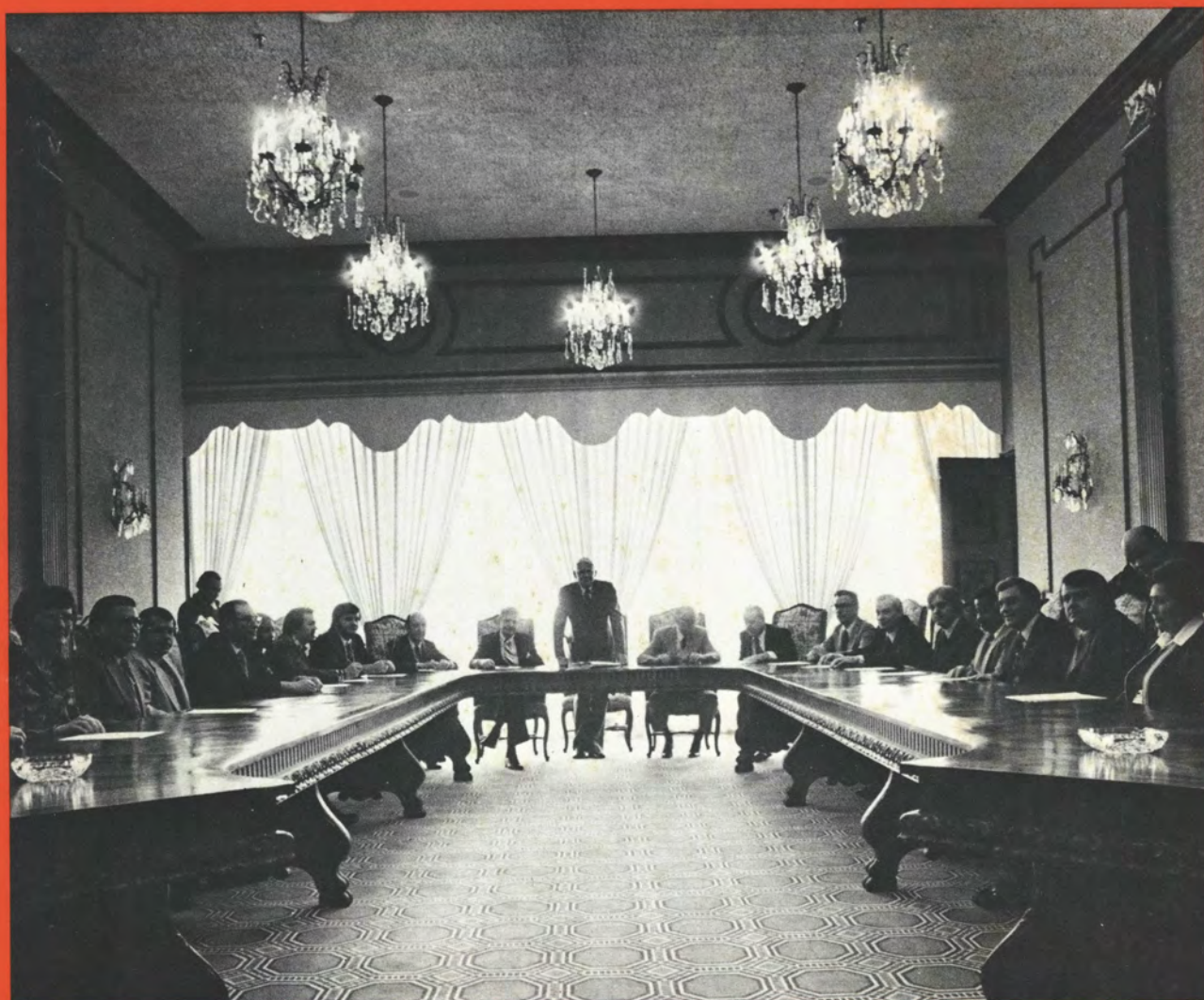


Southern Exposure

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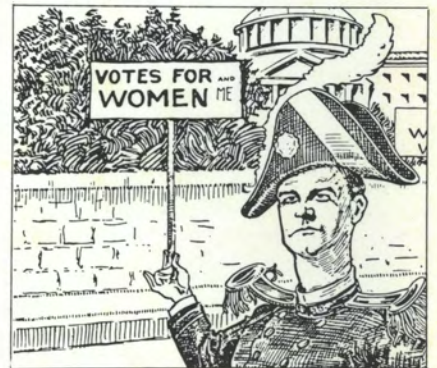
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from our readers. . . .



Illustration by Leslie Udry

Reading your articles is giving me a better understanding of the differences between our ideas. I think our main point of disagreement is the relative importance we assign to the problem of outside ownership in the Dixian economy. You seem to downplay this issue in your writing. It is as if you think the inequality between owner and worker is so great as to make the location of ownership irrelevant. I, on the other hand, see outside ownership as one of the chief causes of poor economic performance and an important contributor to inequality in Dixie.

It is from this single difference that all our other disagreements spring. For example, my nationalism is based primarily on the conviction that our existing governments cannot (or will not) do anything about the ownership problem. To me, the seriousness of the problem justifies a general reorganization of governmental power. You, of course, would have a hard time agreeing with that because you are more interested in the type of reforms that would still be required under any form of government.

Lest I begin to sound too critical, let me point out one area in which we seem to agree. Your writing displays a commitment to rigorous social and economic analysis that I find very refreshing. A number of popular writers have succumbed to the lure of nostalgia and tried to define Dixie's

current problems in terms of the passing of old norms, customs and institutions. Nostalgia is a fine cathartic if taken in small doses but as a substitute for rational social analysis it leaves us mired in our past with no workable approach to either present or future. What these neo-Agrarians overlook is that change is inevitable in any society. Rather than bemoan our loss of rural innocence, we should be attacking the problems of industrialization and looking for solutions. You seem to have realized this and I consider it one of your strengths.

William B. Simmons
Lachine, Quebec

Firstly, I'm trying to find Southerners active in such things as organic agriculture, solar and wind energy, and all the rest of the sprawling field loosely called "appropriate technology." I'm trying to set up a number of projects bearing on putting ecologically sound tools in people's hands, and making contact with others doing similar work (I'm sure they're there, whether or not they're organized), if practical, would be a great help. "Networking" is a popular pastime in this movement — it may well be, if regional linkings are forming here, that you'd have gotten wind of it.

Secondly, your fall piece on Carolina Action (Vol. VI, 3) has intrigued me mightily, and probably others as well. *Southern Exposure* is intrinsically more inclined toward academia than advocacy, which is just fine, and always superior to a hypocritical mask of impartiality... howsomever. When something you seem to favor has such potential for widespread usefulness, could you go so far as to print an address or two for personal follow-up?

Lastly, the item which provoked this letter's being written at all: while I'm all in favor of reproducing dialectical and idiolectical nuances of expression as faithfully as possible, I do have some qualms about letting reviewers perpetrate words like "evolution." 'Tain't fittin'.

There — all my nits are picked and I'm feeling much better now.

Pierce Butler
Natchez, Mississippi

Larry Shirley, Southeastern Regional Director of the Center for Renewable Resources, can supply numerous "appropriate technology" contacts. You can reach him at: 1028 Connecticut Ave. NW, Room 1100, Washington, DC 20036. (202) 466-6880.

Carolina Action's address is PO Box 1985, Durham, NC 27702.

And we plead guilty on "evolution" — whatever that's worth.

Your special issue, "Still Life: Inside Southern Prisons" (Vol. VI, 4) was superb. It stimulates one's thinking, encourages a closer look at our prison systems, and at the same time leads professional penologists to despair. But the synopsis is the same, i.e., prisonization in some form is essential in a society like ours, and our practices of managing them are just as irrational as those who must inhabit them.

One must work or live in a prison environment to have any understanding of its nature. I have had the fortune, or misfortune, of having worked with several prison systems outside of the South. And by these standards, I think Southern prisons measure up well.

As an employee who works with 10 prison units in eastern North Carolina I have asked our administrative officer to order 15 copies of your "Still Life" issue for distribution to our superintendents and their staff.

Clyde Pulley
Restitution Counselor
Goldsboro, North Carolina

My respect for both blacks and white liberals decreases greatly whenever I read ludicrous articles or reviews lauding the "blackness" of obviously white persons such as Charles W. Chesnutt and Jean Toomer ("A Return Visit: Charles Waddell Chesnutt" by Bob Brinkmeyer and "Jazz Literature" by Jason Berry, Vol. VI, 3).

Unlike Brinkmeyer, I don't find it surprising that Chesnutt's Uncle Julius character reinforces negative black stereotypes. In Chesnutt's works, the only truly admirable characters are mixed white or light mulatto; they are the people who are intelligent, educated, attractive, etc. Blacks are presented as a backward burden that must be overcome. From a man like Chesnutt, however, that is to be expected.

Chesnutt makes his strong condemnation of Southern racism in *The Marrow of Tradition* and *The House Behind the Cedars* in contrast to *The Conjure Woman* because the former two works deal with his own people instead of blacks. In doing this, he is no exception. From *Clotelle* to *Cane*, the "black" author who is really mulatto or whiter shows a decided

preference for his own people (the suppressed nationalistic longings of another oppressed minority?). They deal with the unpopular topic of miscegenation because it represents the origin of their people. To a black or "pure" white, miscegenation is merely a multi-colored roll in the hay.

Chesnutt's name should be removed from any list of authors designated as black. What he and others like him are saying is that if they must bear the hated names, "Negro" or "black," then the white public should associate the terms with mulatto and white characteristics rather than black ones. In the case of Toomer, who openly rejected the Negro label, the consistent violation of his racial integrity by blacks and liberals is reprehensible.

Dorian A. Hall
Ann Arbor, Michigan

I find very little humor and even less honor reported in your otherwise excellent publication *Southern Exposure*.

I left the West Virginia hills a half century ago and more, but in my former travels in the mountains and river valleys of the Southeast, I observed and heard many a funny anecdote and I met more than one genuinely honorable man. That word in recent years has kind of gone out of fashion when we consider the record of our representation in Congress and the executive department of the government. Nevertheless, I know there must be another Judge Waring, Dr. Will Alexander and Justice Hugo Black somewhere in the square miles of your area.

Pare Lorentz
Armonk, New York

Let me begin by saying that I have enjoyed every issue of your publication that I have seen. However I must go on to say that I was disturbed by some of your remarks in your recent issue about prison life in the South.

While I agree with the general theme of the issue, that crime is the outcome of an oppressive economic and political system, not an individual problem, I do feel that your attitude toward crime victims was at times very cavalier. For instance in your introduction you mention a holdup in

Atlanta that caused an elderly woman to enter a hospital for one week for what you imply was not a small heart attack. This insinuation seems unnecessary. The fact remains that whether or not the accused criminal was treated unfairly or should or should not have been sent to prison, someone was forced to give up a week of their life to an inadequate and expensive health care system, and to suffer whatever emotional costs may have come from being at the crime.

A problem also comes when you refer to "less damaging lawbreakers... drunken brawlers, check forgers, pill stealers, car thieves..." Whether or not these people should be paraded through courthouses and given exaggerated punishments is one issue. The other is that a person whose car is stolen and damaged and who loses his or her job because of an inability to get to work is a crime victim who suffers from the same social and economic system of injustice as the perpetrator of the crime and should be accorded the same consideration.

It seems to me that as sensitive as we must be toward those who suffer from the injustice system as criminals, we must also be aware of the victims. Political conservatives have made much of the fact that the left cares more for prison reform than for the victims and as a result have been able to gain strength as the champions of law and order. If the left is to stop this trend and to win back the respect it commanded in the 1960s it must put forward a program that is understanding of both the criminal and the victim, a program that demands an economic upheaval that will put an end to both. Similarly, while everyone agrees that white collar criminals too often go unpunished, the fear of the person who commits a violent crime is much greater than the fear of one who quietly robs from the poor to give to the rich. The immediacy of the gun provokes a greater cry for protection than the exposed computer code of the embezzler, a fact that cannot be erased and must be dealt with.

Let me close by saying that I felt that for the most part the issue on prison life was sensitive and informative.

Janet Lynn Golden
Cambridge, Massachusetts

THE LEGACY OF SHARECROPPING



Over the past half century, no person has done more to analyze the conditions of the Southern tenant farmer, and advocate their reform, than sociologist Arthur F. Raper. Born in rural North Carolina at the turn of the century, Raper studied under Howard Odum at the University of North Carolina and went on to work for the Commission on Interracial Cooperation in the 1920s. He and his family lived for extended periods among white and black farmworkers in Greene County, Georgia, and his powerful studies of the tenancy system – *Preface to Peasantry*, *Tenants of the Almighty*, and *Sharecroppers All* – reflect his direct experience and deep commitment.

In early 1978, Raper sent the following letter to George M. McDaniel, a consultant with the Smithsonian Institution. McDaniel's assignment was to recommend appropriate furnishings for a "sharecropper house" placed there a decade before. When Raper examined the house, which came from a tobacco farm in eastern Maryland, he noted it was quite superior in structure and maintainence to the typical sharecropper house in the lower South, where sharecropping had long been most prevalent. His letter outlines a number of reasons why the legacy of sharecropping and tenant farming remains a powerful force in modern America. It seemed to us an appropriate introduction to the following two articles and photo-portraits on the past and present life of one sharecropping family, Emma and the Gudgers.

Now in his late seventies, Raper lives in active retirement on a farm in Oakton, Virginia. A 30-minute interview in which Raper reflects on many aspects of farming and the changing South is now available on ¾-inch color videotape. It is based on an interview conducted last summer at the Oakton farm by historians Sue Thrasher and Larry Goodwyn, and supported by the National Sharecroppers Fund, where Raper has been an active board member for years. The program is ideal for groups or classes studying Southern history and/or rural development issues and is available in a videocassette from North State Public Video, P.O. Box 7, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514

A Letter from Arthur Raper

Dear Mr. McDaniel:

I trust the Institution will be interested in exploring the desirability of setting up a typical lower South sharecropper house of the 1925-35 period. This should be done for a number of reasons: to recognize the presence in our society of the vast number of people who once lived in such houses; and to understand better the people who once lived in them and now account for a great proportion of the lower income people in the heart of the larger metropolitan areas of America. There is a dynamic relationship between the bleakness of these erst-while sharecropper houses at the end of the first third of the century and the welfare problems of our big cities at present. The city eventually pays for rural poverty.

Between 1935 and 1966, when the decrease of the farm population in the nation as a whole was less than 50 percent, the highest decreases were in the cotton South: Mississippi, 67 percent; Georgia and West Virginia, 66 percent; Arkansas, 65 percent; Louisiana, 64 percent; South Carolina and Oklahoma, 62 percent; Texas, 61 percent; and Virginia, 55 percent.

In the Mississippi Delta, the heart of the cotton South, the percentage of cotton picked by machines rose from seven in 1950 to 55 in 1960 to 95 in 1967 to practically 100 in 1977. Beyond this, in recent years effective procedures have been worked out for machines to apply chemicals that control the growth of weeds and grasses, and so eliminate the need for hoe hands. The total number of share tenants (mostly sharecroppers) and farm wage hands in the area under consideration dropped from 83,000 in 1950 to 33,000 in 1959 to 22,000 in 1964, with the number continuing to decrease down to the present. Also, there was a sharp decline in seasonal labor used: in the spring of 1960, 30,150 people were employed an average of 16 days, whereas six years later 7,225 were employed four days; in the fall of 1960, 21,414 people were employed for 36 days as compared with six years later when 11,253 were employed for two days.

In the first quarter of this century, the spread of the boll weevil across the South, from Texas to Virginia, sped the collapse of the old plantation system. As a result, millions of acres of cotton land shifted to livestock and tree farming, each of which was decidedly less labor-intensive than cotton, and each was on the side of the angels in terms of soil conservation – but each of them rendered surplus millions more farmworkers.

It is well to reckon with the fact that the vast proportion of the people who left farms, and then left the Southern region, were not attracted out (excepting during the two World War periods) but rather were pushed out of their shrinking low economic niches in the cotton country. And, in so far as any of them may have been attracted out,

it was not so much for hope of employment – for in the cities, too, by the time the rural migrants got there, power-driven machines were digging the ditches and performing other menial and unskilled tasks that they might earlier have done – as the hope for welfare support of one type or another, with along the way much searing disillusionment, loss of hope, and, within the inner cities, rampant tensions, drugs, thievery, and other lawlessness.

And how could it have been otherwise? For it was that element of the American population least equipped to cope with urban life who were being forced by circumstances to take up their precarious abodes in the inner cities of the nation. These migrants had come from the areas where housing had long been most inadequate and cultural life thinnest: in 1935, more than half of the sharecropper dwellings leaked when it rained, and more than half were without any kind of inside finish (just the upright studdings and the horizontal outside weather-panes; only one in 20 had screens on windows and doors, and less than two in 100 had fly-proof privies, while nearly half had no privy of any kind; a fifth had no printed matter in the house, while only an eighth subscribed to any newspaper, and most of these were local weeklies, of the who-visited-whom kind.

A house in the Smithsonian Institution reflecting such conditions is warranted by the vast numbers of people who lived in them in 1930 – a total farm tenant population of more than 10 million people, four million of whom were sharecroppers, of whom nearly two and a half million were black – and by the vast number of people who have moved out of them to American cities. The percentage of blacks in the metropolitan areas of the nation rose from 27 percent in 1910 to 74 percent in 1970, and the end is not yet in sight, for whereas some urban whites and middle-class blacks are now moving back to the South, there is still a steady outflow from the rural South of impoverished blacks.

The sharecropper house is a veritable backdrop for many of today's urban problems.

In this sharecropper house, on the average, lived a man and woman and four children:

Who moved every two or three years from one house to another more or less like it.

Who never owned any land or other taxable property.

Who were accustomed to a diet of fatback meat, corn bread, and blackstrap molasses, with sometimes turnip greens and other plain foods in season.

Who commonly got along without the services of a trained physician except in dire circumstances, depending principally upon patent medicines, and for childbirth, untrained midwives, often illiterate and oblivious of the basic elements of sanitation.

Who never voted, or sat on a jury, or were called "Mr." or "Mrs.," except by their equally poor and disfranchised peers.

Who had no legal claim to any portion of the crop the family had grown until all furnishing bills had been paid in full, including "carrying charges" on advances at "credit prices" for the food and supplies used while producing the

crop.

Who frequently failed to pay out in full, and whose debt then would likely be carried over against their next crop, or if they moved to another plantation, the debt might be transferred to their account there.

Who, if black, likely had heard from older kinsmen stories of advantages taken of mothers and daughters, of warnings of mob violence if this or that "stay-in-your-place" expectation were ignored or violated.

Who lived in a shabby house, built of a single thickness of rough, undried lumber, often with cracks in the walls and floors through which the wind blew until covered by cardboard or newspapers from the commissary or the big house.

Who, accustomed to a limited diet, suffered much pellagra, especially among the womenfolk and children.

Even so, in these houses there lived an occasional man, woman or child from whom came forth a work song, or a spiritual, or the intricate timing of ragtime or jazz, or the body movements that go with tap dancing, the Charleston, and so on. Many of these distinctive expressions were grounded on the insightful understandings these people had of their own predicament, of the powers that be, the riding-boss, Captain Jim, what went on in the big house, including such quarrels as occurred between him and Miss Sally, his wife.

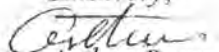
Yes, they knew they had to play the roles of nobodies, but within themselves some of them knew they knew what was going on: they knew they were somebodies, for they saw their songs and dances – often ridiculing those who thought themselves their lords and masters – appreciated and appropriated by them: We have company coming this weekend, so you all come up to the house about eight Saturday evening and do that song and dance you were doing on the way home from the fields this afternoon.

The insights of the croppers were far beyond the ephemeral and the superficial, as seen in songs like "Go Down Moses – Let My People Go!" Took it right out of the white man's Bible, and used it to melt the white man down! Repeated the Uncle Remus tales, in which the defenseless rabbit always wins.

Out of these bleak houses went the millions of ex-sharecroppers and farm wage hands, first to Southern towns and cities, and soon – most of them virtual refugees – on to the great American cities, where within the sounds and smells of great affluence, they batted down for their next round with life. They were given no preparation for their abrupt transplantation.

Surely it is not too much to hope, even believe, that the leadership of a great nation will soon take its bearings and welcome the opportunity to seek out the whole truth about so great a number of its own, and help them attain their full stature and thereby enrich us all by becoming a stronger and happier people. A long and tedious process it will be, but the sooner and saner undertaken the better.

Sincerely,


Arthur Raper

EMMA'S STORY: TWO VERSIONS

Emma McCloud lives today in a rented, four-room frame house at the edge of Cherokee City, Alabama. She dresses neatly in pantsuits from the racks of the cheaper department stores, but the linoleum on the floors is cracked. At 62, her only income is the monthly Social Security check. In the winter the oil burner in the middle of the living room half-heartedly fights the cold air seeping in through warped window frames and slanted floors.

On the evening of my first visit, I showed her James Agee and Walker Evans' *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, the classic portrait of the Depression South. Emma's daughter, Patricia, whom she calls Sister, asked, "Did they write about you, Mama, in that book?"

Emma wasn't sure, so I found the place where Agee spreads forth his description of Emma, "rather a big child, sexual beyond propriety to its years." She tried to read the words, but her eyes are very weak, and even with the thick bifocals the small print was too much for her. She handed the book to Sister and asked her to read it aloud. As she did, first Emma and then the rest of us were transported back to 1934.

Emma was 18 then, had been married for two years to a man 20 years her elder, and was about to leave Alabama to join her husband in the red hills of Mississippi. James Agee, on assignment for Henry Luce's *Fortune* magazine, and photographer Walker Evans were staying at Emma's sister's home, documenting the life of a family they believed to be representative of white sharecrop-

pers in the South. Emma's brief visit, the coming together of her kinfolk and her departure to another land gave Agee and Evans more than they bargained for.

As Sister read, Emma kept murmuring, "I remember that," and "Yes, that's just the way it was." When the part came which described the leave-taking, Emma began crying and her emotion filled the room. When Sister finished, Emma began talking about leaving her family and going to the red hills of Mississippi. Then she brightened. "You know, I didn't know Jimmy [Agee] felt that way. About me and all. He was a good-looking man. And I loved to talk to him, but if I had knowed he felt the way he says he did . . . why, we'd have talked some more." She chuckled. Her laughter was rich and infectious. We all began to laugh.

The second version of Emma's story is her own. It was assembled from our taped conversations in November, 1976, and from pages in her diary. Although I have arranged her story in a chronological sequence and used conventional spelling, the words and sentences are her own. I have altered the names of the characters in accordance with Agee's practice and Emma's wish. Needless to say, Emma's experiences, her life and emotions, though simply expressed, are as moving as the eloquent ruminations of her accomplished observer, James Agee.

— Bradford L. Jenkins

Brad Jenkins teaches sociology and history at Guilford Technical Institute.

First Version by James Agee, photos by Walker Evans



I am fond of Emma, and very sorry for her, and I shall probably never see her again after a few hours from now. I want to tell you what I can about her.

She is a big girl, almost as big as her sister is wiry, though she is not at all fat: her build is rather that of a young queen of a child's magic story who throughout has been coarsened by peasant and earth living and work, and that of her eyes and her demeanor, too, kind, not fully formed, resolute, bewildered, and sad. Her soft abundant slightly curling brown hair is cut in a square bob which on her large fine head is particularly childish, and indeed Emma is rather a big child, sexual beyond propriety to its years, than a young woman; and this can be seen in a kind of dimness of definition in her features, her skin, and the shape of her body, which will be lost in a few more years. She wears a ten cent store necklace and a Sunday cotton print dress because she is

visiting, and is from town, but she took off her slippers as soon as she came, and worked with Annie Mae. According to her father she is the spit and image of her mother when her mother was young; Annie Mae favors her father and his people, who were all small and lightly built.

Emma is very fond of her father and very sorry for him, as her sister is, and neither of them can stand his second wife. I have an idea that his marrying her had a lot to do with Emma's own marriage, which her father so strongly advised her against. He married the second time when Emma was thirteen, and for a long while they lived almost insanely . . . far back in a swamp: and when Emma was sixteen she married a man her father's age, a carpenter in Cherokee City. She has been married to him two years; they have no children. Emma loves good times, and towns, and people her own age, and he is jealous and mean to her and suspicious of her. He has given her no pretty dresses nor the money to buy cloth to make them. Every minute he is in the house he keeps his eye right on her as if she was up to something, and when he goes out, which is as seldom as he can, he locks her in: so that twice already she has left him and come home to stay, and then after a while he has

The Gudger family consists of George, his wife, Annie Mae, on his left. Louise at ten, the oldest, seated in front and to the left of her mother. The baby, standing on the bench next to Louise. Burt, four, in short pants, and Junior, eight, in overalls. Behind Junior and standing on George's right is Emma, Annie Mae's younger sister.

THE GUDGER FAMILY, 1936

come down begging, and crying, and swearing he'll treat her good, and give her anything she asks for, and that he'll take to drink or kill himself if she leaves him, and she has gone back: for it isn't any fun at home, hating that woman the way she does, and she can't have fun with anyone else because she is married and nobody will have fun with her that way: and now (and I think it may be not only through the depression but through staying in the house because of jealousy and through fear of living in a town with her, and so near a home she can return to), her husband can no longer get a living in Cherokee City; he has heard of a farm on a plantation over in the red hills in Mississippi and has already gone, and taken it, and he has sent word to Emma that she is to come in a truck in which a man he knows, who has business to drive out that way, is moving their furniture; and this truck is leaving tomorrow. She doesn't want to go at all, and during the past two days she has been withdrawing into rooms with her sister and crying a good deal, almost tearlessly and almost without voice, as if she knew no more how to cry than how to take care for her life....Annie Mae is sure she won't stay out there long, not all alone in the country away from her kinfolks with that man; that is what she keeps saying, to Emma, and to George, and even to me; but actually she is surer than not that she may never see her younger sister again, and she grieves for her, and for the loss of her to her own loneliness, for she loves her, both for herself and her dependence and for that softness of youth which already is drawn so deep into

the trap, and in which Annie Mae can perceive herself as she was ten years past; and she gives no appearance of noticing the clumsy and shamefaced would-be-subtle demeanors of flirtation which George [Annie Mae's husband] is stupid enough to believe she does not understand for what they are: for George would only be shocked should she give him open permission, and Emma could not be too well trusted either. So this sad comedy has been going on without comment from anyone, which will come to nothing: and another sort has been going on with us, of a kind fully as helpless. Each of us is attractive to Emma, both in sexual immediacy and as symbols or embodiments of a life she wants and knows she will never have; and each of us is fond of her, and attracted toward her. We are not only strangers to her, but we are strange, unexplainable, beyond what I can begin yet fully to realize. We have acted toward her with the greatest possible care and shyness and quiet, yet we have been open or 'clear' as well, so that she knows we understand her and like her and care for her almost intimately. She is puzzled by this and yet not at all troubled, but excited; there is nothing to do about it on either side. There is tenderness and sweetness and mutual pleasure in such a 'flirtation' which one would not for the world restrain or cancel, yet there is also an essential cruelty, about which nothing can be done, and strong possibility of cruelty through misunderstanding, and inhibition, and impossibility, which can be restrained, and which one would rather die than cause any of: but it is a cruel and



ridiculous and restricted situation, and everyone to some extent realizes it. Everyone realizes it, I think, to such a degree even as this: supposing she is going away and on with it, which she shouldn't, then if only Emma could spend her last few days alive having a gigantic good time in bed, with George, a kind of man she is best used to, and with Walker and with me, whom she is curious about and attracted to, and who are at the same moment tangible and friendly and not at all to be feared, and on the other hand have for her the mystery or glamour almost of mythological creatures. This has a good many times in the past couple of days come very clearly through between all of us except the children, and without fear, in sudden and subtle but unmistakable expressions of the eyes, or ways of smiling; yet not one of us would be capable of trusting ourselves to it unless beyond any doubt each knew all the others to be thus capable: and even then how crazily the

conditioned and inferior parts of each of our beings would rush in, and take revenge. But this is just a minute specialization of a general brutal pity; almost any person, no matter how damaged and poisoned and blinded, is infinitely more capable of intelligence and of joy than he can let himself be or than he usually knows; and even if he had no reason to fear his own poisons, he has those that are in others to fear, to assume and take care for, if he would not hurt both himself and that other person and the pure act itself beyond cure.

But here I am going to shift ahead of where I am writing, to a thing which is to happen, or which happened, the next morning (you mustn't be puzzled by this, I'm writing in a continuum), and say what came of it.

The next morning was full of the disorganized, half listless, yet very busy motions of ordinary life broken by an event: Emma's going away. I was going to take her and Annie Mae to her brother



George Gudger has no home, no land, no mule; none of the more important farming implements. He must get all these of his landlord. Chester Boles, for his share of the corn and cotton, also advances him rations money during four months of the year, March through June, and his fertilizer. Gudger pays him back with his labor and with the labor of his family. At the end of the season he pays him back further: with half his corn; with half his cotton; with half his cottonseed.

Out of his own half of these crops he also pays him back the rations or advance money, plus interest, and his share of the fertilizer, plus interest, and such other debts, plus interest, as he may have incurred.

In the best year he has ever had, he cleared \$125. One year in three, he ends up in debt.

Gallatin's house near Cookstown, where she was to meet the man with his truck, and I was waiting around on the front porch in the cool-hot increasing morning sunlight, working out my notes, while the morning housework was done up in special speed. (George was gone an hour or more ago, immediately after the breakfast they had all sat through, not talking much. There had been a sort of lingering in eating and in silences, and a little when the food was done, broken by talk to keep the silences from becoming too frightening; I had let the breakfast start late by telling him I would take him in the car; then abruptly he got up saying, 'Well, Jimmy, if you —' Whether he would kiss Emma goodbye, as a sort of relative, was on everybody's mind. He came clumsily near it: she half got from her chair, and their bodies were suddenly and sharply drawn toward each other a few inches: but he was much too shy, and did not even touch her with the hand he reached

out to shake hers. Annie Mae drawled, smiling, What's wrong with ye George; she ain't agoin' to bite ye; and everyone laughed, and Emma stood up and they embraced, laughing, and he kissed her on her suddenly turned cheek, a little the way a father and an adolescent son kiss, and told her goodbye and wished her good luck, and I took him to work in the car, and came back. And now here I was, as I have said, on the porch.) Here I was on the porch, diddling around in a notebook and hearing the sounds of work and the changing patterns of voices inside, and the unaccustomed noise of shoeleather on the floor, because someone was dressed up for travel; and a hen thudded among dried watermelon seeds on the oak floor, looking, as they usually do, like a nearsighted professor; and down hill beyond the open field a little wind laid itself in a wall against the glistening leaves of the high forest and lay through with a long sweet granular noise of rustling water; and the

"When we moved in here, I wanted to make the house pretty. I folded a paper and cut it into a pretty lace pattern and hung it on the mantelpiece: but now I just don't care."



hen dropped from the ledge of the porch to the turded dirt with a sodden bounce, and an involuntary cluck as her heaviness bit the ground on her sprung legs; and the long lithe little wind released the trees and was gone on, wandering the fringed earth in its affairs like a saturday schoolchild in the sun, and the leaves hung troubling in the aftermath; and I heard footsteps in the hall and Emma appeared, all dressed to go, looking somehow as if she had come to report a decision that had been made in a conference, for which I, without knowing it, seemed to have been waiting. She spoke in that same way, too, not wasting any roundabout time or waiting for an appropriate rhythm, yet not in haste, looking me steadily and sweetly in the eyes, and said, I want you and Mr. Walker to know how much we all like you, because you make us feel easy with you; we don't have to act any different from what it comes natural to act, and we don't have to worry what you're thinking about

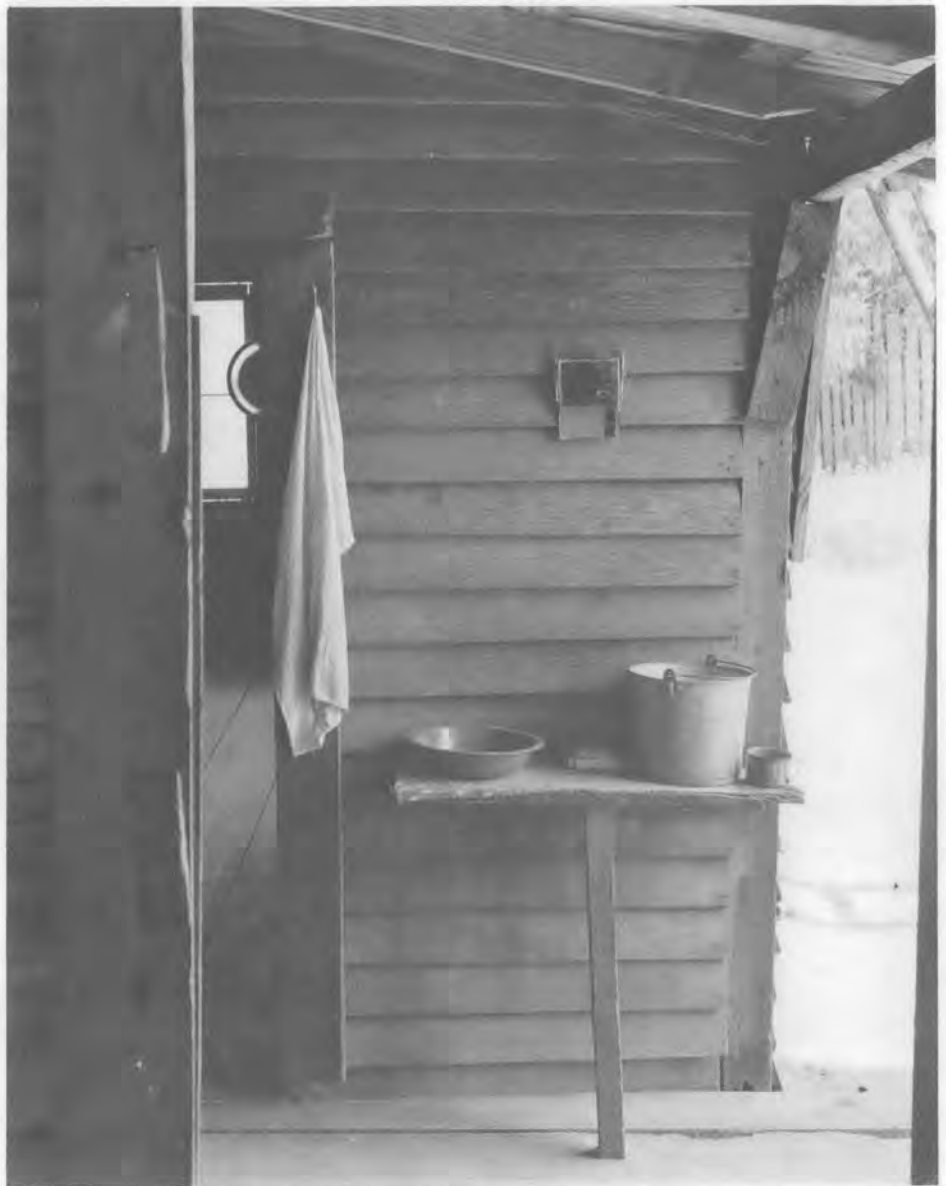
us, it's just like you was our own people and had always lived here with us, you all are so kind, and nice, and quiet, and easygoing, and we wisht you wasn't never going to go away but stay on here with us, and I just want to tell you how much we all keer about you; Annie Mae says the same, and you please tell Mr. Walker, too, if I don't see him afore I go. (I knew she could never say it over again, and I swore I certainly would tell him.)

What's the use trying to say what I felt. It took her a long time to say what she wanted so much to say, and it was hard for her, but there she stood looking straight into my eyes, and I straight into hers, longer than you'd think it would be possible to stand it. I would have done anything in the world for her (that is always characteristic, I guess, of the seizure of the strongest love you can feel: pity, and the wish to die for a person, because there isn't anything you can do for them that is at all measurable to your love), and all I could do,

Their house lacks not only electricity and plumbing but the privies which are by jest supposed to be the property of any American farmer, and the mail-order catalogues which, again with a loud tee-hee, are supposed to be this farmer's toilet paper.

They retire to the bushes; and they clean themselves as well as they can with newspaper if they have any around the house, otherwise with corncobs, twigs, or leaves. To say they are forced in this respect to live "like animals" is a little silly, for animals have the advantage on them on many counts.

The odors of cooking. Among these most strongly, the odors of fried salt pork and of fried and boiled pork lard, and second, the odor of cooked corn. The odors of sweat in many stages of age and freshness, this sweat being a distillation of pork, lard, corn, wood-smoke, pine and ammonia.



the very most, for this girl who was so soon going on out of my existence into so hopeless a one of hers, the very most I could do was not to show all I cared for her and for what she was saying, and not to even try to do, or to indicate the good I wished I might do her and was so utterly helpless to do. I had such tenderness and such gratitude toward her that while she spoke I very strongly, as something steadier than an 'impulse,' wanted in answer to take her large body in my arms and smooth the damp hair back from her forehead and to kiss and comfort and shelter her like a child, and I can swear that I now as then almost believe that in that moment she would have so well understood this, and so purely and quietly met it, that now as then I only wish to God I had done it; but instead

the most I did was to stand facing her, and to keep looking into her eyes (doing her the honor at least of knowing that she did not want relief from this), and, managing to keep the tears from running down my face, to smile to her and say that there was nothing in my whole life that I had cared so much to be told, and had been so grateful for (and I believe this is so); and that I wanted her to know how much I liked them, too, and her herself, and that I certainly felt that they were my own people, and wanted them to be, more than any other kind of people in the world, and that if they felt that of me, and that I belonged with them, and we all felt right and easy with each other, then there wasn't anything in the world I could be happier over, or be more glad to know (and this is so, too); and that



I knew I could say all of the same of Walker (and this, too, I know I was true in saying). I had stood up, almost without realizing I was doing it, the moment she appeared and began to speak, as though facing some formal, or royal, or ritual action, and we stayed thus standing, not leaning against or touching anything, about three feet apart, facing each other. I went on to say that whatever might happen to her or that she might do in all her life I wished her the best luck anyone could think of, and not ever to forget it, that nobody has a right to be unhappy, or to live in a way that makes them unhappy, for the sake of being afraid, or what people will think of them, or for the sake of anyone else, if there is any way they can possibly do better, that won't hurt other

people too much. She slowly and lightly blushed while I spoke and her eyes became damp and bright, and said that she sure did wish me the same. Then we had nothing to say, unless we should invent something, and nothing to do, and quite suddenly and at the same instant we smiled, and she said well, she reckoned she'd better git on in and help Annie Mae, and I nodded, and she went, and a half-hour later I was driving her, and Annie Mae, and her father, and Louise, and Junior, and Burt, and the baby, to her brother's house near Cookstown. The children were silent and intent with the excitement of riding in the car, stacked on top of each other around their mother on the back seat and looking out of the windows like dogs, except Louise, whose terrible gray eyes met

It is hardly to Louise's good fortune that she "likes" school, school being what it is. Dressed as she is, and bright as she is, and serious and dutiful and well-thought-of as she is, she already has traces of a special sort of complacency which probably must, in time, destroy all in her nature which is magical, indefinable, and matchless: and this though she is one of the stronger persons I have ever known.



To attend school Squeaky in a few years will, like his brother and sister, walk in wet weather a mile and a half in clay mud which in stretches is knee-deep on a child. Southern winters are sickeningly wet, and wet clay is perhaps the hardest of all walking. Attendance suffers by this cause, and by others.

mine whenever I glanced for them in the car mirror. Emma rode between me and her father, her round sleeveless arms cramped a little in front of her. My own sleeves were rolled high, so that in the crowding our flesh touched. Each of us at the first few of these contacts drew quietly away, then later she relaxed her arms, and her body and thighs as well, and so did I, and for perhaps fifteen minutes we lay quietly and closely side by side, and intimately communicated also in our thoughts. Our bodies were very hot, and the car was packed with hot and sweating bodies, and with a fine salt and rank odor like that of crushed grass: and thus in a short while, though I knew speed was not in the mood of anyone and was going as slowly as I felt I could with propriety, we covered the short seven mileage of clay, then slag, to Cookstown, and slowed through the town (eyes, eyes on us, of men, from beneath hatbrims), and down the meandering now sandy road to where her brother lived. I had seen him once before, a man in his thirties with a bitter, intelligent, skull-formed face; and his sour wife, and their gold-skinned children: and now here also was another man, forty or so, leathery-strong, blackshaven, black-hatted, booted, his thin mouth tightened round a stalk of grass showing

gold stained teeth, his cold, mean eyes a nearly white blue; and he was sardonically waiting, and his truck, loaded with chairs and bed-iron, stood in the sun where the treeshade had slid beyond it. He was studying Emma coldly and almost without furtiveness, and she was avoiding his eyes. It was impossible to go quite immediately. We all sat around a short while and had lemonade from a pressed-glass pitcher, from which he had already taken at least two propitiatory glasses. It had been made in some hope of helping the leavetaking pass off as a sort of party, from two lemons and spring water, without ice, and it was tepid, heavily sweetened (as if to compensate the lack of lemons), and scarcely tart; there was half a glass for each of us, out of five tumblers, and we all gave most of it to the children. The children of the two families stayed very quiet, shy of each other; the others, save the black-hatted man, tried to talk, without managing much; they tried especially hard when Emma got up, as suddenly as if she had to vomit, and went into the next room and shut the door, and Annie Mae followed her. Gallatin said it was mighty hard on a girl so young as that leaving her kinfolks so far behind. The man in the hat twisted his mouth on the grass and, without opening his



Burt now at four is in so desperate a psychological situation that he is incapable of speaking any language beyond gibberish (in which he has great rhythmic and syllabic talent) only after he has been given the security of long and friendly attention.



teeth, said Yeah-ah, as if he had his own opinions about that. We were trying not to try to hear the voices in the next room, and that same helpless, frozen, creaky weeping I had heard before; and after a little while it quieted; and after a little more they came out, Emma flourily powdered straight to the eyes, and the eyes as if she had cried sand instead of tears; and the man said – it was the first kind gesture I had seen in him and one of the few I suspect in his life, and I am sure it was kind by no intention of his: ‘Well, we can’t hang around here all day. Reckon you’d better come on along, if you’re coming.’

With that, Emma and her father kiss, shyly and awkwardly, children doing it before parents; so do she and her brother; she and Annie Mae embrace; she and I shake hands and say good-bye; all this in the sort of broken speed in which a family takes leave beside the black wall of a steaming train when the last crates have been loaded and it seems certain that at any instant the windows, and the leaned uppity faces, will begin to slide past on iron. Emma’s paper suitcase is lifted onto the truck beside the bedsprings which will sustain the years on years of her cold, hopeless nights; she is helped in upon the hard seat beside

the driver above the hot and floorless engine, her slipped feet propped askew at the ledges of that pit into the road; the engine snaps and coughs and catches and levels on a hot white moistureless and thin metal roar, and with a dreadful rending noise that brings up the mild heads of cattle a quarter of a mile away the truck rips itself loose from the flesh of the planed dirt of the yard and wrings into the road and chucks ahead, we waving, she waving, the black hat straight ahead, she turned away, not bearing it, our hands drooped, and we stand disconsolate and emptied in the sun; and all through these coming many hours while we slow move within the anchored rondures of our living, the hot, screaming, rattling, twenty-mile-an-hour traveling elongates steadily crawling, a lost, earnest, and frowning ant, westward on red roads and on white in the febrile sun above no support, suspended, sustained from falling by force alone of its outward growth, like that long and lithe incongruous slender runner a vine spends swiftly out on the vast blank wall of the earth, like snake’s head and slim stream feeling its way, to fix, and anchor, so far, so wide of the strong and stationed stalk; and that is Emma.

Second Version by Emma McCloud — “So I Sung To Myself”



I was born May 27, 1916. Now that seems like a long time ago, but sometimes I get to thinking back and it don't seem long at all. I can remember when I started to school. We had to walk to school back then three miles

and it would be so cold, but we didn't mind for we didn't know any better.

Mama would tie a string around my pencil and tie it around my neck so I would not lose so many for they was hard to get. We would take our lunch in a paper sack. Sometime it would start raining on us before we got to school. The sack would get wet and tear up and we would try to keep our lunch. Sometime we would put it in our pocket.

My brother Clifford, he was smaller than I was and he could not walk as fast as I could for you see I was just a tomboy. But I was real good in school, and I really liked to go for I was going to be a nurse when I finished school – that was always my dream. And I think I would have been if I could have went on to school. But the year I was 13 years old, my mother died. Oh, I can

remember that day. You see she was in the hospital – it don't seem like that she was there many days. I know me and Clifford went to see her but once. That is all I remember but she knew us that day and we were so glad, for we just knew that she was better and would soon be back home with us. But that didn't happen. She died and left us. Clifford 10 and me 13.

Poor old Daddy. There he was left with two children and a big field of cotton to gather, and I know now that his poor old heart was so heavy and he felt so alone and didn't know what to do. I had to start cooking, milking the cow, going to the field too when I had time. I had to wash our clothes and pray for the Lord to come and get me and carry me where Mama was. I didn't know how to do anything and I needed her so bad.

I haven't forgot yet that no one came in to help me and teach me how to do anything. But that poor old daddy of mine done his best and he was always kind. He did not make fun of nothing I tried to do, I don't see how he ate the food I cooked and worked as hard as he did. I can see him now, sitting on his cotton sack, eating the slop I cooked. He didn't stop long enough to come to the house and eat and rest a little while. He ate in the field and went right on picking

THE GUDGER FAMILY, 1978



Today, 40 years later, Annie Mae and her sister, Emma, the Gudger children and their children still live in the same region of Alabama.

Annie Mae is now 69. George, her husband, died in 1959. Even then he was still a sharecropper. Annie bore George three more children after 1936. Things got better during the war, but life for the Gudgers remained hard. Riddled with cancer, practically too weak to walk, George continued his work in the cotton field until his death.

“George didn’t live to enjoy some of the things we have now. We never had nothin’ the whole time he was alive.”

And Louise, the brightest and the strongest, dropped out of school at 13, married at 14, and committed suicide at 41.

cotton. I don’t guess he could send us to school anymore. I just know we didn’t go anymore, and I didn’t become that nurse I wanted so bad to be. We just worked hard from year to year – them three years until Daddy married again. We never had any more Christmas. We didn’t have anything but one another. We was a pitiful three.

In three years after Mama died, Daddy married again and he married a woman that didn’t suit our family. You see I had begun to eye the boys a little when Daddy was not looking. There was one that came along that I thought was it. He was 12 years older than I was. Daddy didn’t like him but I did. I think the reason I fell so hard for him was because all the girls around wanted to go with him but he liked me the best. I thought I was something else. I had a lot of life in me when I was growing up. I talked a lot and laughed a lot and I liked to sing. I was just a jolly girl.

This man, Fred Newby, wanted to marry me. Of course, I wanted to marry him too, but I had this friend, Luther Suggs. Me and him was real close. I had more fun with him than I did with anybody and he didn’t want me to marry this fellow and he set in to break us up. Me and Luther didn’t date but what was so funny we wouldn’t let each other date anybody else. If one of us started

dating someone, the other wouldn’t stop till we broke them up and we could do it every time. We was just good buddies and that was all. He was a doll. I had more fun with that boy than I ever had with any boy and it was clean fun and that is the truth. You know, I bet me and him was really in love and didn’t have sense enough to know it. Some nights we would sit in the middle of the road till midnight and after and try to count the stars. And I would think he was the sweetest man on earth, but I never did think of him as a boyfriend and I know he felt the same way about me.

Then I met Fred and we begun to talk about marrying and the only reason we didn’t, that buddy of mine found out about it and that was it. He broke us up in one night’s time on Christmas Eve night. I didn’t really mean to let him do it but he did. It just broke my heart and I cried and cried but it didn’t do any good. I was 14 years old at that time.

After Daddy married that woman that he had taught me against all my life, I started staying with my sister and her husband. He was a hard-working man, and he believed in everybody working from daylight till dark and that is what we done.

I married when I was 17 years old. Right then all I wanted was a home. I was so tired of the way I

Junior still farms, but he works for wages. With another man, the farm owner, he plows, cultivates, and harvests the yield from 500 acres. He works 10 hours a day, five days a week. For this he earns \$125 a week.

"Out of my whole family, I'm the only one that farms today. All of the

rest of them do public work, but working on a farm now is like public work. You're hired for one thing and that's what you do. If you're hired to drive a tractor, you drive. If something breaks, you don't try to fix it. The man I work for takes care of that. It's none of my concern."



was living. Work, work, that was all anybody wanted with me.

I married in February before I was 17 in May. The first time I saw Lutie he was in bed sick. I remember I saw his eyes that night and I thought they was so pretty. His hair was a light red, not a ugly red and it was pretty and just lay in deep waves. I thought a lots about him the next few weeks.

As soon as he could walk, he came over to where we lived. I still thought he looked nice. Well, for some reason his family didn't think too much of him. They always was saying some unpleasant things about him, and I felt sorry for him so I put in a lot of time with him. He was 20 years older than I was. And I was a big mouth – just full of life. But down inside of me I was a lonely girl. I was always searching for something that I couldn't find.

Well, he began to talk to me about marrying him. I didn't want to, but I thought that his family and him too was living for God. Now listen, I am not trying to condemn them for God forbids that, but anyway I had been taught you was not supposed to marry anyone that had been married and had a living wife or husband. So I told him that,

but he went on and showed me where it would be all right in the sight of God for me and him to get married. But I can't remember him just really asking me to marry him and me saying I would.

But anyway he got the license and came after me and I ran away when I saw him coming. I went about three miles to Mrs. Suggs' house, that was Luther's mother. I stayed all the rest of the day, and I got a curl of Luther's hair and tied a string around it and put it around my neck. I did not tell him what I was up against though. So it was about dark when I came back home. I thought Lutie would be gone. I knowed I would have. But I had to pass this house on the way home where this old man lived, and I liked that old man and I would listen to what he said. He was a good old thing. Lutie was there at his house so the old man come out in the road and stopped me and stood right there and talked me into going on and marrying Lutie. So we went the very next day and married. I stayed with him three weeks and I ran away and went back to my sister's house. That was the only home I had.

Then he came and got me and carried me to his mother's house. I couldn't sing around him or his mother either for I sung love songs and all that



Squeaky, the baby in 1936, is now a father himself. He works in a meat-packing plant in Tuscaloosa, 17 miles away. Though he does better than Junior, his wages are still low by a national standard. There is no union in the plant.

kind of stuff and they would say that was what my mind was on. They didn't like for me to sing out loud, so I sung to myself.

I just couldn't stay there and Lutie wouldn't get me out so I just got out myself. I went back to Sister and George [Sister's husband]. Boy, you had to work there.

Well, Lutie he decided to come to Cherokee City and get him a job so he did and in about two weeks he come and wanted me to come up here with him and I did. I don't remember just how long we stayed up here, but I do know we had just one room. We cooked, ate and slept all in the same little room, but it was fun. We was happy. Then a old man came along – Mr. Jack Jackson. He was old, but he made Lutie think that money growed on trees at Lee, Mississippi. But you see I had got pregnant with Mildred or I don't believe I would have went. I thought I would never see Sister again, and I looked on her kindly like a mother I guess, so I went to stay a week with her before I left and that is when I met them two men – Walker and Jimmy – that has wrote books about us and of the South.

In them times me and George would go to the woods with a cross-cut saw, course Sister would go

with us. I'd get on one end of that saw, he'd get on the other one. Great old big long tall pine trees and we'd saw them up for stovewood. I'd do anything he'd do. I didn't know no better. People talked about what was going on. It was because they was always trying to find something to gossip about. That's exactly the reason things was said about us. We asked for it.

The only thing that I do regret. I wish Jimmy hadn't wrote just like he did because now all the children's grown and can read and they'll wonder. I tried to explain to them it wasn't, but I don't know whether they believed it or not.

Well, anyway, on Sunday Lutie and Mrs. Jackson come after me. I was so glad to see Lutie, but I didn't want to go so far away, but I went. Me and Lutie never had anything much. I won't try to write about how and the way we lived, but we were happy. I followed him around like a child would their daddy and he treated me like I was a child.

When Mildred was born, I tried hard to be a grown woman, but I didn't know how. I still wanted Lutie to pet me just as much as he did Mildred and he did. We had a hard time but we was happy. For that first three years we was married, I



only stayed with him for seven weeks, but after Mildred was born I never left him again.

I guess the only thing I done wrong, I mean about another man, was I day-dreamed for 33 years about Fred for I thought I was really in love with that man. But in the 33rd year I saw Fred Newby, and I would never have known him anymore. He looked awful. I still can't believe he is the man I thought I loved so dearly.

Anyway, 17 months after Mildred, May was born. I worked in the field right up till she was born. I put out soda with Mildred in my arms. May was born the 16th of July and I picked cotton that fall. Oh, it was hard, but I done it. In 13 months, Ruby was born.

I give up everything when I went to having children. I just wrapped my life around them five kids. Now don't misunderstand me. I grewed very close to Lutie and we had a lot of good times together. With his tongue, he was real good to me, and I know he loved me and the children with all his heart, but the only thing was if he couldn't find a job like he wanted, he just wouldn't have one. If he couldn't make good money, he just wouldn't work. I worked for 50 cents a day and put bread in their mouths and he wouldn't do it. He would work and play. He would make a water-wheel down in the ditch somewhere. Now honest

to God, I worked for 50 cents a day and that wasn't by the hour, that was from sun till sun. Fifty cents to put bread in those kids' mouths. I've worked a lot of days and I'd go home toting a four-pound bucket of lard. That's what I'd be paid for a day's work.

There was a family lived right down below us. It was when Ruby was a baby. And his wife died and he had five boys, and I'd work for him. I'd wash their clothes, I'd iron them, I'd patch them. And they all wore overalls. When they'd put the clothes in a sheet to tie them up, I couldn't pick them up. I'd wash them on a rub-board and boil them in a pot. I'd rinse them and hang them up. I take them up to the spring above the house. I'd carry my washpot up there rather than toting water back and forth. I'd build a fire under the washpot and boil them clothes.

Then Lutie got on the rehabilitation. They called it bull farming, but he got a mule instead of a bull. When he got that mule and cow and some pigs and chickens, I was the happiest woman around. That rehab was a Roosevelt thing. He was the only President I ever knew that done anything. He was the only one that I knowed that I seen what he done.

That year I planted the cotton seed with my hands and Lutie covered them. Sonny was born

Burt lives in a mobile home in Tuscaloosa. He visits his mother often, but he is bitter about the past and would not live in his home county. He attended trade school after the Korean War and became a welder. After welding for 15 years, he had to give it up because the constant glare of the torch injured his eyes and inhaling the fumes for years had given him severe sinus trouble. He now works as a supervisor in the same plant where he worked as a welder.

"I helped organize the place that I'm working in now. . . . This guy that owned the place came from up North. He came down here looking for cheap labor. He was paying us two dollar and a quarter to weld. Now they're paying a welder about six or seven dollars, and some good fringe benefits."

the 20th of April and believe it or not I chopped cotton. I could see the house and I would call to Mildred and tell her what to do. When Sonny got to crying hard, I would tell her how to pick him up and bring him on the porch and rock him. Then every once in a while I would run to the house and feed and dry him and then go back to work. It was hard, but I done it and got by. That fall we lost everything.

So the next thing, Lutie went to Mobile and went to work at the shipyard. He was a guard there. I won't never forget — he sent me \$30 one time. The rest of the time he always got robbed. He was always getting robbed. So then it was back to stay with his mother, Mrs. McCloud. We went, me and the children.

I worked in the field all I could. Then they transferred Lutie up here to the Northeastern Hospital, still as a guard. We moved to the old C. C. [Civilian Conservation Corps] camp at Cookstown. That year, the 23rd day of August, Sister [Patricia] came to us. A big 10-pound girl. Lutie was a guard at the gate of the hospital. He dressed like a million dollars, and my children went to school barefooted. He had all his shiny buttons, and when I had to go up town — I didn't go unless I had to — I borrowed a dress to wear.

Then he lost his job and we farmed again. And if

Lutie took a notion that he would not work, that he was going to the creekbank and fish, he went to the creekbank and fished. And me and the children, as they got big enough, went to the field and we worked and we would sweat.

When Ruby was nine years old she came sick. As it happened they had all had good health until then. But she taken sick with rheumatic fever, and it was at the bad stage when they found it. The first time she went to the doctor, he put her to bed for six months. After the end of that six months, he told her to stay there for another six months.

What hurt me so bad, and no one really knew but God, was that I would have to go to the field and leave her. Sometime she cried for me just to stay home with her, but believe it or not I couldn't. We all had to eat. I don't mean to be bragging for it is nothing to brag about, but we farmed on the halves and I had to be the one that had to get a place, and I had to give my word, and they looked to me for them crops to be made, and I had to go. I have just left Ruby a lot of my times with my heart breaking and the tears running down my face with the sweat. I have shed enough tears to do a washing, and God seen me and I bet he felt sorry for me for I prayed as I worked so many, many times. But I can look back now, and I can see that I had a lot of faith.

Like Annie Mae and Squeaky, Junior, his family, two daughters and their husbands, and his son all live in mobile homes. The name is a misnomer, since these dwellings are not mobile but are permanent homes. The Gudgers are typical of many families in the Southeastern US. In 1975, 51 percent of the new housing units purchased in the South were mobile homes. Given this trend, within a few years mobile homes will outnumber traditional houses.

Amidst the painted aluminum, the stainless steel and the vinyl, there are traces of the older way of life. Junior owns several acres surrounding his home. Three of his married children dwell on those acres.



I'll tell you where I got my first break and the only break I got. I had the asthma. I got down with it so bad I couldn't get up. I had it so bad they would just have to take me to the doctor to get a shot. Somebody from somewhere, I'll never know where, sent to Rehabilitation. They got started to find out what caused the asthma and what could be done. They sent me to Birmingham. They give me all kinds of tests, but they never could figure it out.

Then – this man's name was Mr. Johnson – he was with the Rehab. He come down one day and he asked me how would I like a job. I thought to myself: I couldn't lift myself, I didn't have no education, I never could see good. All my life I couldn't see. I didn't have no glasses. But Mr. Johnson – he done me more good than anybody – he wanted to get me a job at a nursing home. He put glasses on my eyes, he got me the job, he put uniforms on my back, and put shoes on my feet. And he set me up. And do you know I went to work there and it wasn't long till I began to feel better. And it wasn't long till I could just go up and down that hall and just do as much as anybody. And I was so happy. I enjoyed it the best in the world. And all the old people loved me, I loved

all them. We all got along good – just like a big family. All workers and patients and everything.

Well, now, my husband, he didn't like this much. He'd grumble about it, and I was making \$35 a week. I was taking care of all the expenses. I even paid the rent, and I never got to buy me anything new. Here's where the trouble started. We had two buildings. One of them we called the women's hall, one of them we called the men's hall. There was men over there. You know in wheel chairs and all. The people I worked for was Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Clinton. Well, now they liked me and I could tell they did and they trusted me. They believed in me. And I'd do everything I could. There wasn't nobody working on the men's hall but one colored man. So Mr. Clinton come down one day and got us all in the little old nurses' station. He said, "Now we got so many in here we just run over one another. What about one of you going over to the men's hall and helping John?"

Nobody said anything. I didn't say a word, but he kept talking, wanting someone to volunteer to help. Directly he looked over there at me. He said, "Emma, what about you?" and he knowed I'd do anything to help him.

I said, "Now, Mr. Clinton, I don't know whether

I'd like that or not. If I don't like it, what're you going to do about it?"

He said, "I'll put you right back there where you were."

I said, "All right. That's a deal." So I went over to the men's hall, and we cleaned that men's hall up. Me and this colored man did. And after we got it cleaned up, why, I was the queen over there. Old John wouldn't let me do much of anything, and all them old men just loved me. After lunch I would go in a room and go to bed and one of them old men would sit outside the door and watch to see if anybody was coming over there. If he seen someone, he would call me. I had it so easy all the other aides got jealous as well as Lutie. Then some of them wanted to change places with me, but Mr. Clinton said no, for they all refused to go when he asked them.

Oh, I had a good time. I even planted flowers in our yard, and them old men would help me. That is the ones that was able. We had Sunday School, and I joined the men's class. Even the preacher seemed to like me. I was almost happy.

Then my husband he got to throwing all those old men up to me. Wanting me to quit my job. I wouldn't of quit for nothing. He'd say, "With this asthma, you quit and get this disability. Go to the doctor and get on disability."

I had sense enough to know that I couldn't get on no disability as long as I was able to work, and I was able then. He ordered me to quit, but I wouldn't quit my job. I come in one day and he was gone. He went to Brockton — that's where his oldest daughter by his first wife was. He got down there and he began to write me bad letters. May and Ruby got to where they would tear them up before I got home, so for a long time I thought he wasn't writing anymore.

But one day "Bang!" When I got home, I always went up to May's. So when I went that day she had to tell me that the police had been there with a letter from Lutie saying he was coming to Cherokee City and that he was going to kill me. They wouldn't turn my letter over to me, but several of them got after me to put in for a divorce. I knowed I couldn't pay for it, but I thought if I do that, maybe he'll settle down and stop this mess. So I did.

I seen a lawyer, and he put in for the divorce just to stop his mouth. I didn't really want a divorce. I didn't care about one, but one day the lawyer called and told me it was ready for me to

pick up, but I didn't have the money to get it. Someways or other some money come in my hands and I went and paid for it. We was divorced.

But now all my children was grown and married. After that Lutie come back home. Me and him was friends after that. We didn't live together no more, but we was friends until he died. When he died I was standing by his bed, holding his hand.

I worked at the nursing home for about six years. They closed it down. It was just a . . . they called it the poorhouse. It was kept by what people drawn from their social security. They condemned the building and put that one out of commission. Then they put the new ones up over at Northpark, and they have gone up just like hot potatoes.

After the nursing home closed down, it wasn't long till a Mr. and Mrs. Frank French got in touch with me, so I went to work there. He was claimed to be one of the richest men in Cherokee City. His wife was down. Well, she wasn't down at that time, but she was senile. I stayed with the Frenches almost six years, and she died in November. I thought when she died my job was over. They had gone up. They was paying me \$65 a week. They had two of us. One stayed in the daytime and one stayed at night. When she died, I thought that would be all of it, but they wanted us to stay on just like we was going with him. So we did.

Then after he died I knowed my job was done, but do you know I went on backwards and forwards to that house for two or three months after that. And there wasn't a soul over there, but they wouldn't tell me to quit, wouldn't tell me to stay home. I just kept going back. They kept paying me the \$65 a week right on. Now they didn't the other ones, but they did me. I stayed there till they got to dividing the things. They put them down in the floor and everywhere and I couldn't walk and get around. I just quit. I quit because I couldn't walk around in the house.

From there I went to a Mrs. Wall's and I worked over there for about two years. While I was working there now the Frenches never did turn me alose. They kept calling me up. They would call and want to talk to me. I'd talk. One of the boys called me and told me he wanted to see me. When could I get away and come over, away from Mrs. Wall's that was where I worked. I told him anytime after dinnertime. He come over and got me. I didn't know where I was agoing. So he carried me to the courthouse. He carried me up there, and he

gave me a \$2,000 bond. He had it recorded. So I kept that bond a long time before I cashed it. I finally cashed it. Anyway that's when my break come. When I felt like I was somebody. Could get out. . . . Well, you know how it is when you can get out and make a payday.

I was taking care of an old lady and she fell and got hurt two weeks before Lutie died so they was on the same floor at the hospital so I got to be around him them two weeks. I would go and feed him. The day before he died, he laughed and said, "We should go back together. We can't live without each other." So we laughed and I made him sit up in bed and I rubbed his back.

The next day every chance I got I would go and see about him. I remember it was about four o'clock. I went in and they had brought him a milkshake so I told him he had to eat it so I picked it up and fed it to him. He ate it all. Then I had to run back to Mrs. Wall. In a little while, I went back to look in on Lutie. I knew he was going away. I called his name and he looked at me. I ran after a nurse. She said, "Mr. McCloud will pull out."

I said, "Not this time."

So we went back to his room together. She told me to call the kids that was here in town, and she would call the doctor. So we did. I called Sister and she called the rest. I hurried back to him and took his hand in mine. He looked at me. I just prayed that the children would get there. Sister just made it, and I think May was a few minutes late, and the others came as soon as they got the word.

But you see how things can work. I fed him last and I held his hand until he was gone. After all I was with him at the end. We had lots of ups and downs.

Today is Sunday, January 11, 1976. This is the way I talk to myself when I get so lonesome, and it has got to where I stay so lonely. Ruby and [her husband] Will is in bed so I just talk on the phone and write. And I read the Bible a lot too. I've got to where I enjoy it.

It sure is raining this morning. It is so dark, and when you spend as much time as I do just by yourself, it ain't too good. If I don't write or read, I just go crazy with my thoughts.

You remember I just lost the only boy I had September 20, 1975, and it has almost run me crazy. [Sonny worked as an engineer on riverboats pushing barges on the Mississippi and Ohio. He was

below deck when a boiler exploded.] We can't understand why these things has to happen so quick. He was so big and healthy we thought, and he went away like a candle blowed out or at least that is what we was told, but as for knowing, we don't. I ask myself, "What did he think about last? What was he thinking about when it happened? Was he hungry for he was just getting off from work?"

Then he lay on the floor of that old boat, burnt up, and me here sleeping in my bed of ease. I won't never get over that. He had to die all by his self, and the way he had to go is killing me. He was so afraid of fire. He never liked for me to even burn trash in the yard. He was a sweet old boy to his mama and he knew that. I miss him so bad sometime I just can't hardly stand it, but I have to keep going a while longer now. No one knows how long.

I hope he is better off than I am tonight. There is one thing I would believe though — he don't have a worried mind and a broken heart tonight. I believe he is sound asleep. He ain't worried about how things are going on here, but I hope to meet him in the morning when we rise up. I want to be right close to him and put my arms around him and say, "Hi, Sonny."

He will pat me on the back and say, "Hi, Emma."

Of course, I want all the rest to be there too, and I want us all to set down and have just a happy reunion. Oh, won't it be wonderful there? And there will be Lutie and Bobby [Emma's grandson who was run over by a car] and Mama and Daddy, too. When I get to thinking about it, I can hardly wait. This life has been kindly rugged here. I have never seen too much happiness. My road has been pretty bumpy. The happiest part was when I was trying to bring my children up and I thought I done the best I could. I don't know but Mama tried.

Now I feel kindly alone for a long time. I looked for something real good to happen to me like a little home, a pretty yard of flowers, and a garden, even some chickens. And a good someone to be with, to laugh and talk with. When things was good and when there was trouble and heartaches come about, someone to understand me and help me throw them off and let me be the same way to that someone. But I have give up my dream. That is what I have always done is dream, dream.

So this is just about my life. Not so bad, do you think? □

The Assemblies

by Clare Jupiter

A decade ago, the Virginia Community Development Organization – under the leadership of black attorney Don Anderson – began organizing black people to take more control over their lives. In each county, town and city it penetrated, VCDO started an Assembly – a structure of representative democracy based on the British parliamentary system, through which people make and execute collective decisions. With varying degrees of success, VCDO, also known as the National Association for the Southern Poor (NASP), initiated more than 30 Assemblies in southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina; the organization's dream is to spread the idea throughout the Black Belt South.*

In 1976, VCDO-NASP suffered a severe financial crisis, which in turn brought to a head staff dissatisfaction with the way the organization was run. Under the twin blows of the financial and staff problems, VCDO-NASP lay dormant for two years, providing no services to the grass-roots organizations it built. The Assemblies, largely ignorant of the disputes, continued on their own, some failing, some declining, but many surviving independently. Despite their differences, each contesting faction of VCDO-NASP – the Executive Director, the staff, members of the corporate and advisory boards – agreed the idea was too good to die. In 1978, a revitalized NASP began to pick up where it left off.

The issues that have confronted VCDO-NASP in its short life face every advocate of social change through grass-roots organizing: externally, how best to create a vehicle for lasting progressive change; internally, how to balance the competing claims of democracy and efficiency. For now the story of VCDO-NASP, a continuing experiment, must remain inconclusive, but nonetheless instructive.

A New Power Structure

Late as usual. For a couple of hundred yards before you reach the cinder block building where the Assembly of Gates meets, you see the cars parked along the highway. Enter through the kitchen door and squeeze through the crush of women loading fried chicken, potato salad and peas onto paper plates. Jackie Sears smiles hello; just go have a seat and she'll bring you a plate.

Choose a table where children predominate. Meet Bill Seldon, Mrs. Shirley Saunders and her children and younger brothers. While you're still dawdling over dessert, more punctual souls are sliding chairs and tables across the floor to form one long table, flanked by two aisles of chairs, each aisle three rows deep, facing each other. Each chair gets an Order Paper – tonight's agenda – and another sheet



photo by Ted Spiegel/The Rockefeller Foundation

with blank lines at the bottom. On the top half, "Do you have a problem? Would you like to have a subject discussed? Write it in the space below and give it to your Representative or a Council member."

By now there are maybe 80 people in the room, mostly middle-aged and older, two whites. Executive Council members take the inside seats, against the table. At the head of the table sit Mr. Speaker (Whalyn Jordan) and Don Anderson, founder of the Assemblies. Rev. Lycurgus Harrell starts us off with a prayer and Mr. Speaker calls out, "Mrs. Fannie Hare." Mrs. Hare, identified on the Order Paper as Representative of the Booker T. Washington Conference, stands. "Mr. Speaker, Question Number One to the Chairman for Legal Affairs." Jake Sears, the Chairman for Legal Affairs, rises, addresses the Speaker, and begins

to review the county's new water system. Seems that the water lines will miss a lot of black homes in the county. "If you think some folks got together and arranged this, you're right. Several months ago, you went to the polls, or maybe you didn't bother, but if you did, you made some marks on a little slip of paper. And those marks are what determined where this water system is going."

Mr. Speaker asks, "Are there any further questions?" then proceeds down the Order Paper. After the Chairman for Health has described jobs opening up in the county rural health clinic, Mrs. Annie Burke, Chairman for Education, rises and sheepishly addresses the Speaker.

"I know of two jobs available at the library. Can I say them now?" Mr. Speaker looks at Don Anderson. Anderson lifts his head from the scribbling that has occupied him until now. "Not until the motion for adjournment," says Anderson. "The information does not concern the question before us." Mrs. Burke takes her seat. Anderson bows back into his scribbling.

On down the Order Paper. What is the Legal Services Corporation? Who appoints the Gates County Library Committee? When will the competency tests be given to high school juniors? What's the status of the day-care centers? How is the new Gates County Rural Health Clinic progres-

sing? Who is eligible for food stamps?

There are three Motions on the Order Paper. Each is opened for discussion. Each passes without a dissenting vote. The Gates County Assembly will write letters: to the Legal Services Corporation for a grant application; to the County Commissioners asking them to place the library in the county community center and notifying them that the Library Board does not represent all the people in the county; to the County Commissioners and the Planning Board, asking that two blacks be appointed to fill the vacancies on the Planning Board.

Someone moves for adjournment. Now Mrs. Burke can describe the job openings at the library. Now Jake can announce a collection for donations to the Rescue Squad in honor of our recently departed brother, Otis Jordan. Someone seconds the motion to adjourn. As people file out, they drop loose change into a cup, to pay for the lights and heat for tonight's meeting. It has been exactly two hours since the meeting was called to order.

* The "Executive Arm" or organizing branch of the Assemblies was originally called Virginia Community Development Organization (VCDO). When the network expanded into North Carolina, the North Carolina Community Development Corporation (NCCDC) was incorporated with the same board and management as VCDO. Later, the same people formed the National Association for the Southern Poor to emphasize the national intent of the organization. "The Executive," "VCDO," "NCCDC" and "NASP" are interchangeable terms. In this article, "VCDO" will be used to describe the organization before 1976 and NASP since then.



The Assembly of Gates is one of a network of Assemblies in the Black Belt counties of Virginia and North Carolina, and like the others it follows a complicated structure of representa-

"Here's how we operate ..."

Sitting on the floor of his double-wide trailer, chain-smoking Kools, Jake Sears describes a series of "fiascoes we went through that had the effect of ripening us for some sort of structured organization." In one such incident that occurred before the Assembly of Gates was formed,



a black lunchroom supervisor discovered some pilfering of lunchroom supplies and reported it to the white superintendent.

Jake Sears says, "I believe, I don't have any support for it, but it's my speculation that he went to his friends in the white community and told them, 'Hey, if you got your fingers in anything, better get them out, 'cause she knows about it.'" At a subsequent meeting, the Board of Education decided not to fund the lunchroom supervisor's job the next year.

The woman complained to the NAACP and black people came to her support. The school board convened a special meeting, on a weekday, to deal with the rumblings and complaints. "Enough black folks took off from work, and we all crowded into the school board's tiny little office, and we're ready, we know that we got our stuff together, and we gon see some justice done.

"There's the school board up there, lily white. And there's all of us back here, smutty black, and the chairman of the board says . . ." Jake pauses for effect, aims a spear of flame at his fresh cigarette . . . then spews out a mixture of smoke, laughter and the words, "'Who's yall's representative?' Ahhh, God Almighty! No lie, we all looked at each other. Representative? Huh? Cause nobody's saying anything, the chairman looks at one gentleman who had kind of been in the center of the whole thing and says, 'Mike [name changed], I thought we got this thing straightened out yesterday.' Right then we knew the hunt was up. Evidently the chairman had met with Mike the evening before and told him nothing was going to change, 'she's not going to get her job and that's the end of it.' Mike neglected to tell us about it.

"So, nothing happened. It was just another thing that showed us, when you go talk to the man, you better have your program together."

It was some time after this incident, late in 1973, that Don Anderson contacted Otis Jordan, who owned a service station and snack bar in Gates County, and described the network of county organizations called Assemblies that he was setting up. Jordan and a small group that composed the nucleus of the local NAACP went to a meeting of the Assembly of South-

hampton, Virginia, saw a film on the Assemblies and heard Anderson explain the concept. They liked it.

Back in Gates, they helped set up a mass meeting attended by about 200 black folks, where Anderson again showed the film and discussed the concept of the Assembly. At the end of the meeting, the people there voted overwhelmingly to organize an Assembly.

Jake Sears says, "Folks downtown knew about it right away. One of our people had to go see a white lawyer, who is very much in the establishment, one Saturday morning, and saw a copy of The Epistle [the Assemblies' newspaper] sitting right smack dab on his desk. Everybody knew about it. It showed us how to use the resources within ourselves, showed us how to correspond with the powers, as an organized group. We've had letters to and from the governor, the secretary of state, the attorney general, the ABC Board. An aide to Jimmy Carter sent us a letter in response to a letter we had written him about something. It surprised us, because we didn't think we could do that kind of thing.

"Here's how we operate. A couple of years ago, one of the members of the then ABC board, his term expired. For some reason they did not appoint a new member at that time. Come next June, there's another vacancy, so they have to appoint two. So we said, well, this county is 53 percent black. Since you got to appoint two anyway, why not appoint a black? Okay, we made that decision in the Assembly, and Otis Jordan and I went to see the Board of Commissioners. They told us that they were going to recommend that the present board be reinstated, and that they heard the Board of Health was going to recommend the same thing.

"The Board of Education gave us the same song and dance. But in the meantime, we had written letters to Robert Morgan in the Senate, Thad Eure, Secretary of State, Clarence Lightner, Mayor of Raleigh, and Howard Lee, Mayor of Chapel Hill. All these letters going out saying at the bottom who we're sending copies to. The three boards held a closed meeting to make the decision, and when they come out of there, a black man had been appointed."

tive democracy based on the British parliamentary system. In a decade of organizing, VCDO has achieved moderate success in establishing Assemblies and showing rural blacks how to use its mechanisms to solve personal and collective problems — from helping a member receive welfare payments to improving the quality of health services in the county.

Post-meeting socializing and subsequent conversations in the homes and offices of members of the Assembly of Gates and other Assemblies affirm some early impressions: many of the members are poor and uneducated. They are domestic workers, laborers on other people's farms, factory workers. The Assembly may well mark their first participation in community organizing, outside their churches.

The officers, though, are more likely to enjoy a middle-class standard of living. Many are reverends, funeral home directors, schoolteachers, often the established leaders in their communities before the Assembly was organized. Many of the members seem timid compared to people in other kinds of community organizations, and they tend to defer to the leaders, and to elect the same people as officers time and again. For many of the leaders, the Assembly is one of a string of organizations which strive to improve their status as black people, such as the NAACP, the Citizens Improvement League and the Democratic Party.

Members of the Gates County Assembly find the formal structure of the Assembly the most effective vehicle to enable them to help themselves. Again and again, they stress how thoroughly the Assembly has organized the community, how orderly are its processes, how efficiently it has fostered communication, from one end of the county to the other, and within each neighborhood. They credit the Assembly with indirectly boosting the number of black public officials in the county through the momentum of organizing it has generated.

"The Assembly is our backbone," says Rev. James Walton, a semi-retired car mechanic, "because we can probe into so many areas. No matter what problem comes up, there's always somebody in the Assembly who can handle it."

Gates is a rural, agrarian county, with almost no industries except farming and logging. Blacks comprise 53 percent of the population but have had little say in what goes on in the county. There's a quiet pride in Isaac Battle's voice as he describes some of the dents black people have made into the local white power structure since he helped organize the Gates Assembly. "We knew that we had done things in a fragmented sort of way, either through the NAACP or the Gates Citizens Improvement League, and we had never come to grips with the fact that what we were doing was nothing. But in organizing in this [Assembly] fashion, we don't leave out any household, and everybody in the community knows what you are doing."

Battle has been president of the Assembly of Gates since its beginning in late 1973. His demeanor, his cautious speech, his various mannerisms of deliberation — clearing throat, stroking chest, adjusting glasses — typify the school principal that he was before becoming assistant superintendent of schools for a neighboring county. He is pleased to recount some of the achievements of the Assembly: "We've provided some recreation activities for the people in our neighborhoods, putting up basketball and volleyball teams. We've organized a boy scout troop. We've helped people get on the food stamp program or improve their health services, through referring them to the agencies that they didn't have any knowledge about. We've given small scholarships to graduating seniors from the public high school for the last two years and made donations to the Gates County Arts Council,

"We've gotten some road improvements which we were unsuccessful in getting before. We've made some recommendations for some of our people to serve on county committees. We've been able to raise money to help some of our families that got burned out of their homes. Certainly our members went all out to support the new rural health clinic that is being constructed and we've put our efforts behind a water system for the county."

Battle says, "We're not asking for anything that's not really expected under the Constitution. We're not attempting to overthrow anything.

We just want a piece of the action, just a piece."

Battle's humility — and the seemingly moderate achievements of the Gates Assembly — belie the larger purpose behind the elaborate structure. Anderson's personal goal in founding VCDO rested on his belief

... that an institution must be created to give power to the people; that it is pointless to erect such an institution merely to influence policy, but the institution must be great enough to make policy. On a community level this means to mobilize enough people to elect the community's government — whether the community be a city, a county or a state. The objective of the people would be to organize enough voting strength to occupy the seats of power... This could not be accomplished by the Negro people alone, so [we must look to put] together a winning coalition of Negro and white liberals. The first thing to accomplish is to put together the machinery, which would be the basis of a democratized political party machine, capable of choosing its own policy, to which its candidates must adhere.

The Assemblies now in existence are a mechanism for creating leadership and accountability. For Anderson, getting such a structure in place is far more important than winning tenuous concessions from a county's white establishment.



The institution that became the Assemblies was first envisioned in 1958 by 46-year-old black attorney Donald Louis Anderson; but the roots of the idea go back to his boyhood. The son of a prominent doctor in Tallahassee, Florida, Anderson says, "Race has always been the huge problem of my life, and I felt that I couldn't go on to any other serious occupation until I had made some contribution to its solution."

He attended the prestigious all-black Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C. "I had my militant period before



Donald Louis Anderson

I was 17," he says. "I felt that as long as the constitutional means of expression were blocked, you might as well expect violence. But I thought they weren't going to be blocked anymore, and I watched with keen interest the debates and filibusters on the civil rights bills. I knew we would still need something more, and I started looking for a means of organizing."

After graduating from the University of Michigan, Anderson served in the armed forces and then entered the London School of Economics in 1955, where he became intrigued by the parliamentary system. "I went to the House of Commons almost every night," he says. "Certain features of that institution attracted me to it. One was the efficiency with which decision-making was handled. Two, the responsiveness of the leadership to the people — the fact that they could be thrown out at any time. Three . . . you see, our government's main problem is its inability to come to a decision. Look at the House of Representatives. There is a body totally incapable of reaching a decision, because there are 435 sovereignties with no system of

bringing them into a coherent force . . . so there is the concentration of decision-making. The Executive Council will always come to a decision."

After earning a masters' degree from the London School of Economics, Anderson entered the University of Michigan Law School. During the summers, while he was home in Tallahassee, he witnessed the Tallahassee bus boycotts, a parallel effort with the Montgomery bus boycotts, and discussed with boycott leaders the need for a more permanent vehicle to fight for civil rights. Among these leaders was Rev. C. K. Steele, a deputy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and leader of the Tallahassee boycott.

Anderson wrote the first draft of the Articles of the Assembly in the summer of 1958, discussed it with Steele, then rewrote the draft. The idea was tried out in Tallahassee, and worked for a while, but did not last.

"We hadn't discovered two crucial dimensions of organizing," says Anderson. "We hadn't developed the problem-solving mechanism, and we never really formed Conferences. It was more like a community improve-

ment league. Everybody thought it was a good idea, but then I went back to law school and nothing became of it. What we were lacking was the services and staff, and perhaps an understanding on the part of the members as to what we were actually getting at."

After graduating from law school in 1960, Anderson went to work as a clerk for two judges in Pennsylvania, taught economics at a women's college in Pittsburgh, and formed the Committee of Pittsburgh to spread the idea of the Assembly and to raise money to implement it in the South. He also wrote down the idea in the manuscript, "A Liberal South," which he tried unsuccessfully to get published.

In 1964, Anderson went to work as counsel for the US House Committee on Education and Labor, where he worked closely with Rep. Adam Clayton Powell. There he assisted in drafting anti-poverty legislation, explained the laws to congressmen, and later led the investigation into the operations of poverty programs. "I saw that they were putting programs first," says Anderson, "and that while poor people were being put on the boards of the poverty agencies, they were overwhelmed by the other board members. And they were not accountable to the other poor, so the programs they put up may or may not be wanted by the people. Thus the programs were underutilized and unable to reach the poor."

In a later letter to his VCDO staff, Anderson says that these jobs were "merely to maintain me, but gave me good training and contacts" as he continued to search for funding for the Assembly idea.

That funding finally came in 1968, from a wealthy white Virginia realtor, Edwin Lynch, who had learned about Anderson's idea through a chain of black civil rights leaders and white liberals.

With a \$10,000 grant from Lynch, Anderson formed the Virginia Community Development Organization and tried to organize in Petersburg, beginning, as he always does, by seeking the support of recognized leaders in the black community. When these leaders rejected the idea of the Assembly, Anderson turned to the surrounding counties and, working alone, estab-

lished eight county Assemblies in his first year of work. At first his car was his office; later he obtained an office in a Petersburg black Baptist church, then staff assistants and more funding.

1970 marked the first appearance of *The Epistle*, the Assembly-wide newspaper published out of the central office, Turner's Inn, in Petersburg. The paper appeared intermittently at first; at the height of Assembly activity, it came out monthly.

Though the Assembly project organized blacks, for the first few years none of the field organizers were black. Most staff were Conscientious Objectors fulfilling their "alternative service" requirement or part-time and summer volunteers from several colleges. They were paid "volunteer" wages: \$15 per week, plus room, board and expenses. Anderson did not find the staff's race a drawback. "The fact that they were young, white, interested outsiders was actually an asset in the rural counties," he says.

But Jim Riley, a CO who began working with the Assemblies in November, 1969, noted the danger of "falling, consciously or unconsciously, into the role of the great white savior. Too often in the past in rural areas there's been a propensity for people to look to civil rights workers as someone who will 'help them.' "

It was in part to guard against this tendency that Anderson forbade staff from getting involved in local issues. Their role was merely to teach a technique; staff could never urge Assembly members to take a particular course of action. But the rationale for this principle, "organizing for the sake of organizing" instead of organizing for issues, goes much deeper, finding root in Anderson's assessment that past organizing around issues, particularly in the 1960s, yielded only transitory victories. Once the issue died, so did the coalitions formed around it.

The key for Anderson was to build a firm structure that would identify leaders, give them power and hold them accountable to an organized constituency. Here's how the system works in theory: Assembly organizers — the VCDO staff and local volunteers — divide the county into Conferences, groups of 50 blacks and interested whites who live near each other. All blacks of voting age who live within the physical boundaries of a given

Conference are listed on the "Conference Sheet." When at least seven out of the 50 people agree to start meeting, they elect a Representative, who will lead the neighborhood Conference and represent it at the county-wide Assembly meetings. The Representative chooses seven Committeemen who are responsible for internal communications between each seven-member committee and the Representative. Seven Committeemen times seven Members plus the Representative makes up the 50-member Conference.

Conferences meet at least four times a year but preferably monthly. Neighbors discuss ways to help each other and the community. Members who have a problem can write it down on a Problem Sheet and give it to their Committeeman. If the Committeeman can't solve the problem, he or she gives

The Assembly has great potential for holding leaders accountable.

it to the Representative. If the Representative fails, he or she refers it further up the chain.

The Conference, the cornerstone of the Assembly structure, more closely resembles an unofficial government than a community service organization. With no previous effort on their part, all black members of the community have a slot in a relatively small group which will keep them informed of Assembly activities. Because that group never exceeds 50 people, each member can play a significant role. Through practice, Committeemen and Representatives gain confidence and skill in solving the problems referred to them.

Ideally, at monthly assembly meetings, Representatives of all Conferences, and any other people who want to attend, discuss issues that affect the larger community. A fully organized Assembly will have a Conference for each group of 50 black adults, but so far only Charlotte County, Virginia, has completed this process.

While Conference organizing continues, organizers set up the county-wide Assembly, first holding a mass meeting to elect a President by majority

vote. The President nominates an Executive Council, the policy-making body for the Assembly. Just as the Conference simulates a governmental subdivision, so the Executive Council resembles the leadership of a Parliament, composed of Chairmen for 10 to 12 departments, such as Education, Recreation, Agriculture, Health, Legal Affairs, Economic Development, Welfare, Ways and Means (a treasurer's position), Youth and Housing. The Council also includes a Chief Whip, who handles intra-Assembly, but especially intra-Council, communications.

At the mass meeting, people vote to approve or disapprove the Council as a slate, not individually, a process designed to produce a body that can work together without being paralyzed by internal strife. If the Council is voted down, then the process of electing a President is repeated, until the Assembly members have approved a President and Council. Council members collect information and solve problems, referred to them by Representatives, in their departments.

Assembly organizers select an impartial Speaker (not a Council member) who presides at the monthly Assembly meetings; the Speaker selects a Clerk, who performs secretarial functions. One such function is to collect questions from Representatives which members have asked to be included on the Order Paper, the agenda for the Assembly meeting.

These questions, each directed to an officer or Assembly organizer, serve more purposes than eliciting information. They can be used to air complaints, to embarrass the officers or to demand action as well. Every Representative has a right to have his or her question appear on the Order Paper; refusing to list a question is grounds to have a Clerk removed.

As the Assembly's policy-making organ, the Executive Council has two major powers. First, it can act on behalf of the Assembly when that body is not in session. Second, it alone can determine which Motions Assembly members can vote on. A week before the Assembly meets, the Council decides which Motions to place on the second half of the Order Paper. These must be chosen with care, for if a Motion is defeated, then the President must call for a "vote of confidence" in the Executive Council.



Seven Committeemen times seven Members plus the Representative make up the 50-member Conference

If the Representatives vote "no confidence" in the Executive Council, then the President and Council must resign, or the President must dissolve the Assembly and call for new elections of Representatives.

The scheme is an attempt to concentrate power in the leaders, focusing collective responsibility on them for the actions they propose and implement or fail to implement, thus ensuring that they will be held accountable to the Assembly members.

Meetings do not vary from the Order Paper, a safeguard against any tendency to dissolve in directionless discussion. Members cannot propose motions from the floor, but must ask an Executive Council member to propose it. And the Council may not disagree among themselves in public. A Council Member who disagrees with the actions of the majority has the recourse of resigning and playing an adversary role as a Representative. Barring such unusual circumstances, the President, Council and Representative serve for two years.

One final layer remains in the Assembly structure, the Council for

the Assemblies, composed of Presidents of every county and city Assembly. This body, which makes regional policy for the Assembly network, is organized like an Assembly, with a President and Council, and meets twice a year.



To build this complex structure, VCDO staffers visited counties and trained local leaders in how to spread the Assembly idea, build more Conferences, and maintain the various parts of the system. Only five or six of the Assemblies are structurally strong — Gates and Surry Counties in North Carolina, and Charlotte, Halifax and Mecklenburg Counties, and perhaps Portsmouth, in Virginia. Even those that are strong have sometimes been criticized for failing to move from structure to action. The Halifax Assembly, for example, was beautifully organized, with many Conferences meeting every month. But little was done with the power represented by that participation, beyond having the

Assembly write an occasional letter or make a phone call to a government agency. Today, the organization is torn apart by rivalry between the leaders.

The "problem-solving" aspects of the Assemblies, the checklist of short-term accomplishments, have always been secondary in Anderson's scheme. But in many cases, the ideal *process* of referring problems through a chain of representatives — which is crucial to building the proper structure — has had little relation to actuality. Many times staff members in the central office in Petersburg received requests for help from individual leaders long before the Assembly's mechanism had been exhausted.

The Assembly mechanism seems to function best when it can plug into another mechanism which would maximize its power. In particular, county organizations effectively use the leverage of federal intervention to increase black involvement in local policy councils. Any agency or governmental body receiving federal funds for a social service program is required by law to include representation of poor and/or minority communities on

its policy-making council. Consequently, a letter from an Assembly to county authorities requesting black involvement also carries the weight of federal monies and attorneys behind it.

"We're kind of grateful for the Civil Rights Act and for the Office of Civil Rights," says Gates Assembly President Battle, "because we know if anything is done with federal funds, we're gonna be involved, or we'll have to let somebody know about it. Now there's a \$650,000 community recreation center in Gates, as a result of federal funds. The advisory council for that is 50-50, black and white, and I got chosen as chairman of it."

Other victories have relied on the added clout of sympathetic government officials, or resulted from forcing them to become more sympathetic under the threat of pressure from above. For example, in Prince George County, Virginia, the Assembly tried in 1969 to get the county to provide a food stamp program. When the Board of Supervisors refused, Assembly members, with the help of federal and state officials, began to distribute food to needy families under the commodity food program. After this program was phased out in 1973, the Assembly circulated a petition asking the board to begin a food stamp program and sent representatives to several board meetings to talk up the idea. Under pressure from the Assembly, the board finally began such a program in 1974.

In Portsmouth, Virginia, the Assembly began a job training program that CETA workers rated the most effective in the city in placing people in jobs. The Assembly of Portsmouth also pressured the city into building 400 units of low-income housing in a neighborhood ravaged by urban renewal.

In thousands of unrecorded cases, Assembly members and leaders have performed "ombudsman" type services for people in the community, helping people get welfare services, pressuring governments into improving roads and ditches, and challenging discriminatory practices of local governments and businesses. Many of these achievements may appear slight, and only a fraction of the rights and privileges supposedly guaranteed by law. But with an appreciation of the power

relationships between the races in many of these areas — relationships that some other organizations and countless poverty programs did little to change — such victories become more impressive.

In Surry County in 1971, the Assembly leaders and members advanced to the next stage in Anderson's plan for building political power for rural blacks. Instead of challenging the existing county government's decisions, the black community for the first time in its history elected a majority black Board of Supervisors (county commissioners). While the Assembly's non-profit status prohibits it from becoming directly involved in election campaigning, local people place the credit for this victory squarely on the lessons learned from Assembly organizing. Needless to say, the Conference Sheets, with the name, phone number, car ownership and party affiliation of each voting-age black in the county, also played a key role in helping the Assembly leaders when they put on their hats as political activists.

The potential of the Assembly mechanism for empowering people is obvious. And once black leaders get positions of power, and some are co-opted into the system, which is inevitable, the Assembly also holds greater potential than most organizations for holding these leaders accountable to other members. As Anderson says, the key to the organization's success rests on how well local people understand the rules and procedures and how well their participation correlates to the power of their leaders.



The Assembly structure, with its many levels of participation and accountability, contrasts sharply with its founding organization/sponsoring agency — VCDO. As the Executive Director of VCDO, Don Anderson insisted that the staff's role be restricted to servicing the organizing needs of local Assemblies. He also demanded total authority over the staff. Internal democracy, he felt, would bog VCDO down in countless debates and shifts of direction; moreover, he has main-

tained that, without his long-range vision and understanding of the concept of the Assemblies, too much staff discretion could undermine the purpose of Assembly organizing.

Both principles came under attack in 1970 when several staff members, led by summer volunteers, revolted from Anderson's authority. Their demands cited minor complaints about specific deeds of VCDO, but centered on the demands for more organizing around issues and more staff role in making decisions for VCDO. Anderson responded that "a democratic policy on the part of the crew would give me responsibility for the course set without the power to accomplish it, while it would give the crew power without responsibility, which, as Stanley Baldwin has said, was the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages." Looking back on the revolt, Anderson now says, "I considered it a lack of understanding as to what the objective should be. I set up a series of seminars to try to explain why I felt this was the only way, but I found that I was spending more time convincing them and not organizing." Thus, over the next five or six months, Anderson fired all the staff members who still disagreed with his approach.

"I didn't see a need for an organization that was teaching a democratic technique to have an internal democratic structure," says staffer Jim Riley. "The main point is for an organization to work, there has to be somebody in that organization who is responsible for it. That person was Don. The rest of the staff were essentially transients. The average stay for a staff person was 14 months. There has to be a division of labor. A consensus policy may work okay when you have three or four people, but as an organization gets larger it's impractical."

Anderson has consistently asked prospective staff whether they could accept his total authority for the organization and whether they fully accepted the principle of organizing for the sake of organizing. For the most part, staff seemed happy to embrace this latter principle. Several voiced their belief that organizers tended to create issues, dominate and manipulate groups and make themselves indispensable. Anderson's authority was more problematic. One staff member, Kris Curtis, who began

working with the Assemblies in June of 1974, says that there were criticisms of particular decisions Anderson made, and a feeling that staff should have more information about funding and programs, and more voice in VCDO planning, but that "it wasn't phrased in terms that Don should not have the ultimate authority he had."

The Assemblies kept growing. In 1974, it expanded into North Carolina, and the North Carolina Community Development Organization (NCCDO) was incorporated with the same board and management as VCDO, to facilitate fundraising from North Carolina foundations. Professional fundraisers were hired that year and more contributions poured in from individuals, foundations and churches, but still there was never enough to meet VCDO's ever-expanding budget. In particular, says Anderson, it was difficult to get foundations to fund an operating budget. Special projects were more attractive to the big givers; the Assembly function of imparting a technique was "too abstract" for many foundations to comprehend or place much trust in, according to Anderson. VCDO did sponsor several projects over the course of its history, including a buying club, an agricultural cooperative and a clothing store. They were all eventually discontinued, mainly because of lack of money.

For the first time in 1974, the staff began to implement a plan, discussed as much as two years earlier, to train local organizers to teach the Assembly technique through a hierarchy of local organizing committees, instead of devoting staff time to this function. This yielded faster, better results, and by the end of the year, 19 Assemblies were in existence.

Around this time, Dr. Clarence Gray III, of the Rockefeller Foundation, came to Petersburg to investigate VCDO's application for a grant. Gray, associate director for the Agricultural Sciences for the foundation, toured the office and attended an Assembly meeting in Prince Edward County, not far from where Gray, a black man, had grown up. Gray was impressed, not only with the order and discipline of the Assembly meeting, but with the potential role VCDO could play in a special program the foundation had recently begun for the Southeast.

Recalling the foundation's goals, Gray says,

The South is on the threshold of what appears to be a stage of rapid development. There's a scramble for resources and jobs. When we look at the black population of this country, half still live in the South, and about half of those live in the rural areas. Our strategy was to find a way to not only aid urban areas, but to look at the problems of the poor in rural areas. Then, the population distribution is something that can be upsetting. Everybody lives in cities, which makes us very vulnerable from a security standpoint. We've also encountered increased activity in rural areas. So a major goal (of the foundation) was to help blacks in the region.

Gray noticed some weaknesses in the VCDO. "They were a one-man operation and were rather thin in management expertise and the man-

agement of finances." But on the other hand, Gray read VCDO's backing from a wide range of church groups and foundations like Mary Reynolds Babcock, Edna McConnell Clark and Z. Smith Reynolds as "indications of substance and wide-ranging support." Gray says VCDO's weaknesses were "typical of fledgling" organizations and that he felt that "while Don was out intellectualizing and conceptualizing, Jim Riley [whose duties included being treasurer for VCDO] would be back at the office handling day-to-day affairs. On the whole it seemed a pretty good bet."

Thus Rockefeller granted \$300,000 to VCDO over two years, in semi-annual installments that began in January of 1975. For an organization like VCDO, the size of the grant was staggering, swelling the budget from \$150,000 in 1974 to \$400,000 in 1975. Even so, though VCDO spent \$400,000 in 1975, they had raised only \$375,000 that year, deepening the debt which the organization had carried since its earliest years.



Ted Spiegel/The Rockefeller Foundation

Anderson's philosophy was to expand as fast as he could, to "prove" the idea of the Assemblies to foundations, to show that it would work, not only in a single county or a single state, but anywhere. Thus the staff doubled in 1974 to about 20 people, then doubled again to about 45 in early 1976. Aside from the 22 field staff, this included eight full- and part-time clerical workers, eight problem-solving and projects directors and eight administrators.

By the end of the year, VCDO's debt exceeded \$150,000.

The rapid expansion from 1974 to 1976 stretched VCDO's thin finances and affected the character of the organization as well. Says Kris Curtis, "We evolved from a small, tight group of volunteers to more of an employee situation. Before, when people just trickled in, and got absorbed into the group, training was informal. You would go around with an experienced staff person, read and talk to people all you could. The expansion led to a formalization of it. When we let 12 new people in all at once [in the summer of 1975], we had a full-scale training program. There were more people working in the office and doing administrative things. Before, just about everybody worked in the field. You might be responsible for three counties and an office job. With more staff, it got to be two counties and maybe a part-time office job. And you'd be living right in the middle

Concentration of control ultimately seemed to impede the effectiveness of VCDO.

of the counties, so you were a lot more effective. Having that many staff was good; it just happened too rapidly and wasn't planned well."

The benefits of the expanded staff were visible. Six new Assemblies emerged, bringing the total to 28 organizations. Almost 200 neighborhood meetings were held every month. Two candidates for state office in Virginia, Andy Miller and Ira Lechner, addressed the Council for the Assem-

blies' semi-annual meeting in 1976.

Earlier in 1976, Jim Riley left VCDO because "it was time to move on and maybe the organization could profit by my leaving." C. Hoy Steele, who had begun working for VCDO in June of 1974, took over Riley's duties in March of 1976, after two months of on-the-job training. Steele says that both foundations and advisory board members had been stepping up pressure on VCDO to "do something about our finances. There hadn't been any financial planning. The money had been increasing from the beginning, but there were still a lot of old bills which we would pay on a crisis basis. We didn't even know what our monthly budget was. We were permanently in debt. When things got rough, Don would just put on an incredible burst of energy and go find some money."

To aggravate matters, a grant which in Anderson's words "we had every assurance of getting" did not come through. The stock market was at a low point during this period, so other sources of income were drying up as well. Anderson conducted a fund-raising drive among the local Assemblies which netted only a few thousand dollars.

In the summer, the effects of the financial crunch were becoming obvious. Anderson realized he would have to cut back, and asked nine or 10 staff members, whom he felt pretty sure were planning to leave at the end of the summer, to leave a little earlier. He told the rest of the staff that they might have to leave soon. "These layoffs really shook people up," says Steve Dawson, who had been on the staff since 1973. "It was done as humanely as possible, but it came as an admittance of how bad things were." Several of the staff did agree to keep working on a volunteer basis.

Anderson refused to let the staff know the extent of the debt — which by this time exceeded \$200,000 — and this became a major impetus for several of the staff members who engineered VCDO's second staff "revolt." Concerned about their chances of never getting paid and of being let off with scant notice, some staff drew up a list of "negotiable" demands. They included:

- that staff be represented on the VCDO and NASP (National

Association for the Southern Poor) corporate boards and on the advisory board, and that Assembly members be represented on the corporate boards;

- that Anderson not be paid any salary until the staff were paid through the time that they were laid off;

- that until the staff debt was repaid, the financial records be completely open to the staff still owed money;

- that monthly meetings be held, at which Anderson would provide a full financial statement;

- that the staff of August 31 would decide which of the staff would be retained;

- that for the next six months, all budgetary decisions and all departmental decisions be made collectively by Anderson and the staff members who were department heads, after which time the same body would determine future decision-making procedures.

But when Anderson met with the staff in the second week of September, 1976, he fired everybody "for financial reasons." Kris Curtis described the situation as having a "cast of hopelessness about it. When Don decided to lay everybody off for financial reasons, there wasn't even a possibility of us getting together to discuss how to run VCDO."

The severe financial crisis and staff rebellion crumbled VCDO, forcing it to suspend services. It was then that some Assemblies performed their most impressive feat: they stayed alive. Three-fourths of the individual Assemblies continued to meet and act without any support services from the executive arm. Many raised money to support themselves. Structurally, they were autonomous units and not dependent on large financial assistance from VCDO anyway. Most members remained ignorant of the difficulties in the central office. But in late September, Anderson convened a special meeting of the Council of Assemblies to alert these leaders to the problems. Ten of the 19 Presidents of Assemblies attended and passed an Anderson-inspired resolution which banned local Assemblies from hiring fired staff members of VCDO.

The internal disputes escalated to

the VCDO board of directors and advisory board of wealthy donors. Foundations which had supported Anderson in the past became concerned about their investment, the repercussions of unhealthy tensions on other organizations serving the Southern poor, and the fiscal responsibility for settling VCDO's huge debt. Finally, two advisory board members sought help from the Planning and Management Assistance Project, a specially funded project of the Center for Community Change that aids non-profit organizations.

Karl Mathiasen of the Project began interviewing some Assembly Presidents, former staff and members of VCDO's corporate and advisory boards. He was immediately impressed by their common agreement — despite some intense personal differences — that the Assembly idea was a good one and should not die. "Their dedication to the concept of the Assemblies was extraordinary," says Mathiasen. "These were volunteers. They were angry, bitter, frustrated, but their decision to stick around was my first indication of how important the organization was to them."

The problems he saw in VCDO, says Mathiasen, were typical of non-profit social change organizations. In particular, VCDO's corporate board did not play an active role, leaving the affairs of the organization to Anderson. It was a conclusion mirrored in the staff's complaint that too many functions — fundraising, financial control and staff management — were vested in Anderson's control, with no checks on his power. This concentration of control, which Anderson demanded for the sake of efficiency, ultimately seemed to impede the effectiveness of the organization. The staff were particularly concerned that no members of the Assemblies had the power to decide the priorities of the organizing arm of VCDO.

Several foundation representatives have even criticized the Rockefeller Foundation for giving an "exorbitant sum" to a group that "patently did not have the capacity to manage it," in the words of one foundation representative. "It was really foolish and 1960s-ish of them to do that," he says. "They hadn't even looked at the books until somebody blew the whistle on VCDO."

Gray disagrees, and defends Rockefeller's action. "Every grant is a gamble, or it should be," says Gray.

**"I have devoted
twenty years
to this thing."**

—Don Anderson

"If an organization is a sure thing, then they don't need us. But they had to submit their income tax returns and some financial records to us before each release. They didn't go down the drain until our last release."

Nonetheless, Gray admits that "maybe I was instrumental in giving him (Anderson) grandiose ideas about future fundraising." An advisory board member echoes his belief. "When he got that money from Rockefeller, he thought it was just the beginning of money pouring down from the heavens. And this is the way people with a vision have to be, they have to believe in the dream against unrealistic odds. But when you're on the board, all you can see is that the figures don't add up."

Indeed, the Rockefeller Foundation did not abandon VCDO, but made a \$10,000 grant to the Center for Community Change to partially fund PMAP aid to VCDO-NASP; the rest of the funding came from foundations and individuals who had been associated with VCDO-NASP before.

PMAP and the friends of VCDO set up two interim boards, one to work on fundraising and one to concentrate on budgeting. They were able to convince 11 individuals and 10 foundations to pledge that, if enough money were pledged, they would all pay in, so that VCDO could start off with a clean slate.

Mathiasen also revised VCDO's corporate structure. "I negotiated with Don that there needs to be an *active* group of outsiders (on the corporate board) and that Don could hire or fire me or my replacement only with the agreement of the executive committee. The advisory committee will be phasing out." Mathiasen will continue as comptroller for the organization until he can "build an institutional structure

that can work with Don and eventually can work with anyone."

The debt has been almost completely repaid, and the staff debt was settled out of court. Now operating only as NASP, the organization has received several grants beyond the debt. The reconstituted NASP has an office in Ahoskie, North Carolina, and three staff members: Jim Riley and Bill Bergen, both former staffers; and Cliff Somerville, who had previously served as the chief local organizer for the Assembly of Halifax, Virginia. The new office has begun to respond to requests to form Assemblies in Northampton, Beaufort and Pitt Counties in North Carolina and Fauquier County in Virginia. Staff have also been visiting the established Assemblies to see which ones need help.

"My plan is to give existing Assemblies one more year to become self-sufficient," says Anderson. "After that, I don't plan to use any more of the money I raise for that purpose." Instead, future funds will be devoted to expansion.

Anderson still insists that he must have ultimate authority to determine how to organize. "I have devoted 20 years to this thing," he says, "and to have it go in a direction I thought was wrong is something I could not countenance while I was in the organization." As for the financial troubles of 1976, he says, "It's true I took some risks, and frankly, I don't regret having taken them. In an innovative project like ours, where most people don't believe it could happen, getting money is a problem. I took risks in order to get large enough and have an adequate staff, to get functioning Conferences, so that we could have a durable institution. I felt that that would be the proof of the Assemblies.

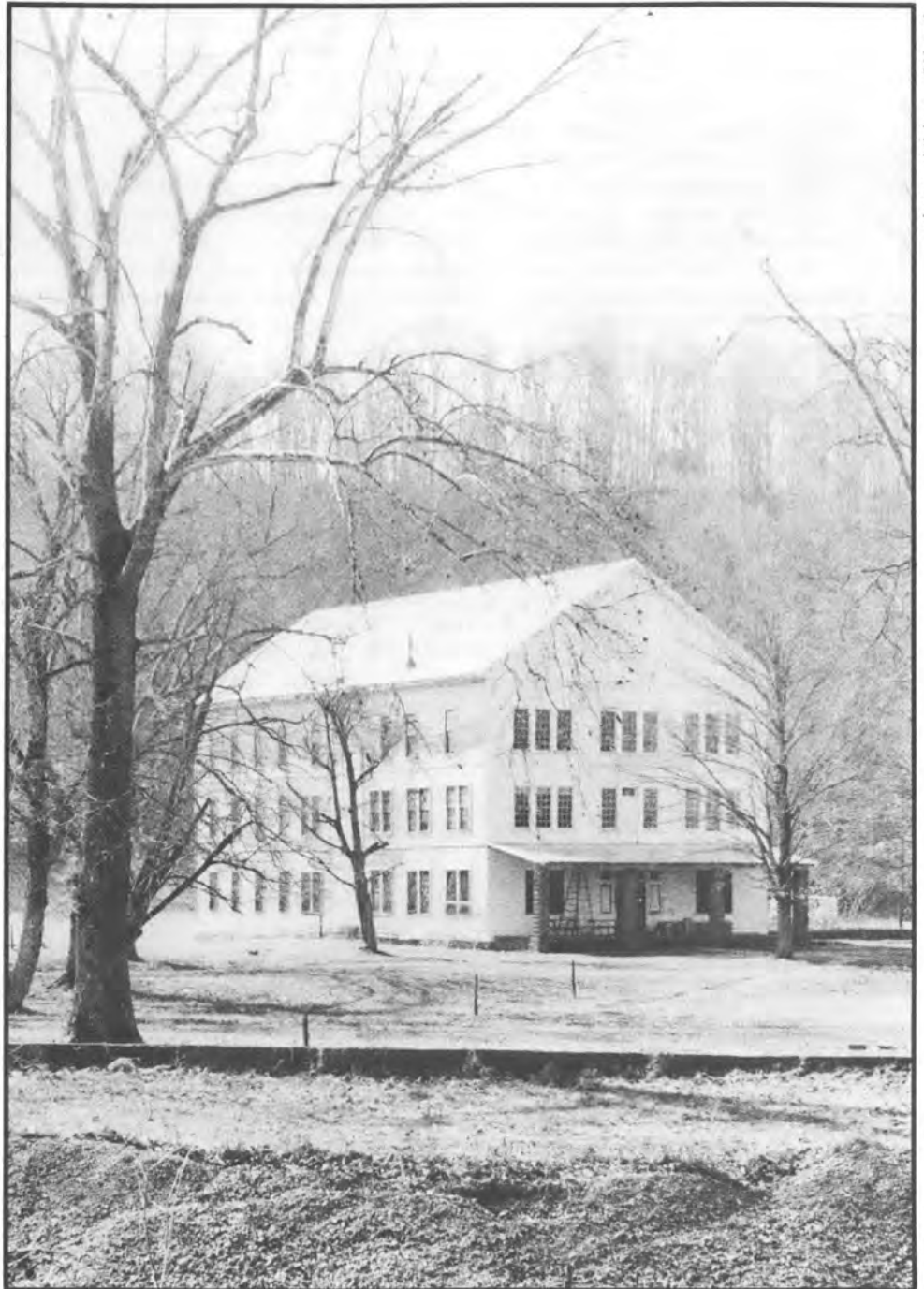
"It took me eight years to get as far as we had gotten. We had formed over 1,000 Conferences, and a fifth of them were meeting every month. There we were on the verge of a big success, when we had the financial problems. When we suspended services, *that* was the moment the idea was proved, because the leadership of the Assemblies took over. They stood on their own." □

Clare Jupiter is a former staff member of Southern Exposure. She now lives in New Orleans.

By John Egerton

Visions of Utopia

John Egerton is a native Southerner, and grandson of one of the founders of another utopian community in Rugby, Tennessee. A journalist and author, he has written articles on a variety of topics for more than 20 magazines — including Southern Exposure. He has published three books on the South: A Mind to Stay Here, The Americanization of Dixie, and Visions of Utopia. This article is excerpted from Visions of Utopia, University of Tennessee Press, ©1977 by John Egerton.



photos: Visions of Utopia

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There is no explaining the strange career of Julius Augustus Wayland. Born poor in Vincennes, Indiana, in 1854, he went on to become (in chronological order) a successful printer and a Republican capitalist in his home state, a postmaster and an alleged carpetbagger in post-Civil War Missouri, a prosperous real estate speculator in Colorado, a socialist newspaper publisher back home in Indiana, the founder of a utopian socialist colony in Tennessee, and the publisher of a Kansas-based newspaper with a national following of left-wing political reformers. He has been called “a Victorian Tom Paine” and “the greatest propagandist of Socialism that has ever lived.” His Kansas paper, *Appeal to Reason*, attained a circulation of more than 150,000. He introduced Eugene V. Debs to socialism, and Debs went on to run for President of the United States five times and to become the most famous socialist in American history (with the possible exception of Norman Thomas). Wayland suggested to Upton Sinclair the idea of writing a book exposing deplorable conditions in the Chicago stockyards, and Sinclair subsequently turned it into his muckraking classic, *The Jungle*.

As a convert to socialism, Wayland attacked monopolies and free enterprise with unflagging zeal, but he never lost the knack for turning a profit; and although he gave most of what he made to his adopted cause, he did not die a poor man. He did, however, die tragically. In 1912, after his party had lost another election and his paper had lost its broad appeal, the man who had optimistically expected “the coming nation” to be a socialist state finally gave up in despair and took his own

life. And then, the strangest thing of all about Julius Wayland: his visibility and influence and notoriety evaporated almost instantly; he seemed to disappear almost without a trace; he was quickly forgotten, and has hardly been remembered since.

The biographers have overlooked a fascinating character. Wayland is worth remembering for his skill as a propagandist, his political and social influence, and his colorful excursion from republicanism to socialism. And perhaps most of all, he should be remembered as the founder of Ruskin, a Middle Tennessee utopian colony that attracted settlers from all over the United States before it fell victim to its own internal flaws and to the American legal system it so critically disdained.

The last decade of the nineteenth century was a period of great political and economic instability in the United States. Grover Cleveland was elected President in 1892, the only man ever to win that office, lose it, and then win it again. Populism was on the rise, and William Jennings Bryan, as the standard-bearer for the Democrats and the Populists, made a strong bid for the presidency in 1896. The stock market crashed in the Panic of 1893, and Jacob Coxey led his “army” of the unemployed on a march on Washington. The opulence of the “money barons” — the Carnegies, Morgans, Rockefellers and others — stood in



Julius Augustus Wayland, 1908

vivid contrast to the poverty of the masses; and men who called themselves Populists or Socialists or Communists advocated numerous alternatives to the inequitable system of unrestrained private enterprise. It was also a busy time for experimental utopian communities: by one estimate, more than 80 such colonies were scattered across the United States at the close of the century.

On the eve of the Panic of 1893, Julius Wayland was a well-to-do real estate broker in Pueblo, Colorado. But he had become vaguely discontented with what he considered a political and social injustice: a system that benefited entrepreneurs like himself at the expense of less advantaged people. An English shoemaker in Pueblo had introduced him to the essays of the Fabian Society and the social criticism of John Ruskin, and Wayland was beginning his rapid conversion from republicanism to his own unique blend of enterprising socialism. Convinced that a depression was coming, he sold his property interests and moved to Greengburg, Indiana, to ride out the storm and prepare to take up again his former craft — printing, publishing and editing — on behalf of his adopted cause.

Socialism had not surfaced as a mass movement in the United States at that time, but it had a large following in Europe, and it took a multitude of different forms. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were the movement’s radicals, the proponents of a violent and revolutionary class struggle. The Fabians, whose number included Bernard Shaw, were opposed to the Marxist theory, holding that more evolutionary social reforms within existing institutions would bring about the natural development of socialism. The earlier utopian socialists — principally Robert Owen and Charles Fourier — were idealists who envisioned the creation of communitarian settlements based on voluntary and cooperative sharing of all resources, and their views were carried forward in the last years of the century by other idealists, most notably the English novelist Edward Bellamy. There were also the Christian Socialists, of whom Thomas Hughes was one. And then there was John Ruskin, an English art critic and social theorist whose early writings on art and architecture gave

photo courtesy of Walter Wayland

way to more broadly directed social and political criticism and to the advocacy of positive programs for social reform. Many of his theories on such things as old age pensions, publicly financed education, and the organization of labor have long since become accepted principles.

Wayland studied many of Ruskin's works, and he read *Looking Backward*, Bellamy's 1888 novel describing an orderly, problem-free cooperative society of the future. The two Englishmen not only expressed views and ideas he shared enthusiastically; they also wrote with a style and flair he deeply admired. Their skill as writers prompted him to take up his own pen in emulation, and their ideas became the basis for the utopian socialist community he dreamed of creating. More than any others, Ruskin and Bellamy were the philosophical giants in Wayland's vision of socialism.

In Indiana, he launched a weekly newspaper on April 29, 1893, naming it *The Coming Nation*. Within six months it had a paid circulation of 13,000 and was completely self-supporting, even though its income was derived entirely from subscriptions (capitalist advertising was not accepted). Wayland wrote most of the copy himself, and the remainder came primarily from reprints of socialist tracts and the correspondence of the readers.


The newspaper revealed much about Wayland himself. It avoided complex theoretical discourses and stuck to simple issues, laid out in short, pithy paragraphs. It contained none of the hair-splitting arguments that divided different kinds of socialists one from another, but advocated instead a flexible and inclusive philosophy uniting all socialists against their common enemy: capitalism. Its four pages of aphorisms, one-liners, short editorials, and eye-catching tidbits of information were clearly directed to the masses of common people, not to an intellectual elite. Wayland had little patience with the theoreticians, whose windy arguments bored him; he wanted to popularize socialism for the benefit of the multitudes of impoverished workers, and an astounding number of them responded with 50-cents-a-year subscriptions and enthusiastic letters of encouragement. He had the deft touch of an advertising man, a publi-

THE COMING NATION

RUSKIN, TENN., SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1893.

This Paper Stands for the Common Ownership of All Means of Production and Distribution, and is Edited and Published in a Co-operative Community Based on that Principle.


SEVENDAKS.



Who Are "We the People?"

HELP THE STRIKING MINERS.

The St. Louis Meeting—Labor Leaders Declare for Collective Ownership of Mines and Transportation—Dispatch From Eugene Debs—National Gathering Called for September 27.



ENDURANCE OF THE TOILERS.

B

LEAVES ON ACORNS.

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To Colonize, or Not to Colonize?

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FOR THE PROLETARIAT.

cist, a promoter — and the hard-hitting delivery of an evangelist. Many of the intellectuals of the movement looked askance at his over-simplifications, but they could only envy his ability to move the multitude.

By the spring of 1894, the circulation of *The Coming Nation* exceeded 50,000. Wayland had been telling his readers that a circulation of 100,000 would produce a surplus of about \$23,000 a year, and that the money would be used to buy a tract of land upon which a socialist colony — "The Co-operative Commonwealth" — would be built. He promised that those who sent in 200 or more subscriptions to the paper, or contributed as much (presumably \$100, at the rate of 50 cents per subscription), would be the charter members of the colony. His

intent was to create a practical, functioning model of social reform, a demonstration of his faith that cooperation and other socialist principles were superior to monopoly and competition.

By summer, Wayland had become a controversial and unwanted figure in the little town of Greenburg, but he was a popular hero to his far-flung readers; and although the paper's circulation had not reached 100,000, he decided it was time to move. His agents had been searching the interior of the nation for suitable land, concentrating their efforts in Kentucky and Tennessee, and they decided finally upon two adjoining 500-acre tracts at Tennessee City, a small community in Dickson County, about fifty miles west of Nashville. The price was

\$2,500 — \$2.50 an acre — and since the property was served by a nearby railroad and post office, both of which the colony would need, Wayland felt he had made a good bargain. In the July 21, 1894, issue of *The Coming Nation*, he sent out a call to the charter members of the new community and announced that the next issue of the paper would come from Tennessee.

2

FOUNDING A COLONY

The first dozen settlers arrived in the heat of summer, and lived in tents while they cut timber and erected the first structure — a building to house the printing press that was to be their principal source of income. One of them later described Tennessee City as “a sorry collection of primitive Southern homes on a railroad track,” with the post office and “a run-down hotel” nearby. The property, which had been owned by a Chicago land company, was pleasing to look at, but its forested hillsides and rocky flatlands yielded stubbornly and sparsely to the new tenants, who struggled under extreme difficulty to gain a foothold.

They were a diverse and interesting assembly from all over the United States. Accounts vary as to their number, but the first group apparently included about 20 men and a dozen women, some of them couples with children, others single. They were, by and large, craftsmen and professionals, intelligent and well-read individuals. The depression had driven them to refuge in socialism, and one thing they held in common was a desire to escape from the competitive society and start anew in an atmosphere of cooperation. There was a butcher, a baker, a barber, a blacksmith; there were five printers, three doctors, two ironworkers, and several teachers and farmers. And there was their convener, Julius Wayland, who named the colony Ruskin, in honor of the man whose “great, loving, wise spirit” had led them there. John Ruskin, he said, was his model, and “his mind is my inspiration.”

Ironically, Ruskin was by then a 75-year-old man suffering from intermittent periods of insanity that had become almost continuous. Wayland had faithfully mailed him each issue of

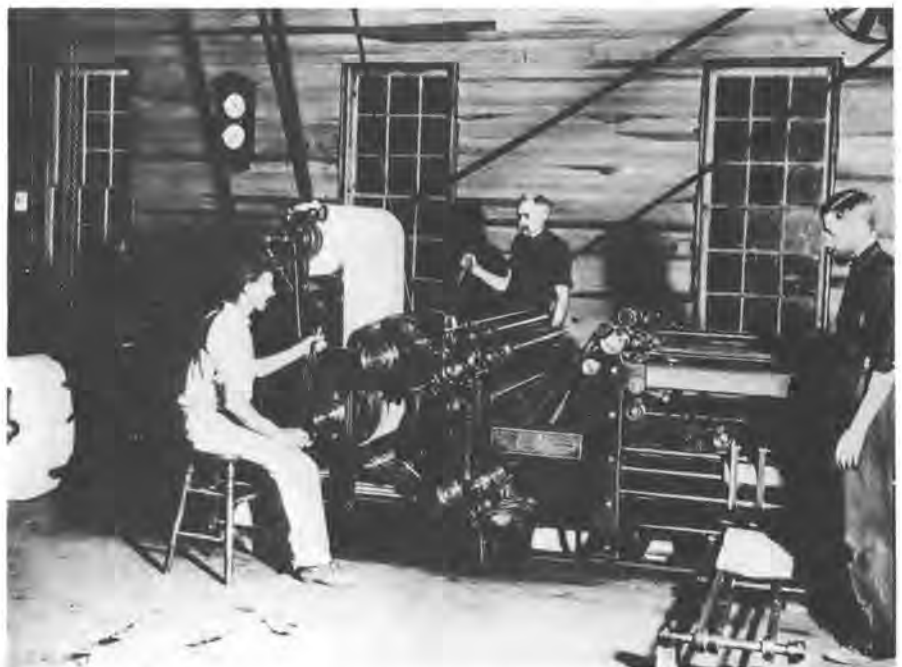
The Coming Nation, and he wrote to tell him of the colony that had been founded in his name. Subsequently, an autographed and finely bound copy of Ruskin’s complete works was received in the Tennessee community, but the old man whose words had inspired Wayland and his comrades was too ill to take an interest in their efforts.

Tennessee had no law suitable for the incorporation of a town such as the Ruskinites envisioned, but Wayland believed the laws that governed business corporations could be adapted to serve the needs of a cooperative association, and on his initiative the Ruskin Co-operative Association was incorporated under state law, and a charter was drawn up and signed by the adult members of the community. When it was learned that the law forbade women to be incorporators, the charter was redrawn and signed by 20 men on August 16, 1894.

Thus, Ruskin began as a curious amalgamation of political and social ideas. As a cooperative community, it adhered more closely to the romantic visions of Ruskin and Bellamy and to the earlier endeavors of Robert Owen than it did to Marx’s more contemporary brand of revolutionary communism. As an incorporated entity under Tennessee law, it conformed to the legal requirements of capitalism.

Its charter permitted the shareholders collectively to acquire land, to own and operate manufacturing facilities, to build houses, to provide educational and recreational services to members, to insure employees against want, and to promote harmonious social relations on the basis of cooperation; but the colony’s principal asset — its publishing house — remained the property of Julius Wayland. These apparent contradictions were destined to cause friction, but in the beginning they mattered little — if, indeed, they were even noticed.

Each charter member received one share of stock in the corporation, regardless of the amount he had actually paid in, and the shares were given a face value of \$500 each. Wives as well as husbands received shares, and the stockholders met once a month to transact the business of the colony. They elected a board of directors and officers (Wayland was the first president), and organized the activities of the colony under elected superintendents of education and recreation, agriculture, manufacturing, sanitation and medical care, public works, cuisine, and distribution. *The Coming Nation* resumed publication from its new plant in August, the settlers worked together to build individual homes for each family, all meals were provided in a common dining facility, agricul-



The publishing house was Ruskin’s principal asset.

tural and manufacturing activities were initiated, and a steady stream of new residents came to share in the arduous but productive undertaking.

Under the terms of the charter, each man paid \$500 and received one share of stock when he joined the colony; if he had a wife, she could either purchase a share of stock for herself or receive the benefits of the community free of charge, in return for her labor. All work was of equal value; housing, food, medical care and other necessities were provided without charge; and purchases from the community commissary were made with paper certificates, each of which represented one hour of work (a quart of peanuts cost one hour in scrip; a pound of coffee, seven hours; a pair of pants, 37 hours).

Ruskin was organized to the teeth around the principle of cooperation. It was a place of intense, feverish, exhausting activity, a beehive of zealous and industrious workers in eager pursuit of a lofty cause, and they generated enough energy to produce quick and impressive results. In addition to the printing plant, the houses, and the commissary, they built a kiln and a planing mill, acquired a herd of dairy cows, and began to manufacture and market such diverse products as chewing gum, suspenders, and Ruskin Ready Remedy, a cure-all patent medicine priced at 25 cents a bottle.

By the fall of 1894, the colony had almost 100 residents and the newspaper had close to 75,000 subscribers. Wayland told the shareholders in October that he was turning over to the association "all the material and good-will of *The Coming Nation*, the building and the money." The plant, he said, was worth "at least \$50,000," although it had a book value of \$15,000, most of which belonged to his wife. (That, incidentally, was one of the few references Wayland ever made to his marital status.)

3 RADICALS AND ROMANTICS

In the October 13 edition of *The Coming Nation*, Wayland inserted a brief editorial comment which seems in retrospect to suggest that trouble was already brewing beneath the



peaceful surface at Ruskin. "There is no danger to our colony from the outside," he wrote. "If our members have sense enough to hold together, not to allow trifling, petty matters to create dissention [*sic*], this colony will grow to rival other corporations and its members will be rich in all the opportunities of life. I have no fear of outside interference, nor quarrels over weighty matters. It is only the meanest, smallest matters that can create dissention, and I believe some member of every family is well enough posted to avoid these little clashes."

Ruskin's charter members were already outnumbered by newcomers, and each time the population grew, the potential for disagreement increased. There were "trifling, petty matters" aplenty — quarrels over manners and morals and religious beliefs and especially over variations of the socialist theme.

Wayland was a non-partisan socialist, an independent rather than a party loyalist. He fashioned his own doctrine as he went along, and stubbornly held to it in spite of the criticisms of his companions. Impatient of narrow-mindedness, he was himself narrow-minded and defensive of his views, which he felt were broad enough to include everybody and thus should be accepted with deference.

But many residents, particularly newcomers, would not defer to him. The press was the big money-maker, and it was spreading the gospel of socialism far and wide; but Wayland was attacked for running it as a profit-making enterprise, and for controlling it by himself. He defended its prosperity as the life-blood of the colony; yet even after he gave its assets to the association, his opponents called him an individualist and an anarchist — the worst imaginable epithet to any self-respecting socialist — and accused him of lining his own pockets with money from the newspaper. He attempted to retain editorial control of the paper,

but the residents insisted that it be run in the same way that everything else at Ruskin was run — cooperatively.

Throughout the winter and spring of 1895, the running battle between Wayland and his detractors continued, and while the unsuspecting readers of *The Coming Nation* were given only glowing accounts of Ruskin's progress and the march of socialism, the founder and editor of the paper gradually lost his control of it. Finally, in the middle of the summer, Wayland gave up. His resignation, the paper announced, was "by mutual consent," but in fact he departed in bitter disillusionment, his dream of a model community in shambles. The land he had bought and the printing empire he had created remained in the hands of the association — they were, in fact, its primary assets — yet some of his enemies who called themselves "loyalists to the cause of Socialism" asserted that he left owing the stockholders \$3,500.

In truth, he did not leave empty-handed, or so it seems. Within a month, he had launched a new paper, *Appeal to Reason*, in Kansas City; and he had enough resources to see it through a money-losing year there before moving the operation to Girard, Kansas, where it became a vastly successful publication and the leading socialist newspaper in America. Wayland was to meet again with *The Coming Nation* under circumstances that could only have given him a satisfying feeling of vindication, but his departure from Ruskin was anything but triumphant. Historian Robert Corlew called it "another case of Jerusalem stoning her prophets." Wayland had written in one issue of *The Coming Nation* that each stockholder owned one share of non-assessable, non-dividend-paying, non-proxy-voting, non-transferable stock, "and it will be to you of no value, except as it gives you the right to be one of us." When he became a minority of one, that prophetic declaration applied to him, and he gave up his



All work was of equal value. A quart of peanuts cost one hour in scrip; a pound of coffee, seven hours; a pair of pants, 37 hours.

valueless share of stock and left in disgrace and defiance.

Ruskin did not collapse after Wayland left. The stockholders, who had gained complete control of the newspaper, turned the editorship of it over to Alfred S. Edwards, a former associate of Wayland's who had parted company with him after a disagreement. The circulation of *The Coming Nation* held steady, and the population of Ruskin continued to grow. Late in 1895, the colony demonstrated its vitality in a daring move. Having found their land unsuitable for agricultural production, the Ruskinites decided to buy additional property in the vicinity and to move the entire enterprise — houses, printing plant and all — to the new site.

The land was located five miles north of Tennessee City, in the fertile valley of Yellow Creek. It had, in addition to abundant timber, limestone, and brick clay, 300 acres of arable land and two enormous caves, one of

which was used as a meeting place and a natural refrigerator for food storage. In all, the colonists acquired about 800 acres at an average of \$20 an acre, paying about half of the \$16,000 purchase price in cash and mortgaging the rest, using their Tennessee City property as collateral.

The move was made in stages over a year's time, and by the beginning of 1897, it was complete: Ruskin had a new home, at the center of which was Commonwealth House, an imposing three-story structure housing the printery, the communal dining room, lodging for newcomers and visitors, a nursery, a bookstore, and a library. It was a huge, barn-like building that towered above the crude houses of the colonists, and on its third floor, in an auditorium large enough for 700 seats, plays and lectures and musical programs were staged, and art exhibits lined walls. In the less rarefied atmosphere at ground level, buildings that had been moved from the old site were

placed with houses, barns, a blacksmith shop, and a store that had been there before; and the aggregate gave Ruskin all the essential elements of a thriving and prosperous town.

The first part of 1897 may have been the colony's zenith. It had assets of close to \$100,000, made up of 1,800 acres of land, a highly successful newspaper and printing business, no less than 75 buildings, a diversified agricultural operation, a sawmill, a grist mill, a steam laundry, a machine shop, a cafe, a bakery, a school, a commissary, a cannery, and several cottage industries whose products were advertised and sold by mail and across the counter. Ruskin also had about 250 residents who had come from 32 states and half a dozen foreign countries, and they worked nine hours a day at whatever jobs they agreed to perform, receiving in scrip the equivalent of \$5 a week for their efforts. Ostensibly, the principles of socialism were resoundingly successful. Once-hostile neighbors had begun to admire the industriousness of the Ruskinites, to trade with them, and even on occasion to socialize with them. The Nashville *Banner* called the colony "a commendable and harmless enterprise." To observers on the outside, Ruskin seemed to have arrived and conquered.

But it was within two years of total collapse. Its problems, as Wayland had said they would be, were internal, and they were multiple and complex. A change in the by-laws gave the board of directors complete control over all the affairs of the association, and stockholder meetings, which had been held once a month, became pro-forma, once-a-year affairs. A women's rights dispute developed between the wives of charter members, each of whom owned a voting share in the corporation, and the women who had arrived later, most of whom had no share and thus no vote. The division between charter members and the



Ruskin's main building, Commonwealth House, still stands.

other colonists had grown from a narrow fissure to a gaping chasm, and when the charter members sought an injunction from a Dickson County court to prevent the issuance of stock to "non-charter" women unless they paid the \$500 fee, there was no repairing the damage. What had been a private dispute behind closed doors became an open conflict involving the law and the courts, and that change signaled the beginning of Ruskin's demise.

There was a pronounced division between the charter members and most of those who came after them. For the most part, the original colonists were middle-class urbanites with an intellectual and philosophical interest in socialism. They were not radicals but romantics, gentle people who believed in the principle of cooperation but opposed the theory of class struggle. They worked hard for themselves and for the community, and in their shared achievements and failures they quickly became a closeknit group.

The later arrivals often found it difficult to enter that first circle, for a number of reasons. Many of them came from rural areas, or from the hard-hit ranks of the depressed working class. Some were unhappy with the limited choice of jobs available, others resented the notion of cooperation and sharing, and a few were loafers

and freeloaders. They were, as a group, less disciplined, less well educated, and more radical than their predecessors. They sensed an attitude of superiority among the charter members — a feeling that was reinforced by some who expressed the view that a higher value should be placed on "brain" work and "thinking" jobs than on "hand" work and common labor.

Out of this sharp separation arose several conflicts. Some of the charter members who helped to oust Wayland because he refused to share control of the press found themselves under attack for their reluctance to share power with the newer members. Admission to the colony was made more difficult — a preliminary visit was required, as was a written examination on the principles of cooperation and socialism, in addition to the \$500 fee and approval of a majority of the stockholders — but the restrictions failed to lessen the dissension, and a few people moved into the community without ever becoming members.

Education was another bone of contention. From the beginning, great emphasis had been placed on the school program, and on cultural and intellectual activities for all ages, as well as on the teaching of socialist principles. But as time passed the interest began to diminish, and educational pursuits were given a lower priority. When the colony was relocat-

ed at the cave site, 25 acres were set aside for the Ruskin College of the New Economy, and a resident architect designed a building for it. Money was raised through appeals in *The Coming Nation*, and in June of 1897 a ceremony was held for the laying of a cornerstone, but the building was never completed and the college was never opened. By then, the Ruskinites had other things on their minds.

The colonists also had serious quarrels about religion. There was no church in the village, the residents at first being indifferent to religion. Later, a Sunday School was organized to meet in private homes, and some colonists went outside the community to church. In time, the membership included some who practiced spiritualism and healing faith, others who came from the major Protestant denominations, and still others who were militantly anti-religious. Emotional religious conflicts sometimes erupted, and they were seldom tempered with brotherly love.

Finally, the most visible and outwardly controversial dispute was about sex. A few of the latecomers to Ruskin were advocates of "free love" and against marriage, and their well-publicized arguments with the monogamous colonists created in the minds of many outsiders a false impression of rampant immorality. The "free love" dispute was actually a



Early photographs of unknown origin show the settlers of Ruskin to be industrious and enterprising people.

minor matter concerning only a few Ruskinites, but it was magnified all out of proportion to its importance, and it became yet another strain on the already weakened cord that bound Ruskin together.

4 POLITICS, RELIGION AND SEX

The colony's internal unraveling seemed to begin just when its external image was becoming favorable. Ruskin was in sound financial condition, with no debts outstanding except the property mortgage. Its members paid their poll taxes and road taxes, and in 1896 they voted four-to-one in favor of the Democratic-Populist candidate for President, William Jennings Bryan, as did their Dickson County neighbors. The county school system paid Ruskin \$2 per pupil for the operation of a five-month school, and the colony kept school in session 10 months a year and provided the building and teachers. And after the Ruskinites had served free barbecue to 2,000 people at a public Fourth of July celebration in the big cave in 1896, a newspaper in Waverly praised the colonists as "not anarchists and revolutionaries but good, law-abiding citizens whom any county would be glad to claim."

By the middle of 1897, Ruskin's internal crisis was building rapidly. Some insiders complained that it was "not Socialist enough." Others said its affairs were controlled by "a secret ring," and it had become "a closed corporation for a favored few." Charges and countercharges of "capitalism" and "anarchy" and "individualism" were tossed about. It was asserted that the colony had no discipline and no leadership. Politics, religion, and sex — three eternally unresolvable subjects of debate — were endlessly debated. There was no willingness to compromise, and cooperation had become nothing more than a word in the name of the association. Any who think Ruskin is a paradise, a columnist in *The Coming Nation* wrote, "get a wrong idea of our colony. We are but human, with 5,000 years of inherited prejudices. . . . We can't change human nature in four years." That oblique acknowledgement was about as close as the newspaper ever came to reporting on Ruskin's problems.

But the problems continued. In June 1897, three colonists preparing to resign from the community turned in their shares of stock and asked for a \$500 refund. The colony leaders had honored such requests in the past as a matter of policy, but they refused the three men, explaining that the local constable had come to collect

on bad debts they had incurred, and their shares had been sold to pay their creditors. The men promptly sued the colony, and subsequently were countersued for libel. The resort to court action had been tried once again, and in the coming months it would be tried many more times.

Early in 1898, a group of dissidents agreed to leave the colony if their \$500 shares were redeemed, but some of the men claimed full shares for their wives as well as themselves, and the dispute over equal rights for women surfaced once more. Altogether, nine court injunctions were sought in 1898 and 1899. Somehow, Ruskin kept going, but its population had stopped growing and the circulation of *The Coming Nation* had begun to drop. The colonists were in court almost as often as they were at work, and their constant preoccupation was not socialism but survival. As the months dragged on, the collapse of the colony seemed more and more certain.

The end almost came in May of 1899. A small group of colonists, most of them charter members, went into court and sought to have the Ruskin corporation dissolved. The judge denied their motion, saying they lacked sufficient evidence to prove their assets in the corporation were being squandered. But the law did give the court broad discretion in cases



When they were building the colony, the settlers lived in tents and ate outdoors.

concerning the rights of stockholders, and it was clear that the colony might be vulnerable to a call for liquidation by a few dissatisfied shareowners. Under the deteriorating circumstances, the tactic seemed bound to succeed eventually.

By then only a small handful of charter members remained at Ruskin, and they had few allies in their campaign to have the colony dissolved. A majority of the stockholders held a closed meeting in secret and decided that liquidation might indeed be the best strategy, as long as they controlled it. They voted to abolish the Ruskin Co-operative Association, and to create a new entity, the Ruskin Commonwealth. Their plan was to ask the court to sell the assets of the association and to distribute the proceeds among its members, who could then choose to remain in the newly formed Ruskin Commonwealth or leave. But the charter group — the minority — learned of the plan and beat the majority to the punch. At their urging, a judge declared the colony hopelessly deadlocked and appointed a receiver to sell the assets at auction.

It seems of little consequence now which side initiated the action, since,

in effect, both factions had concluded that liquidation was inevitable. But in the heat and emotion of the time, every move seemed to have an exaggerated importance in the minds of all the colonists, and even predictable and expected developments caused shock and excitement. More than 30 years after Ruskin failed, a former colonist named J. T. McDill recalled the moment when the fateful news reached him. "Our little Eden was not to last," he wrote. "I was out in the field with a hoe when the news came. A receiver had been appointed to sell us out for technical violations of the anti-trust laws. The decision was final. There was no appeal." The sale was set for June, and then postponed to July 26.

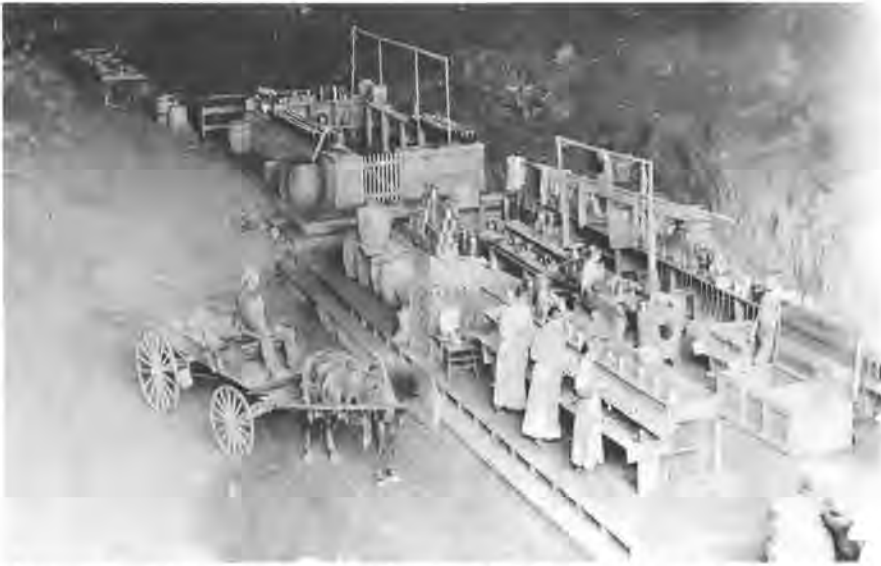
McDill was not a charter member, and it is not altogether clear which camp he was in. The same apparently can be said for many other colonists. They were not always well-informed about the various intrigues that were afoot, and they sometimes aligned themselves differently from one issue to the next. Ruskin was seldom if ever divided sharply into two rigidly defined ideological factions; it could more accurately be described as a

collection of shifting coalitions, the shape and strength of which often changed. And on the issue of liquidation, there turned out to be three factions: the charter minority, who got the injunction; the majority, who formed the new Ruskin Commonwealth; and a group of about 30 people, described by a Nashville newspaper as the "cream" of the colonists, who were making their own individual plans for the future.

Only 138 stockholding members remained at Ruskin. Theoretically, each one stood to receive par value — \$500 — for his or her share, and since the assets of the colony had been valued at \$94,000 in a January, 1899, inventory, most of them hoped and expected to receive at least par value, and perhaps more. But they were naive about the arcane complexities of the law and the courts. A forced sale, they were told, would not yield anything like the true value of the properties, and there would be court costs and legal fees and mortgages to settle. Furthermore, the circulation of *The Coming Nation* had fallen from 60,000 to 11,000, reducing its worth accordingly. They might be lucky to realize \$250 apiece.

In part to build the community's assets and in part as a farewell gesture to their neighbors, the Ruskinites managed to reach an agreement on one thing: they would invite the public to one last Fourth of July celebration at the cave. It was a grand and heart-warming affair. The colonists put many of their personal belongings on sale, as well as the products of their industries, and they provided music and entertainment and generous amounts of barbecue and ice cream. They sold admission tickets for 25 cents apiece, and although the day's attendance was estimated to be 1,500 people, about 5,000 tickets were sold. Recalled J. T. McDill in 1932: "They bought everything we had to sell, [and those who] had some money left threw it all in a hat and donated it to us." He and many others were overwhelmed: "those grand people... rallied to support and comfort us... We had outraged their religious beliefs. We had reviled their politics. We had mocked their simplicity. And they forgave all." It was Ruskin's last happy day.





Among the industries launched by the Ruskinites was an extensive canning industry inside the cave.

5 END OF AN EXPERIMENT

The sale and its aftermath were a disaster for the colonists. Hundreds of people came looking for bargains, and they found them: fine horses sold for as little as \$10, mules for \$9, hogs for \$5. The original 1,000-acre property at Tennessee City, which Julius Wayland had bought in 1894 for \$2,500, attracted a high bid of \$2,300. The 30 or so colonists who sided neither with the majority nor with the charter group decided they wanted the cave site for a non-ideological community of private homes, and their representative bid \$11,000 for the 800-acre site that had been purchased three years earlier for \$16,000 and was still encumbered by a mortgage of almost \$6,000.

Considering improvements and higher land costs, both parcels were probably worth more than the high bids, but under the circumstances, the prices seemed satisfactory. To the chagrin of the colonists, however, both deals fell through when the high bidders could not raise enough money to take possession. An involved legal hassle ensued, and the sale was reopened. When it was all over, a man named Thomas Rogers — possibly the same individual who had sold the colonists a 384-acre section of the cave site for

\$10,500 in 1896 — was declared the high bidder on the entire 1,800-acre Ruskin property. He got it all for a grand total of \$1,505. The mortgages on the land were left for the colonists to pay from their receipts.

All in all, the assets of Ruskin brought in about \$16,500. Settlement of the mortgages reduced that amount to \$10,600. Court costs, the claims of creditors, and the fees of the receivers and attorneys took another \$5,200 or so, leaving about \$5,400 to be divided 138 ways. Each colonist got approximately \$39 and a little change.

The members of the new Ruskin Commonwealth pooled their resources to buy *The Coming Nation* and its presses and joined with a group of Indiana socialists who had bought a tract of land seven miles south of Waycross, Georgia. They moved there in October of 1899 and started a new colony, resuming publication of the newspaper. Their little post office at the village of Duke, on the edge of the Okefenokee Swamp, was renamed Ruskin on January 1, 1900, but the colonizing venture was short-lived. In less than 18 months, it had succumbed to hot weather, fire, sickness, suspicious neighbors, and poor credit. The local sheriff sold the printing equipment in February, 1901, to cover bad debts. (The Ruskin name, however, can still be found on Georgia road maps.)

The colonists scattered after the sale — and later, after the Georgia experiment folded — and in a short

time they were as widely separated as they had been when Julius Wayland summoned them to Tennessee. About a dozen of them went together to a “single tax” colony at Fairhope, Alabama, and others joined utopian communities in California and elsewhere.

Ruskin was finally finished. The *New York Journal* editorialized that the association “was perfectly solvent,” and its failure was “not commercial.” Its problems, the paper said, had been caused by “the dissatisfaction of less than a dozen members.” Others were less charitable, saying “bums and hoboes” made a poor mix with “well-educated and cultured people.” A daughter of one of the colonists said later that Ruskin had attempted “to carry out one economic order in a limited sphere, while surrounded by and under the laws of an entirely different economic order.” It was not a question of which was right or best, she said, but of “the impossibility of coexistence between irreconcilable systems.”

One loose thread in the Ruskin story remains to be tied. Julius Wayland was editing his socialist newspaper, *Appeal to Reason*, in Girard, Kansas, when he learned that *The Coming Nation* had been dissolved and sold in Georgia. He sent a representative to buy it, and it was subsequently merged with his highly successful Kansas enterprise. Doctrinaire radicals in the Socialist Party apparently thought little of Wayland and his shoot-from-the-hip brand of socialism, but his readers obviously liked him, and so did Eugene V. Debs, who wrote a column for the paper. Wayland was a man of many contradictions: a believer in political action but not a party loyalist, a utopian who lost his faith in colonization schemes, a soft-hearted man with a hot temper, and finally an eternal optimist who committed suicide.

Shortly before his death, when Ruskin was a faded memory and *The Coming Nation* had been given a decent burial in the pages of *Appeal to Reason*, it must have become clear to Julius Wayland that Debs would never be President and the upcoming nation would not be socialist. In an unguarded moment of candor, he spoke his own epitaph: “The struggle against the capitalist system isn’t worth it. Let it pass.” And he did. □

LADIES BECOME VOTERS

By Marie Stokes Jemison

While working for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment in her native Alabama, Marie Stokes Jemison became curious about the experiences of the state's women reformers and suffragists of an earlier generation. As she searched for the unknown heroines of the South, she discovered much about her home city and her own family: her grandmother's first cousin, for example, was Bossie O'Brien Hundley, the leading suffragist behind the women's lobbying efforts in the Alabama legislature, and a close ally of Pattie Ruffner Jacobs.

The experience, Jemison says, has "changed my life." She recently co-founded the Southern Women's Archive of the Birmingham Public Library, and she is currently writing a book about Southern women.

In a letter to us, Jemison writes eloquently of the lessons history has taught her to apply to the struggles of recent years:

Having worked for civil rights for blacks and ERA for women, I feel much of the opposition to women's rights, particularly in the South, is analogous to the fight by Southern women for suffrage before 1920. The semantics today against ERA are virtually word for word the same semantics.

The folk hero Sam Ervin, speaking against ERA in North Carolina last year, began a speech: "If I thought the ERA would make my wife and daughters happier, give them more privileges. . . ." When you read Pattie, you will see that she quotes a letter from a legislator in 1914: "If I thought having the vote would make better wives, sisters. . . ."

Senator Bob Wilson in the Alabama Senate, 1978, argued that Alabama women are the most privileged women in the world and do not need ERA. The leader of the anti-ratification forces in 1916 began: "Southern women are the most privileged. . . ."

Having read and researched the suffrage period for so long now, I can truly sing, "I've heard this song before."

Pattie Ruffner Jacobs and Women's Suffrage in Alabama



photos courtesy Southern Women's Archive, Birmingham Public Library

As you can see, the question of the black vote plagued Southern women in suffrage, which in my humble opinion was not as important an issue for women in other parts of the country. I think it took more courage, more fortitude, for Southern women to struggle for these basic rights than for women elsewhere, because their cultural role was so much more defined, especially by the burden of racism. In all the books by the experts, I have never read of much sympathy for Southern women in this position. One more example, I suppose, of how little we in the South are understood.

I hope you can give Pattie life in your journal, because she had been lost until I found her.

— Marie Stokes Jemison

From the beginning, the women's suffrage movement in the South was linked with racial issues. Black men had been voting since the Civil War, but as their numbers grew, so did the white politicians' and businessmen's fear of the power of their vote. During the 1890s, the disfranchisement movement gained considerable strength, led by members of the Democratic Party actively opposed to Populists and black-based Southern Republicanism.

In 1901, a constitutional convention met in Montgomery, Alabama, the "Cradle of the Confederacy," for the express purpose of taking the vote from black men by requiring them to pay a poll tax. At that convention, Frances Griffin, a teacher and president of the fledgling Alabama Suffrage Association, raised the question of women's suffrage as well:

I live in a household of women, of educated women. My sisters are widows and I am an old maid. There is not a man on the face of the earth interested particularly in how the affairs of our household go. We have no more voice in that neighborhood than if we were a party of Americans set down in Russia. There is a Negro gardener who works our fields. . . . He was a little over 21 years old when he came to us. He said he had been in school 10 years and he was at the first pages of the second reader, but when the voting time came, he went over to the village and did the voting for the family.

And now you are taking that one prop from us. We ask you to at least give us his leavings.

The delegates laughed at Griffin and promptly forgot her appeal. Following this failure, suffrage activity in Alabama virtually came to a halt, and by 1904 the Equal Suffrage Association had ceased to function.

Nevertheless, suffrage sentiment continued to ferment, especially in Birmingham. The growth of women's club activities was a major factor; like many others, Birmingham women found that the competence they developed through club experiences opened new vistas. In their meetings, speakers told of child labor in the textile mills, the long, hard hours of work, the widespread illiteracy and high rates of maternal and infant mortality. The women responded with private and group investigations. It quickly became apparent that laws to alleviate many of these problems were lax or nonexistent. Political action was demanded, but despite the women's ability to identify such injustices, they had no power to effect changes. The resulting frustration led many club women to believe they must win the right to vote.

On November 11, 1911, the Equal Suffrage League was born in Birmingham with Pattie Ruffner Jacobs as president. The suffragists were few, but dedicated, and unfazed by the protective, chivalrous rhetoric used against them. For the most part, members were young and married to prominent businessmen and professional men, with considerable social position in the community. The cause had gained respectability since Frances Griffin addressed the Alabama Convention 10 years before, but older Birmingham society was still unimpressed by the activities of the League. They were especially disturbed by

Pattie Jacobs, the most important suffragist and the freest spirit.

"Pattie likes politics because of the men," it was whispered, with the implication that Pattie was a "loose" woman.

In fact, Pattie did enjoy the company of men. "The world is run by them," she told her husband. "Politics is a male pastime and suffrage is a political issue. If we are to ever win, we have to learn your secrets."

Although gaining the vote was the consuming passion of her life, Pattie's interests were varied. Possessing a lovely voice, she was much in demand as a church singer and was for many years soloist at the Southside Baptist Church in Birmingham. She was interested in art and interior decoration, and remodeled a small building in the back of her home into an art studio. Advanced in her thinking and interests, she was an early owner of a motor car. Even more gossip erupted on an occasion when she and her husband modeled the new Annette Kellerman bathing suits for an ad in a local newspaper.

The Jacobs' home contained a Chinese Room, a fascination to the neighborhood children. One of the children on the block remembers Pattie as a straight-backed, rather formal person, but "I was crazy about her. The Chinese room was never off-limits to us children, and she always had time to explain about the art and furniture."

Pattie Ruffner Jacobs was born October 2, 1885, the youngest of six children in Malden, West Virginia. Her grandfather, General Lewis Ruffner, was a wealthy salt producer and a staunch Unionist in the Civil War; her great uncle, Henry Ruffner, was president of Washington and Lee



Pattie Ruffner Jacobs was born in West Virginia on October 2, 1885. Her parents – Union sympathizers in the Civil War – moved to Nashville soon after her birth.

University and a Presbyterian minister with strong anti-slavery convictions. Booker T. Washington, the famous black educator and a houseboy to Pattie's great aunt for a period of time, later wrote in his autobiography that she taught him much and "proved one of the best friends I ever possessed."

Pattie's own parents, who were union sympathizers, moved to Nashville soon after her birth. Her mother, a well read and thoughtful woman, wanted her children to receive the best education available and then use it in

constructive ways. Pattie proved to be the family's most original thinker, as well as its most versatile and talented member.

In a diary kept during the ages 19 to 22, she mentions resenting the comment that "Pattie has a man's mind," and the thoughts she confided to her diary were those of a restless, independent spirit. She tired easily of routines, and she longed to "break away and do something really unconventional and new."

As a senior at Ward's in Nashville,

Pattie organized nine senior girls into the Literary Society and was elected president of the group. "It is lovely to be president and preside, call the girls to order with a severe rap," she wrote after being elected. Perhaps her need to lead was stimulated by a personality clash that existed between herself and her older sister, Bertha. In Bertha's eyes, "Pattie can't do anything right." Bertha had married Harry Jones in Birmingham, and later invited her widowed mother and sister to come and live with them, a move especially traumatic for Pattie, then a young woman.

Her writings during this period reflect hurt and a great desire to escape and establish herself elsewhere, someplace where she could show her sister what she could do. Refusing to waste her time in the numerous social activities of the day, she entered normal school where she studied two years to be a teacher. During this time, yearning for independence, she earned "pin money" painting and selling tally cards to bridge enthusiasts.

After two years in art school in New York, Pattie returned to Birmingham at age 22 and was courted by Solon Jacobs, a popular bachelor in town. Although he was somewhat older, Pattie felt a growing fondness for him. But the institution of marriage troubled her and in a series of entries in her diary, she struggled with these questions. Convinced early that marriage was often poorly based, she vowed in 1893 never to be loved for anything but her "best, holiest, inner self."

Pattie overcame her apprehensions and her marriage appears to have been a most happy one. Solon Jacobs later gave his wife unswerving support

The Red-Blooded Man's Defense

"I do not believe there is a red-blooded man in the world who in his heart really believes in woman suffrage. I think every man who favors it ought to be made to wear a dress. . . . Let me assure you tonight, gentlemen, that the women of this country do not want suffrage. A vast majority of the good wives, mothers and daughters do not want woman suffrage. When the wife and mother looks after the home and rears the children in the way God would have them reared, they have done enough in this world and they are performing the highest and best service that womankind can perform; but when woman mounts a dry goods box in the street and speaks to the rabble, she lowers herself and men lose that high order of respect that they cherish for lovely, gentle women."

— Alabama Congressman Tom Hefflin
Speech before US Congress, 1913

throughout the suffrage fight. Yet the personal struggle through which she went, her doubts and questionings of the status quo, the search for her own identity, show Pattie Ruffner Jacobs as a remarkably perceptive and unusual Southern woman of the period. The reasons for her struggle are significant, because the same motivations were to strengthen and sustain her all her adult life.



SHOULD A "LADY" VOTE?

Birmingham at the turn of the century, dubbed the "Pittsburgh of the South" due to the booming iron and steel industry, had few of the softer features of the old South. It produced hardware instead of cotton. Lords of industry were making and losing vast fortunes. It was a hard society in which money and power overshadowed all else. Birmingham lacked a natural aristocracy or leadership with humanitarian values. It was a new town: many of the leading families were only three generations from the coal mines. Pattie, by birth and upbringing, belonged to the upper class, but she was too sensitive and intelligent to play social games. Bussing herself with club work, where she was soon introduced to the problems of working women and children, she became increasingly trou-

bled and turned to the church, but it provided no support for her concern. Although Pattie, like many of the Southern suffragists, came from a religious background, she typically found no answer for social problems in the established church.

In 1910 gritty, boisterous Birmingham had all the problems of a fast growing city, not the least of which was sewage disposal; typhoid and tuberculosis were constant threats. Leading a delegation to see the Mayor, Pattie suggested a plan to divide the city into districts with women appointed in each to watch over sanitary conditions and report back to him. She was graciously received, thanked, and then nothing happened. She did not know that a women's group in Selma had approached the city fathers about the same unsanitary conditions and had likewise been ignored. Within the next year both groups came to the realization, independently of each other, that their efforts were useless without the means to "vote the rascals out."

Pattie responded eagerly to talks at her club meetings by visiting suffragists from other Southern states. Then, in 1910, Birmingham was host to a national Child Labor Conference at which the famous reformer, Jane Addams, spoke. Pattie attended at the invitation of Mrs. W. L. Murdock, a veteran in the fight against child labor in Alabama. After this conference she said to Mrs. Murdock, "I have seen enough. We must organize for the vote." With Mrs. Murdock she set about to organize the Birmingham

Equal Suffrage Association, the first such activity since the 1890s. The organization grew rapidly and soon a state alliance seemed possible. Invitations sent to the Selma suffrage group stated clearly the need for a statewide meeting. "To protect the home, to conserve the race and bring to fruit the seed of democracy sown by our forefathers when they declared taxation without representation is tyranny."

Pattie Jacobs, Bossie O'Brien Hundley — wife of a federal judge and daughter of Birmingham's mayor — and two other women attended the 1912 national suffragists' convention in Philadelphia, only six weeks after forming the Alabama group. These hard-working, well-organized, articulate women did much to debunk the unjust myth of the scatterbrained Southern belle so readily accepted by the rest of the country. In her eloquent address to the general assembly at the convention, Pattie spoke of the pedestal platitude "that appeals less and less to the intelligence of Southern women who are learning in increasing numbers that the assertion that they are too noble, too pure to vote, in reality brands them as incompetents."

The Alabama women were received warmly by the convention delegates. Birmingham newspapers, now more favorable to their cause, gave wide coverage in both the society and the news sections, bolstering interest in the suffrage issue throughout the state.

The state association threw itself into an effective organizing campaign



The institution of marriage troubled Pattie Jacobs. She vowed to be loved only for her "best, holiest, inner self."

under Pattie's leadership. Working women were encouraged to bring their lunch and have coffee at the downtown Birmingham headquarters, which was well supplied with literature and volunteers. Suffragists fanned out across the state, speaking to women about forming local associations with the goal of establishing an active group in every county in preparation for the 1915 legislative session three years away. During 1913 and 1914 much activity revolved around raising money and attracting attention to the cause.

As the suffragists entered a new community, they usually found a noticeable lack of enthusiasm and sometimes hostility. Ladies simply did not speak in public on political questions. Men were certain they were going to see militant, "mannish" women, and were surprised instead to find fashionably dressed women of culture who did not threaten, beg or plead their cause but merely presented the facts and a case based on reason. Delivering their message in a logical, dignified and charming fashion, the suffragists

often won over all but the most hardcore opposition. After a speech by Pattie on the courthouse steps of a small town in south Alabama, the editor of a weekly newspaper went so far as to say, "The arguments of the ladies on the suffrage question were strong and convincing and made many carry home a feeling much more favorable to the movement than they ever had."

An important part of the strategy was to try to show that voting was not in conflict with the behavior of a "lady." As Ann Scott points out in *The Southern Lady*, "As long as she was respectable, a southern lady could get by with an awful lot."



SANCTITY AND SUPREMACY

It is hard to understand how the politically powerful could resist these dedicated, remarkable women, but resist they did. The political forces that denied the vote to blacks in 1901 certainly feared women's suffrage and said so through the press and speakers of the day. An unsigned pamphlet that made its way across the state sums up their fears:

It is the avowed purpose of leaders among northern advocates to break the "Solid South" by means of votes of Negro women and break down race and sex distinction. Is this in keeping with the traditions and civilization of the south?

Will the white men of Alabama,

in response to the misguided few, subject the innocent and unsuspecting mothers, wives, and daughters of Alabama to such terrible consequences?

Or this from a letter to an Alabama newspaper in 1912:

Take a word of a veteran, one who in 1861 shouldered his musket and went to do battle for the Southland that he loved and bears on his body the scars of service; one who in the dark days of reconstruction while the good women were at home praying for its preservation was at the ballot box fighting for white supremacy and the sanctity of that home.

Over and over, the suffragists were told the hopelessness of their cause; they either did not hear or refused to believe that a cause so just, an argument so reasonable, presented by white ladies so gently bred, would not prevail.

In 1914, the National Suffrage Association paid the Alabama suffragists a great compliment by coming south to hold their executive meeting. Alabama was chosen because of the energy and dedication shown by Birmingham women such as Pattie and Bossie Hundley who had marched beside their Yankee sisters in the streets of New York and Washington.

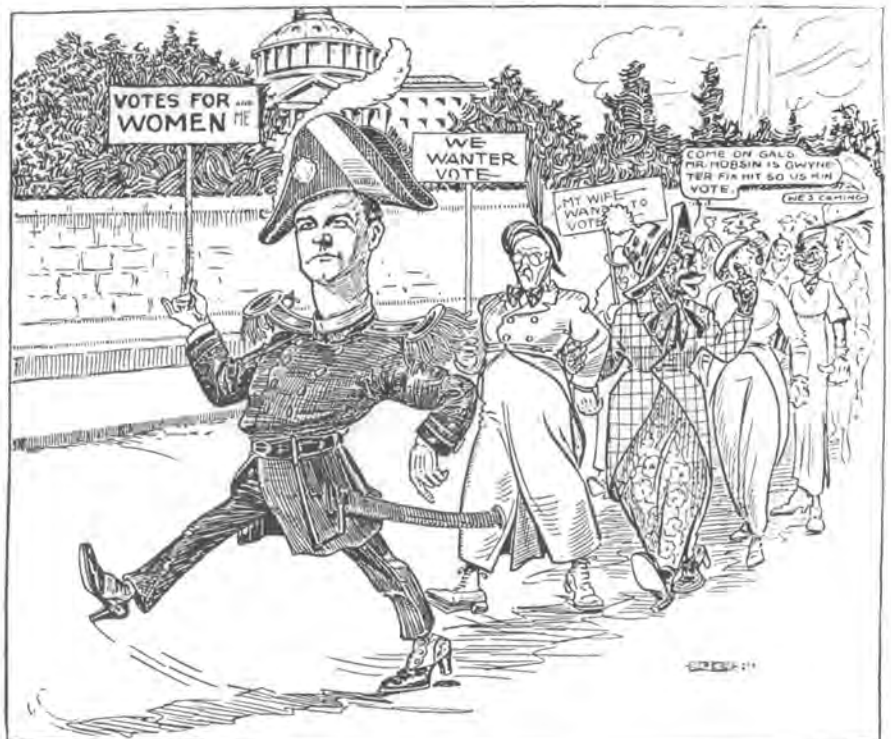
As soon as it was announced that a group of national equal suffrage workers was coming to Alabama, trouble began for Pattie. The Alabama press accused the suffrage board of coming south to take the decision about women and the vote away from the state, giving that power to the federal government instead. The

states rights issue plagued the Alabama Equal Suffrage Association from that time on. Out of deference to the strong states rights feelings of many local citizens and politicians, the Alabama women continually stressed their wish for enfranchisement by action of the state legislature rather than by imposition of Congress. Yet the Alabama Association always remained affiliated with the National American Woman Suffrage Association, even when the federal approach became the only hope.

Although the Alabama group wanted no part of conservative states rights organizations, it also shied away from the more radical National Woman's Party headed by Alice Paul,

which worked for enfranchisement only by federal amendment. Militant tactics and attitudes frightened the Southern women who, after all, had never deviated from their ladylike behavior. Alice Paul spent a fruitless week in Birmingham in May, 1915, but could not lure any of the local women into her group. These women still believed that reason would prevail and that militancy would only hurt the cause.

The long anticipated opportunity to present their case came in 1915, the first legislative session since the Alabama Suffrage Association had been organized. All forces went into action. Bossie Hundley took the legislative responsibility. She began to





Pattie Jacobs and the Alabama suffragists were women of culture who presented the facts and a case based on reason.

build a file on each legislator to determine his usefulness to the cause, writing each to ask his stand. In every legislative and senatorial district, suffragists interviewed candidates and reported back their degree of support. The responses from the candidates were predominately noncommittal and political, but over and over included comments such as:

"My residence is in a Negro county, a population of more than 30,000 Negroes to a white population of less than 4,000. I

would want to be assured that the amendment submitted to the voters eliminated Negro women from the provision of suffrage."

Or:

"Just why your sex should desire the ballot is surprising to myself as well as to many others as you occupy socially a more enviable position in the south especially than ladies enjoy anywhere on the face of the earth."

Undaunted, Pattie and Bossie continued to travel the state, urging women to put forth intense effort toward the big day.

The Alabama Legislature opened its sessions on January 15. On the same day, Congressman Tom Heflin was back on his feet in the US Congress professing:

"If the political arena becomes more attractive to the average woman than the important duties of the home, who will perform those duties? Man cannot, and if woman neglects them, the state is doomed and the republic must perish."

The suffrage bill was introduced into both the Alabama Senate and House soon after the session began and was sent to what were considered friendly committees.

The Equal Suffrage lobby obtained a public hearing at a joint session on January 28, 1915, at which Pattie and the venerable Julia Tutwiler, among others, testified. Tutwiler, a pioneer in the fields of prison reform, convict labor and education for women, spoke about the need for women to gain the vote as a world at war appeared inevitable:

"When those who suffer most by war have a voice in declaring it, there will be no more wars of aggression. Women will always be ready to give their sons, their brothers, lovers and husbands to the defense of their homes and their fatherland; but they will never willingly send them to be 'cannon fodder' in wars of contest."

The testimony fell on deaf ears;

the House promptly shelved the Suffrage Bill indefinitely. However, the Senate agreed to hear it on the 25th legislative day, still five months away.

The intervening months were busy for the suffragists. Lobbying intensified as Pattie and Bossie Hundley worked feverishly on the undecided legislators and kept in touch with the sure votes. The state headquarters, moved to Montgomery for the legislative session, actively distributed literature and politicked the press and legislators. US Congressman Heflin, during summer recess, was in the state claiming that the supporters of the amendment were only a few, meanwhile implying he would change his vote if he could be convinced the few were a majority. Bossie, in the audience on one occasion when he made such a claim, interrupted to say, "Surely, you know your position to be untenable since there is no way for women to register their opinion on suffrage." This bit of a debate brought much comment in the press, and helped keep the issue alive.

A low blow was dealt the cause two days before the scheduled August 25th vote. An anonymous pamphlet, "A Protest against Woman Suffrage in Alabama," was distributed which played on old racial fears. It charged that the effect of reopening the suffrage question "will be to restore the Negro men under the Fifteenth Amendment with the additional votes of Negro women.

"Who will benefit by woman's suffrage?" it asked. "Will the modesty of your wife and daughter permit her to come in contact with the turmoil of politics? Will it not put a sword in the hands of the immodest

and of those who would tear down the traditions of the south?" The scurrilous pamphlet was written by several Selma gentlemen, one a former congressman, after the Selma Bar Association took a stand against suffrage.

Pattie and the suffragists frantically prepared a rebuttal to the pamphlet and distributed it the next day, but the damage was already done. The sponsor of the Suffrage Bill, Representative Green of Selma, withdrew his support and spoke against the measure.

When the vote was taken, women packed the balcony and halls of the Confederate capital. The House was

decorated in yellow, the suffrage color, and the women, along with favorable legislators, wore sunflowers as a symbol of hope. Although the bill secured a majority, it fell 12 votes short of the three-fifths vote required. The spirit of Senate supporters was dampened by this defeat and when the vote came several days later, the bill was easily defeated 20 to 12. The code of chivalry coupled with racial fears killed women's suffrage in Alabama in 1915.

Failure was painful, but the indefatigable Pattie commented, "We have received a check. That is all. We will be before the Legislature in its next session and in all succeeding sessions until our bill is submitted. We have not by any means given up the fight."

There was the inevitable letdown after seeing the work of five years end in humiliating defeat, and many suffragists lost heart.

In addition, an anti-suffrage organization known as the Alabama Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage was formed in the Selma area in 1916. It was affiliated with a national organization which published "The Woman Patriot," claiming to be dedicated to "The Defense of Womanhood, Motherhood, The Family, and The State and Against Suffragism, Feminism and Socialism." "The Patriot" declared that passing the (federal) Anthony Amendment meant certain race and sex war, and this news found an eager audience in Alabama, particularly whites in the Black Belt.

In 1916, the National Equal Suffrage Association shifted its focus to the adoption of a federal amendment; clearly, the states rights approach was hopeless. This move alienated

DO YOU KNOW

THAT



11 White States, Full Suffrage
3 United States, Statutory Suffrage
(President and Members)
19 Shaded States, Partial Suffrage
17 Black States, NO SUFFRAGE

ALABAMA

Is one of seventeen states out of the forty-eight, where women can not vote on any question?

Do You Know that women have equal suffrage with men in Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Washington, California, Oregon, Kansas, Arizona, Nevada, Montana and Alaska; in Norway, Finland, Australia, and New Zealand, and have partial suffrage in other countries?

Who Can't Vote!

Children, insane, Idiots, Aliens, Criminals and Women.

WILL our boasted Southern chivalry still class the women of Alabama with these?

HELP US to make Alabama the first Southern State to give its women equal political rights with its men.

- HELP US
1. By organizing an Equal Suffrage Association in the place where you live.
 2. By joining the one already organized in your town.
 3. By contributions of money.

Apply for Further Information and more Literature to:

Alabama Equal Suffrage Association,

Headquarters
1818 Second Ave., BIRMINGHAM, ALA.

Price 3¢ (10 for 30¢)



"She was a woman so far in advance of her time. . . . She did things the modern girl takes for granted, but in which she was a real pioneer."

many former supporters in the South. Politicians at the state and national level and most Alabamians violently opposed suffrage granted by the federal government. Pattie, speaking to the state convention in 1916, also urged support of the federal amendment, and gave up her position as state president in order to work more intensely at the national level.

World War I offered suffragists an opportunity to show their concern for the nation, and many plunged into war work at the expense of the

movement. Just as the Civil War had interrupted the earlier struggles of Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, and other abolitionists and feminists of that period, World War I distracted the later recruits. Pattie was appointed state chairperson of the National Liberty Loan drive and the Alabama Suffrage movement took second place.

But while the local movement floundered, drained of its vibrant leadership, efforts at the national level led to the passage of the 19th Amendment by Congress. Both Ala-

bama Senators, John Bankhead and Oscar Underwood, voted against the amendment as did 11 of the 12 representatives. Congressman Richard Pearson Hobson, a naval hero of the Spanish-American War, was the only affirmative vote. It cost him reelection to Congress.

The fight now moved to securing ratification of the Amendment in the states. At the 1919 national convention, assured that their fight would soon be won, the Alabama women reorganized. Pattie again became president of the state association, and the women girded for battle. The Alabama Legislature was scheduled to convene on July 8, 1919, and the suffragists had high hopes of success.

But anti-ratification forces also quickly mobilized, and in Montgomery a group called the Southern Women's Anti-Ratification League formed. Marie Bankhead Owen, the prominent sister of Senator John Bankhead, became president, and membership grew rapidly throughout Alabama. Future Senator Lister Hill joined the ranks as did the entire Bankhead family, two former governors, judges and legislators. Opposition from textile mill owners, coal mine operators and liquor interests was likewise formidable. Manufacturers opposed ratification because they worried that their cheap labor supply of women and children would dry up if female voters managed to pass the Child Labor Law. Coal mine owners were concerned that convict labor might disappear, for the ladies had consistently worked and spoken against this inhuman but lucrative system. Liquor interests knew from experience what militant women could do to protect their families. Money poured

into the anti-suffrage movement.

Some of the opposition, while agreeing that women should vote, still violently opposed any federal amendment.

The major press was now firmly in the enemy camp and editorial comment was generally patronizing and barbed. Using flattering language about that "charming but naive lady, Mrs. Jacobs," journalists dismissed her arguments, claiming that democracy had nothing to gain by the enfranchisement of women. Over and over Pattie responded to the comments in firm but always genteel language, yet beside some editorials pasted in her scrapbook she wrote, "Unanswerable!" She was forced to defend her sisters in the movement who were occasionally taunted as members of the leisure class. In answer to one editorial she wrote, "The discontent distinguishing suffragists is not so much with their own individual conditions, but with the affairs which still permit the exploitation of women and children; and an overwhelming desire to help relieve such conditions." She was convinced that women had a role to play in abolishing society's evils and saw the vote as a prerequisite.

The thorny race issue forced the suffragists into expedient positions and statements. Pattie wrote for the *Birmingham News* as the vote approached, "Qualifications that have kept Negro men from voting in the southland can be adjusted to keep Negro women from voting, when the ballot has been made equal for white men and women."

There seems little doubt that this statement did not express her true feelings, for she said about the unfair

poll tax several years after suffrage had been won:

"I believe that qualified Negro men and women should be allowed to express their choice of candidates and their opinions on public questions in the ballot box; and that exactly the same test should be applied to them as is applied to other citizens, no more, or less."

At the national level, women's suffrage in Alabama was considered hopeless. However, the vigorous campaign waged by Pattie Jacobs and the League kept the state's suffrage movement in the national news. If the unthinkable could happen in Alabama, it could mean a quick victory nationwide.

The national opposition's strategy was to secure 13 clean, fast rejections to ratification of the 19th Amendment, thereby blocking any court action in case a future legislature should reverse its stance. According to their plan, Alabama would be the first of the 13 states.

When the legislature assembled on July 8, 1919, Representative J. Lee Long of Butler County in south Alabama introduced a resolution to reject the proposed Amendment. On July 16, 1919, an open hearing was held before a joint session of the legislature. Surprisingly, the opponents refused to make a vocal presentation, but from the floor Senator James Evins read the touching appeal of 12 Montgomery society leaders. The speech implored the legislators not to force them from the

"quietude of our homes into the contaminating atmosphere of political struggle. We seek to

discharge our duty to our country and to the cause of civilization and right living, not by voting and holding office, but by making homes in which Love and Peace and Happiness dwell and by instilling into our children love of their country and devotion to high ideals. We seek to remain such and we look with confidence to those in whom the high traditions of the south will live to protect us from this device of northern abolitionists which, if adopted, it seems to us, be not only debasing in its effect upon the womanly character, not only productive of discord in the sweet harmony of the family circle, but will also inevitably result in striking down those barriers which you and your fathers have raised between Anglo-Saxon civilization and those who would mongrelize and corrupt it."

The Senate rejected the Amendment the next day; two months later, the House concurred. Anti-suffrage had won again.

The 1919 defeat was a little less bleak than 1915, because ratification seemed an idea whose time had come. Indeed, within the year, Tennessee (the home state of the militant Sue White) became the 36th state to ratify and the long battle was over. But no deep South state ever ratified the 19th Amendment.

A few months before the amendment became law, the Alabama Equal Suffrage Association voted itself out of existence and members of the Suffrage Association joined together

WHY ALABAMA WOMEN SHOULD VOTE.

BECAUSE:

THE WOMEN OF ALABAMA, by the payment of direct taxes on their property, and indirect taxes on what they eat and wear, contribute to state revenues, and should, because of this financial interest, be represented in the state, directly and on equal terms with men.

The largest individual taxpayer in Montgomery county is a woman.

THE WOMEN OF ALABAMA ARE SO UNIVERSALLY LAW-ABIDING that, according to Dr. W. H. Oates, State Prison Inspector, only from 3 to 5 per cent. of the inmates of the state penitentiaries and prisons are women—this in spite of the fact that Alabama holds almost the world's record for crime. Therefore, woman suffrage means the addition of more moral voters in Alabama.

WOMEN ARE NOT IDENTICAL WITH MEN, and their **SPECIAL INTERESTS** should be represented at the ballot box as are the interests of men.

THE SPECIAL INTERESTS OF WOMEN ARE THE CHILD, THE SCHOOL, THE HOME.

ALABAMA has one of the worst child labor laws in the Union, protecting only those children under twelve who work in mills and manufactories, making it possible for children of five and six years to be legally employed ten and twelve hours a day (as is the case along the Gulf coast).

ALABAMA has the largest number of illiterates of any state in the United States.

ALABAMA is one of the six states in the Union having no form of compulsory education.

ACCORDING TO THE SCHOOL CENSUS of 1911, two-thirds of the graduates of public and private high schools in Alabama were girls. Therefore, woman suffrage means the addition of more educated voters.

THE WOMEN OF ALABAMA want to protect their homes by having a direct voice in the making of the laws governing sanitation, food and water inspection, garbage disposal, fire protection, the immoral influences of the street, and all other agencies which affect the home.

THE WOMEN OF ALABAMA want to aid directly in the abolition of the White Slave Traffic by means of their ballots.

WOMEN might help administer Alabama affairs more economically, honestly and progressively than have the present voters. Many men admit that Alabama men and women together could do much better for themselves, the state, and posterity, than could either sex alone.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE REASONS WHY

ALABAMA WOMEN SHOULD VOTE.

Published by **ALABAMA EQUAL SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION**
Headquarters, 1818 Second Ave., Birmingham, Ala.



Price, \$1.50 per 1,000

OVER

to form the League of Women Voters. For several years, Pattie Jacobs served as an officer in the National League of Women Voters.

Backed by the support and loyalty of a large group of women throughout the state now armed with the vote, Pattie used her influence and energy in a number of humanitarian reforms. Campaigns against the infamous system of leasing convicts to work private coal mines and the abuse of child labor engaged her, and she saw both evils through to the end. Always concerned about unregulated working hours, she corresponded with Mary Anderson in the Woman's Bureau, US Department of Labor, as early as 1922 on the need for an eight-hour day. In 1919 she spoke before the National Democratic Committee, though no women had yet been admitted to the committee. She was a member of the National Association of Democratic Women and served as Associate National Committee-woman. A year later, the National Democratic Committee selected six women to join the men, and Pattie was one of them.

Through her activities in the League of Women Voters and the Women's Bureau of Labor, she met Eleanor Roosevelt. Franklin Roosevelt later appointed her head of the Women's Division of the Consumer Advisory Board of the National Recovery Administration. Then, in 1938, while serving as publicity speaker for the TVA, Pattie Jacobs died suddenly of a heart attack. She was 60 years old.

Pattie Ruffner Jacobs was born into a South in which women rarely appeared in public. In fact, much of Birmingham was askance at her devia-

tion from the accepted role of women. Her daughter, Madeline Jacobs Stallings, remembers:

"She was a woman so far in advance of her time. Her life was a series of interests and activities which were an ana-

thema to the women of her generation. She did things which the modern girl takes for granted, but in which she was a real pioneer...."



THE POST-MOVEMENT REACTION

American politics and culture have reverted to reactionary conservatism since 1968. Despite the rhetorical triumphs of Black Power, the influx of blacks into economic and political positions of privilege and the establishment of black studies curricula in Southern schools, a retreat from the political logic of the '60s has developed.

Both before and after Martin Luther King's assassination, some of his key associates within SCLC and the NAACP privately refused to come to terms with his new political position, including his critique of the Vietnam War. Many continued to praise the King legacy publicly, but — as in the case of some of Malcolm X's former followers — they privately denounced the international perspective and anti-imperialist analysis implicit within Martin's final speeches. The material realities of America, especially the military machine fueling its economy, forced Martin to abandon his older reformist ideas for a higher form of social and ethical criticism; yet many other leading integrationists could not, or would not, follow him.

The fragmentation of the Movement increased as a host of SNCC activists retreated under the cover of the Black Power slogan into local and state politics, and entrepreneurial leaders like James Farmer and Floyd McKissick forged a Booker T. Washington-type alliance with the Nixon administration to boost black petty bourgeois power.

While the number of blacks registered to vote in the South has climbed from 2 million in 1964 to 4 million today, the momentum of the Movement to achieve representative democracy between the races has ground to a halt. The masses of blacks in this region still do not hold the political power equal to their numbers. Black elected officials number 1,847 in the South, but that amounts to only 2.3 percent of the total number of elected officials in the region. Blacks con-

Thoughts on Black Politics

by
Manning Marable

stitute 20.5 percent of the South's total population and make up popular majorities in over 100 counties, yet only 10 counties are effectively controlled by blacks. In 1978, only two black Congressmen were from the South, and both represented major metropolitan areas.

Furthermore, this small elected elite, with few exceptions, represents not the interests of the black masses that were the essence of the Movement but the maturing black bourgeoisie and corporate interests in the New South. It tends to represent political philosophies to the right of their Northern counterparts; e.g., Barbara Jordan's staunch and sincere defense of the character of John Connally at his milk fund trial; Andrew Young's solitary black vote endorsing the 1973 appointment of Gerald Ford to the Vice Presidency.

Like a number of black Republican politicians during the New South of the 1880s, many black Southern Democrats have today abandoned the political liberal-left within the Democratic Party, despite their rhetoric to the contrary, and have cemented an alliance with new representatives of the South's upper class. The rapid rise of Barbara Jordan, Andrew Young, Ben Brown and other Southern black moderates signifies a basic shift from the tradition of whites-only politics; it also, and more importantly, signifies that the region's ruling class has decided it can accommodate

certain representatives of the Afro-American community into the governance of a new matrix of state power which supports accelerated capitalistic development in the region. The principles of the Movement for these black leaders have been transformed, abandoned or rationalized into the principles of the ruling corporate interests.

The fundamental reason for these political developments is economic. The New South of today, like the original New South of the 1880s, depends for its growth upon finance capital and rapid commercial and industrial expansion. During the post-Reconstruction era, the capital influx came from New England and the Mid-Atlantic. Today the capital comes from the North, the West, all parts of the world, and from the South itself. Since the late 1960s, economists and corporate leaders alike have commented upon the "booster" character of the South's modern economy. From 1960 to 1976, personal per capita income increased from \$1,707 to \$5,198, while industrial output of Southern factories leaped from \$25.8 billion to \$54.0 billion. During the recessions of the Nixon-Ford administrations, Southern business led the stock market revival. Conservative economist Elliot Janeway notes that "stock brokerage firms with national networks of branch offices report that the retail stampede to buy stocks began in the South. Its impact on Wall Street was to spread the word overnight: 'When in New York, do as the Southerners do.'"

Coinciding with the rapid expansion of commerce and industry in the New South has been a process of agrarian underdevelopment and the proletarianization of rural blacks. The small towns and villages of the picturesque, rural South lose their former share of the economic market to the massive metropolitan powers of Atlanta, Memphis, Birmingham, Houston, Charlotte and New Orleans. Rural life becomes increasingly dependent upon the eco-

nomic, political and cultural initiatives of the metropolis. Agricultural employment steadily declines, the vital class of small farm owners erodes and black landownership disappears. From 1964 to 1974, 29 percent of all Southern farms ceased operations, a total of 454,000 fewer farms. The federal farm policies under Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Ford encouraged the destruction of the independent middle-class farmer's market resulting in a real decline in agricultural output in the region, from \$8.3 billion in 1960 to \$7.4 billion in 1976. Black farmers have been especially hard hit: their number has shrunk from 3,158,000 in 1950 to only 938,000 by 1970. The displaced farmer and farmhand have entered a burgeoning labor pool whose surplus and lack of organization has in turn heightened the influx of new industry to the region.

The high rate of industrialization, the destruction of the independent black farming class, and the underdeveloped consciousness of labor in the South directly contributed to the conservative character of the New South's black politicians. The proletarianization process has isolated black religious and traditional community leaders whose base was the farmer and farmhand. The new urban-based leaders have largely ignored the position of a new class of black workers in the region's political economy. Under this leadership, the attention the Movement placed upon the narrow political struggle for integration and equal opportunity obscured the more fundamental economic and social problems operating on the black South until it was too late. King may have recognized these truths as he struggled to help the organization of black sanitation workers in Memphis. But even today, the black leaders of the New South have yet to grasp the new position of black laborers in the region's political economy, and they have yet to confront the racist mechanisms that thwart the development of a new progressive base among black and white workers in the region. Instead, they have allied with the employers who "provide jobs" for the displaced agrarian population and, in exchange for token favors, have helped them manipulate government power — with everything from right-to-work laws to regulation of branch

banking — for the capitalists' interests.

The entrance of blacks into Southern politics coincides with the expansion of state institutional forms. Southern governments during previous New South periods were seldom more than petty courthouse committees of Black Belt plantation owners and/or the lawyers of industry. But the New South of the '70s has experienced an astonishing growth in state bureaucracies which itself manifests key elements and contradictions within the region's political economy. The rapid underdevelopment of the rural South required new state sponsored welfare agencies. And the rapid industrialization of the urban centers and influx of a new first-generation working class called for state government intervention similar to the New Deal programs of the '30s. Even as conservative a politician as George Wallace resorted to big government policies to balance the demands of industrial developers, old-line county politicians and black integrationists: the class interests of all these groups were reconciled through an expanding network of government services. During his administrations, Wallace supervised the construction of 15 trade schools, 14 junior colleges and the largest highway expansion program in the state's history. The state bureaucracy tripled in size under his administration; the proportion of Alabama residents employed in public welfare

A new generation of opportunistic black politicians has been elevated to positions of power

programs, about 34 percent, reached the second highest in the nation. Wallace and other vocal segregationists (like Louisiana's Risley Triche, Georgia's Herman Talmadge, and South Carolina's Strom Thurmond) have openly renounced their racist rhetoric and legislation of only 10 years ago and now demand that their state governments keep up with the rising expectations of black constituents by creating the infrastructure of incentives and services for rapid economic growth.

Within this context, a new generation of opportunistic black politicians have been elevated to powerful positions due to their clientele relationships with the regional bourgeois interests. The challenge of the Movement has given way to compromise. The black middle class and segments of the white ruling class provided critical financial support to constitutional reformers like King, Young and Jesse Jackson of SCLC, Farmer and McKissick of CORE, and John Lewis of SNCC. But as the political struggle gained major successes, radicals like Malcolm X, James Forman and others in SNCC, and theoreticians like James Boggs pointed the way toward social revolution — a frightening spectre of permanent struggle and cultural transformation which neither the black nor white establishment could accept. The popular, massive struggles in the streets died down gradually as the political system granted certain concessions — and after many important black radicals were imprisoned, bought out or assassinated.

The reformed state governments of the New South are now dominated by a group of white moderates who bring new management techniques to the massive state bureaucracies and who project a "progressive" image of the state's democratic policy-making apparatus and services to blacks and the poor. This new breed of white politicians — led by Terry Sanford of North Carolina, Jimmy Carter of Georgia, Dale Bumpers of Arkansas, Edwin Edwards of Louisiana, John West of South Carolina, William Walker of Mississippi — has been especially adroit at defining for the citizenry a new rationale for state power. Through public statements and actions, they have established the legitimacy for the directions of the New South: the acceptance of civil rights legislation, the integration of many public schools and policy councils, the influx of heavy industry, the expansion of commercialism, and the decline of the agrarian influence on state legislatures. They have thus helped consolidate the white and black masses behind the capitalistic development of the region. This New South creed is explained and promulgated through new educational institutions, electronic and print media, and cultural programs. Behind the rhetoric

of reform, the state expands its influence into every aspect of cultural life.

The impact of these changes on black society has been particularly reactionary. The New South's aesthetics negate, or attempt to replace, the Afro-American cultural heritage, the protest impulse evident with many phases of Southern black culture, and the *weltanschauung* of the new urban working class. Despite the continued use of the word "black," most black social and intellectual leaders in the South have quietly accommodated themselves to the new capitalistic realities and New South-style political roles. On the college campuses, radical black professors and administrators are being fired; black studies programs are abandoned; fraternity and sorority life has replaced an interest in political discussions. Clothing styles, mannerisms of speech and habits changed almost overnight. Afro-hair styles and dashikis gave way to bleached hair, surreal clothing and high heels. The blues and jazz, once an integral part of the political struggle of the '60s, were replaced by blatantly sexist disco. Numerous activist journals and community newspapers initiated in the '60s closed down for economic reasons.

Perhaps the strongest single cultural change has occurred within the relations between men and women. The Civil Rights era in the South was a period of expanded sexual freedom. Women like Rosa Parks of Alabama and Fannie Lou Hamer of Mississippi assumed leadership roles in local desegregation struggles; black women of all ages ran for office, organized voter registration campaigns, gave political speeches and raised funds for civil rights activities. In recent years, however, an overwhelmingly black male cast seized the newly available state and county political offices. Southern black males have downplayed ERA legislation and have not campaigned aggressively for expanded state-supported abortion facilities and day-care centers. Instead, the traditional chauvinism inherent in the Southern ethos finds new expression within black middle-class-sponsored beauty pageants and debutante balls.

The expansion of the state and the pre-eminence of the bourgeois culture have only helped stagnate the region's intellectual and cultural creativity. The



photo by Billy Newman

On the college campuses, radical black professors are being fired; fraternity and sorority life has replaced an interest in political discussions.

South's aggressive economic structure, from slave labor to entrepreneurial capitalism, has contributed to what journalist W.J. Cash termed "the savage ideal" 40 years ago. The culture of the white bourgeoisie — its love of material possessions, its lack of humanism and gross disrespect for life and ecology — has encouraged widespread social violence and a backward intellectual climate. More people are murdered per thousand in Savannah and Montgomery than in New York or Watts. The incidence of rape increased over 41 percent in North Carolina between 1969 and 1973, and by significant amounts in almost every Southern state. The "mind" of the South still represents the dregs of American academic and cultural achievement. In 1970, the South had only five percent of the nation's leading graduate schools, according to a national survey. In spite of Wallace's expansion of state-supported educational institutions, Alabama ranks at the very bottom of every national scale for education. The black college suffers from declining enrollments and severe financial difficulties, largely because of the desegregation of the region's major white state-supported institutions. Many white and black radicals have fled to the North and

West Coast in search of better working conditions, a freer academic climate and higher salaries.



The possibility for social change within the conservative political economy of the New South now depends primarily upon the success of black activists and intellectuals in re-educating the dispossessed working people and the poor toward a new political consciousness of struggle, a consciousness based on class interests and an awareness of the historic use of racism to divide workers.

The history of the relationship between black and white laborers in the South is, at best, ambiguous. Since the late nineteenth century, blacks have acquired the reputation as strike-breakers and scabs. The Negro laborer was viewed as a temporary source of cheap labor by white managers, and as such, seemed to pose a continuous threat to the direct economic interests of the white working class. There were numerous incidents, however, of black-white cooperation within the struggles of organized labor.



The black leaders of the New South have allied with the employers who "provide jobs" for the displaced agrarian population.

For example, during the reorganization of the United Mine Workers in the 1930s, white coal miners in Alabama worked with black miners to establish a strong biracial base. By 1935, there were 23,000 UMW members in Alabama, 60 percent of whom were black.

In the post-World War II South, biracial working class coalitions became virtually non-existent. When the Chattanooga Central Labor Union passed a resolution supporting school desegregation in the summer of 1955, nine individual locals issued counter-resolutions against their organization and in favor of white supremacy. Several locals left the union, declaring that the pro-integration resolution was "Communist inspired." During the early 1960s, Local 12 of the United Rubber Workers at the Goodyear plant in Gadsden, Alabama, typified many of the tensions over racial equality at the workplace. The white-dominated local refused to process grievances of black employees who protested against segregated dining facilities and Jim Crow restrictions within the plant. Black workers with many years of seniority were regularly laid off without pay, while white employees with less seniority were allowed to work.

Few civil rights workers attempted to convert white trade unionists in the South to a favorable position on integration. The white working class voted for segregationist politicians, and union halls throughout the region were regularly used as meeting places for the Ku Klux Klan and White Citizens Councils. In a number of important union elections conducted by the National Labor Relations Board, black workers voted against the union and provided the margin of defeat.

To some extent, the separation between Southern black and white workers was manifested nationally by strained relations between civil rights leaders and trade unionists. Historian Philip Foner observed that "the courageous and militant blacks faced intimidation and repression, and the movement . . . was in constant need of funds and moral support. But the AFL-CIO gave neither."

Among the most influential proponents of the thesis of alliance between Negro integrationists and white labor was Martin Luther King. Speaking before a convention of the United Packinghouse Workers Union in 1957, Martin insisted that "organized labor can be one of the most powerful instruments in putting an

end to discrimination and segregation." Unfortunately, the labor establishment refused to accept this vanguard role. Some labor leaders like Walter Reuther gravitated toward the centrist-conservative factions within the Movement; the majority of them still accepted the historical image of the black laborer as innately inferior or as the perpetual scab.

In the wake of the Movement, black and white worker relationships have remained relatively backward. The illusion of equal opportunity and the elevation of a limited number of black professionals into the business bureaucracy continues to dominate black and white consciousness. Even in the majority of the new Southern factories, blacks continue to be hired in unskilled or low paying positions. The racial privilege of whites continues to be a driving wedge that separates and alienates workers and forces white laborers into the waiting arms of white management.

The area of the South with the worst record of interracial labor cooperation in recent decades remains the Black Belt. Despite the general growth of industrial development, manufacturing employment has steadily declined in the Black Belt. As Alabama's industrial employment climbed from 1,040,126 in 1950 to 1,235,287 in 1970, Black Belt totals dropped from 136,059 to 105,504 in the same period. In Macon County, Alabama, for example, the total number of workers employed in industry in 1950 was 9,719. By 1960, the figure fell to 7,833, and by 1970 it was 7,213. In the most industrialized county of the Alabama Black Belt, Dallas County, total industrial employment dropped from 20,266 workers in 1950 to 18,776 in 1970. In this climate of decreasing jobs and rising unemployment, occurring within the social context of a Movement to halt *de facto* and *de jure* segregation in employment procedures, labor solidarity across the color line dissolved. White workers in the Black Belt clung desperately to their jobs, swallowed their complaints and kept their distance from union activities. In too many cases, these white workers blamed the move toward the desegregation of Southern society for their failure to attain individual and collective prosperity.

For all these problems and contra-

ditions, there are indications that the concurrent processes of urbanization, industrialization and the proletarianization of blacks has created the conditions for new interracial, working class alliances. The Amalgamated Clothing & Textile Workers Union is currently organizing the 450 workers at the J. P. Stevens mill in Montgomery. Despite Stevens' promise that union activists would not be harassed, several prounion employees were fired in 1976 and 1977. Others were harassed and coerced into resigning. Stevens workers in Montgomery have minimal health insurance and pension protection, and no parking, lunchroom or medical facilities. Sixty percent of the workers are black, but there is not a single black supervisor in the plant. These conditions are typical of any of the dozens of Stevens plants in the South. Despite these hardships, many workers have met in weekly meetings and are now on the verge of creating a visible local. White workers have begun to re-evaluate their traditional fears and racist notions and have moved toward the union's self-consciously biracial posture. In doing so, they have begun to challenge the essence of Southern history.

The history of humanity is no tidy series of predictable events, moving inextricably toward an inevitable social revolution or political upheaval. The Civil Rights Movement as a series of political confrontations against an archaic social institution was predictable but not inevitable. The present period of reaction and conservatism in the South, caused by many subjective and objective conditions, can not be understood apart from the important positive achievements of black people in previous decades. Jim Crow will never return as it once existed, nor will its crude indignities which crushed the humanity of its master class. In spite of contradictory leaders, compromising politicians, and an apathetic middle class, the black majority will never retreat from the substantial gains achieved during the 1950s and 1960s. The tradition of community organizing, picketing, boycotting and rallying still exists, and many blacks who were too young to participate actively in the Movement seem interested in re-establishing its activist ethos, if not its original organizational forms.

The next Movement in the South must be grounded within Marxian theory if it hopes to successfully combat racism. Southern community organizers and black political activists

have begun to realize the profound, historic, symbiotic relationship between capitalist economic development and white racism. A principled struggle against the residual structures of segregated society can become the basis for a deeper conflict against cultural underdevelopment and expanding economic exploitation. The future struggle against the causes of racism must be channeled through new, practical political institutions that owe their perspective to a materialist analysis of Southern life and labor. It seems probable that in the next decade this depressing and immensely contradictory period will produce the groundings for an even more successful democratic movement against economic inequality.

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NEW ORLEANS VERSUS ATLANTA

Politics in New Orleans has always been fascinating because the game is played with such cynicism. New Orleans politics is *trickster* politics; ideology means nothing, rhetoric is a tool of the poseur. It is only natural that the person on the bottom — the black who is barely surviving in this society — is the most cynical of all toward the electoral system.

Certainly blacks know that electoral politics, even in the last decade with the elections of Moon Landrieu, Edwin Edwards and Dutch Morial, has not been their road to power and independence as a people. In the American political system, independence stems from economic power —

Power to the Parade

by Tom Dent

politicians don't represent the "people," they represent the economic interests that elect them; these interests in

return expect protection and the services of the system. Economic power is exactly what the black community of New Orleans does not have, so in the end black politicians either represent white interests or opt for rhetoric, which, however sincere, is usually impotent.

Black Atlanta, on the other hand, has for several decades been a strong economic community, reaping the consequent political benefits. In fact, in Atlanta the power interests of black and white money often coincide. Atlanta is middle-class America, and the blacks there seem very satisfied to emulate the whites. Not only an emulation in style of acquisition, but

in values, lifestyles, even speech. This is the real reason why Atlanta is "the city too busy to hate." They are busy making money.

What they do with the money is something else, but suffice it to say that middle-class black Atlanta would never pause during the good day's work to join a parade. Nor is the thought considered anything but New Orleans foolishness and if not immoral, certainly recidivist. Black Atlanta ties into a system of middle-class respectability fully supported by the big churches and the six colleges. Their suppression of black culture or any lifestyle that white America cannot identify with is typified by an attitude toward the power structure of "we're just like you," and in its more highly

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structure would coincide as in Atlanta, but I doubt it. As it is, the policies of the New Orleans white power structure seem to be designed to keep the black community underfoot while giving up nothing, making no concessions, not even to the twentieth century.

what struggling blacks here see all the time: the expensive renovated uptown houses in contrast to the prison-like Desire Housing Project downtown, the buses primarily ridden by blacks, the tourist trade at the expensive New Orleans restaurants seen only when the kitchen door swings open, Parish Prison, Central Lockup and the criminal courtrooms filled daily with blacks. Black youths wash the dishes, sweep the floors, cook the fast foods, polish the image of New Orleans glamour. And a lot of these jobs are work-this-week-off-next-week.

In 1969, 38.2 percent of New Orleans' black families lived below the poverty level, as compared to only 25.2 percent in Atlanta, 26.8 percent in Houston and 26.5 percent in Dallas.



photo by Larry Sorigy

developed stages, "we're more like you than you if you knew the best in you." In this system, black Atlantans look upon African heritage like some long-suppressed family illegitimacy. Even the down-and-outs who wander up and down old Hunter Street (now the new Martin Luther King Boulevard) wear suits and ties, the better to pick up a free drink.

Compared to Atlanta, New Orleans is a breath of fresh air — but if air cost money, a lot of homefolks would suffocate. The food is great, but it is becoming more expensive; the music is great, but one cannot eat music. If New Orleans had a large black middle class, possibly their interests and the interests of the white power

Dr. James R. Bobo, a University of New Orleans economist who has watched the direction of the New Orleans economy with alarm, noted in his exhaustive and well-publicized 1975 study, *The New Orleans Economy: Pro Bono Publico*, "we really have two economies and two societies, one conventional and one unconventional (the underworld of economics). The most distinguishing characteristics of the underworld economy are: 1) incredibly high unemployment, 2) abject poverty and poorness, 3) relatively low educational attainments, 4) the degradation of welfare for many, 5) human, social and physical blight and 6) substandard housing."

Bobo gives documentary support to

Since then, the relative position of New Orleans has probably worsened. Bobo concludes that "...low labor force participation rates, economic discrimination, the relatively low educational preparation of the labor force because of the disadvantages of poverty and being poor, with its attendant high rates of unemployment, underemployment and unemployability, have contributed to our relative impoverishment, a condition of impoverishment greater in degree than for all major metropolitan areas, Atlanta, Dallas, or Houston, or for that matter, the entire nation."

The overwhelming thrust of Bobo's criticisms has to do with fundamental New Orleans economic weaknesses,

and the longstanding failure of the power structure to recognize them, and to recognize with the exception of the police force increases, that the entire city suffers from the consequences of the condition of its black poor.

Economic inequities are not the only distinctions between blacks and whites in New Orleans. We must begin to view the descendants of freedmen as a people who inherit not only the horrible legacy of slavery, but the strong positive legacy of African cultural retentions, especially in music, dress, the various racial societies, dance, cooking, parades, funerals, and the joy of something we might call the theater of the street. (To some extent these qualities exist in all large black communities of the South, but they are ever more so in New Orleans.) The gaiety, the love of life that whites (and many blacks) perceive on the faces of blacks here, particularly during cultural celebrations, is often misinterpreted as a sort of mindless contentedness, as if the people had not the sense (or the cause) to be angry.

It is my feeling, however, that this attitude toward life is a cultural strength that makes it possible for people to survive the hard times despite their frustrations — though white New Orleans, especially some of the younger enthusiasts of black music and culture, usually sees black culture as devoid of political and community consciousness in the same way their elders thought the beatific look on the faces of black musicians was due to their own "tolerance," the kindness and indulgence of the ruling class. Culture, music, parades, funerals — all of it — as it operates among black people in New Orleans *never* eschews political or economic considerations, however much these aspects may be suppressed. On the contrary, culture can be the very instrument that best conveys the political and economic interests of the people, though it has not been generally viewed this way.

The appeal of culture is why so many blacks remain in New Orleans, or return, seemingly against all economic reason. "It's a good town," many a black New Orleanian will tell you even away from the city. "Can't make no money but no other place like it." Then they will talk about the good times: the music, red beans and

rice, the parties, gumbo and what happened at carnival, or the mystery and intractable perversity of the place, the rains, the family histories of entangled bloodlines, then the music again.



All this means that full black political strength in New Orleans must begin to include people with lifestyles and interests at odds with middle-class America: the second-liners, the people who walk the unemployment lines, the people who were born in and have never left the projects, the welfare mothers and the welfare children, the people who wash dishes in the famous Quarter restaurants, the people who live in rundown New Orleans housing — the people to whom the vote now means nothing. They have been the *cynical ones*, and for good reasons. Most of the nonparticipants, the non-voters, feel that politics is "white folks' business."

Will politics ever become "black folks' business?" If so, what will make it so? Black New Orleans culture *is* at odds with mainstream American culture, a historical reality not only not likely to change, but in my opinion, not desirable of change. The extreme poverty, the raging unemployment in hard-core black New Orleans, makes it almost impossible for the community to elect representatives who will further its interests in traditional political ways. Once the black community elects someone, it is difficult to hold that representative faithful after she or he is exposed to the lure of greater amounts of money from competing mainstream economic interests, whether in plain ole dollar payoffs or jobs which offer huge increases in salary. 'Opportunity' for newly elected black politicians, themselves poor, appears in shiny traps wrapped in red ribbon.

In addition there are the problems created by the skillful direction of the potential black vote through outrageously gerrymandered districts — or brilliantly gerrymandered depending on how you look at it. Although the Supreme Court recently ruled that the present at-large, five district represen-

tative structure of the City Council is constitutional, it does not shake the conviction of most blacks that both the councilmanic and state legislative districts are now and have always been drawn with the aim of diluting black voting strength. Black voting blocs have also been discouraged by the racial housing pattern of New Orleans: in the old city, since the abolition of slavery, blacks have lived in just about every neighborhood. It is said this pattern developed because so many blacks worked as servants and the whites wanted them to live nearby; in the same way, in the French Quar-

**"It's a good town....
Can't make no
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ter, slaves lived in the rear of the houses of their white owners.

The potential black vote is even further defused by the traditional practice of buying off neighborhood organizations for — well, if not pennies, for rent money. During the last decade, SOUL (the Southern Organization for United Leadership) attempted to put a stop to this, but what has happened to SOUL is a case of history repeating itself. SOUL grew out of the concentration of black voters in the lower Ninth Ward. As the first really strong black New Orleans political organization in the twentieth century, SOUL was, for a time, a solid step forward, built largely on the small black homeowners and middle- and low-middle-income blacks who populate the area below the Industrial Canal, a commercial waterway that runs between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain. The Lower Ninth Ward represents mostly post-World War II growth, offering an opportunity for black home ownership not possible in the inner neighborhoods of New Orleans, and the lifestyle of a small town as satellite of a great city. SOUL also reached across the Canal to organize the area around the Desire project. (The area Tennessee Williams wrote about in *A Streetcar Named Desire* — part of the area was then

Polish — is also the area where whites were most active in resisting the beginnings of school desegregation in the early 1960s.) Desire, however, is much more poverty-stricken and politically impotent than the Lower Ninth.

In a sense, SOUL was a child of CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), the civil rights organization that attempted to organize New Orleans in the early '60s. It was also a product of the extremely active '60s legal firm of Nils Douglas, Lolis Elie and Robert Collins (now the first black federal judge in the South), CORE's local legal defense firm and the meeting place for New Orleans veterans of the civil rights movement. Nils Douglas was the first to test the political waters in the Lower Ninth in 1966 with workers buttressed by Movement veterans. Douglas lost this election, but within a few years he put together a formidable organization which controlled the ward's state representative office and became a power to be reckoned with in all city political affairs. Meanwhile, Douglas' law partner, Robert Collins, created COUP (the Committee for Organizational Politics) in his native Seventh Ward (primarily creole blacks). COUP often endorsed candidates in tandem with SOUL.

By 1970, when Moon Landrieu ran for Mayor and Edwin Edwards for Governor, SOUL-COUP had such a strong position it could guarantee the delivery of at least 80 percent of the city's black vote. Landrieu won the mayorship almost entirely because of the black vote, receiving less than 30 percent of the white vote. Edwards, after a messy primary, won a close gubernatorial race because of the solid bloc of black supporters delivered by SOUL-COUP and other black groups in New Orleans.

As a result of Landrieu's mayoral victory in 1970, SOUL struck some deals that most people feel were beneficial to the New Orleans black community. It is generally believed that in return for their support, Landrieu agreed to black control of federal community action and model cities programs; in addition many blacks gained prominent city jobs including, near the end of Landrieu's term, Chief Administrative Officer Terrence Duvernay.

Certainly the Landrieu-SOUL marriage was an extremely beneficial one

for both parties and through it the very face of City Hall, previously so hostilely white, seemingly stocked by straw-hatted, cigar-smoking Irish or Italian bosses, blackened before our very eyes, blackened in ways whites who liked the way things were before Landrieu could not accept. On the other hand, it should never be forgotten that it was a bargain; during his crucial eight years Landrieu was able to win almost every key election he had a stake in because of his dependable bloc of black support — of which a large part, but certainly not all, was orchestrated by SOUL-COUP.

After such notable successes, the quick demise of SOUL (COUP still exists as a fairly potent force) is difficult to explain. In a sense it can be explained by saying the leaders followed the classic pattern: lacking a strong economic base, they took whatever jobs—from judgeships to independent business opportunities—became available during the Landrieu years, and used the political organization to protect their new-found economic opportunities. Early in the game, severe splits emerged within SOUL over direction, between the rank-and-file and the leaders, between those from Desire on one side, and those from the Lower Ninth and Gentilly on the other; the inclination of the leaders to further their own interests at the expense of the rank-and-file did not inspire unity.

In addition, leader Nils Douglas, though a fine strategist and conceptual thinker, never seemed able to articu-

**We may have to
arrive at a politics not
of profit or power,
but of survival.**

late SOUL policy in a way that could transcend the labyrinthine organizational endorsements. Finally Douglas, always a rather phlegmatic politician, left the leadership role, and with his departure went what remained of organizational cohesion. By the time Landrieu's term was ending in 1978, SOUL had split into factions and was

fighting itself in the courts, a sad spectacle indeed.

Ironically and possibly tragically, it was during a period of setbacks for black political organizations in New Orleans that Ernest M. Morial was elected the first black Mayor in 1977. Morial possesses a distinguished record as a civil rights attorney and is a protege of the late A. P. Turead, the pre-eminent black civil rights attorney in Louisiana during the legal battles against segregation. Morial is also a product of black New Orleans' strong creole legacy, a people who have historically suffered from confusions and indecision about racial identity, often preferring, even when self-professedly black, to see themselves as a third group between the whites and the dark-skinned African-retention blacks of Congo Square heritage. Culturally, the creoles of color of earlier generations looked to France, not Africa (or America) as the paradigm of civilization.

Morial has always identified black, but his career has eschewed alliances with black political organizations, he has always seemed to move in splendid isolation. Nevertheless, he became the first black state representative in the late '60s and soon after narrowly missed a bid for City Councilman-at-Large.

When Morial announced for Mayor to succeed Moon Landrieu he was considered by most blacks to have no chance. What happened was almost unbelievable. Morial ran an excellent campaign in the first primary, coming out strong as a 'black' candidate, identifying his aspirations with such as Tom Bradley of Los Angeles and Maynard Jackson of Atlanta. It soon became obvious that Morial would be one of five candidates to be taken seriously, and it accrued to his advantage that he was the only black in the race.

In the first primary, Morial carried almost 90 percent of the black electorate, to the dismay of three of the white candidates who had reputations as racial moderates and hoped for at least a part of the black vote. Morial has always had his enemies among blacks in politics here, but he in fact received an almost unanimous endorsement from the black electorate without begging for it or having it delivered to him by an ongoing organ-

ization; it was, as some said, "a secret black bloc." Therefore, totally unexpectedly, Morial ran first in a closely fought five-man primary, and very importantly, the three white moderates split their vote, throwing the one rather conservative white, Councilman Joseph DiRosa, into the runoff against Morial.

After a few debates and an aggressive and sometimes bitter campaign in which Morial gave no quarter, it became obvious to the power structure he was the only choice; one who would be able to hold, if not actually improve on, some of the 'progress' gained during the Landrieu administration.

Yet Morial's election means almost nothing to the blacks on the bottom rung, those who have never been involved in the political process. As if to underscore the meaninglessness of any substantial gains for the black community, upon winning Morial has steadfastly maintained he is not and will not be a 'black' Mayor, owing nothing particularly to the black community. Such rhetoric is hardly necessary, since the black community has no method of calling in debts. In a sense, Morial, in contrast to Maynard

Jackson of Atlanta, presents the spectacle of a 'black' Mayor whose prime distinction is that he does not act like a black man.

If there is to be any meaningful change in New Orleans, we may have to arrive at a politics not of profit or extraordinary power, but of *survival*. The person who puts together this new black political structure might be the person who, after winning, does *not* take a better job, does *not* move 'up' as the fruit of political labors. We are not talking about a new, more radical ideology (however desirable this may be), but a new breed of community political activist, one who does not identify as a political 'professional,' one who has the luxury of not needing to convert political efforts into immediate cash reward, jobs or contracts, who has no desire to be the object of political glamour or to acquire a judgeship or appointive post. Hopefully, this person will work for years on the building of black organizational coalitions and their skillful use. Until one day the sight of a plum becomes too sweet. . . .

All this may sound dreamy, but if it ever happens it will probably happen

this way. The only real political salvation for the black community in New Orleans is self-help, the building of strong coalitions, and the retaining of dedicated people at the level where they have to answer primarily to the interests of the community — not the power structure.

Meanwhile, when it comes to politics these days it's all Atlanta. Black New Orleans has a big corner to turn. But when it turns it won't be the same corner as Atlanta, which is the same corner the rest of America always turns, it will be its own. Then, as one prominent black Southern politician — a native of New Orleans who left to go elsewhere — said, his eyes opening wide as he comprehended the idea of political leverage *plus* culture, "then you would have a monster!" □

Tom Dent, a native of New Orleans, has worked with the Free Southern Theater and the Congo Square Writers Union in New Orleans. He has published a number of poems and essays, and is currently working on a book of essays on the black South since the Civil Rights Movement.

BETTER VOTERS, BETTER POLITICIANS

The early '60s mass mobilizations and demonstrations did more than destroy the South's petty apartheid; it drew the South's black middle class into the protest movement in ways it had never been involved before. One hope of this synthesis of the educated elite with the mass action of the common man was that the newly enfranchised voters would select men and women of consummate political skill and high moral purpose to sit on the South's councils, commissions and legislatures; that they would forge a new "New South" from the remnants of its several predecessors.

Hope for Political Reform

by Julian Bond

Several among the newly elected black officials took to their new offices

like ducks to water. They learned the machinery that turned the engines of government. They organized caucuses on racial lines to coordinate their efforts. They learned the "go along — get along" philosophy without surrendering independence of thought or action. They were true politicians, able representatives of their people: open, honest, effective, dutiful, responsive and responsible. If they were more moderate than some had hoped, they were more militant than others had dared wish. If they occasionally revealed that social class was a greater determinant than racial origin, they remained racial advocates, loud and

frequently lonely voices speaking for the dispossessed.

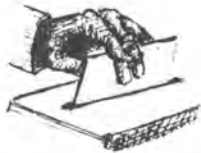
But many of the region's black elected officials have turned out to be only slightly better than the white officials whose places they took. Even though they are more "liberal" on the American political index, they remain less likely to harness the reins of government than their more experienced, more veteran white colleagues. Too often, the rank and file of black elected officials (BEOs) are as concerned with narrow, neighborhood issues as any alderman in Chicago. They are surely less venal than Chicago's pols are reputed to be, but because they depend more on personality and less on organization to get elected, the South's BEOs are largely charismatic figures sitting on the outskirts of power.

At the same time the number of BEOs increased, the number of blacks actually voting began to go down, almost as if the latter had seen enough of the former. In 1976, in the election guaranteed for Jimmy Carter by black ballots in 13 states delivering 216 of the 270 electoral votes he needed to win, only 58.5 percent of eligible black voters registered and only 48.7 percent actually voted. (For whites, the rates were 68.3 percent registered and 60.9 percent voting). The 1976 voting and registration figures for blacks were the same as in 1972, but lower — by six percentage points — than in 1968 and 1964.

53 percent of eligible black voters live in the South; in 1976, only 56.4 percent were registered and 46 percent actually voted. Because of population densities, the South has elected more blacks to public office than any other region, but these mayors and aldermen and commissioners often remain accessories beside the fact of actual governance of their towns, counties and states.

Former Governor Lester Maddox's prescription for improving his state's penal system is apt here — "We need a better class of criminals." Southern blacks need a larger pool of more sophisticated voters, less likely to vote for a man or woman who knows the words to their hymns rather than the numbers on their paychecks, and a larger pool of potential officeholders, more familiar with multi-million dollar budgets than with church collections

and tenant association dues. This does not mean that the minister or the community club president are disqualified from public service, but that charisma and a minute constituency aren't enough, by themselves, to guarantee voters a return on their investment of their franchise.



First, the voters. The Atlanta-based Voter Education Project, nearly abandoned by the New York foundations

available monies, but would begin to teach the self-reliance so important as all sources of outside funds, from public and private sources alike, diminish.

For itself, the VEP must raise capital increasingly from those who've already benefited from its work — the growing black middle class attracted back to the South by jobs won by the political and street activism of the middle and late '60s. This last task is far from easy; the venerable NAACP, now more than 60 years old, has never been able to position itself as the fiscal responsibility of America's black population, despite its long record of



photo by Lucinda Bunnien

Julian Bond at work in the Georgia State House

that created it, remains the single agency devoted solely to registration of minority voters across the South. This organization must be strengthened and returned to its former role as comptroller and dispenser of funds for its various, locally (often neighborhood) based constituent groups that actually do the hard work of registering the unwilling.

But the VEP must begin to wean itself away from dependence on remote sources for funds, and its clients from their sole reliance on the VEP itself. A system of demanding matching funds from client groups would not only double the amount of

success.

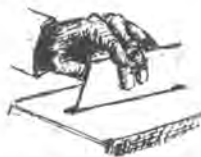
In addition to the relatively simple — in most of the South — registration process itself, the VEP must use its scarce resources to teach political organization, a throwback technique to the late '50s when the South's few black voters in urban areas — Atlanta, Charlotte, Charleston, Birmingham — were organized by nonpartisan Voters and Civics Leagues. By avoiding partisan politics, and by organizing upward from block to precinct to ward, these early Leagues were able to maximize the minority vote far beyond its actual percentage in the voting population. They could deliver

85 percent of minority votes to endorsed candidates; their endorsements, colored by the racial tones of the times, often selected the least offensive candidate, but were able to moderate the Negrophobes so common in the '50s South. Partisan politics, neighborhood parochialism and the increase in personality-oriented duchys have destroyed most Voters Leagues; their descendants, like New Orleans' SOUL and COUP described by Tom Dent, have been destroyed by rewards to their leadership or the inevitable personal struggles for power engendered by political activism.

Coupled with organization must come citizenship education; if literate, white American college students don't know the basic rudiments of citizenship, or the names and terms of their federal representatives, how can poorly educated Southern blacks be expected to?

The importance of bond elections, of Public Service Commissions and other regulatory agencies, the budget-setting process in the legislature, the limits of mayoral power, the supremacy of county over municipal government, the spread of regionalism in health planning particularly and all planning generally, must be explained to a populace which views its officeholders as simply ombudsmen divorced from elective function, refereeing between a formless, faceless government and the citizen.

Registration, organization and education must be conducted at equal speed by the large national rights organizations — the NAACP and SCLC throughout the South and the Urban League in cities where it exists — as well as by the thousands of community groups that abound. A revitalized Voter Education Project can serve as the funding source, as the fount of expertise in organizational techniques and as the coordinator of training for the BEOs themselves.



It is impossible to pre-select officeholders, or to ensure that Candidate A who knows the limits of his job and its beneficial uses for his constituents will be elected over Candidate B who

is looking — as one black Atlanta County Commission candidate admitted — for the job with the best pay and the most benefits. But it isn't impossible to tutor some of the winners.

A variety of organizations — most now defunct — have tried to systematize the training process, but none has ever institutionalized it. Nevertheless, exposure to the larger world of finance and budgeting is as essential as is a strong commitment to equal justice in officeholders of any race or position; for minority lawmakers, it is obligatory.

In January, February and March, the Joint Center for Political Studies, a foundation-funded "research, education, technical assistance and information" agency for minority officials, will host three training institutes supported by the US Civil Service Commission. Focusing on budgeting, planning and management, the seminars will teach their participants to "read a budget, apply for federal and state assistance," and will instruct elected and appointed officials in "time management, increasing personal effectiveness, bond issues," and "the constitutional duties of elected officials." It should be no surprise that officeholders need instruction in their duties; what is surprising is that we accept and re-elect those who so obviously lack expertise.

The Joint Center's seminars are also making use of a resource virtually untapped by the South's political activists — the black college. Two of the three meetings will be held at Jackson State College in Jackson, Mississippi (January), and at South Carolina State College in Orangeburg (February). While political science departments at the more than 100 public and private black schools have played a marginal role in guiding the course of black politics, these schools' economics and business departments have had little to do with training or support of often unsophisticated BEOs. These colleges, under attack from HEW, forced to adapt to new curricula and abandon old ones to meet integration guidelines, their very existence questioned by cost-conscious and racist state governments, could do worse than to undertake citizenship education and job-training for the new crop of BEOs, community activists

and the small but growing number of black bureaucrats in the South.



The political process remains the surest path to economic advancement and democratic decision-making for the South's underclass, white and black; the present state and low numbers and skills of minority elected officials can only reinforce the inequities of the latest New South unless radical shifts occur in the knowledge and number of voters and candidates.

The correct mix of alert and informed electorate, compassionate and skilled officeholder is difficult to stage-manage, but it has failed to develop naturally. Those who care about the region and its people, their ability to share democratically its wealth and resources, must see political development as the first priority of social activism from now on.

The leaders of voting drives and candidates for public office in the remainder of the '70s and the upcoming '80s will have to shift their rhetoric as well. A plea for participation based on yesterday's martyrdom is no longer sufficient to stir the unregistered — and uninterested — inhabitants of the South's ghettos and abandoned farmlands. They have given a helping hand upward to too many status-seeking candidates who use elective office for personal aggrandizement, or who see themselves in an adversary relationship with the people who promoted them to office.

Fifteen years ago in Atlanta, a defeated candidate for political office complained that Atlanta's black voters received nothing for their votes except "street lights on Auburn Avenue and policemen who can't arrest anyone but you."

The successful campaign in the 1980s must tie political participation with economic improvement, or black Americans will enter a long night of permanent political impotence and its consequent permanent penury. □

Georgia State Senator Julian Bond is president of the Institute for Southern Studies, which publishes Southern Exposure.



1

A Gaggle of Georgians

photographs by lucinda bunn

G U E S S W H O ?



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GUESS WHO?

1. Harley Langdale, Jr. (third from left) at the Georgia-Florida Field Trials, Albany. Director, Citizens & Southern Bank; VP and Dir., Langdale Woodlands, J.W.Langdale Co. From the Valdosta clan that includes John W. (Dir. of Southern Co.) and W.P. Langdale, owners of auto, timber, naval supply, oil and building supply companies.
2. John Booth and Representative "Kil" Townsend in lobby of State Capitol.
3. Herman J. Russell and Coretta Scott King at Spelman College, Atlanta. He is Chrmn., H.J. Russell Plastering Co., Citizens Trust Co. and *Atlanta Inquirer*. Dir., Atlanta Hawks and Atlanta Flames. Trustee, Morris Brown College and Atlanta Arts Alliance. Treas., Atlanta Chamber of Commerce. Coretta Scott King is President, Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Social Change.
4. Bert Lance and Senator Sam Nunn.
5. Walter Rylander and "date" at the Sumter County Historic Preservation Society Christmas Party, Americus.
6. Marvin and Janice Shoob and guests at their home in Atlanta. Marvin Shoob is an attorney and the former Treasurer of the Georgia State Democratic Committee.
7. Betty Talmadge, wife of Senator Herman Talmadge, and Mary Beth Busbee, wife of Governor George Busbee, at banquet.
8. Dr. Otis Hammonds (second from right), anesthesiologist, at home with guests.
9. Robert W. Woodruff, 89-year-old patriarch of the Coca-Cola Co; Chrmn. of its Finance Committee. In more active days, he was a key Southern figure on many boards, from GE and Morgan Guaranty Trust to the Boy Scouts and the Red Cross. The famous "anonymous donor" of millions to Georgia charities — over \$100 million to Emory, \$6 million to the High Museum.
10. D.W. Brooks at Gold Kist poultry-processing plant in Carrollton. Chrmn., Cotton States Mutual Insurance Co.; Dir., Cousin Properties, Inc.; Trustee, Emory, Wesleyan, Reinhardt. Innovator of agricultural cooperatives in the '20s, he is now Chrmn. of Gold Kist, Inc., and has been since '33 when it began as Cotton Producers Assn. He became a national spokesman for Southern agricultural policy, serving on dozens of commissions and as agricultural/economic advisor to Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Carter.
11. William Banks (seated right) with his guests Gudmund and Carolyn Vigtel and Frances Howell at "Bankshaven," Newnan. Banks is on Advisory Council for Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation. Gudmund Vigtel is Trustee, the High Museum. Howell is Chrmn., Atlanta "Committee of 100."
12. Sylvia Ferst in her Atlanta penthouse. Trustee, High Museum and Arts Alliance.

Photographs © Lucinda Bunnan, from *Movers and Shakers in Georgia*, by Lucinda Bunnan and Frankie Coxe, Simon & Schuster, 1978.

By Bruce Cory

TAXING TEXAS TIMBER BARONS



Photo by Roy Hamric

To look at Bill Hoffman, you probably wouldn't suspect he is one of the most influential men in East Texas.

You can see him at almost any meeting of the Jasper County commissioners court, sitting unobtrusively in a corner, clad in his customary outfit of sports shirt, slacks, white socks and loafers. You might take him for a local homeowner there to ask the county to open more garbage dumps, or maybe a construction contractor with a bid in on a county job.

You might, that is, until the subject of the county's finances came up. Then, you'd likely see him fish a small calculator out from his shirt pocket and start tapping out numbers authoritatively.

At a commissioners court meeting in February, for example, Hoffman announced that, by his calculations, a \$9,600 annual appropriation requested by the county's three public libraries would require a \$600,000 hike in property valuations on the county tax rolls. His tone of voice clearly indicated he thought such a course would be fiscal madness.

And when Hoffman spoke, the commissioners listened. The one-room libraries in the piney woods towns of Jasper, Buna and Kirbyville are still scraping along without county assistance.

Hoffman doesn't hold elective office. He's not the county auditor, treasurer or tax assessor-collector. But he has more influence on county finances than all three combined. He's the tax man from Temple-Eastex.

Hoffman manages the tax and title division of Temple-Eastex Industries, the state's largest landowner. A divi-

sion of Time Inc., Temple-Eastex owns more than a million acres of East Texas timber land, operates three massive mills in Diboll, Evadale and Pine-land, and holds title to recreational developments on Sam Rayburn and Toledo Bend Lakes. Its production of paperboard, building materials and wood pulp last year made up about 25 percent of Time Inc.'s \$1.2 billion in revenues. Hoffman's assignment is to keep track of — and, where possible, to keep a lid on — the property taxes Temple-Eastex pays to 22 counties and about 150 school districts.

By all accounts, he does an admirable job. The nearly 220,000 acres of Temple-Eastex timberland in Jasper County, for instance, are officially valued for tax purposes at \$100 per acre. According to conservative estimates made by foresters and appraisers, that figure is about one-third of the land's actual market value.

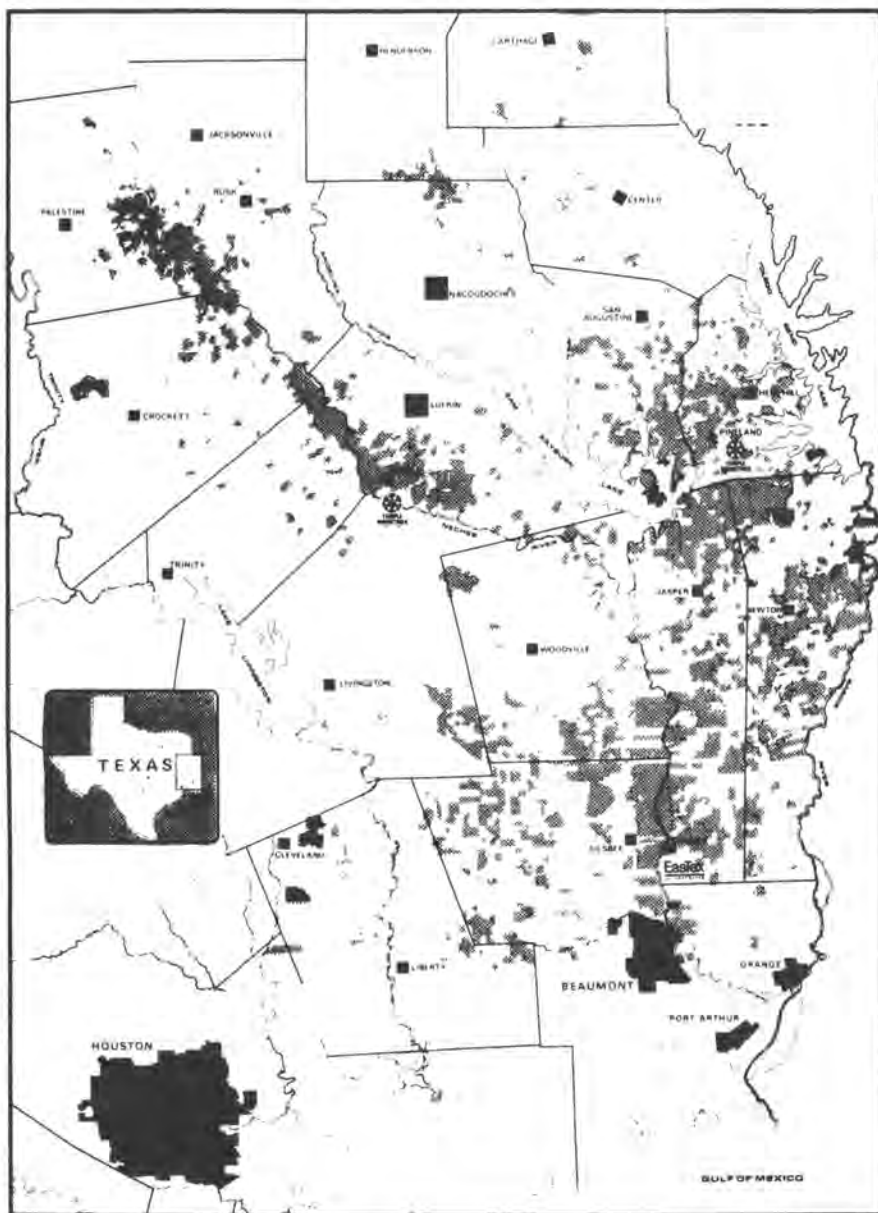
One might suspect that the recent wave of tax reform proposals have Texans clamoring for new laws to make timber companies like Temple-Eastex pay their fair share. But things don't always work that way. This past November, Texas voters approved by a margin of seven to one a "tax relief" amendment to the state constitution which promises to make timber land-owners among the biggest beneficiaries of the 1978 tax revolt.

The amendment was the product of a special session of the legislature convened a few weeks after the passage of California's Proposition 13, and it was, in legislative parlance, a "Christmas tree" — a package of proposals offering a little something for everyone. Unfortunately, most of the "tree's" branches were weighted with tax exemptions and reductions for those who needed them least. True, homeowners received a \$5,000 exemption on the market value of their homes for school tax purposes, and larger exemptions for the elderly and disabled were also included. But the amendment struck from the constitution the clause requiring the taxation of stocks, bonds and other forms of "intangible" property — a boon to wealthy investors. And the

most controversial element of the "tax relief" package, the one opposed most stubbornly by progressives in the legislature, dealt with "productivity valuation" for agricultural land. Billed as a measure designed to grant tax relief to the state's hard-pressed family farms and ranches, its profoundest effect will be to clamp a lid on the tax bill the state's timber giants must pay to the already impoverished county governments and school districts of rural East Texas.

With an eye toward protecting small farms and ranches, Texas voters

had approved during the mid-1960s a state constitutional amendment permitting the assessment of agricultural land based on the income derived from that land during the previous five years. In almost all instances, such "productivity" assessments are considerably lower than those based on estimates of the market value of the land, especially when real estate speculation forces land prices well above their actual value as farm land. But the amendment was flawed. It failed to permit farms organized as corporations to qualify for produc-



Timber land owned by Time's Temple-Eastex division in Southeast Texas

tivity tax valuations, and many small farmers and ranchers had already begun to incorporate their holdings, with family members as stockholders, for income tax purposes. In every session since 1969, the legislature has considered proposals to correct this oversight. But the issue has been clouded by the timber lobby, which has adopted the idea of productivity valuation as its own.

Because timber is "harvested" only once every 25 to 40 years, the five-year income formula used to assess crop and pasture land is not applicable. Instead, productivity value of timber land is measured by a complicated system of "site indices" foresters have developed to calculate timber growth rates. For example, site indices might show that an acre of timber has appreciated in value, after deduction of management costs, by \$20 in one year. That figure is then divided by the anticipated rate of return from that timber, currently about 10 percent. The result: an estimated productivity value of \$200 per acre. Current productivity valuations on most East Texas forest land range from about \$100 to \$275 per acre.

Timber company representatives say that productivity valuation is the only fair way to tax forest land. "Our timber land is not available for a housing subdivision," said Bill Hoffman of Temple-Eastex Forests. "No one is going to build a factory on it. The only thing it is good for is growing trees." Therefore, he maintains, attempts to tax timber land at market value are "confiscatory."

While Hoffman's arguments have a certain validity, they ignore some basic realities. In the piney woods of East Texas, the timber companies are the last taxpayers in need of tax relief. In most jurisdictions, homeowners and other businesses pay a much higher share, proportionally, of the tax loads than do the timber giants. And the timber industry already enjoys virtually unchecked power to keep its property tax bills down. "The timber companies own 85 percent of the land in this county," said Newton County Tax Assessor-Collector Buster Daniels. "They tell us what they're going to pay."

Table 1 shows that Daniels exaggerated the extent of timber company holdings in Newton County, but not

by much. The industry-dominated Texas Forestry Association is fond of distributing studies which show that about two-thirds of the state's more than 10 million acres of commercial forest land is owned by individuals or families. A closer look at the figures, however, reveals that most of these small holdings are in relatively sparsely forested Northeast Texas. In the more thickly wooded and commercially productive counties of Southeast Texas, corporations own virtually all the land. More than 80 percent of Temple-Eastex's 1.1 million acre timber domain

TABLE 1
CORPORATE TIMBER HOLDINGS
(by county)

County	Taxable forest acreage	Portion Controlled by timber cos, in acres and % of total	
Angelina	334,000	192,000	57%
Hardin	498,500*	348,000	70%
Jasper	490,400*	359,600	73%
Newton	563,200	431,200	77%
Sabine	178,500	104,500	59%
San Augustine	217,200	143,000	66%
Tyler	530,400*	389,400	73%

*Figures do not reflect proposed acquisition of 65,000 acres in these counties for the Big Thicket National Preserve.

Source: US Forest Service, *Forest Statistics for East Texas Pineywood Cos.*, 1976.

lies in the seven southeastern counties listed in Table 1. The state's other timber giants (Table 2) are also firmly entrenched in Southeast Texas. "I keep hearing about the small timber farmer, but I have never been contacted by one," said State Senator Roy Blake of Nacogdoches. "Frankly, it's hard to believe (the TFA's) statistics on the subject."¹

II

Students of the South are familiar with the paradox of Appalachia—the phenomenon of a poor people subsisting in a land rich in natural resources. The same paradox can be found in East Texas. Considerable wealth has been drawn from the piney woods since railroads opened the region for exploitation at the turn of the century,

although the timber barons of that era have given way to today's diversified corporations. Time Inc.'s 1977 annual report shows pre-tax profits of \$52.9 million for Temple-Eastex's operations, or 30 percent of the corporation's total pre-tax earnings. Kirby Forest Industries, a division of the Santa Fe Railroad Co., reported 1977 pre-tax profits of \$21.9 million. Southland Paper Mills, acquired by the multinational St. Regis Paper Co. in 1977, is the second largest producer of newsprint in the United States thanks to its East Texas holdings.

TABLE 2
CORPORATE TIMBER HOLDINGS
(by company)

Company	Total forest acreage	Approx. acreage in the 7 counties
Temple-Eastex	1,090,000	867,000
Kirby Forest Inds.	550,000	422,108
International Paper	442,807	106,537
Southland Paper	570,000	50,562
Champion-US Plywood	477,260	49,283
Owens-Illinois	171,776	103,500
Totals	3,301,843	1,598,990

But little of this wealth is reflected in the circumstances of the Texans who live in the timber country. The 12 counties that comprise the heart of the region² had a higher percentage of white families living in poverty (19.4 percent) than any other part of the state, according to a 1973 report of the Texas Department of Community Affairs, *Poverty in Texas*. Over 49 percent of the black families in the region stood below the poverty level of \$3,500 per year for a family of four and more than 54 percent of the elderly were officially living in poverty in Sabine County, which has a population of about 7,500 people, two doctors and no hospitals.

"All of these counties around here," Jasper County Commissioner Corbit Whitehead once explained to a visiting outsider, "are poorer than Job's turkey." The government services available to East Texas residents reflect that poverty. East Texas jails are nightmarishly antiquated and run-down, and criminal trials are still presided over by

circuit-riding judges. "In this area," said Ron Willis, criminal justice planner for the Deep East Texas Council of Governments, "we are still paying full-time law enforcement officers \$600 per month and expecting them to work 60-hour weeks and do a good job." Schoolteachers in East Texas uniformly receive the minimum wage set by — and paid by — the state.

The timber industry contends it is more than paying its share of the tax load for local services. Another study circulated by the Texas Forestry Association shows that the average com-

the South. (Taxes on timber land in the region range from 23 cents per acre in Alabama to \$1.60 per acre in Georgia.) When local governments reappraise land to produce more tax revenue, said Hoffman, "we wind up paying our share and a little bit extra."

The figures in Table 3, however, tell a different story. They are drawn from a 1977 report by the Texas Research League and are based on data compiled in the statewide study of local tax assessment prepared by the Governor's Office of Education Resources (GOER) in 1975.

their market value cannot be accurately determined from sale prices. But appraisers in the GOER study estimated market values for East Texas timber land between \$350 and \$450 per acre. But even if the counties appraised timber land at only \$200 per acre, as shown on Table 4, the additional tax revenue would be substantial. The total tax payment to those counties from Temple-Eastex alone would increase by about \$275,000 per year — or about 35 cents more per acre.

One reason why homes are assessed at a higher rate is that it's easier to de-

TABLE 3
VALUATION DISCREPANCIES
(by school districts)

	Average ratio of assessor's value to market value	Single	Agri-
		family residence	cultural land
<i>Angelina Co.</i>			
Hudson ISD	19.9%	24.1%	8.7%
Lufkin ISD	25.6	32.7	10.9
Huntington ISD	12.4	32.6	5.2
Diboll ISD	23.1	28.5	7.0
Zavalla ISD	15.1	17.5	0.2
Central ISD	14.1	17.0	6.0
<i>Hardin Co.</i>			
Kountze ISD	42.9%	32.0%	47.0%
Silsbee ISD	48.8	45.0	35.0
Hardin-Jefferson	55.3	50.0	50.0
Lumberton ISD	66.9	68.0	77.4
West Hardin ISD	33.6	24.0	18.0
<i>Jasper Co.</i>			
Brookeland ISD	17.0%	20.0%	10.0%
Buna ISD	28.0	35.7	16.6
Jasper ISD	34.1	38.0	24.0
Kirbyville ISD	40.6	50.0	24.0
Evandale ISD	25.0	15.0	12.0
<i>Newton Co.</i>			
Burkeville ISD	16.4%	18.0%	14.0%
Newton ISD	31.5	48.6	25.0
Deweyville ISD	45.0	37.0	29.0
<i>Savine Co.</i>			
Hemphill ISD	14.6%	18.4%	5.0%
West Sabine ISD	15.2	16.0	8.0
<i>San Augustine Co.</i>			
San Augustine ISD	14.8%	5.6%	19.9%
Broaddus ISD	9.1	9.0	4.0
<i>Tyler Co.</i>			
Colmesneil ISD	22.1%	20.0%	18.0%
Woodville ISD	43.0	54.0	36.0
Warren ISD	48.6	40.0	39.0
Spurger ISD	30.2	25.1	29.0
Chester ISD	24.2	25.0	16.0

bined county and school district tax on East Texas timber land is \$1.43 per acre, the second highest such figure in

TABLE 4
COST OF UNDERVALUATION
(by county)

County	Current valuation of forest acreage	Taxes collected (1977)	Taxes if reappraised at \$200 per acre*	Difference
Angelina	\$ 60	\$ 81,405	\$263,250	\$181,845
Hardin	85	169,967	417,803	247,836
Jasper	100	78,464	156,928	78,464
Newton	100	197,120	394,240	197,120
Sabine	100	28,560	57,120	28,560
San Augustine	38	30,951	165,072	134,121
Tyler	150	329,696	421,774	92,078
Seven County Totals:		\$916,163	\$1,876,187	\$959,584

* The \$200 per acre appraisal is a very conservative figure; it is the average appraisal of timber acreage employed by one of the most recently appraised school districts in the region, the Kountze Independent School District.

The first column shows the fraction of GOER-estimated actual market value at which 28 school districts in East Texas appraised their real property. In the Hudson Independent School District in Angelina County, for example, the official valuation of real property was about 19.9 percent of its estimated market value. The second and third columns show the ratio of official to actual market values for single-family residences and for agricultural land — including timber.³

In all but five school districts, homeowners paid a proportionally higher share of the school tax bill than did the timber companies. In 12 school districts, homeowners were taxed on the basis of valuations at least twice as high as those for timber lands.

Table 4 shows the economic effects on county governments of undervaluing timber land. Because large tracts of timber land rarely change hands,

termine their market value than to find the market value of timber land. But some local officials admit that timber companies actively discourage attempts to revalue their holdings. "It's always the same story," said one school tax assessor-collector who asked not to be named. "If you decide to revalue their property they'll bury you. They'll take you to court and bankrupt you."

The threat of a lengthy, costly lawsuit hangs over virtually every local government that considers revaluing timber land, and it is a threat that has been carried out more than once. "As a rule, counties and school districts in East Texas are taken to court whenever they make a mass tax reappraisal," said W. R. Owens, an independent appraiser and an expert witness in many such tax challenges.

Major property owners challenging revaluations in concert strengthen their hand by withholding the disputed tax payments. Although delinquent

tax charges mount up, it may take several years for a taxing authority to win court orders to collect those fines. Even a few months without tax revenue from the timber companies can put considerable pressure on a school district or county at loggerheads with its largest taxpayers. Often, as with the Spurger Independent School District in 1972, and the San Augustine Independent School District in 1975, school boards simply buckle under and sign out-of-court settlements that roll back the controversial reappraisals. It's a process one Angelina County school official referred to, with considerable understatement, as "reaching a mediocre agreement with your landowners."

According to Bill Hoffman, the timber companies have played only a minor role in such tax reappraisal suits. "Where you have those lawsuits is where a lot of landowners get disgusted with a revaluation, not just the timber companies. It's like a small California," he said, alluding to the ferment that led to Proposition 13.

However, Jack McCreary, president of Southwestern Appraisal Co. of Austin, has a different opinion; individual landowners may join such suits, "but that's because the timber companies play Darrell Royal football and get someone else to carry the ball." When tax challenges are heard before boards of equalization or in court, he reports, the lead counsel for the complaining landowners is most often from one of the firms on retainer to



Photo by Roy Hamric

the timber companies.

McCreary took part in one of the bitterest reappraisal battles in East Texas in recent years, in the San Augustine Independent School District. About 180 landowners, including the timber companies and such local notables as former Lieutenant Governor Ben Ramsey and US District Judge Joe Fisher, challenged reappraisals by McCreary's firm that raised the valuations on timber land in the district from \$18 an acre to between \$190 and \$350 an acre. While the court battle over the reappraisal went on, conservatives in the district took control of the school board and negotiated an out-of-court settlement that pushed timber valuations back to \$36 per acre.

Since then, the district has nearly gone bankrupt. Plans for the construction of a new high school to replace the one built in 1927 have been scrapped, and in 1977 the district was forced to borrow more than \$100,000 from local banks to meet its July and August payrolls. The San Augustine case, McCreary said, "was a vicious thing." But it is not unusual.

III

Legislating a statewide change in the valuation or tax assessment on timber land has proved equally frustrating. Demand for tax reform of rural land seems to only play into the timber companies' hands. In fact, they

seized on the debate over productivity valuation of farm and ranch land as an opportunity to cement into the state constitution the favorable treatment they already receive in property tax matters. They claim the productivity valuation of timber land would actually increase tax revenues for many local governments in East Texas, and, in the short run, they are right. In half of the school districts in Table 3, for example, the GOER study determined that productivity value appraisals of timber land would be higher than currently appraised values.

One of the staunchest foes to the productivity valuation of timber land, former State Senator Don Adams of Jasper, agrees that it would "raise the basement" on timber taxation. But, he adds, it would also impose a tax ceiling that would grow more restrictive as market values on timber — and other property — increased.

"Whenever you put a tax ceiling on any type of land, you're adding to the tax burden on everyone else," said Adams. "The average man would have to pick up the difference." Adams opposed the extension of productivity valuation to timber land when the idea first surfaced in 1969, during his first term in the legislature. "The timber companies kept pressuring me to support it," he said, "but after a while, they found out that dog just wouldn't hunt with me."

Despite his opposition, the legislature approved the amendment extending coverage of the productivity system of valuation to corporate farm



Photo by Roy Hamric

and timber land and placed it on the November, 1970, ballot. Adams campaigned against it throughout East Texas, while statewide opposition was led by the Texas State Teachers Association, which claimed that the measure would erode the tax bases of rural school districts. The amendment went down to defeat by a 53 to 47 percent margin. (In East Texas, only about 30 percent of the voters approved it, and the Hardin County electorate rejected it by a vote of 4,006 to 818.)

Undiscouraged, proponents of the amendment reintroduced it in the next four sessions of the state legislature. It was defeated each time, although in 1977 it cleared the Senate and fell short of the necessary two-thirds majority in the House by just one vote. Lobbying by the timber companies for the amendment was intense, and when the special tax session of the state legislature was called in July, 1978, the battle was joined again.

Moderate and liberal legislators fought hard to keep productivity valuation for timber land out of the "relief" package. In the Senate, an attempt to exclude corporate timber holdings from the measure failed by just one vote. But in the House, the amendment's backers made two modifications which assured its passage. The amendment was reworded so that only productivity valuation for corporate farm and ranch land could become effective immediately after voter approval; even if the amendment passed,

productivity valuation for timber land would require further enabling legislation. "What that did was make it harder for people like me to go around the state and get the voters to turn it down," said State Representative John Bryant of Dallas, one of the leading opponents of the "tax relief" package. And the House leadership adopted the "Christmas tree" strategy, forcing the membership to vote on the entire "tax relief" amendment rather than on its component parts. Many legislators shared the emotions of State Representative Jimmy Allred of Wichita Falls when, on the final day of the session, he raised his right hand to signify an "aye" vote for the amendment while placing his left hand over his nose in disgust.

Once it was out of the legislature, there was little chance of preventing passage of the amendment. Democratic gubernatorial candidate John Hill, anxious to prevent any disruptions of party unity, prevailed on the politically influential state teachers association to remain silent on the amendment during the fall campaign. Don Adams, who had helped defeat the proposal in 1970, and had by this time become a legal advisor to Governor Dolph Briscoe, also remained silent on the issue. The state AFL-CIO and Texas Consumer Association denounced the amendment as a "fraud" that would set back the cause of true tax reform in the state. But the homeowner tax exemptions included in the amendment made it highly attractive

to voters. On November 7, 1978, they voted 85 percent to 15 percent for its enactment.

Bryant sees little hope of defeating the enabling legislation which will permit the productivity valuation of timber land. Now, instead of a two-thirds vote of both houses, all that will be required for the measure's passage are simple majorities.

One way to salvage some of the revenue that will be lost from the amendment might be to add to it a severance tax on timber. Louisiana taxes timber that way, and last year its timber severance tax produced nearly \$4 million in tax revenue, 75 percent of which was returned to the local jurisdictions where the timber was harvested. Adams said he once proposed to timber company representatives coupling the productivity tax with a severance tax as a compromise measure. They responded "with horror," he said. But it is far from a radical idea. Indeed, it is based on one of the oldest concepts in government: those who profit by the extraction of the land's resources should pay for that privilege.

It is a concept that many parts of the South, including Texas, have yet to take seriously. □

1. Even in northeastern counties where the majority of the land is in small holdings, a major timber company is usually the county's largest landowner. In Cass County, for example, it's International Paper Co.; in Anderson County, Temple-Eastex.

2. They are Angelina, Houston, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Newton, Polk, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Shelby, Trinity and Tyler counties.

3. Only about 10 percent of the "agricultural" land in the seven counties listed in Table 3 is used for growing crops or grazing stock. The rest is timber. The amount of crop and pasture land ranges from about 34 percent in Angelina County to about six percent in Tyler County. (Source: Texas Soil Conservation Service, *Conservation Needs Inventory*, 1970.)

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Photo by Roy Hamric

“It’s Good To Be



“Cherrydale” – Home of Eugene Earle Stone III, founder of Stone Manufacturing Co. Once the home of James Clement Furman, president of Furman University and son of its namesake, Rev. Richard Furman.

by Cliff Sloan and Bob Hall

Home In Greenville” . . .

“We’ve been taking on the whole damned city,” says a textile worker active in the unionizing drive at Greenville’s J. P. Stevens mills. “The newspapers, the TV, the businesses, the churches, the schools — we have to take them all on.”

Greenville, South Carolina, has a national reputation for virulent anti-unionism. Recently, for example, *The New York Times* called it one of the “most relentlessly anti-union cities in the nation.” It is a reputation of which many in the Greenville business community are proud, a reputation they have self-consciously built and intend to maintain. Less than eight percent of the workers employed in the county belong to a union; and those who try to increase that rate or lessen the \$2,830 wage gap between industrial workers here and the rest of the country find themselves very much in the minority.

“People come to Greenville to get away from unions,” says an executive from a major textile company. “They say, ‘I want to live again, I don’t want to be harassed all the time.’”

Greenville has changed over the years — drastically, some would say — but it remains a place where executives feel they can live again, a place to get away from union demands and government regulators. “It’s Good To Be Home in Greenville,” boasts the city’s Chamber of Commerce. In an era of runaway shops, conservative politics, and resurgent religion, it is also a place whose national significance far exceeds the size of its population — 62,000 in the city, 278,000 in Greenville County. Among other things, Greenville is the home of:

• **Michelin Tire Corporation**, the French-based multinational firm and



pioneer of the radial tire. Michelin chose Greenville and neighboring Anderson and Spartanburg counties to locate its first plants in America because the area’s work force was both familiar with factory work and hostile to labor organizing. The United Rubber Workers, fearful that the presence of non-union plants in the US will weaken its bargaining position with the Big Four tire makers, has tried to organize Michelin’s new workers — with little success. Michelin, which is completely unionized in France, plans to build more plants in the South, adding to its present \$350 million investment and work force of over 2,500.

• **Robert T. Thompson**, chairman of the US Chamber of Commerce’s labor relations committee, senior partner in one of the country’s top anti-union law firms, and chief strategist behind the massive lobbying campaign and filibuster that scuttled the Labor Law Reform Act of 1978. “I’ve been sort of a technical advisor to Chamber lobbyists,” Thompson says dryly. Defeating the bill, which would have strengthened the National Labor Relations Act, became Thompson’s

number one obsession in 1978. His law firm — Thompson, Mann & Hutson — contributed over 100 amendments to weaken the bill; the firm’s clients include a score of the biggest companies and trade associations in the country, including Deering-Milliken, GE, Campbell Soup, and the American Textile Manufacturers Institute. “I happen to think that defeating this thing is in the best interest of the companies I represent,” Thompson concludes.

• **Daniel International Corporation**, the third largest industrial contractor in the nation. After World War II, founder Charles E. Daniel “sensed the tidal strength of the [Southern industrial development] movement and became its captain through his ability to offer sites, survey information, and good, fast, low-cost, and complete plant construction.”* Before his death in 1964, his company had built over 400 plants in the South — 250 in South Carolina alone — for companies like Celanese, J. P. Stevens and Dan River Mills. His nephew, Buck Mickel, follows in his footsteps, especially in his opposition to union labor. In 1977, Daniel International merged into the large, California-based Fluor Corporation, a move both firms believe will give them a stronger position in the burgeoning non-union construction field, particularly in Daniel’s current specialty — building nuclear and fossil fuel power plants for utilities.

• **Clement Furman Haynsworth, Jr.**, segregationist judge from one of Greenville’s oldest families. (His great-grandfather, the Rev. Richard Furman, founded Furman University while

* From Kenneth and Blanche Marsh, *The New South: Greenville, South Carolina* (Columbia: R.L. Bryan & Co., 1965), p. 100.

... *But It's Better*

"Everything is ordered and controlled. It is all run with a surface grace, but with enormous emphasis on control — like a plantation or a cotton mill."

Joseph B. Cummings, Jr.
Atlanta Bureau Chief
Newsweek

serving as the president of the Southern Baptist Convention 152 years ago.) Richard Nixon appointed Haynsworth to the US Supreme Court, but the Senate eventually rejected his nomination. While Chief Justice of the US Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, Haynsworth frequently wrote decisions upholding segregationist practices which the US Supreme Court regularly overturned on appeal. His nomination was part of a package of favors which Strom Thurmond won from Nixon in exchange for campaigning for him in the South in 1968 against George Wallace. The deal, worked out in an Atlanta hotel room meeting between Nixon and the South Carolina senator, resulted in protective tariffs for the textile industry, relaxation of the federal role in school desegregation, and the insertion of 20-odd friends and associates of Thurmond into key administration posts. According to writer Neal Peirce, "rarely in American history has a political debt been so handsomely, consistently paid off."

• **J. P. Stevens & Company**, the nation's second largest textile company, with 18 of its 85 plants in the Greenville area, as well as its manufacturing, personnel, and purchasing headquarters located in the Daniel Building, Greenville's largest. The New York-based textile firm more than doubled its size in 1946 by merging with a network of Southern mill owners centered in Greenville. Stevens is now the city's largest industrial employer. The target of a national union organizing campaign, the company moved its annual stockholders' meeting from New York to Greenville's Textile Hall in March, 1978, to avoid a recurrence of embarrassing demonstra-

tions that met its owners in 1977. Stevens is so incensed by the continuous barrage of public attacks from New York politicians, labor leaders, editorial writers, and even Wall Street insiders, that it has threatened to abandon the Stevens Tower in midtown Manhattan, no doubt to consolidate its troops in Greenville.

• **Bob Jones University**, the fundamentalist training center for hundreds of missionaries and ministers that helped Greenville earn another of its favorite slogans, "Buckle of the Bible Belt." Students are forbidden to smoke, drink, hold hands, dance, kiss or date without chaperones. Bob Jones III is the current university president, following the precedent of his grandfather, who founded the school in 1927, and his father, Bob Jones, Jr., who is now the chancellor. With 5,700 students and buildings worth over \$40 million, Bob Jones University is the largest fundamentalist university in the world. It also operates an FM radio station, broadcasting classical music, religious sermons, and editorials by Ronald Reagan (sponsored by Roger Milliken) across three states.

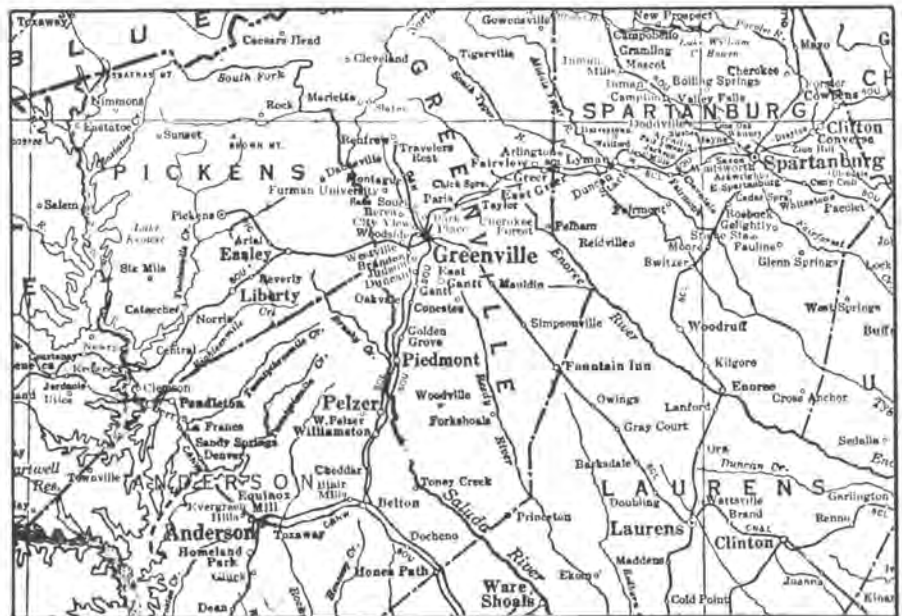
• **Roger Milliken, head of Deering-Milliken**, the nation's largest privately held textile company. Although he lives in Spartanburg, Milliken is a major influence in Greenville (where his Judson Mill employs 1,100), the rest of South Carolina and the country. Besides sponsoring the Ronald Reagan editorials on WMUU, he contributes heavily to a wide variety of ultraconservative causes, including the John Birch Society and National Right to Work Committee. He gives his executives free subscriptions to Bill Buckley's *National Review*. He gave Richard Nixon \$84,000 in 1972,

If You Hate Unions

some of it secretly, and was a key figure in what Jack Anderson called "a direct link between a campaign payoff to President Nixon and his efforts to restrict textile imports." In labor circles, Milliken is known for "the Darlington case," a 13-year battle which followed Milliken's decision to close his Darlington mill after the textile workers union won an election in 1956. Even after the courts finally decided Milliken should compensate the employees for being fired illegally, Deering-Milliken attorneys kept the case on appeal for several more years, preventing any of the 550 affected workers from receiving a dime.

II

Nestled in the rolling foothills of the Piedmont, Greenville was originally a second-home community for wealthy Charlestonians seeking refuge from the heat of South Carolina's Low Country. By the late 1880s, the town became the center for a new kind of plantation: the mill village. At first spurned by the Low Country cotton planters, industrialization soon impressed many of the post-Civil War elite as the only means for "resurgence." Greenville, with the waterfalls of its Reedy River and its proximity to the impoverished white farmers in the hills, became the natural hub of the movement. New South advocates like Benjamin F. Perry urged local businessmen to "educate the masses, industrialize, work hard, and seek Northern capital to develop Southern resources." Perry, who had argued against secession with men like Dr. James Furman, was not exactly a popular figure among the wealthy



whites. But his new advice seemed to possess more merit.

In 1873, Vardry McBee and three Bostonians newly arrived in Greenville began the Vardry Mill, powered by the falls of the Reedy River. It was the town's first textile factory. The next year, Colonel H. P. Hammett opened the Piedmont Manufacturing Co. on the Saluda River, following the lead of his father-in-law, William Bates, a Rhode Island native who had started Greenville County's first cotton mill a half century earlier on the banks of the Enoree River. And in 1881, Captain Ellison Adger Smyth, grandson of a Charleston banker, joined F. J. Pelzer to organize the Pelzer Mill.

Newly created mill villages like Piedmont and Pelzer flourished, inviting other capitalists to open their own versions in or around Greenville. Whole towns, with company-owned houses, stores and churches, sprang up

almost overnight. By 1882, Greenville County employed more "hands" (1250 workers, including children) in cotton mills than any other South Carolina county; the South's total textile employment of 19,400 in 1880 and 44,800 in 1890, while gaining rapidly, was still dwarfed by New England's 217,700 textile workers in 1880 and 259,500 in 1890.*

At this early point, labor organizing challenged the hegemony of mill owners. In October, 1886, while conducting a strike at cotton mills in Augusta, Georgia, the Knights of

* Georgia and North Carolina had more textile workers than South Carolina in these decades. The region as a whole depended on child labor. 24 percent of Southern cotton millhands were boys under 16 or girls under 15 in 1890, in contrast to only seven percent in New England. By World War I, South Carolina's mill employment surpassed Georgia's, ranking third behind Massachusetts and North Carolina.



An unusual group picture of Greenville area mill owners taken in 1905. At the top of the photograph are many of their names.

Labor came to the Greenville area. According to textile executive and amateur historian Malcolm Cross, the workers' enthusiasm produced "a frantic correspondence among South Carolina textile leaders about the Knights and what to do about them." The solution, then as now, seemed to hinge on firing the leaders and vigorously repressing the momentum for union organizing. When the Knights helped employees at the Pelzer and Piedmont mills, Cross says, "Capt. Smyth and Col. Hammett responded quickly and effectively, sought out and discharged the troublemakers and brought to a halt the abortive attempt to organize their workers."

The industry's policy of racial segregation also took shape in these early days. Capt. Smyth, generally recognized as the "Dean of Southern Cotton Manufacturers," organized rifle clubs with the single purpose of defending white rule from scalawags and carpetbaggers and keeping blacks in their place. When Wade Hampton won the governor's office in 1876 with the help of roving bands of "Red Shirts" like Capt. Smyth's men, Reconstruction ended; new rules rigidly segregating the races soon circumscribed every part of society.

From then on, mill owners could always point to the "white only" status of textile factories as visible evidence of their loyalty to their workers. Racism, in a state that was still 51 percent black in 1920, thus became the linchpin in a new form of Southern paternalism whose finer accoutrements included everything

from free Christmas turkeys to garden plots, company-sponsored sports teams to scholarship funds.

Between the 1890s and World War I, Greenville experienced its "textile gold rush years." Mills and mill villages sprang up through the Piedmont, especially in Anderson, Greenville and Spartanburg counties. Greenville's population jumped from 1,518 in 1860 to 8,607 in 1890 to 23,127 in 1920; meanwhile, employment in the county's cotton mills rose from 1,800 in 1890 to 8,500 in 1920. Owners added more looms and spindles to old factories and opened new ones, borrowing capital from machinery manufacturers, the commission houses which sold the finished goods, the local banks which mill owners established, and from each other. Stores, hospitals, utilities, newspapers, schools, churches — all were organized and either owned outright by the mill men or tied to their fortunes through marriage and an elaborate network of middlemen (lawyers, realtors, financiers, contractors) and interlocking boards of directors. For example, James Orr, Jr., who married Col. H. P. Hammett's daughter, is described by a biographer as

president of the Piedmont Manufacturing Company, Piedmont, S. C. He was organizer of the Orr Cotton Mills of Anderson, S. C., vice president of the American Company, the Mills Manufacturing Company, the Greenville News, the Paris Mountain Hotel Company and the Greenville Gas and Electric Company. He was a director of the First National Bank of Greenville, the American National Bank, and the People's Bank of Greenville, also of the Easley Manufacturing Company and the Cox Manufacturing Company. He also served as trustee of the South Carolina Medical College of Charleston, of Converse College in Spartanburg and Clemson Agricultural College of Clemson.†

Such inbreeding and intricate interweaving of interests has long characterized the Piedmont, and has made Greenville the aristocratic center of upper South Carolina, as Charleston is

† From William P. Jacobs, *The Pioneers* (Clinton, SC: Jacobs & Co. Press, 1935).

"Educate the masses, industrialize, work hard, and seek Northern capital to develop Southern resources."

— Benjamin F. Perry
19th century
New South advocate

for the Low Country. Capt. Smyth's daughter married A. F. McKissick, who was president of Ninety-Six (the name of another mill town) Cotton Mills and later owner of Alice Manufacturing Company. Their grandsons, A. Foster and Ellison, still play an active role in Greenville textiles and banking. Similarly, the Stone, Earle, Haynesworth and Furman families — all among the most powerful in Greenville today — are interconnected through common ancestry as well as current business interests (see the Wheel of Fortune on page 98).

The actual consolidation of several mills under one corporation — rather than through interrelated, but independent stock owners — did not occur until Lewis W. Parker merged a group of 16 mills into the Parker Mills Co. in 1907. He organized the corporation to rescue mill owners who had suffered large losses in the financial panics of the early 1900s. But in 1914 his own company went into receivership when the bottom fell out of his investments in the cotton market.

The trend, however, had been established; larger and larger companies formed or expanded by buying Southern mills. Commission houses such as Milliken & Co., J. P. Stevens, Josiah Bailey and Iselin-Jefferson (later Dan River) moved into direct ownership of mills. By the end of World War I, when the market for textile products soared, these Northern interests joined Southern mill owners in capitalizing a host of factories. In 1920, Greenville County had 22 mills with 750,000 spindles, making it the largest textile center in the state, with neighboring Spartanburg County a close second. Only Gaston County, North Carolina, had more spindles in the South.

By 1930, with Northern investment flowing faster and faster into the region, the South finally surpassed New England in the number of spindles and looms in production. Newer equipment, cheaper labor, lower taxes, combined with the introduction of scientific management techniques (the speed-up and stretch-out), helped profits in Southern textiles leap past those in the North. But the industry's commitment to maintaining the paternalism of the earlier generation of mill owners remained unchanged. When workers in Greenville County joined

the national textile strike of 1934 (the country's largest mass strike), their meetings were infiltrated by company spies, they were harassed by company "deputies," and chased off picket lines by the national guard. On September 6, 1934, six strikers in nearby Honea Path were killed and 30 injured in a shootout between company men and strikers. Shootings also occurred at Judson Mills and other area plants. The national guard, on orders of the



South Carolina governor, patrolled the mill villages until the strike was finally crushed in late September.*

* Greenville was not immune to other labor protests throughout these years. In 1915, the IWW shocked the entire region by marching through downtown Greenville with a red flag. The wave of textile strikes in 1929 also rippled through the town's mills, though not with the violent consequences of a Gastonia or Elizabethton. Several walkouts in Greenville brought concessions from the mill owners in their use of the stretch-out and speed-up (making fewer people do more work).

In the 1840s, Vardry McBee and his millwright John Adams built this dam at Conestee on the Reedy River. The cotton mill McBee built was replaced in 1898 by the Conestee Mill which, in the 1950s, became a part of Wyandotte Worsted.



III

By World War II, Greenville had firmly established itself as the "Textile Capital of the World." And with a mixture of brute force and graceful paternalism, its leaders had taught both blacks and whites how to stay in their places. The well-disciplined work force and pro-business climate of the area attracted other employers in the post-war economic boom. The size of Greenville (58,000) and the area's textile employment (21,000) grew little after 1950, but a plethora of non-textile plants opened on the outer edges of the city, especially along the 30-mile Interstate 85 corridor to Spartanburg.

The value added by manufacturing factories in Greenville County jumped sevenfold between 1947 and 1976, the population rose from 158,000 to 278,000 and the number of non-manufacturing jobs (trade, finance, utilities, government, services) climbed from 15,800 to 51,800. In the 16-year period from 1960 to 1976, over \$650 million in new industrial investment entered Greenville County, with much of that in the non-textile field. The number of jobs in these industries — chemicals, electrical equipment, rubber, apparel, even aerospace — doubled from 15,000 to 30,000 during those years; and the contribution which the textile mills made to the total value of

products made in the county declined from more than one half in 1960 to less than one third in 1975 (\$571 million out of \$1.85 billion).

Other changes in the post-war era further complicated the plantation-style rule of the old mill men. The automobile helped render the mill-owned village obsolete; workers could be recruited from outside the county, and those in the mill houses possessed a new mobility. The new employers that arrived offered higher wages, pulling skilled loom fixers and others out of the mills and raising the expectations of other workers. Legislation to improve the pitiful educational levels of South Carolinians, while consistently opposed by the textile interests, gradually made headway. In 1960, the South Carolina attorney general, with the agreement of the mill owners, finally declared unconstitutional the state law effectively barring blacks from work in textile factories. But it took the civil rights movement and Civil Rights Act of 1964 to open the gates. Black employment in South Carolina mills rose from under five percent in the early '60s to 17 percent in 1968 to 30 percent in 1976. Federal regulation of many other areas formerly considered the sole prerogative of management also stepped up in the '60s and '70s. No longer could a handful of men make decisions the way they had for

a century.

"It used to be that a man could make a decision, put on his hat, and that would be the decision of the board of directors," recalls a descendant of one of Greenville's most prominent textile families. "It's an awful nice way of doing business and we miss it now."

"So many Yankees have come in," rues a construction company executive, "the courthouse crowd just doesn't have the power anymore."

But some men recognized that there were ways to adapt to the changes. Alester Furman, Jr., like his father before him, is one of these. At 80, he has lived long enough to hear others call him "A Man of Great Vision" — and, indeed, he has led two generations of Greenville's elite in making the transition from mill-owned schools, churches, homes, hospitals and clubs to independent, but friendly, enterprises.

Furman tells a story about a 1946 train ride he took with Robert Stevens, then chairman of the board of directors of J. P. Stevens. Stevens was touring the South, putting the final touches on the merger plan that would bring the modern J. P. Stevens into existence.

As they passed a mill village, Furman turned to Stevens. "Bob," he asked, "when are you going to sell your houses?"

The very thought horrified Stevens.

"Never, I'll never do that," he said emphatically. "We'd lose control of our workers."

Furman smiled and shook his head. "We'll manage," he told Stevens confidently.

Indeed they have, though in ways much less obvious, though no less effective.

IV

One of the principal tactics in maintaining control while expanding the circle of power involves letting in only your friends. For Greenville's elite, this strategy has meant blocking the entrance of companies into the area that are not aggressively anti-union.

"There's a long history of local interests, textile interests, encouraging or discouraging new industry," recalls E. D. Sloan, Jr., a Greenville road construction magnate. "The mills that were here controlled the water commission. . . . The water commission would say, 'I'm sorry, we don't have enough water.' It was the prerogative of the good ole boys in the courtroom."

Many in Greenville remember a time in the '30s, for example, when the Manhattan Clothing Shop tried to open a plant in Greenville. Manhattan had a "closed shop" contract and likely would have opened a unionized plant. The good ole boys in the courtroom quickly mobilized to keep it out altogether.

Recently, the most highly publicized example of screening a prospective business followed Philip Morris' 1977 announcement that it had bought an option on land near Greenville as a possible site for a \$100 million plant that would employ an estimated 2,500 workers. Several bankers were anxious to have Philip Morris, with its huge payroll and purchasing power, come into the area. But some of the biggest names in Greenville business, and in South Carolina politics, made known their opposition to Philip Morris on the basis of its contract with the Tobacco Workers Union in its North Carolina plants. The heavy guns came out blasting.

"It would be like inviting the devil into the dining room," says Sloan. "I told one of those bankers, 'Let's run those bastards off; somebody else will

come.'"

"It was going to be a large plant," anti-union lawyer Robert Thompson recalls. "My objection was that they were coming here and not giving employees a free choice. The industrial climate of South Carolina is based on non-unionization. If Philip Morris were here with unionized workers and families, this would no longer be a non-union community."

"No way that plant should ever have come here," Buck Mickel declares. Mickel is generally considered "the single most powerful man in Greenville." His uncle, Charles Daniel, founder of Daniel Construction Co., is still revered as the patron saint of Greenville's business community. "Philip Morris would have brought in a union," Mickel says in explaining his opposition to its proposed move. "It's a corporation that takes and never gives. I know, I've worked for them."

Most textile companies shun publicity, but Bob Coleman, chairman of Riegel Textile, admits he is "very opposed to organized labor;" and another Riegel executive went on record during the Philip Morris debate expressing "concern . . . about Philip Morris' union status. It's very difficult to believe they're going to have the will to preserve our open shop environment."*

Even Michelin Tire, a newcomer to Greenville, publicly said it had "reservations" about the new tobacco factory. Ironically, when Michelin first located in Greenville in 1974, it encountered the same kind of scrutiny and resistance. Local businessmen were afraid its higher pay scale and better package of benefits would disrupt the prevailing rates for Greenville workers. They also feared Michelin

* The Chamber of Commerce ultimately wrote the company a lukewarm letter saying it would be welcome; but most observers consider the gesture only a formality to obscure behind-the-scenes maneuvering. Some even believe that Senator Strom Thurmond and Governor James Edwards contacted the tobacco firm and discouraged the move. Both men deny the charges, but one prominent businessman's doubts reflect a widespread attitude: "You take the fact that Roger Milliken and some of those other guys who were opposed to Philip Morris are some of the biggest Republican contributors in the state, and it's not hard seeing Thurmond and Edwards getting involved on their behalf."

Opposite page: The Woodside Mill in background and its mill village were organized in 1902 by the Woodside brothers. It is now owned by Dan River and employs about 1,100 workers.

"There's a long history of local interests, textile interests, encouraging or discouraging new industry. . . . It was the prerogative of the good ole boys in the courtroom."

— E.D. Sloan, Jr.

Greenville
construction magnate

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would not strenuously oppose organizing by the United Rubber Workers Union. Its new plants would be susceptible to unionization, mill owner Eugene Stone III complained to the newspaper in 1973. And that would be “just like a cancer; once they get a foothold, it tends to spread.”

Michelin has since established itself as a strong advocate of anti-unionism. It took the unusual step of naming as plant manager not an experienced production supervisor, but an expert

in “personnel management.” It regularly sends representatives to the anti-union courses offered by the Chamber of Commerce and area schools. And it has established personal ties to Greenville’s old-line elite; the Michelin family has become close friends of the Furmans.

Orienting new businesses like Michelin to the Greenville way of doing things is one of the roles of the local Chamber of Commerce. With a full-time staff of 24 professionals and an

unions by moving South — we should unionize here too,” 44 percent agreed and only 30 percent disagreed.

While unions like ACTWU eagerly organize a newly responsive work force, the Chamber has its own programs to preserve the status quo. A Communications Action Program is “directed toward the general public stressing its stake in maintaining a climate free from union organization and collective bargaining.” A Communication Network Task Force monitors “labor



Greenville Today: looking toward the downtown skyline from Abney Mills' Poinsett Plant. Tall building at left is Daniel Building. Others are (left to right) South Carolina National Bank, Poinsett Hotel, Insurance Building and City Hall.

annual budget of \$650,000, the Chamber operates an extensive program of lobbying, management training and public education (see article by Mike Russell). It is most sophisticated and best organized at what it considers most important: the effort to keep unions out. Plenty of people, it seems, remain unpersuaded about the dangers of unions. A Lou Harris poll of South Carolinians in 1971 found that most citizens thought the lack of labor organization hurt their standard of living. In answer to the question, “Industry is just running away from labor

activity in its formative stages.” A Business-Industrial Relations Committee serves as trouble-shooter to combat “third party intervention” (the Chamber’s term for union representatives). Significantly, the Committee’s guiding light is GE vice president Stephen Dolny, another indication of how “diversification” has actually provided the Greenville business community with some of its most aggressive anti-union leaders.

The Chamber’s Leadership Greenville program most clearly reflects the changing methods of control exercised

by the Greenville business community. As the old-line leaders died or moved out of the limelight, others in Greenville, and at the Chamber in particular, feared "a crisis of leadership." Leadership Greenville is designed to meet this crisis by training 40 to 50 young professionals a year in a variety of subjects — "labor... leadership... economy... education... media... the arts." The goal is "developing a core of informed, committed and qualified individuals," a core of individuals who will share the Chamber's perspective in their leadership of Greenville.

V

Training this core of leadership has proven crucial to fulfilling the primary goal in the business control of Greenville: the prevention of independent sources of opposition or criticism to corporate policies. When Alester Furman, Jr., and other established leaders relaxed their personal control of key institutions in the community and guided the transition to "independent" enterprises, they needed to make sure these new entities were headed by friendly, pro-management people. Independent-minded newspapers, churches, universities, professional and civic associations,† and social service agencies could play a vital role in challenging the status quo and creating an atmosphere conducive to critical thinking and dynamic interchange. Significantly, such free-spirited institutions are not allowed to thrive in Greenville.

Greenville's two newspapers — the *News* and the *Piedmont* — are both

† The failure of the professional community to achieve independence from the business interests it often represents is best illustrated by Greenville doctors. Not a single one is willing to diagnose a case of byssinosis, or brown lung, the disease mill workers may get from breathing cotton dust. Medically certified diagnoses are required before a mill worker can collect disability compensation payments from the state. Consequently, the Carolina Brown Lung Association says it has been forced to take disabled Greenville workers to other parts of the state for fair medical treatment — though they still run into resistance from many doctors. The head of the SC Lung Association's task force to instruct doctors how to diagnose byssinosis is a consultant for a textile firm, M. Lowenstein & Co., and for Liberty Mutual, the textile industry's largest insurer and chief opponent to paying brown lung claims.

owned by Multimedia and both consistently run pro-management editorials.* A top textile executive calls Jim McKinney, editor of the *News'* editorial page, "a good ole boy you can count on." McKinney himself proudly tells visitors that his friends are among the top businessmen in Greenville and his brother-in-law is a former Burlington Industries executive.

Neither paper seems very interested in investigative reporting, or in asking Greenville's leaders any embarrassing questions. "The basic policy is 'Keep Your Eyes Closed,'" says one of the papers' reporters. "It's not an explicit policy, but it's implicit." Even a reporter from *The Daily News Record*, the textile industry trade newspaper, calls the papers' coverage "miserable." J. Kelly Sisk, chairman of the board of Multimedia, has a different opinion:

We recognize that the textile industry is extremely important... In the newspaper business, you have to think about people — advertisers, merchants, stores where newspapers are bought and sold. It's our purpose to give good, solid coverage of the textile industry. That's our avowed purpose... We're respected for it."

Sisk's curious sense of his newspapers' constituency — advertisers, merchants and store owners — reveals much about the independence of the *News* and the *Piedmont*. So does Multimedia's extensive involvement in running its personnel through the Leadership Greenville seminars; and so do the numerous corporate interlocks between Sisk, other Multimedia executives and the Greenville business establishment (see chart p. 98). The cordial relationship Multimedia's local television station, WFBC, maintains

* One editorial in the Sunday, July 13, 1976, *News-Piedmont* condemned the consumer boycott of J. P. Stevens undertaken by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) as "evil... deplorable... tyrannical." Two days later, an editorial in the *Piedmont* claimed that if ACTWU's attempt to organize Stevens workers in Greenville succeeds, "individual workers' rights would be trampled in a mindless union... We hope Stevens workers, who for so many years have played such an important part in this community's smooth development, will not fall for the false siren song of union rocks and shoals waiting as sharks to snare unwary travelers."

What are nice companies like these doing in a place like this?

They're profiting! Why?

Well, such factors as these have a lot to do with it: the largest pool of manufacturing labor in the South, outstanding natural opportunities, technical training second to none, a positive labor climate and an easygoing lifestyle with plenty of fresh air and water. If you'd like to know more about Greenville, we'd love to share it with you.

Write to us or call collect, and we'll send you a copy of our brochure, "Report From Greenville." It describes in detail what you'll want to know about Greenville — and what it's like to live and work here.

‡ If you're planning an expansion, you'll profit by thinking out Greenville, South Carolina!

Write to:

J. Kenneth Luke, Mgr. Eco. Dev.
Greater Greenville Chamber of Commerce
Post Office Box 10048
Greenville, South Carolina 29603
Telephone 803/242-1050

Greenville, South Carolina

IF YOUR BUSINESS IS GOING PLACES... WE'VE GOT A PLACE FOR YOU TO GO.

If you're in distribution, assembly, or service, there's a special place for you in South Carolina. We're the only state in the East with a no-STLUS Law. You can ship your product to assembly in Pennsylvania, and ship it out again without paying an inventory tax.

A noticeable tax director is only a small part of our attractions. We'll meet your workers in our technical schools free of charge for the skills they'll need in your business. We've got a state port system, interstate highways, and one of the highest rail densities in the South.

If your business is going SOUTH, we're the place for you to go.

South Carolina

"Full Of Surprises."

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with the city's elite is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that the station recently had two women broadcasters change their surnames to two of the most important in the city — Furman and Daniel. "It was no coincidence," says WFBC News Director John Poston. "Furman and Daniel are familiar and easy names in Greenville."

The academic institutions of Greenville — Bob Jones, Clemson, Furman and Greenville Tech — also fail to examine critically, much less challenge, the claims and prerogatives of corporate power. Sermons at Bob Jones regularly condemn interest in unions or reliance on government-supported welfare programs as "un-Christian" — a true Christian would await the welfare of Christ.

Furman University projects a more liberal image, but in many ways it is just as hostile to "interference with business." Two years ago, for example, the School of Continuing Education offered a seminar on "Practical Collective Bargaining," taught by arbitrators with the National Labor Relations Board. It was hoped that both union and management would participate. But the very concept of "practical collective bargaining" is so repugnant to Greenville executives that few companies sent representatives.

In fact, the idea that Furman sanctioned a seminar promoting the notion of feasible unionism raised the dander of some of the university trustees.

"We caught a little flak from Mr. Furman about doing it," recalls Dr. Louis Phillips, Furman's Dean of Continuing Education. "We felt that, as a liberal arts institution, we were justified . . . but it turned out to be so heavily union that we decided not to do it again."

Phillips learned his lesson well. Last year, the School of Continuing Education offered a seminar in "Maintaining Non-Union Status."

The atmosphere at Clemson, a state university, is no more free of corporate influence. The school's president since 1959, Robert C. Edwards, is a former treasurer of Deering-Milliken and now serves as a director of Dan River Mills and Duke Power. The school's curriculum features an extensive textile management program to train future mill executives. "You wouldn't believe the pressure around here about unions," says one young history

professor. "If you don't mind unions, and if you like your job, you learn to shut up. And if you hate unions, letting people know about it is a good way to advance your career."

While Clemson and Furman teach the management, Greenville Technical Education College trains their employees. It can hardly be expected to rankle the employers who will provide jobs for its students. Actually, Greenville's textile leaders were among the strongest opponents to Governor Ernest Hollings' plan to begin a statewide network of technical schools in the early 1960s. But today they are proud to claim Greenville TEC as evidence of their vision and concern for the advancement of their workers. As Senator Hollings recently explained, the textile industry for decades operated on a cyclical pattern of employment following the market demand for various materials. It would go from peaks of six-day weeks around the clock to valleys of a single shift one day a week. "At the peak," Hollings said,

they wanted to reach out and get all those employees. They didn't want anyone competing and certainly not training them to higher skills and going off to higher pay. So we had quite a struggle in actually instituting our technical and industrial arts program. Every textile and chamber of commerce man in South Carolina now is proud of our industrial training. But they were the ones who resisted it at first.

VI

Greenville's elite have made a habit of keeping the city in the dark — and then claiming credit when a ray of sunshine breaks through. From the creation of public schools — originally opposed because they would take the children out of the mills — to the technical colleges, all social advances are projected as gifts from the benevolent owners concerned for the welfare of their beloved workers. The same self-serving distortions allow business leaders to claim credit for opening mills to black workers and for providing higher-paying non-textile jobs with national corporations which have located in Greenville — even though

both changes were vigorously resisted for years. Adopting these changes as their own is one of the ways Greenville's corporate power structure maintains its control: rather than fight to the death on an issue, it absorbs the inevitable into its own framework and thus keeps the upper hand. Graceful, but thorough, control.

There are still a few realities that Greenville's rulers have not faced, much less accepted as consequences of their backward policies and hegemonic control. Most significantly, Greenville suffers from chronic poverty. People who work hard remain poor. For Buck Mickel, chairman of Daniel International, Greenville "is just a nice place to live." He and his family are among the 200 families that made more than \$50,000 in 1970. But for fully one-third of Greenville's families, their year's income failed to top \$6,000.

"Poverty is not a real big problem," says Dr. Larry McCalla, chairman of the county council, from his spacious home in a secluded suburban neighborhood. "There's no place you could pick out as a real deep poverty situation."

State Senator Charles Garrett also doesn't think the problem is all that bad. His attitude is perhaps best expressed by a sign in his office in Dan River Mills: "Stamp Out Poverty — Get Rich Quick."

Men like McCalla and Garrett and Mickel are likely to tell you that poverty is on the decline in Greenville, that wages are going up. They'll cite statistics to back that up — the estimate that, by 1980, four times as many local families will have annual incomes exceeding \$50,000. But they might not mention estimates that, in 1980, a third of Greenville's families will still be getting by on less than \$10,000 a year. Or that South Carolina ranks 46th in per capita personal income (\$5126 compared to the national figure of \$6441 in 1976).

Nor are the annual income figures the only evidence of serious and unmet social needs in Greenville. In 1970, for example, Greenville had the third highest murder rate in the country. Greenville also continues to spend relatively little on its public schools even though it has more money available than the rest of the state. The Greenville County

Planning Commission put it succinctly: "outlays per pupil in Greenville County are approximately the same as those in the state of South Carolina as a whole, even though income per capita in the county is 15 percent greater." The illiteracy rate in the state is the second highest in America, yet teacher pay and per-pupil school expenditures are the second lowest. In the early 1970s, the South Carolina Education Association grew so disturbed by these inadequacies that it threatened to impose sanctions if the legislature did not grant a sizeable increase in teachers' pay. Until a \$500 increase was granted in 1973, the average teacher earned \$1,400 below the Southeastern average.

These continuing needs — the poverty, the crime, the schools — have not moved Greenville's leaders to tax its corporations or its wealthy citizens more heavily. A study in 1970 revealed that the state could collect \$165 million more a year in property taxes and \$31 million more in personal income taxes without exceeding the national average tax rates. The same study showed that South Carolina reaps \$36 million more from its sales taxes (which fall most heavily on the poor) than the national average. But instead of taxing the rich, Greenville and South Carolina continue to make those least able to pay support the costs of government services. After all, low taxes are one of the preconditions for a healthy business climate. Even the so-called "leading progressives" accept this assumption without question. "Our schools are better than some people might think," says Max Heller, who served as the city's reform-minded mayor from January, 1971 to January, 1979; "if our taxes were higher, we would have less development."

Ironically, Heller takes his liberal credentials as "a man who serves the people's interests" to his new post as head of South Carolina's industrial development office. Part of his job involves continuing — albeit under state sponsorship — the paternalistic tradition of convincing workers/voters that *their* best interests are served by granting more concessions to industry. But the facts suggest that the principle of "business first, the people's welfare second" has had an overall stifling effect on the social conditions

of Greenville and South Carolina. Because Greenville is the most industrialized part of the state, its low corporate and property taxes have left South Carolina poor and helped lead the state to the bottom of the stack in many areas: South Carolina ranks 43rd among the states in percentage of families with income less than \$3,000; 42nd in number of hospital beds per one thousand persons; 48th in average student-teacher ratio; 49th in the percentage of the work force unionized; 47th in average industrial wage; and 47th in per capita welfare assistance payments.

As long as the interests of Greenville's corporate elite take precedence over the interests of the majority of its citizens, such backwardness can be expected to continue. A reversal of those interests — especially through the organization of Greenville's workers — poses a direct threat to men like attorney Robert Thompson, builder Buck Mickel, realtor Alester Furman and textile man Robert Coleman. The circle of power is not large enough to let the unions in — not without a fight anyway.

"You can develop an industrial community, as we have, where there's no place for a union," says Robert Thompson, almost as an article of faith. "You can live forever without them." □

Cliff Sloan, a student in Cambridge, Mass., conducted research on Greenville, J.P. Stevens, and related matters for his senior thesis with the support of a Summer Research Award from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy Institute of Politics. Bob Hall works at Southern Exposure. Special thanks to Mike Russell and Phaye Poliakoff.

A NOTE ON SOURCES

Sources for this article include dozens of interviews conducted by the authors; newspaper articles and unpublished papers in the Greenville Public Library's South Carolina Room, including Malcolm Cross's speech, "Textile Pioneers of Greenville" and such articles as "Alester Furman Called 'Man of Great Vision,'" *Greenville News*, Nov. 12, 1961, and "South Has Come Long Way Since Day When Mills Family Owned," by Alester Furman and Ted Shelton, *Greenville News*, Oct. 14, 1962; books include Broadus Mitchell, *Rise of Cotton Mills in the South* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1921), Guy A. Gullick, *Greenville County: Economic and Social Conditions* (Columbia, SC: Uni-

"You can develop an industrial community, as we have, where there's no place for a union. You can live forever without them."

— Robert Thompson
attorney

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Photo credits: pages 82 and 87 from *The New South* by Marsh; p. 86 from the Greenville County Library, published in *A Greenville County Album: A Photographic Retrospective*, 1977; p. 88 and 90 by Mike Russell.

Greenville's Experiment:

Leadership Greenville provides a smoke screen for the Chamber's anti-union efforts and a means to co-opt those who might otherwise offer progressive leadership.

Greenville, South Carolina, is a laboratory for a social experiment — its hypothesis: that a community can take a "principled" stand against workers organizing for collective bargaining, and can enforce that stand on the entire work force in the community.

In its most simplified form, the experiment looks absurd: a highly organized business community employs a number of devices to convince workers that *they* are better off *unorganized*. But this strange combination of hypocrisy and Alice-in-Wonderland logic has worked with frightening effectiveness. And since Greenville is one of the nation's major "job meccas" — it is the most rapidly developing part of the second most rapidly developing state — this experiment will continue to have national consequences.

In the old days, the experiment was carried out with the ingenious paternalism and personal style of a handful of mill owners, men like Captain Ellison Smythe, F. W. Poe, the Beatties and Hammetts, and Lewis Parker. Their success helped make Greenville the "Textile Capital of the World." Today the efforts to keep workers unorganized begin in the boardrooms of Greenville's corporations. A few of the older leaders sit on numerous boards where they are joined by many newcomers. The interlocks between banks, textile companies, utilities, insurance firms, large retailers and manufacturers are so extensive that they have created a tight-knit network of corporate and personal relationships that encompasses every major business and elite family in Greenville.

The relationships are further solidified by these same people's member-

ship in key churches (Christ Episcopal, First Baptist, Buncombe Methodist), social clubs (Greenville Country Club, Poinsett Club, Green Valley Club) and their service on the boards of various social agencies and arts organizations (Greenville Symphony, St. Francis Hospital, Greenville Little Theatre, March of Dimes, etc.).

As a result of this intricately interconnected web of relationships (see chart), the elite of Greenville — the corporate policy-makers — speak with one voice. Each time one of the big corporations holds a board meeting, its 10 to 20 directors have another chance to hammer out and ultimately harmonize their different interests. When the board of the South Carolina National Bank meets, for example, the directors of eight supposedly competing textile companies who serve on the bank's board can formally and informally discuss such common issues as interest rates, investment priorities, municipal expansion, labor problems, and political races. And when the Liberty Corporation (controlled by the Hipp family) holds its board meeting, nearly every key leader in Greenville's business world attends.

The policies which shape the social experiment of Greenville are made in these boardrooms. They are expressed with a single voice to the public through the Chamber of Commerce. And they are implemented by a host of lower management technicians who receive their training through the Chamber's multitude of programs.

The Greenville Chamber of Commerce thus fulfills a crucial function in coordinating the "boardroom crowd" and teaching the rising executives in its member businesses how to execute the boardroom's wishes.

by Michael B. Russell

The Non-Union Culture

It is the hub of Greenville's social experiment.

II

The Chamber describes itself as the primary agency responsible for maintaining and improving the business climate of Greenville. Its programs have eight objectives: to foster a superior public education system, balanced economic growth, efficient local government, a more favorable business climate, an improved quality of life, an attitude of unity and pride in the community, development of community leadership, and support for the American free enterprise system.

The Chamber carries out the program with an annual budget of \$658,000 (1977) and a series of committees and task forces which involve more than 500 Chamber members. Many of these committees perform such stereotypical Chamber functions as membership recruitment and government lobbying on issues from minimum wage to OSHA enforcement to tax legislation. Last year, for example, the Greenville Chamber joined other chambers across the state in a successful campaign to thwart reform of South Carolina's inadequate workman's compensation laws.

While such activities obviously serve the interests of business at the expense of the average working person, there are others that are considerably more subtle in shaping how people behave — indeed, how they *think*. These are the training and education programs aimed at transforming existing and emerging leaders — from corporate vice presidents to librarians



Leadership Greenville seminar

to Urban League officers to factory supervisors — into efficient, effective advocates of the philosophy, "What's good for management is good for the people." Like other Chambers around the country, the Greenville Chamber of Commerce has begun sponsoring these sophisticated seminars which rely heavily on new techniques of behavior modification, group counseling and interpersonal therapy. The guardians of Greenville's stand against unions now have a whole new arsenal at their disposal.

Most of the Chamber's educational/training programs fall under two broad areas, Community Development and Employee Relations, directed respectively by full-time staff members Frank Ryll and Bill Westmoreland. One of the Community Development programs is a course called "The Economics of Freedom for Employees." It teaches employees of Chamber

members how the free enterprise system works, and has four objectives:

EDUCATION . . . is the best method of overcoming the ignorance prevalent among employees and the general public over the working of the free enterprise system in Greenville and the Nation. . . .

TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION . . . lines opened between top management and supervisory-level employees on operations, profits, goals and corporate responsibility. . . .

LOYALTY . . . gained by each employee through appreciation of company achievements and operations within free enterprise. . . .

RETENTION . . . of important aspects of this new-found knowledge so participants can effectively discuss economic free-

As a result of this intricately interconnected web of relationships the elite of Greenville — the corporate policy-makers — speak with one voice.



dom and the system with fellow workers. . . .

The "employees" course, discontinued in 1976, was brought back to life in 1978 by popular demand and henceforth will be offered twice a year. Seventeen people took the course on November 17, 1978: six from Simon's Cutting Tools, one from 3-M, two from Southern Bank and Trust, two from the Greenville County Library, two from the Greenwood School District and four from Judson Mills (a division of Deering-Milliken). The faculty was drawn entirely from Furman University and consisted of three economists and one political scientist.

Topics of discussion in the course included "The Characteristics of Capitalism," "Profit," "Capital and Its Sources," "Free Trade" and the CBS News film "The Second Battle for Britain," which blames Britain's economic troubles on socialists and unions. Over and over, the course hammers home the basic message: profit is needed, government regulation is bad, and unions are outside interference. Employees come away from the session with a complete understanding of management's world view, without ever exploring what their own self-interest might involve in "the free enterprise system."

The Chamber has also been concentrating recently on a companion course for elementary school teachers titled "The Economics of Freedom for Teachers." More than 350 teachers in Greenville and adjacent Pickens County have already taken the course.

But the real jewel of the Community Development section of the Chamber is its Leadership Greenville program. Now four years old, the seminar and

retreat series counts among its more than 200 alumni vice presidents of the major banks and companies like Michelin Tire, Riegel Textile, Phillips Fibers, Stone Manufacturing, J. E. Serrine, Daniel Construction, Bigelow-Sanford, Greenville News-Piedmont, Liberty Life and J. P. Stevens, plus county commissioners, city management personnel, state legislators, school administrators and social service agency heads. According to Frank Ryll, a transplanted Floridian who directs the program, Leadership Greenville is a descendant of Leadership Atlanta, a program that began in 1969 as a result of concerns about how leadership in the community was emerging. The program is also tailored after efforts of the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro.

With an annual budget of \$40,000, half drawn from student fees and half from the Chamber, the program is geared to identify highly qualified emerging leaders; provide them with an understanding of the needs of the community; counsel them in "management and leadership" skills; develop an "esprit de corps" for working on community projects; create communications channels between the participants and existing community leaders; and identify places where they can become involved in community activities.

Indeed, the program has created a network of emerging leaders whom other alumni can call up to serve on boards and commissions or to get contacts for new employees. The local United Way, for example, has seven alumni on its board and two alumni on the staff. The political community is also looking more and more to Leadership Greenville for the young

politicians who are properly groomed in the ways of integrating business interests and public service. Political aspirants see graduation from Leadership Greenville as a "leadership credential" — almost like the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval — which will help them move up in the party machinery and appear as a more viable candidate should they choose to run for office.

By involving blacks and women in the program, and by tackling various "community issues" like law enforcement and public education, Leadership Greenville has given the Chamber both the "liberal" image of a concerned agency and a wider audience for its own special concept of leadership skills and management goals. The combination of this liberal image with Leadership Greenville's esprit de corps provides the Chamber with a smoke screen for its anti-union efforts and a means to subdue and co-opt the very people who might otherwise provide the leadership for progressive change in the community.

The Employees Relations division of the Chamber is equally subtle. Its director, Bill Westmoreland, adamantly claims no one at the Chamber is anti-worker. Indeed, Westmoreland sees his personal "mission" as convincing companies that it is good business to treat their employees like human beings, and provide for their non-work-related social and emotional needs.

Westmoreland stressed over and over that the key message of his Positive Management Leadership Training (PML) programs is that employees must be treated with fairness and dignity. He believes that most of the services that unions provide, such as



Left to right:
Alester Furman
III, Buck Mickel,
Robert Small,
J. Kelly Sisk,
and Gordon
McCabe, Jr.

grievance procedures, seniority systems, and open-door policies, are services "which long since should have been provided by the companies." He firmly believes that by providing these services companies can avoid unionization. For Westmoreland, any company which gets a union probably deserves it.

He is a self-described "missionary" for this position in the Greenville area, and the large corporations are responding to it well. In the three years the program has been run, more than 60 executives from the highest levels of local management have attended.

Westmoreland refused to detail the curriculum he uses in the course, but he did say he drew on materials from the American Management Association and American Society for Personnel Administration.

The course itself consists of a retreat and eight follow-up sessions. The retreat sets the stage for the entire course. Management participants are taken away for a weekend and spend much of the time role playing a work place which is out of control. The instructors act out the role of the workers and intimidate the executives into realizing the benefits of "positive leadership."

According to Westmoreland, most the larger corporations have developed their own sophisticated employee relations programs. The Chamber focuses on those companies without programs and those most vulnerable to labor "unrest." It monitors the activities of unions as they begin to organize, alerts companies ripe for unionization, and offers their executives Westmoreland's training retreat-seminar series.

Westmoreland runs a similar pro-

gram for first- and second-line supervisors called the Labor Forum. Here his goal is slightly different — he wants to help those supervisors understand that their job is not to be a "bull in the woods," doing the actual work for people, but to help them be more productive on the job by helping them solve work- and non-work-related personal problems.

PML and Labor Forum serve as pseudo-unions in Westmoreland's view, even though employees have no negotiating power. For him, it is enough that a company comes to the workers three or four times a year to inform them about changes to be made and any improvements in benefits and pay. He sees that meager offering as quid pro quo for productivity, attendance and loyalty.

III

While all of these programs run semi-independently of one another, they all exist within the framework of the Chamber's anti-union position. Through these vehicles, the Chamber maintains the social experiment. Leadership Greenville maintains the Chamber's image as the "most progressive organization in the community," obscuring the Chamber's position regarding an organized work force. PML provides businesses in the area with the tools to keep their workers unorganized and happy, and the Economics of Freedom for Employees and Teachers ices the cake, making business' goals everyone's goals.

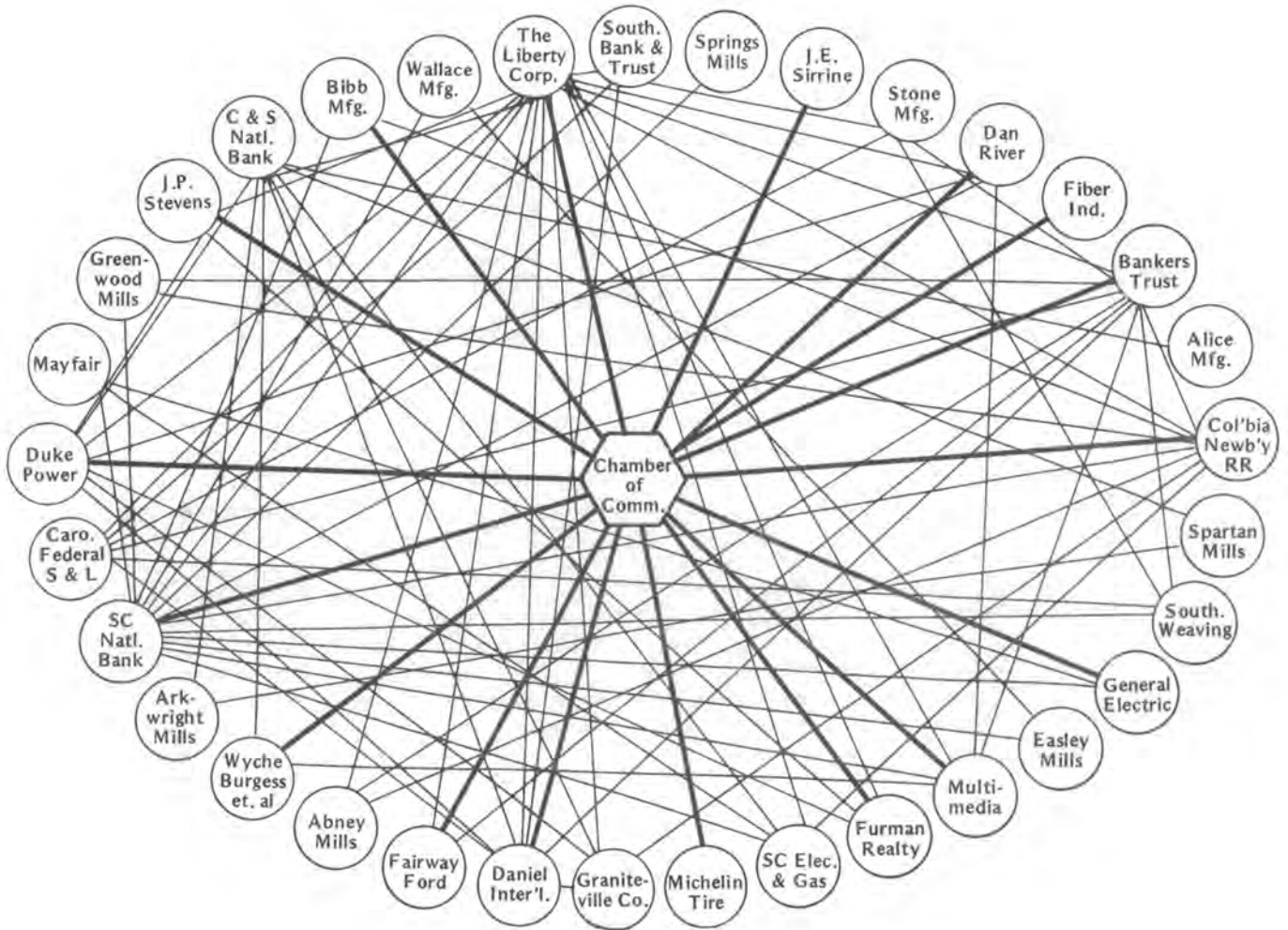
If one thinks this judgment harsh, he or she need look no further than the Chamber's Board of Directors, a veritable who's who of people and companies opposed to workers or-

ganizing and bargaining collectively. Freshly elected are Dr. John Johns, President of Furman University, which provides ongoing management training in how to keep unions out, and Harold E. Addis, the new vice president of Industrial Relations for the Manufacturing Division of J. P. Stevens. Present and past directors include people from J. P. Stevens, Texize, Riegel Textiles, the Greenville *News-Piedmont*, Sloan Construction Co., Celanese, Michelin and Daniel International.

With the help of the Chamber, these companies are now keeping up with the latest anti-union techniques. A few years ago, only about a dozen management consulting firms were involved in helping companies defeat union drives; today there are more than 100. Using an adaptation of various psychological theories, these consultants all recognize that people have different values and that those values must be addressed in the work place if the worker is to be satisfied with non-union status.

Charles Hughes of Executive Enterprises, for example, has argued that there are seven different levels of value systems. Most workers (and many managers) fall between value systems two and six. Hughes writes in his book *Making Unions Unnecessary* that only when you reach the seventh level have you crossed the bridge from "animalism to humanism." Hughes clearly believes that most workers live with subhuman sets of values. When he talks about constructing a work environment for people, he is not concerned with helping all the people become human, but with responding

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The Wheel of Fortune

THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE only shows selected corporate interlocks for these companies connected to the Greenville Chamber of Commerce. Each line represents a man affiliated with two companies. The dangers of such overlapping economic interests are described below. The list on the opposite page gives the executives' names (all white men) and their affiliations on the chart; they are on the board of directors of a listed company unless otherwise noted. Another layer of interlocking association takes place through family, social and personal ties — which are omitted here. For example, Gordon McCabe and Alester Furman III were founding members of the Green Valley Country Club, begun in 1954 as a more exclusive enclave from the growing Greenville Country Club. Furman, like his father and grandfather, is a director of J.P. Stevens; until McCabe turned 65, he was a top executive of Stevens and also a board member. He is now director of a Stevens competitor, Bibb Manufacturing. O. Perry Earle, Jr., a former president of the Green Valley Country Club, is Furman's first cousin. Earle, Furman and McCabe have all played a leading role in sponsoring the Rose Ball, a biennial dinner and dance benefiting the Greenville Symphony and St. Francis Hospital, two prominent charities (it netted \$28,000 for them in 1977). When Earle was treasurer of the Rose Ball a few years ago, the general chairman was J. Kelly Sisk of Multimedia, and the chairman of the community development committee was Paul Barrett. Barrett worked for Sisk, eventually as editor of the *Greenville Piedmont*, from 1942 to 1957, and later became public relations director for J.P. Stevens. He replaced Brown Mahon, another Rose Ball patron, who left to help organize and serve as chairman of the Carolina Federal Savings & Loan Association. O. Perry Earle, Jr. was the bank president and succeeded Mahon as chairman. While Barrett was learning the ropes in the textile business, the man who followed Mahon in taking care of most of Stevens' social/public service obligations in Greenville was Gordon McCabe. McCabe, Mahon, Earle and Furman are all members of Christ Episcopal Church. Thus the circle is complete, even in brief form.

“There is in this the danger of a business elite, an ingrown group, impervious to outside forces, intolerant of dissent, and protective of the status quo, charting the direction of production and investment of industry.”

— U.S. Congress, 1978

HUB AND SPOKES: Selected Board & Officers of Chamber, 1978

William L. Carpenter, Chamber President: J.E. Sistine Co.
James Shoemaker, Chamber President-Elect (1979): attorney, Wyche, Burgess, Freeman & Parham
Stephen B. Dolny, Chamber VP-Business & Industry: General Electric
Donald Barhyte, Chamber VP-Community Development: Multimedia
Julian Turner, Chamber VP-Economic Development: Bankers Trust
Thomas Berry, Chamber VP-Membership: Duke Power
Junius H. Garrison, Chamber VP-Urban Affairs: Furman Realty
Grover Elliott, Chamber Treasurer: Dan River Mills
Harris P. Gravely, Chamber Director: Liberty Life Insurance
Joseph W. Jelks, Chamber Director: J. P. Stevens & Co.
Gordon McCabe, Chamber Director: director of Bibb Manufacturing, SC National Bank and Columbia, Newberry & Laurens Railroad
Currie B. Spivey, Jr., Chamber Director: Daniel International
Richard Stofan, Chamber Director: Celanese's Fiber Industries
Yves Trelhu, Chamber Director: Michelin Tire Corp.
Louis E. Williamson, Chamber Director: Fairway Ford

INTERLOCKING DIRECTORS

Rufus Barkley, Jr. (Charleston), chrm. Cameron & Barkley: director of South Carolina National Bank and The Liberty Corp.
John L. Baurer: Daniel International, Carolina Federal Savings & Loan
William H. Beattie: SC Natl. Bank, Wallace Mfg. Co., Easley Cotton Mill
C.D. Blalock (Greenwood): exec. vp, Greenwood Mills; Bankers Trust
Alfred M. Burgess: chrm., Wyche, Burgess, Freeman & Parham; Multimedia
J. Willis Cantev (Columbia): C & S Natl. Bank, Liberty Corp.
McFarlane L. Cates, Sr. (Spartanburg): Arkwright Mills, Spartan Mills, Citizens & Southern National Bank
Charles W. Coker: Springs Mills, SC Natl. Bank
Charles W. Cox: Daniel International, Southern Bank & Trust Co.
David E. Cromwell: exec. vp, Dan River Mills; SC Natl. Bank
Frederick Dent (Arcadia): Mayfair Mills, General Electric, SC Natl. Bank
O. Perry Earle, Jr.: Carolina Federal Savings & Loan
Robert C. Edwards, pres. Clemson: Duke Power, Dan River Mills

James W. Foley (Columbia): Daniel International, Bankers Trust
Alester G. Furman III: Furman Realty, J.P. Stevens, Liberty Corp., Duke Power Co.
Charles A. Gibson: Southern Weaving Co., SC Natl. Bank
Ben A. Hagood (Columbia): Mayfair Mills, SC Electric & Gas, SC Natl.
B. Calhoun Hipp: Liberty Corp., Carolina Federal, Southern Bank & Tr.
Francis H. Hipp: Liberty Corp., SC Natl. Bank
D. Wellman Johnson: Abney Mills, Bankers Trust, Columbia, Newberry and Laurens Railroad Co.
W.W. Johnson (Columbia): Bankers Trust, Liberty Corp.
J.F. Kane, dean of Bus. Admin, USC: Graniteville Co., Liberty Corp.
C.D. Lott, Jr. (Columbia): SC Electric & Gas, C & S Natl. Bank
John H. Lumpkin (Columbia): SC Electric & Gas, SC Natl. Bank, Liberty Corp., Columbia, Newberry & Laurens Railroad Co.
Brown Mahon (retired J.P. Stevens exec.): Carolina Federal Savings
Wilburn W. McEachern: SC Natl. Bank, Dan River, Multimedia, Liberty Corp.
A. Foster McKissick: Bankers Trust, Liberty Corp., Fairway Ford
Ellison A. McKissick: Alice Manufacturing Co., C & S Natl. Bank
Buck Mickel: Daniel Intl., Graniteville Co., C & S Natl., Duke Power
Edward A. Ramsaur: Multimedia, Bankers Trust
W. Thomas Rice (Jacksonville, Fla.), chrm. Seaboard Industries: Columbia, Newberry & Laurens Railroad, Graniteville Co.
Greg W. Rothe: vp-finance, Daniel Intl.; Southern Bank & Trust
J. Edwin Schachte (Charleston): SC Electric & Gas, C & S Natl. Bank
James C. Self (Greenwood): Greenwood Mills, SC Natl. Bank, Columbia, Newberry & Laurens Railroad Co.
J. Kelly Sisk: Multimedia, Dan River, SC Natl. Bank, Liberty Corp.
Robert S. Small: Dan River, SC Natl. Bank, Liberty Corp.
John I. Smith: retired exec., Abney Mills; Liberty Corp., Bankers Trust
Eugene E. Stone III: Stone Mfg. Co., Southern Weaving Co., Bankers Trust, Carolina Federal Savings & Loan
Ward S. Stone: Stone Mfg. Co., Southern Bank & Trust
Wilson C. Wearn: Multimedia, Bankers Trust
Arthur Williams (Columbia): SC Natl. Bank, Liberty Corp.
C. Thomas Wyche: attorney, Wyche, Burgess, Freeman & Parham; Citizens & Southern National Bank

The Danger of Corporate Interlocks

by the Committee on Governmental Affairs, US Congress*

Investigations have identified the interlocking directorate as a corporate device with the potential for harm in our competitive economic society. Commenting on the results of the Pujo Committee [Congressional study on the "Money Trust" in 1913], Louis Brandeis wrote:

The practice of interlocking directorates is the root of many evils. It offends laws human and divine. Applied to rival corporations, it tends to the suppression of competition and to violation of the Sherman law. Applied to corporations which deal with each other, it tends to disloyalty and to violation of the fundamental law that no man can serve two masters. In either event it tends to inefficiency; for it removes incentive and destroys soundness of judgment. It is undemocratic, for it rejects the platform: "A fair field and no favors" — substituting the pull of privilege for the push of manhood.

The Federal Trade Commission [1950] report found that corporations which are linked together directly, or indirectly, enjoy special channels of communication which can lead to the destruction of competition, preferential treatment in the purchase and supply of goods and financial services, and the concentration of undue economic power in a few hands.

The Celler Subcommittee report also noted that corpo-

rate management interlocks present problems of conflicts of interest. A director serving on the boards of different corporations has, by definition, divided loyalties. His opportunity for "inside dealing" can lead to a subordination of the interests of the stockholders for his private gain. In many cases the very nature of the interlock divides his loyalties to the stockholders of each of the respective corporations. A director of two companies having business dealings with each other, or whose interests otherwise may conflict with each other, is placed in the anomalous position of being a fiduciary with respect to each. . . .

Where they wear several hats, directors are inevitably caught in the middle, and by not acting at all, they may be betraying their trust to the stockholders of each of the companies they represent.

What are some of the potential areas for abuse?

First, among the largest national corporations (and for that matter among the largest companies within a region), personal interlocks between business leaders may lead to a concentration of economic or fiscal control in a few hands. There is in this the danger of a business elite, an

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SPECIAL REPORT

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to their value systems in such a way that they will not want a union. Neither will they obtain any notion of a bargaining process at work in their factory. Hughes likens bargaining with workers to feeding bears in Yellowstone Park. When they beg food and you give it to them, they will return again wanting food, and again and again, until you have no food to give them. Then, he says, they will attack you.

Closer to home are the seminars offered in the Carolinas by Penton, Inc., which employs Walter Imberman and lawyer Robert Valois to travel through the South helping companies avoid unions. Imberman handles the psychology, Valois talks about the legal and quasilegal steps the employer can take during a campaign. Valois should know: he is the attorney for the Stevens Education Committee, a workers' anti-union committee in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina. Valois and Imberman appeared at Furman University last spring to run one of their courses for local managers.

A new wave in the "positive management" movement is the use of

behavior modification techniques in the work place. Behavior modification is a technique descended from Pavlov and his dogs and B. F. Skinner and his pigeons. It presupposes that people, like animals, are nothing more than a series of behaviors that can be triggered (i. e., conditioned) with the correct stimulus. In the world of therapy, it is used generally on people who are severely retarded or brain-damaged to help them function at some level of comfort. In the work place, "behavior mod" is applied without consent to manipulate people. In Greenville, behavior modification is used by J. P. Stevens, which teaches it to supervisors at its management training center. Stevens hires juniors and seniors from Furman University's psychology department to help staff this program. Almost all the management consultants recommend that the first-line supervisors be responsible for carrying out the policies of management — to the point of writing the maintenance of a union-free environment into their job description. If a union wins a representation election, it is the supervisor, who is neither management nor labor, who bears the brunt of the

blame.

Thus the battle against workers organizing takes on a bizarre dimension as it becomes literally a battle for people's minds. In the work place, the social experiment sheds its subtlety, using techniques designed for healing troubled minds for the crass purpose of maintaining a union-free environment. It depends on a view of workers as something less than human or nothing more than conditioned behaviors which, with the proper stimulus from management, will increase productivity and reject unions.

A State Chamber of Commerce report provides the perfect summary for the experiment being conducted in Greenville: "South Carolina's favorable ranking in providing an attractive business climate did not just happen. It was because state and local government, civic and business organizations, and the citizenry as a whole dedicated themselves to making economic development a priority issue." □

Mike Russell is Associate Director of Southerners for Economic Justice and, like many leaders described here, is a member of Christ Episcopal Church.

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ingrown group, impervious to outside forces, intolerant of dissent, and protective of the status quo, charting the direction of production and investment in one of several industries. Such an elite may be spawned by the concentration of key directors of major firms on a single board where they directly interlock, or by the distribution of such key directors among various other boards where they indirectly interlock their companies.

Second, interlocks between actual or potential competitors, whether direct or indirect, provide a linkage for communication and discussion which can result in common action (with or without agreement) and a consequent elimination of competition. Direct interlocks among industrials which are actual competitors are generally illegal under section 8 of the Clayton Act, but there are some loopholes in that statute.

Third, there may be directorate interconnections between companies which, although not directly competitive, are in the same or closely related industries. Such liaison relationships may result in corporate policies which discourage expansion and diversification into competitive areas, or the development of completely new business fields.

Fourth, vertical interlocks — where a common director links two or more companies having actual or potential dealings with each other at different levels of business

activity — are also potentially dangerous. Such interlocks can reach backward to various stages of supply or forward through various levels of distribution and consumption. In either case, the close relationship may lead to preferential treatment to the detriment of other suppliers or consumers. Vertical interlocks also provide avenues for reciprocal dealing, vertical integration and exclusive dealing arrangements which can disrupt free markets and work a hardship on smaller producers and consumers.

Fifth, perhaps the most pervasive of the direct and indirect interlocks identified by this study are those among financial institutions and industrials, utilities, transportation companies, retailers and other heavy users of financial services. There is no question that potentials for abuse are inherent in the very nature of the close board room ties involving financial and nonfinancial entities. Having a representative on the customer's board places a bank in a special position to learn the particular needs of such a customer and to obtain a favored position in meeting those needs to the detriment of other financial institutions. Similarly, such inside relationships provide advantages to the bank in the purchasing or selling of the customer's securities which could affect the value of those securities. . . .

* From "Interlocking Directorates Among the Major US Corporations," a report by the Subcommittee on Reports, Accounting and Management of the Committee on Governmental Affairs, US Congress, January, 1978.

The South Moves South

by scott wright and martha clark

We lived for 10 weeks with a working-class family and their nine children in Cuernavaca — the land of “eternal spring-time.” Cuernavaca is wedged into a valley at the foothills of mountains that lead up to Mexico City. Here, nine centuries ago, lived the Aztec people; here was the summer home of Montezuma and later the victorious “conquistador” Cortez. Just to the south of Cuernavaca lie some of the richest sugar cane fields in the state of Morelos — and all of Mexico.

Today, Cuernavaca is the home of another invader — Burlington Industries, the multinational textile company based in North Carolina. As with previous conquerors and oppressive regimes, the presence of Burlington and its harsh treatment of the 1,500 employees in the area’s four mills has brought considerable conflict to the town. This is a region with a long history of struggle.

In the sugar refineries, the blackened bodies of the “caneros” covered with dust evoke memories of the revolution. Sixty years ago, Emiliano Zapata marched at the head of thousands of “campesinos” under the

banner *Tierra y Libertad*: Land and Freedom. On these same communal lands, or “ejidos,” the father of the family with which we were living was born. And his father still works the same sugar fields, still plows the land with horses, still remembers the revolution in which more than one million people — out of a population of 15 million — perished. When the revolution began in 1910, 97 percent of the land was owned by 830 people or corporations, two percent was held by 500,000 small and medium scale farmers and the balance by municipalities. Today, the state of Morelos has usurped the cry of the campesinos: “*The land will return to those who work it with their hands.*” But the reality is otherwise: 78 percent of the land in Mexico remains in the hands of 1.5 percent of the people.

The “colonia” (neighborhood) we lived in is called Teopanzolco, which, in the Nahuatl language of the Aztecs, means “the place of the gods.” Just beyond the colonia, across the railroad

tracks, lies one of the many pyramids built by the original inhabitants. The modern colonia was built with the help of Burlington Industries’ subsidiary, Textiles Morelos. And as in the milltowns of the southern United States, the lives of the mill workers are largely determined by the company.

The father of our family was fired from the mill nine years ago for his union activities, and blacklisted. In order to support his family and his six children, he moved with them into a “casa de carton” — a cardboard shack — and rented their first house to other families. Unable to find steady employment, and with some skill as a plumber, he goes out each day to contract work — for a day, three days, however long he is needed. A plumber, like a carpenter or painter, must work 10 hours a day to earn 65 pesos (sometimes 90) — about \$3.00 a day, or 30¢ an hour. More often than not he does not find work. But he is not alone: one out of every two workers is underemployed. More than 10.5



million — in an economically active population of 17.5 million — are without full employment in Mexico.

In the kitchen, the mother of our family is stirring a pot of “frijoles,” or beans, our staple diet. She does not count among the 3.5 million women who make up part of the “economically active population” although her work is just as long and just as tedious. On the table is a stack of tortillas. These two — beans and tortillas — must suffice to feed the nine children she has borne into this world. She does not usually make the tortillas, for they can be more readily purchased from one of the many “tortillerias” in our neighborhood, now a multinational business in the larger cities of Mexico. Even the yellow corn from which they are made is not from Mexico but is imported as field corn from the US, where it is fed to livestock. Mexico, in turn, exports its white corn to the tables of North America. The volume of trade between the two countries accounts for more than half of Mexico’s trade. And the majority of winter vegetables in the United States comes from the fields of Mexico’s northern states. In our family we do not buy milk from the stores because we cannot afford it: an hour’s wage in Mexico will not buy a liter of milk — eight pesos or 35¢. Sometimes we purchase milk from the “lechero” who comes by on his burro in the afternoon to dip out fresh milk into our pot. Once in a while we slaughter one of the chickens we raise in the back. But as for the majority of the Mexican people, bread, meat, fish, milk and eggs are a luxury.

Since 1975, the price of beans has risen 300 percent and that of tortillas 400 percent. Only the very privileged escape the gnawing hunger of mal-



nutrition.

When we arrived in Cuernevaca in October, 1977, 1500 "textilleros" from four different mills had been on strike for more than a month against Burlington Mills. Their demands were traditional union demands: a minimum wage, reinstatement of workers who had been fired, retirement pensions, back-pay for days during the strike when there was no work. There were many problems with the strike, including a struggle against the leadership of the government-controlled union, the CTM (Mexican Confederation of Workers), who were more acquiescent to the desires of the company and the ruling government party, the PRI (Party of the Institutionalized Revolution). The only real hope of a truly democratic union is to form an independent union, a move which the Catholic Church, under the leadership of the Bishop of Cuernevaca, Mendez Arceo, solidly supports. After 102 days — betrayed by the union leadership and exhausted with hunger — the strikers went back to work. One week later the company fired 100 of the most "conscientized" leaders of the strike. With no recourse to gain back their jobs — no system of arbitration, unemployment compensation or welfare — these people face the same struggle to survive and support their families as the father in our family faced nine years ago.

Jose Obrero (a pseudonym), a friend of our father, was also fired by Burlington nine years ago. He told us about life in Mexico's mills and the intricate web of control and dependence which the American companies have spun through the courts, police, political parties, unions and most of the church:



JOSE OBRERO: *I've been a textile worker since I was 14 years old. When I began work, I had lots of hopes and ambitions. I started work because I had a friend who was able to get me a job. Naturally, I felt indebted to those who were good enough to give me work. But later I began to understand that it was part of the system that a person had to be thankful and grateful to the one who had given him work. The union leader was the one who gave us our jobs, and we had to support him when a labor election came up. But he was in cahoots with the company, since he was passing out favors and giving people jobs only as the company allowed him to. When a union election was near, the factory would organize outings and suppers and drinking fests and would tell us who the people were who were best equipped to be labor union leaders. The leaders would call us and say, "Remember when I gave you that tarpaper so you could put it over your roof so it wouldn't rain in? Well, now you have to give me a favor: work for the person the company designates as the new labor union leader and denounce anyone you hear opposes him." So you see that the person who is elected as our leader is really in debt to the company. We wind up with two bosses, the owner of the factory and the labor union leader. If we complain to the union, they say, "If you don't like the situation, you can leave."*

The companies also have a grip on the churches. Where I began working outside Mexico City, all the factories

had the names of saints. Every year on the Saint's Day of the factory, there would be a big party, and there would be a Mass and the priest would give a very pretty sermon. The sermon basically said we should give thanks to the Lord because we had such a very good owner of the factory. We should be concerned with keeping the good relations between the workers and the owner. And we should renounce the Devil which came to the factories in the form of labor agitators and communists.

About nine years ago, some 70 of us began to meet together and discuss our situation and try to organize to change the system we were beginning to become aware of. We managed to get a lot of other workers thinking about what was going on, but because of this all 70 of us were fired and blacklisted so we couldn't get work anywhere else in this city. We faced the alternative of either dying of hunger or leaving. The saddest thing for us was that the church organized a Mass of Thanksgiving to celebrate the fact that the so-called plot between the communists and the labor agitators had been broken.

I moved here to Cuernevaca and got a job working for Burlington Industries. But I found that here there was an even more refined system than in my hometown. To get a job here, you could not admit to having any previous contact with a labor union. They would hire you only if you were a campesino, a peasant or small artisan. So I told a white lie and said I had been an artisan.

Here I began to understand that it was considered a crime to speak about the rights that the law gives us. If there were any fringe benefits that we re-



The striking Burlington textileros marched in support of hospital workers and, with banners and posters, told bystanders and supporters about their struggle to form their own union.

ceived it was because of the goodness and loyalty of the owner, not because of the rights the law gave us. For example, there were times when they would give us, free, a Coca-Cola or some old cardboard they had or some rags they didn't need anymore. To show our appreciation for that we had to work a couple of hours a day extra without any pay.

Each year they celebrated the formation of the Labor Union. At the same time they would give us certificates in which they would show us their appreciation for our punctuality and our efforts at production. And with that we felt very happy. There were about 1,500 workers who were in the labor union, not counting the workers at the management level. Of the 1,500, only about 320 were considered permanent workers and accrued seniority. The others would work for six months or so and then Burlington would lay them off. Then they would be rehired, but only as new workers. So they might be working for 15 years, but never get past six months as a permanent worker; they would never accrue any seniority or any rights.

Burlington also used a system called variable workload. They took the workload set by the younger, stronger worker and placed it on the older worker, saying, "If you can produce this amount, then you can stay on as a permanent worker." The young worker would work at a breakneck speed in order to be considered for permanent worker's status. Everyone else would try to follow that rate, but naturally, after three or four years, a person would develop some difficulties with his health and begin to slow down from the strain. Then the owners

would say, "Well, before you were a good worker, but now you're beginning to get lazy. If you can't work any faster, we'll have to dismiss you and get a new person."

Normally we had a half-hour lunch period in our eight-hour work shift. But then the company said they were in a crisis, so we had to give up our lunch period. We'd take our lunch in a brown bag and have to eat our sandwich or taco amidst all the dust and thread. Some people just stopped eating lunch at all, just kept working straight through without any food.

Because of my experience in my hometown, I started talking with the other workers about these conditions. We began to educate each other about what was going on through our underground papers and circulars, making them see the injustices we were suffering. The company became very concerned about what we were doing. They started investigating and identifying who we were. When they located me as being one of the key people of this group, they hired another person to provoke a fight with me in order to have a justification to fire me. The person who was supposed to provoke the fight with me was unsuccessful because I wouldn't allow myself to be provoked. But since they had this all set up anyway, they just went ahead and wrote out the facts that I had been involved in a fight and fired me anyway. They started a petition among the workers asking that I be fired because I was a dangerous person, with a threat that anyone who refused to sign the petition would be dismissed from their work. The more permanent workers, as a fringe benefit, had the advantage of being able to purchase their home through an

arrangement with the factory for financing. If they didn't support the company, they could lose their work and if they lost their work, they would also lose their homes. Despite all this pressure, 42 workers were dismissed because they still refused to sign the petition.

The six of us who were the leaders were dismissed without any sort of compensation. We lost the savings we had within the company programs. We even lost our last week of salary. They blackballed us so we couldn't get work in any other factory. They even arranged, through the government, to cut off any health services that, by law, we were entitled to.

The six of us felt that one of the major problems is the fact that the workers are especially ignorant of the law. If the worker knows enough to be able to apply the law in his favor, well then he is able to defend himself. But, sadly, in our own cases, we found that when we knocked on the door of the labor courts, the doors were all closed and there was no way of getting justice. Some of the workers in the union who came to my defense demanded that there should be an investigation of whether or not there really was a fight, and whether there was any basis for dismissing me. But the company told the court that the workers who testified on my behalf were all troublemakers, and the company had enough money to buy the justice it wanted from the government courts.

Everything was going against us: the government, the labor courts, the owners, the labor union, and the fear of our fellow workers. Fortunately, there was still one ally: the bishop here in Cuernavaca. Father Sergio and

other priests here are very different from the priests in my hometown. He helped us economically and also morally, because he told us we weren't alone. He said, "Don't become demoralized in the experiences that you've had. Don't just look at them and feel sorry for yourselves, but communicate them to others."

With that support, we organized here in Cuernavaca a school for labor union education. And now we've been working for nine years. The reaction of the owners has been very strong. They have put many workers on the blacklist. Some are in prison, accused of being guerrilla fighters, but really because they try to organize independent unions. There are now many small groups of workers studying, discussing issues and trying to organize. We continue to make progress and keep a strong spirit despite the extreme pressures from the company and the high sacrifice it demands from all of us. Nearly all the workers who have been dismissed have large families, so we have had to find ways to support ourselves as small artisans or small merchants or things like that. We try to help ourselves mutually and have tried to organize cooperatives. Unfortunately, what the cooperatives need is capital — and all we have are needs.



The tensions between workers and Burlington continued to intensify throughout the nine years after Jose Obrero was fired, culminating finally in the 102-day strike in late 1977, the first strike at the Burlington Mills



since their opening. The official union continues to be a major obstacle for workers' rights. In fact, for a year before the strike, the union leaders refused to hold an assembly of workers despite the constitutional requirement that meetings be held monthly. They were afraid they would be voted out and replaced by more militant workers. Only after pressure reached a breaking point did the union "tolerate" the demand for a strike, and then its official leaders quickly backed away, allowing the company to starve the workers into submission. Since the strike ended in December, 1977, over 400 activists have been fired by Burlington.

During the strike, workers and their families maintained a constant vigil in the central plaza of Cuernavaca, in front of the Governor's palace. With banners and leaflets, they told bystanders and supporters of their struggle to break away from the government-regulated union and form their own syndicate. They collected money in cans at the plaza and canvassed neighborhoods to feed their families. The strikers also maintained around-the-clock picket lines at the four Burlington mills, prohibiting executives from entering the plants or hiring new workers. The story of their fight quickly spread throughout the state of Morelos as a constant stream of supporters from other factories and from various political

groups joined them at the town square and then returned home to tell others. A people's theatre group, Los Mascarones, toured from barrio to barrio with an entire repertoire of songs and skits portraying the oppression of Mexican "textilleros" (textile workers) by Burlington Industries.

The Church was the strongest and most unifying supporter of the strike. In his sermons at the Cathedral's daily mass, the Bishop of Cuernavaca, Sergio Mendez Arceo, constantly advocated the liberation of the poor from their oppressors. He even called for a ban on all services usually held in the factories on the Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe (December 12). In their place, he held a special mass for the textilleros and their families in the famous Cathedral of Cuernavaca. Local priests also helped build solidarity among workers and conducted "reflection" groups on the Gospel of Liberation and the strike. Their leadership was instrumental in establishing the labor education school mentioned by Jose Obrero, which became a center of discussion and helped many workers understand their legal rights for the first time.

The two largest demonstrations of workers occurred in November, 1977, during the third month of the strike. The first was a combined protest by 3,000 workers and the staff of a government-sponsored hospital set up the previous year "for the people." When the staff had tried to expand



People huddled together on the cold plaza ground, singing, keeping each other awake, laughing.

their services to establish neighborhood clinics and confront the housing, food, water and workplace conditions behind the medical problems of their patients, the government threatened to close the main hospital. At that point, striking workers joined the hospital staff in a huge march from the gates of one of the Burlington plants to the city's main street and on to the Governor's palace. A few days later, the "people's" hospital was closed.

The second large demonstration occurred on November 20, the date set aside to commemorate the Mexican Revolution of 1910. As the date approached, Army officers told the workers in the central plaza to end their vigil and take down their banners so the Revolutionary Parade could pass by the Governor's palace. The strikers refused to move. True, their numbers and militancy were dwindling as food grew scarce and "los charros" (betrayers) argued for a return to work. But for many *textilleros*, the fight against Burlington was the same as that of their revolutionary hero, Emiliano Zapata. They pledged to remain in the plaza as an expression of solidarity with their past. The evening after the Army ordered them to leave, more than 200 workers and their families and supporters camped in the plaza. Fear filled the air as people waited for the military action which inevitably follows such acts of rebellion. The theatre group, *Los Mascarones*, arrived with guitars and movement songs. People huddled together on the cold plaza ground, singing, keeping each other awake, laughing. Late in the evening, three truckloads of soldiers arrived at

the central plaza. Unloading quickly, the unarmed men went through a series of exercises, marched around the singing crowd, loaded back into the trucks and departed. No one knew if the soldiers would return and move into action. The demonstrators waited through the next day and into the night, but there were no other signs of confrontation.

The day celebrating the Revolution arrived. Thousands of people filled the streets and central plaza to watch the Revolutionary Parade go by. In front of the Governor's palace, unmoved, stood the *textilleros* with a huge new banner stretched in front of them. "VENCEREMOS," it read. "We shall overcome."



Burlington Industries is not an isolated example of foreign companies exploiting Mexican workers. Nearly 50 percent of the shares of the 290 largest corporations in Mexico are controlled by transnational companies; the percentage of the industrial workforce employed by the capital-intensive transnationals has doubled over a 10-year period to more than 16 percent. The increasing integration of the Mexican economy into the international capitalist system means that the bread and the labor of the Mexican people is more and more in the hands of foreign banks and corporations.

In August, 1976, under pressure from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Mexico devalued its peso for the first time in

22 years. With inflation running as high as 20 percent and unemployment approaching 60 percent, the bankers in New York, London and Paris were unhappy. Mexico was in debt \$28 billion, half of this amount owed to private banks in the US such as Chase Manhattan, a prime lender to the World Bank.

In 1973 the president of Chase Manhattan Bank, David Rockefeller, had helped to found the Trilateral Commission, an organization of US, West European and Japanese capitalists united to manage "a single world economy in addition to managing international economic relations among countries." President Carter, as well as his Vice-President, National Security Advisor, the Secretaries of State, Treasury and Defense, and the Ambassador to the UN, are all members of this elite monitor of capitalist interests. The Trilateral Commission is currently proposing that international public banks, such as the IMF, implement conditions of austerity in their loans to Latin American countries. This has been done in Chile, Argentina, Peru, Jamaica — and, most recently, in Mexico. According to David Rockefeller, the extension of credit to less developed countries should be "subject to rigorous conditions that assure domestic policies which promote efficient adjustment."

The immediate effect of the devaluation of the peso in Mexico was a loss of 50 percent of its value: food prices doubled without a corresponding increase in wages. Four months later the former Governor of the World Bank and the IMF in Mexico, Jose Lopez Portillo, took office as President of Mexico and

During the strike, workers and their families maintained a constant vigil in the central plaza and a picket line around Burlington's mills.



announced a new \$1.2 billion loan from the IMF. The loan came with certain conditions of austerity: a cut in government spending in the public sector, a limit to the creation of new jobs, a 10 percent ceiling on wage increases, prices of basic commodities like food left free to rise. While real income for workers declines, the number of strikes — with or without official union sanction — continues to increase. In the first three months of 1978, there were 427 strikes, 47 percent more than in the same period in 1976.

The prospects for the future are not encouraging. The discovery of oil and natural gas deposits in the southeastern states of Mexico in 1973 will alleviate but not resolve the crisis. A fourth of the country's \$4 billion annual exports now comes from petroleum sales. The US, which imports 70 percent of this oil and gas and which looks to Mexico as an alternative to Arab dependence, is not likely to pressure the government to enact new measures to help the growing number of poor people. In the next 20 years, the population of Mexico will double to 120 million. Mexico City will shelter more than 32 million inhabitants — one-half the current population of Mexico — by the year 2000. During the years 1971-1974 the caloric consumption of the peasants declined by 20 percent, and they are getting hungrier; 5.5 million children are malnourished and 200,000 die each year from malnutrition and disease. For every 1,000 children born in Mexico this year, 65 will die before age one. The economics of austerity

are in fact implementing a policy of starvation among the Mexican people.



Not far from our colonia there is a district called "La Estacion," where more than 500 families have come to live as squatters over the past 30 years. Here, amidst the huge eucalyptus trees which overshadow the abandoned railroad station and the outlying area, the people have built "casas de carton" — cardboard shacks constructed from trees, old shipping crates, scrap metal, and sometimes stone gathered from the rocky soil. Here in these "casitas" one room often serves as dining room, bedroom and kitchen where parents and children alike eat, sleep and prepare their meals. Many of them have had electricity now for some years; all of them lack water and toilets.

Until a year ago, there was no water in the entire village. People either had to go to the market each day to buy water and carry it home, or else risk drinking contaminated water. Then, as people became more organized, a popular assembly was formed which meets every Sunday afternoon to discuss the problems of the community: water was a most immediate need. Within a matter of weeks the community began to construct its own system of water. Soon three outlets were established. Still, the water was rationed by the government and was available only at night. Long lines of barefoot children,

grandmothers and mothers nursing their babies began to form during the night and the early morning hours, all of them laden with wooden poles slung across their shoulders. All variety of buckets and paint cans hang from ropes tied to their poles. From the outlets they must carry the water — sometimes more than 70 pounds — long distances to their shacks to use for cooking, washing and, of course, to drink.

Some years ago, not far from here, a man named Ruben Jaramillo attempted to lead his fellow squatters in just such a venture to build their own colonia, their own neighborhood. On March 31, 1973, more than 15,000 squatters occupied lands the government seized for tax delinquency and then left abandoned. They pooled their incomes — \$1 to \$3 a day — and built cooperative stores, bakeries and slaughterhouses, built schools, laid sewer pipes with volunteer labor, and banned alcohol from the colonia. On September 28, 1973 — less than six months later — 2,000 soldiers and 100 police attacked the settlement in the predawn hours, shooting Ruben Jaramillo, his pregnant wife and their two children. But the people continue. □

Scott Wright and Martha Clark spent several weeks in Mexico in late 1977 during the strike at Burlington Mills. They have written about their experiences in The Catholic Worker and are involved in other educational programs with the textile workers in Cuernavaca.

The South Goes North

In 1923, the Burlington, North Carolina, Chamber of Commerce offered to underwrite the expense of a new factory if an aggressive young mill owner named J. Spencer Love would move his operations to their city. For forty years, until his death in 1962, Love acquired, merged, and built new mills — often with other people's money — until he created the largest textile company in the world, Burlington Industries.

In the 1930s, he gained renown for the "Wooden Walls of Burlington" because he left one temporary wall in new plants, making it easier to expand. In 1944, he opened his first mill outside the United States — the Textiles Morelos complex in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Following World War II, Burlington continued to expand, growing from 45 plants and \$93 million in sales in 1944 to 119 plants and \$1 billion in sales in 1962, with mills in Mexico, Canada, Germany, Colombia, South Africa, France and England.

To build that fast required an immense influx of new capital. Love, the Harvard-educated son of a Gastonia, N.C. family, moved Burlington's headquarters to New York to be closer to the money sources. He hired business school graduates and professional managers, and put a number of his Wall Street associates on his board of directors. The money rolled in, and Love dazzled brokers and bankers by getting a greater return on their investment than other textile companies could.

Since his death, Love's company has continued to lead the industry in new management procedures, technological innovations, public relations techniques, and financial and inventory controls. It is the kind of company Wall Street loves. Unlike others in the field — including number 2 in the industry, J.P. Stevens & Co. — Burlington has little old-line family influence or ideological preoccupations to distract its succession of professional managers from squeezing the most from the least. It annually invests three times as much on modernization and expansion as Stevens does, and nets twice the profits as Stevens with only 50 percent more workers. With relentless precision, it has streamlined overhead costs, cut out less profitable product lines, diversified into furniture and other businesses, and modernized those plants with the brightest future. According to Horace Jones, former Burlington chairman, "The restructuring, although painful and difficult for the company, has resulted in opportunities for increases in productivity and the establishment of a keen and aggressive posture in our highly competitive industry."

The restructuring has been most painful to the 20,000 Burlington workers who lost their jobs, most of them in North Carolina where half the company's mills are still located. From 1973 to 1978, it increased its sales from \$2.5 billion to \$2.9 billion while closing 32 plants and reducing its work force from 88,000 to 66,000 people. Burlington often told its workers that they were losing their jobs because of the 1974-75 recession or because of increases in foreign imports. "We are seeing the massive market disruption in the U.S. textile and apparel industries because of mushrooming growth of imports which has caused extensive damage to member companies and their employees," Burlington explained in a full-page ad in Carolina newspapers. But foreign production is actually a growing part of Burlington's own business. (In 1976, it admitted it had paid "about \$300,000" in bribes to foreign officials in the previous five years "to continue normal operations.") Sales from foreign plants contributed \$282 million in 1978 and the company's foreign work force of 8,000 has remained relatively stable while domestic employment declines. Last year, while Burlington closed seven plants in the South, it spent another \$30 million to expand its new operations in wage-depressed Ireland. In the ten years from 1969 to 1978, Burlington closed more than 30 mills in the South and spent over \$1 billion to further automate those remaining. People lose jobs not simply because of foreign production, but be-

cause of Burlington's commitment to replace workers with machines. As company spokesman Dick Byrd says, "We're using new technology and faster equipment to do the same volume of work with fewer people."

Meanwhile, Burlington tries to preserve the paternalistic idea that its policies are in the best interests of its employees. "The Company that keeps ahead is the one that can predict with some degree of accuracy where . . . changes will occur, and swing quickly to meet them," executive vice president Charles McLendon recently wrote in the employees' newsletter. "For us, in some instances, this has meant closing plants or cutting back certain operations. In others, it has meant expansion, or conversion of facilities from one product to another. . . . These are hard decisions, but they must be made to protect the best interests of the total Company, to strengthen our overall position, to fulfill our obligations to shareholders and to improve job security for the great bulk of our employees."

Burlington can be expected to continue to use its sharp-pencil managers and computers to make its operations "fulfill our obligations to shareholders." The profit margins are slim in textiles, and even though Burlington is number one, it does less than seven percent of the industry's business. It can't manipulate prices and profits like a General Motors or Kellogg or US Steel can in industries controlled by three or four producers. There are 5000 textile companies in the U.S., with 6000 plants. So Burlington tries to use its access to big money, its experience in ruthless inventory controls and highly automated facilities to overcome problems that might bankrupt others in the field. Some observers have suggested that Burlington might like to see some of its competitors driven out of business by such things as the cost of meeting EPA, OSHA or minimum wage standards. (Love took the unique position of favoring the rise in minimum wage to \$1 in 1960, shocking many textile owners but further establishing his company's "progressive" image. More recently, Burlington has not joined the rest of the industry in denying that OSHA's new cotton dust standard can be met within four years, even though it will require substantial investments in new machinery.) With fewer, bigger competitors the industry could begin to operate more like those dominated by a handful of producers. Instead of small profit margins, it could boost profits artificially and make greater profits off fewer units sold. Such a trend would be consistent with Burlington's reliance on faster machines and fewer workers.

Whatever the future holds for Burlington, it still has some of the most sophisticated corporate managers at its helm, men with extensive multinational financial and governmental experience who are far removed from the stereotypical Southern mill owner. Among Burlington's board of directors are:

George W. Ball, senior partner of the Wall Street brokerage firm, Lehman Brothers; also a director of American Metal Climax (AMAX); former Under Secretary of State, 1961-66, UN representative to UN, 1968, and international troubleshooter for Kennedy and Johnson.

Ernesta D. Ballard, pres. of Pennsylvania Historical Society.

Joseph W. Barr, partner of J & J Co., real estate developers; trustee, Committee for Econ. Development and Georgetown Univ.; dir., 3M Co., etc.; former Under Sec. of Treasury, 1965-68, Treasury Secretary, '68-69, and pres./chrm., American Security & Trust Co., '69-74.

William S. Boothby, Jr., chrm., Blythe Eastman Dillon & Co., Wall Street brokers; active Republican; dir. of ten corporations, including Getty Oil, Sperry Rand, Georgia-Pacific and Insurance Co. of No. Amer.

Alexander Calder, Jr., chrm. of Union Camp; dir. of Bank of New York, Seaboard Coastline, Tri-Continental Corp., and Ingersoll-Rand.

William T. French, retired chrm. of First National Stores; member, Foreign Policy Assoc.; dir., Pillsbury Co., Warnaco, Inc., SuCrest Corp.

Frank S. Jones, Ford Professor of Urban Affairs at M.I.T., Boston.

Horace C. Jones, Burlington's finance comm. chrm.; dir., Union Carbide, Union Camp, Wachovia Corp., and Provident Mutual Life Ins.

Harry W. Knight, dir., Agricon, Inc., Insurance Co. of No. America, Waldorf-Astoria, Shearson-Hayden Mutual Funds, etc.; trustee, Comm. for Economic Development; mem., Foreign Policy Assoc., UN Assoc.

John W. McKinley, president of Texaco, Inc.

Hans Robert Schwarzenbach, Swiss textile owner and investor.

John W. Simmons, chrm., Morton-Norwich Products.

— Southern Exposure editors



by Mitchell J. Shields, with research by Bill Brooks

THE LEAVINGS OF POWER

From its beginnings in the Cold War paranoia of the 1950s, through expansion by the corporate ambitions of the '60s, to its death in the bureaucratic blunderings of the '70s, the story of the Georgia Nuclear Laboratory reveals with uncanny clarity many of the murky causes – and disastrous consequences – of America's continuing infatuation with nuclear power.

It was perhaps inevitable that during the late 1950s one of the more excessive examples of America's love affair with nuclear technology – a nuclear research laboratory – should come to the pristine, almost idyllic north Georgia mountains. Dawson County, some 60 miles north of Atlanta, was the site, an untended range of hill and forest where the mountains of Appalachia begin to calm and flatten. The only nearby town, Dawsonville, was noted primarily for producing Lloyd Seay, the fast-driving Georgian who entered state legend by winning one of the first major stock car races before returning home to be shot by a cousin angry over some unsettled moonshine dealings. They buried Seay in the Dawsonville cemetery, under a headstone marked by a reproduction of the newspaper photo showing him in his winning car, smiling.

Some three miles from that cemetery flows the Etowah River; it was here that the Air Force decided to research the development of an atom-driven airplane. The plane would be to the sky what nuclear submarines were to the sea, an ever-prowling war machine to constantly remind any enemy that in the event of even the most meticulously planned attack, retribution was always possible. Besides, as newspaper editorials of the time reasoned, the Soviet Union was reported fast at work on *their* nuclear

aircraft. The United States could not afford to be left behind.

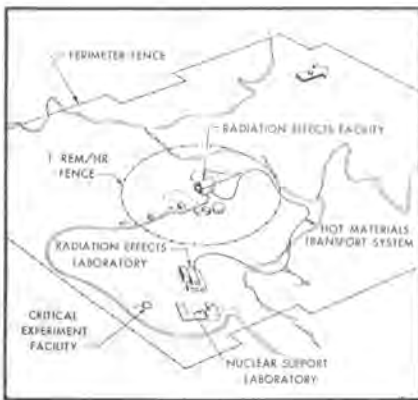
It was something of a coup for Georgia to get the Air Force lab. Roscoe Tucker, a Dawson County landowner who served as a delegate to the Republican convention which first nominated Eisenhower, had heard early on of the nascent plans for an atomic aircraft. He knew from his connections that the government would need a secluded laboratory site, and he began putting together a 10,000-acre tract. Lockheed Aircraft, with the country's largest airplane assembly plant located in nearby Marietta, was also eager to get in on the burgeoning nuclear industry. They enjoyed their own inside track with the Air Force since Georgia's senior senator, Richard Russell, chaired the powerful Armed Services Committee. So, in 1956, Lockheed bought Roscoe Turner's land, then turned around and offered it to the Air Force for one dollar, provided the company be given the contract to run the facility. Over half a million dollars had gone into land acquisition, but Lockheed expected that government fees would more than make up the loss. They were right. From 1958, when the facility opened, to 1961, Lockheed received \$19,224,000 to run the plant.

The Air Force also sank \$14.5 million into construction costs, much of that going to General Electric for two low-power nuclear reactors. The smaller

of the two, called the Critical Experimental Reactor, followed a standard design and was shielded in concrete. At its height, the CER produced three megawatts of power. The companion Radiation Effects Reactor yielded 10 megawatts. Its size was not unusual, but it was the only unshielded reactor in the country. When not in use, the RER sat on a hydraulic lift at the bottom of a 38-foot pool of water. When operating at full power, the reactor was exposed to air, and radiation could move in an unimpeded circle across the landscape.

From the Air Force's point of view, this exposure was just fine. They wanted to see how large quantities of material – entire sections of an airplane, for example – would withstand constant radioactive bombardment. Other laboratory buildings, warehouses, a railroad spur, a cooling area and an administrative complex were designed to meet this primary purpose. Two fences to keep people out were built, one which encompassed the full 10,000 acres and another set 3,600 feet from the unshielded radiation source. But many residents of Dawson County still worried when they heard about the reactors. Since the Etowah River flowed only 750 feet from the RER, they expressed special concern that the water might be contaminated by radioactive runoff. At a kickoff dinner, Lockheed vice president Dan Haughton¹ assured everyone that water contamination would be nonexistent. Lockheed installed water samplers downstream to keep their promise.

Records indicate the water quality was never compromised. Escapage of radiation through the air, however, may have caused problems. At full



power, the RER cast out beyond the 3600-foot barrier up to one rem per hour, a radiation level considered safe in the 1950s. More recent research has lowered acceptable radiation exposure levels. For nuclear employees, the yearly allowable level is five rems; but for the general public, it's only five millirems. During the RER's life, then, it is likely a number of workers and some civilians received more cumulative radiation than is now thought wise.

As it happened, changing military priorities actually cut RER's life rather short. Almost as soon as the research facility was built, the need for it vanished. By 1958, Air Force interest in a nuclear plane waned, and when John Kennedy became president, he ordered the project cancelled.

The Air Force initiated plans to warehouse the laboratory, but was convinced instead to turn the site over to other government agencies. NASA paid Lockheed \$800,000 annually to do experiments for its RIFT (Reactor in Flight Program) project. Again RER bathed large equipment with controlled radiation doses. The RIFT duty left the RER with a lot of free time, and during the years when the laboratory's future seemed uncertain, universities leased time for a number of experiments. According to people who worked there during the early 1960s, the experiments included such things as irradiating primates to see what they could take before dying.

One of the better known projects carried out by Emory University concerned radiation's effect on plant life. The RER, a researcher commented, could provide a good simulation of what it would be like following an atomic blast. By letting the reactor run at full power for 10 hours, the

surrounding vegetation would get a taste of life after a nuclear explosion.

There was no immediate effect, but in the fall trees closest to the reactor shed their leaves up to a month early, and leafed out next spring a month late. Then the vegetation started to die. Among the trees, pines went first. Hardwoods lasted longer. The most resilient were the weeds. Andrew Sparks, an Atlanta reporter invited out to view the experiment's results, described the mid-summer forest near the RER this way:

Pine trees are brown and lifeless. Oaks look as bare as in midwinter except for tight clusters of leaves near the trunk and these leaves are abnormal and misshapen. Some of them are two and three times their usual length and ruffled along the midribs as if they had been stitched up on a sewing machine. Buckeyes, surely at the end of their luck, grow leaves that might have been dreamed up in some botanical crazy house. Even the poison ivy looks sick—spotched and blistered as if it had received a dose of its own medicine.

Robert Platt of Emory's biology department, the man in charge of the project, observed, "This shortening of the life span is one of the most interesting effects of radiation. Scientists think it happens to man too."

In spite of such experiments, the RER proved a continual burden. Few projects needed the large sweep of radiation it provided. The drop in work meant a drop in employment. At its height the laboratory had given jobs to almost 300 people; by the mid-1960s that number had dropped to around 150. In the beginning, 25 health physicists monitored radiation, but they also felt the budget crunch, and their number dwindled to one or two by the late 1960s.

In 1965 the Air Force turned the site over to the General Services Administration for disposal. Despite all the money that had been poured into construction, the government felt it would be cheaper to get rid of the facility than be stuck with caretaker

bills. It had been a waste of money from the start, and when the GSA advertised the laboratory for bids it received only one — from Lockheed. The GSA advertised for bids a second time; again only Lockheed expressed interest. So in 1966 the GSA sold Lockheed the 10,000 acres — plus an estimated \$7.5 million worth of real property — for \$1,201,000. The site, known during its military days as Air Force 67, officially became the Georgia Nuclear Laboratory.

It's uncertain why Lockheed felt it could succeed where the government had failed, but shifting from public to private hands did little to halt the facility's slide. Work continued to come piecemeal. Lockheed built some demonstration reactors for the "Atoms for Peace" program, worked on the irradiation of food for preservation, developed a wood/plastic amalgam (called Lockwood) that promptly went nowhere. The RER had been sunk into its pool and forgotten, while its supporting hot cell was given over to other jobs.

One job entailed encapsulating Cobalt 60 for hospitals and universities. Inside the protected interior of the hot cell the radioactive isotope was handled with mechanical arms and safely shielded before being removed to the outside. The work with Cobalt 60 began in 1967, and later that year an accident occurred which would haunt the area.

Cobalt 60 is a pernicious isotope in that it is such an effective contaminant. It adheres easily to exposed surfaces in a process similar to rusting iron; one person who has worked with Cobalt 60 describes it as "throwing flour into the air. It gets on everything, and you have to be really careful not to track it in or out." To prevent the Cobalt 60 in the hot cell from escaping to the clean areas of the laboratory building, the cell was negatively pressurized. Air inside the cell would be below normal air pressure, so that air flowed in only one direction: out of the clean laboratory into the radioactive cell. Air was vented from the cell through a special regulator called a damper.

One day in 1967, a mechanical failure prevented the damper from opening. Pressure within the hot cell began to rise, and before long the air flow reversed; breezes laden with micro-

scopic radioactive particles of Cobalt 60 began issuing out of the hot cell into the laboratory's air conditioning system. Most of the laboratory building was contaminated before the problem with the damper was discovered and corrected.

Lockheed evacuated the building and called in a decontamination crew. According to some former employees, cost of the decontamination neared half a million dollars, and when it was finished, the company reported to the AEC that the accident had been corrected. The laboratory checked out clean, and workers returned.

But during the decontamination, one area had been missed or simply ignored. A concrete air duct ran below the floor of the hot cell. When pressure had reversed, a large concentration of Cobalt 60 particles had lodged in the duct. They remained there after the job was over. It is possible they were left behind because, by being in the hot cell floor, their radiation was shielded, and as long as the facility continued to operate normally, the negative air pressure would protect the particles from escaping.

Only one other accident involving radioactive material is known to have occurred at the Georgia Nuclear Laboratory, and the date and details of the event are uncertain. It happened in a storage area across the Etowah River from the rest of the facility. When the RER was active, the area had been the cooling-off spot for trains carrying irradiated materials. But as use of the reactor declined, the cooling-off spot was given over to the storage of high-level Cobalt 60 waste prior to shipment to Barnwell, South Carolina, for disposal. The laboratory stored its waste in 55-gallon drums, and at some point the drums leaked radioactive contamination into the environment. One theory is that the drums rusted through, and the Cobalt 60 waste was spread by ground water movement. Some claim that tornado velocity winds tore into the dump once, throwing drums around and cracking a few to leak waste. One way or the other, Cobalt 60 residue was scattered over the storage area.

By 1970 Lockheed decided to close the lab. Only a caretaker

staff remained. At this point, the city of Atlanta contacted the company to inquire about purchasing the land for a second airport site. Following a round of discussions, the city agreed to pay \$5 million for the acreage if Lockheed could prepare the site and get the transaction cleared by the federal government.

"I wouldn't be inclined to eat the soil, but otherwise it is not dangerous."

— Richard Fetz
Georgia Radiological
Health Service

"Lockheed could have sold it as a going concern to Westinghouse or somebody else. That would have been the thing to do," Lockheed public relations officer Joe Dabney claims now. "But the city of Atlanta wanted this area, so we agreed to clean it up. We didn't really get much from it. As things turned out, maybe we should have sold it to Westinghouse."

In 1969 Georgia had signed an agreement with the AEC which turned over administration of most nuclear material licenses to the Georgia Department of Health's Radiological Health Service. Richard Fetz, a long-time state employee, headed the service. When Lockheed inquired about preparing the land for sale, Fetz made a trip to Washington to discuss with the AEC how Georgia could become the regulating body for the site.

The AEC decided that if the reactor cores were transferred elsewhere, the state could decommission the rest of the facility. When the AEC received confirmation of the action, the state Radiological Health Service took over.

"We sat down with the Lockheed people to figure out exactly how the decommissioning would go," Fetz says. "Lockheed said they didn't have the expertise for it, and the state certainly didn't have the staff, so it was decided to go with an outside company."

Georgia hired Atcor, an Elmwood, New York, firm with a history of decommissioning atomic reactors, and the state provided people to check the competency of the work. Lockheed picked up the tab, reportedly close to

\$5 million.

The dismantling proceeded smoothly until the Atcor people got to the hot cell, where they found Cobalt 60 had coated the walls. An inspection disclosed the air duct contaminated in the 1967 accident. It was too dangerous, they decided, to tear down the whole building. Instead, they ordered the walls scraped and the concrete air duct broken up with jackhammers before being sent to Barnwell, South Carolina, for storage.

The work on the hot cell proceeded 24 hours a day and lasted from late March to late June, 1972. When the air duct was destroyed, dust from the activity spread out over the site, carrying minute particles of Cobalt 60. Supervisors from the Radiological Health Service noticed the dust and directed pickup of some of the hotter areas. Getting all of it, they decided, was impossible.

Decommissioning was finished June 22. Radiations levels were declared to be not more than .2 millirems an hour above background level averaged over 10 centimeters squared, with no localized spot exceeding one millirem per hour. Fetz admitted that, despite the effort of his department, some areas containing radioactive material may have been missed. But on the whole, the Radiological Health Service assured, "the best interests of public radiological safety have been met even though some trace amounts of radioactive material necessarily cannot be removed."

The city of Atlanta signed the contract with Lockheed and became the new owner of the site. In 1975, with plans for a second airport still in the future, the city decided to lease the area to the Georgia Forestry Commission, which promised to manage it. The former nuclear facility had already become a popular spot for people in Dawson County. Visitors explored the area, carrying away souvenirs or discarded building material destined for personal use. A 1975 photo from the area shows a deep trench in front of the hot cell filled with pieces of scrap. Dawson County natives say it was not uncommon to find "doughnuts" carved in the dirt beside the hot cell, physical reminders of teenagers who found the abandoned area conducive to spinning out with motorcycles and automobiles.

Picnickers used slabs taken from the hot cell as tables, and campers were said to use the still standing hot cell building as shelter.

Fetz remembers that he returned to the property more than once and was bothered by open holes left in the floor of the hot cell where Atcor had punched through to destroy the contaminated air duct. He thought people might fall into the holes and impale themselves on support rods. Complaints to the state brought no action.

One thing that did not disturb Fetz was radiation. He remained confident of his work. Rumors circulated regularly through the county of lingering dangers from radioactivity at the former nuclear laboratory, but in a 1975 story done by the *Times* of nearby Gainesville, Fetz discounted the whispered complaints. "I wouldn't be inclined to eat the soil," he told reporter Alma Bowen, "but otherwise it is not dangerous."

That remained the official line until late 1976 when the Forestry Commission subleased the 10,000 acres to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for use as a hunting ground. Just that year the DNR had received funds for its own radiological inspection unit, a unit that, unlike the Department of Human Resources Radiological Health Service, would be specifically concerned with contamination of the environment. After a survey headed by T. Roland Phillips, fences marked with "No Trespassing" signs and topped with barbed wire suddenly appeared around the hot cell and the former cooling-off area. Trucks spread dirt two feet deep in a circle around the hot cell. The doors left open for almost five years were sealed shut, and holes where pipes had entered and exited were filled with concrete.

Parishioners of Salem Church woke one Sunday morning, got dressed for services, and drove down the old Salem Church Road only to find their path had been fenced off. Complaints to county officials were relayed to the state and a belated explanation was given: the 1976 study had found "unsafe" levels of radiation. "We are concerned that people will be building campfires, opening beans, and eating them on this ground," James Setser, supervisor of the DNR's radiation unit,

said. Strangely, the event was given attention only in the Gainesville *Times*, which printed the story in a low-key manner on March 9, 1977.

Full results of the survey went unpublished for more than a year, until Bill Brooks, who provided research for this article, took *Atlanta Constitution* reporter Chester Goolrick to the site. Only recently, the paper had printed an article about nuclear contamination in Erwin, Tennessee, and the story about the Georgia Nuclear Laboratory seemed a good local piece with which to follow. On Sunday, May 14, 1978, Goolrick's story received banner front page display in Georgia's most widely read newspaper. Suddenly all those people who had been happily scouting around Dawson County were deeply worried.

The 1976 investigation showed flatly that the cleanup four years earlier had been insufficient. Initial findings indicated radioactivity levels from five to 125 times higher than allowed for in the 1972 decommissioning. The final study outlined the problem in greater detail. Even after four years, all five of the areas formerly licensed by the state were found to be still hot, though most fell well beneath the 1972 guidelines for direct radiation. The cooling-off area, however, had one spot rated at 50 millirems an hour and another rated at 100 millirems per hour.

Far more dangerous was the residual Cobalt 60; "significant amounts" were found at the cooling-off area, seepage pits and hot cell. The hot cell was the most heavily contaminated, apparently as a result of the dust spread by Atcor workers. DNR officials found micron-sized particles of Cobalt 60 on everything — walls, ground and the concrete slabs used by campers as picnic tables. Some of the oxidized isotope was firmly attached and of minor concern as a direct radiation source. But enough was mobile for Phillips to declare in his report that "*In all areas, except the reactor area at this time, there is definitely a significant radiation hazard with regard to internal exposure to individuals. It is probable and a real possibility that persons in these areas could in some manner*



ingest or inhale the particulate matter."

The scuffed floor of the hot cell with freely moveable dust; the stretch of ground in front of the building where teenagers had played in automobiles, raising thick clouds of dirt; the stone slabs on which picnic meals had been spread — all could have sent invisible particles of Cobalt 60 into some unaware person's body. Building material from the same area had been surplused and given away to locals during the 1972 decommissioning. Some of it had gone into the local schools and hospital, some into private residences. That material, too, might have carried Cobalt 60.

No illness related to radiation had been reported by visitors to the area; whether because none had occurred, it hadn't been discovered, it had yet to develop, or it was attributed to some other cause is unknown. Even the low levels given off by the Cobalt 60 found in Dawson County may cause damage if exposure continues long enough. The isotope, if inhaled, can lodge in the lungs and cause radiation burns, or if it is ingested, can be carried through the blood stream, insoluble, to different body organs, where it would stay until no longer radioactive. But since the latency period for cancers resulting from such low-level exposure is estimated at between 10 and 50 years, it will be well into the 1980s and beyond before anyone will know whether contamination of the Dawson Forest was harmless. The effect of residual low-level radiation is still a topic for

debate, so state officials could claim, as James Setser does, that even the higher-than-allowed-for contamination levels were not really all that dangerous.

"We knew it was something," he says, but we didn't feel it was a serious threat." The two fenced-off areas were closed not because people going into them were in serious danger, he adds, but because present state policy is to reduce public exposure to radiation as much as possible. "We felt that there we could do something to reduce the risk, so we did it."

Not everyone agrees. As Bob Boyd, a meteorologist at the Georgia Nuclear Laboratory now at the Georgia Institute of Technology, comments, "Most people would have disagreed that [the decommissioning] was handled properly and wasn't dangerous."

State officials attribute the discrep-

ancy between the 1972 and 1976 surveys to differing methods of study. Setser, obviously reluctant to criticize another state agency, says, "I do know there has been a complete difference in philosophy since 1972. Now we believe that radiation should be reduced to the absolute minimum where possible. The earlier idea was that you just had to reach certain levels. But how can you say if a level is safe? We just don't know."

Fetz, who still maintains confidence in his 1972 work, agrees, pointing out that he and his men simply walked an area measuring general radiation, while Phillips' crew scoured the ground on hands and knees, finding localized hot spots. Even so, Fetz's authorized report had claimed no localized spots emitting over one millirem per hour, which now seems impossible, since a

number of general levels were found to be higher in 1976 than that allowed for in the 1972 decommissioning standards.

By the time the public was notified of the continuing dangers from radiation, the state had hurriedly erected "No Trespassing" signs and fences — as if to solve the problem by isolating it. Yet when reporters went out to view the sealed-off places in May, 1978, they found a hole had been torn into the hot cell big enough for a man to crawl through, and dirt covering the Cobalt 60-contaminated ground was being eroded away. Precautions were immediately stepped up. The hole was filled again, patrols of the area increased, and game wardens told to arrest anyone found inside the marked fences. At a cost of \$40,000, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission conducted a flyover to check for higher-than-acceptable levels of radiation in the 10,000 acres. Their survey confirmed the 1976 conclusions. Dawson County remains a hot spot.

The threat of direct contamination of the public from the radiation at the Georgia Nuclear Laboratory now seems halted, but the main issue of the drawn-out affair remains unresolved. What happens after a nuclear operation is no longer needed? The young atomic industry has barely addressed the question; it has focused on the problem of building nuclear facilities instead of the difficulties of dismantling them and disposing of waste. The Georgia Nuclear Laboratory was a site of minor complexity compared to most nuclear facilities currently under construction. If decommissioning so easily went wrong there, who's to say the same won't happen when a truly dangerous area is scheduled for cleaning?

"That's getting to the heart of it," James Setser says. "The NRC is at work right now to establish criteria for decommissioning of nuclear sites. A lot of other facilities have been decommissioned badly. Not everybody likes the way things have been carried out. I think the Department of Energy has about 150 sites nationally they're looking at, many of them much worse than Dawson County. All of this has put pressure on the NRC, and points

WHO GUARDS THE GUARDIANS

Just a few months before the Radiological Health Service declared the Georgia Nuclear Laboratory radioactively clean, another incident occurred which calls in question the RHS's competence. A Delta Convair 88 left New York on December 31, 1971, carrying a cargo that included a leaking package of molybdenum 99, a radioactive isotope which, when converted to Technetium 99, has medical uses as a diagnostic tool.

During the flight that touched down in New Orleans and Houston, radioactive material leaked all over the plane's cargo bay. There was no indication anything had gone wrong until one Houston company that received the material noticed the package was contaminated. A quick check located the Convair 88 in Chicago, where it was grounded and examined by the AEC. Unacceptable levels of radiation were found in the cargo bay, and on January 2, 1972, the plane was sent to Atlanta, where Delta is headquartered, for decontamination.

The Atlanta office of the AEC coordinated the activity, eventually turning the job over to the RHS and a handful of Delta employees. The AEC had by this time given the Radiological Health Service, a unit of the Georgia Department of Public Health, authority to supervise nuclear activity within the

state. With rubber gloves and boots, special coveralls, respirators, and three radiation detecting devices, the RHS cleaned the cargo, checked out the plane, and gave Delta permission to fly it again.

Three days later the Convair 88 landed in Tampa, Florida, where officials decided to give it a going-over, just in case. They found the plane still contaminated. There were two hot spots in the cargo bay which clearly gave off radioactive readings. The plane was sent back to Atlanta for another cleaning.

The official explanation for the discrepancy was a variation in equipment and differing test methods. A report of the incident also said the Atlanta people interpreted their readings differently from the Florida people. Whatever the cause, the conclusion was the same. What Georgia's Radiological Health Service said was clean was not clean.

Furthermore, the case raises questions about the AEC's ability to judge a state agency's capacity to monitor nuclear activity and protect its citizens from dangerous exposure. Georgia's Radiological Health Service was the twenty-second state organization licensed by the AEC. What about the competency of their other 21 decisions?

— M.J.S.

to the real need for establishing good criteria for decommissioning."

"Dawson County is an example of a larger problem. The larger problem is the use of nuclear material and experimentation techniques without adequate concern over public health." Janet Lowe says this quietly. She is a member of Georgians Against Nuclear Energy, the most active anti-nuclear organization in the state. "I would just like the public to question if they want to put their tax dollars into this sort of pursuit. What did we get out of Dawson County? What research that aided mankind, or anyone, came out of it?"

She pauses for a moment. "I just wonder what's going to happen when all these places are closed. All you can do in some cases is pour concrete over everything. What it means is that the nation is going to be pockmarked with these areas you can't go into."

The Georgia Nuclear Laboratory looms from the forest unexpectedly, a flattened area strewn with slabs of concrete, presided over by the two-story rectangular hot cell. Abandoned, angular, it has the geometric clarity of Aztec temples in the jungles of Mexico. A discarded shrine. The facility is eerie as the sky darkens and the air cools with the evening, and hunters' guns echo in the distance. To what gods are these temples erected? And what form of sacrifice will they eventually ask? □

1. Dan Haughton later became president and chairman of Lockheed, guiding it through the exposé of the C-5A scandal (the huge aircraft, built in Marietta under a controversial Air Force contract, kept dropping wheels and suffering wing cracks), and through the eventual bail-out of Lockheed by the federal government in the early 1970s. Making promises to the public became something of a habit for Haughton during those years.

Mitchell J. Shields is an Atlanta freelance writer whose work has appeared in a number of regional and national publications. Bill Brooks was raised and still lives in Jasper, Georgia, which is about 20 miles from the Georgia Nuclear Laboratory. About a year ago, he took a Geiger counter to the site, found excessive radiation levels and has tried to get the danger corrected ever since.

ANOTHER ONE FOR THE DEVIL

Sure as Hell, the Devil
inhabited the stairway
between Dean's Drugs and Tick Tock's
clock loft
living on dust and flies,
smelling things up like sulphur,
straining the air conditioner,
eating the heat when it was cold.

That's what happened to business.

Not the malls, not the freeways,
but the Devil, goddam it, infecting
Dean with blinding hangovers, making Tick
Tock senile, unable
to remember when to eat or sleep
or how to fix clocks. The two men
sat down and hung their chins
in a sink. The deal
was closed.

And sure as Hell,
the Devil got it all; clocks, ear plugs, pills,
etc.,

the endless etcetera
on down to strings and tacks. The Devil and four
well dressed lawyers
in the sweltering middle
of heart attack weather
stood on the steps of the courthouse
and auctioned it off to themselves.

"Hear Ye, Hear Ye,
Be it known that on this the third of August . . ."

The Devil got it all,
and the sheriff, the doctors,
the withered bus riders
plastered on benches like bugs,
all of us passing,
we missed it. One day
there were two men in business: CLOCKS FIXED, HAMBURGERS, HEAT FOR SORE MUSCLES, PERSCRIPTIONS IN A MINUTE. One day,
then sure as Hell
they were gone.

— David C. Childers
Lillington, N.C.

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BOOK REVIEWS

from the cover of *Our Appalachia*



FIRST PERSON PLURALISM

Such As Us. By Tom E. Terrill and Jerrold Hirsch. University of North Carolina Press, 1978. 302 pp. \$14.95.
Amoskeag. By Tamara Haraven; photographs by Randolph Langenbach. Pantheon, 1978. 395 pp. \$15.00.
Our Appalachia. By Laurel Shackelford and Bill Weinberg; photographs by Donald Anderson. Hill and Wang, 1978. 397 pp. \$12.95.
A Stranger in the House. By Robert Hamburger; photographs by Susan Fowler-Gallagher. MacMillan, 1978. 192 pp. \$6.95.

By Marc Miller

Southern Exposure has previously published excerpts from **Such As Us** (Vol. VI, 3) and **A Stranger in the House** (Vol. V, 1). We consider oral history a crucial input into the journal. *One issue, No More Moanin'* (Vol. I, 3-4) is devoted to oral testimonies of Southern history rarely found in text books.

History, the study of the past, is a field of fads, some of value, some just new names for old ideas. The past decade has seen the rise of "new" economic history, "new" social history, the resurgence of Marxist history and, most popular of all, oral history. Indeed, the professional association of

oral historians titled its recent conference "The Coming of Age of Oral History," and the nation's most famous oral history program (at Columbia University) is now 30 years old; more important is the avalanche of oral history-based books, crowned by the success of Studs Terkel's *Working*.

The professionals have wasted quite a few words on Terkel. They have debated his qualifications, some preferring to consider Terkel a journalist or raconteur, thus defending their discipline within academia by denying their kinship to such popular writing. As the furor has died down, oral history has accepted Terkel as its star, much to the benefit of the technique (and probably not mattering a whit to Mr. Terkel). Mindful of the success of *Working* and other popular oral accounts such as the *Foxfire* books, publishers and oral historians have collaborated to produce a great deal of valuable material in recent years.

Underlying the concept of oral history's "coming of age" has been the presumption of two phases: the old — i. e., half-assed — and the new — i. e., rigorous, academic. The old began several thousand years ago and featured Homer; it culminated in the 1930s with the life histories collected by the Federal Writers Project and other New Deal projects. Published in part in *These Are Our Lives* in 1939, these accounts are read as literature rather than as historical evidence.

The new oral history grew out of the invention of the tape recorder; through electronics, the spoken word could be reproduced, transcribed and verified, thereby increasing its acceptability to social scientists. Traditionalists — perhaps defending their

footnotes based on "private communications" — attacked oral evidence as hopelessly biased, self-interested, overly general and often incorrect when cross-checked against accepted facts. Proponents of oral history replied, with justification, that interviews must be analyzed in the light of all these factors, but that such is true for all historical documents, whether written or spoken, solicited or uncovered.

In spite of this defense, however, oral historians (and publishers) still choose most often to offer up raw words, with editing and annotation inserted primarily to improve clarity. As several recent books illustrate, "oral" and "historian" remain separate words. But the power of each book suggests that the proponents may be wrong: oral evidence is different in kind from the archival papers of industrial tycoons and world leaders. In spite of obvious faults, the power of the spoken word, whether spoken by a factory owner or chambermaid, supports all of us who see the value of combining the potentials of history and literature to produce a view of the past with meaning in the present. And, although the new oral history began as a method to chronicle the activities of great men, the current practitioners have instead explored the democratic potentials inherent in the technique.

Such As Us: Southern Voices of the Thirties bridges the gap between the old and the new approaches to oral history. When *These Are Our Lives* appeared in 1939, project director W. T. Couch intended a second volume to follow, based on the multitude of Federal Writers Project narratives. World War II intervened, but *Such As Us* finally carries out the original plan. Editors Terrill and Hirsch follow Couch's format closely, imitating the major sections on farm and factory life. But, while Couch presented a South meant to refute Erskine Caldwell's searing caricatures, Terrill and Hirsch have the concerns of historians and reformers. *These Are Our Lives* appealed primarily to the literary world; *Such As Us*, appearing 40 years after the date of interviewing, has entered the historian's world. But in reading both collections, the differences become minute; both reflect

Couch's original concern that "with all this talk about democracy it seems not inappropriate to let the people speak for themselves."

In its concentration on race — especially the contrasts between the statements of whites and blacks — *Such As Us* reveals beyond a doubt the power and value of oral history. Historians can forever debate the economic or social or political origins of the Civil War; but Parson Bill, a white, knows "We was fighting to keep the slaves," and Uncle Ben, a black, knows they "were fighting to keep me under bondage." A personal reality, but one we dismiss at our own peril.

The selection of accounts in *Such As Us* illustrates the broad range of opinions found in the spoken word.

*Oral history is not
neutral evidence any more
than the other sources
upon which we draw*

Much to some readers' chagrin, the "people" don't always say what we'd like to hear; the bad comes out with the good. For example, as I read "A Woman's Like A Dumb Animal," I kept hoping to be surprised by some populist reversal of what the title suggests; it never came. In "Tech 'Er Off, Charlie," a black Uncle Charlie Holcomb tells the white interviewer, "Niggers has got to l'arn dat dey ain't like white folks, and never will be, and no amount o' eddycation can make 'em be, and dat when dey gets outen dere place dere is gonna be trouble." Does Charlie believe this, or is he tomming for a white interviewer? We don't know, but the fact of the words still contributes to our need for knowledge.

These Are Our Lives and *Such As Us* both recognize the importance of textile mills in the lives of Southerners. The view of Southern factory life revealed in the FWP narratives matches to a remarkable degree that of the Northern counterpart portrayed in *Amoskeag*. The FWP books strove for the breadth of Southern experiences; Tamara Haraven and Randolph Langen-

bach attempt depth by concentrating on Manchester, New Hampshire, a city — like many in the South — dominated by a single textile corporation. The book grew out of several hundred interviews exploring the family and work life of the employees of the Amoskeag Company, once the largest textile plant in the world. At its height in the early 1900s, the Amoskeag employed 17,000 people in Manchester and had a floor space about equal to that of New York's World Trade Center.

Amoskeag reveals one of the pitfalls of oral history: the history revealed depends on who tells it. As the authors recognize, a contradiction arose between the fact that Amoskeag workers overwhelmingly voted to strike in 1922, while all of the workers in the book claim to have opposed the strike. The reader is left with a picture of a beneficent corporation challenged by a union unscrupulously manipulating the work force. When shown his employment record, Cameron Stewart reacted with shock: "They wrote in my record that I was an agitator! What would I agitate? . . . As a matter of fact, the help had gone out on strike, and I still went in. I came out only because there wasn't anybody there. I had nothing to do with the textile union."

Haraven, in her role as historian, finds herself forced to counter the most obvious interpretations of these testimonies. Her explanation — the "Amoskeag spirit," the corporate family loyalty — strikes a familiar chord to Southerners, but it leaves many questions unanalyzed. It also ignores a defect of the technique: the network historians use to find informants leads easiest to people considered stable, respectable and reliable; activists, on the other hand, often move to other towns — voluntarily or as exiles.

Amoskeag, unlike much of oral history, does get into the minutiae of life: the heat and humidity of the mills, the process and problems of weaving, the relation of workers to machines, the role of religion, male-female relationships, family interactions. In considering these details, I was again struck by the similarity of life in Southern and Northern mill towns: the omnipresence of the

company, its desire to control its employees, the contrasting loyalty on the part of workers to their employers. And, while the FWP interviewers found it almost impossible to speak to anybody but poor people, professional historians have easier access to the elite. Most of *Amoskeag* presents the words of workers, but the several lengthy interviews with representatives of lower, middle and upper management reveal a wider range of facts than is available to most workers and highlights the differences and similarities in the world views of workers and management.

Like *Amoskeag* and *Such As Us*,

Our Appalachia draws on the resources of a major oral history project, in this case the Appalachian Oral History Project. In *Our Appalachia*, the editors make their theme far more explicit in both interviews and remarks than oral histories usually do, thereby proving that — contrary to some claims — oral history is not neutral evidence any more than the other sources upon which researchers draw. The theme here, however, reflects a major drawback of interviewing: the tendency to glorify the past. *Our Appalachia*'s three parts all stress the concept of a better world destroyed by economic development. Most of

the interviews reject everything non-traditional, everything in modern, industrial, capitalist society.

The tendency towards glorification of the past, like racial or sexual bias, should not be a cause for immediately rejecting oral history: a weakness, it is also a major strength. As *Our Appalachia* shows, oral history provides perhaps the best — often, the only — method available for remembering the positive aspects of our past, the social networks that made traditional society function before we became “organized” and automated. Jim Byrd recalls that, even before convict labor, upkeep on roads had

A RETURN VISIT: WILLIAM STYRON

By Bob Brinkmeyer

Rarely has a contemporary writer evoked such heated critical response — both good and bad — as William Styron has done. Styron's first novel, *Lie Down in Darkness* (1951) drew extravagant praise from the critics; the literary world was eagerly awaiting an exciting new post-World War II writer who could take up where America's earlier twentieth century giants (Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Faulkner, etc.) had left off. On his first appearance, Styron was cast in this starring role. But his next major novel, *Set This House on Fire* (1960), which struck off in some new directions, was almost universally condemned. Then in 1967 *The Confessions of Nat Turner* burst onto the scene. Initially this novel drew critical acclaim, but soon it became the center of blazing controversy as people began to read it more as a social document and less as a novel.

Born and raised in Newport News, Virginia — which he once described as the “absolute heartland of a deadened, unenlightened culture” — Styron showed no real interest in writing as a career until he attended Duke University and came under the tutelage of Professor William Blackburn (who also nurtured such talented writers as Reynolds Price and Fred Chappell). Short stories were Styron's first efforts

at fiction, and, after graduating from Duke, he studied with Hiram Hayden at the New School for Social Research. By 1950, at the age of 25, he had finished *Lie Down in Darkness*; from then on the novel would be his important medium, though he has written a satirical drama, *In the Clap Shack* (1973).

Early on Styron disclaimed being a Southern writer, preferring a national identity to a regional one. But he has since noted that “there is a strong pull in my work toward trying to explain or express certain southern sympathies, certain southern apprehensions.” In fact, his novels are steeped in the Southern experience and, particularly *Lie Down in Darkness*, reveal a good deal about life in the contemporary South.

Styron's work represents the second generation of the Southern renaissance. The first was headed up by Faulkner and other writers, such as Thomas Wolfe and Andrew Lytle, who were born around the turn of the century and whose best work came in the 1920s and 1930s. These earlier writers grew up at a time when the old traditions and beliefs of the South, those time-honored codes of morality and community, still held sway but were beginning to break up before the ever-widening inroads of modernism. Pulled between the traditional life of their Southern roots and the cosmopolitan life first experienced at the universities, these writers struggled to balance the tensions. And in the process they

created great literature.

But, as Louis Rubin has pointed out, Styron came too late to experience this conflict. By his time, though the old ways were still being given voice, they were no longer an active force. Ideals of family and community were superseded by more individualistic and amoral goals. People struggled less to find their place in the established community, and more to find themselves amidst a complex environment of biological and social forces. People were no longer ultimately responsible to God, but to themselves.

Styron's work reflects this shift in outlook. While *Lie Down in Darkness*, for example, bears many resemblances in plot to Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (both depict young protagonists from decadent aristocratic families committing suicide), the emphases are different. Faulkner's Quentin Compson loses his grip on reality because he cannot find a place in his community (he's torn by the tension of the old ways versus the modern view), while the problem of Styron's Peyton Loftis stems from the psychological destruction visited upon her by her parents. With Faulkner the force of history is ever-present. One major theme of *The Sound and the Fury* is the extended decline of the Compson dynasty. In contrast, family lines are not crucial to the dilemma of Styron's characters. The Loftises are the nouveau riche of the modern South, and Styron does not deal with the deeds and tendencies of their ancestors.

been the responsibility of the citizens of a community; people gave, not tax money, but "worked about ten days a year to the man," Buck Scalf knew an effective, community-based method for dealing with crime: "A man was socially ostracized after being caught stealing, such a great burden upon him, that they just wouldn't hardly steal anything. In fact, I never heard of anybody stealing anything until I was a grown man." Obviously, these solutions cannot be directly applied to contemporary social problems, but they remind us that alternatives exist and suggest key elements of an effective approach.



A Stranger in the House is totally different from the other books con-

sidered here. While most oral history collections go for many short interviews, Robert Hamburger presents 11 substantive interviews with household workers. By allowing the people to talk at length, he has given us narratives of extreme power.

All 11 household workers live in the North; all migrated there, most from the South, a few from the Caribbean. Together, they describe "how black women have met the challenges and opportunities" of the transition from a rural home to the role of stranger, of paid employee in a white, urban household. And Hamburger allows them to build upon the

Styron is best known for *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, a work which aroused sensationally hostile reactions from many black scholars and leaders. The furor reached such peaks that Twentieth Century Fox, after paying \$600,000 for the film rights, ultimately shelved the project to avoid getting mixed up in the controversy. Much of the reaction, I believe, can be explained by the social atmosphere which existed when the book came out. The time was the late '60s, and the Black Power movement, with its emphasis on black pride and revolutionary action, was rising in strength and momentum. The effects of the movement were felt everywhere. The new heroes of the black movement were not the Booker T. Washingtons, straddling the fence to gain concessions, but revolutionaries who were willing to challenge the oppressors with armed might. Nat Turner, leader of a slave rebellion in Virginia in 1831, was one of the Black Power movement's exemplary historical figures.

In the midst of this new awareness of black history and pride came William Styron's novel, showing Nat, among other things, lusting after white women, repenting his acts of violence, and finally experiencing a religious vision of love and transcendence (described in terms of an imagined sexual climax with the white woman he murdered). Not much is known about the real Nat Turner (he made a confession before his hanging which almost certainly was doctored by the

attorney who took it down), and Styron's imaginative handling of Nat's life (he called the book a "meditation on history") infuriated many blacks. This statement by Charles V. Hamilton is a good example of the prevalent reaction:

We will not permit Styron's "meditation" to leave unchallenged an image of Nat Turner as a fanatical black man who dreams of going to bed with white women, who holds nothing but contempt for his fellow blacks, and who understands, somewhat, the basic human desire to be free but still believes in the basic humanity of some slaveholders.

Furthermore, critics argued, the book was an apology for slavery, suggesting that most slaves were content under slavery and that slavery was really what they were fit for. "This novel," asserts Ernest Kaiser, "is a witches' brew of Freudian psychology, Elkins' Sambo thesis on slavery, and Styron's vile racist imagination." Only a few prominent blacks disagreed.

Styron didn't really deserve such a furious denunciation. While the novel does have a few disturbing racist implications (Nat's lust for white women, for example), Styron maintains throughout the novel a chilling vision of the horrors of slavery. His point is that slavery destroys the humanity not only of the oppressed, but of the oppressors. According to Styron, the system of slavery poisoned the humanity of the white oppressors and also beat down and degraded the blacks —

a view which directly contradicted the belief of many 1960s black critics that the slaves were revolutionized by their ordeals and were only prevented by a lack of weapons from rising in full-scale revolt. The world of Styron's novel is a wasteland, devoid of humanity, courage and moral purpose. No one stands tall here — but Nat. Styron's Nat is no pure, clenched-fisted revolutionary, but he's the only strong, sensitive, and noble character in the hell of ante-bellum tidewater Virginia. And he tries his best to change things.

The Confessions of Nat Turner is Styron's best work, controversial as it is, because it is the only one that maintains a powerful grip on the reader from the first page to the last. His other works exhibit more tellingly his major flaw as a writer: a garrulous lack of control which causes him at times to ramble and rant and lose the thread of his story. But Styron's talent is always evident, even in his worldliest digressions, and when this is combined with an overarching structure and discipline as in *Nat Turner*, the effect is stunning.

It has been almost 12 years since Styron has published a novel. Several years back he published in *Esquire* an excerpt from a novel he was working on, tentatively entitled *The Way of the Warrior*, which was about the life of a career Marine. But there has been no word since, and one can only wonder what he's writing now. We're all the losers for his silence. □

idea of being a stranger, of living in a house but not being a member of the family. One woman told Hamburger he knew more about her after two hours than did the family she had worked for after several years. The women continually remarked upon that anonymity, and the isolation of laboring without co-workers: "They're just lovely when I first started, but then they began to feel that I was a machine — just somebody in the house, just work, work, work. As if I was a child."

But, as in *Amoskeag, Stranger in the House* does not always satisfy our desire to hear from a conscious, politicized worker who believes she is being exploited by a ruthless master. Some women have grown to enjoy their work; some even describe employers who have become friends, who accept them into the family (something impossible in a factory). Minnie Stevens considers her employers as friends: she eats with them, and their children play together. "We started off with a good relationship — it could be because she's a Southerner." Minnie Stevens is, of course, an exception.

The key to the effectiveness of *Stranger in the House* is that it led me into a world I have often observed, but which — as a member of the middle class — I have never experienced, by choice and by privilege. Just as happened after reading the best of Studs Terkel, I can no longer just look past "the hired help." They are revealed as fellow human beings. As Hamburger writes, "There is a great human variety in these accounts and the moral challenge of an extraordinary encounter."

This challenge, this entry into a new and unrecorded and often hidden world, is the justification for oral history: a sharing of the experiences, not of the "inarticulate" (Couch's term), but of the overlooked. In every oral history, people speak; we are learning to listen. □

Marc Miller, book review editor of *Southern Exposure*, recently completed a history, supported by extensive interviews, of life in the United States during World War II. He has taught oral history and is now collecting first person accounts of work life over the last hundred years.

THE WARY FUGITIVES

By Louis Rubin, Jr. Louisiana State University Press, 1978. 384 pp. \$7.95.

By James J. Thompson

I'll Take My Stand, the Agrarian manifesto of 1930, has become something of an historical curiosity. Although the Louisiana State University Press has — to its eternal credit — recently reissued the volume, one wonders who still reads it, and more, what do those elusive readers make of that compendium of gauzy romanticism and clear-eyed realism, of nostalgic longing for an aristocratic past and a rising call for democracy?

The impassioned pleadings of the Vanderbilt Agrarians should perhaps still mean something to Southerners, and yet my students — bright, at times intellectually gifted, young men and women, who if not of Virginia are at least in it — have scarcely heard of the book. Coerced into reading it — through the ominous threat of an impending examination — they recoil in shock and wonderment at the sometimes less than subtle racism, the attack on the sacred idol of technology (after all, these young people have grown up with electric toothbrushes), and the exaltation of agricultural life contained in its pages.

Others who stumble across the volume probably react in similar fashion. Without too much difficulty these readers can dismiss *I'll Take My Stand* as a period piece, another of those perverse and peevish outbursts that folks south of the Potomac give vent to with fair regularity. Thus dismissed, the book can be conveniently relegated to a backroom shelf, there to gather dust alongside such oddities as George Fitzhugh's *Cannibals All* and James Jackson Kilpatrick's *The Sovereign States* — interesting, if hardly edifying, products of Southern contrariness.

And yet *I'll Take My Stand* has always had its discerning readers, men and women who have taken the volume seriously and who have labored assiduously to unravel its layers of meaning. No one has accomplished this task so masterfully and with such

grace and clarity as Louis D. Rubin of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in his most recent book, *The Wary Fugitives: Four Poets and the South*. Rubin brings to his four poets — John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Donald Davidson and Robert Penn Warren — the sensitivity to the human experience, the lucid prose and the impeccable scholarship that have elevated him to a preeminent place of honor among Southern literary scholars. In dozens of essays, countless reviews and a shelf full of books, Professor Rubin has established himself over the past 25 years as our best interpreter of the novelists and poets of the South. At long last he has turned his talents fully upon the Fugitive-Agrarians; and the result in *The Wary Fugitives* is, if not the last word on the subject, certainly the most complete and perceptive to date. Professor Rubin has written his best book.

A short review can only suggest its richness and penetrating insight. Within the space of some 350 pages, Rubin has cut to the core of Agrarianism and has drawn sharp personal and intellectual portraits of the four major men of letters to emerge from the movement. There is first of all John Crowe Ransom, the elder statesman of the group, who forged the young men of Vanderbilt University into the Fugitives, and then with brilliance and ironclad logic drove himself into — and ultimately, out of — Agrarianism.

And then there is Allen Tate, who "brought literary modernism to Nashville," and who wrestled in the 1920s and 1930s with the surging and conflicting demands of modernism and tradition. These two men stand in the forefront, but Rubin does not slight Donald Davidson, the true believer, the impassioned defender of the South who, in Rubin's estimation, forsook the dictates — and tensions — of art to become a Southerner who wrote poetry rather than a poet who happened to have been born in Tennessee.

Having presented these three, Rubin turns to what Virginia Rock, author of the only complete study of the Agrarian movement, has called "The Making and Meaning of *I'll Take My Stand*," and to the careers of Ransom, Tate and Davidson in the years immediately after the book's publication. Rubin concludes his study with a chapter on

Robert Penn Warren, for whom "Agrarianism never became the central allegiance," but who, as Rubin demonstrates, used the themes of Agrarianism — its "religious, social and moral assumptions" — to mold his first four novels, arguably his best work among the seemingly endless stream of novels and essays and poems that continue to pour from his pen.

In his account of these four authors, Rubin has added much to our understanding of them as Southerners and as writers, but of equal importance is his attempt to wrest the deepest meaning

Thomas Wolfe sneeringly labeled the Agrarians lily-handed academicians who had escaped the farm to sit in cloistered universities.

from *I'll Take My Stand*. For that volume has been, more often than not, both damned and praised for the wrong reasons. As Rubin clearly sees, the collection of essays was not "about" farming and a pre-technological rural existence. Had it been nothing more than a tract on agriculture, the Agrarians could have been rightfully accused of being what Thomas Wolfe sneeringly labeled them: lily-handed academicians who had escaped the farm to sit in cloistered university walls and write lovingly of a life filled with back-breaking toil and small reward. The Agrarians knew that a life of hookworm, pellagra and boll weevils offered scant occasion for paeans of praise. And the technological clock could not be turned back — much less stopped — as Ransom discovered in his disenchantment with Agrarianism. To attack "indoor plumbing and rural electrification" left one at a dead end, empty-handed and slightly ridiculous.

"What the Agrarians had to offer both individually and as a group," Rubin declares, "was what Tate proposed: a reasoned, intelligent, planned defense of religious values and humane community attitudes as a way of retarding (and in the doing, humanizing) the pell-mell rush of the modern South to adopt the ways, values and

practices of industrial America." May this passage sink home to all readers of Rubin's book and — just possibly — entice them into dipping back into the pages of *I'll Take My Stand*.

Rubin has not settled all the arguments generated by the 12 Agrarians, nor has he written the definitive work on the movement. One could wish that he had seen fit to deal with some of the other Agrarians, perhaps at the expense of Warren, who does not seem to be as crucial to Rubin's concerns — and certainly not to the Agrarian circle. Surely time is long overdue for Andrew Lytle — alive and vigorous at 76 — to receive the attention he so richly deserves. But the failure to discuss Lytle and the other major Agrarians is a small flaw amidst a sea of strengths. For those who care deeply about the South and her writers, Professor Rubin has written a book of sparkling insight and graceful scholarship. By enabling us to reconsider a movement which saw that Southerners should be more than consumers of technology's bountiful offerings and fodder for the maw of industrialism, he has placed us in his debt. □

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THE DECLINING SIGNIFICANCE OF RACE

By William Julius Wilson. University of Chicago Press, 1978. 204 pp. \$12.50.

By Harold Barnette

Once upon a time, before the Civil Rights Movement, there was to be found in this country a truly remarkable community of citizens. Surrounded as they were by hostile forces, these resourceful, spirited folk settled into a linear lifestyle that we presently call survival. Quietly, they set about creating an exemplary social order; the normal scourges of social life — economic exploitation, political oppression and cultural impoverishment — were banished from their midst.

William Wilson's *The Declining Sig-*

nificance of Race is one of the latest contributions to the seemingly endless tradition of myth-making about black people in this country. Wilson's thesis is only half-articulated by the cleverly chosen title since the book argues that the importance of social class and economic position for American blacks is increasing as the importance of race is declining. Wilson attempts to document this assertion with empirical, mainly census, data while he simultaneously constructs a bold new interpretation of American social history from antebellum times up to the present. Either of those undertakings would seem to require a tome unto itself, and one is justifiably alarmed at the thinness of Wilson's study. As one chapter follows the other, it is not the significance of race that the reader finds diminishing but Wilson's credibility as a social scientist and scholar.

Wilson tends to treat *race* and *class* as though they are things that have concrete meaning outside the realm of human experience. To describe his use of the terms, one has to resort to the sports metaphor: *race* and *class* are two teams competing in a contest which has as its goal the retardation of black progress. This reified use of terms which have no function other than representing useful concepts is a frequent and troubling occurrence throughout Wilson's book. For example, early in his study Wilson states, "I also attempt to show how *the polity* more or less *interacted* with *the economy* either to *reinforce* patterns of racial stratification or to mediate various forms of racial conflict" (emphasis added). One could be charitable here and say Wilson is merely using a literary device to make his point, but the man is not given to artful modes of expression; he means exactly what he says.

Wilson distinguishes injustice that is racially motivated from class-based injustice because he wants to prove that class stratification and conflict were not important factors in the life of the segregated black community. Wilson would have us believe that class antagonisms have developed among black people only during the past 30 years. In Wilson's words:

It is difficult to speak of a uniform black experience when the black population can be meaningfully

stratified into groups whose members range from those who are affluent to those who are impoverished. This of course has not always been the case, because the crystallization of a black class structure is fairly recent.

By "fairly recent" Wilson means since World War II. Yet, to W. E. B. Dubois, writing *The Philadelphia Negro* before the turn of the century, the crystallization of a black class structure was quite evident:

There is always a strong tendency on the part of the community to consider the Negroes as composing one practically homogeneous mass. . . . And yet if the foregoing statistics have emphasized any one fact it is that wide variations in antecedents, wealth, intelligence and general efficiency have already been differentiated within this group.

Wilson is not totally unaware of class stratification in the segregated black community. As his thesis becomes more and more implausible, he resorts to euphemism: "On the eve of the Civil War a small black elite had emerged in the North whose *improved* class status coincided with increased expressions of dissatisfaction with racial injustice"(emphasis added).

Wilson is also aware of the dominating role that the black upper class plays in the community's political life. He emphasizes that the political program of civil rights agitation was tailor-made for the black bourgeoisie. However, this insight does not extend to his interpretation of class-conscious behavior of men like Booker T. Washington, who advocated a variety of economic nationalism (or perhaps we should say racialism). Wilson infers an altruistic purpose when he claims, "In the early twentieth century a Negro professional and business class developed to meet the needs of and serve the rapidly expanding black population." Anyone who lived in a segregated community and patronized those professionals and businessmen knows that they could be as predatory as their counterparts in white society. Often they could behave even more crassly than whites of the same stripe because they enjoyed a captive market which could not turn elsewhere for service. The black mortician is a case in point.

Wilson's re-conceptualization of American history introduces a three-stage configuration which rivals in

complexity the series: A, B, C. He tries to link three periods of economic development with three definitive periods of race relations. The economic periods are designated pre-industrial, industrial and modern industrial. They pair off with slavery, the Northern migration and the Civil Rights Movement, respectively. According to Wilson, the problems faced by blacks today (and particularly lower-class blacks), are more closely tied to structural changes in the modern industrial economy than to obstacles thrown up by discrimination.

We are presented with a procession of facts, tables and charts which



Wilson apparently believes add force to his assertions. More often than not, they cast an oblique shadow over his entire enterprise. For example, in a section titled "The Increases in Black Unemployment," Wilson's data actually reveal that the rate of black unemployment compared to that of whites has been fairly stable for the past 20 or so years.

A point should also be made about the overall quality of scholarship this work presents. Wilson periodically refers to "Marxian explanations," and even "orthodox Marxist explanations." Yet one searches his footnotes in vain for a single primary Marxist source. In the process of setting up his framework, Wilson states a preference for the term "system of production." He goes on to differentiate this from the Marxist expression "forces of production." In this important conceptual prologue, where the authenticity of theoretical expressions would seem of paramount concern, Wilson cites a single secondary source, Neil J. Smelser, whose book, *Karl Marx on Society and*

Social Change, was also published by the University of Chicago Press. In fact, University of Chicago Press books are so visible in Wilson's bibliography that this book might be mistaken for a promotional item. Likewise with Wilson's propensity toward citing his own works and his "private communication."

The main problem of this book is simple: Wilson cannot mix one-part mythology with a handful of statistics and a dash of quotes from controversial historians to produce a convincing study. This is a recipe for failure. The significance of race, at least in the way Wilson looks at the problem, is not declining. Affirmative action, a racially conscious policy, has now become a legal fixture. Even the evidence Wilson marshals to prove his point winds up proving him wrong. Consistently high black unemployment rates are significant precisely because it is the black unemployment rates that are consistently high.

The most annoying aspect of *The Declining Significance of Race* is Wilson's concern that a schism has suddenly appeared within the black community and that the gap between the "haves" and "have-nots" is increasing. His lament implies that the black community is a newcomer to the experience of stratification by class, unequal opportunities within the racial ranks and internal political domination. This just isn't true. Contrary to Wilson's opinion that "it was not until after World War II that the black class structure started to take on some of the characteristics of the white class structure," social classes within the black community have always been well-defined and meticulously preserved. They are as native to the ghetto as hoe-cake and potato pie.

It is a measure of the state of writing on race questions today that Wilson's book has been accorded so much fanfare. What seems to be declining is not the importance of one's race, but the ability to think through a problem. Wilson attempts to solve the puzzle of post-'60s race consciousness by declaring that the subject of study is no longer important. □

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GRASS-ROOTS SOCIALISM

By James R. Green. Louisiana State University Press, 1978. 450 pp. \$24.95.

By Pat Black

Writers, like lawyers, often get themselves into trouble by over-identifying with their clients. In *Grass-Roots Socialism: Radical Movements in the Southwest, 1895-1943*, James R. Green provides us with a well-crafted account of the activities of Socialists in the Southwestern states for the first half of this century; but he neglects to tell us what significance this struggle, however noble, had on the culture and politics of the region and the nation.

Green begins with the decline of the Populist movement and the conversion of many Populist leaders to the new Socialist cause, which achieved a solid basis for national organizing with the creation of the Socialist Party of America in 1901. Farmers' movements had been viewed with contempt during earlier Socialist efforts under Daniel DeLeon, but the new party led by Eugene Debs allowed room for the common-sense radicalism of small farmers and tenants to exist side by side with the more conventional Marxism of industrial workers.

Green sees the Socialist movement as a positive advance beyond Populism; the Socialist Party "transcended its provincial origins" by adopting the principles of the Second International and by focusing its organizing efforts more on landless tenants than on the small yeoman farmers who made up the backbone of the People's Party and the Alliance movement in the 1880s and 1890s. His comparison of the two movements thus concentrates on ideological correctness:

Unlike the Populist agrarians... the Debsians saw "the whole history of mankind" as a "history of class struggle." And so they accepted the reality of class conflict in their own time and committed their considerable energies and abilities to fight against the capitalist class.

In sharp contrast to Green's approach, we have Lawrence Goodwyn's

Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America. Goodwyn celebrates the Populists for their ability to be radical and effective with the populace at the same time. He sees the failure of the Populist mass movement as one of the central tragedies in American history. The problem with Goodwyn's book, however, is that he has become so attached to his Populist clients that he declares a political wasteland in their wake:

Reformers could ignore the need for cultural credentials, insist on

serious analysis, and accept their political irrelevance as "socialists"; or they could forsake the pursuit of serious structural reform, and acquire mainstream credentials as "progressives" and "liberals"... The collapse of Populism meant, in effect, that the cultural values of the corporate state were politically unassailable in twentieth century America."

Even though Goodwyn writes off Debsian socialists because of their "dull dogmatism and political adolescence," Green relies heavily and uncritically on Goodwyn's work in his

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early chapters on the transition from Populism to Socialism in the Southwest. The only explanation seems to be the crippling politeness used by academics when discussing each other's work. Green's reluctance to fight back on the crucial point of the comparative effectiveness of the two movements leaves us with nagging questions that refuse to go away.

Without falling into the trap of equating correctness with effectiveness, it is still important to give credit to the Socialists for the unique relevance of their "American solution" to end the tyranny of capitalism. The Populist shadow economy of government loan institutions and manipulation of currency supplies to favor debtors would provide only a marginal reform in today's world. The programs advocated by Debsian socialists go to the heart of our current problems. The Debsians would also have retained democratic freedoms, private ownership of small businesses and farms, and a commitment to decentralized government structures. Adding the strong devotion to pacifism among Socialists, their beliefs become a mirror for many of the currents animating the New Left in this country during the past 15 years.

The Socialist Party of America's efforts from the turn of the century until World War I were, following Green's description, neither dogmatic nor adolescent. If the Socialists fell short of launching a major challenge to Democratic Party control of the Southwest, they still managed to organize tenants' unions which helped alleviate the miserable conditions of sharecroppers, they assisted both the Wobblies and conventional American Federation of Labor unions in calling important strikes in the region, and they made a strong enough showing at the polls to elect local and state officials and to pressure the Democrats into at least approving some reforms.

The Socialist pinnacle, which admittedly wasn't all that high, came in the 1912 elections. Eugene Debs received nearly a million votes in his presidential campaign, which meant that some 10 percent of the American electorate were willing to kill the competitive success myth supporting capitalism. Over 80,000 of the Debs votes came from the Southwest.

The 1912 turnout was the result of a decade of hard organizing by Socialists, and they hoped it was just the start. As it turned out, it was the start of their destruction. Businessmen and leaders of the two larger political parties began a crusade of repression. The Socialist movement in Louisiana was broken in 1913 at the end of a bitter timber strike. In the other Southwestern states, the disfranchisement efforts used against blacks were turned on the poor white sharecroppers and workers who voted with the Reds.

Many Socialists responded by forming their own night-riding groups and fighting back. The Texas Socialists were carried away by the model of Emiliano Zapata in Mexico. This response proved fatal in the face of vastly superior arms, and it was just the excuse the establishment needed to throw regular police and militia forces into the battle. Socialist opposition to World War I finished the movement. All-encompassing sedition laws were used to jail Debs and other Socialist leaders. With rural Socialists easier to identify and eradicate than their urban counterparts in the East, the Socialist movement in the Southwest had virtually disappeared by 1919, never to return in force again.

Although Green acknowledges the losses suffered by Socialists during the Red Scare, he is not willing to consign

their radical activities to a brief period in our past. A few of the Socialist leaders managed to hang on through the Ku Klux Klan heyday in the 1920s. The 1930s saw a small revival of Socialism when Norman Thomas, who succeeded Debs as the party's national leader, helped organize the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. Closing the circle, Green traces the remnants of the STFU through its merger with the National Farm Labor Union — where Cesar Chavez got his start — in the late 1940s.

The connections Green makes from one movement to another are tenuous, but they do make a point. The radical impulse never suffered complete destruction despite the crushing setbacks. Some of the old warhorses always survived to go on working and to pass their ideals to the next generation in the hope that history would provide a better climate for fighting capitalism.

No one can really foretell whether Green's hope or Goodwyn's pessimism provides a better prediction for the remainder of the twentieth century, but we can certainly face getting up every morning a lot more easily with the thought that our monolithic culture just might be assailable. □

Pat Black for some unaccountable reason is attending law school at the University of Texas in Austin.

Laying By

*Your crops, old man, are in
the hard red dirt of your father's land.
Scooter plow moves through the
rows of Alabama corn;
you follow it just as he did,
but each terrace is flatter now.
You have no sons to come
hard by, forcing crumbling
furrows to respect the succession
of generations in this labor.
The scrub oaks have overtaken
bottom land cleared by man and mule
forty years ago. Your grandfather*

*broke it first, but it lay fallow
in his declining years and you
had to work it like new ground.
And now look —*

*Now dog days are heavy on the
soil. The August heat is parching
the fat ears like meal in a tin
pan in the oven. But you,
you watch the skies, for the rain
comes in the late afternoon.
You are sure of that.*

— Randall Williams

FORTY ACRES AND A MULE

By Claude F. Oubre. Louisiana State University Press, 1978. 212 pp. \$12.95.

by Eric Foner

In the past 20 years, no period of American history has undergone a more thorough revolution in interpretation than Reconstruction. The traditional view that in the years following the Civil War the South was victimized by the corrupt rule of ignorant blacks, unscrupulous carpet-baggers and traitorous scalawags has been completely overturned. Studies of individual states have drawn attention to the positive achievements of Reconstruction regimes, as well as the complex social process by which blacks and whites sought to adjust to the new situation created by the end of slavery.

Although the old view of Reconstruction has been swept away, no new synthesis has taken its place. We still have no convincing portrait, for example, of the nature of black leadership, the quality of political life or the underlying reasons for the failure of the radical governments. Historians today find it far easier to agree on what Reconstruction was not than on what it was.

There is one point, however, on which most students of the era probably concur: the failure to distribute the land to the former slaves lies at the heart of the Reconstruction story. This idea — a radical departure when suggested in the 1930s by historians James Allen and W. E. B. Dubois — has now become historical orthodoxy. It is surprising, therefore, that Claude Oubre's *Forty Acres and A Mule: The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Land Ownership* is the first book-length study focusing entirely on the land question.

Drawing primarily on the voluminous records of the Freedmen's Bureau, the agency created by Congress in 1865 to oversee the affairs of the South's former slaves, Oubre presents a rather dry but still quite useful narrative of the land question and the

Bureau's relationship to it. As he recognizes, the land question had roots stretching back to the earliest days of the Civil War, when abolitionists and radical Republicans first linked the goal of landownership for Southern blacks with that of emancipation. During the war, hundreds of thousands of acres of land fell into government hands through confiscation, abandonment or forfeiture.

Oubre relates two stories of war-time experiments in placing freedmen on these lands. On the South Carolina Sea Islands, some freedmen were able to purchase tax lands sold at public auction; in the Mississippi Valley, the plantations at Davis Bend were converted into a settlement for over 10,000 blacks. Generally, however, land in Union-controlled areas was either leased or sold to whites, with the freedmen hired as laborers, often at scandalously low wages.

Early in 1865 General William T. Sherman issued his famous Field Order No. 15, setting aside a stretch of land along the South Carolina and Georgia coasts, including the islands, for the exclusive settlement of blacks. By June, some 40,000 freedmen had settled on the Sherman reservation. In addition, Sherman instructed the military to loan mules to the blacks to enable them to work the land. From this action, Oubre suggests, came the phrase "forty acres and a mule" which

would resound through Reconstruction debates. At the same time, in March, 1865, Congress passed the Freedmen's Bureau Act, which included a provision for the leasing of 40-acre tracts to the freedmen.

Thus, at the end of the Civil War, the government appeared to have embarked upon a policy, cautious as it was, of encouraging black landownership. As Oubre shows, however, during the summer of 1865 the situation was drastically altered, as President Andrew Johnson decided to restore land to its former owners. Some Freedmen's Bureau officials did their best to obstruct the policy and encourage black landownership. Others, according to Oubre, were indifferent or even hostile to the prospect. But in the end, virtually all the land under the Bureau's control, except that on the Sea Islands, was restored to white ownership.

The land issue, however, was far from dead. Contemporary accounts are replete with eloquent statements by freedmen of their desire to obtain a parcel of land. One committee from Edisto Island addressed President Johnson, after being informed they would have to vacate land so their former owners could return: "This is our home. We have made these lands what they are. We were the only true and loyal people that were found in possession of these lands. . . . Shall not we who are freedmen and have always



Office of Freedmen's Bureau in Memphis (*Boston Public Library*)

been true to this Union have some rights as are enjoyed by others?"

There were, of course, some political figures who sought to satisfy the freedmen's land hunger. Thaddeus Stevens, the radical Congressman from Pennsylvania, proposed a plan to confiscate and redistribute the lands of disloyal planters. But the furthest Congress would go in this direction was the enactment of the Southern Homestead Act in 1866, opening public lands in the South to settlement by blacks. Oubre devotes several chapters to the operation of the Act in various states and to the efforts of certain Bureau agents to assist freedmen in settling these lands. But, in general, the Act was a failure. Public land in the South was of poor quality, the freedmen lacked the capital required to establish farms, and land offices were often totally disorganized. In the end, only 1,000 freedmen received final title to land under the Act.

More successful were efforts of blacks to acquire land on their own, sometimes with the aid of sympathetic whites. Oubre relates some examples of blacks' cooperative endeavors to obtain land: the black regiment which pooled its bounty payments to buy a plantation, the blacks who established joint stock companies to purchase lands. By the 1870s, some freedmen had accumulated enough capital to purchase small tracts. Indeed, Oubre feels that the black achievement in acquiring land has been ignored by historians who stress the failure of land distribution. By 1900, he states, one quarter of the black farmers in the South owned their own land. This statistic, however, may be misleading. The land blacks acquired tended to be of marginal quality, and black farms were miniscule in size compared to

those of whites. For the vast majority of freedmen, landowning remained a frustrated dream.

In relating this story, Oubre has performed an important service for students of the period. Unfortunately, he has defined his subject so narrowly that he cannot explain why the drive for landownership failed. The land question cannot be studied in isolation from other ideological and political issues agitating America during Reconstruction. Oubre provides no explanation for the widespread opposition among whites to black landownership, because he does not perceive that ideas on land were intimately related to Americans' attitudes toward property, labor and the nature of the Southern economy itself.

In my opinion the land question should be viewed as a part of the central issue of early Reconstruction — control of the black labor force. As the South Carolina planter William H. Trescot wrote late in 1865, "You will find that this question of the control of labor underlies every other question of state interest." To allow blacks access to land, Trescot insisted, would destroy the labor system of the South: "It will be utterly impossible for the owner to find laborers that will work contentedly for wages alongside" independent farmers. The example of emancipation and its results in the West Indies was ever-present in the minds of Southern whites. Where given the opportunity, as in Jamaica, the freedmen had simply abandoned the plantations and opted for self-sufficient farming. As a result, sugar production had plummeted.

Oubre does not consider what blacks would do with land once they acquired it. The example of blacks who did acquire land on the Sea Islands was

anything but reassuring to those who felt a revival of cotton production was essential to the nation's economic well-being. Many freedmen there had refused to plant the "slave crop" cotton, choosing instead self-sufficiency. As one Georgia black said, "if ole massa wants to grow cotton, let him plant it himself."

Northerners as well as Southerners were not prepared to see cotton production follow in the trail of West Indian sugar. Many Northern whites were perfectly prepared to see some freedmen acquire land through their own hard work, industry and savings. Most opposed the idea of the government distributing the land as a gift, as proposed by Stevens, fearing this would undermine the laborers' initiative and industriousness. Blacks, of course, insisted that land would not be a "gift," but a payment for years of unrequited labor which had made the land productive in the first place.

In view of the plight of the Southern farmer in the late nineteenth century, it may be doubted whether landownership would have been quite the panacea for blacks which some historians have suggested. Nonetheless, the land question was a central one for blacks as well as whites, and Oubre deserves commendation for being the first writer to focus his attention exclusively upon it. Yet this very narrowness of focus prevents him from grappling with the broader context, without which black farmers' failure to achieve the dream of "forty acres and a mule" cannot be understood. □

Eric Foner teaches history at City College of the City University of New York and writes on various aspects of nineteenth century history.

BOOKS ON THE SOUTH

This list consists of books published since November, 1978. Book entries include works up to January, 1979. Dissertations appeared in the Dissertation Abstracts Index during August-October, 1978.

The entries are grouped under several broad categories for your convenience. Mention of a book here does not preclude its being reviewed in a future issue. Un-

solicited reviews of publications of general interest to our readers are welcome. Recent works are preferred.

Copies of the dissertations are available from Xerox University Microfilms, Dissertation Copies, PO Box 1764, Ann Arbor, Mi. 48106. The cost is \$7.50 for microfilm and \$15 for xerographic.

ECONOMICS, HISTORY AND POLITICS

"An Analysis of the Post Desegregation Era in the Bessemer City Schools," by James M. Howell. Dissertation. University of Alabama.

"An Analysis of Union Representation Elections in Mississippi, 1968-72," by Leo Vincent Crook. Dissertation. Mississippi State University.

The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky, by Lowell H. Harrison. University Press of Kentucky, 1978. \$4.95.

"An Appraisal of the Role of the Public School as an Acculturating Agency of Mexican Americans in Texas," by Marjorie Silken Friedman. Dissertation. New York University.

"The Atlanta Police: An Ethnographic Study of the Introduction of Female Officers," by Patricia Lynn Weiser Remington. Dissertation. University of Pittsburgh.

"Bethesda: An Investigation of the Georgia Orphan House, 1738-1772," by David R. Poole, Jr. Dissertation. Georgia State University College of Education.

"Charleston, South Carolina, Merchants 1815-1860: Urban Leadership in the Antebellum South," by Gregory A. Greb. Dissertation. University of California, San Diego.

"Citizen Participation Within the Planning and Land Use System Program of Fairfax County, Virginia: A Survey Study," by Sidney R. Steele. Dissertation. George Washington University.

"Cobb County, Georgia, 1880-1900: A Socioeconomic Study of an Upper Piedmont County," by Thomas A. Scott. Dissertation. University of Tennessee.

"Comparing State Committees: A Comparison of Committees in the Virginia House of Delegates and the Georgia House of Representatives," by George J. Peery. Dissertation. Emory University.

"Corporate Social Involvement at the Local Level: A Study of Social Responsibility in San Antonio, Texas," by John Albert Reeder. Dissertation. State University of New York at Buffalo.

"Determinants of the Value of Small Kentucky Banks, 1971-1973," by Robert L. Losey. Dissertation. University of Kentucky.

"The Development of the Southern United States: A Test for Regional Convergence and Homogeneity," by Max M. Schreiber. Dissertation. University of South Carolina.

"Direct Protection of Ultimate Consumers by the Government of the State of Texas: An Economic and Legal Analysis," by Frank W. Giesber. Dissertation. University of Texas.

"An Economic Approach to Water Supply Planning in Southeastern Virginia," by William B. Anderson. Dissertation. Virginia Polytechnic Institute.

"The Effects of OSHA on Selected Manufacturing Management in Texas," by Donald Edwin Boulding. Dissertation. Arizona State University.

"Electorate Expansion and Public Policy: A Decade of Political Change in the South," by Mildred Elizabeth Sanders. Dissertation. Cornell University.

"The Governors' Councils of Virginia 1692-1722," by Grace Larson Chickering. Dissertation. University of Delaware.

"A History of Industrial Arts Education in North Carolina, 1919-1977," by Lynn Pickens Barrier. Dissertation. North Carolina State University.

"Industrial Location in the Nonmetropolitan Communities of Kentucky and Tennessee, 1970-1973," by David R. Kelch. Dissertation. University of Kentucky.

"Industrial Training in North Carolina:

Case Studies in New and Expanding Industries, 1975-1977," by Anne Rogers Moore. Dissertation. North Carolina State University.

"The Long Ordeal: Army Generals and Reconstruction in Louisiana, 1862-1877," by Joseph G. Dawson, III. Dissertation. Louisiana State University.

"Major Military Industries of the Confederate Government," by Maurice K. Melton. Dissertation. Emory University.

"Mental Health Law in Mississippi," by David A. Pritchard. University Press of Mississippi, 1978. \$10.75.

"Moral Choices: Memory, Desire and Imagination in Nineteenth Century American Abolition," by Peter Walker. Louisiana State University Press, 1978. \$24.95.

"A Narrative History of Selected Aspects of Violence in the New South, 1870-1920," by Jerry Lee Butcher. Dissertation. University of Missouri-Columbia.

"The North, the South, and the Republican Ideology: The Northeastern Republican Press, 1865-1869," by Anne Kusener Nelson. Dissertation. Vanderbilt University.

"Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1846-1865," by Marc W. Kruman. Dissertation. Yale University.

"Social Origins of the New South: Alabama, 1860-1885," by Jonathan M. Weiner. Louisiana State University Press, 1978. \$14.95.

"Southern Mountain Republicans, 1865-1900: Politics and the Appalachian Community," by Gordon B. McKinney. University of North Carolina Press, 1978. \$18.00.

"Technological Change in the Post Bellum Louisiana Sugar Industry," by Louis A. Felzer. Dissertation. Temple University.

"Testing Emphasis and Technical Curriculum Placement Procedures Among Selected North Carolina Community Colleges," by Richard Northrup Fisher. Dissertation. North Carolina State University.

"Texas in the Confederacy: Military Installations, Economy and People," by Bill Winsor. Hill Junior College Press, 1978. \$12.50.

"Texas Monthly's Political Reader, 1978 Edition. Southwest Book Services, 1978. \$6.95.

"Ties of Intimacy: Social Values and Personal Relationships of Antebellum Slaveholders," by Russell Lindley Blake. Dissertation. University of Michigan.

"Turn to the South: Essays on Southern Jewry," ed. by Nathan M. Kaganoff and Melvin I. Urofsky. University Press of Virginia, 1978. Price not set.

"The Union of the States: A Study of Radical Whig-Republican Ideology and Its Influence Upon the Nation and the South, 1776-1861," by Walter K. Wood. Dissertation. University of South Carolina.

"The Woman Suffrage Movement in Tennessee," by A. Elizabeth Taylor. Octagon Books, 1978. Reprint of 1975 edition. \$10.50.

BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

"After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism," by Paul

D. Escott. Louisiana State University Press, 1978. \$15.95.

"Amos Kendall in Kentucky, 1814-1829: The Journalistic Beginnings of the 'Master Mind' of Jackson's 'Kitchen Cabinet,'" by Baxter F. Melton, Jr. Dissertation. Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

"Bill Tuck: A Political Life in Harry Byrd's Virginia," by William Bryan Crawley. University Press of Virginia, 1978. Price not set.

"Famous Women of South Carolina," by Idella Bodie. Sandlapper Store, Inc., 1978. Price not set.

"Leroy Pope Walker and the Problems of the Confederate War Department, February-September, 1861," by Rick Halperin. Dissertation. Auburn University.

"The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society," by Thomas L. Conelly. Louisiana State University Press, 1978. \$5.95.

"The Personal and Religious Realism of James Agee," by Rochelle Garlin. Dissertation. University of Pennsylvania.

"Revolt Against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign Against Lynching," by Jacquelyn D. Hall. Columbia University Press, 1979. \$14.95.

"Richard Bennett Hubbard: An American Life," by Martha A. Turner and Jean S. Dunean. Shoal Creek Publishing Co., 1978. \$15.00.

"Southern Women in the Recent Educational Movement in the South," by A. D. Mayo. Louisiana State University Press, 1978. \$17.50.

"William E. Glasscock: Thirteenth Governor of West Virginia," by Gary J. Tucker. Dissertation. West Virginia University.

BLACK EXPERIENCES IN THE SOUTH

"The Age of Segregation: Race Relations in the South, 1890-1945," ed. by Robert Haws. University Press of Mississippi, 1978. \$8.50.

"An Analysis of the Ratio Changes in the Student Population of the Atlanta School System (1960-1974)," by Radford Cisco Hamilton. Dissertation. University of Georgia.

"Black Administrators in Higher Education: Conditions and Perceptions," by Robert L. Hoskins. Praeger Pubs., 1978. \$17.95.

"Black Educators and Intelligence Testing: The Case of the South and the Educational and Vocational Guidance of Blacks, 1920-1950," by William Bonds Thomas. Dissertation. State University of New York at Buffalo.

"The Black Family and Black Women: A Bibliography," ed. by Phyllis R. Klotman and Wilmer H. Baetz. Arno Press, 1978. \$15.00.

"Black Heritage in Social Welfare, 1860-1930," ed. by Edyth L. Ross. Scarecrow Press, 1978. \$20.00.

"The Black Librarian in the South," ed. by Annette Phinazee. Gaylord Professional Publications, 1979. \$12.50.

"Black Naturalism: A Philosophy and Technique used by Black American Novelists in the First Half of the Twentieth Century," by Raymond T. Hunter. Dis-

sertation. Wayne State University.

Black Plots and Black Characters, by Robert L. Southgate. Gaylord Professional Publications, 1978. \$25.00.

Black Worker: The Era of the Knights of Labor, Vol. III, by Philip S. Foner and Ronald L. Lewis. Temple University Press, 1978. Price not set.

Black Worker: Formation of the Knights of Labor and Railway Brotherhoods, Vol. IV, by Philip S. Foner and Ronald L. Lewis. Temple University Press, 1978. Price not set.

Blackwater: A Marxist Perspective on the Meaning of Black Religion, by Manning Marable. Challenge Press, 1978. \$12.00.

"Catching Sense: The Meaning of Plantation Membership Among Blacks on St. Helena Island, South Carolina," by Patricia Guthrie. Dissertation. University of Rochester.

"Charles Waddell Chesnut: Aspiration and Perception," by Sallyann Harris Ferguson. Dissertation. Ohio State University.

The Children is Crying: Congregationalism Among Black People, by A. Knighton Stanley. Pilgrim Press, 1978. \$7.95.

"The Development of Black Atlanta, 1865-1885," by Jerry John Thornberry. Dissertation. University of Maryland.

The Devil's Music: A History of the Blues, by Giles Oakley. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978. \$6.95.

"The Educational Philosophies of Booker T. Washington and Carter G. Woodson: A Liberating Praxis," by Alfred Young. Dissertation. Syracuse University.

Employment of Blacks in the South, ed. by Ray Marshall and Virgil L. Christian. University of Texas Press, 1978. \$17.95.

Encyclopedia of Black Folklore and Humor, by Henry D. Spalding. Jonathan David Pubs., Inc. 1978. \$12.95.

"Impact of Black Voter Participation on the Politics of Louisiana and Virginia," by John K. Price. Dissertation. University of Texas at Austin.

"The Influence of Blacks on the Development and Implementation of the Public Education System in South Carolina, 1836-1876," by Elliott McClintock Johnson. Dissertation. The American University.

"Irony in the Fiction of William Wells Brown and Charles Waddell Chesnut," by Richard O. Lewis. Dissertation. State University of New York at Buffalo.

Pastoral Care in the Black Community, by Edward P. Wimberly. Abingdon Press, 1978. \$3.95.

Protest at Selma: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, by David J. Garrow. Yale University Press, 1978. \$15.00.

"Richard Wright: A Marxist Approach to His Early Work (1930-1942)," by Annette Lois Conn. Dissertation. Temple University.

"Selected Grammatical Features of the Speech of Blacks in Columbia, South Carolina," by William S. Sanders. Dissertation. University of South Carolina.

"The Status of Gullah: An Investigation of Convergent Processes," by Patricia Ann Jones Jackson. Dissertation. University of Michigan.

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Architecture in Tennessee, by James A. Patrick. University of Tennessee Press. Date and price not set.

"A Brief History of White Southern Gospel Music and A Study of Selected Amateur Family Gospel Music Singing Groups in Rural Georgia," by Stanley H. Brobston. Dissertation. New York University.

"Cadastral Patterns in Louisiana: A Colonial Legacy," by Carolyn Oliver Fisher. Dissertation. Louisiana State University.

"The Course of Religious Education at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1902-1953: A Historical Study," by Kermit Stephen Combs, Jr. Dissertation. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"Eighteenth Century Gravestone Art in Georgia and South Carolina," by Diana W. Combs. Dissertation. Emory University.

Free, Adult, Uncensored: The Living History of the Federal Theatre Project, by John O'Connor and Lorraine Brown. New Republic Books, 1978. \$24.95.

"A Frontier Reflected in Costume: Tallahassee, Leon County, Florida, 1824-1861," by Margaret Thompson Ordonez. Dissertation. Florida State University.

"The History of the Francis Howell School District (Mississippi)," by Hugh James Burns. Dissertation. St. Louis University.

"The Image of Southern Baptists: A Content Analysis of Time and Newsweek, 1967-1977," by Thomas F. Jackson. Dissertation. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"An Investigation of Health and Fitness Knowledge of an Aged Population in Southern Mississippi," by Jill Tutton Wilson. Dissertation. University of Southern Mississippi.

"Kentucky Educational Television Network: The Formative Years," by Jerry P. Perry. Dissertation. Syracuse University.

Mules and Memories: A Photo Documentary of the Tobacco Farmer, by Pamela Barefoot. John S. Blair, Publishers, 1978. \$17.95.

"A Regional History of Southern Branch, American Public Health Association," by Dennis N. Tunnell. Dissertation. University of Alabama.

"Silesians in Texas: A History of the Oldest Polish Colonies in America," by Thomas Lindsay Baker. Dissertation. Texas Tech University.

"The Social Integrative Effect of Fairs and Festivals on Local Communities: A Study of the Shrimp and Petroleum Festival in Morgan City, Louisiana," by Stephen E. Doeren. Dissertation. Louisiana State University.

"Tabby in the Coastal Southeast: The Culture History of an American Building Material," by Janet Bigbee Gritzner. Dissertation. Louisiana State University.

LITERATURE

Anthology of Mississippi Writers, ed. by Noel Polk and James Scafield. University Press of Mississippi, 1978. \$19.95.

"Contemporary Deep South Poetry: A Classification of Subjects," by Gayle Goodin. Dissertation. University of Mississippi.

The Enchanted Country: Northern Writers in the South, 1865-1910, by Anne E. Rowe. Louisiana State University Press, 1978. \$11.95.

"Escape from The Narrow House: The Autobiographies and Fiction of Evelyn Scott," by Mary Ethel Carrigg. Dissertation. University of Wisconsin-Madison.

"Faulkner's Commedia: An Interpretation of The Sound and the Fury, Sanctuary, As I Lay Dying and Light in August," by Charles Lance Lyday. Dissertation. Vanderbilt University.

A Literary History of Alabama: The Nineteenth Century, by Benjamin B. Williams. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1979. \$18.50.

"The Lost Cause: Myth, Symbol and Stereotype in Southern Fiction," by Corinne Howell Dale. Dissertation. University of Michigan.

"Mannerist Mythopoeisis: A Reading of Warren's Brother to Dragons," by Ann P. Burnes. Dissertation. St. Louis University.

"Narrative Mode in the Novels of William Faulkner," by Hugh M. Ruppensburg. Dissertation. University of South Carolina.

"The Pastorals of Eudora Welty," by Alison Deming Goeller. Dissertation. Temple University.

"Providence in the Novels of Samuel Clemens," by Robert L. Cody. Dissertation. University of Florida.

"Psychic Transformation Through Memory-Work and Negation in William Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom!" by Eileen M. Donahue. Dissertation. University of Notre Dame.

"Scenes from Yoknapatawpha: A Study of People and Places in the Real and Imaginary Worlds of William Faulkner," by Emma Jo Grimes Marshall. Dissertation. University of Alabama.

"The Social Role of Faulkner's Women: A Materialist Interpretation," by Carol A. Twigg. Dissertation. State University of New York at Buffalo.

"Tell Me Who I Am': James Agee's Search for Selfhood," by Mark Allen Doty. Dissertation. Indiana University.

Where I Live: Selected Essays, by Tennessee Williams. New Directions, 1978. \$12.50.

"A Working Model for a Course in Appalachian Literature for Students in High School or the First Two Years of College," by William C. Plumley. Dissertation. Union Graduate School.

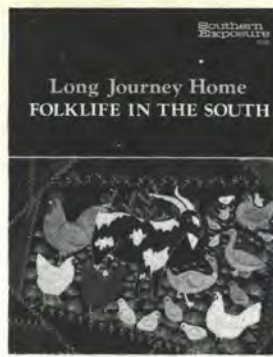
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Vol. II, No. 4 FOCUS ON THE MEDIA. Ronnie Dugger and the *Texas Observer*, the *St. Petersburg Times* reporting for the consumer, the early black press, Alabama's exclusively-white ETV network, a woman reporter takes on *Atlanta* magazine, and alternative media projects. Interviews with Robert Coles, Minnie Pearl, and early FCC Commissioner Cliff Durr. Plus charts on who owns the media.

Vol. III, No. 1 SOUTHERN BLACK UTTERANCES TODAY. Edited by Toni Cade Bambara. Features 37 pages of Southern black poetry. Addison Gayle on black literature. Articles on effects of migration north, Mississippi black folk artists, how black music works, torture at Parchman Prison, the Republic of New Africa jailed, images of black women, Pan-Africanism, lessons from China and Cuba.

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Vol. IV, No. 1&2 HERE COME A WIND: LABOR ON THE MOVE. A 225-page book by unionists, academics, and journalists on: who is the Southern worker; campaigns at Farah, Oneita, and J.P. Stevens; runaway shops; labor education; OSHA and EEOC. Oral histories of industrialization. A 30-page report on "Bloody" Harlan, 1930-74. State-by-state profiles of the workforce, unions and their activities.

Vol. IV, No. 3 ON JORDAN'S STORMY BANKS. A special issue on religion in the South featuring articles on the black religious heritage, religion and country music, church women and reform movements, the money behind Billy Graham, the Moving Star Hall, the church and the civil-rights movement, growing up a Southern Baptist, and a 20-page report on where the church's money goes.

Vol. IV, No. 4 GENERATIONS: WOMEN IN THE SOUTH. The myth of the Southern belle, loose lady and Aunt Jemima versus the reality of women-headed households, working women and feminist reformers. Women's liberation as a ment. Community leaders and quilt makers. Bawdy humor, fiction, interviews about growing up female, plus poetry and demographic maps.

Vol. V, No. 1 GOOD TIMES AND GROWING PAINS. Jimmy Carter's Coca-Cola connection, and Larry Goodwin's analysis of "populism" Carter-style. Plus interviews with a granny midwife from Plains, Ga., and coastal fishermen, articles on the destruction of Memphis' Beale Street, growing up gay in Dixie, the decline of the Southern railroads, celebrating Emancipation in Texas, how one neighborhood saved itself.

Vol. V, No. 2&3 LONG JOURNEY HOME: FOLKLIFE IN THE SOUTH A 224-page celebration of the crafts, foodways, sports and music of people from the Louisiana Gulf Coast to the Maryland-Pennsylvania border. Includes articles on buck dancing and clogging, Grand Ole Opry, barbecue, Dixie Rock, Sacred Harp singing, the Negro Baseball League, 200 years of pottery, and a special 46-page Folklife Resource Section.

Vol. V, No. 4 SOUTHERN EXCHANGE. A sample issue of a new publication from the Institute for Southern Studies which digests the best articles about the region's developments appearing in media ranging from *Fortune* to the *Texas Observer* to the *Orlando Sentinel*. Includes articles on "The New North-South War," Bert Lance's future, TVA's new director, urban sprawl, LSU Press, Southerners in D.C.

Vol. VI, No. 1. PACKAGING THE NEW SOUTH. Special sections on the New South politicians (including New Orleans' Dutch Morial, South Carolina's Tom Turnipseed, and Alabama's Bill Baxley) and on Joan Little (including an in-depth interview). Also articles on "red-baiting" Highlander Folk School, the 150-year history of J.P. Stevens, the Federal Writers and Treatre Projects, and Bill Livers, Ky. storyteller.

Vol. VI, No. 2 SICK FOR JUSTICE: HEALTH CARE. A 25-page section on community clinics, articles on brown lung, hospital organizing, healing waters, Meharry Medical College, the Student Health Coalition, the UMW Health Fund, Kingsport's industrial pollution, "People's Medicine of the Early South," "The Great Hookworm Crusade," a report on health profits and interviews on being trained as a health professional.

Vol VI, No. 3 PASSING GLANCES A collection of articles featuring interviews with Beale Street bluesmen, a three-part section on Senate races for 1978, a three-part section on organizing, including profiles of Carolina Action, Mississippi's United League and Virginia ERA lobbyists, a report on "Who's Getting Rich in the New South," and essays on the origins of the Sit-In Movement and on jazz's influence on literature.

Vol VI, No. 4 STILL LIFE: INSIDE SOUTHERN PRISONS. A specially designed reader on the who, what, why, how of prisons, with a mixture of essays, interviews, poems and graphics by prisoners, ex-cons, professionals, reformers, and clergy. Includes portraits of several state prisons, a section on the re-emergence of the death penalty, and examples of what people can do to change the prison system.

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