



Southern
Exposure

\$3.00

Generations
women in the south

*A song of then, a song of now,
A song of yet to come.*

— Alice Gerrard, 'Hazel's Song'

The time has come, Lillian Smith wrote in 1962, for women to risk the "great and daring creative act" of discovering and articulating their own identity. Three years later, Southern women of a younger generation, fortified by the skills and self-respect earned in the black civil-rights movement, issued the first manifesto of a new feminism. Their words landed with explosive force, setting off cultural reverberations which have shaken the lives of men and women alike.

A little more than a decade after that, this issue of **Southern Exposure** began to take form. Its creation has taken us back into history and deep into the meaning of our own lives. As we set out to understand the situation of Southern women, we found ourselves "in search of our mothers' gardens." We found ourselves naming an experience we share across the generations. "So many of the stories that I write," Alice Walker discovered, "are my mother's stories." To speak in our own voices, we had first to give expression to a "promise song" that has been there all along.

The women who emerge from these pages possess many forms of integrity, courage and spiritual grace. They are the builders of a network of voluntary organizations which provide the cement of community. They form a secret sisterhood of storytellers and comic artists whose humor functions as sex education, social criticism, and shared delight. "Cooking, quilting and making do," they are the anonymous artists of everyday life.

The women who speak here did more than survive day-to-day. They took risks, fought back, assumed a place in the forefront of insurgency. Women like Jessie Daniel Ames, Lillian Smith, Anne Braden, Lois MacDonald and Pauli Murray stand in a special tradition: that of Southern women as warriors against the status quo. Such individuals played key roles in the labor movement and in the struggle for racial justice in the region; in the process they forged a bond of common womanhood across class and racial lines which remains a model for our own time.

In their accounts of the contemporary civil-rights movement, both Cynthia Washington and Sara Evans point to another model as well: that of women who did not gain regional prominence or notoriety but who provided the grass-roots leadership for social change. When the young civil-rights workers of the '60s arrived in the deep South, they found in every community a "militant woman... outspoken, understanding, and willing to catch hell, having already caught her share." Sallie Mae Hadnott, who lives with her husband and eight children on Easy Street in Prattville, Alabama, is one such woman. In the mid-'60s, she organized the Autauga County NAACP, led voter registration drives, sent her children to the first desegregated school, and became the name plaintiff in the Supreme Court case putting National Democratic Party of Alabama candidates on the state ballot. Today she struggles on: "the

stabilizing factor, the upsetting factor, the bulwark and the pacifier. She keeps Prattville alive."

Creativity, subversion, survival skills — a soft heart and a thick skin — these are all part of the legacy we claim. But underlying Southern women's lives is another, fundamental motif: the day in, day out reality of work. Contrary to received images of the leisured Southern lady, the experience of the vast majority of women in the region has been defined by economic necessity. Historically, the nature of Southern industrialization, together with the employment of black women as agricultural and domestic laborers, has brought a high percentage of Southern women into the workforce. But the economic contributions of women go far beyond wage labor. As a textile worker who attended the Southern Summer School for Women Workers in Asheville, N.C., at the beginning of the Great Depression put it:

It is nothing new for married women to work. They have always worked....Some girls think that as long as a mother takes in washings, keeps ten or twelve boarders or perhaps takes in sewing, she isn't working. But I can say that either one of the three is as hard work as women can do.

John Florin's demographic survey of patterns of production and reproduction and Ellen Stein's sensitive account of cultural and economic change in a piedmont county confirm this historical observation. As inflation and the flight of unorganized, low-wage industries to the South have held real wages down, wives and mothers have gone to work in ever increasing numbers. Yet they continue to carry women's double burden: they bring home necessary wages, while at the same time providing the caretaking function in the home that makes family survival possible. Moreover, growing numbers of women, both black and white, serve as heads of households — and such women-headed families comprise 68 percent of those living below the poverty line. When Hazel Dickens, a young mountain woman who puts contemporary words to traditional music sings "The Working Girl Blues," she speaks for women across the generations and across the color line.

When Freud was asked what a healthy person should be able to do, he replied, "to love and to work." Women in the South have always combined those great human capacities. Many of us face the future with options our mothers never had: we can dream dreams that they could not name. But as we search for new definitions of love, for new choices in work, we remain rooted in a culture that they created and preserved. We seek a fusion of love and work which generates power, not in the traditional sense of ascendancy over others, but power as energy that bears fruit. In search of our mothers' gardens, we will find our own.

Photo credits — Front cover: Rick Doble. Back Cover: Kay Burke. Contents page, top to bottom: Robert Ballard, Wendy Watriss-Fred Baldwin, Donna Bennight.



- 2 Letters from our Readers
- 3 Blood Knowledge / poem by Joy Elvey Lamm
- 4 The Fourth Generation of Proud Shoes
by Pauli Murray
- 10 Women's Consciousness and the Southern Black Movement
by Sara Evans
- 14 "We Started from Different Ends of the Spectrum"
by Cynthia Washington
- 19 "If It was Anything for Justice"
Interview with Sallie Mae Hadnott by Margaret Rose Gladney
- 23 The True Southern Belle / poem by Virginia Rudder
- 24 Quilting Women: "Rather Quilt than Eat, Almost"
by Jennifer Miller
- 29 Magnolias Grow in Dirt
by Rayna Green
- 34 Mountain Women / poems by Lee Howard
- 36 Paralyzed: A True Story
by Lee Smith
- 42 Kalanchoe Pinnata / poem by Jeanne Ormond
- 43 Lillian Smith: Reflections on Race and Sex
by Jo Ann Robinson
- 48 On Women's Autobiography
by Lillian Smith
- 50 A Second Open Letter to Southern White Women
by Anne Braden
- 53 Women and Lynching
by Jacquelyn Dowd Hall
- 55 Rape Law: A Case Study
by Kathy Gleason with Sean Devereux
- 58 Photographic Portrait of Southern Women
- 60 In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens
by Alice Walker
- 65 That Civilizing Spirit
by Ellen Stein
- 70 The Southern Summer School for Women Workers
by Mary Frederickson
- 76 "It's Something Inside You"
Interview with Anna Mae Dickson by Wendy Watriss
- 82 Right to Life: The Southern Strategy
by Priscilla Parish Williams
- 86 The Lonesomes Ain't No Spring Picnic
by BIRTHALENE MILLER
- 91 Grandmother...and Afterplay / poems by Lee Robinson
- 92 Hazel and Alice: Custom Made Woman Blues
by Len Stanley
- 95 Varieties of Southern Women
by John Florin
- 98 Women in the South: A Bibliography
- 104 Book Reviews
- 111 Lest We Forget / poem by Ann Deagon
- 113 Potter / poem by Jeanie Thompson
- 115 Judgment / poem by Virginia Rudder
- 116 Pictures from A Wedding Book / poem by Lee M. Robinson

from our readers. . . .

Special Issue Editors

Susan Angell
Jacquelyn Dowd Hall
Candace Waid

Managing Editors

Bob Hall
Jennifer Miller

Editorial Staff

Bob Arnold
Kathleen Doble
Bill Finger
John Gaventa
Steve Hoffius
Chip Hughes
Jim Overton
Joe Pfister
Sue Thrasher
Chris Walters-Bugbee

Composition

Southern Types
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Lay-Out and Design

Bob Dorland

Special Thanks to.

Doris Betts, Susan Dunn, William Ferris, Judy Hogan, Harriet Jones, Lee Kessler, Ginny Looney, Elizabeth Meese, Page McCullough, Jane Pfister, Georgia Springer, Allen Tullos, Donald Waid, Jean Ormond.

Southern Exposure® is published quarterly by the **Institute For Southern Studies**, 113 N. Columbia Street, Chapel Hill, N.C. and 88 Walton Street, Atlanta, Ga. A subscription for one year costs \$8.00. Address all editorial and subscription correspondence to **Southern Exposure**, P. O. Box 230, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514. Second class postage paid at Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514. Copyright © Institute for Southern Studies, 1977. Winter 1977 issue.

Unsolicited articles, poetry, photography, and fiction are welcome. Manuscripts should be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Allow eight weeks for consideration.

I would like to hear more from the author of "The Rebel in Me" (*Here Come A Wind*, SE, IV, 1-2), Ms. Selina Burch. Working women in the South can certainly relate to her problem. We all have SOB's trying to stop our progress. Strangely enough they are not all male.

Margaret Summey
Atlanta, Georgia

My roots are Southern, but now I work in Portland in community projects. I have a deep love for social history and I've found nothing more fascinating than **Southern Exposure**.

John Hall
Portland, Oregon



As a Southern Presbyterian, let me express my appreciation for your very clear and perceptive piece on the Presbyterian Church in the United States in *On Jordan's Stormy Banks* (SE, IV, 3). I think in particular you have caught the cultural and theological ambiguity of Presbyterians in the region.

Reading your article, I was reminded of a conference at Montreat several years ago. In a worship service with five or six hundred people present, the liturgist had us read a litany from I or II Corinthians. The text was broken up according to social and economic categories: black/white, old/young, men/women, rich/poor, et cetera. Each worshiper was to read the lines in the text whose assignment fit.

Everything went well until we came to the pair of lines assigned to rich and poor. Only a sprinkling of us read the "rich" line, and there was a great thundering response of voices on the line assigned to the poor. Then a nervous pause in the whole assembly which broke up into laughter of recognition at the unplanned and unintended trap we affluent Presbyterians had just walked into.

This church as a church, in its tribal religious culture, has never fully examined and overhauled the self-image of Presbyterian poverty which was accurate in the late 18th and early 19th centuries but has certainly been illusory at least since the rise of the New South after reconstruction.

Lewis Wilkins
Nashville, Tennessee

Southern Exposure is unique, readable, and passionate as it chronicles Southern culture and makes known to a wider audience the burdens, strength and joy of this region apart. Keep up the good work. I would like to see an issue devoted to education in the South.

Edward J. Pyatt
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

I just returned to California from a Christmas visit to Mississippi. The first one in ten years. It was like going back 30 years. I had almost forgotten how things really are being able to judge only from a viewpoint of San Francisco movement politics. *Whew!*

I do enjoy **Southern Exposure**. I sometimes don't like the single thrust of each issue (damn John Dean for that phrase.) I know it's hard work to put out any kind of magazine so my only criticisms are that quite often you tend to get overly scholarly and caught up in statistics, and the quality of the *printing is poor and inconsistent*.

I would like to suggest that each issue of **Southern Exposure** devote a section to a photographic essay of documentary nature. I have a deep love of the South and would like to see the beauty of it preserved. When I went back last Christmas I drove around just looking at the old houses from my past and felt that in their own way there was style and grace even though many were shacks and wrecks.

Jerry Walker
San Francisco, California

Well, you've done it again, and it looks like you're fixing to do it yet again with your forthcoming *Southern Women: Myth and Reality* issue.

The latter has been a central thought in my life since I left the South for the first time and moved north with my northern husband. I'm home again, and happy to be, and I'm going to be thinking about the myth and reality of Southern women the rest of my life I suppose.

I grew up in the mountains of East Tennessee, went to college in Alabama and I'm currently falling in love with the amazing Southernness of north Florida. So, if you need an investigator for anything in my area, please call on me.

Incidentally, I grew up in a small town where being Episcopalian was even weirder than being Catholic, and the one Jewish family was considered Far Eastern. "They go to some temple, Hindu or something, over in Knoxville," was the rumor about

them. We felt they were very exotic, and I never tasted anti-Semitism until I moved to the Midwest.

Church youth groups were a major form of adolescent entertainment and a good excuse to go to the Dairy Freeze on Sunday night. After years of switching around from Baptist Training Union to M.Y.F., I found the most attractive and fun boys went to the Presbyterian Youth Group. They were tempting, but the trappings and drama of a high church Episcopalian chapel kept me in that camp for several more years.

Paddy Baker Bowman
Gainesville, Florida

Enclosed is my check for \$25 for which please: (1) Renew my subscription for 2 years; (2) Send me an additional copy of *On Jordan's Stormy Banks* (Vol. IV, No. 3); (3) Accept the remainder as a contribution.

You are a literate and eminently informative magazine, patently biased (not excessively) in all the right directions. Stay that way.

In some future issue, could you explore Southern attitudes on US military actions in Southeast Asia, amnesty for anti-war activists, US foreign policy in general and related matters?

Arthur Salzberg
Wantagh, New York

My friend Paul Buhle has just showed me a copy of your special issue, *On Jordan's Stormy Banks*. I have enjoyed reading it very much.

Next fall I hope to teach a course in American religion to about twenty students. I know of no other source which is both so up-to-date and so readable as your last issue. I think my students would profit greatly from reading it since there is so little understanding of evangelical religion here in the urban Northeast.

William G. McLoughlin
Professor of History
Brown University
Providence, Rhode Island

Blood Knowledge

by Joy Elvey Lamm

I am not

*An old mountain woman
trapped by the circumstance
of poverty and the coal company's
mudroad with the bottom out
and the sides off down the hill;*

*Don't have hands started bleedin'
from haulin' rocks before I was ten,
nor a heart that aches in winter
thinkin' of a papa lost in some
black gassy-holed seam;*

*No way to claim the trap
of wallpaper peelin' down,
linoleum cracked, and a tinroof leakin'
on a saggin' gray house
my man forgot to mend;*

*And there never was the torture
of babies comin' after I was some past forty
and had to dig steep acres
of potatoes in the hot-dust sun
of fields we couldn't even buy.*

*When I wake up cryin', then,
I can't use a borrowed reason
for pained cycles of struggle
layin' claim to my body
and my battered head;*

*Only there're times in
the godforsaken twilight all alone,
I too smother from feelin' mostly dead
in a life whose surface rights
I don't control or own;*

*Dispossessed, I wander
on a journey through stripped layers
of a mountain pass that never ends,
survivin' on the old blood knowledge
shared deep with women kin;*

*So I hold to believin' that there're
spirit-rights, wise earth, sweet friends
transcend it all, recalling strength
that waits for each of us to use,
to never lose, to fiercely hold. . . .*

The Fourth Generation

In 1956, Pauli Murray published *Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family*. Like Alex Haley's *Roots*, this triumphant saga of four generations served notice that black Americans had begun to recover and define their own history. Murray's book focused on her grandparents, Robert and Cornelia Fitzgerald, who embodied in their own lives the tensions of a biracial society. Cornelia was the daughter of a slave raped by the son of a wealthy North Carolinian. Robert was the offspring of a loving marriage between a mulatto coachman and an illiterate white farm girl. The couple met when Robert, after fighting in the Union Army, came South to open a school for ex-slaves. When the dismantling of Reconstruction and the re-establishment of white control forced him to close the doors of his beloved school, Robert moved his family to Durham, North Carolina, a New South tobacco town. There he made a sparse but respectable living as a bricklayer.

Robert's love for teaching, however, lived on in his oldest daughter, Pauli Murray's Aunt Pauline. She was, she later told her niece, "practically born and bred in a school house with a piece of chalk in my hand." Robert carried her to his school when she was only two; at four she could read and write. Nine days before her fifteenth birthday, with her hair up and wearing a long, grown-up dress, she passed the county teachers' examination. Although so fair she could have crossed the color line, she remained what was known as a "race woman," making her work as a teacher her contribution to the black freedom struggle.

Now 66, Pauli Murray has continued the battle for dignity and self-expression which is her family heritage. In the process, she has won distinction as a civil-rights attorney, a feminist leader, a writer and a poet. On January 8, 1977, she became the first Negro woman ordained a priest in the



Aunt Pauline

200-year history of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Murray began her career in the 1920s as a "New Negro" poet of black identity and protest. In the '30s, she plunged into the labor movement. Gradually, however, the logic of events pushed her toward the law.

In 1938, the University of North Carolina, heir to the estate of Murray's own white ancestors, turned down her application for graduate study because she was black. The following year, she was jailed in Petersburg, Va., for resisting segregation on an interstate bus. The turning point came with the famous Odell Waller case, in which a black sharecropper was unjustly sentenced to die for the murder of his white landlord. As a field secretary for the Workers Defense League, Murray traveled throughout Virginia raising funds for the defense. "I told myself," she remembers, "that if we lost his life, I must study law. And we lost his life."

As a writer and an attorney, Pauli Murray has raised a singular voice on behalf of both women's liberation and black autonomy. She was a co-founder of NOW, and, as an ACLU attorney,

she contributed to the precedent-making court decisions holding that the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment applies to discrimination because of sex. She served as a Senior Lecturer at the Ghana Law School and, from 1968 to 1973, as Stulberg Professor of Law and Politics at Brandeis University.

In 1973, she abandoned her legal career for the church. As a candidate for the priesthood, she found herself in the midst of a conflict as bitter as any that had gone before. Yet, for her, ordination represented not so much a milestone in the struggle for women's rights but a new phase in a long search for "reconciliation and liberation."

The story below was selected and edited by Lee Kessler from the rough draft of a chapter from Pauli Murray's new book, tentatively called *The Fourth Generation of Proud Shoes* (forthcoming from Harper & Row).^{*} Like the first volume of her family history, *Fourth Generation* is more than a record of accomplishment. It portrays with great warmth the sorrows and pleasures of everyday life on the edge of the color line, the sustaining role of kinship bonds, the tradition of self-sufficient women, and the faith in education which made it possible for the Murray family to "walk in proud shoes." The story begins in 1914, when, after the death of her own mother, Pauli Murray came to Durham to grow up under the guidance of her Aunt Pauline.

^{*}Among Pauli Murray's publications are *Dark Testament and Other Poems* (1970); *States' Laws on Race and Color* (1951); and "The Liberation of Black Women," in *Our American Sisters*, edited by Jean E. Friedman and William G. Shade (1973). See also *Pauli Murray Interview, Feb. 13, 1976*, Southern Oral History Program, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

of Proud Shoes

by Pauli Murray

Aunt Pauline's decision to adopt me was a significant departure from her traditional role in the Fitzgerald family. I learned afterward that she had taken the step in the face of dire warnings and admonitions from friends and relatives. As the oldest of six children of a blind father and high-strung mother, she had been the workhorse, the person to whom everyone looked to keep things going through all emergencies; her parents' wishes and needs had been paramount. She had escaped this role briefly around 1899 to marry and embark on a life of her own, but this bleak venture was marked by an unrelieved struggle for existence and by the loss of her two children in infancy. The marriage itself foundered on an issue of principle.

The future seemed promising enough when she married young, blond, blue-eyed Charles Morton Dame, fresh from Howard University Law School. But they had not reckoned with the formidable racial barriers facing colored men who took up the practice of law. Racial lines which had blurred during Reconstruction were now being drawn ever tighter by the segregation laws enacted by the Southern states in the wake of the *Plessy* decision of 1896. The best young Dame could do was to earn a few dollars here and there surreptitiously writing wills and deeds for white attorneys, supplemented by his wife's meager earnings as a teacher. They moved from Virginia to West Virginia in search of opportunities, but Dame seemed unable to establish himself at the bar.

Some of the white men for whom he worked said flatly, "Look, Dame, you'll never get anywhere as a colored lawyer. You're as white as any white man and you'll have a better chance if you cross the line."

During the first half century after Emancipation, thousands of near-whites exercised this option to escape racial oppression, and the temptation to end a grubbing existence finally overpowered Charles Dame. He announced his intention to his wife and tried to persuade her to join him in the proposed venture. She herself looked indistinguishable from a Caucasian and the two of them would have had



Pauli Murray

photo by Stephen March

little difficulty fading into the white background.

Aunt Pauline's refusal brought an end to their marriage. Charles Dame disappeared from her life and there were rumors that he became a very successful lawyer in a neighboring state. She returned home to slip into her accustomed harness and everyone took it for granted that she would have no further life of her own. Thus, it was with some consternation that her relatives and close friends viewed her first step toward independent action. They warned her that taking a three-year-old child was too great a responsibility for a lone woman of 43 who already had two aging parents.

"It's a mistake to raise somebody else's child, particularly a girl," they said. "It's too full of heartaches; she'll bring you nothing but trouble."

Their concern was well-founded. My arrival would create many practical problems, for the Fitzgerald household included my grandparents, who were frail and in their late seventies, as well as Aunt Pauline and Aunt Sallie, her unmarried sister of 36. Both sisters taught in the local public schools and were away most of the day. What was Aunt Pauline to do with me while she was away at school? It was too much to expect my grandparents to cope with an active mischievous child. And there were no nursery schools for working parents.

Moreover, her appointment to the city system was more than a full-time job. It required the dedication of a saint. Aunt Pauline rose at five every morning and arrived at school before seven-thirty. She came home late in the afternoon, prepared supper, and then returned to night school to conduct literacy classes for the hardworking parents and grandparents of her day-school pupils. If a child was absent, she visited the child's home after school to find the reason. She was expected to attend all community gatherings in addition to teachers' meetings and parents' meetings. On Sundays she usually went to church twice: morning service at her own St. Titus Episcopal Church and evening service at the neighborhood Second Baptist Church which many of her students and their parents attended.

For all her stolid exterior, Aunt Pauline had a timid streak and shrank from contention. She gave in on many issues to keep peace in the family and in most of her decisions she deferred to her parents' wishes; but on the issue of my future she was resolute.

There were obvious reasons for her decision, of course. I was her namesake, her godchild, and it

was my mother's last request that Aunt Pauline have me. I also filled a void left by the deaths of her own children. But I think there were other reasons which she could not put into words. She was reticent about expressing her inner feelings to adults, but she had no difficulty communicating with small children. She had the unerring intuition of a great teacher. She taught not merely to impart knowledge but to build character and shape the future. Whether a child was pliable and responsive or wooden and inflexible, she sensed its possibilities. She envisioned the finished product, the fine grain of wood beneath a rough and splintered exterior.



photo by Donna Bennight

So, in spite of family objections and anticipated hardships, Aunt Pauline brought me to Durham to live. If she ever had misgivings about this risky venture, she never voiced them. Aunt Pauline's sturdy ally but strong competitor in her new undertaking was her younger sister Sallie, also a teacher. Seldom were two individuals so different, yet so fiercely loyal to one another. Aunt Pauline was intensely practical, a woman of few words who seldom smiled. She was kind and just, but strict; she never allowed me to dawdle over my chores or to evade responsibility for misdeeds. She possessed a methodical mind and plodded through the most difficult task until it was done. Aunt Sallie was imaginative and entertaining, with a contagious laugh and an endless repertoire of engaging stories, but she tended to be disorganized and followed a pattern of stops and starts. She had great intellectual curiosity, sang, played the piano, read widely and was a great conversationalist. Aunt Pauline sang a little off-key and had less artistic bent. I could always talk out my troubles with Aunt Sallie, but in any emergency which required action I automatically turned to Aunt Pauline. Their contrasting personalities were my strongest maternal influences and I grew up absorbing characteristics of each.

My schooling began in a somewhat unorthodox manner when I was around four or five. Since Aunt Pauline was determined not to burden my aging grandparents with caring for me, she decided to enroll me in school. She taught at West End, a six-grade public school for colored children housed in a weatherbeaten two-story wooden building across the road from the long, low Liggett and Myers tobacco warehouses near the Southern Railroad tracks. What a contrast it was to the nearby white children's school with its fine brick building and green lawn. West End was so rickety that you could hear the wind howl through on stormy days. We had no playground equipment or lawn either, just barren clay ground.

Although West End had no kindergarten, it had three levels of first grade. A child normally progressed from one level to the next, and it usually took three years to reach second grade. Aunt Pauline taught the highest section, 1-A, but she secured the principal's permission to place me with other beginners in Miss Hattie Jenkins' class.

My career in class, however, proved to be short-lived. Within a few weeks my presence stirred up a controversy among other parents who complained that if "Mis' Dame" could put her child in school

before the legal age of six, they had the same right. Mortified, Aunt Pauline immediately withdrew me from formal enrollment, but having no alternative she continued to bring me to school with her every day and kept me in her own classroom. The older children adopted me as a class mascot and under Aunt Pauline's watchful eyes, I was permitted to sit with them at their desks and to look on while they recited. But in order to avoid criticism, she did not allow me to participate in class games or to be anything more than an onlooker.

The most common classroom game in the lower grades in those days was one in which children performed their reading and spelling lessons standing in line side by side. When a child made a mistake, the next child who recited correctly took his place. The line was constantly changing, the objective being to reach the head of the class. Children who misbehaved forfeited their places and were sent to the end of the line. It was a harsh game for slow learners, but the faster learners loved it.

Toward the end of the school year Aunt Pauline was surprised to see me standing in line with the other children, something she never allowed me to do. In spite of her sternness, she was gentle with children, and I never knew her to single one out for

Turn of the Century Postcard of East Main Street, Durham, North Carolina



photo courtesy of Syd Nathans



"I personally have two problems, that is, two problems that are built in. I must always be concerned, not theoretically, but I must be involved with and necessarily concerned with racial liberation. But I must also personally be concerned with sexual liberation because, as I often say, the two meet in me, the two meet in any individual who is both woman and a member of an oppressed group Women, because they are half of the human race, have a rather peculiar situation of being represented both in the oppressed and oppressor classes, but nevertheless, having problems which are common as women.... So that a woman of minority status shares the problems of the oppressed group, of which she is a part, but she also shares the problems of all women. And the depressed status of women is universal."

— Pauli Murray

humiliation. She simply ignored me and was about to pass over me to the next pupil when she heard me sing out, "I can read, Aunt Pauline!"

Without waiting for her to reply, I seized the book of the child next to me and began to read out loud. When the class was over, Aunt Pauline called me to her desk. She reached in her drawer and pulled out a book I had never seen before.

"Let me see you read this book," she said. She had assumed that my earlier performance was one of mimicking the other children and speaking words from memory. When I read the new book without making a mistake, she realized that all the time I had been in her class I was learning whatever she taught the others. From then on study was as natural to me as breathing and the classroom became my second home.

One of Aunt Pauline's big problems was how to fill the bottomless pit in my stomach. She could not understand how a small child could eat so much and stay so skinny. I had three passions — beef steak, molasses, and macaroni and cheese. Macaroni and cheese we ate almost every Sunday and molasses was cheap, but steak was usually beyond Aunt Pauline's pocketbook. She would buy a few ounces, just enough to flavor thick flour gravy, and use hot biscuits as a filler.

In those early years I rebelled against Aunt Pauline's discipline only over food. Once we were invited to dinner at the home of Dr. Charles Shepard, brother of the Negro college president, Dr. James E. Shepard of North Carolina Central University. Aunt Pauline admonished me to be on my best behavior. All went well at the dinner table until I asked for another piece of meat. Aunt Pauline said no, but I insisted. "Let her have it, there's plenty," Mrs. Shepard said, but Aunt Pauline believed that good discipline required firmness and said that I had to learn that "no" meant "no!" I continued to beg for meat. Finally, she threatened to take me down from the table and give me a whipping if I asked again. She almost never whipped a child, and to her, a whipping was a drastic measure. But her warning had not the slightest effect. I stubbornly clung to my request.

The inevitable happened. Aunt Pauline took me into a room and gave me one of the few whippings in my life. I was in disgrace when we came back to the table, but my first words were, "I want more meat, Aunt Pauline." I didn't get it, of course, but the incident made such a deep impression on me that I always saved the meat on my plate to eat last.

Aunt Pauline's method of hometraining was a remarkable blend of firm discipline and freedom to choose, though I had to live with the consequences of my choices no matter how bizarre they might be. Once she let me pick my winter hat and coat, and I decided on a chinchilla coat with a red flannel lining and a funny little Tyrolean hat from the boys' department. This I had to wear – it was my choice – no matter *who* laughed.

This unorthodox approach collided with the more traditional methods used at school, and during the five years I attended West End, Aunt Pauline was in the unhappy position of being both a parent and a colleague of fellow teachers who found me too self-assertive, "too fast" and "too womanish" for my own good. She seldom escaped a detailed report from them of my slightest misdeed. A teacher's child was expected to be a model of good conduct, *not* a ringleader of mischief. They never complained that I was insolent or deliberately disobedient, but that I had too much energy for one child.

My teachers used various schemes to keep me under control. In the second grade, my Cousin Ethel Clegg, whom I adored, felt that she had to be extraordinarily severe with me so that other children would not complain of favoritism to her relative. She made me sit apart from the class in a corner desk near hers in the front of the room where she could keep an eye on me. It was the lingering remnant of the "Dunce Stool" and Cousin Ethel could not have contrived a more embarrassing symbol of disgrace.

Miss Martha Hester, my third grade teacher, would take me along with her whenever she left the room on an errand, explaining to other teachers that she dared not leave me behind or I would have the class in an uproar when she returned. On these occasions I would stand wishing I could shrivel into a speck of dirt and disappear between the floor boards.

My worst ordeals at West End came in the fourth grade under Miss Louise Bullock, a massive woman who ruled by naked fear and would cuff a child without warning. Once when we were standing in line, she thought I had created a commotion. Without saying a word she slapped my face so hard she left the red print of her fingers on my cheek for all to see. My problems with Miss Bullock were complicated by the fact that, along with Christine Taylor and Lucille Johnson, I was among the three "lightskinned" pupils in a class of darker hues, a minority within a minority. That Lucille and I

also had parents who taught in the school system did not add to our popularity. We seemed to be the prime targets of Miss Bullock's ire.

One of our forbidden pleasures that year was sneaking off to Mr. Jim Elliott's little grocery store a few doors from our school building during school hours. Mr. Elliott kept a big barrel of vinegar pickles in the back of his store which he sold for a nickel each. Our supreme joy was to wedge ourselves between rows of piled up cans and cartons, fish around in the barrel with a long-handled fork for the biggest cucumber we could find, then buy a penny's worth of sour balls, bite off the end of the cucumber, insert the candy and suck the sweet and sour combination until the pickle gradually disappeared. When Miss Bullock caught me one day with a half-eaten pickle in my desk, she thrashed me before the entire class.

After one of these episodes, Aunt Pauline would look at me steadily through her rimless glasses, a sadness in her eyes and deep disappointment in her low even voice. She would sigh when I brought home my report card each month with a string of A's in scholarship marred by the first column labeled "Conduct" which wavered from A to D. I would feel more remorseful than if she had given me a second whipping because I knew that I had brought her disgrace.

Those years of being a high achiever in scholarship and a low achiever in deportment made me ambivalent about myself. I desperately sought approval and my inability to measure up to my teachers' expectations made me feel there was something wrong with me.

I also felt different, both rooted and alien, because I could not talk as naturally about my parents as other children did. It must have been my need for a visible parent which finally led me to ask Aunt Pauline if I might call her "Mother." To her credit she tried to fill my need while being very careful not to usurp my own mother's place in my memory. She did not try to shield me from painful truths and she answered endless questions about my family. So strong was the fusion of need and reality that I lived with two symbols of motherhood. On Mother's Day when people wore flowers in tribute to their mothers, I could not decide whether to wear a white flower in memory of my mother Agnes or a red flower in recognition of Aunt Pauline. It was characteristic of my way of resolving dilemmas that I wore both kinds.

Copyright © 1977 by Pauli Murray,
published by permission of the author.

WOMEN'S CONSCIOUSNESS and the SOUTHERN BLACK MOVEMENT

by Sara Evans

Twice in the history of the United States the struggle for racial equality has been midwife to a feminist movement. In the abolition movement of the 1830s and 1840s and again in the civil-rights revolt of the 1960s, women experiencing the contradictory expectations and stresses of changing roles began to move from individual discontents to a social movement in their own behalf. Working for racial justice, they developed both political skills and a belief in human rights which could justify their own claim to equality.

Moreover, in each case, the racial and sexual tensions embedded in Southern culture projected a handful of white Southern women into the forefront of those who connected one cause with the other. In the 1830s, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, devout Quakers and daughters of a Charleston slave-owning family, spoke out sharply against the moral evils of slavery and racial prejudice. "The female slaves," they said, "are our countrywomen — *they are our sisters*; and to us as women, they have a right to look for sympathy with their sorrows, and effort and prayer for their rescue. . . . Women ought to feel a peculiar sympathy in the colored men's wrong, for like him, she has been accused of mental inferiority, and denied the privileges of a liberal education."¹

Through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, religious commitment led a series of middle-class women to engage in social action, though they continued to accept many



photo by Leonard Freed, *Black in White America*, Grossman Publ.

conventional attitudes about women and blacks. A new set of circumstances in the late 1950s and early '60s, however, forced a few young Southern white women into an opposition to Southern culture more comparable to that of the Grimke sisters than to their immediate predecessors. During this period, student ministries and the YWCA fostered a growing social concern and articulated, in the language of existential theology, a radical critique of American society and Southern segregation. The ethos of the Southern civil-rights struggle perfectly matched this spirit of religious insurgency which motivated a generation of white students. When the revolt of Southern blacks began in 1960, it touched a chord of moral idealism and brought a significant group of white Southern women into a movement which would both change their lives and transform a region.

Following the first wave of sit-ins in 1960, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), at the insistence of its assistant director, Ella Baker, called a conference at Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C., on Easter weekend. There black youth founded their own organization, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to provide a support network for direct action. SNCC set the style and tone of grass-roots organizing in the rural South and led the movement into the black belt. The spirit of adventure and commitment which animated the organization added new vitality to a deeply rooted struggle for racial equality.

In addition to this crucial role within the black movement, SNCC also created the social space within which women began to develop a new sense of their own potential. A critical vanguard of young women accumulated the tools for movement building: a language to describe oppression and justify revolt, experience in the strategy and tactics of organizing, and a beginning sense of themselves collectively as objects of discrimination.

Relative deprivation is an overused and overly clinical term to describe the joys, the pain, the anger, and the ambiguity of their experience.

Nevertheless, it was precisely the clash between the heightened sense of self-worth which the movement offered to its participants and the replication of traditional sex roles

within it that gave birth to a new feminism. Treated as housewives, sex objects, nurturers, and political auxiliaries, and finally threatened with banishment from the movement, young white Southern women responded with the first articulation of the modern challenge to the sexual status quo.

The Decision

The first critical experience for most white women was simply the choice to become involved. In contrast to portions of the Northern student movement, Southern women did not join the civil-rights struggle thoughtlessly or simply as an extension of a boyfriend's involvement. Such a decision often required a break with home and childhood friends that might never heal. It meant painful isolation and a confrontation with the possibility of violence and death. Such risks were not taken lightly. They constituted forceful acts of self-assertion.

Participation in civil rights meant beginning to see the South through the eyes of the poorest blacks, and frequently it shattered supportive ties with family and friends. Such new perceptions awakened white participants to the stark brutality of racism and the depth of their own racial attitudes. One young woman had just arrived in Albany, Georgia, when she was arrested along with the other whites in the local SNCC voter registration project. By the time she left jail after nine days of fasting, the movement was central to her life. Her father suffered a nervous breakdown. But while she was willing to compromise on where she would work, she staunchly refused to consider leaving the movement. That, it seemed to her, "would be like living death."

For other women, such tensions were compounded by the fact that parents and friends lived in the same community. Judith Brown joined the staff of CORE and was sent to work in her home town. She wrote later of the anxieties she felt: "For that year I had to make a choice between the white community in which I had grown up and the black community, about which I knew very little."²

Anguished parents used every weapon they could muster to stop their children. "We'll cut off your

money," "You don't love us," they threatened. The women who refused to acquiesce often responded with loving determination. On June 27, 1964, a young volunteer headed for Mississippi wrote:

Dear Mom and Dad:

This letter is hard to write because I would like so much to communicate how I feel and I don't know if I can. It is very hard to answer to your attitude that if I loved you I wouldn't do this.... I can only hope you have the sensitivity to understand that I can both love you very much and desire to go to Mississippi.... There comes a time when you have to do things which your parents do not agree with.³

Even activist parents, who themselves had taken serious risks for causes they believed in, were troubled. Mimi Feingold learned years later that when she joined the freedom rides with the moral and financial support of her parents, her mother was ill with worry. Heather Tobis' uncle wrote that her work in Mississippi compared with the struggle against fascism in the 1930s and 1940s. "We are proud to claim you as our own," he said. But her parents asked angrily over the phone, "Do you know how much it takes to make a child?"⁴ Whether they kept their fears to themselves or openly opposed their children's participation, the messages from parents, both overt and subliminal, were mixed: "We believe in what you're doing — but don't do it." Their concern could only heighten their daughters' ambivalences.

The pain of such a choice, however, was eased by the sense of purpose with which the movement was imbued. The founding statement of SNCC rang with

Sara Evans has been active in the civil-rights, anti-war, and the women's movements in the South for many years. This article is adapted from a chapter in her manuscript, "Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil-Rights Movement and the New Left," to be published by A. A. Knopf. Sara is currently an assistant professor of history at the University of Minnesota.

Biblical cadences:

“. . . the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence (is) the foundation of our purpose, the presupposition of our faith, and the manner of our action. Nonviolence as it grows from Judaic-Christian tradition seeks a social order of justice permeated by love. . . .

“Through nonviolence, courage displaces fear; love transforms hate. Acceptance dissipates prejudice; hope ends despair. Peace dominates war; faith reconciles doubt. Mutual regard cancels enmity. Justice for all overcomes injustice. The redemptive community supersedes systems of gross immorality.”⁵

The goals of the movement — described as the “redemptive community,” or more often, the “beloved community” — constituted both a vision of the future obtained through nonviolent action and a conception of the nature of the movement itself. Jane Stenbridge, daughter of a Southern Baptist minister who left her studies at Union Theological Seminary to become the first paid staff member of SNCC, expressed it in these words: “. . . finally it all boils down to human relationship. . . . It is the question of whether I shall go on living in isolation or whether there shall be a we. The student movement is not a cause. . . . it is a collision between this one person and that one person. It is a *I am going to sit beside you*. . . . Love alone is radical.”⁶

Within SNCC the intensely personal nature of social action and the commitment to equality resulted in a kind of anarchic democracy and a general questioning of all the socially accepted rules. When SNCC moved into voter registration projects in the Deep South, this commitment led to a deep respect for the very poorest blacks. “Let the people decide” was about as close to an ideology as SNCC ever came. Though civil-rights workers were frustrated by the depth of fear and passivity beaten into generations of rural black people, the movement was also nourished by the beauty and courage of people who dared to face the loss of their livelihoods and possibly their lives.

One white, female civil-rights worker in Mississippi wrote that the Negroes in Holly Springs were incredibly brave, “the most real people” she had ever met. She continued, “I’m



Singing and praying at Birmingham demonstration, 1963

sure you can tell that the work so far has been far more gratifying than anything I ever anticipated. The sense of urgency and injustice is such that I no longer feel I have any choice . . . and every day I feel more and more of a gap between us and the rest of the world that is not engaged in trying to change this cruel system.”⁷

New Realities

The movement's vision translated into daily realities of hard work and responsibility which admitted few sexual limitations. Young white women's sense of purpose was reinforced by the knowledge that the work they did and the responsibilities they assumed were central to the movement. In the beginning, black and white alike agreed that whites should work primarily in the white community. They had an appropriate role in urban direct-action movements where the goal was integration, but their principal job was generating support for civil rights within the white population. The handful of white women involved in the early '60s either worked in the SNCC office—gathering news, writing pamphlets, facilitating communications—or organized campus support through such agencies as the YWCA.⁸

In direct-action demonstrations, many women discovered untapped reservoirs of courage. Cathy Cade attended Spelman College as an exchange student in the spring of

1962. She had been there only two days when she joined Howard Zinn in a sit-in in the black section of the Georgia Legislature. Never before had she so much as joined a picket line. Years later she testified: “To this day I am amazed. I just did it.” Though she understood the risks involved, she does not remember being afraid. Rather she was exhilarated, for with one stroke she undid much of the fear of blacks that she had developed as a high school student in Tennessee.⁹

Others, like Mimi Feingold, jumped eagerly at the chance to join the freedom rides but then found the experience more harrowing than they had expected. Her group had a bomb scare in Montgomery and knew that the last freedom bus in Alabama had been blown up. They never left the bus from Atlanta to Jackson, Mississippi. The arrest in Jackson was anticlimactic. Then there was a month in jail where she could hear women screaming as they were subjected to humiliating vaginal “searches.”¹⁰

When SNCC moved into voter registration projects in the Deep South, the experiences of white women acquired a new dimension. The years of enduring the brutality of intransigent racism finally convinced SNCC to invite several hundred white students into Mississippi for the 1964 “freedom summer.” For the first time, large numbers of white women would be allowed into “the field,” to work in the rural South.

They had previously been excluded



Checking signals at a demonstration before police move in

because white women in rural communities were highly visible; their presence, violating both racial and sexual taboos, often provoked repression. According to Mary King, "the start of violence in a community was often tied to the point at which white women appeared to be in the civil-rights movement."¹¹ However, the presence of whites also brought the attention of the national media, and, in the face of the apparent impotence of the federal law enforcement apparatus, the media became the chief weapon of the movement against violence and brutality. Thus, with considerable ambivalence, SNCC began to include whites — both men and women — in certain voter registration projects.

The freedom summer brought hundreds of Northern white women into the Southern movement. They taught in freedom schools, ran libraries, canvassed for voter registration, and endured constant harassment from the local whites. Many reached well beyond their previously assumed limits: "I was overwhelmed at the idea of setting up a library all by myself," wrote one woman. "Then can you imagine how I felt when at Oxford, while I was learning how to drop on the ground to protect my face, my ears, and my breasts, I was asked to *coordinate* the libraries in the entire project's community centers? I wanted to cry 'HELP' in a number of ways."

And while they tested themselves and questioned their own courage, they also experienced poverty, oppres-

sion and discrimination in raw form. As one volunteer wrote:

*For the first time in my life, I am seeing what it is like to be poor, oppressed and hated. And what I see here does not apply only to Gulfport or to Mississippi or even to the South.... This summer is only the briefest beginning of this experience.*¹²

Some women virtually ran the projects they were in. And they learned to live with an intensity of fear that they had never known before. By October, 1964, there had been 15 murders, 4 woundings, 37 churches bombed or burned, and over 1,000 arrests in Mississippi. Every project set up elaborate security precautions — regular communication by two-way radio, rules against going out at night or walking downtown in interracial groups. One woman summed up the experience of hundreds when she explained, "I learned a lot of respect for myself for having gone through all that."¹³

New Role Models

As white women tested themselves in the movement, they were constantly inspired by the examples of black women who shattered cultural images of appropriate "female" behavior. "For the first time," according to one white Southerner, "I had role models I could respect."¹⁴

Within the movement many of the legendary figures were black women

around whom circulated stories of exemplary courage and audacity. Rarely did women expect or receive any special protection in demonstrations or jails. Frequently, direct-action teams were equally divided between women and men, on the theory that the presence of women in sit-in demonstrations might lessen the violent reaction. In 1960, slender Diane Nash had been transformed overnight from a Fisk University beauty queen to a principal leader of the direct-action movement in Nashville, Tennessee. Within SNCC she argued strenuously for direct action — sit-ins and demonstrations — over voter registration and community organization. By 1962, when she was twenty-two years old and four months pregnant, she confronted a Mississippi judge with her refusal to cooperate with the court system by appealing her two-year sentence or posting bond:

*"We in the nonviolent movement have been talking about jail without bail for about two years or more. The time has come for us to mean what we say and stop posting bond. . . . This will be a black baby born in Mississippi, and thus wherever he is born he will be born in prison. I believe that if I go to jail now it may help hasten that day when my child and all children will be free — not only on the day of their birth but for all their lives."*¹⁵

Several years later, Annie Pearl Avery awed six hundred demonstrators in Montgomery, Alabama, as a white policeman who had beaten several protesters approached her with his club raised. She reached up, grabbed his club and said, "Now what you going to do, motherfucker?"¹⁶ Stunned, the policeman stood transfixed while Avery slipped back into the crowd.

Perhaps even more important than the daring of younger activists was the towering strength of older black women. There is no doubt that women were key to organizing the black community. In 1962, SNCC staff member Charles Sherrod wrote the office that in every southwest Georgia county "there is always a 'mama.' She is usually a militant woman in the community, out-spoken, understanding, and willing to catch hell, having already caught her share."

Stories of such women abound. For providing housing, food, and active support to SNCC workers, their homes were fired upon and bombed. Fannie

Lou Hamer, the Sunflower County sharecropper who forfeited her livelihood to emerge as one of the most courageous and eloquent leaders of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, was only the most famous. "Mama Dolly" in Lee County, Georgia, was a seventy-year-old, grey-haired lady "who can pick more cotton, slop more pigs, plow more ground, chop more wood, and do a hundred more things better than the best farmer in the area." For many white volunteers, they were also "mamas" in the sense of being mother-figures, new models of the meaning of womanhood.¹⁷

The Undertow of Oppression

Yet new models bumped up against old ones: self-assertion generated anxiety; new expectations existed alongside traditional ones; ideas about freedom and equality bent under assumptions about women as mere houseworkers and sexual objects. These contradictory forces finally generated a feminist response from those who

could not deny the reality of their new-found strength.

Black and white women took on important administrative roles in the Atlanta SNCC office, but they also performed virtually all typing and clerical work. Very few women assumed the public roles of national leadership. In 1964, black women held a half-serious, half-joking sit-in to protest these conditions. By 1965, the situation had changed enough that a quarrel over who would take notes at staff meetings was settled by buying a tape recorder.¹⁸

In the field, there was a tendency to assume that housework around the freedom house would be performed by women. As early as 1963, Joni Rabinowitz, a white volunteer in the southwest Georgia Project, submitted a stinging series of reports on the "woman's role."

"Monday, 15 April: . . . The attitude around here toward keeping the house neat (as well as the general attitude toward the inferiority and 'proper place' of women) is disgusting and also terribly depressing. I never saw a

cooperative enterprize (sic) that was less cooperative."

There were also ambiguities in the position of women who had been in the movement for many years and were perceived by others as important leaders. While women increasingly became a central force in SNCC between 1960 and 1965, white women were always in a somewhat anomalous position.²⁰ New recruits saw Casey Hayden and Mary King as very powerful.²¹ Hayden had been an activist since the late '50s. Her involvement in the YWCA and the Christian Faith and Life Community at the University of Texas led her to join the demonstrations which erupted in Austin in 1959. From that time on she worked full-time against segregation, sometimes through the Y, sometimes through the National Student Association or Students for a Democratic Society, but always most closely with SNCC. Mary King, daughter of a Southern Methodist minister, had visited SNCC on a trip sponsored by the Y at Ohio Wesleyan University in 1962 and soon returned to work

"we started from different

In 1963, Cynthia Washington, an engineering student at George Washington University, became a member of SNCC. Within a year she was director of a freedom project in Mississippi, registering voters, organizing in the community, and holding mass meetings. She went on to head the Atlanta Center for Black Art. At present, she is a Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies and editor of its newsletter, *The Link*. The following is an excerpt from a letter to *Southern Exposure* about her experiences in the civil-rights and women's movements.

During the fall of 1964, I had a conversation with Casey Hayden about the role of women in SNCC. She complained that all the women got to do was type, that their role was limited to office work no matter where they were. What she said didn't make any particular sense to me because, at the time, I had my own project in Bolivar County, Miss. A number of other black women also directed their own projects. What Casey and other white women seemed to want was an opportunity to prove they could do

something other than office work. I assumed that if they could do something else, they'd probably be doing that.

I remember driving back to Mississippi in my truck, thinking how crazy they were. I couldn't understand what they wanted. As far as I could see, being a project director wasn't much fun. I didn't realize then that having my own project made a lot of difference in how I was perceived and treated. And I did not see what I was doing as exceptional. The community women I worked with on projects were respected and admired for their strength and endurance. They worked hard in the cotton fields or white folks' houses, raised and supported their children, yet still found the time and energy to be involved in struggle for their people. They were typical rather than unusual.

Certain differences result from the way in which black women grow up. We have been raised to function independently. The notion of retiring to housewifery someday is not even a reasonable fantasy. Therefore whether

you want to or not, it is necessary to learn to do all of the things required to survive. It seemed to many of us, on the other hand, that white women were demanding a chance to be independent while we needed help and assistance which was not always forthcoming. We definitely started from opposite ends of the spectrum....

I remember discussions with various women about our treatment as one of the boys and its impact on us as women. We did the same work as men — organizing around voter registration and community issues in rural areas — usually with men. But when we finally got back to some town where we could relax and go out, the men went out with other women. Our skills and abilities were recognized and respected, but that seemed to place us in some category other than female. Some years later, I was told by a male SNCC worker that some of the project women had made him feel superfluous. I wish he had told me that at the time because the differences in the way women were treated certainly did add to the tension between black and

full-time.

They and others who had joined the young movement when it included only a handful of whites knew the inner circles of SNCC through years of shared work and risk. They had an easy familiarity with the top leadership which bespoke considerable influence. Yet Hayden and King could virtually run a freedom registration program and at the same time remain outside the basic political decision-making process.²²

Mary King described herself and Hayden as being in "positions of relative powerlessness." They were powerful because they worked very hard. According to King, "If you were a hard worker and you were good, at least before 1965. . . you could definitely have an influence on policy."²³

The key phrase is "at least before 1965," for by 1965 the positions of white women in SNCC, especially Southern women whose goals had been shaped by the vision of the "beloved community," was in steep decline. Ultimately, a growing spirit of



photo by Donna Bennight

ends of the spectrum"

by Cynthia Washington

white women.

At a district meeting in Mississippi, I heard Stokely's comment that the only position of women in SNCC was prone — with the exception of women who either dressed or looked like men. I was standing next to Muriel Tillinghast, another project director, and we were not pleased. But our relative autonomy as project directors seemed to deny or override his statement. We were proof that what he said wasn't true — or so we thought. In fact, I'm certain that our single-minded focus on the issues of racial discrimination and the black struggle for equality blinded us to other issues....

In the late 1960s, some black women were "producing children for the black nation," while others began to see themselves as oppressed by black men. For many, black women were the most oppressed group in American society, the victims of racism, chauvinism and class discrimination. Chauvinism was often seen as the result of forces acting upon all black people, and struggle between black men and women as an effective

way to keep us from working together for our common liberation. On the other hand, my son by this time was three years old; I was divorced, and the thought that anyone would want to have a child to support by themselves seemed like a mean joke. If women were becoming pregnant to counter the charge that they took "manhood" away, then the position of black women, even in movement circles, seemed to have deteriorated. To me, it was not a matter of whether male/female oppression existed but one of priorities. I thought it more important to deal with the folks and the system which oppressed both black women and black men....

The white people I talked with often assumed the basic necessities. That gave them the luxury of debating ideology and many things I felt would not change the position of black women. Abortion, which white women were fighting for, did not seem an important issue for black women. Women who already had children might need abortion in the future, but in the present they needed

a means to support children other than welfare, a system of child care, decent homes and medical attention, opportunities for meaningful employment and continuing education. Again, we found ourselves in different circumstances with no program or tactic to begin building sisterhood.

Over the last two years, I find myself becoming more involved with women in Washington, discussing the impact of race, class, and culture on us all and concrete ways women can help each other survive. I also find that the same black women I knew and respected during the 1960s are in the process of re-forming a network. Most of us have now spent the greater part of our adult lives as single women involved in movement activities. We have been married, divorced, some have children; we have gone from town to town, job to job, talking to each other. The problems of womanhood have had an increasing impact on us, and the directions of our own, of my own, involvement in the women's movement are still unfolding.

black nationalism, fed by the tensions of large numbers of whites, especially women, entering the movement, forced these women out of SNCC and precipitated the articulation of a new feminism.

Racial/Sexual Tensions

White women's presence inevitably heightened the sexual tension which runs as a constant current through racist culture. Southern women understood that in the struggle against racial discrimination they were at war with their culture. They reacted to the label "Southern lady" as though it were an obscene epithet, for they had emerged from a society that used the symbol of "Southern white womanhood" to justify an insidious pattern of racial discrimination and brutal repression. They had, of necessity, to forge a new sense of self, a new definition of femininity apart from the one they had inherited. Gradually they came to understand the struggle against racism as "a key to pulling down all the... fascist notions and mythologies and institutions in the South," including "notions about white women and repression."²⁴

Thus, for Southern women this tension was a key to their incipient feminism, but it also became a disruptive force within the civil-rights movement itself. The entrance of white women in large numbers into the movement could hardly have been anything but explosive. Interracial sex was the most potent social taboo in the South. And the struggle against racism brought together young, naive, sometimes insensitive, rebellious, and idealistic white women with young, angry black men, some of whom had hardly been allowed to speak to white women before. They sat-in together. If they really believed in equality, why shouldn't they sleep together?

In many such relationships there was much warmth and caring. Several marriages resulted. One young woman described how "a whole lot of things got shared around sexuality—like black men with white women—it wasn't just sex, it was also sharing ideas and fears, and emotional support...My sexuality for myself was confirmed by black men for the first time ever in my life, see...and I needed that very badly... It's a positive advantage to be a big woman in the black community."

On the other hand, there remained

a dehumanizing quality in many relationships. According to one woman, it "had a lot to do with the fact that people thought they might die." They lived their lives at an incredible pace and could not be very loving toward anybody. "So [people] would go to a staff meeting and...sleep with whoever was there."²⁵

Sexual relationships did not become a serious problem, however, until interracial sex became a widespread phenomenon in local communities in the summer of 1964. The same summer that opened new horizons to hundreds of women simultaneously induced serious strains within the movement itself. Accounts of what happened vary according to the perspectives of the observer.

Some paint a picture of hordes of "loose" white women coming to the South and spreading corruption wherever they went. One male black leader recounted that "where I was project director we put white women out of the project within the first three weeks because they tried to screw themselves across the city." He agreed that black neighborhood youth tended to be sexually aggressive. "I mean you are trained to be aggressive in this country, but you are also not expected to get a positive response."²⁶

Others saw the initiative coming almost entirely from males. According to historian Staughton Lynd, director of the Freedom Schools, "Every black SNCC worker with perhaps a few exceptions counted it a notch on his gun to have slept with a white woman—as many as possible. And I think that was just very traumatic for the women who encountered that, who hadn't thought that was what going South was about." A white woman who worked in Virginia for several years explained, "It's much harder to say 'No' to the advances of a black guy because of the strong possibility of that being taken as racist."²⁷

Clearly the boundary between sexual freedom and sexual exploitation was a thin one. Many women consciously avoided all romantic involvements in intuitive recognition of that fact. Yet the presence of hundreds of young whites from middle- and upper-middle-income families in a movement primarily of poor, rural blacks exacerbated latent racial and sexual tensions beyond the breaking point.

The first angry response came not from the surrounding white community (which continually assumed sexual excesses far beyond the reality) but from young black women in the movement.

A black woman pointed out that white women would "do all the shit work and do it in a feminine kind of way while [black women]...were out in the streets battling with the cops. So it did something to what [our] femininity was about. We became amazons, less than and more than women at the same time." Another black woman added, "If white women had a problem in SNCC, it was not just a male/woman problem...it was also a black woman/white woman problem. It was a race problem rather than a woman's problem."²⁸ And a white woman, asked whether she experienced any hostility from black women, responded, "Oh tons and tons! I was very, very afraid of black women, very afraid." Though she admired them and was continually awed by their courage and strength, her sexual relationships with black men placed a barrier between herself and black women.²⁹

Soon after the 1964 summer project, black women in SNCC sharply confronted male leadership. They charged that they could not develop relationships with the black men because the men did not have to be responsible to them as long as they could turn to involvement with white women.

Black women's anger and demands constituted one part of an intricate maze of tensions and struggles that were in the process of transforming the civil-rights movement. SNCC had grown from a small band of sixteen to a swollen staff of 180, of whom 50% were white. The earlier dream of a beloved community was dead. The vision of freedom lay crushed under the weight of intransigent racism, disillusion with electoral politics and nonviolence, and differences of race, class, and culture within the movement itself. Within the rising spirit of black nationalism, the anger of black women toward white women was only one element.

It is in this context that Ruby Doris Smith Robinson, one of the most powerful black women in SNCC, is said to have written a paper on the position of women in SNCC. If a copy

of this paper exists I have yet to find it. Those I have interviewed who attended the conference at which she delivered it, or who heard about it soon thereafter, have hazy and contradictory memories. Nevertheless this paper has been cited frequently in the literature of contemporary feminism as the earliest example of "women's consciousness" within the new left.

Ruby Doris Smith Robinson was a strong woman. As a teenager she had joined the early Atlanta demonstrations during her sophomore year at Spelman College. That year, as a participant in the Rock Hill, South Carolina, sit-in she helped initiate the "jail - no bail" policy in SNCC. A month in the Rock Hill jail bound her to the movement with a zeal born of common suffering, deepened commitment, and shared vision. Soon she was a battle-scarred veteran, respected by everyone and feared by many; she ran the SNCC office with unassailable authority.

As an early leader of the black nationalist faction, Robinson hated white women for years because white women represented a cultural ideal of beauty and "femininity" which by inference defined black women as ugly and unwomanly. But she was also aware that women had from time to time to assert their rights as women. In 1964, she participated in and perhaps led the sit-in in the SNCC office protesting the relegation of women to typing and clerical work. Robinson died of cancer in 1968, and we may never know her own assessment of her feelings and intentions in 1964.³⁰ We do know, however, that tales of her memo generated feminist echoes in the minds of many. And Stokely Carmichael's reputed response that "the only position for women in SNCC is prone" stirred up even more.

For Southern white women who had devoted several years of their lives to the vision of a beloved community, the rejection of nonviolence and movement toward a more ideological, centralized, and black nationalist movement was bitterly disillusioning. Mary King recalled, "It was very sad to see something that was so creative and so dynamic and so strong [disintegrating] ... I was terribly disappointed for a long time.... I was most affected by the way that black women turned against me. That hurt more than the guys. But it had been there, you know.

You could see it coming."³¹

Rebirth of Feminism

In the fall of 1965, Mary King and Casey Hayden spent several days of long discussions in the mountains of Virginia. Both of them were on their way out of the movement, though they were not fully conscious of that fact. Finally they decided to write a "kind of memo" addressed to "a number of other women in the peace and freedom movements."³² In it they argued that women, like blacks, "seem to be caught in a common-law caste system that operates, sometimes subtly, forcing them to work around or outside hierarchical structures of power which may exclude them. Women seem to be placed in the same position of assumed subordination in personal situations too. It is a caste system which, at its worst, uses and exploits women."

Hayden and King set the precedent of contrasting the movement's egalitarian ideas with the replication of sex roles within it. They noted the ways in which women's position in society determined women's roles in the movement — like cleaning houses, doing secretarial work, and refraining from active or public leadership. At the same time, they observed, "having learned from the movement to think radically about the personal worth and abilities of people whose role in society had gone unchallenged before, a lot of women in the movement have begun trying to apply those lessons to their

own relations with men. Each of us probably has her own story of the various results."

They spoke of the pain of trying to put aside "deeply learned fears, needs, and self-perceptions...and...to replace them with concepts of people and freedom learned from the movement and organizing." In this process many people in the movement had questioned basic institutions, such as marriage and child-rearing. Indeed, such issues had been discussed over and over again, but seriously only among women. The usual male response was laughter, and women were left feeling silly. Hayden and King lamented the "lack of community for discussion: Nobody is writing, or organizing, or talking publicly about women, in any way that reflects the problems that various women in the movement came across." Yet despite their feelings of invisibility, their words also demonstrated the ability to take the considerable risks involved in sharp criticisms. Through the movement they had developed too much self-confidence and self-respect to accept passively subordinate roles.

The memo was addressed principally to black women — long time friends and comrades-in-nonviolent-arms — in the hope that, "perhaps we can start to talk with each other more openly than in the past and create a community of support for each other so we can deal with ourselves and others with integrity and can therefore keep working." In some ways, it was



Woodcut: "Preoccupation," by Lois Kojola, from *Motive* magazine

a parting attempt to halt the metamorphosis in the civil-rights movement from nonviolence to nationalism, from beloved community to black power. It expressed Hayden and King's pain and isolation as white women in the movement. The black women who received it were on a different historic trajectory. They would fight some of the same battles as women, but in a different context and in their own way.

This "kind of memo" represented a flowering of women's consciousness that articulated contradictions felt most acutely by middle-class white women. While black women had been gaining strength and power within the movement, white women's position — at the nexus of sexual and racial conflicts — had become increasingly precarious. Their feminist response, then, was precipitated by loss in the immediate situation, but it was a sense of loss against the even deeper background of new strength and self-worth which the movement had allowed them to develop. Like their foremothers in the nineteenth century, they confronted this dilemma with the tools which the movement had given them: a language to name and describe oppression; a deep belief in freedom, equality and community soon to be translated into "sisterhood"; a willingness to question and challenge any social institution which failed to meet human needs; and the ability to organize.

It is not surprising that the issues were defined and confronted first by Southern women whose consciousness developed in a context which inextricably and paradoxically linked the fate of women and black people. These spiritual daughters of Sarah and Angelina Grimke kept their expectations low in November, 1965. "Objectively," Hayden and King wrote, "the chances seem nil that we could start a movement based on anything as distant to general American thought as a sex-caste system."³² But change was in the air and youth was on the march.

In the North there were hundreds of women who had shared in the Southern experience for a week, a month, a year, and thousands more who participated vicariously or worked to extend the struggle for freedom and equality into Northern communities. These women were ready to hear what their Southern sisters had to say. The debate within Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) which started in

response to Hayden and King's ideas led, two years later, to the founding of the women's liberation movement.

Thus, the fullest expression of conscious feminism within the civil-rights movement ricocheted off the fury of black power and landed with explosive force in the Northern, white new left. One month after Hayden and King mailed out their memo, women who had read it staged an angry walk-out of a national SDS conference in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois. The only man to defend their action was a black man from SNCC.

Footnotes

1. See Gerda Lerner, *The Grimke Sisters From South Carolina: Pioneers for Women's Rights and Abolition* (New York: Schocken, 1971), 161-62.

2. Confidential interview; Judith Brown to Anne Braden, September 19, 1968, Carl and Anne Braden Papers, Box 82, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

3. Elizabeth Sutherland, ed., *Letters From Mississippi* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), 22-23.

4. Interview with Mimi Feingold; Dr. Sidney Silverman to Heather Tobis, July 21, 1964, Elizabeth Sutherland Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; Heather (Tobis) to "my brother" in Sutherland, ed., *Letters*, 150; interview with Heather Tobis Booth, November 5, 1972.

5. Quoted in Cleveland Sellers, *The River of No Return: The Autobiography of a Black Militant and the Life and Death of SNCC* (New York: William Morrow, 1973), 39.

6. Howard Zinn, *SNCC: The New Abolitionists* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), 7.

7. James Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries: A Personal Account* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 235, 238-39. Avivia Futorian to unknown, July, 1964, Sutherland Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

8. Interview with Mary King; "Job Description: Mary King, Communications," carbon copy, n.d., Mary King's personal files.

9. Interview with Cathy Cade.

10. Interview with Mimi Feingold, July 16, 1973, San Francisco, California.

11. Interview with Mary King.

12. Sutherland, ed., *Letters*, 111-112, 229-230.

13. Len Holt, *The Summer That Didn't End* (New York: William Morrow, 1965), 12; Interview with Vivian Rothstein, July 9, 1973, Chicago, Illinois.

14. Interview with Dorothy Burlage.

15. "News from SCEF" by Anne Braden (typed), April 30, 1962, and "Statement by Diane Nash Bevel" issued April 20, 1962, (Handwritten draft), Carl and Anne Braden Papers, Box 47, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

16. Interviews with Jean Wiley, July 26, 1973, Washington, D.C.; Gwen Patton, June 20, 1973, Washington, D.C.; Fay Bellamy, June 29, 1973, Atlanta, Georgia.

17. Forman, *Making*, 276; Interview with Mimi Feingold.

18. Interviews with Fay Bellamy; Mary King; Ella Baker, July 31, 1973, New York City; Cathy Cade; Nan Grogan, June 28, 1973, Atlanta, Georgia; Jean Wiley; Betty Garman and Jean Wiley, July 26, 1973, Washington, D.C.

19. "To: Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, From: Joni Rabinowitz, Southwest Georgia Project," April 8-21. (1963) Joni Rabinowitz's personal files.

20. This conclusion is inferred from interviews with Fay Bellamy, Gwen Patton, Jean Wiley, and Betty Garman.

21. Interviews with Cathy Cade, Vivian Rothstein, Sue Thrasher, and Nan Grogan.

22. Interview with Staughton Lynd, November 4, 1972, Chicago, Illinois.

23. Interview with Mary King.

24. Interview with Dorothy Burlage.

25. Confidential interviews.

26. Interview with Jimmy Garret, July 16, 1973, Washington, D.C.

27. Interview with Staughton Lynd; interview with Nan Grogan.

28. Interviews with Gwen Patton; Jean Wiley.

29. Confidential interview.

30. Interview with Howard Zinn, August 7, 1973, Boston, Massachusetts; Josephine Carson, *Silent Voices: The Southern Negro Woman Today* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1969); Zinn, *SNCC*.

31. Interview with Dorothy Burlage; Mary King.

32. Casey Hayden and Mary King, "Sex and Caste: A Kind of Memo," *Liberation* (April, 1966), 35-36.



If it was Anything for Justice

by Margaret Rose Gladney

“The preachers said we was dominated and the educators said we was crazy. But I didn’t feel that way about it. If it was anything for justice, I wanted the same thing for my children that the other segment had for theirs.”

— Sally Mae Hadnott

Sallie Mae Hadnott has carried on a spirited fight against poverty and racial discrimination for most of her fifty-six years. Her home is on Easy Street, a dirt road in one of the few black sections of Prattville, Alabama, an antebellum cotton mill town ten miles northwest of Montgomery. Before her family had indoor plumbing in their three-room house, she and her husband James added a room as a meeting place for blacks in their community. From there she organized the Autauga County NAACP in the mid-’60s, laid plans for voter registration drives, and raised eight children, two of whom were among the first black students to integrate Autauga County High School. She ran for office twice and was the name plaintiff in the Supreme Court case Hadnott vs. Amos, which allowed blacks to have their names on the ballot as members of the National Democratic Party of Alabama (NDPA). Her friends and co-workers describe her as “the stabilizing factor, the upsetting factor; the bulwark and the pacifier. She keeps Prattville alive.”

Big Mouth Heifer

Like other rural children, Sallie and her five brothers grew up with meager opportunities for formal education and with only as much food as their family could raise.

“I was born in Montgomery County, Alabama, out between Dannelly Field and somewhere down the road. My father was a farmer. When we came along, we had hogs and cows and raised sugar cane. I learned about life and how to make it when you didn’t have it. When hardship was on, we used to cook a lot of peas and sweet potatoes. And that way we was educated to doing without. If we had good bread and milk, it was a good meal for us and we dared not ask anything more.

“I remember very well my mother was a good cook. We’d go up to what was called the big house with Aunt Dinah — that was Mama — and she’d cook. After the white people had got through eating, whatever was left on the table she would take it and divide it among us. If I was with her, I had to eat out on the steps or the back porch. This kind of worried me. She was cooking the food, yet she had to wait until after everybody else ate their lunch and then she’d go in and eat the scraps or get just what was left.

“An aunt raised me after my mother passed in July of ’31. I was almost elev-

en. She said, ‘If it’s a sack dress, make sure it’s clean. Make sure your feet look nice and let your head look neat because it won’t be this way all the time.’

“I remember she used to sit up and sew shirts out of muslin. After you wash ’em so long and bleach them with bluing they would become beautiful white. We used to take the fertilizer sacks and soak the letters out of them and make sheets. When we got through boiling them a time or two, they would be really good and long-lasting. We didn’t know anything about nice sheets and nice pillow cases like we do now. But we learned what life was all about.

“We didn’t go to school like children go now. We only had three months to go to school. If cotton was in the field for scroppin’ in October, well, we had to get out and scrap the cotton for Mr. Charlie. ’Cause we didn’t pay any rent. The work that you done paid the rent. And I feel like we overpaid.

Margaret Rose Gladney is assistant professor in American Studies and the New College at the University of Alabama. This article is based on interviews with Sallie Mae Hadnott at her home in Prattville in June and August, 1976, and with her daughter Nitrician Hadnott in Washington, D.C. in July, 1976.

"We moved from Montgomery to Autauga County in 1933 because some of Father's white friends told him this was a good county for cotton.

"We had to walk seven miles out and back to go to school — so far that the next year the superintendent decided to let us go into Prattville to North Highland School (the only school for blacks in the town). White children would ride the bus, while we had to walk the muddy roads, rain or shine. I felt that was unfair, but we couldn't do too much about it.

"I finally dropped out of school at seventeen. I had to wear my brother's shoes and other kids would tease me about the soles flapping. But if I'd known like I know now, I'd put them shoes on and go those other six months. I had said I wanted to go to Tuskegee, but I didn't make it. We didn't have the money.

"In 1940, we moved on Mr. Huey's place down here at Lake Haven. The first year we made forty bales of cotton, and Dad didn't lack but a little of catching up, of paying his debts. And the next year he made forty-five bales of cotton, and he still didn't make enough to pay off the debts. So my older brother said to my father, 'Dad, you can stay here if you want to; but I'm going to Birmingham and get me a job in the mine. I want to tell you right now, don't send for me because I wouldn't tell a mule to get up no more if he laid down on my lap.' So I felt like he really had his bitters. And I said, 'Well, maybe someday we can do some things.'

"One thing that triggered me most — I never will forget. My grandmother lived with my Uncle Oliver down on the Old Hayneville Road. She was sick and they sent me down to be with her during the day while they worked. One day I was rubbing her back, and she had some scars down her back and they was larger than my hand. I was curious to know, 'Grandmother, what happened to you, what caused these scars?'

"And she said to me, 'This is where I forgot to get the kindling wood one night for the boss. And he put live coals — fire coals — down my back. Said he would teach me a lesson that I wouldn't forget. And I got the sack and went on in the woods, and frost was on the ground. And I got pine straw and lay on it and put the sack over me until fore day where I could just see the

light and blunder about in the woods to get something to start the fire. And then I came back to the house.'

"And I remember saying, 'Well, Grandmother, I wish I had been there. They would have had to kill me!' But I promised her this. I said, 'You wait until I grow up, Grandmother; I won't take it. And anyway I can pay them back for what they've done to you, I'm going to do it!' And everytime I get to do something for good I feel like I'm keeping my word to my grandmother.

"When my dad was working sharecrops he bought a mule and some fertilizer from a guy named Allison Bowman who ran the stockyard in Montgomery. And another lady and I — we called her Aunt Rose — would go to work in the field just as early as daylight would permit, and we would knock off at 5:00 or 5:30. We was working by the house, and Mrs. Bush, the little foreman's wife, always would yell and tell us what time it was when we got to the end. So this particular day Mrs. Bush says, 'Sallie, it's 5:30.'

"And I said, 'Thank you, Ma'am.'

"Aunt Rose said, 'What time did she say it was?'

"And I said, 'She said it was 5:30.'

"And he (Bowman) said, 'Goddammit, little big mouth heifer, didn't nobody ask you what time it was!'

"And I told him, 'You crop-eared so-and-so. I wasn't even talking to you.' And it was real ugly — I said, 'You just call me that again, you s.o.b., I'll take this damn hoe and crop your other ear.'

"He started up to me, and I just drew the hoe back. I was gonna let him have it. I think he knew that I really meant it, so he sorta backed up, and said, 'Get on.'

"And I said, 'I'm going and I'm not in no rush about it.' I picked up the hoe — he thought I was going to lay it down — and put it across my shoulder and we went on home.

"I didn't tell Daddy and I didn't sleep good that night. The next morning I got up just as early and got my lunch and left the house with that hoe. I went on down Highway 31 and sit up under a pine tree until about 9:30. When I got up and went on down to the field it was nearing 10:00. Mr. Bush looked and saw me coming, and he made it to the road.

"He said, 'Hey, Mr. Bowman say for you not to come back here no more.'

"I said, 'Did he really mean it?'

"He said, 'Yes.'

"I said, 'Oh, thank you.' I took off and run up the road. I knew then that I had to tell Dad the truth.

"I went on over to the field where Daddy was. He said, 'Y'all got through early today.'

"'No, sir, Daddy,' and I just told him the truth about what happened.

"And Daddy said, 'That's all right. Hand me the hoe; I'll go see him.' So Daddy went. And that was my last day's work of being a sharecropper."

Sally left home to marry at the age of 18. Eight years later, faced with physical abuse and lack of support for herself and her three sons, she divorced her husband.

Soon thereafter she met James O. Hadnott through the church choir. They married and together raised eight children — her three sons and their three daughters and two sons. Mr. Hadnott worked as a carder in the local cotton mill until a heart attack forced him to retire in 1961, and Sallie held part-time jobs until her notoriety as a civil-rights activist made it impossible for her to get work.

"I don't know how we did it," recalls her daughter Nitrician, "but we did. We were happy, never had complaints about food on the table. Of course, we did eat a lot of pork. We had chickens in the back and a couple of pigs. On the side we raised greens. Mother made us know that was the best she could do and we were satisfied."

Even before the civil-rights movement, Sallie began to assume her role as a community leader. Neighbors and friends came to her with their questions about legal or business matters, asking her to read, explain, and write letters for them. Nitrician recalls, "It just grew within her. She was always active in her church. She would give speeches at different meetings, mainly church meetings, but she would tie in her political thoughts, too. I remember when the people came in to help with voter registration. She wasn't afraid of the new — she wasn't afraid to let them in, or of what would happen to her. Of course, my father was a little bit afraid, but I think with her there encouraging him, he got over that. And she started from there to go on into other things. She's always been against people mistreating each other; and when she did get the chance, she just let it out."



photo by Wendy Watriss-Fred Baldwin

Stand Up and Blunder On

Sallie's decision to organize voter education drives in Prattville grew out of her own experience of being denied the right to register to vote.

"In Autauga County there was about 70 to 90 (black) voters. We had one black school teacher — rather she was classed as black, but really she was two-thirds white. And she would always deliver the black vote and get what she wanted. This I felt was unfair to the people and to me. So I decided to do something about it.

"I went down to the board of registrars three times. Everytime I would go I never got a hearing. The first time they said come back in six months. The next time, they extended it to one year. Well, I didn't know any better. I waited until the year was up and went back.

"But there was a meeting in Birmingham at the Masonic Temple. The Assistant Attorney General of the U.S. was there, and I asked him, 'If you go to the Board of Registrars, are they required to give you an answer whether you passed or not?'

"He said, 'Yes.'

"I told him I had went for the third time and I never had heard anything, but I planned to go back.

"He said, 'Date the time and let me know when you go back to make sure that you get an answer.'

"So he sent somebody in and they found those records and brought them out to me. And I asked, 'Did I fail it?'

"And they said, 'No, not on either one. They just got wrote on here Incomplete. Don't see a damn thing wrong with it except that they don't want you to become a registered voter.'

"That encouraged me all the more to stimulate interest among the others."

Sallie expected the school teachers and preachers, traditionally recognized as leaders in the black community, to take the initiative in encouraging blacks to register and vote.

"The black preachers are always in the pulpit on Sunday and they are preaching from eleven to one about heaven. I said to one of them, 'I know we live in the hotbed of the Klans and this is the Klan county but you preachers always talking about heaven.' How could he tell me what was on the other border and he hadn't been there? And we're catching hell right here. I said, 'Preacher, I want some of what you're preaching about gonna happen over on the other side, right here on earth.'

"I was in a meeting of the NAACP

and I brought up this issue about what the teachers and preachers weren't doing. And I remember a woman from Mobile said, 'Look, if you feel that strongly about it, go back home and get your voter registration campaign ready. Get it organized, and then do what you have to do. If the teachers refuse, and they are the educators shaping minds, and the preachers are teaching you every Sunday and they fail to do it, then stand up, right or wrong. All that you don't know, just blunder on. Somebody will come to your rescue.'

"So we got a campaign of registration underway. From July to November of 1965 we got 800 on the register. Then we got Mr. W.C. Patton of the NAACP Voter Education Project to get federal examiners to come in so we wouldn't be harassed by the Klans.

"But one of the federal examiners down there had called the chairman of the board of registrars of Autauga County to tell him how to challenge the federal books to keep us from being on record down there. He didn't know I overheard him talking about his plan.

"Now, he was a federal examiner

and he was to go up for promotion that Saturday for State Supervisor. Now if he was that low down and he was just a federal examiner, what was he going to do when he got into power?

"I come on home and I called Mr. Patton in Birmingham, and he was in Texas at Johnson's ranch. So I put in a call out there. Mr. Patton said, 'Well, all right, if you've got his name, that's good enough. Me and the President will take care of that right now.'

"So that Saturday I was about thirty minutes late getting down to the office and when I got there the federal examiner had already been notified that he wouldn't be here any longer and he couldn't figure out the reason why.

Keep Your Identity

In 1968, Sallie ran for County Commissioner and in 1970, for Secretary of State on the N.D.P.A. ticket. Although she did not win, she said, "I done very well, and that was saying to me right then that if you left a light on the hill that some younger person is gonna be inspired later on to come on and pick this torch up and keep it moving."

Sallie takes seriously the idea of setting an example for younger people to follow. Her daughter Nitrician remembers that during her childhood her mother was "the mother of the neighborhood." In voter registration drives, she got young black people to leaflet communities and encourage their parents to register and vote. Nitrician also remembers that, after watching the news at night, the family would sit around and discuss what they had heard. So, it was not surprising that, when the "freedom of choice" plan for school desegregation was implemented in 1965, two of the Hadnott children chose to be among the first blacks to integrate Autauga County High School. Sallie recalls how it all began:

"It wasn't really my idea when integration came for my children to leave the school they were at. But we were sitting up discussing about freedom of choice and I said, 'Well, I wonder who's going.'

"My daughter Nitrician, who was in the eighth grade then, said, 'Mama, don't fool yourself. If they open that door, I'm going.'

"And I said, 'Well, I won't say

don't go, but tell me why.'

"'Because our school don't even have accreditation. Down there, if you go to the white school, you can go to the college of your choice. Are you going to fight me?'

"I said, 'No, baby, all that Mama don't know and you do, tell me, and I'll back you all the way. You go down there, gal, and don't try to be white. Just go down there and keep your identity. Let them know that you come from a black school and you appreciate what it had to offer because it was inferior education to start with. And if they ask you what you're doing down there, tell them you are seeking the same thing that the other segment is seeking so when you get to college you can have any door opened that you want to. And I'm with you all the



photo by Lucinda Bunnem

way.' That's all I could do to back her.

"Her brother James wasn't going at first. He was making C's. He was just jiving around and the teachers were using him for an errand boy. But after he found out that the other boys with better grades backed out or were pressured not to go, on the last day to register he said, 'Mom, that's my sister who's going down there to face the world. How about sending my papers on down there.' I didn't have but about thirty minutes; so I got my daughter-in-law to run it on down to the court house to the superintendent's office.

"The morning that they opened up, every mother that had a child going was giving me a ring to find out if mine were going to still go. I said, 'By all means, honey!' And I said, 'If you're a little nervous, meet me down at the Blue Moon and we'll line up as a car pool and all motor in together. And

that way, if anything happens, somebody will know it.' So they agreed.

"I had called the FBI and the news-men and told them exactly what time we were entering. So we went on down and Chief of Police Claude Burton was there with his big club on his hip.

"And somebody that was janitor-ing down there had stopped me on the way and said, 'Hey, I saw some white boys go over to the park and come back with new baseball bats. And we're afraid that once the blacks get in, something's going to break loose down there. I'm telling you this, but don't tell on me.'

"Soon as we rolled up and the Chief was directing us in, I said, 'Chief, before we loose the children in, I got a tip that there has been brand new base-

ball bats given to the white youth to beat the blacks up. Since you're the Chief of Police, I'm letting you know. The burden of responsibility is going to rest on your shoulders. And I'm going to tell the principal the same thing. We're going to take them on in here and we're going to loose them. I want you to know as soon as we do, they are you all's responsibility until they get back to us. I just want to make myself clear.'

"One of my older sons had told me, 'If you send them down there, Mama, get prepared, we'll have to set up with shot guns at night 'cause some of these Klansmen don't want this.' I laughed, I taken it lightly; but did you know it really come to that.

"My husband and I took turns sitting up at night. They bugged us so with the phone. I didn't want to change my number. If they found we were go-

ing to change it, we'd have to keep changing it. And the last time they called I said, 'Hello.'

"And the voice on the other end said, 'Well, goddamn, is you still there?'

"Yes, and I don't plan moving anywhere. And if anything comes up there in my yard and squat, I'm going to wipe it with my shotgun.' That was the last call.

"We were so hungry sometime. It was rough then. Sometime we'd have only white meat and grits, but we was determined. I went down one time and asked the school principal, Mr. Davis, about giving them food. The free lunch program was on.

"And I said, 'You work for the federal government. What I'm doing — promoting citizenship — I'm doing for free because I want to raise the black folks' standard of living. You all had us in the gullies so long, but we're gonna rise.'

"He said, 'Well, get your food then.'

"I said, 'I know the choice is up to you. But that's all right; we'll make it.'

"Somehow he never did give us any free lunch. But I want you to know when he got ready to run for superintendent of education, he had little enough sense to come back up here and ask for our support. And that was my time that I told him, 'No way, Mr. Davis. When the choice was yours to give my children food, you refused, when it was many a morning we had grits, gravy, and white meat.'"

Because of her children's experiences with school integration in Autauga County, Sallie was asked on several occasions to testify before the U.S. Commission of Education in Washington, D.C., concerning problems of educating poor children and improvement of federal education programs. At the end of one hearing in October, 1968, Sallie made the following recommendation:

"You know, you all make all these good laws and they look good in black and white, and then you place them in the hands of segregationists to implement. Just what kind of justice do you think we are going to get with the segregationists implementing it? With the money you've got, why don't you call a few key people, leaders in each county, that would tell you what's going on and let them mobilize the students to be in one place. You could get facts from the students."

The Commissioner made no com-

ment at the time, but in the summer of 1970, Senator Walter Mondale visited the Hadnott home on Easy Street. In Sallie's kitchen and under the trees in her yard, he listened to black children from across the county as they filed through to tell how they'd been threatened, beaten and sometimes expelled by teachers and school administrators.

In response to Senator Mondale's visit, The Prattville Progress, a local newspaper, published a scathing editorial calling Sallie Hadnott 'an uneducated disciple of hate and disorder' and 'a resident who continually fights progress.'

Looking to the future, Sallie is interested in starting a school breakfast program for the poor children of the county and in working to get black women on the police force. Now that blacks are on juries, she would like to see monthly workshops conducted to educate jurors about their responsibilities.

Sallie has worked hard to see that the doors of opportunity are open for blacks, but she is not satisfied simply to have black faces replace white faces in positions of community leadership. She is concerned with the responsiveness of both black and white leaders to the needs of the whole community. "Before blacks were hired on the police force," she said, "they were screened [by white officials] for the organizations they belonged to, such as the NAACP, and they never chose those recommended by the black community, but only those who would say 'yes' and do what they were told."

Even as Sallie criticizes whites for refusing to work with blacks who are not "yes-men," she also criticizes blacks, especially elected officials, for failing to stand up for their rights. "If you take their money, it ties your hand. You can't speak freely because you got the man in your pocket and you just can't say what you want to say. So I don't have no strings attached to me."

When Sallie, as president of the Autauga County NAACP, was asked by a local radio station to host a Sunday morning show, she replied: "Now, if you think you're sticking a sugar tit in my mouth to go on the air and not talk about the things I see, you can get somebody else. Because if I see it, I'm going to say it. And I'm going to make sure it's the truth."

The True Southern Belle

by Virginia L. Rudder

*I'm a Southern belle, new style, a grafted hybrid,
Strictly homegrown, the very devil to domesticate,
Impossible to hem up, box in or tie down.*

*I'm stubborn as kudzu, stronger than morning
glory vine*

*And rough as pig iron. I wasn't born. I
was spawned,*

*Bit off, chewed up and spit out to germinate
Betwixt dying honeysuckle and scrawny
scrubpines.*

*Catamounts raised me. Copperheads
and cottonmouths*

*Taught me how to blend, fading, fit in against
any background*

*And lay low, waiting every danger out; how,
when attacked,*

*To strike first, strike hard and strike last, biting
Back faster than sheet lightning forking down.*

*I'm a Southern Belle old style. Heavy odds don't
faze me.*

*I fight my own battles. And I win, when winning
counts.*

*I've enough tar and turpentine on my heels,
enough gumption*

*To know when to turn tail and run like
twenty hells;*

*When to wheel and snarling, stand pat,
sticking fast.*

*I don't hold with lost causes, nightriders or wars
But I can Stonewall it with the best. And do,
Everyday.*

*Had ought to, having a smidgen of Jackson gut
and grit,*

*Enough to see me through. I'm a fool, too.
Fifth generation.*

*I don't traffic with malice and lies. I trust deeds
More than vows. I respect dirt more than air
Because life grows there. I know no matter
what hue*

*The skin, hearts speak the same tongue and
all blood*

*Is red, red as the dark rich clay I walk each day.
I eventually, finally learn*

Tough hides and tender hearts will always survive.

*Dreaming, scheming, I grow, change, expand, plot
And plan my fields. I can break new ground all
day long*

*And commence to raise cane when the sun goes
down*

*Because I'm a Southern belle, true style. My aim
is the sky.*

*I can storm, plunder, swear, fight, shout,
holy-roll, shoot straight.*

*I can smoke, joke, run, race, win, lose, draw, turn
on a dime*

*And meet you coming back for change. Everytime,
Because I'm just what you see — little but loud
And poor but proud to be a Southern belle
country style.*

QUILTING WOMEN



photo by Ann Hawthorne Sunning the Quilting Top

“rather quilt than eat, almost”

by Jennifer Miller

Bedcovers were the first true art form in America.

Books corroborate this claim for quilts, but they also tend to dwell on patterns used in various regions instead of the particular tastes and talents of the individual artists. Any quilting woman knows that she takes pride in being *different* from her neighbor. In country stores where quilts are being sold, women are often heard to exclaim how they would have done that Wild Goose Chase pattern, for example, with a simpler border or fancier stitches or less green. Neighbors may share patterns; they may exchange scraps of materials. But each quilt is an individual creation. Each says something about the maker's life.

A quilt is two layers of cloth filled with cotton, polyester or wool, with the three layers stitched in a pattern that keeps the filling in place. In the past, sewing the layers together (quilting) was often a collective process, requiring that the participating women be friendly, of course, and most of all that their stitches be consistently tight and neat. The back of the quilt is usually one fabric. The "top" is the part that requires the most individual planning and artistic choice. Even at quilting bees, each top was the work of one woman alone.

Women began making quilts in this country as soon as they had enough sewing scraps. Pioneer women kept the family beds piled high with colorful quilts as they struggled to survive the winters in the wilderness of North America. "A woman made utility quilts as fast as she could and as well as she could so her family wouldn't freeze, and she made them as beautiful as she could so her heart wouldn't break. Of all the things she did day in and day out, the quilt was perhaps the only thing that would last longer and be remembered more gratefully than last summer's pickled beets." (Beth Gutcheon, *New York Times Magazine*, 7/20/75.)

It hasn't been that long since nearly all women did some kind of sewing; depending upon their economic status, they made everything from long underwear to doilies. Black women on Southern plantations did exceptionally fine applique work (decorating or trimming one material by sewing on shapes from other cloths), a skill that originated in Dahomey, West Africa. Plantations had superb quilts made by slaves, while Southern farm women made their bedcovers out of whatever sewing scraps or feed bags they had. Whether they were appliqued velvet and satin or dyed sack patchwork, the quilts were both colorful and necessary.

Women often associated each quilt they made with an event: a wedding, birth, death, going-away. Names of old quilt patterns suggest their origins.

Some are from the natural surroundings which have been a joy as well as a hardship to women isolated in the country: North Carolina Lily, Spider's Web, Wild Goose Chase, Bear Paw, Maple Leaf. There are names about daily life (Log Cabin, Barn Raising), about dreams (Around the World), about events (Rocky Road to Kansas, Whig's Defeat). Some are political statements, the kind women weren't supposed to make not so long ago: Jackson's Star, Underground Railroad, and one pattern made by some women during the Civil War was called Radical Rose. It featured a black center in each rose, an expression of sympathy for the slaves.

There were patterns with religious names: Tree Everlasting, Forbidden Fruit, Job's Tears. Another favorite was the "crazy" quilt which could be made without any pattern, using all sizes and colors of scrap materials.

Album quilts are for remembrance (sometimes each block is a different story, a family history), and friendship quilts are often "signed" with flowing stitches. There are also death quilts.

One was made by a woman in Lewis County, Kentucky, in 1839. Elizabeth Roseberry Mitchell pieced a brown cotton quilt that had an intricate picket fence as a border around a cemetery in the center. Inside the cemetery, she stitched the shapes of coffins to mark gravesites. There was a path leading from the cemetery to a bottom row of little brown-cloth coffins, each with the name of a member of the family. Whenever one of them died, Elizabeth snipped the coffin and re-sewed it into its place in the cemetery.

I

The advent of an age of cheap blankets and insulated houses eliminated the necessity of quilt-making for many women. But in rural areas, especially in the South, everyone's mother or grandmother remembers how quilts could brighten a sparsely furnished bedroom. The connotations of hard work, self-sufficiency, patience, love and durability remain. Plus, quiltmaking is quiet work, peaceful; it requires more imagination than other household work.

In wooden houses in the country, some women still make quilts to keep their families warm. But women with "tight" houses make them, too. Some give them to family and friends. Some sell them. Some save them, wrapped in plastic, neatly stacked in closets. Maudie Gilbert and her sisters, Mary and

Jennifer Miller is on the editorial staff of Southern Exposure and edits Facing South, the weekly syndicated column of the Institute for Southern Studies.



photo by FSA/Library of Congress

Quilts photographed during the Great Depression

Martha, live with their families up on Sandy Ridge, near Campton, Kentucky – mountainous country with icy winter winds. Maudie, Mary and Martha get together sometimes to do their quilting. Mostly they quilt on their own, though, because Maudie says they do so much talking when they get together that they don't get much done. "You know how sisters are when they've always been close."

Maudie was recounting the winters when she was young and could see the stars through the cracks in the roof, but was still warm under three or four quilts. Her mother made enough quilts for all the family beds, plus some for a woman up the ridge who was well enough off to have others make her quilts. She paid Maudie's mother \$2.50 for a double-size quilt, then cut it in half and used it on two beds! Of course, as Maudie says, "Two dollars and fifty cents would buy quite a bunch of groceries at that time. Now you could put \$2.50 worth of groceries in your pocketbook, almost."

Maudie began quilting when she was seven. Her aunt gave her little pieces of thread and pieces of material too small to be of much use, and Maudie sewed them together. They all quilted, her mother and aunts and two older sisters. When she got married, at 18, she started farming with her husband and keeping house; she had six children. "I'd quilt in the fall of the year," she said. "After we got our other work done, then I would make our quilts that we used. Had to make two or three new ones every year, because usually there was a new kid to come along every year or two."

Maudie says she'd "rather quilt than eat, almost.

"After the kids get gone to school, I sit right down and start to quilt, and usually it's eleven or twelve o'clock before I even look up. Because, you know, I get so interested in it, just like you really get interested in working a puzzle or something you love, and want to see how it's going to turn out; that's how I am about my quilting. It doesn't seem possible, but it's true."

It doesn't seem so impossible, considering the tree quilts and eagle quilts she makes that are famous for their beauty. She and her sisters were picked as the best quilters in the area several years ago. The local co-op asked them to make a quilt for Pat Nixon when her husband was still President; the sisters took it to Washington, D. C., and presented it to her. That one was an eagle quilt.

Now her young son, Joey, helps around the house, washing dishes, sweeping floors, while Maudie quilts ten to twelve hours a day.

"You quilt, quilt, quilt and you sit right there in that same place all day, and it just takes you *so* long to make one. Of course, the money's good and it's good honest money, but you don't make much. I do it because I love to quilt – and I need what money I do make." She usually gets about \$100 for her big quilts and \$25 for crib size.

She studied her hands, bending her fingers in and out as if they were stiff. "But I'd make them if I didn't get anything for them. If I sat right down with a piece of paper and a pencil and figured up

all the price of everything that's in a quilt, I guess I'd have to quit. But I want to keep doing it, til my eyes give out."

She wants to make one special one for each of her children. Plus she needs more for her house, because it isn't insulated. It still takes about four quilts on each bed to keep out the cold. But the fancy quilts are not made for daily use; she can't afford to keep the eagle or tree quilts.

A woman whose weakened eyes have ended her quilting days lives about 100 miles east of Maudie, near Whitesburg, Kentucky. The mountains are even more rugged there, and houses balance on cliffs or nestle back in hollows. Mrs. Georgia Fairchild Taylor has always stayed close to her family. She quilted with her sisters, too. Her big old house has closets full of quilts she's made, all light greens and bright yellows and blues and pinks – flower colors. She has always gardened and planted flowers in the spring and summer, and made her quilts in the winter. She won't sell them. She only has one daughter. So she saves her quilts, with a special one for her only grandchild, "if he ever gets married."

As a young girl, Georgia had to do most of the housework and cooking because her mother was ill for a long time. "There've been things I'd like to do, but I've always been a housekeeper and tended the garden, canned, put up stuff, and I got

attached to that kind of work. I'm glad that I did, because it's a pastime to do some kind of work, whether it's in the garden, doing sewing or quilting, things like that."

Though her house was cold before electricity, quilts aren't as necessary now. But she's proud of the ones she made and thinks "it was the best thing in the world for me to have been home so much," taking care of her ailing parents and, later, a sick husband.

"Family's the most important thing," she said. "Wouldn't you have done the same?"

Passed from mother to daughter, and now to country stores and craft co-ops, quilts are more widely appreciated these days. But most women have been aware of the beauty of what they've done all along. In Madison County, North Carolina, a woman who has quilted to cover her beds and now sells her quilts at a crafts store talked about her early work.

"People back then didn't have the money to buy materials to make fancy tops out of, or even to set it together with," said Leona Rice. "My daddy worked for the Chesterfield Milling Company and over there, they'd bust these flour bags. Every bit of flour was in cloth sacks. So we'd get those flour bags and wash em and we'd strip our quilts together with em." She says they'd even use some of the big sacks for quilt lining.

Quilting in East Texas in 1976



photo by Fred Baldwin & Wendy Watriss

She remembers carding cotton out of an old mattress that belonged to her grandmother. "We took and tore that mattress up, and Grandmother showed me how to card, and we carded all that cotton, redone it over and put it in little rolls, and that's what we used for my quilts when I was going to get married."

Now she laughs about some of those old quilts, about how she looks at them and thinks, "Oh, Lordy, what stitches I made!" But she avers she's as proud of the old ones as any she'd quilt today.*

II

Today people are buying quilts like Leona's to hang on their walls. Connor Causey, a young woman in Hillsborough, North Carolina, who quilts and teaches quilting classes, thinks it's great that people are hanging them. "I think they should be treated that way. I'm doing art and my medium just happens to be material. Though I'm doing a lot of traditional designs now because there are so many I want to try, someday I'd like to get into some more original designs, and even free-form quilting."

Connor's favorite quilts are the patchwork ones; she says the geometry of them is timeless. "You can go back to these patterns that are very old and see that the original designs really took a lot of figuring." One old pattern which is especially complex interested Connor, and she asked her friend with a PhD in physics to separate the pattern into its parts. It took four or five hours. Connor asked, "Now, how could the originator, probably a woman with little or no formal education, figure it out?"

Connor learned to quilt from an older woman in Hillsborough. She usually quilts by herself now, and says that most of the other quilters she knows work alone, too. In the past it was much more of a social function than it is today. At quilting bees, the work would go faster, and the women who didn't have telephones and didn't live very close to each other would have a chance to visit. "People get together in many other ways now," says Connor. She works on a frame in her home, and sometimes, when friends drop in to see her, they'll sit and stitch a while with her.

She'll never get tired of quilting, but Connor thinks she probably will get tired of selling them. It makes it "work" to do one to fill an order.

*The interview with Leona Rice was conducted by Laurel Horton, librarian for the Appalachian Room at Mars Hill College and folklore graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"Nobody quilts for the money. If you break down the hours, you could make more as a waitress." But she has a two-year-old daughter, and quilting has turned out to be a good way to make money at home.

Another young woman, Susan Paterson in Barnardsville, North Carolina, took up quilting when she was pregnant with her first child. Now she has two daughters and quilts so much that her sales help support the family.

"I wanted to make a quilt for my first baby," she said. "I asked a lady who runs a gas station down in Barnardsville how to make a quilt, got her directions and went home, made a quilt all wrong. It looked pretty good to me for all the mistakes, and the days I spent arranging and rearranging the pieces were so pleasant that I decided to make a full-size quilt."

She was just as happy with her second quilt even though it was lumpy and didn't last long because the thread wasn't heavy enough. Her husband made a quilting frame and she's had a quilt top on it ever since.

At first she made quilts for friends, then began going to some mountain fairs; now she sells through a store in Asheville and Chicago, and does a pretty good mail order business. Three years ago, she purchased a rubber stamp. Now, she has a price list.

Her mother didn't quilt, but had a big effect on Susan because "she had an eye for handwork." Besides doing all the practical sewing, which she taught to her daughter, she also embroidered, crocheted and knitted beautifully. "Mother was very confident about being able to do any needlework and I think that's why when I decided to quilt, I had no doubts about being able to do it."

One turn deserves another, and Susan says she plans to instill that same confidence in her daughters, Emily and Becky. "I'll make sure they can do a little hand sewing and use a sewing machine, and help them in any projects they undertake, but I won't sit them down and teach them to quilt unless they ask me."

The way quilting women tell it, a person has to want to quilt to do it well. There has to be an urge to create, and there must be the time and situation that will allow it.

If a woman intends to do all that handwork, it's likely she'll want her quilt to be beautiful, like someone's oil painting. She'll want it to be different from all others, even more so than her own barbecue sauce or apple pie recipe. Most quilts are unique, as are their makers, women like Maudie and Georgia and Leona and Connor and Susan. Quilts were bed coverings first, born of necessity, but the individual work and creativity has always gone beyond the "necessary."

MAGNOLIAS

GROW IN DIRT

The Bawdy Lore of
Southern Women

by Rayna Green

I heard my first bawdy stories from Southern women; they told them in the appreciative company of other women and children, male and female. Usually, this storytelling occurred when we city folk went "down home" for holidays to visit relatives in East Texas (a Southern enclave in the Southwest). All the women would assemble after dinner to talk about family matters and tell stories. The men were engaged in the same enterprise out in the yard, except that they didn't talk family; they talked politics. And they didn't "set" to talk; they stood or hunkered.

We girls and all the boys who were too young to go out with the men had been put to rest near the women, but we were always very much awake. No one really expected us to go to sleep, and we were allowed to listen as long as we didn't intrude. It was called being "seen and not heard." Ordinarily, we had been called upon to perform earlier, but when our songs and recitations and the men's mealtime politics talk were done, the women had their turn. When things got a bit too racy, someone would put a finger to her lips and say "little pitchers have big ears." The content would be adjusted for cleanliness for awhile, but not for long.

Of course, some of what they said was meant for children, and it was calculated to send us into shrieks of

shocked delight. The very advice traditionally given to children was comic, bawdy and just the reverse of proper. "Now that you're going off to college," an aunt advised my best friend, "don't drink out of any strange toilets." And my granny warned the girls many times, "Before you marry any ol' hairy-legged boy, be sure to look carefully into his genes (jeans)."

For such wonderful advice, we did indeed have big ears, and we carried away material for our future repertoires as grown women. Such performances gave my sisters and cousins something to share, expand and treasure as much as we treasured the more conventional and publicly acceptable Southern woman's store of knowledge about cooking, quilting and making do.

One of the first bawdy stories I remember was about a newly-married couple who spent their first week with

the girl's parents. Late one morning, her mother went upstairs to see why the couple hadn't come down for breakfast, and she returned to the kitchen with orders for Paw to call the doctor. When he inquired why they needed one, she replied, "Oh, they come down in the middle of the night for the lard and got your hide glue instead."

The woman who told that story and many others was my grandmother. She continued to fill my big ears with a large and delightfully bawdy store of tales, songs, jokes, and sayings for the next thirty years. Grandmother was an unusually good storyteller, but her bawdiness was not remarkable in our family. Her sisters, my mother, my sisters, cousins, and aunts all engaged in the perpetuation of the bawdy tradition. I have noted this family pattern elsewhere and have heard similar material from Southern friends and colleagues in folklore and from those marvelous teachers professional folklorists call "informants." Although folklorists are just beginning to report its existence all over the world, I have heard bawdry from all sorts of women. I continue to hear such material from family members; since I don't travel home very often, Ma Bell has to serve as the communicative vehicle. I'm certain her corporate Yankee ears would turn pink if she knew what my sisters



told me long distance. The phone now serves as an instrument for the maintenance of tradition and for my own recall of those stories I heard so long ago. In fact, a new tradition in the family is the reputation of Grandmother's stories, and it is partly due to that tradition that I can record them here.

Many folks in the South would vigorously deny that any women would engage in such naughtiness. Certainly there are some, perhaps many, who would no more traffic in bawdry than in flesh. And there are others who would not even participate by listening. As my best friend's aunt would say, "She wouldn't say 'shit' if she had a mouth full!" The South believes in and reinforces its own mythology, and the bawdy material simply would not aid women in maintaining the Mammy-Miss Melly image. Between the accepted image and the rigid sanctions of Protestant church life, I doubt many women would revel in a public reputation which included being a good trashy storyteller.

One way my family acknowledged the hypocrisy was to tell bawdy stories about it. A favorite from my mother concerns a group of ladies discussing sex. One said she'd heard that you could tell how much a woman liked

sex just by examining the size of her mouth. "Waal, (and here the teller opens her mouth wide and bellows) ah just don't believe that," said Mrs. Priss, the minister's wife. And "Oooh, (here the teller purses her lips) is that sooo!" said Mrs. Belle, the red-headed beauty operator.

The reason few know about Southern women's bawdy lore is that most scholars of pornography, obscenity and bawdry are male. Unlike folklorist Vance Randolph who had the good fortune, good sense and credibility to collect such materials from women, most collectors received bawdy lore from men. Women sang them child ballads and lullabies and men told them bawdy tales and songs which could not, until recently, be printed at all. Men not only collected bawdry from men, but they often sought it only from certain kinds of men – usually urban black males on the street or in prison. They knew Southern white males tell racy racist material, and, being rightfully offended by the existence of an endless Rastus and Liza joke cycle, never thought to ask what else there was. Had they gone collecting the stuff from women, they'd have either got it, been shot trying, or ruined their reputation with the men out by the pick-up.

I recall the stunned surprise of two male colleagues in folklore when, during a visit to my home, my female relatives treated them to a display of sisterly trust and verbal indiscretion the like of which they'd never been otherwise privileged to hear. Few husbands, brothers or fathers would have sent male collectors to a female relative if the agenda was dirt. So, the dirt stays in the kitchen where men and women prefer to keep it.

The number of women who tell bawdy lore is something of a question, but what kinds of women tell it is an even more curious issue. Due to my own origins and upbringing, my exposure to Protestant lower- and lower-middle-class women, both black and white, has been more extensive than to any other group. However, because of the peculiar advantages which education has afforded me, I have mingled with wealthy and upper-class women enough to hear the stories they have to tell. All sisters under the skin, one might say, and sharing trashy talk certainly moved us to a common denominator. Genteel rich ladies fulfill one's

wildest expectations, and the stories of the Southern female horse set (the Manassas manure crowd, as one Washington journalist tabbed them) would give any Derby hooker a run for the money on this particular track. One of the loveliest of their stories comes from my aunt, an elegant horsy lady who loves train stories – the bawdier the better. She tells of the flashily dressed belle who boards a train in Memphis heading West. Two dark ladies seated across from her draw her attention, and she inquires after their exotic origins.

"Well," says the first one, "I'm a Navajo and my friend here, she's an Arapajo."

"Oh, that's just wonderful," says the berouged lady. "I'm a Dallas 'ho. We have so much in common."

Not to be outdone by elegant women, other women who operate outside the boundaries of social systems also take license in their storytelling. The various Southern "whore ladies," barmaids, snuff queens (Country/Western groupies), and other wicked ladies I have known and loved deliver the goods when it concerns bawdy tales. The trash-mouthed "good old girl" has even surfaced in recent literary and cinematic treatments. The Cracker truck-stop waitress in *Alice Doesn't Live Here Any More* is one such character. And two Southern madams and their repertoires have been immortalized in print. Pauline of Louisville's notorious bawdy house wrote her own delightful memoirs, and "Miss Hilda," the last of the Texas Madams, appears with her tales in a 1973 *Journal of American Folklore* article (see bibliography). Miss Hilda illustrates part of the Southern paradox by telling outrageous stories at the same time she forbids her female employees and male clients to swear in the House. She might be a "Dallas 'ho," but some standards had to be maintained in order to keep up the proper image.

One final group which participates in bawdry, however, is less bound on keeping up the image. I have to confess that many of the women who tell vile tales are gloriously and affirmatively old! They transcend the boundaries – not by their station and employment – but by aging beyond the strictures that censure would lay on the young. The South, like many traditional cultures, offers an increase

Rayna Green is presently director of the Project on Native Americans in Science for the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Washington, D.C. She served as coordinator of the Regional America Program for the Bicentennial Festival of American Folklife at the Smithsonian Institute, and is book review editor for the Journal of American Folklore. She has written the introduction to Vance Randolph's collection, Pissing in the Snow and Other Ozark Folktales (University of Illinois Press, 1976), as well as articles and reviews for many journals.

Rayna wrote us the following note: "My grandmother, Clara Frederick Derden, was the bearer of many Southern, German, and Texas traditions, including bawdy lore. Born in 1900, she died on October 19, 1976, two weeks after I finished this article. I brought a draft of the article to her hospital room and said that I had 'told all,' and that her reputation would be ruined. She laughed and said she hoped I'd told the truth. I've tried to do just that. This is for her."

photo by Ann Hawthorne



in license to those who advance in age, and old ladies I have known take the full advantage offered them in their tale-telling. They seem to delight in particular in presenting themselves as wicked old ladies. Once, when my grandmother stepped out of the bathtub, and my sister commented that the hair on her “privates” was getting rather sparse, Granny retorted that “grass don’t grow on a race track.”

A number of stories I’ve heard concern old women’s fancy for young men, and Randolph reports several of these in *Pissing in the Snow and Other Ozark Folktales*. As the Southern Black comedienne, Moms Mabley, used to say: “Ain’t nothin’ no old man can do for me ’cept bring me a message from a young man.” I confess I look forward to old age if I can be as bad as Granny and Moms.

Southern or not, women everywhere talk about sex – sex with young boys, old men and handsome strangers – and sexual errors, both good and bad. Newly married couples are some of their favorite characters along with



photo by Lucinda W. Bunnen

prostitutes, preachers, rabbis, nuns, Easterners, country boys and girls, foreigners, and traveling salesmen. In general, men are more often the victims of women’s jokes than not. Tit for tat, we say. Usually the subject for laughter is men’s boasts, failures or in-

adequacies (“comeuppance for lack of uppcomance,” as one of my aunts would say). One story my granny tells is about the two women who were arguing as to whether old men could satisfy women. They argued back and forth until one quieted the other by asking if she’d “ever tried to stuff spaghetti up a pig’s butt?”

Preachers take the brunt of many jokes, and one can understand – given the Southern church’s rigorous control over women’s lives – why parson stories are true favorites of women. Preachers either get away with what they can never brag about, or worse, get caught with their clerical piety down. In a



joke my aunt tells, a young nun sits across from a prostitute on a train. When the sweet little nun inquires solicitously of the painted lady what she does to get such beautiful clothes, the lady replies that she is a prostitute.

“Oh, my,” said the nun. “I’ve never

met a prostitute. What do you do?"

"Well," the lady said, "I sleep with men for money."

"Oh, my goodness," gasped the nun, "how much do you charge?"

"Twenty-five dollars," said the lady.

"Twenty-five dollars," the nun said in surprise, "why, pooh on Father O'Brien and his cookies!"

My grandmother does a long monologue composed of mock announcements from the pulpit by the typical Baptist preacher. "Will all the ladies in the congregation who wish to engage in family planning, please see the minister in his study," the monologue begins, and the phrases following do the preacher's image no good.

Besides preachers and old men, women love to tell stories about country boys and strangers. Country boys are noted for their affections for sheep and their mothers and sisters. Strangers are noted for their tricks on local folk, most particularly for their efforts to secure sex with the farmer's daughters. In a story repeated in *Pissing in the Snow*, one of my Southern Indian/Kentucky migrant friends told of the on-shore sailor who had the joke played on him. He visited a small-town prostitute, but was too drunk to know what he was doing. As he huffed and puffed in his efforts to get his money's worth, he asked how he was doing.

"Oh, about three knots," replied the lady.

"Three knots?" he asked.

"Yeah," she said. "It's not hard. It's not in. And you're not gonna get your money back."

Next to country boys and strangers, foolish people of all kinds are the subjects of tales. What constitutes foolishness could be some matter for debate, but I expect that the women all recognized it when they saw it. When someone behaved in a silly or disgraceful way, my Granny would remind us of Charlie Fershit who had his name changed so that it was All-Turd.

And she would tell us about the country boy who came to work with two black eyes. When his friend asked how he got them, he said, "Well, when we stood up in church yesterday morning, a fat lady in front of me had her dress tucked up between her buttocks. I thought to help her out, so I pulled the dress straight and she turned around and hit me in the eye."

"But you have two black eyes."

And the country boy said, "Well, when she turned back around, I figured she must have wanted her dress like it was, so I put it back."

I have rarely heard from women material that I would consider to be deeply derogatory to women or men; I have as rarely heard racist sex tales from women, black or white. Thus, the women's repertoires, like those of other groups, are as distinctive for their omissions as for their inclusions. Southern men tell stories about many of the same characters as women, but their emphases and inferences are, I believe, quite different.

The genres of women's bawdry are, I think, few. I have rarely seen bawdy gestures. Tales and jokes predominate, though I have heard some vulgar songs. Most of the songs, like those of males, are parodies of traditional, popular or religious songs. The "dirty" version of "Little Red Wing," for example, is sung by males and females alike, and I have heard relatives and friends sing it. But, in general, I cannot recall hearing many bawdy songs from women, though Randolph reports some incidents in his unpublished manuscript, "Bawdy Songs from the Ozarks." A kind of bawdy word play or word invention, however, appears to be quite common among Southern women; here the content is often scatological rather than sexual. My mother's favorite curse is "shit fire and save matches." The comic naming of genital areas ("Possible" for: wash up as far as possible, down as far as possible, and then wash possible) offered women an enormous opportunity for bawdy language play. Here the many names were not in themselves bawdy though their immediate referent was. In my family, a woman's pubic area was known as a "Chore Girl" or a "wooly booger." Here, I leave the reader to ponder the cultural significance of the terrifying "booger" in Southern life as well as the visual, metaphoric impact of the well-known (well-used and worn out) scrub pad on women's imaginations. I never heard a woman use but one (twat) of the numerous derogatory terms for women's genitalia that Southern men use (gash, slash, pussy, cunt, cock, etc.).

Our Chore Girls and wooly boogers were affectionately referred to, as were the male "tallywhackers." Again, I marvel at the richness of cultural

interpretation possible as well as at the cynicism with which Chore Girls and tallywhackers were invented. So much for moonlight and magnolias. What is interesting in all the naming is that Southern ladies' reputed public preference for euphemism (e.g.: "he Critter" for "bull") travels to the private sector as well.

The same preference for word play and euphemism shows up in another form of bawdy lore that women engage in. Southern women love to discuss death, disease, dying and pain. But they also love to invent comic diseases accompanied by the comic definition of the disease. Just the shorthand name of the ailment said by one of my female relatives while we were in public or polite company could be guaranteed to send all the children into fits of laughter. Whenever one of us would complain of some unspecified ailment, Granny would say that we had the "hiergarchy" — that's when you usually fly high but have to light low to shit. Or when someone really behaved badly, she would inform us that he had the "spanque" (pronounced span-Q). "That's when there's not enough skin of the ass to cover the hole," Granny would say. There were, of course, non-bawdy diseases like the "epizooty," applied to unspecified craziness or illness, but Granny seemed to know more people who had the spanque and the hiergarchy than the epizooty.

Southern women — like traditional women in all cultural areas — use the bawdy material in many ways for many reasons. Obviously, the material is entertaining to those who use it and presumably to their audiences who continue to demand it. But why it entertains is something else again. I can scarcely develop a theory of humor here, but I can speculate on the uses of the material beyond the simple evocation of laughter. That function of evoking laughter, however, is an important one in the analysis of women's materials since women, stereotypically, do not have reputations as humorists. Women themselves often say they cannot and do not tell jokes. The media comedienne stand alone in their presentation of women as inventors and perpetrators of humor, but even there, few — beyond Moms Mabley and Lily Tomlin, both from Southern cultures —

have gone outside the boundaries of portraying women as humorous objects rather than as humorists. Thus one of the functions of bawdy lore lies in women seeing themselves as comic storytellers and comic artists. In the women's world, as in the men's, the premier storyteller and singer, the inventive user of language commands respect and admiration. And the ability to bring laughter to people is as much admired as the preacher's power to bring tears. Here, the ability to evoke laughter with bawdy material is important to these women's positive images of themselves as teller and audience.

There are other functions of this material, however, which should be obvious. Clearly, the material is educational, but in an unexpected way. Unlike the enormous repertoire of horror stories used to convince children (particularly young women) of the importance of maintaining the culture's public agenda ("why, I know one girl who sat on a park toilet seat and got a disease and she could never marry"), the bawdy tales debunk and defy those rules. The very telling defies the rules ("nice women shouldn't even know what a prostitute is much less what she does"). Women are not supposed to know or repeat such stuff. But they do and when they do, they speak ill of all that is sacred — men, the church, marriage, home, family, parents.

It is almost a cliché to say that humor is a form of social criticism, but the shoe certainly fits here. Southern women *ought* to get married and have children and like it, according to overt cultural prescription, but marriage and sex in bawdy lore are not always attractive states. In a story told by a woman to Vance Randolph, a young Cracker wife complains about her beekeeper husband's stinginess. He makes her lick old sour molasses off his pecker every night though he keeps three hundred pounds of strained honey in the house. Not a lovely portrait.

A standard comment on sex usually offered by married women is "I give it to him once a week whether he needs it or not." But some of the stories make sex — with whoever happens to be attractive — sound downright appealing, and that version differs from the duty-bound version ladies often purvey to prospective brides. So, in the bawdy lore, the women speak

with disgust, relish or cynicism about what they ought not to admit to in their socialized state. The bawdy lore gives a Bronx cheer to sacred cows and bulls.

But the bawdy lore itself is a form of socialization to the hidden agenda in Southern women's lives and thoughts. The tales and sayings tell young women what they can expect in private out of the men and the institutions they are taught to praise in public, and they inform them as they could never be informed in "serious" conversation. Poking fun at a man's sexual ego, for example, might never be possible in real social situations with the men who have power over their lives, but it is possible in a joke. The hilarity over the many tiny or non-performing tallywhackers, or the foolish sexual escapades of drunken, impotent men form a body of material over which women vent their anger at males and offer alternative modes of feeling to the female hearers. And when the audience is small boys, what then do the women want them to "hear"? Perhaps their mothers and aunts expect them to remember and "do right" when the time comes. Perhaps, though, the repetition of such stories before little boys is just a tiny act of revenge on the big boys out by



There are many issues concerning women's bawdry that I have not attempted to address here. For example, I do not know to what extent men and women share tales, songs, sayings and so forth. How often and in what circumstances do women perform bawdy material in front of adult men (or vice versa) and how are their repertoires, expectations and uses of the lore affected by that performance? How do performance styles or attitudes toward bawdy material differ among individual performers, between various regions of the South, and between racial and ethnic groups? In most instances here, I have given examples of women's bawdy folklore totally out of context and have alluded to types of situations where women might perform this material. Studies and reports of all these aspects of female bawdy performance would tell us a great deal about the covert culture and acculturation of women in the South. But the world of women's bawdry is a private, not a public world, and access to it would require more than scholarly interests and credentials. In part, I am reluctant to suggest that anyone approach that world for the purposes of study alone, and rather insist that a natural participation in it offers more than any research report could.

the pick-up. Just remember Old Pompey humming a few choruses of "All God's Chillun' Got Shoes" while he swept under Old Marse's feet, and see if that particular shoe doesn't fit. There are many forms of education, and sometimes the lessons are hard.

A kind of function that the stories and sayings serve, however, is not necessarily connected to the covert psychological agenda that concerns women's needs to react against the system that defines their roles as wives, mothers and Ladies. The need is for sex education, pure and simple, and the bawdy lore serves that purpose as well as others. My Granny's sayings about looking into a boy's genes/jeans served two purposes. It made me ask about genes which led to a discussion of why I couldn't marry my age-mate cousin and beget pop-eyed, slack-jawed kids. And those first bawdy stories about young married couples, lard and hide glue led to inquiries about the SEX ACT in general. Why, please, would anyone want to use lard or Vaseline in sex anyway? One may still ask that question, but posing it to my cousin got me a lot of information in return. The kind of sex education I got from the bawdy stories and from inquiries about them was no more erroneous or harmful than the "where babies come from" lecture, and it was a good deal more artistic and fun.

So, participation in fun, rebellion, and knowledge-giving were all a part of what those naughty ladies gave me and what Southern women can continue to give new generations of women. For those who engage in bawdry, the reward comes from having been bad and good at it. The respect that her audiences give the bawdy female narrator backs up the delight she gets from the forbidden nature of it all. What she purveys is a closet humor, taken out and enjoyed whenever and wherever ladies meet — while they work together and while they relax together. Their humor requires no pick-up, no men's club, no coffee can for spitting, no coon hunt, no Mason jars full of whiskey, and no chaw of Red Dog Tobacco — just a kitchen, a porch, a parlor, and a private, willing audience of ladies. Next time you see a group of women in that particular set, don't assume they're sharing the latest recipe for peach cobbler. The subject may be other delights.

"Appalachian women have more faces than these few poems can mirror, but there are some wrinkles that always form around the eyes, some same angle in every smile, some common sound in the telling of every life . . ."

"Aunt Neva is the most traditional woman in my family. She has always lived in rural Eastern Kentucky, farming the same piece of land. Most importantly, she feels this life is the best of all possible lives to be had, and has been responsible for transferring to me much of what I see as positive about mountain culture.

"Often when I think of Appalachian women, the word 'waiting' comes to mind – waiting to leave a parent's home, waiting for times to be easier, waiting for the children to be grown, waiting for the peace and luxury of growing old with a mate with whom a long struggle has been shared. 'The Garden' is my Aunt Flossie's story of such waiting. She married Elijah when she was sixteen and moved a stone's throw from her parents' house. These two homes have a path between them worn by the daily crossings of three generations. Then Flossie lost her children to marriage and her parents and husband to death all very near the same time. After having been a hub in this wheel of family, she finds all the spokes gone and the rim of the world will not connect to her center."

– Lee Howard



The Garden

1

She smoothes her wrinkleless skirt
(A-lined and middle-kneed)
Straightens her glasses
dabs at the corner of her eye
and resettles her hands
for the tenth time
in her lap
And says
Lige always had a pretty garden
His beans were the fullest in Clay County
His corn the sweetest
He always took such pleasure in it
especially in the evening in it
And silent
as she combs the new-turned spring ground
for a sign of a dead man
but not one seed of him
can be found

2

She had the trees pruned
til their new green
looks like second growth
on old stumps
They offer no shade
Lige and she
just last summer
sat listening to crickets
and the train-rumble rattle
of the auctioneer
selling chickens and couches
across the road
til long after the moon
rose above the dark hills
and the hollows were quiet
Coming from the path along the garden
I heard their soft murmur
like the humming of a stream
like voices in a dream
to the music of katy-dids
they sang
their children's lives
And without words
stroked the rough skin
of their hands
as they watched
but did not see
the hugeness of the night

3

The house rings with only 2 footsteps
now
she watches snow fall
even and steady
as the beat of a heart
She cannot see beyond the yard
of the old homeplace
on the other side of the frozen garden
strange children play
around the thick-trunked trees
She once hung tin from them as saplings
to keep the birds away
Now old nests fall under the weight of the snow
to the delight of other childhoods
Her own lost
with the losing of the two that found her
Her own future lost
with losing of the one who took her
Stuck in the present
her empty womb aches
She closes the curtain
on the endless sea of white sameness
and cries for all that's been too long gone
and cannot ever come back again.



Mountain Women

photo by Ann Hawthorne

Kentucky Girlhood

If you put your ear to the rail
Miles away trains will rumble their coming
with a clicktyclack clacktyclick
hurrah
Whistle will blow
far through deep green valleys
and ricochet off mountain sides
to stop at the door
of where you hear
inside the ear of your wanting
to see beyond the hills you're cradled in
So you kneel by
parallel steel
ribbons
Squeezing in between the ties
And pray to the song of a smoke-belching machine
to come sweep you out of this smooth wide lap of a world
before you are rocked to sleep
You are very still
listening
for the hurrying sound of your dreams
And your heart goes
clicktyclack
and back again
As you yearn your soul to motion

Aunt Neva

Grey hair pinned to the nape of her neck
and green eyes like summer
singing an old song
with words half-remembered
and the tune tucked into the tip of her tongue
saying
Long-me-life and 'pon my honor
I never
No I never
but I've thought about it some
I've run me a day and a night
through these hills
and chewed mountain tea
that tastes just like that brought-on gum
And never
'pon my honor never
felt there was more
I should be wanting
than what I ever had
And I had me a good man
who worked with me
this land
and fine corn
head high
we did grow it
and into our stone mill
we did throw it
and all winter with lard we had rendered
I made pone after pone
of crackling bread
And never
'pon my honor
never
did I miss a french roll
I never had
And I had me all I wanted
for I've known me this holler
and everything that lives on it
and if I lacked for nothing
why should I worry for something
that could be elsewhere had
No I never
'pon my honor
I never
wished for nary thing
that could be elsewhere had

Lee Howard grew up in the Kentucky mountains and now lives in Washington, D. C. Currently, she teaches a poetry workshop at The Roosevelt Hotel for Senior Citizens.

PARALYZED

by Lee Smith



This is a short story and it is not about me either. It's about my first cousin Mary Lou Stoles. I'm the one writing it since she can't lift a muscle; she is lying over there next door just as paralyzed as she can be and still be breathing. It's the most pitiful thing.

From where I am sitting on my back porch I can look out through my clematis vine and see my backyard with my clean clothes all hanging out neat and straight on my clothesline, and I can see the Levisa River (Levisa means Pretty Pictures in Indian) right out beyond that, and the railroad track where the coal trains go, and then the mountains starting straight up just as green as you please behind the railroad. Dew is on everything because the sun won't come up here until about ten o'clock. I mean it will *come*

up, but it can't get over the mountains and hit the yard before ten, the mountains are so high. Looking up I can see the sky, bright blue, and tell it's going to be another sunny day. Another scorcher.

I've lived here in Grundy, Virginia, for nearly forty years, and I wouldn't live anywhere else if you paid me. I like it. There is some that don't, but I do. I know all the sewers run into the Levisa, which looks so pretty, and I know that mountain I'm looking at has got strip mines all over the top of it and all over the other side of it too like a honeycomb. But that's progress. You can't tell me anything about it I don't know. I was born right here in this house in the front bedroom, the one with the window looking out on Route 460. Right now, my mother and my uncle Louis are sleeping upstairs, Uncle Louis breathing real heavy due to his black lung, and over there next door, not but about thirty feet away from my back steps, my cousin Mary Lou Stoles is stretched out in *her* bedroom that she has always had. She hasn't been out of that room since she paralyzed herself nearly two years ago.

That was the setting and now I will go on into the plot: as much plot as there is to it, I mean. The big trouble is that this is real life and so the plot is hard to pin down. Things just happened, the way they will, and when you look back you think, "Oh, if I hadn't closed the door just *then*," or "What if I had gone over to Knoxville for the summer when Aunt Louise asked me that time, what *then*? But you didn't do it, you didn't go, and so you never know, and looking back it's hard to say when the important things

Lee Smith grew up in Grundy, Virginia and is the author of The Last Day the Dogbushes Bloomed and Something in the Wind. Currently she is working on a novel based on "Paralyzed, A True Story."

happened or even what they were because all the days went along so smooth back then, like water under the bridge. But there's no point in throwing the baby out with the bath water, I always say: you've got to salvage what you can and keep ahold of what you've got and not be looking off in the clouds somewhere. If my daddy hadn't gotten so bad off, I never would have taken over the hardware store, for instance. I didn't know a two-by-four from a hole in the wall that day I started. I didn't know I was starting it either; I thought I was just going in to see how everybody was getting along with Daddy sick.

But my cousin Mary Lou Stoles was the prettiest girl you ever saw, and I'll be the first to say it. When we were girls, she was so pretty that people — women too — would just stop still in the street to get a good look at her. She had real long black hair, real curly, and these dark, dark brown eyes and dead white skin with the pinkest cheeks, all natural. It used to make me sick, somebody born looking like that right next door, related and all. But there wasn't any way to get around it. That's the way she looked *all* the time, and after a while you had to get used to it. Mary Lou herself never did get used to it, she thought there had to be something else all the time when the way she looked would have been aplenty for anybody else.

I remember the night she won the Miss Grundy High Contest: she wore a strapless white ballerina-length evening gown covered all over in seed pearls with rows of net ruffles going all the way down its skirt, bright red patent leather high heel shoes, and a red velvet ribbon around her waist and another around her neck. Mary Lou had a flair all right. Nobody else would have thought to have put a ribbon around their neck. She stood up there all by herself on the stage holding some red roses while the Grundy Golden Wave rhythm band played

"America" and the yellow tile walls of the senior high auditorium shook and shook with the noise. Buford Garber, who was a disc jockey in the daytime and was the emcee that night, went out and put this little bitty tiara on her head and it flashed in the spotlights like real diamonds, and he put a sequin banner across her that said "Miss Grundy High." She stood up there by the ornamental potted palms and smiled, and flashbulbs were going off everywhere like fireworks.

"How do you feel?" Buford Garber asked in his big disc jockey voice. "What are you thinking right now?"

"This is the happiest moment of my life!" Mary Lou blurted and burst into tears. It was the best thing she could have done. The crowd went crazy, clapping and whistling and yelling and carrying on. They loved it for her to cry. It was all right to be that pretty if you cried about it, and so everybody was running out onto the stage and kissing her and hugging her.

I went too. I had been in the Beauty Contest myself, as a matter of fact, mainly because Mary Lou's mother had told Mama it would give me some poise, but I went off in the second round. I knew I would, and I was glad Mary Lou won it. So I hugged her too and it was like hugging a doll or something, like she didn't even know me. Offstage by the Coke machine, my Aunt Helen, Mary Lou's mother, was just about to have a fit she was so excited. She had two boys too, but it was Mary Lou that she really set store by. She had dressed Mary Lou up like a doll all her life, and now it looked like it was about to pay off. Aunt Helen had big plans for Mary Lou: the Miss Buchanan County Contest, the Miss Claytor Lake Contest, the Miss Virginia Contest. Who knew what might happen after that?

Mary Lou got all the way to runner-up in the Miss Virginia Contest, and she won everything in between. Now that she is paralyzed, Aunt Helen has

put all her trophies and ribbons right up where she can see them, on top of her bureau dresser and on the wall. Aunt Helen is the kind that ignores everything she doesn't like. She just plays like it doesn't exist, and it doesn't as far as she is concerned, and she acts like nothing ever happened to Mary Lou between winning the beauty contests and now.

After the contest I remember I went on home with Mama and Daddy. Loretta Belcher was having a party and I wasn't invited, but I didn't care anyway. I had to get up early for Sunday School the next day. Anyway I was sitting at the kitchen table drinking a Coke, still wearing my formal, when the telephone rang and it was Mary Lou.

"Will you come back over here and get me?" she said. She sounded like she was crying. I had my driver's license, but Mary Lou was still too young to get hers.

So I got up and got the car keys and put on a sweater and told Mama where I was going. The auditorium was a mess, paper cups and stuff everywhere. Some people were cleaning it up. The doors were open but the curtain inside was closed. She was sitting back there on the stage all by herself in the middle of her 7-piece set of white Samsonite luggage that she had won for being Miss Grundy High.

"I thought you were going to the party," I said.

"Jerry wouldn't take me," she said. Jerry was this boy that Mary Lou was dating then; his family was just trash and I never could see it, her dating him, with all the boys she had her pick of. You should have seen them driving by her house on Sunday afternoons. But Aunt Helen never would let Mary Lou go out with the same boy two nights in a row. Aunt Helen wanted her to be real popular.

"Why wouldn't Jerry take you?" I said.

"He said I'd be too popular now, he said I'd be stuck up. I'm not stuck up, am I?"

"Well, whether you are or whether you're not is not any of my business," I said, "but I wouldn't go out with that Jerry any more if I was you."

She said something.

"What?" I said.

"He plays the guitar," she said. "He wrote a song about me last week, now he won't even take me home."

"Well, come on," I said, and I had to load all seven pieces of that Samsonite luggage into the car myself, because Mary Lou had to carry her roses and her trophy and her makeup case. All the way home she was sitting real still on the seat and her hoop stuck out over the gears.

"Don't you tell Mama I didn't go to that party," Mary Lou said when we got there, and she got out of the car and ran across the yard to her house as quick as she could, leaving all that luggage in the car, and I watched her go until the white of her dress was gone. "Thank you," she called back. Then she closed her door. Thank you, my foot, I thought, but I know when to keep my mouth shut and I never did tell Aunt Helen a thing.

The boys Mary Lou liked were always weird: Mary Lou had a weird streak in her that she got from her father. Harold Stoles was a failure, everybody said so, I don't even know what he ever did for a living besides that. They lived on Aunt Helen's money which was considerable, her being an only child and her father had a patent on some special kind of rivet that people use everywhere in coal mining, even in South America.

When I think of Uncle Harold, I think of him in their living room of a summer with the drapes pulled, just sitting in there in the dark. He never would answer the door. Mary Lou was in there with him most times when I came over to ask her to play. She was the only one in that family that ever paid any attention to Harold Stoles at all, and God knows what they talked about. Mary Lou's brothers had already gotten out of that house as quick as they could though, I'll tell you that, and they never did come back. One of them is in Alaska on a pipeline and the other in Ohio, right today, and they don't send anything but Christmas cards to their mother.

Mary Lou and her daddy used to stay in that room all the time. Sometimes they would have me come in there with them, and then Harold Stoles would read us "The Little Tin Soldier Is Covered With Dust" and "The Spider and the Fly." Mary Lou used to always get real wrought up and start crying, but he went right on anyway. She liked to get upset and cry and he knew that; it took me longer to figure it out.

I think that's what she liked about

religion: all the carrying on. In spite of all Aunt Helen's efforts, Mary Lou never darkened the church door until her daddy died. Then she went to the funeral, of course, which was real simple and real short. There wasn't much you could read out of the Bible that would apply to Harold Stoles. Mary Lou took on so at the cemetery that two men had to help get her back in the car. Nobody else carried on like that, of course. It was bound to be a relief for Aunt Helen. Now she could open the drapes and air out that room where he'd been for so long.

Mary Lou started going to church after that, which tickled Aunt Helen to death until Mary Lou started going too much, when Fred Lee Sampson, Evangelist, and the Singing Triplets came to town. Fred Lee Sampson set up a big tent and then he set up a little tent behind that one, but you couldn't go in the little tent unless you were saved at the revival. I don't know what all they had in the little tent besides a plastic pool for baptizing, and Mary Lou never would say. I wasn't about to find out for myself. I don't hold much with electric guitars and singing triplets and microphones and that sort of thing. I've been saved since I was ten years old.

The second week of the revival, Fred Lee Sampson had somebody build him a big plywood cross to put in the big tent and he drilled all these holes in it and screwed little colored Christmas lights in every hole and put up everybody's name under one of the holes. If you got saved or rededicated your life, you got to screw in your little light every time you went to the revival after that. Naturally Mary Lou loved it. She loved to go up and screw in her little light. Mary Lou was real religious from then on until she went to college, especially in the summers. Aunt Helen said Mary Lou was making a spectacle of herself. She used to make Mary Lou promise not to rededicate her life any more or she wouldn't let her go to the revival, but Mary Lou did it anyway.

Well, it came time for college, I went over to Radford and majored in home ec. To tell the truth, I didn't much mind when Daddy developed emphysema in the fall of my sophomore year and I had to come on home to take care of him. Somebody had to look after Granddaddy and Uncle Louis too, and it was just too



Over there next door, not but about thirty feet away from my back steps, my cousin Mary Lou Stoles is stretched out in her bedroom that she has always had. She hasn't been out of that room since she paralyzed herself nearly two years ago.

much for Mama. I had learned enough by then anyway. But Mary Lou kept on going to college. Radford wasn't good enough for her either. Oh no. Not even East Tennessee State University was good enough for her! Aunt Helen took that rivet money and sent Mary Lou off to some fancy school on it.

In college Mary Lou majored in English and started looking like some kind of beatnik. She never came home if she could help it. Aunt Helen didn't like the way things were going, but there wasn't much she could do about it after she had sent Mary Lou there. Whenever anybody asked Aunt Helen if Mary Lou was in a sorority where she was, Aunt Helen's eyes would just glaze over, and she'd say something about the weather. By that time Mary Lou wouldn't have touched a sorority or a beauty contest with a ten-foot pole. She always had to be one way or the other, Mary Lou. She never could be in between. When she did come home, she dated Hubert Blair who was out of law school by then and was starting to go into the coal business on the side, but she wouldn't go out with him much even though Aunt Helen was really pushing it and he was just crazy about her.

Hubert used to talk to me about it. "I just can't understand that girl," he

would say, shaking his head. "She's the craziest thing I ever saw," but he was smiling about it. Hubert was the best catch in town, if you were interested in that sort of thing, until Mary Lou ruined him. He wouldn't look at anybody else, and she treated him so mean. I used to bake him some gingerbread and take it by every now and then to try and pep him up. Because Mary Lou was *morally loose*, that was the plain truth about it, and everybody knew it. It just killed Hubert. That's how she wrapped him around her little finger, and that's why she got those long distance telephone calls all the time when she was home. To talk to her though, you wouldn't have known it; she tried to pull the wool over everybody's eyes by acting so sweet.

I asked her straight out one time if she was ever going to marry Hubert or just keep stringing him along, and she laughed and said she was going back to school to get a masters degree so she couldn't very well marry anybody right now, could she? She had let her hair grow out then and it was hanging all the way down her back. Of course she didn't need any more education. She just wanted to hang around with those weird people you find in places like that, and sure enough she got tangled up with one of

them and started living with him in New York City without the benefit of clergy.

Hubert was the one who told me that. He went up there to try to talk some sense into Mary Lou and there they were in one room, he said, with a bare light bulb hanging down from the ceiling, eating off of two little portable burners. Hubert said it was a bad neighborhood with trash piled up all over the street. But Mary Lou sent him back, and Hubert just about died. Then he married this girl that always had liked him, Marge Ketchum, and they had little baby twin girls right away.

Aunt Helen never mentioned Mary Lou one time in five years, that's how bad it was. One time, Mary Lou actually brought that so-called New York artist of hers to see me. I couldn't believe it! The doorbell rang and I thought it was the Jewel Tea man or the boy coming to work in the yard, so I opened the door and there stood Mary Lou looking just awful, not even clean, with that hippie boyfriend of hers.

"Well, aren't you going to ask us in?" she said, just like she hadn't done any of it. She had a little bit of Aunt Helen in her too.

I said, "Come on in." I guess she could tell how I felt.

She was the prettiest girl you ever saw, so pretty that people – women, too – would stop still in the street to get a good look at her. She had real long black hair, dark, dark brown eyes and dead white skin with the pinkest cheeks, all natural. It used to make me sick.



photo by Rick Doble

“This is Jerold Kukafka,” Mary Lou said, but I never could bring myself to look right at him. He had wild bushy black hair like a Negro and was wearing some old faded work pants. I would have said something to him, only I couldn’t think of what to say. He didn’t look like any kind of brainy writer to me, but that’s what Mary Lou had told Aunt Helen he was, only of course he hadn’t published anything. Mary Lou sat on the sofa and wrinkled up my antimacassars. She kept pulling at them with her fingers, and her fingernails were all bitten off.

This Jerold Kukafka went walking around and around the room like some kind of skinny jungle cat in a cage at the zoo. I have one whole wall full of shelves where I keep my teacup collection and he kept picking up a teacup and looking at it, then he’d walk away and then he’d come back and look at another one. It made me so nervous.

“You’re still collecting your teacups, I see,” said Mary Lou.

“Yes I am,” I said.

“You haven’t changed a bit,” she said. “You still look just the same.”

Mary Lou looked around. “This room is the same, too,” she said. “You haven’t changed anything. Do you remember sitting over there at

the table and making paper dolls out of magazines? Do you remember how we used to play gin rummy for hours and hours?”

“Mama and Uncle Louis will be back any time,” I said. “They went over to Junior’s to get some salad peas for supper.”

“Oh,” Mary Lou said.

Jerold Kukafka was looking at my cup from Limoges, France.

“How is my mama?” Mary Lou asked.

“She’s all right,” I said. “I’d go over there if I was you.”

“We went over there,” Mary Lou said, “but she wouldn’t answer the door.”

“She might not be home,” I said.

“There’s a car in the driveway.”

“What kind is it?”

“A blue car,” Mary Lou said.

“That’s hers all right,” I told her. “Buick Skylark.” Imagine not knowing what kind of car your own mother drives!

“Well, how is she?” Mary Lou asked again. Mary Lou still had her hair long but pulled straight back in a pony tail, and she was real thin. Her cheekbones stuck out and her eyes looked way too big and they shifted, shifted everywhere.

“Your mother is about as well as you can expect,” I said, “considering.

Maybe she was taking a nap.”

Jerold Kukafka was looking at my cup from the Brussels World Fair. “Let’s get out of here,” he said. It was the first thing he had said and I jumped. Mary Lou stood right up and went over to him like she was pulled by a magnet and she held his hand.

“Tell Mama I asked about her,” Mary Lou said, “and tell her I said I’m real happy.” She was happy, too: I believe it. Some people thrive on sin.

Mary Lou left with Jerold Kukafka in the pouring rain not ten minutes before Uncle Louis and Mama came back with the salad peas, and I never said a word. I guess Mary Lou wasn’t so happy a year after that, because Jerold Kukafka hung himself dead from an exposed pipe in the bathroom in that place where they lived in New York, and Mary Lou found him herself with his tongue hanging out and all black in the face. Then Mary Lou was in a hospital. Aunt Helen just casually let that drop one day when we were all out on the porch drinking ice tea. Aunt Helen clammed up right away and she wouldn’t say *why*, but I’m sure it was mental, myself, or she would have said.

We buried Granddaddy in September and a couple of days after that, here came Mary Lou back home. She was thirty. It was exactly like those years with Jerold Kukafka never had happened at all: here came Mary Lou, looking like she ought to have looked all along. She was wearing dresses and playing tennis at the new country club all of a sudden, she had cut her hair real short, and butter wouldn't melt in her mouth.

One day she walked in the office to see old Earl Graves, the Superintendent of Schools, and the next week she was teaching senior English at Grundy High. She made a blueberry cheesecake and brought it over to Mama and me. She sold little felt birds at the Women's Club Christmas Bazaar. But I watched her close and noticed things, nothing I could ever put my finger on — she smoked a lot, and her eyes looked funny sometimes. She was back here for almost three years before any rumors started, and I never heard them then. People wouldn't have said a word to me, seeing as how I'm a relative. People are that polite.

The first I heard of it was in the Rexall, where I was having my lunch, when Brenda Looney came bursting in the door. Brenda Looney is a teller at the Levisa Bank and Trust, so she sees everybody and knows what's going on all over town. She wears these harlequin glasses. I never have cared for her myself and I never stand in her line when I go to make my deposits at the bank. But here she came, just slamming into the Rexall on her break, couldn't wait to tell it.

"Did you hear about Hubert? Hubert Blair?" she asked real loud, talking to Mrs. Ritten who works at the cosmetics counter and is a big friend of hers, but of course you could hear her all over the store. "Well!" she went on, and although two counters were in between me and Brenda Looney I could imagine how she looked, how she would draw up her mouth. "Hubert Blair and Mary Lou Stoles have *run off!* Eloped. They say he left a note for his wife."

"Oh, and those poor little twin girls!" cried Mrs. Ritten. "That's just awful. I can't imagine Hubert doing a thing like that."

"Well, that's what they did all right," Brenda Looney said. "I didn't

know if you heard it or not."

"That beats everything," Mrs. Ritten said.

"What does?" asked old Mrs. Tyler Rockbridge, coming up, and they told her, and they told everybody that came their way. They said that Marge Ketchum Blair was under heavy sedation and her mother was coming in on the train.

But you can be sure that everybody shut up pretty quick when I got out of my booth and went over to the cash register. They didn't know I was in there. I took my time, too. "I want two packs of Dentyne," I said, "and put it on my bill, please, Sue." I didn't have to tell Sue what I had for lunch. I always have the same thing, a bean salad and a coke and a small bag of barbecue potato chips. I took my time going out and you could have heard a pin drop. Somebody in this family has got to have some dignity. On my way out of the Rexall I remember that I saw that Coppertone ad up over the lotions, that little girl with her hair in pigtails and a real good tan. I could have cried about Hubert's poor little twins.

Of course, it wouldn't have done any good. Hubert has a lot of money since he's in the coal business now, and he gave Marge the most alimony you ever heard of. Marge built herself a new ranch-style house and then married John Wheeler a year after the divorce went through. John Wheeler is a gynecologist. Hubert and Mary Lou moved fifty miles over to Bluefield, where Hubert has some mines, and they just laid low for a while. Nobody ever said a word about them, at least not to me. It was like they had both fallen into one of Hubert's mines.

They were married, of course — Hubert wouldn't have lived with somebody without marrying her — and about a year after that they had a little boy, and then all of a sudden here came Mary Lou out of retirement. The first thing we knew, she was all over the *Southwest Virginia Mountaineer*, smiling out of the society page every Sunday like she deserved to. Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Blair return from Jamaica! Mrs. Hubert Blair has an intimate luncheon! Mrs. Hubert Blair is the head of the Heart Fund! That one really cracked me up. I showed it to Mama, who said, "Well, I guess she's turned over a new leaf." Another day Mama said, "Well, they always were in

love," right in the middle of nothing, but I knew who she was talking about. Mama thought it was romantic.

Mary Lou came back for a visit and brought her little boy, Justin, and that's all I heard from Aunt Helen and Mama for the next two weeks. How cute Justin was, how smart Justin was, how Justin could count to ten on one breath. I was down taking inventory at the hardware store and missed the big visit, myself. Then Hubert announced that he was running for Congress and Mrs. Hubert Blair had her picture on the *front* page, just like she was Jackie Kennedy.

In the middle of the campaign, Mary Lou came home. This time she came home to stay. Hubert called and called, but Mary Lou wouldn't go back to him. Hubert told Aunt Helen that Mary Lou had left all her diamond rings on the kitchen sink. Hubert came over here in his Lincoln Continental three or four times but Mary Lou wouldn't talk to him. There was a lot of publicity about it in the papers. Finally it got so bad that Aunt Helen was having nervous palpitations of the heart, so I walked over there myself to see what I could do.

Mary Lou was lying on the couch in the front room wearing some old robe that must have been Aunt Helen's. She was smoking a cigarette and looking at the ceiling, that's all. She had all the venetian blinds shut tight.

"Hello," I said. I sat down in the rocker.

"Hello, Agnes," she said. She didn't seem surprised to see me. I rocked for a while.

"Don't you think you'd better go home now and help Hubert run for Congress?" I asked. "Who's taking care of your little boy?"

"He's better off," she said. "Hubert's better off too." Her voice was flat as a pancake.

"What made you come home?" I asked. Sure I was curious, but I thought I might get at the trouble that way.

"I was heading a campaign to raise money to improve the facilities at Barton," she said in her strange flat voice. Barton is the mental institution for the southwest part of the state. "I had to go over there and take a tour." Her voice stopped, like it was too much effort to go on. I waited.

"They unlocked the door and I was walking through the wards with the director. Each one we went in was

worse than the one before it. Finally we came to the D ward, which was worse than all the others put together. It was the one where they keep the people who are just like vegetables. They keep them in cribs, Agnes. These big cribs."

I rocked.

"And I was going along looking at everything with the director, and we stopped by one of the cribs to talk, and this horrible, this, *thing* that was in the crib suddenly sat up and grabbed my hand and looked at me."

"Well," I said. "Poor thing. I guess it was glad to see somebody different."

Mary Lou rolled her head back and forth on the pillow. "No, no," she said. "No. You don't understand. It knew me. It looked right at me and it knew me."

"That's ridiculous," I said.

"No," said Mary Lou. "It knew me."

She wouldn't talk any more after

that so I went home. I still can't figure out why that upset her so much. I bet she made it all up in her head. Because they bring those people to Barton from all over this part of the state, and the way I look at it, it's about 1000 to one that any of them would have ever seen her before.

The next day Mary Lou paralyzed herself. They took her in an ambulance to Charlottesville, and then they brought her back. The doctors couldn't find any medical reason for it, they said. They said it was all in her mind. We put her in her old room and Aunt Helen hired two practical nurses, Mrs. Dee and Mrs. Dixon, and they're still there. It's been a year and a half now. Mrs. Dee does the day shift and Mrs. Dixon does the night shift, so she can have some time in the day to work in her garden. I opened a laundromat next to my hardware store.

And Hubert? Everybody felt so sorry for Hubert that he won the election in a landslide victory and now he's sponsoring a strip-mine bill. When ecology came in, Hubert was right on top of it. It's no telling how far he'll go in politics now. He is divorcing Mary Lou quietly — you can't blame him — and he is taking complete care of Justin. He won't even let Aunt Helen look at Justin, much less have a hand in raising him. He told Aunt Helen that he didn't want Justin ever to come in that house and see his mother like she is.

Aunt Helen was real upset, because after all, Justin was the only one she had left. Now Aunt Helen won't have a thing to do with Hubert except sign the checks he sends her, which she says she can barely bring herself to do.

Mary Lou just lies up there in that room every day, like she is lying up there now, with her bed caddy corner so she could look out of the window and see Aunt Helen's climbing rambler rose in full bloom on the trellis if she would turn her head. But she won't. She won't lift a finger. She just lies there. Everybody in town has taken a fancy to it. The preacher, Mr. Sprayberry, comes and sits with her some. He reads her the Bible even though you can't tell if she can hear it or not.

Mama goes and sits with her, and Aunt Helen, and all the ladies in town. People are always bringing congealed salads to Aunt Helen because once Aunt Helen told somebody in the

beauty shop that Mary Lou liked them. Mary Lou can eat fine, but you have to feed her. The only one she won't eat for is Mrs. Dee. Some people have said why don't we put her in a nursing home but of course we won't hear of it. Not a one of us has ever died in a nursing home. We can take care of our own.

I go over there and sit and sometimes I think about how we used to play gin rummy and how we used to sneak off and go swimming in the creek, and it's so sad. It's so pitiful the way she lies there. It's a funny thing but she looks almost prettier now than she ever did. Her hair is growing out now and I fix it real pretty. I think about how she looked the night she won Miss Grundy High. I helped Aunt Helen put all her trophies and ribbons up where she can see them. I often think that if she had married Hubert the first time he asked her, if she hadn't gotten all that education, she could be having intimate luncheons for people in Washington right now. But I'm glad she came home.

I talk to her a lot and I think she understands everything I say even if she won't make a sign. Every day when I come home from the store I go over there and sit with her for a long time. It rests me, sitting in that room, it's so peaceful there. It's always real clean and cool, and we've got it fixed up so nice. I try to keep her interested: I told her all about the Burger-O franchise I just bought, and I read the newspaper to her and the *Reader's Digest*. I never do read her anything about Hubert, though. One day I read her "I Am Joe's Nervous System" out of the *Reader's Digest* but her eyes didn't even flicker. A lot of times I just sit and hold her hand, and sometimes I give her a back rub.

And who knows what will happen? It is not given to us, as Mr. Sprayberry says. And who knows if she might not just jump up from that bed one day and go off and get her PhD or do something else crazy? She's not 36 now. Or she might stay right there and atrophy to death. What I think, though, is that she's happy. I think she likes to have me hold her hand. Outside her window the seasons come and go, and now Aunt Helen has put a picture of The Last Supper up for her to look at, too. It's so pitiful how she lies there; it would just make you cry.

Kalanchoe Pinnata

by Jeanne Ormond

*I want to grow
Like a mother of thousands.
I want to sprout
Babies all along the rims
Of my top leaves.
I want the babies to drop,
One at a time, or
All at once —
I don't care —
As long as they drop,
Sprout, and grow into thousands
Of mothers of thousands.*



LILLIAN SMITH

Reflections on Race and Sex

by Jo Ann Robinson

In February of 1956, Lillian Smith wrote from Neptune Beach, Florida: "This morning a sixty-eight year old woman swam into the sea in front of our house and tried to drown herself . . . she would not let them help her on a boat. She fought wildly for her right to die . . . she stuck it out one hour and a half before she weakened and succumbed to life's insistent demand that she survive. It was fascinating to watch."¹

It must have been fascinating, for Lillian Smith was engaged in a life and death struggle of her own — against cancer — that went on for 13 years. Refusing to succumb to the insistent demand of recurring malignancy (she once told a friend, "my body will probably die before 'I' know I'm

dead"),² Smith wrote five books in this period, revised another, published numerous articles, lent her physical presence and the fund-raising capabilities of her writings to the nonviolent civil-rights movement, and traveled about the country discussing with college students and various civic groups her convictions about the human condition.

She sometimes described the cancer as a "friendly enemy."³ It left her in pain and in debt and was a horrible drain on her physical strength. But other, more spiteful adversaries — censors, editors, critics, vandals — did deeper damage. They zeroed in on her very reason for being, her work. Her novel, *Strange Fruit*, was banned in Boston in 1944. Reviewers ridiculed

her books, as when the *Atlanta Constitution* wrote of *Killers of the Dream*, "There is one chapter, or orgasm. . ."⁴ Sometimes the books were slighted, as with her last novel, *One Hour*. And sometimes they were burned.

The historian must say that fire was certainly Smith's worst enemy. An accidental blaze from an overheated stove in 1944 destroyed part of her correspondence and files relating to the magazine which she

Jo Ann Robinson is an associate professor of history at Morgan State University in Baltimore. The research for this article was supported through a Faculty Grant from Morgan State and through the assistance of Mary Eberhardt.

had co-edited since 1936. Teenage vandals were responsible for a fire in her study in 1955 that consumed an estimated 13,000 letters, a completed novel set in China, two autobiographical novellas, materials from which she had planned to write a book on India and countless other items of personal and historical value. In 1958, unknown intruders started two forest fires on the mountain where she lived. Although fire fighters were able to save her home, the psychological toll was great. "It broke me up rather badly," she wrote. "I wanted to leave and never come back."⁵

Lillian Smith faced such opposition largely because she broke taboos on sex and race. Born and raised in Jasper, Florida, making her home for most of her life in Clayton, Georgia, Smith was one Southern white woman who preferred slacks to crinolines and who bothered her head about matters that only men were supposed to discuss. She opposed segregation years before the United States Supreme Court made such a position tenable for most white Americans. She used modern psychology to analyze the patterns of sexual and racial behavior that prevailed in the American South. Her conclusions, though always framed with compassion, were seldom flattering to her ancestors or neighbors.

In 1915, when Lillian Smith was 18

years old, her father lost the lumber mills, turpentine stills, light plant, ice plant and store in Jasper, which had comfortably supported his wife and nine offspring. The Smiths moved permanently to their summer cottage in Clayton, Georgia. In 1920, as part of their many-faceted battle against poverty, Mr. Smith opened the first private summer camp for girls in Georgia, naming it for the Laurel Falls that cascaded below their cottage. Lillian had to divide her attention between her promising career as a concert pianist (she studied in Baltimore at the Peabody for substantial periods between 1919 and 1922) and the duties this family enterprise forced upon her. Finally, her parents' failing health dictated a complete end to her efforts as a musician. In 1925, she was called home from the position she had assumed three years earlier as director of the music department of Virginia School in Huchow, China. Now she became — most reluctantly — director of Laurel Falls Camp. "I saw nothing challenging or interesting in it," she later recalled.⁶ But, characteristically, she channeled her discontent into creative experimentation. Within two or three summers, the camp had become a living work of art.

The campers were white girls between the ages of six and sixteen, mostly from the South. Many returned year after year, some graduating to the status of counselors and

continuing in that capacity well into their adulthood. The girls received instruction in horsemanship, tennis and swimming, and the camp was nationally noted for its programs in sculpture, drama, dance and music. But the uniqueness of Laurel Falls lay in Lillian Smith's concern with the inner growth of girls, seeking to come to grips with the emotional, biological and social forces at work in their lives. The campers and "Miss Lil," as they knew her, talked about subjects that little girls dared not broach anywhere else: their bodies, their hates, their fears, their sense that not everything their parents did and said was right.⁷

As Smith lay dying in the autumn of 1966, a woman who had spent several summers at Laurel Falls wrote of her "Sunday morning talks" with Miss Lil:

"'Honesty,' 'Courage,' 'Dignity,' just words until Miss Lil made them into unforgettable pictures of human achievement. She did not go into the inequities of race. I don't think she ever used the word 'integration.' . . . [But these were] words you remembered when Birmingham became more than a place . . . Words you remembered when a hate-filled face screamed obscenities at a small colored child going to school. Words you remembered when the streets of Washington resounded to the marching feet of men and women crying for their place in history . . . When she talked about dignity, courage and honesty, you had pinned the words to



Laurel Falls Camp, Rabun Gap, Georgia: "She channeled her discontent into creative experimentation. . . ."

your heart."⁸

At the end of each summer it was customary for the campers to present a play which was an outgrowth of their conversations with Miss Lil. Two of these dramas survive, "Behind the Drums," a dramatization of the struggle of black people to free themselves from "white man's chains, white man's gold, white man's lust," and "The Girl," a portrayal of the female child emerging from a "large, pale pink egg, lighted from within, the opening covered by layers of pink chiffon" into a long battle against Hates, Fears, Guilts, and Failures.⁹ Who could guess that these images of black history and female strength were entertained on the ridge of a mountain in north Georgia by little daughters from some of the "best" white families of the South?

II

If the activities at Laurel Falls were atypical for the time and the region, the ideas that Smith and a camp counsellor and close friend, Paula Snelling, promulgated in a "little magazine" which they began in 1936 were simply heretical. Like the camp, the magazine was sparked by adversity. In 1936 Smith was tied to a widowed, invalid mother; Snelling had suffered an accident with emotional side effects that were hard to shake. The two women were about, as Smith later recalled, "to lose ourselves in some desperate fashion." So she sug-

gested that they direct their common love for literature into a magazine.¹⁰

They chose the name *Pseudopodia*, explaining in their promotional material that a pseudopod is "a tender and temporary projection of the nucleus of the inner self."¹¹ After several issues the name changed to *The North Georgia Review* and the contents broadened to include nonfiction. The magazine assumed its final title in 1942 as *The South Today*, a journal of what we would now call interdisciplinary thought. The editors' catalogue of what they wanted their readers to learn about the South included: "its books and writers, its great fortunes, who possess them and how they were made, its business, its political leaders and their opinions...its churches, its schools...its mores, its folkways, its dances, its crafts...its crime centers, its disease centers....'the Negro,' 'the tenant farmer,' 'the textile laborer,' 'the mine worker,'...the South's peaches and cream complexion and its warts."¹²

Insight on all these topics was provided through editorials and review articles by Smith and Snelling and through the writings of others. *The South Today* was the first white Southern journal to publish the work of black scholars and artists. Moreover, Smith and Snelling were among the few writers in the region concerned with how women felt, dreamed, created, suffered as human beings. Editorial comments laid bare the myth that lynching was a requirement for

preserving white womanhood. A jointly composed essay titled "Man Born of Woman" exhorted women to overcome culturally imposed habits of keeping an empty head and using a seductive body to maintain the status of parasites. Critical but supportive reviews of the work of women writers such as Carson McCullers and Evelyn Scott appeared as frequently as reviews of the work of better known male writers. Aspiring female authors were given space and encouragement for their work. Pauli Murray's *Dark Testament* first appeared in *The South Today*, and she has called Lillian Smith the "guardian angel" for the early chapters of her first book, *Proud Shoes*.¹³

At the same time, the editors of the magazine looked at the malevolent effects that traditional sex patterns had upon men. This was one of the themes of an essay entitled "Man Born of Woman" and it was strikingly expressed in a short column written by Smith in 1944 called "Susy and the Bulldozer": "The American notion of the male as a kind of halfback-gentleman cowboy-quick-on-the-draw must often have been a difficult role for little boys to live up to." And she wondered, with a daring that would not find acceptance in many corners of our society today, "what effect it would have on their personality and our culture if little boys were permitted to play dolls as long as they want to, if they could, without guilty feelings play at life and love...[instead of] toy machine gun play [which] gives the experience of feeling power without feeling the tenderness that restrains and inhibits power."

In this and other such writings one finds a sting in the tail of Smith's feminism, an expression of her abiding dissatisfaction with the weaknesses exhibited by her own sex. "The only trouble with doll-playing is, it is so much fun that some children are never weaned from it. We all know the women who though they have put on the mask of maternity are still little girls playing dolls with their children." She concluded that "a nest of machine guns and a couple of bulldozers are preferable to that kind of doll playing."¹⁴

Lillian Smith explored the themes of race and sex in her major published writings – two novels, *Strange Fruit* and *One Hour*; two social, philosophi-



... Within two summers, the camp had become a living work of art."

cal and autobiographical essays, *Killers of the Dream* and *The Journey*; a handbook for living up to the 1954 Supreme Court decision, *Now is the Time*; a warm and often humorous reminiscence, *Memory of a Large Christmas*; and *Our Faces, Our Words*, a set of monologues which explore the hearts and minds of participants in the 1960s civil rights movement. From the standpoint of historical impact, *Strange Fruit* and *Killers of the Dream* are the most significant.

These were the books that earned for their author the reputation of a guerrilla. Edward Weeks described *Strange Fruit* as "a novel which is like a hand grenade tossed into a tea party."¹⁵ When Howard University conferred the Doctor of Humane Letters on Smith shortly after *Killers of the Dream* appeared, the citation declared, "You are a dangerous revolutionist. There is enough dynamite in what you say to blow up the very foundation of segregated civilization."¹⁶ And they might have added, "the foundations of sexist civilization" as well.

It is not necessary to agree with every detail of Smith's story of how the South "grew its children" to appreciate the impact which her telling of it had upon the minds and souls of those who read or even heard about her books. In *Strange Fruit* she depicted fictionally the way sexual and racial conditioning in childhood can create pathology in adult society, a process she spelled out explicitly in *Killers of the Dream*. The furor over *Strange Fruit* was allegedly caused by her use of the word, f-u-c-k. More obviously the trouble was that the story told of love between a black woman and a white man. Even more fundamentally disturbing was the unrelenting human complexity of all the novel's characters. Some black readers enjoyed the dissecting of infected white psyches but took umbrage when the lives of the black characters fell short of an ideal. Marxists appreciated scenes of labor exploitation by the capitalist millowner but were incensed by the depiction of a kindly side of the man.

Smith and her sister adapted the novel for the stage, and it came to Broadway in abbreviated form under the direction of Jose Ferrer. The play was a financial success, but American critical response was mixed. Among the play's critics was the eminent

Walter White, father of the leading lady, who objected to his offspring's role as the lover of a white man. Yet, the character Jane White portrayed has been called "one of the most memorable women in modern fiction." And about the entire story Richard Wright said, "There has never been a more truthful picture of the Southern Negro's desperate plight." So readers and audiences could not agree about the ideological or social merits of *Strange Fruit*.¹⁷ There was no question, however, that as a work of art it was gripping.

Strange Fruit left room for varying interpretations of the author's meanings and purpose. Smith's next book, *Killers of the Dream*, did not. Unequivocally, and with a wealth of autobiographical documentation, *Killers* details how the South raised its daughters and sons to be gracious and genteel and arrogant and callous at the same time. Racial segregation bred the arrogance and callousness; the gracious-

*"When we as children crept
over the race line and played
with Negroes, or broke other
segregation customs known
to us, we felt the same
overwhelming guilt that
was ours when we crept over
the sex line and played
with our bodies. . . ."*

ness and gentility masked profound sexual and psychological distress. And all this, Smith argued, began at an early age: "[W]hen we as small children crept over the race line and ate and played with Negroes, or broke other segregation customs that were known to us, we felt the same dread fear of consequences, the same overwhelming guilt that was ours when we crept over the sex line and played with our body, or thought thoughts about God or our parents that we knew we must not think. Each was a "sin," each "deserved punishment".... Each was tied up with the other and all were tied close to God. These were our first lessons."¹⁸ Her vivid descriptions of the individual and social disorders resulting from these lessons were bound to insult some of her neighbors, including "liberal" Southern editors whose acceptance of segregation she openly challenged and whose own psychologi-

cal and moral health she was questioning by implication.

Killers of the Dream, Smith often said, "is the book that turned the South against me...blasted me out of existence.... Men like Hodding Carter and Ralph McGill and others on the [Atlanta] *Constitution* did a dirty job on me in those days."¹⁹ Sales, reviews, promotion, access to public media never came again for Smith in the big way they had come after *Strange Fruit*. She felt "smothered" and with justification.

In part, her work lent itself to being smothered by opponents and undervalued by others, because of the persistence with which she stuck to a belief that had taken root during her experience with *South Today* — that "nothing literary in this country is profoundly serious if it evades segregation, color, race, the body image."²⁰ As Margaret Sullivan has noted, this "unabashed acceptance of the moralist's role made it fairly easy for critics to dismiss her works as propaganda or 'problem novels.'" And Smith was certain that racism among the literary establishment in New York contributed to lack of recognition for her work.

In addition to these explanations stands the fact that Lillian Smith was a woman who did not write about the domestic transactions considered appropriate for "women writers." Instead she offered grimly realistic portraits of racial and sexual disaster. Time and again she came up against hostility, incomprehension and faint-heartedness on the part of men who controlled the newspapers and magazines and television networks, the publishing houses and their advertising departments. When *Now is the Time* began making waves, for example, it mysteriously disappeared from bookstore shelves. Smith's editor assured her that his company was only counting the copies. But those copies never reappeared.²¹ When NBC announced that Smith was to appear on the Dave Garroway Show with James Eastland of Mississippi, pressures brought to bear against the network prevented the author from reading the statement she had prepared, while Eastland was allowed to monopolize the "conversation."²²

In 1961, she wrote: "There is a group in this country who have done all they could to low rate every book I

have written; there is tremendous anger against me felt by many white men not because of racial ideology but because I told their sex secrets — and secrets that were not too bright and honorable to look at. There is this sex jealousy and I have known it for many years."²³ Smith was equally certain that the leading white male authors in America — "Williams, Miller, Faulkner, Hemingway" — all failed to understand "women or Woman.... Because they dare not return to the womb, dare not come close to the Dark Mother, they write often like boys." Faulkner, Smith observed, feels like "a helpless boy when confronted with female strength and female blindness ...and he takes scissors and cuts women up in little paper thin pieces."²⁴

In conscious contrast Smith labored to make the women in her fiction as fully complex as life itself. "The women in her novels," Paula Snelling has said, "reveal nuances of female behavior seldom visible to male authors; they also show societally generated perversions of this inherent femininity." Snelling continues, "Had cancer not intervened, her long-worked-on novel *Julia* and her contemplated autobiography would have been her major, deeply felt and pondered, works on this seductive subject of gender."²⁵

Lillian Smith contended that no western woman had ever written a great autobiography, that down through the years we had allowed men to "create one image after another" of who we are — madonna, bitch, whore, doll. The time had come, she felt, for us to engage in the "great and daring creative act" of discovering for ourselves our own identity.²⁶ Smith longed to create from her own life a model for this female act of discovery. A premonition that death would overtake her too soon surely lies behind the letter she wrote to another Southern female writer less than a year before she died, in which she said, "I wish so much that sometime — while I am living or afterward — that you'd do at least a magazine study of me as writer and woman. I feel that you can see more," she explained.²⁷

For Lillian Smith it was usually women in her personal sphere who *could* see more, who were the most supportive, whose love was the most

enduring. When she privately listed the people who had been the closest to her she named one man and six women, adding, "and there were others, some of the camp counsellors; a few of the campers themselves, now grown..."²⁸ At a time when the research of scholars such as Carroll Smith-Rosenburg and Nancy Cott is awakening our interest in the socio-historical significance of "sisterhood" in America, it seems valuable to note this deep emotional bond between Smith and her few close women friends, especially her colleague Paula Snelling and her youngest sister, Esther Smith.²⁹

Yet Smith also acknowledged her intellectual and emotional indebtedness to men. When news reached her of the fire in 1944 one of the few people she could stand being with in the early days of her shock and grief was a man. And there were authors — including Ashley Montague, Robert Coles, most especially John Howard Griffin, with whom she shared inner feelings and explored the pains of her personal struggles.

On one of the rare occasions when she spoke of her unmarried status, Smith told a group of college women: "We of my generation did go out into the world hungering for careers; marriage was important if we could find the right man but...men wanted us to be dolls and not talk, except baby talk.... It hurt like hell...to find that the interesting men liked us in the office and laboratory and on the stage, but didn't want women like us in their homes." But this same speech ended on a note of hope for sexual harmony: "It all comes down to our mutual willingness to...think of ourselves first as human beings and second as women and men."³⁰

Paula Snelling has stressed that Smith knew "the sharp two-edgedness of swords that separate: she had seen that men no less than women, whites no less than blacks are deformed and stunted" whenever one group denies the other full human status.³¹ "I believe," Smith wrote, "that future generations will think of our times as the age of wholeness; when the walls began to fall; when the fragments began to be related to each other."³² In the last months of her life, as a result of reading Teilhard de Chardin, she began to set this vision in a time frame of a hundred thousand or a half-

million years.

Perhaps this perspective gave her added courage not only on behalf of American and human civilization but on behalf of her own place in history. Long ago she had told her father, "it's just as much a sin to cheat yourself as it is to cheat anyone else."³³ In the late 1950s, she told an agent who tried to get a bargain from her on the movie rights to *Strange Fruit*, "I am not quite what you and Hollywood think I am, a has-been.... I don't need to sell *Strange Fruit* as if it were a bankrupt property... I am patient; I know my worth; I know my historical value to this country."³⁴

It remains to be seen whether this country will ever agree.

Footnotes

Most of Lillian Smith's papers are at the University of Georgia at Athens. The citations below are to that collection, unless material in the possession of Paula Snelling at Clayton, Ga., is specifically indicated. In addition, there are Smith papers at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Fla., and in the Julius Rosenwald Fund Papers at Dilard University. The only published biography is Louise Blackwell and Frances Clay, Lillian Smith (N. Y., 1971).

1. Lillian Smith to Denver Lindley, February 23, 1956.
2. Lillian Smith to Margaret Sullivan, January 22, 1966.
3. For example, Lillian Smith to Harry Golden, January 28, 1966.
4. Jack Tarver, *Atlanta Constitution*, February 9, 1950.
5. Lillian Smith to Helen Lockwood, December 19, 1958.
6. Lillian Smith's autobiographical manuscripts at Clayton.
7. Some of the essence of the camp can be found in catalogues, the "Laurel Leaf" newsletters to campers and parents and essays of instruction for counsellors. See also Lillian Smith, *Killers of the Dream* (N. Y., 1949), pp. 29 - 42. Frances Mendelson, "Psychology Teaching Stressed at Lillian Smith's Girl's Camp," *New York Herald Tribune*, Sunday, August? ; Lillian Smith, "Growing Plays: The Girl," *Educational Leadership*, II, May 1945, pp. 349-360, and Lillian Smith, "Summer Camps," in Andrew J. Ritchie, *Sketches of Rabun County History*, Clayton, Georgia, 1948, pp. 429 - 434. Most of the alumnae of Laurel Falls are still living and an oral history project on the effects of the camp on their lives would be a valuable undertaking.
8. Jane Parks Ward, "Letter from Buss Eye," September 1966, at Clayton.
9. "Behind the Drums" reprinted in White and Suggs, *From the Mountain*, (Memphis 1972); "Girl" in *Educational Leadership*, *op.cit.*

10. Autobiographical notes, Athens.
11. Introduction, *From the Mountain*.
12. *North Georgia Review*, Spring 1940, back cover; Margaret Sullivan, "Lillian Smith: The Public Image and the Personal Vision," *Mad River Review*, Summer-Fall, 1967, pp. 3 - 21.
13. Pauli Murray to Redding Sugg, October 10, 1971, at Clayton.
14. Lillian Smith, *South Today*, spring-summer 1944. See also Redding Sugg, Jr., "Lillian Smith and the Condition of Woman," *South Atlantic Quarterly* (Spring 1972), pp. 155 - 164.
15. *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1944, p. 127.
16. Howard University citation, at Clayton.
17. Lillian Smith, "History of Strange Fruit," *Saturday Review of Literature*, February 17, 1945. Lula Jones Garrett, "Strange Fruit," *Baltimore Afro-American*, March 18, 1944, p.9. Lillian Smith to Jerry Bick, October 16, 1961 (re Walter White, p.3). Quote from Richard Wright, *Current Biography*, 1944, pp. 635 - 638. *Life Magazine*, December 24, 1945, pp. 33 - 35.
18. *Killers*, pp. 69 - 70.
19. Lillian Smith to Mrs. Albright, October 21, 1957.
20. Lillian Smith to Edward Keating, (date uncertain).
21. J.O. Robinson conversations with Paula Snelling and numerous references in Lillian Smith's letters. For example, Lillian Smith to Hazel F. Bailey, April, 1965.
22. J.O. Robinson conversations with Paula Snelling and references in Lillian Smith's letters, e.g., to Mrs. Albright, October 3, 1957.
23. Lillian Smith to Jerry Bick, October 27, 1961.
24. Lillian Smith to Gerald Sykes, August 8, 1959.
25. Paula Snelling, "Re Lillian Smith."
26. Lillian Smith, "No More Ladies in the Dark," *Saturday Review*, August 25, 1962, p. 24, and speech at University of Florida, May 10, 1962; unpublished manuscript at Clayton. Lillian Smith, "To Tame the Shrew," *Saturday Review*, February 23, 1963, pp. 33 - 44.
27. To Wilma Dykeman Stokely, October 30, 1965.
28. Lillian Smith to Mrs. Morehouse, n.d.
29. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual. . ." *Signs*, Autumn, 1975, pp. 1 - 29. Nancy Cott, "Young Women in the Second Great Awakening in New England," *Feminist Studies*, Fall 1975, pp. 15 - 29. See Lillian Smith's comments on her friendship with Paula Snelling in autobiographical writings, Athens Manuscript and "In answer to questions from Joan Titus."
30. See autobiographical manuscripts at Athens; University of Florida speech, *op. cit.*
31. Paula Snelling, "Re Lillian Smith."
32. Quoted in *Saturday Review*, October 22, 1966, pp. 53 - 54.
33. Lillian Smith to "Dearest Dad," Fall, 1917.
34. Lillian Smith to Jerry Bick, October 27, 1961.

On Women's Autobiography

by Lillian Smith



The following selection is excerpted from a speech made by Lillian Smith at the University of Florida in 1962.

We have no record that Adam was aware of himself before Eve gave him that first long look. She was his primal mirror. It must have been quite a shock to discover himself in a female's eyes. Yet this profoundly traumatic experience has not been dealt with adequately either in poetry or psychology. Freud missed it entirely — as he missed so much that is important about women and men and their relationship with each other.

The women, themselves, have never written much about what Eve saw when she looked at Adam, although what she saw may have had a great deal to do with her learning to talk first. She has whispered about it to other women for a million years, and some of what she whispered has leaked out, of course.

What is more important — at least, to our topic of autobiography — is the fact that women have not broken the million-year silence about themselves. Or, they are only beginning to. They know how they look in men's eyes. At least, they should. For poetry and art and myth and fiction and religion are filled with icons and images and dreams and nightmares about the female; and there are the Greek furies and maenads and the Protestant witches and the Catholic Madonna....

But they dare not record how they look to themselves. Why?

There are reasons. One is there are many women who have no awareness of themselves. They have never asked who they are and they don't care. And

there are the appeasers, who may have their own ideas, but have settled, publicly, for the men's view. It seems the simplest way to live and often the only way to keep the bread buttered. There are others, confused by what they have been told which is not in the least what they know about themselves, who have settled things by turning off the light in their interiors; they are different and they know it but these differences are easier to accept if unnamed.

But there is a more cogent reason why women have kept their silence. They dared not tell the truth about themselves for it might radically change male psychology....

So — playing it safe — women have conspired to keep their secrets.... But great autobiographies are not written by people who have conspired to keep silent, and we must face the fact that no woman has, as yet, written a great autobiography.

However, women are exceptionally good at memoirs and diaries and journals. They rarely tell the truth, even in their diaries, about their sex experiences or their most intimate relationships; nor do they spend much time asking the unanswerable questions about the meaning of human life since they have never been too sure they were human. But they have a blunt, and highly entertaining way of cutting the homefolks down to size; they see the specific things, the small events that are so often full of heart-stopping implications; and they can get it on paper. As you know, the best women writers do not use a self-conscious literary style but write the spoken language with beautiful precision, and

sometimes with poetic lyricism.

This down-to-earth, vivid and sometimes poetic quality in their writing has a certain enchantment. We all know women are less given to abstractions and generalities than are men — not because they are not capable of abstract and categorical thinking but because they are, like artists, closer to things, to the human flesh, and human feelings; and they tend to remember that the concrete is always different while the abstract has a deadly sameness. And because they avoid abstractions, it follows that they tend to be less romantic than men. Maybe much of it comes from their age-old task of changing diapers and washing them, laying out the dead (in the old days), giving medicine and enemas, doing the homey, dirty, naked sort of things that only women and doctors and today's undertakers are familiar with....

Women, including women writers, have a tendency to deflate the hero's ego. But, even though it is hard to forgive them this sin, we must admit that in their diaries and journals they have left us some unforgettable pages. What women are more different from each other than Harriet Martineau, Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Wordsworth — yet they all have given us in letters or diaries a superb, unforgettable awareness of fragments of the human experience. Even their rebellion has for me a special poignancy. I find myself thinking of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*. It was an outburst — and her men friends were cool to her, afterward, for weeks — it was an impassioned protest of women's position in the world, of the woman writer's almost insuperable difficulties. It is certainly not her best writing. Nor does it reveal her most interesting and subtle qualities as a woman. Yet it sticks with you. Such plain, raw facts, so deeply felt by one woman and so meaningful to millions of others....

Freud said once that woman is not well acculturated; she is, he stressed, retarded as a civilized person. I think what he mistook for her lack of civilization is woman's lack of loyalty to civilization. Southern women have never been as loyal to the ideology of race and segregation as have Southern men. The Southern woman has always put the welfare of one individual above the collective welfare or collective values. Many of them have been betraying White Supremacy for 200

years, but most who have done so could not reason with you as to why. Instinctively woman chooses life, wherever life is, and avoids death, and she has smelled the death in the word segregation....

Women have been particularly good with the bitter times of war.... They recorded our individual differences while the newspapers recorded our group samenesses. But, though we were given many letters and diaries that tell us how unsolid the South was even the year before the [Civil War] began, how torn were the hearts and minds and souls of men and women, there did not come out of this traumatic ordeal one good autobiography. The Southern women played it by ear, day by day — and never, afterward, turned back to see what significance, what meaning, lay in what she had actually done and said and thought and recorded. She could not form a gestalt and say: This has been my life and my people's life.

With all their talent for the specific and the concrete, with their capacity for passion and for disloyalty to conformity, women have not, as yet, written autobiographies that deserve the word "great."

Have men? Yes. Yes — and no. To write the perfect autobiography would of course require a man able to accept and bring all his selves together...he would need to know the archaic depths of the unconscious and at the same time criticize these depths with a rational, logical mind; he would need to accept and understand his childhood as well as his present; and he would, finally, need to be a man who knows a great story never gives an answer to its listeners but instead asks a great question. I have for years been asking myself, "when is a story a real story?" The only satisfying answer I have found is this: When a story begins with one specific question about life, or a handful of questions, and ends with a bigger question, one that human beings must keep asking, knowing as they ask that it cannot be answered, then a story is a real story — and maybe an immortal one.

So, when a story teller — and every autobiographer is a story teller — starts out to tell his own story, he has to search deep and wide to know what that story really is. This is a spiritual and intellectual ordeal. It is more:

it is a creative ordeal for he is actually creating his own Self and his own life as he writes, because he is giving it its meaning... What a courageous, and almost demiurgic task to set out on the quest for the meaning of one's life, what stoical honesty is required in order to write it down! No wonder most of us settle for smaller matters. No wonder women for the most part have settled for notebooks and diaries and journals.

I hope, some day, to write my autobiography. I have not yet done so — although most of my writing is autobiographical. In one book, *Killers of the Dream*, I have chosen to take one fragment of my life, my experiences as a white person in a strictly patterned, highly conformed culture, and write as fully as I could of that. I have told in that book many true things about my childhood as I lived it... Only in a tight, closed culture could such a book be written. A German, reared as a child in the Nazi days could give us a book of similar worth. Why did I do this — instead of writing about myself as an individual? Because I was not a free individual during some of those years, I was a white conformist. I told, both as documentary and as confession, my story as one human being caught in the white-black strands of a web that seemed to be soft and pliable but was made of thin steel wires which caught and held and wounded the human spirit.

Someone asked me, "Did you write this book as an act of penance?" I think perhaps I did in a way — as every autobiography is an act of penance — but it was also for me, if I may say, a very serious thing, a step toward redemption. As was St. Augustine's *Confessions*. I began the book not to give answers but to find the big questions that I could and must live with in freedom. And because the situation I lived in, and still live in, is one of great importance to the earth's future, because segregation as I knew it and others in the South knew it is both symbol and symptom of the deep malaise which the human race is suffering from, I also appealed in this book to the reader to help us change ourselves. For I felt, and I still do, that insight and understanding can help us bring our split selves into some kind of unity — and this seems to me important for every individual in our times.



Anne Braden:

A SECOND OPEN LETTER TO SOUTHERN WHITE WOMEN

*Anne Braden is a journalist who for the past 30 years has been active in Southern civil-rights, civil-liberties, anti-war, and labor movements. In the late 1940s, she left daily newspaper work to become a writer and organizer with her late husband, Carl Braden, who died in 1975. In 1954, the Bradens were charged with sedition by the state of Kentucky after they bought and resold a house in a white neighborhood to a black couple. Anne was never tried, but Carl served almost a year of a 15-year sentence before being released on bond. The conviction was finally reversed after the Bradens organized a two-year nation-wide campaign that was part of the resistance movement against the repression of the '50s. This case is the basis of a book by Anne on race relations, *The Wall Between*, published in 1958.*

*From 1957 to 1973, the Bradens worked for the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF), traveling the South as field organizers and later as executive directors of the organization. Anne also edited SCEF's publication, *The Southern Patriot*. Throughout this period, they helped black and white Southerners struggle together in common cause. Anne now serves as co-chairperson of the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic & Social Justice (SOC), a regional organization working with grass-roots groups, and is vice-chairperson of the National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression.*

In 1972, I wrote an "open letter" to Southern white women on racism and rape. It appeared in the *Southern Patriot* and as a pamphlet used in the effort to free Thomas Wansley from a Virginia prison.

Wansley, black, then 26, was arrested at age 16 in Lynchburg, Va., and charged with raping a white woman. I am convinced that he was innocent. Lynchburg was in turmoil, in response to student sit-ins challenging segregation in public places. A series of rapes was reported, a massive manhunt ensued in the black community, hysteria fired by a racist newspaper mounted in the white. Wansley became the culprit; he could have been any young black. The prosecution's witness could not identify him, but he was sentenced to death.

Protests during the '60s won a new trial, but he was convicted again and given life. The early 1970s brought new attempts to free him.

I saw the case as part of a horrifying pattern that pervades Southern history — rape, a crime if the victim is white and the alleged attacker black, not a crime if the victim is black (no matter who the attacker), often ignored if both parties are white. An old system that has terrorized the black community, confused the white, kept people divided, degraded white women as it oppressed black men and women.

I called on white women, for their own liberation, to refuse any longer to be used, to act in the tradition of

Jessie Daniel Ames and the white women who fought in an earlier period to end lynching, and to join our black sisters in a fight to free Wansley.

The campaign to renew interest in Wansley ran squarely into the struggle of women to make society aware of the crime of rape. Some white women activists did join the effort for Wansley, but many did not. Some couldn't bear the thought of defending any man accused of rape.

I argued that as women fought against rape they must never forget the racist way the charge of rape can be used. Otherwise, I feared, white women seeking liberation might find themselves pitted against black people striving for freedom, two groups that should be allies. Furthermore, I feared, white women might find themselves objectively on the side of the most reactionary social forces, used once again.

Four years have passed, and I think this is precisely what has happened. I write this second letter to Southern white women because I think we have a particular responsibility to help reverse this trend.

The Resurgence of Racism

The racist use of the rape charge, contrary to some popular opinion, is not past history; men are still being arrested for rape not because there is any evidence that they are guilty, but

because they are black. It happens in situations (1) where there was no rape (and as women we must be honest enough to admit that this can happen), or (2) where there was a rape and police set out to find a black man, any black man. And in a racist society, to many whites, all blacks look alike.

An upsurge in the racist use of the rape charge is always triggered by historic conditions. After Reconstruction in the South, when lynching reached its height, the charge of rape was used to terrorize the black community, divide interracial Populist coalitions, and keep power in the hands of a few. A few white men. White women were always the pawns.

Similarly, I think the last decade in this country has seen not a decline of racism but its resurgence. During the civil-rights movement in the early '60s, racism was on the defensive. But in the late 1960s, a massive counter-attack began. This took many forms: the framing and jailing of black organizers, and sometimes their murder; covert efforts to destroy civil-rights organizations; co-optation of movement energies with temporary federal programs; a new ideological onslaught of theories of racial superiority; and a reemergence of the Ku Klux Klan.

In this setting, increased accusations of rape against black men were inevitable. Wansley is still in prison, almost forgotten. James Carrington, another Virginia black, charged with rape for what was essentially a date with a white woman, remains in prison for 75 years. Johnny Ross in New Orleans, Ronnie Long in North Carolina, Willie Burnett in Kentucky, Christopher Moore in Mississippi . . . the list is growing.

Meanwhile, the women's movement has successfully focused public attention on the crime of rape. Yet this campaign has also created an atmosphere in which it becomes harder — and sometimes impossible — to struggle against the racist use of the rape charge, an atmosphere in which even to use that phrase puts one in the position of condoning rape.

A recent book highlights the dilemma: *Against Our Will, Men, Women and Rape*, by Susan Brownmiller (Simon & Schuster hardcover, 1975, Bantam paperback, 1976).

Brownmiller's book has been widely acclaimed and it performs a unique service. It documents the

unwritten history of rape; it exposes the function of rape laws as a protection of men's property rights, not women's safety; and it challenges ancient and current notions of men's inherent right to women's bodies.

Unfortunately, the book also hands a potent weapon to those who would use racism to divide us. I have heard Brownmiller speak. I don't think she is any more racist than the rest of us who grew up white in a racist society. She deals with the rape of black women and points out that they have been even more victimized than white women. I don't think she intended her book to become a weapon for racism. But objectively it serves that function; we must analyze why.

The Enemy Forgotten

Southern white women have the potential to help build a women's movement that is not at odds with the black liberation struggle because historically we've had to deal with the issue of racism before we could understand anything else.

In my 1972 letter, I described my own experience of politicization. As a young newspaper woman in the '40s, I saw a black man get 20 years in prison in a Birmingham courtroom after a white woman testified that he looked at her in an "insulting" way (the charge was assault with intent to ravish). I was horrified not only by what was being done to that black man but also by what was happening to the woman. For that moment of being a "protected" woman, she would pay with a lifetime of poverty and subservience to the husband, the father, the brother, the judge who made her "queen for a day" in the courtroom.

Only later did I recognize the similarity of my own position. When I hesitantly complained to the prosecutor about what had happened, he told me not to worry my head and began giving me a new "scoop" for my newspaper. I subsided, effectively converted into one more brainless woman, even my success as a reporter dependent on his "protection."

My moment of freedom came in 1951 when I joined a delegation of white women to Jackson, Miss., to protest the killing of Willie McGee — a black man framed on a rape charge in Laurel, Miss. We were arrested for

trying to see the governor, and when one policeman learned I was from Alabama, he threatened to kill me. "You are not fit to be a Southern woman," he shouted. I looked at him and replied, "No, I'm not your kind of Southern woman." Suddenly I knew I was on the "other side." The other side not just from that cop but from all the rulers of the South who treated black people like children and put white women on pedestals and turned on both in fury when they asserted their humanity. For me, it was a point of no return.

My personal story is not atypical. Most white Southerners who come to understand the great social issues of our world do so through that long, painful passageway of the struggle with racism. In a society that built its economy, its culture, its very existence on racism, it can be no other way.

Thus I was interested to read that Brownmiller too, although growing up in the North, experienced her "first stirrings of social conscience" when she read of "certain cases, now legend, in which black men had been put to death for coming too close to white women." Yet, to my amazement, she views the Willie McGee case, which provided my road to freedom, as just another example of the male-dominated left using a rape case as an organizing tool for its own benefit. In her view, the defense of McGee, of the Scottsboro Boys in Alabama in 1931, and of the Martinsville Seven in Virginia in 1951 were battles imposed on the South by outside radicals, in contrast to the more "authentic" and "pragmatic" civil-rights struggles of the 1960s.

Even more startling is her treatment of the 1955 lynching of Emmett Till, the 14-year-old black from Chicago who was murdered and thrown in to the Tallahatchie River in Mississippi because he whistled at a white woman. Brownmiller deplores the murder; but what concerns her most is the way the incident illustrates the power struggle between white and black men over the bodies of women. Till's whistle, she says, was no innocent gesture but a reminder to white Carolyn Bryant that he "had in mind to possess her."

Such an emphasis reflects a fatal flaw running through Brownmiller's book: a recurring tendency to ignore racism as a primary force in this country. However oppressed Carolyn

Bryant was as a woman, she was white and therefore wielded more power than Emmett Till — as demonstrated by his body in the river and her approving presence in the courtroom where her husband, who admitted the crime, was acquitted.

Racism is not some abstract concept invented by the left for its own gain. It *does* exist. The “rape cases” inspired action and became famous not because they were unusual but because they exemplified the terrorism which upheld political and economic power relationships in the South. Every black person knew that a member of his or her own family could have been a “Scottsboro Boy” or a Martinsville defendant. At any moment, a false rape charge could be used to divide white against black and destroy efforts at fundamental economic change. The McGee case, for example, crippled one of the strongest unions in predominantly anti-union Mississippi, the woodworkers’ local at Laurel’s huge Masonite plant.

In my experience, the left of that period — the Communist Party and the organizations it influenced — did not manipulate these cases. Nor did it, as Brownmiller argues, “destroy the credibility of the complaining witness by smearing her as mentally unbalanced, or as sexually frustrated, or as an oversexed, promiscuous whore.” The left consistently said, as Brownmiller acknowledges by quoting leaflets from the period, that responsibility lay with an exploitative economic system and that white women, as well as blacks, were its victims. Instead of manipulating people, the left’s defense efforts offered black and white women a way to fight back together.

For me, as a white Southern woman, this social analysis was sensible and liberating. It no longer left me individually guilty for the racism that was destroying us all. Individual guilt is a dead end; it offered no possibility for collective action. The social analysis, however, meant that if I repudiated my complicity in racism, I could be free.

For black Southerners, these defense efforts were initial openings to fighting back. For example, Rosa Parks, who later sparked a movement by refusing to go to the back of a Montgomery bus, made her first

clandestine contact with the civil-rights movement when she watched her husband and his friends enter their home, pull the shades, and count money they had secretly collected for the Scottsboro defense.

The struggle against terror, the search for the symbolic dignity of sitting anywhere on a bus or in a restaurant, the determination to exercise the power of the voting booth — these are all part of the same battle for life and liberty. It might be comfortable for those of us who are white to dismiss the racial implications of the rape issue; but they will not go away. We only need listen, as I did, to the black woman who asked Brownmiller, “What you are saying may help me protect myself, but how can I protect my son?” A movement that has no answer to that question ignores the fact that in a society anchored by racism, there can be no liberation for anyone until the race issue is met head on.

Susan Brownmiller and many feminists of her generation were awakened to social issues through the civil-rights movement of the 1960s. I think they still acknowledge the debt they owe to their roots in that struggle. But their revulsion against male domination of that movement led them out of civil rights and into the leadership of a new feminist insurgency.

Male attitudes *were* atrocious in that period, much worse, I think, than the situation in the left of the ‘30s and ‘40s. Many women of my generation and older found in the left a place where women were looked upon as autonomous human beings. The people who shaped the civil-rights struggles of the ‘60s, both men and women, grew up in the reactionary back-to-the-kitchen period of the 1950s, and they took that ideology with them into the movement. Women were right to rebel; and I feel now that some of us who continued to concentrate on fighting racism were not sensitive enough to the issues they were raising.

But I also think that they were wrong to turn away from other problems and to focus only on sexism. I believe that all issues are “women’s issues,” including war and peace, economics, and racism. To ignore the interrelationships of these can lead to Brownmiller’s unfortunate conclusion

that women are always on the side of righteousness and that the central theme in human history is man’s drive to subjugate women with the weapon of rape.

Rape *is* increasing in this country, as is all violent crime. The volume of rapes increased 62 percent over the five year period from 1967 to 1973, with black women almost twice as likely to be raped as white women. Statistically, one of every 10 black males now in adolescence can expect to die by violence before the age of 30. But we cannot ignore the fact that this rise in personal violence is restricted to the capitalist world. I’m not suggesting that socialism will auto-



Jessie Daniel Ames, 1919

*Southern trees bear a strange fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood
at the root,
Black bodies swinging in the
Southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the
poplar trees.*

— Billie Holiday

On May 3, 1930, a Sherman, Texas mob dragged George Hughes from a second floor cell and hanged him from a tree. Hughes was accused of raping his employer’s wife. But the story told in the black community, and whispered in the white, was both chilling and familiar: an altercation over wages between a black laborer and a white farmer had erupted in ritual murder.

matically eliminate violent crime — or sexism, racism or any other evil. But travelers who go anywhere in the socialist world return impressed that people walk the streets at night without fear. We have to think about that.

Tearing rape from its social context can lead to proposing “law and order” solutions to a very complex problem. Brownmiller, for example, recommends legal reforms to facilitate the conviction of rapists. But such proposals ignore the nature of a court system which discriminates against the black and the poor and a prison system which does not control crime but increases it. Such solutions put us objectively in alliance with the forces

of repression.

I’m not suggesting that the women’s movement halt its fight against rape. But we must face the hard fact that in our society there just may be no possibility of security for anyone — women or men — and that the only true answer is basic change in the society itself. We must try to shape all struggles in a way that does not feed the fires of racism. A first step might be for white women to fight as hard for victims of the racist use of the rape charge as they fight against rape. Black women and white women supported Joan Little when she defended herself against rape in a North Carolina jail. But many white women

were not there when it came time to defend Delbert Tibbs on death row in Florida, although there is no evidence that he was within 150 miles of his alleged crime.

We live in a society that is fast decaying. As it moves into deeper collapse, those who own and run our country will search for sections of the population that will support police state measures in the interest of “order” and an elusive security. That’s why it frightens me when I hear women calling for “law and order” solutions to rape. White women were used 100 years ago by the few who managed to fasten a kind of fascism on the South. I don’t want to see us used again.

Women & Lynching

by Jacquelyn Hall

The complicity of a moderate governor, the burning of the courthouse, reprisals against the black community — all brought the Sherman lynching unusual notoriety. But Hughes’ death typified a long and deeply rooted tradition of extralegal racial violence.

Unlike other incidents in this bloody record, the Sherman lynching called forth a significant white response. In 1892, a black Memphis woman, Ida B. Wells Barnett, had initiated a one-woman anti-lynching campaign; after 1910, the NAACP carried on the struggle. But the first sign of the impact of this black-led movement on Southern whites came in 1930 when a Texas suffragist named Jessie Daniel Ames, moved by the Hughes lynching, launched a white women’s campaign against lynching. Over the next 14 years, members of the Atlanta-based Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching sought to curb mob murder by disassociating the image of the Southern lady from its connotations of female vulnerability and retaliatory violence. They declared:

“Lynching is an indefensible crime. Women dare no longer allow themselves to be the cloak behind which those bent upon personal revenge and

*savagery commit acts of violence and lawlessness in the name of women. We repudiate this disgraceful claim for all time.”*¹

Unlike most suffrage leaders, Jessie Daniel Ames brought the skills and consciousness acquired in the women’s movement to bear on the struggle for racial justice. The historic link between abolitionism and women’s rights had been broken by the late nineteenth century, when an organized women’s movement emerged in the former slave states. Ames herself had registered no dissent against co-workers who argued that woman suffrage would help ensure social control by the white middle class. But as the Ku Klux Klan rose to power in the 1920s, she saw her efforts to mobilize enfranchised women behind progressive reforms undercut by racism and by her constituency’s refusal to recognize the plight of those doubly oppressed by sex and race. As she shifted from women’s rights to the interracial movement, she sought to connect women’s opposition to violence with their strivings toward autonomy and social efficacy. In this sense, she led a revolt against chivalry which was part of a long process of both sexual and

racial emancipation.

Two interlocking networks of organized women converged in the creation of the Anti-Lynching Association. From evangelical women’s missionary societies, Ames drew the movement’s language and assumptions. From such secular organizations as the League of Women Voters and the Joint Legislative Council, she acquired the campaign’s pragmatic, issue-oriented style. Active, policy-making membership consisted at any one time of no more than 300 women. But the Association’s claim to represent the viewpoint of the educated, middle-class white women of the South depended on the 109 women’s groups which endorsed the anti-lynching campaign and on the 44,000 individuals who signed anti-lynching pledges.

Ames’ commitment to grass-roots

Jacquelyn Hall, a guest editor for this issue of Southern Exposure, teaches history at the University of North Carolina and directs its Southern Oral History Program. She is currently finishing a book on women and the anti-lynching movement to be published by Columbia University Press.

organizing, forged in the suffrage movement, found expression in the Association's central strategy: By "working through Baptist and Methodist missionary societies, organizations which go into the smallest communities when no other organizations will be found there," she hoped to reach the "wives and daughters of the men who lynched."² Once won to the cause, rural church women could, in their role as moral guardians of the home and the community, act as a restraining force on male violence.

The social analysis of the Anti-Lynching Association began with its perception of the link between racial violence and attitudes toward women. Lynching was encouraged by the conviction that only such extreme sanctions stood between white women and the sexual aggression of black men. This "Southern rape complex," the Association argued, had no basis in fact.³ On the contrary, white women were often exploited and defamed in order to obscure the economic greed and sexual transgressions of white men. Rape and rumors of rape served as a kind of folk pornography in the Bible Belt. As stories spread, the victim was described in minute and progressively embellished detail: a public fantasy which implied a group participation in the rape of the woman almost as cathartic as the lynching of the alleged attacker. Indeed, the fear of rape, like the fear of lynching, functioned to keep a subordinate group in a state of anxiety and fear; both were ritual enactments of everyday power relationships.

Beginning with a rejection of this

spurious protection, Association leaders developed an increasingly sophisticated analysis of racial violence. At the annual meeting of 1934, the Association adopted a resolution which Jessie Daniel Ames regarded as a landmark in Association thought:

"We declare as our deliberate conclusion that the crime of lynching is a logical result in every community that pursues the policy of humiliation and degradation of a part of its citizenship because of accident of birth; that exploits and intimidates the weaker element . . . for economic gain; that refuses equal educational opportunity to one portion of its children; that segregates arbitrarily a whole race . . . and finally that denies a voice in the control of government to any fit and proper citizen because of race."

"The women," Ames proudly reported, "traced lynching directly to its roots in white supremacy."⁴

Although the Association maintained its single-issue focus on lynching, its participants also confronted the explosive issue of interracial sex. They glimpsed the ways in which guilt over miscegenation, fear of sexual inadequacy, and economic tensions were translated into covert hostility toward white women, sexual exploitation of black women, and murderous rage against black men. Their response was to demand a single standard of morality: only when white men ceased to believe that "white women are their property and so are Negro women," would the racial war in the South over access to women come to an end.⁵ Only then would lynching cease and social reconstruction begin.

By World War II, the anti-lynching movement had succeeded in focusing the attention of an outraged world on the most spectacular form of racial oppression. The black migration to the North, the emergence of an indigenous Southern liberalism, the interracial organizing drives of the CIO all contributed to the decline of extralegal violence. This successful struggle against terrorism made possible the emergence of the post-World War II civil-rights movement in the South. Only with the diffusion of massive repression, of overwhelming force, could the next phase of the black freedom movement begin: the direct-action assault on segregation in the Deep South.

On February 21, 1972, Jessie Daniel Ames died in a hospital in Austin, Texas. The civil-rights movement had long since bypassed the limits of her generation's vision of interracial cooperation and orderly legal processes. Ames had not become part of the folklore of Southern struggle. But, with the rebirth of feminism from the crucible of the civil-rights movement, her career has come to be seen in a more favorable light. On February 12, 1972, as Ames lay dying, Congresswoman Bella Abzug of New York addressed a Southern Women's Political Caucus in Nashville. Exhorting her audience to use the political power of organized women to affect the issues of the day, she could find no closer analogy for such a movement than the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching. Jessie Daniel Ames would have wanted no better tribute.

FOOTNOTES

1. *A New Public Opinion on Lynching: A Declaration and a Pledge*, Bulletin No. 5, 1935.
2. Minutes, ASWPL, Jan. 13-14, 1936, ASWPL Papers, Atlanta University.
3. W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (NY: Random House, 1941), pp. 116-20.
4. *Norfolk (Va.) Journal & Guide*, Jan. 20, 1934; Jessie Daniel Ames to Miss Doris Loraine, March 5, 1935, ASWPL Papers.
5. Minutes, *op cit*.



Anti-lynching leaders assemble at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, in 1938, before Booker T. Washington memorial. Many of the women, black and white, were key figures in the Southern interracial movement of the '20s and '30s. Included are Mrs. R.R. Moton, Jessie Daniel Ames, and Mary McLeod Bethune (last three on right, front row).

Rape Law: A Case Study

by Kathy Gleason
with Sean Devereux

"The unchaste (let us call it) mentality finds incidental but direct expression in the narration of imaginary sex incidents of which the narrator is the heroine or the victim. On the surface, the narration is straightforward and convincing. The real victim, however, too often in such cases is the innocent man; for the respect and sympathy naturally felt by any tribunal for a wronged female helps to give easy credit to such a plausible tale. *No judge should ever let a sex offense charge go to the jury unless the female complainant's social history and mental makeup have been examined and testified to by a qualified physician.*"

—John Henry Wigmore

This vision of the rape victim as dangerous daydreamer was offered in 1904 by John Henry Wigmore, the foremost scholar in American evidence law, whose writings have both reflected and shaped our legal thinking. The core of the rape trial is the victim's testimony, and Wigmore was asserting that this testimony should be approached always with suspicion. Undoubtedly, that notion was shared by every participant in the trial, except the victim, and she, more often than not, was the only female in the room.

Laws governing the crime of rape evolved from concepts of male property rights which formed the common law, and which descended largely unchanged from feudal times. When property was stolen or destroyed, punishment was meted out according to the value of the thing taken. Among a man's chattel, or personal property, were his wife and daughters. Accordingly, when a woman was raped, her worth to her owner had to be determined before a punishment could be decreed. That worth was measured in terms of her "virtue." A man could not be punished for stealing the "virtue" of a woman who had none. But death was the only proper punishment for the man whose act resulted in an economic loss — a smaller dowry — to the husband or father; a "deflowered" daughter was worth far less on the marriage market than one still "chaste." The purpose of the rape trial was thus an evaluation of the property one man had taken from another.

The preeminence of the property concepts eroded, but their effects on the trial process remained. Distress to the woman rather than economic loss to the man came to justify punishing her attacker. Yet, she still had to prove that she had lost something, that she hadn't been "asking for it," and didn't "deserve it." In the mind of the jury, as well as in the legal theory, a "bad" woman had nothing of value to lose, and therefore, could not have been raped. Developing psychological theory provided other, more sophisticated reasons, like Wigmore's, for

RAPES REPORTED IN NORTH CAROLINA

1969:	602
1973:	847
Percent increase:	41%

Source: FBI, "Crime in the US," 1969, 1973.

examining the victim's sexual and moral character. Regardless of the reason, the victim's virtue or lack of it continued to determine the outcome of the trial.

As a result of these prejudices inherent in the common law, the victim encounters two obstacles before the trial begins. First, she learns that if the assailant goes to trial, so will she. Typically an insensitive defense attorney whose only objective is to win the case tries to show the jury that the victim is immoral, not worthy of belief, and most importantly, was not raped at all, but consented to and perhaps initiated the conduct for which she now seeks an innocent man's death. Her past sexual and moral history is fair game for this exposition.

The second obstacle lies in the excessive penalties prescribed for rape. Until the recent Supreme Court re-examination of capital punishment, many states provided death as the maximum, and in some cases the mandatory, penalty for rape. When juries are given the alternative of acquittal or death — or even life imprisonment — the likelihood is that they will acquit when the victim is of only "questionable character."

In 1974, a committee of the North Carolina Legislature was studying the question of homosexual assault in the state's prisons. Two volunteers from the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Rape Crisis Center appeared before the committee to suggest that its study be broadened to include all aspects of sexual assault. Insisting that the proposal was beyond its scope, the committee declined. Present in the audience that day, however, was an interested listener, State Senator Carolyn Mathis of Charlotte.

"I was struck by the idea of legislation to cover the whole area of sexual assault," she recalled. "Common law rape is limited, a man on a woman. That's all. Anything else is not rape. Here was the suggestion that we should neutralize the gender in sexual assault statutes."

Representative Patricia S. Hunt of Chapel Hill shared Sen. Mathis' concern. With the support of the Rape Crisis Center, the two women were able to convince the Legislature to establish a commission to study the problem of sexual assault and make recommendations for reform.

On October 15, 1975, the Research Committee on Sexual Assault convened. Statistics were analyzed, but the Committee focused its primary attention on interviews with people involved in the rape phenomena: victims of sexual assault, medical personnel, rape crisis volunteers, law enforcement officers and police training officials, district attorneys, defense attorneys and specialists in the mentality of the sex offender.

"The experience was extremely educational for me," Sen. Mathis recalled. "It was the best study committee I've ever been on. We heard testimony of the victims in closed executive session. Very rough, very emotional. But it really made an impression on us."

Kathy Gleason and Sean Devereux are law students at the University of North Carolina. Ms. Gleason is research assistant to Thomas J. Andrews, the principal draftsman of the sexual assault bill described here. Mr. Devereux is a former staff member of Southern Exposure.

Publicity and the legal process, the Committee believed, imposed such a burden on the victim that many cases of rape still went unreported, despite statistics that showed an increase in reported rapes. Their belief was supported by victim testimony. The Committee reported:

The underlying reason that so many rapes are not reported appears to be based on the victim's anxiety about the external consequences of acknowledging the assault — the reaction by law enforcement, hospitals and the general community....In many cases, this has resulted in the victim being "assaulted" twice: the physical sexual assault and the indignity of public suspicion and ridicule. In the final analysis, it is because so many victims who reported the assault have subsequently expressed resentment and anger to the public's insensitivity to them that such a large percentage of sexual assaults are not reported.

The victim's first exposure to the law enforcement system and public suspicion usually takes place in the

interview room at the police station. A session with a skeptical or insensitive detective may discourage the victim from proceeding further. Often she is not given even that choice, as police officers decide which victim's story will convince a jury and which should be "unfounded."

Beyond the police station, however, the victim faces the real test: the courtroom cross-examination. A victim often will drop charges rather than undergo the ordeal of defending her past against the suggestions and outright accusations of the defense attorney.

These considerations were foremost when, after twelve months of testimony and debate, Thomas Andrews, Committee member and UNC law professor, presented a draft of the Committee's proposal. Implicit in every aspect of this initial report was the effort to avoid common law suppositions which prevent a realistic appraisal of the facts in each case. The Committee scrapped

the sex-discriminatory definition of rape, "carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will," and replaced it with the sex-neutral concept of sexual assault: any unconsented act of a sexual nature. This expanded concept encompassed, among other things, homosexual assault.

The Committee also discarded the term "rape," recategorizing "rape and kindred offenses" under the new heading, "sexual assault." The spotlight was thus shifted from the sexual aspects of the crime to the suffering and distress of the victim.

Under the new heading, the Committee listed three degrees of felonious sexual assault and one misdemeanor. The degree depends on whether there was sexual contact, or a sexual act, or an attempted sexual act; whether or not there was an injury, and the seriousness of the injury; whether the assailant used a weapon, whether the assailant was aided by others; and whether the victim is a child. Graduated degrees of punishment track the new sexual categories. The severity of the sentence would be determined by the severity of the assault. Sentences would range from a fine for a misdemeanor to life imprisonment for first degree sexual assault.

Margaret Ballard, Chapel Hill-Carrboro Rape Crisis Volunteer, felt that the graduated system of assault and sentencing and the elimination of capital punishment were the most important provisions of the bill. "I've gone with victims to court, and taken them through the whole thing. I've been with them at the hospital, and at the police station, seen them go through cross-examination and right through to the end of the trial. After all that, they still don't get a conviction. The juries say that they believed the victim, but they couldn't sentence a man to death. If we could change the whole attitude toward rape, that's more important in the long run. If lighter sentences will help do that, it's important."

The Committee also offered a new definition of consent. In the past, courts have had problems determining whether the victim resisted or if the assailant had used enough force. Under the proposed bill, consent and not force would be determinative of a sexual assault. Anytime the victim lacks "an affirmative desire to participate," the sexual contact or act is unconsented.

TRIAL AT THE POLICE STATION

As a newspaper reporter assigned to cover the police department, I was in and out of detective headquarters three or four days a week for two years. Much of what I observed remains baffling to me. One thing I can say with certainty, though, is that a woman in a police station is better off generally — less shame and more satisfaction — if she has been shot or stabbed or had her car stolen, or has been arrested for shooting, stabbing, or stealing a car, than if she has been raped.

When I was first on the job, I thought a rape was news. I took an incident report upstairs to the sergeant who was in charge of the homicide section which investigated murders, suicide, assaults and all rapes. The report made him grin.

"If you are going to bring me one, son, bring me a good one anyway. This is a black-on-black. Eight out of ten of your rape reports are black-on-black. I'm not saying it never happens, but we don't go rushing out there every time we get a signal 65 (rape) on Jefferson Street. Bring me a black-on-white or a white-on-white from the right part of town and we'll talk business."

Detectives would go to great lengths to find the guilty man when they believed that a "nice girl" had been violated. However, their initial

reaction to every rape report was suspicion; they firmly believed that more often than not the woman who summoned the police had not been raped but was either covering for loss of virginity, infidelity or other fall from virtue, or taking "revenge" upon inattentive parents or boyfriend.

Further, a detective's personal conviction that a woman had suffered sexual assault could easily be nullified by his estimate of her story's weight with the jury. One midnight, plainclothes officers questioned a woman whose face was badly swollen and bruised yellow and purple. No one challenged her claim that she had been beaten. She had also been raped, she insisted. After an hour of gang inquisition, the detectives finally believed that she was telling the truth. Nevertheless, their advice to her was, "Go home, take the darvon the intern at the county hospital gave you, and forget it." They weren't without sympathy. But they already knew what the jury would eventually learn, that she was 36 years old and had been a prostitute more or less full time since she was 14. Juries don't decide in favor of whores, they reasoned. She would never know whether the jurors themselves would have disagreed.

— a Jacksonville, Fla.,
police reporter

Under the current law, a man can't "rape" his wife in North Carolina. In fact, one authority of North Carolina family law seems to find an endorsement of the use of force on an unwilling wife: "[T]he law does not say that, being a man, he cannot take charge of the situation and do something himself."^{*} The rethinking of the consent definition changes that. The marriage vow would no longer amount to a blanket consent for life; under the proposal, sexual assault would be possible when the husband and wife were living apart. Furthermore, a man could no longer defend himself with the assertion that he had mistaken a woman's intoxication for her consent.

The issue of the admissibility of evidence of the victim's past sexual activity is underscored in the bill. Presently this evidence can be admitted to discredit the victim as a witness, to show that she was likely to have consented to the defendant, or both. The problem is that seldom, if ever, is evidence of sexual activity relevant to these determinations. Allowing the evidence in at all is merely a carryover from common law tradition which the judicial system has been reluctant to abandon.

Why the reluctance? Our criminal justice system affords the defendant special protection. The Constitution guarantees the defendant the right to confront and cross-examine the witness against him. That right is not limitless, but any deprivation of either of these rights is closely scrutinized. Even the defendant, however, cannot gain admittance of irrelevant evidence.

"You have to be very careful in a rape law," Rep. Hunt said of this section of the proposed statute. "Basically what you've got is two people accusing each other. You can't forget that all of this is extremely traumatic for him, too."

The Committee had to formulate a rule which would exclude irrelevant evidence of the victim's past sexual conduct offered by the defendant, but which would not interfere with his rights to confront and cross-examine. Three situations were defined in which that evidence may be admissible. They proposed that "the sexual behavior of the defendant or victim is irrelevant to any issue in sexual prosecution, except: where the victim and the defendant

had previously engaged in sexual relations; where medical evidence that a sexual act had occurred might be imputed to someone other than the defendant; or where either the victim or the defendant has engaged in a pattern of sexual behavior similar to the facts in the alleged assault."

Another provision deals with the fact that sometimes juries consider evidence which they should not have heard. If a defense attorney asks, "Isn't it true, Miss Jones, that you lived with a man out of wedlock for two years while you were a student?" the judge will ordinarily sustain the prosecutor's immediate objection. The judge's instruction — "The jury will disregard the last remark"—ignores the damage done.

The proposal would eliminate such misleading of the jury by requiring that any evidence of a victim's past sexual behavior which might be admissible undergo a screening by a judge out of the presence of the jury. The judge would decide if the evidence can be admitted and instruct the defense attorney on how much may be admitted, the type of questions that may be asked, and the nature of any other references which may be made to the evidence.

Other proposals were added, but one particularly embodies the underlying philosophy of the new sexual assault bill. That provision does away with the antediluvian common law tradition in which the judge in a sexual assault case instructs the jury in a special way. The prototype dates from 1778:

It is true rape is a most detestable crime, and therefore ought severely and impartially to be punished with death; but it must be remembered, that it is an accusation easily to be made and hard to be proved, and harder to be defended by the party accused, tho' never so innocent.*

Under the proposed law, no such cautionary instructions or admonitions could be given.

When public hearings on the bill opened on December 8, 1975, immediate objections were raised. Responding to an invitation from the Committee to comment on the bill, Chief Justice Susie Sharp of the North Carolina Supreme Court sent Franklin Freeman, Assistant Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, to deliver the

Court's opinion that the statute as written was unworkable. The Court's primary objection was echoed by a number of trial lawyers and defense attorneys who attended the hearings: the "vast number" of possible changes would confuse magistrates, prosecutors, and judges when deciding what charge to make or what instruction to give. Newspapers played up the unfavorable elements of Freeman's comments including his statement that the bill was a "legalistic and linguistic nightmare." Unfortunately, the temporary controversy obscured fundamental agreement over the important provisions of the bill. In response to the objections, the Committee simplified the structure of its proposed law, but the core provisions remained intact.

Indications are that much of the bill will pass when it goes before the Legislature in the 1977 session. Support from the Committee and approval of the Supreme Court give it a strong chance. Supporters hope that the ERA forces will endorse the bill once their Amendment is resolved in the Legislature.

Representative Hunt expressed reservations: "The support of the Supreme Court is no guarantee, although their disapproval would have been the kiss of death. It's hard to say. The lawyers in the Legislature aren't prosecutors, they're trial lawyers, defense attorneys. Its passage is still very uncertain."

Sen. Mathis feels that a large step forward has been taken: "It's a very progressive bill for North Carolina, progressive for anywhere in the country."

Whatever the immediate fate of the bill in the North Carolina Legislature, the process of reform has come a long way since Sen. Mathis first listened to the Rape Crisis volunteers. Margaret Ballard of the Rape Crisis Center, who followed the legislation from the beginning, was encouraged by the experience.

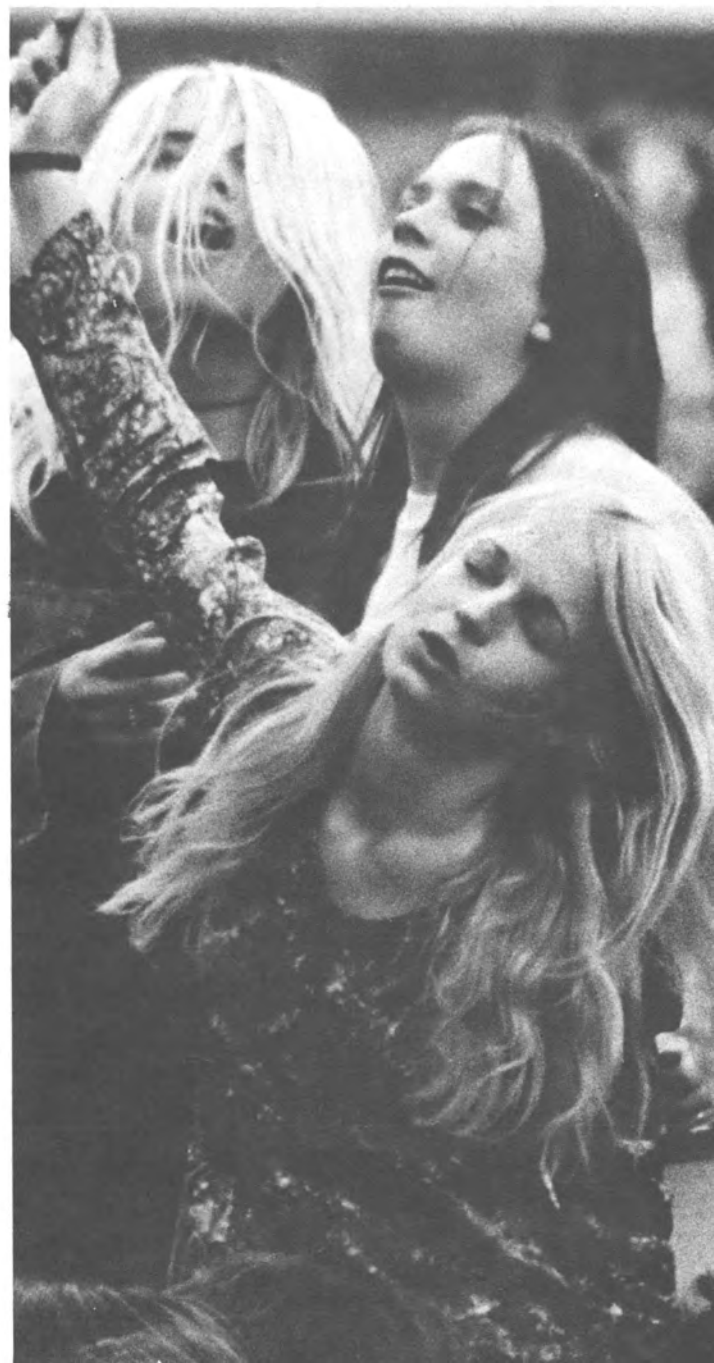
"They really thought it would die in the Committee when it was first appointed. But members began to change their minds when they heard the testimony of the victims. For me it was a very neat kind of thing. It was a good experience to go and see minds changed. And it made me feel good to know that I can have an input. I feel like something might get done."

* Robert E. Lee, *North Carolina Family Law* (1963), 88.

* M. Hale, *The History of the Pleas of the Crown* (1778), 639.



(left to right) top row: Wendy Ewald, Robert Ballard, Wendy Watriss-Fred Baldwin, Wendy Watriss-Baldwin, Watriss-Baldwin, Watriss-Baldwin, Watriss-Baldwin, Rick Doble
bottom row: FSA/Library of Congress, Watriss-Baldwin, Watriss-Baldwin, Watriss-Baldwin, Rick Doble



In Search of Our

I described her own nature and temperament. Told how they needed a larger life for their expression . . . I pointed out that in lieu of proper channels, her emotions had overflowed into paths that dissipated them. I talked, beautifully I thought, about an art that would be born, an art that would open the way for women the likes of her. I asked her to hope, and build up an inner life against the coming of that day . . . I sang, with a strange quiver in my voice, a promise song.

"Avey," Jean Toomer, *Cane*

(The poet speaking to the prostitute who falls asleep while he's talking.)

When the poet Jean Toomer walked through the South in the early twenties, he discovered a curious thing: Black women whose spirituality was so intense, so deep, so *unconscious*, that they were themselves unaware of the richness they held. They stumbled blindly through their lives: creatures so abused and mutilated in body, so dimmed and confused by pain, that they considered themselves unworthy even of hope. In the selfless abstractions their bodies became to the men who used them, they became more than "sexual objects," more even than mere women: they became Saints. Instead of being perceived as whole persons, their bodies became shrines: what was thought to be their minds became temples suitable for worship. These crazy "Saints" stared out at the world, wildly, like lunatics — or quietly, like suicides; and the "God" that was in their gaze was as

mute as a great stone.

Who were these "Saints"? These crazy, loony, pitiful women?

Some of them, without a doubt, were our mothers and grandmothers.

In the still heat of the Post-Reconstruction South, this is how they seemed to Jean Toomer: exquisite butterflies trapped in an evil honey, toiling away their lives in an era, a century, that did not acknowledge them, except as "the *mule* of the world." They dreamed dreams that no one knew — not even themselves, in any coherent fashion — and saw visions no one could understand. They wandered or sat about the countryside crooning lullabies to ghosts, and drawing the mother of Christ in charcoal on courthouse walls.

They forced their minds to desert their bodies and their striving spirits sought to rise, like frail whirlwinds from the hard red clay. And when those frail whirlwinds fell, in scattered particles, upon the ground, no one mourned. Instead, men lit candles to celebrate the emptiness that remained, as people do who enter a beautiful but vacant space to resurrect a God.

Our mothers and grandmothers, some of them: moving to music not yet written. And they waited.

They waited for a day when the unknown thing that was in them would be made known; but guessed, somehow in their darkness, that on the day of their revelation they would be long dead. Therefore to Toomer they walked, and even ran, in slow motion. For they were going nowhere immediate, and the future was not yet within their grasp. And men took our mothers and grandmothers, "but got no pleasure from it." So complex was their passion and their calm.

To Toomer, they lay vacant and fallow as autumn fields, with harvest

time never in sight; and he saw them enter loveless marriages, without joy; and become prostitutes, without resistance; and become mothers of children, without fulfillment.

For these grandmothers and mothers of ours were not "Saints," but Artists; driven to a numb and bleeding madness by the springs of creativity in them for which there was no release. They were Creators, who lived lives of spiritual waste, because they were so rich in spirituality — which is the basis of Art — that the strain of enduring their unused and unwanted talent drove them insane. Throwing away this spirituality was their pathetic attempt to lighten the soul to a weight their work-worn, sexually abused bodies could bear.

What did it mean for a black woman to be an artist in our grandmothers' time? In our great-grandmothers' day? It is a question with an answer cruel enough to stop the blood.

Did you have a genius of a great-great-grandmother who died under some ignorant and depraved white overseer's lash? Or was she required to bake biscuits for a lazy backwater tramp, when she cried out in her soul to paint watercolors of sunsets, or the rain falling on the green and peaceful pasturelands? Or was her body broken and forced to bear children (who were more often than not sold away from her) — eight, ten, fifteen, twenty children — when her one joy was the thought of modeling heroic figures of Rebellion, in stone or clay?

Alice Walker is Fiction editor of Ms. Magazine and the author of many volumes of poetry and novels, including Once, Revolutionary Petunias, In Love and Trouble, and Meridian.

Copyright © 1974 by Alice Walker. Originally published in Ms. Magazine.

Mothers' Gardens

by Alice Walker



photo by Tom Davenport

How was the creativity of the Black woman kept alive, year after year and century after century, when for most of the years Black people have been in America, it was a punishable crime for a Black person to read or write? And the freedom to paint, to sculpt, to expand the mind with action, did not exist. Consider, if you can bear to imagine it, what might have been the result if singing, too, had been forbidden by law. Listen to the voices of Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, Roberta Flack, and Aretha Franklin, among others, and imagine those voices muzzled for life. Then you may begin to comprehend the lives of our "crazy," "Sainted" mothers and grandmothers. The agony of the

*The creator of the Stool is lost!
And all the young women
Have perished in the wilderness!*

But this is not the end of the story, for all the young women — our mothers and grandmothers, *ourselves* — have not perished in the wilderness. And if we ask ourselves why, and search for and find the answer, we will know beyond all efforts to erase it from our minds, just exactly who, and of what, we Black American women are.

One example, perhaps the most pathetic, most misunderstood one, can provide a backdrop for our mothers' work: Phillis Wheatley, a slave in the 1700s.

Virginia Woolf, in her book, *A*

woman, insert *born or made a slave*) would certainly have gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage outside the village, half witch, half wizard (insert *Saint*), feared and mocked at. For it needs little skill and psychology to be sure that a highly gifted girl who had tried to use her gift for poetry would have been so thwarted and hindered by contrary instincts (add *chains, guns, the lash, the ownership of one's body by someone else, submission to an alien religion*), that she must have lost her health and sanity to a certainty."

The key words, as they relate to Phillis, are "contrary instincts." For when we read the poetry of Phillis Wheatley — as when we read the



photo by Donna Bennight

lives of women who might have been Poets, Novelists, Essayists, and Short Story Writers (over a period of centuries), who died with their real gifts stifled within them.

And, if this were the end of the story, we would have cause to cry out in my paraphrase of Okot p'Bitek's great poem:

*O, my clanswomen
Let us all cry together!
Come,
Let us mourn the death of our mother,
The death of a Queen
The ash that was produced
By a great fire!
O this homestead is utterly dead
Close the gates
With lacari thorns,
For our mother*

Room of One's Own, wrote that in order for a woman to write fiction she must have two things, certainly: a room of her own (with key and lock) and enough money to support herself.

What then are we to make of Phillis Wheatley, a slave, who owned not even herself? This sickly, frail, Black girl who required a servant of her own at times — her health was so precarious — and who, had she been white, would have been easily considered the intellectual superior of all the women and most of the men in the society of her day.

Virginia Woolf wrote further, speaking of course not of our Phillis, that "any woman born with a great gift in the sixteenth century (insert *eighteenth century*, insert *Black*

novels of Nella Larsen or the oddly false-sounding autobiography of that freest of all Black women writers, Zora Hurston — evidence of. "contrary instincts" is everywhere. Her loyalties were completely divided, as was, without question, her mind.

But how could this be otherwise? Captured at seven, a slave of wealthy, doting whites who instilled in her the "savagery" of the Africa they "rescued" her from...one wonders if she was even able to remember her homeland as she had known it, or as it really was.

Yet, because she did try to use her gift for poetry in a world that made her a slave, she was "so thwarted and hindered by...contrary instincts, that she...lost her health..." In the last

years of her brief life, burdened not only with the need to express her gift but also with a penniless, friendless "freedom" and several small children for whom she was forced to do strenuous work to feed, she lost her health, certainly. Suffering from malnutrition and neglect and who knows what mental agonies, Phillis Wheatley died.

So torn by "contrary instincts" was Black, kidnapped, enslaved Phillis that her description of "the Goddess" — as she poetically called the Liberty she did not have — is ironically, cruelly humorous. And, in fact, has held Phillis up to ridicule for more than a century. It is usually read prior to hanging Phillis' memory as that of a fool. She wrote:

*The Goddess comes, she moves
divinely fair,
Olive and laurel binds her golden hair:
Wherever shines this native of the skies,
Unnumber'd charms and recent graces
rise.*

(Emphasis mine)

It is obvious that Phillis, the slave, combed the "Goddess'" hair every morning; prior, perhaps, to bringing in the milk, or fixing her mistress' lunch. She took her imagery from the one thing she saw elevated above all others.

With the benefit of hindsight we ask, "How could she?"

But at last, Phillis, we understand. No more snickering when your stiff, struggling, ambivalent lines are forced on us. We know now that you were not an idiot nor a traitor; only a sickly little Black girl, snatched from your home and country and made a slave; a woman who still struggled to sing the song that was your gift, although in a land of barbarians who praised you for your bewildered tongue. It is not so much what you sang, as that you kept alive, in so many of our ancestors, *the nation of song*.

II

Black women are called, in the folklore that so aptly identifies one's status in society, "the mule of the world," because we have been handed the burdens that everyone else — everyone else — refused to carry. We have also been called "Matriarchs," "Superwomen," and "Mean and Evil Bitches." Not to mention "Castrators" and "Sapphire's Mama." When we have pleaded for understanding, our

character has been distorted; when we have asked for simple caring, we have been handed empty inspirational appellations, then stuck in the farthest corner. When we have asked for love, we have been given children. In short, even our plainer gifts, our labors of fidelity and love, have been knocked down our throats. To be an artist and a Black woman, even today, lowers our status in many respects, rather than raises it; and yet, artists we will be.

Therefore we must fearlessly pull out of ourselves and look at and identify with our lives the living creativity some of our great-grandmothers were not allowed to know; I stress *some* of them because it is well known that the majority of our great-grandmothers knew even without "knowing" it, the reality of their spirituality, even if they didn't recognize it beyond what happened in the singing at church — and they never had any intention of giving it up.

How they did it: those millions of Black women who were not Phillis Wheatley, or Lucy Terry or Frances Harper or Zora Hurston or Nella Larsen or Bessie Smith — nor Elizabeth Catlett, nor Katherine Dunham, either — brings me to the title of this essay, "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens," which is a personal account that is yet shared, in its theme and its meaning, by all of us. I found, while thinking about the far-reaching world of the creative Black woman, that often the truest answer to a question that really matters can be found very close. So I was not surprised when my own mother popped into my mind.

In the late 1920s my mother ran away from home to marry my father. Marriage, if not running away, was expected of 17-year-old girls. By the time she was 20, she had two children and was pregnant with a third. Five children later, I was born. And this is how I came to know my mother: she seemed a large, soft, loving-eyed woman who was rarely impatient in our home. Her quick, violent temper was on view only a few times a year, when she battled with the white landlord who had the misfortune to suggest to her that her children did not need to go to school.

She made all the clothes we wore, even my brothers' overalls. She made all the towels and sheets we used. She spent the summers canning vegetables

and fruits. She spent the winter evenings making quilts enough to cover all our beds.

During the "working" day, she labored beside—not behind—my father in the fields. Her day began before sunup, and did not end until late at night. There was never a moment for her to sit down, undisturbed, to unravel her own private thoughts; never a time free from interruption—by work or the noisy inquiries of her many children. And yet, it is to my mother — and all our mothers who were not famous — that I went in search of the secret of what has fed that muzzled and often mutilated, but vibrant, creative spirit that the Black woman has inherited, and that pops out in wild and unlikely places to this day.

But when, you will ask, did my overworked mother have time to know or care about feeding the creative spirit?

The answer is so simple that many of us have spent years discovering it. We have constantly looked high, when we should have looked high — and low.

For example: in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., there hangs a quilt unlike any other in the world. In fanciful, inspired, and yet simple and identifiable figures, it portrays the story of the Crucifixion. It is considered rare, beyond price. Though it follows no known pattern of quilting, and though it is made of bits and pieces of worthless rags, it is obviously the work of a person of powerful imagination and deep spiritual feeling. Below this quilt I saw a note that says it was made by "an anonymous Black woman in Alabama, a hundred years ago."

If we could locate this "anonymous" Black woman from Alabama, she would turn out to be one of our grandmothers — an artist who left her mark in the only materials she could afford, and in the only medium her position in society allowed her to use.

As Virginia Woolf wrote further, in *A Room of One's Own*:

"Yet genius of a sort must have existed among women as it must have existed among the working class. (Change this to *slaves and the wives and daughters of sharecroppers*.) Now and again an Emily Bronte or a Robert Burns (change this to a *Zora Hurston*

or a Richard Wright) blazes out and proves its presence. But certainly it never got itself on to paper. When, however, one reads of a witch being ducked, of a woman possessed by devils (or *Sainthood*), of a wise woman selling herbs (our rootworkers), or even a very remarkable man who had a mother, then I think we are on the track of a lost novelist, a suppressed poet, of some mute and inglorious Jane Austen... Indeed, I would venture to guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman..."

And so our mothers and grandmothers have, more often than not anonymously, handed on the creative spark, the seed of the flower they themselves never hoped to see: or like a sealed letter they could not plainly read.

And so it is, certainly, with my own mother. Unlike "Ma" Rainey's songs, which retained their creator's name even while blasting forth from Bessie Smith's mouth, no song or poem will bear my mother's name. Yet so many of the stories that I write, that we all write, are my mother's stories. Only recently did I fully realize this: that through years of listening to my mother's stories of her life, I have absorbed not only the stories themselves, but something of the manner in which she spoke, something of the urgency that involves the knowledge that her stories — like her life — must be recorded. It is probably for this reason that so much of what I have written is about characters whose counterparts in real life are so much older than I am.

But the telling of these stories, which came from my mother's lips as naturally as breathing, was not the only way my mother showed herself as an artist. For stories, too, were subject to being distracted, to dying without conclusion. Dinners must be started, and cotton must be gathered before the big rains. The artist that was and is my mother showed itself to me only after many years. This is what I finally noticed:

Like Mem, a character in *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, my mother adorned with flowers whatever shabby house we were forced to live in. And not just your typical straggly country stand of zinnias, either. She planted ambitious gardens — and still does — with over 50 different varieties of

plants that bloom profusely from early March until late November. Before she left home for the fields, she watered her flowers, chopped up the grass, and laid out new beds. When she returned from the fields she might divide clumps of bulbs, dig a cold pit, uproot and replant roses, or prune branches from her taller bushes or trees — until night came and it was too dark to see.

Whatever she planted grew as if by magic, and her fame as a grower of flowers spread over three counties. Because of her creativity with her flowers, even my memories of poverty are seen through a screen of blooms — sunflowers, petunias, roses, dahlias, forsythia, spirea, delphiniums, verbena ... and on and on.

And I remember people coming to

*I notice that it is only when
my mother is working in her
flowers that she is radiant,
almost to the point of being
invisible, except as Creator.
She is involved in work
her soul must have:
ordering the universe in the
image of her personal
conception of Beauty.*

my mother's yard to be given cuttings from her flowers; I hear again the praise showered on her because whatever rocky soil she landed on, she turned into a garden. A garden so brilliant with colors, so original in its design, so magnificent with life and creativity, that to this day people drive by our house in Georgia — perfect strangers — and ask to stand or walk among my mother's art.

I notice that it is only when my mother is working in her flowers that she is radiant, almost to the point of being invisible — except as Creator: hand and eye. She is involved in work her soul must have. Ordering the universe in the image of her personal conception of Beauty.

Her face, as she prepares the Art that is her gift, is a legacy of respect she leaves to me, for all that illuminates

and cherishes life. She had handed down respect for the possibilities — and the will to grasp them.

For her, so hindered and intruded upon in so many ways, being an artist has still been a daily part of her life. This ability to hold on, even in very simple ways, is work Black women have done for a very long time.

This poem is not enough, but it is something, for the woman who literally covered the holes in our walls with sunflowers:

*They were women then
My mama's generation
Husky of voice — Stout of
Step
With fists as well as
Hands
How they battered down
Doors
And ironed
Starched white
Shirts
How they led
Armies
Headragged Generals
Across mined
Fields
Booby-trapped
Ditches
To discover books
Desks
A place for us
How they knew what we
Must know
Without knowing a page
Of it
Themselves.*

Guided by my heritage of a love of beauty and a respect for strength — in search of my mother's garden, I found my own.

And perhaps in Africa over 200 years ago, there was just such a mother; perhaps she painted vivid and daring decorations in oranges and yellows and greens on the walls of her hut; perhaps she sang — in a voice like Roberta Flack's — *sweetly* over the compounds of her village; perhaps she wove the most stunning mats or told the most ingenious stories of all the village story-tellers. Perhaps she was herself a poet — though only her daughter's name is signed to the poems we know.

Perhaps Phillis Wheatley's mother was also an artist.

Perhaps in more than Phillis Wheatley's biological life is her mother's signature made clear.

The June brides of the Bicentennial year seemed so promising in Randolph County, North Carolina.

The county seat, Asheboro, sits halfway between the honeymoon havens in the mountains of Gatlinburg, Tenn., and the long shores of Myrtle Beach. There are closer places endowed with scenic magnificence and abundant sunshine, but none where liquor flows legally. Besides, tradition requires that honeymoons be celebrated out of state.

The June brides, 18 years old on the average, took their choice of honeymoon spots and then returned home to work and to save for a house and family. Their parents had every reason to be proud.

The brides — or at least the large majority of them — had already finished high school in a county where most adults had not completed the tenth grade. And while thousands of young people in other parts of the nation sat idle and jobless, Randolph's women went forth into the mill day and night. Proportionally, twice as many women were employed here as in the country as a whole. And more than half of these worked as operatives in textile, furniture and electrical equipment plants.

They married boys from home, from hard-working, church-going families and they carried themselves in the community with all the proper pride and ceremony. They seemed so smart, so well educated, so anxious to settle down and pick up the threads of home and family.

But to hear the older women tell it, something is amiss with these brides. It would seem, say highly placed sources within the Asheboro Council of Garden Clubs, that the youngsters have failed to lay claim to the civilized essence of their heritage.

I

A garden club is a fellowship, a gathering of the faithful. It is built on respect for the imperatives of nature and the subtleties of order; it aims for grace in community affairs, for a higher evidence of community purpose than the accomplishments of commerce.

Asheboro is a city on a hill, spanking clean and astonishingly beautiful. The women of the garden clubs have seen to that. They have brought forth splashes of marigolds from clay strips between parking lots. They have shaded

That Civilizing Spirit

by Ellen Stein



photo by Gary Hinshaw/Asheboro Courier-Tribune

ed the entranceways to public buildings with dogwood clouds. They have gotten down on their knees and dug their fingernails into the dirt, all to reveal to Asheboro a glimpse of the creative potential of its civilization. They have worked in this manner for three generations.

The fourth generation has declined to carry on. The women of the garden clubs now are generally in their fifties, often in their sixties or seventies; fewer than a dozen are thirty.

The leadership is worried. Has the spirit died? Why do the youngsters not feel the impulse to work with the elements, to create pleasant places from the chaos of muddy hillsides and weedy dooryards?

Any woman can join a garden club, any woman who cares. There are clubs in almost every neighborhood, old or new, rich or poor, black or white. There are clubs in sections of town so far back up the hill that the city has not yet paved the roads or brought out the water lines. Only the clubwomen are there to see that things are presentable. There is something essentially middle-class behind the garden club spirit. But women from all social levels respond to its call. Each club is auton-

omous with a homogeneous membership and a program that best suits its needs. A club in the black neighborhood, for example, planted trees on the grounds of a day-care center while several white clubs were seeding flower beds at a historical site.

But all the clubs send representatives to a city-wide council which operates a program called HANDS to coordinate beautification efforts. At the Bicentennial-Southern regional HANDS meeting in Charleston, S.C., Asheboro (population: 14,000) placed first among cities of its size on the basis of its comprehensive HANDS program.

The Bicentennial year was an especially challenging one for the garden clubs; there was the state project which involved large-scale plantings of the official North Carolina Bicentennial trees, dogwood and crepe myrtle, plus the local historical project restoring the building and grounds of the century-old Female Academy. In addition, there was the ongoing work: Beauty Spot of the Month recognition, horticultural scholarship administration,

Ellen Stein is a former society editor of the Courier-Tribune in Asheboro, N.C.

photo by Steve March



photo by Ann Hawthorne

clean-up campaigns, Blue Star highway marker plots, and all the rest.

Young members or no young members, the clubwomen plunged ahead and laid their post-Bicentennial plans. At the top of the list was improving the grounds of the new Council on Aging office, located in a defunct convenience-store outlet, with a pocket-sized, multi-level, curbside garden, including shady and sunny places to sit. There would be different flowers blooming for different seasons, and the path from car to door would be set in old brick. It would take a long time to finish.

Meanwhile, the clubwomen gather for their neighborhood club meetings. After a business session conducted by a string of officers and committee chairmen, they listen to a program planned months in advance; topics range from "Flowers of the Old South" to "Wildflowers of North Carolina" to "The Therapeutic Value of Gardening." Occasionally the programs deal with

the nuts-and-bolts of plant propagation or flower arranging, but transmission of specific skills is generally left to the informal network of family and neighbors. The clubs assume broader educational and moral responsibilities — the social and psychological examination of the gardening impulses, the commitment to transmit the concept of a civilized community.

Perhaps for this reason the Council of Garden Clubs leaders, although busy as always, spoke of their Bicentennial accomplishments with an undertone of disappointment. There were no youngsters to teach, no one left who would sit and listen to the lessons.

II

Randolph County is neither rich nor intellectually sophisticated; it is typical of the Piedmont Carolinas, founded economically on textiles and furniture, culturally on country

churches and bootleg beer.

The last time the census takers came around, they found only 900 women, out of 40,000, who had been to college. But Randolph has a library system, a proud one, and it took generations for the women to build it.

The county government has now assumed a part of the responsibility for the libraries. People are proud of the system — 98 percent told state researchers their library facilities and services were outstanding — and much of the work is still carried on by volunteers. Unpaid women, Friends of the Library, come in each day to spell the small, paid staff, to raise funds for books, and to supervise and expand the local history and genealogy collections. Every morning, they place vases of fresh-cut flowers on the circulation desk.

As these women age, it is possible, though not certain, that the burden of their work will shift to the larger body of taxpayers, who will hire pub-

lic servants to take over what private volunteers once did.

It's a familiar pattern for rural areas like Randolph County. Once when families were hungry, they were fed by the women of the county and their churches. But during the recession of 1974 and 1975, so many people went hungry that a volunteer army of women working literally round the clock, and bolstered temporarily by an influx of unemployed men, fell months behind the job. Reluctantly latching onto federal grants, the county hired more personnel in its social services department and began a more or less serious attempt to enroll citizens for food stamps.

Perhaps more significantly, the social services department hired a full-time volunteer coordinator, someone who could keep the women working hard and thus keep the taxes down.

III

Out from Asheboro, in the tiny mill villages along Deep River and the farming communities between the ridges of the Uwharries, the work of civilizing society has fallen to the Extension Homemakers.

In the spring of 1976, when some 200 Homemakers gathered for a Bicentennial festival, more than a dozen were honored for perfect meeting attendance records dating back before World War II. Dozens more had not missed a meeting since the 1950s. The Extension Homemakers are still holding on, still working fearsomely hard, but few of the members are young enough now to begin building such venerable attendance records.

The Homemakers are mystics. They look into the depths of family life and see powerful forces to be mobilized for social order. For their Bicentennial project, they assumed responsibility for partial funding of Girls' Haven of North Carolina, a private corporation organizing homes for the state's homeless teenage girls. "If every mother were an Extension Homemaker," they said, "there would be no need for a place like Girls' Haven."

They made a quilt, every stitch pulled by hand with beeswax-strengthened thread, and offered chances on the quilt to everyone making donations to Girls' Haven.

But a quilt is not a raffle item

plucked from a hat. Imagine, in the bygone days, a country home where the beds are piled high with quilts. The homemaker knew each square as a quiet evening of needlework when a baby was on the way, or a stolen moment of stillness amid the clatter of small children. Or a long, dark night marked by the anguish of one or another episode from the history of family troubles. No outsider could read the story of a quilt; its tale was

private and personal.

The Homemakers' 1976 quilt was different. It was conceived and executed outside the family, designed by 15 neighborhood clubs according to a self-revealing theme. A square with a redbird on a dogwood branch stood for North Carolina; a pillared mansion was the South; a Liberty Bell was the nation; a farmer and his wife symbolized the country hearth and home; and a double-wedding-ring patchwork

RANDOLPH COUNTY'S WORKING WOMEN

A century ago, Randolph County, North Carolina, looked the way the New South was supposed to look. Dozens of new brick factories were clustered along the banks of Deep River, spinning cotton for the first great wave of piedmont Carolina industrialists. Surrounding each plant was a dusty mill village; sprawling back from the villages were small farms, and then forests, already staked out for the growing furniture industry. Over the generations since, Randolph has remained in the mainstream of the Southern textile-furniture economy, never really urbanizing or growing rich or developing the wide range of industries and services associated with other industrialized regions. But change did come to the county, and no one was affected more by the change than the women of Randolph.

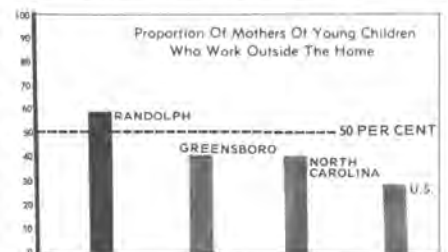
The old cotton mills closed down one by one or were converted to more sophisticated operations specializing in synthetic fibers or the final stages of textile processing, such as knitting, hosiery and apparel. The textile giants, Burlington and J.P. Stevens, built modern, mechanized plants in the county, and other national firms, such as General Electric and Union Carbide, moved in to produce small electrical items like hair dryers and batteries. Randolph's industrial base widened slightly, but more importantly it shifted from heavy labor involving raw materials to lighter production tasks handled more and more frequently by women.

The proportion of the textile labor force who are women grew slowly from 1910 to 1960; then in the decade of the 60s it jumped from 52 percent to 60 percent. In 1970, only 20 percent of Randolph's working women were in clerical work (far below the

national average of 35 percent). Men still dominated the skilled production trades, along with managerial positions and the professions, but women kept the mills going.

In May, 1976, the Randolph Committee on the Status of Women issued a report which combines statistics with interviews to create a profile of women's lives in a piedmont county. It finds that married women with young children are more than twice as likely to work as are such women generally (58 percent to 28.5 percent). Childcare services are expensive and inadequate, and these working women carry a double burden: in the words of one respondent, the major problem they face is "operating a home and doing a full-time job."

In addition, the Committee reported that men in Randolph earn more than women in virtually every line of work, at every educational level. The typical male worker earned \$5,777 in 1970, while the typical female made only \$3,795. Randolph, like other piedmont counties, is at the very bottom of the industrial wage structure. Only by going to work along with their husbands have the county's women spared their families the worst exigencies of poverty. At the same time that they carry home their necessary wages, they also provide the caretaking function in the home that makes family survival possible.



pattern offered, as a touch of tradition, the unciphered calligraphy of the ancient quilt.

The Homemakers' quilt was programmatic. Nobody's grandmother ever saw a quilt like that. But one fine September afternoon, the quilt was stretched across a century-old frame in the agriculture building next to the courthouse, with the clubwomen clustered round for the quilting bee. It was not an old-style bee; women from black clubs and white clubs throughout the county sat side by side, their needles darting under the watchful eye of the county home extension agent, Drue Trotter. Some of the women admitted they had not learned enough of quilting at their mothers' knees, and had honed their skills from books and a night class at Randolph Tech. Some argued that the edges were finished incorrectly, not turned down in the old way but bound up according to an imported book-lesson. Nonetheless, the Homemakers made a quilt and raised \$1500 from their raffle.

Hundreds of homemakers, many of them grandmothers, are still firmly enmeshed in the extension clubs. In 1963, the state of North Carolina commissioned a study on the needs of women which predicted that home extension agents could lead the way toward the family of the future. The agents could show the poor how to eat better for less, how to stretch tight budgets still more tightly. They could link the state's millions of rural families to the expanding resources and services of an industrializing world. Through the mechanisms of 4-H clubs and teen service organizations, the agents could open the larger world to children, especially to girls who might otherwise never picture what lay down the road beyond the local mill.

Mrs. Trotter, like dozens of other agents in dozens of other counties, has taken her mission seriously. She has done everything possible to keep the new generation involved in regenerating the extension spirit. It's not her fault if the potential seems to be slipping further away.

In 1976, one of her 4-H students, Kathy Kearns, went off to a state university with a scholarship she won in a statewide clothing competition. After nine years of learning about fabrics and fashions and wardrobes and budgets, Miss Kearns spent the summer before college sharing

her skills, on a volunteer basis, with the Randolph County community. She taught sewing courses to youngsters, fixed bulletin boards on clothing repair, wrote newspaper articles on making clothes and wearing them proudly, led workshops for the housing authority on how children can learn to sew on buttons and dress respectably.

But after college, Miss Kearns probably will not be available as a community resource in the same way. She plans to use her scholarship not to learn home economics or fashion design but to study textile chemistry. Like Kathy Kearns, the brightest, most dedicated young women trained by the 4-H/home extension system are being won for the future by the nation's industry and lost to the personalized, women-centered system which raised them.

The brightest, most dedicated young women are being won for the future by the nation's industry and lost to the personalized, women-centered system which raised them.

Another Randolph County home agent, human development specialist Lynn Qualls, says most young women are simply too busy to work closely with the extension agents and their service projects. "You look at the families with young children," Mrs. Qualls said, "the ones who are right there at the beginning of the life cycle, teaching the littlest children half of what they'll ever know. They're all at work, both the mother and the father, and either they're working second shift or third shift, the husband on one and the wife on another, or else the children are in nursery school all day. These are the homemakers we have to reach today, and there's no way they can make a commitment to any of our ongoing programs. Where can they find the time?"

At the county's Bicentennial festival in October, the home agents held

open house and distributed pamphlets encouraging young wives and mothers to join the Extension Homemakers clubs to learn the secrets of upgraded family life and the skills for community leadership. But Mrs. Qualls wasn't putting much stock in the success of the pamphlets; her project for 1977 is a monthly newsletter for parents of pre-schoolers, conveying the secrets to the new generation by mail, providing easy access in living-room comfort, and making little demand on their time and energy.

The younger women are growing up with different sets of skills for a different world. They have learned far more than their grandmothers from the public schools. TV and the generalized popular culture have taught them differently. The new Miss Randolph County, for example, won her title by singing in the style of a quintessentially New York rock group, Manhattan Transfer. Last year's Miss Randolph, a home economics graduate of Western Carolina University, sees little opportunity at home for utilizing her skills; she is seeking a career in boutique merchandising, hoping to work in a larger population center. Failing that, she says, she may try a stint as a stewardess.

Winners of the annual Miss Randolph competition can, of course, set their sights higher than most. But there are other ways out of the mill open to those with less outstanding accomplishments. It is possible, for example, to get second-shift work as a toe sewer in a hosiery mill and study practical nursing for a couple of years at Randolph Tech. In nearby counties, there are technical institutes teaching dental hygiene, keypunch operation, bookkeeping, medical secretary skills, even operating room technology. Almost all these programs are filled to overflowing, with long waiting lists. Almost all the students are working while they study, and women students, more often than men, are working in mills.

Two other escapes from the mill are available to women with certain backgrounds and inclinations. Some can go to college. And some can enter trades traditionally left to men. Debbie Allen, for example, recently graduated seventh in her class from truck-driving school and became a long-distance driver for Klopman Mills. But marriage-

and-family is not often an escape, not in 1977. The cost of living is far too steep for a man to bear alone.

The June brides and all the other young women, enrolled in school and already on the job, are pulling for themselves. Their work has little to do with the group accomplishments and mutual recognition of Extension Homemakers or garden clubs. They are putting in long hours at work, at school, cleaning up the house, running after children. They're becoming a little like men, too busy to trim shrubbery around the entrance to the library. They'd rather pay their taxes, be left alone and let someone else take care of the city's beauty.

Besides, the Bicentennial youngsters still have the older women around to carry on the volunteer work. The effort has not been abandoned. Not yet.



photo by Donna Bennight

THE WANING OF THE PERSONAL TOUCH

Mrs. Jones — which is not her real name — turned 70 last winter and came down with a pretty bad illness. She doesn't like to dwell on what specifically went wrong with her body, but she readily admits it was a terrible winter and she finally had to retire.

Mrs. Jones' retirement is a relative matter. True, she no longer goes into her real estate office every morning to work until late at night. Her daughter Louise has taken over most of that responsibility. But Mrs. Jones was always much more than just a hard-working, independent businesswoman. She has also been a ferociously dedicated club-woman, and she's not about to give up that.

When the warm weather came, Mrs. Jones seemed to perk up a little and get around better. She still has days when she just can't make it to meetings. She's had to resign from several officerships, but what she's lost in the range of her activities she has more than made up for in intensity. "I'm not one of those people who feels like the world owes me a living," she says. "I feel like I owe the world everything I've got left."

Louise is as proud of her mother as a daughter can be. She is proud of the real estate office her mother built up from nothing over thirty years of widowhood. She is proud of the

plaques and silver bowls and certificates of appreciation that clubs have presented Mrs. Jones; everything is on display in the office, right by the door. Louise is working hard to keep that business going — she's come out of a rough marriage and has two children to feed — but the work means more than a living.

"Back when my mother started this office, business was a lot harder for a woman than it is now," she says. "People didn't want to do business with a woman. She had to build up their respect year by year, little by little, and she did it. And now that things are in my hands, I'm not about to throw all that away. When people have faith in you, you've got yourself an awful big responsibility right there."

But Louise doesn't talk with as much confidence about the other side of her mother's responsibilities — the volunteer work and club life, the years of small projects raising money for needy children, coordinating blood drives and visiting with orphans and getting a piano for the school. Louise hasn't been able to find it in herself to take up these sorts of activities. She's not sure why. "My mother is one of the most dedicated people you can imagine," she says. "I just wish I were

more like her in a lot of ways. Sometimes I just look at her and shake my head, and I think to myself, 'Where does she get all that energy? How does she do it?'"

Mrs. Jones sees it differently. "Louise doesn't exactly have what you'd call an easy life. She's got those two little boys to raise all by herself, and she's got more than enough work here for one woman." But what goes unsaid tells the story: didn't Mrs. Jones herself raise Louise without a father, and didn't she too work day and night putting together that business?

"My mother's had it much harder than I have," Louise says. "She made this business work, she made people come to her about real estate because she sort of carried things an extra step. She cared about them personally, I think that was the main thing. And it showed. She followed up on people — if somebody died in their family, she kept up with what was happening to them, and people appreciated it. Nowadays, the main thing is to know your business — my mother always did that, too. I try and keep up with the personal touch, but I guess Asheboro's gotten a little bit larger. You can't do it any more to the same extent. And people don't want the same degree of attention; they don't expect the same spirit."

by Mary Frederickson

The Southern Summer School for Women Workers

So you want to know about the Southern Summer School. Well, all I can say is — that group is responsible for whatever sense I have today! It made a big impression on me. It was the first time I had ever been away from home, but that didn't bother me. The school was so informal — it was like everyone was on the same level — it seemed as if the teachers wanted to learn from us. You were taught to be aware of what was going on around you, about the labor movement, and the fact that women should be active in it.

—Polly Robkin, New York City
November 2, 1974

It was a great inspiration to me to feel like women were considered capable of participating. It was something new and interesting and I guess it was to most of the girls. They had never had a chance to speak up and talk and express themselves about what they felt should and shouldn't be done in our government and in our industry. They had never had an opportunity to express themselves before, and it was great....

—Vesta Finley, Marion, N.C.
July 22, 1975

The Southern Summer School for Women Workers represented a unique effort at female cooperation across class lines. During the late 1920s, a group of women trained in the social sciences and committed to using their skills as teachers in behalf of social change, organized a workers' education program for women in the Southern region. Each summer from 1927 to World War II, the staff of the School sought to provide young workers from textile, garment, and tobacco factories with the analytic tools for understanding the social context of their lives, the opportunity to develop solidarity with each other, and the confidence for full participation in the emerging Southern labor movement. The following account of their experiment represents a tentative outline of work-in-progress. It is part of a larger study of the role of women in social reform, the perceptions and experiences of Southern working women, and the relationship between middle-class reformers and the women they sought to help.

I

The roots of the Southern Summer School lay in the opening decades of the twentieth century, when the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) sought to channel the reform impulse of middle-class women into programs responsive to the needs of working women. The YWCA created an industrial department to reach working women on the local level, and the WTUL pioneered in the establishment of workers' education programs. Both supported the passage of protective legislation and the expansion of trade unions.¹

The founders of the Summer School, Louise Leonard McLaren and Lois MacDonald, hoped to bypass the limitations of a Northern-based WTUL and a Southern YWCA whose local branches were dependent on the support of mill owners and businessmen. Lois MacDonald, an economist and native of South Carolina, had written a classic study of Southern



The Southern Summer School did not have a permanent campus but rented facilities — schools and camps — each year, in different locations near Asheville, North Carolina.

mill villages in 1926.² As a YWCA leader in the South, she had helped organize a summer program which placed college students in industrial jobs. Having worked as an operative in an Atlanta textile mill herself, MacDonald had grown especially concerned about the human costs of Southern industrial development.

Louise McLaren, the daughter of a Pennsylvania banker and a graduate of Vassar, had served as the YWCA Industrial Secretary in the coal mining region of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. After she became National Industrial Secretary for the Southern region in 1920, she traveled across the South. Like Lois MacDonald, she observed firsthand the impact of rapid industrialization on the lives of women. She perceived that:

The popular idea that the South is 'different' and the failure to recognize the same large factors in industrial change which have characterized the industrial revolution elsewhere, handicaps the workers and retards the growth of the labor movement in the southern states. Just as the existence of national barriers has often prevented workers from different countries from recognizing their common cause, so southern sectionalism has blinded the textile workers to their need of affiliation with organized workers of the rest of the United States.³

Together the two women set out to overcome such sectional barriers through a Southern-based workers' movement in which the workers would "themselves take a hand."

As models for their plan, McLaren and MacDonald looked to the Brookwood Labor College, the Bryn Mawr Summer School, and the workers' education programs of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union (ACWU). For financial aid, they turned first to the American Federation of Labor. The AFL, however, was at its lowest ebb, devoted to craft unionism, and uninterested either in organizing women workers or in promoting workers' education. Consequently, the two women were forced to create an organization which would draw on a wide range of

Mary Frederickson is a graduate student in history at the University of North Carolina. She is currently writing a doctoral dissertation on the Southern Summer School.

interest groups for support.⁴

Response to their call for assistance came from across the spectrum of women's organizations. Funds for the first residence session in 1927 came from the American Fund for Public Service, administered by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, the radical feminist and IWW veteran. Meta Glass, sister of conservative Virginia Senator Carter Glass, provided facilities at Sweet Briar College (the School was later moved to Asheville, North Carolina). Students were recruited from local 'Y' branches and sponsored by middle-class Southern women's "workers' education committees" which provided money for travel and tuition.

The faculty McLaren and MacDonald recruited included both graduates of New England women's colleges and the small women's colleges of the South. Most were single and all were fiercely independent. Almost all had worked previously with the YWCA and then moved on to involvement in other reform activities. The Southerners were "new women" seeking a public role for themselves in a society which provided few outlets for their aspirations. The commitment of the New Englanders paralleled in many ways that of the women who had traveled South after the Civil War to teach in the American Missionary Association (AMA) schools for the newly freed slaves. Like their predeces-

sors, they were motivated by a sense of duty and they looked to Southerners as those most in need of aid. For many, the South held the mystery and attraction of a foreign land.⁵

Above all, like the AMA women before them, the women of the Summer School were teachers. Trained in the educational theories of John Dewey and the optimistic tenets of the new sociology, they perceived education as the way to bring about social change; and it was through their role as educators that they sought to bridge the gap between their own advantages and other women's needs.

In constructing their program, the faculty consciously avoided the literary and artistic emphasis of the Bryn Mawr Summer School and the vocational training of most adult education programs. Because their ultimate goal was to train grass-roots leaders and to disseminate organizing skills, the faculty planned to provide students with a practical knowledge of economics and the political system. As one board member put it:

This is no individual enterprise. It is not merely a session for those who may have the means to improve their individual and personal attainments and seek for themselves a little higher training in the arts and cultures of life.... The emphasis of the whole school is to be on social and not on individual growth and responsibility.⁶

Thus the founders of the Summer



Faculty of the School, 1929. Marion Bonner, a faculty member from North Carolina described the School as a place where women could come together and talk with other women without pressure from bosses, husbands or children. The environment was to her "very friendly, very cooperative . . . just like one big happy family . . . a wonderful experience of freedom and security."

School hoped to transcend the reformist goal of improving the lot of individuals. They envisioned regional collective change: a transformation of the lives of Southern working women.

II

During the School's fifteen-year existence, over 300 women attended its sessions. All were between eighteen and twenty-five, with at least two years of industrial experience and six years of schooling. All were white. The School owned no property but rented facilities each year; in consequence the faculty bowed reluctantly to the social mores of a segregated society. They did not take on the challenge of creating an integrated student body, but at the School they consistently stressed the identical interests of black and white labor. They also ran brief workers' education programs for blacks in several Southern cities.

Chief among the School's teaching methods was the use of the students' own life experiences as illustrations of historical change and social problems. Students were encouraged to compose and perform original dramas based on their own life histories. And their autobiographies and essays, together with faculty follow-up studies of their

participation in local labor and community activities, provide a rich collective portrait of the lives and thoughts of a cross-section of Southern working women.

For example, the work history of Nora MacManus, a cotton spooler from Macon, Georgia, illustrated to the other students the double-edged impact of protective legislation. She had first gone into the mill as a "bobbin-girl" at the age of eight. A short while later she left work to attend school when the Georgia legislature passed a law forbidding the employment of children under fourteen. At fourteen she returned to the mill as a spooler, working eleven hours a day until she was fifteen. Then her hours were reduced by a new state law preventing children under sixteen from working more than eight hours a day. At each turn in her story, the intervention of legal reform ameliorated the conditions under which she worked, while at the same time working an economic hardship on her family.⁷

The stories written by Summer School students graphically mirrored other social and economic changes. They told of the difficulties faced by those who worked the land, the movement of families from the farm to mill towns and urban centers, the

high price paid for economic survival. Students wrote of the hazards of coal dust, textile fibers, and dangerous machinery, and of the additional burden of frequent pregnancies. Most suffered from an inadequate diet; many had been forced to cope with the ill health or early death of their parents. One student, in 1929, summarized her family history in this way:

My childhood was happy. Our home was in a big oak grove. After I became old enough I had to work on the farm. If there wasn't work to be done at home I would have to help other people. My father's health had been bad for several years. After he was not able to do farm work we moved to the city. The doctor told father he had pellagra. At first I thought work in the mill was a great experience, but I soon grew tired of working in such a place and would often long to be out in the open again.⁸

The School drew to its campus women who longed for the means to change the patterns of their lives. They came for many reasons: some had been fired for union organizing or had joined a local and wanted to understand the meaning of their new commitment. But most students in the School's early years came simply out of a desire to learn. Many had left school at an early age and jumped at the chance to obtain additional education. Bessie Edens was a leader in the Elizabethton strike of 1929, and later in the same year came from Tennessee to the Summer School. She described her first contact with the School this way:

I didn't know what it was all about more'n nothing only they said it was the Southern Summer School for Women Workers of America or something to that effect. School was what I wanted, school. I didn't know what kind of school it was. But after I got there I liked it.⁹

Another student came to the School in 1930 upon the recommendation of a regional officer of the AFL. Elected president of her local union at the Kahn Manufacturing Company in Mobile, Alabama in 1925, she had served as a delegate to Alabama State Federation of Labor conventions and, in 1928, was elected vice-president of the Federation. She came to the Southern Summer School because:

In assuming the duties of these offices I felt my inability, but it has always been my policy to do the best I can when called upon. With my work at the factory, my home and children, I haven't had an opportunity to read and study the pro-



Scene from play entitled "Wealth and Work" produced by students in 1929. Note the symbols of wealth (tennis racket and velvet dress) on right, and those representing working-class life (wounded worker and sorrowing widow) on left. Dividing them is The Machine.

blems of labor as I would love to, so when the opportunity to attend the Southern Summer School came, it seemed to be something I had been longing for.¹⁰

The School's students knew first hand the difficulties women confronted in the labor movement. A woman from the Hanes Hosiery mill in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, reported that while the male employees in her plant were well paid and did not work over eight hours a day, the local union excluded women from membership; they could get work only every other day. A student from Birmingham, Alabama, who worked as an organizer for the United Textile Workers during 1935, stressed that it was necessary "to convince the men of women's ability and sincerity." She argued that women often did not participate in unions because they had the double burden of working in the mill during the day and doing housework at night. However, she commented that support from women workers during times of conflict, on picket lines, and in relief efforts, was essential to the survival of any union.

At the School the women often discussed the special needs and concerns of women workers. In 1929, they debated the problem of the place of married women in the labor force. One of the older students, married and the mother of two children, maintained:

It is nothing new for married women to work. They have always worked. Why should not a married woman work, if a single one does? What would men think if they were told that a married man should not work? If we women would not be so submissive and take everything for granted, if we would awake and stand up for our rights, this world would be a better place to live in, at least it would be better for the women. Some girls think that as long as mother takes in washings, keeps ten or twelve boarders or perhaps takes in sewing, she isn't working. But I can say that either one of the three is as hard work as women can do. So if they do that at home and don't get any wages for it, why would it not be all right for them to go to a factory and receive pay for what they do?¹¹

Another student clarified the argument when she pointed out that few women in the South in the '20s and '30s quit working outside the home when they married:

Apparently we like to deceive ourselves. The girls in industry only enter as they think for a very short time. Very soon,

they keep thinking 'I shall marry, then I shall not work anymore. Why then should I be interested, or, in other words, why should I bother about all of this fuss that goes with improving conditions?' But aren't we mistaken about this? Do the women who marry leave industry? We all know that as a general thing this is not true.¹²

The role of women as cheap, surplus labor was the theme of a student essay, written in 1927:

Among the working class, women have always helped to make the living. Women at the present time are employed in almost all kinds of work. Some employers would rather work women than men because they consider them more efficient and regular at work than men. Women are gaining for themselves a place in the industrial world, but should be careful to keep a high standard and not remain content to be cheap labor.¹³

In many ways, the School achieved its goal of providing the social space in which working women could gather to talk to one another, reflect upon their lives and gain confidence for self-expression and communal aspiration. But the hopes of its founders reached far beyond the meaning of the School experience for individual students. They saw themselves as training leaders for an insurgent Southern labor movement; and that movement, they believed, would be part of a larger struggle for "the creation of a genuine democracy in which those who work would own and operate the country."¹⁴

III

As the '30s progressed, the lofty vision of the School's leaders seemed close to realization. In 1929, workers across the South had revolted against increasing workloads and diminishing wages in a series of wildcat strikes which focused national attention on the region and compelled industrialists to ameliorate working and living conditions in numerous Southern mill-towns. After years of worsening economic depression, workers' discontent once again erupted when 200,000 Southerners joined the general textile strike of 1934. The formation of the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO), in the following year, spurred labor organization in mining, textile and garment-making industries; and the ACWA, the ILGWU and the United Garment Workers launched

Southern organizing drives. In 1937, the CIO established the Textile Workers Organizing Committee to spread the idea of industrial democracy throughout the South.

As a result of these developments, the number of the School's students affiliated with trade unions rose substantially, and by 1935, 80 percent of the students in attendance represented Southern locals. Financial support from labor increased as newly formed unions across the South raised scholarship money and sent members to the School to receive training in parliamentary procedure, labor history and economics.

While this new labor backing was essential to the School's program, it also presented difficulties. From the beginning, the disparate aims of creating a women's alliance across class lines while, at the same time, organizing Southern workers had led the School to look for support from groups fundamentally at odds with one another: middle-class women's organizations on the one hand and labor unions on the other. Closer ties to the labor movement threatened to topple this fragile coalition.

As the CIO organizing drive gained strength, the School's leaders struggled to interpret labor's aims to reform-minded Southern women. As Louise McLaren explained in a speech to the Virginia Federation of Women's Clubs:

It is hoped that the club women of the South may study the facts before it is too late, and that they will get behind the workers' education movement since that is one concrete way in which they might help to prepare workers to do their share in bringing about right conditions in southern industrial life.¹⁵

But this effort to mobilize middle-class support for labor met powerful obstacles. For example, in 1935, McLaren reported that the Roanoke, Virginia, workers' education committee chairman, a former YWCA industrial secretary, had been forced to sever her connection with the School "because of her lack of freedom to express her interest in the labor movement due to her husband's employment in a large corporation." This was, McLaren added, but one example of the School's growing difficulty in finding middle-class women who would "identify themselves with workers in the present tense situation."¹⁶

I WAS IN THE GASTONIA STRIKE

I was in the Gastonia strike. I had been working for the Manville-Jenkes mill in Loray, near Gastonia for eight years — ever since I was 14. We worked 13 hours a day, and we were so stretched out that lots of times we didn't stop for anything. Sometimes we took sandwiches to work, and ate them as we worked. Sometimes we didn't even get to eat them. If we couldn't keep our work up like they wanted us to, they would curse us and threaten to fire us. Some of us made \$12 a week, and some a little more.

One day some textile organizers came to Gastonia. They came to the mill gates at six o'clock, just when the daylight hands were coming out. They began to talk to the workers as they came out of the mill. Everybody stopped to listen. When the night-shift hands came up, they stopped to listen too. I was on the night shift. None of us went into work that night, for the organizers were telling us that they would help us get more money and less hours if we would stick together in a union, and stay out.

This was the first time I'd ever thought that things could be better; I thought that I would just keep working all my life for 13 hours a day, like we were. I felt that if we would stick together and strike we could win something for ourselves. But I guess we didn't have a chance — the way "the law" acted after we struck.

That night we had a meeting, and almost all of the workers came. People got up and said that unless they got shorter hours and more money they would never go back to work. We all went home that night feeling that at last we were going to do something that would make things better for us workers. We were going to win an eight-hour day, and get more pay for ourselves.

The next morning, we were at the mill at five o'clock, to picket, but we couldn't get anywhere near the plant, because the police and the national guards were all around the mill and kept us a block away. We formed our picket line anyway, and walked up and down a street near the mill.

Every day for a week we picketed. One day my husband, Red, went with me on the picket line. (He worked in another mill on the night shift.) Just as

we started on the picket line two policemen came over and grabbed Red, put him in an automobile, and took him to jail. They beat him up with a blackjack, and broke his ring and tore his clothes. They thought he was one of the strikers, and they were arresting strikers right and left, hauling lots of them to jail every day.

In the second week of the strike, the bosses went to other towns and out in the country and brought in scabs. The police and the national guards made us keep away from the mill, so all we could do was to watch the scabs go in and take our jobs.

We kept on with our picket line, though we didn't have much of a chance to persuade the scabs not to go in, because of the police and guards. We were treated like dogs by the law. Strikers were knocked down when they called to the scabs, or got too near the mill. Every day more and more strikers were arrested. They kept the jail-house full of workers. Strikers were put out of their houses. All over our village you could see whole families with their household belongings in the street — sometimes in the pouring down rain, and lots of them with their little children and babies.

We had a relief station where strikers could get food and groceries. Red, my husband, had been fired from his job in the other mill when his boss found out that he was trying to help us strikers, so he opened a drink stand near the relief station. One night about nine o'clock, the police came to the relief station as they usually went anywhere there were any strikers. I don't know what happened exactly, but there was a gun fight, and the chief of police was killed. Red, who was selling drinks there, was arrested along with a lot of others. Red and six others were accused of killing the policeman.

After Red was put in jail for the murder, my father and I moved to another town. I was expecting my baby soon, but I went to work in another textile plant. Except for what I read in the papers, I didn't know much about what was going on in Gastonia.

Then I read about Ella Mae Wiggins in the paper. I didn't know Ella

Mae so well, but I knew she was one of the best leaders the strikers had. Everybody liked and trusted her. This was the way she was killed: Things had gotten so bad in Gastonia that the strikers were afraid to hold a meeting in the town, so they got a truck and were going outside of town to hold their meeting. It was while they were on the way that the policemen way-laid them and opened fire on the truck. Ella Mae was shot in the back, and killed out right.

After this the strikers felt as if there wasn't any use going on with their fight. Most of them went to other towns and tried to get jobs. Our strike failed.

I don't remember exactly when the trial of the police who killed Ella Mae took place, but I do know that the trial was just a fake — they didn't do anything at all to those men that killed her.

Seven months after the strike they tried Red and the six others accused of killing the chief of police. They had been kept in jail all this time. I couldn't attend much of the trial on account of the baby, but Red told me about it.

Almost everybody thinks that the workers were innocent, and many people believe that the chief was killed by one of his own policemen. However, Red and the others were convicted of the murder, and given anywhere from five to twenty years in the penitentiary. Red and the others got out on bail, and all of them left the country and stayed away for two years. Then Red came back to get me and the baby and he was caught, and sent to prison. He served three years and four months of his prison term, and got out last year.

After the trial, I moved to High Point, and got a job in a textile mill to support the baby and me. We have had a hard time of it, but I think what we went through in Gastonia was worth it all, because I think people all over the country learned about the conditions of textile workers in the South, and it helped the labor movement in the South.

—Bertha Hendrix

1938 Southern Summer School

Scrapbook

Even the sensitive and dedicated leaders of the Southern Summer School sometimes had difficulty understanding the realities faced by working-class women. For example, during the late summer and fall of 1929, Louise McLaren corresponded with several students who had participated in the textile strike in Marion, North Carolina. She wrote to one student in October of that year, after the second strike in Marion in which six workers had been killed:

This morning I have a letter from Laurence Hogan telling me that you have been scabbing in the mill since the murders and of course I am shocked to hear it. I hope there is some mistake about this and that you will write me and tell me how it happened.

Minnie Fisher, a twenty-year-old cotton mill worker, replied:

Louise, I am sorry you heard that I was scabbing. I will tell you how it was and you be the judge. They had a strike on Tuesday and we didn't know anything about it until it was pulled and our boys got killed at the gate and then I quit work . . . our leaders never had any meetings to tell us what to do so nearly all the union people went back. I haven't worked but two days and they asked me not to go back and now I am back home and . . . have got no job no money no anything and my man is gone and I can't find out where he is whether dead or alive and I am in debt that it looks like I am going to have to do some scabbing so you can imagine what kind of shape I am in. I have got a little girl that has to be clothed and fed . . . so now you have the truth from my heart what would you do if you was in my place?¹⁷

Such an exchange illustrates the elusiveness of the School's hope for female solidarity across class lines. Students armed with organizing skills and an increasing sense of self-worth had to venture back into communities which were often hostile both to female assertiveness and to labor organization. Moreover, while students returned to the pressures of factory work and family responsibilities, their teachers resumed academic posts at colleges and universities, taking up lives which made it difficult, if not impossible, for them to comprehend the constant hardships faced by working-class women.

Nevertheless, within the confines of the School itself, Louise McLaren, Lois MacDonald and their colleagues did create a model for new social relationships. The School experience seems to have marked an important

watershed for many of the students. It provided a first exposure to the world beyond the mill village or city factory. For some, it served as an entry into the labor movement or community leadership positions. For most, it offered if not the means of collective change as its founders intended, then at least the incentive and opportunity for individual self-advancement.

IV

After 1935, the School abandoned its connections with women's groups and became more dependent on organized labor. However, contrary to union priorities, the School's leaders continued to insist that workers' education and the organization of women workers were crucial to the movement. And, they urged students to maintain an independent stance toward all institutions, including trade unions.

As the radical thrust of the CIO drives of the depression era gave way to pragmatism and political compromise, the socialist perspective of the School's leaders caused increasing tension. By the beginning of World War II, the group's relationship with a male-dominated labor movement had undermined their feminist goal of forging a women's alliance as well as their efforts to organize women workers. As a result of pressure from the unions, the School began admitting men in 1938.

When World War II brought a return to full employment, workers had little time to attend a residence school. As the unions gained strength and financial solvency, they began to establish their own workers' education programs. Thus, by the early '40s, the role of the school which had been hailed as "the classroom of the Southern labor movement" was no longer clear.¹⁸ In 1943, after over two decades of work in the South, Louise McLaren decided to leave the School.

The Southern Summer School, however, did not disappear. Rather, under new leadership, it turned to other social issues. In 1944, the renamed Southern School for Workers began running literacy programs for black workers, organizing voter registration drives, and fighting to eliminate the poll tax. When, in

1950, the organization finally disbanded for lack of funding, Mary C. Barker of Atlanta, who had served for many years as head of the School's advisory board, contemplated the group's work over the years since 1927. She emphasized the seeds of change which the School had planted in the minds of many Southerners, stressed the impact which the School had made on the lives of Southern workers, both black and white, and wrote that to her the School had not died, but "is very much alive today, for it has entered into the blood stream of the evolving history of the South."¹⁹

Footnotes

1. Mary Sims, *The YWCA: An Unfolding Purpose* (NY: Woman's Press, 1950); Gladys Boone, *The Women's Trade Union Leagues in Great Britain and the US* (NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1942).
2. Lois MacDonald, *Southern Mill Hills* (NY: Alex L. Hillman, 1928).
3. "Some Aspects of Industry in the New South," *The Journal of Electrical Workers and Operators* (1928), p. 355.
4. See Theodore Brameld, ed., *Workers' Education in the US* (NY: Harper & Bros., 1941), pp. 48-66; Eleanor G. Coit and Mark Starr, "Workers' Education in the US," *Monthly Labor Review*, 49 (July 1939), pp. 73-79; Mark Starr, "The ILGWU," *Journal of Adult Education*, 9 (1937), pp. 35-39; Florence Hemley Schneider, *Patterns of Workers' Education: The Story of the Bryn Mawr Summer School* (Washington: American Council on Public Affairs, 1941); Alice Hanson Cook and Agnes M. Douty, *Labor Education Outside the Unions* (Ithaca: NY State Sch. of Industrial & Labor Rel., 1958).
5. See Lura Beam, *They Called Them By the Lightning: A Teacher's Odyssey in the Negro South, 1908-19* (Ind'polis: Bobbs Merrill, 1967); James McPherson, *The Abolitionist Legacy* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1975).
6. Atlanta, *Journal of Labor*, April 5, 1929.
7. Nora MacManus, "Autobiography" in Southern Summer School Scrapbook, 1927, in private possession.
8. SSS Scrapbook, 1929.
9. Bessie Edens Interview, Southern Oral History Program, August 14, 1975.
- 10-13. SSS Scrapbooks, 1930, '29, '27, '27.
14. "Report on Conf. on Workers Education," Chattanooga, Jan. 16-17, 1937, SSS Papers, Catherwood Library, NY State Sch. of Indl. and Labor Rel., Cornell Univ., Ithaca.
15. Speech by McLaren, "Workers' Education in the South," May 3, 1929, to the Va. Federation of Women's Clubs, SSS Papers.
16. Director's Report, SSS, Jan. 15 - Mar. 15, 1935, Frank Graham Papers.
17. McLaren to Fisher, Oct. 16, 1929; Fisher to McLaren, Oct. 23, 1929, SSS Papers.
18. Jack Herling, "Southern Summer School Real Workers College," Federated Press, Eastern Bureau, August 24, 1929.
19. Mary Barker to Brownie Lee Jones, Oct. 16, 1951, Barker Papers, Emory Univ.



"It's Something Inside You"

by Wendy Watriss

Throughout the long history of racial and sexual discrimination in the South, women have found ways to survive with a sense of purpose and self worth. For most women, the struggle has been private rather than public, set amidst the commonplace circumstances of our lives and overshadowed by the more dramatic episodes of social change. This is the story of one such woman: Anna Mae Dickson, a black woman, a maid, born in a rural East Texas county 55 years ago. Her life might go unnoticed in the framework of the modern struggle for women's rights, yet it is a significant example of how one woman survived 40 years of domestic servitude and was able to turn that experience to the service of her family and her community. To put her story in perspective, one must understand the world in which she lives.

Seventy miles northwest of Houston, between the piney woods and the rich bottom lands of the Brazos River, lie the small towns and farms of Grimes County. Nineteenth century planters found the county's blacklands ideal for large-scale cotton farming, and many brought slaves with them from the old South. From pre-Civil War days to the early 1900s, blacks were a majority of the county's population. The Reconstruction era brought about the emergence of strong and vocal black leaders, and the Populist movement attracted strong support in the county. At the end of the century, however, this activism ended. Five months of terrorism and the murder of two prominent black politicians brought victory in local elections to a "White Man's Union."

Shortly after, a shootout on the main street of the county seat ushered in a new epoch. Black voting stopped, and no black took part in county politics until the election of a black school board member in 1972.

The exodus which started in 1900 was only the beginning of a long out-migration which decimated black leadership and left blacks a minority of the county's 12,000 people. Few whites or blacks living today remember that blacks once held public office or were important in the political life of the county. For most people, black history is limited to recollections of slavery and the teachings of Booker T. Washington.

Sixty years of political rule by the White Man's Union also insulated the county against social and economic change. A corn, cotton and cattle economy prevailed through the 1950s. Large farming and mercantile interests, often linked by family connections, succeeded in keeping industry out of the county until 1960. Social relations remained static as well. Only in the last 15 years, for example, have Polish and German families, brought in as sharecroppers in the 1870s and '80s, started to mix socially with the old Anglo-American families.

For blacks, economic survival has been a major issue. After the imposition of New Deal farm policies, it became almost impossible for most blacks to escape the sharecropping system. Even those who had been able to buy land earlier found themselves unable to make a living as small independent farmers. Although nearby oil fields and the growing industries in Houston became an escape valve for many blacks after the Depression, the move was not always easy for those

who had grown up in close-knit rural family groups. Roads were bad and communications difficult in most farm areas through the 1940s. Unless relatives or friends lived in the city, finding work and a place to stay became a deterrent to moving.

For a black woman growing up in the '30s and '40s, it was particularly difficult to break out. The white, male dominated environment shut off black women from a meaningful role in public life and limited the possibilities for leadership within the black community itself. In fact, as late as 1960, a young woman raised in Grimes County with only a few years of formal schooling could look forward to little other than farming or working in white homes. Industrial jobs in Houston were open primarily to men, and competition was tough for the better paying urban jobs in hotels, boarding houses and affluent private homes. Farming itself was limited because landowners were reluctant to rent land to families

Wendy Watriss is a photo-journalist living in Anderson, Texas. She is currently at work on an historical and photographic study of four Texas counties.

The material for this article has been gathered during a year-long study of Grimes County. Sources include over a hundred interviews with people from all parts of the community, census manuscripts, newspapers and county records. Of particular importance has been an article by Lawrence C. Goodwyn, "Populist Dreams and Negro Rights: East Texas as a Case Study," American Historical Review (Dec. 1971), 1435-1456.

headed by women. The only women who escaped the economic bind in Grimes County were teachers and the black home demonstration agent. Most of them were daughters of the small landowning and professional class which began to develop in the post-Reconstruction era and which could afford the cost of education and the necessity of paying off local school trustees for a job.

Women, particularly the daughters in large families, often received more schooling than men, but few could gain financial independence. Domestic work was plentiful in the county; it frequently meant steady employment, but rarely paid a living wage. Even with the various fringe benefits that went with working in white homes, most women could not make as much as a man. In 1960, for example, the average income was \$1,445 for a working man in the county and \$629 for a woman. In most black families, money matters were handled by the men. Banks and stores generally required the co-signature of a man when granting credit to a woman. Even in the old Baptist

churches, women were given little voice in business matters.

With the rise of the civil-rights movement and the integration of schools and public agencies in the county, however, a number of black women, like Anna Mae Dickson, have emerged as community leaders. Now a grandmother in her mid-fifties, Mrs. Dickson has worked as a cook, babysitter and housemaid since she was 13 years old. In recent years, she has become president of a newly integrated PTA and a spokesperson for the black community. In the small brick home she and her husband recently built, constant activity marks the day: there are several families to feed, meetings to plan and two grandchildren demanding attention. The phone rings all day — women seeking aid on home demonstration programs for underprivileged children, a school benefit, an immunization clinic, a church project. Between meetings, Mrs. Dickson caters weddings, sometimes for as many as 1000 guests, and cleans other people's homes.

As she tells her story, there are no dramatic climaxes, no acts of

heroic grandeur — just the day-to-day effort to survive and maintain her sense of self-respect in a world which consigned her to a position of servitude. In the search for maneuvering room for herself, she found she could step out and help others in the struggle for respect in a white-controlled world.

"After 40 years of working in other people's homes, you learn that you never know what's in a person's mind. It's true for them. It's true for us. As I heard one old preacher say about one time in slavery when they were whipping his mother — they were whipping her about praying. He said she looked at the master and said: 'You can't tell if I'm praying or not. Because I may not be speaking it out, but you don't know what my heart is doing.'

"They may keep you from speaking out, but they can't keep you from thinking. It's something on the inside of you, that's what keeps you going. And you learn to be two persons to live through it all."

Growing up during the '30s and '40s, Mrs. Dickson chopped and picked cotton for 75 cents a day and helped her



photo by Fred Baldwin & Wendy Watriss

Mrs. Anna Mae Dickson with her grandchildren: "Start within yourself. And then your family. And then just spread out!"

grandmother wash and iron for a living as well as raise hogs and vegetables. The grandmother who raised her had never been more than 20 miles from home and applied strict standards to the young Anna Mae.

"In those days, you know, a lot of our people didn't let the girls get out much. I got many a whipping for slipping off and easing on into town to the ballgames on Sunday afternoons when we had nowhere else to go. When we got basketball, and I wanted to play on the team, Mama didn't want me to. She didn't even like girls to wear those short-sleeved dresses that would show the pits of your arms. And you better not be caught with a dress above your knees! The closest I got to a dance was when she'd take me to Saturday night suppers. There was dancing and gambling all right, but she put us where we couldn't see it.

"We were taught there were good girls and bad girls. If a girl made a mistake and got pregnant, we weren't supposed to associate with her. I remember my grandmother saying, 'If you fall, don't wallow. Get up, brush yourself off and get a new start.' Even when a girlfriend got married, we that weren't married couldn't run with her anymore — if the older heads were around to see it.

"I look at children today and wonder what kind of children were we. Why didn't we have enough sense to be nosy and try to know what was going on? Now, I was a toughie, and I wasn't afraid of nobody. But sometimes I wonder what went on in my mind. You know, I thought for a long time that babies came out of tree stumps. That's what they told us at home. Imagine! With my grandmother and great-grandmother both being midwives!

"I look back and say what an awful way to grow up. But we didn't know it then. Now I know that people had a hard time, but as children we didn't think about it. A half-gallon syrup bucket was as good for us as lunch boxes are for children today. And we didn't think anything of walking three miles back and forth to school."

But when the chance came, it didn't take long for her to learn there were other things to do. Anna Mae was 17 when she finished the ninth grade at the three-room country school and went to town to the county's only colored high school. By her own

admission, she was "green as a pea" — a girl who had never danced and never seen a victrola. She stayed in Navasota with an aunt because her grandmother couldn't afford to send her back and forth on the bus everyday, and she earned pocket money working in a nearby café which catered to black teenagers. Her best friend was a girl who had grown up more freely than she and whose mother made a living selling bootleg whiskey.

Halfway through the tenth grade, finishing school became secondary to other concerns. "I didn't have clothes like the other children at school because Mama wasn't really able to give them to me. I felt if I went out and worked, I could get some of the things I wanted. I wanted to get out in the world! It was an adventure to get away.

"I had wanted to be a secretary for a long time because once I saw the secretary to the high school principal and that seemed to be the most important job I saw a black woman have. But if you lived where I did, you did domestic work or farming, even if you finished high school. If you married, you worked for a chance to get on somebody's place that had real good land that you could farm and make good crops. For a black girl, there wasn't anything like working at the stores. They weren't open to us at that time, in the late '30s. And I don't remember any registered nurses that was colored working in the hospital then. The only nursing that you did was taking care of people's children. It was easy to find a job babysitting, or somebody to cook for and houseclean. So that's what I did. And I didn't leave Navasota because I was scared to go to a big place like Houston. I worked for \$2.50 and \$3 a week back then in 1938. And by the end of the 1950s, I was making \$10 to \$12 a week.

"Starting off, I was lucky because the lady I stayed with in town had worked for a lot of the doctors' families. She was elderly, and she knew most of the old settlers in town. If such and such a person would call and wanted me, she'd say: 'Now, Anna Mae, they ain't going to pay you. You just call them back and tell them you got another job and you can't help them out.' That way I didn't have much trouble finding good families.

"I learned to take what opportunities I had. For a long time, for

example, I wouldn't work for families that didn't have children because I found out there was more opportunity working in homes where there were children. If you were real good to the children and took care of them well, you could do more things and the people would help you. I first got to know Houston because I worked for a family that had a little boy that took sick. They carried him to Houston to stay with his relatives, and that little boy didn't want to leave me. So I went too. The relatives saw how well I looked after that boy, and one day, to my surprise — because I wasn't getting very much from them — they took me to a big store and bought me some real fine underwear. It was the first time I ever had good underclothes.

"You could learn a lot about cooking in some homes. I'll never forget the first time I had to cook and serve a dinner by myself. I was 13. It was my first steady job — working summers between school. The lady was having 15 people for Sunday dinner. She was having these little birds they call 'quail.' I had never seen them before. Well, she showed me the recipe book, explained it to me, and said to have it ready when they came back from church. I was so scared I must have cried the whole time I cooked those birds! But I served them. And that lady didn't let anyone say anything bad about the food or the way I was serving it. I'll never forget that day, and she wouldn't even let Mama come and be with me. But when people praise my cooking now, I think of that lady because she taught me everything I know about cooking for white people.

"I felt like this in my work: I felt like if I were trustworthy and were kind to the people I was working for, they would allow me more opportunity and help me. I found out it worked to the good. Like another family I worked for, they had a store. Now I always liked to know what happens on the inside of things. And stores were important in those days because we got our credit and everything there. So I got this family to let me go and work in the store Saturday afternoons when I finished the meal at home. I'd hang up the garments that customers tried on so the clerk would be free to wait on them. They didn't hire colored girls as clerks then. But I'd watch how they did things, and I learned how those stores operate on the inside.

"Conditions changed from family to family. I've worked for people I would go back and work for anytime because they treated me as a member of the family. They didn't treat me like a servant. You'd try to find the people who seemed like they'd help you get ahead. But actually people chose us most of the time, rather than we choosing them. You'd get jobs by somebody recommending you. So I've had to work for people that treated you like they didn't have any feelings for you. Some people, I don't care what you did, it was never right.

"Like this banker's wife, one day I was serving a lunch for her. She had all the bankers there, and she was the only woman. She had her meals served in courses. We had got to the dessert and coffee. I came in with the coffee cups – I used to be able to tote 12 cups of coffee on one hand and serve with the other. Well, I went in this day and it's a wonder I didn't scald two of those men and scald them good! When I set the first cup of coffee down, Mrs. Thompson hollered. 'Anna Mae, goddamnit, you're serving that coffee on the wrong side!' Boy, I just started to shake. One of the men just caught the tray and set it on the table.

"I went back in her kitchen, and I looked at the dishes stacked from one end of that room to the other. I took off her dainty little apron and her dainty little hat piece and folded them up in the drawer. Then I put on my old straw hat, and I walked out."

Working in private homes, a black woman was exposed to many kinds of personal indignities. Mrs. Dickson set her own limits.

"I've seen girls, they'd go to the beauty parlor and get their hair pressed and curled and then go to work, and the white children would take dirt and throw it all over their head. They wouldn't say anything. But I wouldn't stand for things like that.

"When I went into a family, I'd tell them the children had to obey me. One family I worked for had a little boy, and I guess he just hated black folks. He would spit on us and do things like that. I said to the lady: 'Now I want to tell you there's one thing I cannot tolerate: I cannot stand for anybody to spit on me. If he does that, you may hate me for the rest of your life, but I will whip him good.'



photo by Susan Fowler-Gallagher

"Well, one day I went to work, and I was wearing one of those blue uniforms. And, girl, when I ironed one I thought it shouldn't have a wrinkle in it anywhere! So I thought I was looking pretty cool that day. The lady was sick when I got to work, and she asked me to dress the little boy for school. I dressed him and brushed his hair. When I turned around he spit right on the back of my dress. I grabbed him down in that bathtub and whipped him good with a rough towel he had there. His mother started yelling: 'Are you whipping him?' I said: 'I sure am!' She started to say something, and I said: 'Don't bother, I'm leaving anyway.' I left and never went back.

"Another time I was called a thief. You know that is something you never want on your record. Stealing is one thing I never did. I never even wanted to break anything. I hate to break things. And I sure didn't need to steal. I was working for a salary, and I knew what I was working for, and that's what I planned on.

"Well, I was working for this schoolteacher, Mrs. Reagon, and she had some beautiful pocket handkerchiefs. One Sunday, she went to church and later on she couldn't find the handkerchiefs she took with her. She said: 'I know I came home with that handkerchief. Anna Mae, I know you got it.'

"Oh my God, I just flipped! I started yelling at her, telling her what

I thought, and you could hear me down the road! 'If I were stealing and I had to take a pocket handkerchief, I'd be a pretty poor thief,' I told her. 'What in the world would I do with one of your pretty little handkerchiefs, other than wipe my sweat with it? If I were stealing, I certainly wouldn't take something that you'd miss right away.' I quit right then and there and walked out.

"Her daughter came up to the house before I left and said she would look for it because she didn't believe I took it. Sure enough they found it the next day in Mrs. Reagon's coat sleeve. Mrs. Reagon called me at home and said she and her husband would like me to come back to work. I said: 'I'm glad you have cleared my record, but you'll have to find yourself another Anna Mae, because this one won't be back.'"

It wasn't always possible to walk out, however, and many things had to be suffered in silence, even when they hurt inside.

"A lot of times I didn't let myself think about the negative side. When you grow up into something all your life, you don't always think about it. Like coming in the door – all our lives we'd been going to the back door, so I never fretted much about it. But some things did bother me. Why could I go out the front door to sweep the porch, but couldn't go through that front door for any other reason?"

"Or you would go in the kitchen and make biscuits and rolls for people because they weren't buying bread in those days. Now you know you got to put your hands in it to make it. All right, you'd make the bread and then after it would get brown and ready to eat, they wouldn't want you to put your hands on it. And it was the same thing with meat. You could touch the meat before it was cooked, but after it was done, don't you touch it! Oh, that would get me mad!

"But you'd go on because you needed the work. But there were mornings I hated to go to work. I'd be saying to myself: 'Why don't they do their own work? I do mine, why don't they do theirs?' Then I'd get angry with myself — thinking about dropping out of school. Thinking if I had gone on to school maybe I wouldn't have to be doing this kind of work. Wouldn't have to be going to the back doors to work.

"It was like leading two lives. I'd be down there all day working in those houses and then I'd come back home and I'd look around and think: 'Oh my God, why do I have to live this way?' I'd walk around and look at my floors when all we had were those little patches of linoleum, and I'd think of their floors. Then I'd have to haul and heat our dishwasher when right down there where I'd been all day they'd have more hot running water than they could use. Sometimes when I was driving home, I'd be saying to myself: 'Now if I just had such and such a thing. And oh, my God, if I could only have a bathtub.'

"But you did what you had to and didn't feel sorry for yourself. We just had to make a living and that was the only way to do it."

In 1942, when a friend told her about a job opening in Houston, Mrs. Dickson left Grimes County. She spent three years working in a Houston boarding house, cooking and waiting on tables for \$13 a week. But when she separated from her husband after becoming pregnant with her second child, her employer wouldn't keep her on. So she went home to have the baby.

During the time she'd been away, the county's population had shifted dramatically, with many of the poorer farming families — both white and black — leaving for jobs in the city. But this movement of people did little

to change the economic environment. In fact, from the late '40s to the mid-'60s, local economic opportunities were even more restricted than they had been two decades earlier, especially for poorer people. Industrial representatives looking for new places to locate factories during World War II were allegedly turned away by the bigger landowners around Navasota. At the same time, government support programs helped drive tenant farmers off the land, while technological changes and the distribution of cotton allotments made it almost impossible for a small independent farmer to make a living. It was not until the late '60s and early '70s that black people in the county began to see the economic benefits of the civil-rights struggle.

The return home and the coming of a second child were the beginnings of a change in Anna Mae Dickson's life.

"I used to be a devil. I didn't bother anybody because it was my life when I was off work, but I used to drink heavily. As I told a lady once: 'I've drunk everything but beat-up glass and strychnine.' I did that for almost ten years — after I dropped out of school, while I worked in Houston and when I came back. Right up to when I had my second baby about 1947.

"I've known what it's like to drink the blues away. One night I got so sick and when I stopped and looked back on what I was doing, I dreaded the life I was living. I was ashamed. From that day to this, I haven't drunk anything. The only thing I thought I could do about it was to go on and help somebody else to straighten out their life. I wanted to get out and work with people, my own people."

In 1950, she joined the church again. Through her work in the Baptist missionary society, Mrs. Dickson discovered her own organizing skills. When she spoke, people listened. This experience strengthened her sense of responsibility and from the church she went on to other community activities. She directed home demonstration programs for black girls and helped establish one of the county's first clubs to raise funds to support school athletics.

"Then I've been president of PTAs at three schools — two colored schools and the one which I helped organize after we integrated with the white

school. I have helped with rodeos for our people, the 19th of June celebrations, health programs and the organization of a volunteer fire department for the whole community.

"Now it looks like the more I do, the happier I am and the better I feel. My children, they worry about my health and tell me to slow down. I tell them I ain't ready to die yet. My husband he won't say anything because when we got married that was one thing I had him to understand: If I go honky-tonking and he don't like it, let him speak his mind. But if I go to church or some organization to help somebody to do something good in the community, don't let him say a word to me!"

In a county where there was little black activism during the '50s and '60s and where many black people are still reluctant to work with whites in community activities, Mrs. Dickson is regarded as a leader by both groups. She thinks it is important to maintain links with the white community and to have the black representation in community organizations. She is the first to say that conditions have improved for women and for blacks, but she has no illusions. She sees a need for blacks to stand up for their rights, but she has no patience with those she sees as an embarrassment to her race or an impediment to long-term progress.

"We abuse the opportunities we have gotten. Since we have got integration, we don't want to take our time to come up anymore, to do the little jobs that need to be done. We just want to zoom to the top. And then when you get to the top, you don't know what to do to stay there. I don't mind starting up from the bottom. That's what my life has been about. I take time to learn. Before I jump into something, I get all the information I can. Whatever I do, I want to show progress. I tell people all the time: 'I'd rather be asked up anyday than have to be asked down.'

"Too many of us do not understand what this integration means. Take when our schools in a northern part of the county integrated in 1968. They were the first, and we had a meeting with the superintendent. Well, the colored people — most of them — were only interested in their children getting over to the white school where they could get hot lunches and all.

They weren't thinking about what would happen to our teachers, how many colored teachers was going to be out of work.

"We had the meeting, and none of the other colored would say anything. I got so tired of getting up and down that I asked the superintendent would he please let me talk sitting down. I sat there and fought for our teachers all night! And our bus drivers. And, girl, I fought alone. Then when school started, and they didn't have a job, they were wondering why. Out of nine or ten of our teachers, three was hired back. You've got to watch, and you've got to learn.

"I'll tell you this. I don't care whether I'm with them (the whites) or not. If they had given my schools the same things they had in their schools, I figured we had the teachers that could teach. I felt like this: Give me what you got, and I'll stay where I am. Pay me what you get, and I'll stay where I am. If you build them a brick school, build us one. That's all the equalization I'd like to have. I don't care about sitting in the class-

rooms with them and being around them. That's the only thing I would like to have, equal opportunity. And then we will have to learn to cope with it."

To Mrs. Dickson, who is bringing up a second generation of children in her home where she now has a bathtub and hot running water, there is hope for change, particularly for the younger people around her.

"I have tried honestly to teach my children to get whatever in life they can that will help them benefit themselves, to make them be better citizens. I have taught them what I know, and I have asked that they help me. Now they get out on their own. They are not afraid to mix.

"The only thing I really did — because I never finished high school — was to insist they get a better education than I did. I made them finish high school. The two oldest girls did finish and started college, but they got married and quit. The youngest two are both in college now.

"With both my children and my grandchildren, I have encouraged them

to reach high — not to think about what somebody else is doing but about what should be done. And I have always told them that the only way to do it is to start within yourself first. And then your family. And then just spread out!

"Sometimes people don't know what they are doing. What did I know when I went to Navasota from the countryside? You go along and it's like sometimes when you're driving and thinking about other things and then come back to yourself suddenly and look at the speedometer, and you're way over the speed limit. You weren't doing it intentionally, it's just that your mind was drifting somewhere else. That's what I think we do with our lives. We let our lives go. We follow the gang. We don't think about how precious our life is or what we can do with it.

"Like the old slave woman said when she was being whipped: 'You don't know what my heart is doing.' You have something inside of you. They can never take that away from you."



photo by Fred Baldwin & Wendy Watriss

Mrs. Dickson (on right) with friends planning the 19th of June celebration: "Before I jump into something, I get all the information I can. What I do, I want to do to show progress."

Right to Life: The Southern Strategy

On January 22, 1973, the United States Supreme Court legalized abortion nationwide. Since that time, a struggle has ensued between those who support the Court's action and those who do not. The increasingly intense campaign to pass a constitutional amendment which will reverse the Court's abortion ruling continues to expand, and recently the South has become an important target area for "Right-to-Life" political organizing.

by Priscilla Parish Williams

On October 3, 1976, every Roman Catholic church in the country was ordered to observe "Respect Life Sunday" as part of the Bishops' Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities. At the church I attended that day in rural Virginia we listened to an open letter from the area's bishop on the horrors of abortion; we looked at large colored posters of an embryo named Jennifer and her pregnant mother (we received smaller ones to take home); and, during the communion service, we were invited to sign "Bicentennial Reaffirmation" forms, pledging ourselves to safeguard "for every human being" — including the unborn — the inalienable rights expressed in the Declaration of Independence. At the bottom of the form we were asked to give our name and address and to indicate whether or not we were 18 or older and whether or not we were registered to vote. The forms were to be sent back to regional pro-life headquarters before undoubtedly going on to each area's political representatives.

Mobilizing political strength is central to the Bishops' mission to overturn

Priscilla Parish Williams, an Arkansas native, worked two years as the Washington, D.C., liaison for the American Civil Liberties Union's Reproductive Freedom Project. After leaving the ACLU, she traveled through much of the South interviewing Right-to-Life activists for this article.

the US Supreme Court's historic ruling of January 22, 1973, giving women the right to abortion as part of their constitutional right to privacy. As it happened, the two plaintiffs in the case were two poor Southern women, known to the court as Jane Roe and Mary Doe. Their legal cases had become a focal point for women throughout the country who felt that abortion was *the issue* when "control over our bodies" was *the slogan*. It now appears that the South has become an important target area to the opponents of abortion.

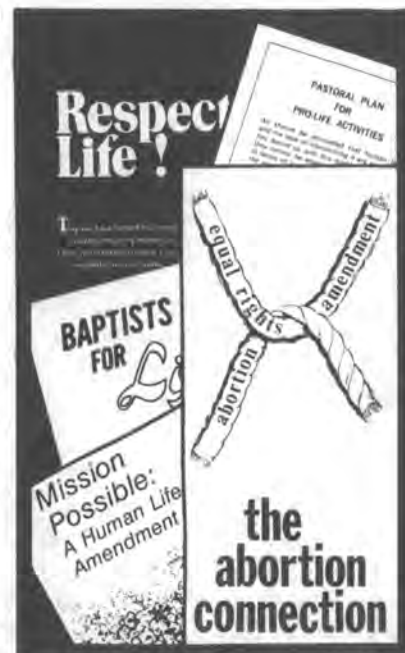
Before 1973, anti-abortion committees had worked vigorously in many states to defeat the wave of liberal *state* abortion laws passed in the late '60s and early '70s. But the Court's decisions spurred a new level of activity. The weekend after the *Roe* and *Doe* ruling, the Conference of Catholic Bishops launched the National Right-to-Life Committee and quickly set up state organizations all across the country. There are now other so-called "pro-life" organizations as well as the Right-to-Life Committee, and they all share the same goals. Their long-range purpose is to overturn the Supreme Court's decisions by any of several amendments to the US Constitution. Their short-range tactics have been to thwart the implementation of *Roe* and *Doe* by restrictive state laws and administrative defiance.

The short-range efforts, however, have suffered repeated setbacks, especially from court rulings prohibiting

various state laws aimed at circumventing the *Roe* and *Doe* decisions. Thus discouraged by losing state battles, but still determined to win the war, the Right-to-Lifers have turned their energies to their primary objective: the passage of an amendment to the US Constitution. Although there is some variation in the language of the amendments proposed thus far, most Right-to-Lifers support the one generally known as the Human Life Amendment which gives a fetus the full constitutional protection of a person.

Oddly, the Roman Catholic Bishops who are spearheading the drive for a constitutional amendment have not yet supported the language of any *particular* amendment. Perhaps they fear such a move might divide the Right-to-Life camp into warring factions; perhaps it would make them even more liable than they already are to charges of violating the principle of the separation of church and state; finally, it might weaken their eventual bargaining position if an entirely different amendment emerges in later stages of lobbying.

Whatever the Bishops' real reason, it does not reflect a lack of concern about the issue. Their "Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities" included not only instructions for Respect Life Sunday, but a blueprint for organizing state coordinating committees, diocesan-level working groups, parish committees, and local "bipartisan" political action coalitions.



The Southern Strategy

Since passage of a constitutional amendment requires approval from two-thirds of each chamber of Congress, and subsequent ratification by three-fourths of the state legislatures, Right-to-Life activists are now solidifying their support and cultivating new constituencies. One potential source of support, they believe, is the South. Judy Brown, the National Right-to-Life Committee's director of public relations, maintains that because of its broad and deep sense of morality stemming from a strong religious base, the South will finally be the strongest single region in lobbying for an anti-abortion amendment. Consequently, Right-to-Life leaders have set out to do some serious consciousness-raising for their cause in a region where the other side's attitudes have not yet become firmly entrenched.

The strongest opposition to abortion has traditionally come from areas where abortions are performed in large numbers and where there has been a large enough Catholic population to call attention to the issue. While the number of abortions in the South is growing, there still have been relatively few compared with other regions; and there are very few Catholic strongholds in the South. These two factors help explain why the much publicized "abortion controversy" did not gain prominence in the South at the same rate it did in other parts of the US.

The reason so few legal abortions have been performed perhaps lies in the general attitude of Southerners toward abortion. One study shows that in 1968 and '69, 84 percent of men and 91 percent of women among non-Catholic Southerners disapproved elective abortion.¹ Now, although a majority of Southerners supports the Supreme Court decisions, the South is still a conservative region compared with the East and West.² In fact, in several Southern states the laws and availability of abortion services are just beginning to reflect acknowledgement of the 1973 Supreme Court decisions.

Arkansas, for example, has continued to abide by its obsolete statute despite the Supreme Court rulings. As late as 1975, Vietnamese refugees sent to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, were denied abortions. Encouraged by Nixon's 1971 Presidential Order which commanded military bases to perform abortions in accordance with state law rather than the *Roe* and *Doe* decisions, Fort Chaffee turned its back on the Supreme Court. The Vietnamese women failed to qualify for abortions not only because their pregnancies did not threaten their lives, but also because they were not able to meet a four-month residency requirement, even though the Supreme Court had specifically declared residency requirements unconstitutional.

For Arkansas residents, the situation was only slightly better. Some physicians in Little Rock were willing

to perform abortions in private hospitals for a fee ranging from \$500 to \$750. If a woman without much money and/or a friendly physician had the clairvoyance to consult "Arkansas Women's Rights" in the Little Rock telephone book, she might be referred to one of three small-town doctors willing to perform abortions, provided that both concurring medical opinions and consent from the woman's parents or spouse could be obtained. Finally, in February, 1976, a Little Rock gynecologist who had established an abortion clinic filed suit to test the constitutionality of the state law, and successfully obtained a temporary restraining order against its enforcement.

By 1976, abortion clinics also opened in Alabama, Mississippi, and West Virginia, making abortions available to more women of all income levels in every Southern state — and adding fuel to the South's steadily growing Right-to-Life movement.

Needless to say, national Right-to-Life leaders are anxious to halt this trend. They hope to develop a Southern organization to fight *against* expanding abortion services and *for* a constitutional amendment. One of the strongest Right-to-Life chapters in the country, Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life, has begun "Mission Possible," a self-help missionary program for the South. Already, Mission Possible seed money has gone to Baptists-for-Life leader Bob Holbrook from Hallettsville, Texas. Other groups

THE CASES OF JANE ROE AND MARY DOE

In the spring of 1970, two pregnant Southern women were prohibited from obtaining abortions. Mary Doe — as she was known to the court — was a married woman from Georgia. According to the records of *Doe v. Bolton*, "She had three living children. Two had been placed in a foster home because of her poverty and inability to care for them. The youngest had been placed for adoption. Her husband had recently abandoned her and she was forced to live with her indigent parents and their eight children. . . . She had been a mental patient in the State Hospital."

The other — known by another pseudonym, Jane Roe — was an unmarried woman in Texas. She was unable to get an abortion in the state because her life was not threatened by the

continuation of her pregnancy (the only reason for which abortions were allowed in Texas), and she could not afford transportation to one of the few states where safe, legal abortions were available.

The Texas law prohibiting all abortions except those necessary to save a woman's life was typical of the vast majority of state statutes at the time. The Georgia law, passed in 1968 as a so-called "reform" law, prohibited abortion as a general rule, but made exception for cases in which a pregnancy would threaten the life of a woman or "seriously and permanently injure her health," a fetus would be born with a "grave, permanent, and irremediable" defect, or a pregnancy resulted from rape. In an effort to comply with one of the law's procedural requirements, Mary Doe had applied to the Abortion Committee of Atlanta's Grady Memorial Hospital. Her request was denied on

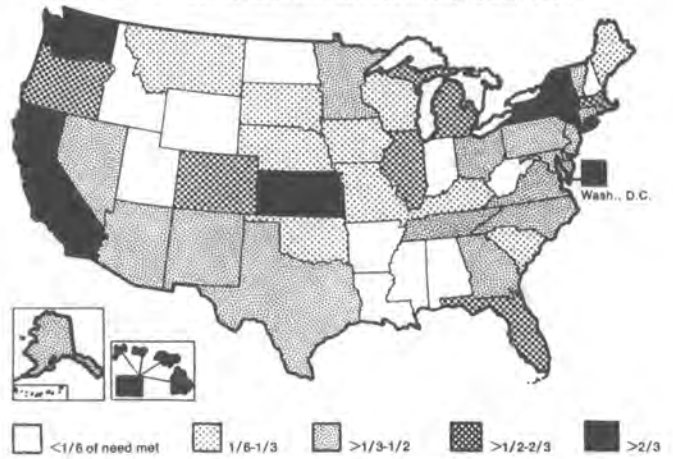
the ground that her situation did not fall into any of the categories for which the state law made exceptions.

The two women initiated separate lawsuits culminating January 22, 1973, in the Supreme Court's decisions (*Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*) in their favor. The Court held that the right of a woman to seek an abortion fell within the constitutional right of privacy, and that in the first trimester of pregnancy, attempts to interfere with a woman's decision to have an abortion were unconstitutional. In the second trimester, states were permitted to make regulations, but only to protect maternal health. In the third trimester, however, states were given authority to restrict abortions if they chose; but even then, the Court ruled, efforts to preserve life and health of a woman should take precedence over those to protect the fetus.

— P.P.W.



Percent of need for abortion services met, by state, 1974



reprinted with permission from Family Planning Perspectives, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1976.

will be subsidized on the basis of matching grants. In addition, Mission Possible has sent representatives into Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia to teach Southern groups how to organize, lobby, and recruit additional members.

David O'Steen, the director of the Minnesota group and a Southerner himself, recognizes the stigma against Catholics in the South, and for that reason believes the movement must be broadened beyond the Catholic church. The president of South Carolina Citizens for Life, Mrs. Eleanor Blizard, shares his view. A devout, spirited woman, Mrs. Blizard says, "Nothing makes me madder than for people to think I'm Catholic." She works closely with the local Catholic Bishop, but her main effort is to reach other Protestants. She explains that she first became involved in the movement when representatives from Right to Life and Planned Parenthood came to her Sunday School class. "I asked both for Scripture to support their positions. Planned Parenthood had none. Right-to-Life had Scripture and pictures."

Despite *pro-Doe* and *-Roe* resolutions favoring what has come to be called "freedom of choice" by many national religious groups with strong Southern contingencies — e.g., the United Methodist Church, the southern Presbyterian Church in the United States, and the Southern Baptist Convention — there are pro-life rumblings in the pews. Baptists-for-Life's Bob Holbrook was instrumental in getting the Southern Baptist Convention to

"I asked both for Scripture to support their position. Planned Parenthood had none. Right to Life had Scripture and pictures."

pass a resolution at its June, 1976, annual meeting much different in tone from the preceding years' resolutions on abortion. Though affirming the traditional Baptist position on the separation of church and state, this year's statement condemns abortion which "for selfish non-therapeutic reasons wantonly destroys fetal life, dulls our society's moral sensitivity, and leads to a cheapening of human life." By comparison, its language about "the right of expectant mothers to a full range of medical services and personal counseling for the preservation of life and health" seems weak and ambiguous.

In a much stronger anti-abortion resolution also passed this summer, the Presbyterian Church of America (the small splinter group of congregations which seceded from the Presbyterian Church in the United States over abortion, among other issues) called upon "every responsible citizen to support the enactment of moral legislation that will protect the unborn child."

While the evangelical groups, the independent Baptist churches, and the autonomous Churches of Christ do not have a "national office" through which to communicate and organize, they do have highly effective

informal networks. For example, the director of Tennessee Volunteers for Life is a Church of Christ preacher named John Waddey, who is also head of the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions. Waddey showed some pictures to his friend, Ray Dutton, a Church of Christ preacher in Jasper, Alabama. Now Dutton, who regularly preaches on one of the most powerful radio stations in Alabama, heads Alabama Citizens for Life. His group is rapidly outdistancing the older, less effective Alabama Right-to-Life — whose youth group, incidentally, spent an entire fall weekend at Birmingham shopping centers in rocking chairs, staging a "rock for life."

Whether by rocking in public, manning booths at state and county fairs, speaking to civic clubs, schools, local church groups, or appearing on radio and TV, the Right-to-Lifers are beginning to touch a responsive chord in Southern churches, mainline and evangelical alike.

The Facts

As I interviewed the president of the N.C. Right-to-Life chapter in her home, her sister-in-law addressed stacks and stacks of envelopes at the dining room table. The Georgia Right-to-Life organization has just moved into headquarters of its own after being housed for several years in the chapter president's garage. The South Carolina Citizens for Life's president reported their "biggest and best meeting ever" had occurred the week be-

fore I drove through in October. And on it goes. The recurring message I heard from Right-to-Life leaders throughout the South was simple: "We just have to tell the people what an abortion does to a baby, and what the dangers are to a woman. Right now people just don't know the facts."

The pictures and "the facts" currently in wide circulation throughout Right-to-Life circles in the South and elsewhere are usually based on the *Handbook on Abortion*,³ written by two long-time Right-to-Life activists, Dr. and Mrs. J. C. Willke of Cincinnati. The Willke's argument, proclaimed as "the scientific case for the unborn," seems to echo in any conversation with a Right-to-Life supporter: terms seldom vary, the examples cited are the same, and the logic follows a predictable course. Right-to-Life speakers usually begin each session with a two-part audio-visual presentation. The first half shows the development of the fetus through gestation, usually proceeding backwards from the toddler stage for effect, then graphically illustrates various abortion methods. The second half covers "dangers to maternal health." Its intent is simply to scare women contemplating abortion with "facts" regarding the risks of abortion — hemorrhage, long-term mental and emotional damage, sterility, the likelihood of premature births and miscarriages in future pregnancies, and the like — although the evidence to support these "facts" is, at best, contradictory.

Not surprisingly, Right-to-Lifers do not show the other pictures or

mention the other facts — facts which argue persuasively for keeping abortion legal in all fifty states and which account for the vast approval of legalized abortion in the public opinion polls, even in the Bible-belt South. Abortion mortality rates, for example, have dropped dramatically, even though the total number of abortions has gone up. The number of illegal, back-alley abortions has also declined, although in areas where abortion is still not widely available, they of course persist.

Dr. Jacob Adams, associate director of the Emory University-Grady Memorial Family Planning Program in Atlanta, reports that now he seldom sees a woman suffering from a "septic" abortion (usually an abortion performed in unsterile conditions, resulting in extreme infection), whereas before the 1973 Supreme Court decisions, septic abortions were second only to accidents as the largest cause of deaths for women of reproductive age in the health clinic where he worked. According to Adams, Georgia's 1968 "reform" law clearly worked to the advantage of women who, as private patients in private hospitals, could get their physicians to do abortions for any of the "therapeutic" reasons the law permitted. Poor women appeared with their infections in the emergency rooms of public hospitals.⁴

Indeed, the very terms "Right to Life" and "Human Life Amendment" become a mockery when one thinks of these women. Pictures of women dead and dying in hospital emergency rooms and on motel floors will match

any of the Right-to-Lifers' visual aids. The correlation between safe, legal abortion and public health will not change with a Human Life Amendment. Women will continue to get pregnant and continue to obtain abortions, legal or illegal. While Right-to-Lifers sometimes acknowledge that many more women die when abortions are not legal, that fact in their eyes is no justification for permitting abortions by law.

The right secured in 1973 by Southerners Jane Roe and Mary Doe has not yet received its final test. It is up to those of us who defend a woman's right to control her own body to point out that the *real* danger to a woman is not having an abortion, but rather, having an illegal one. This fact must be repeated as continually as the Right-to-Lifers tell their facts, lest a "Human Life Amendment" come to pass, rendering null and void the 1973 Supreme Court decisions. The current buildup of Southern forces indicates that members of the Right-to-Life movement are absolutely serious about their goal.

Footnotes

1. Judith Blake, "Abortion and Public Opinion: The 1960-1970 Decade," *Science*, 171 (February 12, 1971), p.547.

2. W.R. Arney and W.H. Tröschler, "Trends in Attitudes Toward Abortion, 1972-1975," *Family Planning Perspectives*, 8 (May/June 1976), p.122.

3. Cincinnati, Ohio: Hayes Publishing Co., Inc., 1971, rev. ed. 1975.

4. For further information regarding abortion and public health: *Center for Disease Control: Abortion Surveillance, 1974*, issued April, 1976, by the Center for Disease Control, Atlanta, Ga., 30333.

CALIFANO WOULD BAR US AID FOR ABORTIONS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 13 — Joseph A. Califano Jr., the incoming Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, told Congress today that he was opposed to abortion and would work actively to bar abortions under all Federal health programs, including any national health insurance plan that is enacted.

"I personally believe that abortion is wrong. I believe that Federal funds should not be used for providing abortions, but if the courts decide that as a constitutional right in this coun-

try there is an entitlement to Federal funds for abortion, I will enforce the law," he added in response to questioning by Senator Robert W. Packwood, Republican of Oregon.

Senator Packwood questioned the fairness of having a constitutional right to abortion, affirmed by the Supreme Court, without an equal right to access by poor women, whose health services are usually paid for by Government programs.

"If a lady wants to have an abortion and does not have the money, is that just tough luck?" he asked.

"The Federal Government is not the source of all funds," Mr. Califano replied.

The position outlined today by

Mr. Califano at two confirmation hearings, while consistent with the campaign position of President-elect Carter, is more stringent than any action taken to date by previous Presidents, including President Ford.

Mr. Carter and Mr. Califano, while opposed to a Constitutional amendment, are willing to initiate a restriction on the use of Federal funds for abortions, Mr. Califano said, if the courts permit it.

The restriction would cut deeply into the \$45 million to \$55 million spent each year to pay for some 250,000 to 300,000 abortions, most performed under the Medicaid program for the poor.

NEW YORK TIMES

The Lonesomes Ain't No Spring Picnic



photo by Tom Davenport

by BIRTHALENE MILLER

Me and Candy sitting in the swing, pumping it slow and easy, floating out in air so full of spring that if we close our eyes, we can smell the grass growing. We're counting together, aiming on going up to a thousand. For no reason at all, except to show Jeffrie and Jimmie and Rhodie that there is one more thing we can do that they can't. Just letting the devil git ahold of our souls, Grandpop would say. We stop when he come out into the yard.

He's got on his best dark-blue, marking-for-death

suit, and he carry his pearl-handled walking stick in one hand and the Bible in the other. Candy and me cross our fingers and watch him walk down the street. When he's out of sight, I open my mouth and my breath comes popping out like soap bubbles, I'm that relieved.

I look at Candy and she's shaking. "Why you still scared?" I say. "He done gone past your house."

Candy say, "I hear a screech owl last night right outside my window."

"You hold your wrist and choke it til you make it quit hollering and tell it to go away and mark somebody else for bad luck or dying?"

"Yeah, but what if the devil git me alive for doing it the way your grandpop always preaching?"

"I druther the devil git me alive than he git me dead," I say, but I whisper it so that Rhodie can't tattle-tale it the way she do everything, even the time she catch me and Candy with our hands on each other doing a thing that Grandpop say is an admonition to the Lord and eternal damnation to our souls. We still do it sometimes. We try not to, though, cause we're scared of what God'll do to us if He catch us.

Candy is thinking of that now, I know, cause she look worried and I start worrying, too. We start up the swing again but there's no joy in it now. The world that smell so clean and green and sweet just smell sad like funerals now, and we git down and go into the kitchen.

Grandma is baking custard pies. She's got a streak of flour, white as death's pale horse, smeared across her face. She's looking towards us but her eyes are going on through us, and she's mumbling to herself.

"Grandma?" I ask. "Grandma, who is it going to die?"

Grandma don't answer but start in rolling out the dough and I see she's mad or upset from the heavy way she is leaning on the dough roller.

"Grandma, who is it going to die?" I say again, and Grandma look at me finally and say, "Ain't nobody going to die, if the Lord be merciful." But her eyes got that look of her body being here and her mind over yonder someplace, like she's two people at once. Make a chill run up and down my spine. What Miz Rose call a possum walking over my grave. But I don't want to think about no graves now, especially my own, and I grab Candy's hand.

We just the other side of the door when Grandma start in mumbling again. "Lord, pore little Sue Ellen . . . Lord, all alone and scared."

"Sue Ellen?" Candy ask, but I can't answer because of the catball that's suddenly caught in my throat. We go out and set on the front steps. Just quiet and holding hands. It is the first time we ever know Grandpop to mark someone so young for dying. Sixteen.

After a long while Candy ask, "Why'd he want to go and do that to her?"

I say, "He don't do the choosing. The Lord do that. Grandpop just points out them that the Lord say to."

Candy say, "I wonder what she dying from?"

"I know," Rhodie say, crawling out from under the steps beneath us. "She dying from forcation."

"What?" me and Candy say together, and then I say, "Look here, Rhodie, Grandpop is going to git you for saying ugly words like that."

Rhodie say, "He say it hisself."

"That's different. Preachers have got to say what the Lord tell them to and if He tell them to say a bad word, they gotta say it."

Rhodie plops the bottle against her doll's painted lips and asks, "Why is forcation a bad word?"

"Cause . . . just cause it is," I say, trying to sound knowing. "And another thing, if you keep telling them lies, Grandpop is gonna strap you."

"What lies?" Rhodie cry, looking like she don't even know what I'm talking about. Sometimes I wonder how she can be my sister, she's so dumb.

I say, "Them lies you tell about Sue Ellen dying from -"

"Ain't lies," Rhodie say. "Sue Ellen dying from forcation. Deacon Riddell say it hisself and she his own daughter -"

"Niece," I say. "Just cause she live with them don't make them her parents. And the word is fornication, dummy. Don't nobody die from it."

"Do too. Grandpop and Deacon both say Sue Ellen dying from it."

"When they say that?" I ask.

"A few minutes ago. When they come up the street. They in the church now."

I can see the church door open. "What else they say?"

"Deacon tell Grandpop he raised her up in the straight and narrow, and he never allowed her to smoke or drink or paint her face or wear short skirts or mess around with boys."

I wonder again how Sue Ellen stayed so gay and friendly living with two people what always go round like their mouths stuck full of straight pins and they afraid to smile for fear they swallow one.

I see Grandpop and Deacon come out of the church and go into the cemetery.

"Picking out a spot for the grave," Candy say,

"Don't have to pick one. They'll put her beside her mama and daddy," I say, but the two men walk past Sue Ellen's parents' graves and on to the far corner of the cemetery. Deacon bend down and start driving down the burial stake.

There ain't no graves at all in that section and I think of Sue Ellen with her pretty face and smile being put off all by herself and my eyes run over with tears and Candy keeps asking over and over, "Why they putting her there, Mary Ann? Why they

Birthalene Miller lives in Ackerman, Miss. This is her first published short story.

putting her there?"

She look at me and see I'm crying and she start crying, too. We don't want to watch no more, and we go round the house and set on the bench beneath the bare wisteria vines that crook over into themselves like they got a hurt, too, like me and Candy has. I got a worry, also, that keep gnawing at me. I say, "Don't see how Sue Ellen . . . I mean, how she can . . . what with her not going with no boys."

"And no men, neither."

"Lizzie Beth Collins . . . she all the time with her. She the one, Got to be."

Me and Candy look at each other. Then we both move down the bench as far away as we can from each other and Jeffrie and Jimmie sneak up behind us and start shouting, "Bang! Bang! You dead!"

They stop hollering suddenly and I look up and see Grandma standing on the steps. She say, "For shame . . . Lord, as if there ain't enough killing and dying in this world without you two play-acting it. You, Jeffrie, you Jimmie, throw them sticks down right now!"

Grandma ain't quite five feet tall, not much more'n me and Candy and we eight – or almost – years old. But Grandma's voice got ten feet of do-what-I-say in it, and the boys throw the gunsticks down quicker'n they be red hot coals.

Grandma say, "Candice, your mama want you and the boys to go home now, and Mary Anne, you and Rhodie's dinner is on the table. Pearl and me are taking some pies over to Miz Rose's and the Deacon's."

After Rhodie finally git through dawdling over dinner, I go outside and Candy come over. We set on the steps but far apart. After awhile, Grandma and Miz Pearl come back. As they coming up the walk, Grandma saying, "But Lord, a coat hanger!"

Miz Pearl look at me and Candy, and she poke Grandma in the ribs. They go up the steps past me and Candy. They set down in the rockers and Miz Pearl say, "That Deacon Riddell . . . expecting any minute for the corpse to be brought back from the undertaker, and all he can talk about is the disgrace." Her and Grandma whisper to each other.

When they hush whispering, Grandma say, "You see what I see? Two cats so full of curiosity that they going to bust open in a minute. Friday and the last spring holiday from school and you two waste it just setting around eavesdropping."

"We ain't eavesdropping. We watching them dig Sue Ellen's grave."

"And they digging it in the far corner," I add.

"Mary Anne, what you talking about? Her parents buried in the middle."

"Yes'm, I know but . . ."

"They burying her in the new ground they take in. Way over at the far end of it," Candy burst in

ahead of me.

Miz Pearl and Grandma both get up and look.

Grandma say, "Lord, they right, Pearl. That pore motherless . . ." She moan and press her hands against her belly like she got a pain in it somewhere.

Grandpop come into the yard and up the steps like he don't even see Grandma or Miz Pearl or me or Candy, though we got to quick jerk back to keep his death-marking clothes from touching us.

"Mr. Robinson, may I have a word with you, please?" Grandma say, low and respectful, like Grandpop preach in the pulpit that it's the duty of a woman to be that way cause she neath her husband, being only his rib and he got to all the time stand with his shadow between her and God.

"Speak ahead, woman," Grandpop say.

"Private. Please," she say.

"All right, but it will have to be fast," Grandpop say. His eyes have that look they always git when he's working on one of his pulpit-thumping, window-rattling, hell-fire-breathing sermons.

Grandma shut the door behind her and Grandpop. We can't hear what she saying but we hear him plenty good through the open window.

"Fitting? Fitting? A fornicator and a murderer. What would be a more fitting place for us to bury her? Less'n we bury her outside the cemetery altogether?"

"But just a child." Grandma talking louder now. "What if it was Mary Anne or Rhodie? In a few years they will be young ladies . . ."

"And it will be the church's duty to make them and all other young folks know that the wages of sin is death everlasting."

"Mr. Robinson!" Grandma cry. "You're not fixing to preach a hell damnation sermon over that poor girl's body, are you?"

"The Lord puts the words in my mouth. I only say them."

"But . . ."

"Enough, woman. I got to be about the Lord's work."

Grandpop come back out and go across to his church. After awhile we hear Grandma talking on the phone. She's on the phone a long time, forever it seem, and the warm spring afternoon run quickly towards cold sunset. The air so still and so heavy with flower smell and sunshine and wet, I feel like I'm looking through glass. Lying on my side in a goldfish bowl and looking across the yard and the cemetery at the grave diggers and the water so quiet and heavy over me that I can hear the thud-thump of the hard shovels against clay and the far-off distant sound of Grandma talking.

When she finally come out, her eyes shining with mad. She say, "Lord! Men! The tribulation of them." She walk up and down the porch. And

down and up it. She moan as she walk. "Lord . . . that pore . . . Lord, that lily-livered woman wanting to do better but always obeying that rock-hearted man of hers."

She stop pacing finally and stand staring at the church. "Lord, why you lay such a burden on womenfolks by putting that obeying thing in?"

After awhile, she turn and go into the house and start rattling the pots, and Miz Pearl tell Candy to come along and help her get supper, cause afterwards they all going over to the Riddell's. Candy look at me and I see how bad she hating the thought of going. I reach out my hand to her. Our hands are all but touching when we remember and jerk them back.

I watch her go and the loneliness is a boil inside me aching to pop itself. I go inside. Grandma hears mine and Rhodie's prayers and tucks us into bed. I ain't sleepy and I git up and go to the bathroom. When I pass the opened door of Grandpop's and Grandma's room, I peep inside and see Grandma sitting all alone and quiet and reading the Bible.

Seeing her like that gives me a bad case of the lonesomes. But everywhere is going to be lonesome from now on without Candy, I think, and I crawl under the quilt beside Rhodie. I think of Sue Ellen and the lonesomeness of her grave off by itself. I think of all the lonesomeness in the world. Then I think of dying and hellfire and I throw the covers back and pull my gown up and look at my body. I expect to see the red flickering of flames on it but the streetlights coming in through the shades make it look green. And I think that maybe it's poisonous for me or anybody else to touch ever again.

In the morning, Grandma and Grandpop don't say nothing to each other. After we all dress up in our funeral-going clothes, we set in the living room and wait for the hearse to bring the corpse. Grandma set with her black purse in one hand and her Bible in the other and with the quiet all around her. Grandpop keep looking at her. Finally he say, as if he can't stand it no more, "Idie, what is it? What's ailing you?"

Grandma set on as though she don't even hear him, even though I know she do and even though she always before pay heed to every word he say, like the Bible says to. That's the reason I decided I ain't never going to git married but just always have lots of boyfriends.

Grandpop ask, "Is it the grave?"

Grandma don't say nothing and Grandpop say, "Idie, you know that I got to say and do the things the Lord tell me to."

"And I got to do and say the things He tell me to," Grandma speaks at last.

Grandpop open his mouth wide to say something but just then he see the hearse coming and



photo by Tom Davenport

he grab his hat up and run out.

Grandma follow him and me and Rhodie follow Grandma. Candy join me in the church yard and we follow the people inside. When we all seated, I look up and see Grandpop standing at one end of the casket and Grandma standing at the other end. I don't understand that, cause everybody but the preacher is supposed to be setting. And I don't understand it even more when Grandpop go up into the pulpit and Grandma go up behind him and stop in front of the pulpit stand so she between Grandpop and the congregation. Everybody look at her, not understanding. Everything so quiet you could drop a straight pin point down and hear it hit.

Grandma open her mouth and speak and her voice is as quiet and peaceful as winter rain dripping past a bedroom window. She say, "I know that most, maybe even all of you, think it sinful for a woman to speak in church. Preacher" — she nod over her shoulder at Grandpop — "Reverend Robinson say it and I respect him as my husband and my preacher. But there is somebody else I respect, too. Some people. Though many say they don't need or deserve respect. I say they do. I say until they git their respect this world going to go on being messed up."

People look at Grandma and some begin to shift around and clear their throats, small noises grating against the quiet, cracking the thick hull of it.

Grandma look at the crack in the quiet and she draw the quiet closer around herself. She say, "Women — that's who I'm talking about. Women all the time git blamed for every sin done under the sun. Some we do. Some we don't. But nearly always the sin we do we don't do alone. There's a man do it with us and he just as guilty. Only he, being a man, don't git the blame heaped on him like us women do."

She look down into the slowly widening crack and she say, "There's someone, a man, or a boy what think he's a man, who ain't one bit less guilty than Sue Ellen. But I don't see nobody pointing him out, accusing him of his sins. And he, more'n likely, setting right here among us."

The people turn slowly from looking at Grandma and begin alooking at each other and I see them wondering as I am. A boy or a man, I think — and not Lizzie Beth Collins. The worry that has been corked up inside me comes spewing out like half-frozen Coke.

Grandma say, "Sue Ellen in years scarcely more than a child. But she die the death of a woman. If there be any woman here today what can love or pity her because of, or despite of, what she did, I invite that woman to step forward and help me in burying this, our dead sister."

Grandma stand waiting in the quietness that is so thick that I feel I can reach out and touch it,

so soft and deep that I can put my whole hand in it. Grandpop still standing behind her, and he look like he don't know what to do or say, and the people all look at Grandma and nobody move. Then suddenly Miz Pearl git up quick and go stand beside Grandma. Lizzie Beth and several other girls and some women go up. Me and Candy go up, hand in hand.

Deacon Riddell jump up. The frowns in his face so deep you could plant a turnip patch in them. He cry, "Preacher, I object to such unorthodox proceedings."

Grandpop don't say nothing, and Grandma go down and stand at the head of the casket. We follow her and I look down at Sue Ellen's face. It look as calm and peaceful and quiet as Grandma's. And so beautiful. The beautifullest face I ever see. Except Grandma's now with the softness on it like light. She say, "Let us pray."

After the service, Miz Pearl and five other women act as pallbearers. They start to carry the casket towards the red mound of dirt in the far corner of the graveyard, but Grandma stop them. She pick Miz Riddell out of the crowd following along behind us. She say, "You, Lucille. You Sue Ellen's only blood kin. You decide where you want her buried — alongside her parents, or way off in the corner by herself." She point to the two mounds of dirt — one that we see yesterday and a new one in the middle of the cemetery. I stare at the nearest mound and Miz Riddell and everybody else stare at it. All except Grandma, who look as if there ain't nothing unusual about a grave gitting dug all by itself in the middle of the night.

Miz Riddell look at the grave. "Please," she say. "She has been a daughter to me for twelve years." Tears come running down her face.

"An admonition unto the Lord," Deacon interrupt. "I say she is to be buried in the grave I pick for her."

"No!" Miz Riddell say. She say it low at first. Then she say it louder. "No!" And her sobbing overtakes her.

Deacon say, "The Bible says wives obey their husbands."

"The Bible says it all right," Grandma say. "But it say a lot of other things, too, like love and mercy and he without sin casting the first . . ."

"Right in God's own Book. It say wives obey their husbands and . . ."

"Maybe it say that just cause it's written there by men," Grandma say.

Deacon's face quiver like there is water under it boiling. "Heresy!" he screech. "Preacher! A heretic!"

Grandpop been standing back in the crowd. He step forward now and lay a big hand upon Deacon's shoulder. He say, "No member of my church

going to call no other member a heretic. Especially no one going to call my wife one.” He look around at the crowd and then back down at Deacon. “The women have taken it upon themselves to conduct this funeral. Let us let them carry on with it,” he say and turn and walk slowly out of the cemetery and into his church.

Deacon stare after Grandpop. Then he spit upon the ground and march out of the cemetery, too.

When we pass the church after finishing burying Sue Ellen, I see Grandpop setting in his study. Even after it is dark out and the spring air is thick

with a misting of rain, I still see him setting alone and lonesome looking.

I lay awake a long time thinking of the day and Grandma and the strange ways of women and men. Rhodie flops over towards me and abandons her pillow and burrows into mine. I start to push her away but don't. I lay breathing her breath and it smell warm and rich and sweet like the hot chocolate Grandma give us before putting us to bed. I think of Candy and, with the secret fear and guilty worry that Sue Ellen's death brought gone, the thought of her is warm and gentle and sweet again in my mind.



photo by Fred Baldwin & Wendy Watriss

Grandmother in the Nursing Home

by Lee Robinson

*They do not make these places
for the Grande Dame,
feisty widow
of the rose velveteen settee,
the bitch in you I love.
Your keepers knit and rock,
women who would suckle you
to death, they coo and rock.
I would read you a poem
but you do not remember me:
I, the thin girl who loved
the dusty covers of your Dickens,
the foreign odors
of your dark apartments,
your tragedies,
your small strong hands.*

Afterplay

by Lee Robinson

*Ah,
my body's
serendipity,
the deep-from-the-bone
surprise: I,
alone on the red quilt now,
accept the dark's
congratulatory hug
and bow
to the enormous ovation
of the billion cells.*

Custom Made



Woman Blues

Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard have been friends for 20 years, since they met in Baltimore where Hazel sang in the all-night bars of Cozys and Blue Jays when she could get the work. They've been singing and playing together since 1962. You won't hear Hazel and Alice on top 40 radio, but if you go to bluegrass and country music festivals or folk gatherings, you're likely to hear them. Audiences love their easy manner, gutsy voices and lively music, whether it's 10 people at a workshop or 10,000 at a folk festival. But by far their most enthusiastic fans are Southern women, who can instantly recognize and identify with the feeling behind the words as well as the sound that "puts guts into it," as Hazel says.

It's the combination of traditional country sounds with words of a working class or country experience that makes Alice and Hazel a unique musical duo. They have lived their music and are well-prepared to speak women's hearts and minds, from the bottom rungs of the barstool to some new "custom-made" woman blues. Their singing relationship reflects the mix of working class "country," with its own strong music traditions, and middle class, "city" experiences. Together Hazel and Alice have grown personally and politically, and have spoken through their music of conditions and feelings listeners could understand.

Both women credit the other's support and encouragement as the primary reason they can create their own kind of music. "It's an entirely different experience than I've ever had singing with other people," says Hazel. "And that only comes with a certain

kind of respect and love — just pure communication that you have with another person. The men I have sung with, there was always that cut-off, where you felt that you were the supporter, as opposed to being the other half of the team. But ours is a mutually supportive role. The faith and trust that Alice has had in my music has been tremendous. She was my sole support in trying to write songs, which is really putting yourself on the line."

How did Hazel, a miner's daughter from Montcalm, West Virginia, eighth of 11 children, meet Alice, a college-educated folksinger from Los Angeles? Hazel originally left home at 16 to work in a Virginia mill. Three years later, like countless others when mills and mines closed, she moved to Baltimore looking for work. Often singing by herself in bars and confronting the alien city, Hazel began living the life which she would sing about in later years.

"The experiences I had were incredible and I wasn't prepared to deal with it.... We were living in the slum section of the city and thrown right into the midst of it: a lot of working-class people had come from the country and a lot had got into situations they were not prepared for. I felt terribly inferior.... People were always putting down my accent — even people from the South who had been to school and spoke a little better still put others down that didn't know how to fit in. I couldn't understand which way I was supposed to be or what I was supposed to be."

*West Virginia, Oh my home
West Virginia's where I belong*

*Len Stanley is an organizer with the
Carolina Brown Lung Association.*

*In the dead of the night
In the still and the quiet
I slip away like a bird in flight
Back to those hills, place where I call home.*

*It's been years now since I lived there
And this city life's about got the best of me
I can't remember why I left so free
What I wanted to do, what I wanted to see
But I can sure remember where I come from.*
—Hazel Dickens, Rounder Records, 1976

Alice Gerrard, raised on the West Coast, married her Antioch College classmate Jeremy Foster and came to Washington in the late 1950s. In college, she was exposed to the folk revival but had been more drawn to the traditional sounds of fiddle and banjo. Like other city folk, she was interested in the instrumental sounds rather than singing — until she met Hazel.

A long list of coincidences led to Hazel and Alice's encounter at a pickin' party in D.C. Hazel's brother, a black lung victim, shared an interest in traditional music with an orderly at the sanatorium where he was a patient. The orderly was Mike Seeger, bluegrass music enthusiast and high school friend of Jeremy, Alice's husband.

When Mike, Jeremy and Alice met Hazel and her family, the music they had heard on 78's and Library of Congress tapes came alive.

"Those were exciting times for all of us," remembers Alice. "It was a unique kind of two-way love affair, involving friendship and closeness and learning from one another.... We learned that music and people are not separable."

Through her new friends, Hazel began to realize that some people from the "city culture" were truly interested in her heritage and her music, in who she was and what she had to say.

"We'd been put down so much I couldn't believe anybody was sincere about the music. When I met a lot of these people who didn't look down on what I came from and musically what I was trying to do, I think that really sustained me."

On the other hand, Alice met not only Hazel but a whole musical culture. "In traditional music, in country music, which is what we're talking about," she says, "everything is part of somebody's experience. It's a *life music*, music that really comes from people and their lives. So you can't sing a song and not have it be part of somebody's experience... I'm talking about a music and an orientation that basically comes from working-class women, working-class people."

A song which profoundly reflects the impact of Hazel's life and music on Alice is called "You Gave Me a Song." Alice structured the song so that the verses tell Hazel's story, but the chorus reflects what that story has meant to her own life. Alice writes simply, "Maybe I should have called this 'Hazel's Song' — she was definitely on my mind when I wrote it."

*We used to be a family in our little cabin home,
Whose windows they are broken and whose chimney's dark and cold,
But jobs were hard to find back then, it wasn't easy to survive,
So one by one we all left home to change our way of life.
Got a job in a factory on that old assembly line;
Gonna climb on up the hill and leave my past behind;
But the only climbing that I did was five flights up the stairs,
And the past I thought I'd left behind went with me everywhere.*

*Chorus: 'Cause you gave me a song
Of a place that I call home.
A song of then, a song of now,
A song of yet to come.*

*So here we are, my past and me, a-workin' in this bar;
Sing a song of broken hills and streams that once ran clear;
Sing a song of you my friend, lonely like me;
The city's taken all we have but sweet, sad memories.*

*But someday I'll go home again, lord it's been a long hard road;
I'm not saying that I'll stay but I know now if I go,
I'm gonna take you with me and what you gave when I was young;
Others held me for a while but you held me all along.
—Alice Gerrard, Rounder Records, 1973*

Alice's culture opened new doors of perception for Hazel, too. She began to experience a new awareness of class, integrated with a woman's consciousness. Looking with new eyes at the world around her, Hazel expressed a growing sense of unfairness and injustice in songs that could be called her trademark — songs about fallen women, working women, and rambling women.

"The whole way that working-class people deal with the world is different. There are a whole lot of things you let go by the wayside, things that you don't object to because you're afraid — and you know you *can't* object because you don't have those choices. Your livelihood depends on that paycheck every week.

"Some of these things were just earthshaking to me when I got invited to middle-class homes and became friends with people who have money. The way they relate to a situation is just so different; they have a choice — like whether or not to have a doctor, and even *which* doctor they may have. They have the power of money behind them. Even the simplest things, the way they buy food. They would spend more on just a little accessory to the meal than we would spend on a whole meal. It just seemed grossly unfair."

*I said I'm tired of workin' my life away
And giving somebody else all of my pay
While they get rich on the profits that I lose
Leaving me here with the working girl blues.*

*Yodel la ee
Working girl blues*

*I can't even afford a new pair of shoes
While they can live in any ole penthouse they choose
And all that I've got is the working girl blues.
—Hazel Dickens, Rounder Records, 1976*

But it wasn't just money or class differences that aroused Hazel's anger.

"When I first started singing in bars in Baltimore, I'd see a lot of pathetic women who would come in to pick up men. It was so confusing to me; they were so defenseless. The men would use and abuse them — and then laugh about it. Finally, I saw what was happening. It was the pot calling the kettle black!

"I realized that I *could* say these things if I *wanted* to. Up to that point, I thought somebody was going to look at me kind of strangely if I put this kind of feeling in a song. I'd never

heard a song that said those things in that way."

*At the house down the way, you sneak and you pay
For her love, her body, all her shame;
Then you call yourself a man, you say you don't understand
How a woman could turn out that way.*

*You pull the strings, she's your plaything
You can make her or break her it's true
You abuse her, accuse her, turn around and use her
Then forsake her anytime it suits you.*

*Well, if she acts that way, it's 'cause you've had your way
Don't put her down, you helped put her there.
—Hazel Dickens, Rounder Records, 1973*

For both Hazel and Alice, the search for identity and creative expression has been affected by relationships with husbands and, in Alice's case, with children. Hazel's marriage, about which she says little, lasted only a few years.

"I grew tremendously, by leaps and bounds, after getting out of that relationship," she says. "I grew much more productive, music-wise. All my married life, I wasn't even that involved with my music... but then I obviously didn't get a whole lot when I was growing up, and he didn't either, so we were trying to get everything from each other that we didn't get while we were growing up."

Part of the identity search for Hazel was untangling which roles she was willing to play, just who she was as a woman. Now, through her songs, she emerges a feisty woman with a strong female response to the male country theme: 'don't try to tie me down, I'm just born to wander.' She asserts, "Now I have more of an idea of who I am and what I need and want."

*There's a whole lotta places
That my eyes are longing to see
Where there is no green cottage
No babies on my knee
And there's a whole lotta people
Just waiting to shake my hand
And you know a rambling woman's
No good for a home lovin' man*

*Chorus:
Yes, I'm a rambling woman
Lord, I hope you understand
'Cause you know a rambling woman's
No good for a home loving man*

*Take all that sweet talk
And give it to some other girl
Who'll be happy to rock your baby
And live in your kind of world*

*For I'm a different kind of woman
Got a different set of plans
You know a rambling woman's
No good for a home loving man.*

—Hazel Dickens, Rounder Records, 1976

Alice's life changed drastically when her husband Jeremy died in an automobile accident. Fortunately there was enough insurance money to support her and the four children, but it took time to adjust to being on her own. She grew more involved with her music, began playing more with Hazel, and helped start the magazine *Bluegrass Unlimited*. She remembers, more than the hardship, a growing sense of freedom in those years.

Perhaps it was this new-found freedom that allowed Alice to infuse some sense of humor into her songs about women. It seems fair to say that her early women's songs lack the underlying indignation which Hazel's very personal experiences brought forth. Yet in "Custom Made Woman Blues," she touches deeply on a process known to most women:

*Well, I tried to be the kind of woman
you wanted me to be
And it's not your fault that I tried to be
what I thought you wanted to see*

*Smiling face, shining hair, clothes that I
thought you'd like me to wear
Made to please and not to tease, it's the
custom made woman blues.*

*Yes, I tried to be the kind of woman you
wanted me to be
And I tried to see life your way and say all
the things you'd like me to say*

*Loving thoughts, gentle hands, all guaranteed
to keep a-hold of your man
Made to please and not to tease, it's the
custom made woman blues.*

Alice Gerrard, Rounder Records 1973

"It's very important to understand what the woman's experience has been in the past, because you can't really move ahead without recognizing what's come before and how to deal with it. You can't just wipe out that whole. It's important to recognize the attitudes that have prevailed and then try to change them. I could never write a song like "Stand By Your Man," but if I were to sing something like "Stand By Your Man," my responsibility would be to put the song into some kind of context that says this attitude has to be overcome, but, nevertheless, this attitude is a reflection of women's experience.

*I'm just sittin' in this bar room
Yes, that's whiskey that you see
And my name is Mary Johnson
And Lord, my feet are killin' me
I been working hard and I just stopped in
Before I head on home
And if you're thinking something different,
friend,
Well you sure are thinking wrong*

Chorus:

*And if you think you're reading 'want to'
In these big brown eyes of mine
Well, it's only a reflection
Of the 'want to' in your mind*

*Now we all get lonely sometimes
And this might be your time
And you're seeing satin pillows,
Sweet perfume, forbidden wine
And you think I'm thinking on those lines
And now and then I do
Oh, but just like you the 'want to' is
A thing I'd like to choose*

Alice Gerrard, Rounder Records 1976

Alice eventually married her old friend Mike Seeger but later took back her maiden name. "Ours is basically a good relationship. Mike's always been supportive and I don't have any feeling that he would ever want to hold me back from a career....but a name can get in your way. I was always 'Mike's wife,' 'Mike's sister,' even 'Pete's daughter.' If we were in a room full of people and someone came up to him and totally ignored me, it really bothered me. I'd say to myself, for god's sake, you have something, too—you're playing music independently of Mike and what you and Hazel do is really important. Yet people would relate directly to him rather than to me."

Essentially though, Alice enjoys being married. "I like the idea very much of there being somebody in this world that knows you almost better than anybody else, that you can really expose yourself to. For me, this is very important. And I feel that Mike is just about my best friend in the world in a lot of those ways. At the same time, I go through periods where I just want to be by myself, and I don't want to have to answer to anybody."

She recalls one particularly bad summer when her wish for her own time conflicted with her family life. "I had a bad cough that wouldn't go away and I couldn't sing. All the children were there—my kids and Mike's kids and that makes seven. And I just kept feeling like, oh God, I'm going to lock myself in a room. I did a couple

of times. I'd close the door and just stay in a room upstairs for a whole day. It was really bad."

*In the early morning light I creep on down
the stairs
Hush you floor, keep your squeakin' down
And the smell of good hot coffee and the
silence all around
And nothing but my thoughts, and the
stirring of a song
To break the sad sweet feeling, Lord, of
being all alone.
And if I'm very still I can drain this holy
hour
And if I'm lucky stretch it out to two
Before the world comes crashing and down
the stairs comes truth
In smiles and tears and ratty hair, and I
can't find my shoes
And I don't know, Lord, I don't know if I
can make it through*

*But I hope you know how much I love you
Cause I guess it ain't showing much these
days*

*Just old dreams of yesterday keep on get-
ting in the way
Of picnic days and daisy chains
Of come on, let's all go into town today
Of help you make your bed and put your
clothes away . . .*

*Well anyway, I guess I'm gonna stay
So come on now, Your mama's gonna
stay . . .*

*In the early morning light I creep on
down the stairs . . .*

Alice Gerrard, Rounder Records, 1976

The pervasive ideas of the women's movement have deeply affected Hazel and Alice; they give credit to that movement, as well as to the women living their songs.

They have won many devotees the last few years, particularly among Southern women, but neither of them wants to be "boxed in," as Hazel puts it, by the implication that they are only singing for women. Their music comes first. Hazel says, "I've been around and grown up with this music and if you take that away, you've taken the biggest part of me. Music is probably the strongest way that I express myself."

Alice sums it up as she writes on one of their record covers, "[Our music] is the result of good friendship, lots of changes in our lives But the heart of the matter is really all those hours of hacking around, life confessing, amateur therapy and all the rest. Two-thirds mouth and one-third hard work, and over some time, perseverance and knowing that we love this music."

Varieties of Southern Women

by John W. Florin

Women in the South are not really that much different demographically from women elsewhere in the country. They live about as long, are about as likely to be in the labor force, have about the same number of children, are about as likely to divorce, and outnumber the male population by about the same ratio: 105 to 100. There is nothing unusual in any of this. However, these statistics mask the often great differences that exist *within* the South for women in such things as divorce rates, fertility, and labor force participation.

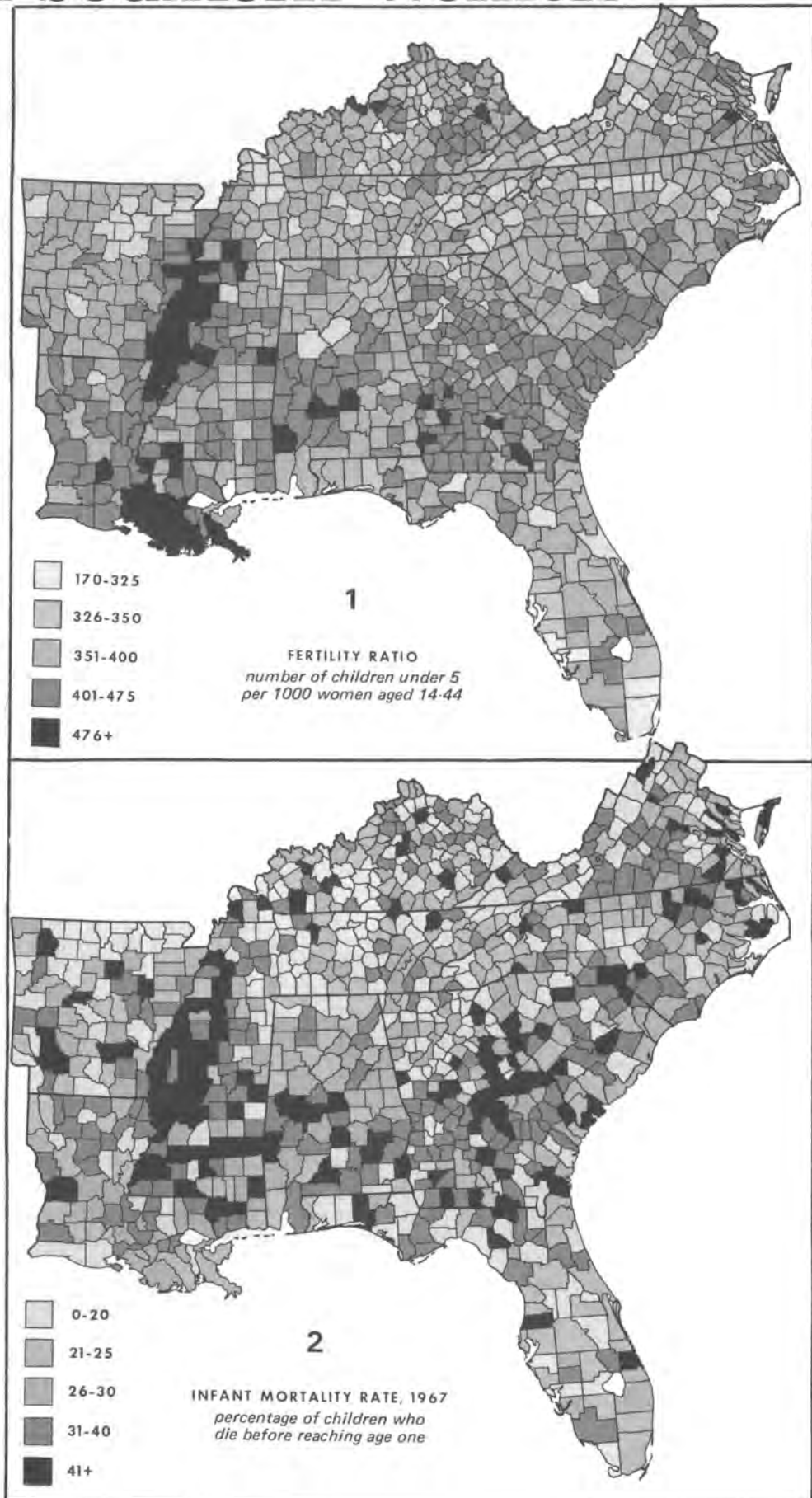
The South is not today, and really never was, homogeneous. Rather, it is composed of many, often strikingly, varied parts.

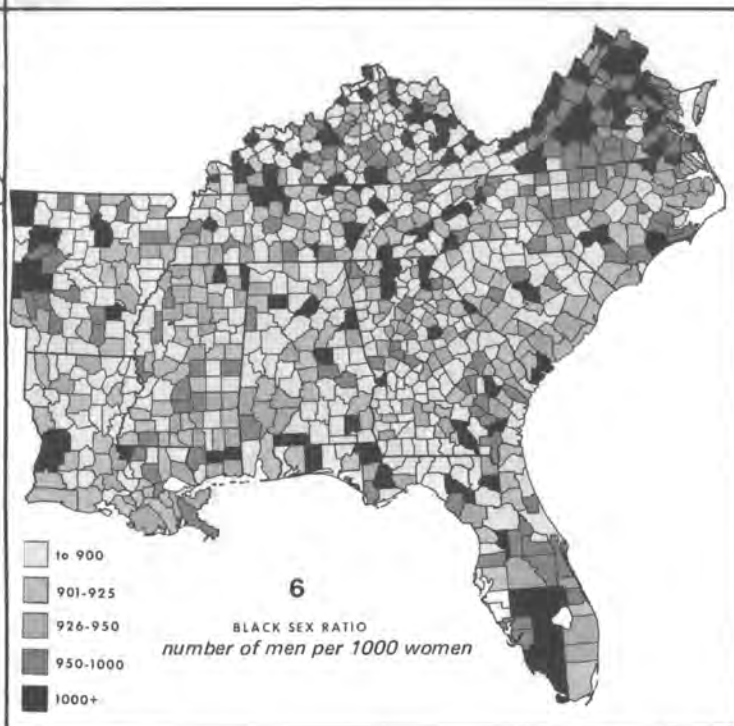
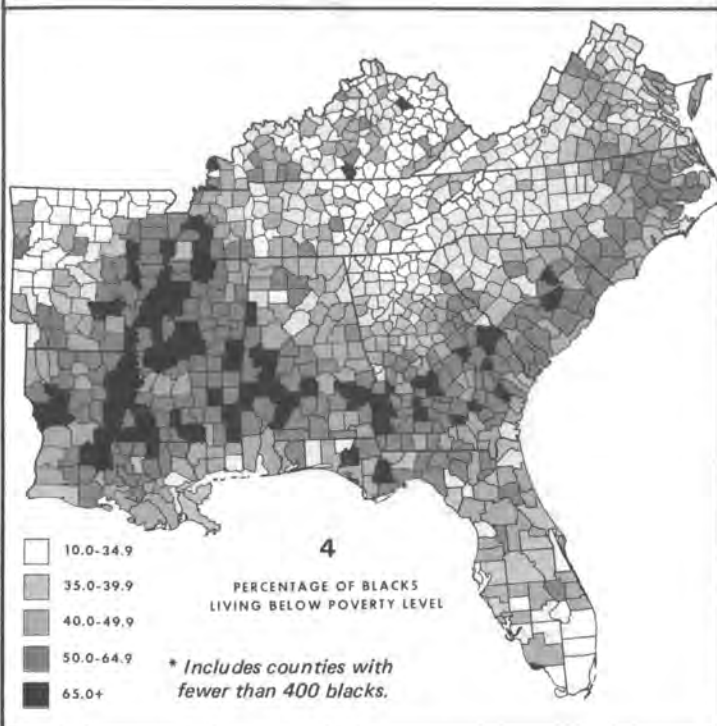
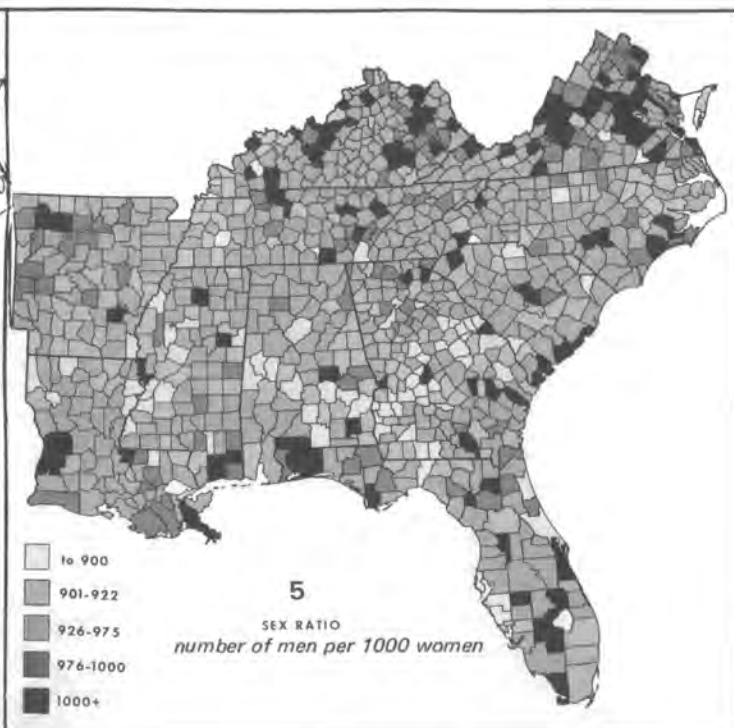
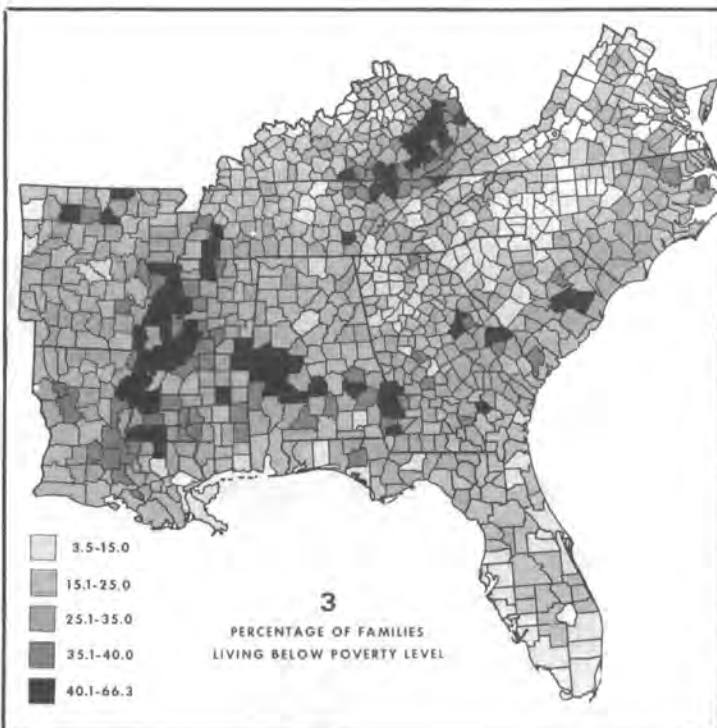
For example, while the fertility rate (the number of children under the age of five per 1000 women of child-bearing age) in the region is almost the same as that for the entire country (362 to 370), parts of the South vary greatly from the regional norm [see map 1]. The Cajun country of southern Louisiana, the only predominantly Catholic area in the South, has a very high fertility rate which reflects its limited acceptance of birth-control procedures.

Counties in the Mississippi Delta also have among the highest fertility rates in the United States. This rich cotton producing area, once a key part of the plantation South, is both rural and predominantly black. It is also poor. Because young children are particularly susceptible to problems in their environment, one statistical indicator for the area's poverty is a high infant mortality rate (the percentage of children who die before reaching age one) [see map 2].

Poverty [maps 3 and 4], rural residence, large black populations, and high fertility are in fact intertwined in large sections of the South. The old cotton belt of the Inner Coastal Plain from southeastern North Carolina through the black belt of south-central Alabama

John W. Florin is the co-author, with Richard J. Kopec, of The Changing Population of the Southeast (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Geography Department, 1973), from which these maps are taken.





ranks relatively high on all of these measures. Eastern Kentucky, its steep slopes pitted and torn by coal mining, also has a long tradition of poverty and a high fertility rate [map 1].

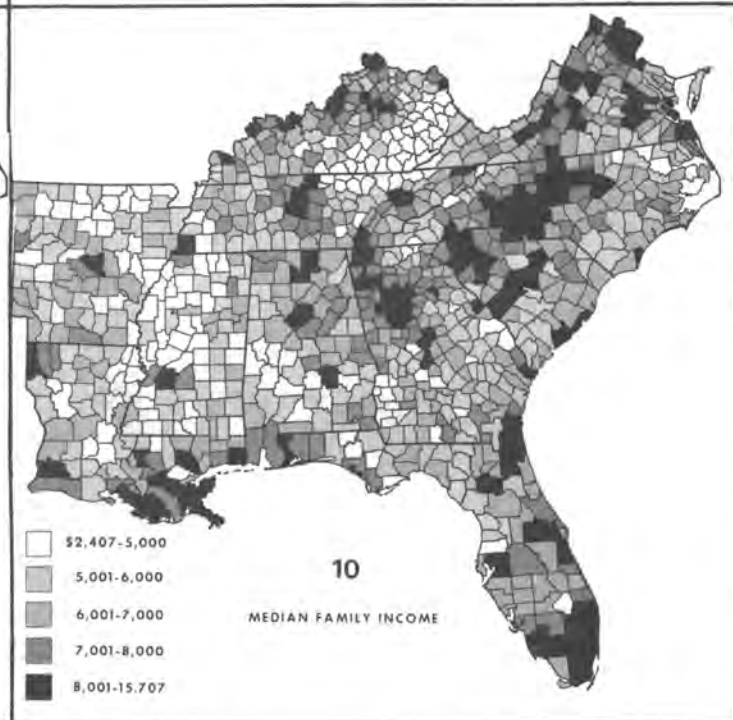
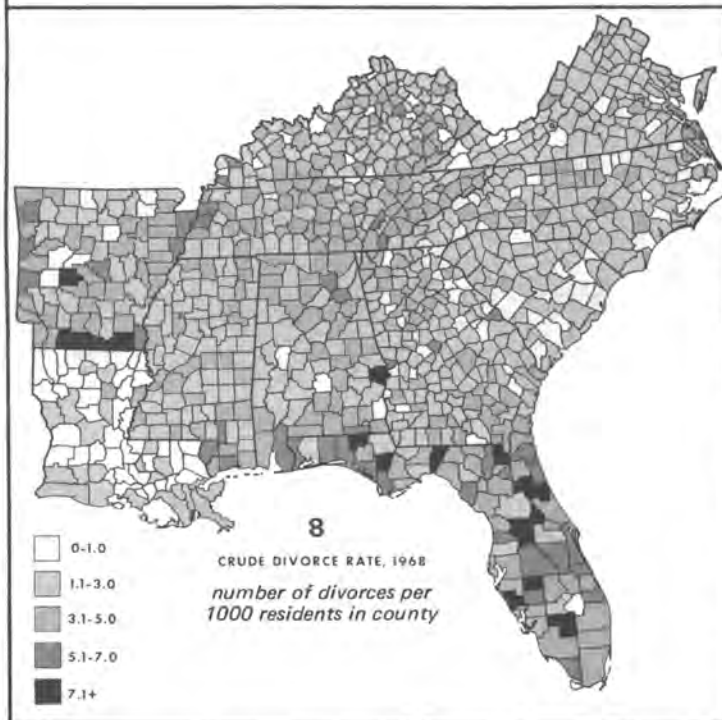
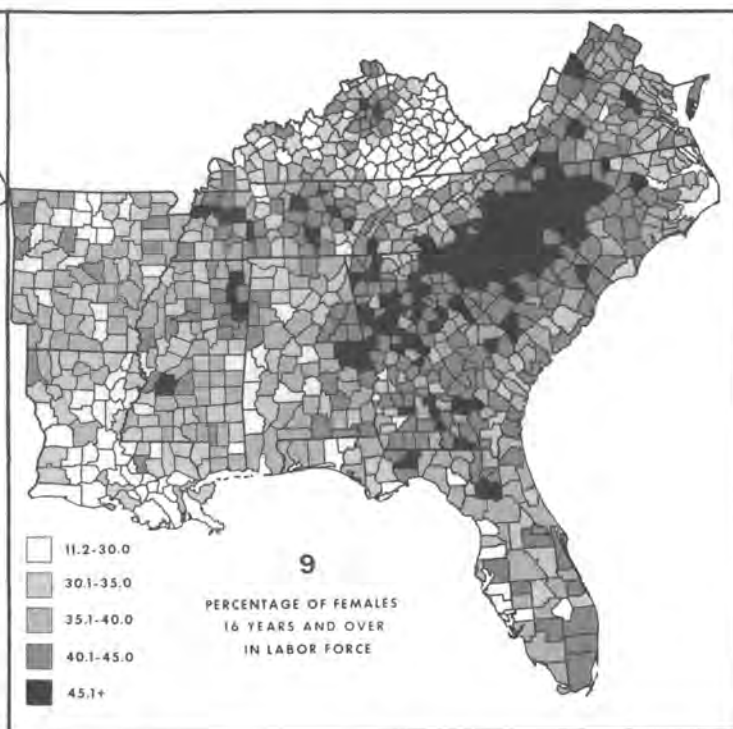
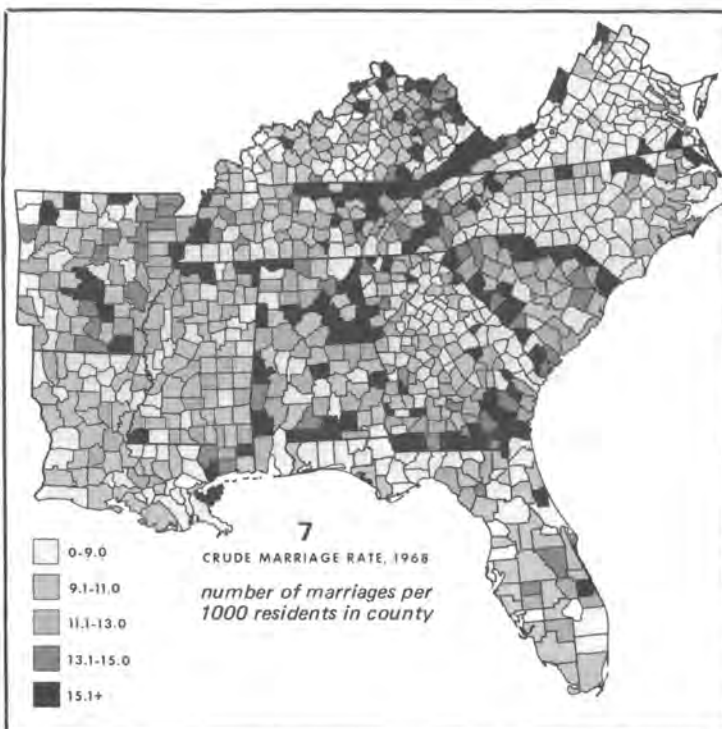
An unusual, heavy outmigration of females from Appalachia has resulted in a male majority in many of the area's counties, something quite unusual in the eastern United States today. Elsewhere, in fact, women are often left behind in the flight from rural poverty since men enjoy easier geographic

mobility in the US. In most of the rural counties in the Inner Coastal Plain and the Delta, for example, a high percentage of the population is female [maps 5 and 6].

Rates for both marriage and divorce [maps 7 and 8] are at least partly the result of a state's laws; in Louisiana, the strong Catholic influence has helped maintain a strict set of divorce laws. The relative leniency of divorce laws in Alabama compared to Louisiana, or of marriage laws in South Carolina com-

pared to its neighbors, is suggested by the darker border counties of these states.

Urbanization and manufacturing growth in parts of the South have offered a particular opportunity for large numbers of women to get jobs [map 9]. Many women, especially young adults, move to urban areas to take advantage of the plentiful jobs in traditional female occupations, e.g., secretarial and sales work. Such cities as Atlanta, New Orleans, and Memphis



have low male-to-female ratios as a result of this movement.

The piedmont textile industry from southern Virginia through northern Georgia also employs mostly females. This region of small manufacturing cities and towns has provided industrial jobs to tens of thousands of women. North and South Carolina lead the nation in the percentage of married women in the labor force. The extremely low percentage of working women in the labor force in Appalachia,

especially in the coal region, is now resulting in a movement of "cut-and-sew" operations into the region to take advantage of this reservoir of cheap labor.

In 1970, the average woman worker earned approximately two-thirds as much as her male counterpart because of the low-paying jobs available to her. This problem is especially difficult for female heads of households: in the South as a whole, women are heads of over one-third of black families and one-fifth of white families, and these

families comprise 60 percent of those living below the poverty line. Still, in a state like North Carolina, which has the lowest average manufacturing wages of any state, the working woman with a working husband has pushed the state's median *family* income above those of a dozen others [map 10].

Atlanta is not Hazard, Kentucky; Miami and the Mississippi Delta are a world apart. There is no "typical" Southern woman — only women who live in the South.

WOMEN IN THE SOUTH

A Bibliography



photo by Stephen March

The Greek ideal that "a woman should be spoken of neither for good nor evil" has enjoyed a longstanding acceptance. Women have become historically visible only when they emerge from the anonymity of the female role to participate in the political events historians have traditionally considered significant. In recent years, however, the "new women's history" has begun to focus attention on social processes which affect women in general: female socialization, personal networks, inner life and family dynamics, the emotional logic behind women's search

for efficacy in the public sphere. Yet even as the study of women has begun to enter the research mainstream, relatively little work has appeared on the distinctive experience of women in the Southern region. The reality and diversity of their lives continues to be shrouded by a stereotype of womanhood which obscures far more than it explains.

The following bibliography represents an eclectic survey of topics and time periods. Though by no means complete, it should serve as an indication of available written sources and a

stimulus to further research. The list begins with theoretical overviews which may serve as tools for placing sources in critical perspective. The general section includes cultural, historical and sociological studies. For the most part, literary criticism has been omitted unless it deals directly with the question of sexual roles and experiences. No systematic survey of dissertations and masters theses has been made, but several unpublished studies of special significance are included.

The section on biography, autobiography and memoirs is highly selective. Wherever possible, articles from state historical journals have been bypassed in favor of book length studies. Selections were made with particular attention to the inclusion of individuals from a variety of life interests, political perspectives and time periods. Citations are by subject rather than author except in the case of a few collections of short biographical sketches. In the literature and poetry section, only one or two works by each author have been included.

Of particular aid in compiling this bibliography have been: the publications of the Feminist Press, Box 334, Old Westbury, N. Y. 11568; Edward T. James, ed., *Notable American Women, 1607-1950* (Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1971); and the *Women's Labor History Film Project* in Washington, D.C. Special thanks to Page McCullough, Jim Overton, Ellen Dawson, Paula McClendon, Lyn Goldfarb, Yvonne McLemore, Jay Sawyer and Cindy McMillan and Anne Dexter.

THEORY

- Bridenthal, Renate, "The Dialectics of Production and Reproduction in History," *Radical America*, Vol. 10, March-April, 1976.
- Brownmiller, Susan, *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*. N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1975.
- Daly, Mary, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.
- Firestone, Shulamith, *The Dialectic of Sex*, New York: Bantam, 1970.
- Giele, Janet Zollinger, "Centuries of Womanhood: An Evolutionary Perspective on the Feminine Role," *Women's Studies*, Vol. 1, 1972.
- Gordon, Linda, et al., "Historical Phallacies: Sexism in American Historical Writing," in Berenice A. Carroll, ed., *Liberating Women's History*, Urbana: U. of Illinois, 1975.
- Kelly-Gadol, Joan, "The Social Relation of the Sexes: Methodological Insights of

- Women's History," *Signs*, Vol. 1, Summer, 1976.
- Lerner, Gerda, "Placing Women in History: A 1975 Perspective," in Berenice A. Carroll, ed., *Liberating Women's History*, Urbana: U. of Illinois, 1975.
- Mitchell, Juliet, *Woman's Estate*, N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1971.
- Oakley, Ann, *The Sociology of Housework*, New York: Pantheon, 1975.
- Rosaldo, Michelle Zimbalist and Louise Lamphere, eds., *Woman, Culture and Society*, Stanford: Stanford U. Pr., 1974.
- Rosen, Ruth, "Sexism in History, or Writing Women's History is a Tricky Business," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 33, August, 1971.
- Scott, Anne Firor, "Making the Invisible Woman Visible," *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 38, Nov. 1972.
- Zaretsky, Eli, *Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life*, N.Y.: Harper, 1977.

GENERAL

- Abernathy, Mollie C., "Southern Women, Social Reconstruction and the Church in the 1920s," *Louisiana Studies*, Winter 1974.
- Allen, Lee N., "The Woman Suffrage Movement in Alabama, 1910-1920," *Alabama Review*, April 1958.
- Allen, Ruth Alice, *The Labor of Women in the Production of Cotton*, Chicago: 1933, Arno Press Reprint.
- _____, "Mexican Peon Women in Texas," *Sociology and Social Research*, November-December, 1931.
- Anderson, Mary, *Women's Place in Industry in 10 Southern States*, Women's Bureau, Wash., D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1931.
- Andrews, Matthew Page, *The Women of the South in War Times*, Baltimore: Norman Remington, 1920.
- "Appalachian Women," *Mountain Life and Work, Special Women's Issue*, June, 1974.
- Bailey, Hugh C., "Ethel Armes and *The Story of Coal and Iron in Alabama*," *Alabama Review*, July, 1969.
- Bailey, Hugh C. and Dale, William Pratt, "Missus All Alone in De Big House!" *Alabama Review*, Jan., 1955.
- Barnes, Annie S., "The Black Beauty Parlor Complex in a Southern City," *Phylon*, June 1975.
- Baldwin, Alice M., "The Woman's College of Duke University," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, January 1956.
- Barber, Henry, "The Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching," *Phylon*, December, 1973.
- Bartlett, Irving H. and Camber, C. Glenn, "The History and Psychodynamics of Southern Womanhood," *Women's Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1974.
- Beam, Lura, *They Called Them By the Lightning: A Teacher's Odyssey in the Negro South, 1908-1919*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Beebe, Gilbert Wheeler, *Contraception and Fertility in the Southern Appalachians*, Baltimore, 1942, Arno Reprint.
- Benedict, Mary K., "The Higher Education of Women," *The South in the Building of the Nation*, Vol. X, ed., S.C. Mitchell, Richmond: The Southern Historical Publication Society, 1901-1913.
- "The Black Woman", special issue of *The Black Scholar*, December 1971.
- Blackman, Lucy Worthington, *The Florida Federation of Women's Clubs*, Jacksonville, 1939.
- Blaudin, I.M.E. *History of Higher Education of Women in the South Prior to 1860*, NY: Neal Publishing Co., 1909.
- Boatwright, Eleanor M., "The Political and Civil Status of Women in Georgia, 1783-1860," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Dec. 1941.
- Bogin, Ruth, ed., *Black Women in Nineteenth Century American Life: Their Words, Their Thoughts, Their Feelings*, forthcoming from Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Boyle, Sarah Patton, *The Desegregated Heart: A Virginian's Stand in Time of Transition*, N.Y.: William Morrow & Co., 1962.
- Braden, Anne, *The Wall Between*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1958.
- Bradley, Frances Page and Williamson, Margaretta A., "Rural Children in Selected Counties of North Carolina," *Children's Bur. Pub.* 33, 1918, Arno Reprint.
- Breckinridge, Sophonisba P., *Women in the Twentieth Century: A Study of Their Political, Social and Economic Activities*, N.Y., 1933, Arno Reprint.
- Cade, Toni, *The Black Woman*, New York: Signet, 1970.
- Carrington, Evelyn M., ed. *Women in Early Texas*, Austin: Jenkins Publishing, 1975.
- Carson, Josephine, *Silent Voices: The Southern Negro Woman Today*, New York: Delacourte, 1969.
- Children of Pride*, Myers, Robert M., ed., New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1973.
- Coan, David L., "Eliza Lucas Pinckney and the Reintroduction of Indigo Culture in South America," *Journal of Southern History*, Feb. 1976.
- Cotten, Sallie Southall, *History of the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, 1901-1925*, Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Co., 1925.
- Dart, Helen M., "Maternity and Child Care in Selected Rural Areas of Mississippi," *Children's Bureau Publication No. 88*, 1921, Arno Reprint.
- Davidson, Elizabeth, *Child Labor Legislation in the Southern Textile States*, Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1939.
- Davis, Angela Yvonne, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," *Massachusetts Review*, 13, Winter/Spring, 1972.
- De Leon, Thomas C., *Belles, Beaux and Brains of the 60's*, 1909, Arno Press Reprint.
- Dollard, John, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1937.
- Douglass, Frederick, *Frederick Douglass on Women's Rights*, ed. Philip Foner, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976.
- Durr, Virginia Foster, "The Emancipation of Pure White Southern Womanhood," *New South*, Winter, 1971, Vol. 26, No. 1.
- _____, "In the Name of Southern Womanhood," *New South*, Vol. 17, Winter, 1962.
- Ergood, Bruce, "The Female Protection and the Sun Light: Two Contemporary Negro Mutual Aid Societies," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, July, 1971.



... I came to explore the wreck.
The words are purposes.
The words are maps.
I came to see the damage that was done
and the treasures that prevail.
I stroke the beam of my lamp
slowly along the flank
of something more permanent
than fish or weed

the thing I came for:
the wreck and not the story of the wreck
the thing itself and not the myth . . .

— from Adrienne Rich,
"Diving into the Wreck"



- Essin, Emmett M. ed. *Appalachia: Family Traditions in Transition*, Johnson City, Tenn.: E. Tennessee State U. Press, 1975.
- Evans, Sara M., "Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left," Dissertation, UNC, 1976.
- "Experiences of the Race Problem, By a Southern White Woman," *The Independent*, March 17, 1904, Arno Reprint.
- Finley, Ruth E., *Old Patchwork Quilts and the Women Who Made Them*, Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1929.
- Fleming, John E., "Slavery, Civil War, and Reconstruction: A Study of Black Women in Microcosm," *Negro History Bulletin*, Aug.-Sept., 1975.
- Fletcher, Marie, "The Southern Heroine in the Fiction of Representative Southern Women Writers," Dissertation, LSU, 1963.
- Forrest, Mary, *Women of the South Distinguished in Literature*, N.Y.: Richardson, 1866.
- Foss, George, ed., *A Singer and Her Songs: Almeida Riddle's Book of Ballads*, La. State U. Press, 1971.
- Frazier, E. Franklin, *The Negro Family in the United States*, Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1939.
- Fuller, Paul E., *Laura Clay & The Woman's Rights Movement*, Lexington: U. of Ky. Press, 1975.
- Gay, Dorothy Ann, "The Tangled Skein of Romanticism and Violence in the Old South: The Southern Response to Abolitionism and Feminism, 1830-1861," Dissertation, UNC, 1976.
- Gifford, James M., "Emily Tubman and the African Colonization Movement in Georgia," *Ga. Hist. Quarterly*, Spring, 1975.
- Granger, Mrs. A.O., "Effect of Club Work in the South," *Annals of the Am. Academy of Political & Social Science*, XXVII, Sept., 1906.
- Gray, Virginia, "Activities of Southern Women: 1840-1860," *So. Atlantic Quarterly*, July, 1928.
- Greene, George N., "ILGWU in Texas 1930-1970," *Journal of Mexican American History*, Spring, 1971.
- Grimke, Angelina, *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South*, Shrewsbury, NJ: 1836, Arno Press Reprint.
- Grimke, Sarah, *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Women*, Boston, 1838, Arno Reprint.

- Griffin, J. J., "Women in the Ministry: Southern Theological Students Join Liberation Forces." *Chr. Cent.*, Sept. 18, 1974.
- Gutman, Herbert, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925*. NY: Pantheon, 1976.
- Hagood, Margaret J., *Mothers of the South: Portraiture of the White Tenant Farm Woman*. Chapel Hill: UNC, 1939.
- Hall, Jacquelyn. "Revolt Against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and Women's Campaign Against Lynching," Dissertation, Columbia, 1974.
- Hammond, Lily Hardy, *Southern Women and Racial Adjustment*. Lynchburg, Va.: J. P. Bell, 1917.
- _____, *Race and the South: Two Studies, 1914/1922*. N.Y., 1914, 1922, Arno Press reprint.
- Hancock, Faye E., "Occupational Opportunity for Southern Women: A Descriptive Picture of Women at Work in the South in 1940," M.A. Thesis, UNC, 1946.
- Hatcher, Orié Latham, *Occupations for Women: A Study Made for the Southern Women's Educational Alliance*. Atlanta: Southern Women's Educational Alliance, 1927.
- _____, *Rural Girls in the City for Work*. Atlanta: Southern Women's Educational Alliance, 1930.
- Herrenway, Robert, "Folklore Fieldnotes From Zora Neale Hurston," *Black Scholar*. April, 1976.
- Holiday, Billie, *Lady Sings The Blues*. Barrie and Jenkins, 1958.
- Ingram, Francis, "The Settlement Movement in the South," *World Outlook*. 27, May, 1937.
- Jeffrey, Julie Roy, "Women in the Southern Farmers' Alliance: A Reconsideration of the Role and Status of Women in the Late Nineteenth-Century South," *Feminist Studies*. Vol. 3, Nos. 1/2, Fall, 1975.
- Johnson, Guion Griffis, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1937.
- _____, "The Southern Woman," *The South in Continuity and Change*. eds., John C. McKinney and Edgar T. Thompson, Durham, N.C.: Duke, 1965.
- Johnson, Kenneth R., "Kate Gordon and the Woman Suffrage Movement in the South," *Journal of Southern History*. 38, August, 1972.
- Johnson, Robbie D., "Folklore and Women: A Social Interactional Analysis of a Texas Madam," *Journal of American Folklore*, July-Sept., 1973.
- Kahn, Kathy, *Hillbilly Women*. New York: Doubleday, 1973.
- Kaser, David, "Nashville's Women of Pleasure in 1860," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*. Dec., 1964.
- Kent, George E. "The Black Woman in Faulkner's Works," Part 1 & 2, *Phylan*, Dec. 1974, March 1975.
- King, Florence, *Southern Ladies and Gentlemen*. N.Y.: Bantam Books, 1976.
- Kolodny, Annette, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphors as Experience and History in American Life and Letters*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: UNC Press, 1975.
- Kondert, Nancy T., "The Romance and Reality of Defeat: Southern Women in 1865," *Journal of Mississippi History*. 35 (2), 1973.
- Kyle, Elizabeth, *Willie Mae*. New York: Signet, 1958.
- Ladner, Joyce, *Tomorrow's Tomorrow: The Black Woman*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971.
- Laney, Lucy, "The Burden of the Educated Colored Woman," Hampton Negro Conference No. III, July, 1899, *Report*.
- Lerner, Gerda, *Black Women in White America: A Documentary History*. New York: Pantheon, 1972.
- Lewis, Helen Matthews, *The Woman Movement and the Negro Movement - Parallel Struggle For Rights*. Charlottesville: U. of Va., 1949.
- Lewis, Helen, Sue Kobak and Linda Johnson, "Family, Religion, and Colonialism in Central Appalachia or Bury My Rifle at Big Stone Gap," *Growin' Up Country*, ed., Jim Axelrod, Clintwood, Va.: Council of the Southern Mountains, 1973.
- Louis, James P., "Sue Shelton White and the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1913-20," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*. XXII, June, 1963.
- Lumpkin, William L. "The Role of Women in 18th Century Virginia Baptist Life," *Baptist History and Heritage*, July 1973.
- Magruder, Julia, "The Typical Woman of the New South," *Harper's Bazaar*. 33, Nov. 3, 1900.
- Mainardi, Patricia, "Quilts: The Great American Art," *Feminist Art Journal*. Winter 1973.
- Mason, Lucy Randolph, *Standards for Workers in Southern Industry*. Richmond. National Consumers' League, 1931.
- Massey, Mary E., *Bonnet Brigades*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966.
- _____, "The Making of a Feminist," *Journal of Southern History*. Feb., 1973.
- Mayo, Amory Dwight, *Southern Women in the Recent Educational Movement in the South*. Washington, D.C.: US Bureau of Education, *Circular of Information, No. 1*. 1892.
- _____, *The Women's Movement in the South*. Boston: Reprinted from *New England Magazine*. 1891.
- McAdoo, L. S., "Women's Economic Status in the South," *Arena*, 21, June, 1899.
- McLaren, Louise Leonard, "A School in the Old South: Women Workers Study Industrial Problems," *Labor Age*. Dec., 1928.
- _____, "Workers' Education in the South," *Vassar Quarterly*. May, 1935.
- McMaster, Elizabeth W., *The Girls of the Sixties*. Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1937.
- McPherson, James M., "Abolitionists, Woman Suffrage and the Negro, 1865-1869," *Journal of American History*, December, 1965.
- Mendenhall, Marjorie S., "Southern Women of a 'Lost Generation,'" *South Atlantic Quarterly*. Oct., 1934.
- Mills, Gary B., "Coincoid: An Eighteenth Century 'Liberated' Woman," *Journal of Southern History*. XLII, May, 1976.
- Mims, Edwin, *The Southern Woman: Past and Present*. Lynchburg, Va.: 1915.
- Moore, Gaylen, *Profile of Appalachia*. Washington: The Day Care Development Center of America, 1974.
- Morgan, Edmund S., *Virginians at Home: Family Life in the Eighteenth Century*. Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg, 1952.
- Morris, Celia, "Learning the Hard Way: On Being a Student in the 1950s," *Change Magazine*. Summer 1974.
- Neal, Larry, "Zora Neale Hurston: A Profile," *Southern Exposure*. Vol. I, No. 3 & 4, Winter 1974.
- Negro History Bulletin*, Special Women's Issue, May, 1966.
- Otey, Elizabeth L., "Women and Children in Southern Industry," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 153, Jan., 1931.
- Owsley, Frank L., "The Education of a Southern Girl," *Alabama Review*. Part I, Oct., 1953; Part II, Jan., 1954.
- Page, Sally R., *Faulkner's Women: Characterization and Meaning*, Deland, Fla.: Everett & Edwards, 1972.
- A Poetic Equation: Conversations Between Nikki Giovanni and Margaret Walker*. Washington, D.C.: Howard Univ. Press, 1974.
- Poppenheim, Mary B., et al, *The History of the United Daughters of the Confederacy*. Richmond, 1938.
- Poussaint, Alvin, "The Stresses of the White Female Worker in the Civil Rights Movement in the South," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 123, Oct., 1966.
- Powdermaker, Hortense, *After Freedom: A Cultural Study of the Deep South*. N.Y.: Viking Press, 1939.
- Price, Margaret Nell, "The Development of Leadership by Southern Women Through Clubs and Organizations," M.A. Thesis, UNC, 1945.
- Putnam, Emily James, *The Lady: A Study of Certain Phases of Her History*. New York: Putnam, 1910.
- Quinney, Valerie, "Three Generations in the Mill," *Southern Exposure*. Vol., 3, No. 4, Winter 1976.
- "The Race Problem - An Autobiography By a Southern Colored Woman," *The Independent*, March 17, 1904, Arno Press Reprint.
- "The Rebel in Me, Interview with Selina Burch," *Southern Exposure*, Vol. IV, No. 1-2, 1976.
- Reed, John Shelton, "An Evaluation of an Anti-Lynching Organization," *Social Problems*. Fall, 1968.
- Reed, Ray, "In the South, Road to Equal Rights is Rocky and Full of Detours," *New York Times*, March 20, 1975.
- Richardson, Eudora R. "The Case of the Women's Colleges in the South," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, April 1930.
- Ripley, C. Peter, "The Black Family in Transition: Louisiana, 1860-1865," *The Journal of Southern History*. 41, August 1975.
- Rob, F. B., "Honeychild at the Barricades," *Harper's*, October, 1962.
- Ross, B. Joyce, "Mary McLeod Bethune and the National Youth Administration: A Case Study of Relationships in the Black Cabinet of Franklin D. Roosevelt," *Journal of Negro History*, January, 1975.
- Ruoff, John C., "Frivolity to Consumption:

- Or Southern Womanhood in Antebellum Literature," *Civil War History*, Sept. 1972.
- Schuler, Kathryn R., "Women in Public Affairs in Louisiana During Reconstruction," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, July 1936.
- Schwarzweller, Henry K. et al., *Mountain Families in Transition*, University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971.
- Scott, Anne F., "After Suffrage: Southern Women in the Twenties," *Journal of Southern History*, August 1964.
- _____, "The 'New Woman' in the New South," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Autumn 1962.
- _____, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- _____, "Women, Religion, And Social Change in the South, 1830-1930," in Samuel S. Hill, Jr., ed., *Religion and the Solid South*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972.
- _____, "Women's Perspective on the Patriarchy in the 1850s," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 6, No. 1, June 1974.
- Shardron, Virginia A., "Out of Our Homes: The Woman's Rights Movement in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1890-1918," M.A. thesis, Emory University, 1976.
- Sides, Sudie Duncan, "Southern Women and Slavery (Parts I & II)," *History Today*, Jan./Feb. 1970.
- Simkins, Francis and James W. Patton. *The Women of the Confederacy*, Richmond: Garret & Massie, 1936.
- _____, "The Work of the Southern Women Among the Sick and Wounded of the Confederate Armies," *Journal of Southern History*, I, Nov., 1935.
- Spruill, Julia Cherry, *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies*, Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1938.
- Stearns, Bertha M., "Southern Magazines for Ladies (1819-1860)," *So. Atlantic Quarterly*, Jan., 1934.
- Sterkx, H.E., *Partners in Rebellion: Alabama Women in the Civil War*, Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson, 1970.
- Stigler, George J., *Domestic Servants in the United States, 1900-1940*, N.Y.: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1946.
- Sugg, Redding S., "Lillian Smith (1897-1966) and the Condition of Woman," *So. Atlantic Quarterly*, Spring 1972.
- Tamburro, Frances, "The Factory Girl Song," *Southern Exposure*, Vol. II, No. 1, 1973.
- Tatum, Noreen D., *Crown of Service*, Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1960.
- Taylor, A. Elizabeth, *The Woman Suffrage Movement in Tennessee*, N. Y., Bookman Associates, 1957. See also her numerous articles which cover the development of the suffrage movement in virtually every Southern state.
- Taylor, William R., *Cavalier and Yankee*, N.Y., Harper and Row, 1969.
- Terry, Geraldine B. and Bertrand, Alvin L., "The Labor Force Characteristics of Women in Low-Income Rural Areas of the South," *Southern Cooperative Series Bulletin*, No. 16, June 1966.
- Ulmann, Doris. *The Appalachian Photographs of Doris Ulmann*, ed., John Jacob Niles. Penland, N.C.: The Jargon Society, 1971.
- Vossler, Kathryn B., "Women and Education in West Virginia, 1810-1909," *West Virginia History*, July, 1975.
- Walker, Alice, "In Search of Zora Neale Hurston," *Ms.*, March, 1975.
- Walker, S.J., "Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* - Black Novel of Sexism," *Modern Fiction Studies*, Winter 1974-75.
- Walters, Ronald G. "The Erotic South: Civilization and Sexuality in American Abolitionism," *American Quarterly* 25, May 1973.
- Wells-Barnett, Ida Bell, *On Lynching*, (1892, 1895, 1900), N.Y.: Arno Press, 1969.
- Woods, Sister Frances Jerome, *Marginality and Identity: A Colored Creole Family Through the Generations*. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1971.
- Yang, H.C., "Attitudes Toward Employment for Mothers and Daycare for Children in Appalachia," *Journal of the Ky. Medical Association*, 70, Feb., 1972.
- Young, James H., "A Woman Abolitionist Views the South in 1875," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Dec., 1948.
- Yost, Genevieve, "The Compleat Housewife or Accomplished Gentlewoman's Companion"; *William & Mary College Quarterly History Magazine*, July 1938.

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES, BIOGRAPHIES, MEMOIRS

- Ames, Mary, *From a New England Woman's Diary in Dixie in 1865*. Springfield, Mass. 1906, Greenwood Press Reprint.
- Andrews, Eliza F. *The War-time Journal of a Georgia Girl, 1864-65*, New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1908.
- Angelou, Maya, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, New York: Random House, 1969.
- Avery, Myrta Lockett, *Dixie after the War*, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1906.
- Bankhead, Tallulah, *Tallulah: My Autobiography*, New York: Harper, 1952.
- Barrett, Kate Harwood Wallet, Wilson, Otto, in collaboration with Robert South Barrett, *Fifty Years Work With Girls: 1883-1933*, Alexandria, Va.: The National Florence Crittendon Mission, 1933.
- Bates, Daisy, *The Long Shadow of Little Rock, a Memoir*, New York: David McKay Co., 1962.
- Beers, Fannie, *Memories: A Record of Personal Experience and Adventure during Four Years of War*, Philadelphia: Press of J. H. Lippincott, 1889.
- Bennett, Bell Harris, MacDonell, Mrs. R.W., *Bell Harris Bennett, Her Life Work*, Nashville: Board of Missions, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1928.
- Berry, Martha McChesney, Byers, Tracy, *Martha Berry, The Sunday Lady of Possum Trot*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1932.
- _____, Kane, Harnett and Inez Henry, *Miracle in the Mountains*, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956.
- _____, Myers, Elisabeth, *Angel of Appalachia, Martha Berry*, New York: Julian Messner, 1968.
- Bethune, Mary M., Holt, Rackham, *Mary McLeod Bethune; A Biography*, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1964.
- _____, Peane, C. O., *Mary McLeod Bethune*, New York, Vanguard Press, 1951.
- Boyd, Belle, *Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison*, New York, Bletode & Co., 1865.
- Breckinridge, Madeline, Breckinridge, Sophonisba P., *Madeline McDowell Breckinridge, a Leader in the New South*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921.
- Breckinridge, Mary, Tomasson, Verna, "Mary Breckinridge: First American Nurse-Midwife," *Appalachian Heritage*, Vol. 2, No. 3, Summer 1974.
- Brent, Linda, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, ed. by Lydia Maria Child, Boston: Published for the Author, 1861.
- Browne, Martha (Griffith), *Martha (Griffith) Browne, Autobiography of a Female Slave*, New York: 1850, Greenwood Press Reprint.
- Burwell, Letitia, *A Girl's Life in Virginia Before the War*, N.Y.: F.A. Stokes, 1895.
- Caudill, Rebecca, *My Appalachia: A Reminiscence*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966.
- Chadwick, Mary Ione, "Civil War Days in Huntsville," *The Alabama Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1947.
- Chamberlain, Hope, *Old Days in Chapel Hill*, Chapel Hill, UNC Press, 1926.
- Chestnut, Mary Boykin, *A Diary from Dixie*, ed. Ben Ames Williams, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1949.
- Clark, Septima P., with Blythe, Le Gette, *Echo In My Soul*, New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1962.
- Clay-Clopton, Virginia, *A Belle of the Fifties*, New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1904.
- Coleman, Ann Raney, *The Victorian Lady on the Texas Frontier: The Journal of Ann Raney Coleman*, ed. Richard C. King, University of Oklahoma, 1971.
- Cook, Anna Maria, *The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 1861-1867*, Athens, Ga.: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1964.
- Cooper, Anna Julia, *Anna Julia (Haywood) Cooper, A Voice From the South, By a Black Woman of the South*, Xenia, Ohio: 1892, Greenwood Press, Reprint.
- Craft, Ellen, Stills, William, *Running A Thousand Miles for Freedom*, London: 1860.
- Cumming, Kate., *Kate: The Journal of a Confederate Nurse*, Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1959.
- Cunningham, Catherine Campbell, Jones, Dorsey D., "Catherine Campbell Cunningham: Advocate of Equal Rights for Women," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Summer, 1953.
- Dawson, Sarah Morgan, *A Confederate Girl's Diary*, N.Y., 1913, Greenwood Reprint.
- Deming, Barbara, *Prison Notes, a Non-violent Woman in a Southern Jail*, N.Y.: Grossman Publishers, 1966.
- Dickey, Sarah A., Griffith, Helen, *Dauntless in Mississippi: The Life of Sarah A. Dickey, 1838-1904*, Northampton: Ma.: Metcalf Publishing Co., 1965.
- Donelson, Emily, Burke, Pauline W., *Emily*

- Donelson of Tennessee*, Vol. I & II, Richmond: Garrett & Massie, Inc., 1941.
- Driscoll, Clara**, Goodson, Margaret, *Clara Driscoll, Philanthropist, Politician*, unpublished M.A. thesis, Texas College of Arts and Industries, 1950.
- Fearn, Anne Walter**, *My Days of Strength*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939.
- Fearn, Francis**, *Diary of a Refugee*, New York: Moffatt, Yard & Company, 1910.
- Felton, Rebecca Latimer**, *Country Life in Georgia in the Days of My Youth*. Atlanta: Index Printing, 1919.
- _____, Talmadge, John E., *Nine Stormy Decades*, 1960.
- Forten, Charlotte**, *Journal: A Free Negro in the Slave Era*, ed. by Ray Allen Billington, New York: Collier Books, 1961.
- Gay, Mary Ann Harris**, *Life in Dixie During the War, 1861-65*, Atlanta, Ga.: C.P. Byrd, 1897.
- Gilman, Caroline**, *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1838.
- Giovanni, Nikki**, *Gemini: An Extended Autobiographical Statement of My First 25 Years of Being a Black Poet*, New York: Viking Press, 1973.
- Glasgow, Ellen Anderson**, *The Woman Within*, N.Y.: Harcourt Brace, 1954.
- _____, Godbold, E. Stasky, Jr., *Ellen Glasgow and the Woman Within*, Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1972.
- Goldthwaite, Anne Wilson**, *Memorial Exhibition: Anne Goldthwaite*, M. Knoedler & Co., (includes biography by Holger Cahill), 1944.
- Gordon, Caroline**, Stuckey, William J., *Caroline Gordon*, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972.
- Greenhow, Rose O'Neal**, *My Imprisonment, and the First Year of Abolition Rule in Washington*, London: R. Bentley, 1863.
- _____, Ross, Ishbel, *Rebel Rose: The Life of Rose O'Neal Greenhow, Confederate Spy*, New York: Harper, 1954.
- Grimke, Angelina and Sarah**, Lerner, Gerda, *The Grimke Sisters from South Carolina: Rebels Against Slavery*, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1967.
- Grimke, Angelina**, Lumpkin, Katharine DuPre, *The Emancipation of Angelina Grimke*, Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1974.
- Hamer, Fannie Lou**, Johnson, Susan, "Fannie Lou Hamer: Mississippi Organizer," *Black Law Journal*, 2, Summer, 1972.
- Harrison, Constance Cary**, *Recollections, Grave and Gay*, London, South, Elder & Co., 1912.
- Hart, Nancy**, Coulter, E. Morton, "Nancy Hart, Georgia Heroine of the Revolution: The Story of the Growth of a Tradition," *Georgia Review*, Fall, 1954.
- Hellman, Lillian**, *An Unfinished Woman*, Boston: Little Brown, 1969.
- _____, *Pentimento*, Boston: Little Brown, 1973.
- _____, *Scoundrel Time*, Boston: Little Brown, 1976.
- Holland, Ellen B.**, *Gay as a Grig: Memories of a North Texas Girlhood*, Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1963.
- Jackson, Aunt Molly**, "I Am From Kentucky Born," *Equal Justice*, 8:8, January 1932.
- Johnson, Marietta**, *Thirty Years With an Idea*, University of Alabama Press, 1974.
- Johnston, Henrietta**, Middleton, Margaret S., *Henrietta Johnston, (1700-1729) of Charles Town, South Carolina: America's First Pastellist*, Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1966.
- Mother Jones**, Featherling, Dale, *Mother Jones, The Miner's Angel*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1974.
- _____, Jones, Mary Harris, *The Autobiography of Mother Jones*, Ed., Mary Field Parton, Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing Co., 1974.
- Joplin, Janis**, Friedman, Myra, *Buried Alive, The Biography of Janis Joplin*, New York: W. Morrow, 1973.
- Kearney, Bell**, *A Slaveholder's Daughter*, New York: Greenwood Reprint, 1900.
- Keckley, Elizabeth**, *Behind the Scenes, or Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House*, New York: G. W. Carlton & Co., 1868.
- Keller, Helen**, Brooks, Van Wyck, *Helen Keller*, New York: Dutton, 1956.
- Kemble, Frances**, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation, 1838-39*, ed. by John A. Scott, New York: 1961.
- King, Grace Elizabeth**, Wolff, Peter, *Memoirs of a Southern Woman of Letters*, Barrington, Ill., 1932.
- Lee, Crystal**, Leifermann, Henry P., *Crystal Lee: A Woman of Inheritance*, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1975.
- Levert, Octavia Walton**, Delaney, Caldwell, *Madame Octavia Walton LeVert: The South's Most Famous Belle*, Mobile, Alabama: Historic Mobile Preservation Society, 1961.
- Lind, Jenny**, Rose, Kenneth, "Jenny Lind, Diva," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, March 1949.
- Low, Juliette Magill Kinzie Gordon**, Schultz, Gladys Denny, and Daisy G. Lawrence, *Lady from Savannah: The Life of Juliette Low*, Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1958.
- Lumpkin, Katharine Dupre**, *The Making of a Southerner*, New York: A. A. Knopf, 1947.
- Lynn, Loretta**, *A Coal Miner's Daughter*, Chicago: Regnery, 1976.
- Mason, Lucy Randolph**, *To Win These Rights: A Personal Story of the CIO*, N.Y., 1952, Greenwood Press Reprint.
- McCullers, Carson**, Carr, Virginia Spencer, *The Lonely Hunter: A Biography of Carson McCullers*, New York, 1976.
- Menken, Adah Isaacs**, Lesser, Allen, *Enchanting Rebel*, New York: Beechhurst Press, 1947.
- _____, Falk, Bernard, New York: Beechhurst Press, 1934.
- Meriwether, Elizabeth Avery**, *Recollections of 92 Years, 1824-1916*, Nashville: Tennessee Historical Commission, 1958.
- Merrick, Caroline Elizabeth Thomas**, *Old Times in Dixie Land: A Southern Matron's Memories*, New York: Grafton Press, 1901.
- Mitchell, Margaret Munnerlyn**, Farr, Finis, *Margaret Mitchell of Atlanta*, New York: Morrow, 1965.
- Moody, Anne**, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, New York: Dell, 1970.
- Moore, Grace**, *You're Only Human Once*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1944.
- Murray, Pauli**, *Proud Shoes*, New York: Harper, 1956.
- Musgrove, Mary**, Coulter, E. Merton, "Mary Musgrove," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, March, 1927.
- Nation, Carry Amelia Moore**, *The Use and Need of the Life of Carry A. Nation*, Topeka: F. M. Steves & Sons, 1909.
- Newman, Frances**, Baugh, Hansel, ed., *Frances Newman's Letters*, New York: H. Liveright, 1929.
- Ney, Elisabeth**, Fortune, Jan, and Burton, Jean, *Elisabeth Ney*, New York: A. A. Knopf, 1943.
- Nicholson, Elizabeth Jane Poitevent Holbrook**, Harrison, James H., *Pearl Rivers*, New Orleans: Tulane University of Louisiana, 1932.
- Ovington, Mary White**, *Portraits in Color*, New York, Viking Press, 1927.
- Peterkin, Julia**, Landess, Thos., *Julia Peterkin*, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1976.
- Pember, Phoebe Yates**, Wiley, Bell I., ed., *Phoebe Yates Pember, A Southern Woman's Story: Life in Confederate Richmond*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1959.
- Pinckney, Eliza Lucas**, Pinckney, Elise, *The Letterbook of Eliza Lucas Pinckney, 1739-1762*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972.
- Pocahontas**, Barbour, Philip L., *Pocahontas and Her World*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970.
- Porter, Katherine Ann**, Hendrick, George, *Katherine Ann Porter*, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1965.
- Pringle, Elizabeth Waties Allston**, Cathey, Cornelius O., ed., *A Woman Rice Planter*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961.
- Rainey, Ma**, Stewart-Baxter, Derrick, *Ma Rainey and the Classic Blues Singers*, New York: 1970.
- Ramsay, Martha Laurens**, Ramsay, David, *Memoirs of the Life of Margaret Laurens Ramsay*, Philadelphia: James Maxwell, 1811.
- Rice, Alice Caldwell Hegan**, *The Inky Way*, New York: Appleton-Century Co., 1940.
- Riddle, Almeida**, Foss, George, ed., *A Singer and Her Songs: Almeida Riddle's Book of Ballads*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970.
- Ripley, Eliza**, *Social Life in New Orleans-Being Recollections of My Girlhood*, New York, 1912, Arno Press Reprint.
- Ritchie, Jean**, *Singing Family of the Cumberland*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1955.
- Roberts, Elizabeth Madox**, McDowell, Frederick P. W., *Elizabeth Madox Roberts*, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1963.
- Royall, Anne**, Jackson, George S., *Uncommon Scold: The Story of Anne Royall*, Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc, 1937.
- Sinclair, Mary**, *Southern Belle*, New York: Crown Publishers, 1957.
- Smith, Bessie**, Albertson, Chris, *Bessie*, Stein and Day, 1973.
- Smith, Lillian**, *Killers of the Dream*, Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1963.
- _____, Blackwell, Louise, and Clay, Francis, *Lillian Smith*, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971.
- Spencer, Cornelia Phillips**, Russell, Phillips, *The Woman Who Rang the Bell: The Story of Cornelia Phillips Spencer*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949.
- Thomas, Anna Haskell**, Thomas, Charles, ed., "The Diary of Anna Haskell Thomas," *South Carolina History Magazine*, July, 1973.
- Truly, Sarah**, Morgan, Madel J., "Sarah Truly (d.1792) a Mississippi Tory," *Journal of Mississippi History*, Feb. 1975.
- Truth, Sojourner**, *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, 1878, Arno Press reprint.



_____, Fauset, Arthur, *Sojourner Truth, God's Faithful Pilgrim*, Chapel Hill: UNC, Press, 1938.

_____, Pauli, Hertha, *Her Name Was Sojourner Truth*, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962.

Tubman, Harriet, Bradford, Sarah H., *Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People*, New York: Citadel Press, 1961.

_____, Conrad, Earl, *Harriet Tubman*, Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, 1943.

Tutwiler, Julia Strudwick, Pannell, Ann G., and Wyatt, Dorothea, *Julia S. Tutwiler and Social Progress in Alabama*. University of Alabama Press, 1961.

Two Black Teachers before the War, Boston: 1864, Arno Press Reprint.

Walker, Maggie Lena, Dabney, Wendell P., *Maggie L. Walker and the Independent Order of St. Luke*. Cincinnati: Dabney Publishing, 1927.

Wells, Ida B., Duster, Alfreda, ed., *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*, Chicago and London: U. of Chicago Press, 1970.

West, Lillian C., Loftin, Bernadette, "A Woman Liberated: Lillian C. West." *Florida Historical Quarterly*, April, 1974.

Wharton, Mary Cravth, *Doctor Woman of the Cumberlands*, Pleasant Hill, Tennessee: Uplands Cumberland Mountains Sanatorium, 1972.

Wiley, Bell E., *Confederate Women.*, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975.

Wilkinson, Eliza, *Letters of Eliza Wilkinson*, New York, 1839, Arno Press Reprint.

Wright, Sarah, *This Child's Gonna Live*, Delacourte Press, 1969.

LITERATURE

- Aither, Lisa, *Kinflicks*, Westminster, Md.: Knopf, 1976.
- Arnow, Harriet, *The Dollmaker*, N.Y.: Macmillan, 1954.
- Betts, Doris, *Beasts of the Southern Wild and Other Stories*, Scranton: Harper, 1973.
- _____, *The River to Pickle Beach*, N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1972.
- Burke, Fielding, *Call Home the Heart*. New York: Longmans, Green, 1932.
- Carver, Ada Jack, *The Cajun*, N.Y.: S. French, 1926.
- Caudill, Rebecca, *Susan Cornish*, N.Y.: Viking Press, 1955.
- Chopin, Kate, *The Awakening*, N.Y.: Norton, 1976.
- _____, *Complete Works of Kate Chopin*, 2 vols., Per Seyersted, ed., Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1969.
- Cook, Fannie, *Mrs. Palmer's Honey*, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1946.
- _____, *Boot-Heel Doctor*, N.Y.: Dodd, 1941.
- Deal, Babs, *Fancy's Knell*, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966.
- Dykeman, Wilma Stokely, *Return the Innocent Earth*, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart, 1973.
- Fabio, Sarah, *Black Images/Black Insurrection*. San Francisco: Julian Richardson, n.d.
- Fields, Julie, *East of Moonlight*, Charlotte, N.C.: Red Clay Books, 1973.
- Fitzgerald, Zelda, *Save Me the Waltz*, N.Y.: Norton, 1974.
- Giovanni, Nikki, *Black Feeling, Black Talk, Black Judgement*, West Caldwell, N.J.: Morrow, 1970.
- Glasgow, Ellen, *Barren Ground*, N.Y.: Grosset & Dunlop, 1925.
- Gordon, Caroline, *The Woman on the Porch*, N.Y.: Cooper Square, 1971.
- Grau, Shirley Ann, *The Keepers of the House*, N.Y.: Knopf, 1971.
- Hellman, Lillian, *The Collected Plays*, Boston: Little Brown, 1972.
- Hurston, Zora, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, N.Y.: Fawcett, 1972.
- _____, *Jonah's Gourdvine*, Philadelphia, Pa.: Lippincott, 1934.
- King, Grace Elizabeth, *Creole Families of New Orleans*, Baton Rouge: Claitors, 1971.
- Lee, Harper, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1960.
- Lumpkin, Grace, *A Sign for Cain*, New York: Furman, Inc., 1935.
- _____, *To Make My Bread*, New York: Macaulay Co. 1932.
- Murfree, Mary N. (Charles Egbert Craddock, Pseudonym), *In the Tennessee Mountains*, Boston: Gregg, 1968.
- McCullers, Carson, *Member of the Wedding*, Philadelphia: New Directions, 1963.
- Moody, Anne, *Mr. Death: Four Stories*, New York: Harper & Row, 1975.
- O'Connor, Flannery, *A Good Man is Hard to Find*, N.Y.: Harcourt Brace, 1955.
- Page, Dorothy Myra, *Gathering Storm — A Story of the Black Belt*, N.Y.: International, 1932.
- Peterkin, Julia, *Collected Short Stories*, Columbia: USC, 1970.
- _____, *Scarlett Sister Mary*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1928.
- Porter, Katherine Anne, *Old Order: Stories of the South*. N.Y.: Harcourt Brace, 1955.
- Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan, *Crack Creek Cookery*, N.Y.: Scribner, 1942.
- _____, *When the Whipporwill — Short Stories*, Dunwoody, Ga.: Norman Berg, 1973.
- Roberts, Elizabeth Madox, *Black is My True Love's Hair*, N.Y.: Viking, 1938.
- Sanchez, Sonia, *Blues Book for Blue Black Magical Women*, Detroit: Broadside, 1974.
- _____, *Homecoming*, Detroit: Broadside, 1968.
- Sanguinetti, Elise, *The Last of the Whitefields*, N.Y.: McGraw, 1962.
- _____, *The Dowager*, N.Y.: Scribner, 1968.
- Sargent, Elizabeth, *The African Boy*, N.Y.: MacMillan, 1963.
- _____, *Love Poems of Elizabeth Sargent*, N.Y.: McGraw, 1971.
- Smith, Lee, *The Last Day the Dogbushes Bloomed*, N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1968.
- Smith, Lillian, *Strange Fruit*, N.Y.: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1944.
- Tillery, Carlyle, *Redbone Woman*, N.Y.: J. Day, 1950.
- Walker, Alice, *Revolutionary Petunias & Other Poems*, N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, 1973.
- _____, *In Love & Trouble: Stories of Black Women*, N.Y.: Harcourt Brace, 1973.
- Walker, Margaret, *For My People*, New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1968.
- _____, *Jubilee*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966.
- Welty, Eudora, *The Optimist's Daughter*, N.Y.: Fawcett World, 1973.
- _____, *The Wide Net and Other Stories*, N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, 1967.
- Williams, Joan, *Wintering*, N.Y.: Harcourt Brace, 1971.

BOOK REVIEWS

photo by Fred Baldwin & Wendy Watriss



BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

Susan Angell is a staff member of *Southern Exposure* and an editor of this issue.

Harry Boyte, a long-time Southern activist and journalist, is currently working on a book on corporate power and the new populist movement with funding from the Field Foundation.

Dorothy Ann Gay is a visiting professor of history at North Carolina State University and is continuing her research on women and violence in the antebellum South.

Jacquelyn Dowd Hall is a guest editor of this issue of *Southern Exposure*.

Anne Newman has been a journalist with newspapers in North Carolina and Kentucky, and is recently returned from Ghana.

Arthur Raper, born on a North Carolina farm in 1899, has written ten books on race relations and rural problems, including *Sharecroppers All* and *Preface to Peasantry*. This review was dictated from a hospital bed where Dr. Raper was temporarily confined. He is now recovering at his Virginia home.

Allen Tullos, a native of Alabama, is a graduate student in folklore at Yale.

Dell Upton is architectural historian for the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission.

Candace Waid is a guest editor of this issue of *Southern Exposure*.

Peter Wood is an associate professor of history at Duke University and the author of *Black Majority*.

Even Cowgirls Get the Blues, by Tom Robbins. Houghton Mifflin Co., 1976.

"The lust of the goat is the bounty of God.

The nakedness of woman is the work of God.

Excess of sorrow laughs. Excess of joy weeps."

-William Blake

Even Cowgirls Get the Blues is the first novel I've read in a long time that made me want to laugh instead of cry. It flirts with banality: every dream and vanity of the seventies takes its bow in these pages. But Tom Robbins moves too fast to be trapped by convention. In language so fine it seems like play, he weaves an extended metaphor of life's possibilities that makes what most of us call living look like dying.

His heroine, Sissy Hankshaw, a child of the fifties, is born into the "poor white trash race" in South Richmond, Virginia. But Sissy has been touched by the bizarre; gigantic thumbs set her apart, give her a special destiny. At seventeen, lushness and angularity call a truce: Sissy looks in the mirror and finds that she is beautiful. Pretty girls have choices. Should Sissy save her money and let a plastic surgeon prepare her for normal female life? Or should she follow the tingle of power in her thumbs?

Sissy takes to the road. She becomes the best, the greatest, the Muhammad Ali of hitchhiking. When her hands are in shape and her timing is right, Sissy can "compose melodies, concerti, entire symphonies of hitch." Even the sex maniacs and cops can only blink and let her pass. When Sissy is really moving, she is in a state of grace.

But the dialectic between freedom and security is built even into Sissy's genes. She meets Julian, a Mohawk Indian transmuted into an upper East Side genteel watercolorist. He holds her in his arms, builds a castle around her, digs a moat, raises the drawbridge. Sissy's magic, which has to be fueled by risks, by extremes, "takes a walk." Confronted for the first time by tenderness and need, Sissy falters. Time and space, no longer held in abeyance by inspired motion, fall in on her, bringing in their wake memory and loneliness. Sissy marries Julian and launches a heroic attempt at normal womanhood.

The remainder of the book is a kind of female *Bildungsroman*. When she no longer *feels* the universe — “thrilling and concrete and whole” — Sissy sets out to *know* it. She is guided along the way by a dirty old wise man called “the Chink;” by an anti-therapist (the author, thinly disguised), who springs her from a clinic which wants to help her “transcend” her deformity; and by the delicious forewoman of the biggest all-girl ranch in the West.

Robbins unabashedly dives into all the big questions: the tension between order and disorder, between individual and community, between liberty and security. The author’s vision is essentially a private one and his views of politics and power don’t always live up to his own picture of life’s complexities and civilization’s discontents. His cowgirls are neatly divided between the dreamers who believe in the power of the eternal feminine and want to lead men tenderly into the New Age, and the militants who tend to “become what they hate.” When the cops massacre the cowgirls — in a violent denouement for which the reader is not quite prepared — the author seems cavalierly to hold his heroines responsible for their own destruction. Though women are the book’s heroic characters, they are seen very much through the eyes of a man.

Usually, though, Robbins’ metaphysics work, in part because they’re never far from flesh and comedy. Sex is both philosophy and play. Sweet, inventive, and messy, it blossoms up unexpectedly in the midst of conversation: Sissy and Julian caress one another until their bodies shine, their bed “a boat in a weird sea.” Cowgirls bend and roll together in high rhythm on the plain. The Chink’s love-making is long, slow, and, like life itself, “very smutty business.” Only Pan understood women, says the author. He lured maidens into the woods, not to rape them or seduce them, but to make them laugh, to turn them on.

Even Cowgirls Get the Blues is a very funny and very hopeful book. Its characters pay dearly for their fantasies and idiosyncracies. It is laced with observations of a country long gone down death road. But even Robbins’ villains are humanly complex and full of unexpected strengths. Mixing joy with sorrow, he offers an extravagant celebration of magic and poetry, of love in all its guises (“... the full

trip, emotionally speaking, the grand tour: fall in love, visit both Heaven and Hell for the price of one”). He invites us to take risks, to embrace contradiction, to defy the pressures of time. All a person can do in this life, says the Chink, “is to gather about him his integrity, his imagination and his individuality — and with these ever with him, out front and in sharp focus, leap into the dance of experience.”

—Jacquelyn Dowd Hall

Roots, by Alex Haley. Doubleday, 1976. 587 pp. \$12.50.

The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925, by Herbert G. Gutman. Pantheon Books, 1976. 704 pp. \$15.95.

Half an hour west of my home in central North Carolina, just south of highway 70 near the Haw River, is the homesite of a cotton mill owner named Holt who became governor of North Carolina. Here, in the 1850s, Alex Haley’s great-grandfather, the slave blacksmith Tom Murray, came courting the Holts’ half-Indian house servant, Irene.

In the opposite direction, half an hour east near the Eno River, stand the surviving big house, barn and slave quarters of the Bennehan-Cameron plantation, first organized before the American Revolution and recently donated to the state for tax purposes by Liggett and Myers Tobacco Company. Here, in June 1776, a daughter named Lucy was born to the slave couple of Phebee and Arthur, and because her name was the first to be recorded in the plantation’s birth register, she represents the “furthest-back-person” whose kinship historian Herbert Gutman has been able to trace.

I explored these locations recently with Haley and Gutman in mind. Rusting roadside markers memorialize the sites where the Holts and the Camerons accumulated economic capital and social power, but the world of Irene and Lucy has left scarcely any trace. Now, however, through a new generation of studies such as *Roots* and *The Black Family* — books “about poor Americans, nonwhites who spent a good portion of their American

experience enslaved,” to quote Gutman’s opening page — the details of that world are beginning to be rediscovered, examined, and questioned.

Starting from a recollection of stories heard on his grandmother’s front porch in Henning, Tennessee, Alex Haley has traced his own genealogy on his mother’s side back through seven generations to the Mandinka town of Juffure near the River Gambia in West Africa. There, according to the village historian or *griot*, a young man named Kunta Kinte disappeared while chopping wood over 200 years ago. That man turned out to be Haley’s ancestor, captured by slave traders in 1767, brought to Annapolis aboard the *Lord Ligonier*, and sold into forced labor in Virginia. Haley, who previously created *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, has now used his writing skills to build a detailed story around the Kinte family tree, mixing fact and fiction to create a dramatic saga intended to be emblematic and inspirational.

While Haley was expanding the story of one black family, labor historian Herbert Gutman was busy condensing and distilling the experiences of many. Troubled by the long tradition of influential literature about the weak, fatherless, unstable black family culminating in Daniel P. Moynihan’s *The Negro Family in America* (1965), Gutman set out to examine the historical record. Using birth registers, court proceedings, Freedman’s Bureau reports and oral narratives, he focused on the mid-nineteenth century, but he also reached back into the eighteenth century and forward into the twentieth. His massive Anti-Moynihan Report shows beyond a doubt that slavery did not destroy black family ties; on the contrary, despite an oppressive labor system, stable double-headed households with elaborate kinship networks reaching across several generations were more the rule than the exception, not merely among “elite” antebellum slaves but among diverse Afro-Americans across the South over time.

These two books, each more than a decade in the making, have been eagerly awaited by persons interested in the South and in Afro-American history (cf. *Southern Exposure: Facing South*, p. 94). Already they have been widely reviewed and discussed, and Haley’s *Roots* has been transformed into an elaborate twelve-hour television

drama. The attention is deserved, for each work represents an unusual achievement, imaginatively conceived and painstakingly executed. Though thoroughly different in form, both books reveal the intense desire of an author to infuse the broad subject of Afro-American family history with his special vision. And the visions of the two writers, as conveyed through Haley's literary treatment and Gutman's social scientific tract, have a surprising amount in common.

For example, both Haley and Gutman are committed to emphasizing continuities over time and space. Gutman stresses the way that social customs, such as the pattern of naming children after close kin or the marriage ceremony of jumping the broom, reappear in a variety of contexts. Haley underscores recurrent patterns in his own family, and by implication, in all other Afro-American families. "Hundreds of rains ago in the land of Mali," young Kunta tells his Muslim teacher, "the Kinte men were blacksmiths, and their women were weavers of cloth." Three generations later, Tom Murray becomes a skilled blacksmith and marries the Holts' Irene, an accomplished weaver: three generations after that, Haley himself hears this family tradition confirmed again by an African *griot*.

But for both authors, whatever continuity existed was sustained at a price and against heavy odds. Moreover, such stability was maintained *by the slaves themselves*, in spite of their masters rather than in imitation of them. Gutman's appraisal of the black families that took hold on the Cedar Vale Plantation of John Cohoon in Nansemond County, Virginia, echoes segments of the Kinte family odyssey as Haley imagines it. The first individual slaves "who became the parents of two generations of Cohoon blacks had been scrambled together forcibly from diverse owners by a young Virginian's desire to become a planter." From then on, the numerous acts and decisions of the planter "mostly posed problems for the slaves he either purchased or saw born to his estate. And the many choices that Cohoon's slaves made," Gutman argues, "were efforts to solve those problems, choices shaped by the beliefs bred in the culture of the slaves but confined and constricted by the society dominated by their owners until 1865." Thus,

Gutman emphasizes, "several generations of Cohoon slaves underwent a *cycle of family destruction, construction and dispersal that lasted more than half a century.*" This painful cycle was a central fact of existence in all slave families, including Haley's. He has his great-great-grandmother, the slave woman Matilda, observe, "it look like dis fam'ly gwine split to de winds fo' we ever gits it back togedder."

The way black families held together under heavily adverse conditions was (and in fact still is, according to Carol B. Stack's *All Our Kin*) a function of extensive kinship networks. The elaborate consciousness of "kin" associated with all Southerners was at its strongest among blacks. As Gutman demonstrates, they stressed the importance of these linkages through naming practices, and they were careful, unlike their white masters, never to confuse kinship lines by marrying close relatives. These ties were highly functional, involving not merely recognition but also obligation. Quite rightly, a recurrent theme in Haley's book is the persistent effort of blacks to obtain freedom for their relatives. The commitment even draws deprecating comment from whites. "Yes, isn't it unbelievable?" a relative states to Massa Waller: "I hear that half the free niggers in the cities work day and night to save enough money to buy their kinfolk, and then set them free." Within a society which promises mobility and economic success to individuals willing to sever family roots and shirk kinship obligations, it is interesting to speculate, in the light of these books, that it may be the *strength* of Negro family bonds, rather than their weakness, that has helped keep blacks on the economic margins of the culture.

— Peter H. Wood

Democratic Promise — The Populist Moment in America, by Lawrence Goodwyn, Oxford University Press, 1976. 718 pp. \$19.50.

Why has the language of the Populists — those "earnest agrarian rebels" from the last century — gained currency in modern America? In an urbanized, nuclear-rimmed, electron-

ically wired age that would seem a universe removed from nineteenth-century rural life, two well-known journalists, Jack Newfield and Jeff Greenfield, publish a "new populist manifesto." A former United States senator, Fred Harris, runs a "new, populist campaign" for the Presidency. And President Jimmy Carter, finds it useful to describe himself, with the dissembling smile which has become his trademark, as a "populist."

Lawrence Goodwyn's massive reinterpretation of American Populism, *Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America*, not only tells a deeply moving story of men and women who constructed a "new way of looking at things," it also helps explain the strange resonance between the farmers' movement and the aspirations of millions of people today.

According to Goodwyn, conventional treatments of Populism have focused wrongly on the surface manifestations of the movement — especially the political history of the People's Party in 1896 — and have entirely missed the internal life of the farmers' revolt. American Populism grew directly from the insurgency of farmers in the Southern and Plains states in the late 1880s. Millions of people found themselves pushed ever deeper into debt by the crop lien system and a national monetary policy that favored the big bankers. Though the heart of this exploitative system was located in the New York banking community, its arterial networks of usurious credit pulsed through Midwestern marketing outlets and Southern "furnishing houses" to reach into every agricultural district in the nation. Desperate to retain their land and escape the peonage of tenantry, the nation's farmers devised a new method of cooperatively marketing their crops and purchasing their supplies. They formed the Farmers' Alliance to spread the solution.

The gospel of "large-scale cooperation" swept the South and West and caught up millions of farm families in a massive social movement. Supported by their own network of over 1000 newspapers, an extensive internal lecturing circuit, and mass, revival-like encampments, the farmers constructed an enormous phalanx of cooperatives.

The movement, however, met the implacable opposition of the banks, whose refusal to extend credit

**Julian Bond,
Noam Chomsky,
Barry Commoner,
Eugene Genovese,
Doyle Niemann,
James Weinstein,**

and a host of others.

In-depth, insightful
coverage of politics,
labor, culture, capitalism,
and people —

in communities, the
nation, the world.

You won't find it
anywhere else, it's

IN THESE TIMES

America's new,
independent, socialist
weekly newspaper.

A one-year subscription
costs \$15. Mail your
check to New Majority
Publishing Company, Inc.,
1509 North Milwaukee
Avenue, Chicago, IL 60622.

_____ name

_____ street

_____ city state zip

Or send us your name and
address and we'll send you
a free issue.



MAKARA

**PUBLISHED BY WOMEN, FOR PEOPLE.
A NEW WEST COAST BI-MONTHLY
MAGAZINE PRESENTING FEMINIST
ALTERNATIVES, IN AN EXCITING
GRAPHIC FORMAT.**

- * **FICTION, POLITICS, INTERVIEWS, CHILDREN, HISTORY, ART, ETC.**
- * **SUBSCRIPTION: CANADA \$6.00 ELSEWHERE \$7.50.**
- * **MAKARA, 1011 COMMERCIAL DRIVE, VANCOUVER, B.C. CANADA.**



SIGNS: JOURNAL OF WOMEN IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY, a new quarterly from The University of Chicago Press, is an international voice for scholarship about women.

A sampling of articles from the first volume:

Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America*
Hélène Cixous, *The Laughter of the Medusa*
Marnie Mueller, *The Economic Determinants of Volunteer Work by Women*
Janet M. Todd, *Images of a Feminist: The Biographies of Mary Wollstonecraft*
Nancy Tanner and Adrienne Zihlman, *Women in Evolution: Subsistence and Social Organization in Early Hominids*
James A. Brundage, *Prostitution in Medieval Canon Law*

In every issue:

REVIEW ESSAYS. Regular assessments of research and publications on women in the various disciplines and professions. A different group of related disciplines is covered in each issue; each group is treated once annually.
ARCHIVES. Important documents, essays, and fiction retrieved from the past, accompanied by historical notes and commentary.
REPORTS/REVISIONS. Notes on research-in-progress, meetings, new periodicals, programs, etc.
BOOK REVIEWS. Concise reviews of current titles.

A **SUPPLEMENTARY ISSUE** in Spring 1976: Proceedings of the Conference on Occupational Segregation held at Wellesley College in May 1975.

Editor Catharine R. Stimpson, Barnard College
Associate Editors Joan N. Burstyn, Douglass College, Rutgers University;
 Donna C. Stanton, Barnard College *Managing Editor* Sandra M. Whisler

ORDER FORM



Please enter my subscription for one year, beginning with the inaugural issue, Autumn 1975.

Institutions, \$16.00 Individuals, \$12.00 Students (with professor's signature), \$9.60 Outside the United States, add \$1.00 to cover postage.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail with your check or purchase order to:
SIGNS: JOURNAL OF WOMEN IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY
 The University of Chicago Press, 11030 Langley Avenue,
 Chicago, Illinois 60628

QUEST

a feminist quarterly


- National journal committed to the exposure of feminist political analysis and ideological development.
- Forum for political exchange.
- Provides the latest material on ideas and directions of feminism.
- Reaches out to those who are creating and teaching political, social or economic change.

"As an effort to explore the past and develop the future, this promises to be an extremely important contribution. A required item in any collection with a serious interest in the women's movement".

Bill Katz, *Library Journal*

"Quest is a relationship, one of our important links to one another. It connects our outsides to our insides, our lives to our ideas, and what we have done and been to what we shall do and be".

Sally Gearhart, San Francisco
State University Women's Studies

<p>QUEST a feminist quarterly</p>  <p>THEORIES of REVOLUTION</p>	<p>Quest: a feminist quarterly P.O. Box 8843, Washington, D.C. 20003</p> <p>Yes, I would like to subscribe to Quest. Enclosed is a check or money order for \$9.00 for a year's individual subscription.</p> <p>Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____</p>
--	--

threatened the coops' existence. Radicalized by their experience, the farmers turned in desperation to proposals for basic change in the banking and credit system itself. Finally, when both major parties proved the captives of banking interests, the farmers created the independent "People's Party" to pursue the dream of "an intersectoral, interracial farmer-labor coalition of the 'plain people.'"

Ultimately, however, their political revolt could not succeed. The chasm between industrial workers and agrarian rebels proved too great for lasting alliance and the new party never attracted a mass following in the Northeastern cities. To maneuver in the world of national politics required coalitions with many who had not undergone the "educational experience" of the cooperative crusade — free silverites, western rebels and others who proved to be what Goodwyn calls a "shadow movement," vulnerable to simplistic slogans, co-optation and manipulation. Indeed, in 1896, the Democratic leader, William Jennings Bryan, capitalized on this phenomenon with rhetorical praise for "the people" that obscured the hollowness and superficiality of his proposals. The People's Party endorsement of his Presidential candidacy after a bitterly divided convention seemed a mockery to the original farmer base. Across agrarian America, reform papers shut down and lecturers packed away their notes. Thoroughly co-opted, the agrarian revolt abruptly collapsed.

"This book is about the decline of freedom in America," summarizes Goodwyn. "Populists dissented against the progressive society that was emerging in the 1890s because they thought that the mature corporate state would, unless restructured, erode the democratic promise of America." Their failure ushered in a society dominated by caste and finance capital. In concrete terms, as the farmers lost their land, they also lost the margin of control they exercised over their own destinies.

Goodwyn's scholarship establishes a new interpretative framework for understanding American Populism. Other crucial questions need further exploration. For example — as Marxist critics would be quick to point out — terms like "freedom" and "democracy" conceal complex race and class realities. In the 1880s, control over

land for white middle-income family farmers in the South often meant tenantry or sharecropping for blacks. Even though black and white farmers reached a virtually unique alliance in the movement, the underlying contradictions became abruptly apparent in 1891 when the Farmers' Alliance opposed a strike for higher wages by black laborers. Similarly, the role of women in the movement demands treatment, as Goodwyn observes. Finally, the relationship between the movement and other dynamics in Southern society in the same period requires study. It would not prove surprising, for example, if the relatively prosperous farmer stratum which furnished much Alliance leadership also helped finance the cotton mill crusade. Since the mill crusade enclosed the poor white workforce in a "white-only" preserve and formed the bulwark of New South conservatism, such a link may well help explain the later degeneration of many Populist politicians into racist demagogues. To illuminate such questions will ultimately require quantitative methods which Goodwyn does not widely employ. But his work nonetheless grandly accomplishes its intended task: to construct a new starting point for serious study of the Populist movement.

Goodwyn's treatment of the "democratic promise" does more as well. It extends the meaning of "democracy" beyond formal politics to popular participation in determining the affairs of the society, including its economic life. Through their cooperatives, their proposals for currency reform and their political organization, the insurgent farmers sought to check the growing power of a financial and corporate elite which threatened to dominate all phases of American life. It is this aspect of their struggle which strikes a responsive chord in present-day America.

In our contemporary environment of prolonged uncertainty, relative economic stagnation, and changed international power relations, the issue of "the people" versus "the interests" has again come to the forefront of American politics. The demands raised by the movements of the '60s for sexual and racial equality, expanded social services, and environmental and consumer protection pose grave threats to profit margins. In consequence,

corporate strategists are devising new ways to limit popular input into governmental decision-making. Indeed, Carter's cabinet is full of sophisticated craftsmen with plans for reducing what one advisor terms America's "excessive democracy." The nation is in a "new phase in a conflict as old as the American republic," says *Business Week*, "the conflict between a political democracy and a capitalist economy." It is such a crisis of democracy which has generated a new focus on corporate power and control over the nation's economic resources among many social change constituencies. And in turn it is such a crisis which makes the battle of the Populists of pressing relevance today.

Goodwyn adds a further dimension to our understanding of the meaning of democracy by examining the internal structure of the movement itself. "In their institutions of self-help Populists developed and acted upon a crucial democratic insight," he writes. "To be encouraged to surmount rigid cultural inheritances and to act with autonomy and self-confidence, individual people need the psychological support of other people. The people need to 'see themselves' experimenting in new democratic forms."

Such a definition of "living democracy" holds fascinating parallels to the process of popular self-assertion which Third World liberation movements have self-consciously fostered in the twentieth century: what Goodwyn describes in the farmer cooperatives of late nineteenth century rural America would be instantly recognized by those who build the *grupos dinamizadores* (the dynamizing groups) in Mozambique today. It has direct applicability to the interior process of change in modern industrial America as well.

In a world far distant from that of the Populists, ordinary people still need the social space created by popular self-confidence and sense of possibility that overcome the intimidation and self-doubt taught by the dominant culture. Thus, it is in the neighborhood organizations, citizen groups, cooperatives, labor reform battles, and equal rights struggles of the "new populism" that living democracy can be found in the 1970s and the foundations for a democratic culture can once again be constructed.

— Harry C. Boyte

On Shares: Ed Brown's Story, told by Jane Maguire. New York: W. W. Norton, 1976. \$7.95.

Jane Maguire's *On Shares*, a chronicle of a south Georgia sharecropper's journey to Atlanta, is a book to be taken seriously; its low-key drabness reflects the mud sills that underlie our current race relations, South and North, rural and inner-city.

Here are the everyday doings that crushed the life out of people continuously exposed to them. For where there is little hope, there is little endeavor, and where there is little endeavor things get done half-heartedly, tardily, or hardly at all.

It is no fun to read a book like this and know the truth of what is said and left between the lines. The human soul is a fragile thing, and the marvel to me is that so many landless blacks and equally crushed, landless whites held on to as much dignity as they did over the years, years characterized by votelessness, crop lien laws, vagrancy laws, courthouses and statehouses dominated by a few big-propertied families and their lackeys — merchants, bankers, lawyers, doctors, and the preachers of the more "respectable" churches.

I know these are hard words. I also know they are true.

So, gentle reader, remember — not all of the above lackeys were genuinely committed to the positions they were forced to take. For some small groups, such as the Quakers, Mennonites, Moravians and other cultural islands across the South, had always opposed slavery outright or had acquiesced reluctantly. And remember that most numerous segment of all, the scattered pockets of Appalachian highlanders whose forebears may well have been squeezed off the better lands in the decades before the Civil War as the slave plantations expanded into the more level lands south and east. And remember, it was Hinton Rowan Helper of western North Carolina who in the 1860s wrote what is perhaps the most thorough-going economic and moral indictment of slavery. Sometime, me thinks, the yet more careful regional historian will hunt out these rare souls and build to them the monuments they deserve.

I read Rosengarten's *All God's Dangers* carefully and found there the tip of an iceberg, that tip up in the sun to be seen by all. A brave, articulate soul



photo by Pat Goudvis

who dared hell to do his thing. I am glad that book was written. I am glad, too, that Jane Maguire wrote her book, dove way down deep as it were, cracked off a nether piece of the iceberg and brought it up to the light for us to see.

On Shares tells us well what Ed Brown did; what I wish Jane Maguire would do now is go back through her own materials and do such other digging as she may need to do to fill out the things that tell us what Ed really felt while all of this was going on, though I know he would hardly have dared articulate it, as he saw his people and the poorer whites being dragged down with him. Having finished her second book, I wish she would find somebody to work with her to write a third one about what is happening to our own nation of tomorrow and tomorrow as more and more of us become sharecroppers of the industrial-military-communications complex — that is, more and more of us find ourselves sharing in the increasing risks to which we are exposed while all the time becoming increasingly impotent in the face of the forces that shape our lives.

—Arthur F. Raper

Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves, edited by Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips. University Press of Virginia, 1976. 405 pp. \$20.

Inspired by projects in individual states, the directors of the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress

Administration (WPA) in 1936 undertook a national effort to record the memories of ex-slaves. This book is a product of that effort. The editors have collected all of the surviving materials from a project which, in Virginia, resulted in the interviewing of about 300 former slaves. *Weevils in the Wheat* replaces an earlier book, *The Negro in Virginia* (1940), which featured condensed and often rewritten versions of some of the interviews.

In contrast to *Gone With the Wind*-style histories of the old South and the new statistical histories which suggest that slavery wasn't all *that* bad, we have here the slaves' own view of life under the peculiar institution. Seventy-five years after the end of the Civil War, the emotion which comes through these narratives most strongly, and which seems to have characterized daily life under slavery, is terror. Tale after tale of grizzly tortures, murder and routine beatings dramatize the fear that was a constant in the slaves' lives.

Weevils in the Wheat is a major contribution to Afro-American history and anthropology. As one might expect, it contains a wealth of information concerning the daily lives, customs, and beliefs of the men and women who were victims of the Southern labor system. But the book is more than just another volume in the flood of fugitive slave narratives, document collections, and histories of slavery which have appeared in recent years; it is as much about the 1930s as it is about the 1850s.

The Virginia narratives differed

from those collected in other states in several respects. Notably, the Virginia ex-slaves were, as a body, older than those interviewed elsewhere, and thus had had more experience as slaves than their counterparts. More significantly, most of the interviews in Virginia were conducted by black people. The Rev. Ishrael Massie remarked, as did several other informants, that "I kin tell ya a mess 'bout reb times, but I ain't tellin' white folks nuthin' 'cause I'm skeer'd to make enemies."

Especially in those interviews conducted by Susie R.C. Byrd, the narratives comprise a genuine history from the bottom up, a twentieth-century assessment by blacks of the black experience in the South, an assessment arrived at through a consideration of the power relationships between slaves and their masters which shaped that experience. Consequently, the conversations turn around four major themes of black/white power — punishment, the enforcement of rules and regulations by patrollers, religion and its supposed effects upon the slaves' attitudes toward their bondage, and the end of slavery in the Civil War.

The absolute legal power of whites over blacks is contrasted with the slaves' efforts to mitigate and evade it, and to create for themselves some space independent of the intrusions of whites, who were the weevils, or bugs, in the wheat. The most common form of direct evasion was running away. Often the fugitive constructed a subterranean home in the nearby woods, where he or she might exist for years, even raise a family, without being detected. Brave souls would refuse to be punished; braver ones would sometimes strike back.

More often, however, the slaves turned to the supernatural, both Christian and non-Christian, for protection and deliverance. Charms and potions thwarted enemies and warded off whippings. A pot turned upside down at an illicit nocturnal meeting trapped the sounds that might betray the gathering of patrollers. Christianity provided strength and solace in day-to-day trials. And ultimately it was God, not the obnoxious Yankees, who ended slavery. There was "no res' fer niggers 'til God he step in an' put a stop to de white folks' meanness."

Some mention must be made of the editing. In a long introduction, the

editors describe the condition in which they found the interviews; it was an archivist's nightmare. The materials were scattered among several repositories, and the interviews themselves were of varying quality. They were often written down after the fact in a condescending and unintelligible dialect. In the course of creating *The Negro in Virginia*, original interviews were cut-and-pasted into the book manuscript. Then they were often heavily edited for social, political and literary reasons.

By careful comparison of manuscripts, notes, fragments and alternate texts, the editors have attempted to 'de-edit' the WPA work, and to arrive at the least adulterated form of each interview. Nevertheless, only 159 narratives representing 157 ex-slaves could be recovered out of the 300 interviews reportedly conducted. The editors have also provided a variety of supporting materials, including several sets of contemporary guidelines for recording dialect, information about the interviewers and the informants with whom each dealt, and statistical breakdowns of the ages and residences of the informants.

For the historian, the anthropologist, and the folklorist, an important primary source has been recovered. For the general reader, this is a collection of moving, often spellbinding, recollections from a remarkable group of men and women.

— Dell Upton

The Emancipation of Angelina Grimke, by Katharine Du Pre Lumpkin. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1974. 265 pp.*

Katharine Lumpkin's *The Emancipation of Angelina Grimke* addresses a salient question about the radical career of this antebellum abolitionist and feminist from the South: What made her do it?

"A more unlikely social background could hardly be imagined," Lumpkin begins. Born to John F. and Mary Grimke, members of South Carolina's aristocracy, Angelina was assured a highly respected station in Charleston society. The big white Grimke house on the Battery, the black maids and manservants at her beck and call, the bell-shaped satin dresses trimmed in lace, the leisurely carriage rides in the afternoon, and the endless rounds of luncheons, teas, barbecues, dances, and balls — in short, all of the romantic trappings of the Old South's slaveholding class — belonged to Angelina by birthright.

Why would one so pampered by wealth and admired for her beauty flee from all of this? What strange forces drew Angelina to the distant North, where she was to become the most notorious female abolitionist of the 1830s?

The answers lie in the secret coils and impulses of Angelina's personality, which Katharine Lumpkin has meticulously recreated for the reader. For those interested in the history of

Lest We Forget

by Ann Deagon

*Here three strands of barbed wire kept
the uningenious cows
out of the woodlot so they would not
spoil their milk at blunder against trees.
The wire's down this fifty years at least.
Only this poplar, thickened like a woman
between the unrelenting bands, bark cinched
at knee and waist and neck, has overgrown
what choked her. She witnesses.
Do not forget the poplar, or the fence.*

*I write this for the beauty of a woman's face:
black, deep-lined, grown old in Birmingham.*

women, this biography is a psychological adventure. By piecing together fragments from the Grimke family diaries and letters, the letters between Angelina and her husband, Theodore Weld, and her two mulatto nephews, Archibald and Francis Grimke, and the documents of anti-slavery meetings and rallies at which Angelina appeared, Lumpkin has given us a very personal portrayal of this unusual woman's life.

The materials on the Grimke household in Charleston are particularly rich in tracing Angelina's initial steps toward emancipation. Layer by layer, Lumpkin strips away the family's idyllic finish to reveal a structure of interrelationships diseased with "violence and discord." As a young woman in her early teens, Angelina was forced to hear sounds she could not shut out, those of her elder brother Henry beating his black servants. Henry's extreme and sudden rages had left Stephen, the Grimke family butler, with periodic fits of epilepsy and lapses into insanity after an ivory-butted coach whip was broken across his head. Henry's sadistic displays left the young and sensitive Angelina with a 'recurring fear of violence,' a fear reinforced by the interracial violence on the streets and wharves of Charleston proper. Moreover, Angelina's mother had no time for her youngest daughter and criticized her fears as 'foolish weakness.' In later years, Angelina recalled these outrages as causing her 'acute emotional deprivation as a child.'

The need to belong, to exercise her superior intellect, and to fulfill her boundless capacity for moral action ignited Angelina's rebelliousness. With few exceptions, the abolitionists were religious people and their movement was religiously motivated. In her early twenties, Angelina adopted the Quaker faith which brought her to Philadelphia to live with her elder sister Sarah, who had earlier become a Quaker.

Thus placed geographically in the midst of the anti-slavery controversy, Angelina recognized her calling to join the abolitionist crusade in 1834 and in two short years "her brilliant intellect and phenomenal voice found full expression." She became the first American female to speak in public before "promiscuous" audiences, and in 1838 lectured against slavery before the Massachusetts legislature. Thou-

sands attended her speeches, and from all extant accounts, Angelina captivated her audiences.

Lumpkin notes that Angelina secretly longed to return to Charleston 'to go right among the slaveholders... that I could plead with them in the spirit of love to undo the heavy burden & let the oppressed go free.' But after the publication of her *Appeal to the Christian Women in the South* in 1836, Charleston's port authorities outlawed her entry into the city; in May of 1838, she married Theodore Weld.

In attempting to unravel the reasons for Angelina's "mysterious" withdrawal from public speaking after her marriage, Lumpkin harshly criticizes both Weld and Sarah Grimke, a third party to the Weld household until her death. Often quoting from Weld's letters to Angelina before and after their marriage, Lumpkin cites him as unrelentingly critical: "He never faltered in his conviction that he must point out others' failures." He consistently acted as an 'inquirer (sic) general,' putting 'the worst construction on doubtful actions' though he knew to do it was 'unspeakably base.' When Angelina received invitations to lecture, Weld questioned her motivations for wanting a public life and preached the evils of 'selfish ambition.'

Sarah eagerly joined in such moral admonishments. Lumpkin describes her as a "crippled individual," "outwardly gentle, humble, deeply devout, and unselfishly devoted to Angelina," but inwardly aggressive and frustrated "by feelings of deprivation that had warped her deepest needs."

Angelina's first twelve years of marriage resulted in a depression which she described as coming "over me like a dark cloud." In 1854, however, the family moved from their small farm in Belleville, New Jersey, to the Raritan Bay Community, where Angelina, Theodore and Sarah taught at Eagleswood School. Angelina considered this time 'the happiest winter I have spent since my marriage.' She dreamed of renewing her youth by leaving her 'silent bitterness' behind her, but she never regained her former brilliance and spontaneity as a public speaker. The intervening years had left her self-conscious and filled with doubt. When asked to speak in behalf of the slave, Angelina equivocated or

urged that others be asked.

Angelina maintained lively interest in liberal causes until her death in October of 1879. But the glorious 1830s, "the golden years of the anti-slavery crusade," had been Angelina's years of emancipation. For it was then that she demonstrated most impressively her superior mind and spirit, the tenacity of her principles of human rights and equality, her insistence on action to accomplish these goals, and her courage, boldness and incomparable strength of purpose. These were the characteristics that made her great.

Lumpkin vividly traces Angelina Grimke's evolution into an anti-slavery reformer and women's rights advocate. The presentation of Angelina's marriage and domestic life is convincingly disheartening, although Angelina's persecution may be overdramatized. In addition, not enough attention is directed towards the influence of Angelina's and Sarah's father, Judge Grimke, upon the development of his radical daughters. Despite these drawbacks, Lumpkin's work is well organized, scholarly, and gripping.

— Dorothy Ann Gay

**Single quotation marks indicate original manuscript sources.*

To Make My Bread, by Grace Lumpkin. Macaulay Company, 1932.

Call Home the Heart, by Fielding Burke. Longmans, Green & Company, 1932.

The Wedding, by Grace Lumpkin. Southern Illinois University Press, 1976. 319 pp. \$8.95.

The Gathering Storm: A Story of the Black Belt, by Myra Page. International Publishers, 1932.

In the spring of 1929, two thousand men and women walked out of the Loray mill in Gastonia, N. C., in angry response to stretch-outs and wage cuts. Within days, the mill owners evicted the strikers from their company houses and hired scabs, the governor called in the National Guard, and the Communist-led National Textile Workers Union sent in fresh organizers. By the time the combined force of the state, the church and the mill owners had crushed the strike, Police Chief Adlerholt had been shot, ballad-singer Ella Mae Wiggins assassinated and the Communist organizer Fred Beal had fled to Russia for asylum.

This symbolic confrontation seized the imagination of millworkers, radicals, journalists and historians alike. It also inspired a little known experiment in Southern proletarian fiction. Within a few years of the strike, six novels appeared based on its events. Three of these were written by Southern women; and all three focused on the role of women in a period of dramatic social conflict.

The emergence of the proletarian novelists within the artistic circles of New York City followed the larger radicalization of American intellectuals by such events as the Sacco-Vanzetti trial and the Passaic, New Jersey, textile strike. In January, 1931, the editors of the *New Masses* issued what would become a routine call for "intellectuals to break with the dying culture of a dying class [and] join us in our fight for a new world."

Amidst the overwhelming realities of the Depression-torn '30s, the artist could no longer remain safe in a privileged garret. A generation thus turned to the problem of how, in theory and practice, art could be put to the service of social change.

The three Southern women who contributed to this creative ferment attained varying degrees of political effectiveness and literary success. But all could claim an honest familiarity and a probing concern for the people of the textile belt and mountain regions. Each made a valiant attempt to merge political vision with narrative framework. And each sought to achieve this union in an exploration of the region in which their own lives had taken shape.

Virginia-born Myra Page had organized in Philadelphia's garment district and written a sociology thesis on the Southern textile industry. Grace Lumpkin, a native Georgian, had spent her summers in the North Carolina mountains, worked as a home demonstration agent, and traveled to wartime Europe for the YWCA before beginning her longtime exposure to New York. Fielding Burke, who lived for many years near Asheville, North Carolina, had already become a poet of some standing under her real name, Olive Tilford Dargan.

The Gathering Storm, To Make My Bread, and Call Home the Heart all appeared in 1932. They depict the migration of mountain families to mill villages. Defrauded of their land by

agents promising better housing, higher wages and schools for children, the mountaineers wander into the industrial web of the New South. They slave beyond exhaustion but remain poor.

In each novel, a strong heroine, raised in a matriarchal line which offers models of female independence, becomes a leader in the struggle for organization and, further, a new world. A mountain girl is transformed by experience into the most recalcitrant of strikers.

The special issues confronting women are as central to these novels as class itself: each depicts the tension between the pride of motherhood and the anguish brought by each new birth. For these heroines, birth control offers an alternative to dooming another child to inadequate care or slavish work in the mills. As they move toward participation in class struggle, each woman must struggle free of those aspects of marriage and child-rearing which entrap her.

Especially in *Call Home the Heart*, Fielding Burke has achieved a compelling portrait of the dialectic in women's lives between the claims of personal love and of social duty. But her heroine Ishma's striving for autonomy is inseparable from her class loyalty:

"'You'll get up to seventeen dollars in six months,' he encouraged her. 'That'll make some o' these whiners an' slackers shut their mouths.' Which made Ishma understand why she was getting bitter looks from some of the workers. What a strange system, she thought, where to do your best meant hurting your neighbors."

Critics have charged these works with a multitude of sins: partisanship, restriction of the "universal" to economic relations; a false bravado in the face of a blundering union leadership and overwhelming defeat. And one can criticize the incongruous rhetoric that flows from suddenly eloquent workers as well as certain failures in narrative construction. Grace Lumpkin's work portrays the cultural background of the mountaineers through their own eyes, but she is less convincing in the treatment of strike events. Myra Page's book is the most didactic in tone, though it offers valuable insight into the terms of ideological debate in the period.

But more important than any stylistic complaints is the authors' commitment to an artistic vision based on the dignity of working people. All three books offer exciting examples of writers trying to come to grips with an

Potter

by Jeanie Thompson

*With force you become what you don't care about,
bored with this endless spinning. Everywhere
there is a sound of clay being slapped round;
small skulls bump on the wheel.
This place is thick with midwives.*

*As my hands
lose their skin and take on yours,
wet and dirt-smelling,
I feel your slag, your indifference.
These shapes are what you don't allow.*

*I push a wall that gives itself
like blind faith. I pass for God.
Your smell stains my clothes. My knees
join your wheel in the altar
where you take sacrifice.*

*Cut loose, you sit like a deaf child,
your wet, marred skin
defies my touch.*

*If I lifted you, you would collapse,
your walls crumbling like trumpets.*

issue of central significance today: the relation between feminism and class consciousness. All strive to express the composite experience, not the individual variations of a first generation of factory workers seeking liberation. Certainly, these are stories meant for more than literary critics; in fact, I don't doubt that they would be welcome reading in many mill towns today.

The Wedding, a later book by Grace Lumpkin, recently appeared in a reprint series on lost American fiction. While lacking the vitality of her earlier books, it forms an interesting counterpoint to the Gastonia fiction. The story is simple, building toward an event — the Georgia wedding of the daughter of a fading aristocratic family and a talented, ambitious 'Doctor.' The town blossoms in expectation of the occasion, but the night before, Jenny simply refuses to go through with it. The refusal is shortlived and what could have been an interesting social comment on a man stubbornly oblivious to his bride-to-be's vision of the partnership dissolves into a comedy of manners. Instead of a reprint of the much more compelling *To Make My Bread*, which is almost impossible to find, we are left with a harmless book about a private, momentary rebellion.

If there is a more positive hope for this book, it is that it will draw attention to the earlier work not only of Lumpkin but of Page and Burke. The novel has virtually ceased to be the form in which political questions are raised. However, the contribution of these three women, their talent and their vision, deserves our admiration. This part of our Southern heritage we should determine to save, and since the Southern textile industry remains largely unorganized, to carry on.

— Susan Angell

TALLADEGA SPOONBREAD

(Excellent)

1 qt. milk
1 pt. corn meal
Salt
1 tbsp. sugar
Butter the size of egg
4 well beaten eggs
1 tbsp. baking powder

Put milk on to boil. When it is almost boiling, stir in corn meal rapidly. Remove from heat and add salt, sugar, butter and baking powder. When sufficiently cool, add the eggs. Put in a large buttered dish or pan and bake at 375 degrees for 40 minutes or until brown. Serve hot with a spoon. Have batter 1-inch thick in pan when cooked. Serves 8-10. Half the recipe makes a nice casserole for family.



Eva B. Purefoy

The Purefoy Hotel Cookbook: True and Tried Recipes of Real Southern Cooking, by Eva B. Purefoy, assisted by Kitty Crider. Write: Purefoy Hotel Cookbook, P.O. Box 282, Talladega, Ala. 35160. Postpaid \$6.60.

If we had come this way in the 1920s, riding between the foothills of the Appalachians on one of the ten daily passenger trains that came into Talladega's depot, we would have stepped out to the sounds of a porter shouting, "Come to the Purefoy Hotel for fried chicken, brown gravy, hot biscuits, oysters, cakes, pies, all you can eat!" Gathered up by such an appeal, we would have been taken to the rambling 88-room hotel; and had we been selling a line of cloth, rugs, or appliances, we would have been assigned a sample room where local buyers would come to inspect and purchase. Later, having paid \$1.65, we would sit in the large dining room to enjoy one of the best meals to be found in the US, usually 30 different Southern dishes served family style, prepared with care and quality by Eva Purefoy and her staff of cooks. The meals in fact were not designed to make money, but to entice guests to the hotel, managed for many years by Robert Purefoy, Eva's husband.

Had we been a proper white family within 200 miles, we might have made

this trip once a week. Or if we had been Cotton Tom Heflin, or Big Jim Folsom, or Hugo Black looking for a place to do a little socializing, politicking, and cuisining, the Purefoy would have drawn us to the big table up front set with silver goblets and served by a gold-toothed gany-mede.

Eva Brunson Purefoy was in her eighty-second and last year when we visited her in 1974. She sat in her fine old home along one of the tree-lined streets in Talladega, and talked about her lifetime of work (which continues actively with the seventh edition of her famous cookbook).

Many of the forces which influenced Eva Purefoy can be traced to the end of the Civil War and the slow rebuilding which followed. Left with a lap of emptiness that covered a bellyful of poverty, even respectable ladies took to the roadsides selling tasteless sweet potato pies and fried fish, or opened their homes to "paying guests." With many men dead and others gone West, women of the South were frequently alone with thoughts of how they could survive in a culture in which it was considered an insult to family and femininity for a woman to make a living outside the home.

The work options for these women before and shortly after 1900 were few. Retrenchment policies of state governments had cut away the already minute funds spent for education and public welfare. Nevertheless, school teaching was a popular occupation for upper-class ladies. It was often a very temporary one as well, for with the reappearance of men, some of whom could hardly read or write, the women were obliged to turn the classrooms over to male teachers.

Where the cultural restraints were not quite as strong and the need more desperate, middle- and lower-class women became cotton mill operatives, supplementing their husbands' small wages with their own smaller ones. This "coming out" to factory work coupled with an increasing urbanization to diminish some of the Southern resistance to women working.

Millinery shops, dress shops and small businesses were opening, too. But a woman needed a strong family association, usually a partnership with a husband, to open any business catering to the public.

By the time of Eva Brunson's early

womanhood, there was still only a handful of Southern businesswomen. The oldest of twelve children, she got her first hotel training in the small Brunson family hotel in South Alabama. But there was little chance she would ever manage her own hotel and restaurant had she not married a man interested in the hotel business. With four children from Robert's first marriage, Eva, at age twenty-three, suddenly became both a mother and a businesswoman.

The first Purefoy Hotel opened in 1916 at Monroeville, a small trading town near the Alabama River between Mobile and Montgomery. Black women did the laundry in washtubs, hanging out linens to dry in the back-yard sunshine. Robert Purefoy was in charge of the hotel's accounts and Eva blended the expectations for a white Southern woman with the demands of a successful business. From the outset, she understood the atmosphere that was required. She recalls, "We ran our hotel like you would a big home. We never rented a room for any immoral purpose or to gamblers or to anyone other than guests of the hotel. I reared my children in the hotel."

This small hotel in Monroeville gave the Purefoys a good start. Here William Jennings Bryan stopped ("He was a big eater; he liked everything on the table") and here Eva learned the arts of cooking. "When I married Mr. Purefoy, I couldn't cook anything but simple food. But when we went in the hotel business, we had a very fine cook who had been trained by a Southern woman. We had this cook for about a year and I learned to cook from him. Then, through the years, I tried new recipes and tried to improve my cooking. I gave the kitchen the best that I had from five o'clock in the morning until ten o'clock at night. We were either planning or serving all the time."

By 1920, when the Purefoys sold out in Monroeville and began their hotel in the larger town of Talladega, the essential partnership had been worked out. Like the women who argued for suffrage because they felt woman's higher and finer qualities would bring a resultant high quality to government, Eva Purefoy similarly insisted upon personal care in running her business like a family, with internal loyalty and pride in product. It was her cultural belief that she had different qualities from

men and that she could bring those to the business she shared with her husband and, after his death (in 1939), with her brother-in-law.

At Talladega there were many more employees, both black and white, in the Purefoy Hotel than there had been at Monroeville. Several of these folk stayed on for decades, some eventually retiring into houses which they had bought with their savings. By the mid-1920s, the hotel was regularly full of guests, and several hundred people came daily to be served in the dining room. There was endless cleaning, washing, dusting. Chickens and turkeys had to be killed, picked and drawn. Locally grown vegetables were prepared fresh in the kitchen. For a while, due to regional outbreaks of typhoid, all the water that went on the table had to be boiled.

"You have to love humanity to feed them," Mrs. Purefoy says. "There's a lot of drudgery in it. With the high price of food and labor it would be impossible to serve as we did back in those days. There are very few good eating places any more. The old-fashioned way of serving, family style, is a thing of the past. We always made it a point, if someone came in late, they were put at a table where they could have hot food. That was one of the secrets of serving family style. We didn't want to be in the class of a boarding house. We tried to serve our food very attractively, too. You have to feast the eyes as well as the stomach when you serve food."

Through the years the Purefoy steadily gained its reputation. It was cited by national restaurant guides and magazines like *Life* and *McCall's*. Duncan Hines, after a Sunday dinner visit, included the restaurant in his list of the country's best. Recognizing the

Judgment

by Virginia L. Rudder

*"If you tell a lie, you'll never go to heaven."
-A grandmother's warning*

*When I die,
I certainly hope
I shan't have to go to heaven,
Because it would be
Dreadfully lonely
Up there
With nobody
But God
And George Washington
And me.*

value of her knowledge of food preparation and household care, Eva Purefoy had for some time pondered the possibilities of writing a cookbook. She remembers telling Robert of her plans to publish such a book in 1937.

"My husband didn't think I could sell my cookbook. He said, 'You're sunk, you'll never sell those cookbooks, there are too many on the market.' I had \$1100 worth printed and 'Oh!' he said, 'I'm sorry, I just hate to see you lose all that money.' And I said, 'Just watch me. I'll show you!' And in a short time I had sold them all and one order after another through the years." Well over 130,000 copies of the *Purefoy Hotel Cookbook* have been printed and, long before the boost from the book's mention in *The Last Whole Earth Catalog*, orders poured in from all over the US.

With over 700 recipes ranging regionally from Virginia Brunswick Stew to New Orleans Gumbo, and including a dozen for sweet potatoes, four for watermelon pickles and preserves, and others for daily breads and holiday specialties, the *Purefoy Hotel Cookbook* offers, as promised, a full guide "to old and new Southern cooking at its best." "Delicious Fudge Cake" which is raised on eggs is one of many interestingly old recipes. Another is "Roast Turkey" in which Mrs. Purefoy advises cooking time according to how fast the bird was grown and whether or not he was "allowed to eat the wild things in the woods."

Another remarkable feature of the cookbook is "Just Ask Me" — a 62-page collection of household information which includes cooking secrets, stain removal charts, advice on food preservation and gardening, and home recipes for, among other things, soap, furniture polish, facial cleansers and "a mustard plaster that will not blister."

Women's lives can be found in cookbooks. We know of at least one Alabama granny who, in leafing through the *Purefoy Cookbook* and seeing the homestyle chicken pie recipe, exclaimed, "I've never seen that in any cookbook before! It's our pie, just chicken and crust." Building on generations of Deep South cooking, Eva B. Purefoy preserved more than a collection of recipes from a fine hotel. *The Purefoy Hotel Cookbook* represents the Sunday-table legacy of Southern women.

—Allen Tullos and Candace Waid

Pictures for a Wedding Book
by Lee M. Robinson

1969.

*I marry the banjo boy.
It is quick:
in our parent's church,
with his aunt's ring,
our turquoise-pink-lace
weeping mothers,
our fathers
grim in black;
uncles, aunts,
war hero cousins,
everybody embarrassing
everybody else,
and the banjo boy
as pale and mum
as if he is about to be
wheeled in for surgery.
And I: silly in the virgin white,
saying kind things for once
to my sister, who at fourteen
is five feet ten
and licking her chops
for sex.*

Kinflicks, by Lisa Alther. Knopf, 1976.
503 pages. \$8.95

I must admit I was more than a little intimidated when I opened my review copy of *Kinflicks* to find 503 pages of tiny print. Ugh! I lugged the two-inch thick volume around with me for a week before finally retreating to a corner in my favorite restaurant, armed with coffee and ashtray, determined to conquer my phobia about fat books. Not two minutes after beginning the first chapter and still skeptical about the title (barely pornographic?), I heard two women at the next table noisily whispering, "She's got it!" I looked up guiltily, still recovering from a case of the crabs. "We can't find anyone else who's read it," one of the women explained. "You won't be able to put it down. It makes you laugh and cry; it hits on every part of being a woman." Then, turning to her menu, she sighed, "It's become my Bible."

Two weeks, many hot baths (my heat was not working so I read in the tub), and several fictional lifetimes later, I sighed in agreement with that woman. *Kinflicks* is a wonderfully intertwined novel, covering dozens of experiences familiar to women today.

The "kinflick" of Virginia (Ginny) Hull Babcock Bliss is a prose movie — flashbacks and flashforwards within a month-long time frame. From the June day when Ginny arrives at her mother's deathbed until the July day when Mrs. Babcock dies and Ginny hilariously botches three suicide attempts, *Kinflicks* races through the episodic memory of a chronically displaced 27-year-old contemporary woman. Keeping watch at her mother's bedside comes at a convenient time for Ginny. She has just been kicked out of her three-year wedlock and kept away from her two-year-old daughter by an irate husband. With the flippancy of a crazed and tired housewife who's just been given a port-a-pac camera, Alther steadily shoots reel after reel of the memories and maturation of a daughter watching her mother die.

Ginny Babcock (the Bliss came with marriage) says of her mother in the first chapter, "It was always so unsatisfying to rage at her in a tantrum, as children, 'I hate you! I hope you die!' She'd reply calmly, 'Don't worry, I will. And so will you.'" The effect is dry comedy growing from the titillating, deadly serious subjects with which we all are painfully familiar. It is funny and forlorn, carefully balanced.

Ginny has drifted through her life taking slightly disinterested, headlong plunges into bizarre experiences, a privilege of the rich. Heiress to a lifetime trust from the profits of the Babcock munitions factory, her only motivation seemed to spring from a stubborn denial of her parents. Her philosophy professor at an elite northeastern women's college once told her, "You display a remarkable ability, Miss Babcock, to adapt yourself to your surroundings — a sort of protective coloration, as it were."

Ginny speaks of her own aimlessness after failing a self-appointed guru's test of her transcendence skills: "There were certain advantages to being spiritually retarded after all. Never in my life had I experienced clarity and conviction in a decision. Usually I drifted blindly into irremediable situations, or had a decision wrenched from me with much pain and struggle, like an impacted wisdom tooth."

Ginny's "irremediable situations" include experiences with male and female lovers, radical political activities, a stint as a suburban homemaker, and a search for spiritual aid from all

comers. Yet listing them merely gives a hint of their straightforward, refreshingly bawdy comedy. It does not do justice to the depth of character Alther weaves into her personalities through smooth narrative and sharp dialogue. The delicacy of her insight varies, however. Her treatment of radical politics, both left and feminist, is heavy-handed. The character of Eddie, Ginny's lesbian lover, becomes too extreme to be realistic, culminating in Eddie's unusually violent death. And yet there is something just passionate and sensitive enough about the three-year affair that her portrayal of lesbianism is comfortable and positive, rather than awkward.

The description of life in a small Southern town, the emphasis placed on Ginny's matriarchal and mountain heritage, is convincing. Ginny's grandfather is described as an "Appalachian Horatio Alger," an escapee from the coalfields who moved into the Tennessee piedmont, built a factory and town in his old age, grew disgusted with the mutation his dream had produced, retreated to the family cabin and "began planting kudzu all around the town and factory in hopes they would be swallowed up."

Despair lurks throughout the book, often thinly disguised in the relationship between Ginny and her mother. Mrs. Babcock now lies in a Hullsport hospital bed, slowing dying of a blood disease, with her daughter's blood rushing through tubes into her body. "A subtle shift in the balance of power between Ginny and herself had occurred, and she didn't like it at all. The pattern had always been Mrs. Babcock's bleeding herself dry, as it were, for the children, 'I live but to serve,' she had quipped gaily. . . . But there had been truth in this quip, she now knew. Ceasing to serve, she had collapsed, mentally and physically."

Ginny kept her vigil in the hospital room. "Panic seized her. Tending her mother had filled the void for a time, but the void was still there, waiting. Where would she go? What would she do? Was it even possible to live once you'd tasted the imminence — and eminence — of Death? Death was easy for the dead. But how were the living to cope with it? 'Mother!' she wailed."

There is no neat resolution of *Kinflicks*, and cannot be. It is a remarkable first novel.

— Anne Newman

Books on the South

This list is comprised of works published since November, 1976. Book entries concentrate on the winter months and include new publications through March, 1977. Dissertations listed were accepted by universities for the Ph.D. degree and compiled in the Dissertation Abstracts Index during November, 1976 — January, 1977.

The entries have been placed under several broad and loosely-defined categories for your convenience. Mention of a book here does not preclude its being reviewed in a future issue. Unsolicited reviews of publications concerning the South or of general interest to our readers are always welcomed. Preference is given to recently released books.

Copies of the dissertations below are available from Xerox University Microfilms, Dissertation Copies, P. O. Box 1764, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. The cost is \$7.50 for microfilm and \$15 for xerographic.

Economics, History, and Politics

"Anglo-Texan Attitudes Toward the Mexican, 1821-1845," by James E. Crisp. Dissertation. Yale University.

The Antislavery Appeal: American Abolitionism After 1830, by Ronald G. Walters. Johns Hopkins Press, 1977. \$11.00.

"'Bitter Combinations of the Neighborhood': The Second American Party System in Cumberland County, North Carolina," by Harry L. Watson II. Dissertation. Northwestern University.

"British Convict Servant Labor in Colonial Virginia," by Frederick H. Schmidt. Dissertation. College of William and Mary in Virginia.

"Central Kentucky During the Civil War, 1861-1865," by Ronald R. Alexander. Dissertation. University of Kentucky.

Confederate Arkansas: The People and Policies of a Frontier State in War Times, by Michael B. Dargan. University of Alabama Press, 1976. \$8.50.

The Development of the Migratory Farm Labor System in Texas, 1900-

1954, by George O. Coalson. R. & E. Research Associates, Pubs., 1977. \$9.00.

"Drug Usage Among High School Students in a Mississippi Community," by Rodney N. Friery. Dissertation. Mississippi State University.

"'A Free Ballot and a Fair Count': The Department of Justice and the Enforcement of Voting Rights in the South, 1877-1893," by Robert M. Goldman. Dissertation. University of Michigan.

"A Geographic Analysis of Hamlet Population Change in East Tennessee," by James R. O'Malley. Dissertation. University of Tennessee.

"Geographic Implications of External Funding for Rural Towns in Missouri," by Roger H. Flandermeyer. Dissertation. University of Nebraska — Lincoln.

How Jimmy Won: The Victory Campaign from Plains to the White House, by Kandy Stroud. William Morrow & Co., 1977. \$8.95.

The Improbable Era: The South Since World War II, by Charles P. Roland. University Press of Kentucky, 1976. \$4.75.

"Infant Mortality in Mississippi Counties, 1949 to 1972," by Ellen S. Bryant. Dissertation. Mississippi State University.

"Land Transactions in Louisa County, Virginia, 1765-1812: A Quantitative Analysis," by Ransom B. True. Dissertation. University of Virginia.

"Legislative Factions in Georgia, 1754-1798: A Socio-Political Study," by James M. Grant. Dissertation. University of Georgia.

Letters on the Slave Trade, by Thomas Cooper. AMS Press, 1976. Reprint of 1787 edition. \$10.50.

"Liberal Attitudes Toward the South: 1930-1965," by Richard Klimmer. Dissertation. Northwestern University.

"The Making of a Model City: A History of Anniston, Alabama, 1872-1900," by Grace H. Gates. Dissertation. Emory University.

"A More Perfect Union? Slavery, Comity, and Federalism, 1787-1861," by Paul Finkelman. Dissertation. Yale University.

"The 1928 Presidential Election in Florida," by Melvin E. Hughes, Jr. Dissertation. Florida State University.

"The Politics of Powerlessness: The Wallace Campaigns of 1964, 1968 and

1972," by Josephine M. Carlson. Dissertation. Rutgers University.

"Port Town at War: Wilmington, North Carolina, 1860-1865," by Richard E. Wood. Dissertation. Florida State University.

"Propaganda, Dissension, and Defeat: Loyalist Sentiment in Georgia, 1763-1783," by Charles A. Risher, Jr.

"Radical Third-Party Voting Among Coal Miners, 1896-1940," by Lee M. Wolfe. Dissertation. University of Michigan.

"Regional Economic Effects of Petroleum Industry Developments in Texas, 1900-1970," by Francis B. Burdine. Dissertation. University of Texas at Austin.

"Social Life in the Antebellum Cotton Port: Mobile, Alabama 1820-1860," by Harriett E. Amos. Dissertation. Emory University.

"Society and Government in Loudoun County, Virginia, 1790-1800," by James C. Bradford. Dissertation. University of Virginia.

Southern Tradition and Regional Process, by William H. Nicholls. Greenwood Press, Inc., 1976. Reprint of 1960 edition. \$15.00.

"State Government and Economic Development: An Analysis and Evaluation of the Virginia Industrial Development Plan," by Michael F. Digby. Dissertation. University of Virginia.

Texas, Its Government and Politics, by Wilbourn E. Benton. Prentice Hall, 1977. \$7.50.

This Affair of Louisiana, by Alexander Deconde. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976. \$12.50.

"Unionizing Activity and Unionization Potential in Hired Agricultural Labor Markets in the United States," by Richard W. Taylor. Dissertation. Louisiana State University.

"Union — Non-union Wage Differentials in the Construction Industry," by Judith M. Gross. Dissertation. Princeton University.

Views of Louisiana, by Henry M. Brackenridge. LSU Press, 1977. \$8.95.

We Knew Stonewall Jackson, by Richard Wheeler. T. Y. Crowell, Co., 1977. \$7.95.

Biography and Autobiography

"Alexander H. Stephens and the Peace Issue in the Confederacy, 1863-1865," by John R. Brumgardt. Disser-

tation. University of California, Riverside.

Billy Graham: The Adventures of Super-Saver, by Charles Ashman. Quadrangle. Date and price not set.

Florida Territory in 1844: The Diary of Master Edward C. Anderson, by Edward C. Anderson. University of Alabama Press, 1976. \$8.50.

"Henry 'Light Horse Harry' Lee: A Biography," by Thomas E. Templin. Dissertation. University of Kentucky.

Jefferson's Nephews, by Boynton Merrill. Princeton University Press, 1976. \$16.50.

Julian Carroll of Kentucky, by Charles P. Conn. Fleming H. Revell Co., 1977. \$5.95.

"Laurence M. Keitt: South Carolina Fire-Eater," by John H. Merchant, Jr. Dissertation. University of Virginia.

The Life of Major General Francis Marion, by Mason L. Weems. AMS Press, 1976. Reprint of 1835 edition. \$21.00.

The Man Bilbo, by A. Wigfall Green. Greenwood Press, Inc., 1976. Reprint of 1963 edition. \$12.25.

"Senatorial Baron: The Long Political Career of Kenneth D. McKellar," by Robert D. Pope. Dissertation. Yale University.

Sid McMath and the Southern Reform Tradition, by James E. Lester. Rose Publishing Co., Inc., 1976. \$10.00.

Three Rebel Families, by Lambert and Nora P. Schuyler. Heron House Publishers, 1977. Price not set.

Cultural Perspectives

American Jazz Music, by Wieder Hobson. Da Capo Press, date not set. Reprint of 1939 edition. \$15.00.

"Billy Graham and the Fad of Evangelical Unity," by Farley P. Butler, Jr. Dissertation. The University of Florida.

"The Dependent Child in Mississippi: A Social History 1900-1972," by Thomas E. Williams. Dissertation. Ohio State University.

Early Downhome Blues: A Musical and Cultural Analysis, by Jeff T. Titon. University of Illinois Press, 1977. \$14.95.

"Education in the Missouri Ozark Region: One School's Story, 1807-1975," by Wesley E. Oakley. Dissertation. Southern Illinois University.

From Ragtime to Swingtime, by Isidore Witmark and Isaac Golber. Da Capo Press. Date not set. \$24.95.

Little Kingdoms: The Counties of Kentucky, by Robert M. Ireland. University Press of Kentucky, 1977. Price not set.

"A Medical History of Georgia: The First Hundred Years, 1733-1833," by Gerald L. Cates. Dissertation. University of Georgia.

Mountain Mists: Gunter's Mountain: a Microcosm of Appalachia, by H. T. Wasks et al. Henry S. Marks. Date not set. \$12.95.

"A Regional Arts Council for South East Texas," by Robert C. Osborne. Dissertation. Texas Tech University.

"Religious Periodicals in the Development of Nashville, Tennessee as a Regional Publishing Center, 1830-1880," by Harold E. Holland. Dissertation. Columbia University.

"Ritual, Belief, and the Social Context: An Analysis of a Southern Pentecostal Sect," by Harvey K. Clow. Dissertation. Duke University.

Road to Recovery, by Joe W. Burton. Broadman Press, 1977. \$6.95.

"Rural Southeast Georgia Speech: A Phonological Analysis," by Joan H. Hall. Dissertation. Emory University.

The Schools That Built Fear: Segregationist Academies in the South, edited by David Nevin. Acropolis Books, 1977. \$10.00.

Stomping the Blues, by Albert Murray. McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1976. Price not set.

"A Study of Educational Theater Programs in Ten Selected Small Liberal Arts Colleges in South Carolina," by Dale O. Rains. Dissertation. Louisiana State University.

"Symbols and Social Organization in an Appalachian Mountain Community (Rocky Creek)," by Patricia D. Beaver. Dissertation. Duke University.

"The Understanding of Salvation in the Evangelistic Message of Billy Graham," by Will P. Apel. Dissertation. Northwestern University.

Black Experiences in the South

"Alienation in the Life and Works of Richard Wright," by Theresa Haymon. Dissertation. Loyola University of Chicago.

"An Analysis of the Political Career of Frederick Douglass, 1865-1895," by Linda E. Hines. Dissertation. Auburn University.

"Biblical Metaphors of Bondage and Liberation in Black Writing: A Study of the Evolution of Black Liber-

ation as Mediated in Writing Based on the Bible," by Ernest M. Bradford. Dissertation. University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Competition and Coercion: Blacks in the American Economy, 1865-1914, by R. Higgs. Cambridge University Press, 1977. Price not set.

Coretta Scott King, by Lillie Patterson. Garrard Publishing Co., 1977. \$3.84.

"The Extent to Which Christian Education Curriculum Materials, Which Were Used with Adolescents in Black Baptist Churches of Richmond, Virginia, Between 1969 and 1973, Reflect the Black Experience," by Paul Nichols. Dissertation. American University.

"The Fact of Blackness: Black Existentialism in Richard Wright's Major Fiction," by Derrell R. Shreve, Jr. Dissertation. University of Minnesota.

"The 'Great Opportunity': Northern Teachers and the Georgia Freedmen, 1865-1873," by Jacqueline Jones. Dissertation. University of Wisconsin-Madison.

"P. B. Young and the Norfolk *Journal and Guide* 1910-1954," by Henry L. Suggs. Dissertation. University of Virginia.

Prince Among Slaves, by Terry Alford. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977. \$10.95.

"Progressive Presidents and Black Americans," by Robert J. Leupold. Dissertation. University of Kentucky.

"The Role of Personalism in the Development of the Social Ethics of Martin Luther King, Jr.," by Ervin Smith. Dissertation. Northwestern University.

"Secondary Schools Established and Supported by Black Baptists in Virginia, 1887-1957," by Lester F. Russell. Dissertation. Rutgers University.

Slavery, Abolition, And Emancipation, by M. Graton and J. Walvin. Longman Inc., 1977. \$21.00, paper \$13.00.

"A Socio-Critical History of Nineteenth-Century Fiction Written By Black Americans," by Roger L. Whitlow. Dissertation. St. Louis University.

"W. E. B. Dubois: The Native Impulse: Notes Toward an Ideological Biography, 1868-1897," by Frederick Woodard. Dissertation. University of Iowa.

Literature

Addio; Madretto, and Other Plays, by Stark Young. CORE Collection, 1976. Reprint of 1912 edition. \$14.00.

"Black Characters in Faulkner's Fiction," by Janet L. Pieper. Dissertation. University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

"The Decline of Plantation Stereotypes: New Realism in White Writers' Portrayal of the Southern Negro, 1922-1932," by Cheryl R. Peterson. Dissertation. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

"The Demonic Paradox: Studies in Faulkner's Imagery," by Lynn D. Buck. Dissertation. SUNY-Stony Brook.

"The Development of Narration Technique in the Apprenticeship Fiction of William Faulkner," by Ronald L. Corwin. Dissertation. Brandeis University.

"The Development of William Styron's Artistic Consciousness: A Study of the Relationship Between Life and Work," by Eva B. Mills. Dissertation. University of Cincinnati.

"The Family Motif in Thomas Wolfe's Drama and Fiction," by John R. Pleasant, Jr. Dissertation. Louisiana State University.

"Faulkner's Early Short Story Career," by John P. Criglen, III. Dissertation. Yale University.

Jesse Stuart: Selected Criticism, by J.R. Lemaster. Valkyrie Press, 1976. \$6.95.

"Love and Marriage in Walker Percy's Novels," by James R. Mack. Dissertation. Emory University.

"Mark Twain and War," by Theo V. Murray. Dissertation. Texas Woman's University.

"Mark Twain at Play: An Examination of the Literary Form," by Bruce F. Michelson. Dissertation. University of Washington.

The Ordeal of Mark Twain, by Van Wyck Brooks. AMS Press, 1976. Reprint of 1933 edition. \$15.00.

The Restless Journey of James Agee, by Genevieve Moreau. Morrow, 1977. \$10.95.

The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone, by Tennessee Williams. Bantam, 1976. \$1.75.

Selected Poems, 1923-1975, by Robert Penn Warren. Random House, 1977. \$25.00, paper \$5.95.

"Stark Young: Playwright," by Frank Childrey, Jr. Dissertation. University of Mississippi.

Twain Unabridged, by Mark Twain. Running Press, 1976. \$15.95, paperback \$8.95.

"Women in the Writings of Mark Twain," by Trygve R. Thoreson. Dissertation. Northwestern University.

The World of Tennessee Williams, by Richard E. Leavitt. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1977. \$20.00.

Women in the South

The Awakening, by Kate Chopin. W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1976. Critical Edition Series. Price not set.

"Breaking the 'Quondam Obstruction': Place As An Aspect of Meaning in the Work of Eudora Welty," by Bessie Chronaki. Dissertation. Duke University.

"A Comparative Study of the Chivalric Satire of Ellen Glasgow and James Branch Cabell," by Shirley Lit-

whiler. Dissertation. Auburn University.

"Conflict in Direction: Realistic, Romantic and Romanticistic Elements in the Fiction of Mary N. Murfree," by Reese M. Carlton. Dissertation. University of Wisconsin-Madison.

"The Finite Image: Attitudes Toward Reality in the Works of Flannery O'Connor," by James M. Leaver. Dissertation. University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The Freeman and Other Poems, by Ellen Glasgow. AMS Press, 1976. Reprint of 1902 edition. \$9.00.

"Lifelessness is the Only Abnormality: A Study of Love, Sex, Marriage, and Family in the Novels of Carson McCullers," by Harry J. Wallace. Dissertation. University of Maryland.

"Lillian Hellman and Her Critics," by Michael L. McPherson. Dissertation. University of Denver.

"Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' *The Yearling*: A Study in the Rhetorical Effectiveness of a Novel," by Edna L. Saffy. Dissertation. The University of Florida.

"Revolt Against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Woman's Campaign Against Lynching," by Jacquelyn D. Hall. Dissertation. Columbia University.

"Self and Society: The Dialectic of Themes and Forms in the Novels of Carson McCullers," by Christopher M. Smith. Dissertation. University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

"Southern Womanhood, 1865-1920: An Intellectual and Cultural Study," by John C. Ruoff. Dissertation. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

First Class
Permit No. 281
Chapel Hill, N.C.

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

No postage stamp necessary if mailed in the United States

Postage will be paid by

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE
P.O. BOX 230
CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA 27514



INDEX FOR VOLUMES III AND IV OF SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

- The Absent Bridge.* Poem by Janet A. Tarver. III, 1, p. 70.
Adam's Rooster. Fiction by Wayne Greenhaw. III, 4, pp. 35-39.
Afterplay. Poem by Lee Robinson. IV, 4, p. 93.
Agribusiness Could Put You on a Dog Food Diet. George Harris. III, 1, pp. 81-83.
And We'll All Sing Together. Rich Kirby. IV, 3, pp. 4-9.
The Ballad of Barney Graham. Interview by Fran Ansley and Sue Thrasher. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 136-142.
The Bathers. Poem by Lorenzo Thomas. III, 1, pp. 72-74.
Being Me is a Gas. Poem by Fay D. Bellamy. III, 1, pp. 38-41.
Being Southern on the Northern Fringe. Horace Newcomb. IV, 3, pp. 66-72.
Billy Graham, Superstar. Bob Arnold. IV, 3, pp. 76-82.
Black Literature: What's Out There. Special report by the Institute for Southern Studies. III, 1, pp. 104-105.
Black Music: How It Does What It Does. Ojeda Penn. III, 1, pp. 22-24.
Black People Living in Cuba. Michael E. Fisher. III, 1, pp. 91-94.
Blood Knowledge. Joy Elvey Lamm. IV, 4, p. 3.
Born for Hard Luck: Peg Leg Sam. Interview by Allen Tullos. III, 4, pp. 40-45.
The Brotherhood. Jim Green. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 21-29.
The Call. Will Campbell. IV, 3, pp. 25-32.
Case Study: Coca-Cola and Methodism. Bob Hall. IV, 3, pp. 98-101.
Case Study: Property for Prophet. John Gaventa. IV, 3, pp. 101-103.
Chanukah. Camp Hill, Alabama. Janet Rechtman. IV, 3, p. 73.
Chemical Zombie. Louis X. Holloway. III, 1, pp. 52-56.
China: Lesson in Revolution. Leah Wise. III, 1, pp. 95-103.
That Civilizing Spirit. Ellen Stein. IV, 4, pp. 65-69.
Clara Bell. Poem by Karen Mitchell. III, 1, p. 43.
Concurrence. Poem by Susan Dorsey. III, 1, p. 67.
Custom Made Woman Blues. Len Stanley. IV, 4, pp. 92-94.
Dreams. Poem by J. Floyd. III, 1, p. 45.
EEOC: Mandate for Labor. James E. Youngdahl. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 70-74.
Fluggle-Boogie Perceptions. Poem by Makeda. III, 1, pp. 20-21.
Fourth Generation of Proud Shoes. Pauli Murray. IV, 4, p. 4-9.
A Free Platform? Joseph Roberts. Interview by Bill Troy, Sue Thrasher, and Jim Sessions. IV, 3, pp. 40-44.
Gold. Poem by Melvin E. Brown. III, 1, p. 79.
Grandmother in the Nursing Home. Poem by Lee Robinson. IV, 4, p. 93.
Granny Reed: A Testimony. Interview by Paul Gillespie and Keith Heel. IV, 3, pp. 33-37.
Growing Up Catholic. Pam Dunbar. IV, 3, pp. 74-75.
Hearing James Brown. Poem by Richard A. Long. III, 1, p. 12.
That Holding Out Spirit. Photographic essay by Guy and Candy Carswan. IV, 3, pp. 10-13.
If I Could Go Back... Interview and editing by Groesbeck Farham and Gwen Robinson. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 16-20.
If It Was Anything Far Justice. Margaret Rose Gladney. IV, 4, pp. 19-23.
Images of Black Women. Roseann P. Bell and Beverly G. Sheftall. III, 1, pp. 62-63.
Images: Us. Poems by Students of Frederick Douglass High School. III, 1, pp. 30-37.
It's Something Inside You. Interview by Wendy Watriss. IV, 4, pp. 76-81.
Judgment. Poem by Virginia L. Rudder. IV, 4, p. 115.
Julian Bond: The Movement, Then and Now. Interview by Bob Hall and Sue Thrasher. III, 4, pp. 4-15.
Just Missing With Me. Poem by Tina Smith. III, 1, p. 66.
Kalanchoe Pinnata. Poem by Jeanne Ormond. IV, 4, p. 42.
Labor History Bibliography. Special report by the Institute for Southern Studies. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 160-169.
Labor on the Move: State-by-State Profiles. Special report by the Institute for Southern Studies. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 170-204.
Last We Forget. Poem by Ann Deagon. IV, 4, p. 109.
Lillian Smith. Reflection on Race and Sex. Jo Ann Robinson. IV, 4, pp. 43-49.
The Lonesomes Ain't No Spring Picnic. Fiction by Birtmahene Miller. IV, 4, pp. 86-91.
Love Poems Be Boopin'. Poem by Sybil J. Dunbar. III, 1, p. 25.
Magnolias Grow in Dirt. Rayna Green. IV, 4, pp. 29-33.
The Meeting. Poem by Lee Howard. IV, 3, p. 59.
Memphis: How to Stop the Developers. David Bowman. III, 4, pp. 18-24.
The Memphis Runaway Blues. David Ciscel and Tom Collins. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 143-149.
A Mighty Fortress: Protestant Power and Wealth. Jim Sessions. IV, 3, pp. 83-97.
"Mind, Body and Soul": Cecil Cone. Interview by Bill Troy, Sue Thrasher and Jim Sessions. IV, 3, pp. 44-45.
Mississippi Black Folk Life. Photographic essay by Roland Freeman and Worth Long. III, 1, pp. 84-87.
My Mother. Poem by Janet A. Tarver. III, 1, p. 68.
Mountain Women. Poems by Lee Howard. IV, 4, pp. 34-35.
Movin' on Lyon Avenue. Poem by Janet A. Tarver. III, 1, p. 13.
A New Day Begun: John Lewis. Interview by Bill Troy, Sue Thrasher and Jim Sessions. IV, 3, pp. 14-24.
A New Twist for Textiles. Chip Hughes. III, 4, pp. 73-79.
Norfolk: From Honky Tonk to Honky Gitter. Carl Abbott. III, 4, pp. 31-34.
The Old Regular Baptist Church. Ron Short. IV, 3, pp. 60-65.
On the Line at Onitsa. Carolyn Ashbaugh and Dan McCurry. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 30-39.
Organizing for a Safe and Healthy Work Place. Chip Hughes and Len Stanley. IV, 1 & 2, p. 80.
OSHA: Dynamite for Workers. Chip Hughes and Len Stanley. IV, 1 & 2, p. 75-82.
On a Forgotten Theme. Poem by Janet A. Tarver. III, 1, p. 68.
The Organized Unorganized. Jim Grant. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 132-135.
Our Black Love is Fuel for the Revolution. Poem by Sister Akers. III, 1, p. 60.
Our Brothers Were in Custody...Again. Imani Akubakari Obadele. III, 1, pp. 46-51.
Pan-Africanism: A Reevaluation. Richard A. Long. III, 1, pp. 88-90.
Paralyzed. Fiction by Lee Smith. IV, 4, pp. 36-42.
The People's Institute of Applied Religion. Bill Troy with Claude Williams. IV, 3, pp. 46-53.
Picture for a Wedding Book. Poem by Lee Robinson. IV, 4, p. 114.
Pikeville: Millionaires and Mobile Homes. Anita Parlow. III, 4, pp. 25-30.
Pikeville's Methodist Hospital: One More Rejection. Jacqueline Bernard. III, 4, pp. 27-28.
A Place of Their Own. Thelma Stevens. IV, 3, pp. 54-58.
Poem for a Sister. Brother Sambo-bev. III, 1, pp. 58-59.
A Poem for My Baby Brother. Karl Anderson. III, 1, p. 26.
Three Poems. Charles Freney. III, 1, p. 11.
Potter. Poem by Jeanie Thompson. IV, 4, p. 112.
Quiet Dignity of Choice. Photographic essay by Alvin Rosenbaum and Susan Moss. III, 4, pp. 86-93.
Quilting Women: "Rather Quilt Than Eat, Almost." Jennifer Miller. IV, 4, pp. 24-28.
Rape. Poem by Karen Mitchell. III, 1, p. 42.
Rape Law: A Case Study. Kathy Gleason with Sean Devereux. IV, 4, pp. 55-57.
Reaching New Fields. Higdon Roberts. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 156-159.
The Rebel in Me: Selina Burch. Interview by Sean Devereux. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 4-15.
The Recruiter. Rev. D. W. Johnson. Interview by Clem Inhoff. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 83-87.
Reference Point: A Black Woman Speaks to Her Man. Poem by Carolyn Fowler. III, 1, pp. 76-77.
Two Reviews of Children's Books. Arni Saran and Antoinette Green Wright. III, 1, pp. 27-29.
The Rhythm of Black Personality. Luther X. Weems. III, 1, pp. 14-19.
"Right Here on Earth" - James Corder. Interview by Bill Troy, Sue Thrasher, and Jim Sessions. IV, 3, pp. 39-40.
Right to Life: The Southern Strategy. Priscilla Parish Williams. IV, 4, pp. 82-85.
The Right-To-Work-Far-Less. Bill Becker. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 88-89.
RSVP. Poem by Tina Smith. III, 1, p. 66.
Rough Draft. Poem by Carolyn Fowler. III, 1, pp. 75-76.
Runaways: A Call to Action. Don Stillman. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 50-59.
In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens. Alice Walker. IV, 4, p. 60-64.
A Second Letter to Southern White Women. Anne Braden. IV, 4, pp. 50-53.
The Southern Ethic. Nexus Gallery Photo exhibit edited by Michael Blumensadt, Fredt Christman, Dairdre Murphy and Carter Tomassi. IV, 2 & 3.
The Southern Ethic: An Introduction. A. D. Coleman. IV, 2 & 3, pp. vi-viii.
Southern Summer School for Women Workers. Mary Frederickson. IV, 4, pp. 70-75.
The Spark That Ignites. Myles Horton. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 153-156.
Stevens vs. Justice. Bill Finger and Mike Krivosh. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 38-44.
Strangers in a Strange Land. Addison Gayle, Jr. III, 1, pp. 4-7.
Survival Motion: Notice. Poem by Melvin E. Brown. III, 1, p. 80.
Textile Men: Looms, Loans, and Lockouts. Bill Finger. III, 4, pp. 54-55.
Textile Women: Three Generations in the Mill. Valerie Quinney. III, 4, pp. 66-72.
Textile Resources. Special report by the Institute for Southern Studies. III, 4, pp. 80-85.
Tobacco in Transition. John Steeloff. III, 4, pp. 46-52.
Twenty-First Century Spook. Poem by Sister Akers. III, 1, p. 61.
Uneasy Beginnings: Labor Education. Larry Rojinn. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 150-152.
Up South: A Review of Black Migration. James Simmons. III, 1, pp. 8-10.
Varieties of Southern Women. John Florin. IV, 4, pp. 96-97.
Victoria Sobiech-Farah. Bill Finger. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 45-49.
"We Started From Different Ends of the Spectrum." Cynthia Washington. IV, 4, pp. 14-15.
Which Side Are You On? Song and discussion by Florence Reese. IV, 1 & 2, p. 90.
Which Side Are You On?: Harlan County, 1937/1974. Bob Hall. IV, 1 & 2, p. 91.
Will He or Won't He. Ed McConville. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 128-131.
A Woman's Work. Elizabeth Tornquist. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 124-127.
Women and Lynching. Jacquelyn Hall. IV, 4, pp. 52-54.
Women in the South: A Bibliography. IV, 4, pp. 99-103.
Women's Consciousness and the Southern Movement. Sara Evans. IV, 4, pp. 10-18.
Worth a Thousand Words. Photographic essay by Milton McLaurin and Michael Thompson. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 60-68.
The 34th Worth of You. Poem by Janet A. Tarver. III, 1, p. 69.
1937: The Battle of Ewart. Bill Bishop. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 92-101.
1938-9: The War in the News. Harlan Co. news clippings compiled by the Institute for Southern Studies. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 102-103.
1946: Day By Day. Photographic essay by Russell Lee. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 104-113.
1974: The Brookside Strike. Tom Bethell and Bob Hall. IV, 1 & 2, pp. 114-124.

ALL BACK ISSUES OF SOUTHERN EXPOSURE
ARE AVAILABLE. USE ORDER FORM BELOW

Southern Exposure

P.O. Box 230
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514

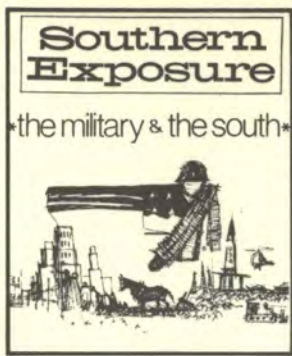
Enclosed is \$ _____ for:

- _____ copies of *The Military & The South* (Vol. I, No. 1) @ \$2.50
- _____ copies of *The Energy Colony* (Vol. I, No. 2) @ \$2.50
- _____ copies of *No More Moanin'* (Vol. I, No. 3 & 4) @ \$3.50

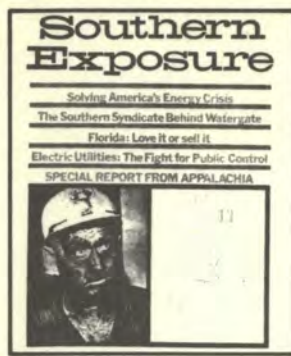
- _____ copies of *America's Best Music and More...* (Vol. II, No. 1) @ \$2.50
- _____ copies of *Our Promised Land* (Vol. II, No. 2 & 3) @ \$3.50
- _____ copies of *Focus on the Media* (Vol. II, No. 4) @ \$2.50
- _____ copies of *Southern Black Utterances Today* (Vol. III, No. 1) @ \$2.50
- _____ copies of *The Southern Ethic* (Vol. III, No. 2 & 3) @ \$3.50
- _____ copies of *Facing South* (Vol. III, No. 4) @ \$2.50

- _____ copies of *Here Come A Wind* @ \$3.50
- _____ copies of special on Religion @ \$2.50
- _____ copies of special on Women @ \$2.50
- _____ ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION @ \$8

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____
 STATE _____ ZIP _____



Vol. I, No. 1 **THE MILITARY & THE SOUTH.** Robert Sherrill talks with William Proxmire and Les Aspin, Julian Bond and Leah Wise on "Our Violent Culture," New Orleans draft resister Walter Collins speaks from prison, an Atlanta Lockheed employee blows the whistle on the C-5A, Derek Shearer on "Converting the War Machine." Plus a 40-page analysis of what defense spending means to the South. **\$2.50**



Vol. I, No. 2 **THE ENERGY COLONY.** Special report on Appalachia by Jim Branscome and John Gaventa, "Why the Energy Crisis Won't End" by James Ridgeway, "The South's Colonial Economy" by Joseph Persky, Kirkpatrick Sale on the Sunshine Rim behind Watergate, organizing for public control of utilities, how to investigate your local power company. Plus charts on who owns the utilities. **\$2.50**



VOL. I, No. 3&4, **NO MORE MOANIN'.** 225 pages of Southern history rarely found in textbooks, reported by the participants themselves. Surviving the Depression, sharecropper organizing, oral history of slavery, coal mining wars, 1929 Gastonia strike, 1936 Atlanta auto-workers sit-down, 1919 Knoxville race riot, Vincent Harding on black history, and Louisiana's New Llano Cooperative Colony. **\$3.50.**



Vol. II, No. 1. **AMERICA'S BEST MUSIC AND MORE...**The South as the source of American music: country music - from hillbilly to electric Opryland, Southern rock, working songs, blues, streetsinging, rural banjo pickin', Appalachian traditional music. Loretta Lynn, Tom T. Hall, Harlan Howard, Sonny Terry, Allman Brothers. Plus articles on planners in Ky., migrants in Fla., organizing in Ark. **\$2.50**



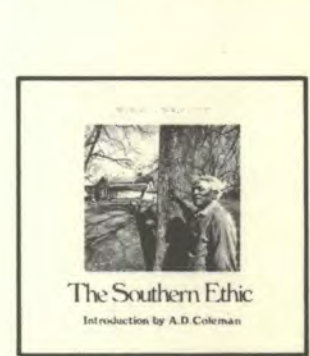
Vol. II, No. 2&3. **OUR PROMISED LAND.** 225-pages including agribusiness vs. cooperatives, black land ownership, the Forest Service, land-use legislation, mountain development, urban alternatives, Indian lands. The voices of sharecroppers from *All God's Dangers*. Plus a 65-page state-by-state examination of land ownership and usage, with charts of agribusiness, oil, and timber company directorates. **\$3.50**



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. **\$2.50.**



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. **\$2.50**



Vol. III, No. 2&3 **THE SOUTHERN ETHIC.** The first collection of contemporary Southern photography. Southern people and their environments, in depth and detail, as seen by 41 artist. "Sensitive, vigorous," say photo critics. Produced for the touring exhibit of the Nexus Gallery. **\$3.50**



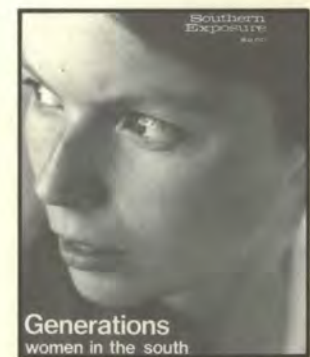
Vol. III, No. 4. **FACING SOUTH** Includes a 13-page interview with Julian Bond on "The Movement, Then and Now," and a 33-page, special review of Southern textiles based on the oral history of three generations of women in the mill, union organizers and mill owners. Plus articles on the New South cities, blues singer Peg Leg Sam, changes in tobacco farming, and a photo essay on crafts. **\$2.50**



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; run-away 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. **\$3.50**



Vol. IV, No. 3 **RELIGION** 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, growing up a Southern Baptist, the church and the civil rights movement, where does the church's money go. **\$2.50**



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 an outgrowth of the civil rights movement. Community leaders and quilt makers. Poetry, fiction and interviews about growing up female. **\$2.50**

