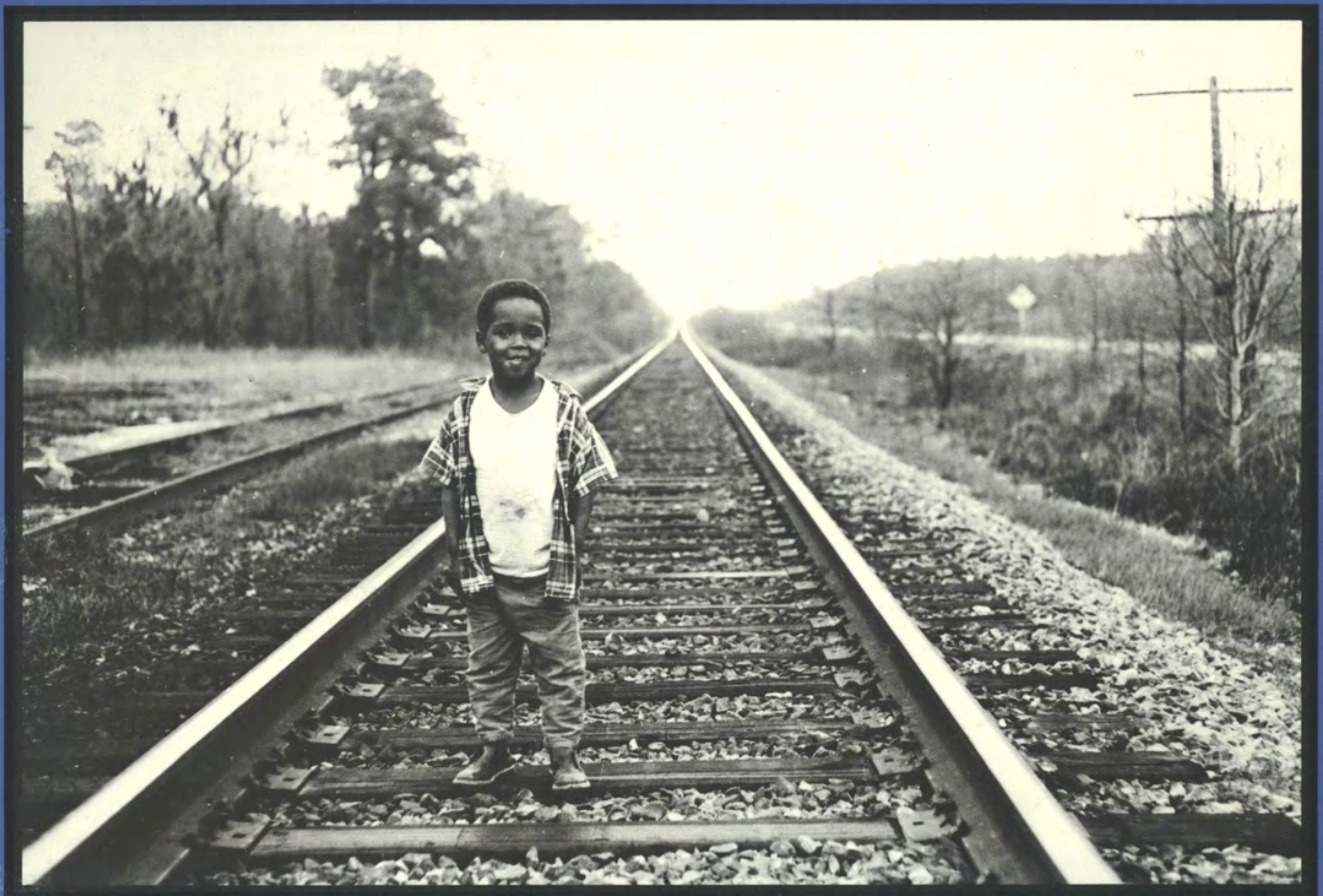
Southern Exposure

$3.00

ISSN: 0146:809x

# good times and growing pains...



*Railroad Romance • The Other Woman From Plains, Georgia • Beale Street Blues*

*The Coca-Cola Story: Journey to the White House • Celebrating Freedom in Texas*

*Growing Up Gay in Dixie • A Stranger in the House: Domestic Workers Speak Out*

*Can Coastal Fishermen Survive? • Jimmy Carter and the Original Populists . . .*

# good times and growing pains...

This issue, which marks the beginning of our fifth year, combines a number of articles about the good times and growing pains of a South reaching national maturity. It seems appropriate for us to answer, at this time, some of our readers' questions about who we are and what *Southern Exposure* represents.

Early observers thought we'd never make it this far with a regional journal so critical of the powers that be and so preoccupied with the lesser known people, with the struggles and heritage of a culture considered bankrupt by sophisticated America. But, like the South, we have attained a new stability, partly from the spin-off of the media search for Jimmy Carter's South (they have yet to find it) and partly from our appeal to the same hunger for connections to a past, a place, a people, that made *Roots* a meaningful event for so many.

Long after Carter is gone, we suspect people will still be yearning for ways to make sense of the pains and joys of life in America. *Southern Exposure* recognizes that leaders don't last very long these days, yet people – all of us – are constantly struggling to get by to find some solid ground from which to combat the constraints pressing in upon us. By going behind the superstars, *Southern Exposure* has from its beginning tried to establish the basis for Southerners and others to examine critically those features of the old culture which depress and isolate us, and to build on those which inspire and support us.

It's natural, therefore, that we begin our exploration of growing pains with a portrait of Gussie Jackson, one of many such stories which never make headlines, but which are as important to our idea of gracious living and cooperative service as anything we know about Miz Lillian. A photo essay provides glimpses of our childhood experiences, and several articles explore different ways we live, work and occasionally find happiness as we grow older.

More critically, we chronicle the rise of two institutions – Coca-Cola and railroads – which helped push the South into mainstream America. And we trace the destruction of one special source of our cultural dignity – Beale Street, the birthplace of the Memphis blues. Nevertheless, the vitality of our grass-roots history and populist traditions persists, though less evident in Jimmy Carter's ascendency than in community events like East Texas' Juneteenth celebration and Winston-Salem's neighborhood renewal project. In fact, in two essays we suggest that instead of being the pinnacle of Southern integrity, Jimmy Carter represents a distortion of populism and a further expansion of the technocratic manipulation of everyday people for profit and power. That perspective won't win us many friends in Washington, but it is true to our own history.

We began the magazine five years ago as a project of the Institute for Southern Studies, a group of civil-rights and anti-war organizers and writers who felt the 1970s demanded new forms of resistance to the oppressive systems we had named and confronted in the 1960s. We knew from firsthand experience that the South was weak both in progressive thought and in progressive organizations; we also knew that we could not depend on our Northern allies for the humanity and humility required to organize or write here.

We began to shape a program that would build on the culture's strengths to nurture (1) critical thinking about the region's problems and potentials and (2) skillful organizing of citizen-based institutions for self-determination. Such ambitious goals have not been easy to articulate, much less translate into concrete actions. Needless to say, we've had growth pains of our own.

The 11 people whose names appear on page two are the staff of the Institute, and in addition to *Southern Exposure,* they direct a number of projects designed to revive and strengthen populist traditions in the region and nation. Two such projects stimulate progressive thought among a wider audience than *Southern Exposure* can ever hope to reach: a syndicated weekly column, which appears in 60 newspapers (mostly rural) with a readership of over one million, features the personal stories of Southerners whose lives reflect a struggle for humanity and creativity; and an oral history project produces alternative curriculum materials on Southern history which incorporate a grassroots perspective on the good times and growing pains endured by the average people who have made change, who have made our history.

Another arm of the Institute helps consumer, labor and neighborhood organizations in the region pinpoint their targets, mobilize their available strengths, train local leadership, win concrete demands, and build new structures for citizen's power. We have done considerable work with groups concerned with utilities, land, and energy issues; and currently, staff members are working overtime with two movements in the textile industry: the unionization drive at J.P. Stevens & Co., and the organization of victims of cotton dust through the Carolina Brown Lung Association.

Underlying all of the Institute's projects is the wish to draw together the best of old and new perspectives and organizations so people can face good and bad times together, instead of apart. We have learned from our own experience that the cumulative pressures of the dominant culture hurl individuals into separate lives, separate outlooks and professions, eliminating the enduring flexibility of multiple skills and tolerances. To protect ourselves, we seek comfortable niches from which we can fend off perceived threats. In our little world, for example, folk artists distrust organizers, scholars patronize journalists, and vice versa.

Combating that nonsense is one reason why *Southern Exposure* combines many talents and perspectives in each issue; we have also found that when reflective, educational work is combined with an outreach and organizing program, both thought and action become stronger. Fundamentally, we are convinced that if we don't share our insights, if we don't have sympathy for ourselves as comrades instead of competitors, then our individualized struggles for a decent life are doomed to failure. Unless we turn our private battles into cooperative enterprises, our growing pains will in the end be destructive and our good times nothing more than self-deception.

If you would like more information about the Institute, write us at Box 230, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

*Photo Credits – Cover: Joe Pfister. Contents page, Wendy Watriss and Fred Baldwin (bottom), Howard M. Ameling (middle).*

Southern Exposure Volume V, Number 1

2 Letters From Our Readers

4 "And None of Them Left-Handed": Midwife From Plains
*by Christopher Walters-Bugbee*

13 Coming Up Southern
*photographic essay by Bob Herbert*

19 The First Year's Sowing
*fiction by Carroll Dale Short*

22 A Stranger in the House
*by Robert Hamburger*

32 Journey to the White House: The Story of Coca-Cola
43 Jimmy Carter: Master Magician
*by Bob Hall*

45 Jimmy Carter and "Populism"
*by Lawrence Goodwyn*

47 Railroad Fever
*by Steve Hoffius*

59 Just As I Am: Growing Up Gay
*by Louie Crew*

66 People, Place, Persistence: A Victory for Neighborhoods
*by Malcolm Jones*

75 Beale Street Blues
*by David Bowman*

80 Celebrate Freedom: Juneteenth
*by Wendy Watriss*

88 Living Off the Sea
*by Jennifer Miller*

92 Resources

94 Book Reviews

96 Amerikan Bandstand / *poem by Jack Boozer*

99 Untitled / *poem by Steven Ward*

103 The South: A Market for Shoes / *poem by Stephen March*

104 Louisiana Down Home / *poem by Garland Strother*

105 To Claudia, Second Poem / *poem by Manning Marable*

106 Books on the South

Managing Editor
Bob Hall

Associate Editors
Jennifer Miller
Christopher Walters-Bugbee

Editorial Staff
Susan Angell
Bob Arnold
Kathleen Doble
Bill Finger
Chip Hughes
Jim Overton
Joe Pfister
Sue Thrasher

Lay-Out and Design
Mary Margaret Wade

Composition
Southern Types
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Special Thanks To:
Cliff Kuhn, Libby Lewis
Page McCullough, Joan Urban

**Southern Exposure** ® is published quarterly by the **Institute for Southern Studies.** A subscription for one year costs $8. Address all editorial and subscription correspondence to **Southern Exposure**, P. O. Box 230, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514. Second class postage is paid at Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514. Copyright © Institute for Southern Studies, 113 N. Columbia Street, Chapel Hill and 88 Walton Street, Atlanta, Ga. Spring 1977 issue.

Articles, fiction, poetry and photographs are welcome. Send for guidelines: P. O. Box 230, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514.

# from our readers.....

In his review of *Spindles and Spires*, Jim Branscome counters Liston Pope's acceptance and parroting of the notion that Southern mountain people are inherently anti-union by suggesting that the "mountain" people whose union drive failed in Gastonia in 1929 were from the same stock – and even some of the same folk – who built the UMWA in the coal fields and who even enjoyed organizing success at textile mills in Elizabethton, Tennessee.

There are several things wrong with all this, not the least of which is Branscome's assumption that workers who populated Gastonia's mill villages in the late 1920s were mountain people. Some were and some were not, if one counts place of birth. Also, if Branscome intended to use the 1929 drive at Elizabethton as an example of successful unionizing, then he'd better look again. That particular effort fell apart in its later stages much the same way drives in Gastonia and Marion did that same year.

But the major problem with the whole business is both Pope's and Branscome's acceptance of the overused theory of Appalachian distinctiveness.

What's really questionable is the attempt to come out flat-footed with any generalization about mountain people. The very fact that sociologists and speech researchers find the notion of distinctiveness so attractive should have warned most of us away from it by now. In my own case, I gave it some half-hearted belief until, finally, it became overly apparent that the region contains enough internal variety to prevent lumping together. Perhaps more important, the region bears more similarity to Southern rural culture in general than it carries distinctiveness.

The persistence and possible inaccuracy of the theory are not, however, its sole drawbacks. Its real danger is that it hampers trying to understand more basic things about the economies of the South, an understanding of which, it would seem, is fundamental to a movement to change things. For instance, instead of debating whether or not mountain people are natural-born anti-union, perhaps we should be trying to understand why cotton mill workers – anywhere in the South – have tended (at least so far) to resist unionization.

As appealing as the notion of Appalachian distinctiveness might be, there is much danger that becoming fixated on it prevents our understanding that, for the most part, what people have to do for a living and what they think about it are probably more important in terms of what they might do to change things than are the circumstances and location of their birth and whatever distinctiveness that is supposed to carry with it.

Sam Howie
Todd, N.C.

Please send me two copies of the issue called *Here Come a Wind: Labor on the Move.*

I saw the shooting of Barney Graham. I was at church at the time when the shooting started. I stood up and turned, facing the door, and the way the fire was flying you would have thought it was the Fourth of July.

They were even on the roof of the store firing, and on both sides of the road. Church was dismissed as soon as the shooting stopped. I had to walk past Mr. Graham to go home. There were several men standing around him, one with a machine gun, another with a hand gun. They told me I would have to go around. I asked who it was and they told me it was Barney Graham. I went home and told my father. He got dressed and went over there. My father, Dick Stults, was a friend of Mr. Graham.

Pauline Stults Beaty
Jamestown, Tn.

I am a Black Floridian from Sanford, a small tourist town just north of Orlando, Apoka and a few more towns that are King of the citrus groves and farm lands. I know the sadness of a migrant worker trying to make ends meet when the harvest season is over, and he has few skills to work elsewhere. I was a young girl when the first migrant seasonal rush left Sanford, following the harvest to Northern states. The crews that left home that year were packed on the back of a truck like a herd of cattle. They left with high hopes of making good and

having enough money to be able to settle down and build a better life for themselves.

After a few bitter years of failing, traveling the highway through all kinds of weather, and having terrible accidents, finding the camps unsafe, the housing poor and lacking in privacy, many of them gave up their dream and returned home. They work menial jobs and raise their own vegetables as a means of survival.

Many times I think of migrant workers who did escape these hardships. They are a part of the hardship I suffered in making a better life for myself and my family. I consider myself one of the more fortunate migrants; I never made a living working in the fields, but was lucky enough to find a good life when I left my hometown. Before I left, I worked one day picking tomatoes in Fort Pierce. Dear God! The sun was hot that day, and as far as the eye could see were rows and rows of plants. I thought I would never reach the end. Being from the country, I was born around snakes and knew the ones to be careful of. But that day a water moccasin curled itself around the hoe of the woman working next to me. I never went back to work and have never worked on a farm again. Yet I have never been able to forget the plight of those who still have to work on a farm for a living, traveling from state to state, season to season, still hoping for the better things in life, surviving the best way they know how.

Bernice Wright
Long Island, N.Y.

A special friend recently gave me a copy of *Southern Exposure, Generations, Women in the South.* Your article on Lillian Smith in this issue is greatly appreciated. Jo Ann Robinson did a wonderful job and brings to light again the work of a marvelous human being.

Having grown up in Lillian Smith's hometown of Clayton, it seems almost incredible that until recently I never realized what she had done in her lifetime. A few years ago I was invited up to visit Lillian Smith's home on "Old Screamer," to meet Paula Snelling, her co-worker and friend, to tour the old camp grounds, to visit Lillian Smith's home and library and finally to read the plaque that marks her grave. That visit became one of the most unforgettable experiences of my life. There, on the top of a mountain, among the laurel leaves, among the remains of Laurel Falls girls camp, among the tall pines, among the blooming wild flowers, among those who knew her best, I encountered the great living spirit and presence of Lillian Smith.

After five years of intense study into her life and work I realize that the words she spoke are as valid today, for today's world, as they were when she first wrote them some 30 years ago. Her spirit is still moving in our country in so many ways. Her work is evolving itself even in our periods of social stress and change. And why? Because she wrote about them and explained them to us long before they began to happen.

Sally Forlines
Clayton, Ga.

I have a suggestion for a future issue: since many Southerners are in prison for progressive or revolutionary activities, why don't y'all do an issue on these people? Southerners who've gone to prison for fighting for social change. I'm thinking of people like Ben Chavis and the Wilmington 10, Jim Grant and the Charlotte 3, Alvin Glatkowski, who mutinied while working as a merchant seaman and diverted an entire ship filled with napalm to Cambodia in March, 1970, so it wouldn't be used against the people of Laos or North Vietnam. (Al's in prison with me in Lompoc.) There are many of us who share a Southern heritage in these cages; and a growing number who are in here not for individualistic reasons, but for fighting for our people.

Anyway, thanks again for your support. A luta continua!

Steve Scipes 18882-148K
Lompoc, Ca.

I have enjoyed reading your publications. I have passed them around to friends, relatives and co-workers. They have been interested in the publications also. The only problem is that the common people I know and meet each day cannot see shelling out $2.50 for a book. It's a combination of tightness and lack of motivation to change things.

In the past I have gone out of my way to express my concern for needed social and economic changes in these states. People were understanding and sympathetic but hardly eager to jump on a bandwagon. For this reason, I tend to now agree with the apathetic masses. Otherwise I would be forced to hate so many people I know and work with. I have given up on organizing people to oppose utilities and corporate powers. I'm tired of writing letters to congressmen and senators; I don't know why I'm writing you all this except to point out that we need to set our hearts and minds on one important cause — one important issue. An issue that is winnable but challenging. We need a major breakthrough for laboring people. An issue which affects the masses and will therefore attract and motivate them. I want a three-year renewal.

William T. McDowell
Inman, S.C.

photos of Miss Gussie by Chris Walters-Bugbee

# "and none

*Lillian Carter and Gussie Jackson are the same age, and in the 78 years since they were born, they've seen a lot of changes come to southwest Georgia. For much of their adult lives, their houses have stood less than two miles from each other, and in the sparsely populated area around Plains, that makes them nearly neighbors. Both women are grandmothers several times over now, and look after their children's children with undisguised pleasure. Miss Lillian brought four children into this world, and the recent political success of her oldest boy is clearly a source of great satisfaction to her as matriarch of the Carter clan. She speaks proudly and often of her children and their families.*

*Miss Gussie gave birth to ten children, seven of whom survived the hard life of tenant farming in the pre-Depression South. She, too, speaks proudly of her offspring, yet actually numbers her children in the hundreds. For, in addition to her own, Gussie Jackson brought over 600 other babies into this world during her 32 years as a granny midwife in Sumter County. In fact, by the time Miss Lillian made her now celebrated journey to India with the Peace Corps in 1967, Miss Gussie had already spent 25 years working among her own people just down the road.*

I was the first midwife in my family. My mother died before I was 14 years old. So there had never been nobody in my family been a midwife before; I was the first. And I loved the job – I don't care what nobody says, I loved doing it.

I just always wanted to do something. I used to say I wanted to be a schoolteacher. Couldn't make that. But I got this, and I did it for 32 years. Over 600 children, and I didn't lose a mother in 32 years, though I did carry one or two to the hospital.

I began when we were living on a place owned by one of the doctors in town. And living there, I always went with him to assist when the babies would come, and so I learned a lot. There was a bunch of us living there, and they would need to get somebody – you know, you always need to get somebody to help you when a person is having a baby. Well, I was always the woman they could get – I could stand it. Really, I had a better nerve. You know you can't deliver a baby if you ain't got no nerve. So that has a lot to do with it.

I was just helping out then. I wasn't getting no pay or nothing. You know, it looked like a lady be having a baby with nobody to go over there and help, and I would just help out. And right from the first time I always wanted to do it – seems like it was just in me. Once I had been with one old midwife there waiting on a baby. The old lady was there but she didn't have on her glasses and her eyes were bad and she couldn't see. And if she cut the cord she might have cut it too short. And then if she'd a tied it, she might of not tied it tight enough and the baby be liable to bleed to death.

So the child's aunt said, "Miss Liza can't tie the cord, she can't hardly see how to cut it. It's too bad they have to get the doctor from Plains to come down here to tie that cord." You know they weren't strict then, but afterwards they got strict about who tied it.

So she said, "Why you all want to get him up here? Gussie can tie it."

## the midwife from plains, georgia

# of them left-handed"

## an interview by chris walters-bugbee

I said, "Can't do that."

"When you tie it . . .," she said.

I said, "I wouldn't tie it for nothing unless the granny said tie it, and I wouldn't cut it unless the granny said cut it."

She said, "Well, it's just too bad to have to get the doctor from Plains down here just to tie and cut the cord." So they agreed. See – I know it wasn't violating because there wasn't no law to it; they didn't care who did it at that time, anybody could tie the cord. So – I tied the cord, and he's a grown man and have children now. That was my first cord that I tied – Oscar Lassiter. But I wasn't a certified midwife then.

*Prior to 1925, an estimated 9,000 granny midwives practiced in Georgia entirely outside the regulation of the state. Midwives often exchanged their labor on a "one neighbor does for another" basis; and because of the high cost of doctors and their scarcity in rural areas, every woman was a potential midwife. Before the state assumed responsibility for supervising and licensing midwives, training was acquired through an informal apprenticeship, and skills and knowledge were handed down from one midwife to another.*

*In 1925, at the urging of the Medical Association of Georgia, the State Board of Health took the first steps toward certification and regulation of midwives. The new law substituted formal instruction by the state for shared experience among the midwives, and required all candidates to attend twelve monthly classes taught by the public health nurse. By 1940, done with having children of her own, and fresh out of child-bearing neighbors, Miss Gussie wanted to "stay with it," and keep practicing as a midwife. But the regulations were in full force by now, and the state "had gotten strict about who tied the cord and things such as that." If she was going to continue to respond to the needs of her people, Miss Gussie would have to go through formal training. The apprenticeship which she had served with the other midwives had established her "vocation" both in her own mind, and in the minds of her people. Though the granny midwives themselves could no longer select and train the new midwives, they continued to watch for women with the knack, and encouraged the younger women to formally take up the profession for some time after the new law had been passed; several generations of midwives were so selected before the old ways were weakened, and the decision to become a midwife was individualized.*

*Miss Gussie was nearly 42 years old when she completed the classes and received her state certification as a midwife. But she had also received the more traditional and decidedly less formal instruction given by the black community's own practicing midwives all during the time she grew up.*

About the time I was through having children of my own, and could tend to other folks still having theirs, some older ladies down the road from where I was living were talking about the midwives, about retiring the older midwives and getting younger women. Most of

---

*Christopher Walters-Bugbee is on the editorial staff of* Southern Exposure. *A former resident of Koinonia Farm in Americus, Ga., he has known Miss Gussie for seven years.*

them working were grandmothers or older — just old, though they was still being used. I felt like I had as good nerve as any. Bless God, bless the dead, I told one old midwife, and she say, "Put on in for it then. If first you don't know, well I know and I'll help you." When you first started to studying for to be a midwife, your peoples would encourage you, say you had the knack and could do it. Me and her had been friends before I started, so she asked them to put me in for the classes. She knew me and how I do.

Now the way I was taught was different than that which the midwives who came before us and were working during the time I was having children used. We had better equipment to work with than they did when I was using midwives. We had better everything by the time I got to be a midwife. You know times is changing. It used to be tougher, it really did.

When we were first learning we met once a month with the Health Department nurses. Sometimes the nurse would meet at our homes — she'd meet at mine this time, she'd meet at the other woman's the next. We'd all do like that and she'd get around. Wasn't so strict for those before me. They only met every now and then for those meetings. But we had to go every month.

And we had a lot of tests. They even taught us how to wash our hands. We had a mask, we had a cap, we had a gown, and then you had a work apron. We had to keep these clean scrubbed and sterile. If I wasn't too tired when I got home, I'd just wash and boil them. If I was, I'd just put them in to soak. But I had two sets; that way I could always have my bag ready. And the state furnished you with caul dressing, the state furnished you with eye-drops, the state furnished you with birth certificates. And after washing the clothes, we had to iron them so we looked clean and fresh. Every midwife had the same thing. You had your gown, you had your towels, you had your orange-wood stick to keep your nails clean. We had to have a physical every year, and x-rays and blood tests and skin tests. The Health Department paid for it.

*The state could train and certify, but ultimately, it was up to the women in the community, the prospective patients, to determine a midwife's fitness, to pass judgment on her skills and "the way she do." State law required only that all women intending to use a midwife be seen regularly by the Public Health nurse beginning no later than the fifth month. These examinations permitted the doctors to*

*screen out high risk patients. After the seventh month of pregnancy, those women whose physical examinations suggested the probability of a normal childbirth received a certificate from the physician which declared them safe for midwife delivery. Possession of that certificate or "pink card" was required of all women who engaged the services of a midwife. Regulations of the Department of Health made it illegal for any midwife to undertake a case not previously certified by a doctor.*

After you were certified, how it was starting out depended on how many people liking you. Some of them like you and some of them naturally didn't, and those who did would soon come for you. Now at the first you might miss a couple, if you was out working or gone to town or something. You know, you couldn't afford to just sit home and wait for them, so you was bound to miss a few.

Peoples made up their minds about who to call just by however they see about a person. You know if one uses you and is satisfied, she gonna tell someone else how it was, and the next thing you gonna hear from her. And there it goes from person to person. And when you started, it would get around, and sooner or later they'd just come for you and you'd go and that'd be it. It was hard for most to start, but I had it good; people knew me, and I didn't have it bad a bit.

So, I got my share. I think I delivered four or five now on the basketball team at Plains High, and Lord, I just love to go up there and watch them play. They see me sometimes and you can hear them — "Hey, Miss Gussie's here watching!" "Yeah, I'm sitting here, Here I sit." I say, "What you all talking about me for?" I enjoy it. And when they start back playing, I'll be there. I get there early, but I don't never clap till the Varsity boys come out. Lord, they can play ball!

I kept up with my babies after they were born. I got a book which has their names and the dates of their birth, and I keep it near and look over it from time to time.

We had to fill in the birth certificates, put the name in and the date, the mother and the father, their names, and get that or mail it one to the Health Department. And I had to sign it. Most of the time the people had a name already, cause we couldn't turn in the birth certificate without it. But I tell you the truth, some of them babies I couldn't get the names while I was out there, so I'd name the babies good enough on the certificates, and the people would say okay later when I told them.

It was interesting business to me. There's just so many things to know, so many things you want to know about. They told us all the danger signs you know, and I never had any trouble, cause if a woman wasn't right, they wouldn't give her that card. I had several ladies in my time who didn't have the card, and most I just carried on to the hospital. I couldn't work with them myself, cause you see I wanted to keep my job, and they take

away your license for that.

*Though called out in the middle of the night to "see about a woman" in labor, a midwife could not legally attend that delivery if the woman did not have her card. In such cases, the midwife was required to send for a physician, or if possible, arrange for the woman to be taken to the nearest hospital. Transportation was not always available, however, and there was seldom time for the long journey in any case. Despite the regulations, white doctors were often reluctant to travel out to the country on such short notice, especially when a midwife was already present at the bedside. As a consequence, most doctors were more than willing to delegate their authority in extraordinary circumstances, provided that the midwife notified them as soon as possible and brought both mother and baby to the hospital for a follow-up examination.*

A girl, she came here and she didn't have no card for her and wanted me to see to her, so she came here and lay down. I said, "You gonna have to go somewhere else if you ain't got no card for yourself, nothing to say you got a blood test." So she kept talking about how she was feeling and finally asked me, "What you gonna do?" I said "We gonna have to take you to the hospital; you ain't got no card and I can't do it." So we started on to the hospital and the baby come fore we got there. We just take it on to the hospital, they dressed it and fixed it up.

Our Public Health supervisor, Mrs. Flahive, always told us, "There be sometimes you get in a terrible fix. Sometimes you go there, and the baby ain't there yet. But before you can look around you, when that baby is ready to come, it come and can't help. It's always best to save a life then to let it die. There's always a way out of it if you do right. So if a child is ready to be born when you get there, see about it, and then call the Health Department." So that would relieve me, knowing that you could go on ahead if there was no other way.

We were directly responsible to the Public Health nurses, but I've called doctors about a baby a time or two when I had to. Dr. Logan in Plains was always so nice. I'd call him in the case of a woman without no card and he'd say, "You go ahead, and report to me when you're finished. I'll stand between you and the law." But not all of them was like that. Every now and then I had to call this other doctor in town, and he made me kind of mad cause you'd call needing help and he didn't want to give no help. He'd say "Well, I'll do it this time, but I ain't gonna do it no more." Real nasty like.

But I had good support from the nurses right up until I stopped. And I tell you one thing that made me love our nurses so good. If I did wrong and she said something to me, no one else heard what she said. And if someone else did wrong and she say something to them, I didn't hear what she said. She didn't drag it out in front of the group and make you feel bad. All our Public Health nurses were white, but even back then we didn't have no problems with them. They was all real nice.

*Although state law required that all women planning to use a midwife notify both the midwife and the Public Health clinic no later than the seventh month of pregnancy, in reality a midwife had to be ready to go on a case on a moment's notice. Even planned deliveries could not be scheduled with more than rough guess accuracy, and unexpected cases often came with no warning at all. Small wonder then that Health Department regulations also required that all midwives "keep their bag packed, supplied, and ready for use."*

Plenty of times they'd come for me without any notice. And though I might be in the middle of something, well I'd have to drop it right there and go on. But that's what I promised and so that's what I did. And, when I was working, if they called me, I went. Somebody'd come pick me up at work. Every job I was working on, if they came after me, I'd go with them. Cause the people I be working for, they'd know I was gone to deliver a baby. Folks knew I was a midwife when they hired me, and knew I was bound to go when I was called. I wanted to do it, and that's what I had to do to keep up. You accept that

**Illustration of room set up for delivery by a midwife, taken from the 1936** Manual for Midwives **of the Mississippi State Health Board.**

*For years, public health nurses have been teaching midwives, without realizing that the midwife has been teaching the nurse – more and probably more valuable lessons than the nurse has taught the midwife. During these years the midwife has been the recipient of much impatience and criticism. A few brave souls have dared to give her a word of praise, realizing that they were more or less endangering their standing with other nurses and with the medical profession. The fact that statistics have never incriminated the midwife to any great extent has been ignored as rather bad taste on the part of statistics.*

*Laura Blackburn, R.N., District Supervisor*
*State Board of Health, Columbia, S.C., 1941*

when you start in. Whenever they need you, you got to be ready to go. Else there ain't no sense in doing it at all if you can't go when the people need you.

And boy, I had the worst time with my husband when I first started out. Oh boy! Back when I was taking the lessons and studying about it, he didn't want me to do it. Started talking about how I had to cook for him.

"You'll be gone a lot," he said.

I said, "Ahh, won't everybody be having a baby every day."

"But I'm gonna need somebody to cook."

I said, "I ain't gonna cook all day everyday. Just get up and fix you something yourself. If I get on sick, you going to get up and fix it and if I die you gonna fix it or get somebody else, one. You oughta be ashamed of yourself. You oughta be glad I can get it."

"Ain't gonna do me no good."

I said, "It's gonna do you a heap of good."

"Well, the money you make is gonna be your own."

I said, "Sure. You go with me one time when I go to see about someone, I give you a part of it." But he never came—and I didn't want him following me. He couldn't take it. Well, after he see that I was going to do it, he got over it. And those times when they come for me, if they didn't have a way to fetch me with them, well – he would take me. One time, when we was staying out back where Loudrell and Mamie Pope used to stay, one night a man come at me on a bicycle.

He said, "I'm on a bicycle, I'll pull you."

I said, "You won't pull me." Yeah, I told him, I said, "Uh huh," I said, "Roy, get up and take me down the road." He laughed about that man coming to get me on a bicycle. But my husband Roy took me to deliver that baby. And lots of others.

Most of the places where I stayed at, they always fixed me something to eat and treated me nice. "Lay down Miss Gussie, don't you set up and lose your strength till the time comes." Usually there'd be two or three women setting around, but I didn't have no help till the baby comes. The husbands, they stayed away from there. The women say that they didn't want them around, and I didn't either. I didn't need them, so the women just say, "Ahh, just let them go on then."

One time I did have a case where a man wanted to sit up in there. He was just a friend of the woman, not her husband, who was out in the other room. He was just sitting there looking until I said, "You know, you can't stay in here, you gonna have to get out a here."

"Sam said I could come in here."

"If it's your wife you can stay in here," I said, "but if it ain't your wife YOU can't stay in here. I got to catch the child and you ain't gonna be in my way."

"Well, Sam said so."

I say, "SAM – COME IN AND GET THIS FOOL OUTTA HERE!! He ain't gonna stay here. I ain't gonna be worried with him."

Sam come in and say, "You come out of there. You know you ain't got no business setting up with Miss Gussie and the others in there working." I said, "This is my job and I'm gonna work with it, and I ain't gonna fool with you." And so he went on. But most of the men people, they don't want to be there. My husband didn't; he didn't want no part of it.

I just always wanted to be there from the start. And I must have been pretty good to deliver thirteen for one woman alone. And I delivered four white babies in my time. But white people didn't use us midwives as a rule – they could pay the doctor and go on to the hospital. Had six sets of twins too, but none more than twins. And with the twins I never knew about them till I got there and they got there. And I never lost a mother, and none of my children are left handed as far as I know of. All that work, but I enjoyed it you know; it was so good. I always wanted to do something for someone.

*Given the history of midwifery, and its honored place in almost every culture, the exalted status currently enjoyed by doctors in the developed countries of the West is a comparatively recent and unusual development. Even in the western world, evidence of the professional standing previously enjoyed by midwives is found in records. For example, in London three hundred years ago, one William Silk, an English surgeon, married a midwife. She paid the equivalent of $3 for her license to practice; her husband, the surgeon, $2. Nurses and technicians were created because doctors needed them. But since you must get born before you can get sick, the midwife has always preceded the doctor. Midwifery is not a product of man-made science and technology, but a creation of human nature, the result of the instinctive knowledge shared by all human beings, that a woman in labor needs the help and support which she can only get from another woman.*

*To be sure, the granny midwives who delivered nearly 70% of all black babies in the South during the '30s and early '40s did provide several generations of women with services which doctors were either unwilling or unable to provide at equivalent fees. Compared to the wages earned by nurses, midwifery paid very little, and some of the time paid nothing at all.*

When we started out, I delivered one $10 baby, then it went up to $15, then eventually it got up to $35. All the midwives used that. We had to agree; I couldn't charge no more than someone else, and she couldn't charge no more than me. You couldn't charge nobody more than that; if you did, they would take your license. I didn't always get paid. Some people, they mean to pay you; then some people don't mean to pay you. If a fellow mean to pay you, he'll look after that. And a lot of them, they didn't pay me, but the white man they working for did. He sure did, yeah. He used to see me out there after the babies come and he'd ask me, "Gussie, did you get your money?"

I said, "Yes sir, I got my money."

"Well," he said, "I tell everybody down there you got to get your money. They pay the doctor so they got to pay you too, just the same." So I most always got my money. I understood how it was with them, and they could see how it was with me. We all got along good.

*The advantages of a midwife-assisted delivery were more than financial, however. One other consequence of midwifery was of even greater importance than the low costs. Every state which used certified midwives in a well-regulated system under the supervision of the Public Health Department found that the quality of care provided by midwives soon equalled that provided by physicians. Furthermore,*

*according to a report issued by the White House Council on Child Health and Protection in 1932, three Southern states — Alabama, Maryland, and Virginia — showed considerably fewer deaths by childbirth among black women attended by midwives than among those attended by physicians.*

*Doctors trained to cure diseases tend to view birth as an illness which requires their assistance and, more often than not, their active intervention. Midwives, on the other hand, were rigorously taught to view birth as a natural process. They were carefully schooled in the ways in which they might assist that process, from antepartal to postpartal care for mother and newborn, yet throughout their brief training they were reminded that their role was primarily a passive one. State Law (Georgia Rules and Regulations for Midwifery Chapter 270-5-7) prohibited midwives from engaging in the practice of medicine, and warned that "a midwife shall not intervene with the natural course of labor." All of the training manuals carried this emphasis and the specific procedures learned by the midwives presupposed the organic naturalness of normal childbirth, and protected it from unwarranted interference. Granny midwives were forbidden by state law to do much more than watch and wait with the mother until the baby had actually been born. Midwives were trained in patience and schooled to wait by the bedside until nature took its course.*

*"Every midwife had the same thing. You had your gown, your towels, and your orangewood stick to keep your nails clean. And you always kept your bag ready."*

You know I've had babies to come, their heads supposed to come first, well I've had them their feet come first and then I've had them breach — their butts come first. And all you can do is just wait on time. It'll move itself. And it always did. Once in a while the cord would drop down first for some, though it never happened that way with me. But if it did drop down far enough you tied it next to the baby then you tie it up above and then you cut it. But I ain't never had none of that. All this business, they just teach you all these things at the clinic, and if you can pay attention when they tell you these things you'll be ready. But if you don't pay attention, well something will come up you don't know about when you're working.

With babies which come earlier than they's supposed to, you either took them with the mother to the hospital, or called for someone to come get them if you had no way to get them there. If you was able to get a way, you just wrapped that baby up and take him to the hospital. They see about them. If the mother start to hemorraging, you could take her stomach, you know, like this and massage it until you could feel it look like it form up. But I ain't never had none of that.

If the woman started to tear and she needing stitches, all we could do was take her to the hospital and let them see about her. But most of them didn't need such. When they get tired of it all they bear down, and the baby be born without the tearing. Yes sir, I seen a heap of babies born. And it's not hard work. I never had no afterbirth come ahead of the baby. But there's nothing you can do till the baby gets there, and then you move the baby, and you try not to let water get in its mouth.

To keep the bed from getting wet, some of them had rubber, you know, under the sheets. Some of them had paper padding — you can take 16 sheets of newspaper and make a pad and put a cloth over it. And so, we always got by, however it was. Everybody didn't have the same. But you always used what they had, and if it was good, you didn't say nothing and if you was in a place that was bad, you go out and did the same thing and didn't say nothing about it. You can't go out and talk about how "so and so is bad," cause you gonna work for more than one person. And not only that, but if I talk about what you got, somebody's gonna tell you what I said and that's gonna make the next

**Miss Gussie enjoys a party given in her honor by her neighbors, many of whom she delivered.**

person say, "I ain't gonna use her; she talks about what she sees." So you just got to keep quiet.

So, however, you got a pad on the bed and maybe the water break just ahead of the baby coming out, well you pack something or other around it. And then you got cotton wipes to clean out his ears and nose and mouth, and silver nitrate drops for his eyes. And I just let them cry by themselves. I never hit them. Some of the time they're fixing to cry before the time they even get out of there. And I like it when they holler. You got a good baby if he hollering when he coming outta there; if he holler, you got a fine baby. No, I don't never spank them. But other people spank them, or say they do.

Now, I'd keep the woman in bed two or three days, whatever she feel like. If she feel like sitting up the first day, well let her go ahead. Even get up and walk around if they want. If they could do it, it was good for them. I think they should be quiet for a few days, but moving is okay and good for them. Most of them said that the time of the full moon was best for having a baby, and it seemed to be true near as I can remember.

Now, a lot of people, they don't nurse their babies from the breast the way we did. You see, we didn't have none of that canned kind of milk, so we nursed our babies. Look like most of them that come from the hospital don't do that no more. And another thing, you see we tie that cord with two tapes, leaving a stub about this long; first we'd tie it here and then you tie it there; and you tie it good and tight, that's another good rule. And when that cord comes off you put a little alcohol on it with cotton, tuck it in and then you bind it up. You put the band on just as soon as the baby be born, and let it stay until the cord gone. Maybe change it sometime if the baby's band gets dirty, you know. How long you leave it on, how long it takes, depends on the size of the cord. If it's a large cord, it takes longer than a smaller one. The larger the cord the longer it took. I haven't done it for a time now – the cord, I mean. But I could do it again and tie it right. But I ain't gonna have to.

*Statistics indicate that a large percentage of maternal mortality follows operative interference. Physicians are not patient waiters. Nothing in their long years of training or experience has prepared them to sit by the bedside of those mothers who are normal, and watch while a natural process takes place in a routine manner. Ten years or more of university education makes most doctors constitutionally unable to sit with a woman through the long hours of her labor and not do anything.*

Well, if they started to hollering when it hurt, I just let them go on, less it got too noisy. Sometimes I had to holler myself, "If you don't hush I gonna leave you." I said, "You hollering like somebody's beating you." And they hush up. They do. "Instead of hollering, just push a bit."

And sometimes you have one that just quit on you. My daughter was like that. Some of them after a while start to holler, "I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't." I say, "You can, you can, you can, you can, you can, you can, you can." I tell you, once they find out that *you* give up, they'll give up. But if you stand out there, they see you mean business, and they come along before too much time. I had a hard time myself, with a couple of my own. But I had a daughter who was gonna take all week to do when her time came. She don't be doing nothing but crying and carrying on. She don't be trying to have no baby. I went back and forth over to her house there for a *week!* And I talked to her. I got tired of it, too. Finally, I started up home, and here come her husband wanting me to come on and see about her. I said, "She ain't gonna do nothing when I get there."

He said, "Lady, you going?"

"Well, I already been there two days; no, I reckon I ought to stay here." And she didn't do nothing that day. Well, the next day here he comes again. "I reckon she's gonna be ready this time."

"She ain't gonna do nothing," I said, "but if I go this time and she don't do it, I ain't going over there with you after her no more."

"Well somebody's got to —"

I said, "Well let *you* see about her then."

He said, "Come on, I'll take you in my wagon." So, there we were again.

I said to her, "Well, what's happening?"

She said, "Nothing."

I said, "Well listen, you get up out of this bed and walk around."

"No, I don't feel like it."

I said "You *feel* like *lying around;* get up, you been laying around now too long. Get up and walk. " So she got up. So she messed around there and messed around till I said, "You ain't doing nothing but wasting my time. Let me tell you one thing now. I been coming over here all the week. I say you ain't trying to have no baby. You could have done had this baby the other day but you just wouldn't do it. Just holding it back. Ain't no need to hold it back; you got to do it."

Now Rosa Mae is sitting there and she say, "Oh Miss Gussie, you're mean. What do you think you're doing talking to her like that?" All I know is that I laid her out and in a few minutes she had her baby.

Rosa Mae says, "Miss Gussie, you knowed what you was talking about."

I said, "Yeah, I know, she could have had that baby the day before yesterday, but she just wouldn't do it. Just draw up. She know what she got to do the minute she done have it."

"Well, she sure done move when you laid her out there, Gussie."

"Yeah, I done laid her out — I'm tired of you now." I say, "You worry me every night and every day here I come over here and you ain't doing nothing. I'm tired of you." But I didn't have too many like that. There is so many that know just what to do but can't bring themselves to do it right off. Sometime you got to count the contractions, but the most of them when they get started they come on.

Then, once the baby was born, you had to wait for the afterbirth. Sometimes I would have to wait longer for the afterbirth than for the baby. Cause once the baby has come, some don't want to work no more. One woman I finally told, "You ain't about to have that afterbirth. There ain't no use in me staying round." I knowed she could have it, she could just bear down and be through with it. I been over there since Saturday night and I was wore out. I said, "There ain't no use in me staying around here and laying out waiting if you ain't even trying to have it. You could have had that afterbirth."

She said, "Ohhhhh, Miss Gussie, it *hurt!!*"

I said, "You think I don't know it hurt? But you better bear down now and be done with it."

"I can't do it!" She got to crying then, saying that she couldn't do it, hurt too much, stuff like that.

I said, "You can have it. If you done have the baby, why not have the afterbirth? I done tied the cord and the baby, he all fixed up and sitting over there, and you still not finished! And it's less painful than having the baby. You see, everything's done over, you ain't got nothing left to do but kick it on. Everything is over." But some folks, they just won't do it!

You can feel a woman's stomach and tell if she gonna have that afterbirth. If there is a knot there, that afterbirth is gonna come. And if it's flat like my stomach here, then you take her into the doctor so he can see to her. When it did come we had to look it over to see if it was all there. If it was, okay then. If it wasn't, and waiting didn't bring it on, then we took her and it to the hospital for the doctor to see about them. When the afterbirth did come, we always burned it. You see, if you just throw them away, some of the dogs around there be likely to get at it.

One woman I had a real time with. She had the baby, and she wouldn't have that afterbirth. Her brother told her, "If you was my wife I'd leave here, and when I come back here the baby be 35 years old and you still not have the afterbirth." Lord, if I didn't laugh, let me tell you the truth, I laughed till I just cried. Yes, said if she was his wife he would leave her there and when he come back that baby be 35 years old. Lord, that tickled me so bad. Yes *sir* — I had a good time while I was working.

*Though the granny midwife can be deservedly proud of her past, she has no future in Georgia. Because the medical profession has always assumed that ideal childbirth requires hospital delivery by a physician, most doctors begrudged the midwives their role in maternal health care. Citing new hospital construction and expanding state health services, the medical estab-*

*lishment finally succeeded in ending the certification of new midwives in 1963.*

*Practicing midwives continue to be recertified but their numbers have declined rapidly. Already weakened by attrition, the granny midwives sustained a further blow when Medicare and Medicaid were created in the late '60s, and made hospital deliveries economically possible for many who would otherwise have used a midwife. Doctors who had previously certified patients for delivery by midwife found hospital deliveries at once more convenient and more lucrative; they began advising their patients accordingly, and ceased to cooperate with midwives. And since the hospitals did not require regular check-ups, but would accept patients at any stage in their labor on an emergency basis, many women found them more convenient as well. Certainly the mystique which surrounds medical technology in this country has also contributed to the decline of midwifery throughout the rural South, and the subsequent rise in the total of hospital births. Now there are only 58 granny midwives active in Georgia, and their 250 deliveries in 1976 accounted for less than one percent of the state's total number births. And state health officials expect that number to decrease to zero by 1980.*

All those people weren't on the welfare then and used us more, till the welfare came and they could get a doctor all the time and go to the hospital and not have to go to the clinic no more and it all be paid for. Then what use they got for midwives after that? Specially since they can't get it paid for like they could the doctor in the hospital.

And you know, they ain't training no more midwives in Sumter County, or the whole of Georgia no more, as far as I know. Ain't heard of none leastways. Them's still practicing now come up a long time ago. You know Willa Mae Champion? Well, she come up after I had been delivering for a while. We had plenty — we had about 17 or 18 in our class. We had a good group. Willa Mae come up the same way, though her group was much smaller, maybe six or eight, and hardly nobody come up after that. We used to laugh about the first baby Willa Mae had, how she give up, how she talked with me after her first time. Said she was through with it! Said, "Oh Lord, Miss Gussie, I can't do it." So I sit down and I wrote her a long letter. She say she got that in her trunk even now. Said I give her the mostest encouragement. Because she says she was ready to quit! And you know, the nurse was so nice to her, and she hadn't got certified yet. She respected her training, and though it was lacking a few weeks till our anniversary, when we come up and get our licenses, when she called her and told her, she told Willa Mae to just go right ahead with it. That was so nice of her to let her go ahead with her first call. Well, come May, I hear Willa Mae be the last one of us practicing in these parts.

The welfare, now, it's made it tough on midwives. Since it came, most people won't be bothered no more with clinic, they just go to the hospital when their time finally does come. I don't know if welfare would let them go to midwives if they wanted, but most don't even want to no more. The hospital just looks better, I don't know why. It costs a heap of money, I do know that. Folks are getting spoiled with the hospitals, and the stuff they can give you there for the pain and the doctors taking the babies. I wouldn't want no doctor to take my baby. I'd rather have it, and know when it come.

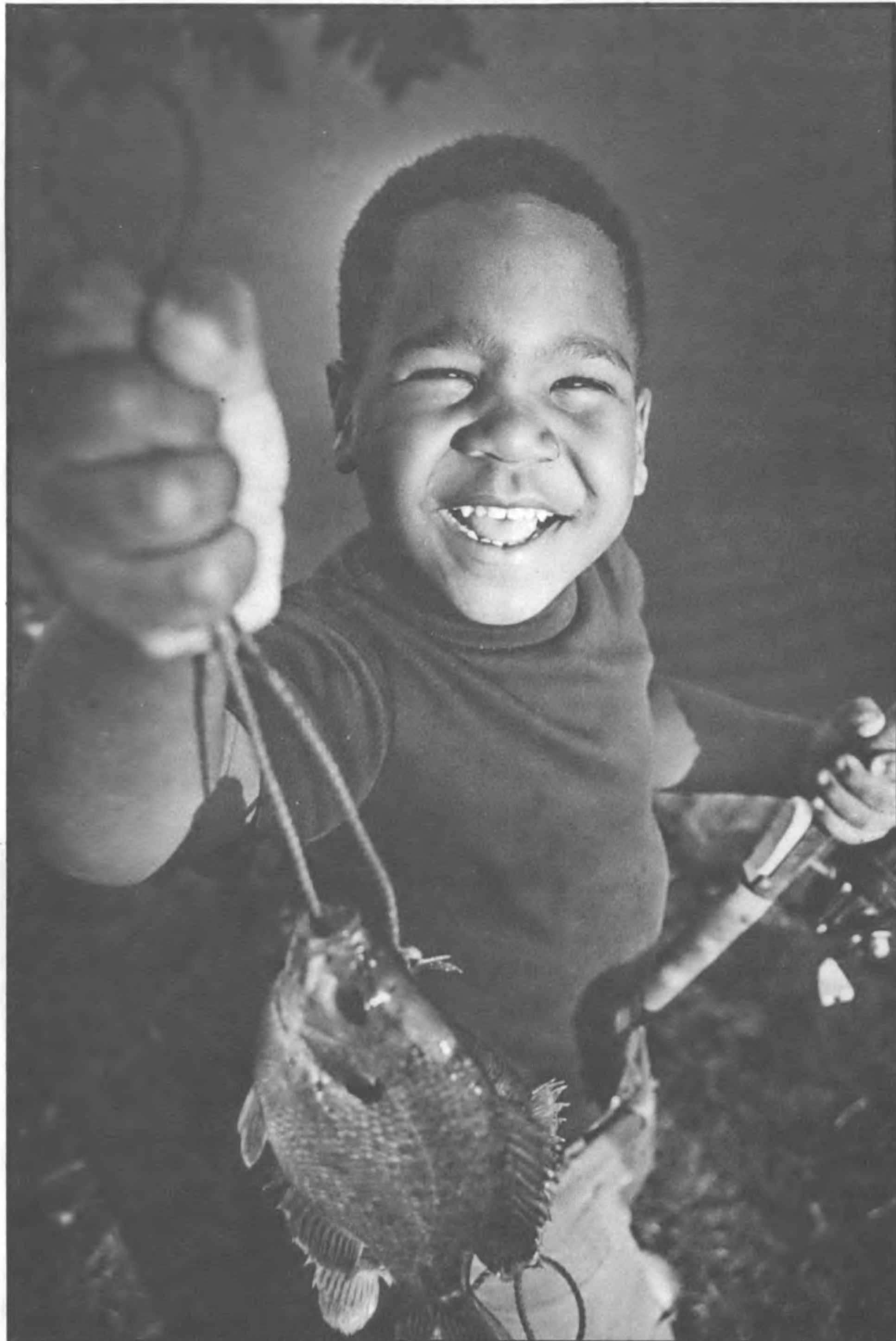
*The State Public Health Department points out that granny midwives are being "replaced" by nurse-midwives, registered nurses who have taken an additional one to two years of training to be certified in midwifery. But there are at present only 22 certified nurse-midwives practicing in Georgia, and all but five are working with regular obstetricians in private practice. Though their presence at bedside will continue to humanize maternal health care for their patients, their services are available only to those who can afford them. And in view of the resistance of the medical establishment toward enlarging the role of the nurse-midwife, it is unlikely that their numbers will increase significantly in the near future. Nurse-midwives are, at best, a long-term solution to an immediate and pressing problem. What was once a major part of the statewide system of maternal health care has been deliberately phased out over the last 15 years (and with it one source of competition for doctors), and nothing has been developed to take its place for the large number of people who can neither qualify for Medicare, nor afford the high cost of private health insurance.*

*Health services which were once available for $35 now cost $500 for a hospital delivery (payment due before admission in many cases), and $600-$700 for a private physician. And women who were once able to continue a rewarding tradition of service among their friends and neighbors by attending free classes once a month for a year, must now find both the time to spend three or more years in school, and the money to pay for it. For patient and practitioner alike, midwifery has become a privilege reserved for the middle class. And it is a privilege that is much appreciated. There are three nurse-midwives currently practicing in Americus, nine miles from Plains, and the obstetricians with whom they are associated have as many patients as they can handle.*

*Meanwhile, there have been no deliveries reported by granny midwives in Sumter County since 1975. And Willa Mae Champion, the last active granny midwife in the area, who must deliver six babies a year to maintain her certification, has traveled as far as Atlanta, 140 miles to the north, to take a case; she wants to keep up her practice. That won't be possible much longer.*

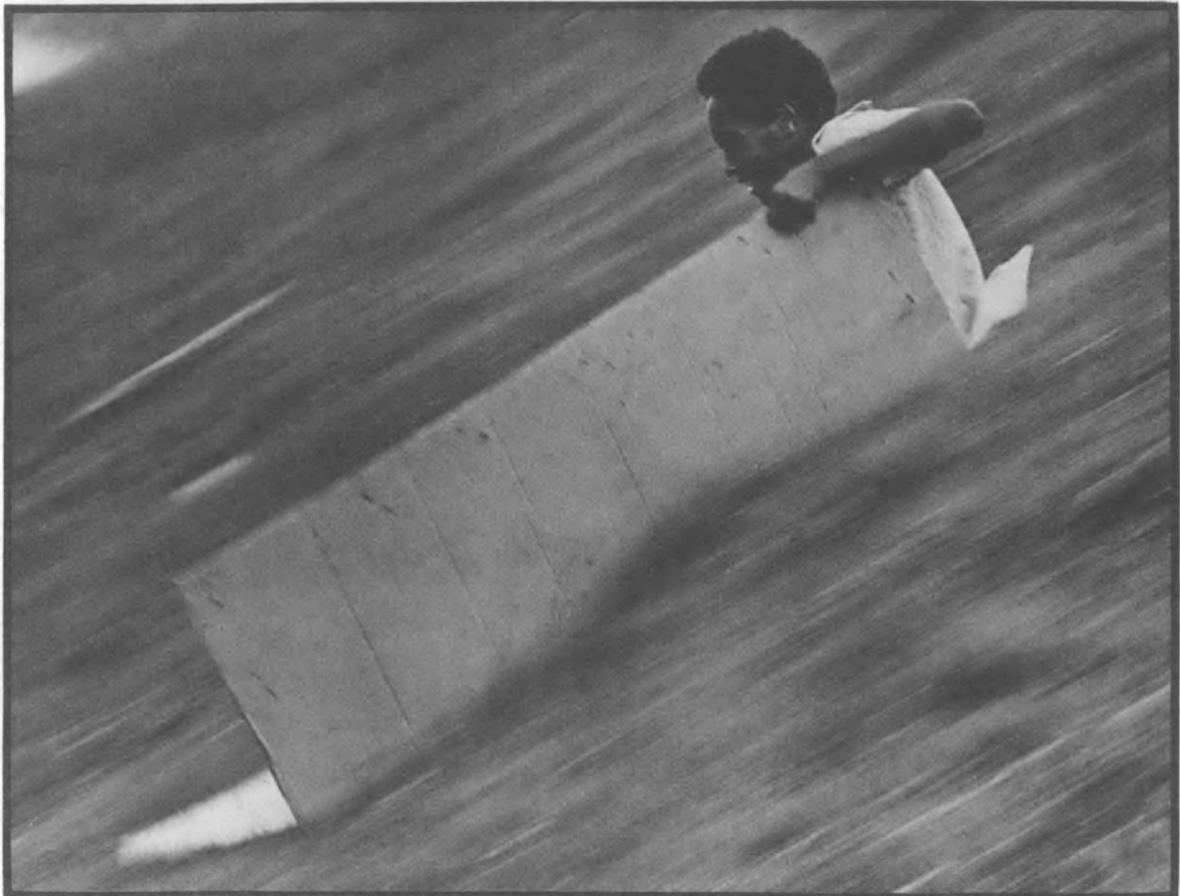
Some ask me how I ever took a vacation? Well, I didn't vacate. Oh, every now and then I'd go and then somebody else would get that baby there — Miss Brown, Miss Angry, Miss Champion, or somebody. There was always somebody. But soon enough there won't be.

Yeah, it was good. I enjoyed it. I don't know no other work I could have done I would have enjoyed so good. Just to think that you bringing people in the world, you're helping somebody that needs help and that's good. I don't think I could have gotten as much joy out of doing anything else. I'd a heap rather do that than just schoolteach. I get joy out of delivering babies and when I see people that I delivered. I sure do. And there are a lot of them here in Plains. Yeah, in Americus, up north, all down Highway 19 going to Albany, over in Smithville. They's a heap of them all around.

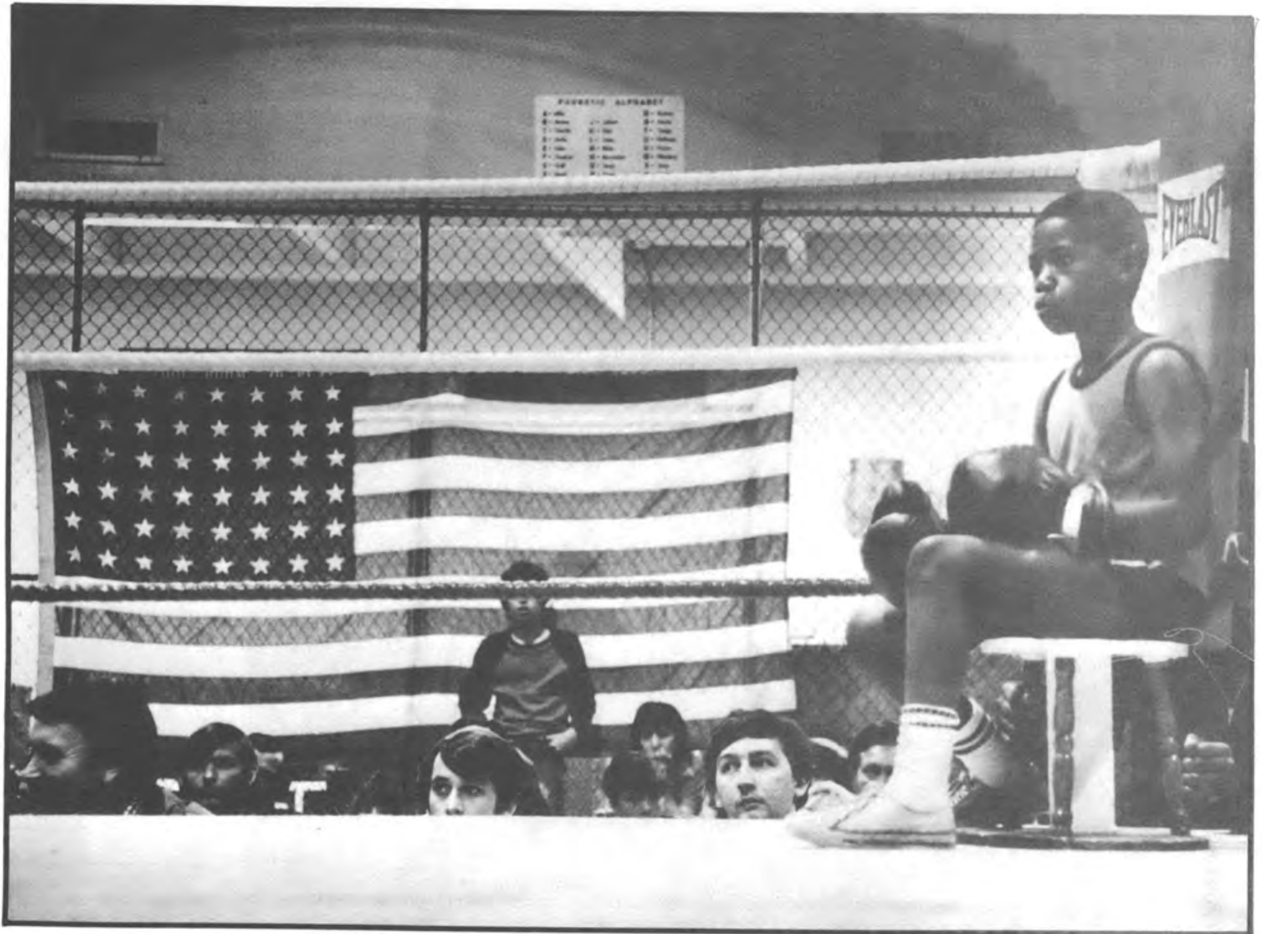


# coming up southern
## a photo essay by bob herbert

*Bob Herbert spent 21 of his 28 years in Alabama, where most of these pictures were taken. After six years with the Decatur* Daily, *he moved to Delaware last year to work as a general assignment photographer with the Wilmington* News.



Pitch
In!


EVERLAST

# the first year's sowing

## a short story by Carroll Dale Short

In a small square garden to the side she grows peas and beans of all kinds, cabbage and turnips and mustard greens, pumpkins and gourds. The wide fields beyond the house are twenty years fallow, grown up with sage grass and sapling pines.

In her yard she keeps a dozen pullets – dull hens, shale red – and two ragged white roosters. At the last of the sun each day, she brings out water and grain in two broad buckets and pours it for them. It is these times she is most seen, walking bent to the pull of the buckets.

She is a big woman, above six feet tall. Not fat, but wide-shouldered, humped by hard lifting, with large bowed legs. She moves slowly about the yard. With a thin pink eyelet sweater and her gray hair circled in braids, sun in the loose fanning wisps, she looks like a misshapen queen from a faroff place. She has always been here, or near here. Born in one of the coves, she married in the mountain.

Of land, she owns the Hyche forty (Hyche, her name), the old Lee place, some twenty acres, and all of the Gilliland bluff with its Seven Room Rock – a cluster of tiny caves in the sheer sandstone face, where Indian bones are discovered time and again by young men who live in the cove.

Her house is on the mountain's north end. It sits off the paved road on a rise of clay, just up from a blue pond the shape of a nearly-straightened horseshoe. Seen from the road in summer the pond is all high reeds, hidden green around. In winter, when they go thin and brittle, a whipping of the wind shows diamonds through them, flashings of the blue water. It is so shallow a tall man could walk across it.

The sons of her three brothers are all moved north. The brothers too. She is widowed, lives alone. But the people of the mountain, no kin to her, say "Aunt" when they talk about Pluma. Never "Granny" or "Old Pluma" though she is old, older than any of them.

In the story, she is a girl:

Steam from the cookpots. New brush brooms swept full of dust. Saved-up lace, sewn by hand to the edges of the curtains. A milkglass bottle of gift perfume, touched like flowers inside the neck of her dress. Standing in the doorway, watching the rolling afternoon fields, wanting Tom Hyche to come up for supper. Feeling him past the next ridge, wherever he is working, feeling his progress, feeling him come. Finally seeing him, coming far off, leading the mules.

This is her life the weeks since March, the wedding.

Tom Hyche bends over the washstand, splashes water on his face and neck. The day has been hot, and his open shirt is dark with sweat. The water turns field-brown in his hands, drips into the white basin.

He feels blindly to the hook where towels always hang, finds none. She is suddenly by him with a new towel, just warm from the iron, and lays it on his wrists. He wipes his eyes free and with a wet hand reaches out to pinch her belly, make her smile.

"Well, bless you," he says politely. She pushes his hand away. She smiles, still.

He is a big man, the only man in the mountain taller than Pluma. Tom Hyche is spare of fat, but with arms and legs like logs. Yellow-tan hair hangs shaggy on his ears, and the sun has bronzed him reddish all down to his waist. His face is guileless, boy-smooth, plain as a bundle of husks.

"I have got some yams your daddy brought," she says from the stove. Late sun slants in sharply, carries yellow across the floor planks. He says nothing, sits at the table and watches the fields. She spoons out bowls of beans and stew-meat, a plate of cornbread, a pan of sweet potatoes daubed with butter. She carries them all to table and then sits down.

She knows cooking. It has been half her life till now. The other half she has spent beside her older brothers in the field rows: planting, plowing, hoeing like a man.

Old people, the first settlers in the cove, still tell the story of the father she has no memories of. All she sees of dead Lige Collier now she sees through the eyes of old men who were there that day.

When Pluma was born, the only girl of four children, her father celebrated with whiskey. He had been six days drinking on the bright Sunday noon when he charged through the Crossroads Church reunion driving a wagon full of his friends, all drunk. "This horse can't beat a train, I'll eat it," he shouted, and whipped the horse toward the railroad tracks down in the flats. All the church crowd watched, powerless to help him. The whistle was already blowing.

His friends, seeing the fast engine coming, bailed out of the wagon one by one and tumbled safely to the edges of the road. That left Lige, driving, and one man in back, who grabbed with terror at the brake pole and locked the wheels. The wagon slid sideways onto the tracks, where it stopped. The force of the engine splintered the wagon and ripped the two men. It carried them for almost half a mile.

Virgie Collier, Pluma's mother, died of pneumonia one hard winter. She left Pluma, by then eleven years old, and the boys — twelve, fourteen and sixteen. All the first woman-things, the crampings and the sickness, came to Pluma while she hoed and cooked and swept. She had no time for the new feelings, for the blood.

Tom rakes his plate clean, wipes up the bean juice with a piece of bread. "Making a little time, now," he says. He nods toward the open door, to the fields. The sun gone, the land sits in a dark blue haze of heat. The woodstove ticks down in the corner, cooling toward night.

He eats the bread and follows it with a glass of tea. "Got all of it broke up but that little dogleg piece in the bottom forty. Tomorrow'll get that." He runs his tongue against all his teeth, finding crumbs, and looks through the window at the sky. He has eaten from all the dishes except the sweet potatoes. On the floor, yellow dust shows in the last light. It lies vaguely shoe-shaped, fallen from his soles where he sits. A white cloth napkin, the first Pluma has owned, lies untouched beside his plate.

Tom Hyche had been a friend of her brothers since she could remember. For years they had all set traps for crayfish, hunted coon, hidden in canebreaks to smoke the wide sticky leaves called rabbit tobacco. His father, John Thomas Hyche, was the first settler on the mountain's steep north face. A small, fierce, wiry man, the way he came there is a legend:

Young John T. Hyche walked in from North Georgia, leading a sick horse, without a cent in his pocket. He set to work, cleared land, laid claim to it. Now, these years later, he owns almost a quarter of the whole mountain. At his age, John Hyche still plows until dark. He carries his dried corn in a wheelbarrow down the slopes to the mill, by torchlight. He is up before daylight, hammering boards for still another shed. He has given the land Tom farms now, has given the land their house is on. John's wife died the month that Tom, their only one, was born. John Hyche works his land alone, as he has always done.

A few weeks before Pluma's last brother was to marry and move out, Tom Hyche showed up at service in the little Crossroads Church where Pluma went. He came home with her and William, stayed for dinner and most of the afternoon. The next Sunday he was back again in church, at Pluma's bench, though he was never known to care much for church before. By Christmas they were telling they would marry, and on New Year's Tom staked the foundation for their house.

They sit by the door, in the rust light of a coal-oil lamp. A fog has come into the yard. The stars and the moon, pearl grey and ringed with vapor, are spread above the black trees. Familiar crickets start up in the dampness beneath the steps. Pluma's bare feet are drawn up under her long skirt. Her hands lie folded in her lap.

"Listen!" she says. She touches his knee to quiet him. Two throated notes sound, from woods somewhere far off:

*Kuh-REE.*

Tom whittles a piece of wood, trailing the shavings down the steps. He stops and closes his eyes to hear better.

*Kuh-REE.*

*Kuh-REE.*

Naked to the waist, he is doubly red in the warm light. He uncreases his eyes and then smiles to show he has heard. "Mmmm," he says, and nods to her. He whittles again, flicking dry curls out the door. His eyes are on his work.

*Kuh-REE.*

"Pretty," she says.

*Kuh-REE.*

She leans to him. With one finger she skims over the crisp yellow hairs of his arm. She touches his wrist, closes her fingers around his knife, takes it from him, lays it by the door. He follows her soft walking, beyond the oil lamp, to the next room's dark bed. In the empty lamplight, his dusty unlaced shoes sit on a mat of reeds she has woven for them, picked from the pond nearby.

Their first night and the few after, he had torn her, soft as he tried to be. By long years' work, she was trained to stiffen, clench her jaw to any task, and so to his bed. Now she has learned how to move with the force of him, in time to his hard whiteness below. *Let him be a wind,* she tells her mind, *and go as he moves. Sway soft to it, away, to it.* She has learned his bed.

July has the longest days. He planted right, by the signs. They sprouted well, and plenty of rain has come. But they are browning now: the leaves of corn, the bean vines, the squash. Their edges are dying, and Tom spends more hours in the field. He plows, he hoes, he plows again, digs out all the grass and weeds.

---

*Carroll Dale Short lives outside of Quinton, Alabama, in Shanghi, the community in which he was born. He is married, with a four-year-old son, and works for* The Birmingham News. *His recently completed first novel,* The Sowing, *evolved from this short story.*

He sits on the front steps at noon, dark in the shade of the house. He is wet from head to foot with sweat. He drinks from a jar of water at his side, wants no food. The fields, past his black shape, are a blinding clay gold.

Pluma stands behind him in the door. "It all beats me," she says gently. "If there was too much fertilize—"

Tom spews water from his mouth. "Unhhh-uhh," he rasps out, not looking around, and then speaks more quietly. "No, it was done right." He still doesn't face her. She walks to the hot stove, pulls the boiling pots off to one side.

She goes to the steps, squats behind him. "It don't have to be your daddy," she says. "There's plenty of people out elsewhere you could ask."

He spits again. Without turning around, he gets up walking fast toward the fields. Carrying the warm jar of water by its neck, he goes out of sight beyond the ridge. Pluma looks down at the back of her hands. She has blistered her wide knuckles on the stove.

Two weeks pass and nothing changes. On a morning when Tom is gone into town to buy medicine for a mule's yellowed eye, Pluma ventures for the first time into the fields. She has stood at the edge, in the grass. She has watched her husband point to far humps of it like describing constellations in the night sky, but she has not walked in any field since her family's, in the cove.

A cloud has cooled over the sun, and the dust-shaking wind of the morning has settled. She remembers how to walk in a field. How to walk, with the soft crusts of dirt giving way.

She kneels down where a row of corn has withered down to brown stalks. She rakes the row with her fingers, pinches the dirt clods and rolls them in her palm. In the dirt she sees fine white root-hairs, cut free and turned up in the plowing. The sun has dried them hard as ivory. She sees now how deep the blade of the plow has run.

*He didn't know,* she says inside her mind. *He was trying to get the weeds all out, and he cut too deep. He tried too hard,* she says. *He didn't know.*

The heavy plank door of his tool shed creaks as she goes in. The air teems with dust. Red wasps thud at the planks, lazy in the heat. She finds the plowstock, the high angled blade, propped in a corner in its chains. She crouches beside it on the cool dirt floor, picks up a hammer and clangs the thick side of the blade. The blows send hard-caked field dirt flying from its fastenings.

drawing by Leslie Miller Vorgetts

She hammers at the wing nut, trying to free it. It is frozen on with rust. Her hammer rings the shed full of clanging. The fastener moves. She pounds it again with the blunt peen hammer, narrowing the angle of the blade.

The door behind her darkens. Her hammer falls silent. She turns and sees the dark log shape of him, leaning humped in the door.

"I wondered if maybe the blade was going too deep," she says brightly, swallowing, patting back the hair that has fallen into her face from the laboring. "They say that sometimes it can cut at the roots, when it goes deep, and I was wondering. . ."

His face is in the shade of the roof. Only his eyes show, caught in a narrow stripe of sun from between two boards. His eyes don't change. His hand tightens on the dry brown sack he carries. It crackles like leaves in a fire. He stands for the longest time, says nothing. Pluma goes out past him, toward the house, to start cooking their noon meal.

The first year's crops are enough for canning, but none is left to sell in town. When fall ends, Tom Hyche sells five acres to Algie Lee, whose land is next to his. The money is used to buy a mule for the one that died in October, and to buy enough lumber to build a bigger corn crib for the next year's harvest. He is planning ahead for larger things.

It was during those weeks of ice that Pluma, feeling her hard flat belly and its regular rhythms, told herself without words that there could be no children from him.

The first warm days of March, while building the new corn crib, Tom hurt his back. It has kept him most days in bed, or at least not lifting any tools to work. Selling a small piece of land to the Lees, Pluma pays for the first weeks' labor of two boys from the cove, hired to break land for the planting. She goes into town for the seed herself, watches the boys close as they sow it, telling them, remembering the way. She stays with them, through the days, to make them work.

Late in a day she walks up from the farthest ridge, seeing the house in a haze of gold pollen. Behind her, just in hearing, the boys at their plows are laughing at a joke one has told. *By the first of June we can send them home,* she tells herself again. *They are not much good. Things will be better then. He will be healed.*

Tom Hyche sits on the steps in the soft light. He wears work pants and the thin blue shirt from pajamas she made him for Christmas. A chipped white cup is in his hands. All day he drinks a warm, thin tea he has started brewing for himself. Coming up from the fields, she sees him there, watching her. He smiles, drinks from the cup. □

# A Stranger in the House

by Robert Hamburger

The black houseworkers' narratives which follow are part of a book-in-progress, *A Stranger in the House*, which looks at how black women from the South have fared as domestic workers in the North. In the homes of the well-to-do, black women have lived, cooked, taken care of children, and become an important part of a family's daily life. Employers of household workers are frequently the very people who can best afford to create homogeneous social environments which isolate them from racial, cultural and economic outsiders; yet they open their homes to women whose lives differ from their own in essential ways. This contact has often been debasing to black women; it has rarely been lucrative. Encounters with the white middle- and upper-class world have made these women expert participant-observers in the complex area of racial interaction. To live as a stranger in a strange and sometimes unfriendly environment is not easy, but the women interviewed have adjusted without submitting to despair.

The major historical event in any account of household workers is the great wave of immigration which has carried black women from the rural South to urban centers in the North for close to 100 years. When Reconstruction ended in 1877 and Jim Crow laws were passed throughout the South, the paternalistic mood of race relations was replaced by increasing violence and terror. To young blacks experiencing cruelty, poverty and the treadmill of agricultural labor, the North appeared to be something different. It promised greater racial tolerance, expanding industry with peripheral jobs for unskilled black workers, and a growing middle class which sought unskilled poor for domestic service.

In *The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward*, Louise Venable Kennedy[1] describes this "push and pull" syndrome: Blacks felt themselves pushed out of the South by a sharecropping system which put little or no capital in the hands of black workers. They felt pulled North by more diversified employment opportunities and the possibility of better wages. As a result, disenchanted young blacks began heading North in the 1880s by the hundreds.

They were pioneers of sorts, ambitious people who were willing to leave a familiar world because they hungered for a better life. White Southerners looked upon this exodus with scorn. Many viewed the new generation as "restless, dissatisfied, and worthless" and they recalled somewhat wistfully "the faithful, courteous slave of other days, with his dignified . . . humility."[2] Of course, this was somewhat short of disinterested social observation. The Southern agrarian economy rested on the backs of poorly paid farm workers who were now departing in droves.

From 1880 to 1900, the black population of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Illinois nearly doubled from 235,000 to 411,000. This growth rate continued in the next 20 years, due largely to massive immigration from the South. Between 1910 and 1920, the percentage of blacks in Alabama, Louisiana, Delaware, Tennessee and Mississippi decreased, and the rate of increase in other Southern states was rarely higher than 15 percent. In contrast, the black population rose in New York by 47.9 percent and in Michigan by 251 percent. In that decade alone, the number of Southern-born blacks in the North jumped from 415,000 to 737,000.[3] The economic and social significance of this movement was massive. Only in the last few years has the number of blacks leaving the South dipped below the number entering the region.

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, black women came North in greater numbers than men — five women for every four men — and 59 percent found jobs. Often

---

*Robert Hamburger is the author of* Our Portion of Hell, *an oral history of the civil-rights struggle in Fayette County, Tennessee, published by Links Press. The interviews in this article are part of his forthcoming book,* A Stranger in the House. *Photos are by Susan Gallagher.*

they were exploited by employment agents who traveled the South offering blacks transportation and a guaranteed job on their arrival in Northern cities. Naive young women became, in effect, indentured servants by accepting terms of service that gave them "Justice's Tickets" to the North. They filed aboard steamships that took them up the Atlantic Coast, and were segregated uncomfortably in steerage quarters along with luggage and white travelers' pets.

The vast majority of these women found employment as private household workers. By 1910, New York had one of the highest percentages of working black women in the nation (only five states in the agricultural South had a higher percentage); and four out of five of the women were involved in domestic service. The message was clear – if you want to work, and if you're sick of rural life and the servitude of tenant farming, come to New York and become a domestic worker. Many women were happy to make the move, but to suddenly pass from a sharecropper's cabin in the rural South to the homes of the white middle class in Northern cities was an enormous adjustment, to say the least.

There is no question that these black women were the most marginal group in America's labor force. During World War I, America's manufacturing and mechanical industries began employing black women to help meet Europe's new demands for war materials. With this temporary opening for black women, the percentage employed as domestic workers in the North declined from 80 to 75 percent by 1920. But the pithy observation, "Last hired, first fired" surely applies to the history of black working women.

Not until after World War II did women begin to penetrate the industrial labor market and professional areas in significant numbers. To be sure, the percentage employed as domestic workers has declined steadily over the years, but the greatest changes did not come about until fairly recently. In 1965, there were still close to one million black household workers, about one third of all black working women. From 1965 to 1974, a dramatic change took place that saw close to a half million black women leave their jobs as household workers. The civil-rights movement, the War on Poverty and the expanding service-oriented economy combined to move black women into clerical and professional jobs for the first time. Young women who grew up during the years of civil-rights protest are usually loath to enter domestic service. And fair hiring practices and job training progams in the mid-1960s have made it possible for many to find work outside of white households.

Neither of the women interviewed here found it easy to make the transition from South to North. The rural South was the setting for childhood experience – a place of poverty and racial injustice, but also the scene of close family ties and cherished memories. These women turned North for much the same reason as their predecessors of almost a century ago. The Greyhound bus has replaced the Dominion steamships, but Rose Marie Hairston's narrative reminds us that even recently there have been ruthless employment agents peddling dreams of travel, recruiting young women with promises that fall short of reality. Some of these women were lucky and found work with families that offered them material comfort and sincere friendship. For others domestic work has been a lonely, difficult experience. Fortunately, the women brought with them a warmth characteristic of their Southern roots, a keen sense of human behavior, and a stubborn belief in their right to be treated decently.

## WOMEN AND DOMESTIC WORKERS

| | % of Labor Force Women | | | % of Labor Force Black Women | | | % Women Empld. as Domestics | | | % Black Women Emp'd as Domestics | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1890 | 1930 | 1970 | 1890 | 1930 | 1970 | 1890 | 1930 | 1970 | 1890 | 1930 | 1970 |
| Alabama | 24 | 25 | 37 | 19 | 15 | 9 | 30 | 32 | 9 | 33 | 47 | 32 |
| Arkansas | 14 | 18 | 38 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 32 | 30 | 6 | 35 | 44 | 29 |
| Florida | 19 | 25 | 40 | 14 | 13 | 7 | 47 | 48 | 6 | 55 | 75 | 27 |
| Georgia | 24 | 27 | 40 | 18 | 16 | 11 | 45 | 38 | 8 | 53 | 59 | 28 |
| Kentucky | 14 | 16 | 36 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 56 | 35 | 5 | 92 | 84 | 27 |
| Louisiana | 26 | 24 | 35 | 20 | 14 | 11 | 36 | 41 | 11 | 37 | 57 | 31 |
| Mississippi | 27 | 27 | 39 | 23 | 20 | 12 | 23 | 22 | 10 | 24 | 27 | 30 |
| N. Carolina | 21 | 24 | 41 | 13 | 11 | 8 | 37 | 29 | 6 | 46 | 52 | 23 |
| S. Carolina | 29 | 30 | 28 | 23 | 19 | 11 | 23 | 28 | 9 | 26 | 40 | 15 |
| Tennessee | 15 | 20 | 39 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 52 | 37 | 6 | 68 | 74 | 25 |
| Texas | 12 | 19 | 37 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 43 | 36 | 6 | 53 | 68 | 26 |
| Virginia | 19 | 21 | 39 | 13 | 9 | 7 | 64 | 38 | 6 | 78 | 71 | 22 |
| W. Virginia | 10 | 14 | 33 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 55 | 34 | 5 | 94 | 85 | 25 |
| New York | 21 | 26 | 39 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 44 | 27 | 3 | 91 | 81 | 11 |

*SOURCE: Figures for this chart come from census data. Note – in 1890 and 1930, domestic and personal service occupations were listed together and included laundresses and servants (who were the majority of domestic/personal service workers), hairdressers, housekeepers, untrained nurses, waiters and waitresses, etc. By 1970, service employment, including personal service, was a separate designation from "private household workers." The figures for this year shown above reflect only the latter.*

| Black Women as % of All Female Domestics in New York State | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1890 | 1930 | 1970 |
| 6 | 21 | 50 |

FOOTNOTES

1. Louise Venable Kennedy, *The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward: Effects of Recent Migration to Northern Centers* (New York, 1930), p. 44.

2. These remarks were made by Southern farmers who testified before the Industrial Commission in 1899-1901. They are cited in Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto* (New York, 1971), pp. 25-26.

3. All statistical information in this essay comes from materials assembled by the Bureau of the Census. *Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915* and *Negroes in the United States, 1920-1932* are both invaluable.

Eileen Doughlin is one of the women who left the South

Roena Bethune

*At one point in the following interview, Roena Bethune remarks, "They [the employers] don't care anything about you. They don't want to know nothing about your background; they don't even want to know what's going on in your home. All they want to know is what you are doing for them." Again and again, the women I talked with have told me that they shared more of themselves in our two-hour interview than in two years with a single employer.*

*As houseworkers they are rarely permitted to fully exist: it is not necessary that their full reality as human beings be taken into account in order for them to perform their tasks. As a result, these women spend much of their lives cut off from their own people and surrounded by people who rarely allow them to assert themselves as integral beings.*

Never Discussed Hard Times

I was born the 14th of December, 1936, in a little small town called Fayetteville, North Carolina. Coming up as a child, I can remember us living in about a seven-room, white house on Merkson Road. My mother, she was a domestic worker. She worked in people's homes taking care of children and housekeeping. She could only do so much for us because she had to take care of all the bills and everything because our father had separated from us. My mother, she never received welfare checks. She always believed in going out and working and trying to take care of us herself. And I remembered the time that she would often tell us, "I don't know how I am going to make it, children, but by the help of the Lord we will make it."

She would earn something like $10 to $12 weekly, and we had to live off of this. She had very bad days and she had some good days. As for raising us, a daughter and a son, she would have to go out to work and leave us – and as me being the oldest child at home, I had a lot of work to do in the house. My mother would always tell me that I had to clean, and I had to cook if necessary. I was only about the age of nine years old when I started to learn about housekeeping. My mother had nobody to help her take care of us, but only herself.

Ever since I can remember, my mother worked for white families, but she never discussed with me about the hard times or nothing going on with the jobs. I was only a little girl; I can't remember so much about those times. The only thing that I know – she used to come in the house, and she'd be telling us, "Oh, my day was so hard. I had so much work to do, and I have to come home, and I have to do lots of things. You children have to help me out." That's about as much as I knew. I think my mother really didn't want us to know how hard times was. But, you know, by looking on and observing you could see the expression on her face, you could tell when times come that wasn't so good.

I never went on the job with my mother. She used to work for this family – they had children growing up like me and my brother – and they would give my mother shoes and clothing for me and such things as that. When I was quite small, I didn't know no difference, but as I became to be a teenager I didn't like it because I wanted new clothes. My mother would bring things home, and I knew that she'd gotten them from someplace that

**to become a domestic worker in New York City.**

she was working. I didn't want to wear them, cause in school the kids would laugh at you and say, "Ugh, your mother let you wear hand-me-down clothes."

I remember my grandmother, when I was growing up like the age of 12 and 13, she wanted me to wear those long dresses, and I don't want to wear those long dresses. I used to have to wear those stockings, like with the seams up the back of the legs. And I would go to school and pull the stockings off in the bathroom, and just before time to come home I would put them on. I knew I would get a whipping if I didn't return home with things that I wore to school.

We was the type that had to go to church on Sunday, and through the week we went to school every day. And when we come back home we had an obligation in the house to do, so we did not have the time to be running around out there in the street to find out what was really going on out there. Our time was occupied in the home. We lived in a separate world. After I was 15, things was better. And at 16, going on close to the age of 17, I was married. So that's about as much as I can say about coming up.

### Started Moving Fast

I met my husband in Fayetteville. We had an army base there which is called Fort Bragg. A lot of GIs was there, and my husband was a serviceman. We met each other downtown and we started talking. I was walking down the street and he was standing with some GIs at the corner. Myself and a couple of girlfriends was walking, and so the guys started talking, and so we just made a conversation, and he asked me if he could make a date with me. I hesitated, and we gossiped for a while. So I told him he could come back at Saturday afternoon. My mother didn't really approve of it. I started thinking about growing up and how you don't get things that you want, and I said, "Well I met this boy, a GI, and I know he have money, and he can maybe give you money sometimes and help out with, you know, if it might be something I wanted, he would get it for me." So we dated for about four months, and then we got married.

For five years we was very happy together, but then my husband – I really hate to say this – we started having trouble in the home. He started going outside, and he found something outside better than what he had in his home – or he thought he did. After that we separated and I came up to New York.

Believe me, I was here one week and I was ready to go back. I had heard a lot about the big city, and I had heard a lot about the bright lights. And when I came and I saw all the tall buildings and saw all the people moving in the streets, I said, "Who in the world could live in a place like this with the people in the street; they's pushing each other, it's overcrowded, and everybody's in a hurry, nobody have time to even speak to each other. How in the world can people live in a place like this?" And I was ready to go back home.

I was living with my brother and his wife. They had been living here already, about five years before I came to New York. So, my sister-in-law, she used to tell me, "Roena, you realize you never been in the city before, and the city is much different from just where you come from. You come from the South and you never seen a lot of people all in one

For half of her day, Eileen Doughlin, like thousands

place together like this. But if you stay here a while, you will like it. And you will make some money, and you get your own little bank account started, and you find out that you don't have to be in a distress for money. You'll have money to spend, and you'll have money to save, and you will like it then. The reason why people don't speak to you when you walking – they don't have time for talking with you the way people did at your home. Their work hours is different; some people be going to work at different times, and nobody don't have time on the street to be speaking and stopping and holding conversation with each other. There is a lot of difference in this place than in the place where you just come from."

I couldn't understand that, so after two years, I told my sister-in-law, "I'm going back home." I went back home and found I pretty much had gotten used to it here. It was just like a storm had passed over, and I could not get adjusted to living back there any more. So I told my mother, I said, "I am going back to New York."

She said, "Well, you must be going to take the children."

I said, "Yeah, when I go this time I'm taking my family because I won't be coming back to the South to live anymore."

When my kids came here, they got adjusted right away. They didn't even have to go through no struggles or hard times. They started school the third day they was in New York. They caught on to everything much faster than I did. The way that the people lived here was altogether different from the way I was raised. Even in their houses, people were rushing around and I could not understand it. Like when they would get ready to cook a meal, they just get the food together and they put it on the stove, and they have this ready in five minutes, and they have that in five minutes – it was just a whole new life for me.

It was like everything was moving so fast. And I was never used to anything like that growing up in North Carolina. Then after I got adjusted to everything I came to know how everything was moving in the city, and I started moving fast like everything else.

My first job in New York, I was a chambermaid doing household work at the Saint George Hotel in Brooklyn. As long as I worked in the hotel, the management was great. Dealing with the guests, that's where the little run-ins would come in. I would go in to make up the bed. As a routine, the customer occupying the room is supposed to be out of the room to let the maid make the room up. A couple of times when I'd go to the room the door would be unlocked – I'd go in the room and the man would be in the bathroom closed up, and he would say, "Come in, don't you like to make some fast money?" He'd be nude. I got very angry, very angry, and I would run out of the room and go to the nearest telephone that was on the floor. I would call the desk and say, "The man in such-and-such a room, he's in the nude in the hotel, he's giving me a hard time, and I refuse to make this room up because he's not supposed to be in the room. He's offering me money, and I don't like to be going through stages like this because it's very terrible and embarrassing."

So the manager would say, "Well, just stand outside in the hallway, somebody'll be up in a few minutes and we'll get him out." So they'd come up and they'd talk to the guy and they'd get him to leave the room. Then I'd go in and make it up.

**of women lives the life of a Stranger in the House.**

Several times this happened.

There is a lot of things you go through working in a hotel. It was a very terrible embarrassment – some of the things, you wouldn't even want to approach nobody telling them about it. You try to get out of the room as fast as you can; you go down and make complaints. What can you do? These things happen living in a hotel.

I think it made a difference I was black – the way they would approach you, you know. You could read them, what they think, "Well, how much money can you be making for a job like this? I know that you will like to make extra money. You can't be making but so much, and nobody would never know about this but me and you. I can get over fast with you."

Now the way I feel about white people, I don't hate them or nothing, but I do have a little discrimination against them because, you know, it seems like they only class all the black people as one way. As far as I'm concerned with the white man or the white woman, when I go out there and I do a day's work for them, I just do my work. As far as I am concerned they don't love me and I cannot love them because I know that there is a space difference in between; there is a racial gap, because that white woman or white man that you go and work for in their house, when the time comes for them to serve dinner, they will not let you sit down at that dinner table and eat with them. They will tell you, "Serve us Roena, and then after you serve us you can have your dinner in the kitchen" where you do the cooking, not in the dining room where they sit down and eat their dinner themselves. So you know when things like this happen, there is a complex racial gap somewhere.

## Rose Marie Hairston

*Rose Marie Hairston's apartment was on 102nd Street, just a block west of Central Park. The shells of three abandoned cars gave the kids on the street a prop for their various games. None of the locks worked at the entrance of Rose's fourth floor walk-up, and all of the mailboxes had been pried open. The entrance smelled of urine and garbage and decay – a depressing place. Before our interview began, she explained to me that there had been three fires in her building in the past month. The way she saw it, her landlord preferred to collect on fire insurance rather than throw away money on legally required maintenance and repairs. She would have to find a new place soon because the city was about to condemn the building. She laughed as she told me this, and her laughter puzzled me. Her efforts to get her landlord to provide her with a safe and decently maintained apartment seemed frustrating, infuriating and exhausting, but not at all funny.*

*Later, as Rose began to recount her personal history, Donna Jaykita, her 11-year-old daughter, came to the kitchen door and listened. She clearly enjoyed her mother's stories, and Rose Marie seemed more comfortable delivering her narrative to a familiar face. For the most part, the daughter was perfectly quiet, but a few times she broke into laughter that illuminated the sources of her mother's own laughter. She only laughed at stories in which her mother suffered or was momentarily helpless. Rose Marie's stories informed her daughter of what she might expect as a black woman in America, and through her laughter Donna Jaykita acknowledged that her mother's message had been received and understood. For both, laughter was*

*a means of defiance; it stood as an assertion of freedom against adverse circumstances. No crisis could finally bring them down or break their spirit.*

### We Were Very Poor

I was born in Martinsville, Virginia, 38 years ago. There's mostly furniture factories, farming, tobacco there. My family had their own house, but we didn't live there all the time. My parents moved to West Virginia, and my father was a coal miner. He was a motorman in the coal mine and a brakeman. A motorman drives down in the mine to bring the coal out. Sometimes he was a brakeman, and he would ride on the back of the little car, which was very dangerous. I forget what it's called, but from working in the mine he got fluid in his knees and elbows and up in his shoulder. And from getting his back hurt and his hip hurt six or seven times, it caused him to have a type of arthritis. My father started working at the coal mine at age 14, and he was retired about the time he got 40. He had been hurt a lot of times, you know; he was all broken up.

I was a good-sized girl when he retired. We wasn't afraid because we used to go in the coal mine also. We couldn't afford to buy coal, so we used to have to go in some of the strip mines and get the coal. Well, you know some people could afford it, but we were very poor; we couldn't afford to buy the coal or the wood or anything like that. Sometimes we couldn't get in the mines cause they had a watchman, so we would have to go over on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad and wait for the train car to come by.

The cars used to be loaded with coal, so my brother and I would jump the train and get on the car and throw off enough coal. Sometimes we would throw off the coal and ride the train a long ways, and then when we got back, somebody else had picked it up. So we would have to wait for another train to come by.

In West Virginia we never knew anything about racial prejudice. Really, we never heard anything about that until we went back to the state of Virginia. Where we lived around the coal mine there was Jews, Italians, Hungarians, Poles and just about any race you could name. Everybody mingled together. When I was about 10, my brother Maurice and me went back to Virginia on the farm for a summer. We didn't know what they were talking about when they used to say "colored people." In West Virginia we didn't use the words. Everybody there was together. But when we were going to Virginia, we got off the bus to go to the bathroom, and we wanted something to eat, and we saw a sign said "Colored in the Rear." We went in there – it was a little, dirty, greasy room about the size of a good chicken house. It was so dirty in there. And then we wondered why all the white people were sitting up in the best part of the bus. Even the bathrooms said "No Colored." Even the telephones had big signs that said "No Colored."

My grandfather who lived in Virginia was working for Judge Whittle, so we stayed there and worked for him awhile. We ran into trouble one day. We went to the Judge's brother's house to do some work. His brother had this little eight-year-old girl, and her name was Ruth. So we went around to speak to Ruth, and we said, "Hi Ruth, pleased to meet you." And my oldest brother, Raymond, who lived there with my grandfather all the time said, "You have to call her Miss Ruth."

I said, "We got to call her Miss Ruth?"

He said, "Yeah."

I said, "Well, I ain't gonna call her Miss Ruth."

And Maurice said, "Well I ain't gonna call her no Miss Ruth; that's a little girl. Momma told us don't call nobody no Mr. or Mrs. down here."

Raymond said, "You have to call her Miss Ruth, cause if you don't they'll take you off and beat you."

I said, "Well I don't think they can beat us," cause we thought we could beat anybody. My brother got a kerosene lamp one night, and we slipped into the dog house where my grandmother and grandfather couldn't see us, and we wrote a letter to my mother. We told her that we had to say "yes sir" and "no sir" to children, and that the people down there called you "niggers," and when they wanted you to do something they called you "boy" or "girl" or "nigger." And we didn't like it. My brother didn't understand it, and he was always fighting with the kids.

The schools was all black. We would get up at four o'clock and have breakfast and do some chores like milk the cows and feed the dogs and different little things like that. Then we would walk seven miles to catch a bus, and the bus would take us into town, and then after we got into town we would have about another mile to walk to school. Sometimes in the evening if it was nice, we wouldn't even catch a bus – we'd just keep walking and walking and walk all the way home. We got out of school about three o'clock and sometimes it'd be about five or six, sometimes seven o'clock, before we'd get home because we'd stop and fool around, and throw rocks at the white children.

**Rose Marie Hairston: "One time we said we'd work and make a lot of money, and then we'd go back to West Virginia."**

You know, we'd be walking in the country and sometimes they would say, "Niggers, you gonna spoil the walkway here." And my brother would hit them with a rock or something. We'd throw rocks and hit them in the head. We would fight them. And then we would run and run. Sometimes they would chase us, and there would be a lot of them, there'd be grownups too. It was fun.

### Bought and Sold

When I was a little girl, I always had hopes of being a nurse or a doctor. I always wanted my husband to look like my father. I wanted my husband to be his height, his complexion. My daddy was not a big guy, but he was a handsome guy. I said if I ever married I wanted a big farm and a lot of children. One of my sisters, she wanted to be a doctor. Another one wanted to be a nurse, and one wanted to be a schoolteacher. We'd say that one day we'd be the Hairston clinic. We always wanted something that would help others. One time we said we'd work and make a lot of money, and then we'd go back to West Virginia and have an orphanage. Unfortunately, it never happened.

I was about sixteen-and-a-half, and I was reading a newspaper. It said, "Ladies and Girls 18 and over: Jobs in New York." And you didn't even have to pay to come to New York. And this ad said it paid $125 a week. I said, "Oh boy, that's good! I think I'll go up there and talk to this man." He was a preacher, too, and that's what made me mad. It was just another old gimmick. Anyway, I went up there and he interviewed me. He said, "How old are you?" I told him I was 18, and he kept looking at me.

He said, "I don't know, Rose, you look very young. Matter of fact, you look like you're no more than 12."

I said, "No, eighteen." So he told me to bring him proof that I was 18, or bring my mother. I told him all right. I caught the bus and went back home and got my cousin to come back with me. She was a much older lady than I was. She told them that she was my mother. She gave her consent for me to come to New York. So he said all right. He told me to come the next day and that he would meet me at the bus station. Then he described the persons that were to meet me in New York on 50th Street. So I met him the next day, and he gave me the bus ticket and he said, "Good luck, Rose." I said, "Yeah."

And he said, "When you make all that money, put it in the bank." I wasn't scared, I was determined because I thought $125 a week was a long ways from getting $7.50 a week.

I didn't tell my mother I was going. She kept asking, "Where you going?"

I said, "I'm going over to visit somebody for a little while."

She said, "I think the right thing for you to do is ask me to give you permission to go. You don't just get ready and go."

I said, "I want to go visit a friend over in Lewisburg."

"Well, all right. But you don't need a suitcase just to take two or three dresses, do you?"

I said, "No."

She give me this brown shopping bag to put the three dresses in and some underpants and bras. She asked me, "You want me to go to the station with you."

I said, "No, I'm a big girl; I can catch a bus."

She said, "When you get there, you call back." There wasn't but one telephone in the neighborhood, so everybody knew your business. She told me to call back Miss Wilson and tell Miss Wilson that I had got there all right.

I went over to the bus station and met the

"I got my money and the rest of my things, and she tried to talk me into staying, but I didn't fall for it. I just laughed a lot. I guess it runs in my family; my mother laughs a lot, too. So I got me another job."

preacher, Brother Plow. He was there with my bus ticket. I jumped on the bus. I was so excited. I was looking out the window, and I was listening good for the man to say New York. I was so excited. I said to myself, "Oooh, now I get to see the movie stars." I thought you'd probably see them on the streets. I had read a book about Harlem, and I was dying to see Harlem – 125th Street, the Apollo Theater, and I was dying to see 42nd Street. I didn't understand what Wall Street was, you know. I thought it was somewhere all the rich people and celebrities be – that they'd be there just for you to look at.

When I got off in New York, I saw the people walking – it looked like everybody was walking fast and the cars was whizzing. I said, "Golly, if I get out there on this street, I'm gonna get hit by one of them cars. It's too crowded in New York." Then I saw there was two fellas, two Jewish fellas, there to meet me. I had a photograph of them. They told me that I should come with them, that they were there to meet me. While we were walking down the street, I would look up at the buildings and I ran into a stop-sign. After that I had a stiff neck from looking up at the buildings.

I got in their car and went out to the agency in Long Island. Leaving the city, I got disappointed. I said, "Oh my god, I just left the country and thought I was coming to the big city, and the man was trying to send me back to the country." The man in the agency would tell the people, "I have this nice girl here, she's very attractive, she's 18, and she's good with children." You know, they didn't know a thing about you. So they would say, "We'll bring her over in an hour, and when we get there, you have to give us $150." I said to myself, "He's selling the girls. I come all this way just to be bought and sold."

They took me out to this lady. I remember her well – Mrs. Burke at 250 Central Avenue in Cedarhurst. I got there and looked at this big old apartment building and I said, "It sure is a big old place." I had the idea that she lived there in that big old building all alone, and and she expected me to clean it all by myself. I got in there in this little apartment, and she showed me through the rooms. I asked her, "Where do your children live?"

She said, "Here with me."

"Where would I live?"

"Here with me."

"Well, where?"

"You will live and sleep in this room with my children."

"I have to share this room with your children?"

I didn't like it because the little girl slept in a cradle and I slept in one bed and the little boy slept in one bed with me. I never liked to sleep with anybody. Then I had to get used to when the lady would get up early and leave, and you didn't see them no more til five or six or seven o'clock. Then she would come in and have something to

eat. She didn't spend time with the children. I would think she don't love her children; she don't stay home. I wondered why.

### Somebody I Work For

I worked there about a month, and I kept asking her, "When is payday, when you going to pay me?" She said, "Oh, you'll get paid. Do you want me to give you money until you get paid?" So I said, "Yeah." So she gave me money. Her husband took me to Robert Hall's, and I think I bought a coat and two dresses and shoes. Anyway, I ran out of money, and he came over to the counter, and he asked me did I get everything I wanted, did I have enough money, and did I want anything else. I said no. The lady behind the counter said, "Gee, you have a good boss."

I said, "Boss?"

And she said, "Do you work for him? Is that your husband?"

"No, I work for him."

"Well, that's your boss."

I said, "Well, I just say it's somebody I work for."

When it came time to get paid, they didn't owe me, I owed them. It came up a big argument. I told her I was supposed to get $125 a week. She said, "No, I'll show you on the contract." So she went and got this contract, and she showed it to me. We was only supposed to get $100 a month.

I told her to get in touch with this agency. I told her, "I'm from the country, but I got sense enough not to work for $100 a month. I could stay at home and work for $100 a month." We called the agency, and the agency had went out of business.

She told me that she couldn't afford to pay $125 a week. She said, "You don't do a lot of cooking." I said, "Yeah, I understand that, but I sits here day and night taking care of your children, taking them to parks. I had to spend my money, cause when I take them to the store they be hollering about what they want. I didn't want to be embarrassed, so I used my money to buy them things."

She offered me $40 a week, and I told her I'd try it for awhile till I found something better.

After that she began to get very nasty and prejudiced. When her company came, she said she didn't want me to sit in the other room and watch TV. I would have to go back into my room until her company left. One day she asked me, "You wasn't used to eating steak and pork chops in West Virginia, were you?"

I told her, "Yes, I was used to good food in West Virginia."

So she said, "Well, the maids don't get treated like the family."

I said, "Well, I don't know what you mean by 'maid.' A maid is somebody who works in a hotel, right?"

"No, all of you that came up here are maids to us."

So I said, "Oh, you mean that this will be something like slavery time?"

She was from Georgia, and people were still treated like slaves in the Deep South till about 1960. I began to get very angry when she told me her parents had a lot of slaves. Then she said, "I wish it was slavery time, I'd make a good slave out of you." I got real mad and cursed her. One word followed another word, and then I got so mad that I slapped her. I slapped her hard as I could. I went into the bathroom, and the little boy came into the bathroom and bit me on the leg. I looked at him a long time and then I grabbed him. I started to throw him in the bathtub, but then I thought better of it. So I grabbed him and picked him up, and I turned him upside down by his feet and started to shake him. Then I just go so mad that I took his head and I put it in the commode.

She asked me was I crazy. I told her no. She said, "Well, you had better go back to West Virginia where they allow you to do that."

I told her that I was going to get me another job. I got my clothes and I went to a friend's house. Later, I called Mrs. Burke and asked her to pay me, and she said she would pay me when I stopped by. I felt a little uneasy going back, so I asked this boy, one of my friends to go with me. He went and got his two brothers and and said, "Come on, go with me back to get the rest of Rose's things." They were great big guys, six foot four.

So I rang the doorbell, and she said, "Who is it?"

I said it was Rose.

She said, "Well come on in."

I started to open the door, and my boyfriend said, "Let me open it." So he opened the door, and when he opened the door, he looked behind the door, and Mr. Burke was standing behind it with a car jack. I guess he was going to hit me. And her mother, father and brother was standing there waiting for me.

I got my money and the rest of my things, and she tried to talk me into staying, but I didn't fall for it. I just laughed a lot. I guess it runs in my family, my mother laughs a lot too. So I got me another job. □

# JOURNEY TO THE WHITE HOUSE: The Story of Coca-Cola

**by Bob Hall**

Asking Jimmy Carter, as John Chancellor did recently, if his reputation wasn't derived more from his use of symbols than his actual accomplishments is a little like asking Coca-Cola if its success isn't more the result of its advertising than the actual merit of its product. "Well, John," Jimmy drawled, "I don't think you can really separate the two."

Indeed you can't. Or at least, Mr. Carter is in big trouble if you do. So is J. Paul Austin, the chairman of the Coca-Cola Company. No other company or President has succeeded so well solely on the ability to manipulate images. The image *is* the product. What you get is what you *believe* you get. The consequences of a Presidency controlled by a master of the art of deception is one thing (see below: "The Politician as Magician"); but understanding the workings of a corporation built on images is something else again. Presidents come and go, but Coca-Cola was built to last forever. Forever.

It didn't start out that way, of course. For decades, Coke was in many ways the same sort of outsider that Carter was in 1976. Starting out in Atlanta in 1886, it pulled itself up by its own bootstraps, relying largely on the Southern kinship network of its founder, Asa Candler, and his first bottlers. As the fame of the drink grew, so did the fortunes of dozens of Southern families, who in turn financed ventures ranging from Delta Air Lines to Alabama's Bellingrath Gardens to the

*Bob Hall, managing editor of* Southern Exposure, *grew up in Orlando, Fla., original home of Coke's Minute Maid. He began researching the company's history seven years ago while living in Atlanta, and received support from the Fund for Investigative Journalism and the Southern Regional Council's Southern Investigative Research Project.*

Atlanta Roadway track; in time, the product propelled its makers into the top circles of national power, reflected today in J. Paul Austin's positions as chairman of the Rand Corp., director of Morgan Guaranty Trust and General Electric, member of David Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission, regent of the Smithsonian Institution, and trustee of a dozen organizations from the California Institute of Technology to the Nutrition Institute. To achieve such distinction, the men who ran the company realized even in its early years that the most important thing about their product was its good image. In the first year, they spent as much money in public relations as they earned in profits, a trend that has continued into the present when both figures hit $200 million.

Everything depended on the reputation of Coke, and like Carter's people, the men behind Coca-Cola knew they had to make the drink respectable to the skeptical yet gullible constituent. "We can't afford to offend the sensibilities of any group of people anywhere," quips a senior vice-president in Atlanta. "We stand for the very highest quality.... Clean-cut, up-right, the family, Sunday, the girl next door. *Wholesomeness*."

Selling wholesomeness is what Coca-Cola is all about. The product couldn't be perfected; only the image could be manipulated to make the drink more and more popular. And when it comes to images, Coca-Cola literally wrote the book. A sampling from its in-house pamphlet, *Philosophy of Advertising*: "Only [through advertising] can we gradually 'condition' our customers to a point where they are favorably reminded of the product when they see a simple trademark at the point-of-sale....If what we say is to make its impression, it must be repeated many times. One drop upon a stone leaves no impression, but many drops and the stone is worn away....Because Coca-Cola is bought on impulse and because we have no way of telling when and where an impulse will take hold on a customer and because that impulse will be momentary in its duration, we must aspire to so arranging our advertising as to always present an appealing invitation to 'pause for a Coke' whenever and wherever an impulse strikes any of our customers."

By succeeding in that task, the wizards behind Coke have transformed what is essentially colored sugar water into a fountain of wealth, gushing forth more millionaires than any other product in history. They have turned a one-man operation into a multi-billion dollar corporation that owns orange groves in South Africa, bottles wine in New York State, sells sewage systems in Canada, trains management specialists in Washington, cans protein drinks in South America, peddles bottled water in New England, makes instant coffee in Europe, and ships to 135 countries the magic ingredients of its mainstay product: the Fabulous Coca-Cola. The company and the product now have credentials that boggle the mind:

*world's largest consumer of granulated sugar*
*world's largest privately-owned truck fleet*
*world's most advertised product*
*world's biggest retail sales force*
*world's leading producer of citrus concentrate*
*world's most extensive franchise system*
*world's first multinational corporation of consumer products*
*world's best known product*
*world-wide supplier of private-label coffee and tea*

How the masters at Coke built their empire, and how they conquered the multitude of unbelievers, imitators, and challengers surrounding them, is a story worthy of a book (and I'm working on that now). It is a story of the power of men and money to control what you think, to generate a blend of *images* that captivate your *imagination*, that will make you think 'Coke' when you see a sign or feel tired or thirsty or a little depressed ("Coke adds life"). It is a story of the most incredible mobilization of human energy for trivial purposes since the construction of the pyramids. Think of it. The world's most highly advanced team of writers, public relations experts, psychologists, lobbyists, lawyers, sales managers, and advertising executives are focusing all their creative talents on getting young kids addicted to Coke so they'll drink it for life.

*It is the story of the most incredible mobilization of human energy for trivial purposes since the construction of the pyramids.*

It is the story of what went wrong with the American dream.

### Chapter I

Coca-Cola was born in the 1880s in a period of intense competition known today as the era of the Robber Barons. Ruthless men of wealth carved up one industry after another, hoping to acquire monopoly profits. John D. Rockefeller did it in oil, Andrew Mellon went after aluminum, Buck Duke succeeded in tobacco, Jay Gould and a few others took the railroads, Andrew Carnegie tried for steel. Coca-Cola had its strong man, too, and it typifies many giant corporations which, despite public mythology, are still led by a single strong man. The story of Coke is in many ways the story of two generations of strong men.

The first of this mighty pair was Asa Griggs Candler. Cut from the humorless, Puritan mold of

a religious mother and stern, hard-driving father, Candler pushed himself and his product from the obscurity of an Atlanta drugstore basement into national prominence. The Civil War had left Candler's prosperous parents and their sprawling west Georgia farm in disarray, but young Asa was able to use the connections of the Candler clan to secure a job as an assistant druggist in nearby Atlanta. In 1873, at the age of 21, he arrived in town with the proverbial $1.75 in his pocket – the beginning, according to Coke legend, of "the entrepreneurial spirit that makes the company strong." But with a cousin who had served as Georgia's governor and two brothers who went to the US Congress, Asa Candler was not about to fall on his face. In rapid succession, he "worked" his way up to chief clerk of the store, married the boss' daughter, opened his own drugstore, and began dabbling in the booming real estate market of a rebuilt Atlanta.

It didn't take Candler long to recognize that the real money in drugs came not from owning a store but from selling your own concoction through other people's stores, or through the ubiquitous traveling medicine man. With his savings, Candler launched his own product called Botanic Blood Balm and plunged into the greatest merchandising circus America has ever witnessed: the amazing patent, or proprietary, medicine boom – "cure-all remedies for all that ails thee." His appetite was just whetted when he heard of a new idea for a headache and hangover tonic called Coca-Cola.

Doc Pemberton, an obsessive creator of spirits and pharmaceutical wonders, had invented Coca-Cola one day in his back yard. He was searching for a new "lift-giving" medicine that he could add to his line of compounds distributed to Southern drugstores by his John S. Pemberton Chemical Company, compounds like Globe of Flower Cough Syrup, Indian Queen Hair Dye, and Triplex Liver Pills. On that spring day in 1886, Pemberton took his patented French Wine Coca (an "ideal nerve and tonic stimulant") and replaced the wine with a pinch of caffeine, a little cola extract, and a mixture of a few other oils. He was delighted with the result.

By the end of May, Pemberton had convinced a few Atlanta druggists to feature his creation, and he placed his first ad in the local newspaper heralding the product as "Exhilarating! Invigorating!" It wasn't until six months later that he discovered by accident that the medicine tasted better with carbonated water than plain tap water. By the end of 1886, Pemberton had earned $50 in profits on 25 gallons of Coca-Cola syrup and had spent $46 in advertising.

John S. Pemberton, Coca-Cola formula creator. A cardboard cutout display from 1909. Asa G. Candler, the Company's founder.

Gradually, the drink picked up sales, but Pemberton's health was rapidly declining, as were his finances. He began casting about for partners, and Coca-Cola immediately became something of a hot potato among Atlanta druggists seeking a good investment. No one quite knew what the future held for a health drink that tasted good. Soft drinks were hardly known, and the proprietary medicine field was already crowded. Nevertheless, it seemed to sell well, perhaps because of its unique combination of properties that made it a pleasant-tasting stimulant. Pemberton's assistant, Frank Robinson, had named it Coca-Cola for its major ingredients derived from the coca nut and cola plant leaf (and his hand-written rendering of the name remains the product's trademark). No one seemed to worry about whether or not the drink contained cocaine – it probably did. (The official company position is that "nobody knows about then, but it's sure not in there now.") Besides, the caffeine – equivalent to a third-of-a-cup of coffee – and the phosphoric acid's conversion of sugar to

readily digestible levulos and dextros was enough to give Coke its lift-giving kick (as well as its ability to dissolve nails). Whatever the real reason, the druggist-investors knew the product worked, and they were willing to gamble on its attractiveness in the hustling, yet melancholy days of the New South.

Since Asa Candler had personally found relief for his habitual headaches from a glass of Coke, he recognized the drink's value. And since he was a shrewd businessman, he quickly moved into the center of the financial transaction surrounding Pemberton's dispersal of his interests in the Coca-Cola formula. In two years, Pemberton had completely sold out, and Candler had made $300 by loaning money to various investors, then buying up their interest himself or helping another investor buy it at a higher price. By August 30, 1888, the broken Pemberton was two weeks in the grave and Asa Griggs Candler had purchased full ownership of the properties, titles, patents, formula and assets of the "proprietary elixir" Coca-Cola for the modest sum of $2,300. Rumors still abound in Atlanta that Candler as much as stole the formula from the aged Pemberton. The word "hustle" may be fairer. A more generous account is given by Candler's son in his father's official biography: "Dr. Pemberton was apparently a very capable druggist, but his business enterprises were never crowned with conspicuous success, and it remained for others to make his creation known all over the civilized world."

No one would question Candler's business ingenuity. By 1890, at age 38, the father of five children, Candler was grossing over $100,000 a year, chiefly from the sales of his Botanic Blood Balm, Coca-Cola, and Everlasting Cologne. Coke sales were growing so rapidly, and appeared so limitless, that Candler decided to close out his entire stock of "drugs, paints, oils, glass, varnishes, perfumery and fancy articles" in order to concentrate on one product. In the next two years, he moved to a new building, incorporated The Coca-Cola Company with himself as president and major stockholder, and devised an ambitious advertising campaign stressing the "delicious, refreshing, stimulating, invigorating" nature of his drink.

The new company's advertising budget and gallon sales of Coke skyrocketed tenfold in each of the next two decades, from $11,000 and 35,000 gallons in 1892, to $120,000 and 360,000 gallons in 1902, to more than $1 million and 4 million gallons in 1912. That year, Coca-Cola was sold in every state in the US and several foreign countries; it had earned the distinction of being the most advertised product in America, and had made Candler a millionaire many times over.

Candler's success had much to do with his niggardly habits (he saved used envelopes for scratch paper) and his insistence that all employees abide by "my views of what is the proper moral behavior that should be associated with Coca-Cola"; but the cornerstone of his business acumen was his stubborn concentration on perfecting the techniques of mass marketing and advertising. He tried every known gimmick, and invented a few himself, to get his product into drugstores and into the hearts of a buying public inundated by such merchandising innovators as F.W. Woolworth and J.C. Penney. Candler's thoroughly prudish instincts balked at the use of scantily clad women in his advertisements, but he held back nothing when it came to making claims for his "wonderful nerve and brain tonic." With the help of his nephew, Samuel C. Dobbs, who headed the company's advertising program for decades, he let loose an avalanche of new slogans attributing extraordinary medicinal qualities to a 6½ ounce glass of Coca-Cola: "relieves physical and mental lethargy," "for headaches and tired feeling," "refreshes the weary, brightens the intellect, clears the brain," "strengthens the nerves," "the favorite drink for ladies when thirsty, weary, and despondent," "remarkable therapeutic agent."

Ironically, Candler strenuously objected to the government's right to tax Coca-Cola as a proprietary medicine during the Spanish-American War, even though Coke ads had claimed it could cure

1905 magazine ad

such maladies as hysteria, neuralgia, melancholy, biliousness and insomnia. With the help of his lawyer brother John – who was the company's general counsel and an associate justice of the Georgia Supreme Court – Candler sued the federal government for $11,000 in back taxes. At a jury trial in 1902, Candler won back his money with $2,000 interest.

But stressing Coke's medicinal qualities had more drawbacks than the dreaded intervention of the government taxman. Candler and Dobbs began to realize that it limited sales to those people looking for relief from some specific discomfort. While there were plenty of people feeling miserable in the early 1900s, the routines of their daily lives demanded a wholly different remedy than anything yet imagined. The rise of the assembly line, the big city and cash in the pocket were in sharp contrast to the world of the family farm that had dominated American culture only a generation earlier. The country was undergoing a revolution in life style that systematically turned self-sufficient people into wageworkers and consumers, and with the agony of that transformation came the need for

**CASE STUDY IN FLORIDA: MIGRANTS, MONDALE, CALIFANO AND COKE**

What happens when the nation's most successful boycott organizers take on the makers of the world's best-known product? Twice in the last five years, Caesar Chavez's United Farm Workers have threatened a full-scale boycott of Coca-Cola if the company did not order its Minute Maid subsidiary to sign a union contract with Florida grove workers. Both times, the UFW won.

"We knew the thing they hate worse than anything is bad publicity," said Mack Lyons, chief organizer for the UFW in Florida. "We threatened to bring attention to how they were dealing with their workers, and to boycott them if necessary. We knew that despite all their publicity about world harmony, they didn't give anything unless they were pushed hard. We played to their weakness, and that's their 'good-guy' image."

The UFW won the orginal contract with relative ease in January, 1972, when it caught Coca-Cola reeling from the embarrassment of an NBC documentary on the inhuman treatment of migrants by citrus growers. Coca-Cola had bought Minute Maid in 1960, the same year Edward R. Murrow's devastating "Harvest of Shame" brought a flurry of national attention to Florida's migrants. Ten years later, the NBC Special revealed the same conditions: crowded camps, two and three families living together in tar-papered shacks without indoor plumbing, crew leaders who cheated "their" workers, arbitrary pay scales, nonexistent safety and sanitary provisions in the fields.

With 30,000 acres of Florida groves, Minute Maid is the country's largest citrus processor, and appeared in the film to be the biggest exploiter of migrant fruit pickers. "We decided that was not the kind of image Coca-Cola wanted to be associated with," explained William Kelly, vice-president for Coke's grove operations. To repair the damage, the company launched a massive effort, the real purpose of which, said Lyons, was "to clean up their image." Company chairman J. Paul Austin used his appearance before Senator Walter Mondale's Subcommittee to proclaim Coke's disapproval of the "deplorable" conditions in Florida and offered his help in creating a National Alliance of Agribusiness to aid minorities in agriculture. Austin was accompanied at the hearing by Coke's Washington attorney and skillful lobbyist, Joseph Califano, who had done the necessary preliminary work to prime the Congressmen and press for Austin's "self-effacing candor." It mattered little that the Alliance Austin suggested never materialized; his promises won immediate praise from Senator Mondale and a blitz of priceless publicity about Coke's concern for farmworkers.

To shore up its image further, the company poured millions of dollars into a highly publicized Agricultural Labor Program to improve living and working conditions. It also signed the first labor contract covering farmworkers in Florida history. Aware that Coke could not resist organizers in its groves without suffering public ridicule, Caesar Chavez had sent his cousin Manuel into the state to sign up Coke's workers. Within six weeks, 76 percent had signed cards indicating they wanted to be represented by the UFW. Negotiations with the company began in earnest, spurred by a few strategic visits to Coca-Cola bottlers by UFW boycott sympathizers. By early 1972, the union got what Chavez called "the best contract farmworkers have gotten anywhere the first time around." And instead of a boycott, the company reaped glowing press coverage of its humane treatment of farm laborers, and a fistful of awards for "good citizenship." (As it turned out, sometimes the award-givers needed a little push. The committee of the Anti-Defamation League which honored Austin for his "humanitarianism" was actually headed by a top executive of McCann-Erikson, the advertising agency for Coca-Cola.)

With its image restored and the UFW clearly preoccupied with commitments in California, Coke felt little pressure to renew the union contract when it ran out in January, 1975. Under its Agricultural Labor Program, Coke simply phased out its use of migrant labor so it couldn't be embarrassed again. Now its labor relations problems were more typical of giant corporations that squeeze their workers whenever possible. "When the contract expired, they just waited to see what we could do," said Lyons. "They knew we couldn't strike in this economy, and they felt very secure with their new image."

"As soon as the contract went down, things got very tough," said Watson Carter, a veteran Minute Maid fruit picker who made $9,000 in the last year covered by the UFW contract. "They'd take us in a grove and tell us the rate we'd get, and if we didn't like it, they said they'd find others to pick it. It's like holding a gun to your head." Under the old contract, a committee of UFW and Coke representatives set piece rates above the standard 47¢-per-box figure for groves with poor trees and high grass. "They ended all that," said Carter. "It was take it or leave it – just like the old days before the union. Of course, they still paid us a little more than others so they could brag about being the best in the indus-

new mechanisms of relief. Populism, evangelical revivals, unionization, socialism, reactionary movements fueled by racism and nativism all experienced a boom in the period from 1880 to 1920. Coca-Cola offered something different. It didn't confront the changes; it made them easier to endure; it projected an image of the good life that came with "the pause that refreshes." For only a nickel, it offered a pleasant escape into a fantasy world of pretty girls, warm friends and wholesome fun.

Today, we are bombarded so often with such image advertising, including Coke's ads which associate the drink with everything from falling in love to world harmony, that we take the technique for granted; or put another way, advertisers now largely determine what we conceive of as satisfying, convenient, good, responsible, valuable and fun. But in the early 1900s, when quick things that made you feel good – especially sex and booze – were given the Victorian frown, Coke was taking a bold move to pioneer a market for itself as "a delightful surprise" (1924). Ever so cautiously, Samuel Dobbs altered the emphasis of Coke's ad copy from pragmatic cure to fantasy delight, from

try – but we knew they could do more."

William Kelly claims the company voluntarily extended the expired contract "in all its terms" on a day-to-day basis, and continued the "hardship" rates for bad groves. But an examination of Carter's pay-stubs confirms his average price rate and total income dropped 20 percent from the previous season.

"That's just the way they do it," says the soft-spoken Lyons. "They tell the press one thing and tell us something else. If we could just get them to do what they say they do, we figured we'd be in fine shape."

Negotiations for a new contract continued through the winter and spring of 1975 with little result. By the summer, the farmworkers were getting restless. On July 4, they read a Declaration of Independence from Coke's "paternalism" in front of the Minute Maid headquarters in Auburndale, and Lyons began a 16-day publicity-seeking fast. Charges and countercharges began to fly, but little word of the conflict spread beyond the state. Then in August, after the California legislature passed its Agricultural Labor Relations Act for supervised elections between the Teamsters and UFW, the union staged small demonstrations at Coke's Atlanta and Houston offices to let the company know well-oiled boycott machinery was free to tackle a non-California target. At the national UFW convention in September, the members endorsed an international boycott of Coca-Cola "if it becomes necessary."

"Things went much better in negotiations after that," declared Lyons. "Everything was on the table. Coca-Cola's Kelly agreed that "we were very close," but when several more meetings produced no results, Lyons and a group of farmworkers drove to Atlanta to begin a three-week series of around-the-clock sit-ins inside Coke's office building, culminating in the arrest of four union members for criminal trespassing. As the union hoped, the demonstrations brought in the national media and Coca-Cola capitulated. It sent a delegation of senior officers to La Paz, California, to meet with Chavez himself and sign a new three-year contract.

"They were playing a public relations game with us all along," concludes Lyons. "The Atlanta actions put us over the top because they let the company see what a boycott campaign could do to their image." Company spokesmen refused to comment on the union's tactics.

> ***"You'd be sensitive about your image, too, if everybody knew your name," explained a Coca-Cola executive.***

Coca-Cola's image is perhaps the best monitored and most carefully cultivated complex of symbols in the world – the Pope and the Presidency notwithstanding. Today, a $200 million advertising budget and a sophisticated legal and public relations team insure that nothing controversial (like pollution or discrimination or migrant labor) becomes identified with the products.

"You'd be sensitive about your image, too, if everybody knew your name," explained a finance officer.

"Can I quote you on that?" a reporter asked.

"Absolutely not," he shot back. "The company has a very strict policy that all answers for the press must come from the public relations department. If you quote me in an article, I'll be fired. It's as simple as that."

Despite such enforced carefulness, the embarrassing truth about what really goes on behind "The Real Thing" occasionally hits the headlines. When it does, the Coca-Cola team is mobilized to quell, if not co-opt, the source of opposition. For example, there was a tremendous uproar in 1966 when the Jewish community in New York City discovered that Coke had refused to award a franchise to an Israeli bottling firm because it feared losing its multimillion dollar business in the Arab countries – many of which had a higher per capita consumption of Coca-Cola than the US. In the course of a week, the Anti-Defamation League denounced Coke, the *New York Times* exposed it, and businesses from Mt. Sinai Hospital to Nathan's Famous Hotdog Emporium threatened a boycott. Coke's management was "deeply distressed over the high emotional content" of the charges, which they claimed were "unfair and unfounded." Their first line of defense was to say that no "suitable" bottlers could be found in Israel, but by week's end, with the controversy still raging, they miraculously found a franchiser for Israel. In retaliation, the Arabs mounted a total boycott of Coca-Cola. From the company's perspective, it was a price worth paying in order to prevent a greater loss of reputation in America.

Florida's farmworkers may prove to be a much more difficult constituency to co-opt. And the truth about Coke's "model" programs for its workers

*(continued on next page)*

1904 blotter

"specific for headache" (1893) to "relieves the weary" (1905) to "full of vim, vigor and go" (1907) to "the drink that cheers but does not inebriate" (1908) to "when life and energy seem to be oozing out of your pores with each drop of perspiration and it just seems you can't go a step further or do a lick more of work, step into any place and drink a Coca-Cola. You'll wonder first what turned on the cool wave...." (1910) to "enjoy a glass of liquid laughter" (1911) to "its fun to be thirsty when you can get a Coca-Cola" (1913).

In the decades ahead, the trend escalated and

may prove a recurring burden for the purveyor of world harmony – especially as long as the UFW is there to make waves – because the real story of what has happened at Minute Maid differs substantially from the glossy hand-outs distributed by Coca-Cola.

Coke began tampering with its Florida image even before it became national news in 1970. Just before NBC aired its "White Paper" on migrants, Coca-Cola President J. Lucian Smith (then president of the company's Foods Division) engineered a meeting with NBC producer Reuven Frank which resulted in the deletion of the two segments most critical of Coke. After the broadcast, copies reproduced for distribution to libraries and schools had a special notice attached at the end of the film telling viewers that Coca-Cola had since undertaken a comprehensive program to upgrade the living standard of its workers.

The company steadfastly maintains that its Agricultural Labor Program (ALP) began well before the bad publicity. J. Lucian Smith, it says, toured the Minute Maid operations in 1968 and returned to Atlanta to report conditions so bad they "could not in good conscience be tolerated by the Coca-Cola Company." In fact, nothing concrete was done until the NBC documentary and Senator Mondale's Subcommittee on Migratory Labor brought Coke's policies into the national limelight. Even then, Coke's efforts seemed designed for their publicity value. Each new step in the ALP was announced with handsome PR materials, glossy photos, and special press tours. A journalist was hired to see if a book might be written on the project's progress. "They obviously viewed it as a long-term goodwill investment," the reporter recalls. But the book was soon deemed "too heavy-handed" and abandoned in favor of a 25-minute color film which the company still shows visitors. Smith sent personal letters to friendly newspapers indicating that their "editorial support means much to us." The subsequent orgy of "promo" materials prompted Otis Wragg, then editor of the *New York Times*-owned Lakeland *Ledger*, to protest: "When I see them spending about as much for publicity as they do for actual services, then I have to question their effort."

Despite this history, William Kelly, the man in charge of the ALP, still tells reporters, "One of our principles was that anything in connection with the project would be open, but we would not seek publicity ourselves. We didn't want it to be a public relations tool of the company. . . .We have not attempted to generate publicity about it ourselves."

Reality again diverges from Coke's misleading, if not deceptive, descriptions of the Agricultural Labor Project's three principal program areas: housing, social services and health care, and employment. Company propaganda suggests the programs were designed to "break the endless cycle of poverty" affecting farmworkers. In fact, the thrust of each program has more to do with creating a more stable and productive workforce for Coca-Cola with government subsidies and a minimum of public criticism.

**Housing**: Perhaps the most publicized part of the Agricultural Labor Project is the 85-home Lakeview Park development that Coca-Cola "made happen," as Kelly puts it. Company brochures and magazine articles in publications like *Reader's Digest* and the *Atlanta Constitution* describe the development, located in Frostproof, Florida, as a pristine delight, complete with a lakefront pavilion and community-owned orange grove. But for most Minute Maid workers the project has been quite upsetting. To begin with, Coke tore down the camps that had housed some 600 workers in the peak season. Those who couldn't get into the relatively tiny, 85-home Lakeview Park had to move on or find quarters elsewhere. For those who could get in, the $14,500-to-$18,000 cost of the homes meant that monthly mortgage payments, even with FHA financing, began consuming an exorbitant portion of their payroll checks.

"There's a lot I don't like about this setup," says Larry Hill, a picker for Minute Maid. "The finance company has been raising my payments since I got here. It started out at $80 a month; now it's $151. We had a bad year here, so that makes it hard." The pressure of constant payments forced workers to be more efficient pickers; if they couldn't make it, the company hoped others would move in who could handle the responsibility of home ownership – namely the more stable worker who had probably never been a migrant. Sometimes those who managed to get into Lakeview Park were forced to leave through no fault of their own. Aaron Banks was one of the first to move into the new homes, but when he fell from one of Coke's citrus trees, and injured his back, he lost his income and eventually defaulted on his house. Ironically, he was forced to move in with friends in one of Coca-Cola's old migrant camps, which now belongs to a local church. The case of Banks' foreclosure is far from unique. Spokesmen for the ALP continue to describe the project as "a success story," but today more than *one-fourth of the 85 homes are empty*. Because all but three of the homes have been sold at least once,

soon the words became less important than the scenes of happy smiles. The astronomical growth in Coke sales proved that Candler and his associates had created a market for "the great national drink" that satisfies "the heart's desire" (1916). They had only to get their product out to the masses and maintain their lead over any new entries in the field. The second task of keeping the upper-hand against any would-be competitors was helped by a vigorous legal campaign against upstart soft-drink companies that said things Coke now regarded as deceitful. Truth in advertising had not yet taken hold in America, but as Coke's name became established, along with the names of Wrigley and Hershey and Camel, a new impulse for honesty in advertising arose among America's leading merchandisers. A host of newcomers like Taka-Cola, Polo Kola, Vera Cola and Chero-Cola were capitalizing on slogans created by Coke to win a share of what Candler thought was rightfully his market. Competitors became "imitators" and John Candler and the company's legal department sued hundreds of them, successfully setting precedent after precedent in the new field of trademark law.

Coke has gotten back nearly all its original investment in starting the development. "Our number one objective was that the company should not make any profit on Lakeview Park," Kelly volunteered. "The number two objective was to lose as little as possible."

**Health and Social Services**: Frostproof is also the site of Coke's model health clinic. Far from being "unprecedented," the clinic is one of 14 similar units across the state under various sponsorships. It's not the biggest, nor does it focus on servicing migrants. In fact, in comparison with the other clinics, Coke's Frostproof project looks more like a sophisticated company program for keeping workers healthy than the "unique self-help" program described in public relations brochures.

The West Orange Farm Workers Clinic (WOFWC) in nearby Apoka provides an illuminating contrast to Coke's operation. A genuine, community-based project, without the financial assistance of Coca-Cola, WOFWC has had to hustle for everything it's gotten. Even though the clinic serves many Minute Maid grove workers, the company rejected a plea for a piece of its land that the clinic originally selected as an ideal site.

"Coke had a chance to help us and they didn't," says Ellery Grey, WOFWC's director. "But we got by anyway. It made us do our own work, and we're better off for that in the end." Grey would still like to get a chunk of Coca-Cola's money, but he doesn't want to be considered a part of their operation. "Two months after we opened we were serving more people than Coke's Frostproof clinic. We provided more programs with a smaller budget. I'm not criticizing their efforts; their dentistry program is especially strong. But maybe the image they promote is more than what they've earned."

Along with the Frostproof clinic, Coca-Cola has created four area Community Development Corporations which sponsor tutoring, libraries, child care, recreation, and related programs such as a comprehensive screening program of the health needs of its employees. The company has spent about $7 million for all these programs; since 1970, however, Kelly admits that over $1 million of this money went straight to outside consultants who helped launch the CDCs. About 20 percent of the funds for the CDCs comes from HEW – now headed by Coke friend Joseph Califano. Meanwhile, the Woodruff Foundation, which is controlled by the 87-year-old powerhouse behind Coke, Robert W. Woodruff, and which ranks among the top seven foundations in the country (assets: $250 million + ), gives away several million dollars *each year* to medical programs, primarily Emory University's Woodruff Medical School. Why doesn't the Woodruff Foundation help out in Florida? "We were encouraged not to ask them," an ALP staffer replies awkwardly. "They have other concerns."

**Employment**: Ironically, Robert Woodruff's old maxim, "I want everybody associated with Coca-Cola to make money," is occasionally mentioned in connection with what the company calls "the one major goal" of the Agricultural Labor Program: "to break the endless cycle of poverty that is often the lot of the migratory worker and to give to that worker a sense of stability and opportunity to enjoy the benefits made possible in today's economic system."

To implement that goal, Minute Maid reorganized its labor force of 1500 into 250 hourly-paid grove workers and 950 piece-rate harvesters. The problem of the 300 migrants the company normally hired was solved by simply doing away with their jobs, and increasing the work load for the remaining employees. Within a year and a half, productivity had increased 20 percent; in three years, the turnover rate had dropped by half. Today, hiring is done through the union hall, and according to Kelly, the crews are composed of "basically the same people" from year to year. Unlike most citrus companies, Coca-Cola profits by hiring pickers year-round because it can use them to harvest its huge lemon groves in the off-season for oranges.

Those who have remained on the stabilized payroll receive the best wages in the industry and a package of vacation, sick-leave and pension benefits that is, as the company says, "unparalleled" for citrus workers. But to call the benefits "generous" – another Coke catch-word – is stretching credulity. In the first five years of giving better benefits, the program for 1200 employees cost Coke about $2 million. Minute Maid spent that much in a few weeks not too long ago to advertise a new brand of orange juice which it later recalled from the market.

According to Mack Lyons, the increased wages and benefits were the only good parts of the ALP – and the union deserves the credit for making them permanent. "The problem is not housing or social services, but economics," says Lyons. "Coke wants to sell the problem their way so they can get the government to subsidize what should be their responsibility. If they provided decent wages, they wouldn't need those programs. That's why people want us here. They know they can't trust Coke."•

1908 calendar

1916 company history

1923 magazine ad

1941 calendar

(It was not until 1942 that a major case against Pepsi-Cola's right to use the "cola" ending finally broke Coke's monopoly on the word.) Meanwhile, Samuel Dobbs traveled across the country preaching the virtues of honest advertising; in 1909 he was selected president of the Associated Advertising Clubs of America (predecessor of the American Advertising Federation), and in 1911 his "Ten Commandments of Advertising" became the industry's standard for decent propaganda. From the purveyor of phony promises, Coke proudly elevated itself to "the leader in truthful advertising."

The task of getting the product out to the masses was also handled by a Candler relative. Nephew Daniel C. Candler went on the road with a horse and buggy to peddle Coke, and in 1894 went to Dallas to open the company's first branch office. Asa's sons worked in the Atlanta production center, which, for the first few years, was hardly more than a large kettle in which the ingredients were mixed. One son supervised the operations in New York and later introduced Coca-Cola to London. Candler even imposed on his brother Warren, who became the ranking bishop in the Southern Methodist Church, to distribute coupons for free drinks to local druggists in his home base of Nashville. (Asa and Warren's invasion of Cuba on behalf of Coca-Cola and Christ is described in the Fall, 1976, issue of *Southern Exposure.*)

Coupons, trays, outdoor billboards, metal signs, wall paintings, soda fountain urns, clocks, calendars, matchbooks, and all manner of decorative displays were employed by Candler's growing sales force to entice druggists to dispense the product from their fountains. In addition, the bottling of Coke begun by a pair of Chattanooga businessmen in 1899 rapidly expanded into an elaborate, and thoroughly incestuous, franchising network.* Even though the network operated independently of his money or directives, Chandler kept his eye on the bottlers by maneuvering another nephew into a position of coordinating their internal relations through publication of *The Coca-Cola Bottler.* As business mushroomed, the Coca-Cola Company opened more field offices to service its expanding market, and Candler satisfied his fascination with real estate by generally building a "Candler Building" in each new city: New York, Baltimore, Havana, Toronto, Kansas City, Los Angeles – the list kept growing.

As one of the richest men in the South, Candler found himself increasingly involved in real estate, politics and philanthropy. In 1914, when World War I broke out and the bottom fell out of the cotton market, he single-handedly bailed out the region by establishing his own crop-support price for farmers; he built huge warehouses in Atlanta and offered to loan any farmer six cents per pound for the cotton they stored with him. Candler's Central Bank & Trust began shelling out $100,000 per day, and promised to loan out $30 million if necessary. The farmers never fully tested this promise, however, since America's build-up for the war soon brought cotton prices back up. Nevertheless, as a local newspaper reported, "The system under which the Atlanta Warehouse Company is operating will eventually revolutionize the marketing of cotton and will finally do away with the ruinous system of selling the entire crop at harvest time for what it will bring on a glutted market."

The popularity of Candler's program to help the little farmer made him a natural choice when Atlanta's business elite began looking for one of

** Recent figures indicate that half of the 600 Coca-Cola bottlers are still controlled by only 57 family dynasties (mostly Southerners). In 1971, the Federal Trade Commission issued a formal complaint against soft drink franchise systems, charging that the provision giving bottlers a territorial monopoly restricted competition and cost consumers an extra $1.5 billion per year. Coke bottlers led what then Senator Fred Harris called "the biggest lobbying effort I ever witnessed" to block the FTC with special interest legislation, and when the company president came to testify before Congress, he brought along Joseph Califano, then a skilled lobbyist frequently employed by Coca-Cola, now Jimmy Carter's Secretary of HEW. Observers now predict that the FTC staff will lose its battle to have bottlers compete with each other across territorial lines.*

1946 magazine ad

1951 Santa

1968 booklet

1970 "Golden Legacy" series

their number to run for mayor in 1916. The city, as Candler told his son, was "financially and morally bankrupt" and needed an energetic "chief executive of this corporation." Candler was also becoming more aggravated with "federal legislation adverse to accumulation of surplus [capital]." Until 1915, wrote his son, "in a very real sense, the Coca-Cola Company was Asa G. Candler, and the line between his personal property purchases and those of the company was frequently faintly defined." The new federal income statute ended all that, requiring the company to divest itself of its non-related real estate holdings. In late 1916, Coke distributed over $6 million in property to its stockholders, and a few months later, Asa G. Candler, Inc., was formed to hold Candler's vast assets.

At age 64, Candler turned over the reins of the trimmed-down Coca-Cola business to his sons and, having won the mayoral race, began administering the city as though it was his personal fiefdom. He defeated a union engineer from Southern Railway who mounted a sizable campaign (winning 35 percent of the vote) against Candler's anti-labor practices. But Candler's belief in the wisdom of an elite was only reinforced. Shortly before his term ended, he lectured his fellow citizens on the dangers of how "a democracy runs quickly to anarchy":

> *"When the world is made safe for democracy, it will still remain for us to make democracy safe for the world. A rapid, ranting democracy which has taken leave of all settled principles of right and silenced the voice of conscience is about as unsafe a force as can be imagined, and the raising of such democracies is the peculiar peril of cities without both intelligence to know what is right and virtue to do the right that is known."*

It was precisely this blend of moral and corporate rhetoric that would dominate the Trilateral Commission upon which J. Paul Austin and Jimmy Carter sat decades later.

While Candler continued a number of projects, including the development of the Druid Hills suburb and Emory University, his lackluster sons began to wonder if the Coke business had not reached its maximum potential. Competitors were successfully invading the market, the Coca-Cola trademark was still not securely protected by law, the price of sugar that had skyrocketed during the war refused to drop, and a suit filed against the company under the Pure Food and Drug Act threatened the very formula of their beloved product.

This last development was especially menacing to the Candler family. When the Pure Food and Drug Act went into effect in 1906, the man in charge of its enforcement, Dr. Harvey Wiley, began publicly calling the makers of Coca-Cola "dope peddlers" ("dope" is still slang for Coke in the South) and "poisoners." In 1909, he had a shipment of Coke syrup seized on its way to Chattanooga. In the resulting trial, *US* v. *Forty Barrels and Twenty Kegs of Coca-Cola*, one court after another considered Wiley's charges that the new law prohibited additions of caffeine to the product and prohibited further use of the drink's world-famous name since it contained no coca and little cola. Company lawyers argued that caffeine was not an additive but an essential part of the drink, and that many products from pineapples to Grape-Nuts didn't contain derivatives of the substances mentioned on their labels.* The battle raged for

* *With the rise of consumerism in the 1960s, the Food and Drug Administration revived its opposition to Coke feeding kids caffeine without their mothers' knowledge. Through its adroit lobbying, Coca-Cola held out until the FDA chief could be replaced with a friend of the industry, then got what's known as "the Coca-Cola Amendment" passed which made caffeine a* mandatory *ingredient for all "cola" and "pepper-type" drinks – its answer to the question, "How do we know what our kids are drinking?" The amendment left the labeling of ingredients optional, so when Coke began listing caffeine as an ingredient on the drink's bottling caps, it proudly claimed that it "voluntarily initiated a program of ingredient labeling . . . that went beyond what was required . . . [and set] an example for the rest of the soft drink industry."*

years, but by the time the Supreme Court ordered Coke to obey the Act, Dr. Wiley had been replaced by a less aggressive administrator, who let the company off the hook in 1918 with a small modification in their manufacturing process and a bill for legal costs of about $90,000. Nevertheless, the anxious Candler sons had already begun negotiations, and in 1919, in the largest financial transaction the South had yet known, the Coca-Cola Company was sold for $25 million to a consortium backed by three banks: Chase National and Guaranty Trust, both of New York City, and Atlanta's Trust Company of Georgia.

Thus ended the first epoch of Coca-Cola's history. As Asa concluded: "When I gave them [his four sons] the business, it was theirs. They sold out a big share for a fancy price. I wouldn't have done that, but they did, and from a sales standpoint, they drove a pretty keen bargain."

The moving spirit behind the new owners of Coca-Cola was Ernest Woodruff, a man every bit as shrewd and expansive in his operations as Asa Candler. As president of the Trust Company of Georgia, he had helped launch several businesses that continue today, including Atlantic Steel Company, Continental Gin, and the predecessor of The Mumford Company. But Coke was already well established, and when its new owners decided to get a new president in 1923, they asked for Ernest's prime creation: his son Robert.

Robert Winship Woodruff quickly became a living legend. He had already worked his way into the presidency of Cleveland's White Motor Company, and for a few years continued in the post while also serving as president of Coca-Cola. He was 33 in 1923, when he took charge of Coca-Cola, and he has never really given it up; at age 87, partially disabled by a stroke, he still goes into his office in Coke's headquarters whenever he's in Atlanta. Visited there recently, he talked about Coke chairman J. Paul Austin and president J. Lucian Smith, the business-college types who are transforming the company from a personal extension of first Candler and then Woodruff into a sophisticated, diversified, management-team-centered corporation that can better compete in the modern business world. As he looked at their pictures across his desk, Woodruff noted that "he had hired them," and with a characteristic twinkle, added that although he doesn't interfere in management, they keep their jobs "as long as they do what I like." As chairman of the board's finance committee and controller of roughly 20 percent of Coke's stock, Woodruff is in a good position to see that the transition of power to a new generation is smoothly executed. Most of the board members of Coke have been his personal friends for decades: of the 18, only two are not Southerners or company employees; one-third are over 70 years old.

Asa Candler actively directed Coke for 24 years; Woodruff headed its growth for more than half a century. Everything Candler did, Woodruff did bigger and better. His exploits broadened the company into an international financial power and thrust Atlanta into the mainstream of America's political economy. It was upon the base largely built by him that Jimmy Carter rose to national power. It was no accident that J. Paul Austin legitimized Carter for the Northern banking centers, or that candidate Carter used Coke's international sales network, instead of the State Department, for his foreign trips, or that his closest advisor Charles Kirbo, and the head of the transition team, Jack Watson, and his new Attorney General, Griffin Bell, all came from King & Spalding, the law firm that has long knit its two chief clients, Trust Company of Ga. and Coca-Cola, into *the* dominate force in Atlanta. Changing what comes out of the White House vending machines from Pepsi to Coca-Cola is only one of the smaller ways President Carter will return the favors. But that's another story.☐

# Jimmy Carter: Master Magician

**by Bob Hall**

Figuring out Jimmy Carter has become such an exciting and profitable pastime for writers and commentators that it may be too good to give up. Even when what he is becomes obvious, we'll still keep watching his every move, ever more impressed by a finesse that has not been seen in Washington for many years. Jimmy Carter is a master illusionist, and even when his magic is known to be nothing more than a series of finely tuned techniques, the power to captivate our attention will remain, perhaps even intensify.

Many of us in the South were understandably amused by the success of Jimmy's big act on the campaign trail. We gleefully watched him mesmerize the normally haughty national media and parlay the symbols of Southern provincialism into a national revival. But now that he has made it to the top, we feel a little duty-bound to admit that he's not really just a good ole boy — especially since so many political analysts in the North persist in searching for the secret of Jimmy Carter in the South. In truth, the significance and skill of Jimmy Carter's magic act goes far beyond the routines of Southern politics.

Southerners are quite familiar with the politician as magician. In fact, the South itself may rightly be seen as largely illusion: a place built on images, on the manipulation of symbols and the projection of order, beauty and unity onto what would otherwise appear as arbitrary, coercive and fragmented. It is no surprise that the South has nurtured its brightest minds into the nation's most noted novelists, journalists, politicians and preachers. These are the trades that thrive in a culture rooted in myth and mystery, rhetoric and romance. Jimmy Carter is a hero in this culture.

What we have now is the Americanization of the Southern hero, or rather the Southernization of America's identity crisis. For generations, Southern politicians have made it into office by promising their voters nothing more than self-respect. With an impressive repertoire of gimmicks and symbols

***In the campaign, he manipulated his symbols with information gained from computer technology. . . . In the White House, he merged image and technique with a team of management wizards recruited from Coca-Cola***

(from galoshes and suspenders to Bibles and bicycles), they succeeded by making the mass of defeated, humiliated white Southerners believe in themselves, believe that they *could* survive, that they were better than *those other* people, that the South *shall* rise again! Southern politicians gave people pride, not prosperity, and for more than a century it worked.

Now an America shaken by the guilt of Vietnam, the shame of Richard Nixon, and the anxiety of economic crisis has turned to the modern Southerner for a few words of moral uplift. Jimmy Carter's mission is to deliver us from evil with a government "as good as the people." He promises to restore our national image, our belief in ourselves. Oh yes, Lord! We are a great country after all. Our righteousness will see us through the hard days. America *shall* rise again.

It's a fantastic image, and with the proper orchestration it will continue to sell big. The trick, of course, is to package this image so well that it keeps selling even after it is recognized as rhetoric. The medium must become the message; the humble, gracious, open-minded, honest President *is* the government! Responsive politics is no longer a system that makes the state accountable to people, but a superleader that citizens have access to. We believe that the government cares because Jimmy cares, and he's okay because he says we're okay. We are gently reminded that our real strengths as a nation are moral, not material, and our new feeling of superiority helps us forget who's pushing the cost of energy up, or why we're laid off, or what happened to national health insurance.

For this kind of finesse to be believable, very sophisticated image manipulation is required. Too sophisticated for the run-of-the-mill, good-oleboy Southern "populist." Jimmy Carter has succeeded so well — and will continue to do so — because he understands better than any previous President, including the facile JFK, that the power of magic in politics depends on mastering the techniques that control the audience's attention. He has coupled his regional instincts for charm, sincerity and rhetoric with a keen appreciation for the technology that allows him to know and shape what it is people want to hear and feel.

There is no contradiction in this: the best magician is always the best technician. He knows exactly when to look you in the eye, when to tug his sleeve, when to introduce a new prop, with each movement designed to lull you into thinking things are happening that really aren't. It is precisely Carter's preoccupation with the mechanisms of political leadership that separates him from the intuitive, earthy Southern style of a Bible-quoting Sam Ervin or a sloganeering George Wallace. He is the master magician because he has adapted his skills as a technician, an engineer and a management specialist to the problem of Presidential power in an era when people are cynical about politics and Presidents. He manipulates his images for maximum appeal with information gained from systems analysis. No other Southerner ever did that.

In the campaign, the merger of image and technology was best represented by Pat Caddell, the Yankee computer-polling wizard. Everything from the green color-coding of the campaign literature to the inspirational tone of the Carter speeches was developed from detailed analysis of computer print-outs on the American voter. In fact, the process started in 1974 when Carter, as the Democratic Party's National Campaign Coordinator for the mid-term election, gathered an elaborately detailed portrait of voters which revealed how hungry people were for symbols they could believe in again. With this knowledge, Carter began his act, dropping one image after another into the national media about who he *really* was: populist, outsider, non-racist, agrarian, manage-

*"What we appeal to in the consumer and voter is an attitude. We want them to have a positive feeling toward the product regardless of their point of view."*

**— Tony Schwartz, creator of ads for Coca-Cola and Jimmy Carter**

ment expert, fiscal conservative, born-again Christian. In the final days of the campaign, when Carter's popularity in the polls was slipping, the creator of hundreds of Coca-Cola commercials, Tony Schwartz, was brought in to help. The voters were beginning to wonder if the moralist farmer they liked could be a respectable president; so the man who worked on making Coke "the real thing" repackaged Carter as the serious, subdued candidate. "We took him out of the fields and put him in a suit in a library," says Schwartz about the new TV ads. "Whether it's Coca-Cola or Jimmy Carter, what we appeal to in the consumer or voter is an attitude. We don't try to convey a point of view, but a montage of images and sounds that leaves the viewer with a positive attitude toward the product regardless of his perspective." This final touch by Coke's brilliant media technician put Carter over the top and foreshadowed things to come.

Once in the White House, the Carter show took on dazzling dimensions. It's not just that he continues working the symbols to keep his own popularity high. He literally intends to transform the image and technique of government administration so that it becomes both more acceptable to the general population and more efficient in serving America's economic interests in a new era of global competition. To accomplish such an ambitious goal, Carter first brought in a team of management wizards who had the vision, administrative skills, and muted arrogance to reorder America's system of government. The merger of image and technique which these managers relish is perhaps best illustrated by the members of the Carter team selected from two of the world's largest multinational corporations, Coca-Cola and IBM (including Coke-retained attorneys and executives

Griffin Bell, Joseph Califano, Charles Kirbo, Charles Duncan and J. Paul Austin, and IBM directors Harold Brown, Patricia Harris and Cyrus Vance).

No other organizations have succeeded so well in perfecting the technique of packaging their products with an irresistible mystique. Coca-Cola has done it by literally transforming what is essentially colored sugar water into an all-purpose elixir indispensable to life itself. It is the world's quintessential manipulator of images—and it is run by Southerners. IBM has done it by making technological innovations indispensable to the business world's capacity to expand. It is the quintessential manipulator of information, the basis of modern organizational planning and power.

Behind the images of these clean companies faithfully serving their constituents lie nothing less than the most sophisticated, shrewd and far-sighted corporate managers in the world. Like Carter, they are fundamentally technicians, the master manipulators of image and information; they deal in goals and management-by-objective, not antiquated ideologies that can be labeled "conservative" or "liberal." Like Carter, they are specialists in reorganizing bureaucracies to maximize their efficiency in solving problems. Their two interrelated goals are simply to restore public confidence in a faltering domestic political economy and to bolster the position of the dollar—the ultimate expression of America—in an expanding system of international trade. The first requires opening the government to outsiders with everything from walk-in voter registration to phone-in talk shows; and in doing that Carter appears the liberal. The second involves controlling inflation with everything from cutting pork-barrel spending to opposing labor's minimum wage; and in doing that Carter appears the conservative.

In fact, both programs are part of a style of politics as new to the South as to Washington. It is a style that unites magic and technology, image and information, a style that is more fascinated with the mechanism of efficient administration for reaching measurable objectives than with balancing off the special interests and their lobbyists.

Meanwhile, by playing the country boy from Plains, Jimmy endears himself to the voters and keeps the attention of the media focused on his Southern roots. Of course, we don't mind a little attention down here now and again, but we know our quaint ways can sometimes distract people from the bigger issues. Behind the sleight-of-hand tricks, Jimmy's main act has more to do with the introduction of corporate gamesmanship and computer technology into Presidential politics than with bringing work shirts and black-eyed peas into the White House; it is the dramatic distortion of democracy, not its fulfillment.

# Jimmy Carter and "Populism"

**by Lawrence Goodwyn**

Beginning in the spring of 1976, when the nomination of Jimmy Carter first became a distinct possibility, and extending through the ensuing campaign and into the first hundred days of the Carter presidency, a fairly uncommon ideological question intruded into mainstream American politics: "Is he a populist?"

*The question, "Is he or isn't he?" raises the fundamental issues about the meaning of modern American democracy.*

The question was asked with great longing by some, with considerable anxiety by others, but, in either case, the possibility of presidential "populism" acquired, for awhile, a fair amount of notoriety. Now that Mr. Carter has, in his own interesting fashion, provided impressive evidence that he is not a populist, the entire episode might be put aside as a temporary national aberration were it not for the fact that the implicit issues raised – including the very meaning of modern political language – cast such revealing light on the rigidity of contemporary American politics.

Carter himself precipitated the discussion by his quiet acknowledgement, made quite early in his bid for the Democratic nomination, that he was indeed a "populist." The term evoked images of legions of Southern and Western farmers striving, some time in the late nineteenth century, for more economic justice and, as such, was consoling to many Americans of progressive persuasion. But before Carter's early primary victories, his pronouncement stirred little general interest – especially east of the Hudson River where manifestations of the original Populist impulse had been virtually nonexistent and where the topic has ever since remained cloudy. But by the time Carter had demonstrated his growing electoral muscle in the Pennsylvania primary in the late spring, a number of Northeastern urbanites, including a banker or two, began to interest themselves in the populistic proclivities of Jimmy Carter. The serious investigation of Carter's ideological presumptions was upon us.

The inquiry was beset by a certain amount of organic confusion from the outset, for any measurement of Carter's populism necessarily depended upon some sort of understanding of what "Populism" was. And this, of course, meant grasping the essentials of the original specimen which appeared in the late nineteenth century. A generation ago, the noted historian, C. Vann Woodward, did his best to provide a calm, scholarly description of historical Populism through his brilliant biography of Tom Watson, the agrarian captain from Carter's home state of Georgia. Some years later, Woodward followed with an investigation of Populism throughout the South, published as part of his magisterial rendition of the post-Reconstruction era, *Origins of the New South*. But though Woodward presented an impressive case that Populism in the South was serious business, and though subsequent scholarship has offered evidence that it was serious business in the Western granary as well, the Gilded Age reformers continued to receive considerably more condescension from twentieth-century Americans than serious inspection.

Despite the efforts of those historians who wrote in the Woodwardian tradition, Populism did not materialize as a progressive movement in our history books. Rather, it remained somewhat odorous (either faintly or malevolently) and, above all, vaguely defined. In this fashion, the agrarian revolt was dimly perceived as some sort of mass popular movement unencumbered by serious intellectual content. The conclusion seemed to be that a Populist was someone who was "for the people," but precisely how he or she proceeded to demonstrate this loyalty remained obscure.

Contributing to the uncertainty over time were a number of Eastern-based academics – notably Richard Hofstadter, Oscar Handlin, and Daniel Bell – who seemed to restrict their research to local libraries where primary materials on populism were necessarily in short supply. In their hands, Populism was "irrational," "zenophobic," and altogether something from which Americans were well spared. Indeed, Jimmy Carter's willingness to associate himself with such a questionable historical experience indicated he might not quite measure up to the minimum requirements of presidential stability.

From such premises, then, the investigation of Jimmy Carter's populist roots proceeded. The results were contradictory. It was discovered that his maternal forebears in Georgia had been disciples of Populist Tom Watson, and that they shared with Watson the conviction that credit merchants in the South, and the American banking system generally, were systematically exploiting the great mass of American farmers. Building upon this conviction, Watson, and presumably Miss Lillian's parents who supported Watson, developed some rather far-fetched ideas about the proper structure of the American economic system.

On the other hand, Jimmy Carter's paternal forebears were credit merchants who, like their counterparts elsewhere in the South, managed to acquire title to much of the surrounding countryside. As such, from a Populist perspective, they were part of the problem, not part of the solution.

The 1976 presidential candidate seemed to blend these sundry ancestral impulses into his speeches with semantic ease. The poor needed help and he would give it; on the other hand, he was a fiscal conservative, and government was too big. He worked well with people who worked well with Nelson Rockefeller; he also worked well with Andy Young. He even, very briefly, worked well with Ralph Nader. The signals were, indeed, unclear. From beginning to end, the

*Larry Goodwyn is the author of* The Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America *(Oxford Univ., 1976).*

debate about presidential populism was conducted without much clarifying assistance from the principal subject himself.

In fact, the inquiry by all parties was misdirected from the outset, and little blame can legitimately be placed on Carter for the disappointment of liberals over his economic policies once he settled into the White House. As a matter of fact, the plaintive hope of so many people that Carter would resuscitate the American progressive tradition by acting in "populistic" ways reveals rather more about the erosion of the democratic environment in America than it does about the political maneuvering room available to a president elected within the constraints imposed by that environment.

The confirming evidence for this assessment comes not so much from presidential actions as it does from a clear understanding of what historical "Populism" actually embraced and what modern "liberalism" does not embrace. Populism was a mass movement of some millions of people over a score of states scattered across the South and West. It was autonomously based – that is to say, it was grounded in an institution that offered specific political goals in the name of the people who comprised the institution. Ideologically, Populism represented a critical analysis of the particular structure of finance capitalism at a time when the captains of industry and finance were in the process of defining the future ground rules for social, economic, and political conduct of twentieth-century Americans. Populists regarded these ground rules not only as inherently undemocratic and exploitive, but corrosively restrictive of popular democracy itself. However, since they lost their struggle to place a number of curbs on the spreading power of the corporate state, modern politics in America has necessarily operated within the much narrower perspectives that Populists worked to avoid.

One consequence of our constricted modern view is that we have been unable to understand the original Populists. However, in terms of Jimmy Carter, one thing is clear. Though Populists strenuously attempted to hold their political spokesmen to support of the structural economic goals of their movement, they had far too sophisticated an understanding of authentic democratic politics to place their hopes for such fidelity in the politicians themselves. Instead of deferentially hoping that their spokesmen were "good Populists" who would not betray them, they attempted to maintain their movement in such purposeful and democratic order that they themselves would be able to determine who those spokesmen would be. "The people" themselves, organized and politically informed through their own actions in their own movement, were to provide the necessary guarantee that any political problem inherent in the infidelity of candidates would take care of itself. In short, they did not wait, apprehensively, for signs that their own spokesmen would or would not, in contemporary parlance, "sell them out," for the simple reason that they did not believe authentic democratic politics could be created from on high by a "leader" – even a presidential leader.

Indeed, in one sense, the culturally confined participants in modern American politics who have described the original Populists as "irrational" were correct. From such a perspective, steeped as it is in resignation masking itself as sophistication, it is indeed "irrational" for anyone in modern America to aspire to the kind of democratic goals the Populists envisioned.

The verdict is clear. The Populists lacked sophistication. They did not know what they were up against. They lacked the wit to be intimidated by the constraints of political life in the corporate state, with its massive economic oligarchies, with its privately financed elections responsive to those same oligarchies, with its resulting culture of loyalty to the prerogatives of corporate elites to shape the political process itself.

The Populists did not understand that their battle should not have been fought because it was not going to be won. So failing to understand, they worked together for many years, first as a small band in the Southwest, then as a mass constituency of "plain people" across half a continent. So failing to understand, they developed their own sense of autonomy and self-respect, their own democratic analysis of the world they live in, their own Jeffersonian-style vision of a society where people rather than corporate combinations determined the rules of civic dialogue. So failing, they dared to aspire in behalf of their own vision of human possiblity. This, indeed, was their fate.

But this is also their legacy. It has little to do with Jimmy Carter. He is as confined by the rules of modern American politics as any of the rest of the population. As the original agrarian reformers of Gilded Age America knew, democratic politics does not begin with politicians, even presidential politicians. It begins with the self-respect of individual people, and eventually the organized self-respect of many people. If the evidence of history is any guide, Americans will not have a populist president until we first develop a mass popular constituency. For such is the stuff of authentic democratic politics. Unfortunately, such a concept of democracy is a topic, indeed a way of thinking, that is not easily fathomed within the constraints of "modern society." Contemporary progressive politics persists without relation to the building of mass democratic constituencies.

Eighty years after Populism, the Democratic Party is little more than a repository of vaguely progressive impulses, an organizational shell so undefined and helpless it was taken over by 100,000 kids in behalf of McGovern in 1972 and taken over four years later by a provincial politician with wholly predictable ties to his own provincial corporate elite.

Today, our very traditions of politics, our confined sense of what is possible, mitigate against the conceptual intuitions about democracy that guided the nineteenth-century Populists. Our problem in not understanding them, and the cultural issues raised by our inability to understand them, is not the fault either of the original Populists or of Jimmy Carter. Our problems are our own. They are rooted in our resignation about what is possible and what is not possible in the modern corporate state.

The Populists would not have admired their modern "progressive" descendants. Until we develop the cultural poise and self-respect to understand why, we will continue to think of politics as the special province of leaders. We will, therefore, continue to look to Washington and shape our response to harmonize with the requirements of what passes as modern political morale – with passive resignation, with sophisticated cynicism, or with romantic hope.

Such sundry modes of deference were not notable Populist attributes.

photo courtesy of Earl Spicer

# Railroad Fever

**by Steve Hoffius**

The liquid orange sun comes up over the Southern Railway depot in Charleston, SC, and my new friend pauses and watches it glint off row after row of freight cars – tankers, boxcars, lumber cars, even an old square car with sliding house windows that railroad crews once used as a bunk car.

As we walk past the cars, I am shown their finer points: the wheels of this one had been a remarkable innovation when they were invented, as had the double-locking doors of another; the company logo painted on the side of a third is unique. My tour guide looks upon each railroad car as a blessing and a friend. "Jack Radley's the name," he had introduced himself. "Fifty years a brakeman for Southern." His hair is not yet all gray and except when he sees a car that particularly fascinates him, he walks along swiftly. "Better than reading the papers," he explains. "You can always know how the economy's doing when there's a train depot around. Just come out here and see what's being shipped around. More carloads of chemicals you see. Lumber's down a little from last week." He stretches up to look within one car and walks away shaking his head. "Just as many running empty, though."

The sun is nearly up now, and Radley unzips his windbreaker, thrusts his hands into his jeans. He kicks one of the small stones that lines the rails. "Whole industry's going to pot," he grouses.

"Used to be this was a great railroad city. We had the first passenger train in the country of course, 'The Best Friend of Charleston.' For years if any freight was going to be shipped by water out of the South, it went out of either Charleston, Savannah or Norfolk, and the railroads got a big chunk of the freight going to the docks. We had almost a dozen passenger trains going through here every day. Why when Union Station was still downtown before it burned in '48, people would gather in long lines to travel by train. Course that was all we had. But Lord, the ride was good.

"There was class then, the railroads were a classy operation. Now it's just a business. Nobody feels like they're serving the public. Most don't even carry passengers anymore, gave all of that to the government. We've lost a lot."

The old Seaboard Coast passenger station in Charleston is now the Amtrak station. It's not much inside or out, just a cinder block building across from the Budweiser warehouse. Inside, it features twin gray waiting rooms. Both rooms include the usual two bathrooms, though the signs declaring White and Colored were removed long ago. The station is crowded with passengers this morning waiting for the northbound Palmetto.

A young boy, fat, with his shirt hanging out and a very excited look on his face, rushes into the station.

---

*Steve Hoffius is a Charleston, SC, bookseller and free-lance writer.*

All 25 passengers gather their luggage and pass through the glass doors to the the platform in time to see a Seaboard Coast Line freight rush past with its load of empty cars. The boy looks up in amazement. "It forgot us Mama."

As the crowd files back into the station, the clerk announces the arrival of the Palmetto and everyone turns around and files back out. No train is in sight.

The people I talk with on the platform look at me incredulously when I ask them why they ride trains instead of cars, buses or planes. "We always have," says one woman. "The kids don't scream. And it's about as cheap as a bus." She shrugs. "We always have, why not?" She remembers other trips with pleasure – but not because of sumptuous furnishings. She talks of people she met, of friends waiting for her. "I never saw no flowers in the diner," she said. "Only saw the diner once."

Soon the Palmetto is spotted coming around the turn and easing into the station. It is six cars long, all painted red, white and blue. The passengers climb aboard, 30 in all, 27 blacks and three whites. "That's about average," said a station clerk. "Blacks ride the trains. Period. Any whites that come along are just incidental. We count on black families visiting kin up North, and being visited, to keep this station going. Especially during the summer. Without them it'd be nothing."

Radley had earlier complained about the Palmetto. "It doesn't even have a diner," he said. "Just what they call an Amcafe. That's a refrigerator and a microwave oven. You can't run a railroad like that.

"But oh, that new equipment. Coming out of Savannah at 70, 80, 90 miles an hour you can put your coffee down on the seat next to you and never lose a drop, not even when they're braking. I've traveled with my wife and we've both looked up in surprise to see that the train was moving. 'I thought we were still in the station,' she said. 'It's this new equipment,' I told her. It's really something."

Radley rides the trains twice a year. The woman in the Amtrak station rides the Palmetto every month. She has no fantasies about the railroad's glorious past. She rides trains because they are convenient and cheap, and when they are neither she takes the bus. When Radley talks of trains they sound like poetry rushing past; she makes them sound practical, as if they have a future.

photos by Deanna Morse

**"How Long, Baby, How Long"**

Few subjects in the South are as cloaked with personal mythology as are the railroads. Oh, there are a few. Moonshine – there may be more tales of brewing moonshine, running it and hiding out from the law, and then, once clear, shaking up the mason jar to watch the bubbles rise to the wide lid, taking a swallow and convulsing in pleasure. And Eugene Talmadge – there are still plenty of tales about him and other suspender-snapping politicians of his ilk. And maybe a few other subjects. But not many. The railroad is in a class by itself. For decades we looked upon the railroads as a saviour, not *the* saviour of course, but a secondary deity, and we pinned our hopes and dreams to the trains, invited them into our lives, our music, our folklore. We rode the trains on very special occasions: when we visited kin, when we went away to school, when we went to the city for spring shopping, when we left for a better job, when we left for the war, when we left, when we left.

Or we stayed home, but noted the train's passing, held onto it as a possible exit if needed, our one link to distant lands. We sat at home and nodded familiarly as it passed on schedule, called out the train's number and name, and marked time by its whistle. As children, we placed pennies on the track to be smashed and eagerly

waved to the men in the cab and caboose. And a friend told me that his father, a preacher, prepared all of his sermons while walking along the railroad tracks near his home in western Kentucky. He only rode the trains once, but weekly returned to that familiar place to step from tie to tie, trusting himself to the rhythm of the tracks while his mind concentrated on other matters. It soothed him.

If our imagination was captured by the tracks alone, those two simple lines, crossed with ties, stretching clear to the horizon, what of the grandeur of the stations? The smaller ones were nothing to inspire dreams, just small clapboard buildings, clean but dull though they opened onto the pounding glory of the trains. But in Charleston, Chattanooga and Atlanta, and other spots throughout the South, stood fairy-tale mansions which echoed with our wonderment, their high-ceilinged rooms with glass windows way above our heads, dirty and streaked with dust but higher than a house, a tree. Cracked leather seats cradled sad-eyed bums, curled up in search of a warm spot to catch a few winks, who would, at the proper time, obligingly raise their feet above the cold marble floors so stern men might pursue cigarette butts with their broom-handled dust pans. At long rows of counters of polished wood and gleaming brass we gathered accordion tickets and headed for wooden platforms protected by overhanging roofs in which birds built their nests. Scattered people waited, some forlornly, their suitcases the least of their burdens, others looking expectantly down the tracks as if anticipating hope and a fresh start.

When the train roared into town we stopped our business and took note. This was especially true when steam engines pulled the cars, before they were replaced by diesels. The first locomotives rushed out of the fields and swamps all glistening black and silver, clouds of steam rising from dozens of unseen valves, bells clanging, conductors shouting, leaving behind a thick trail of smoke to mark their passage. People from far away burst into town on those trains, and rode right out again; men sat atop tons of magnificent machinery, controlling it with powerful tugs and pushes, their massive arms shining in sweat, shouting to each other over the churning of the engine, the rhythmic gasps proclaiming its need to move on. It was mystery and adventure and sexuality and freedom all bolted together; it was power and money, a ticket to pursue your fantasies: *everything you've ever wanted is out there at the end of the line, climb aboard, climb aboard.* For many towns, it was the closest thing to x-rated movies. And at first, it didn't even matter that only a few could afford it. It was there, that was enough.

"I don't suppose you've ever eaten on a first class diner, have you?" Radley had asked. Well once, I had explained, but the sway of the train shook up the greasy eggs I had eaten and I got sick. He stopped walking to stare at me closely; his brow furrowed and his eyes narrowed. "Wasn't the Southern was it?" I assured him it was not. "Probably the Atlantic Coast, wouldn't surprise me." I explained that it was a train from western Michigan to New York City. His eyes swept over the sky. "Oh *well*," he said, throwing up his arms.

According to Radley, in the early days when he worked on the Southern, the diners ran with precision and offered incomparably good food, fancy meals on ironed linen tablecloths with polished silver beside a bud vase and a single flower; the waiters rushed about the swaying cars without spilling a drop, coordinating heaping trays of food for large numbers of tables.

Somehow everything worked right. Meals were delicious and served quickly. Beds appeared as if by magic from the walls and ceiling when needed. Shoes left out at night were shined in the morning. Passengers left at the correct stop and their bags were waiting there. "Was a public ever better served by a workforce than railroad passengers?" Radley had asked.

Like Radley, many Southerners have accumulated this massive wealth of nostalgia and misconception in repeated story and anecdote. We have been captured by our own storytelling. But it wasn't all our own doing. We have had help.

Southern writers gave railroads a place of honor in the Southern landscape right from the first, stuck them right among the dogwoods and magnolias:

"A breeze blew through, hot and then cool, fragrant of the woods and yellow flowers and of the train. The yellow butterflies flew in at any window, out at any other, and outdoors one of them could keep up with the train, which then seemed to be racing with a butterfly."

So Eudora Welty described the Yazoo-Delta in *Delta Wedding.* Flannery O'Connor set one of her finest short stories on a train, one of the few places where a rural Southern white boy might be expected to encounter a big city Northern black man, a porter. For Thomas Wolfe, the railroad was a ticket out of Asheville, at once a lonely-toned reminder of isolation and a momentary respite from despair. And uncounted poets have sat by the tracks, in the stations, in their seats and berths, and tried to capture the rhythms of the train.

The railroads became an intimate part of Southern music both because of their omnipresence in Southerners' lives and because of the personal involvement of Southern musicians with the trains. When Sleepy John Estes arrived in Memphis in the late '20s to record his music, he came from Brownsville, Tennessee, where he had been a caller on track gangs. Hank Williams' father was a sometime locomotive engineer, A.P. Carter worked for years on a railroad gang, Peg Leg Sam lost his right leg below the knee hitching a ride on a freight train in Raleigh. Johnny Cash's father worked on the St. Louis and Southwestern Railroad. Merle Haggard, whose father was a railroad man, was himself born in a converted refrigerator car, near the Southern Pacific yard in Bakersfield, California. And Jimmy Rodgers, the Singing Brakeman, was raised by his father, a section foreman for the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio Railroad. From the black crews he served as a waterboy, Rodgers learned to play the banjo and guitar, and was introduced to the blues. Before taking up music professionally, he was successively a section foreman, flagman and brakeman.

Southern musicians transformed their experiences with the railroads into music and, in so doing, gave us images with a life of their own. Trains promised freedom from lives of bondage or constraint. The Texas inmate, for instance, who heard the prison folklore that a person would be freed if he were bathed in the headlight of a passing locomotive, wrote, "Let the Midnight Special shine its everloving

light on me." Box Brown became a popular symbol when the story of his escape from slavery was spread in song: Brown had taken the image of the Underground Railroad literally, and after building a wooden crate, had himself shipped from Richmond to Philadephia by the Adams Express Company. Even in their personal lives, Southern musicians looked to trains as a way out. As a popular blues song explained:

When a woman takes the blues
She tucks her head and cries.
But when a man catches the blues
He catches a freight train and rides.

And if the railroad had the promise of escape and freedom, its distant whistle sounded the notes of loneliness. Leroy Carr sang:

I can hear the whistle blowing,
but I cannot see no train.
And it's deep down in my heart,
baby, that I have an aching pain.
For how long, how long,
baby, how long.

Musicians immortalized railroad heroes like John Henry, the black mountain man who refused to bow down to his mechanized replacement. Other songs describe stock railroad characters: road crews which worked at impossible speeds, women who crawled through ferocious storms to stop the train before it reached the washed-out bridge, little water boys and children saved from a terrible death on the tracks, horsemen who could beat the locomotives, hoboes killed under the wheels or who rode away and were never seen again, mean station masters, daring railroad thieves, and engineers who went down with their cabs:

Then up the road he hurtled,
against the rock he smashed;
The engine it turned over,
poor George's chest was mashed.
George's head in the firebox lay;
the flames were rolling high.
"I'm glad I was born for an engineer,
on the C & O road to die."

## "The Seagoing Railroad"

*All I hate about linin' track,*
*This old bar's about to break my back.*
*Big boy can't you line 'em?*
*Oh boy can't you line 'em?*
*Oh boy can't you line 'em?*
*Here we go line them track.*

Railroad Work Song

For decades the workers on Henry M. Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway had reason to hate their work. They built bridges and track through the marshes of eastern Florida – dirty, dangerous, disease-ridden work. They took the track into the ocean, clear out to Key West in one of the most remarkable feats of engineering in railroad history. Hundreds were killed in the process. And when it was finished the employees of the line watched their railroad slump, watched it head toward bankruptcy.

The Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) was born before the turn of the century when Flagler, already wealthy from his work in oil with John D. Rockefeller, headed South for a vacation. He first visited Florida in 1883 at the age of 53. He became enchanted with St. Augustine and reasoned that other Northerners would find it equally appealing once it was more accessible. Flagler built the massive Ponce de Leon Hotel, then made certain that travelers would be able to reach it without trouble. He bought up the existing railroad trackage, contracted for the South's first large steel railroad bridge to be built across the St. Johns River and modernized the line. It was a relatively safe investment and it paid off.

Flagler then turned his sights to the beaches and swamps

### So Inviting a Field

We have romanticized the trains and much of what we now so fondly "remember" was born of simple exaggeration. They were indeed a grand means of travel and in some instances still are. They really did contribute a great deal to our history and were justifiably celebrated. But the railroads were also a business, run by some of the most rapacious men in the country. Control of the railroads meant power and the means to even greater power. When the railroad's futures were planned, passengers were often barely considered, and passenger service, even in the years remembered so nostalgically, was largely an effort by the railroads to gain wide public support. The railroads provided it because the public demanded it and was dependent on the railroads for transportation. But passenger service never produced great profits. It has always been subsidized, until recently by the fortunes the railroads made from hauling freight and from their other business enterprises, and since 1972, by the federal government.

photo by Deanna Morse

Southern businessmen were among the first in the country to recognize the railroad's economic potential as a prop for their sagging business fortunes. "The Best Friend of Charleston," the first locomotive built in America for regular service, was the means by which Charleston merchants sought to end the decline of their port city with its limited river access. Charleston needed something to compete with Savannah's river transport system, something which could bring merchandise to the ocean from inland textile and lumber mills and take supplies to the growing towns of the piedmont and mountains. For lack of a river, Charleston built a railroad.

"The Best Friend of Charleston,"

---

further south. He brought his railroad to New Smyrna Beach in 1892, Cocoa in 1893, Fort Pierce and West Palm Beach in 1894. The construction crews brought an immense amount of business with them, and they provided the opportunity for even more. Wherever the railroad went, small towns blossomed into cities. Everyone along the state's east coast watched his plans carefully, eager to see where he would build next.

Mrs. Julia D. Tuttle, who owned 644 acres of land on the north side of the Miami River, was among those watching. She flooded Flagler with letters encouraging him to bring his railroad to her land. He refused. She traveled to Jacksonville twice to convince him; still he refused. Yet she persevered and when the severe freeze of 1894-95 struck, destroying an estimated $100 million worth of fruit and vegetables as far south as Palm Beach, she sent him a bouquet of orange blossoms. This time he responded positively when he realized the security from severe weather which the citrus groves enjoyed in South Florida. He visited Mrs. Tuttle and agreed to build his railroad to her land and help construct a city in exchange for a large amount of free acreage. They called the place Miami.

As Flagler announced his plans to lay each new stretch of rail, skeptics maintained that the road was not worth the massive investment necessary to cross the swamps, not worth the danger of forcing hundreds of men into the insect-infested work area. Flagler pushed his road on.

Never were the complaints as loud, however, as when he announced plans to extend his road to Key West. The new road would stretch 128 miles from the mainland, 75 miles over open water or marshes. In 1906, when Flagler was 76 years old, construction began. Over the next seven years, 4,000 men worked on the roadway, building a series of bridges and hundreds of embankments, filling beds with rock-fill. In the first year a hurricane ripped through the construction project, breaking loose from its moorings a quarter-boat on which about 150 men were housed. Nearly 100 men were killed.

Flagler demanded that the construction continue. Another hurricane hit in 1909, a third in 1910, destroying massive amounts of completed work. Still, Flagler urged his crews on, and the workers rebuilt it. Finally, on January 12, 1912, the road was completed – 128 miles costing hundreds of lives and $50 million – and Flagler rode into Key West on the first train. The city, destined to become the major American port for trade with Cuba, threw a three-day drunk.

Flagler, 82, announced, "Now I can die happy. My dream is fulfilled." Less than a year later he was dead. In 1935 many of the bridges to Key West were destroyed in a hurricane, and Flagler's great dream was never rebuilt, though the bridges and embankments were eventually used to construct Florida Highway A1A linking Miami to Key West.

In 1923, the Florida East Coast Railway shared in the riches of the first Florida Boom. Passenger trade jumped in one year from eight daily trains north and south to 14; revenue ton-miles climbed from 556.6 million in 1923 to more than a billion in 1926. Operating revenues almost doubled. Flushed with the nation's excitement about Florida, the railroad spent $45 million in 1924 alone to double its capacity.

In 1926 the boom ended. FEC slumped severely and, by 1931, court-appointed receivers were presiding over bankruptcy proceedings. The line limped along until World War II and the arrival of the second Florida Boom. Debts were still massive, but in 1944, competition was keen for owner-

*(continued on next page)*

however, suffered an early demise. From the time of its initial run on Christmas morning in 1830, the train operated regularly for only six months before its fireman grew irritated at the screechy sound pouring from the engine's safety valve. The train had been stopped to allow the passengers a chance to rest, and the fireman wanted to relax as well. He tied the steam valve open. The sound ceased. The engine exploded.

But "The Best Friend" had already proved to be a popular means of transportation, both for passengers and for local businesses. The train was rebuilt, and renamed "The Phoenix." The railroad had served its primary purpose by reviving Charleston business and it provided excitement for the people of the Low Country as well. One of the passengers on that first run of "The Best Friend" later wrote that the train "flew on the wings of the wind at the speed of 15 to 25 miles per hour, annihilating time and space and leaving all the world behind."

But of course there were problems. The explosion of "The Best Friend" had scared away many potential passengers. And the new engine still sent sparks and ashes onto the clothes of the passengers, and made so much noise that conversation was difficult. The railroads responded by placing two cars between the locomative and the passengers. The first was piled high with cotton bales to catch any debris from the engine and to protect the passengers from an explosion. On the second sat a group of black musicians who entertained the passengers as best they could while they bounced along, and provided a bit more buffer space between the white passengers and potential death.

By 1833, the railroad was opened the full length of its 136 miles from Charleston to Hamburg, SC, on the Savannah River. It was now the longest railroad in the world. And over the next few years it also became the first railroad to carry the US mail, the on a flatcar before the locomotive), the first to use wheels that pivoted on sharp curves and allowed the train to increase its speed.

The idea caught on. In 1831, a Virginia coal mine owner paid for the construction of 12 miles of track from his mines to the James River at Richmond. Four years later, South Carolina Senator John C. Calhoun boasted that "a judicious system of railroads would make Georgia and Carolina the commercial center of the Union."

And in 1837, a stake was driven at a spot near the Chattahoochie River in central Georgia to mark the proposed junction of the handful of existing city-to-city short lines nearby to make a new unified state system that would extend to Tennessee. Known simply as "the terminus" for the next five years, in 1843 it was named Marthasville in honor of the daughter of ex-Governor Wilson Lumpkin, a friend of the railroads. Two years later, it was renamed Atlanta.

Other cities were also investing heavily in the railroads, including Mobile, Louisville and New Orleans, but Atlanta boasted a more central location and already sat astride the

ship of FEC. Atlantic Coast Line entered the bidding, hoping to absorb the Florida line into its holdings. Seaboard and Southern offered to jointly buy the intrastate line in order to keep Atlantic from obtaining a Florida railroad monopoly. And then along came Edward Ball, a trustee of the DuPont estate and well-known anti-labor conservative – owner of much of Florida's timber holdings, banks and a telephone company. The Interstate Commerce Commission, the state and the Brotherhood locals (railroad workers' unions) chose Ball's St. Joe's Paper Company over the other bidders because his company's purchase of FEC would keep the line independent.

With the new land boom, business increased, but FEC maintained that it had not yet become solvent enough to meet the rising demands of the workers. In a state that had been first to pass a right-to-work law and was still one of the least unionized, Ball's position seemed secure. In 1963, when FEC refused to abide by an industry-wide 10.48 cents-an-hour pay hike, its Brotherhood locals went on strike.

Within the state of Florida, Brotherhood locals were strong at Seaboard, both on the line and in the offices in Jacksonville. But Ball proudly squelched the union at FEC during the nine years of struggle and negotiation that followed the initial strike. When workers left their jobs in '63, he refused to meet their demands and FEC wheels chugged to a halt. Less than two weeks after the walkout, supervisory employees began operation of a freight train from Jacksonville to Miami and back. Soon they hired 400 scabs to take the strikers' jobs. FEC was back in business.

But battles continued, with political pressures, threats, bullets and bombs. During this time, throughout the nation, Brotherhoods – once aggressive and strong under Eugene Debs and A. Philip Randolph – were cowed by accusations of "featherbedding," and FEC strikers were assailed by this criticism. Their one major coup came in 1966 when they pushed a Congressional investigation which ultimately forced Ball to choose between his extensive bank holdings and his other financial interests. He sold his 30 banks in order to retain control of FEC. But the union suffered major setbacks twice within the next few years when the US Supreme Court upheld FEC efforts to revise work rules and make other changes necessary to keep the trains running through the strike. Certainly, Ball's tenacity and bullheadedness would have made Henry Flagler proud.

In December, 1971, a settlement of sorts was reached: the pre-strike payroll of more than 2,000 workers was cut by more than a half. Salaries were standardized at a lower rate than those of most railroad workers in the nation. Today FEC work-shifts are long and conditions hazardous; the trains are noisy, jolting, and go many miles without stopping. On the FEC line, there is no collective bargaining unit.

During its construction, Henry M. Flagler's line was decried as the presumptuous dream of a rich man who could plan a railroad with no consideration for the health of his workers. Passed from rich man to multimillionaire, FEC keeps rolling despite worker complaints. This is Flagler's legacy. ▪

connection of a number of lines. By the late 1850s, though the town itself had only crude wooden sidewalks and a few streets covered with crushed rock, it had invested more than $500,000 in the railroads. As a consequence of such single-minded support, Atlanta quickly became the railroad capital of the South.

The railroads expanded greatly in the years just before the Civil War. In the 1850s, Southern states built over 7,000 miles of track, more than the total built by the rest of the nation during that same period. Track mileage increased by 340 percent in the South and 230 percent in the North. Railroad construction was cheaper in the South for a number of reasons. The South used slave labor, selected lighter and sometimes inferior rail ties, built over the relatively easy terrain of the Southern coastal plains, and maintained fewer cars per mile of road than did the Northern lines. Even so, many millions of dollars were needed to fuel the expansion. Some of the money was invested by wealthy businessmen, but even more was put up by city and state treasuries. The taxpayers of Charleston, for instance, were the main backers of "The Best Friend's" line, the Charleston and Hamburg Railroad. In addition, before the war, Charlestonians had financed the construction of a quarter of the Charleston and Savannah Railroad, most of the South Carolina Railroad, a quarter of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad and had put a million dollars into the Blue Ridge Railroad. Throughout the South the story was the same.

The Civil War was the first war in history in which the railroads played a major role. Because troops and supplies could be rushed wherever needed, over great distances in relatively short amounts of time, the protection of railroad lines was a major concern of both armies. Though the railroads were one of the South's most important weapons, they remained in the control of only a few individuals. Jefferson Davis early recommended building track to connect the various lines. The Confederate Congress in 1862 appropriated a million dollars to build the 40-mile connection between Danville and Greensboro, and even more to link Meridian, Mississippi, and Selma, Alabama, providing an all-rail route from Vicksburg to Richmond, entirely south and west of the mountains. The railroads, of course, were very grateful for this assistance and granted the Confederacy regular discounts for the duration of the war. The Wilmington and Weldon Railroad made enough money in the first two years of the war to pay a 31 percent dividend in 1863.

photo by Deanna Morse

As the war dragged on, however, the railroads' boom soon came to a temporary halt. With few ironworks in the region, damaged track or destroyed cars could not easily be replaced. The cost of nails rose from four cents a pound in 1861 to $4.00 a pound in 1864. In that same period lubricating oil rose from $1.00 to $50.00 a gallon. And when Sherman marched to the sea, his goal was to destroy all the rail service he could reach. He succeeded.

After the war, the cities and states that owned the railroads sold them at bargain rates to Southern investors, who began the massive task of rebuilding. Sherman's forces had left much of this railbed destroyed, the rails themselves twisted around trees; these were removed, melted down and recast. The United States government, eager to get the railroads going again, supplied equipment. Businesses reestablished themselves; individuals began to travel more. By 1867 most of the ruined roads were repaired, and in the next six years 3,500 miles of new

## WARNING

The Pullman Company calls the attention of its patrons to the fact that "Card Sharks" and "Con Men" have started their winter campaign on railroad trains.

Passengers can protect themselves by refusing to play with strangers.

SAFETY FIRST LAST AND ALL THE TIME

line were constructed on the way back to business as usual.

Immediately after the war a few Northern investors bought Southern lines, but most seemed content to sit back and watch while the lines got back on their feet. The governor of Virginia openly recruited Northern men and money to help the state rebuild her train system. Newspaper publisher James DeBow pleaded: "What the South now needs is capital, and if the immense accumulation of the North could only be diverted in that channel, something like the old days of prosperity would be revived... Will not these rich capitalists pause and consider? Never before was so inviting a field opened."

The rich capitalists paused, considered and then moved. In 1871 the Pennsylvania Railroad began to buy up lines, especially in Virginia. The Panic of 1873 brought in even more Northern investors. Even before the Panic was well underway, 34 railroads defaulted on their bond interest. Most Southern railroads went into receivership in the next year, and soon thereafter into the hands of Northern investors. By 1880, Northern interests controlled over half of the total Southern rail mileage. By 1890 the three largest Southern railroad systems — the Louisville and Nashville, the Richmond and Danville, and the East Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia — were owned outright by Northern investors. Of the six remaining large systems in the region, five were Northern controlled. And by 1900 all of the major Southern railroads were under Northern financial management.

Throughout the nation, a few men

### BLACKS BUILD THE ROADS

In 1890, almost one-third of the black workers in trade and transportation were railroad workers. The large increase in black railroad workers resulted from the expanding network of railroad construction in the South. Companies engaged in these operations, always in need of a large labor force, looked upon the Negro as an important source of cheap labor for rough, heavy work. Only 4.1 percent of the blacks in railroad work were classified as skilled employees; the vast majority were used in repairing and maintaining the road beds. Blacks who held skilled or responsible jobs on the railroads in the South were found primarily in such positions as locomotive engineers, firemen, brakemen, switchmen, and yard foremen. Most Negroes in railroad jobs in the North held positions in the Pullman Service as waiters or porters. The rise of the railroad Brotherhoods, with their bitter animosity toward the Negro, caused a decrease in the number of blacks in skilled jobs after 1890. The determined assault of the Brotherhoods against the skilled black worker had by the outbreak of World War I resulted in his exclusion from almost all responsible positions on the railroads . . . .

At the convention of the Brotherhoods in Norfolk, Virginia, in November 1898, Grand Master Frank P. Sargent of the firemen was quoted in the press as saying that "one of the chief purposes of the meeting . . . was to begin a campaign in advocacy of white supremacy in the railway service."

A Brotherhood member from the North pointed out that all the talk about blacks being "too stupid" to make good firemen or engineers masked the fear that they did make capable railroad workers but, being forced to accept lower wages, were a threat to the pay scales of white engineers and firemen. The white railroad unions, he continued, dared not press for wages much higher than those paid to Negroes for fear that their members would be entirely replaced by black crews. Little wonder, then, that wages in the South for these occupations were considerably below those in other areas. There was really only one solution to the problem of wage competition, he concluded: to admit blacks into the union and with them present a solid front against the employer.

Meanwhile, the engineers and firemen were cooperating to forbid the hiring of Negroes as firemen on any road where none were employed and to keep the percentage of black firemen already employed jointly with white firemen from increasing, in the hope that blacks would in time be entirely eliminated.

In the South, the railroads resisted the elimination of blacks, as in the case of Houston and Texas Central's refusal in September, 1890, to get rid of Negro switchmen. But the Brotherhoods did not give up, and on June 16, 1909, the white firemen on the Georgia Railroad went on strike against the employment of black firemen. The railroad management, headed by E. A. Scott, termed the strike "the beginning of an effort to drive all the colored firemen from the southern roads," and resisted the demand.

The strike lasted two weeks, during which time black firemen were beaten and otherwise intimidated. It ended when a board of arbitration ruled that the Georgia Railroad was allowed to employ blacks as firemen wherever they were qualified to fill the job, but at the same wages that white firemen received. Technically, the white firemen had lost the case, but, as the Brotherhood leaders jubilantly told the *Atlanta Constitution*, they accepted the ruling because "white firemen would be preferred to a Negro fireman when the same wages were paid." The only inducement for the railroads to hire blacks in the first place had been removed.

Events bore out this interpretation. Black firemen were discharged from the Georgia Railroad, and other Southern roads soon followed suit. By 1915, there was not a single black engineer in the entire country. . . .

On August 25, 1925, A. Philip Randolph and a few score of Pullman porters launched the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in New York's Harlem. Its intention was to deal with the low wages, long hours, lack of adequate rest on trips, lack of bargaining power, and job insecurity in the porters' work. From the beginning, the Brotherhood's

were making huge fortunes from the railroads, men like Andrew Carnegie, J.P. Morgan, Cornelius Vanderbilt and Jay Gould. The South added to the riches of many of these, especially Morgan, who bought the Southern Railway system and helped it grow immensely. Each of the magnates bought dozens of small lines and consolidated them, and the number of railroads — and railroad owners — in the country rapidly dropped. Just as rapidly the owners realized that if they would stop fighting about rates they could all increase profits. From 1882 to 1886 freight rates had dropped by 20 percent as the various lines fought each other for the business. Railroad owners tried to end this by setting up standard rates for their biggest shippers, but found themselves continually undercut by the smaller lines. After four years of expensive rate wars, the large railroads, pleading that too much competition was unhealthy, turned to the federal government for help.

Farmers and some passengers were also demanding federal regulation of the railroads, but for entirely different reasons. While the rates for major shippers dropped, the prices charged to passengers, small businesses and farmers remained high. Farmers were sometimes charged for a ticket to the end of the line, even if they were only going part of the way. And, while larger businesses were granted rebates, small farmers sometimes had to pay as much as a bushel of corn in freight costs for every bushel they shipped.

The government responded to the complaints of both groups and in 1887 passed the first railroad regulation law. The first commissioners decreed that lines could not charge more for intermediate or short hauls than the price for the complete route. But they allowed the railroads to charge far more than the actual percentage of the route traveled, and farmers still felt robbed. The Commission created by this new legislation was weak — it permitted the railroads themselves to establish common rates and only rarely exercised its authority. Though the railroads themselves registered thousands of complaints about illegal rate-cutting in the decade that followed, the Commission heard only 180 cases from 1890 to 1900.

In 1891 one railroad executive, Aldace Walker, explained, "The term 'free competition' sounds well as a universal regulator, but it regulates by the knife. Unless the weapon in turn

---

newspaper, *The Messenger*, served as the spark for the Brotherhood's organizational drive and the voice through which porters (mostly anonymously) could express their grievances and desires. Porters operating between New York and Chicago risked discharge by serving as underground couriers, delivering bundles of *The Messenger* with its descriptions of the porters' grievances and its presentation of the Brotherhood's program. They carried leaflets and confidential communiques to the Brotherhood nucleus already operating in Chicago.

It was not easy to win recruits for the Brotherhood. Although unemployment had decreased by the mid-twenties, blacks were still feeling its effects. A large number of out-of-work blacks were eager to become Pullman porters; indeed, it was often the only job a black college graduate could land. Those who were already porters were reluctant to risk their jobs. Welfare workers, anti-union porters and company inspectors rode the trains on which union men worked, and invented charges of rule violations against them, which often led to their discharge. To overcome the fear this practice created, the Brotherhood had to assure the porters that the membership list was carefully guarded.

Despite the stiff opposition of the Pullman Company, many porters were convinced that they needed a real union to end the outrageous conditions under which they labored. There were 15,000 Pullman porters traveling all over the country. Those assigned to regular runs began work at $67.00 a month; if they remained in the service for fifteen years, they would thereafter receive $94.50. Tips increased the actual earnings, but the cost of uniforms, shoe polish, meals, and so forth was deducted from their wages. Their 11,000 miles of travel per month usually meant 400 hours, excluding preparatory time and time spent at the terminals. To aggravate the situation, porters often "doubled out" or ran "in charge" of a car, taking increased responsibility under unfavorable physical conditions for added pay at a diminishing rate. Many of the Pullman porters realized that only through collective bargaining could they hope for redress.

The NAACP and locals of the National Urban League endorsed the Brotherhood, and some black churches even permitted it to use their buildings for meetings. Most important of all, many black workers came to see the Brotherhood both as a symbol of all the Negro's claim to dignity, respect, and a decent livelihood and as a union. "The fight of the Pullman porters is the all-absorbing topic wherever two or more Negroes gather in Harlem," one report said.

*Pullman porters symbolized the Negro's claim to dignity. . . . They were leaders in their community*

—Excerpted from Philip S. Foner,
**Organized Labor and the Black Worker**

In 1937, the railroads finally did what they said they never would do; they signed a contract with the Brotherhood that quadrupled the income of the porters in a few short years. Randolph had established a link with the black communities of America that few other black leaders enjoyed. On the job, the porter may have been the invisible man who responded to the call "George," but in his community, he was a figure of some importance. He held a steady job — no small thing in a community of the unemployed and under-employed — and often managed to save a little something and to buy his own home. He was ambitious for his children; the porters put more young people through college than any other single group of Negro workers. Yet, he was not part of the black bourgeosie or the backbone of the NAACP. He was a worker, a trade unionist. When an organizer sets out to unionize workers in a plant, he often seeks out those who are skilled workers, natural leaders, and those whose jobs may offer some freedom of movement within the plan or within a given department. They can talk to more workers, and are more likely to be heeded because of their skills and standing among their fellows. The porters were natural organizers for a black protest movement for the same reason. . . .

—Excerpted from Thomas R. Brooks,
**Walls Came Tumbling Down: A History of the Civil Rights Movement, 1940-1970.**

itself is held in check, it is too dangerous an agency to be endured." The government eventually agreed with the railroads and in 1902 passed a stiffer law, the Elkins Act. This act, which set up the Interstate Commerce Commission, no longer even pretended to meet the needs of farmers and small business interests. It gave the commissioners the power to enforce their decrees and to penalize "over-competitive" lines. Some railroads had been giving up about 10 percent of their gross revenues in illegal rebates. The Elkins Act ended that, and forced all railroads to charge common rates under ICC regulation. Between 1900 and 1905, railroad income rose for the first time in many years, both in freight revenue per ton-mile and in revenue per ton. Dividends nearly doubled.

Railroads became one of the major sources of wealth in the country. Profits from handling freight were high already, and the companies came to own millions of acres of land, at no cost. The companies had complained to the government in the 1860s that they could not take on the task of building transcontinental lines without an added incentive. Congress gave the railroads title to all of the land surrounding their tracks, so that they might sell it and use the profits to finance construction costs. The railroads, however, held onto their land. Eventually minerals were found beneath much of the land. Cities expanded and the vast land holdings were sold at high prices. The railroads grew even richer.

In 1913, 35 Eastern railroads applied to the Commission for a general rate increase of five percent. Hearings were held and some increases were granted, though not the full five percent requested. However, as historian Gabriel Kolko writes, "For the first time the Commission made explicit its doctrine that the railroads had to receive a 'living wage,' in Commissioner James S. Harlan's phrase, if they were to attract investment and function profitably. The Commission made explicit what had been an operational reality for many years: the ICC was to protect the railroads in their function of making profits for individual capitalists so long as the railroads provided their services to the public on reasonably minimal standards of equality."

The onset of World War I brought even greater consolidation of the railroads by a government seeking an efficient rail system to serve the nation's wartime needs. Between 1916 and 1920, freight revenue rose by 50 percent.

Yet railroads still were faced with the fact that passenger service, though extremely popular, was not profitable. Only freight made money, and rail executives tried to lose as little on their passenger division as possible and still provide enough services to keep the good will of the public.

After WWI, the American people quickly became fascinated with air travel and private cars, and the nation's love affair with the railroads was suddenly over. The private lines were more than willing to forfeit a money-losing operation and in the '70s asked the federal government to take over passenger rail services. Citing the steady decrease in passengers and declining revenue in the last two decades, management claimed that if the government did not take over the passenger business, the railroads would go bankrupt. Some in fact did go bankrupt, notably the massive and mismanaged Penn Central. To upgrade passenger service would have demanded a huge infusion of money, money that the railroads had but didn't want to invest in passengers. Rather than order the railroads to build up their own services, the government agreed to take over the passenger business. The National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) was established in 1972, leasing much of its equipment and personnel from private rail lines and running over their rapidly deteriorating roadbeds.

photo by Howard M. Ameling

### Other Than Romantic Notions

Since the establishment of Amtrak, the number of passenger trains in the country has been cut drastically, though the actual quality of service has improved somewhat. Charleston, SC, for instance, had been served by five trains daily heading north and south in the mid-'60s; when Amtrak took over, the number of trains dropped to two in each direction. Throughout the region, Amtrak trains only run up and down the east coast, east and west through the middle of southern Georgia. The Southern Railway refused to join Amtrak, and operates passenger trains from New York south to Charlotte, Atlanta and on to New Orleans. That's all that's left of our passenger trains. People now find it impossible to travel through much of the South by train. No line takes passengers through western North Carolina or eastern Tennessee, the Gulf Coast between New Orleans and Jacksonville, or the entire state of West Virginia. And many large cities like Asheville, Wilmington, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Baton Rouge, Shreveport, Pine Bluff and Fayetteville are

## Seaboard Coastline Industries

**Headquarters:** Jacksonville, Florida.

**Gross Operating Expenses:** 1976 – $1,483,896,000. 1975 – $1,290,777,000.

**Net Income:** 1976 – $84,954,000. 1975 – $47,006,000.

**Number of Employees:** 37,817.

**Operations:** The Seaboard system stretches across the Southeast, with the bulk of the track covering the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida. The tracks also extend into Alabama, Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois and Washington, DC. SCL Industries own 16,371 miles of track and provides service along approximately 7,000 more miles of jointly owned and leased rails.

**Subsidiaries:** Seaboard Coast Line Industries, Inc., is a giant holding corporation consisting of the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad and numerous affiliated railroads. In recent years, the company has grown rapidly thanks to their aggressive policies of soliciting industrial relocation in their areas; the campaign has netted them a total of 1623 new plants and 608 additions to existing plants in only four years. SCLI also improved land along its tracks through its subsidiaries, like the Atlantic Land and Improvement Co., which owns several major terminal companies, citrus and packing houses and warehouse facilities. In 1960, Atlantic formed a subsidiary Alico Land Development Co., which developed over 230,000 acres of farm, cattle, oil and timber property in central and south Florida. Though SCLI no longer classifies Alico a subsidiary (it now owns less than 50 percent of the stock), three of SCLI's board members remain directors of Alico and SCLI still has a substantial interest in the lucrative Alico property. In addition, SCLI now owns several coal companies and publishing operations, the biggest of which is the Florida Publishing Co., publisher of the *Florida Times Union* and the Jacksonville *Journal*.

**Principal Director Interlocks:**
Union Camp; Monsanto; Borden Co.; Westinghouse; Dun & Bradstreet; Burlington Industries; West-Point Pepperell; Southern Bell; Ethyl Corp.; Liberty Life Insurance; Daniel International; Cox Cable; Graniteville; Blount; The Boston Co.; Stop and Shop; American Cast Iron Pipe; Wilmington Shipping; Florida Publishing; Southern; Georgia Power; Duke Power; Florida Gas; SC Electric & Gas; Commonwealth Natural Gas; Chemical Bank; Bank of NY; Mercantile-Safe Deposit and Trust; US Fidelity & Guaranty; Fed. Reserve Bank of Richmond; Lykes Brothers; Boston Safe Deposit & Trust; Citizens & Southern National Bank; State Bank of Jacksonville; 1st Alabama Bank of Birmingham; Sun Banks of Fla.; 3rd National Bank of Nashville; City Investing; National Life & Accident Insurance; 1st National Bank of Atlanta; SC National Bank; 1st National Bank of Louisville; Fla. Federal Savings and Loan Assoc.; Fla. 1st National Bank of Jacksonville; Bennett Bank, Jacksonville.

## Norfolk & Western Railroad

**Headquarters:** Roanoke, Virginia.

**Gross Operating Revenues:** 1976 – $1,216,259,000. 1975 – $1,050,918,000.

**Net Income:** 1976 – $131,522,000. 1975 – $87,506,000.

**Number of Employees:** 25,363.

**Operations:** Norfolk & Western owns 7,659 miles of track and operates on an additional 7,200, primarily in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Virginia; it also has tracks in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa and Canada.

**Subsidiaries:** Norfolk & Western owns six different land development corporations in its service area. The Virginia Holding Company owns approximately 80 acres of industrial sites outside St. Louis. The Nickel Plate Improvement Company has a 50 percent interest in the large Briar East apartment complex in Hammond, Indiana, which also features a shopping center and a large industrial complex. The Pocahontas Land Corporation leases large tracts of oil, gas, timber and coal lands in four states; it presently is leasing 450,000 acres of coal land. N & W has also promoted other industrial development along its tracks; in the last five years, 600 new plants and expansions of existing plants have been announced, and N & W has broken new ground for several industrial complexes.

**Principal Director Interlocks:**
Allied Chemical; ALCOA; General Motors; HJ Heinz; PPG Industries; Corning Glass; US Industries; US Gypsum; Fieldcrest Mills; Falstaff Brewing; AP Green Refractories; Indiana Bell; Scott Paper; NY State Gas & Electric; Peoples Gas; Madeira Enterprises; Mellon Banks; Goldman Sachs & Co.; Marine Midland Banks; Fed. Reserve Bank of Chicago; 1st National Bank of St. Louis; Indiana National Bank.

## Southern Railway

**Headquarters:** Richmond, Virginia.

**Gross Operating Revenues:** 1976 – $1,002,186,000. 1975 – $839,651,000.

**Net Income:** 1976 – $89,241,000. 1975 – 78,325,000.

**Number of Employees:** 20,830.

**Operations:** Most of Southern's tracks run through Alabama, Georgia, and the Carolinas. It also services Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, Virginia and Washington, DC. Southern directly owns 5,955 miles of track and operates over a total of 10,494 miles.

**Subsidiaries:** Southern has invested heavily in related enterprises like terminal companies and warehouse facilities. It has branched out into other forms of transport as well, such as the Ocean Steamship Co. of Savannah, Airforce Pipeline, Inc., and Southern Region Coal Transport, Inc., which contracts to haul coal by barge down the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers. Like its competitors, however, Southern has focused its efforts on industrial development in its service areas. In recent years, construction has begun on 400 new plants and 200 additions to existing facilities. Also, Southern plans several industrial complexes, like the Westlake, Fla., community expected to house 35,000 people and offer 2,000 acres of choice industrial sites. Southern has also invested in numerous commercial real estate ventures.

**Principal Director Interlocks:**
Coca-Cola Co.; AT&T; R.J. Reynolds; Georgia-Pacific; American Smelting and Mining; Mead Corp.; Jordan Spinning; Royal Cotton Mills; Hanna Mining; Westmoreland Coals; Bituminous Coal Operators Assoc.; Continental Corp.; Media General; Niagra Mohawk Power; Morgan Guaranty Trust; Dry Dock Savings Bank; Brown Brothers Harriman Co.; 1st National Bank of Birmingham; Wachovia Bank & Trust; Bankers Trust of SC.

not served at all.

The moribund state of passenger service became most apparent on January 15, 1977, when the Southern regional division of the National Association of Railway Passengers, the nation's leading consumer group for train riders, met in Atlanta. Only 37 of the 375 members actually showed up to discuss the need for improved passenger rail service, and most of them had to travel by plane. From my home in Charleston, I would have had to go by way of Alexandria, Virginia, in order to reach Atlanta by train. If I had made a 15-minute connection (unlikely, since the first train is usually an hour late), the trip would have taken almost 21 hours to cover 289 miles at a cost of $78. Missing that connection would have meant an additional 11-hour lay-over. Delta offers eight flights daily between the two cities, and charges $42; some nonstop flights take less than an hour. Trailways provides three buses from Charleston to Atlanta daily, and covers the distance in 12 hours for $22.30. By car, the drive can be completed in less than seven hours.

Now freed of the burden of carrying passengers, Southern railroads have been able to concentrate on serving Southern industry. It is a job with which they had had particular success in the past. The three major lines now serving the South are all ranked in the top 17 transportation companies in the nation. The Seaboard Coast Line and Norfolk and Western both had operating revenues of well over a billion dollars in 1975; Southern Railway had $879 million. By 1976, Southern's annual revenues had also topped the billion dollar mark. The three are among the nation's 10 largest transportation companies in assets and among the top 11 in net income.

That they might serve industries throughout the region, all three have placed representatives of key elements of the Southern economy on their boards of directors, as well as others from the media, local Southern political circles and national banking groups which have major input into the business picture of the South.

Not content with the present revenues, the railroads have all begun massive programs to lure new industries to their routes from other regions throughout the country. As a result of successful recruiting, Southern takes in an additional $18 million each year just from the new industry now located on its lines. Seaboard Coast has been equally successful in their efforts, and the Norfolk and Western figures are not far behind.

We've still got our trains and probably always will, but our relationship to them has changed. For the first time in years, the number of passengers riding trains is increasing. We have discovered that only the bicycle is a cleaner vehicle than the train, whose fuel mileage is 12 times that of the automobile and 15 times that of airplanes. And travel by rail is much safer than any other means of transportation. We realize now that railroads need consume no new land; every year we spend millions on new highways, parking lots and airports, yet we have already built more miles of track than we can possibly use. If the country is serious about mass transit, an extensive, well-advertised, high-speed train system is crucial. In short, passenger trains can be supported for other than romantic notions.

The railroads themselves, however, the private lines, really haven't changed that much. Founded for profit, they have certainly fulfilled their purpose. And in the process they have, over the past century, taken more and more from the government and the people of this country. The railroads received tax breaks, protective legislation and free land; in exchange they transferred the responsibility for passenger rail service to the federal government while they strengthened their hold on the lucrative freight business. Not exactly an equal trade. Today this lopsided arrangement is exemplified by the relationship between the federal government and ConRail.

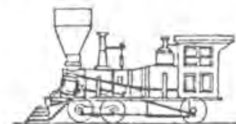
In 1976 Congress took over six bankrupt lines to establish ConRail, now the largest railroad line in the country, with 17,000 miles of track in 16 Northern states. Like Amtrak, ConRail was funded by the government in an effort to prop up the nation's railroads. Unlike Amtrak, however, ConRail is not a semi-private corporation, but a wholly private business which proudly advertises that it is "in business to make a profit." As one ad explains, "Don't confuse us with Amtrak – a Government subsidized company responsible for intercity passenger service. ConRail is a for-profit company – primarily a freight railroad." Congress, then, has set up a private railroad and bankrolled it with $2.1 billion to haul freight, traditionally the railroad's most profitable business activity.

For years we bestowed federal money and gifts on the railroads with little reluctance. We received fresh linen in the diners and berths and a low haunting whistle that blew in the distance. And we were satisfied.

Now, however, we have been freed of the private lines' hold on us and on our imaginations. At last we can be critical. The railroads in the South have made it clear that as businesses, they can still make large profits. They don't need our unending assistance. After everything American railroads have been given in the past century, after we have allowed them to give up their passenger service, if they cannot succeed financially, then it's time to consider nationalization. Michigan recently took over the entire Ann Arbor Railroad and parts of other lines in the state. That's one option. Other states could look into the possibility of running those lines that the private railroads are rapidly abandoning. And when the federal government is called upon to bail out the railroads again, we should look beyond ConRail-type systems to other alternatives. The federal government has recognized the need for rail transportation, and has provided funds for that purpose in the establishment of ConRail. Yet control of the line remains in the hands of a few wealthy men.

Recently a friend told me about the last time a steam engine puffed through his hometown of Covington, Virginia. His father, who regularly went out to watch the trains pass, returned to the house with tears in his eyes. My friend said it was the only time he ever saw his father cry. He knew things would never be the same again. He was right.

But today we have no reason to weep for the railroads. We have only to turn our appreciation for the railroads' rich past into a program for the future.



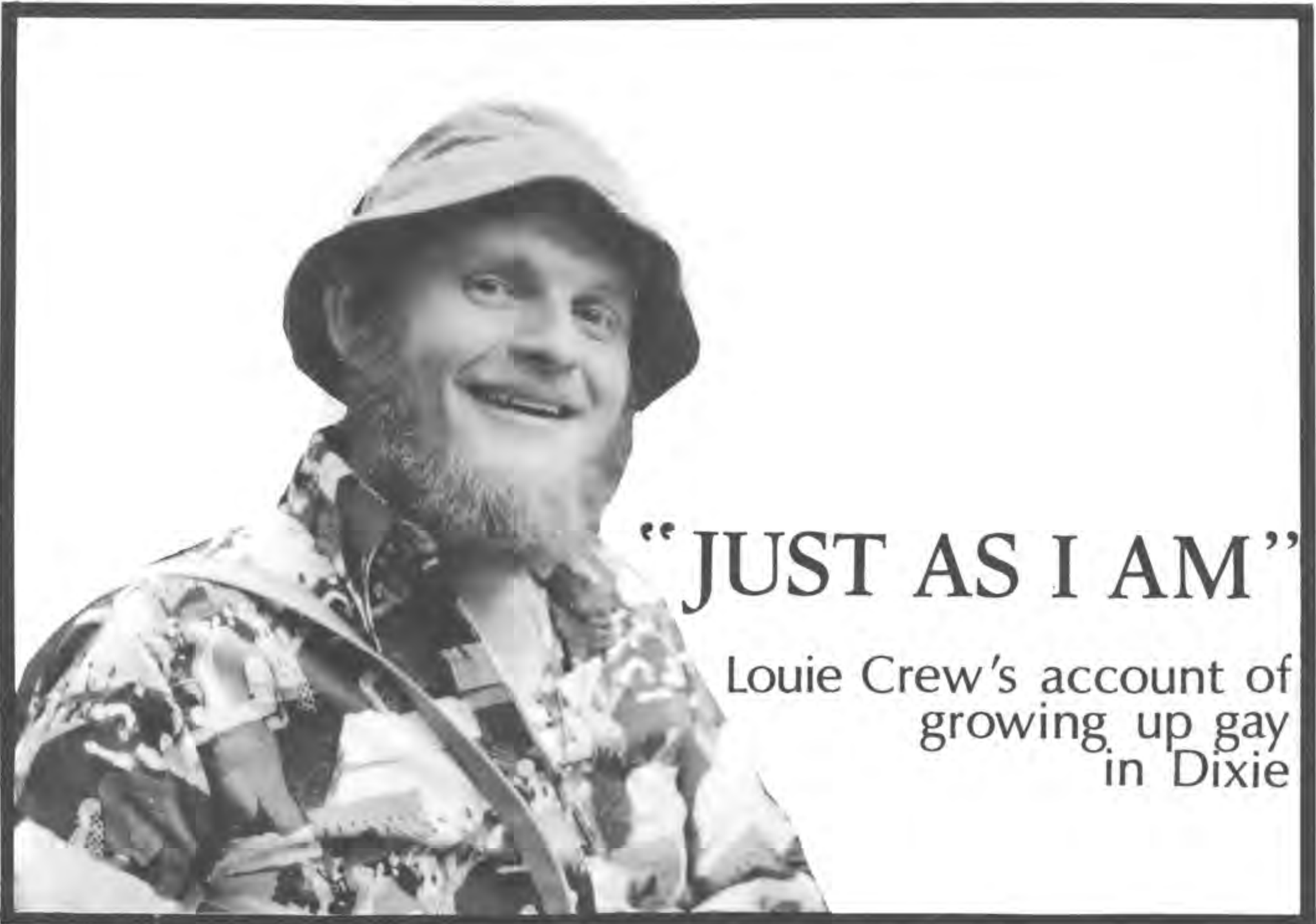



photo by Kay Tobin

# "JUST AS I AM"

## Louie Crew's account of growing up gay in Dixie

I am a male, 40, openly and happily married to another male. We make our home in rural central Georgia, where he is a hairdresser and I am an associate professor at a state college. I am white; he is black. We are active in the community and have valuable friends on the campus and in town, where we have lived for almost four years.

Growing into my present open, reasonably stable, maximally fulfilling gay consciousness has been a circuitous, tedious process, with many false starts. My background was similar to that of many native Southerners. Great-great-great-granddaddy was a private in the South Carolina troops in the Revolutionary War. Great-granddaddy fought as a private in the Coosa County, Alabama, troops of the War of the Rebellion. I was born and reared in Anniston, Ala., went to prep school at McCallie in Chattanooga, went off to Baylor University in Texas with a view to becoming a Baptist preacher, and wound up a schoolteacher, first at Auburn University, then at Darlington prep school in Rome, Ga., and later at the University of Alabama, where I earned my doctorate in English.

My world of Anniston, Chattanooga, Tuscaloosa, Atlanta and Auburn did not give me much help in growing up as a gay person. The thousands of gays in the South who had come before me were never allowed any positive visibility, and my entire education was directed by people who were not gay and who were unable to understand me. The only gays I heard about in my youth were victims of cruel gossip, most typically people unlucky enough to have been caught in their own efforts to conceal themselves. They were always roundly vilified. Almost every small Southern town I know about has its tale of some talented person who was forced to leave following the "scandal" of such discovery. Most often the "crime" at worst was having been involved in an act of nonviolent affection of mutual consent, or often merely having made the inquiry to someone to discover whether he or she would be interested in such a relationship.

### Growing Up Alone

My boyhood in the South was Puritanical, heavily influenced by the church. During puberty I learned about masturbation from two fellows who had discovered it at a Boy Scout camp. I realized as we did it together that they had a fascination for me that resembled their own fantasies about girls they were going to try this with. About the same time, my Baptist preachers talked in vague, compelling terms about "secret sin." For evidence

*Louie Crew is the author of* **Sunspots** *and* **The Gay Academic.** *He has just won his second National Endowment of Humanities summer fellowship, this time to study under grammarian James Sledd at the University of Texas. He has been a Fulbright grantee, and he is on the board of directors of National Council of Teachers of English. He is the founder of* **Integrity**, *a national organization of Gay Episcopalians, and he is an associate professor at Fort Valley State College in Fort Valley, Georgia.*

of the preacher's truth I carried in my wallet a group picture of my masturbation buddies, a seventh-grade snapshot made in the buff when about five of us had had an overnight party at my house. I remember my Grandmother's initial surprise when she once discovered the picture. "What's this, son!?" she said; and then her face grew as inscrutable as the Sphinx, as if stolidly certain of what I was vaguely beginning to know for myself. My attraction to these fellows was at once a compelling mystery and my shameful secret.

At puberty I struggled to be faithful to my church's condemnation of homosexual behavior by denying my sexuality altogether, except for frantic autoeroticism and its attendant same-sex fantasies, which kept my secret ever before me. Had I been straight, the dynamics would have been the same but the institutions of courtships, dating, the family, etc., would have counterbalanced the internalized guilt over masturbation. As it was, so effective was the restraint which I accepted that by the time I was 28 I could count on eight fingers my personal experience of orgasm with other persons.

At prep school once some friends were discussing wet dreams. They shared some of their fantasies, and asked me to do so. When I told how in one of my wet dreams a kind old man sitting next to me on a bus had reached out to touch me, one of these amateur psychologists with great show of concern gave the accurate diagnosis: "you must be becoming a homosexual yourself." I knew he was right, but I was scared beyond imagining at his discovery. I wished that I had not shared the dream; I wanted to recall it, annul it, but I knew that the dream corresponded with everything my body had always told me about myself. The effect of my friend's discovery was to reinforce my commitment to sexual self-denial. Thereafter I chose far more carefully those to whom I spoke about my "thorn in the flesh."

I buried myself in work and won the award for "unselfish service." And I often spent long hours staring off Chattanooga's Missionary Ridge, wondering about a previous winner of the award who had committed suicide, so the student rumors went, because he feared exposure for homosexuality. When a student, one I thought least like the stereotype of gays that we circulated, was summarily sent home for having required a younger student to perform fellatio on him, the events warned me of the risks of ever acting out my own sexuality. I minimized all personal contact except the most institutionalized, and had my touch only by serving as the campus athletic trainer, torturing myself with the unreciprocal physical rubbings of all my heroes. Growing up gay in a military school was a formidable challenge.

Fortunately, I did not retreat altogether from close contact with people during the years after boarding school. Instead I worked hard at developing five very close and long-term friendships with other males, most of them college classmates or colleagues. We shared comprehensive intellectual interests as well as a common professed disinterest in sexual behavior of any sort. To each of these select few I "confessed" my homosexual inclinations, but always in such a way as to seek the individual's support of me in my resistance to such "temptations." I studiously avoided any person I suspected was homosexual, naively assuming that I was an expert at such recognition. I could not accept the truth that just as I do not fit homosexual stereotypes, so most other homosexuals are equally unrecognizable. I made it expressly clear to my friends that I did not want reciprocal sexual confidences from them, and most complied. Year after year we traveled thousands of miles to visit and wrote scores of letters. It was not until I was 28 and beginning at last to face squarely my own needs for human genital contact that I began to see that most of my bachelor "intellectual" friends were also homosexual and most were also committed to a fierce celibacy.

Except for the limited sharing of these early "confessions," being gay for me meant being terribly alone, always having to wear a mask, constantly justifying even to myself my lack of sexuality by saying that I thereby won some spiritual compensations. Freud's word *sublimation* came along as a big help: at least I knew better than to repress, and as much as I hated myself for doing so, I spent myself tirelessly in autoeroticism and prayer.

Sublimation was grim, but it did have some rewards. I certainly grew as a student. Often I also was able to be a good friend. Ironically, I was able to respond better to the needs of others than to my own. As a corridor master at Darlington, I was trusted to keep a secret and frequently was asked by a distraught student: "Sir, what am I to do?! I have just blown my roommate!" Here I was, never having known a gay adult whom I trusted and never having had the courage to act out my own attractions, yet called upon to counsel others.

"Did you enjoy it?" I asked.

"Yes, that's what scares me," always was the reply.

"Did he enjoy it?" I asked.

"I don't know."

"Well, aren't you talking to the wrong person?"

I am still amazed at my good sense as I recall those sessions in which I had to play it by ear, instinctively leading persons away from the very guilt that was suffocating me. Somehow I always knew that the crucial question was the personal one: "Have you looked for a way for this experience to bring you closer to another human being?" It seemed terribly important to tell them what I knew then mainly from books, but know now in the flesh: they were not isolated freaks for having had such sexual experience and their enjoyment of the experience did not commit them irrevocably to repeat such behavior.

## Not the First

I was in my thirties before I learned that a major religious figure in my childhood daily cruised the local bus station for homosexual trade. When once at college I went for counsel about my incessant homosexual dreams, the preacher opened the door and asked his secretary to stay within earshot, so fearful was he of being closeted with someone even to discuss gay dreams. Four years later, this same preacher was fired for having an affair with his male choir director. When as a teenager I once shared with a fellow convert at a Billy Graham rally what I had written as my confession in the booklets that were handed out for this purpose, the gorgeous young man confessed in tears that he too was "guilty," and then in fear we both avoided each other thereafter. At Baylor I once slipped an anonymous note under the office door

of my religion professor begging him to discuss homosexuality in our Christian ethics class; instead he gave a grim lecture on the Freudian terms *id, ego, superego*, and suggested that his "anonymous caller" (I turned crimson!) ought to see a psychiatrist, and a Christian psychiatrist at that.

In short, I was facing in the South what gays face everywhere: I could not become visible without becoming an outcast; older gays were unwilling to risk counseling the young; nongays did not understand the experience at all and were often openly hostile.

When I started teaching at Auburn, I discovered at the Opelika bus station my first glory hole, an orifice in the wall dividing toilet stalls that accomodates anonymous sexuality. Later I discovered that these holes abound on most Southern campuses, particularly in libraries and in union buildings. At Auburn I was amazed to discover some of the brightest professors and students making their rounds to cruise the johns. Later, at the University of Alabama, I learned that gay sex was big business, particularly in certain key departments. At least one dean and three department heads were well-known to our gay underground. Yet this underground offered very little community or support, and only on the rarest of occasions the dubious privilege of a nude swimming party or a one-sex dance. And even on those occasions, people were fairly uncommunicative, and most did not even participate, so great were the risks of any potential visibility.

Amazingly, many gays survive these conditions and manage to avoid being crippled by society's fears, and our own as well. Many of us manage to preserve our integrity and to make meaningful contributions at all levels of society. Strangely, only in 1973 did the American Psychiatric Association "discover" what many gays have known all along: our gayness is not the sickness; the sickness is the homophobia plaguing the land.

Our society finds it especially difficult to grasp the fact that we gays can repress or "control" our instincts' without ever changing, much less "curing" our gayness. I myself was once pressured by a psychologist to accept heterosexuality. I found myself capable of heterosexual responses, responded to the overtures of a young woman with whom I could be completely open about my predominantly gay orientation, married her, and had a successful sexual relationship, as measured by the actual pleasure given and received. Yet throughout our five years together I sacrificed my primary orientation, my sense of self, my wholeness, my integrity. Now I am amazed that our society would license people to practice such counsel, that our society would encourage in young women a missionary zeal to "convert" men, that parents would rejoice at such suspicious "salvation," and that a priest would rejoice in such a marriage, knowing all the facts, but would not rejoice to see two men who love each other undertake the same union. If we have a messed-up, confused, alienated, crumbling society, as I suspect we do, I believe that we have ourselves to blame. For starters at reform we might try an honest avowal of our own nature and desires, instead of merely conforming to a code of institutionalized behavior thrust upon us.

***"In short, I was facing what gays face everywhere: I could not become visible without becoming an outcast. . . . Growing up gay in the South became exciting for me only when I assumed responsibility for my own growth. . . ."***

## Coming Out

Our culture teaches that homosexuality is the perversion of heterosexuality, and for years I believed it. Only slowly did I realize that the real perversion is the deceit and duplicity with which too many persons, gay and not gay, continue to live.

In my many years in the closet, Southern writers sometimes managed to break the silence and speak about people who shared my sexual orientation, but often the accounts were more devastating than the silence. Calder Willingham in *End as a Man*, writing of his experiences at the Citadel, speaks of a brutality that completely violates my gay sensibilities. Tennessee Williams peoples his works with self-destructive gay neurotics, thus earning for himself the title "Poet of the Damned." The gay male in Truman Capote's *Other Voices, Other Rooms* is an ominous, mysterious threat, and the novel's little boy is routinely teased by freaks and circus people. Southern gothic novels spread damnation-by-association like sorghum over the gay experience, a heavy sweetness unto death that is not likely to tempt any reasonable gay person to walk out of safe hiding. Even hints of camp, of gay celebration, when they occurred in Southern fiction were usually played for their jadedness. The impression I received was that all gay sexual encounters were grim and joyless, and that grand old families were routinely leveled by them. Neither impression has been confirmed by my own experience of healthy, open gay sexuality.

For years I took it as a blessing that I was not very effeminate, was not usually recognized as gay, even in the highly sensitive boarding schools where I taught, where sometimes even straights were fired for giving the misleading impressions of feminine softness. Of course, I studiously avoided any clues of gayness, real or imaginary. I would never wear green on Thursdays, always kept my fingernails closely trimmed, eschewed various "delicate" styles of smoking cigarettes and crossing legs about as assiduously as I avoided football and rough competition. I now have no particular regrets about the sexual blend that resulted in my personality. And I even enjoy my renaissance notion of mixing a certain toughness with a definite gentleness. What I do resent is that my culture made me pay the heavy price of sexual abstinence for 28 years to maintain

this view of myself.

In the closet I was unlikely to find a strong gay love relationship that could nourish my wholeness. In the closet I could not affirm my casual existence as a gay person on a par with my sexual existence. In the closet I maintained the rigid, stultifying separation of my mind and my body. In the closet I was even afraid to pray to my God, "Just As I Am," and no church thought to tell me that the God who made me loves creation and designed my body chemistry; I had left the Baptist church to become an Episcopalian at age 25 and though the form of worship was more pleasing, the needs of my body and personality to be reconciled were still not met. In the closet I wasted holy energy of all sorts – intellectual, spiritual, artistic, sexual – trying to be something that I was not, namely a heterosexual.

My real growing up was accomplished in 1973 when I decided to leave the closet. I announced to my classes and to the community that I was gay. I accepted, affirmed, and celebrated being who I am. Two major factors influenced this dramatic reversal of my habits of 37 years. For the first time I was involved in a gay relationship in which both of us desired a long-term, substantial commitment, and we were both much too happy in our own union to be willing to hide. In fact, we felt that the many public dimensions of healthy unions (shared colleagues, friends, economic relationships, etc.) required such openness if we were going to have a space for growth. Secondly, I had been given an opportunity to co-edit *College English* for a special issue on "The Homosexual Imagination" (Vol. 36, No. 3, November, 1974). In doing so I wanted to speak my pronouns honestly, not *they, them, their* and *theirs*, but *we, us, our* and *ours*.

When I announced my gay identity, the world did not fall apart as I had feared; in fact, for the first time it really began to make sense. By embracing myself, I discovered, even actualized, my strength, my energy, my capacity to love, my ability to be loved, my will to survive as myself rather than as a fabrication of my community. For the first time many major ideas of our culture began to make sense in terms of my personal experience, not the least of which were Grace, Redemption, The Wandering Jew, The Good Samaritan, Integrity....

In the closet a gay inevitably confirms the might of the oppressor, and the social and economic mobility allowed to those who pass as not gay is bought at the price of self-doubt that the oppressor is right. As Dr. King used to say, "Those who go to the back of the bus probably deserve the back of the bus." To think oneself a slave is the worst form of slavery; it is to be shackled with what William Blake called "mind-forged manacles." Homosexuality is a serious felony in 34 states, but the real measure of the oppression is in terms of the quiet resignation of the thousands of gays who do not complain. My vulnerability is measured by the tight closet doors of many, many about me.

Gay mind-forged manacles rattle across our land, growing rusty, ready to break. Thousands of gays wait to make their own discoveries of growth into personal freedom and responsibility. I have met gay people of every race, class and background working in every area of the South. It is high time for the South to grow up to the needs of these gay persons. At this time gays remain the one minority group with no outspoken allies, in spite of the fact that all gays are born in heterosexual unions. Few if any sympathetic non-gays are self-confident enough in their own sexual orientation to risk being seen wearing one of our buttons. Politicians are terrified of open association with us, though they frequently knock at the back door and are regular if anonymous customers at gay baths. Schools which we support with our taxes maintain medieval notions about us and systematically deprive us of our history while flagrantly appropriating as non-gay most of the literature, music, and art that we have created. Medical servants and public health officials are not even trained to understand basic specialized requirements of gay patients and typically give us inadequate physical examinations. Religious groups, for the most part, regularly condemn us as special sinners, and social groups ostracize all of us who refuse to be invisible.

The most immediate and specific need of gays is the extension to us of our civil rights. We should have the freedom of sexual association and public overtures of affection as do non-gays. We should not be discriminated against in employment, housing, etc. Our marriages should be accorded legal status, and possibly even tax credits should be awarded us for our contribution to solving both the population explosion and the energy crisis. Television, movies, and textbooks should be required to give a full view of the gay experience from uncensored gay points of vew. Every care should be made to recognize the diversity of ways of life in the gay experience, not just those styles which confirm non-gays' fears of us. Crimes against gays by blackmailers, entrapment specialists, toughs and other hooligans should be punished with firmness. Children should be guaranteed an atmosphere of freedom and joy in which to discover more responsibly who they are and who they may become.

If this vision of equality is too terrifying to America and the South, perhaps we should rewrite the tenets of our church and state institutions more honestly, saying instead that "whosoever is straight and believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life," that "all straights are created equal and endowed with certain inalienable rights." The Declaration would be narrower, the Gospel less good news, but such revisions would do justice to those straights who are afraid they might be gay if given a fair chance to discover who they are.

Growing up gay in the South is a challenge, one that became exciting for me only when I assumed responsibility for my own growth. During my nearly 37 years of acquiescing to the bleak invisibility prescribed for gays, I abetted the arrest of my own healthy maturation.

Now I routinely face a different set of problems, namely, the hostility which our society reserves for open gays; yet I face this hostility with maturity and with the energy I formerly wasted in hiding and self-hatred. It has been painful to be cut off from some members of my family, though fortunately my parents have remained supportive, though confused. Some of my neighbors' children spit on me when I jog and shout obscenities as I routinely pass through town. HUD has proved that a local realtor discriminated against the two of us by denying housing when he learned that we are gay and racially integrated. Because I am gay, a dean in another university refused to hire me, though I

was the unanimous choice of his entire search committee and of his 30-member faculty rank and tenure committee.

Several members of the vestry at my local parish sent a letter asking me to "find some other place of worship that may be more in sympathy to your thinking and efforts toward gay people," and when I shared this letter with the press, my bishop blew up and told me through the papers that he was summoning *me* for discipline, because *I* had "disturbed the peace and good order of the Church." Interestingly, at the "discipline" session he admitted privately to my lawyer and to me that he had "no authority to discipline a lay person" and had spoken only in anger, but he has refused to make this episcopal abuse clear to the public.

Another bishop (in the Anglican Orthodox Church) wrote a letter printed on the front page of the regional Birchite paper accusing my lover and me of having caused the tornado that ripped through our town recently! Meanwhile, my priest sometimes shouts at me in public, has said that he wants to kill me, and sometimes spills the communion wine on me when I continue to accept Christ's invitation for all persons to partake of His body and blood. Confronting such nonsense from the changing old order is much easier than was the task of trying to accept that order's definitions of me.

In the mutual support and understanding of our union, my spouse and I daily confirm that all that our culture had taught us about gayness was indeed a denial of our full humanity. It is a real comment on the quality our society gives to gay life that the two of us met just outside the bathroom on the sixth floor of the Atlanta YMCA. Such a fact might be a source of shame in the straight culture, but is a source of pride and joy in the gay culture, evidence of the staying power, growing power of the gay experience no matter what kind of ground the straight culture allows us to plant in.

My growth is not the decadence of my family tree, but the flowering of the dreams of freedom that my great-granddaddies had in the American Revolution and the War of the Rebellion. My gay integrity, wholeness, honesty, and responsibility are part of an honorable human tradition, and the New South will simply have to make room for Ernest and me. ☐

photo by Stephen March

# southern gay

## ALABAMA

### Birmingham

Ragnarok Press, 1719 – 13th Ave. So., 35205. Prints lesbian poems.

### Huntsville

Gay Identity, c/o Unitarian Church, 701 Clinton Ave., 35801. Publishes *Gayseed.*

*Gayseed*, 2310 Country Club Ave. NW, 35805. Quarterly; poetry, local information.

## FLORIDA

### Boca Raton

Gay Academic Union, Florida Atlantic University, Student Activities Office, 395-5100. Involved in gay rights activism and paraprofessional counseling.

Southern Gay Liberator, P.O. Box 2118, 33434. Publishes *Florida Gay Liberation News.*

### Clearwater

Suncoast Gay Alliance, P.O. Box 2423, 33517.

### Delray Beach

Bob Eisemann, Box 2319, 33444. Counseling, legal and medical referrals to local gay liberation projects.

### Fort Lauderdale

Dignity/Fort Lauderdale, Box 8503, 33310.

Metropolitan Community Church, 1127 SW 2nd Ct., 33312. Publishes *Sunburst.*

Universal New Age Church, 1426 Lauderdale Villa Dr., 33311. Publishes *Divine Light.*

### Fort Myers

Metropolitan Community Church of the Palms, P.O. Box 32, Tice, 33905.

### Gainesville

Gay Community Service Center, Rm. 300, J. Wayne Reitz Union, U. of Florida, 32612. Publishes *Mirror Image.*

Gay Community Services Center, P.O. Box 103, 32602. Peer counseling, VD clinic, emergency housing.

*Women Unlimited*, 12 NW 8th St., 32601.

### Hollywood

Stonewall Committee, P.O. Box 2084, 33020. Publishes a newsletter, provides medical and legal referrals and operates a speakers bureau.

### Jacksonville

For local information contact Gay Alliance for Political Action, 354-4610; Metropolitan Community Church, 354-1318.

Dignity/Jacksonville, P.O. Box 5012, 32207. Publishes a newsletter.

Integrity, Dr. Robert Ragland, Box 5524, 32207.

Metropolitan Community Church, P.O. Box 291, 729 Laura St., 32201. Counseling, health clinic, emergency housing. Publishes *Gay Community News and Calendar.*

Gay Alliance for Political Action, P.O. Box 52043, 32201. Medical and legal referrals, emergency housing.

Hu-man-ity, 2954-B Park St., 32205. Gay men's group.

### Miami

Dignity/Miami, P.O. Box 381736, 33138.

Fellowship Chapel, P.O. Box 331299, 33133. Professional counseling, legal and medical referrals.

Lutherans Concerned for Gay People, c/o Kent, Center for Dialog, 2175 NW 26th St., 33142.

Metropolitan Community Synagogue of Greater Miami, P.O. Box 330132, 33133.

Metropolitan Community Church, P.O. Box 370963, 33137. Counseling, prisoner services. Publishes *The New Life.*

Alliance for Individual Rights, Inc., P.O. Box 330414, 33133.

Dade County NOW Lesbian Task Force, P.O. Box 330265, 33133; 1431 NW 43rd St., 33142. Publishes *Lesbians Speak.*

Gay Community Services of South Florida, P.O. Box 721, Coconut Grove Station, 33133. Legal and medical referrals, rap group for parents of gays.

### Orlando

Florida Coalition of Gay Organizations, P.O. Box 26274, 32816.

Gay Students Association, Florida Technical U., P.O. Box 26274, 32816.

*Gayzette*, Parliament House Resort Hotel, 410 N. Orange Blossom Trail, Suite 147, 32805.

### Pensacola

Lambda Society, P.O. Box 4479, 32507. Counseling, legal and medical referrals, parents group.

### St. Petersburg

Female Awareness Counseling Enterprises, Twin Towers, 12945 Seminole Blvd., Largo 33540.

King of Peace Metropolitan Community Church/St. Petersburg, 1050 Parkview Lane, Largo 33504. Church: 6702–54th Ave. N. 33709.

Lesbian Task Force of Pinellas County NOW, c/o 210 5th Ave. So., 33701.

### Sarasota

Daughters of Bilitis, P.O. Box 15621, 33579.

### Tallahassee

Herstore, 112 E. Call St. Feminist bookstore collective.

Florida State U. Women's Center, F.S.U. Box 6826, 32306. Resource library, lesbian rap group, rape crisis center, political theory.

Feminist Women's Health Center, 1017 Thomasville Rd., 32303.

### Tampa

Dignity/Sun Coast, P.O. Box 3306, 33601.

Metropolitan Community Church, 2904 Concordia Ave., 33609. Counseling, legal and medical referral. Publishes *The Crusader.*

Feminist Women's Health Center, 1200 W. Platt St., 33606.

Tampa Daughters of Bilitis, c/o Feminist Women's Health Center, 1200 W. Platt, 33606.

U. of S. Florida Gay Coalition, Box CTR 2466 U.S.F., 33602. Counseling, legal and medical referral. Publishes a newsletter.

## GEORGIA

### Athens

The Hobbit Habbit, 298 E. Washington, 30601. Gay feminist bookstore.

Committee on Gay Education, Box 2467, University Station, 30602. Publishes *Gay Sun,* operates speakers bureau and library.

### Atlanta

ATTHIS, P.O. Box 1923, 30301. Workshops and consultation.

Dignity, Box 77013, 30357.

Integrity/Atlanta, Dr. Ara Dostourian, Department of History, West Georgia College, Carrollton, 30117.

Metropolitan Community Church, 800 N. Highland Ave., NE 30306.

Alternative Therapy Center, 20 4th St. NW, 30308.

Gay Information Service, (404) 874-4400 (24 hours).

Gay Help Line, Box 7974, 30309. Publishes *Gay Help Liner*.

ALFA: Atlanta Lesbian Feminist Alliance, Box 5502, 30307; 1326 McLendon Ave. NE, 30307. Counseling, emergency housing; publishes *ALFA Newsletter.*

Libertarians for Gay Rights, 2936 Skyland Dr., 30341.

*The Barb*, Box 7922Y, 30309. 374 Fifth St. Regional and national news.

*Cruise Magazine*, Box 11987, 30355. Gay entertainment guide to Atlanta and other SE cities.

### Hampton

Living Word Chapel, Box 468, 30228.

### Savannah

For local information, contact Basement 234-9148.

## KENTUCKY

### Beuchel

*New Womankind*, P.O. Box 18102, 40218.

### Lexington

Metropolitan Community Church, 156 South Limestone, 40507.

Lexington Gay Services Organization, Box 1677, 40501.

### Louisville

*Lesbian Feminist Union News*, P.O. Box 3764, 40201.

Gay Liberation/Daughters of Bilitis, 416 Belgravia Ct., 40208.

# resource guide

## LOUISIANA

### Alexandria

*Louisiana Gay Blade*, Box 1583, 71301.

### New Orleans

Dignity/New Orleans, Box 15586, 70175.

Metropolitan Community Church, 1934 Burgundy, 70117. Publishes *The Light*.

Gay Service Center, Box 51315, 70151. Community Center.

Daughters of Bilitis, Box 52113, 70152. Publishes *Gay - La*.

Tulane University Gay Students Union, c/o Associated Student Body, University Center, 70118.

## MISSISSIPPI

### Jackson

Mississippi Gay Alliance, P.O. Box 8342, 39204. Switchboard, publishes newsletter.

Mississippi Lesbians, P.O. Box 8342, 1003 Walnut, 39204. Publishes *Lesbian Front*.

### Mississippi State

Gay Counseling and Educational Projects, Mississippi Gay Alliance, P.O. Box 4470, Mississippi State U., 39762.

## NORTH CAROLINA

### Durham—Chapel Hill

Duke Gay Alliance, P.O. Box 6298, College Station, Durham, 27708

Triangle Area Lesbian Feminists, P.O. Box 2272, Durham, 27702.

Female Liberation, P.O. Box 954, 27514. Publishes *A Feminary*.

### Charlotte

*Sinister Wisdom*, 3116 Country Club Dr., 28205.

### Greensboro

Gay People's Alternative, P.O. Box 6806, 27405.

### Greenville

Eastern Gay Alliance, P.O. Box 1126, 27834.

### Raleigh

Metropolitan Community Church, 900 W. Morgan St., Apt. 8A, 27603.

## SOUTH CAROLINA

### Columbia

Metropolitan Community Church, 706 White Ave., 29203; P.O. Box 11181, 29211.

## TENNESSEE

### Memphis

Community Bookshop, 1907 Madison Ave., 38104.

Metropolitan Community Church, P.O. Box 3538, Fort St. Station, 38103.

Gay Switchboard, P.O. Box 3620, 38103, phone 726-4299.

### Nashville

Nashville Women's Center, 1112 19th Ave. South, 37212.

Metropolitan Community Church, P.O. Box 187, 37202.

## TEXAS

### Austin

Austin Lesbian Organization, P.O. Box 3301, 78764.

Womanspace, 2330 Guadeloupe St., 78705. Switchboard, peer counseling.

Gay Political Committee, P.O. Box 1255, 78767.

Gay/Texas, Office of Student Activities, U. of Texas, 78712.

Integrity/Austin, P.O. Box 14056, 78761.

Gay Community Services, University Y, 2330 Guadeloupe St., 78705. Walk-in peer counseling and information, legal and medical referrals.

South Central Region of the US Gay Academic Union, 900 West Ave., 78701.

### Bryan

Awareness, c/o Rt. 3, Box 297A, 77801.

### Corpus Christi

Gay Organization, P.O. Box 675, 78403.

### Dallas

Dignity/Dallas-Fort Worth, P.O. Box 813, Arlington, 76010.

Metropolitan Community Church, 3834 Ross Ave., 75204. Publishes *Channel*.

Gayline of Dallas, c/o Rob Shivers, P.O. Box 5944, 75222, phone (214) 241-4118. Counseling, referral.

Dallas Daughters of Bilitis, 3220 Lemmon Ave., 75204.

Task Force on Lesbianism, P.O. Box 12431, 75225.

Tryst Magazine, P.O. Box 36471, 75235.

### Fort Worth

Switchboard, 338-0128.

Dignity/Dallas-Fort Worth, P.O. Box 813, Arlington, 76010.

Agape Metropolitan Community Church, 251 Vacek, 76107. Publishes *Open Door*.

Daughters of Bilitis, P.O. Box 1564, 76101.

### Grand Prairie

Metropolitan Community Church, P.O. Box 718, 75050.

### Houston

Crisis Hotline, 228-1505.

Dignity/Houston, P.O. Box 66821, 77006. Publishes newsletter.

Integrity/Houston, P.O. Box 16041, 77022.

Metropolitan Community Church, P.O. Box 13731, 77019.

Gay Activists Alliance of Houston, P.O. Box 441, University Center, U. of Houston, 77004. Publishes *Lambda Letter*.

Gay Politcal Caucus, P.O. Box 16041, 77022.

Houston NOW Sexuality and Lesbian Task Force, Women's Center, 3602 Milam, 77002.

Texas Gay Task Force, c/o Integrity, P.O. Box 16041, 77022.

United Homophile Organization, c/o Integrity, P.O. Box 16041, 77022.

Community News, P.O. Box 3942, 77001.

*Montrose Star*, 2110 Lexington, 77098. Weekly.

*Point Blank Times*, P.O. Box 14643, 77021. Monthly.

Abraxas, 1200 W. Alabama, 77006. Lesbian /feminist books.

### Lubbock

Lubbock Gay Awareness, Box 4002, 79409.

Dignity/West Texas, Box 16065, Sunset Station, 79490.

### McAllen

New Age Community, c/o Melnyk, 306 S. 11th St., 78501. Publishes newsletter.

### San Antonio

Gay Switchboard, (512) 733-7300.

Dignity/San Antonio, Box 12260, 78212.

Gay Community Center, 1136 W. Woodlawn, 78201. Publishes *Together Gay*. Counseling, information.

Gay Women of San Antonio, c/o 12013 Lone Shadow Trail, 78233.

### Universal City

Texas Gay Task Force, Box 2036, 78148.

## VIRGINIA

### Arlington

Gay Women's Open House, (703) 671-3762.

### Charlottesville

Gay Student Union, Peabody Hall, Univ. of Virginia, 22901.

### Norfolk

Virginia Lesbian/Feminist Group, Box 11103, 23517.

### Richmond

Gap Rap, 10 W. Cary St., 23220.

Gay Liberation Front, c/o Kenny Pederson, 505 Brookside Blvd., 23327.

### Roanoke

Roanoke Valley Trouble Center, Inc., 3515 Williamson Rd., 24012. Crisis intervention and referrals.

### Williamsburg

Gay Liberation Group, College of William and Mary, Campus Center, 23185.

*Compiled from* Gaia's Guide, 1976 *(third edition), 115 New Montgomery Street, San Francisco, Calif. 94105, and from* Gayellow Pages *(Fall/Winter, 1976-77), published by Renaissance House, P.O. Box 292, Village Station, N.Y., N.Y. 10014.*

# PEOPLE, PLACE, PERSISTENCE:

## a victory for neighborhoods

article by Malcolm Jones
photographs by Mary Margaret Wade

The Crystal Towers neighborhood perches on the edge of downtown Winston-Salem, N.C., on the lip of a plateau from which the rest of the city spills away. When the original homes in the neighborhood were built almost 100 years ago, they were among the finest in the young town of Winston. But, as the city grew, the doctors, lawyers and industrialists who built the neighborhood moved west on the crest of fortune.

By the late 1950s, the spread of decay was inexorable. What new residents the neighborhood attracted were renters. The fine old homes that flanked the curving streets were subdivided into smaller units. Improvements were cosmetic or nonexistent. Trash filled the vacant lots and streets. The area was not, by any definition, a neighborhood. It was a way station, a temporary stopping place for people who seldom dreamed of something better or had stopped dreaming of anything at all.

A few of the older residents remained, hoping for a rejuvenation that did not come. Like most center-city areas, Crystal Towers became a victim of prolonged neglect. By 1970, the neighborhood held a mixture of poor and middle-class people, whites and blacks, homeowners and renters. The few people that still owned their homes were mostly old. Having waited too long to sell, they watched with dismay a once proud neighborhood slide into what appeared to be irreversible decline.

### The Stage Is Set

Like many cities, Winston-Salem's housing programs have long been packaged by a Housing Authority and a Redevelopment Commission. In this case, the two agencies might as well be one. Both are under the influence of James Haley, who has headed the Redevelopment Commission in Winston-Salem since 1970. From then on, to challenge a city housing program was to challenge Haley. Not many people succeeded. The cornerstone of Haley's urban renewal program was East Winston, the city's black residential section. Residents in that section complained, with good reason, that there was little opportunity for rehabilitation in the area: after Haley's renewal, precious few old houses remained. The old homes, many of them delapidated but capable of

being salvaged, had been bulldozed away in the Model Cities era. It mattered little what people in the affected area thought about the plan. The guiding principle of the Redevelopment Commission was simply to create as much new housing as possible with available federal funds. Invariably this meant destroying the old structures and building a fewer number of multi-unit housing projects, a form of housing that may be efficient but has never shown to be in any way conducive to neighborhood life.

In 1974, Congress passed a Community Development Act to improve federally funded housing programs in cities like Winston-Salem. The new law consolidated 12 diverse urban renewal programs run by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and thus streamlined the flow of money to the cities. Initially, cities were pleased with the new law because it gave them a greater sense of autonomy in spending funds from Washington. However, if Richard Nixon's "new federalism" freed cities from some federal guidelines, it imposed a new set of restraints: the aldermen could figure out ways to use the money, but first they had to hold hearings to let the public advise them on how it should be spent.

Once public hearings became a way of life for city governments, the closed-door negotiations between the bureaucrats from Washington and the bureaucrats (like Haley) from city governments were suddenly passe. Elected officials, not appointed people, now bore the greater responsibility for decision-making. And, as one Winston-Salem alderman put it, "The city is going to be responsive to elected people, and elected people by their nature are going to be worried about the next election, whereas redevelopment is run by appointed people, and appointed people, they don't have to worry about the ballot box." The stage was set for a new style of opposition to Haley's programs.

In late 1974, when the city began holding public hearings on how it would use the Community Development money, one of the first things proposed was a typical Haley clearance project for Crystal Towers. Ironically, it is one of Haley's projects that gave the neighborhood its name. A 12-story highrise to provide public housing for the elderly sits at the southeast corner of the neighborhood. Finished in 1972, the building is named Crystal Towers. Haley still insists, with some justification, that the highrise was one of the positive things that the neighborhood had going for it. To build the highrise, the city had condemned and razed about a block's worth of slum housing, widened and straightened Sixth Street, the southern boundary of the neighborhood, and built a small park on the corner of the property occupied by the highrise.

That does not mean that the city then planned to rehabilitate what was left of the neighborhood. "There were some weaker points," recalls Haley, naming as the worst, "low home-ownership, a changing of the people that lived there – sort of a transient type – and the kind of housing in there. Most of the houses were originally well-built; the construction could accept rehabilitation, but with the low home-ownership, it is questionable whether it (rehabilitation) would be a successful program."

In other words, while not denying that the housing stock was sound, the city did not encourage or seek out potential home-buyers who might be willing to fix the houses. As a rule, city bureaucrats contended that it was cheaper and more practical to level the houses and use the cleared land for something else. Since industries, notably Hanes Dye and Finishing Co., had been nibbling at the neighborhood's edges for years, it was fair to assume that the Crystal Towers area, once cleared, would be snapped up at a good price for industrial use.

### Enter Jon

Jon DeVries came to Winston-Salem by way of, among other things, civil-rights work in Georgia and Harlem, the Morningside Heights riots in New York City in which Columbia University students protested the demolition of black housing to make way for a new gym and where DeVries, beaten himself, saw his wife hauled over a spiked iron fence by the police.

In 1972, Jon and Maggie DeVries and their two-year-old son, Dylan, moved to Winston-Salem and bought a house in the Crystal Towers neighborhood. DeVries supported them by doing carpentry work and then working at a hardware store. Protest and activism were no longer the center of their lives: "I wasn't conscious of getting anything done when we came here," DeVries says. "I just wanted to get us a place to live." His one outlet for community work was the Downtown Church Center, a non-denominational organization with which he still works that does day-care work, provides transportation for the poor and indigent and acts as a liaison between the social services departments of the county and the whites and blacks who live near downtown.

After some time in the city, the DeVrieses were calling it home. It was therefore with apprehension that they began reading newspaper accounts in the fall of 1974 of how the city planned to spend its Community

**Jon DeVries, neighborhood organizer/planner.**

*Malcolm Jones is a native of Winston-Salem and is the book editor and a reporter for the Winston-Salem* Sentinel.

Development money. Jon suspected that the house and the neighborhood which had been home for two years might be targeted for demolition.

DeVries is not an imposing figure. To look at him, one might think of a debauched choirboy. But the aldermen who listened to him at the first public hearing on December, 1974, were quick to learn that he is a lot tougher than his looks imply.

"Bill McNeil, one of the city planners, knew I was coming to the meeting," recalls DeVries. "He saw me at the door and said, 'All that you're slated for is clearance. I don't think you can get anything else out of it if you get anything at all.' It was a very pessimistic introduction. I really *didn't* think we were going to get anything."

His guess was not off by much.

"There was a question-and-answer period, and I stood up and asked the board of aldermen and Mr. Haley whether what I saw on the screen was what they seriously proposed for our area. What I saw on the screen was 65 units to be cleared and no street improvements and no rehabilitation funds. That concerned me."

DeVries and his next-door neighbor, Douglas Bales, a middle-aged television executive who had lived in the neighborhood for several years, were subjected to some tough questioning by the aldermen. Under fire, DeVries suggested that the city investigate an alternative to clearance such as homesteading, the process whereby a city takes title to old houses and then allows potential homeowners to move into them on the condition that the individuals will fix them by a prescribed date.

To their credit, the aldermen took him up on his suggestion, and a member of the planning staff was soon in Wilmington, Delaware, where homesteading has been used with some success. While nothing came of that suggestion, the fact that the city council took some responsive action gave DeVries the necessary encouragement to keep working to save his neighborhood.

In other neighborhoods where residents were not so alert, the city's plans proceeded unabated. By contrast, DeVries made repeated trips not only to the Community Development hearings but also to regular aldermanic meetings; his experience as a community organizer had taught him that governments could best be fought when forced on the defensive.

***"We are equally concerned with the house built in 1890 as we are with the brick duplex built in 1950."***

To do this, DeVries and Bales canvassed the neighborhood, made a survey of the housing and prepared a rough chart of the number of houses that were sound, those that could benefit from rehabilitation and those that were beyond hope. Within a month, DeVries was able to return to the aldermen, first to challenge the Redevelopment Commission's figure of 14 percent owner-occupancy rate – his house-to-house canvas showed 21 percent – and then to present an impressive 20-page document that contained specific recommendations for rehabilitation, low-cost loan programs, neighborhood beautification and requests for help with the crime program.

"The board received the report with no comment, and I wasn't entirely sure if anybody would ever read it. But obviously John Palmer (DeVries' alderman) did, and copies of it filtered into the planning department and places over there. We started feeling like we were getting some feedback based on what we had turned in," DeVries says.

Two key elements stand out at this point. First, DeVries obviously meant business. He had worked hard, and his sincerity was beyond question. Second, he demonstrated to the city that he could suggest alternatives couched in its language. His written proposal, for example, took three key sections from the Community Development Act pertaining to restoration and rehabilitation and translated them into suggestions eminently applicable to his neighborhood. Such sophisticated use of the law was not lost on the aldermen. John Palmer, who had just taken office, was immediately impressed.

Palmer is a slight, dapper man with a buttoned-down fastidiousness that would make him look more at home in a board of directors' meeting than as a Democratic alderman representing a ward which includes a large low- to middle-class black population as well as most of the intellectual community of Wake Forest University. His manner is discreet and polite, but he is not afraid to try something new if he can be persuaded that it will benefit his constituents. To Palmer, DeVries' report "just made so much sense, in terms of the goals of the Community Development Act, to preserve the housing stock. Here's a neighborhood with housing stock that you could never replace, and the cost per unit was minimal.

"I calculated the cost to rehabilitate a house versus the cost to clear and then build a new project. . . . seems like on an average it was $8,000 per dwelling unit for rehabilitation in terms of cost to the taxpayer, and it was three times that – $25,000 – to clear and rebuild.

"It occurred to me that this was more economical from a tax-dollar point to do this . . . . it was just common sense."

Though the ideas of rehabilitation

made sense to Palmer and members of the planning staff that read the plan, they did not appeal to a number of others. Alderman Richard Davis, though black himself and the representative of a ward which had been blitzed in the name of urban renewal, was a devout believer in the old clear-and-rebuild approach. At one meeting, he agreed with DeVries that the Crystal Towers neighborhood did indeed need good housing, but he claimed that the best way to get it was to raze the existing structures, subdivide the land and resell it.

"I wrote him a long letter disputing that," DeVries says, "because from the land the city had cleared, they were getting back at best one-fifth of the money they had put into it, and the city had not been able to attract new development on the land it had already cleared. I couldn't perceive that we were going to get new housing that way, and I still don't. I think sometimes you get new business, but you seldom get new housing."

In the end, the persistence of DeVries and Bales paid off. On March 5, 1975, three months after DeVries first heard what the city planned for his neighborhood, the aldermen approved plans to include the Crystal Towers neighborhood as a $1 million rehabilitation project in the Community Development proposal to be sent to HUD. The most remarkable feature of the proposal was that the city, by incorporating DeVries' ideas, was able to shave off almost half of the original recommended cost of clearance as figured by the Redevelopment Commission.

The major selling point of rehabilitation from the city's point of view was that any money spent was, first, federal money and, second, would come back eventually in the low-cost loan program that DeVries had devised. Housing stock and the tax base in the center city would both improve.

Within a week after the aldermen approved the proposal, the city machinery began to work. For such neighborhood projects, the city uses a management team comprised of planners, engineers and public works people. This was the group that would actually organize the program. DeVries requested and was allowed to sit in on their monthly meetings.

One of the first things the management team set up was the low-interest loan program to be financed by the Community Development money. Under this program, a citizen could borrow up to $16,000 at three percent interest, repayable over 20 years. To sweeten the deal, the homebuyer would receive a $2,000 rebate upon completion of rehabilitation of his house. This loan program did not do away with regular mortgages that home buyers would have to negotiate on their own, a feature that would later cause the neighborhood much trouble.

In a very short time, DeVries had succeeded beyond even his expectations in forcing the city to re-evaluate its plans for the Crystal Towers neighborhood. But if he had stopped after getting a foot in the door at city hall, the project could have failed by becoming one in the long line of neighborhood programs which faltered as the residents themselves receded further and further into the background. DeVries understood the importance of the next step — the organization of the neighborhood as a neighborhood.

### The Cast Expands

In the middle of March 1975, a neighborhood meeting was held at which members of the management team explained to area residents the loan program, the slum clearance, landscaping and other technicalities of what would be happening in the coming months. Those present, about 15 people, responded enthusiastically. In the next few weeks, residents helped show city employees around the area, familiarizing them with the neighborhood's problems. They also helped compile a more complete survey of what needed to be done to the existing structures and which absentee landlords needed to be contacted. This was the first in-depth survey of the neighborhood ever done, either by the city officials or the residents.

The ultimate effect of this chapter in the neighborhood's history is harder to judge than the preceding one where the reversal of the city's plans is a simple, black and white success story. Work within the neighborhood is often a matter of intangibles, involving a transition from a collective state of mind that resulted in closed doors and drawn drapes to an open and healthy exchange of labor and friendship among people. Crystal Towers is not the first neighborhood to enjoy a revival, but it is certainly an unusual and dramatic example of a well-organized transition from blight and decay to emotional and economic prosperity.

Perhaps the fact which sets the neighborhood apart from others in the city is the conjunction of public and private endeavor. The adjacent West End neighborhood had won a stunning citizen's victory a few years earlier by convincing the city government to rezone the neighborhood to stop the inroads of business and apartment buildings. And Waughtown and West Salem are showcases of city-initiated

**"Martha Dunigan, three daughters, four ducks, and a dog live in a restored mansion."**

programs. But no other neighborhood has so successfully matched public housing programs with the efforts of local residents. When the negotiations with the city first began in the last month of 1974, only a handful of adventurous souls had bought houses in the neighborhood under the triple threat of potential clearance, the encroachment of industrial development and the everyday facts of life encountered in a low-income neighborhood – vagrancy, drunks, the threat of petty theft and fire.

One of the first of the new wave of homebuyers was Martha Dunigan, an artist in her thirties with three daughters, four ducks and a dog. The 84-year-old rambling Victorian mansion she bought in September, 1974, sits high on a hill overlooking West End Boulevard. Although today she is surrounded by the busy sound of carpenters working on houses on all sides of her property, the scene was quite different three years ago. Condemned housing dotted the view. A grocery store that fronted for a "drink house" sat just around the corner. It was not a proper neighborhood for a woman with young children. But Mrs. Dunigan took the risk.

"I realized from the start it was a terrific gamble," she said. "If the street were zoned commercial or if they started tearing houses down, I'd be in real trouble."

But she couldn't get as large a house as cheaply in the suburbs, and, like so many of the people that followed her example, she was ideologically opposed to the idea of clearing out so many potentially valuable homes. "It slays me to see these beautiful homes just going to seed because nobody cares about them," she said in an interview in 1975. "It's a weird kind of euthanasia: get rid of them because they're old."

Most of the people that started moving into the neighborhood soon after the city approved the plans for rehabilitation were slightly younger than Martha Dunigan, and as a group displayed a sense of adventure and tolerance that many homebuyers lack. Not many typical middle-class suburbanites would agree with Bright Larkin, who moved into the neighborhood in June, 1975, with his wife, Connie, and their two children: "The ethnic mixture adds something to a neighborhood. Variety is always nice. The racial mixture here may keep some people from moving in, but I'm not sure they'd be assets to the neighborhood anyway."

Crystal Towers had always been as much a social as an economic experiment, and black and white residents who viewed each other with suspicion and distrust a few years ago now seem to enjoy a harmony not found elsewhere in a city that the Council on Municipal Performance had called "the second most segregated city in the United States" based on a study of 1970 census tracts (Shreveport, La., was listed first). Indeed, while studies based on census tracts can often be misleading because the figures are very general, there is no denying that Winston-Salem's urban renewal programs failed to promote housing integration in the city. On the other hand, Crystal Towers is an example of a project that can, by combining rehabilitation of existing housing at reasonable prices with public housing construction and rent subsidy programs, bring people of different races together.

Chuck Dizard is another resident who finds the social and racial mixture an advantage. A labor union organizer, he and his wife Debbie, a physician's assistant, think the neighborhood will be a good place to rear the children they plan to have. "This is closer to the life of the city," he says, "and children growing up here will have a better sense of what's going on around them."

The motives of other residents are mixed. Jonathan Edwards, an urban planner, always dreamed of buying an old house and fixing it up. He says the experience has in turn taught him a good deal about his profession. For long-time residents, like George and Mary Cuthrell and their five children, or Elizabeth Melton, the new city programs gave them the opportunity to buy the houses they had rented for several years.

One of the more ironic stories to come out of the neighborhood's reawakening involves Elizabeth Melton, an employee of Southern Bell. She rented her house for 12 years before she finally was able to buy it. Two days before she took title to the house, the landlord came by with a routine eviction notice because she was late with the rent. He had no idea that she had been dealing with the owner until she politely threw him out.

**The Partners' Agreement**

As the city's management team proceeded to iron out plans for the loan program and the technicalities of rehabilitation, the neighborhood pursued activities of its own. More meetings were held at DeVries' house, and a solid core of about 20 residents began to help him with planning. They asked for and got condemnation proceedings against several irreparably damaged houses. They held a major trash pick-up for the area. Most importantly, as newspaper coverage gave the neighborhood steady publicity, residents took the responsibility of showing potential home-buyers around the neighborhood. Absentee owners and landlords were contacted to see if they were interested in selling their property or investing in repairs.

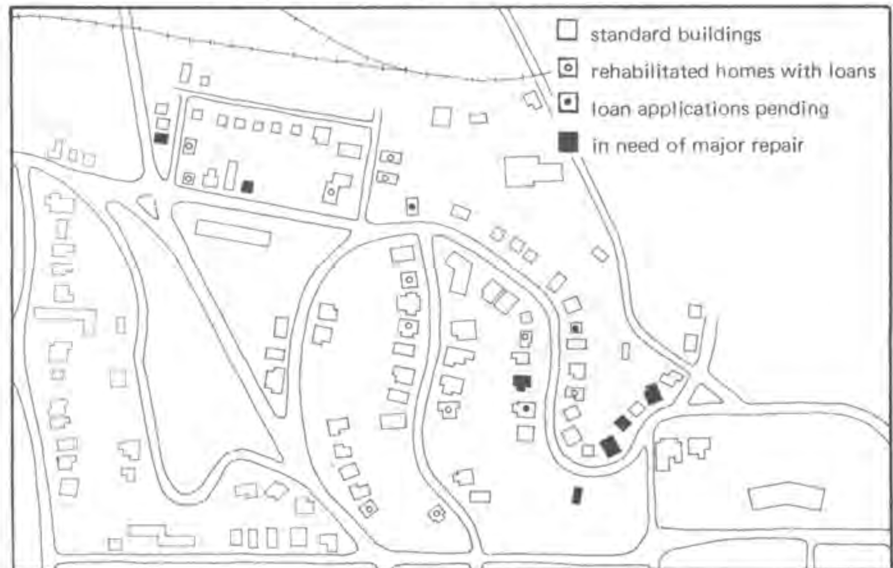
On August 17, 1975, the neighborhood held its first major meeting. Seventy residents and landlords attended, along with Aldermen Palmer and C.C. Ross and members of the city management team. DeVries remembers it as a successful meeting: "The officials left from that meeting saying, 'Well, rehabilitation might not work over here, but it's certainly obvious to us that a whole lot of people want it.' And I think the language of what they planned to do over here reflected more and more neighborhood input after that."

On September 22, 1975, after testimonials from over 40 residents from Crystal Towers, the aldermen approved the final draft of the rehabilitation plan for Crystal Towers neighborhood. Under the plan, the city designated a team from its Neighborhood Conservation Program to work in the neighborhood, managing the loan program, directing landscaping activities and acting as a liaison between residents and contractors who must bring the houses up to code pending inspection by the city.

Don Dwiggins, an NCP member who has been intimately associated with the project since January, 1976, is full of praise for the project. "We've seen the area change very drastically in two years from a low home-ownership area (about 20 percent according to DeVries) to over 50 percent, which to me is one of the biggest plus-factors for an area. Our basic philosophy has been to go into an area which had a minimum of 50 percent owner-occupants and the housing would be basically sound. Normally, we wouldn't even work with a case before the person actually owned the house. But this has been very worthwhile. We've processed 14 loans to date."

Dwiggins is a slow-talking, self-effacing man who seems equally at ease with his Crystal Towers clients as he does with city planners. He pays attention to facts and figures, but he is also one of the administrators most impressed with what people in the neighborhood have done: "There have been a lot of changes in the last 15 months which it would have been hard for me to foresee, and I think it's been the city working with the citizens and vice versa that has accomplished this. I don't think it could have been accomplished without citizen participation, and yet, I don't think without the city being willing to bend, to be

Crystal Towers Neighborhood, October, 1975



Existing Situation, Summer, 1977

Projected Plan, October, 1978

flexible and try some new approaches in that particular area, I don't think we would have seen the changes that we see today. That's one of the most drastic changes that I know here in Winston-Salem."

On March 5, 1976, one year to the day after the aldermen had approved the initial rehabilitation plan, Crystal Towers received authorization from the state of North Carolina for incorporation as a neighborhood organization. Soon thereafter, it obtained tax exempt status, which gives it wide latitude in business transactions.

March, 1976, was an important month for the neighborhood for another reason as well: Joe Lineberger, a neighborhood resident, got his mortgage approved by Piedmont Federal Savings and Loan.

For months, Lineberger had been dickering with Piedmont over mortgage terms. He needed a mortgage to qualify for the home improvement loan from the city. But he must have title to the house, the city said, before he could get a loan. No title, no loan; no loan, no mortgage. Lineberger, a day-care teacher of limited means, couldn't afford to repair or buy a house without financial assistance from either the city or a private lending institution, but each made its help contingent on backing from the other.

The problem is a common one for many old neighborhoods. It's called redlining and occurs when banks effectively draw a line around a neighborhood, saying "This area is a bad financial risk. We won't make any loans here."

For residents caught in such a predicament, the only alternative is greenlining, or boycotting the institutions which redline. There is now a federal law, passed last year, called the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, which requires that lending institutions publish a list of their loans according to location, thus alerting the public if redlining is actually being done.

Until Lineberger's battle, only four people had received financing for houses in the neighborhood. Two of the people simply assumed the mortgages from the previous owners, and two successfully got them from savings and loan companies. But the people who would benefit most from a chance at buying a house in Crystal Towers – those who, like Lineberger, had the desire but not the financial wherewithal – were being shut out. Crystal Towers might be a noble experiment in the eyes of the city and the neighborhood residents, but to lending institutions it was only a bad risk. "That area had its day as far as the purpose for which it was built," said Dan Smith, chief loan officer of Winston-Salem Savings & Loan in March, 1976. By his logic, a home owner's loan for Lineberger was irrational.

By that time, everyone from the planners to the aldermen who had worked with the program showed an honest desire to see the program work. They were very disturbed when they heard about Lineberger's difficulties. So in March, 1976, Alderman John Palmer, Public Works Director Joe Berrier and City Finance Director Joe Collette went to have what Palmer calls a "little visit" with the management of Piedmont Savings and Loan, one of the intransigent companies. As Palmer explains the meeting, it was an educational experience for the company: "Initially they were skeptical, but they're on board now. They understand; they see that it's working."

Pressed for details, Palmer will only say, "They're busy lending on the houses which make the most sense to them, which have traditionally been the suburban, development-style house. This was a new thing, and they just didn't understand that this project had the backing of the local government and the federal government, and the risk wasn't all that much. And there were administrative technicalities that they needed to know like the financial control that the city had over the payment of funds to a contractor who would come in and work on a house. In other words, this plan was designed to be foolproof. The city was going to make darn sure that this money got used for the intended purpose. And savings and loans at that time didn't realize that. So we had to get them on board, and we did it."

What Palmer does not say, but what the bankers undoubtedly *did* realize was that the city government had major accounts with the Piedmont and Winston-Salem Savings and Loan companies which could be transferred to other banks. That, plus the city's explanation and guarantee backing of the program, provided the necessary clout to break loose mortgage loans for Crystal Towers.

### Beyond Victory

After the redlining battle, victories big and small started popping off like a chain of firecrackers. More people continued to move into the area, take out loans and mortgages and go to work on houses. The city approved residential zoning for the neighborhood in June, 1976. That effectively protected the area from speculative purchasing. And in August, the Winston-Salem Foundation approved a $15,000 grant that allowed DeVries to quit his job at the hardware store and work full-time with the neighborhood.

Crystal Towers has never been and shows no signs of becoming a pristine experiment. People are there for idealistic reasons, to be sure, but they are also there because the area offered good housing at prices not available elsewhere in the city.

"One misconception is that we're just restoring old homes," says DeVries. "There is an image that 'here's another restoration project like Old Salem.' Our concern is not restoration but rehabilitation of housing regardless of when it was built in order to have quality housing available for people who want to live here. We are equally concerned with the house built in 1890 as we are with the brick duplex built in 1950."

## *DO·IT·YOURSELF NEIGHBORHOOD REHABILITATION*

*There are several unique features of what the Crystal Towers Neighborhood Association has accomplished through innovative use of Community Development money that could be adapted by other groups.*

1. **Incorporation.** *The residents wrote the Association's Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws which spell out a block-captain structure. Affairs of the Association are carried out by four officers with a quorum of the block captains. A local attorney reviewed these papers and filed for incorporation, while a nearby church donated funds for attorney and filing fees. The By-Laws stipulate that tenants, resident-owners, and absentee-owners are each entitled to one vote in the general neighborhood meetings which attract from 30 to 50 people. Under Chapter 55-A of the NC General Statutes, the state granted the Association a Certificate of Authority on March 5, 1976.*

2. **Tax Exemption.** *Incorporation assured members of legal protection, provided a guide for long-term goals and aims, and permitted the group to buy, sell, and receive property. The Association then filed for and obtained state tax-exemption under Sections 105-125 and 105-130.11 of The NC General Statutes (May 3, 1976).*

*The remaining hurdle for full legal empowerment of the group was federal tax-exemption (under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code) which enables it to solicit tax-deductible contributions of property and money for expenses and staff. The IRS has traditionally ruled that neighborhood groups which restrict membership to residents or property owners in a given area could not qualify as "charitable" organizations. But in April, 1976, in Revenue Ruling 76-147, the IRS decided that if the activities of a group "combatting community deterioration" were "truly public in scope," the group itself could qualify as a charitable organization since "the community, and derivatively all those who live there, are benefited." Based on this ruling, the Association filed a form 1023 application and received exemption in October, 1976.*

3. **Grant.** *The federal tax-exempt status enabled the Crystal Towers Neighborhood Association to apply for and receive a $15,000 grant from the Winston-Salem Foundation to cover Association expenses and to pay the full-time salary of the chairperson. The Foundation was so impressed with the results of this venture that it established a new category of funding, "Civic Improvement," which will enable other neighborhood groups to obtain needed resources.*

4. **Community Development Features.** *Although the new National Neighborhood Policy Act will supercede the 1974 Housing and Community Development Act which the Crystal Towers Assocation used as the basis for its experimental program, such activities should be even easier to justify under the new legislation. Briefly, these experimental features are:*

A. **$2,000 Homeowner Incentive Grant.** *The Association and the city interpreted 570.200 Section ii (grants aimed at rehabilitation) as a means to finance a $2,000 rebate to home-buyers. HUD objected that raising owner-occupancy wasn't a proper goal of rehabilitation monies because the sole intent of the legislation was to improve* property. *The Association and the city argued that such grants represented an incentive for the long-term rehabilitation of the area. The compromise allowed the grant to apply only to the purchase of sub-standard homes (but since nearly all the homes were sub-standard, the Association considered it a victory).*

B. **Landscaping.** *To protect the homes from industrial noise and visual blight from the north, the Association successfully requested a tree-planting program under Section 570.200 Section iii. This was the first time a comprehensive landscaping program had been adopted as part of a Community Development plan in Winston-Salem.*

C. **Planning.** *To preserve a high level of citizen participation, the city consented to allow the chairperson of the Association to become a non-voting member of the Planning Team for the area. City decision-making has benefited from the data the neighborhood regularly brings to planning, and some modifications of this arrangement could be justified under any Community Development program.*

5. **Packaging and Marketing.** *In order to address the problems of vacant land and sub-standard multi-family buildings, the Association has spent the past year stimulating private re-investment by planning, coordinating, and promoting new construction, renovation of existing apartments, and house-moving. The Section VIII rent supplement program has proven the only viable stimulus for new construction; and as a result of the Association's active recruitment of developers, two new apartment buildings will be built this year. The Section VIII existing rental program also enabled the Association to approach absentee owners with computations showing a profit for them if they will renovate their building under the loan program and rent to Section VII applicants. Now that the neighborhood is improving, other apartment buildings are achieving a stable enough tenant population to justify rehabilitation without rent subsidies.*

*The tax-exempt status has enabled the Association to accept donations of houses from another area. It then arranges to have the house moved and finds a buyer who applies for a rehabilitation loan before the house is moved so the work can commence immediately in the new location.*

*Another useful tool in stimulating the upgrading of property is the purchase option. When a substandard house comes on the market and there are no immediate owner-occupant purchasers available, the Association purchases an option to buy, cleans the property up, and eventually sells its option at cost to a buyer. These options cost from $100-$200 and prevent speculators and irresponsible landlords from buying and becoming a problem.*

*After some initial skirmishes were alleviated by the intervention of our alderman and the city staff, the Association now works closely with the savings and loan institutions to insure that mortgage money will be available to qualified buyers.*

– Jon DeVries

**The house above, donated by a local business, will be moved to a vacant lot.**

What kept that egalitarian flavor in the neighborhood was new development. This might be considered the second part of the neighborhood's story, and it is the part that separates the neighborhood most drastically from other neighborhood associations in this city and elsewhere. Other groups have put all their energies into keeping such places as the increasingly affluent West End or Atlanta's Inman Park true to one sort of identity or another, but Crystal Towers has tried for the broadest possible mix of residents, from homeowners to people needing public housing assistance.

While the neighborhood residents had been informally showing prospective buyers around the neighborhood and putting them in touch with owners in the early stages of the story, the incorporation and tax-exempt status enabled the association to officially package land. The primary objectives were to put houses on the land made vacant when older structures were condemned and to provide low-cost, multi-family housing for as many people as possible.

"We quickly got into marketing," DeVries says, "because that was something the city was not prepared to handle and they still aren't. It's somewhere between what the real estate market is supposed to do and something the city can't quite do."

To date, in little over a year's time, a contractor has been convinced to begin building a 12-unit apartment building for the elderly on land that the neighborhood convinced the city to clear two years ago. Hanes Dye and Finishing Co., whose factory abuts onto the northern rim of the neighborhood, donated three houses that are in the process of being moved into the Crystal Towers area at this writing. Plans call for the eventual moving of four more. It is quite possible that Crystal Towers will end up with more housing stock than it started with, an anomaly in the history of urban renewal.

The house movings particularly delight the neighborhood residents because they are the ultimate in recycled housing that can still be priced so that low- to middle-income people can afford them. The cost of moving the Hanes houses, the installation of new foundations and the necessary rehabilitation work will run between $8,000 to $12,000 each, a reasonable sum by most standards, and existing housing stock is being saved in the process.

Another successful project that does not involve new construction but has introduced a new facet into an old situation revolves around a 22-year-old apartment building which, though one of the newest structures in the neighborhood, had been allowed to deteriorate. Until a few months ago, it was an eyesore, badly in need of repair. Then the neighborhood association did some investigating and discovered that the building's residents were all in an income bracket that entitled them to rent subsidies through HUD's Section 8 rent subsidy program. With the help of the Redevelopment Commission, the association prepared a package which it then took to the landlord, explaining that the rent subsidies – which are paid directly to the landlord – would increase his revenues enough to cover the cost of rehabilitation. As a result, the landlord decided to take out a $25,000 rehabilitation loan to repair the building. (Loans are more generous for multi-family buildings.)

The neighborhood association's energy and integrity has not only enabled it to convince the city to help but has also proved attractive to developers. John Eagan, who has built much of the public housing for the elderly in Winston-Salem, and who will develop the 12-unit complex in Crystal Towers, has been impressed with the neighborhood's approach. "The people in the Crystal Towers neighborhood wanted this apartment building; they spent a lot of time at HUD to get it. If it gets built, it will really be a credit to them, because they had the perseverance to stay with it."

Another attraction for Eagan was the balance in the neighborhood between new and old structures. "I just don't think you say, 'We're going to do rehab,' and I don't think you say, 'We're just going to do new construction.' I think you have to look at any method that provides good housing and preserves our neighborhoods."

That, in fact, may be the key motivating force behind all the efforts that went into Crystal Towers, and is best summed up by DeVries: "There is enough disgust among people about the amount of cleared land in our cities so that the themes of citizen participation and alternative planning strike a resonant chord, whether those people have been through political experiences or not. We got the participation of a lot of older residents who, except for voting once in a while, had no participation in the political process, but who had an almost immediate commitment to neighborhoods, decent housing and sensible ways of spending federal money.

"To some extent, what happened here was unique, maybe because of a particular combination of people and place, but I think there's a lot of those kinds of people in a lot of places." □

photos of Beale Street by F. Jack Hurley

# BEALE STREET BLUES

by David Bowman

*Goin' to the River,*
*Maybe bye and bye,*
*Goin' to the River,*
*And there's a reason why –*
*Because the River's wet*
*And Beale Street's done gone dry.*

W.C. Handy, *Beale Street Blues* (1916)

It is like a backlot of an old movie studio. Two blocks of old brick buildings, their facades looming over an empty street, their back sides open and showing dingy wallpaper and tin ceilings. Around the abandoned street are acres of parking lots and weed-covered land. Beale Street. The most famous street in Memphis, the one place visitors always ask to see, has fallen victim to a city's fantasies about what it ought to be.

What happened to Beale Street is the betrayal of the showplace and pride of the black community by the white community that runs Memphis.

It's as if there was a movie here, with a cast of thousands. W.C. Handy, one of its stars, remembers the scene in Pee Wee's Saloon, where he wrote the first published blues music, *Memphis Blues:*

*Just inside Pee Wee's entrance door there was a cigar stand. A side room was given to billiards and pool, another to crap games and cards. In a back room there was space where violins, horns and other musical instruments were checked by free-lance musicians who got their calls there over phone number 2893. Sometimes you couldn't step for the bull fiddles. I've seen a dozen or more of them in there at one time. Upstairs a policy game was operated.*

*Through Pee Wee's swinging doors passed the heroic darktown figures of an age that is now becoming fabulous. They ranged from cooks to waiters to professional gamblers, jockeys and race track men of the period. Glittering young devils in silk toppers and Prince Alberts drifted in and out with insolent self-assurance. Chocolate dandies with red roses embroidered on cream waistcoats loitered at the bar. Now and again a fancy girl with shadowed eyes and a wedding-ring waist glanced through the doorway or ventured inside to ask if anybody had set eyes on the sweet good man who had temporarily strayed away.*[1]

The world knows Beale Street because of Handy's music, but the street's fame pre-dated him and served as the magnet that drew him and thousands of others from the Mississippi Delta, up the Hernando Road that became Highway 51, up the Illinois Central Railroad and out of the drudgery of the rural South. Beale Street produced the first touring circuit for black actors and entertainers in this

*David Bowman is a contributing editor on architectural and urban affairs for* City of Memphis *magazine, and is a member of the Beale Street Foundation's cultural committee. This article is adapted from a chapter in his book now in preparation,* Memphis and the Politics of Development.

country, organized in 1907 by F. A. Barrasso and the Pacini Brothers, builders of the Palace Theater on Beale, the most famous black theater in the South.

Until it was vacated, and its roof allowed to cave in, the Palace was the scene of 50 years of vaudeville, concerts, and the famous Amateur Night shows emceed by Nat D. Williams, the first black disc jockey in the South. In the 1920s and 1930s, its Midnight Rambles brought bright and bawdy stage shows to the only theater in town where whites, instead of blacks, sat in the balcony.

These were the scenes of the Beale Street movie. Unfortunately, by the 1950s, the city's leaders wanted to remake the city in their own image, to falsify it, to create a Beale Street toned-down, cleaned up, and guaranteed safe for the white, middle-class tourist. If Disney could do it for Frontierland, why couldn't Memphis do it for the home of the blues? By July 11, 1959, the city fathers had reached their decision. Mayor Edmund Orgill announced that Beale Street would be converted into a major tourist attraction for Memphis and America.

***"Unfortunately, by the 1950s the city's leaders wanted to remake the Street in their own image, to falsify it, to create a Beale Street toned down, cleaned up, and guaranteed safe for the white tourist."***

Beale Street was celebrated again and again by writers like Richard Wright and Langston Hughes and by lesser-known people like Gilmore Millen, who described the place he knew as a police reporter for the *Commercial Appeal*:

*Beale Street is not a legend. Bravely as any lights in Memphis, its electric advertisements dance and twinkle gold and green and blue and red against the facades of its not too modern buildings, and the automobiles and street cars roll down asphalt paving through crowds of Negroes as varied as any in the world.*

*It is a street of business and love and murder and theft – an aisle where Jew merchants and pawnbrokers, country Negroes from plantations, creole prostitutes and painted fag men, sleepy gamblers and slick young chauffeurs, crooks and bootleggers and dope peddlers and rich property owners and powdered women with diamonds in their chryselephantine mouths, and labor agents and blind musicians and confidence men and hard-working Negroes from sawmills and cotton warehouses and factories and stores meet and stand on corners and slip upstairs to gambling joints and rooming hotels and barber shops and bawdy houses.*

*It is the main street of the Negro population of a city whose percentage of Negro population is greater than any other city in America, and whose murder rate is the highest.*[2]

Ironically, the Memphis Housing Authority (MHA), an agency created in 1935 to provide public housing, took charge of turning Beale Street into the white man's fantasy of black culture. By the 1960s, MHA had built thousands of housing units, but it had destroyed far more in its evolving role as the city's principal agent for acquiring land. Under the "write-down" – the public sacrifice for private gain – MHA bought, cleared and improved huge chunks of land and then turned them over to commercial and industrial developers at a fraction of the real cost. The mandate to provide public housing was clearly overshadowed by the city's use of the agency to remove rundown neighborhoods.

The Beale Street Urban Renewal Project became the fifth massive MHA project to follow this pattern.[3] It encompassed 167 acres, or roughly a 14-block area stretching east from the Mississippi River, including 625 buildings, of which 570 were substandard. Replacement of these decaying buildings had provided the original justification for the project; however, a few years after the acquisition and land clearance had begun, a funding cut by HUD led MHA officials to lop off the eastern half of the project, and with it, the entire provision for construction of new public housing. Several hundred residential buildings (including a number of antebellum mansions) had already been bulldozed, turning the area into one more urban wasteland. MHA blunted the criticism by promising that 615,000 square feet in the *western end* of the project would be set aside for public housing, but to this day, only one high-rise for the elderly has been built in the area.

With plans for public housing virtually scrapped, all that remained of the Beale Street Urban Renewal Project was a scheme to redevelop the western end of Beale into an entertainment and commercial complex called the Blue Light District, surrounded by high-rise luxury apartments with a million-dollar view of the Mississippi River. But even in pursuing what Martin Anderson (author of *The Federal Bulldozer*) described as a "regressive program" – displacing low-income people for high-rent buildings – the Memphis Housing Authority proved all thumbs. What began as an intrusion into the heart of black Memphis quickly became a planning and urban renewal fiasco.

**Paper Glitter**

The first of many versions of the redevelopment dream for Beale Street appeared in the *Press-Scimitar* on June 26, 1963. Plans called for a "tourist mecca centering around the Memphis Light, Gas & Water Building." Three years later, MHA announced plans for transforming "drab Beale Street into a glittering jewel complete with a revolving tower-restaurant at the Mississippi River, a riverfront freeway, high-rise apartments, a plaza along Beale and a huge covered commercial mall north of Beale."[4]

The hotel and entertainment industries, led by Playboy Club and Holiday Inn, responded with enthusiasm. Even the National Park Service bestowed its official blessing on the proposed entertainment complex, designating two blocks of Beale Street as a national historic landmark. This preservation mandate complicated things considerably, however, because of one of MHA's criteria for demolishing a building asked, "Will the continued presence of the building deter redevelopment of the area? For instance, will a house of obsolete design discourage private enterprise from erecting expensive high-rise apartments on otherwise valuable adjacent land?" Having destroyed more buildings of "obsolete design" than anyone else, MHA suddenly found its hands tied – landmark structures simply couldn't be destroyed, not even for "expensive high-rise apartments." Nevertheless, MHA officials were confident

they could find ways to work within the constraints and still get on with building their dream.

Federal preservationists were not their only obstacle. In June, 1967, when MHA received its first $3 million check from HUD for land acquisition, Beale Street property owners woke up to the fact that MHA's dreams were their nightmares. Beale Street had enjoyed a good mix of small black-owned businesses (including a photo studio, barber college, barber supply firm and shoe shop) and white-owned businesses (furniture stores, discount stores, dry cleaners, cafes, night clubs, liquor stores, and nine pawnshops). The merchants protested that replacing these businesses with a $6 million utility office building would rip the heart out of Beale Street. At a public hearing, Alvin Lansky, owner of Lansky Brothers, the Beale Street clothiers made famous by the patronage of Elvis Presley, B. B. King, and others, said: "You're forgetting one thing. If you tear down all these buildings, you will no longer have Beale Street and you will defeat your purpose." For the first time, the public realized that landmarks like the elegant old vaudeville and movie palace, Loew's State (1912), and Memphis' first skyscraper, the Randolph Building (1891), would have to disappear to make room for civic improvements like the plate-glass palace "squatting on its man-made knoll," as *Commercial Appeal* writer Jefferson Riker put it. In spite of the vehemence of their arguments, Lansky's and a dozen others' protests were simply ignored.

The dissenters would not give up easily, however. By the time MHA got ready for its second-year proposal to HUD in 1968, the Beale Street Project cost had jumped from the original $20 million in 1959 to $26 million. The revised dream, drawn up by Memphis architects Walter Ewald and Mel O'Brien, called for jazzing up the facades of the existing Victorian structures along Beale Street with brick and blue-glass colonnades. Recognizing that the decorations were merely token gestures in the overall redevelopment plan, the local shopkeepers turned out in force for the second public hearing, held in August, 1968. They greeted the testimonials praising the project with a chorus of protest that lasted three hours. L. T. Barringer, head of a large cotton business at Front and Beale, wondered why his structurally sound building had been condemned. David Caywood, attorney for the 85 merchants in the ad hoc Beale Street Merchants Association, said he doubted whether new construction like the MLG & W building would be "the type of replacement that would cause W. C. Handy to write good music." O'Neil Howell, of Ben Howell & Son, Saddlery, Second and Beale, said, "I think you're creating a Frankenstein that some day you'll live to regret."

Twenty days later, the city council adopted a resolution approving MHA's redevelopment plan. With one swing of the gavel, citizen opposition to the project was rendered obsolete. Predictably, the resolution's strongest support came from Councilman Lewis Donelson, who later led a Beale Street redevelopment group, and Councilwoman Gwen Awsumb, head of the Office of Community Development which eventually supervised Beale Street's redevelopment, and William Goodman, one of the largest downtown property owners and a leader of the original Beale Street redevelopment campaign. One of the few dissenting voices at the Council meeting belonged to Alvin Gordon, attorney for the Barringer Cotton Company, who said it would be "unfair to build luxury apartments in the area when additional low-income housing has been trimmed by federal spending cuts."[5] Soon afterwards, the Barringer building was officially cleared away with dynamite.

In the next two years, HUD money continued to pour into MHA for the private development features of the project, and the Authority began speculating that upwards of $100 million in private capital would be attracted into the area to complete the Blue Light District. Meanwhile, the established businesses on Beale Street received their eviction notices from MHA. Maurice Hulbert, the 73-year-old head of Hulbert Printing Company, an all-black firm located at 358 Beale, said, "We know we gotta go." The evictees were notified that if they stayed, they would be required to remodel their buildings to conform to MHA's plan for its renewal area. Few had the money that renovation would require. Evie Koen, owner of Koen's Cleaners and Shoe Shop, 363 Beale, which her father had started in 1914, found that her notice read for the end of January – a mid-winter eviction for a small business. Some evictees went quietly, some went noisily, but nearly all went, firmly convinced that they couldn't fight City Hall. With them went the real Beale Street, a street long integrated with prosperous businesses run by Italians, Jews, and Negroes, under names like Gallina, Raffanti, Gemignani, or Epstein, Koen, Karnowsky, or Hulbert, Williams, and Hooks. Only empty buildings with boarded-up windows remained, producing a rapidly decaying business environment for the few surviving merchants who found themselves renting from the city's new slumlord, the Memphis Housing Authority. Not only did MHA fail to maintain the newly acquired property; it deliberately hastened its demise by hacking off the backs of buildings that stuck out over the new alleys that would service the businesses once the proposed Beale Street pedestrian mall was completed. The vacant buildings were soon open to vandalism, and leaking roofs damaged the plaster and structural members inside, forcing renovation costs even higher.

**The Best Laid Plans....**

While the Authority was clearing up the land and sponsoring studies about what might replace the gutted buildings, it was left to a private developer to seize the opportunity and actually finalize the plans, package the financing, and build the structure which would become the new Beale Street. Such is the theory of government and private enterprise working together for "urban renewal." Needless to say, it is a partnership that often attracts opportunistic developers and often ends in legal arguments over who is reponsible for taking what risks. The Beale Street Project had its share of both problems.

The first private developer proposal came from Beale Street Blue Light, Inc., a consortium representing the financial leadership of the black community. Their proposal formed the basis for a WMC-TV documentary, *Beale Street – Reclaiming the Blues*, aired in September, 1971, and narrated by Art Gilliam, WMC-TV newscaster and head of the consortium. Beale Street Blue Light's proposal differed little from the concept envisioned by MHA, but

its financing reflected the realities of a declining downtown, and favored "phased" rather than simultaneous development. According to BSBL, "it is economically unfeasible to place 45 businesses in downtown Memphis simultaneously with the expectation that each of them could survive in competition with each other, as well as with other downtown businesses." Rather, it expected "to move into later phases of the project out of income generated by the initial phase."6

No action was taken on the Beale Street Blue Light proposal while the MHA awaited completion of two feasibility studies. In January, 1973 – five years after it had begun destroying buildings – the Memphis Housing Authority formally announced that it was ready to accept proposals for the redevelopment of the three-block Blue Light area. MHA's legal notice in the newspapers indicated that it was willing to consider any proposal, from rehabilitation of individual buildings by existing owners to the demolition of "all properties in the Blue Light area," presumably including every building in the national historic landmark district!

By February, MHA had its eye on two groups – the black-led Beale Street Blue Light, Inc., and the white-led Beale Street USA, Inc. The latter venture was headed by Ron Barassi, who described himself in his resume as a Vietnam veteran and a "mercenary platoon commander," and a respectable bond salesman named Warren Creighton, whose company had handled housing authority bond issues in many cities. In contrast to Beale Street Blue Light's program of phased development, Beale Street USA advocated a "simultaneous" approach modeled on Disney World, which would "finish the entire project and then open it to the public."

A third group of developers brought together three leading Tennessee Republicans – white attorney and former Councilman Lewis Donelson, black attorney and businessman A.W. Willis, and US Senator Howard Baker. But Senator Baker withdrew his endorsement as he got more involved in the Watergate hearings, and the Donelson-Willis group never submitted a formal bid for redevelopment, though they were instrumental in creating the Beale Street Foundation the following year.

On April 12, 1973, Beale Street USA was chosen as redeveloper because the MHA board "felt like their management setup was better, their financial institution was better, and they wanted to do the whole thing at one time, not in a piecemeal fashion." MHA chairman Ethyl Venson cast the sole dissenting vote, because she believed "there just really wasn't the black involvement I think there should have been to develop Beale Street – I'm talking about people being on the investment end of the arrangement. I'm not talking about somebody just playing around or having their name used."7 Mrs. Venson's husband had had his dentist's office on Beale Street for many years, so her feelings about the fate of the street were understandably stronger than the four whites who served with her on the MHA board.

Beale Street USA faced opposition from other leaders in the black community. In 1973, the Black Political Council organized "Concerned Citizens to Save Beale Street." They vowed to fight the betrayal of their beloved street. Such organized opposition was short-lived, however, and incapable of sustaining the attention of community leaders and the media. But the ad hoc group's campaign almost proved unnecessary because BSUSA quickly had more than enough troubles of its own.

In October, Ron Barassi talked in terms of $200 million for entertainment, conventions, tourists, and high-rise development, 1,000,000 square feet of entertainment and retail space, 600,000 square feet of office space, and a 300-room motor hotel. He promised that financing would be secured by February 1, 1974, and concluded by releasing a favorable economic feasibility study of the proposed project commissioned by his own group. A similar, yet more extensive study, done by Architecture Engineers Associates of Nashville (as required by the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation), was much less optimistic: "Most of the buildings are in sad and deteriorated condition, and at least eight of the buildings still standing will have to be torn down, so that the ultimate cost of redevelopment will continue to rise beyond anticipated returns."

One month after his confident announcement, Barassi cut his prediction about capital investment by half. By the following spring it looked as if he would not be getting a nickel. It was rumored that others had spoiled his credit with the banks; with no track record, and little visible evidence of financial solidity, Barassi was easily tagged as a bad risk.

On May 1, 1974, MHA asked Beale Street USA to surrender its development rights to the newly established Beale Street National Historic Foundation, chartered by the state as a non-profit corporation with quasi-public authority. In return, MHA would allow BSUSA to continue as "manager and operator" of the commercial portions of the street. This greatly reduced role was further threatened that summer, when BSUSA's original contract neared expiration. At the urging of the Mayor's office, MHA staff, and others, BSUSA was granted a final 60-day extension to secure financing. It failed again.

The waning of Beale Street USA accompanied the waxing of the new Foundation, conceived by the city's chief administrative officer, Clay Huddleston, and developed by Lewis Donelson, Norman Brewer of the Downtown Council, and Ron Terry, the Chief Executive Officer of the First Tennessee Bank, Memphis' largest financial institution. The Foundation initially consisted of a 33-member body for broad-based community participation, but was subsequently reduced to a 22-member body of 13 blacks and nine whites. Ron Terry headed the Foundation's executive committee, and from the beginning, he and several other white committee

chairmen dominated the meetings and set policy; the black board members tended to sit back and follow the leaders, no doubt awed by the head of a billion-dollar bank.

Beale Street had to sit and wait while the Foundation covered all the same ground again – plans, studies, reports, and decision-making all had to be repeated. Out came the architects' renderings; up popped ideas for shops; back went the proposals to Washington for approval. This time, however, some of the rules had changed. First, ownership of the 12 acres in the Beale Street Historic District was conveyed to the Foundation. Second, under the rules of the Foundation, the land could no longer be sold to a redeveloper, but could only be leased from the Foundation, which was itself dependent on the City of Memphis for its operating funds.

In December, 1975, after delegating its responsibilites for development of the 12 acres of land parcels to the Foundation, MHA advertised for bids to repave Beale Street itself as a pedestrian, open-air mall. The Beale Street Mall's design was consistent with the city's Main Street Mall so the two could be tied together at the corner where the old streets intersected.

By this point, Beale Street's redevelopment was being scaled down considerably, in the face of recessionary realities, to a mere $8.5 million for rehabilitation and construction of the buildings and $1.7 million to $2.5 million for a new parking garage. The project's architect, Mel O'Brien, said that 282,000 square feet of space in the Blue Light area could cost between $25 and $35 per square feet to renovate – more than the cost of new construction.

Shortly after a low bid of $1.5 million was accepted for the construction of the Beale Street Mall, MHA announced that its design had been turned down by the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, which would block federal funds for the project. The Council complained that the proposed landscaping was too cluttered and lacked historicity; they said it would make Beale Street more like a suburban shopping mall than a turn-of-the-century street. News of the mall's rejection came six years after the landscape architects' firm of Ewald Associates received the $117,000 contract for its design.

MHA and BSNHF were understandably upset; a shopping mall design was exactly what they had in mind. They saw Beale Street with "a discotheque, a vaudeville and silent movie theater, two major theme restaurants, a book and music store featuring blues and soul music, a recreated Pantaze Drug Store, an art gallery, and an all-cotton products outlet."[8]

To this day nothing has been redeveloped, though MHA has spent an estimated $23 million on the Beale

Street area acquiring land, demolishing buildings, putting in new streets, curbs, gutters, sewers, and lighting, and paying the salaries of those who serve as administrators, consultants, architects, and other accomplices. But there are still monthly developments which indicate the sad tale of Beale Street isn't finished. In the summer of 1976, for example, Beale Street USA announced it would sue the Foundation for outstanding payment due for "services rendered"; at the end of 1976, BSUSA was bought off for a mere $100,000 to release the City from its original developer's contract, worth about $3 million. Yet another round of studies has been commissioned, including a "pre-feasibility study" by the American City Corporation.[9]

The land around Beale Street remains vacant. MHA has posted huge signs: "Commerical Land For Sale,"[10] It has also mailed all over the country a brochure proclaiming, *Remaining Urban Renewal land ready-to-develop for commercial, industrial or residential uses in Memphis, Tennessee.* The 28-pages describing unsold parcels features black outlines around empty white space, representing vacant weed-grown land that was once houses, trees, small businesses, gardens, historic buildings, lots of nice people, and some of the world's greatest music.☐

#### FOOTNOTES

1. W.C. Handy, *Father of the Blues* (N.Y., 1941, 1970), p. 95.

2. Gilmore Millen, *Sweet Man* (N.Y. 1930), pp. 150-1. See also "Amateur Night on Beale Street," *Scribner's* (May, 1937).

3. In its first urban renewal project on Railroad Ave., MHA cleared 41 acres and built three large buildings – a school, a warehouse and a bowling alley. The rest of the area is still vacant.

In the Jackson Ave. Project, also begun in 1956, MHA cleared 120 acres for use by institutions – a vocational school, a fire station, city engineering offices, and additions to two hospitals. The land was thus removed from the tax rolls. The balance of the land went for light industrial uses and right-of-way for the new I-40 expressway.

Similarly, in the Medical Center Project, begun in 1958, 140 acres of solid 1920s apartment buidings were razed at a cost of $17 million for about $40 million in new hospital and medical school developments, also mostly tax-exempt.

The Court Ave. Project, begun in 1960, built the new Civic Center at a net cost to the MHA of $12 million.

4. *Press-Scimitar* (September, 26, 1966).

5. *Commercial Appeal* (August 28, 1968).

6. Undated memo from BSBL, Inc., to Drue Birmingham, MHA Real Estate Dept.

7. Evidence that Art Gilliam's group could have been a better choice as a redeveloper came in 1977 when he purchased the high-priced Memphis radio station WLOK, making it one of the country's few black-owned AM stations.

8. *Commercial Appeal* (March 22, 1976).

9. A subsidiary of the Rouse Company that almost developed 4600 acres of Memphis' Penal Farm. See "How to Stop the Developers," *Southern Exposure* (Winter, '76).

10. One of the few beneficiaries of the Beale Street land clearance program has been the Memphis Publishing Company, owner of the city's only two large-circulation dailies, which bought a large chunk of land at the eastern end of Beale for its new plant and office-expansion. Perhaps this is why the newspapers in Memphis have been so soft-spoken about urban renewal.

# CELEBRATE FREEDOM:

Few things reflect so clearly differences in historical perspectives between white and black people in Texas as their celebration of "freedom" days. For most white Texans, of course, freedom came with the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the defeat of Santa Anna (April 21, 1836 – San Jacinto Day). For black Texans, it came with the landing of Union troops in Galveston on June 19, 1865.

Unlike white freedom days, "Juneteenth," as the June 19 holiday is often called, receives no official recognition. Nonetheless, it is still a day for festivities in communities throughout Texas, and is one of many Emancipation Days celebrated by Afro-Americans in various regions since 1808[1] – and ignored by white scholars for more than a century. Its observance has depended solely on the perpetuation of strong folk traditions among blacks in the Southwest – Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas and Oklahoma – and particularly in eastern Texas where most of the early cotton plantations were established between 1828 and 1865.

In Grimes County, an old corn and cotton area of east-central Texas, newspaper accounts in the 1870s, '80s and '90s tell of mass meetings held by black citizens in churches to prepare for the 19th of June festivities. In addition to providing participants with an "abundant dinner" and an occasion for merrymaking, the early celebrations had a solemn side. Black politicians, educators and community leaders would talk about the history of emancipation and the future of black people in Texas. Before the advent of Jim Crowism in the early 1900s, Republican Party officials might be asked to speak as well. [2]

"I was just a small boy then," recalls a farmer born in 1893. "But I remember sitting and watching the meat cook. Everybody would be sitting around on the ground. They'd have this old gentleman, sometimes four or five of them, that would come to witness. Come to tell how they came through slavery times. Tell us where they come from, what state they come from and how they was mustered out. I remember old man Dan West, he was one of them. He'd get up on a wagon and talk to us about why we was celebrating the 19th. He'd go through the whole story: how they put them up on a platform, auction them off, and how the man could look at them and pick out what he wanted. How they came to Texas. And how the slavery chain was broke. And he told about when freedom came: people being so happy they'd get up and jump and shout. He said one lady went crazy. Yeah, I was just a young boy, six or seven, but I can remember the old men talking – the old slaves and how they came through it all. You had to be told about it back there because there was no history we studied about that."

Other people recall recitations of the Emancipation Proclamation and readings from poets like Paul Lawrence Dunbar. A popular story about the origin of the June 19th celebration was passed from generation to generation. An older woman, who has farmed all her life, says,

"I'll tell you like they told me: The 19th is the day the white people gave those Negroes for their celebration. When they freed the Negro, when the war was over, all these farmers had crops and slaves and they had all their money tied up in them. If they had cut the slaves off right away, they would have been broke men. So they didn't say anything. Made them work until the 19th of June when all the crops were cleaned and all that work was over with. Then they gave them that day for their celebration."

Although a number of legends recount the origins of the celebration, its beginnings actually go back to an historical event. The surrender of the Trans-Mississippi Department of the Confederacy took place on June 2, 1865, but a shortage of transport delayed the arrival of Northern troops in Texas for 17 days. It was not until June 19 that Major General George Granger

*Wendy Watriss is a photo-journalist living in Anderson, Texas. She is currently at work on a historical and photographic study of four Texas counties. The photographs in this article are by Ms. Watriss and Fred Baldwin.*

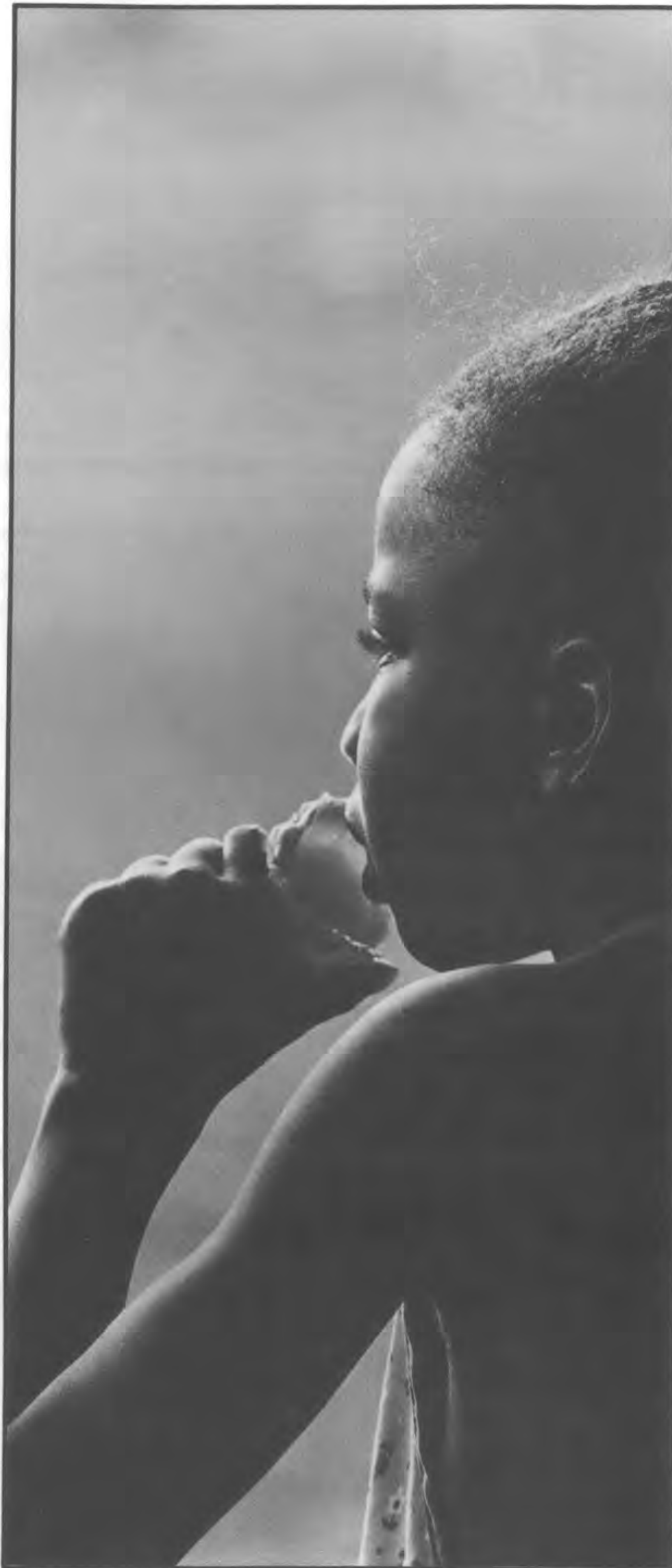
# Juneteenth

by Wendy Watriss

landed in Galveston to issue the order that "all the slaves are free."

The Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, did not have any effect in Texas because so little of the state was occupied by Northern troops. When Lee surrendered in April, 1865, most Texas plantations were still intact and a quarter million black people were working as slaves. Only with the arrival of Granger's decree – and Yankee troops – were slaves actually freed in Texas. June 19th, therefore, became the day of celebration.

"It was just a happy, getting-together day," says a retired teacher who grew up in a community of black landowners some 60 years ago. "We'd be farming and everybody would try to get the land clean by the 19th. If I had my crop cleaned out and you didn't have yours cleaned, I would come over and try to get yours cleaned out, too. We all worked for that day: to have the crops cleaned, to take that holiday. We'd get together and buy a beef, or maybe someone would throw in a beef or part of a hog. Then we'd get together to barbecue it. The women would fix baskets, salads, cakes and pies. And we'd all meet at a special place. There would be soda water and ice cream. We'd make our own ice cream. And we would have ball games, horse races, goose-neck pullings and some kind of music at night. Wouldn't have sermons or spirituals; it was just a joyful day."



"My father never allowed us to work on the 19th," remembers one farmer. "The crops could get bad, the grass grow high, but we took off that day. All through this county, all through this state, to the Negroes, it was their celebration day. It was the only day we had."

For the men, celebrating the 19th would begin on the evening of the 18th when they would get together to barbecue the meat in deep pits. It would be a long night of storytelling and the exchanging of tall tales about the past. On the morning of the 19th, families often had ice cream and custard at home before leaving for the "Nineteenth" ground. If there was extra money in the family, children might be given a new pair of shoes or a dress to wear for the occasion. Food was plentiful at the dinner because every family brought desserts and several covered dishes. In addition to the ice cream, there would be the special treat of ice-cold lemonade and the traditional red (strawberry) soda water, which became known as "June 19th soda." Games were held after dinner, with baseball being the main attraction. The baseball games were very competitive and usually involved teams from different communities. In some places, part of the church grounds was set aside for the 19th festivities. In other areas where black farmers had their own land, several acres might be donated to the community. A committee of landowners, church deacons and Lodge members was generally responsible for organizing the celebration.

There are stories of white landowners breaking up the baseball games to make their tenants go back to work, but most seemed to have allowed farmhands to take the day off. Some even donated money and meat for the celebration. On big farms which had many families working on half-shares, the dinners were often organized by whites. But only occasionally did whites actually join in the celebration.

### On the Decline

By World War II, a number of cultural and economic forces began to undermine the tradition of the 19th. As family members moved to the city

and rural Texas became more influenced by classroom education than by oral tradition, the big community-wide celebrations became less common in many parts of the state.

"The old men got to the place they didn't talk any more and they began to die out. Those of us who came on after them didn't know much to say about it. We couldn't tell the young people anything because we weren't there. It was just one of those things they didn't keep records of so there wasn't anything to say," explained a man born in the 1920s, a firm supporter of the 19th.

At the same time, young people were taught at school that January 1 – Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation – was the real freedom date. Without the words of the elders to tell them otherwise, they began to regard June 19 as just another symbol of their forefathers' ignorance – a part of the past they wanted to forget. Today it is not uncommon to hear older people, who have celebrated the 19th for much of their lives, describe the 19th almost apologetically: "Well, we didn't know any better then."

Economic forces were a threat as well. The Depression, the inability to make a living farming, and the subsequent migration of people to the cities disrupted families and older ways of life. Many people went to places like the west coast where no one observed the 19th. Even those who went to work in Texas cities like Dallas and Houston found opposition to the holiday among urban employers.

"I left out like everybody else. Couldn't survive, farming and sharecropping," remembers one man. "I went to Houston and worked as a boilermaker. That was about 1946, '47. I told my boss I wanted to go off for the 19th. He said: 'What's that?' I told him it was Independence Day for the Negroes and I wanted to take it off because that's the way I was raised. He said I'd be fired if I took off. So now we celebrate the Fourth of July – have to because the business is closed and we can't work anyway. That's what happened to the 19th. If it didn't come on a Saturday, you couldn't get off."

Then came the civil-rights movement of the '50s and '60s. In many families, there are stories of sons and daughters whose involvement in the struggles for racial equality made them impatient with the old ways.

"Here's what helped throw out some of the 19th," says one grandfather, a World War I veteran. "You take my son, he went off to college and got into that voter registration, and he came back saying we shouldn't celebrate the 19th. I had to dress him up. I said, 'Don't you come in here with that – your brains have been washed in college! If it hadn't been for my father being freed when he was, we all – you, too – would be born a slave. Remember that your ancestors are the cause of you being where you are at now!' I told him that but still we don't celebrate the 19th like we used to." And this is the way it was in many homes by the mid-1960s.

### Perseverance

In spite of these problems, the celebration never completely died out. Throughout East Texas, there have been groups of black people who have managed to keep the 19th alive in their communities. Some of the groups began as money-making organizations, but the most long-lasting seem to be those which have used the tradition of the 19th as a means of fostering community pride and progress. Existing during a period when work patterns and family life were undergoing tremendous disruption, some of these groups have served as a remarkably stable source of community leadership.

One such group is the 19th of June organization in the small East Texas town of Anderson, county seat of Grimes County. The organization will hold its 37th annual celebration this year. It was started in 1938 by a group of men who had come from black landowning families in the area.

"We were all kinfolks, community folks, friends, church members," says Lloyd Mason, one of the few founders still living. "We got together – 16 men – when we saw things start to go down. It was hard times. Families weren't getting together the way they used to do, and people were falling away from the 19th. We wanted to do something to help the town, to remind the children of what had gone on. The 19th had been handed down from generation to generation in our families, and we wanted it to be remembered when we were gone."

In the beginning 25 families each contributed a dollar to buy meat for the opening dinner. The first celebration was held in 1940 on the grounds of one of the local churches. An old-fashioned basket supper was served to several hundred people. In keeping with the secular traditions of the 19th, subsequent dinners were moved away from the church, first to the county fairgrounds and later to land purchased by the organization especially for that purpose.

The organization was quick to adapt the style of the celebration to local needs. One of the first things it did was establish an annual rodeo. Many black men in Texas, including several founders of the 19th organization, made a living as cowboys. But entrance fees and racial discrimination had made it almost impossible for blacks to ride in the white rodeo circuits of the day, and the expense of building pens and maintaining rodeo stock impeded the establishment of black rodeo circuits until the late '50s and '60s. Anderson's 19th of June rodeo became one of the few public opportunities for black cowboys to exhibit their skills as horsemen. The rodeo also helped make money for the organization by drawing large crowds of people, and the 50-cent entry fee made it possible for almost anyone to become a participant. In addition to the rodeo, the organization gave the celebration importance and visibility by sponsoring a large parade down Anderson's main street.

Significantly, the Anderson 19th of June organization has maintained its independence from the white community. During the first two years, the organization asked for donations of meat and money from white landowners and merchants to help pay for the dinners, but in the third year of its operation, this practice was stopped.

"We figured we should be men who could hold up our own place," Lloyd Mason says. "We accepted help at first, but we got to the place where we didn't want to ask them. We wanted to do it ourselves, not just depend on others for help. I enjoy it, seeing my race get out and do for itself."

Since then, the organization has raised the money it needs through membership dues and donations from the black community. It also sponsors

**Officers and older members of the 19th of June organization, Anderson, Texas.**

fund-raising events such as horse races, basketball meets and hayrides. To maintain the tradition of a free dinner, members of the organization pay $7 a year to cover the cost of meat and other purchases. The rest of the food is donated by member families who also cook, serve, and make floats and costumes.

At the end of the 1940s, when the organization was no longer permitted to use the county fairgrounds for the rodeo and dinner, several of the officers joined forces with a black landowner and built their own rodeo pens ten miles from town. A year later, they raised enough money to buy two acres of land nearer town where they could serve the dinner. With quiet satisfaction, the members noted that few blacks attended the county's "youth rodeo" when it was scheduled on June 19th.

Ironically, it is the white community which has turned to the 19th of June organization for support. Several years ago, some of the officers were asked to help with the town's Fourth of July rodeo and thus bring more of the black community to that event. Because money was being raised for a volunteer fire department which the blacks had wanted for many years, the officers agreed. Until then, it had been a custom for many black families to leave town on July 4th and spend the day fishing together.

Membership in the 19th of June organization has grown to 50 families today. In the old schoolhouse, which the organization helped to buy as a community center several years ago, three generations work together each year to prepare for the celebration. Last year, over 500 people attended the dinner; they came not only from surrounding communities but also from Dallas, Houston, Chicago and Los Angeles.

Since the early '70s, with the emergence of black nationalism and its attendant interest in Afro-American history, there has been a renewal of public concern about the preservation of June 19th in Texas. In 1972, the state legislature approved a resolution introduced by two black representatives which states that the 19th of June was a "holiday of significance to all Texans and, particularly, to the blacks of Texas, for whom this date symbolizes freedom from slavery."[4] Although the event of 1865 seems forgotten amid modern-day preparations for parades, dinners and games, the importance of the occasion has not been lost. The words of older generations may have gone, but it is not hard to imagine that their voices are still heard on the 19th of June in Texas.

FOOTNOTES

The information in this article has been gathered from the following sources: personal interviews with 25 people in Grimes County and Houston, Texas; Houston, Galveston and Grimes County newspapers from 1865-1910; Benjamin Quarles, "Historic Afro-American Holidays," *Negro Digest*, February 1967, p. 15; J. Mason Brewer, "Juneteenth," *Texas Folklore Society Publications*, No. 10 (1932), 9-54; William H. Wiggins, "Free At Last!: A Study of Afro-American Emancipation Day Celebrations," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University (1974); *Ebony*, "Juneteenth: Texas Carries on Tradition of Emancipation Holiday with Amusement Park Celebration," June 1951, pp. 27-30; also various histories of Texas and Afro-American history in Texas.

1. Wiggins, William H. "Free at Last!: A Study of Afro-American Emancipation Day Celebrations." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, 1974. In this study, Wiggins documents 15 separate celebrations.

2. *The Navasota Tablet* (Grimes County), June 21, 1878; June 23, July 6, 1883; April 27, 1899.

3. General Orders, No. 3, Galveston, June 19, 1865, in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I, Vol. 48.

4. *The Dallas Morning News*, June 20, 1972, "Austin Wire: Juneteenth Recognized by House," p. 10.

Members of the 19th of June organization prepare for the celebration by making desserts, stuffing the floats for the parade, and starting the barbeque on the "Nineteenth" ground in Anderson.

photo by Stephen March

# LIVING OFF THE SEA

**by Jennifer Miller**

Between the North Carolina coastal towns of Morehead and Swansboro, just off the main highway, a road loops through a sprawl of houses, shacks, boats and gear. Past the gardens, the churches, a fire department/recreation center and a small grocery store, it winds through the community of Broad Creek. Midway on the loop road, a driveway of broken shells points to a collection of buildings next to a dock: the Roger W. Jones Fish Company. This is the community's major business establishment.

Jones Fish Company faces Bogue Sound, a body of water separated from the ocean by Bogue Banks. In recent years Bogue Banks has teemed with big name developers catering to hordes of beach-seeking, seafood-eating tourists; but Broad Creek is still miles from the Holiday Inns and MacDonalds.

At Jones' dock rest several 60-to-80 foot sturdy white trawlers hung with black and green nets. Their decks are wide with gaping holds and rounded cabins. On the shore are piles of clam, oyster and scallop shells, some sun-bleached, others still emitting a sweet low-tide odor.

Protected against a March breeze by flannel shirt, corduroy pants and rubber boots, a man repairs his net on an expanse of sand and shells beside the fish house. Balancing on an up-ended crate, he slashes the frayed strands with his penknife and deftly ties new string in place. A small dog steps occasionally into the net, entranced by the scent of the grey cord.

Roger Jones, drawn to the water to see what an incoming small boat is bringing him, greets its old skipper who anchors and unloads. Then, in the small office, the man holds his straw hat in hand while Jones notes the catch, hands him bills and change. The outer office is crowded with young and old men keeping track of local news. In the other rooms are freshly washed concrete floors, a huge freezer, and stacks of clams in burlap bags, ready to be loaded into a refrigerated truck.

---

*Jennifer Miller grew up on Bogue Sound, a few miles down the shore from Broad Creek. She is an editor of* Southern Exposure, *and co-editor of* Facing South, *a weekly syndicated feature in Southern newspapers.*

At his desk, Roger Jones is surrounded by cluttered shelves, the ever-present fish species charts and two soft faded armchairs. A large painting of Miss Maxine, one of his trawlers, is his backdrop. He keeps track of markets, suppliers, prices and coastal goings-on by phone, doodling on a notepad as he talks. Jones is short, almost stocky, with a reddish complexion and blue eyes; his hair is damp, neatly combed. Checked cotton shirt and dark cotton pants are his office clothes, and his straw hat is on the shelf.

A trucker, picking up the clams, talks at length about markets in Pennsylvania and New York. Jones is quietly reassuring. He sells to whom he pleases, dislikes the seamy ways of competing firms. As they talk, Charles Jones slams in and out of the office with messages and requests. The young man actively shares the responsibilities of the business and takes the load off his father. Clearly he will carry the fish company on in years to come.

Broad Creek is a prime location for the Jones' business. This coastline, third longest of the 50 states, offers a uniquely varied assortment of seafoods, due partly to its geographic location but also to the separation of northern and tropical waters created by the sharp outward thrust of the Gulf Stream at NC's Cape Hatteras. North Carolina has the third largest breeding ground for finfish and shellfish in the US, supporting shrimp, crabs, clams, oysters, scallops, flounder, trout, bluefish, mackerel, mullet, porgy, red snapper, spot and hundreds of lesser known varieties of edible fish. Sports fishermen flock by the thousands to the beaches and boats, and trawlers venture into the ocean for some of the commercial catch. But the largest fishery in North Carolina has been and still is that which goes on in the rivers, bays and sounds, in the huge estuarine area which extends over 2500 square miles of inland water.

Villages are interspersed with miles of lowlands; towns dot the string of islands, the Outer Banks, and fishermen go out in small boats throughout the seasons. Unlike the South's farmers, who have been caught in a squeeze of increasing costs and increasingly competitive markets, these fishermen use much of the same equipment that their fathers and grandfathers used before them and, more importantly, continue to live off what they catch.

Traditionally, US fishermen have captained their own small boats, built years ago with fresh fish markets in mind. Thousands still catch a variety of seafoods, employing diverse methods of distribution and marketing, but in such areas as New England, the ubiquitous fish block (bulk-frozen catch from big ships) has replaced much of what was formerly landed by domestic fishermen. Saws have replaced skillfully wielded knives to produce uniform shapes, suitable for assembly line requirements of institutional feeding establishments and fast food chains. And the New England fishing industry, once the biggest in the US, has dwindled.

Unlike North Carolina, with its shallow harbors and inland waters, northern deep water ports welcome the catch from large, mostly foreign vessels. Big processing plants, such as Gorton's, prosper by producing fish sticks and other products from these blocks of quick-frozen fish caught by distant water fleets with sophisticated equipment on board. With such standardized markets awaiting the catch, and with the competition of vessels which can deal with large volume, domestic fishermen sometimes find it hard to survive.

No single company dominates the fishing industry along the Southeast coast, and this is especially true in North Carolina; its fishing communities seem to foster individual, family-run enterprises. There are many ways to handle and process seafood, and coastal natives know all of them. They survive by drawing their livelihood from other related skills as well as from their home waters: they garden, build boats, operate marinas, restaurants and gift shops, hold civil-service jobs at nearby Marine Corps bases, do carpentry, plumbing and electrical work, even sell pieces of their land in lots to inlanders. Meanwhile, some fish full time, others part time. Some sell seafood on ice in the back of their pick-up truck or to their local market.

Few communities remain that are totally dependent on fishing. The popularity of the beach as a place to retire, vacation and eat has brought new people and new industry – lured by the promise of increased incomes, residents often welcome such changes. Still, fishing and related activities continue.

**"It was born in a lot of folks, though, to love to be independent. It's a thrill to pursue the fish, always looking for one of those big catches. It's a challenge to out-maneuver the fish, to capture them."**

In fact, many sons and daughters of aging fishermen have expanded their parents' operations, relying on the area's resources, and are prospering. Besides the 5500 full-time fishermen, about 8600 workers are employed by 184 fish companies on NC's coast. Often these are family-run operations that process and sell, truck and market their products. Husband and wife teams are particularly successful; children help out after school. Enterprising, traditional enough to utilize old methods and flexible enough to make necessary changes, these businesses flourish.

Instead of competing with imported bulk seafood that now supplies over two-thirds of US consumers' demands, NC fishermen are answering requests for the kind of seafood they can supply – fresh and fresh frozen products that they can deliver whole and in identifiable forms to wholesalers, distributors, retail outlets and local restaurants. According to the proud refrain, "a North Carolina fish is distinctly a fish, not a block of white meat that tastes like chicken."

In 1976 retail sales of NC seafood netted about $144.2 million; prices are often higher in seafood markets and grocery stores for fresh fish than for pre-packaged. But the public seems willing to pay for quality and for "real" fish, says Sam Wilburn, who has recently opened several retail seafood stores inland in North Carolina.

"I think there will always be a need for fresh fish products – people like to see a fish, to feel it. As long as we keep the rivers clean and get a fair price for the product, there'll be businesses like these on the coast."

Wilburn bought the defunct icehouse in Swansboro, refurbished it and is now supplying ice to fishing trawlers. He has also started a processing plant on the premises, and bought five trucks to deliver fresh seafood to his own stores and to others on his routes through the state. He will not buy any boats, he says, because the fishermen

of Swansboro are already equipped to furnish him with what he needs, and have the skill and years of experience to "know where to go and how to get it." As he establishes a steady market for seafood in the state, he thinks he can begin to pay better prices for the catches. Presently, skiff fishermen average from $4000 to $6000 a year for their labor.

"I'm not a crusader," he says. "I'm trying to support my family." It makes sense to him to keep his suppliers happy. One reason fishermen are often underpaid is that a popular species of fish or other seafood may be caught in great volume one week, bringing low prices, and not be available at all another week, causing the prices to soar. Wilburn plans to store seasonal catches in his large freezer when they come in a glut; he can stabilize the prices then and deliver to his customers on a regular basis. He will also handle a few specialty items, and thinks that some creative marketing might pay off if customers learn to enjoy products that are considered delicacies elsewhere but are bought for low prices or trashed in this state.

Recently Wilburn hired two full-time workers for his facility, and plans to employ part-time help as needed, to sort the different sizes and species one from the other and from the ice, and to pack the large catches. At this point he can still choose how big he wants his business to be. Another man who lives off the sea in Swansboro has an even simpler operation. Fitzhugh Littleton and his son supply crabs to a picking plant in "little Washington," NC, which in turn trucks the meat to Northern markets. Littleton's business consists of one rectangular grey-wood building, 100 to 150 crab traps and floats, a dock and two small boats. Up the street from his dock is Main Street: a line of shops, a drugstore with an ice-cream counter, a bar, a seafood restaurant. Nearby is a marina full of pleasure boats and yachts. Littleton's family helped settle Swansboro. His father fished; his mother's family farmed, and he has crabbed for 30 years, starting his business with $300."Fishing is a crazy business," he says, referring to the consumers' changing tastes. "Used to shovel overboard 300 pounds of shrimp a day because we couldn't sell them." People had to acquire the knack for wolfing down these delicacies.

Littleton is 63. "There's a few old heads left," he said. "But the tourists get in the working man's way. Too many people out there." He gestures toward the water. "Course, they've got the same right out there as we have."

On Main Street, Bogue Sound and up and down the coast, the integration of old ways and new people continues. The fishermen and processors have always known each other from community to community, from Wanchese, Rodanthe, Avon, Ocracoke, to Atlantic, Davis, Harker's Island, to Morehead City, Broad Creek, Swansboro, and south to Sneed's Ferry, Wilmington, Southport. Crackling shortwave radios on board and on shore carry tales of big hauls, danger and daring, good and bad times. Some of the smaller communities are clannish, set in their ways; others are more cosmopolitan by way of television and tourists.

## "Do for the fisherman what we did for the farmers . . . ."

*Although Alvah H. Ward Jr. grew up in northeastern North Carolina, on the coast, there is no briny smell about his office. He lives in the state capital, Raleigh, several hours from the nearest body of salt water, and is a seafood industries consultant for the Food Industries Development Section of the NC Department of Natural and Economic Resources. Assured and cool in tie and pastel shirt, surrounded by men in similar clothes in similar office spaces, he talks about NC's fishing industry – what it is now, what it should become.*

*Presently, it is a "status quo" industry which can continue until costs of living, industrial pollution or something else does it in, he says. It has not changed much in 20 years, and probably won't change for that many more, having reached its "maximum effectiveness."*

*The fisheries that exist on the sounds, rivers and bays are doing a good job, says Ward, but there should be a thriving offshore fishing industry as well, one that is competitive with foreign fleets. Foreign vessels are reaping the harvests; the recently imposed 200-mile limit will tax those ships' catches, will require specific permits for species. But without sufficient shore facilities located at deep water ports, without sophisticated gear, fish-finding techniques, large ships and trained fishermen, North Carolina will continue to lag in the large volume fishing that takes place miles from shore. According to Ward, environmental concerns and worries about overfishing have been overemphasized. "We need to stop talking so much about conservation and start talking about efficient utilization of the resource. The government's new approach is to bring development in proper perspective with environmental concerns. No longer will the tail be wagging the dog in North Carolina."*

*North Carolina is trying to attract new industry, new money into the domestic fishing industry. Generally, tourism is not a year-round business and cannot sustain the coastal economy; more management training and better jobs are needed for residents of coastal communities – Ward, a middle-aged man with silvery hair, speaks deliberately, quietly. "We have to give incentives to industry unless we want to continue giving our resources to Communist fishing industries.*

*"Farmers were given opportunities and didn't ignore them," says Ward, referring to those who could afford newly developed methods. "After all, a farmer is still a farmer is he's growing tomatoes for Hunt's. And a fisherman is still a fisherman if he works for a larger company."*

*In a few years, Wanchese Harbor will be completed on Roanoke Island in northeastern North Carolina. The nickname for this project, which is costing the state almost $30 million, is "NC's New Seafood Industrial Park." Wanchese will become a central location for fishing fleets, processing and shipping facilities; North Carolina is dredging a deep water harbor, building docks, roads, and ocean jetties to protect the inlet, providing utilities, sewage treatment and other services. Sites along the harbor will be available for leasing to privately owned receiving, processing and transportation facilities. Ward says that bids for these spaces are welcome from local people as well as from outside companies.*

*But he adds, "We don't want the kind of shacks (present fish houses) we've had on the coast."*

drawing by Leslie Miller Vorgetts

But the fish houses will buy fish from retired professors as well as locals, and they'll sell to blacks and whites, even yankees and other "foreigners."

Roger Jones' successful fish company has been a boost for the surrounding community as well. He started his business in 1950, but has lived in Broad Creek all his life except for time spent in the service and five years in Florida. He has built trawlers, run a grocery store, worked in shipyards during the war, and fished in Bogue Sound up until 1950. Long ago, his grandfather owned a fish company in Florida. Jones says he has always been on the water.

Now he takes in the catch from about 40 people who live in Broad Creek. Some of these people make their living in small boats: fishing, shrimping, clamming, crabbing and scalloping in the sound. Jones also owns two trucks and four trawlers, two of which he built himself; the other two were built by local people.

Refrigerated trucks arrive on schedule to pick up freshly caught seafood and take it to Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Norfolk; roughly 40 percent goes to distributors in North Carolina. According to Jones, more isn't sold in his home state because people buy the quick-frozen fillets delivered from other states to their supermarkets. "Seems as if they save up their appetites (for fresh seafood) to come to the coast and eat it. They could get fresh stuff just as good inland if they wanted."

Jones employs four or five full-time workers, and calls on about 25 people in Broad Creek to help when a big catch comes in. "I get in the pick-up truck and go around," he explains. "And some of them have phones." These part-time helpers are young and old people, as well as people who have other jobs but want the extra money.

Roger Jones and his son agree: there is a future in fishing for the young, if they want it. "The fishermen in Bogue Sound range in age from about 22 to 65. The younger people don't take to it as much when they can make more money elsewhere. It was born in a lot of folks, though, to love to be independent. It's a thrill to pursue the fish, always looking for one of those big catches. It's a challenge to out-maneuver the fish, to capture them." One fisherman, scoffing at those who go after clams, said, "Clams, they just lie there. You have to outsmart the fish." And an energetic young man who is running a fish house in Ocracoke said, "I could have gone to work for the park service, but I want to be my own boss." It's a feeling echoed by others in the NC fishing industry.

The breed of fisherman may be changing, but it is surviving. Jones estimates a third or even a half of the young men in his community are continuing the tradition of making their living off the sea. Some work on trawlers like Miss Maxine which requires a captain and two crew. Others run fish companies or operate their own small boats. (The cost for a 22-to-25 foot boat, built by local people, equipped for year-round catches with fish net, scallops dredges, shrimp trawls, clam facilities and a gasoline engine, ranges from $8,000 to $12,000.)

These independent investments and businesses continue despite trends toward specialization and large-scale production in other industries and agriculture. Changes are underway, however. Alvah Ward, a seafood industries consultant with the state government (see box), says, "We must do for the fisherman what the farmer has had done for him through the agricultural extension program." The land-grant college program, as well as federal, state and industry research-and-development efforts, has helped turn agriculture into agribusiness. Development of expensive machines, hybrids, chemicals and new techniques has supplemented and maintained the economies-of-scale philosophy nurtured in industry, government and university offices. Obviously, small farmers cannot compete with corporations that control all phases (supply, production, processing, marketing of food crops) for the sake of low-cost efficiency – but while food prices do not decrease, quality does. And lost to those who once farmed for a living is a certain individual pride as "better jobs" turn out to be shifts in the local mill or a journey northward.

Many policy makers and investors maintain that independent fishermen and small companies are destined for extinction anyway in decades to come, so research money and incentives are going to those who need them the least. It seems likely that several large companies on the NC coast will upset the long-standing marketing practices, the individually arranged trucking routes and flexible work patterns. Their arrival will undermine the foundations of existing diverse cultures of fishing communities.

But for now, after the initial investment for the boat, gear, icehouse or whatever, NC fishermen are ready for the hot and cold weather, back-breaking and sometimes dangerous work that is fishing. They must be flexible to deal with an erratic market, to decide against an inside, "secure" job – diverse economic opportunities of the community are their only security, and the weather, water and fluctuations of nature are their boss. On the North Carolina coast, many people still like things that way. And so far, they can still make that choice. □

# RESOURCES

**La Confluencia** is a bilingual journal, focused on the Southwest, and "written for people involved in community action, bilingual education, and the conservation of human and cultural resources." Having observed that "most Southwestern children now, whether Navajo or Anglo or Chicano or Tewa, grow up in the dominant culture expressed on television, talk English to their friends, and speak the language of their grandfathers, if at all, only to their grandfathers," the editors of this new journal have dedicated themselves to the exploration, celebration, and preservation of all of the cultures of the Southwest.

They explain: "A confluence is the place where rivers meet: we hope *La Confluencia* can become a meeting ground for ideas, cultures, languages, people. It may be that in twenty years we will all have the same walk, the same talk. But it is our hope that real meetings can strengthen our distinctness, and chase the shadows that keep us from seeing each other, and ourselves, clearly."

*La Confluencia*, P.O. Box 409, Albuquerque, N.M., 87103. $2.50 per issue, $8.00 for a one year subscription (one volume, four issues).

**Cabbagetown Families, Cabbagetown Food** offers a cook's tour of a unique neighborhood in downtown Atlanta. Originally a mill village, Cabbagetown grew up around the old Fulton Mill which operated from the late 1800s to the late 1950s. With the active encouragement and support of the folks at *Foxfire*, the young people of the neighborhood interviewed eleven women and in the process recorded their life stories and their unique methods of preparing their favorite foods. *Cabbagetown Families, Cabbagetown Food* is a recipe book by women who cook by following their own traditions and instincts instead of formulas in books. It is also an account of life in Cabbagetown past and present, about cotton mill work, and most importantly, about country ways that have survived changes in the city. For recipes for collard greens, corncob dumplings and poke salad, pick up a copy and discover just how much "country" there is smack in the middle of the South's largest city. Available from Patch Publications, P.O. Box 5301, Atlanta, Ga., 30307. $3.50.

**Gonna Rise Again!** is a how-to guide to economic organizing for hard times compiled by the now defunct Resources for Community Change collective. This 50-page booklet describes organizations that have taken up the cause of poor and working people across the country, groups which the editors felt were in some way unique because of their militancy, strategic clarity, or tactical creativity. In selecting material for the booklet, members of the collective asked themselves the question, "How would knowledge of this group's activities help other organizers?"

The result is a booklet "about anger transformed into resistance, about the organized response which lies on the farther side of saying 'ain't gonna be treated this way any longer!'" In addition to profiles of 74 groups in 22 states, *Gonna Rise Again!* includes an analysis of the current economic crisis, and articles on unemployment organizing in the '30s, unemployment (or the lack of it) in China, direct action tactics, and methods of strike support.

*Gonna Rise Again!*, available from *Southern Exposure*, P.O. Box 230, Chapel Hill, NC, 27514. $1.

The second word in **Alternate ROOTS** stands for Regional Organization of Theatres South, a new network of independent theatres which banded together last year for mutual support, communication and survival. As regional theatre continues to grow throughout the country, similar groups have formed in other regions, but *Alternate ROOTS* is the first of its kind to adopt a formal organization and to obtain funding. Future plans call for theatre festivals, conferences, and the regular publication of a newsletter. The first issue is a directory of the 16 theatre companies which joined together to form ROOTS. Available free from Beth Stubblefield, c/o the Play Group, 1538 Laurel Ave., Knoxville, Tenn., 37916.

Since the history textbooks ignored their heritage as children of mining families, the students at Northern Cambria High School in the Pennsylvania coalfields decided to write their own. The result is **Mining Folk**, a handsome, 192-page book which celebrates, in words and pictures, the people, history and values of the coal mining community. Using oral history techniques, the students interviewed their parents and grandparents, recorded stories about the old days, gathered photographs from family albums, and in the process realized their sense of pride in their community's traditions.

"As children of mining folk, we always wished that our parents could be more like other people, more sleek and sophisticated. It hurt us to admit that our fathers mined coal....We are coming out of the dark. We are learning that our ancestors measured up to the most hostile of work environments. Our people survived and still endure strikes which improve the conditions of all workers by showing the world that people of spirit will starve rather than tolerate subjugation. America's best resource is not coal; it is coal-mining people. As children of mining folk, we present our humble, loving, courageous, self-reliant grandparents and parents. We think other people should try to be more like them."

*Mining Folk* explores the unwritten history of the coal mines, and the people who work in them. Available from Northern Cambria High School, Barnesboro, Pa., 15714.

**Descriptive Guide to North Carolina Environmental Groups**, the result of a lot a hard work by authors Steve Hoffius and Lance Peacock, offers a complete listing of all groups now fighting to preserve North Carolina's land, air and water. With beautiful illustrations from a turn-of-the-century

seed catalog and a format similar to the *Whole Earth Catalogue*, the *Descriptive Guide* provides a meeting place for like-minded people, a place where ideas can be shared, and strategies discussed and planned. In the ongoing war for the environment, the *Descriptive Guide* is both a record of past battles lost and won and a basic training manual for the next skirmish. Standard equipment for all combatants who make up the state's last line of defense against the "rape, ruin and run" folks.

*Descriptive Guide to North Carolina Environmental Groups,* Conservation Council of NC, P.O. Box 2001, Raleigh, NC, 27602. $2.

**A Day Without Sunshine** is a comprehensive, penetrating documentary about the Florida citrus industry and its treatment of the farmworkers who pick the fruit that Anita Bryant likes to sing about. The 60-minute color film produced and directed by Robert Thurber in cooperation with the Community Television Foundation of South Florida, is a scathing indictment of Florida's highly profitable agribusiness and its allies in state government. Narrated by James Earl Jones, the documentary features interviews with agribusiness leaders, union organizers, farm labor observers and government officials, and includes portraits of three migrant familes. *A Day Without Sunshine* concludes with an overview of action that might improve the lot of the farmworkers — still among the poorest paid, least protected and most exploited laborers in America today.

*A Day Without Sunshine,* available from the Communications Commission, National Council of Churches, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 860, New York, NY, 10027.

**The Workbook** is a fully-indexed catalog of sources of information about environmental, social and consumer problems. It is aimed at helping people in small towns and cities across America gain access to vital information that can help them assert control over their own lives.

*The Workbook* is a tool "for all the people who, in their various ways, are working to provide a world characterized by economic justice, clean air and water and uncontaminated soils... thriving small-town and regional-scale economies...land reform, adequate child-care facilities...meaningful work for all, justice in the courts..." All things bright and beautiful. The staff believes "that war, racism, sexism, poverty, crime and environmental destruction are all parts of the same problems. Solutions will require action on many fronts. We hope *The Workbook* can serve this vast, nameless movement for change."

*The Workbook,* published monthly, by Southwest Research and Information Center, P.O. Box 4515, Albuquerque, NM, 87106. $7 per year.

In **A Better Day for Indians** Vine Deloria, Jr. writes eloquently and persuasively of the Indian's plight in America, and offers a detailed, seven-point national program to redress the wrongs suffered by this continent's original inhabitants. Published by the Field Foundation, *A Better Day for Indians* analyzes the assumptions which presently control the federal government's Indian policy and sets forth the challenge facing the Carter administration in clear and unequivocal terms.

The first of several papers on national policy questions to be published by the Field Foundation in 1977, *A Better Day for Indians* is available free from The Field Foundation, 100 East 85th St., New York, NY, 10028.

Anita Parlow's **The Land Development Rag** documents the efforts of corporate land developers to push small farmers off their mountain land in two counties in North Carolina. Published in booklet form by the Southern Appalachian Ministry in Higher Education, *The Land Development Rag* outlines the farmers' fight to continue living on their own land. Avery and Watauga were among the first Appalachian counties to feel the economic, political and social effects of the developers' shovels, and this booklet sounds the warning for mountain people in counties next on the list.

Available free of charge from Southern Appalachian Ministry, 1538 Highland Ave., Knoxville, Tenn., 37916.

The **Southern Tenant Farmers Union**, founded in 1934, was instrumental in bringing about several major reforms which benefited agricultural workers in their struggles during the 1930s, '40s and '50s. Although the union itself is now part of history, co-founder H. L. Mitchell still travels across the country, speaking to university, labor and community groups about the history of labor organizing in the rural South, from 1930 to the present. A one-man resource on the agrarian South, H. L. Mitchell is available for lectures, seminars and conferences.

In addition to his busy schedule of public appearances, Mitchell continues his efforts in behalf of surviving members of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. "Mitch" actively seeks to place collections of valuable historical papers from groups like the STFU in libraries throughout the country. The collections are on microfilm, and under a special arrangement with the Microfilming Corporation of America, a percentage of everything ordered through Mitchell goes to support surviving members of the STFU.

Among the many collections now available, four are especially noteworthy: **Archives of the Rural Poor: The Complete Papers of the STFU; The Collected Papers of John Beecher; The Collected Papers of Howard Kester; The Socialist Party of America Papers.** A full catalog is available from H. L. Mitchell, P. O. Box 2617, Montgomery, Ala., 36105.

Making the most of the concentration of cable TV networks in Appalachia, **Broadside TV** has developed a regular series of videotapes for TV stations, elementary and secondary schools, and special workshops. The tapes let the people of Appalachia tell their own stories, and range from portraits of musicians to mountain news. The current catalog lists seminars and concerts by Ralph Stanley, the noted pioneer of mountain music, and the 1976 Jonesborough Storytelling Tapes, featuring traditional storytellers from Appalachia, and stories on everything from the Old West and Fishing Tales to Afro-American Culture Tales and Deep South Tales. Their catalog is free, their tapes unique.

Write *Broadside TV,* Elm and Millard St., Johnson City, Tenn., 37601.

# BOOK REVIEWS

**Jack Bass** is writer-in-residence at South Carolina State College and co-author of *The Transformation of Southern Politics* with Walter DeVries.

**Bob Brinkmeyer** teaches English at North Carolina Central University.

**Rayna Green** is presently director of the Project on Native Americans for the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Washington, DC, and book review editor for the *Journal of American Folklore.*

**Chris Mayfield** is a free-lance writer, gardener, and a proud mama of a nine-month-old daughter, Mary.

**Laughlin McDonald** is the director of the Southern Office of the American Civil Liberties Union in Atlanta.

**Leo Ribuffo** teaches history at George Washington University in Washington, DC.

**Thad Stem, Jr.,** is a veteran author of Oxford, NC, now at work on his sixteenth book.

**Cam Walker** teaches history at the College of William and Mary in Willamsburg, Va.

**Southern Ladies and Gentlemen,** by Florence King. Stein and Day, 1975. 216 pp. $1.75.

With each new description of the loonies that populate Florence King's Southern madhouse, I kept checking to see if I knew one, or worse, was one. I certainly recognized a number of those near and dear in the book. And if you are a Good Ole Boy or Girl, a Dowager, a Rock, a Dear Old Thing, a Gonad Manque, a Mama Tried, a Self-Rejuvenating Virgin or a Southern Daddy, you will recognize yourself in the book and sign up for the cure. Just reading the book will be a penance for your manifold cultural sins.

If, heaven help, you ever spawned, married or loved one of King's cast of madhouse residents, the book will help you avoid further indulgence and atone for past foolishness. If you are a Yankee, the book will either confirm your worst fears about the new man in the White House or inspire you to book a one-way passage to Atlanta on the next Dixie Flier. And if you are none of the above (a Californian, perhaps?), but love comic social analysis, you will give up Evelyn Waugh for Florence King. Whether therapy, indictment or social commentary in substance, King's book is a delight in style and intent. I hope all the real Southern characters will forgive her and give copies to their friends the way Gideons give Bibles.

Though the book is terribly funny — viciously, lovingly, outrageously funny — it is also a remarkable piece of popular anthropology. Don't let the lack of footnotes and diagrams fool you into thinking King is not serious. The volume is a fine piece of field research, though King appears to have been more a participant-observer than a grant-funded scholar like her mythical Yankee social historian, Dr. Jonathan Latham, who left in a hurry when Southern manners turned to madness. King stayed because she belonged, and turned her participation into prose. The book is to Southern manners and morals what Trollope's and Austen's novels were to English life in previous centuries. Like those acute observers, I expect Ms. King will no longer be received in the homes of the people she so beautifully exposes to public scrutiny, but most readers will be grateful that she kissed and told.

The book is a personality-and-culture study of the type so popular with mid-century anthropologists. Rather than relating individual madness to pervasive cultural themes, however, she describes Southern cultural madness by drawing personality types. The book is not about the whole culture, and some real types never make an appearance. People who represent neither the pathological nor symbolic public norm — someone like Rosalyn Carter comes to mind — will not be found here; neither will those black folk who make up the normative counter-culture by defining the boundaries of the majority culture. Race is there, but only as an attitudinal dimension of white Southerners' minds. The Dear Old Things' and Silly Old Ladies' obsessions with "big black nigras" define their personalities as surely as their tendencies toward the vapors, but it is their fixation on mythos rather than actual "big black nigras" that marks the book. Nonetheless, race is only one of the social issues that forms the Southern personality type. Class, status, family and style are even more important categories for King's characters, and she has a deadly aim for her chosen targets.

The book is very much about Southern sex and sexuality, thus its heading on the paperback version, "The bestseller that catches Dixie right between the sheets." No category of the sexual behavior Southerners find most interesting escapes description — virginity, rape, incest, infidelity, homosexuality. Each vignette includes King's dramatization of the dialogue that ought to accompany the ritual enactment. The Good Old Boy's ritual attempted rape thus elicits his ritual apology, "I'm mighty sorry 'bout last night. I didn't mean no harm, just wanted to love you, but I was drunk, and a l'il crazy, thass all. But I wasn't gonna rape you, 'deed I wasn't, I just wanted to hold you a l'il, thass all." Had I not been on the receiving end of just such a drama only recently, I would have dismissed King's dialogue as bad lady's magazine, but my friends and I all agreed that she had clearly overheard all of our scenes with Earl, W.J. and Wesley. The sexual types are all there and so are the supporting Southern rationales: the Town Fairy as the accepted and inevitable result of being a change-of-life baby; the self-rejuvenating virgin who remains so because she was drunk (they didn't take their clothes off; they didn't do it in a bed, etc.); and the slash hound who goes prowling for it in his car but who really hopes to find Miss Melanie on the street corner. All are as much a part of the living South as Marse Robert is a part of the legend.

While Southern men are very much present in the book, the work is clearly about Southern women. Reformed Southern women can console themselves by saying that the book deals in caricature (it does) and that it draws the types so broadly as to ignore the complexity of Southern womanhood (it doesn't). True, very few of the ungenteel women who weren't raised on the Vapors Mentality appear. Lolly, the Good Old Girl who is continually memorialized in truck-stop waitress country and western songs, makes too brief an appearance. Southern white country women and those strong, political ladies who run everything sweetly but firmly aren't much around in King's book. But women like King herself and other Washington and New York exiles who escaped the deadly embrace of Pi Beta Phi or the Junior League by becoming literary ladies, lawyers or Radcliffe radicals make poor targets for King's barbed humor. They never had the vapors and aren't any fun at all. Rather, King is preoccupied with the stereotypes who define the South's notions of womanhood; they make good copy and they are her stars, however reluctantly they may step onto her well-lighted stage. Their preoccupations with family and tradition (The Graveyard Twitch), social ritual ("coming out"), style (being "pert," "freezing" the impertinent), and health ("female complaint," tilted wombs, nervous prostration and The Change) form the core of King's treatise on the follies of Southern womanhood. Her keen eye for female ritual ("Settling down to an evening of serious drinking is standard sport for Southern best girl friends"), for folk belief (Coca-Cola is the best douche) and folk speech ("He's all potatoes and no meat.") contributes nicely to the whole Dorian Grey portrait.

photo by Tom Davenport

In general, this is not a picture that will delight either feminists or unreconstructed Southern women. But slanderous as it is, the book's accuracy is unimpeachable. The author's loving care for her subjects is indisputable. King loves these ladies and so will you. Their very outrageousness speaks well for them in a world where political seriousness is matched by seriousness of style.

The book is as ribald as the Southern ladies King describes, and it is also as evil and generous, as vigorous and vile as they. King's very irreverence is part of a Southern female closet tradition, and seeing it proudly on parade is tremendously gratifying. I hope King "goes to pieces" in print again soon. I would gladly get drunk with her and tell her about my female troubles if she'd promise to write another book next year. I expect, or rather hope, that *Southern Ladies and Gentlemen* has a large over-the-counter clientele in Charleston and Atlanta, and that its delightful social criticism has provoked both self-examination and laughter in the nicest circles.

**– Rayna Green**

---

**Lancelot,** by Walker Percy. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977. 257 pp. $8.95.

Walker Percy writes in an essay that the novelist is "less like a prophet than he is like a canary coal miners used to take down into the shaft to test the air. When the canary gets unhappy, and collapses, it may be time for the miners to surface and think things over." But in his new novel, Percy seems to be more prophet than canary. He utters no plaintive cries; instead he issues a challenge, a call to war against the putrefaction of modern civilization and all of us who contribute, actively or passively, to its intolerable stink. This book is not pleasant reading — nobody likes to be on the wrong end of a satirical attack. Percy's aim is bold and even noble: he dares us to reject things as they are for a simpler and more honorable way of living.

Percy himself lives in Louisiana and is heir to a long tradition of Southern chivalry and genteel literature. A devout Roman Catholic, his novels are characterized by their existential flavor, their humor, and their sensuality. Obviously a complex person, his writing is equally complex and cannot be described simply as "religious" or "intellectual." *Lancelot* is his fourth novel and his fourth portrait of men living the golden life who can barely control their depression and anxieties.

In *Lancelot,* Percy, like some other modern novelists, tries to impose order onto the chaos of modern life by striking rich corresponding chords between a contemporary situation and an ancient mythical tale, in this case the medieval legend of the Quest for the Holy Grail. There are several versions of the story of how King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table searched for the chalice that Christ supposedly used at the Last Supper, and Percy, I think, has chosen a French version, *Queste del Saint Graal.* In this twelfth-century tale, the Round Table society is beset from within by the sins of various unchaste knights and ladies. King Arthur sends his knights on the holiest quest possible,

but most of them fail, including the peerless Lancelot. Their secular chivalry is useless to bring them this highest, holiest privilege.

Lancelot almost succeeds, through his courage and great heart, but he is denied the final victory because his highest allegiance is not to Christ but to the chivalric ideals of love and honor, ideals which he inevitably betrays by his adulterous relationship with Queen Guinevere. In Percy's novel we find a modern exploration of the same basic problem: can one find a new life, free of the American diseased decadence, simply by practicing personal honor and simplicity? Or must one grapple somehow with the difficult significance of Christ's love and death and resurrection?

The main character of *Lancelot* is a middle-aged Southern gentleman by that name, reminiscent in many ways of Dr. Thomas More from Percy's third novel, *Love in the Ruins*. Lancelot is locked into a stultifying routine – Percy would call it "everydayness" – of booze and Beethoven and television news broadcasts, until one day he realizes with a sudden shock the total decadence of present-day America. He makes this discovery by stumbling upon his daughter's bloodtype. Realizing that she cannot possibly be his child, he is propelled into a new realm of freedom and action.

Like his medieval namesake, Lancelot Andrewes Lamar sets out on a quest. But the world has changed a great deal since the days of King Arthur, and this twentieth-century knight finds himself searching not for the shining purity of the Holy Grail but for its opposite – a real, live sin. "Evil," the new Lancelot tells us, "is surely the key to this age, the only quest appropriate to the age. For everything and everyone's either wonderful or sick, and nothing is evil." If he can just find one true sin, unmitigated and unexcused by today's limp amorality, life may begin to seem real. More importantly, it will become possible once again to believe in God. The doctrine of atonement will make sense.

The quest is a bizarre one. It leads Lancelot to commit murder and arson, and finally lands him in a prison hospital in New Orleans. The story is told retrospectively in a monologue delivered by Lancelot to his boyhood friend, now a silent priest whose name, Percival, continues the correspondence with the Grail legend. The monologue is punctuated by some shocking indictments of today's people and their lives, and focuses most scathingly on what Lancelot sees as the insidious force of permissiveness, sexual and otherwise. "We are living in Sodom," Lancelot says, and he declares he will not tolerate this age. But neither will he accept Percival's Catholicism (Percy's own answer) because even Catholicism, Lancelot thinks, has been diluted by modern permissiveness: "I'd have fought for your lady, because Christ had his broadsword. Now you've gotten rid of your lady and taken the sword from Christ."

Lancelot's answer? To strike out fresh, and initiate a new life of reality and worth in that old womb-like seat of Southern glory and defeat, the Shenandoah Valley. Lancelot's vision of a new way seems to coincide with the hopeful ending of *Love in the Ruins*, where Dr. Thomas More starts over again with another wife and family in an old brick slave cabin, hoeing collards and enjoying the simple pleasures of good boots and hot morning grits.

But there is an important difference between the conclusions of the two books. Thomas More's rejection of modern emptiness and his achievement of inner peace includes his acceptance – however reluctant and incomplete – of Christian faith. In contrast, Lancelot is a secular knight like his medieval namesake, and his virtues are based on personal honor rather than on Christian charity. Consequently, Percy reserves the last word in this novel for the priest, Percival, whose legendary namesake was the knight of true faith and one of the three allowed to find the Grail. Although Walker Percy realizes the seeming irrelevance of the church to society's sickness, the novel's conclusion contains an implicit rejection of Lancelot's chivalric code in favor of Percival's Catholicism.

*Lancelot* is a more intense and upsetting book than any of Percy's other three novels, though it remains unmistakably his. Walker Percy fans will relish the hilarious song-like dialogue, the beautiful-absurd places and women, the quasi-scientific precision of color and gesture and voice. Lancelot's ravings are deliberately grotesque exaggerations. Percy wants to electrify the callous sensibilities of modern readers. He knows that a straightforwardly Christian novel like Cardinal Spellman's *The Foundling* would leave us cold; the church's vocabulary no longer carries force. "The old words of Grace," Percy writes elsewhere, "are worn smooth as poker chips and a certain devaluation has occurred, like a poker chip after it is cashed in." The priest remains silent throughout most of the novel for this very reason. Percy must build his message through a counter point of melancholy silence and bizarre violence, in the hope that his readers will be shocked out of their "everydayness."

In his use of the grotesque, Percy recalls another gifted Southern Catholic novelist, Flannery O'Connor, who believed that modern readers must be jolted into an awareness of the real significance of Christ's life and Christian mysteries: "To the hard of hearing you shout," she said, "and for the almost-blind you draw large and startling figures."

"The Christian novelist nowadays," Percy writes, "is like a man who has found a treasure hidden in the attic of an old house, but he is writing for people who have moved out to the suburbs and are bloody sick of the old house and everything in it." *Lancelot* is Percy's attempt to bring people back to the old house by making them bloody sick of the suburbs.

– **Bob Brinkmeyer**

## Amerikan Bandstand

by Jack Boozer

*The thing about rhythm*
*is that you don't want*
*to be too*
*good with it*
*or you begin*
*to sound like*
*a tango.*
*Poetry is a different*
*kind of dancing;*
*it moves in the skyway's solitude.*

*"I'll give that a 35 – you can't dance to it."*

*Bob Dylan once sang about*
*Ma Rainey and Beethoven*
*unwrapping some*
*bedroll,*
*and all about tuba players*
*around some*
*flagpole –*
*But you can't dance to that*
*either.*

# IT TOOK THE MEDIA TO KEEP THE GOVERNMENT HONEST. BUT IT TAKES "MORE" TO KEEP THE MEDIA HONEST.

*MORE watches the media while the media watches you*

What if the news reporters, TV commentators, gossip columnists and media gurus who helped write the Watergate story did as thorough a job investigating their own business?

What if Woodward and Bernstein found a Deep Throat somewhere in the bowels of the Times?

Or if Barbara Walters put Barbara Walters under the microscope?

That's the kind of thing that happens each month in the pages of MORE, the Media Magazine.

MORE covers the media like the media itself covers a big story. By looking for sources and listening and digging and watching every word and reading between the lines. By getting behind the scenes and into the back rooms and conference rooms, providing the stories behind the stories you get and the stories behind the stories you never get.

At MORE, we get media people to tell us things they'd never tell anyone else. And we get the very people who report, comment and advertise to write things about reporting, commentating and advertising they could never write anywhere else.

For example we've explored a family feud at the *Times* that may have been responsible for Daniel P. Moynihan becoming a U.S. Senator. We examined the power of a handful of editors at *Time* and *Newsweek* to create and destroy rock stars overnight. We interviewed the controversial *Los Angeles Times* reporter who said that journalists should "lie, cheat, steal or bribe to get their story." And MORE ran the Nora Ephron media column that *Esquire* killed and the profile of Rupert Murdoch that *New York* wouldn't run.

We've given the business to the news business, advertising, movies, publishing and the entire communications industry. And don't think they haven't started watching their words a little more closely now that they know someone else is.

So if you subscribe to the idea that someone should be watching the media like the media watches everyone else, subscribe to MORE.

## I WANT TO KEEP THE MEDIA HONEST. SEND ME MorE.

Please enter my subscription immediately.

- ☐ $12 for 1 year (12 issues)
- ☐ $21 for 2 years (24 issues)
- ☐ $30 for 3 years (36 issues)
- ☐ Payment Enclosed ☐ Bill me

Name

Address

City State Zip

Signature

THE MEDIA MAGAZINE

MorE P.O. Box 955 Farmingdale, New York 11735

Add $2.00 per year for outside U.S. and Canada. Please allow up to 4 to 6 weeks for delivery of first issue.

MO47

**The Ethnic Southerners,** by George Brown Tindall. Louisiana State University Press, 1976. 251 pp. $11.95.

In 1928, historian Ulrich B. Phillips defined as the unifying principle and central theme of Southern history "a common resolve indomitably maintained" by the white man that the South "shall be and remain a white man's country." With desegregation becoming an accepted reality, does that mean that the long-reported "vanishing South" has arrived, or at least is well on the way?

Not so, says George B. Tindall, a former president of the Southern Historical Association, who contends in this collection of essays that there is a "larger Southernism" that continues to keep the region distinctive. Southern historians, he writes, have "somehow felt the regional differences in their bones." He lists such factors as a distinctive historical experience involving defeat and poverty; the climate and physical setting with their effects on life, tempo, emotion, and character; the Negro's presence and pervasive influence on the whole life of the region; the powerful religious heritage and the knowledge of good and evil; and finally the persistence of an essentially rural culture with its neighborliness in human relations.

These are the ingredients that made the South a melting pot for two ethnic groups, black and white, says Tindall. Reluctant to acknowledge kinship, "each has been keenly aware of its separate identity in the nation."

The two groups have experienced the unique characteristics of Southern history from different perspectives. The sight of the Confederate flag, for example, evokes quite different emotional responses from blacks and those whites to whom it still symbolizes something meaningful. A 1974 survey by Walter De Vries revealed significant differences in attitude on political issues between black and white Southerners that in most cases was greater than the differences between Southern whites and non-Southerners.

Though the Southerner of the present generation has seen the old landmarks crumble with great rapidity, says Tindall, "we learn time and again from the Southern past and the history of others that to change is not necessarily to disappear. And we learn from modern psychology that to change is not necessarily to lose one's identity: to change, sometimes, is to find it."

The breakdown of segregation has not only eliminated white supremacy as a unifying historical theme, but it has also provided freedom for the white Southerner from the conflict of loyalties to a rigid social structure based on inequality and to the principles of equality and liberty that not only are the heart of the American Creed, but whose origins, Tindall emphasizes, are themselves in part traced to Southerners such as Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson.

In the end, Tindall questions whether the South – with reconciliation within reach, the land relatively unspoiled, and the political system more open and unrestricted than ever before – will learn from the mistakes of others. He would like to believe it would happen, but concludes, "if experience is any guide, the South will blow it. We will have to make the same mistakes all over again, and we will achieve the urban blight, the crowding, the traffic jams, the slums, the ghettos, the pollution, the frenzy, and all the other ills that modern man is heir to. We are already well on the way."

– **Jack Bass**

---

**The Angelo Herndon Case and Southern Justice,** by Charles H. Martin. Louisiana State University Press, 1976.

On January 18, 1933, Fulton County Judge Lee B. Wyatt sentenced the young black Communist Angelo Herndon to 18 to 20 years at hard labor for having violated Georgia's insurrection statute. The previous June, Herndon had helped organize an unprecedented integrated protest at Atlanta's city hall over the suspension of relief funds. Incensed by the vagueness of the law, the flimsiness of the evidence, and the bias of the court, white liberals, middle-class blacks, and Herndon's party comrades mounted vigorous – if sometimes contradictory – campaigns to win his freedom. By the time the US Supreme Court overturned his conviction in 1937, the case had attracted national attention. In this thorough book, Charles Martin unravels the complicated political and judicial maneuvers, comments on the legal issues, and renders his own verdict on "Southern justice."

Herndon's arrest at the unemployed council post office box was part of an extensive effort to purge Atlanta of what Assistant Solicitor John H. Hudson called "damnable anarchistic bolsheviki." Indeed, as Martin shows, Hudson and his superiors had effectively harassed radicals since 1930. In this environment, Herndon was an especially appealing target. Converted from the "religious abstractions" of his youth to radical politics by a speaker at a Birmingham rally in 1930, Herndon attended a national convention of unemployed councils, joined the Communist party, spoke on behalf of the Scottsboro defendants, recruited for the Trade Union Unity League, and participated in a New Orleans strike. Badgered by formal and informal law enforcers in Alabama and Louisiana, he moved to Georgia in late 1931.

Initially, Herndon's indictment in July, 1932, attracted little attention. The International Labor Defense (ILD), a Communist-dominated group heavily involved in the Scottsboro case, helped to secure counsel and plan strategy. John H. Geer and Benjamin Davis, Jr., the local black attorneys who represented Herndon, agreed that legal efforts must be supplemented by what ILD Secretary William Patterson called "mass pressure." The judicial prospects before an all white jury were not promising. The statute, passed during Reconstruction, made an attempt to incite insurrection a capital offense. Quoting from minutes of Communist meetings and radical pamphlets found in Herndon's room, Solicitor Hudson stressed that the "reds" planned to establish a Negro republic in the South, a key Communist goal during the early 1930s. When professors from Emory testified that the literature wasn't insurrectionary, he questioned their patriotism and pronounced the university a "hotbed of iniquity." Hudson demanded the death penalty so that "daughters of state officials can walk the streets safely."

Angelo Herndon countered that capitalists divided blacks and whites in order to exploit both races, and said that the shedding of his "innocent blood" would not solve the real problems of unemployment and inequality. His defense attorney, Benjamin Davis,

accused the state of waving the "bloody flag" of prejudice, declared that the Ku Klux Klan, not the Communist party, was insurrectionary, and observed that Solicitor Hudson knew "as much about communism as a pig knows about a full-dress suit."

More restrained than the solicitor, Judge Wyatt told the jury that "mere possession of radical literature" was not grounds for conviction. The state must show that Herndon had threatened "immediate serious violence." The jurors also lacked Hudson's fervor. Quickly agreeing that Herndon was guilty, they nevertheless decided against capital punishment. While his lawyers prepared an appeal, Herndon entered Fulton Tower prison, where he remained until August 5, 1934.

Unanimously upholding the conviction on May 24, 1934, the Georgia Supreme Court ruled that Herndon's job as a Communist organizer, combined with the inflammatory nature of his pamphlets, "amply authorized" the jury "to infer that violence was intended, and that the defendant did attempt to induce others to combine in such resistance to the lawful authority of the state."

Complementary efforts to free Herndon through "mass pressure" were undermined by public apathy and division among his supporters. Black journalists and the NAACP distrusted the Communists. Incensed by the party's tactics in the Scottsboro case, Will Alexander of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation refused to work with them in this instance. Especially during the "third period" preceding the Popular Front, Communists were rarely convivial allies. They believed that all parties to their right were reactionary — and told them so. A typical denunciation of "social fascists" disrupted a meeting of the Atlanta Provisional Committee for the Defense of Angelo Herndon. But Martin shows that Communist activities and the relationship of the party to blacks varied considerably with the local situation. His evidence reveals that party organizers for the Herndon defense in Atlanta practiced a *de facto* cooperation with liberals and Socialists which "foreshadowed" the Comintern's proclamation of the People's Front in mid-1935. Martin could have strengthened his discussion of the internecine disputes by relating them explicitly to the history and historiography of the American Left.

The International Labor Defense and the Communist party deserve substantial credit for saving Herndon from the chain gang. Herndon remembered that the ILD aided him "instantly," and the group was speedy indeed compared to the NAACP. Later, shrewd Communist and ILD publicity made him a national *cause celebre*. Communist and ILD efforts raised the $15,000 needed to free Herndon on bail in August, 1934. Thereafter, they brought him to New York, saluted him at numerous rallies, and organized his lecture tour. Above all, while rhetorically affirming mass action, in practice they followed the legal lead of Whitney North Seymour, a Wall Street attorney who unsuccessfully argued *Herndon* v. *Lowry* the first appeal, before the US Supreme Court in early 1935.

Ultimately, Herndon was freed by shrewd legal tactics, not mass pressure. Seymour and W.A. Sutherland, a white Georgia attorney, filed a writ of *habeus corpus* with Judge Hugh M. Dorsey of Fulton County Superior Court. Dorsey, who had prosecuted Leo Frank in the 1910s and later served as governor, ruled that the insurrection law as construed was "too vague and indefinite to provide a sufficiently ascertainable standard of guilt." After the Georgia Supreme Court overruled Dorsey, Seymour and his staff prepared another appeal to the United States Supreme Court. In *DeJonge* v. *Oregon*, the Court had recently decided that mere participation in a rally sponsored by Communists was not a criminal act. Seymour cited *DeJonge* to buttress the appeal.

Writing for a bare majority, Justice Owen Roberts overruled the Georgia Supreme Court on April 26, 1937. He denied the Fulton county Solicitor's contention that the "dangerous tendency" test used in *Gitlow* v. *New York* applied to Herndon. In that instance, New York's criminal anarchy law had "carefully and adequately" defined the offense. In this case, Roberts agreed with Judge Dorsey and Whitney North Seymour that the insurrection statute did not provide a "sufficiently ascertainable standard of guilt." If Herndon had proposed creation of a black republic "at once," circumstantial evidence might have supported his conviction. But the black republic was only an "ultimate

Untitled
by Steven Ward

*A man came today*
*selling aluminum siding*
*and storm windows*
*Most people around here*
*are buying storm windows*
*with their black lung money*

*Companies didn't keep records*
*of the men who worked the mines*
*It's hard to make a case in court*
*if you can't prove*
*you worked for the company*
*And you have to go to court*
*for black lung*
*My grandfather was lucky*
*a coal car hit him*
*and broke his leg*
*He spent three weeks*
*in the company hospital*
*He might have lost the leg*
*but his brothers came*
*and made them give him up*
*They took him to a real doctor*
*in Huntington*
*Companies keep records*
*of the men who stayed*
*in their hospitals*
*It's the law*

*My grandmother made the trip*
*to Charleston*
*where the sick records are kept*
*She waited politely*
*all day in the hallway*
*for the paper that said*
*her husband had broken his leg*
*and stayed in the company hospital*
*The paper is court evidence*

*They were thinking of putting*
*a storm window in the bathroom*
*It gives away too much heat in the winter*
*It's a big window and they asked*
*the salesman for an estimate*
*He took out his tape and measured*
*he figured and judged*
*Four hundred dollars*

*Get out  get out of my house*
*(this is my grandfather)*
*No window costs that*
*How can you ask that much*
*Get out*
*And the salesman*
*ran out redfaced and afraid*
*of my seventy year old grandfather*
*(He's still six feet tall)*
*In the front yard*
*my grandmother caught up with him*
*She said he (my grandfather)*
*just got worked up*
*and not to take it so hard*
*She is a patient woman*

# we told you so

Mostly, people say: "I hate to say it – but I told you so." We have to say it. That's our business. And, almost incredibly, as this country's oldest weekly, we've been "telling you so" for nigh on 112 years.

Still, we're not in the scoop story business. As analysts and probers into the dynamics of political events, we get to know where the fault lines are and consequently, where the earthquakes may occur. The news media do the follow-up job of telling you what number on the Richter scale the quake hit.

The Bay of Pigs, for example, is one big quake we called long before "The Press" knew what hit them and us.

The expert academics, the Ralph Naders, the Ted Kennedys who write for us mostly tell it straight – in English rather than in the jargon of a dogma or the latest new-found quick and easy push button way to socialism. We're proud that a lot of people consider us the sane voice of the left-of-center sentiment in America.

If you send us a dollar we'll send you two weekly issues. If you like it, you might want to subscribe. You ought to take a look at The Nation, it's really something quite special.

*SEND ME an issue for two weeks. Here's my dollar and my address and zip code.*

*NAME* ______________________________

______________________________

______________________________ *ZIP* ________

*Exposure*

THE NATION 333 SIXTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10014

MOVING?

If you are moving, be sure to send *Southern Exposure* your new address.

ideal." Herndon's public exhortations, like much of the literature, were "void of criminality." Hence, as construed and applied, the insurrection statute "unreasonably" limited freedom of speech and assembly.

While concurring in Martin's enthusiasm for this "significant" – if temporary – advance for civil liberties, we must recognize the limits of the libertarianism. Martin himself notes with irony that the jurists might have rejected Herndon's appeal on the merits in 1934; by 1937, political pressure, including President Roosevelt's plan to expand the Supreme Court, helped to move Justices Hughes and Roberts leftward. But the Court's majority still declined to bury the "dangerous tendency" doctrine and apply the more stringent "clear and present danger" test, and Roberts' own decision implied that the conviction might have been affirmed if Herndon had called for immediate establishment of a black republic. As Zechariah Chafee, Jr., pointed out, *Herndon* v. *Lowry* merely pruned the "fringe" attached to the insurrection statute.

Non-lawyers are more likely to compare Herndon's case to the Scottsboro, Alabama, rape trials than to the sedition prosecutions of Dirk DeJonge or Benjamin Gitlow. Liberals and radicals, including Herndon, stressed this connection throughout the 1930s. Although white racial fears deprived blacks of fair trials in both cases, the differences were significant. Initially, the young men tried at Scottsboro were represented by two lawyers – one drunk, one senile, and both inept. Herndon had competent, though inexperienced, counsel from the outset. The Communist party and the NAACP struggled bitterly to win over the politically innocent Scottsboro defendants. While acrimony divided his defenders, Herndon remained loyal to Communist ideology and ILD tactics. Moreover, notwithstanding the fervor of the Solicitor's office, Martin rightly concludes that Georgia officials showed "greater restraint" than their counterparts in Alabama. Claiming that Georgians did not "get excited" about sedition, Gov. Eugene Talmadge explained, "We never molest a nigger unless he rapes a white woman." Dan Carter has written that the Scottsboro rape case "went to the heart of race relations." Herndon's alleged distribution of radical pamphlets did not.

Finally, from the perspective of constitutional law, *Herndon* v. *Lowry* was less significant than *Powell* v. *Alabama*, which guaranteed counsel to certain defendants at the state level; or *Norris* v. *Alabama*, which attacked the exclusion of blacks from juries. Ironically, these more important Scottsboro decisions only provided new trials for the defendants. Herndon was freed. He became vice-president of the Young Communist League and, in the 1940s, co-editor with Ralph Ellison of the *Negro Quarterly*.

Considering the historiographical fate of Herndon's party comrades, Norman Markowitz has lamented the absence of a "real secondary literature" on American Communism. The remark applies with particular force to accounts of Negro-Communist relations. From the early work of Wilson Record to Harold Cruse's irate *Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, most authors mixed polemics, memoirs, and snatches of congressional testimony. On the whole, Martin's book is a happy exception to this general trend. Communists were frequently dogmatic and manipulative and their "Marxist" explanations of American conditions were sometimes downright silly. At the same time, many party members were perceptive and humane, and Martin gives Communists credit when they deserve it. He applauds the ILD's "valiant" fight to free Herndon. He quotes with approval Adam Clayton Powell's judgement that most blacks neither feared Communists nor fell "over backwards in admiration." Rather, a Communist was "just another human being to be judged individually" on the basis of his commitment to black equality.

According to Martin, Herndon's rank-and-file defenders considered him "more a symbol than a real person." Unfortunately, he appears in this volume in much the same capacity. The author commends his intelligence, courage, and devotion, but says little about his motives or inner turmoil. Martin could have compensated for Herndon's refusal to be interviewed by making better use of *Let Me Live*, the autobiography he published in 1937. The book contains propaganda for the People's Front as well as admittedly "sentimental" portraits of Southern blacks. But it also offers poignant description of imprisonment in Fulton Tower and shrewd assessments of friends and foes.

Above all, *Let Me Live* shows how the son of "hard-boiled Republican" parents became a dedicated Communist. With considerable self-awareness, Herndon saw that he was drawn by something more than the party's "clear-cut" endorsement of racial equality. It also provided the education that he had "longed for." Ralph Ellison has suggested that Herndon left the Communist Party during the 1940s as part of a search for identity. His affiliation was obviously part of the same search, and it had its psychological rewards. Party membership helped him to develop a sense of self and gave him the strength to endure imprisonment and trials. Yet his autobiography does not deprecate the political commitment because it fulfilled personal needs while seeking public goals. Here too, Herndon was more insightful than social science tracts that interpret radicalism as neurosis writ large.

Aside from the failure to portray Herndon's human side, Martin is weakest when he implies that the case is best understood as an example of "southern justice." Suppression of "subversives" of any race, color, or creed was almost a national pastime. Surveying the nation between 1930 and 1932, the American Civil Liberties Union discerned the "prevalent notion that radicals have no rights." Despite superficial similarities, Herndon's case had less in common with Scottsboro than with the classic red hunts from A. Mitchell Palmer to John Mitchell. Like most red scares, moreover, the one in Fulton County owed much to reputable citizens who hardly considered themselves extremists. William Hartsfield, soon to be mayor of Atlanta, presented a sedition bill to the legislature. The *Atlanta Constitution* demanded the summary arrest of Communists. In the final analysis, instead of illuminating a peculiarly "southern justice," the Herndon prosecution should remind us, as Howard Zinn put it, that the evil "qualities so long attributed to the South as special possessions are, in truth, American qualities."

– **Leo Ribuffo**

**The Third Life of Grange Copeland,** by Alice Walker. Avon Books, 1970. 255 pp. $7.95.

**Meridian,** by Alice Walker. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976. 228 pp. $7.95.

Southern black women stand at the center of Alice Walker's work. Wives, lovers, mothers, daughters and sisters of all shapes and conditions fill the novels, poems, stories, and essays of this gifted young writer. Committed "to exploring the oppressions, the insanities, the loyalties, and the triumphs of black women," Walker shows them loving their men, trying to protect their children, avenging their wrongs, and cultivating their flowers amidst terror and revolution.

As prolific as she is talented, Walker has published, in addition to her two novels, two volumes of poetry, *Once* and *Revolutionary Petunias,* a collection of short stories entitled *In Love & Trouble,* a children's biography of Langston Hughes, and numerous essays. Her "preoccupation," she has said, is "the spiritual survival, the survival *whole* of my people."

Even while affirming the possibility, Walker never underestimates the difficulty or the costs of that survival. More often than not, her black women pay a high price. Roselily, in the story that bears her name, marries a man she scarcely knows in order to gain respectability for herself and a father for her children. Rannie Toomer makes a desperate though ultimately futile effort to save her baby in "Strong Horse Tea." In *Meridian* so intense is Meridian Hill's commitment to the poor blacks whom the civil-rights movement left untouched, that she sacrifices all her worldly possessions and nearly life itself.

Although Walker now lives in New York City, she has spent most of her life in the South where her characters love, suffer, and struggle. She was born in Eatonton, Georgia, in 1944, one of eight children in a tenant farming family. By her own account a rather solitary, dreamy child, she attended the local black schools and graduated first in her class. After two years at Spelman College in Atlanta, she transferred to Sarah Lawrence, where she received her B.A. in 1966. Caught up in the civil-rights movement, Walker returned to the South to help register voters in Georgia and to work for Head Start in Mississippi. That several of her books are dedicated to Movement figures is a measure of the importance of this period in her life.

Walker's South is rural, poor, and violent. Yet it is a source of strength as well as despair for her characters. As sharecroppers they suffer from the exploitation of the white landowners; as poor blacks they are scorned and ignored; as civil-rights workers they are beaten and jailed. But their roots in the South run deep. They understand its myths and mysteries. The women continue to plant their flowers in its fertile soil. Though she has traveled widely — to Africa, Europe, the Soviet Union — Walker herself often returns to the South in search of "a wholeness" that eludes her elsewhere.

Walker recognizes the loss when the well-educated, sophisticated Molly can no longer bear to visit her poor Southern family in the very personal poem "For My Sister Molly Who in the Fifties." Or when the Muslim daughter treats Grandma Dee's quilts as ART in the short story "Everyday Use." Walker's heroine is Sammy Lou of "Revolutionary Petunias" who, as she is dragged off to the electric chair for killing the white man who murdered her husband, admonishes: "Don't yall forgit to *water* my purple petunias."

For all the strength of her poems and short stories, Walker's themes are most fully recognized in her two novels. The first, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland,* is an unblinking account of the spiritual and moral havoc wrought by the tenant farming system. Unable to strike directly at the white men who enslave him, Grange turns his rage against his own wife and children. His eventual desertion of the family leads to his wife Margaret's suicide and creates in his son, Brownfield, a festering bitterness. When Grange returns to the South, having found his second life in the North scarcely more satisfactory than his first, he acknowledges his sins and tries to make amends. But Brownfield is unforgiving; filled with self-hatred, he continues the cycle of destruction.

Having beaten his gentle wife, Mem, into haggard old age at thirty, Brownfield finally murders her in the presence of their children. Two of these children also come to a tragic end — Daphne goes mad and Ornette becomes a prostitute. Only the youngest, Ruth, whom Grange takes in, survives whole. Grange devotes his third life to nurturing his granddaughter, preparing her to bloom in a hostile world (ironically, much of the money that supports Grange and Ruth comes from Fat Josie, an evil whore who has loved Grange since his young manhood.) In the end, Grange must kill Brownfield and sacrifice his own life in order to save Ruth. At the conclusion of the novel Ruth is alone, but ready to join the civil-rights movement that has come to her door. If Ruth can help change the South, Walker implies, then perhaps Margaret and Mem, Brownfield and Grange will not have died in vain.

*Meridian,* Walker's recent novel, deals directly with this process of change. A complex and not completely successful work, it chronicles the life of Meridian Hill during the waxing and waning years of the civl-rights struggle. Awakened by the Movement, Meridian evolves from an unloved, lethargic young woman always at the mercy of her body — at seventeen she was "a drop-out from high school, a deserted wife, a mother, a daughter-in-law" — to an ascetic, almost saintly figure who travels the backroads of the South bearing the message of survival. Her transformation is prolonged and difficult, for she cannot accept the easy rationalizations and casual betrayals of her friends. Like Walker, she struggles to reconcile change and continuity, death and life, revolution and beauty.

Scorned by her radical colleagues in the 1960s because she cannot positively affirm that she will kill for the revolution, Meridian puzzles over this question for ten years before she concludes that under certain conditions she would indeed kill for her people. Her friends, meanwhile, have long since given up the fight. Anne-Marion, her college roommate, "had become a well-known poet whose poems were about her two children, and the quality of the light that fell across a lake that she owned." Truman Held, who discovers his love for Meridian only after he has rejected her for a white woman, explains why he now lives in the North:

*"When things are finished it is best to leave."*

*"And pretend they were never started?"*

*"Yes."*

"But that's not possible," Meridian replies. She cannot desert.

Close at times to martyrdom, Meridian decides that too many have already died. Christ, King, and Malcolm should have refused, she thinks. "All saints should walk away. Do their bit, then — just walk away." For herself Meridian finally accepts a secondary but crucial role:

> *...perhaps it will be my part to walk behind the real revolutionaries — those who know they must spill blood in order to help the poor and the black and therefore go right ahead — and when they stop to wash off the blood and find their throats too choked with the smell of murdered flesh to sing, I will come forward and sing from memory songs they will need once more to hear. For it is the song of the people, transformed by the experience of each generation, that holds them together, and if any part of it is lost the people suffer and are without soul. If I can only do that, my role will not have been a useless one after all.*

Although Walker hints that Meridian's example will ultimately redeem her people, the book contains a number of less optimistic strains. For example, nearly all the black children in the story die or disappear. Meridian gives away her son when she accepts a scholarship to Saxon College. Later, after aborting another child, she is sterilized. Truman's mulatto daughter is murdered in New York. The pregnant Wild Child, whom Meridian tries to protect, is hit by a car. A small boy drowns in an open drainage ditch; a young girl strangles her baby "with a piece of curtain ruffle." Can one saint atone for all this destruction? And who will follow her if all the children are dead?

In the end, *Meridian* attempts too much. Burdened with several short sections that seem more like the germs of future short stories than integral parts of the novel, it lacks the unity and coherence of *Grange Copeland.* Nor are all the shifts in time and viewpoint effective. Yet if she has not answered all the questions she raises in *Meridian,* Walker has created another memorable black woman, and Meridian Hill will haunt the reader long after the details of the novel have been forgotten. For as she explains to Truman near the end of the book:

> *...all the people who are as alone as I am will one day gather at the river. We will watch the evening sun go down. And in the darkness maybe we will know the truth.*

— **Cam Walker**

The South: A Market For Shoes
by Stephen March

*"The South is an untapped market*
*for shoes,"*
*said Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor.*
*"Yes, shoes!*
*Put shoes on those poor barefoot Southerners*
*and a social revolution will take place!"*

*The South blushed red as a Georgia sunset.*
*All below the Potomac*
*backbones snapped*
*musket-straight.*

*And Josiah Bailey,*
*a Carolina knight*
*with a firm jaw and*
*moonshine-clear eyes*

*haughtily advised*
*the U-nited States Senate:*

*"Gentlemen,*
*even our* mules *wear shoes!"*

**Rough Weather Makes Good Timber,** by Patsy Moore Ginns; J. L. Osborne, Jr., artist. UNC Press, Chapel Hill, 1977. 189 pp. $9.50.

This book is in the yeasty, gallivanting tradition of Augustus Baldwin Longstreet's *Georgia Scenes* (1835) and Johnson Hooper's *Adventures of Captain Simon Suggs,* those marvelous local color books that had their magnificent culmination in 1884 with the publication of *Huckleberry Finn.*

Ms. Ginns' first-person, oral format makes an active participant of the reader-hearer, just as the late Ring Lardner did in such head-to-head forays as his short-story classic, "Haircut." And the hypnotic spells and enchantments cast in these absorbing anecdotes, essays, vignettes, nosegays, heart songs, and bucolic renderings will remind those with long, passionate memories of Thomas Wolfe's "Chickamauga," perhaps the Asheville man's most memorable short story. On a final visit to Yancey County in 1937, Wolfe wrote the story almost verbatim as it was spoken to him by his maternal great uncle John Penland, who had fought at Chickamauga 74 years before.

As with "Haircut" and "Chickamauga," and with Longstreet, Hooper, and Twain, one has a sense of dramatic immediacy with *Rough Weather.* If it's true, as the late Ford Maddox Ford believed, that reading superior literature is more like taking a trip than reading a book, then Ginns-Osborne have succeeded admirably.

This is the sort of engrossing literature that began around the campfires of the nomads in Bronze Age, and it runs a clear course to Chaucer and on to the American wilderness. Literature began with the tales of the patriarchs, and the indigenous narrative has supplied mankind with some of our finest entertainment and most useful instruction. And in *Rough Weather,* matter and manner are wedded vibrantly.

Because most of the vignettes and excursions are told briefly, the reader's attention remains in high gear. In fact, as this reviewer savored a page and anticipated the next page, he kept thinking of William Cowper's lines, "Conversation:"

> *"A story, in which native humor reigns,*
> *Is often useful, always entertains;*
> *A graver fact, enlisted on your side,*
> *May furnish illustration, well applied:*
> *But sedentary weavers of long tales*
> *Give me the fidgets, and my patience*
> *fails."*

*Rough Weather* is a book to buy and to cherish.

— **Thad Stem, Jr.**

**The Schools That Fear Built: Segregationist Academies in the South,** by David Nevin and Robert E. Bills. Acropolis Books, Ltd., 1977. 186 pp. $10.00. Paperback, $4.50.

When the Supreme Court announced in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional, the uproar from the South was deafening. Seven states passed "interposition" or "nullification" resolutions calling for open defiance of the *Brown* opinion. The South Carolina legislature, expressing the common outrage of many white Southerners, condemned the Court's "deliberate, palpable and dangerous attempt to change the true intent and meaning of the Constitution" and predicted that if *Brown* were allowed to stand it would precipitate "the ultimate destruction of constitutional government."

What is striking about much of the official rhetoric of the time was that it didn't mention race at all. This is particularly true of Sam Ervin who wrote the seminal Southern Manifesto signed by virtually every elected federal official in the South, pledging massive resistance to school desegregation. The South deplored the *Brown* decision, he told us, because it undermined constitutional government and states' rights. Of course, the real quarrel of massive resistance wasn't over forms of government at all; white people simply didn't want to send their children to school with blacks.

So deeply did the South feel about race that it beat back desegregation during the entire decade and a half following *Brown*. It closed schools, repealed compulsory attendance laws, provided for tuition grants to private schools, set up transfer programs for white students into majority white schools and instituted "freedom of choice" plans for pupil assignment. These tactics worked so well that by 1964, ten years after *Brown*, seven of 11 Southern states had not achieved even one percent of integration of blacks with whites in public schools. And there was always violence, ugly, brutal, racial violence. There were race riots in Clinton and Nashville, Tennessee, Mansfield, Texas, Sturgis, Kentucky, and Little Rock, Arkansas. There was racial violence at the University of Georgia and the University of Mississippi. In Birmingham, Alabama, four little girls were murdered and 23 others injured in a church bombed on the Sunday morning after a federal court order refused to postpone desegregation of city schools.

When massive resistance finally crumbled and schools in the South were forced to desegregate, private schools for whites blossomed overnight across the Southern landscape, literally in every single place affected by desegregation. The apologists for the new schools, like the apologists for "separate but equal" before them, again insisted that their quarrel was not over race. They wanted "quality education," local control of schools and a place in which to teach their children Christian values.

*The Schools That Fear Built*, which is about the new segregationist academies, seems at times almost to agree. "It is too simple," says co-author Nevin, "to blame this movement entirely on racism and fear of integration." And again Nevin says, "White flight *may be* a reaction to integration orders. It certainly *is* a reaction to what is perceived as trouble in the public schools." (emphasis supplied)

That may be true, but Nevin makes the wrong point. Without racism and the attendant fear of integration, the new academies never would have been built, and it is racism and fear of integration that keeps their doors open. The point about the new schools is not local control or "quality education," for the South has never yet required that. Their sole purpose is to provide a way that white children won't have to go to school with blacks. From a region which has wallowed in academic mediocrity for most of its history and has even cultivated a contempt for what it calls "book learning," the cries for quality education are not to be taken at face value.

*The Schools That Fear Built* equivocates on the purely racial attitudes in the rise of white academies, perhaps because it does not examine in detail the process of desegregation in the South. The traumatic and volatile period from *Brown* through *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1971), which approved busing and other meaningful remedies for desegregation, is dealt with in only two pages. But what the book does focus upon is the private schools themselves. The profile it develops of segregated education in the South is enormously revealing. *The Schools That Fear Built* cannot fail to encourage support for public education.

How good are the segregationist academies? Nevin and Bills conclude that they are not very good at all. Generally, they are underfinanced, understaffed, teachers are inadequately prepared, headmasters lack training and experience in administration, curriculum is restricted, instructional equipment is inadequate, libraries are poor, lunch programs often nonexistent, transportation is poorly organized and extra-curricular activities are limited. It is no wonder that the private academics usually fail to provide "a quality learning program."

Not only do the new academies fail their students by offering them a weak and narrow education, but as Nevin and Bills point out, they erode larger social interests as well. Private schools draw off support for public education and perpetuate the crabbed and subjective views of race relations and of society which have caused the South to stumble so often in the past. While fortunes of the new schools ebb and flow, their continued survival is a tribute to the enduring ability of many white Southerners to rationalize their racial fears and biases.

— **Laughlin McDonald**

Louisiana Down Home
by Garland Strother

*Backwater sired there*
*of cotton sharecroppers*
*whose plantation dreams*
*died like dried-juice trees,*
*I was born to the Baptist*
*pines of Tensas Parish,*
*Louisiana down home,*
*and grew up to*
*the poor white litanies*
*of breakdown, waltz-time blues*
*and tongue-shouting, two-step*
*hands up gospel*
*till the bloodlines rang.*

*Lord how we sang.*

**Selected Letters of William Faulkner,** edited by Joseph Blotner. Random House, 1977. 488 pp. $15.00.

"What I have written," William Faulkner once wrote in a letter to Malcolm Cowley, "is of course in the public domain and the public is welcome; what I ate and did and when and where is my own business." Faulkner repeatedly protested any exposure of his private life, and prevented it wherever he could. "Sorry, I haven't got a picture," he wrote to his literary agent. "I dont intend to have one that I know of either. About the biography. Dont tell the bastards anything. It cant matter to them. Tell them I was born of an alligator and a nigger slave at the Geneva peace conference two years ago. Or whatever you want to tell them."

Knowing how Faulkner felt, we might feel a little squeamish about reading his *Selected Letters*. But Joseph Blotner has done an excellent job of selecting and editing. There are no sexy love notes, no bitter family quarrels; we do not feel like Peeping Toms reading these letters. Instead, we receive a new appreciation of the multiplicity of troubles, worries, satisfactions and endless hard work, which are the portion of an artist rising from obscurity to greatness.

Readers may be surprised to find that the letters are not written in what people have come to think of as typical Faulknerian style; there are very few of those long and grandly complicated sentences. These are not studied literary epistles, but letters written out of the occasion of the moment — like everybody writes, only more interesting. We are conscious all the time that this is Bill Faulkner speaking from Oxford, Mississippi; he's funny, vivid, eccentric and very Southern. In some ways he is rather old fashioned — "Yours at hand" is a common opening and generally courteous and warm, except when rebuffing the harassments of biography-seeking journalists or reacting to some real or imaginary affront to his honor, which he took as seriously as any of his characters ever did.

By far the majority of the letters are about business — written to his agents and publishers — and a great number of these, especially from the first two-thirds of the book, have to do with money. We are made to feel the seemingly insoluble financial plight of a writer trying to make a living by his trade: he must have time and freedom to write, but he also has to support himself and, in Faulkner's case, an astonishing array of dependent relatives. "Beginning at the age of 30," he complains to his publisher, "I, an artist, a sincere one and of the first class, who should be free even of his own economic responsibilites...began to become the sole, principal and partial support of my mother... a brother's widow and child, a wife of my own and 2 stepchildren, my own child...." We get caught up ourselves in the constant suspense, hoping with Faulkner that the *Post* will contract for a series of stories so he will be able to pay his taxes, or wishing that he didn't have to spend half of each year earning money by working on Hollywood scripts. It's a relief when fame finally catches up with him and the threat of bankruptcy is blotted out for good.

Many of these business letters, though, have to do with Faulkner's actual writing. Often he gives his publishers astonishingly precise outlines of his planned novels years in advance of their production. In one letter written in December, 1938, he sketches the whole Snopes trilogy. Periodically, he makes assessments of himself as a writer: "Enclosed is the best short story in the year of 1935." He was meticulously attentive to the details of his works and would often send off an urgent request that the publishers change a name or date or a phrase, even if it meant resetting a whole page. He was also adamant about not accepting unwarranted editorial changes. "And don't make any more additions to the script, bud," he wrote to his agent regarding the proofs of *The Sound and the Fury*. "I know you mean well, but so do I. I effaced the 2 or 3 you made."

For serious Faulkner students, perhaps the most valuable letters are those Faulker wrote to Malcolm Cowley, as Cowley was preparing the now famous *Portable Faulkner*. Here he discusses at length such questions as the symbolism of Sutpen's Hundred in *Absalom, Absalom!,* the history of Southern literature, and his attitudes towards some of the characters he created: "Jason would call $2840.50 '$3000.00' at any time the sum was owed him. He would have particularized only when *he* owed the money."

In addition, there are warm and funny letters to the family from their absent "Pappy"; letters of advice to a young disciple; letters written as a prominent Southerner pleading for racial tolerance; and occasionally, letters of appreciation to fellow writers such as Hemingway and Richard Wright. Although Blotner has discreetly omitted much material which is really none of our business, a great deal remains, and, as Blotner says in his introduction, "in reading [the letters] we are privileged to know somewhat better one of America's foremost artists."

— **Chris Mayfield**

to claudia
*by Manning Marable*

my skin
bites me hard
the heat of this day
and these chains
bleed me
and still I hear your pounding heart

summer nights in alabama
are not meant for lovers
the evenings were cooler
in africa
in the infancy of our love

negroes
below us boast of revolution
in these barren cotton fields
the heat laughs at us
the heat dares us to die
but i say
the struggle must wait
at least until tomorrow morning
for i have found
sweet blackness
in your arms this night
and i love you too much to die

# Books on the South

*This list is comprised of works published since January, 1977. Book entries concentrate on the spring months and include new publications through July, 1977. Dissertations listed were accepted by universities for the Ph.D. degree and compiled in the* Dissertation Abstracts Index *during February, 1977 - April, 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 & POLITICS

**Alabama, A Bicentennial History,** by Virginia V. Hamilton. W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1977. $8.95.

"An Analysis of the Relationship Between Anti-Communism and Segregationist Thought in the Deep South, 1948-1964," by Wayne A. Clark. Dissertation. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**The Anti-Slavery Argument,** ed. by William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease. Irvington Publishers, 1977. Reprint of 1965 edition. $20.00.

**Arkansas History,** by Boyd Johnson. Rose Publishing Co., Inc., 1977. Price not set.

"Assault on a Wilderness: The Big Thicket of East Texas," by James J. Cozine, Jr. Dissertation. Texas A&M University.

"The Background and Development of the American Missionary Association's Decision to Educate Freedmen in the South, with Subsequent Repercussions for Higher Education," by Eloise T. Welch. Dissertation. Bryn Mawr College.

**The Big Thicket of Texas: A Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography,** by Lois W. Parker. Sable Publishers, 1977. $22.50.

**Blacks and the Populist Revolt: Ballots & Bigotry in the "New South,"** by Gerald H. Gaither. University of Alabama Press, 1977. $10.75.

"Catalyst for a Revolution- A Rhetorical Analysis of the Oral Debates on School Segregation Leading to the Supreme Court Decision of 1954," by Bradford L. Kinney. Dissertation. University of Pittsburgh.

"The Citizen Factories: The Americanization of Mexican Students in Texas Public Schools, 1920-1945," by Thomas E. Simmons. Dissertation. Texas A&M University.

**The Colonial South Carolina Scene: Two Contemporary Views,** ed. by H. Roy Merrens. University of South Carolina Press, 1977. $14.95.

**Communication & Frontier: Perspective on the Early Shenandoah Valley,** by Robert D. Mitchell. University of Virginia Press, 1977. Price not set.

**Early Texas Oil: A Photographic History, 1866-1936,** by Walter Rundell, Jr. Texas A&M University Press, 1977. $18.50.

"The Economics of Safety Legislation in Underground Coal Mining," by David R. Henderson. Dissertation. University of California, Los Angeles.

"Editorial Leadership in a Time of Crisis: Virginia's Massive Resistance, 1954-1959," by William H. Turpin. Dissertation. University of Virginia.

"The Episcopalian Clergy in Maryland and Virginia, 1765-1805," by Sandra R. Dresbeck. Dissertation. University of California, Los Angeles.

**Essays in Southern History: Presented to Joseph Gregoire de Roulhac Hamilton by His Former Students at the University of North Carolina,** ed. by Fletcher M. Green. Greenwood Press, 1977. Reprint of 1949 edition. $12.25.

**Essays in Southern Labor History: Selected Papers, Southern Labor History Conference, 1976,** ed. by Gary M. Fink and Merl E. Reed. Greenwood Press, 1977. Price not set.

**The Farmer's Last Frontier: Agriculture, 1860-1897,** by Fred A. Shannon. International Arts & Sciences, 1977. $9.95.

"The Growth of a Refining Region," by Joseph A. Pratt. Dissertation. Johns Hopkins University.

**History of Woodford County, Kentucky,** by William E. Railey. Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., date not set. $17.50.

**Law, Society, and Politics in Early Maryland,** by Aubrey G. Land and Lois G. Carr. Johns Hopkins Press, 1977. $17.50.

**A Long Time Coming: The Struggle to Unionize America's Farm Workers,** by Richard Meister and Anne Loflis. MacMillan Publishing, Co., Inc., 1977. $14.95.

"The Missouri Small Farm Program: An Analytic Evaluation," by Gordon L. Myer, Jr., Dissertation. University of Missouri - Columbia.

**The Newspaper Press in Kentucky,** by Herndon Evans. University Press of Kentucky, 1977. $3.95.

**Observations Upon the Floridas,** by Charles B. Vignoles. University Presses of Florida, date not set. Reprint of 1823 edition. $8.50.

"Of Freedom and Freedmen: Racial Attitudes of White Elites in North Carolina During Reconstruction, 1865-1877," by Robert D. Miller. Dissertation. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**One Kind of Freedom,** by R. Ransom and R. Sutch. Cambridge University Press, 1977. Price not set.

"Partisanship in the Urban South: A Study in Change, 1960-1974," by Margaret A. Aiesi. Dissertation. University of Florida.

**Passing of the Mill Village: Revolution in a Southern Institution,** by Hariett L. Herring. Greenwood Press, 1977. Reprint of 1949 edition. $11.25.

"Perceptions of Selected Corporate Officials in Five Southeastern States Which Influence Their Corporations' Giving to Higher Education," by Joseph A. Buck, III. Dissertation. University of Georgia.

"Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left," by Sara M. Evans. Dissertation. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"The Redistricting Process After One Man – One Vote: The Case of Virginia," by Robert J. Austin. Dissertation. University of Virginia.

**Revolutionary Virginia, the Road to Independence Vol. 3: Breaking Storm – the Third Convention 1775,** ed. by Robert C. Scribner & Brent Tarter. University Press of Virginia, 1977. Reprint of 1953 edition. $35.00.

"A Rhetorical Analysis and Com-

parison of the Speaking of William Jennings Bryan and George Corley Wallace Within a Political Framework of Populism," by Becky S. Drury. Dissertation. Purdue University.

"The Right of Petition in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," by Raymond C. Bailey. Dissertation. University of Georgia.

**The Scalawag in Alabama Politics, 1865-1881**, by Sarah W. Wiggins. University of Alabama Press, 1977. $10.00.

**The Southeastern Indians**, by Charles Hudson. University of Tennessee Press, 1977. $23.50.

**Stony the Road: Essays from the Hampton Institute Archives**, ed. by Keith L. Schall. University Press of Virginia, 1977. Price not set.

"A Study of White Protestants' Attitudes Toward Negroes in Charleston, South Carolina, 1790-1845," by Jimmy Gene Cobb. Dissertation. Baylor University.

"Suwanee River Town, Suwanee River County: Political Moieties in a


ADVERTISEMENT

*A public service message by Bernard Rapoport, president of American Income Life Insurance Company. Excerpts from a speech to Minnesota AFL-CIO meeting, Oct. 5, 1976, in Minneapolis.*

In a discussion one day, I expressed some of my concerns about our technological society and its thwarting of our societal commitment to what we commonly refer to as the work ethic.

Slogans such as "machines work, men think" deprecate work and provide for an attitude which almost demeans people who are in any endeavor that we ordinarily associate with the service industries, or almost any form of manual labor.

A century ago, Henry George told us:

*Though custom has dulled us to it, it is a strange and unnatural thing that men who wish to labor, in order to satisfy their wants, cannot find the opportunity.*

*There can be no real scarcity of work. . . . until human wants are all satisfied.*

I am certain that if a poll were taken it would reveal that ninety-nine percent of all Americans could accept this as a concept in which there would be total agreement.

I'd like to review with you what our course of action for the past hundred years has been, through which I hope to convince you that we gave lip service to this precept, and our institutional thrusts have produced an opposite result.

After World War II, we had a 4 percent rate of unemployment. While there was a little complaining, it was assumed that this was acceptable. Today we have a 7½ to 8 percent unemployment rate. I was amazed to hear, during the presidential debate, President Ford say that we had more employed people today than ever before in our history. In a so-called democratic capitalistic society, if our standard is to be how good things are rather than how this society can provide a decent quality of life for all its members, then, perhaps, we are in more serious trouble than we really know.

Every society needs capital: its components are land and natural resources – and, oh yes, labor, too. Then we get into that mysterious thing called "productivity of labor." I want to dwell for a moment on this last item.

Let us say that a farmer has 1000 acres of land and that it would take a complement of 20 people to do all of the things necessary to run the farm efficiently. (For the purpose of this discussion, let us overlook the obvious inequality in the fact that the farmer gets for his product what the market will pay; those with whom he has to negotiate are generally monopolists, and so the bargaining is terribly unfair.)

Now comes the Congress and the Executive Branch, and they say to the manufacturer of tractors: "If you will invest money in building a tractor factory we will give you a 10 percent investment credit; in other words, you are going to get a tax break for buying new machinery (generally labor-saving and/or job-displacing) to build these tractors." The government needs money with which to provide services, so this particular company isn't going to be paying its fair share of tax, thus shifting the burden to the mass of Americans.

As all of us generally pursue that course which is in our self-interest, the manufacturer takes advantage of this tax break.

Now comes the farmer. He can reduce the number of people necessary to run his farm by perhaps ten by utilizing the tractor; not only that, he receives certain tax advantages for purchasing it. What is the net result? Ten fewer people have jobs.

You make this point with so many folks and their retort is, "Well, do you want to stop progress?" I don't know how to define the word, but if progress means that in building something big or monumental the result is misery for millions, I just can't believe that the person who invented the word had this in mind.

Let me cite a most poignant example. I was privileged to sit in on a meeting one time with the representatives of members from 13 lesser-developed countries. We were talking about the plight of their people and the subhuman conditions under which they existed.

Some of the Americans in the group said: "Well, we just need to supply you with more tractors" – more scientific machinery. To the surprise of some of the members, the response from some representing the lesser-developed countries was: "We have plenty of that kind of equipment, we just don't know how to operate the machinery."

I submitted to the group the idea that here in America we almost have come to the conclusion that work is onerous, and that what they had in plentiful supply was labor. I continued that what they needed were simple implements such as hoes, rakes, etc., and that they needed technical people to show them how to make efficient use of the land in combination with the plentiful labor supply they had.

For too long, we have looked at science and innovation to solve our problems and both are harnessed to the goals of using less labor and more land and capital.

Here we are, short of natural resources, recognizing now more than ever before the finiteness or the scarcity of natural resources, and using up what we can't replace and letting lie idle – workers, that is – those

Southern Community," by Richard W. Sapp. Dissertation. University of Florida.

**The Territory of Mississippi, 1798-1817.** AMS Press, 1877. Reprint of 1937 edition. $57.50.

"Toward a Theory of Community Organization in a Mexican-American Community in South Texas," by Jose A. Gutierrez. Dissertation. University of Texas at Austin.

"Turmoil in an Orderly Society: Colonial Virginia, 1607-1754; A History and Analysis," by Timothy E. Morgan. Dissertation. College of William and Mary.

**Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism,** by David R. Goldfield. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $17.50.

**Urban Republicanism in the South,** by Donald S. Strong. Greenwood Press, Inc., 1977. Reprint of 1960 edition. $9.50.

**Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas,** by Randolph B. Campbell and Richard G. Lowe. Texas A & M Uni-

ADVERTISEMENT

whose energy is regenerated on a daily basis. All you and I have to do to have as much energy tomorrow as we do today is to eat and sleep properly.

Mason Gaffney, who is an English economist, says:

*Along with short work we face a swelling array of derivative evils: crime, alienation, protracted apprenticeship periods, soaring welfare and dependency, frustration of idle housewives, forced early retirement, geriatric ghettos, imperialism to make jobs and acquire raw materials, weapons constituencies, other pork-barreling, glorification of waste, slowdowns, featherbedding, fear of change, stunting of creativity through grasping for tenure, seniority, and security, suppression of competition, exclusionary local codes and zoning, loss of flexibility and mobility, and rejection of the free market. All these evils have their independent roots, but are inflated by unemployment and the fear of it.*

Certainly, on a logical basis, one can fault unions for featherbedding, but such critics are dealing with a result and not the cause. If the union of which I were a member was working within an industry that was constantly taking advantage of the 10 percent investment tax credit law, and thereby purchasing on an increasing scale equipment that would increase the productivity of labor (I use that term in its bad sense), I would be very proud of defending any kind of arrangement that promoted featherbedding. It is just downright uneconomical and morally reprehensible that my society plunges headlong into technological utilizations without consideration of the quality of the living of its people.

Don't be misled. Time is too short and the mathematics too complicated for presentation in a few minutes of conversation.

Again referring to Mr. Gaffney. He reminds us that we treat resources and capital as cheap and that we have come to consider labor as the only cost of production worth mentioning. And then comes the general conclusion of the wage-price spiral: we ignore the possibility of substituting labor for land and capital. Seems to me he says it all; I quote:

*Geared to accept and live with concentration of wealth and economic power, it has little to say about the effects of industrial mergers in substituting capital for labor by putting plants on standby and laying off workers.*

In doing so, supposedly we become more efficient. But this so-called high labor efficiency means low land efficiency, as well as low capital efficiency.

In the period from 1899 to 1953 – a span of 54 years – the ratio of capital to labor increased over 100 percent. You know what that means, of course, that more money is spent on machinery than on labor. If you have any doubt about why those of you in the labor force need to be darned concerned about whether you have a job next year or in the years to come, these figures certainly give credence to those concerns. The ratio of capital to labor is increasing at an even greater accelerated rate today than in the 54 year period I just mentioned.

The standard cliches don't wash with the facts. For example, the economic system is supposed to be self-adjusting; if everything worked by the book, then when capital became too expensive entrepreneurs could be expected to reduce the rate of capital consumption in favor of labor. The reality is that the intensive use of capital continues unabated and the so-called compensatory mechanisms which may have been effective in the past don't work very well today.

Everyone knows that the paper industry is a low-profit, highly mechanized industry – the leaders of the industry thought that they could decrease costs with more sophisticated machinery and reduce their labor costs.

If we had had in place of an investment tax credit a tax break that hinged on maintenance of jobs by a company, we would have prevented two bad things from happening: first, loss of employment, and, secondly, loss of profits for the company.

The illusion has always been that when you start a new factory you create jobs; this, of course, is true, but what we do not take into account is how many jobs will be displaced by virtue of what that factory will be producing. I am aware that in my own company we would need from 2½ to 3 times as many employees if it were not for the computer. I am certainly not advocating the abolition of computers, but I do think we need to consider that while the manufacturing of computers created a lot of jobs, without any basis in fact I suspect that it displaced people on a ratio of fifteen- or twenty-to-one.

It seems to me that unions need to become more deeply involved in these kinds of considerations.

Consider, for a moment, the problem that so many of the unemployed are within the most deprived group of our population. These are the folks who find it most difficult to find jobs. What has been our answer to their concerns? Self-service gasoline stations? This action has displaced thousands of folks – so many more jobs than were created by those in the manufacture of the equipment needed for self-service gasoline stations.

In human terms, so-called technological progress always seems to inflict its severest blows on that element that needs nurturing most.

If we start with what is best for most people, that's the first step. We can do it. As one Indian philosopher said: "Believing may be difficult; the need for believing is inescapable."

versity Press, 1977. $14.50.

## BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

**The American Siberia, or: Fourteen Years' Experience in a Southern Convict Camp,** by J.C. Powell. University Presses of Florida, date not set. $12.00.

**Billy: A Turning-Point in the Life of America's Greatest Evangelist,** by John Pollack. Harper & Row, 1977. $8.95.

**Billy Graham: His Life and Faith,** by Gerald Strober. Words, Inc., 1977. $4.95.

**Building Poe Biography,** by John C. Miller. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $20.00.

"Clarence Hamilton Poe: Crusading Editor, 1881-1964," by Joseph A. Cote. Dissertation. University of Georgia.

**Correspondence of James K. Polk: 1837-1838, Vol. 4,** ed. by Herbert Weaver and Wayne Cutler. Vanderbilt University Press, 1977. $25.00.

**Cracker Messiah: Governor Sidney J. Cotts of Florida,** by Wayne Flynt. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $20.00.

**Daniel Ladd: Merchant Prince of Frontier Florida,** by Jerrell H. Shoffner. University Press of Florida. Date and price not set.

**David French Boyd: Founder of Louisiana State University,** by Germaine M. Reed. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $20.00.

"The Early Political Career of Alben W. Barkley, 1877-1937," by Gerald S. Grinde. Dissertation. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

"Edmund J. Davis: Radical Republican and Reconstruction Governor of Texas," by Ronald N. Gray. Dissertation. Texas Tech University.

**From Peanuts to President,** by Beatrice Smith. Raintree Publishers, Ltd., 1977. $3.95.

**From the Slave Cabin of Yani,** by Virgil S. Powell. Exposition Press, Inc., 1977. $11.50.

**Gentleman in a Dust Coat: A Biography of John Crowe Ransom,** by Thomas D. Young. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $32.50. pap. $8.95.

**Jefferson, the Road to Glory,** by Marie Kimball. Greenwood Press, 1977. Reprint of 1943 edition. $21.00.

**Jimmy Carter,** by Peter Bourne. Little, Brown & Co., 1977. $8.95.

"John B. Connally: The Making of a Governor, 1917-1962," by Ann F. Crawford. Dissertation. University of Texas at Austin.

**John C. Calhoun,** by Margaret L. Coit. Norman S. Berg, Publishers, 1977. $14.95.

"John J. Zubly: Preacher, Planter, and Politician," by Roger A. Martin. Dissertation. University of Georgia.

"Kinnie Wagner: A Popular Legendary Hero and His 'Constituency,' " by Richard C. Sweterlitsh. Dissertation. Indiana University.

**LBJ – The Way He Was,** by Frank Cormier. Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1977. $8.95.

**Leander Perez: Boss of the Delta,** by Glen Jeansonne. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $25.00.

**Letters to Hon. William Prescott,** by Jimmy Carter. Gordon Press, 1977. $34.95.

**The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society,** by Thomas L. Connelly. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1977. $10.00.

**Military Memoirs of a Confederate,** by Edward P. Alexander. Morningside Bookshop, 1977. Reprint of 1907 edition. $22.50.

**Mothers of the South: Portraiture of the White Tenant Farm Woman,** by Margaret J. Hagood. W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1977. $3.95.

**My Soul Is Rested,** by Howell Raines. G.P. Putnam's Sons, date not set. $9.95.

**A Narrative of the Early Days and Remembrances of Oceola Nikkanochee, A Young Seminole Indian,** by Andrew Welch. University Presses of Florida, date not set. Reprint of 1841 edition. $8.50.

**Oglethorpe in America,** by Phinizy Spaulding. University of Chicago Press, 1977. $12.50.

"An Outsider Looking In: John Garland Pollard and Machine Politics in Twentieth Century Virginia," by John S. Hopewell. Dissertation. University of Virginia.

**Ploughshares into Swords: Josiah Gorgas and Confederate Ordnance,** by Frank E. Vandiver. University of Texas Press, 1977. $11.00.

**Prince Among Slaves,** by Terry Alford. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1977. $10.95.

"Ray S. Musgrave: A Biography of a Dedicated Educator," by Miles M. Vujnovich. Dissertation. University of Southern Mississippi.

**The Religion of Jimmy Carter,** by Niels C. Nielson, Jr. Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1977. $2.95.

**A Saga of Wealth,** by James Presley. G.P. Putnam's Sons, date not set. $12.95.

"Senator John Sherman Cooper: Consummate Statesman," by Clarice J. Michener. Dissertation. Indiana University.

**Thomas Jefferson, Landscape Architect,** by Frederick D. Nichols and Ralph E. Griswold. University Press of Virginia, 1977. $10.00.

**Virginia Ancestors and Adventures,** by Charles H. Hamlin. Genealogical Publishers, date not set. $20.00.

**Virginia Historical Genealogies,** by John B. Boddie. Genealogical Publishers, date not set. Reprint of 1954 edition. $15.00.

**Witness in Philadelphia: A Mississippi WASP's Account of Civil Rights Murders,** by Florence Mars. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $10.00.

## CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

**Appalachian Odyssey: Walking the Trail from Georgia to Maine,** by Steve Sherman and Julia Older. Stephen Greene Press, 1977. $8.95.

**The Art of Ragtime,** by William Schaffer and Johannes Riedel. Da Capo Press, date not set. $5.95.

**Atlas of Kentucky,** by Pradyumma P. Karan and F. Cotton Mather. University Press of Kentucky, 1977. $19.50.

**The Blue Ridge,** by William Bake. Viking Press, 1977. $14.95.

**Bluegrass,** by Bob Artis. Nordon Publications., Inc., 1977. $1.75.

**Brass Bands and New Orleans Jazz,** by William J. Schafer and Richard B. Allen. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $6.95.

"Cades Cove During the Nineteenth Century," by Durwood C. Dunn. Dissertation. University of Tennessee.

**The Civil War Songbook: Complete Original Sheet Music for 37 Songs,** edited by Richard Crawford. Dover, 1977. Price not set.

"The Concept of Folk Region in Missouri: The Case of Little Dixie," by Howard W. Marshall. Dissertation. Indiana University.

**Country Music: The Poetry,** by Carol Offen. Ballantine Books, 1977. $1.50.

**The Country Music Encyclopedia,** by Melvin Shestack. T.Y. Crowell,

1977. $7.95.

**Darlingtoniana: A History of People, Places and Events in Darlington County**, by Eliza C. Ervin and Horace F. Rudasill. Reprint Company, 1977. Reprint of 1964 edition. $12.50.

**A Day of Solemn Thanksgiving: Music for the Fourth of July, 1783, in Salem, North Carolina**, by Marilyn Gombosi. University of North Carolina Press, 1977. $14.95.

**Dead Towns of Alabama**, by W. Stuart Harris. University of Alabama Press, 1977. $8.95.

"The Development of Modernism: Intellectual Life in the South, 1919-1941," by Daniel J. Singal. Dissertation. Columbia University.

**Early Downhome Blues: A Musical and Cultural Analysis**, by Jeff T. Titon. University of Illinois Press, 1977. $14.95.

**The Everglades: River of Grass**, by Marjory S. Douglas. Banyan Books, 1977. $10.00.

**The Flavor of the South: Delicacies and Staples of Southern Cuisine**, by Jeanne A. Voltz. Doubleday and Company, 1977. $9.95.

**Florida - The Forgotten Frontier: A Visual History of Early South Florida As Seen Through the Photographs From the Ralph Middleton Monroe Collection**, by Arva M. Parks. Banyan Books, 1977. Price not set.

"Folklore of the Big Sandy Valley of Eastern Kentucky," by William E. Lightfoot. Dissertation. Indiana University.

**The Genteel Tradition at Bay**, by George Santayana. Haskell House, 1977. $7.95.

**He Walks with Me: The Religious Experience of Country Music Stars**, by David Graham. Simon & Schuster, 1977. $7.95.

**Health in the Southern United States: An Original Anthology**, edited by Barbara G. Rosenkrantz. Arno Press, 1977. $20.00.

**History of the Baptists**, by H.C. Vedder. Gordon Press, 1977. $34.95.

"A History of the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference, 1957 - 1973," by Cleamon R. Downs. Dissertation. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"Household and Family in the Postbellum South: Walton County, Florida, 1870-1885," by Barbara F. Agresti. Dissertation. University of Florida.

**The Legacy of the Blues**, by Samuel Charters. Plenum, 1977. $4.95.

**Medicine in Kentucky**, by John H. Ellis. University Press of Kentucky, 1977. $3.95.

"Neighborhood and Ritual in Northern Virginia," by David W. Haines. Dissertation. American University.

"Oral, Printed, and Popular Culture Tradition Related to the Melungeons of Hancock County, Tennessee," by Saundra K. Ivey. Dissertation. Indiana University.

**Place Over Time: The Continuity of Southern Distinctiveness**, by Carl N. Degler. Louisiana State University Press, 1977. $8.95.

**Preus of Missouri: A Report on the Great Lutheran Civil War**, by James E. Adams. Harper and Row Pubs., Inc., 1977. $10.00.

**Prize Country Quilts**, by Mary E. Johnson. Oxmoor House, Inc., 1977. $12.95.

**The Quilters – Women and Domestic Art**, by Patricia Cooper and Norma B. Buferd. Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1977. $12.95.

"The Regional Vocabulary of Brownsville, Texas," by Juliet Villareal Garcia. Dissertation. University of Texas at Austin.

**Rough Weather Makes Good Timber: Carolinians Recall**, by Patsy M. Ginns. University of North Carolina Press, 1977. $9.50.

**Southern Living Illustrated Cookbook**, by Lillian B. Marshall. Oxmoor House, 1977. $14.95.

"A Study of Kentucky Folklore as a Resource for High School English Programs of the State," by Charles S. Guthrie. Dissertation. University of Kentucky.

"A Study of the Literacy Level of Atlanta Public High School 11th and 12th Grade Students," by William T. Hammond. Dissertation. Georgia State University.

**Two Centuries of Virginia Cooking: The Haw Branch Plantation Cookbook**, by Gibson J. McConnaughey. University Press of Virginia, 1977. Price not set.

**Voices From the Countryside**, edited by Guy Miles. Banyan Books, 1977. $5.95.

**Yams and Tales from Southern Mountains**, by Joseph S. Hall. Hollywood Book Service, date not set. $3.50.

**Watermelon Wine: The Spirit of Country Music**, by Frye Gaillard. St. Martin's Press, 1977. $10.00.

### BLACK EXPERIENCES IN THE SOUTH

**Africa and the Afro-American Experience**, edited by Lorraine A. Williams. Howard University Press, 1977. $8.95.

**African Folklore in the New World**, edited by Daniel J. Crowley. University of Texas Press, 1977. $8.95. pap. $2.95.

**The Afro-American Novel 1965-1975: A Descriptive Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Materials**, by Helen R. Houston. Whitston Publishing Co., 1977. $10.00.

**Afro-Americans and Africa: Black Nationalism at the Crossroads**, compiled by William B. Helmreich. Greenwood Press, 1977. $12.95.

**American Literature: Perspectives on Black**, by Roger Whitlow. Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1977. $2.95.

"Beyond the Yoke of Bondage: A History of Black Folks in South Carolina, 1900-1940," by Theodore Hemmingway. Dissertation. University of South Carolina.

**Black Images in American Literature**, by Joan Cannady. Hayden Book Co., Inc., 1977. Price not set.

**Black Over White: Negro Political Leadership in South Carolina During Reconstruction**, by Thomas Holt. University of Illinois Press, 1977. $10.00.

"Black Political Participation in the South: An Examination of Contextual Effects," by James M. Carlson. Dissertation. Kent State University.

**The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution, 1770–1800**, by Sidney Kaplan. Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977. $9.95.

"The Black Student and the Student Affairs Worker at Six Predominantly White Colleges and Universities in Georgia: A Reciprocal Study of Their Perceptions," by Roger G. Bryant. Dissertation. University of Georgia.

**Black Tennesseans, 1900–1930**, by Lester C. Lamon. University of Tennesee Press, 1977. Price not set.

**Blacks in Selected Newspapers, Censuses and Other Sources, An Index to Names and Subjects**, ed. by James De T. Abajian. G. K. Hall & Co., 1977. $320.00.

**The Booker T. Washington Papers, 1899 – 1900, Vol. 5**, ed. by Louis R. Harlan and Raymond W. Smock, Uni-

versity of Illinois Press, 1977. $17.50.

**The Booker T. Washington Papers, 1899 – 1900, Vol. 6,** ed. by Louis R. Harlan and Raymond W. Smock, University of Illinois Press, 1977. $17.50.

**Charles W. Chesnutt: A Reference Guide,** by Curtis W. Ellison and E. W. Metcalf, Jr. G. K. Hall & Co., 1977. Price not set.

**Code Name Zorro: The Murder of Martin Luther King,** by Mark Lane and Dick Gregory. Prentice-Hall Inc., 1977. $9.95.

"Electoral Participation and the Quest for Equality: Black Politics in Alabama Since the Voting Rights Act of 1963," by James D. Campbell. Dissertation. University of Texas at Austin.

"Every Atom Belonging to Me as Good Belongs to You: Jean Toomer and His Bringing Together of the Scattered Parts," by Frederick L. Rusch. Dissertation. State University of New York at Albany.

"An Historical Study of the Desegregation of the Alexandria, Virginia, City Public Schools, 1954-1973," by Mark Howard. Dissertation. George Washington University.

**Judge Horton and the Scottsboro Boys,** by Barbara Bauer and Robert Moss. Ballantine Books, Inc., 1977. $1.75.

**The Life and Death of Martin Luther King,** by James Haskins. Lee Lothrop & Shepard Co., 1977. $5.95.

"Language Standards and Communicative Style in the Black Church" by Richard L. Wright, Dissertation. University of Texas at Austin.

**Major Black Religious Leaders, 1755-1940,** by Henry J. Young. Abingdon Press, 1977. $5.95.

"The Mulatto Motif in Black Fiction," by Earlene Stetson. Dissertation. State University of New York at Buffalo.

"Nat Turner: Slave, Preacher, Prophet, and Messiah, 1800-1831: A Study of the Call of a Black Slave to Prophethood and to the Messiahship of the Second Coming of Christ," by James N. Mitchell. Dissertation. Vanderbilt University Divinity School.

**The Negro and His Folklore in Nineteenth Century Periodicals,** edited by Bruce Jackson. University of Texas Press, 1977. Reprint of 1967 edition. $12.00.

"The Policies and Purposes of Black Public Schooling in Louisville, Kentucky, 1890-1930," by Brenda F. Jackson. Dissertation, Indiana University.

**The Political Socialization of Black Americans: A Critical Evaluation of Research on Efficacy and Trust,** by Paul R. Abramson. Free Press, 1977. $12.95.

"Ralph Ellison: His Fiction and Its Background," by David L. Carson. Dissertation. University of Delaware.

"Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction: Freedmen's Education in the South, 1865-1870," by Robert C. Morris. Dissertation. University of Chicago.

**Red Over Black: Black Slavery Among the Cherokee Indians,** by R. Halliburton, Jr. Greenwood Press, 1977. $15.95.

"The Relationship of Work Motivation to Selected Demographic Characteristics of Black Female Workers," by Elaine Ferguson. Dissertation. University of Houston.

**A Right to the Land: Essays on the Freedmen's Community,** by Edward Magdol. Greenwood Press, 1977. $16.95.

"River Road: A Rural Black Community in Southeastern Louisiana," by Velesta Jenkins. Dissertation. University of Kentucky.

"School Desegregation in Jefferson County, Kentucky, 1954 - 1975," by John M. Thompson. Dissertation. University of Kentucky.

"The Slave and Free Black Community in Norfolk 1775 – 1865," by Tommy L. Bogger. Dissertation. University of Virginia.

"Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540 – 1866," by Theda Perdue. Dissertation. University of Georgia.

**Slow Fade to Black: The Negro in American Film, 1900 – 1941,** by Thomas Cripps. Oxford University Press, 1977. $19.95. pap. $5.95.

"The Struggle for Identity in the Major Works of Richard Wright," by James A. Miller. Dissertation. State University of New York at Buffalo.

**Subordination or Liberation? The Development and Conflicting Theories of Black Education in Nineteenth Century Alabama,** by Robert G. Sherer. University of Alabama Press, 1977. $10.00.

**The Trial of Martin Luther King,** by Alan P. Westin and Barry Mahoney. Apollo Editions, 1977. $4.95.

"The Uses and Functions of Afro-American Folk and Popular Music in the Fiction of James Baldwin," by John W. Roberts. Dissertation. Ohio State University.

**White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550 –**

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

**1812,** by Winthrop D. Jordan. W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1977. $6.95.

### LITERATURE

"Creative Responses to Time in the Novels of William Faulkner," by John T. Matthews. Dissertation. Johns Hopkins University.

"Dialectical Elements in the Fiction of Carson McCullers: A Comparative Critical Study," by Sheena Gillespie. Dissertation. New York University.

"The Dragon By the Side of the Road: A Study of the Fiction of Flannery O'Connor," by Bobbye G. Au. Dissertation. Claremont Graduate School.

"The Drama of Reconciliation, 1875 – 1900: The Place of Theater and Stage in the National Effort for Reunion," by Kenneth T. Rainey. Dissertation. Ohio State University.

"Eudora Welty: The Achieved World of Her Early Stories," by Jerry L. Harris. Dissertation. Ohio University.

"The Evolution of the Lone Heroine in the Works of Ellen Glasgow," by Christine E. Frey. Dissertation. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

**Flannery O'Connor & Caroline Gordon: A Reference Guide,** by Ralph M. Wardle. G. K. Hall & Co., 1977. Price not set.

"From the Actual to the Experimental: The Journey Motif in Mark Twain's Work," by Andrew P. Rubenfeld. Dissertation. New York University.

**The Illustrated Edgar Allan Poe,** ed. by Roy Gasson. Standing Orders, Inc., 1977. $15.95.

**Jesse Stuart: Selected Criticism,** by J. R. Lemaster. Valkyrie Press, date not set. $6.95.

**John Barth: An Annotated Bibliography,** by Richard A. Vine. Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1977. $6.00.

**The Literature of Memory: Modern Writers of the American South,** by Richard J. Gray. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977. $16.00.

"Man in the Universe: The Cosmic View of Eudora Welty," by Margarette J. Sather. Dissertation. University of Louisville.

**Mark Twain: A Reference Guide,** by Thomas A. Tenney. G. K. Hall & Co., 1977. Price not set.

"Mark Twain and Freethought," by Thomas D. Schwartz. Dissertation. University of California, Los Angeles.

"Mark Twain and His Illustrators, 1867 – 1889," by Beverly R. David. Dissertation. Michigan State University.

**Masterpieces of the Southern Poets,** by Walter Neale. Scholars Reference Library, Date not set. Reprint of 1912 edition. $10.00.

**My Mark Twain,** by W. D. Howells. Haskell House Publishers, Inc., 1977. $11.95.

"The Nature and Function of Paired Characters in Mark Twain's Novels," by Paul L. Hegel. Dissertation. University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Old Tales & Talking: Quentin Compson in William Faulkner's "Absalom, Absalom!" and Related Works,** by Estella Shoenberg. University Press of Mississippi, 1977. Price not set.

"Pastoral and Parody: The Making of Faulkner's Anthology Novels," by James M. Grimwood. Dissertation. Princeton University.

**The Poetic Vision of Robert Penn Warren,** by Victor H. Stranberg. University Press of Kentucky, 1977. $9.95.

"Probing the Great Dark: Dream Features of Mark Twain's Late Works," by Randy F. Nelson. Dissertation. Princeton University.

"Robert Penn Warren: Philosopher-Novelist," by George J. Jabol. Dissertation. University of Michigan.

**Selections From the Critical Writings of Edgar Allan Poe,** by Frederick C. Prescott. Gordian Press, Inc., 1977. Reprint of 1909 edition. $12.50.

"The Sound and the Fury: An Archetypal Reading," by Theresa L. Pearson. Dissertation. University of New Mexico.

**Tennessee Williams: A Tribute,** ed. by Jac Thorpe. University Press of Mississippi, 1977. $29.95.

**Thomas Wolfe: A Reference Guide,** by John S. Phillipson. G. K. Hall & Co., 1977. Price not set.

"To Talk Creatively: A Study of the Writings of Walker Percy," by Jay R. Telotte. Dissertation. University of Florida.

"The Uses of the Past in the Novels of William Faulkner," by Carl E. Rollyson, Jr. Dissertation. University of Toronto.

**William Faulkner's Craft of Revision,** by Joanne V. Creighton. Wayne State University Press, 1977. $12.95.

**William Styron: A Descriptive Bibliography,** by James L. West. G. K. Hall and Co., 1977. Price not set.

**The World of Tennessee Williams,** by Richard F. Leavitt. G. P. Putnam's Sons, date not set. $20.00.

"The Yoknapatawpha World and Black Being," by Erskine A. Peters. Dissertation. Princeton University.


**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 *On Jordan's Stormy Banks* @ **$2.50**

____ copies of *Generations: Women in the South* @ **$2.50**

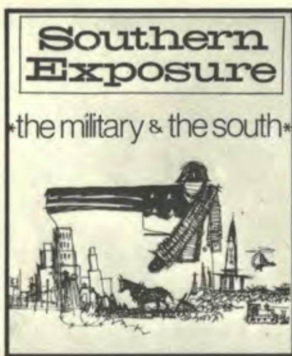
____ ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION @ $8

NAME ____________

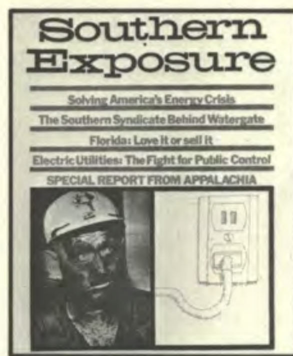
ADDRESS ____________

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**

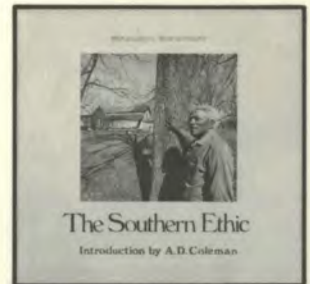
**VOL. 1, No. 3&4, NO MORE MOANIN'.** 225 pages of Southern history rarely found in textbooks, reported by the participants themselves. Surviving the Depression, sharecropper organizing, oral history of slavery, coal mining wars, 1929 Gastonia strike, 1936 Atlanta autoworkers sit-down, 1919 Knoxville 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-Africansim, 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; runaway shops; labor education; OSHA and EEOC. Oral histories of industrialization. A 30-page report on "Bloody" Harlan, 1930-74. State-by-state profiles of the workforce, unions and their activities. **$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**