Southern Exposure

NEIGHBORS

"It seems to help me bear it better when she knows about it."

The Incarceration of Annie
A Cloud on the Horizon
Doing What's Right

March/April 1983

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BY DEE REID

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A CLOUD ON THE HORIZON

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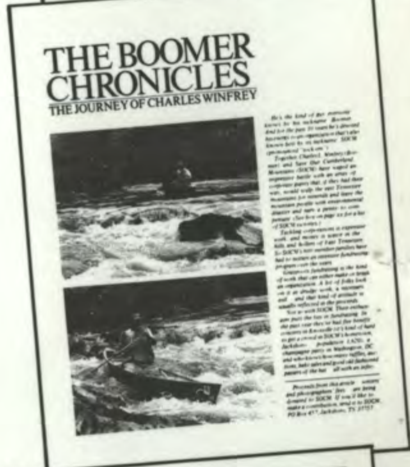

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FROM OUR READERS

Dear SE:

Best $16 I've invested this year, I believe. And I invest all I can, as a "retiree for change in our Promised Land." The South belongs to all of us who live here – U.S. too!

The faces on the cover of the latest issue ("Prevailing Voices," September/October, 1982) grabbed me right away – all beautiful. And the quotes and circumstances are RIGHT ON! As a volunteer for anti-hunger, anti-poverty and pro-community action agencies, I like all of your first issue – first rate!

The statement by Ms. D. Cotton – "you could grow wings . . . you can fly to great heights" – reminds me of a brief verse I wrote in tribute to black candidate Mary Miles of St. Matthews, South Carolina, who beat the Democratic dynasty's incumbent "house boy" in the June 8 primary.

We never know, until we try
How far and high
We're gonna fly
Starting today
And hand in hand
Let's fly into
Our Promised Land!

Mary Miles, 34, a self-styled "bony little black woman," is mother, wife, a powerful persona and a winner over the "Independent" white candidate reared against her by the ruling dynasty in Calhoun County.

– Lou Bryan
Columbia, SC

Dear SE:

I read an interesting article in your publication which gave one side of the story about the Greensboro shootout ("The Third of November," Fall, 1981).

As you know, the Jews and Communists who were involved in that affair claim that the state court system functioned improperly.

As a minor right-wing leader who happens to be the chief coordinator of a movement called "The Second American Revolution," I have petitioned the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Justice Department to be as solicitous about protecting my civil rights as it is about protecting the civil rights of black Communists.

In an effort to force compliance with a dictatorial decree which has been issued to me by another private citizen, I was given a criminal record (for trespass) which was based on false charges, perjured testimony and *outrageous trial procedure.*

Left-wing officials in Washington seem to see nothing wrong with this – *if the victim is active in the right wing.*

The development of this case is being timed to offer the public this contrasting attitude when the federal grand jury meeting in Winston-Salem to consider CWP-KKK conflicts announces its verdict.

There is mounting evidence that the right-wing viewpoint is not going to be listened to with the care that it deserves until these forces PROVE that they can create as much chaos as the left-wing forces created when they torched and pillaged our cities in the '60s.

Three cases now in various courts are going to develop the justification for this approach BEFORE the violence occurs.

THEN you can present the other side of this conflict between opposing philosophies – if you care to, and if you dare to.

– Warren B. Brooks
Clemmons, NC

Dear SE:

I have just read your classified ad in *Fellowship* magazine. I am curious about the format and make-up of your journal and am writing to request information and a sample of the journal. I am also curious about what you referred to as the "progressive tradition of the Southern region" in your classified ad, as I have seen little evidence of any type of progressivism during my living experience here in southern Virginia, near South Boston.

– Glen D. Bowman
Buffalo Junction, VA

Dear SE:

Thank you for sending us a copy of *Southern Exposure* ("Waging Peace"). Obviously, a lot of people worked on it and spent a lot of time, money and effort.

I don't think it is about peace, however, or how to obtain it. Societies that have gone through fundamental social and political change – like the Soviet Union and China – still wage war against each other. The fighting in Southeast Asia continues. Paul Robeson is not a good person to quote on the end of the cold war – he passed on the East's cold war cliches to an earlier generation – most of which you are passing on to this generation.

The politics of the cold war are dangerously in ascendance in America, the article on page 15 states. Did the cold war ever end in the East? Is this part of the effort?

– Bob West
World Without War Council-Midwest
Chicago, IL

Dear SE:

I've spent a large part of the last 18 years collecting and preserving a very extensive library/archive of material related to Mississippi, especially the Civil Rights Movement and other progressive activities. All of this work has been unpaid, and now I'm in very bad straits, trying to maintain the material in the state but just not able to spend the time needed to put it in shape so another facility might make it available and keep it current from then on.

I need to hire someone to work with me on it – I'm facing numerous additional pressures, largely related to being without funds, and I also just don't have the energy to work solo on this any longer. I have really run out of ideas on where to turn for help on this project, and if there is some way I could raise enough money to pay someone to work with me, it would ease the pressure.

Could you please inform your readers of this situation and ask them for help? Thanks.

– Jan Hillegas
Jackson, MS

NOTE: Civil Rights Library/Archive desperately needs your help to complete processing of extensive materials collected over 18 years by volunteer. Send contributions, self-supporting volunteer offers or long SASE for details to: Freedom Information Service, P.O. Box 3568, Jackson, MS 39207.

READERS CORNER

Emma and the MX

by Bob Brinkmeyer

Not 10 minutes after her birth I was holding my third daughter, Emma Elliot Brinkmeyer, in my arms. She had been washed off, wrapped in a warm blanket and handed to me while her mother was being tended to. A few minutes earlier the doctor had let me cut her cord, severing the last connection with the womb. Emma, all seven pounds eight ounces of her, was now an individual on her own, a member of the world. I cradled her close and gazed upon her.

Many thoughts were passing through my mind. Foremost was my intense joy and relief that my baby was safely here. With so many toxic materials – chemical, radioactive and otherwise – now in our environment, I was especially thankful that Chris and I had borne a healthy child for the third time. Like our two other daughters, Emma was beautiful. As I studied her face, I thought about how fragile she was – so small, delicate, lovely. No way I'm going to drop you, kid, I wanted to tell her. No way.

I've always cherished these first few minutes after I've been handed my new child. It's the first "private" time between daddy and child, the beginning of what I intend to make a long and loving relationship. With this third birth, a different element emerged; a dark cloud passed over my thoughts – a mushroom cloud, bringing death, destruction, annihilation. I was thinking of a nuclear holocaust.

In my vision, Emma and I were thrown across a room that was itself being blown apart from the shock wave of a nuclear blast. We had no time to shout or scream, or to make any effort to shield ourselves. The bomb blast rolled over us and continued on.

I shook my head both to bring me out of my nightmare and to assert, instinctively, my rejection of what I had just witnessed: NO! Unaware of what she had just been through and still cradled in my arms, Emma softly cooed away. I noticed how chilled I was; the delivery room was cool, but my chill had little to do with room temperature. Slowly I began to unfreeze myself by turning my attention to the beauty of my new daughter and by blocking out – as best I could – my vision of a nuclear disaster. I held on to Chris as she was being cleaned up and thought of the mysterious beauty of conception and birth. By the time we all left the delivery room, I was once again joyful. But just beneath the surface of my joy lay the prickly itch of fear.

I am well aware of the irony of being overcome by a vision of death moments after celebrating the birth of my third child. It shouldn't be that way. I should have been thinking of a bright future, of Emma as a child frolicking with her sisters, reading with her mamma, planting peas with me in the garden. Or later, of going to school, falling in love, becoming a writer or whatever she chooses. Anything but death by nuclear explosion.

But perhaps I'm wrong. Maybe in this world of nuclear peril, it is appropriate that at moments of intense joy and fulfillment we should feel the all-consuming threat of the holocaust. Such a vision is not unrealistic, and it may be that only by living out the holocaust in these moments when we feel furthest from death and despair will we goad ourselves into a commitment to work for world disarmament, and thus for the future of humanity.

Two days after Emma's birth, President Reagan announced his plans for deploying the MX. He said that he was "concerned about the effects the nuclear fear was having on people." He said our children should not grow up fearful of the future but confident and hopeful of it. Reagan went on to suggest that the MX – which he renamed the "Peacemaker" – will heal our psychological wounds, bringing us to a state of peace, as described in the words of Spinoza and quoted by the president: "Peace . . . is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence, justice."

Given the world arsenal of 50,000 or so nuclear warheads and the militaristic, confrontational stance toward the Soviet Union taken by the Reagan administration, it borders on the absurd for our president to suggest that the MX would usher in world peace and wholeness of mind. Reagan's underlying logic represents the message sent by one administration after the next to the American people on the issue of nuclear weapons and diplomacy: we – meaning the president and the Pentagon – have the world situation under control as long as the arms buildup continues; so don't worry, don't get involved politically; just go on living as if there were no thermonuclear warheads, no threat of nuclear war.

My disturbing delivery room experience with Emma a few days before made it seem almost as if Reagan were speaking specifically to me. Pooh, he was telling me, that vision of yours was utter nonsense because, with MX, nuclear war will never take place. So there's no need, his message went on, to scare your children by educating them on the horrors of nuclear warfare.

What I have come away with after Emma's birth and Reagan's speech is not a conviction to ignore the nuclear peril, as the president would have me do, but a commitment to confront it with increasing passion. Nothing less than the fate of humanity is at stake, and I promised myself that all my children, when I think they can understand it in a way that will not scar them, will know about nuclear warfare and its horrors. My children and I will be right there in the effort to free us all from the nuclear nightmare – and make the future possible.

Our readers often write us about a unique experience or neglected issue, or to share personal ideas and ideals. We've set aside this space to let you speak out. Send submissions to us c/o Readers Corner. Manuscripts should not exceed 1,000 words and must be typed, double-spaced. We'll pay $50 upon publication.

SOUTHERN NEWS ROUNDUP

Rural schools tracked into unknown future

Last spring, Judge Arthur M. Recht of the West Virginia Supreme Court issued a 244-page indictment of that state's system of financing and delivering public education, concluding that it failed miserably to provide the "thorough and efficient" schooling of all children which the state constitution guarantees. The judge regarded his decision as "no less than a call to the Legislature to completely reconstruct the entire system of education in West Virginia." But supporters of his demand for sweeping reform are now afraid that the legislature could worsen the problem by acting hastily on changes recommended by Governor Jay Rockefeller and the state department of education.

"We're afraid they will ruin rural schools even more by trying to standardize education," says Linda Martin, an organizer of the Lincoln County Parents for Better Schools and the new director of the West Virginia Education Project (Box 37, Griffithsville, WV 25521). "We want standards, but not standardization.

"If they want every high school to provide students with a chance to take trigonometry, that's okay," she explains. "We can do it with traveling teachers, videotapes, what have you. But if they start setting the dimensions of the trigonometry classroom and minimum number of students per room, then they're leading to the end of rural schools, to consolidation. And there are plenty of studies that show how consolidation doesn't help our children's education."

Judge Recht first promised to appoint an independent commissioner to arrive at the reforms the state system should follow. But under pressure from the Rockefeller administration, he allowed a commission appointed by the governor and dominated by the department of education to present its own set of recommendations for legislative review. Recht could still name a commission or otherwise offer specific guidance for correcting the systematic inequities evidenced by the small Lincoln County school which triggered his court ruling.

After looking at the Rockefeller committee's recommendations – more emphasis on new buildings and consolidation, less on a diversified curriculum or the quality of teaching – education reformers and parents in many rural areas are organizing with Linda

Martin to make sure eliminating schools doesn't become the solution for their inadequacies. They need time to mobilize more parents groups, labor unions, teachers and citizens activists around an alternative set of reforms – and they may get it. The state's high unemployment rate and budget cutbacks could make legislative approval of school consolidation or other expensive programs unlikely for another year.

Ironically, the issue of who pays for West Virginia's schools was central to Judge Recht's original decision, although its impact has been blunted by Rockefeller's swift maneuvering. In startling language, the judge declared: "The absence of a thorough and efficient system of education in West Virginia is directly related to property wealth, and the failure of the Legislature to provide a sufficient financial base to assure that each child in West Virginia is the recipient of a high quality system of education."

Tax reformers interpreted the ruling as support for their bid to levy a property tax on the state's vast unmined mineral wealth. But the coal lobby shot that idea down in the 1981 legislature, and Rockefeller turned the issue of higher taxes for schools into a "pro-small-property-owner" movement, which resulted in a constitutional amendment limiting property assessment for purposes of taxation to 60 percent of true value. (Of course the change doesn't affect the *rate* of tax on the assessed value, so it's really a bogus victory.)

"The question is still who pays for the schools, and it's at the heart of what kind of schools we get," says Martin. "The coal companies don't pay their fair share, so those of us who live in coal-dominated counties don't get the money for good schools. There's enough money in these mountains to give our kids a great education. We don't need to make everybody suffer to build an educational bureaucracy that still won't solve the problem."

With the department of education touting a 10-year, $780-million construction program as the number one answer to Judge Recht's decision, Linda Martin could find a lot more people ready to link a tax reform campaign with major changes in education policy.

Free elections come to Kingdom of Perez

Citizens of Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, got their first chance in 15 years to choose between candidates vying for seats on their parish council. Ernest Johnson, a black man whose lawsuit led to the elections, and Germaine Curley, a white woman, survived a field of 43 candidates to qualify for the February 26 runoff. No black or woman has served on the parish council since its establishment 21 years ago.

The election, which marks the latest in a series of setbacks for the once-omnipotent Leander Perez family, grew out of the 1975 challenge by Johnson and Merlis Broussard. They claimed that the at-large system of electing school board and commission members illegally diluted black voting strength. The court agreed. The Plaquemines Parish Commission Council appealed and lost, and finally accepted a consent decree in late November, 1982. U.S. District Judge Frederick Heebe, who had first ruled in favor of Johnson and Broussard in 1978, then set the election dates and also set the pay for the new councilors at $18,000. The pay is crucial since government bodies ordered to desegregate often sabotage their replacements by eliminating funding.

For their first open election perhaps since the Perez family dynasty began half a century ago, voters turned out enthusiastically. Seventy-seven percent of those eligible to vote did so. "I've been waiting a long time for this," said Hosea Ned. "I'm 33 and I've never voted before. Now that's a shame."

The decline of the Perez fortunes followed intense squabbling among the heirs of Leander Perez, Sr., an arch-segregationist who had hoped to create a dynasty in charge of the oil-rich parish by installing his son Leander, Jr., as district attorney and son Chalin as commission council president before his death. But the sons began fighting over the spoils, and one initiated a grand jury investigation of the other. Leander currently faces charges connected with investigations showing he stole $43 million in mineral royalties from parish lands, and that the family company, Delta Development Corporation, stole another $72 million. Indictments brought against Chalin for similar thefts were dismissed. Leander, Jr., faces one count of conspiracy to commit malfeasance for his role in dismissing a parish grand jury that was expected to indict him and Delta Development on the theft charges.

The election marks the first time in 22 years that a Perez has not sat on the council, but despite the breaking of the Perez family power over city government, much remains to be done. Current council president Luke Petrovich says one of the first orders of business of the new council will be to break leases under which the Perez family takes in about $5 million per year from parish oil and gas production. In addition, Chalin is still district attorney and continues as chair of the parish Democratic Party executive committee, a key post in the selection of candidates for state offices. And the new members of the council, who represent diverse political and economic interests, may still overlook the needs of the parish's majority poor population.

— Thanks to Walter McClatchey
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Officials move against peaceful prison strike

Twenty-five prisoners in the Maximum Security Unit of the Mississippi state prison at Parchman face disciplinary action after staging a 19-day hunger strike in January. Ken Jones, public relations officer for the Mississippi Department of Corrections, says there was no violence, no hostages taken nor lives jeopardized by the action of the prisoners. Yet Deputy Warden Joe Cooke declared the strike an institutional emergency, paving the way for a series of punitive measures against the striking inmates.

During the strike, death row inmates were denied religious services and their families were turned away on visiting days; no media or outside medical personnel were allowed into the unit under the orders of Warden Cooke. Prisoner advocate L.C. Dorsey fears the lockout represents a dangerous precedent. "There is no emergency, since the prisoners are not rioting, are not threatening anyone, have not caused any changes in the operation of the unit or posed any threat to the institution's security. What the Department of Corrections is able to do by imposing an emergency is stifle information."

The prisoners began the peaceful hunger strike after repeated attempts to receive a response to a series of requests for such things as access to law books, arts and crafts supplies, educational programs, dialogue about inmate grievances, contact visits with family, better medical care and an investigation into the beating of one of the inmates, James Morris.

Owen Brooks of the Delta Ministry, the only person outside the prison system allowed to visit the prisoners during the hunger strike, said they felt that medical attention was critically deficient. In fact, the strike was called off after two of the men developed medical problems.

Three days after the prisoners stopped accepting food, Warden Cooke took a hard line by accusing them of violating Rule 9-2-11. "The concerted, coordinated, premeditated entering into a group conspiracy of *any* nature," he declared, "constitutes disruption of the orderly function and administration of the institution."

The 25 prisoners were thereafter cited for a rule violation for *each* meal skipped. They are now awaiting action by a prison-department disciplinary committee. The final punishment is not known at this writing in early February, but family members have reported that sentences up to 300 to 1,000 days are being added to the terms of each hunger strike participant.

Record settlement in Arkansas bias case

After nine years of litigation, Georgia-Pacific has finally agreed to pay hundreds of past and present black workers at its Crossett, Arkansas, plywood plant more than $3 million in back wages and damages — the largest award in a civil-rights case in Arkansas history.

In 1980, a federal judge found the company guilty of discriminating against blacks in wage, promotion and job transfer policies. The decision arose from suits filed in 1973 by a group of workers and their local of the International Woodworkers of America (IWA). At one point in the proceedings, the union's lawsuit was dismissed on the grounds that it couldn't represent workers in a civil-rights action. In a landmark decision, the U.S. Eighth

Circuit Court of Appeals overturned that ruling, and IWA attorney James E. Youngdahl of Little Rock says the final settlement, negotiated point-by-point in the two years since the judge's 1980 verdict, "demonstrates that unions can make significant contributions to the enforcement of equal opportunity law."

John W. Walker, a Little Rock civil-rights attorney representing the original plaintiffs, said the primary beneficiaries of the settlement would be several hundred blacks still employed at Crossett and as many as several thousand others who worked there in the past. A key issue in the complaint was that blacks were concentrated in the lower-paying jobs at the plywood plant and were not allowed to transfer to the nearby paper mill where the lowest salaries, Walker said, were higher than the top salaries at the plywood plant.

Walker and Youngdahl are now negotiating with Georgia-Pacific over working conditions and other non-monetary questions which they say must also be changed to eliminate all vestiges of discrimination in the two plants.

– Thanks to Elizabeth Shores, Little Rock, Arkansas

Alternative fund gives cash to make change

Twenty-five community groups, media programs and organizing projects in the Carolinas and Georgia received grants in February totalling $43,100 from the Atlanta-based Fund for Southern Communities. Most awards were between $1,300 and $3,000 and according to Midge Taylor, the Fund's coordinator of grantmaking, "The common denominator among the recipient groups is that each one is empowering disenfranchised people to work for immediate improvements in the lives of their communities.

"Our grantees are not people who want the government to take care of them; they want to take care of government and to change the social and economic systems that adversely affect them."

Money for the two-year-old "alternative foundation" is raised from a growing network of donors who prefer to see their gifts of $1,000 or more going to support progressive social change rather than to more traditional charities, said Fund executive director Alan McGregor. Other money comes from members of the Fund, who

pledge two percent of their annual income and/or time to the foundation.

A board of 11 directors who represent the interests of members, donors and activists and who fulfill a set of geographic, racial and sexual guidelines reviewed 128 proposals in December and January to choose the 25 grantees.

Those selected range from Atlanta's 9-to-5, which organizes office workers, to the regional chapter of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, based in Athens, Georgia. They include six low-income organizations whose community or daycare centers are the focus of outreach and advocacy. In Georgia, these groups are the Burke County Improvement Association, Community Improvement Coalition of Monroe County, Concerned Citizens of Ideal and the Poverty Rights Office of Atlanta's Emmaus House. In South Carolina, they are the Greenwood County Grassroots Committee and New Horizons for Children in Charleston County.

Three North Carolina projects are tackling criminal justice issues – Western Carolinians for Criminal Justice in Asheville, Robeson County Clergy and Laity Concerned and Raleigh NOW. Three other groups in that state are designing media programs to give voice to people ignored by the mainstream press – Night Heron Press in Durham for lesbian writers, the Third World Women Writers Workshop, also in Durham, and New Hope's community press for Halifax and Northampton Counties.

There are organizing projects for peace (South Carolina Nuclear Freeze Campaign), against PCBs and hazardous waste landfills (Warren County Concerned Citizens in North Carolina), for reform of utility regulation (Fairfield United Action in South Carolina) and for protection of workplace civil liberties (Greenville's Workers' Rights Project).

Atlanta's Southern P.O.W.E.R. received a grant to work with rural women, and Eskenosen in Roberta, Georgia, got funds to work with low-income community leaders. Funds also went to help the Center for Community Self-Help in Durham develop a credit union for members of worker-owned cooperatives and for the Georgia Agricultural Marketing Project to set up food-buying coops in Atlanta public housing projects.

Raleigh's Carolina Interfaith Task Force on Central America will address international issues; the Concerned Citizens for Representative Government in Columbia and Richland County, South Carolina, will organize against the disenfranchisement of black citizens; and Harbinger Publications in Columbia will investigate the health risk and environmental fallout of nuclear bomb production at the Savannah River Plant.

If you live in the Carolinas or Georgia and would like to support, or have your group supported by, the Fund for Southern Communities, write Box 927, Atlanta, GA. 30301, or call 404-577-3178.

U.S. Chamber elects union-buster as head

Robert Thompson, the Greenville, South Carolina, attorney who guided J.P. Stevens's anti-union strategy through the late 1970s, has been elected chairperson

of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Thompson gained national prestige among his corporate colleagues for his skill in coordinating the successful fight against reform of the National Labor Relations Act, which the AFL-CIO and the Carter administration pushed in 1978.

Thompson's election as the Chamber's chief spokesperson indicates that the business lobby is pursuing a vigorous, shrewd – and ultra-conservative –approach to national politics. Thompson says he's ready for "a major battle" with labor unions over federal jobs programs and federal legislation like that sponsored by the United Auto Workers, which would require commodities sold in the U.S. to contain a minimum number of U.S.-made parts – the so-called "content law."

One more prediction from the man who still represents Stevens, Deering-Milliken and other anti-union companies is worthy of note: "I do think there is very likely to be a large organizing effort in the South in textiles and other industries as soon as the recovery reaches a point where people who are still working aren't concerned over whether they will be working tomorrow or not."

Violence predictable, Miami not reformed

Only a few months before the December, 1982, rebellion in the Overtown section of Miami, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission released a 353-page report which analyzed the 1980 uprising in Liberty City and prophesied: "Unless a concerted effort is made to bring about the black community's participation in all aspects of local growth and progress, conditions will likely worsen, isolation increase and violence recur."

Miami Mayor Maurice Ferre and other officials wanted the commission to return to the city to examine the causes of the Overtown riots that began after a Hispanic police officer fatally shot Nevell Johnson, Jr., a 20-year-old black man, in a video-game arcade. But the commission refused the request, issuing a one-page statement which said the conditions of "isolation" were virtually unchanged; blacks were still excluded from "the political and economic power sectors that control community resources and make community decisions."

Indeed, a return to Miami reveals that the $48 million in federal funds and $7 million in privately raised money have changed life very little for the 65,000 residents of Liberty City. About half the federal money – which has now stopped flowing under Reagan, despite a promise of $100 million in assistance from Jimmy Carter – went through the Small Business Administration as disaster loans to entrepreneurs who lost businesses in the chaos; but most of them relocated elsewhere.

Other funds went to convert burned-out lots into parks, leading residents to become more skeptical of government efforts to help. "They built things like this boulevard," said one resident. "There's benches in pretty colors on it. Don't do us no good. They just give us young folks a place to sit and wait to rob you as you pass by."

Because less than 20 percent of the 240 damaged businesses have reopened in Liberty City, there are now 3,000 fewer jobs. An estimated 70 percent of the community's youth are out of work, and the overall unemployment rate is higher than it was in 1980. Poverty in the midst of Miami's glitter is especially disheartening. The average black family's income is under $10,000 – less than half of the median family income for Dade County.

Racial harassment and brutality by police are still everyday events, say residents of Overtown and Liberty City. In both 1980 and 1982, the spark that touched off days of rioting was a blatant demonstration of the criminal justice system's racial bias: the May, 1980, acquittal of four white police officers who were charged with murdering Arthur McDuffie, a black insurance agent.

President Reagan said it was "irresponsible" for government officials to blame economics for the 1982 rebellion in the Overtown neighborhood. But commission chairperson Clarence Pendleton, Jr., a Reagan appointee, disagreed: "I think economic conditions do underlie what happened in Miami," he said, adding that the president was "probably misinformed."

Black community leaders agree. They held long grievance meetings with city officials in December and presented a petition demanding the firing of police chief Kenneth Harms for his alleged role in covering up the killing of Nevell Johnson. But the chief is still in office, and the mayor has created his own investigative committee while chastizing the Civil Rights Commission for not returning to Miami. "It is pointless for them to come back here," said Bill Perry, the president of the local chapter of PUSH. "We know what the problems are. There were the same problems during the McDuffie riots: economics."

Banks prosper, hold farmers in tight grip

While farmers are caught in the worst financial squeeze since the 1930s, the bankers they are indebted to are enjoying record profits. Total borrowing by farmers has climbed to $200 billion,

but their net income has plunged 40 percent over the past three years to $19 billion.

The media has focused on Midwestern grain farm foreclosures, but Southern farmers are also getting threatening calls from public and private lenders. For example, the Federal Land Bank and its allied Production Credit Asso-

ciation – which account for 58 percent (or 50,500) of the farm loans in Georgia, Florida and the Carolinas – foreclosed on 307 farms in the four states in 1982, three times as many as in 1981. And in several Southern states, half the farmers indebted to the Farmers Home Administration are delinquent in their loan payments – a rate which easily surpasses the national average of 30 percent.

The Rural Advancement Fund has set up a hotline for farmers facing foreclosures in the Carolinas, and it expects the number of callers to increase in the months ahead. (The number to call on Wednesdays and Thursdays is 919-542-5292.)

The Bank of America, the largest private lender to agriculture, is nervously estimating that as many as 30 percent of the country's farmers could not repay their loans even if they sold all their property and equipment. From a look at the numbers, however, bankers could afford to show considerable leniency toward the hard-pressed farmer. Net income for most banks – even after deducting bad debts – was up 10 to 20 percent, and in the South figures were even more flush. The picture for most Americans, even the non-farmer with a fulltime job, was less rosy. The Bureau of Labor Statistics says the weekly earnings of the average worker increased only 3.8 percent from December, 1981, to December, 1982 – while inflation climbed 3.9 percent.

INCREASED INCOME IN 1982 OF TOP SOUTHERN BANKS

	% gain over '81	Income in million $
Barnett Banks of Fla.	42%	$65
Southwest Bancshares, Houston	34	67
Sun Banks of Fla., Orlando	33	39
Mercantile Texas, Dallas	26	103
Allied Bancshares	26	88
NCNB Corp., Charlotte	23	77
First Atlanta Corp.	20	43
Texas Commerce, Houston	20	170
First Union Corp., Charlotte	20	50
Republic Bancorp., Dallas	19	157
Wachovia Corp., N.C.	17	78
United Virginia Bancshares	15	41
Interfirst Corp., Dallas	15	223
Citizens & Southern, Atlanta	14	51
Virginia National Bancshares	14	33

Wrong Texas 'suburb' gets big helping hand

Houston is the place the national media liked to call the diamond-studded buckle of the Sunbelt. The reality, of course, was always something else – unemployment rates were low, but so were wages, and Houstonians living below the poverty line were much more likely to be working than their Northern counterparts. But all the publicity hype brought droves of people – 30,000 a year – to the city.

Then the recession arrived in Houston; in a 10-month period last year, unemployment climbed from 4.7 percent to 8.2 percent; and the city acquired a new "suburb" that has forced a piece of Houston's reality into the media's consciousness. Tent City is an enclave of about 250 homeless, out-of-work people living in tents along the San Jacinto River, a latter-day Hooverville 30 miles from downtown that has captured the national imagination. The hoopla started in late 1982 when the *Wall Street Journal* described Tent City in a story about the migration of the Northern unemployed to the Sunbelt.

Since then at least 350 reporters have showed up: all three television networks, major out-of-state newspapers, national magazines, the foreign press, even a Hollywood movie crew. The story is a natural; it has "great poignancy and pathos," to use the words of Gary Reagan, executive producer of the local CBS station, which has carried dozens of stories on Tent City. As Reagan told the *Wall Street Journal* in January, "When you pan the cameras away from the tents to Houston's skyline, it's very dramatic."

But the story is much bigger than that. People are living in tents any place in town where one can be pitched, all the trailer parks and camp grounds are full, and others live in cars parked beneath freeway overpasses – all victims of Reaganomics, the recession and the federal budget cuts, with no place to turn. As a visiting German reporter said, "If you compared the American social net with the German social net, a similar thing couldn't happen."

To find the sort of place that does get caught in the American social net, one must turn to another Houston suburb. A planned community 30 miles north of the city, The Woodlands is a tree-filled town of 16,000 where the average house sells for $92,700, where there are no clutter, no garishness, no mobile homes and nobody in tents.

It is the brainchild of George Mitchell, a wealthy oil entrepreneur and outspoken opponent of social spending programs and government intervention. Yet his ideology did not stop the Mitchell Energy and Development Corporation from accepting $20 million in federal grants and a $50 million federal loan guarantee to "develop" The Woodlands back in the early 1970s. And now, as the government prepares to terminate its involvement, it is declaring The Woodlands a success and leaving Mitchell Energy's shareholders with what security analysts say is a potential gold mine. The Woodlands is already running a profit. Give it another eight years, Mitchell told a reporter, and it will be "a real money winner!"

That's one measure of success. By the measure of the goals of the program under which The Woodlands was founded – the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) "new towns" – failure may not be too strong a word. The HUD towns were supposed to be racial and economic cross-sections of the surrounding area, but The Woodlands is just another pleasant place for the middle and upper classes. Blacks, Hispanics and other minority-group members make up 42 percent of the Houston-area population, compared with nine percent in The Woodlands. The median family income there is one-third higher than in metropolitan Houston. And The Woodlands is way behind on its commitment to provide low-income housing; two small areas for the poor house seven percent of the people.

Moderately priced and very expensive homes keep going up, but no more low-income housing will be built unless the government keeps subsidizing it. According to Mitchell Energy official Edward Lee, "Every project has to show an adequate return. We're

adamant about that." So, when HUD pulls out of The Woodlands this year, the town will simply pledge to make an attempt, subject to availability of public housing aid, to build more homes for the poor.

A HUD official says the original idea of having the minority population equal that of the metropolitan area and of achieving economic balance in these federally funded towns was "naive." The same word might be applied to anyone who thinks the community's "pledge" is more than an empty promise.

South Carolina joins anti-nuclear lawsuit

Opponents of the startup of a dormant Savannah River Plant (SRP) nuclear reactor received a big boost when South Carolina Attorney General Travis Medlock announced that the state would join their side in a lawsuit requiring SRP officials to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed startup. Though the state has traditionally welcomed expansion of SRP and other nuclear facilities, Medlock's decision reflects the growing skepticism South Carolinians feel about the nuclear industry.

SRP has produced plutonium and other radioactive materials essential to each nuclear weapon produced in the U.S. since 1953. Recently, SRP technicians have been repairing the L-Reactor, dormant since 1968, to churn out plutonium and tritium for the thousands of new nuclear bombs planned by the Reagan administration. SRP wants to rev up the L-Reactor by October, 1983.

The coalition opposing SRP's plans includes the Savannah Coastal Citizens for Clean Energy, the Environmental Research Foundation in Columbia, League of Women Voters chapters in South Carolina and Georgia, the Georgia Conservancy, and the Washington-based Environmental Policy Institute and Natural Resources Defense Council. On behalf of several residents near the SRP, these groups have filed suit in federal court demanding that SRP prepare a thorough EIS on the consequences of the startup. Though the suit would not in itself stop the startup, it could force exposure of information that would give opponents a handle with which to keep the L-Reactor from firing up.

SRP officials maintain that they need to start up the facility promptly and that filing an EIS could release information that could endanger "national security." Opponents suspect that the reactor is old and unsafe to operate; that thermal pollution from the extremely hot discharge water would damage both the Savannah River

and surrounding wetlands; and that the radioactive water flushed from the reactor would couple with known radiation leakage from SRP's operating facilities to jeopardize the health and safety of the surrounding community.

Considerable behind-the-scenes debate between various state agencies preceeded Medlock's January 11 announcement to join the lawsuit; coastal management and water quality officials apparently favored requiring an EIS, while the Department of Health and Environmental Control, which monitors radiation discharges, claimed it had sufficient means to ensure public safety. Medlock, meanwhile, was running an aggressive pro-environmental campaign for election to the attorney general's job, and his decision to enter the case was one of his first acts in office.

Though opponents of plutonium production welcome Medlock's support, they remain wary that the state might accept dangerous compromises, such as allowing SRP to construct a cooling tower to discharge waste heat into the air in lieu of dumping the water into streams. They also note that the state is being pressured by pro-nuclear forces, particularly in Aiken and other communities economically dependent on SRP, to allow a speedy startup for the L-Reactor.

But the state government under Governor Richard Riley has taken measures in recent years to wipe out South Carolina's reputation as "the nation's nuclear dumping ground." It cracked down on SRP's discharge of radioactive water and began investigating the potential health effects of the facility, which received widespread publicity when two *Atlanta Constitution* reporters found an unusually high number of cases of the disease polycythemia vera in the area (see *Southern Exposure*, September/October, 1982). State officials also supported public opposition to the storage of highly radioactive spent fuel rods from commercial nuclear reactors at SRP; over 30,000 people have signed petitions and eight county councils have gone on record against allowing other states to send their high-level radioactive wastes to South Carolina.

Even hawkish, pro-nuclear Senator Strom Thurmond fought further use of South Carolina for nuclear waste storage. And he has told SRP officials "they can't count on my support [for the L-Reactor] unless they provide assurances that the restart will have no adverse effects on the health of South Carolinians and people in Georgia." It's just possible state's rights politics may prove the fatal stumbling block for Ronald Reagan's desire for a significant nuclear buildup.

— Thanks to Bebe Verdery, Columbia, South Carolina

SEEN ANY GOOD NEWS?

There's no reason to let us be the ones who sift through the press to choose the material to include in the Southern News Roundup. If you see a feature article in your local newspaper or a magazine that sheds light on what progressive Southerners are doing – or are up against – send it to us. Send the complete article, date and name of publication (with its address if possible) along with your name and address, and whatever additional comments or interpretations you care to include, to: Southern News Roundup, P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702.

BASQUE

Coops Save Jobs

Last fall, the author and two other Southerners who develop and implement adult education programs for worker-owned and -managed cooperatives visited Mondragon for 10 days to see firsthand how educational programs operated in the successful Basque cooperative group.

Despite unemployment rates topping 24 percent and countless business failures throughout the heavily industrialized Basque provinces of northern Spain, the nearly 100 worker-owned cooperatives centered in the town of Mondragon have yet to lay off a worker or shut down a plant. Instead, they have turned to education and research as solutions to the spreading worldwide depression. "Education was the foundation of our cooperatives," one veteran manager told three American visitors recently. "Education and research are the keys to our future growth."

The Mondragon cooperatives, which now provide the majority of jobs in the mountainous town of 30,000, had their beginning in 1956. After 15 years of patient education and preparation, five young Basque engineers, encouraged by a Catholic priest, founded a tiny industrial cooperative in Mondragon. They set out to make durable, inexpensive cooking stoves, and to "establish the primacy of labor among the factors of production." Twenty-four people bought membership shares, worked there and tended their business.

Today, 26 years later, there are about 18,000 cooperative shareholders. They run assembly lines making stoves, washing machines, water heaters, refrigerators, spin dryers, replica antiques, bus bodies, electronic switching gear, tool and die equipment and other products. One cooperative builds bridges, and another high-rise apartments. The 64 branches of the cooperative Caja Laboral Popular – the working people's bank – provide credit for worker-owned businesses, a computer service and a management assistance program.

Each cooperative, including the bank, is governed by a board of directors; each has a general manager who does not have a vote. "The board of directors of a cooperative is a school of management of a quite special kind," we were told. "The board is elected by all the members during the annual general assembly. They are the owners of the business. They have to defend the business, and not just their own interests."

Mondragon's worker-owners have expanded educational programs to give each other skills as needed. They are teaching about newer technologies and their applications and have redoubled efforts at applied research to keep their businesses prospering. Nearly every cooperative has its own retraining program. Some classes are offered during working hours, and dozens of courses are regularly offered after hours. If there is any relation between a member's job and the retraining being sought, the cooperative pays the tuition fully.

In-plant classes to improve the skills of those workers whose jobs have not succumbed to technological change are held to help boost productivity. These have been instituted among a work force which has the highest productivity levels in Spain – higher than the largest, most efficient capitalist or state-run firms.

Ikerlan, a research cooperative owned and financed by the cooperatives, does research in electronics, mechanical engineering, thermodynamics, solar energy and computers. Prototypes or working models of new equipment and products are designed and then tested in its laboratory and machine shop. As the research progresses, the knowledge gained is shared with cooperatives for installation or further testing.

On their own, many cooperatives look for new products or additions to current work. For example, Auzo Lagun, a cooperative founded by women to provide part-time jobs for housewives, is in the midst of feasibility and marketing studies for possible garment manufacturing. If the cooperative's board approves financial, credit, marketing and equipment studies, more part-time jobs will be created in Mondragon – and the Basque cooperative will have a new product to market in 1983 should the new Socialist government enter the European Common Market.

Even before the first cooperative started, the Basque cooperatives had a technical college. Originally called La Escuela Professional Politecnico, it has provided mechanical and chemical engineering courses for high school and college level students since 1943. The five founders were among its first graduates. Today the school is named in honor of its founder, Father Jose Maria Arizmendiarrieta, the Catholic priest who backed the young engineers.

All these educational efforts preceded the current depression. The first cooperative members wanted to distribute "human capital" as widely and evenly as possible. The idea stuck, and has become policy common to Mondragon's cooperatives. Such an investment in education has ensured a steady supply of trained personnel and promises to be one way to avoid layoffs from what Europeans call redundancy resulting from technological change.

Such farsighted policy by owner-members can be seen in other areas of Mondragon's corporate affairs. During the boom years of the '60s and early '70s, the cooperatives discouraged unlimited growth. Businesses with large profit yields were naturally inclined to expand. Their dreams were checked by policies formulated by the associated cooperatives which curbed expansion at 12 to 15 percent annually. The aim was two-fold: first, to limit the possibility that a "rich" cooperative would evolve to dominate the others; and second, to hedge against sudden economic downturns accompanied by hurtful layoffs or plant closings.

Another example of why the Basque cooperatives haven't laid off a worker lies in the "worker months" program. Cooperatives help each other out during peak seasons or when a cooperative faces some unexpected but temporary difficulty. This policy requires that individuals possess more than one narrow industrial skill. It also avoids surges in seasonal employment. This program has been stepped up during the lingering depression.

Two internal organizations common to each cooperative provide the educational process through which members learn from each other about their business. The first is the annual General Assembly meeting where broad financial, sales, production and credit policies are discussed. Elections ensure rotation on and off the board of directors; any worker-member can be elected.

A second instrument nonformally educating the work force about cooperative business affairs is the Social Council, composed of elected members who usually represent 20 workers each. The Social Council oversees personnel matters such as hours, working conditions, safety, educational policies and disputes. "What happens," according to Inake Aguirre Zabala, public relations chief for Caja Laboral Popular, "is that when a person has been a member of the board of directors or the Social Council a lot of matters and a lot of concepts become quite familiar. It is a progressive learning experience. The people become quite well prepared to face decisions."

photo by Wes Hare

HOUSING BUILT BY ONE OF THE WORKER CO-OPS IN MONDRAGON

Together these structures underlie an organization of work that is neither state-controlled nor traditionally capitalist. According to Antonio Perez de Calleja Basterrechea, director of the bank's management division: "Everyone has learned on the job, within a highly propitious social environment, about how management can be controlled by the work force itself, with everyone continually learning from his own experience of the cooperative experiment. The Mondragon experiment has shown, above all, how workers can create and expand a system of self-management in an environment which is changing rapidly and becoming more and more competitive, in other words within a developing economy."□

– Frank Adams

CALIFORNIA

Video Villainy

To most Americans, Atari means games. To the workers who make the products, the most familiar game is union-busting.

Since early 1982, Glaziers and Glassworkers Local 1621 has been helping Atari workers in California organize a union. A few months after the drive began, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the agency in charge of finding illegal immigrants to the U.S., conducted a series of workplace raids. Atari, where about 2,000 workers are immigrants from Third World countries, was one of the places raided.

About 60 workers were arrested, and while many were soon back on the job, workers became less willing to risk speaking out in favor of the union. Mike Garcia, an organizer with Local 77 of the Service Employees International Union, said the raids at Atari and other plants "set organizing back around here for all of us in the labor movement."

As unions see how INS raids hurt immigrant workers and the unions themselves, they are taking action to prevent raids or reduce their impact.

Several northern California unions filed a lawsuit to stop INS raids because they violate workers' civil rights. Elsewhere, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union won a decision requiring the INS to get search warrants stating who they are looking for and why they are looking at a particular work place.

When a raid does occur, unions such as the Chicago Joint Board of the Retail, Wholesale, Department Store Workers Union continue to protect workers' rights, including insisting a company notify the union as soon as a raid begins.

Last, several unions have joined coalition efforts to fight deportations. As John Boardman, business agent for Hotel and Restaurant Workers Local 25 in Washington, DC, says, "We can't organize immigrant workers if we let the threat of being sent home hang over their heads. By defending the immigrant worker, we're defending ourselves too."□

– thanks to American Labor

Facing South

a syndicated column:
voices of tradition
in a changing region

Building Boats for the Working People

EAST POINT, Fla – Seventy-eight-year-old Joseph Lolley sat in his boat shed reminiscing about his boyhood. Dressed in blue coveralls and white T-shirt, he looked more like a simple farmer than the boatbuilder whose name is legend among local oysterers and whom younger boatbuilders call "the best there is" in the region.

Joseph Lolley started oystering with his father when he was five or six years old. "I became so fast," he said, "I could cull faster than my father could tong!"

In those days oysters were sold by the thousand, and the wagons, driven by mules, oxen or horses, would come down during the winter months to cart them to Atlanta or other northern markets.

Located in Franklin County, on the Gulf Coast between Tallahassee and Panama City, East Point is the hub of the local oyster fishery, which last year produced 92 percent of Florida's oysters. Here the confluence of the Apalachicola River and Apalachicola Bay makes the oysters both plentiful and delicious. "The fresh water makes the oysters fat and the salt water makes them tasty," one oysterer explains.

Today oysters are sold by the bushel or gallon, and refrigerated diesel tractor trailers rumble in and out of the 16 independent shucking houses along East Point's bustling waterfront, transporting oysters year-round to destinations all over the United States.

Though refrigeration and mechanization have modernized the processing of oysters, the harvesting is still done as it was when Joseph Lolley was a boy: the tonger scrapes the oysters up from the bottom using a pair of long wooden-handled tongs, and the cullers sort through them, breaking up the clusters and tossing the undersized oysters overboard.

Of the 3,400 people employed in the East Point oyster fisheries, about 700 are full- or part-time tongers who ply their trade in the unique boat that Joseph Lolley helped develop.

Distinguished by a sharply upturned bow, wide side decks, a box cabin or "dog house" on the stern, and an outboard engine, this type of oyster boat is especially well adapted to its working conditions. It serves as a stable platform for the tonger standing on the side decks, provides shelter for the crew from sudden changes in weather, and carries up to a ton of oysters in sometimes choppy seas.

Like other traditional American working craft, the "Lolley boat" has evolved to suit a region's particular circumstances (weather and water patterns) and cannot be found in other areas.

Lolley has built boats for a livelihood since his youth. He learned his craft from his father, whose sturdy boats were among the few to pass the rigors of government testing and were used by the Coast Guard during World War I.

Joseph Lolley also builds boats to last. "To hit a sea with a load of oysters, a boat has to be tough," he says. He learned much from some of Florida's Greek fishers who befriended him. While others moored their boats during hurricanes, the Greeks reefed their sails and rode the storms out. Expert sailors, they knew how to make the forces of nature work for rather than against them, and as a boy Lolley became aware of that distinction, applying it first to the design and con-

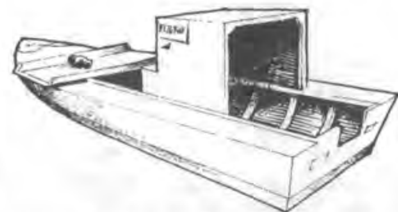


illustration by Frank Holyfield

struction of his "play" boats and later to his full-size boats. He says he conceived the hull he builds today when he was a boy, running along shore pulling behind him a toy boat improvised from a barrel stave.

When he moved to Inglis, midway down the Florida peninsula, Lolley learned how to build V-bottom boats, and he's credited with introducing this design to the East Point area when he returned about 25 years ago.

While the materials have changed through the years – marine plywood has replaced cypress planking, for example – the "Lolley boat" remains the model for the 300 oyster boats in the East Point fleet. Surprisingly, not one is a mass-produced fiberglass boat. "With age they don't hold up," Lolley explained.

Today, Joseph Lolley only "dabbles," constructing an occasional boat for his grandchildren and instructing the younger builders who seek his advice. He has supplied hundreds of boats to two generations of oysterers, but he seeks no formal credit for his accomplishments, content with the modest boat that he has built "for the working people."

– RICHARD LEBOVITZ
freelance writer
Buxton, NC

"Facing South" is published each week by the Institute for Southern Studies. It appears as a syndicated column in more than 80 Southern newspapers, magazines and newsletters.

RESOURCES

Our Endangered Children

The latest statistics on *America's Children and Their Families* are all together in one easy-to-understand 81-page handbook compiled by the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) from various governmental sources. Divided into a variety of categories – including family size and structure, income and poverty, working parents, child care, maternal and child health, education, housing, juvenile justice, food and nutrition and youth employment – the book is a key resource for child advocates, educators, policy makers, researchers and so forth.

CDF's conclusion is that American children are worse off now than they were 10 years ago. Among the stark facts are these: of the nation's 61.7 million children under 18, one in five lives in poverty. Almost seven million have no health care, and 40 percent of all preschoolers are not immunized against polio. One in three children has never seen a dentist. One in five lives with only one parent. About 13 percent of all 17-year-olds are functionally illiterate.

For a copy, send $5.50 to CDF at 1520 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

Pregnant and Mining

In the late 1970s, as more and more women went to work in the coal mines, the Coal Employment Project (CEP) – the Tennessee-based women's support group – began to get calls from pregnant miners: "How long should I continue my work? Is there anything in the mining environment that could hurt my baby? What are the jobs in the mines that I should not be doing because they might affect my pregnancy?"

CEP had no answers and, the women reported, neither did their doctors or anyone else. But a beginning has now been made. During 1981 and '82, CEP staff sought out women who had been pregnant while working in the mines and interviewed 26 women who had experienced a total of 33 such pregnancies. The first result is *Pregnant and Mining: A Handbook for Pregnant Miners.* Written by Brenda Bell and June Rostan, it reports what the pregnant miners said about their jobs and health, how long they worked and why they stopped when they did, the outcomes of their pregnancies, the reactions of management and co-workers and their advice to fellow miners during pregnancies. The handbook also offers information on choices

in childbirth and medical care, and a list of resources and organizations.

It's not the final word on the subject. As Bell and Rostan say, "It is not possible to state conclusively that working as a coalminer has no negative impact on pregnancy nor is it possible to conclude that working as a coalminer does have a negative effect. Before drawing either of these conclusions it is necessary to conduct additional research." But it *is* an impressive start. Write CEP at P.O. Box 3403, Oak Ridge, TN 37830.

Peace Is Disarming

An important outpost of religious activism for peace we inadvertently passed over in our recent issue on "Waging Peace" (*SE*, November/December, 1982) is the Disarmament Program of New York's Riverside Church, an action-oriented education program for congregations and communities across the country. Its monthly newsletter, *Disarming Notes,* provides news of the worldwide disarmament movement, including extensive coverage of recent visits between Americans, Europeans and Russians. Thoughtful essays also appear. For example, we recently noticed one on "Militarism and Racism; Common Enemies – Common Dangers."

The program also offers a complete range of books, pamphlets, films, bumper stickers, T-shirts and so forth. Write the Riverside Church for a list: 490 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10027.

Self-Help Housing

Habitat for Humanity, an ecumenical outgrowth of Koinonia Farms in southwest Georgia, is busily engaged in no-profit, no-interest, community-based housing projects in the U.S., Africa and Latin America. It has drawn on its experience to compile the *Community Self-Help Housing Manual,* a 72-page how-to-do-it book that tells how to organize and finance such projects and how to build low-cost, energy-efficient homes for needy people.

There's advice on getting started, what committees are needed and what they should do, legal matters, construction ideas and sources of more information. In each case the narrative is supplemented by sample forms – for example, several varieties of applications for housing, articles of incorporation and even floor plans, all in actual use by one or another Habitat project. And since 11 of the 16 North American projects are in the South – places like Johns Island, South Carolina; Immokalee, Florida; Paducah, Kentucky; Appalachia, Tennessee; and San Antonio, Texas – interested Southerners should find the advice relevant and instantly adaptable.

You can order copies from the publisher, the Intermediate Technology Development Group of North America, P.O. Box 337, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520; the cost is $4.75 plus $1.50 shipping and handling.

By David A. Sampson

Grass & Gravel

What happened to me is an abomination. What happened to me is a violation of the highest order. It hurts. I am angry because of the hurt.

It would take me 26 calendar years to be able to make that statement. It feels good that I now can.

I was born breach; a victim of cerebral palsy. The attending anesthetist promptly christened me Joseph after the hospital in which the event took place. Six weeks later, my parents had me re-christened David Sampson. It was their unwitting acknowledgement of the warrior they had conceived.

I have no conscious recollections of my birth. Memory of the ordeal lives deep within my unconscious. It shows itself in dreams.

A feeling of entrapment pervades my birth dreams. My dream consciousness often cannot get out of a given space. At birth, I tried to enter the birth canal seat first – a tight fit, to say the least. It was quite an impossible fit. Thwarted attempts to turn me end round followed. I've heard talk of my chin getting caught on Mother's pelvis. How accurate this is, I do not know. The upshot is, the process damn near killed me.

I drowned.

Suffocated.

Brain damage occurred.

My awareness of such havoc showed itself with remarkable clarity in a dream. I recount the night's work here just as I recorded it the morning after it occurred.

It is time for me to leave this place. I try to squeeze through the square/rectangular hole in the white cinder block wall. The hole is under a sink (the allusion to water evident in all my dreams related to birth). The sink has exposed pipes. The edges of the hole are painted green. (Here I interject the thought: green-go-spring-rebirth.) The grass is green on both sides of the wall. I want to get my head and right arm and shoulder out through the hole first. They won't go. I know I didn't have this much trouble getting in. I sit with my back to the hole. Father helps by manipulating a device. I feel my molecules shift and contort. My back begins going through the hole. Father says this is the way out. I'm doubtful. My spine hurts from the contortions. I doubt my head will fit.

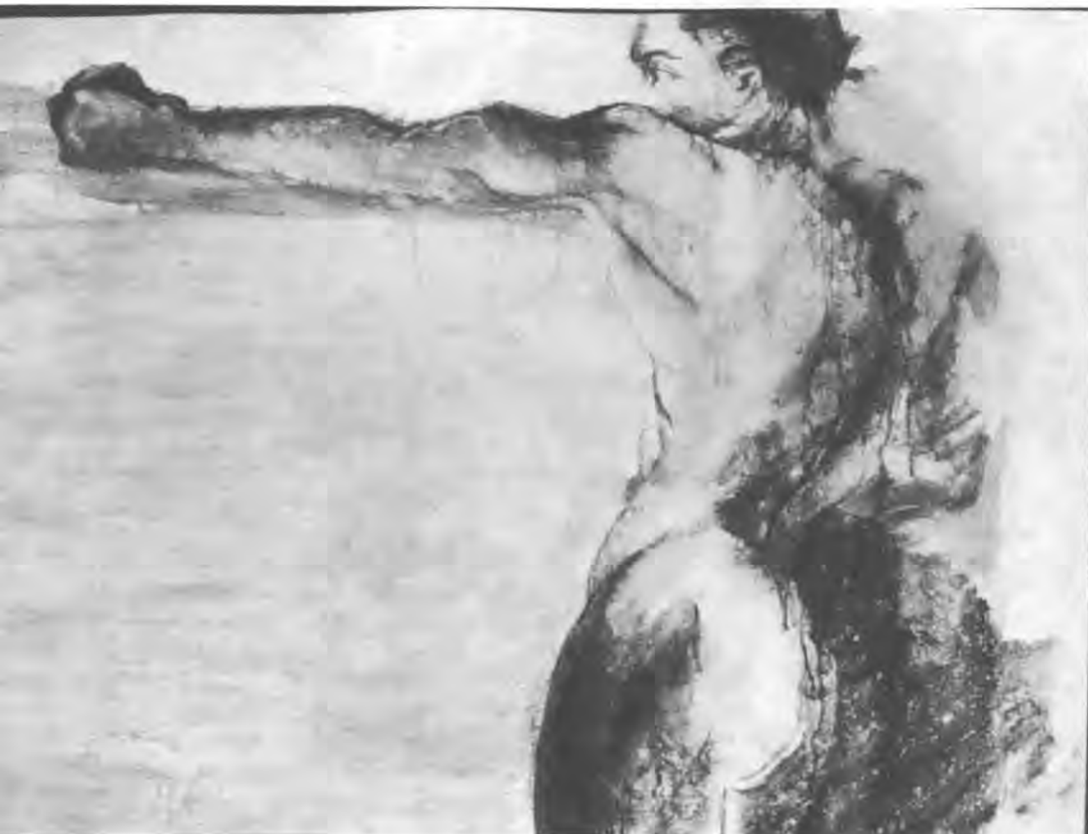
I did not. At least not in time.

My childhood was happy.

Eleven months and one day after I was born, my Mama gave me a playmate: a sister, Martha Stanley. Stanley would pull me out of my crib to play with her. This I know through the stories parents love to tell about their children. I am quite sure I considered the extradition a marvelous feat and the resulting bruises a small price to pay for such a masterfully executed jail break.

Early on Stanley tested her wings. She stepped off the front porch one day with every expectation for flight. She would fly the nest sooner than I.

The first clear memory I have of not being physically able to do something I wanted desperately to do dwells inside the walls of my third home. It was the home my parents purchased shortly after moving to Atlanta, Georgia I was five or six; old enough to want to climb trees. And I wanted more than anything to climb the tree in our side yard. It was a magnificent old loquat tree with multi-trunked limbs bowing invitingly to the ground. Mama did her best to satisfy the needs of her growing boy. She climbed the tree with me as high as she dared. Mama and I would perch in some crotch of the tree surveying the world as it could be seen from that perspective, then later



Male

I cried because we never climbed high enough. I cried because we had climbed the tree together. I cried because I could not climb the tree alone.

she would hold me while I cried bitterly.

I cried because we never climbed high enough. I cried because we had climbed the tree together. I cried because I could not climb the tree alone.

I entered public school at the seventh-grade level. I was a year older than most top-of-the-totem-pole grammar schoolers. My parents and teachers decided, in light of my inexperience in the public school system, holding me back – putting me on the same grade level as my sister Stanley – was the best thing for me. Subjecting me cold turkey to the sub-freshman high school experience would have been too much.

School, for me, had meant the Cerebral Palsy Center where all my schoolmates were like me. They had cerebral palsy, whatever that meant. I never cared much for clinical explanations. I understood that everyone out there had trouble controlling their body. I understood that the majority of my friends had far more trouble controlling their bodies than I did. I understood from my parents that because I had less trouble controlling my body than, say, Steve or Betty or Pam, and, therefore, could do more things and (with someone's help) go more places than they, I should feel lucky.

I understood all this and believed.

I never received a report card as such from my teachers at the center, though many a report was made on me. Academic achievement was measured in terms of S and U. Work was considered *satisfactory* if it was done to the best of one's ability. There was no correlation that I could discern between the grading standards measuring me and those measuring Stanley. Around the Cerebral Palsy Center I was considered exceptionally bright and I recognized my intelligence within the context of the world as I knew it. I had no idea how my intellectual powers measured up in the world *out there.*

I was keenly aware of the separation of worlds even from an early age. We lived on the very end of a dead-end street; a street whose children had long since grown up and moved away. It was a retiring neighborhood. My *normal* friends were Stanley's friends. I knew them and played with them because Stanley knew and played with them. I assumed my contact and, more importantly, my subsequent friendship with these children to be dependent upon my social link: my sister. I developed no real feel for how I would fare either academically or socially in the world.

Towards the end of my stint at the Cerebral Palsy Center, Atlanta discovered Doman Delacato, two doctors out of Philadelphia. I say Doman Delacato were two doctors. That's what I believed. Upon writing it, I'm not so sure.

I never actually saw the two men with the revolutionary treatment. I never saw the men whose program turned my life, and the lives of every member of our select class, upside down. For all I knew Doman Delacato could have been the Wizard of Oz, a big green mass of fire, fume and hullabaloo. As things turned out, that's just what it was for me – a lot of fire, fume and hullabaloo. The monumental gains attributed to the program did not come for me.

The Doman Delacato habilitative program, above any other, and I was on many, was the most thoroughly dehu-

Text and artwork © David A. Sampson, 1979-1983. This is a condensation of a longer work.

manizing of all organized therapeutic rituals.

Autumn's excitement faded that winter when the meaning of the select classroom began soaking in. With the advent of the new school year and the unveiling of the mysterious program, I fantasized classrooms of rings and trapezes. I was itching to swing like a monkey from the trees.

Crawling in the room that first day grounded those fanciful flights fast. The desks and chairs we sat in in years past – gone. A green rug lay on the floor. On it were two oriental-height tables. My horizons dropped from the panoramic view of monkeys to that of the caterpillars. The Doman domain was strictly on the floor.

The program's premise went something like this: it was the brain cells which had been damaged and/or destroyed at the time of birth. Lack of oxygen had seen to that. In my case, the cerebral havoc was confined to the cells controlling skeletal muscle activity. My therapy up until that point had attempted to treat the muscle, that is, the symptom. Doman Delacato would treat the cause. They would teach the undamaged brain cells to do the work. Work we did.

Patterning was the order of the day. Sometimes it was the order of the night, as well. Patterning meant five minutes of having people moving my appendages in a specified manner so as to simulate the act of crawling. Crawling correctly, that is. The way my sister supposedly did "it" before she learned to walk. The way my sister did "it" was stiff-legged like a camel.

After having the pattern honed into my head, I was to practice for 20 minutes on my own. I was to crawl. I crawled. I rested. I repeated the process. I repeated the process seven days a week.

The physical therapy room was one huge expanse of blue linoleum tile. So while there was never a corner in which to hide while 20 minutes ticked away at a snail's pace, you could always converse with a fellow crawler. Or better yet, with the therapists themselves. I dearly loved joking with Lenny, Ellsy, Thelma and Mrs. Rudolph. The rapport we had was unique. There was a certain equivalency between us. There was a humanism in the therapist's response to me that raised me to their level, though my belly never left the floor.

Every so often we were masked. This ritual took place periodically throughout the day. Each of us had our own wire-rimmed, double-pouched plastic face mask that was slipped over our nose and mouth. A straw in the end of this Halloween concoction allowed just enough air in to prevent suffocation. The effect was similar to that of a dry cleaning bag over the head. By the end of the specified minute, I breathed deep and hard, sucking up every molecule of oxygen available. The effect induced was precisely the one intended; deep breathing. Cerebral palsied people often do not breathe deeply, though I don't know why. How much carryover this exercise had, I haven't the slightest idea. For the time the mask was on and the minute or so it took to catch my breath after it had been removed, I breathed as hard as any Triple Crown winner. We all did.

I had a great and secret aversion to that nasty piece of plastic. I would fantasize space ventures to help soften the anonymity of my disguised features. I was uneasy with the way the translucent plastic beaks distorted the appearance of myself and my friends. I did not like the way the masks yellowed with age. They looked grungy and having mine slapped over my face once an hour, on the hour, made me feel grungy. Beyond that, there was a nebulous uneasiness within me every time the masks came out. Only now have I been able to clarify that queasy rumble of long ago.

It had to do with the amount of oxygen I was getting; or more precisely, the amount I was not getting. The feeling was stifling.

The connection crystalized this past July. I was leisurely swimming the back stroke. Swimming was then an activity still eight months new to me. I was wriggling through the water like a sperm shot from a cannon, feeling very sleek and alive. The driving rhythm of each stroke seemed to feed from the momentum of the stroke just completed. My body cut through the water like an otter and the water

yielded to my presence, massaging me lovingly in passing. I had just passed beneath the string of flags signaling the three-quarter mark in the Olympic-size pool. I coughed. My stomach contracted. My seat went down and so did I. I flopped over violently in the water. I struggled. Without air, I could not depend on my body's natural buoyancy to get me back on the surface. Months of swimming instructions came to mind. I had learned to float only when I managed to relax. Swimming came easy only when I usurped my body's ingrained tendency to work.

And not working took a lot of work.

I could not relax.

I could not move.

Every muscle in my body became hard as brick and just as heavy. The surface was within a matter of inches, but getting there seemed as long a journey as does the birth canal to the unborn. I hung in suspended animation for what seemed an eternity. Weightless. Supported, yet anchored – desperately wanting oxygen. Mustn't this be what birth was like. I flashed, horrified at the prospect of finding out. I remembered the maskings of Doman Delacato and knew this was the undertow I had felt.

Masking came all too often.

So did patterning.

My life, like never before, became clearly focused on that magical someday we were all working for. "Someday you'll thank me for this," Mother said.

Children having disabilities become introduced to the concept of tomorrow far sooner than do most children. It is for them an especially critical concept to master for any habilitative activities to be truly beneficial.

I am all for rigorous habilitative or rehabilitative activity. But that activity should address itself to the whole individual. It is easy to become consumed in a child's physical development when that is the area most obviously in need of attention. The more severe that need is, the easier to become consumed by its maturation. But other needs exist as well. There must always be a sense of today's uniqueness and fulfillment. It is a delicate balance and one not easily maintained.

How much I gained because of the program is hard to tell. The physical activity did do me good if it did nothing more than keep me limber. Cerebral palsy accentuates and accelerates the body's natural tendency to stiffen. I have to work like hell to maintain status quo. In recent years I have felt my body age at an alarming rate. It is a battle I am rapidly losing.

In retrospect, I may or may not have accomplished just as much under the rigors of another program. In fairness to the Philadelphia wizards, the program never professed to be a cure. There is no cure for cerebral palsy short of regeneration of brain cells. Or death.

I hated crawling. It was monotonous. It was humiliating. By the time I quit the program, I had faced that first terrifying day of public school. I had made the transition from the handicapped world separate from my sister's to the *real* world at large. However well or ill I fit this new world, I was irreversibly part of it.

I was a young teenager and in spite of my extraordinarily different childhood, like any teenager I was itching to stand up and walk away from the past.

When I did, I stood up bent-kneed – unable to reach my full height of five feet, five-and-a-half inches. It seems to be common among CPs. My hamstrings had contracted. The muscle running down the back of my leg from my seat to my heel was too short to allow me to straighten my legs.

It was the summer between the ninth and tenth high school levels when I entered the hospital at Galveston, Texas, for corrective hamstring surgery. I don't recall what prompted Mother to investigate the possibility of a surgical solution to my statutory problem. The problem that summer certainly was not uppermost on my mind. I was well into a non-credit figure drawing course at the High Museum of Art. And art frees my mind of all confines. This particular drawing course was non-credit for me because I was still in high school. Had I been in college, I could have earned college credit for the experience.

It was an experience. I could hardly believe Mother had signed me up for nude life study classes. I was no stranger to the High. I had taken art classes at the museum since before there was a museum. I had said I wanted to be an artist for as long as I had wanted to be anything. Still, drawing real live naked women was something else again.

I arrived late that first Tuesday, clutching the manilla drawing pad that was at least half as long as I was. Mother opened the studio door and rolled me in. The model already had her clothes off. She was standing in the middle of the studio with her back to us. Thank God! Arriving late under these circumstances was nerve-wracking enough; had Mother and I come face to face, eyeball to nipple with this naked stranger, I believe Mother would have fainted. As for me, I don't know what I would have done. My heart could not pound any harder than it already was. I could not have been any harder than I already was.

But the nervousness of that first moment of entering the grownup world of the artist had long passed when I entered the office of the orthopedist. He told me my legs could be straightened. The top doctor in the field of hamstring surgery was in Galveston.

I spent a month in that Galveston hospital bed looking like a wishbone. I awoke from the operations, my legs in crotch-high casts attached together and separated from each other by a bar at about mid-shin. My hamstrings had been sliced lengthwise behind each knee and reconnected end-to-end. The final result did not equal the length of my legs. They had to be entombed in plaster still slightly bent. I was, of course, disappointed.

I turned my sights downward and reached for my toes. It was just what the doctor ordered. By the time they took the buzzsaw to my plaster sarcophagus, my legs were straight as toothpicks – and not much bigger around. There never were two more beautiful toothpicks.

Beauty hath a vengeful wrath. My hamstrings did not take kindly to what had been done to them. And they let me know their displeasure with muscle spasms that literally rocked my bed. I had never known such exhaustive physical

pain. Spasms rocked me for months; first in my plaster-of-paris Texan chaps, then at home in leather and steel. The spasms rocked me every way but asleep. Nights were endless.

Gradually I again took my first steps, always lock-kneed, lifting from the hip. My legs would not bear the full weight, though my body weighed considerably less than it had prior to the operation. I looked like an emaciated rat. Lean and shaved all over. Nevertheless, I needed braces for support.

Sometime after coming out of my casts, and before going from the Galveston Medical Center home, I witnessed the doctor demonstrate my probable gait. It reminded me of Frankenstein. It was ghoulish. He told Mother and Father that I might not come out of braces. No one had bothered to mention this possibility to me at the outset. A lifetime in leather and steel? Like hell! As a child I had braces. My memory of that was only dimly jogged by a newspaper photo of myself and a noted orthopedist. The Ivory Soap boy in braces. The thought of going back to that for a lifetime just didn't wash. Braces were a dim memory at that time and I was determined that's how it would remain. I was in high school. I would not be separated from the world by steel. The closest my pimply-faced friends came to Bethlehem Steel was the trick-tracks on their teeth. Well, my teeth didn't need straightening and now that my legs had been straightened, my braces, like theirs, as far as I was concerned were temporary.

I remember no great fanfare when I took off the braces for good. Like my friends sneaking wads of bubble gum between trips to the orthodontist, I, too, remembered the taste of life before braces. I stole sugar – first on the sly, then openly, feverishly – giving my legs every opportunity to regain the strength bed rest robs.

I convalesced for nearly a year.

I can now stand erect. There is, behind each knee, a reminder of how I got there. Reminders of those last four drawing classes – cut. The reminders are headaches. Knee-aches, actually. Life being the imperfect scale it is, recurring migraines behind each knee are, I suppose, a reasonable price for a man's full measure. The truth of the matter is, there's a price to be paid. I paid it. In this aspect, as is the case with every other aspect figuring into living with a disability, the mortgage on life is high. Payments are steep and they last a lifetime. The doctor signing the birth certificate of a child with a disability in effect acts as proxy for the child, making that new life responsible for a balloon note.

My Daddy died to me with my entrance into adolescence. His was a slow arduous death. It is a loss I still mourn.

Daddy fell victim to America's perspective of her own masculine self. It is a cancer which reduces many a man to machine. Under pressure of America's convoluted reflection of manhood and what it means to be a man, Daddy forgot how to be loved by his own kind.

Our society regrettably teaches men to distance themselves from their brothers – from the very individuals inherently possessing the greatest potential for understanding and support. The adolescent's rejection of his father's physical affection is a direct response to the messages the boy receives. Little boys are told to "stand up and take it like a man." To do anything less is a direct affront to their masculinity. Even at an early age, the sense of sex is critical to the sense of self. The power of sexual stereotyping, therefore, cannot be underestimated. Men are supposed to be strong and independent. And largely unemotional.

What men are is human.

Because we subvert the natural expression of natural feelings, the American male has had to find other more covert ways to satisfy his needs for masculine affection and camaraderie. It is unacceptable for men over a certain age to hug one another. But introduce the air of sporting competition and the intimacy of wrestling becomes perfectly permissible. Alcohol promotes camaraderie because there is no danger of accountability. And is it any wonder that in a country that severely limits the physical contact of its male population, football is the national pastime?

The North American Soccer League doesn't stand a chance.

Social pressures came to bear on Daddy and me about the same time they bear on most fathers and sons. I had long since outgrown the ritual of the Sunday funnies. I did not need him to dry me off after my nightly bath (the memory of which I dearly cherish). And allowing anyone to tuck me in at night was far too babyish for a young teen. I had no affinity for any of the common substitute activities expressive of love among men. We shared no love of sport. Sport bored the hell out of me. I had no desire to become spectator to yet another facet of life. Driving a car was assumed to be beyond my realm of capabilities. And I assumed so as well. I felt little need to tinker with a toy I could not fully enjoy. We could not enjoy my growing sexual prowess, I had no sexual prowess growing. Even if I had, sex was a subject squeamishly left to Mother's squeamishness.

Beginning with my graduation into high school, Father showed his affection to me and to the rest of the family in perhaps the only manner he could. He expressed himself through love's Siamese twin. Father, to me, means anger. Father's anger spilled out over us with all the passion and safety of a Sunday afternoon on the gridiron.

To Father I was handicapped when it was convenient for him to have me so. He would force his help on me when I did not want it, so as to get me quickly out of the way. On these occasions, and there were many, he did not know the meaning of "No, thank you," regardless of the form it took. By the same token, when it was convenient to have me not handicapped, I was not. Help was forthcoming only after a greal deal of coaxing.

Basic to his teeter-totter behavior is, I think, the fact that Father had not then, nor has he yet, come to grips with the naked truth – that he sired a cripple. His emotional life would be a great deal easier were I not a cripple.

Having a successfully deep relationship with anyone who has a disability of any kind requires first coming to grips with one's own limitations. Dealing with human mortality is no easy task. It is an issue many simply avoid. However, we can never become comfortable with another's limitations until we are comfortable with our own. I, too, struggle with that. Father has not accepted his limitations. He, therefore, cannot accept mine. It is easier for him to keep me at arm's length than grapple with the reality intimacy demands.

Having myself recently experienced anger for a loved one while watching Grandmother dare to die on me, I can now understand one of the sources of Father's anger. Father holds a certain anger especially for me which goes beyond even social pressure for expression of love. It is the anger which comes from a deep and profound hurt. That hurt is perhaps the one life experience we share. It makes us fierce adversaries, bound by a relationship as powerful as steel. The hurt he feels will not go away in time. If anything, it will fester. Hurts of such depth heal only with a conscious, deliberate and focused effort to understand the root and the breadth of the pain.

Graduating from high school, I had applied to Georgia State University exclusively, figuring then if David was to go to college, it was GSU or nothing. Georgia State was an accessible university. I knew of no other accessible university teaching a strong art curriculum.

My second year at Georgia State, I needed to go off to school. College was the great wading pool of independent living. Everyone was allowed to get their feet wet before diving into life on their own. There was no time like the present.

I called my VR counselor to find out how much assistance I could get. I got none. He had less enthusiasm than a dead fish. Vocational Rehabilitation was paying my tuition to State; they could not pay the higher tuitions of Georgia's other institutions of higher learning. They certainly could not begin to pay for out-of-state tuition. As for my alternative suggestion of continuing at Georgia State, but taking an apartment with a roommate, financial assistance from VR was out of the question. There were no provisions for such matters.

I did not think to ask for a referral to some other agency possibly capable of lending support for my quest for independent living. I am not sure any agency had within its realm of service the kind of support I needed at the time. If such help did exist, I did not know about it. In fact, I got the very distinct feeling from my Vocational Rehab counselor that handicapped people were not supposed to want to leave mommy and daddy and the security of home.

Mother took me to look at three schools that were within our price range and were reportedly accessible. Very few colleges met both requirements.

Valdosta State University had a wonderful new Fine Arts facility. The intermingling of Chopin with turpentine and linseed oil excited my senses and cushioned the restraining reality of the split level building with stairsteps.

My love was not totally accessible to me.

The art department at Valdosta did not offer the educational range Georgia State did. Mother and I loaded the car and drove on.

The campus of the University of South Florida at Tampa was tremendous. It seemed 70 football fields had been laid end-to-end and side-by-side on out to infinity. Everywhere I looked was flat Floridian sterility. The sun reflected off white pavement with a blinding force that could signal rocket ships. The art department seemed just as twenty-first century sterile. I did not like it.

A month or so later, Mother and I were on the road again. This time we took a northern route, to Memphis State. The snowy Tennessee winters did not excite me at all, but I had a cousin in Memphis I remembered with foggy fondness and, what the hell, the university was accessible. That was more than could be said for most.

My main concern was with the art department. Memphis State's concerned me.

With me were the photographs of the work I had done the year before. I had discovered the wonders of the rapidograph pen and was cross hatching my heart out. The technique resembled the etching of the old masters – in

a vague sort of way. And I'd work tirelessly refining the minutest detail.

I was good.

My first show had been a near sellout.

My second show had not done as well. But what did I care? The particular mall which showed my work was not as well traveled as Atlanta's premiere shopping mall. I had done well at Lenox Square. I had gotten through the screening process having only to display one example of my work. I had felt the respect of the other artists exhibiting. The jangling in my pocket serenaded professionalism.

I felt good about myself as a serious artist and confident in the quality evident in my portfolio.

From Memphis State's reaction, you'd have thought I was daVinci incarnate.

I was good, but not that good.

I returned to Georgia State aching from the decision I'd had to make. Memphis State had been my last hope for a total college experience. As much as I longed to have that experience, I would not shortchange my artist's education to get it. I was angry over the choice because there was no choice. To satisfy one set of needs, I had to violate the other. I felt as though someone had handed me a carving knife. The question was not if I would cut myself or how deep the cut would go. The question was simply a matter of where.

What I did was castrate myself. I returned home and there became impotent. I felt completely swallowed up.

I poured myself onto canvass. The hours not spent traveling to and from art class were spent behind a paint brush. The demands I made on myself were gruelling. A quarter did not end without my feeling like a zombie. My energy consistently ran out four weeks before the quarter did. During the final weeks of a quarter I frequently fell victim to crippling cricks in my neck, shoulders, back and arms. Propelling myself by wheelchair was excruciating. Colds frequently buried me.

The pressure paid off in a way. I expected the best from within me and that's precisely what I got. Sometime during my junior year, my classmates began calling me "Master David." The name stuck. I was glad for the recognition. One of my illustrations won inclusion in the Society of Illustrators 1976 student competition show. I came back from New York high as a kite and rode that same jet stream through to graduation.

On first glance, things seemed never to be better. I was doing well in my major and picking up scholastic honors right and left. However, my kite's tail had caught a thorn and the fancier I fluttered in the wind, the more entangled I became.

Home life was no life. It was survival. I gasped for air.

My social life was non-existent.

About the time I rounded the corner for my home stretch run for the sheepskin, Georgia State hired a counselor and coordinator for handicapped services. A black man, Richard himself sat in a wheelchair. He spoke from experience. We met quite by accident that cold December day.

"You are receiving SSI, aren't you?" he asked in passing.

"SS what?" I said.

"Supplement Security Income. Being disabled, you've been entitled to a monthly check since you were 18." I was then 24. I shuddered at the thought of what I could have done with a little income. "As for your desire to move out on your own," he added, "of course you want to – every human being does." It was the first time anyone had ever told me I had a right to the same kind of life everyone else enjoys. How I got it was a matter of careful maneuvering.

"Apply for Section 8 Housing. The government subsidizes the rent of low-income families. And SSI is certainly low enough income. After you do all that," Richard went on, "apply for food stamps and Medicaid. Your SSI eligibility qualifies you for a state-furnished electric wheelchair. Go to Vocational Rehabilitation for that. And while you're there, tell your VR couselor you need certain things to start life as a freelance artist living independently."

Living independently. The word reverberated between my ears like the cling-clanging of the Liberty Bell on that first Fourth of July. I absorbed Richard's every word, astounded at my foolhardiness. I assumed if services or programs were available for which I was eligible, I would be told. I was a white middle-class honky without the street savvy of a tin can. My can had been kicked because I was too ignorant to know it was not made for kicking. I remembered the conversation I had had years ago with my deadpan VR counselor. Short of finding another university, I wanted to find a roommate and an apartment. I had been informed in a dry monotone that what I wanted was quite impossible. Like a fool, I believed.

As an SSI recipient, I automatically qualified for Medicaid coverage. It also entitled me to additional benefits from Vocational Rehabilitation. Bingo! Under Richard's guidance, I hit a vein in the embalmed arm of state government.

VR would provide me with an electric wheelchair.

I was familiar with the contraptions from my years at Georgia State. I knew they were handy devices and I knew they were well out of our price range. The motorized chairs at school were used primarily by paraplegics. I was not comfortable around those people with severely limited mobility. Their powered chairs symbolized a degree of restriction I did not want to acknowledge. I wanted no part of them or their electric chairs. The reflection was too painful.

Practicality dictated a change in outlook. At the time, I did not have a driver's license, much less a car. If I was to move out, live on my own, and accomplish all the activities inherent in such a venture, I had to have an electric wheelchair. Stumbling home with a sack of groceries in one arm and a jug of milk in the other leaves no hand to hold a walker.

I reluctantly sat in the seat I had proudly avoided.

Qualifying for Section 8 housing did not come as automatically as did Medicaid. If you can believe a bureaucrat, the ones at the Housing Authority were among the most over-worked in the system. They had applications still unprocessed from six months back. My application looked in order, but there was no way to get a ruling for at least as long.

After running the maze of bureaucratic formalities,

Sisters

Having a successfully deep relationship with anyone who has a disability of any kind requires first coming to grips with one's own limitations.

I finally got through to the head honcho, a Mrs. Buck. Appropriate, considering what I was doing to the system – or was the system doing it to me?

I bugged the hell out of Mrs. Buck. She heard my voice on the phone once every few days for weeks. When she didn't return my calls, I barraged her with messages. Eventually, I got some words of encouragement. She told me to go ahead and sign a lease on an apartment. The Housing Authority would process my application shortly thereafter and the months of waiting due to the backlog would be usurped.

I began the process of finding myself a home. I had very specific requirements. Above all, my home had to be accessible to an electric wheelchair or be easily made accessible.

I signed the lease on a one-bedroom apartment two hours after graduating *cum laude* with a Bachelor of Visual Arts degree from Georgia State University. The date was June 11, 1977. I moved into my new home two days after that. It was the first real home I'd had in 10 years. In a single stroke, I managed to pull off the biggest coup of my life. I had simultaneously written the end to my formative years and prefaced chapter two.

I opened my own front door in spite of the system, not because of it. Though the Housing Authority under HUD gives the option to go out and find an apartment owner willing to go along with the regulations of the program and move into that apartment in the real world, in actuality if you have a mobility-hampering handicap, you virtually have no choice.

The ceilings on allowable apartment rent plus utilities in 1977 were archaic.

I could have found an apartment meeting HUD's financial limitations. I did. It was in Atlanta's high crime district and up two flights of stairs. Between it and the nearest grocery store were 12 city blocks and not a single curb cut. I do not know where the nearest drug store was. It really did not matter. The situation was impossible.

I live independently in the community because I have a landlord who is willing to bend to make the bureaucracy work for me. Had I not found such a landlord, I would have gone into a Housing Authority owned-and-operated highrise home for the elderly and destitute. I would have existed in a pre-fabricated cracker box alongside all the other misfits, who through age or financial happenstance, society deems easier dealt with in neat bureaucratic cubicals.

Aside from its rigidity, the problem with the system is there is no system for the average, middle-class American. The individual with a disability had better be dirt poor and therefore eligible for federal support, such as it is, or filthy rich and able to assume the exorbitant cost of living. Electric wheelchairs run into thousands of dollars. The price of medicine is high.

Uncle Sam picks up the tab for some of that – assuming one is on SSI. And it's a good thing he does. There are expenses of handicapped living which Uncle Sam will not pick up regardless of income. By the time the tally was totaled, for example, I had spent close to $800 making my apartment and apartment complex accessible. Accessing expenses are not tax-deductible if, to keep benefits, one is disallowed a substantial earned income on which to be taxed.

Then there are the unexpected expenses. The last time I lost my balance, I lost $50 in the process, because my glasses frames could not take the abuse my body had. Optometrists and glasses are not covered under Medicaid.

The jump from a government-supported handicapped existence to a self-supportive one is so great there is little or no incentive to get out of the system once having fought your way in. The system perpetuates the handicapped attitude by actively fostering the continued need for dependency.

If American society feels strained, it is because America handicaps many of her citizenry.

My first sexual experience was with a man. I was 25. I returned to my apartment with a friend. We had lunched together. I excused myself long enough to park my electric wheelchair in the pantry. Closing the door on my in-house garage, I resumed our conversation. My walker was out of reach, so I leaned on Pierce for support. He hugged me and asked me to bed.

I had come to a crossroad. Thoughts raced through my head rapid-fire like a machine gun unloading its round. I held my silence, stalling for time. This invitation was not totally unexpected. I had agonized over my own sexuality for years.

It was that first year in public school – my first exposure to *normal* people. A friend invited me over to spend the night. His big brother's bar bells lay dusty in the garage. My friend, in passing, showed me an issue of *Muscle* magazine. It was a real turn on. Those exploding biceps, triceps and pectals, well-oiled and glistening, seemed like precious gems under the photographer's light. The men exuded such a physical power, such power I had never felt kin to. I wanted to see more. I wanted to ask for more.

I did not dare.

I remembered years before, sitting in pajamas on Mama's bed drawing bare-chested men with lions, bare-chested men with leopards, bare-chested men with tigers, bobcats, wolves, whatever. When the whatever ran out, I still drew bare-chested men. They started out soft and rounded, but after a little coaching from Daddy, I understood the masculine physique. I revelled in its strong angularity. It fascinated me. And I was jealous of its every sharp shadowy turn.

I remembered all this and wondered.

High school increased the doubt. I reached puberty in the eighth grade – a full year after my adventuresome grammar school comrades. Some seemed so apt at groping in the bushes and down a blouse, I was sure they were very old hands at it.

I heard tales of conquests, near-conquests and the desire for conquests, regardless of the cost. I stayed on the fringe of these talks, laughing with the rest, enjoying the stories of young males perusing their pride, but feeling no such cocky self-confidence swell within me. I didn't go gah-gah over the largest pair of knockers to come bouncing down the hall to gym class. And that concerned me.

I was never one to date. Not because of lack of desire. Two always seemed a number preferable to one – particularly in the closing hours of a party. But I had an acute lack of self-confidence. Mother had somehow managed to impress within me the notion that I was less of a date than all the other potential dates in the sea. In its most crass terms: why would any girl want to date David, or to be intimate with David, when she can date a *whole* boy.

The lines of communication were, of course, much more subtle than this. I was never expected to date as I was expected to bring home good grades. My sisters were expected to date. Mother spoke of building a duplex for the three of us – herself and Father and me. We would live three together when Stanley and my still-younger sister, Tricia, married and moved. The possibility terrified me.

I had discovered *Playboy*. I had discovered life drawing classes. I knew what it was to be excited to orgasm by a woman. I knew what it was to be relaxed with a naked woman in the studio. I did not know what it was like to be intimate with a woman or even presume to ask. I was always a coward, terrified of the rejection I would surely get. The girls I knew were my very good friends and at that level, I was the swordfish in school. I could leap with the best of them, swimming rings around most conversationalists. But dating ran much deeper. There, I felt quite the catfish – awkward and gangly. Not dating was painfully safe. I took the safe way out.

College had been much the same – only more so. I didn't see anyone outside the classroom. Georgia State was an urban commuter university. As such, my friends invariably lived on the other side of town from me. Very few responded to overtures to get together. It was a lonely five years.

All the while my need for closeness increased. I ached to hold and be held.

My attraction to and jealousy for the well-built male increased as well. I desperately wanted a body I could like, a body I could be proud of. A body I thought other fish would take as bait. I wanted a body that showed its strength as blatantly as mine hid it. In high school, not only was I bogged down in the ugly duckling syndrome, I carried the additional weight of feeling David was ugly by some divine decree. I was ashamed of my body because I was a cripple. And cripples ought to be ashamed of their bodies. Their bodies, after all, are ugly. Why else would strangers "pray for me to be healed?" For years I feverishly lifted weights in the privacy of my locked room. I was hoping to acquire a more masculine physique, all the while ashamed of my burning desire to change my physical pre-destiny.

A friend had kissed me once. He returned me to my parents after an evening at the theater. I pressed my finger against my lips to retain the sensation as long as possible. My lips burned with excitement over my first kiss. It had seemed good for him as well. He left smiling. Could it be that Mother was wrong? Could it be that I was really nice to kiss? This meeting of the mouths had taken me quite by surprise. I had not had time to dry my lips as Mother had always instructed. I had not the slightest idea what state my lips were in. It didn't seem to matter though. My friend left smiling. I enjoyed the possibility that I might be sexually appealing. I enjoyed the lingering sensation of the kiss. I enjoyed it all and wondered what it all meant.

Was I homosexual or did I simply enjoy being kissed? The question gnawed at me. And if I were homosexual, was the choice made freely and naturally, or was it, as I feared, some unconscious attempt to differentiate myself from my overbearing father. I had, after all, felt the power of his refusal to let me be me. Might not this be an attempt to assume an identity so blatantly foreign to Father as to leave no room for comparison? The possibility infuriated and pained me as my attraction to the well-built male peaked while my ability to respond to the equally well-endowed woman plummeted.

The drama was fearful by the time I moved out on my own. The stage was set. complete with a gay bar across the

street from my new home. I felt the continued tugging of elusive sex pulling me in. With gay men, I might find acceptance. I might feel sexy and good-looking. I might also feel even more ostracized by the world I had come to know for its lonely rites of "Hello, how are you? What classes are ya taking? Don't tell me more, I don't care to know." If they did not care to know David in the wheelchair, how much less would they want to know gay David in the wheelchair? A great majority of the world, it seemed, reacted to homosexuals in the same way Father reacted to homosexuals. They made him sick.

So I had a choice. If I ventured into the gay community, I might find the affection I desperately needed. On the other hand, doing it with a guy was thought of as weird. It seemed a bit weird to me. I didn't want to be any weirder than my body already made me. Still, it was tender. And I needed an outlet for the tenderness I held within.

Pierce hugged me and asked me again to come to bed. My mind raced as the rapid fire of a machine gun discharging its load.

I was at a crossroad. I went to bed with Pierce that afternoon.

When it was all over, I looked myself in the mirror and smiled.

A few months later, I made the plunge and ventured into the gay bar. My electric wheelchair was wider than a single half of the bar's double-door entrance. My entrance that first night was not quite the inconspicuous event I had hoped for. It sounded like thunder as I ram-rodded my way in. Every eye fell on me. I drew the deepest breath I could in the stifling silence, held my head high and drove my chair to the end of the bar. I got out of the chair and climbed up on the barstool. The gentleman next to me promptly bought me a beer. The courtship between me and my own sexuality had begun.

I began feeling sexy once others showed me I could be thought of as a sexual being.

I discovered the pleasures of my own body. I learned to internalize every stroke of gratification, relishing and nourishing my body and soul's natural capacity to heal itself.

I love the complete absence of spasticity I experience after orgasm. I know of no other conscious state, with or without drugs, in which I feel such complete relaxation. Quite frankly before that first blow job, I did not know such relaxation was within my realm of reality. Making love with someone I care for deeply has the additional benefit of producing a very definite after-effect. The intensity of my relaxive state fades quickly. The ghost of that experience shadows me for hours. I feel slowed down and more in control of my body's actions. My body feels my own.

The emotional value of my finally having a sex life was eventually more surprising and even more powerful than the unexpected joy of its physical effect.

I immediately felt grounded – as though my sail boat had suddenly been given a keel of far greater weight. I sat lower in the water; I felt less tossed by the sea.

My period of activity in the homosexual world lasted about a year. For that time, I learned a lot and grew a lot. I made a few good friends. Some I still see. With some, I share sex. I stopped frequenting the bar when I no longer felt a need to go – when I began feeling uncomfortable being there.

I felt uncomfortable about the exclusiveness of the environment of the gay bar.

I feel uncomfortable about the exclusiveness of the heterosexual world as well. My struggle with sexual labels has led me to a satisfying dismissal of their import.

Several months after the onset of my self-imposed exile from the nursery of my sexual self, I began feeling rumblings not felt since the time of my first uncovering of that big-nippled beauty in the pages of my cousin's *Playboy* so many years ago. I began noticing female's bodies. The packaging was nice.

My sensory mechanism was very rusty from lack of use – but it was there and functional.

The human psyche, I discovered, has remarkable adaptive powers. As long as I was the true apostle to the notion that David was not to be sexual, I could only respond to women in ways which were safe and guaranteed Platonic. I could have no girlfriend. I had many a sister.

Jerking off was certainly safe as long as I kept the possession of that *Playboy* and my interest in sex secret. But even the capacity of a picture to excite me wilted and eventually died as the vicious circle of non-sexuality folded in on itself. By the time drugstores began carrying the more explicitly revealing girlie magazines, my brainwashing had a self-fulfilling momentum of its own. Crotch shots were far too threatening. They revolted me. I, in effect, had become that which I was told I was. I was, in practice, a non-sexual being. It was only when my squelched sexuality attached itself to an already existing, though then not recognized deep-rooted jealousy for the well-built, well-functioning, powerful male body, that I finally felt safe enough to consider myself capable of sensuality and capable of expressing that sensuality toward another human being.

It was befitting my birth as a sexual man that I first explored that mysterious sexuality with a man. I had missed that final stage of adolescent sexual development that draws boys together behind the barn for circle jerks. At the age most boys masturbate one another and race to beat the other's explosive ecstasy, all my classmates were crippled. They never did "it" with me because, I expect, like me, their cousins and acquaintances never did "it" with them. We never saw each other as sexual because at the age of traditional awakening no one saw us as being sexual. As long as people remain in unnatural or isolated environs subject to unnatural expectations or a lack of expectations, then less-than-natural behavior will tend to self-perpetuate.

My struggle to gain ownership of my own sexuality is the same struggle toward life in its totality. It is not a process of overcoming, but a process of plowing through. There is no circumventing life if growth is to continue throughout. The muck often rises neck-deep.

Much of the muck I have waded through and continue to wade through was and is unnecessary. Parenting is at best the most awesome responsibility two individuals ever assume with no explicit training. Parenting a child who has a disability without benefit of informed professional guidance is asking for trouble. Nothing either of my parents did to me was ever done except out of the conscious sense of the best of intentions. I am still paying for their good intentions.

The human ability to forgive injustice is dependent upon an understanding of the full scope of that injustice. I am not yet able to completely forgive either Mother or Father what they did to me. I, therefore, do not believe I have yet realized the true pervasive nature of what they did.

It has been my experience that those people less subject to the unconscious misconceptions about handicaps so rampant in our society are generally those individuals who were exposed to people with handicaps from a very early age. Even this, however, cannot be assumed adequate preparation for parenting a handicapped child. Too often the parental desire to protect perverts desired results.

Mother and Father continually pointed out the far more limiting conditions of my schoolmates in an attempt to protect me from the pain of my own limitations. In truth, they did not shield me from my pain and resulting anger, they increased it by denying its legitimacy. They threw just enough cold water on the flames of anger to transfer an apparent danger to an unseen and lethal smolder. The chances of surviving a blaze are far greater than are the chances of surviving the noxious gases of the unseen enemy.

Anger and its underlying pain is my God-given birthright. Little else is. Recognizing this, I can embrace that birthright as basic to life as I know it. I can channel that tremendous source of energy in a way which promotes my greater health and happiness. I can create. I can pour all the pain and anguish I know into every brush stroke I paint and every word I write. I can transform that molten me into a communicable thing of beauty. I can reach out and profoundly touch another human being.

I can feel alive!

The awakening of such a painfully joyful awareness of anger's power took 26 calendar years. The road traveled to reach that point of beginning was far longer. The battles this warrior has waged were bloody – far bloodier than necessary. And now, at the doorstep of my beginnings I find a hopeful swell of enthusiasm for the clearing horizons. I also feel the unmistakable presence of blood and scars. I have gained a lot in choosing to fully live. I have also paid a dear price for the harvest. Intermixed with the wheat is the chaff of weariness that will remain with me forever.

I have taken merciless aim at a lot of sacred cows, mindful of a little girl I have never met. She, too, has cerebral palsy. By virtue of her own physical reality, she will face untold physical problems. By virtue of her physical reality and the reality of American society, she will encounter many of the emotional distortions I have enumerated. She will probably encounter more. My list is by no means complete. The emotional effect of profound trauma is unavoidable. The extent to which external factors affect early childhood development, however, can be affected by the parents.

Parents of children with disabilities must be aware of the attitudes their youngsters are going to run into. They must not be afraid to let their child run into those brick walls. Only when people are exposed to each other do barriers begin to crumble. Mamas and daddies can soften the blow of the walls by not reinforcing the myths that built them.

Finally, parents can allow their child the freedom to be whoever he or she is. They should explore the complete spectrum of their son's or daughter's feelings, discovering the origins of those feelings without attaching moral values to them. Emotions have no moral value. It is only what we do with emotions, not the existence of the feeling, that can bring good or harm to ourselves or others.

Underneath it all, my quest is no different than that of anyone else. A poem I wrote six years prior to this writing still says it best:

now
while my fingers feel the callus form
deep within my sweating palm
touch
the hole to make it heal
touch me now while I may feel
the earth and all its grass and gravel
to live and know I was alive – for a moment aware
able to share
the touch

EPILOGUE

"I David declare you Linda my most beloved and take you for my wife."

Her name was Linda. I called her Love. The 208 days we shared were a lifetime, the 17 months since her death an eternity. One of the pleasures of growing older is the giving up of much of youth's intensity for a more full-bodied vintage. The paradise I know, I know to be a uniquely human experience. I have plucked the rose and bled from the thorn.

The three-and-a-half years preceding this appendage have satisfied the question *why*. Life *is*.

Life is.
I risk.
I survive.□

David Sampson's artwork can be viewed and purchased through the McIntosh Gallery, 1122 Peachtree St. NE, Atlanta, Georgia (404) 892-4023.

A CLOUD ON THE HORIZON: PESTICIDE DRIFT

BY DEE REID

While the agricultural chemicals industry lobbied Congress last summer to water down a troublesome pesticide control law, residents of the tiny rural community of Gorgus, 325 miles away in central North Carolina's Chatham County, hid in their homes to avoid fumes from a controversial herbicide known as Agent White.

Boise Cascade had hired a specially licensed helicopter pilot from Louisiana to spray a mixture of herbicides known commercially as Tordon 101 (a Dow Chemical Company product) and Weedone (made by Union Carbide) over a 450-acre timber tract to kill off hardwood sprouts so the land could be re-planted with more marketable pine.

Investigators from the state Department of Agriculture finally determined that some of the chemical ingredients, probably 2,4-D, had volatilized – vaporized after striking the ground due to the hot, humid weather – and drifted over the adjacent, predominantly black community.

Carrie Yancey, whose land adjoins the Boise Cascade tract, was afraid to go outdoors while she nursed the youngest of her four children. She watched her vegetable gardens wither and die. There would be no produce to put up for the winter.

Billie Rogers's 12-year-old son ran into the house, coughing and eyes running, to tell his mother that a helicopter was spraying something over the area. A man on the ground told him it was safe, not to worry. But before the day was over, the Rogerses began suffering from sinus headaches, wheezing and coughing. And six months later, Mrs. Rogers said the bones in her face ached and her hands swelled up when she walked in the woods around her home.

Seventy-one-year-old herbal specialist Johnny Lee noticed brown spots on his fruit trees. Children in the community suffered stomach cramps and diarrhea, and the older residents lived in fear of it all happening again.

After learning that Tordon contains the same ingredients as the controversial Agent White – banned by the army in 1970 and thought by several respected scientific researchers to cause cancer and birth defects – Beverly Mitchell lost sleep worrying about the safety of her unborn child. "Just because it's legal, doesn't tell me it's safe," she said. Her farm had been invaded from above by the kind of chemicals she and her husband refused to use on their own garden.

Despite the 95-degree temperature

and stifling humidity, most of the 10 families affected by the incident felt compelled to keep their doors and windows shut tight at night because they didn't want to breathe anything that smelled that bad while they were sleeping.

Only after the community twice requested it did state pesticide investigators consider testing affected food crops to see if they contained any traces of dangerous chemicals. A month after the spraying took place, the inspectors were unable to find any traces of herbicides in the damaged produce, but they admitted they couldn't give the food a clean bill of health since even negligible amounts might be harmful.

"If they didn't know, I sure didn't know," shrugged Mrs. Yancey, who felt it was safer to discard even the crops that appeared healthy.

Damaged Crops, But No Violation

State pesticide officials did conclude that the damage to the Yanceys' garden was caused by herbicides drifting from the Boise Cascade tract, but they declared there had been no violation of state regulations or of federal label restrictions designed to promote safe use and avoid drift.

The chemicals apparently hit their intended target, then vaporized and drifted due to an unforeseeable change in the weather, concluded John Smith, secretary of the Pesticide Board and chief investigator. The Yanceys would have to hire their own lawyer if they expected to collect any damages from the timber company or the pilot involved, Smith said.

After the Agent White cloud lifted, it was clear to this small community that neither the federal Environmental Protection Agency nor the state Department of Agriculture could protect them.

North Carolina's pesticide law, and accompanying regulations, do place some limitations on the aerial application of restricted-use herbicides like Tordon because they could pose ecological and health problems if they got into water resources and can also destroy non-target crops, like tobacco, tomatoes and other produce. Pilots must be trained and licensed by the state Department of Agriculture. No spraying is allowed within 100 feet horizontally of an occupied dwelling

photo by Barry Hecht

A helicopter under contract to South Carolina Electric and Gas Company sprays a powerline right-of-way with Tordon 101, Agent White.

(except upon written permission), or 300 feet of an occupied school, hospital or nursing home. Herbicides must not be sprayed near water resources or in high velocity winds. The pilot must also follow the label instructions written under EPA guidelines – which critics say are too vague. With Tordon, the label advises that precautions be taken to avoid drift by noting the wind velocity and air temperatures.

The pesticide office of the N.C. Department of Agriculture gets about 100 complaints a year. Some of them are the result of pilot error, overspraying and other mishaps. But many are due to the delayed drift of herbicides, which, according to the National Agricultural Aviation Association, can occur up to a day or two later in hot and humid weather. In the state of Washington, for example, 2,4-D drifting from aerial application over forest lands has been cited for extensive damages to grape crops five miles away.

Neither North Carolina nor EPA have stated in their restrictions the specific climatic conditions that could cause volatilization and drift, such as air temperature, fog banks, humidity or the likelihood of rain.

Since North Carolina's law does not require the company or pilot to notify adjacent residents in advance of spraying, they have no way of preventing the damage to themselves or their gardens. North Carolina law does require the company to notify beekeepers in advance if they have a registered apiary within a half mile of the target area, a point that beekeepers lobbied for several years ago.

"Shouldn't humans at least be considered as important as bees?" asks Billie Rogers.

Neither North Carolina nor EPA monitors aerial spraying programs to see if regulations are followed. The state will investigate only when they receive information, usually from private citizens, that leads them to believe a violation may have occurred. It took Gorgus residents many phone calls to convince state officials, who

had already determined that no violation had occurred, to at least come back and test some produce samples to see if their food would be safe to eat. It was that sense of helplessness that prompted members of the community to ask local authorities to study the issue and help them make changes in the state laws and regulations.

The residents of Gorgus are not alone in their concern about herbicide drift. While the Yanceys and their neighbors wondered what they could do to prevent this from happening again, citizens in Cherokee County in western North Carolina were taking a count of increasing cancer deaths over the last five years, deaths which they believe are linked to the use of Tordon by power companies, the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture since 1966. State health officials went up to the mountainous county last summer to see if they could find any scientific evidence to support these claims.

Meanwhile, North Carolina's Senator Jesse Helms was up in Washington, trying to make life easier and more profitable for Dow Chemical Company and other major agricultural chemical producers by drafting a Senate bill that would significantly limit the public's knowledge of potential health hazards associated with herbicides and the ability of states to pass regulations that exceeded federal controls. Thanks to Helms being tied up in the Christmas, 1982, filibuster against the gasoline tax, that bill (a revision of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act – FIFRA) never made it out of his Agriculture Committee, but it is expected to spark a battle between an environmental-consumer-farmworker coalition and the pesticide industry in this session.

Frustrated by the decline in the Reagan administration's EPA and worried about efforts in Congress to weaken FIFRA, citizens across the U.S. have turned instead to their state courts, legislatures and regulatory agencies for protection from herbicide drift.

Complaints from Gorgus prompted other Chatham County residents living adjacent to the 23,000 acres of commercially owned timberland in the county to join forces to change the state law governing the aerial application of herbicides. They have asked their county commissioners and planning board to study the issue and help them request changes from the state pesticide board and the state legislature.

North Carolina law requires that beekeepers be notified before pesticides are sprayed. "Shouldn't humans be considered as important as bees?" asks a resident.

North Carolinians stand to learn from the experiences of those involved in similar situations in other states, most notably West Virginia, where citizens' complaints about herbicide drift prompted an investigation by the state's Attorney General, a state Supreme Court ruling about spraying, and the eventual enactment of strict controls.

Banned in Vietnam, Hailed at Home

Although phenoxy herbicides like Tordon have been widely used across the U.S. since the 1960s, complaints from rural residents have grown over the last four or five years as information about the potential health hazards associated with their use have been publicized.

Suggestions that phenoxy herbicides might be harmful to human health come in part from Vietnam veterans, who have filed a barrage of lawsuits against the federal government claiming that exposure to the defoliant Agent Orange (a mixture of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T) caused cancer and other health problems. (See *Southern Exposure*, Vol. X, No. 2.) Agent White – a mixture of Picloram and 2,4-D (now marketed commercially as Tordon) was widely used in Vietnam as a defoliant along with Agent Orange. The U.S. Army stopped using Agent White in 1970, after a study concluded that, of the four commonly used military herbicides, Picloram posed the greatest potential for causing "long-term, permanent ecological damage."

In 1973 the National Academy of Sciences interviewed more than 30 Montagnard tribe members in South Vietnam's highlands, where Agent White's use was heaviest. The subjects consistently referred to illnesses occurring among those in or near the sprayed areas, with the most common symptoms reported including abdominal pains, diarrhea with vomiting, respiratory symptoms and rashes. Some noted an unusually high number of deaths, particularly among children, following the spraying.

Despite the army and NAS studies, timber companies, the U.S. Forest Service, power companies, state transportation departments and the USDA continued to use considerable quantities of Picloram, 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T to kill off persistent woody growths. When EPA suspended the use of 2,4,5-T in 1979 after it was linked to miscarriages in Oregon, the use of 2,4-D and Picloram increased in its place.

The chemical 2,4-D, registered for use in the U.S. since 1948, is one of the most widely used herbicides today. About 1,500 products registered with EPA contain the ingredient, and more than 70 million pounds of it are distributed annually in the U.S. Picloram, registered in 1963, is one of the four major products in Dow's agricultural chemicals division, and earned the company more than $500 million last year.

The chemical 2,4-D is used in Weedone, and together 2,4-D and Picloram are known commercially as Tordon or Amdon, products which are sprayed from helicopters and planes over public and private forests and utility company rights-of-way. According to a 1979 study conducted for EPA by a California consulting firm, nearly 700,000 pounds of Tordon have been used on 135,000 acres throughout the Southeast, mostly by power companies.

The U.S. Forest Service used 49,000 pounds of Picloram on 77,000 acres of national forests, much of it in the South. The Forest Service uses a quarter ton of Tordon a year on 800 acres of clear-cuts in the Nantahala Forest in Cherokee County alone. The USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service subsidized the use of Tordon pellets by western North Carolina farmers to eradicate the persistent multiflora rose. The plant, which the government had introduced in the South in the '40s to control erosion, had gotten out of hand.

Boise Cascade representative Charles Sibley told the Chatham County planning board that his company viewed the Gorgus spraying as a successful experiment. Now that they have gained experience, they plan to do more spraying in the future, he said. Boise owns about 9,000 acres of land in Chatham County alone.

The Data Gap

Although both Picloram and 2,4-D are registered for use by EPA, the agency does not have in its files the studies conducted by the army or the National Academy of Sciences. In justifying the continued use of the herbicides, EPA relied solely on animal tests conducted by private laboratories under contract to Dow and the National Cancer Institute.

The first two tests were conducted in the late 1960s by Industrial Biotest Laboratories of Northbrook, Illinois, the largest chemical testing lab in the U.S. The lab was later charged with falsifying the data and fabricating the results, and the tests were thrown out as invalid. The third test, conducted in 1977 by Gulf Research Institute in New Iberia, Louisiana, for the National Cancer Institute, has been criticized as deficient. Analyses of these tests have caused a schism in the scientific community between those who believe they show Picloram is carcinogenic and those who do not.

In 1979, Dr. Melvin Reuber, then a noted pathologist with the Frederick Cancer Research Center in Maryland, reviewed evidence prepared by Dow and Gulf and said, "There's no doubt in my mind that Picloram is a carcinogen."

But EPA based its conclusion on the consensus of the NCI review committee, which held that the presence of benign tumors does not necessarily mean a substance will cause cancer. EPA admitted that more data is needed on the long-term effects, but in the interim maintains the position that no current evidence exists that Picloram poses risks of "unreasonable adverse effects to human health or environment."

Herbicide proponents from the timber, agricultural and pesticide industries say if it's okay with EPA, it must be safe.

Charles Sibley, who was in the helicopter that sprayed Tordon over Gorgus, said he had gotten the stuff all over him and never experienced ill effects. He said he has several children and had another one on the way at the time and he was not worried about long-term effects. "If we didn't think it was safe, we wouldn't use it," he said. "We want to be good neighbors."

Dow research scientist Wendell Mullison insists that Picloram is "completely safe for humans." He said table salt is three times as toxic.

Rick Hamilton, a pesticide specialist at North Carolina State University, told a group of concerned Chatham County citizens that the controversy over Agent Orange and Agent White stemmed from "emotional environmentalists" and a "media blitz." He said that most people who complained about damages were "publicity hounds." "I would have no qualms about my children being sprayed," he said. "I've been covered myself."

Before coming to N.C. State five years ago, Hamilton worked for the forest industry for a year in Virginia, where he was involved with spraying 2,4,5-T. He said he believes both Agent Orange and Agent White are safe.

West Virginia's Experience

The fact that non-target crops have been damaged by drifting herbicides, and people have experienced a variety of short- and long-term ill effects, leads many to believe EPA's label restrictions are not enough to protect the public.

Many states, like North Carolina, have regulations that essentially echo EPA guidelines on the use of herbicides, but they do not resolve the problem of volatilization and aerial drift. West Virginia was in that boat in May, 1980, when Bob Welsh was arrested for shooting at a helicopter spraying 2,4-D over a utility company right-of-way on his land, high atop Egypt's Ridge in Roane County. The judge understood Welsh's concern and acquitted him on self-defense. "Any reasonable person could have felt threatened," the judge said.

Welsh went on to become somewhat of a folk hero, and West Virginia went on to become the first state to really restrict the aerial application of herbicides.

Citizen concern about the aerial spraying of herbicides in West Virginia began as far back as 1977 when 2,4,5-T was still being sprayed by power companies over private rights-of-way. Steve White and Carol Sharlip had just moved from Baltimore to a 100-acre farm on a hillside in Chloe in Clay County, where they planted a large organic garden. They became concerned when they found out the power company was spraying 2,4,5-T from a truck onto the right-of-way behind an occupied trailer at the corner of their property.

They joined their neighbors in the West Virginia Citizens Against Toxic Sprays, patterned after a similar group in Oregon. The Oregon effort eventually prompted studies on the relationship between the use of 2,4,5-T by the U.S. Forest Service and timber companies and the prevalence of miscarriages in one area of Oregon.

White and Sharlip were relieved when the use of 2,4,5-T was banned by EPA, but disappointed when they saw a power company helicopter return in the summer of 1980 to spray Weedone (2,4-D) and Picloram over the same area.

After hearing about Welsh taking a shot at a helicopter in neighboring Roane County, Sharlip, White and their neighbors marched down to the regional office of Monongahela Power Company to let them know they weren't too happy about what was happening in their community either. The Citizens Against Toxic Sprays set up a hot line, establishing three local telephone numbers that citizens could call in the northern, central and southern parts of the state to report and describe the effects of herbicide spraying in their communities.

"We got 60 calls alone in our area," White said. "They got even more up north."

The state Department of Agriculture investigated several incidents and soon

concluded they involved violations of federal law.

"EPA didn't seem interested in prosecuting," White recalled. "I think they were afraid that their labels were too vague and might not hold up in court. It was then that state officials realized the need to write stronger regulations."

After the hot line was established, one irate citizen called the attorney general's office immediately after his land was sprayed. The attorney general assigned deputy assistant Dennis Abrams, head of a special environmental task force, to investigate.

"He was extremely interested in the issue," White said. "It was the additional pressure from the attorney general that got things moving over at the Department of Agriculture."

Abrams was concerned when his office got 10 or 15 additional calls in a three-hour period. "Citizen concern had been building over the last few years," he said. "But that summer (1980) it was humid and unusually hot, and the power companies did a lot more spraying than usual. They sprayed right on the ridge top in Roane County, and a heat inversion kept everything close to the ground. There was a tremendous amount of drift." Although only one or two people said they were directly sprayed, many complained of headaches and nausea.

Abrams called in health, water resources and agriculture officials to conduct soil, water and crop tests. "Things just mushroomed from there," he said. "Another incident occurred a week or two later and we heard the same complaints and symptoms. Suddenly people came out of the woodwork to report prior incidents."

photo by Barry Hecht

A hypo hatchet is used to inject Tordon into hardwood trees.

Among the prior cases were those cited in a petition filed by a group of citizens before the state Public Service Commission, complaining that several power companies were responsible for dangerous spraying incidents occurring from 1977 to 1979. Citizens asked the PSC to enact regulations that would demand: prior notification of residents on land adjacent to rights-of-way; wider buffer zones around homes, animals and water resources; and a commitment that the utility company would not spray if the landowner volunteered to clear the land by hand or machine – without herbicides.

While the PSC was hearing that case, the attorney general's investigation was showing results. The power companies agreed, with pressure from the attorney general, to a moratorium on further spraying until the investigation was completed. Meanwhile the attorney general set up a task force of citizens, health, water and agriculture officials and power company representatives to draft some guidelines for the agriculture department.

Shortly after the guidelines came out and the power companies agreed to abide by them, the PSC made a ruling on the citizen petition and asked for similar restrictions against aerial spraying. "The PSC ruling added clout to the agriculture department's new guidelines," White said. "At that point the power companies had no choice but to go along."

Eventually the state of West Virginia enacted those guidelines as law. Under the new regulations, a power company wishing to spray a right-of-way must provide written notification to the pesticide section of the state Department of Agriculture, local radio and TV stations, at least one local newspaper of general circulation, all adjacent property owners and tenants or others in control of land next to the right-of-way who have made a written request. The notice must describe what herbicides will be used, and where, when and how they will be applied.

What makes West Virginia's law unique among other states that have passed similar restrictions are two sections: one addressing volatility and drift, and the other requiring the power companies to give residents

the option of maintaining the right-of-way themselves.

Under West Virginia law herbicides cannot be sprayed from a plane or helicopter when the wind velocity exceeds five miles per hour, when the spray may come into contact with a fog bank, when temperature inversion and air stagnation are present, when the air temperature exceeds 90 degrees fahrenheit, or when it is raining or apparent it will rain within two hours. Without these specific conditions, judgment about the likelihood of volatilization and drift would be left entirely up to the pilot.

The law also gives the landowners the right to clear the right-of-way on their own land, forbidding any application of herbicides, and the state is now encouraging citizens to negotiate with power companies for reimbursement for any work they do for them on the right-of-way. "This was a very essential provision for those people who are adamantly opposed to the use of herbicides. It gives them some measure of control over their own land," White said.

A year after West Virginia enacted these provisions, the state Supreme Court added teeth to them by ruling that old right-of-way agreements between property owners and the power company never gave the utility the right to spray herbicides over the land in the first place. The court declared, "It was clearly not the intent of the parties to allow the power company to destroy all living vegetation within the area sprayed or adjoining areas where those deadly herbicides could drift."

"Our organization always contended that the landowner should control what happened to his land," said White. "The state Supreme Court decision was the ultimate affirmation of our position. A lot of utility companies think there are good reasons for spraying along their rights-of-way and that there are some times when it is the only way to go," White said. "But this decision tells them they can't do it just because they have a right-of-way agreement."

Both Abrams and the Citizens Against Toxic Sprays are pleased with the outcome of their efforts. There was virtually no spraying at the end of 1980 and only one or two complaints during the summer of 1981. Sharlip believes that the actions of Agriculture Commissioner Gus Douglas, the pressure from deputy attorney general Dennis Abrams, and the state Supreme Court ruling now mean that the spraying problem may be over in West Virginia.

Bob Welsh was arrested for shooting at a helicopter spraying pesticides on his land. The judge acquitted him on self-defense, saying, "Any reasonable person could have felt threatened."

"We're waiting to see what will happen next summer," she said. "But I feel that, because of the concerns raised by citizens, state officials and the courts, the power companies have decided not to spray anymore."

White said the key to the success of their campaign was not putting all of their eggs in one basket. "We couldn't just stop with the agriculture department," he said. "And I would caution citizens in similar situations in other states not to simply pick the most obvious channel for applying pressure. Departments of agriculture tend to be in a funny position because most of their responsibility lies in the area of encouraging herbicide use. They tend to get behind it and look with suspicion on citizens who criticize that approach."

Both White and Sharlip said that Agriculture Commissioner Douglas responded with concern to their complaints. But they believe that it was the additional pressure from the attorney general's office and the rulings from the state Supreme Court and Public Service Commission that combined to make it very difficult for the power companies to refuse to cooperate.

West Virginia's regulations are considered by some to be the best in the nation, and several other states are now fashioning new regulations from the West Virginia model. Connecticut and Wisconsin recently enacted stiffer aerial spray regulations calling for advance notice and buffer zones, and TVA has taken a second look at when and how to apply herbicides aerially. TVA requires advance notice to all adjacent landowners or residents and has made it a policy not to spray when a feasible alternative exists.

What about long-term effects?

Some critics of the use of aerial application of herbicides like Tordon think that advance notification and wider buffer zones are not enough. "That's just window dressing," said Colin Ingram, a freelance writer in the Hanging Dog community in western North Carolina.

Ingram, who has counted 158 cancer deaths in his area between 1977 and 1981, believes they may be tied to the use of Tordon over the last 17 years. He thinks that the state should also be looking at health and safety data on these herbicides before allowing their use – reliable data that was not contested or thrown out for being falsified.

Jay Feldman of the National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (NCAMP) in Washington, DC, agrees. Feldman has been watching the agricultural chemicals industry try to remove from FIFRA (the only federal law controlling pesticides) provisions which give states authority to pass stricter pesticide controls and give the public the right to know more about potential health effects.

"Weaker legislation and regulation at the federal level mean more highly toxic products in the air with less information on their health and environmental effects," Feldman said. He urges citizens who are studying new pesticide control proposals to also demand more health and safety data, as California already does.

Ralph Lightstone of California Rural Legal Assistance Migrant Program believes strong state controls are needed in the light of a trend

toward deregulation in the Reagan administration. "EPA is now considering weakening its data requirements and dropping any efficiency requirements," he said. "Companies will be able to market a product that could be hazardous, as they already have, and not even have to demonstrate that it's effective."

The fact that EPA ignored both the army and NAS studies on Agent White and chose to stick with the Gulf study despite its deficiencies has made some critics suspicious of EPA's ability or intent to regulate the pesticide industry. "Right now the only legal handle is what's on the label," Feldman said. "Due to the lax nature of enforcement on the federal level, and the fact that many of the label instructions are based on little or bad data, there is a need for states to do something more."

The agricultural chemicals industry has been trying to restrict states' authority and the public's access to data about the chemicals in their lives ever since California passed the toughest registration procedures in the country three years ago. The major difference between California's registration procedures and those used by EPA under FIFRA are California's requirements for data on health and environmental effects. Since January, 1980, the state's pesticides law has read, "No more pesticides will be registered for use in this state unless the pesticide has been tested for birth defects, cancer or genetic mutations, or the pesticide company is undertaking such tests."

California's law angered the agricultural chemicals industry so much that they've sued the state several times, but so far they've lost; now they're trying to amend FIFRA so that states like California can no longer have standards which are stricter than EPA's. Senator Jesse Helms, chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, has vowed to help the industry with their fight, despite the fears of increasing numbers of his constituents back home in North Carolina that the use of pesticides may have some connection with increases in cancer, birth defects and other illnesses in their communities.

Herbicides and Cancer

Tordon was introduced in Cherokee County in western North Carolina back in 1965. Since then TVA, the U.S. Forest Service and timber companies have been applying it on rights-of-way and public and private forests.

In 1976, Cherokee County still had one of the lowest cancer mortality rates in the state, with 27 cancer deaths out of 161 total deaths. But by 1979 – 15 years after Tordon was introduced and about the time it takes for cancer to show up in humans exposed to dangerous chemicals – with 45 cancer deaths out of 174 total deaths, Cherokee County had the fourth highest cancer-death rate of any county in the state. By 1981, the state's figures showed a reduction back to 34 cancer deaths out of 160. But Cherokee County residents were taking their own count.

Frank Rose, a funeral home director in Murphy, believes the government's cancer death figures are low because cancer is not always reported as the cause of death when cancer patients die of other complications. Last June he began questioning his customers and found that of the last 100 funerals at his establishment, 28 deaths were due to cancer.

When a March, 1982, article in *Inquiry* magazine by South Carolina writer Keith Schneider publicized the fears of Cherokee County residents,

Resources

Two recent court cases, if upheld by higher courts, could establish important precedents for citizens trying to enact stronger state regulations governing the aerial application of phenoxy herbicides like 2,4-D and Picloram.

- In November, 1981, a California Superior Court judge in Humboldt County found the state Department of Food and Agriculture's system for granting permits to aerial applicators of phenoxy herbicides unconstitutional, because it does not require the applicator to notify adjacent property owners and residents in advance *(Richard Kelley et al. vs. Edward Urban et al.)*.
- In September, 1982, a U.S. District Court judge in Oregon enjoined the Bureau of Land Management from further spraying of 2,4-D until a "worst case analysis" of the impact of the action on human health could be made. *(Southern Oregon Citizens Against Toxic Sprays vs. James Watt et al.)* The case is pending appeal.

West Virginia regulations: A copy of the West Virginia Pesticide Use and Application Act of 1975 and administrative regulations to govern the aerial application of herbicides to rights-of-way may be obtained from the Office of the Attorney General, Charleston, WV 25305.

Handbook for Manual Maintenance of Power Line Rights-of-Way: How to convince your power company you can do the job better yourself. Available for $1 from the West Virginia Citizen Action Group, 1324 Virginia St. East, Charleston, WV 25301.

National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides: Keep up with pending amendments to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and other information about pesticide action nationwide. Five dollars gets you a subscription to their newsletter. Write 530 7th St. SE, Washington, DC 20003.

Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides: $8 will get you a one-year subscription to *NCAP News*, a comprehensive collection of informative articles on herbicide issues. *An Economic Analysis of Herbicide Use for Intensive Forestry Management, Parts I & II*, by Jan M. Newton (each part costs $8.50) provides a critical analysis of the most often used arguments for aerial spraying (cheaper, more effective, jobs). Newton punches holes in them all. NCAP, Box 375, Eugene, OR 97440.

Government Accounting Office: The Comptroller General's 1981 report on "Stronger Enforcement Needed Against Misuse of Pesticides" provides a review of problems in EPA and state pesticide enforcement programs. The Comptroller General's 1980 report on "Environmental Protection Issues in the 1980s" concludes that EPA programs for regulating pesticides cannot be relied on "to cull out dangerous pesticides. Program effectiveness was hindered by mis-management, delays and a host of unresolved issues." Both available, free of charge for the first copy, from the U.S. General Accounting Office, Documents Handling and Information Services, PO Box 6015, Gaithersburg, MD 20760.

the state Division of Health Services sent Dr. Greg Smith, a physician and epidemiologist, to the mountains to investigate. Although his study is not complete yet, Smith has drawn some conclusions about the dangers associated with the aerial application of herbicides.

"There is a large usage of herbicides going on with very little information provided to the user," Smith told concerned citizens in Chatham County. "It's on the product, but the user may not be paying attention. The potential of exposure is particularly high for those living near aerial spraying."

Smith said that North Carolina's regulation requiring a 100-foot buffer zone from occupied dwellings was not enough to protect residents from aerial drift and potential health hazards. "What we thought to be safe years ago, we no longer do," he said, referring to the use of Agent Orange, which has been linked to cancer and spontaneous abortions.

Both Smith and his colleague Dr. Carl Shy, an epidemiologist at the University of North Carolina School of Public Health, agreed that the government approved substances like Agent Orange too quickly. Now, they say, they are suspicious about other pesticides that have been given similar government approval.

Since coming to UNC in 1973, Shy has been studying the effects of herbicides on rural counties in seven southeastern states: North and South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana. After characterizing counties according to degree of pesticide use, Shy found an association between the intensive use of pesticides and cancer – lung cancer in particular.

"This could not be explained away by chance," he said. "There was a statistically significant relation between herbicides, pesticides and cancer." He emphasized the "subtle, delayed effects" which are not detected for 15 to 25 years. "Even if they are approved by the government, they are not necessarily safe," Shy said. "That only means they have passed toxicity tests showing they won't kill rats at certain levels. There's a great deal we don't know about them.

"Caution is needed with their use, much more so than the producers would have us believe," Shy said. "These are dangerous health hazards we should stay away from unless absolutely necessary."

Pesticide producers disagree. "The public should be completely assured and not concerned if they have an accidental exposure to 2,4-D," reads a Dow Chemical Company publication. "The evidence clearly shows that such exposure would not be harmful."

Dr. Ruth Shearer, a genetic toxicology consultant for the Issaquah (Washington) Health Research Institute, disagrees. She studied the short- and long-term health effects linked to both 2,4-D and Picloram, and testified in a number of court cases involving herbicide spraying incidents. After six years of intense study of the regulations placed on chemicals which cause cancer and birth defects, Dr. Shearer said, "I have become aware of the shocking failure of the EPA to protect the public from untested toxic pesticides."

She has studied more than 30 cases of 2,4-D poisoning and more than 15 involving Picloram. All of them included the same kinds of symptoms reported in the NAS study of Vietnamese tribes sprayed with Agent White, symptoms which are not detectable in laboratory rodents.

"I don't think people should have to be exposed to Picloram," she said. "I don't think it should be used. Registration with EPA doesn't mean it's even been tested properly and it certainly doesn't mean it's safe."

Dr. Greg Smith agrees with Shearer that there is not enough data on Picloram to warrant its widespread use. "As a physician I feel that the number of studies on Picloram are very limited in number, compared to the number of studies usually required for approval by EPA," Smith says. "The data is not there to say if Picloram is safe over the long term or not."

Who's guarding our health?

The realization that neither EPA nor North Carolina's Department of Agriculture did anything to prevent a potentially dangerous herbicide from drifting over the Gorgus community prompted one resident to question just who in the state should be responsible for safeguarding the health of citizens who could be exposed.

"The Department of Agriculture helps and trains farmers to use herbicides and yet they are the ones who are also called on to monitor their misuse," said Margaret Pollard, a Gorgus resident who complained to the Chatham County Planning Board.

"It seems to me that puts the fox in bed with the chickens," she said. "It's a serious conflict of interest. Their staff [Agriculture Department] came out to our neighborhood with the company [Boise Cascade] and insisted there were no toxic side effects from these chemicals. Usually when you think of monitoring for health effects, you think of health departments. I wonder if the state legislature could address putting the responsibility where the competence lies."

While the Chatham County Planning Board and local citizens continue to draft their proposals for stricter controls on the aerial application of herbicides like Tordon, residents of the Gorgus community wonder if things will ever be like they were before the spraying.

Six months after the spraying took place, Billie Rogers went out to pick wild greens and became ill. "The bones in my face ached and my hands began to swell," she said. "I went to the clinic and they said I was probably having a reaction to the spraying."

And Johnny Lee is hesitating before he goes down to the banks of the Deep River to pick wild sassafras for tea. Like his neighbor Beverly Mitchell, he's a purist about the food he grows and eats.

Now he's afraid that the tea he once drank to feel better might just make him sick.□

Dee Reid is a journalist living near Pittsboro who frequently writes about rural and environmental issues. A former reporter and managing editor for The Chatham County Herald, *she has received six North Carolina Press Association awards in the past four years.*

THE BOOMER CHRONICLES
THE JOURNEY OF CHARLES WINFREY

photos by Whitey Hitchcock

He's the kind of guy everyone knows by his nickname: Boomer. And for the past 10 years he's devoted his energy to an organization that's also known best by its nickname: SOCM (pronounced "sock em").

Together, Charles L. Winfrey (Boomer) and Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM) have waged an impressive battle with an array of corporate giants that, if they had their way, would scalp the east Tennessee mountains for minerals and leave the mountain people with environmental disaster and nary a penny to compensate. (See box on page 36 for a list of SOCM victories.)

Tackling corporations is expensive work, and money is scarce in the hills and hollers of east Tennessee. So SOCM's 600 member-families have had to sustain an intensive fundraising program over the years.

Grassroots fundraising is the kind of work that can either make or break an organization. A lot of folks look on it as drudge work, a necessary evil – and that kind of attitude is usually reflected in the proceeds.

Not so with SOCM. Their enthusiasm puts the fun *in fundraising. In the past year they've had five benefit concerts in Knoxville (it's kind of hard to get a crowd in SOCM's hometown, Jacksboro – population 1,620); a champagne party in Washington, DC; and who-knows-how-many raffles, auctions, bake sales and good old-fashioned passers of the hat – all with an infec-*

Proceeds from this article – writers' and photographers' fees – are being donated to SOCM. If you'd like to make a contribution, send it to SOCM, PO Box 457, Jacksboro, TN 37757.

tious kind of cheer that makes you want to dig a little deeper each time.

SOCM's most recent extravaganza will surely go down in fundraising history as Most Creative, and probably Longest Running, as well. On September 15, 1982, Boomer set his canoe in the Clinch River and began paddling his way to the southern tip of Florida – a 1,900-mile, four-month odyssey to raise money for SOCM.

By the time Boomer pushed off, he had received pledges ranging from a few cents to a dollar per mile totaling over $10,000. When he made his final pullout at Flamingo, Florida, on January 24, another $1,600 had been pledged.

The trip, a life-long dream for Boomer, was his farewell gift to SOCM. He didn't have any Big Plan for the future; he just sensed it was time to paddle on.

And so he did, keeping a daily journal which he summarized from time to time and sent back to his friends at SOCM, who typed from his sometimes illegible handwriting and mailed copies to all the folks who made pledges to Boomer and SOCM.

Portions of Boomer's journal are excerpted here, with our hearty congratulations for a job well done.

I would have enjoyed the sendoff if I hadn't been so embarrassed. As it is, I was glad to get away. I planned to stop at the river landing a mile downstream to repack, but a TV crew was set up on the bridge waiting on me so I had to push on down.

The fourth day I paddled down to the dam and my tiny canoe was allowed to pass through the Melton Hill locks. I had hoped to do this but wasn't sure they would let me. The lock-keeper was very friendly and said they would admit a bathtub to the locks if someone paddled one through.

After the dam, I entered an entirely different world, "The Land of Mordor." The Department of Energy property on the right bank became frightful rather than charming: creek mouths with gates across to keep boats out, an island with very sick-looking trees and rip-rap along both shores. More mysterious facilities began to pop up until past the Highway 58 bridge where suddenly a fence lined the right bank with "Hazardous Area No Trespassing" signs. There was also a "Contaminated Materials" sign at one spot. This in itself was bad enough, but popping out of the bank to the river every so often along that terrible shore were water discharge pipes. I thought to myself, "What are these fools doing? People downstream drink the water, bathe in it, cook with it!" I guess maybe there are advantages to dumping radioactive waste into the Clinch River: catch a fish – you don't have to do anything but eat it, it's already cooked.

At last I found myself heading up the Little Tennessee River, on Tellico Lake. This part of the journey had many mixed emotions for me. Tellico is a beautiful lake, and has very clean, clear water. However, it is also rather sterile. I saw few birds, fewer fish jumping up in the evenings, no lakeside homes or houseboats and little boat traffic.

I did see where once lay the ancient Cherokee town of Toqua, the old Indian village Echota, the drowned original site of Fort Loudon and the place where once an island sat in the middle of the river that I camped on many times. To me the Little Tom Tellico Lake is a lake of ghosts, my own included.

If Tellico Lake was clear, Lake Calderwood can best be described as crystalline. The water was so pure you could see bottom at six feet. The scenery was really something, too, as the lake is completely encircled by mountains on all sides. I paddled up the mouth of Slickrock Creek, tumbling down out of Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness. The water was even clearer than on the lake. Where the creek drops into the lake over a falls, a plunge basin has formed that is at least a 10- or 12-foot drop, and the bottom looks like it's only inches away from you.

TRIBULATIONS

I began my upstream journey on the Little Tennessee River on September 25, which was supposed to be a rest day, but I couldn't really relax with the Little T facing me. I actually made four miles on Fontana Lake, portaged a quarter-mile around the Narrows and made over three additional miles by six p.m. Although I was out of the boat, wading the riverbed and dragging the boat behind me two-thirds of the time, I was encouraged by the fact that the most difficult stretch had gone so quickly.

The next day I learned the folly of my optimistic thinking. I woke up to a cold foggy morning – too cold to be in the water and I couldn't see the bottom well enough without sunshine. I waited at camp until 11:30 a.m., when the sun finally burned off the fog, then began, hoping to reach civilization by the end of the day.

Around the first bend my heart dropped. The longest, meanest, rockiest looking shoal I had seen yet, including the Narrows. Out of the canoe and away we go. The shoal seemed to last forever, and utterly exhausted me. When I finally got to the pool at the top, the pool turned out to be every bit of 100-feet long, followed by another series of shoals and ledges for another half-mile.

photo by Whitey Hitchcock

And so it went. Each day I tired a little sooner as the river began to take its toll. The first two days I made three-and-a-half miles each day; the third, two-and-a-half miles; the fourth, two miles. I had ascended the river from Tennessee almost as far upstream as one could go, but I was too physically wrecked to bask in this glory for long. The rope burn on my shoulder, the cuts and skinned places on my legs and arms, the fact that my wet suit was coming apart – all told me I was not winning this battle with the river. I guess I should have realized that it is nature's way that things go *down*-stream, not up.

What I had feared for days finally happened late one day as I was tiring. I slipped on a loose rock, went all the way under in fairly deep water, and lost control of my precious cargo. Walt Disney could have made a nice animated cartoon out of my wild tripping, stumbling chase back downstream to catch my runaway canoe. Fortunately, it lodged on a gravel bar instead of a sharp rock, taking on a little water but not overturning. It was the hardest 150 feet I have ever traveled, trudging back upstream over those same ledges I had so painfully negotiated just 30 minutes before.

I finally took leave of the Little Tennessee River at mile 107, the last 20 miles being upstream from the lake. I was fortunate and found an 80-year-old black man, Charlie Chavis, who gave me a lift to Mountain City, Georgia, only three miles from where I'm to begin the whitewater run on the Chattahoochee River to Atlanta.

I hear from folks here that the Chattahoochee is very *low* right now – lots of shale and rocks. I simply smile when told that, knowing that going downhill in a riverbed has to be better than going up, whether I'm paddling, wading or crawling.

THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER

On Friday, October 8, my whitewater guide, Whitey Hitchock, showed up at Clayton and after stopping for supplies, we headed down to Helen, Georgia, and the Chattahoochee River, my next home for over a week.

The upper stretches were relatively calm, banks lined with laurel and rhododendron, the river fast but with few rapids and shoals. It reminded me of the flat sections of the Clear Fork River or Daddy's Creek back on the Cumberland Plateau. We camped for the night after a short day, covering about six miles.

The next day included the most serious whitewater I expect to see on this entire trip. Smith Island Rapid was the first, a technical Class II-III rapid which we both did okay after portaging some of the heavier gear to lighten the boats. After a quick stop for ice and water at the Wildewood Shop, we headed on down to Buck-Shoals, a very long class II-III rapid with many rocks. This was too long to carry gear around so I ran it fully loaded – a mistake. I hit many rocks, including one that put a nasty dent in the front of the canoe. I felt lucky to get through the rapid without turning over. The next major rapid, Three Ledges, was a piece of cake – we were able to portage gear around the Second and Third Ledges and run with a light load. The final major rapid, the Horseshoe, required a long, sweeping turn as if you were paddling around the closed end of a horseshoe. I cut a little too sharply and met head-on at the end of the rapid with what Whitey named "Slug Rock" for its snail-like appearance. The rock slugged me and dented the brass frontpiece of my canoe, but I made it through upright. We camped at the base of the rapid on a sand bar – a beautiful campsite straight out of *Field and Stream.*

ON PAST ATLANTA

After a refreshing, if somewhat shocking, reunion with civilization in Atlanta, I embarked on October 18 on the Yellow River at Milstead, southeast of the city. The upper stretches of this little river were similar to parts of the Chattahoochee, often flowing swiftly over rocky bottom with several sets of shoals. An old mill dam at Porterdale, a mill "company town" south of Covington, had to be portaged. After Porterdale, the Yellow settled down to a flat lowland stream running along between mud banks.

Just about the time I was beginning to like the intimacy of this little stream, it flowed into the backwaters of Lake Jackson. Instead of water skiers and huge houseboats and lakeside homes, this lake is dominated by fishing boats, run-down shanties and modest cabins. It's a poor person's lake, the banks lined with black people fishing in the afternoons. Even the boat docks were low-key: no restaurants and gift shops, just ice, bait, tackle and gasoline – the basics.

photo courtesy SOCM

DARIEN

The vast, swampy flood plain of the Ocmulgee keeps most development away from its banks. With the exception of Hawkinsville, the towns along the river were merely wide spots in the road, and were all 40 miles or so apart. In between these small towns, no bridges, no communities, no factories. Nothing but miles and miles of swamp and river with the only other humans being an occasional hunter or fisher.

On November 9, I rounded a bend, struggling against an incoming tide (who says water cannot run uphill?) and saw the bluffs of Darien with the tall net booms of shrimp boats tied

SOCM: A COALFIELD PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATION

The coalfields of east Tennessee hold some of the greatest natural wealth in the nation. But its vast ranges of timber and coal are largely controlled by a few out-of-state corporations. In 13 coal counties, the top five landowners in each county own 27.3 percent of surface land, but pay only 3.4 percent of the taxes.

In its 10 years, SOCM has organized, lobbied and gone to court on a variety of issues affecting the Cumberland region: property rights, water quality, roads, taxation and community services. Their victories include:

- enactment of the 1977 Tennessee Surface Rights Law which protects landowners who do not control their mineral rights from having their land strip-mined without their consent;
- documented the extensive outside corporate control of the coalfields and the low taxes paid by these corporations;
- won a court ruling ordering the state to enforce its Water Quality Law, which requires mining companies to obtain water quality permits prior to operation;
- investigated and testified before Congress to expose the illegal practice of layering (concealing low quality coal and dirt) in shipments accepted by TVA generating plants;
- sued TVA for accepting illegally overloaded coal trucks which damage local roads;
- forced the state to tax coal reserves;
- persuaded the state legislature to adopt a coal severance tax, providing millions of dollars to coal-producing counties for roads and schools;
- forced several coal companies to pay their fair share of property taxes on business equipment;
- forced the Koppers Corporation to withdraw its plans to build a synthetic fuels plant which would have doubled strip mining in the state and used a yearly tonnage equal to Tennessee's present annual production.

– from SOCM's 1982 Annual Report

up at the docks. Coming down this river like an old-time rafter heightened my imagination, and I could almost envision, there below the Darien bluffs, the masts of ocean-going schooners lying off the wharves for their turn to load up lumber from the Georgia swamps.

As I tied up at a shrimp boat dock and walked up the hill, I knew how it must have felt for back-woods river runners to finally pull their logs into the boom and take off for the sin-filled alleyways of this old-time seaport. Today, however, the taverns and bawdy houses of old Darien are all gone, and the town is merely another quiet, small town with a few stores, a motel or two, a goodly supply of churches, and a city hall. An old fort, a few Victorian houses, one or two beaten-down foundations and some huge live oaks are all that remain of this proud old town; once the economic hub of Georgia, it was destroyed in 1863 by Union soldiers and in 1898 by a hurricane and rebuilt even stronger both times. What finally led to the decline of Darien was the depletion of its lifeblood, those gigantic swamp cypress trees that supplied ship timbers for half the sailing ships of the world.

THE INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY

I had seen no dry land at all since leaving Darien – just miles and miles of sound, sea and tidal marsh. My first dry land turned out to be Fort Frederica National Monument, which allows no camping. So I pushed on, heading for a marked landing a few miles up a creek. By this time, the tide was coming out, and on this creek, it was coming out very strongly. Two hours later and after dark, I realized that I had made only half the distance to the landing. I gave up and made the return trip to Frederica in less than 35 minutes without paddling. I had been attempting to ascend an up-tide in the dark.

Now, I am not in the habit of breaking rules, but this was serious – no dry land for miles, me in a canoe on a waterway after dark with no running lights, and it was getting windy, chilly and damp. Fort Frederica looked awfully good. It was low tide, so the point below the fort was covered by a 10-foot high steep wall covered with slick mud, impossible to climb with gear. I stood at the bottom on some oysters and, after several misses, managed to hook my throw rope bag around a sign post at the top of the bank and pull myself up. The sign said, "No landing." I proceeded to tie off the canoe to the no-landing sign, work myself back down and up again with a sleeping bag and blanket. After pausing to proclaim Fort Frederica officially stormed and occupied by the Appalachian Navy, I bedded down on the 400-year-old dust of the powder magazine in the fort.

I was later told that this fort is supposed to be haunted, but I was unmolested throughout the night. I rose with the sun and pushed off before James Watt, our Secretary of the Interior, could mount a counter-attack.

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

The little town of St. Marys was definitely a port in a storm for me. The town is one of those places where time stands still – old houses everywhere, shrimp trawlers and sailboats docked along the waterfront, which is still the center of town, and Segle's Bar filled with rowdy sailors from nearby Kings Bay Naval Base. An old town made somewhat famous by the "Gasoline Alley" comic strips and the Toonerville Trolley – I couldn't resist the temptation to slow up my pace for a look around.

My stay in St. Mary's was made more pleasant by running into the "Flying Dutchman," Hasse Timp. Now Hasse is somewhat of a throwback, even in a throwback town like St. Marys. He lives down by the pier on a 40-foot sailboat, drives a beatup clunker around town and appears to be considered somewhat of a flake and ne'er-do-well by the more sophisticated citizenry. Except for those of the citizenry who happen to own sailboats or make a living from the sea – Hasse can sail anything with a mast and a sheet of sail-cloth under any conditions. When he holds forth at the dock or among the sailors down at Segle's, people listen. My insane canoe trip down the Waterway caught the Dutchman's fancy, so I ended up landing a free berth aboard the "Zephyros," his schooner/home.

SUWANNEE RIVER

At Big Shores on the Suwanee River, I met the first other canoeists I have seen since northern Georgia, a group from the Outward Bound program. The group consisted of a husband and wife counselor team escorting 10 young women from Florida juvenile detention programs on a special course to learn cooperation and self-sufficiency. The kids, some from very rocky home lives, all seemed worth the trouble.

I ate supper with this group a couple of days later when we met again, and shared my precious pumpkin bread with these dangerous criminals. The kids inhaled this treat with gusto. I believe someone even ate the tinfoil.

At White Springs I resupplied. This town was a mineral springs resort before the Civil War and still retains much of this ante-bellum flavor. Right below town is the Stephen Foster Memorial. The Suwanee, you remember, is Stephen Foster's river, even if he never set eyes upon it. The state of Florida has shown its appreciation at this lovely memorial, which features spacious grounds, various exhibits and the world's largest tubular bells in a tower chiming Foster melodies all day long. It was sort of nice, I must admit, to paddle the three miles below White Springs with "My Old Kentucky Home," "Jeannie With The Light Brown Hair" and "Way Down Upon the Suwanee River" ringing in my ears.

The Suwanee region is cursed and blessed much like the Cumberland Mountains. Only the wealth in the ground here is phosphate instead of coal. While in White Springs, I noticed an article which brought me back home in a hurry. AMAX Phosphate, Inc., has received a federal grant to determine the feasibility of mining under and through streams for phosphate. It seems the only thing in their way is the Florida state laws which forbid mining in streams. AMAX is currently attempting to get the state to waive or change the law for this special environmental project, which will be further south, near the Peace River. Maybe it's time for a Florida SOCM. They could call it "Save Our Coastal Marshes."

Manatee Springs State Park has the largest spring on the Suwanee, pouring a sizable river out of the ground to join the main stream. The park, which is one of the nicest I've seen, is overrun with hundreds of red squirrels and various birds, but the gentle manatee seldom appears there anymore.

This fascinating sea mammal, which spends its days floating around on the surface of the rivers munching the water weeds which grow all over Florida, is fast becoming extinct. The irony of the manatee is that its greatest value has been in eating the troublesome water hyacinth and other weeds which make motorboating and even canoeing impossible in some areas of Florida, while it is the motorboat that is speeding the animal to extinction. The slow-moving "sea cow" is often run over and injured by propellors. I hope to see some manatees even if I have to change my route somewhat.

photo courtesy SOCM

I had planned to paddle out in the Gulf and down to the mouth of the Withlachoochee River, where I would catch a ride over to Daytona Beach for a short Christmas break. But another front blew in from the west, bringing chill northerly winds. Now, the problem with paddling a canoe on the west coast of Florida when the wind is blowing from the west should be obvious. There just ain't no place to hide! The wind pushes up good-sized swells which break across the shallow mud flats. I remembered the experiences on the fairly well-sheltered Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, confirmed that the forecast was for several more days of heavy northwest winds, and chose discretion over valor.

Ed Bendure, my friend from Daytona Beach, responded eagerly, making the 150-mile drive over to pick me and my noble craft up and take us over to Daytona Beach a few days early for a nice Christmas rest.

The river beckons onward, but I've got to admit, it's nice to be under a roof, surrounded by good friends, Santa Clauses, packages and Christmas cookies. The river will still be there on December 26.

PEACE RIVER

After a week in touristy Daytona, I was itching to get started. The day after Christmas, Ed, Karen, their friend Roger and I were back on the river again. This time it is called the Peace. And at times this river has been everything but peaceful. In the 1800s this was Seminole Country and witnessed bloodshed between Indian and white. Today the upper part of the Peace River Valley is being torn apart by phosphate mines, some of which put our little ole strip pits to shame.

Because southern Florida seldom gets all that cold, the lower Peace River belongs to reptiles – alligators by the dozen, although not as large as the ones I saw in Georgia; and mud turtles and cooters [terrapins] seemed to be holding sunbathing conventions on every log. There was also an abundance of something else I've not seen much of: snakes. Every willow tree

or deadfall along the bank seemed to hold a snake. One logjam held seven snakes, four of which were the dangerous cottonmouth moccasin.

We paddled a mile or so up Charley Apopka Creek to spend the evening and part of the next morning digging for fossils. This creek is famous for fossil shark's teeth, and we found them numerous. We also found fossil fragments of a prehistoric turtle shell which must have been 10 feet in length, as well as teeth belonging to the extinct three-toed ancestor of the horse. My training in geology got the better of me for awhile, and the rest of the group had to practically drag me out of the creek to head on downstream.

Finally we reached the end of the Peace River and the head of Charlotte Harbor, a huge bay opening out into the Gulf of Mexico. As I learned earlier, saltwater paddling is hard work and not a little unnerving. Ocean canoeing has its rewards, however. At one point, we were treated to a porpoise show. One did a "Flipper" act and leaped completely out of the water and began tailwalking in front of our canoes.

One of the most positive notes of this part of the trip was the people we met along the way. On our first night on salt water, among the mangroves, campsites were hard to find. We were invited to camp in the back yard of a couple originally from Jackson, Tennessee – Danny and Maude Lewis. The next night we were again invited to pitch tents in a back yard by a retired couple, who insisted upon cooking breakfast the next morning. The following night, when we were wet and cold from an all-day downpour, some mullet fishers invited us into their camp, shared their ice and provisions, and overwhelmed us with generosity, in spite of the fact that fishing is poor and they are all struggling to pay their bills.

photo courtesy SOCM

1,904 MILES

From Sanibell Island I paddled through the heart of the southern Florida tourist mecca at Fort Myers and Naples. The best way to describe the area is overpopulated and overexpensive, but it is endowed with great natural beauty. I saw the rare, endangered manatee, received an escort of playful porpoises across Naples Bay, camped on deserted beaches and wandered through the maze of Ten Thousand Islands and the mangrove wilderness of the Everglades National Park. Ironically, the worst weather I encountered on the entire trip was the final week in the Everglades Wilderness, where I couldn't check into a convenient motel.

My reception at Flamingo was small and intimate, as I wanted it. I paddled alone down that final canal and had just checked in at the Ranger station when my friends from SOCM pulled up in their car. We popped some champagne, ate some lunch and then loaded up the car and headed for the Keys for a couple days of rest.

Now that the trip is over, I am beginning to look back upon my experiences and take stock. I paddled through 1,705 miles of the South along rivers, lakes, oceans and bays; I portaged, walked and hiked another 199 miles. I had been trying to discover something – both internally and externally – and though I didn't find answers to the major questions of life, I was able to think a lot, to ask more questions and to make some decisions.

When we travel these days, zipping along interstates in our little cars, eating at Howard Johnson's and staying at Holiday Inns, we lose touch with what travel should be all about. Throughout this journey, the scenic beauty, the fascinating wildlife and our abuse of these treasures were widespread and unforgettable. But the one thing I'll remember above all is the people I met – the people who live and work along this waterway were almost to a person kind, hospitable and encouraging. The experiences I will treasure longest are of these new friends and of the people back home who helped me along the way with their support and their prayers. A truly unforgettable experience.□

MOTHER NATURE'S TERMS

While sitting in my tent one star-studded, warm evening on the Ocmulgee, I began this report by addressing myself to all the folks back home who had expressed doubt at my well-being and safety on the trip. I originally began my report in the following manner:

Yes, I have suffered. I have had to float around bends just in time to watch a deer tumble into the water and swim across in front of my canoe. I've been forced to watch kingfishers carry on spectacular aerial dogfights over the water to determine territorial rights; I have had the great misfortune of having to surprise a flock of wild turkeys, to see them strutting across a sandbar to suddenly fall into a gobbling panic, flying in all directions as the strange fellow in the green canoe grinned and clicked his camera. I have also had the misfortune of rounding the bend just in time to see a 10-foot alligator lying upon a sandbar with his head in the air, getting a suntan and looking for all the world like he was waiting for me to come over and scratch his belly.

In addtion to all these hardships, I have been forced to camp on crystalline white sandbars surrounded by cypress trees and spanish moss being serenaded by the bellow of alligators and the hooting of owls.

The day after I wrote the above gloating lines, it rained and rained – and rained. Then it turned windy and the temperature dropped into the 30s that night as I lay shivering in my wet tent. The day after, one of those quaint critters, a raccoon, relieved me of my cheese supply. The day after that, after investing a good chunk of my remaining financial reserve in film, my camera quit working. I guess this all just goes to show that nothing is forever, especially when you are living in a tent and taking whatever Mother Nature doles out on her own terms.

To Do What's Right

Interviews by Dorothy Hall Peddle

"I've been called a wild woman because of the risks I've taken

but never a wonder woman," said Eula Hall of Honaker, Kentucky, founder and supervisor of the Mud Creek Clinic at Grethel. She had been flown to New York City on November 22, 1982, with her husband Bascom to receive one of the 18 cash awards made by the Wonder Woman Foundation to women over 40 from all areas of the country who were judged to possess in an outstanding degree the courage, compassion and independence that characterized the fictional "Wonder Woman" of comic book fame.

In his letter nominating Hall for the Wonder Woman award, Richard Couto, director of Vanderbilt University's Center for Health Services, praised the work and life of Eula Hall:

"The achievements of Eula Hall are recorded in the lives of thousands of people – men, women and children – who live in the Mud Creek region of Floyd County in Eastern Kentucky. Mud Creek is isolated by horseshoe-shaped mountains and the Big Sandy River and stands out as an area of need, even in Appalachia. Eula was born in neighboring Pike County and has spent her adult life working to meet the needs of the people on Mud Creek. Chief among her achievements is the Mud Creek Health Clinic, which has provided health services previously unavailable to 14,000 patients. [See Southern Exposure, *Summer, 1978.]*

"Eula began organized efforts to improve conditions in Mud Creek as part of the War on Poverty and was a founding member of the Eastern Kentucky Welfare Rights Organization in the late 1970s. As a leader of this group she helped acquire hot lunches for children in the Mud Creek schools and gained from state and local government a concrete and steel bridge to serve Mud Creek. This bridge replaced one of Appalachia's most notorious, rickety 'swinging bridges' that school buses had been using to the extreme anxiety of local parents. In addition, she played a major role in acquiring federal and local grants for a water system for the Mud Creek area.

"Most important is Eula's work to provide health care for the needy. She has devoted the last 10 years of her life primarily to the establishment and maintenance of the Mud Creek Clinic. As a social worker and clinic coordinator she provides transportation for those who need it and even delivers medicine to patients when necessary. She insists that everyone be seen regardless of ability to pay. She assists each individual patient with health and legal matters such as acquiring social security or black lung benefits, thus combining the best of paralegal and paramedical roles.

"The significance of Eula's achievements in building the Mud Creek Clinic go far beyond her individual role. Her fire and determination have inspired others. Many of the original staff who founded the clinic

in 1971 are still there. Money is certainly not the reason. Salaries are very low, even for Eastern Kentucky. It is determination, the sense that the clinic team is providing something crucial to the lives of people, that keeps them there. Each patient is treated with dignity and respect, and they express a fierce loyalty. The clinic has become a center for community organizing and citizen participation in issues affecting other parts of the mountains.

"Eula has chosen to live where she is considered an adversary of those who have taken from the poor and of those who, while charged with the welfare of others, have lost the sense of injustice. She maintains a sense of outrage. She has no formal training for her work, only the constant abiding principle, 'To do what's right.' Eula often sizes up a situation and concludes, 'Now that ain't right.' Those words are a call to action. She explains more than two decades of confrontation and struggle with a shrug and an almost casual, 'You just get tired of being pushed around.'"

Upon receiving a Wonder Woman cash award of $7,500 at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in New York City in November, 1982, Hall said: "The best part of it was knowing that women had been recognized for their efforts and that many of them had had the same or similar struggles as I have."

What follows are transcripts of taped interviews with Hall (with added comments on the health delivery system from a 1981 videotape, "Come Hell or High Water," by Vanderbilt University's Center for Health Services) and with Mike Sheets, a nurse-practitioner on the Mud Creek Clinic staff.

EULA HALL

I was born and raised in Pike County, Kentucky. I was my dad's first child by his third wife. My father was a healthy, sturdy person, but he couldn't work in the mines any longer because of his age. He farmed and provided timbers for the mines. What we ate was what we raised and generally we had enough for ourselves and enough to give to neighbors when they were in need, like in the spring when supplies would give out and we had extra sacks of peas.

I didn't go to school till I was nine, because we lived far out at the head of the holler. When we moved so we could go to school there were three of us starting at once – myself and an older half-brother and half-sister. My first dress was a blouse made from a flour sack and a skirt made out of a yard of chambray shirting goods. I sold herbs to get the material for making the dress. I went to school barefooted and my feet would get so cold by the time I got to school that I just couldn't stand them down on the floor. I remember crossing my legs and sitting on my feet in my seat. I guess I must have looked like a frog. The teacher gave me a whack and told me to put my feet down. We didn't go to school very long that year because all of us got whooping cough.

Things got hard at home and as soon as I could, I wanted to be on my own. By that time there were three brothers under me that were just like my children. I wanted to be able to help them more so they could stay in school. I started working out as a hired girl. I left Pike County and came over to Floyd County where I had a half-brother. While I was taking care of his pregnant wife, I got a reputation for knowing how to care for babies and women and for being a good cook. If I was working where the mother was sick, I would take care of the kids, feed them and do extra things for them.

I met McKinley Hall when I was 17. It was his aunt I was working for. He'd been in World War II and had developed a small disability in the service. In fact, he had had a mental breakdown. He was working the mines before I married him, although after awhile he just quit working. I said I would marry him because I thought it would be easier for me, but it was worse. I found there's worse things than being a hired girl. I had always seen the good side of my husband and never the bad side, but after we had been married for two weeks he started drinking and became very abusive. I think it hurt his pride that he wasn't able to control his wife. He was a man who didn't want you to think for yourself, but I just had to think for myself because I'd been on my own since I was 12 years old.

My first husband was very violent, very abusive both to me and to our children. He would beat me, tear my clothes, set the curtains on fire. He broke my ribs, and my cheekbone three times. Once my eyeball was even out of its socket. The children would try to protect me and then I had to fight him to defend his children. He was hard on my deaf son Danny. When he threatened us, I would go out to the neighbors for help and sometimes we would have to hide under a house through the night.

That's the reason that I feel now that I owe the community my life. If somebody gives me a call in the middle of the night and she says she's into trouble there's no way I can go

photo by Sally Maggard/CSM

EULA HALL

back to bed and go to sleep. I advise them – get them to a neighbor or sometimes even my own house or, during the day, here to the clinic. I've taught women to drive. We have classes here twice a week where teachers from Mountain Comprehensive Care prepare women to take the G.E.D. test so they can get jobs at nearby shopping centers and become independent.

As the five children were growing up, I was gardening to feed us and I would take in handicapped people and get paid a small fee from the state. When my husband was around – quite often he was away for a couple of months with some other woman – it wasn't much of a home for those handicapped and sick people, but they said that they wanted to stay with me anyway and not move out.

About in the '60s I became aware of how many health problems were going unattended, especially the problems that affect coal miners. We organized several groups – the Kentucky Black Lung Association, the Kentucky Miners Health Care. We worked with the Council of Southern Mountains, that sponsored the first VISTA workers. And we organized around other issues, like getting better roads and schools, or preventing flooding from silt ponds. Mud Creek in Floyd County has a reputation for fighting for the people's rights. Mostly it was the women. Women will be the ones to protest and to stand in front of the bulldozers.

In Knott County, when strip-miners were burying family cemeteries with their dozing, we decided to go and support the old people who owned the land that was being molested. We called it "Save our land and people." We were told the bulldozers that were doing the stripping were coming toward a family graveyard. We got up at four in the morning and by five we were heading for a site.

The guards were hard on the men. They tried to take us on, too, but there were just two men against 22 of us women. Some crawled over the barricades and I crawled under. We had Channel 3 there from Huntington, to document what was happening. When we finally got to the site, we really got on those operators good. They told us we would go to jail for trespassing, but we told them they were the ones breaking the law, covering up fields of beans and corn and just raping the fields. A driver said, "If my mother hadn't been a woman, I'd have shot them all!" But we succeeded in stopping them.

MUD CREEK CLINIC AT CRAYNOR BEFORE AND AFTER 1982 FIRE

But health care was always my baby, because I've seen so much suffering. The clinic started with the Eastern Kentucky Welfare Rights group, after the screening we did in the summer of 1972. We began door-to-door health screening and found there were more than 14,000 people in the hills and hollows that needed serving. At least one out of 10 needed health care and wasn't able to get it. We found quite a few people who had never seen a doctor in their lives. There were complications of pregnancy, disease from contaminated wells. Diseases like black lung, diabetes and hypertension were going untreated. A lot of people had no vehicles to drive to hospitals at Martin, Pikeville and Lexington or they weren't served when they got there (though Our Lady of the Way hospital in Martin has never turned anyone away when they needed help and couldn't pay). We knew we had to have some kind of primary medical care at Mud Creek.

I never let people forget there were problems that weren't getting attended to. Finally, somebody answered my call. Some concerned people got together and raised $1,400 with rummage sales and donations, and we rented a small frame house in 1972. I was surprising myself and starting a clinic! We got two doctors from Our Lady of the Way to come from Martin two days a week to see patients. With what equipment we could pay for, we had a start. I always had it in my mind that if we couldn't provide full-time health coverage, we would at least have a center where everybody could come and people would be made aware of the problems.

Before very long the first clinic was too small. So I moved out of my house and the clinic was put there in 1974. We divided the rooms and closed in the back porch for medical records and lab and the front porch for examining room and lounge. Later we added a unit for respiratory therapy. We had begun to get monthly waivers of $5,000 from the United Mine Workers for testing for black lung disability and for therapy. We were expanding staff and services and doing well by 1977, when the clinics with the UMWA waivers were informed that those funds had run out and that we would need to look for other funding.

So we went to Big Sandy Health Care in Prestonsburg, the funding agency that works out of the Appalachian Regional Commission in Atlanta. They agreed to a merger, so we could keep serving people on a sliding scale, doing our own hiring and getting personnel through Big Sandy as well as their administrative services. It was the best thing that could have happened to Mud Creek Clinic. But it was good for Big Sandy, too. It has to be the people that shows the medical folks and politicians that something can be done.

In the clinic at Craynor on the Mink Branch we had 19 rooms and two beds. We had a dental clinic. We had 20,000 patient records, all in metal file cases. All of that went up in flames on the night of June, 1982, when I got a call that the clinic was on fire. They think it might have been drug thieves trying to cover up a theft. We called the Mud Creek Volunteer Fire Department, but the truck stalled. When we got there, we could see nothing could be saved.

I went back home and thought about the destruction and I just had to cry. I thought and I cried and then I thought some more. I talked it over with my husband Bascom, no relation to the McKinley Hall who had died about eight years back. Bascom and I decided we would have a Mud Creek Clinic, come hell or high water! We got back there early next morning and some of the medical staff were on hand too. The women were crying and asking, "What are we going to do now, Eula?" I said to them, "We're going to see the patients. That's what we're going to do!"

So we told the Harold Phone Company to come out and hook up a phone so we could reach the patients and tell them we were still in business. At first they told us it wouldn't be possible. Then Bascom's cousin Eric, out on a phone company truck, was contacted by CB radio and within a half-hour we had a phone being installed on the willow tree near where the clinic was still burning.

We got a table and some chairs, and some of the women volunteered to stay at the phone. Our staff saw 20 patients that day. Then we made arrangements with Gary Newman, who was the principal of the John M. Stumbo elementary school a mile away, and by five that afternoon we were getting moved into the school and gradually getting the equipment we most needed from hospitals and from our sister clinic in Magoffin County. Mike Sheets can tell you how we got our trailers for the clinic we're in now, and began over again here in Grethel in August after spending the summer in the school building.

My plans are to have more and better services. We're going to have x-ray facilities. Dental is a great need and it's very possible we can get a dental unit and can get a dentist through the National Health Corps. We're going to have a big room for community meetings and education classes. We hope to have evening and weekend hours if we can get more staff. I think these trailers could be used for staff housing.

What I hope and pray for is that we can have an abuse shelter for women located somewhere, maybe not with the clinic, but with police protection. It's a great need. Just recently a disabled woman near here shot her estranged husband, who was battering the door down, because she thought she had no choice. The courts will always stand by the man. You can imagine what it would mean to a woman like that to have a place to go for even temporary protection and to get a good night's sleep.

I've fought hard for a place where patients can be treated as people. It has to be accepted that health care is a right and not a privilege. A third of the people cannot afford the full cost of their health care. I believe that financial incentives should be away from more expensive kinds of care and toward less costly forms, where money can be saved through wise purchasing and a dedicated primary care staff. We need to have federal intervention in remote areas like this.

I've said often that the health care delivery system is a reflection of what we value as a society. Do we really care about people? If we don't, it's society that's going to suffer!

MIKE SHEETS

I am a family nurse-practitioner, a commissioned officer with the U.S. Public Health Service. The only way I ever got an education was by getting into the armed services. My family was poor, dirt poor. In school they told me I would never get anywhere because I was from the wrong side of the tracks. When I went into the army I found I couldn't qualify for the education to be a gunnery pilot. They said they did have an opening for surgical technician and I took that. I found out that I liked the work. When I got out I entered nursing school. My grades were high, but I ran into prejudice from the faculty because I happened to be male. Then I went on and got my master's degree as nurse-practitioner from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

Mud Creek Clinic is a good place to work, because we work together. I'd rather be out here in the country than be in the city where you have a pecking order and everyone is stepping on each other's toes. What we do in a primary health care clinic is to treat things that are easily treated and manage chronic disease to keep it from getting worse, besides making referrals. What I do as a mid-level medical professional is to suture wounds, deal with infections, treat bronchitis and pneumonia, things like that. I have a good trust-relation with Dr. Ellen Joyce, the doctor in family medicine who's been here since 1978. We also have Dr. Gordon Young, a dermatologist who comes two days a week. Sister Sarah Ragalyi is an R.N. and we have Juanita Compton as L.P.N. Mike Brooks is pharmacist. Eula is supervisor, public relations person, counselor and transporter of patients. For maintenance, we couldn't get along without Bascom Hall, who holds the place together.

We do a tremendous number of examinations to see if people qualify for disability compensation. The system is so screwy. If you're disabled or have got chronic disease and you're poor, you can't even see a doctor to get into the system. There has to be an entry point and that's where Mud Creek Clinic comes in. We do the examination. If somebody isn't really disabled, we'll tell them they're wasting their time and not go any further. And Social Security knows this. They know that when they get something from us, it's the truth.

The poverty is just rampant around here. We have a phenomenal parasite problem because the wells are real low. There's a water system here now but because of the cost, people are reluctant to hook into it. Until a year ago, we had no organized trash collection at all, people just threw their refuse over the embankment and into the creek. After we've given the patients medicine for parasites, usually they're all right for awhile but then it comes back.

We do a lot of counseling and education to try to teach people how to take care of themselves, but sometimes it's a matter of not having any water at all. I had a patient that had an infection in his foot and he was getting blood poisoning. I told him to soak his foot in hot water with borax and he said his well had dried up and so were the neighbors' wells. He hitchhiked eight miles to come to the clinic so we could soak his foot.

Last June with the fire destroying our other building we were real anxious because it looked for awhile like we might not even have a clinic. When I came to the clinic the day after it burned down, there was just the chimney and hunks of metal left.

We lost $300,000 worth of equipment accumulated over 10 years' time. One day we had it and the next day we had nothing.

We grieved for a half-hour and then we started making out lists of what we needed. We hardly had more than our personal stethoscopes and opthalmoscopes, but we saw the people who came. You can't turn people away and say you're sorry. We prescribed medicines, did first aid and saw about 20 patients that day. The administrator from Prestonsburg came out the day after the clinic burned down and said it would take at least three or four weeks before we could be in business again. We told him, "Here's a list of the equipment we need. Get working on it!"

The same day, we went to the John M. Stumbo elementary school at Grethel and talked to the principal about moving over there for the summer. He agreed to the arrangement. We cleaned up the place and we were seeing patients in the school within the next 24 hours. The local hospitals and the Magoffin County clinic were real helpful. They loaned us equipment and we got outdated equipment from the nuclear disaster hospital in the area. There were 75 volunteers who went out to pick up the stuff. They just came out of the woodwork, many of them our own patients.

We don't just have poor patients. We have people from millionaires to those who are broke and don't have anything, because it's the only thing around here, and it's a community clinic.

photo by Sally Maggard/CSM

HOMER HALL OF GALVESTON, KENTUCKY, RECEIVING TREATMENT FOR BRONCHIAL ASTHMA AT THE MUD CREEK CLINIC, 1975

They discussed fundraising needs at a community meeting held at the school over the weekend. About 400 people from the area were at the meeting, mostly patients and supporters. Over $4,000 was raised and pledged in $5, $10, $20 donations from people who couldn't afford to give it. We were on the air with the station from Pikeville 12 hours a day, two days, in a radio telethon which helped us raise $17,000. District 304 of the UMWA pledged $2,000. Once people could see that we had local support, it gave us help getting other monies. The Catholic bishop at Covington gave us $10,000. The Dominican Sisters from Racine, Wisconsin, raised $5,000 for us. A lot of coal operators and businesses contributed, too.

The other thing that speeded us up with getting donations was that federal funding in all the clinics was changing on October 1 from 20 percent local to match 80 percent federal, to a 50-50 percentage basis. There's no way we could have raised $200,000. We just slid in, we barely made it, so we could get a $320,000 Appalachian Regional Commission grant by matching it with our $80,000. The ARC got us a double-width trailer all the way from Irvine, Kentucky, one that two pediatricians had been using. We had to get another HUD trailer ready for pharmacy occupancy by August 15, when we would have to vacate the school building. To get the pharmacy trailer ready in time for the move, we worked day and night. There was Bascom Hall, Mike Brooks, myself and volunteers who helped with the floor, carpeting, wiring and insulation and lighting. All the lumber was donated.

I think the main reason that this clinic is still in business while they closed two others in the Big Sandy system is that the need here is so great and we have such good support in the whole community. Our business here has picked up from seeing 25 patients in a day to seeing 75, just with the change of location to Highway 979. At Mink Branch, roads were broken down from trucks and it was always muddy. There was no decent place to park. The buildings were old and leaked. Here at Grethel on the Mitchell Branch we have good level ground and it's convenient for people to reach us. We're extremely happy with what we've got. People who come in from the outside and are used to chrome and leather chairs are appalled with our old furniture. But it's so much better than what we had.

I'm proud that Eula was selected to win one of the 18 Wonder Woman awards from so many hundreds recommended in the nation. I think it's one of the few times somebody got an award that was justified.□

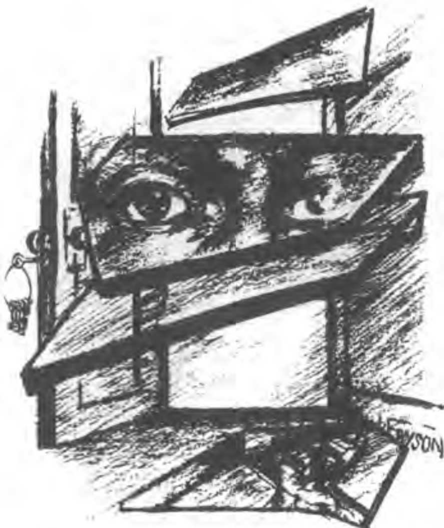
Dorothy Hall Peddle is a communications person and freelance writer. She resides at the Siena Center of the Sisters of Saint Dominic in Racine, Wisconsin, where she is Sister Helen Peddle.

Poetry by Charles Ghigna

Howard be thy name

WHEN HOWARD BECAME JESUS

No one in the huddle laughed
when Howard said he was Jesus,
that if we did not believe him
we were all sinners doomed to hell.
The next play was a hand-off to Howard.
Everyone, even our team, piled on,
grabbing for Howard, for the ball,
for the chance to cling to something solid.
When our boyhood heap had finally become still,
a pointed shadow drew our eyes way down the field
and there against the goal post leaned Howard,
the warm ball in his arms like a baby,
his eyes round and deep like the barrels of a gun.
Walking home, everyone was silent but Howard.
He said he had wanted to tell us about it before,
but was not sure that we were ready to listen,
not sure that we were ready to believe.
He said for the past year and a half
as he lay each night on his back,
his arms stretched out in a cross,
his feet so neatly together,
he was sure he had been chosen to lead us
in the path of righteousness for his name sake.
He said it was not luck that he had aced every test,
that the bookcase and birdhouse he built in shop class
won ribbons at the county fair.
He said that was just his way of being Jesus,
that we must learn to trust his perfect ways
and regard his saintly airs with adulation.
But we walked on in silence, each new step
so tight and full of fear we could not breathe,
could not break away and run on home alone.
At his house we stopped and watched him enter,
his eyes releasing us at last behind the door.
That night beside our beds we fell to prayer
and prayed that all that afternoon was just a dream,
that we would wake up in the morning and find Howard
in the huddle telling lies just like before.



WHEN HOWARD BOWED HIS HEAD TO WATER

Howard skipped stones across the lake
that last, late August afternoon
until his father's face filled
the lighted cabin window.
But Howard looked the other way,
following the final stone with his stare,
bowed his head low to water
and watched his face float
in the sky at his feet
until the blue became a shadow,
until the wind carried his name from the window
and pulled his eyes out of the dark
away from the lightness of youth.

WHEN HOWARD GOT ALL KEYED UP

Howard loved his collection of keys.
Looking more like an obedient jailer
than a barefoot, knock-kneed boy,
he wore a heavy ring of them on his belt,
letting them hang like a sunburst of brass
jingling wherever he went.
And he went everywhere with them,
finding more each day in the backs
of his grandmother's dresser drawers,
in the bottom of her attic trunks,
on rusted nails under her basement steps,
in jelly jars out back in the shed.
He spent entire afternoons on her porch,
taking them off the big ring one by one,
scrubbing and shining them until they were new,
until they shone like a string of gold teeth,
until they rang together like a chorus of chimes
open and free in the morning sun.

Charles Ghigna is poet-in-residence for the Alabama School of Fine Arts, where he directs the creative writing program. His works have appeared in numerous publications and anthologies, and his most recent collection is Alabama Bound. *These prose poems are part of an episodic novel,* Howard Be Thy Name, *still in search of a publisher.*

AN INTERVIEW WITH BISHOP LEROY MATTHIESEN
BY SAM TOTTEN AND MARTHA WESCOAT TOTTEN

AN ACT OF FAITH

Leroy Matthiesen is a big man with a firm handshake, hearty laugh and a genuinely warm manner. Born in Texas in 1921, Matthiesen has lived there most of his life. A bishop since 1980, Matthiesen has gained notoriety for his strong stance against the nuclear weapons race as well as for his advice to workers in the nuclear weapons field to "consider the moral implications of their work." When one understands that Amarillo is the home of Pantex, the final assembly point of all nuclear weapons made in the United States, the courage of Matthiesen's stance and outspokenness is obvious.

photo by Henry Bargas

I was born and raised in Texas. Born in 1921. Olfen, Texas, where I grew up, was all Roman Catholic. There wasn't anything else. In the church we always had an American flag and a papal flag. Church and country. God and country. So I grew up with this idea that God and country are almost one. To be unpatriotic was wrong, was sinful. You had to love your country. You had to obey your country.

So during World War II, while I was in the seminary and had a 4D classification as a divinity student, I kept up with the war. My brothers were in it, and when the bombs dropped at Hiroshima and Nagasaki I didn't think about the moral implications of that at all. It meant the end of the war with Japan and I was glad about that. My brothers could come home and life could go on as usual.

"My country's got some policies that I cannot in conscience support because they go against my God."
– Bishop Leroy Matthiesen

In 1954 I was asked by the bishop to start a new parish in northeast Amarillo, which is about 11 miles away from Pantex. I remember filling out letters of recommendation for people who applied to work out there. These people were generally professional people. They added a lot to the church. I was happy to have the church, and to see the influx of people because they added to the church membership and supported the church. What I didn't know at the time was that they were converting Pantex from a conventional munitions plant to a nuclear weapons plant. The local paper didn't even send a reporter out there to find out what was going on.

By the fall of 1980 the first hearing was held in Amarillo about the basing of the MX in the Texas panhandle. Everybody at the hearing, which was conducted by the Department of Defense, talked against it on ecological grounds. When people were saying, "We want the missiles for defense but don't put them here, put them some other place," that was my first notion

of "That's not right." If we need them why won't we take them. Why are other people saying, "Put them over there" and why are we saying, "No, put them over there?" So I started studying about nuclear missiles. I didn't issue a statement or anything. I read other people's things.

But on Christmas of that year I preached my first sermon on nuclear weapons. Christmas is the day in our religion of the birth of the Prince of Peace. I said, "Here we are honoring the Prince of Peace, but we're building nuclear bombs to destroy. It's a contradiction." The sermon didn't cause any reaction, but people were saying, "Yeah, yeah, you're right." But it wasn't personalized for them. They didn't make the connection between Pantex and the sermon.

After that there was a second hearing and at that point I introduced a written statement since I had to be out of town. I said, "We don't want the MX missile here. Most people don't want it on ecological and economic grounds, but I want to add a third dimension here – on moral grounds. For that reason we not only don't want it here, but we don't want it anywhere." There was something in there that appealed to the local population. I also said, "We cherish our land. It is important to us. It's been good to us. So we don't like somebody else coming in from the outside and destroying what we have built." See, that appealed to the people in Amarillo because they don't trust outsiders anyway.

On February 10, 1981, there was a protest demonstration at Pantex. They were protesting the whole business of nuclear weapons. A group of people contacted me and asked if I wanted to participate, but I declined. They were going to come into Amarillo on Saturday evening and have a prayer service and on Sunday they were going to talk and pray some more and then on Tuesday some of them were going to go over the outer security fence at Pantex. When they invited me to participate, I said, "I just don't believe in that form of protest because I think it will invite violence. And I think it is wrong to use evil means to accomplish a good end." In fact, there ended up being no violence involved, but I thought at that time that somebody was liable to get killed.

It turned out that three of them [the protesters] were Roman Catholic. While they were in the local jail I went to visit them and discovered that one of them was a Roman Catholic priest. His name's Larry Rosebaugh. Before I saw him I thought I'd find a hippie type with long hair and that he'd be weird and anti-American and that sort of thing. He did have long hair and a big full beard, but he was a very gentle person, very spiritual, very religious, a very intelligent person, and not at all anti-American. He said, "I'm doing this because I love my country. If we keep up this insanity, the country's going to be destroyed." I discovered that he had been working with Dom Helder Camara down in Recife, Brazil, and had gotten arrested there for helping street boys who don't have a home. He was getting food for them and preparing it for them on the street, and that's an infraction of an ordinance.

Well, at this point I was beginning to say, "My country right or wrong just doesn't hold water anymore. Countries can be wrong about what they do." And I was just beginning to think that my own country could be wrong. That thought bothered me a whole lot and it still does. Today I find myself fundamentally disagreeing with some of the policies of our government. This runs contrary to everything that I was brought up to believe. All of a sudden I'm saying, "My country's got some policies that I cannot in conscience support because they go against my God."

In April or May of that same year another major event took place that was the second key turning point in my awareness. A permanent deacon in our church, a guy named Robert Gutierrez, who also worked at Pantex, came to me. The studies leading to his ordination as a deacon along with – I'm pretty sure, though he never talked about it – the protest demonstration at Pantex involving a Catholic priest, caused him to reflect on working in a plant that was making nuclear weapons. In our church, clerics are forbidden to bear arms and deacons are clerics. Now, I'm not sure what his job at Pantex was because they can't really talk about it, but he was pretty well convinced that it didn't matter what job you had because the whole plant is geared around making nuclear weapons. They put the warheads together and put the warheads on the missiles. So he had come to the conclusion that what he was doing was wrong.

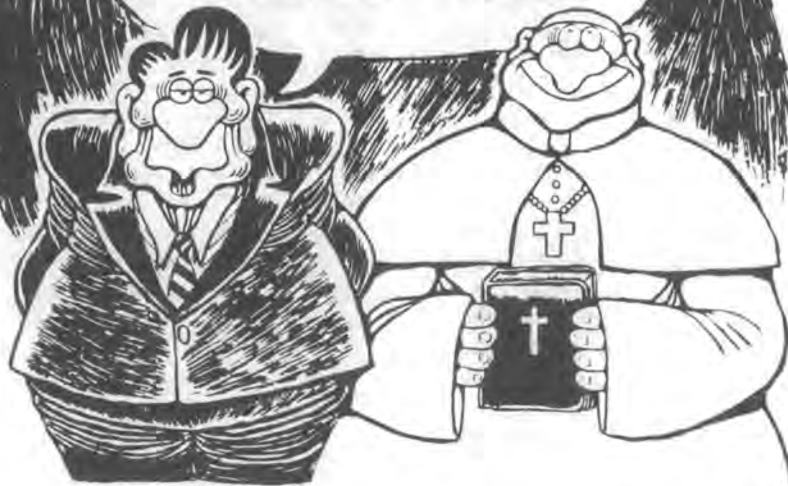
He and his wife came to me and his wife said, "We are beginning to think that what Bob is doing may be wrong. What do you think?" Well, I pretty well, at that point, knew what I thought. So I said, "Yes, Bob, I think it's a situation that is suspect morally and I really think that you need to get out of it." Then he said, "But I've got a problem." I said, "What's that, Bob?" He said, "I don't think I can get another job, and I need to support my wife and myself. I'm 55, I've had a heart attack, I can't do hard physical work anymore, and I don't have a high school diploma."

Since that time he's been subjected to lots of pressure from both sides and is really very confused. Sometimes he thinks it's okay to work out there, but other times he doesn't think it is.

Then a little later came Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen's statement to the Lutheran synod in which he talked about the Trident submarine and called it the "Auschwitz of Puget Sound." That's very strong language. I had to think, "Why's he calling it that?" He was saying that Trident submarines could kill millions of innocent people.

All of these events and incidents were adding to my concern about nuclear weapons. Then there was an announcement by Reagan in the paper that he had decided to go ahead and build the neutron bomb. He went on to describe what the neutron bomb is – an enhanced radiation warhead limited in its destructive power when it hits and explodes, but its uranium shield has been removed so the neutron waves keep on travelling. At that point it doesn't destroy buildings but it will kill any living thing in its way.

That struck me as being particularly abhorrent. Not only because of the nature of the weapon itself but because it seemed to open up the way for the possibility of thinking about a limited nuclear war, which I think would be a catastrophe if we ever made that decision. I don't know how you can guarantee that it's going to



stay limited, and then you have the possibility of an all-out nuclear exchange and that could mean the end of the world.

I wrote a statement which said that I thought Reagan's decision was an anti-life decision. The fateful line that's gotten me into the national scene was the one that said, "I urge those who engage in the production, assembly and stockpiling of nuclear bombs to reflect on the moral implications of what they're doing and to consider the possibility of transferring from that kind of work to peaceful pursuits." A reporter interpreted that statement to mean that I was calling on Pantex workers to resign, and there was a real furor in Amarillo.

I put in the line because Bob Gutierrez, the deacon and Pantex worker, came to me. All these other statements were saying that the arms race is a bad thing, that nuclear warfare would be a catastrophe and that we have to stop all of this, but nobody was saying, "What is the moral responsibility of the people who are building these things?"

So I thought I've got to say something about that. There have been times when I thought, "Who am I to disturb the consciences of other people?" But I didn't set out to disturb them. I was asked for advice. I couldn't say, "I don't know." I'm supposed to be a spiritual leader and guide.

Thus far I only know of one person who has publicly quit Pantex. His name is Eloy Ramos. I had known for some time that Eloy and some others supported what I said. The church that I had started in '54, the St. Lawrence Church, became the new cathedral in Amarillo. A lot of people who are members of St. Lawrence work at Pantex. So the pastor was quite concerned when I came out with my statement that those who worked on making nuclear weapons should reflect on the morality of what they're doing. He said, "There were some who questioned why you made the statement and there were others who defended it." He mentioned Eloy Ramos and some others. That was in May or June of 1982.

Somewhat later Eloy came out to see me and said, "I have decided to resign." I said, "Why did you make that decision?" He said, "Well, I've been thinking about this for two or three years. I've been working out there for 16 years. It's one of the best jobs I've ever had. I like the people out there. I like my job. I'm a mechanic and maintain the trucks, but I've always worried about what I was doing because I realized that we're building weapons that can kill innocent people and that can destroy the earth. I grew up on a farm and when I was a boy I worked the farm cultivating and planting cotton. I love the earth. I love God's creation, and I finally realized that what I'm doing is going to destroy it and I can't do that anymore."

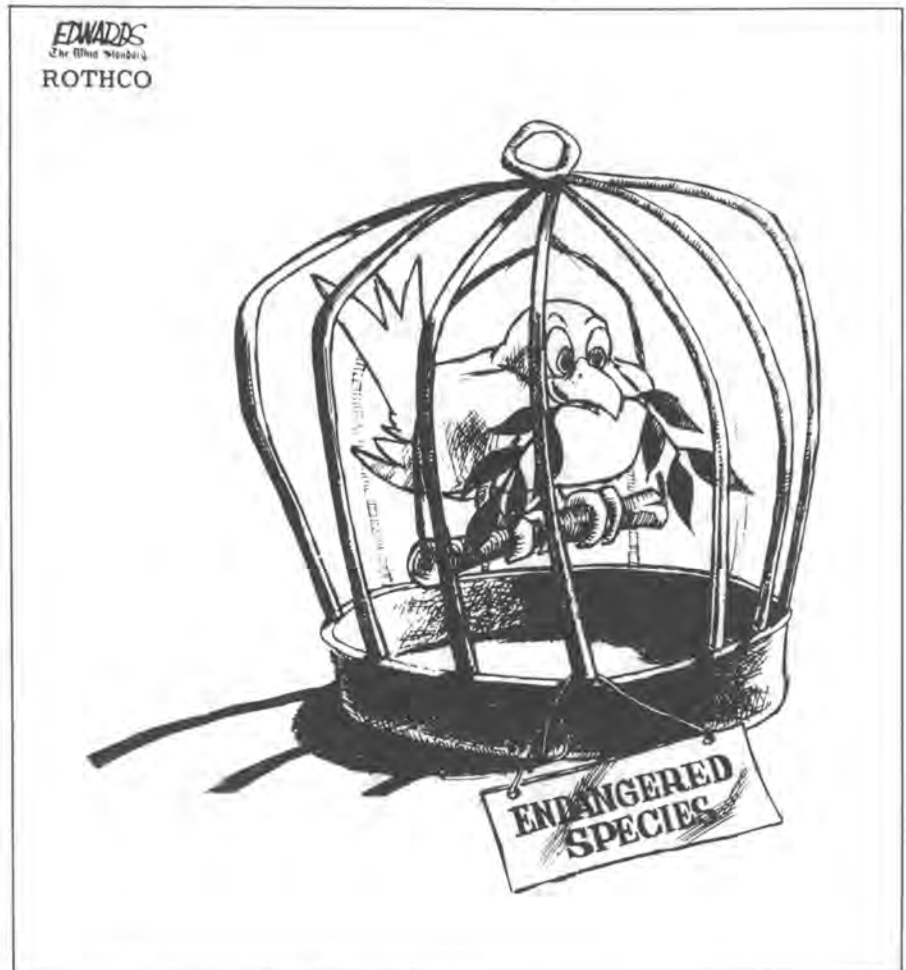
At that point I said, "Do you have a job lined up?" He said, "No, I'm going to make my announcement now that I'm quitting next Friday." I said, "You know, the newspapers are liable to get ahold of this and publish it." He said, "Well, I've been thinking about that and worrying about it and sometimes I think I should tell everybody publicly, but other times I think I should keep it to myself." I said, "I think it would be a great witness if you told it publicly." So he said, "Okay."

A couple of weeks later he came back to me and said, "I've got a job. I'm going into business for myself. I have a contract with Sears and Roebuck and I'm going to install the backyard fences that they sell. But I need a truck. I need about $1,500." I said, "Great," and wrote out a check. He said, "This is not a gift, this is a loan because I'm going to pay it back." I said, "You don't have to pay it back." He said, "I want to so other people can do what I did and transfer jobs." And sure enough, he's paying it back.

The interesting thing is that when he quit Pantex he got really good treatment by his fellow workers. The last day that he was there they gave him a party and gave him a gift. It was really weird. And his quitting made the front page of the paper, and there was not one single letter to the editor criticizing him for what he did.

So Eloy was the only one who went

public, but I know that some others have quit. They didn't need any help. One guy transferred to Santa Fe Energy, which is an affiliate of the Santa Fe Railroad. It's a company working on alternative sources of energy.



As you can imagine, the initial response to my statement resulted in very angry calls and letters. People stated that what they were doing was necessary for the defense of our country and that it's patriotic work. I was called a traitor and was invited to go to a communist country of my choice and to stay there. Very angry reactions. One Catholic woman wrote to me and said, "How dare you! You should be arrested and tried for treason."

Then there were others who called and thanked me for speaking out, especially a lot of young people. That's been an interesting phenomenon. Young people — who identified themselves as having been Catholics but who were disenchanted with the Church because it was arguing whether it was okay to have women read the scriptures in church or about communion in the hand, but didn't deal with any real-life issues — were happy somebody was finally speaking out on something they were really concerned about. They in essence said, "If this is something the Church is going to do then we'd like to come back and be a part of it." So that was very consoling.

The first time I spoke publicly was on November 11, 1981. The Union of Concerned Scientists had convocations at colleges all across the United States. Lo and behold, I was invited to come to West Texas State University. There were about 200 students and professors there. I got a standing ovation and I was just dumbfounded. I thought I might get killed instead of that, you know.

Then I flew down to San Antonio that evening and there were 400 or 500 people and I got the same sort of reception. The next day I flew out to Oklahoma City for the Phil Donahue show. There were about 3,000 women in the audience and they were on all sides of the platform. I was just amazed by it all. Phil Donahue also had Alan Forbes, a Baptist minister from Amarillo, on and it was kind of a debate. Alan Forbes takes the position that it's our Christian duty to build nuclear weapons. It worked out extremely well because Forbes dug a hole for himself and came across as totally hating the Russians. Well, that's Bible Belt country and I just kept saying, "But the Bible says, 'Love your enemy and do good to those who hate you.'" And that brought on another generation of letters and requests.

I began to receive letters with donations from all over the country to help the workers who might want to resign and who would need some financial help to tide them over or to help establish job counseling or job placement for them. Some other letters said, "It's okay for you to raise the question of conscience here but supposing that somebody wants to transfer from that work and can't. What are you doing to help them?" I had to say, "I'm not able to help them, but I'd better figure out a way to do it." So it was in the back of my mind to start a fund, but not a whole lot developed there. Maybe $400 or $500, which couldn't have helped anybody very much.

There were some workers who were talking of resigning and they were going to Catholic Family Services, our social service agency. In January, 1982, I got a call from Father Daryl Rupiper, who's in the same religious community as Father Larry Rosebaugh. He said his community wanted to do something to show their solidarity with Father Rosebaugh, who had gotten out of jail just before Christmas. So they said that, if I accepted, they would send a gift of $10,000 to a fund to help workers transfer jobs.

Well, some reporter dug up the information that the counseling was going to be done at Catholic Family Services, and when it was announced that I had set up this fund to help

the workers, there was an angry reaction on the part of some of the workers and some of the people in town. This time they had a way to vent their anger.

Catholic Family Services is a member agency of the United Way. United Way gave $60,000 annually to Catholic Family Services for three programs: child abuse, problem pregnancy counseling and teenage runaways. None of those programs, obviously, was in the area of counseling people who, for reasons of conscience, might want to transfer from nuclear weapons work to other work. But there was a report that workers from Pantex were cancelling their contributions, which were taken out of their paycheck, to United Way so long as Catholic Family Services was a member of United Way.

A couple of weeks later I got a call from the president of United Way saying, "We've got a problem." So we got together along with another guy from United Way and they told me that they anticipated the loss of $200,000 on a $2 million budget and that something had to be done. To make a long story short, one of the guys said, "What we need is a clear statement from Catholic Family Services that the agency will not counsel workers coming from Pantex." I said they had to talk to the agency itself because while it's our agency they have a mission statement that they operate by. So they went to the agency and the people at Catholic Family Services said, "No, we'll counsel anybody who comes in need, and we're not going to distinguish the need."

So the upshot of that is the United Way cut off the funding to Catholic Family Services. There was an angry reaction to that and people began to send contributions to Catholic Family Services and to me. Also, people informed United Way that they were going to drop their contributions to United Way. So, as a matter of fact, we collected $70,000 to $75,000 from the people in Amarillo.

People from all over the country have contributed money to the fund, which we call the Solidarity Peace Fund. One very interesting contribution was from one of the workers at Pantex, a woman who works there. She said that she would like to quit and sent in a check for $200. She said, "This is to help workers who might want to transfer. I'm one of the workers who would really like to transfer, but I have an insurance policy that covers cancer which is provided by the plant. If I leave I'll have no further coverage and I'm afraid I might get cancer down the years from working at Pantex." That she'll get cancer is a very distinct possibility because they handle plutonium and tritium and all that jazz.

"There's a story in the New Testament about a guy who came to Christ at night, under the cover of darkness, because it wasn't politically expedient to be seen with Him in daylight. And that's going on in Amarillo right now."

I must say that other priests in Amarillo have been supportive of me, but not publicly. One minister wrote to me and said he supported me but not publicly. The Jewish rabbi, Marty Scharfft, publicly supported me, but he has since moved on. I think the Jewish community was just kind of very cool to him so he has moved on. The new rabbi has said that he won't make any statements about these issues.

I've found that a lot of people in Amarillo were very concerned about what was going on at Pantex but didn't feel free to speak and still don't. They still find it difficult. There's a story in the New Testament about a guy who came to Christ at night, under the cover of darkness, because it wasn't politically expedient to be seen with Him in daylight. And that's going on in Amarillo right now. Any number of people have told me, almost in whispers, that they're glad I spoke out. They don't do it themselves because they're afraid their neighbors will condemn them. And I've gotten letters not only locally but from all over the country saying, "I thought I was the only one concerned about this issue. Thank you for speaking out." I was like that, too. I wanted to speak out, but I didn't for quite awhile. But it was people like Larry Rosebaugh and Hunthausen who enabled me to speak. In a sense I felt that if they could speak out I could do it too.

As far as what citizens should be doing now, in the nuclear age, I think everyone should be informed about the issues. Secondly, people have to know that they can have an impact. They have to be convinced that they can make a difference. I think people need to ask candidates for office where they stand on the nuclear weapons issue, and people need to exercise their vote. The government can't build nuclear weapons unless we fund them, but so far whatever the Pentagon has asked for the Pentagon has got. That has to stop.

Also, there will come, inevitably, the question of conscientious objection in working with nuclear weapons both in the military service and in civilian plants. That's inevitable as I see it. It will take some time, but people will begin to think, "I've got to make a personal statement about this."

As I said in my statement about the neutron bomb, "God's gifts may be used for evil or good, for war or peace. The God of Israel warned the people of ancient times that the military use of the horse is 'a vain hope for safety. Despite its power it cannot save.' Is not the military use of nuclear energy likewise a vain hope for safety? Despite its incredible power it cannot save." More and more people are beginning to realize that and that's what will, hopefully, turn us away from the nuclear arms race.☐

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This article is an excerpt from an oral history included in Atomic Activists: Their Stories, *which will be published in the fall of 1983.*

A play for one woman

The incarceration of Annie

by Rebecca Ranson

PROLOGUE

Annie Brown, here.
Don't nobody know how old I am.
Shit, I mean I know how old I am but nobody wrote it down when I got born, so nobody knows how old I am.
Sounds stupid, don't it?
You should have been there the day I was having a hearing.
That was something.
My Mama birthed me at home and there wasn't no legal record of me.
The lawyer and the judge just stood there talking back and forth about it and I said, hey, listen since I don't exist if I ain't wrote down, then I'll just

split and your problem is solved.
I thought it was funny as hell. They didn't see the humor to it in any kind of way. Lawyer got hot with me, told me to be quiet.
My Mama would have thought it was funny too after birthing me and raising me and then they talk about was I using a alias and did I belong to somebody else.
I told them hell, no. I was grown and I belonged to myself.
I wished Mama coulda been there so we could of had us a laugh but see she was home keeping Nicey
Her name ain't Nicey
It's Denise but me and Jesse just called her Nicey
Mama was home with Denise.
I didn't want my little girl seeing none of her Mama in handcuffs and shit.
Jesse wasn't there either.
He was locked up over there to the men's penitentiary
doing four years for robbery.
He done two years already but for a while there he was always getting into them fights and now they think he's either mean or crazy.
Might be too
One or the other.
Prisons does that
See before I came I didn't know
Jesse told me
but I couldn't even imagine all the stuff you be going through in prison
the way people act and stuff
like it could make you crazy.
I ain't saying that the outside
outside of being in prison is easy
and inside prison is hard
It ain't like that
but in prison
I sleep in this big room
there's 20 of us on one side
You can't never be alone
Never
Things always happening around you
jumping off you know
It ain't never quiet
unless you're in the box
Then it's so quiet
your own breathing scares you.

I been here six months.
Annie Brown, the convict.

NICEY

I got two babies
Denise, she's almost four
She turn three and her Daddy was in jail
She be four soon and me and her Daddy both in jail
Poor baby
My Mama, she take real good care of Nicey
but Mama's old and she don't like a lot of noise and stirring 'round her
Nicey don't ever stay still
She practically come out of me strutting
That girl
Whew
She'd run the legs off a jack rabbit.
When Nicey was three
it was just me and I was sick so I'd been laid off work
I had applied for welfare
Looked like it just wasn't gonna come and then on Nicey's birthday, here come a check in the mail.
We got us a bucket of fried chicken
a big bag of coal for heat
and we ate and we were 'bout to burn up we were so warm.
That there was a happy day.
Sometimes your luck runs with you.
I talked to Nicey about Jesse all the time but I suppose saying Daddy didn't mean much, her being so little and all
We visited Jesse regular over at the prison but visits was limited to two a month and Nicey was short of memory

Jennifer Lanier in her performance as Annie. Photos by Rick Darnell.

and Jesse would want to hold her so bad that she'd get scared of him and scream.
I could see the hurt in Jesse's eyes but it wasn't none of Nicey's fault.
She was just too little and she always got shy over to the prison.
I learnt a lesson from that.
I didn't want her coming here to see me
and me wanting to hug on her
and her squalling and calling my Mama her Mama.
I seen it.
I seen it just about to tear some of these womens half in two when their own flesh and blood sit there and say, "You ain't my Mama neither."
I write Nicey letters but I don't write so good and Nicey can't write back.
I call the house some too.
Nicey don't like talking on the phone so I mostly just talk about her to Mama.
She asked me one time, was I in prison? I said, "Yes, baby, for a while but I'll be home soon." And she said, "When is soon, Mama?" I busted out crying. Soon is a year away. That ain't soon.
My own little girl won't even remember her Mama.
You think that don't make you hate yourself, you got to do some more thinking.

WELFARE

My other baby won't ever know me
I give him up to the social worker so somebody else could adopt him.
When they arrested Jesse I was already working on his second baby.
Neither one of us knowed it.
See, like I was bleeding regular but I was feeling sick.
I missed so much work, Sam laid me off and told me to get myself well.
I washed dishes and waited tables for Sam in this dump he calls a restaurant.
I went to the doctor and he said I was gonna have a baby.
I thought I would die right then.
Jesse in prison and me out of a job and the doctor said I had to stay off my feet until the bleeding stopped. He told me to go to the welfare and they would help me out until I could go back to work.
I didn't want no damn welfare.
I seen enough of them snooty ladies come poke around, acting like they was afraid something dirty might touch them. I guess some of them are nice but I musta got the hatefulest bitch they had. I had Nicey with me and I said to her that I needed some help and the social worker said, "Where is the father of that child?" and I said, "Her Daddy is in prison," and she said, "Mrs. Brown, have you ever thought of getting a job?"
She said it like it was some new idea she just thought up.
When I told her I got laid off, she raised up her eyes and sighed and asked me if it was inconsistency at reporting to work that got me laid off, and then she didn't wait for an answer and started talking about how she had to come to work every day and come on time or they would take her job away too.
I was so mad.
Hadn't nobody ever talked like that to me before except my own Mama and I didn't expect to have to listen to no white social worker talk at me so I cut into what she was saying and told her I was pregnant and having woman troubles and had to stay in bed awhile. That shut her up a minute and then she smiled and asked who the father of this child might be.
I gave her the meanest look I could.
I been told I can look mean when I got a mind to.
"My husband.
Jesse Brown.
My husband, the Daddy of this child in my belly."
Nicey started crying.
She wasn't used to me yelling at people.
The welfare lady told me I was in a public office and I should lower my voice.
Then she told me quick that they would check me out and IF I was telling the truth then I would probably be eligible for a check.
I was crying and Nicey was crying when I left there.

No check come for two months and every time I stayed up a day, the bleeding would come back on me.
Me and Nicey moved in with Mama.
Wasn't nothing else we could do.
Mama didn't have room but she ain't the complaining kind
She's a religious woman
She always told me to trust in the mysterious ways of the Lord.
I decided a long time ago the Lord wasn't mysterious. If there was one, he was just plain damn mean and sorry and didn't care nothing about black people.
I never told Mama what I thought about the Lord.
She woulda thought I was sinning by saying that.
She give us a bed.
Wasn't no way she was gonna see no grandchild of hers out in the cold.

JESSE

Jesse burned up my ears for me going to the welfare.
He said I didn't need no welfare cause I had a man and I said, "Baby, if I got one, where is he at?" and he screamed about how he was gonna bust my mouth wide open if I said another word.
Them seemed like the worst days of my life at that time.
I didn't know what more was coming.
Jesse started saying it wasn't no baby of his in my belly,
couldn't be,
he was in prison.
I knowed he'd gone crazy then.
Jesse knew me that good that he shoulda knowed I wouldn't let no other man mess around with me. Jesse got me clean. He knowed that but his mind being in the penitentiary and all had got him to thinking in awful ways. He said it was cause so many men said they found their women been running on the street and lying to them.
"Jesse Brown," I said to him, "if I take to running any street, you will be the first one to know."
That day Jesse was sorry for what he said but then he started it back up a couple weeks later.
Before all that started to happening Jesse would be sweet to me and he'd say how lonesome he was for me.
I missed him terrible.
I had got used to sleeping snuggled up under his arm and

I'd lie there and try to imagine his arm around me. Wasn't no use. Something ain't there, it ain't there.
I wanted a man but I wanted my man.
I wanted Jesse.
Some of them other men around started trying to sweet-talk me and asking me about how hard it was waiting for your man to come home. Sam was one of them too. Jesse would have killed him if he'd heard that. It was tough with Sam being my boss and all but I'd joke him and say, "When you got a man like Jesse, waiting ain't no problem."
I was young, innocent and dumb back then.
Jesse turnt on me completely.
Prison did it to him and he done it to me.
It still hurts.
Some wounds don't heal even if you know what caused them.
I was good to him.
I loved him.
We was happy before he went to prison and got changed.

Now I worry about me changing.
Is this time I'm doing going to change me like it done him?
Shit, it's changed me already
I just hope I can do the rest of it and get the hell out of here and forget it.
Forget Jesse too.
I don't ever want to see him again.

When Nicey was born I was hoping so hard for a boy so Jesse would have him a son.
Now I hope Jesse rots in hell before he gets a son.
He wouldn't never say that baby boy was his and he was.
I was too damn stupid to go running the street.
I hadn't never done nothing but be with Jesse.
I was gonna name the boy Jesse too.
I didn't even give him no name.
The social worker said it would be better if I just didn't think none about that baby at all.

I still don't know did I do the right thing or the wrong thing.
Seemed like there wasn't no choice.
My baby had to have him a Mama and there wasn't no way I could get out of here to be his Mama.
My own Mama had took sick and they took Nicey away from her, give her to my sister in Alabama who already got three children of her own. She give Nicey a home but she said she couldn't no way take another baby. So I give him up.

I never did like my sister. She was always uppity and contrary. I don't want Nicey living with her. Mama had to move up there too. When I call up, my sister don't do nothing but yell at me about how could I go robbing somebody and leave all my mess behind for her to clean up after.
I don't call her much.
I guess she got it hard.
I don't get no visits now that Mama is gone.

PRISON FAMILY

I got this prison family.
In my family I got a Mama and a grandmama and a baby sister.
Had me a husband too but I couldn't keep him.
We had to get us a divorce.
Ain't that something?
You know, you take the real world with you and you make it over again inside.
If all you got is womens, then you make do with what you got.
When I first come in, I listened to them women talking about so-and-so was their Daddy or Mama and I laughed

in their faces. "That ain't no man," I'd say, "that's a pure-t woman if I ever seen one, even if she do chop her hair all off and walk like she got something between her legs. She just got what the rest of us got."

I couldn't understand it.

I wasn't here two days before this woman sided up to me and said she liked the way I looked and could we get us an understanding.

I give her a dose of plain understanding.

Later I was sorry.

Part of it is I got lonely wanting somebody to talk to and part of it is that when you get into that family thing, it's like them people starts to care about you. It gives you something to do, something to get your mind off prison.

The husbands is mostly for protection.

Outside if you ain't got a man, you ain't got nothing, and people walks all over you. Inside, if you got a husband then people don't be messing with you so much and your prison family gonna give you a cigarette when you out and a swallow of their soda. Don't sound like much maybe but when you're doing without, it counts a lot.

Theys a whole lot of talk about bull dagging but a whole lot is talk.

Sarah, she was, you know, she liked women all her life, before prison, and she wouldn't take truck with any of the goings on in here. She said that none of these women doing all the talking had any idea what loving a woman was about.

I liked Sarah, even if she was one of them kind of women. She kept to herself.

Nobody's business ain't everybody's business. That's what Sarah said.

One night

I was so low

I don't think I ever been so down.

I was crying and I didn't even know what it was about.

It wasn't my time of the month or nothing,

and Sarah, she said, "Little girl, who been mean to you today?"

That made me cry more.

She put her arms around me and rocked me.

This may sound terrible and I don't care because it's the truth.

I asked Sarah to love me, you know, make love to me.

She cried then.

She wouldn't do it.

She said, "Hey, little girl, what then? I be falling in love with you and you just doing something to pass the time."

She got two joints and we got to smoking. We laughed all night long.

Sarah and me gonna be tight forever.

That there is something I know.

GETTING BY

I didn't know anything about dope and drugs before Jesse went to prison.

Me and him bought us a bottle of wine once in a while.

Two glasses and I'd be high.

Jesse used to tease me about getting high if he passed the bottle under my nose.

We had us some good times. When you're that young and don't know nothing, you can really get happy.

In here I wouldn't say the wine or dope exactly makes me happy but it makes being here less unhappy. Takes your mind off it for a day or two while you figure out how you're gonna get some stuff and who you're gonna share it with and how you're gonna keep from getting caught. You know, it takes up time, planning all that, anticipating. Sometimes it's a real bust too. The good part is looking forward to it and doing it ain't nothing.

You act crazy here and the infirmary gives you out free highs, thorazine.

There be some women in here that got to be crazy for real, like Mary, who don't want nobody to come in and use the toilet after she cleans it. She be ready to fight you if you try. They sent Mary to see this head shrinker and he give her lots of thorazine and she shut up. Now she can't even hold the brush in her hand to clean. We using some dirty toilets now too.

I couldn't do no time that way.

Jackie, she was beside me down to the city jail, when we was waiting to go to court. Jackie said she could do her time standing on her ear. What she meant was, laying on her back. The guards would come in and she'd unbutton her shirt down and lean against the bars and they'd come back around visitin' her with a pack of cigarettes and a cheeseburger.

There's every kind of people you can think of in here. I'm including them that work here too. Good and bad ones. The volunteers is a trip and a half. Most every kind of religion there is comes in here and some people think if you get a Bible in your hand they gonna let you go home. You can't count on nothing though. People wants to go home so bad they'll do or say anything.

I work in the kitchen and this woman working near me keep on talking about how she can't stand it no more so one day she chop off a finger just so she could go to the hospital downtown, just to get out of the gate and breathe her some free air.

I lay in my bed some nights and think about free air. Everybody says as soon as the gate closes behind you, you can suck in free air and it feels like different air. I hate nights. I'd rather be in that stinking kitchen. All them noises. People be moaning and havin nightmares and snoring. Down the hill they got cottages for when you work up to almost about to go home. They give you a room of your own. Some people say they sit up all night, scared to death of the quiet after having got used to the noises. After I come up for review, I'll probably move down the hill.

MAMA'S DEAD

She ain't died, not my Mama.

She ain't no such a thing.

My Mama is fine. I'll call her up. You'll see.

Don't go telling me that my Mama died while I'm here. She ain't done it.

I don't have no Daddy but I got a Mama who loves me.

She don't write letters to me much. She can't write good. We had this Open House. Open House she brought me a devil's food cake with chocolate icing. My Mama knows what I like. My Mama, she sick but she wouldn't die. She just wouldn't. Nicey be there and my sister and Mama knows how bad I need to know she's there with them.

Oh my god.
Ohhhhh.
Sarah, Sarah.
My Mama up and died and they said I can't go to the funeral cause I'm in the wrong level and it's out of state.
I don't have nobody loves me no more.
Sarah.
Sarah, get me a joint, will you?

PO-TENTIAL

Let me tell you something.
You are looking at potential.
I got it.
Ms Estelle Jones says I got potential, that I can do whatever I decide to do with my life.
I told her I decided to leave this place then and she laughed.
I was dead serious.
If I got so damn much potential to be developing, I just ain't got the time to be laying up here in this prison.
It's the truth.
Nothing you can do with potential here unless what you supposed to be doing is finding out how crazy human beings are, and how bad and how mean they can get at each other because they don't like themselves either.
I didn't know anything when I came in here.
Now sometimes it seem like I know everything there is.
I don't mean book stuff. I mean about like real people and all.
I asked Ms Estelle Jones what it was I had potential to do and she said I was a leader, a natural leader, and could influence a lot of people because they listen to me, 'cause they know I don't just jump off on my own trip and talk to hear my own voice.
I said, "Okay, Ms Jones, tell me what to lead, how to use that potential I got."
It was nice to be told something like that but I swear I didn't have any idea what it could mean.
Got elected dorm representative, which means I take the bitching to the staff and ask them for help. It's not bad. It helps in little ways and then I got my G.E.D. and I started these courses at the technical institute. Best thing about them is that I get out of here two days a week even if I do arrive in the Department of Corrections bus. People look at you like you just might be gonna slit their throat or steal their bags and the men act like they know you always been on the corner down the block from them. Still I guess if I got any potential to be able to earn my own living this will help.
Me and Nicey sure gonna need it when I get out.
I'm luckier than a lot of these women. Some of them ain't got the first idea how to read or nothing and they get stuck doing dishes and cleaning floors. I don't like saying it but some women just ain't never thought about anything, *anything*. And they be talking yap, yap, yap all the time, yap, yap, yap and keeping up with other people's business and not tending to their own. Nobody ever took up time with them.
Nobody ever asked them what they thought so they just didn't ever think. It makes you sick and it makes you mad at the same time. I'd like to jerk a knot into some of them, make them sit still for five minutes and think before they did something and got in more trouble.
Like, when I first come here, I thought I hated some of these guards more than anything. Now I don't even bother to hate. This whole place is so messed up that saying who is right or wrong about most stuff is impossible.
I got tight with this one guard. I have trouble sleeping at night and she was the night matron at the dorm and we'd talk about everything and nothing. Just talk. We was company to each other. We'd drink coffee and smoke cigarettes and talk about something besides prisons. I had me a real friend.
There was some complaints and they moved her out of this building, same way Sarah got moved. Nobody wants anybody to be tight with anybody else. Seems like people don't want anybody to be friends or ever be happy or talk about the world outside.
Some people don't ever see any choices.

MY DREAM

I got this dream.
Hey, don't get me wrong. I ain't Martin Luther King. I wish I was. I think he really did have those dreams, that he saw this kind of world where people were interested in love and brotherhood and where they wanted to be glad about being good. I don't know nobody who wouldn't be ashamed to be told they were good. Good means stupid where I come from, means you don't have money and don't know how to get over, and you ain't nothing.
I got this dream though about how Nicey and me is gonna live in this nice apartment building and it'll have good

heat and air conditioning. And I'll love Nicey all day every day and she'll love me. She'll forget her Mama used to be a convict.
That's some dream, ain't it?
There's some women already been home and come back. They say all them dreams you have in here are just dreams, nothing but dreams and don't nothing work out at all.
I hope that's not the truth.
Hope.
Dreams and hope.
That's all I got.

I AM GUILTY

First thing people always ask me is what I did to get here.
I tell them I got born.
That's how I got here.
I got born, same as everybody else.
I guess I'm guilty of my crime.

I know for sure it was my hand that reached in the cash drawer at Mister Mike's store. I was the one who ran out the door with that one-hundred and twenty-eight dollars in my hand. It was me. I did it. That makes me guilty. I was the one that Mister Mike, who I been knowing all my life, told the police about. I was the one who sat in the city jail for three months waiting for a trial. I was the one found guilty and sentenced to prison. I am the one that's guilty. I'm here, ain't I? That makes me the criminal beyond a shadow of a doubt.
I was guilty of a lot of things that day.
I was guilty of yelling at the welfare lady who told me she was sorry about my daughter having pneumonia and was I sure that Jesse Brown was the father of the baby in my belly because he told her he wasn't.
I was guilty of screaming at Nicey because she knocked a glass of orange juice on the floor and when my Mama slapped me for slapping Nicey, I was guilty of telling my own Mama that I hated her for ever having birthed me into being black and poor and having nothing. I was guilty of denying my Mama, my people and wishing my unborn child dead. Then I was guilty of going and getting all the dope and wine I could beg from people I know, and using it all so I could march into Mister Mike's store and put my hand in his cash register and take the money, knowing that he knew me, knowing that he would turn his back on me because I've known him all my life and knowing he would tell the police but hoping he wouldn't. I barely got back to the house before the police pulled up and my Mama handed them back the money too, said she didn't want anything that wasn't due to her.
I told Mama a lot was due to her she didn't get. She cried and wanted to know from Jesus what she had done wrong. I told her to ask me, not Jesus. I told her she had no right to bring me into the world. She said . . . but I love you. You're my little girl.

So here I am.
My dead Mama's little girl with a little girl of my own.
I'm twenty-three years old, going on a thousand.

Annie Brown, convict.
Annie Brown, criminal.
Annie Brown.

Rebecca Ranson is a playwright living in North Carolina and is the coordinator of People's Art Action, a network of politically committed performing and visual artists. She taught writing and theatre in prisons for seven years, including two years at the North Carolina Correctional Center for Women. This play is a tribute to the women at that prison.

"It seems to help me bear it better when she knows about it."

A network of women friends in Watson, Arkansas, 1890-91

by Margaret Jones Bolsterli

One of the most destructive messages passed on to young girls implies that the spirit of competition born of the quest for the "most desirable" boyfriend, and later husband, will remain with them all their lives; that they will, in fact, see other women as the enemy. Furthermore, the myth of the Southern Belle coupled with the women-are-the-enemy myth accuses Southern women of having greater hostility toward each other than have our sisters in the North, East and West. Southern history, when it deals with women at all, focuses on the accomplishments of unusual women or women in unusual times under the stress, say, of civil war; all but the more basic relationships are ignored. Southern literature, when it focuses on the lives of women, tends to further the myth of cutthroat competition and dislike.

So when the current phase of the women's movement in the 1960s and '70s fostered support groups, it came as a surprise to many that women found such pleasure in cooperation. Feminist influence has weakened the old cultural myths of competition among women to some degree, but young women are still being taught, somehow, to distrust each other.

As a cultural historian and a teacher of regional women's literature, I have had an opportunity to read Southern women's private documents – letters and diaries that escape attention because they concern the humdrum of daily existence rather than the drama of history in the making. In these documents, I have found the truth about relationships among Southern women: for most of their lives, their best friends are other women. And they know it. Nowhere does this seem more evident than among wives – the very group who should, according to the myth, be most reliant on men for their emotional support.

FANNIE MORGAN AND TWO YOUNG WOMEN IN 1914

photo courtesy Virginia Sue Meade

The friends discussed here lived in the late 1800s in a tiny town in the Arkansas/Mississippi delta region of Arkansas. One of them, Nannie Stillwell Jackson, kept a diary in which she recorded the details of their daily lives. I have recently edited this diary for the University of Arkansas Press under the title *Vinegar Pie and Chicken Bread: A Woman's Diary of Life in the Rural South in 1890-1891.*

Nannie Jackson's diary records the dull and isolated life in a town whose only connection with the rest of the world was a dirt road so rough and muddy that each leg of the 20-mile trip to the county seat and back required an overnight stay. Supplies came by steamboat to Red Fork, a port on the Arkansas River three miles away. There was no railroad or telegraph office; daily mail service was not instituted until 1890. Most of Watson's residents were families of small farmers and the merchants who supplied them.

For the most part, money was scarce. It was especially scarce in the household of W.T. and Nannie Stillwell Jackson, whose 140 acres of land seem to have been either uncleared or under water too much of the time to be very profitable.

In 1889, Nannie Stillwell, a widow with two little girls and few financial resources, filled her desperate need for a breadwinner by marrying W.T. Jackson, a young man not only "beneath" her but 20 years her junior. "Mr. Jackson," as she invariably calls him, was practically illiterate and capable only of working the plot of land they owned, doing odd jobs

around the neighborhood, and butchering animals to sell for meat.

Nannie, on the other hand, was a woman of some education. Her handwriting is neat and clear and she frequently wrote letters for those who could not do it themselves. An avid reader, she even read aloud to her husband when she could get him to sit still.

Nannie's diary indicates that the relations between the Jacksons were strained and sometimes stormy. In fact, not one shred of affection or concern for his well-being is expressed in the entire diary. She shared a house, bed and marriage with Mr. Jackson; emotionally, she lived in a world of females: her daughters Lizzie and Sue and a group of some 20 women who formed a network of friendship and support.

Setting aside the financial considerations that made a husband necessary, if all references to men were deleted from Nannie Jackson's diary, her life would not appear substantially different. But it is impossible to imagine it without women. Judging from the evidence in this diary, contemporary women's support groups are an attempt to recover a tradition in women's lifestyles.

At the beginning of the diary, Nannie is 36 years old. Her best friend, Fannie Morgan, is the 19-year-old wife of a man 17 years her senior. Fannie has recently lost a baby, and Nannie Jackson is most solicitous and caring toward her. They share a great many things: food, starch, household chores and their troubles.

Thursday, June 19th, 1890: *I baked some chicken bread for Fannie & some for myself, & she gave me some dried apples & I baked 2 pies she gave me one & she took the other I made starch for her & me too, & starched my clothes & ironed the plain clothes & got dinner.*

This friendship threatened Mr. Jackson and he tried to curb it. But Nannie valued rewards of the relationship more than his approval.

Friday, June 27th, 1890: *I did some patching for Fannie today and took it to her she washed again yesterday & ironed up everything today I also took 2 boxes of moss & set out in a box for her, when I came back Mr. Jackson got mad at me for going there 3 times this evening said I went to talk about him & said I was working for nothing but to get him & Mr. Morgan in a row, & to make trouble between them & I just talk to Fannie and tell her my troubles because it seems to help me bear it better when she knows about it. I shall tell her whenever I feel like it.*

And tell her she does. When she feels sick and depressed, for example, she asks Fannie to make sure that all of her possessions go to Lizzie and Sue and that she be buried next to Mr. Stillwell, her first husband, if she should die.

The relationship with Fannie is as close as the tie between very close sisters. Nannie is as concerned about sickness in Fannie's household as in her own, and she seldom makes a special dish without taking some to Fannie. Presents of food to each other are considered personal presents not meant to be shared by the family at mealtime but to be eaten on the spot.

WATSON DURING A RIVER "OVERFLOW," PROBABLY 1916

photo courtesy Mae Willis

When one of Nannie's circle of friends is ill or has an unusually heavy load of work to do, they all pitch in to help:

Thursday, June 19th, 1890: *Clear and warm, very warm. Lizzie is a heap better. Today I went up and washed dishes for Fannie and helped her so she could get an early start to washing for she had such a big washing. Sue churned for her. Miss Nellie Smithee helped her wash and they got done by 2 o'clock.*

The generosity of such acts of kindness should be measured by the heaviness of Nannie's own work load. She makes all the clothes, including underwear, for herself and two daughters, as well as shirts, nightshirts and underclothes for Mr. Jackson. She also makes sheets, towels and pillowcases from unbleached domestic cloth. All her cooking is done on a wood-fired stove for which she must carry wood daily.

Nannie washes all their clothes with water heated outside in an iron pot. They are scrubbed by hand on a rub board with homemade lye soap, rinsed through two tubs of cold water, then starched stiff as a board, hung on a line to dry, and later ironed with irons weighing from five to 10 pounds each which have to be heated on the stove. The laundry suds are never thrown away; they are used to scour the kitchen floor. Her wash water must be carried from the bayou 50 feet away if there is not enough water in the rain barrels.

And of course, three meals a day must be cooked. No packaged food is used, no bakery bread. There is a rare can of storebought fruit only when somebody is sick and deserves a special treat. The garden is Nannie's purlieu, as well as the milk cow and the chickens.

Since this is swamp country, people are frequently very sick. In these days of hospitals and undertakers, it is hard to imagine the almost casual ways of handling the dying and dead before we had facilities to care for them – until we read Nannie's account of the death of a small boy in Watson, when

Sue and young Lizzie ride to the graveyard in the wagon with the corpse because it is too far to walk. Then a friend dies during a period of high water in the bayou:

April 14th, 1891: Mrs. Archdale died this morning at 25 minutes to one she suffered a heap before she died and talked sensible up till about 4 or 5 hours before she died. Dove got there before she died but Mr. Jimmie and the doctor never did come . . . Mrs. Morgan, Mrs. Newby, & Mr. Jackson, Kate McNeill & Fannie Totten all set up last night & we dressed her and laid her out . . . The gentlemen have set up with the corpse tonight for Mrs. Gifford can't set up, Mrs. Morgan is sick and the rest of us set up last night . . . Mr. Jackson went to Redfork today to see about getting the coffin made and it has come and Mrs. Archdale is in it.

Wednesday, April 15th, 1891: Cloudy all morning the gentlemen took Mrs. Archdale away & not a lady could go on account of the water. It is falling but slow so slow.

Nannie Jackson's other close friends are Mrs. Chandler, Fannie's mother; Mrs. Nellie Smithee, a widow who works as a live-in domestic worker and field hand; and the Owen sisters, Miss Carrie and Miss Fannie, who board at the Jackson house during the school term while Miss Carrie presides as teacher of the one-room school. The Owen sisters are also like sisters to Nannie, but are not as close as Fannie Morgan – the bond of wifehood is missing.

Miss Carrie is the only financially independent woman in this network. She not only supports herself and presumably her sister, but maintains her own horse, Denmark. Since the average pay for teachers in that county in 1890 was just $252 a year, her independence was limited, but she received the respect due her as an educated woman. While living with the Jacksons, she took part in community social life and joined in the sewing, but she did not perform household chores with the women. Mr. Jackson resented Miss Carrie and complained because Nannie wouldn't reveal their private conversations to him.

The amount of visiting that went on among Nannie and her friends is impressive. This was not a community where people lived close to each other; fields and pastures stretching at least a quarter mile separated their homes. The road was alternately dusty and muddy, and the bayou that runs through the area had to be crossed on a log. After heavy rains had swollen it, the only way across was by boat.

Nannie Jackson's network of friends included black as well as white women. The amount and quality of communication between blacks and whites in the South has always been a shadowy dimension of Southern history and culture; readers unacquainted with the rural South may be surprised at how much interaction actually existed between the races. Nannie expresses affection for several black women, and judging from their gifts and visits to her, the affection is returned. She wrote and received letters for them, traded poultry and dairy produce with them, and did sewing for them. In fact, without knowledge of the race of the women mentioned in this entry, one would have a difficult time sorting things out:

Wednesday, August 6th, 1890: I cut and made one of the aprons for Aunt Francis' grand child & Lizzie & I partly made the basque Aunt Chaney came & washed the dinner dishes . . . Mrs. Chandler, Fannie, Mrs. Watson & Myrtle McEncrow were here a while this evening, Aunt Jane Osburn was here too, & Aunt Mary Williams she brought me a nice mess of squashes for dinner. Carolina Coalman is sick & sent Rosa to me to send her a piece of beef I sent her a bucket full of cold victuals . . . got no letters today wrote one for Aunt Francis to her mother & she took it to the post office, I gave her 50 cents for the 2 chickens she bought & a peck of meal for a dozen eggs.

"Aunt," of course, is the Southern white form of address for an older black woman who deserves respect. Confusion reigns, though, when white women who are really Nannie's aunts or are called aunt by the community are mentioned. The quality of all the aunts' visits is so much the same that their races can only be told by checking the census rolls which categorized people, at least until 1880, as "white," "black" or "mulatto."

Nannie Jackson's diary gives a strong sense of the autonomy of

THE JACKSON FAMILY, ABOUT 1896. CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT: LIZZIE, SUE, JAMES COOSE (LIZZIE'S HUSBAND), W.T. JACKSON, CARRIE, NANNIE STILLWELL JACKSON, "STONEWALL."

photo courtesy Virginia Sue Meade

women's culture in Watson – a culture not hostile to that of men, but separate from it and different, with its own center and order. It certainly does not appear to have been a culture of the oppressed but of those who simply share a common experience – an experience which they do not share with men, even their husbands.

It is easy to see how little girls in this community were enculturated to follow in their mothers' footsteps: Lizzie and Sue worked right along with their mother at household chores and spent their free time playing dolls and mimicking the roles of the adult women:

Sunday, June 15th, 1890: *Cloudy & warm sun a little, brisk south wind all day, Mr. Jackson went down to Mr. Howells this morning did not stay very long, he came back ate a lunch then went up on the ridge & helped Mr. Morgan to drive home Lilly & Redhead the 2 cows I am to have the milk of, Lilly is mine but Redhead is not she is in Mr. Morgans care and he lets me milk her, I sent Lizzie up to help Fannie clean up this morning & I baked 2 green apple pies & took one to her she sent me some clabber for Mr. Jackson's dinner Lizzie & Sue did not want to go anywhere to day & they stayed home & played with their dolls & had sunday school & a doll dinner out under the plum tree, I slept some read some & wrote Sister Bettie a long letter fixed up 7 journals to send her & cut a piece out of a paper that Mr. Jackson brought to send her, he has not stayed about the house but very little today, Lizzie Sue & I have had a pleasant day.*

The daily lives of our foremothers shed some light on a question I have pondered for years. On the frontier and even years later, as in the time Nannie Jackson was keeping her diary, women and men did many of the same chores around the house and fields. Why did the women learn to cultivate an air of weakness and dependence so that a strong man would take care of them?

It is clear from reading Nannie Jackson's diary that women had no alternative. Since they did not have the employment options of men, either in actuality or in their visions of themselves as workers, mothers conditioned their daughters to be weak. There was a women's culture and a men's culture, which were almost mutually exclusive. A woman's means to gaining a better life lay not in her competence but rather in her ability to attract a husband who could afford to hire some other woman to do the work for her that frontier women and poor women had to do for themselves.

photo courtesy Virginia Sue Meade

FANNIE MORGAN AND TWO CHILDREN, ABOUT 1895

The conditioning process that nurtured this state of affairs is evident in the diary. Nannie's daughters share the housework, chop cotton and carry water to the men in the fields, but it is obvious from the amount of time they spend playing dolls and washing dolls' clothes that, with Nannie's full encouragement, they are playing the games that lead to success in the women's world.

If I had been given the opportunity to deal with Nannie Jackson's diary when I was a young student, my vision of my region's culture and my role in it might have been drastically different. I might have gained at 20 rather than at 48 respect for the enduring qualities of my foremothers, because the processes in which they were involved demanded the same respect as the processes in which their husbands and brothers engaged. I might have better understood what was especially hard to accept at 20 – the necessity mothers felt to mutilate the dreams of young women in order to force them into acceptable patterns of behavior. I might have learned to respect the women's culture for the support it gave to women, rather than to accept the general contempt for it.

Until the old myths are buried once and for all, it will continue to be difficult for women to trust each other, not only in personal relationships but also in responsible positions. Not only will sisterhood remain elusive but also the respect that is necessary before women will support women in high offices or as doctors, lawyers, bankers and politicians.□

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Parts of this essay have appeared in slightly different form in her essay "On the Literary Uses of Private Documents" in Teaching Women's Literature from a Regional Perspective, *published by the Modern Language Association, 1982; and in her introduction to* Vinegar Pie and Chicken Bread: A Woman's Diary of Life in the Rural South in 1890-1891, *published by the University of Arkansas Press, and available for $14.00 plus $1.50 handling from the University of Missouri Press, P.O. Box 7088, Columbia, MO 65205.*

DURING THE SUMMER of 1982, after spending 15 years trying to understand slavery through written records, I got my first chance to share in literally uncovering a segment of black history.

Working with archaeologists from North Carolina's Department of Cultural Resources, I served as Historical Coordinator for a field school in Pettigrew State Park south of Albemarle Sound. We recruited a dozen students from Duke University and Durham Technical Institute and worked for six weeks on the state-owned Somerset Place Plantation near Creswell.

there is only vacant space. Yet when Edmund Ruffin visited the plantation at its height in 1839 and described it as a model of Southern agriculture for the readers of his *Farmer's Register*, it was built around a community of over 200 workers, more than 40 of whom had specific manufacturing skills. (In addition, there were over 60 black children and more than a dozen elderly blacks.) According to the Washington County census of the following year, out of 299 persons living at Somerset Place, 281 – *94 percent of the inhabitants* – were slaves.

DIGGING BLACK HISTORY

BY PETER WOOD

When we arrived in July, Route 64 leading to Roanoke Island was being resurfaced to prepare for the four-hundredth anniversary of "the Lost Colony" in 1984. Migrant workers and men from the local prison farm were beginning to harvest truckloads of vegetables from the huge agribusiness operations which cover the flat, rich land of Washington County. At nearby First Colony Farms, engineers and businesspeople were laying plans for the world's largest peat-methanol conversion plant (see page 66). And at Somerset Place, site manager Bill Edwards and his staff were explaining the plantation to a steady flow of summer tourists.

As at other plantations throughout the South, the buildings, artifacts and stories of Somerset's white proprietors have been attentively preserved, while the historical presence of a large black community has long been overlooked or minimized. Where a small sign proclaims "slave quarters,"

The descendants of several of these families still return to Somerset for reunions. Scores of relatives from as far away as Chicago and Philadelphia gather at the public campsite where their ancestors once lived. They park their cars within feet of the buried hearths where slaves once cooked and ate, and they play softball in a broad field their forebears cleared by hand.

But for years the physical links between past and present have been almost invisible. The last three houses in what was once a long row of cabins were destroyed in 1929. Several years later a WPA work crew graded a road over the long line of foundations. Only the outlines of the slave "chapel" and "hospital" near the Big House have been preserved for tourists. Here we unloaded the equipment for our dig. We spent our first week reviewing everything we knew about the site, in order to decide exactly where to start our excavation.

THE BROAD PENINSULA BETWEEN Albemarle and Pamlico Sound hasn't always been open farm land. Four hundred years ago, when Raleigh's English colony reached the Outer Banks, a dense swamp forest of cypress and white cedar covered the region. The Roanoke Indians had a settlement called Tramaskecoc at the head of the Alligator River, and artifacts suggest they visited the huge, elliptical "bay lake" at the center of the swamp to spear fish along its 17-mile shoreline. When European colonization forced coastal tribes inland, knowledge of the

Harper's Weekly

lake disappeared until it was rediscovered in the 1750s by a hunter named Phelps. He gave his name to the lake and laid claim to the adjacent shore, but 30 years later the so-called East Dismal Swamp still remained undisturbed.

In the 1780s, as in the 1980s, America's aggressive business elites were looking for ways to expand and consolidate their wealth. Up and down the eastern seaboard they established new industries, extended overseas trade and speculated in western land. And as property near the coastal ports increased in value, these investors looked again at remaining pockets of uncleared land for "development." Engineers in England were demonstrating that well-placed canals could drain valuable swamplands while providing steady irrigation and cheap transportation. Why not do the same thing in America by exploiting enslaved labor?

The trade bringing African workers to the new Southern states reopened on a large scale after the Revolution, and planters from the Potomac to the Ashley River near Charleston sought tax exemptions for putting their slaves to work on canals that would be "public improvements." In South Carolina's lowcountry, planters had their workers extend the system of dikes and ditches used to cultivate rice. In Virginia, George Washington returned to his scheme of surveying a canal through the Great Dismal Swamp to connect North Carolina's landlocked Albemarle district to the port of Norfolk. And in Edenton, North Carolina, Josiah Collins joined with two other investors to form the Lake Company, hoping to develop the swampland around Lake Phelps. The key to the Lake Company's plan would be a six-mile drainage canal, and the key to the canal scheme would be importing African labor before North Carolina acted to close the slave trade.

Collins promptly outfitted the 80-ton brig *Camden* for a voyage to Africa under Captain Richard Grinald, and according to North Carolina port records the vessel arrived in Edenton on June 10, 1786. Authorities valued the 80 Africans aboard – mostly young men between the ages of 20 and 25 – at nearly £3,000. Once Collins paid the import duty on these slaves, he transported them 35 miles south into the swamp beside Lake Phelps. For the next three years, under the supervision of Scottish engineer Thomas Trotter, they labored to dig a huge canal some 30 feet wide and 20 feet deep. It would carry fresh water from Lake Phelps six miles north to the Scuppernong River; heavy locks would harness the waterpower of the 16-foot drop to sea level.

The working conditions in the isolated, insect-ridden swamp are hard to imagine. According to Collins family lore, the workers were confined in huge cages while they dug, passing the dirt out through the bars. Malaria was common, so the white investors stayed away from the area; they realized that the Africans had a comparative resistance to the disease. We now know that the sickle-shaped cells found in the bloodstreams of people indigenous to a malarious climate limit their susceptibility to this mosquito-borne illness.

Though planters did not understand the cause, they exploited this genetic advantage among the Africans mercilessly. Ebenezer Pettigrew, the son of a minister who controlled land on the lake, wrote: "Negroes are a troublesome property, and unless well managed, an expensive one, but they are indispensable in this unhealthy and laborious country, for these long canals, that are all important in rendering our swamplands valuable, must be dug by them or not at all."

Africans who survived the three-year canal digging ordeal were then set to work clearing the rich swamp, cutting huge cypress trees that were centuries old and eight or 10 feet thick at the base. Logs were dragged to the canal, where workers had built a sawmill run by waterpower. By 1790 Collins and his associates were shipping large quantities of cypress planks from the mouth of the Scuppernong, and by 1795 so much sawdust had accumulated in the canal that the slaves were obliged to shovel it out so the barges could move freely.

Cleared swampland was planted in rice and then in corn; a gristmill was constructed beside the canal; and later a huge four-story barn was erected for storing grain and loading barges. By 1803 there were 125 workers living beside the lake. They had carved a plantation from the swampy wilderness, and for the next six decades their children and grandchildren would continue to extend drainage canals, clear fields and cultivate crops.

The story of the plantation's owners has been well documented. Josiah Collins bought out his partners and named the estate Somerset Place before his death in 1819. His son reaped the profits of the 65,000-acre farm for two decades, and by the time he died in 1839 a handsome house was under construction overlooking the lake and the original "Collins Canal." This became the country residence of Josiah Collins III and his family, until the presence of Union troops in the area prompted him to march half his slave force west to Hillsborough during the Civil War.

Local whites, some sympathetic to the Union and others resentful of grinding their corn at the Collins Mill, ransacked the Big House before the war's end. But after 1865 many worked the Collins land as sharecroppers, along with blacks, living in surviving slave cabins. During the New Deal the estate was acquired by the Resettlement Administration as Scuppernong Farms and parcelled out as

homesteads to poor whites from the mountains. The Big House became a recreation center, but later it was acquired by the state, declared an historic site by the National Trust and then carefully restored at public expense.

WEST OF THE BIG HOUSE, where the row of slave cabins once stood along the lake shore, we saw only a smooth lawn and a field of weeds extending to the public campsite in the distance. Here was the haystack in which we would be searching for telltale needles from the black past. There would be no refreshing view of Lake Phelps beside us. In the past decade it had receded several hundred yards behind a thick screen of new foliage.

Using a surveyor's transit, we divided the site into rows of 40-feet-by-60-feet operational units, each subdivided into 24 10-feet-by-10-feet squares, that could be used to chart our work. With this grid of nails and string established westward from the Collins Canal, the question remained: where to dig? An earlier field school had excavated several structures very close to the lake. One had a large hearth of the sort used for cooking and may well have served as an early commissary. (An 1839 inventory lists three separate kitchens as well as a tailor shop.) Were there slave dwellings nearby?

To begin answering this question we used three very different documents. An 1821 surveyor's map depicted a neat row of five buildings along the edge of a compound facing the lake. A turn-of-the-century photograph of the Big House and lake front showed the location of several trees and structures that have long since disappeared. And a recent aerial photo revealed a faint rectangle of discolored grass in the line where one of the compound buildings could have stood in 1821. That was the place to sink our shovels.

Positive results came within hours. Modern landscaping had systematically scraped away the last century of artifactual evidence, but this meant that the remains from slavery times were just below the surface. Scarcely six inches down we hit the expanse of laid brick that had been sapping

THE FIRST SLAVE DWELLING CHIMNEY UNCOVERED AT SOMERSET PLACE

moisture from the grass above. Careful digging with trowels revealed it to be a large chimney base, more than six feet wide. This hearth faced west and apparently dated from the early nineteenth century; we had found the east end of a compound building. But which one? And how large was it? Who had used this hearth, and for what? Could other structures in the row be found, and would they be similar?

Opening several new excavation squares uncovered the brick support piers around the edge of the building and gave us its overall size and shape. It had been a 20-feet-by-20-feet structure with a second chimney on the west end. The size of these chimney bases and the extent of the brick rubble outside the building where these chimneys had collapsed suggested a two-level dwelling with fireplaces above and below at each end. Here was the outline of a traditional "I-house" – a two-story dwelling at least two rooms long, but only one room deep, with the front entrance on the long side facing Lake Phelps. Such houses have their roots in English folk culture, and I-houses, many of them 20-feet-by-40-feet with opposing double-shoulder (or two-story) chimneys, have been commonplace in North Carolina since the late eighteenth century.

With long metal probes we explored the adjacent ground systematically for similar configurations. Whenever we struck brick we plotted it on a graph-paper map and marked each spot with a yellow margarine cup (high technology!) until a pattern began to emerge. Then we opened oblong trenches, stripping off the earth layer by layer, recording all the features, retrieving and cataloguing all the artifacts for later study. Within a month we had unearthed the foundations for two more identical I-houses of the same dimensions with a chimney at each end.

The six hearths varied slightly in detail, but they could all have been laid by the same bricklayer. Perhaps it was Joe Welcome, Josiah Collins's slave mason who built similar chimneys for the Edenton Academy in 1800 and later lived at Somerset. Under each hearth we discovered a layer of long-lasting cypress planks, laid to give the heavy chimney a solid footing in the deep mud. Clearly we had found three of the buildings on the 1821 map, and the cypress planking suggested they might well have been built several decades earlier when the lake front was still wet and swampy.

Would there be more of these substantial buildings as we moved west down the row? The seventh hearth faced west, but so did the next and the next, indicating that we had reached the smaller, single-hearthed dwellings built after 1821. These houses had been roughly 18-feet-by-18-feet with a fireplace on the east end. The chimney bases had been well protected by the WPA road, so once we had gauged the 38-foot distance from one hearth to the next, it took only one exciting afternoon to proceed down the row with a tape measure and a probe, locating the bricks for two dozen successive dwellings!

WE HAD HOPED TO PINPOINT at least one building and had located 27. But each discovery only whetted our curiosity about who lived in these homes and what their lives were like. Some answers will come from the careful analysis of artifacts now underway, but we quickly learned that written records of the plantation could also be highly suggestive. For example, an early overseer passed on a recollection of the original African slaves:

> At night they would begin to sing their native songs, and in a short while would become so

wrought up that, utterly oblivious to the danger involved, they would grasp their bundles of personal effects, swing them on their shoulders, and setting their faces toward Africa, would march down into the water [of the lake] singing as they marched till recalled to their senses only by the drowning of some of the party. The owners lost a number of them in this way, and finally had to stop the evening singing.

Written documents varied from extensive published sources, such as the detailed article about the plantation which Edmund Ruffin printed in his *Farmer's Register* in 1839, to mere slips of paper. An 1827 purchase order, for example, lists among "Things wanted at Lake Phelps" a 100-pound bar of iron, five inches wide and three-eights of an inch thick, "to be used for spades." Some of the rusted metal links and hinges we found were no doubt hammered from such a bar by Fed, the Somerset blacksmith.

One written document proved uniquely valuable in giving meaning and substance to our work in the field. It was a "List of Famileys, taken 1843," *dividing up more than 280 slaves by dwelling unit.* The first group lived in "No. 1 Big Cabbin," the second in "2 Above," the third in "3 Below," the next in "4 Above," and so on through "12 Above." But the thirteenth group was listed in a "Single Cabbin," and so were the remaining 22 units.

Here was a possible solution to our puzzle. Apparently the three two-story structures we had located were known as "big cabbins," and each had been divided into four separate one-room apartments, two "Below" and two "Above." Beyond them stretched the row of smaller, newer "single cabbins," numbering 23 by 1843.

Our initial excavations suggested that construction probably varied little from building to building (row housing for slaves set the pattern for the region's later mill villages). But the list made clear that occupancy was far from uniform, since families varied in size. The single cabins averaged 8.6 inhabitants, but one contained only four persons while another housed 15. In the three big cabins, 36 people lived in the six downstairs units, while 47 people lived in the six slightly larger rooms above.

UNTIL RECENTLY, ONLY THIS SIGN MARKED THE PLACE WHERE SEVERAL HUNDRED PEOPLE LIVED ON THE SOMERSET PLACE PLANTATION.

photo courtesy Duke Chronicle

Using the 1843 list and others which give ages and family relationships, it is possible to piece together a surprisingly clear picture of exactly who was living in the three excavated big cabins in January, 1843. For example, the first downstairs room was occupied by Polly Trotter, age 45, and seven numbers of her family. Her mother was Old Sucky (71) who lived upstairs in 2A with six other people. Thomas Trotter, the white engineer who supervised the canal work, may have been Polly's father, her husband's father or their initial owner. With Polly lived her three sons, Luke (19), Armistead (17) and Cyrus (16). Polly's daughter Lydia (21) and her husband Providance (22) also lived in the small room with their young children, Sophronia and Ary.

All these people once sat around the first hearth that we uncovered. With painstaking genealogy, other household units can be described and linked, as whole family trees take root and grow again inside the foundations we began to uncover with our trowels. For the first time we now have access to numerous slave house sites *and* to specific names of residents, building by building, on the same plantation. Four students from the dig are already at work on related research projects, and site manager Bill Edwards has applied for funds to begin interpreting early findings to visitors.

Hopefully, work will go on again at Somerset in some future year, and additional plantation sites elsewhere will be excavated. Analysis of material artifacts and written records from separate locations will allow us to compare and contrast different slavery experiences in greater detail. Already such projects have helped archaeologist Leland Ferguson prove that blacks often made their own pottery, using modified African techniques, and our work at Somerset helps confirm this hypothesis.

Similar insights may be just beneath the surface for careful teams of researchers. As I sifted through dirt for artifacts, I was reminded that the Wolof word *dega*, pronounced like "digger" in English, means "to understand" in West Africa. Slaves brought to Somerset and elsewhere gave the similar-sounding English verb, *to dig*, a meaning of their own. Among African-Americans, "dig" has always meant "comprehend" or "appreciate," and last summer we learned for ourselves that to start to dig is to begin to understand.□

Peter Wood is a friend of the Institute for Southern Studies who teaches history at Duke University and chairs the board of the Highlander Center. He is the author of Black Majority.

FOR PEATS SAKE

BY PETER WOOD

WHEN AFRICAN WORKERS dug the Collins Canal in the 1780s, the impact of their labors on the surrounding swamp seemed enormous. But it took decades – at a rate of one acre per worker per month – to clear the 65,000 acres that made up Somerset Place Plantation. Now huge tractors do in hours what slaves once did in weeks, and the area around Lake Phelps faces environmental shifts that far surpass those of 200 years ago. While Josiah Collins tapped just enough water to drive a mill wheel, the latest generation of canal builders plan to pump more than two million gallons of water a day.

The Josiah Collins of our generation is Malcolm P. McLean, a millionaire who made his fortune in trucking and containerized shipping before turning to resort development and superfarming. When heavy machinery and cheap fertilizer again made eastern land clearing a tempting North Carolina investment, he set up First Colony Farms on 372,000 acres in 1973. As the Collinses sold grain in Japan before the Civil War, McLean now markets corn and soybeans on the international market. But on much of his land, the rich mineral subsoil suited for agriculture is still covered by a six-to-10-foot layer of peat.

Peat is the waterlogged mat of partially decomposed vegetation that has gathered for millenia in the delicate, still-mysterious freshwater bogs known as pocosins. These beautiful and vast sponges – there were 2.3 million acres of pocosins in North Carolina in 1953 – serve as vital protective filters for the upper estuaries that are the primary nursery area for North Carolina's valuable fish population. In recent decades more than two-thirds of the state's pocosins have undergone large-scale clearing, and less than five percent of the existing pocosins are in publicly owned protected status.

While this rapid shift has been profitable for agribusiness, it has been costly for the region. Huge fields have made dust storms a hazard; wind-blown sediment has settled more than a foot thick in parts of shallow Lake Phelps, suffocating fish eggs and killing aquatic life. Destroying the dense pocosins has endangered the black bear, and carving drainage canals has affected the water table. Experts worry that surface salt water intruding inland could damage agricultural land, and surges of fresh water pouring into saline estuaries during the spring could disrupt the spawning of shellfish.

In 1981, when an underground peat fire burned through more than 12,000 acres south of Lake Phelps, First Colony Farm employees joined state foresters in digging three canals to the lake and pumping 27 million gallons of water per day into a network of ditches. While officials claim this did not affect the lake, its level has dropped considerably as the area's preoccupation with peat has grown. Now the region around the lake is bracing for an escapade in peat mining that could change the lowcountry and the fisheries of adjoining Albemarle and Pamlico sounds forever.

As peasants have known for centuries, dried peat is a clean-burning fuel with an efficiency comparable to coal. Four-fifths of U.S. reserves are in Alaska and the northern Great Lakes states, where the climate is too cold to dry the peat efficiently and the distances are too great to move the bulky substance at low cost.

Warmer North Carolina possesses nearly 900 million tons of fuel-grade peat, equivalent to more than one billion barrels of oil, deposited across 1,000 square miles near the coast. First Colony Farms on the "Palimarle" peninsula owns more than 200 million tons of peat covering 120,000 acres (equivalent to 676 million barrels of fuel oil), and First Colony has already obtained a permit to strip mine peat on 15,200 acres south of Lake Phelps.

A big question is where McLean's superfarm will sell its peat. Recently Ireland, Finland and the Soviet Union have been burning peat to generate electricity, and First Colony executives have talked with local utility officials about building a 150-megawatt peat-fueled power plant. When nearby Virginia Electric and Power Company experimented with peat in 1981, Vepco officials decided the substance was not feasible for commercial operations. Nevetheless, Carolina Power & Light Company is budgeting more than $100,000 to experiment with peat in several of its coal-fired boilers, and First Colony Farms and two other peat-mining firms are donating the fuel for the well-publicized test.

Meanwhile, in December, 1982, ground was broken near the center of First Colony's holdings for the world's first commercial facility to convert peat to methanol. A consortium

called Peat Methanol Associates (PMA) expects to invest over $200 million in a plant to convert 676,500 tons of peat per year into 67,500,000 gallons of methanol. The plant, being constructed without any environmental impact statement, will employ 200 people and be capable of expansion. The cast of characters involves the world's largest bank, a covey of Republican powerbrokers (including the director of the CIA) and the government's Synthetic Fuels Corporation. SFC was created by the Energy Security Act of 1980 to assist private investors in developing a commercial synthetic fuels industry. Its actions are exempt from compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the federal Coastal Zone Management Act and even the Freedom of Information Act.

Early in 1980, as Ronald Reagan began his bid for the presidency, Malcolm McLean's advisor on energy matters – former oil executive and independent investor Jack B. Sutherland – introduced the founder of First Colony Farms to Robert Fri, a veteran of the Nixon and Ford administrations who had served in the Environmental Protection Agency and the Energy Research and Development Agency. Fri had recently created the Energy Transition Corporation (ETCO), a Santa Fe-based firm specializing – according to its brochure – in obtaining financing; anticipating "the course of future government policy;" securing "necessary cooperation and approvals;" and encouraging government "to create the climate in which the private sector can operate successfully."*

Soon ETCO had become the managing partner in the PMA consortium, convincing Koppers Company Incorporated of Pittsburgh to pick up the lion's share of the stock through its subsidiary, the North Carolina Synfuels Corporation. Koppers would redesign its coal gasification process to handle peat, while ETCO worked from its Washington office to obtain loan guarantees and methanol price supports from the new Synthetic Fuels Corporation.

The scheme finally began to bear fruit on December 2, 1982, when the U.S. Synfuels Corporation agreed to grant PMA up to $465 million in loans and price guarantees. Though peat-to-methanol hardly involves a "major" new energy source as described in the charter of the $17 billion Synfuels Corporation, PMA's project is the largest to obtain the board's blessing so far.

With these massive public subsidies in place, the Bank of America should be willing to deliver a $175 million loan for the project – no great sum for an institution with assets worth $87 billion. If all goes well, Malcolm McLean will have a steady purchaser for his peat at government-backed prices right in the middle of his own superfarm. McLean's farm will receive $12 million from PMA for peat rights, according to the Environmental Policy Institute in Washington.

And when the peat has been removed to expose the valuable mineral subsoil, First Colony will be left with a broader base for agribusiness. "It's certainly an attractive business proposition for McLean," EPI researcher Rich Young told a reporter recently. "How else can you get paid millions of dollars to clear land [that will then be] worth millions of dollars."

But just as hidden politicking and upbeat publicity seem about to pay off, Carolina's Great Peat Rush may yet bog down. When Democratic governor Jim Hunt goes after the U.S. Senate seat now occupied by Jesse Helms, he "might could" stop running interference for East Carolina business interests that are firmly in Helms's conservative camp. Moreover, environmentalists have begun to push for stricter regulation of peat strip mining as they did for coal strip mining in the 1970s. Florida recently denied a Georgia-Pacific peat mining application because state water standards could not be met, and Minnesota, after four years of study, has imposed a moratorium on any peat-mining operations of more than 2,000 acres.

The real battle may come over release of heavy metals into the ecosystem. Minnesota's Department of Natural Resources found that peat lands acted "as accumulators of atmospherically introduced heavy metals, particularly mercury," thus "removing heavy metals from potential concentration within food webs." Experts suspect that drying peat releases mercury into the atmosphere and into the ditches and canals used to drain the bogs. Canals now draining the Lake Phelps peat field at the mining site show mercury levels 26 times higher than state standard, and an assessment prepared for PMA concedes that the source of mercury and iron exceeding state standards "may be seepage from the surrounding peats."

PMA and their supporters seem ready to claim that peat mining should not be blamed for "unexplained" high background levels of mercury in the area. But mercury in high concentrations is toxic to aquatic life and bioaccumulates through the food chain. Since the economy of eastern North Carolina is tied increasingly to fishing and recreation, state citizens will be taking a hard look.

The heavy metals question is "a red flag issue," says Derb Carter, a Raleigh lawyer who directs the Carolinas Wetlands Project of the National Wildlife Federation. Carter points out that even if fully exploited, the Phelps peat field could only furnish two-and-one-half days of energy at current U.S. demands, and yet the state is running serious long-term risks. "The real driving force behind peat mining in North Carolina," he charges, "is not the development of an energy resource but the necessity of removing the organic soils so the mineral soils below can be farmed. The beneficiaries of SFC funding for the PMA project will be several out-of-state investors and one agribusiness group in particular."

It took a Civil War to challenge the labor practices that built the Collins canal and its tributaries. But for decades herring swam up the channel and were readily harvested by slaves for food and sale. Few fish will spawn in the canals being dug by First Colony Farms. As a new age of agribusiness bursts upon Lake Phelps, North Carolinians are now getting their first glimpse of who will profit and who will pay the price.

Derb Carter speaks for a growing constituency when he concludes: "The ultimate losers may be the American taxpayers and coastal citizens." □

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* Four other ETCO founders from recent Republican administrations included Charles Robinson, a deputy secretary of state under Henry Kissinger; Frank Zarb, formerly with the Federal Energy Administration; and William Turner, past U.S. ambassador to the Organization for Economic Cooperation. William Casey (the current CIA director) served President Nixon as chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission and as undersecretary of state, and managed Reagan's campaign in 1980.

REVIEWS

photos courtesy Vanishing Georgia

Above: Crowd gathered for public hanging at Lawrenceville, GA, May 8, 1908. Henry Campbell, convicted of the murder of a black woman and her child, addressed the crowd at his hanging. In a calm and eloquent statement, he said an innocent man was going to his death.

Below: Farm accident, Paulding County, GA, c. 1920.

Above: Picking peaches on the Hunt farm near Round, GA, c. 1910

Below: Slave quarters at the Hermitage plantation outside Savannah, GA, c. early 1900s.

Grassroots Photos

Vanishing Georgia, text by Sherry Konter. University of Georgia Press, 1982. 225 pp. $19.95.

Begun in 1975 as a pilot program with almost no funding, the Vanishing Georgia project had, by 1982, collected over 18,000 photographs from attics and basements, from professional to family snapshots, with most taken between 1890 and 1930.

The program relies on a grassroots network to come up with material. As Sherry Konter describes the process in her introduction, after the staff coordinator makes a preliminary visit to a county to explain the significance of photographs, "The Vanishing Georgia team usually spends two days at a location. Participants bring in their pictures, which are photographed and returned to them. They give identifying information and receive instructions on how to preserve, store and identify their pictures."

As the photographs accompanying these reviews show, the result is valuable both as history and art. These photographs are selected from the 200 which appeared in the book *Vanishing Georgia.* □

Connections

Reweaving the Web of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence, edited by Pam McAllister. New Society Publishers, 1982. 448 pp. $8.95.

Many of us living in the deep South have a sense of isolation from what we perceive to be the heartbeat of radical thought and support. Our roots are in neighborhoods and towns that overflow with a history of social and economic revolution, and yet we yearn for greater connection with "the network." We are handfuls of people, wearing many organizational hats, who are trying to respond. Critical reflection too often takes a backseat to the pressing issues of the moment.

A new book, *Reweaving the Web of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence,* edited by Pam McAllister, presents an opportunity to make connections with the more than 50 contributors to this anthology. Through essays, short stories, plays, poems, speeches, songs, interviews, photographs and artwork, the women (and two men) contributors present us with a long-awaited reference book and collective foundation. As I read *Reweaving the Web of Life,* my thoughts ranged from identification to reflection to moments of anger, solidarity and challenge.

By 1968, I was just beginning to realize that people could respond to injustice with something other than "bandaid-type" programs. I am not certain what brought this into focus for me, but I do know that the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., spurred me to join the picket lines and marches and to experience the ultimate baptism at that time, arrest. The power of nonviolence was a very real force in my life, while at the same time I remained very naive about much of what was happening.

During the past 15 years, I have been growing through my participation in many activities and organizations of the social change movement, but only in recent years have I begun to catch glimpses of the larger political dimensions. Many of the contributors to this book helped me to continue this critical look at the past in a way which gives impetus for the future. Many share a common Southern experience.

photo courtesy Vanishing Georgia

Women of the Raymond Community Council grading and picking the first eggs marketed by the cooperative, Coweta County, GA, 1921.

Reweaving the Web of Life is divided into two parts. The first deals essentially with theory and the second with application. As the title implies, however, the two are inseparable, and the result is a necessary mixture of both. Women's history, the role of women in the struggle for civil rights, against racism and against militarism; the complexities of violence; creative responses to today's potential for nuclear annihilation; personal insights into self-defense; vegetarianism and many other topics – all are in this collection. The book also includes an annotated bibliography of further readings on feminism and nonviolence, and a chronology of events referred to in the text.

Connections between women and militarism are just being recognized, but making those connections is especially crucial in our region. Southerners have an historical economic investment in war greater than that of the rest of the country. We also have a higher proportion of low-income people (including large numbers of women) dependent on outside help for basic needs – help which is often tentative and meager. This seems to place our region in the precarious position of being tied to the military for economic survival. *Reweaving the Web of Life* discusses the elaborate interconnection between sexism and violence, adding much needed perspective to efforts for disarmament and conversion.

Women's role in the struggle against racism is also explored from several visions. It appears that a conscious effort was made to include a diversity of viewpoints. I would like, however, to have read many more works by women of color and by women speaking from a variety of cultural perspectives. But, as the editor notes in her forward, this anthology is a beginning, and it is a step forward in making the connection between racial oppression and the patriarchy.

Catherine Reid, in her essay "Reweaving the Web of Life" which gives the anthology its name and its tapestry, writes of her experience with the Spinsters, an affinity group which began spinning a symbolic web of many colors on March 30, 1980, at the gate of the Yankee Nuclear Power Plant in Vernon, Vermont. In her introduction to that article, McAllister writes, "With this action the women began weaving a web to entangle the powers that threaten this vulnerable planet;

mending the ragged edges of our misinformed, fragmented lives; spinning the delicate threads that will connect us to each other."

Significantly, this theme is echoed widely among activist women. A commemorative poster for the 1983 National Women's History Week (March 6-12) features a photograph of the hands of a Native American woman, Laura Somersal, as she demonstrates the traditional skill of basket weaving. The photograph depicts qualities which are reflected in these pages: the power of women to create, survive and incorporate our unique political vision.

Gandhi used the word *satyagraha* – adherence to the truth (truth force) – to describe one part of his program of nonviolence. This implies an activity. In much the same way, this book offers a conviction that feminism and nonviolence are the key to a revolution which will entangle that which threatens destruction and reweave that which sustains life. That revolution *also* implies activity. It must prompt further dialogue and commitment to challenge sexism, racism, militarism and all that is evil. It must heal, but must also anger and motivate.□

– by Diane Hampton

Shorts

Elephants in the Cottonfields: Ronald Reagan and the New Republican South, by Wayne Greenhaw. Macmillan Publishing Co., 1982. 320 pages. $15.75.

Instead of *Elephants in the Cottonfields,* Wayne Greenhaw's new book might more aptly be titled *Angels Descend Into Dixie;* all the blemishes Southern Republicans have revealed over the years receive a gaudy makeup job from a reporter who should know better. Though Macmillan is promoting *Elephants* as following "the growth of the Republican Party in the South from 1856 until the election of 1980," culminating in Reagan's 1980 Southern landslide, the book sorely misses the mark in its coverage of the last 20 years, lapsing into *People*-style profiles of a group of Republicans whose complex origins and attitudes are summarized in their supposed desire to bring the two-party system to the South.

Greenhaw begins promisingly enough by explaining his own horrified reaction to the fact that his father dared to vote Republican in all-Democrat Alabama and by summarizing some 100 years of Republican life in the South. Then, however, he shifts course dramatically, serving up portraits of 14 prominent Republicans ranging from old Dixiecrat Strom Thurmond to lifelong Republican Howard Baker to young turk Carroll Campbell. Though he does present interesting glimpses of these architects of the Republicans' rise to power, he loses track of many behind-the-scenes actors who have changed the face of Southern politics. Missing are such prominent figures as Roger Milliken, the South Carolina textile executive who has bankrolled arch-conservative Republicans for decades, and Bill Brock, whose 1970 racist, superhawk senatorial campaign toppled moderate-liberal Albert Gore in Tennessee and who joined forces with the more moderate Howard Baker to lay the foundation for what is now one of the strongest Republican parties in the South.

Furthermore, Greenhaw glosses over the pernicious actions of the new wave of political thugs like Tom Ellis and North Carolina's Congressional Club. There is little hint that today's Southern republicanism could spawn electioneering featuring the gutter-level ads and tactics that inspired the 1982 campaigns of extreme reactionaries like North Carolina's Bill Hendon and Tennessee's Robin Beard. Nor is there any serious analysis of the major splits between various elements of the Republican fold, as between North Carolina's "moderate" Republican James Holshouser and the yahoo wing of the party dominated by Jesse Helms, Tom Ellis and John East.

Ultimately, *Elephants* fails to provide any comprehensive analysis of why the Republican Party is flourishing in the South, where it is headed today, and, most importantly, what real impact it is having on the South's citizens. Greenhaw has given us a quick look at a number of influential elephants, but it'll be up to a more in-depth analyst to explain the real nature and significance of today's Southern Republicans.

Fear at Work, by Richard Kazis and Richard Grossman. Pilgrim Press, 1982. 306 pp. $10.95.

Fear at Work examines fledgling efforts to unite both union members and environmentalists in the fight for full employment and a safe and clean viroment – to emphasize "jobs *and* the environment" rather than "jobs *versus* the environment." Authors Richard Kazis and Richard Grossman, who have been at the forefront of such efforts through their work at Environmentalists for Full Employment, lay out a host of case studies which reveal why we don't have to sacrifice the environment to keep a high level of employment and which show how union members and environmentalists have successfully united to preserve both jobs and nature.

This is crucial reading for all concerned citizens; the Reagan administration's policies are increasing unemployment, assaulting the environment and setting the stage for more potential clashes between these uncertain allies. Unfortunately, the book is a bit weak in explaining *how* to lay to rest the lingering hostilities between labor and the environmental movement and to bring the two forces together in a powerful "jobs and the environment" movement, but it does emphasize *why* this coalition should occur. A concluding statement by Steelworker legislative director John Sheehan effectively summarizes the challenge we all face today:

> Now is not the time to make [environmental protections] ineffective because of some political objective to "get the government off our backs." What we need is to get carcinogens out of our lungs and put good jobs in our community.

Books on the South

This list consists of books published since November, 1982. Book entries include works through March, 1983. All books published in 1983 unless otherwise indicated. Dissertations appeared in the Dissertation Abstracts Index in August and September, 1982. All dissertations are dated 1982

unless otherwise indicated.

The entries are grouped under several broad categories for your convenience. Mention of a book here does not preclude its being reviewed in a future issue. Unsolicited reviews of publications of general interest to our readers are welcome. Recent works are preferred.

Copies of the dissertations are available from: Xerox University Microfilms, Dissertation Copies, P.O. Box 1764, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

ECONOMICS, HISTORY AND POLITICS BEFORE 1865

"Acadian to Cajun: Population, Family and Wealth in Southwest Louisiana, 1765-1854," by Maureen G. Arceneaux. Brigham Young Univ.

The Art of Slave Narrative: Original Essays in Criticism and Theory, ed. by John Sekora and Darwin Turner (Macomb, IL: Western Illinois Univ., 1982). $8.00.

Black Slavery in the Americas: An Interdisciplinary Bibliography, 1865-1980, two volumes, compiled by John D. Smith (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982). $95.00.

"The Evolution of the Criminal Justice System of the Eastern Cherokees, 1580-1838," by Charlotte Hyams Peltier. Rice Univ.

Fruits of Merchant Capital: Slavery and Bourgeois Property in the Rise and Expansion of Capitalism, by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese (New York: Oxford Univ. Press). $25.00.

Gender, Wealth and Power in the Old South, by Suzanne Lebsock (New York: W.W. Norton). Price not set.

How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War, by Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones (Champaign: Univ. of Illinois Press). $24.95.

The Matamoros Trade: Confederate Commerce, Diplomacy and Intrigue, by James W. Daddysman (East Brunswick, NJ: Univ. of Delaware Press). $19.50.

"'The Money Our Fathers Were Accustomed To': Banks and Political Culture in Rutherford County, Tennessee, 1800-1850," by Carroll Van West. College of William & Mary.

"Moravian Colonization of Wachovia, 1753-1772: The Maintenance of Community in Late Colonial North Carolina," by Daniel Barrett Thorp. Johns Hopkins Univ.

The Plantation Mistress: Women's Work in the Old South, by Catherine Clinton (New York: Pantheon). $18.95.

Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution, ed. by Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia). Price not set.

ECONOMICS, HISTORY AND POLITICS, 1865-1983

"Amtrak and TVA: A Case Study of Government Corporations and Autonomy," by Thomas Joseph McKenna. Fordham Univ.

From Mississippi to California, ed. by Michael D. Heaston (Austin: Jenkins Pub.) Date not set. $9.50.

"Grambling State University: A History, 1901-1977," by Mildred Bernice Gallot. LSU.

"Hidden Work: Baptist Women in Texas, 1880-1920," by Patricia Summerlin Martin. Rice Univ.

"A History of Belhaven College, Jackson, Mississippi, 1894 to 1981," by James Frederick Gordon, Jr. Univ. of Mississippi.

How Capitalism Underdeveloped America, by Manning Marable (Boston: South End Press, 1982). $20.00.

"An Investigation Into the Root Causes of Poverty in Leon County, Florida," by Rudolph Daniels. Florida State Univ., 1981.

"Keeping the Faith and Disturbing the Peace: Black Women from Anti-Slavery to Women's Suffrage," by Willie Mae Coleman. Univ. of California, Irvine.

"Labeling Appalachians: The Role of Stereotypes in the Formation of Ethnic Group Identity," by Philip James Obermiller. Union for Experimenting Colleges & Universities.

"New Deal Archaeology in the Southeast: WPA, TVA, NPS, 1934-1942," by Edwin Austin Lyon, II. LSU.

"The Quality of Life of People in Poor, Rural, Southern and Appalachian Areas," by David Loyal Zierath. Univ. of Kentucky.

"Race, Reform and History: Southern Liberal Journalists, 1920-1940," by John Thomas Kneebone. Univ. of Virginia, 1981.

The South Carolina Upcountry, 1540 to 1980: Historical and Biographical Sketches, by E.D. Herd, Jr. (Greenwood, SC: Attic Press, 1982). $9.95.

"Southern Ladies and Millhands: The Domestic Economy and Class Politics, Augusta, Georgia, 1870-1890," by LeeAnn Whites. Univ. of California, Irvine.

The Southern Redneck, by Roebuck (New York: Praeger Pubs.). Date not set. $24.95.

South-watching: Selected Essays by Gerald W. Johnson, ed. by Fred Hobson (Chapel Hill: UNC Press). $8.95.

Tell Me A Story, Sing Me A Song: A Texas Chronicle, by William A. Owens (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press). Price not set.

"Two Black Communities in Memphis, Tennessee: A Study in Urban Socio-Political Structure," by Charles Williams, Jr. Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

"Congressman Howard W. Smith: A Political Biography," by Bruce Jonathan Dierenfield. Univ. of Virginia, 1981.

James Branch Cabell: Centennial Essays, ed. by M. Thomas Inge and Edgar E. McDonald (Baton Rouge: LSU Press). $15.95.

Jonathan Daniels and Race Relations: The Evolution of a Southern Liberal, by Charles W. Eagles (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press). $16.95.

The Path to Power, by Robert Caro (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1982). $19.95.

A Southern Rebel: The Life and Times of Aubrey Willis Williams, 1890-1965, by John A. Salmond (Chapel Hill: UNC Press). $25.00.

We Can Fly: Stories of Katherine Stinson and Other Gutsy Texas Women, by Janelle D. Scott and Sherry A. Smith (Austin: E.C. Temple, 1982). Price not set.

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

The Complete Country Music Discography: 1922-1942, by Tony Russell (Nashville: Country Music Foundation). $30.00.

Mountain People: An Appalachian Anthology, ed. by Robert E. Manning (Boston: Appalachian Mountain Club, 1982). $9.95.

"Plain Country People: A Study of Values in a Kentucky Hill-Farming Community," by Margaret Ann Garden. Univ. of Texas at Austin.

South to Louisiana: The Music of the Cajun Bayous, by John Broven (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing). $7.95.

With A Southern Accent, by Viola G. Liddell (University: Univ. of Alabama Press). $8.95.

Womenfolks: Growing Up Down South, by Shirley Abbott (New Haven, CT: Ticknor and Fields). $27.50.

LITERATURE

"The Crawford Women," by Carol Jackson Scott. Univ. of Louisville, 1981.

"An Edition of Selected Poems by Hulda Saenger Walter," by Betty Jean Crenwege Scrogin. East Texas State Univ.

Faulkner's "Negro": Art and the Southern Context, by Thadious M. Davis (Baton Rouge: LSU Press). $10.95.

"Fiddle Tunes, Foxes and A Piece of Land: Region and Character in Harriette Arnow," by Joan Rae Griffin. Univ. of Nebraska-Lincoln.

"Gavin Stevens, Faulkner's 'Good Man,'" by Carl Singleton. Loyola Univ. of Chicago.

Hellman in Hollywood, by Bernard F. Dick (Brunswick, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 1982). $22.00.

Her Work: Stories by Texas Women, ed. by Lou H. Rodenberger (Bryan, TX: Shearer Pub.). $16.95.

I Will Always Stay Me: Writings of Migrant Children, by Sherry Kafka (Austin: Texas Monthly Press). $11.95.

"The Iconoclastic Art of Flannery O'Connor," by Richard Martin Leeson. Univ. of Oregon.

"John Gould Fletcher and Southern Modernism," by Lucas Adams Carpenter. SUNY-Stony Brook.

Mark Twain and His World, by Justin Kaplan (New York: Crown Pubs.). $10.95.

"Music in Selected Works of Tennessee Williams," by William Joseph McMurry, Jr. East Texas State Univ.

"The 'Nether Channel': A Study of Faulkner's Black Characters," by John McMillan Gissander. Univ. of California, San Diego.

"Religious Skepticism in Selected Novels of Mark Twain," by Randy Keith Cross. Univ. of Mississippi.

"William Styron's *Sophie's Choice*: A Study," by Nancy Louise Chinn. Florida State Univ.

James McBride Dabbs: Southern Liberal

interview by John Egerton

In 1969, John Egerton, then a member of the Southern Education Reporting Service staff, interviewed James McBride Dabbs for the Southern Regional Council's magazine New South. *He described Dabbs as a "farmer, writer, former professor, country gentleman . . . at 72, an elder statesman in that vague and amorphous category labeled 'Southern liberal.' He was 60 when the Civil Rights Movement began, and in his own style he devoted himself to it. In magazine articles and speeches, in three books, in the presidency of the Southern Regional Council . . . he has spoken with candor and conviction about the South." The following is excerpted from that interview and is reprinted with permission.*

I came late to my concern about racial injustice, but when it first began to be an issue in the '40s, I was in a position of having decided the issue for myself almost 10 years before, without knowing I'd decided it. When I was 37 [the year his wife died], I became rather suddenly aware of the fact that I was a human being, fundamentally like any other human being. Life had pretty well stripped me of most of what I valued, and I saw that I didn't have much left but my basic humanity. I wasn't thinking about race then – it was no deep concern of mine – but when the race issue did arrive, I didn't have to solve it for myself. As far as I was concerned, Negroes were human beings just like everybody else, and should have the same rights. I had enough common sense to know that they *didn't* have the same rights, and that something had to be done. . . .

I've never been an activist, never been attracted to demonstrations – it's just not my style. I see a very full place for the activist, but it's not my cup of tea. And it's held for me, this idea of an abiding force rather than a passionate feeling for justice which can burn brightly and then wear you out and you quit.

I came into the Civil Rights Movement partly because I was tired already. Segregation seemed to me not so much an evil thing as a useless, foolish thing. Life is tragic enough, hard enough, and segregation is an unnecessary burden. Why make life any more difficult? I was trying to get out of the toils and shackles of segregation. . . .

Southern liberals are really conservatives. Even the Negroes who go north keep coming back to their old homes. Why, in the name of common sense, do they, if this is such a hell of a place, as all the liberals say it is? Well, the point is that it isn't that kind of place. The system has been wrong and unjust, but somehow there have been virtues – many small perhaps, maybe some great – woven into the system. The Southern emphasis on decency, kindness, manners and so on was built partly because the Southerner didn't have the courage and imagination to wipe out the injustice, so he just did what he could to make it a little more human. He should have wiped out the injustice – we're still trying to do that – but he didn't do bad when he tried to make it human. He only did bad when he thought he had corrected the whole thing. . . .

I sympathize with the white segregationist in the situation he's in. In some ways he is a more pitiful figure than the Negro. Power has corrupted us, and the average Southern white racist is in an identity crisis. In the last 100 years he's learned two things: you can't keep the Yankees out, and you can't keep the Negroes down. Faulkner says the Southerner is a man who resists. Well, if he can't keep the Yankees out or the Negroes down, then who is he? He doesn't know. There's nothing left for him to identify himself with. A man in this emotional world is trapped. The white segregationist is more bound by the whole racial complex than the Negro, he's more frightened. At least the Negro knows what's got him – the white man's got him. But when the white man gets trouble, he doesn't know what's got him, and he's got himself all tied up. . . .

America is violent compared to Europe, and the South is violent compared to the rest of the nation. We built our life upon slavery, we built upon violence, no matter how much the gloved hand tried to smooth it over. You arrested people, you captured people and you held people down, finally by force. This society was built upon violence, and therefore when violence erupts in man-to-man relationships, across racial lines or within the races, I don't think this is surprising.

We developed a militia early because of slavery, and we built a myth of feudalism, and feudalism meant an army – the plantations were the castles. It is in these beginnings that violence is rooted, the key factor being the oppression of the Negro.

So the society was built upon violence. But, ironically, in spite of all our sins and errors, we still have the potentially saving grace of community. . . .

At root, it isn't blacks *against* whites, it is blacks *with* whites. If we can have the courage and imagination to accept this, then at least we'll be on the way to solving our problems. Finally we've got to admit that we're really one culture – divided now by unfair practices and discrimination, but basically one culture.□

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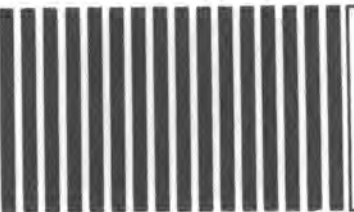

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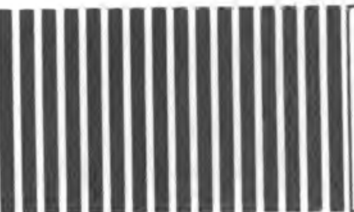

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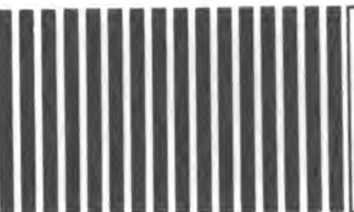

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