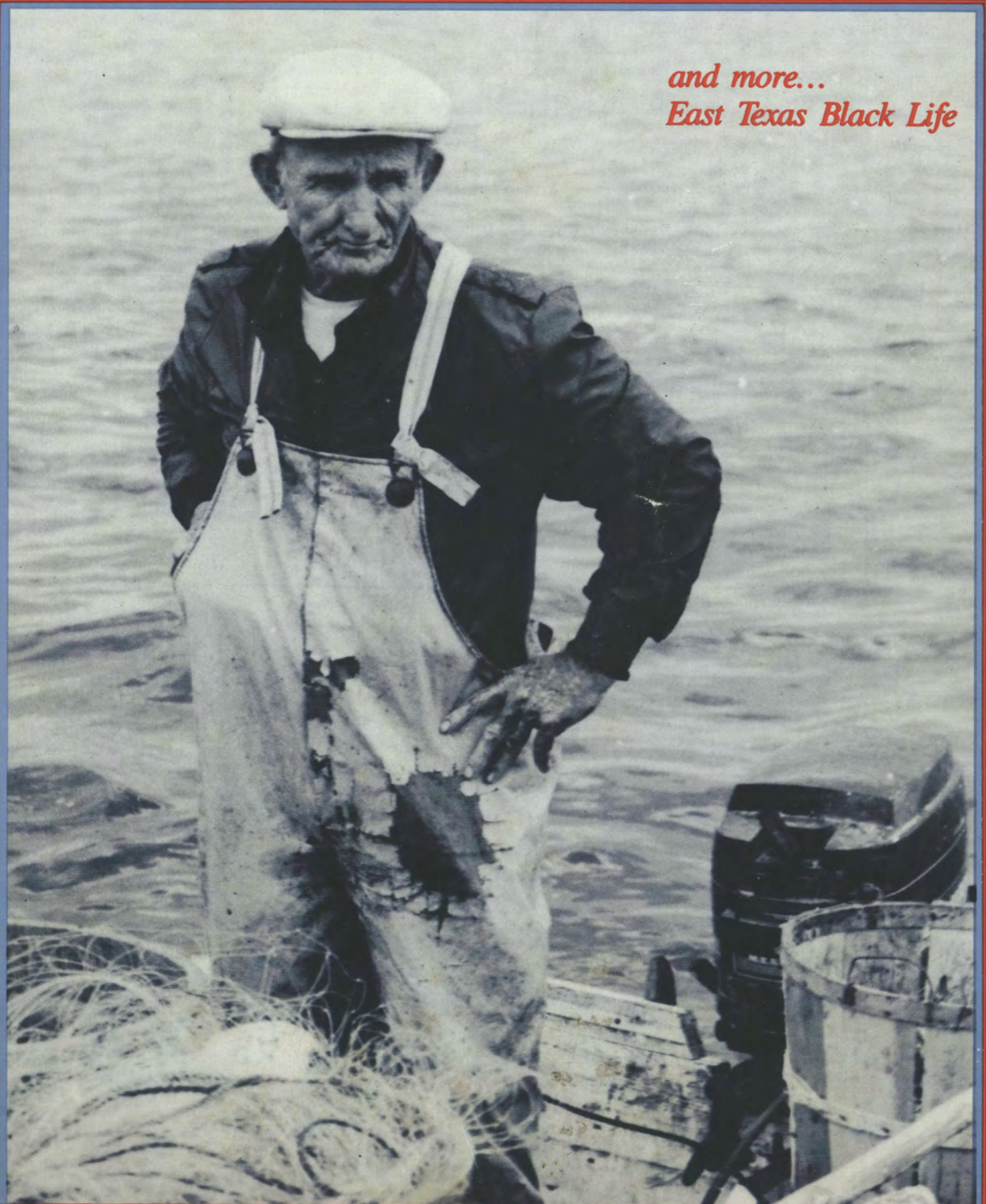


Southern Exposure

# WATER POLITICS

*We All Live Down Stream*



*and more...  
East Texas Black Life*

MARCH/APRIL 1986

\$4.00



# Southern Exposure

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## Page 21: BLACK WATER

### “Water— you can drink it with a fork”

BY JOHN GRENATA AND LINDA SELFRIDGE  
with an Introduction  
by Chris Hedges

There is a problem about water in the South. It's not that there isn't enough of it, but that it's not clean. In the past few years, the South has become a hotbed of water pollution. The problem is not just the obvious, like the toxic waste dumps and the chemical plants, but the more subtle, like the runoff from the farms and the cities. The water is getting dirtier and dirtier, and it's getting harder and harder to drink. In some places, the water is so bad that you can't even drink it with a fork.

## Page 35: GROWING UP WITH PRISONERS

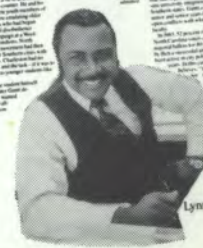
### CHILDHOOD ON A SUGAR LAND PRISON FARM

It's a hard life. The children of the prisoners are growing up in a world of pain and suffering. They are being raised in a place where the only role model is a man in a uniform. They are being taught that crime is the only way to survive. They are being taught that the only way to get ahead is to be a criminal. They are being taught that the only way to get out of the prison is to be a criminal.

## Page 44: HIZZONER, THE SIT-IN LEADER

### “We're Becoming the Mayors”

An interview with former sit-in leader  
Harvey Gantt, now Charlotte's Mayor



by Lynn Haessly

## Page 52: THE COTTON- PICKING LIFE

### Back Road into Town

By Eddie Harris

The sun  
was barely  
peeping up  
and the cracks  
of darkness  
was almost  
over

It was a hot day in the South. The sun was shining brightly, and the air was thick with heat. The cotton fields were a sea of white, and the pickers were busy at work. The life of a cotton picker is a hard one, and it's a life that's been passed down from generation to generation. It's a life of struggle and sacrifice, and it's a life that's slowly disappearing.

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## A View From Death Row

— M. E. Marrs

Some months ago I was asked to write an essay presenting my views on capital punishment. This was not an unusual request to make of me — I am currently imprisoned under sentence of death in Texas, a state that has conducted more than its share of executions this past year — but I doubted that I had anything unique or original to say. “Why do we kill people who kill people to show that killing people is wrong?” seems to sum up all opposition to the death penalty. But that unremarkable request has continued to nag at me. I was unsure how I really felt about the law’s view of capital punishment, and needed the soul-searching that would be required to write this essay.

I’ve always felt that many who favor execution believe that infliction of the Hammurabic prescription of “an eye for an eye” is simple conformity to the fixed will of God, as revealed in the holy scripture. (Compare Jesus’s explicit denunciation of that ethic in Matthew 5:38-40.) Others seem to be “programmed,” conditioned by mass media (as so many of us today are). Exploitation by the media of the deep emotional response to violent crime may serve as an “advertisement” for violent “solutions” to crime. Nevertheless, heinous crimes are committed that outrage all of us, moving even the meekest to yell, “Get the rope!” I needed to purge myself of the preaching and programming of others and uncover my true feelings.

I am still reluctant to write because of my personal investment in the outcome of the national debate over capital punishment. In the interest of objectivity, I will not write of my crime, trial and appeal, but will try to report what an inside “observer” has seen and learned, as accurately as possible.

While I have been an observer here,

nine men have been executed. In my opinion, two had been convicted of horrible crimes; six were caught in the middle of desperate circumstances; and one was *innocent*. I say that he was innocent not because of his claim of innocence, but because of the undisputed facts of his case. At the trial of Doyle Skillern, the court heard uncontroverted testimony from the admitted triggerman that Doyle was innocent of the murder, that he had no foreknowledge that a murder would occur, that he was not even present at the actual scene of the murder! His is not an



Community Press Features

isolated case. There are a number of such cases on death rows.

I currently share a cell with M.D. Crawford, who as a teenager robbed a convenience store with another youth who admitted that he, not Crawford, accidentally shot the store clerk. It is apparent that the court believed the shooting was accidental, because it gave the admitted triggerman a sentence of life imprisonment. So why is Crawford on death row? The irony of both his case and that of Doyle Skillern is that the triggerman in each instance received a life sentence! I wish to see no person condemned to death, but where is the consistency of the law when lives are at stake?

Suppose the courts were required to take a closer look at capital cases than is evidently required now, weighing the

facts more carefully, demanding stricter standards of proof, enforcing more substantial procedural safeguards? Is this not what was promised when the current death penalty statutes were adopted, following the Supreme Court’s 1972 ruling that previous statutes had inflicted unconstitutionally “cruel and unusual punishment” because of “capricious and arbitrary” application? What if the laws attempted to specify that only those guilty of the most outrageous, most heinous crimes might be subjected to death as punishment? Again, we have been assured that present laws do this. But there will always be inconsistency. Innocents will be put to death.

But capital punishment poses a more basic moral, spiritual, and ethical question: Is anyone fundamentally, intrinsically, irredeemably bad? So bad that his or her enforced exclusion from society would not suffice to protect the public? So bad that the safety of society can be ensured only by ending his or her physical existence? I don’t think so. I can understand why the bereaved loved ones of a murder victim might be unable to see the possibility of any good in a person convicted of murder, but I cannot understand how most people could accept such a despairing view of human nature. Americans seem to have lost their faith in humanity, forgotten the value of human life. The renewal of faith in human potential and the elevation of respect for human life should begin with the restoration of those values to our law.

Who truly believes that God would create something totally wrong, without value or higher purpose? I do not believe that anything living is absolutely evil. I don’t think that I ever believed it. And I believe that the American people would also reject such one-dimensional moral blindness if they searched deeply within their own souls, or if they were allowed to observe *all* of America’s condemned instead of the media’s choice of sensational highlights.

Last spring, I watched a man condemned for a horrible crime plant seeds



he had somehow acquired to produce a garden of beans, cantaloupes, tomatoes, and watermelon in the 4' x 12' horseshoe pit of the small death row recreation yard. The other death-sentenced prisoners grumbled some, laughed at the absurdity of it, and continued to pitch horseshoes over the rows of planted seed until — to everyone's surprise — green sprouts began to push their way toward the sun. An amazing transformation took place in the men who frequented the yard. They forgot about horseshoes and started tending the little plants.

The garden grew against all odds. The "soil" in the pit was very poor and had no drainage. Tall brick walls kept the garden in almost constant shade. What little sunlight the plants did receive was filtered through the metal mesh cage enclosing the yard. Errant volleyballs and basketballs crashed about haphazardly. But men watered and tended the garden daily. They guarded it against stray balls. They bailed standing water from it after every rain. A few seedlings struggling to survive brought forth the caring, protective, gentle nature of these men society deemed unworthy to live. Consequently, their regard for the garden was not without positive results; by mid-summer bean vines were climbing ten feet high up the metal cage and a few cantaloupes were actually eatable.

I've watched other death-sentenced prisoners become engrossed in science, religion, and art with similar results. People struggle to grow under even the most adverse circumstances, and within this struggle can be seen the part of one to be respected and honored among society.

These are not sympathy stories. They are observations of fact recounted here to support my assertion that no person is absolutely evil. The vilest human being has a higher purpose, a nobler side, that we can discover if we will but seek it out.

I can tell you of another, darker aspect of capital punishment. I've observed those that the sentence of death has devastated so thoroughly that execution would be redundant; occasionally some memory seems to pass close by prompting an effort to show life, but the spirit

is gone. And there are those who will commit sex acts for cigarettes — or just for some attention. But these men were not always this way. At some point in their lives they made the wrong choice, or perhaps no choice was offered.

Compare what has been accomplished in recent years in fields such as physics, engineering, and medicine with the present state of the field of criminology, which is still stuck in the age of Hammurabi, 1792 — 1750 B.C. I am convinced that when the genius of this nation is harnessed for the highest human good — the protection and nurturing of all life — there will be no condemned, no death rows. I think that this is not only possible but inevitable — a simple matter of progress. The first step has to be a renew-

ed faith in each other and the placing of a higher value on life. I do not expect this to happen overnight. Nor do I expect everyone to share my views. I am convinced, nevertheless, that humanity will save itself.

Meanwhile those of us condemned to America's death rows will continue to die, as will those destroyed by wars, those preempted by abortion clinics, and those fallen victim to numerous other senseless institutionalized cruelties. We have been repeating the lesson, "forgive them for they know not what they do," for more than 2,000 years. In this writer's view we should be close to mastering it. □

*Marley Edwards Marrs has been a death row inmate at Ellis I Prison in Huntsville, Texas since December, 1983.*

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## Refugee Detention in Louisiana

**O**n March 12, 1986, the largest Federal Alien Detention Center in the country opened in Oakdale, Louisiana. Oakdale is a town of 7,500 located in the central Louisiana woodlands.

The purpose of the center is to detain and deport illegal aliens, or people who have entered the country without immigration papers. The center will hold 1,000 people, and 100 acres have been set aside for emergency tent housing of up to 5,000. The first such facility to be operated jointly by the Bureau of Prisons and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the Oakdale center is three times the size of the largest INS facility and expands national capacity by 50 percent.

People from as many as 100 countries will be housed in the center. Buses from short-term centers around the country will bring people to Oakdale for long-term detention, until the center's capacity is filled. The INS expects a high turnover of detainees, with the average stay four to five months. Federally matched state money will expand the regional airport to accommodate commercial traffic bringing in and deporting aliens.

The need for expansion arises from a shift in U.S. immigration policy towards incarcerating refugees. "These people are not being charged with any criminal offense," says Martha Kegel, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Louisiana. "There is something very disturbing about the prospect of turning over refugees to the Bureau of Prisons, whose purpose is to imprison and punish convicted offenders."

Until 1981, refugees were generally not detained. People who enter the country without documentation have the right, under the 1980 U.S. Refugee Act, to apply for political asylum and to obtain legal counsel. Before 1981, the INS

detained less than 5 percent of the refugees it saw. "Physical detention of aliens is now the exception, not the rule," wrote the Supreme Court in 1981. "Certainly this policy reflects the humane qualities of an enlightened civilization," they wrote.

Detention camps set up in 1981 to hold large numbers of Haitian refugees led to a suit charging that the Haitians had been singularly discriminated against. In 1982, general detention of refugees was made official Immigration Service policy.

Refugee support groups are concerned that the remote location of the detention center will make it harder than usual for immigrants to obtain asylum. The town of Oakdale has only five practicing attorneys, none with experience in immigration law. A survey by a Lake Charles, Louisiana law firm of 650 area attorneys found only three able or willing to volunteer services for the detainees. ACLU general counsel William Quigley stated that "by building a national immigration jail in an area with very few available lawyers, the government has made the refugees' right to counsel meaningless."

Current applicants for political asylum, their attorneys, the ACLU, and other refugee support groups filed a class action suit in 1984 on behalf of those to be incarcerated at Oakdale. The plaintiffs argued that the remote location of Oakdale, the scarcity of available attorneys, the language barrier for most refugees, and the isolation from friends and support services ensured that the Oakdale detainees would be deprived of their right to counsel. A similar case on behalf of isolated Haitian refugees in 1981 had been settled in the refugees' favor. The court had concluded that "by transferring these refugees to desolate, remote areas, wholly lacking in counsel...INS has thwarted the statutory and regulatory right of these refugees to representation." The 1984 case, though based on similar arguments, was dismissed because the violation of rights had not yet occurred.

In political asylum cases it is up to

the applicant to show that there is a "reasonable possibility" that he or she will face persecution if sent back to the country of origin. If an applicant is able to get free legal assistance, according to the ACLU, the process can still be difficult. Many times a refugee's experiences in his or her homelands have made the individual distrust authority and an attorney must spend additional time fostering trust. Additionally, communication is often less accurate when attempted through an interpreter, and attorneys may be required to spend more time and effort than in other cases.

As Oakdale is being filled, area support groups are preparing for an expected increased demand on their services. Ecumenical Immigration Services, a New Orleans-based firm that provides free legal, pastoral, and social services to refugees, hopes to open a legal center in Oakdale. National groups such as the Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights are helping the ACLU in New Orleans recruit local volunteer attorneys. The resources are scarce. "We are not going to be able to save everyone," said Kegel. "Some people are going to be sent back to El Salvador."

— *Caroline Senter*

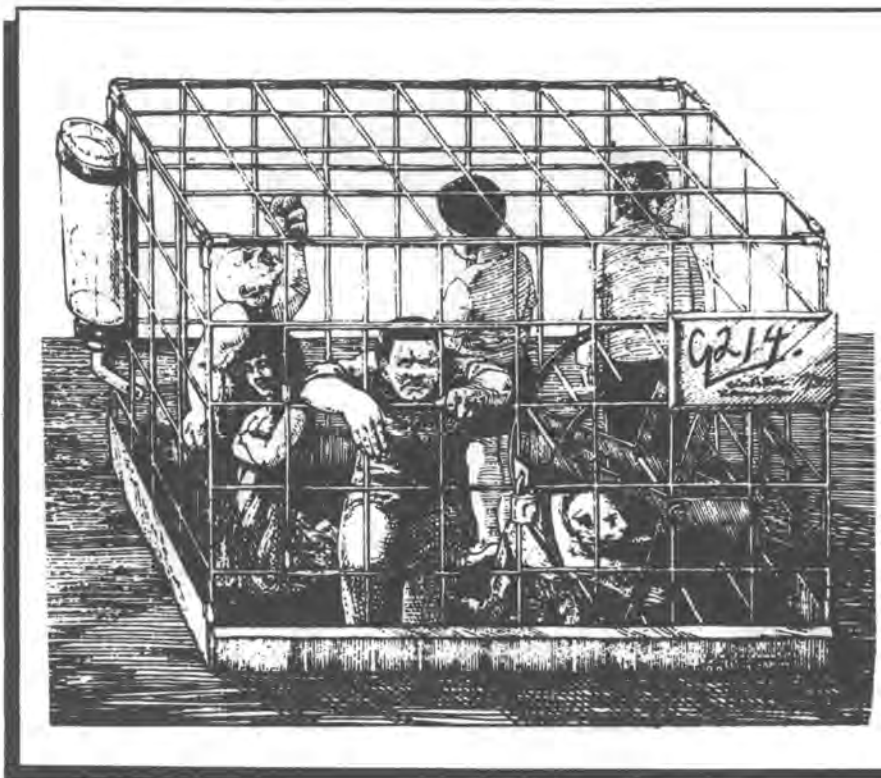
## Enrollment Ceiling Affects Black Colleges

**A** new 18 percent ceiling on out-of-state freshmen at North Carolina state universities could hurt traditionally black colleges, which have admitted higher numbers of students from elsewhere.

Three of the four universities with the highest percentage of out-of-state freshmen are traditionally black schools. Elizabeth City State University in the fall had 32.5 percent of first-year students from outside the Tar Heel state; North Carolina A & T in Greensboro had 33.6 percent; and North Carolina Central University in Durham had 24.7 percent.



## SOUTHERN NEWS ROUNDUP



Liberated News Service

The new policy was recommended in February by an advisory panel to the state university system's Board of Governors and scheduled to be put in effect by 1988.

Since 1981, under federal decree to desegregate the state university system, traditionally white campuses such as the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill have begun actively competing with black colleges for in-state black enrollees. Administrators at Elizabeth City University, for example, have cited competition with white colleges as a factor in declining in-state enrollment and consequently increasing out-of-state enrollment. Geographic location is another factor effecting Elizabeth City's enrollment patterns. Its northeastern North Carolina location attracts students from Virginia's Tidewater.

Early in February a group of black state legislators, led by Representative Daniel T. Blue, Jr., and Senator William N. Martin, asked the UNC Board of Governors to postpone voting on the cap until its impact on black campuses could be assessed, according to a

Raleigh News and Observer article. The delegation was unsuccessful in its bid.

The 1988 deadline allows the universities only two years to gear recruiting efforts to comply with the 18 percent maximum. Chancellor Leroy Walker of North Carolina Central stated, "It gives us two years to get our scholarship programs up in order to get qualified black students. We've recently shifted our emphasis from a large effort to recruit out-of-state students to recruit in-state students." Declining enrollment by in-state students also caused the university to launch a five-year campaign to attract the offspring of Central alumni to offset the decline. "We're projecting a 200-person increase next year," Walker said.

Another problem facing traditionally black universities is the actual number of college-age blacks available for enrollment. The pool of eligible black students has shrunk because a smaller proportion is seeking higher education and because of decreasing numbers of black college-age individuals with the end of the baby

boom. Walker expects the decline to bottom-out by 1989.

The ability of black colleges to attract in-state students will largely depend on their scholarship programs. Eighty-five percent of Central's student body receives financial aid. Even so, administrators are hoping to raise enough scholarship money to make Central more attractive to North Carolina students. The 18 percent ceiling will have less of an impact on the schools with better-developed and -endowed scholarship assistance programs.

According to Walker, the majority of black North Carolina students attend college in the state, and the out-of-state students are attracted by the general economic and social climate of the state as well as the academic standards. Tuition for the North Carolina system is among the lowest in the country and therefore attractive for out-of-state students.

One encouraging note for black colleges remains that 80 percent of black students in higher education attend traditionally black institutions, according to Walker. After a period in the last decade of many black students choosing to attend predominantly white universities, the trend is switching back to black colleges.

In spite of the specified ceiling, black administrators do not believe they will have to recruit more white students to keep enrollment up. Although the number of college-age blacks will rise in the 1990s, Walker said, "We must be competitive. The situation demands expert marketing — market, sell, and recruit."

— Robin Suratt

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## Old Segregationists Fade Away

Two once-vital symbols of segregation passed from the political scene this spring, leaving pallid legacies behind. Former Senator James O. Eastland of Mississippi died in February, and Alabama Governor George Wallace announced his retirement in April.

Both men once powerfully stood in the way of civil rights, and both had seen their power fade. Their most similarities end.

Eastland epitomized the Southern plantation aristocrat, representing his white upper-class constituency with what the *New York Times* called "an Old World Sense of propriety" and with unlit cigar in hand. Serving in the Senate for 36 years—22 of them as chair of the potent Judiciary Committee, Eastland deftly used the filibuster to block civil rights legislation and boasted of personally stopping 127 such bills.

Despite Eastland's genteel manners, he was an unreconstructed Southerner on the issue of race. "If it came to fighting, I'd fight for Mississippi against the United States, even if it meant going out into the streets and shooting Negroes," he once said.

As a dominant politician with a secure Senate seat, Eastland could afford to take a hardline position. He opposed the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which eventually spelled his doom: when the act passed, only 6.7 percent of his state's eligible blacks were registered to vote. By the 1980s, 85 percent had registered, compared to 81 percent of whites.

When Eastland realized that these trends could prevent his reelection in 1978, he decided not to follow the politician's dictum and change with the times. Instead, he retired, dogmatic to the end.

Unlike Eastland, Wallace came from a family so poor that in the 1920s they read by lamplight and drew their water from a well. As a politician, Wallace chose the tradition of populist demagogue, rather than elite leader. He



Southern Exposure file photo

**In their heyday in the mid '60s — Governor George Wallace of Alabama and Governor Lester Maddox of Georgia. Maddox was known as the "ax-handle governor" because he once passed out ax-handles to patrons of his Atlanta restaurant in a defiant gesture against court-ordered desegregation of public facilities.**

called himself a friend of the "little guy."

In 1958, Wallace lost a bid for Alabama's governorship by 65,000 votes to a rabid segregationist, John Patterson. Wallace swore he'd never be "out-segged" again. By 1963, Wallace won the governor's office and vowed at his inaugural, "Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever." That year, he defiantly tried to prevent

two black students from entering the University of Alabama.

Ever the political chameleon, however, Wallace possessed the ability to change with the times. Recognizing the growing presence of black voters, he embraced black leaders, such as slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers's brother Charles. He broadened his political spectrum as he returned to the "little guy's" issues: taxes, government



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spending, crime. In spite of some cosmetic overhauls and support by some black voters, millions of white voters—in Alabama and in the 1976 presidential primaries—never doubted that Wallace remained a staunch segregationist at heart. Now weakened by Arthur Bremmer's five bullets, 66-year-old Wallace is retiring.

Few Southern politicians now would dare to stand in the schoolhouse door, as George Wallace once did, or to filibuster against civil rights bills, like Eastland.

Yet many younger officials have not forgotten the power of racism: they have adopted more subtle rhetoric and techniques. Senator Jesse Helms worked to block the Martin Luther King federal holiday, noting its expense and spreading innuendo about King's alleged Communist affiliations rather than condemning the idea of celebrating a black hero. Eastland's former press secretary has popped up as Ronald Reagan's deputy press secretary, Larry Speakes. The Reagan administration, of course, has a dismal civil rights record, consistently undercutting the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, for example.



As Eastland and Wallace fade from politics, we can bid good-bye to two arch opponents of integration and civil rights. We wish their ways passed forever.

### SCLC Ends Winn Dixie Boycott

The 13-state boycott of Winn Dixie food stores spearheaded by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) ended January 15 after the company announced the liquidation of its stock of South African products, such as canned fruit and frozen fish.

Declaring an end to the 16-week boycott on the morning of Martin Luther King's birthday, SCLC president Rev. Joseph Lowery called Winn Dixie's move "a great victory for the forces of conscience against the evils of apartheid." The organization, cofounded by King in 1957, "still lives and still engages the conscience of the nation through nonviolent direct action."

Winn Dixie announced January 13 in an ad in the *Atlanta Constitution* that "no South African products are offered for sale in any Winn Dixie store." Spot checks by the SCLC indicated that Winn Dixie had in fact removed South African goods from its shelves. "They

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Photo by Elaine Tomlin

Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young joins SCLC President Joseph Lowery and SCLC/WOMEN protesting the sale of South African products by Winn Dixie stores. SCLC demonstrated at stores in Atlanta, as well as Florida, Alabama, North Carolina, Louisiana, and other states.

were definitely losing a lot of money," said SCLC representative Michelle Alexander. Empty parking lots, employee interviews, and reduced deliveries to many Winn Dixie stores had all pointed to reduced sales at picketed stores.

Several waves of arrests also brought attention to Winn Dixie's dealings with apartheid. Lowery, Georgia state representative Douglas Dean and ten other minister/educators and public officials spent Thanksgiving in jail after sitting in at a store in Decatur, Georgia.

In other Winn Dixie protests, three of King's children — Bernice, Martin, and Yolanda — were arrested along with a niece and cousin of King as well as the Rev. Ralph Abernathy III and Georgia state senator Julian Bond.

— Paul Holmbeck

## Georgia Pardons Leo Frank

*Leo Frank he met her,  
With a brutish heart and grin.  
He says to little Mary,  
"You'll never see home again."*

*She fell down on her knees,  
To Leo Frank and pled.  
He picked up a stick from the  
trashpile,  
And beat her o'er the head.*

— from the ballad  
"Little Mary Phagan"

**W**hen 13-year-old Mary Phagan, an Atlanta pencil factory, hand was murdered

in her workplace in 1913, Southern whites quickly pointed their fingers at her Jewish boss Leo Frank. A slight, popeyed, bespectacled man, he eloquently proclaimed his innocence—up until the moment two years later when a well-organized group of leading citizens kidnapped him from a state prison, drove him into the countryside, and hanged him from an oak tree.

In March, more than 70 years after Frank was lynched, the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles finally gave him a posthumous pardon.

Two years before, the same board had refused the pardon, citing insufficient evidence of his innocence. State and national Jewish groups renewed their lobbying and reframed their petition, asking that instead of proving Frank not guilty he be pardoned because he was



## SOUTHERN NEWS ROUNDUP

denied justice—through the Jew-baiting at his trial and because the state had not protected him against lynching.

The earlier pardon attempt had been prompted because a new witness had come forward. In 1913 Alonzo Mann had been a 14-year-old office boy in the pencil factory, and in 1982 he swore he had seen another man, a black janitor named Jim Conley, carrying the girl's body. Mann, who died in 1985, said he had not testified at the time because he was afraid of Conley.

Anti-Semitism had run rampant at Frank's trial. Crowds gathered outside the courthouse chanted, "Hang the Jew!" Conley, the star witness in the trial, fingered Frank as the killer. No other evidence clearly tied Frank to the murder. Although Conley changed his story many times to police and at the trial, the white jury chose to believe Conley rather than Frank. Georgians found it easier to suspect the outsider Frank — a Brooklyn Jew. Indeed, the

jury convicted Frank on the basis of Conley's inconsistent testimony, the first time in the South that a white man had been found guilty on the word of a black man, according to writer Steve Oney. The judge sentenced Frank to hang.

As the verdict was announced, Fiddlin' John Carson stood on the courthouse steps, singing the ballad, "Little Mary Phagan," soon to become well known throughout the region as almost an anthem representing boss men's exploitation of Southern white factory women.

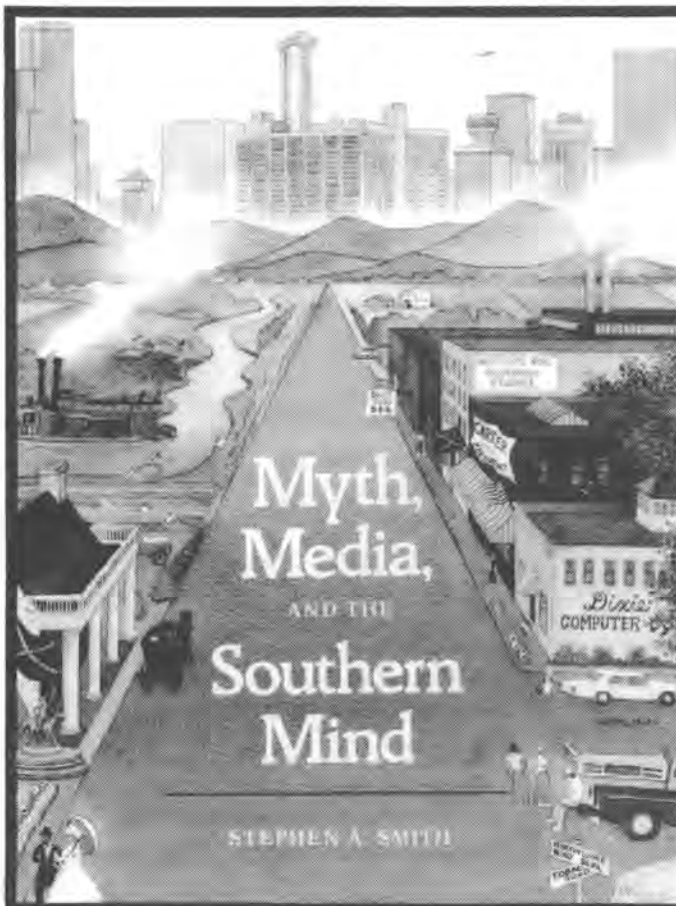
Frank appealed his case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, where he lost. Then the night before Frank's scheduled execution in June 1915, Georgia's governor commuted the sentence to life in prison because, he said, the evidence had been so slight.

Editor Tom Watson—famous as a leading Southern populist—put his acid pen to work in his publications *The Jeffersonian* and *Watson's Magazine*. In

August, he declared, "The next Jew who does what Frank did is going to get exactly the same thing we give Negro rapists." Some Southerners readily extended the same terror they used to repress black people to Jews. On August 17, Frank was the first Jew lynched in the South.

Frank's lynching spurred a renaissance of the nearly defunct Ku Klux Klan—which soon burned a cross atop nearby Stone Mountain—as well as the birth of the Anti-Defamation League. Based in New York, the organization aimed to help prevent prejudice and violence against Jews. Many members there and in Atlanta later worked for Frank's pardon.

Stu Lewengrub, Southeastern director of the group, said at the time of the pardon, "People of good will and judgment have long believed that Leo Frank was victimized by perjury and prejudice at his trial and that an innocent man was lynched by a mob inflamed by bigotry."



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## ARIZONA

### Big Mountain Relocation Efforts a Disaster

**M**ae Wilson Tso expressed worry about the future of her family. The mother of nine, she is one of more than 3,000 Navajo and a few Hopi families who have been required to relocate from their traditional homelands on Big Mountain, in northeastern Arizona. "This thing is immensely strong. We have pleaded in vain and it seems we have been forgotten. The time has passed and it turns into hardship and hunger. In my home I have seen disruption and coming into being poor. I have sold my animals and have come to see that it is no good without them. It is lonely without them. The land was divided without proper thought of how it would hurt us, the five-fingered people. Washington was foolish. I compare it to the way you treat sheep when you separate the ones you are going to sell," she said.

The relocation is required by federal law enacted in 1974 under the Navajo-Hopi Land Settlement Act which authorized a "50-50 split of of an area of land formerly known as the Joint Use Area, which were lands shared among Navajo and Hopi alike for hundreds of years," according to fact sheet reports provided by Navajo-Hopi resistance organizers. The act established a Relocation Commission to plan for the "removal of all Navajo and Hopi people who happen to be residing on the wrong side of the fence," the report said. Only about 100 Hopi must leave, compared to the thousands of Navajo, and the Hopi Tribal Council favors the federal removal policy.

"The Indian policy of the American government has been destructive as has been proved by history and this is another example of it," says Danny

Blackgoat. Blackgoat is a Navajo and one of the resistance organizers on Big Mountain.

In March, Blackgoat and others involved in the organizing work initiated a Southeastern and East Coast tour to "spread the word and gather support to stop the forced relocation." The deadline for relocation is July 8. After that, Indians remaining in the disputed area will lose the right to relocation benefits. The Southern tour, sponsored by Indian supporters such as the People's Mobilization Committee, included stops in Atlanta, Athens, and Sautee, Georgia; Cherokee and Asheville, North Carolina; Gainesville, Florida; and New Orleans. According to Blackgoat, the Southeast and East Coast were the weakest areas in the country as far as understanding the relocation and supporting the resistance. Speakers on the tour were Diné (Navajo) and Hopi elder women, traditional leaders, who encouraged supporters to put pressure on Congress to repeal or amend the relocation bill.

In July 1985 an article in *The Independent* newspaper of Gallup, New Mexico reported a meeting between Hopi and Navajo elders "to discuss and reaffirm their long-standing conviction against the Relocation Act." According to the article, the traditional elders of both tribes refuted the belief that a century-long land dispute between the tribes forced the U.S. government to step in and redivide 1.8 million acres of reservation lands between the two nations. The elders instead claimed that the real impetus behind the government's actions was known deposits of coal and uranium already being mined on the reservation. Companies such as the Kennecott Copper Company through its subsidiary the Peabody Coal Company, Kerr-McGee, and the Texas Eastern Transmission Company stand to gain from lease agreements on the disputed lands that might further land use for strip mining of coal and uranium deposits, according to the article.



Photos by Cate Gilles

**Katherine Smith, Diné resistance leader**

Supporters of the relocation resisters point to the Navajo-Hopi Land Settlement Act as a clear violation of international law as stipulated by the 1948 United Nations Convention on Genocide. Section "d" of the treaty defines the forced relocation of any racial, ethnic, or religious group under conditions which might bring about the destruction of the group involved as genocide and illegal under international law. Blackgoat states that the relocation has harmed the traditional Navajo and Hopi people because the culture, religious freedoms, and economy have been disrupted by the plan. According to Blackgoat, it has been extremely difficult for traditional Navajo or Hopi peoples to adjust to the relocation, with only the more culturally assimilated Indians meeting with any success.

Additionally, reports indicate that the traditional peoples who have moved have had difficulties with unscrupulous real estate and loan companies. Many traditional people do not speak English or know how to manage U.S. currency and are losing their newly purchased homes. In communities such as Flagstaff, an alarming 50 percent of



## VOICES OF OUR NEIGHBORS

relocatees have already lost their homes. Evidence of fraudulent real estate practices was turned over to federal authorities for investigation, according to the *Big Mountain News* in 1984.

Another significant factor of the relocation plan is that it also called for the reduction of livestock herding on the disputed lands. While the 1974 act gave the Diné Navajo people until 1986 to relocate, livestock reduction of sheep, goats, and other animals was required by January 1982. Livestock herding, with some agriculture, has been the basis of the area native peoples' economy for centuries, according to organizers. The Diné people were allowed about 3,000 sheep and goats, along with some horses and cows, which meant a 90 percent reduction of their stock inventories, reports indicate.

Given all the apparent facts of the relocation situation, informed observers say the state of relations between the U.S. government and the native peoples and among the various nations themselves are fraught with complications that can only be reasonably described as the result of colonialism. Hopi Tribal Council members also state that the present-day issues cannot possibly be understood without going back to the history.

The Navajo claim that the entire relocation plan was strongly supported by the Hopi Tribal Council, one of the many tribal councils established out of

the 1939 Indian Reorganization Act. The Navajo contend the Council does not represent the "traditional Hopi peoples." Many believe the Hopi Tribal Council has taken a position based on vested interest and a history of acculturation into non-Hopi western society, citing that some Tribal Council members are Mormons and that the Council was involved in hiring a Salt Lake City public relations firm to stage a dispute between the two tribes over the land and allow the U.S. government to act on the staged dispute. This, they contend, would allow the Hopi to grant more leases to the corporations for strip mining on the land.

Hopi Tribal Council member Nona Tuchawena states that the council remains in support of the relocation efforts and is pushing for the July 1986 deadline to be adhered to. Otherwise, according to Tuchawena, relocation benefits will be lost.

Relocation efforts continue. Big Mountain relocation defense legal counsel Matt Strassberg states that the government claims that over 900 families have left the reservation to relocate and that another 1,000 are relocating. Federal officials maintain that only 70 families have yet to show no interest in relocating, Strassberg said. But resistance supporters say this problem won't end with the July 8 deadline. They say that many native peoples there would rather die than leave their traditional homelands. □



Big Mountain women at the barbed wire fence dividing the Navajo and Hopi in Arizona.

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SPRINGHILL, TN

## Farm to Factory: "I Got Sunday Off"

— by *Ilene J. Cornwell*

In the summer of 1914, young Josie Coleman left her family's double-log home in Spring Hill, Tennessee, to work in Nashville. Her father, a farmer supporting 10 children younger than Josephine, drove the girl and her shawl-wrapped belongings the 35 miles to the state capital in a mule-drawn wagon.

"I got my first job when I was 13 years old," she recalled, "working from six in the morning 'til six at night...six days a week, making 50 cents a day."

The youngster's decision to emigrate to Nashville was made with the full approval and encouragement of her parents, Jessie and Mattie Graves Coleman. The family farm had come to a literal standstill since the previous few years had been disastrous ones for Southern farmers. Texas fever had invaded the region and the disease, caused by microorganisms transmitted by tick bites, had killed or quarantined most livestock. The long drought that summer of 1914 and Maury County's epidemic of hog cholera had effectively put an end to the Colemans' crops and hogs.

When Josie's uncle, preacher Joshua Nellums, reported in glowing terms on the ready market for labor in industrialized Nashville, first-born Josie decided that Nashville was the place to be. She could lodge with her aunt and uncle Nellums who lived near the downtown after she secured a job at one of the many factories and mills in the city.

"I paid 50 cents board to my Uncle Josh, kept a precious 50 cents for street-car fare during the week, carried a tin pail with my lunch each day, and sent \$2 to my folks in Spring Hill," she remembered, adding with a wry chuckle, "I felt I was making *big money* in 1914!"

At that time, Nashville was an

established and thriving commercial center. The first world war had erupted in Europe, but it had not yet had great impact on America or caused shortages in this country. Nashville's population then stood near 115,000. Many residents, like Josie, had come to the city to work in the industrial jobs burgeoning there as elsewhere in the bustling New South. Flour had been the city's chief product since the turn of the century. There were three flour mills — including Royal Flour which became Martha White — five cotton mills, several bag and hosiery mills, and a spring and mattress factory. The area's brisk lumber trade made Nashville the leading hardwood center of the country. These vigorous enterprises offered steady employment to anyone willing to work.

Josie Coleman was more than willing to work; she was eager. She landed her first job at the Hartsford Hosiery Mill on Twelfth Avenue North. She and "lots of other young girls" and women worked for 50 cents a day, six days a week, feeding yarn to the machinery which turned out above-the-knee ribbed stockings for boys and girls. She threaded loops of cotton and wool on the large needles of a pre-set pattern or form; the needles created "everything...the toe, ribbing, and ends." Then she had to transfer the stocking to a footer for finishing. The stockings were made from white yarn and later dyed black, a hue obtained with sulphuric dyes. This procedure took place away from the knitting factory, as the dye was extremely toxic.

The employment of 13-year-old boys and girls "really wasn't accepted then," Coleman later said. "I lied when I applied for the job and told the man at Hartsford I was 16. But I wanted and needed that job!"

The thousands of other young farm women and children entering the factories in the early 1900s were willing to work for low wages. This fact encouraged Tennessee — like other states — to wink at the existing labor laws. Manufacturing had brought sweeping changes to the



Josie Coleman Cornwell (1958).

agrarian South since the rise of industrialism in the late 1800s, and bosses placed primary importance on "cheap, docile, unskilled labor" and did not always adhere to legal guidelines.

Thirteen-year-old Josie Coleman's work schedule of 72 hours a week broke state laws restricting the age and hours a young person could be employed. Tennessee differed from neighboring states because trade unions had grasped a toehold there, and organized labor succeeded in passing a child labor law a decade before other Southern states. In 1893 Tennessee politicians responded to this nascent Southern movement pushing child labor reform legislation. That year the General Assembly passed an act forbidding an employer from hiring a child younger than age 12 "in any workshop, mill, or mine in this state." This first labor law was amended in 1901 to raise the employable age of a minor to age 14. By 1910 the legislature had limited the factory working hours of women and children under 16 to no more than 60 a week. Opposition to these reforms remained so slim that when the Tennessee Supreme Court nullified the law in 1911, the General Assembly quickly re-enacted child labor laws and even stiffened the provisions. Child labor reformers continued to press for change, and in 1913 the legal working hours for children ages 14 to 16 were reduced to 57.

Although young Josie toiled more than



the legal maximum hours, her memories of beginning full-time work in 1914 are pleasant. The working conditions — the long hours, the dimly lit factory, few breaks, and only 15 minutes for lunch — seemed no worse to her than the sunrise-to-bedtime hours she had worked on the family farm in Spring Hill.

"There were never any 'hours off' on the farm," she recalled. "I was out in the fields all day, took care of my younger brothers and sisters, and helped my mother with chores. It was hard work. So when I was paid money to work and got Sunday off, I liked it. I liked it a lot."

She liked her work so much that she remained at Hartsford for four years. During that time her father sold the farm and brought the rest of the family to Nashville to share the prosperity. After he obtained a job with a flour mill and bought a home close to the industrial section of the city, Josie moved in with the family.

At the seasoned age of 16, Josie acquired a better-paying job — at 75 cents a day — with the J.B. Morgan Company on the city's public square. She began by sewing sacks of starched calico cotton used for packaging flour meal.

"Ladies really loved those sacks," she laughed. "When they were empty, the sacks were washed and the stitches cut out so curtains and clothes could be made from them. I've wondered if the 'free' fabric they got when they bought flour wasn't more important than the product!"

During the 10 years Josie Coleman worked for the Morgan bag company, she married and bore her first child. Motherhood prompted her to leave the paid work force for good in 1928.

Looking back on her youthful employment, she considers it positively. "You know, 50 cents a day was good money in 1914. And money I sent to my folks at home kept the family alive until my father came to Nashville to work." □

*Josie Cornwell Redden married twice, was the wife of a sharecropper, and raised two of her grandchildren. Now she's 84 and lives in a Nashville nursing home.*

*Ilene Cornwell married into the Cornwell family and met Josie Redden through her in-laws. Cornwell is a Nashville writer who has written a guide to Mississippi's Natchez Trace Parkway.*

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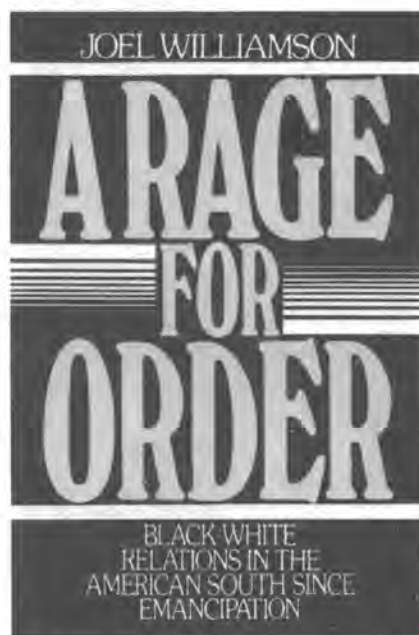
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# RESOURCES



## The Brothers from Other Planets

In the filmstrip, *The Secret of Goodasme* (get it?), space creatures invade Planet Earth with the mission of dispelling sex and race stereotypes. The aliens discuss stereotypes with three kids — a white girl, a black boy, and a Cherokee boy — and convince them that prejudiced perceptions are both false and harmful.

This film is one of dozens put out by the Council on Interracial Books for Children. The premise behind the council's mission (which is the same as the space creatures' mission), is that racism and sexism are perpetuated by ignorance and that children who are not exposed to bias-free environments and unprejudiced role models may not be aware of the horrors of discrimination.

Meanwhile, the council points out, children often receive subtle discriminatory messages in story books, the media, and in the English language itself, not to mention the blatantly racist and sexist attitudes many are exposed to in their own homes.

The Council on Interracial Books for Children aims at educating people of all ages to develop an openness towards people of every race, sex, and belief. The council points out that even well-meaning people often participate in discriminatory practices simply because they are unaware they are doing so. Thus the Council has developed a number of educational tools, ranging from cartoons for grade school children to practical exercises for college and adult education classes.

Besides films and books, the Council puts out the *Bulletin*, a journal appearing eight times a year which addresses issues such as race and sex discrimination. It examines storybooks and textbooks for bigotry and also offers guidelines for selecting bias-free textbooks, storybooks, and other learning.

For a description of available

resources write: Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1841 Broadway, New York, New York 10023. *Bulletin* subscriptions are \$14 a year for individuals, \$20 for institutions.

## Not the Marines: Peaceful World Adventures

Last summer in Oakland, California, young volunteers from Denmark, Spain, France, West Germany, and the United States gathered to construct a child care center at Uhuru House, a black community building.

At the same time, similar projects were going on in states spanning from Texas to Vermont, as well as in both Eastern bloc and Western countries all over the world.

The workshops are organized by Volunteers for Peace, a nonprofit organization that promotes international workshops in 36 countries. These sessions are described as short-term "peace corps," or as microcosms in which nations join together to better the lot of humanity.

In a typical workshop, 10 to 20 people from four different countries work together in a soup kitchen, or clear land for a baseball field, or rehabilitate an abandoned house. They usually stay with families involved in the projects.

Anyone over the age of 18 can participate in the workcamps, which are held year round and which last for two to three weeks. Volunteers often register for multiple workcamps in the same or different countries. The cost of each is \$50.

The 1986 *International Workcamp Directory* lists over 800 inexpensive, personal travel and work opportunities in Western and Eastern Europe, Western Africa, and North and Central America. A new workshop in Atlanta, Georgia is currently under consideration for this summer.

To receive a free newsletter from

Volunteers for Peace or a copy of the 1986 directory (\$6), write to VFP International Workshops, Tiffany Road, Belmont, Vermont 05730. (802) 259-2759.

## Hey You!

Federal law states that every employer must provide a workplace free of excessive noise, which means that workers cannot be continuously exposed to noise louder than a voice shouting or a car on a highway. The constant roar of textile machinery in some factories may challenge those limits.

This and other information about textile mill hazards can be found in the newly issued *Textile Health and Safety Manual*. Put out by the Occupational Safety and Health Law Center (OSHLIC), the manual lists federal and state safety and health regulations, along with information on how to spot and correct safety hazards and where to find legal assistance if needed.

Written in non-technical language with easy-to-read charts, the book explains how the federal and state laws interrelate. Special sections in the manual cover brown lung legislation, the new hazard communication standard, high-risk jobs, medical programs required by law, and information about how to get in touch with both state and federal Occupational Safety and Health Act offices.

The manual's author, J. Davitt McAteer, is an attorney who represented the Brown Lung Association in the 1981 Supreme Court cotton dust case. McAteer also directs the Occupational Safety and Health Law Center, a nonprofit, public interest law firm in Washington D.C.

The 276-page paperback manual is available for \$6.95 (plus \$1 postage) from the Occupational Safety and Health Law Center, 1536 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036.

— compiled by Stephanie Greenblatt





# Water Politics

What would you do if you woke up one morning to the news that the water coming into your house was contaminated by radioactive polonium?

Like most of us, C. B. Hiscock of Fort Lonesome, Florida, didn't give much thought to the purity of his drinking water — until this February when researchers from Florida State University found radioactive levels in his well 23 times the state standard. Now Hiscock and his family are buying jugs of water at the local Publix grocery store.

According to the *Orlando Sentinel*, the researchers "are perplexed as to how extensive and how harmful polonium exposure might be — and how to get rid of it." One scientist says the Florida Aquifer, underground source for most of the state's water, is not in danger because polonium — a "daughter" of unstable uranium atoms found naturally in phosphate ore — loses half its strength every 138 days and "should dissipate" before reaching consumers' taps. Others contend they can't tell how bad the problem is until their study of wells in the phosphate-rich, west-central part of Florida is completed near the end of 1986.

Neither the EPA nor the state plans any action until the survey is finished, even though everyone knows the contamination has been worsened by years of phosphate companies' pumping the waste water from their mines into deep sink holes or "recharge wells" that replenish the ground water supply. Regulators are not anxious to throw another hurdle before the powerful phosphate industry which employs 12,500 Floridians and provides 80 percent of the nation's phosphate needs. After all, the industry already suffers

from a declining fertilizer market, increasing foreign competition, and costly environmental regulations.

So while the scientists conduct their study and the regulators wait for the results, Hiscock and his neighbors have abandoned their wells and hope the bottled water they're buying is safe. What would you do if you were in his shoes?

Or what would you do if you were a commercial fisher and one day learned that a ruptured 20-year-old pipe dumped tons of slime into a fertile estuary killing all the organisms on which shellfish feed? Like the disaster that hit C. B. Hiscock in Florida, this one also happened in February 1986. It too involved the phosphate industry's contamination of water, but it endangered a community's livelihood rather than its drinking water.

"This is only the latest in a long list of spills and ruptures and slime pond leaks that have been killing the Pamlico River," say Etles Henries, a fisher who runs the commercial seafood plant begun by his father in Aurora, North Carolina. "Texasgulf acts like their phosphate mine is the only thing that matters around here. They don't want to recognize that the fishing industry has been here for hundreds of years and it still gives work to thousands of people. I don't mind them doing their job, but they shouldn't be allowed to cost me mine."

Regulators in North Carolina are even more lax than those in Florida when it comes to stopping water contamination by phosphate miners. The only phosphate company operating in the Tar Heel state, Texasgulf (a subsidiary of the French-owned Elf Aquitaine) employs 1,300 workers in

economically depressed Beaufort County. Although it has been cited by the Army Corps of Engineers and EPA for many regulatory violations, the state has allowed the company to continue mining under a water discharge permit that expired in 1984. "There are too many jobs at risk to close that place down," one regulatory official admits privately.

The politics of polluted water faced by C. B. Hiscock and Etles Henries may seem remote to you. For most of us, water is one of those simple commodities we take for granted. Only when we're deprived of its ready availability do we realize how essential it is to our daily life.

Fortunately, the South as a whole has ample supplies of fresh water, as Robert Healy points out in his new book, *Competition for Land in the American South*: only 1 percent of the annual renewable water supply in the Tennessee Valley is consumed and less than 10 percent is consumed in the entire Mississippi River basin. But aggregate figures ignore the intensity of the problem for those people whose water supplies are being drained dry or permanently contaminated.

The figures also obscure the common thread running through case after case of water misuse: land-rich corporations earning millions of dollars off the earth's natural or developed resources give no more regard for the water beneath or beside their land than they are forced to. From the forest products firms around Savannah, to the phosphate industry that owns 659,000 acres in Florida, to the energy companies of the Southwest and Appalachia, these corporations take water for granted, like the rest of us, until their own supply is threatened. But unlike us, the scale of their operations means their short-sightedness has immense consequences for their neighbors nearby and far away. As Robin Epstein points out in her article here, the pollution of the Albemarle Sound caused by the average farmer's drainage ditches pales in comparison to what would result from the ambitious plans of First Colony Farms to drain tens of thousands of acres of coastal wetlands, mine the peat off the top, and plant corn on what remains.

Epstein's report is part of a larger study initiated by the Institute for



**CROSSING JORDAN'S WATERS:** members of the Haw River Assembly in North Carolina stage a "canoe-in" at the 1982 opening of a dam across the Haw creating Jordan Lake. They urged the state to clean up the water in the lake.

Southern Studies examining land-ownership in all 100 of North Carolina's counties. In case after case, we found that giant landowners not only control the land-base of a county, but through that control they dominate the job market, politics, tax policy, housing conditions, economic development strategies, and environmental protection measures of the surrounding area. Texasgulf owns 62,000 acres in Beaufort and Pamlico counties. Not far away, Weyerhaeuser (the timber/paper conglomerate) owns one-fifth of Martin County, employs 2,100 people, and is the major consumer — and polluter — of water in the vicinity.

Although all five of these counties are on the coast, they fit the pattern identified in the Appalachian Land Ownership Study (see *Southern Exposure*, January/February 1982): the counties with the highest proportion of their land owned by absentee corporations are also among those with the highest rates of poverty, substandard housing, and unemployment. And, as you'll see from the profiles of the two mountain communities in this section, they are also the counties with the most grotesque forms of water abuse. In Campbell County, Kentucky—where Melissa Smiddy's well water was threatened by the strip mines circling her home—ten corporations owned nearly half the county's land in 1980. The Appalachian study noted that Campbell County's local development policy jumped to the tune of the corporate interests rather than serving the needs of residents.

Even in the more prosperous urban counties of the industrialized Piedmont, the Institute's study discovered, land-rich corporations and developers still exercise an inordinate influence over the fate of an area's water quality. Consider another example from February 1986, this one from Durham, North Carolina, where *Southern Exposure* is based. Developers that month won major zoning changes which will allow them to build a massive industrial-residential complex on 5,200 acres between three rivers that feed the region's municipal water systems. They adamantly — and successfully — opposed area residents' demand for an independent environmental impact statement to determine the project's long-term affect on the fragile waterways.

The Durham County Commissioners sacrificed strict land-use regulation in favor of two longstanding principles: (1) people should be able to do what they want on their own land; and (2) any development that improves the county's tax base is beneficial. These two out-dated myths, more than any others, undercut the enactment of systematic zoning and environmental regulations across the South. Wheelers-and-dealers of our land and water resources like it that way, and you'll find them among the most politically active interest groups in nearly every election, from the smallest county to the biggest city.

Because of the political climate created and maintained by land-rich profit takers in the country as well as in

the city, citizens who see their water endangered must fight on a case-by-case basis. They are put on the defensive, called troublemakers, and made to feel isolated and hopeless. But, as you'll see in the following pages, with the right combination of persistence and popular support, everyday citizens are succeeding in protecting the water they need for their life and livelihood.

Indeed, people who wonder whether their water supplies are pure needn't wait to act until pollution becomes obvious. The activists in North Carolina's Haw River Assembly decided to test their local drinking water, prompted partly by their observation that well-water drinkers apparently experienced less cancer than those who consumed city-processed chlorinated water. The Assembly's strategy now is to influence state officials and to urge them to tighten water policy standards.

The spirit and the strategies of the "troublemakers" profiled here are inspiring and instructive regardless of where you live. Ultimately, each of them demonstrated that his or her private complaint was a matter of grave public concern: these grassroots activists impressed the politicians with enough people, the bureaucrats with enough paper, and the media with enough drama to transform themselves from isolated victims into well-connected protectors of the American dream. Their victories are not secure, however, because their opponents remain convinced of their own righteousness and they have the money to keep trying new ways to exploit public resources for private gain.

Vigilance against the next scheme of the peat miners or coal processors or urban developers is crucial. We can no longer take water for granted, because if we are not organized to protect our natural resources, someone else will come along and abuse them. It's only a matter of time. We must spend the energy now to learn the value and vulnerability of our water (as well as our land and air) or we're destined to pay a far greater price later to correct its ruin.

The Florida phosphate industry has a slogan they want us to believe: Phosphate feeds you. Nature teaches another lesson: Without water, there is no life. □





# Testing The Waters

Water should be cheap, abundant, and essential, because it is the environmental factor that most controls where people live and how they prosper. The history of human settlement has depended largely on the availability of clean, reliable sources of water. Only in the past century, however, have people become aware of the need to carefully monitor water quality.

The residents of Pittsboro, in the central Piedmont of North Carolina, drink water drawn from the main flow of the Haw River, which drains portions of Guilford, Randolph, Alamance, Orange, and Chatham counties before it joins with the Deep River to form the Cape Fear. The waters of the Haw serve industrial, farming, and residential uses in communities along its course. How the stream can continue to serve these various needs, and remain a clean source of drinking water, has been the crucial question raised by the activist members of the Haw River Assembly.

The Haw River Assembly is a citizens' group formed in 1982 to voice

community concerns about the Haw River as a source of drinking water and as a natural recreational area for boating, fishing, and wildlife conservation. The Assembly's initial membership was a broad constituency that grew in response to a decade-long controversy over the creation of Jordan Lake — a 14,000-acre reservoir created in 1982 by a dam across the lower reaches of the Haw. Besides flooding much of what has been called "the best tobacco land in the Haw River basin," the lake also posed serious environmental challenges because of upstream pollution. Conservationists feared that the lake would suffer from an excess of dissolved nutrients (such as phosphates) and a consequent oxygen deficiency. After a prolonged legal battle the lake was built anyway, and local conservationists formed the Haw River Assembly to take constructive action to protect the Haw and to educate the public about its scenic, historic, and recreational value. This article is drawn from a lengthy report published in 1985 summarizing the

findings of the Assembly's Water Quality Committee.

## History of the Haw

The early history of the Haw River basin was shaped by its rich soil, abundant waters, and the transportation difficulties that hampered trade and prevented the development of large slave-worked plantations.

From the mid-1800s to the turn of the century, cotton mills emerged as a dominant industrial feature of the Haw River basin. The river's main stream and tributaries provided power for scores of mills, and mills spawned mill towns, where workers often lived in company-owned houses and bought supplies from company stores. The lands remained primarily agricultural, with tobacco and timbering operations emerging to take a prominent place in the economy. By the early 1900s furniture manufacturing, centered in the town of High Point, had also become a major industry in the western part of the basin.

In the early twentieth century several small but significant events took place in the growing town of Burlington, about 27 miles upstream from Pittsboro. In 1919, after a number of water supply wells ran dry, the town installed its first water treatment facility, drawing water through a rock filter system from Stony Creek. When Stony Creek's flow became insufficient by 1927, the town built a 30-foot dam to create a reservoir from which to supply the growing population. About that time a small company opened Burlington Mills, a pioneer producer of synthetic fabrics and now the giant Burlington Industries. By 1948, fifty manufacturers of hosiery and related products operated within Alamance County alone.

Despite setbacks during the Civil War and later during the Depression in



At the opening of a dam across the Haw creating a lake, Haw River Assembly members rally for clean water.

the 1930s, agriculture remained a solid feature of the Haw River basin economy. The agricultural economy took a downturn, however, after World War II. The number of farms decreased between 1945 and 1967, and much of the abandoned farmland reverted to forest.

Today the area is experiencing substantial population growth, due in large part to the booming economies and subsequent population explosions in the neighboring towns of Durham, Raleigh, and Chapel Hill. Experts now expect a growing trend away from agricultural uses of the land and toward increased industrial and residential uses.

### Pollutants in the Haw

The Haw river system drains approximately 1,695 square miles of North Carolina Piedmont. The state Division of Environmental Management (DEM) estimates that under low flow conditions the Haw contains 96 percent wastewater; the DEM also reported in 1981 that 39 of 93 permitted dischargers into the river in the regional division that includes Pittsboro were not complying with state water quality regulations.

These noncomplying dischargers included municipal wastewater treatment plants, industries, and residential sewage systems. Combined with chemically laden run-off from road surfaces, farms, and construction

sites, this pollution affects not only the river's ecology but also the quality of the drinking water drawn from it. Moreover, where there is a high demand for drinking water, there is a correspondingly large output of wastewater.

This cycle of use and re-use of stream water for multiple purposes poses a dilemma for public users. Toxic substances, especially when not biodegradable, may become introduced into river water treatment plants, and inevitably into drinking water.

The Pittsboro community — downstream from a heavily industrialized area, surrounded by farmland and managed forests, and encroached upon by rapidly growing bedroom communities — has seen enormous changes take place in the Haw River in recent years, and can expect to cope with even more as the population continues to mushroom and as increasing numbers of industries are encouraged to move to the area.

### Focus on Drinking Water

Pittsboro maintains a conventional water treatment plant for processing drinking water for the town and Chatham County's needs. The plant was built in 1962 and updated to new Environmental Protection Act standards in 1974.

The plant uses alumcoagulation, sedimentation, filtration, and

chlorination treatment processes employed by most water plants. Advanced treatment processes capable of removing synthetic organic chemicals have not been implemented. Under current operation, the plant regularly meets the appropriate state and federal standards. The town is fortunate to have competent and dedicated personnel operating its water plant.

Pittsboro's drinking water system nevertheless faces a number of problems. The current supply of drinking water must soon be increased to serve a fast-growing population. New system design and improved treatment techniques could upgrade the drinking water supply and quality to serve these needs.

In response to community concern about chemical and other pollutants in Haw River water, the Assembly formed a Water Quality Committee to gather information about the river's chemical pollutants. An ad hoc committee was formed for those interested in investigating the drinking water quality of the Haw. This committee's project eventually took the form of the Haw River Drinking Water Survey.

Since the Haw River Assembly members felt that the water treatment system was doing an adequate job of processing ordinary sewage wastes the Drinking Water Survey focused on analyzing the presence of synthetic organic chemicals in Pittsboro's drinking water and Haw River water.

The Drinking Water Survey Committee felt it could help fill the gaps in federal and state clean-up efforts on the Haw River. After consulting with several key figures in local and state water quality programs, the group set up the following objectives for its study:

- to examine Pittsboro drinking water and source water for the presence of synthetic organic chemicals;
- to investigate possible health effects of any chemicals found, using existing research data relating to identified substances;
- to examine available data from previous testing of Haw River water for organic substances;
- to determine what substances were being discharged upstream and compile a profile of dischargers and their operations;



- to create public information tools — programs, slide shows, and pamphlets — to educate users and potential users of Haw River and Jordan Lake waters, as well as other state residents, about existing and potential pollution problems;

- to offer solutions, alternatives, and new methods of problem-solving;

- to develop a model for citizen action groups to duplicate or utilize.

In November 1983 the proposed Haw River Drinking Water Survey received unanimous endorsement from the Town of Pittsboro and the Chatham County Board of Commissioners. Seed money to develop the proposal was donated by the New Hope Chapter of the Audubon Society and the Orange Water and Sewer Authority.

In 1983 The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation awarded a \$15,000 grant to the Assembly to begin work on the drinking water survey. The committee contracted with the Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering of the University of North Carolina School of Public Health to conduct a chemical screening of the drinking water from the Pittsboro water treatment system for synthetic organic chemicals.

### The Results

Two complementary tests for detecting trace organic chemicals in Haw River drinking water and treated Pittsboro water were conducted in February, April, June, and July of 1984. The results indicate the presence of 12 synthetic organic chemicals in the Haw River water and 13 in the Pittsboro drinking water. Five chemicals were common to both waters.

All of the organic chemicals identified in Pittsboro drinking water contained chlorine. Four of the compounds were trihalomethanes, which are currently regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency. Many of these can be formed during the normal drinking water treatment process. These chlorinated organics have also been found in the water from other municipal systems that use the same chlorination method. In this regard, Pittsboro's drinking water differs little from chlorinated drinking water throughout the nation.



## How the Haw River Assembly tested the waters, and how you can, too

Although North Carolina's Haw River Assembly had only existed for about a year when members decided to survey local drinking water quality, the group tackled the project with the organizational finesse of veteran campaigners. The result was a 107-page, technically sound, and readable report.

In the published report the Assembly outlined its methods and suggested ways other groups could approach similar missions. Boiled down, the plan looks like this:

- define goals
- raise money
- seek expert help

Members hoped to develop a model for a project that other groups could duplicate. "We were really into this to prove citizens don't have to wait for the government to do [testing] — they can do it themselves," explains group member Lynn Featherstone.

Unlike citizens in West Virginia mining communities or North Carolina's peat regions who reacted to specific threats to their water [see "Peat Wars" page], the Haw River group suspected pollution and sought to learn what problems might exist in its water in order to educate the community about water quality and to stimulate reconsideration of water policy.

"Don't get intimidated by the technology," warns Featherstone. "You can always find an expert to do the work." He recommends calling on scientists at universities rather than those in state agencies, who may have too-cozy relationships with the industries they regulate.

The spark behind the Haw project was Tom Glendinning, a local contractor and landscaper who had been concerned about local water quality for a decade. He began talking about his concerns to other Pittsboro residents, and in 1982 they began holding meetings to attract others to work with them. They soon developed the idea of testing the water for trace organic chemicals over a several-month period,

and that's when the planning began.

Members first developed an organizational scheme. They realized that in order to receive grant money, the project must be sponsored by a non-profit group with tax-exempt status. They applied to the IRS and were approved. Then they hired a director and developed a proposal to submit to funding agencies. After receiving a substantial grant from a private North Carolina foundation, the Assembly set to work. The organization suggests clearly spelling out duties of all project volunteers and developing written contracts for all consultants.

Finding experts who could advise and perform the testing proved to be crucial. The cost of Haw River's testing was \$6,000 including the chemical analysis and report. Other types of testing may be cheaper. In North Carolina, for example, the state health department will test for bacteria, metals, pesticides, petroleum, and fluoride. Private labs, which may be more neutral than regulatory agencies, can conduct similar and other tests.

Although the Haw River citizens had the advantage of the nearby scientists at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, the organization believes that people in more isolated communities can find help readily. The Assembly suggests that many environmental groups can help local activists to locate resources and experts. Among the groups they list are the American Rivers Conservation Council in Washington, DC; the Sierra Club; and the Audubon Society.

To find testing labs capable of the work your group seeks, call the regional Environmental Protection Agency office or the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta.

After compiling the results and producing the report, the Assembly distributed copies to policy makers, environmental groups, state agencies, scientists, and libraries. □

The survey committee undertook a detailed literature search to determine the known health and environmental effects of the compounds identified. Although some of the compounds have been studied extensively, some of the data were contradictory. For other compounds very little or no information could be found.

Adverse health effects of the compounds listed include damage to liver and kidneys, irritation of the skin and mucous membranes, nervous system damage, and respiratory distress. In laboratory animals some of these compounds have demonstrated that they may cause cancer, genetic mutations, or birth defects. Environmental effects include toxicity and bioconcentration in fish, algae, and other aquatic organisms. Although most of the compounds are relatively stable, some break down into other active chemicals. The environmental fate of several of the compounds remains unknown.

A significant fact that became known during this literature search was the lack of consistent data on the toxicology and environmental effects of many of these compounds. This lack of readily available and consistent data underlines the need for more information concerning synthetic chemicals found in the environment, especially about the adverse health effects resulting from low-level, long-term exposure to a given population.

Although the amounts detected were at or below levels considered hazardous to animals, and by inference to humans, we really do not know what levels are hazardous for humans. But because we are subject to so many other environmental and dietary assaults over periods of up to 80 years or more, any additional substances that may cause cancer, genetic mutations, or birth defects must be considered dangerous.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

While much remains unknown about the suitability of Haw River water for drinking water use, there is strong evidence suggesting that the presence of synthetic organic chemicals, even at the low concentrations at which they were found, is indeed a problem, and that steps should

be taken to address and remedy the problem. The survey committee drew up a list of recommendations, including the following:

- A statewide program should be initiated to educate the public concerning the importance of clean water.

- Research should be undertaken on the toxicology, environmental effects, and breakdown pathways of synthetic chemicals identified in natural waters as well as in drinking water.

- An epidemiological study should be made of the long-term health effects and chemical exposure levels of people who drink Haw River water.

- Individuals and organizations concerned with local rivers should be encouraged to undertake appropriate water quality studies.

- A "Right-to-Know" policy must be instituted. Complete disclosure on a continuous basis by industrial sources must be required to guide permit requirements and monitoring, and to aid in emergency spill response effectiveness.

- The State of North Carolina should further aid industries along the Haw River in cleaning up their waste effluents, keeping them clean, and potentially recycling them into useful products, through an enhanced Pollution Prevention Pays program.

- A faster and more efficient emergency response strategy should be developed to deal with the possible accidents and spills that could result in large quantities of toxic materials suddenly entering the Haw River.

- A monitoring program should be set up to establish a long-term profile of trace organic compounds in Haw River water.

- If further research demonstrates that the presence of synthetic organic chemicals in the drinking water is a consistent problem, then Pittsboro and Chatham County officials should consider possible treatment alternatives to reduce this problem, such as activated charcoal filtration, ozonation, or ultraviolet light.

- At the federal level, the Toxic Substances Control Act should be strengthened, and funding must be provided for enforcement.

## Postscript

*When the report was published, the Haw River Assembly gave copies to the Pittsboro town manager along with its recommendations. So far, town officials have declined to act, according to Assembly member Tom Glendinning. The group could have exerted some political muscle, but — as Glendinning put it — "where in the watershed do we stop?" noting that waters from the Haw flow all the way to Wilmington on the coast.*

*Instead, the group has concentrated on influencing state legislation, an activity hampered by its tax-exempt status, which limits lobbying. Currently, members serve as advisers to the Legislative Study Commission on Water Quality. Another Assembly goal is to repeal a state law which forbids North Carolina from setting higher water quality regulations than the federal government, whose standards generally have not been tightened since the beginning of the Reagan administration.*

*As another follow-up to the drinking water study, the group has begun a survey of cancer rates in a small town along the Haw. One side of town has drawn its water from a state-approved system since the late 1940s; the other side continues to use wells. According to Glendinning, water-system drinkers have experienced a 2,300 percent higher cancer rate than well-water drinkers. The Assembly is working with an epidemiologist to systematize these initial data.*

*To obtain a copy of the report — which includes a detailed outline of the project process and a sample budget —, send \$10 to Haw River Assembly, P.O. Box 187, Bynum, North Carolina 27228. Delivery time is four to six weeks. Copies of the three-page executive summary cost 75 cents. □*





# “Water— you can drink it with a fork”

BY JOHN GAVENTA AND LINDA SELFRIDGE

with an Introduction  
by Chris Mayfield

“Pure as a mountain stream” — this image of sparkling brooks and rivers flowing untainted through verdant hills has become deeply embedded in our national imagination. In the Southern Appalachian Mountains, gigantic projects such as the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) have harnessed the enormous power of the region’s rivers to generate electricity and to attract industrial development to this historically depressed area; and thousands of tourists flock each year to enjoy the tranquil beauty of waterfalls and spring-fed trout streams.

Despite Appalachia’s vast water resources many of its citizens have no access to safe drinking water. Extraction of other natural resources in the region has damaged water supplies, and industry itself, often drawn to the region in part by its plentiful water supplies, has frequently shown little interest in safeguarding those resources. These problems are heightened by the difficulties and expense of proper sewage disposal and waterpipe installation in steep, isolated rural areas.

Consequently, water quality is

becoming an increasingly important health issue in the region, complicated by the fact that so many families in central Appalachia depend on private wells or other unprocessed and unmonitored water supplies. A recent TVA report on the counties it serves in six Southern states shows that 22 percent of residents there depend on wells or other private systems (such as cisterns or water hauled from springs or streams), while in central Appalachia the percentage is even higher. A recent study by the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development (MACED) estimates that 60 percent of the population in 21 southeastern Kentucky counties depend on private water supplies.

Many of the aquifers (underground water reservoirs) from which people draw their well water are close to the ground’s surface and thus are very vulnerable to pollution from coal mining operations and, in recent years, from oil and gas drilling. Powerful explosives used in both surface and underground mining operations can fracture rock around an aquifer, sometimes causing wells to run dry and often opening avenues for bacterial pollution from improperly disposed sewage as well as from heavy metals and other chemicals that the mines discharge during the digging and processing of coal.

Residents of coal mining communities frequently contend with “black water” (water filled with tarry sludge — suspended solid wastes from mining operations), while others report “red water,” contaminated with iron and manganese — not as dangerous as black water but unpleasant to the taste and liable to stain laundry and dishes.

Still other residents — especially in north-central West Virginia — report acid mine drainage, caused mostly by abandoned underground mines where materials surrounding the exposed iron ore become acidic through contact with oxygen or water. This acidic

run-off pollutes streams, kills fish and other wildlife, and releases toxic materials into aquifers. Some mine companies discharge wastes from coal-cleaning operations into streams or inject it into abandoned mines where it can leak into aquifers.

Companies drilling for oil and gas also have created many problems. Because of the laws governing mineral rights ownership, oil and gas wells can be drilled close to homes which often use well water. Consequently, drinking water is often contaminated with mud and brine and even with gas itself.

Besides this pollution from the extractive industries, a major threat to drinking water in the region is bacterial contamination, often resulting from seasonal flooding (sometimes made worse when land has been damaged or eroded through strip-mining and inadequate reclamation) and from poorly disposed sewage.

This contamination is worst in private well-water, but public water systems are vulnerable too. MACED has published two extensive reports in recent years on drinking water in the steep mountains of Southeastern Kentucky, where many small water companies operate throughout the area. Some are old coal-camp systems now operated by small isolated communities with virtually no monitoring or safety procedures. They often lack the capital and the technical maintenance know-how to provide reliable service. Replacing broken pipes on steep slopes or in crooked valleys is expensive and difficult; thus water supplies are often contaminated and much water is lost along the way. Yet because of groundwater pollution the demand for public water service is growing by leaps and bounds. Kentucky's Division of Water has shown substantial interest in dealing with this problem. MACED reports that the state legislature is about to pass a bill providing for public education efforts about safe well water and for an extensive program of testing well water for bacterial and chemical contaminants. Some aspects of the program are already being implemented.

Clean water is clearly an important issue in the Appalachian region. Concerned residents have found that close monitoring and activism by citizens



Photos by Gary Hamilton

Melissa Smiddy

are the only way to make the clean-water laws that exist actually work to protect ordinary people from dangerous water pollution.

However, fighting for safe water is time-consuming and often frustrating, as the laws governing responsibility for pollution are hard to understand and the extractive industries are often reluctant to spend money on safeguards and proper land reclamation. In addition, many economically depressed communities are so dependent on these industries that clean water activism is often seen as a threat to jobs. Some activists are harassed by their own neighbors and relatives who see the dangers of losing their jobs as more frightening than the perils of drinking questionable water. Moreover, the challenge of providing clean water through publicly owned systems is complicated and expensive, so that even local governments which are sincerely interested are hard put to find affordable solutions. Yet in communities throughout the region, individuals and community groups continue to demand and in some cases to get action to protect essential water supplies.

The narratives that follow arose from a workshop on Appalachian water problems that the Highlander Research and Education Center held in New Market, Tennessee, in June 1984. They are the personal stories of

two people who have become deeply involved in efforts to protect the water resources in their communities. The narratives were published by Highlander in slightly different form in a booklet entitled, "Water — you have to drink it with a fork!" They are reprinted here by permission of Highlander Center.

*"We'd lose our well because we are in a circle of strip mines."*

#### MELISSA SMIDDY

*Melissa Smiddy lives in Campbell County, the largest coal-producing county in the Tennessee Mountains. She and her family own two acres of land in the Lick Creek community, where massive strip-mining operations have encroached nearer and nearer in recent years. Tired of having her house and her nerves literally shaken by powerful blasts from the four surrounding strip mines, and worried about the threat to her family's water supply,*



*Smiddy joined a multi-county community organization called Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM). She now serves on its board of directors and has become an articulate champion of environmental issues at public hearings in the community. Here she recounts the beginning of her involvement in public affairs and comments on the obstacles she has faced along the way.*

I was born and raised in the vicinity of Lick Creek. I was the third child of six children. My father was a disabled coal miner. When I was six months old he was paralyzed — this was caused by a rock [falling on him] in the deep mine.

I am the mother of two sons, Hank, age 11 years, and Jeremiah, age five years. I have been the wife of Willie for 15 years. Willie's dad is also a retired disabled coal miner. Willie has attended night classes at comprehensive high school under instructors from Roane State in mining and the matters that more or less surround mining.

When our house was shaken by blasts from a nearby strip mine we both began to question these blasts because we knew enough that they shouldn't be that hard.

In the fall of 1983, the heavy machinery and hard blasting shots from a nearby strip mine became almost unbearable. Our house shook — doors, windows, walls, and floor vibrated. We were surrounded by and faced four separate strip mines. The shots were very hard and came at unscheduled times — all through the day and evening.

A neighbor lady and I became very concerned about these problems so we began to try to work with the state agency that regulates strip mining. After many calls from us, the state did curtail some of the unscheduled shots.

As we began the next step — trying to find out if the hard shots that shook our house were illegal — the harassment started. My family members became suspicious of my actions. The Department of Surface Mining (DSM) inspector said my first name to the coal companies' engineer one rainy, dreary day. The engineer didn't know anything about me, so he brought my name back to the workers to try and find out about me. In reality, it was the

state inspector who was to blame for the harassment because he told the miners that I was making the complaints.

Our complaints about the hardness of the shots brought a seismograph to my home. The state inspector set it up but the whole effort proved fruitless. The machine wasn't working much of the time. And the miners knew the seismograph was in my yard and held back on their blasting as long as it was set up.

After the seismograph was taken



Melissa Smiddy

away, the blasts continued. So, in great concern, I had my neighbor friend who is a member of Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM) call Vicki (Quatmann of SOCM) and tell Vicki to call me. As soon as she called me we went to work and also became good friends.

*Smiddy and Quatmann concentrated first on searching out the legal rights of residents in mine-blasting areas. They found that a resident is entitled to a "pre-blast survey" of his or her home and well, to be done at the expense of the mine owner. This had never been done on Smiddy's property. After hiring a lawyer, they finally succeeded in getting a mining engineer to inspect her house and water.*

*Meanwhile, the two became involved in trying to stop the company from receiving a permit to begin mining on seven additional acres in the community. This effort earned Smiddy a certain amount of hostility from the mine-owners and from some community residents.*

When I received the results from the water sample taken by the mining engineer, it showed that my water had serious problems with fecal coliform. This really worried me because our well is 500 feet deep and we made a lot of trips to the bank over three years [so we could pay for a deep well] to get good water. I showed the report to Vicki and while we were talking about it she mentioned about how water testing is supposed to be done. That was when I realized how badly the mining engineer had done my water. I told her he had come out with a dirty jar, rinsed it in the creek, and then come into my house to get a water sample!

We notified the state agency right away, sent them a copy of my water testing, then told them how Spradlin's engineers had done the test. The state people came up and redid my water — and found it was good water and had no problems with fecal coliform. We said that the water survey Spradlin had on my house was bad and probably everyone else's was also done wrong, and that he should be required to redo the whole set as part of his permit application [to drill on additional land in the community].

When the federals took over here in Tennessee, I asked them to also check

my water. Their testing showed the same as the state's — that it is good water. So now, as we looked over Spradlin's permit application for the seven acres submitted to the federals, we saw he was still using the bad survey he took on my water in his permit package.

[Companies will make inspections of people's houses and wells at their own expense and for their own protection so that if someone claims damage they can compare their first inspection to see if damage actually occurred. If they say a well was bad before they blast, then the company has no responsibility.]

Our well is one of the big reasons I got into fighting these blasts. I knew it was only a matter of time before we'd lose our well because we are in a circle of strip mines. When we first bought our house we found out the well was bad. We had to fix it ourselves and pay out of our own pockets. I told Willie, "I'm not giving it up to nobody!"

The state inspectors tell us a lot about these blasts — they try to say it is the nearby powder company practicing. With four different strip mines and a powder company nearby, how are we to know who is doing the blasts? Yet they expect us to name exactly who is doing it in order for them to be able to investigate and serve a violation. They also say that it is just air blasts that sound so loud and that the only ones we should worry about are ground blasts. When your house, windows, doors, dishes are shaking — how are we to know air from ground?

The mining people think we're common and don't know anything. They come to test our water with a dirty jar. I say, "That's not right, that's got dirty water in it!" And they say, "That won't hurt — I'll just wash it here in this nearby ditch!" Then he brings back results that say my water is bad. I'm not going to sign for that — that wasn't my water!

They took me for an idiot. When you get into something like this it doesn't take all day for your family to turn against you. My mother's brother called me, "Melissa, what are you doing? You called SOCM!" And I said, "What are you talking about?" and he says, "You are going to mess around and I'm going to lose my job!" I said, "Well, right now, I'm busy. I can't talk



Helen Newsome and her husband John at a Highlander Water Workshop

to you. If you want to, call me back." I'm still waiting for his call.

Everything you do, everybody knows. I had the Department of Surface Mining (DSM) up at my house and all the neighbors watched. The DSM man asked me if I had talked to my neighbors about this. I tried — but they didn't want to get involved. They didn't think they could do anything or add anything that would help. They didn't want their names used. They all have wells a lot nearer the surface than mine — some actually use surface water. But they're afraid; and some who fought it years ago, they're tired and scared too. And they won't stand with me. They're too blind, too scared, but soon we'll be like those people in Kentucky, hauling our water.

We all have wells, but even if we got onto the water from the nearby utility

some day, that water's no good.

They've had all kinds of trouble with putting in too many chemicals because their reservoir is filled up from all the strips around it. The creek here is messed up. Vicki and I recently saw a huge oil drill just up our creek. It's the nastiest looking thing I've ever seen in my life. The silt pond they just built doesn't look right. The filthy water comes up over the edge and into our creek. Kids play in the creek. The coal company's silt ponds are bad, too. They've had several breaks and had to go in and fix them.

Even if everybody in our community lost their well, I don't believe they would stand with me. The coal operator is a smooth talker and I believe he'd wave a dollar bill under their noses. He'd take whatever he wants and go on.



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## *“The water from our well ran solid black”*

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HELEN NEWSOME

*“Black water” — a toxic mixture of coal wastes and acids — is one of the most dramatic examples of pollution caused by coal mining. Many coalfield families drinking well water have watched their tap water turn to black, tarry sludge, and many have reported various health problems resulting merely from bathing in this “water,” let alone drinking it. Here Helen Newsome of the small eastern Kentucky community of Ligon tells how she became involved in trying to force the local coal preparation plant to find safer ways of washing the coal and of disposing of its wastes.*

My name is Helen Newsome. I was born and raised in Ligon, Kentucky, which is a small but active coal mining community.

Until the end of 1984, I lived with my husband and our four children at the base of a slag heap [a refuse pile of rock discarded from the mining operation] over 200 feet high. As a child I remember playing with the other children. There were apple orchards. There were large fields that we played ball in. Of course, the tippie [a place where coal is transferred from the mine or trucks to rail cars — usually higher than the truck or rail car so that loading is easier] was there. During my growing up years, I saw many bad things happen. Mountains of slate refuse began covering the hills. More and more land became huge refuse piles.

All of these years I lived at the base of the huge heaps. Heavy rains caused [the coal company's holding] ponds to overflow, thousands of tons of slate would come tumbling down around our house, the road would become impassible because of slate slides. The piles grew higher and higher. Because

of the lack of reclamation enforcement, the piles became huge, black, burning heaps.

All my family and most of our neighbors were employed by Left Beaver Coal. No one ever said anything about these [problems]. People were afraid of losing their jobs or being denied winter coal. Growing up in a coal mining camp had its rewards, but little did people realize what devastating impact coal mining would have on the environment over the years.

The local coal preparation plant facility until the early '70s ran dry coal. In the early '70s a washing facility was installed. The black waste water was pumped underground into abandoned coal mines, which connected with other mines in neighboring communities. Also, as the mines began to fill, black water was pumped underground into injection wells. Black water ponds began popping up after the mine workings were pumped full.

The plant was unable to dispose of the waste water properly and for many years the waste was pumped directly into the creek. The plant only had two holding ponds for the black water, to allow the black waste to settle before pumping it underground. These ponds were seldom ever cleaned out, other than being drained into the creek at night. The disposal pipeline lies in the creeks and streams. This pipeline had many open valves used to let the water go directly into the creek, by-passing any holding ponds. Even though residents complained about the black water to state officials, this continued to happen on a daily basis.

In the fall of 1982, the water from our home's 84-foot drilled well ran solid black—thickened by the tarry sludge that had been pumped underground for so many years. The tap water in our house turned tarry black. Our water was ruined.

For the next two years my family had to buy water to drink after being warned by a coal company employee that the well water could be harmful. My children suffered from severe skin rashes which our family doctor said could be related to bathing in our well water. I notified company officials, but there was no response. We found out later that the whole discharging opera-

tion had never been permitted by the state Natural Resources Agency.

At this time I realized that something else had to be done. Even though many complaints were being made, these violations were still happening every day. I began writing as many public officials as possible. I began to call state officials. After weeks had passed, still no response. I called EPA in Atlanta, wrote my congressman, [the late Carl D. Perkins] and other public officials.

I would go to areas where these [government] representatives would be making public appearances. I would tell them my story and ask for help or advice. I was told by my congressman that if I would gather a petition with as many signatures as possible of people objecting to the mining practices and send it to him, he would see that it got to the right people.

Well, I took a petition around and I got 167 signatures — over half the people in the community. Almost everyone had experienced black water coming from their wells. Several wells had been closed because of mines breaking loose, being pumped full of black water and just contaminating the groundwater which runs on over into dug wells and fills them up. So they closed their wells, but nobody never said anything about it or did anything about it.

Because of signing this petition, several people were evicted from their homes that were owned by the coal company; some elderly people were denied winter coal unless they would take their names off of the petition and swear that they didn't know what they were signing. The community has had quite a few problems. My husband was laid off from the coal company three times. But he says, “If I have to work like that, I don't want a job.”

All attempts to get company officials to help with our water had failed. They felt that they had no obligation to protect our water from further contamination.

In the spring of 1983, at another public affair, I met an attorney who told me of an environmentalist group, the Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition (KFTC), which assists people from area communities in learning how to go through the proper channels and getting the attention of proper of-

ficials.

I asked the Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition for help, which they gave. Their hydrologist started various water testing projects at creeks and ponds and other houses in the area. I took the water samples myself and sterilized our own jars to take them. I had some hard times getting them, because sometime the company works at night clearing what few ponds they did have and discharging the waste. It's black, solid coal sludge — it's just like tar if you scooped it up; but I got samples of it and we had it analyzed. It has high concentrations of heavy metals and different chemicals and things in it.

So we tried everything we could. I shied away from publicity, but eventually Joe [Szakos of KFTC] managed to take care of that problem. The newspaper had picked up on what was happening in Ligon. State inspectors began turning up many state and federal violations....

In September of 1983 two inspectors were sent to Ligon from the EPA in Atlanta. This was called a routine inspection of the coal company's methods of operations. But the plant was never in operation when these inspections were being made. I asked the inspectors questions, but they refused to answer. So I requested a copy of their report. I was told that this report was being withheld because of possible enforcement actions. I appealed under the Freedom of Information Act. A public notice stated that the Environmental Protection Agency was withholding the coal company's re-issuance of the plant's NPDES [National Pollution Discharge Elimination System] permit. During the coming months the black water continued to be pumped into the creek.

Some people were beginning to have more bad experiences, not only with the black water coming through their faucets but from slate slides, pieces of mountain coming off on their property. We also had problems with the huge waste ponds giving way and flooding low-lying areas.

Still pursuing my quest for enforcement of the laws, in January 1984, after several violations were issued in one week to the company, I went to Frankfort, Kentucky, to talk with the secretary of the State Natural Resources Office and showed her pic-

tures of the black water running through our creek. The next day the state handed the company a cessation order to stop the flow of black water into the creek.

In June 1984, I received a copy of the EPA inspection report. The company was indeed in violation of its existing permit.

It took nine months of appeals under the Freedom of Information Act to get this report. It was withheld because enforcement actions were pending. We have never seen if they've done anything for it yet. But the conclusion of the report says:

"Based on information submitted to EPA and notices of violations issued by the state reclamation office, the company failed to notify EPA of its violations.... Visual inspections of the ponds and the injection systems indicate recent spills and discharges of black water. It appears that the pond sizes are vastly undersized and its only discharge is into the waters of the U.S. Visual inspection of receiving waters has black water, concludes the source can only be coming from the lower prep plant facility, upstream of the facility, or the residence. This permit is in violation of its effluent limitations and its permit conditions." Signed: Mike Armand, EPA Environmental Inspector.

Next, the plant applied for a permanent program permit. I urged as many people as possible to write and object to this permit being issued. A hearing was held, and the plant was denied their mining permits — truly a victory for everyone that had worked so hard to stop the pollution of the creek.

I feel that this struggle was necessary for the welfare of my family. I still feel I did the right thing, not only for myself, but for others who have to continue to live with what was put upon them by a large coal-producing company. Given the same situation, I wouldn't hesitate to do it all again.

#### POSTSCRIPT

*The coal preparation plant filed for a new permit in the fall of 1985, and a public hearing was held in October, at which the company claimed that it had built and tested a new pond system for washing the coal. The state Natural Resources and Environmental Protec-*

*tion Cabinet issued a ruling in November finding that the plant had probably ruined most of the water in the community and that it had a terrible record of violations of health regulations, but said that the company's "good-faith efforts" were sufficient for the state to grant it a new permit. As of early 1986, the company was operating the Ligon plant only sporadically. No steps have been taken to repair the extensive damage caused earlier.*

*Helen Newsome moved to Ohio in 1984, but before she left she called all her neighbors asking them to file complaints about the plant. One neighbor, disabled coal miner Palmer Humphrey, has filed a complaint with the Circuit Court asking that the plant's permit be revoked on account of its numerous past violations and its current failure to repair the damage to the community's water. Humphrey says that the company dug drinking water wells for two local families, but that the water had to be run through three treatment systems before it passed government standards. "To me, that says the water is pretty well unuseable," says Humphrey. He and his wife spend \$300-\$400 each year on bottled water just for drinking and cooking.*

*Humphrey says that many people in the community seem resigned to the fact that their water is ruined, and feel that nothing can be done to remedy the situation. "But there's 12 to 14 of us," he adds, "that are planning to keep pushing them. We've just got to — it's our water." □*

*Linda Selfridge has worked at the Highlander Center for the past eight years. She was primary editor of these interviews, which appear in the book **You Have to Drink it With a Fork**.*

*John Gaventa is director of the research program at the Highlander Center. A graduate of Oxford University in England, and a Rhodes scholar, he has worked at the Center for more than 10 years.*

*Chris Mayfield is a freelance editor who lives in Durham and is copy editor of **Southern Exposure**.*





# The Peat Wars

By Robin Epstein

*North Carolina's Pamlico peninsula is an isolated, low-lying region, surrounded by salt water sounds which are in turn bordered by narrow barrier islands known as the Outer Banks.*

*This sparsely populated area is dotted with fishing villages and family farming communities in which people have been making their living in the same manner for generations.*

*When entrepreneur Malcolm McLean proposed mining huge tracts of these peat bogs in 1982, some local citizens realized that removing the peat surface could irreparably damage the ecology and the economy.*

*An unlikely coalition of fishers and environmentalists joined together and successfully fought off this threat to their way of life. They turned out hundreds of citizens at public hearings, and they vigorously voiced their opposition in the environmental*

*regulatory process. In the end, they slowed McLean's project so that the huge and complicated financing collapsed. And they learned how to become citizen activists.*

North Carolina's coastal estuaries—where rivers meet the sea in an ecologically complex web of waterways—feed and protect the larvae and juveniles of over 75 species of fish and shellfish. The state's billion-dollar commercial and sports fishing industry depends on the productivity of the estuaries. For North Carolina's estuarine system to remain an important breeding ground for the state's teeming fish population, its salt water balance must be safeguarded and pollutants must be kept to a minimum.

Extensive wetlands, known as pocosins, naturally regulate the flow of fresh water into the estuaries, main-

taining the delicate salinity and nutrient balance necessary to sustain fish and shellfish life. Much of the pocosin wetlands are laden with deep organic peat deposits. Peat is formed in a water-saturated environment of partially decomposed plant material which after millions of years becomes coal. In Ireland, Finland and the Soviet Union, peat is burned for fuel. Undisturbed, North Carolina's 1,000 square miles of peat bogs act as a sponge to buffer seafood nurseries from freshwater intrusion and heavy metals. The pocosins also play a crucial role in controlling erosion, floods, and pollution, and are habitat for endangered wildlife including the black bear. The coastal wetlands have recreational value to retirees and tourists who bring much-needed income to the depressed region.

Over 400,000 acres of North Carolina's freshwater wetlands have been drained and reclaimed for agriculture during the past 35 years. Of the remaining pocosins, more than half are slated for conversion by corporate superfarm interests and forest product industries. Only 5 percent are protected by public ownership. Agribusiness has taken its toll. Ditches and canals of drainage networks dug over several decades crisscross cleared wetlands, causing the soil to release mercury, cyanide, iron, magnesium, and other pollutants at levels that exceed state standards. No one knows for sure how increased drainage will affect groundwater, air quality and wildlife, or if small family farmers will survive the expansion of agribusiness.

But the estuarine system is already stressed and cannot withstand further water quality degradation if it is to nourish the fisheries and allow locals to make ends meet in the traditional fishing industry. A young shrimp hit by an onslaught of fresh water dies immediately or is forced to seek saltier



Photos by Laura Drey

**Ted Hill, president of American Peat in Pontego, North Carolina, stands in his 100-acre peat field on a rainy day. He bags peat in 40-pound bags to use as potting soil. Peat Methanol Associates proposed to clear 15,000 acres of peat to convert into synthetic methanol.**

surroundings in deeper unprotected waters where predators abound. Similarly, North Carolina's fishers are in danger of being gobbled up by out-of-state investors whose tax write-off ventures may not bode well for the region's environment and economy.

In 1982, when First Colony Farms and Peat Methanol Associates (PMA) announced a peat-mining project that would entail clearing 15,000 acres of freshwater wetlands on the peninsula between the Albemarle and Pamlico sounds, northeastern North Carolinians turned to collective action. The successful fight to stop the PMA project had far-reaching local, state, and national consequences. With the help of the media and professional conservationists, the opinions of coastal citizens were heard by decision-makers in the state capital and on Capitol Hill. The peat-mining controversy spearheaded unprecedented involvement of the fishing community in public debate.

Also new was the coalition of fishers who work on the water and dealers who run the dockside fish-houses. Animosity between those who catch

and those who buy and resell the product was dispelled by the necessity of working together against outside encroachment, and watermen and women became less suspicious of self-proclaimed environmentalists.

As a result of criticism generated by the PMA controversy, state employees and appointed citizens who staff the environmental divisions and regulatory commissions of the Department of Natural Resources and Community Development were forced to take a hard look at the existing permitting process. The state legislature also turned east and took note of the groundswell of demands for responsiveness to the environmental concerns of seaside constituents. Since the peat-mining episode, estuarine water quality has become a much-discussed issue of environmental concern, from the state capital to crabbing villages along the Outer Banks.

Likewise, on the national level, the U.S. Synthetic Fuels Corporation's support for the costly and destructive North Carolina project fueled the growing criticism of the federal government's entire synfuels program.

The victory of fishers and environmentalists in the prevention of a large-scale peat-mining project backed by powerful businessmen, state and national politicians and bureaucrats, and a federal agency indicates that new ideas about the meaning of development are gaining clout in the region, which extends roughly from Elizabeth City to Wrightsville Beach and includes some of North Carolina's poorest counties. In their fight to preserve the valuable peatlands that safeguard tributary productivity, coastal citizens experienced the heady feeling of successful grassroots organizing. For people whose lives are economically and culturally tied to the health of the ecosystem, the realization that they could influence peat-mining policy inspired political activism around other issues affecting their community's natural resources.

## MCLEAN BOGS DOWN IN PEAT

When Winston-Salem-born trucking magnate Malcolm McLean purchased 372,000 acres of North Carolina lowlands and created First Colony Farms in 1973, he didn't realize that the Pamlico (Pamlico and Albemarle) peninsula was blanketed with peat and unsuitable for superfarming. With First Colony's machinery stuck in the mire, McLean started to worry that he'd made an unwise investment. If he could just get rid of the peat, and plant crops in the rich mineral subsoil underneath, each acre of land bought in 1973 for \$400 would be worth \$1,200 or more.

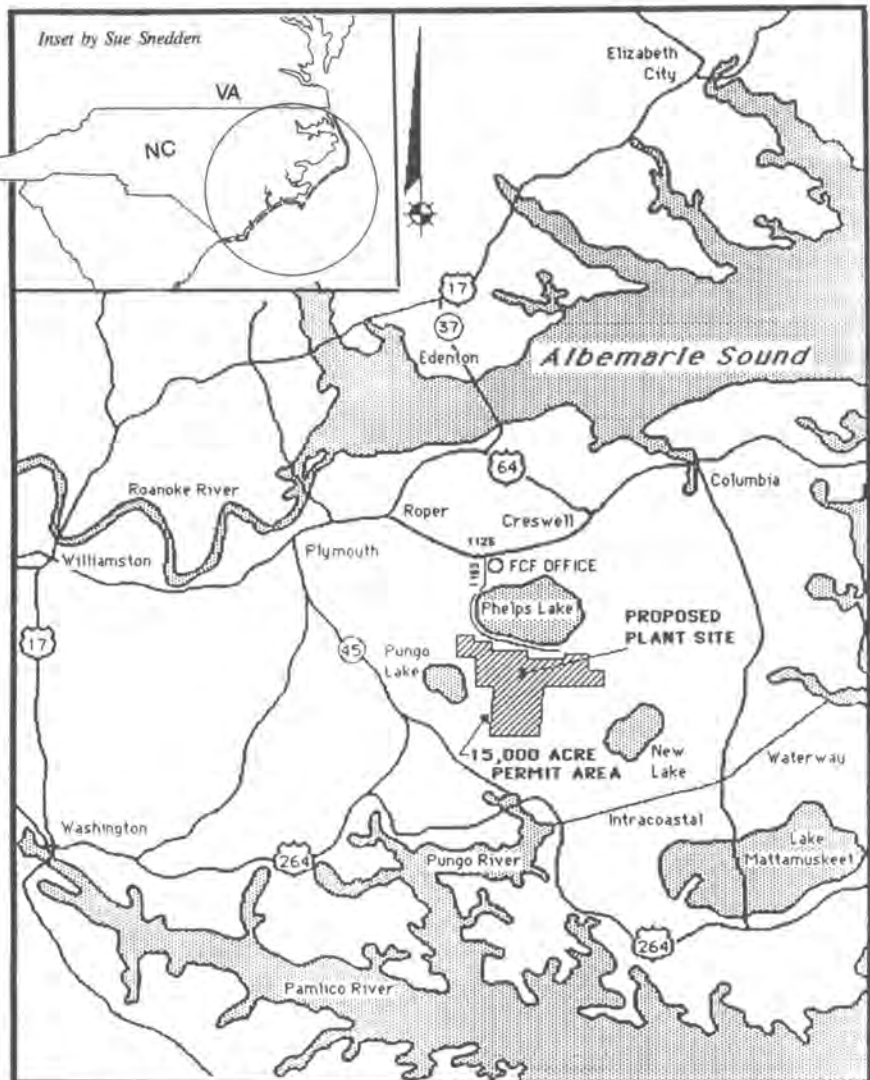
In the early 1980s McLean's prayers were answered by the creation of the consortium Peat Methanol Associates (PMA). On the heels of the oil crisis, the federal Department of Energy had poured money into surveying U.S. peat reserves and investigating peat's use as fuel. Most of the country's peat, the researchers discovered, is located in Alaska's frozen tundra and is therefore out of reach of exploitation. Playing right into the national panic for energy self-sufficiency, and encouraged by the attention the resource had received in Washington, PMA proposed to lease First Colony's peat bogs, mine and dry the peat, and convert it through a gasification process into methanol for sale as an octane booster in unleaded

gasoline. The gasification process necessary to produce 1,000 tons of distilled methanol per day would also yield 217 tons of solids for disposal and 1.28 million gallons of treated waste water. That there was a glut of methanol on the world market and that the technology for methanol use in automobiles was untested didn't seem to matter.

PMA's readiness to take a seemingly unwise economic risk and the consortium's disregard for possible environmental impacts illustrate the power and influence enjoyed by its stockholders. One of PMA's partners, the Energy Transition Corporation (ETCO), was founded in 1978 by former high-ranking officials of the Nixon and Ford administrations and by William Casey, Reagan's campaign manager and now director of the CIA. ETCO's stockholders had considerable experience with government energy projects and in the company's charter articulated their intention to use political know-how to gain access to federal subsidies for new energy technologies.

The financial assistance of the U.S. Synthetic Fuels Corporation (SFC) really made peat mining lucrative for Republican power brokers. On December 2, 1982, corporate chair Edward Noble sent a letter of intent promising \$465 million dollars in price supports and loan guarantees to PMA on condition that the peat-mining operation be expanded into another 100,000 acres in Washington, Tyrrell, Dare, and Hyde counties. Such an expansion, however, would be difficult because of air quality impacts and state policies on mining below sea level.

Noble, a major benefactor of conservative think tanks including the Heritage Foundation and the Committee on the Present Danger, was a former critic of the SFC. But after heading Reagan's transition task force on the corporation, Noble decided the country was in dire need of a private sector synthetic fuels industry. Believing that the SFC should encourage the nascent industry, he sought out projects to fund with his \$17 billion budget. Many of these failed miserably, and Noble was finding himself under increasing pressure to justify the agency's existence when



Map from First Colony Farms

PMA came along. Despite figures showing that all of North Carolina's peat could meet the nation's energy needs for only two-and-a-half days, the Synthetic Fuels Corporation endorsed PMA as if peat were a viable fuel source for the future.

By involving the SFC, which is exempt from the restrictions of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, and the Freedom of Information Act, PMA avoided having to prepare the usually required environmental impact statement. After years of such studies, Minnesota and Florida had severely restricted or prohibited peat mining because of the long-term risks associated with such excavation.

PMA also had the blessing of North

Carolina Governor Jim Hunt, a Democrat. He endorsed PMA as an example of environmentally safe and attractive technology long before review by any state agency was underway.

In opposition to the power of the allied corporate industry and receptive politicians who favored peat mining stood the poor, dispersed, commercial fishers and family farmers. PMA's plan to situate the peat-to-methanol conversion plant in Washington County divided local sympathies. Washington County, attracted to PMA's promise to increase its local tax base and create jobs, would be spared the negative environmental impacts the project entailed. Hyde, Dare, Beaufort, Carteret, Craven, and other counties





**Hundreds of coastal fishers and farmers attended a March permit hearing to protest a new peat-mining proposal before the Environmental Management Commission.**

to the south of the site, while receiving none of the benefits, would be confronted with irreversible freshwater drainage problems resulting from excavations in the north. Small farmers, if not directly affected by damage to water quality, would have to contend with depressed prices for their crops after corporate farms put land reclaimed from peat mines into increased production of corn, wheat, and soybeans.

### **HOW CITIZENS MOBILIZED**

As bureaucrats in Raleigh and Washington, D.C. smoothed the way for PMA, local concern about the project grew. Coastal attention to the peat-mining project fit into the context of increasing concern over water quality, the impact of industries such as phosphate mining by Texasgulf, and commercial development along mainland beachfronts and on barrier islands. Several environmental groups were working on local issues at the community level. A resident of the community of Ocean, Todd Miller, organized a conference to assess the various problems facing the coastal environment and to evaluate the needs of the cosponsoring groups. A plan for an umbrella organization to coordinate coastal activism around issues of environmental, economic, and social

importance to the region grew out of that conference.

The North Carolina Coastal Federation, incorporated in September 1982, began to act as a clearinghouse for information about efforts to protect the coastal ecosystem and economy. As the Federation's first major battle, the fight against PMA created a constituency that retains a strong voice in North Carolina environmental politics today.

The Coastal Federation orchestrated the participation of commercial fishers and seafood dealers and served as a liaison between local public interest groups and national environmentalists. As a result of flyers, letters to the editor, many public meetings, and outspoken indigenous leaders, the diffuse concern of individuals coalesced into a viable multicounty movement.

The progress of the Coastal Federation's peat-mining battle was closely monitored by the mainstream print and television media. "The media played a big role in our organizing," says Miller. "The outside interest kept the local interest going. Any opportunity people had to talk about the problem of drainage they took advantage of." The presence of reporters from New York City and Washington, D.C. down in northeastern North Carolina made it hard for local skeptics to say peat mining wouldn't affect them, and the

power of the media was not lost on PMA's opponents. The Raleigh-based Carolina Wetlands Project of the National Wildlife Federation's Southeast Natural Resources Center, directed by Derb S. Carter, was strategically placed in the fight against PMA.

Backed by 30,000 conservation-minded North Carolinians and a staff of resource specialists, the National Wildlife Federation had the legal means to challenge the inadequacies of North Carolina's regulatory approach to corporate land clearing. Derb Carter and his associates stayed in close contact with Coastal Federation activists, sending experts to testify at state hearings, reminding agency officials in the capital of the water quality concerns of fishing groups, and feeding scientific data and economic and political analysis concerning PMA to the press.

A third organization joined the National Wildlife Federation and the Coastal Federation as a key actor in the "peat war." The North Carolina Fisheries Association, the state's largest and oldest fishing organization, did everything in its power to protect the salinity balance of coastal waters. Most of its 600 members, primarily seafood dealers, were unsophisticated politically when the PMA crisis hit. But Clark Callaway, the association's vice president, was attuned to the workings of the state's regulatory system, having worked as a seafood extension agent for North Carolina State University before opening his own business.

Realizing that mining the Pamlico peatfields would spell disaster for the seafood industry, and seeing that PMA already had a great deal of momentum, Callaway convinced a number of prominent Fisheries Association members to pledge \$1,000 to pay an attorney to represent the association against PMA. New Bern lawyer Henri Johnson, a preservationist at heart, worked with the association and the National Wildlife Federation to reiterate the opposition of commercial fishers to peat mining at every step in the permitting process. Her many appeals and requests for public hearings on land-use decision making were a constant reminder to regulatory agents and state politicians that the seafood

industry's objections were not going away.

"To stop someone from using his property, the whole culture has got to mandate that the reason is strong enough," says Johnson. Fishers who had harvested the waters for generations without poisoning the resource told Malcolm McLean that he couldn't do whatever he wanted with his land, she says.

The militance of the fishers followed months of patient work by the Coastal Federation. With Todd Miller as president, the federation received a \$20,000 grant from the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation in January 1983 to educate people about large-scale peat mining. Few locals knew the project was being planned. "They were completely in the dark," says Miller, "particularly the ones who stood to lose the most, the commercial fishermen and the family farmers who make up the vast majority in those counties." As information about the scope of PMA became known, the federation worked to convince highly independent commercial fishers of their potential to make a difference. Educational outreach in this case meant politics, not ecology. Once told how to respond to the threat and contribute by attending a meeting or making a phone call, locals were faithful to the cause in the face of great odds.

Dave Cecelski was one of the Coastal Federation staffers and volunteers who spent the spring of 1983 establishing contacts with community leaders who, in turn, got their friends riled up about PMA. Cecelski grew up in Carteret County and has relatives sprinkled up and down the coast. For Cecelski, organizing in the coastal region meant reaching people where they lived and worked. He hung around the docks and fish-houses and got to know people all over the Pungo River basin. Often a local person, once informed about the peat project, would call a meeting to spread the word and to give people a place to get questions answered.

In traveling around Hyde, Dare, and Beaufort counties to enlist the support of coastal residents, Cecelski found that local criticism of peat mining extended beyond the specific proposal of PMA and involved more than concern about water quality degradation,

although that was the most concrete fear. In defending their way of life, fishers took on more than peat-miners; many found fault with unfettered corporate development in general. In a sense they challenged prevailing beliefs about the meaning of progress. Poor counties in northeastern North Carolina may be in need of new economic opportunities. But so-called innovative changes that undermine traditional industries such as fishing and family farming are seen as incompatible with the fabric of a society tied to natural resources.

Cecelski recounts his impressions of local sentiment:

*They're plain white persons who make about \$5,000 a year and are real self-sufficient. There's a healthy distrust of industrial culture and a value on being able to take care of yourself and your community.*

Cecelski's experience with one fisherman-turned-activist left him greatly impressed with the information networks that locals put to use once they decided to act. H.O. Golden, a weathered man of 63 and one of the preeminent fishers in the state, rallied the support of watermen and women from all over Dare County. Golden spread awareness of PMA's intention to mine First Colony's peat using the same methods he used to find out the latest crab prices — he got on the VHF and broadcast all over the Sound.

Ann Braddy, a Belhaven crabber and mother of five, emerged as another energetic grassroots mobilizer. Braddy got her neighbors involved in conservation politics, a sizeable feat in light of local reticence and sexism. She insisted that her peers participate in the protection of their livelihoods and convinced them they could influence peat-mining policy. Braddy now has a circle of Beaufort County fishers to call on during other environmental emergencies. She explains how she educated the dubious:

*With something like that you have to work every day. I was always talking to someone. We went door to door, putting things in mailboxes, telephoning. I did a lot of calling congressmen; I wrote to the Raleigh newspapers; I was on TV a time or two. We had meetings at the crabhouse and at the schoolhouse.*

*Being a woman, they listen but they don't hear you. There aren't that many women that work on the water, and they don't think you know what you're doing.*

*I think what suprised me most about the whole thing was that people not directly working on the water didn't think it would affect them, and the whole town is basically seafood.*

*A lot of them didn't have time to mess [with it]. They can't take one day off to go to a meeting because they'll lose money. What's that opposed to the rest of their lifetime? I told them it was their one last shot and it probably was.*

Coastal North Carolinians like Ann Braddy were not motivated to fight PMA solely by environmental and economic concerns; a strong emotional current and a lot of pride made up the foundation of peat mining's opposition. "What gets me is how people like that [developers] can get up and say they're not destroying your livelihood," says Braddy. "I asked Bob Fri [vice president of PMA] how he could sleep at night knowing what he was doing to us, and he said he wasn't doing nothing."

Taking on PMA was especially important because it was a consciousness-raising experience for the participants. "I believe it was a turning point in North Carolina environmental politics," says Willy Phillips, a soft-shell crabber in the town of Bath. "The PMA thing united a group that hadn't been capable of political action before—the commercial fishermen."

## SPREADING THE WORD

The most effective vehicles of public education in the campaign against PMA were two well-attended meetings. The debates, highly publicized, gave organizers tangible goals to work toward, and identified ways for locals to get involved. The Williamston hearing was set up by the state, and the second which took place in April was arranged by the Coastal Federation. The differences between the two meetings reflected the blossoming awareness and empowerment of the region's concerned citizens.

Community meetings were held in homes, court houses, churches, and



**Crabber Ann Braddy and her children Crystal and Dawn with her boat B-5 on Pungo Creek: "People not working directly on the water didn't think it would affect them. The whole town is basically seafood."**

the like, to prepare people for the February, 1983, hearing in Williamston, Martin County set up by the state's Department of Natural Resources and Community Development. These small gatherings preceding official hearings were indispensable in terms of presenting information to people and strengthening their confidence.

At the hearing, the state gave PMA unlimited time at the outset and only left the opposition a chance to speak late in the evening on a sign-up basis. Even so, the Coastal Federation considered the Williamston hearing a success. Despite a busload of people

brought in to speak for the project by Washington County officials, and the fact that attendance meant a three-hour round-trip drive for those who would be most affected by freshwater runoff, the crowd of over 300 was pretty evenly divided for and against peat mining. "It was effective in that there was a lot of dissent even though it was a long way from where we were working, and was in the heart of the area where the jobs would have been created," recalls Cecelski. "The people speaking against it were speaking from the heart, versus the three-piece suit types. The contrast was real evident."

The turn-out at Williamston acti-

vated local interest; peat mining's critics became eager for more ammunition with which to confront PMA's arguments. Fishers felt the hearing had demonstrated the state's lack of genuine interest in the seafood industry's concerns, so the Coastal Federation held its own public meeting in a more convenient location. There the fishers and environmentalists called the shots for a change.

In anticipation of the big event, Coastal Federation organizers and volunteers stimulated a lot of discussion about peat mining at the local level and nationwide. The April meeting at Mattamuskeet High School in Coastal Hyde County was planned to open with presentations from proponents, opponents, and state regulators, to be followed by a question-and-answer session. But procedure was quickly abandoned and one observer noted, "PMA really got fried."

Spirits ran high. The night belonged to what Willy Phillips refers to as "the real grassroots gut-pulling emotional lower-echelon commercial fishermen." The 600 watermen and women who met at Mattamuskeet "galvanized their own resolve and showed the regulatory agencies they were a force to be reckoned with," says Phillips. Even skeptics came away thinking they might have a chance to affect the outcome of the PMA controversy. "Up until that time at Mattamuskeet they had felt the odds were against them," says Miller. "We were probably as blatantly unfair as they had been at the first one, but at least it was our side."

## **PMA GETS NERVOUS**

Following the Mattamuskeet meeting PMA started to grope for means to appease citizen opposition. When the company's hired researchers found mercury levels 240 times state standards in drainage ditches at the peat-mining site, PMA claimed these levels were natural to the region and that the standards were impractical. Critics stuck to their original contention that high concentrations of mercury were traceable to the disturbance of organic peat soils during experimental mining.

Making a concession which further



betrayed PMA's nervousness about the peat project's feasibility, the company succumbed to pressure from fishers to address the freshwater drainage problem. In what amounted to an admission of former callousness towards the seafood industry's claims, PMA promised to lessen runoff by building lagoons and a large lake to lengthen evaporation retention time. "They realized they couldn't get around it but with engineered solutions," says geologist Jonathan Phillips, executive director of the Pamlico-Tar River Foundation, a Washington County conservation group.

The fishing community wasn't silenced by the artificial lake concept. Unaddressed by PMA's proposed hydrological modifications were the impact of major storms, concentration of contaminants, and the cost of the perpetual pumping necessary to make the artificial lake function.

## PEAT MINING AND THE STATE

In taking on North Carolina's regulatory system PMA's opponents had two ingrained and complementary barriers to overcome — one procedural, the other ideological. The Natural Resources department's convoluted maze of agencies impeded citizen access to the land-use decision-making process. Even after finding ways to participate, fishers and environmentalists were still hindered by the department's working premise that development was inevitable—the natural, even desirable path of the future. Yet with a two-pronged approach — in which attorneys and professional environmentalists handled the legal end of the opposition's review requests and permit appeals to the staff of the Department of Natural Resources, and in which local activists stimulated discussion among the citizen commissions and turned out uncustomarily large crowds at agency meetings — the Coastal Federation and its allies were able to set in motion a series of changes that have achieved more responsible water quality regulation throughout North Carolina.

State law lacks a coherent means of addressing the cumulative impact of peat mining. As a result of the Department of Natural Resources' piecemeal approach to water quality issues, no



Peat drainage ditches criss cross the low-lying Pamlico peninsula.

basic rules exist for evaluating the steady flow of permit applications into the state's environmental review agencies. But the overlapping regulatory commissions gave peat mining's critics a forum in which to create dissension, and regional citizens got a taste of what it means to bargain with bureaucrats and politicians.

The night before a critical commission hearing, activists served commissioners a home-cooked seafood dinner in Stumpy Point. Afterwards, activists insisted that peat mining and agricultural reclamation could damage the "natural conditions of the estuarine system" that commissioners were legally mandated to preserve. Commissioners began to realize that they were ineffective in pressing change on environmental issues. Environmental Management Commission director Bob Helms, for example, kept his board uninformed of policy decisions. Commissioners sometimes read in the newspaper that crucial groundwater discharge permits for peat-miners had been issued without their foreknowledge.

Commissioners responded by taking charge, beginning with deciding to hold a public hearing on the PMA project over Helms's objections. The commission took another step by changing the policy that a developer did not have to produce a water management plan until six months

after he or she begins to pollute. Now the commission requires thorough environmental assessments, public hearings, and development of water management guidelines before issuing groundwater or pollution discharge permits.

The board changed, believes environmentalist Derb Carter, because members had felt foolish during the PMA controversy. Environmental Management Commission vice-chair Jimmy Wallace, mayor of inland Chapel Hill, explained the change was because the commission wanted to "get citizens back into the picture." The peat-mining proposal, he said, had a magnitude he'd never appreciated before. "The whole peninsula might be rendered sterile, destroying not only livelihoods but estuary nursery areas, fish, and shellfish."

## SUING FOR WETLANDS

Besides working to slow the peat-mining project through the state regulatory system, environmentalists and fishers took aim through the federal courts. Seven local and national groups filed federal suit, challenging the Army Corps of Engineers decision that the Pamlico peninsula did not constitute a wetland. The Corps had only visited the site in the summer, the dry season. Any peat bog should automati-

ically be considered a wetland — as a basic textbook principle, insists marine biologist Dick Barber. In a federally designated wetland, any mining project must obtain a dredge-and-fill permit from the Corps and it must create an environmental impact statement. In December 1985, a federal judge ruled that the Corps had been “arbitrary and capricious,” and ordered a reevaluation of its decision.

## PMA GIVES UP

By the end of 1983, PMA was behind schedule. With all the snags encountered in the permit process, the consortium needed more time. It requested increased subsidies from the Synthetic Fuels Corporation. Without additional loans, reasoned the sponsoring developers, their private investors would be likely to back out of the peat-to-methanol conversion project.

Synthetic Fuels had problems of its own, however. Both Republican and Democratic members of Congress had attacked the corporation in 1983, especially its promise of \$465 million in price supports to PMA. Public officials worried that the corporation's allocation of funds was being influenced by the self-interest of its own officials.

Aware of the dissatisfaction of environmentalists in northeastern North Carolina and nationwide, under pressure from political observers on the right and the left and the General Accounting Office, and grasping the economic shakiness of the whole idea, the corporation refused to provide PMA with more federal funding.

The Synthetic Fuels Corporation's denial of more funds shook the PMA project to the core. Claiming that peat mining wasn't feasible without supplementary money from the government, Koppers Chemical — one of the largest participants in the consortium — withdrew its involvement. In February 1984 PMA held a press conference to announce the project's demise and in April 1986, Congress terminated the Synthetic Fuels Corporation.

## THE PEATWARS CONTINUE

The fight against peat mining suc-

ceeded on two fronts. The issues involved those once unempowered or not interested in public policy, and they in turn challenged those in decision-making positions and brought them to task for their slack and uninformed attitude toward the region's environment and its people.

As a classroom in the field — or on the water — the organizing around PMA taught coastal citizens about bottom-up politics. The numbers of people involved and the sense of urgency expressed by commercial fishers and environmentalists made the need for serious thinking about coastal water quality and land-use issues clear to policy setters in county commissioners' offices, the state legislature, and congressional committees. But PMA's adversaries can't sit back and relax; the peat war continues on several fronts.

No moratorium has been placed on peat mining. Early in 1986 Malcolm McLean announced a renovated proposal to mine First Colony's peat, this time for electric power generation. Because no federal subsidies will be involved this go round, the project may attract less national media attention and be more difficult to halt. McLean's spokespeople are proceeding with the utmost diplomacy; they describe the excavation process as ecologically sound. But McLean wants to see how Chicago-based industrialist Samuel J. Esposito fares with his peat-mining proposal before proceeding with his latest plan to remove First Colony's peat at a profit, making available cleared land for agribusiness.

Esposito has enticed investors to his peat-mining project on Whitetail Farms in mainland Hyde County but the Environmental Management Commission has refused to give him a water management permit five times, and he is unlikely to receive a go-ahead any time soon.

Finally, feeling the pressure from fishers and environmentalists dating from the PMA controversy, the state drafted a set of stringent and comprehensive peat-mining regulations last winter. After being hotly debated by over 600 participating at a Hyde County public hearing in March 1986, the new regulations will be voted on by the Environmental Management Com-

mission in July. If the pivotal requirement sticks — that excavation cannot produce more nutrients or fresh water runoff than undrained pocosin covered with mature hardwood vegetation — peat mining will be next to impossible, according to Todd Miller.

The people who opposed PMA have a homegrown definition of productivity, formed by generations of farming and fishing, and it isn't shared by developers who perceive the priorities of locals as backward. Neither land speculators nor state officials, no matter how sympathetic, can be counted on to consider the detrimental impact of environmentally irresponsible development in the same way as a Stumpy Point crabber. In a technologically alienating society in which workers often exercise little control over their workplaces, North Carolina's commercial fishers own their own boats, repair their own nets, and set their own hours. This independence is at stake if they don't exercise some control over resource policy and if destructive land-clearing practices persist.

In the effort to save their land and livelihoods, local citizens—fishers, farmers, crabbers, fish dealers—learned about power, control, and trust. “Politics are always crooked,” says crabber Ann Braddy. “I did find out there are still a few good fellers in there that will help you, but not enough.” Clark Callaway, from the Fisheries Association, thinks the people in the state government are starting to grasp the problems facing the coastal region but says, “They still hear powerful landowners with too much influence on one side and three thousand small fishermen and farmers on the other saying, ‘You're killing us.’” One of the most important lessons locals gained from the PMA experience was that public officials, unless prodded continually, are unlikely to advocate on behalf of the community. Locals are now prepared to prod. □

*Robin Epstein was an intern with Southern Exposure before coming aboard as a consultant on the North Carolina Landownership and Political Economy Study underway at the Institute for Southern Studies, for which this profile was written.*



BY PATSY SIMS

# CHILDHOOD ON A SUGAR LAND PRISON FARM

Every summer and often on holidays, we would head to the prison farm just outside Sugar Land, Texas, where my grandfather worked as a combination veterinarian-guard and where he and my grandmother lived in a big white house with screened porches front and back. Mother would pack up our '39 Chevy and we'd set out from Beaumont on a highway lined with splattered armadillos and nondescript towns which loomed larger in my childhood fantasies than they did on the landscape. China . . . Devers . . . Dayton . . . on past Houston. In those pre-freeway days, before progress and subdivisions devoured the twenty-five miles between Houston and Sugar Land, Highway 90 stretched on uninterrupted except for an occasional gas pump-grocery or a clapboard tourist court. Burma Shave signs, as evenly placed as telephone poles, were considered entertainment rather than environmental eyesores, and we would pass the foreverness of Children's Standard Time reading the slogans aloud: THE WHALE / PUT JONAH / DOWN THE HATCH / AND COUGHED HIM UP / BECAUSE HE SCRATCHED / USE BURMA SHAVE.

Stafford was a landmark of special significance, because the lanes divided and straddled the town, and because it was the last interruption on

the otherwise low, level terrain before we got our first glimpse of the Imperial Sugar Refinery, a towering eight-story brick building with what was probably the area's only neon sign emblazoned across the top. From there, we had another mile or two to go, past the Sealy Tuftless Mattress Company, the Imperial Mercantile, and the depot, to Central State Farm and the turnoff to Mama and Popo's.

After a few days Mother would usually return to Beaumont, allowing me to spend a week or two or however long Mama and Popo's nerves could hold out. The visits were somewhat of a family tradition that started with my older sisters, Norma and Dot, and our cousin Florence. None of the boys in the family ever stayed on, though looking back no one knows why, unless it had something to do with the inherent nature of little boys and the waning patience of aging grandparents. By the time I came along — ten years after my closest sibling — there was no one my age, so I literally had a captive audience.

Occasionally I brought along a playmate from home, but for the most part I whiled away the hours showing off my latest dance routines to the prisoners or helping Mama shell peas. I especially remember sitting on the backsteps watching the convicts pick cotton or beans or whatever was grow-



ing, while a guard on horseback pranced up and down the rows, a rifle resting on his shoulder in case someone decided to run. From dawn until dark—or, as the prisoners more aptly

.....  
Patsy Sims revisited "2 Camp" with her dog Maggie last summer.  
.....



Photo by Robert A. Cashdollar

put it, "from can to can't"—they hoed and weeded and plowed the fields which stopped just short of Mama and Popo's house. In winter, a trusty would bring coffee to the field guards in what in other seasons served as the water wagon. A metal drum, suspended in back by chains, contained a fire to keep the coffee hot and hands warm. At lunch and when sundown neared, the inmates were herded back to their quarters, sometimes in parade formation doing a "turn-row" trot and flanked by mounted guards; at other times, huddled together in a mule-drawn wagon. Black inmates were taken down the road to "Two Camp," a three-story structure of bricks and bars; white ones, across the highway to "the new unit," an equally formidable building surrounded by a high wall and towers and floodlights they turned on at night.

I remember a time or two when Popo called to warn, "A prisoner's loose," and then hearing shooting underneath the house. Yet I never recall being scared, nor did the darker side of prison intrude upon my in-

nocence, either the crimes the men were convicted of or how they were treated. They were my friends and in some cases, my heroes. Especially Dan, a white-haired trusty who ran the post office, a small frame structure a vacant lot away from Mama and Popo's house. Mama said he was serving a

life sentence for shooting a man, but to me he was special. And I suppose the feeling must have been mutual. The Christmas I was seven he gave me what I considered my first "grown-up" book—*The Fireside Book of Christmas Stories*. Today, it is one of the first things I would grab if my house caught fire. Besides running the post office, Dan kept books for the prison and drove Captain Flanagan around. He was a particularly neat man. Distinguished looking, as I remember him. He wore carefully pressed white shirts and trousers like all the convicts did, except for the bad guys who were branded with the stripes immortalized by Saturday matinees. He had a lot of "freedom," even for a trusty, and folks said it was because he was extra smart, or at least Captain Flanagan thought so.

Captain Flanagan was the warden, known as "the Big Captain." Besides him, there was his assistant, the "Little Capain," then "the Steward," who looked after inside matters such as the laundry and food service, and "the Dog Sergeant," who kept the

bloodhounds. Everyone else doubled as a guard—regardless of his primary assignment—and was addressed as "Boss." In the case of my grandfather, few people knew him by his given name, Gurnade, only as "Boss Shanks." He might correctly be referred to as a jack of all trades; he maintained the cotton gin, acted as veterinarian (although he had no formal training), supervised a squad of prisoners who tended to the chicken coops and Captain Flanagan's yard, and was never far from his .38. Popo was born in 1880 in Cooper, Texas, up in Delta County. He met Mama in Perry Landing, where he helped her father raise sugar cane. That was about as much as I ever knew about his past, other than the fact his father fought in the Confederate army. Popo himself was not a large man. In his wedding photograph he appeared handsome, with dark hair and mustache and a youthful innocence that succumbed to his line of work. Yet underneath that sometimes tough lawman exterior he was kind, even gentle, with a mischievous glimmer that betrayed what he really was: a lovable tease. For a time he grew potatoes, but for the greater part of his life he worked for the law, along the Mexican border, in Alabama, and on the prison farm.

Like the other hired hands, he provided his own workclothes—khakis and a straw cattleman's hat—and got around the farm on a horse, which was delivered to his house each morning by a trusty. He worked seven days a week for a salary that never reached more than \$90 a month and, for most of his years there, hovered at around \$50. The house was at a point referred to as "midway," because of its position between the two prison units. It was part of a complex that consisted of Dan's post office, a rose garden, and Captain Flanagan's two-story, pillared house, which I remember visiting only once, to play dolls with a little girl he and his wife were supposed to adopt but didn't. Even though Mama and Popo lived across the road, I don't recall them going there either. Folks on the prison farm didn't seem to visit back and forth much, at least not with the Flanagans.

Mainly we passed the evenings on the porch swing listening to crickets and frogs the way we did the radio, or

in a bedroom that had been added onto the back of the house. For some reason, that's where everyone—including company—congregated the way most rural people do around the kitchen table. It was the largest room in the house and with windows on two sides caught a welcome breeze in those days before air-conditioning. Heaven knows it was not for aesthetic reasons. The back bedroom's furnishings consisted of two utilitarian iron beds, several upright rockers, a plain oak dresser, Depression-era linoleum, and an insurance calender that changed with the year but never in design. A crank-type telephone was mounted on the wall at such a height that Mama had to stand on tiptoes to holler, "Hello, Central?" into the receiver. The room always smelled of liniment and hummed with the buzzing of frantic flies, the rustling of a nearby cotton wood tree, and the whir of an oscillating fan.

There were two other bedrooms—a particularly small one and then a "fancy" bedroom with "yo-yo" curtains chronicling the wardrobes of female members of the family; a living room fancied up with crocheted doilies and gold-satin pillows commemorating THE ALAMO and ARMY AIR CORPS; a skinny walk-through bath with a door at each end; a kitchen that smelled of biscuit-and-bacon breakfasts, salami-and-onion lunches, chicken-and-milk-gravy suppers, and a dining room whose table fluctuated in length with the family's births and deaths. Rolled-down canvas shades enclosed the back porch, summer and winter, sealing in a damp coolness. Shelves along the wall nearest the kitchen showcased colorful jars of "canned" peaches and preserves and "chowchow," and next to the icebox, a crock held cucumbers pickling in homegrown dill.

Occasionally Popo would sit me in front of him on his horse and ride over to the units. The second-time black offenders assigned to "Two Camp" slept on the top floor; unmarried guards, on the second. The ground floor housed offices and the eating areas. In the guards' dining hall, plates heaped with pot roast, collards, and cornbread, or a similar combination, were passed through a barred window separating the eating area from the kitchen which

was kept locked. As I recall, the room was a dingy institutional green, yet somehow the things I rebelled against at home always tasted better there. Even spinach. Maybe because I had watched it grow.

Before the late 1940s when the state legislature was persuaded to up its ap-



Photo courtesy of Hazy Sims

propriations, the prison was pretty much self-sufficient. It produced enough not only to feed and clothe the inmates but to generate operating funds. Besides the cattle and crops—including cane raised for Imperial Sugar—a whole complex of operations surrounded Central No. 1: a cotton gin, exterminator, meat-packing plant, cannery, leather shop, and pickle vats six feet in diameter. Sometimes on our outings Popo and I would tour the buildings, most of them corrugated tin that turned a blinding silver in the summer sun.

About the only time we left the prison compound was after work or on one of Popo's rare days off when we would scrunch into Mama's and his Chevrolet coupe and drive to Sugar Land or five miles in the other direction to Mrs. Clayton's service station and store. The trip was more to visit than to buy anything. Mrs. Clayton and her husband Larry were good friends. Few of us in the family ever knew Mrs. Clayton's first name or Larry's last one. He had started working at the store as a young man. When

Mrs. Clayton's first husband died, he stayed on to help her run the business and they eventually got married. Even then, most folks continued to call her "Miz Clayton" and him, Larry, and

.....  
 "Popo" — Gurnade Shanks — with his prison farm horse at a Texas county fair in the 1920s.  
 .....

neither seemed to mind. She was a large woman with long gray hair she braided and then wound around her head, the way Mama did, in a halo. Larry was not a large man, as I remember, nor did he say much. Except for an occasional game of dominos, we would just visit, and he or Mrs. Clayton would generally give me a peanut pattie, or a "Round the World" I think we called it.

Perhaps I was too young to view those family trips to the prison farm as anything out of the ordinary. It wasn't until long after Popo retired in 1949 and moved him and Mama into a pre-fab house bought mail-order from the Sears Roebuck catalog that I fully appreciated the uniqueness of the experience. It wasn't *every* kid who got to spend summers on a prison farm and count among her friends *real* cops and robbers or whose granddaddy could reel off yarns about running down moonshiners in Alabama and singlehandedly apprehending tough hombres along the Rio Grande, then hand-cuffing them around a tree while he went out looking for more.

Today, strange as this may sound, those times in Sugar Land are among my fondest childhood memories. At family gatherings the conversation seldom fails to get around to prison-farm stories, like the time one particularly obese guard was slashed across the stomach and survived without too much damage, thanks to his fatty insulation, or when Captain Flanagan caught still another guard slumped over in his chair, rifle resting

.....  
**Two Camp, a prison farm building where Patsy Sims often ate with her grandfather.**  
 .....



Photo by Robert A. Cashdollar

across his lap, dozing. The guard opened his eyes to see the toes of the warden's boots facing his. Without looking up, he said, "Captain, have you ever noticed the way ants work?"

The all-time favorite is about Mama and Popo making homebrew during Prohibition, right in the middle of the prison farm. That was before I was born, but the details have been carefully remembered and handed down. As children, my sisters were admonished *never* to mention the brew to anybody and sometimes were posted to keep an eye out for Captain Russell, the peg-legged warden. Once, while Mama and Popo were making a batch of brew, he showed up for a visit and was maneuvered to another part of the house. The whole time the captain was there my sister Dot worried that he would discover what was going on and put Popo in jail, which I suspect my grandfather would have viewed simply as another addition to an already good collection of yarns that has made him a legend in the family and continues to entertain his great-great-grandchildren 30 years after his death.

Hardly a week goes by that I don't think about Popo. That could be

because of a photograph on my desk of him and Mama in their later years, but I am inclined to believe it has more to do with his adventures and storytelling abilities and those summers on the prison farm. Sights, sounds, flavors, smells that for most people evoke memories of more traditional visits with their grandparents make me remember the big white house, the freshly turned earth during planting season, turnip greens simmering in the guards' dining room, and rain

pelting against the tin roof of Dan's post office.

Now and then I browse through *The Fireside Book of Christmas Stories* in which Daddy carefully recorded "Christmas 1945" and my name but not Dan's, maybe because we never knew his full name. In those days, inmates were rarely called by anything but their first name or a nickname usually derived from some particular characteristic, like Shorty or Looking-Down Red or Crying Shame. Sometimes a relative would inquire about a convict only to be told he was not at that unit because prison personnel had long since forgotten his real name. Dan never had a nickname, and I guess that was because he was different, or at least I liked to think so.

While I was home several years ago, I decided to drive out to Sugar Land, to see what the prison farm was like today and if I could find out what had happened to Dan. Both his post office and the big white house were gone, reclaimed for farmland as though they had never existed. "Two Camp" had been gutted and converted into storage space after integration, yet the shell revealed the building I knew as a

child. The walls remained the same institutional green, and the floor plan was still traceable on the concrete, just as I remembered it: the guards' dining room was here, the kitchen there, the barred window in between. Across the highway, "the new unit," known now simply as Central State Farm, remained virtually unchanged: white, with the same high walls and towers and floodlights they turn on at night. Nearby, inmates were picking up pecans while a mounted guard, with rifle ready, looked on.

Inside, the warden treated me to lunch in the guards' dining room, and to a piece of lemon meringue pie almost as good as that 40 years ago. Unlike the old-timers who seldom went beyond second or third grade, this man had a college degree, yet he shared Popo's love for stories about the past. Dan had left long before his time, but the warden knew folks he felt confident would remember: a man in town and a former warden who put me in touch with the widow of the dog sergeant who accompanied me to see still another retired captain. For five days I shuttled from Sugar Land to Rosenberg to Huntsville to Madisonville to Normangee. Everyone remembered Dan: his white hair, his intelligence, but not his last name or what had become of him. Vera Bledsoe, whose late husband had tended the bloodhounds for 37 years, vaguely recalled him being paroled in the late '50s and then marrying a school teacher with whom he had corresponded after she visited the prison on business. But that was the extent of Mrs. Bledsoe's knowledge. Finally, on my last day in Texas, when it was too late to look any further, I put the question to Joe Hines who had been the warden at a neighboring prison farm.

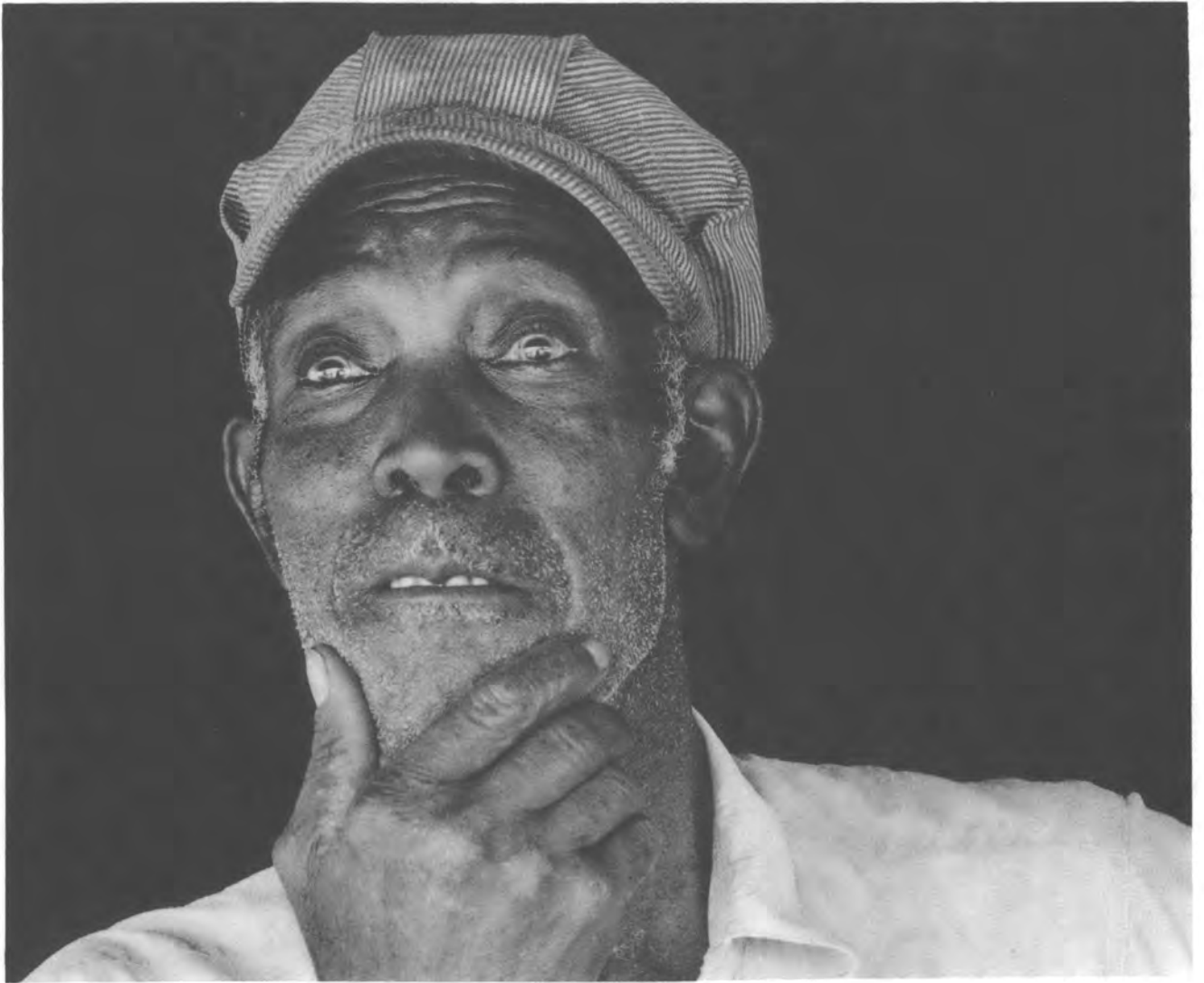
"Sure," he answered without hesitating, "that was old Dan Sims." □

*Patsy Sims, author of The Klan and a forthcoming book on tent revivals, is writing a novel set on a Texas prison farm in the 1940s.*



East Texas

# Black Life



*Locke Minor, Blacksmith, 1973*

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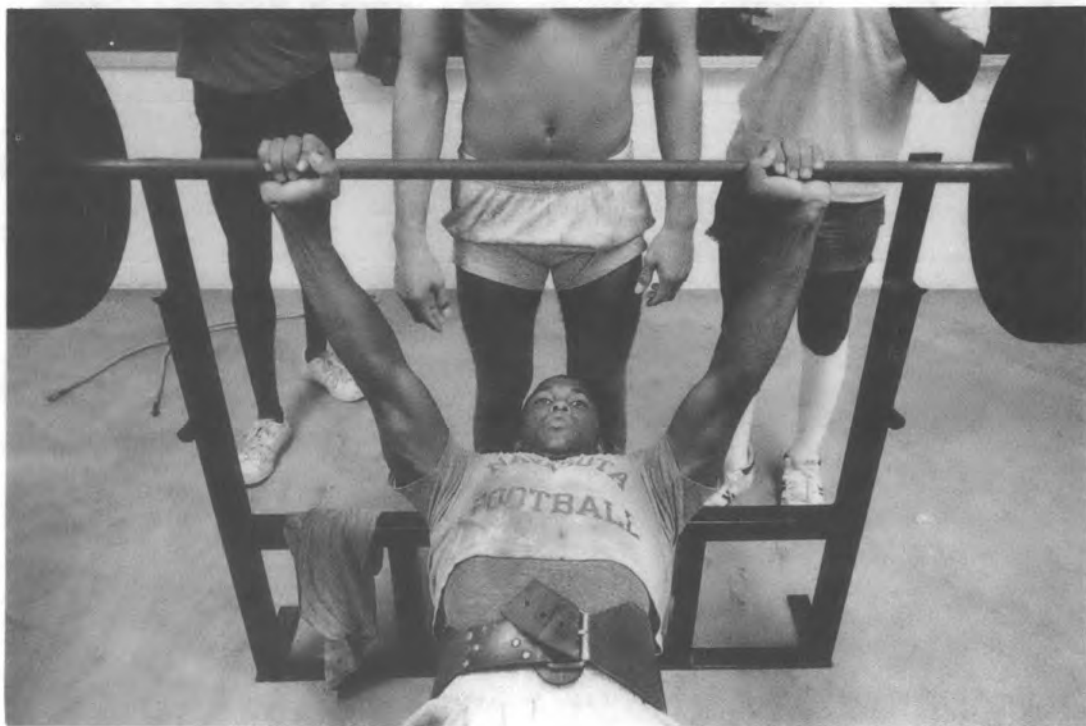
PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRED BALDWIN & WENDY WATRISS



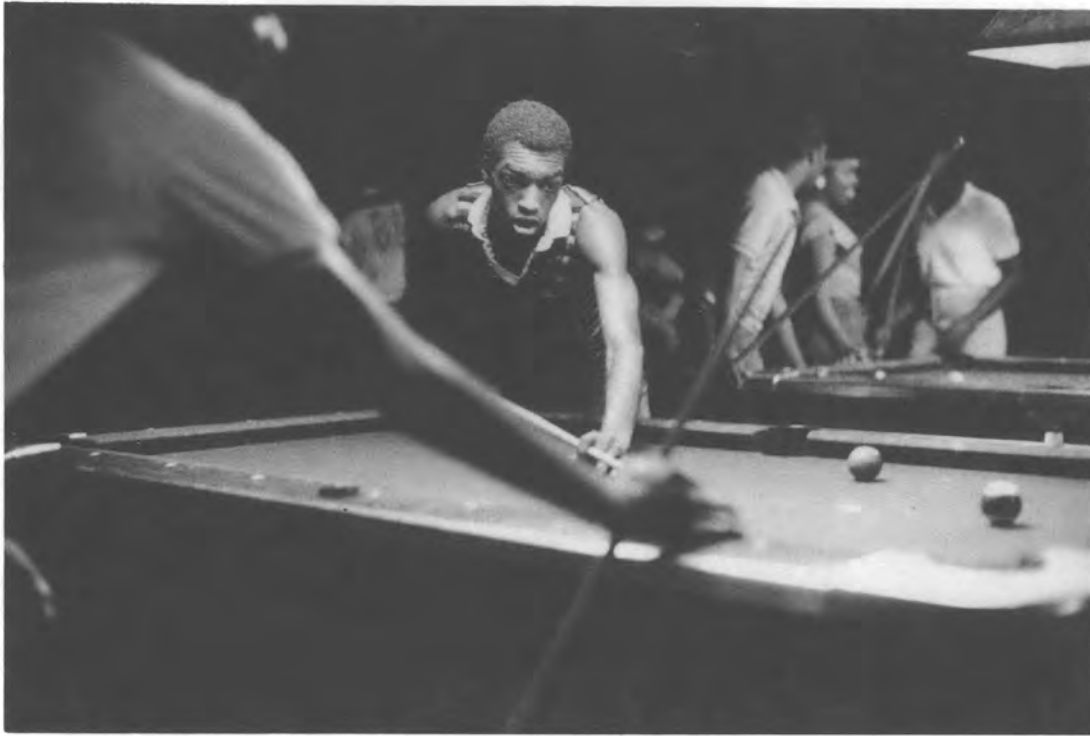
*Saturday Night, 1985  
Railroad Street*

*Frederick Baldwin is an associate professor at the University of Houston and Director of the Photojournalism Program since 1982. He has been a freelance photojournalist from 1958 to the present. His photos have appeared in National Geographic, Life, Sports Illustrated and a host of other publications.*

*Navasota High School, 1985*



# black life



*Wendy V. Watriss is a freelance photo-journalist and writer. Her works have been published in Life, Stern, Newsweek and many other publications. As a former newspaper reporter and producer of public affairs television documentaries, she has produced documentaries for National Educational Television in New York.*

*Kojak's Bar, 1984*

*Railroad Street, 1984*







*Wedding, East Texas, 1985*

*Black Rodeo, 1980*



# A Poem for Langston Hughes

By Lenard D. Moore

Illustration by Jacob Roquet



You Langston,  
you black man who is waiting  
for our tomorrows not to be underground  
& lost to oblivion,  
whose afrikan eyes have sealed  
like a vault,  
whose metaphors live on,  
whose poems tremble the world  
like a great earthquake,  
whose spirit lifts heads, young & old,  
whose books will always be read...  
you who were not afraid to seek revolution/  
a revolution of liberation--  
you were not afraid to retrace the Nile,  
to show how stable your memory,  
how untimid your voice  
for your people,  
how brilliant you were.

You Langston,  
you black man who is waiting  
for our tomorrows  
not to be underground  
& lost to oblivion,  
whose sentient words have brought salvation,  
have led brothers & sisters  
to cast words upon page after page..  
create piercing poems/  
& treasure their heritage.  
Oh, you black man insisted on electrifying  
the world when others sought  
to cage you like a bird.  
Always it is the rhythm of your words,  
jazz rhythm,  
stroking freedom in ears,  
burning in minds  
so deep  
so deep

*Lenard D. Moore is a poet, writer, and literary critic who has been published in over 125 magazines internationally. He is the former Southern regional director for the International Black Writer's Conference.*

*This poem was first published in Stepping Stones Magazine in 1984.*

# “We’re Becoming the Mayors”

## An interview with former sit-in leader Harvey Gantt, now Charlotte’s Mayor

In 1960 an 18-year-old Charleston, South Carolina high school student named Harvey Gantt organized his peers to conduct a sit-in at a Kress dimestore lunch counter. He and his friends, who were youth members of the NAACP, were emulating older college students who had begun the famous civil disobedience integration campaign at a Woolworth’s in Greensboro, North Carolina. The movement had then spread to other Southern cities with black colleges. Charleston had no black college, and the task—if it was to be done—fell to younger students like Gantt.

As a college student himself a few years later Gantt decided that he wanted to transfer to all-white Clemson

University to study architecture, a career he had dreamed about since his early teens. After an extended court battle, Clemson reluctantly admitted

him. Once the elite university administrators realized they had lost, they responded moderately, and middle- and lower-class whites followed suit, without creating the violence that had required federal troops to ensure university integration in other Southern states. Gantt completed his junior and senior years there with few open conflicts with white students or faculty.

In 1983, 52 percent of Charlotte, North Carolina voters cast their mayoral ballots for 40-year-old Gantt, by then a successful architect who had been active in city politics for nine years. In this campaign, Gantt believes, “race was a factor...not an issue.” A plurality of whites—40 percent—sided



Photo courtesy The Charlotte Observer

by  
Lynn Haessly



with Gantt, a necessary margin for his election in a city where only 23 percent of the registered voters were black. Two years later, Gantt pulled in an even wider victory in a re-election bid, winning 60 percent of the city's vote.

Gantt's success and ability to appeal to white voters have drawn disparagement from some other blacks, who have seen Gantt as catering too much to the downtown power elite. Gantt, for instance, decided not to endorse Jesse Jackson for president in 1984. The mayor portrays himself as a qualified individual who happens to be black, who weighs black interests alongside others when formulating city policy.

In January, Gantt created a tape-recorded oral life history, with interviewer Lynn Haessly of the Southern Oral History Program at the University of North Carolina, from which these excerpts are drawn:

### **I WAS BORN**

in Charleston County on one of the islands surrounding Charleston, Young's Island to be exact. My family, my mother and father, were very young—my father was 21, my mother was 18. We moved immediately to Charleston when I was an infant. I lived in public housing in the city of Charleston then, as opposed to the county. My father got a job working in the war industries. At that time, Charleston was a big naval base; it still is. For the first four years of my life I lived in public housing.

Then my father decided to move out of public housing as things got better for him and he got a leg up on the economic ladder. And as the war wound down, we moved to the center of Charleston in our own house. Probably I got my first interest in architecture by remembering that he built the house himself...and the house sort of grew with our family. I ultimately had four sisters, me being the oldest in the family.

I went to public schools but never went to first grade...I went from kindergarten to second grade. The first day or two that they put me in first grade they found that I had done so well in kindergarten that there was no point in keeping me there and so they

put me in second grade. My mother was very pleased about that.

My mother's family, as far back as they can remember, and my father's family came from two different sections of the island. My father came from the Adams Run area of Young's Island and my mother came from the Oakville area of Young's Island. She was an only child but my father came from a big family of Gantts that were there...We assume that there must have been some Gantts that owned a plantation or something in the area a couple of generations or more back. My father's father had considerable landholdings, or at least it was considered amongst the folks in that area to be fairly large.

I attended Morris Street Baptist church with my family. I literally grew up in that church. My father and mother came from the island and they were members of a small Baptist church...They came right in [to Charleston] and settled into that church and that's the only church that our family has known....

My folks were economically the lower, lower-income family.[They were] what I call salt-of-the-earth working people...not a lot of frills, a great deal of love and attention of course to their children and a great deal of belief in America as the land of opportunity if you work hard and you get an education.

We had a high degree of emphasis on education. So we were middle-class in concept. You know, we believed in the country and believed in those goals of the middle class that I think is the stuff that America is made of, which is a certain degree of education to gain a certain level of material acquisition to live comfortably and of course to do the same thing over and over again with your children. My father worked two or three jobs. In retrospect, probably at relatively low wages, except in the latter parts of my stay at home he started to move up the ladder in the naval shipyard.

My mother was a housewife for all of our time. We have these strong standards about women. My father had a strong feeling for the fact that with five children my mother needed to be home with them. It's a value that I sort of carry. I'm kind of old-fashioned about that.

I still feel very strongly about children coming home from school because when I used to come home from school, the first thing I'd say when I hit the door was "Mama" and she would answer back. It was so reassuring to me. I didn't realize it was reassuring until later years looking back on it. And that really happened all the way through high school. I'd come home, whether it was from a football game or football practice or Senior High Club meeting or something and holler out that same "Mama." She was always home....

The role of the father I think I probably emulate from the way my father treated us. He was never a pal to me and I was an only boy. You know, he didn't try to get out and play Little League baseball with me. Occasionally he'd come to the games when I played football in high school and they would come as a family to the game. But he didn't get very gung ho and never tried to be a pal. He was always there, sort of reassuring. He would always be stern on the discipline at the appropriate times.

[My father was] a great talker about the weightier issues of the time, politics, etc., and it really is in my father that I got more of the inspiration to enter the world of politics. My mother, on the other hand, was always there. So it is in the little but important things about life that value transmissions occurred with my mother. My father was, for example, a very religious man, but my mother said, "Yes, your dad believes in God, I do too, but you shall study your homework and you shall put two hours of work into that because that is how you are going ultimately to be successful as an architect one day," and so forth and so on.

I'm one of those fortunate people who early on recognized that I wanted to be an architect and that was in ninth grade. It was putting together my aptitude for drawing and my interest in the technical aspects of putting things together that led me to architecture.

About third grade one of my teachers noticed that I doodled on my pad quite a bit, and I would try to draw the prettiest girl in the class. She thought she would take that stray energy that was always doodling and drawing and get me to draw the

Christmas scene or the Thanksgiving scene or the pumpkin and horn, etc. And I would do right well at it. She'd tell other teachers, "He can draw," you know, "Let him draw this." I did that all the way through elementary school and people started to know me as a person who really could sketch very well. As I look back on it they weren't all that good in terms of sketches but they were probably better than most of the kids could draw... I guess by their pushing it, it gave me confidence.

My mother was concerned. She didn't want me to be an artist. She thought that wasn't really a stable enough career. As I said, she was a very practical person who looked at things that way. So when I landed on architecture, it seemed to be the perfect blend.

[My early education was] excellent. I always have said that. I mean, I didn't know that the bad books or the books that were out of date were out of date. And I thought people were generally interested in me and my classmates and they wanted us to do well. There was a great deal of competition to do well, to achieve excellence, a lot of pushing about education. My folks were very much involved with the PTA and other people that were around me were involved... We were all salt-of-the-earth kind of average, lower-income Americans who had jobs.

### THE FIRST TEN YEARS

of my life I paid no attention to [the social atmosphere in Charleston]. The things that happened around me were accepted. From our little house that my father built, I would walk past an elementary school—I mean, I'd walk up to the corner and I'd look to my left and there was a white elementary school, but I would turn to my right and go four or five blocks to a black elementary school. But they looked no different in my opinion and I thought nothing of it except that's the way things were.

If my mother took us on Saturdays shopping, we got on the bus. We as young kids would go to the back of the bus and we wouldn't question that too much at all. When we got to water fountains, we were taught early on that you drank from the colored fountain because white folks drank from the other one.

During Gantt's 1984 mayoral campaign, he flashes the victory sign at a campaign debate.



Photo courtesy The Charlotte Observer

So in other words, the world was made up a certain way. We lived generally in an integrated neighborhood. It was very strange. There were white people nearby, and numbers of [times] on the playgrounds without sanction we'd end up playing together. The law, we later found out, did not really allow that but kids would do it anyway....

[Charleston is] a city where servants lived closer to the bigger houses [but] along the alleys. Traditionally that's the way it is. Now the alleys, of course, are just as expensive, in fact chic, in terms of having higher-income units.... In the old days, the way the city was laid out, is you had the big houses around the Battery and lots of little, small alleys that were servants' quarters. That's how you got the kind of pattern of integration that occurred in many of the Southern cities like New Orleans and Charleston and Mobile.

At any rate, at that time we [didn't live] in that older section of Charleston and so most of the streets were standard little streets. You know, my world was colored by the drugstore around the corner and the neighbors who lived around me. The street became a playground for us where we played football and stickball. It was a very circumscribed world but it was very comfortable. I never felt disadvantaged, which is a new word in the lexicon of the language that came in the late '60s and '70s. [I was] comfortable, loved, secure.

It was comfortable up until [age] 11. [Things] changed dramatically for me with the Supreme Court [*Brown v. Board*] decision in 1954. [It] was a watershed year in my whole life.

I was about 11 years old and had become an avid reader. A couple years earlier I found this small branch library in the black community and teachers would encourage me to go there and to read. I started reading little boy's type novels about baseball, football.... And I started reading everything that I could get my hands on.

But when this happened I started to get curious about the whole thing about segregation and why it was unconstitutional. And then I started to see our society in a different light; blacks, whites, and why we do things.

Wow, there were actually people who questioned that! I never questioned it before and then I started.

When I started asking questions it became more of a topic of conversation at the dinner table, as it started to become a topic of conversation at everybody's dinner table, I suppose.

And I just voraciously consumed everything I could find. I read novels, news magazines, and [my father] reinforced a lot of it. He himself was a member of the NAACP so I was very proud of my father for having the courage back then to be a member of that organization as I found out more about it.

It finally manifested itself in the fact that he led an effort of parents to get the use of the white high school stadium because ours was in such bad shape. It was very dramatic to see him and other parents get together and cause a change to occur. So it was probably my family's first direct encounter with politics and...doing something about a problem. They had been active in the PTA and so it was almost natural for them to continue to be active. And their son was a quarterback on the football team, so they were that much involved in it.

But it was also the thing that allowed me...by the early part of 1960 as I was a senior, that's when the sit-ins started to occur, to lead. I had to act on my own conscience then about the system and had been sufficiently radicalized enough that I thought we ought to do something. I later on with a few other students led a sit-in demonstration which caused us to go to jail.

#### WE SAT DOWN

at S.H. Kress's lunch counter after planning to do so for about three or four weeks. We selected our students very carefully, about 23 of us—all of us seniors in high school about to graduate. [It was] one April day in 1960, one month before graduation. Our parents, [were] fit to be tied. We couldn't tell them about it. But we felt very strongly. I guess we were caught in that whole thing as it spread across the country. This wasn't right. It seemed ridiculous now that you really examined it.

We were all youth members of the NAACP. But the sole effort was kind of an adjunct thing that was done in

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*“I started to see our society in a different light; blacks, whites, and why we do things. Wow, there were actually people who questioned that!”*

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secrecy. We didn't want any- and everybody to be a part of it. We started reading about Martin Luther King and nonviolence and we were concerned that we got people who were not hot-headed.

We didn't want any violence beyond whatever was necessary. We trained ourselves to resist the efforts. What we were doing was picking a lot of things that we'd read. We didn't get any of the national leaders to come down to give us any advice. In fact, they would not likely pay much attention to Charleston. Most of the action was occurring on big college campuses in North Carolina and other places.

We decided if we were going to do it we couldn't tell our parents. There is [no black university in Charleston]. That was probably one of the other reasons that it never would come to a head, and we felt that if things were going to happen, that kind of negotiations they had gotten into in Greensboro to bring about some changes, you had to do something to make it happen. This class that graduated in 1960 is a pretty unusual class, too. I think a lot of those people have gone on to be fairly well known in their field and so we had an unusual crop of leaders.

We were not locked up in a jail, we were kept in a courtroom. My parents came to pick us up. The city of Charleston acted in a very civil manner. We were charged and our case ultimately ended up in the Supreme Court [and] was thrown out. It started a change in the minds of the whole place. It ultimately ended up in a movement that spread throughout all of Charleston. That occurred two years later, three years later. The year I went to Clemson, one of the same people, [a] young minister, led a move-



ment called the Charleston Movement, which was massive demonstrations à la the Birmingham-type things that occurred for public accommodations, not just lunch counters, but the whole works. That ultimately culminated in a large number of people who wanted to march on Washington and the North. I think all across the South those changes occurred during that year and the following year. But the sit-ins were the first, the very first time this had ever happened.

In the circumscribed world of segregation, there was Howard and Tuskegee and [North Carolina] A & T...[for me as a black college applicant]. I never applied to them. I only applied to Howard. But I had made a decision already, being into what I thought America was going to be all about in the future—that is, an integrated world. I had already made a decision that I was going to go somewhere to get an integrated education. In other words, I wanted to be in a school where I was taught by black and white professors, etc., because architecture is practiced mainly by whites and I thought that you needed to be in an environment where [you] got that kind of teaching, or at least integrated teaching.

I was a National Achievement Scholar out of high school and that meant that I had some scholarship to any school that I could get accepted to...and I applied to Iowa State, and Ohio State, and a few others. I don't remember all of them, the Ivy League schools were beyond question for me. I got accepted at Iowa State, thought that that would be a great place to go to. It was in the Midwest, in the middle of the country, in middle America. I got out there and didn't like it.

There weren't many blacks anywhere. And that was a culture shock for me; it was really a considerably different place than I had thought it would be. I was mesmerized by the big-time college football and seeing so many black athletes and assuming that the schools were a lot more integrated than they were....Very few blacks matriculated at those universities and many of them were athletes.

As a matter of fact, one of the first couple of days I was there standing in

Gantt arrives at Clemson to register: "What was remarkable about the whole thing [was that] it was like a charade...we were going through the acts to satisfy the people of South Carolina...that they had exhausted every legal remedy available to them before they let the gates open that would never be closed again."



Photo courtesy The State, Columbia, South Carolina

the registration line, everybody assumed that I [was] playing on the football team, which insulted me and was degrading.

[Then] I found that Clemson had a pretty good school of architecture. Things just came to some logical conclusions as they do in my life. I mean there are times when truth itself sort of snaps its head straight up in my face and you know that you've got to go in a different direction. It's like that period when I was politicized by the segregation decision, which was another kind of milestone. [I realized] "It makes no sense for you. If you are lonely out here in the Midwest which is hostile to your upbringing in terms of climate and being close to people you know, etc., you ought to be home. That's where you ought to go." And it was nice to make that decision on a 23-below-zero day in Iowa.

I left Iowa State in the first quarter of my junior year, having filed a suit the previous summer, after [my lawyer and I] had tried on three different occasions for each semester to get in to [Clemson] and being given different kinds of excuses.

The first time I started this, I did it on my own and I sensed that they would do it. They sent me catalogs and nice things about Clemson. They were delighted to have...an application. I filled the application out and then we had trouble. The application then signalled that this was not a usual application because it was coming from a student who was at Iowa State who attended Burke High School in Charleston, South Carolina. Burke was known as a black school, so he had to be a black student. I got a letter back essentially saying, "Hey, we notice you are doing very well at Iowa State. You're getting some state aid to go to school there, plus you are on a scholarship. Enjoy yourself!"

Then I got mad. I went back and said, "But you don't understand. I want to go to school there." [I contacted] the same lawyer that assisted us, Matthew Perry, in the sit-in case in high school. I remembered his name, called him up, and told him what I'd done. He said, "Great! Now, from now on, just [give] me a copy of all the letters you send them, a copy of all the letters they send back to you. And

we'll see if we can't develop a file and if we can pursue it." And that's what happened.

The Legal Defense Fund [of the NAACP] took the case over once it had gotten to the point where it was clear that [Clemson was] going to resist my application. We sought to exhaust all the administrative avenues we could force. And after Perry [who regularly handled NAACP cases in South Carolina] took the case, the state knew that we would be getting some legal help.

[The NAACP] paid our legal fees. My family didn't have to pay it; they couldn't afford it....Let's see. We proceeded to file it in [federal] district court in Anderson, South Carolina, and that was heard on its merit and the federal district judge ruled that Clemson was not guilty. So we took it to the Court of Appeals in less than three or four weeks...in January of 1963. And the Court of Appeals said [to Clemson], "Yes, you did discriminate. You've got to admit it." Then the state of South Carolina took it to the Supreme Court and they refused to hear it and that ended the case.

I always had a feeling that South Carolina was going to be...aristocratic, dignified, stiff upper lip....If I couldn't, in my efforts to get into Clemson, appeal to the morality of the situation—which is that I had a right to go there—I could ultimately win out on manners.

### CLEMSON TURNED OUT

to be blacker [than Iowa State]. The great surprise was the day that I went up to register amidst the hullabaloo of all the news and press people. Once that was over, I remember going to my room, getting a clue of what the world was going to be like seeing a janitor in the corridor—black—and I realized how different that was immediately from Iowa, where the janitors were all white. Then I walked into the dining room, and here I'm expecting to see this sea of white faces, and literally all over the dining room are black people. Admittedly, in a subservient role or [as] workers in the dining hall.

I felt very comfortable. I walked through the line and I got the biggest piece of apple pie because these folks were handing it out to me. They were saying, "Hey, we are glad you're here.

The hulabaloo of the press and crowds on Gantt's first day at Clemson.



Photo courtesy The State, Columbia, South Carolina

Boy, we're going to take care of you." So all of a sudden my world was a different one. It was, "Hey, you're not alone at all. You're only a student but, my gosh, look around you. You're going to be taken care of because you're back home in the South."

*A commonly told story about Gantt entering Clemson holds that angry white students bounced a basketball on the floor above his dormitory room, taking shifts around the clock for weeks.*

I think too much has been made of that. Somebody developed that story and they've attributed it to me. That people were rude and they bounced basketballs all night long and I never could go to sleep. That's really not true. I don't know where that came from.

During the entire time I was at Clemson, I had about three epithets hurled at me, and they were all done by someone who was on the fourth floor of some dorm. It was a Friday afternoon, he was probably drunk as hell, and he'd say something like "nigger this" and hide.

I used to tell people maybe it was my

size that kept people from coming up to me and doing some of the things that I'd heard had happened to other pioneers in situations like that, like being spat upon, being physically abused in some kind of way. That really just never happened.

I made a habit of not sitting in front of any open window. [There were] little precautions I took to avoid the fate of some crazy person with a shotgun who might want to do something. But generally, I felt quite able to move about the campus quite freely. They had some guards who were rather unobtrusive and there was once that we played a game with a kid that I got to know in the architecture school. We were coming from class one day and we were fooling around—we lived in the same dorm—and we faked a fight, you know, we were just trying to see how much of the security that was still there. They came out of the woodwork. But other than that...

*Gantt's wife-to-be, Cindy Brawley was the second black student to attend Clemson.*

Somebody said, "Boy, you guys got caught in an environment where you

were made for her and she was made for you and there was nobody else anyway so you might as well get married." It could have been like that. I met her prior to her coming to Clemson. I became a very famous person all of a sudden in the period leading up to that, so I went to speak to a lot of high schools and got to meet her. [I had] heard that she was interested in being a student at Clemson and she was a very smart girl. So I finished talking to her class and then we talked. She was pretty and I thought it was nice. She matriculated at Clemson the very next semester. She got in. With no fanfare, no questions about her application. She was more than well qualified for it and she was a math student. At first I had no idea of ever really dating her, you know, in the sense of carrying her out for a date.

### THERE WERE PEOPLE

who were quite concerned about my dating habits as to whether I would end up seeking to date one of the white girls on campus. That gave the president and some others a great deal of concern in that first semester with no one else there before Cindy came.

There was a big dance. Brook Benton, a pop singer, was going to be there. I decided I wanted to go. A few people in the administration wanted me not to go because they thought that people would be drunk at the dance portion of the thing and [if] I'm standing around, I might get some lonely young lady who would ask me for a dance. And [if] I would be crazy enough to dance with her...that might create a problem. Think about that.

[Gantt did go to the dance, and he danced with white women.] There were no problems. Nobody did anything. That's the way I felt, anyway, that they wouldn't. I just thought that the administration was a little bit too cautious. At any rate, that's the only sign that people were concerned about what my social life might be like. One of the big fears of that period was the fear of the mixing of the races; the fear of interracial dating was always in the back of the minds of the dyed-in-the-wool segregationists. They saw that as the end of whatever.

Then Cindy comes along and I just primarily treated her as a sister for

maybe six months. I mean I would just take her and we'd go to dinner together, we'd occasionally go out on a date together. I'd introduce her around to the black community which was very nearby and it turned into other things.

[The quality of my education at Clemson was] very good. Much better than average. I'm not saying that individually I got better or special treatment. I just think that the program in the School of Architecture was a very, very good one, and it still is. I'm still hiring students from that program.

[After graduation] I admit the reason I didn't stay in South Carolina was that nobody offered me a job. It was about as simple as that. Not that people wouldn't have offered me a job; I was graduating third in my class in architecture, and usually the first three or four or five students are the ones that are gobbled up. It didn't take me long to figure out that I wasn't getting offers from South Carolina. I was [getting] them from North Carolina and Georgia, Atlanta specifically.

I came to Charlotte because I got the best offer. I had never heard of the place... But the first time I saw Charlotte I fell in love with it.

It just seemed perfect in terms of size. It just had an air about it that said, "Hey, here is a place that's growing. You might be able to grow with it." ... Atlanta was too big, kind of overwhelming. I was newly married. I thought that we could do better in Charlotte. God, I'm glad I made that decision!

[My generation is] the group now that are becoming the mayors. We did the demonstration things, too, believe me, in the King philosophy. We saw what happened to the black power movement and probably never thought it was reasonable. Many of the people who led those movements, Stokely [Carmichael] and Rap [Brown] and others, came from the North really. They were not Southerners.

### WE SOUTHERNERS

growing up under the shadow of King really did see change occur, dramatic change, and so there was a certain believability about pushing direct action and then ultimately evolving that into politics. That made some sense to

us. Jesse [Jackson] really is still a civil rights [activist]. He and I have really taken two slightly different roads. I'm more a believer in taking the benefits that were brought about by Martin and Jesse and all the other direct-action kinds of things and molding them into long-term, institutional changes that would occur, systemic changes that have occurred in our society.

I read about the [Charlotte] *Observer's* report yesterday on the increasing amount of blacks that are registering [to vote]. That is significant to me and it's been significant enough in this community that I've been elected to public office and it's been in no small part due to the increased amount of participation by black voters in the electoral process.

We see that now as the vehicle for change: to assume and to aim higher in local and state and other places to bring about...that revolution that started back there when the Supreme Court made that decision. And so for us, the civil rights movement had its purpose. Black power...those people were slightly younger than we are (well, I guess, we're really about the same age). That was an offshoot of the Student Nonviolent Co-ordinating Committee. [They were] the shock troops of the civil rights movement that got disillusioned with the lack of more rapid progress.

Again, you know, you've got to remember folks that came from the South, many of us were very much attuned to the changes that we saw occurring that were in our eyesight dramatic. And many of us came from those middle-class type environments that said the way to do things is not to destroy them but to try to negotiate power.

*Many white voters who vote for Jesse Helms also vote for Gantt.*

It is true, at least we track that in our own political campaigns. I think people really do believe or think they want people who will serve them in public office who will tell them like it is.

They think Jesse Helms tells it like it is. Jesse Helms stands for a lot of things that in my opinion are anathema to what's good for North Carolina. But people find a believability in Jesse. He understands them.

What I've noticed in Charlotte is that people believe me, they don't



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*“...a state where education is a top priority and people are literate, trained in using the best of all our resources ...is important to me.”*

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always agree with me. But when I say [something] they believe it, they don't believe I'm putting them on. And they don't believe that I say things simply for political effect, having no meaning or substance to it. I suspect that there is a degree of comfort in the average citizen to know that “even though I don't agree with the guy, I know he's honest.”

I hear them saying that about Jesse, too. He didn't like Martin Luther King and he didn't try to tell you he did. They like that. It gives them some comfort, they have to agree with him on that, some of them.

*In the early 1970s Gantt served as a planner for an idealistic, federally funded black “new town,” Soul City, organized by civil rights activist Floyd McKissick. Located northeast of Raleigh, North Carolina, the town was isolated and never attracted a sufficient industrial base. Like many other federal new towns spawned by the Nixon administration, Soul City failed. Three years later Gantt took his first public office when he was appointed to a vacant Charlotte city council seat.*

I got that appointment that December of 1974 to fulfill a term. I didn't come here with the intentions of going into elected politics. But I did come here and got very much involved in architectural-type activities with the AIA—the American Institute of Architects—and got involved in a task force study of the planning and development going on here in Charlotte that got a lot of attention in '74. I think that ultimately gave me the visibility that you wouldn't normally get because of what we said in that planning study...When I served that one time I liked it so much I decided to

run again.

I love people. I love this city. I like what I'm doing. I think I'm very comfortable with myself, first, so you start there and then the second thing is that I've always been one who sort of enjoyed working with people...I don't like being alone. I like being around people. Yet in many ways I am alone in this office. I mean, being the mayor, but I just enjoy working with folks.

*Gantt bluntly acknowledges that he is infatuated with politics for its “power.”*

To get things done, I mean. You know, mayors in North Carolina are not strong mayors [legally] as they are in other states. But Charlotte comes closest to being the strongest mayor that you have, with veto power and the ability to appoint people, the ability to set the agenda for what the city ought to be thinking about or doing...But it's the ability to get things to happen for the good.

#### I'VE SEEN

a different kind of world since being an 11-year-old boy [and that] big decision on segregation being unconstitutional. There is a different possibility for the South and for North Carolina and South Carolina and other places. And I think in my own mind I see that unfolding every day. And the ability to help that unfold, to see a state where education is a top priority and people are literate, trained in using the best of all our resources, whether they are black or white, is important to me. If I get an opportunity to get that to happen just a little bit quicker by being mayor of Charlotte, it's important to move us along.

[Getting] people working together [is my biggest accomplishment as mayor]. There is a lot more communication in this town than in a lot of other places. When I hear about other communities having race relations problems—Charlotte certainly hasn't reached the millenium in terms of that either. But there is a fairly good network going on in this community that I can pick the phone up right now and talk to the Greek community, the Jewish community, the black community, and so forth and so on. And we can have everybody in this office inside a couple hours to resolve a problem. That's very important.

It's just as important as getting the community to attract new industry, build the next high-rise, build the next park. When you've got the people working together, you can get them to put away their thing for our thing, that is the city. That to me is a big accomplishment. I see a lot of that happening. We passed a lot of bond issues, big ones, since I've been mayor and they've all overwhelmingly passed because we could get a diverse group of people who might have been disparate on that issue but once we get them in here and start talking, we get them to [help] us. I don't twist arms very well, but I try to persuade you in other ways.

*On his political future...*

I'm not running for the Senate in 1986 and I don't think you would hear my name. First of all, you've heard too many names from Charlotte already...I was busy running in the [mayoral] campaign [last fall] telling people of this community that I wanted to be their mayor for the next two years...

One day maybe I'll want to [run for the Senate]. I don't want to do that now. I'm kind of one-track. I want to do this and do it well. And if the spirit of the Lord tells me that I need to be somewhere else maybe I'll look somewhere else. But there are a lot of other good people out there.

I'm an ambitious person but I don't believe in serving in a public office with the sole purpose of stepping up to the next office...

People now automatically say, “Well, you know, where do you go in Charlotte politics after you've been mayor? You can't do anything else here, you got to go to another level. You've got to go to Raleigh or you've got to go to Washington.”

I don't think you have to go anywhere. You can do a job here and quit, rest, relax, re-create yourself, and then see if there is something you really want to do. □

*Lynn Haessly reported on the 1985 North Carolina General Assembly for the Gastonia Gazette and is now an associate editor for Southern Exposure.*

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# Back Road into Town

Fiction by  
Eddie Harris

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The sun  
was barely  
peeping up  
and the cracks  
of darkness  
was almost  
over  
•

Momma wake us up with the smell of biscuits and gravy. Everyone hit the floor at the same time, didn't no one have to wake us up.

"Patrick, Jonathan, Hosea and the gals! We start picking cotton today," she yelled.

We all gathered around the table for Pa to say the blessing and the words he said was "Lord bless this house and my family as we slave for the white man. Keep us holding on. Amen."

"Pass the biscuits," Pa said.

Through the back window, Tootsie Pop spotted Mr. Charlie coming up the back road.

"Is your pa at home?" asked Mr. Charlie rough and rude.

"Yes suh. What you want with him?"

By that time, Pa walked out putting his hand through the tore-up screen. Mr. Charlie spoke to Pa, grinning and cheeing down with his jaws skint back from ear to ear.

"What can I do for ya, Mr. Charlie?"

"You can start picking cotton near Shadow Creek."

"Yes suh."

Pa said "Yes suh" everytime Mr. Charlie said a word and he scratched his head in fear. I asked Momma many times what kept Pappa so far behind. What in the world was holding my daddy down?

Pappa always dropped his head. Lord he seemed so afraid, like he was carrying a heavy burden all the time. Daddy was scared of the white folks. There was a man up in the big house so Pappa was afraid to speak out. The man kept my daddy's nose right on the ground. Pappa was mighty good. He was doing the best he could. All his life he lived just for now. Since he had a heavy load he couldn't walk the front road. On his face he always wore a frown, it was for us that he was trying to make it through. He had to take the back road into town.

"Justine, you mop the floors. Emma Jean, you wash the dishes. Paulean, you and Tootsie help me wash."

Mamma always spoke softly, like she was tired. Pa always acted worried because he couldn't give his family exactly what they needed.

We stayed in an old piece of house that leaned to the side just a little with the porch jacked up in the air. We were unable to put lights in our house at that exact time. I always hung around Pa.

He said, "One of these ole days boy, we gonna leave this place."

He threw a sad look with tears about to burst out and rushing his hands into his pocket he gave me fifteen cents to go into Rolling Fork to buy a soda pop.

"Go on!" he shouted. "I can handle the things around the house. Take the back road into town," he commanded me.

There was a narrow dirt road opposite from the front road that led into town.

*This is the story of a poor black family on the Charlie Cain plantation in Rolling Fork, Mississippi, in the late 1960s. Sam was a laborer on the plantation. He and Charlie grew up running and playing together, throwing rocks against railroad tracks to make sparks. They dreamed together, but when Charlie Cain got his own plantation, things changed. Sam's son Patrick tells the tale.*

Leaving I watched Mamma wash the sheets. They looked so good, they looked like white snow. Further down the road, I saw Mr. Charlie's house. A huge house, bigger than any house in the plantation, and colored white. It was pretty as the daisies in spring.

"Come here, boy!" he shouted. His son Robert started grinning and teasing me.

"Look at that nigger! You ready to pick that damned cotton for Daddy?"

Mr. Charlie ordered his son away. He just wanted to see what was on my mind. He showed me his house, top to bottom, clicking on the lights and it was brighter than the snow in winter. Then he rubbed my head saying, "That's not a lamp boy, this here works by 'lectricity." He threw a funny grin. He nearly made me cry by showing me all through his house. Weren't no raggedy chairs like in our house. They even had inside baths.

I looked angry, gritting my teeth at his pretty couch, wondering why we couldn't live like this. I snatched my body away quickly and left. He yelled out as I was leaving, "You work good boy, I'll give you a raise!"

When I got to Rolling Rock, I spotted Katherine Pepper, the beautifullest girl I ever seen in my life. As she spoke so polite, "Hello, Patrick," my eyes were widened with fright that she was the first girl to ever notice me and didn't laugh at my patched overalls with the knees tore out in the right leg. She smiled and stood still gazing into my eyes in a very romantic way.

"Where you been?" she asked.

"Just at home messing around," I answered with a nervous strain in my voice.

"I'll see ya, Katherine." I ran home and forgot about the soda pop.

I got home just in time for the truck to run to carry us to the field to pick cotton. Everyone in my family was ready and had ate dinner.

Momma shouted at me, "Boy, where in the world have you been? You kids just worry me to death. Y'all gonna kill me."

I went into the house without saying anything and grabbed a baked potato and a hip of a chicken. Pa had already left because he worked at the press at



Illustration by Jacob Roquet

Mr. Charlie's gin. We climbed on the truck and Uncle Henry took off. Almost fifty people were on it, jam-packed. Tootsie Pop and the other girls were mumbling. I heard words like, "Not in this world he won't. Owe the white man some \$500 like a fool. Child, all our daddies in debt."

Momma said, "Well, we here again y'all."

All the women folks spoke out, "Amen."

"Now we can all make us some money."

Momma's friend Lucille stood on the back of the truck rolling her

stomach slowly saying, "I'm gonna do my thang Saturday night. I'm gonna curl my hair," she put her hand on her hip and rolled her stomach faster, "I'm gonna see my man."

"Where you going Ella Mae?"

"Girl, you know I don't go out talking 'bout going out. I'm gonna get ready for church. I take the preacher to dinner on Sunday."

One of the women on the truck shouted out, "That young preacher gonna run off with one of your daughters if you don't watch it."

Other ladies joined in the conversation, "Keep your eyes open child."



"He look like a nice young man to me," said Momma.

The further we went down the road, the further we saw nothing but snow-white cotton, prettier than ever. The boys on the truck was speechless, all thinking the same thing—to get their family off the plantation and into town. Finally, Uncle Henry started slowing down and stopped.

"I guess this must be the place," somebody on the truck said.

Uncle Henry had to request for them to be quiet for him to write down their names in order for Mr. Charlie to pay them. Uncle Henry spoke like a white man and was only an Uncle Tom, a stone cheese eater for the white folks.

"We're only paying y'all four dollars a hundred this year folks."

"We done heard that before," people shouted.

Uncle Henry talked like he had land but he didn't have anything. Everyone got on their rows to pick cotton. Some carried two rows and some carried three.

We were strolling in the hot blazing sun. It seemed like we were doing twenty miles an hour going down those cotton rows. Our hands were faster than a cotton picker. Mr. Charlie let Uncle Henry be in charge of laborers because he was a Uncle Tom and was going to tell everything that goes wrong. The sun was going down and we were still working, suddenly Uncle Henry yelled, "It's time to weigh, folks."

He weighed everybody's cotton on the scale and at last we loaded in the truck and went home.

When we got home it was 6:30 p.m. and our dog, Queen, met us with laughs, jumping on us and crying out. She was a German shepherd. I saw a change on Momma's face as she almost crawled off the truck from tiredness. She was tired and broken down.

"Patrick!" she yelled, "get your Momma some firewood in here, you and Joe and them."

We were poor to the bone. We ate supper and laid our tired bones down. It was early in the night and the crickets and frogs were talking. I thought they were telling me to get my family away from here. I had done figured all my brothers and sisters out. I knew that they were gonna leave me

and Momma and Pa behind. I heard Joe and Hosea talking in the night. They thought I was asleep.

"Joe, you 'sleep man?"

"Naw, man."

"I'm leaving here man 'cause I'm tired of working for nothing. We'll never get nowhere like this. I'm going to Chicago and don't you hold your breath until I come back."

"I'm leaving too," said Joe. "I'm leaving quicker than you can blink your eye."

Finally I heard Pa coming up the back road. He carried that blamed guitar everywhere he went, even to work. I heard that Mississippi Blues as Pa played the guitar and whistled in the dark. I jumped out of bed in one jerk. It was late when Pa came home from work. We all ran out to meet



him. Momma was happy but she cried out, "How long's it gonna take!"

"Take what, woman?" Pa replied.

"How long's it gonna take for us to get outta debt and stop working from sun up to sun down?"

Momma spoke her words half crying.

Momma held her hands up in the air looking and reaching toward heaven saying, "God will you please wrap your arms around us and get us outta debt, please Sir. So we can leave and get off of this white man's place."

Momma fell on her knees and cried with her face in the dust.

Pa said, "We leaving soon honey. Just hold on."

He walked sadly toward the house.

We worked hard all that week, like mules pulling a plow. Our hands were tough as leather, the bolls in the cotton had scratched our hands. We were really catching hell but at last it was Saturday. We finished the week.

I saw dust from the dirt road early Saturday morning. It was Mr. Charlie coming to pay off. His big blood hound, Foxy Red, sat in the truck beside him. Even his dog lived in luxury. Outta all the work we did, Mr. Charlie handed Pa \$50. From sun up to sun down Pa worked all day and half of the night. We still didn't make nothing because Pa was in debt. But still we were happy because we knew we were going to eat decently that night.

Hosea and Joe were practicing football in the yard with some of their teammates, getting ready for the coming year. Joe and Hosea were the number one football players at Henry Weathers High School. Paulean, Emma Jean, Justine, and Tootsie Pop were jumping rope. Momma was sewing and humming, getting ready for church on Sunday.

Pa called out, "Patrick! Ella Mae! I'm going to Rolling Fork to pick up a little grocery. What you want me to bring you back?"

Momma smiled and said, "Just bring me a Cadillac, Sam darling."

They both smiled at each other and kissed.

"Take care of your Ma, ya hear Patrick."

"Yes suh."

It was funny but Pa always depended on me no matter what. Pa went rushing up the dirt road. He always took the back road and ordered everyone else in the family to take the back road also. After Pa had gotten outta sight, Momma ironed everybody's clothes for church. She had to use an old-fashioned non-electric iron because we couldn't afford electricity. Momma was catching hell but it didn't seem to show. She was a strong-willed lady.

Momma worked every day of the week and on Saturday. She washed with a scrub-board and tub. As she went up and down with her tired hands, I felt her back hurting just by me watching.

I spoke to myself, "I'm gonna find a way to get us off this plantation."

Pa went to Rolling Fork quickly. We

saw him coming up the back road with those big bags that had junk food in it.

"We gonna eat tonight," said Momma smiling, hugging Pa and looking towards the sky. "One of these ole days..." I knew what she meant.

We had fun eating salami, bologna, drinking cokes and strawberry 12-ounce soda pops. Only on Saturday we ate like this. Paulean sung and Pa told jokes of horror about the Klan, about how blacks were afraid of the white knights. Suddenly it wasn't funny. I became afraid and went to bed leaving them behind. I had a real beautiful dream that I wished would come true.

I dreamed Pa was in the city and had a factory job and Momma had a nursing job wearing white. I was so proud. I dreamed we were staying in a house like Mr. Charlie's. Boy, I was cheeing down in my sleep and everyone was happy until I found myself only in a dream.

"Wake up Patrick. Wake up," Momma said. "Time to get up baby."

I shouted, "It can't be. We're here in this raggedy house with holes surrounding us. Where's the house like Mr. Charlie's? Where's the...?"

"It was a dream son," answered Momma. "Take it easy, baby. One day you'll find yourself in a place better than this. Now get ready for Sunday school."

I snatched the cover off me angrily and went to breakfast. Everyone was getting ready for church. It was Pastoral Day. We were late because Pa had to give us haircuts — the hustle with a part on the right side of our heads. I couldn't wait to go to church. I quickly got ready. White short-sleeved shirt, black pants, black Stacey Adam shoes, and a white handkerchief sticking out of my back pocket. With my Sunday school book in my right hand, I was sharper than a razor.

I met my buddy E.J. who wanted to be a professional basketball player some day. He played basketball on the Henry Weather High School varsity team. He shot at least 30 points a game. On our way to church, we passed women and men on their way to church also. We were walking faster than they were. We were half running. Some of the ladies had umbrellas over their heads because it was so hot. The dust was at least three inches thick. We

were hoping that a car wouldn't come and dust us up in our Sunday clothes. Me and E.J. stood around the church greeting some of our friends we went to school with. The men and women had on their best trying to show off. I swallowed when my eyes met Katherine, the girl I wanted to be my girlfriend some day.

"E.J., what's Katherine doing here?" I asked.

"You know how it is. Some folks don't have nowhere to go on Sunday, so they come to another church when it's not their Pastoral Day."

The preacher was greeting the ushers, mothers, deacons, and some of the women in the choir. There were some strange men at church wanting to open up a meeting at the church. They were supposed to be civil rights



leaders like Martin Luther King. Reverend Clark walked up while the leaders were talking to one of the deacons, Deacon Odell. Deacon Odell introduced the men to Reverend Clark. They spoke bravely.

"We're here to attend a boycott because prices of food are going up and the pay of jobs stands still. We need a place to meet so we can talk to our colored people. The less we do, the less that will be done and it's our duty to do something about it."

Reverend Clark didn't say anything at that moment.

"We're also here to talk to some farmers about leaving the plantation for a better life."

All the people at church were afraid. One man named Pap, another Uncle Tom, spoke out.

"Mr. Charlie good to us though. He give us a bonus for Christmas. We don't have to pay no rent, no gas bill, no light bill neither."

But the stranger insisted.

"Look at your situation, man. You don't live in a decent house or have the things that you should have. You still have to use outside baths."

Reverend Clark got angry and insulted the men.

"Ain't no hobos going to come through here and get our church burnt to the ground! The Lord built this church for us and ain't nobody gonna take it away from us."

I thought the strangers had good ideas.

Everybody went inside the church while the civil rights leaders drove off. Katherine sat beside me and she held my hand in hers. Reverend Clark took his turn after the deacons prayed heavenly prayers.

His sermon was titled, "God Is Coming To Free The Slaves."

The mothers "Amened" him to death. Pa was a deacon but seemed worried about something. He sat in the pulpit and looked in a yonder world. □

*Eddie Harris grew up on a Mississippi plantation until 1974 when he left at the age of 18. He spent eight months in Chicago before returning and settling once again in Mississippi. "Back Road Into Town" is an excerpt from an autobiographical novel Harris recently completed.*

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## Uppity Women

*She powdered her nose, she drank wine with her husband, and other outrageous acts by Southern "ladies"*

**Outside the Magic Circle: The Autobiography of Virginia Foster Durr**, edited by Hollinger F. Barnard, Foreword by Studs Terkel. The University of Alabama Press, 1985. 360 pp. \$24.50.

**Raney, A Novel**, by Clyde Edgerton. Algonquin Books, 1985. 227 pp. \$12.95.

**My Mama's Dead Squirrel: Lesbian Essays on Southern Culture**, by Mab Segrest. Firebrand Books, 1985. 237 pp. \$8.95.

— by *Kim Lacy Rogers*

It is 1954, the year of the *Brown* decision and segregationist red-baiting in the South. United States Senator James O. Eastland of Mississippi, head of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee (SISS), subpoenas Southern political activists Aubrey Williams, Myles Horton, Virginia Durr, and James Dombrowski to testify in New Orleans about their alleged Communist activities with the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, a biracial organization concerned with race relations, voting rights, and regional economic development.

After witnessing one day of the proceedings, Virginia Foster Durr decides that she is "not going to have anything to do with that committee whatsoever." Refusing to participate in the hearings, she prepares a statement for the press. It ends with the sentence, "I stand in utter and complete contempt of this committee."

During the subcommittee's interrogation, she responds to Eastland and his attorney only once: "My name is Virginia Durr. I'm the wife of Cliff Durr. That's all. From here on out I'm

standing mute. That's all the questions I'm going to answer. I'm not going to have anything to do with the committee."

Her husband later recalls that a television camera was grinding away while his wife "remained silent. Every now and then she'd take out a compact and powder her nose. It drove them into a rage."

Natives of Alabama, Virginia and Clifford Durr had been New Deal Southern liberals. Virginia's brother-in-law, Hugo Black, had been appointed to the Supreme Court in 1937. As an attorney, Clifford Durr had defended several loyalty oath cases during the first years of the McCarthy era in Washington, D.C. Virginia Durr had been a strong supporter of the labor movement, had served as the president of the National Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax, and had been involved with the engaging mixture of New Dealers, "Progressives," Christian Socialists, civil rights advocates, Communists, and other Southern radicals who populated the Southern Conference for Human Welfare. The Durrs' politics and their status as "well-born" members of fine old families made their encounter with Eastland's subcommittee richly ironic. One panel witness charged that Virginia Durr and her colleagues had tried to overthrow the government by force and violence in the Civil War. She recalls in *Outside the Magic Circle*:

*One of the advantages of living in Cliff's hometown is that nobody believed that Cliff and I had the talent to overthrow the government by force and violence. Even the people of Montgomery thought that was silly. In Montgomery everybody's grandfather had tried to overthrow the government by force and violence. My grandfather tried to overthrow the government by force and violence for four years. There was hardly anybody we knew in Montgomery whose grandfather hadn't tried to overthrow the government by force and violence, and they were still revered as great heroes.*

Virginia Durr's gesture to the



Young Virginia Durr

Photo courtesy University of Alabama Press

Eastland committee, and her testimony about its charges, symbolize the style of her political activism. It is a liberal egalitarianism based upon a secure sense of social identity and place. She was born into a respected Alabama family that suffered genteel poverty when her minister father was unchurched for challenging a literal interpretation of the Bible. She was educated to marry well and to lead the life of a lady. But she was too smart and opinionated, and married Clifford Durr, a lawyer who "always told the truth." Then, Junior League relief work in economically depressed Birmingham educated her about the ravages of poverty and unemployment. When Clifford Durr took a job with the New Deal, Virginia became active in the causes that inspired Southern liberals—such as the labor movement and the campaign to end the poll tax. When the Cold War made these issues suspect, the Durrs were red-baited. Clifford Durr was fired from a position as attorney for the National Farmers' Union in 1951 after Virginia signed a petition urging the curtailment of the Korean War. Returning to Alabama, the couple encountered painful social ostracism rather than the financial rewards that



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middle age brought their peers. And sadly, the political changes that the Durrs and many of their activist friends thought would free the South have not worked that liberation: Alabamans vote, again, for George Wallace.

In the series of edited oral interviews that form her "autobiography," Virginia Durr recounts a fascinating story of a Southern woman's change in consciousness—from the unexamined life of a young lady to the awareness of a political activist who fears that America is evolving into a "dictatorial corporate state." This personal transformation came about gradually. At six, she had been personally outraged when her family forbade her to play any longer with the black children of servants; she felt cut off from some who had loved her. While a student at Wellesley, she was made to accept a seating arrangement that put her at a table with a "Negro" student or else be forced to leave school. She thought of the Harvard dances and her blossoming social life, and stayed. She realized that she had feared her father's anger if she violated the code of segregation rather than believing in the code herself. Later, in her early years as a political activist, she wanted to remove the poll tax so that Southern workers and women—not necessarily blacks—could vote. But her evolving sense of the structural causes of poverty and discrimination led her to identify the problems of the poor, the black, and the female as interdependent.

*Outside the Magic Circle* is a valuable document for a number of reasons. Durr's voice is engaging, warm, and shrewd, and her odyssey of political commitment belongs in the collective biography of a remarkable generation of Southern liberals and radicals. Her story gives us portraits of people like Myles Horton, Aubrey Williams, James Dombrowski, Lyndon Johnson, and judges Hugo Black and Richard Rives. These Southern liberals fought the injustices of a social system that had granted them privileges based upon systemic inequalities of race, class, and gender. Their attacks on inequalities imbedded in law and custom became attacks on their own privilege—and were often interpreted as treasonous by state

and federal governments, by other Southerners, and by their own families. This generation of activists paid social, financial, and personal dues for their political work.

Durr's narrative also reveals what may well have been the special strength of these few people. Like Hugo Black and Richard Rives, Virginia and Clifford Durr possessed a very personal sense of place and class identity, of belonging to the upper-class white world of Alabama. This sense of inheritance, of knowing who they were in a world that rewarded good manners and breeding with a certain deference, protected them from the alienation that often accompanies momentous social change. Clifford Durr felt at home in Alabama; "he felt like he *owned* Alabama. It was his," his wife said. Virginia Durr's treatment of Eastland reflected her outrage at the "kangaroo court" atmosphere of the proceedings, as well as a personal outrage that James Eastland—"as common as pig tracks"—had subpoenaed *her*. Virginia Durr is aware of the privileges of being "well born" and "placed." And she does not apologize for them: her status and personal relationships allowed her to become effective politically. The Durrs' sense of entitlement gave them a sense of responsibility for the oppressed. Clifford Durr and judge Richard Rives were outraged by racial injustice because whites treated blacks unfairly: at issue was the abuse of power. In a sense, their generation's style of activism reflected the assumptions of their class: that the "best white people" were responsible for those who did not share their privileges.

As a window into Southern white liberalism, Virginia Durr's narrative has special strengths that result from her ability to interpret the region's class and social structures from the vantage point of an intelligent, skeptical female witness. *Outside the Magic Circle* has the quality of a 19th-century novel of manners; like Jane Austen, Durr explains the relevance of personal relationships and manners to the construction of social reality. This is a traditional gift of women narrators: the ability to chart the geography of intimate relations and personal changes through nuance, style,

and detail.

It is ironic that *Outside the Magic Circle* should appear at a moment when two other white Southerners, Clyde Edgerton and Mab Segrest, are experiencing the consequences of unfashionably democratic opinions. Edgerton's recent novel *Raney* provoked an uproar at North Carolina's Baptist-affiliated Campbell University, where he was a professor of education. Some administrators and a few faculty felt that Edgerton had been too critical of the Baptist church in the book—*Raney* is the humorous story of a Free Will Baptist woman whose opinions on race and social propriety change in the first two years of her marriage to an Episcopalian. Edgerton has since left Campbell, as has English instructor Mab Segrest, an anti-Klan activist and lesbian feminist. Her book, *My Mama's Dead Squirrel: Lesbian Essays on Southern Culture*, poses a radical feminist critique of Southern literature, race relations, and gender roles.



Photo courtesy Algonquin Press

Clyde Edgerton

Edgerton and Segrest describe changes in individual consciousness. *Raney* is a first-person chronicle, and Segrest's voice is the essayist's omniscient "I." Both write about place, class, identity and family. This terrain is similar to the territory covered by Virginia Durr, but Edgerton and Segrest arrive at quite different conclusions. Edgerton's heroine Raney Bell Shepherd

experiences small but significant changes of personal consciousness while working through a marriage with a man from a very different familial and cultural background. Yet she remains enmeshed in her small-town Baptist family and community, certain of her loyalties and of the continuity of her relationships.

Segrest's change in consciousness is far more radical, both personally and politically. At an early age, she became aware of her attraction to other women as a part of her "difference," and felt an implicit identification with the most visible outsiders in her small Alabama community—black students integrating an all-white school, black women working in an endless limbo of subordination to white women. Segrest's family is part of that educated community of

white women—humorous, sensitive to nuance, thoroughly ironic in attitude, blind to their own oppression of the black women who care for them and serve them. So Segrest's odyssey is a journey toward her own liberation, which necessarily involves the liberation of a multitude of oppressed and subordinate "others" — blacks, migrant workers, lesbians, students, men and women stranded in the mind's oppression, the poor. The enormity of Segrest's hopes matches the intensity of her conviction. Both make her writing relentless, sometimes painful.

At one level, it is difficult to see why Clyde Edgerton's *Raney* outraged part of his scholarly community. It is a story of widening inclusion and tolerance. *Raney's* changes of attitude develop during her marriage to Charles, a librarian

from Atlanta, who also learns a great deal of tolerance from her. *Raney* is a comic heroine given to guileless malapropisms. Edgerton's affectionate use of dialect effectively raises obvious social questions. During a family outing to a beach, *Raney* recalls:

*Aunt Naomi wanted to know how thick the niggers had been down at the boardwalk.*

*"Not very," I said. "They hang out mostly at Wright's beach." That's the nigger beach. "I don't think I saw over one or two."*

*"I saw a whole car load," says Norris.*

*"They've got as much right as anyone else to walk on the boardwalk," says Charles. Charles has this thing about niggers. For some reason he don't understand how they are. Or at least how they are around Listre and Bethel.*

## Two Teachers and the Baptist Thought Police

Campbell University professor David Funderburk is running for a vacant U.S. Senate seat from North Carolina as a Republican with the backing of Jesse Helms's PAC, the National Congressional Club. After a stint as Ronald Reagan's ambassador to Romania, Funderburk returned to the Southern Baptist institution in his old job as history professor and had enough clout with administrators to be appointed chair of the social sciences division.

Those connections help to explain why conditions at the conservative school drove faculty members and writers Mab Segrest and Clyde Edgerton to leave.

Before Segrest published her book, *My Mama's Dead Squirrel*, she quit Campbell in 1983 after seven years as an English instructor. The year before she had been involved in a dispute with the administration over censorship of the literary magazine, for which she was adviser. A student had submitted sketches of nudes. Dean Jerry Wallace pressured her to reject them. In the end, she remembers, "we drew some clothes on the ones that were the most

'nekkid'" to satisfy the administration's prudery. In the meantime, Segrest had begun publishing lesbian essays under her own name.

The next year—although the university had offered her a one-year contract—it failed to promote Segrest to assistant professor, despite a strong recommendation from her department chair. In a self-evaluation form that had asked for a description of church activity, she had replied that she no longer attended the Methodist church of her childhood but that she regularly met with friends for "meditation, prayer and fellowship." Dean Wallace responded in a letter explaining why the university had not promoted her, noting among other reasons that her lack of church membership "causes us to believe that you have less than a 'sympathetic understanding and acceptance of loyal commitment to the purpose and objectives of the university'" which he said includes "involvement and participation in church."

Feeling that she could not accept the proffered contract with integrity and knowing that as a lesbian her days at Campbell were numbered, Segrest

resigned. This decision caused Segrest, who loves teaching, a great deal of pain. Denied a classroom, at first she turned to teaching Haitian migrant laborers, an experience she describes in the book. In an introduction to the book, poet Adrienne Rich calls this piece "one of the great essays on teaching." Segrest now coordinates the anti-Klan organization North Carolinians Against Racist and Religious Violence, a task she sees as very like teaching because it involves gathering information and helping people to learn from it.

Unlike Segrest, Clyde Edgerton left Campbell in a much stronger position, with the press and powerful colleagues on his side.

*Raney* was published in March 1985 to fine reviews from publications such as *Newsweek* and *The New York Times Book Review*. That same month, Edgerton told reporters that his contract had not been renewed because the administration objected to the book's portrayal of the Southern Baptist faith. Several days later, in the wake of the ensuing outcry in state newspapers, Edgerton received a contract—with no raise. He took that response as an insult and resigned.

In the meantime, Louis Rubin—an eminent English professor at the



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Maybe his Johnny friend is different. I can only speak for the ones around Listre and Bethel.

"Well, son," says Aunt Naomi, "I agree they got a right. The Constitution gives them a right. So that's settled. There's no question about that. No argument at all about that. The problem comes with where they want to spend their time. And as long as they've got their beach, like Raney says, then I don't understand to my life why they don't use it—why they have to use ours. In Russia they wouldn't have their own beach. But our constitution does provide that they can have their own beach. I agree. It's just that they need to stay in their own place at their own beach just like the white people stay at their own place at their own beach."

So Edgerton articulates Raney's

University of North Carolina and the editor of the new *History of Southern Literature*—sent out 50 copies of Edgerton's resume along with 50 copies of *Raney* to English departments across the South. Rubin enclosed a cover letter noting that Edgerton might be out of a job. He received two offers and accepted an appointment at St. Andrew's Presbyterian College in Laurinburg, North Carolina.

Like Segrest, Edgerton sees the conflict at Campbell as based on an absence of academic freedom: "The issue...is the lack of a grievance procedure...If faculty could respond, there would have been no problem."

Campbell University's Jerry Wallace, now provost, considers that no academic freedoms were abridged. Both Segrest and Edgerton were offered contracts which they chose not to accept, he says. He declined to offer a definition of academic freedom, saying it would take too long to explain. According to Segrest, almost all Campbell faculty work from year to year on one-year contracts—an unusual practice in universities—instead of the more usual three-year contracts for untenured professors. Few faculty apparently are tenured. Wallace would not discuss the practice of extending one-year contracts or disclose the percentage of tenured faculty. □

family attitudes—a rural, pre-Brown, unthinking racism untouched by court rulings and the civil rights movement. In living with Charles, Raney's sense of racial difference undergoes a quiet, personal change. Her reasoning moves from intimate examples and analogies to the broader issues of friendship and human recognition. Thinking about Charles' problematic experiences with her family, Raney admits:

...I got to thinking about Charles being outnumbered and that maybe Johnny Dobbs really was one of his best friends—that something traumatic in the army had caused them to be good friends.

If I had lived back in Bible times as a Hebrew and had been good friends with an Egyptian, then think of the problems that would have come out of that. Or what if I'd been friends with somebody who had leprosy: everybody back then hated people with leprosy. If I had married into a family—sort of like Charles has—who didn't understand that you could be friends with an Egyptian or a leopard, then the problems—all in all—would have been worse.

By the novel's end, Raney and Charles have become tolerant of each other's differences. Teetotaler Raney now and then takes a sip of wine and even enjoys some mild sexual experimentation with her husband. Charles comes to accept the intricate relations of Raney's family, and his best friend, a black law student, becomes the godfather of their son. But while visiting the couple, Johnny Dobbs must stay at the Ramada Inn. Like Virginia Durr, Raney finds that her sense of place and belonging—her rootedness in her intimate world—are unaffected by her change in consciousness. Her experience does not alienate her.

While *Raney* documents quiet and private changes, and while Virginia Durr describes personal change in the context of the major political reforms of this American century, Mab Segrest's consciousness can best be described as revolutionary. Like Alice Walker's heroine of the novel *Meridian*—a work that Segrest appreciates—she refuses to be either a victim or an oppressor in a culture structured by "racism, sexism, and patriarchy." Her writing is at times

visionary, at times annoying; Segrest's voice is often choked by the solipsism of the true believer. Several of her most powerful essays address women's creativity.

In one essay, "Southern Women Writing: Toward a Literature of Wholeness," Segrest attacks the Southern male literary tradition. Her most obvious target is William Faulkner and his "Southern Gothic" romances that pit spinster characters—like Joanna Burden of *Light in August*—against their own sexuality. The results are grotesque, a term that has come to describe the work of a multitude of Southern male and female writers, including Carson McCullers and Flannery O'Connor. According to Segrest, the grotesque characters that have populated Southern fiction in obsessive droves serve "deliberate political ends." The grotesque, she says, *fastens the creative imagination on images of deformity and despair. Backed by the patriarchal myth, it persuades us that this is reality, i.e. not to be questioned or changed. People in power stay in power: it's god-ordained. The grotesque limits the creative imagination by causing divisions within the self so that the individual is cut off from her deepest parts, from those oracles and visions that could tell of a different reality, of the possibility of wholeness.*

Women writers who have differed from the vision of the normal and the sane implied by the creation of monsters have been ritually ignored, erased, or allowed to "self-destruct." What was at stake for the dominant cultural vision supported by writers like Faulkner and the Southern Fugitives was a conviction that "the white man and his pattern can never be changed."

Segrest hopes to see this deforming vision of social and literary reality changed through the infusion of new Southern writers, particularly lesbian writers who share a sense of oppression with others who have been historically invisible. Segrest sees the spinster—a woman *not* defined by her relationships to men or to others—redefined by a feminist vision that values "the creative integrity of a woman's solitude and the absolute necessity for sanity and health of a woman's community." This essay





Mab Segrest

ends with a call to arms for a "Women's Literature of Wholeness," that would end the division of black women and white, Northern and Southern.

Other essays in this collection cover Southern humor, sexual socialization, teaching in a Baptist college, interviews with the late activist Barbara Deming, and Southern lesbian writing; also included are "Carolina Notebook" pieces devoted to Klan violence, gay-baiting, and the oppression of migrant workers. Segrest writes a difficult and moving essay about the women in her family, black and white, three generations bound together through the subordination of black to white. Throughout these essays, Segrest returns repeatedly to the contradiction between the structural realities she experiences as alienation and division, and her desire for a home in a world and culture that might kill her, if her political and sexual identity were obviously visible. She remains plagued by a question that has haunted generations of Southern writers, "the painful question of *home*—who owns it, who must flee it, who wants to claim and how do we reclaim a regional culture soaked in the heritage of human slavery."

This question reveals the tension between Segrest's alienation from Southern culture and the world of

"wholeness" she wishes to create. Perhaps unconsciously, her own writing reflects the polarizations of normal and grotesque that structure the rituals and memory of Southern culture. Segrest seems obsessed by guilt and expiation. She asserts that educated Southern white women must "find a new basis for identities because the sense of self we have been taught is based on lies." So she must pay penance for the privileges that have given her a voice that, by its strength, makes others feel diminished. After delivering well-received remarks at a women's meeting, Segrest must ask herself, "How was I being like my grandmother, making speeches about race relations, with four generations of literacy behind me and practice in talking out loud from ten years of college teaching?"

As a Southerner who is a radical and lesbian feminist Segrest cannot be comfortable with the self that the injustices of her culture have allowed her to become. She is sensitive to *every* form of oppression, so there is no peace in her world—only a visionary dream of utopia. This is the logical product of a political vision that defines the past as deforming and unjust, but it allows very little air and light for sustained discourse. One wonders if Segrest talks with many souls who do not share her particular vision of reality and hope.

Virginia Durr, Clyde Edgerton and Mab Segrest tell very different stories of changing consciousness. Each story can be read as a watermark of change along a continuum of personal and political choices. But a radical difference of sensibility separates Mab Segrest from Durr and Raney. Essentially, the last two accept the past and present, and find much to affirm in the givens of family and regional life. For Segrest, however, love seems conditioned by heartbreak. As her mother's daughter, she is tortured by her family's willed blindness to the costs of inequality—a cost written in the lives of blacks, poor whites, women, gays. Unable to forgive them, and the history that has shaped them, she cannot feel at home. She cannot tolerate the past that has made her. Such is the voice of a visionary, a Southern woman

thoroughly aware of the emotional consequences of radical alienation, which is perhaps the deepest expression of personal politics. □

*A native of Florida, Kim Lacy Rogers teaches history at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania.*

## Musical Strings of the Future

**Traditional Music of the Future**, by No Strings Attached. Turquoise Records 5051.

— by Larry Vellani

The combination calendar/clock on this album's cover reads, "July, 2040 12:35 a.m." The message seems to be "Welcome to the future," the home of the Virginia-based string band No Strings Attached. This time and place are heralded by the new release, "Traditional Music of the Future." Even earth-based musicians would require extraterrestrial talents to shuttle simultaneously between the past and the future on a vinyl disk. Lacking Marty McFly (the *Back to the Future* kid) in the band, NSA fails to be in two places and times at once. But the patient listener of this latest album can enjoy some inventive arrangements and original compositions.

As the band's first album on the spanking-new label Turquoise Records out of Whitesburg, Kentucky, the record is an intergalactic tour de force of the quintet's picking, blowing, and "dhammering" (NSA's term for hammering and dampening the chromatic dulcimer), with an impressive array of traditional and space-age instruments.

In the best time-traveling traditions of H.G. Wells and Dr. Who, NSA certainly dares to be different, pairing hammered dulcimers and synthesizers to perform Gershwin's "Summertime" and the band's own brand of Piedmont samba. For all the novelty, the album never quite breaks through an ozone of tricky techniques and catchy musical hooks into a new string band orbit. The final

product is more a passing meteor shower than a new constellation of original tunes shimmering around a musical/artistic center.

But, hey, maybe that's our musical future! They do sound like they're having fun. Maybe I need to see their video.

The album is not without its far-out moments. "Hills of Dhammering" and "Ode to a Glowworm" are inventive, mysteriously powerful pieces, rooted in today's traditions while moving into the twenty-first century. "Reward for Trying" will be come a new-age old-timey gem, but it's hidden between two forgettable songs. Wes Chappell's kalimba break on "Sorta Samba" and Pete Hasting's chromatic harp on "Amusing the Muse" are inspired, and Bob Thomas's bass playing throughout almost gives the album the center it sorely lacks. Unfortunately, these stellar points fail to boost the record's overall payload beyond the eccentric and the sometimes far-fetched.

Pardon me, if this is the future, take me to your grandparents' leader.

What does bode well for our collective musical future is the debut of Turquoise Records, established by Pat Martin. After six years with the June Appal label — part of eastern Kentucky's cultural preservers at Appal Shop — Martin wanted to become more involved in the promotional support of artists and to work with more commercially oriented music than she felt Appal wanted to support. "Traditional Music of the Future" is her first release, and she has done a commendable job putting together a visually pleasing and informative promotional package, while avoiding the grosser aspects of hype. I especially like the liner notes mentioning the craftspeople and companies which manufacture the instruments used on the album, a nice tribute to the forgotten fingers that make the musician's magic possible. □

*When Larry Vellani is not playing, singing, or dancing to country and old-time music, he is the Co-Director of the North Carolina Prison and Jail Project.*

## Books on the South

*This list consists of books noted in Forthcoming Books in Print through spring 1986. Dissertations appeared in Dissertation Abstracts from November and December 1985 and January 1986. All books were published in 1986, and dissertations appeared in 1985 unless otherwise noted.*

*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 Southern interest are welcome, recent works being preferred.*

*Copies of the dissertations are available in microform hard copy from: University Microfilms International, Dissertation Copies, P.O. Box 1764, Ann Arbor, MI 48106; 800-521-3042.*

### AFRO-AMERICANS

**African Fundamentalism: A Literary Anthology of the Garvey Movement**, by Tony Martin. Majority Press. \$7.95 paper.

**The Angel of Beale Street, Vol. I**, by Selma S. Lewis and Marjean G. Kremer. St. Luke Press. \$19.95.

"Before I Be A Slave": A Social Analysis of the Black Struggle for Freedom in North Carolina, 1860-1865," by Donna Johanna Benson. Duke Univ. 1984.

**Black America: Special Edition with Holiday Epilogue**, by Roger A. Hammer. Place in the Woods. \$4.95.

**Black Labor and the American Labor System**, by Herbert Hill. Univ. of Wisconsin Press. \$27.50/\$12.50.

**Branches Without Roots: The Genesis of the Black Working Class**, by Gerald D. Jaynes. Oxford Univ. Press. \$35.

"Ebonyville in the South and Southwest: Political Life in the All-Black Town," by Ben Wayne Wiley. Univ. of Texas-Arlington. 1984.

**Free At Last! Alternate Histories of Black America**, by R. Reginald. Borgo Press. \$19.95/\$9.95.

**From Access to Power: Black Politics in Boston**, ed. by James Jennings and Melvin I. King. Schenkman Books. \$16.95/\$11.95.

"Harmonic Circles: Afro-American Religious Heritage and American Aesthetics," by Joseph Augustine Brown. Yale Univ. 1984.

"A Historical Study of the Implications of Black Music and its Relationship to the Selected Aspects of Society, Culture, and Educational Experiences of Black Americans: 1955-1980," by Susan Frissell. Loyola Univ. of Chicago.

**Index to the Schomburg Clipping File**, ed. by the staff of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of the New York Public Library. Chadwyck Healey. \$50.

**The Jesse Jackson Phenomenon: The Crisis of Purpose in Afro-American Politics**, by Adolph L. Reed, Jr. Yale Univ. Press. \$17.50/\$5.95.

**Prayer in the Black Tradition**, by O.R. Bowyer et. al. Abingdon Press. \$5.95 paper.

**Recordings of Afro-American Performers: Opera, Choral Music and Song. 78 rpm and Cylinder. 1900-1949**, by Patricia Turner. Garland Publishing. \$27.

"The Rhetorical Strategies and Tactics of Malcolm X," by John Franklin Gary. Indiana Univ.

**The State of Afro-American History: Past, Present and Future**, by Darlene C. Hine. Louisiana State Univ. Press. \$27.50.

"Traditional Black Music and Musicians in Rural Alabama and Northeast Mississippi, 1940-1982: An Ethnomusicological Analysis," by Glenda Jay Driskell. Univ. of Alabama.

**A Trust Betrayed: The Story of Jim Keegstra**, by David Bercuson and Douglas Wertheimer. Doubleday. \$17.95.

**Viewfinders: Black Women Photographers**, by Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe. Dodd. \$19.95.

### LITERATURE

**The Afro-American Short Story: A Comprehensive, Annotated Index with Selected Commentaries**, by Preston M. Yancy. Greenwood Press. \$35.

**Bearing Witness-Sobrevivendo: An Anthology of Writing and Art by Native American-Latina Women**, ed. by Jo Cochran et. al. Calyx Books. \$7.50 paper.

**Chicano Poetry: A Critical Introduction**, by Cordelia Candelaria. Greenwood Press. \$35.

"Crossing the Bridge: The Great Mother in Selected Novels of Toni Morrison, Paule Marshall, Simone Schwarz-Bart, and Mariama Ba," by Angelita Dianne Reyes. Univ. of Iowa.

**Crossing the Double Cross: The Practice of Feminist Literary Criticism**, by Elizabeth A. Meese. Univ. of North Carolina Press. \$19/\$8.95.

"Dime Novels: Popular Fiction and Working Class Culture in 19th Century America," by Michael Joseph Denning. Yale Univ. 1984.

**Figures in Black: Words, Signs and the Racial Self**, by Henry L. Gates, Jr. Oxford Univ. Press. \$22.95.

**Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contents**, by Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocínio Schweickart. Johns Hopkins Univ. Press. \$27.50/\$10.95.

**Homewords: A Book of Tennessee Writers**, ed. by Douglas Paschall and Alice Swanson. Spirit That Moves Press. \$16/\$10.

"Hush, Hush — Somebody's Callin Ma Name: Analyzing and Teaching Jean Toomer's *Cane*," by Chezia Brenda Thompson. Carnegie-Mellon Univ.

"The Image of the Black Woman in the Spanish-American Novel: A Study of Characterization of Selected Spanish-American Novels," by Janet Jones Hampton. Catholic Univ.

"Innocents in Gehenna: Calvinism in the Novels of Madison Jones," by Alan Kent Bickford. Georgia State Univ.

**In Search of Self: Life and Death in Walker Percy's Novels**, by L. Jerome Taylor. Cowley Publications. \$7.95 paper.

"Observing Communion: An Investigation of Alienation and Sacramental Re-entry in the Novels of Walker Percy," by Paul Clifton Schreiber. Univ. of California-Santa Barbara.

"Reading Race: The White American Poet and the Racial Discourse in the Twentieth Century," by Aldon Lynn Nielson. George Washington Univ.

"Religious Experience in the Novels of Walker Percy," by Jeong-Mi Park. St. Louis Univ. 1984.

"The Representation of the Gullah Dialect in Francis Griswold's 'A Sea Island Lady,'" by Mailand Cheney Sledge. Univ. of Alabama.

**Stealing the Language: The Emergence of**

# REVIEWS

**Women's Poetry in America**, by Alicia A. Ostriker. Beacon Press. \$19.95.

## RELIGION

"The Contextual Fit of the Black Church to Certain Characteristics of the Poor," by Agnes Tat Fong Liu. Fuller Theological Seminary.

"The Defiant Legacy: Southern Clergy and a Rhetoric of Redemption for the Reconstruction South," by Hal W. Fulmer. Louisiana State Univ.

"The Development and Limitations of Feminist Christology: Toward an Engagement of White Women's and Black Women's Religious Experiences," by Jacquelyn Grant. Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

"Holiness, Righteousness, and Life: the Theology of William Porcher DuBose," by Frederick Thomas Barker. Drew Univ.

"Religion and Education: A Study of the Interrelationship between Fundamentalism and Education in Contemporary America," by Lanny Ross Bowers. East Tennessee State Univ.

"The '700 Club' as Religion and as Television: A Study of Reasons and Effects," by Stewart Mark Hoover. Univ. of Pennsylvania.

"Toward the Redemption of American White Working-Class Reality: A Liberation Theology," by Karen Lou Bloomquist. Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

"The Transformation of American Quakerism, 1800-1910," by Thomas D. Hamm. Indiana Univ.

"We Shall Meet on that Beautiful Shore: Hymns of Death in the New South, 1865-1900," by Mary Bhampe Pope. Emory Univ.

## CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

**The Aged in Rural America**, by John A. Krout. Greenwood. \$29.95.

"The Bounds of Their Habitations": The Southern Presbyterian Church, Racial Ideology and the Civil Rights Movement, 1946-1972," by Joel Lawrence Alvis, Jr. Auburn Univ.

"Broommaking and Dollmaking in South Central Kentucky: Two Women Folk Craftspersons in a Generational Perspective," by Annelen Ruth Archbold. Indiana Univ.

**A Collection of Classic Southern Humor**, by George W. Koon. Peachtree Publishers. \$9.95 paper.

**Eighteenth Century Clothing at Williamsburg**, by Linda Baumgarten. Williamsburg. Price not set.

**From Melting Pot to Rainbow Coalition: The Future of Race in American Politics**, by Sheila Collins. Monthly Review Press. \$26/\$10.

**How Can You Come Out of It If You've Never Been In! Essays on Gay Life and Relationships**, by Donald Vining. Crossing Press. \$14.95/\$7.95.

**Lesbian Etiquette: Essays Humorous**, by Gail Sausser. Crossing Press. \$12.95/\$5.95.

**Lesbian Letters**, by Christine H. Stockton. Heron Press. Price not set.

**The Lesbian Periodicals Index**, compiled by Clare Potter. Naiad Press. \$29.95.

**Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century**, by Laura Shapiro. Farrar Strauss and Giroux. \$15.95.

**Piece of My Heart: The Life, Times and Legend of Janis Joplin**, by David Dalton. St. Martin's Press. \$15.95.

**Red Beans and Rice: Recipes for Lesbian Health and Wisdom**, by Bode Noonan. Crossing Press. \$9.95/\$4.95.

"Regional Differences in the Level of Unionization in the United States: A Study of the Effects of Right-to-Work Laws in a Dynamic System," by Lynn Allen Smith. Univ. of Pittsburgh.

"The Role of the Scribe in Eastern Cherokee Society, 1821-1985," by Carmaleta Littlejohn Monteith. Emory Univ.

**Somethin's Cookin' in the Mountains: A Cookbook Guidebook to Northeast Georgia**, ed. by Cathy Bucek and Jay Bucek. Soque. \$9.95.

**White Trash Cooking**, ed. by Ernest M. Mickler. Jargon Society. \$11.95.

## HISTORY, POLITICS AND ECONOMICS — BEFORE 1865

"Biosocial Organization and Change in East Tennessee Late Woodland and Mississippian," by Richard Criss Helmkamp. Purdue Univ.

**The Civil War: Battle for Atlanta**. Time-Life Books. \$14.95.

**The Civil War: Spies, Scouts and Raiders**. Time-Life Books. \$14.95.

"Content with Being": Nineteenth-Century Southern Attitudes toward Economic Development," by James Crawford King, Jr. Univ. of Alabama.

"The Long Arm of the Law: Slavery and the Supreme Court in Antebellum Louisiana, 1809-1862," by Judith Kelleher Schafer. Tulane Univ.

"The Morgan Papers: The Impact of George Morgan and George Washington in Formulating In-

dian Policies at the Outbreak of the American Revolution in 1776," by Gregory Lynn Schaff. Univ. of California-Santa Barbara. 1984.

"Neither Ballots nor Bullets: Women Abolitionists and Emancipation during the Civil War," by Wendy Faye Hamand. Univ. of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign.

"Race and the Rise of the Republican Party, 1848-1860," by James D. Bilotta. SUNY-Buffalo.

"Red Hills and Piney Woods: A Political History of Butler County, Alabama in the Nineteenth Century," by Michael Jackson Daniel. Univ. of Alabama.

**Railroading in the Carolina Sandhills: The 19th Century (1825-1900, Vol. 1)**, by S. David Carraker. Heritage Publishing Co. \$25.

"A Shield and a Hiding Place: The Religious Life of the Civil War Armies," by Gardiner Humphrey Shattuck, Jr. Harvard Univ.

"Slavery and Freedom in the First State: The History of Blacks in Delaware from the Colonial Period to 1865," by Patience Essah. Univ. of California-Los Angeles.

**Sword over Richmond**, by Richard Wheeler. Harper and Row. \$19.18.

"They Fought Splendidly!": The Struggle for Port Hudson," by Lawrence Lee Hewitt. Louisiana State Univ. 1984.

**Your True Marcus: The Civil War Letters of a Jewish Colonel**, by Frank Byrne and Jean Soman. Kent State University Press. \$11.95.

## HISTORY, POLITICS AND ECONOMICS — SINCE 1865

**American Workers, American Unions, 1920-1985**, by Robert Zeiger. Johns Hopkins. \$25/\$9.95.

"Competition, Segregation, and Succession of Minorities and White Women in the Middle Atlantic Region's Central Cities Labor Market, 1960 to 1970," by Alice E. Colon-Warren. Fordham Univ. 1984.

**Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, Vol. 2: D-G, 7 vols.**, ed. by William S. Powell. Univ. of North Carolina Press. \$45.

**The Economics of Women, Men, and Work**, by Francine D. Blau and Marianne A. Ferber. Prentice-Hall. \$25.95/\$18.95.

"Getting Their Hands on the Land: The Revolution in St. Helena [South Carolina] Parish, 1861-1900," by Mary Jennie McGuire. Univ. of South Carolina.

"A History of Louisiana, 1939-1945," by Jerry Purvis Sanson. Louisiana State Univ. 1984.

**Lone Star State: The Power, the People, and Manana**, by Scott Bennett and Tim Richardson. Algonquin Books. \$15.95.

"Mass Demonstrations and Mass Media: The 1983 March on Washington: A Case Study," by Patrick Esmond-White. Univ. Without Walls.

"The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Alabama, 1913-1952," by Dorothy A. Autrey. Univ. of Notre Dame.

**Old South, New South: An Economic History since the Civil War**, by Gavin Wright. Basic Books. \$19.95.

"Partisan Dealignment and the Emergence of Southern Republicanism," by Tari Renner. American Univ.

**The Republican Party and the South, 1855-1877**, by Richard H. Abbott. Univ. of North Carolina Press. \$25.

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"The Rise of the 'New' Republican Party in South Carolina, 1948-1974: A Case Study of Political Change in a Deep South State," by Gregory Burke Sampson. Univ. of North Carolina. 1984.

A **Scottsboro Case in Mississippi: The Supreme Court and *Brown vs. Mississippi***, by Richard C. Cortner. Univ. Press of Mississippi. \$19.50.

**Thinking Back: The Perils of Writing History**, by C. Vann Woodward. Louisiana State Univ. Press. \$12.95.

### WOMEN

"Androgyny: The Liberation of Behavior from

the Prison of Gender," by Charles Emery Preston. Univ. of New Mexico.

"Effects of Uncertainty and Risk on the Allocation of Time of Married Women," by Eileen Trzcinski. Univ. of Michigan.

**Farm Women: Work, Farm, and Family in the United States** by Rachel A. Rosenfeld. Univ. of North Carolina Press. \$26.

**Gender and History: The Failure of Social Theory in the Age of the Family**, by Linda J. Nicholson. Columbia University Press. \$30.

**The Great American Housewife**, by Annegret S. Ogden. Greenwood. \$29.95.

"Self-Concept of Black Female University Students in the Southern Region of the United

States," by Glenda Island Lars. Texas Technical University.

"The Social Dimensions of 'Women's Sphere': The Rise of Women's Organizations in Late Nineteenth Century American Protestantism," by Margaret Lamberts Bendroth. Johns Hopkins Univ.

"Susan B. Anthony De-Radicalizes, Re-Organizes, and Re-Unites the American Woman Suffrage Movement: 1880-1890," by Ruth Ellen Winson Drish. Univ. of Iowa.

**Women and Aging: An Anthology**, ed. by the Calyx editorial collective staff et. al. Calyx. \$12.

**Women and the Law of Property in Early America**, by Marylynn Salmon. Univ. of North Carolina Press. \$24.

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### Publications

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Mainstream culture idolizes youth and ignores older people—old women in particular! **Women and Aging** addresses issues too long ignored. Barbara MacDonald, Baba Copper, May Sarton, Marge Piercy, Imogen Cunningham, Margaret Randall, Lucy Lippard and many more contribute to this powerful anthology. Poetry, fiction, art, essays, photography, book reviews, journal entries and bibliography. 264 pp. Includes 40 pp. visual art! Send \$12.75 to WOMEN AND AGING, CALYX BOOKS, Dept. SE, P.O. Box B, Corvallis, OR 97339.

### In Search of Kith and Kin:

The History of a Southern Black Family from The Ante Bellum Era to The Present Day. A chronicle of slavery in Granville County, North Carolina by Barnetta McGhee White, a must reading for those who have roots in slavery. Special interest to genealogists, historians, librarians, and black studies programs. \$30 post paid to Kith & Kin, 1118 Saxony Drive, Durham, NC 27707.

### Dreams and Dynamite

The selected poems of Southern radical poet Covington Hall. Introduced by Dave Roediger. Send \$4.50 to Charles Kerr Publishers, 1740 Greenleaf Ave., Suite 7, Chicago, IL 60626.

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## Dixie Students Take a Stand

The 1960 lunch counter sit-ins begun by North Carolina A & T activists in Greensboro galvanized black college students across the South into a new, self-consciously styled "movement" for civil rights. Many focused their energies through the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

Some of their white contemporaries, also swayed by the earlier promise of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, joined SNCC and otherwise took part in the cause. Anguished by the knowledge that their forebears had created the system of oppression, a core of young Southern white civil rights organizers found themselves cut off from family and friends because of this new activism.

By the end of 1963 SNCC had changed its orientation from campus to community organizing, and its goals moved beyond achieving civil rights to seeking economic parity. Southern whites within SNCC realized that the organization's increasing radicalism would alienate some white students who otherwise could be drawn into civil rights work. The other major student organization, *Students for a Democratic Society*, had a far too national agenda to appeal to Southerners.

In April 1964 forty-five students from fifteen Southern white campuses gathered in Nashville to launch a new group, *Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC)*. Determined that the "South could solve its own problems," they issued this manifesto:

We do hereby declare, as Southern students from most of the Southern states, representing different economic, ethnic and religious backgrounds, growing from birthdays in the Depression years and the war years, that we will here take our stand in determination to build together a New South which brings democracy and justice for all the people.

...[When] Franklin D. Roosevelt assumed the presidency of the U.S. ... [he] called our Southland "America's number one domestic problem." He talked about the needs of those Americans who were ill-housed, ill-fed, and ill-clothed. Today, in 1964, when a majority of our nation is living in an affluence which makes the spectres of poverty and racism tenfold more inexcusable, a Southerner is in the White House. Yet the struggle for equal opportunity for all men—white and non-white, young and old, man and woman, is by no means completed. Our Southland is still the leading sufferer and battleground of the war against racism, poverty, injustice and autocracy. It is our intention to win that struggle in our Southland in our lifetime—tomorrow is not soon enough.

Our Southland is coming of age, they say. But we both hope and fear for her new industries and her new cities, for



SSOC Logo

we also are aware of new slums, newly unemployed, new injustices, new political guile—and the Old as well. Is our dream of democracy to be dashed just as were Jefferson's dreams and the Populist struggles lost in the blend of feudal power, racial fear and industrial oligarchic opportunism? Only as we dare to create new movements, new politics, and new institutions can our hopes prevail.

We hereby take our stand to start with our college communities and to confront them and their surrounding communities and to move from here out through all the states of the South—and to tell the Truth that must ultimately make us free. The Freedom movement for an end to segregation inspires us all to make our voices heard for a beginning of a true democracy in the South for all people. We pledge together to work in all communities across the South to create nonviolent political and direct action movements dedicated to the sort of social change throughout the South and nation which is necessary to achieve our stated goals.

Our region must be an exemplar of the national goals we all believe in, rather than a deterrent to them:

1. Not only an end to segregation and racism but the rise of full and equal opportunity for all;
2. An end to personal poverty and deprivation;
3. An end to the "public poverty" which leaves us without decent schools, parks, medical care, housing, and communities;
4. A democratic society where politics poses meaningful dialogue and choices about issues that affect men's lives, not manipulation by vested elites;
5. A place where industries and large cities can blend into farms and natural rural splendor to provide meaningful work and leisure opportunities for all—the sort of society we can all live in and believe in.

We, as young southerners, hereby pledge to take our stand here to work for a new order, a new South, a place which embodies our ideals for all the world to emulate, not ridicule. We find our destiny as individuals in the South in our hopes and our work together as brothers. □

Among the legacies of the SSOC is *Southern Exposure*. In 1970 two SSOC leaders founded the *Institute for Southern Studies*, designed as a think tank to research and publicize political and economic issues in the South. The Institute began publishing *Southern Exposure* in 1973.

At *Southern Exposure* we welcome submissions from our readers for this feature. Send ideas to: *Voices From the Past, Southern Exposure*, P.O. Box 531, Durham, NC 27702.



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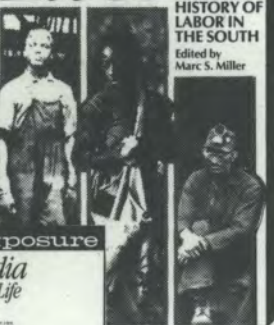


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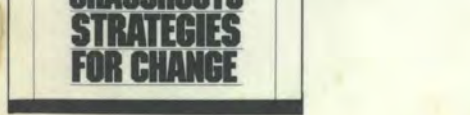
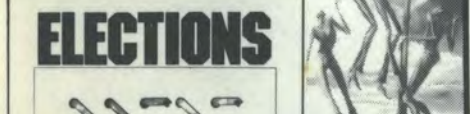
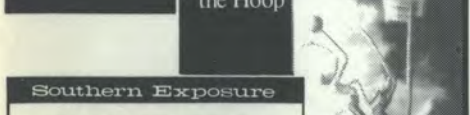
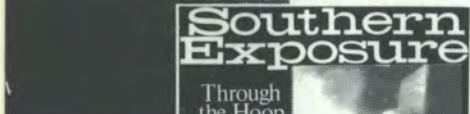
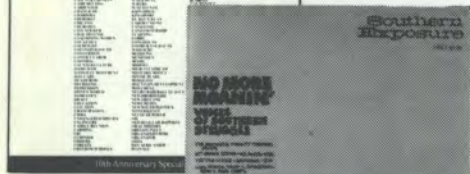
THE SOUTHERN EXPOSURE HISTORY OF LABOR IN THE SOUTH  
Edited by Marc S. Miller



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