

Appalachian Curator

Volume 1, Issue 3, Winter 2020



The *Appalachian Curator* is a publication of the
Special Collections Committee of the
Appalachian Studies Association

Volume 1, Issue 3, Winter 2020

The *Appalachian Curator* is a newsletter by and about special collections and archives that collect primary and secondary materials related to the Appalachian mountains. Our intended audience is scholars, students, researchers, archivists, librarians, and anyone else with an interest in resources that document Appalachia.

The *Appalachian Curator* is a publication of the Special Collections Committee of the Appalachian Studies Association. It is a free, online newsletter published triannually (Spring/Summer, Fall, and Winter) and hosted at the University of North Carolina at Asheville.

We welcome questions, comments, ideas for articles, news about Appalachian repositories, updates on new acquisitions, and anything related to Appalachian resources.

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Cover photo: Swinging bridge, The Little Pigeon River, Edgar Purdom (1900-1987), Hunter Library Special Collections, Western Carolina University

Editor's Column

Gene Hyde, University of North Carolina Asheville

Welcome to the Winter 2020 issue of the *Appalachian Curator*, which wraps up our first year of publication. The editors have been pleasantly surprised at well the *Curator* has been received. As of this writing, we've had over 2,000 unique visitors, and you viewed individual stories and articles over 5,800 times. Thanks for reading ...or at least stopping by and checking out the *Curator*!

The *Appalachian Curator* is a publication of the Special Collections Committee of the Appalachian Studies Association, and we're featuring an article about the Special Collections Committee by Committee chair Stewart Plein. The Committee will have our first meeting on Saturday morning at this year's Appalachian Studies Conference at the University of Kentucky. The session is entitled "Roots of the Region: The Special Collections Committee Roundtable," which will meet from 8:30-9:45 pm Saturday morning (room to announced in the final conference schedule). We hope to see you there.

This issue features several articles describing outreach and collaboration efforts at Appalachian Special Collections, including how Appalachian State is contributing information about ginseng for the Smithsonian Folklife Festival this summer and how West Virginia University created an "Appalachian Futures" exhibit.

We're pleased to share three community archiving profiles, one from the Buncombe County Public Library in Asheville, NC, a second from the Arthurdale community in West Virginia, and a third from Smoky Mountain High School and Western Carolina University. Related to community archiving, there's also an article about a digital history storytelling project at California University of Pennsylvania.

Our Featured Collection column this issue focuses on the development of the Southern Highlands Research Center, which later became Special Collections at the University of North Carolina Asheville.

We're looking forward to launching our second year with the Spring/Summer issue in April, and we are looking for stories about anything related to Appalachian archives. Please let us know what you'd like to share with the Appalachian Studies community.

Possible story ideas include:

- community archiving projects
- digitization projects

- histories and profiles of archival repositories
- profiles of archivists and donors
- descriptions of collections
- articles on the craft and practice of archival work
- lists of new acquisitions
- upcoming workshops or training opportunities
- upcoming or current exhibits and events
- news about grants or collaborations
- or anything else related to Appalachian archives

Have an idea? Please contact the editors – Gene Hyde (ghyde@unca.edu) or Liz Skene Harper (charper@email.wcu.edu).

Our next issue (Volume 2, No 1, Spring/Summer) will be published in April 2020, with an article deadline of April 15.

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Special Collections Committee News: Thinking about Special Collections: The Understory Grounding Appalachian History

Stewart Plein, Special Collections Committee Chair, Appalachian Studies Association

Introduction

While reading the newspaper on the first day of this New Year, my attention was drawn to an Associated Press articleⁱ about the impending opening of a collection of letters between the poet T.S. Eliot and his friend, Emily Hale. Sealed for fifty years at the request of Hale as a stipulation of her donation, the correspondence is now available for the first time. The opening of this collection provides students, scholars, and researchers with an intimate look into a relationship that, for decades, has been tantalizingly oblique and speculative, providing not only new insights into the life of a well-known poet, but also adding a new branch in the understory of Eliot scholarship.

I know what you're thinking. No, T.S. Eliot, while born in Missouri, wasn't from Appalachia. Neither was Hale. The correspondence isn't housed at an Appalachian institution, it's at Princeton University. Regardless, this event illustrates the purpose of special collections and the processes used to respect privacy, while also providing access in the public interest.

Repositories across Appalachia do exactly the same things. Archivists and librarians at repositories and institutions throughout the area collect, preserve and provide access to materials in a variety of formats that document and record the history and culture of our region. These materials are rooted in our collections, providing a dense understory to the vast and varied forest that is Appalachian history and scholarship.

The Appalachian Consortium and the new committee

Beginning with its founding in 1971, the precursor to the newly revived ASA Special Collections Committee, special collections committees in the Appalachian Consortium connected special collections, librarians, and archivists in the region. The consortium, through meetings, publications and conference sessions, worked to preserve and share our culture and the materials that record it. After thirty-four years in this role, the consortium disbanded in 2004. Nevertheless, Appalachian archives continued to

gather, preserve and share our history and heritage without a coordinating body dedicated to bringing archivists, librarians and researchers together to discuss and promote our collections.

Fortunately, Gene Hyde, Head of Special Collections and University Archivist at Ramsey Library at UNC Asheville, changed all that. Working closely with ASA, Gene was able to interest the association in a new committee to resume the work of the Appalachian Consortium's special collections committees. This new committee, called simply the Special Collections Committee, became an offshoot of the former consortium and part of ASA's governing structure. Plans for the new committee were announced in a February 9 post, "A New Group for Archivists of this Region,"ⁱⁱ in the Virginia Tech Special Collections and University Archives blog.

Goals for the special collections committee are three-fold: to promote, to recognize, and to develop, while at the same time continuing to build, enhance and sustain the community of Appalachian special collections. Building on Virginia Tech's blog post, goals for the committee include:

- Updating information about Appalachian repositories and institutions across the region. Much has changed and institutions have grown since the initial assessments were made by the Appalachian Consortium.
- Assessing the needs of repositories—both large and small.
- Facilitating conversations and creating opportunities for professional development activities that could be held at future ASA conferences. These professional development opportunities could include a variety of events such as workshops, exhibits, and targeted sessions, with the possibility of developing a certification program specifically focused on special collections in Appalachia.
- Developing funding sources for projects and encouraging and recognizing new scholarly work focusing on primary source materials in the region.

As the new chair of the special collections committee, I would also like to look beyond the physicality of archives to include recognition of important books and genres that have characterized and described the region. The historical reach of books that have defined Appalachia is broad and deep. They include everything from scholarly works on early explorers, pioneers, captivity tales, local color literature, foodways, music and musicians, Affrilachians, folklore, poetry, health, healing and remedies, genealogy, geography, and so much more. All of these subjects and areas are part and parcel of the archives of Appalachia.

In closing

From these early beginnings steps have been taken to formalize the committee and promote it to others. An initial session at the ASA conference at UNC Asheville in March 2019, sought to develop interest and encourage participation in the new committee. The session drew interested individuals who supported the committee concept and those involved in its evolution made plans to move forward.

A committee report posted in the Fall 2019 *Appalink* newsletter,ⁱⁱⁱ announced a new chair following the departure of Rachel Vagts, who initially held the chair's position, and a call for participation. Committee goals and plans were also described.

Looking forward, as we gather together to celebrate our region at the upcoming Appalachian Studies Association 43rd Annual Conference, "Appalachian Understories," March 12-15, 2020, in Lexington, at the University of Kentucky, I hope you will considering joining me for a "getting off the ground" special collections committee session to discuss these plans as we continue to move ahead. I hope to see you there!

In addition to her duties as Chair of the Special Collections Committee in ASA, Stewart Plein is also Curator, Rare Books & Printed Resources and Managing Director, West Virginia National Digital Newspaper Project at West Virginia University Libraries
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ⁱ Associated Press: "T.S. Eliot letters to muse to be unveiled after 60 years." By Christina Paciolla. January 1, 2020 GMT. <https://apnews.com/9a10f7ba1297864b210b5d5416d09e12>

ⁱⁱ The Virginia Tech Special Collections and University Archives blog: February 9, 2019. "A New Group for Archivists of this Region." <https://vtspecialcollections.wordpress.com/2019/02/22/a-new-group-for-archivists-of-this-region/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Appalink: Fall 2019, October 9 issue, Volume 43, Number 1. "Special Collections Committee" report. Appalachian Studies Association newsletter.

Featured Collection, Origin Story Edition: Special Collections at the University of North Carolina Asheville

Gene Hyde, UNC Asheville

For this issue of the *Appalachian Curator*, we take a look at the origins of Special Collections at UNC Asheville. Established in 1977 (and opening its doors in 1978), UNCA's Special Collections were originally founded as the Southern Highlands Research Center.

The 1970s was a fertile decade for Appalachian Studies, Appalachian research, and Appalachian special collections and archives. Much was afoot: the *Appalachian Journal* was started in 1972, the Appalachian Consortium published the *Bibliography of Southern Appalachia* in 1976, and the *Appalachian Journal* published the special issue "A Guide To Appalachian Studies" in 1977. The first Appalachian Studies Conference was held at Berea College in 1978. Appalachian Special Collections were also growing and developing. Berea hired its first professional trained archivist in 1975, and Appalachian State University hired its first professionally trained librarian to manage the W. L. Eury Appalachian Collection in 1978. East Tennessee State University opened the Archives of Appalachia in 1978.

It was in the midst of all this activity that UNC Asheville created its own Appalachian special collection. Organizing efforts began in 1976, and by January 1977 a "Historical Resources and Archives Committee" was developing guidelines for a regional repository. As UNCA library director Ainsley Whitman said at the time, noting that there were already Appalachian repositories in Asheville and Western North Carolina, in starting a collection at UNCA: "in one sense we may be 'walking on eggs' when we consider that Pack Library has the Sondley Collection, the Thomas Wolfe Collection, and a history collection. There is the new McDowell Project at A.B. Tech. The WNC Historical Association may have certain axes to grind. Western Carolina has a tremendous collection in this field already with an Archivist on their staff. Appalachian has a room and a sizable collection and considerable interest in this type of endeavor. We will be entering an already crowded field. How will we fit into this picture?"

Despite this "already crowded field," UNC Asheville established an Appalachian Collection. But what would they call it? Several names were suggested for the new collection, including the French Broad Valley Historical Center, the Historical Center of WNC, and the Archives of the Blue Ridge. They finally called in the Southern Highlands Research Center.

The newly formed Southern Highlands Research Center (SHRC) was founded by historians working with the library director. The first director was Bruce Greenawalt, and he outlined the new SHRC's collection goals in the accompanying newspaper article. The initial collection emphasis would be on the Asheville area, and would focus on business and commercial records, religious history, the black community, and "ad hoc" environmental and political groups. Indeed, some of the earliest collections obtained include the Reuben B. Robertson Collection (he was the manager of Champion Paper), the Congregation Beth HaTaphila Congregation papers, the Heritage of Black Highlanders Collection, and the Upper French Broad Defense Association Collection.

For the first decade or so, the Southern Highlands Research Center was run by historians, with Milton Ready following

Greenawalt at the helm. It was located in several locations on campus. By 1993 the SHRC was renamed to Special Collections and became part of Ramsey Library, where it has been since then. The current Special Collections at UNCA continues to collect materials that reflect its original mission: collections acquired over the last few years include the Isaiah Rice Collection of photos from an Asheville African American photographer, the papers of Agudas Israel Synagogue, records from the Southern Dharma Retreat Center, records from RiverLink and Mountain True (two prominent Asheville based environmental groups), and records from the Grove Park Inn and Biltmore Industries.

Dr. Greenawalt To Head UNC-A Research Center

Dr. Bruce S. Greenawalt, assistant professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, has been named director of the newly-established Southern Highlands Research Center at UNC-A.

The center, established by the university's* Historical Resources and Archives Committee, will collect historically-significant records of individuals, organizations and groups, making them accessible to students of history, sociology, biography, genealogy and folklore, according to Dr. Greenawalt.

"Although the title of the center suggests a far-ranging collection, we will necessarily begin the search for material in the greater Asheville area," he said. "The city's characteristics suggest several initial emphases for our collection."

Noting the city's role as a business and commercial center for the region, he said the collection of business and commercial records can be of use to students of economics and U. S. economic history. "A second focus will be on the religious history of the region," Dr. Greenawalt said. "Western North Carolina already possesses two important archival collections for the Methodist and Southern Presbyterian churches. We should seek records from those independent congregations without archival resources."

He cited Asheville as the

center of Western North Carolina's black population, suggesting a third initial focus — the history of black highlanders.

"Such a collection will be a useful corrective to the assumption often found in Appalachian literature that all mountaineers are white," he said.

Another important area noted by the UNC-A historian would be records of ad hoc organizations dealing with regional issues.

"Without action, the records of the Upper French Broad Defense Association, the Beaucatcher Mountain Defense Association, Quality '76, the Buncombe County E.R.A. Committee and other such groups may be scattered and lost," he said. "All of the above cited records can be used by scholars interested in the dynamics of community action groups."

Dr. Greenawalt, a member of the UNC-A faculty since 1964, earned his B.A. at Maryville College, his M. A. at the University of Wisconsin and his Ph. D. from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Before joining UNC-A, he taught at Warren Wilson and Wisconsin. He is a member of Phi Alpha Theta International Honor Society in History.

From the *Asheville Citizen-Times*, April 24, 1977

This article from the 1988 issue of the original *Curator* provides a snapshot of the collection a decade after its founding:

THE CURATOR

The Newsletter of Appalachian Regional Collections

THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS CENTER

The Southern Highlands Center of the University of North Carolina at Asheville, which was established in 1978, is located in the D. Hiden Ramsey Library. Directed by Dr. Milton Ready, author of *Asheville: Land of the Sky* and open to the public by appointment (704-251-6414), the Center documents the political and cultural development of Western North Carolina since the 1880's. Although the Center contains several hundred linear feet of manuscripts and a collection of 112 oral history tapes, its strength is the more than 21,000 prints and negatives contained in the R. Henry Scadin and Ewart M. Ball collections.

R. Henry Scadin was a traveler in the Southern Mountains between 1883 and the mid-1920's. His collection consists of five feet of journals and diaries and several hundred glass plates which are of particular interest because they were taken during a period which saw a considerable rise in local color interest in the area.

Ewart M. Ball, Sr. (1894-1937) bought the Plateau Studio from Japanese photographer George Masa. Ball also worked as a contract photographer for *The Asheville Citizen* and *The Asheville Times*. Widely used, the Ball collection is an outstanding and comprehensive collection of professional photographs documenting Thomas Wolfe's Asheville of the 1920's. Ball's son and grandson also worked as professional photographers with *The Asheville Citizen-Times*, and the Ball collection through their work documents the Western North Carolina region through the 1970's.

Debra L. Thomas
Head of Public Services — Ramsey Library
University of North Carolina at Asheville

Article from the *Curator*, Vol. 2, no. 1, 1988

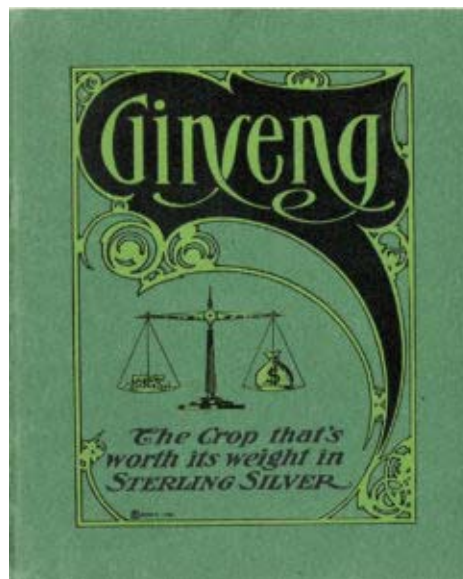
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Ginseng, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, and Appalachian archives

Trevor McKenzie, Appalachian State University

It is exactly the wrong time of the year to dig ginseng, making it the perfect time to dig into the W.L. Eury Appalachian Collection's holdings concerning "The Divine Root." This summer, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, held June 24-28 and July 1-5, celebrates the traditions and folklore surrounding American ginseng, one of Appalachia's oldest natural exports. The event will bring together a wide array of people, ranging from ginseng gatherers still using time-tested traditions in harvesting the wild root to farmers engaged in large-scale production of ginseng to exporters who ship the root from the mountains of Appalachia to locales around the world. Since the spring of 2019, interns with the Smithsonian Folklife Institute have conducted field and archival research to contribute to the programs held at this year's Folklife Festival. As one of these interns, I forsook the shelter of the forest for the rolling stacks of the Eury Collection, finding documents and recordings, which add context to the root's significance in Appalachian life and lore.

Beginning the 18th Century, trade of American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) has connected forested hillsides in the Appalachians with the wider world. The plant has traditionally had appeal in Asia, due to its possessing different medicinal properties than Asian variants of ginseng. Cherokee traditions tell that the root possesses a supernatural quality, allowing it to evade diggers unless they have the assistance of a spirit to guide them.¹ In the September 1977 article "The Elusive Root," *The Plow*, a now-defunct southwestern Virginia magazine that focused on mountain life, community, and environment, celebrated the ginseng cache of "Sang Hunters" Lee and Bonnie Ashlin of Sugar Grove, Virginia. "[Lee] Ashlin says he has the best luck finding the root in ground that's not too damp," recorded *The Plow*, "but with dried 'sang selling for about \$100 a



Ginseng booklet from the E. B. Olmsted
Ginseng papers

pound, that's about as much as he'll say about the place he found his pound and a half of ginseng." *The Plow (Periodical)* collection contains the original photograph of the Ashlins holding the piles of roots shortly before trading them for cash. The photo and accompanying article are a perfect window into the long history of mountain people engaging with the global economy while making use of resources on their own land.

In contrast to the Ashlins' homegrown story of success, the letters of E. B. Olmsted reveal the interest of the corporate world in Appalachia's ginseng. The letters detail the attempts of Olmsted, a Washington, D. C. businessman, to set up a ginseng empire in southwestern North Carolina in the late nineteenth century. Entering the



Lee and Bonnie Ashlin from
The Plow

mountains near Murphy, North Carolina in 1870, Olmsted attempted to manipulate and control the trade of ginseng. Unfortunately, his outlook on mountain people was largely shaped by stories published in 1860s magazines, focused the curious and primitive practices mountain ginseng diggers. Olmsted also believed that, in the wake of the Civil War, he would be the economic savior of the region, inspiring the gratitude of mountain people while making his fortune. The reality that greeted Olmsted in the mountains revealed a people who, rather than being isolated and ignorant of the worth of mountain roots, already had well-established connections with ginseng exporters. Olmsted's letters, largely to his creditors at the New York firm, Lanman and Kemp, are pitiful to read and chart the gradual failure of his

unborn ginseng enterprise. At certain points, the businessman expresses his annoyance at mountain people's business savvy and their failure to play into his money-making plans. Olmsted's letters are an amazing resource, connecting the history of the ginseng trade with the stereotypes of mountain people as they formulated in the post-Civil War era. The correspondence to his New York backers also displays the heavy financial interest of outside investors in natural resources in the Appalachian region, concurrent to similar interests in coal and timber.ⁱⁱ

During the latter part of his time in the Appalachians, Olmsted appears to have picked up the pamphlet "Ginseng: The crop that's worth its weight in sterling silver." This New York-produced "how-to-guide" on the ginseng trade connects with another collection in the Eury manuscript collections, *Exporting Companies' Information and Ginseng Cultivation papers*. These papers contain newsletters, correspondence,

instructional articles on the maintenance of ginseng, and price lists for dried roots, all produced by between 1908 and 1916. The correspondence in this collection shows the continued interest of northeastern-based businesses in North Carolina ginseng, with letters from exporters H. A. Schoenen (New York, New York), Belt, Butler and Company (also New York), and Newtown Producing Company (Bucks County, Pennsylvania). Conversely, the small collections of *S. V. Tomlinson's Price Lists of Roots and Herbs and Botanical Receipts sold to Todd Drug Store and R.T. Greer and Company*, focus on communities engaged in the buying and selling of botanicals in Wilkes and Watauga counties.

In addition to the above manuscript materials, the Eury collection also holds many oral histories related to ginseng hunting and exporting. The *William Lightfoot Collection of Student Papers* contains the transcript of a conversation with a southeastern West Virginia ginseng hunter, Fred Prichard. Interviews with Mr. and Mrs. E.R. Duvall, Ed Cullen, Elizabeth and William Hartley, all focusing on the history and community of the herb trade in western North Carolina are held in *Appalachian State University Oral History Projects*. Perhaps the most significant oral history on buying and selling of ginseng (and other roots and herbs) is a recording of Butch Wilcox of Wilcox Drug Company, also in the Appalachian State University Oral History Projects. This multi-generational family company, established in Boone, North Carolina in 1900, was, according to Butch, “the largest American buyer of botanicals” by the mid-1970s. Though it is no longer in operation, Wilcox Drug is still remembered by the wider herb trade community, with many of those who worked for Wilcox now operating successful businesses across the southeast.

The celebration of American ginseng at the 2020 Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, D. C. this summer will engage audiences with the living history of an interaction between a plant and people. On the eve of this celebration, the Eury Collection at Appalachian State University continues to collect and document the ginseng's significance in Appalachian folkways and economies. It is hoped that some of the materials from the Eury Collection will contribute and add context to the programs held in Washington, D.C., and further help the public dig into the history and culture of the “elusive root.”



Ginseng pamphlet from the E. B. Olmsted Ginseng papers

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ⁱ For more on this history see David A. Taylor's *The Divine Root: The Curious History of the Plant that Captivated the World* (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2006)

ⁱⁱ For more critical analysis on Olmsted's letters see Luke Manger's awesome article "Sangin' in the Mountains: The Ginseng Economy of the Southern Appalachians, 1865-1900" (*Appalachian Journal* 40.1-2, Fall 2012/Winter 2013).

Curating Appalachian Futures: an interdisciplinary, collaborative project

Sally Brown Deskins, West Virginia University Libraries

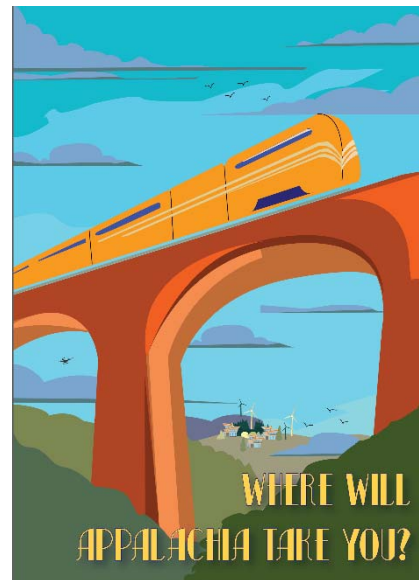
Curating *Appalachian Futures*, an interdisciplinary project spearheaded by myself, Exhibits Coordinator for West Virginia University Libraries, was a complex, collaborative project including contributions and partners region wide. This article will take a look at the process of creating the broad, tremendous exhibit with 50 artistic, scholarly and community contributors and the mini-conference that stemmed from it, further contextualizing and giving impact to the idea beyond the walls.

Appalachian Futures is the main exhibit developed by the WVU Art in the Libraries committee spanning the main spaces of the Downtown Campus Library. The committee, consisting of twelve librarians and cross-campus faculty, also develops and approves exhibits and displays for the Health Sciences and Evansdale Campus Libraries. *Appalachian Futures* follows WATER: An Interdisciplinary Exhibit Exploring Life's Critical Resource

(2018-19), including contributions from over 40 regional scholars, artists and activists, the first collaborative exhibit I curated after coming on board as Exhibits Coordinator. Before I took the position in spring of 2017, the librarian-only committee coordinated the exhibits themselves, and did not curate or design original exhibits.

The Art in the Libraries committee brainstormed a list of about a dozen broad exhibition ideas including immigration, collections, environment, and more; and eventually voted on *Appalachian Futures*, with a tie-in with the WVU Humanities Center, whose 2018-19 theme for programming was Future oriented as well.

To curate *Appalachian Futures*, I along with the WVU Humanities Center Director, formed a regional expert committee to develop the call for content summary to disperse to area universities, think tanks, artists groups, organizations and list serves, etc. The exhibition committee consisted of a music historian, an art historian, an



Appalachian Futures exhibit at WVU

artist/curator, two poets, an historian, a folklorist, an artist/activist, myself and the WVU Humanities Director, also a theatre scholar. With the committee, we developed a thoughtful outline for the exhibit with themes outlined and contextualized including Growth of Diverse Perspectives; Science, Education and Industries; Future of Appalachian Traditions; Speculative Futures; and Class Projects.

After outlining the exhibit call, it was dispersed by the exhibition and Art in Libraries committee, as well as the Libraries Communications Coordinator, to various outlets and groups, seeking an array of perspectives and media contributions. While the call was dispersed and we awaited submissions, I also had to seek funding to design and produce this exhibit. A call for exhibit sponsors was included in the call for submissions, but proactive work had to be done in order to successfully create this exhibit.

Teaming with the Libraries Development Director and Dean, we were able to obtain partnerships from regional libraries including the West Virginia Library Commission, Marshall University Libraries, and Appalachian State University Libraries. Each of these organizations also agreed to host the exhibit after the original debut at WVU, a bonus for the partners involved. Partnership with the printer allowed for a small discount on printing the exhibition panels and vinyl installations, as well as partnerships with WVU Reed College of Media, First United Bank & Trust, and independent donor Catherine Wilson Jones. I, with the help of the WVU Humanities Center Director, also submitted to the West Virginia Humanities Council for a grant to support the design and production, which was not accepted. With the Dean of WVU Libraries, I also submitted grant applications to the WVU internal Community Engagement grant, which we had previously received for a community driven art project, which was also not accepted. I, with one of the exhibition committee members, also applied for the WVU Humanities Center Collaborative Project grants, to support the design and production of the exhibit (the Director was not on the deciding committee), which was accepted. I also submitted a Community Engagement grant application with Arts Monongahela, our city's arts council, which was accepted. So all in all, we received enough support to hire a professional designer, which we did, to make this exhibit shine; as well as outsource the printing of the panels.

Meanwhile, by the deadline, we had received eighty exhibition submissions, from music to artwork, and historical scholarship to environmental work; from both WVU students and faculty, to artists and professionals from as far away as Chicago, New York, and Florida, with Appalachian ties. The submissions included a form with a title, abstract, contact information, and its relation to one or more of the exhibition themes. Once I received them all, I had my intern organize a Google file with the submissions by theme on an excel sheet with corresponding folders, so both the exhibit and Art in the

Libraries committees could review the submissions. I met with both committees separately, two times, to discuss all of the submissions. I took feedback from both committees and brought it to review with the WVU Humanities Center Director, and made ultimate decisions based on themes, feasibility, and space. Because the Libraries do not have facilities to host plays or large music concerts, we invited those folks to be listed as potential programming ideas for future exhibition venues. Because the Libraries do not have the capability to provide vital security or handling insurance for fine art, we selected some to be reproduced on exhibition panels and vinyl installations; and we also hosted a mini-complementary exhibit of selected original work for two months only to be on display at WVU. Ultimately 50 contributions were selected for the main exhibition and ten for the complementary fine art exhibit.

Once communications were made for acceptances and rejections, and final versions were sent and received, I began to curate the content into the themes and then into subthemes, to create the integrated display. Faculty librarians helped me edit the content in their areas of expertise, and each edited written submission was approved by original authors. Once this content was complete, I compiled it into folders on a Google drive to send to the designer, to integrate with imagery and creative design to create the panels to not only fit in the WVU Downtown Campus Library, but to be flexible to go on display in the other spaces, most of which have considerably smaller wall space. As such, the designer planned them in such a way that the venues can select which panels to include.



Appalachian Futures exhibit at WVU

As the panels were being designed, an interest in formulating a mini-conference around Speculative Futures came about via the WVU Humanities Center. We partnered again on an internal WVU grant to support mini conferences, and it was accepted. So, another conference committee was formed to fully develop this theme, call, and schedule for later in the year, to both complement and further promote thinking around this broad topic, to expand its impact.

At the same time, the exhibit design and installation was complete and the promotion was set in motion; traditional media as well as social media strategies were

taken on to promote this truly multidisciplinary exhibit opening, including live music, interactive gaming and brief talks by the Dean of Libraries and one of the exhibit contributors, a historian. An interactive element was also developed with help from the exhibition committee, including “Question Stations” where viewers could respond to philosophical questions around the future of Appalachia, in collaboration with WVU Philosophy Department.

Other programming developed in conjunction includes Women of Appalachia: An Invitational Exhibit, a visual exhibit of artwork by regional women artists in March 2020, in celebration of Women’s History Month. An exhibit reception with a curator’s talk will also take place. An informal exhibit, REMIXing the Archives, was curated, a juried exhibit of digital and print collages using WVU’s West Virginia & Regional History Center’s online collections.

Moving forward, an exhibition manual is being developed for the futures venues of the exhibition. The curating of the spring Speculative Futures mini-conference to be held at WVU continues, and as other exhibitions at other Libraries rotate, the next featured exhibit inspired by the 2020 suffrage centennial, *Undeclared: Canvas(s)ing the Politics of Voter Suppression Since Suffrage*, is currently being developed with a regional team of experts and the Art in the Libraries team.

Exhibitions in libraries provide this wonderful opportunity to build exhibitions around their limitations of security and alternative display space, in creating rich, diverse, multi-disciplinary exhibits with both campus and community members, evoking the Library’s role as both information documenters and holders as well as neutral information transmitters.

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Northern Appalachian History Digital Storytelling Archives

Christina Fisanick, California University of Pennsylvania

Robert Stakeley, Senator John Heinz History Center

Christina Fisanick, an associate professor of English at California University of Pennsylvania, began seeking an opportunity to integrate digital storytelling in her honors writing classes since she completed her Certificate in Digital Storytelling from the University of Colorado at Denver in 2010. Robert Stakeley, the Education Outreach Coordinator at the Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, had been searching for additional ways to showcase the collections from the Heinz History Center Affiliates Program (HCAP), which are small historical societies and organizations throughout parts of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio. Being aware of both of their needs, in April 2013 Gary DeLorenzo, a professor of mathematics and computer science at California University of Pennsylvania, brought them together to talk about a potential partnership. That conversation sparked a collaboration that has produced more than 300 digital stories that tell the history of northern Appalachia.

Digital stories are short (two to four minutes) videos that combine a voiceover, moving and still images, and a soundtrack to tell a story. People all over the world use digital storytelling as a tool to share their thoughts and experiences with issues ranging from refugee rights to coping with cancer to identity politics. Fisanick and Stakeley teach honors students at California University of Pennsylvania how to create digital stories that explore the history of communities throughout southwestern Pennsylvania, northern West Virginia, and eastern Ohio with the intention of not only preserving the history of the region, but to encourage people to appreciate their own histories by visiting local historical societies and organizations.

From this collaboration, more than 600 students have worked with more than 70 HCAP sites over the past seven years. Originally, these digital stories have been stored on YouTube as a short-term solution. In 2019, however, the Manderino Library at California University of Pennsylvania established a digital archive to permanently house and provide access to these stories. Although the archive is in its early stages of development, the public can watch 18 of the most recently created digital stories, which primarily focus on southwestern Pennsylvania history.

In creating these digital stories, students have used a wide range of historical artifacts from historical societies and organizations, such as California Area Historical Society, Brownsville Area Revitalization Area, the Connellsville Area Historical Society,

and the McKeesport Heritage Center. Topics for just a few of the digital stories have included the 1948 killer industrial smog in Donora, Pennsylvania, the Benwood, West Virginia coal mine disaster of 1924, the Whiskey Rebellion in Washington County, Pennsylvania, and the Free Labor Store in Mt. Pleasant, Ohio. The Digital Storytelling Project archive will continue to add digital stories from past and future semesters with the understanding that if we do not tell our own stories, others will tell them for us.

The Northern Appalachian History Digital Storytelling Archives can be found at <https://harbor.klnpa.org/california/islandora/object/cali%3A3>.

Christina Fisanick is an Associate Professor at California University of Pennsylvania, an advisory board member for the Northern Appalachian Network, and a founding member of the planning committee for the Writers Conference of Northern Appalachia.
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Robert Stakeley is the Education Outreach Coordinator and Heinz History Center Affiliates Program Manager at the Senator John Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

New collections in regional repositories

W. L. Eury Collection, Appalachian State University

Private William Rufus Barlow Civil War letters - In the summer of 1862, William Rufus Barlow (1827-1865) of King's Creek, Iredell County, North Carolina was conscripted into the Confederate Army, joining other draftees in Company B of the 18th North Carolina Infantry. The letters sent home by Barlow to his wife, Elizabeth German Barlow (1840-1914), reflect the fears and values of a conscripted soldier as he experienced the horrors and attrition of the Civil War. In several letters, he laments his inability to escape the army, fearing that desertion would bring about retribution on his family. In addition to descriptions of camp life and battles, Barlow's letters contain suggestions for the upkeep the family farm, pleas for foodstuffs from home, and lists casualties from his home community. The letters always close with Barlow's dread that he will die before he can write another letter and express hope that he will meet his wife and children in heaven. Barlow participated in many of the major battles fought by the Army of Northern Virginia, receiving a shrapnel wound in the wrist and enduring multiple bouts of sickness. Captured in 1864, he spent his final months in the prisoner of war camp at Elmira, New York, dying of pneumonia in January 1865. Barlow's letters reveal the mind of a non-slaveholding western North Carolina farmer who was a reluctant participant in a conflict that devastated Appalachian communities.

Mary Lyons papers - Mary E. Lyons is an award-winning author of fiction and nonfiction books for children. Lyons' historical and biographical works delve into the lives of marginalized people in history, from women to African Americans to impoverished Irish during the potato famine. She has written, edited, or co-authored twenty-one books. The Mary E. Lyons Papers consist of the research, illustrations, correspondence, manuscripts, drafts, and proofs of eighteen of Lyons' published books, as well as three that were not commercially published. In addition, there are articles, presentations from conferences and classroom visits, letters from students, publishers, and others, school curriculum materials that compliment Lyons' books, and other book ideas. This collection provides an example of the process of writing and publishing, as well as how the author immerses herself into the time periods and the lives of those about whom she wrote with the aid of primary sources, such as the farm ledger from the late 1840s, used in writing *Letters from a Slave Girl: The Story of Harriet Jacobs*. Lyons received a Bachelor of Science from Appalachian State University in 1970, and returned to earn a Master of Science in reading in 1972. Before becoming a full-time writer, Lyons was a reading teacher at both elementary and middle schools in North Carolina and Charlottesville, VA. She has also been a school librarian in elementary, middle, and high schools in Charlottesville.

Berea College

William Goodell Family Papers, Part 2, 1757-1959 The William Goodell Family Papers (Part 2) consist of correspondence of numerous Goodell family members (both between each other and family friends and associates); writings, documents, and photographs of Goodell family members; documents, writings and printed materials of abolitionists; and correspondence, papers, and materials specific to members of the family of William Goodell Frost.

Celebration of Traditional Music Recordings, 1974-, 1974-2018 Audio and video recordings of Celebration of Traditional Music performances 1974 - 2018. Also included are recordings and transcripts of meetings of the Traditional Music Committee relating to the planning of the Celebration's early years.

Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University

Beth Harrington Films, 2000-2007, AppMs 875. Raw video and interview transcripts for Beth Harrington's films *Welcome to the Club: The Women of Rockabilly* (2004) and *The Winding Stream: The Carters, the Cashes and the Course of Country Music* (2014).

Johnson County Hospital Oral History Project, 2018. Three (3) oral history interviews and associated documents about the community impact of the transition from the former Johnson County [Tennessee] Hospital to the current Johnson County Hospital.

Maxine Kenny Collection, 1971-1988, undated, AppMs 461 (accrual). Subject files relating primarily to Appalachian health, especially in Floyd County, Virginia, and strip mining.

Michael Montgomery Collection, AppMs 632 (accrual). Research files on Appalachian linguistics and related books and journals. From the estate of Michael Montgomery. Note: The bulk of Montgomery's research remains with his research partners.

Timothy F. Woodbridge Music Collection. Approximately 2000 78rpm records of old-time and country music recordings from Appalachia and elsewhere.

University of North Carolina Asheville

MountainTrue Papers -Contains materials from MountainTrue, the oldest environmental non-profit agency in Western North Carolina, formed through a merger of The Environmental and Conservation Organization of Henderson County, founded in 1987, the Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance, founded in 2000, and the Western North Carolina Alliance, based in Buncombe County and founded in 1982. The collection contains a wide range of materials from the conservation group, including various environmental projects and planning, and the correspondence and data associated with the projects. The collections contains a large number of items related to timbering projects in Western North Carolina, including graphs, maps, and correspondence of several prominent government officials. There are also materials related to mining, oil drilling, herbicide usage, nuclear waste management, clean air initiatives, and watershed management. The collection contains correspondence from the US Department of Agriculture as well as the papers of Walton R. Smith's correspondence and "Green Papers." The collection also contains material from the USFS, including graphs, data, and reports, as well as timber sales and studies.

Virginia Tech

Christiansburg Industrial Institute Oral History Project; Ms2019-037 The Christiansburg Industrial Institute Oral History Project consists of oral history interviews, transcripts, field notes, and other assorted documents produced by the students of Professor David Cline in the Fall of 2012 in association with interviews conducted with former students of the Christiansburg Industrial Institute about their childhoods, the African-American community in Southwest Virginia, the student experience at Christiansburg Industrial Institute, the quality of the curriculum and how it prepared students for further education and the workforce, the closing of the school, and subsequent preservation efforts via the Christiansburg Institute Alumni Association and Christiansburg Institute, Inc.

Byllesby, Virginia, Dam Construction Photograph Album, 1912-13; Ms2019-028 The Byllesby, Virginia, Dam Construction Photograph Album contains 110 silver gelatin prints in a black photograph album that documents the step-by-step construction of the Byllesby dam and associated power generating structures on the in Carroll County, Virginia in the Blue Ridge Mountains. It includes the installation of turbines, images of workers on site, and living quarters. There are also a few images of people in the landscape, dancing, and playing cards, along with related newspaper clippings and ephemera. The dam, built by the predecessor to the Appalachian Power Company, was

one of the first to provide electricity to the region. The album likely belonged to Clifford Erickson, a draftsman on the dam project.

Jacob Sherman Legal Documents, 1858; Ms2019-027 The Jacob Sherman Legal Documents contain a complaint of Jacob Sherman and the testimony of Burgess R. Linkous regarding the sale of an enslaved person in Western Virginia in 1858. The complaint of Jacob Sherman in the circuit court of Pulaski County, Virginia, against Edward H. Kinzer and Burgess Linkous, brings a case for the return of an enslaved woman and several of her children who were fraudulently purchased and sold off without his permission by the two men while he was recuperating from grievous injuries to his body and mind. The complaint is addressed to the Honorable Andrew S. Fulton, judge of the circuit court of Pulaski County, Virginia. The complaint was transcribed by Lynch S. Currin, clerk.

G. E. Roberts Letter, 1874; Ms2019-026 The G. E. Roberts Letter contains information pertaining to an African American man shooting a white doctor, Dr. Hammet, in Christiansburg, VA. The letter is written to Walter J. Reeve in Central Depot, VA on February 8, 1874.

Carroll and Wythe Counties Industries Collection, 1937-1980; Ms2019-016 This collection consists of materials relating to various industries in Carroll and Wythe counties, Virginia, collected by author Randal L. Hall in the course of writing *Mountains on the Market: Industry, the Environment, and the South*. The collection includes four issues of Zinc magazine (the in-house publication of New Jersey Zinc Company), the Summer 1939 issue of which includes a six-page photo section on Austinville, Virginia. Also included is a special photographic section of the Galax Gazette. In addition to brief company overviews, the publication contains photos of the plants, products, and personnel of Galax Mirror, Webb Furniture, Vaughan Furniture, Vaughan-Bassett Furniture, and Galax Knitting, as well as other businesses; and various scenes of the city and surrounding area. The collection also contains an Austinville Limestone pocket notepad, a National Carbide Company miners lamp dust can lid, and a combined photo portrait of the individual employees of the Carroll Hosiery Mills.

George W. L. Kabrich Family Papers, 1850-1947 [bulk 1850-1904]; Ms2019-013 The George W. L. Kabrich Family Papers, 1850-1947 [bulk 1850-1904], contain correspondence, legal records, financial records, and religious documents. The collection documents the personal and professional life of George W. L. Kabrich, who taught school and Sunday school, worked as Overseer of the Poor for Blacksburg Township, and was on church councils for local Lutheran churches. Items also relate to George's father-in-law John Surface, his daughter Effie Kabrich, and others.

Rosanna Croy Dawson Collection, 1847-1907, 2019; Ms2019-012 The collection contains materials related to the Croy-Dawson families of Blacksburg, Va. These include diaries, photographs, and other documents, some of which involve a dressmaking business started by Ellen Dawson and later joined by Rosanna, Ellen's mother. The business, run out of the family home, was, reportedly, the only woman-run business in Blacksburg at the time.

Robert Edward Minshall Collection, 1909-43; Ms2019-043 Robert Edward Minshall Collection contains VPI photographs and booklets from 1909-1913. There are 30 photographs, many of which are postcards, which include images of campus views, Castle Rock, the corps, Price Hall, Cascades, the 1943 campus flood, VPI walkway, Academic Building no. 1, Uncle Bill, and pictures from the 1909 football team. Additionally, there are two booklets from the Class of 1913 Annual Sophomore Banquet and VPI 1913 Commencement.

Albert N. Hubbard Letter, 1864; Ms2019-034 The Albert N. Hubbard Letter is a diary-style letter that contains information pertaining to fighting and traveling through the Shenandoah Valley, including New Market, Woodstock, Harrisonburg, and Staunton. The letter was written in Martinsburg, Virginia, and sent back to Hubbard's home in Windsor, Massachusetts.

John L. Hebron Letter, 1862; Ms2019-033 The John L. Hebron Letter contains information pertaining to the capture of a prisoner, July 4th celebrations, swimming in the river, and interacting with Rebel soldiers on picket. John L. Hebron writes the letter to his mother, dated July 5, 1862 from Battle Creek Tennessee.

Western Carolina University

Gideon Laney Collection This collection concerns the photography of Gideon Laney (December 22, 1889-February 16, 1976), of Brasstown, in Clay County, NC. He served in France during World War I, and returned to North Carolina after his discharge in 1919. In 1924, he married Martha Creech Ison, and their daughter, Grace Elizabeth, was born in 1925. Martha died in 1929, leaving Gideon to raise their young daughter.

Bethel Rural Community Organization Collection This collection contains items donated by the Bethel Rural Community Organization in Haywood County, NC. This collection chiefly concerns the Plott family, and includes ledgers and photographs.

David M. Sherman Collection, Add. #7 This collection is an addition to the David M. Sherman collection, concerning the Appalachian Trail, including correspondence (1983-2004) and Appalachian Trail maps and brochures.

Slaglekin Family Genealogy Project Collection This collection contains the genealogical research done by Phil Slagle. It contains genealogical and other information related to ancestors and descendants of Jesse Henry and Maggie Gillespie Slagle of Cartoogechaye Community in Franklin. The Slaglekin Project is a collection of genealogical information and artifacts (photos, family trees, books, medical histories, and the like) relating to the ancestors and descendants of Jesse Henry and Maggie Gillespie Slagle of Cartoogechaye, Franklin, Macon County, NC.

Community Archiving Profile: Continuing the Story: Oral Histories Shape Arthurdale's Legacy

Meredith Dreistadt, Arthurdale Heritage, Inc.

In the height of the Great Depression, Eleanor Roosevelt, First Lady to the newly elected President Franklin D. Roosevelt, left affluent Washington, D.C. to travel to one of the most impoverished communities in the country: the coal mining towns along Scotts Run in northern West Virginia. There she saw firsthand how horrifically affected families were by both the ripples of the Great Depression and the greed of coal companies that ruled over the miners' lives. As soon as she returned to Washington, Mrs. Roosevelt set to work pushing for funding and devising plans for a new community to aid these desperate miners.

Out of her efforts came Arthurdale, a town built from scratch by the government in which 165 former miners and their families, called homesteaders, were given houses, jobs, education, community, and farmable land with the hope of creating financial and community stability for the group. In the 85 years that have passed since the start of the United States' first New Deal Homestead community, the "Arthurdale Project," is an important window into the past for its role in being the first federal housing project in the United States. It is for this reason that the grassroots-started non-profit Arthurdale Heritage, Inc. (AHI) has been active in documenting and archiving the voices of homesteaders and their descendants.



Homesteader working his land in 1935

In June of 1987 volunteer historian for AHI, Glen Longacre, sat down individually with 28 original homesteaders, most of whom were in their eighties and nineties, turned on a tape recorder, and began asking them about the impact of this federal project on their lives. Charles and Hilda Hendershot were married in 1931 in Scotts Run and described their desperate situation: "We got married and lived in one of the little company shanties up against the hillside. It looked like it was about ready to fall

down. We were there until we moved [to Arthurdale]. It was bad,” said Hilda. Charles affirmed the conditions in the run, “People was hungry. They wasn’t workin’, hardly workin’. I worked one, two, a really big week if I got three days. About 90% of ‘em lived out of the company store, whatever the company wanted to give ‘em or let ‘em have.”

Otis Pugh remembered moving from a coal shanty up to an Arthurdale house, “That was all the difference in the world up there after you got the new house up there at Arthurdale.” His wife, Edith Pugh agreed, “Well, that was something wonderful to us. We went up there and had heat all through the house, in all the bedrooms.” These interviews offer incredibly important insights into the lives of coal miners and their families whose lives were changed forever by the Roosevelt Administration.

It was through Longacre’s efforts to save these histories that AHI’s oral history collecting began in earnest. A series of questions were developed in the early 1990s on



Lou Birurakis from Scotts Run and Dick DeGolyer and Dr. John Fullmer who both grew up in Arthurdale

which all interviews since have been based. Many of our interviewees, particularly older women who worked in their homes most of their lives, will argue that they do not have much to say about Arthurdale when asked for an oral history interview. The nature of AHI’s interview questions ensures an open-ended discussion between interviewer and interviewee can be had. The prompts allow homesteader

descendants to talk more freely about

their experiences in Arthurdale, without the worry of value. Prompts such as “tell me about where you grew up,” “what kind of chores did you do as a child?,” and “who were your friends at Arthurdale High?” allow for stories to emerge, even from the quietest of our interviewees. Certain questions such as “did you ever meet Eleanor Roosevelt?” have been removed from the list due to the lack of discussion that usually surrounded the many “no” answers that were recorded. Instead our volunteer interviewers have discovered that if someone had met Mrs. Roosevelt, they would most certainly bring up that meeting throughout their stories on their own accord.

Over the past 35 years AHI has been devotedly documenting the Arthurdale community by collecting historic objects, photos, and papers from homesteaders and their descendants. Oral histories, however, have been collected much more

inconsistently. These histories have been taken only when a member of AHI has the keen interest to do so, which leaves gaps in the Arthurdale story. Since 2015, the spark has been reignited in the form of two homesteader grandchildren, Ed and Jean Turnley, a former executive director, Jeanne Goodman, several AmeriCorps members, and many transcribers such as Carole Heaster. These volunteers have recorded dozens of oral histories, all of which are invaluable to AHI's archival collection.

Capturing voices of Arthurdale today no longer means capturing homesteaders, as their generation has entirely passed away, but it means capturing the stories of their children and grandchildren, the people whose lives are actively impacted by the New Deal community of the 1930s. This provides a new insight to the Arthurdale Project by allowing us to discover the effects of this experimental community on entire families.

Historically, Arthurdale was a contentious project for the government to undertake. A major flaw was in homesteader employment. The job market was largely unstable for homesteaders as the industries that the government contracted to provide employment suffered once branches were placed in Arthurdale. This was due to a myriad of reasons including the poor state of the late 1930s U.S. economy and the remoteness of the work site from major trade routes. The project cost around 2.6 million dollars from taxpayers and returned virtually no significant revenue. For these reasons, Arthurdale is sometimes viewed as an overreach by the federal government.



Roger Casseday, teacher at Arthurdale High School
and WWII veteran

Despite critics who claim that Arthurdale was a failure, homesteaders and their descendants will argue otherwise. In 2017, descendant Edgar Shackleford explained why he thought it was a success: "We just had a good time runnin' around all through Arthurdale as kids. I knowed everyone back then. We didn't have to worry about food or nothing. We worked hard at the house taking care of the gardens, but we didn't have to worry. That's a success to me."

In late July of 2019, two sons of homesteaders Ross and Mildred Lyons, Donald and Raymond Lyons, were interviewed about their experiences. As a final interview

question, Jean Turnley asked, “What do you think when people say Arthurdale was a failure?” Ray Lyons chuckled, “Those people clearly didn’t grow up here.”

Children of original homesteaders have their own children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, all of whom have been given more economic opportunities than may have been granted had their ancestors never left Scotts Run in the 1930s. Brother



Lyons Family in the 1940s

and husband to two homesteaders, John Wiles, argued in 2019 that Arthurdale, “brought people out of poverty and gave them something to work for. You know they worked hard before Arthurdale, but seeing the success is what gave us all (descendants) something to work for too.”

These oral histories nuance the legacy of this experimental homestead community. They

provide color, emotion, and personality to an otherwise forgotten moment in the history of the Great Depression, the Roosevelts, and the beginning of federal housing projects. With an ear to its present community, AHI has continued the important work of documenting the history of this pioneering project. These tapes and their transcriptions are available to the public in AHI’s archive building in Arthurdale, West Virginia. AHI plans to create an online archive space for ease of use and access by anyone interested in the history of Arthurdale.

Meredith Dreistadt, AmeriCorps Member and acting archivist at Arthurdale Heritage, Inc.

Community Archiving Profile: Community-driven Archives Programs in the Buncombe County Public Library System

Katherine Calhoun Cutshall and Zoe Rhine, Buncombe County Public Library

The staff of the North Carolina Room at Pack Memorial Library, located in downtown Asheville, NC, is always on the lookout for new ways to engage the public in our work. Until 2009, when the collection first moved into a space of its own, (separate from adult reference) there had not been much in the way of these efforts. Searching for inspiration, staff encountered *Archives Alive: Expanding Engagement with Public Library Archives and Special Collections* by Diantha Dow Schull. In this volume of case studies, Schull sought out how both public and university libraries (as well as small museums and historical societies) found creative, low budget solutions for engaging in new projects and programs that worked to connect collections with communities.

The biggest take-away from Schull's work for North Carolina Room staff was the concept of community-driven archives projects. Community-driven or community-based archives being collections created by and for members of a specific community (whether defined by geography, race, culture or class). Community-driven projects aim to increase engagement, because community members will likely want to take an active part in gathering the historical and contemporary heritage of their own community. The collection, under perfect circumstances, comes back fairly turn-key, with staff, in our case, entering the information into our database.

The original plan for the North Carolina Room's community-based archives project aimed to join our special collections "branch," located within Pack Memorial Library (the central, downtown Asheville branch), with the eleven outlying libraries in the system acting as outreach arms. According to plan, each community library would become the center of all activity for a geographically-defined, community-based archives project. This plan helped increase access and visibility of the North Carolina Collection for patrons across the county, but also outlying branch staff, who are not all as familiar as they could be with the North Carolina Room, our resources, and collections goals.

Over time, the North Carolina Room has engaged with the concept of community-driven archives in two distinctly different ways, and, so far, completed projects with three different communities, two defined by geography and one defined by race. Before beginning this type of outreach, our archive held scarcely little about the rural communities surrounding Asheville, nor did it fully represent the history of women,

people of color, or working-class families. Our goal was that by partnering with branch libraries and community members to seek out different materials, our collections would become more diverse. Once we began community-driven projects, the diversity of our collections increased quite naturally. For the first time, staff were not relying on in-the-know donors, rather, they were seeking out materials from people who may not even know that the North Carolina Room exists.

The North Carolina Room's first community-driven archives project was titled simply, the "North Asheville History Project." To begin, North Carolina Room staff mounted an exhibit of material pertaining to North Asheville community of items already in our collection at the North Asheville Branch Library as a means to garner interest. Two signup sheets were made available at the circulation desk, one for those interested in becoming volunteer interviewers, and another for those interested in being interviewed. After some time, community members were invited to an informational meeting and oral history training. Interviewers were provided with recording equipment, questionnaires, and oral history donation forms via a backpack that could be checked out at the branch. The library branch made their community room available for interviews, unless people preferred to be interviewed in their home. In addition to individual interviews, community members were invited to participate in an "Ask Your Elders" roundtable discussion. Throughout the interviewing process, there were two scanning days held at the branch allowing residents a chance to loan a digital copy of their photos to the North Carolina Collection. A final year-end program that included several project participants was given at the Lord Auditorium at Pack Memorial Library because of its larger capacity.

After evaluating the victories and pitfalls of the North Asheville pilot project, staff were able to create a standard protocol for continuing community-based archiving with other communities and library branches. This protocol is based largely on UNC Chapel Hill's Southern Oral History Project techniques, procedures, and forms. The North Carolina Room has now completed two projects with these procedures: 1) the North Asheville project, and 2) the very successful Fairview project which garnered more than 45 individual interviews (and continues to grow).

The North Carolina Room's current Community History project breaks from the geography-based community mold, and thus forced staff to modify our protocol to best achieve our goals. This year, recognizing the tremendous absence of African American representation in our collections, staff decided to reach out to Buncombe County's African American community with the "Black Asheville History Project." The major difference in this project is there is no specific branch to partner with for outreach and interview space. This led us to a partnership with Buncombe County's Community

Engagement Office, a team working directly with historically marginalized communities to ensure equitable access to county services. Given the African American community's historically damaged relationship with the library system, in particular the F.A. Sondley



History Harvest promotional card, NC Room, Pack Library

Reference Library (the predecessor to the North Carolina Room), we made special efforts to do long-term outreach and be conscious of community concerns about exploitative practices. This also led to a change in project format.

In November 2019 North Carolina Room staff and volunteers hosted our inaugural series of “History

Harvests” based on the protocol from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. This new format led us to condensing what would have been a process over several weeks into just a couple of afternoons. Working with the Community Engagement Team, we invited hundreds of community members for an afternoon that included a community round table discussion and plenty of time to scan photos. Digital copies and originals were returned to the owners on the spot.

Each of these formats for community-driven archives projects has their pros and cons, and North Carolina Room staff are still figuring out some of the kinks in our protocols for each. The primary lesson we have learned, is that each community-based project will be different, because each community is different. The most important thing is to be prepared to be flexible and encounter some challenges along the way.

Our recurring challenges:

- Those who are willing to transcribe interviews are far scarcer than those willing to interview. You will probably want to find funds for professional transcription.

- It is probably best to find a community member willing to head up the project. This both allows the community more agency and takes pressure off library staff. These projects can become all-consuming if you let them.
- All people involved in the project should be as informed as they can be about all aspects of the process, including interviewing, scanning photos, permanent donations, deed of gift/loan form language, etc.
- Recruiting hard to reach folks, in particular, those in assisted living facilities or those who may be interested but have moved away from their home community.

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Zoe Rhine recently retired as the Special Collections Librarian at the North Carolina Room at Pack Library.

Community Archiving Profile: Mountain People, Mountain Lives Oral History Project

Elizabeth McRae and Alex Macaulay, Western Carolina University

For the past five years, history faculty at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC, have collaborated with students at a local high school on the Mountain People, Mountain Lives Oral History Project. Beginning each January, Drs. Elizabeth McRae and Alex Macaulay

conduct a series of workshops, preparing students at Smoky Mountain High School to research, organize, and conduct oral interviews with a wide range of local people. In May, the participants scatter throughout their small mountain community to record and conserve the memories of men and women from multiple backgrounds

with a multitude of experiences. To date, forty-eight students have conducted seventy-five interviews. Fifty-four of these have been transcribed with audio and transcripts available via Western Carolina University's Hunter Library website (<https://tinyurl.com/mountainlives>). The interview subjects cut across class, racial, gender, and generational boundaries as students have recorded the accounts of long time residents, recent immigrants, African Americans, Latinos, farmers, nurses, preachers, teachers, veterans, entertainers, activists, and professional athletes. They sat and listened as interviewees from the ages of twenty-five to ninety-six shared the broad experiences of Appalachian women and men who fought in wars, danced at Woodstock, and struggled through hard times.

These interviews preserve the unique memories, traditions, lives, stories, and customs of men and women who have made history, but do not always show up by name in history books or history classes. As part of this process, the participants come to



From left, Smoky Mountain High School students Lucy McRae, Sydney Rice, Natalie Parris, Michael Todd, Anna Morgan and Lee Macaulay are shown with the poster presentation of “Mountain People, Mountain Lives,” presented at the 2019 Oral History Association annual meeting.

appreciate not only the complexity and diversity of history, but of their surrounding community as well. It reminds some and reveals to others that friends, families, neighbors, and themselves are part of a much larger world with members who have shaped and are shaped by historical forces. They come to realize and appreciate that big stories happen in small places, which expands their view of the world, their Appalachian community, and their own place in each.

Early on, the students recognize the responsibility they have to not only the people they speak with, but to the larger community as well. Interviewers and interviewees alike know that their contributions mean a great deal to the men and women who live and work here, but they also understand that their recorded conversations have and will play a role in many people's current and future perceptions of Appalachian people and culture. In this regard, this project emphasizes that Appalachian lives are both rooted in their place and shaped by national and international experiences. For academics and participants alike, it promotes a substantial reimagining of Appalachia and its inhabitants, from a region and people traditionally defined primarily by their isolation to a potentially boundless place with an identity not limited by geography, race, religion, class, politics, sexuality, or nationality.

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