

Appalachian Curator

Volume 4, Issue 3, Winter 2024



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

Volume 4, Issue 3, Winter 2024

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 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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Editor's Column

By Gene Hyde (UNC Asheville) and Liz Harper (Western Carolina University)

Welcome to the Winter 2024 issue of the *Appalachian Curator*. This issue features several articles about collections from institutions in Ohio and Pennsylvania. Jasper-Waugh Quasebarth describes the Appalachian collections at Ohio State University's Center for Folklore Studies, while Harrison Wick writes about the digitization of the James Dougherty Collection at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Stewart Plein of West Virginia University presents a fascinating example of her scholarship on how publishers portrayed Appalachia on book covers, examining various editions of Charles Neville Buck's novel *The Call of the Cumberlands* to illustrate how local color was presented. Kellen Carpenter from Western Carolina University describes the collaborative effort between WCU and the University of North Carolina Asheville to develop the Southern Appalachian Digital Collections website.

Three articles are about Appalachian archivists. Jeremy A. Smith of ETSU writes a warm welcome to two new archivists, Kim Larmee at University of Virginia at Wise and Sarah Insalaco, the Flood Recovery Archivist at the Hindman Settlement School. Tim Binkley of Berea College welcomes Emily Hilliard in the newly created position of Berea College Folklorist. And I write about our newly funded Bill and Alice Hart internship at UNC Asheville, which funds UNC Asheville students to work on Appalachian collections in Special Collections. The first Hart Internship student is Deb Erwin. Welcome to all our new regional archivists!

And, last but by no means least, we have our usual column on New Acquisitions in Appalachian Archives.

Do you have an update about your repository? A new initiative to share with the Appalachian archival community? A collection you'd like to highlight? New resources to share? We would love to hear from you and help you share your stories with your colleagues. If you have a story suggestion or want to submit an article, please contact Liz Harper (harpere@email.wcu.edu) or Gene Hyde (ghyde@unca.edu).

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

Currently, the digital assets of Special Collections at Western Carolina University (WCU) and the University of North Carolina and Asheville (UNCA) live together on the website of the Southern

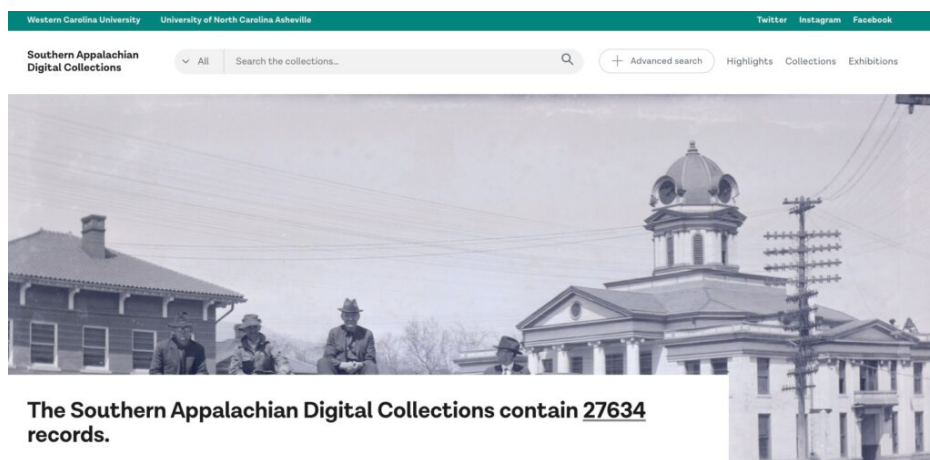
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Southern Appalachian Digital Collections

By Kellen Carpenter, Digital Scholarship Librarian, Western Carolina University

Currently, the digital assets of Special Collections at Western Carolina University (WCU) and the University of North Carolina and Asheville (UNCA) live together on the website of the Southern Appalachian Digital Collections Partnership alongside the bold mission statement that declares: “The Southern Appalachian Digital Collections Partnership was founded in 2019 to host centralized online access to unique regionally focused digitized materials that document the history and culture of Southern Appalachia.” It’s a mission statement that gestures at a recent history of change and hints at bigger plans for the future.

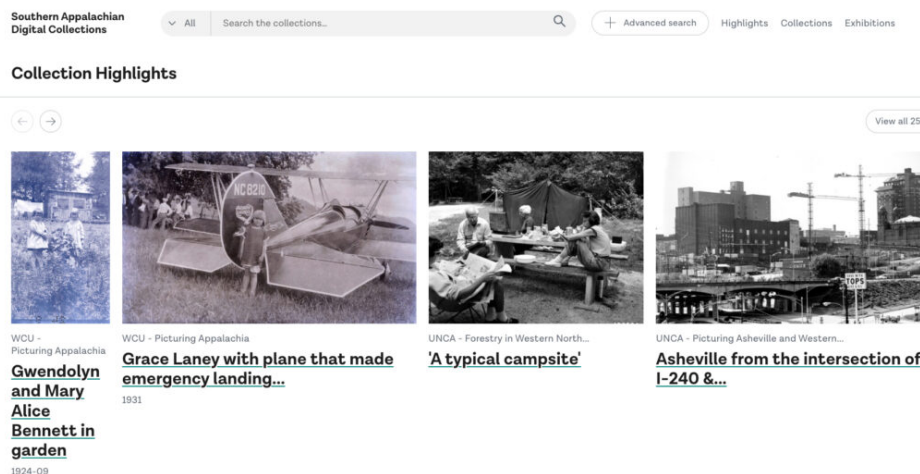


Southern Appalachian Digital Collections home screen

In 2019, Western Carolina University and the University of North Carolina at Asheville formed a partnership to consider a joint solution for managing and displaying digital assets created by the Special Collections department within each institution’s library. While both universities had been independently pursuing a program of digitization within their Special Collections, neither was satisfied with the way they were organizing and displaying these digitized items. Leveraging the existing relationship between WCU and UNCA libraries that exists as part of the Western North Carolina Library Network (WNCLN), the two institutions agreed to pursue a tighter partnership and a joint platform for digital assets. With the help of a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant, the

libraries were able to hire a consultant to help define a specification of what the libraries needed out of a digital platform, a plan for soliciting and evaluating potential vendors, and a general plan of attack.

This strategy led the partnership to Qi, a content and collections management platform that was primarily used by museums and galleries and had seen little adoption and use in library special collections. Qi, however, met our specification better than a lot of products and platforms explicitly aimed at archives and libraries. The developer of Qi, Keepthinking, agreed to work with us to customize the platform configuration and develop a website to effectively showcase our materials.



Some of the collections from WCU and UNC Asheville on the SADC site.

As with any large-scale migration, moving existing digital assets onto the new platform was a massive undertaking. All-told, over 25,000 items, including images, pdfs, audio and video files were extracted from the older system and eventually ported over to Qi. Of course, the process of moving all of your stuff at once only brings into stark relief the inconsistencies of process and naming that creep in during a decades old digitization program. While migration is a challenge, it is also a golden window to make changes, and the opportunity to conduct significant metadata remediation was hard to pass up: If you're moving all your boxes from one house to another, you might as well correct the labels on the boxes while you've got your hands on them. That's a metaphor that probably doesn't give enough credit to the effort and work behind such a massive metadata cleanup.

From the beginning of the development process, the Southern Appalachian Digital Collections (SADC) Partnership was never intended to only include WCU and UNCA. Even as early as picking the name, the partnership aimed to be a potential gateway and destination for the whole southern Appalachian region and not just western North Carolina. With that in mind, the website and underlying back-end organization of Qi were designed to accommodate multiple institutions. While the holdings of a given institution can still be searched for and viewed separately from the holdings of other institutions, the shared repository means that materials on a shared topic, person, or place are easily viewable alongside each other, regardless of the parent institution. The presumptive end-goal has always been a platform that transcended the individual founding institutions and placed the spotlight on the region’s history and culture. To that end, the SADC Partnership is seeking partners to grow and expand.

Biltmore Forest School surveying class

Description

Dr. Carl Schenck and a group of Biltmore Forest School students use surveying equipment during a class out in the field.

Details

Format Photographs	Type Stillimage
Date Date: 1898-1913 Date digitized: 2011-11-11	Extent Dimension: 8" x 10"
Subject - Topic Biltmore Forest School -- Students Forestry schools and education Schenck, Carl Alwin, 1868-1955 Surveying Surveying -- Instruments	Time Period 1900s 1910s
Source institution University of North Carolina Asheville	Identifier Nfnc_0275



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A photo from UNC Asheville’s forestry collections, showing how metadata is displayed in SADC

With WCU and UNCA established with the SADC, it’s time that the partnership takes a wider view of the natural and cultural heritage landscape of the region and begin to grow. The partnership offers a way for organizations of the region, particularly smaller ones, to share group purchasing power for licensing the Qi content management system, share digitization capabilities, and share staff expertise. While collective cost-sharing is at the root of this partnership, the active operating principle is intended to be one of cooperation and mutual aid. Prospective member institutions should reside within Southern Appalachia (Western North Carolina, North Georgia, Eastern Tennessee, South Carolina, Southwest Virginia); have a mission to support and preserve the literature, culture, music, or historical

heritage of the region; contribute collections to digitize and/or accession into the shared content management system; and commit to pay annual fees and proportional costs of joint projects.

Any library, archive, museum, or other cultural heritage institution that meets these criteria and has the relevant collections, staffing, and structure to contribute to the partnership should consider the SADC as way to effectively publish digital assets online and spread their reach. A steering committee composed of representatives of all member institutions provides guidance for future projects and growth of the SADC partnership in an egalitarian and democratic decision-making and governance process.


WCU - Picturing Appalachia

Baptism on Fires or Tusquitee Creek

Description

Gideon Thomas Laney (1889-1976), also known as Gid, was the prominent photographer for the Brasstown and Sweetwater areas of Clay County, North Carolina in the first part of the 20th century. Trained as a portrait photographer and motivated by the need for flexible work after the death of his wife Martha Creech Ison in 1929 left him a single parent, Gideon borrowed his sister's bellows camera and began to photograph the people and events of his community. He sent his film off to be developed by Weaver Studio in Copperhill, Tennessee and later by Crisp's Studio in Murphy, North Carolina. From the negatives, he made 6 cent postcard prints using his in-home darkroom.

Details



Share ◀ Permalink ↻ Copyright © Download ⏴

Another example of how images are displayed in SADC, this one from WCU.

Importantly, the SADC website and underlying content-management system are continually being improved. The Qi platform is being actively developed and the SADC has witnessed several dramatic quality-of-life improvements implemented. In addition to a responsive developer and an active user's group, the SADC partnership has actively sought to fund development of features specific to the partnership's needs. This emphasis on infrastructure and design has left the SADC with a blueprint for growth and the space and structure to welcome new members. With its focus on collaboration and cooperation, the Southern Appalachian Digital Collections Partnership stands ready to continue its mission of building regionally oriented, historically significant collections of broad cultural and research interest extend online access to unique resource materials of the natural and cultural history of the Southern Appalachian region.

Charles Neville Buck's *The Call of the Cumberlands*:

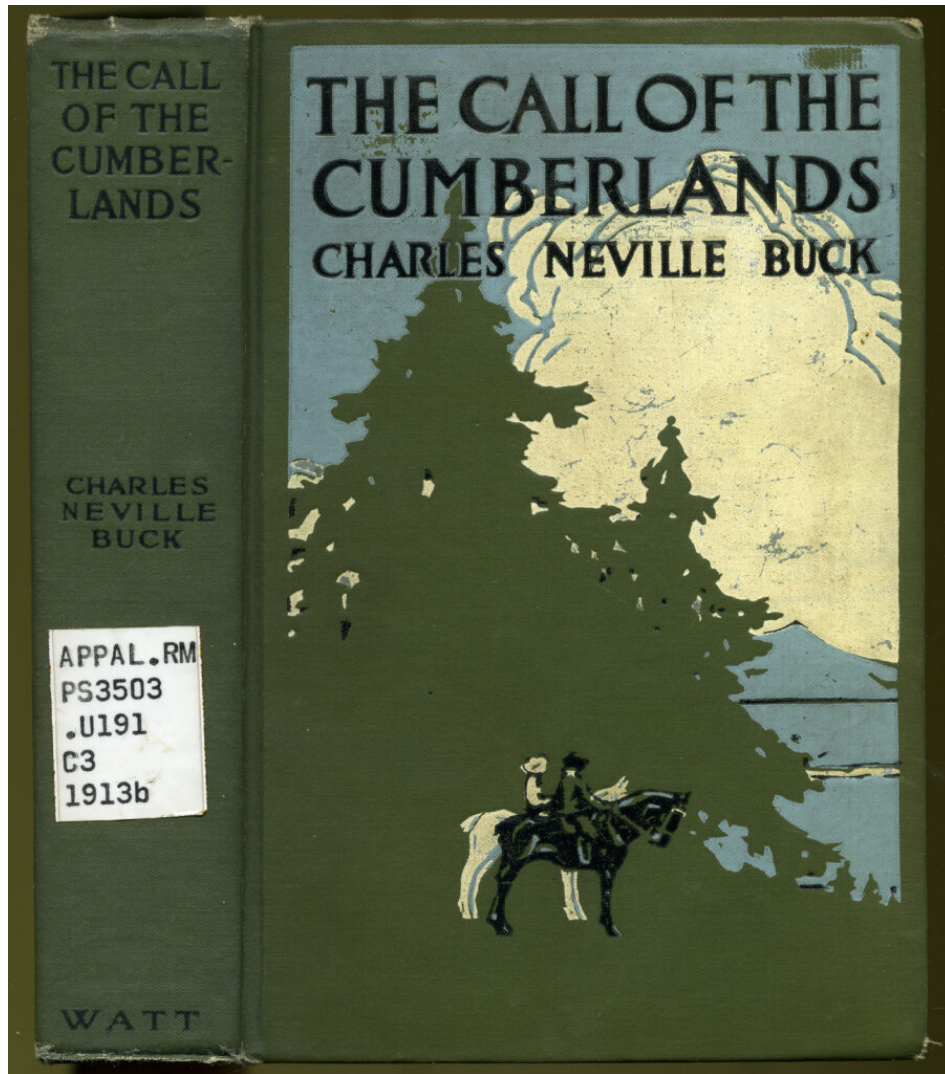
The Importance of Multiple Editions of the Same Book

By Stewart Plein, Curator, Rare Books, Printed Resources, Appalachian Collection, West Virginia University

In my role as curator of rare books and the Appalachian book collection at WVU, I'm always on the lookout for books that add research value to our collections. One of my favorite go to resources is often referred to as Appalachian Local Color Literature, popular during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. I consider this time period to be of exceptional importance to Appalachian Studies as a documentation of a national perception of Appalachia and its people during this time. These books represent the birth of the Appalachian stereotype, and while stereotype is often considered to have arisen within the pages of these novels and non-fiction works, stereotype is also represented on the covers of books. These cover designs are the initial image a buyer sees, first to grab the prospective purchasers' attention with design and detail in multiple colors, second, to provide the book's setting, (if the rhododendron is on the cover it's a sure bet the book is about Appalachia), and third, to provide context with a depiction of an event or image that sets the scene, whether it's romance, moonshining, hunting, feuding, or any number of standard Appalachian tropes that can be depicted on the cover of a book in a single eye grabbing image.

In this article we'll be looking at three editions of the same book: what they tell us about Appalachia and why the study of the same text in different editions or formats is important to the study of Appalachia. You would not be alone if right about now you're asking yourself why? Why is it important to collect different copies of the same book? I hope I can answer that question.

The books:

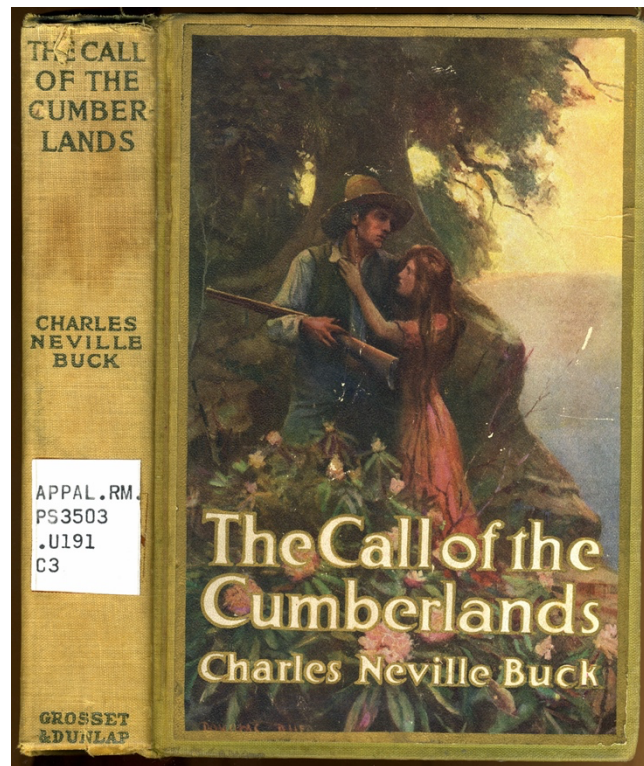


The Call of the Cumberlands, first edition. New York: W. J. Watt & Co., 1913

The First Edition:

This cover design depicts the immensity of the Appalachian wilderness. It serves as a reflection of the initial reactions of travelers, newly arriving in Appalachia from eastern urban centers, what we might call sight seers or tourists today. This cover design displays Appalachia as a large and uninhabited wilderness. Everything is outsized on the cover, the big sky with billowing clouds, the evergreens, and the mountains in the background. This perspective is enhanced by the miniaturization of the travelers on horseback. Their smallness within the natural surroundings helps to convey the idea that travelers were small in comparison and lost in such a vast wilderness. As America became more urban, rural

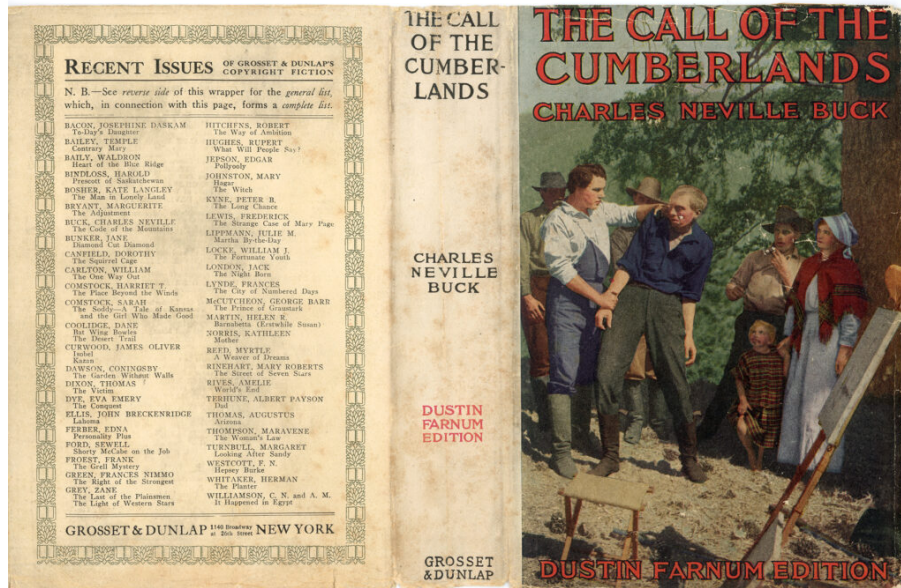
places like Appalachia seemed static. Travelers from big cities looked at Appalachia and felt lost from many different perspectives. This included an appearance of lack in general; such as a shortage of schools, a lack of stores selling goods like clothing and food, a perceived lack of community norms, like courts or policing. This cover beautifully and simply depicts travelers lost in the immensity of the Appalachian wilderness.



Call of the Cumberlands, Popular reprint edition, New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1913

The Popular Reprint Edition:

The Call of the Cumberlands was so popular among the reading population that it made the very first bestseller lists. Because of its popularity, it was reprinted with a different cover depicting characters from the story. Here we see a lovelorn lass of the hills, clinging to a man who looks very uncertain about her attentions.



The Call of the Cumberlands, Photoplay edition. Illustrated with scenes from the photoplay (silent film) produced and copyrighted by Pallas Pictures, 1916.

The Reprint Publisher: Grosset & Dunlap

Notably a reprint publisher, Grosset and Dunlap was also known to publish first editions, particularly in its early days. As a reprint publisher, Grosset & Dunlap purchased the plates from the original publisher, in this case, W. J. Watts. The book was printed in its entirety from the original plates and in a move that has since confused many book collectors, the title page lists the original publisher, not Grosset & Dunlap. Their name is only seen at the base of the book's spine.

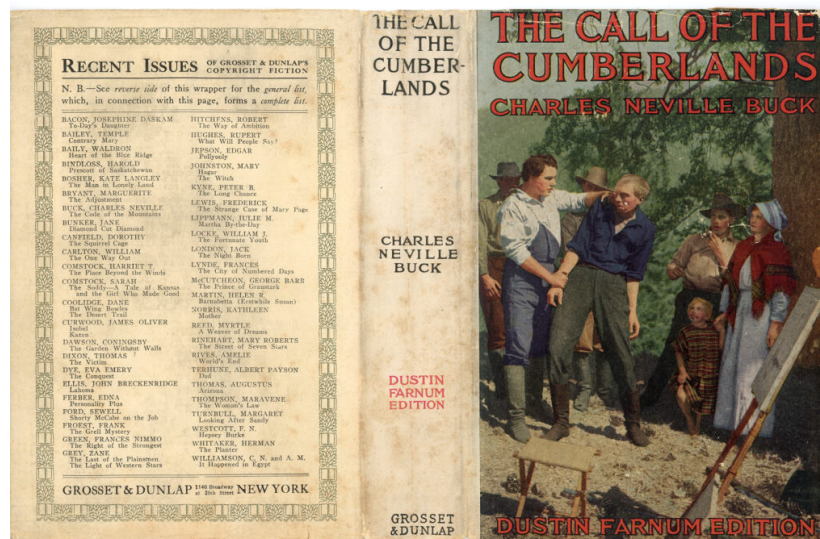
Grosset & Dunlap editions, once disregarded, have since become important because of the entire duplication of the original text, but also because they were the first to reprint a best seller or popular book in a cheaper edition within the first year of its publication. Grosset & Dunlap's reprints were hard bound editions but today, they can be considered as the forerunner of a paperback following its run as a first edition. This practice documented the publishers' effort to produce lesser editions in both quality and cost in the mid to later 20th century.

One thing to note is though the original publishers, Watts, owned the book cover design which was commissioned by them, the majority of the time that was not conveyed to the reprint publishers, leading the reprint house to select a new image. In the case of the Grosset & Dunlap edition, the

frontispiece illustration, the first one you see when you open the book, has been reprinted and used as the cover of the reprint edition. An inexpensive and easy approach to cover art.

Photoplay edition:

What is a photoplay? It's a term contemporary to the period of a popular novel that was made into a silent film. The book often contains stills from the silent film in which actors and scenes are included as the illustrations. Gone are the artists' depictions of the earlier publications. In their place are stills from the film. Movie tie-ins are familiar to us today. Novels you may have already read have been turned into movies and reprinted with the actors on the book's cover. This is the same thing, except scenes, or movie stills, from the film are also included as illustrations. For me, I find collecting photoplay editions to be of great importance. In most instances, the silent film has not survived. The photoplay edition is often the only evidence that remains of the silent film version of an Appalachian Local Color novel. Without this record we may never know that a film was produced from the novel, who starred in it, how costumes represented the dress of Appalachian people, how sets documented the Appalachia region, both from an outdoor perspective as well as an interior scene in the home, or the publicity and marketing of the film through movie posters.



Dust jacket for the photoplay edition of *The Call of the Cumberlands*

THE DUST JACKET for the photoplay edition:

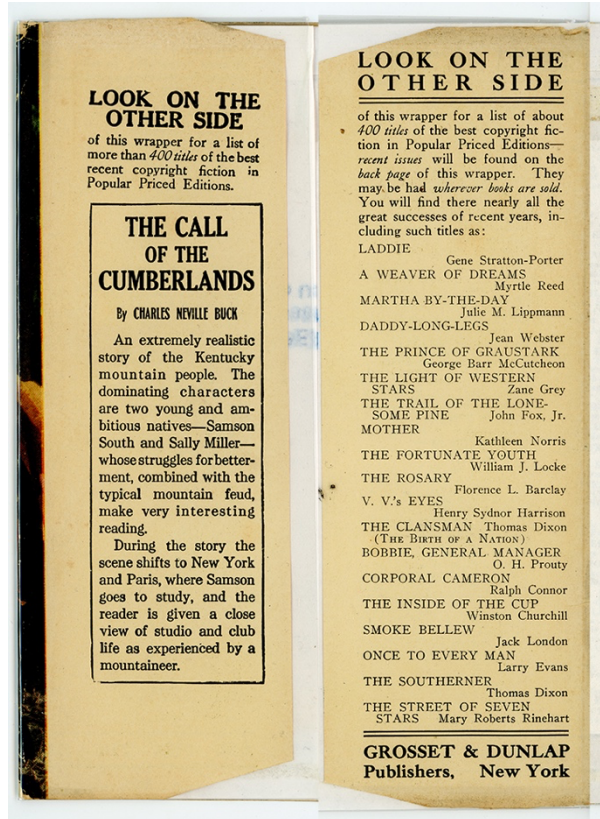
Among these three editions, the dust jacket for the photoplay edition is the only survivor, but it tells us a great deal about the publicity and marketing of the silent film version of a popular novel. Many people throw dust jackets away, considering them a nuisance, but dust jackets are critically important to our knowledge of the book. Take this dust jacket for example. The cover bears a colorized scene from the film, which is of interest as all silent films were black and white. The back cover lists new books offered by the publisher.



Interior jacket, Call of the Cumberlands photoplay edition

Turn the jacket over and you have a full list of the books available from this publishing house. Many times, though not in this instance, prices were also included. This could be considering a mini catalog advertising new titles available to order.

Dust Jacket Flaps:



Dust jacket flaps, Call of the Cumberlands photoplay edition

The first thing seen on the front flap is a “blurb,” a publicity statement about the book: “An extremely realistic story of the Kentucky mountain people . . . Whose struggles for betterment, combined with the *typical* mountain feud, make very interesting reading.” (Italics added by author)

The dust jacket flaps fold around the book to keep it secure. The jacket itself is designed to protect the book, but it also serves as a form of advertisement. The flaps are no different. Flaps are often printed with a description of the novel, as seen here, and provides a peek at other titles that might interest the reader.

No space on the dust jacket is wasted. Every space on the jacket was used. It functions as an informational guide to the book itself, as the publishers’ catalog, and as a marketing tool designed to inform customers and encourage purchasing in a Spotify sort of way – if you liked this book, you might like. . .

Inside the photoplay



Silent Film Still Photo Illustration: Winifred Kingston as the Hill Woman, Sally Spicer

The still above features the lead actress, Winifred Kingston, as character Sally Spicer. Sally picks up a rifle to protect herself from unwanted male attentions after a rape attempt. Although the depiction is meant to make Sally look like she can take care of herself, the fact that she holds the rifle upside down depicts otherwise. The single word caption describes her as *Lonely*. She is shown barefoot in a Hollywood costume meant to represent homespun clothing appropriate for the time period. We would never know any of this without scenes from the film.

Tropes:

This list represents some of the common Appalachian tropes that appear in the book and the film, but are widespread in the genre of Appalachian Local Color Literature. This is where the stereotype of Appalachia began and it is still prevalent today.

- Feuding Families: Two violently feuding Appalachia families inspired by... the infamous Hatfield McCoy feud.
- Hillbilly dialect: Often used in the silent era, example: "Hit's" for "Its."
- Attempted Rape: She grabs a shotgun and fends him off.

- Politically Incorrect Hero: Main character justifies his decision to study art abroad while fiancée is left behind by saying that *there's no reason for women to go to school*. (Italics added by author).
- Torches and Pitchforks: Feudists are chased with torches and bloodhounds.
- <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Film/TheCallOfTheCumberlands>

Questions to consider?

Why is it important to collect different copies or editions of the same book?

How do these books aid in our understanding of Appalachia?

Why is the dust jacket important? Will you ever throw out a dust jacket again? I hope not!

Conclusion: The Importance of Multiple Editions

The answer to our question? We need all of them. Each book tells us something different, each book informs us, each book reflects a different perspective, even though they are the same work by the same author. By their individuality they reflect similar but unique concepts about the representation and the depiction of Appalachia and its people that came into prominence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and remains as the basis of the stereotypes still prevalent today

Stewart Plein is a scholar of book history that pertains exclusively to publishers' bookbindings. She examines publishers' representations of Appalachia as depicted in books with decorative covers and jackets that were commissioned by the publisher as a marketing tool.

Appalachian Collections at the Ohio State University Center for Folklore Studies Archive

by Jasper Waugh-Quasebarth, Archivist, OSU Center for Folklore Studies

The Folklore Archive of the Center for Folklore Studies at The Ohio State University is a repository of international and regional folklore, regional history, and expressive culture comprised of twenty-three main collections stemming from the ethnographic and text-based research of faculty, students, and professional folklorists of the university. As an extension of the university's land-grant mission, the Folklore Archive seeks to serve Ohio counties through the documentation, preservation, and application of folklore materials. With thirty-three counties (over a third of Ohio's counties) within the bounds of the ARC regional designation and a historical focus on Appalachian in Folklore Studies, the archive contains a trove of information collected on Appalachian folk culture. As part of our current efforts to further develop and generate collections of Appalachian folklore, this article aims to introduce our existing collections to researchers, educators, artists, and activists of Appalachian Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, and beyond in hopes of sparking future collaboration.

The Folklore Archive houses collections of ethnographic materials, ephemera, grey literature and media related to folklore in a broad sense. Public and academic folklorists affiliated with the Center as well as student pursuing coursework and research in folklore at the undergraduate and graduate levels have been the primary collectors. As a result, collections are deeply individualized to the theoretical, geographic, and methodological interests of collectors.

As the onetime home of the Ohio Folklore Society and the American Folklore Society, the Folklore Archive became a repository for the ethnographic materials and publications of public folklorists working in Ohio from the mid to late 20th century. The Center for Folklore Studies Collection (CFS) has materials related to the organization of the Ohio Folklore Society and the grassroots connections between folklorists working in Appalachian Ohio, who saw the region as a wellspring of folkloric material in its musical, craft, and occupational traditions. From 1977 to 1982, the Ohio Arts Council funded field research into traditional music forms, industrial occupational folklore, craft and folk art, and religious practice,



A sample of publications from the Ohio Valley Folk Research Project, a mid-20th century Ohio Valley folklore collection initiative. Folklore Archives, Center for Folklore Studies, Ohio State University. Ohio Valley Folk Research Project Collection. Box 1.

resulting in manuscripts, tapes of interviews and performances, and photographs, much of which has been digitized. This collection (OAC) also contains a digitized version of the film *Simple Gifts: Aspects of Ohio Folklore* (1972) and *Say Amen: Portraits of Southern Ohio Folklife* (1983), which arose from public folklore research in the state. Additionally, the archive hosts a near-complete collection of the publications of the Ohio Valley Folk Research Project (OVF). This project collected folk narratives of place, foodways, and music throughout the Ohio River Valley, publishing wallpaper-bound copies through the Ross County Historical Society from the early 1950s through the 1960s.

Through independent research, faculty and staff of the university generated collections related to Appalachia. The Francis Lee Utley Record Collection (URC) consists of commercial recordings imprinted on disc media from the early to mid 20th century, including rare recordings and album art. From popular media dealing in stereotypical images of Appalachian folk music to rare anthologies of activist music, the collection demonstrates the breadth and diversity of Appalachian commercial folk recordings. The Hank Arbaugh (HA) collection developed in collaboration with faculty and students contains recordings, ephemera, and illustrations of the Central and Southern Ohio traditional music community as documented by Columbus-based musician Hank Arbaugh. The Patrick B. Mullen

Collection (PM) contains materials collected during his fieldwork with the American Folklife Center while working on the 1978 Blue Ridge Parkway Folklife Project.



A selection of materials from folklorist Rosemary Joyce's research with Southeast Ohio basket makers in the late 20th century. Folklore Archives, Center for Folklore Studies, Ohio State University.
Rosemary Joyce Collection. Box 6.

The Rosemary Joyce Collection (RJ) is made up of photographs, fieldnotes, maps, and other fieldwork materials stemming from her fieldwork with artisans in Southeast Ohio in the mid to late 20th century. Center for Folklore Studies staff, students, and affiliates also generated the Appalachian Studies Network Collection (ASN) which documents the educational, economic, social, environmental and political factors that influenced Appalachian students in their decisions to attend college at Ohio State from 2011-2015. The collection contains interviews with students and information collected in site visits to twelve counties in Appalachian Ohio.

Through their coursework, students have produced most of our archival holdings. Reflecting an earlier methodology of only collecting discrete units of generic folklore, the Genre Card Collection (GRC) contains instances of genres of folklore (proverbs, sayings, practices, recipes, etc.) often attributed to specific people and places from the mid 20th century, many from Appalachia. With a turn in Folklore Studies toward context and performance, student projects generated in folklore classes began to include full interviews, transcripts, photographs, and reports, which comprise the Student

Ethnographic Projects Collection (SEP). This collection contains contributions from over 11,000 students from 1967 to today. This original research covers a vast area of topics related to Appalachia, including place-based legends, ghosts and cryptids, migration, music, foodways, family life, mining, and storytelling usually focused on Appalachian Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia.



Former Ohio Field School students Lydia Smith and Jacob Kopcienski interview Brent Bailey on the significance of the Rendville Cemetery in Perry County, Ohio. Folklore Archives, Center for Folklore Studies, Ohio State University. Ohio Field School Collection.

Finally, our ongoing service ethnographic methods project, The Ohio Field School (OFS), continues to generate archival holdings around the questions related to changing environment and place in Appalachian Ohio. Based on seven years of collaborative fieldwork with community grassroots organizations, the collection contains interviews, photographs, ephemera, and field reports generated by graduate and undergraduate students in collaboration with community partners.

With diverse collection practices comes diverse challenges to access, digitization, and organization. The CFS Folklore Archives is in the process of re-cataloging, describing, digitizing, and making its collections more accessible to researchers and the public. To schedule a visit to the CFS Folklore Archives or for more information about individual collections, please contact CFS Archivist Jasper Waugh-Quasebarth at waugh-quasebarth.1@osu.edu.

Digitization of the James Dougherty Collection at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP)

By Dr. Harrison Wick, Special Collections Librarian and University Archivist

Technological obsolescence and “file not found” are the prospects for many collections if digital conversion is not carried out during the lifecycle of electronic records, data files, and especially audio and video recordings. After conducting an in-house survey of the Special Collections and University Archives at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) in Indiana, Pennsylvania, it was determined that record group and manuscript group collections contained more than 5,000 audio cassette tapes and 2,500 video cassette tapes, which does not include reel-to-reel tapes and other



Unprocessed media format in the IUP collections.

formats. That number of audio and video cassette tapes does not include electronic files that were stored on disk including 3.5 and 5.25 inch floppy, or CD and DVD, which are next on the obsolete media list. Without constant vigilance and the timely conversion of audio, data, and video files to modern formats, recordings and information stored on obsolete media can become lost in time as media continues to deteriorate, and software and technology evolve.

There are multiple solutions to these concerns, including planned conversion of media formats to the latest technology. This can be accomplished inexpensively in-house for specific formats, such as 3.5

inch floppy disk, CD and DVD, audio cassette tape, and video cassette tape (VHS). The problems that can be encountered is the available technology, finding a functional audio cassette player or video cassette player (VCR) can be challenging. However, it may be advantageous to send larger collections of media to an outside vendor who would create MP3 and WAV audio files and MP4 video files. The biggest concern is knowing what type of data files will be accessible in the future, current data files including .doc, .docx and .pdf may become obsolete in a relatively short period of time. The secret is public awareness, be aware of the different types of media stored in your collections, and plan to convert these formats before it is too late. There are many outside vendors who can accomplish the digital conversion of obsolete media, but consider the expense of sending 7,500 tapes. In many cases, grant funding and donations can be obtained to help offset the cost of digital conversion for specific projects. However, writing and receiving grant funding can be challenging and a long-term process.



Audio cassette tapes in Manuscript Group 30

A case in point is the Dr. James Dougherty Collection (Manuscript Group 176) which contains many audio and video recordings of conferences, interviews, and documentaries. These recordings include the history of IUP, social movements, and particularly labor history in the Appalachian Region. This collection contains more than 100 audio and video recordings in a variety of formats that are in the process of being digitized and converted to new MP3 and WAV audio files and MP4 video files. Eventually, all of these new recordings will be accessible as part the Dr. James Dougherty Collection.

In an ideal situation, these audio and video recordings could be downloaded as part of an institutional repository, but these platforms can be expensive to maintain. An inexpensive solution is to make these recordings available as part of the IUP Special Collections and University Archives website.

The secret is vigilance, when accepting “new” archival donations, it is imperative that archival repositories be aware of obsolete media formats. Do not be afraid of conducting a survey of existing collections to determine if you have data files and recordings on media formats that must be converted in a timely manner. There is limited time to consider digital conversion. Only then can steps be taken to convert these formats to new digital files in order to save audio and video recordings that may not be available anywhere else.



Audio cassette collection in the IUP Special Collections

The Bill and Alice Hart Appalachian archival internships at UNC Asheville

A few years ago Bill and Alice Hart donated their private library of Western North Carolina books and materials to Special Collections at UNC Asheville, as the *Appalachian Curator* reported several issues ago. This year, Bill and Alice Hart continued their generosity by creating the Bill and Alice Hart Internship for UNC Asheville students interested in working with Appalachian archives.

The first Bill and Alice Hart Intern began work this semester in UNC Asheville's Special Collections. Deb Irwin, a history major at UNC Asheville, was selected through a competitive process to be the first Hart Intern. Deb was able to meet the Harts in January when they came to campus to view an exhibit about the Hart Collection.

Hart Interns learn basic archival theory and put it into practice working with Appalachian archival collections. Deb will be processing a large photo collection of Asheville and Western North Carolina photos recently donated to UNC Asheville. She will also be writing an essay describing her internship that will be posted on our Special Collections blog.

The Bill and Alice Hart Internship will fund an intern each semester for a total of six semesters. The Internship is open to juniors and seniors who have shown a demonstrated interest in Appalachian history and culture, either through coursework or by faculty recommendation.



Deb Irwin, the inaugural Bill and Alice Hart Intern, meets Alice, Will, and Bill Hart in front of an exhibit about the Hart Collection in Blowers Gallery, Ramsey Library, UNC Asheville.

Berea College Welcomes Archivist Emily Hilliard

By Tim Binkley, Head of Special Collections and Archives

In July 2023, the Special Collections and Archives (SCA) department of Hutchins Library welcomed Emily Hilliard to our team. Emily is serving as Berea College Folklorist, a newly-funded position. She could have been stationed within other college programs and offices, but it seemed logical to the committee that created the position to give her direct access to SCA staff and resources. Of course, we agreed!

Emily is a folklorist, writer, and media producer with degrees from The University of Michigan (B.A.,



English Literature and Language and French and Francophone Studies) and The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (M.A., Folklore Studies). Prior to coming to Berea, Emily served Mid Atlantic Arts as Folk and Traditional Arts Program Director (2021-2023) and the West Virginia Humanities Council as State Folklorist and founding director of the West Virginia Folklife Program (2015-2021). She has also worked for Smithsonian Folkways Recordings and the National Council for the Traditional Arts. Of special note, Emily was a 2014-2015 Berea College Sound Archives Fellow.

Emily's published writings include *Making Our Future: Visionary Folklore and Everyday Culture in Appalachia* (UNC Press, 2022) and articles "Students of the Strikes" (*Dissent*, 2023), "Something Deeply Rooted: The Invisible Landscape of Breece D'J Pancake's Milton, West Virginia" (*Oxford American*, 2021), and "Written and Composed by Nora E. Carpenter': Song Lyric Scrapbooks, Home Recordings, and Self-Documentation" (*Southern Cultures*, 2016), which was based on her Berea Sound Archives Fellowship.

Emily's mission is to raise interest in the study of folklife and provide hands-on training and experience with the tools of her discipline, both on and beyond campus. She is already making great progress meeting students and colleagues, planning folklife events, giving presentations, and writing.

One of Emily's special interests is foodways. In October through December, SCA is inviting the public into our reading room to search the 550+ historic and regional cookbooks in our collection for spoonbread recipes and stories. We also hope to collect the same from our visitors. If you have a favorite spoonbread recipe or story that you would like to add to the archives, please contact Emily at hilliarde1@bera.edu.

The Appalachian Curator welcomes two new Appalachian archivists to the region

Kim Larmee is now the Archivist, Records Manager & Liaison Librarian at The University of Virginia's College at Wise. Larmee is a Certified Archivist with a BA in Criminal Justice (minor in History) from Indiana University and an MLIS from the University of Iowa with a Certification in Special Collections. She previously worked at the Iowa Women's Archive, the Science of Mind Archives and Library Foundation, and the Archive of American Art at the Smithsonian, and also spent a summer in Italy learning paper preservation and working on museum preservation and disaster recovery. Outside of work, when she's not walking and snuggling with her small 50 pound dog, Larmee is an avid reader and pickleball player.

Since August 2023, Sarah Insalaco has served as the Flood Recovery Archivist at the Hindman Settlement School, where she oversees all salvage and processing work on the school's archives, which were damaged in catastrophic floods of 2022. Sarah is a native of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and she received a Bachelor's degree in history from Marymount Manhattan College in New York City and a Master's degree in Archival Management and History from Simmons University in Boston. When not in the archives, Sarah enjoys exploring new hiking trails with her black lab Maisie, knitting, reading, and visiting historic sites.

Welcome Kim and Sarah!

– Jeremy A. Smith, Director of the Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University

What's new in Appalachian Special Collections?

New collections in regional repositories:

[Buncombe County Special Collections, Asheville](#)

[University of North Carolina Asheville](#)

[University of Tennessee at Chattanooga](#)

Buncombe County Special Collections, Asheville

Mary Mitchell Westall Large Collection on Westall Family History (1905-2016), additional accrual, MS294. Materials in this collection represent five generations of the family of Asheville builder James Manassas Westall (1861-1943). With the 1914 marriage of his son “Jack” to Mary Mitchell Wiley, the “hillbilly” Westall clan was united with the Tennessee business roots of Asheville hotelier Newton Pierce Chedester and the Virginia tidewater roots of the Arthur Luther Wiley family. Supported by historical genealogies, these photos, letters, scrapbooks, family stories and ephemera focus on upper-middle class family life in a late 19th-century suburban city. The original donation was made in 2007 with additional materials being added in 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2016. Buncombe County Special Collections received the final donation of materials for this collection in October 2022. This donation includes several hundred family letters, a recipe book/cookbook that belonged to Emma Chedester Wiley which was passed down to Mary Mitchell Wiley (Mrs. Jack Westall) and then to Mary M. Westall Large, scrapbooks and photo albums from the Arthur Luther Wiley family, additional printed materials relating to the Westall and Wiley families, and correspondence to Thomas Wolfe. Also included are annotated correspondence and photos of the women employed in the Jack Westall household at 44 Westall Avenue in the early 20th Century, an autographed copy of Thomas Wolfe’s “The Story of a Novel”, an autographed copy of a book by WASP Dot Swain Lewis, with a model of a statue she created for the WASP museum, and assorted Asheville memorabilia.

City of Asheville—Parks and Recreation (1970s-2010), MS440. Items in this collection include materials related to city parks, programs, and festivals through the years. Photos are of staff members, booths, and attendees at events such as Bele Chere, First Night, and holiday parades. This collection

highlights the Parks and Recreation facilities and programs through the years that have served the diverse population of Asheville.

Asheville City Council Records (1849-2021), MS442. This collection contains records of Asheville City Council meeting minutes dating back to 1849. Asheville City Council minutes 1849-Jun 24, 2008 are held on microfilm. Digital copies of the microfilm, as well as born-digital minutes, are also held on DVDs. [1890-1896](#) and [1896-1900](#) are available on archive.org.

BCSC Zine Collection (2015-2023), MS446. This collection assembled by BCSC staff contains zines (small-circulation self-published works typically with DIY, subculture origins) of local interest, either by creators local to the WNC region or centered on topics of local interest. As alternative publications produced outside of traditional publishing models, zines are generally intended for personal expression and/or knowledge sharing, especially by and among identities and communities that are not typically represented by mainstream publishing. Topics in this collection range widely, and include LGBTQ+ issues, identity politics, activism, anarchism, how-to, and more. Creators include individual artists as well as organizations that disseminate information within specific communities. Some of the contributors are Grace Crouch, DIYabled, Geddi Moore, Jessica White, co-founder of the Asheville Zine Fest in 2016(MS447), the Asheville Zine Fest, and BCSC Artist in Residence Miles Lamberson.

University of North Carolina Asheville

David Cohen Editorial Cartoon Collection_[M2021.03] – Contains hundreds of original editorial cartoons by David Cohen, who has drawn cartoons for the *Asheville Citizen-Times* since 1970. His cartoons have appeared in publications such as *The Funny Times* and on CD covers by such musicians as Carla Bley.

Holly Boswell Kindred Spirits Collection, [M2019.08] Holly Boswell (1950-2017) was a pioneering transgender activist, credited with being one of the earliest adopters of the term “transgender” and the creation of the transgender symbol. This collection contains Issues of *Gender Quest* from Spring 1998 to Autumn 2001, excerpts from writings on spirituality, and materials relating to the operation of Kindred Spirits including correspondence, meeting materials, financial documents regarding the organization’s status as a nonprofit, and materials relating to the construction of the Bodhi Tree House in Black Mountain, NC.

Art Loeb Trail Collection [M2022.01] – Contains documents, newspaper articles, maps, trail dedication materials, publications, correspondence, and other materials related to Art Loeb and the creation and dedication of the Art Loeb Trail.

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

The [Lookout Mountain Civilian Conservation Corps photographs](#) digital collection is comprised of 25 back and white photographs that document the environmental conservation and infrastructure improvements conducted by Civilian Conservation Corps crews on Lookout Mountain, Chattanooga, Tennessee between 1933 and 1939.