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NORTH CAROLINA CONVERSATIONS



A PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH CAROLINA HUMANITIES COUNCIL



Italian immigrant women and children of St. Helena in Pender County are gathered in front of one of two community canneries in 1908. St. Helena was one of five immigrant agricultural colonies established to introduce Americans to the European style of intensive farming of vegetables on small plots. Learn more about this journey story and others as the new Museum on Main Street host sites offer a glance at the upcoming *Journey Stories* Smithsonian exhibition that begins to tour North Carolina later this year (p. 28). Photo Courtesy of Pender County Public Library: Hugh MacRae II Collection.

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FROM THE CORNER OF ELM AND FRIENDLY

Shelley Crisp, Executive Director

In the last year, staff, alums, and friends of the North Carolina Humanities Council have been taking a look back over the 40 years of grants, professional development for teachers, speakers, library discussions series, and other programs the Humanities Council has made possible since it was created in the early 1970s. We have been a quiet nonprofit these many years, yet offered the lens of humanities programs to raise the profile of issues that have engaged our state for many more than the last four decades. Pouring through the archives and seeking for a theme to honor our roots and celebrate the unbelievably creative, innovative, and mindful work accomplished through the Council's grant dollars and resources — suffice it to say, the totality is humbling and a summary, impossible. But in that spirit, in this issue and the next *North Carolina Conversations*, you will glimpse some commemorative stories amid the ongoing, forward-moving Council work.

Linda Flowers' mighty invocation to hold onto those who might thoughtlessly be "throw'd away" finds renewed voice through this year's Linda Flowers Literary Award recipient Nancy Dew Taylor. *Crossroads* offers similarly powerful voices as North Carolinians were asked a few years ago to reflect on identity, culture, and history. Just as the state prepares to welcome a second Museum on Main Street Smithsonian exhibition tour, *Journey Stories*, in June of this year, "The Last Word" offers one parting story to remind of the wonderful MoMS *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music* that toured in 2011. We can never say enough to thank our supporters, but we list them here so that you can help us do so. In addition to financial gifts, the Council has enjoyed the support of many volunteer Council members and trustees who have guided the Council in serving the state. Recognition of Council alums offers the long view of those contributions.

The work of the Humanities Council has been captured over time in juxtapositions like these: "traditions and transitions"; a "tradition of transformation"; "engage your world"; "weaving cultures and communities"; "we the people"; "all human endeavor"; and "many stories, one people." There are other phrases, titles, and themes, all of which aspire to catch the essence of how humanities programs enrich, extend, and empower lives of every stripe. Others say it better than I do, so let me leave you with the words of community organizer John Parker who offered these thoughts about the intersection of the humanities and the promise of what he celebrates as "beloved community":

Exploring community through the public humanities reinforces my belief that we must create transformative relationships and be good stewards of our gifts and resources to bring about the change we wish to see in the world...The public humanities remind us of what we know about community, its heart and spirit, what we will learn about life as we experience its wonder and trials. Through stories, dialogue, expression, living history, drama, literature, organizing, art, documentary, photography, ethnography, exhibits, and community work, we learn about what we've lost about community, the intimacy and ease of fellowship, our memories of generations before, and lives lived...If we let ourselves get close enough to community through the humanities, we can see the world, in all its beauty and ugliness, and it is possible to see that we can create the beloved community. If we want to be intentional, we can have an inclusive civic table, where our relationships affirm the dignity, worth, and potential of everyone. If we truly listen to the stories of struggle and hope, we will remember we have the power to transform our lives and communities...if we listen and learn.

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North Carolina Humanities Council Celebrates David Price as the 2011 Caldwell Laureate

On Friday, October 21, 2011, in the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, scholar and statesman David Price accepted the North Carolina Humanities Council's highest honor, the John Tyler Caldwell Award for the Humanities. Duke University President Richard H. Brodhead presented the annual Caldwell Lecture in the Humanities. Thomas W. Ross, President of the University of North Carolina System, conferred the award. Price's acceptance remarks follow.

I am very grateful to the North Carolina Humanities Council for the generous citation and for the 2011 John Tyler Caldwell Award. I am honored more than I can say to join the list of distinguished past recipients. This award means all the more to me because I knew John Caldwell and had the highest respect for him as a teacher and educational leader, a champion of liberal education, and a warm and engaging human being whose counsel and encouragement meant a great deal to many people, including me. It's good to see Dr. Caldwell's sons, Chuck and Andy, again, and I'm pleased they could join us. I want also to thank all of you for being here, Dick Brodhead for his remarkable lecture, and Tom Ross for such a generous introduction.

As for the kind words said about me, I will simply recall my experience as a divinity school student being interviewed for a Kent Fellowship to undertake graduate study. One of the interviewers was Hans Frei, a theologian of great distinction. At one point he asked me how two well-known theologians might approach a particular

issue. I took something of a leap, opining that although these thinkers started from quite different premises, they might actually come to the same conclusion on this particular issue. Professor Frei leaned forward: "Mr. Price," he exclaimed, "I think you are exactly right! But I'm not going to ask you to explain it, because I'm afraid you would mess it up."

So tonight I will try not to risk "messing it up." I do want to speak personally, however, about three "connections" I have experienced with and through the humanities, connections between what I have read and researched and taught in American political thought and ethics and what our country is now experiencing. That is the best way I know to express my indebtedness and gratitude to those who initiated me into historical and philosophical studies and to convince you, if anyone here needs convincing, that what you are dispensing — whether by teaching or writing or interpreting, or supporting those who

do — connects in a powerful, sometimes transforming way, with the challenges and dilemmas we confront in daily life.

I've strayed pretty far from the academic vineyards, but I can still say that nothing gives me greater satisfaction than when former students tell me how much something that happened in my classroom or around the seminar table influenced or benefitted them. We all have debts of this sort: for me they include Peter Walker and E.P. Douglass, who first introduced me to American intellectual history as a Carolina undergraduate; William Lee Miller, who introduced me to Reinhold Niebuhr and other social ethicists at Yale Divinity School; and political and social theorists such as Frederick Watkins, Roger Masters, David Calleo, Sidney Ahlstrom, and Staughton Lynd at Yale's graduate school. I always enjoyed the humanistic side of political science — political theory — more than its behavioral or institutional aspects, although I suppose in retrospect it is fortunate that I always kept that dual track of teaching and research on Congress and American politics going!

The first connection pertains to what one might call the "Antifederalist moment" we are now experiencing in American politics. I used to tell my students that if they wanted to understand our constitutional history they should read *The Federalist*, but if they really wanted to understand American politics, they should read the Antifederalists. American revolutionary

David Price is the leading scholar-humanist on Capitol Hill. A founding chairman of the Humanities Caucus, he stands out in a fractured Congress for his decency of character and thoughtful personal relations that cross party and philosophical divides.

~ James Leach, Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities



2011 Caldwell Laureate David Price.

Caldwell Laureates

The John Tyler Caldwell Award for the Humanities, the Humanities Council’s highest honor, has been presented annually since its inauguration in 1990. Named for its first recipient, the late Dr. John Tyler Caldwell, former chancellor of North Carolina State University from 1959–1975 and a founding member of the Humanities Council, the award pays tribute to individuals whose lives and work illuminate one or more of the multiple dimensions of human life where the humanities come into play: civic, personal, intellectual, and moral.

1990	John Tyler Caldwell [†]	2001	Houston Gwynne (H.G.) Jones
1991	John Hope Franklin [†]	2002	Reynolds Price †
1992	Doris Waugh Betts	2003	Wilma Dykeman † & Hugh Morton †
1993	Samuel Talmadge Ragan [†]	2004	Mary Duke Biddle Trent Semans †
1994	Anne Firor Scott	2005	Louis D. Rubin, Jr.
1995	John Marsden Ehle	2006	Benjamin Eagles Fountain, Jr.
1996	William W. Finlator [†]	2007	Emily Herring Wilson
1997	Charles Bishop Kuralt [†]	2008	Walt Wolfram
1998	Dorothy Spruill Redford	2009	Marsha White Warren
1999	William C. Friday	2010	Fred Chappell
2000	Thomas J. Lassiter, Jr. [†]	2011	David Price

[†] deceased

thought, as Bernard Bailyn, Gordon Wood, and others have pointed out, was distinctive in its juxtaposing of power and liberty — with little sense that power might serve or expand liberty, or that governmental power might counter power in other realms. The inclination rather was to see the power of government and the liberty of citizens as fundamentally opposed. This proved to be problematic as a governing principle and, after six perilous years under the Articles of Confederation, the drafters of the Constitution sought to strike a new balance between what they called “energy in government” and the checks and balances that would keep that government within its proper bounds.

The Antifederalists were having none of it. In considering the proposed government, one of them wrote to a Boston newspaper, we “ought to look upon those who are to put it in motion as our enemies — to be

careful what we give, to see what use it is to be put to, and where to resort for a remedy if it is abused” (Kenyon Ixii). The Antifederalist legacy has positive aspects, including the addition of the Bill of Rights to the Constitution. But the extreme anti-governmental strain’s continuing impact is decidedly mixed — often leading to a misdiagnosis of whose power we should be concerned about and throwing up ideological obstacles to the practical and judicious use of governmental power. The Tea Party movement is only Antifederalism’s latest manifestation, ironically posing as the defender of Federalism and the Constitution. Understanding the historic power of Antifederalist themes in American thought can help us understand the appeal such ideas have to a major segment of America’s population and how, at least for now, they have gained sway over one of our major political parties.

The second connection also harkens back to a recurring strain in American political thought, a “communitarian” strain that has often provided a counterpoint or corrective to the dominant themes of liberal individualism. The roots are Puritan and Transcendentalist, but the fuller articulation came in the Progressive Era with thinkers ranging from philosopher Josiah Royce to pioneer sociologist Charles Horton Cooley, to Herbert Croly, W.E.B. DuBois, and John Dewey. These thinkers caught my attention early on and led me to make the late 19th-early 20th century the centerpiece of my teaching and writing in American political thought.

Communitarian thought invokes values and assumptions that exist in some tension with those central to the American liberal tradition: our interdependence as well as our autonomy; responsibilities as well as rights; identity, solidarity, and obligation,

as well as freedom and voluntarism. It thus has serious implications for how we think about our common life and about public policy. This realization shaped the approach I took in the 1970s as part of the young faculty group launching what is now Duke's Sanford School of Public Policy. My assignment was to figure out what the ethics offering should look like in a new-model public policy curriculum — after Watergate, our director, Joel Fleishman, was fairly certain there should be such an offering! Working with like-minded colleagues across the country, with the help of a foundation grant that Joel secured, I decided that at the graduate level we should add an ethical component to policy analysis. This meant examining concepts of human well-being and the public good prominent in our philosophical and moral traditions — liberty, justice, the public interest, community — and trying to discern their implications for public policy. One's thinking about affirmative action will be powerfully shaped, for example, by whether one sees college admissions as a contest among meritorious individuals, or as a mechanism for compensating individuals for past deprivation, or as an instrument for meeting the needs of the community, and of sub-communities, for trained leadership. I thought then, and I think now, that the communitarian tradition can bring unique insights and often a needed corrective to our policy debates.

The third connection involves what also must be regarded as a dissenting strain of thought, a sensibility at odds with prevailing views, although the text I will cite is among the most familiar in the American lexicon:

Both [sides] read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered — that of neither has been answered fully (Stern 841).

[These words are from] Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural — words all the more remarkable for being uttered after almost four years of civil war, words that lead us to reflect on the perils of self-righteousness in politics or of absolutizing our own ideology or cause.

...the study and reflection we undertake, particularly in the humanities, can illumine our personal lives and our shared history as well; it has worked that way for me.

Reinhold Niebuhr once wrote that Lincoln's words "put the relation of our moral commitments in history to our religious reservations about the partiality of our moral judgments more precisely than, I think, any statesman or theologian has put them" (qtd. in Miller 8). Lincoln expressed the moral commitment against slavery in uncompromising terms, along with his determination to "finish the work we are in." But there followed the religious reservation, the recognition that ultimate judgment belonged to God alone, the refusal, even in this extreme instance, to presume an absolute identification between his own cause and God's will.

We may express our sense of human fallibility, and our relationship to powers and purposes that we sense are larger than ourselves, in theological or non-theological terms. But the sensibility, the warning against pride and self-righteousness, is surely rooted in our religious and literary traditions. It counsels a kind of humility in political life whereby we decline to claim ultimate sanction for our own ideology or political cause and reject the pretensions of those who do make such claims.

I doubt that I need to argue very strenuously for the relevance of humility or of the "religious reservation" to today's politics. In citing this and the other two clear and present "connections," I mean to suggest and illustrate the ways that the study and reflection we undertake, particularly in the humanities, can illumine our personal lives and our shared history as well; it has worked that way for me. I am grateful for the opportunity to express my indebtedness to those who awakened my interest and deepened my understanding, and to commend and encourage as strongly as I can those who carry on this work today. Thank you.



Caldwell Laureate David Price with Thomas W. Ross, President of the University of North Carolina System, who conferred the award. Photo by Duke Photography.

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(L-R) Jean-Louise Beard, Price office chief of staff; Beth Norris; North Carolina Department of Transportation Secretary Gene Conti, who is Congressman Price's former Chief of Staff; David Price; Tracy Lovett, Price district liaison; and Kate Roetzer, Price senior legislative assistant. Photo by Duke Photography.

Congressman **David Price** grew up in Erwin, Tennessee. He attended Mars Hill College, then a junior college, and transferred to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as a Morehead Scholar. He then received a Bachelor of Divinity and Ph.D. in Political Science at Yale University. Before he began serving in the U.S. Congress in 1987, Price was a professor of Political Science and Public Policy at Duke University.

Price is the recipient of the Wilbur Cross Medal from the Yale Graduate School and of the William Sloane Coffin Award for Peace and Justice from the Yale Divinity School. The American Political Science Association honored him with its Hubert H. Humphrey Award, and he has been elected to the National Academy of Public Administration. He has given the Walter Capps lecture at the University of California-Santa Barbara, the McLeod Bryan lecture at Mars Hill College, the Odum Institute's 80th Anniversary lecture at UNC at Chapel Hill, and the Olin lecture at the U.S. Air Force Academy. He is a Durham NAACP Freedom Fund honoree and recipient of the North Carolina National Guard's Medal of Merit.

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When we live outside ourselves with sufficient intensity of feeling, we in turn have a chance to be changed. This is the way we annex understandings that have been struggled toward by others that we would never have reached on our own....This is how we learn that there is more to human history than the present, and that our present is itself a moment in time....Understood this way, the humanities are not a specialized taste but the root of the most basic human and civic competencies.

~ From Richard Brodhead's 2011 Caldwell Lecture in the Humanities, "The Fire That Never Goes Out," to be printed in the Summer/Fall 2012 issue of *North Carolina Conversations*.



Duke University President Richard H. Brodhead delivers the Caldwell Lecture in the Humanities. Photo by Duke Photography.

Many Voices: The Story of One State

The National Endowment for the Humanities *We the People* grants will soon be phased out. As recipients of those funds, the North Carolina Humanities Council and its partners benefitted from this initiative “to encourage and enhance the teaching, study, and understanding of American history, culture, and democratic principles.” One of the projects undertaken by the Humanities Council was a statewide conference that in turn produced *We the People: Conversations on Identity, Culture and History in North Carolina*, a collection of reflective essays. Conference participants were asked to comment on the collective experience and lasting value of humanities programs. (The full text of the publication is now available online through DigitalNC, North Carolina’s Digital Heritage website.) What follows here is a sampling of essays that are meant to provoke thought and interest and conversation about the state’s rich cultural heritage — examples and images from eloquent voices as well

North Carolina Stories is a Humanities Council grant initiative that encourages the investigation of local history via themes such as immigration, migration, adaptation, and displacement. The project is facilitated by a community nonprofit sponsor with deep and appropriate connections to the specific geographic area and requires a humanities scholar specializing in the themes inherent in the project or in the use of digital resources. Under the auspices of the Humanities Council, the sponsor group and scholar



Mural created by David Wilson for the We the People conference, Chapel Hill, 2005.

as commentary on the necessity to capture it, however imperfect the methods.

Just as one door closes, however, another opens. The North Carolina Humanities Council is pleased to announce a new grants program entitled *North Carolina Stories: A Digital Journey of Our State*. The program seeks to foster digital preservation of exactly the kinds of stories referenced

in this issue of *Crossroads*, to offer a way and some means to preserve and honor the many voices that make up our state’s constituency. As John Parker, whose essay is excerpted in the “From the Corner” preface to the magazine, advises, “listen and learn”; better yet, read and consider: what story does your community risk losing; what voices must you preserve for those who come next?

develop a project which examines, explores, and illuminates multiple aspects of the community and its history. The partners will utilize digital tools to extend the examination and to identify and preserve the collective and foundational history of a place. The digital resources, combined with a mapping component, will be showcased with free public programming to bring results into greater relief for the local community and humanities audiences at-large.

North Carolina Stories projects can receive up to \$2,000 of Humanities Council funds. Application materials and sample projects are available at www.nchumanities.org/content/north-carolina-stories. Please contact Donovan McKnight for more information at 336.334.4770 or dmcknight@nchumanities.org



Why Am I a North Carolinian?

Melton McLaurin | Professor emeritus of history UNC Wilmington and former chair of the North Carolina Humanities Council

Among the many and varied

personal identities we each possess, that of North Carolinian resonates deeply within me. It is true that I was Tar Heel born, and there is a high probability that I will be Tar Heel dead, although I have not lived my entire adult life so far within the state. Why do I have such a strong identity as a North Carolinian, in some very important aspects of my life far stronger than my identity as an American? Like so many things in life, it results from the circumstances of my childhood and of my youth, from those early formative years in which one soaks up the surrounding culture and mores as if by osmosis. Formal education, travel, life experiences, each and all have diluted the impact of those early years upon character and personality, but they can never erase them. They are far too deeply embedded in the psyche to be removed, perhaps even to be significantly changed.

With this in mind, rather than attempt to explain the forces that shaped my identity as a North Carolinian in scholarly fashion, which often is synonymous with boring, I would like to engage in a bit of stream-of-consciousness, or remembering. I realize that some of the specifics in this remembrance may not relate to the experiences of those who read this piece, but believe that the collection as a whole will. And so, we begin.

Wade, hometown, rural hamlet, the sure knowledge of its geography, the streets on which less than a thousand people lived, evenly divided between black and white. The flat terrain of eastern North Carolina, the smell of plowed earth, tobacco fields ripening in the searing summer heat, townspeople, black and white, working on outlying farms, helping with the harvest, dirty, sweaty, gossiping, lying,

singing, tying handfuls of green tobacco leaves on to sticks to be hung in curing barns. Walking down a dirt street with schoolmates to the local white elementary school. Singing the "Old North State" in the school auditorium. The moist cool of summer nights; fireflies; cold cokes; homemade, hand-churned ice cream, vanilla with fresh peaches; pick-up baseball games on the community field. Church, always church, the stern legalism of Presbyterianism for me, catechism, who made you god made you and all things. The joyous hymns of the Baptist services, the shouted amens in Pentecostal congregations, the small black churches, Baptist and Methodist, I never entered.

Family. My home at the town's limit, three-bedroom, one bath bungalow, six children. A father drilled in the virtues of North Carolina and North Carolinians, a mother from South Carolina. Baseball on the lawn. Mowing the grass. Waiting for the school bus on a cold winter morn. My grandfather's store, candy and cokes, work from the time I was twelve, gasoline and money as a teen. My grandmother's home, pies in the pie safe, grapes on the vine. Thanksgiving week visits from a great uncle in Virginia, a foreign land. Holiday feasts, coconut cake, lemon pie, apple float, syllabub, ambrosia, homemade wine. Heated political arguments at the table or before a fire after dinner. Family trips, including grandmother, great aunt, and the dog, to the coast, to Holden Beach, Carolina Beach, the Outer Banks, never to Myrtle Beach.

Trips to the state fair, the midway, thrill drivers, girlie shows, fireworks. My father's driving, fast, aggressive, scary high school friend who wrecked two cars praying for survival as Daddy drove. Basketball, the other religion. Goal in the



Melton McLaurin.

backyard. Tuesday and Friday night high school contests, cheerleaders, pick-up games in cold that numbed fingers and on asphalt that ate knees. Trips to the Dixie Classics and the Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament at Reynolds Coliseum. Noise, excitement, fervor, devotion, Everett Case and Frank McGuire, magic figures.

Politics and history. Family pride in its Scottish heritage. Grandmother's tales of her father's role in the Populist Party, a great uncle named for Leonidas Polk. The reverence with which my father spoke of W. Kerr Scott. Devotion to the Democratic Party. My parents supporting Truman and Stevenson. A sense of people, of families known and who knew me. A sense of place, of rootedness. A sense of heritage, taught at school and imbibed at home. Above all, a sense of belonging, of being a North Carolinian.

Even the Dead Will Not Be Safe

Charles D. Thompson Jr. | Director of Education and Curriculum Development,
Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University

Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious.

~ Walter Benjamin from “Theses on the Philosophy of History” in *Illuminations*

In the sideboard in my grandparents’ farmhouse dining room was a bowl of photographs. Some were very old shadowy images of the Appalachian past staring as through a glass darkly. Most of the people in them my grandmother could identify by name, location, and a story, though some were lost even to her. As a child, I returned to the bowl of pictures again and again. Taking the bowl to the kitchen table, I’d ask questions, and she’d tell the story. Why did they have that hatchet and saw in the picture? Whose log house was that? Why did Grandpa Smith carry a pistol? Grandma patiently leafed through the images with words, reliving her past and what she knew of the pasts of ancestors even she may never have met. I was mesmerized. She helped me reach across a chasm of time and space to find relationships and to know that I’m not alone. These moments were sacred — and fleeting.

Beyond the few images, names and details, there was precious little for me to grasp, fingertips almost touching then slipping back into the darkness of the photos.



Now that my grandparents are gone and the photographs are scattered, the flourishes

Charles D. Thompson, Jr.

they added are silenced. This is a tragedy repeated in nearly every family in every generation. “Why didn’t we record her when we could have?” we lament, or “if only they had not thrown away that diary when they moved!” or “if they had just taken better care of that photograph....” Such are the tragedies of the human condition that will ruin us if we are not vigilant.

So, our flawed task is to go carefully, always extending our hands across divides, hoping to grasp something beyond ourselves, something that might shake us out of our dogmatic slumber, our self-assured modes of communication, to learn and to change.

We have aphorisms about what happens to us if we forget the past. We also know that we always lose our grasp on the present and that by tomorrow what we have preserved is always already not all that we wish it could be. As James Agee lamented in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, it would be so much more preferable to preserve the real objects: the horses and their reins, the plates of food, soil, and even excrement, to really show, to smell, hear the thing in itself, instead of telling. But we always lose that battle to preserve the real. As soon as we try to do it, we know we have failed. We settle for the representation in words, sound, and image. We hope

that what we capture or trap for a fleeting moment is enough to convey, to show, to cause someone else to feel and to believe something.

It is this sense of impending loss and the hope of reversing it and influencing the continual revitalization of our potential that has generated in many of us a desire to keep communications with our pasts alive, to do the best we can with representation, as faulty as it may be. We have taken to making photographs and films, written words and recorded voices, as a vocation. We call this impulse documentary work. This work, now a way of making a living for me and others, bears the huge weight of preservation of the human story. It comes from wanting to touch and to be touched,

to reach across divides of time, space, and idiom, and make a difference in the way history is remembered from now to the unimaginable future. But it always must also be subjective, selective, and imperfect.

What I began doing instinctively as a child, I now see as a calling, a task weighty with responsibility, an endless effort to wrest the past from the enemy Walter Benjamin would say is always lurking nearby, ready to wrest meaning away for the fascists and others bent on destroying our human potential, our very freedom. What heavy work for a child carrying a bowl of photographs!

I look back on my grandmother's storytelling sessions and know that we innocently embodied at those moments an essential human inclination to remember and to tell, and we had every right to do this task together. In those times in her kitchen, no one needed to discuss the ethics of Grandma sharing a story with me or for me to see the particular photographs in question. She made decisions about what to leave out and what to put in when she told it, but no one talked of self-reflexivity or the problems of translation from one culture to another. These times were ours, the sharing between us unquestionable.

Problems unimaginable in personal relationships like these, however, take on a different tenor in our professional documentary relationships, particularly when we cross into other families, other cultural constructions with our questions and representations, our own equipment and our devices. Somebody's grandma can easily become a human subject and boundaries can be transgressed, sacred scenes unfolded without sensitivity. In short, people can be used. Thus, we have realized in this vocation of preserving stories and images, that preservation always begs the question: "For whom?"

The task of the documentarian is therefore never as simple as one might wish for, the story is never without subplots, and the motives are never as unencumbered as a child's question. While this realization has paralyzed more than one of my students in their efforts to do fieldwork (and perhaps rightly so in the beginning), realizing the imperfection of re-telling and reworking need not be abandoned altogether. The stakes of not preserving the past are too great not to pursue this work. The challenge is to acknowledge the imperfections of our work and to always return to the questions of motivation, profit, ownership, and long-term preservation of the work.

One discovery we documentarians have made is that extended fieldwork often makes for better and fairer representations. In contrast, whizzing in and out of a community to grab the sound and image is always a flawed model. Oh, to spend days on end with someone who at her leisure tells a story about a photograph and who can say so much with a laugh about that gun so that you know that he was not as dangerous as he looked in that picture! Yet, we must be careful with such longings. If we never crossed divides or never found out anything about people different from us, we would be damned to eternal

conflict, difference provoking diffidence, or violence.

So, our flawed task is to go carefully, always extending our hands across divides, hoping to grasp something beyond ourselves, something that might shake us out of our dogmatic slumber, our self-assured modes of communication, to learn and to change. Also, always remembering that everyone we encounter is someone's grandmother, grandson, partner, parent or child also helps. We must document because telling stories is what makes us human. Human beings, as our own families often remind us, love to document, but are often horrible at preservation or sharing information with others. Should every history always be shared? Perhaps not, yet often to declare something unknowable to anyone else is also a tragedy. We documentarians are insiders in a few places and outsiders in many others, always finding ourselves betwixt and between the past and future. We bear a weight on our shoulders, not only of preservation but of getting the story right. And we know that no one ever quite succeeds. This is our blessing and our curse.

Farm Security Administration photographs (front cover: Dorothea Lange; second and final pages: Marion Post-Wolcott), in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Traditional Agrarian Discourse

Gary Freeze | Professor of History at Catawba College, Salisbury, NC

Several years ago, I went to Chicago with another North Carolinian — a humanities reference librarian to be more exact — and he talked me into touring the imposing, impressive Harold Washington Public Library. When we got to the special collections floor, the librarian turned out to be from Charlotte. He was more than polite; he was genuinely glad to meet us. More significantly for me, he was pleased to hear us. “It’s good occasionally,” he noted while we chatted, “to hear that soft, distinct North Carolina voice.”

That moment in Chicago has been important to my quest as a North Carolina humanist. He had known us by our voice — not just by our accent, but by the resonance we conveyed when we actually said the things we wanted to say. Because he had heard North Carolina voices before, he could tell we really were who we said we were and meant what we said, unlike the counter attendant down Michigan Avenue who told me outright I was a liar when I mentioned I had gone to the same school as Michael Jordan. I did not argue with the attendant, as, of course, was my “soft” way of being polite, of being a “distinct”-ive North Carolinian.

As a sometime scholarly presence for state humanities programs, I have come to value the “soft” character of so much of what we do. Although my role as a social historian calls for acute analysis of the inequities and harsh realities of the past, my use of that history as a humanist tends to be softer and subtler. Rather than pile drive interpretation down anyone’s throats, I ply suggestion whenever possible to help my fellow

Tar Heels come to their own conclusions about their past and their culture.

In part, I do the soft approach because it marries well with my interpretation of what it has meant to be a North Carolinian through time. In many ways this softness is as much a historically-based artifact as is, say, the remnants of the “high toide” accent on Ocracoke Island. It is an echo of what I have come to call “traditional agrarian discourse.” Each of these three words has suggestion for us today. As North Carolinians we have always been traditional, we have had those traditions rooted in our shared agrarian experience, and, most importantly, we have always pursued some form of discourse about our very unurban condition. This has been the case from the Regulation to the Research Triangle.

Let me explain that this catch phrase deviates a bit from the standard thematic approach to state history. Sectionalism has

to acknowledge its limits for interpretation. Bias and discrimination, struggle and power are just some of the terms for understanding history everywhere. But what about here? Race, class, and gender do not alone explain why I sound the way I do when I go to Chicago. It is more subtle than that; in fact, what is revealed is that I, and most North Carolinians, don’t have an urban background.

My work gravitates toward the idea that North Carolinians have spent centuries working out the terms of their identity without the guidance of urban identity. Think of it; until very recently no North Carolinian ever lived in a really big city — unless, like Thomas Wolfe, they moved to one. At times in our history, even Troy, New York, has been bigger than our largest place, and even today, the sprawl of Charlotte or the Triangle pales before the sweep of the slums in Asian megacities. From the 1705 founding of Bath to the 1969 establishment of the multi-arena Carolina

Finally, awareness of how we sound and what we mean, given our past, helps us meet the future. Humanities programs in the twenty-first century, I believe, should become bridges to the values which are worthy of retrieval from our traditional discourse.

been state history’s longtime benchmark, and I have nothing to refute its validity. There are today, and have been always, “two North Carolinas,” one down East, the other in the West. The sectionalism theme has manifested itself in everything from two types of barbecue to Old East and Old West at Chapel Hill, to the governor having a house in Asheville as well as in Raleigh.

The agrarian discourse emphasis can also mask recent revisionist views of the state that emphasize disparities in race, class, and gender relations. I have no brief against the revisionist view, other than

Cougars, the state has tried often, but has never established the central place so common elsewhere.

This historic condition, I think, drives the distinct character of humanities discourse in our state. Holland Thompson, a North Carolina historian of a century ago, noted that the people he saw moving to town to work in textiles still had “the tang of the soil on their feet.” I think we still have it on our minds, at least those of us who came of age in the vicinity of 1972, that pivotal year when so much about our politics, commerce, and culture began

to change. The agrarian discourse model does more than hark tradition. It helps explain, for example, how matters of race can be pursued in a polite, but substantive way. It helps explain why labor unions had such a hard time in the twentieth century, why, for example, one textile organizer wrote back north to say, “These people don’t even understand what a union is.” It helps us ferret out the hidden stories of each community, because we understand better how matters like deference, shame, pride, and identity have worked among us. It helps us understand that even if we do not want to live in Mayberry, at least metaphorically, we have all come from there. As the sage Barney Fife noted, “You have to understand, this is a small town.” What the deputy meant to say to those mythical urbanites from Raleigh was, “y’all” is a bridge to proper expression of feeling as well as fact. It has been the work of the humanities in North Carolina to mesh the feelings of our people with the facts of our past.

Finally, awareness of how we sound and what we mean, given our past, helps us meet the future. Humanities programs in the twenty-first century, I believe, should become bridges to the values which are worthy of retrieval from our traditional discourse. The new fact for North Carolinians is that we are finally becoming urban in most of our arrangements and many of our habits. Since 1972, the locks of race, class, and gender that were part of the past have become brittle, if not broken. Yet we face new challenges of space allocation, social adjustment, and demographic changes that many of our youth seem poorly tooled to handle. The continuation of our own distinct humanities approach can perpetuate that “soft” voice that makes us recognizable in the singular global city of today.

Who Speaks for My Ancestors and Who Will Tell My Grand-Children?

Nyoni Collins | Project Director for “Remembering the Rosenwalds,” a 2002 county-wide oral history project in Robeson County, North Carolina

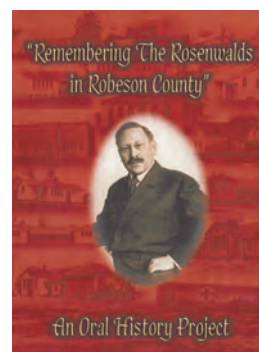
I look up above my computer screen to see the host of family photographs on my shelf — myself at various stages of my life — childhood, young adulthood, and now middle age. I see pictures of the first family reunion that we held and the awards that I have been honored to receive for the work I have done. I see mementoes of places and experiences that I have had that have brought great meaning to my life.

But the most revered of all of these collected on that shelf is the photograph of Ma Catherine, the oldest family ancestor that any of us has any visual record of — this black and white photo of the etched dark-skinned face of a rural elderly woman stolen from Africa at age twelve and sold into slavery in the south — is my historical connection to memory. Ma Catherine stares at the camera through deep-set eyes that say, “You can never know what I have seen.”

The photograph, we have come to believe, was taken in the 1930s when the federal government’s WPA sent mainly white writers and photographers to conduct oral histories documenting the lives and experiences of former slaves. Sadly, we have no record of what Ma

Catherine shared or did not share with these documenters. We long for any fragment of her life they might have asked her about, any words of knowledge she might have spoken — but none can be found. We are left only with this recently recovered treasure — the face of an African woman, who lived an African American experience in a cruel historic time period in this country. But across the boundaries of time and space, across the boundaries of the living and the dead, Ma Catherine gazes at me and asks this question, “Who will speak for me?” It was Ma Catherine’s question that set me off on an unexpected journey that would eventually bring me to the work I have done in African American community history.

If people are going to get involved for the long haul that it takes to make a difference, it is the memory of the ancestors that toiled before them that must matter, it is the hope that what they share with any documenter will be a legacy for a better future. Listening, even with the best intentions, is not enough. Change will not be enough. It is the power of continuity in which we must invest, upon which we must call. It is my ancestor speaking to me and my telling my grandchildren that our community had a story that mattered in this world. It is only then that the community will know where it came from, without having to rediscover it each generation; that they will know that their history has value and no one from the outside has to validate that for them.



Remembering the Rosenwalds in Robeson County: An Oral History Project, 2003, is available at DigitalNC, North Carolina’s Digital Heritage website.

Claiming Home

Dorothy Spruill Redford | author, genealogist, public historian, 1998 Caldwell Laureate, and director (retired) of Somerset Place North Carolina Historic Site

In 1935 Fred and Dorothy Littlejohn packed all that their suitcases could carry and boarded a train in Columbia, North Carolina, bound for the North. Both hailed from “prominent” black Columbia families and were leaving behind substantial homes, family-founded churches and schools, family-owned businesses, and two living generations of family elders — one of whom had been born enslaved. They also left behind Jim Crow and the systemic expectation that blacks show deference to all whites regardless of their age, educational attainments, or socioeconomic status. They left the South at a time when historians, social scientists, the media, and lawmakers all seemed to conspire to denigrate or demonize everything identified with Americans of African descent: facial features, manner of speech, cultural traditions including music and other art forms, and (above all else) basic human intelligence. The Littlejohns felt nothing beyond their immediate family culturally affirming about being a North Carolinian or, for that matter, Southern. They lived for a time in Philadelphia, “the city of brotherly love”; then settled permanently in Jamaica, New York.



Dorothy Spruill Redford.

By the time I joined them at the age of two in New York in 1945, my Uncle Fred and Aunt Dot lived invented lives. They were transplanted West Indians complete with contrived, non-Southern accents. Their cover story for knowing nothing about the West Indies was that they had left the islands as small children and had never returned. In New York the beaches, public transportation, retail outlets, the block they purchased a house on, and the Presbyterian Church they attended were all integrated. And rather than just skin color, discrimination was based on ethnicity, country of origin, religion, neighborhood, and any other distinguishing factor one could name. As West Indians in New York, they felt more a part of the American tapestry than they did as blacks from the South.

In New York I too became a reborn islander. “Don’t tell anyone where you are from and don’t pronounce that word that way,” Aunt Dot insisted, and I too perfected a contrived, unidentifiable accent. We visited North Carolina kin every summer, stopping first in Virginia where my North Carolina parents had settled. But we never told our New York neighbors where we were actually going. In the end, Aunt Dot and Uncle Fred’s rejection of the South and all the culturally negative feelings it evoked was so complete they refused even to have their bones interred in Columbia soil.

In time I returned permanently to the Jim Crow South I was born to and soon came to hate the way the South made me feel. My parents were Grady and Louise to white children less than three years old. Mother drew my footprints on a sheet of paper and took the sketch to the store to buy my shoes because she knew we couldn’t try on shoes in the store. When segregated buses finally ended, I remember getting on the bus and sitting directly behind the driver. You couldn’t see as much sitting behind the driver nor was the seat particularly comfortable, but the symbolism was irresistible. Although by



In *Somerset Homecoming*, Redford traced her family history back to the 18th century.

the late 1970s, historians and social scientists had begun to retell southern history, public representations of the history of Americans of African descent still vacillated between cannibalistic African tribes and their inherently “slow” and inferior American progeny. For a number of years, when folks asked where I was from, I’d smugly rattle off, “I was reared in Queens, New York — 150-21, 115th Drive — out near Kennedy Airport.” I found little affirming about being a native North Carolinian until 1983 when I discovered Somerset Place: an antebellum plantation turned tourist attraction situated no more than fifteen miles from Columbia. It was the plantation on which my enslaved ancestors had cleared the land of virgin timber, cultivated prosperous fields, and constructed more than 100 business and residential structures.

By 1983 the National Endowment for the Humanities had been around for eighteen years, fostering democratization of the nation’s history and supporting public dialogue and representations of America that are inclusive of the diverse races and

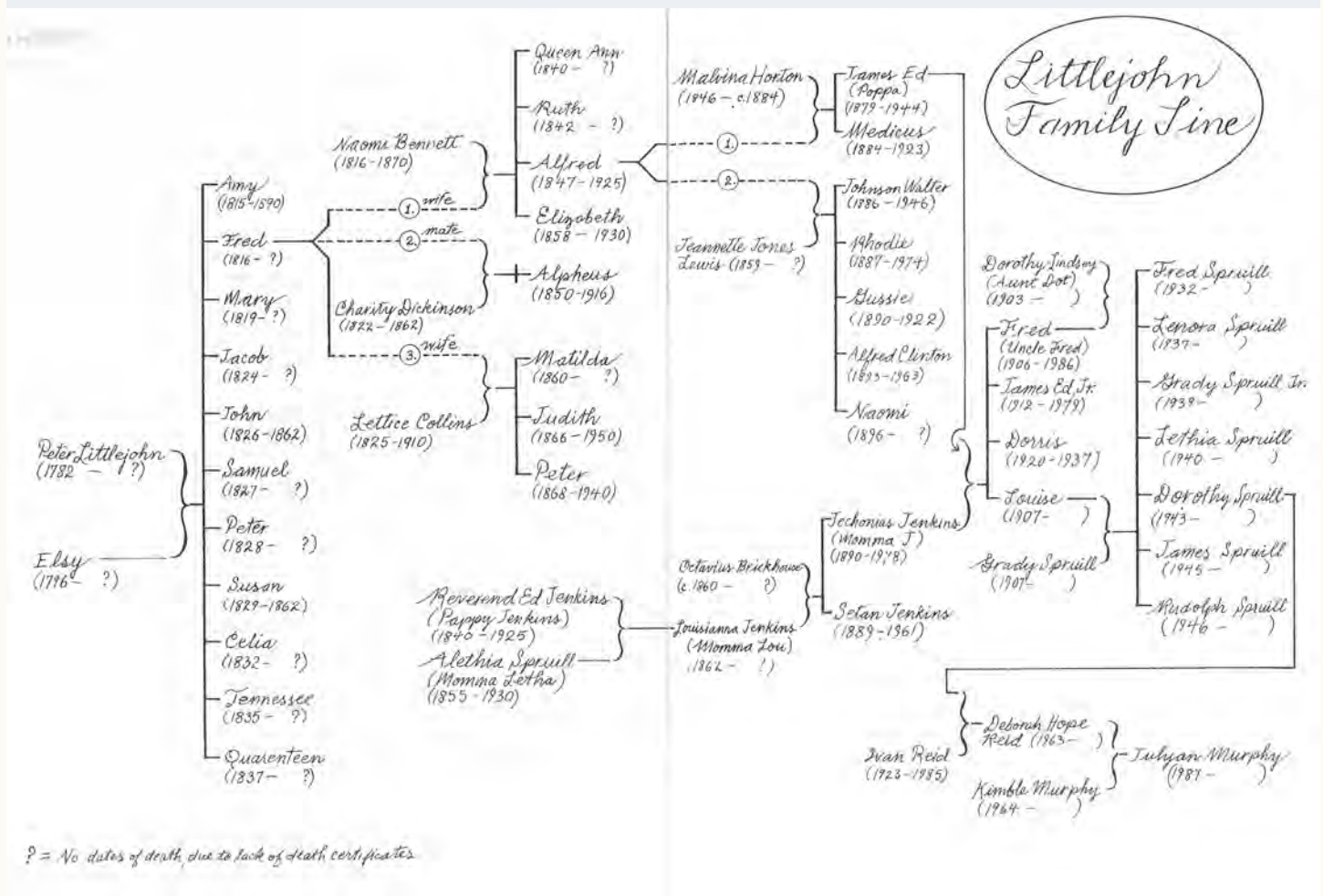
ethnicities forming the durable foundation upon which the nation we celebrate today stands. Academy-based and public historians, social scientists, and even media outlets also cooperated in retelling all Southern history — including North Carolina’s history. And at Somerset Place, I discovered my family history — a tangle, deeply-rooted, and valuable connection to North Carolina’s history — and my soul came to know that North Carolina is what it is today because of my bloodline, and nothing about the way my fellow Southerners choose to view and value me can change that fact. I now know and ensure that representations of history at Somerset Place reinforce the fact that the history, culture, and heritage of all

Americans coexist, commingle, and inextricably mesh into one incredibly delicious stew. Today, when asked where I am from, “Columbia, North Carolina” is my answer. I covet the empty spot next to my grandmother in the Disciples of Christ cemetery in Columbia. I want my decaying bones to enrich North Carolina’s soil.

My North Carolina, the state I lay claim to on behalf of every African American whose roots are planted in her rich soil, is not yet the North Carolina that I would want her to be. A few years back, I hired a white twenty-one-year-old local fellow who had just earned a degree and was looking for part-time summer work. I decided to let him sit in on the interviews for a full-time,

permanent position at Somerset Place. When the seven interviews were behind us, I observed that one applicant was “heads and shoulders above the others — the most qualified.” Without missing a beat, and seemingly without malice or intentional offense, the young man said, “But she’s black!!” He had, perhaps without even realizing it, embraced a historic and systemic racist world view. My North Carolina, the one I envision when I say “We The People,” will rear generation upon generation whose inculcated beliefs about African Americans and other minorities are without automatic distinctions based on skin color.

First published in 1989, *Somerset Homecoming* chronicles Redford’s quest to discover her family.



? = No dates of death, due to lack of death certificates

The Mu'azzin's Song: Islam and the African Diaspora of the Indian Ocean

Omar H. Ali

Among my earliest memories as a child living in North Africa during the mid-1970s was listening to the *azān*, the melodic call to prayer heard daily across much of the Muslim world. Each morning, just before sunrise, I would hear the “song” as it gently filtered through my dreams. In the distance, the *mu'azzin* — the person making the call — would slowly fill the morning air with the opening words, *Allah-u-akbar* (God is great), stretching and then soulfully bending each vowel. Like a grain of sand, each rendition of the *azān* is slightly different from the next, each *mu'azzin* expressing his own unique sensibility.

For centuries the *mu'azzin* has affirmed and reaffirmed the unity and continuity of the *ummah*, the ever-growing, ever-changing community of Muslims comprising a kaleidoscope of cultures and societies — urban, rural, coastal, and everything in between (a subject I discuss as a Road Scholar in my lecture “The Many Faces of Islam”). Although the *azān* is delivered in Arabic, hints (inflections, emphases) of the *mu'azzin*'s local or regional accent invariably come through:

Mande, Kiswahili, Gujarati, English, Malay, and others.

Until recently *mu'azzins* used only their voices to project their call — something akin to a tenor at the top of a crescendo. Today, however, many *azāns* — whether heard in Cairo, Hyderabad, Jakarta, or an enclave of London, Brooklyn, or Buenos Aires — are pre-recorded and amplified through speakers, losing their personal touch and more intimate character of times past.

The origin of the *azān* stretches back some fourteen hundred years to western Arabia. There, beginning with Islam's first *mu'azzin*, Bilal ibn Rabah — the son of an Ethiopian mother and an Arab father — the caller would invite the community to prayer. According to tradition, Bilal, who was a slave and a contemporary of the Prophet Muhammed, heard of the prophet's message of a single, compassionate, and merciful god, Allah, and refused to recant his newfound faith even when tortured by his owner who opposed the prophet's message. A close companion of Muhammed, Abu Bakr, heard of Bilal's tenacity and purchased the African

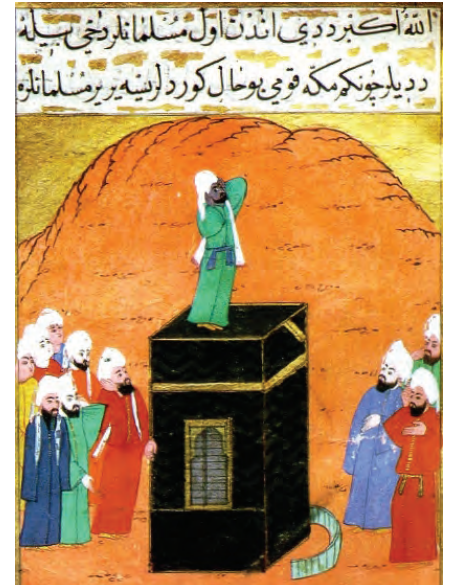


Image from Schomburg Center, New York Public Library.

captive's freedom. Prompted by a dream, Muhammed then asked Bilal — known for his powerful yet melodic voice — if he would call the prayer for the community. Bilal agreed and soon emerged as a leader of the *ummah* — helping to carry out the takeover of Mecca and serving as inspiration for the *mu'azzin*-training brotherhood that would bear his name.

It is with Bilal that we see the beginnings of the intersection of Islam and the African Diaspora. Inextricably linked, Islam and the African Diaspora would spread and develop in tandem across the Indian Ocean world. Bilal's story would pass into legend and oral history, eventually recorded in the Hadith — stories of the early *ummah* which, along with the Qur'ān (Koran), form the principal written sources of



Road Scholar **Omar H. Ali** is a historian at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He wrote the narrative for the online exhibit “The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean World” at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of The New York Public Library and is working on a new book, *Islam in the Indian Ocean World: A Documentary History*. He invites you to contact him at ohali@uncg.edu.

Islam, to which scholars have added histories, biographies, and legal and philosophical treatises.

When most of us think about Islam, we think of someone of Arab descent from the Middle East, yet three-quarters of Muslims are not from the Arab heartlands. Spread across sub-Saharan Africa (from West Africa across the Sahel and down the Swahili coast), South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka), Southeast Asia (Malaysia and Indonesia), the Far East (China), and to a lesser extent in Europe, the United States, and Latin America, Muslims comprise approximately 1.5 billion people — nearly one in four of the world’s total population.

When most of us think about the African Diaspora, we think about black people in the Atlantic world — the Caribbean, Brazil, and the United States. Beginning in the early 16th century, and over the next three hundred and fifty years, an estimated eleven million West, West-Central, and Southeastern Africans were forcibly migrated to the Americas as part of the transatlantic slave trade. Less known is that an estimated twenty percent of the Africans taken to the Americas were Muslim.

However, a far older dispersion of Africans took place across the Indian Ocean, which has parallels to the Atlantic migration but also a number of significant differences. The African Diaspora of the Indian Ocean world began centuries before that of the Atlantic and likewise shaped the lives of tens of millions of people through contact, cultural influence, and the fruits of black labor. This other Diaspora, which grew with the spread of Islam, nevertheless remains the lesser known of the two major migratory trajectories of Africans in the world.

Sweeping across the Indian Ocean and its several seas were thousands of dhows — lateen-rigged ships — carrying Africans. Propelled by the seasonal winds that blow in clockwise fashion for four months, stop

for four months, and then reverse direction for another four, were the crews that made their way from port to port along the Indian Ocean littoral. Over the course of many centuries, such crews traded and spread goods, technologies, traditions, languages, and religion — specifically Islam, but also African-based religions which created new forms of syncretism (the fusion of religions, such as the practice of controlling the zar “winds,” or spirits, among Muslim Afro-Iranians; or paying homage to Sufi saints among Muslim Afro-Indians in the way that Hindus pay homage to their holy men and women). As part of their travels and settlement they created new coastal cultures and societies that mixed Africans with Arabs, Persians, and Indians — cosmopolitan cultures — in a great arc from the Swahili coast to the Malabar coast of western India.

Africans journeyed to distant lands, sometimes radically different from their own. Initially, most of these men and women came from the coastal areas of eastern Africa. Over time, more came from the interior Great Lakes region, followed by Central Africa. They took their customs, their skills, their arts, their music, their languages, and their worldviews with them wherever they went, Africanizing the Indian Ocean world along the way.

Like their counterparts in the Atlantic world, most African migrants across the Indian Ocean world were enslaved as captives of war, the victims of outright kidnapping, or made chattel as debt repayment. They were then sold, sometimes several times over. But not all Africans in the Indian Ocean world were captives, just as not all enslaved people were Africans. Unlike in the Americas, slavery in the Indian Ocean was never racially codified; people who were enslaved in the Middle East and Asia came from different backgrounds.

And there were other important differences between the Atlantic and Indian Ocean African Diasporas: historically,

Africans and their descendants in the Indian Ocean world tended to have greater social mobility than in the Atlantic world due to Islamic laws and societal conventions that incorporated the children of enslaved women into the homes of slaveholders as free kin while allowing (indeed, encouraging) greater authority among captives with specialized skills (for example, administrative and military); the Qur’ān would provide explicit justification for emancipation.

There are many faces of Islam, just as there are many faces of humanity. While Islam has certain basic tenets (belief in a single god and compassion for others), there are infinite ways that it is interpreted and practiced (including rules and regulations that have more to do with social control than anything else). One cannot therefore meaningfully separate Islam (in some “pure” form) from interpretations of Islam, and its uses — which, as with other religions, run the gamut of practices (from the most generous and progressive acts of humanity to the most misogynistic and backwards). Indeed, there are many faces and many experiences of Islam.

For me, the *azān*, like the rising sun, remains an immeasurable source of comfort — an invitation into the seamlessness of history, where the past and present are inseparable, an audible reminder of my connection to all of life and all of what we create and recreate together.

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An application to apply for a Road Scholars program may be found at www.nchumanities.org.

Questions about applying for a program or becoming a Road Scholar should be directed to Carolyn Allen at (336) 256-0140 or callen@nchumanities.org.

A Scholar's View:

A Visitation of Spirits

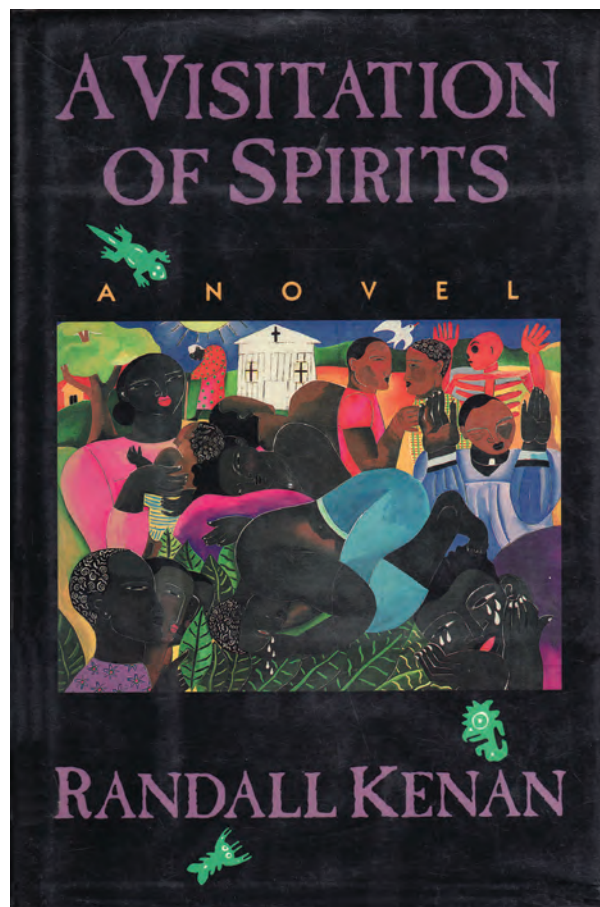
Joseph Bathanti

In September of 1997, on a mission as a North Carolina Humanities Council Let's Talk About It facilitator, I traveled to the Mitchell County Library, way up in the mountains, in Bakersville. Accompanied by my wife, Joan, and two sons, then 10 and 5, we whirled out of Statesville in late afternoon and arrived, starving, not long before my talk, at The Oaks, a bed and breakfast the library had reserved for us. There were no hotels in Bakersville.

The Oaks was run by Cindy Sharpe, a wonderfully friendly, accommodating woman, who had taken a writing workshop I had taught years before at Mayland Community College in adjacent Avery County. She and her husband had recently bought The Oaks, an enormous old three-storied southern home with a wrap-around porch and balconies fringing each floor. It had been built in the early 1800s, and needed some work. It was painted white, and loomed quite cheerily against the firmament, Roan Mountain purpling in the

dusk. I hurried in, changed into my requisite tie and coat, and, with directions to Helen's, the local cafe, a few doors down from the library, ripped with my family in tow into downtown Bakersville.

Helen's, featuring traditional Southern fare, was jammed. I ordered, then growing twitchy with hunger, watched the clock push toward seven o'clock, the appointed time for the program to start. At five minutes until the hour, the food not yet arrived, I left my family in Helen's to dine without me. My first stop was the car where I drank the kids' little travel juice boxes, gnawed a pear to its nub, then sprinted along Main Street (the street of choice for small town public libraries in North Carolina) to the library.



The Mitchell County Library, directly across the street from First Baptist Church, a big red brick building with painted white columns and a shiny white cupola, is storefront-like, situated in a tiny intersection I assumed was the town square. Thus, from their panel of floor-to-ceiling windows facing the street, my audience,

HOW TO SPONSOR A LET'S TALK ABOUT IT PROGRAM

An application to apply for a Let's Talk About It book, poetry, or film library discussion series may be found at www.nchumanities.org. Questions about applying for or planning a program should be directed to Carolyn Allen at (336) 256-0140 or callen@nchumanities.org.

Since 1999 the North Carolina Center for the Book and the North Carolina Humanities Council have partnered to manage the Let's Talk About It project in North Carolina. The North Carolina Center for the Book, an affiliate of The Center for the Book at the Library of Congress, promotes reading and lifelong learning for North Carolinians of all ages.

exactly thirty men and women, all rather elderly, and no doubt wondering where in the world I was, had witnessed their esteemed visiting scholar flying down the street, tightening his tie and still gobbling the dripping pear. Realizing this at the last moment, with some mortification, I barged in on them, was greeted by the relieved librarian, my host, and sat through her introduction, trying to get my breath.

My subject was *A Visitation of Spirits*, by Randall Keenan. It is a critically acclaimed, wonderfully written, unrelievedly grim and nihilistic novel written in an impressionistic style about one night in the life of Horace Cross, a brilliant, gay, teenaged black boy living in the stultifying fictional North Carolina hamlet of Tims Creek. Because of his self-loathing, Horace attempts through ceremonial magic to turn himself into a red-tailed hawk, and when that does not work he wanders the landscape naked and finally kills himself with his grandfather's shotgun in front of his minister cousin.

No one liked the book. They found it profane, offensive. My head swiveled from disgruntled face to disgruntled face. My blood sugar dropped precipitously. Across the street the Baptist church seemed to sneer, then levitate with disapproval as I attempted in my presentation to guide my audience through the novel: Horace's conflicts with his family and the church, the racist stranglehold the rural South still had on him, and of course his marginalization as a result of his sexuality. Thank God, time ran out and it was time for cookies, party mix and punch. I rushed to the refreshments and starting shoveling it in before I fainted, while the audience crowded around me. Each of them shook my hand and told me how much they had

enjoyed my talk — that after hearing me talk about the book, they had found a lot to like in it. They loaded me down with goodies to take back to my family. One lady even gave me some poems of hers to critique.

When I arrived back at The Oaks Joan and Cindy, studying the harvest moon, pasted up against the Roan, were at a table in the front yard. Cindy told the story of waking one night in The Oaks and witnessing hovering above her a grey-headed, "long-lipped," old woman in a short-sleeved gingham dress. Cindy's small daughter had been sleeping with her, and the hovering woman had said, "I like her. She's sweet." Cindy replied, "I like her too. But you better go before you scare her." The woman vanished. Poof. "You see things around here," Cindy told us. "Plenty of sounds too."

Joan and I realized we'd be spending the night in a haunted house, which, as the moon swelled and swelled, detaching itself from the mountain and threatening to roll into the yard, no longer looked so cozy, but somewhat sinister.

The boys refused to sleep alone, so the four of us crowded into a big four-poster bed — the kind in which the dead quicken in Poe stories — in a cavernous room. All night the house chattered, the too-bright moon nudged the deliquescent panes of antique glowing window glass, and the children kicked at us. I couldn't stop thinking about *A Visitation of Spirits*.

**An appreciably different version of this essay was previously published in North Carolina Libraries.*



Joseph Bathanti is a Humanities Council trustee and has been a Let's Talk About It discussion series facilitator and a Road Scholar. An award-winning writer of poetry and prose, the recipient of numerous teaching awards, he is currently a professor of creative writing at Appalachian State University, where he is also co-director of the Visiting Writers Series, director of Writing in the Field at Appalachian State University, and the Watauga Global Community Writer-in-Residence.

Mill Creek Suite

Nancy Dew Taylor

At an Easter Dance for Returning Soldiers

1919

Catching a glimpse of Frank's face
in the crowd, she almost steps
on her partner's feet, her heart
catapulting, heat starting
its slow body burn.

His limp
nearly gone. She tries to keep
her mind aligned, vows she won't
look at him again. Yet yearns.

So much about this soldier
draws, knits her heart to his life.
Wit, tact, lack of pretension,
height enough for her 5'10.

But the farm life he's chosen—
can she endure it? Applause
wakes her from reverie. Caught
off guard, distraught, she stumbles,
mumbles an apology,
wonders if Frank saw. Dares glance
toward him, meet his keen gaze, hold.

Unaware of all except
each other, they stare and stare.

A Crown Complex as Weavings

That blue dress with its zig-zag—
silver sequins stretched across
her breast—is bested. He stares—gawks,
even—a hopeless bumpkin.

Pale yellow silk. Duster thin
as air, green-leaf embroidered,
freckles flickering beneath—

And her hair:

that fluid amber roiling
with braids that coil, disappear
to resurface as sleek rolls
wound smooth as the curve of waves
about to break.

Pulled under,
he sinks, drowns.

Dinner on Montford Avenue

Asheville, NC, Christmas, 1919

"I hear you play the fiddle."

"Yes, sir," Frank ignores the slur.
"Also lute and dulcimer,
none particularly well.
Do you play, sir?" he inquires.

Ellen's father (her brother
and Ellen called him Old Jove)
snorts. Ellen looks down, demure.

"Your favorite composer?"
"Mozart, sir. I have a friend
who finds his works sissified—"
he takes up Old Jove's gauntlet,
Ellen smiles—"but I love them.
Did you know Mozart almost
never changed a note he wrote?
Yours, sir?"

"What?" mumbles Old Jove.

"Favorite composer, sir."

"Bach," barks Jove. "And I suppose
you mountaineer folk—" voice close
to a sneer—"prefer your own
music."

"We do love it, sir."

"More wine, Frank?" Ellen's mother
tries. Old Jove glares her quiet,
demands of Frank what he is
studying.

Old Fort to Ridgecrest

1925

Except during winter's snows,
the worst of stormy weather,
or as Ellen's confinement
nears, Frank makes this trek each month,
six miles from door to cabin door,
to visit, help his mother.

After crossing Mill Creek, he
takes the trail into the cove
until he's close surrounded
by mountainsides, bears left up
the coiled path. Leaving behind
the rhododendron-shadowed
water, its splashing the last
sound but for his breathing
or birdcall, wildcat, bear, wind,
he passes through the silence
of soaring virgin hemlock,
an empty dream-like forest
floor dark as twilight, cool, bare,
springy and brown with needles.
Curling upward, he gains height
on treetops, stops above them
to catch breath, sight between oak
and poplar across the gorge
old Mitchell and Pinnacle
clear and green in morning light.
From here in winter bareness
the world is all high sky, all
chaste snow on blue-bodied slopes.

On. He runs the ridge, up, then
over Eagle's Aerie, dips
once, rises, steady, three miles
across lonely, unnamed peaks

toward the long, high range off which
he can see only southwest.

In mid-July, he unloops
the sack from his belt and bends
to scoop blueberries across
the back of the wide, steppe-like
mountaintop. The journey's last
third is up even higher
to Little Kitazuma,
down, then up Kitazuma
itself, passing the pale path
leading to the Bear's Cave,

topping Kitazuma near
out of breath, stopping to rest
at The Rock. Now he can see
all the way down the broad, rich
Swannanoa Valley toward
Asheville and, far off, Pisgah.
Downhill to the gap, wagon
track, a rocky road, the path.
Well, son, his mother's greeting.
A glass of tea, last week's news.
Then he might clean the well, chop
the limb that fell in Wednesday's
storm. Beans to pick, cucumbers.
*Ah, blueberries. Tonight pie,
tomorrow before you go,
some muffins for my sweet girls.
And Ellen. Ellen is well?*

Frank first says, "Ma'am,
no more." In his level voice,
"Sir, classics."

"What use are they
to you on a rocky farm
in wild country near Old Fort?"

"The same," says Frank, "as to you
in your bank business, as to
my Welsh forebears and father
in their kind of work—farming.

I understand, sir, you like
the horses . . ." Ellen's mother
gasps. Old Jove cuts his eyes toward
his daughter. Ellen stares, bold—
"and have," Frank adds smoothly, "fine
stables."

Jove harrumphs, stammers.

Ellen smiles at Frank. Then her
mother quakes with awful dread.
These two will wed; she will lose
this child, as she did her son,
to her husband's hauteur, him
she should long ago have fled,
old beast powerful as this
red pain in her splitting head.

She slumps. When Ellen touches
her, she is already dead.

Night Storm at the Bear's Cave

1927

He can smell the rain come south
instead of west—a bad sign
for it to crawl around behind
the Craggies and tall Greybeard
heading to test the valley.
It drags with it thick clouds stained
black and gray as river rocks.
Relentless as death, the storm
converges at the county
line, locks him in. He trots, hunched.

In two seconds he is soaked
to his socks. He slows but plods
on, squishing, head bent against
drops sharp as sling-shot needles.
He flinches as lightning blasts
a white pine, wrapping the top
in flames that shiver, then run
down wet bark to sodden ground.
Thunder booms across mountains.

He runs the last half mile up
Kitazuma's slick back
to the dark, slight widening
where the path to the Bear's Cave
falls straight off the mountainside.
He slides down sideways, crashing,
clutching at rhododendron,
and jams to a sudden stop
only feet short of the ledge.
He scrambles through the dripping
mouth, eyes scouring the depths till
lightning lights the sandy floor.
The world flicks bright on, then off.
Earth trembles and rain drums down.
He sleeps finally, when rain
turns steady, softens to drips,
not yet knowing his cabin
has been struck, burned to the ground.

Come first morning he rises,
brushes the crust from his clothes.
He'll have to rush his mother's
visit, return home today.
Ellen, the twins, and baby
Franklin expect him.

Day Two

Dig. Build coffin, drive home
nails with strokes like shots. Lay in
Franklin's charred remains. Carry
box uphill, shrug off John's hand,
ignore his proffered help.
Glare shut the preacher's praying,
the women's voices singing
dirges. Fling dirt clods, grunt.
Bare teeth, snatch the twins from Sue,
stride away toward home. Stop. No,
no home. Toward Ellen, death-like.
Transformed. Innocent of all woe.

On the Train, Doc DuBose Makes Notes

Second degree on right arm
and hand only. Richardson
of Black Mountain agrees. Keep
her warm. Asheville's Mott favors
a new paraffin treatment—
mix with melted Vaseline,
liquid petrolatum, oil
of eucalyptus. Thymol,
iodide, mentholatum
to stop pain and infection.
Morphine. Swab picric, citric
acids on cleaned vesicles.

Strange how Mott asked me about
her long, beautiful red hair.
Said if she makes it, he'll graft.

A hard haul, dark as this mile-
long tunnel, circuitous
as these snake-like tracks curling
below Swannanoa Gap.

We'll see. A fighter, this girl.

Song of Water

She dreams she sits in a boat
softly rocking, only sounds
the small lapping waves thrown back
from a deep green curve of trees,
slight scraping of the wooden
bottom on the sandy shore.

Felt memories. Summers then
were Bee Tree Lake—dark blue, lost
beneath the Seven Sisters,
primordial mud curling
between her toes, trees growing
right down the pitched mountainsides
to the edge of the warmed water.
She'd begged to go in naked
to let water lap, anoint.

Splashing in the slow-flowing
Swannanoa, canoeing
the French Broad's strong back. That lake
up the near-enclosed cove close
to Black Mountain so icy.

This water swirls warm, smelling
of lavender and Frank. She
thinks he is kissing her breast.

Her whole body aches to arch.

Ellen's Secrets

She performs her ritual:
grouts the fracture in her heart
the shape of little Franklin,
fingers the eyelid stitched shut,
then the crumbled mouth, braided
plaid of breast. Webbed stub of hand.

How can anyone love this
beast, this host of horrors pressed
into what she has become?

She will make herself a ghost,

sew herself up like a doll
with dead eyes, no mouth, no needs,
make herself invisible,
incorporeal, a blank.
Keep them all out. Even Frank.

She turns her face to the wall.
Embalms herself in dark Styx
water at once black, burning,
her self's perfect analog.

She wakes Frank, screaming *Water!*

Awakening

From bed she hears Frank's sharp call
to the mule, hears the jangle
of chain when, near noon, he leads
Mel to new-green maple shade.

Then comes the long file's rasp, sound
rough as her skin. Frank sharpening
the plow. She pictures his hand,
recalls its touch on her breast.
Her mind skitters, locks out love.

She rises, unsteady, sits
to watch him bowing over
his hot work. The sound of file
grates. The smell of fresh-turned earth
aggravates, makes her hands itch.
She knows the feel of the file,
its heft in her hand. Before
the fire—

These six months inside.

I am winter. She fidgets,
touches her good hand to hair
stubby as the sound of plow
he stumps back into ground.
Frank loops the file to his waist.
She knows it will rub against
his thigh, caress, smoothe a swath
against his jeans. She fingers
that warm line, imagines, moans.

He stands, stretches, arches his back,
walks to the well, unhitches
overall straps, draws the shirt
over his head, slow cranks down
the bucket, muscles bunching.
Then he bends, splashing water
on his face, on his fair hair,
darkening it.

His torso.
Strong, twisted cord of backbone.

Return

Nothing was ever so hard.
Every chore takes three, four
times longer, marred results far
from perfect. She grits her teeth
till her jaws hurt.

Frank is all
patience, all helpfulness. Curt,
she resists, snaps, sounds a crank.
Admits to herself his love
may still be real, knows it gnaws
at the edges of her heart.

She plans to plant black cohosh,
blackberry, deadly nightshade,
juniper, pokeweed, yarrow.



Nancy Dew Taylor's chapbook of poems, *Stepping on Air*, was published by Emrys Press in 2008. Born in Lake City, South Carolina, Taylor is a graduate of Furman University, with an M.A. from UNC at Chapel Hill and a Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina. She has taught English in the public schools of North and South Carolina and at Randolph-Macon Woman's College, the University of Puerto Rico, the University of South Carolina, and Lander University. For almost fourteen years, she taught the medical humanities to residents and faculty at the Greenville (SC) Hospital System, where she was a medical editor.

Taylor's short stories have been published in *The South Carolina Review* and *Sargasso*, a Caribbean journal. Her poems have appeared in *Appalachian Journal*, *Kalliope*, *Scribble*, *The South Carolina Review*, *Timber Creek Review*, *Chebacco: The Magazine of the Mount Desert Island Historical Society*, *Tar River Poetry*, and *New England Watershed* and in several anthologies, including *Pinesong*, *Mountain Time*, *A Millennial Sampler of South Carolina Poetry*, and *Contemporary*

Appalachia, volume 3 of *The Southern Poetry Anthology*. She was a finalist in the 2006 Rita Dove Poetry Competition in Salem College's Center for Women Writers' National Literary Awards and in 2008 was named honorable mention in the same competition. She lives in Greenville, SC.

Ulmann to Niles*

1929

I want her from this angle,
dressed in whatever she wants,
her white, rosy skin shining
against all this dark order.
As backdrop, that chestnut oak—
rent, mangled, and scarred, its trunk
cruelly carved as her face.
Afternoon sun the best.

This garden, hidden, tells us
all we need to know of her—
look: Shakespeare's rosemary, thyme,
a gourmet's coriander,
dill, parsley, oregano.
A wild spirit inhabits
its owner: see how she chose
lush pink peonies, velvet
gardenias, white, fragrant,
these small but blowsy plants
that will not be restrained
but throw themselves at the air
with never a fear?

Yet, see?
something's not right about this
newest area: too-straight
rows, odd plants—deadly nightshade.
She will not let herself love
this place, is uprooting things.

It's that change in her I want
to catch, mirroring her loss.
Like the indentations left
on her tree when someone ripped
off old wisteria vines.

**Doris Ulmann, raised in Baltimore,
traveled across Appalachia photographing
its people. Her traveling companion, John
Jacob Niles, gathered its folk songs.*

Ellen Follows Ulmann into Deep Woods

I prefer to be alone.
She knows it and how I love
dirt and trees almost as much
as an empty room. I go,
unhesitating, with her,
a total stranger—bony,
tall, her hair stuffed carelessly
under a wide-brimmed straw hat.
I carry her camera
stand, being at ease with things
askew. We go into deep
woods. She will recognize, when
we get there, the place.

She gazes
at me frankly—ha—not like
the others, eyes averted
but with quick, covert glances.
She likes that I want to be
photographed by her, solo,
unashamed, by a single
eye like mine. She doesn't know
yet I won't keep a copy.

A *negative*, Ulmann calls
it. *Appropriate*, I think.

Frank Leaves a Note in Ellen's Apron Pocket

This is your *métier*, not
mine, but your eye might see part
of me if I write. Forgive
my halting words.

I love you.
I love each of your bones bent
on having your way. I love,
centered on the inner wrist
and winding from neck to hip
(silver as sequins on that blue
dress you wore when first we met),
your seared, scarred skin that pulls back,
rippling, from near touch. I ache
to make my way down that path
to the secret place we had
before you locked me out.

That place is ours, not yours.
Let me in.

Oak Dresser

She stares as it sways, though roped
tight to poles on four corners
of the wagon, the bedroom
suite Frank had promised.

Right off
the shape the mirror holds stirs
whirls of resentment and rage.

While two slim strangers untie
it, Frank turns clear eyes on her,
approaches. She can barely
speak: Listen here. I said no
mirror. You think staring will
salve, help me accept this face—
I've heard you tell your mother
as much. I'll not have it. That eye
and mine will not inhabit
the same space.

It's not for you.
A strange inflection, so cold
she stops breathing, feels ice creep
into her knotted stomach.
It's for the girls— His voice flat,
his hard eye jarring her own,
not for you—three words knifing.
Sudden, grim images swirl:
the scared self she wants to hide
from, her scarred face and body,
Frank with a different wife.

Ridgecrest to Old Fort

1931

This snaking trail twists like thought.

On these trips he's taught himself
not to rail or brood. Today,
though, he's overwrought, thinking
only of Ellen's turning
to him in sleep two nights back.

Feeling her close, he'd gone hard,
tried not to move. He knew when
she woke, felt her stiffen with
realization, pull back.
He turned and reached out for her.
She rose and left him alone.

So anxious is he for home,
he's left his mother's early,
hoping to see pleased surprise
in Ellen's eye. Now he stops,
prepares his mind and face.
Steadies his twirling brai n.

Crossing rain-swollen Mill Creek,
he steps with care on wet rocks.
As though one false move could send
hope and his whole world whirling.

At Mill Creek

She gives him one more half hour
because he is never late
then sets out alone to where
creek and path converge.

In leafy
light, she almost misses what
divides water near the big
rock: Frank, his leg bent back, bone
and blood evident. She kneels
beside him, kisses his face—
cold, so cold. Her body shakes.
She must pull him out—can't move
him with this nub, useless arm.
She slides his head on her lap,
watches eyeballs roll. Rubs, rubs
his face, calls to him.

She hears
a high scream, then another.
In the end recognizes
the voice as her own.

LINDA FLOWERS LITERARY AWARD

The North Carolina Humanities Council invites original, unpublished entries of fiction, nonfiction, or poetry for the 2012 Linda Flowers Literary Award. Submissions should celebrate excellence in the humanities and reflect the experiences of people who, like Linda Flowers, not only identify with North Carolina, its people and cultures, but also explore its problems and promises.

For complete submission guidelines and prize details, see the North Carolina Humanities website at www.nchumanities.org. Questions may be directed to Donovan McKnight at (336) 334-4770 or dmcknight@nchumanities.org.

DEADLINE: postmark date August 15, 2012

The North Carolina Humanities Council was privileged to have Linda Flowers as one of its members from 1992 to 1998.

*That my book about Eastern North Carolina might touch a chord with some people... I had not anticipated. What [they] are responding to in *Thrown Away*, I think, is its human dimensions: the focus on real men and women having to make their way in the face of a changing, onrushing and typically uncaring world... This humanistic apprehension, I tell my students, is as necessary for living fully as anything else they may ever hope to have.*

~ Linda Flowers, in a letter to the North Carolina Humanities Council Membership Committee, July 1992

Nancy Dew Taylor, Reflections on Writing

The lives depicted in the poems are like those of the people I came to know during the summers my family spent east of Asheville: strong, resilient, self-reliant, loving. I hope they can see themselves in these poems — and can feel my admiration and my gratitude. This sequence of poems about a young couple living on a farm near Old Fort in the early part of the 20th century began when my friend Bill Perry told me the story of John May's father's weekly trips on foot from Old Fort to Ridgecrest to check on his widowed mother. The trip seemed epic to me. I'd hiked it down but never would have made it up, and I wrote the first poem in this series about that six-mile, uphill hike. I knew the Mill Creek area, and I knew the railroad, too. I had long been fascinated by the photographs of Doris Ulmann and decided it was quite possible she might have ridden the train, gotten off at Old Fort, and taken photographs of people living in the mountains nearby. Ron Rash introduced me to the form, a seven-syllable line with internal rhyme that came from the Welsh epic, *The Mabinogion*.

2011 SELECTION COMMITTEE

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Read more previous winning submissions at www.nchumanities.org/linda-flowers.

Laying Down Tracks:

Moving from “Good Roads” to “Good Modes”

Rachel Willis

In the early 1900s North Carolina became known as the “Good Roads State.” By the 1950s, “Highway”—etched in granite on the building façade—summarized the NC Department of Transportation’s road and private vehicle strategy for surface transportation. However, congestion, environmental impacts, rising energy prices, and the rapidly escalating costs of constructing and maintaining roads, bridges, and related infrastructure mean we will have to employ more diverse transportation strategies in the future. Simply widening road width to accommodate growing traffic is like loosening one’s belt to deal with obesity: it doesn’t solve the problem. Building toll roads doesn’t solve it for those of limited economic means. We have to become the “Good Modes State” by investing in alternative transportation methods if we want to preserve quality of life and have a dynamic globally competitive economy in North Carolina.

Joseph Caldwell, the first President of the University of North Carolina, articulated the need for an east-west rail line across the state to enhance commerce and link the state’s diverse regions in an article as early as 1828. Given that rail construction in the U.S. had only begun two years earlier in New York, his ideas were visionary, exceptionally so for an educational leader in a poor rural state. The difficulty of obtaining continuous corridors and financing made for slow progress, but the economic development value of trains was so apparent that by 1848 the NC legislature

had authorized a statewide rail line. In 1854 the NC Railroad (NCRR) was chartered with the state providing two-thirds of the capital. The remaining stock was issued to private shareholders in an early public-private partnership to encourage business owners to invest in rail transportation, locate facilities on the railroad, and use rail transportation to move raw materials and finished goods. The corridor came to be known as the Piedmont Crescent (now the route for Interstate 85 between the Triangle and Charlotte). As the development of rail accelerated, train locomotives became the engine of economic progress in North Carolina for freight and passengers.

Evidence of the success of rail transportation to promote commerce and mobility is evident in a beautiful Depression-era mural that now hangs in the New Bern Academy, North Carolina’s first public grammar school. Commissioned under Roosevelt’s Works Project Administration, the painting originally graced the Union Rail Station in Raleigh. The bird’s eye view from the mountains to the coast shows green pines and crystal blue water dominating the landscape *because* it includes thin black rail lines linking communities large and small. A small factory symbol indicates the central location of the train station in towns depicted in this recently restored precursor to Google Earth. The critical role of rail transport in creating jobs and moving goods is implicit and also provides a better map for our future in North Carolina.

Accommodating and distributing growth across the state to stimulate job creation in



Train approaches signal light at dusk. Photo by Lou Nachman.

urban and rural areas — while preserving the natural beauty of our state — requires more rail options. Roads are critical, but they work better when they accompany mass transit options in the right places and with the appropriate technology, frequency, and connected mode changes. Trains and buses can move people and goods more efficiently than cars and trucks. Depending on the type of train, you can get dozens if not hundreds more people in the same space as a handful of passenger vehicles. Anyone who has ever used the DC, Boston, or Portland metro rail systems knows the capacity of trains to move lots of people to their destination quickly.

However, effective train service requires continuous rail corridors to destinations for passengers and products. One ton of freight travels 436 miles per gallon of diesel fuel when it moves on a rail car, and freight operators are taking advantage of the old



ALL ABOARD

2012 Teachers Institute Summer Seminar

Laying Down Tracks — A Study of Railroads as Myth, Reality, and Symbol
 June 17–23, 2012, at the Friday Center in Chapel Hill

corridor and advertising the clear economic advantage to potential customers.

Thus, building the “good jobs landscape” means more trains in more places for passengers and freight. Anyone who has used a rail pass in Europe has seen how well trains can protect the green spaces between cities and deliver people and products directly to and from their urban or port destinations without parking problems, congestion delays, or massive amounts of land devoted to concrete. Good mass transit options also enable non-drivers’ mobility and access to the benefits of communities. This strategy also requires more walkable communities and better transit services within communities to complement the rail service.

With more than twelve years of transportation board experience, including serving as chair of the Triangle Transit Authority in the late 1990s, I know firsthand that NC already has some of the infrastructure and policy in place to make commuter, city-to-city, and high-speed passenger

train networks and service better. In 1998 Gov. James Hunt authorized the purchase of outstanding private NCRR stock. NC citizens now own the rail corridor outright. NC DOT Rail Division investments have improved freight train capacity, AMTRAK service, and rail crossing safety as well as restoring many of the beautiful historic train stations across the state. The recent successful opening of the LYNX light-rail system in Charlotte with continuing voter support for the extension of rail and bus service is a clear example of the demand for more mass transit.

Though such progress is admirable, this is a crucial time for re-establishing rail as a viable transportation option across our state. Increases in energy prices and the population growth rate demand we plan for more cost-effective transportation options. If we want fast, frequent, affordable, eco-friendly trains and buses, we need to increase our investment in mass transit and build a modern network of rail lines within and between communities; support complementary air, port, train and

bus service; and encourage smart planning efforts that capitalize on these opportunities to build ridership and then lay down more tracks.

Just as we invest in equitable access to jobs through investing in public education and training, we must invest in equitable physical access to work and economic development prospects through investing in public mass transportation choices.

Rachel A. Willis is the Bowman and Gordon Gray Professor of American Studies and Economics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a GSK Faculty Fellow on Transportation Policy at the Institute for Emerging Issue. She currently is a London Honors Faculty Director in Residence at Winston House and is teaching “Global Access to Work” on the rails, waterways, and buses of the United Kingdom.

AlumNews

Geneva Baker (Robeson County) was selected employee of the month in August 2011. A participant in a 2010 Teachers Institute weekend seminar, she continued her professional development work by attending a “We the People” workshop in Pine Knoll Shores and the Annual Conference of Science Teachers in Greensboro.

Joy Kinley (Yadkin County) was accepted into the Teachers for Global Classrooms Program, a division of the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and run by IREX (International Research and Exchanges Board). Kinley has spent the last semester studying global education and will continue these studies through the spring semester. Grant funds pay for Kinley’s travels this summer to India to meet with teachers, educational leaders and to visit schools.

Tim McDonough (Durham County), a social studies and special education teacher, participated in a workshop at North Carolina Central University on “re-education,” which included a presentation by a mother of an emotionally challenging child. McDonough reports that this presentation reinforced his belief, “re-learned” through the Teachers Institute semester course in 2009 at Duke

University on “The South in Black and White,” that “there’s nothing like learning from someone first hand.” McDonough continues, “That lesson keeps breathing life into my teaching: an interview is required for all my students’ (grades 6–12) research projects.”

Theresa Pierce (Rowan/Salisbury) has received a Robertson Family Foundation Global Teacher Award through the UNC Center for International Understanding to participate in a professional development program in Denmark, June 2012.

Sam Yates (Richmond County) received his National Board Certification in Library Media. In his renewal portfolio, Yates featured a project he designed based on his experience in the 2009 Teachers Institute Summer Seminar. During that project, his students discovered that musician Dorsey Dixon had lived and worked in the mill village where Yates’ school is located. One student discovered that Dixon was her cousin. Through oral history with the student’s grandfather as well as reviewing numerous photographs and music, all Yates’ students engaged in the valuable lesson of searching for and using primary source information.

Kathryn Newfont, Associate Professor of History and Faculty Chair of the Ramsey Center for Regional Studies at Mars Hill College and a Teachers Institute scholar, is the author of *Blue Ridge Commons: Environmental Activism and Forest History in Western North Carolina* (University of Georgia Press) released in February 2012.

Tammy Young (Buncombe County) successfully renewed her National Board Certification in October 2011. In addition, Young and two colleagues received a \$1,115 grant from the Black Mountain, NC, Old Depot Association. Funds were used to purchase two classroom sets of novels, various nonfiction and reference books, and DVDs to launch the implementation of the AP English course on Appalachian Literature designed after Young attended the 2010 Teachers Institute Summer Seminar “Appalachian Voices.”

TEACHERS INSTITUTE ALUMS: SHARE YOUR PROFESSIONAL NEWS.

Send information to
lynwkw@nchumanities.org.

The newly refurbished Piedmont & Northern locomotives are now used for the restoration of service between Mount Holly and Gastonia, a distance of 12 miles. The first trip was on February 20, 2012. These tracks were originally built in 1911 and moved people and goods between Gastonia and Charlotte. In 2007, Gaston County received a \$5 million state grant for the reactivation of this line. NC DOT officials see this restoration of service as an opportunity to spur economic development. Photo by Lou Nachman.



Core Sound Findings: 2011 Summer Seminar Impact

This seminar renewed my spirit as an educator and enabled me to return to my classroom in the fall with a positive attitude toward my students and my profession.

~ Jennifer Linn, Kannapolis City Schools

Participants in the 2011 Teachers Institute Summer Seminar, “Core Sound: A People and a Place of Change and Courage,” have already begun to put to use in their schools much of what they learned during their week of intensive study at the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center, June 19–24. Gathering for a follow-up workshop in Greensboro, these participants reported how they have shared their summer experience with colleagues and students.

While there are plans being designed for the next school year, much was incorporated during the Fall 2011 semester as educators addressed the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for their areas. Highlights include:

- **Gazelia Carter**, social studies, Craven County Schools: unit on hurricanes — scientific causes and effects (physical, cultural, economic)
- **Mary Jo Edwards**, math teacher, Carteret County Schools: lessons on changes in area’s economy as the job market in the seafood industry changes
- **Daniel Loftis**, math teacher, Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools: lessons on percentages related to fishing industry information, types and quantities of fish on approved list
- **Thomas Stewart**, English, Lenoir County Schools: lessons designed for Black History Month using his personal video of the seminar performance of the Menhaden Chanteymen, including student

analysis of lyrics and music as well as a comparison to Negro Spirituals and a study of African American contributions in North Carolina’s coastal fishing industry.

Numerous participants have held workshops for their colleagues — departmental faculty, full faculty, and district NCAEA members. Others have placed the seminar texts in their school libraries for use by teachers and students. One participant, Scott Canipe (computer education, Rutherford County Schools), reported that his participation in this seminar spurred him to take the Praxis exam for middle grades social studies. He is now qualified to teach North Carolina social studies.

The impact of this intensive week of challenging academic study will continue. Plans are in place for additional work during the 2012–2013 academic year. Highlights include:

- **Jennifer Linn**, English, Kannapolis City Schools: portfolio project focused on the significance of place in the human experience
- **Quinn McLaughlin** and **Lindley Swift**, Humanities, GTCC: development of a new cultural studies course using the Core Sound as a case study
- **Michelle Hunt**, language arts/math, Caldwell County Schools: integrated writing project on North Carolina coastal regions and culture
- **Sylvia Winger**, art, Yadkin County Schools: use of Core Sound photos and historical/cultural information to spur activities in a watercolor unit.



Map of Down East drawn by and courtesy of Susan Anger.



Participants from the 2011 Summer Seminar gather in Greensboro, NC, in February 2012 for a follow-up workshop.



MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET

Journey Stories Arrives

Journey Stories is a collaboration between the North Carolina Humanities Council, the Smithsonian Institution, and rural sites statewide. It will tour six sites in North Carolina in 2012–2013. Curated by William Withuhn, curator emeritus for the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, this traveling exhibition examines the intersection between modes of travel and Americans' desire to feel free to move.

The story is diverse and focuses on immigration, migration, innovation, and freedom. It takes account of immigrants coming in search of promise in a new country; stories of individuals and families relocating in search of fortune, their

own homestead, or employment; the harrowing journeys of Africans and Native Americans forced to move; and, of course, fun and frolic on the open road. The story of the intersection between transportation and American society is complicated, but it tells us much about who we are — people who see our societal mobility as a means for asserting our individual freedom.

Journey Stories uses engaging images with audio and artifacts to tell the individual stories that illustrate the critical roles travel and movement have played in building our diverse American society. Here our site partners explore their own journey stories as regional and personal heritage.

Photo above: North on Highway 27, NC, 1940. Photo courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

Journeys with *The Green Book*

*Nancy Van Dolsen, Director,
North Carolina Museum
of the Coastal Plain, Wilson*

Most physical journeys, whether for business or pleasure, are in some way planned and mapped. For an African American traveler during the Jim Crow era, taking a journey without making plans could mean finding yourself with nowhere to eat or to spend the night, especially in the southern states. Many middle-class African Americans turned to *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, which was published from 1936 to 1964, to help find hospitable accommodations throughout the country. According to the book's creator, Victor Green of New York City, the book would allow black motorists to travel without experiencing the humiliation of racial discrimination and segregation. Arranged by state and city, the book included the locations of welcoming lodging, restaurants, barber/beauty salons, taverns, and other services. *The Green Book* gives testimony to how the Jim Crow landscape, while certainly filled with obstacles for black motorists, could be navigated in creative and resistant ways. The businesses highlighted in Victor Green's travel guide represented places of refuge for black travelers and served as early sites for creating the African American tourist we see today.

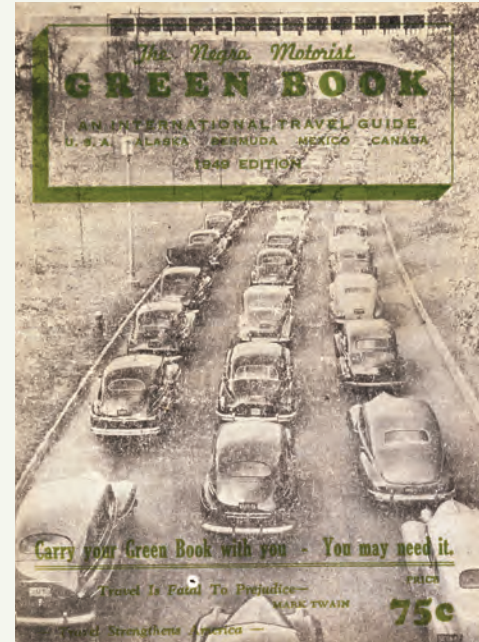
The East Carolina University Center for Sustainable Tourism, under the direction of Dr. Derek H. Alderman, is working on mapping *The Green Book*, as part of a larger project to gain an understanding of African American tourism historically and currently. Many scholars speculate that many tourism choices made today by African Americans are still affected by feelings of racial acceptance and cultural/historical factors, such as the collective memory of past injustices and discrimination. As part of an initiative called RESET

(Race, Ethnicity, and Social Equity in Tourism), the Center is also collecting “journey stories” related to travel and tourism during the Jim Crow era to learn about the obstacles and opportunities that faced African American tourists who used *The Green Book* or other special travel guides (and there were others available). In talking about travel in the past, the Center for Sustainable Tourism hopes to create a dialogue about more current travel experiences and the social and spatial barriers that continue to shape the African American travel experience, realizing that while travel has changed since Jim Crow there are still legacies of it.

Finally, Dr. Alderman and his students, are interested in exploring how the mapping of *The Green Book* would help encourage black and white heritage tourists to learn about the history of Jim Crow travel and perhaps assist in developing a modern day travel guide of sites for these tourists to visit.

The North Carolina Museum of the Coastal Plain (NCMCP) in Wilson will be working with Dr. Alderman and Richard Kennedy, a graduate student in geography at East Carolina University, who is working on *The Green Book* for his thesis topic. The NCMCP will help in researching and locating the businesses found in our region in *The Green Book*, and will also collect journey stories of African Americans in our community and their experiences traveling during the Jim Crow era. By physically mapping and analyzing the material culture of these buildings, which are part of the physical remains of the Jim Crow era, we can better understand not only the current configuration of the City of Wilson, but why each of us experiences the city as we do. The collection of the journey stories of these sites and of those traveling to and from Wilson, will deepen and broaden our understanding of life in Wilson in the past and present.

These maps and stories, collected with *The Green Book* as the focus, will form a vital part of the local exhibit at the NCMCP,



Cover of *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, 1949, Center for Sustainable Tourism, East Carolina University.

“Forced and Unforced Journeys,” which will accompany the *Journey Stories* exhibition when it comes to Wilson.

North Carolina Transportation Stories Abound

Martha Jackson, Curator, North Carolina Museum of Transportation, Spencer

Since the North Carolina Transportation Museum opened its doors to the public in 1983, museum staff have interviewed citizens involved in a variety of transportation industries. These stories will be presented and added to by encouraging visitors to share their transportation and travel stories during the *Journey Stories* exhibition. Digitized and saved in the museum’s research library, they will serve as a growing repository that parallels the exhibits of the material culture

of transportation of our state now on display. How wide and diverse is that history? Here’s just a peek.

Current exhibits at the museum include most forms of transportation, including rail, road, water, and air throughout our state’s long history. The area’s American Indian inhabitants used dugout canoes like one on display at the museum and created trails following animal migratory patterns. Later, settlers used many of those same

trails to create a road system that exists to this day.

Visitors can view a Conestoga wagon made in Rowan County. German settlers designed Conestoga wagons as early as 1725 in the Conestoga region of Pennsylvania. They featured sagging centers and elevated ends to prevent cargo from falling out. Thousands of German and Scotch-Irish immigrants used similar wagons to travel down the Great Wagon Road into North Carolina’s backcountry.

As technology changed, rail lines became more common in the state. Rail companies often used different track widths, called “gauges.” This lack of standardization among the states sometimes made it difficult to travel between states. After the Civil War, gauges became more standard, and

travel by rail became almost commonplace. On-site steam and diesel locomotives along with passenger and freight cars from the previous era of North Carolina's bustling rail yards provide a time portal to the travel and transport experiences of almost two centuries.

As automobiles became more affordable and highway construction made travel faster and more convenient, North Carolinians became more mobile and dependent on cars and trucks. The state



Diver with navigational lantern from the USS *Iron Age* which ran aground at Lochwoods Folly Inlet in 1864. Provided by the North Carolina Underwater Archaeology Branch.

maintains the largest highway system in the nation, with over 78,500 miles of paved roads. Early road-grading equipment is featured in an exhibit explaining how these roads were created. Museum attendees can also see the evolution of cars and trucks, including a 1901 Steamhope that ran on steam, a 1918 electric car made by Rauch and Lang, a 1959 Edsel, and a 1961 Corvair truck.

Today most goods are hauled by tractor-trailers, and North Carolina has several truck manufacturers, trucking companies, and smaller independent carriers. Visitors can view several early Mack, Freightliner, and Carolina Freight trucks, in addition to cargo containers invented by native North Carolinian Malcom McLean. These cargo containers could be easily transferred from ships to trailers and taken by trucks to inland destinations.

North Carolina was the site of the first successful heavier-than-air flight and, with the progression of air travel, has become home to three international airports, 74 public airports, and almost 300 private airports. The museum features two small aircraft, including a home-built

“airphibian” that can land in water. The museum's Roundhouse displays a replica of a Wright Brothers flyer, a wicker carriage made by one of the world's largest balloon manufacturers located in Statesville, N.C., an Eastern Airlines flight simulator, and airline employee uniforms. Tom Davis started Piedmont Airlines in Winston-Salem and built one of the nation's most successful airlines. A Piedmont Airlines DC-3 is currently being renovated by volunteers, many of them former and current airline employees.

We turn to the water from the air. Paddleboats once travelled up rivers in the east, carrying cargo and passengers. Today, ferries unite the Outer Banks and rivers emptying into the sounds. During the Civil War, Wilmington was the “Lifeline of the Confederacy,” as daring captains steered their fast ships at great risk through the Union blockade under the protection of Fort Fisher, bringing equipment for armies and goods for civilians. Artifacts have been recovered from sunken blockade runners and blockaders by state underwater archaeologists. Visitors will indeed experience the transportation legacy of our state with *Journey Stories*.

Kephart Journeys to the Smokies

Pamela A. Meister, Curator, Mountain Heritage Center, Cullowhee

The mountains of western North Carolina are rich in journey stories, from ancient Cherokee legends to tales of today's vacationers. There are stories of settlers drawn to this region and of long-time residents who left seeking a better life, but who sometimes returned to the place they still called “home.” Changing modes of travel — from mountain footpaths to wagon roads, through the coming of the railroads and the ascendance of the automobile — sparked a profound transformation of the region that is still continuing today.

A Western Carolina University public history class spent a semester researching regional journey stories that will be used to create exhibits at the Jackson County Library in Sylva to complement *Journey Stories*. The students' research covered different types of stories, from the dislocation caused by the construction of Fontana Dam to the growth and evolution of the town of Sylva. They also looked at the physical transformation of the Cataloochee Valley by the National Park Service and the physical and cultural journeys of Cherokee basketmakers.

Permanent exhibits at the Mountain Heritage Center focus on the migration of Scotch-Irish settlers to western North Carolina and the history of Western Carolina University, but a special temporary exhibit will focus on a personal journey story with an enormous and lasting impact on the entire region — the journey story of Horace Kephart.

Born in Pennsylvania in 1862 but raised in Iowa, Horace Kephart enrolled in graduate school at Cornell at age seventeen. Trained as a librarian, he achieved national recognition as director of the Mercantile Library in St. Louis, Missouri, from 1890 to 1903. While living in what was already one of the largest cities in the nation, Kephart developed a passion for outdoor life and began



Horace Kephart sitting on his bunk in Hall Cabin. The shoes on his feet and under the bunk are now part of the Mountain Heritage Center's Kephart collection, as is the pistol holster hanging on the wall. Photo courtesy Hunter Library, Western Carolina University.

writing about his camping and hunting excursions.

However, a mid-life crisis sparked by a troubled marriage and struggles with alcoholism and what he later described as “nervous exhaustion” caused Kephart to leave St. Louis. In 1904, at the age of 42, he arrived in western North Carolina, hoping for a fresh start and a renewed purpose in life. He immersed himself in his new natural environment and took an immediate interest in the people, history, and culture of the region.

The result of Kephart’s time in what he described as “the back of beyond” were hundreds of articles as well as several books. These included *Camping and Woodcraft* (1906), one of the cornerstones of American outdoor writing, and *Our Southern Highlanders* (1913), the classic work on early 20th century southern Appalachia. Both works are still in print and continue to attract an enthusiastic following.

Kephart arrived in western North Carolina at a critical period of regional change.

Railroad routes were established in the 1880s, and in their wake came large-scale industrial development, especially in the mining and logging industries. During the 1920s, Kephart joined the movement to create a Great Smoky Mountains National Park, using his abilities and reputation to convince individuals on local and national levels of the need for such a park.

He was aided in his efforts by photographer George Masa. Born in Osaka, Japan, Masa came to the United States in 1901 to study mining. He eventually settled in Asheville, North Carolina, where he became a photographer and opened his own studio. Masa’s breathtaking landscape photographs and Kephart’s text were used in promotional materials championing the cause. Together, they raised awareness of the significance and beauty of the Smokies and sounded the alarm over the devastation wrought by unsound industrial operations.

Although Kephart’s life was cut short by an automobile accident in 1931, it already was apparent that the Great Smoky Mountains

National Park would be established. In 1933, George Masa fell ill and died in the county hospital. Within the park, a 6,217-foot peak now bears the name of Mount Kephart. On its broad shoulder is another peak, Masa Knob. Both Kephart and Masa feature prominently in Ken Burns’ PBS television series, *The National Parks: America’s Best Idea*.

In 2004, Western Carolina University celebrated the 100-year anniversary of Horace Kephart’s arrival in the region with a special project. Hunter Library’s Special Collections and the Mountain Heritage Center joined together to create “Horace Kephart: Revealing an Enigma,” an online exhibit and research site at www.wcu.edu/library/digitalcoll/kephart. The physical exhibit, scheduled to open in September 2012 at the Mountain Heritage Center, will recreate Kephart’s original camp with artifacts from the Center’s Kephart collection and provide a detailed look at Kephart’s impressive contributions and his own journey story.

Pender County Journeys

*Michael Y. Taylor, Director,
Pender County Public Libraries,
Burgaw*

People have long journeyed to, through, and from the land we now call North Carolina. While many stayed for generations, others only passed through, but most were affected in some way by the experience of the journey. New York and other great urban areas may be most identified as the “melting pot” of America. But wherever paths lead and cross, journeys have played some role in shaping who we may be culturally, physically, intellectually, and spiritually.

Burgaw is a small town of only a few thousand souls located in rural Pender County in the southeastern corner of the coastal plains. Explorers sailing up the Northeast Cape Fear River in 1663 wrote the first detailed travel journal of their experiences and left geographic names — Stag Park and Rocky Point — that we still use today. Hearing of their account, others followed from the British Isles and France seeking land and opportunity, while bringing captives from West Africa against their will.

Burgaw is not particularly an old town, having been designed and laid out as a new county seat in 1878 on deforested land beside a pioneering railroad from the 1830s. So it’s all the more surprising that the town possesses what the North Carolina Department of Archives and History called in 1985 the oldest train depot in the state.

The beginnings of the three hundred-foot long wooden structure go back to 1850 after the 161.5 mile railroad between Wilmington and Weldon was built and



Italian immigrant women and children of St. Helena in Pender County are gathered in front of one of two community canneries in 1908. Photo Courtesy of Pender County Public Library: Hugh MacRae II Collection.

hailed as the “longest railroad in the world.” Before Burgaw was a community, several hundred acres of forest were purchased on the rail line twenty-three miles north of Wilmington at the headwaters of Burgaw Creek to serve as a wood and water fuel stop for the steam-powered trains.

Involuntary journeys certainly include the 226 men of African heritage listed in the 1850 slave census owned by the railroad corporation. Some of these men were kept at Burgaw Depot to cut trees and to saw and split the wood to fit in the locomotive fireboxes. From these captive labor camps common to Southern railroads rose a rich legacy of stories and music, such as the story of John Henry, the “rail drivin’ man.”

At the turn of the 20th century, several hundred acres on the south side of Burgaw were marketed in Europe as a real estate farm development called St. Helena. “Own a Home in North Carolina” proclaimed a brochure with glowing language describing the economic opportunities and quality of life. Each ten-acre plot was to include a tidy cottage and outbuildings, all for \$240 financed over three years.

The first wave of Italian farmers arrived by train in 1907 but found the place not as pleasant as depicted. The fertile fields they anticipated were nonexistent, and the forest had to be cleared. Local prohibition laws drove the Italians away when they could not legally consume the wine from their vineyards. But they left a love of a new food embraced by the locals called spaghetti. Their departure opened the door for waves of Slovaks, Poles, Hungarians, Austrians, and Russians who stayed and planted a mosaic of cultures and traditions to blend in with the Anglo-Saxon and African American communities.

Through such journey experiences, the people of Burgaw and Pender County heard new languages, tried new foods, and formed lasting friendships and blood connections. Some journeyed northward for a generation or more and then came back home to the land. Others journeyed overseas to war, forever changed by that experience. Today the community absorbs new people with different influences from Mexico, Central and South America, along with Palestinian Muslim families.

The Pender County Libraries will feature much of this history when *Journey Stories* arrives in June.

Robeson County's Airflight Past

Blake Tyner, Executive Director and Curator, Robeson County History Museum, Lumberton

The Robeson County History Museum will celebrate its history and connections to flight in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibition *Journey Stories*. Robeson County has many wonderful connections to flight through its natives including Angus Wilton McLean, Ida Van Smith, Thomas Oxendine, and William McArthur.

While McLean served as governor, he was on hand to greet Colonel Charles Lindbergh as he embarked from the Spirit of St. Louis in High Point, North Carolina, on October 14, 1927, following his famous trans-Atlantic flight from New York to France. McLean also participated in the 25th anniversary of the Wright Brothers' flight at the unveiling of the original memorial on December 17, 1928, at which time he met Orville Wright.

African American pilot Ida Van Smith's love for flight began in her hometown of Lumberton, when as a child her father would take her to watch the planes take off at the airport. At age fifty, her dream of learning to fly came true. When she acquired her private pilot's license and instructor rating, Smith founded the Ida Van Smith Flight Club on Long Island, New York. The flight training club was for minority children to encourage their involvement in aviation and aerospace sciences.

Thomas Oxendine enlisted in the U.S. Naval Air Corps in January 1942 and became the Nation's first American Indian to complete the Navy Flight School. He then served as a fighter pilot and flight instructor during WW II, the Korean War, and the war in Vietnam. As a naval aviator, Oxendine took part in 33

battles during World War II and received numerous awards and medals.

William McArthur, a native of Wakulla, joined NASA in 1990. McArthur has logged 224 days, 22 hours, 28 minutes and 10 seconds in space, including 24 hours and 21 minutes of extra-vehicular activity time in four space walks. McArthur served as the manager of the Space Shuttle Program's Orbiter Project Office at Johnson Space Center.

The final component of "Robeson County and Flight" is an exhibit on the Laurinburg-Maxton Air Base, opened along the border of Robeson and Scotland County during World War II. The base was the largest glider training base in the U.S. and prepared glider pilots for the D-Day Invasion. The base is depicted in photographs but also in a large amount of memorabilia collected by local historians.

The Laurinburg-Maxton Army Air Base, the largest glider training base in the world, was activated on August 28, 1942. It consisted of 4,644 acres with three 6,500-foot long runways that formed a triangle. The triangle's center was 510 acres of Bermuda grass, the landing site for the gliders. In August 1943, General Henry H. Arnold, commander of the Army Air Forces, witnessed a night operation of gliders at the facility and heaped extensive praise on the operation. From 1942-1945, thousands trained for combat onsite, including those who took part in airborne assaults in New Guinea, Sicily, Burma, and the Normandy and Market Garden operations. In the final two years of World War II, Laurinburg-Maxton became the primary U.S. base for training glider pilots.

Robeson County is very proud of its varied flight history and sees it as a perfect complement to enhance the theme of the *Journey Stories* exhibition.



L-R: Mae Jemison, astronaut; Ida Van Smith; and unidentified gentleman. Photo courtesy of Robeson County History Museum.

Pushing the Boundaries: Batteau Transportation Changed Rockingham County Forever

Kim Proctor, Executive Director, Rockingham County Historical Society Museum and Archives, Wentworth

When the Museum and Archives of Rockingham County (the MARC) opens in Wentworth, North Carolina, on August 11th 2012, Museum on Main Street's *Journey Stories* will be the centerpiece. Among the local displays complementing the Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibition will be the story of waterway navigation and the history of batteau transportation in Rockingham County.

And when General Nathaniel Greene needed supplies sent south to fight General Cornwallis' forces for American Independence, he sent Captain John Smith to explore the Roanoke and Dan Rivers to Lower Sauratown, just south of Leaksville in Rockingham County, North Carolina. Treacherous Eagle Falls, about ten miles west of the North Carolina line, stopped him. But the seed was planted, and a solution to the navigation problem pursued.

The importance of success could not be underestimated. For an isolated backwater agricultural region with limited market potential, the answer opened doors that would change Rockingham County forever. Navigation around Eagle Falls on the Dan River meant access to the global market.

Navigation required two things: the ingenuity to carve out navigable waterways and skilled men to navigate them.



Leaksville Landing batteau mural by artists Kitty Williams and Jack Stone, Eden, NC. Photograph courtesy of Margaret Manual.

Long before railroads and paved roads transported people and goods, the waterways did. During the American Revolution, Thomas Jefferson instructed that twelve boats or batteaux be built, billable to him, "so as to answer the [need for] transportation of Provisions along the rivers." Both Jefferson the farmer and Jefferson the war-time governor understood the value of the waterways and the need to push the boundaries.

Now he turns, and after one or two ineffectual efforts to get his pole fixed in the rocky bottom of the river, secures his purchase, adjusts the upper part of the pole to the pad at his shoulder, bends to his task, and the long but not ungraceful bark mounts the rapids like a sea-bird breasting the storm... [and] the boat bravely surmounts every obstacle, be it rocks, rapids, quicksands, hammocks, what not.

~ George Bagby, *Canal Reminiscences*, 1879



2012-2013 TOUR SCHEDULE

BURGAW

June 23–August 4, 2012

Pender County Public Library

WENTWORTH

August 11–September 22

Rockingham County Historical Society Museum & Archives

CULLOWHEE

September 29–November 9

Mountain Heritage Center

WILSON

November 17–December 29

North Carolina Museum of the Coastal Plain

SPENCER

January 5–February 17, 2013

North Carolina Transportation Museum

LUMBERTON

February 23–April 6

Robeson County History Museum



Smithsonian
Institution

Our State
NORTH CAROLINA

The ingenuity necessary is evidenced in attempts to navigate during high water periods on the Dan River, as early as 1792 and the subsequent partnership between North Carolina and Virginia to establish the Roanoke Navigation Company in 1815, and the remnants of wing dams and sluices still visible today. These manmade structures redirected water and allowed batteaumen to skirt the dangerous waters on their way to new markets with Rockingham County tobacco, grain, and sundry commodities. The founding of the towns of Leaksville (a tobacco inspection point and landing) in 1815 and Madison in 1817 made a significant difference. The economy of the area boomed.

Shipping goods by batteau was possible because of free blacks and slaves, who steered skillfully down the rivers. George Bagby opined: "For if ever a man gloried in his calling the negro bateau-man was the man. [It] was a hardy calling demanding skill, courage and strength in high degree." For these black men, who navigated the waterways, the job opened up new horizons and a sense of independence unknown to the majority of their peers.

Visitors to the Wentworth opening of *Journey Stories* will learn more about this interesting and provocative subject. Museum text panels, images, maps, and a model of the Dan River Basin will situate the story in time and space. A life-size reproduction of a batteau, recovered from the Dan River, and a 19th-century batteau pole, along with all the accoutrements of a commercial river journey will give a tangible sense of this intriguing experience. For the adventurous, canoe trips along the scenic Dan River are available and promise to spark the imagination and give pause to reflect on bygone times.

For more information, contact Darrell Stover at (336) 334-5723 or dstover@nchumanities.org

Journey Stories is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the North Carolina Humanities Council, a statewide nonprofit and affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Funded by the U.S. Congress.

Our State is the Statewide Media Partner.

Windows to the Past: People, Place, and Memory in Downtown Greensboro

Benjamin Filene and the Windows to the Past Project Team

Benjamin Filene, director of public history and associate professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and graduate students collaborated on Windows to the Past: People, Places & Memory in Downtown Greensboro, a multi-faceted project that offers public audiences different ways of “touring” downtown and making connections between people, streetscapes, and sense of place.

Have you ever wondered what a favorite downtown spot was twenty-five, fifty, or even one hundred years ago? Six museum studies students at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro have spent the last year-and-a-half trying to figure out just that. They have been poring through Greensboro’s city directories, deeds, census records, photographs, fire insurance maps, and classified ads, as well as examining the structures themselves and conducting oral interviews.

How does one make the case for local history? My students receive master’s degrees in history with a concentration in museum studies (other students in the program concentrate in historic preservation). As future curators, site managers, museum educators, and directors, they need to wrestle with how to do meaningful history that matters to a community.

Every year I have the students carry out a local project that involves research, interpretation, design, and fabrication of public products for and with community partners. For the 2011 class, I posed a particularly challenging question: how can one uncover and share the “hidden histories” of downtown Greensboro’s buildings? This was not just a research task but a challenge of interpretation and collaboration. Students established partnerships with Downtown Greensboro, Inc., Action Greensboro, Inc., Elsewhere Collaborative, and students in

the graduate seminar in digital humanities/digital history taught at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill by Robert C. Allen and Pamela Lach, creators of the Main Street, Carolina software platform. The students funded their work through a grant from the North Carolina Humanities Council. As they pored through public records and conducted oral interviews, they looked for connections among the tales and tidbits they were uncovering. In the end, they were struck by how their findings offered a rich way of seeing downtown Greensboro’s sense of place evolve: changing ideas of race, class, and gender shaped who was central to and who was marginalized from the downtown community.

While buildings are the starting point, the goal was to “repopulate” the past by sharing human stories. The *Windows to the Past* team created window-front displays, a printed self-guided tour, a website, blog, and a podcast; and they partnered with UNC at Chapel Hill students to design and implement an interactive web-based tour using the Main Street, Carolina software platform.

Throughout the project, a core theme was voice — giving voice to mute buildings, understanding whose voice was being amplified and silenced in the historical record, allowing interviewees to speak in their own voice. As well, the students worked hard to find a shared voice through which they themselves could speak as public historians. With that in mind, the reflections below are the students’ own — testaments to their ability to embrace how small-scale history can open up big



The Windows to the Past team. (L to R): Benjamin Filene, Kelli Landing, Felicia Lowrance, Alaina McKee, Amelia Gallo, Stephanie Krysiak, Sam Berton.



Schiffman's Jewelry Company, Greensboro, then and now. Founded by Simon Schiffman in 1893, Schiffman's Jewelry Company began on the 300 block of South Elm Street, but moved into the Pythian Building storefront in 1923. Vintage photo courtesy Greensboro Historical Museum Archives. 2012 composite photo by Alaina McKee.

questions and invite new ways of seeing the world around us.

In the hopes that the research they found will reach the widest possible audience, they created multiple ways of “touring” downtown. The first is through window-front exhibit panels, featured in sixteen buildings downtown until May 1, 2012. Each of these panels features stories about the people who worked, lived, and passed through each of those buildings. To accompany these panels, they created a walking tour brochure. Another way to explore downtown stories is the website: <http://mainstreet.lib.unc.edu/projects/greensboro>. The website contains information from over thirty buildings downtown. Here you can find more stories, pictures, fire insurance maps, and audio clips.

Through the Ordinary: Rediscovering Greensboro's History

The *Windows to the Past* team offers a small sample of the stories uncovered about Greensboro's history. The students

hope this project will inspire others to keep digging for more stories about the city. History isn't just about the presidents, businessmen, and national events. It is made every day through average people leading their lives. Schiffman's Jewelry Company offers one example.

The original store was across the street because the township divides in half in the middle of Elm Street. Ladies would not go down the west side of the street. The east side was for the women of ill-repute and their friends and neighbors. In 1936, a tenant left a cigarette lit and burned the building down. In 1937 Mr. Charles Hunt built the existing building as it is today, and we stayed in the same location.

~ Arnold “Tony” Schiffman, grandson of founder Simon Schiffman

One Man's Dream Creates Two Communities

Trains bring people, merchandise, and ideas through towns. But they can also divide them. The train tracks on Elm Street did just that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In fact, Greensboro owes its nickname, the Gate City, to the large number of trains that passed through town each day. During his tenure as governor of North Carolina, John Motley Morehead was instrumental in developing the railroad in our state. In 1850 he became the first president of the North Carolina Railroad. During his farewell address to the North Carolina Railroad stockholders, Morehead said, "Living, I have spent five years of the best portion of my life in the service of the North Carolina Railroad. Dead, I wish to be buried alongside of it in the bosom of my own beloved Carolina." As Morehead had envisioned, the city flourished with the construction of the railroad. Southern Railroad Company opened its first passenger station on Elm Street on June

Carved into the stone above the main entrance is "SOUTHERN RAILWAY." When the building was constructed in 1927, the Southern Railway Company used Greensboro as a main hub for both passenger and freight trains. In the 1940s, more than forty trains moved through the station each day. Currently the building is named the "J. Douglas Galyon Depot" after Douglas Galyon, a Guilford County resident who was Chairman of the North Carolina Board of Transportation from 2001 to 2010. Passenger trains still move out of the depot, except now they are controlled by the Amtrak system. Photo courtesy Greensboro Historical Museum Archives.



Hamburger Square, about 1940. Constructed in 1895, this building now houses Natty Greene's Pub and Brewing Company. In 1953 it was the famous hot dog-serving California Sandwich Shop. The building to its left was the occasionally dicey Blue Bird Billiard Parlor. Photo courtesy Greensboro Historical Museum Archives.

9, 1888. By the 1920s, Greensboro outgrew this station, and a new one was commissioned. It opened in 1927. Until the 1940s, nearly forty trains a day passed through Greensboro. During peak hours, Greensboro residents at either end of Elm Street were separated from one another due to this constant train traffic. Separate grocers, shops, music stores, banks, and even post offices grew up on both sides of the tracks.

A Division of Class

Like most cities, Greensboro has continually been divided by class. With the Occupy Wall Street movements that have swept the country, these distinctions have recently moved center stage. In Greensboro, class distinctions were just as visible in the

1950s. The economic distinctions were simply a way of life.

In the fifties, the area known as Hamburger Square, where the current-day Natty Greene's brew-pub stands, was known as the place for the rough-and-tumble lower classes of Greensboro. So-called "proper" women stayed away from the area. Children were told not to look sideways when driving through the square. At the same time, for some this was a place of inclusion. At Jim's Lunch, across the street from Natty Greene's, blacks and whites were served at the same counter. For many, this area holds great memories. For others, this area was a place of fear and danger. Either way, Hamburger Square became central to developing and creating different communities downtown.





Fordham's Drug Store is named for its founder, Christopher Columbus Fordham, Sr. Fordham, better known as "C.C.," who gambled when he decided to build a drugstore on the south side of the railroad tracks in 1898. This was new terrain for businesses, since most chose to stay on the more populated, northern side of the tracks. C. C.'s gamble paid off. When other entrepreneurs saw his success, they also began to enter this previously unknown territory, just as C.C. (and his famous namesake) had. Photo Courtesy Greensboro Historical Museum Archives.

The Man Behind the Fountain

Every community has some local members who are legends. Some, like John Motley Morehead, have been deemed historically important. Yet others who may not be famous outside of Greensboro strongly impacted the community just by being a part of it. Charlie Cleveland Sharpe, Jr., was one such local celebrity. Born in 1914, Sharpe graduated from High Point College and attended Duke Divinity School. However, upon graduating from Duke, he became a jack-of-all-trades. He was a Golden Gloves boxer, worked as a laborer, managed the Tool Box gas station, sold Bibles, wrote poetry, and even impersonated Santa Claus for the local children.

Sharpe's poems were famous in Greensboro. He authored "A Soda Jerk's Prayer" which hung behind the soda fountain at Fordham's Drug Store, where he worked for three decades. Jim Schlosser, formerly of the *Greensboro News & Record*, states that, "Charlie Sharpe was only Greensboro's second best known soda jerk," right behind O. Henry. According to Schlosser, "He loved telling the store's history and showing how he mixed beverages." It was at Fordham's that Charlie enjoyed rich conversations across the counter with his customers. However, according to his obituary, his true avocations lay elsewhere: he was "always ready to preach" and to play "the 'joyful noise' with his sweet violin."

Let me see Thine image in every soul
That lays a nickel on this bar.
And may I not forget that each is destined
In Thy Kingdom to become a shining star.

~ from "A Soda Jerk's Prayer"

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE POWER OF PUBLIC HISTORY:

Archibald, Robert R. *A Place to Remember: Using History to Build Community*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1999: an exploration of how personal memories and connections to place shape our sense of who we are, where we belong, and why history matters.

What We See: Advancing the Observations of Jane Jacobs. Stephen A. Goldsmith and Lynn Elizabeth, eds. Oakland, CA: New Village Press, 2010: in tribute to Jacobs' 1961 book *The Death and Life of American Cities* (an early call to celebrate the vibrant messiness of urban life), a collection that looks at how we can understand and learn from cities today.

Hayden, Dolores. *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996: an influential bridge between urban planning, public history, and architecture that builds from case studies of public projects in Los Angeles.

Isenberg, Alison. *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004: a history of how downtowns have evolved not only as economic centers but as cultural symbols of our cities and their times.

Stilgoe, John R. *Outside Lies Magic: Regaining History and Awareness in Everyday Places*. New York: Walker and Company, 1998: a quirky and sometimes moving call to open our eyes and see our human-made landscapes with fresh eyes.

FOR MORE STORIES ABOUT GREENSBORO, VISIT:

<http://mainstreet.lib.unc.edu/projects/greensboro>

Harlan Joel Gradin Award for Excellence in the Public Humanities

The Gaston County Public Library is the 2011 recipient of the Harlan Joel Gradin Award for Excellence in the Public Humanities for *Standing on a Box: Lewis Hine's National Child Labor Committee Photography in Gaston County, 1908*.

Directed by Gaston County Public Library's Carol Reinhardt, "Standing on a Box" used photographs taken in 1908 by Lewis Hine — a sociologist, reformer, and National Child Labor Committee journalist — to explore child labor conditions in Greater Gaston's textile mills at the turn of the nineteenth century. Reinhardt says that the project "embraced hundreds of people who came together to examine and celebrate our local textile/mill village history. For the first time in the forty-plus years I've lived in Piedmont North Carolina, I heard people talk with pride about family roots in the textile culture, share family stories in the *Gaston Gazette*, and claim their own past."

Robert Allen, Logan Godfrey Professor of History at UNC at Chapel Hill, gave the *Standing on a Box* keynote lecture. He explains that a descendant of an area millworker wrote to him: "My grandfather was nine years old, worked a twelve-hour shift at Loray. He had to stand on a box to reach the spinning frame." In a *Crossroads* article about the project, Allen wrote, "For those living in Gaston County today, Hine's 1908 photographs bring family home. The images in these photographs are of places they know, of places now gone that their parents and grandparents knew.... Loray Mill, Trenton Mill, Ozark Mill, Melville Manufacturing Company in Cherryville, the High Shoals Mill."

Cindy Moose, director of the Gaston County Public Library says, "Beyond a shadow of a doubt 'Standing on a Box' was the most ambitious and significant project the library and community partners ever launched."

Project partners included the Gaston County Museum of Art and History, Gaston County Historic Preservation Committee, Friends of the Gaston County Public Library, Gaston Arts Council, Preservation North Carolina, Levine Museum of the New South, county schools, and local churches.

View selected exhibition photographs in the Gallery section of the North Carolina Humanities Council website. Read more about the project by downloading the Council's *Crossroads* publication "They Are Not Strangers to Us: Lewis Hine's Gaston County Photographs, 1908."



(L-R) Cindy Moose, Harlan Joel Gradin, Carol Reinhardt, Robert Allen. Photo by Duke Photography.

Trustee Nominations

If you — or someone you know — can help advance the work of the Humanities Council, please consider making a nomination for membership on the Council Board. Visit www.nchumanities.org for details on the roles and responsibilities for Council trustees as well as information about where to send a nomination letter and résumé.

Nominations are due by April 15, 2012.

Mission Statement

The North Carolina Humanities Council serves as an advocate for lifelong learning and thoughtful dialogue about all facets of human life. It facilitates the exploration and celebration of the many voices and stories of North Carolina's cultures and heritage.

The North Carolina Humanities Council is committed to

- an interdisciplinary approach to the humanities
- dialogue
- discovery and understanding of the humanities — culture, identity, and history
- respect for individual community members and community values
- humanities scholarship and scholars to develop humanities perspectives
- cultural diversity and inclusiveness
- informed and active citizenship as an outgrowth of new awareness of self and community.

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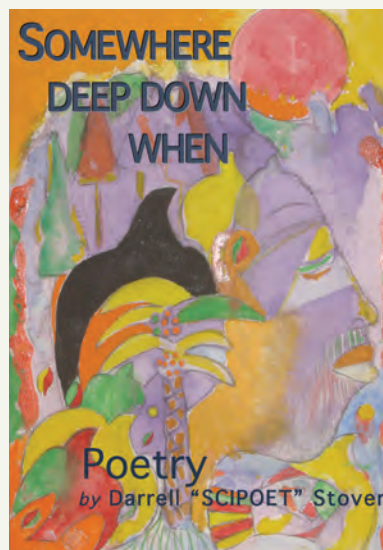
Willis P. Whichard to Serve on Federation Board

Lawyer, judge, legislator, historian, and nonprofit advocate Willis P. Whichard has been appointed to the sixteen-member Federation of State Humanities Council's board. Whichard served as a gubernatorial appointee on the North Carolina Humanities Council board for six years and chair for two years. He is the only North Carolinian who has served in both houses of North Carolina's General Assembly and on both of the state's appellate courts. The Federation states: "As a tireless student of history, who has a deep understanding of the political process, Whichard will bring the skills of a diplomat and extensive connections from around the country to the...Board of Directors."



New Poetry from Darrell Stover

Darrell Stover, program director for the North Carolina Humanities Council, has published *Somewhere Deep Down When*, a collection of spoken word and jazz poetry. The volume is scheduled for a March 2012 release, with public readings throughout the spring.



Top: Council alum and former chair Willis P. Whichard with Council executive director Shelley Crisp at Humanities on the Hill in Washington D.C. Middle: The cover of *Somewhere Deep Down When* features a painting called "Sage of the Night" gouache, 1984, by tj reddy. Bottom: Genevieve Cole with Council alum and Advisory Board member Jeanne Tannenbaum, December 2011.

Genevieve Cole Retires

Genevieve Cole retired in December 2011 after 22 years of employment with the Council. Following a limerick roast at the November 2011 quarterly trustee meeting, Cole was feted in Greensboro by Council staff and alums. She reports that she is now a Floridian, having had to give up her NC driver's license. In parting, she said, "I miss you all! Keep the humanities spirit up."



Harlan Joel Gradin Receives Order of the Long Leaf Pine

Harlan Joel Gradin has received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine Award from the State of North Carolina for more than twenty years of service to the state. As a dedicated humanities scholar and Council program director, he guided the Council's partnerships with diverse community groups, providing opportunities, Harlan commented, for "North Carolina citizens to see themselves as actors in making their own history."

North Carolina Humanities Council Alumni

Many gifted individuals from across North Carolina have served on the governing board of the Humanities Council since its inception. If you have the opportunity to do so, please thank these volunteers for their vision and leadership.

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Fiddle Song

John Thomas York

Shubal Miller sat on the porch holding a fiddle, an heirloom from his father, holding it across his chest like a mandolin, one last time. The late afternoon was cool for August, a bright afternoon with a taste of September, and he sat on the east side, the back of the house, watching shadows grow over the barn, the outbuildings, garden, orchard, grape arbor.

He had tried playing a ballad, “Pretty Saro,” but he found it too painful, both because of the arthritis and because songs about long journeys made him think of his last journey, which he hoped would be to a shining city, where he would again see Rosanna and Mama and Papa, a heavenly reunion. But it was hard saying good-bye, all the same, to all those left behind and this farm he had built from the ground up.

Holding the fiddle, he found himself sitting in a memory over twenty years old. It was not a memory he liked, but it came back like a stray cat he’d carried off to the woods several times, a mean, ugly cat he didn’t have the heart to shoot or drown.

One hot Sunday morning, he and his wife and nine children walked up to Mt. Pleasant, just ten minutes down Nebo Road, the girls and Rosanna wearing bonnets, Shubal and the boys wearing straw hats — he and the boys wearing their best shirts buttoned to the throat. Shubal’s family was the first one to get to the church, and the boys opened the windows, and the girls dusted the pews before the rest of the congregation came in.

Their preacher that Sunday was a sawed-off, red-faced, red-haired man, Preacher Phelps, an itinerant preacher. Shubal

had heard him before and thought him a righteous man, though an irritating man to listen to, having a high-pitched voice, as well as a tendency to spray flecks of spit when he got excited.

Shubal didn’t remember the text for that Sunday, didn’t remember the preacher’s opening remarks, but just as he was about to drift off into a mid-morning nap, Brother Phelps stirred himself into a fury, his voice breaking into such a high falsetto, Shubal was sure that Cousin Joe’s hound dogs, sleeping under the porch fronting the house next door, must be stirring themselves and walking off to the woods.

And then Shubal realized that he was the object of the preacher’s wrath:

“I tell you what, brothers and sisters, those who continue playing fiddle music, who insist on playing their jigs and drinking hard cider, white liquor, or scuppernong wine, they will break the hearts of their wives and children, their neighbors will caper and clog and dance their way into the hottest parts of hell, their boys and girls will follow the road to Sodom and Gomorrah, so help me, God!”

Shubal felt his face turning red. He glanced over to Rosanna, and he could glimpse her cheek turning pink under her bonnet. He didn’t look around at his brother Snider, but prayed that Snide didn’t run home to get his pistol — that boy had a bad temper. Shubal was sure that most of the members of the congregation were hanging their heads; nearly half of them had come by his front porch the night before, taking a seat in a rocking chair or sitting on the edge of the porch, or standing under the oak trees in the yard, while he fiddled and Snide flailed the banjo and Cousin Lonzo strummed the guitar. Once in a while, a boy or young man would do a bit of buck dancing down in the yard, raising little clouds of dust around his brogans, but nobody danced for long, it was so warm, and none of the younguns were misbehaving.

It was a little after sundown when the preacher came riding by on a sorrel gelding — didn’t get off, just paused to say hello to folks in the yard. Phelps must’ve seen Shubal, Snide, and Cousin Lonzo sharing a bottle of scuppernong wine, the last of the batch Shube had made the previous fall. But there wasn’t anybody drinking hard liquor, not in his presence. His neighbors knew he didn’t abide corn whiskey or cussing or card playing, just a little wine, a little music on Saturday night, maybe a game of checkers.

And didn’t a farmer deserve a little entertainment? After a week of plowing, hoeing, mucking out the stables, milking the cows, weeding the tater patch, priming tobacco, staying up with the boys to keep the wood-fired furnaces going in the tobacco barn, (everybody breathing in the aroma of curing tobacco) didn’t a farmer deserve a little fun after his Saturday bath?

But that preacher went on until noon and overflowed with examples of all the bad things that happen when people hearken to the fiddle, and, along with a torrent of spittle, showering the Davis family on the front bench, all of them fanning with their straw fans to fight the heat and bat away the flying phlegm, he showered them all with exhortations to lead a sober life and to follow the straight and narrow.

Preacher Phelps had obviously been listening to Widow Sprinkler, with whom he had boarded the night before. She was the president of the local Temperance Society. She once told Shubal that it was wrong to turn his scuppernong grapes into wine, that it was a sin to enjoy a cup of hard cider on a winter’s night. Widow Sprinkler was grinning over in the women’s section, a straight ugly grin a body wears when she knows God agrees with her, and happy to have an ally in her campaign to purge every house in Yadkin County, every house in the state and nation, of any form of alcoholic beverage.

Why, nobody got drunk that Saturday night at Shubal’s house, or any Saturday night:

He didn't allow such goings on. The night before, he and his brother and cousin had stopped playing before dark, by nine at the latest. He and his neighbors had all been up since sunrise, and any of them who had livestock would be up at sunrise on Sunday, gathering eggs and milking and feeding animals before getting ready for church.

After the benediction, the preacher walked to the front door of the whitewashed church to shake hands as folks left. But Shubal walked out the side door and didn't look back or wait on anybody, just walked on to his house, walked around back, and wound up a bucket of cold water from the well so he could wash his face. When it was time for dinner, he sat at the head of the table, said grace, and everybody started eating, nobody talking, not even Mabel, the youngest, who was only seven.

When he was finished, he wiped his mustache with a napkin, complimented Rosanna on her fine cooking, then said, "Well, Mama, I think any time Preacher Phelps is in the pulpit, I'll just stay home and have devotional here with the family."

The younguns looked at their mother, who didn't say anything for a minute. Then she said, "Shubal, I wish you would let me make those grapes into jelly and preserves this year."

He looked down at his plate and said, "Yes, ma'am."

She didn't say a word about the fiddling, but he guessed he would have to walk over to Snider's house if he wanted to play anything but hymns. Not that Mary and the children would really miss the fiddle; she was a Fleming, and there wasn't a Fleming alive who could carry a tune in a bucket, and looking down the table at his nine younguns, he couldn't see a one who had shown any talent for making music. He guessed the preacher had won.

And this bright blue August afternoon, he was selling his fiddle to the Davis boy. Tommy Davis had heard about how Shube used to make music, heard he had a good fiddle, and was coming to make an offer. Shubal was ready to accept, now that his fingers were hurting, now that his hearing was going, almost gone.

One time when he took a wagon load of tobacco to Winston, he had seen a minstrel show where he heard a man playing a song on wine glasses, the man dipping his finger in water and circling the tops of the glasses, the sound sending a chill up Shubal's spine. Now, his ears shutting down, it seemed like Shubal was hearing that song all the time, or some monotone variation, especially when things got quiet.

Mabel touched him on the shoulder — he didn't hear her step out on the porch. She was near thirty years old and had never married; she was keeping a promise to Rosanna to look after him until the end. There she stood wiping her hands on her apron, smelling of peaches and piecrust

and looking like a blond version of her mother.

"I'm sorry, Papa," said Mabel. "I didn't mean to startle you. Tommy Davis is here to trade for your fiddle."

Tommy stepped down from the house onto the porch. A tall, strapping young man, he smiled and said, "Hello, Mr. Miller. I sure would be proud to buy your fiddle, if'n you're ready to sell it. Mine isn't much better than a box and four strings."

Shubal shook his hand and said, "Hello there, boy. Yes, I reckon I'm ready. But first I want to see if you can play it."

Shubal handed over the fiddle. From the side table, he picked up the bow and handed it to Tommy.

"I've already rosined the bow. Go ahead. Let 'er rip."

Tommy blushed a little, but after a few tentative squawks to check out the tuning, he bounced into "Blackberry Blossom." He had the knack, all right.

When he was finished, Tommy said, "That sure is a sweet sounding fiddle."

"And that was good fiddlin', Mr. Davis. Now, let me hear a slow one. You know 'Pretty Saro'?"

Tommy said, "Yes, sir," and put the fiddle back under his chin. When the boy got to the high, lonesome part, Shubal's eyes



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started leaking, and Mabel had to take a corner of her apron to wipe her cheek.

When Tommy finished, Shubal said, “All right, Mr. Davis. The fiddle is yours.”

“How much you want for it?” Tommy asked, looking a little worried.

“You know how to cut firewood, sir?”

“Oh, yes sir. Of course.”

Shubal looked over at Mabel. He said, “Well, Mabel here would be right proud if you could keep our stove and the fire places supplied with wood this winter. Wouldn’t you, Mabel?”

Mabel laughed and said, “Oh, Papa. Your fiddle ain’t worth that much!”

Shubal frowned and said, “It’s worth a train load of wood, enough for several winters,” and he turned his gaze back to Tommy, “but firewood for one winter will do. What do you say, Mr. Davis?”

“You’ve got a deal, sir,” and he held out his hand.

Shubal shook his hand, and Tommy put fiddle and bow in a case and took them home. He kept his promise, and nearly a year later, Shubal and Mabel still had plenty of firewood when Tommy died in France, in the Battle of Belleau Wood. His mother offered to give the fiddle back to Shubal, but he said, no, it was Tommy’s, so she hung it up on the wall beside a photograph of her boy in an Army uniform, a black ribbon tied around the fiddle’s neck.

And Shubal supposed that was the end of the story. He said less and less, as the wailing of the wine glasses got louder and louder.

But, of course, when a song is over, it’s never really over, living on in the hearts of those who love it. And, while none of Shubal’s children showed any musical talent, they never forgot the songs he played. And there were granddaughters



Back row: Julius, Dixie, Maude, Lelia, John, Jim; front row: Lucy, Shubal Miller, Mabel, Rosanna Fleming Miller, Pearl, circa 1914. Photo courtesy of John York.

who played the piano and grandsons who strummed the guitar. And, later, there were great-grandchildren who bought amplifiers and Fender guitars and drum sets. One band of cousins played “Jesus Rock” one Sunday in the brick version of Mt. Pleasant Church: Mabel and her sister Maude looked like they could crawl under the pews and die, while those long-haired younguns sang “My Sweet Lord” and “Get Together.” Were the Miller ancestors shaking their heads in their coffins in the graveyard? Was Shubal tapping a bony toe? Maude never said a discouraging word to her grandchildren. Maybe she remembered how her daddy felt, chastised for playing a fiddle.

And one of those hippie boys grew up and married a West Virginia girl — Jane, a violinist, a woman who brought more than enough genetic material for making musicians. While Shube Miller was entertaining his Yadkin County neighbors in North Carolina, Jane’s great-grandfather was playing the fiddle on his front porch in Basin, West Virginia, and raising nine sons and three daughters, nearly everyone growing up to sing in choirs or gospel or barbershop quartets. And one of the boys had a son who became a piano tuner, who played saxophone and trumpet in a big band, who married a piano teacher and singer. And the teacher traced her family tree back to Susannah Biber, who came

from Germany in the early eighteenth century. Was Susannah related to Heinrich Biber, the virtuoso of the Baroque violin? And tuner and teacher had three children, two girls and a boy, two violinists and a trombonist, and Jane married the hippie guitarist who grew up and cut his hair, and they had three daughters.

That itinerant minister who chastised Shubal Miller didn’t understand the primary impulse behind fiddle music. But Jane understood, and she trained her daughters to play from the time they could walk: Elizabeth, Kathryn, Rachel, who grew up to play violin, cello, string bass. They understood, and they understand, whether it’s “Bile Them Cabbage Down” or something by Mozart, Ravel, Beethoven, Rossini, or Shostakovich. They pass on the joy that Shubal didn’t start — and, no, he didn’t end it; he merely said yes and passed it on down the line. And as long as we puny human beings draw breath, when will the song ever end?

It’s a manifestation of a spirit that cannot be denied. I dream of walking under a full moon, shining on the hills of the Yadkin Valley, the pastures and groves, the fields of alfalfa, sorghum, corn, tobacco — and the vineyards! What a pleasure to smell the grapes, the scuppernong, yes, but also the chardonnay, merlot, Riesling,

the sangiovese, the tempranillo. I dream of my great-grandfather sitting on his porch, a shade within a shadow, playing a violin — “Fair and Tender Ladies,” “My Home’s Across the Blue Ridge Mountains” — the crickets and katydids fiddling in the background, a wine glass waiting on a table close at hand, his descendants listening, sitting in the moonlight.

The Back Story for “Fiddle Song,” a Short Story by John Thomas York

One Saturday afternoon, one summer forty years ago, I sat on Grandma Spencer’s front porch and played my guitar, playing a jig I’d picked out. Usually, when the cousins and I practiced rock ‘n’ roll music on this porch on a warm Friday night, Grandma — Maude Miller Spencer — sat in the kitchen and snapped beans or read *The Upper Room*. This afternoon, though, she walked out, slowly settled in a lawn chair, and listened to me play a different sort of dance song, “Pretty Little Girl with a Blue Dress On.”

When I stopped playing, Grandma said, “That reminds me of a fiddle tune my daddy played, your Great-Grandfather Shubal Miller. On a Saturday night, he would play with his brother, Uncle Snyder, who played banjo. Shube and Snide, folks called ‘em.” And she grinned, remembering an evening when neighbors gathered, and somebody begged her father to play, and somebody clogged to “Blackberry Blossom” or “Bile Them Cabbage Down.” She glanced over at me and said, “Daddy got criticized in church one time for playing string music, you know.” But I didn’t know, so I asked her to tell me, and thus a seed was planted.

EVENTS & DEADLINES

LARGE GRANTS

For projects beginning after **July 15** and **December 15**

- Draft proposals are due **March 15** and **August 15**
- Final proposals are due **April 15** and **September 15**

MINI GRANTS

Mini-grant applications must arrive at the Humanities Council office by the **first day of the month** and must be made at least **eight weeks** in advance of the program.

PLANNING GRANTS

There is **no deadline** for a planning grant.

ROAD SCHOLARS

Road Scholars applications must be made at least **eight weeks** in advance of the requested program.

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

Let’s Talk About It applications must be made at least **eight weeks** in advance of the requested program.

TRUSTEE MEETINGS

- **June 8, 2012**
- **September 15, 2012**
- **November 9, 2012**
- **February 16, 2013**

NOMINATIONS FOR NEW TRUSTEES

New trustees nominations must arrive at the Humanities Council by **April 15, 2012**.

LINDA FLOWERS LITERARY AWARD

Entries must be postmarked by **August 15, 2012**.

TEACHERS INSTITUTE SUMMER SEMINAR

Laying Down Tracks — A Study of Railroads as Myth, Reality, and Symbol, William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education, Chapel Hill. Seminar scheduled for **June 17–23, 2012**.



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