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## P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

## FIFTEEN YEARS OF DIVERSITY AND CONTINUITY

by Roberta T. Herrin

The theme of the 1992 Appalachian Studies Conference, "Diversity in Appalachia: Images and Realities," is well reflected in the preliminary program that Tyler Blethen and the program committee have assembled and distributed. A quick scanning of sessions shows topics ranging from the Civil War to Cherokee stick-ball; from fire-handling to Fairlawn; from Mary Wolstonecraft to Lee Smith. Such has always been the richness and depth of our programs. But while we celebrate this diversity in 1992, we also celebrate continuity. We honor the wisdom and the foresight of the Steering Committee which gathered under the leadership of Loyal Jones to organize the first Appalachian Studies Conference at Berea College in 1977-78.

In his essay "Self-Reliance," Ralph Waldo Emerson argued that "An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man, . . . and all history resolves itself very easily in the biography of a few stout and earnest persons." When Loyal Jones helped organize the first Appalachian Studies Conference in Berea in 1977-78, he and his co-workers laid the foundation for the institution that we have all enjoyed for the last fifteen years. I'm sure Loyal would demur at the mention of his name alongside Emerson's quote, and yet we owe a debt of gratitude to Loyal and the "few stout and earnest persons" who have led this organization since 1977. I'm not sure that debt has been paid.

At the 1978-79 conference in Jackson's Mill, West Virginia, there was little formality; there was little attention paid to our first president, Sharon Lord; and there was certainly no sense of history--we had none. There was, however, that solid feeling of community which always characterizes an ASA conference, along with the confidence that this was a good thing and that it would endure. It has, and now our history need telling.

Tyler Blethen and his program committee have arranged a forum at this year's conference in which to tell this history and--in the telling--perhaps learn something about ourselves. Wilburn Hayden will convene a General Session on Friday afternoon, March 20, 3:00 to 4:30, for a round table discussion by former presidents of the Appalachian Studies Association. The session will do two things: It will first be an opportunity for the full membership to address the needs of a growing organization, needs which the Steering Committee has grappled with for several years. In addition to serious stock-taking, the session ought to produce some good stories (though I doubt that any can top Wilburn's account of the hotel raid at the 1991 conference). It should be a lively session; listed among the former presidents are some of our best humorists and raconteurs!

Fifteen years is a long time, and as we planned this session, I wondered if any of us could name all the ASA presidents dating back to 1978-79. I certainly could not and had to call upon Gerald Roberts and Shannon Wilson in the ASA Archives at Berea for an accurate list, which, by the way, doesn't exist anywhere else in print...until now.

- 1977-78 [no president: Loyal Jones, Chair, Steering Committee]
- 1978-79 Sharon Lord, University of Tennessee
- 1979-80 Joan Moser, Warren Wilson College
- 1980-81 John Stephenson, University of Kentucky
- 1981-82 Patricia Beaver, Appalachian State University
- 1982-83 Jim Wayne Miller, Western Kentucky University
- 1983-84 Charlotte Ross, Appalachian State University
- 1984-85 Richard Drake, Berea College
- 1985-86 Ron Eller, University of Kentucky
- 1986-87 Jean Speer, Virginia Tech (VPI&SU)
- 1987-88 Grace Edwards, Radford University
- 1988-89 Loyal Jones, Berea College
- 1989-90 Doyle Bickers, West Georgia College
- 1990-91 Wilburn Hayden, Western Carolina University
- 1991-92 Roberta Herrin, East Tennessee State University

When I look at this list, a number of observations immediately come to mind. First, exactly half of our presidents have been women, as is our president-elect, Becky Hancock. In an age when we hear

about "token women" and when organizations and businesses scramble to balance their male/female ratios, the ASA can be proud of its long tradition of equality--a tradition, I might add, that evolved naturally and not out of any concern for "political correctness."

Another observation is that our leadership has reflected the diversity of our membership. It reflects our broad geographic scope, from Georgia to Kentucky and Virginia. While it is true that most of the leadership has come from the larger academic institutions in the region, smaller schools such as Warren Wilson College have also been represented. In 1992-93, we will officially recognize another major component of our organization--public schools. Because the ASA resolved last year to make the Youth Conference one of its priorities and to emphasize the involvement of youth in Appalachian studies, it is fitting that our 1993 president, Becky Hancock, is a public school teacher (at Pulaski County High School in Virginia) and the driving force behind the Youth Conference from its inception.

A final observation is that many of our former presidents continue to be leaders in the organization, still serving on committees and participating in the program. During the last year, for example, Loyal Jones, Grace Edwards, Doyle Bickers, and Richard Drake graciously agreed to serve on an ad hoc By-laws Committee, and spent many hours reviewing and updating that vital document. Hardly a week passes without my having to call on one of them for help; they are always generous. As you'll note from the list of nominees on the ballot elsewhere in this issue of Appalink, our leadership will continue to reflect a very healthy balance of old and new blood.

I encourage you to arrive at the conference a bit early on Friday to attend the General Session. We have never before scheduled a session on the conference's opening afternoon, but because the number of program proposals submitted grows each year, we are finding it necessary to extend the conference time. So, this plenary session is an experiment in programming, but more importantly, it is an opportunity for us to honor the individuals who have shaped the association and to celebrate fifteen years of continuity.

UPCOMING CONFERENCE REMINDERS:

The deadline for pre-registration is March 6, 1992.

As noted above, this year's conference will begin earlier than usual with a general session, a round table of past ASA presidents, from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. on Friday, March 20.

Pre-registration material, with preliminary program, was mailed over a month ago. If you haven't received it, contact program chair Tyler Blethen at (704) 227-7129.

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## **RURAL COMMUNITY IN THE APPALACHIAN SOUTH**

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BALLOT  
APPALACHIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION  
OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES, 1991-1992

The following nominees are placed before the Association membership by its Nominating Committee for various offices and committees for 1992 and 1993. Following each nominee's entry is a black space to either vote for that nominee or for write-in nominations for the same position. Please fill in ballots and return by March 1 to the Nominating Committee chair, Rebecca Hancock, Pulaski County High School, P.O. Box 518, Dublin, VA 24084.

For Vice President/President Elect:

Alice Brown serves as the director of Faculty Scholars Program (formerly the Appalachian College Program) in Lexington, Kentucky, which provides development opportunities for faculty at 38 private colleges in central Appalachia. She holds an M.A. from Appalachian State University and an Ed.D. in Higher Education from the University of Kentucky. She served as treasurer of the Appalachian Studies Association from 1988 to 1991.

Brown: \_\_\_\_\_ Write-In Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

For Vice Program Chair/Program Chair Elect:

Jean Haskell Spear is the Director of the Appalachian Studies Program and Professor of Communication Studies and Humanities at Virginia Polytechnical Institute and State University. She is the author of The Appalachian Photographs of Earl Palmer (1989) and serves as cultural advisor to the Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway. She served as president of the Appalachian Studies Association in 1986-1987.

Spear: \_\_\_\_\_ Write-In Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

For Steering Committee (3 at-large members) (3-year term):

Grace Toney Edwards chairs both the English Department and the Appalachian Studies Program at Radford University. She did her graduate work at Appalachian State University and has been among the most active members of the ASA over the last decade, serving as its president in 1987-1988.

Edwards: \_\_\_\_\_ Write-In Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Chesla Sharp is a member of the English Department at East Tennessee State University. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin and is interested in the transforming role of folklore and music in Appalachian society. He served this past year as a member of the ASA program committee.

Sharp: \_\_\_\_\_ Write-In Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

For Steering Committee (continued):

Jerry Williamson founded the Appalachian Journal: A Regional Studies Review in 1972, two years after he joined the faculty at Appalachian State University, and has edited it ever since. He was educated at Wayland College in Texas and at the University of Utah.  
Williamson: \_\_\_\_\_ Write-In Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

For the Program Committee: (4 positions) (1-year term)

Sandra Ballard is a member of the English department at Carson-Newman College. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee. She has published on a variety of Appalachian subjects and is presently at work on a biography of Harriette Arnow.  
Ballard: \_\_\_\_\_ Write-In Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Phyllis Bickers holds an M.Ed. in counseling from West Georgia College. She has just moved from Georgia to Shippensburg, Pa., where her husband Doyle serves as director of admissions at Shippensburg University. Both Phyllis and Doyle have long been active in the ASA, particularly during his year as president in 1988-89.  
Bickers: \_\_\_\_\_ Write-In Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Lewis Martin is an instructor of sociology at New River Community College in Dublin, Virginia. He served as president of the Virginia Humanities Council last year. He is currently conducting research for a comparative study of the Scots-Irish influence on Appalachian and Australian cultures.  
Martin: \_\_\_\_\_ Write-In Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Jim Minick teaches English at Radford University, where he received his M.A. degree. He organized the Appalachian Teachers' Network, a network of Southwest Virginia teachers, which held its first conference this past fall. Jim has agreed to serve as Vice Chair of next year's Youth Conference and chair the Youth Conference when the ASA meets in Virginia in 1994.  
Minick: \_\_\_\_\_ Write-In Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

[Three additional program committee members are to be appointed by the program chair.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Journal of the Appalachian Studies Association has been selected for inclusion in the prestigious Modern Language Association's Master List of Periodicals of the MLA International Bibliography. This means that it will be indexed for inclusion in the annual Bibliography and listed in the MLA Directory of Periodicals. Pat Arnow, the ASA Journal's managing editor, and ASA President Roberta Herrin were instrumental in winning approval for the journal's inclusion. The journal has been published at ETSU's Center for Appalachian Studies and Services for the past three years.

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Union College is pleased to announce that Deborah Thompson has been named director of the Appalachian Semester Program. The Appalachian Semester is an interdisciplinary, experiential program that explores the mountain region through classwork, readings, discussions, field trips, guest speakers, and community activities. At the heart of the program is a supervised internship or directed study project which allows students to explore particular areas of interest.

The Appalachian Semester Program, in operation since 1970, is open to mature sophomores, juniors, and seniors from accredited colleges and universities, and offers 15 hours of transferable credit. Union College is a small Methodist-affiliated, liberal arts college located in Barbourville, Kentucky. For more information, contact Deborah Thompson, Director, Appalachian Semester, Union College, Barbourville, KY 40906; phone (606) 546-4151, ext. 324.

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The Western North Carolina Historical Association announces the winner of the 1991 Thomas Wolfe Literary Award, presented annually for the best work of fiction or non-fiction that focuses on the region and its people. This year's recipient is Confederate Colonel and Cherokee Chief: The Life of William Holland Thomas, by E. Stanly Godbold, Jr. and Mattie U. Russell. Published by the University of Tennessee Press, the book is a biography of one of 19th century Appalachia's most accomplished residents. A lifelong resident of western North Carolina, Thomas exerted tremendous influence on the region through his roles as businessman, politician, Cherokee Indian agent, and Confederate leader during the Civil War.

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Now and Then, the Appalachian magazine published by the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services at East Tennessee State University, seeks articles, essays, poetry, short stories, and photographs for two upcoming special focus issues. For an issue devoted to "The Appalachian-Scottish Connection," material should be received by March 1, 1992. For the following issue, on "Sports in Appalachia," the deadline for submissions is July 1, 1992. For guidelines or other information, write Pat Arnow, Editor, Now and Then, Box 70556, ETSU, Johnson City, TN 37614-0556.

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As a member of the membership committee of the Southern Historical Association this year, the editor of Appalink is taking advantage of this space to invite anyone interested in southern history to join the association. For those of us doing Appalachian history, the Journal of Southern History has become a significant outlet for cutting edge scholarship on our region, including recent and forthcoming articles by historians such as Ronald Lewis, Martin Crawford, Wilbur Miller and Ralph Mann, all on Appalachian topics. The SHA's annual meeting, held in early November, has in recent years featured sessions on Appalachian history that provide a useful and stimulating means of contact and interchange between historians of both the highland and the lowland South. This year's meeting will be held in Atlanta on November 4-7, 1992.

Membership in the Association is one of the best bargains in the profession, a mere \$20 annually for regular membership, and \$8 for students with proof of current enrollment. To join, write Will Holmes, Secretary-Treasurer, Southern Historical Association, Department of History, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602.

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The next issue of APPALINK will appear this summer.  
Deadline for submissions or ads: June 15, 1992.

Submit to: John Inscoe, Appalink Editor  
Department of History  
University of Georgia  
Athens, GA 30602  
Phone (404) 542-6300

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# Appalachian Passage

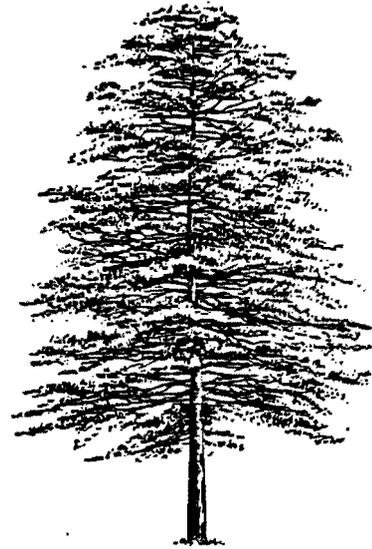
Helen B. Hiscoe

*Appalachian Passage* is a memoir of the year (June 1949-July 1950) the author and her physician-husband spent in a West Virginia coal-mining camp where he was the company doctor. Recalling the difficulties of their life there and offering an indelible picture of the place and its people, the book is filled with insights into the social structure of mining camps and the problems of rural health care.

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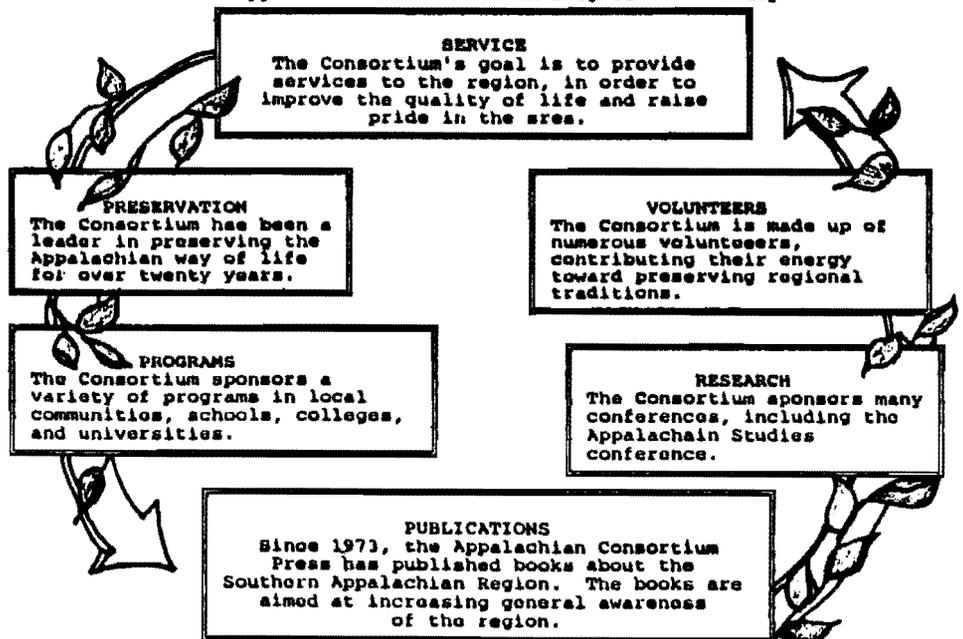
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