

# THE APPALACHIAN FREE PRESS



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## VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3

<b>Rural Film Festival</b> by Michael Coleman	2
<b>Reconstruction Project</b> by Ezekiel Streetman	5
<b>Joe's Thanksgiving Story</b> by Jo Ann Bullard	6
<b>Menu of an 1800's Appalachian Thanksgiving</b> by Manda Wallace ~AKA Banjo~	10
<b>Appalachians Need to Reconnect With Their Sustainable Roots</b> by Luke Godsey	12
<b>We Looked to Be On Fire</b> , by Aimee LaFon	14
<b>Hear Thunder Road Roar: Beyond the Mythology of Moonshine</b> by Sadie Kimbrough	15

## Rural Film Festival

By Michael Coleman

Wednesday, Feb 28th at 630pm. Lyric Theatre in Blacksburg, VA

This blog article was originally published by the [Center for Rural Education at Virginia Tech.](#)

Since returning to Appalachia to pursue a doctorate at Virginia Tech, I have had the opportunity to reconnect with the region that was so impactful in the formulation of my identity. One of the most invigorating ways to do so has been immersing myself in the literature from the region. As I become increasingly familiar with Appalachian literature specifically and rural literature more broadly, there is one type of statement that always catches my attention.

The statement reads something like, “I know [insert rural place] is complicated, but . . .” At this point, the author will apologetically explain how and why they have come to love the rural place they are writing about. Whether their love is borne of the natural beauty, the pace of the lifestyle, or the friendly people, the author is assuring the reader that they do not agree with certain cultural elements associated with rural places across America.

At face value, maybe there is nothing wrong with this kind of sentence. After all, I feel like I could write a similar sentence about much of what enamors me. Yet, in many ways, this kind of sentence feels like both a virtue signal designed to keep the author’s identity at arm’s length from their rural subject matter and a capitulation to mainstream media depictions of rural America.

Painted as racially homogenous and philosophically monolithic, media depictions of rural places have largely lacked a nuanced gaze. While this is a frustrating reality, the deeply entrenched narratives created by this often-vapid coverage effectively demonstrate the power of media narratives. Thus, as I and staff members at The Center for Rural Education sought to present a counternarrative of rurality, we quickly coalesced around the idea of using short films.

After an arduous selection process, we finalized a list of ten films to screen for the inaugural Rural Film Festival, which took place on March 1st at the Lyric Theatre in Blacksburg, Virginia. The intent of the Rural Film Festival was to celebrate and amplify



rural people, places, and cultures. The films explored an array of topics, including identity, foodways, and the relationship between rurality and social activism.

Though the films were certainly not holistic in their representation, they served to offer a counternarrative to oft-repeated stereotypes bestowed upon rural America. John Prine's "Summer's End" provoked festival-goers to think about how we engage in hard conversations about the places we love; a variety of short films from [The Appalachian Retelling Project](#) reminded the audience of the diversity present in Appalachia, and a film from [Appalshop](#) provided those in attendance a unique view of modern-day activism in rural Kentucky. Furthermore, panelists Jon Dance, Tameka Grimes, Jeff Mann, and Emily Satterwhite provided a poignant follow-up to the films as they demonstrated to the audience what reverence for rural spaces looks like in scholarship, activism, and creative pursuits.

Despite the powerful lessons taken from the films and panelists, when I reflect on the evening, I often find my mind drifting to the audience. As I handed out the concession tickets, I was struck by the different backgrounds of those who walked through the doors. Undergraduate students, graduate students, university personnel, Lyric Theatre members, and people from across Montgomery County and beyond were in attendance. In my view, the success of the event was dependent upon the experiences had by the approximately 100 attendees.

Initially, [I had told a local reporter](#) I had two primary goals for the event. For those from rural places, I was hoping the films and discussion would prove to be a dignity-affirming event. An evening where their culture and lifestyle would be amplified and celebrated. For those not from rural places, I was hoping the evening would provide them with the lens to critically interrogate popular depictions of rural places, checking for reductive language and paternalistic points of view.

However, with the benefit of hindsight, I realize my hope for the evening was maybe a bit simpler. In many ways, when I view each of the ten films presented, I realize the night was about love. The people, places, and things we love are all complicated. They are dynamic and ever-changing in a world that demands constant adaptation. Some of the adaptations we arrive at are more palatable than others, and some lead to a more sheepish kind of love. A love that requires qualifying statements like, "I know [insert rural place] is complicated, but . . ." Whether or not you feel the need to qualify the rural place you love with that statement, the stories told, panelists featured, and audience members present affirm that rural places—places rife with compassion, community, and challenges—are worth celebrating.

## Reconstruction Project

By Zeke Streetman

As we are reminded at nearly every moment unless there's a great deal of change in a very short amount of time, the culmination of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere will result in a runaway greenhouse effect.

That being said, aside from extreme temperatures and considerably more storms, we don't know what the effects will be. We don't know how our infrastructure system will fare. My bet is rather dismal. I anticipate that collapses in agricultural and transport systems will leave us in a place of self-reliance once again.

This article is the preface to a project I need your help finishing. Our world has become so multidisciplinary that tethering together all of the resources we'll need to rebuild is a big challenge.

It may be 200 or 1,000 years before things calm down again. Fortunately, we have the advantage of 12,000 years of advancement in agriculture. We have the knowledge and the tools to do things correctly a second time around.

In a way that is correct and in a way that is equitable, just, and sustainable. So here is the question posed to you and anyone who gets to read this: **What is something we will need to rebuild?**

From the basics of community agriculture to the sophisticated building of technology or medicine. In 2,500 words or less, provide a piece of the puzzle to rebuild a better and more humane society.

Appalachia is a diverse rural place, and we will need to be flexible and smart to survive, but we can and will. But that will require preparation.



## Joe's Thanksgiving Story

Good morning. Welcome to Jo Ann's Virtual Café 2023. Come on in and help yourself to a breakfast beverage. Let's talk.

Joe has a Thanksgiving story.

It was getting close to Thanksgiving. The weather was turning colder. Ben and his wife, Laura were babysitting their granddaughter, Shirley. They lived on a small farm in a rural county. Shirley was about ten years old.

She noticed an old photo album sitting on a bookshelf in the parlor. She picked it up and carried it into the living room. "Shirley, what have you got in your hands?" said Laura. "It's an old book of pictures of people that I don't know. It looked interesting to me. Can we look at it together? Can you and Grandpa tell me about the pictures of the people?" asked Shirley.

"Come on over here and sit between us on the couch. Grandpa and I will tell you some things about them," her grandma replied. Shirley sat down between her grandparents. Shirley opened the book. The first picture they saw was a group of people sitting around a big table eating. "What's that picture about?" she asked.

Ben replied, "That's an old gathering of your relatives celebrating Thanksgiving. That's my Uncle Jake and his wife with all their kids. There are your great grandma, Olive, and great grandpa Ray." Ben went on to explain to Shirley all the others sitting around the table.

"It looks like they are having a good time. There's a picture of women cooking and putting a big turkey into a big old stove. They are laughing. There are also pictures of kids playing board games and such together. I see that the adults played card games and such. There's one thing I don't see. There are no Christmas decorations. Nowadays, it seems that people have Christmas decorations up before Christmas. Why is that?" asked Shirley.

Grandma Laura answered, "Why Thanksgiving once was almost as important as Christmas in our day many years ago. It was a big and special holiday. It was a time when families would get together and have a big meal. When we were young, we couldn't wait for it. We would get to see a lot of our relatives and close friends. We knew we would get to eat as much as we wanted and eat all those great desserts like pumpkin pie, apple pie, cakes, and especially sweet potato casserole. Now back then, the only time we usually ate turkey was on Thanksgiving, unlike now, where many people have it throughout the year. It was a

special day of uncles, aunts, grandparents, and even cousins coming together and just being around each other.”

Grandpa Ben said, “I sure miss those days. We have always tried to celebrate Thanksgiving like we used to, but things are different now. It seems that Thanksgiving has gotten lost. It seems that after Halloween, all you see is Christmas everywhere. We didn’t even think about Christmas until after Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving was the one special day with a large gathering of family members.”

“People would eat and talk about what they did throughout the year and catch up. Now great grandpa would tell stories of when he was young. He was funny in telling them stories. We kids learned so much listening to all the old people talk. We got to play with cousins that we usually didn’t see much. It was a fun day. Nobody talked about Christmas much. Thanksgiving was a day to be thankful for family and friends. It was not a day to think about Santa Claus and gifts.”

Shirley asked, “What happened to that special day? How did it get lost or become so unimportant? Why is all the talk about Black Fridays and commercials on Television and buying toys and gifts?”

Grandpa Ben said, “People got greedy. Businesspeople started to realize that they could make more money by getting people to buy more gifts and things. They started putting on commercials and displays earlier each year. Thanksgiving was starting to get lost with all emphasis on Christmas. People started to put up Christmas decorations earlier to show off, I guess. Now stores are putting up Christmas decorations right after Halloween. You don’t see many Thanksgiving displays anymore. I remember in school drawing pictures about Thanksgiving and taping them on the blackboards. You know the biggest thing I miss about Thanksgiving?”

Shirley asked, “What?” Grandpa answered, “Waking up on Thanksgiving morning and smelling all that delicious food being cooked. Then packing it up and going to my grandparents or church to be with family and friends. I sure wished I could feel that way again. Now it’s hard to get all the family together with people moving away or saying they are too busy with this or that. I feel that Thanksgiving has been ruined. It’s just not the same anymore.”

For the next two hours, Shirley’s grandparents told their favorite stories about their Thanksgiving. Shirley loved listening to them talk and laugh, telling their stories. She really



had fun being with her grandparents. She only wished that Thanksgiving was like it was that way now.

That night when she stayed at her grandparents' house, she went to sleep thinking about Thanksgiving and her grandparents. The next morning, she woke up smelling food cooking. She went downstairs in the old farmhouse. She could hear several kids and adults talking. She knew something was wrong. The house was different. The kitchen had old appliances and even a wood cook stove. There were people standing around, talking and laughing. At first, she didn't recognize anyone.

Then she realized that the people were the ones in the pictures that she saw the day before with her grandparents. She knew she was dreaming, but it was so real. As the day wore on, she saw everyone arriving and bringing food. Kids playing and having fun. Then it was time to eat. Everyone gathered for the dinner prayer. Kids got to eat first and had their own table. Then everyone else ate. It was a fun day. Then suddenly, all things vanished. She woke up from her dream.

That morning at breakfast, Grandma asked Shirley, "Did you sleep well last night?" Shirley told them about her dream. "It was so real. Great-grandma was so funny, and Great-grandpa would tell stories all day. He even told one about Grandpa Ben eating too much sweet potato pie and getting sick on Thanksgiving. It was funny the way he told it."

Grandpa Ben said, "I never told you that story. I don't think grandma knows that story. How did you know that?" Shirley replied, "Because I was there!"

Grandma replied, "You got to see a real Thanksgiving like we had. That's enough for me." Shirley smiled, "I learned a lot about what Thanksgiving should be. When I get older, I will



always have my family celebrate Thanksgiving like it should be. I will never have any Christmas decorations up before Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving will be a day of Thanks and family. Christmas will have its own place after Thanksgiving.”

The phone started ringing. Calls came in one after another all morning. Grandma and Grandpa answered all of them. “Shirley, guess what? This Thanksgiving, everyone will be coming to our house. We are going to have an old-fashioned Thanksgiving like we once did. We have sent letters to everyone to come. You know what? Everyone called and said they are coming here. The one thing, Shirley, you will have to do is show everyone pictures from that old photo album and tell everyone who they were. This year Thanksgiving won’t be lost,” smiled Grandpa Ben.

Many of us have found that Thanksgiving is different than when we were kids. We only hope that we can capture it again, like when we were young. Thanksgiving should not be lost between Halloween and Christmas. As Pastor Joseph would say, “Thanksgiving is a very special day for giving Thanks for each day of sunlight that lights our path.”

Having said that, let’s share a breakfast beverage and a Native American Proverb. The Proverb of today goes like this, “The more you are thankful, the more you attract things to be thankful for.”

Thanks for coming! Enjoy your gift of today. Have a great day!

PS The idea behind this story came from Jo Ann talking about what Thanksgiving was when most of us were young and not how it has become today. She said I should write something about that.

## Menu of an 1800's Appalachian Thanksgiving

written by Manda Wallace AKA ~banjo~

Appalachian women worked like men most days. They were the center of the family and of their homes. They tended to many chores, including chopping wood, cooking, spinning wool, and making all the family's clothes. They tended the gardens and the livestock, they raised their children. In other words, the first Appalachian women were a strong, hearty, and joyful bunch of women. They took no time for themselves. They endured many hardships and adversity, but somehow they were successful in carving out a life in the wilderness of the beautiful but harsh Appalachian Mountains.

I think that all Spring and Summer, an early Appalachian woman might have thought as she tended to her chores, especially at harvest time, to pick and choose what to save for her special Thanksgiving feast. People had seasonal diets. In the spring and summer months, they ate many more fruits and vegetables than they did in the fall and winter.

In the Fall, a popular dish was Squirrel & Gravy. The Squirrel heads with brains intact were also eaten. They would cook them with the eyes, ears, and nose tips removed. In eating squirrel heads, you take the head in your fingers and hold it on the plate while you eat the facial muscles. Then you remove the lower jaw and eat the tongue. But the piece of resistance is the brain which is removed by cracking the top of the skull with the handle of a butter knife. Then you pick the bone fragments off and literally suck the brain out. It is rich, sweet, buttery tasting and cannot be equaled by most other foods. Squirrel brain has only one drawback. It is too small. Brains from nearly any edible animal are wonderfully tasty food. Whether it is a squirrel, cow, or hog, the brain is one of the best-tasting portions. I can remember my Papaw Gass eating Scrambled Brains.

If the weather was cold enough, it was also common to kill a hog during Thanksgiving week. Fresh pork, especially organ meats, is good, especially at a holiday dinner. They often sent the heart, lungs or "lights," liver, kidneys, spleen, or "melt" to the house as soon as the hog was gutted, and that would be their supper. There might be a large pot of fresh pork and potatoes at Thanksgiving dinner.

They also flavored vegetables with small amounts of pork. The favorite for this use was smoked jowl, but salt pork was also often used. In the days when refrigeration was not always available, or electricity was unpredictable, salting was often the most effective way to preserve home-killed meats. Many had what were called "Smokehouses," where they smoked and stored their meat for preservation.

They had their Leatherbritches, too: big pots of shucked beans. Other vegetables might include sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes, squash, beets, turnips, carrots, and a variety of greens such as kale, collards, mustard, and turnip greens. Fresh whole milk and home-churned butter. After the butter was removed from the churn, warm fresh butter milk had to be a treat!

Deserts were Jams and Jellies and Pies.

You know, I find it funny that in all this little writing, I have not mentioned turkey. Yes, they did have wild turkey at their feasts, but more likely, they enjoyed Venison stews, steaks, and roasts, chicken with maybe some dumplings, fish, beef, and more than likely pork.

And to end the celebration, they might have pulled out Pa's personal crock of Corn Likker and spread the spirit in giving thanks to all – children as well.

I can almost feel the love and warmth the families shared during their time of giving thanks. I can't say I smell the aroma from the food, though. And guess what? The women are still working and smiling and having a joyful time. You know what they say, "A woman's work is never done."

Hope you enjoy reading, and as always, drop a comment or two.

We at Appalachian Free Press hope your Thanksgiving table is full of your favorite food and surrounded by your favorite people.

Happy Thanksgiving!

# Appalachians Need to Reconnect With Their Sustainable Roots

By Luke Godsey – University of Pennsylvania

Photo By: Micah Abshear

It's time to dust off your grandpa's old Farmer's Almanacs and get to work.

A few days ago, I was shopping for cleaning supplies and came across a bundle of eco-friendly surface sprays for \$41. While I did want to purchase something friendly to the environment, this price was too steep and made the product inaccessible. This made me think back to my childhood.

I grew up in a low-income family that often struggled to make ends meet. For my mom, it was impossible to be conscious of the planet while still feeding her children. This is the case for many rural families. How can I support the environment while still supporting my basic needs?

Creativity. Our greatest asset as rural citizens is our creativity. For centuries, Appalachians have had to be creative to survive with the little resources they had. It has now become a pride for many of us. Appalachians face many hardships and through these hardships creativity blossoms.

Take my Nan for example – almost everything she owns has been made by her hands and she is proud of this fact. She has made birdhouses from old milk jugs, pillows from old scrap fabric, seed starters from old egg cartons, and much more. She and many others from older generations reminisce on how creating something from nothing was a family event that brought relatives together. Nothing goes to waste in my Nan's household.

Speaking of grandmas: next time you visit for Thanksgiving dinner take a look at the old bookshelf. Odds are you'll find some old almanacs and magazines that can give you some ideas on how to be sustainable in everyday life. For decades, Appalachian families have used these publications as sources of inspiration for their projects.

My great-grandma is a perfect example of the power held within these pages. She used to use the patterns from old magazines to make quilts from ripped jeans and dresses for my Nan from flour sacks.

If creativity is a pillar of rural Appalachians, then knowledge is the foundation. When you have nothing, your asset becomes what you know and what you can do. This is why not just

old books, but community is so important to our prosperity. Long gone are the days of crafts being passed down through generations and advice being gifted by neighbors. This has left us to the whims of consumer culture. If a necessity or a sustainable product is too expensive for us, we are presented with the option to either go without or pay the lofty price or forgo it. As time goes on, more of us have lost the third option, which is to create.

I was lucky enough to have learned skills such as sewing, woodworking, and how to grow my own food. But, there are many people my age who were not taught these self-sustaining practices. Our generation has lost the ability to create in times of need and we are left with a world where, to be sustainable, one must be a consumer. This does not have to be the case, however.

As mentioned above, our Appalachian heritage is filled with communities coming together to teach and create in times of hardship. My generation needs to return to this heritage that we have chosen to forget. There is so much beauty that we have forgotten, not just the beauty of craft, but the beauty of community. Appalachians used to come together to create the most beautiful quilts and sadly this is just another piece of us that has been lost to major corporations.

Learning these skills and crafts will not just allow us to be more sustainable, but to connect to our past.

So, next time you are walking through the grocery store and spot a \$25 birthday cake, consider making it yourself. Or use it as a chance for your grandma to teach you her favorite recipe.

## We Looked to Be On Fire,

By Aimee LaFon

Setting our paces at a day job  
Undeserving of the lighter things  
And unhopeful of something more.

We looked to be on fire, falling from the sky  
Like meteors or space trash crashing in appalling flight.

Take away the purposes, slip down out of your suit,  
And what's left is something that does not propose to see.

When you looked, were we on fire? Burning  
With something unknown to us? Seething with rage

About a world we already lost?

## Hear Thunder Road Roar: Beyond the Mythology of Moonshine

By Sadie Kimbrough

*“Blazing right through Knoxville, out on Kingston Pike, Then right outside of Bearden, they made the fatal strike. He left the road at 90; that's all there is to say, The devil got the moonshine and the mountain boy that day. And there was thunder, thunder over "Thunder Road", Thunder was his engine and white lightning was his load. And there was moonshine, moonshine to quench the devil's thirst. The law they never got him 'cause the devil got him first.”*

- Robert Mitchum, *Thunder Road*, 1958

Knoxville got a moment to shine in the spotlight when Hollywood hotshot Robert Mitchum produced *Thunder Road* in 1958. Although the movie was shot 100 miles east in Asheville, North Carolina, the opening theme brought attention to Knoxville's Kingston Pike, a segment of the infamous “Thunder Road.”

The moonshine route's name refers to the roar of engines escaping the grasp of authorities. Thunder Road runs from Harlan, Kentucky to Knoxville, Tennessee. Legend has it that the movie's climax, when moonshine runner Lucas Droolin crashes his Ford coupe during an epic police chase, is based on a real Kingston crash. While many Knoxvilleans recount the tragedy, there's not much consensus on the details.

“People have grown up believing what someone told them when they were young,” Knoxville local Alex Gabbard told Knoxville News Sentinel in 2012. (1) For years he tried to get to the bottom of the Thunder Road origin story, but like many others, ultimately failed to identify it. No newspaper stories, no records, no nothing. Mitchum died without revealing his inspiration.

“It's history,” claimed Gabbard. “To those of us who grew up in that world, it doesn't seem like history because it doesn't seem like so long ago, but it is. Now it's giving way into legend.”

In the decades following its premiere, cult classic *Thunder Road* held the United States in a tight grip. It took over movie drive-ins, themed roller coasters at Dollywood, and even inspired a young Bruce Springsteen to write a song of the same name. But what intrigued East Tennesseans was not just their shoutout in the theme song. Thunder

Road told an all-too-familiar story of mountain people evading (or attempting to evade) authorities in order to maintain self-reliance.

Moonshine is the name for untaxed and therefore illegal liquor. It's sometimes called "white lightning" or "mountain dew." Nowadays, the label is seemingly flexible. Check the shelves of any liquor store, and you might see clear whiskeys or neutral spirits labeled as moonshine. Don't be fooled. This is just a regular licensed commercial spirit being advertised with a folkloric name.

The practice of illicit liquor making has deep roots in the Appalachian region. When Scots-Irish settlers arrived in the mountains in the 1700s, they brought their whiskey-making skills. Small farmers with vast corn harvests found a profitable drink to concoct. They didn't call it "moonshine" then. The word's British origin refers to the tradition of sneakily concocting liquor in the nighttime, so it wasn't until distillers had reason to brew in secret that they used the infamous name. (2)

Appalachian farmers farther north in Western Pennsylvania launched a rebellion in 1791 when the federal government imposed an excise tax on whiskey. They "clung to whiskey as the stronghold of their households," writes historian Steven Stoll. (3) They opposed the tax because it devalued their drink which previously functioned as an "irreplaceable source" of stability. Although the uprising mostly failed, a strong desire to independently control food commodities was established among mountain farmers.

Moonshine, real moonshine, is not legal. The home distillation of liquor is more complicated than wine or beer making because of the greater loss in tax revenue. Placing a tax on whiskey burdened Appalachian distillers by increasing the price for consumers and therefore lessening the demand.

Maybe this price increase wouldn't have been a problem, but money was not plentiful in the southern mountain economy at the end of the eighteenth century. Most families provided for themselves using forest resources. No need to interact with outside economies. Banks were distant, and the region mainly operated under a barter system. Landowners were already being taxed on





their land and livestock. They “recoiled” at this unprecedented excise on one of the few goods that could earn them cash. (4)

This lack of cash flow did not cease to be a problem in the region. Outsiders continued to interfere with Appalachian life during the 1800s and 1900s, increasingly placing locals in a state of dependency, whether with their landlord, the lumber or coal companies they worked for, or the taxes they loathed. (5)

And the taxes weren’t the only problem. Temperance laws spread throughout the region like wildfire, eventually resulting in nationwide prohibition from 1920 to 1933. With this new crackdown on liquor, demand for moonshine hit an all-time high. Secret stills popped up every which way. With alcohol cheap and always available, homemade creation and consumption rose dramatically. (6)

Participants in this illicit economy developed creative methods of hiding and transporting their merchandise. The New York Herald wrote in 1922 about Cumberland Mountain, Tennessee local George Neff, a notoriously crafty transporter, or bootlegger. “Nary a drop of liquor in this here car,” George told the cops, who apparently pulled him over 5 times in one week. Later, to his friends, “Well, I didn’t lie to ‘em. The stuff wasn’t in the car; it was under it.” When the officers asked him about the 40-gallon jug suspended under his small car, he claimed it was “one of them new fangled gas tanks.” George carried on his way.

The federal and local police struggled to contain the moonshine problem. Not only did mountain ingenuity stump them, but the geography of the region interfered too. “Mountaineers are as scattered as the hills are scattered,” one officer told the Herald. “The moonshiner’s game is a lone one.” (7)

But in reality, this usually wasn’t the case. Distilling families, households, and neighbors, although sometimes in competition with one another, often formed organized resistance, working together to outwit their pursuers.

But this is not to say that moonshining communities were incredibly inclusive. In the 1890s the “white cap” club emerged in Wilkes County, Tennessee. This gang of moonshiners sought to protect each other from federal agents, “convinced that federal and local liquor laws threatened to destroy their livelihood.” Loosely based on the organizational structure of the Ku Klux Klan, the white caps also terrorized local Blacks “in an attempt to maintain white supremacy.” Black Appalachians did participate in moonshining, though, and had for a long time. (8)

Perhaps the most infamous moonshiner of Hancock County, Tennessee, Mahalia “Big Haley” Mullins was a mixed-race woman known for her lawlessness and enormous size. In 1899, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* published a story on one of the many unsuccessful arrests of Mahalia. When deputies found the felon in her Cumberland cabin, their seizure was interrupted by her young daughter, who whispered in her mother’s ear, “I’ll go tell the crowd,” referring to Mahalia’s other dozen children. Knowing they would be outnumbered, the officers withdrew. (9)

When Mahalia died in 1898, newspapers across the country gave a nod to her legendary status. “Not too big for death,” reported the *Asheville Citizen-Times*, claiming Mahalia was a “650 pound” mother of 18 who could not be captured by the police “on account of her size and the isolated location of her home.” (10) *Bridgeton Pioneer* wrote that there was “no way to get her down the mountain.” (11)

The story was clearly sensationalized, with many reporters even speculating that she had been murdered by neighbors envious of her successful moonshine business, which she took over after her husband died. “Was this great woman murdered?” asked the *Inquirer*. If so, the reporter predicted the mountains would “witness bloodshed” as “the tribe always avenges an injury to one of its members. (12) The use of “tribe” perpetuates an anti-Appalachian and frankly anti-Black narrative that paints the family as primitive and backward.

Stereotypes synonymous with Appalachia, like the rugged mountaineer or isolated hillbilly, are evident in moonshine discourse. According to the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*, the hillbilly image is a “lanky, black-bearded, white male who lives in a cabin in the mountains with an outhouse out back. He wears a battered slouch hat, totes a shotgun, and a jug of moonshine, and holds little regard for the law, work, cleanliness, or book learning.” (13)

The fountain drink Mountain Dew (have you made the connection yet?) drew from this mold for its advertising campaigns for years. “Drink Mountain Dew,” they said. “It’ll tickle yore innards!” Mascot Willy the Hillbilly was always depicted with his trusty jug and tattered plaid ensemble. Willy served as comic relief, and he never wore shoes. Despite the hyperbolized tales surrounding moonshine, its role as a regional commodity cannot be reduced to a story of drunken mountain folk running from the law.

Moonshining represents resistance and rejection of laws not suited to meet the needs of the mountains. This idea garnered particular relevance after prohibition, as concerned Appalachians and Americans at large questioned the stability of their civil liberties. (14)

As foreign entrepreneurs crept into the forest and mountain landscapes to enrich themselves from the abundance of natural resources, the people of Appalachia did what they could to hold on to their subsistence. Even flying down Thunder Road, the moonshiner's game was a serious one.

1 Matt Lakin, "Echoes of Thunder," Knoxville News Sentinel, June 24, 2012, 10S.

2 William E. Ellis, "Moonshine," Tennessee Historical Society, October 8, 2017.

3 Steven Stoll, *Ramp Hollow: The Ordeal of Appalachia* (New York, NY: Hill & Wang, 2018), 125. 4 Stoll, *Ramp Hollow*.

5 Stoll, *Ramp Hollow*.

6 Bruce Stewart, *Moonshiners and Prohibitionists: The Battle Over Alcohol in Southern Appalachia* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2011).

7 "In the Moonshine Belt Where Every Clump of Bushes Hides A Still," *The New York Herald*, April 23, 1922, 10.

8 Stewart, *Moonshiners and Prohibitionists*. 9 "Was This Great Woman Murdered?," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 12, 1899, 27. 10 "Not Too Big For Death," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, September 19, 1898, 1.

11 "Famous Moonshiner Dead," *Bridgeton Pioneer*, September 22, 1898, 7.

12 "Was This Great Woman Murdered?," 27.

13 Rudy Abramson and Jean Haskell, eds., *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2006).

And...

Thank you very much to all our readers and contributors, we would definitely couldn't do this without You! We'll keep it going as long as we can!

Thank You!

Zeke & Aimee