

Research Up-To-Date

The Newsletter of the Urban Appalachian Council Research Committee

Volume 4, Number 1

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The Research Committee was created at the founding of the Urban Appalachian Council more than thirty years ago and has always informed the council through active research. To be notified of future research committee meetings, which are open to all, please contact msullivan@uacvoice.org or phone 251-0202.

CONTRIBUTORS WELCOME!

Please send your article, announcement, or website link to Roberta Campbell at campberm@muohio.edu. Also, feel free to forward this newsletter to interested parties.



From the Editor: **Urban Appalachians and Appalachian Culture**

One of the most debated issues among scholars and service providers of the Appalachian constituency, both urban and rural, is the notion of whether a distinct Appalachian culture exists. In this issue, I call your attention to two quite different approaches to this question from members of the Urban Appalachian Council Research Committee. The first one, by Mike Maloney, is an essay about urban Appalachians and our regional heritage. He makes it clear that the Diaspora has a diverse background, both ethnically and in social class, but that there is such a thing as a common culture in terms of certain experiences. In the second, Kay Russ, describes those Appalachian cultural attributes that she has discovered matter when counseling clients in the Appalachian region.

Who are the Urban Appalachians?

By Michael Maloney



(Michael Maloney is an independent scholar and activist. He is a founding member of the Urban Appalachian Council and the Research Committee. Maloney was also one of the original leaders in the Appalachian Identity Center in Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine. The following is excerpted from the exhibit guide for the photo-essay Perceptions of Home: The Urban Appalachian Spirit, copyright 1996, Urban Appalachian Council, last updated in 2010.)

Urban Appalachians are people now living in urban areas who came from the Appalachian region or whose ancestors came from there. Most are not first generation migrants but long-term city dwellers. People from Appalachia have been migrating to Cincinnati and other cities outside the region ever since these cities were founded. But it was not until the period following World War II that Appalachians became one of the major population groups in these metropolitan centers.

In terms of national origin, urban Appalachians reflect the varied heritage of the Appalachian region. They are Scotch-Irish, English, Scottish, Irish and Welsh. Some are African-American or Native American. Many have a German ancestry. Others are descended from people of Central and Southern Europe who were recruited to work in the coal and steel industries. Most Appalachians have a mixture of these heritages. But this diversity does not mean that there is no such thing as an Appalachian culture. A common experience of living in the hills, the towns, the valleys or the foothill sections of the Appalachian region, coupled with the eighteenth century frontier experience of the early settlers, did produce a regional culture.

Urban Appalachians are also diverse in terms of the kind of places they lived in before migration. Many came from coal camps in the Cumberland Plateau or Allegheny Mountains. Others came from cities such as Knoxville, Ashland, Charleston, or Pittsburgh. Most, however, came from a rural area or small town.

Just as an Appalachian might be white or black, they might be Protestant, Catholic or Jewish, or possess a religious heritage that defies denominational classification. They might be rich or poor, live in the inner city or in an affluent suburb. Most Appalachians in cities are employed in blue collar and service jobs, but Appalachians are also professionals, owners of businesses and managers. Some are artists, engineers, or architects. Many are educators and health care workers. During the

period of Ohio's industrial expansion the majority worked in factories. Now work in the service economy is becoming more important.

Appalachians came to Midwestern cities under a great variety of circumstances. Early migrants came in trickles, one family at a time, over many decades. They came in response to specific opportunities such as the opening of a factory. They came during World War I and during the prosperous twenties. They were sometimes recruited to work in a specific factory. It has been said, half-jokingly, that Champion Paper transplanted half of Wolfe County, Kentucky to work in its Hamilton plant.

During World War II, thousands of Appalachians came north to work in defense plants. Thousands more came in response to layoffs in the coal industry. When mines shut down, sometimes entire coal towns were depopulated. During the fifties, special bus runs were made to transport laid-off miners and their families to Cincinnati and Dayton. It was during the 1940-1970 period that entire neighborhoods in Cincinnati and other Midwestern cities became Appalachian, but the foundations of those communities were often laid much earlier in the century. This 1940-1970 period is often referred to as The Great Migration.

Wright Aeronautical (later General Electric), Armco, U.S. Shoe, General Motors, Frigidaire, Ford Sharonville, Champion Paper, Nutone, National Cash Register, Delco Moraine, and Newport Steel: these and many other factories large and small drew people from the Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia Hills to southwest Ohio and northern Kentucky.

The location of these factories often determined the location of Appalachian neighborhoods. Concentration of low cost housing became "ports of entry" for some families and long-term homes for others. These ports include Fifth and Wayne and Moraine in Dayton; Over-the-Rhine, Norwood, Camp Washington and many others in Cincinnati; Covington and Newport in Kentucky. Layoffs, changeover, plant shutdowns and long stretches of unemployment were common experiences.

Newcomers would often stay with relatives or friends until they got settled. When the layoffs came, people might have to go back to the mountains for a time or "double up" with relatives in the city. Networks of family and friends were the main support. Soon churches were organized that for many became an additional means of spiritual and material support. As neighborhoods became Appalachian, churches, stores, bars, restaurants, and social clubs were established to serve this population. Appalachian music flourished and Cincinnati became a center of the recording industry. Appalachian festivals in Dayton and Cincinnati draw over 40,000 people annually to celebrate Appalachian heritage.

As more members of a family migrated and new children were born, family networks with rural roots and urban branches became larger and stronger than before migration. These family networks were flexible and often included non-kin in a network of mutual support, informal education and nurture. Kinship systems and a set of experiences first in the

mountains and now in working class neighborhoods in the city are the core concepts in understanding Appalachian culture. And now that every Appalachian family has members in both rural and urban areas, there is very little difference between rural and urban Appalachians. The major differences among Appalachians are probably along class lines.

But most urban Appalachians have benefited in many ways from the move to the city. They have benefited economically and culturally. Midwestern cities are home to thousands of practicing musicians, craftspeople, storytellers, poets, writers, and other artists. Appalachians have contributed to the civic, economic and cultural life of their communities, serving as ministers, elected officials, union leaders, and in thousands of small businesses. Appalachian names you would recognize include Branch Rickey, Kathleen Battle, James Rhodes, Verne Riffe, and Marian Spencer.

For the most part urban Appalachians are not rich and famous. They placed the welfare of their families and neighbors above their own advancement. They are the men and women who made the refrigerators, assembled the automobiles, made paper boxes, and a thousand other products, and hauled them over the road in tractor-trailers. They built bridges and highways. They made airplane engines and rocket components. They built churches and sometimes neighborhoods. Some longed for home as they saw their children and grandchildren grow up in the city or in suburban towns or trailer courts. Some were glad to escape the hills in favor of greater opportunities in the city. All helped shape the life and culture of Midwestern cities in the last half of this century.

(For more information you can contact Maloney at maemon@yahoo.com.)

Counseling Appalachian Clients

By Kathryn Russ

(Dr. Kathryn Russ, of Lindsey Wilson College in Columbia, KY, is a member of the UAC research committee and has been doing research on how mental health counselors can best work with clients of Appalachian culture. Following are some highlights from an article, "Working with Clients of Appalachian Culture", to be published in the American Counseling Association's VISTAS 2010.)

Since there is great diversity within the Appalachian population, a "modal" or "typical" client is the focus of this research. Though people of Appalachian background tend to be an invisible minority, their culture must be taken into account when doing mental health therapy.

According to some researchers, Appalachians are more collectivist than individualistic. This means that they are person-oriented rather than task-oriented. Identity is dependent on community and kinship ties, so

Appalachians avoid confrontation that might jeopardize their standing in the group and interfere with its smooth operation. Each person is important and has a place in the community, and interactions tend to be reciprocal.

Making one person more important in the community than others (getting “above their raisin”) would undermine the egalitarianism necessary for smooth community functioning. In counseling, this means that confrontation in therapy is difficult. It also means that indirect communication is preferred over the more direct. A direct question demands an explicit answer, which is against the independent, self-reliant nature of the Appalachian culture. When meeting with clients, it is considered polite to first engage in small talk, before beginning the therapy session and to use more in the way of self disclosure. These are ways of showing respect and demonstrating egalitarianism; of showing that you consider the client your equal.

Interpretation of what is considered a mental disorder or problem is affected by culture, as indicated by the inclusion of culture-bound syndromes in the DSM-IV-TR. For example, in mainstream America, a lack of self-actualization is regarded as mental illness. In Appalachian culture, a lack of connection to the group or community is more likely to be regarded as a mental disorder.

People of Appalachian culture have a strong connection to their families and to their land. There is strong loyalty to place and even urban Appalachians, a generation or more removed from “home”, return on a regular basis. Family reunions are usually held, if possible, on the old homestead. When financial hardship or other circumstances make it difficult for urban Appalachians to regularly return home, it may cause separation anxiety and depression. Personal identity may be dependent on the home place and their standing in that community and family, even when they are removed from it

There are several points to keep in mind when working with people of Appalachian culture. A few of the most important are to listen carefully, use more indirect speech, do not be an “expert”, always show respect, and to routinely check for depression and somatization with clients of Appalachian culture.

(For more information or a list of Dr. Russ' references, email her at Kruss@Zoomtown.com.)

Research Committee members Participating in Georgia Conference

North Georgia College and State University will host the thirty-third Annual Appalachian Studies Association conference on March 19-21 in Dahlonega, Georgia. The theme for 2010 is “Engaging Communities”.

Among the participants will be UAC Research Committee members Phillip J. Obermiller, Michael Maloney, Thomas Wagner, and Roberta Campbell.

Obermiller is the discussant for the session *Making Ends Meet: Presentations of Economic Ways and Livelihoods in, around, and out of Appalachia*. Maloney is one of several panelists who will be discussing *Transforming Places: Lessons in Movement-Building from Appalachia*. Wagner is presenting his paper called "Crossing Community Barriers: Cincinnati's Appalachian Festival." And Campbell is the convener for the session, *"Mountain Mamas": Challenging Socio-Political Images of Appalachian Women*.

For conference details visit <https://appalachianstudies.org/conference>.

Research Notes

(From the Research Committee: Robert Ludke, Chair)

Minutes of January 22, 2010:

Developing the Research Agenda

The committee discussed the strategies and focus of the committee. Are we doing all that we can? What else needs to be done to inform the larger community of our research and what we offer? Do we need to revitalize the task forces (Education, Health, and Economic Security)? Should we pursue a multiple-item agenda or a single-item agenda?

Phyllis Shelton and Debbie Zorn have been to the Action Research Center at the University of Cincinnati's College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Resources to inform them of what we do and also to network with other groups associated with ARC. Of particular note was the work being carried out by Harmony Gardens called "Picturing Girls' Health". Judy Harmony has asked UAC for help identifying respondents. Phyllis also told ARC about the health research center that Bob Ludke is developing.

There was discussion as to whether the Social Areas Report would continue based on the 2010 Census. Bob Ludke and Phillip Obermiller are working with the Health Foundation to keep "Appalachian identity" questions on the Greater Cincinnati Health Foundation Survey.

Phil asked whether the UAC could raise money for some technology to develop presentations that could be carried out by staff and volunteers. The more difficult issue is making sure that the presentations are ready. Other means for disseminating information might include updating the UAC website and continuing efforts through the newsletter and its subscribers. Mike suggested that we have a "Louise List": entities that Louise Spiegel could present to when we have presentations ready to go

or that she could help us get in touch with.

The consensus of the committee members is that the Research Committee would continue in its traditional role of serving as the mechanism for the receipt and discussion of research needs, the identification of resources to address those needs, the sharing of research ideas and findings, the translation of research into potential actions, and the dissemination of research findings in a meaningful format to appropriate audiences locally and nationally. The Committee will take steps to strengthen its efforts in identifying and securing the resources necessary to address identified research needs as well as its efforts in disseminating information to appropriate audiences. Rather than adopting a single-item research agenda, the Committee would continue identifying research needs and issues through input from the UAC staff, who also serve as representatives of the community, the three task forces (Education, Health and Economic Security) which need to be re-energized, and committee members and other interested parties.

Miscellaneous:

Bob passed around the research committee listserv and asked us to review it to see who might need to be added. Rebecca Lee received the 2010 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "The Dream Continues" Award from University Hospital and the University of Cincinnati on January 15. Rebecca is also applying for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Nurse Faculty Scholars Program, in which Bob Ludke would be her research mentor.

The next research committee meeting will be held on February 19, 2010 at 10 am at UAC headquarters. Kay Russ will present her research.

Minutes of February 19, 2010:

Announcements:

Maureen Sullivan received a notice about the Weathering the Economic Storm funds for grant-writing from the Greater Cincinnati Foundation. The committee will ask Bonnie Kroeger to look into possible grants and perhaps write the grant. Louise Spiegel, Debbie Zorn and Bob Ludke will approach Northern Kentucky University president, Dr. James Votruba for ideas. Ohio State University and the University of Cincinnati have received Clinical and Transitional Science Awards and are investigating diabetes and obesity in rural and urban Appalachia. UC will provide some indirect funding and the pay for a half-time community educator. Bob also noted that UC's Genomic researchers are asking for identification of Appalachians. Michael Maloney informed the committee that the Greater Cincinnati United Way is dropping the designation of "Appalachian" from its database. Phyllis Shelton has been accepted into the UW leadership institute. Phillip Obermiller distributed nominations for the Unsung Hero awards which are due in Dayton by March 31. The committee discussed the literacy program at Oyster School. Committee members discussed whether teachers are disconnected culturally from

the students. Also, the current program may need more time to work.

Kay Russ Presentation:

Kay Russ presented her research into counseling Appalachian clients, primarily in rural Appalachia. From her work, she has produced a book chapter and will be presenting at the American Counseling Association in March. Of key importance to Appalachian culture is maintaining a sense of equality with clients and being a good listener. Committee members suggested modifications and additional sources to explore for her research. She will forward her paper to those members who wish to comment further. (For a summary of Dr. Russ' work, see the story "Counseling Appalachian Clients.")

Miscellaneous:

Dawnetta Hayes and Kelli Jette, members of UC's Action Research Project joined the meeting to discuss their proposal to do a comparative photo voice study of the community (see January 22 minutes). They will collaborate on the idea with Phyllis.

The next research committee meeting will be held on April 16, 2010 at 10 am at UAC headquarters. Robert Ludke will present his research.

Additional Links:

Center for the Study of Gender and Ethnicity in Appalachia
<http://www.marshall.edu/csega/index.asp>

The Appalachian Connection (newspaper)
<http://www.uacvoice.org/AppalachianConnection/apdec06.pdf>

Appalachian Studies Association
<http://AppalachianStudies.org/>

Social Areas Report of Cincinnati
<http://www.socialareasofcincinnati.org/>

Appalachian Women's Alliance
<http://www.appalachianwomen.org>

Appalachian Studies at Miami University-Hamilton
<http://www.ham.muohio.edu/appalachian/index.htm>

Oral History of Appalachia Program, Marshall University
<http://www.marshall.edu/sociology/Oralhist/ohap.html>

Appalachian Regional Commission
<http://www.arc.gov/index.jsp>

Highlander Research and Education Center

<http://www.highlandercenter.org/>

Appalachian Centers:

East Tennessee State University Center for Appalachian Studies and Services

<http://www.etsu.edu/cass>

The University of Kentucky Appalachian Center

<http://www.research.uky.edu/Appalcenter/index.html>

Berea College Appalachian Center

<http://www.berea.edu/appalachiancenter/>

Appalachian State University, The Center for Appalachian Studies

<http://www1.appstate.edu/dept/appstudies/>

Eastern Kentucky University Center for Appalachian Studies

<http://www.appalachianstudies.eku.edu>

The Ohio Appalachian Center for Higher Education

<http://www.oache.org>

Radford University Appalachian Regional Studies Center

<http://www.radford.edu/~arsc>

Emory and Henry College Appalachian Center for Community Service

<http://www.ehc.edu/special/service/commervice.html>

Morehead State University Institute for Regional Analysis and Public Policy

<http://www.irapp.morehead-st.edu>

North Georgia College and State University Appalachian Studies Center

<http://www.ngcsu.edu/resource/ASC>

Sinclair Community College Appalachian Outreach and Studies program

<http://www.sinclair.edu/centers/vclc/StudentActivities/MinorityStudentOutreach/OutreachtotheAppalachianCommunity/index.cfm>

Southeast Community College Appalachian Center

<http://www.kctcs.edu/AppalachianCenter>

Western Carolina University Mountain Heritage Center

<http://www.wcu.edu/mhc>

West Virginia University Regional Research Institute

<http://www.rri.wvu.edu>



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