

First Lady Ellen Axson Wilson decorated “the Blue Mountain Room” with Appalachian handicrafts, helping to launch the Southern Arts and Crafts Revival.



Photo by Charles Moore/Map by Appalachian Voices/Postcard courtesy Library of Congress
At the CASS office, a map reflecting present-day threats to Appalachian ecosystems is juxtaposed with a blow-up of a souvenir postcard of President Woodrow Wilson’s 1913 White House bedroom.

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR

APPALACHIAN

STUDIES AND SERVICES

by **Charles Moore**

The Center for Appalachian Studies and Services (CASS) at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) continued its successful grant-raising and educational programming in 2001-02 and remained a leader in promoting regional studies in Tennessee, across the Appalachian region, and nationally.

The center produces exceptional media productions, teaching initiatives, and partnerships that positively influence teaching, public service, and research in the surrounding five-state region. Its program includes Appalachian, Scottish, and Irish Studies, held during the summer of 2001 in Edinburgh, Scotland, in cooperation with the School of Scottish Studies; the Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Country Music Program, which produced a compact disc, *ETSU Bluegrass Pride*, featuring the ETSU Senior Bluegrass Band; the B. Carroll Reece Museum, which hosted regional

art programs; the Archives of Appalachia, which added further holdings of public documents and audio and visual recordings; the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*, which edged past its halfway point; and *Now & Then Magazine*, which published its 19th consecutive volume.

Appalachian Studies curricula advanced during 2001-02 with the cooperation of ETSU’s Master in Arts in Liberal Studies program; the Appalachian Teaching Project, sponsored by the Appalachian Regional Commission; the Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Country Music Program; the Appalachian, Scottish, and Irish Studies Program; and the Appalachian Studies Minor Program, offering an additional 36 courses. Development of the B.A. and/or M.A. degree in Appalachian Studies progressed to the next stage.

Now & Then published three issues during 2001-02: “Striking a Balance: Conserving & Developing Appalachia’s Natural Resources,”



Among varied Reece Museum exhibits was this 2001 First Quilt Competition hosted by the museum and Tennessee Quilts of Jonesborough, Tennessee.

Exploring life in the Appalachian region, each issue of *Now & Then* magazine reveals the story of Appalachia through articles, essays, interviews, fiction, poetry, and photography.

“Beyond Our Borders: Appalachia and the World,” and “First Person Appalachia: The Personal Essay Issue.” *NewsCASS*, the CASS newsletter, was published twice during the year. *Now & Then* sponsored a poetry contest winner’s reception (concluding the contest started in the previous year) and kicked off a fiction writing contest that will end in the spring of 2003. The CASS website was enhanced during the year to include 83 pages (plus the Archives’ search pages) and in the last six months had 300,000 “page views.” The center is beginning to see a wired-public response through online queries and memberships.

Most entries for the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia* were completed by 2001-02, allowing editors to enter the preproduction phase in the fall of 2002. Finished sections (music, geography, or politics, for example) are being forwarded to the University of Tennessee Press. The end of the project is now in sight (approximately August 2005). The center continued to spend down the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Whisman Scholarship grants while looking for additional funding to continue the *Encyclopedia* project. A reassuring sign of the *Encyclopedia*’s potential is the public and academic feedback anticipating its publication. At the latest fiscal year’s end, former director Dr. Jean Haskell was devoting full time to completion of the *Encyclopedia*.

The 2001-02 Appalachian Teaching Project

consisted of an upper-level class taught on 13 campuses across the region. Students addressed a single broad question of sustainability in the region, preparing for a presentation by each school in Washington, D.C., before the staff of the Appalachian Regional Commission. Students made the trek to Washington in November 2001 and reported an overwhelming sense of accomplishment, a global view of their work and their region, and a collegiality with fellow students from the length and breadth of Appalachia. The center is proud to have participated in the project’s formation and will again be the organization’s locus for the fiscal year ending in 2003.

The ETSU bluegrass bands blazed through a triumphant year of performances and acclaim. The band members performed on the road for a variety of organizations and before enthusiastic audiences at local concerts. The *ETSU Bluegrass Pride* CD, emphasizing the program’s instructional nature, was engineered with cooperation from WETS-FM (National Public Radio for the Tri-Cities), which provided professional-level studio and editing services. A video production based on the Senior Bluegrass Band’s trip to Japan in the summer of 2001 was locally broadcast. Program chair Jack Tottle sought and acquired a mural, *ALL in the Family II*, by North Carolina artist Marianne DiNapoli Mylet, for installation in the ETSU Charles C. Sherrod

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John Fleenor and Mary Grace Meador look through some of the 16,000 long-play country and western and bluegrass record albums recently donated.

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Library. The mural, approximately nine feet by thirteen feet, depicts famous musicians who came through the region or were influenced by local music. The Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Country Music Program benefited from the success of the *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* movie soundtrack, which seemed to encourage many new students to take lessons in acoustic instruments. Two hundred fifty-two students signed up for that program's music courses in the spring 2002. Martha Scanlan, a former student in the program, won first place in songwriting at Merlefest—the largest bluegrass festival in the world—in North Wilkesboro, N.C., for her song "Little Bird of Heaven." ETSU alumna Becky Buller produced her first album, *Rest My Weary Feet*, and moved to Nashville to pursue her professional career.

The Archives of Appalachia added 454 tapes and books and 118 linear feet of manuscript to

its holdings during the fiscal year. The archives successfully negotiated the acquisition of 17,000 long-play albums of country and bluegrass music and an additional 600 linear feet of manuscript. The archives' manuscript holdings at year's end totaled 6,200 feet. (A linear foot in archival terms is a one-foot stack of manuscript.) The archives served 4,100 patrons and finalized Internet search aids for researchers.

The B. Carroll Reece Museum, one of only 12 accredited museums in Tennessee, exhibited a variety of east Tennessee and western North Carolina art in 2001-02, extending its name and reputation among artisans, craftspeople, and the general public. Support from local bottler and early Mountain Dew businessman Dick Bridgforth contributed to the success of the "Dew It" exhibit. One of the Reece's more popular exhibits was the annual quilt competition in which only local quilters can compete. In addition, the annual First Tennessee Bank Show, also featuring only local artists, attracted media attention and hosted its trademark gala on opening night.

Despite the loss of the Governor's School for one year, a carefully chosen teaching staff eagerly anticipates the return of 60 high-school students for this popular four-week learning project during the summer of 2003.

After Dr. Haskell stepped down from CASS's director post, Dr. Ted Olson (Appalachian, Scottish, and Irish Studies) was appointed interim director, monitoring progress of the *Encyclopedia*, the 2003 Smithsonian Folklife Festival's Appalachia Exhibition, and the Appalachian Teaching Project's second round.

Service Highlights

Dr. Olson received the Appalachian Writer's Association 2002 Appalachian Book Award for his comprehensive edition of the poetry of one of Appalachia's (and America's) best poets, James Still. This book, *From the Mountain, From the Valley* (University Press of Kentucky), was featured on NPR's "Morning Edition" program and continues to be sold in bookstores throughout the region. Dr. Olson is currently compiling a CD anthology of Appalachian music, tentatively commissioned by the Smithsonian Folkways record label.

Amy Barnum, archivist, published two papers about the Archives of Appalachia.

Georgia Greer, archives office manager, co-authored and self-published a book called *Reflections of the Housewright Family's Journey*.

Norma Myers, archives director, directed negotiations with local media and entertainment companies, individual donors, and public service organizations for the transfer of private col-

lections to the archive's holdings.

Ned Irwin, public archivist, published seven papers and two presentations on east Tennessee history, including a keynote address about ETSU's patron, George L. Carter.

Charles Moore, coordinator, continued to serve on the steering committee of the Bilingual Media and Language Resources project funded by the Kellogg III Community Partnerships program.

Thomas Sneed, research assistant, obtained a Tennessee Arts Commission grant to provide a survey of musicians in the region, laying the groundwork for a database for future public use.

Jane Woodside, editor of *Now & Then* and assistant director of the center, served as co-investigator of the project "Description of Smoking Cessation in Southern Appalachia," funded by National Institutes of Health and the National Institute of Nursing Research.

Blair White, Reece Museum curator and director, served as president of the Appalachian Consortium, which combines the efforts of higher education and nonprofit institutions in the Southern Appalachian region. He also acted in advisory roles for the Haywood (N.C.) Community College Crafts Department, the Rogersville Depot Museum, the Ewing Gallery (UT-Knoxville), and the Hindman (Ky.) Settlement School.

Planning for 2002-03

The center eagerly anticipates publishing the 20th anniversary issue of *Now & Then*. Progress is underway to channel foundation fundraising deeper into the various divisions of the center to alleviate the budget dilemma. Two significant grant applications are underway. The first is for \$297,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities which will facilitate the preservation of magnetic tapes in the archives that are deteriorating steadily and will become useless within a few years if not preserved; the second is to obtain the last monies necessary for finishing the *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*. Additionally, the Appalachian Regional Commission committed \$60,000 for the second Appalachian Teaching Project, involving 10 Appalachian regional campuses that presented their research findings in Washington, D.C., in November 2002. The Appalachian, Irish, and Scottish Studies Program is anticipating taking students to Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Scotland during the second summer term of 2003.

Currently the center is offering four courses in Appalachian studies and hosting the ever-expanding bluegrass music curriculum. The Reece Museum initiated a new art scholarship, bringing the center's total number of endowments up to eight. The center is a focal point for



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Troy Gowan, Susan Grove-DeJarnett, and Jill Oxendine select slides to use in the Center's Encyclopedia of Appalachia, to be published in 2005.

the 2003 Smithsonian Folklife Festival Appalachia Exhibition, to be held on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in June/July. Center faculty members Dr. Ted Olson, Dr. Jean Haskell, Dr. Richard Blaustein, Jack Tottle, and Raymond McLain are serving with ETSU faculty Dr. Tess Lloyd and Dr. Roberta Herrin on this exhibition's curatorial committee.

For 2001-02 the center attracted substantial outside matching funding from private donors, grants, in-kind contributions, and used semi-annual mass mailings to solicit donations. Despite a shaky summer across the state at the fiscal year's end, the center clearly continues to have a significant impact on regional studies both in Appalachia and nationally.

During 2001-02, CASS extended its variety of partnerships, working on projects with such organizations as the Birthplace of Country Music Alliance, Kellogg Community Partnerships, First Tennessee Bank, Northeast Tennessee Museum Association, Tennessee Archives Association, the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh, Upper East Tennessee Science Fair, Tennessee Arts Commission, Tennessee Humanities Council, Cumberland Gap National Park, Harris Fund of Washington County, Tennessee Quilts of Jonesborough, Pepsi Bottling Group of Johnson City, and the Smithsonian Institution. ■

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**The Encyclopedia
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edged past its
halfway point,
and the center
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