

Border States

Journal of the Kentucky-Tennessee American Studies Association

No. 4
1983



Published by Middle Tennessee State University

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EDITORS' NOTES

The papers in this issue of Border States were made available to the editors by some of the panelists at the last two meetings of the Kentucky-Tennessee American Studies Association. These meetings were held at Barren River State Park, April 3-4, 1981 and at Fall Creek Falls State Park, March 26-27, 1982.

The publication of this issue of Border States was made possible by a grant from the Oral History Center at Eastern Kentucky University. The editors wish to express their gratitude for this support. The editors wish also to thank Mrs. Cindy Duke and her assistants, Ms. Lorraine Painter and Mrs. Betty Nokes for their dedication in the preparation of the manuscript. It was printed at Middle Tennessee State University under the direction of James B. Booth.

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THE FRENCH IN CENTRAL KENTUCKY:
THE MYTH AND REALITY OF ASSIMILATION

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In 1941, Archibald McLeish wrote, "If America has something to offer the French poets, artists and musicians exiled by the Nazis . . . it is the ability to find in America their own strength and purpose without having to sacrifice their French character or their artistic integrity." In this statement McLeish implies a special Franco-American relationship which has existed since the Revolutionary War. However, he makes an error common to interpreters of interactions between the dominant American social classes and the various minorities which have settled here. He ignores the experience of the minority, in this case the French, and extols the ideology of the majority. The study of the early French immigrants to central Kentucky illustrates McLeish's error. Although coming into a society favorably pre-disposed toward them, the French nevertheless were required "to sacrifice something of their French character."

Politically, Kentucky was probably the most pro-French area in the young nation. Settled by veterans of the Revolutionary War to a large degree, Kentucky place names reveal their appreciation of France. County names of Bourbon and Fayette and cities named Louisville, Paris, Versailles and LaGrange reflect an attachment to monarchical France. The new France, the France of revolution, saw pro-French sentiments increase.

The leadership of the area was in the hands of men committed as much by social ties in Virginia as by political principle to Thomas Jefferson and the Republican faction, the group which looked to the French as the natural ally of the new United States. These republicans controlled local political organizations, most of the wealth, the press, and Transylvania Seminary, later University, although leadership of the latter was frequently challenged by the Presbyterians.

To central Kentuckians, it appeared that France was repeating the American experience. Louis XVI, the once admired ally, was transformed into a base tyrant surpassed only by George III. France, like America, was trying to replace tyranny with liberty. The frontier press both encouraged and gave outlet to pro-French sentiment. John Bradford, the republican editor of the Kentucky Gazette, stated in an early issue:

Every citizen of the world, every friend of the rights of man and more especially every citizen of the United States must feel interested in the Kingdom of France. The following authentic and

judicious journal of events, as they transpired . . . at the crisis of the glorious Revolution we trust will be acceptable to our readers.¹

From the outbreak of revolution to Bonaparte's rise to power all other issues combined did not receive the coverage reserved for events in France. The fall of the Bastille, the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and the French constitutions were recounted in detail. The bread riots and other potentially negative events were understated. For example, Bradford wrote on 19 January 1793, with a between-the-lines sigh of relief, that the first accounts of the September Massacres of 1792 had been exaggerated. The executions were "those of the Swiss prisoners and some of the female attendants of the Queen. . . . The number was not more than two hundred."² The French were praised for destroying "the most stupendous fabrics ever erected by the demon of despotism," and erecting on its ruins another "temple of freedom."³

When war broke out in 1792, Kentuckians took renewed interest in the beleaguered French. Bradford wrote: "As the events of the French revolution must be interesting to every lover of liberty, so the success of the patriotic arms must be proportionally pleasing."⁴ Long accounts of military news and rumors of victories and defeats were relayed to the readers in each issue. The fact that the news was consistently four months late seems only to have increased reader anticipation. During the winter months when the news was delayed by ice on the Ohio River, Bradford apologized to his readers and assured them that all news from Europe would be carried when it arrived. The defection of Lafayette did not alter the pro-French sentiment. In the same issues, President Washington was encouraged to seek Lafayette's release from the Austrians, and the Revolution from which he had defected was extolled.

As the rest of the country began to question the violence of the Revolution, the Kentucky press became more openly pro-French. Bradford increased his own editorial comment and opened his columns to central Kentuckians wishing to express their views. On the execution of Louis XVI, Bradford chastized those who were becoming squeamish about the bloodshed:

Instead of regaling the French republicans as monsters, the friends of royalty in this country should rather admire their patience in so long deferring the fate of their perjured monarch, whose blood is probably considered an atonement for the safety of many guilty thousands that are still suffered to remain in the bosom of France.⁵

Articles submitted by central Kentuckians expressed the same sentiments. Their style ranged from attempts at satire to righteously indignant diatribes. The favorite subject was the natural alliance of the United States and France, and increasingly, the attempts

by England and their Federalist partners to destroy that relationship. In fact, extra editions were required to print war news from Europe and the paid advertisements displaced by these articles.

These writers were not restricted by the same journalistic ethics that curbed, at least to a minimal degree, the pens of the editors. However, in 1793, the Gazette added an even better means to extol the French cause. The first column dedicated to the American Muse appeared on 23 February 1793. "Poetic license" is a most appropriate term to describe central Kentuckians' attempts at verse. The first poem was entitled The Liberty Tree and it began a steady glorification of liberty, freedom, and other things Franco-American. Tyrants were dethroned by angels dedicated to the cause of liberty, and contempt was heaped upon the collective heads of Prussians, Austrians and especially the dastardly English. One poet wrote:

By hell inspired with brutal rage
Austria and Prussia both engage
To crush fair Freedom's flame;
But the intrepid sons of France,
Have led them such a glorious dance,
They've turn'd their backs for shame.
May Heaven continue still to bless,
The arms of Freedom with success,
Till Tyrants are no more:
And still, as Gallia's sons shall fly,
We'll shouting cry Encore!⁶

Some months later the verses added a new element. In addition to praising the French revolutionary efforts the bards began to criticize President Washington. A lengthy poem entitled "On the Anniversary of the Storming of the Bastille" contains the following lines:

Ah! While I write dear France ally'd
My ardent wish I scarce refrain;
To throw these sybil leaves aside
And fly to join you on the main:
Pray Heaven your guns may never fail
No George reward me with a jail.⁷

The American Muse slowly evolved from its original purpose to include other, and occasionally better poetry, but for approximately three years the poet's efforts were clearly linked to the French. Since the subject matter was acceptable, no one questioned the poetic skills of the writer.

By 1793, the pro-French sentiment was overwhelming. Independence Day celebrations, held in every central Kentucky county, inevitably toasted the noble French and their "democratic" efforts.⁸ Messrs. Brent and Love of Lexington gave a victory party to celebrate French military success. The hosts provided revolutionary

cockades which were later tossed in the air after toasts to France, victory, and Republican interests. The Gazette reported the usual patriotic speeches, the Franco-American decorations, and the general enthusiasm for France expressed by the participants.⁹

In August 1793 Lexington, Georgetown, and Paris created democratic societies patterned after the Jacobin Clubs of France. While the major issues of these clubs were the free navigation of the Mississippi River and the defense of Republican principles, the rhetoric was often pro-French. Members called upon Washington to be more sympathetic to France and wrote some of the articles mentioned earlier to keep the issue before the public. County assemblies as well gave further expression throughout the period of a growing disdain for government policies toward France.¹⁰

The central tide of opinion through the Genêt Affair, the Jay Treaty, the XYZ Affair, and the Quasi-War was that the pro-English, pro-aristocratic party was trying to destroy democracy, place Americans under English economic domination, and finally, in the process, break America's word to the French and join that nation's enemies. Parts of this theme were expressed over and over again in every medium, but one writer brought virtually every element together in a long article running through the June 1798 issues. Ambassador Genêt had been intentionally discredited by the Federalists; the Jay Treaty was an obvious effort by the Federalists and the English to sour Franco-American relations; Adams purposely chose emissaries to France unacceptable to its government, thus precipitating the XYZ scandal; and finally, given this history of relations, the Federalists, not the French, were responsible for the Quasi-War.¹¹ By 1798 then, pro-French political opinion was firmly entrenched.

The decidedly pro-French political orientation of central Kentuckians accentuated an acceptance of French culture. The Kentucky Jeffersonian Republicans were, after all, an economic, social and cultural elite as well as a political force. Lexington and its satellite communities showed a concern for civic pride and cultural growth much earlier than most frontier areas. The leadership concerned itself with city services such as fire protection, traffic flow, the removal of unsightly rubbish heaps and other community-wide projects. The names of the central Kentucky Republican elite consistently appeared on city boards, and other civic and political organizations such as the library board and societies for the promotion of agriculture, cultural events, and immigration.¹²

Lexington was proud that it was larger than Louisville or Cincinnati and emphasized its intellectual and cultural accomplishments as well as its commercial leadership. After the War of 1812 and introduction of the steamboat on the Ohio River, central Kentucky commerce declined and even greater emphasis was put on the cultural significance of Lexington, the self-proclaimed Athens of the West. Lexington had a theatre and a musical society by 1810.¹³ The letters in the Hunt-Morgan, Shelby, and Evans collections

at the University of Kentucky contain a wealth of information on the social life of the central Kentucky elite. Parties and balls came one after another. There was great concern that the right young people had the opportunity to meet and show their social graces, and references to the danger of marrying beneath oneself were relatively frequent.¹⁴ The area developed a distinctive upper class which separated itself intentionally from the more common folk.¹⁵

David Meade's estate, Chaumière des Prairies, located just outside Lexington, was the gathering place for the intellectual and business elites. Visitors to Lexington invariably came to the afternoon levees at this cultural oasis.¹⁶ It should be noted that in this period the French were still arbiters of culture. The advertisements of books for sale and the catalogues of libraries give an indication of the popularity of French authors and books on French topics. The large number of central Kentuckians of that era who could use the French language effectively is both astonishing and revealing.¹⁷

At Transylvania, the political and cultural Francophile feeling came together. In 1794, the school incorporated the study of the French language into the curriculum.¹⁸ The Trustees revealed more of their Republican political motivation than their concern for education in their official justification:

Considered in a social view, as connecting us more closely with the only free nation on the earth but ourselves, it [the French language] is highly important; and considered as unfolding to our youth the writings and learning of a nation, now holding preeminently the first rank in the world for virtue,¹⁹ for patriotism and for science, it is indispensable.

Two of Transylvania's presidents during this period, Harry Toulmin and Horace Holley, were decidedly pro-French from an intellectual as well as a political point of view. Consequently, Transylvania was to provide a French flavor to Lexington society through the first decades of the 19th century. French teachers came to Transylvania usually to stay only a few years, but there was rarely a year when at least one Frenchman was not employed at the institution. The school also recruited a significant number of students from the French communities in Philadelphia and New Orleans.²⁰

It was into this atmosphere that the Frenchmen came. If larger numbers had come to central Kentucky, a different response may have resulted, but a small group, with the correct accoutrements of culture, gave the elite a chance to put its political preferences into actions and to increase its cultural distinctiveness at the same time. The schools of French language, dance and deportment for young ladies or gentlemen established by the French provided that special cultural touch for their children. The French

business establishments, as will be shown, catered to the feelings of distinctiveness, and the French themselves added the trappings of cosmopolitanism to the frontier community.

On the surface at least, the benefits were reciprocal. The French came to central Kentucky almost to a man for economic reasons. Alexander Fournier explained it in almost metaphysical terms when he said in a letter to Martin Picquet that "Providence was most wise in giving man the thirst to acquire."²¹ Madame Charlotte Mentelle, in a revealing letter to her husband's parents, suggested a similar motivation. Given a guaranteed income of four hundred dollars per year, the Mentelles would return to France. Unfortunately, France was overpopulated and too many talented people were unable to exercise their abilities. Indeed, despite the fact that Madame had many unkind things to say about Kentucky and Kentuckians, she stated that three to four million honest French farmers and artisans should seek the prospects of a better life in America.²² Her husband was involved in numerous businesses, teaching, manufacturing, and land speculation during the period from 1797 to 1820.

Most of the French were from urban areas originally and settled in frontier communities. Many taught when they first arrived and then established commercial ventures. Almost every one of them speculated in land, having brought with them the French attitude that land acquisition was the answer to all economic needs. However, only when they reached an economic level sufficient to qualify them as gentlemen farmers were they happy on the land. Those who tried to clear the land left at a much faster rate than those settling in urban areas.²³

The central Kentucky elite lent both moral and financial support to the French business ventures. John Savary of Millersburg was forced on several occasions to ask Robert Alexander of Woodford County to lend him money to pay the taxes on the large blocks of land he had purchased.²⁴ Alexander, at Savary's suggestion, also invested in one of Waldemar Mentelle's projects. In 1808 Mentelle built a kiln to produce Kentucky's first stoneware. Alexander invested two hundred dollars in the venture. When the first kiln blew up, Mentelle asked Alexander to make an additional investment of sixty dollars. When that kiln malfunctioned, Madame Mentelle wrote Alexander asking for thirty dollars. His patience and support were more than Madame expected, she wrote. She would understand if he wished to make no further investment, but she pleaded with him not to involve her family in the "horrors" of a law suit.²⁵ Alexander did not sue, and Mentelle finally produced the stoneware.²⁶

The advertisements of the French schools in the newspapers clearly indicated Republican sponsorship of French economic efforts. In virtually every instance, the name of a prominent Republican appeared in some capacity along with the type of school and the instructor. The notice for Peter Valentine's language school was "announced" by Harry Toulmin.²⁷ Charles Lorimer opened a dancing school and an evening school for young gentlemen in the home of

Martin Hawkins.²⁸ James Trotter "sponsored" Charles Barbier's school.²⁹ The Kentucky Vineyard Association, an effort by French-speaking Swiss immigrants to produce wine in Kentucky, was a favorite, if unsuccessful, investment opportunity for men such as John Bradford, Henry Clay, and David Meade.³⁰

The Mentelle family was adopted by virtually the entire community. They came to Lexington in dire financial straits after the failure of the French settlement at Gallipolis, Ohio. According to Thomas Hart Clay, Henry Clay's son and Mentelle's future son-in-law, they were given a "small life-estate" on the Richmond Road by the Wycliffe family.³¹ That "small" estate was across Richmond Road from Ashland, the home of Henry Clay. It was large enough to hold the ten members of the Mentelle family, a library, and a very select boarding school which included Mary Todd, the future wife of Lincoln, among its students.

Henry Clay hired Mentelle to work on a surveying crew and to paint buildings at Ashland. Mentelle and a Mr. Downing established a painting business for which Clay purchased the paint. Mentelle was also hired to teach French at Transylvania, and he taught children on a private basis at the same time. Madame Mentelle provided tailoring services for the Clay family and frequently served as Clay's secretary.³² She also worked with Robert Barr and William Leavy in preparing a catalog of the Lexington Library.³³

Robert Alexander and Harry Toulmin consistently helped both Kentucky French and French residents of other areas with the frequent land disputes of the period. In addition to Savary's claims, Alexander was frequently involved with the land dealings of Stephen Girard, Charles Pauley and James Vanuxem of Philadelphia. Harry Toulmin settled claims for John Bourquet and Dupont de Nemours.³⁴

Other Frenchmen developed businesses which looked to the wealthier citizens of Lexington for the clientele. James Robert opened a gold and silversmith shop in 1806, Loftus Noel was a tailor, and John Delisle made specialty items including surgeons' instruments, swords and parts for clocks. Henri Terasse operated a coffee shop and club in Lexington. For six dollars per year one could read from the forty-two national newspapers to which the establishment subscribed or play billiards, chess, and backgammon in the game room. Gentlemen could order wine, spiritous liquors, or brandy. M. Terasse also opened a public garden behind his home which he called Vauxhall. On a summer evenings residents gathered to dance on the illuminated platform built for that purpose.³⁵

It was also Terasse, in partnership with M. Deverin, who began the confectionery which made Mathurin Giron the best known Frenchman in central Kentucky. A genius in the kitchen by all contemporary accounts, Giron did wonders for frontier culinary arts. He baked for all occasions--weddings, dinners, parties. He was perhaps most famous for the elaborate cake made in honor of Lafayette's visit to central Kentucky in 1825. Over the confectionery, Giron developed

a ballroom. His cotillions, held under the tutelage of Adolphe Xaupi, catered to the upper classes.

The French benefitted tremendously from the support of the central Kentucky elite. By 1810 the French were in a much improved economic situation. John Savary's land speculation had proved successful despite his early misgivings.³⁶ He owned land in four states, operated a store in Millersburg, and had three boats on the Ohio River.³⁷ The Robert family owned over 33,000 acres in Montgomery, Madison, Garrard, and Fayette counties.³⁸ Louis Vimont became a major merchant and landowner in Bourbon County, married his children into the central Kentucky aristocracy, and held a place of respect in the community. The Mentelles also established themselves among the central Kentucky elite. Madame ran her boarding school, and her husband's business efforts eventually proved successful. Despite Madame's contempt for slavery, the family owned two slaves by 1810, and four of the daughters married into slaveholding families.

The success was not, however, without a price. Although central Kentuckians appreciated the French, that appreciation was accompanied by the development of a mental image of what a Frenchman ought to be which did not correspond in every instance to reality. That image varied significantly, but the general components can be seen. The early image stressed the cultural and intellectual attributes of the French and their gentility. As the image evolved, however, more emphasis was placed on physical attributes and mannerisms. The men were viewed as small and most frequently rotund. French dress and a "pleasant" accent were perfectly acceptable. They were often seen as romantics and frequently known to embellish the truth for the sake of a good story. Politically, the image was slower to develop for reasons which will be shown. Only in the late 1820s, after the rabid pro-French sentiment waned, did the picture develop. Then, the French were generally viewed as Royalists, often with close personal connections to the martyred Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.

The descriptions of these Frenchmen by contemporaries and by the first historical writers indicate this development. Dr. A. E. Saugrain, one of the earliest Frenchmen to settle in central Kentucky, was short and rotund, vivacious and animated. He had "a sweetness of temper, which nothing could sour."³⁹ Even the French seemed to perpetuate the image. Mme. Mentelle, writing in the Saturday Evening Chronicle, stated that Saugrain "could have amassed a large fortune but with a heart and hand always open . . . he never felt a desire of accumulation and died poor, regretted and beloved by all."⁴⁰ Dr. Saugrain was also a bit eccentric, and there is little as valuable to legend-making as eccentricity. He was one of the first men on the frontier to have a device for producing electric current, and supposedly delighted his neighbors by shocking unsuspecting Indians.⁴¹ Finally, Saugrain had won for himself the high esteem of the backwoodsmen. He had shown himself "not withstanding his small stature and great good nature, a very hero in combat with the Indians."⁴²

Mathurin Giron was described in similar terms. Rotund and rosy, cordial and merry, Giron "never alienated a friend, never irritated an enemy."⁴³ He was the French gentleman who showed his delight when Mary Todd visited his store and spoke French to him.⁴⁴ He made "tall pyramids of meringues and macaroons for wedding suppers, and spun around them a cloud of candied webbing as white and misty as the veil of the bride."⁴⁵

The Mentelles, though never described as rotund or rosy, were intelligent, industrious and cultured French people. Monsieur Le Duc, a Transylvania professor, was "a polished and educated Frenchman."⁴⁶ Constantine Rafinesque was a learned and enthusiastic man but a "visionary" fellow.⁴⁷

The more perceptive members of the French community recognized their peculiar position vis-a-vis their wealthy benefactors. They had been initially accepted at a level of society from which their economic position, had they not been French, would have excluded them. They were very careful to preserve that special relationship even if it meant sacrificing some of their "French character."

The business establishments of Terasse and Giron were so cultured in a studied way as to be obviously appealing to the elite's concepts of Frenchness. Terasse's reading room had French charm evidenced by touches such as elegant backgammon tables and the Napoleon brandy he imported all the way from Louisville. M. Giron decorated his ballroom with murals depicting airy landscapes broken by orange trees and placed hundreds of brightly colored candles in sconces around the room. He built a terrace around the ballroom where guests could talk at summer dances or come, by invitation, to watch parades from a vantage point above the common street crowd. Giron's personal bearing reflected the same intent. He dressed "Frenchy," spoke with a pleasant French accent, and made special treats for the children of Lexington, at least for Mary Todd and her friends.⁴⁸

French caution is particularly apparent in the area of political expression. Although the traditional interpretation viewed the French as Royalists fleeing the Revolution, in fact, the French population of central Kentucky was reasonably mixed politically. The Catholic priests--Flaget, Dadin, Chabrat, David, and others who established Catholic churches in settlements throughout the state--the Mentelles, A. E. Saugrain, and Xaupi were certainly Royalists. Savary, Barbier, Vimont, and Tardiveau were, on the other hand, favorable to the Revolution.

The interesting aspect of their politics is not where they stood but the deafening silence of both groups on the political situation in France. With the issue so prominent in the press, there is not one article which can be traced directly to a Frenchman. While Kentuckians were writing articles and verse in favor of Revolution, the French were advertising goods and services for sale. The letters written by Frenchmen to members of the dominant

element also reveal few political comments. Furthermore, only one central Kentucky Frenchman, Pierre Tardiveau, can be directly linked with any local expression of Revolutionary sentiment.⁴⁹

This is particularly interesting when the central Kentucky French are compared with pro- and anti-Revolutionary forces in Europe and, to a lesser degree perhaps, with those in other parts of the United States. The emigres scurried about Europe encouraging the crowned heads to invade France and talked of the evils of liberalism and revolution to anyone who would listen. The Revolutionaries, were equally evangelistic in their attempts to export their cause.

One would expect the Catholic priests to have been the most hostile toward the Revolution and the most vocal in their opposition. Their lives had been disrupted, and they had suffered serious abuse as well as personal danger while in France. They certainly did not hesitate to speak out on other issues. Bishop Flageŕ condemned Louisville as "the place where dissipation reigns."⁵⁰ Father Steven Badin, the Apostle of Kentucky, was particularly critical of the cuisine and the hygiene of Kentuckians.⁵¹ Finally, Father Nerinckx, a Belgian forced to flee because of the French invasion, complained in 1807 that "the French are the worst portion of the people, and few catechisms in that language are bought, few confessions heard, but plenty of curses uttered."⁵² The Catholic writers and memoirists who have written the stories of these exiled priests mentioned frequently the harrowing escapes from France, priestly eccentricities, and anecdotes of confrontations with frontier Protestant ministers, but they recalled no comments on the Revolution. Moreover, despite frequent complaints about irreligious frontiersmen, a situation which would appear to invite analogy with Revolutionary France, there were no such references in the priests' correspondence with the diocesan office in Baltimore. Yet, in 1819 when Badin sought a publisher for his treatise on missionary work in Kentucky, he went to "an old friend," the editor of the Ami de la Religion et du Roi in Paris.⁵³ The Ami de la Religion was one of the most reactionary publications in Restoration France. The anti-Revolutionary sentiments of these priests seem to have been expressed in demands for a renewed faithfulness to conservative Catholic theology and adherence to rigid moral codes rather than in comments hostile to the Revolution.⁵⁴

Among the secular population, the same silence is apparent. Indeed, published comment on the political sentiments of the French is virtually non-existent until much later. The actions of Madame Mentelle are perhaps even more revealing than silence. Katherine Helm, a biographer of Mary Todd Lincoln, stated that the Mentelles were loyal to "their unfortunate sovereign Louis XVI" and loved "with deep devotion the frivolous but gentle and mild Marie Antoinette." They could never allude to these martyrs without tears.⁵⁵ Madame Mentelle, writing to her husband's parents in 1803, did not mention the Bourbons but made it quite clear that she was not pro-Revolution. Explaining why they could not return to France, she stated that "France could not always be under the government of a strong

man, and the revolution, that flow of blood, which at present has stopped running, will resume its fatal course and plunge everyone into misfortunes greater than those they have recently escaped."⁵⁶

In 1800, Madame Mentelle translated a pamphlet for the Bradford Press, the views of which were antithetical to her own.⁵⁷ The pamphlet, entitled Voyages, Adventures, and situation of the French Emigrants from the Year '89 to '99, followed a typically Republican line. The pamphlet warmed to its subject when the old regime was discussed. The nobility were gamesters, crimps, and rogues. "The whole Royal Family," a few individuals excepted, were "the most illiterate, the most vicious, and the least amiable in the kingdom." But the best was reserved for Marie Antoinette:

She has been represented here, as a beautiful, innocent and mild woman. This last character has never been hers; and as for beauty, everyone knows that a woman of forty, addicted to excesses of all kinds, with pimples on her face, has but few remains of it.

How Madame must have blanched at this reference to her gentle Marie Antoinette! A look at the list of subscribers, those agreeing to purchase the tract before its publication, may explain why she translated it. It reads like a virtual "Who's Who" of central Kentucky Republican circles, including the Todds, Henry Clay, Trotter, Bradford, and Richard Johnson. Equally noticeable is the absence of French names from the list.⁵⁸

Madame revealed something of a double standard in other dealings with Kentucky. To central Kentuckians, she was the gentlewoman, the cultured lady who opened her home to those interested in playing and hearing good music or in meeting French visitors to the city, the gifted headmistress of the most fashionable school for young ladies in the area. Letters sent to her by former students, by Julie Duralde Clay, the French sister-in-law of Henry Clay, and by others, reveal the high esteem in which they held her. But in letters to her husband's parents, another Madame Mentelle is revealed. This Madame was highly critical of Kentucky and Kentuckians. There is nothing which normally holds people to a given region, she wrote, that could hold the Mentelles in Kentucky except the need for money. The people here, with few exceptions, could never be the friends of Europeans, particularly of les français sensible. That term cannot be translated literally as "the sensible French." In this context, it has connotations of class, culture, and manners which Kentuckians, according to Madame, did not have. The combination of Republican principles of political democracy and the efforts of the same people to create a distinctive social class completely baffled her. She spoke of flatterers and parasites, an interesting statement, given her dependence on the very group she was criticizing. Kentuckians possessed many and great vices, but no discernible virtues. Her strongest words condemned the lack

of true society. "Nulle société. Rien," she wrote. It was, she stated, best just to pass over the people in silence.

She could not, however, remain silent. She returned to the subject two pages later to discuss one further inconsistency. The national constitution spoke so highly of liberty, "but that seems so ridiculous, so absurd, when compared to the enslavement of the negro." She must have raised the subject at some point with her neighbors because she stated that when one mentioned the issue it was like listening to fools who thought they were speaking rationally.

Madame then turned to the state itself: "We float always between good and bad in this Kentucky, this Paradise. The land is beautiful but what is beauty? Trees, trees, and more trees." The climate was disagreeable, winter lasted six months, and one could not get fresh fruit. Indeed, the more the Mentelles saw of Kentucky, the more they loved France.

Admittedly, the fact that Madame would within a month deliver her fifth child in a period of eight years may have had something to do with her attitude. However, in a letter dated 26 April 1804, she repeated many of her complaints.⁵⁹ Even if tempered by the knowledge of her discomfort, this Madame is not the one she portrayed to her central Kentucky neighbors.

A less dramatic example of the same phenomenon can be seen in the correspondence of John Savary with Robert Alexander. The exchange of letters began in 1794 and ended only with Savary's death two decades later. Early nineteenth-century correspondence is extremely formal and often overly flattering for twentieth-century tastes, but Savary's letters go beyond that. The earliest letters are very similar in style, phrasing and general effusiveness of language to letters of French fonctionnaires, bureaucrats of common origins, written during the Restoration era to noblemen of high standing. There is a contrived subservience to them when compared to letters among equals. Robert Alexander was a man of considerable wealth and social position in central Kentucky and may well have seemed to Savary the equivalent of a nobleman.

Through the years, there is a subtle change in the tone of the letters. By 1808, the year in which both Savary's economic ventures and his social standing came into clearer and more stable focus, there is a much greater tone of equality. By 1810, Savary spoke more frequently and less cautiously of political affairs and even began to give Alexander financial advice and moral encouragement.⁶⁰ The evolution of Savary's correspondence is made more apparent by the fact that the two letters of the Mentelles to Alexander, those regarding the kilns, are included with Savary's papers. The Mentelles did not have Savary's long relationship with Alexander, and the letters reveal the same sycophancy as Savary's earliest communications. The fact that Savary's will, written in 1808 and probated in 1816, left all his possessions to Robert Alexander makes Savary's caution even more interesting.

The French made other changes in their lives very early in their Kentucky ventures. If Kentuckians could not spell the relatively simple Savary the same way on any two occasions, it is little wonder that he quickly stopped referring to himself as Jean Henri Savory de Valcoulon. Pierre was changed to Peter, Jacques to James and Jean to John. Waldemar Mentelle abbreviated his first name, leading many Kentuckians to call him William, and his wife used Charlotte instead of the more difficult Victoirie. Whether intentional or not, they also named their children Marie, Louise, Rose, Henry, and Theresa--names which could be pronounced en anglais or en français.

John Savary was the first to break the political silence. In 1808 he was elected as a financial expert to the Kentucky legislature. He also began to write political tracts, although he refused to publish those outside the mainstream of opinion. Writing to Albert Gallatin, John Badollet, a mutual friend, expressed the hope that Savary would deal with the financial issues and not make speeches. His accent was so heavy that it might give offense to Kentuckians.⁶¹ The caution in political affairs was still apparent.

Thus, when one examines the experience of the French in central Kentucky from the French point of view, the conclusion is inescapable that they sacrificed some of their own personality to adhere to their neighbors' image of "Frenchness." Since their culture, unlike that of so many other American minorities, was so highly valued, the extent of the sacrifice was muted. The French traded public expression of political thoughts and certain modes of behavior for social and economic success. The definition of the acceptable limits of French thought and behavior was certainly a subtle process, and it elicited a great deal of cooperation from the French, at least the ones who settled permanently. The examination of this French experience in central Kentucky reminds us once again of the pitfall of accepting uncritically the assessment of a minority by the majority.

NOTES

- ¹Kentucky Gazette, 21 November 1789.
- ²Kentucky Gazette, 19 January 1793.
- ³Kentucky Gazette, 22 October 1791.
- ⁴Kentucky Gazette, 16 February 1793.
- ⁵Kentucky Gazette, 11 May 1793.
- ⁶Kentucky Gazette; 16 March 1793.
- ⁷Kentucky Gazette, 2 November 1793.

- ⁸Kentucky Gazette, 9 July 1796; 16 July 1796.
- ⁹Kentucky Gazette, 16 February 1793
- ¹⁰Kentucky Gazette, 1 August, 15 August, 29 August, 5 September 1798.
- ¹¹Kentucky Gazette, June 6, 13, 20, 27, 1798.
- ¹²See Lexington Board of Trustees Minutes Books; Kentucky Gazette, 6 September 1797.
- ¹³Richard C. Wade, The Urban Frontier (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. 107-08.
- ¹⁴The Eliza January-Mary Bullock letters are particularly revealing of Lexington-Louisville social life. See Shelby Papers, University of Kentucky Special Collections.
- ¹⁵Wade, pp. 107-08.
- ¹⁶William Leavy, "Memoires of Lexington and Vicinity," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, 41 (1943), 250; Henry J. Peet, ed., Chaumière Papers (Chicago: O'Donoghue, 1883), p. 53.
- ¹⁷Alexander Papers, University of Kentucky Special Collections, 28 June 1810.
- ¹⁸Transylvania was one of the first institutions in the United States to teach the language as a part of the curriculum. Other institutions provided instruction on an adjunct basis.
- ¹⁹Transylvania Seminary Records, 1794, as quoted in Niels H. Sonne, Liberal Kentucky, 1780-1828 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p. 58.
- ²⁰James Hopkins, ed., The Papers of Henry Clay (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1959), II, 690; Clay wrote to Horace Holley that many New Orleans families wished to send students to Transylvania. He mentioned that a M. Allain was to visit Lexington with prospective students. See also Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, 34, 488; two French students read speeches in honor of Lafayette in 1825.
- ²¹Alexander Fournier to Martin Picquet, n.d., Barbaroux Papers, The Filson Club, Louisville, Kentucky.
- ²²Victoirie Charlotte Mentelle to Monsieur et Mme. Mentelle, 28 December 1803, University of Kentucky Special Collections.

²³Charles Lakanal is an excellent example. Carrying letters of introduction from Lafayette to Thomas Jefferson and Henry Clay, Lakanal, a native of Grenoble, attempted to settle land in Gallatin County and write a definitive account of the American liberal experiment. A man of some reputation in France both as a politician and scientist, the "contemplative" life proved too tame. He wrote a detailed plan to establish Joseph Bonaparte over Spanish territory in the Southwest and later accepted the position of President of the College of New Orleans. He returned to France after several years.

²⁴John Savary to Robert Alexander, 12 January 1798; 17 October 1800, Robert Alexander Papers, University of Kentucky Special Collections. Savary served as partner and agent for many French people speculating in Kentucky lands. He and Albert Gallatin owned over 120,000 acres in Kentucky, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Stephen Girard, the French financier in Philadelphia, and many merchants of that city also owned Kentucky land.

²⁵W. Mentelle to Robert Alexander, 18 July 1808; Charlotte Mentelle to Robert Alexander, 16 September 1808. Alexander Papers, University of Kentucky Special Collections.

²⁶George Ranck. History of Lexington (Cincinnati: R. Clark and Co., 1872), p. 102.

²⁷Kentucky Gazette, 17 July 1794.

²⁸Kentucky Gazette, 6 October 1800.

²⁹Kentucky Gazette, 1 August 1795.

³⁰Thwaites, p. 207.

³¹Kenner Collection, University of Kentucky Special Collections, Deposition of Thomas H. Clay, Menifee Circuit Court.

³²Hopkins, The Clay Papers, I, 121,187,299,709; II, 353.

³³William H. Perrin, Sketch of Bourbon, Scott, Harrison and Nicholas Counties, Kentucky (Chicago: O.L. Baskin and Co., 1882), p. 385.

³⁴See Alexander Papers, University of Kentucky Special Collections.

³⁵Fortescu Cuming, Sketches of a Tour to the Western Country (Pittsburg: Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum, 1810), pp. 166-67.

³⁶Henry Dater, in a Mississippi Valley Historical Review article, 26 (1939), 21-38, has Savary disappearing after dividing the lands he owned with Albert Gallatin. Savary moved to Millersburg in 1797. Dater also contends that Gallatin and Savary dissolved their partnership to maintain their close friendship. The friendship and the partnership were maintained. The two men divided about half their mutual holdings. The remainder was held in partnership until Savary's death in 1816 when it was willed to Robert Alexander of Woodford County. Gallatin then sued for his share. See Alexander Papers, University of Kentucky Special Collections.

³⁷See Alexander Papers, University of Kentucky Special Collections, Savary-Alexander Correspondence.

³⁸Kentucky Tax Lists, Fayette County, 1809.

³⁹Henry Brackinridge, Recollections of Persons and Places in the West (Philadelphia: James Kay, 1834), p. 44.

⁴⁰Charlotte Mentelle, Saturday Evening Chronicle, 14 July 1827, as quoted in Eugene Blies, Dr. Saugrain's Relation of his Voyage down the Ohio River from Pittsburg to the Falls in 1788 (Worcester, Mass: Charles Hamilton, 1897), n.p.

⁴¹Brackinridge, p. 44.

⁴²Brackinridge, p. 44. Brackinridge made a far greater hero of Saugrain than he deserved or claimed on most occasions. See Blies, Dr. Saugrain's Relation of his Voyage.

⁴³William K. Doty, The Confectionery of Monsieur Giron (Charlottesville: The Michie Co., 1915), n.p.

⁴⁴Katherine Helm, Mary, Wife of Lincoln (New York: Harper and Bros., 1928), pp. 43-44.

⁴⁵James Lane Allen, Flute and Violin and Other Kentucky Tales and Romances (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1923), p. 65.

⁴⁶Leavy, p. 46.

⁴⁷Leavy, pp. 41, 126-7.

⁴⁸Helm, pp. 43-44.

⁴⁹Peter Tardiveau was an original member of the Political Club of Danville, but resigned very early after giving offense to several members. He also was involved in the Genét affair. However, after 1795, apparently having learned a bitter lesson, he seems to have devoted most of his time to commerce. He later moved to Bowling Green, Kentucky. See Thomas Speed, The Political Club of Danville, Kentucky (Louisville: John P. Morton & Co., 1894), p. 94.

⁵⁰Clyde F. Crews, "Hallowed Ground: The Cathedral of the Assumption in Louisville," Filson Club Quarterly, 51, 251.

⁵¹Badin to Chabrat, 7 February 1821, quoted in Ben J. Webb, The Centenary of Catholicity in Kentucky (Louisville: Charles A. Rodgers, 1884), pp. 449-50.

⁵²Quoted in Huntley Dupree, "The French in Early Kentucky," Filson Club Quarterly, 15, 87.

⁵³Steven Badin to Guy Chabrat, 4 July 1819, quoted in Webb, p. 443.

⁵⁴Webb, pp. 138, 163-4.

⁵⁵Helm, p. 45.

⁵⁶Madame Charlotte Mentelle to M. et Mme. Mentelle, 28 December 1803, University of Kentucky Special Collections.

⁵⁷Voyages, Adventures, and Situation of the French Emigrants from the Year '89 to '99 (Lexington: John Bradford, 1800). The author's name is not printed on the pamphlet, but Madame Mentelle's name is penned on the title page. A note says the name is in the hand of the original owner. In another citation, she is referred to as the translator. The latter appears more likely for reasons explained in the text.

⁵⁸The names of Thomas January and Abner LeGrand, both Huguenots, do appear. This pamphlet is in the University of Kentucky Special Collections.

⁵⁹Madame Charlotte Mentelle to M. et Mme. Mentelle, 28 December 1803; 26 April 1804, University of Kentucky Special Collections.

⁶⁰See Alexander Papers, University of Kentucky Special Collections. The papers contain about eighty letters between Savary and Alexander over the period of approximately twenty years.

⁶¹Gayle Thornbrough, The Correspondence of John Badollet and Albert Gallatin (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1963), p. 38; Savary to Alexander, 12 March 1809, Alexander Papers.

"Westward The Jug of Empire": Whiskey Advertising In
American History

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There appeared, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, in Grantham, England, a sign on a tavern, with a painted illustration of a beehive with a swarm of bees surrounding it. The accompanying rhyme advertised the product for sale there:

Within this hive we're all alive,
Good Liquor makes us funny,
If you are dry, step in and try
The flavor of our honey.

In the United States, it is Mark Twain who is credited with the somewhat cynical paraphrase of George Berkeley's classic line, "Westward the course of empire takes its way." After experiencing the excitement of the West, Twain was moved to comment that the line should read, "Westward the jug of empire. . . ." Americans can be comforted, however, by the fact that drinking and drunkenness were around long before the first Europeans set foot on this continent. As a matter of fact, there is an old ditty from somewhere in our past that says:

He is not drunk who from the floor
Can rise again, and drink once more,
But he is drunk, who prostrate lies,
And cannot drink and cannot rise.

Whiskey drinking has been around for much longer than whiskey advertising. In the beginning, of course, the distillers and the drinkers were usually the same people. Even when the whiskey was not made by the drinker, however, the supplier did not really have to do a selling job. The need for advertising did not develop until the home distilleries gave way to profit-seeking enterprises, and the liquor industry began to take shape.

The need for such an industry in America is evidenced by the fact that the Puritans coming to establish their settlements on the coast of New England, brought with them not only their religion, but also their strong drink. Alcoholic beverages were not considered ungodly. As a matter of fact, the Mayflower carried casks of beer and a supply of Aqua Vitae (probably Holland Gin),¹ both of which were much preferred to the water on board which was, quite literally, "not fit to drink."

One of the first crises in the New World arose as the group searched along the coastline for the most satisfactory spot for

building their new homes. After six weeks of frustrating disagreements, the decision could be postponed no longer, their "victuals being much spent, especially our beere, and it now being the 20th of December."² Thus the colony was established at Plymouth and the hardships suffered by the Pilgrims during the early years are well documented.³

One of the most pressing problems for these Plymouth colony Puritans was the depletion of their small supply of alcoholic beverages. Water certainly was not the answer. In England and Europe the water had been, generally speaking, usable only for washing or cooking. Even though the water of New England was found to be more tasty, its purity had not been proven. William Bradford wrote of the Puritans in the Netherlands contemplating migration to the New World that "The change of air, diet and drinking of water would infect their bodies with sore sicknesses and grievous diseases."⁴ Unfortunately, most of the water in the Old Country was "an unwholesome beverage" coming, as it did, "from a contaminated well in a city or farmyard. The common table beverages of poor families in England and Holland were beer and cider."⁵ The Reverend Francis Higginson accepted the shortage or lack of stronger drink more gracefully than some, however, and wrote in 1629, "Whereas my stomach could only digest and did require such drink as was both strong and stale, I can and oftentimes do drink New England water very well." His testimonial could not carry too much weight, however, as he died a short time after giving it.⁶

The Mayflower's captain shared the ship's supply of beer. In April, however, the vessel departed for England, and the colonists were left to shift for themselves as far as food and drink were concerned. Future colonists headed for America would be better prepared, setting sail with much larger supplies of beer, malt, and liquor. It was quite evident, though, that high priority would have to be given to the establishment of a liquor industry. Many of the families brought their own brewing utensils and their own stills and manufactured beverages primarily for consumption within the home. Most of the liquor that found its way into the market was imported.

The appearance in 1620 of beer and liquor in the New World was not, however, the first known use of alcoholic beverages on the North American continent. Thomas Harriot's A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia, first published in 1588, reports that while he was visiting the short-lived colony on Roanoke Island and studying the grain called "Mayze," "Wee made of the same in the country some mault, whereof was brewed as good ale as was to be desired. So likewise by the help of hops thereof may be made as good Beere."⁷

As the population of the colonies increased and the territory involved expanded, the demand for liquor in its various forms continued to grow. More and more of it was dispensed through ordinaries, taverns, or inns. The colonial governments took steps

to regulate the operation of such establishments and the manner in which they sold spirituous liquors, even fixing the prices to be charged for drinks and the number of drinks that might be sold to certain individuals.

Despite the significant amount of business involved, advertising was not an important factor. The art of promotion was not highly developed at the time and, as a rule, demand far exceeded supply. It would be near the end of the nineteenth century before labeling and advertising assumed prominent roles in the industry. The advertising that was used in colonial times and in the early days of the Republic usually simply announced the arrival or availability of supplies of liquor. For example, the New York Mercury, in December, 1753, carried an advertisement that read:

To be SOLD by
Benjamin Payne,
At his House opposite the Old-Slip-Market, at the
Sign of Admiral Warren
Choice Madeira wine, rum, brandy,
Geneva and arrack; bobeia tea and Muscovado
Sugar, with sundry other liquors by wholesale or
retale.⁸

Near the end of the eighteenth century, the North-Carolina Gazette (New Bern) announced imported goods, just arrived from France, to be sold at auction. Included in the delicacies and representing a rather large portion of the shipment was an assortment of fancy brandies, liqueurs, and wines. Among these was a quantity of ratifea, "a spirituous liquor flavored with the kernels of several kinds of fruit."⁹

Not all of the liquor flowed into the country through normal import channels. Prize cargoes provided some of the stocks to be auctioned off. The front page of The Pennsylvania Gazette of July 17, 1776, carried a copy of the Constitution of New Jersey which had been adopted promptly after the formal declaration of the separation from Great Britain on July 4. There were numerous advertisements sharing that first page, however, as well as other pages, including one that announced: "The Remainder of the Cargo of the Prize Ship JUNO, consisting of Jamaica Spirits, Sugar and Fusick, will be sold this Afternoon at Bright and Pechin's Wharf."¹⁰

Jamestown has been described as Virginia's boom town of the early seventeenth century with the suggestion that the small planter there "squandered his small crop on the liquor and luxuries that show up in boom towns."¹¹ The records of the Virginia Company show that one of the first acts of the legislative assembly was intended to outlaw excesses in drinking. "For it was drink more than clothes that the planters craved," says Edmund S. Morgan. "The thirst of Virginians became notorious in England, and the ships that sailed up the James River were heavily freighted with sack and strong waters, even if they neglected to bring more solid fare."¹²

Not all the imports came from overseas. The Northern colonies provided much of the trade goods coming into the South. Some of the distilleries in the North sent down Continent rum which was so bad, according to William Byrd III, that the poor people who drank it called it "Kill-Devil." Apparently this name never caught on as a brand name or as a useful part of the limited advertising that was done.¹³

As the pioneers crossed the mountains and settled in the Mississippi and Ohio River valleys, a significant change took place in the liquor industry. Most of the products distilled in the East had been rye whiskey, but gradually the western farmers were turning to corn as their major crop and this grain became the raw material for their stills. Because it was much easier and more economical to move the corn to market by the gallon rather than by the bushel, more and more of it was converted to whiskey.

Somewhere along the line, a charred barrel was used for aging some whiskey and bourbon was born. It was named for a county in Kentucky and that state became the center of production for this new American product. The discovery of the bourbon-making process is said to have occurred in the year 1789, but Kentucky farmers had been making whiskey since they started moving into the territory before the American Revolution. In the early years they made enough to satisfy their own needs with, perhaps, a little left over for bartering. Later, however, as the amount produced increased, they began to ship their surplus to market, with much of it going down the Mississippi River on flatboats to New Orleans as an important cash crop. Obviously their marketing methods were primitive and there was no labeling or advertising to speak of. Even so, it has been estimated that in the year 1800, over 200,000 gallons were shipped down to New Orleans.

It was not until the later years of the eighteenth century that some distillers began to label their barrels in an effort to distinguish their product in a meaningful way. About the same time, enactment of the Excise Act of 1791 opened the way for the use of "proof" as a part of the advertising of whiskey and brandy. This law established some six different proofs and provided that the Secretary of the Treasury be responsible for measuring the proof and determining the amount of tax to be imposed.

The advertisements and labels now began to refer to their products as "full proof" and "good proof," with some making claims concerning the "age" of their whiskey. Around the turn of the century, "old whiskey" was being advertised even though many distillers continued to sell it fresh from the still. As one Ebenezer Stedman of the Georgetown, Kentucky, area recounted, "I went to the still house that stood opposite Webbs house for a gallon of whiskey that was, as Col Cox used to say, a weak old lacking five days."¹⁴ As the sellers began to emphasize "age" in their advertising, the numerous brand names that appeared included many with "old" as part

of the trade mark. There was Old Taylor, of course, but also Old Tub, E.G. Booz's Old Cabin Whiskey, Old Forester, Jack Daniel's Old No. 7, and so on. Many of these "old" brands are still on the market today. Advertising in Lexington in 1820 spoke of "a few Barrels of very superior Old Whiskey, By the Barrel or Gallon-- Also, Good New Whiskey, By the Barrel."¹⁵

In 1870, one distiller began promoting his whiskey by using the name of one of the nation's illustrious Founding Fathers. Jefferson Pure Rye Whiskey was sold in barrels that carried an advertisement showing a distillery located just behind the former President's Monticello home.¹⁷ There was, of course, no such distillery at Monticello and certainly no indication that Jefferson was ever associated with any such enterprise. His name and his home were simply appropriated by the distiller to lend prestige and distinction to the whiskey. It is a good indication, not just of the free-spirited marketing of the day, but also of the growing importance of the "brand" in advertising.

The preponderance of early advertising was directed to the trade, and if there was any bottling and labeling done, it was a function of the proprietor of the inn, tavern, or general store, and not the distiller. The liquor was delivered to the dispenser in barrels and he either sold it directly from the barrel or provided bottles and sometimes labels. Some distillers did send along to their retailers a decanter or bottle to be used at the bar for identification purposes. The customer could not be sure that the bottle contained what it was supposed to carry, however. Even if the product in the barrel was the genuine article--aged whiskey--there was nothing to stop the dealer from diluting it, in a variety of ways, before reselling.

The bottles which the distiller sometimes sent along with his barrels of whiskey were promotional pieces that made liberal, and usually unauthorized, use of the names and likenesses of America's heroes and symbols. George Washington and the American Eagle were widely used as decorations for these fancy decanters or bottles. Washington was not averse to distilling or imbibing alcohol, but the individuals and companies who later used his good name did so without regard for the General's (or his family's) right of privacy.

The frontier moved westward, with whiskey and other alcoholic beverages moving right along with it. Liquor was an important item among the supplies for any party starting out for the move west, and the saloon was usually the first, or one of the first, retail establishments to be opened in the new towns. Other stores, too, dispensed whiskey along with groceries and dry goods, firearms and farming tools. "Omaha," it is said, "was nourished through its earliest days by a crude emporium that dispensed groceries and whiskey from a dank dugout whose roof was a layer of sod."¹⁸ Willaim Lamme, advertising in the Franklin Missouri Intelligencer, listed a wide variety of articles on hand and offered for sale everything from "Clothes and Cassimeres" to "Spanish Cigars,"

"Knives and Forks," "Grass, corn, and bramble Scythes," "Tea and Coffee," and "Medicines, assorted." Then he added, "ALSO ON HAND, 55 bbls. Whiskey, by the barrel; 4 bbls. Jamaica spirits; 3 bbls. Gin and Wine." A Vandalia, Illinois, merchant "announced his prices through the columns of the Illinois Intelligencer," in the late 1820s, "quoting whiskey at thirty-seven and a half cents a gallon by the barrel, and forty-three and three-fourths cents if bought by a single gallon."¹⁹

Around the beginning of the twentieth century, the promotional activities in the industry took on a new look. The packaging and branding of products was becoming more common and the distillers were forced to follow the trend. This led to a decrease in the number of home distilleries. There was also a mounting tide of opposition to the consumption of alcoholic beverages, and this contributed to the need for new advertising techniques. In addition to the more extensive use of brand names, there were more illustrations in the ads along with special offers and premiums to attract customers, both wholesale and retail. For example, the H. Jackson Company proposed "The Greatest Whiskey Offer from the State of Kentucky." This 1914 advertisement promised "2 gallons in demijohns of the famous Jackson's Monograph Whiskey at the Rock Bottom Price of \$4.00, Express prepaid---and a Deck of Cards FREE! With Each Order."²⁰ Another offer from that same company gave the customer who bought a gallon or more an "elegant STEM WINDER WATCH" and pointed out that "A Shipment of Two Gallons Will Contain Both the Watch and the Cards, FREE. Where Customers Prefer, we will give a Safety Razor in place of the Watch." At this time the gallon demijohn was priced at \$3.25.²¹

Some of the gifts were a bit more unusual. In 1908 the premium of the Hayner Distillery of Troy, Ohio, was a "Handsome Decanter with Lock-Stopper, Absolutely Free with all orders for Three quarts of Hayner Private Stock bottled-in-bond whiskey and one quart of W. S. Straight Whiskey." This was a "handsome decanter . . . of clearest crystal glass--in attractive cut class design--with fluted neck and base--bears no label or other advertising--and will prove a decided ornament to any sideboard." The most appealing feature, however, was the "combination lock-stopper," said to be "the most ingenious stopper every produced. It is fitted at the top with a dial like the combination on a safe--the stopper locks into the neck of the bottle--and cannot be withdrawn by anyone who does not know the combination. It is an absolute safeguard against children, servants or others tampering with your whiskey."²²

Brown and Forman made good use of several well-remembered ads. "One showed a mustachioed rancher in ten-gallon hat and faintly Spanish garb, embracing a huge bottle of Old Forester with one hand while the other confronted the world with a pistol." According to the caption he is "Guarding a good thing in Arizona."

Another, promoting Kentucky Dew which was made by a firm later bought by Brown-Forman, "presents a buxom lady of Gibson Girl genre fishing from a rock in a small stream." Yet another shows "A group of gentlemen hunters pausing for the traditional Bourbon-and-branch water, well-equipped with three barrels and a case of Brown-Forman's best, circa 1890."²³

The Louisville Courier-Journal of May 7, 1892, carried an ad for "Churchill Hand-Made Sour-Mash Whisky, 40 per cent, small grain," while only a few inches away was an announcement, in the form of an advertisement, of the opening on May 2 of the "Louisville Institute for the Cure of the Liquor Habit." Other such institutions offered to cure not only the whiskey, but also the opium habit.

Another advertisement, this one illustrated, appeared in a 1900 issue of the Courier-Journal for Mammoth Cave Whisky with the suggestion that: "Nothing is more appropriate AS A CHRISTMAS PRESENT emanating from Kentucky than a case of fine old Bourbon, and nothing is more appreciated." Attention is invited to their "16-year old lot, Bottled in Bond and delivered anywhere in the United States east of Colorado, in a blank case, expressage paid, four bottles \$5.00." The blank case, the equivalent of the "plain wrapper" seemed to be important to some customers who might be sensitive about nosy neighbors. Many of the mail-order dealers specified in their advertising that the nature of the contents of the package would be concealed.

The role of the United States government became an important factor in the promotional efforts of the distillers and merchants. Nock & Snyder, Louisville, in the Courier-Journal of January 4, 1900, said, "SEND US \$2.25 (money order or cash--no individual checks) and we will SEND YOU in a box, one gallon of our SEVEN YEAR OLD JAY-EYE-SEE KENTUCKY SOUR MASH WHISKY." The customer could have confidence in the product since Nock & Snyder went on to say that they "take this whisky from the U.S. bonded warehouse direct and are thus enabled to guarantee its absolute purity and age." One wholesaler decorated his advertising "with some ten different pictures of Uncle Sam in various pleasing poses," with the bold heading "Uncle Sam is our Partner."²⁴

It is safe to say that in the 1890s and early 1900s distillers were somewhat less inhibited with regard to their advertising. Sex, if used at all today, is presented in a subtle and, usually, inoffensive manner. Not so in the earlier days. One advertisement, sponsored by The Belle of Nelson Distillery Company, was illustrated with several nude and semi-nude females lounging in a lavish harem setting. Another, from the Sunny Brook Distillery (circa 1900) put the distillery and its smoke stacks in the background but gave over the foreground of the illustration to a group of young ladies disporting themselves in and around a pool of water. Several are in the nude and in the water, while others are disrobing and pinning up their hair as

they prepare to join the fun. Such advertising offended the Women's Christian Temperance Union of that day and would violate the industry's own code of good practice today.

In addition to the exploitation of sex in the whiskey advertising of the early days of this century, there was wide use of sports, particularly hunting, and some demeaning portrayals of ethnic groups in a fashion that would not be acceptable today. As described by Harry Harrison Kroll, one such advertisement pictured "a colored preacher with a bony horse, an old umbrella, and a 5-gallon jug of Green River, the whisky without headache, the parson parting his whiskers with a big grin of anticipation, his belly about to bust out of his frock coat, his pants baggy, his shoes run down, his hat a beat-up stovepipe."²⁵ Another, in somewhat the same vein, depicts a poker game being played on a table labeled Old Forester Whisky, with one of the players seated on a keg marked "Since 1870" and a Brown-Forman calendar on the wall.

Some advertisers elected to show the distillery where their product was made or to show a quaint little home still operation to indicate, generally, that the big modern distillery company still made their whiskey the old-fashioned way. American advertisers in general went through this stage when they seemed to feel that the best way to promote their product was to show a picture of the plant where it was made or distributed. Pillsbury showed their huge flour mill, Montgomery-Ward their huge mail-order building and warehouse in Chicago, and one patent medicine manufacturer featured a drawing showing a photographic sectional interior view of their laboratory, from the engine room and rum vault in the basement to the tank room on the sixth and top floor. In like manner, many of the whiskey firms pictured their "modern" plants or used the approach exemplified by the Early Times plaque, which portrayed an old mountain still with the ox-drawn wagon loaded with barrels of whiskey.

The advertising of whiskey and other liquors came to a virtual halt in 1920 following ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment and passage of the Volstead Act. The long dry spell began, and the need for advertising and promotion disappeared. Not until 1933, in the early days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal, would the use of such advertising reappear. Then, the Twenty-first Amendment repealed the Eighteenth and on December 5th of that year, Prohibition, the "Great Experiment," came to an end.

The new industry and the new advertising that emerged from the hiatus imposed by Prohibition showed more sensitivity to public opinion. The advertising techniques and policies that have developed in the years since 1933 reflect the concerns of an industry that has been put down hard once and will tread softly to avoid the recurrence of such a calamity. Today, the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, representing the members of the industry, imposes restrictions on the advertising of distilled

spirits through its "Code of Good Practice." This set of voluntary controls is supplemented by another in the form of the National Association of Broadcasters' "Code of Good Practices" for Radio and Television. Adherence to these voluntary controls seems assured as long as the threat of government regulation of a more restrictive nature hangs over the industry like a cloud. A return to Prohibition is not likely at this time, but for liquor producers it is a spectre always lurking on the horizon.

NOTES

¹Dean Albertson, "Puritan Liquor in the Planting of the New England," New England Quarterly, 23 (1950), 478.

²George F. Willison, Saints and Strangers (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1945), p. 159.

³William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647 (New York: The Modern Library, 1952); G. Mourt, Journal of the English Plantation at Plimoth (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966).

⁴Bradford, p. 26.

⁵Bradford, p. 26n.

⁶Alice Morse Earle, Customs and Fashions in Old New England (Williamstown, Mass.: Corner House Publishers, 1969), p. 163.

⁷Thomas Harriot, A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia (New York: Dover, 1972), p. 13.

⁸James T. Adams, ed., Album of American History, Vol. I: The Colonial Period (New York: Scribners, 1961), p. 325.

⁹Wesley H. Wallace, "Property and Trade: Main Themes of Early North Carolina Newspaper Advertisements," North Carolina Historical Review, 32 (1955), 481.

¹⁰Arthur G. Peterson, "Commerce of Virginia, 1789-1791," William and Mary Quarterly, Series II, 10 (1930), 304.

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¹²Morgan, p. 179.

¹³Calvin B. Coulter, Jr., "The Import Trade of Colonial Virginia," William and Mary Quarterly, Series III, 2 (1945), 304.

¹⁴Frances L.S. Dugan and Jacqueline P. Bull, eds., Bluegrass Craftsman: Being the Reminiscences of Ebenezer Hiram Stedman Papermaker, 1808-1885 (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1959), p. 45.

¹⁵Henry G. Crowgey, Kentucky Bourbon: The Early Years of Whiskeymaking (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1971), p. 110.

¹⁶Crowgey, p. 111.

¹⁷Virginius Dabney and Jon Kukla, "The Monticello Scandals: History and Fiction," Virginia Cavalcade, 29, No. 2 (Autumn, 1979), p. 53.

¹⁸Keith Wheeler, The Old West: The Townsman (New York: Time-Life Books, 1975), p. 20.

¹⁹Lewis E. Atherton, "Early Western Mercantile Advertising," Bulletin of the Business History Society, 12, No. 4 (Sept., 1938), pp. 52-53.

²⁰Robert E. Snyder, Whiskey Paper (Amarillo: Snyder Whiskey Research Center, 1980), p. 37.

²¹Snyder, p. 36.

²²Snyder, p. 54.

²³John Ed Pearce, Nothing Better in the Market (Louisville: Brown-Forman Distillers, 1970), pp. 30-31.

²⁴Gerald Carson, The Social History of Bourbon: An Unhurried Account of Our Star-Spangled American Drink (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1963), p. 156.

²⁵Harry Harrison Kroll, Bluegrass, Belles, and Bourbon: A Pictorial History of Whisky in Kentucky (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1967), p. 222.

SLOW BIRTH IN WHITE AND BLACK: TENNESSEE'S
STATE COLLEGES IN THE FORMATIVE YEARS

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The birth and early history of Tennessee's Regents universities must be understood in the light of long-expressed demands for professionally trained teachers to serve in the state's slowly emerging public schools. The General Education Act of 1909 functioned as the legislative mechanism essential for creating those teacher training institutions (normal schools) whose transformation would preface development of Middle Tennessee, East Tennessee, Memphis State and Tennessee State Universities, respectively. Yet there had been public appeals on behalf of state normal schools for over fifty years prior to this critical legislation.¹

The long trail of unsuccessful bills on behalf of state normal schools may be traced to October 27, 1855, when Representative Robert Hopkins Hatton of Wilson County first initiated such legislation before the Tennessee General Assembly. Calling for the creation of one normal school, this young legislator hoped to advance his considerable ambition by engineering this proposal into law. His bill designated the city of Lebanon as the site for the new school. Hatton pleaded his case by claiming that Tennessee's common school teachers were inadequately trained and that the Volunteer State lagged behind other states which had already established state normal schools. He also raised an emotion-laden issue as further inducement, claiming that Tennessee was relying heavily upon the instruction of northern teachers, who, "coming amongst us, with all their prejudices against our institutions, were sowing pernicious Abolitionism in the opening minds of our youth."² Hatton's persuasive talents were effective in the state House, but the state Senate proved another matter. The young legislator had feared that the ultimate cost for such a venture would be "the rock on which I will be split." Hatton's was a melancholy prescience, because the Senate defeated his bill by a single vote. Opponents claimed the state had already depleted its funds by making appropriations for priorities such as agriculture and railroads. Spending money upon "such an aristocratic proposition" as a normal school would indeed "sacrifice the credit of the state."³

Once described as the "Demosthenes of the great American Whig-Know Nothing Party,"⁴ Robert Hopkins Hatton did not allow this normal school defeat to dampen either his ambition for public office or his ardor for creating schools which would prepare teachers. He ran unsuccessfully against Democrat Isham G. Harris of Shelby County for the governorship in 1857, articu-

lating again the critical need for normal schools as he campaigned. Yet this pioneering individual, who subsequently served a single term in Congress, was soon lost to the cause of educational reform. In 1862, while serving as a Brigadier,⁵ General in the Confederate Army, Hatton was killed in battle.

There would be others in the Tennessee General Assembly who would follow Hatton, pressing the need for state normal schools. In 1865, the Civil War disrupted implementation of a Normal School proposal that had both cleared the General Assembly and received the governor's approval. Such legislation was again proposed in 1867 and 1868, only to be defeated.⁶ Governor John C. Brown informed the General Assembly in 1873 that the Volunteer State, with dubious distinction, was "third in ignorance" among the nation's states.⁷ This sobering account of illiteracy in Tennessee helped spur the legislature to pass a public school law during the same year. The new statute set in motion an administrative structure for the schools ranging from the state level through the various county districts. But when a State Normal School bill was introduced in 1873, the legislature again demonstrated the limits of its generosity and defeated the proposal.⁸

In 1875, a governing body for the public schools was created with the addition of a state board of education. And were it not for the largess of the Peabody Education Fund, there would have been no simultaneous attention given to normal school education. While accepting this handsome assistance, the General Assembly was not so quick to make a financial commitment itself. Indeed, when the Peabody State Normal School of the University of Nashville was established in 1875, the legislature stipulated "that nothing in this Act shall be so construed as to authorize expenditure of money from the State Treasury or School Funds of the State."⁹

The State of Tennessee may have continued in this less-than-reciprocal relationship to Peabody Fund support were it not for prospects of the new normal school being moved to a more appreciative environment. Peabody President Eben Stearns reported, indeed, that existing circumstances could prompt proposals "to remove the College to some other State exhibiting greater interest in its welfare."¹⁰ With this possibility looming before the General Assembly, lawmakers managed to discover public funds. In 1881, the first state appropriation for the Peabody Normal was made. Starting with an initial sum of \$10,000, the Tennessee General Assembly continued to make yearly appropriations to Peabody until 1904.¹¹

Even though Peabody Normal School received state funds, the University of Tennessee in Knoxville had to exist over a comparable period on federal land grant funds and tuition payments. Not until 1903 did the General Assembly finally award the long-frustrated state university with an appropriation.¹²

Yet no exorbitant claims may be made for the General Assembly in its Peabody support. The appropriations, which were directed toward school maintenance, were relatively small when compared with the private support granted through the Peabody Education Fund. And though the General Assembly had provided unprecedented state assistance, control of the Normal remained in the hands of the Peabody trustees and the Education Fund.¹³

While the pioneering work of Peabody Normal received growing recognition, it was obvious that the institution was preparing only a fraction of the teachers necessary to populate the private and public schools of the state. But the decades between 1870 and 1900 were not propitious times for rectifying the poverty of teacher-training opportunities. The burdensome legacy of the state debt and depressed agricultural conditions continually undermined ambitious funding for public education. And there persisted those vocal elements who strongly preferred a state dotted with privately-supported academies and colleges.¹⁴

Yet the agricultural economy received a vital transformation in 1900. And with marked improvement of this crucial industry¹⁵ came a simultaneous rise in expectations for public education. Adding an essential impetus to such goals was the Southern Education Board, which campaigned vigorously for public education throughout the South between 1900 and 1910. As with each of the southern states, the Tennessee enterprise was set in motion independently.¹⁶ Within the Volunteer State, the Southern Education Board's initiatives were carried forward by Seymour A. Mynders, Charles W. Dabney and Philander P. Claxton, each of whom was serving in a prominent educational position at the time the campaign was started in 1904. Mynders was serving as the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Dabney held positions as both the President of the University of Tennessee and as a paid agent of the Southern Education Board. Claxton had been hired to serve as the Director of the Southern Education Board's Bureau of Information and Advice on Legislation and School Organization.¹⁷

Claxton's own description of the school campaigns illustrates the energy set loose:

. . . at first, we took advantage of all possible opportunities to speak and write for education and to get others to do so. We used school commencements, picnics, churches, Sunday schools, farmers' meetings, Decoration Day assemblies, lodge meetings. . . . I wrote to all colleges and high schools . . . to preachers . . . editors . . . women's clubs . . . county superintendents. . . .¹⁸

The range of these appeals proved contagious, and within such an environment of elevated expectations the enthusiasm for normal schools was revived. By July of 1906, educational campaigners had composed a seven-point proposal for the purpose of creating and maintaining three state normal schools for whites.

An added stipulation of this proposal called for one normal school to be placed in each of the three geographic sections of Tennessee.¹⁹

While this measure was defeated, its sponsors did not repeat the withdrawal of prior normal school advocates. Within the next three years the campaign was intensified and a new bill was proposed. This new legislation called for the creation of three white normal schools and one agricultural and industrial state normal school for Negroes.²⁰ The relationship of blacks to this legislation reflected, of course, the finely-honed mechanisms of caste within the Volunteer State. The very appeal for a "Negro normal" had been approached with considerable caution. As reformers, the Southern Education Board campaigners had sounded the theme of universal education, yet they did not wish to jeopardize either their public school or their normal school legislation by emphasizing the needs of black Tennesseans.²¹ And so when ultimate sanction was given to the formation of a Negro normal, the school was to be an institution distinctly different from its white counterparts. The words "agricultural and industrial" implied the instruction in rudimentary trades that had long made blacks invaluable to white landowners throughout the rural South.²²

This caste designation was not restricted to the institutional character of the new "A. and I." When the General Education Act creating the three white and one Negro normal was finally passed in 1909, the distinction was also singled out within the funding formula. While each of the white schools was designated two-sevenths of the annual appropriation, the black agricultural and industrial normal was provided only one-seventh.²³ Yet it was the very label "agricultural and industrial" which made visible blacks' claim to separate land-grant status under the Morrill Act of 1890, the second Morrill Act. This act had been constructed to prevent further funding discrimination against blacks in the southern and border states. These same states were required to fund separate land-grant schools for blacks or face the penalty of receiving no federal land grant funds.²⁴

And so, ironically, an identity established to accentuate caste distinctions proved useful for gaining federal funds. Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State Normal School for Negroes was thereby designated as the black land-grant counterpart to the University of Tennessee.

Yet in truth, blacks did not acquire independent access to these funds without a protracted struggle. For nearly two decades the State of Tennessee had allowed only a meager fraction of those federal resources available from the second Morrill Act to be used on behalf of black Tennesseans. Only after persistent protests--protests which carried ultimately to Congressional chambers and the President of the United States--was the state's black population able to attain the federal land-grant resources to which it had been directly entitled.²⁵

Within the previously mentioned General Education Act (1909), which authorized the four state normal schools, was a stipulation concerning who should be accountable for site selection. The State Board of Education was given this responsibility, charged to find promising locations in each sector of the state. Accessibility, affordable living costs, physical environment, and prospects for contributions were all considered. As educational historian Allison Norman Horton has noted, "In reality, the last factor was the deciding factor."²⁶

Land, equipment, buildings, and school maintenance were all fundamental requisites which the General Education Act had been considerably less-than-munificent in providing.²⁷ Therefore, the State Board of Education was disposed, of necessity, to find those sites where the citizenry's sense of generosity would prevail over the omissions of the General Assembly.

Bids for the state normal schools followed immediately and were submitted in impressive numbers. Bids for the East Tennessee State Normal School were submitted from Athens and McMinn County, Dayton and Rhea County, Cleveland and Bradley County, Sweetwater and Monroe County, and Johnson City and Washington County. Proposals for the Middle Tennessee Normal came from the cities of Monterey and Cookeville in Putnam County, Winchester and Franklin County, Tullahoma and Coffee County, Fayetteville and Lincoln County, Columbia and Maury County, Clarksville and Montgomery County, Shelbyville and Bedford County, and Murfreesboro and Rutherford County. In the western sector of the state, appeals for the West Tennessee Normal emerged from Trenton, Milan, and Humboldt in Gibson County, Huntingdon and McKenzie in Carroll County, Jackson and Madison County, Covington and Tipton County and Memphis and Shelby County. Of course, Johnson City, Murfreesboro, and Memphis were the most successful bidders for the three white normals, but the financial resources put forward to win the sites are reflections of impressive commitment. From the twenty-one localities which competed with bids, over \$750,000 in bonds, land and money was raised.²⁸

For the financially more distressed black population, the only serious bids came from Chattanooga and Nashville. Chattanoogaans were led by educator William Jasper Hale, who later became the first president of Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State Normal School for Negroes. Yet the site was given to Nashville. This was due largely to the exhaustive campaigning of the Nashville Globe, a black newspaper, and a grassroots organization of citizen volunteers known as the Agricultural and Industrial State Normal School Association.²⁹ Chattanooga had been a strong competitor, but black Nashvillians (especially Henry Allen Boyd of the Globe) cultivated the paternalists in the legislature skillfully. General Assembly members were informed, indeed, that legislators could oversee their investment better if the school was located in Nashville.³⁰

By March of 1911, the construction of buildings for all of the new state normal schools was under way except in Memphis.³¹

Simultaneously the presidents designated to lead the schools were selected. The men recommended by the State Board of Education were educators with proven commitments to the public sector. R. L. Jones, the first president of Middle Tennessee Normal, was State Superintendent of Public Instruction between 1907 and 1911.³² Sidney G. Gilbreath, selected to lead the East Tennessee Normal, had previously taught at Vanderbilt University and had been appointed at age 26 to be the superintendent of Tennessee's public schools in 1895.³³ Seymour A. Mynders, the first president of West Tennessee Normal, had also served as a State Superintendent of Public Instruction and had been a pivotal figure in the Southern Education Board's campaign on behalf of public education.³⁴ And William Jasper Hale, at the outset uniquely selected to be "principal" rather than president of the A. and I. Normal for Negroes, had been the principal of Chattanooga's East Fifth Street School and an ardent campaigner in Chattanooga's bid for the black normal.³⁵

But not all members of the General Assembly were awed by these appointments. John Pink Sipes, a Representative from McNairy County,³⁶ chose immediately to put the new presidents on notice. Using his position as a member of the State Normal Investigating Committee, Sipes protested that the appointment of such men was premature, since construction of the school buildings had yet to be completed. A contemporary newspaper, The Johnson City Comet, has given this account of the legislator's sense of indignation:

Representative Sipes intimated that something would be done at the next legislature to remove the newly appointed presidents to these normals or keep them from drawing a salary until they begin actual work. He says the appointment of normal presidents was nothing but a political move and should have been withheld until there was need of such a position.³⁷

While Representative Sipes' words caused none of the appointees to be removed, such sentiments (together with openly stated suspicion that normal school funds were being mishandled)³⁸ were bothersome deterrents to a sense of mutual trust between the General Assembly and the new normal school presidents.

Early descriptions of the new state normal schools are revealing both in terms of public relations efforts and in terms of institutional aspirations. School bulletins from the beginning years introduced prospective students to aesthetically pleasing and commodious settings. Yet the presidential reports to the Superintendent of Public Instruction painted such dismal pictures that at times they seem to have been describing starkly different places. One example illustrating such contrasts may be drawn from early descriptions of the Middle Tennessee State Normal. A school bulletin of 1911-1912 had this to say about the campus setting:

The location for the Normal School plant is all that could be desired. The site embraces one hundred acres of land. The building is located on an elevation which drains naturally in all directions. From the third story in the main building one can see a range of hills looking in any direction. A more beautiful perspective could not be desired.³⁹

But from the president of the Murfreesboro school came this contrasting report to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the same year:

I desire to call the attention of the Board to the fact that water stands in the basin between the building and Main Street for several consecutive days during the rainy season. This pond covers about three acres of the Normal campus and stands at a depth of two feet over the road. It is necessary that some action be taken at an early date looking to the relief of this situation by proper drainage. It greatly interferes, during the high water seasons, with the students boarding in town and the occupants of the Boys Dormitory, necessitating, as it does, their walking a considerable distance around through muddy fields and climbing fences in order to reach the Normal buildings.⁴⁰

Another illustration of such a disparity may be witnessed in the school bulletin appeals of the Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial Normal and personal accounts of early students and teachers. The catalogue of September 1912 spoke of an institution "happily located" with "material equipment . . . thoroughly modern and well appointed for the purpose it is to serve." To further sweeten the appeal, the journal added, "The site selected by the Board is one of the most desirable around Nashville. . . . It is on high ground amid healthy surroundings and commands magnificent views."⁴¹ Yet from Mrs. Harriett Hale, the wife of "Principal" Hale, came this description: "The main campus was on a rocky hill. The campus as a whole was not beautiful . . . in sharp contrast to . . . older, well established colleges and universities."⁴² And from a student who attended the black normal between 1912 and 1914 came this terse comment: "The campus was just a crude place, it was rocky. . . . It didn't have grass. It wasn't landscaped at all."⁴³ Another former student added a pungent remark concerning the proximity of livestock to living quarters:

Hogs weren't cared for in a sanitary manner. But the place was just working with hogs. They had crude quarters for chickens. President Hale even had his own private hen house that was too close to the boys dormitory for comfort.⁴⁴

The modern equipment upon the A. and I. Normal campus was another catalogue fiction. The first official report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction detailed the need for farm implements and other machinery essential to carry out the "industrial" role of the school.⁴⁵ It would be naive to expect total candor in school advertisements. But for believing students there must have been some bewildering surprises once they arrived upon the campuses of the state normal schools.

Yet such conditions did not produce a mass exodus. To the contrary, each of the normal schools was quickly filled with Tennessee students eager to take advantage of a tuition-free education. The lack of dormitory space was, indeed, a problem shared among all of these quickly-crowded schools. Male students particularly felt this dilemma. The second president of West Tennessee Normal, J. W. Brister, capsuled the frustrations concerning this lack of accommodations for men. In his presidential report of 1915, the Memphis educator rendered a succinct statement on the need to remedy this problem:

The Normal School needs a men's dormitory. We have been renting, during the past year, Prescott Flats, just off the campus, and one other building in the immediate neighborhood of the school, and these buildings have cost us practically twice as much as we have been able to realize from them. It is confidently believed that with proper provision for young men, the number of students could be largely increased. We are continually deploring the absence of men from the teaching profession, and yet in the building of a Normal school we make provision for young women and let the men shift for themselves.⁴⁶

The impoverished state of Tennessee's elementary and secondary schools, of course, conditioned the requirements for admission to the new state normal schools. For example, the Bulletin of the Middle Tennessee State Normal for the 1911-1912 academic year stated the school was "open and free alike to white males and females resident of the State of Tennessee." Prospects were required to be at least sixteen years of age and have completed elementary school. But this same catalogue clearly detailed a reciprocal obligation which conditioned their admission. The student was required to

first sign a pledge to teach in the public or private schools of the State of Tennessee, within the next six years after leaving the school, at least as long as he or she has attended said school.⁴⁷

Yet Homer Pittard's history of Middle Tennessee State College illustrates the difficulty in appraising many students' credentials. Some students came from private normal schools that had been unable to survive following the General Education Act of 1909. Such schools have been described as "Lightning normals,"⁴⁸ quick to appear and quick to leave. The young men and women who attended these private normals were awarded degrees which were, to say the least, idiosyncratic in nature. Historian Pittard has called attention to one case which highlights the peculiar character of such students' credentials. One Macon County woman applied for admission to the Middle Tennessee State Normal with a B. O. degree from Pleasant Shade Academy. Momentarily non-plussed, the entrance evaluators soon recovered and asked the applicant to explain what the letters in the degree symbolized. They were informed that "B. O." meant Bachelor of Orthography.⁴⁹

Curricular offerings among the white state normal schools could range eclectically from Latin studies, modern foreign languages and trigonometry to "practical" lessons in the manual arts.⁵⁰ At the Black A. and I. Normal, there were not, of course, as many curricular opportunities proposed within the more traditional instructional areas. Yet agricultural and industrial education was more accepted as a legislators' concept than as a curricular alternative. "Principal" Hale managed to manipulate the rituals consummately, as campus guests (especially state legislators) were greeted by students who were (by design) busily assuming agricultural and industrial roles.⁵¹

In comparison to the wide range of courses offered at the state normal schools, extracurricular opportunities were spare. Student athletics, for example, were certainly notable for their primitive character. Pictures of the football and basketball teams at the Murfreesboro normal are testament to the modest beginnings. One photograph of the football squad pictures twelve uniformed men, while another shows a basketball aggregate of five sober-faced males.⁵² Playing with abandon under such circumstances must have made forfeiture a distinct possibility. Clearly this was a more innocent age for athletics.

In retrospect, these normal school days give an impression of crude beginnings. But after over five decades of near drought, the years following 1909 gave momentum to a virtual flood of changes in public higher education. And with six Regents universities, a sprawling state university system, and an expanding community college network as visible evidence of these changes, another potential problem has emerged within the Volunteer State. Whereas the lack of public colleges earlier served to inhibit educational opportunity, the plethora of public colleges and universities in the present has stimulated a competitive environment rife with uncertainties. And especially in times of decreasing enrollment and financial stress, the presence of such an abundance of public institutions for higher education could well lessen the security of all.

NOTES

- ¹House Journal of the First Session of the Thirty-First General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, October, 1855 (Nashville, 1856), p. 159; Allison Norman Horton, "Origin and Development of the State College Movement in Tennessee," Diss. George Peabody College for Teachers, 1953, pp. 16-18.
- ²James Vaulx Drake, Life of General Robert Hatton (Nashville, 1867), p. 84.
- ³Drake, pp. 61-62, 84-85, 87.
- ⁴Stanley J. Folmsbee, Robert E. Corlew, and Enoch L. Mitchell, Tennessee: A Short History (Knoxville, 1969), p. 238.
- ⁵Drake, pp. 145-146; Horton, pp. 16, 19-20; Folmsbee, Corlew, and Mitchell, p. 238.
- ⁶Horton, p. 20.
- ⁷Folmsbee, Corlew, and Mitchell, p. 414.
- ⁸Horton, p. 20.
- ⁹Acts of Tennessee, 1875, Ch. 90, p. 126.
- ¹⁰Tennessee School Report, Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Schools for the Scholastic Year Ending August 31, 1878 (Nashville, 1879), p. 59.
- ¹¹Horton, p. 24.
- ¹²James Riley Montgomery, The Volunteer State Forges Its University: The University of Tennessee, 1887-1919 (Knoxville, 1966), p. 110; Ralph Edward Samples, "The Development of Public Education in Tennessee During the Bourbon Era, 1870-1900," Diss. The University of Tennessee, 1965, pp. 144-146.
- ¹³Horton, pp. 21, 24, 27.
- ¹⁴Andrew D. Holt, The Struggle for a State System of Public Schools in Tennessee, 1903-1936 (New York, 1938), pp. 5-11, 16, 19.
- ¹⁵Holt, pp. 9-10.
- ¹⁶C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 (Baton Rouge, 1966), pp. 403-406.

¹⁷Charles W. Dabney, Universal Education in the South (Chapel Hill, 1936), pp. 54-59, as cited in Montgomery, p. 85; Charles Lee Lewis, Philander Priestly Claxton: Crusader for Public Education (Knoxville, 1948), p. 150; Samuel H. Shannon, "Agricultural and Industrial Education at Tennessee State University During the Normal School Phase, 1912-1922: A Case Study," Diss. George Peabody College for Teachers, 1974, p. 89.

¹⁸Lewis, p. 150.

¹⁹Lewis, p. 153; Horton, p. 86; Shannon, p. 90.

²⁰P. P. Claxton Papers, MS-278, Box 14-I, Special Collections, James D. Hoskins Library, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville; State of Tennessee, Acts of Tennessee, 1909 (Chapter 264), House Bill 242, pp. 907-917.

²¹Charles W. Dabney to Charles L. Coon, August 27, 1903, Charles W. Dabney Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, as cited in Louis Harlan, Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States, 1901-1915 (New York, 1968), p. 92; Louis R. Harlan, "Southern Education and the Race Issue in Public Education," The Journal of Southern History, 23 (May 1957), 189-202; Shannon, pp. 90-91.

There was also concern (among President Dabney's supporters) that his very role with the Southern Education Board was distressing certain members of the Board of Trust at the University of Tennessee. In the minds of certain trustees, Dabney's activities with the Southern Education Board invited "race prejudice" that would adversely influence the University of Tennessee. See Letter from W. H. Baldwin, Jr., New York City, to Mr. Edward T. Sandord, Knoxville, dated January 13, 1902, in the Charles W. Dabney Papers, Box 5, Folder 90, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

²²Booker T. Washington's persistent advocacy of this educational mode was instrumental, of course, to his preeminent power among black Americans at the turn of the twentieth century. See Booker T. Washington, Working with the Hands (New York, 1904), p. 51; Shannon, p. 38.

²³Acts of Tennessee, 1909 (Chapter 264), House Bill 242, pp. 907-917.

²⁴The Morrill Act, Statutes at Large 26, 417 (1890).

²⁵"Vocational Education." Hearings Before the Committee on Agriculture, House of Representatives, on H. R. 23581, April 23, 24, 25, and 26, 1912 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), p. 73. A copy of the legislation has been included in Box 1, folder 29, James C. Napier Collection, Special Collections, Fisk University Library, Nashville, Tennessee; Letter from Register to the Treasury, J. C. Napier, to President William Howard Taft, December 18, 1911, James C. Napier Collection, Box 2, folder 2, Special Collections, Fisk University Library, Nashville, Tennessee; Shannon, pp. 111-116, 136-137.

²⁶Horton, p. 45.

²⁷Acts of Tennessee, 1909 (Chapter 264), House Bill 242, pp. 907-917; Horton, p. 45.

²⁸"Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction," Appendix, Senate and House, Fifty-Eighth General Assembly, State of Tennessee, 1913, p. 295; Tennessee School Report, Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for 1909-1910, pp. 48-49; Horton, p. 46.

²⁹Descriptive examples of campaigning activities may be found in the Nashville Globe editions of December 31, 1909 and March 18, 1910. For a detailed interpretation of the campaigns on behalf of the black normal, see Shannon, Chapter III.

³⁰Nashville Globe and Independent, April 19, 1935, as cited in R. Grann Lloyd, Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State University, 1912-1962 (Nashville, 1962), p. 6.

³¹The Johnson City Comet, March 17, 1911; Judge J. P. Young, Editor, Standard History of Memphis, Tennessee, From a Study of the Original Sources (Knoxville, 1912), pp. 440-441.

³²Bulletin, Middle Tennessee State Normal School, 1911-1912, Vol. 1, no. 1, p. 6.

³³The Johnson City Comet, February 26, 1911, and March 30, 1911; David Sinclair Burleson, History of the East Tennessee State College (n.p., 1947), pp. 11-12.

³⁴Lewis, p. 150; Shannon, p. 89.

³⁵Lester C. Lamon, "The Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial Normal School: Public Higher Education for Black Tennesseans," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, 32 (Spring, 1973), 54; Shannon, p. 117.

³⁶Tennessee State Library and Archives, Biographical Directory, Tennessee General Assembly, 1796-1969 (Prelim. No. 18), Chester County, McNairy County, p. 35.

³⁷The Johnson City Comet, March 17, 1911.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Bulletin, Middle Tennessee State Normal School, 1911-1912, Vol. 1, no. 1, p. 38.

⁴⁰"Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of Tennessee, 1911-1912," Appendix to the Senate and House Journals of the Fifty-Eighth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, 1913, p. 331.

⁴¹Bulletin, Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State Normal School, Volume I, no. 2, September, 1912, p. 16.

⁴²Shannon, pp. 119, 138.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Shannon, pp. 167, 202.

⁴⁵"Superintendent of Public Instruction, Biennial Report," Appendix to the Senate and House Journals of the Fifty-Eighth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, 1913, p. 56.

⁴⁶"Superintendent...Biennial Report" (1915), p. 223.

⁴⁷Bulletin, Middle Tennessee State Normal School, 1911-1912, Vol. 1, no. 1, p. 12. These requirements had been quoted directly from Acts of Tennessee, 1909, Ch. 264, House Bill 242, p. 913.

⁴⁸Homer Pittard, The First Fifty Years: Middle Tennessee State College, 1911-1961 (Murfreesboro, 1961), p. 63.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Bulletin, Middle Tennessee State Normal School, 1912-1913, Volume III, no. 1., pp. 18-21, 28.

⁵¹Shannon, pp. 174-176.

⁵²Bulletin, Middle Tennessee State Normal School, 1913-1914, Volume IV, no. 1, pp. 45, 55.

GEOGRAPHIC IRONY AND THE NEW ENGLAND LITERARY IMAGINATION

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In his sonnet "New England" (1925), Edwin Arlington Robinson draws a metaphorical relation between the hostile winter climate of his native region--"here"--and the joyless, conscience-driven lives of its inhabitants.¹ In positive contrast Robinson presents a warmer, surely southern, climate--"there"--and the freely passionate lives of its inhabitants. The climatic and emotional contrast cannot help produce "envy" in New Englanders, according to Robinson's speaker in the poem. Such an envious condition may be viewed as an American version of the attitude which Paul Fussell has identified in English travel writers during the period between the two world wars. In his study, *Abroad*, Fussell has described this literary attitude as a species of "heliophily," the longing for emotional and sexual freedom, symbolized by the warmth and leisure of southern climates, and the rejection of inhibiting, Puritanical mores, symbolized by the cold of northern urban civilization.² In Robinson's case, the personified "Conscience who always has the rocking-chair" is a New England version of the acronymic Dora of Fussell's study, the Defense of the Realm Act that complicated and repressed the moral lives of English free spirits under the pretense of political necessity.³ The New Englanders' envy of the Southerners is understandable, one assumes, in the same sense as the Englishman's envy of the inhabitants of the Riviera.

And yet, Robinson's poem has another dimension. His hyperbolic extremes of climate and character cannot help but raise questions. Is it true, as Robinson's speaker claims, that "the wind is always north-northeast?" Is there no redeeming variety in the weather of New England? Do children in New England truly "learn to walk on frozen toes?" Furthermore, do inhabitants of more hospitable climes actually "boil" with "a lyric yeast of love?" Some irony is surely at work in this poem, an irony involving a conflict of perspectives: one assuredly the speaker's but another just as assuredly the view of an outsider.⁴ Robinson's speaker can see as clearly as any outsider that the region is marked by a coldness of both climate and character. The speaker can also see that this coldness is not the total picture of his homeland and that, even if it were, the opposite extreme is not necessarily preferable.

In his ambivalence Robinson's speaker is like another truly regional fictional character, William Faulkner's Quentin Compson. In academic exile at Harvard, Quentin must, like Robinson's speaker, simultaneously recognize the fundamental deficiencies

of his region and defend its virtues to an outsider, his censorious Canadian roommate. When Shreve McCannon asks Quentin at the end of Absalom, Absalom! "Why do you hate the South?" Quentin answers, "I dont. I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it!"⁵ Both sides of the true regionalist's ambivalence are captured in this agonized cry, as they are in Nathaniel Hawthorne's analysis of his feelings toward his native Salem in the "Custom-House" sketch prefaced to The Scarlet Letter. Hawthorne writes:

It is no matter that the place is joyless for him; that he is weary of the old wooden houses, the mud and dust, the dead level of site and sentiment, the chill east wind, and the chilliest of social atmospheres;--all these, and whatever faults besides he may see or imagine, are nothing to the purpose. The spell survives, and just as powerfully as if the natal spot were an earthly paradise.⁶

Of especial interest in this passage is Hawthorne's easy equation of climate and emotional life in terms closely paralleling those operating in Robinson's poem. This is a distinguishing quality of the New England literary imagination. Like any true regionalist, the New England writer is ambivalent toward his native region, but he is conditioned, as writers from other regions need not be, to convey this ambivalence through imagery based on radical contrasts of coldness and warmth, repression and passion. Two strikingly similar texts may serve to illustrate the ancestry of the literary tradition flowering in Robinson's poem. The first is Hawthorne's tale "The May-Pole of Merry Mount," published in 1835, the second, The Education of Henry Adams, first published in 1907.

In Hawthorne's tale "jollity" fulfills the envied function that Robinson assigns to "Joy," and "gloom" is Hawthorne's opposing vice, equivalent to Robinson's "Conscience." Characteristically, Hawthorne raises this emotional conflict to the allegorical level: "Jollity and gloom were contending for an empire."⁷ To dramatize this conflict in the New England soul, the author has made the settlers of Merry Mount the embodiment of "jollity" and the seventeenth-century New England Puritans the embodiment of "gloom." As in Robinson's poem, the emotionally positive pole seems at first the author's univocal choice. Modeled on the historical settlers of Thomas Morton's Mount Wollaston, the colonists of Merry Mount worship pleasure, represented in pre-Freudian terms here by a may-pole. The narrator says admiringly of these colonists and their emotional enterprise: "Should their banner be triumphant, they were to pour sunshine over New England's rugged hills, and scatter flower-seeds throughout the soil (p. 54). The Puritans seem as odious as the colonists are attractive, as we see in negative descriptions of this sort: "Not far from Merry Mount was a settlement of Puritans, most dismal wretches, who said their prayers before daylight, and

then wrought in the forest or cornfield, till evening made it prayer time again" (p. 60). The author's rhetoric seems clearly to dictate the reader's acceptance of the colonists, advocates of the Dionysian may-pole, and rejection of the inhibited Puritans, of whom the narrator says, "The whipping post . . . might be termed the Puritan May-Pole" (p. 61).

Furthermore, Hawthorne presents this ideological struggle in images remarkably similar to those informing Robinson's poem. The colonists, as is clear in the passage quoted above, are associated with sunlight. They are also associated with the phallic may-pole and with abundant flowers. On the contrary, the Puritans are associated with armor and darkness, images suggestive of coldness and infertility. In poetic terms, such imagery operates as insistently as the tale's plot to draw the reader toward the alternative represented by the colonists. Even the connotations of the words jollity and gloom tempt the reader toward heliophily.

As in Robinson's poem, however, the apparently simple anti-thesis is complicated by irony. Hawthorne's rhetoric resembles Robinson's in that he does not attempt a positive defense of the native New Englanders. Rather, he undermines the positive impression of their antagonists through hyperbole. These colonists are too committed to pleasure, as are the Southerners in Robinson's poem

Who boil elsewhere with a such lyric yeast
Of love that you will hear them at a feast
Where demons would appeal for some repose,
Still clamoring where the chalice overflows
And crying wildest who have drunk the least.

In a similar manner, Hawthorne's narrator observes in passing that "it was high treason to be sad at Merry Mount" (p. 58), an admittedly mild irony. He is soon more severe, however, turning to authorial exposition to observe: "The men of whom we speak, after losing the heart's fresh gaiety, imagined a wild philosophy of pleasure, and came hither to act out their latest day-dream" (p. 59). The reader cannot avoid the conclusion that the colonists are too frenetic, as unacceptably extreme in their pursuit of jollity as the Puritans are in their advocacy of gloom. Even here, moreover, the author's irony plays a part. The reader is finally forced to question whether the Puritans could possibly be so joyless as the narrator suggests. Passages of this sort are representative: "When they met in conclave, it was never to keep up the old English mirth, but to hear sermons three hours long, or to proclaim bounties on the heads of wolves and the scalps of Indians" (pp. 60-61.) Here the irony is most provocative.

Where does Hawthorne actually stand in relation to these Puritans? Some clarification is available outside this tale,

in The Scarlet Letter, for example, where Hawthorne ironically says about a Puritan holiday:

Into this festal season of the year . . . the Puritans compressed whatever mirth and public joy they deemed allowable to human infirmity; thereby so far dispelling the customary cloud, that, for the space of a single holiday, they appeared scarcely more grave than most other communities at a period of general affliction.⁸

The hyperbole here suggests a rhetorical analogy to Hawthorne's authorial stance in "The May-Pole," criticism tinged with amused sympathy. In another passage in the novel he says less equivocally about the Puritan leaders that they "had fortitude and self-reliance, and, in time of difficulty or peril, stood up for the welfare of the state like a line of cliffs against a tempestuous tide."⁹ In a sense, Puritan vices and virtues are closely allied in Hawthorne's eyes, inflexible sternness appearing only as another aspect of absolute moral integrity. In either case, however, the Puritans are in danger of remaining isolated from warmth and human sympathy, trapped on the far side of an irrecconcilable duality.

In the tale under consideration, Hawthorne strives to transcend this duality through symbolism. Unlike Robinson, who presents his conflict only in antipodal extremes as "here" and "there," Hawthorne establishes a possible synthesis in the persons of Edith and Edgar, a newly married couple of Merry Mount settlers. They are clearly associated on the one hand with images of warmth and fertility:

His right hand held a gilded staff, the ensign of high dignity among the revellers, and his left grasped the slender fingers of a fair maiden, not less gaily decorated than himself. Bright roses glowed in contrast with the dark and glossy curls of each, and were scattered round their feet, or had sprung up spontaneously there.
(pp. 56-57)

On the other hand, these two escape the charge of forced gaiety that the narrator levies on the other colonists, because their marriage is based on true love and not mere sensual indulgence. They do not simply "boil," as Robinson says, "with . . . a lyric yeast of love." Hawthorne's narrator says about Edith and Edgar, "From the moment that they truly loved, they had subjected themselves to earth's doom of care, and sorrow, and troubled joy, and had no more a home at Merry Mount" (p. 58). Here is a promising dramatic compromise, the reader suspects.

The reader is correct in his suspicions, as the story's conclusion makes clear. Endicott, the leader of the Puritans, has been called at various points of the story a "remorseless

enthusiast" (p. 63) and a "man of iron" (p. 66). Even so, in the conclusion of the tale, he is moved by the true love obvious in the young couple's behavior, and so he chooses to bless rather than condemn them along with the other hedonists. The sign of his blessing is brilliantly symbolic:

Endicott, the severest Puritan of all who laid the rock-foundation of New England, lifted the wreath of roses from the ruin of the May-Pole, and threw it, with his own gauntleted hand, over the heads of the Lord and Lady of the May. (p. 66)

This passage presents a rare reconciliation of opposites, a symbolic yoking of "here" and "there," "jollity and gloom," warmth and coldness. The "gauntleted hand" and the "wreath of roses" connect the two poles of the regional ambivalence in a unique fashion. Thus, the Puritan victory, which seems destined to destroy entirely all hope of joy for New England, is symbolically subsumed into a loving marriage, the appropriate resolution for a comedy, not a tragedy.

Henry Adams found no such symbolic resolution for regional ambivalence, despite his repeated claim that his autobiography chronicles a search for "order through chaos, direction through space, discipline through freedom, unity through multiplicity."¹⁰ I think a reader of The Education of Henry Adams must recognize the sincerity of the author's search. The reader must also recognize that Adams' treatment of the regional ambivalence resembles Robinson's more nearly than Hawthorne's. Adams shares with both his co-regionalists an ironic vision, and he follows their practice also in presenting this vision through images of warmth and cold, "Joy" and "Conscience." He resembles Robinson and differs from Hawthorne in failing to find an artistically organic device to bridge the ironic dichotomy. Adams differs also from Robinson in his complication of the conflict between "here" and "there" by establishing two loci for each. The envied "there" is sometimes Quincy, Massachusetts, and sometimes the American South. The wretched "here" is sometimes the city of Boston and sometimes New England in general.

One benefit of Adams' multifaceted analysis of the region is his concession that New England has more than one season. In his book the wind is not "always north-northeast." This variety is not necessarily the salvation of the inhabitants, however, as Adams writes: "The chief charm of New England was harshness of contrasts and extremes of sensibility--a cold that froze the blood, and a heat that boiled it." After establishing two unpleasant climatic extremes in the region, Adams proceeds quickly, in the mode practiced by Hawthorne and Robinson, to move from images of heat and cold to the emotional conditions that they may be taken to represent. He continues: "So that the pleasure of hating--oneself if no better victim offered--was not its rarest amusement; but the charm was a true and natural child of the soil, not a

cultivated weed of the ancients" (p. 7). That is to say, this New Englander expresses himself emotionally in terms of "Fire and Ice," as did his co-regionalist Robert Frost.

Having given two negative dimensions to the New England climate, Adams then turns in a familiar direction by polarizing two sites and two climates as the vehicles for a metaphorical contrast in modes of existence. First of all, come the seasons: "Winter and summer, then, were two hostile lives, and bred two separate natures. Winter was always the effort to live; summer was tropical license" (p. 9). These climatic categories permit Adams to analyze the relations of "jollity and gloom" even in the life of a child, as in this long, but apt quotation:

Winter and summer, cold and heat, town and country, force and freedom, marked two modes of life and thought, balanced like lobes of the brain. Town was winter confinement, school, rule, discipline; straight, gloomy streets, piled with six feet of snow in the middle; frosts that made the snow sing under wheels or runners; thaws when the streets became dangerous to cross; society of uncles, aunts, and cousins who expected children to behave themselves, and who were not always gratified; above all else, winter represented the desire to escape and go free. Town was restraint, law, unity. Country, only seven miles away, was liberty, diversity, outlawry, the endless delight of mere sense impressions given by nature for nothing, and breathed by boys without knowing it. (pp. 7-8)

The country, Quincy, is the setting for the most dramatic and memorable episode in Adams' childhood, his grandfather's squelching of Adams' youthful rebellion by silently dragging him to school by the hand. Even so, the negative pole in the contrast is clearly Boston, a prime candidate for the role of "here" in the imagination of any New England writer.

Elsewhere in The Education, Adams writes about Boston, "The climate made eternal war on society, and sex was a species of crime" (p. 269). In such remarks we recognize parallels to Robinson's hyperbolic condemnation of New England asceticism, especially his description of the inhabitants' attitude toward sex: "Passion is here a soilure of the wits, / We're told, and Love a cross for them to bear." From such evidence it is tempting to conclude that the "grisly saints" of Hawthorne's tale have succeeded totally in extirpating all signs of the may-pole. Adams would not repudiate such a conclusion, but one suspects he would probably not endorse it either.

The other aspect of Adams' geographical metaphor both clarifies and complicates his ambivalence. Consider his description of spring in the South:

The tulip and the chestnut gave no sense of struggle against a stingy nature. The soft, full outlines of the landscape carried no hidden horror of glaciers in its bosom. The brooding heat of the profligate vegetation; the cool charm of the running water; the terrific splendor of the June thunder-gust in the deep and solitary woods, were all sensual, animal, elemental. No European spring had shown him the same intermixture of delicate grace and passionate depravity that marked the Maryland May. (p. 268)

By implication at least, New England operates as a negative pole of judgment in phrases such as "stingy nature" and "hidden horrors of glaciers." At the same time, Adams connotatively raises the possibility that the South is also flawed through the phrase "passionate depravity." As any rate, the passage suggested this possibility to T. S. Eliot, a poet with New England ancestors. The impression was so clear to Eliot as to reappear as a negative allusion in his poem "Gerontion."¹¹ One detects in Adams a similar attitude.

Another element enters this complex equation when Adams turns from issues primarily involving sensuality--or the lack of it--to issues involving grander moral questions, slavery, for example. Even when addressing the great moral issues of his lifetime, however, Adams is incapable of writing without irony. As a result, his metaphorical pairing of slavery and the poor condition of Southern roads is at once an indictment of the South and an ironic twitting of New England priggishness:

To the New England mind, roads, schools, clothes, and a clean face were connected as parts of the law of order or divine system. Bad roads meant bad morals. The moral of this Virginia road was clear, and the boy fully learned it. Slavery was wicked, and slavery was the cause of this road's badness which amounted to social crime--and yet, at the end of the road and product of the crime stood Mount Vernon and George Washington. (p. 47)

The association of George Washington and slavery, with all its moral and patriotic ambivalence, is symptomatic of Adams' habitual view. There is always another side to any question, no matter how simple the phrasing might make it seem. Even "jollity and gloom" are not simply good and evil as one might assume. In this respect, as in so many others, he resembles Hawthorne and Robinson.

None of these three writers would be likely to subscribe to this doctrine of New England regionalism gleaned from the Journals of Henry David Thoreau: "I have never got over my surprise that I should have been born into the most estimable place in all the world, and in the very nick of time, too."¹² At least two of the writers--perhaps all three--would wish to qualify this observation

of Hawthorne's, appearing in a letter to his fellow New Englander Horatio Bridge: "New England is quite as large a lump of earth as my heart can really take in."¹³ Probably the only acceptable summary of the complexity defining the regional ambivalence of these three New England writers is the one offered by Emily Dickinson, the cryptic practitioner of an equivalent form of irony. Characteristically avoiding the hyperbole of her male co-regionalists, Dickinson writes, "I see New Englandly."¹⁴ So do they all!

NOTES

¹Edwin Arlington Robinson, Collected Poems (New York: Macmillan, 1937), pp. 900-01.

²See Paul Fussell, Abroad: British Literary Travelling Between the Wars (New York: Oxford, 1980), pp. 130-41.

³See Fussell's chapter "I Hate it Here," Abroad, pp. 15-23.

⁴Concerning the poem's ironic perspective, see H. H. Waggoner and Richard E. Amacher, The Explicator, X, 5 (March 1952), 33.

⁵William Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom! (1936; rpt. New York: Vintage, 1972), p. 378.

⁶Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, Vol. I of The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. William Charvat, et al. (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1962), p. 11.

⁷Nathaniel Hawthorne, Twice-Told Tales, Vol. IX of The Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. William Charvat, et al. (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1974), p. 54. All further references to this work appear in the text.

⁸The Scarlet Letter, p. 230.

⁹The Scarlet Letter, p. 238.

¹⁰Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams, ed. Ernest Samuels (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), p. 12. All further references to this work appear in the text.

¹¹T. S. Eliot, The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909-1950 (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1952), p. 21.

¹²Henry David Thoreau, The Heart of Thoreau's Journals, ed. Odell Shepard (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1927), p. 256.

¹³Quoted in Horatio Bridge, Personal Recollections of Nathaniel Hawthorne (1893; rpt. New York: Haskell House, 1968), p. 155.

¹⁴Emily Dickinson, The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown, 1960), p. 132. Randall Stewart first identified these three apt passages in his essay "Regional Characteristics in the Literature of New England," in Regionalism and Beyond, ed. George Core (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 157-8.

THE KENTUCKY HILL WOMAN: EARTH MOTHER
IN A TIME OF TRANSITION

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In the eastern United States, the Appalachian Mountains extend 1,300 miles from Vermont to North Alabama. The southernmost portion of the mountain chain is known as the Southern Appalachian region. It consists of mountain peaks, rolling hills and plateaus demarcated by rivers. The eastern border is defined by the Blue Ridge Mountains and the western rim by the Cumberland Plateau. The Great Valley lies between.

The portion of the Cumberland Plateau which lies in Southeastern Kentucky may be described as a rolling region, dissected by ridges and winding rivers. It was once endowed with forests of tulip poplar, beech, oak, walnut, and chestnut trees, with abundant wild life and fertile soil. "The Kentucky country was widely known for its fertility. It was also accessible and its government was early organized and stable. To this pioneer land of promise, then, migration flowed in a swollen stream after the Revolution."¹ The river lands were settled first, then the border counties in eastern Kentucky, and finally, the mountains.² The influx of migrants continued steadily for twenty-five years after 1787; by 1812, the flow subsided, and by 1830, "all the present stock of the basic population had arrived, and few settlers came into the region after that date."³

Diverse theories have developed concerning the ancestry and character of the early settlers in the Kentucky hills. They have been traced to Scottish chieftains or to English redemptioners and indentured servants. They have been called hardy, self-reliant and independent as well as illiterate, uncouth, undisciplined, and barbaric. Individualism and stoicism are traits attributed to the first hill people as well as traditionalism, fatalism and religious fundamentalism.

Whatever their exact origin and character, the Kentucky hill people proved to be resilient. In fact, they managed to survive and flourish in virtual isolation for nearly a century, developing a culture in which utilitarian handicrafts, the ballad, the fiddle and the recipe for home brew were familiar companions. During the first half of the twentieth century, however, the outside world arrived in the form of land speculators, mining and lumbering operators, road builders, missionary teachers, preachers, doctors, and the United States Government.

Harriette Simpson Arnow, a writer from southeastern Kentucky, published three novels about the Kentucky hill people as they experienced unprecedented social and economic changes in

their region from 1920 to 1945. In Mountain Path (1936), Hunter's Horn (1949) and The Dollmaker (1954), Arnow viewed the transformation of hill society through the eyes of the hill women, creating realistic female characters to voice their impressions, reactions and adjustments. This paper will describe the principal female character in each of the three novels, focusing upon the characteristics of the archetypal Earth Mother reflected in her identity.

Carl G. Jung, the German psychologist, used the ancient term "archetype" in relation to his theories of the "collective unconscious," a part of the unconscious mind not acquired but inborn, not individual but universal. The collective unconscious consists of "primordial types" or "universal images" common to every human being.⁴ One such image is the archetypal Great Mother. When identified with the earth and the cycles of nature, she becomes the Earth Mother. She is thought to have kinship with domestic animals, especially the cow. She encompasses that which inspires devotion or awe: the church, the university, city or country, heaven or earth. Her image is identified with the mysterious and deep, the sea and forest. She symbolizes fertility, being captured in images of pregnant women and associated with the cornucopia, a ploughed field or garden.⁵

The literary critic employs Jung's definition of the archetype to describe "an image, a descriptive detail, a plot pattern, or a character type that occurs frequently in literature, myth, religion, or folklore and is, therefore, believed to evoke profound emotions in the reader because it awakens a primordial image in the unconscious memory and thus calls into play illogical but strong responses."⁶ Certainly the principal female characters in Arnow's novels evoke those profound emotions.

The kinship between the archetypal Earth Mother and Arnow's realistic characters extends beyond depth psychology or literary criticism. Corie Cal in Mountain Path, Milly Ballew in Hunter's Horn and Gertie Nevels in The Dollmaker were not aware of archetypal images in their unconscious minds. They were conscious of their role as dictated by their environment and culture, a role closely patterned after the Earth Mother in all of her complexity.

A brief synopsis of each of the novels must precede a description of Corie, Milly and Gertie. Path records the impressions of Louisa Sheridan, a young teacher from Lexington sent in the 1920s to a remote mountain school. The plot includes moonshining, feuding and intrigue. The depiction of the family with which Louisa resides and the subtle suggestions of Louisa's maturation keep the book from being categorized as a "typical" novel about the "typical" mountaineers of the early nineteenth century.

The novel Horn introduces the Ballews, a family struggling to survive on Little Smokey Creek during the last years of the Depression. The plot centers on Nunnelly Ballew's obsession with

catching an infamous red fox named King Devil. The inhabitants of the community struggle to preserve their traditions within a rapidly changing environment: the gravel road has come, bringing in WPA, AAA, the Law, the radio and news of the war across the water. The sons and daughters leave by the same road, going to work in industrial centers or to fight in the war.

Dollmaker resumes the story of the hill people at the same critical point in history. The intrusion of the outside world has disrupted life in Ballew, Kentucky, a sister community to Little Smokey Creek. The young men and women are gone, leaving the old and infirm with the women and children. The central character, Gertie Nevels, transports her young family to a government-run housing project in Detroit to join her tinkerer husband, Clovis, a lover of machines and high wages.

Historical accuracy, meticulous attention to detail, graphic imagery, universal and regional themes characterize the writing of Harriette Arnow. She depicts with precision and insight the people of the Kentucky hills as they confront the twentieth century. She knew the place and the culture well, but she knew the hill women best. Corie Cal, Milly Ballew, and Gertie Nevels are distinct individuals who, within the context of the Kentucky hills, suggest the appearance and the character of the Earth Mother: they are earthy, maternal, and they suggest an affinity with the earth, nature, and fellow creatures.

Corie Cal in Path is the matriarch in the mountain home where Louisa Sheridan boards. The young school teacher, small and prim, contrasts markedly with Corie, the wife of Lee Buck Cal and mother of three living children. Her stature and coloring suggest the archetype of the Earth Mother:

She was large: not hippy after the fashion of well-fed women in the cities, but tall and thin and rangy with long loosely put together bones, and a long neck set under a long but well-shaped head. Her jaws were long and thin, so was her nose, and her chin long and pointed--almost pretty. Her feet, however, were what caused Louisa to forget that it was impolite to stare. They were long like the rest of her; narrow heels, long wide-spreading toes with each great toe standing a little apart from its smaller sisters and seeming to enjoy a much wider range of experience. . . . Corie was a rhapsody in brown, even her blue eyes were flecked with lights the color of brown sand in yellow sunlight.⁷

Milly Ballew in Horn differs in appearance from Corie. Milly's voice suggests both her appearance and her personality. Nunnally Ballew, Milly's husband, has returned home from one of his periodic visits to the general store: "A woman's voice,

light and breathless and touched with the same gaiety that filled the children's, called from above the house."⁸ As Milly and the four children run to greet Nunn, he looks at his wife: "his eyes slipped over his wife, from her forehead with the little wispy curls that always came when she worked in the field and sweated, down her thin child's body in a ragged faded dress and feed-sack apron to her bare brown feet" (Horn, p. 5). A child-like quality enhances Milly's earthiness.

Gertie Nevels in The Dollmaker brings other qualities to the figure of the Earth Mother. Gertie is a tall, muscular woman, mother of five children and wife of Clovis Nevels. She can run a farm and handle a mule as well as any man. She takes pride in her capabilities and does not try to conceal her masculine traits: "And even in the man's work shoes, the long and shapeless coat, green-tinged with age, open giving glimpses of a blue apron faded in strange squares as if it might have at one time been something else--a man's denim trousers or overall jumper--she held herself proudly, saying: 'You want my name; I'm Gertie Nevels from Ballew, Kentucky.'"⁹ In a later scene, Gertie sees her reflection in a mirror and reacts:

She saw a huge and ugly woman, flat-cheeked, straight-lipped, straggledy-headed, her face grazed with tiredness and coal dust, even her chapped lips gray. The straight, almost bushy black brows below the bony forehead were on a level with her own, and she realized she was looking at herself--the same old Gertie who had made her mother weep. She laughed a long laugh, a good laugh. (Dollmaker, p. 135)

Beyond any archetypal unconscious image within their minds, the common cultural experiences of these three hill women helped to define their personalities and values. Their environment and culture clearly defined roles for both men and women. The female role suggested essentially the Earth Mother, but that image took on distinctive features within the context of the Kentucky hills.

Corie's early life had been hard. Her mother died, leaving Corie with the responsibilities of an adult when she was yet a child. She grew up quickly and internalized the code of the Kentucky mountains, a code which included moonshining and feuding. As a mountain woman, the only direction her life could take was toward marriage and motherhood. She married Lee Buck Cal and obeyed the Biblical and cultural mandate to "be fruitful and multiply."

Milly lost at an early age both father and mother and was working in a coal camp when she met one of the miners, Nunn Ballew. Nunn scandalized Little Smokey Creek community when he married Milly, a complete stranger with unknown and therefore questionable ancestry. Milly was fourteen at the time, of prime marrying age

and very fertile. She has borne six children, two of whom have died. During the course of the story, she bears the seventh.

Gertie's youth, like Corie's and Milly's, was hard. Her mother was frequently ill, and her father had been crippled in a logging accident. Whereas Corie and Milly mastered the domestic skills traditionally performed by women, Gertie worked in the fields and managed the farm until her younger brother Henley was old enough to help. Henley alone acknowledges that Gertie saved the family's farm, and as he lies dying on a foreign battlefield during the war, he bequeaths to her the money earned in his cattle dealings.

Like Corie and Milly, Gertie had no formal education. She had an important advantage, however. Her father taught her to read the Bible and helped her memorize scriptures, poems, and The Constitution of the United States. He also taught her to whittle. Gertie proved to be an eager student.

Gertie's educational advantage, her masculine appearance and behavior alienate her from the other hill women. She thinks independently, dealing with a variety of religious and moral issues normally consigned to the men. The woodworking skill, rather than any domestic craft, becomes her most fulfilling mode of expression. Her most cherished dream is to purchase a farm of her own: "It was as if the war and Henley's death had been a plan to help set her and the children free so that she might live and be beholden to no man, not even to Clovis" (Dollmaker, p. 122).

Hill society has no place for an independent, land-owning woman, however. Gertie can work in the field and save the family farm, but it is the only son, Henley, "who in dying had taken with him the Kendick name, the Kendick land" (Dollmaker, p. 60). Gertie can save the nickels and dimes from her egg and walnut sales, combine them with the money bequeathed by Henley, and she can even approach Old John Ballew with an offer to buy the deserted farm he owns. But Old John backs out of the agreement, and Gertie joins Clovis in Detroit when the proponents of mountain mores intervene and spell out the duty of a wife to be with her husband.

The natural dignity and reserve these three women exhibit cannot be attributed to appearance. They are earthy, unrefined, simply dressed, aged beyond their years. The dignity of each must be found in the qualities of her character.

Corie's maternal nature is evident in her care for her family and her pride in her children. "Her primary concerns are for her man and her children, even to the submergence of her own individuality."¹⁰ She advises, comforts and sustains the inexperienced Louisa as another child. Corie is the person with whom Louisa identifies and from whom she learns patience, endurance and gratefulness.¹¹

Corie's suggestion of the Earth Mother must be considered within the context of her life in Cal Valley. She values her children as her greatest assets, yet as a result of the harsh mountain environment--the shaded valleys, the poor defenses against wintry weather, the prevalence of sickness and the lack of medical care--three of Corie's children lie buried in the family's graveyard: "Corie nodded and lifted the churn dasher gently up and down looking into the fire, as if her three dead babies moved there somewhere back of the reddening flames" (Path, p. 277).

Corie masters the domestic skills, churning by the fire-light, stirring apple butter, making cookies, dipping candles, caring for the animals as she does her children. She enjoys these activities generally, but too often, they merely keep her hands busy as she anxiously awaits the return of her moonshining, feuding husband, Lee Buck. She spends many melancholic evenings alone, preoccupied by some task, worried yet resigned to silence. Louisa watches Corie one evening as Lee Buck prepares to leave the house, everyone knowing that a clash between feuding clans is imminent: "Corie moved forward as if she would touch him or say something, but in the end did neither. Only stood and softly patted Beetle [the baby] on the shoulder while Lee Buck walked to the door and walked out without looking back, and the latch clicked" (Path, p. 334). Louisa recognizes what enables Corie to remain silent and wait: "[Louisa] wished for what Corie had, something warm and alive that she could touch and hear its regular breathing. Something she could press her face against and shut out the cold unnatural light, and the sound of the wind in the higher hills" (Path, p. 336).

The portrait of Milly as a mothering figure is more sharply defined than that of Corie. Milly nurtures every living creature around her, her children, Zing, the Ballews' old hound, the two puppies Nunn buys after Zing's death, and Betsey the family's cow. Even her husband Nunn reflects upon the aura surrounding her as he returns home late one evening during a blizzard: "Aye, Lord, have pity on all men out in the snow and the dark who had no light of their own to go to; it was worth all this head-swimming trip just to come back to Milly's light" (Horn, p. 93). Milly hears Nunn coming, meets him on the path and guides him inside "with solicitous care" (Horn, p. 95).

In one scene, Milly seems to become an embodiment of the Earth Mother. Her two-year-old son Deb has wandered away from her watchful eye. A frantic Milly finds him seated on a limb high in a cedar tree. With mixed fear for his safety and pride in his prowess, she tries to coax him down. Eventually, she climbs the tree after him and slaps his bottom playfully: "But Deb smiled slyly and began trying to undo her dress, and Milly settled herself on one big limb with another at her shoulders and let him nurse. She took a chew of tobacco from a little tight roll of home grown in her apron pocket . . . and amused herself

by spitting at a lizzard on a rock and running one hand lightly through Deb's damp curling hair" (Horn, p. 15).

Milly's maternal nature, like Corie's, has been molded by the circumstances of her life in the hills. Two of her offspring have died. She adores her children but deplores the thought of another pregnancy. Despondent over the latest one, she flees to the outdoors and the company of the quiet ewes: "she wished she were as good as they--each heavy with lamb, waiting out her time with no fear and no sinful questioning of God's will" (Horn, p. 232).

Milly's thoughts about being born female reflect the harshness of the environment: "Aye, Lord, it would be better never to have a girl child; they saw nothing but pain and trouble and work and so many went wrong, or else married some good-for-nothing little feist when they were too little to know that kisses come easier than victuals and that a houseful of youngens comes easiest of all" (Horn, p. 57). These thoughts seem ironic as they come from Milly, a woman who settles comfortably on a limb to nurse her child, a woman who epitomizes the Earth Mother.

Gertie does not suggest the image of Earth Mother as strongly as Milly, but Gertie cares for, teaches, advises, and disciplines her children. She meets their physical and emotional needs, conveying to them a sense of security. Cassie, the most fragile and sensitive of Gertie's children, elicits most often Gertie's nurturing. The two pause on an excursion through the woods after Cassie has fallen down, and Gertie bends over the child: "She was crying now. 'I can see little girls in your eyes, Mom, little bitty girls.' 'They're little Cassies,' Gertie said, bending her head to look at a smear of blood on Cassie's teeth so that the little girls went away. She scooped her upon one arm. . . . Cassie cuddled against her, one arm about her neck, her cheek on her shoulder, all her child for an instant" (Dollmaker, p. 44).

As do Corie and Milly, Gertie suggests the basic character of the mother figure within the context of her own situation. While at home in the hills, she knows how to provide for her family. Indeed, on one occasion, by acting quickly and efficiently, she saves her baby Amos' life by performing an emergency tracheotomy on him with her whittling knife.

The train trip to Detroit to join her husband Clovis disconcerts Gertie as it does her children. The fears of the older children are offset for a time by the intrigue of new experiences, but Cassie is overcome by the smells of the train and the noise of the crowded terminal. She buries her face in Gertie's lap. All of the children turn to Gertie for reassurance when they inspect the cold, dingy apartment in the Merry Hill Housing Project: "The tired, hungry, shivering children looked at Gertie, their eyes asking and expecting of her the warmth and food she had always

given" (Dollmaker, p. 154). Gertie, in that foreign place, in that moment and in the months to come, cannot respond. She feels displaced, ineffective and frustrated as a mother, a wife, a person.

Gertie loses her children in Detroit just as she loses herself. Clytie and Enoch, like their father, are absorbed by the project's culture. Amos, the youngest, will grow up as an urban child.

Two of Gertie's children cherish life in the hills and cannot adjust to urban life, but Gertie's efforts to help these children come to naught. Reuben, her oldest son, rebels against her as he does against everything in his new environment. He eventually slips away and returns to the hills; and Gertie thinks: "She could raise bushels of sweet potatoes, fatten a pig, kill it, and make good sausage meat, but she didn't know how to buy. She could born a fine and laughing boy baby and make him grow up big and strong, but inside him all his laughter died" (Dollmaker, p. 318).

Gertie finds that her mothering cannot satisfy Cassie's need, either, but the result is more tragic in her case than in Reuben's. Cassie reacts to the pressure of growing up in the crowded project by retreating totally into her relationship with an imaginary friend, Callie Lou. The retreat takes Cassie and Callie Lou beyond a tall wooden fence into the privacy of the railroad yard where they may play unnoticed and uninterrupted. It is there that a train hits Cassie, severing both of her legs. Gertie holds her dying child, trying to comfort her as she has so many times in the past. Again, her efforts seem futile as Cassie is snatched from Gertie's arms and wheeled by the attendants into the sterile hospital: "She reached for the bundle, but the cart had fled from her in a hissing, crying wind and she had fled after it down through the rushing, choking halls, past smooth and silent doors. . . . But through it all Cassie had never been her own again" (Dollmaker, p. 375).

The maternal impulse is felt intensely by Corie, Milly and Gertie. Each woman also senses an affinity with the earth, with the cycles of nature, and with fellow creatures. Corie lives her life in harmony with nature and teaches Louisa an important lesson:

From Corie she learned gratefulness and thankfulness for all things: dry wood, rain when the spring was low, cold snaps that cured up cold and made a spell for killing hogs, sunshiny days, snowy days (they meant good crops), hard frozen bare ground for it was then that the children did not wet their feet or ruin their shoes. Without being a pessimist, Corie expected the worst of all possible combinations in all things, and as a result, was eternally grateful for some little things. (Path, p. 215)

Milly, like Gertie, prefers those tasks which may be performed outdoors, like the cutting and stripping of cane:

Molasses making time was hard but Milly liked all parts of it. She liked to strip the long broad blades from the shining silvery stalks, tie the blades into bundles, and think of Lizzie, the black heifer, feasting on cane fodder with the little black calf that was to be working hard on two teats while she milked the other two. She liked to stand on tip-toe reaching for a head of cane, golden-brown and shining, she and the cane-- held alone an instant together against the blue silk sky; then she was pulling it down, cutting it off and feeling a second's sadness that was forgotten in reaching for another and knowing that up and down the cane rows grew a mounting pile of chicken feed--and Milly in her mind's eye would see fat hens pecking at the cane heads on a snowy day. (Horn, p. 24)

Milly's affinity with nature and nature's creatures is apparent in her close association with Betsey, the family's cow. On one occasion, Milly turns to Betsey when troubled about Nunn, "and she began to cry and cried on as she milked, her forehead pressed against Betsey's flank, soundless tears sliding down into the foaming milk" (Horn, p. 381).

Of all creatures, Milly identifies most closely with King Devil, the crafty red fox Nunn has hunted obsessively for years and an important symbol in the novel Horn. The people of Little Smokey Creek attribute supernatural powers to the legendary fox who has eluded hunters, stolen chickens, killed sheep, and led hounds to their deaths in chases over field and cliff. Significantly, Milly observes the fox at close range, and there is no hint of the hunter-hunted challenge that lures Nunn on relentlessly:

In one place the leaves on the ledge seemed richer, redder, like the flaming bush that appeared to Moses in the Bible. But the thing was not leaves but a great red fox, brightened by the sun. As if eager for her to see him, he stood still among the red leaves, head turned toward her, fiery-tipped brush lifted, mouth open, happily, pleasantly, like a dog. . . . With a last cool glance, he dropped his head and picked up a hen, one of Nancy's White Rocks, fresh-dead and limber. (Horn, p. 23)

Milly and King Devil meet once again on the night of the fox's capture. The hounds overtake King Devil and make the kill just outside a house where Milly is helping to deliver a baby. Milly reaches King Devil first: "Milly saw the long red hair,

stained in spots with new-shed blood, but gleaming still. She . . . ran her hand along the fox's belly--something moved feebly under the skin--one jerk and then it was still, like the first and last struggle for life in a baby chicken too feeble for the hatching." King Devil was a "queen" heavy with young ones. Milly sorrows for the sister creature: "but the vixen had run so free: not many things could be so free" (Horn, pp. 395, 396).

Communion with the earth and fellow creatures is also an integral part of Gertie's life. In moments of crisis or chaos, Gertie flees to the outdoors. In one episode, she stands exhausted outside the doctor's office where she has brought Amos, her critically ill child: "She walked slowly along the cement walk that led to the front porch, lifting her face to feel the rain, for after the white brightness of the hot little room, the cold rain and the dark were like old friends" (Dollmaker, p. 29).

Gertie's bond with nature and the earth becomes synonymous with procuring her own farm. She expresses her dream in the imagery of the Old Testament. As a tenant farmer's wife, she identifies with the wandering tribes of Israel. The farm she wants to buy becomes the Promised Land. When it appears that she has indeed bought the farm with the money she has saved and with the funds bequeathed to her by her brother Henley, Gertie sings the hymn "How Firm a Foundation, Ye Saints of the Lord": "Her foundation was not God but what God had promised Moses--land. . . . What more, oh, Lord, what more could a woman ask?" (Dollmaker, p. 112).

Gertie's dream fades when she succumbs to community pressure and joins Clovis in Detroit. Without that essential communion with the earth and nature, Gertie feels disoriented. Denied her own land, she has no foundation upon which to stand. She now cites a different Biblical image: "Upon the willows in the midst thereof, we hanged our harps, and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.' But how shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land" (Dollmaker, p. 133).

Gertie's estrangement is especially poignant after Cassie's death. Like Corie, Gertie needs some living thing to hold. Like Milly, she longs for a kindred spirit: "If she could walk now, walk all night, walk and walk, forever; if she had corn to gather . . . even a cow to milk, some gentle cow that would let her lean her forehead" (Dollmaker, p. 376). Dock, the family's mule comes to mind: "Where was Dock? . . . She realized tears were falling on her twisting hands. She had never cried for Cassie, but now she cried for a mule, a mule that wouldn't recollect her, but with him she had been so free, so unafraid" (Dollmaker, p. 480).

The shock of Cassie's death plunges Gertie into whirling delirium. She loses her will. She lies unkempt, sleeping fitfully, drugged with phenobarbital. In intermittent moments of

consciousness, Gertie realizes she will never leave Detroit and Cassie. She begins the labored process of orientation to the urban environment. Her contact point is the earth. Gertie thus encourages the children to plant grass and lilac sprigs on their meager plot of ground. The family sits around the kitchen table one hot summer evening making gardening plans for the next spring:

"An where'll we have the corn crop?" Clovis asked, smiling in spite of the sweat running into his eyes.

"Under the west winder so's it'll shade us," Enoch said, and they all laughed a little.
(Dollmaker, p. 449)

The novels Horn and Dollmaker link significant symbols with the principal female characters: Milly identifies with King Devil; Gertie carves a block of cherry wood to reveal the man hidden within. As mentioned earlier, Gertie's father taught her to whittle, and whittling became her creative outlet:

I've never had much time fer whittlen fool-
ishness. Oh, a few dolls. Cassie--that's my
least girl--she's crazy over the dolls I whittle,
but when I git all settled I'm aimen to work up
a piece a wild cherry wood I've got. It's big
enough fer th head and shoulders uv a fair-
sized man if . . . if I can ever hit on the right
face. (Dollmaker, p. 16)

The developments in her life affect Gertie's perception of the man in the wood. While she remains in the familiar hills of Kentucky, working toward buying her own farm, Gertie perceives the man as "a laughing Christ uncrowned with thorns and with the scars of the nail holes in his hands all healed away; a Christ who had loved people, had liked to mingle with them and laugh and sing" (Dollmaker, p. 54). When Clovis leaves to work in Detroit, Gertie depends upon the block of wood for company, whittling and dreaming of a well-fed, well-housed family secure on her own land. Then when the dream disintegrates and Gertie takes her "rightful place" beside her husband in the housing project, the partially carved head and shoulders in the wood provide support. Gertie forgets the noisy, crowded alley and loses herself in the work of revealing the hidden man. A marked change in Gertie's relationship to the block of wood occurs when Cassie is killed. Gertie turns to the wood in her delirium, projecting onto the hidden man her inexpressible grief and horror: "One side was now no block of wood at all, but the cloth-draped shoulders of someone tired or old, more likely tired, for the shoulders, the sagging head, bespoke a weariness unto death." Instead of laughing Christ, Gertie then begins to see a Judas with cupped hands "holding lightly a thing they could not keep" (Dollmaker, pp. 400, 405).

The same confusion of identity becomes pronounced in Gertie's own life. Clovis has always dismissed Gertie's wood carving as idleness. Before they left the hills, his constant rejoinder was: "If'n you must waste elbow grease on whittlen, couldn't you make a ax handle er somethen somebody could use?" (Dollmaker, p. 31). After the move to Detroit, the meager income and high cost of living reinforce Clovis' argument. He draws up plans for a home operation with a jig saw: Clovis will cut rough figures of dolls and crucifixes from pieces of scrap wood; Gertie will smooth and shape them with her knife. Enoch, their son, will paint and peddle the finished products.

Gertie must make a choice: she may follow her own creative impulses and continue to reveal the man in the wood or she may acquiesce to Clovis and mass-produce jumping-jack dolls. Her decision proves to be as enigmatic as the identity of the man in the wood and, indeed, as her own identity. In the novel's climactic scene, Gertie hauls the block of wood to a nearby scrap wood lot. Her grim countenance contrasts sharply with the laughing, inquisitive faces of the alley's children who accompany her. Gertie seizes an axe and, with two sharp blows, splits the block of wood in half. She then asks the proprietor of the lot to split the wood into even smaller pieces suitable for carving. She intends to whittle small figures to be sold at a Christmas bazaar.

Gertie's decisive action raises questions about her motivation. Is she defeated or victorious? Does she identify with the Christ of the Judas? The face in the wood evaded her, and perhaps her decision arises from a sense of futility. Her gesture may, on the other hand, indicate the recovery of her strong will, her determination to survive in the new environment. Furthermore, what does the action suggest about Gertie's identity? Has it altered as drastically as her environment? Even before leaving the hills, Gertie differed from Corie and Milly in her masculine orientation, her independent spirit and her mode of creative expression. Tragically, in the urban environment, Gertie's confusion of identity becomes another distinctive feature.

The three novels by Harriette Arnow, Mountain Path, Hunter's Horn, and The Dollmaker, delineate the interrelationship of identity and environment. Although Corie must cope with devastating personal experiences, her world is basically static. She knows her function and her place as defined by the long-standing traditions of the Kentucky hills. Corie knows who she is. Although there is widespread disruption in Milly's world as a result of events outside the hills, little in her personal life changes. She, like Corie, feels competent to fulfill the responsibilities dictated by her role. Gertie's world, however, alters completely, leaving Gertie disoriented and frustrated when confronted by different circumstances, responsibilities, and values. She must live in constant confusion or adapt to survive.

Significantly, the semblance of the Earth Mother may still be seen in Gertie as she at first resists then adapts to life in the housing project. Will that unconscious image have as profound an influence upon Gertie's urbanized daughter, Clytie, or does the unconscious image become conscious only within a particular environment? Is the archetype of the Earth Mother more likely to surface in women like those living in the Kentucky hills, relying upon the earth, sensitive to the cycles of nature, working closely with their animals, finding their places within the domestic sphere? Other analytical essays based upon other novels will have to be written to answer these questions.

Regardless of the sociological and psychological implications for their children and grandchildren, Corie Cal, Milly Ballew, and Gertie Nevels, creations of Harriette Arnow and the Kentucky hills, embody the archetypal Earth Mother. As Eckley observes, "Because they are women, they are more closely in touch with the real essence of life . . . the births, the deaths, the sicknesses, the hardships."¹² Corie, Milly and Gertie express the "mother love" described by Jung, "the mystic root of all growth and change . . . the love that means homecoming, shelter, and the long silence from which everything begins and in which everything ends."¹³

NOTES

¹John C. Campbell, The Southern Highlander and His Homeland, 2nd ed. (1921; rpt. Spartanburg, South Carolina: The Reprint Co., 1973), p. 321

²Campbell, p. 40.

³Harry M. Caudill, Night Comes to the Cumberlands: A Biography of a Depressed Area (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1962), p. 22.

⁴C. G. Jung, The Archetypes and The Collective Unconscious, 2nd ed., trans. R.F.C. Hull (1959; rpt. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 3-5.

⁵Jung, p. 4.

⁶C. Hugh Holman, A Handbook to Literature, 4th edition (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1980), p. 34.

⁷Harriette Arnow, Mountain Path, 2nd ed. (1936; rpt. Berea, Kentucky: Council of the Southern Mountains Publishers, 1963), p. 32.

⁸Harriette Arnow, Hunter's Horn (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1949), p. 5. All further references appear in the text.

⁹Harriette Arnow, The Dollmaker (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1954), p. 5. All further references appear in the text.

¹⁰Wilton Eckley, Harriette Arnow (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1974), p. 47. All further references appear in the text.

¹¹Eckley, p. 51.

¹²Eckley, p. 74.

¹³Jung, p. 92.

WILLIAM FAULKNER AND CAROLINE GORDON: TWO VIEWS OF
THE AMERICAN ADAM

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R. W. B. Lewis's study The American Adam is, he says, an attempt "to disentangle from the writings and pronouncements of nineteenth-century American authors and emergent American myth."¹ The myth emerging from the writings of Hawthorne, Cooper, Melville, Emerson, and Thoreau depicted "life and history as just beginning. It described the world as starting up again under fresh initiative, in a divinely granted second chance for the human race, after the first chance had been so disastrously fumbled in the darkening Old World."² Lewis describes the typical hero of such literature as "an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources."³ Lewis calls this "heroically innocent" hero the American Adam, and the literature in which we find him is said to be "informed by the Adamic vision."

Lewis's "Epilogue" to The American Adam is devoted to certain twentieth-century works he considers to contain Adamic heroes. One such character is William Faulkner's Isaac McCaslin in Go Down, Moses. The volume is a series of stories chronicling the McCaslin family of Jefferson, Mississippi, from 1772 up to 1947, from Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin down to Isaac, his grandson. One of the collection's most widely-read stories is "The Bear," in which Isaac's initiation into hunting, indeed into life itself, is recounted. Possibly the most often anthologized of the stories is "Delta Autumn," wherein Isaac is nearly eighty years old. By this time the delta wilderness has dwindled down to a small triangle, and it, like Isaac, is about to pass into memory.

In part four of "The Bear," we learn that Isaac, at age twenty-one, refuses to accept his inheritance of land because the first McCaslin to own it engaged not only in slavery but also in miscegenation with one of the slaves, and in incest with the miscegenous offspring. That is to say, L. Q. C. McCaslin's sexual relationship with his slave Eunice produces Tomasina, and his affair with Tomasina produced a son called Tomey's Turl. As an adult, Isaac discovers that Tomey's Turl is his cousin. Isaac is repelled not by his blood relationship to Turl and his offspring but by his grandfather's callous indifference to his own blood-kin. There is also another reason for Isaac to refuse his inheritance. By the age of twenty-one Ike has adopted the views of his half-Indian, half-Negro spiritual father, Sam Fathers, toward the ownership of land: that land is to be occupied and used but not to be owned. When Isaac's cousin McCaslin Edmonds questions him about the repudiation of his inheritance, he replies:

I cant repudiate it. It was never mine to repudiate. It was never Father's and Uncle Buddy's to bequeath me to repudiate because it was never old Ikkemotubbe's to sell to Grandfather for bequeathment and repudiation. Because it was never Ikkemotubbe's fathers' fathers' to bequeath Ikkemotubbe to sell to Grandfather or any man because on the instant when Ikke-motubbe discovered, realised, that he could sell it for money, on that instant it ceased ever to have been his forever, father to father to father, and the man who bought it bought nothing.⁴

In this passage Isaac seems to be echoing the sentiments of Thomas Skidmore, a nineteenth-century leader of the Workingmen's Movement and a progressive laborite. Lewis quotes Skidmore in the first chapter of The American Adam. Skidmore wrote:

One generation cannot sell, give or convey, even if it had the right, to another. The reason is, that the one is dead; the other living. The one is present; the other absent. They do not and cannot meet, to come to a treaty, to make delivery; to give or receive.⁵

Skidmore, and others like him, saw the inheritance of property as a dark hold-over from the European Old World and a practice that defied the equality promised in the Declaration of Independence. Isaac's repudiation grows out of a different kind of reasoning, but both men represent the Adamic belief that man's attachment to the land ought to resemble a love affair rather than a marriage. Obvious in both passage, also, is the desire of one generation to divorce itself from the wrongs of a previous generation.

Instead of taking the land and farming it, Ike takes up carpentry because, we are told, "If the Nazarene had found carpentering good for the life and ends He had assumed and elected to serve, it would be all right too for Isaac McCaslin" (p. 309). Isaac marries his partner's daughter, and although they are married for many years, the two never produce a child. Ike's bride allows him one look at her naked form, one session of uninhibited love-making shortly after the wedding. At this time, she tries to extract a promise from Isaac that he will claim his inheritance. His reply is: "No, I tell you. I wont. I cant. Never." In return, Isaac's young wife says to him, laughing, "And that's all. That's all from me. If this dont get you that son you talk about, it wont be mine" (p. 314). The scene closes with Mrs. McCaslin's mocking laughter. The American Adam is confronted by the American (and eternal) Eve, but this time he hands the apple back to her.

Isaac, like the nineteenth-century Adamic hero, seems to fit neatly Lewis's description: "standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling" and "heroically innocent."⁶ This congruence,

moreover, is not coincidental. Before the publication of The American Adam in 1955, Lewis published an article entitled "Hero in the New World: Faulkner's 'The Bear.'" In that article, Lewis calls the Mississippi delta wilderness, "A new, unspoiled area in which a genuine and radical moral freedom could once again be exercised--as once, long ago, it had been, in the garden of Eden." Ike's refusal to own the land enables him to "move in a world of light--a light still meagre but definite."⁸ Ike's innocence is therefore achieved in Adamic terms despite the imminent disappearance of the garden and in the face of temptation offered by his Eve-like, acquisitive bride.

Another modern fictional character who resembles Isaac McCaslin in many ways is Caroline Gordon's Aleck Maury. Miss Gordon, like Faulkner, was a southern writer primarily concerned with southern themes and southern settings. Her best fiction centers on Mr. Maury, both in her novel Aleck Maury, Sportsman and in her collection of short stories, Old Red and Other Stories. Both McCaslin and Maury are born into well-established Southern families; both men are introduced by older black men to hunting at an early age; McCaslin and Maury both decline to follow their fathers as planters. McCaslin becomes a carpenter, Maury a classics teacher. Neither man ever owns a large amount of land or of personal property. Both characters, as children, are separated either by death (in McCaslin's case) or for the sake of education (in Maury's case) from their natural parents. Ike is reared primarily by his older cousin McCaslin Edmonds, and Maury is sent to live with his Aunt Vic and Uncle James so that his Aunt Vic may tutor him in Latin. Most important, each character throughout his life must renew his bond with the wilderness. In "Delta Autumn" McCaslin, nearly eighty years old, has given up actually hunting, but still is compelled to go on the yearly hunting trips because he sees "himself and the wilderness--as coevals, . . . their two spans running out together, not toward oblivion, nothingness, but into a dimension free of both time and space" (p. 354). In Gordon's story "The Last Day in the Field" she, like Faulkner, identifies the elderly man's life-span with the seasons of the year. At the story's beginning, Mr. Maury says, "That was the fall when the leaves stayed green so long. . . . It looked like winter was never coming."⁹ But by the story's end, when Mr. Maury realizes that his chronically aching leg will probably preclude any more hunting trips like the one he describes in the story, he observes "the leaves . . . everywhere . . . all over the ground" (p. 167). Mr. Maury's own autumn, symbolized by the fallen leaves, is at hand.

As in the life of Isaac McCaslin, the women in Mr. Maury's life seem determined to bend him to their wills. At times, in fact, he takes a certain amount of pride in his sufferings at the hands of women. As a boy, he exaggerates to his sister an account of a beating received from Aunt Vic. He says, "I remember that on one of my visits home I showed my sister a scar on my leg and boasted that the day before I had stood in a pool of blood drawn from my naked legs by that buggy whip of Aunt Vic's. The pool was probably

a few flecks of blood fallen on the carpet, but there was no doubt about it. Aunt Vic was, as we said, 'quick on the draw.'"¹⁰

Aleck Maury's marriage fares better than Isaac McCaslin's, but his account of it in "Old Red" and random remarks gleaned from the novel and the other stories indicate a relationship heavily loaded with conflict. Mr. Maury, long after his wife's death, calls their conflict "Guerilla warfare and trying to the nerves, but that had been only at first. For many years they had been two enemies contending in the open" (p. 141). He remembers about his wife: "She had never given up hope of changing him, of making him over into the man she thought he ought to be. Time and again she almost had him. And there were long periods, of course, during which he had been worn down by the conflict" (p. 141). Similarly, Isaac McCaslin, remembering his wife, thinks, "Women hope for so much. They never live too long to still believe that anything within the scope of their passionate wanting is likewise within the range of their passionate hope" (p. 352). As a very old man, in a story called "The Presence," Maury's utter disgust with women is exposed when he cries passionately, "Women! I've been watching them. They'll rock the world if they don't look out!" A few lines later, he privately thinks that even though there are no women in his life now, "he seemed to have been in servitude to them all his life" (p. 186).

Finally, there is the identification of both Aleck Maury and Isaac McCaslin with wilderness creatures of nearly mythic proportions. "Old Red" is called that because in it Mr. Maury consciously identifies himself with the wily fox called Old Red he hunted as a young man. Faulkner writes in "The Bear" that "the old male bear itself, so long unwifed and childless as to have become its own ungendered progenitor was his [Ike's] alma mater" (p. 210). In "Delta Autumn" Ike more than once reminds himself that, like the bear Ben, he too is childless.

The parallels between the two characters are, I hope, obvious. Why, then, can we not neatly classify Aleck Maury with Ike as an example of the American Adam? There are at least three reasons. First, Mr. Maury is a fictionalized version of Caroline Gordon's own father, William Fitzhugh Gordon. It seems reasonable to assume that Gordon's fictional characterization of Maury would be influenced more by his model's character traits than by those from some literary source. Gordon recounts, in the reissued edition of Aleck Maury, Sportsman (1980) how she came to write the novel. In the early 1930s a trip to Paris on a Guggenheim Fellowship "bore little tangible fruit" (p. 294), so that Gordon and her husband, Allen Tate, returned to the United States to live in a house on the banks of the Cumberland River. Her father lived in a fishing lodge on the Caney Fork River, in East Tennessee, and the Tates often visited him there. Drawing on her earlier experience interviewing celebrities for a New York newspaper syndicate, Gordon began, with her typewriter at her elbow, to ask her father about his early life. Mr. Gordon

became so intrigued with the project that, she says, "One morning at two o'clock he broke the silence of the fishing lodge by shouting: 'Caroline! This is good, take it down'" (p. 297).

Another reason that Caroline Gordon never invites us to view Maury as an Adamic character is that her writing is influenced by Classical rather than Christian or Biblical myth. William Fitzhugh Gordon taught classics and Caroline Gordon was as familiar with The Iliad and The Odyssey as many other writers were with the Bible. It is in Biblical or Christian myth that innocence is a highly valued quality, moreso than in Classical literature. Therefore, it is only natural that a writer whose first exposure to literature was probably Latin and Greek might have neither the desire nor the inclination to emphasize a heroic character's innocence, and by Lewis's own definition, the American Adam is "heroically innocent."

Third, and most important, I think, is that Gordon's very gender may have prevented her from writing literature "informed by the Adamic vision." In order to write such literature, an author must be willing to idealize his male hero, as I think we can safely say Faulkner has done with Isaac McCaslin. As many critics have pointed out, Isaac can be easily identified with Christ himself in his humble choice of carpentry, in his simple life, in his adherence to principle, in his sexual near-purity. Caroline Gordon seems, on the other hand, determined that her readers see Aleck Maury as altogether human, warts and all. Some of Mr. Maury's "warts"--flaws--are selfishness, gluttony (he weighs 230 pounds), childishness, lying, and self-pity. In "Old Red" Mr. Maury, an expert fisherman, refuses to write a book about fishing because he does not want everyone else to know as much as he does. He also refuses to attend his cousin's funeral because he prefers to fish. Instead, he concocts a lie about his kidney condition, one that he suspects his daughter will see through if he groans too loudly. Nor will Maury look at his daughter's face during this charade, "for fear of catching that smile on her face--the girl had little sense of decency" (p. 124).

Gordon's irony is muted and gentle in the preceding passage, but in "The Presence" she makes Mr. Maury's childishness quite obvious. When he learns that Jenny Mowbray, his landlady who has taken "a fierce motherly interest" in him, may sell her boarding house, divorce her unfaithful husband, and move back to Kentucky, he thinks, "What about me? . . . You'll run off to Kentucky. I'll have to find some other place to live" (p. 185). This is the story in which Mr. Maury has complained so bitterly about his servitude to women and about women "rocking the world." It seems quite obvious that Maury is more worried that Mrs. Mowbray's servitude to him may soon cease. The story also ends ironically with Mr. Maury, not an especially religious man, muttering the Anglic Salutation: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour . . . of our death" (p. 187). He has unconsciously reverted to a prayer taught him by his Aunt Vic, another

mother figure. Gordon seems intent on our seeing Maury as childishly selfish and self-pitying. When one mother figure threatens to disappear, he immediately thinks of another, and appeals to yet a third. Obviously Mr. Maury defies Lewis's description of the Adamic hero as "an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources."¹¹

Mr. Maury, unlike Isaac McCaslin, seems almost to wallow in domestic comfort, despite his view of himself as Old Red, the free, wild creature who resists capture and entrapment. The structure of "Delta Autumn" and the structure of Aleck Maury, Sportsman are evidence of this. Faulkner's description of Isaac's domestic arrangements is quite brief: "He had had a wife and lived with her and lost her . . . before he and his clever old dipsomaniac partner had finished the house for them to move into it: --and it was still kept for him by his dead wife's widowed niece. . . . But he spent the time within those walls waiting for November, because even this tent with its muddy floors and the bed which was not wide enough nor soft enough nor even warm enough, was his home" (p. 352). Isaac's preference for the discomforts of the muddy, cold tent and for the company of men over the companionship of his niece's family are much more in keeping with the Adamic tradition--the innocent American hero pitted against the American wilderness.

A much larger portion of Aleck Maury, Sportsman is given over to domestic details. Mr. Maury describes every house he ever lived in, many of them in rather precise detail. At the novel's conclusion, when he considers moving in with his daughter and her husband, he says:

I was already, in my imagination, living in the new place. . . . It took shape before me so solidly that sometimes now I look back on it and find it hard to believe that I have not actually lived in that house, on that river. A small white cottage it was, nestling on the edge of a gentle bluff. There would be a big yard with flower beds and off to one side a pasture and an enclosure for Steve's goats. . . . I could see quite clearly the path that sloped on the right down to the little river. It started from the rear--need I say that this ideal cottage had two rear entrances? One, Sally's and Steve's, was latticed and covered with vines. The other was a small platform on which I set my minnow bucket, my cane poles and all my other paraphernalia. (p. 273)

The image of the two rear entrances, one latticed and vine-covered, the other a bare, functional platform, seem symbolic of Mr. Maury's desire for a kind of domestic arrangement that would

offer traditional comfort yet still leave him free of the entrapments of the proverbial vine-covered cottage. We notice also that Sally's husband--not Mr. Maury--will help complete the domestic scene by keeping goats, fulfilling the role of agrarian domesticator that Mr. Maury rejected many years earlier.

In the end, because the dream house is unattainable, Mr. Maury decides not to live with Sally and Steve, and he leaves them abruptly to move into a fishing lodge run by a young family. By doing this, he will ensure both his own comfort and his own freedom. He says in "Old Red" that "it was only in hotels that a man was master of his own room" (p. 124), but we notice that Maury always finds "family" hotels run by motherly women. By placing Mr. Maury in a variety of domestic settings--his own father's house, his Aunt Vic's more glorious plantation, his wife's family place, the many houses he lives in during his teaching career, the fishing lodges and boarding houses he inhabits during retirement--Gordon ironically undercuts Mr. Maury's notion of his own independence. Her emphasis on Maury's love of domesticity, the coddling by his motherly landlady, his appreciation of home-cooked food, form a sharp contrast to Isaac McCaslin's love of the "tent with its muddy floor" which he calls his home.

Isaac McCaslin's tent serves as a symbol for his resistance to female entrapment and domestication, and according to Nina Baym, the Adamic myth requires its female characters to be either "entrappers" or "domesticators." Isaac McCaslin's bride is an entrapper. She is like the Faulkner women described by Irving Howe in William Faulkner, A Critical Study: "the this-worldly sex, the child-bearers who chain men to possessions and embody the indestructible urge to racial survival." Faulkner's men (including Isaac McCaslin) are, Howe says, "happiest when they 'get away,' escaping to the woods for a few weeks of female-less companionship. His women are happiest . . . when men are subdued to their social tasks."¹³ Baym writes that "Such a portrayal of women is likely to be uncongenial, if not basically incomprehensible, to a woman. It is not likely that women will write books in which women play this part."¹⁴ To refine Baym's statement somewhat, we might say that Caroline Gordon, and perhaps other women writers, if they do portray female characters as entrappers or domesticators, indicate that such a portrayal represents a masculine view of women. Mr. Maury sees his wife, his daughter, his Aunt Vic, and a flirtatious widow he encounters as domesticators, and he sees himself as the wily fox who escapes them, but Gordon's ironic undercutting of Maury's fanciful view of himself, her exposure of his flaws, cues the reader that the narrative voice she employs in the stories does not concur with this view.

The notion of the American Adam is, as Baym asserts, very likely the exclusive property of masculine critics, just as a purely Adamic character is likely to be produced only by a masculine imagination. Olga Vickery, writing in 1959, presages Baym's

contention. In an article which we suspect is a retaliation to Lewis's work, she says of Isaac McCaslin that "In rejecting sin, Isaac also rejects humanity. Significantly, he holds himself aloof from close human ties; though he is uncle to half the county, he is father to no-one and husband solely to the wilderness. Having confused the wilderness with the Garden of Eden, he not only dedicates but sacrifices his life to it."¹⁵ Annette Kolodny, in The Lay of the Land, calls Isaac both "son and lover" of the wilderness. Kolodny emphasizes the maternal aspects of nature in American thought and says that "American pastoral, unlike European, holds at its very core the promise of fantasy in daily reality."¹⁶ Ike, has, in these terms, rejected Eve (his bride) in favor of an idealized mother-figure.

Inherent in the notion of the American Adam is the notion of Eve, the seducer, the temptress. Ike says of his wife, when he sees her nude, "They are born already bored with what a boy approaches only at fifteen with blundering and aghast trembling. . . .She is lost. She was born lost" (p. 314). It is difficult to imagine a woman writer or critic condoning the idea that man may achieve innocence, but that woman is so steeped in sin that she may not. Kolodny, Vickery, Baym, and Kate Millet all emphasize in their works that such a view is an outgrowth of a paternalistic society.

Isaac McCaslin, whether we condone his repudiation of the inheritance or do not, is nevertheless presented to us by his creator with no blatantly ironic qualifications. In fact, he is proposed as all the more saintly when we consider what he has foresworn: sexual love and filial love. Faulkner elevates him into a purely fictional, idealized realm. Caroline Gordon cannot idealize her Mr. Maury in the same way, because she understandably cannot cast herself or any other woman in the role of domesticator, entrapper, or temptress. Ultimately the reader responds to Isaac as a character who could exist only in fiction. Mr. Maury is a much more complex character than the Adamic hero because his creator, consciously or otherwise, has rejected the Adamic myth in favor of realism. Gordon's fiction emphasizes, as Adamic fiction does not, that human beings--even independent and stubborn old men--do not exist apart from society and that no real adult is "heroically innocent."

NOTES

¹R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 4.

²Lewis, p. 5.

³Lewis, p. 5.

⁴William Faulkner, Go Down, Moses (1940; rpt. New York: Vintage Books, 1973), pp. 256-57. All further references to this volume will appear in the text.

⁵Lewis, p. 17.

⁶Lewis, p. 5.

⁷R. W. B. Lewis, "The Hero in the New World: William Faulkner's The Bear," Kenyon Review, 13 (1951), 654.

⁸Lewis, "The Hero," p. 659.

⁹Caroline Gordon, Old Red and Other Stories (New York: Scribner's, 1963), p. 158. All further references to this volume will appear in the text.

¹⁰Caroline Gordon, Aleck Maury, Sportsman (1934; rpt. Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1980), p. 54. All further references to this volume will appear in the text.

¹¹Lewis, p. 5.

¹²Nina Baym, "Melodramas of Beset Manhood: How Theories of American Fiction Exclude Women Authors," American Quarterly, 33 (1981), 133.

¹³Irving Howe, William Faulkner: A Critical Study, 3rd ed. (1951; rpt. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 144.

¹⁴Baym, 134.

¹⁵Olga Vickery, The Novels of William Faulkner: A Critical Interpretation (Baton Rouge: La. State Univ. Press), p. 133.

¹⁶Annette Kolodny, The Lay of the Land (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 7.

HERITAGE AND DERACINATION IN
FOUR KENTUCKY WRITERS

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Each of us must decide what attitude to take toward the past. To deny the past is in itself to take a particular attitude toward it. Certain conventional opinions color our general view of the past. For example, it is thought that dwelling in the past is as neurotic as repressing it. To romanticize or idealize the past, to live in the past, neglecting the present or the future is considered by most to be an unhealthy attitude. History, whether public or personal, is thought to teach us, to provide insight. We believe we learn useful lessons from history; we find role models in its heroes; we find instruction in its legends and its myths. Furthermore, we find our roots in both time and place. Roots, which generally seem to refer to place, also relate directly to time. Roots locate us, not only in community, in region, but also in history. But roots which reach into the past also provide nourishment for future growth. They provide continuity, and they offer the security and comfort of knowing and of being known.

The two words "heritage" and "deracination," respectively, carry positive and negative connotations. Generally we associate heritage with legacy, with inheritance, with family, while deracination makes us think of separation, of drifting, of being up-rooted. To deny one's heritage culturally is psychologically similar to repression, which produces neurosis or psychosis in an individual. To be denied one's heritage is considered oppression, as is implied, for example, by the recent emphasis on reconstructing black history or women's history. Deracination is synonymous with insecurity or alienation. The rootless person is an exile--a stranger in a strange land. Yet, looking at it another way, deracination may hold positive attributes. Autonomy and anonymity provide room to grow and to develop individuality; while on the contrary, being rooted permanently in one region or community may cause one to become "stuck in the mud," may stifle growth and change, and may threaten individuality. One may become "root-bound." New beginnings are always possible to those who can truly forget the past and put it behind them.

Just as everyone must, writers must also decide what attitudes to take toward the past--the historical or public past, or their own personal or private past. This paper will examine the attitudes toward the past of four contemporary writers of our own region--Kentucky. Janice Holt Giles in The Kentuckians, Harriette Simpson Arnow in The Kentucky Trace, Jane Stuart in Land of the Fox, and Elizabeth Hardwick in Sleepless Nights show very different attitudes

toward the past--both public and personal. Giles and Arnow, in their novels about Kentucky in the Revolutionary War, treat the historical past of the region. Stuart and Hardwick, in their experimental contemporary novels, attempt to come to grips with a personal or private past.

Of the four, Janice Holt Giles' novel, The Kentuckians,¹ exhibits the most conventional use of the past. It is a typical historical novel. Building upon public historical record, it brings together fictional, historical, and sometimes even legendary characters at a particular place during a specific time in history. Through the point of view of Dave Cooper, a fictional character, we see Benjamin Logan, James Harrod, Daniel Boone, George Rogers Clark, and many others, both historical and fictional, as they move through the Kentucky wilderness and settle at Boonesburg (Boonesborough), Harrodstown (Harrodsburg), and Logan's Fort (Stanford). Giles seems to be quite faithful to the public historical record of the time period--1775-1777. A comparison of her novel with histories of this Revolutionary War Era reveals few discrepancies.

Through the author's use of dialect and point of view we identify with the central consciousness, Dave Cooper, one of the original Long Hunters. We participate in his conflicts with Colonel Henderson and the Transylvania Company and in his disagreements and later alliances with Daniel Boone and James Harrod as he returns to Kentucky in 1775 to make his claim--to raise his cabin and plant his corn. We are with him as he hunts buffalo and fights Indians. By Giles' use of point of view the reader is brought into the value system of the frontier. We come to accept Cooper's attitude toward the land--the settling of it and the defense of it. Through the novel's fictional technique we come to understand emotionally as well as intellectually--at least insofar as the author understands--why the settlers went to the wilderness and why they stayed. We learn of their customs, their diets, the way they built and furnished their houses. We experience the way they fell in love and married, how they bore their children and how they suffered their losses. We see how they learned to live with danger. We participate in their daily life. Because we begin to identify with the characters, the author engages our emotions and we begin to care what happens. General knowledge of history serves as foreshadowing; familiar place names and the specific detail of setting link present readers directly to the characters--fictional and real. We begin to think of them as our fathers, our family, our forebears. We look at their bravery and come to admire our ancestors. This is a novel about heritage. This novel says, we accept the legacy of the pioneers. This is where we come from. This is where we are now rooted. Yet, the author, Janice Holt Giles, is not a true Kentuckian. Kentucky is her adopted not her native state.

Harriette Arnow's recent novel, The Kentucky Trace,² would appear on the surface to be a similar kind of book. It treats

the same historical era. Both novels are set in the same general region of Kentucky. Both are written in the style of a re-constructed frontier dialect. The Kentucky Trace uses a point of view similar to that of The Kentuckians. In Arnow's book the reader is inside the consciousness of William David Leslie Collins, a surveyor originally of a well-to-do Virginia family. Yet the books are similar only superficially. Although Giles' novel is a book about heritage, Arnow's novel is about deracination.

Near the opening of the novel Leslie Collins escapes being hanged only to find on returning to his home that his goods, his stock, his slaves, his wife and baby are gone without a trace. With something like relief he sets out for Kentucky, ostensibly to look for his family. However, he seems to regret the loss of his slaves and his goods much more than the loss of his wife and baby. We find that his had been a shotgun wedding and he knows the baby is not even his. Unlike Giles, Arnow makes little effort to link her historical novel to general knowledge of the period through characters or events. However, Arnow uses specific details in abundance to describe the trail her character takes to Kentucky: his diet, his clothing, the kinds of trees in the forests, the sounds of rain on dead pine needles on the trail, the smell of the campfires, the roar of the Falls of the Cumberland. It is easy enough to map Collins' trail by the names of rivers, but Arnow keeps him off the nearly legendary Wilderness Road and away from Harrodsburg and Boonesborough. Instead she leads him toward French Lick via Price's Station. Somewhere across the South Fork of the Cumberland she has him camp in a row of rockhouses. Here he chances upon a strange collection of rootless people: an Indian without a tribe; a black slave woman named Rachel; a nameless grey-eyed white baby whose mother won't claim him; and the mother, a "yellow-headed woman" traveling alone without a man--husband, lover, or guide. Here Collins stays to help another rootless man, Daniel Strunk, make saltpeter in exchange for the gunpowder that he desperately needs.

During Collins' stay at the rockhouse, Rachel names the baby William David after him, and Collins begins to call the Indian "Little Brother." Collins' slave, Jethro, appears with some of his stock, his dogs, his family Bible and the news that the wife and baby are dead. Collins' reaction to this news is to say: "Forget it. Sadie was dead. Quit looking back" (KT, p. 194). In fact, Collins' whole attitude toward the past is to "forget it":

Used to be? It didn't seem long since he'd heard his grandparents talk of the "used to be." He'd wondered then if the words meant the same thing as "back then." He shook his head. The used to be was for old men; men so old they had nothing left but the used to be. His wouldn't be much. Right now he ought to be making part of it. (KT, p. 146)

Collins, the son of Virginia gentry, finds himself drawn into this strange new "family." Looking toward the future rather than the past, Collins saves the baby from the wrath of its child-murdering mother, the "yellow-headed woman." He finds a cow to provide milk for the baby boy, and eventually christens and adopts him. Collins now desires to present the baby to his own parents as a grandchild since a letter from them tells him that they have disinherited their other sons for being on the wrong side of the Revolution--for being Loyalists. (We have already learned that Collins shot one of his own brothers at the battle of Camden.) Most of Collins' original family are dead or dispersed just as the colonies' original ties with the mother country are broken. England's attitude toward the colonies is mirrored by the yellow-headed woman's attitude toward her grey-eyed baby. Heritage is forsaken; revolution means deracination.

Collins previously had "cursed the writer for the lie put into his Bible" (KT, p. 67) when his wife Sadie entered the wrong date of birth for her bastard son in the Bible which held record of Collins' "maternal and paternal ancestors for five generations back" (KT, p. 66). Now Collins himself falsifies the record in the family history section of the Bible in order to claim William David as his own son. He writes a letter to his parents inventing a relationship and marriage to the child's imaginary mother. He even invents a gentleman's surname--Carlyle--for her so that his parents will more easily accept the baby as their own grandchild. In one sense William David is truly Leslie Collins' own son. The child bears Collins' name now and owes his life to the man who first saved him from a mother who wanted to kill him and then provided food to sustain that life. The bastard child adopted by a rootless surveyor will become the inheritor of the Collins family of Virginia. Leslie Collins has created his heritage.

In a way it seems ironic that Arnow turns to the earliest pages of our American history to talk about the advantages of deracination. Using an almost legendary time of the past--the American Revolution on the western frontier--The Kentucky Trace illustrates how a man can in a sense become his own ancestor, can shape his own destiny and take control of his own future. The real hope of the future of this country lies in the promise of the grandparents' acceptance of this bastard child as their own heir. In The Kentucky Trace Arnow rejects the ideas that the past was more stable than the present, that history is sacred, and that deracination is new. Instead she demonstrates that our American heritage is deracination.

Of the two books treating the personal past, Jane Stuart's unconventional novel, Land of the Fox,³ is based on the more conventional attitude--that denying or repressing the past can lead to psychosis. The point of view of this novel is that of a schizophrenic young woman, Kay Forrester, who suffers a mental breakdown. The reader is inside her consciousness, slipping out

of reality and into fantasy with no warning as the narrative shifts from first to third person and back. Kay Forrester's break with reality is caused by her repression of some traumatic facts of her past. Her fantasies take shape as a person--a fat man with a cigar who follows her persistently--and a place--the "land of the fox." Stuart describes this fantasyland: "O lovely country days when . . . I roamed the fields in dreams, my face buried in Queen Anne's lace and goldenrod, my feet so soft and tender in spring-green windswept grass" (LF, p. 4).

Describing this imaginary place Stuart writes:

In the forest, the pine trees are tall and dark. They stand so close together that their needles intertwine. No sunlight can slip through when winter winds whip the pines into erectness, snow slides across their heads and freezes solid, a roof of ice and steel seals out the peeking stars. Inside, it is warm and peaceful. The hard ground is carpeted with moss, trailing arbutus climbs this way and that, mushrooms grow tall and fat, happy seats for little elves who sew and sing. (LF, p. 24)

Details of country sweetness (quite reminiscent of some of the descriptions of the Kentucky scenery in Giles' novel) are mingled with fairy tale references to elves, frog princes, fairy princesses, and so forth. Kay Forrester, wife and mother, longs to be "A plain princess, a simple maiden returning home" (LF, p. 24). Instead she sees below her, "brained out on the sidewalk, raped and beaten, feet sticking up through the mud like the character of some Times-Picayune police report, . . . the people of [her] past, dragged along in their agony and kept alive by innumerable encounters, never allowed to croak into a glorious non-existence but throttled and strangled into admitting that they were and never should have been" (LF, p. 4).

Kay Forrester erupts into psychotic violence--she thinks she has killed her husband's boss when in fact she has turned the gun on herself. She is hospitalized and her mental health is restored when she faces her repressed past--the night she lost her virginity, not because she cared for the boy, but in order to be "free, of all the rules and traditions that were trying to make [her] part of a world [she] didn't want to be a part of" (LF, p. 146). She had felt rejected afterwards not only by the boy, but also by her community, because she was "different from the rest, different, different." She thinks, "Maybe they knew that I saw spirits from the past. . ." (LF, p. 146). She says to her husband, "When you took me away from it all, when you offered me a new life, it was already too late. Because I could not get away from the old one. But I can. . ." (LF, p. 146). After she has confronted her repressed past, Kay and her husband Jason decide to move away from the city of New Orleans. She says:

We are going back to where we lived before,
 when we were happier.
 We are going back to the land where our
 children were born. . . .
 We are going back, and we are going forward. . .
 We are returning to the land that borders the
 mystic blue lake--
 We are going back to the fourth element,
 earth. . . . (LF, p. 152)

The novel concludes on this note: "There can be no forgetting who I am or was, or what has happened to me. I thought, once, that I could forget completely--but I was wrong" (LF, p. 153). In Jane Stuart's novel *Kay Forrester* comes to the conclusion that the way to face the future and make a new beginning is not to forget the "used to be" as Leslie Collins of *Arnow's* novel says, but to remember the past truly and go on from there--paradoxically to go on by going back.

One is tempted to comment on Jane Stuart's own life choices in terms of the attitude expressed by the central character in *Land of the Fox*. Here is a woman who has chosen to compete with her own famous literary father who rooted himself and his works firmly in his own native region. His daughter, Jane, has said of herself, "I am one of the strangest kinds of Kentuckians--an expatriate. . . .I haven't really lived at home since I was sixteen. It will probably be a long time until I 'go home' again, too, because I've become caught up in my own way of life. . . . But it doesn't matter much beyond the homesickness that comes over me so often, because, in a way, I've never left Kentucky. I will always be more a part of the early years spent there than the later ones passed wandering all over the world. . . ."4 It is hard not to identify Kay Forrester, pursued by the hallucinatory fat man with a cigar, with Jane Stuart, pursued by the ghost of her own writer father, Jesse Stuart. It is hard not to see Kay Forrester's fantasy "land of the fox" as the fields and forests of Jane Stuart's old home place in W-Hollow in Eastern Kentucky--a real land of the fox. It is hard not to want to ask if the author has truly faced her own past so that she can go on to the future.

The last novelist I wish to consider is another expatriate Kentuckian, Elizabeth Hardwick. Of the four novelists I am discussing, Elizabeth Hardwick perhaps has the greatest literary reputation as a critic, as founding editor of the *New York Review of Books*, as the former wife of the New England poet Robert Lowell, and as the author of three novels. The most recent of these novels, *Sleepless Nights*,⁵ published in 1979, is an enigmatic book. Hardwick claims in the opening paragraph that it will be a "work of transformed and even distorted memory" (SN, p. 3). One reviewer observes: "At first reading, *Sleepless Nights* appears to be a haphazard assemblage of fragmentary portraits, anecdotes, aphorisms, meditative generalizations, wayward bits and

pieces. . . ."6 The book fits none of our preconceived ideas about novels because it has no plot, tells no real story, and has no characters who really engage our sympathies. The same reviewer says that Hardwick depends "almost entirely on style as her principle of unity" writing "beautiful words about ugly, desperate, boring people."7

Elizabeth Hardwick claims the novel is not autobiography and yet she names her central character Elizabeth, gives her a youth in Lexington, Kentucky, and has her leave Lexington to live in New York City just as the author herself did. Yet, as another reviewer has observed, the reader senses that "Hardwick has kept us at a distance while she hides behind the veils of memory."8 I fear that both these reviewers miss the point of this novel. In a television interview with Dick Cavett shortly after the publication of her novel, Elizabeth Hardwick said that she felt deracination was one of the most important themes in contemporary fiction. Sleepless Nights is a novel about that contemporary phenomenon of deracination, and I believe a close examination of this novel will prove most enlightening in this discussion of heritage and deracination.

It is not exactly accidental that all the Kentucky writers I am discussing are women. The question of heritage and deracination is particularly acute to a woman. Consider the most elementary fact of heritage, "carrying on the family name": as soon as a woman contracts a traditional marriage she forfeits that primary right of heritage, and in her subsequent name change must necessarily experience an intense feeling of deracination. Pause to consider for a moment a woman such as Elizabeth Hardwick who in an earlier time refused to accept the venerable name of the Lowells of Boston and instead chose to live, to work, and to write under her own Lexington, Kentucky, name of Hardwick.

The most puzzling thing about Hardwick's recent novel, Sleepless Nights, is an absence, a silence. Nowhere in this pseudo-autobiography, this pseudo-memoir, does she remember or reminisce about her famous husband, Robert Lowell, although she speaks of him occasionally as *He* (in italics). She writes of her life in Boston thus: "Boston: an intermission. Many things happen between the acts. Everything has come to me and been taken from me because of moving from place to place" (SN, p. 121). This is a book about what takes place "between the acts"--during the intermission. And in fact, isn't this personal focus a truer, even a more realistic way of perceiving the past? The matters of public record--whether historical or personal--never contain the real truth of our heritage.

Elizabeth Hardwick's persona Elizabeth in Sleepless Nights suffers from insomnia. As she lies awake--sleepless--she remembers incidental bits and pieces of her life: Henry Clay High School in Lexington, the university, "Man o' War on view," images of horses "everywhere, on calendars, on ashtrays," the races,

dancing at Joyland. She remembers her maids, Josette and Ida, and their lives. She thinks of a homosexual young man, J., whom she lived with in the Hotel Schuyler when she first went to New York; she remembers Billie Holiday as she and J. saw her and heard her sing. She recalls a certain man named Alex as "a type, a genre," and a Dr. Z in Holland and his love affairs. She thinks of bag ladies in New York, of a murdered friend. But she does not reminisce about her husband.

Early in the novel Hardwick writes:

It is not true that it doesn't matter where you live, that you are in Hartford or Dallas merely yourself. Also it is not true that all are linked naturally to their regions. Many are flung down carelessly at birth and they experience the diminishment and sometimes the pleasant truculence of their random misplacement. . . .

The stain of place hangs on not as a birth-right but as a sort of artifice, a bit of cosmetic. I place myself among the imports, those jarring and jarred pieces that sit in the closet among the matching china sets. I have no relations that I know of born outside the South and hardly any living outside it even today. Nevertheless, I am afraid of the country night and its honest slumbers, uneasy even in the daylight with "original settlers" and old American stock. The highway, the asphalt paths, the thieves, the contaminated skies like a suffocating cloak of mangy fur, the millions in their boroughs--that is truly home. (SN, p. 12)

She writes of her Kentucky homeplace:

Farewell to Kentucky and our agreeable vices. We go to bed early, but because of whiskey seldom with a clear head. We are fond of string beans and thin slices of salty ham. When I left home my brother said: It will be wonderful if you make a success of life, then you can follow the races.

Farewell to the precious limestone, to the dynasties of swift horse bones. (SN, p. 18)

After she left Kentucky and went to live in the Hotel Schuyler in New York, she says, "The rootlessness hardened over everything, like a scab" (SN, p. 33). She writes, "When you travel your first discovery is that you do not exist" (SN, p. 5). She says photographs bear record of the past, and of her own photo-

graphs she says she has "three hundred or more, that bear witness to form; pictures in the drawer, in the old box, photographs that make one his own ancestor. Of others I have cared about, cared for years--not a trace, not a fingerprint. As it should be. Those who leave nothing behind cannot be missed for long" (SN, p. 71). In trying to define her past, her heritage, Elizabeth says she has been "looking for the fossilized, for something--persons and places thick and encrusted with final shape; instead there are many, many minnows, wildly swimming, trembling, vigilant to escape the net" (SN, pp. 5-6). Hardwick opens her novel by saying, "If only one knew what to remember or pretend to remember. Make a decision and what you want from the lost things will present itself. You can take it down like a can from a shelf. Perhaps. One can would be marked Rand Avenue in Kentucky and some would recall the address at least as true. Inside the can are the blackening porches of winter, the gas grates, the swarm" (SN, pp. 3-4). She concludes this novel about heritage and deracination, this record of many "sleepless nights" by writing, "Sometimes I resent the glossary, the concordance of truth, many have about my real life, have like an extra pair of spectacles. I mean that such fact is to me a hindrance to memory" (SN, p. 151).

Of these four Kentucky women writers, both Arnow and Giles chose the point of view of men, ignoring the question as it particularly concerns women. Jane Stuart uses the point of view of a woman surrounded and persecuted by men--the fat man, her husband, his boss, her psychiatrist. Even the hallucinatory "Foxy" of the "land of the fox" is male. Kay Forrester must somehow find herself as a woman in this "forest" of men. But Elizabeth Hardwick faces head on--as a woman--the question of heritage and deracination. She writes: "I have always, all of my life, been looking for help from a man. It has come many times and many more it has not" (SN, p. 12). She also comments, "Orgasms of twenty years ago leave no memory" (SN, p. 66).

Hardwick starts Elizabeth on the most ordinary way of searching for heritage--looking to her parents. She writes, "Mother and father are soon dead. That is what it all comes to, but do they see their own death as the loss of mother and father?" (SN, pp. 13-14). Elizabeth dismisses her father rather unceremoniously, remembering him merely as being "in the room next to the attic, reading and smoking. He may be a little drunk--it is night" (SN, p. 94). Hardwick writes: "I can see him only as a character in literature, already recorded. I will say, can say, he was very handsome, and indeed, when embalmed, with his hair parted on the wrong side, his profile reminded everyone of that of John Barrymore. . . . He was not defined by work but by the avoidance of it. . ." (SN, pp. 90-91). It is the presence of Elizabeth's mother which pervades the novel. She says of her mother, "I never knew anyone so little interested in memory, in ancestors, in records, in sweetened back-glancing sceneries, little adornments of pride" (SN, p. 92). She remembers about her: "I never knew a person so indifferent to the past. It

was as if she did not know who she was" (SN, p. 6). But she says, "I was bewitched by my mother and would wake up on 116th Street in New York longing for the sight of her round, soft curves, her hair twisted into limp curls at the temples, her weight on the stepladder washing windows, her roasts and potatoes and fat yeast rolls; and her patient breathing in the back room as she lay sleeping in a lumpy old feather bed" (SN, p. 18). The novel is filled with letters from Elizabeth to her mother, some beginning, "Dear Mama," some "Dearest M." Through the many letters to her mother Elizabeth defines her uniquely female heritage. In this way, Elizabeth Hardwick attempts to become her own ancestor, as a persona with her own name defines a heritage paradoxically achieved through deracination. She asks herself, "Why didn't you change your name? Then you could make up anything you like, without it seeming to be true when all of it is not?" And then she replies, "I do not know the answer." Yet this book, alone of all these four, really comes to grips with the question.

Of these four women novelists, three have chosen to leave their native Kentucky, whereas the fourth chose instead to leave her own home state and to adopt Kentucky. In a sense, each has written her own history. Even Giles, the one most faithful to public knowledge, has established her own heritage through her own deracination. But of the four, Elizabeth Hardwick is the one who is most conscious of the question of heritage and deracination as it relates to region. Janice Holt Giles follows the traditional path of seeking roots in history and being faithful to that public record. Jane Stuart has her character accept the Freudian premise of facing traumatic events of the past factually before being able to live in the future, yet she seems unable, as a writer, to accept the same premise for herself. Harriette Arnow and Elizabeth Hardwick both seem to advocate a radical re-writing of history, to recommend an acceptance of deracination as a positive, on-going, affirmative experience, perhaps a necessary experience.

These four novels set forth very different ways of treating the past: to re-enter the past and re-live it, reconstructing it as factually as possible; to forget the past, to forge one's own history, create one's own heritage, and forget the "used to be"; to remember the past truly, face it squarely and then go on to the future by going back to the past; and last, to remember whatever sticks in the memory because that is the true past regardless of what public record holds. In this last novel Hardwick says to let those memories swim freely into the mind--the "many, many minnows, wildly swimming, trembling, vigilant to escape the net"--but to accept the fact that memory is always transformed, distorted. She says that we all write our own histories, regardless of how hard we try to do otherwise.

From these novels we can conclude, then, that a healthy approach is to develop a sense of individual identity inside a sense of place, but to look back at the past without either fear

or nostalgia; to assimilate whatever we see there of value and to ruthlessly discard the useless; to be selective, to pick and choose as we write our own histories; to create our own legends and myths, to make ourselves our own ancestors.

NOTES

¹Janice Holt Giles, The Kentuckians (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 1953).

²Harriette Simpson Arnow, The Kentucky Trace: A Novel of the American Revolution (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1974); hereafter cited in the text as KT.

³Jane Stuart, Land of the Fox (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1975); hereafter cited in the text as LF.

⁴In an introduction to White Barn, as quoted in Dorothy Edwards Townsend, Kentucky in American Letters, Vol. III, 1913-1975 (Georgetown Kentucky: Georgetown College Press, 1976), pp. 324-325.

⁵Elizabeth Hardwick, Sleepless Nights (New York: Random House, 1979); hereafter cited in the text as SN.

⁶Pearl K. Bell, "Elizabeth Hardwick and Mary McCarthy," Commentary, October 1979, p. 65.

⁷Bell, p. 66.

⁸Doris Grumback, Review of Sleepless Nights, Chronicle of Higher Education, 14 May 1979, p. R10.