

Alabama Folklife

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News and Information about Alabama's Traditional Culture

Spring 1998

Building Slat Box Fish Traps is a Family Tradition

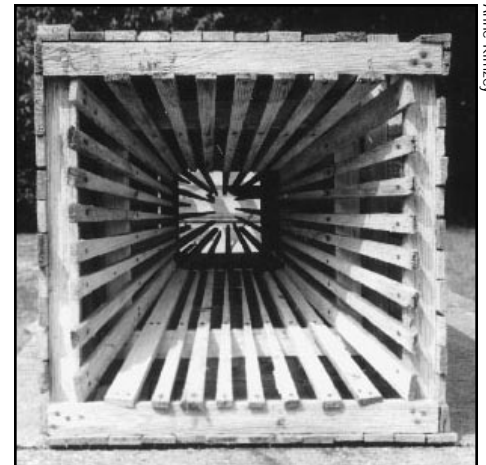
Among the array of commercial fishing products one can buy from the Memphis Net and Twine Company catalog are "square catfish traps" for approximately \$35.00 each. Members of the Haggard family of Waterloo (Lauderdale County) have always made their own fish traps by hand out of white oak.

Wayne Haggard learned this vanishing craft from his father, who fished commercially on the Tennessee River for more than thirty years. "We were born and raised on the side of the river. And when I got home from school it was my job to re-rack the bait lines or repair the nets, or whatever it took for us to make a living," he said. Now Haggard has taught his son Shannon how to make the traps. The two men participate in the State Arts Council's

Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program, which administers teaching grants encouraging masters of traditional arts to preserve their knowledge by passing their skills on to a new generation.

Sitting under a shed in his backyard, Wayne Haggard explained the seasonal activity of building the traps. "We get out here on a rainy day when we can't do nothing else and we'll build boxes anywhere from one week to three weeks, or four. Whatever it takes. Depends on how many boxes we're going to use that year to fish."

They start with knotless, number one grade white oak from the sawmill. They build the framework first, which is four square frames that include the funnels. Each box has two cone-shaped funnels, a "false



Anne Kimzey

The funnels on a slat-box trap allow fish to swim in but not out.

funnel" that directs the fish into the box and the actual "holding funnel." The second funnel has thin slats, the ends of which come close together

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Anne Kimzey

Wayne (left) and Shannon Haggard of Waterloo built this fish trap from thin strips of white oak.

Slat Box Fish Trap *(From Page 1)*

at the "throat," so the fish can't get back out the way they came in.

The next step is to cut the lumber into thin slats five feet long using a table saw. "We'll just stand here and we'll rip boards for hours," said Haggard. Once all the materials are ready, they nail the slats to the framework, clipping the sharp ends of the nails off first so that they won't split the thin boards. On one side of the box they fashion a removable door, which is held in place by wooden "barn-door hinges" until the fisherman empties his catch.

The boxes have a bait section and a holding section. The boards are close together on the bait section, so that the bait filters out only through the funnels to lure the fish in. Legally, "the holding part has to have slats 1 1/4 inches apart for the

small fish to get out," said Haggard. "A fish that small is no good anyhow."

The boxes are baited with five pounds of scrap cheese, the older and smellier the better. Boxes have a "tail line" rope on one end that is attached to an anchor weight, usually an eight-inch concrete block. The whole box is sunk in the river with the funnel end facing downstream. "You position the throat of the box down the river, where the current will carry the bait down and the fish swim up," said Haggard. They follow the bait into the box.

"It's just a big minnow trap that's all it is."

New boxes have to be weighted with rocks until they become water-logged enough to stay on the bottom. When it's time to check the boxes (every few days), they go to the location of each box, drag to find the rope and then haul the box into the boat to empty the catch and rebait the trap. When Haggard was active in commercial fishing, he would have four "runs" of about 15 to 20 boxes each. A run, he explained, is a string of boxes down one side of the river, that a fisherman will go out and check at one time.

Boxes are fished in shallow water, about six to 15 feet and catch mainly small catfish around 3/4 to one pound. "On occasion we have caught a three pound fish, but that's when they're really running good," he said.



Anne Kimzey

The Haggards also fish with nets and trotlines. These "jump boxes" are used for baiting the many hooks on a trot line and feeding the lines into the water from a moving boat.

They catch mostly "willow cat, channel cat, and a few blue cat. If you get a flathead yellow cat in this box, he'll be the only fish you'll have. They're afraid of him. He's an enemy to other catfish. He eats live bait," said Haggard.

Fishing with boxes is only one method available to commercial fisherman, said Haggard. He has also fished with trot lines, hoop nets and gill nets. He often combines the shallow water boxes with hoop nets which he uses in deeper water. The business is also seasonal. "Certain kinds of fish run at certain times of year. Whatever's running is what you go catch," he explained. "These boxes are fished in the wintertime when you've got more current. The muddier the water the more fish you're going to catch. And on a good year, when we get lots of rain, we eat better around here."

— ANNE KIMZEY

Alabama Folklife

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Southern Folklorists Named Chairs of National Endowments

President Clinton has named two Southern folklorists, William R. "Bill" Ferris and William J. "Bill" Ivey to head, respectively, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts. The United States Senate recently confirmed both men.

Bill Ferris served for 18 years as the founding director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi in Oxford. There he produced a number of films and publications, including the best selling *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. He is a recipient of the Charles Frankel Prize in the Humanities.

Since 1971, Bill Ivey has directed the Country Music Foundation in Nashville, Tennessee. The Foundation operates the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, manages historic properties and publishes a respected journal. Ivey is a national trustee of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences and, since 1994, has served on the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.

In recent years, controversy and conservative political opposition have beleaguered both Endowments; but both Ferris and Ivey are attracting enthusiastic bipartisan support. Republican Senator Jim Jeffords called Bill Ivey "an excellent leader of the agency." Senator Edward Kennedy called Ivey an "excellent choice to lead this agency into the next millennium." Ferris was strongly supported by President Clinton and Vice President Gore as well as by Republican Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi.

Hank Willett, director of the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, has known both Ferris and Ivey for some twenty years. "I think they are both extremely well suited for their new positions," he said. "In

their many accomplishments they have demonstrated great political acumen. Both Endowments will be well served. And both Bill Ferris and Bill Ivey possess a deep knowledge of and respect for the traditional culture of Alabama and the South."



David A. Taylor

Folklorists Bill Ferris (left) and Bill Ivey recently assumed the top posts at the NEH and NEA. (Photo courtesy of the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress)

Tributaries Available in Fall

Three years ago, the Alabama Folklife Association first published *Tributaries*, a scholarly journal devoted to Alabama folk culture.

AFA has accepted articles for its next issue of *Tributaries*. Publication is planned for fall of 1998. This is the second issue of the occasional journal, which serves as a much-needed outlet for current folklife research in the state.

Members of AFA will each receive a free copy as a benefit of membership. All other copies will be sold for \$10.00 apiece. With the help of the Alabama State Council on the Arts, AFA will distribute copies to each library in Alabama.

This issue of *Tributaries* presents a variety of topics. Alan Brown's essay on outlaws and their legends

puts Alabama outlaws in a national perspective and offers another look at a familiar folkloric text. Suzanne Marshall's piece on the poisoning of Sweet Valley examines a traditional community under stress and how its members bonded together under horrific circumstances.

Pat Huber and David Anderson offer a glimpse at the local cultural sources for "The Log Train," a song written by Alabama's celebrated performer, Hank Williams. In his article "My Great-Grandmother Was a Cherokee Princess: The Unknown Indians of the South," Fred Fussell steps on our toes a bit with a humorous look at the controversial topic of American Indian-ness.

With a profile of African-American women singers from the

Wiregrass region, Jerrilyn McGregory gives credit to overlooked and under-appreciated cultural leaders.

Book and record reviews profile a few important recent offerings that are available for researchers, teachers and students of Alabama culture.

Three obituaries celebrate the lives of Sacred Harp singing master Dewey P. Williams, herbalist Tommie Bass, and retired railroad worker Cornelius Wright. These three men achieved national recognition through their knowledge, teaching and presentation of Alabama folk traditions.

For more information contact:

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Monroe County Man Shares Memories of Life on the Alabama River

When he was growing up in the 1930s in Packer's Bend (Monroe County), Slater Huff, Jr. helped his father operate the Davis Ferry on the Alabama River.

The ferry took passengers, and sometimes livestock, back and forth from Packer's Bend to the community of Franklin on the other side of the river. He began helping his father when he was 7 years old and by the time he was 11 his father trusted him to run the operation by himself. He remembers charging 50 cents per car or wagon and 10 cents for people on foot. On Sundays, people going to church got a free ride on the ferry.

Ferry service was available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week except when the river was too high. The Huffs lived near the river landing, so it was not uncommon for travelers to wake them up in the middle of the night for a ride across the river.

At the time, the ferry consisted of a motor boat tied to a flat. If no wagons or cars were crossing they would use only the boat to ferry passengers and leave the flat tied to the river bank.

Downstream from the ferry landing, Slater Huff's father and other men tied logs together into large rafts of 300 logs or more to be floated down river to sawmills near Mobile. This was dangerous work. Huff said that his father's partner was killed when a log rolled over him. He recalled the men who rode on these huge rafts, steering with a rudder, the three to five days it took to get to Mobile. They'd return by bus to the community of Sunny South, walk or hitch a ride to the river landing and be ready to go on the next raft. Huff never worked on the rafts himself, he

said, because by the time he was old enough and strong enough to do the work, barges had come into use to transport logs.

Slater Huff quit working the ferry when he left home to serve in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He returned after the war and worked for the Scotch Lumber Company in Fulton, where he was employed for 46 years until his retirement last year at age 71.

The county still operates the ferry, which is now based on the Franklin side of the river. The ferry keeps Packer's Bend from being isolated from the rest of the county. Many of the teachers at Monroe Senior High School come in from across the river and the ferry may save them as much as 60 miles on their commute. According to Huff, a trip to Monroeville by road from Packer's Bend is about 84 miles. Taking the ferry makes the trip only 28 miles.

Slater Huff's experiences on the river became the subject of a special performance sponsored by the PACERS Small Schools Cooperative, a program of the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. For a project that brings together students and elders in their communities, students at Monroe Senior High interviewed Huff and then, with the help of songwriter Larry Long, they wrote a song about life on the Alabama River. The students and Long performed the song for the



Anne Kimzey

Slater Huff, Jr., of Lower Peachtree (Monroe County) stands at the spot on the Alabama River where he and his father ran the ferry in the 1930s.

community and Huff gave his own performance on the harmonica.

The Monroe Senior High Students and Huff are joining several other PACERS schools to perform at the City Stages Festival in Birmingham and at the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife this summer. A photo of Slater Huff, Jr. is also featured in an exhibit titled "Water Ways: the Traditional Culture of Alabama's River Systems," which is touring schools and museums throughout Alabama. This summer the exhibit is appearing at the North Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce (Bay Minette), the Baldwin County Heritage Museum (Elberta), Old Alabama Town (Montgomery), the Museum of East Alabama (Opelika), and the Water Course (Clanton). For more information call the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, (334) 242-3601.

— ANNE KIMZEY

Youths and Elders Perform at Smithsonian Folklife Festival

Students and an elders from Monroe Senior High School in Packer's Bend (Monroe County) and T. W. Martin High School in Goodsprings (Walker County) performed with musician and educator, Larry Long, on the National Mall on June 26. Long's performance with youth and elders from rural Alabama was featured at "Folkways at Fifty," the 50th anniversary celebration of Folkways Records. The celebration was part of the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife this year.

Long and the students performed original songs based on the life stories of elders in their communities. One of the songs, "Hey, Coal Miner," is featured on two compact disc recordings released by Folkways. The recordings are, "Here I stand: Elders' Wisdom, Children's Song, Larry Long with the

Youth and Elders of Rural Alabama" (1996), and the "Smithsonian/Folkways' Children's Music Collection" (1998).

Working with Long in Alabama, students invited community elders into their schools to tell life stories. Long and the students wrote songs based on the elders' stories. Then the students and Long performed the songs and honored elders in performances in each community. The educational process undertaken by students, teachers, and community members, and developed by Long, is known as "Community Celebration of Place." Live recordings featured on the Folkways discs were taken from Community Celebrations of Place in rural Alabama schools.

The group making the trip to Washington, D.C. represented member schools of the PACERS

Cooperative, a program engaged in collaborative work, such as "Community Celebration of Place," with intent to celebrate and prove the viability of small rural schools and places. The PACERS Cooperative is sponsored by the Program for Rural Services and Research of the University of Alabama and ACCESS (the Alabama Coalition of Citizens for Excellence in Small Schools). The Cooperative is also a partner in the Annenberg Rural Challenge.

"We're thankful that Smithsonian/Folkways is willing to offer the opportunity for the children to perform," said Long before leaving on the trip. "We're thankful that they're gracious enough to fly children from rural Alabama not only to see the capital and honor their elders, but to be honored themselves."

Apprenticeship Grants Awarded

The Folk Arts Program of the Alabama State Council on the Arts awarded 16 folk art apprenticeship grants for 1998 totaling \$20,500. This is the thirteenth year of the apprenticeship program, which seeks to preserve important artistic traditions by giving teaching grants to master folk artists to pass their skills on to the next generation.

Recipients of the apprenticeship grants include:

William Bailey of Poarch (Escambia Co.) is teaching the Creek Indian Language to children from the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

Calvin Bodiford of Luverne (Crenshaw Co.) gives many students lessons in old-time music on a variety of stringed instruments.

Gwen Chafin of Arab (Marshall Co.) is teaching white oak basketry to two students.

Amanda Denson of Haleyville (Winston Co.) conducts Sacred Harp singing schools in her community.

Nora Ezell, a noted African-American quilter from Tuscaloosa, teaches quilting to five students.

Wayne Haggard, a commercial fisherman from Waterloo (Lauderdale Co.), is teaching his son to construct several types of fish nets.

William "Gene" Ivey of Ider (DeKalb Co.), an old time fiddler, teaches instrument making and fid-

dling to students on Sand Mountain.

Japheth Jackson of Ozark (Dale Co.) teaches Sacred Harp singing to children in his community.

Annette Jordan, a pine straw basket maker from Eutaw (Greene Co.), is instructing four students in her craft.

Willie King, a blues musician from Aliceville (Pickens Co.), teaches four students acoustic and electric blues guitar.

Jerry McCain, nationally known bluesman from Gadsden, instructs three students on the blues harmonica.

Betty Ray of Holly Pond (Cullman Co.) is teaching bluegrass guitar and singing to two students.

Odessa Rice of Eutaw (Greene Co.) teaches pine needle basketry to seven students from the Black Belt Region.

Jeff Sheppard of Glencoe (Etowah Co.) will teach five Sacred Harp singing schools in north Alabama.

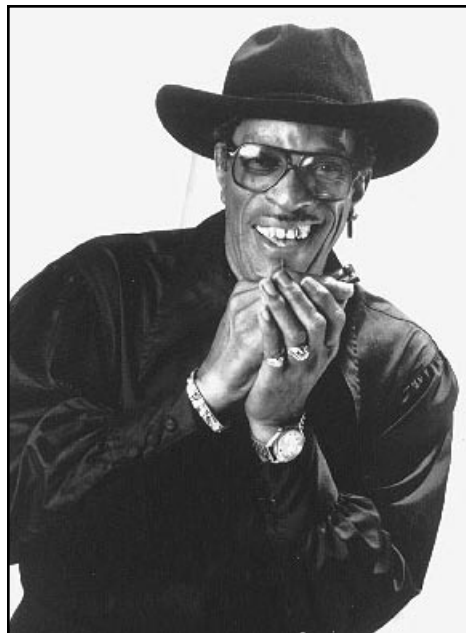
Joe Bob Traylor of Woodland (Randolph Co.) passes on his family tradition of making bent willow furniture to his son and daughter.

J. C. Williams of Boligee (Greene Co.) teaches white oak basketry to four students.

The deadline to apply for next year's apprenticeship program is October 1, 1998.

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Johnban Records

Jerry "Boogie" McCain, master of the blues harmonica, will teach through the state's Folk Arts Apprenticeship Program.

Boggs Pottery Shop Has Long History

The Boggs family began making and selling pottery in Prattville a century ago. Although they are no longer actively making pottery, they continue to manufacture concrete horticultural products and garden statuary.

Since the earliest days of Alabama's statehood, family pottery shops like Boggs supplied communities with the necessities of food preparation and storage.

For most of their pottery making careers, the Boggs produced utilitarian stoneware. Unlike earthenware, the clay body in a stoneware vessel vitrifies at the high temperature at which it is fired (2100 - 2500 degrees F). This quality made it waterproof and ideal for "canning." A homemade ash-based glaze gave these early vessels a green color.

Storage and canning jars were produced to store food on early farms and plantations. Jugs were produced to hold cider, vinegar and whiskey, an economically important product of the corn crop in earlier times. Churns were made for the production of butter. Other house-

hold items such as chamber pots, and serving bowls, were also a part of the local potter's repertoire. In the nineteenth century, forms such as jars, churns, jugs and bowls were cheaper to make locally, while tableware such as plates and cups were often manufactured in Europe or elsewhere and bought in stores.

The Boggs family first made pottery in the Rock Mills community of Randolph County, Alabama in the nineteenth century. Rock Mills was a noted "jugtown" attracting frontier potters in the 1830s. According to family tradition, the Boggs family made pottery during this early period alongside their neighbors—the Usserys, Mapps, Shepards, Belchers, McPhersons and Henrys.

Late in the nineteenth century, the economic development of Alabama and its railroad system increased demand for pottery. Potters managed to capture the market in new south cities such as Birmingham and Anniston, making use of the railroads both to ship their wares and to import the economical, brown-colored Albany slip glaze.

Many young potters from Rock Mills left and established potteries in other parts of the state to meet this new demand.

According to the 1900 Census, James Andrew Boggs (1872 - 1961) moved from Rock Mills and was making pottery in Autauga Co. near Prattville. By 1910, he and his family went back to Rock Mills and remained until they returned to the Montgomery area in the 1930's. James A. Boggs also worked in Colorado and, for a time, at the Spruce Pine art pottery in Franklin County, Alabama.

The family eventually located on Highway 31 near the present Pine Level exit on I-65. Here, he and his sons, James J., Virgil E., and Horatio carried on the family tradition of pottery making. In a 1945 *Birmingham News* article, James A. Boggs commented "we grew up as pottery makers, that's all."

If the last decades of the nineteenth century were the golden age for pottery activity in Alabama, the first quarter of the twentieth century signaled the beginning of a rapid decline. One reason for the decline was the development, beginning in the 1880s, of large industrial pottery factories in the Midwest that could turn out quantities of uniform wares, produced in molds, and then shipped south at a price cheaper than the local potters could match.

Another, more fundamental reason for the decline was the development of canning and refrigeration technology that required different types of wares, such as vacuum-sealed glass canning jars. The traditional pottery that the people of Alabama had relied on for years — the crocks, jugs and churns — began to look crude and primitive when compared to the new products. Folk potters adjusted to the change as best they could. Most pot-



Bonner Boggs, Ralph Phillips and Will Boggs made pottery in Rock Mills (Randolph County) in the 19th century. (Photo courtesy of Carolyn Pound Holder)

Boggs Pottery Shop *(From Page 6)*

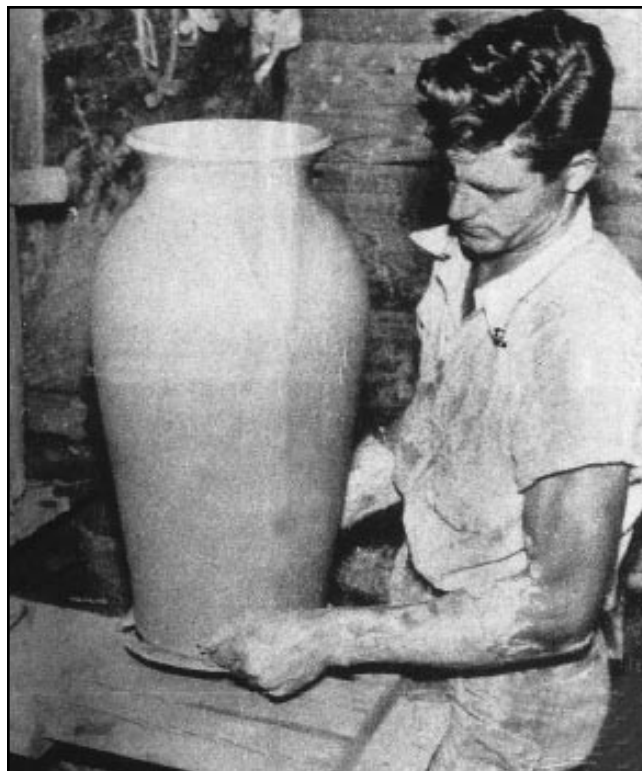
ters faced this declining market by expanding their line of wares. By the turn of the century, the utilitarian pottery market had declined to such a degree that potters began making ornamental and horticultural wares to remain in business.

Eventually, James A. Boggs's son, Horatio "Ho" Boggs, took over the shop. Initially, "Ho" ran the shop with the help of his father and father-in-law, potter Hogan Tatum. Later, with his sons, Horatio, Jr., Wayne and nephew, Malcomb, they specialized in unglazed horticultural wares such as flowerpots and strawberry jars. Eventually, the grandchildren of Ho Boggs—Bo, Mary Margaret and Wayne, Jr., also worked at the pottery.

Today, the two family-operated shops in Alabama still making folk pottery are Jerry Brown's Pottery in Hamilton and the Miller Pottery just south of Brent on Highway 5. Like the Miller family of Brent, the Boggs

stopped making glazed wares in the 1940s and 50s to concentrate on unglazed garden wares. Eventually, they made more and more molded vessels and added molded concrete garden statuary to their repertoire. They also sold European garden pottery in addition to their own. Unlike the Millers, the Boggs never attempted to reinstate a line of glazed pottery.

Family pottery shops like the Boggs are a waning phenomenon. Even so, the stoneware and earthenware vessels made by four generations of the Boggs family in Prattville remain in



Horatio "Ho" Boggs is shown here at work in his pottery shop in the late 1930s.

service and have become the quarry of antique dealers.

— JOEY BRACKNER

Project Researches Use of Lloyd Hymnal

"Our people held the Lloyd hymnal to be sacred right behind the Bible. Take the Bible first and the hymnbook second," said singer David Lee of Hoboken, Georgia, in a recent interview with Joyce Cauthen and Joey Brackner. "I wouldn't no more disparage or discredit that book than I would the Bible itself because that is the way we were brought up - we were very respectful of that book."

Lee was speaking of a small, text-only hymn book, *Benjamin Lloyd's Primitive Hymns*, originally published in Alabama in 1841, that remains in use by Primitive Baptists across the nation.

Last year the Alabama Folklife Association received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to fund research and publication of a book of essays about the hymnal.

The book will have an enclosed CD showing the wide variety of ways in which hymns are sung resulting from the fact that there is no musical notation in the hymnal.

Thus far Joyce Cauthen has done a great deal of library research on the subject and made numerous recordings of African-American congregations in the Sipsey River Association in Greene and Pickens counties singing from Lloyd's. She plans to record the singing style of the Big Creek Association in Western Tennessee, whose members sing in a similar style but with different timing than the Sipsey singers.

Steve Grauberger has recorded African-American congregations in Macon County whose singing is quite different in melody and rhythm from that in the Sipsey Association. Steve and Joyce have also recorded

white hymn singers from Bibb County whose singing is greatly influenced by the four-part harmony they sing from *The Christian Harmony*, a shape-note book.

Joyce Cauthen and Joey Brackner recently recorded the Lee family from near Waycross, Georgia, who have long enjoyed singing from *The Sacred Harp*, and thus sing hymns from Lloyd's with the harmonies and timing they use when singing from that venerable shape-note book outside of church meetings.

Funding for the project continues through September 1998. The resulting publication and CD will add to our knowledge of Alabama's sacred music traditions and enable a wider audience to hear melodies that have been passed on orally for generations without ever having been written down.

Capitol Rotunda Singing is a Success

Let me tell you about the first "Mid Winter Sing" held in the rotunda at the Alabama State Capitol in Montgomery on Saturday January 31, 1998. The singers used four of the oblong shaped-note books published in Alabama. These are *Sacred Harp* (1991 Denson revision), *Christian Harmony* (1994 revision), *Sacred Harp* (1992 Cooper revision) and the *Colored Sacred Harp*.

For the past 12 years shape-note singing has been going on in the capital city. For the first two such gatherings, the singing was held at Dexter Avenue Methodist Church. It then moved to Old Alabama Town in the Grange Hall through the courtesy of Hank Willett and others connected with the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture. The first dozen sings were held on the third Thursday in July of each year.

Jim Carnes who lives in Montgomery is a qualified master of shape-note singing. He and Joey Brackner, who is the Folklife

Program manager for the Alabama State Council on the Arts, and others, felt that one singing each year was not enough, and that we should seek permission to hold a singing in the winter in the rotunda at the State Capitol.

Permission was granted.

The first sing was announced for Saturday, January 31st. WOW! Seemingly singers came from everywhere. In fact they did come from 34 Alabama cities and towns, plus four different states. The acoustics were good. The singers were in the mood to sing. You would have to be there to see, participate and hear what a joyful singing the group did make. It was an uplifting experience.

Many singers believe that when using the four shape-note books, it



Anne Kinzey

J. C. Harden, 92, of Banks, (Pike County) directs a Sacred Harp tune from the Cooper book.

allows all shape-note singers to participate, blending their voices together in sweet harmony.

— ART DEASON

Editor's Note: Art Deason is a Christian Harmony singing master from Centreville (Bibb County) and recipient of the 1997 Alabama Folk Heritage Award. He is a founder and organizer of the annual Capital City Shape Note Singing.

Anne Kinzey



Standing under the dome of the State Capitol, Stanley Smith of Ozark (Dale County) leads a song at this statewide shape-note singing held in January

Twelfth Annual Capital City Singing

On July 16th, staff of the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture welcomed shape note singers to Montgomery's Old Alabama Town Grange Hall for the 12th annual Capital City Singing.

Some early risers arrived at 9:30 a.m. Singing officially began at 10 a.m. We were blessed with singers coming from many parts of Alabama and Florida.

Preference for certain books seemed to disappear as the different books were used. Anyway, where can you go to sing from four different books at the same convention? We had several first-timers. It was an enjoyable day for all.

"Blessed be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love."

—ART DEASON

Alabama Sampler CD Features Traditional Music from City Stages

Many of Alabama's best-known folk performers are featured on a newly released compact disc recording titled *The Alabama Sampler*. Produced in honor of the Birmingham City Stages festival's 10th anniversary, the CD contains 17 exciting live performances from the Alabama Sampler stage, which began its existence in 1989 as the Alabama Folklife Festival.

The hour-long CD includes 16 pages of liner notes. It makes it possible to hear, once again, the music of the late Dewey Williams, J.D. Whited, Albert Macon, and Cornelius Wright, and to continue to appreciate the talents of performers who are still with us.



The Sterling Jubilee Singers

Production of the CD was funded by Nextel, City Stages and the Alabama Folklife Association. To order: send a check for \$12 payable to the Alabama Folklife Association, c/o the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, 410 N. Hull Street, Montgomery, AL 36104.

The Alabama Sampler contains the following selections:

1. Little Whitt and Big Bo - *"My Home is in the Delta"* (blues)
2. The Adairs - *"Wild Bill Jones"* (bluegrass)
3. Cornelius Wright - railroad work calls (narrative)
4. James Bryan & Carl Jones - *"Whistleby"* (old-time fiddle)
5. Albert Macon & Robert Thomas *"Tap Dance/Back and Sides"* (blues)
6. Sterling Jubilee Singers - *"Jesus Hits Like the Atom Bomb"* (gospel)
7. Little Jimmy Reed - *"Help Me Spend This Dough"* (blues)
8. Birmingham Sunlights - *"I'm Going to View That Holy City"* (gospel)
9. Whited String Band - *"Fox Hunt"* (harmonica & string band)
10. Gospel Harmonettes - *"He'll Wash You Whiter Than Snow"* (gospel)
11. Kathryn Tucker Windham - *"Don't Be Afraid of Ghosts"* (narrative)
12. Wiregrass Sacred Harp Singers - *"Florida Storm/Give Me Just a Little More Time"* (shape-note)
13. Al Malone and the Melody Men - *"Sin Ain't Nothing But the Blues"* (gospel)
14. Glenn Tolbert - *"Ruby"* (bluegrass)
15. National Convention Sacred Harp Singers - *"Sweet Canaan"* (shape note)
16. Jerry McCain - *"Just a Little Bit"* (blues)
17. Jerry and Tammy Sullivan - *"Blind Bartimeus"* (gospel)



The Alabama Sampler CD celebrates 10 years of traditional music at Birmingham's City Stages festival.



Al Malone and the Melody Men

Ray Browne Meets With Folklife Association

Popular Culture scholar and folklorist Ray Browne was the featured guest at the April 30 meeting of the Alabama Folklife Association in Montgomery. Browne, a native of Lamar County, Alabama, studied at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa before going on to graduate school at the University of California-Berkeley in the early 1950s.

A seminal figure in the American Popular Culture Studies movement, Browne was founder and long-time director of the Center for Popular Culture Studies at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. He is author of dozens of publications on a diverse range of subjects from folk music to detective novels.

At the AFA meeting, Browne spoke of growing up in rural Alabama, his fieldwork experiences in the 1950s, and his theories on

folk and popular culture. His presentation was followed by a lengthy and engaging discussion.

A business meeting, which included annual elections and project updates, followed the program. The slate of new officers was proposed and voted in. Officers for 1998 are Erin Kellen, President; Beverly Helsel, Vice-President; Virginia Jones, Secretary; Joyce Cauthen, Treasurer; Carole King, Kern Jackson and Bettye Kimbrell, Members-at-Large.

Joey Brackner reported that he developed a brochure on the state's two folk pottery shops, the Brown Pottery in Hamilton and the Miller Pottery in Brent, for distribution in the state's welcome centers.

Erin Kellen announced that the Sacred Harp Video Project continues and that she is seeking the funding needed to complete the project.

Joey Brackner and Joyce

Cauthen reported on the progress of the Lloyd's Primitive Hymns project.

Erin Kellen mentioned Kathie Farnell's plans to produce a CD compilation of spirituals recorded in Gee's Bend (Wilcox County) and archived at the Birmingham Public Library.

Joyce Cauthen presented a preliminary design for an AFA membership brochure and noted suggestions for changes. She will continue working on the brochure, which will include ordering information for AFA products. The group also discussed developing a web page for the organization.

After examination of the financial report, the group voted to fund two projects. An allocation of up to \$3,500 was approved to help fund the production of an Alabama Sampler CD celebrating the 10th anniversary of the City Stages festival in Birmingham.

A second allocation of \$100 was made to music scholar Doug Seroff for the purpose of cleaning up early recordings of Alabama string bands. These recordings will be released on the Document Records label.

Anne Kimzey



Popular culture scholar and folklorist Ray Browne spoke at the annual meeting of the Alabama Folklife Association.

Miller Pottery Documentary

Eric Miller, a traditional folk potter from Brent, is the subject of a television documentary produced by the University of Alabama. The program aired in April on Alabama Public Television. VHS copies of *Miller's Pottery: Turning for Generations* are available from the University of Alabama Center for Public Television, P.O. Box 870150, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487. A study guide to the program will be posted at their website: <http://www.cptr.ua.edu/sguides.htm>.

Alabama Folklife Books and Recordings for Sale



Jerry and Tammy Sullivan are featured on *In the Spirit* (book and CD) and the *Alabama Sampler* CD.

Alabama Folklife: Collected Essays. Softcover book contains essays on Alabama fiddling, Sacred Harp singing, African-American *a cappella* gospel music, basket making, pottery, and railroad work songs. Limited number available. **\$8.00**

In the Spirit: Alabama's Sacred Music Traditions. Essays on shape-note singing, Dr. Watts hymns, Psalm singing, bluegrass gospel, *a cappella* gospel quartets, moaning, and more, packaged with a CD providing beautiful examples of the various forms of sacred music. **\$15.00** (softcover book and CD) **\$10.00** (cassette only)

Tributaries, Vol. I: Journal of the Alabama Folklife Association. Contains essays on the great shoal fish trap, Mobile Bay jubilees, quilting, occupational folklore, book reviews and more. **\$10.00**

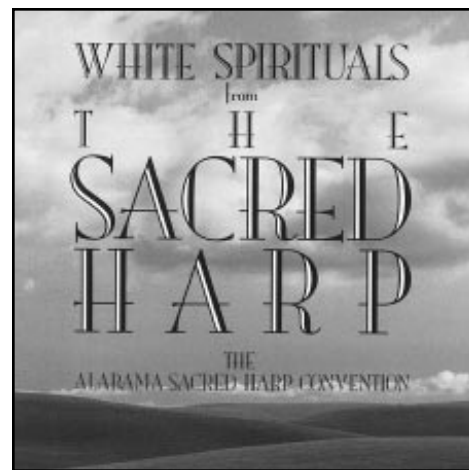
Traditional Music from Alabama's Wiregrass. This compact disc feature

field recordings of bluegrass, gospel, blues and Sacred Harp singing from a ten-county region of southeast Alabama. **\$10.00**

White Spirituals from The Sacred Harp: The Alabama Sacred Harp Convention. Alan Lomax recorded these shape-note songs from *The Sacred Harp* in 1959 in Fyffe (DeKalb County). **\$15.00** (CD) **\$10.00** (cassette)

The Alabama Sampler. A compact disc featuring live performances from the traditional music stage at Birmingham's City Stages festival, including blues, bluegrass, Sacred Harp singing, gospel, railroad calls, and more. **\$12.00**

Cornbread Crumbled in Gravy: Historical Alabama Field Recordings from the Byron Arnold Collection of Traditional Tunes. Beautifully sung folk songs performed by black and white Alabamians in 1947. Cassette and booklet containing extensive liner notes. **\$12.50**



White Spirituals from the Sacred Harp

John Alexander's Sterling Jubilee Singers of Bessemer. This recording features Jefferson County's oldest African-American *a cappella* gospel group. **\$15.00** (CD) **\$10.00** (cassette)

Add **\$2.50 shipping** on all orders. Make checks payable to: **Alabama Folklife Association.**

Order from: the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, 410 N. Hull Street, Montgomery, AL 36104. (334) 242-3601 or fax (334) 269-9098.



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The Alabama Folklife Association is a non-profit statewide organization whose purpose is to promote the appreciation of Alabama folklife through various activities including festivals, conferences, fieldwork, videos, audio recordings, and publications.

Yes, I want to support the AFA. My dues are enclosed.

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Alabama Folklife

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Project Grants Awarded

The Alabama State Council on the Arts announced the recipients of folklife project grants for the current fiscal year (FY 1998). These include:

- Historic Chattahoochee Commission (Eufaula) - \$5,000 for a CD reissue of the documentary recording, "In Celebration of a Legacy."
- Alabama Folklife Association - \$5,000 for production of a CD of spirituals recorded in 1941 at Gee's Bend.
- Landmark Park (Dothan) - \$1,000 in support of their annual fiddlers' convention.
- Society of Folk Arts & Culture (Eutaw) - \$5,000 for support of their annual Blackbelt Folkroots Festival.
- University of West Alabama (Livingston) - \$3,150 for the production of a CD of Rich Amerson's folk music recorded in 1961 by Ruby Pickens Tartt.

In September ASCA will announce the first round of grants awarded for Fiscal Year 1999. The deadline to apply for the second round is



Anne Kinzey

In March, staff of the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture presented interviews on traditional farming practices with participants at Spring Farm Days in Dothan's Landmark Park. Pictured (left to right) are ACTC director Henry Willett with broom makers Thelma Bunch and Nora Grubbs from the Rose Hill Senior Center and ACTC staff member Stephen Grauberger.

October 1, 1998 for projects occurring between February 1st and September 30th of 1999. For more

information, contact Folk Arts Program manager Joey Brackner at (334) 242-4076, x 225.