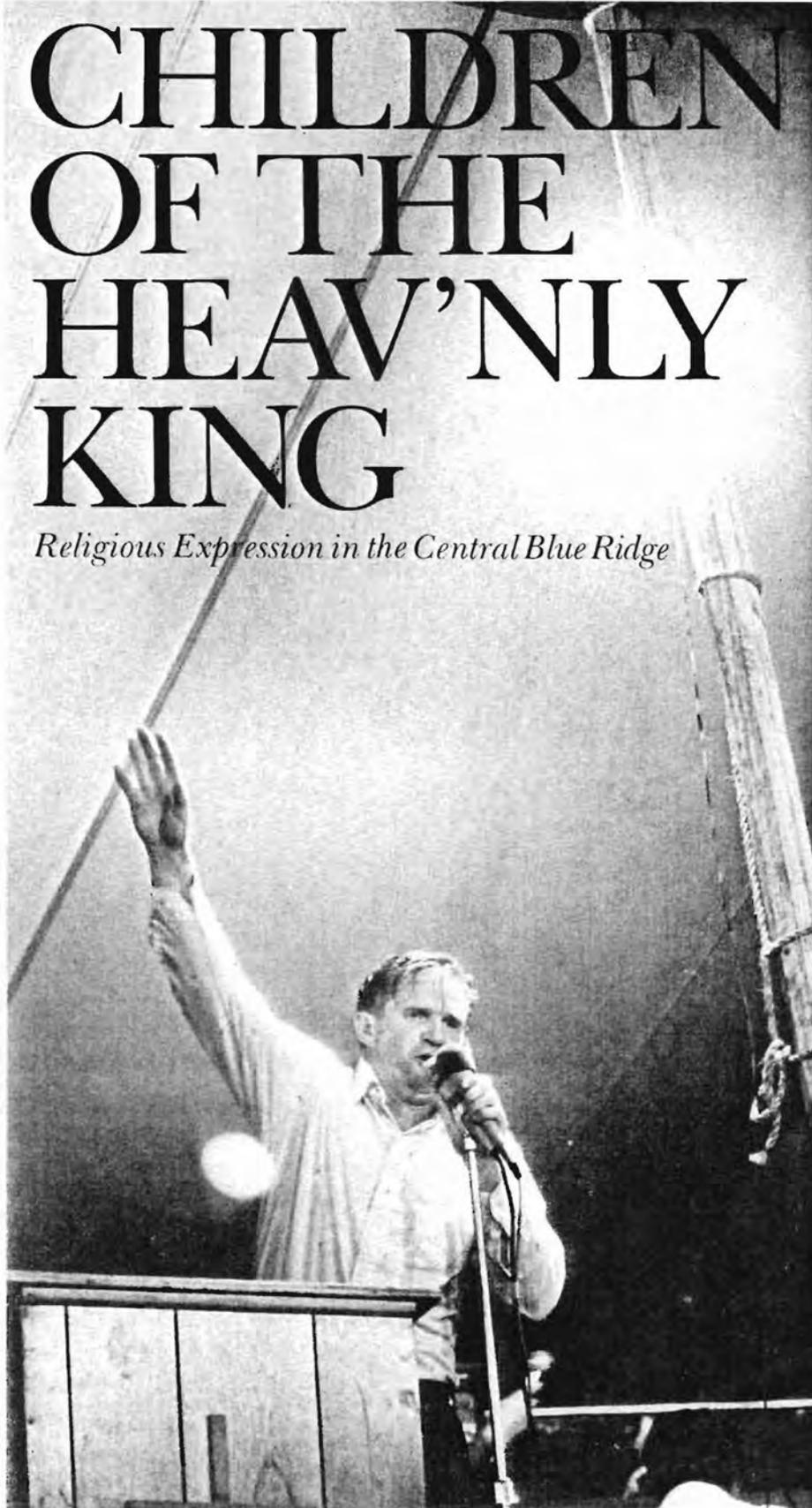


CHILDREN OF THE HEAV'NLY KING

Religious Expression in the Central Blue Ridge



Seldom has the folklore of a particular region been as exhaustively documented as that of the central Blue Ridge Mountains. Extending from southwestern Virginia into northwestern North Carolina, the area has for years been a fertile hunting ground for the most popular and classic forms of American folklore: the Child ballad, the Jack tale, the native American murder ballad, the witch tale, and the fiddle or banjo tune. Films and television programs have portrayed the region in dozens of stereotyped treatments of mountain folk, from "Walton's mountain" in the north to Andy Griffith's "Mayberry" in the south. Folklorists and other enthusiasts have been collecting in the region for over fifty years and have amassed miles of audio tape and film footage. Each year thousands of more casual visitors tour the hills on the Blue Ridge Parkway, or attend the annual Galax fiddlers' convention, one of the best-known in the country.

In spite of all this attention, the people of the central Blue Ridge continue to live their lives with an impressive degree of stability and sense of tradition. Some of these characteristics have been captured in the documentation of the more well-known traditions of the area, such as the fiddle and banjo music. Others, though, exist outside the scope of these more popular, more visible traditions, and they have not been documented well. One such area is that of traditional religious expression: the variety of ways in which people express themselves to their God and convey their faith to each other and their community at large.

This album offers a cross-section of the different traditional modes of religious expression in the central Blue Ridge. These modes range from public celebration to private testimony. They include the usual components of the church service such as preaching, extemporaneous testimony, prayer, and congregational or group singing. They include those special occasions for church celebration, such as communion services, baptisms, weddings, revivals, association meetings, and even funerals. They include church-related activities, such as regu-

CHILDREN OF THE HEAV'NLY KING INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

lar weeknight gospel singings, which may feature both local and regional small singing groups, tent revival meetings, which travel from town to town on a weekly basis, religious radio programs, which may consist of preaching, singing, a combination of both, the broadcast of a local service, or the broadcast of a pre-recorded syndicated program. They include the way in which a church is built, the way in which its interior is laid out, and the very location of the church in regard to cross-roads, hills, and cemetery. And finally, they include the individual church member talking about his own church's history, interpreting church theology, recounting character anecdotes about well-known preachers, exempla designed to illustrate good stewardship or even personal conversion experiences. Many of these modes of expression are highly structured and ritual in nature, and all are part of the fabric of traditional rural life in the central Blue Ridge, where religion still plays a highly visible and dominant role in most people's lives.



By Charles K. Wolfe

of Congress in cooperation with the National Park Service. These recordings were made during this project. The survey studied the lives and culture of the people in a 750-square-mile area straddling the Blue Ridge Parkway near the North Carolina-Virginia state line; the study area extended from Doughton Park, an area on the Parkway in Alleghany County, North Carolina, to the Parkway's Rocky Knob and Mabry Mill about seventy miles to the northeast in Virginia. It included parts of eight rural counties: Carroll, Floyd, Patrick, and Grayson in Virginia, and Alleghany, Ashe, Surry, and Wilkes in North Carolina. For two months in the late summer of 1978 a team of folklorists, photographers, and National Park Service workers lived in the area, documenting the ex-

pressive culture of the people with fieldnotes, photographs, sound recordings, video recordings, and architectural drawings. This documentation joins the permanent collection of the Library of Congress and is being shared with the staff of the Blue Ridge Parkway, who will use it as a research base to develop interpretive materials and presentations for visitors.

The region has a population of slightly over 80,000 people; it is predominantly rural and predominantly white, though a number of well-entrenched black communities play their part in defining the culture. The rural church is a common sight, and in most cases the church is named after a local place or geographical feature. Most of the rural churches are Baptist: Primitive Baptist, Missionary Baptist, Union Baptist, New Covenant Baptist, Regular Baptist, and Independent Baptist. There are a sprinkling of Methodist, Presbyterian, and Pentecostal churches as well, and a number of Churches of the Brethren, formerly called German Baptist Brethren and nicknamed "Dunkards." Though Southern Baptists comprise the largest Protestant denomination across the nation in general, in the central Blue Ridge they are outnumbered three or four to one by other Baptists—especially Independent and Primitive Baptists. Primitive Baptist churches are especially numerous in southwestern Virginia, with over twenty-two in the study area alone. In an article published in *Carolina Dwelling* which describes her work in the 1970s, Eliza Davidson listed sixty-five churches representing eighteen denominations in rural Alleghany County—one active church for each 140 citizens. The national average is one church for every 690 people.

In many ways, the rural church acts as a force for the preservation of older traditions. In black churches, congregations routinely sing without songbooks of any kind; in Primitive Baptist churches, congregations sing without piano or organ, using books that have only the words to songs. Because many of the Blue Ridge churches are small (around fifty members), participation in the service by individual members is high; services are not structured for a passive "audience." People offer spontaneous testimony and deliver prayers, using rhetorical patterns and expressions they have picked up from older members. Though some preachers have attended seminaries, almost every one admits to patterning his or her preaching style from some older mentor. Often the church building itself is the prime physical symbol of a community's existence, and church history is invariably closely tied to community history. Church-centered activities such as creek baptisms, "dinner on the ground," and gospel singing are in some cases the only remaining activities the community shares.

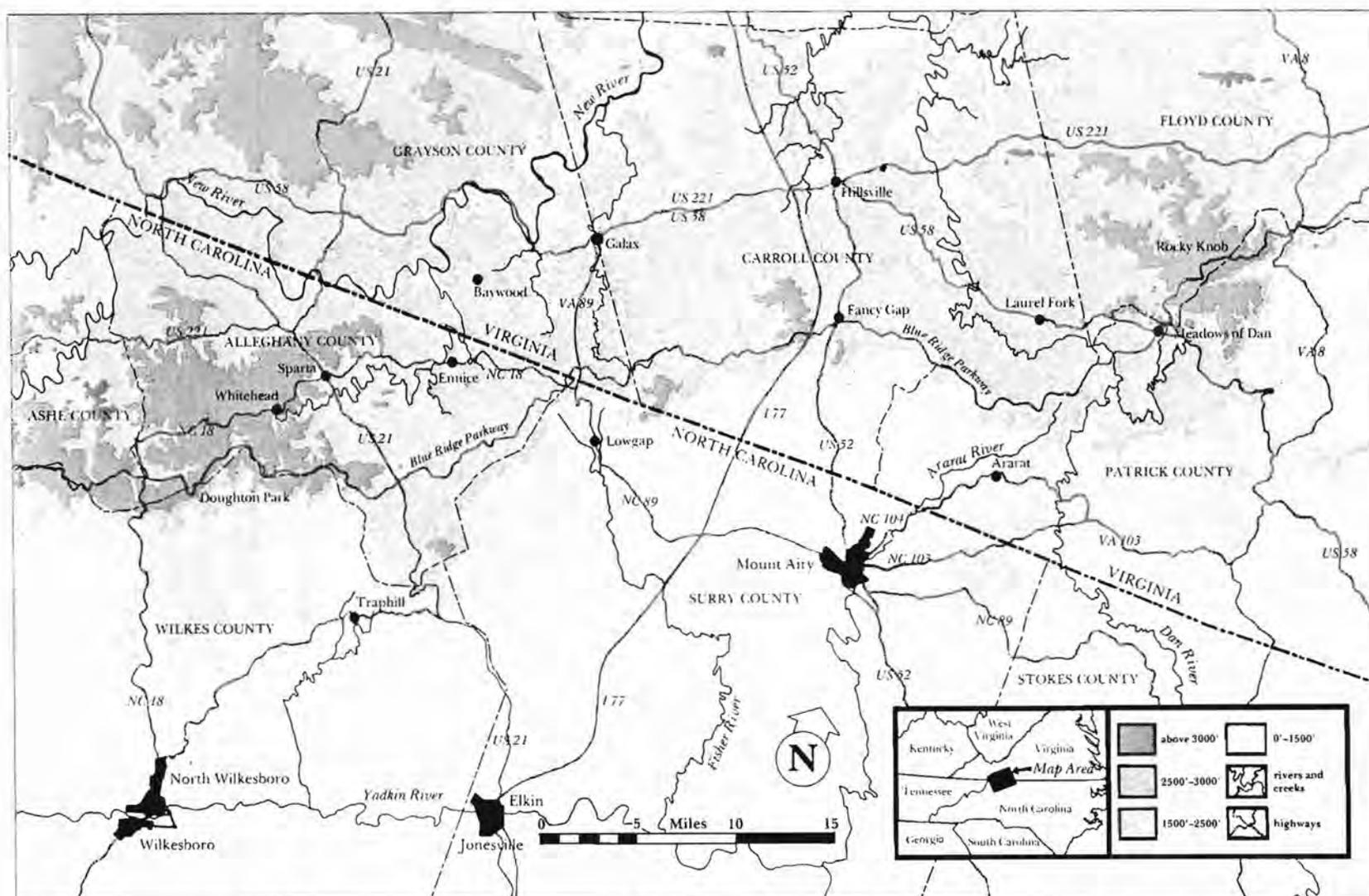
The rural black communities sprinkled along the central Blue Ridge form a cohesive and distinctive part of the region's traditional culture. Their members are prosperous, articulate, and for generations have been part of the fabric of life in the region. Patterns of rural life seem very similar for both blacks and whites, but a closer inspection reveals some key differ-

ences. Many Blue Ridge residents have travelled to West Virginia for some portion of their lives to earn money in the coal mines or on the railroad, but our conversations left us with the impression that more blacks than whites have made this trek. There may be differences in craft styles, like a greater preference among blacks for "strip" quilts, but—as the selections on this album indicate (L69 A2 and A4)—the differences in styles of worship are more pronounced. There is greater inclination toward forming a continuum of sermon, testimony, and song than in relatively more compartmentalized white services. But Leonard Bryan's account of his conversion (L70 B4), recorded in his home, is similar in manner and substance to accounts collected from whites.



Members of two churches at a baptism on Carson Creek, Alleghany County, North Carolina; a recording of the event can be heard on L69 B2.

Gospel singing is an especially thriving tradition in the central Blue Ridge and is perhaps the most self-conscious form of religious expression. Many residents make a clear distinction between "church singing," which refers to singing during a service, and "gospel singing," which refers to small-group singing outside the regular service or as "special music" within the service. Most of the gospel singing—and a lot of the church singing—comes, directly or indirectly, from shape-note songbooks published by R. E. Winsett, Stamps-Baxter, James D. Vaughan, and others. These books use a seven-shape note system which became popular after the Civil War in the South and especially in Virginia, where it was promoted by Aldine S. Kieffer at his influential singing school in the Shenandoah Valley. The system is distinct from the four-shape system used by Sacred Harp singers. By the 1920s a number of songbook publishing companies had sprung up throughout the South, each publishing one or two books a year, usually in inexpensive paperback formats. Each book



would include from 100 to 130 songs, of which about eighty percent were newly-written by various amateur (and a very few professional) singers and musicians across the rural South. The remaining twenty percent of the songs included established favorites from earlier books and older nineteenth-century gospel songs. Thus the books provided new songs in a highly structured traditional mode and kept many older songs in the active gospel repertoires. This collection includes two nineteenth-century songs preserved in this way: "Twilight Is Falling" (L70 A6) and "Palms of Victory" (L70 A1). The main purpose of the books was to service "singing conventions," county-wide or regional gatherings of the best singers in the area. The singers would take turns leading the singing of the entire assembly from the latest book. Gradually, though, publishers began to hire quartets to tour the countryside, popularizing their new books by singing from them. This singing style caught on, and soon it was rivaling the singing conventions in popularity.

Thus today in the central Blue Ridge, the terms "gospel singing" and "singing convention" refer to an informal concert in which small groups appear before an audience—usually in a church—and each performs a set of songs. Indeed, the singing convention tradition in the classic sense has been dormant in the central Blue Ridge for generations, though it still flourishes elsewhere in the South. Many of the older singers in the region—both black and white—recall learning their "rudiments" of music from various two-to-three-week singing schools brought into the area, often by representatives of a songbook company. These schools are occasionally still found, but most of the young people singing shape notes today were taught by their parents. As some of the older shape note books become harder and harder to get, the people keep and preserve them, and pass them on. One of the prized possessions of eighty-seven-year-old Leonard Bryan, a deacon in the Macedonia Baptist Church, is an old Stamps-Baxter songbook from the 1930s

containing the text of his favorite song, "If I Could Hear My Mother Pray Again." A. P. Thompson of Lowgap, born in 1900 and a product of several rural singing schools, sometimes takes a piece of modern gospel sheet-music that he likes and writes in the equivalent shape notes above the round notes so he and others can sing the new piece.

Gospel music, and religious expression in general, is also transmitted by mass media in the central Blue Ridge. In many cases, the media have not had a homogenizing effect on culture but are a tool for preserving the regional character of religious expression. Radio is one example. The region has three stations of its own: WCOK in Sparta, founded in 1967 and broadcasting with 250 watts (15–20 mile radius) in daytime; WBOB in Galax, the region's oldest station, founded in 1947 and broadcasting with 1,000 watts; and WHHV, Hillsville, started in 1961 and now broadcasting at 1,000 watts. Although much of the broadcasting week of all three stations



Rev. Coy Combs and Mrs. Ruth York broadcast a Sunday service on radio station WHHV, Hillsville, Virginia.

consists of "Top 40" music, on Sundays each station returns to highly distinctive local programming. At WBOB, for instance, the June 1979 schedule featured fourteen locally produced religious programs, two regionally syndicated religious programs, and three gospel record programs from sign-on time at 7:00 AM until 5:00 PM. Many of these programs were produced and/or sponsored by local church groups or singing groups, and most were tape recorded by the performers themselves in advance of broadcast. Elder Jess Higgins records his Sunday program the previous Saturday evening in his own home. "A Home in Heaven" (L70 A7) was recorded at

such a session. In 1978, WHHV charged approximately twenty dollars per half hour for Sunday programming and had a waiting list of interested customers. The airwaves are accessible at such rates to almost anyone. WHHV also carries live Sunday studio broadcasts, and a number of preachers and singing groups choose this option. All of these programs are distinctively regional. Messages to the sick and "shut-in" are common, as are specific place-name and personal references in sermons and talks.

In earlier days—1940s and 1950s—gospel singing groups established their musical identity by publishing their own little songbooks, with pictures of the group and a sprinkling of their favorite songs. Today this function has been pretty much replaced by the custom long-play recording. These albums are financed by the group themselves, recorded in studios at Galax, Mt. Airy, or Roanoke, and produced in limited editions of five hundred to one thousand copies. They are sold by the group to help finance travel to singings and are available in some local "Christian book stores," where they joust for space with slick, mass-market gospel LPs put out by giant conglomerates like Word, Inc. Records by groups outside the area also influence local singing. The Easter Brothers, a Mt. Airy bluegrass gospel group and the Inspirations, a Bryson City, North Carolina, group who perform in a slick, modern quartet style, were extremely popular in the late 1970s. Both groups are frequently heard on radio and television. Local singers would often learn the songs of these groups and sometimes copy their vocal styles.

The exact relationship between the individual singing group and the church itself can vary greatly. Very few of the groups contained members who were not active in church or even church leaders. At times, though, a particular church and singing group can differ over the kind of instrumentation used with the singing. Aubrey Brooks, leader of the Peaceful Valley Quartet, recalls, "We've run into some churches who would say, 'We'd like to have you but not your guitar.'" Mr. Brooks's own church, the Union Baptist, formerly forbade guitars, but subsequently permitted them at special gospel singings, although not at regular services. One member complained, "It's like, you worship two Gods, one who likes music with a guitar and one who doesn't."

The Hillsville-Galax-Sparta-Lowgap quadrangle has always been one of the richest areas in the Southeast for traditional instrumental music, and it is not surprising to learn that this instrumental tradition has often overlapped into the equally rich gospel-religious music tradition. As far back as the 1920s, well-known fiddler Ben Jarrell and banjoist Frank Jenkins included in their handful of recordings religious songs like "I Know My Name Is There," and mountain string bands like Surry County's Red Fox Chasers and Ernest Stoneman's Dixie Mountaineers of Galax recorded almost as many gospel songs as they did breakdowns. Galax ballad singer J. C. Pierce, who recorded for the Library of Congress in the 1930s, was sing-



Laurel Glenn Regular Baptist Church, Alleghany County, North Carolina; Elder Millard Pruitt stands to the right of the stove. Portions of a Sunday service at this church can be heard on L69 B1.

ing with a gospel quartet called the Four Tones by the late 1940s, and bluegrass star Larry Richardson began playing gospel music exclusively in the 1970s. Like many other groups, guitarist George Shuffler's bluegrass gospel ensemble performs in churches throughout the area. Members of churches that frown on any kind of instrumental music often play the fiddle or banjo for their own enjoyment and often play sacred songs. A case in point is Millard Pruitt, an elder in the Laurel Glenn Regular Baptist church. Mr. Pruitt is a state-fiddler who plays old hymns and sings to his own accompaniment in a remarkable and archaic style rarely heard today. Yet, in all of his sixty-eight years, he has never taken his fid-

dle into church. "I don't think it would do any harm," he says, "as far as any sin's concerned, in taking the violin and playing those hymns over there in the church . . . but the point is, the younger ones wouldn't look at it like that, they'd look on it as foolishness in worship."

The Primitive Baptist churches in the area not only disallow instrumental accompaniment of any sort, but frown on any sort of special small group singing in their services. Elder Jess Higgins, of the Galax Primitive Baptist Church, explained: "Our church and people have always, to our knowledge, believed in and practiced congregational singing; they've never shown favor by picking someone out of the group or anyone's

group as such in the worship service. That is not to say in our private lives that we wouldn't appreciate private talent, but . . . it has never been a practice of picking talents and singing and listening to them as a group. . . . There has never been a gospel singing as such in any Primitive Baptist church in America that I know of."

Such egalitarian impulses—which also manifest themselves in the tendency of many area churches to reject affiliation with national organizations or hierarchies—help account for the popularity of congregational singing in the region. In many services, congregational singing takes up almost half the time. As the annotations for the selections from the black Macedonia Union Baptist Church (L69 A4) and the white Laurel Glenn Regular Baptist Church (L69 B1) indicate, many congregations will sing a surprising mixture of old and new songs in a variety of older singing styles. Most rural congregations still use shape-note hymnals or—in the case of Primitive Baptists—tuneless word books. Although their singing may be as varied as that of some of the region's trios and quartets, modern "contemporary Christian music" is rarely heard.

The classic folk narratives of the central Blue Ridge—the Jack tales, the tall tales, the ghost stories—can still be found in the region if you look hard enough, but such stories are not nearly as common or as meaningful to the people as various personal experience narratives. These narratives can deal with social history (such as how a speaker survived the Depression), natural history (hard winters, floods), family history (especially courtship stories), or even occupational history. But perhaps the most common are accounts of religious experiences. Such accounts can be offered in public, in the form of testimonies in church meetings, or in a more leisurely semi-

public forum of the front porch or living room. They are offered both to friends who have heard them before and to strangers who are merely interested. Some of them detail a person's conversion to the church; others detail the circumstances of a person's "calling" to become a church leader or preacher; still others detail "visions" that renew faith and give enlightenment.

These narratives, when compared with the other selections on this album, are the most intensely personal forms of religious expression in the area. They may lack the rigorous form of a song or the stylized ornamentation of a sermon, but they are highly structured and are in every sense creatures of a performance genre. Brett Sutton, commenting on the Primitive Baptist's narratives of conversion in his article "In the Good Old Way: Primitive Baptist Traditions," has argued that such stories "are the most finely formed product of their oral tradition. Although they occur initially as mystical private events, they are cast ultimately in verbal form, since no personal experience is really complete until it has been shared, and, to an extent, validated through public testimony." Not all the narratives represented here come from Primitive Baptists, nor are all conversion stories, but their general tenor fits Sutton's comments. The narrators of such stories seem to seek to reinforce the validity of their mystical experiences over and over, and during this process the stories and the manner of telling become codified, structured, and well-honed. One of the informants, Edgar Cassell, when re-visited nearly a year after his story was taped, repeated the story almost word-for-word, nuance for nuance, for a different fieldworker. In fact, when permission was being sought to use these recordings on the present album, every individual contacted knew immediately what "story" was in question, just as they might recall a

Elder Edgar Cassell visits Will Barnard at his home in Kibler Valley, Virginia. A portion of their conversation can be heard on L70 B3.



particular song or instrumental performance. There was nothing casual about the telling of any of these stories, nor any hesitation about making them public.

While few of these personal experience accounts exhibit horizontal variation, where the same basic story is told by several different people, many narratives are similar in underlying structure and purpose. Some residents of the area are aware of these similarities. One commented, "These older mountain folk—they don't feel like they've got religion until they've had a vision."

The narratives themselves have a distinct structure. They generally describe the narrator's entry from the concrete, everyday world into a mystical state of elevated consciousness and revelation, and his subsequent return and reintegration into ordinary life. Often they begin with the narrator evoking a graphic picture of the concrete reality of his physical environment: Edgar Cassell describes his garden and his drive to the Floyd County courthouse (L70 B3), Florence Cheek describes her tobacco barn (L70 B2), Leonard Bryan describes the fields and woods near his house (L70 B4), and Harrison Caudle carefully pictures his bedroom on a certain evening (L70 B5), and hearing a car stop nearby. The next stage of the experience is what Victor Turner has defined as "liminality," a moment "in and out of time," where the individual is detached from the existing social structure. In his paper "Ritual and Sacred Narratives in the Blue Ridge Mountains," Patrick B. Mullen has commented that "the liminal phase itself as described in conversion stories is characterized by disorientation, visions, and emotional release." In many cases, the physical world so carefully evoked by the narrators vanishes, often in bright light; the narrators lose sense of time and place until they "come to." Thus Edgar Cassell does not recall seeing a thing on the long drive into Roanoke; Quincy Higgins remembers little about the sermon he preaches; Leonard Bryan doesn't realize he has been shouting all over the meeting house; Florence Cheek has difficulty articulating her return to the normal world. This latter trait in part also exemplifies the kind of emotional release felt by subjects. Edgar Cassell got tears in his eyes so big he couldn't see to drive, and Leonard Bryan "cried and prayed all night."

Few of the performers on this album are full-time professionals, and few would choose the word "artist" to describe themselves. Their art is integrated into the fabric of daily life, and they do not think of it as something apart. One of the goals of this collection has been to survey the region's diverse modes of religious expression through representative rather than exclusively virtuoso performances, to offer a sample of grassroots expression that a visitor to the Blue Ridge today might expect to find. Some of these performances may contain more artistry than others and some may reflect a greater sense of tradition, but all reflect the beauty and depth of a strong regional culture and the heartfelt aspirations of a proud and independent people.

Acknowledgments

These recordings are testimony to the work of the Blue Ridge Parkway Folklife Project field team, which consisted of folklorists Thomas A. Adler, Indiana University; Geraldine Johnson, Strayer College; Patrick B. Mullen, Ohio State University; Blanton Owen, Ferrum College; Margaret Owen, Ferrum College; and photographers Lyntha Scott Eiler and Terry Eiler, Ohio University. I also served as a folklorist and as field coordinator. American Folklife Center staff members Carl Fleischhauer and Howard W. Marshall joined in the work, as did five National Park Service workers who assisted with the fieldwork as special interns: Harley Jolley, Wes Leishman, Richard MacCamant, George Price, Jr., and Arnold Schofield. Wally Macnow of the Department of the Interior helped organize the project and participated in the fieldwork. Gary Everhardt, superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway and a former American Folklife Center board member, lent his sympathetic support, and Andrew Kardos of the parkway's professional staff helped the effort in many ways. The project could never have taken shape without the backing of William Whalen, director of the National Park Service and member of the Folklife Center's board, and Vernon Dame, the National Park Service's director of Interpretation and Visitor Services.

I would also like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their help as I prepared these annotations: Leonard Ellinwood, Elizabeth Lockwood, and William Reynolds of the Hymn Society of America; Conner Hall, Tennessee Music and Printing Company; Harlan S. Daniel, Chicago; Alan Jabbour of the American Folklife Center; Joseph C. Hickerson and Gerald E. Parsons of the Library's Archive of Folk Song; Bob Pinson and Bob Oerman of the Country Music Foundation Archive and Media Center; Millard Pruitt, Sparta, North Carolina; Avis and Caldwell Schuyler, Lowgap, North Carolina; Howard Forrester, Acuff-Rose Publications; James Blackwood, Memphis; Tommy Sutton, Nashville; Otis McCoy, Jasper, Alabama; Robert E. Nobley, Roanoke, Alabama; Artie and Jim Marshall, Hillsville, Virginia; Ellis Crum, Winsett Music Company; Wilford Roach, Stamps-Baxter Music Company; and Susan Gay, my typist, and my wife Mary Dean, for her assistance in research. The production of this record was overseen by Carl Fleischhauer, with Sam Brylawski and Dorothy Zeiset, Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, Library of Congress. The masters were made by John Howell, chief engineer, Recording Laboratory.

Our greatest debt is to the people whose lives are celebrated here, the residents of the central Blue Ridge. We offer our deepest gratitude to them for permitting us to document their lives and share its richness with others.

Charles K. Wolfe
Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro



Charles Wolfe records Jim and Artie Marshall at Marshall's Auction Barn near Hillsville, Virginia. "Twilight Is Falling," recorded at this session, can be heard on L70 A6.

The Recordings

These annotations include the following elements:

1. A headnote consisting of title, performer, an indication of whether the performer is black or white, recording date, place, the fieldworker primarily responsible for the recording, and the project's file number for the recording. The titles for all spoken-word selections have been provided by the editor.
2. A transcript of the text of the performance. Ellipses indicate deletions from the original recording, except for "Baptizing at Carson Creek," where the original has been extensively edited.
3. The annotation.
4. Under the heading "Present Text," a citation of the publication used when the

performer is singing from a printed text.

5. A list of selected variants from printed and recorded sources. Representative hymnals or songbooks are cited for items which have been frequently published, including the earliest publication known to the editor. The citations for sound recordings include the following information: artist; title; place, collector or recording company, and date of recording (if known); and publication information. For 78-rpm records, the label name and record number is given for the initial release or group of releases. The matrix number is given for unissued commercial recordings. Title, label name, and record number are given for items first released on an LP. Similar information, noted as "Reissued on," is provided when an item first released on a 78 can be heard on an

LP in print in 1980. The accession number is given for unpublished recordings in the Archive of Folk Song at the Library of Congress.

These recordings were made on Nagra IV-S stereo tape recorders, except "A Vision at the End of Time" (L70 B5), which was made on a Nagra E monaural recorder. Microphones and accessories used in the field include Neuman KM84 microphones, Sennheiser 816, 202, and 402 microphones, Nagra QSQC parallel connectors, and a Yamaha PM430 microphone mixer. All selections on this album, except "A Vision at the End of Time" and "Baptizing at Carson Creek" (L69 B2), are in stereo. The master recordings were made at the Library of Congress Recording Laboratory in 1980.



Men's pews at Cross Roads Primitive Baptist Church.

L69 A1
Children of the Heav'nly King.
 Sung by the congregation of the
 Cross Roads Primitive Baptist
 Church; white; August 20, 1978;
 Baywood, Virginia; Carl Fleisch-
 hauer; BR8-CF-R5.

*Children of the Heavenly King,
 As ye journey, sweetly sing;
 Sing your Savior's worthy praise,
 Glorious in his works and ways.*

*Ye are traveling home to God,
 In the way the fathers trod,
 They are happy now, and ye
 Soon their happiness shall see.*

*Oh ye banished seed, be glad,
 Christ our advocate is made;
 Us to save our flesh assumes,
 Brother to our souls he comes.*

*Shout, ye little flock and blessed,
 You on Jesus' throne shall rest,
 There your seat is now prepared,
 There your kingdom and reward.*

*Fear not, brethern, joyful stand,
 On the borders of your land;
 Christ, your Father's elder Son,
 Bids you undismayed go on.*

*Lord submissive make us go,
 Gladly leaving all below;
 Only thou our leader be,
 And we still will follow thee.*

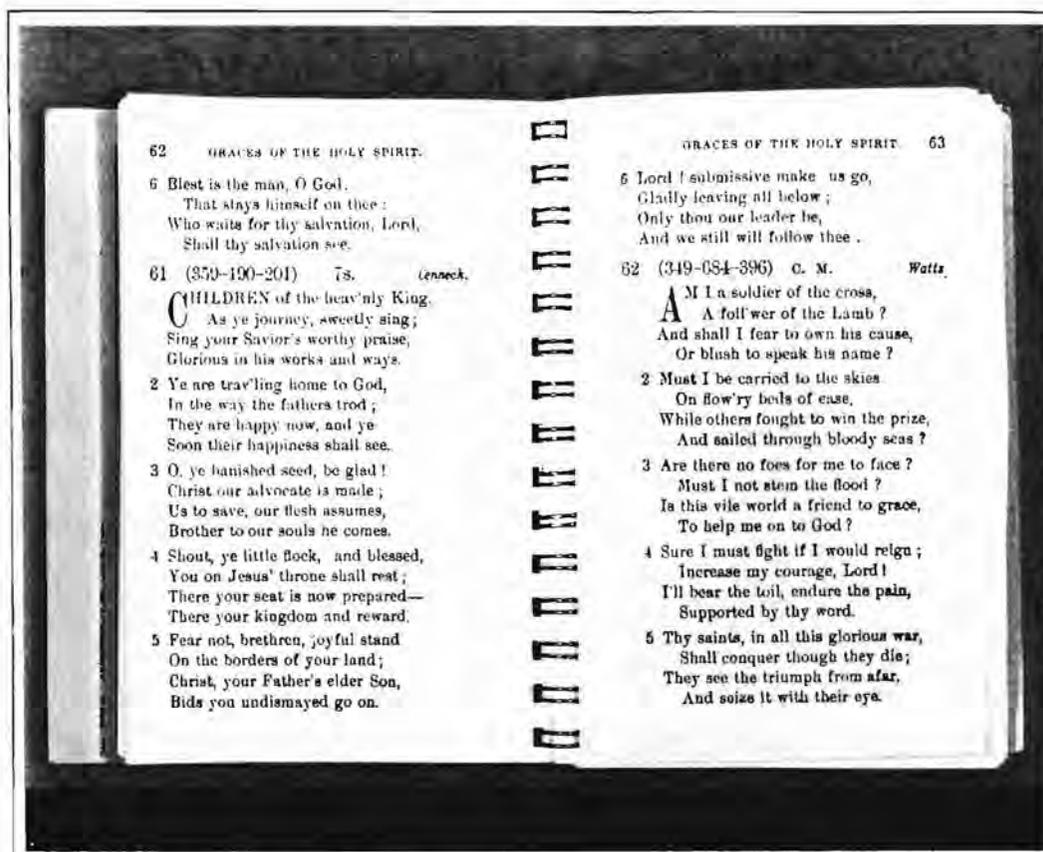
The Cross Roads Primitive Baptist Church, located in the Baywood community a few miles southwest of Galax, is a simple white frame building with a sign stating that the church was founded in 1845 and announcing that regular services are held three times a month. Like many Primitive Baptist churches in this region, the interior at Cross Roads has four banks of pews. Two banks separated by an aisle face the pulpit, filling two-thirds to three-quarters of the church, while the smaller pair face each other and flank the pulpit. The actual church members (thirty-eight in 1978) sit on these latter pews, the men on one side, the women on the other. Attendance at services can range from as few as twenty to as many as eighty (at a communion service), with many of the members coming from

nearby Galax, where they are employed in a variety of blue- and white-collar jobs. One of the elders lives fifteen miles away in Independence and another twenty miles away in Sparta, North Carolina. Most of the members are over forty years old.

Like many Primitive Baptist churches, the Cross Roads church uses D. H. Goble's old hymnal, originally published in Greenfield, Indiana in 1887. Unlike modern hymnals, the Goble book contains only words and no music. Congregations are expected to know the melodies for songs or are free to use a melody that their own particular church or region has attached to the hymn. In a typical service, hymn singing will take up about as much time as the preaching, prayers, and Bible reading combined. This is partly because the hymns are generally sung in their entirety, as opposed to the widespread practice in other Protestant churches of singing stanzas one, two, and four. At Cross Roads, songs are selected spontaneously by the congregation, are performed without accompaniment, and are usually led off by a church member sitting on one of the side pews. The singing style is slow and stately, and hymns are generally sung in unison with no harmony or "parts," although the combination of voices usually creates a heterophonic effect.

This particular selection was recorded at a communion service that followed a normal Sunday service. The regular members of the church in the front pews did most of the singing, but they were joined by about forty people in pews facing the front. During the regular service, the congregation sang eight hymns from the Goble book. At the beginning of the footwashing communion, the members sang "Amazing Grace," many without recourse to a hymnal, and, after the footwashing materials were put away, "Children of the Heav'nly King." After dinner on the ground was announced, the service closed with "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken."

"Children of the Heav'nly King" is a favorite of the Cross Roads congregation



From Goble's Primitive Baptist Hymn Book.

and is often sung at non-communion services at the church. The original, twelve-stanza song was composed in 1742 by John Cennick, an eighteenth-century English evangelical who is best known for his "Jesus My All," which became a source for many traditional American religious songs. For further information on Cennick's life, see Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology*, pp. 215-219. The song has been widely popular in America ever since its first appearance in Occom's *Choice Collection* and has apparently entered oral tradition. Kentucky minstrel Dick Burnett recalled that it was the first song he ever learned.

Present Text

Goble, D.H., comp. *Primitive Baptist Hymn Book*. 1887. Reprint. Greenfield, Ind.: D.H. Goble Printing Co., n.d., p. 62.

Selected Variants: Print

Daily, John R. and Thomas, E.W. *Primitive Baptist Hymn and Tune Book*. Luray, Va., and Danville, Ind.: Daily and Thomas, 1902, p. 36.
 Occom, Samson. *Choice Collection*. New London, Conn.: T. Green, 1774. "The Pilgrim's Song," p. 37.
 Thomas, Elder E.D. *A Choice Selection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. 1877. Reprint. Wayne, W.Va.: Arrowood Brothers, 1978, p. 415.

Selected Variants: Recordings

Harmony Hill Hymnsingers, dir. by Helen Denman Beauchamp. "Children of the Heavenly King." Cincinnati: Baptist Bible Hour, Inc., ca. 1960s. *The Harmony Hill Hymnsingers*, Baptist Bible Hour LP 103.
 Wisdom Sisters. "Children of the Heavenly King." New Orleans: Columbia Phonograph Co., 1927. Columbia 15129.

L69 A2

Testimony.

Spoken by a member of the congregation. **Satan, Your Kingdom Must Come Down.**

Sung by the congregation.
Philip in Samaria (Sermon excerpt). Preached by Rev. James Strickland. All selections from Clarks Creek Progressive Primitive Baptist Church; black; September 10, 1978; Ararat, Virginia; Blanton Owen; BR8-BO-R29 and R31.

Testimony

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all you and Heaven. Know you that the Lord, he is God. It is he that has made us, and not we ourselves. We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise."

I am standing praising the Lord today for what he is to me, for what he has been in my life. This test—this, uh, psalm is one of my testimonies, [that] make a joyful noise unto the Lord. I want to praise his name. Any time we're praising God we got to know that Satan is there too. That's his job. And he is there to tear down. If we trust God and do the things that he would have us do, then everything will be all right. Pray for me, as I go on, that I would be one in his will. And you shall have my prayers.

Satan, Your Kingdom Must Come Down

Satan, your kingdom must come down;
Satan, your kingdom must come down;
I'm going to pay my debt, till we tear your
kingdom down.
Satan, your kingdom must come down.

We're going to preach right here, till we tear
your kingdom down;
We're going to preach right here, till we tear
your kingdom down;
I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Satan, your kingdom must come down.

We're going to sing right here, till we tear your
kingdom down,
We're going to sing right here, till we tear your
kingdom down,
I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Satan, your kingdom must come down.

Philip in Samaria

So Saul here
Would handcuff and
'rest these people.
He went into every home
in Jerusalem,
and see if he could hear of them
calling on the Lord Jesus,
or either
giving him praise.
Whenever
he found them
he would take them and
put them in jail.
So
it was a mighty disturbance about this
time
in around Jerusalem,
and all of the people
had scattered abroad
had left Jerusalem,
because it had come to the point where it
was
dangerous to live there.
And so they began to go
in various places.
But the Apostles
they had nerve enough to stay
right there.
They stayed there,
and still clinging
and preached the word of God.
And so Philip,
being one of the first deacons chose
in the church,
he went on down to Samaria.
And as he went to Samaria,

the Bible says,
that he went down there,
preaching and teaching
God's holy word.
And as he were teaching
the Holy Word,
I'm told that
men and women
believed.
But there was a man
named Simon,
whom had done witchcraft
and
put spells
on folks,
and they
felt like
this was
a mighty man,
and said
that he
is a man from God.
But when Philip
went down there
and began to preach,
about Jesus Christ,
lay hands
on the sick,
and they'll recover.
Those that had palsy,
they recovered from the palsy,
and they begin
to see
that this man
Simon
was the wrong man.
They began to listen
and follow Philip
and they believed
on the word of God.
Bible said
that they took'em down
after being—believing
down in the water,
and baptized them,
and after,
that he baptized
in Samaria
this great revival
that was carried on
in this particular days.
I'm told
that he

turned out
 of the city
 going
 to another place,
 and during
 that time
 the Apostles
 heard about
 this great revival
 where that Philip
 had preached
 and baptized men
 and sent
 Peter and John
 down to Samaria,
 for to lay hands
 on them,
 that they might
 receive
 the gift of the Holy Ghost.
 And I'm told
 that this man Simon,
 he also
 heard the word of God
 and believed,
 and was baptized,
 and when
 he looked at Peter,
 and John,
 laying hands
 on those who believed,
 and were baptized,
 they began to
 receive
 the gift of the Holy Ghost
 or the power
 that was
 which God give them
 or to be witness
 for them,
 and Simon looked
 and said
 "If you'll
 teach me how to do it,
 I'll
 pay you money."
 But I'm glad
 that money won't buy
 salvation this morning.
 And Peter
 said to Simon,
 "Why your money
 won't buy



The temporary basement sanctuary at Clarks Creek Progressive Primitive Baptist Church. Rev. James Strickland, wearing a black robe, is seated at center.

salvation,
 not given
 by price of money
 and I want you to know
 that you're an evil man,
 you're not right,
 and if you don't stop these things
 many things
 will happen unto you."
 Heard Philip saying,
 "I pray
 that you pray on my behalf,
 and that none of these things
 won't happen to me."
 Ain't you glad
 that prayer
 can change things
 even though
 something may be coming wrong
 But if you pray,
 pray sincere,
 I declare everything

will be all right.
 And as he prayed
 and went on,
 laying on the hands,
 of those,
 that had been baptized;
 they received
 the precious Holy Ghost.

Clarks Creek is a rural black commu-
 nity tucked in under the Blue Ridge itself,
 between the Dan and Ararat Rivers. Also
 known as "the Meadowfields community,"
 the neighborhood has been home for
 black families since slavery. The church at
 Clarks Creek was founded in 1892;
 eighty-eight-year-old deacon Jesse
 Hatcher recalls that the congregation was
 originally Primitive Baptist. Around the
 turn of the century, though, the members
 decided to depart from some of the more

conservative practices, and they joined other black churches in the new Progressive Primitive Baptist denomination. By 1907 the church had started a Sunday school and about 1930 added an organ and a piano to accompany congregational singing. During the time these recordings were made, the members were constructing a new church building—their older brick structure had burned a few years before—and they were meeting temporarily in the basement of their still incomplete building.

The performance heard here begins with the testimony of a member of the congregation; she begins reciting a passage from Psalm 100 and then explaining what the passage means to her. Her statement that Satan is always “there to tear down” apparently strikes a responsive chord with some other member of the congregation, and triggers the selection of the song, “Satan, Your Kingdom Must Come Down,” with its refrain “tear your kingdom down.” The sermon was delivered somewhat later in the same service.

“Satan, Your Kingdom Must Come Down” seldom appears in printed collections but has been recorded several times in the Blue Ridge area. Blind Joe Taggart, an itinerant black gospel singer and travelling evangelist very popular in southwest Virginia, recorded a commercial version of the song in 1931. Over thirty years later, white singer Frank Proffitt, from Reese, North Carolina, about sixty miles to the southwest of the Sparta area, recorded two versions of the song he had learned at a rural black church near his home. As recently as 1963 a version was collected from a black man in his mid-seventies living at Sugar Grove, North Carolina. These recordings suggest that at one time the song, or a variant of it, was reasonably well known among rural black communities of the Blue Ridge. The “minor” scale used in this performance (actually a scale where the third degree is sometimes major, sometimes minor) contrasts markedly with the normal major scales used in most gospel and modern church songs.

The Reverend James Strickland, the regular preacher at the Clarks Creek church, lives in Mt. Airy, the nearest large town. The text of his sermon excerpt is a description of Philip’s journey to Samaria and his encounter with the sorcerer Simon, as found in Acts 8:9–25. His sermon includes an accurate and impassioned paraphrase of that passage. As important as the text, though, is the manner in which Reverend Strickland “chants” his sermon with a highly skilled and effective metrical regularity.

Bruce Rosenberg, in *The Art of the American Folk Preacher*, describes the technique many preachers use in delivering an oral, improvised sermon, and his description fits Reverend Strickland’s performance.

Usually the sermons begin with a reading of Scripture and the preacher follows the Bible’s punctuation. But these sermons are antiphonal in nature, and soon the audience’s response—so active and cogently felt—actually delineates each line, each formula. Metrics govern. To punctuate the “beat” the congregation shouts “Amen,” “Oh yes,” “Oh Lord,” “that’s all right,” etc. Most of the time there is no doubt about the end of a phrase: the congregation clearly makes it known. Or else the preacher himself punctuates his lines with a gasp for breath that is usually so consistent it can be timed metrically. (p. 38)

Reverend Strickland, in this excerpt from a much longer sermon, punctuates his lines through the use of the rhythmic marker “uh.” The transcription of Strickland’s sermon is printed with line divisions based on his performance, rather than following the normal conventions for written prose. As the transcription suggests, Reverend Strickland prefers relatively short lines of three or four syllables; as he builds momentum in his sermon, his short lines become even shorter, and for a time are reduced to lines of two syllables. The congregation also interjects comments at the end of al-

most every line, one member occasionally strikes a tambourine, and Reverend Strickland himself sometimes ornaments line endings with a rise in vocal inflection and emphasizes key words and phrases by the device of repetition.

Rosenberg suggests that such chanted sermons represent an “ideal conflation of the prose sermon and the spiritual”; if this is so, then one might readily extend the idea to the entire service of the traditional rural church. One might easily define the whole service in terms of a single dynamic performance with different elements (song, prayer, testimony, sermon) located at different distances along an axis extending from music to the spoken word. In such a schematic, one would probably find that rural churches, and black churches, would have more elements located toward the musical end of the axis than most modern white Protestant churches.

SATAN, YOUR KINGDOM MUST COME DOWN

Selected Variants: Recordings

Blind Joe Taggart. “Satan Your Kingdom Must Come Down.” Grafton, Wis.: Paramount, 1930. Paramount 13094.

Dave Thompson. “Satan, Your Kingdom Must Come Down.” Sugar Grove, N.C.: field recording by Lee B. Hagerty and Henry Felt for Folk Legacy Records, 1963. AFS 14,027 A14.

Frank Proffitt. “Satan, Your Kingdom Must Come Down.” Reese, N.C.: Folk Legacy, 1964. *The Frank Proffitt Memorial Album*, FSA 36.

———. “Satan, Your Kingdom Must Come Down.” Vilas, N.C.: field recording by John Cohen, 1965. *High Atmosphere*, Rounder 0028.

Second St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church Choir. “Satan, We’re Gonna Tear Your Kingdom Down.” Columbus County, N.C.: field recording by Glenn Hinson, 1979. *Eight-Hand Sets and Holy Steps*, Crossroads C-101.

L69 A3

How Long Has It Been?

(Sermon excerpt).

Preached by Rev. Tommy Worrell
at Skyline Independent Baptist
Church; white; September 24,
1978; Carroll County, Virginia;
Blanton Owen; BR8-BO-R46.

Now how long has it been since you labored in the field of God? How long has it been since God broke your heart? I wonder if God put us to test this morning, uh, if God would find out how long it's been since you as a child of God, God has so stirred your heart, and you've looked over Carroll County, Virginia, you've looked over Hillsville, Virginia, you've looked up and down these hollows, and up and down these roads, uh, 52 and the Skyline, uh, and the Snake Creek Road and Ward's Gap Road, uh, you've looked over this area, and you've looked at men and women, uh, that's lost without God, dying and going to hell, and your heart began to bleed for them, until the tears came to your eyes, and you could not help yourself, you was weeping uncontrollably, because God put a *compassion* in your heart and soul for that lost man or woman without God—How long, my brother, has it been since God really thrilled your heart and blessed your heart and gave you tears for those that's lost without God?

That's the elements, Brother Gallimore, that's missing in our services today; that's the thing that seems like it's long gone from the services: people broken-hearted because—of souls going to hell. Oh, we need that compassion.

A little boy one time, they were taking a mission offering and they had, uh, uh, given, uh, in that mission offering they had given very, very little, and that young fellow in that offering, uh, he saw what was happening, uh, nobody was giving

much, uh, and so he called for those offering plates as they came by, he was a crippled boy, he had not much to give, no money whatsoever, but that little boy looked and he saw no one was concerned, about those people out there that never heard the name of Jesus, and so he says, "I don't have much to give, uh, but what I have I give, uh." He took his, uh, he took those crutches he was walking upon, and he put them in that offering plate, uh, and says, "What I have I'll give to the cause of Christ, that others may be saved, uh." And they, uh, saw what had happened. That little boy had given all he had, uh, and the very thing, uh, that he could walk with, uh, he had given it to the cause of Christ, uh. They recalled those offering plates, uh, and those in that service, some men in that service were wealthy, and they called those offering plates back, received the offering again, and thousands of dollars were taken up for the cause of Christ, uh: because one little boy had a compassion for souls.

And I say to you, brother or sister, if some of you people at this church were to get under the burden of souls, uh, and God will give you a compassion, uh, I tell you it'll turn this mountaintop upside down, uh. You might say: "There's not many of us." That don't make a bit of difference, you just do what you can for God, uh, and if you don't have compassion, pray God give you that compassion, uh, and you'll see a revival break out. Not because of preacher Ervin Gallimore or preacher Marshall or Tom Worrell, but because, you see, if a revival comes, it comes not because of the singing, it comes not because of the choir, it comes not because of the pastor, it comes not because of the evangelist, but I have a secret to tell you this morning, if you forget everything else I say, remember this: revival will never come to this church unless it's by you, the congregation and the members of the Lord Jesus Christ. All right. So a compassion.

Soul winning without compassion is only a dream. How long has it been since you've heard anybody pray for souls, uh?

I know sometimes we pray and we hear little prayers in churches, sometimes we hear little prayers at our tables, sometimes. And all of that, uh. But how long has it been since you heard, uh, of secret prayers, uh? And these prayers we have at our churches is well and good, uh, the prayer this morning stirred my heart, uh, thank God, uh, a man was praying that loves God, stirred me, uh. And I know that God hears our prayers. But how long has it been since you've went by somebody's house, uh, and you heard'em in there on their knees begging God to save the neighbors, uh, who's going to hell, uh. How long has it been since you went by somebody's house, uh, and you heard somebody praying, "Oh, I've got a *son* that's going to burn in the flames of *hell*, and they need to be *saved*." And a mother praying, "Oh God, I've got a *daughter* that's lost and going to hell." How long has it been since you've heard prayers of *compassion*, and how long my friend since someone prayed until they stayed on their face before God and would not get off of their face until God came through and answered prayer?

Rev. Tommy Worrell, who preached this sermon at a revival at Skyline Independent Baptist Church near Fancy Gap, Virginia, lives in Mount Airy, North Carolina, the nearest large town. He is a native of Surry County, North Carolina, started work as an evangelist in 1955, and for a time in the 1960s was a regular pastor for another church in the region. He learned much of his preaching style as an apprentice to an older minister in Mt. Airy, and for a time attended Piedmont Bible College in nearby Winston-Salem. He is a pleasant, articulate man who today is a full-time practicing evangelist. His study is full of books, cassette recordings of his own and other sermons, and equipment he uses to record sermons for radio broadcast. He is typical of many modern preachers who are comfortable with mass media and eager to use them to get their messages out to the people.



Rev. Tommy Worrell at Skyline Independent Baptist Church.

When the Skyline Independent Baptist Church invited Reverend Worrell to start off their week-long revival in September 1978, the church had been independent from the Southern Baptist Convention for about six years. Worrell was no stranger to the church; he had helped to organize it some sixteen years before and ordained the current pastor, Ervin Gallimore. He has also helped organize four or five other churches in the area, as well as numerous camp meetings. Skyline church itself is located on Virginia state road 640, in southeast Carroll County, and in 1978 the members were building a new structure to replace the church they were then using. Many of the members

live in rural communities adjoining the Blue Ridge Parkway. The congregation's song leader is Marshall Largen (L70 A1).

The text of the Worrell excerpt uses specific local place names and personal names to make the sermon more immediate. This also tends to reinforce the "sense of place" of the congregation and to make them aware of their own unique culture and heritage. Reverend Worrell based his entire sermon on the dream motif in Isaiah 29, but added elements like the story of the little crippled boy. Such exempla are not taken from scripture. They are often migratory and traditional in nature and form an important part of the Protestant preacher's reper-

tory. Worrell recalled hearing the story about the crippled boy "in a missionary offering" at another church several years ago and has used it frequently since.

Many preachers make a distinction between the style of sermon preached in a regular service and that preached at a revival. "As a pastor, you'd be using a more expository, or teaching, style," says Reverend Worrell. "At a revival you want a more evangelistic type of preaching; you not only want to win souls, but to rejuvenate the faith in your audience." The theme of compassion, which is effectively developed in this excerpt, is a natural outgrowth of traditional Baptist concerns with proselytizing and stewardship.

L69 A4

I'm Going Down by the River of Jordan.

Sung by the congregation.

Prayer.

Spoken by a member of the congregation. Both selections from the Macedonia Union Baptist Church; black; September 10, 1978; near Sparta, North Carolina; Charles K. Wolfe; BR8-CW-R25.

I'm Going Down by the River of Jordan

*I'm going down by the river of Jordan,
I'm going down by the river of Jordan, some of
these days, hallelujah,
I'm going down by the river of Jordan,
I'm going down by the river of Jordan some of
these days.*

*And now my troubles will all be over,
Then my troubles will all be over, one of these
days, hallelujah,
Then my troubles will all be over,
Then my troubles will all be over some of these
days.*

*Then we'll shout from mansion to mansion,
Then we'll shout from mansion to mansion,
some of these days, hallelujah,
Then we'll shout from mansion to mansion,
We'll shout from mansion to mansion some of
these days.*

Prayer

Oh God, our most kind and heavenly Father, once more and again this morning Lord, that you [brought just?] us together again. Oh Lord, we thank thee this morning for this great gathering,

once more this side of the great beyond. Oh, we thank thee Lord that you watched over us last night. Love your neighbors, Lord, get up and go do thy bidding, make our way toward the place we call worship. Oh God Father, we thank you Lord, for so many blessings, Lord, this year. Every storm, ev-every century, been here in the world, uh, down the ages, for a period of time. That you watch over us, you took care of us, through danger and unseen danger; we pray thee Lord.

Oh Lord Father, you led us, day by day and night by night, help us in that straight and narrow path that leads from earth to glory. Oh Lord Father, we thank thee this morning, Father, for so many blessings, Lord, that you have bestowed on—Bless this little number here, we pray thee Lord, this morning to bind us every one in bonds of Christian love for one another. [Let us hold thy hand] day by day and night by, by night, and watch over us, Lord, and take care. Bless those, Lord, this morning, Father, who were not

At the end of a service, Macedonia Union Baptist Church.

able to come out to be with us; bless those, Lord, that's sick in the home, or in the, in the, uh, the hospital, we pray thee Lord, or in the rest home, oh God. Oh Lord, great Lord Father, take care of us, Lord. Lead us, Father, day by day and night by night, going up the King's highway. For we know and I [now] know this morning, Lord, that this world is not our home, we're just, just passing by, that we've got to go, that we going to go Lord, at your commandment, got to leave this world or come back no more. Oh Lord, make us ready for that dying hour, hard times have come, or we got to finish our work here in this world. Well, Lord, we go in and come out no more, we done with all the sorrow we can handle here in the world. O Lord, bless this little number here, we pray thee Lord, bless every one by one Lord. Oh Lord Father, we pray Lord, remember me. Remember the one that's going to preach the Word, oh God. Oh Lord Father, help him preach with power from on high. Help him we pray



thee Lord, to provide a strong [will for the weak] Lord. And oh Father, God, uh, when we are through here in this world, through going and coming, through calling on your holy and high name. We pray Lord Father, in that great getting-up morning, uh, we'll have a home over there, where there'll be no more trouble or trial. Our temptations will be over. Over there, we won't have to die no more. Oh Lord, I go to stand by, as [here on earth we do.] Save us a home somewhere in your kingdom. Amen.

The Macedonia Union Baptist Church has a relatively new brick home on a wooded ridge towering over North Carolina Highway 18 a few miles east of Sparta. The church as a local institution, however, is much older, with roots reaching well back into the nineteenth century. Many of the members that attend the church can trace back their family's membership for three or four generations, making the Macedonia church one of the more durable and stable social institutions in Alleghany County. The church is a member of the New Covenant Association of Union Baptist churches, an association of black congregations organized in 1873. This connection is important for the church's members and many of them refer to their congregation as "Macedonia New Covenant Baptist Church."

The church has had a formal choir for only about ten or twelve years, and while the choir customarily performs several numbers in the typical morning service, congregational singing still dominates the music. No song leader formally announces to the congregation what they will sing, and though the church owns hymn books, they are seldom used. Any church member—male or female—can get up and start a song when moved to do so. On the day "I'm Going Down by the River of Jordan" was recorded, the congregation or choir sang eleven selections during the eighty-minute service. Most of the songs were traditional spirituals like

"I'm Going Down by the River of Jordan," though a few—mostly the ones sung by the choir—were more modern, including an arrangement of "Thank You, Lord," from one of the contemporary Singspiration songbooks. "I'm Going Down by the River of Jordan" was led by Deacon Leonard Bryan, an eighty-seven-year-old patriarch who is also heard in selection L70 B4.

The piano music accompanying the prayer reflects the improvised nature of the service and heightens the effect of the prayer. At the start of the prayer, the speaker chants using a tonal center that corresponds to the key of the piano music. About a third of the way through, the pianist modulates into a different key, while the speaker continues to chant his prayer without shifting its tonal center. Though the specific use of the piano to maintain continuity in the service or to provide a musical background for a prayer or sermon is relatively new at the Macedonia church—they have only had a piano in the last ten years—individual members of the congregation continue to fill such a function by quietly humming or singing.

The prayer is half-chanted, half-sung for the first four or five lines, and then moves into a stylized pattern of statements which feature metrical regularity ("Oh Lord," drawn out, followed by a tumbling, descending line), commonplaces ("day by day and night by night"), and quotations from sources like traditional spirituals ("this world is not our home, . . . we're just passing through"). The frequent interjections by the congregation (especially the deacons) at times overwhelm the prayer itself.

I'M GOING DOWN BY THE RIVER OF JORDAN

Selected Variants: Print

Grissom, Mary Ellen. *The Negro Sings a New Heaven*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1930. "Some O' These Days," pp. 20-1.

National Jubilee Melodies. Nashville, Tenn.: National Baptist Publishing Board, n.d. "Some O' These Days," p. 98.
Rodeheaver, Homer A. *Rodeheaver's Plantation Melodies*. Chicago: The Rodeheaver Co., c. 1918. "Some o' These Days," p. 4.
Work, John W. *American Negro Songs*. New York: Howell, Soskin, & Co., 1940. "Some of These Days," p. 166.

Selected Variants: Recordings

Carter Family. "River of Jordan." Camden, N.J.: Victor Talking Machine Co., 1928. Victor 21434-A.
Charles Owens and family. "The Welcome Table." Nova Scotia: field recording by Helen Creighton, early 1950s. *Folk Music from Nova Scotia*, Folkways FE4006 (P1006).
Pete Seeger. "I'm Gonna Walk and Talk with Jesus." New York: Folkways Records, early 1950s. *Love Songs for Friends and Foes*, Folkways FA 2453 (FP 85/3).
Sonny Terry, Alek Stewart, Woody Guthrie. "Streets of Glory." New York: Stinson Records, early 1950s. *Folksay: Volume 1*, Stinson SLP 5.
West Virginia Night Owls. "I'm Goin' to Walk on the Streets of Glory." Camden, N.J.: Victor Talking Machine Co., 1927. Victor 21533-A.



L69 A5

What a Time We're Living In.
Sung with spoken remarks by Rev. Robert Akers, accompanied by Junior Hawkins, piano and vocal; Alex Shupe, guitar; Donnie Felts, bass; and Kim Shupe, drums; white; August 20, 1978; Galax, Virginia; Blanton Owen; BR8-BO-R11.

It's been requested we sing one other song, and, uh, I tell you, I'm just about sung out and preached out, but we—we're going to try because, you know, uh, people could request it tonight and be gone tomorrow, and then I'd always regret it that I didn't sing it. This is another song I wrote sometime back, "What a Time We're Living In." Key of C. Let's sing to the glory of God. Some of you know this. If you will, you can help me out on it. Praise God!

Chorus:

*Well, what a time, what a time, we're living in,
What a time, what a time, we're living in,
There is hate on every hand, not many love their fellow man,
What a time, what a time, we're living in.
Now this earth, this old earth's going to pass away,
This old old earth, this old earth's going to pass away,
This old earth's going to pass away, all the works of men shall decay,
This old earth, this old earth's going to pass away.*

Chorus

*Now you going to kneel, you going to kneel after while,
You going to kneel, you going to kneel after while,*



Rev. Robert Akers' tent set up in Galax.

*Every knee will bow, every tongue confess,
when God calls his children to rest,
You going to kneel, you going to kneel after while.*

Chorus

*Play it for me boys.
I like this next verse.
Well, I'm going to leave, I'm going to leave after while,
Oh, I'm going to leave, I'm going to leave after while,
Soon that trumpet it will sound and my feet's going to leave the ground,
I'm going to leave, I'm going to leave after while.*

Chorus

*Oh, there'll be peace, there'll be peace after while,
There'll be peace, there'll be peace after while,
Lion'll lay down by the lamb, we shall be led by a child,
There'll be peace, there'll be peace after while.*

Chorus

*Play it one more time, boys.
Oh, there'll be joy, there'll be joy after while,
There'll be joy, there'll be joy after while,
All the saints shouting around God's throne
and the faithful are welcomed home,
There'll be joy, there'll be joy after while.*

Chorus

Amen. All right, we're not going to hold you too long tonight.

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The temporary and transient nature of tent revivals stands in contrast to the sense of congregational and community stability provided by churches like those of the Primitive Baptists along the Blue Ridge. Although tent revivals seem transient, their tradition is of long standing in the region. Rev. Robert Akers has been conducting them himself for twenty years.



Rev. Robert Akers.

Akers was born in Carroll County in 1935, is a part-time contractor, and is pastor of the Full Gospel Holiness Church in Hillsville, housed in a relatively new sheet metal building. For fourteen years he has broadcast "The Evangelistic Hour," featuring music and preaching, on radio station WHHV. The "show used to originate live at the station," he recalls, "but we got to getting so much help it got crowded, so now we feed it live on a line to the station from the church." He currently does about ninety tent revivals a year, working a circuit that takes him as far as one hundred miles from Hillsville, generally more to the southwest than to the east or north.

Akers's talents as a performer and a songwriter came "as a gift"; his father did some singing but was neither a song leader nor a noted singer. Akers has written a number of gospel songs that are well-known to people in the area but has never recorded or published any of his songs. His songs and singing style are similar to that of Brother Claude Ely, a Whitesburg, Kentucky, revivalist who achieved regional fame in the late 1940s through his commercial recordings on the King label. Akers is very much aware of Ely's music and career, though he did not personally know him.

The immediate context for this performance, a revival meeting held on the outskirts of Galax in late summer of 1978, included about thirty minutes of Akers's preaching and nineteen songs performed by Akers and six other singers. The styles ranged from congregational singing to individual solo performances in the manner of modern country music, and included original songs, modern gospel songs, and nineteenth-century revival standards like "Are You Washed in the Blood of the Lamb?" and "Jesus Is on the Main Line Tonight." "What a Time We're Living In" was one of three or four originals Akers performed in that service. The song is structured along highly traditional lines, especially in its use of the same first, second, and fourth line, a technique common in black spirituals and gospel songs.

L69 B1**When the Redeemed Are Gathering In.**

Sung by the congregation.

How Happy Are They.

Sung by the congregation.

Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone.

Lined out by Elder Millard Pruitt and sung by the congregation.

Prayer.

Spoken by Elder Millard Pruitt.

Jesus Is Coming Soon.

Sung by the congregation.

Doxology.

Sung by the congregation.

Blessing.

Spoken by Elder Millard Pruitt. All selections from a Sunday service at Laurel Glenn Regular Baptist Church; white; September 17, 1978; Alleghany County, North Carolina; Blanton Owen; BR8-BO-R34 and R36.

When the Redeemed Are Gathering In

*I am thinking of the rapture in our blessed home on high,
When the redeemed are gathering in;
How we'll raise the heavenly anthem in that city in the sky,
When the redeemed are gathering in.*

Chorus:

*When the redeemed are gathering in,
Washed like snow, and free from all sin,
How we'll shout, and how we'll sing,
When the redeemed are gathering in.*

*There will be a great procession over on the streets of gold,
When the redeemed are gathering in;
O what music, O what singing o'er the city will be rolled,
When the redeemed are gathering in.*

Chorus

*Saints will sing redemption's story with their voices clear and strong,
When the redeemed are gathering in;
Then the angels all will listen, for they cannot join that song,
When the redeemed are gathering in.*

Chorus

*Then the Savior will give orders to prepare the banquet board,
When the redeemed are gathering in;
And we'll hear his invitation, "Come, ye blessed of the Lord,"
When the redeemed are gathering in.*

How Happy Are They

*How happy are they who their Savior obey,
And whose treasures are laid up above.
Tongue cannot express the sweet comfort and peace,
Of a soul in its earliest love.*

*That sweet comfort was mine when the favor divine,
I first found in the blood of the lamb,
When my heart first believed, what a joy I received,
What a heaven in Jesus' name.*

*'Twas a heaven below the Redeemer to know,
And the angels could do nothing more,
Than to fall at his feet, and the story repeat,
And the Savior of sinners adore.*

*Jesus all the day long was my joy and my song,
All that know him salvation might see,
He has loved me, I cried, he has suffered and died,
To redeem such a rebel as me.*

*On the wings of his love I was carried above,
Every sin and temptation and pain,
I could scarcely believe that I ever should grieve,
That I ever should suffer again.*

*Oh the rapturous height of that holy delight,
Which I felt in the self-cleansing blood,*

*Of the Savior possessed, I was fervently blessed,
Overwhelmed in the fulness of God.*

*Know the day drawing nigh, when my soul, thou shalt fly,
To the place that salvation began,
Where the three that are one, Father, Spirit, and Son,
Laid the seed of redemption for man.*

Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone

*Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for everyone,
And there's a cross for me.*

*How happy are the saints above,
Who once went sorrowing here,
But now they taste unmingled love,
And joy without a tear.*

*The consecrated cross I'll bear,
Till death shall set me free,
And then go home my crown to wear,
For there's a crown for me.*

Prayer

Let us all bow and try to pray.
Our kind and gracious and everlasting heavenly Father: once again to imbibe the goodness and mercy that thou has extended unto a few of thy children and of thy creation. And we've been blessed to meet here around this altar upon this, another beautiful Sabbath day. Good Lord, we're trying the best that we have ever learned how to come unto thee as little children this morning in humble prayer and supplication, trying to let our hearts and our voices all unite together in thy praises here on the earth. Desiring, oh Lord, if thou will, look down upon each individual and into their heart and soul today, and breathe upon every heart a spirit of prayer and of thanksgiving for they have so much to be thankful for here in this life. Lord Almighty, we humbly thank thee for the breath that we breathe, oh Lord, and for our food and raiment that we all now possess. We humbly thank



Elder Millard Pruitt.

thee Lord that thou art still a-giving grace unto the humble in heart, oh Lord, and will hear how their prayers when they cry unto thee, are asking of thee a blessing from heaven's world. Almighty God, our Father, today, we humbly pray, oh Lord, that thou would have mercy upon everyone everywhere, wherever that they may be that's trying, uh, to carry out thy way and show the children the way of the bleeding lamb of God whilst they still live here in the world. Almighty God our Father, we humbly ask that thou would, ah, smile upon every one of them, dear Lord, that they might be [born], [ah, Lord,] all thy children everywhere, let one prayer come up to heaven's world. Hide thou meekly, oh Lord, [do] that. How the windows of heaven's world stays a time and then—how they pour out the dews of heaven upon the little flock that thou has preserved. How thine own blood here in the world, oh Lord, we humbly pray thee. How [great it is], God Almighty, that thou would look down today upon. How the little flock around that old Laurel Glenn, dear Lord [it has

been]. How so faithful thy cause and thy ca—calling here in the world. Oh, Lord our Father that thou have mercy on, how the poor lost sinners of the world, oh Lord, where will they be? Oh Lord, good Lord, would thou, uh, give unto them praying hearts, oh Lord, and the [?]. How that they might come unto thee before it's everlastingly and eternally too late. I realize, Lord, we're all bound, how one time through this life and after that, how death and the judgement await, have [visions] Lord Almighty, that thou will help us [all day]. I realize that we're in thine hands and that, how they aren't able, oh Lord, to take away this life which we now possess. Oh Lord Almighty, we pray thee, how Lord that thou would, uh, give each little child the life of eternal, Lord, how that they might be able to leave this world, have influence onto the faith, oh God. How realizing that they, how would have to prepare themselves while [they] live, how, Lord Almighty, give'em praying hearts, Lord, and even then they dispute it on down through the trials and troubles of this life. Lead us all through

the further [carrying] of this service, be our spokesman, Lord, be our leader and our guide. These blessings we ask in the name of Jesus and for our sakes. Amen.

Jesus Is Coming Soon

*Troublesome times are here, filling men's hearts with fear,
Freedom we all hold dear now is at stake;
Humbling your heart to God, safe from the chastening rod,
Seek the way pilgrims trod, Christians awake.*

Chorus:

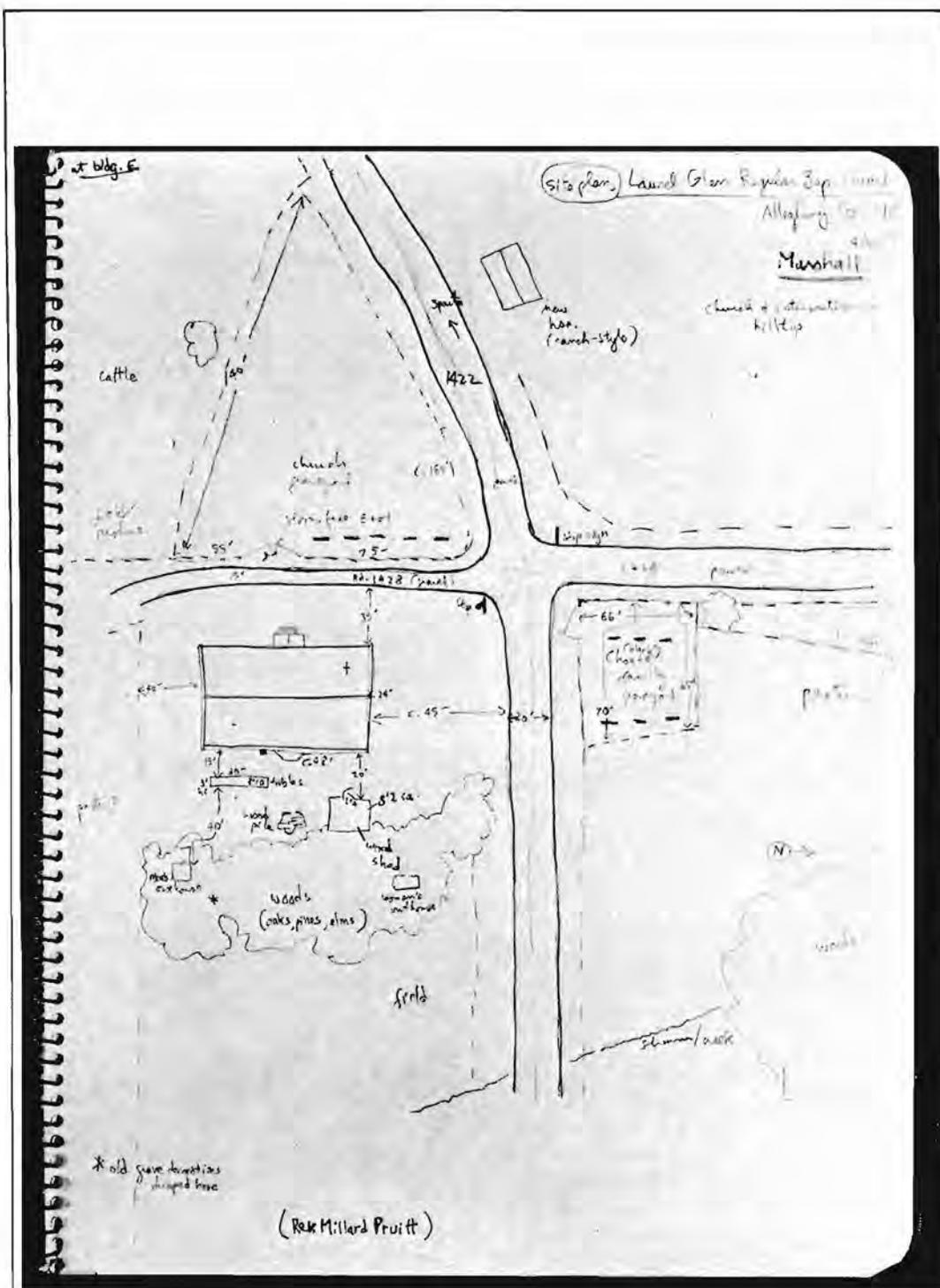
*Jesus is coming soon,
(Jesus is coming soon,)
Morning or night or noon,
(Morning or night or noon,)
Many will meet their doom,
(Many will meet their doom,)
Trumpets will sound
(Trumpets will surely sound,)
All of the dead shall rise
(All of the dead shall rise,)
Righteous meet in the skies,
(Righteous meet in the skies,)
Going where no one dies,
(Going where no one dies,)
Heavenward bound.
Love of so many cold, losing their homes of gold,
This in God's Word is told, evils abound;
When these signs come to pass, nearing the end at last,
It will come very fast, trumpets will sound.*

Chorus

*Troubles will soon be o'er, happy for evermore,
When we meet on that shore, free from all care;
Rising up in the sky, telling this world goodbye,
Heavenward we then will fly, glory to share.*

Chorus

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Ellis Crum, Publisher, Kendallville, Ind. 46755.
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Site plan of the Laurel Glenn Regular Baptist Church from Marshall's fieldnotes for August 14, 1978.

nated as an attempt to meet the demand for a paperback collection of gospel songs that could be used in church. It has been one of the most successful compilations in modern times. All the singing at Laurel Glenn was unaccompanied, and though the Stamps-Baxter and Winsett books contained music, the congregation did not always sing the parts as given but often used the books only for the words.

On the Sunday that these recordings were made, only fifteen members of the Laurel Glenn congregation were present. An association meeting in the area had drawn away some members who would normally attend. The fifteen members included Elder Millard Pruitt and his wife, Malissa, Zane and Mabel Brooks, T.J. Worthington, Patricia Ann Brooks, John Lee Phipps, Una Lee Phipps, Shane Brooks, Betty Ann Jones, and Sherman Scott. Leading the singing were Ray Caudill, the song leader, and Elder Pruitt; Una Lee Phipps's alto voice is also prominent on the recordings. The service included the singing of eleven songs and the "Doxology," as well as a scriptural reading, a prayer, and a message delivered by Elder Pruitt. While this selection offers only excerpts from the service, the songs included are full length and the original order has been preserved.

The performances have also been selected to illustrate the variety of song and singing styles found in such congregations. Next to a rousing revival song like "When the Redeemed Are Gathering In" is a stately 200-year-old anthem, "How Happy Are They," sung in the old unison style. "Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone" is "lined" by Pruitt; he chants a line of the hymn and then the congregation sings it. When asked if lining was still a regular part of the church singing, Elder Pruitt replied, "I'd guess so. If we don't show some of these younger ones how it's done, it's going to be lost." "Jesus Is Coming Soon" is a singing convention song composed in 1942, performed here replete with "parts" (the echoing of the chorus) in the manner of the gospel quartet. The "Doxology" uses the traditional words by seventeenth-century

writer Thomas Ken but is sung to an unusual melody.

Throughout the singing one can detect individual stylistic traits characteristic of unaccompanied singing in the Blue Ridge, such as the use of ornamentation and (especially in Elder Pruitt's singing) "feathering," an upward glide at the end of a phrase. Each of the performances heard here, including the "Doxology," also uses a pentatonic scale, at least in the lead parts. (Some of the harmony and part singing on "When the Redeemed Are Gathering In" adds a sixth tone.) In fact, a case could be made for classifying Elder Pruitt's chanted prayer as a quasi-musical performance using the same pentatonic scale. Such similarities underscore the integrity of the Laurel Glenn service and suggest that the body of songs, prayers, and sermons that comprise the rural church service might be much more musically unified than casual inspection would indicate.

"When the Redeemed Are Gathering In" was written in 1911 by Rev. Johnson Oatman, Jr. (words) and Texan W.H. Dutton (music). This song was popularized primarily by the publisher A.J. Showalter. Reverend Oatman was a prolific writer of hymns in his day, though "When the Redeemed" seems to have been his most popular piece, enjoying over sixteen printings through two decades. Oatman's biography is outlined in William Reynolds's *Hymns of Our Faith*. Showalter, a product of the Shenandoah Valley singing school tradition, founded a highly successful songbook publishing company in Dalton, Georgia, in 1884, and conducted singing schools in several southern states. The Laurel Glenn congregation sang this song from the Stamps-Baxter book. J.R. Baxter was one of Showalter's pupils. The song was often played by the Red Fox Chasers, a famous old-time string band from the same neighborhood as the Laurel Glenn church, who recorded a version in 1928. Galax singer Ernest Stoneman also recorded a version in 1926.

According to hymn scholar Leonard Ellinwood, "How Happy Are They" was

composed in 1749 by Charles Wesley (1707-1788), the English Methodist preacher and hymn writer whose brother John is known as the founder of Methodism. The song, which sometimes appears under the title "How Happy Are They Who the Savior Obey" or "How Happy Are They Who Their Savior Obey," was first printed in America in the Methodist *Pocket Hymn Book*. It is still well known in northern churches, appearing in the twentieth-century Methodist, Lutheran, and Anglican hymnals. Texts have been circulating through the Lloyd and Goble Primitive Baptist songbooks for about one hundred years and have helped to keep the song alive in rural Baptist churches throughout the South.

"Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone" is a composite song with a complex history. The initial stanza seems to be a rewriting of a quatrain in the English poet Thomas Shepherd's *Penitential Cries* (1693) which originally read:

Shall Simon bear the Cross alone,
And other Saints be free?
Each Saint of thine shall find his own,
And there is one for me.

According to Reynolds's *Hymns of Our Faith*, the second stanza has been traced to a missionary collection published at Norwich, England, about 1810. In 1844, George N. Allen combined these two stanzas with the third, wrote a tune called "Maitland" for the lyrics, and published the results in *The Oberlin Social and Sabbath School Hymn Book*; I have been unable to examine a copy of this book. This collection was reasonably popular in its day, but the inclusion of the tune in the 1855 *Plymouth Collection of Hymns* assured it an enduring place in America. The Plymouth collection was edited by the nascent abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher, then an immensely popular preacher, and the tune was titled "Cross and Crown."

In the first half of the twentieth century, the song appeared in at least twenty-seven hymnals of all faiths, making it a staple in American church singing. Today the song can be found in sources as diverse as the Primitive Baptist *The Old School Hymnal* collections and the

Reverend J. Bazzell Mull's paperback songbooks sold through his popular radio program, "Mull's Singing Convention." A parallel performance of this piece, also lined out, was recorded in the 1960s by Elder Walter Evans from Sparta, just a few miles from the Laurel Glenn church. The recording by Ernest Stoneman shares two verses with this performance and adds a different refrain.

"Jesus Is Coming Soon" was composed by the Dayton, Tennessee, song publisher and song writer Robert E. Winsett in the early days of World War II and first appeared in a 1942 Winsett paperback shape-note songbook. The first stanza of the song makes rather explicit topical references to the war, a relatively rare phenomenon in a modern gospel song. The references do not seem to bother the people of the area (one singer saw them as "more relevant than ever"). The song is a genuine regional favorite. The Gloryland Seekers, a young group from nearby Ennice, have recorded the song on a custom record album, as have the Lamplighters quartet from nearby Galax. The Easter Brothers, popular bluegrass and television entertainers in the region, included it on one of their first LPs. More widely known recorded versions include those by the Chuck Wagon Gang and other modern, professional groups.

WHEN THE REDEEMED ARE GATHERING IN

Present Text

Morris, Homer F.; Stamps, Virgil O.; Baxter, J.R.; and Combs, W.W., comps. *Favorite Songs and Hymns*. Dallas: Stamps-Baxter Music and Printing Co., 1939, p. 159.

Selected Variants: Print

Showalter, A.J. et al, comps. *The New Revival Glory*. Dalton, Ga.: The A.J. Showalter Co., 1912, p. 148.

Selected Variants: Recordings

Brown's Ferry Four. "When the Redeemed Are Gathering In." Cincinnati: King Recording Co., 1952. King 1209.



Laurel Glenn church.

Carson Brothers and Smith. "When the Redeemed Are Gathering In." Asheville, N.C.: General Phonograph Co., 1925. Okeh 45023.

Ernest Stoneman's Dixie Mountaineers. "When the Redeemed Are Gathering In." New York: Victor Talking Machine Co., 1926. Victor 20533.

Red Fox Chasers. "When the Redeemed Are Gathering In." Richmond, Ind.: Starr Piano Co., 1928. Matrix 13943.

HOW HAPPY ARE THEY

Present Text

Lloyd, Benjamin, comp. *The Primitive Hymns, Spiritual Songs, and Sacred Poems*. 1841. Reprint. Rocky Mount, N.C.: The Primitive Hymns Corp., 1978, p. 115.

Selected Variants: Print

A Pocket hymn-Book, Designed as a Constant Companion for the Pious Eleventh

Edition. With a prefatory letter to members of the Methodist Episcopal Church from Bishops Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury. Philadelphia: Prichard and Hall for Dickins, 1790, pp. 202-3.

MUST JESUS BEAR THE CROSS ALONE

Present Text

Goble, D.H., comp. *Primitive Baptist Hymn Book*. 1887. Reprint. Greenfield, Ind.: D.H. Goble Printing Co., n.d., p. 263.

Selected Variants: Print

Beecher, Henry Ward, comp. *Plymouth Collection of Hymns*. New York: A.S. Barnes, 1855. "Cross and Crown," p. 244.

Mull, J. Bazzell, comp. *Mulls Our Recorded Songs Number 3*. Cleveland, Tenn.: Tennessee Music and Printing Company for Mull Singing Convention,

1975, no. 19.

Showalter, A.J., et al, comps. *The New Revival Glory*. Dalton, Ga.: The A.J. Showalter Co., 1912, no. 264.

Speir, E.D., et al, comps. *Old School Hymnal No. 10*. Cincinnati: The Old School Hymnal Co., 1964, no. 275.

Selected Variants: Recordings

Edward W. Clayborn (The Guitar Evangelist). "Jesus Will Make It All Right." Chicago: Brunswick-Balke-Collender Co., 1927. Vocalion 1093. Reissued on *Christ Was Born on Christmas Morn*, Historical HLP-34.

Elder Walter Evans and congregation. "Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone?" Sparta, N.C.: Sovereign Grace Record Co., ca. 1960s. *Old Hymns Lined and Led by Elder Walter Evans*, Sovereign Grace LP 6444.

Ernest Stoneman's Dixie Mountaineers, "There's a Light Lit Up in Galilee." Bristol, Tenn.: Victor Talking Machine Co., 1928. Victor 40078.

JESUS IS COMING SOON

Present Text

Winsett, Robert E., comp. *Best of All*. Dayton, Tenn.: Winsett Publishing Co., 1951, no. 107.

Selected Variants: Print

Winsett, Robert E., comp. *Joys Supernal*. Dayton, Tenn.: Winsett Publishing Co., 1942, no. 64.

Selected Variants: Recordings

Chuck Wagon Gang. "Jesus Is Coming Soon." Nashville: Columbia Records, 1971. *Down the Sawdust Trail*, Columbia LP C31043.

Easter Brothers and Their Green Valley Quartet. "Jesus Is Coming Soon." Mt. Airy, N.C.: Commandment Records, ca. 1974. *Country Hymn Time*, Commandment LP 300.

Gloryland Seekers. "Jesus Is Coming Soon." Galax, Va.: SWS Records, 1977. *Come On People*, SWS LP HRC-1201.

Lamplighters. "Jesus Is Coming Soon." Roanoke, Va.: Princess Record Company, ca. 1976. *Lighting the Way Through Song*, Princess LP PR-116.

L69 B2**Baptizing at Carson Creek.**

Conducted by Rev. Cecil Hooper and Rev. J.L. Byrd, with the congregations of the Mountain View Baptist Church, Lowgap, North Carolina, and the Community Baptist Church, near Mount Airy, North Carolina; white; September 7, 1978; near Lowgap, North Carolina; Charles K. Wolfe; BR8-CW-R58.

Rev. Cecil Hooper:

In obedience to the command of the Lord and Master and upon the profession of faith that he has in him, we baptize this thy brother in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

(Submersion)

Amen.

Congregation:

Happy day, happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away.

Hooper:

I was just thinking about these fellows, a-help baptizing their children, it brings back n— several years ago, that I walked out in the waters with my own son. And helped baptize him. And it's a star in all of my blessings since God saved me. I walked out in the waters and helped baptize my wife. And it means something to you. It's a real blessing. We thank God for all of these dads and moms, that's cooperating with us. These children, these boys and girls, that's being baptized this evening. I rest—I request every praying dad and mom, or boy or girl to pray for these.

In obedience to the command of the Lord and Master, we baptize this our sister, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

(Submersion)

Congregation:

Happy day, happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away.

Hooper:

Now, if there's anybody else want to be baptized, me and Brother Byrd will baptize you.

Rev. J.L. Byrd:

Amen, we will.

Hooper:

Hallelujah. Everybody ba—everybody happy with your baptism that you've already had, huh? We'll be looking forward to you, to seeing you over on the other side, if we never see you no more. Over there in the pearly gates of glory, where that we'll never be sick, where the trouble never comes. Now that's a real blessing to me.

Congregation:

Amen, amen.

Hooper:

Just think about it. Brother Byrd, you got something to say?

Byrd:

I was just thinking while Brother Cecil was burying those young folks out there in Christian baptism, what the world thought about it. The world don't see a lot in that. The world has never really saw the significance of someone going down there and be buried in a watery grave. They've never understood the importance of it. But it must have been awful important. Brother Cecil read from the third chapter of Matthew how when John the Baptist was baptized in [there?] in the river Jordan that Jesus came to him to be baptized. What he didn't read right there in that one particular place was that Jesus walked seventy miles to get over there to where John was baptizing, that he might fulfill all righteousness. Even sometimes we that are Christians, we fail to understand or to comprehend that this baptism, the rite of Christian baptism, is the fulfillment of all righteousness, as set forth in the word of God. And it behooves us as Christians as the brothers ask us, not only are we to pray for one another but for these young Christians that have just started out. It behooves us to pray for them night and day, to keep

them on our mind and ever before God in prayer.

So let's keep these in mind and let's pray for them, and encourage them, and hold them up, and help them. Who knows what God will do with some of these. I may be looking at a red-headed preacher right now and don't know it. We don't, no man knows the mind of God. We don't know what God's going to do with them, let's pray for them. And pray for one another. We appreciate the fact that we've had two churches here baptizing together; this is about the second or third time that we've had that, and one time we had three churches here, we all baptized together, three churches, that's wonderful. I expect there's been more people buried with Christ right there than any one little spot in this county, and we appreciate you being here and pray God's blessing upon you.

Anybody want to say a word before we have the benediction?

Perhaps the most conspicuous conviction of Baptists in general is "believer's baptism," total immersion, stemming from the conscious choice of the individual, as opposed to infant baptism. The Christian life involves dying to the old life and rising in a new life; and the act of total immersion symbolizes this, as reflected by Reverend Hooper's frequent references to burial. Thus to many young people in the Blue Ridge, baptism is an important rite of passage. It symbolizes their achievement of maturity, at least as defined in religious terms, for it represents their serious commitment to Christian values. The comments by both ministers heard in this selection reflect the importance of this rite of passage. The tone of the comments is similar to that of a high school commencement. Most of the half-dozen baptized at this service were in their teens.

It was by coincidence that two churches from Surry County decided to hold baptism ceremonies on the same day. The pool at Carson Creek, just about a mile from the main highway from Lowgap to



Carson Creek baptism.

Mt. Airy, has been used by churches in the community for decades, and such "joint" baptisms are not rare. River baptism is still relatively common in the Blue Ridge, though many churches are increasingly turning to in-church "baptistry" tubs for the service. The ceremony as a whole was informal, but followed an interesting and traditional structure. The excerpts assembled here are designed to represent the overall service, which lasted about thirty minutes. Throughout there was a certain consciousness of the "traditionality" of holding the service out of doors at a real creek, and there were a

number of symbolic touches. The congregations assembled on the banks singing "Shall We Gather at the River"; each candidate wore a special white robe; each baptism was framed with identical words by the preacher and by a single phrase of the hymn "Oh Happy Day" by the congregation standing on the bank. After the immersions, both ministers stood in the creek facing the congregation and delivered impromptu comments.

Leading the singing at this ceremony is Caldwell Schuyler, who can also be heard singing with his family on L70 A2. The refrain sung after each baptism comes

from the well-known hymn "Oh Happy Day." According to Fuld's *Book of World Famous Music* (pp. 279-80), this hymn was first published in Boston in 1854 or 1855. Rev. Philip Doddridge's words were first published in London in 1755. Fuld could not substantiate the usual attribution of the melody to Edward F. Rimbault. Throughout the twentieth century, versions of the song have appeared in numerous paperback shape-note songbooks. This melody was parodied in the Prohibition favorite "How Dry I Am."

**L70 A1
*Palms of Victory.***

Sung unaccompanied by Marshall Largen, Rebecca Largen, Barbara Largen, and Bill Scott; white; June 27, 1979; near Laurel Fork, Virginia; Charles K. Wolfe; BR8-CW-R105.

Chorus:

*Then palms of victory, crowns of glory,
Palms of victory I shall wear.*

*I saw a wayworn traveler,
In tattered garments clad,
And struggling up the mountain,
It seemed that he was sad.
His back was laden heavy,
His strength was almost gone,
Yet he shouted as he journeyed,
Deliverance will come.*

Chorus

*The summer sun was shining,
The sweat was on his brow,
His garments, worn and dusty,
His step seemed mighty slow.
But he kept pressing onward,
For he was going home,
Still shouting as he journeyed,
Deliverance will come.*

Chorus



Barbara Largen, Rebecca Largen, Bill Scott, and Marshall Largen at the Largen home.

*I saw him in the evening,
The sun was sinking low,
He'd overtopped the mountain,
And reached the vale below.
He saw that golden city,
His everlasting home,
And he shouted loud hosannas,
Deliverance has come.*

Chorus

*While gazing on that city,
Just o'er the narrow flood,
A band of holy angels,
Came from the throne of God.
They bore him on their pinions,
Safe o'er the dashing foam,
And joined him in his triumph,
Deliverance had come.*

Chorus sung twice

Family singing has always been a cornerstone of gospel music, and it is no accident that virtually all the smaller singing groups represented here are built around family ties. Researcher Stanley H. Brobston, in his dissertation "A Brief History of White Southern Gospel Music and a Study of Selected Amateur Family Gospel Music Singing Groups in Rural Georgia," reports that most groups he encountered during a 1975-76 North Georgia survey could be classified in some way as "family." Indeed, many of the legendary groups of professional gospel music, such as the Chuck Wagon Gang, the Speer Family, and the Blackwood Brothers, started with family members as a nucleus. The family of Marshall Largen of Laurel Fork, Virginia, preserves one of the earliest styles of small-group sacred

singing found in the area. They prefer to sing unaccompanied and in a style that uses little ornamentation or part complexity. This style probably resembles southern family singing before it came under the influence of the flashier, more complex, more upbeat syncopated singing promulgated by the schools of James D. Vaughan and Stamps-Baxter in the 1920s. Indeed, many of the songs the Largens like to sing are taken from turn-of-the-century songbooks passed on through Bill Scott's family.

Elbert Marshall Largen, born near Hillsville in 1923, is a machinist by trade, a part-time preacher, a singer, and a first-rate tinkerer. (He once built a grandfather clock, parts and all.) Marshall describes himself as an "independent" in religious matters. In 1972 his church, the Skyline Independent Baptist Church, withdrew from the Southern Baptist Convention, and Marshall today sponsors a half-hour weekly radio show over WHHV, Hillsville, called "The Word of Life Program." It features the family singing and his preaching and is the main outlet for the group's music. Singing with him are an old friend, Bill Scott, and Largen's two daughters, Rebecca and Barbara. While all the members of the group listen to different types of music, all agree that some modern gospel music is "like a lot of modern religions, it's anti-emotional." On the other hand, Marshall "gets inspired" when he listens to the Chestnut Grove Quartet, a widely known *a cappella* quartet from the western part of the state, and he likes to listen to the singing of Elder Lasserre Bradley on the (Primitive) Baptist Bible Hour, syndicated on radio from Cincinnati. Largen said, "I don't believe his doctrine, but I sure like his singing." Rebecca and Barbara share their father's interest in older tunes but also enjoy listening to modern gospel music, and Barbara occasionally performs newer songs with other young singers in the area.

It has been generally assumed that "Palms of Victory" (also called "Deliverance Will Come") was written in 1836 by John Matthias. (It should not be con-

fused with the "Palms of Victory" published in various sacred harp hymnals, like the 1855 *Social Harp*, p. 53.) Virtually nothing is known about Matthias, however, and hymn scholar Leonard Ellinwood wrote me in 1980 that he could find no publication of this hymn prior to 1877. Although I have not found a copy to examine, Ellinwood said that the hymn appears in J.E. Irvine's 1877 *Full Salvation Hymnal* attributed to Rev. W. McDonald. An identical text appears in Bolton and Driver's 1885 *Songs of the Soul* attributed to Matthias. After this publication, the song appears in many collections, usually attributed to Matthias.

According to Ellinwood, the refrain "Palms of Victory" is one of several camp-meeting refrains that were tacked on to a variety of hymn texts during the nineteenth century. The original text of "Palms of Victory" contained a reference to Numbers 10:29, a description of Moses leading the tribes out from Sinai, but the immediate relevance of this passage to the text of the song is unclear.

In the early twentieth century, "Palms of Victory" was widely reprinted in paperback convention books throughout the South. It was a convenient "filler," a half-page, older song that could be used to fill out a page where a newer song had occupied a page and a half. It was probably through the convention book that the song entered early commercial country music tradition, where it was recorded several times by luminaries like Uncle Dave Macon and the Carter Family. The versions sung by Fiddlin' John Carson and Hedy West are parodies with political overtones whose existence attests to the hymn's popularity. The song today seems to be especially popular in the Carroll-Grayson county area of southwest Virginia, so much so that both Marshall Largen and Bill Scott reported that many natives feel the song is indigenous to that area. I have heard the song sung in this area more than in any part of the country, and other local singers, including Jim and Artie Marshall and the Schuyler Family, include it as a part of their regular repertoires.

Selected Variants: Print

Bolton, H.W. and Driver, J.M. *Songs of the Soul*. Boston: Bolton and Driver, 1885. "Deliverance Will Come," p. 46.

Randolph, Vance. *Ozark Folk Songs: Vol. IV*. 1950. Reprint. Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1980, p. 64.

Silber, Irwin. "You're Hedy West." *Sing Out* 14(1964):28-33. "Pans of Biscuits," p. 28.

Speir, E.D., et al, comps. *Old School Hymnal No. 10*. Cincinnati: Old School Hymnal Co., 1964, no. 323.

Selected Variants: Recordings

Carter Family. "The Wayworn Traveller." New York: Decca Record Co., 1936. Decca 5359.

Fiddlin' John Carson. "The Honest Farmer." New York: General Phonograph Co., 1925. Okeh 40411. Reissued on *The Old Hen Cackled and the Rooster's Going to Crow*, Rounder 1003.

Fiddlin' John Carson. "The Honest Farmer." Camden, N.J.: RCA Victor, 1934. Bluebird B5742; Montgomery Ward 4849.

Smith's Sacred Singers. "Deliverance Will Come." Atlanta: Columbia Phonograph Co., 1928. Columbia 15329.

Uncle Dave Macon. "Deliverance Will Come." New York: Brunswick-Balke-Collender Co., 1926. Vocalion 15439 and 5001.



L70 A2

Holding to His Hand of Love.
Sung unaccompanied by the Caldwell Schuyler Family; white; September 4, 1978; Lowgap, North Carolina; Charles K. Wolfe; BR8-CW-R13.

*Going along, singing a song,
Walking with the Heavenly Dove,
Oh what gladness divine daily is mine,
Holding to his hand of love,
Ever,*

Duo/Solo Chorus:

*I am holding to his hand,
(I am holding to my Savior's hand,)
As I onward go,
(As I onward go,)
Mid the dangers of this land,
(Mid the dangers of this weary land,)
Grace he doth bestow;
(Grace he doth bestow;)
On to brighter realms above,
(Moving on to brighter realms above,)
Sunbeams round me play,
(Sunbeams round me play,)
I hold to his hand of love,
(I am holding to his hand of love,)
All along the way.
(All along the way.)*

*Fellowship sweet, rapture complete,
Walking with the Heavenly Dove,
I have nothing to dread, looking ahead,
Holding to his hand of love,
Ever,*

Chorus

*Traveling on, facing the dawn,
Walking with the Heavenly Dove,
I am nearing the strand of that good land,
Holding to his hand of love,
Ever,*

Chorus

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Like the Largen Family, the Schuyler Family of Lowgap, North Carolina, consists of two generations of singers. Like the Largens, the Schuylers sing from seven-shape-note songbooks, often sing unaccompanied, and confine their performing to church singings and revivals. The Schuylers represent, however, a slightly more modern style than that represented by the Largens. If the Largen sound is rooted in the 1920s, the Schuyler sound is rooted in the late 1930s. It is not surprising that one of their favorite groups is the Chuck Wagon Gang, the Texas singers who emerged in the 1930s and dominated American gospel singing for three decades.

Caldwell Schuyler and his wife Avis have both sung since they were children. Avis came from a family that had no pronounced singing tradition, but she sang in the high school glee club and the church choir. Caldwell, on the other hand, grew up listening to his parents and brothers and sisters sing, and for several years after they were married Avis and Caldwell sang in a quartet with Caldwell's parents, Mr. and Mrs. E.L. Schuyler, also from Lowgap. Later the two sang a lot with A.P. Thompson and his son Ralph. A.P. Thompson, for years a singing teacher himself, had been a member of the Red Fox Chasers in the 1920s, a string band from Surry County which distinguished itself with a popular series of records featuring traditional and gospel music from the region. As Avis and Caldwell's son Trent developed into a singer, and as Thompson began to travel less, the Schuylers became a family trio. Although Caldwell works as a rural mailman and operates a large and successful farm, and Trent studies at nearby Surry County Community College, the Schuylers still manage to travel to two or three evening performances per week in the area. As with many other amateur groups, they feel lucky to recover their gasoline expenses and go primarily for the experience itself.

The Schuyler repertory is more traditional than that of many such groups; they sing songs from old Vaughan,

Stamps-Baxter, Winsett, and Chuck Wagon Gang books and have recently begun singing from the John T. Benson "Inspiration" series of songbooks. Occasionally a piece of modern sheet music appears in their music pile, but even then it is rendered with stately *a cappella* grace. Recently the Schuylers have begun singing some songs with the piano accompaniment of Mrs. Ella Draughn (see L70 A4).

"Holding to His Hand of Love" is a rather typical "convention book" song dating from the 1930s. It was composed by Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Wilson, who for many years ran the important Chattanooga office of the Stamps-Baxter

Company, and by Eugene Wright. The Schuylers sang from a page removed from a hymnal and fastened to a sheet of heavy paper. It was impossible to identify the hymnal, but the page referred to the song's original appearance in Stamps-Baxter's *Starlit Crown*.

Stylistically this performance is interesting because it not only illustrates the newer, more complex, more sprightly gospel song that came into the Blue Ridge in the 1930s, but it also features a stylistic trait called the afterbeat, more commonly known among singers as "back-fire" or "static." In a typical afterbeat song, one voice clearly carries the melodic line, with other voices repeating a word or syllable

Caldwell, Trent, and Avis Schuyler, and Ella Draughn at the Schuyler home.



No. 46 **Holding to His Hand of Love**
 Copyright, 1937, by The Stamps-Baxter Music Co.,
 EUGENE WRIGHT In "Starlit Crown" MR. & MRS. WILBUR WILSON
Not too fast

1. Go - ing a - long, sing - ing a song, Walking with the Heav'nly Dove, O what
 2. Fel - low ship sweet, rapture com - plete, Walking with the Heav'nly Dove, I have
 3. Trav - el - ing on, fac - ing the dawn, Walking with the Heav'nly Dove, I am
 glad - ness di - vine dai - ly is mine, Hold - ing to His hand of love ev - er.
 noth - ing to dread, look - ing a - head, Hold - ing to His hand of love ev - er.
 near - ing the strand of that good land, Hold - ing to His hand of love ev - er.

From Stamps-Baxter's Starlit Crown; the notation uses the seven-shape-note system.

on the offbeat following its appearance in the lead voice. Caldwell Schuyler explains it this way: "It's like, you got it, I got it, you got it, I got it." The afterbeat is not featured often today, though its influence has been felt among almost all writers. Mr. and Mrs. Schuyler recall that when such songs first came in, back in the 1930s, some people thought they were "too jiggy" to be religious songs.

Selected Variants: Print

Baxter, J.R., Jr., et al, comps. *Starlit Crown*. Dallas: Stamps-Baxter Music and Printing Co., 1937, no. 46.

Mull, J. Bazzell, comp. *The Chuck Wagon Gang: Our Recorded Songs Number Two*. Cleveland, Tenn.: Tennessee Music and Printing Co., for J. Bazzell Mull and the Chuck Wagon Gang, 1967, no. 42.

Selected Variants: Recordings

Chuck Wagon Gang. "Holding to His Hand of Love." Dallas: Columbia Phonograph Co., 1940. Vocalion/Okeh 5600.

L70 A3

The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow.

Sung by the Peaceful Valley Quartet: Aubrey Brooks (guitar and vocal), Carol Brooks, Joyce Gillespie, and Bobby Gillespie (vocals); white; June 27, 1979; near Ennice, North Carolina; Charles K. Wolfe; BR8-CW-R102.

Aubrey Brooks:

The title of this song is "The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow."

*I am on the heavenly highway,
 Headed to the land above,
 See this world I have forsaken,
 Just to serve the one I love.
 When the way grows rough and rocky,
 Low before the cross I bow,
 I say unto my soul, be patient,
 The Lord will make a way somehow.*

*Sometimes I get so tired and weary,
 As I journey on my way,
 And the faith begins to fail me,
 It's then I steal away and pray.
 I get a little glimpse of heaven,
 While at his feet I humbly bow,
 And I hear him whisper, fear not,
 I will make a way somehow.*

*Sometimes I feel just like a stranger,
 As I daily plod along,
 Through this world of toil and danger,
 Where so many things go wrong.
 Jesus promised to be with me,
 And to answer every call,
 He will put his arms around me,
 And he will not let me fall.*

*Sometimes I get so tired and weary,
 As I journey on my way,
 And the faith begins to fail me,
 It's then I steal away and pray.
 I get a little glimpse of heaven,
 While at his feet I humbly bow,
 And I hear him whisper, fear not,
 I will make a way somehow.*

Composed by Tommy Sutton and Sylvia Trace.
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If any single professional group can be said to be the dominant influence on the amateur groups in the Blue Ridge area, that group would undoubtedly be the Chuck Wagon Gang. The "Chucks," as many of their Blue Ridge fans fondly call them, came out of the Depression-haunted Texas plains to galvanize and dominate white gospel music in the late 1930s. Through their recordings and radio shows, they have continued to exert this influence until the present day. The group managed to merge the country music style of the Carter Family with the singing school style of Stamps-Baxter and to produce an instantly recognizable style that has moved millions: rich, full, four-part harmony with occasional polyphony or "part singing."

It pleases the members of the Peaceful Valley Quartet when fans compare them

to the Chuck Wagon Gang. For years they have worked to achieve this sound, and the biggest thrill in their career came when they once performed with the "Chucks" on a concert stage. The Peaceful Valley Quartet was originally organized about 1963 by Aubrey and Carol Brooks. Both are natives of the area. Carol grew up singing with her brothers and sisters in a family quartet, The Edwards Family, that performed *a cappella* and sang in local churches. She is the only one of her family to carry on with music. Aubrey went to an old-fashioned singing school at Elkin, North Carolina, but continued to play a wide variety of music, including bluegrass. He developed a rather

The Peaceful Valley Quartet.



unique guitar style "pretty much" on his own, and within a few years the quartet had developed an extensive repertory that featured Chuck Wagon favorites and many of Aubrey's original gospel-sentimental songs. They toured extensively, travelling as far as Akron, Ohio, and appeared in local radio stations, with regular shows on WBOB (Galax) and WCOK (Sparta). About this time they began to experiment with producing their own records and found they could sell enough to help meet their travel expenses. They eventually produced two LPs and three 45s on their own. A fourth single was issued commercially on Arthur Smith's Pyramid label. Carol Brooks, who

sang soprano in the group and was responsible for much of its distinctive sound, underwent surgery on her throat in 1968. Complications forced her to curtail singing, and the group broke up in 1973. After a few years' retirement, Carol and Aubrey began to sing again, this time with their two teen-aged sons, and their success led them to recreate the Peaceful Valley Quartet in 1979. This recording was made only a few days after the group had started singing together again, and while there are occasional hints of rustiness, the sound is still remarkable and unique. Bobby Gillespie, who sings bass here, is an insurance agent in Sparta. His wife, Joyce, is also a native of the region.

"The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow" (not to be confused with a different, often-recorded song by Thomas A. Dorsey) was written in 1952 by disc jockey Tommy Sutton and gospel singer Sylvia Trace. Trace was from Lucasville, Ohio, and sang in a trio with her two daughters; Tommy Sutton was a disc jockey for a Dayton radio station. Sutton recalls, "That song was really the only one of our collaborations that amounted to anything." The song was published in sheet music form by Acuff-Rose in 1953, and the Trace Family Trio recorded it for King that same year. The undated recording by the Trace Trio probably predates the King disc. The record became a modest hit, and the song was picked up by other singers, including the Stanley Brothers, who often performed it but seem never to have recorded it. The Peaceful Valley Quartet thinks they first heard it performed by the Stanleys. Trace went on to record and write other gospel songs. Tommy Sutton eventually moved to Nashville, established close ties with bluegrass musicians like Red Allen, and composed country songs like "Wish I Had a Nickel."

Selected Variants: Print

Sutton, Tommy and Trace, Sylvia. "The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow." Nashville: Acuff-Rose Publishing Co., 1953. (Copyright lead sheet.)

Selected Variants: Recordings

Trace Family Trio. "The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow." Cincinnati: King Recording Co., ca. 1953. King 1185.

Trace Trio. "The Lord Will Make a Way Somehow." Recording information unknown. Trace 100.

L70 A4***Keep on the Firing Line.***

Played on the piano by Ella Draughn; white; September 4, 1978; near Lowgap, North Carolina; Charles K. Wolfe; BR8-CW-R17.

Though nearing her eighties, Mrs. Ella Draughn is still widely regarded as one of the best gospel music pianists around by the people of the Surry County-Mt. Airy region. Recently she has been appearing with the Schuyler Family, who live a few miles up the road from her, and occasionally sings with A.P. Thompson. As a girl in the 1920s she attended a seven-shape note singing school held in the area by Heritage East, a legendary singing school teacher. By the late 1930s Mrs. Draughn was playing piano for the Lone Star Quartet, then fixtures at WPTF in Raleigh. The group would give a daily radio program at 9:00 in the morning and then travel to live appearances every night. "We would play mostly schools. They would charge \$1.00 admission for a two-hour show. That was during the Depression. Schools would take a tax out of the gate to help pay for costs of running the schools." Most of the show was straight quartet gospel music except for some comedy (one of the members created a comic character named Joe Squashead) and Mrs. Draughn's piano solos such as "I'm Going to See Heaven" and "Keep on the Firing Line."

The full effect of the addition of the piano to gospel quartet music has yet to be studied. We know that pioneering quartets like the Vaughan Quartet and the Frank Stamps quartet were recording

with piano accompaniment in the mid-1920s and that pianists like Dwight Brock, James Walbert, Lee Roy Abernathy, and Hovie Lister have emerged as influential arrangers and composers in the genre.

The use of up-tempo, ragtime-like piano solos as a regular part of gospel quartet performances dates from the 1930s, and "Keep on the Firing Line" has emerged as a favorite of many quartet pianists. The song was originally written in 1915 by Bessie F. Hatcher, of Yardville, New Jersey, who produced a number of other "gospel hymns." During the next twenty years, the song somehow got into southern quartet tradition, and underwent several subtle melodic and textual changes. In 1935, a Tennessee gospel group called the LeFevre Trio, who often performed with guitar, banjo, and fiddle, began performing the tune in up-tempo style. Lois Blackwell in *The Wings of the Dove* reports that at one particular singing convention, "several listeners stood up and protested such jive music in a gospel sing, but immediately others jumped up and squelched their protestation—and the LeFevres kept on swinging." In 1935 Alphas LeFevre, then working for the Vaughan Publishing Company, published an arrangement of the piece in a Vaughan convention book; that same year Otis McCoy published a similar "syncopated" arrangement in a book by a rival company. In a 1979 conversation with this writer, McCoy acknowledged that he had heard the song since the early 1930s and that it was popularized mainly through the efforts of the LeFevres. Conner Hall remembers that by the end of the 1930s, this piece had become so popular that in a Greenville, South Carolina, church it was played in swing band style by a 25-piece church orchestra. Quartets, not having such instrumental resources, devised a format where the singers would first sing one verse, and only then turn the tune over to their pianist for a show piece. It was during this period that Ella Draughn learned the tune.

Somewhat different versions of the song arranged by Marion Easterling ap-

peared in rival songbooks published by A.J. Showalter and Stamps-Baxter in 1939 and 1940, and interest was renewed again in the song in the mid-1940s when it was featured by the popular John Daniel Quartet over station WSM in Nashville. Meanwhile, in 1941, the Carter Family recorded a country version of the song (vocals and guitar) which helped spread the song into country and country gospel circles. An interesting parallel to this present performance (complete with glissando run) can be heard on an early record by the Blackwood Brothers, where the piano is played by Hilton Griswald.

Selected Variants: Print

Easterling, Marion W., arr. "Keep On the Firing Line." In *Sparkling Songs*. Dalton, Ga.: The A.J. Showalter Co., 1939, no. 97.

Hatcher, Bessie F. "Keep on the Firing Line." Yardville, N.J.: Bessie F. Hatcher, 1915. (Copyright lead sheet.)

LeFevre, Alphas, arr. "Keep on the Firing Line." In *Sunrise in Glory*, ed. by W. Lee Higgins. Lawrenceburg, Tenn.: James D. Vaughan, 1935, no. 74.

McCoy, Otis, arr. "Keep on the Firing Line." In *Homeland Harmony Songbook*, comp. by Otis McCoy. Cleveland, Tenn.: Tennessee Music and Printing Co., 1936, no. 102.

Selected Variants: Recordings

Blackwood Brothers. "Keep on the Firing Line." Kansas City: Blackwood Brothers Records, ca. 1948. Blackwood 1057-A.

Brown's Ferry Four. "Keep on the Firing Line." Cincinnati: King Recording Co., 1947. King 700.

Carter Family. "Keep on the Firing Line." New York: RCA Victor, 1941. Bluebird B-9026. Reissued on *My Old Cottage Home*, Camden ACLI-0047.

LeFevre Trio. "Keep on the Firing Line." Atlanta: Bibletone Records, ca. 1947. Bibletone 7007-A.

L70 A5

On the Other Side of Jordan.

Sung and played by Elk Horn Four: Warren Lowe (guitar and lead vocal), Ethel Lowe (bass and harmony vocal), Edward Spears (lead guitar), and Joanne Monk (piano); white; September 19, 1978; near Galax, Virginia; Charles K. Wolfe; BR8-CW-R59.

*On the other side of Jordan, just beyond the
shining strand,
I'll be resting in the beauty of that land.
I'll go walking through the garden, with that
man of Galilee,
He's the master of that troubled stormy sea.*

Chorus:

*I am waiting in the shadows for the shining
angel band,
And they'll come and take me home to that
land.
On the other side of Jordan, they are waiting
there I know,
And I'm ready, Lord I'm ready, now to go.*

*On the other side of Jordan, there's so much I
want to see,
There's a mansion in that city waiting me.
I'll possess it on that morning, when I rise to
weep no more,
And I'll be living on that everlasting shore.*

Chorus

*On the other side of Jordan, I have friends I
long to see,
I have loved ones in that city waiting me.
They are resting from their labors, they are free
from all their cares,
They are parted from their burdens of the
years.*

Chorus

*Copyright 1959 by Stamps Quartet Music Co.
Used by permission.*



Edward Spears, Ethel Lowe, Joanne Monk, and Warren Lowe at the Lowe Home.

The Elk Horn Four, named for a church near Galax, consists of Warren C. Lowe and his wife, Ethel, augmented by Joanne Monk, a neighbor who plays piano, and Edward Spears, a young guitarist-singer. Warren Lowe was born in 1924 in the Lowgap, North Carolina, area, as were his parents. Today he makes his living as a glassworker and does a lot of hunting and fishing. His wife Ethel is also a native of the area, works in Galax, and plays electric bass in the group. Unlike many family groups, the Lowes have not been singing all their lives. The Elk Horn Four has existed for a relatively short time. After this recording was made in 1978, Edward Spears dropped out of the group, and the remaining three have renamed themselves the Closer Walk Trio. They continue to perform at local churches two or three nights a week. Both

Lowes are also familiar with the older country and bluegrass songs and frequently host jam sessions with their next-door neighbor, noted bluegrass gospel performer Larry Richardson.

The repertory and performing style of the Elk Horn Four is akin more to that of modern professional gospel groups than to the older classic quartets or singing school style. Much of their repertory is influenced by singers like the Inspirations, a North Carolina group that recorded widely and often appeared on Sunday morning television in the area. The Lowes will frequently take a song which the Inspirations or a similar group have recorded in a rather slick, orchestrated version and perform it as a powerful, even soulful, country duet.

"On the Other Side of Jordan" was written in 1959 by James B. Singleton and

first published in *Gospel Echoes*, a rather obscure shape-note paperback songbook. It should not be confused with a newer song of the same title written by gospel singer J.D. Sumner and popularized by The Blackwood Brothers. The version of the song that seems to have been the direct inspiration for many of the gospel groups in the Galax area was recorded by The Looper Trio, a semi-professional group from Livingston, Tennessee, who are very popular in the central Blue Ridge.

Selected Variants: Print

Stamps, Frank H. *et al.*, comps. *Gospel Echoes*. Dallas, Little Rock, Birmingham: Stamps Quartet Music Co., 1959, no. 66.

Selected Variants: Recordings

Looper Trio. "On the Other Side of Jordan." Dayton, Ohio: Midwest Gospel Sound Records, ca. 1975. *Life Beyond Death*, Midwest Gospel Sound MWGS LP 27404.

Walker Family. "The Other Side of Jordan." Galax, Va.: Heritage Records, 1977. *Family Circle*, Heritage LP XV.

L70 A6

Twilight Is Falling.

Sung and played by Jim Marshall (vocal and five-string banjo) and Artie Marshall (vocal and guitar); white; September 14, 1978; near Hillsville, Virginia; Charles K. Wolfe; BR8-CW-R37.

*Twilight is stealing over the sea,
Shadows are falling, dark on the lea.
Borne on the nightwinds, voices of yore,
Come from that far-off shore.*

Chorus:

*Far away, beyond the starlit skies,
Where the lovelight never, never dies,
Gleameth a mansion filled with delight,
Sweet happy home so bright.*

*Voices of loved ones, songs of the past,
Still linger 'round me while life shall last.
Lonely I wander, sadly I roam,
Seeking that far-off home.*

Chorus

*Come in the twilight, come, come to me,
Bringing some message from over the sea,
Cheering my pathway while here I roam,
Seeking that far-off home.*

Chorus

Gospel songs have always formed a significant part of the repertoires of string bands in the Blue Ridge area. In the 1920s, groups like Ernest Stoneman's from Galax and the Red Fox Chasers from Surry County, North Carolina, recorded almost as many sacred songs as they did secular ones. In later years, area bluegrass musicians followed suit, and some, like banjoist Larry Richardson, turned to gospel music exclusively. Jim and Artie Marshall continue this tradition of integrating gospel into other forms of music, and sport business cards that read: "Original Trucker and Gospel Music, Mountain Style."

Jim Marshall, born in Carroll County in 1928, is a part-time trucker, auctioneer, real estate salesman, music promoter, songwriter, instrument salesman, and bluegrass musician. He is also a devotee of local history, an expert on older musicians in the area, and composer of numerous songs about the region, such as "The Ballad of Fancy Gap," "New River Blues," and "The Night the Angels Sang," the last about a "miracle" that occurred at a camp meeting in the area some eighty years ago. Artie Marshall, also from the area, is a cousin of Ruby Vass, who has recorded for Alan Lomax and others. Though the Marshalls routinely perform in the area, often with well-known bluegrass stars, they have not recorded extensively.

"Twilight Is Falling" was a song that first interested Jim because of its association with Robert Sheffey, a famous

circuit-riding preacher from nearby Wythe County, who travelled the area in the nineteenth century. "This was the song that was for so long associated with Sheffey, and after I read this book about him, I wanted to learn the song and began hunting it." Jim finally found a text of the song in a paperback songbook published by famous gospel songwriter Albert E. Brumley from Missouri. However, the song had deeper roots in Virginia than preacher Robert Sheffey. It was composed in the 1870s by Aldine S. Kieffer and B.C. Unsel, who at the time were running an influential singing school in the Shenandoah Valley. Kieffer and his schools dominated southern shape-note singing from 1874 on, counting among their pupils both James D. Vaughan and A.J. Showalter. James D. Vaughan often reprinted "Twilight Is Stealing" in his yearly paperback convention songbooks, and in 1927 a string band from Kingsport, Tennessee, headed by fiddler John Dykes recorded a version of the piece for Brunswick Records titled "Twilight Is Stealing over the Sea." Galax singer Ernest V. "Pop" Stoneman also recorded a version of the song in Bristol in 1928, but the record was never issued.

Selected Variants: Print

Brumley, Albert E., comp. *Olde Time Camp Meetin' Songs*. Camdenton, Mo.: Albert E. Brumley and Sons, 1971, p. 61.

Henson, J.M., comp. *The Garden of Song*. Atlanta: The J.M. Henson Music Co., 1949, no. 53.

Mull, J. Bazzell, comp. *The Chuck Wagon Gang: Our Recorded Songs Number Two*. Cleveland, Tenn.: Tennessee Music and Printing Co. for J. Bazzell Mull and the Chuck Wagon Gang, 1967. "Twilight Is Stealing," p. 83.

Stamps, Virgil O., comp. *Radio Song Album*. Dallas: Stamps-Baxter Music and Printing Co., 1937. "Twilight Is Stealing," no. 129.

Vaughan, James D., *et al.*, comps. *Heavenly Voices*. Lawrenceburg, Tenn.: James D. Vaughan, 1918, no. 71.

Selected Variants: Recordings

- Carolina Quartet. "Twilight Is Stealing." Winston-Salem, N.C.: General Phonograph Co., 1928. Okeh 45189.
- Chuck Wagon Gang. "Twilight Is Falling." Nashville: Columbia Records, 1966. *The Glory Land Way*, Columbia CL 2597/CS 9397.
- Dykes Magic City Trio. "Twilight Is Stealing over the Sea." New York: Brunswick-Balke-Collender Co., 1927. Brunswick 130.
- Old Kentucky String Band. "Twilight Is Stealing." Brighton, Mich.: Old Homestead Record Co., 1976. *Twilight Is Falling*, Old Homestead OHS 80008.
- Stoneman Family. "Twilight Is Stealing over the Sea." Bristol, Tenn.: Victor Talking Maching Co., 1928. Matrix 47263-2.



L70 A7

A Home in Heaven.

Sung unaccompanied by Elder and Mrs. Jess Higgins; white; September 23, 1978; Galax, Virginia; Geraldine Johnson and Charles K. Wolfe; BR8-CW-R69.

*A home in heaven, what a joyful thought,
As the poor man toils in his weary lot,*

*His heart oppressed and with anguish riven,
From his home below to a home in heaven.*

*A home in heaven, as the sufferer lies,
On his bed of pain and uplifts his eyes,
To that bright home, what a joy is given,
With the blessed thought of a home in heaven.*

*A home in heaven, when our pleasures fade,
And our wealth and fame in the dust are laid,
And our strength decays and our health is
riven,
We are happy still with our home in heaven.*

*A home in heaven, when the sinner mourns,
And with contrite heart, to the Savior turns,
Oh, then what bliss in that heart forgiven,
Does the hope inspire of a home in heaven.*

*A home in heaven when our friends are fled,
To the cheerless home of the mouldering dead,
We wait in hope of the promise given,
We will meet again in our home in heaven.*

"My singing is purely incidental and original," comments Jess Higgins. "There was no special teacher. I don't know a note of music. I've thought about making a record of some of these songs we get requests for, but we'd have to charge for the record, and I feel that God gave me this gift and it should be used freely."

Jesse Burch Higgins, a third generation Grayson County native, is an elder in the Pine Grove Primitive Baptist Church in Carroll County, a leader of the Twin County Foxhunters Club, a minister, and an insurance salesman. For twelve years he and his wife have had their own radio program over Galax radio station WBOB. Elder Higgins and his wife sing old hymns and church songs from sources like Goble's *Primitive Baptist Hymn Book* or books from a series called *Old School Hymnals*, published in Cincinnati since the twenties and sold by the (Primitive) Baptist Bible Hour radio program.

The thirty-minute program begins with about fifteen minutes of singing interspersed with various remarks and announcements, followed by a fifteen-minute sermon-like message. Higgins

tapes the program in his home late Saturday night before the Sunday it is to be broadcast. This allows him to include last minute announcements of singings or revivals and up-to-date news about the sick and shut-in. This selection was recorded as Higgins taped his show for Sunday, September 24, 1978.

Both Elder Higgins and his wife, Jenetta Jo (also a third generation Grayson County native), grew up singing the stately Primitive Baptist hymns, and their audience shares a love of this repertory with them. They have weekly requests for their duet versions of many of the old songs. Both know several different traditional tunes for some of the more popular songs in the old books, where they are printed without musical notation.

The biography of William Hunter, the composer of "A Home in Heaven," is outlined in Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology* and Reynold's *Hymns of Our Faith*. He was born in Ireland in 1811, immigrated to Pennsylvania with his family at the age of six, and later became a Methodist minister and professor of Hebrew and Biblical Literature at Allegheny College. Along the way, he composed some 125 hymns and served on a board to revise the Methodist hymnal. "A Home in Heaven" was first published in 1846 in Hunter's *Select Melodies*. The composer died in 1877.

"A Home in Heaven" seems to be a regional favorite with churches in the central Blue Ridge. The Cross Roads Primitive Baptist Church congregation sang a version of it during the service represented on this album by "Children of the Heav'nly King" (L69 A1).

Present Text

Goble, D.H., comp. *Primitive Baptist Hymn Book*. 1887. Reprint. Greenfield, Ind.: D.H. Goble Printing Company, n.d., p. 273.

Selected Variants: Print

Hunter, William, comp. *Select Melodies*. Cincinnati: Methodist Book Concern, 1846, pp. 271-2.

L70 B1***Preaching by Inspiration.***

Narrated and sung by Quincy Higgins; white; September 9, 1978; near Sparta, North Carolina; Geraldine Johnson and Patrick B. Mullen; BR8-GJ-R31.

Pat Mullen:

You know, I've met preachers that didn't have a sense of humor though. How does that go along with you preaching, your sense of humor?

Quincy Higgins:

Finest in all this world. Yeh, yes sir. It just works like a charm. But, uh, since you asked that question, I was called in a funeral down at Galax one time. And, uh, some hypodermic, you know, from over at Fries, Virginia, was called in with me. He was well qualified in his, uh, vocabulary, and I wasn't qualified at all. I asked Mr. Vaughan—uh, Vaughan-Winn Chapel was where we were going to have the funeral.

Well, I was acquainted with this lady, you know, been with her several services along, and been to her home and all. Well, they had this fellow from over there, you know, and come in, and Mr. Vaughan brought him around and introduced him to me, and we sat down and talked and he wanted to know how I wanted to arrange the funeral. I said, "Brother, you've had a lot of experience and responsibility." I says, "You just arrange it to however you wish to and," I says, "I'll just work with you." Well, that thrilled him, you know, and he commenced spelling it out. He wanted to lead the way and lead the prayer and read the scripture and, and he wasn't acquainted like I was exactly, and he thought that me bring up the conclusion would fit right in. And, uh, went right on, he went, got along fine, I says, "I've always got along with everybody." I says, "Never have had to take no crosses, no word." Just got

along with everybody, that's where your sense of humor comes in. There's fellows in our country that is narrow contracted and, and they wouldn't, uh, offer themselves at all in a funeral service. And that's, that's in the ignorant class. You—it's hard to get along with.

And, uh, so went on, and he, uh, said, "I'll turn the service over to Brother Higgins." I come up singing:

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me,
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.*

They wasn't setting room in that chapel. They get it stretched up all around from every wall, wondering where that hillbilly

Quincy Higgins.

come from. And I went on and sung:

*Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come,
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.*

And I started telling acquaintance with this sister, know how I'd been in her home, and how nice she was, and what a great Samaritan she was, and, and, uh, she'd shouted while I was a-preaching, and so on and so forth. But I says I'm expecting on catching up with her some of these days in the paradise with its eternal rest. And the first thing I know'd the big gate just swung open and I got out that, swimming in water, you know, and just swum away. Yeah.



And, uh, when the funeral arrange—uh—was over, the undertakers come on up, and he says, "Brother Higgins," he says, "how's you, you got a way out to the cemetery?" I says, "Yeah. But I was gonna go with Mr. Vaughan," I says, "I got a truck sitting out here." "Ton and a half truck?" Didn't look just right in a funeral procession. But it rode good. And I says, "I gonna ride with Mr. Vaughan." He says, "I want you to ride with me." I says, "Well, you tell Mr. Vaughan that y—I'm riding with you and we'll just lead the funeral procession."

He went around and told Mr. Vaughan and he said it'd be just fine with him. We got in his car. Nice car, y'know, paid for by the members of the church. Now I never'd had a hat passed around for me. It was running on the rim. Rather have it like that.

Ah-hem, no, hadn't got out of Galax till he laid his hand on my knee, said, "Brother Higgins, you really know the Lord, don't you?" Like he'd give everything he possessed if he could just lay them handbooks down, them prayer books and things, and depend on divine spirit. Well, I said, "Brother, I hope I met him somewhere back yonder. I hope I met him. I hope I did." He knew there was something there he didn't have. I wouldn't swap with him for the whole world. Couldn't afford to—that's all I got, brother. Yeah, that's all I got, and if I was to trade that off, of course, couldn't trade it off. But you know one feller, uh, uh, sold his'n back yonder, for a mess of pottage, and he got in trouble over that. He wept and cried and looked for redemption but didn't find none. That was Esau, you know. He was a cunning hunter.

William Quincy Higgins is a preacher and farmer who lives in Alleghany County, just down the road from Millard Pruitt (L69 B1). Born in 1900, he is a member of the Big Springs Regular Baptist Church and is known for his storytelling abilities. He vowed to become a preacher forty-eight years ago when a

young son was ill, if God would cure the boy. The son recovered and Higgins has been preaching ever since.

This story supports one of the strongest tenets of southern rural Protestantism: the value of inspiration or "gift" over formal training or "book learning." The account has subtle class overtones and implications for the whole ethos of traditional versus modern. It was told as part of a series of narratives about Higgins's experiences and shares with the others an emphasis on concrete details with only brief moments of dogma or moralizing.

L70 B2

A Vision in a Tobacco Barn.

Narrated by Florence Cheek; white; August 19, 1978; Traphill, North Carolina; Patrick B. Mullen; BR8-PM-R15.

Pat Mullen:

Would you tell us your experience?

Florence Cheek:

Well, I told you the other day, it was more like that picture, but now that's supposed to be Christ. But I was down, I was in an old dark tobacco barn when I had my experience. And I was down on that floor, dirt floor, beside that old rock furnace, if you've ever seen one, I doubt whether you have or not. And I was praying and that barn it was made out of logs and daubed with old red dirt. And that barn just disappeared when that light appeared and then that place was just so gold and seemed like it was something. A light that bright would hit you in the eyes now, you know how a car light hurts your eyes, well that hit my body, something did, and that light, it wasn't, it didn't hurt my eyes at all. It just come right to me, it come to me just like that there, and it just went all over me, and from that, I just, I just felt different. I didn't even, I just—but I'd prayed for a long time for the Lord to show me something beside my

own works.

Now I'd been a church member for twenty-some year, but, uh, I don't know, I got condemned because I was trying. I believe anybody that really is trying, I believe God'll show'em, if they—you know, that's their desire, to live for him. I believe he will finally lead you and show you, if you—and you won't be lost. I was doing what they taught me to do, but still I wasn't satisfied with it and I kept reading, and I think it's in, well, I know it's Matthew, somewhere there, where it says you must be borned again, where he was talking to Nicodemus? When he asked him what he could do, to be born, that he could be—do to be saved, he said, "You must be borned again." You remember reading there, I guess? Then I got to reading that over. And it says, "That which is flesh and blood cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven," that you must be borned of the spirit. So Jesus come here, God sent him here, to bring us that. But then he, after he left, now that's why that, uh, four books is the gospel. Well then, after he went back, and come back, after they crucified him, he come back, well, that's the letters. You see, after you leave here today you might contact me through a letter, but you know you won't never be back here again. Well, that's the way Christ—he came back to these disciples and he came back to Paul and them, and that's the letter, the book of the letters, that's where the Spirit made intercession with those and they know it's God. Well, that's they way you are. When you get re-borned again, it'll be something that this world can't give you and it can't take it away. But I can't tell you in what way [that] it'll be, but it'll be in a way where you'll never have no doubt of it. . . .

And so now you have got two ways there you can go. You can go for the devil or you can go for Christ. And if you've got Christ, you've got it all, if you ain't, you got nothing. This here short life here ain't worth it.

Florence Sparks Cheek lives in the community of Traphill, tucked in under



Florence Cheek and one of her quilts.

the ridge a few miles east of Sparta. At the time of this recording, she was seventy-four, and had lived in either Wilkes or Alleghany County all of her life. She is a Missionary Baptist, her grandfather having helped to found the church in the region in the early 1900s. Her church affiliation is a strong family tradition. Cheek is also a skilled quilter, having learned the art from her mother.

Her narrative about personal conversion was offered during a general discussion of religion that did not include a detailed account of her own life. Cheek had been reminiscing about the early days of the church, with dinners on the ground, singing schools, and river baptism. Usually she would give a historical account of a subject (such as what she remembered about river baptisms), and then annotate it with her own personal beliefs. She follows this same pattern in her own conversion narrative: an account of a vision in the tobacco barn, followed by interpretive

remarks. The bright light, the vanishing of the material world—the tobacco barn is a distinctive part of Cheek's environment—and disorientation are all traditional elements of the mystical experience.

L70 B3

I'll Make You a Fisherman of Men.

Narrated by Edgar Cassell; white; August 12, 1978; Kibler Valley, Virginia; Patrick B. Mullen and Carl Fleischhauer; BR8-PM-R6.

Edgar Cassell:

Tell a little more of mine, I guess. I'd a—a little while, a month or two after I joined the church, good meeting on

Saturday, I thought, at the church, and come back home and I had eight kids, kept me, uh, moving around a whole lot to keep a li—few clothes on them and a little bite to eat. Anyway, after meeting, I come back and ate dinner and went up on—my garden was right u-up on the hill, right above the house and—I went up there, I wasn't in the garden after dinner, and I just got to studying about Grandad Blanchard. That—all that top of the mountain around where I lived, there wasn't a, a, a person that I ever remember of that ever said ought ag'in him. He left as good a name as any man that I ever knew.

Will Barnard:

Yeh, yeh.

Cassell:

And I just studying about him while a-working up there, and, and this thought come to me, and I didn't say nothing, but I just thought it, that, that I'd just love to be half the man that Grandad Blanchard was, and just leave half the name that he left. And by then that thought come to me, there was a voice spoke just as plain, says, "Follow me, and I'll make you fisherman of men."

Well, I, I never let nobody know it, I kept that to myself. Of course, I commenced begging the Lord to send somebody else, that a, a brother in the same church, and a lot of male members down there, all of them was better than I was, to send some of them, but—that was my lot. I carried that for nearly a year.

I was working at Roanoke. Over on Monday morning and work till Friday evening and come home. And left home one morning, a Monday morning, and got right above the house—while I'm into it, I'll just tell it all, I reckon—and a little piece above the house, I was right by myself, commenced singing "How Firm a Foundation." And there's eight stanzas of that song and I sung it word by word, just word by word just like it's laid down, from there over to Floyd Courthouse, and I got to crying till I couldn't see to drive, hardly. Looked like there was something

around me just a-drawing, like a big band of something. And I got just out of Floyd, and from there to the top of Bent Mountain, right this side of Roanoke, I never remembered not one thing a-taking place. I left this world as far as I'm concerned. And every li—every little bit, all that day, I, I'd just feel like I was dropping off. There wasn't a pain about me nowhere. Went back to where I slept. Cleaning up, getting ready to go to bed and standing before the mirror shaving. Nobody had never seen no such a face as I saw in there. And there was a voice spoke again, says, "If you don't pick up your calling, this is your last night on earth." That's the reason I go. Take my failures, and—all these things, uh, there's something taking place that causes these things, there's a cause for all things. . . .

Little I left out, I reckon. After the voice spoke and told me that was the last night on earth if I didn't take up my calling, "except ye take up your calling," as quick as I could, I got back in the, my bedroom, just fell across the bed. Ain't no human being ever, never has nor I don't guess ever will, lay on the bed that I laid on. It was just like downy feathers, just as well, just as soft as feathers. And it just commenced, seemed like, going up like that. And I looked out at the window, and there's a bright star a-shining, and all at once that changed, and there he was. In another scripture he says, "I am your bright and morning star." And I saw [afterwards]. How's that?

And he's been with me through all the battles of life.

For the last nineteen of his eighty years, Elder Edgar Cassell has preached at the Concord Primitive Baptist Church near Meadows of Dan, a Virginia community about a half mile from the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Cassells have been Primitive Baptists on the ridge for generations. Edgar's great-grandfather was a preacher and his grandfather remained a preacher at the Bell Spur Church even after his failing health made it necessary for members to carry him into the church in a

chair. Cassell himself has had two key religious experiences which dictated the direction of his life, and he is willing and eager to recount them for stranger and friend alike. The first occurred when he was a young man and was almost killed in a wagon accident. He had an immediate vision of the "gates of hell" but then heard a voice saying, "Fear not, my son," and his life was saved. "Ain't none that can believe it," he says, "but I'll tell it for the truth anyway." In spite of these manifestations, Cassell did not join the church at once—and in fact did not join until 28 years later. Shortly after he joined the church, the experience narrated here occurred and Cassell was called to preach.

This recording was made at the home of Cassell's old friends Will and Ruth Barnard. Cassell had dropped in and the conversation casually moved from talk of the weather and the Dan River to religion. Modern church members lacked zeal, the men agreed, and swapped two stories each which illustrated the zeal of older church members. Cassell then told the story of his wagon accident, and the discussion moved to personal beliefs. During this discussion, Cassell commented, "The world has got so much in it a-shining out so much. Like the Bible says, God has made everything beautiful in its time and he's put it in the hearts of men that they cannot search out the works of God from beginning to end . . . we see so much every day, it keeps our mind off things like that." Shortly after this, Cassell began his formal narrative.

The context thus moved from rather objective accounts of others' experiences to increasingly personal experiences, a time-honored progression in informal discussions of religious matters. The vanishing of the "shining" beautiful natural world that Cassell described in his earlier comment—in the story, represented as the vanishing of the beautiful mountain landscape between Floyd and Roanoke during his trip—is a necessary prerequisite for Cassell to "search out the works of God." Also prominent in the account is mention of Cassell's Grandad Blanchard. This has the effect of associating the pro-

ferred "calling" with family tradition as well as religious conviction. To deny it is to deny both religion and family tradition.

L70 B4

I Used to Be Wild as a Buck.

Narrated by Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Bryan; black; September 6, 1978; near Sparta, North Carolina; Patrick B. Mullen; BR8-PM-R37.

Pat Mullen:

Have you, uh, been a church member most of your life?

Leonard Bryan:

Yeah, I've been a church member ever since I was about thirty years old, [really]. I married when I was twenty-one.

Mamie Bryan:

I don't know how long it was. I don't know how long it was.

Leonard Bryan:

And it was about five or ten years then before I joined the church. I married when I was twenty-one, and I guess it was five, nearly, uh, ten years before I joined the church, wasn't it?

Mamie Bryan:

I don't know, I—

Leonard Bryan:

Somewheres along there, might have been little earlier than longer.

Mamie Bryan:

Ain't got no record [?].

Leonard Bryan:

But ever since that, I belonged to the church. If I hadn't belonged to the church, I'd done been dead and forgotten, gone. I used to be wild as a buck, had an old 32-20 pistol, put it under my arm, and I couldn't go to church without half drunk. And that old pistol buckled on me, didn't care for nothing. It's a wonder I hadn't a-been dead. Now I've got that same old pistol right in here now, a 32-20, that I used to carry when I was wild as a buck.

Mullen:

What made you change?

Leonard Bryan:

Good Lord, I got a blessing and I just changed and—ha-ha, I just— When the Lord blessed me, I threw away all this old stuff. Threw away drinking and carrying pistols and got to serving the Lord and the—living a better life. If I hadn't, I'd been dead and forgotten. I'd a killed somebody or somebody'd killed me.

Mullen:

Did you have an experience that made, made you change?

Leonard Bryan:

Yeah.

Mullen:

What happened?

Leonard Bryan:

I just—

Mamie Bryan:

We had meeting here, we had, run

revivals.

Leonard Bryan:

Had meeting, run revivals. Run revivals, and I just got to praying and wanted to change. I see now that I'm on the wrong road, commenced to praying and— Used to be woods right out here, all this out here to there was woods, and we had this cleared right down here. And I'd go out that night after I'd come to the church, see I going to go out here and pray in these woods out there. And seemed like the booger man go—ha, ha, get me out there, try, I couldn't pray. I had to come out of them woods. I'd come out of the woods and come down here in the field. I was afraid, just, just trying to pray, that booger man, he's just trying to get me. And he run me out, I was scared of them woods, and I come down here in the field, and I come down here and pray.

And you know, when I'd go up to church,

I'd just feel something run all over me that I never had felt. Now I've been a-praying for two or three weeks, and I come down here that night and prayed and went back, come back, I was sleeping upstairs, here, me and my—I sleep upstairs. And I just laid there and cried and prayed all night, I couldn't—I couldn't sleep. And I says, "Good Lord, uh, uh, if you'll just let that sp—that there feeling hit me like it's been a-hitting me, I, I'll, I'll get up and shout. And I says, then if I ain't right, I'll tell him I ain't right. And boy, you know, when, when I had it made up in my mind that way, and went to the church, they couldn't hardly commence singing soon enough till it commenced raining, and I thought, "Will they never start?" And boy, whenever they did start singing, well I'd been up and shouting all over the house, and I didn't know even much when I got up. Boy, I had a time there. See, I done, I'd—I'd done made it up in my mind, "Now, now Lord, you do so and so." And he'd done it, and that, that was the Holy Spirit and I didn't know what it was, I didn't know how to own it.

Mamie Bryan:

A lot of folks don't know what it is.

Leonard Bryan:

And then I owned it—huh?

Mamie Bryan:

A lot of folks don't know what the Spirit is.

Leonard Bryan:

No, but I owned it, boy, when I owned it, I, I, I didn't know, when I come to myself, I didn't know what I'd done, and I'd been shouting all over that church. He sure laid his hands on me.

Mamie Bryan:

And a lot of them don't get changed like that either. Some of them, some of them just get up and give their hand.

Leonard Bryan:

Well, that handshake—

Mamie Bryan:

They don't think they have to pray for it.

Leonard Bryan:

Just handshake ain't worth two cents. You've got to pray and let God, let God get in your heart, and boy you know it.

Mamie and Leonard Bryan with a family photograph made on the occasion of their wedding in 1914.



Whatever form it takes, the religious vision is always seen as a watershed in the subject's life, and a natural tendency in recounting the vision is to emphasize the differences "before" and "after." In the cases of Florence Cheek and Edgar Cassell, both were already long-time church members when their experiences occurred. Both, however, sought to emphasize that they were not somehow fully committed to their religion. In other cases, however, the "before" and "after" difference is much more dramatic, and the radical nature of the change more apparent. Patrick B. Mullen, who recorded this selection and used it as part of his study on religious narratives in the Blue Ridge, writes: "The narratives symbolically express the opposition between social structure and *communitas* by contrasting the lowly state of sinners in society with the exalted state of the saved. This is often done by a description of the personal sinfulness of the narrator's previous life, usually in concrete, specific terms." Most of the time and especially with older people, sinfulness is defined as drinking and fighting. No more succinct example of this pattern could be offered than this one by Leonard Bryan.

Leonard Bryan, eighty-seven at the time of this recording, is a long-time deacon in the Macedonia Union Baptist Church near Sparta and can be heard leading a song by this church in selection L69 A4. A native of Alleghany County, like his father, Bryan has spent much of his life as a farmer, though for thirty years he worked off and on in coal mines in West Virginia. In his narrative, he does not attempt to articulate exactly what his experience itself was. There are no shining lights or allegorical visions. He is more interested in illustrating the effect of the change, though he admits that he did not know what he had been doing while he was "shouting all over that church." Equally interesting are the comments of Mrs. Bryan at the end of her husband's narrative, when she notes "a lot of folks don't know what the spirit is." Some people can have a superficial conversion, but they fail to go through the

"liminal" phase, and they remain part of the normal society.

L70 B5

A Vision of the End of Time.

Narrated by Harrison Caudle; white; September 21, 1978; near Whitehead, North Carolina; Thomas A. Adler; BR8-TA-R12.

Harrison Caudle:

According to the Bible, I, uh, the end of time's getting close. It's said that the people would flock from the cities to the mountains, like goats. And what have they done? They've bought up all this mountain land they can get. And th—buying up mountain land and turning into wildlife. And it's said the people would turn against one another, fathers against sons, sons against the mothers, and daughters against the mothers, and people would turn from the old ways, and they'd turn a deaf ear to the solemn word of God. Over there in the fifth of John the third it said that in the beginning was the Word, Word wa—the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And he spoke of these prophecies a-coming to pass, and when Nebuchadnezzar, over there, when he seed that there band around that stone, that band had done lifted, and Revelations spoke of them four horses. And in 1914 that there was the first horse went out, to make war against one another. And one horse represented death, one had scales in hand, balances, to weigh the world. He spoke of these things. And from that day to this, it's waxed worse and worse, and I believe if we don't get in a revolution war here, that the end is right now on us It's a-coming one way or the other, the end of the times. They may start a war before it ha—gets here. But that'll be the winding up of time.

Tom Adler:

That's, that's some gift to have, that gift

to see things like that.

Caudle:

And a lot of people don't believe in these things. I pray every night before I even lay down to rest, I have an old sack on the bed, sometimes slip off my shoes, lay down and rest awhile, and I hear a racket, a car stop, I'm up and look out the window and have a light over there I throw out. And I raised up [on] a arm, just as wide awake as I am now, and I was like John, the four rudiments, carried away in a trance, and he seed the holy city of Jerusalem descending from heaven. And when God spoke to him, and he says, "Seal [up right] not, the end is not yet."

But I just raised up and I was carried away, I never heard no noise or nothing, I don't know how long I stood there. But I seed this world, it looked like it was all melted. Everything was burnt up. And just as it looked like I was just looking out at it. And I don't know how long I stood there. And something by my side, it seemed like we was walking a-coming out of the mountain, and it says, "Keep a-going." I'd passed people on the road sitting down and some started back, and I couldn't see who it was, it was someone on the left side, says, "Keep a-travelling." And we got to the top of the mountain, I was coming up through the Wildcat Rock, it gets level on top. And I run against a wall. And it says, "Keep travelling." I looked down and I seed tracks. They all go in. [f anybody'd ever] track rabbits in the snow, when you go to a groundhog hole, or holler, or something—they all went one way.

And I went there and come through a little door, went through that door, and you couldn't describe how beautiful. Well it was just level, it was just blossoms, and the kids was just—looked like big butterflies flying around, they'd [tip] you on the jaw, around all these blossoms, and, oh, first one over there, and maybe one over here, and just scattered around, but most of them was [oleanders?]. And I come to myself. And I believe I seed—in, I'd say inside of seven years is the coming of times.



Harrison Caudle.

"I know every cave, every crook and turn, I can show you places over there that I'll go in there, blind as I am, and you can't even find me, with bloodhounds or nothing," says Harrison Caudle of the

land around his native home in Wilkes County. Shortly after the Blue Ridge Parkway was built in the 1930s, Caudle tells how he was asked to go over the land with the park rangers and a stenographer

to identify places and natural features and explain local history. He calls himself a "forest child"—he says he was an orphan left on a doorstep—who grew up absorbing the lore of house-building, healing, moonshining, and hunting. He thinks of himself as somewhat set apart from his community, partly, he says, because he is one-quarter Cherokee and partly because of his gifts for prophecy and healing. He was born in 1892 and tells how he foretold the devastation of the 1916 flood as well as the onset of the First World War. He says, "I believe I was born to prophesy."

While Caudle is a church-goer, he seems to place much more stock in personal interpretation of the Bible than in the formal institution of the church or even the brotherhood of the saved. This is reflected in his narrative, which differs in some important ways from others heard here. In the preceding three narratives, the focus has been on the effect of the experience as much as on the experience itself. The condition of "liminality," by nature difficult to explain in detail and without resorting to elaborate metaphor, tends to cause narrators to focus on the entrance and exit from the experience and on the effect of the experience. Caudle's account is by far the most detailed here of a "vision" and the most allegorical, while little is made of the effect the experience had on him personally. The deleted section of the narrative consisted of Caudle's assertions that urban crime and violent social unrest signify the approach of the end of time.

Indeed, Caudle's narrative is so indirect and allegorical that it is difficult to see its connection to the "real" world, nor are the sources of his images readily apparent. His vision begins with melting and burning. Similar images occur in such Biblical references as the sixty-fourth chapter of Isaiah. A door which opens into another world is a frequent symbol in myth and literature, ranging from Revelation—which Caudle had alluded to when he compared his visions to those of St. John—to *Alice in Wonderland*, with its other-worldly rabbit and butterfly.

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