KENTUCKY'S BOURBON TRAIL | SOUTHERN FOODWAYS ALLIANCE | NASA: SOUTHERN STYLE

2nd & Church

WHERE AMERICA'S WRITERS READ

The Southern Food Issue

Chef Sean Brock

Winter 2016
www.2ndandchurch.com

ARTISAN BOOKS

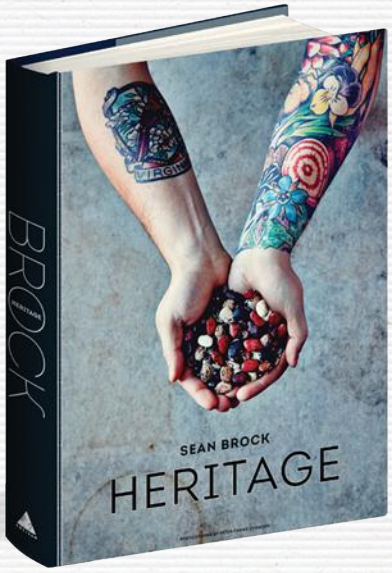
celebrates

SOUTHERN CUISINE

with recipes to *delight* and stories to *inspire*

JAMES BEARD 2015 COOKBOOK AWARD WINNER

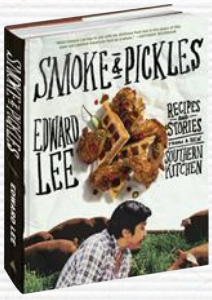
IACP 2015 JULIA CHILD FIRST BOOK AWARD WINNER



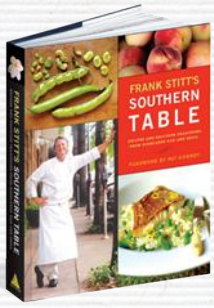
"The blue ribbon chef cookbook of the year"

—The New York Times

HERITAGE
Sean Brock

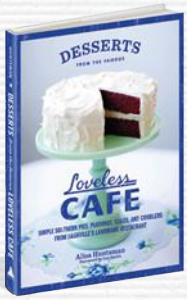


SMOKE & PICKLES
Edward Lee

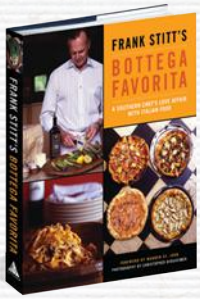


FRANK STITT'S SOUTHERN TABLE
Frank Stitt

THE BACK IN THE DAY BAKERY COOKBOOK
Cheryl and Griffith Day



DESSERTS FROM THE FAMOUS LOVELESS CAFE
Alisa Huntsman



FRANK STITT'S BOTTEGA FAVORITA
Frank Stitt

BACK IN THE DAY BAKERY MADE WITH LOVE
Cheryl and Griffith Day

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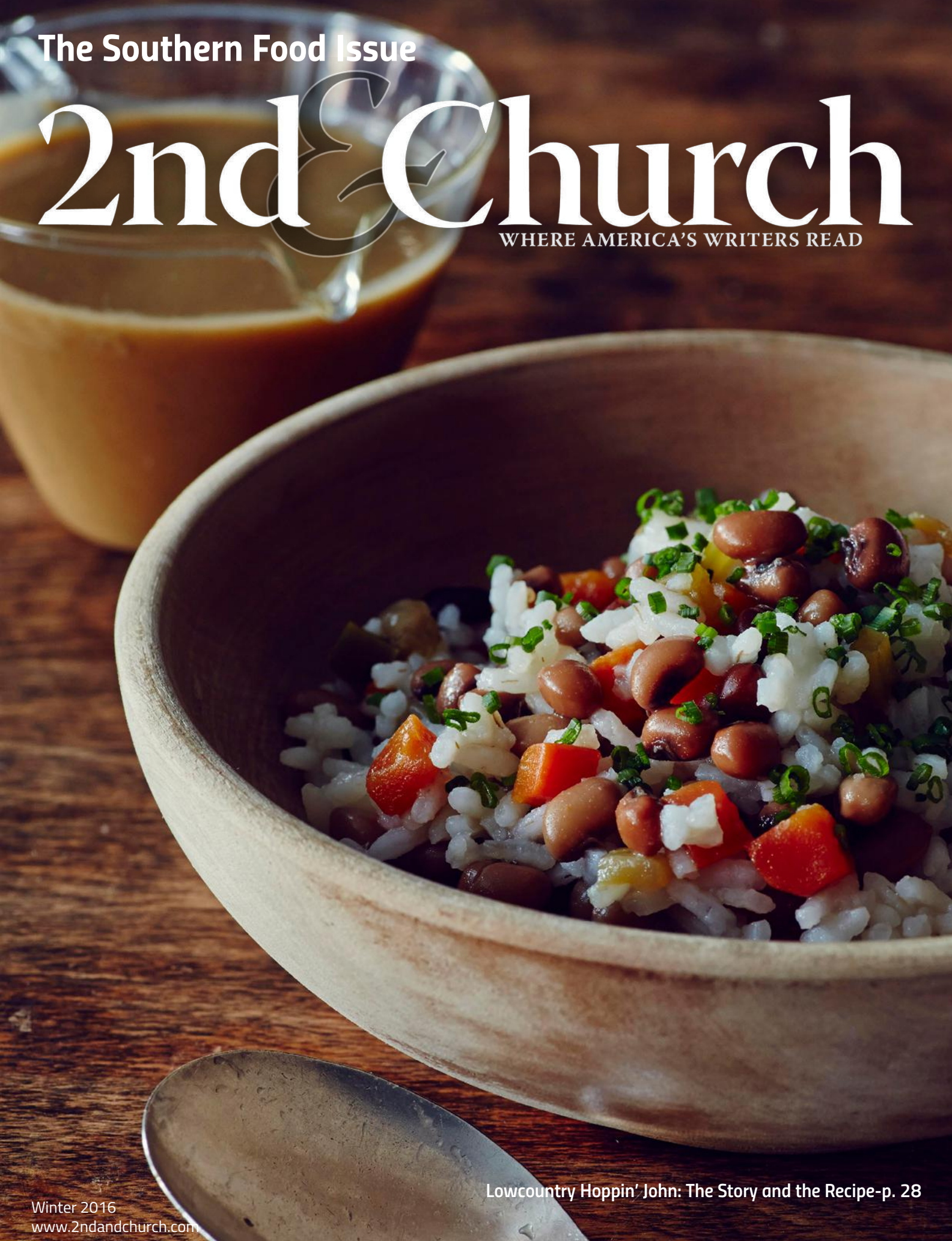
The Southern Food Issue

2nd & Church

WHERE AMERICA'S WRITERS READ



Lowcountry Hoppin' John: The Story and the Recipe-p. 28

Winter 2016
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WHERE AMERICA'S WRITERS READ
Cracklin' Cornbread: The Story and the Recipe-p. 29

The Southern Food Issue

Cover Page: Photo by Andrea Behrends

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Current Page: Photo by Shannon Hall

SONGWRITING

Jason Isbell: On Tour

Something More Than Free

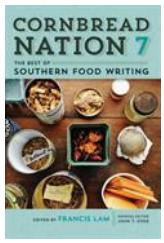
BUSINESS

BOOKSELLER

LOCAL WRITERS, POETS, & MUSICIANS

Departments

BOOK REVIEWS



Great Reads Abound!

Both national, local writers spotlighted throughout our Southern Food issue

LEADING OFF

POETRY

CONTRIBUTORS

ABOVE: Jason Isbell Photo by David McClister

2nd&Church

P.O. Box 198156
Nashville, TN. 37129-8156
E-mail: 2ndandchurch@gmail.com
On the Web: 2ndandchurch.com

Managing editor: Roy Burkhead
Associate editor: Brittany Eldridge
Fiction editor: Roy Burkhead
Poetry editor: Alvin Knox
Factotum: Gayle Edlin

Columnists:
Chuck Beard
Gayle Edlin
Janelle Hederman
Les Kerr
Molly McCaffrey
Randy O'Brien
Julie Schoerke

Correspondents:
Charlotte Rains Dixon: Portland, Oregon
Gayle Edlin: La Crosse, Wisconsin
Alina Hunter-Grah: Chattanooga, Tennessee
Jennifer Palley: Sweden
Linda Busby Parker: Mobile, Alabama
Mary Popham: Louisville, Kentucky
Suzanne Craig Robertson: Nashville, Tennessee
Deidre Woollard: Los Angeles, California

Photographers
Gayle Edlin
Shannon S. Hall
Terry Price
Luke Seward

Web banner photo
Kim Miles

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E-mail: info@threeloons.com

A Word From the Editor ...

Reflecting on food, family

Photo by Clinton Lewis

Civil War-era bridge, on the grounds of Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky

Whenever possible, I do a lot of thinking while visiting a bridge behind Cherry Hall, at Western Kentucky University-especially in the wintertime.

...and I've been thinking a lot about my Aunt Carol over the last couple of months.

Since leaving my small Kentucky town in the mid-1980s, I saw her just a single time, and that visit was brief.

You see, one of my many summer jobs during my high school years was in her restaurant, Lambino's. I think that's how it was spelled. It's shut down now, but that has never stopped me from driving by its location whenever I've been in Kentucky.

The name Lambino's must have been on the building when she took it over because I don't remember anything particularly Italian about the food that we served. Okay, I'm being generous with the pronoun "we." As one of the numerous almost-unemployable relatives who cycled through her kitchen over the years, she worked me in the back as much as possible, unless there were dishes "out there" in the front room for me to fetch.

I suspect my experiences at Carol's place were similar to those at many small, family-owned Southern restaurants: a continuous mountain of dirty dishes and a shower of scalding hot water—usually flung at me by Carol's son, my cousin: "Little Paul." I spent many hours cutting and preparing all sorts of vegetables. Chunks of green peppers remain vivid to me. I also remember a product called "pretender." I grated both real cheese and this "cheese product," mixing them together, allowing Carol to stretch food and dollars.

There are memories of so much kindness in that little building, as well.

After closing time, Carol would open the front doors to the video games and hit a magical, hidden button that registered free credits; we'd play for at least an hour each night. And when high school graduation arrived, Carol hosted a large family event at Lambino's. That kindness was appreciated, and that's the trait that sticks so solid in my mind now.

Kindness is also an attribute of so many people associated with what you are reading now, especially that of this issue's cover story and interviewee, James Beard Award-winning Chef Sean Brock.

Chef Brock and his media folks (Polished Pig Media) have been generous with his time and with access. And you should know that the man did not charge us to use Husk Nashville for the issue's launch! He's executive chef and partner of McCrady's, Husk, and Minero in Charleston, South Carolina; Minero in Atlanta, Georgia; and Husk in Nashville, Tennessee. (If you're at the launch, please stick around for a meal and some bourbon!)

And Glenn Roberts at Anson Mills allowed me to shadow him for an entire day all across his South Carolina operations and fields—loading me down with bags of Southern goodies as I returned home. And Professor David Shields—University of South Carolina food

Continued on Page 133

Food and Stories Bind Us Together as a Culture

by Julie Schoerke

Readers and foodies enjoy the camaraderie of something shared. Stories have bound us together since pre-historic times (literally before history was in a written format) from generation to generation, bringing a greater understanding between cultures. Food tends to bring people together in another unique way: to share common culture and to expand experiences of the five senses.

Nashville is becoming known nationally for being, as *The New York Times* put it recently, the "it" city for food and creative culture. Growth of a literary community is invigorating. Authors and writers are migrating to Music City to become a part of the rich fabric of our community, a creative force that is made up of equal parts "can do" attitude and an inspired group of storytellers through music, writing, and the spoken word.

Let's celebrate some of those who not only have had the vision, but are at the forefront of rolling their sleeves up and making magic happen.

There are far bigger cities in America that cannot boast a fabulous literary magazine, such as our *2nd & Church*. I was living in Chicago when I started hearing so much about this Nashville-based publication and its founder, Roy Burkhead. The aspiring author chose to contribute something meaningful to the discussion of books and publishing and showcase the talent of others authors as well as present the trends of the ever-changing landscape of book publishing. He has given back so much by being the financial benefactor and publisher of a high quality printed magazine with a very active social media and digital presence. I am in awe of what he's accomplished and how much the rest of us in Nashville and beyond have benefited.

Novelist Ann Patchett started the author-turned-businesswoman trend by partnering with book publishing veteran Karen Hayes to establish an independent bookstore with instant credibility and national interest during the dark days after the economy took our crown jewel, Davis-Kidd Booksellers, along with so many other venerable bookstores. Now, Parnassus is a tourist destination!

East Nashville is a hotbed of the best and the brightest of the creative minds in music and literature today. The community's lifeblood pulses through East Side Story bookstore, founded by Chuck Beard and his lovely wife, Emily. And, just as Oxford, Mississippi has the Thacker Mountain Radio Hour, Chuck has established East Side Storytellin', an evening of entertainment by authors, poets, musicians, and spoken word artists who come together in an ever-moving indie business venue to highlight and support Nashville's local business and the talent.

Singer-songwriter Deborah Wilbrink has started a cottage industry by writing a book and creating the "Time To Tell: Your Family & Personal History" movement to help regular folks in Nashville who may have never considered themselves writers tell their own stories.

Courtney Stevens is an author with a rare gift for sharing gratefulness at every turn with groups, and she is one of the stars in the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) community, an incredibly strong and vibrant literary group in Middle Tennessee. There are scores of traditionally-published Young Adult (YA) and children's authors who not only hone their craft and provide enrichment for area school classrooms, but also generously support one another with each book release and event. While the rest of the country has dwindling audiences at bookstore events, SCBWI members come out with strong support. Some of those best-selling and award-winning authors who have built and inspired this movement besides Courtney include Ruta Septeys, Tracy Barrett, Victoria Schwab, and Kristin O'Donnell Tubb. And—of course—there are so many, many more.

Killer Nashville, with visionary Clay Stafford at the helm, heightens the profile of Nashville being the destination for fans and authors alike for accessible books and international blockbuster authors to mix and mingle with.

Of course, Nashville is home to one of the oldest literary book festival in America, the Southern Festival of Books (SFB). This three-day literary celebration is made

Continued on Page 117

Welcome to *2nd & Church*

2nd & Church is a literary journal that celebrates writers, poets, and readers. We publish several issues a year, and readers may view a digital copy and/or purchase a traditional paper copy by visiting us online at www.2ndandchurch.com. Own an iPad? If so, then check out the MagCloud app. It's free and allows you to download all sorts of free publications, including *2nd & Church*.

Our mission

Our goal is to be inclusive of many different types of writers and writing, including creative nonfiction, technical writing, literary fiction, W4C, poetry, translation, songwriting, and commercial fiction.

2nd & Church explores the creative writing life. What does it mean for a writer, poet, or reader to live a life of fine arts? Where can writers, poets, and readers gather? What do they write and read about? Which experiences make it from their lives to the pages? How are they engaged, entertained, and provoked? And in turn, how do they engage, entertain, and provoke readers? These are some of the questions we seek to answer.

JKS Communications

JKS Communications is a literary publicity firm serving our literary communities out of Nashville, New York, and Chicago. *2nd & Church* is a proud partner with these hard-working promoters of the written word. Learn all about them at:

www.jkscommunications.com/

Submission guidelines

We welcome unsolicited manuscripts, but the expectation is that the work will support our mission. Send up to six poems and/or about 1,000 words of prose. For work over 1,000 words, query first. We will consider novel excerpts, but the selection of material must be able to stand alone – be self-contained. We prefer to assign book reviews and criticism; please don't submit those to us.

And in general, we don't publish essays on craft.

Please visit us online at www.2ndandchurch.com for complete writing and submission guidelines.

LEFT: Photo by Brent Miller

A Word From Poetry Editor Alvin Knox ...

Of Apriums and Pluots

I seem to be seeing a lot of prose poems lately, and reading a lot more fiction that pays particular attention to prose rhythms. In fact, sometimes the air between the two seems foggy. Both, of course, try to reveal something about human nature, or perhaps they just do so without really trying. The poet tries to capture a significant moment that somehow illuminates a feeling or idea; the fiction writer tries to create believable characters and place them in a setting and plot that allow them to act and grow; both end up saying something about the nature of human existence, of the complexities and subtleties of living. And they both use language—the printed word—to do so.

Is it also in the use of language where the two distinguish themselves? If so, it might behoove us to look along the sometimes blurry borderline for the distinction, since the extremes render contrasts too sharply. Like comparing plums and apricots, the differences are all too easy to see. Perhaps we're looking for something more like plums and pluots, or maybe plumcots and pluots, since both are hybrids, like the prose poem and poetic prose. No, that is not a good pairing, since technically plumcots are the borderline, a 50/50 genetic hybrid. What about apriums and pluots, since one is 25% plum and one is 25% apricot? What if we abandon the metaphorical comparison entirely? After all, this is prose. The importance is that on the outside they can look much the same. Depending on the varieties at hand, they can even taste very much alike and feel very similar in the mouth; still, buried within their DNA there is a difference.

Photo by Lisa V. Conner

The prose poem is identified as such because it employs all of the conventions and devices of versification but adopts the rhythmical units of prose—the phrase, clause, sentence, and paragraph—instead of using the syllable, measure, line, and stanza of poetry. The absence of line is the most distinguishable characteristic of a prose poem. The prose poem, though it wasn't labeled as such, is perhaps the first type of poetry, since the poetic tradition is oral in nature and the ancient Greeks didn't initially use line breaks in the manuscript form. It was only after the introduction of the line that the distinction between the prose poem and other types of verse could be made, and examples are found from a very early time, though the prose poem as we know and call it today is accredited to 19th century France, where it originated as a response to the extreme rules of versification set forth by the French Academy. Trying to further pigeon-hole the modern prose poem is difficult. Though often lyrical in nature, and often self-consciously witty, prose poems now address the full spectrum of human existence and emotion.

Poetic prose is prose that employs various poetic devices, particularly figurative devices related to image, and including and emphasizing those that enhance phonic textures. The rhythms of poetic prose tend to be more irregular than those of a prose poem, and the density of poetic devices is often called into play as a way to differentiate between the two, but segments of poetic prose can, in fact, be very structured and intense, for instance, this brief excerpt from Tom Robbins' *Still Life with Woodpecker*.

"I love the hot hands of explosion. I love a breeze perfumed with the devil smell of powder (so close in its effect to the angel smell of sex). I love the way that architecture, under the impetus of dynamite, dissolves almost in slow motion, crumbling delicately, shedding bricks like feathers, corners melting, grim facades breaking into grins, supports shrugging and calling it a day, tons of totalitarian dreck washing away in the wake of a circular tsunami of air." (61)

As one can see, the line between poetry and prose can be thin indeed, at least if one looks just at rhythms and presentational devices of language. So, there must be some other distinction.

Perhaps it would be wise to expand our search base, to return to the pure genetic material, to the plum and the apricot as they naturally evolved, and consider just what it is that poetry and prose do. Poetry recreates an experience. Due to its compact form, it frequently relies on symbolism and figures of speech to expand its meaning and create connections, and upon diction, specific language choices, and rhythm to generate tone. Prose can do those same things, but due to its more expansive nature, prose accommodates greater development of ideas and connections. As I often have to remind my composition students, good prose leads the reader toward a specific conclusion, that though some warrants (aka assumptions) can be left unstated, it is the responsibility of the writer to make enough connections to bring the audience to a specific place of understanding. In short, prose explains.

In some ways, then, the two differ in quality and quantity of logic. The poem offers readers an inductive list of details, often leaping from point to point as guided by the associational qualities of language and imagination, something the ancient Chinese called, as I am informed by The Longman Dictionary of Poetic Terms, "riding on dragons." Prose, too, supplies the inductive details necessary for the reader to arrive at meaning, but also supplies the deductive connections and, often, the conclusions. It might be said that prose, including fiction, works harder than poetry to create meaning, but any (good) poet will tell you that is not the case, that finding just the right figure of speech to convey both image and connection is more difficult than developing a prose explanation, and that perhaps the hardest thing a poet does is trust the reader to arrive somewhere in the vicinity of the poem's destination. Writing a poem is a bit like standing on a street corner in Seattle and telling a passerby to go to Sedona to experience a spiritual awakening, while writing fiction is like handing them a map with the route highlighted on it and the name of a Native American shaman penciled in the margin.

Gallery of Poems

Selected works from poets in Tennessee and beyond

Hunger

by Alvin Knox

Hunger is the gnawing in the pits of our being; it speaks to us of absence.

Hunger awaits us when we wake from that longest of sleeps. It grows in the darkness. It feeds on our dreams; it feeds us our dreams.

Hunger is a bar-b-cue abandoned on a picnic table in a park during a sudden thunderstorm. It is barely visible through the cloud of smoke and steam.

Hunger is the cat on the kitchen counter, yowling to be fed. We give it treats by the handful. It eats them all and desires more. It licks our plates when we rise from the table. It is voracious. It is fur and bone.

Hunger is a pair of shears, a shovel, a fence, and a lawnmower.

Hunger has bad teeth and thirteen tattoos.

Hunger is your first love, the one who leaves you standing on the dock, in the driveway, between two rocks, at the movies, up in the air, over a barrel, under the stairs, beneath the surface, beyond hope, behind. We nibble at reasonable facsimiles for the rest of our lives.

Hunger overcooks the meat.

Hunger is birdsong in the bluing predawn light. It is the burble of the coffee pot in the dark kitchen.

Hunger is an empty courtroom at midnight. It is an abandoned prison. It is a church on Easter morning.

Hunger is a shark, a bear, a weasel, a fox. It is an ant dragging a grain of sugar. It is a bat criss-crossing the heavy air of twilight.

Hunger is a cigarette on the back porch at three in the morning, watching as Scorpio begins its slow merging with the black horizon.

Hunger is in the eyes of the honeysuckle. Hunger is the blade of the iris leaning into the afternoon sun.

Hunger is a pothead smoking bong resin on Monday because Friday is payday and it can't get a front.

Hunger has gold fever. It is a ruby in the navel of a bellydancer.

Hunger is the man on the gallows, the black sack drawn over his head, the noose snug, the executioner's hand firm on the polished handle that opens the trap door. It is the waiting grave beyond the hill; often, hunger is less than patient.

Hunger is the man in line at the Goodwill Store, announcing, on Tuesday, that there will be an earthquake in California on Thursday, at 4pm. Hunger is the need to believe in UFOs, Chemtrails, HARRP, and Atlantis. Hunger is a zombie moaning for brains. It is an alien, probe in hand.

Hunger is masturbation, meditation, medication. It is a cell phone addiction, a Facebook addiction, a gaming addiction, a name-your-own-technological-niche addiction. We try to put it down, but when we look it is back in our hands.

Hunger is the bioluminescent mating dance of the firefly: 1, 2, 3…1, 2, 3…1, 2, 3…

Hunger is a waltz, a rumba, a mambo, a cha-cha, a tango, the jitterbug, the swim, and the twist. It is the mashed potato and the chicken. It's the bump, the creep, the Harlem shake, and the hustle. It's the jerk and the twerk. It's the time warp and the limbo.

Hunger is an unwed pregnant girl. It is the child who won't know its father. It is the father who split for Oklahoma when he found out the girl was pregnant. It is Oklahoma. It is the salt in the girl's tears.

Hunger is knowing every item on the menu and not being able to decide what you want.

Want to See Your Poetry Here? Submit Your Work for Review

What We Print: What does it mean for a poet or reader to live a life of fine arts in the United States, especially in the 21st century? Where can poets and readers go, either alone or in groups? What do they choose to write and read about? Which experiences make it from their lives to the pages? How are poets engaged, entertained, and provoked? And in turn, how do those poets engage, entertain, and provoke via their words and phrases? These are some of the questions our editors seek to answer when selecting poetry for *2nd & Church*. We welcome unsolicited manuscripts. Send up to six poems.

Payment: We would love to be able to pay our contributors, and perhaps one day, we will. For now, contributors will receive two copies of the issue in which their work appears.

Submissions: **Simultaneous, Multiple, & Otherwise**. We are okay with simultaneous submissions. If you don't hear from us within one month, you're free to send your work elsewhere. We do ask that you tell us if the manuscript is a simultaneous submission and notify us if the work is accepted for publication elsewhere. Submissions MUST be in English and previously unpublished.

Manuscript Expectations: Shipments, Rejections, Response Times, and More: Write your full name and address on the outside of the envelope. Address submissions to the "Poetry Editor." Ship your work in a large enough envelope to include your manuscript pages, unfolded. Send to the following address: *2nd & Church,* P.O. Box 198156, Nashville, TN 37129-8156

Never send your unsolicited manuscript via certified mail. Certified mail is held for signature at the post office. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (S.A.S.E.) with all manuscripts. Business-size. Use a forever stamp on the envelope. Allow two months before querying. Don't send your only copy. We cannot be held responsible for any manuscript that is delayed, lost, or damaged in shipment.

Preparing Your Manuscript: 8 1/2 x 11 paper. (White paper, please.) Typed. Use an ink- or laser-jet printer. Single-spaced for poetry. 12-point type. Black ink. Times New Roman font style/type. Courier or New Courier is okay, as well. A one-inch margin at the top, bottom, left, and right. Your personal contact information at the top of the manuscript's first page, including your name, address, phone number, word count, and e-mail address. Also, if you have a personal or professional website, please include the URL. Starting with page two, either in the header or footer, number the pages consecutively. Instead of the title, many poets include their last name. Your choice. Use paper clips, not staples. Do not include an electronic copy of your piece. Hard copy only, please. Don't spend a great deal of time on the cover letter: allow your work to speak for you. If you include one, be sure and write a two- or three-sentence author's bio note. (Use the third person, please.)

Gallery of Poems

Selected works from poets in Tennessee and beyond

Thoughts While Beating Zabaglone

by Helen Ruggieri

You beat the eggs and sugar
for about ten minutes until
it doubles and doubles again

Holding the electric beater
over the double boiler
I think about hand whipping

the mixture (what else can
you do while beating
but think of things)

No wonder those old
Italian women had arms
like loaves of bread

no wonder they lost
the voluptuousness of youth
licking the bowls

watching the minutes tick
by waves rising and falling
the sun moving across the table

no wonder they came to America
no wonder they embraced it
bought ready-made pasta and sliced bread

Pelemeni

by David Holper

He would eat them
in a small, white bowl,
the dumplings slathered in sour cream.
He would lean into the steam,
savoring each bite
until a great sigh escaped his lips.
Only afterwards would he speak:
maybe a funny story
or a joke
or some explanation of how a camera worked
or what history has to teach us
this day. We would eat his words
in enormous bites
until we, too, had taken our fill.
This, this
is what I miss.

In Quiet Cafes

- For Edward Hopper

by John Pleimann

Late afternoon
in quiet cafes, the dead
sit down and rest.

They spirit in shadow,
sip tea tepid and weak,
no sugar, no cream.

They test the waters
of this world to ease
back in. Stare, and

they will stare
but to one side.
They believe

you believe
their spirit lives
in your belief.

Sit with them
alone, they
Who come this far,

this weary
and sit in public rooms
open to you

who long to hold them
but will not go so far
as to pass the sugar

pouring sweetly now
into your tea, hot,
Good God, you say,

Too hot to drink.

Gallery of Poems

Selected works from poets in Tennessee and beyond

Secret to Chili

by Wilfred G. Robles

You'll know it's done
when the scent trumps
last night's garments bedroom disheveled
besinned and besmirched
piled beside your chair.

Base? Beer: the better the better.
Bourbon. Any'll do. Sauce
Worcestershire—the best you can find.
Beef bouillon cubes one at a time.
Just keep tasting.

Cook your fauna-and-flora fast and hot to caramel.
Pestle spices secret measured in fingertips.
Tink cans and rinse clean your dark kidneys
in a revolution, espy:
Vacuum-sealed can borne
Swimming blind tin dark
Treading crimson
Pour over your protein fiber and oil.

Make the boil rollick and tumble a spell
then fade down when it growls.
Taste early the broth
Before it's close
know where it started.
Observe your flame and satisfied, leave
Returning once and again to stir.

Retinue of green red brown white black
Gathers densely, eventually, in the deep.
Dip mom's pine kool-aid spoon
bring it up slow and blow
Through the cheerio hole
Of your lips ready. Inhale broth. Sip vapors.
Smack. Goddamn it's good and done.

At the Dining Table

by Gaylord Brewer

So, you want the Serious Man?
Tired of Mockingbird,
can't confide in Coyote?
Fair enough. Allow me
to set the places, light the candles

of the dead. I will even
serve: a cold soup of tears,
thick with salt, to begin.
A salad of nettles and vinegar.
I will carve the flesh for you

and pour the vine's blood
from the bottle.
However, you must make the toast,
if a toast is to be raised.
Yes, I will help myself

from evening's earnest
platter of injustices,
corrupted politicos—my god—
unfair trade, ethnic tensions,
devalued currencies,

theories of dance and democracy.
I will stare at you
across these small flames, listen
as intensely as the night listens,
respond as night responds.

You want the Serious Man?
You got him. And as bonus some
magic I'm seriously famous for:
hold tight the hem
of the cloth, thumbs and wrists

just so—trust me now—and jerk hard.
Ta-da! Send it all crashing.
Well, good night. I did the cooking.
Somebody else
can clean up the mess.

Gallery of Poems

Selected works from poets in Tennessee and beyond

600 Plates

[The Last Supper-California]

by Qiana Towns

"We all have food in common."
-Julie Green, painter

Plate 2 December 2005
Requested no last supper
Final meal: breakfast: oatmeal + white milk

Plate 7 May 1996
Pork chops + baked potato + asparagus + tossed salad + white milk
Mothers say it's the kind of meal that sticks to the ribs

Plate 12 May 1936
Death cell breakfast Death
Painted in indigo against whiteness

Plate 3 January 2002/Plate 18 January 1930/Plate 19 January 1930
And for dessert: pie: Georgia peaches
Sweetness stored on the inside

Tonight after we have finished our last meal
Of the day each of us [being the artless beings
We are] will scrape meat and potatoes into the
Trash. Even after we have spent the day taking
Freedom for granted we will do nothing and be
Apathetic believing there will always be a next time.

Gallery of Poems

Selected works from poets in Tennessee and beyond

To Televtaio

by Sidney Krome

I have been digitizing my slides recently, so far about 2,500
out of 6,000+, but for all the slides I had printed and all
I digitized, one began as part of a videotape I made in 1988,
the last frame of that tape, the last piece of a Greek pastry
my mother-in-law made. The photograph—bordered by the
bronzed-gold wood of the frame—shows a woman's hand
holding a two-tined cooking fork, the tines of the fork in the
folds of dough, raising the folded piece of roughed-yellow
dough up out of the simmering bubbling oil to turn it gently over,
double-folded, and let it rest down again in the oil frothing
white and foaming around the inner surface of the over-the-years—
the decades—of cooking- and frying-blackened pan; in the foreground,
a small curved fraction of the white-porcelain-clad metal laundry basin
used no longer for carrying laundry but only for this purpose, for holding
the deep-fried pastries, the basin draped and covered inside with
fresh clean dish towels to absorb the dripping oil, and in the background,
just beyond the far rim of the pan, a small pale green plastic glass,
a child's cup, really—many years later, after I had had
a negative and photographs made of this moment of the
last folding and lifting of the last piece in the last large
bin of pastries she would ever make, and had some mounted
and framed for my brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law and
had copies made for all of our nieces and nephews,
her grandchildren, Nicky, first-born of the grandchildren,
said he would go to her house most Saturday afternoons
to visit and would split a bottle of beer with her, she drinking
from that very cup, she whose hands kneaded the dough
for hours in the old laundry tub, her back bowed over and
her shoulders rounded, she whose hand had carefully and
gently and lovingly folded and refolded and turned and raised and
lowered thousands and thousands and thousands of those
xerotigana, those semi-deep-fried pastries, known to others
by their far less evocative name diples, folded pastries,
over which she had drizzled the sweet honeyed- and
cinnamon-tinged siropy, and sprinkled the chopped nuts—
pastries which, if you handled them too roughly after they had
cooled and absorbed the siropy and nuts, might crumble in
your hands or in your fingers but once you got them into your
mouth, the only thing they did was melt into an almost liquid
sweetness, a kind of sweeter-than-honeyed manna, a sweetness
that made honey itself taste less than sweet. But for all the difficulty
I have had digesting rich, sweet foods, pastries, pies, cakes, cheesecakes,
I never had any trouble digesting those sweet wonders of the Greek world.
And I could eat them for hours… or could have, if I didn't have to share
them with everyone else.

She always made them only during the week between Christmas and
New Year's, and everybody waited for them each year, every year,
not just the family, but also friends of hers in the church, who would
come like holy mendicants, carrying their begging bowls, bowls into which
she placed their special Christmas/New Year's treats. The videotape/
photo dates from December 29, 1988, the date imprinted on the tape
the day I made it. We came to visit my wife's family the next year also,
1989, as we did every year, but by the time we got there that year, she was
already suffering from what turned out to be a liver damaged by some
unknown decades-old illness, and so she could not make her xerotigana
that year, but slipped suddenly and irrevocably into a coma from which
she never recovered, and she died within a couple weeks.
I used to liken those xerotigana to the nectar and ambrosia of the ancient
Greek gods, but I realized when she died in January 1990 that doing so
put me at risk of committing hybris. But more importantly, I realized that
I should borrow from Odysseus, that wanderer whom Akhilleus in Hades
called "Old Knife": what Odysseus says when he chooses to return to his wife
Penelope and not to accept Kalypso's offer of immortality, nectar and
ambrosia, and eternal lovemaking with a goddess, Penelope, with whom he
shares our all too painful but also our very joyful and meaningful mortality;
better the sweetness of pastries made with human hands and human love
which know so well what can sweeten our lives far more and far
better than nectar and ambrosia.

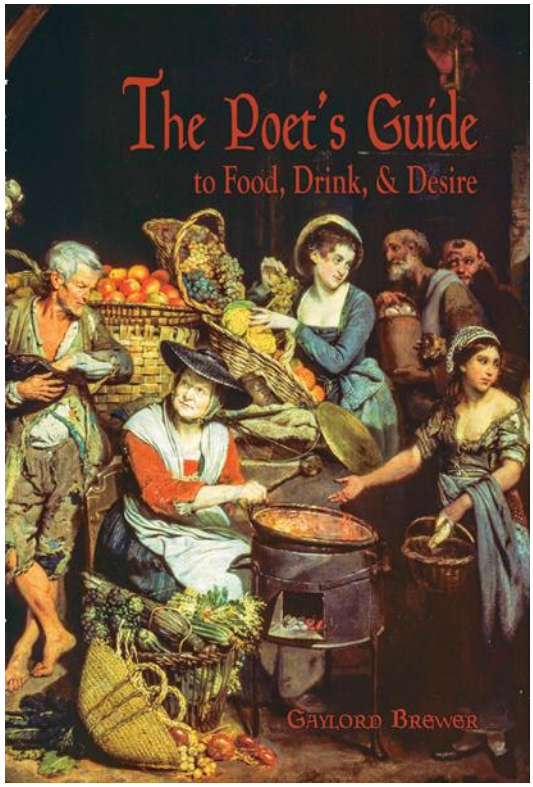
A Cookbook, of Sorts

Murfreesboro poet Gaylord Brewer whisks together recipe, memoir, and verse

by Charlotte Pence and Chapter16.org

With a subtitle—a "A Cookbook-Memoir, of Sorts"—Murfreesboro poet Gaylord Brewer acknowledges that *The Poet's Guide to Food, Drink, & Desire* resists easy categorization. And the "of sorts" quality is exactly what makes this collection of essays and recipes a must-read for home cooks who sometimes fancy themselves chefs who happen to have been spared the nuisance of a restaurant.

In this wonderful mishmash of a book, readers enjoy not only Brewer-original recipes but also Brewer-original lines of poetry, reveries of that first bite of a special dish, and hearty opinions on all things involving food—and life. Titles like "Don't Try This at Home," "Buttermilk as a Lifestyle Choice," and "Later in the Evening; or On Ecstasies, Agonies, & Might Have Beens" are a good indication of what readers are in for. The book begins with three different chapters on duck and then moves on to the glories of a deep fryer, risotto, rabbit (the other underappreciated meat), grilling, blood sausages, some more duck in the form of Foie Gras (the man likes his duck), two chapters on vegetables and non-fried snacks to keep that heart attack at bay, and desserts tailored to the seasons—plus a crash course in proper drink-making and bar-keeping. The recipes are a mix, from the deliciously simple deep-fried olives to the ambitious daring of grilled mussels.



Clearly this is not just another cookbook. The recipes are uncommon (many emerging from Brewer's travels with famous chefs in France and Spain), and their presentation is literary in a way that only a gifted poet can be. Instead of giving us a celebrity chef's kitchen with pristine glass ramekins containing pre-measured ingredients, Brewer lets us see the real kitchen, one where a duck has a blow dryer aimed on its arse to speed up the drying process.

M.L. Rosenthal once called Robert Lowell's *Life Studies* "a series of personal confidences, rather shameful, that one is honor-bound not to reveal." In much the same way, *The Poet's Guide to Food, Drink, & Desire* feels like a gastronomical series of confidences revealed. When explaining how to make risotto, Brewer also includes instructions for how to endure the bore of making risotto. (Answer: a martini.) If a recipe involves a controversial ingredient like caviar, he engages the discussion and admits his own inconsistencies and guilt: "I vividly remember standing in my dingy St. Petersburg dorm room, devouring eggs with plastic spoons and washing them down with a bottle of cold vodka—which bore a bear on the label, or maybe a Viking or a red hammer…." At other moments he removes the mask by openly admitting which recipe in a particular chapter he loves best (Bone Marrow & Truffle Rissotto, for example) and then acknowledging that the other recipe (Scallop and Corn Risotto), while "not as holy," is a cheaper and healthier alternative.

Some chapters feature a bit more memoir than others. There's "Blood Sausage and the Rudiments of Love," for instance, and "On Morel Mushroom Farming & the Agrarian Impulse." The outstanding chapter on fried chicken, "a serious topic" in the United States, seamlessly merges memory and meals. Amid the recipes for Buttermilk-Battered Fried Chicken (and, of course, the buttermilk had better not be low-fat) or Sweet Tea-Brined Fried Chicken, there are memories of driving back to college with Grandma Brewer's cold chicken on the seat beside him. Also nestled within this batch of recipes are Grandma Brewer's indictments against her daughter-in-law for turning chicken pieces to death and other such sins. What is clear in this collection is how often our attempts at honoring the past work their way into our own kitchens.

Of course, what sort of reviewer would I be if I did not try at least one recipe? I decided to go big: the Buttermilk Coconut Almond Pie with Sea Salt Bourbon-Caramel Sauce. This recipe would adhere to my first dietary principle (avoid processed food) but not my second (cut down on anything white, i.e. rice, potatoes, bread, and sugar.) It did, however, embody my third principle, one that Brewer shares: decadence can be necessary at times—and that makes it healthy in its own way.

So I dutifully opened a bottle of wine—again channeling my inner Gaylord Brewer—and got to work. Cooking instructions are written in the conversational style of the essayistic parts of the book, which made it feel as if the author were in the kitchen with me. And the result was divine: the pie fluffy and not overly sweet, but complicated by the sour of the buttermilk and the salt of the almonds. I worried that the bourbon sauce wouldn't set right or be reduced to hard crystals within a day, but that didn't happen. I did notice, though, one slight drawback to the eloquent, loquacious manner of the book: I had to flip back and forth between the ingredient list and the instructions, a span of three pages. So I counted that little finger leap as my exercise for the day.

One of the many delights of this book is the full-on knife-throwing advice. On home winemaking: "Don't. Just don't." On dirty martinis: "If a guest (invariably a young guest) asks for or even insinuates such a thing, simply and politely pretend not to have heard." On sweetbreads: avoid ordering if they've been "smothered and covered beyond recognition in some overbearing blah-blah-blah-chile-diablo reduction or similar pretension." On kitchen equipment: "The well maintained deep fryer… nicely polished, its oil clear and clean, indicates a dedicated cook and entertainer, a fine citizen of the world with a balanced disposition and a pure heart." Finally, perhaps his best piece of advice: "Try to enjoy the moment. It's all we have."

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NEXT DOOR TO THE DEAD:

A Conversation with Kathleen Driskell on "Writing Local"

What was it like to imagine the lives and afterlives of your "neighbors?" How do you translate their voices into poetry that mixes both lyrical and narrative elements?

I've been thinking about the lives of these people for twenty years, since the day my husband and I stumbled upon the church property for sale and I spied its humble graveyard right next door. As a young mother, I was first moved—*I could actually feel my heart move inside my chest*—standing in front of a row of seven small headstones, infant brothers and sisters who died within a few years of each other in the late 1800s.

All cemeteries are filled with mysteries. I think that's one of the reasons people are drawn to them. Mt. Zion next door is no different. Slave graves rest in one corner and at the opposite corner sits a man's headstone that seems determinedly placed outside the boundaries of the cemetery proper. Those mysteries provide the perfect soil for the imagination to take root. It's more difficult to try to place myself inside the grief of those who have recently buried loved ones next door, particularly the twenty-three-year-old son of my neighbors. As my poems address both those who have died long ago and more recently, I tried to take on, at least to some extent, the diction, sensibility, and rhythms of poetry necessary for the particular time and situation in which the person lived and died. I hope the reader can feel those differences when reading through the book, comparing, for instance, the lyric "Infant Girl Smithfield" with the more narrative "The Mower."

The speaker in this collection gives voice to a diverse cross-section of people—from Tchaenhotep, a mummified Egyptian woman, to a Civil War infantryman. Which, of all of these, was the most fun to imagine? Which was the most difficult?

Tchaenhotep was the most fun, and at the same time, the most difficult to imagine. I began my relationship with her years ago after accompanying my children on grade school field trips to the Louisville Science Center. Like a lot of people, I am fascinated with ancient burial rites of queens and kings; however, it wasn't until I read that Tchaenhotep was not a royal, but rather a middle-class housewife that I became totally smitten with her. Her ordinary life made me feel that we had something in common and that I might be able to enter her character. I have loved wondering why her husband would have gone to the great expense of embalming her and thinking about her floating out of the downtown Louisville library, where she was kept for many years, during the Great Flood of 1937. On the other hand, she lived thousands of years ago in a completely different culture, and those are vast challenges to overcome when trying to embody a persona. The best indication of my difficulty in writing about her is the fact I thought about her for years before I believed myself ready to write a poem about her.

What was the most striking piece of history you encountered when researching for *Next Door to the Dead*?

I'm interested in lots of history, American history, and the South, in

particular, and couldn't believe my luck a few years ago when Harry Girdley, a trustee of the Mt. Zion and a descendent of the church founders, dropped off *The History of Mt. Zion Evangelical Church and Cemetery as Told through Documents and Deeds with Latest List of Burials*, a book he researched and compiled with his sister Frances Christina Girdley Barker. Over the years, I had tried on my own to do a bit of research on the property, but as the church was nonprofit, I could find no tax records that established its origin. I regularly cornered folks visiting the cemetery, but memories were foggy and conflicting. Harry's book provides deeds, church minutes, and burial records that have proved endlessly fascinating. I learned, finally, the church building we live in was dedicated in 1859. And for over a decade, I'd been taken with a brushy corner of the cemetery next door where I'd discovered four primitive-looking nubs of stone seemed placed haphazardly. It was only through Harry's records that I learned they were the markers of a "slave family." Much is still unknown about that family—did they die as slaves or were they a freed family?—but a bit of that particular mystery is filled in, and continues to engage my imagination.

In this collection, you engage with age-old traditions of funerary art and poetic meditation on life, death, grief, and loss. What advice would you give to a young poet who is interested in writing about these themes?

Having just come from our Spalding MFA residency abroad in Greece, I am struck again by the ancient roots of our craft. When writing about these funerary traditions and meditations on life and death, young poets follow in the footsteps of legendary Homer and other ancient oral poets who were compelled to take on the same subjects thousands of years ago. It is hard to pinpoint one "form" for an elegy, but reading about this tradition can provide a good structure for writing about grief. In his essay, "The Elegy's Structure," in the anthology *Structure and Surprise,* poet DA Powell discusses how successful elegies take on one of three structures: one with a turn from grief to consolation; one with a turn from grief to the refusal of consolation; and one from grief to deeper grief. It has helped me to think about which of these loose structure best fits my subjects and themes and has provided useful boundaries for emotions that threaten to overcome. Perhaps these structures might be helpful to a young poet as well.

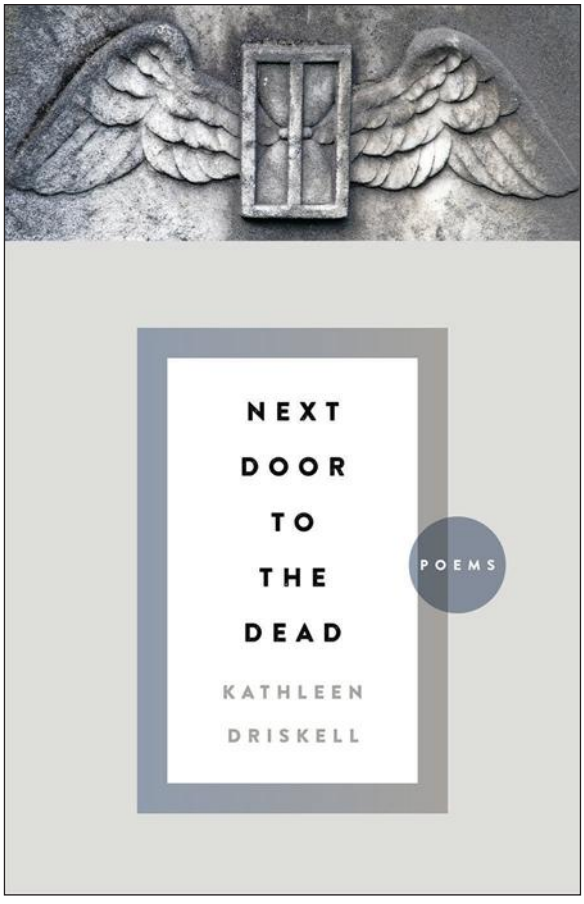
How does *Next Door to the Dead* connect to your previous collection, *Seed across Snow*, which also dealt with themes of loss and mortality? How does it differ?

I have to admit that unlike many of today's writers who are taking on more global subjects, I seem to be completely obsessed with a mere square mile around my home. I tease and defend myself by purporting to be "Writing Local," an idea I've stolen from the "Eat Local" movement. In that vein, the poems in *Seed across Snow* address a number of tragedies that occurred around our home, which local lore says, unbeknownst to us at the signing of the deed, is haunted. The buzz that our church-home is haunted comes mainly, I think, from our proximity to graveyard and also the train trestle where the infamous Goat Man of Pope Lick is said to lurk—Goat Man has his own Facebook page, by the way. I dismissed this matter as silly, of course, but in a period of a few years, our neighbor was struck by a car when crossing the road to her mailbox which sat right next to ours, two teen-aged boys were drowned in nearby Floyd's Fork, other neighbors discovered a young woman who was severely wounded and thrown from a car into a ditch, a nearby house burned to the ground, and on and on. Maybe there was something to the haunting? Meditating on these tragedies reinvigorated old memories of family heartbreaks and I found myself writing about the convergence of the old and new haunts.

When I published that book, I thought okay I'm finished with this subject, but soon poems from *Next Door to the Dead* began knocking around in my head. I had no idea I'd write enough of them to make an entire book, but here it is. And, *Next Door to the Dead,* if anything, seems to narrow my real-estate even more. I haven't found, though, that writing from a small place limits my subjects and themes. After all, *Next Door to the Dead* takes on war, love, death—and Colonel Sanders.

What do you envision for your next collection?

My next collection, *Blue Etiquette*, scheduled for a fall 2016 publication by Red Hen Press, is inspired by my fascination with Emily Post's first edition of *Etiquette*, often called the "blue book of etiquette," because it was originally published with a blue linen cover. I stumbled upon a copy in a used book store and haven't put it down since. It sits on my bedside table as if it were a Bible. Emily Post is a surprisingly imaginative writer, and I love that she uses characters like the "Worldly's," "Mr. Oldineage," "Professor Gray," and the "Youngmarrieds," to illuminate good manners. I've developed some poems based on those figures, as I imagine them. Post also has spectacular subject headings including "Stranger at the Wedding," and "When You Live in a Little House," which I've had fun using as titles that launch poems where I play with alternative interpretations.



You write epitaphs for a number of your neighbors in *Next Door to the Dead*. If they (or one of them) could write an epitaph for you, what do you think it would be?

Now she knows.

Kathleen Driskell is associate editor of the *Louisville Review* and professor of creative writing at Spalding University, where she also helps direct the low-residency MFA in Writing program. She is the author of numerous books and collections, including *Laughing Sickness* and *Seed across Snow*.

"Each poem in this collection is very carefully composed and fully realized—line by line and poem by poem, this is a satisfying book. One of the impressive features is how it works not simply as a collection of poems, but also as a whole book that deepens and expands with each page."

—Maurice Manning, author of Pulitzer Prize finalist *The Common Man*

"An astonishing collection, thoughtfully crafted and admirably honest, that makes us think about all the modes of knowing another person (and of not really knowing them)."

—Lisa Williams, author of *Gazelle in the House*

LEFT: Photo by Craig Paul

In Depth: Chef Sean Brock

James Beard Award Winner, Author, and Seed Preservationist

A Conversation with Chef Sean Brock

Over the summer of 2015, members of our staff met with Nashville Chef Sean Brock in an historic carriage house at Husk Nashville to talk about writing, research, and—of course—Southern food. When not serving as a dining and events location, the space is home to Chef Brock's "The Workshop Series at The Stables," a culinary and educational adventure showcasing acclaimed chefs from across the country and around the world.

Chef Brock is the author of *The New York Times* bestseller *Heritage,* which won the James Beard Foundation Award for Best Book in American Cooking, the IACP Julia Child First Book Award, and the Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance Cookbook of the Year. *Heritage* has 83,000 copies in print after five printings. In addition, Brock is executive chef and partner of McCrady's, Husk, and Minero in Charleston, South Carolina; Minero in Atlanta, Georgia; and Husk in Nashville, Tennessee. A collector of seeds, bourbon, and guitars, he won the James Beard Foundation Award for Best Chef: Southeast in 2010, and he was a finalist for Outstanding Chef in 2013, 2014, and 2015. His TV résumé includes hosting season 2 of the Emmy Award-winning *The Mind of a Chef.*

2nd & Church: **Thanks for making time for us Chef Brock. We know you're busy. As this issue wraps up production in October 2015, you're preparing to open Minero in Atlanta, Georgia, and Artisan Books has announced that it has acquired a new cookbook from you, entitled *Husk.* What's the story you want to tell in the kitchen? What motivates you?**

Sean Brock: Cooking can be as simple as you want it to be or as complicated as you want it to be. That's kind of what's fun about it. You can use it as a way to tell a story. You can use it as a way to inform and teach people. For me, it has been and will always be to show the rest of the world that our food here in the South is as good as it gets. It's not what most people think of it as. It's a much bigger, more beautiful, and more diverse thing than I think a lot of people see it as.

Photo by Terry Price

Chef Brock gently holds a perfect oyster mushroom ready to be seared with garlic, tossed with herbs, coated with a sherry vinegar and local honey dressing, and served along side grilled tilefish with asparagus sauce.

2&C: Chef, at the time of this interview, all of South Carolina is being hit by a downpour of rain, the worst in a thousand years. Before we get into this interview, how are things back in Charleston with your restaurants? How's the recovery coming along?

Brock: You know, we got very, very lucky. It was a big scare for everyone. It could have really done a lot of damage to a lot of people's businesses and properties, but we got very lucky, and we didn't have any problems at all. We're very thankful.

2&C: Have you spoken to Glenn Roberts at Anson Mills? How are his crops and operation?

Brock: Agriculture certainly took a hit, but when you're in that industry and profession, you know those things are just right around the corner, and there's always a possibility of those things happening. Mentally, I think, you prepare yourself. I know that a lot of people took a hit but nothing that was too devastating. Once again, we got very, very lucky.

2&C: Where did the name for the eatery originate, and why did you choose to place it on Ponce de Leon Avenue?

Brock: Being the maniacs that we are, we love history and we love research, and we love trying to understand things as fully as possible. When we started researching the origin and the history of the taco, that's kind of where you want to start. You want to start at the very beginning, and one of the first recorded recipes for a taco was a miner's taco. It tells the story of how the taco got its name from the silver miners. So, *minero* means miner, which is very attractive to me because of the connection to mining in general. I grew up in coal mining, so when you see stuff like that, it's automatic.

2&C: In what way will the Ponce de Leon Avenue location be similar and different from Minero in Charleston?

Brock: When we were approached by developers of Ponce City Market, we really had a lot to consider when making a big decision like that. But once we started to realize how very cool that property was—its history and what they were going to do and who else was involved in the food court—we saw it as a very cool opportunity to be a part of something unique. There are very few of those food halls in a place where so many people can come, walk around, and experience different types of cuisine from very talented people that we're surrounded by. So, it was really, really cool to have the opportunity to be a part of that and to sit back and watch the public's reaction and their support, and we're very thankful. The dishes are exactly the same, and there's a reason for that. We spent six months in a research and development kitchen coming up with those dishes and doing our best to make sure that we weren't able to make the dishes any better. We cooked them and cooked them and cooked them until we couldn't make them any better. When you put that amount of time and care into something, it's a real investment. We really believe in those dishes. So one of the cool things about that concept is that if it continues to be successful and if it continues to be fun, which I think is the most important thing to remember, then we can continue to open them in different cities, in cities that we love, in cities that we feel like could use a place like that?

2&C: Do you envision a Minero in Nashville, and if so, where would you place it in Music City?

Brock: The goal and dream is to get to Nashville, for sure! And that's certainly for very selfish reasons.

2&C: Recently, Artisan Books announced that it had acquired your new cookbook, *Husk,* and it's scheduled for a 2018 publication date. Have your started writing it yet? Will it be a sequel to *Heritage,* or will it be something else altogether?

Brock: I'm just getting ready to start the process, literally this month (November, 2015). And I've already started brainstorming and trying to figure out what I want to say, obviously, with this new opportunity. And that's the way I'm looking at it. I learned so much from writing *Heritage*—the good, the bad, the ugly—and now I have an opportunity to tell the story of Husk, which is fun and interesting to me because it's three different stories. It's the story of the one in Charleston, the story of the one here (in Nashville), and the story of the future of Husk. That's its own story….what I hope that it becomes, and it's really fascinating to start putting those things down on paper. You think about all these things all the time, but once you start writing about them, suddenly becomes a reality and you realize how real it is. I'm really looking forward to the opportunity to exercise my brain in

Photo by Terry Price

A rare moment...*sitting down with Chef Brock!*

Photo by Terry Price

HUSK Cheeseburger, Bear Creek Farm Beef, Fried Potato Wedges

that way, and that's really what writing does for me, and especially a project as big as trying to document the soul of Husk in a book. It's a big challenge.

2&C: Of course, 2018 is a bit far out, but are there any literary beans that you're able or willing to spill right now? Will you have the same photographer, Peter Frank Edwards?

Brock: Absolutely!

2&C: We love public service and community service work at *2nd & Church.* Could you please share with our readers some of the charity work that you do?

Brock: Any opportunity we get to help people when we can, we do. It makes you realize that that's one of the greatest things about being in the food industry, and it actually echoes back to why I wanted to become a chef in the first place. I saw how food affected people, I saw the opportunities that food gave people to bring people together, to help people...through a simple plate of food. That was one of the reasons that I wanted to do this crazy job for a living, so when a chef or restaurant can make a difference, a big difference, and contribute to a society that same way a millionaire can, when we're able to thank through cooking, through sharing food, it's a pretty amazing feeling, and it makes you realize how fortunate we are to be able to help people through doing what we love. And once you start to see the results and you start to see those numbers adding up with each individual you help, it sure makes you wanna do more. What's happened for me is that it has become a huge part of my life. Charity work is one of few things that will get me out of my own kitchen and on the road traveling these days. That's pretty much what it takes to pull me out of the restaurant... is helping people. I'd love to sit down some day and look at how many different things we participate in annually. It's gotta be a big number. It's also the role of a chef, it's also the duty, it's also the responsibility. We certainly see it that way.

2&C: How many different drafts did it take you to finish the book? How long did it take you to write the book?

Brock: Well, *Heritage* was my first book, and it was the first time I tried to be a writer, and it was my first experience with the editing process. It was my first experience with putting my thoughts and ideas into essays and chapters of book. And I think looking back, knowing that now, I realize why it took me three years; three years is a long time to work on one thing, but for me it was this incredibly positive experience mentally. It was real therapy for me. The more I wrote, the more I enjoyed writing, and the more therapeutic it became. So I got to the point where I couldn't start writing. The hard part about writing and doing a book is walking away and saying, 'no more.' I just gotta stop. That was very difficult for me. I guess I had a lot to say. The process of putting that book together took over three years and many, many, many different drafts. I broke my knee in the winter. That sure took me out of the kitchen, but it gave me an opportunity to slow down, to take a look around, and to really start focusing on that book. I printed it out and just laid it all over my apartment. I walked on it, I slept with it, I constantly read it, and the more time I spent looking, the more changes I made once again. That broken knee incident actually inspired me to pretty much rewrite the book, inspired me to go actually a bit further into my personal journey as a chef, it allowed me to write on a different level without being distracted from the everyday chaotic life of a kitchen, and I hate to say it, but breaking my knee was a good thing. It really gave me the opportunity to focus on finishing and pretty much rewriting the book. I see those things when I go back and flip through the book and I start reading it or I hear people talking about it and people approach me about different things that they've read and some of those things wouldn't have been there if I hadn't broken my knee and spent four months obsessing over it without the distraction of the kitchen's daily life.

2&C: Did you have a writing ritual? For example, what time of day did you prefer to write, and what did you use to write it? Was it done


Courtesy of Southern Foodways Alliance/Photos by Brandall Atkinson

Chef Sean Brock and his mom, Renee Brock, at the 18th Annual SFA Symposium in Oxford, Mississippi: October 15-18, 2015.

in longhand? With a computer? Did you have to be in the same location to write, or were you able to get the words down on paper regardless of where you were at any given time?

Brock: I do, I have two different exercises when it comes to writing. I always, always, always have a beat-up notepad in my back pocket to record thoughts and ideas and inspirations. So, a lot of that book was from those notebooks. And now in my back pocket is a notebook labeled "Husk Book." And that ritual for me, that exercise is really what I need to stay focused but also not forget things. To me, it's very important to capture every thought, every idea, every little whim. It needs to be documented. I've been keeping notebooks like that since I've been in the kitchen professionally. They started out obviously as recipes and slowly turned into just little mini-books, a combination of recipes, but also random thoughts and ideas and bursts of inspiration. And recently, when I'm a bit tired or when I'm more alone, I do voice-to-text. I sent myself text message that were just ramblings. You just speak into your phone, you talk to yourself basically, and the voice-to-text records it, and then you send it to yourself and you wake up the next day and there it is. It's a reminder, a stream of consciousness, a rambling on of thoughts and ideas. You see a lot the old fashion writers doing that with tape recorders.

2&C: I've had my English research students up at Western Kentucky University use *Heritage* as part of a small research project. Every semester, I get a couple of e-mails from students, wondering if they have a correct version of my course syllabus and asking me to verify whether or not I want them to read and use a "cookbook." Of course, *Heritage* is much more, and these students are no longer confused after they research and write their papers. I see the book as a creative, career mission statement. How would you characterize it?

Brock: For me, *Heritage* is a journal. It's a documentary. It's a record of my trials. It's trying—perhaps—to even prove something, and it's all the things that happened along the way within that crazy, endless eternal journey.

2&C: What was some of the research that you did for the book?

Brock: I am very lucky to be surrounded by and to be friends with a lot of people who are about a million times more intelligent than I'll ever be, and one of the best decisions that I ever made as a chef was to start hanging out with historians and professors and scientists and thinkers—people who weren't in the restaurant industry, in that daily grind, people who did research for a living…and getting to know those people on personal level. Having them as a reference at my fingertips helps me on a daily basis trying to understand Southern food and Southern culture. But, when you start writing about the history of Southern food, you better know what you're talking about, you better have your facts straight. So there was an enormous amount of research and fact checking and exploration that went into that book. And Jeff Alan was brought on to that project at the very beginning as that historical fact checker and also springboard to help me write a lot of those things and still continues to inform and teach me about the historical side, which coincides with the future of Southern cooking. David Shields, I write about him in the book, was a big life changing moment for me, my relationship with him. He really taught me so much more about cooking than I could have ever learned from a professional chef or anyone in the restaurant industry; he really gave me the foundation and the inspiration to really try and explore and understand Southern food on an intellectual level, and he is someone that I am very, very grateful for.

2&C: The Southern Foodways Alliance's quarterly journal is called *Gravy*. In this summer's cocktails edition, your piece, "The Object of My Obsession," mentioned "the hunt" for that special bottle of bourbon. Throughout your research, have you had any similar "finds in the wild" experiences with Southern documentation?

Brock: Yeah, you know, you'll be surprised what's lying under a pile of dust that hasn't been touched in fifty years, and that's the similarities and hunting for the artifacts, some of which are consumable—like fine bourbons—but certainly everything from old community cookbooks to the hand-written journals and cookbooks of grandmothers. Those are the ones that get my hand shaking. When someone brings me a beat up, hand-written book from their grandmother in that beautiful, old-fashion, cursive handwriting filled full of incredible recipes, you realize that those documents, those are the things that keep culture alive and moving forward, and if we didn't have those things, if those things weren't passed on, we'd have nothing. So, yeah, if you think about it, archeology is a big part of being in the food culture. It's one of the more exciting things, when you come across those old books and journals. The

Continued on Page 122

Savoring Southern Food: "Funny How Time Slips Away" for Diners in Husk Nashville

by Mandy Morgan

Many diners seek out Husk Nashville for the first time to experience the culinary talents of James Beard Award-winning Chef Sean Brock. I had no idea what to expect the first time I visited Husk, over in the Rutledge Hill area of Music City. I was promised a "life-changing meal" and "an old gorgeous Nashville home" by my fellow diners, who were all lucky enough to have tasted Chef Brock's creations already.

Nothing they could have said could have prepared me for what I was about to experience.

Upon arrival, the extensive front porch of this historic 1882 home welcomes you to a large, ornate front door that is begging you to come in with the tempting smells of the night's creations. The lobby, the foyer of a former Nashville mayor's home, displays a large wooden chalk board displaying the restaurant's dedication to locally sourced products and ingredients ranging from ducks and eggs to chocolates and grits. Diners are given the opportunity to see the importance and value Husk places on its ingredients even before they are seated and handed a menu. But the commitment to Southern preservation and quality ingredients does not end at the lobby. Diners are treated to an experience that is probably unmatched anywhere else in town. An extensive hand-crafted cocktail list is not to be missed. In order to discover more about the man behind Husk and the story of the beautiful, historic home, I met with Chef Brock in July, 2015.

I arrived at Husk, as I had many times before for brunch and dinner, but this time it was for my interview with Chef Brock. His team escorted me to a separate building behind the main dining area. As a frequent flyer—as it were, I had never before noticed this building's existence nor could I have known its importance or the creations that emerge from it. Known as The Stables at Husk, this building is used for private dining and as a setting for intimate events and parties. Most recently, this space has hosted Chef Brock's "The Workshop Series at the Stables," which is a "culinary and educational adventure showcasing acclaimed chefs from across the country and the world." Once in the private dining room, I first saw Chef Brock where he was meeting with various members of his staff.

Chef Brock launched into our discussion with tales of his most recent adventure, a trip to Modena, Italy where he was a chosen participant in The Grand Gelinaz. Brock explained the challenge as "thirty-seven of the world's best chefs switching lives for ten days." During his time in Italy and staying with the chef's family, he "slept in [the chef's] home, walked their dog, hung out with their kids, and ran their restaurant." Chef Brock educated me on the details of his trip and how he took his version of "Lowcountry food to

TOP: Photo by Andrea Behrends

From husknashville.com: "If it doesn't come from the South, it's not coming through the door." — Chef Sean Brock.

the Michelin Award-winning number two restaurant in the world."

But even while discussing a restaurant and a cuisine style so different from that of Nashville, he manages to always bring back the focus of our conversation to how misunderstood Southern food is around the world. He feels a certain pride and duty to be an ambassador of our food and culture, specifically pointing out "we're more than gumbo and fried chicken—even though they're both delicious."

Next, Chef Brock moves our conversion to the historic home that we now know as Husk Nashville, and how it was transformed from a former Nashville mayor's home to a different restaurant and finally into the award-winning Husk.

"The idea of Husk was born around the purchase of an old home in Charleston [South Carolina]," Chef Brock said.

Investors in the area bought an old home, closely located to McCrady's—the Charleston, South Carolina restaurant where Chef Brock was (and is) the executive chef—with the intent to flip it and sell it at once. Walking by this location every day on his route home was the inspiration for Chef Brock to stage his Southern cuisine in a Southern home.

As a previous resident of Nashville and a lover of all music genres, Chef Brock said that he decided to bring Husk to Nashville.

He knew he could not put the restaurant inside a new building or space on Broadway, even though those spaces were toured extensively. Brock and his team searched and toured Nashville for over a year until they put the project on hold because they could not find a house that "had the feel of Husk" in Charleston that he was determined to capture in Music City. After the year-long search, Chef Brock's real estate agent called with the good news that a Nashville historic home had been added to the market and that he may be interested in touring it the next time he was in town. Instantly, Chef Brock knew the location of the house and had previously dined in the recently-closed restaurant that it housed, saying "I don't even need to go see it. It's perfect; I know exactly what you're talking about."

During his first tour of the soon-to-be-opened Husk Nashville, Chef Brock detailed out how the abandoned space looked the same as it did the day the former restaurant closed its doors: plates, menus, and tables still placed in the rooms, untouched. But there was one thing out of place that he said he did not expect to see lying on the floor, a single resume. As if Chef Brock needed another sign that this historic home was meant to be the next Husk, the resume on the floor belonged to a former employee of McCrady's.

Once the Nashville property was purchased, the real transformation began.

As with any historical venue, the renovations were extensive to meet the vision Chef

LEFT AND ABOVE: Photos by Terry Price

Husk Nashville, 37 Rutledge Street, Music City

Brock and his team had for Husk Nashville. The home was in dire need of updated electrical wiring, proper plumbing, and a reinforced structure to add a hearth to complete the vision. Teams were brought in from Charleston with the goal of maintaining the antique charms of the exterior while adding unique and modern flair to the interior of the dining areas. It does not take long for diners to notice the vivid and gorgeous shade of purple used within the home to appreciate the attention to detail and vision utilized in this process.

With the story of Husk and the historic home tucked safely within my notebook's pages, the discussion shifted to the ever-changing city of Nashville.

Chef Brock remembers his first visit to Nashville in 2003 and how it was "a nice town with the occasional sleepy honky-tonk, amazing meat-and-three and a few nice steakhouses." He wondered if Nashville would ever accept and embrace the style of food he wanted to bring to the city because, at that time, there were not any other restaurants operating at that level. That reality was not an obstacle for him or any of the other local chefs.

He loved this city and was determined to make Husk Nashville a reality. Chef Brock credits a majority of the food scene transition and progression to Chef Tandy Wilson. He remembers Chef Wilson opening City House around the time that he (Chef Brock) was leaving Nashville to work in Charleston. He appreciated the attitude Chef Wilson had toward approaching a new venture in Nashville: "this is my food, you're going to love it, trust me." He credits this determination to giving Nashville's chefs the confidence to get out there and do what they do best.

Now, as residents of Nashville, we are reaping the benefits of this movement. Chef Brock even went so far as to say that "Nashville is really becoming the epicenter for creative people, which will only breed more creativity for the future." The pride and loyalty he has for Nashville is evident as he describes how he loves to host out-of-town guests so he can be a part of their Nashville experience—whether it's their first or fifth visit. On any given day, you can run into Chef Brock showing friends and family around Robert's Western World or the Ryman Auditorium.

Even though our many love stories of Nashville's food and music scene could have stretched into the evening, Chef Brock had to return to his team to prep for the night's dinner service. This was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I am ever grateful to Chef Brock for making the time to tell the history of Husk Nashville. So whether you are a lover of historic homes or a fan of upscale Southern dining (or like me, a fan of both), be sure to stop by Rutledge Hill and experience this Nashville gem.

Husk Nashville: At a Glance

From husknashville.com: "Husk Nashville, located in Rutledge Hill—just a few blocks south of Historic Broadway, in the heart of Downtown Nashville—is the newest outpost of the Neighborhood Dining Group and James Beard Award-winning Chef Sean Brock's renowned restaurant, Husk. Led by Brock, the kitchen reinterprets the bounty of the surrounding area, exploring an ingredient-driven cuisine that begins in the rediscovery of heirloom products and redefines what it means to cook and eat in Nashville."

Contact Information

Location: 37 Rutledge St., Nashville, TN. 37210
Phone: 615-256-6565
E-mail: info@huskrestaurant.com
Internet: http://www.husknashville.com/
Instagram: https://instagram.com/husknashville/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/HuskNashville

Hours

Lunch: 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Monday-Friday
Brunch: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday
Dinner: 5:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m. Sunday-Thursday
Dinner: 5:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m. Friday-Saturday

The Husk Nashville Team

Sean Brock: Chef/Partner
David Howard: NDG President
Kenny Lyons: General Manager
Brian Baxter: Chef de Cuisine

RIGHT AND ABOVE: Photos by Terry Price


Husk
CHICKEN
WEDGE OAK FARM, TN
DAIRY
GROVES FAMILY DAIRY, TN
DUCK & EGGS
FIELD OF DREAMS
CAROLINA GOLD RICE
ANSON MILLS, SC
TROUT
SUNBURST FARMS
CANTON, NC
HERBS
CARTER CREEK
HICKORY
JOE DOZIER
GRITS
GEECHIE BOY
EDISTO, SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTRY HAM
BOB WOODS, TN
HONEY
ROBIN'S, KY
SMOKED SALT & SOY SAUCE
BOURBON BARREL FOODS, KY
BOTTARGA
BEMIS & JAMES, FL
BEEF
TYLER BROWN
DOUBLE H. FARMS, TN
CANOLA OIL & BENNE OIL
CLAY OLIVER, GA

Lowcountry Hoppin' John

From the Desk of Chef Sean Brock: The Story of Hoppin' John

A man once brought some Sea Island "red peas" to McCrady's and told me they were special. They were red cowpeas that had been planted originally by African slaves in the Sea Islands. He also gave me a bag of Carolina Gold rice, which he was trying to reintroduce to the area. These are the ingredients of hoppin' John, the quintessential Lowcountry dish.

I wanted to believe him, but I hadn't had the best experience with hoppin' John. The first time I sank my teeth into a bowl of rice and peas, I was eighteen years old and I was excited to experience the dish I had read so much about. I had painted the most romantic picture possible in my head, and I couldn't have been more let down. My first bite was beyond disappointing. So I took another bite... more of the same. I left that meal wondering what all the fuss was about—it may have been one of the blandest things I had ever tasted. Little did I know I was being taught the lesson of my life. The lesson that would change the way I looked at food for the rest of my career. That first bowl of hoppin' John was so tasteless that I lost interest in Lowcountry cooking during my time at cooking school.

It wasn't until I tasted those Sea Island red peas in a bowl together with Carolina Gold rice that I realized what had gone wrong those many years ago when I'd first tasted hoppin' John. That hoppin' John was made with commercial, enriched rice and old, flavorless black-eyed peas. At that time the heirloom products that had helped shape the culture of Charleston weren't available to a chef for purchase. They simply weren't being grown. After the Civil War and the abolition of slavery, rice in Charleston was no more. The last commercial harvest was sold in 1927. What emerged after the Great Depression was a modified commercialized rice brand, with a very different flavor and texture from those of the rice people remembered from their youth.

Thanks to the work of the Carolina Gold Rice Foundation (founded by Merle Shepard, David Shields, Glenn Roberts, and other like-minded individuals), I could finally understand why hoppin' John is such a celebrated dish. They did the research and tested old samples of rice from the Carolina Gold Rice era. They collected heirloom seeds and grew heirloom rice, along with benne, okra, peanuts, sorghum, and cowpeas to rotate the crops, and each of these ingredients adds its own particular magic to the soil in which the rice grows. What resulted was the most flavorful rice I have ever tasted.

The foundation's quest is a never-ending one, but all these products are now available commercially through Anson Mills, a company started by Glenn Roberts to repatriate the Carolina Rice Kitchen, so chefs and everyone else can sample these heirloom ingredients. Make this dish (see page 16) with rice and red peas from Anson Mills and taste the difference. Real hoppin' John lies at the soul of the Lowcountry—a metaphor of its history and culture. It embodies the marriage between the golden rice seed, which crossed the Atlantic to underwrite the elaborate wealth of Charleston, and the lowly cowpea, a West African native originally deemed fodder for cattle and for the slaves who had brought that rice to Carolina and grew it. The cultures and ingredients coalesce in this marvelous dish.

Lowcountry Hoppin' John
(Serves 6 to 8)

Peas
2 quarts Pork Stock or Chicken Stock
1 cup Anson Mills Sea Island Red Peas, soaked in a pot of water in the refrigerator overnight
1½ cups medium dice onions
1 cup medium dice peeled carrots
1½ cups medium dice celery
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1 fresh bay leaf
10 thyme sprigs
½ jalapeño, chopped
Kosher salt

Rice
4 cups water
1 teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 cup Anson Mills Carolina Gold Rice
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, cubed

Red Pea Gravy
Reserved 1 cup cooked red peas
Reserved 2 cups cooking liquid from the peas
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
Cider vinegar

Sliced chives or scallions for garnish

For the peas:
1. Bring the stock to a simmer in a small pot. Drain the peas and add to the stock, along with all of the remaining ingredients except the salt. Cook the peas, partially covered, over low heat until they are soft, about 1 hour. Season to taste with salt. (The peas can be cooked ahead and refrigerated in their liquid for up to 3 days; reheat, covered, over low heat before proceeding.)

2. Drain the peas, reserving their cooking liquid, and measure out 1 cup peas and 2 cups liquid for the gravy; return the rest of the peas and liquid to the pot and keep warm.

Meanwhile, for the rice:
1. About 45 minutes before the peas are cooked, preheat the oven to 300°F.

2. Bring the water, salt, and cayenne pepper to a boil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium, add the rice, stir once, and bring to a simmer. Simmer gently, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the rice is al dente, about 15 minutes.

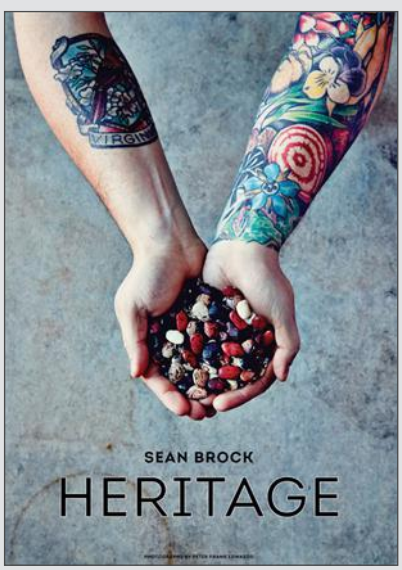
3. Drain the rice in a sieve and rinse under cold water. Spread the rice out on a rimmed baking sheet. Dry the rice in the oven, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes. Scatter the butter evenly over the rice and continue to dry it, stirring every few minutes, for about 5 minutes longer. All excess moisture should have evaporated and the grains should be dry and separate.

For the gravy:

Put the 1 cup peas, 2 cups cooking liquid, and the butter in a blender and blend on high until smooth, about 3 minutes. Add cider vinegar to taste.

(The gravy can be made up to 3 days ahead and kept in a covered container in the refrigerator; reheat, covered, over the lowest possible heat, stirring occasionally to prevent scorching.)

To complete: Use a slotted spoon to transfer the peas to a large serving bowl. Add the rice and carefully toss the rice and peas together. Pour the gravy over them, sprinkle with chives or scallions, and serve.



Cracklin' Cornbread

From the Desk of Chef Sean Brock...

My favorite ball cap, made by Billy Reid, has a patch on the front that reads "Make Cornbread, Not War." I'm drawn to it because cornbread is a sacred thing in the South, almost a way of life. But cornbread, like barbeque, can be the subject of great debate among Southerners. Flour or no flour? Sugar or no sugar? Is there an egg involved? All are legitimate questions.

When we opened Husk, I knew that we had to serve cornbread. I also knew that there is a lot of bad cornbread out there in the restaurant world, usually cooked before service and reheated, or held in a warming drawer. I won't touch that stuff because, yes, I am a cornbread snob. My cornbread has no flour and no sugar. It has the tang of good buttermilk and a little smoke from Allan Benton's smokehouse bacon. You've got to cook the cornbread just before you want to eat it, in a black skillet, with plenty of smoking-hot grease. That is the secret to a golden, crunchy exterior. Use very high heat, so hot that the batter screeches as it hits the pan. It's a deceptively simple process, but practice makes perfect, which may be why many Southerners make cornbread every single day.

Cracklin' Cornbread
(Makes one 9-inch loaf)

4 ounces bacon, preferably Benton's
2 cups cornmeal, preferably Anson Mills Antebellum Coarse Yellow Cornmeal
1 teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon baking powder
1½ cups whole-milk buttermilk
1 large egg, lightly beaten

To prepare Chef Brock's Cracklin' Cornbread:

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F. Put a 9-inch cast-iron skillet in the oven to preheat for at least 10 minutes.

2. Run the bacon through a meat grinder or very finely mince it. Put the bacon in a skillet large enough to hold it in one layer and cook over medium-low heat, stirring frequently so that it doesn't burn, until the fat is rendered and the bits of bacon are crispy, 4 to 5 minutes. Remove the bits of bacon to a paper towel to drain, reserving the fat. You need 5 tablespoons bacon fat for this recipe.

3. Combine the cornmeal, salt, baking soda, baking powder, and bits of bacon in a medium bowl. Reserve 1 tablespoon of the bacon fat and combine the remaining 4 tablespoons fat, the buttermilk, and egg in a small bowl. Stir the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients just to combine; do not overmix.

4. Move the skillet from the oven to the stove, placing it over high heat. Add the reserved tablespoon of bacon fat and swirl to coat the skillet. Pour in the batter, distributing it evenly. It should sizzle.

5. Bake the cornbread for about 20 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Serve warm from the skillet.

Book Review: *Heritage, by Chef Sean Brock*

Heirloom Southern Food to Treasure

by Candace White

Honest food, real farms, conscientious farmers, a face, a name, a voice—not a machine, not a form letter—a real person who owns the company, calling you from his truck as he drives from farm to farm as he checks on his organic heirloom grain crops for his milling company, Anson Mills.

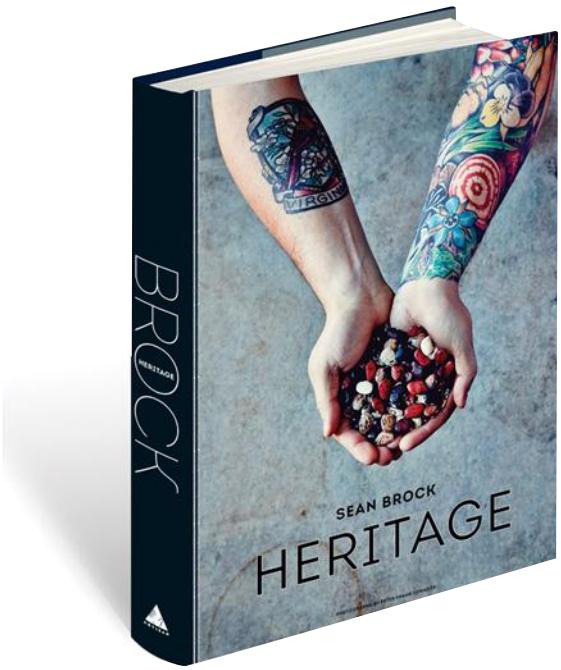
Stunning.

Family farmers who know their soil and practice the intricate rotation of crops that allow sustainability and that produce amazing vegetables, fruits, grains, meats and poultry and eggs...

Fishermen who understand which fish and shellfish to harvest to allow for the rich cycle of growth that nature and our warm Southern seas need...

Passion unheard of in today's modern food empires!

Sounds like small farming and coastal towns 50, 60, 70 years ago when everyone knew where the food they put in their mouths and fed their families came from. These small crop producers know their food, they know the earth and marshes and oceans. They, like Glenn Roberts of Anson Mills, can tell you the ancestry of the grain, where the seeds came from, what was used to fertilize the crops, and when it was harvested. They know the type of hog, the age of the chicken, the type of beef cow, what those animals ate and drank, how they lived—free to graze and grow and reproduce—and what that means to the quality, nutrition, and the flavor of your food. That is what James Beard Award-winning Chef Sean Brock's new cookbook, a homage to Southern food stuffs, *Heritage* is all about.



Time magazine christened Brock "The most conspicuously gifted American chef of his generation," but the most important thing to know about him is that he grew up in the South, growing, eating, and cooking Southern food. When he speaks about the food for his restaurant kitchens, he says in full southern vernacular, "If it ain't Southern, it ain't walkin' in the door."

The tap roots of Brock's heritage run deep into the artesian wells that riddle the Appalachian Mountains of his early years in Virginia and the coastal Carolina marshlands and waterways where he refined his skills and first came to be a chef in Charleston, South Carolina. Southern food is who Brock is. However, this is not a cookbook about an award-winning chef and his accomplishments, though they are many. This is a cookbook about the food that is body and soul of the South and our way of life. These foodways that Brock celebrates in *Heritage* intimately speak of our multi-layered cultural history: American Indian, German, French, English, Spanish Immigrants, and most importantly, the African-American slaves who were the backbone of the historical South.

Our Southern climate and the opulent earth and marshlands allowed the rich confluence and cultivation of plants brought from other continents and cultures. These plants and animals informed and shaped what Southerners grew and ate: corn from the Native Americans; okra, benne, black-eyed peas, and peanuts brought by African Americans; barley, wheat, and peas from England; Ossabaw hogs and Pineywoods cattle from Spain. And the golden rice that built Charleston, it came in 1685, off a brigantine ship sailing from Madagascar that encountered a horrific storm in the southern Atlantic and came into Charleston Harbor for repairs. This is the heritage that Chef Brock so beautifully brings to the table with his recipes and stories of the people who supply his food, small business owners and farmers who care about the quality of their products.

Heritage's photographs of ripe vegetables, fresh game, meat, poultry, and fish—and the farms and people who run them—make you want to seek out these heirloom foods and bring them to your family's table in celebration and gratitude. The recipes are ones Brock has refined over the years in building his culinary repertoire: use what is fresh, use what is in season at the height of flavor, use what is locally sourced, use what is grown and raised by producers who care about their product. (A bit different from most big restaurant kitchens and their large orders from corporate food suppliers.) So, *Heritage* provides recipes that are the full spectrum of Southern food: seafood and marsh chickens out of Charleston, local grain fed beef and hogs, organic fresh produce from century old farms, trout from the North Carolina streams, and Southern artisan chocolate, handmade in Nashville, Tennessee.

I am from the South, and I grew up a lot like this author, at the foot of an ancient mountain range—growing, eating, and preserving food at my Grandmother Thelma's side, much as he did at his Grandmother Audrey's side.

I cook Southern food.

I love most of the things that Brock loves: grits, fresh greens (cooked quick!), cornbread, slow roasted pork, fresh berries, and peaches made into pies, all manner of preserves, and Duke's mayonnaise.

Yet...what Brock brings to this history of Southern food is something that I have never experienced. I ate dinner at Husk Nashville (and then lunch); I read *Heritage* cover to cover; I ordered Plantation White Grits, Sea Island Peas, and Carolina Gold Rice from Anson Mills; I ordered Benton's bacon from East Tennessee and bought Olive and Sinclair Chocolate in Nashville, as well as grass-fed pork from a local purveyor in Lebanon, Tennessee, who raises hormone- and antibiotic-free hogs.

I cooked five different recipes from this book.

Yes, there is a familiarity to this food. It has the savory amazing quality that speaks of long summer afternoons and delicious groaning tables of food prepared by those who love you best. But this food, these recipes...they are like a melody that hangs in your mind from long ago, a familiar tune that you can't quite capture, then suddenly a jazz riff intercedes, takes over your senses, and fills your mind with something better, more refined, more enticing. You are beyond satiated...the food is incredible. But then you hear it, the familiar melody calls you back, you know the jazz riff is coming, you think to yourself, maybe I'll try a few more recipes tomorrow, perhaps Lowcountry Hoppin' John made with Sea Island Red Peas and Carolina Gold Rice. A Chicken Simply Roasted in a Skillet, and Black Walnut Pound Cake with Chocolate Gravy for dessert, and then leftover Black Walnut Pound Cake for breakfast the next day.

Press Release

Artisan to Publish Sean Brock's New Cookbook

Artisan has acquired a new cookbook from chef Sean Brock, author of *The New York Times* bestseller *Heritage* (Artisan Books; 2014), which won the James Beard Foundation Award for Best Book in American Cooking, the IACP Julia Child First Book Award, and the Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance Cookbook of the Year. *Heritage* has 83,000 copies in print after five printings.

Brock is executive chef and partner of McCrady's, Husk, and Minero in Charleston, South Carolina, and Husk in Nashville, Tennessee. He won the James Beard Foundation Award for Best Chef: Southeast in 2010; he was a finalist for Outstanding Chef in 2013, 2014, and 2015. His TV résumé includes hosting season 2 of the Emmy Award-winning *The Mind of a Chef.*

The new book, *Husk*, will focus on Brock's approach to cooking at Husk, Husk Nashville, and Husk Workshop, restaurants that redefine what it means to cook and eat in the South. Brock will share recipes that range from his personal interpretations of classic Southern dishes to his new favorites and will include his signature tips and techniques.

Judy Pray, executive editor at Artisan Books, acquired *Husk* from David Black of the David Black Agency for publication in 2018.

Courtesy of Southern Foodways Alliance/Photo by Artisanal Aperture

The new book, *Husk*, will focus on Brock's approach to cooking at Husk, Husk Nashville, and Husk Workshop.

Photo by Terry Price

Husk Nashville. *Heritage* has 83,000 copies in print after five printings.

Column: *Tastes like home to me…*

Exploring *Heritage,* by Chef Sean Brock

by Candace White

Even though the sun is clearly leaving the twilight sky behind, heat waves are dancing off the asphalt on Rutledge Hill, where we are standing in the road. In front of us is an antique house with a slate mansard roof built high off the ground over a hundred years ago. It has tall windows and a wide front porch well-set to catch the breezes floating up from the Cumberland River. The phrase "Hotter than the Fourth of July in Nashville, Tennessee" runs through my mind. We hear the live music starting from Riverfront Park, almost dark enough for the fireworks. Trying not to sweat while shaking hands with investors, contractors, and a young chef named Andrew, I search the tall front porch with the sheltering old oak. I'd rather meet the house. It looks cooler to sit a while on broad cool limestone steps under arched woodwork. But the house is empty, has been for years, the windows like dark eyes look at the momentary people in the street. We turn away as the first boom hits the air and electric fire lights up the sky to "God Bless America." I can still feel the cool, dark house behind me, the only cool thing on that hot night, in the summer of 2006.

That same year, another young chef left Nashville where he had helmed the kitchen of a five star hotel for three years, that grand old Southern belle, The Hermitage in downtown, with its worn marble staircases and impossibly-gilded ceilings. My husband and I ate there for our anniversary in 2004. Beautiful scallops seared to perfection and an order of short ribs that made it to the list, the one we have for the top 10 best things we've ever eaten; it was number 7. In 2006, Chef Sean Brock went back to Charleston, South Carolina, where he had begun his career. He took over McCrady's, whose peerage ran back to 1778, a restaurant with a history so deep it made the 100-year-old Hermitage Capital Grille seem as if it was built yesterday. Brock has said he knew even then, he'd come back to Nashville… someday.

Early Nashville summer 2007, the antique home at 37 Rutledge Street at the top of Rutledge Hill was all dust and broken up concrete and torn out walls. The small kitchen garden that had been planted in early spring outside the two-story glass addition (built in the 1980s) was withering from heat, lack of water, and brick dust. Delay after delay seemed to fade the hopeful dream of turn-

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Event: Parnassus Books & POP

An Evening with Sean Brock & Jason Isbell

by Roy Burkhead

The two of them—Ms. Amy Geise and her husband, Lucian—were standing in the back of the room, and even though they were standing and in the back, they were happy to be there, in that 5,000-square-foot canvas of dining, patio, and gallery space…especially for this event.

According to Amy, they had been holding their tickets for this Gallatin Avenue event for three or four weeks.

"I found out at Parnassus Books about this event, and I purchased the tickets for my husband for Christmas," said the Kentucky native, Vanderbilt University graduate, and Nashville resident of 15 years. "Oh, we've eaten at Husk about a dozen times!"

Ms. Geise was talking about An Evening with Chef Sean Brock, who appeared in conversation with singer-songwriter Jason Isbell on that December 3, 2014 evening.

Parnassus Books and POP hosted the conversation, and the tickets include a copy of *Heritage,* the much-anticipated first cookbook from Brock, the James Beard Award-winning chef of Husk Nashville.

The filled-to-capacity space was full of folks in all manner of dress: some were dressed up; others, dressed down; one patron pulled off wearing one of those *Back to the Future* orange vests; and those in search of an education sported chic college-wear. In short, foodies talked food with blazers ablaze, leather jackets shimmering. Faces shined with looks of obvious anticipation and excitement, and the faithful talked to one another in an almost whisper: Sean!

"The things I eat now are what I was terrified of as a kid," Chef Sean Brock said in response to Jason Isbell's question about food and childhood. Brock and Isbell were sitting at a small table in front of a packed room. "The older you get, you crave the things that remind you of home; wisdom plays such an important role in food."

Those throughout the room were standing, sitting, and shifting—stretching their necks left and right to get a peek, just above the crowd, of his signature baseball cap. When a question tickled him or the audience reacted to something he said, he would smile, laugh, and tilt his head back.

Oh, okay…what…exactly…is a POP event?

According to the event's page at parnassus.net, 'pop-up' events originated from urban cities where real estate and capital were a premium and budding creatives didn't have the means to afford it. Enter POP, the brainchild of POP UP Chef Sarah Gavigan. Events such as this one give a great cook with a passion, a chef with an idea, an entrepreneur with a new brand, or an artist with a vision the chance to bring food and creative ideas to the public. In the wildly growing creative community of East Nashville, Tennessee, POP is a full-scale restaurant and gallery space designed for dining and events.

"It was one of those evenings where we got to be booksellers and fans at the same time," said Mary Laura Philpott, social media director at Parnassus Books and editor of the bookshop's online magazine, *musing: a laid-back lit journal.* So many of us at Parnassus love Sean's food and Jason's music, so to be present and listen in as those two leaders in their creative fields conversed with each other was a real thrill.

"We sold 145 copies of *Heritage* that night."

A selection of drinks and bites, provided by Otaku South, was available for purchase throughout the evening. From time to time, two side doors would quietly slide open, out of which a waiter or waitress would slide—like a porcelain glide rack out of an exquisite oven—and present a lucky recipient with something warm and delicious…apparently meant just for this one special customer on this particular cold, winter night.

"The folks from POP were so kind to keep bringing drinks and little samples of the food over to the bookselling table for us," Philpott said.

Amongst this festive event, Isbell continued his questioning, including

Continued on Page 133

Photo by Terry Price

ABOVE AND RIGHT: Photos by David McClister

Press Release: *2016 Winter Tour Dates*

Jason Isbell's Tour Continues in February

Jason Isbell has announced 2016 winter tour dates in support of his highly acclaimed latest release *Something More Than Free* (Southeastern Records/Thirty Tigers). The tour will kick off on February 11 with two performances at ACL Live at Moody Theater in Austin with stops in Chicago, Boston, and New York City. Isbell will be backed by his fantastic longtime band The 400 Unit, featuring Derry DeBorja (keys) Chad Gamble (drums), Jimbo Hart (bass), and Sadler Vaden (guitar). Isbell and company will be bringing the celebrated duo Shovels & Rope out with them in support of the new dates.

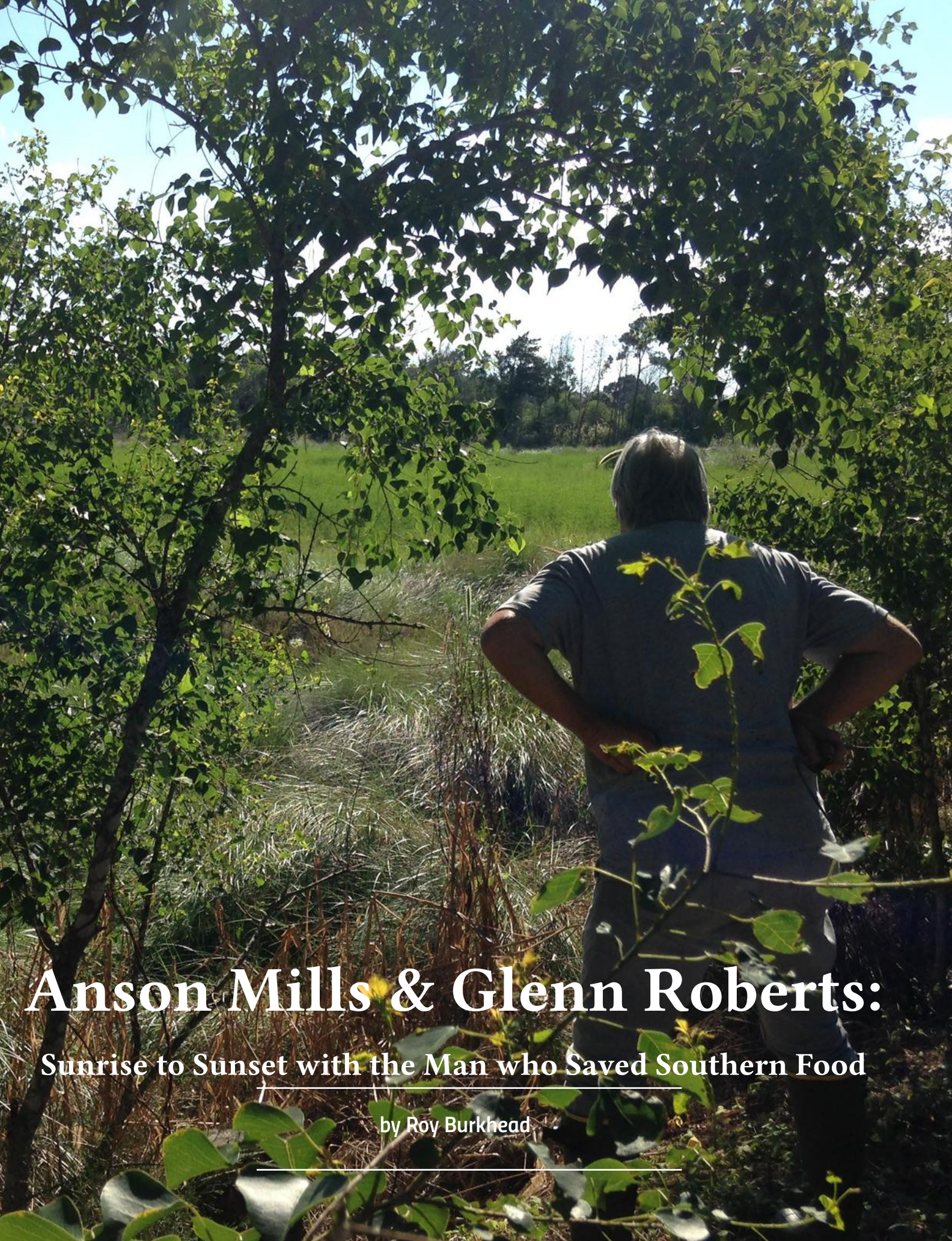
Isbell has released his second *Building The Song* video, which features in studio footage of the creative process in action as he and his band mates created and recorded each song on *Something More Than Free.* The new video features the building of the album's title track. The first *Building The Song* video featured the single "24 Frames" and premiered at NPR Music in June, 2015.

Something More Than Free resonated with critics and fans alike, selling over 94,000 copies to date following its July 17, 2015 release, when it debuted at #1 on the Rock, Country, Folk charts. *Something More Than Free* has received an even wider range of press support than its celebrated predecessor, 2013's breakthrough, *Southeastern.*

Something More Than Free features Isbell's poetic lyrics filled with honesty and authenticity that run throughout his observational vignettes of working class characters that reflect on all of us. Much like his award winning 2013 album *Southeastern, Something More Than Free* has received overwhelming media support, from *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* to NPR's *Fresh Air* and *The Oxford American* to *Stereogum* and *Absolute Punk.* The new album has garnered high praise from an even wider range of press than its predecessor.

Jason Isbell & The 400 Unit Upcoming U.S. Tour Dates

1/31-2/6 - Miami, FL - Cayamo Cruise
2/11 & 12 - Austin, TX - ACL Live at the Moody Theater
2/16 - Dallas, TX - South Side Ballroom
2/17 - St. Louis, MO - Peabody Opera House
2/19 - Indianapolis, IN - The Murat Theatre
2/20 - Chicago, IL - Chicago Theatre
2/25 - New York, NY - Beacon Theatre
2/27 - Boston, MA - House of Blues
2/29 - Toronto, ON - The Danforth Music Hall
3/1 - Royal Oak, MI - Royal Oak Music Theatre
3/2 - Pittsburgh, PA - Benedum Center for the Performing Arts
3/5 - St. Augustine, FL - St. Augustine Amphitheatre



Anson Mills & Glenn Roberts:

Sunrise to Sunset with the Man who Saved Southern Food

by Roy Burkhead

Photos by Roy Burkhead

LEFT: Anson Mills Founder Glenn Roberts—in rubber boots halfway up to his knees and carrying a hand sickle—inspects Carolina Gold Rice at Turnbridge Plantation, close to the Savannah River. TOP/LEFT: Walking back from the rice fields, Glenn pauses to catch up with Floyd Robbins, renowned wildlife artist and artist-in-residence at Turnbridge Plantation. On this afternoon, Floyd was out doing some maintenance on a dirt road that had turned to mud after a bout of rain. TOP/RIGHT: In Clemson, South Carolina, at the Clemson Coastal Research and Education Center (CREC) Organic Research Farm (ORF), Glenn inspects some Carolina Gold Rice with Brian Ward, the center's director.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2015. BEFORE SUNRISE: 5:30 A.M. AT 1922 C GERVAIS STREET, COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA. SITTING IN MY CAR, PARKED AT A DERELICT METAL WAREHOUSE BEHIND A CAR WASH.

When planning my trip to Anson Mills, I knew that the 6,000-square-foot warehouse would be…well…something different. But the bulky padlock on the door gave more of an "out of business" feel than simply stating that the company was closed for the day. I expected to see an old, rusty pickup someplace—something that a person like Glenn Roberts, founder of the outfit, might use. Instead, I saw a 2015 hot rod parked behind an old-looking strip mall from the 1970s—all nestled up next to the warehouse.

Traveling over 400 miles the day before from Nashville, Tennessee, the seven hours on the road put me later into the city than I had anticipated, and I lost an hour—going from a central time zone to an eastern one. And just for fun, I stayed up late and reread the chapter on Carolina Gold Rice from *Southern Provisions: The Creation & Revival of a Cuisine,* by USC Professor David S. Shields. So, yeah, I was feeling a little rough that morning...not knowing what to expect while reading over Glenn's e-mail:

[8/26/15: Hi R, We're on for September 14th. We'll be moving fast during the day, rain or shine. Boots for mud might be a good idea in case it is raining. To be specific, we would set out at sunrise from the mill in Columbia after the first meetings there, then go to the seed house 33 miles away, then check the farm fields near the seed house, then drive to the research farm in Charleston and walk those plots with our landrace plant researchers…that's another 90 miles, then into the ACE Basin to check rice fields…another 70 miles, then back to the SC midlands, 110 miles, then back to the mill by sundown to set up for the next day…another 30 miles.]

* * *

TERRIFIED: 6:00 A.M.

As if stepping out of an episode of *Mind of a Chef,* in which he—indeed—appeared with Chef Sean Brock, Glenn slipped up next to my window and rapped suddenly…and I thought I saw him smile in the darkness as I came a foot out of my car seat. (I suspect this isn't the first time he's unleashed this scare tactic!)

He tells me to park next to his rental car—the hot rod—and come inside his offices. It's not a strip mall, after all. But who would know? There are no signs on any of the buildings.

I've worked in "the offices" of many global and national corporations throughout my writing career, and I had a picture in my mind of what the offices at Anson Mills could look like. I was wrong. Glenn's office (the whole place, really) looked like a place where actual work happened….and it happened pretty much all the time. Anson Mills is a 24/7 operation. Someone in his office is available regardless of the day of the week or time of time. Glenn said his shift starts at 3:00 a.m. (That's….a.m.!)

He anticipates the slightly confused look on my face and offers up some answers to questions I have not yet asked: signs on the buildings and fancy office space would both cost money. And what about that hot rod? It's not even his car. *The man doesn't own a car!* He did the math and since he travels so much, it's cheaper to simply rent a car year round from a place at the airport.

And the point to all of this saving of money, besides the obvious reasons? Anson Mills donates a tremendous amount of its products. The less money he spends, the less overhead he needs. And less overhead translates into more free product going out into the world. And that process starts just outside his door, at the warehouse.

Glenn Explains: "We mill and run the seed house on Monday, Tuesday, and half a day on Wednesday. We farm the rest of the week."

* * *

MILLING TO ORDER, INSIDE THE WAREHOUSE

It's 6:15 a.m., and we're in the warehouse with thousands of pounds of raw product… waiting to become consumable product. According to Glenn, they only mill to order, and by 6:00 p.m., all the orders are out the door. I almost ask how this is possible, but it's 6:30 a.m. now, and Glenn's workers (14 to 16 of them) have started to arrive, and they go directly to work. Bringing back old and almost-extinct species of heirloom corn demands this level of focus. Oh, there is a coffee station, but it doesn't appear to be in demand.

As each worker arrives, some tell Glenn "good afternoon," while others say, "mornin'." The traditional 24 hour day is a stranger to these people. Young, strong, and male (they

Photo by Roy Burkhead

An Anson Mills employee since 2008, Pauline Wray is one of two ladies who package the retail products—over 40 varieties.

would have to be in order to do this work!), they have other lives, and Glenn is eager to point out the jazz musician, the gardeners, and even one feller who is known as "the pig whisperer."

Glenn's appreciation of these people and their talents makes sense, realizing where he's come from and what he's given up to do what he's now doing. For over two decades, he was a historic architecture consultant…a far cry from working in the fields, which he does constantly. According to the company's web site, Glenn studied the French horn throughout his boyhood, and he joined the United States Air Force to satisfy his love of supersonic jets. Later, he sailed around the world on private yachts as a navigator and a mate. The man even drove long-haul trucks for a while.

* * *

7:00 A.M. IN THE HOT ROD AND AT HOPKINS, SOUTH CAROLINA

Glenn, me, and John Hammond (manager of the Anson Mills Seed House) squeeze into the mid-life crisis rental mobile and head over to a test field. It's a decoy field, designed to bring the deer here…and away from the actual crops. Glenn and John walk the field to evaluate a potential redweed problem, pulling a few weeds along the way.

Glenn: "No one thought there was redweed out here. Maybe a large storm blew the stuff in from the nearby peanut field. You got to get it out of the field before you harvest."

After evaluating the field, Glenn tells John to turn over the field (in order to use the field for growing other crops).

* * *

8:43 A.M., AT ANSON MILLS

Back in the office, allowing Glenn to touch base with his front office staff. Glenn tells me that while they're a wholesale operation, their retail business is becoming increasingly popular. I walk down the hall and meet the ladies who happen to be packing up retail products for shipment.

"We've set things up in here like a grocery store," said Pauline Wray. An Anson Mills employee since 2008, she said that they package and ship a little over 40 items.

* * *

9:06 A.M. GLENN AND I BACK IN THE HOT ROD, HEADED TO THE SEED HOUSE IN ST. MATTHEWS - LONGLEAF PLANTATION

Glenn brings me to the seed house as he checks out the inventory. This location is sort of a standby station, where the raw product waits its turn to be delivered to the warehouse at Anson Mills. Tris Waystack is the owner at Longleaf Plantation, as well as a manager of sales at a national out-of-state equipment company. According to Tris, he's been working with Glenn since the spring of 2009: "1700 pounds of rice a day gets cleaned at the seed house."

The day-to-day operations at the seed house are in the hands of Andy England, and on this particular afternoon, Andy was riding high on a recent discovery: "I just learned that I come from a long line of seed savers in England!" Andy seems to be the youngest of the leaders at the plantation, all three settling into easy conversation after they've tended to the tasks at hand. Andy refers to Glenn and "Mr. Glenn," and he's eager to share tales of running the

seed house while Tris unveils his latest tractor finds.

Finally, it's 11:10 a.m. and time to head into Charleston for lunch.

* * *

LUNCH. THE GLASS ONION AT 1219 SAVANNAH HWY, CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA.

Walking from the hot rod to the restaurant's front door, I'm so hungry that I cannot think or speak. This will be my first food since the junk I purchased from a gas station when I left the hotel. (Being diabetic, I tend to eat many smaller meals throughout the day, verses following a traditional approach.) But I don't say anything because I know that the man's been awake since 3:00 a.m., and he's not complaining.

Looking around the place, I am thrilled because I know whatever I eat will be delicious.

The menu on the wall includes selections like deviled eggs, boiled peanuts, fried green tomato po boy with pimento cheese, cornmeal fried North Carolina catfish over chicken gumbo, and buttermilk fried chicken. And the prices are good, so I know I'm gonna afford it. (Editorial note: Glenn refused to allow me to pay for my lunch--fried catfish!)

Open since 2008, The Glass Onion is the sort of place that I was expecting Glenn to take us: taking farm-to-table seriously; offering locally-sourced favorites. A charming environment. According to its web site, it was one of the first places "to support local farmers and purveyors on almost every dish and drink on the menu." If you don't believe me, read it for yourself at:

http://www.ilovetheglassonion.com/

Photo by Roy Burkhead

Dragon Rice, growing at the Clemson Coastal Research and Education Center (CREC) Organic Research Farm (ORF)

* * *

1:23 P.M. AT THE CLEMSON COASTAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER (CREC) ORGANIC RESEARCH FARM (ORF)

Glenn brings me to the Clemson Coastal Research and Education Center's Organic Research Farm, where I meet Research Specialist III Brian Ward. (Brian directs research over at the center.) According to Brian, the most he has ever planted in one year was 170 different plants: "I had 27 lines of cantaloupe, 30 lines of peas, 10 lines of wheat, and 10 lines of rice. I have done research on things from cover crops, to small fruits like strawberries, to asparagus as well as many lines of medicinal herbs and culinary herbs."

It's easy to see that Glenn and Brian make a good research team. According to Brian, "I would like to think of Glenn as the nation's leading advocate for repatriation and preservation of America's culinary past from precolonial times including Native Americans through the post-revolutionary and antebellum times to the present with regard to the original grains including wheats, barleys, oats, and rice, as well as legumes like Southern peas. He is a man of honor and is no-nonsense business sense. He is a philanthropist to some degree and a pioneer in the grain world. He has a deep rooted love and admiration for the South and all of its peoples. He's just an all-around good guy. He has so much knowledge that when you speak to…or rater, listen to him, people say that it's like trying to drink water from a firehouse instead of a garden hose."

* * *

2:26 P.M. ALLIGATOR CHECKLIST AT OAKATIE

Our last stop of the day was a step or two from the water's edge at Turnbridge Plantation, near the Savannah River. A few days before we arrived, there was some wet weather and hunters had pretty much destroyed the dirt/mud road, and it was impossible to get close to the rice fields—Glenn was there to gather some field samples of his Carolina Gold Rice crops—and we had to walk a pretty good way down the road…toward the water.

With thick rubber boots covering his lower legs and a sharp rice hook (also known as a hand sickle) in his hand, he was brave at the water's edge as he went over his "Alligator Do & Don't List." It included helpful tips, like "be aware of holes in the ground" and "don't sneak up on the mamas."

Really?, I thought. *Glenn, could you not have given me the Alligator Do & Don't List while we were still in the car? That way, I could have stayed in the car.*

Somehow, I survived my paranoid time on dry land while this *Man among Men* went out into the watery rice fields.

Walking back from the rice fields, Glenn paused to catch up with Floyd Robbins, renowned wildlife artist and artist-in-residence at Turnbridge Plantation. On this afternoon, Floyd was out doing some maintenance on that messed up dirt road. I headed back to the car.

* * *

IN THE HOT ROD, HEADED BACK TO COLUMBIA

We've both stopped talking. Or should I say, Glenn has stopped talking, and I am zoning out-having not a clue as to where I am in South Carolina… only that I'm eventually ending up at my hotel, a little inn on the grounds of the University of South Carolina. I've already told myself that this night, I am going to sleep as if I invented it!

I ask Glenn if he thinks there is someone still at the warehouse who could put together a "to go" order of Carolina Gold Rice? Of course, I'd be more than happy to pay for it. Instantly, he grabs his cell phone and asks someone to get me something ready. And of course, he wouldn't allow me to pay for the generous amount of Petite Rouge Peas, Carolina Gold Rice, Sea Island Red Peas, and Carolina Gold Rice Grits.

"Right from the freezer to cooking is fine…and return resealed partials to freezer ASAP," is the last thing that I hear from him later that day as I limp away from a day that I'll never forget.

Interview: *Sitting a Spell with the "Indiana Jones of the Historical Culinary World"*

Q&A with USC's David S. Shields

In Columbia, South Carolina, there's a major Southern university. Started in 1801, that campus contains what is generally referred to as "Welsh," a building on College Street…near Pickens Street. It's a couple of buildings, technically. (The office building was named for Vice President for Instruction John R. Welsh, a University faculty member from 1949 until his death. He was head of the English department, 1973-74, before being named vice president.) This two-building, 116,436-square-foot complex houses departmental offices and classrooms. Oh, and there's the Language Resource Center, the Writing Center, and a computer laboratory, as well. In the fall of 2015, we slipped into that building and dropped by office 207 for a short conversation with someone who just may be one of the last Renaissance Men left in America, David S. Shields. Professor Shields is the Carolina Distinguished Professor and the McClintock Professor of Southern Letters at the University of South Carolina and chairman of the Carolina Gold Rice Foundation. …and don't forget PBS television personality! He appears in the second episode ("Seeds") of the PBS Television series *Mind of a Chef.* On this morning, he was working on a website devoted to old Southern orchards.

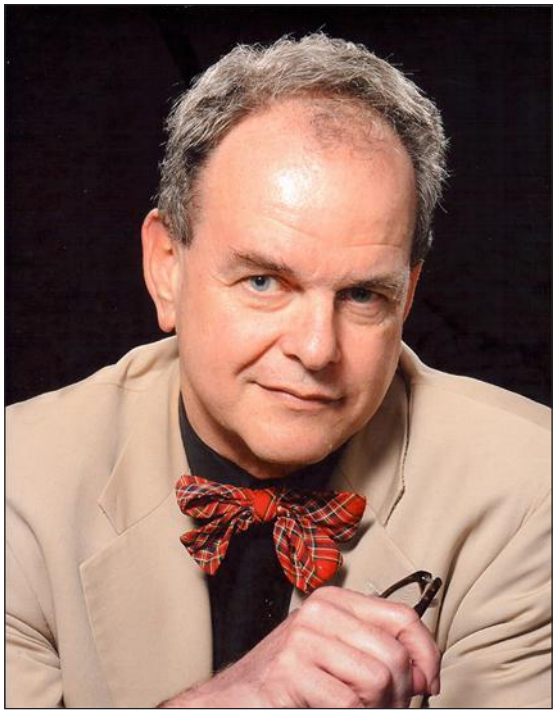


Photo by Sidney J. Palmer

Professor David S. Shields

2nd & Church: Thank you for your time professor Shields. I know you're a busy man. You latest book, *Southern Provisions: The Creation & Revival of a Cuisine,* covers the Lowcountry foodways. Can you share with our readers about some of your other books? And do you plan on similar books covering any of the other foodways?

David Shields: The University of Chicago Press has done well with the books I've published with them. My last—*Still: American Silent Motion Picture Photography*—a history of photography and silent cinema won awards and sold well, particularly as Turner Classic Movie Channel's Book of the Month. They also anticipate doing well with the next one in the pipe line—*Culinarians: American Chefs, Caterers, and Restaurateurs 1794-1919,* a collection of 200 biographies of lives and careers. It's due out in 2016.

2&C: I met with Brian Ward yesterday. He directs research over at the Clemson Coastal Research and Education Center (CREC) Organic Research Farm (ORF). Brian told me the story about how you saved the Carolina African Runner Peanut. Brian said it was almost lost to history, but three years ago you found 40 seeds at the North Carolina State Peanut Germplasm bank. You gave him 20 seeds, a dozen survived, and that yielded 1,200 seeds. The following year, 900 were planted and that yielded 60,000 seeds. In 2015, about 40,000 were planted, and they are hoping for a million seeds. Talk about a success story! How long has everyone been working with Brian?

DS: I don't take pay for anything I do with food. Everything is pro bono. This was the plan from the beginning, when I spent three years reading nineteenth century agricultural journals. We were looking for items that we could bring back, and there was a relatively short list….sugar cane…..field peas…the peanut. We're working with chestnuts now.

2&C: Okay, one last question, just because I'm so nosey….I mean, curious. Exactly how many languages are you able to speak?

DS: I can read Latin, good at Spanish, can read French, make my way through German and Dutch, and I took Russian through college.

USC Professor "Savors the South" at Southern Festival of Books

by Roy Burkhead

USC Professor David S. Shields appeared at Nashville's 2015 Southern Festival of Books on October 9 for a session entitled, "Savoring the South: Getting to Know Classic Ingredients and Cuisine." The author of *Southern Provisions: The Creation & Revival of a Cuisine* signed copies of his book following the session.

"People are always asking me what the most important book written about Southern food is," said Nashville Chef Sean Brock about *Southern Provisions.* "You are holding it in your hands."

"I have referred to David Shields in the past as the Indiana Jones of the historical culinary world," said Brian Ward, Research Specialist III and research director at the Clemson Coastal Research and Education Center (CREC) Organic Research Farm (ORF).

One of Professor Shields many success stories is the Carolina African Runner Peanut.

According to Ward, the Carolina African Runner Peanut was almost lost. It was used as breeding material in the early twentieth century. That's where the modern lines started, and there was no need for the Carolina anymore.

"Three years ago, USC Food Historian David Shields found them at NC State Peanut Germplasm bank; there were only 40 seeds left," Ward said. "They gave me 20, 12 survived, and that yielded 1,200 seeds. The following year, 900 were planted, and that yielded 60K seeds.

"This year (2015), about 40K were planted, and we are hoping for a million seeds, enough to share with Clemson PEEDEE Rec and Edisto Rec for research purpose and to about 20 local sustainable and organic growers who will become the seedsmen/seedwomen going forward and that chapter will be completed."

The professor's next book is entitled, *Culinarians: American Chefs, Caterers, and Restaurateurs 1794-1919,* a collection of 200 biographies of lives and careers.

It's due to be released in 2016.

About Professor Shields

David S. Shields is the Carolina Distinguished Professor and the McClintock Professor of Southern Letters at the University of South Carolina and chairman of the Carolina Gold Rice Foundation. His other books include *Still: American Silent Motion Picture Photography,* also published by the University of Chicago Press.

Press Release: *The Creation & Revival of a Cuisine*

Southern Provisions

Southern food is America's quintessential cuisine. From creamy grits to simmering pots of beans and greens, we think we know how these classic foods should taste. Yet the Southern food we eat today tastes almost nothing like the dishes our ancestors enjoyed because the varied crops and livestock that originally defined this cuisine have largely disappeared. Now, a growing movement of chefs and farmers is seeking to change that by recovering the rich flavor and diversity of southern food. At the center of that movement is historian David Shields, who has spent over a decade researching early American agricultural and cooking practices. In *Southern Provisions,* he reveals how the true ingredients of Southern cooking have been all but forgotten and how the lessons of its current restoration and recultivation can be applied to other regional foodways.

Shields's turf is the Southern Lowcountry, from the peanut patches of Wilmington, North Carolina to the sugar cane fields of the Georgia Sea Islands and the citrus groves of Amelia Island, Florida, and he takes us on an excursion to the Lowcountry region in order to offer a vivid history of Southern foodways, drawing connections among plants, farms, growers, seed brokers, vendors, cooks, and consumers. Shields begins by looking at how professional chefs during the nineteenth century set standards of taste that elevated Southern cooking to the level of cuisine. He then turns to the role of food markets in creating demand for ingredients and enabling conversation between producers and preparers. Next, his focus shifts to the field, showing how the key ingredients—rice, sugarcane, sorghum, benne, cottonseed, peanuts, and citrus—emerged and went on to play a significant role in commerce and consumption. Shields concludes with a look at the challenges of reclaiming both farming and cooking traditions.

From Carolina gold rice to white flint corn, the ingredients of authentic Southern cooking are returning to fields and dinner plates, and with Shields as our guide, we can satisfy our hunger both for the most flavorful regional dishes and their history.

Praise for *Southern Provisions*

"People are always asking me what the most important book written about southern food is. You are holding it in your hands."

— Sean Brock, executive chef, Husk

"In *Southern Provisions,* Shields skillfully draws connections between agricultural history and the history of food in the Lowcountry. In the process, he unearths truths about the South, its flora, fauna, and peoples. If you want to apprehend the tangled roots of American regional cuisine, this is a good place to start."

— John T. Edge, coeditor of *The Larder: Food Studies Methods from the American South*

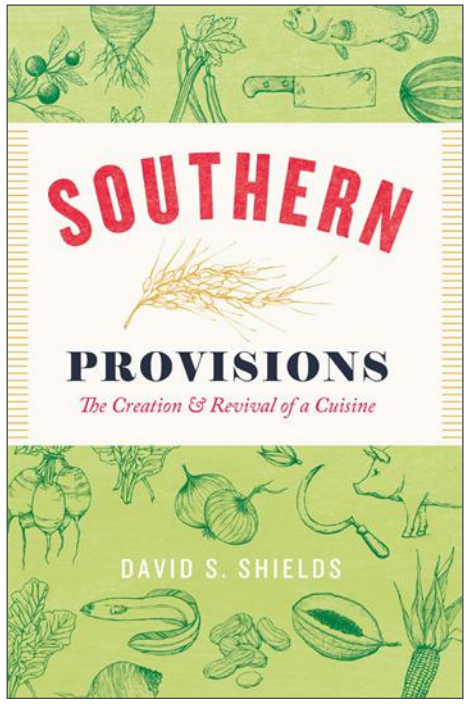
"Shields new book, *Southern Provisions,* is as much manifesto as history, and it represents a solid cornerstone in the burgeoning effort to rediscover, recognize, and adapt the preindustrial agriculture of the South, particularly the Lowcountry region, into the modern culinary lexicon. . . . Shields' contribution to the effort should be viewed as the first edition in a line of investigations that give cooks and farmers an exploratory window into an alternative world, where flavor matters and emergent cuisine expresses an adaptation of heritage that best captures the people and place in which it perennially resides."

— *Charleston City Paper*

Excerpt Available

To read an excerpt from Southern Provisions, access the following web link:

http://press.uchicago.edu/books/excerpt/2015/Shields_Southern_Provisions.html



The Carolina Gold Rice Foundation

Dr. David S. Shields in the Chair of the Carolina Gold Rice Foundation, whose mission is "to advance the sustainable restoration and preservation of Carolina Gold Rice and other heirloom grains and raise public awareness of the importance of historic ricelands and heirloom agriculture." In addition, the Foundation encourages, supports, and promotes educational and research activities focused on heirloom grains, as well as serves as an information resource center to provide authentic documentation on heirloom grain culture and heritage.

Preservation & Membership

According to the Foundation's web site, it "has significant commitments of financial support and is aggressively seeking additional funding commitments. The Carolina Gold Rice Foundation is incorporated and has a non-profit 501(C)(3) status. Membership and other contributions to the Carolina Gold Rice Foundation (CGRF) will be tax deductible to the extent the law allows. All donations will directly support the CGRF and its mission.

Support the mission of the Carolina Gold Rice Foundation through: 1)Financial Donations; 2) In-Kind Donations; and 3) Endowed Research Prize or Scholarship. Financial donations may be sent to:

Carolina Gold Rice Foundation
2971 Doncaster Drive
Charleston, SC 29414

Please include your name, address, phone number and email address so that they may keep you apprised of their activities. For in-kind donations, endowment, or other contributions please contact them through email at officers@carolinagoldricefoundation.org or call at 843-709-7399. Learn more online at:

http://thecarolinagoldricefoundation.org/index.html

The John & Bonnie Boyd Hospitality & Culinary Library:

SoFAB Library Rallies, Endures after Hurricane Katrina

by Skyllarr Trusty

Today, culinary students, professional chefs, nutrition buffs, and general food lovers alike are welcome to browse through the thousands of cookbooks, menus, historical documents, and pamphlets that rest on the shelves in the John & Bonnie Boyd Hospitality & Culinary Library.

But according to Elizabeth Williams, president and director of the SoFAB Institute, these were not the books originally intended to be in the building.

Williams said that she and the institute began collecting items for what would become the John & Bonnie Boyd Hospitality & Culinary Library, and the books Williams had collected for the library were housed and catalogued at the Southern University of New Orleans (SUNO) until Hurricane Katrina turned to them to pulp. To make up for the hundreds of lost books, SoFAB solicited donations.

"A call went out to cookbook clubs and libraries all across the country," Williams said. "It just picked up like wildfire, and people started sending us their cook books."

Now the library houses 17,000 cookbooks…in addition to literature about starting restaurants, books centered on hospitality and nutrition, on how to make beer, agriculture, fishing, et cetera.

Situated on Oretha Castle Haley Blvd., New Orleans, the library rests under the umbrella of the SoFAB Institute, a non-profit devoted to "documenting and celebrating the food and drink of all cultures." It is located alongside The Museum of the American Cocktail (MOTAC) and the Southern Food & Beverage Museum, which celebrates the food of the American South with exhibits, archives, collections, special programming, and—of course—a library!

"I was really intrigued by the opportunity to be involved on the ground level of something that strikes a chord," said Angelique Carson, director of the John & Bonnie Boyd Hospitality and Culinary Library. (She took her first big job with the non-profit library after receiving her master's degree from Louisiana State University.) "You can't just talk about the library without people having some kind of enthusiasm, whether it's about books or food or our story as Southerners.

"I just couldn't resist."

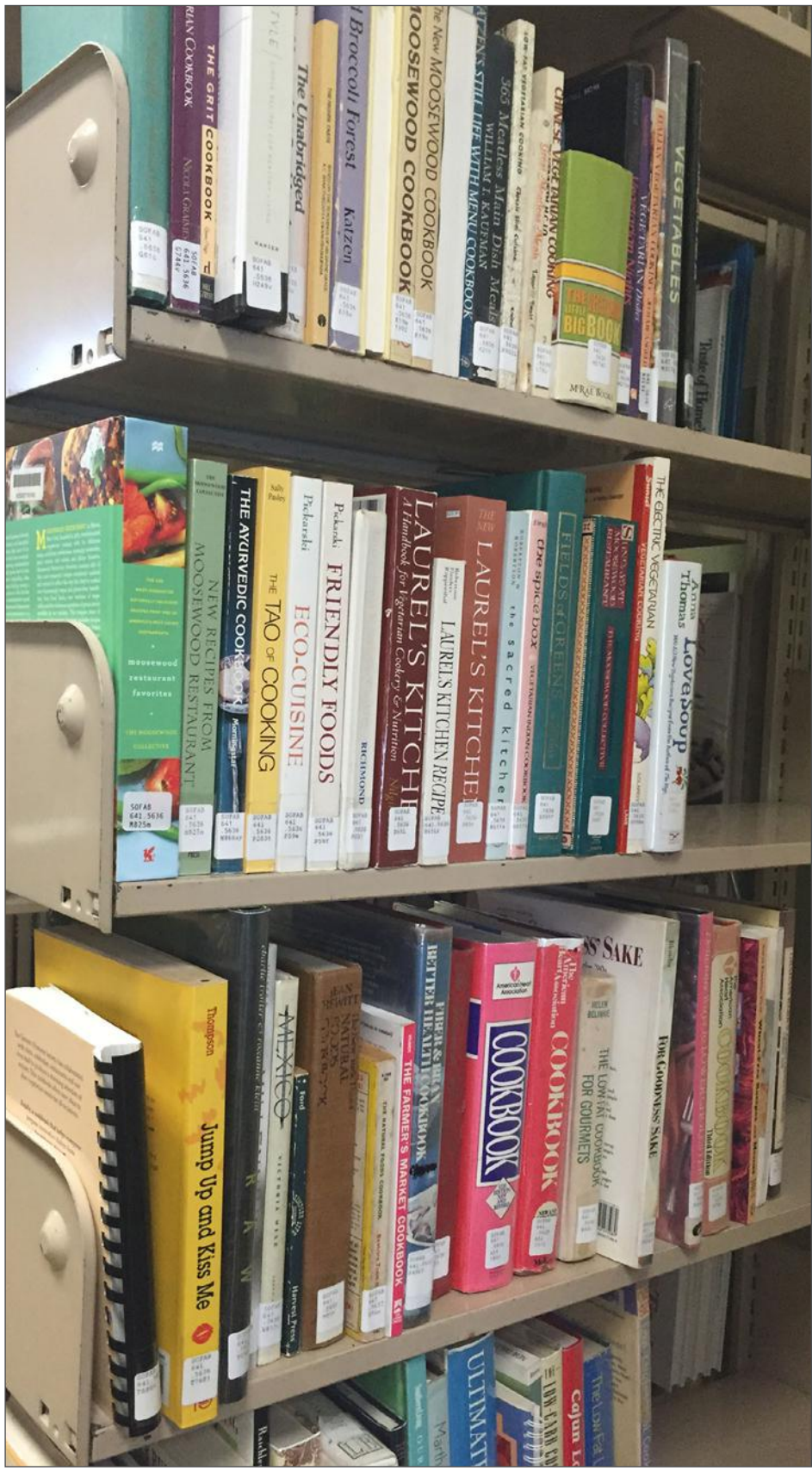
The SoFAB Institute was merely an idea back in 2003 before Williams formed the non-profit corporation.

"Nobody knew what a food museum was, but we knew that we wanted to have a library," Williams said.

Carson said that a plethora of people are receptive to the corporation.

"Because a large part of our material is voluntarily given and because of our title, people are naturally inclined to give items that are Southern based," Carson said. "But we collect everything, cookbooks in any range…we have books about agriculture in the local area and books in regards to maintaining kitchens."

The library holds something for just about everyone, especially those who are serious about expanding their culinary horizons.



"We really want to be an opportunity for both students and amateur chefs, culinary professors, and young chefs who can't afford many of the items," Carson said. "Culinary cookbooks, especially those that are more professionally leaning versus those that are more for the amateur chefs, are very expensive."

One of the most exciting pieces that the library holds is *The Modernist Cuisine* series coauthored by Nathan Myhrvold, which runs around $800.

"We are the only library in the area, other than Delgado where you must be a student, that you can look through the series without having to purchase it," Carson said. "If you're a young student in New Orleans and you want to know about what's going on in this book, where would you have this opportunity? Nowhere. The fact that we can offer something that you can't get your hands on unless you purchase really means a lot."

Before the SoFAB Institute and the library found a concrete home, the Menu Project was created to engage people.

"We said, let's start collecting menus and then people will send in their menus and they'll feel invested in us," Williams said. "Now we have thousands of menus that are in the library, and we also have many, many documents that are the papers of various chefs and writers and things."

These documents include the writings of famous chefs, including Louis Osteen, Mildred Covert, and Phil Johnson. The institute is always welcoming more.

"A lot of these places don't have a home because, before us, not that many places were really collecting things that are related to food," Williams said.

The library is much more than just a reference for local chefs and students; the library and its archives are documenting our history.

"We so often forget about food," said Williams. "You see archeological exhibits about early people and all of these exhibits are about the search for food and all of the implements that they might have created in order to find food; this is something that was studied by early archeologists, but now the museums act as though people stopped eating.

"They don't care about food anymore."

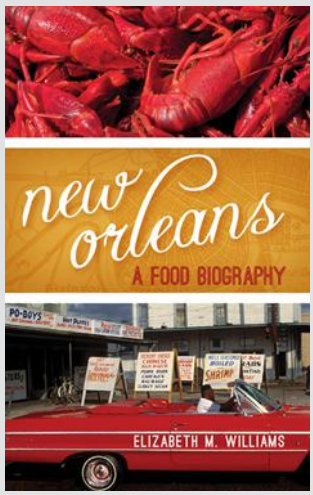
According to Williams, writing changed the attitude surrounding food. Writers gave food a secondary place historically and academically.

"There were long periods of time where libraries thought that cookbooks were not literature and there was nothing historical to glean from cookbooks or anything like that," Williams said. "Now we realize that food is basic and involved in everything."

Food surrounds us. It is used in war tactics as a way of welcoming people and learning about other cultures. William said that the museum holds an important role in recognizing how important food is, something Carson agrees with wholeheartedly.

"It is absolutely impossible to tell our collective story as Southerners without also including the story of our food," Carson said. "We're documenting our history, whether it's agriculture, labor, economy laws, culture: all of that is tied to our food… what we eat and what we drink. I think that our foodways are intrinsically tied to our history."

A Rich and Flavorful Biography



Beignets, Po' Boys, gumbo, jambalaya, crawdads, shrimp remoulade, New Orleans' celebrated status derives in large measure from its incredibly rich food culture, based mainly on Creole and Cajun traditions. At last, this world-class destination has its own food biography. Elizabeth M. Williams, a New Orleans native and founder of the Southern Food and Beverage Museum there, takes readers through the history of the city, showing how the natural environment and people have shaped the cooking we all love. *New Orleans: A Food Biography* starts by describing the indigenous population and material resources, then reveals the contributions of the immigrant populations, delves into markets and local food companies, and finally discusses famous restaurants, drinking culture, cooking at home, cookbooks, and signature foods dishes. This must-have book will inform and delight food aficionados and fans of the Big Easy itself.

"Only in New Orleans would our food be considered just as important as any person and worthy of its own biography! So, whether you're a native New Orleanian or simply a fan of our cooking, just reading *New Orleans: A Food Biography* is sure to satisfy your craving. This book digs into the rich, centuries-old history of the many ethnic and geographic influences that have gone into making our cuisine so uniquely New Orleans."

—Dickie Brennan, chef/restaurateur

About the Author

Elizabeth M. Williams is founder and president of the Southern Food and Beverage Museum in New Orleans, which celebrates the food of the American South. SoFAB is one of *Saveur's* "5 Great Museums Devoted to Food" (5/2011). Williams is also consulting professor at the Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism, University of New Orleans. Her roles there include teaching, writing, and researching issues in hospitality law, culinary history and culture, and nonprofit administration. She has contributed a number of articles on aspects of Southern food to journals. Williams has a law degree and co-authored *The A to Z of Food Controversies and the Law* (2010).

Editorial Note: The family of Louisiana chef Paul Prudhomme has donated his cookbooks, wine and food references, and food science books—totaling about 600 in all—to The John & Bonnie Boyd Hospitality & Culinary Library. All of these materials are available for study by scholars, chefs, students, and the general public. The internationally known chef passed away in October 2015. He was 75.

PAGE 40: Photo by Stephen Binns
PAGE 41: Photo by Luke Seward

Lodge Manufacturing: Casting a Glow across Tennessee

By Alina Hunter-Grah

Southern culture is well known for its focus on family values, traditions, and—of course—food. And that same food has always been known as notoriously-high in calories, which started as a way to ensure that eighteenth and nineteenth century farmers had enough energy to survive the long workday, turning the food south of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River into a cultural aspect of the South.

To explore Southern food thoroughly, cast iron skillets must be at the foundation of any conversation.

"Cast iron is very traditional," said Mark Kelly, public relations and advertising manager at the Lodge Manufacturing Company. "Even though we are a national and international company, we're still a Southern company."

Versatile enough to cook a variety of different foods well, the cast iron skillet is an important part of the Southern kitchen and something worth handing down to family members from one generation to the next. So what better way to discuss something distinctly Southern than to use a distinctly Southern company to show why this piece of kitchen cookware is so important to the region?

Lodge Manufacturing's cast iron factory is nestled along the Appalachian Mountains of South Pittsburg, Tennessee, a small town about 20 miles west of Chattanooga. Joseph Lodge founded the company as Blacklock Foundry in 1896, and the factory remained known as the Blacklock Foundry until 1910, when a fire burnt it down. The location was then moved and renamed as The Lodge Manufacturing Company. In 2002, Lodge went from a regional to a national company as young, hip chefs started picking up on the Southern food culture.

The company has found ways to keep workers paid and customers satisfied over the years.

During the Great Depression, Lodge created new items to sell so that workers could continue to support their families. In 1950, the company upgraded its pouring processes to keep up with increasing demand for its products and maintain worker safety. In 1992, Lodge stopped burning coal to heat its furnaces and started doing so by using electromagnetic induction, but with a greener outcome. Due to the increase in popularity, Lodge expanded again in 2013 to include the construction of two 10-ton furnaces, new sand systems, and a new mold pouring line and cleaning system. This expansion increased productions by 50 percent.

According to the company, it takes great care in the products it creates.

With the exception of the enameled pieces, all pots and pans are manufactured in America. Samples of the iron mixture being used to make the pots and pans are taken every 30 minutes to make sure there are no impurities within the mix. Products that do not fit the company's strict quality standards can be taken from the factory at any time and melted back down again. Many other processes are done to ensure that the skillets are of best quality the company can manage.

ABOVE AND LEFT: Photos courtesy of Lodge Cast Iron Cookware

"We cook and eat with it too," Kelly said. "We're not going to make something we wouldn't eat out of.

"We always want to make it the best."

Customers do notice the quality and versatility of the skillets manufactured at Lodge.

"I enjoy cooking with cast iron because it has even heating and it's very versatile," said Chattanooga resident Maija Denson. "You can use it for pretty much anything. It also lasts a long time."

And according to Patty Johnson of South Pittsburg, "We use Lodge skillets at the Dixie Freeze to cook all of our cornbread. My sister, Marilyn, uses the same cast iron skillet to fry her potatoes in. It is the only thing she will use for them."

Lodge is also environment friendly.

Recycling materials for melting is common among foundries as sourcing can be expensive, but Lodge stated that it also recycles cardboard and seasoning oil. Along with its recycling habits, the company has built three settling ponds where plenty of plant and animal life is flourishing, and it has planted 121 trees on its campus to improve air quality.

"We want to be a good neighbor," Kelly said. "We live here, we work here, we go to church here. Why not make it clean?"

Through the years, Lodge has been able to maintain the family atmosphere and attract generations within families to work at the company, which continues to exhibit the soul and family values so strongly cherished by Southern culture today.

"Being from a small Southern town, we permeate soul," Kelly said.

Nowhere is that soul more apparent than in how Lodge views and treats its employees.

"We are a family," said Bob Kellerman, CEO of The Lodge Manufacturing Company. "So we treat our workers like family."

Lodge's employees support this statement.

The owners make a point of knowing their workers by their first names, as well as knowing all about their families. Cards are sent out to workers' homes on birthdays or if someone is sick. If the factory goes 100 days without an accident, the company provides the workers with a nice meal, and this is on top of a meal on both Thanksgiving and Christmas. And recently, Lodge decided to eliminate work time on Saturdays and Sundays because leadership believed the employees needed more time with their families.

"No other companies have that environment," said Eric Kelley, a third generation Lodge employee who has been with the company for four years. "No other owners interact with their employees. If the company didn't have that, there would be no company. It is what has kept us going for over 100-plus years."

From just reading the label on a Lodge skillet, the company's homey, Southern feeling is evident. Lodge listens to people. It tries to do its best to meet the wants and needs of its customers and employees, alike. It understands how its products have become a part of a family's culture. As a result, Lodge fills the role that it knows people expect.

"We are committed and dedicated to the company and to each other," Kellerman said. "We take pride in who we are, what we do, and how we do it. We find ways to improve who we are, what we do, and how we do it.

"We are all in this together."

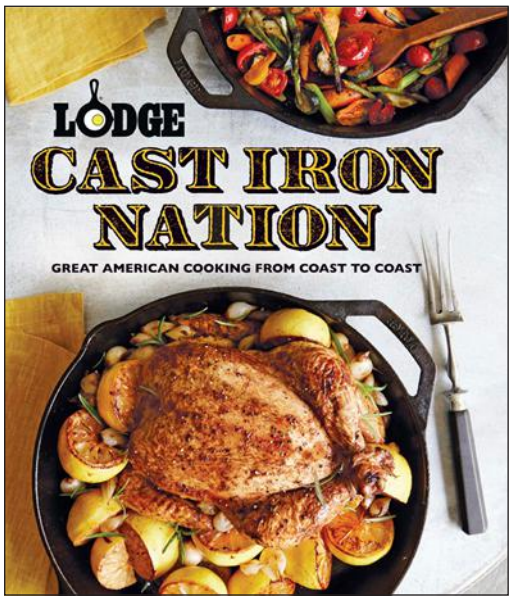
Press Releases: *Great American Cooking From Coast To Coast*

Lodge Cast Iron Nation

Inspired New Dishes and Memorable Stories from America's Best Cooks
▪ With 175 Recipes ▪

Lodge Manufacturing, the country's leading producer of American-made cast iron cookware, has published a cookbook for the new generation of cast iron lovers with *Cast Iron Nation.*

Cast Iron Nation reveals that cast iron is so much more than cornbread's best friend and the perfect tool for frying chicken. This versatile cookware is the base for 175 easy-to-use recipes that represent a cross-section of American regional cuisine, including Pan Fried Rocky Mountain Trout from the West, Toasted Chile-Cumin Marinated Skirt Steak Tacos from the Southwest, Smoked Salmon & Scallion Frittata from the Northeast, Country Ham & Fig Pizza from the South–and even a Hawaiian-Style Beef Stew.



The book includes forwards and special introductions by chefs John Currence and Elizabeth Karmel, and highlights additional recipes from notable chefs like, Lidia Bastianich, John Besh, Mark Bittman, and Sean Brock. The chapters, packed with everything from egg dishes and French toast, soups and stews, casseroles and desserts, also offer step-by-step cooking sidebars and heartfelt stories. Highlights include:

- Everything you need to know about Lodge, from care tips to favorite family recipes. The book covers the best tips on how to care for your cast iron perfected over 118 years of the family business, as well as some of the most fond memories and recipes from the Lodge family arsenal.

- Breakfast and lunch classics from coast to coast. The versatility of this classic American cookware spans the nation with breakfast, brunch and delicious soups and sandwiches.

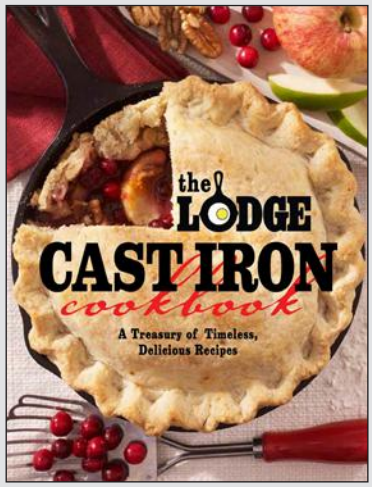
- Three chapters dedicated to all things meat, poultry and seafood: beef, chicken, fish and more are perfected in Lodge cast iron recipes shared in this book from a classic New England Chicken Potpie, Healthy Gluten-Free Fried Chicken Strips and a Pan Seared Duck Breasts with Fresh Raspberries to Drunken Rice Noodles with Pork and the Perfect Filets. The seafood chapter includes Tasso-Spiced Gulf Shrimp, Penn Cove Mussels with Chorizo, Garlic Toasts and Smoked Paprika Aioli and Seafood and Chicken Jambalaya.

- Delicious desserts and baked good classics designed for cast iron: Florida Blueberry Cobbler, Fresh Peach Upside Down Cake, and White Chocolate Strawberry Biscuit Pudding are some of the sweet treats created with Lodge cast iron for a chapter on the best desserts from chefs around the country.

Lodge's previous book, *The Lodge Cast Iron Cookbook* centered on the robust history of the brand and featured well-known and much beloved dishes. *Cast Iron Nation* moves the brand forward to talk about where cast iron is now–from sustainability to its role in the farm-to-table movement–to show just how indispensible this form of cooking will continue to be.

"*Lodge Cast Iron Nation* is for a new generation of cast iron cookery lovers. The recipes are fascinating, delicious and designed to be accessible to everyone."

— John Currence, chef and owner of City Grocery Restaurant Group



The Lodge Cast Iron Cookbook:
A Treasury of Timeless, Delicious Recipes

Cast iron cooking is back in vogue! From America's most chic restaurants to the countless kitchens of avid home cooks, everyone is rediscovering the joy of cooking with classic cast iron. With *The Lodge Cast Iron Cookbook,* home cooks and chefs will learn the basics of cast iron cooking and use and care that will enhance their appreciation of America's Original Cookware.

Cast iron cooking has always been a kitchen favorite with its even heating, great heat retention and its flexibility to go outdoors and grill or cook over an open fire. According to *Esquire* magazine, cast iron cookware "will enrich your eggs and burgers, it's impossible to break and it will last longer than you."

And now with *The Lodge Cast Iron Cookbook,* every cook will learn the simple, savory secrets of cast iron cookery. From the kitchens of Lodge, the world's leading manufacturer of cast iron cookware, this unique cookbook offers over 200 mouth-watering recipes.

The delectable dishes range from breakfast specials to the secrets of great fried food, to soups and stews, biscuits and baked goods, fish, veggies and finally those sweet finales. And the book features favorite cast iron cooking recipes by well-known cooks such as Bill and Cheryl Jamison, Nick Malgieri, and Allison Fishman. Special cooking lessons include cast iron cooking basics and how to enjoy open air cooking and grilling.

This special culinary delight features great cooking stories and intriguing vignettes on the history and legend and lore of cast iron cooking. Each unique recipe, culled from cooks across the country, is illustrated with four-color photography, making this cookbook a keepsake treasured by all cooks.

The Journey to Cast Iron

by Alina Hunter-Grah

Lodge Manufacturing Company's focus on providing the best possible product is most clearly revealed in the steps used to produce its cast iron pieces. This eight-step process is a blistering 90-minute journey toward complete.

1. Mixing the ingredients. The ingredients used to make Lodge's cast iron pieces are mixed into an exact 20,000-pound mixture of iron ore and recycled steel, as well as Lodge's pans that did not meet quality standards. These are then prepared for melting.

2. The mixture is then moved to one of the factory's two 10-ton furnaces and melted at 2,800 degrees Fahrenheit. Impurities within the melted iron float to the top and are removed. Samples are taken to ensure that the mixture is made of the correct composition before moving to the next step.

3. The iron is casted into the shape desired using sand molds. The molds are made with a specific type of sand and pressed by intense pressure into the pattern being used. The iron is then poured into the molds at temperatures between 2,480 and 2,520 degrees Fahrenheit for the best finish.

4. Once hardened, the pieces are moved down a vibrating conveyor belt that shakes off most of the sand from the cast iron. The pans are then moved into a rotating drum where they are tumbled with other pieces of iron that remove the remaining bits of sand.

5. Next, the pans are moved through a shot blast machine that pelts steel pellets at the pans from many different angles to create a more uniform finish. Workers file off the remaining inconsistencies.

6. All of the pieces are then put into a bath of soap, water, and steel media that improves the surface finish of the pots and pans, which are then moved onto a conveyor line to dry.

7. Almost ready, the cast iron pieces are moved through a steam cleaner that removes the rest of the leftover soap. The pots and pans are seasoned with pure vegetable oil and baked until the oil turns black.

8. Finally, all the pieces are inspected one last time. If the pans are deemed unacceptable for retail, they are sent back to the furnaces to be made into new pans. The rest are labeled and boxed to be shipped around the world.

LEFT: Photo courtesy of Lodge Cast Iron Cookware

Book Review: *The Storied South: Voices of Writers and Artists*

Across the Chasms to The Storied South

by Brittany Eldridge

Spanning over forty years, *The Storied South: Voices of Writers and Artists* by William Ferris is a recollection of culture, family, and dedication to telling the stories of twenty-six southern souls and their perception of art. Writers, scholars, musicians, photographers, and painters: each individual with a story of the American South.

Ferris expresses a compulsion to preserve the Southern culture to every "scrap of paper" or "a recorded conversation." Beginning from his childhood on a farm in Warren County, Mississippi, Ferris said that he was fond of his family's stories of the South, and as a folklorist and "student of the South," he wanted to "…reach across the chasms of class and race that defined the world into which I was born as a privileged white Southerner" to "build bridges" between "black and white," "formally educated and folk worlds." (He had a desire to meet the people and through them tell the stories of the South.)

The way the author captures the spirit of each individual in this book is what makes it one-of-a-kind. To catch a glimpse into the world of a working writer like Eudora Welty or a musician like Pete Seeger is so beautifully insightful.

Each interview, each story, each life is filled with memorabilia tracing back to the American South. Eudora Welty grew up in Jackson, Mississippi, and told Ferris that she had always like it there. It was smaller then, everyone knew everyone:"It was a free and easy life."

As a writer, Eudora Welty met Robert Pen Warren, and Cleanth Brooks who were the first people to publish her work. A very close friendship was formed over the years, and they encouraged her to realize what writing was: a network. Both Warren and Cleanth helped her realize was that network was made. According to the author, it was

"…a mutual learning society with readers and writers everywhere."

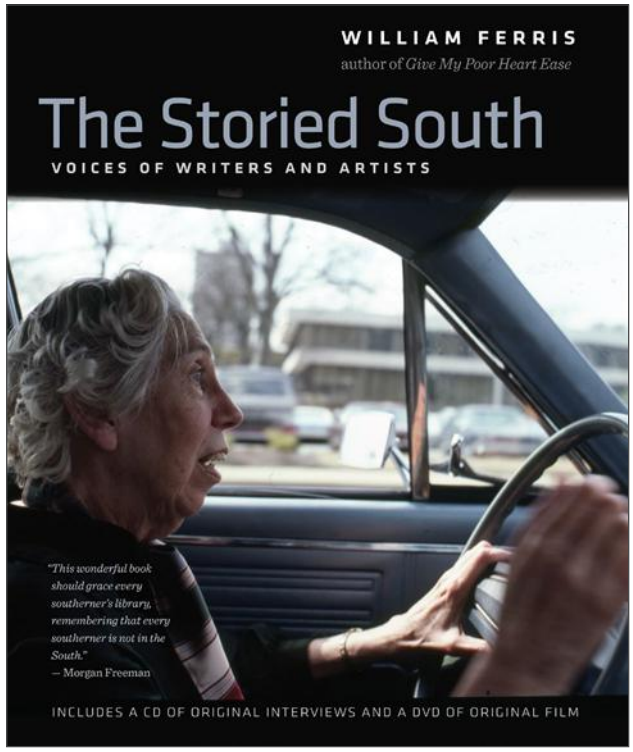
Ferris sheds a light on these various talents and gives the reader a glimpse into a world commonly unknown and masked. Readers will be able to see throughout his book the hidden beauty in these individuals and how their lives in the South is celebrated through the work created by their minds and hands.

Interviewed in San Francisco in 1990, Pete Seeger grew up in New England, and his grandparents were from Massachusetts. To him, the South was a romantic place, distant and far away. His father took him to Bascom Lunsford's Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, and that's when he claims his "life changed forever:" surrounded by Southern music, Seeger says he fell in love with it. He dropped out of college, learned to hitchhike, and wanted to play banjo.

Each interview is presented as a story: a beginning, middle, and an on-going end…because what Ferris is trying to tell us through these remarkable people is that the South keeps going. It lives and breathes and continues to unveil its story. There are twenty-four more stories depicted throughout this book, but to experience them you'll have to read them yourself. Where did they go? Where did they end up? Who did they meet? All questions waiting to be answered through the words of the people and William Ferris.

The author's depiction of the American South, as well as his desire to preserve the culture, carries the book above and beyond expectations, "…their stories are the water in which I love to swim, and their literature and art are drenched in it. While each speaker loves to tell tales, it is clear that the American South is also the spine for each person's life story."

Welcome to the American South.



Praise for *The Storied South: Voices of Writers and Artists*

"Compiles decades' worth of deeply personal interviews with many of the South's greatest luminaries. . . . . And thanks to an included CD and DVD, their voices leap off the page and come to life."

— *Garden and Gun*

"This sweeping record of distinct southern voices captures beautifully the mood, texture, history, and inspiration of our beloved part of the world."

—John Grisham

"William Ferris has long reigned as the unimpeachable source of the entire southern experience. His work on southern folklore and the composition of the Encyclopedia of Southern Culture have made him both legendary and necessary. His book, The Storied South, is a love song to the South Bill helped illuminate. It's a crowning achievement of his own storied career."

—Pat Conroy

"Ferris presents us with artists' testimonies on their own histories, their work, and their theories about what it means to live in the South. These compelling stories help us to ask fresh and meaningful questions about the meaning of art, race, region, and history. They surprise us, make us laugh, and open their work to us anew."

—Henry Louis Gates Jr.

From the University of North Carolina Press: A Land of Storytellers

Tales of Southern Culture and Voices of the South

All it took to captivate William Ferris when he was a child was his grandfather telling him a story.

"In his log cabin in the woods behind our farm, my grandfather, Eugene Ferris, told me the long, spellbinding story of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," he said. "At the end of the story, I would say, 'Grandad, tell it again.' To my delight, he would repeat the story."

"It was on the farm that I learned to love stories," Ferris said.

Ferris's new book, *The Storied South: Voices of Writers and Artists,* is a collection of intimate interviews with writers, scholars, musicians, photographers, and painters and their personal stories. The volume also includes 45 of Ferris's striking photographic portraits of the speakers and a CD and a DVD of original audio and films of the interviews.

"*The Storied South: Voices of Writers and Artists* is a collection of interviews I conducted over the past forty years," Ferris said. "They feature a broad range of people-Southerners and non-Southerners, men and women, black and white.

"Together, they share a common interest in, a passion for, and an obsession with the American South that define how they write, compose, photograph, and paint."

Ferris includes interviews of some of the most luminous artists and thinkers in the American cultural firmament such as Eudora Welty, Margaret Walker, Charles Seeger, Bobby Rush, William Eggleston, Sam Gilliam, and Rebecca Davenport.

"Their stories give us a unique lens through which we can explore the region," he said. "Gathered together in this book, they remind us why the human voice is key to the Southern experience."

Ferris, a renowned folklorist and leader in Southern studies, has been collecting these one-on-one interviews for four decades.

"I sought out these individuals because their work helps me understand my life as a Southerner," he said. "They come from diverse backgrounds, and they constitute a chorus of voices, all of which are deeply connected to the region.

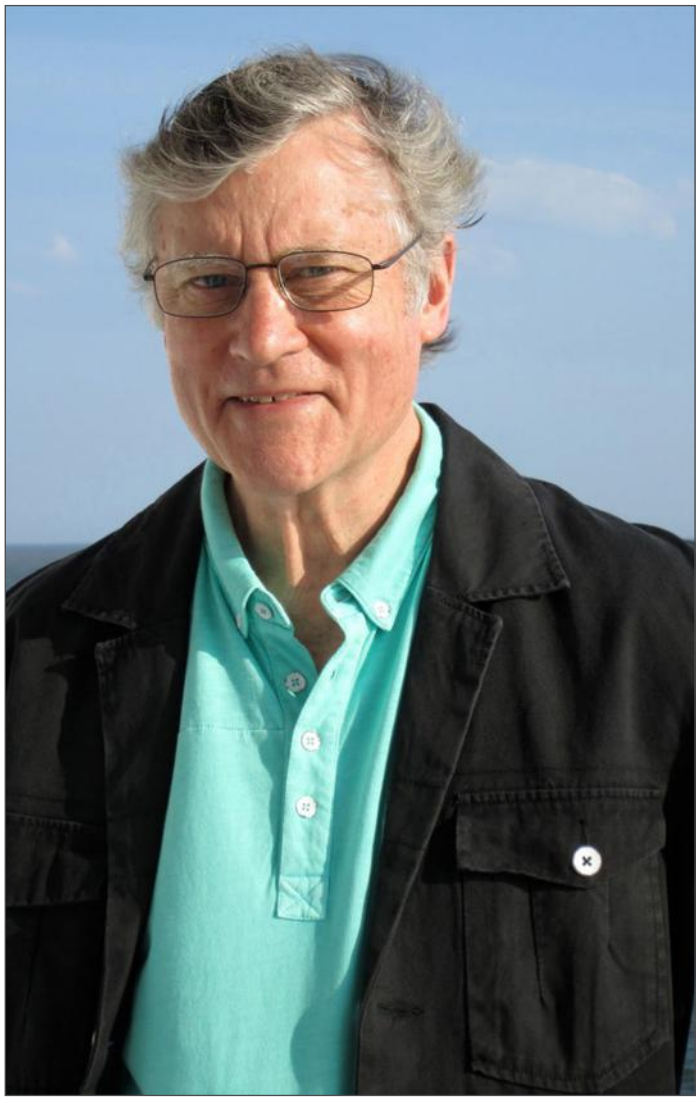
"Each person reflects on how the South shaped his or her career as a writer, scholar, musician, photographer, or painter. Together, they created a body of work that defined both their region and their nation in the twentieth century."

The *Storied South* also delves into the controversial racial and socioeconomic history of the South. Ferris said the region is framed by anecdotes of the Civil War, Reconstruction, the Civil Rights Movement, and the New South, and that these stories affect both white and black Southerners in profound ways.

"To understand these stories, we must understand the contested memory of black and white Southerners who offer opposing views of the region's history," he said. "The perspective of white writers often contrasts with that of black writers, and together they offer a rich, diverse portrait of the region."

Ferris said he drew upon various voices and artistic mediums to give a multidimensional representation of Southern culture.

"I focused my camera and microphone on those who explored the region through photography, poetry, fiction, and scholarship," he said. "Each looked at the South carefully. They studied its worlds, as a potter examines the clay that slowly turns on the wheel before him or her."



William Ferris, author of *The Storied South: Voices Of Writers And Artists.* Photo by Marcie Cohen Ferris.

Though the interview subjects and their stories vary greatly, Ferris said they are all united in their love for the South and its connection to the human experience.

"I discovered that each person uses the story to explain his or her attraction to the South," he said. "The intellectual tools with which they work differ, but their love for the region and its stories is a bond they share."

Ferris is the Joel R. Williams Eminent Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the senior associate director of its Center for the Study of the American South.

A former chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Ferris is the author of *Give My Poor Heart Ease: Voices of the Mississippi Blues,* among other books, and co-editor of the award-winning *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture,* which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

He was also the founding director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, where he taught for 18 years. He also taught at Yale University and Jackson State University.

He said he was grateful to have met such cultural icons, and that their stories helped him reconnect with the boy on the farm who listened to his grandfather tell stories and spin tall tales.

"These stories shaped me and helped me understand my own life," he said. "They led me back to the place where I was born, to people whom I deeply love."

Photo © *The Courier-Journal*

Remembering, Celebrating John Egerton

by Roy Burkhead

For our journalism issue in 2014, I had a wonderful time with the main interview, going back and forth with our friend John Egerton—the author and journalist, the mentor and role model, the chronicler of all things Southern…especially the food.

We spoke…well, I say we spoke. But in reality, he did the talking (both verbally and via e-mail), and I did the listening: volunteerism and public service, equal access for everyone, creative writing, journalism-past and present, race, responsibility and accountability in the online world…I struggled to keep up, to be honest.

Southern food was the subject that we were not able to explore back then, but now we can-from a different point of view. For the first time in many years, I felt as if someone was teaching me something while talking with John. And moving forward, I searched for a way to pass on some of that knowledge.

One of my many jobs is that of part-time English professor at Western Kentucky University, in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

For a couple of semesters, John's *Southern Food: At Home, on the Road, in History* was one of the books I used in my junior-level research course.

The students were required to research and write a large research paper, something connected to their majors. But there was a smaller paper, as well. And this is where *Southern Food* came into play. This selection caught the students off guard, completely. After reading the book, students were required to *go forth* into the world and interview someone, old-school-style, connected to the Southern food culture.

Then, they were required to bounce the book and their interview off a 2005 Southern Foodways Alliance interview with John, done as part of the SFA Founders Oral History Project. Students turned in many wonderful papers, and I'm thrilled to present two of them to you, gentle reader, now.

Giving her insight into *Southern Food: At Home, on the Road, in History* is Ms. Carolyn Wilson.

In addition to being John's friend, Carolyn recently retired as Director of Library Services at Beaman Library, Lipscomb University. She holds an undergraduate degree from Lipscomb University and a graduate degree in Library Science from Peabody College. Her career has been filled with many activities, professional and otherwise, but primarily devoted to book-related causes. She has been involved with the Southern Festival of Books in Nashville, Tennessee, since its inception and is a member of the Women's National Book Association, where she served as National President and from which she holds an Honorary Lifetime Membership. For many years at Lipscomb she directed the Landiss Lecture Series, bringing many distinguished literary figures to the Lipscomb campus. In retirement, she continues to enjoy cooking, reading, family, and friends, and is involved in various writing projects.

We hope that you'll enjoy exploring Southern food and culture through these selections-all inspired by John Egerton and his wonderful Southern words! ☐

Courtesy of Southern Foodways Alliance/Photo a still from *Pride & Joy*, a film by Joe York

John Egerton and Southern Food

by Carolyn Wilson

….Our food has been a powerful reflection of our history, an open window on the daily joys and sorrows of our lives, a constant reminder of who we are and where we came from.

—John Egerton. *Southern Food: At Home, on the Road, in History.* Knopf, 1987.

When John Egerton proposed to write a book on Southern food, his conception of what he wanted to accomplish was clear. He wanted to do a single volume that encompassed his belief that the food of the South, this home he so dearly loved, was an integral part of this region, its culture, its people, and its history. The fact that he accomplished all this and more in this single volume is astounding.

Southern Food was over three years in the making. Often accompanied by his wife Ann and gifted photographer Al Clayton, John visited 335 restaurants in eleven states. Then he and Ann, the primary cook of the family, spent months in their kitchen testing the recipes, from which they selected the 160 included in the book. His disclaimer was that the book was not a scholarly history, nor a cookbook, nor a restaurant guide; yet, elements of all these are included. A valuable historical look at Southern food traditions and rites is an essential inclusion. Collections of recipes with background on their origins abound, delightful and relevant quotes, an annotated bibliography of more than 250 cookbooks with resources, along with moving images created by Al Clayton all merge into this unique work. John called it, " a layman's journal, a critical, quizzical and occasionally comical look at the stomach of the South."

During my early years growing up in Southern Kentucky, this food was the staple diet of my home. We were blessed with a wonderful lady who helped cook, and memories of my childhood are replete with aromas and images of my mother and Sarah cooking in our kitchen. John identified the major food groups of Southern cooking as sugar, cream, butter, eggs, salt, and bacon grease. Sarah used all of these in abundance, without any thought of clogged arteries. When I married, I could barely boil water. I recall the summer before my wedding asking Sarah to teach me how to make pie crust and biscuits. She could not actually give me accurate ingredients or measures as she said she just "felt it." It was a long time before I "felt it." It was a mark of Sarah's superb biscuits that my brother ate his ice cream accompanied by biscuits, preferred over cake only if Sarah made the biscuits.

I never considered myself distinctively a Southern cook. After marriage, my husband was in graduate school and I was teaching in a large secondary school in Atlanta, and we learned to cook together. Larry had finished a two-year stint in the United States Navy and had traveled the world, acquiring some rather sophisticated food tastes. Yet he dearly loved hot biscuits, fried chicken, country ham, fresh vegetables, and banana pudding. In our modest way, limited only by the confines of a graduate income, we began to explore food and entertain for enjoyment. It was our heritage to enjoy our friends over a meal with lively conversation.

My father-in-law owned a grocery store in the Upper Cumberland area of our state and he cured his own hams. Each year at Larry's birthday we received a country ham which we sometimes hoarded, sometimes shared, always enjoyed. Our two daughters never liked the salt-cured ham, always preferring the sugar-cured ones. Mom and Dad took their share willingly. Frequently, Larry invited guests for dinner spontaneously and without notice. Many of these were

students who would gratefully eat anything provided. It became habit to cook for a few "extras," but after I began graduate school, I warned that if unexpected guests arrived, it might mean a trip to Shoney's. On a few occasions, I had a call before I left Vanderbilt that we might have guests who wanted to sample home cooking. Thankfully, I often had the country ham, and it was easy to fill in with what the pantry supplied, with biscuits and red-eye gravy, homemade jam, and grits. Larry taught me to make the gravy, but I did like to add the coffee to my concoction to enrich the flavor. We always had to explain to our guests the difference in red-eye gravy and milk gravy (or sawmill gravy), as well as other highlights of this cuisine, but usually they ate until both eyes and stomachs bulged. Our ordinary food became the extraordinary to them.

I always consult John's book, which resides on my kitchen shelf along with Edna Lewis' *The Gift of Southern Cooking*, as the essential reference. We once had a friend whose favorite dessert was Key lime pie. He contended that the only "original" Key lime pie was not the recipe made with sweetened condensed milk, but rather a cooked custard made in the manner of lemon meringue pie, always with a meringue. That was completely new to me, and for years I looked for a definitive answer for this. When John's book was released, it was one of the first recipes I searched. The facts were there in detail. The limes originated in Asia and were believed to have been brought to Haiti by Columbus around 1493. These limes thrived in the Keys of Florida before the Civil War until 1926, when a hurricane wiped out the groves. What we find now is more closely the less tangy Persian lime. As to the pie, it early came to be a favorite with Southern cooks using egg yolks, condensed milk (readily available), and lime juice in a graham cracker crust.

I recall many visits with John and Ann around holiday time, often bearing some gift of food. John would have his grandmother's biscuit press set up and would be involved in the lengthy process of making beaten biscuits. I never made these because it took some time for me to just produce a credible buttermilk biscuit, but I was intrigued by the process.

In the beginning of the book, John expressed his fear that in the growth of this region we call the South, the amalgamation of our cultures will eventually absorb this cuisine we cherish, and its identity will be lost forever. This identity reflects our history, with times of celebration, times of wars, even times of hunger, and we celebrate with food and family and friends with the hopeful optimism that hard times will come again no more. Southern food has bound us together from all of the varied parts of our region, uniting us as we should be. As I write these words, I find images of family meals with those who have long left us and with those who still sit at my table flooding across the landscape of my heart. And I resolve to keep these traditions sacred for my children and my grandchildren and those yet to come.

On the title page of my copy of Southern Food, John Egerton had inscribed, "This is Carolyn Wilson's kitchen copy. Do not remove." Not a chance, John. Not ever.

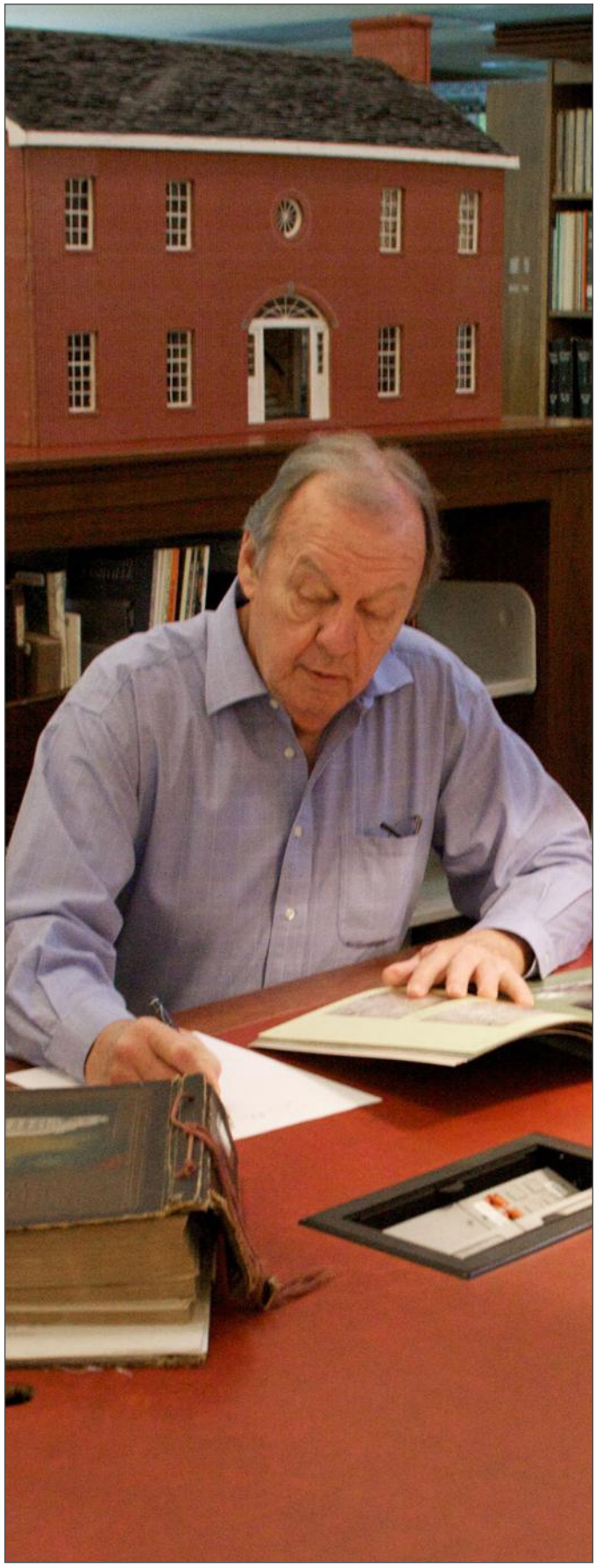


Photo by Terry Price

John Egerton, at the archives in the old Green Hills library

KENTUCKY BOURBON CULTURE

NATALIE WYNN

Western Kentucky University

There is little documentation about the origins of bourbon, but it is well known that it developed in Kentucky. Bourbon is a type of whiskey, but it has specific ingredients and proportions that must be followed. Bourbon must contain 51 percent corn and must be aged in a brand-new, charred white oak barrel to be called straight bourbon whiskey. Bourbon was named "America's Native Spirit" in 1964 because all bourbon must be made in the United States. Even though it must be made in America to be considered bourbon, 95 percent of bourbon comes from Kentucky. In fact, there are more barrels of bourbon than there are people in Kentucky (Mckeithan, 2012).

Bourbon has been important to Kentuckians since its creation. Why? Kentuckians learned that one of the easiest ways to make money from their corn crop was to make whiskey. Buffalo Trace Bourbon Distillery Tour Guide Sarah says, "I think that [bourbon] is probably important to Kentuckians because it is a uniquely American spirit, and people are probably proud that it's made in Kentucky. And because of that, they're proud to be from Kentucky. A lot of bourbon's popularity throughout history is out of convenience. Many Kentuckians worked in the industry, so of course they drank it" (personal interview, November 15, 2014).

Sarah explained that bourbon was sold throughout the South, but a large portion of it was sent to New Orleans and Bourbon Street in the beginning. Many historians guess that this is where bourbon gained its name. Author of *Southern Food: at home, on the road, in history,* John Egerton mentions bourbon as a part of New Orleans' dining culture. In this section of the book, Egerton is discussing the variety of food in New Orleans but mentions the importance of bourbon in this type of cuisine. He goes on to say that even throughout history, bourbon has held its own on Bourbon Street and throughout New Orleans even through the strong cultures and flavors (Egerton, 1993, pg. 116-122).

Bourbon has grown to be popular throughout the nation, but it will always hold a special place in the hearts of Kentuckians. There are multiple recipes that use bourbon. One of the most popular is the Mint Julep. While the Mint Julep did not originate in Kentucky, it is now the official drink of the Kentucky Derby. Egerton explains a bit about how Mint Juleps came about and how to make them (Egerton, 1993, pg. 211). This is one way that Kentuckians have incorporated bourbon into the state history.

It is possible for individuals to tour the bourbon distilleries around Kentucky. This is often called The Bourbon Trail. Not all of the major distilleries are on the tour, but they are close to one another. There is also the Bourbon Craft Tour that allows individuals to travel around to the different craft distilleries in Kentucky. Now, the industry is making

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THE SUSTAINABILITY OF SOUTHERN CULTURE

MOLLIE MOORE

Western Kentucky University

In his book *Southern Food,* John Egerton makes it clear that the English settlers at Jamestown first borrowed the base of what is perceived as Southern United States cuisine from the Native Americans. In doing so, he allows credit to be given to those who deserve it. By acknowledging that pork and corn-the staples of Southern cooking-were shown to the settlers by the natives, he hints at the major theme which Southern America displays: the "borrowing" of ideas and the clashing of different cultures. There also must be an acknowledgement of the United States being a post-colonial society in which imperialism played a heavy hand. Therefore, many of the traditions adapted by the established society are rooted in an international heritage. Taking these facts into consideration allows for a cultural analysis while still paying homage to the culture and society established in Southern America. Egerton's focus is on how all of these influences have become a culture of their own, have shaped the lives of the people living in the South, and are now a living history.

It is made obvious in the way that Egerton discusses his relationship to Southern food that he understands the rich history behind it. In the introduction to the "Eating Out" section of *Southern Food,* he discusses why it was important to investigate the native restaurants of the South. He says, "...it was not just the food that interested me, but also the cooks and servers, the owners and managers, the clientele, the setting, the atmosphere, the table talk, the history" (53). Egerton argues that Southern food is much more than a meal, but a major part of the culture of the South. "I wanted to take a close look at the public art of Southern cooking and to write about the traditions of hospitality and service and fine food that are exemplified in the regions restaurants" (Egerton 53). He believes that food is a part of the social contract and the sharing of food creates a relationship among the community. In an interview he did with Angie Mosier, Egerton states that sharing a meal "...opens up a way for us to become more our own individual selves and self-conscious selves [in] our relationship to other people." Going to these locally and family owned restaurants is similar to going to a friends house for dinner, the meals are prepared and shared with a sense of community and understanding.

A part of Southern tradition is the passing down of recipes through generations upon generations and Egerton explores this dynamic in the "Eating In" section of *Southern Food.* In an interview I conducted with my grandmother, I asked her why she is so adamant about teaching her children and grandchildren to cook. Her response was simple, "It's all I have, really. We've never had a lot of money but we have

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TOP AND RIGHT: Courtesy of Southern Foodways Alliance/Photos by Brandall Atkinson

"Make Cornbread, Not War"

The Southern Foodways Alliance (SFA): Celebrating the American South via Food

by Katie McDougall

So goes the unofficial motto at the Southern Foodways Alliance (SFA), an organization whose mission is to document, study, and celebrate the diverse food cultures of the changing American South. Down-home in spirit, no pretenses, no frills, the SFA seeks to understand the people of the South through what, how, with whom, and why they eat what they eat. After all, food is something we all have in common. The culture of food belongs to our past, our present, our future; it is part of our histories, large and small, societal and familial. And as important as food is to the human experience, so too are stories. We hear them, learn and retell them, pass them along to future generations like prized family recipes. Stories are the bedrock of our cultures, religions, our histories. It is these two fundamental ingredients—food and stories—that make up the wondrous gumbo that is the SFA.

I have a couple of authorial confessions. One, when I offered to write this story, I knew zero about the SFA. Nada. Two: I'm a fiction writer, a novelist in fact, not a journalist. Except for the presence of story and words, what I do is the opposite of journalism. This is all to say, I entered this assignment with some trepidation. But as a fan and friend of *2nd & Church,* enter it I did. I was given a deadline of a year to write it, and who can't write a story in a year…

As the margin of "plenty of time" grew smaller and smaller, I realized with a month left that, given my handicaps, I couldn't write this story without finding a reason to care about it, and to do that, I would need to go to the source, see the SFA headquarters, and meet its people. (Plus, I liked the idea of making pilgrimage to Oxford, Mississippi, not only home of the SFA, but also of literary landmarks Rowan Oak, home to Faulkner, and Square Books, a gem in the world of independent bookstores.) And so I carved out a day, got in the car, and drove West, listening to episodes of SFA's *Gravy* podcast as the miles ticked by and the hills of Middle Tennessee gradually leveled out to flats, swamps, and river basin through Memphis and across the state line before the land folded upward into hills again as I approached Oxford.

By the time I reached Oxford, I'd heard via the podcasts the voices of the Lumbee tribe of North Carolina sharing stories of their holiday traditions and the oyster fisherman in Apalachicola Bay who are presently challenged by a collapsing oyster habitat and a losing battle over

water rights. I learned about the distinctly Southern version of Kosher among the aging and thinning Jewish population of Natchez, Mississippi; the new wave of Christian coffee shops in Knoxville; and the relics of barbecue history unearthed during the restoration of municipal buildings in Lexington, North Carolina. Listening, I was both entertained and informed, but there was a larger takeaway that has something to do with the SFA's mission. By listening to these podcasts, I'd gained insights into people who are not me, who may live in the same region of the country, but whose voices, stories, concerns, loves, livelihoods, histories, and foods are different from my own—but the same, too, in a way. Prior to hearing their voices or stories, I might have simply attached stereotypes, but through these interviews, I became both empathetic and enriched, a witness to the lives behind the stories. And so the magic of SFA began to do its work before I'd even arrived in Oxford.

My pilgrimage led me to the Barnard Observatory on the University of Mississippi campus, where SFA is headquartered and where I had an appointment to meet with Sara Wood, SFA's lead oral historian whose work in collecting and compiling narratives is at the spine of the organization.

Sara is not actually a Southerner, but we won't tell. Hailing from Michigan, Sara came to Oxford circuitously after having bounced between Chicago, the West Coast, the East Coast, and then to Wilmington, North Carolina, where she earned her MFA in Creative Nonfiction. It was at that program that she found her niche with oral history and eventually, through a summer internship with SFA, that she came to Oxford to take on the role of oral historian, a position that was previously filled by Amy Evans, SFA's founding oral historian, whom Sara considers a mentor and model for the work she does.

Sara's interest in studying graduate-level creative nonfiction was rooted not in the desire to write her memoir but rather in telling the stories of others, which made for a logical leap into oral history. In describing how she came to love the work, she spoke of having to become "comfortable with being uncomfortable"—asking people questions that perhaps seemed ill-informed or intrusive. But, she says, those questions "shorten that distance between us a little bit. And that's what drew me in."

Defined simply as a first-person account, oral history has long been integral to America's canon and culture. A literary form all to its own, perhaps most popularized by the slave narratives of the WPA project, Studs Terkel, and NPR's Story Corps, oral history is a uniquely imperfect form of historical record because it is just one person's account, one person's truth, and in this subjectivity lie both its beauty and its limits. With oral history, there is no fact checking: "I ask somebody to tell me the story of their lives through food, and I'm not there to question the truth or authenticity. I'm there to listen to them. It's about being with people in the world and listening to them. It's what Amy started here and what I'm trying to continue. It's important to slow down and listen."

But why food?

Why not interview people about their culture, class, race, religion, or politics, their histories and ancestry, their relationship to the land, their livelihoods?

Answer: Because food is all these things.

Food is the common denominator for the human experience and, hence, the perfect door to conversation. During my chat with Sara, she admitted to feeling self-conscious when she began the job because she was not necessarily "a food person," but she remembered Amy Evans saying, "You, know, it's not about the food."

John Egerton, one of the masterminds behind the founding of SFA, was known to refer to food as "the grease that moves the wheels." It's not so much about the actual story of, say, the po-boy, the pie, the tamale; it's about the lives behind the stories. Food is the point of entry. Food is something we all have in common. It sustains us, and so do stories.

In an ideal interview, Sara explained, a certain magic happens.

"How do I know what I think until I see what I say," Wallace Stegner said of the writing process. Perhaps it is the same in these interviews, that the narrators sometimes don't know the contents of their interiority until it finds its way to the surface through storytelling. Once captured on the record, those ephemeral and slippery truths, insights, or memories become solid and can be grasped, held to the light, nailed down for posterity, history, and reflection. Sara describes how in certain interviews she has witnessed a moving moment when the narrator thinks of something for the first time in years or expresses an opinion he or she didn't know she had.

"It doesn't happen in every interview," Sara conceded, "but in a great interview you watch someone in their amazement and disbelief at what they're saying. I think there's something really powerful in that."

Because there are no deadlines with oral history and because one road leads to the next, it becomes a bit of a "solo journey," one that is old-fashioned in a way. "You call people. You write letters. You sit face to face." Many of the narrators don't have an e-mail address. Often, Sara has to repeatedly explain why she is there, that she's not a journalist seeking a sound bite, but—rather—she's simply there to listen to that person's story. In a fast-moving world beholden to the hurried demands of the Information Age, this slowing down, this listening for the sake of listening, can seem a radical concept, but an important one. While some of her interviewees may be local heroes, known and celebrated within their communities, outside the locus of time and place, their stories are ephemeral, susceptible to loss. Through the work of oral history, these voices, these stories are locked down on record for the benefit of the world at large and its future generations. Looking at cultural change with a long-view, one can see the significance and weight of the SFA's mission: "If we don't do this work, we're not leaving much of a real, holistic, meaningful historical archive."

In the several years Sara has worked with the SFA, she has worked on seven or eight projects, ranging from topics as diverse as the unique Chinese take-out of Tidewater Virginia to the changing curing traditions across the "ham belt" of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. The story, however, that she has spent the most time with and is nearest and dearest to her heart is the "Women at Work" projects in Richmond, where exists a deep tradition dating back to Richmond's reign as the capital of the Confederacy of women, food, and entrepre-

Courtesy of Southern Foodways Alliance/Photo by Brandall Atkinson

...at the 18th Annual SFA Symposium in Oxford, Mississippi

neurism. Given a broad swath of women and food entrepreneurism and the directive, "Just go!," Sara's research led her from one person to another as she made her way through a tangled web of connections, ultimately facilitating about sixteen interviews over at least half a year. What made this project so special were the relationships she formed, especially with two sisters, Deborah Pratt and Clementine Macon Boyd, who have taken turns at the championship title at the Oyster Shucker World Cup and have generously invited Sara into their homes, into their lives. In talking with Sara about this experience, she became cautious in the telling, not wanting her relationship with the sisters to be a flag she waves for her own professional gain. Rather it is representative of what she loves most about her job: "This work has opened my eyes to how we are as a people in the world. I think this job is the best education as a human being I'll ever receive. I don't think people would treat each other in such ways if we really knew where we were coming from. There are moments in these interviews when a door opens, and I see something, and I won't ever be the same kind of person again. It's constantly changing me in a really good way. That's my professional gain."

In summing up the importance of the work of the SFA, Sara recalled a story of a workshop her predecessor Amy Evans led in the Delta at Leann Hines' chicken and vegetable farm in Greenwood, Mississippi. During the workshop, someone asked Leann, a longtime friend and narrator to SFA, what it meant to her to have her story collected. Leann, growing emotional, pointed to her Guardian of Tradition award which is given to all SFA narrators, and said, "It really feels good to be the guardian of something." In telling her story, she'd contributed to a living record of lives lived, communion, people amongst people.

As a fiction writer and cofounder of The Porch Writers Collective, I found a kindred spirit in SFA as we both live and breathe the gospel of story. Story matters. True or imagined, every story we hear, every story we tell helps us to better understand what it means to be human. Perhaps story, to some degree, is even what makes us human—it's where we discover how all our lives are so very different and yet so very much the same. And Lord knows the American South is a storied place, diverse in countless ways. To perceive the South's spirit in its entirety is no easy matter, although meandering through the online archives of the SFA's oral histories, one gets remarkably close.

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Photo Gallery

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October 15-18, 2015

Photos by Brandall Atkinson
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GALLERY


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Bite into a collard sandwich with members of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. Experience Christian coffee house culture in Knoxville. Wade into the water issues restricting oyster growth in Apalachicola Bay. Drink and dance with the Saturday morning crowd at Fred's Lounge in Louisiana.

Southern Foodways Alliance

Or visit us at www.southernfoodways.org, where you can become an SFA member.

Book Review: *Cornbread Nation 7: The Best of Southern Food Writing*

Food to Change Your Soul

by Brieana Bell

What defines a Southerner? As a native Tennessean, this question never crossed my mind until I turned the pages of *Cornbread Nation 7: The Best of Southern Food Writing.* Much more than what I expected, this read is a must for those who are ready for an unconventional—yet enlightening—helping of food from the South.

This thought-provoking collection of stories by both natives of the South and newcomers to the region vividly details how our cultures have fused into the melting pot of Southern food. This anthology chronicles far more than bland descriptions of home-cooked meat-and-threes with a glass of iced sweet tea.

Published by the University of Georgia Press, James Beard- and IACP-nominated food writer Francis Lam edits the anthology, serving an intriguing compilation of more than 40 essays, stories, poems, and other creative accounts by some of the best contributors of food literature. Southern Foodways Alliance Director John T. Edge is the general editor of the series.

This book reminds readers that biases are still a part of everyday life in America, particularly in the South, and it sheds light on the complexity and diversity of food made in this region. The stories that resonated the most had a particular way of stepping out of the kitchen and into somewhere unexpected.

It was in an Alabama poultry farm in Gabriel Thompson's "Working in the Shadows" that the common misconception that immigrants are taking the jobs meant for Americans was addressed.

Shocking truths are discovered on a Florida tomato farm in Barry Estabrook's "The Price of Tomatoes," where he shares with the reader that slavery still occurs in this nation.

Seán McKeithan's piece spoke on how the history of bourbon in the South can still have a questionable association with race, gender, and class generations later.

Despite these grim reflections, there are ample selections that declare respect and appreciation for Southern cuisine.

Monique Truong discusses her weakness for pulled pork and how it relates to her Vietnamese culture in "A Love Letter to North Carolina's Red Bridges Barbecue."

In "The Post-Husk Era," Robert Moss celebrates Charleston restaurants like Sean Brock's Husk for maintaining their specialized identity of the Lowcountry rather than generalizing Southern food—like so many eateries in the region tend to do.

The poem "Ode to Gumbo" by Kevin Young colorfully feeds all the reader's senses in reverence of the New Orleans staple.

Monique Truong's words, "Like the five senses we are born with, the sense of belonging defines the way we experience the world", returned me home, to my original thoughts of sensitivity.

As a woman of color in the South, this book's different passages allowed me to look at my region from different points of view, which is something that we should all do periodically. Each person will interpret this book in different ways, depending upon what s/he brings to the reading. But the awareness of how everyone in our country relates to newcomers is universal.

Being a native is not a prerequisite to discover and become a part of the South. What is on each reader's dinner table is one of the many definitions of what the South is and what it will continue to be.

Food is only one of many expressions of culture and identity. In the end, though, our plates have endless room for all of it.

"Could ultimately be the best ongoing collection of food writing in America today."

—Edible Memphis, on an earlier edition of *Cornbread Nation*

"Like taking a road trip to deliciously obscure spots all over the region, filling up on barbecue, chicken mull and honeysuckle sorbet along the way."

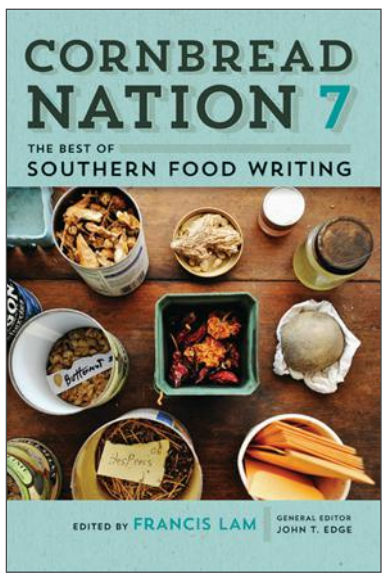
—*Charleston Magazine*, on an earlier edition of *Cornbread Nation*

Photo by Pableaux Johnson

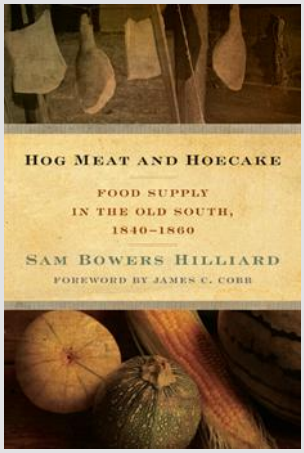
Francis Lam

From the University of Georgia Press:

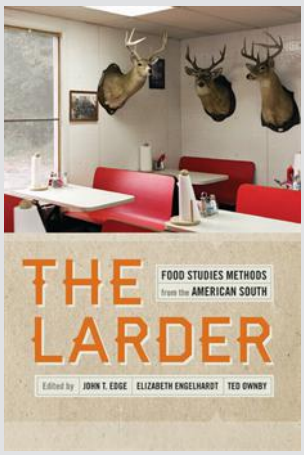
How does Southern food look from the outside? The form is caught in constantly dueling stereotypes: It's so often imagined as either the touchingly down-home feast or the heartstopping health scourge of a nation. But as any Southern transplant will tell you once they've spent time in the region, Southerners share their lives in food, with a complex mix of stories of belonging and not belonging and of traditions that form identities of many kinds.



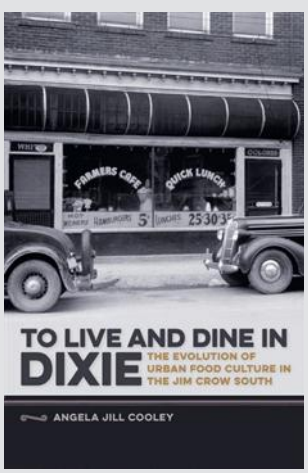
Cornbread Nation 7, edited by Francis Lam, brings together the best Southern food writing from recent years, including well-known food writers such as Sara Roahen and Brett Anderson, a couple of classic writers such as Langston Hughes, and some newcomers. The collection, divided into five sections ("Come In and Stay Awhile," "Provisions and Providers," "Five Ways of Looking at Southern Food," "The South, Stepping Out," and "Southerners Going Home"), tells the stories both of Southerners as they move through the world and of those who ended up in the South. It explores from where and from whom food comes, and it looks at what food means to culture and how it relates to home.



HOG MEAT AND HOECAKE: Food Supply in the Old South, 1840–1860
by Sam Bowers Hilliard
Foreword by James C. Cobb



THE LARDER: Food Studies Methods from the American South
Edited by John T. Edge, Elizabeth Engelhardt, and Ted Ownby



TO LIVE AND DINE IN DIXIE: The Evolution of Urban Food Culture in the Jim Crow South
by Angela Jill Cooley

Southern Foodways Alliance

Studies in Culture, People, and Place

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA PRESS

Southern Foodways Alliance

The University of Georgia Press is proud to announce a new series in Southern Food and Foodways studies.

The series explores key themes and tensions in food studies—including race, class, gender, power, and the environment—on a macro-scale and also through the micro-stories of men and women who grow, prepare, and serve food. The series presents a variety of voices, from scholars to journalists to writers of creative nonfiction.

The series is a collaboration of the University of Georgia Press and the Southern Foodways Alliance at the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi.

Series editor John T. Edge is the director of the Southern Foodways Alliance and general editor of *Cornbread Nation: The Best of Southern Food Writing.* He is the author or editor of more than a dozen books, among them the foodways volume of *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture.*

"The Southern Foodways Alliance [is] this country's most intellectually engaged (and probably most engaging) food society."

—Corby Kummer, *Atlantic Monthly*

Hog Meat and Hoecake
Food Supply in the Old South, 1840–1860

When historical geographer Sam B. Hilliard's book *Hog Meat and Hoecake* was published in 1972, it was ahead of its time. It was one of the first scholarly examinations of the important role food played in a region's history, culture, and politics, and it has since become a landmark of foodways scholarship.

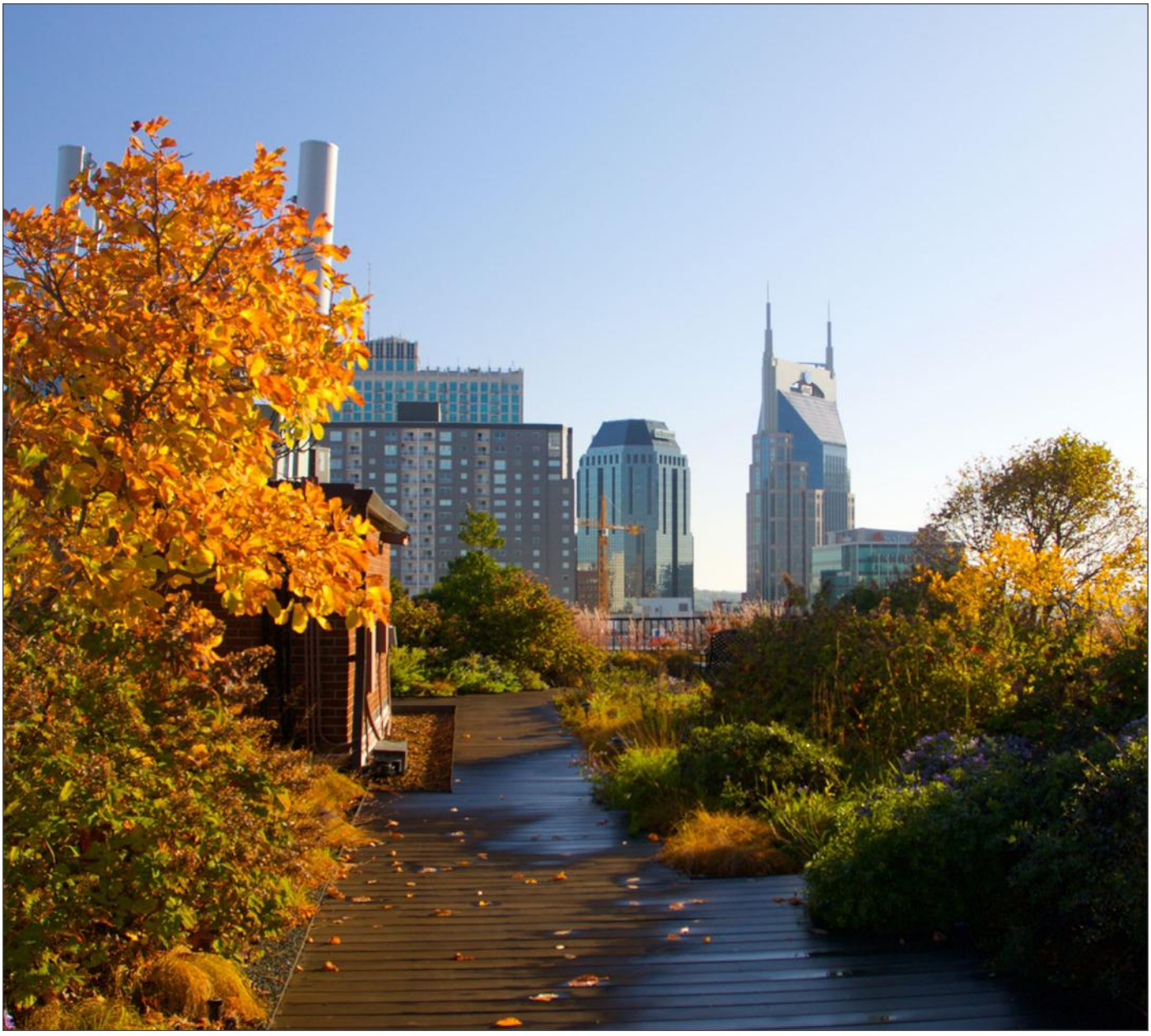
The Larder
Food Studies Methods from the American South

The sixteen essays in *The Larder* argue that the study of food does not simply help us understand more about what we eat and the foodways we embrace. The methods and strategies herein help scholars use food and foodways as lenses to examine human experience. The resulting conversations provoke a deeper understanding of our overlapping, historically situated, and evolving cultures and societies.

To Live and Dine in Dixie
The Evolution of Urban Food Culture in the Jim Crow South

This book explores the changing food culture of the urban American South during the Jim Crow era by examining how race, ethnicity, class, and gender contributed to the development and maintenance of racial segregation in public eating places. Focusing primarily on the 1900s to the 1960s, Angela Jill Cooley identifies the cultural differences between activists who saw public eating places like urban lunch counters as sites of political participation and believed access to such spaces a right of citizenship, and white supremacists who interpreted desegregation as a challenge to property rights and advocated local control over racial issues.

Discover more about this series at: http://www.ugapress.org/index.php/series/SFA



The Green Roof, atop Westview Condos in downtown Nashville, Nine Stories up into Music City's Sky

ABOVE AND RIGHT: Photos by Terry Price

Nashville's Roof Top Gardens: *Going Green*

by Cynthia A. Minor

As Nashville's growth propels it into one of America's favorite travel destinations, it has become a city that architects, builders, and developers find entrepreneurially fascinating. No one can drive around the downtown corridor without seeing waving cranes rising upward, supporting the building of new places for Nashvillians to work and live. Its composite natural stone outcrops and rolling topography are prime targets for those creating glistening and shiny buildings bright with the anticipation of inhabitants and success. Consequently and with foresight, city planners interested in Nashville's health and future are encouraging developers and builders to include green rooftop gardens into their building, landscape, and sustainability plans.

Sustainability is a word bantered about in the "green" movement. Its goal is to reduce the carbon footprint of buildings while preserving the environment in a sustainable manner, keeping as much of the natural aspect of an area as possible. Among those goals is providing spaces in buildings where the inhabitants find visually provocative structures where they can commune with nature. Since there may be no spaces outward, sustainability cohorts campaigned for an upward solution.

Consequently, the city offered an answer: The Green Roof. Nashville will give a credit on waters bills, for private properties complying with its green roof protocol, reducing those bills as an incentive for building sustainable green gardens on rooftops. The city touts—and the science supports—that green roofs improve the water quality of rivers and reduces the potential of flooding and combined sewer overflows. The *Metro City Report* adds that green roofs offer other benefits to the community, as they reduce the heat island effect, lower heating and cooling costs, increase wildlife habitat in urban areas, improve air quality, increase green space, and increase property values.

In order to receive the credit, the property must be entirely within the combined sewer area, privately owned, and cover half of the rooftop space.

It should include an impermeable waterproof membrane layer, a drainage layer (e.g., gravel or a proprietary mat), filter fabric between the drainage layer, growing media (least four inches thick containing no more than 15 percent organic matter), and a vegetation layer with 80 percent coverage of live, hardy, drought-resistant plants.

Armed with this data and with what the city requires in order to qualify for accredited green roof status, this writer sought to scale the heights of a green roof or two.

Upon arrival at my first stop, a renovated nine-story condominium in downtown Nashville, I gazed upward and could see the tips of green trees waving slightly over the edge of the building. In that moment, I remembered that I'm afraid of heights. Although both afraid of heights and bugs, I reached into my trunk and grabbed the bug spray and Christmas tree rope…just in case. I gathered my courage and began my trek toward my first green roof garden.

My tour guide was the delightful Beverly Mansfield, who after chuckling at my rigging and safari attire led me up to the renovated structure's roof. When she opened the doorway to the garden, I felt like what Dorothy must have felt like when she opened the door into Munchkinland, *sans* munchkins, of course. The garden was immaculate and filled the building's entire roof. It's more than 5,000 square feet of garden included bedecked pathways reminiscent of what you'd find in the best Zen gardens. There were roses, wisteria, trees, shrubs, a custom arbor, and a private kitchen that allow residents to sit and entertain in an upscale space, surrounded by native Tennessee plants and priceless vistas. The sunrise view of downtown landmarks was eclipsed only by the image of the sun setting behind the mountains visible to the west. I was only slightly distracted by a huge bug that looked more like a stick than a bug. As Beverly extolled the flexible uses of the space, I kept one eye on the "stick thing" because I was certain it saw me and intended to *get me.*

The calm of the outdoor space distracts from the fact that one is outside, on a roof nine stories above downtown's moving masses. Looking out (and *not down*!) and taking in the 360-degree view, this private high-rise park is quiet and peaceful.

I was prepared for the roof to be unbearably hot, given that the temperature on the ground was more than 85 degrees Fahrenheit. While at ground level the air was hot, humid, and still, this rooftop was cool with a gentle breeze rippling through the ornamental grasses. I saw other green roofs from where I stood and decided to go investigate. I thanked Beverly for the visit and was happy that the "stick thing" forgot to get me.

My next stop was the Nashville Music City Center (MCC).

From the ground, it was impossible to see that it, too, has a green roof. Opened to the public since 2013 and standing five stories, the MCC's immense green roof spans more than 13,000 square feet. The architecture of the building has a rolling effect that mimics the rolling hills surrounding Nashville, with each section having an independent green sustainable roof planted primarily with native grasses. Nashville's commitment to green roof technology led to the MCC becoming recognized as a leader in environmental sustainability. Although I was offered the opportunity to tread upon the roof's surface, I declined because there was nothing to keep me from flying off the building.

Finally, I found myself at the Pinnacle Bank at Symphony Place, a relatively new 29-story office building in downtown Nashville. It is the city's first LEED gold certified skyscraper. The building includes an expansive green roof on the seventh floor above the parking garage. The outdoor space is about 19,400 square feet of vegetated areas. The green roof areas are a combination of extensive planting media, ranging in depths from five inches to nine inches and semi-intensive planting areas ranging in depths between 18 inches and 30 inches. The plantings include ornamental trees, native shrubs, and flowers. Walkways made of limestone pavers lead to a bird's-eye view of downtown Nashville. There, too, breezes missing at street level find their elements in the sky.

My day on the rooftops was surprisingly wonderful. Each building embraced the unique lifestyle and uses of its inhabitants. While once the roof was the sole habitat of air conditioning units, chimneys, and water towers, now the sway of grasses and the beauty of flowering trees and gardens reach skyward from manmade mountains of steel and concrete that support our lives and provide our living. Though these rooftops cannot replace the landscapes we have grown to know, they do provide a peaceful alternative and dynamic use for spaces once thought mundane.

Photo courtesy of Humanities Tennessee

Humanities TN: a Smorgasbord of Literary Programs

by Jennifer Chesak

Book lovers pack on their winter weight in words by snacking on passages and gorging on plot. The phenomenon happens each year after the October close of the Southern Festival of Books, hosted by Nashville-based Humanities Tennessee. But a festival alone is not enough to satiate. Thankfully, Humanities Tennessee's many year-round programs feed the state's voracious literary appetite.

"We could see very early on that Nashville is absolutely a readerly city," says Tim Henderson, the council's executive director. "A lot of great writers are here and absolutely a ton of devoted readers are here."

Humanities Tennessee runs and participates in programs like the online literary publication *Chapter 16* and Salon@615, a partnership between Humanities Tennessee, Nashville Public Library, Nashville Public Library Foundation, BookPage, and Parnassus Books. Workshops and activities foster enthusiasm for writing among youth, and grants and awards fund humanities projects around the state.

Southern Festival of Books

One of Humanities Tennessee's most lauded programs is the Southern Festival of Books: A Celebration of the Written Word, which takes place over three days in October at Nashville's War Memorial Plaza. The festival includes music from regional performers, book signings, panel discussion, and Q & A author sessions. Book festivals and fairs have cropped up everywhere, but the SFB has gained in popularity since its inception 27 years ago.

"One of the things the Southern Festival of Books attempted to do was to truly be a festival of literary work," Tim explains, "to not just have authors sort of reading to audiences and then going their way, but to have something like a real conversation between readers and writers."

The SFB has a regional flavor to its lineup, but there's not a requirement that authors hail from the South; they come from all corners of the world. The submission process begins anew in January with books flooding the Humanities Tennessee office throughout the spring. The downtown Nashville space looks like a mini library with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves lining the walls. With the advent of self-publishing, the amount of submissions the festival receives grows every year.

"We have months and months of going through hundreds of submitted manuscripts and books," Tim says. "We have a really good program committee including several people outside the office, so it's not just staff culling these books, but we use the committee to really review all of these hundreds of submissions and try to give some shape to the program for the festival."

In addition to reviewing submissions for merit, committee and staff members look for titles and authors they can pair with others to create thematic panels. Festival-goers come from all over to hear authors speak and get books signed.

"A family visits every year from Canada and arranges to meet the rest of their family in Nashville over the festival weekend to have their family reunion," Tim says. "They just love the festival, and it seemed like just a great time for them all to get together."

The SFB also has comprehensive children's programing involving parties, character costumes, and author meet and greets.

"It's great to see kids get so enthused by books and characters," Tim says.

He recalls a highlight a few years back when Rick Riordan, (#1 *The New York Times* bestselling author of the *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series, the *Kane Chronicles*, the *Heroes of Olympus*, and *Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard*) was a guest speaker.

"The kids started lining up at about 10:00 a.m. for his late afternoon

session," Tim says. "They wrapped around the block. He filled the War Memorial Auditorium with young adults, and when he walked out on the stage, it was like a rock star walking out onto the stage."

SFB events serve to entertain, but—as do all Humanities Tennessee programs—they also serve to educate. In partnership with the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities at Vanderbilt University, the festival hosts a themed track of sessions each year relating to health and wellness or public policy. At the 2015 festival, the track focused on understanding Islam.

According to Tim, "It was a great roster of authors and we very much hope that it accomplished, even in some small way, exactly what the title indicates."

Salon@615

The Southern Festival of Books hosts authors for just one weekend in the fall, but Humanities Tennessee's goal is to make Nashville a literary destination all year, hence its participation in Salon@615, an author reading series. In partnership with Humanities Tennessee, BookPage, the Nashville Public Library, and the Nashville Public Library Foundation, Parnassus Books brings in bestselling authors for readings, discussions, and signings. The fall 2015 lineup featured Jonathan Franzen, Margaret Attwood, and Elizabeth Gilbert, to name a few.

Photo courtesy of *Chapter 16*

The Southern Festival of Books, in Nashville, Tennessee

This program launched nearly five years ago, not long after one of Nashville's most revered independent bookstores, Davis-Kidd Booksellers, closed its doors.

"When they closed and we didn't see immediately another bookstore that was going to come in and start booking authors all throughout the year," Tim says, "we were really concerned about Nashville's place on the literary map."

Tim credits the partnership with Parnassus (opened in 2011) and the Nashville Public Library for Salon@615's success.

"It's a really strong series that indicates to us throughout the year what a strong commitment and devotion Nashvillians have to reading and supporting the written word and authors."

Chapter 16

To promote author events and to publish book reviews, poems, and essays, Humanities Tennessee relies on *Chapter 16* (Chapter16.org), a website the council launched in 2009 that pays homage to the fact that Tennessee became the sixteenth state.

"We did have to explain, especially at first when we launched, that it was not related to bankruptcy or anything like that," Tim says with a laugh.

As with many existing council programs, the vision was former CEO Robert Cheatham's who retired in early 2013 after 35 years at Humanities Tennessee. The council had noticed a steady decline in book coverage in local newspapers and decided to fill that void with a publication that promotes books and reading.

"We feel like it's crucial to our communities," Tim says. "It's crucial to our democracy that people read and stay informed and engage those ideas."

Chapter 16, edited by Margaret Renkl, has relationships with newspapers (*The Tennessean* in Nashville, *The Commercial Appeal* in Memphis, and *The Knoxville News Sentinel*) to help spread the word.

Grants and Awards Program

Although Humanities Tennessee has developed a robust selection of literary programs in its 40 years, that's not what the council is all about. There are 56 humanities councils located in all of the U.S. states and jurisdictions, and each supports a variety of programs and events. Originally, Humanities Tennessee was solely a granting organization that dispersed federal money to people around Tennessee working on humanities projects. Today, Humanities Tennessee still has a re-granting program that solicits proposals every spring in order to fund programs that serve public audiences who have historically lacked access to educational opportunities.

"It's truly an open field for ideas," Tim says of the proposals. "What we require is that they have educational humanities components to them. But what they are about, it can be as diverse as there are people in the state to come up with ideas."

In 2014, as part of the Standing Together in Tennessee initiative, the grants program placed a funding priority on proposals that dealt with veterans—as either audience members or as participants—with the hopes of generating understanding surrounding the effects of war.

"What we know," Tim says, "is that it's often very hard to talk about that experience of serving during wartime."

Standing Together in Tennessee launched at the 2014 Southern Festival of Books with a track (from The Conversations Bureau program) called "Work after War." Another ongoing program offers a several-week series for veterans in which they discuss an anthology of literature about the experience of war.

"It's a really brilliant anthology that goes all the way back to Homer and goes all the way up through people like Tim O'Brien, Phil Klay, and writers who are writing about that experience of coming back from the Gulf War," Tim says. The biggest challenge for Humanities Tennessee as a state-serving organization is to provide needed projects in smaller towns. "The grants program really helps us do that because it lets us work with organizations statewide that really are tied to their communities and can create projects that can come organically out of those communities."

Humanities Tennessee offers a prestigious gift, the Outstanding Educator Award, to bolster schools across the state. The award is available for up to six full-time educators or librarians. Winners receive a $2,000 fellowship to expand their humanities programs, and the recipient's school gets a corresponding $1,500 grant.

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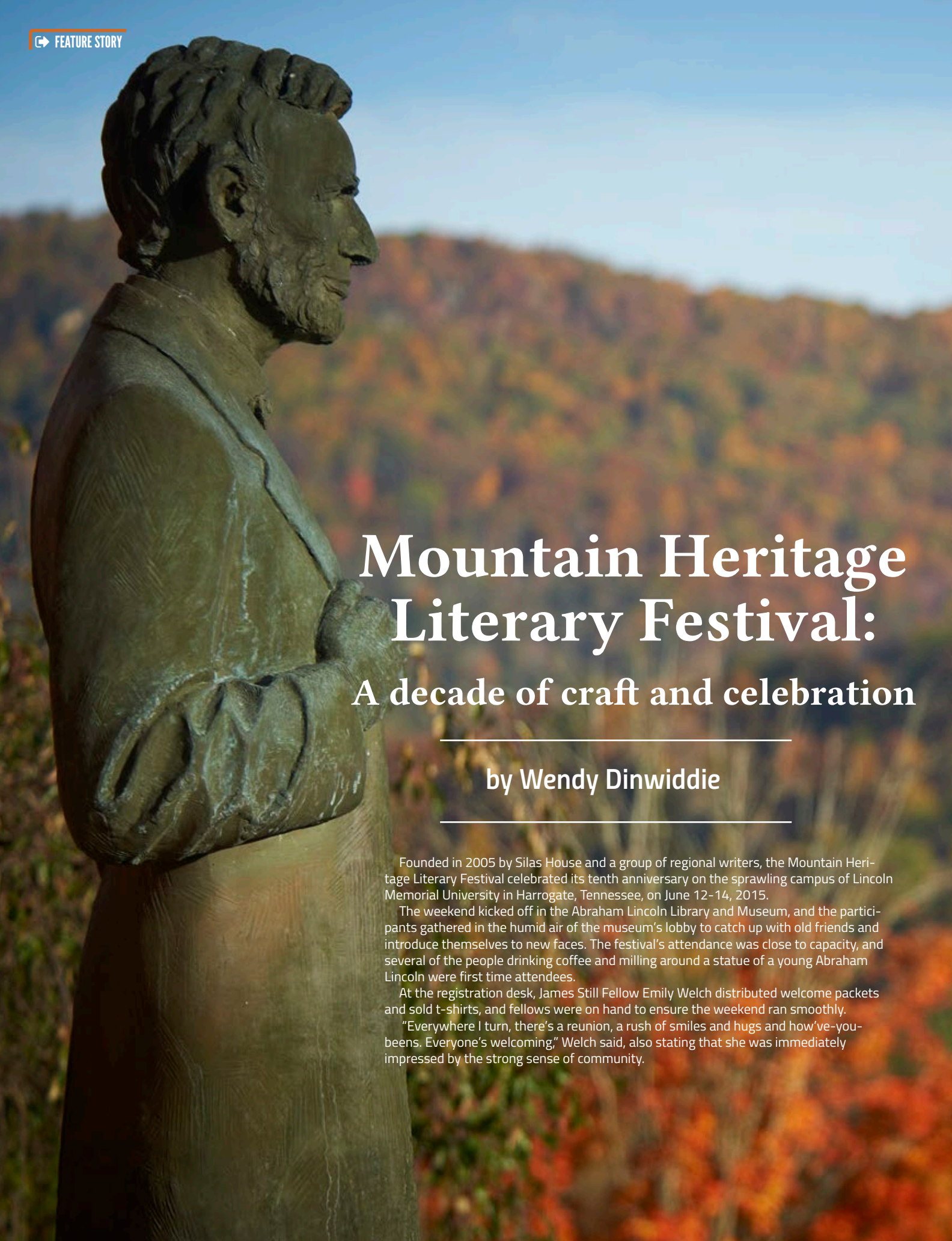


Mountain Heritage Literary Festival:

A decade of craft and celebration

by Wendy Dinwiddie

Founded in 2005 by Silas House and a group of regional writers, the Mountain Heritage Literary Festival celebrated its tenth anniversary on the sprawling campus of Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee, on June 12-14, 2015.

The weekend kicked off in the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum, and the participants gathered in the humid air of the museum's lobby to catch up with old friends and introduce themselves to new faces. The festival's attendance was close to capacity, and several of the people drinking coffee and milling around a statue of a young Abraham Lincoln were first time attendees.

At the registration desk, James Still Fellow Emily Welch distributed welcome packets and sold t-shirts, and fellows were on hand to ensure the weekend ran smoothly.

"Everywhere I turn, there's a reunion, a rush of smiles and hugs and how've-you-beens. Everyone's welcoming," Welch said, also stating that she was immediately impressed by the strong sense of community.

In the museum's auditorium, the stage was set with antique chairs and flanked by large paintings of Civil War battles. Co-directors Denton Loving and Darnell Arnoult welcomed participants to what they hoped would be the best festival yet. Arnoult described her and Loving's vision for the weekend, a gathering of published and beginning writers who come to Harrogate to hone their craft and grow in fellowship. Arnoult was glad to have her mentor Lee Smith present for the anniversary. She felt Smith's giving nature set a precedent for an open conversation among Appalachian writers. The festival fosters an environment of learning. This egalitarian view is reflected in the last words of every welcoming ceremony. Led by Arnoult, the participants chant in a chorus the affirmation: "I am a writer."

The weekend revolves around the master classes. Participants chose between fiction, poetry, and nonfiction. Because the festival does not require a manuscript to register for a particular workshop, many chose to take a class outside of their usual genre. Workshops met on Friday evening and again Saturday morning in the Humanities building. Young and intense, with a tattoo of a clothesline wrapped around her upper arm, Jessie van Eerden taught one of the fiction workshops. Van Eerden's first novel, *Glorybound,* was released in 2012. When she talks to you, you feel like nothing escapes her.

"We focused on work, and how the work that we do—the 'labor of our hands'—can give us a closer look into ourselves and our characters," Welch said. According to Welch, she felt that she learned a lot from listening to the other attendees read in class.

Photo courtesy of Lincoln Memorial University

Site of the 2015 Mountain Heritage Literary Festival

One of the most discussed sessions on the schedule was a reading to a packed room by Sheldon Lee Compton (*Where Alligators Sleep*), David Joy (*Where All Light Tends To Go*), and Robert Gipe (*Trampoline: An Illustrated Novel*). The session host was tied up with other matters, so they played rock, paper, scissors to determine who would read first and then took turns introducing one another. Compton said of the experience, "That particular audience was a joy to read for. A surprise for me was the humor they found in my short story, 'Somebody Take Care of Little Walter.' They opened my eyes to the humor that was there without my knowing it was. That story was written during one of the bleakest times of my life, and, until I was shown better, I had no idea there was any lightness to it at all. I love when an audience or a reader can teach me something. It's a beautiful thing."

The men read for 10 minutes. Joy subbed the name of one of his characters for Ron Houchin, a festival attendee, to a chorus of laughter. Gipe, however, stole the show, reading an excerpt from *Trampoline* where 15-year-old Dawn Jewell finds a pair of her panties in an unfamiliar truck at a mountain top removal site. Linda Michel-Cassidy, a fiction writer in Manning's poetry workshop, said, "Gipe is kind of an explosion. I was sitting in the front row, and it was sort of like being electrocuted in slow motion."

Food at the festival has evolved since the early days, when the staff might have spent all day sweating over meals for close to a hundred participants. The university cafeteria catered all the meals and featured traditional, comfort foods: catfish, fried chicken, barbecue, and biscuits and gravy. In the buffet line, participants swapped stories on measuring meter in Manning's poetry workshop or a trip across campus to the graveyard where Leonard Bush's leg is buried. Many made plans over baked beans and cole slaw to meet again in a couple of month's time. At her table, keynote speaker Lee Smith regaled fellow diners with a story about a reading Harry Crews gave during her tenure at North Carolina State University. He showed up half-mangled from a motorcycle accident and sporting a fresh tattoo.

Local educator and long-time festival volunteer, Tony Maxwell wandered through the crowd handing out group photos from that morning's hike. While others slept off a late night, a group met in the cafeteria parking lot for a walk to the Saddle of the Gap and a trip to the Pinnacle. The 7:00 a.m. hike in the Cumberland Gap National Park is a festival tradition. Its sign-up sheet is a running joke at the registration desk, where Maxwell can be found trying to good-naturedly enlist recruits.

Many in attendance were still mourning the loss of Jean Ritchie, who passed away on June 1, 2015. Ritchie was an instrumental part of the revival of Appalachian folk music and traditions. Her work continues to inspire artists and activists in the region. The festival sponsors the Jean Ritchie Fellowship in her honor, the largest cash prize offered to an Appalachian writer. The recipient of this year's fellowship was Jim Minick. In his remarks at the Saturday awards banquet, Minick spoke of the homesickness he's felt living away from Southern Appalachia for the past two years.

"I shape how people view these hills, how I view them; how we work to preserve their beauty or how we're part of the human impulse to destroy them for short-term profit," Minick said. "Through her long career, Jean Ritchie showed us how to use our creative gifts to speak against this destruction and at the same time love these places and people."

In her keynote address on the final evening of the festival, Smith spoke on the influence place has had on her work. At the Hindman Settlement School, Director Mike Mullins told her that she had been raised to leave Appalachia. Smith found that this was true. Her mother corrected her grammar; her father insisted she take piano lessons. All of this was in an attempt to groom the mountains out of her.

Most notably, Smith spoke of a woman coming up after a reading to say her daughter had gotten into college, but instead of being happy, the woman was deeply saddened.

"She won't ever be like us again," the woman said, and Smith agreed.

This is the experience of the writer, Smith said. The writer is forced to be an outside observer of the place she calls home.

The weekend served as a place for outsiders to gather in communion.

Everywhere, participants clustered together: around the pool table and on porches and at the Saturday evening book sale and in the cramped back room of the Gap Creek Coffeehouse. Chairs were pulled

Continued on Page 126

Press Release: *Smoke & Pickles: Recipes and Stories from a New Southern Kitchen*

Talking with Louisville's Chef Edward Lee

Q: How did a Korean-American kid from Brooklyn become an acclaimed Southern chef?

A: Being Southern is not a geographic location, it's what's in the heart—and at the center of every Southerner's heart is good home cooking. Mine comes from a place as urban as Brooklyn and as far away as Korea—and yet, I've been embraced by Kentucky. My recipes in *Smoke & Pickles* wrap their arms around many different flavors and cultures but have, at their core, a love for food that is uniquely Southern. The stories in the book are about my American experience, which I hope will inspire anyone who wants to do something unconventional. What's more outlandish than a Brooklyn-Korean kid becoming a celebrated Southern chef? But I couldn't be happier.

Q: What brought you to Louisville in the first place?

A: I was taking a road trip across the country and happened upon Louisville during Derby Weekend. It felt like home. I can't explain it really—it was one of those mysterious moments in life, when a person or place just draws you in. I didn't cook Southern food when I first moved to Louisville—in many ways I still don't cook traditional Southern anything. But as I started to observe my surroundings, rich in history and in everything from sorghum to country ham to bourbon to tobacco, I found it impossible not to be inspired by the ingredients and the stories they want to tell. So I started to pull these ingredients through my lens of food, and it was like the missing pieces of a puzzle that I had been searching for all my life.

Q: You're a Louisville chef so it would be wrong not to ask, what is your ultimate menu for a Kentucky Derby Party at home?

A: Any Derby party must start with a Jalapeno Julep. It sets the tone for the evening by telling you're in for an adventure. I'd serve snacks of Pretzel Bites with Country Ham and Pimento-Stuffed Fried Olives during the cocktail hour because, well, in Kentucky, the cocktail hour always runs past 60 minutes. For dinner, I'd start with the Kentucky Fried Quail. Small, tender and scrumptious, it says 'fancy' (though the presentation should be simple). I'd follow with the Frog Legs in Bourbon Brown Butter–frog legs are a Kentucky thing and what's more Kentucky than bourbon? Then the Spinach Salad with Blue Cheese and Lamb Bacon, familiar flavors with a bit of a twist. For the main course, I'd do the Pork Shoulder in Black BBQ Sauce and serve it with a bunch of sides, like Pickled Jicama, Soft Grits, Bourbon Glazed Carrots, and Roasted Okra Cauliflower. I'd slap them with some Chess Pie for dessert and let the bourbon cocktails flow. That's a Derby party.

Q: What kitchen utensil can't you live without?

A: A heavy cast-iron skillet.

Q: Is there a food you won't eat?

A: Roadkill. And, yes, I've been offered it several times.

Q: What's your ideal kitchen soundtrack?

A: John Prine starts it off with some nice melodic singing. Maybe a tune or two from Hazel and Alice. If I'm rolling pastries, I want to hear Big Joe Turner's "I Want a Little Girl" on repeat. If it's a long day, I'll play the Allman Brothers' "Eat a Peach," the whole thing. But I'll sneak in a few Neil Diamond songs. The whole day reaches a crescendo with some My Morning Jacket and finishes with Whitesnake's "Here I Go Again," which is less a song and more an inspirational anthem.

Q: Which recipe from the book should I rush home to make tonight?

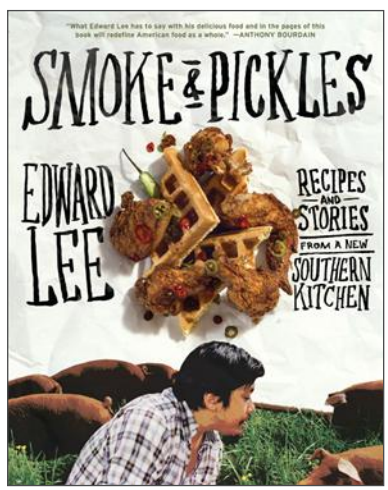
A: Start with one of the rice bowls; they are deceptively simple but a great introduction to the harmony of flavors. The Potato-Stuffed Roast Chicken (p. 78) is one of my favorites. And remember to try the Adobo Fried Chicken (p. 82): it will change the way you approach fried chicken.

Photo by Photographs by Grant Cornett

Chef Edward Lee

From Artisan Books:

Only in America can the Brooklyn-bred son of Korean immigrants grow up to be an acclaimed Southern chef. Edward Lee, the Top Chef: Texas alum and three-time James Beard Award finalist for Best Chef: Southeast, has done just that. In his first cookbook, *Smoke & Pickles* (Artisan Books; May 1, 2013; Hardcover; $29.95), Lee shares 130 recipes that mix the flavors and techniques of his Korean roots, his classical French training, and his Louisville, Kentucky home.

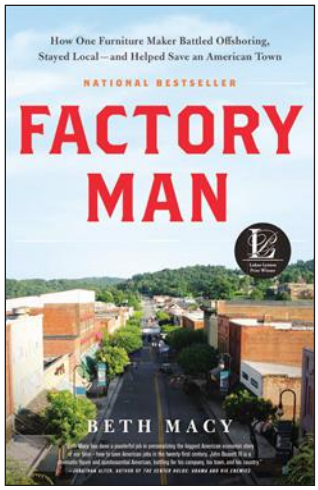


Lee is chef/owner of 610 Magnolia and MilkWood in Louisville, but the recipes in *Smoke & Pickles* are not restaurant dishes. Tested in Lee's home kitchen, these are the drinks, snacks, main dishes, vegetables, and desserts he makes for his own friends and family. Lee opens each chapter with a story that informs its recipes. As he writes, "What I cook is who I am." One story explores his beloved grandmother's life through the lens of imperfect rice. Another one links the ecstasy of tasting an illicit gyro to his decision to become a chef. Perhaps most movingly, Lee relates how pickled cabbage in two forms—kimchi and sauerkraut—connects his family's Korean traditions to those of his wife's German-Catholic family in Indiana.

Factory Man

by Beth Macy

The instant New York Times bestseller about one man's battle to save hundreds of jobs by demonstrating the greatness of American business.



The Bassett Furniture Company was once the world's biggest wood furniture manufacturer. Run by the same powerful Virginia family for generations, it was also the center of life in Bassett, Virginia. But beginning in the 1980s, the first waves of Asian competition hit, and ultimately Bassett was forced to send its production overseas.

One man fought back: John Bassett III, a shrewd and determined third-generation factory man, now chairman of Vaughan-Bassett Furniture Co, which employs more than 700 Virginians and has sales of more than $90 million. In *Factory Man,* Beth Macy brings to life Bassett's deeply personal furniture and family story, along with a host of characters from an industry that was as cutthroat as it was colorful. As she shows how he uses legal maneuvers, factory efficiencies, and sheer grit and cunning to save hundreds of jobs, she also reveals the truth about modern industry in America.

About the Author

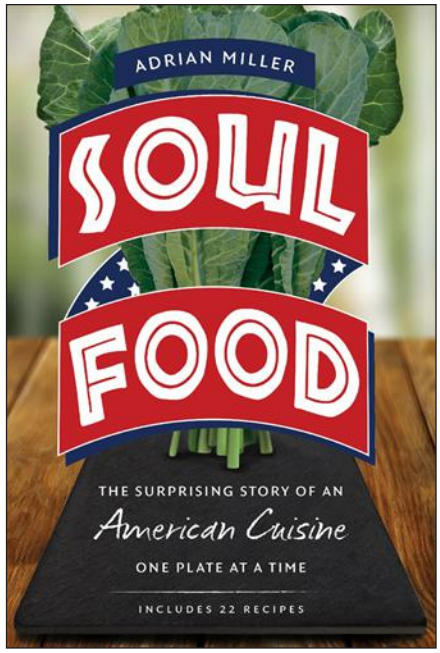
Beth Macy won the J. Anthony Lukas Work-in-Progress Award, a joint project of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard for "her extraordinary reporting and narrative skills" and her work on Factory Man. The daughter of a factory worker, she writes about outsiders and underdogs. Her articles have appeared in national magazines and the *Roanoke Times,* where her reporting has won more than a dozen national awards, including a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard. She lives in Roanoke, Virginia.

Press Release: *From The University of North Carolina Press*

Q&A with Adrian Miller

In this insightful and eclectic history, Adrian Miller delves into the influences, ingredients, and innovations that make up the soul food tradition. Focusing each chapter on the culinary and social history of one dish—such as fried chicken, chitlins, yams, greens, and "red drinks"—Miller uncovers how it got on the soul food plate and what it means for African American culture and identity.

Miller argues that the story is more complex and surprising than commonly thought. Four centuries in the making and fusing European, Native American, and West African cuisines, soul food—in all its fried, pork-infused, and sugary glory—is but one aspect of African American culinary heritage. Miller discusses how soul food has become incorporated into American culture and explores connections to identity politics, bad health raps, and healthier alternatives. This refreshing look at one of America's most celebrated, mythologized, and maligned cuisines is enriched by spirited sidebars, photographs, and 22 recipes.



Adrian Miller is a writer, attorney, and certified barbecue judge who lives in Denver, CO. He served as a special assistant to President Bill Clinton, a senior policy analyst for Colorado Governor Bill Ritter Jr., and as a Southern Foodways Alliance board member.

A conversation with Adrian Miller
Author of *Soul Food: The Surprising Story of an American Cuisine, One Plate at a Time*

Q: You aim to explore "where Southern food ends and soul food begins." What's the difference between the two?

A: Inside the South, the distinctions between the two are so subtle that it almost seems meaningless. In my experience, black Southerners are just as quick to call soul food "home cooking" or "country cooking." I found that the Southern diet, particularly after the Civil War, is demarcated more by class than race. In other words, blacks and whites of a similar socioeconomic background pretty much eat the same foods. That said, I find that soul food dishes tend to have more intensity than their counterparts in Southern cuisine. They're sweeter, more highly spiced and tend to have a higher fat content—all the things that one would expect from a cuisine using a lot of bland starches and lesser cuts of meat. Then there are the differences in preparation. Soul food joints and home cooks tend to have more bone-in meat selections (neckbones, smothered chicken, and meaty soups) and hardcore offerings like chitlins.

Q: How did you research this book?

A: This book is a decade in the making! For much of that time, I felt like a graduate student spending every moment I could outside of work collecting and reading hundreds of cookbooks of all types, looking through digitized newspapers, periodicals and other electronic sources. I crowd-sourced information through social media, read through thousands of reminiscences of slavery, conducted interviews of current soul food practitioners, and talked to and asked questions of anyone who would indulge me.

Q: *Soul Food* dispels a number of myths. What one fact do you most hope readers will take away from the book?

A: After reading my book, the reader should have a deeper appreciation for soul food's complexity and a deeper understanding of what soul food actually is. Soul food has its unhealthy aspects, but so do most cuisines. The deep-fried delights, the rich repasts, and the sugary triumphs fall in line with the time-immemorial tendency to show off one's best dishes to those outside one's group. That celebration food is not meant to be the sum of the cuisine. Soul food has a strong tradition of making delectable dishes featuring vegetables and unprocessed ingredients. In fact, many of the celebrated and faddish "superfoods" that are good for your body—dark, leafy green vegetables and sweet potatoes, for example—have been soul food staples for centuries. This is the exact opposite of the current conventional wisdom on soul food.

The Kentucky Bourbon Trail
Heads, Hearts, & Trails:

Discovering Kentucky's Potable Feast

by Jennifer Eskew

"You can't have a discussion about Southern food and not talk about bourbon!"

This upstart remark sprang from casual conversation and landed me this assignment, a journey that would result in 2,032 miles traveled on my motorbike, a Kawasaki Ninja 650R. Like all good complainers, I hit and run. This time, though, I was rewarded with a task and what came to be a rather daunting responsibility. However, I remain true to my statement: talking about Southern food without including bourbon is not done, never.

I am a proud—sometimes fierce—Eastern Kentucky native. I do not pretend to be a bourbon connoisseur. Even though we tilled up pieces of ancestral stills often in our holler garden, I drank bourbon rarely—often feeling that my lack of bourbon taste and experience could be regarded as a serious character defect…but it's one remedied.

I am a motorcyclist, and this year I have been riding for two decades, over half my life. I admit to being moved by Southern chef Alton Brown's Feasting on Asphalt. Two seasons follow Brown and his crew east to west and south to north, sampling road food along the ride. Much lauded by most serious motorcyclists I know, the series is an accurate depiction of what most of us do: ride around in big circles and tangled routes looking for fun roads and great food. Brown reveals in the series that although there was a distillery close to his route, bourbon and motorcycles don't mix, so they headed on their way. I wanted to fill in the gap. I must issue one vehement disclaimer: there was no impaired riding on this trip. Anyone who's experienced a distillery tour will agree that all the samples together never come close to one proper drink. We were well-fed and hydrated, tempered by sessions of standing around, looking cool. Furthermore, every rider on these trips were experienced, trained in motorcycle safety, licensed, insured, and responsible. Every rider wore the appropriate riding attire, including a full-faced helmet. We all live to ride, and live to see another day.

As a discoverer of stories, part of what drew me to each new stop on the journey that follows was the promise of historical crumbs. Likely unverifiable oral histories and tall tales were given at each distillery, sometimes with a wink, a nod, and a smile. While enjoying the stories to come, realize that they are not limited to claims of being the first for this or the only one for that. Strands of delicious Southern storytelling wind their way through these elaborate process descriptions, tales of humble origins, and the sorrows of failure, infusing the entire experience with a quality not found through mere scientific explanations.

-Jennifer E.

Curious and philosophical, I document our travels as a bourbon explorer, seeking to connect this now-refined drink back to its rural roots, led by observation and my senses. What does bourbon mean to Kentucky, and what does Kentucky mean to bourbon?

When considering drink as place, bourbon defines the concept. Technically—for import and export standards—bourbon does not have to be from Kentucky to be called bourbon, but try telling that to a native Kentuckian and even most aficionados. Within her borders, only bourbon made in the United States can be called bourbon, and 95 percent of the world's market is produced in the Bluegrass State. The recipe is also somewhat mandated: the grain mixture must be at least 51 percent corn, and it must be distilled to no higher than 160 proof (but enter the barrel at 125 proof or less), which requires some dilution with pure water. It ages in new, charred oak barrels for at least four years. Anything aged less than four years must say so. For example, bottles labeled "straight" are two-year minimum age and must include an age on the packaging. No artificial colorants are allowed in the bourbon, for reasons we were later to discover.

* * *

A Sunday in Sept.: Between Lawrenceburg and Versailles

Our first distillery visit is to Wild Turkey, between Lawrenceburg and Versailles, on a changeable but pleasant September Sunday. The day begins hazy, with some light rain that doesn't bother any of us from what I can tell. Ron leads the group through twisty, deserted back roads all morning, passing innumerable simple churches. As we ride, the day begins to warm and clear. The production complex is perched high atop a ridge above the Kentucky River. We rumble over a tall S-bridge parallel to a picturesque cantilever railroad bridge leading to the distillery. At the top of the climb, on opposite sides of the two-lane highway, dark gray warehouses crown stark against a bright blue sky. This landscape is one of my favorite on the entire trail. Our tour is small, and our guide is professional and friendly as he leads us though the works. The visitor's center is new, and it's obvious that the bourbon boom of the last few years has fed reinvestment in property and tourism. The environment is corporate-monied and marketing-centric, and perhaps that's necessary as the Kentucky Bourbon Trail grows in popularity. The month of our visit is the 60th anniversary of Jimmy Russell, retained as Master Distiller for as long as he desires. In January 2015, his son Eddie was appointed co-Master Distiller, working alongside his dad. They have nearly a hundred years of combined experience. At Wild Turkey, the corn used in the mash is from Bagdad, Kentucky, and the wheat is from Montana. The rushes of sweet, musty corn are heady and warming in the fermentation room. The copper still in this facility is fifty-two feel tall, viewed through a window. The tasting at Wild Turkey is where Ron encounters his new favorite bourbon: Russell's Reserve, named for the two Master Distillers and aged 10 years. At this point, Kay is not a fan of bourbon in general, preferring cocktails and white spirits, but American Honey woos her. This is the first tour where we find ourselves lingering with the tour guide after other visitors have drifted away. The guide becomes more conversational as we talk about what we're doing, giving us several ideas on how to use their offerings. Among his personal favorites is bourbon with cream soda. American Honey is versatile: over ice cream (he recommends butter pecan), on pancakes, in oatmeal cookies, and added to unsweet tea. Wild Turkey is one of the places where we could spend half a day, and we take in the fantastic view of the trees, river, and bridges from their hospitable patio before setting off.

From Wild Turkey we ride to Woodford Reserve in Versailles It is nestled deep in the bluegrass, stone fences and horse

The Cast of Mobile Characters

I thought it would be a good idea to visit a distillery for some history, samples, and conversational questions and answers. Somewhere in the talking and planning it was decided to ride to every stop of the official Kentucky Bourbon Trail over the course of a year. I had enlisted many of my motorcycling companions at some point, and we had ourselves an expedition. The riders who made it to every distillery are a motley crew.

- **Jennifer:** A Kentucky native, Jennifer is a rider, motorcyclist, crafter, and cook.
- **Brandon:** Jennifer's husband and another native Kentuckian. A gifted mechanic who loves bourbon and is willing to try anything new.
- **Shannon:** Also a native Kentuckian, a photographer, a long-time riding buddy, and friend who studies bourbon and local roads with the intent of a scholar.
- **Ron:** A design engineer, a stellar motorcyclist, and a ready adventurer; he was route master for the entire trip!
- **Kay:** The CFO of a local industry and Ron's wife, accomplished in the unsung art of being a good passenger—one with spectacular good humor, having been dumped in cold creeks more than once from the back of Ron's Goliath BMW on previous adventures.
- **Jordan:** Ron's grandson, new rider, amateur dirt bike racer, full-time high school student

The Bikes

- Kawasaki Ninja 650R (Jennifer)
- Kawasaki ZRX 1200 (Brandon)
- Honda ST1300 (Brandon's replacement bike)
- BMW R1100GS (Ron and Kay)
- Suzuki V-Strom DL650 (Shannon)
- Suzuki DR650 (Jordan)
- BMW R1100GS (Jake and Cheryl)

The Miles Travelled: 2,032

Trip One: 679 Miles

- Day 1: Springfield, TN. to Berea, KY.: 212
- Day 2: Berea, KY. to Berea, KY. (Round Trip): 190
- Day 3: Berea, KY. to Springfield, TN.: 277

Trip Two: 343 Miles

- Day Trip: Springfield, TN. to Springfield, TN. via Loretto, KY.: 171

Trip Three: 355 Miles

- Day 1: Springfield, TN. to Elizabethtown, KY.: 163
- Day 2: Bardstown, KY. to Springfield, TN.: 192

Trip Four: 655 Miles

- Day 1: Springfield, TN. to Lexington, KY.: 222
- Day 2: Lexington, KY. to Lexington, KY. (Round Trip): 170
- Day 3: Lexington, KY. to Springfield, TN.: 263

farms line the winding roads. Woodford is one of my favorite bourbons, smooth and rich with caramel and vanilla, and prior to this trip, Woodford is the only bourbon distillery I had ever visited. The visitor center has changed a great deal since my first visit. The proximity to Lexington and Versailles combined with easy access from I-64 make this a popular tourist stop.

We are armed with headphones and ushered onto buses to cross the steep and stony property. The grounds and buildings are gorgeous, and after all the tours we've taken along the trail, remembering this setting makes me sigh.

Woodford Reserve is the oldest distillery on the trail, and it shows. Old, well-maintained stone buildings with black barred windows and heavy wooden doors stand next to a creek that winds through the valley. Each building here is still active in some capacity, and the history and use of each one is explained to us. Woodford features a much-photographed small track system used to move barrels from the buildings and onto trucks, and our tour groups are accompanied by aloof and incurious cats; anecdotes about them are had from any guide. The Woodford stills are the handsomest in Kentucky: three huge Scottish copper pot stills are in use. They were installed by the Scots workmen who built them. They appear to be old-fashioned. They are in a sense, but they are computer controlled and heated by natural gas. Here, we learn that copper removes the sulfides and makes the distillate smooth. From the stills the bourbon is placed in the barrels. For a few thousand bucks, anyone can join the ranks of Jerry Bruckheimer and Russell Crowe and purchase one's own barrel. The worker who creates the barrel is known as the cooper, and the cooperage—the sum of that labor—is owned by the distillery, and the unique bottles are made by Owens Corning, which has its localized industry a few miles away.

Late May: near Bardstown

On the last day in May, we ride again. The day begins cool and fresh. This time we are joined by Ron's grandson Jordan, fresh out of motorcycle safety training and with a new permit. This is his first motorcycle trip riding his own bike, a Suzuki DR650, and he nails it.

I love Kentucky…and it's impossible to feel it any more than on a day like this one. It is a thunder in my heart, a heavy, deep, rekindled love that feels like home. I am from this place; it made me to burn bright and loud. As we head northeast on Ron's excellent path, I feel this place as the genesis of all worn clichés about "America the Beautiful."

We carve out back roads under a quilt of thick gray storm clouds and bright blue patches of sky. I suspect that we all laugh at a lonely, shaved alpaca standing belly-deep in a farm pond. We bend against crosswinds that carry the floral tang of cattle and hogs. The wheat is showing off a graceful ombre transition from bright green roots to golden tops; it moves ethereally like long hair under water. As with all the active distilleries to come, I catch the faint sweetness in the air before seeing the new metal warehouses built along Loretto's main road. Ron leads the way down to the distillery, and we are surrounded by neat black barns with red shutters bordering small dull windows. We pay the fee and are welcomed with lemonade and bourbon-flavored coffee, allowed to wander inside the house, and offered a shady seat on one of the porches. Brandon and I offer a pat to the local cat, who we found hunting bugs and mice in the overgrowth behind the old firehouse.

On the tour, we learn that the Maker's Mark location has been operating as a distillery since 1805 and has been labeled as Maker's Mark since 1953 when it was purchased by T. William Samuels Sr.

Strong smells of sweet yeast and fresh corn are everywhere, heady and warm. Our guide tells us that most of the grains are local. The yeast is a 150-year-old recipe. Here, we taste all stages of the fermentation process. The first vat's mixture is almost like breakfast cereal, the second vat's hints of stale beer, and the third vat's contents is where most people can taste what is to come.

Before the 1950s, bourbon was considered a cowboy's drink due to its roughness, but Bill Samuels wanted his bourbon to be smoother. So he began learning how to make bread with his mash recipes and picked the best one for his product. From the beginning of his tenure, women have been involved in the brand: all designs, the iconic bottle with red wax, the mark, the labels, the fonts, and even the name "Maker's Mark" were designed by his wife, Margie. The labels are printed and cut on-site with 1930s-era equipment, and every visitor is gifted one from the press.

None of the buildings—known as rickhouses— on site have electricity except for the buildings used for tours, so there are no elevators. The barrels are moved by hand every few months, from the top to the bottom. All the bottling is done on site, as well. (The one exception is airport bottles.)

We move to the tasting room, which contains the most appreciative group of tasters we encountered on the tour. We sample Maker's White, the white dog of the distillery and available exclusively on site. Next is the familiar regular recipe, followed by Makers 46, which is made by taking the regular bourbon and adding caramelized French oak barrel staves for 9 to 12 more weeks—including an overwintering. There is a wide rumble of recognition in the room, appreciating the difference between it and the traditional recipe. At the end, each of us are promised a bourbon chocolate, eliciting "oohs" and "aahs" from a satisfied audience. Brandon is a fan of novelty, so we spend more at this gift shop than at any other along the tour, packing home bottles of the white, the cask strength, and a huge box of chocolates.

We intended to include Heaven Hill on this trip, but we rode so long and loitered so much at Maker's Mark that we had to leave for home. I reflected on the ride back: the place makes the taste. I was not a fan of Maker's before this day, but the burn of the prickly heat of direct sun, the smooth shroud of humidity seen from great distances, the sharp scent of nearby livestock, and the bitterness of new wood and its charring: I could taste every bit of it, most consistently, the sweetness and richness that can come with time. Bourbon is a spirit that lives on two hundred years of hindsight, its confidence well-earned through the endurance of Kentucky's changeable summers and winters.

Almost August: near Glasgow

On a hot, humid, downright hellish day in late July, we brave the steaming asphalt and an unforgiving sun and head to Heaven Hill.

We pick up Shannon somewhere near Glasgow, where he sweats in his leather jacket waiting for us. Ron could ride forever. He's a tireless badass, a road warrior polished by decades of miles and misadventures. Either his seat or the bike's seat is made of some alien material that allows him to feel no pain. He's been known to lead a trip on nothing but gas station water and beef jerky. I refuse to surrender. We ride until I think I want to either kill him or die, but we make our first stop at a rural IGA market. Business casual men riding scooters converge on Ron, while Kay's journey toward the ladies room with its sink of cold, clean water is delayed by chatty locals. She maintains politeness. Brandon and Shannon go in search of food and drink, and I explain to the cashier and customers the meaning behind my Bitter Southerner shirt. (I had no idea we were so close to Indiana.)

Hydrated, if not refreshed, we gear up once more and head into misery.

The roads roll, their curves cradled by creeks or shaded by wilting trees are a small relief lasting but a breath. The ascents go gracefully as if held aloft by gentle hands to be kissed by the sun, an offering. Any other day, this ride would have been amazing, but not today. It's a scorcher, nearing 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Our levitations feel more sacrificial than celebratory. It is apparent which of my shoulders the sun is hitting most as we twist northward. The heat and humidity drop dullness over me. My active brain drifts from the bike and road and lingers on my new favorite television show's theme song: a jangly, desert tale of a hot and dusty death. Most motorcyclists fear or avoid rain. I long for it, but rain will not come. We ride through regions like those surrounding Maker's Mark, but the landscape has changed with the seasons. The wind-swayed wheat has been shaved to within a foot of

Photo by Ron Brant

the earth, stalks bristle and brown in one field, neighboring lush heaps of soybeans in the next. We take tight corners into tall, wide-leaved stalks of corn, their height and close proximity turning the roads maze-like.

Of all the locations we ride up to, the smell of Heaven Hill in Bardstown, Kentucky earns its name.

The heat and the sun are blasting caramel—my most beloved sweet—thick in the air. Despite the weather, I feel I could sit at the fork in the road and breathe forever. This facility is also new, labeled as the "Bourbon Heritage Center," boasting a large gift shop and many museum-quality dioramas and curated displays of artifacts from bourbon history. Our tour guide is Paul, an older gentleman with a perfect balance of ready wit and dry humor. He jokes that Heaven Hill stole the first Master Distiller, and adds the anecdote that every distillery but Wild Turkey has had a Beam family Master Distiller in their past operations. He credits this to the outcome of a poker game, which wasn't explained further and got a lot of laughs.

This tour provided answers to a lot of my random questions. The rickhouses turn black with "distiller's mold" as a result of the aging process of the bourbon inside, and while many distilleries paint their buildings black to disguise the resulting grime, Heaven Hill does not, and they sell it as honesty. These structures are very simple, built with convection ventilation. Ten to twelve years ago, neighboring Jim Beam distillery lost several warehouses to a tornado, but the ones with this centralized feature stayed erect. Also, in each warehouse is a plumb bob to gauge the weight of the product against the settling of the structure, each of which holds 15,000 to 20,000 barrels at 500 pounds each. None of these warehouses have, or have ever had, artificial lighting except for the lift machines. Once placed, the barrels are not rotated, but barcoded, to keep track of time. Premium bourbons come from the upper floors, the extremes in climate bringing on better aging characteristics. Like most other bourbon distilleries, barrels are made locally, and each distillery has its own assigned char percentage on its barrels. Barrels are made without iron components, as contact with iron spoils the distillate. While all the distillery tours mention the importance and necessity of the limestone water, none do it as well as here, where they have routed a limestone spring on the grounds to show how the limestone filters out any naturally-occurring iron in the water source. Paul gave us the history of the term "bottled in bond," which results in a government inspection bond sticker placed over the cap. Before the bourbon regulations, some unscrupulous distillers would add tobacco juice, iodine, battery acid, and other elements that could be poisonous to falsify the color obtained by aging. The sticker proves the brand was inspected and that the consumers are getting what they're paying for.

The Heaven Hill tour doesn't address the 1996 fire with much depth, as they claim to want to look to the future and not dwell on the past. Photographs and lists of the damage have their own small display, tucked in a corner away from the other exhibits. The fire fascinates me. Started from an unknown cause, the massive fire took out half the distillery operation and seven warehouses full of aging stock, and to this day there is not a distillery on site. The 1996 fire is listed as one of the worst industrial fires in the nation, creating rivers of running alcohol fire and convection winds so strong that they produced 35-story flames. Despite this, there were no injuries, and every worker was back on schedule the next day.

The neighboring distilleries, in fierce but friendly competition, pitched in and leased their facilities to allow Heaven Hill to distill product in their houses so that there was no interruption in production. (They bought a place of their own in Louisville, Bernheim Distillery, which doubled in size in 2015.) The sense of community in this story is moving: this fire may be the most famous, but it is not the only one that's happened and not the only distillery to rise from the ashes.

We move back into the Heritage Center for the conclusion of the tour and the tasting. Paul tells us that Heaven Hill pays $4.5 million per week in federal taxes, so we shouldn't doubt for a second that Uncle Sam wants us to drink. This money has an impact on the local economy and the state. Paul explains with great sympathy the consequences of Prohibition on the communities that once thrived by producing spirits. Thousands of employees, sometimes whole families, lost their livelihoods and careers. Paul speaks well of his coworkers, the operations, and the owning family of Heaven Hill, saying this is a dream job, and it shows.

We are shown some of the other brands that Heaven Hill owns, including Evan Williams, Elijah Craig, Hpnotiq, PAMA pomegranate liqueur, and a

Photo by Shannon Hall

ginger liqueur from France that I need to find again. Our tasting included Bernheim wheated whiskey, made from winter wheat as a primary grain instead of corn. Brandon buys a bottle of Bernheim and once home, makes light work of it. We try Larceny, named for bourbon legend John E. Fitzgerald. Larceny is available in 13 states at the time of this tasting. We are introduced to Select Stock, a spirit that spends eight years in the bourbon barrel and then two or more years in a cognac barrel, available only at the center. Paul explains the difference between married and blended drinks: married are the same product put together, blended are different makers or styles put together.

And then Paul changes my life.

"What bourbon is the best bourbon?" he asks. "The one you love the best."

And that is that. No snobbery, no elitism, he goes on to explain why two fingers of good bourbon consumed over too short a time is a waste, as one of the pleasures of the drink is the lingering finish. Why every drop of water you add to bourbon makes it different and your own because isn't that what the distillers do? That the best way to enjoy bourbon is the way you want to and to not be talked out of it by people who think they know better or are dedicated to some "right way."

I didn't know from where the term "two fingers" came, and I didn't understand that lingering finish was felt in the torso and not the throat. I did not appreciate that it is not a crime to drink as slow as I wished. Here I discovered that unlike every other drink I consume, I do not like bourbon with ice. I do not like it cold, or with added water, or accompanied by anything. For the first time, I feel it where it needs to be felt. He provides many personal anecdotes of which I can't remember any detail but his pleasant spirit. I was too enraptured with him to take any more notes. He ended his conversation with a caution about drinking—and thinking—wisely, topped off with a bourbon chocolate and a goodbye.

We head to dinner and then to a hotel for the night in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. I spend a regrettable amount of time on the bathroom floor, nauseated from a heat-induced migraine that no amount of water or medicine will conquer. More or less cured, we have time the next morning because the Jim Beam tour, the next distillery on our list, doesn't start until noon. A boisterous student lacrosse team has invaded the hotel, so we stage-left to a breakfast chain to eat in relative peace.

The Jim Beam distillery and the grounds are gorgeous. We ride up a smooth, well-maintained road past a branded white barn that marks the entrance from the highway. We arrive early and stroll the grounds, and Shannon takes many pictures ahead of the crowd. There is a small barbecue café on site, but it is too hot for any of us to be interested in such heavy food, so we grab a few Ale-8s and wait for the tour to begin. Jim Beam is a big name on the tour and becomes busy. This tour does not offer detailed distillery tours on the weekends, so we are only shown the rickhouses. No longer mere tourists out for a Sunday jaunt, explanations of how bourbon is made is rote to us.

This is now serious business.

I focus on the individual details of the distillery. Jim Beam has a long and distinguished pedigree as both distillers and businessmen. The railroad in Bardstown is what made Jim Beam a national brand, and convenient, too, as the current site was purchased two years after Prohibition, chosen for its limestone beds.

The distillery's 70 warehouses contain eight million barrels. This tour is short, and I'm not ungrateful because it is another hot and miserable day. We head to the air-conditioned tasting location and are affronted by several tall machines installed with upside-down bottles of the many Beam holdings. We get two samples, fewer and less than any other distillery, but we are provided with darling branded glasses which we are allowed to keep. Presented with odd, micro-chipped cards preloaded with two turns each, we are allowed to choose our samples by inserting the card into the machines around the room. This tasting offers exemplary choice, but I am hot and grouchy and not in the mood. The men of our group try the premium bourbons, including one experimental—not yet released to the public—and Basil Hayden's, which elicits thoughtful and approving nods. Kay tries the liqueurs but seems in the same frame of mind as I am. I sample what I've not seen or tried before, but the affordability and accessibility of Jim Beam during my college years brings the saying "familiarity breeds contempt" to mind. I settle by the cold water and put my new glass to good use, trying to hydrate in dreaded anticipation of the ride home. This day is not wasted, however, as I am reminded again that the mood brought to the

Continued on Page 81

Book Review: *Bourbon: a Savor the South Cookbook, by Kathleen Purvis*

Taking bourbon on an adventure

by Jennifer Eskew

Kathleen Purvis takes bourbon on an adventure out of the bars and into the kitchen in a comprehensive new cookbook from the Savor the South series.

Extensive research into bourbon history and manufacturing provide Kathleen Purvis with ample material to put forth an effective explanation of what bourbon is and how it works, giving context to her use of the spirit in her recipes. She approaches the inclusion of bourbon wisely and gently, allowing it to maintain its own flavorful strength, lending character to the food.

Advanced cooks or purists unhappy with the inclusion of quick ingredients like coffee powders, artificial whipped toppings, or boxed cake mixes can easily substitute their own scratch methods, and there is room for tinkering if something doesn't quite appeal. I appreciated the shortcuts, the unfussy ingredients readily available in rural and small towns, and the advice on which bourbon to use.

The anecdotes are useful and the notes educational. Contextual details and techniques that can be expanded on in other cooking are included, such as the spread on simple syrup and instructions on how to line a pan with foil without making rips. Recipes good for making-ahead are noted, as are storage guidelines. I am especially happy with the inset about cooking with alcohol, which handily dispels the myth that the booze burns off during cooking. (Give us bourbon balls at the office please!)

We made the bacon bourbon for a bacon fanatic friend who received it with much joy. My husband has adopted the Manhattan recipe for life. I am not a fan of mint juleps, but the tea version of the drink is refreshing and convenient. The orange-bourbon Bundt cake is fun to make, and incidentally is easy to transport 250 miles on the back of a motorcycle.

When my group of riding buddies completed the Kentucky Bourbon Trail, we sat down with this book and put together a celebratory potluck.

The family of vegetarians took the bourbon dogs recipe and used it with tofu, and they drove to our house with the windows down, sure they would have been arrested if they'd been pulled over. They let us keep the leftovers, which my husband dumped over a pile of white rice and finished off the next day in a satisfying lunch.

The bourbon pimento cheese owes a nod to Kentucky's delicious beer cheese, but while this recipe tastes fine, the texture left something to be desired. Chilled, the mixture was crumbly and at room temperature it separated.

In the recipe for bourbon-ginger pork tenderloin, I accidentally swapped the ratios of Worcestershire sauce and soy sauce, but since my marinade was made with Knob Creek (all I had on hand at the time), I wasn't about to throw it away. The recipe is forgiving, and the pork was a hit.

Another cook brought the bourbon baked beans in a tinkered recipe – using the sauce from the book and a mixture of her own favorite beans; it was a sturdy but not heavy side, good both hot and cold.

The bourbon-pecan sweet potatoes are a well-balanced recipe that is sweet without forgetting a substantial vegetable is involved.

The bourbon barbecue sauce is sweet and thick, maybe too sweet for some. I baked skinless chicken breasts in it, but it would stand up nicely to strong meats and anything basted under broiler or on a grill, and also anything fried, lending some companionable complexity to the texture of anything crunchy.

The bourbon-fudge pie finished our evening off just right. Great for adults, mixing coffee, chocolate, nuts, and bourbon in a rich dessert that is satisfying on a deep sigh level without being too sugary.

The recipes in this book are simple enough to mark the occasional family dinner, but where it shines is for special events and potlucks. The recipes—and the people who bring them—will surely become favorites at any gathering.

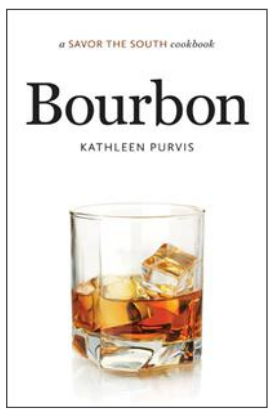
Photo by Shannon Hall

Woodford Reserve gift shop

From the Publisher, The University of North Carolina Press

In this spirited little cookbook, Purvis explores the history, mythology, and culinary star power of this quintessential Southern liquor.

"In researching this book, I learned even more about cooking with bourbon—how to keep its flavor from being overwhelmed by other flavors or dissipating from heat, how to play to its strengths as a glaze or as a match for sweet and savory ingredients," she said.



Featuring both classic and cutting-edge cocktails, the cookbook ranges well beyond beverages to present bourbon as a distinct ingredient in appetizers, entrées, side dishes, and desserts.

From *Classic Mint Julep to Bourbon-Ginger Grilled Pork Tenderloin* to *Pecan Bourbon Balls* to *Bourbon-Chicken Liver Pâté,* the 54 recipes in *Bourbon* are punctuated by Purvis's spirited sense of humor.

Her recipes encourage readers to experiment with bourbon and to appreciate the versatility and uniqueness of the classic drink.

"Along the way, I developed a new respect for that old brown liquor our dads knew," she said. "After all that work to get bourbon in a bottle, don't just keep it there. Open it, drink it, mix with it, cook with it. It was made to be enjoyed."

Kathleen Purvis is the author of *Pecans*: a SAVOR THE SOUTH® cookbook and food editor of the Charlotte Observer. In addition, she is a member of the Southern Foodways Alliance and the James Beard Foundation.

ABOVE: Photo by Shannon Hall

glass has as much effect as any ice or water. Several months later, by accident, I find that Knob Creek, a nine-year-premium bourbon made by Jim Beam and available for sample that day, is my new (and current) favorite bourbon, and I kick myself for not paying more attention.

On our way out of the distillery, Shannon rides ahead to get some action shots, and then we stop at the white barn. We ride up to the front through the grass and park for a photo op, I'm sure to the dismay of the carload of people who have stopped to stare at us. We ride home, hot and tired, splitting off as our group separates and this trip ends.

A Saturday in Downtown River City

The next weekend, in the beginning of August, we head up to Louisville, Kentucky. I remember little about this ride except a wry observation that while most GPS devices have an option to avoid highways, I'm sure that Ron's allows him to choose goat paths.

Our first stop is at the relative newcomer, Bulleit, which began distillation under the current brand in the late 1980s. The Bulleit tour is named the "Bulleit Frontier Whiskey Experience" with tours at the Stitzel-Weller facility. This Stitzel-Weller site was built in 1935, but the company produced through Prohibition. Our exuberant tour guide Sylvia expands on my favorite historical tidbit: during the dry years, one pint of whiskey every 10 days could be approved as a medicinal allowance for each man, woman, and child in a family. There were over six million prescriptions written and filled. Prohibition was the sickest time in America.

The famous Pappy Van Winkle began his career here, eventually acquiring holdings and beginning a dynasty of family, apprenticed owners, and Master Distillers who moved on to form other well-known brands, such as Maker's Mark.

Surviving both the Great Depression and rebuilding after Prohibition when resources were low, what is now known as Stitzel-Weller

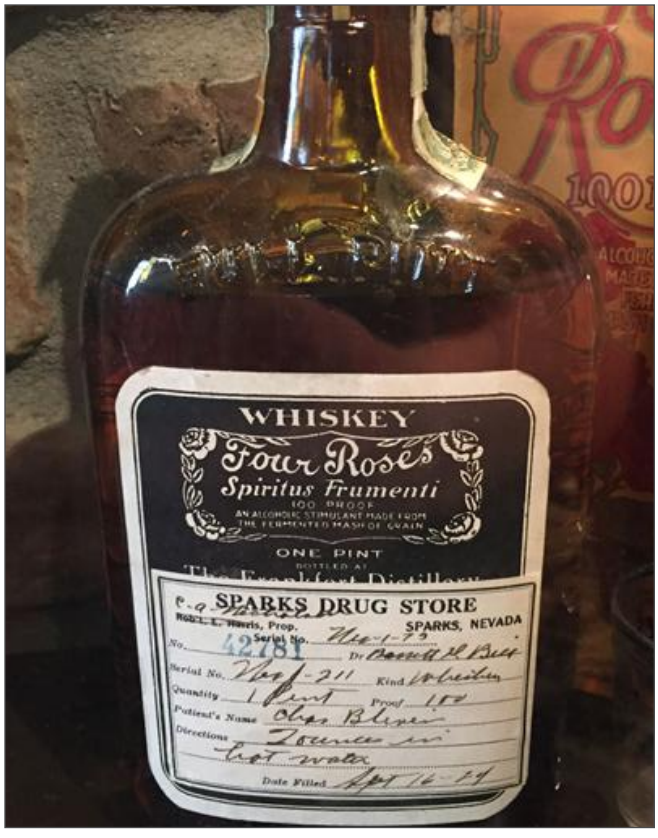


Photo by Jennifer Eskew

could not overcome the decline of bourbon's popularity in the 1970s, when vodka and other clear spirits began to outsell bourbon with terrible force. They sold their holdings to Norton-Simon and left. The company and the facility changed hands many times in these years until 1986 when the company that became Diageo purchased it. In 2014, Bulleit opens the historic site where anyone can walk through Pappy's old office. No commercial distillation takes place here now, but there is a small working distillation room that provides quality control and experimentation on a small scale. Aging space is used by several labels (and perhaps other brands), and they have a bottling line in addition to hosting tours and using their historic on-site cooperage to illustrate maintenance and repair of barrels. Popular premium Weller brands like I.W. Harper never ended production, but they are distilled at other facilities and then sold as exports. In 2014, bourbon outsold vodka again, and I.W. Harper is now back in the United States and available everywhere. Bulleit bourbon itself is made at another distillery until Bulleit's own distillery opens in Shelbyville in 2016. (We walked by the construction site while we were in town, and it looks promising.)

Sylvia is the first tour guide to bring up the term "heads, hearts, and tails," which is how distillate comes out of the stills by stages. Using a handsome miniature model and samples of the white dog, she explains how the heads and tails are put back into the distillation cycle for refinement, while the heart is used for barreling and aging, each level cut at the discretion of the Master Distiller.

With the small cooperage being on site as a back drop, Sylvia goes into great detail about the barrels and why they are so important. The barrels that most Kentucky distilleries use likely come from the same cooper. The cooper makes barrels using no nails, no adhesives, no iron. Here we learn that iron in water is bourbon's mortal enemy, turning it black and bitter. Limestone water here, as everywhere, is prized for its natural ability for filter iron and other unpleasant minerals from the water. All barrels are built by hand, from oak. Over the years, attempts have been made to age bourbon in other containers, but all have failed. White oak barrels are the standard, nearly air tight when made properly. When it is charred, it releases compounds that smell and taste like vanilla. During the summer, when the barrels expand in the heat, those compounds are imparted into the bourbon. In the winter, when the barrels contract, the bourbon held in the wood is pushed back into the container, bringing with it the smoke from the char. Kentucky's changeable and extreme weather—with its cold winters, hot summers, and humidity—is the reason why such fine spirits can be aged in a few years, whereas in colder climates, such as Scotland, the same type of product can take upwards of 15 years. Barrels can be used once for bourbon, but the Bulleit barrels are contracted out to other Diageo brands when aging is finished in Kentucky.

Bulleit is the first tour where I finish all my samples. Sylvia is a true enthusiast, ripping off names of her favorites with glee and giving credit to bartenders and their creations for making Bulleit such a popular bourbon for cocktails. She recommends Old Weller Antique 107 and refers to W.L. Weller 12 as the "poor man's Pappy." Diageo is releasing Blade and Bow Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey (a new brand), using the last remaining Stitzer-Weller-made bourbon in the process. Bulleit 10 year is an immediate favorite with everyone in the group; one of these bottles finds its way into my saddlebag for further experimentation at home.

The official tour over and other participants gone, we stay with Sylvia for another half hour, telling stories, asking questions, and discussing history. We discover that the recent heist of the Pappy Van Winkle stock has possibly elevated the brand name in popular culture beyond what any connoisseur's palate report could do. The story has

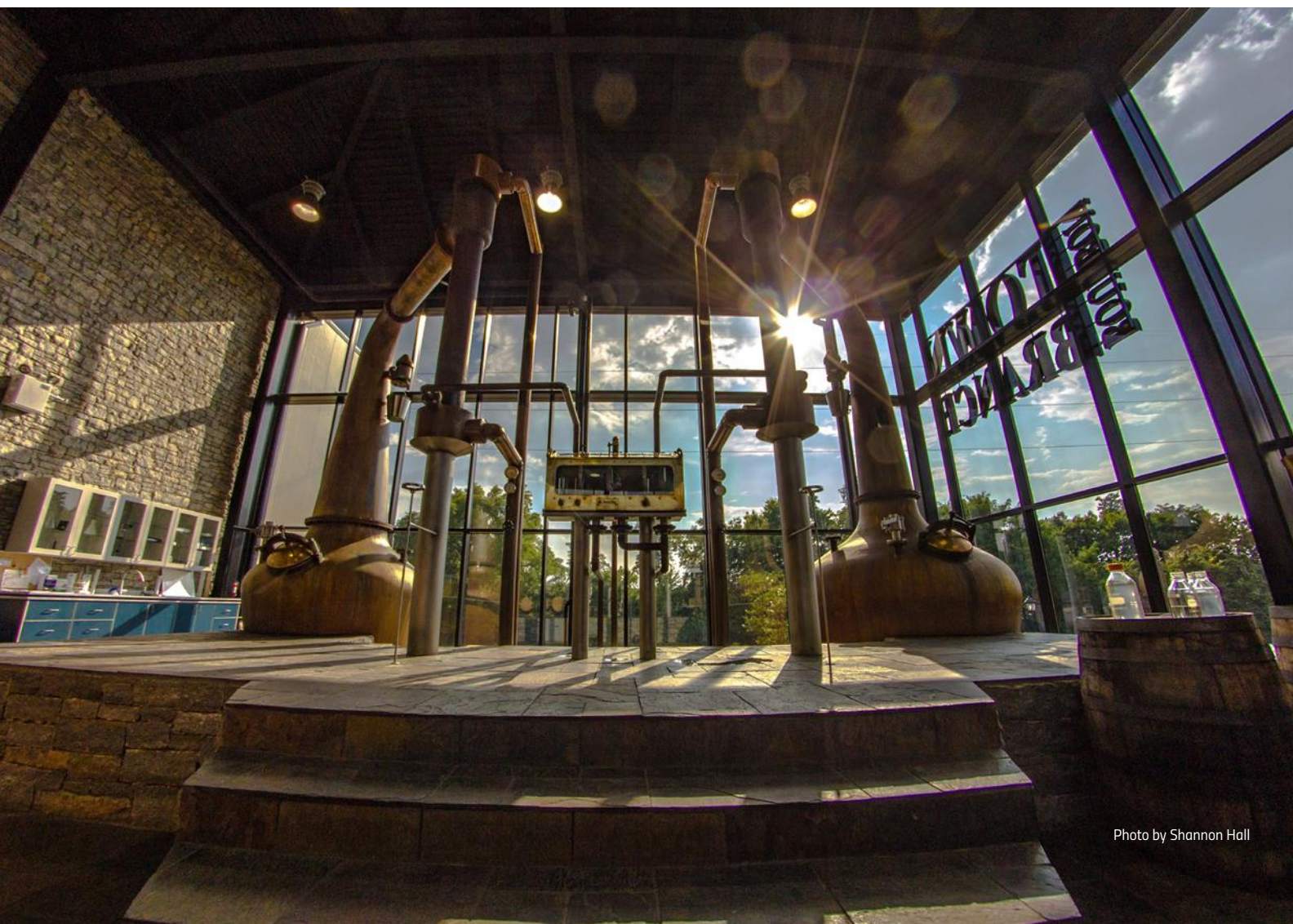


Photo by Shannon Hall

already become the stuff of myth and legend.

From Bulleit, we venture into the heart of Louisville, to the Evan Williams Bourbon Experience. We've already discovered that Evan Williams is a product of Heaven Hill, but this stop is on the trail as a separate destination, and it's easy to see why. The place is focused on tourism, employing many high-tech displays, works of art, and movie recreations to tell the story of Evan Williams the man, who some claim to be a founding father of the bourbon industry and of Louisville. Evan Williams was the first licensed distillery in Kentucky, and when looking at the barrel replicas here and the real thing aging on site at Heaven Hill, we see the barrels labeled with the DSP-1 distinction. I don't think any of us were impressed with the shiny newness of anything at first. One exhibit, however, is a visual aid masterpiece, a whole room dedicated to a lighted diorama that illustrates the process from grain to glass. Our guide tells us that the grains are all purchased from local family farmers, and mentions that Heaven Hill pays over $4 million a week in taxes, like our Heaven Hill guide also told us. No active production work is done here, but like Bulleit, they have a miniature distilling room with beautiful stills that produce one barrel a day. We are invited to put today's barrel number next to our name in the guest book so we can be contacted when it reaches maturity in Bardstown. This guide revealed one more process tidbit that I had been wondering about: why does aged bourbon smell like caramel? We had the vanilla notes explained to us at Bulleit, but here we learn that it's the wood sugars that are caramelized during the char that give it the sweetness, and being a cook myself I should have figured this out before now. Like other distillers, the used barrels are sold for other purposes, and our guide reveals to us that after draining, 24 pounds of bourbon remains in the wood of the barrel, which explains why they are so sought after to store and age products such as salt, sugar, beer, and other consumables.

Evan Williams' recreated rooms are an entertaining depiction of history. Bonding is revisited, and so is the medicinal allowance of bourbon. Their hallway was built to show one of Louisville's old streets and displays antique bottles, many of which were found from the Muhammad Ali Center excavations. Our guide explains the disastrous effect of Prohibition, which caused Louisville to lose 8,000 jobs overnight. The Act wasn't just a hit to distillers: coopers, farmers, even waiters who worked in the community suffered the loss of their profitable—and until Prohibition—stable local industry. As we head toward a vintage-styled bar, our guide says that he would like it known that although having some Beam family Master Distillers, their brand is not in cahoots with Jim Beam. The younger Beam son came to Heaven Hill because Beam operations already had two Master Distillers at the time. The bar is where Evan Williams shows its value for us, as we get more instruction on how to taste, smell, and drink bourbon. We are once again treated to Larceny, with more detail on the name: Named after John E. Fitzgerald, the treasury agent and one of the two people who held keys to the rickhouses, the other being the Master Distiller. Mr. Fitzgerald had a taste for good bourbon, and he chose only the best for himself, which he was able to access at will. Over time, the "light barrels" were known as Fitzgerald barrels, the inside joke behind the Old Fitz bourbons.

Labor Day: Lawrenceburg Redux

On Labor Day weekend, we head to Lawrenceburg, a circle stop from where our journey began. This trip brings us Ron's friends, Jake and Cheryl, on their BMW adventure bike. Brandon and I have family and friends in nearby Berea and Lexington, and after spending some time with them, we head out. On our way to Lawrenceburg, Brandon tells me in the headset that he thinks his tire is going flat, so at a safe place in Kirkville we pull over. Brandon's rear wheel bearings have seized on the axle, forcing the pin and the nut out of the assembly. Most in the group heard the loud mechanical chirp begin after we left the ferry barge that hauled us across the Kentucky River, but everyone seemed to think it was the car behind us or the ferry ramp being adjusted. The bike is not safe to ride, so we call for backup and lounge on a nearby

ABOVE TOP: Photo by Kay Brant; ABOVE MIDDLE AND BOTTOM: Photos by Shannon Hall.

Photo by Brandon Davenport

A copper column still

lawn while we wait together for Brandon's dad to arrive with a trailer.

In the meantime, we get to know our new companions. Jake questions Brandon about his battery-powered cooling shirt and explodes with well-meaning insults, calling Brandon a "spoiled yuppy bastard" who has been riding in comfort while the rest of us sweat in the heat. Good natured ribbing erupts from all sides and is pointed in all directions. A white car driven by a dark-haired woman pulls up next to Ron as he stands in the road. He is the obvious target, and after a little bit of chatting, the driver asks Ron if he'd like to spend an hour and half with her, inserting a short pause before giving the location of the nearby church: she is inviting us to services. The rest of us are on the edge of laughing out loud as Ron tells her that he might consider it, except we are waiting for someone to come get the bike. She offers to take some of our group, and Jake volunteers to stay, proclaiming "I'm a heathen!" She remarks that we're all heathens, really, and departs. Shannon says that she'd driven past us a few times. I wonder how brave she must have been to stop and ask a bunch of bikers to come to church with her on that fine Sunday. Brandon's dad appears, and both the bike and Brandon are loaded up to leave. The rest of us continue on to Four Roses.

Four Roses was built in 1910 in the Spanish mission style, unique in Kentucky. Outside the much-photographed entrance, our guide explains the romantic legend of the name Four Roses. In 1888, the founder Paul Jones Jr. fell in love with a Southern belle and asked her marry him. She told him to look for her at the ball, and if her answer was yes she would be wearing a corsage of roses. She wore four roses, and he named the bourbon Four Roses after his bride.

Perhaps because of the holiday weekend, this is a busy day at the distillery. We are given headphones and ushered into a large, cool room to watch a video introducing the distillation process. It is a good explanation, but narrated with the seriousness of a forensic documentary. On the grounds, our guide explains that the temperature changes inside the rickhouses cause barrels to age differently at different levels of the warehouse. The Master Distiller informed me later that at higher temperatures, the bourbon picks up the woody characters of the barrel more rapidly. Four Roses is the only distillery to use single-story rickhouses for a consistent product. There are several multi-storied rickhouses visible from the site, but they have been sold to nearby Wild Turkey, while Four Roses has their own at another location. Each year, Four Roses makes 10 separate recipes that are blended at bottling to make five separate labels, two of which are sold in Japan-fitting, since Four Roses is now owned by Kirin Brewery Company.

We head inside the mash room, which is closed for summer service. The mash ingredients are detailed: corn is from Indiana, malted barley is from Montana or surrounding regions, and the rye is typically from Denmark and/or Germany. Here, we are well educated in yeast, and our guide tells us that a piece of yeast the size of a thumbnail can inoculate several thousand gallons of brew. The fermenters used here are a mixture of stainless, Douglas fir, and red Cyprus, but as red Cyprus is now protected, those vats will be phased out with firs as they are replaced. While Shannon lingers in the back of the tour to take photos of the shiny, pinky-copper stills, perfumey samples are sent around the group for a sniff of the flavored strains, orange blossom and fruits among them. (We are asked to take them in and see if we can find them later when we sample.) Stains of yeast are proprietary to the brands, and although the process, techniques, and sometimes even the ingredient ratios for bourbon are revealed, I have always had the sense that the true particulars are cantankerously guarded secrets not unlike the most successful recipes of a Southern matriarch. That tiny piece of yeast might be the most protected ingredient: all along the trail we are told stories of how old each one is in either years or generations, and it is often stored in locations more suited to disaster preparedness than food preparation. Our guide leads us to the steam operations, what makes the alcohol separate from the mash and turns into a vapor, where it then lands in the distiller. The bourbon industry has a life outside the bottle. If the Master Distiller or anyone from the sensory panel doesn't like the flavors from the tail box, then the alcohol gets turned into hand sanitizer or rubbing alcohol, something that our guide assures us happens rarely. Nutrient-rich mash is given to local farmers as a wet cake, hopefully resulting in satisfied cows.

In the tasting room, Brandon reappears, having caught up by borrowing his dad's bike. We sample the Yellow Label, the Small Batch, and the Single Barrel. The Small Batch is my favorite, and as we taste, the guide shares her favorite cooking ideas, including substituting bourbon for water in any baking recipe and pouring it over homemade peach ice cream. We take home the sampling glasses as souvenirs and head out while Jake and Cheryl return to Tennessee.

The End of It: Lexington

Our last stop is Town Branch, the newest kid on the block, close to downtown Lexington. We arrive in time for the last tour. The place is packed, so we can't be included in the two-fer tour of their Kentucky Ale brewery across the street. We wait in the gift shop, where I lust for an expensive textbook on the process and marketing of whiskey. We are introduced with a rather cheesy video that's more advertising than information. Town Branch is the first distillery in Lexington in 50 years and is named for the river than runs under the city. Town Branch label Pearse Lyons Reserve is the first malt whiskey distilled in Lexington in over 100 years. The distillation room is modern and small, surrounded by floor-to-ceiling glass walls, a room made to showcase the wood vats and the tall Scottish copper pot stills. Town Branch is distilled two times, and between the stills is a simple mechanized box, known as the spirits safe, to control the flow. The bourbon is made here, but it is aged down the street from Woodford Reserve at the old Taylor Distillery. Town Branch is not allowed to age its spirits on site due to city fire codes. After so many tours of distillation rooms and rickhouses, it cannot be denied that this industry is a community working together.

Distilleries help their neighbors, and barrels are shipped back and forth across the state to age or be bottled. We sample a few of their varieties. Despite the heat, I am in love with my sample of Bluegrass Sundown, a liqueur concentrate of bourbon, coffee, and sugar that's used to make a hot drink, a cousin of Irish coffee. Heavy cream floats on top of the hot, sweet drink. I've never liked Irish coffee but this is delicious, a fantastic way to end the tour. (I had no idea it would end with dessert.) Kay and I both love this sample, and I gave up one of my bourbon tokens for a second helping of the coffee.

A bottle of Sundowner nesting in my saddlebags, we head out to a quiet dinner. Ron, Kay, and Jordan must head back to Tennessee tonight, and Shannon has to work on Labor Day, so after dinner we say our goodbyes. It is rather an anti-climactic end to a year-long trip as we split into singles and pairs, but then I remember that it's not over. We are looking forward to a party soon, where the riders gather with their potluck creations to revisit favorite stories and drinks.

* * *

I was surprised by how many of the distilleries are owned by corporations and conglomerates. I feel myself pulled more to brands that reside in my home state. I will not deny this is an emotional reaction. The decline of bourbon was as much a product of our changing tastes as is the rise the industry is experiencing now. Someone, somewhere in world loved Kentucky's product enough to keep parts of it in business when our own domestic markets would not. Without these interfering interests many, if not most, of these historied brands and locations may have succumbed to the "great bourbon depression" that began in the 1970s. We are a trendy and fickle population, so it is likely that bourbon tastes could cycle again and experience another decline. These bourbons are being made in Kentucky, by Kentuckians, in small remote places and in downtowns. The industry provides not only jobs, but a strong food identity and pride in both the product and the craftsmanship. But now our community is the world. Prohibition taught us valuable and hard-earned lesson in more than just temperance. If we are faced with globalism, let this industry be an example. Let us nod to the past, toast to the emerging craft distillers gaining their footholds, and drink in the knowledge that Kentucky will, as it always has, survive the fire. The bourbon speaks for itself, the philosophies belong to us.

Photo by Shannon Hall

Woodford Reserve Loading Rails

ABOVE AND RIGHT: Photos by Terry Price

CrossRoads Christian is a Bookstore *and* a Ministry

by Suzanne Craig Robertson

Nancy and Steve Speck sell books and many other products at their store, but that's not why they have it. They own CrossRoads Christian Bookstore because, they say, that's where God put them.

"It is not just a business," Nancy says. "It is and always has been looked at as a ministry."

They had been living in Wichita, Kansas, where Steve worked at the Coleman Company. Nancy was working part-time in a library and also homeschooling their four children. When Steve lost his job when the company downsized, he started a consulting business on his own. He soon made a connection that led him to a job as an engineering project manager at Electrolux Home Products in Springfield, Tennessee.

"Two things brought us here," Steve says. "The job at Electrolux and the leading of God to be here."

They have lived in Springfield a decade, but owning a bookstore was not in the plan when they made the move, although she says it had crossed their minds.

"You have those conversations now and then [that] it would be neat to own a bookstore," she says.

They met Keith and Tish Woodall at church and soon Nancy had gone to work for them at their bookstore, which had been on South Main Street in Springfield for 20 years. The store had a portion of the business devoted to selling home-school curriculum and supplies, which Steve says helped Nancy get the job: "She knew the home-school market. Keith was looking for someone to help with that area."

Nancy did that for six years, having been promoted to co-manager, when the Woodalls approached them with an idea. They wanted to sell the store to the Specks.

"The timing was right, it was a really good deal and here we are," Nancy smiles. "There's certainly no doubt it was God-appointed."

Three years later, the Specks have made a few changes in the 5,000-square-foot store, which sits right off the square in the small middle Tennessee town. They sell Bibles and Christian books of all types: fiction, nonfiction, biographies, reference books, devotionals, women- and men-focused. There is music and a lot of gift items, like calendars, journals, t-shirts, posters, and more in the well-decorated and relaxing space.

As for the number of books in the store, Nancy laughs that she has "no idea-but it's A LOT!"

They also sell church supplies and even are home to a church service once a month on a Saturday morning. Former owner Tish Woodall coordinates the service held in the "upper room," which is literally a flight of steps up above the store's main floor. There are about 20 people who attend the service.

"The Home-School Lady"

After they bought the store, they moved the section that stocked supplies for home-school families from the back of the store to the front.

"When we did that, we had this big open room," Nancy says of the back area. "So we prayed and tossed ideas around" about what to do with the extra space.

They decided to add an area for consignment clothes.

"It's not a money maker," she admits, but it's clear that's not why they do it. "It's more of a ministry to the community to find inexpensive good clean clothing."

And as it turned out, the home-school sales, once moved to the forefront, have been the most profitable.

"Without the home-school product, we probably wouldn't be in business," Steve says. "That is something that is important to understand. We have more square footage allotted to everything else than home-school, but is the money maker for us."

It was a natural fit, since Nancy had already learned first-hand years earlier how difficult it could be to get good curriculum to teach her own children.

"That was a calling of God I had never considered," she says of home-schooling her children, adding that having a degree in elementary education helped.

"It has grown quite a bit since I started. A lot of people know me as The Home-School Lady," she laughs. "I don't claim to be an expert."

But she is probably the closest thing to an expert Springfield and the surrounding areas has.

"New home-schoolers just need reassuring that they are going to be okay," she says. "We were all terrified we were going to mess up our children when we started."

That was in 1987, when their daughter was eight years old and home-schooling did not have the popularity it does today, nor was it commonplace. At that time, "it was thought to be very strange," she says, pointing out a few of the positives like turning vacations into field trips and the children socializing "vertically, with all ages."

"You were already considered a rebel," Steve laughs easily with his wife of 39 years, and she smiles right back at him.

A Family Collaboration

When two people partner to run a bookstore, often the work is split with one person who is interested in the books themselves and the other person handling the business end of things. But Steve says, "Nancy does 99 percent of the work here. She does the money and the books." He is in-store help on some days after his day job and also on weekends, but provides moral support all of the time.

The store is staffed with family and a dear friend. Their daughter, Michelle Smith, and daughter-in-law, Allison Speck, work there. Friend Rachel Taylor is also an employee, and their granddaughter, Hannah, who is nine years old, also helps out sometimes.

"She checks people out and greets," the proud grandmother says. "Hannah is going to compliment you on something. She always has a kind word to say to someone."

The Specks say they are one of the few places in the surrounding area stocking such extensive home-school supplies, with customers coming from Clarksville, Hendersonville, Nashville, as well as from many places in Kentucky.

"You can order it online, but you can't open it online," Steve says. "That's what we provide. People still want to touch and look at books—especially home-schoolers. People want to be sure what they are going to be sharing with their kids."

Nancy adds, "If they are going to spend a lot of money, they want to see it."

The store also gives gift certificates for used curriculum, so customers can buy more with that credit.

Making a Living

The Specks agree that if Steve was not working full-time outside of the store, they probably could not make a living with the bookstore, which is why it is all the more important that money is not the main reason they pour their time and souls into the store.

"The point behind it all is that everything we try to do is really a ministry," he says. "Probably the best time I have here, aside from getting to work with my wife, is the opportunity to help someone select a Bible and be able to minister to them."

"They come in to browse," Nancy adds, "not sure what they want. They like the personal touch. Having somebody to smile at them, greet them, say hello."

This is something the Specks and their crew get to do a lot, especially when there is an event in downtown Springfield, like a parade, a festival, or the monthly Art Walk. They stay open late for that and provide refreshments. During the Christmas parade or high school pep rallies, residents have learned about the store.

"We might not be very busy as far as what we sell [at that time]," Nancy laughs, "but a lot of people will find us who didn't know we were here because we let them use our restrooms.

"We stock up the bathrooms!"

There's one aspect of her work she doesn't care for and that is the timing required—orders for the following Christmas must be placed with their distributors in January. Another "pet peeve" is the rush on Christmas that the retail market requires.

"We almost have to skip Thanksgiving, and it's my favorite holiday," Nancy says. "It gets overlooked."

"Unfortunately," Steve adds, "it becomes a distraction to the Christmas [selling season]; it's an important holiday."

Even with this, it's clear the Specks love what they are doing. Nancy says she especially enjoys "talking to people, encouraging them and giving them a peaceful place to come." The store is busy year 'round, but especially at "back to school" time.

A good day for her is having "a lot of customers and helping people. I never know from day to day who's going to come through the door or what the need is going to be."

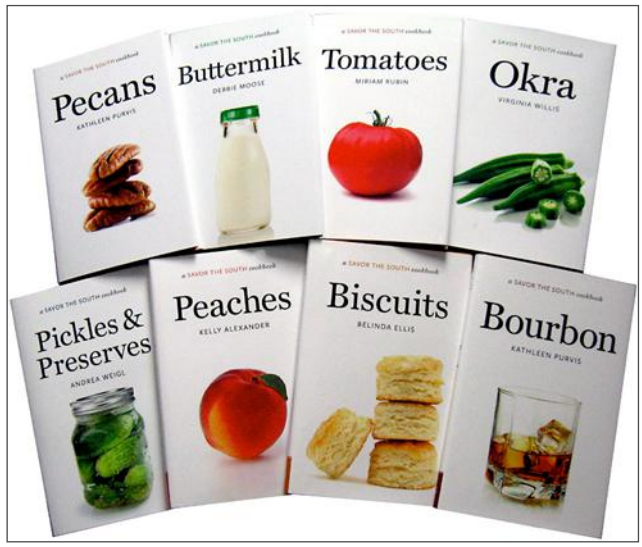
The store is open 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., six days a week and always available at Crossroadschristianbookstore.net.

"If we don't have it, we can order within a short period of time," Steve says.

Book Review: *Okra: a SAVOR THE SOUTH Cookbook, by Virginia Willis*

The "sensual poetry" that is Okra

by Dhwanie (Priya) Anand



Imported by enslaved Africans and readily adopted by European colonists, okra has become synonymous with the cuisine of the American South, making it an obvious choice for the *SAVOR THE SOUTH* cookbook series, which pays tribute to such quintessential southern staples as peaches, biscuits, and bourbon. Yet even in the South, where classic preparations like gumbo and fried okra have propelled the vegetable to its current status as the region's patron pod, there are still those who refuse to sing its praises. Okra's fibrous outer skin and slime-filled seedy inside can be intimidating if not downright repellent to many cooks. After all, why even bother trying to coax flavor from a green monstrosity when gracefully tapered green beans and bright yellow squashes are among the bounty of considerably more attractive summer vegetables to choose from? In a slender, unassuming volume, simply entitled *Okra,* self-proclaimed "okra missionary" Virginia Willis offers an abundance of soul stirring responses to okra doubters, setting about the lofty task of converting the faithless and rekindling fervor in those already within the pod's dedicated fold.

According to the author, *Okra* is meant to be a "one-stop shop for okra" and includes information on all aspects of the plant from its origins and nutritional value to planting and storage advice. There is even a detailed description on stem–trimming and a list of the "top-ten slime busting tips" along with 50 thoughtful recipes. The heart of *Okra's* gospel, however, has less to do with viscosity or grooming options than it does with making an emotional connection to this seemingly unapproachable pod.

Willis describes okra as "sensual poetry," and indeed the sparse, elegant pages of *Okra* often feel more like a book of subtly-crafted verse than an instructional volume. And while there are clear technical directions when necessary—those new to deep frying will find the author's tips on setting up a frying station invaluable—the most effective language in *Okra* consists of the textures and flavors which the author eloquently weaves into perfectly understated preparations, such as "Okra With Butter" or "Crisp Greek Fried Okra," both of which manage to convey the titular pod's depth of character with a minimal amount of words and ingredients.

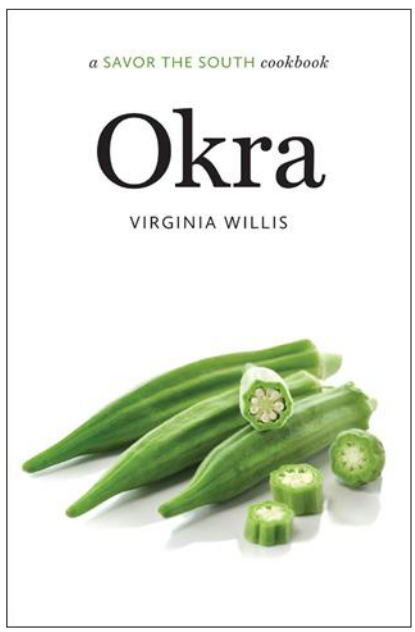
A classically trained chef with Louisiana roots, Willis seems to be in touch with the sensibilities of the average home cook, avoiding any overwrought procedures which might be overwhelming or off-putting for those outside of a professional kitchen. There are no laborious reductions or fancy whisked sauces to be found in *Okra.* Methods are straightforward and concise with just enough background information to place each preparation in the context of a greater narrative. In "Fresh Black Eyed-Peas and Okra," for instance, the author points out the common African origins of both ingredients, marking this particular combination as an especially poignant aspect of the vegetable's history.

On the rare occasion where Willis does foray into a style of okra and tomatoes that feels a tad restaurant-like, the distinction is noted in the recipe's title as "Chef-Style Okra and Tomatoes," and it is clearly explained that "'Chef-style' simply means taking a bit more care to maintain the integrity of the ingredients . . . ." The author also mindfully presents the "chef-style" method directly after the decidedly more home style "Old School Okra and Tomatoes," providing readers with a rather thorough and non-judgmental exploration of a significant set of flavors within the okra sphere.

Like many of the *SAVOR THE SOUTH* volumes, *Okra* includes both a Southern and a global section.

According to Willis, the global recipes are included simply "to see what an iconic Southern ingredient like okra might look like in someone else's skillet."

Yet the inclusion of these recipes actually has much broader implications. The global sections feature recipes from nearly every cuisine in which okra is prominently featured; this includes preparations from India, Africa, the Middle East, and Caribbean. By placing innovative renditions of the traditional Southern aesthetic like "Hot Pepper Grilled Okra" and "Okra Cornbread" in the same volume as "Congolese Okra and Greens" and "Indian Okra and Potatoes in Green Masala", *Okra* puts Southern cooking on par with the great culinary traditions of the world.



In addition to expanding the influence of Southern cuisine, *Okra's* global perspective also manages what perhaps is the book's most compelling argument for mass conversion. The carefully chosen international recipes prove that two of the most famous okra flavor profiles—fried okra and okra with tomatoes—are "found in almost every country that has okra in its cuisine."

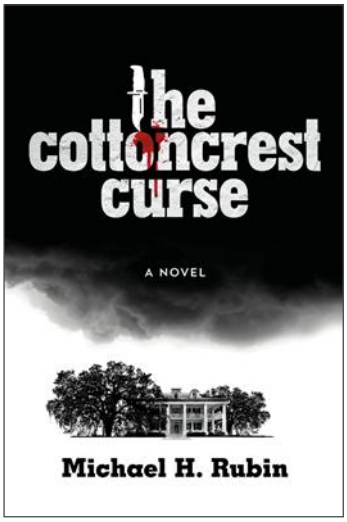
Cross-cultural commonalities, such as these, prove that a vegetable even the proselytizing Willis describes as "contentious," actually transcends boundaries to serve as a unifying element among the diverse palates of the world, which is no less than a divine feat for a hairy Southern pod and a deceptively simple little cookbook.

Press Release

The Cottoncrest Curse: Debut's a page turner

Garnering praise from *New York Time*s best-selling authors and prominent political strategist James Carville, *The Cottoncrest Curse* is an historically accurate, page-turning thriller from the multifaceted jazz pianist, media host, lawyer, law professor, and now debut novelist Michael H. Rubin.

The Cottoncrest Curse is set across multiple generations and tells a compelling and complex family story centered on itinerant peddler Jake Gold.



The bodies of an elderly colonel and his young wife are discovered on the staircase of their stately Louisiana plantation home. Within the sheltered walls of the Cottoncrest plantation, Augustine and Rebecca Chastaine have met their deaths under the same air of mystery as the colonel's father, who committed suicide at the end of the Civil War. Locals whisper about the curse of Cottoncrest Plantation, but Sheriff Raifer Jackson knows that even a specter needs a mortal accomplice and rules the apparent murder/suicide a double homicide-with Jake as the prime suspect.

Assisted by his overzealous deputy, a grizzled Civil War physician, and the racist Knights of the White Camellia, the sheriff directs a manhunt through a village of former slaves, the swamps of Cajun country and the bordellos of New Orleans. But Jake's chameleon-like abilities enable him to elude his pursuers. As a peddler who has built relationships by trading fabric, needles, dry goods and especially razor-sharp knives in exchange for fur, Jake knows the back roads of the small towns that dot the Mississippi River Delta, and Jake has many secrets to conceal, not the least of which is that he is a Jewish immigrant from Czarist Russia. Jake must stay one step ahead of his pursuers while trying to keep one final promise before more lives are lost and he loses the chance to clear his name.

The Cottoncrest Curse takes readers on the bold journey of Jake's flight within an epic sweep of treachery and family rivalry ranging from the Civil War to the civil rights era as the impact of the 1893 murders ripples through the 20th century and violence besets the owners of Cottoncrest into the 1960s.

"Michael Rubin proves himself to be an exceptional storyteller in his novel, *The Cottoncrest Curse*," says Carville, who knows Louisiana intimately. "The powerful epic is expertly composed in both its historical content and beautifully constructed scenery. I highly recommend picking up this book to catch a glimpse into life and conflict during the height of the Old South."

Photo by Gayle Edlin

Press Release

Wisconsin technical writer publishes first novel, *Here & Now*

From first-time published novelist Gayle C. Edlin comes *Here & Now,* a story about a self-sufficient writer with a decidedly supernatural muse.

Lila Dawkins spins her fictional tales out of the real-life threads of experiences she absorbs by touching significant artifacts of other people's lives. But Lila's secret ability isn't a free gift: she struggles to maintain her physical and emotional health with increasingly frequent trips to her remote Wyoming cabin.

This time, the buffering silence of Lila's private escape is shattered by the death of an old friend, a persistent calico cat, two new neighbors, and the vibrations of surfacing memories tied to an object that is somehow reaching out to Lila rather than revealing itself during chance encounter.

The landscape of the past integrates with the stories that Lila tells herself about how she must live her unusual life. Is the solution she created for herself the only way out, or is there another? What part—if any—will either of Lila's new neighbors play in her future? And is there a way to make peace with known and unknown, past and present, her own and others ... for Lila to find herself, for once, staunchly grounded *Here & Now?*

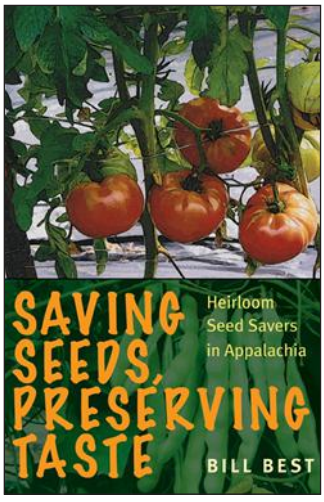
About the Author

Gayle C. Edlin lives in rural Wisconsin, crafting detailed technical literature by light of day and spinning fanciful tales of her own imaginings in the darker hours that remain. She is a columnist and factotum for *2nd & Church* literary magazine and has previously written for *Coulee Region Women* and other regional magazines. She is a member of the La Crosse Area Women Writers and Women Writers Ink.

Press Release: *Saving Seeds, Preserving Taste*, by Bill Best

Good Garden Husbandry: Heirloom Seed Savers in Appalachia

The Brown Goose, the White Case Knife, Ora's Speckled Bean, Radiator Charlie's Mortgage Lifter — these are just a few of the heirloom fruits and vegetables you'll encounter in Bill Best's remarkable history of seed saving and the people who preserve both unique flavors and the Appalachian culture associated with them. As one of the people at the forefront of seed saving and trading for over fifty years, Best has helped preserve numerous varieties of beans, tomatoes, corn, squashes, and other fruits and vegetables, along with the family stories and experiences that are a fundamental part of this world. While corporate agriculture privileges a few flavorless but hardy varieties of daily vegetables, seed savers have worked tirelessly to preserve genetic diversity and the flavors rooted in the Southern Appalachian Mountains — referred to by plant scientists as one of the vegetative wonders of the world.



Saving Seeds, Preserving Taste introduces readers to the cultural traditions associated with seed saving, as well as the remarkable people who have used grafting practices and hand-by-hand trading to keep alive varieties that would otherwise have been lost. As local efforts to preserve heirloom seeds have become part of a growing national food movement, Appalachian seed savers play a crucial role in providing alternatives to large-scale agriculture and corporate food culture. Part flavor guide, part people's history, *Saving Seeds, Preserving Taste* will introduce you to a world you've never known — or perhaps remind you of one you remember well from your childhood."

Praise for *Saving Seeds, Preserving Taste*

"The magic in the greatest of all Jack tales is that what appears to be a mere handful of seeds turns instead into a giant beanstalk leading to riches beyond measure. That same sort of alchemy is at work here in Bill Best's *Saving Seeds, Preserving Taste.* Yes, it's a practical and useful handbook for good garden husbandry, but as it unfolds before your eyes, it reveals as well a vital world of southern Appalachian people, plants, food, and practice to nourish both body and soul."

—Ronni Lundy, founding member of the Southern Foodways Alliance, author of *Shuck Beans, Stack Cakes, and Honest Fried Chicken*

"I love how Bill Best 'stirs the pot.' Going to his house and sitting at his table after a walk through the garden will reveal the best-tasting tomatoes and, likely, some Turkey Craw beans-my personal favorite. But Bill also stirs the pot metaphorically by showing the Appalachian region and the world how place matters in a transnational political economy that has long said otherwise. For all the talk and attention given to globalization, Bill Best in his life's work and especially in this delightful book proves that place matters. The local is the place of deep abiding but also fragile knowledge. If you doubt it, ask your heart and your tongue. They know."

—Chad Berry, Goode Professor of Appalachian Studies and Professor of History at Berea College, author of *Southern Migrants, Northern Exiles*

"In *Saving Seeds, Preserving Taste,* Bill Best has captured in words his passion and dedication for perpetuating heirloom vegetable and fruit varieties in Appalachia. This has been his life's work. At seventy-nine, he continues to promote the saving of heirloom seeds, seeds that hold the potential for flavorful, nutritious food; seeds that if saved, can be grown year after year; seeds that hold a part of the history of Native American and Appalachian cultures."

—*Journal of Appalachian Studies*

Photo courtesy of Ohio University Press

Bill Best was a professor, coach, and administrator at Berea College for forty years, retiring in 2002. Since that time he has continued his seed saving and work with sustainable agriculture and for several years has been director of the Sustainable Mountain Agriculture Center located near Berea, Kentucky. The center makes heirloom seeds available to a wide regional audience and to the nation in general. In addition, through special arrangements, the center also ships seeds to many other countries.

Book Details:

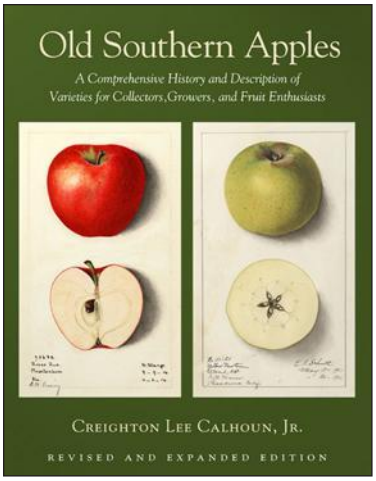
Paperback: 224 pages
Publisher: Ohio Univ Press; 1 edition (April, 2013)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 0821420496
ISBN-13: 978-0821420492

Old Southern Apples:

A Comprehensive History and Description of Varieties for Collectors, Growers, and Fruit Enthusiasts

by Creighton Lee Calhoun, Jr.

2011 Bookbuilder's Award: Best in Reference Books



A book that became an instant classic when it first appeared in 1995, *Old Southern Apples* is an indispensable reference for fruit lovers everywhere, especially those who live in the southern United States. Out of print for several years, this newly revised and expanded edition now features descriptions of some 1,800 apple varieties that either originated in the South or were widely grown there before 1928.

Author Lee Calhoun is one of the foremost figures in apple conservation in America. This masterwork reflects his knowledge and personal experience over more than thirty years, as he sought out and grew hundreds of classic apples, including both legendary varieties (like Nickajack and Magnum Bonum) and little-known ones (like Buff and Cullasaga). Representing our common orchard heritage, many of these apples are today at risk of disappearing from our national table.

Illustrated with more than 120 color images of classic apples from the National Agricultural Library's collection of watercolor paintings, *Old Southern Apples* is a fascinating and beautiful reference and gift book. In addition to A-to-Z descriptions of apple varieties, both extant and extinct, Calhoun provides a brief history of apple culture in the South, and includes practical information on growing apples and on their traditional uses.

Book Publisher: Chelsea Green Publishing.

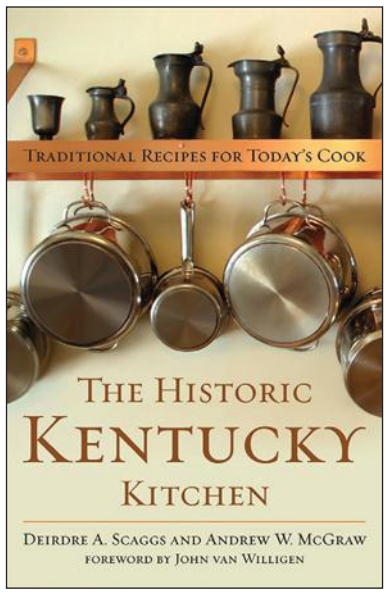
Press Release: *The Historic Kentucky Kitchen, Deirdre A. Scaggs and Andrew W. McGraw*

Traditional Recipes for Today's Cook

Kitchens serve as more than places to prepare food; they are cornerstones of the home and family. Just as memories are passed down through stories shared around the stove, recipes preserve traditions and customs for future generations. The rich, diverse heritage of Kentucky's culinary traditions offers a unique way to better appreciate the history of the Commonwealth.

The Historic Kentucky Kitchen assembles more than one hundred dishes from nineteenth- and twentieth-century Kentucky cooks. Deirdre A. Scaggs and Andrew W. McGraw collected recipes from handwritten books, diaries, scrapbook clippings, and out-of-print cookbooks from the University of Kentucky Libraries Special Collections to bring together a variety of classic dishes, complete with descriptions of each recipe's origin and helpful tips for the modern chef. The authors, who carefully tested each dish, provide recipe modifications and substitutions for rare and hard-to-find ingredients.

This entertaining cookbook also serves up famous Kentuckians' favorite dishes, such as John Sherman Cooper's preferred comfort food (eggs somerset) and Lucy Hayes Breckinridge's "excellent" fried oysters. The recipes are flavored with humorous details such as "[for] those who thought they could not eat parsnips" and "Granny used to beat 'em [biscuits] with a musket." Accented with historic photographs and featuring a wide range of traditional meals, *The Historic Kentucky Kitchen* presents a novel and tasty way to experience the history of the Bluegrass State.



Deirdre A. Scaggs is associate dean of the University of Kentucky Special Collections and the author of *Women in Lexington.*

Andrew W. McGraw is the sous chef at County Club Restaurant in Lexington, Kentucky.

Learn more about this title at:

https://thehistorickentuckykitchen.wordpress.com/

Praise for *The Historic Kentucky Kitchen*

"Who knew what culinary treasures lay tucked within the pages of personal letters and papers in the archives of our major libraries? Cookbook writers and historians have more or less ignored these sources. It took a librarian and a chef, working together, to expose a rich seam of classic and time-honored recipes in the Special Collections division of the University of Kentucky Libraries, and adapt these great dishes to modern kitchens. Archivist Deirdre Scaggs and Chef Andrew McGraw selected over a hundred hand-written recipes from diaries, scrapbook clippings, notebooks and journals left to the library for safekeeping. They tested each one and made the necessary modifications to come up with historic menu items you can prepare in your own kitchen. Every major library and archive in the country will find these untapped sources of old and almost out-of-reach preparations—and the stories that go with them—simply irresistible. If you think I'm kidding, just get a glimpse of three nineteenth-century ways to serve summer tomatoes—stuffed, scalloped, fricasseed—and you'll understand what a trove of pleasures this is."

—John Egerton, author of *Southern Food: At Home, On the Road, in History*

"So many of the recipes date from a time when virtually all the food found on a table had been produced within a few miles of the cook's kitchen that anyone who haunts the aisles of seasonal farmers' markets is going to want this book."

—Susan Reigler, coauthor of *The Kentucky Bourbon Cocktail Book*

"The authors have added significant quality and context to the recipes by actually preparing each of the recipes and offering suggestions for how modern day readers can best create these historic dishes."

—Aaron Purcell, director of special collections at Virginia Tech University

PRESS RELEASE

From Tidal Press: *Blue Territory*

Author's new book "A Meditation on the Life and Art of Joan Mitchell"

Blue Territory is a poetic immersion into the life and art of Joan Mitchell, the great American abstract expressionist painter. A contemporary of Jackson Pollock and Willem De Kooning, she is not as well known as her male counterparts because she was a woman and also because she spent most of her working life in France. Still, in 2013, Bloomsburg Business listed Mitchell as the bestselling female artist of all time.

When asked to talk about her paintings, Joan Mitchell often responded, "If I could say it in words, I'd write a book."

Here is her book.

At once unique and universal, *Blue Territory* is at its core an exploration of love and life, and what it means to love-and live-what you do. Meticulously researched and lyrically written, it will appeal to anyone interested in passionate engagement with the world. The book eschews images so as to allow the words to form them, thereby freeing the reader to imagine the paintings, much as Mitchell would have to do before picking up her brush.

About Robin Lippincott

Robin Lippincott has published three novels—*In the Meantime, Our Arcadia, and Mr. Dalloway,* as well as a collection of short stories, *The 'I' Rejected.*

His fiction and nonfiction have appeared in *The Paris Review, Fence, Bloom, American Short Fiction, Memorious*, and many other journals; for ten years he wrote reviews of mostly art and photography books for *The New York Times Book Review.*

Robin lives in the Boston area, and teaches in Spalding University's low residency MFA in Writing Program.

His new book, *Rufus + Syd,* a young adult novel co-written with Julia Watts, will be published in spring 2016.

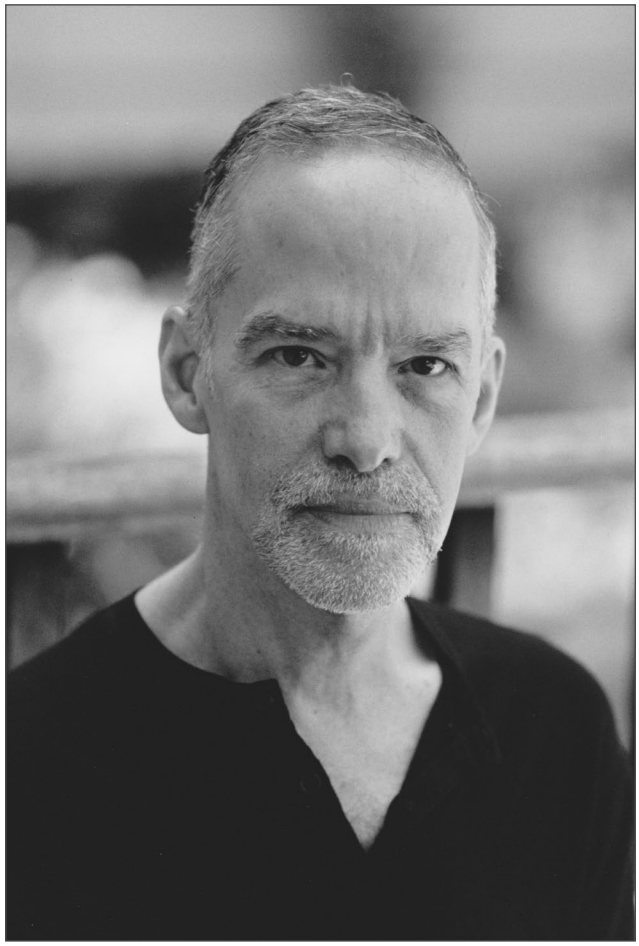


Photo by Karen Watson

Author Robin Lippincott

What Others Have to Say About Robin Lippincott and *Blue Territory*

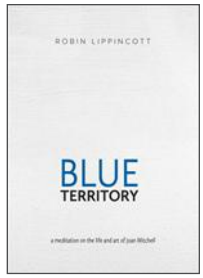
"In *Blue Territory*, Robin Lippincott assembles and unfolds the facts, events, and relationships of Joan Mitchell's life, poetically constructing a portrait of this important painter. Joan loved her life as an artist-it was one full of risks, high and low points, of art to make and see, and artists, poets, writers and composers to meet. She was an intellectual, a fighter, a person of integrity; full of empathy, love, and anguish. Through all of her travails, she painted-from late at night until early in the morning. With this beautiful book, which is at once specific and insightful, oblique and haunting, Lippincott conveys a sense of who Joan Mitchell was, and the substance of her work."

— Sally Apfelbaum, Artist, friend of Joan Mitchell

"No mere recounting of the life of an artistic figure, *Blue Territory* is an audacious rendering of an artist, her passion, her obstacles, and her triumphant work. Robin Lippincott has created a genre of his own in this revelation of Joan Mitchell and her world. Here, the abstract nature of her painting is made concrete, the metaphysics of her vision made tangible, and her vibrant color finds its perfect translation in equally vivid prose. The reader comes away from the experience with the impression of having inhabited, in deep empathetic understanding, a life made from art."

— Kirby Gann, Author, *Ghosting* and *Our Napoleon in Rags*

"Robin Lippincott's affecting and intimate tribute to the painter, Joan Mitchell, is as fiercely felt, imaginative, fluid, and light-filled as her brushstrokes. He has erased the boundaries between Mitchell's art and her life, capturing the quality of light, the saturation of color in her work as deftly as her originality, loneliness, and intensity. *Blue Territory* will open your eyes to the work of one remarkable artist, and to what art at its best can do."



— Eleanor Morse, author, *White Dog Fell from the Sky*

Discover more about Robin at https://www.facebook.com/robin.lippincott.1

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Finalist, Orange Prize
Crab Orchard Review Jack Dyer Fiction Prize

Poetry
Kentucky Poet Laureate
Lannan Literary Award in Poetry
NAACP Image Award in Literature
Nightboat Poetry Prize
University of North Texas Press Vassar Miller Prize

Creative Nonfiction
A Room of Her Own Foundation's Orlando Prize in Creative Nonfiction
Notable essay, *Best American Essays*
Guide to Outdoor Literature's Best Book of the Year

Writing for Children & Young Adults
E.B. White Honor Book Award
Parents' Choice Gold Award
American Library Association Rainbow List
Good Morning America Best Summer Read

Playwriting
Edgerton Foundation New American Plays Award
FringeNYC Encore Series
Southeastern Theatre Conference's New Play Award

Screenwriting
Full-length feature film sold to Disney
Full-length feature film distributed in wide release by Tristar Pictures
Television episodes on Disney Channel
Best comedy, Script Exposure Screenwriting Competition

Crystal Wilkinson, faculty (r.), congratulates AshleyRose Sullivan, alumna, on new book.

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Wild Fig Books

Lexington, Kentucky Artist Rescues Store from the Economy, Publishes New Book

Questions and Answers with Crystal Wilkinson

2nd & Church: **This is sort of The Wild Fig 2.0, right? For those in our audience who may not know about The Wild Fig's story, could you catch folks up with the story...so far?**

Crystal Wilkinson: We acquired the old store in 2011 at the former location. My husband Ron, who had been working as a full time artist, also worked at a bookstore in our neighborhood. When the owner decided to close, we decided to purchase her equipment and the books and then reopen at the same location. After three years, we were not doing so well at the old location, the building was in disrepair, and with the addition of a new big box used bookstore in our service area, we were no longer getting the best used books. So we closed in February 2015 with no idea whether or not we would relocate. When we began to have conversations about the North Limestone area of Lexington, we were so very elated—the energy here is palpable. Lots of change is being made in the area. Businesses with hearts and minds toward the community are being put in place, and it's becoming a booming part of town. We love our beautiful new building and love the energy of the people who frequent us. We just moved to this new location two weeks ago with a full service coffee bar, a literary boutique, and primarily-new books that have been selected specifically for this area. We are a niche market bookstore.

2&C: **When and how did you decide to reopen The Wild Fig? What are some of the lessons learned?**

CW: Frankly, I think our lessons are on-going. The book business is a tough one. Someone gestured toward me during a recent writing conference and said, "Opening a bookstore is a form of activism," and the audience clapped. I hadn't thought of it that way. On a simple level, we love books and believe in brick and mortar stores and ink and paper books. I guess it can be seen as a radical idea in today's time of technology and the electronic book craze, but I read a *New York Times* article about a recent slip in e-book sales and the revival of the book. These kinds of articles make me smile. It's not something grand and new to us that people love real

books. Some people have never left the book, and others are returning to it. Amazingly enough, it's the younger demographic that loves books the most. One of our local council members came into The Wild Fig a couple of months ago and told me about his daughter, a first-year college student, and how much she loves books. He purchased her an e-book device, but she refuses to use it. This made me smile, even though her father didn't seem to share her same passion. So the biggest lesson we've learned is that trends are cyclic. The book is here to stay, and we hope we can sustain along with it. We are giving it all we have.

2&C: **We enjoyed watching the process of the store opening on Instagram. Could you talk about what you had to do to get the building ready to open? Where's it located in Lexington?**

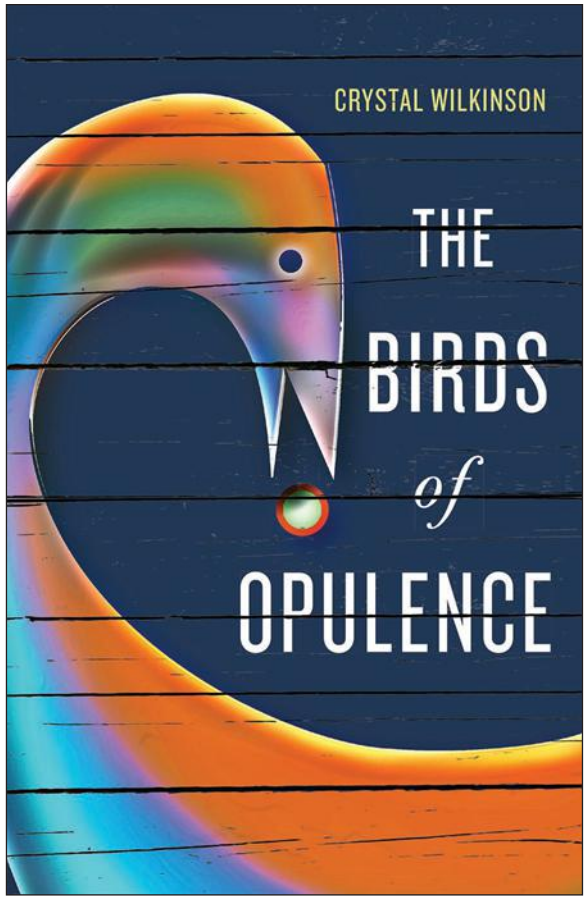
CW: The building is located at 726 North Limestone in Lexington. In its previous formation, it was a residential home. The home was completely gutted with the brick walls left exposed. So much of the history and character of the house is left intact. The end result is beautiful. The floors were sanded and repaired. After inheriting a building with sagging walls and leaks in the roof at our old location, walking into this light-filled, charming place is a wonderful experience. We spent so much money getting the interior just the way we wanted, and we are still waiting for the especially-cozy seating that coffee houses need. Limestone is a unique community in that it is being revitalized, but its regentrification seems to be occurring in a way that keeps the existing community in mind. As African-American business owners, this is important to us as well. We want to get to know our neighbors and don't want to see anyone displaced. There is both a cultural awareness and a business one, simultaneously.

2&C: **You're on Instagram as WILDFIGBOOKS. You're on the Web at http://thewild-fig.com/ And you can be found on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/thewildfigbooks Are you doing anything new in the digital world with this version of the shop than you did the first time around?**

CW: We have a staff of three young people, so I think we have more of a presence on the social networks. Our baristas are constantly posting videos and photos of their new concoctions on social media. They came up with an espresso cream soda last week that is delicious, and there is a video. So that is fun to watch and to be a part of. We will also be posting staff picks and things like that as the months go on.

2&C: **How is this new version of the bookstore different than the first one?**

CW: In the NEW Wild Fig, we primarily carry new books which is a definite change. Also, the addition of the boutique items and the coffeehouse makes us a completely different store with a different feel. Between the new space and the new bookstore model, it's a completely different vibe. It's a cool space, but it is also cozy. It's kind of like a modern, hipster, country store. That's an odd description and perhaps a little misleading, but you have to experience it to understand it. We are also, even though we are heading into fall, trying to create a new vibe for the outside of the building. We have a nice patio and are working on furnishing it before the end of the warm weather. It's a wonderful place to read a book or to have a book discussion while sipping on your coffee drink or an Italian soda. We are particularly excited about our menu items, such as our signature Wild Lemonade which is infused with mint and raspberries, blackberries, and blueberries. There are too many things that are different to name them all, really. But as far as the books go, the main change is that we are a new bookstore with a few used books, unlike our other location where we were a used bookstore with a few new books.



2&C: **Do you think people know when they come in the shop that you're a published writer? You have a new book coming out early in 2016: *The Birds of Opulence* (Kentucky Voices). Please tell our readers about what they can find within its covers.**

CW: Yes, I think that most people know that I am a writer and that Ron is a visual artist. It's great to have that support from other writers and from readers who have read my books and want to read this new one. I've been working on this little book for a long time. I've fussed over it line by line, sentence by sentence, word by word, almost the way you would a poem.

The book centers on several generations of women in a Kentucky black township and their struggle to recover from their own personal pasts and the pasts of their kin. The Goode-Brown family, led by matriarch and pillar of the community Minnie Mae, is plagued by old secrets and embarrassment over mental illness and illegitimacy. Meanwhile, single mother Francine Clark is haunted by her dead husband and forced to fight against both the moral judgment of the community and her own rebellious daughter, Mona. The residents of Opulence struggle with vexing relationships to the land, to one another, and to their own haunts.

This book has everything to do with what we chose to remember from the past and what we chose to take with us into the future and future generations. I guess it's also about the fact that these things that come forward with us to the next generation is not always by choice. It's a short novel that took me a long time to write because I saw it as a meditation on mental illness and the ripple effect of it, and I kept beefing up the pages and then boiling them back down again until it felt right. I am more excited about this book than anything I've written for a long time. I hope readers will be excited about it too.

Crystal Wilkinson is the author of *Blackberries, Blackberries,* winner of the Chaffin Award for Appalachian Literature, and *Water Street*, a finalist for both the UK's Orange Prize for Fiction and the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award. The winner of the 2008 Denny Plattner Award in Poetry from *Appalachian Heritage* magazine and the Sallie Bingham Award from the Kentucky Foundation for Women, she serves as Appalachian Writer-in-Residence at Berea College and teaches in the Spalding low residency MFA in Creative Writing Program.

In Pie We Trust: Southern Food in Film

by Molly McCaffrey

The food movie is an art form unto itself. Great food movies—like *Big Night, Babette's Feast, Like Water for Chocolate, Eat Drink Man Woman, Chocolat, Tortilla Soup,* and *Chef*—speak to us on two levels: a narrative level and a culinary level. We are moved by the story and by the food. We are moved to feel and to eat.

I'll never forget the cool autumn night in 1996 when I saw *Big Night* with friends at The Avalon Theatre in Washington, D.C. Throughout the movie, every one of my taste buds felt like it was activated, and afterwards I was STARVING. And when the whole thing was over, we went to an Italian restaurant across the street where none of us felt like we could get enough to eat. Food movies are that potent—they're so alive they seem to have a physical effect on us.

For some reason, there aren't very many food movies that focus solely on Southern food or culture. The only one that comes to mind is Adrienne Shelley's 2007 indie darling *Waitress.* In that film, a young pie "genius" working in a greasy spoon conveys her emotions through her baking—creating pies like "I Hate My Husband Pie," "I Can't Have No Affair Because It's Wrong and I Don't Want Earl To Kill Me Pie," and "Pregnant Miserable Self-Pitying Loser Pie" to reflect the events of her life: a bad husband, a spontaneous affair, and an unwanted pregnancy. In this way, Shelley ties all plot points to the culinary—as all good food movies do—while also making viewers desperately crave a big ol' piece of pie. Or "pie-uh" as we say in the South.

Despite the dearth of Southern food movies, there are numerous cinematic moments that center on Southern food, the most obvious being found in *Coal Miner's Daughter, The Help, Steel Magnolias,* and *Fried Green Tomatoes.*

In a similar way to *Waitress,* pie is what brings Loretta Lynn and her husband, Doo, together in *Coal Miner's Daughter.* The two meet when the twenty-two-year-old Doo outbids another suitor to win the fourteen-year-old Loretta's company at a pie auction in their small hometown of Butcher Holler, Kentucky.

The major climax in 2011's *The Help* also centers around pie, but before that unforgettable scene occurs, we see one of the main characters—a housekeeper and cook named Minny—teach her new employer, a clueless Southern wife named Celia, how to make everything from fried chicken to pie. It's a moving experience (as well as a pretty obvious Crisco commercial, which is fitting given that Loretta Lynn ended up doing commercials for the shortening company) for both women that shows how well people from different backgrounds can get along. In contrast is the relationship of Minny with her former employer, Hilly Holbrook, who is cruel to the point of being evil. Minny finally has enough of Hilly and enacts her revenge when she feeds her nemesis a piece of chocolate pie containing her own feces. Unlike *Waitress* or other true food movies, viewers come out of that film turned off to food rather than turned on by it. At the same time, The Help's poop pie speaks to a greater issue in our society, specifically the inequality between the races.

The opposite occurs in *Steel Magnolias.* When we first see an armadillo-shaped groom's cake at the wedding of Shelby and Jackson, we can't help but laugh. A wedding cake in the shape of an armadillo??? Nothing seems more ridiculous. And when the cake is cut and bleeds red, we again find ourselves laughing at the absurdity of it. But that cake changed wedding traditions in this country. After *Steel Magnolias,* grooms' cakes became an integral part of the wedding tradition, especially grooms' cakes that shocked their audience or conveyed some of the groom's personality.

Fried Green Tomatoes had the same kind of effect as *Steel Magnolias.* Not many people north of the Mason-Dixon line had heard of a fried green tomato before that film came out in 1991, but afterwards it became an item often found on the menus of foodie restaurants—both Northern and Southern. But *Fried Green Tomatoes* is also like The Help in that the characters use their cooking to enact revenge. In the former, that happens when one cook kills her employer's abusive husband and then turns his remains into barbecue.

Though *Forrest Gump* didn't use food for revenge or introduce Northern viewers to new foods, it did remind them about foods they might have forgotten—specifically boxed chocolate and Gulf shrimp, making us crave both as we watched Forrest and Lieutenant Dan dragging nets for the Bubba Gump Shrimp Company.

If *Fried Green Tomatoes, Steel Magnolias,* and *Forrest Gump* turned people onto Southern food, *Beasts of the Southern Wild* and *Winter's Bone* did the opposite—making us cringe at the ways in which impoverished people are forced to eat in our country. In both films, the main characters are forced to hunt, kill, clean, and cook their own game. And in Beasts, the main character is so indoctrinated to this way of eating that she rejects a free meal when it is handed to her with silverware.

Southern food is also used in film to convey love and affection, as is best shown in 1997's *Soul Food,* a movie about Southern food that is actually set in Chicago. In that film, the Joseph family has dinner together every Sunday because as the matriarch "Big Mama" says, "Soul food cooking is cooking from the heart." But when Big Mama dies, the family falls apart and struggles through tough times before finally coming back together for another family dinner. Food is used in similar ways in *Driving Miss Daisy* when we see Morgan Freeman's character feeding a person who once loathed him, but whom, in the end, he has come to care for.

Finally, there is *Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby,* the ridiculous NASCAR comedy put out by Adam McKay in 2006. This film pokes fun at all things that are stereotypically considered Southern, including Southern food, and one of the movies most famous scenes occurs when Will Ferrell's Ricky Bobby and his family sit down to dinner. In that scene, the camera pans across a dining room table featuring Kentucky Fried Chicken, Domino's pizza, Taco Bell tacos, Wonder Bread, Country Crock spreadable butter, Gatorade, Coca-Cola, and Budweiser, clearly mocking the way all Americans—Southern or otherwise—eat.

Though it's meant as satire, it's actually a moment that sums up how most people see Southern food—unhealthy, common, and coarse. Thankfully, we have all of these other moments in films—heartfelt moments like the ones in *Soul Food* and *Fried Green Tomatoes*—that challenge the offensive notion that Southerners are uneducated clodhoppers who like to eat unhealthy junk food.

ABOVE: Courtesy of Southern Foodways Alliance/Photo by Brandall Atkinson

Courtesy of Southern Foodways Alliance/Photo by SFA

Flash Fiction: "Sliders"

by Molly McCaffrey

It was Memorial Day, and I was pregnant.

My grandmother and I had just returned from Hickie's Hamburgers where we got carryout for lunch. We were sitting on her porch out back, eating greasy burgers Hickie called sliders. I'd taken to them as a kid, but now I only tolerated them because they were Grandma's favorite. I'd often suggested trying something else, but she always resisted.

We ate quietly, my grandmother poking questions at me now and then, about baby names and the like. I asked some questions too, easy ones to loosen her up. I was trying to find out what she thought about my "situation." She responded in her usual manner: abrupt, ending each sentence with a kind of half-nod and The Look, her special form of punctuation.

The nod was an old habit, born of years gazing down her nose at her children and their children too, but The Look was more intentional. It was her way of making sure you were paying attention, and God help you if you weren't. After a few nods and several Looks, I let some time pass without words so I could work up the courage to ask her something I'd been wondering about lately: why she had waited thirteen years to have her second child, my Aunt Collette.

"Well, you know, I had three miscarriages between your mother and Collette," she said.

I hadn't known that, but I didn't think she was expecting an answer, so I just nodded back at her.

"Well, yeah, Henry and I had seven children, but only four of them lived. It was common. It is God's natural way of selecting, you know? There's no reason for us to start deciding now what God's been doing for us all along."

I stopped chewing. My slider didn't taste right anymore. I looked at the pile of ketchup on my plate and wondered if there was any way to spit it out without my grandmother noticing. I put the napkin up to my face, pretending to wipe it off, and let the meat fall into my hand.

"That's awful," I said.

"No," she said firmly and gave me The Look, as if to say, Didn't you hear what I just said? I put my napkin down on my paper plate and turned the awkward bulk of my body to face her, so she would know I was listening.

Finally, she went on.

"We knew it was what God wanted and that was just the way things were," she said, her eyes staring into mine. Unwilling to be shaken off, I held her glare until she looked away to light up a cigarette. "The first two after your mother were miscarriages," she said. "The third was almost a stillborn." She stopped for a moment, as if to remember. "I didn't know what was happening. I thought I just had to go to the toilet." She laughed. "But when I got there, blood and fluids came out all over the place. Then I knew something else was coming, so I reached my hand down and wouldn't you know, there it was . . . so small, it fit right into my hand." She held her palm out in front of her and curved it carefully like she was holding something precious. "With its tiny feet dropping off at my wrist."

She put her other hand inside the open palm and made a fist. Then she unrolled the fist and let her fingers hang off the edge of her palm imitating little feet. I could see the fetus, small and wet, in her hand.

"So, I pulled my pants up and carried it into the bedroom. Henry took a look and said, 'Why, Nellie, what have you got there?'" She looked up at the sky, her eyes shining in the sun.

I was surprised she appeared so content. "So what happened?" I asked, reaching over to touch her arm.

She turned quickly, looking at me like I was a stranger.

"What happened with the baby?" I asked again.

"Oh," she said, coming back to the present. "It was too late. Like I told you, that kind of thing didn't matter. It was God's will."

I picked our paper plates up off the table and walked to the kitchen. My plate was destroyed—the ketchup had eaten a hole through it—while my grandmother's plate looked untouched, as if it hadn't even been used.

"Aren't you going to finish your slider?" she asked me.

"No," I said as I lifted the lid of the trash can and dumped the used plates inside. "I don't want it anymore."

Songwriting Columnist Les Kerr on Food in Songs ...

A Music Menu

The expression "food for thought" is not uncommon. For me as a music lover and songwriter, "food for song" sums it up. Food references have appeared in song lyrics and titles since the first crude compositions connecting words and music began to come together in composers' recipes for music. Cuisine has played an important role in music whether the songs that mention it were created by songwriters or bubbled up organically as folk songs evolved.

Music often accompanies meals. In restaurants with a particular theme, diners may hear music specific to that theme. Mariachi music in a Mexican restaurant. Caribbean music in a tropical-themed restaurant. The music of Italy in an Italian restaurant. All that makes sense. In other settings, generic, non-themed music often plays in the background while diners have their dinners.

Similarly, food is often the subject of a song while, sometimes, food and meals set a scene that drives a story. Here are some of my favorite songs written specifically about food that span many decades (and appetites).

"Jambalaya:" Hank Williams' signature "composition de jour" celebrates one of Cajun country's best known dishes. It has been recorded by many artists including Williams himself and John Fogarty, who released it on his original *Blue Ridge Rangers* album in 1973.

"Cheeseburger in Paradise:" Jimmy Buffett's tribute to the famous combination of beef, bread, and cheese was a hit in 1978. Still a staple of his concerts, his vivid lyrical images cause many a mouth to water.

"Crawfish:" This song was featured in the opening scene of *King Creole,* considered by many to be one of Elvis Presley's best motion pictures. In the movie, set and filmed in New Orleans, Presley performed the song as a duet with jazz singer Kitty White. White's role was that of a French Quarter street vendor who drove a wagon filled with creole delicacies. Their song really helped set the scene in this film that included appearances by Walter Matthau, Vic Morrow, and Carolyn Jones. Unfortunately, White's part of the song was omitted from the soundtrack album, but is still in the movie scene.

"How Many Biscuits Can You Eat?:" A musical question posed by country comedian and old-style banjo master Grandpa Jones, it was a catchy, novelty hit. The number Grandpa quoted was forty-nine biscuits, accompanied by a whole ham. What's for dinner, indeed!

"Polk Salad Annie:" Until Tony Joe White wrote and recorded this hit in 1968, you had to be from the country to know about polk salad (also called "poke sallit"). White broadened the horizons for many as the term "soul food" began to crop up around the same time the song was introduced. White's opening recitation describes what it looks like pretty well.

"One Meat Ball:" This homage to a lonely lump was recorded by The Andrews Sisters in 1945. The flip side of "Rum and Coca Cola," this song was also a hit and tells the story of a man wants to buy something to eat for 15 cents. One meat ball was about as far as a nickel and a dime could take him in the mid-forties.

Some songs use food to help tell a story. In "Ode to Billy Joe," as Bobbie Gentry sings it, the family had gathered for dinner (the Southern mid-day meal, as opposed to the evening "supper") as the news about the tragic end of Billy Joe McAllister was delivered. Those at the table bemoaned how Billy Joe passed away as they, themselves, passed around the black-eyed peas.

Folk music has used food references to reinforce themes throughout history. In "Where Have You Been, Billy Boy," the virtues of Billy's object of affection are illustrated in her ability to bake a cherry pie.

Country music has boldly placed both elbows on the table help tell stories. From Bobbie Gentry to Johnny Cash and beyond, artists and songwriters whose music sprang from an agricultural society use vivid ingredients to create the listener's place setting.

"Father's Table Grace:" This bluegrass stalwart recorded by Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs uses the patriarch's voice as he delivers the blessing before supper to tell the story of a young man about to leave the farm for the city. This is one of Flatt's best recitations and proves that lyrics don't always need to be sung to be powerfully effective.

"Suppertime:" Another country classic delivered beautifully by Johnny Cash, the story recalls the singer's mother beckoning her brood for the evening meal at the close of day. Also performed by Jim Reeves, the song also uses mealtime as a way to convey one message with many elements, much like a "lazy Susan" delivers squash, green beans, and pork chops to those gathered 'round a table after church on a Sunday afternoon.

My songwriting friends kid me about food references in my own music. Well, I write what I know about. Having grown up on the Gulf Coast and having spent a lot of time in New Orleans, seafood and Creole cooking are dear to my heart and often end up in my lyrics. "Smile Upon Your Soul," one of my "food songs," includes a dollop and a dash of some of my favorite cuisine set to music. Bon Appetite!

From "Smile Upon Your Soul"

Pile some shrimp upon French bread until you got a "mess"
Mayo, lettuce and tomato; now your "po-boy's" dressed
Don't worry if the shrimp fall out and get all over you
Everybody else is chasin' down them critters, too!

I'd like to have some good trout amandine
Or maybe Eggplant Josephine
And bread puddin' for dessert
A Bloody Mary might not hurt
Have some rice and Shrimp Creole
Speckled trout inside your mouth'll put a Smile Upon Your Soul
Crawfish in your mouth'll put a Smile Upon Your Soul
Gumbo in your mouth'll put a Smile Upon Your Soul

Nashville Local Literary Scene Columnist Chuck Beard Shares Something Special ...

Ciona be Ciona

After being asked to follow-up my contribution in the last issue of *2nd & Church* that focused on two Nashville writers, Tiana Clark and Dave Wright, who are destined for great things and who are now fulfilling their literary study dreams at Vanderbilt and Sewanee respectively, I thought it would be a smart thing for me to let you know about another extraordinary Nashville writer who is also an East Side Storytellin' alumnus and is currently doing more for her craft and helping other writers more every month than most do in a lifetime. I'm talking about the local legend that is Ciona (pronounced something like "See-On-A") Rouse (pronounced something like Rouse).

Yes, Ciona Rouse, you will remember her for years to come.

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, and raised in South Carolina, she moved quite a bit growing up because her father was (and continues to be) a United Methodist pastor. After attending nine different schools and never living in one city for more than five consecutive years, she sunk her teeth into Nashville after living in Maryland for a year after college. Admittedly, Nashville wasn't her dream city when searching in the summer of 2002, but she had no idea that Nashville would grab hold of her heart like it has done to so many of us.

With a mother who was—and is—a writer, Ciona learned to excel in reading before she reached kindergarten. She had her first journal by age six and mentioned, "I have early entries where I talk about being an author like Laura Ingalls Wilder."

She branched out of the *Little House on the Prairie* phase and soon jumped full-heartedly into poetry after one particular classroom assignment. She explained, "The fifth grade teacher had us fill the chalkboard with nouns, verbs, and adjectives and introduced us to this magical world where you create with words. I wrote my first poem about fireworks. Here is an excerpt from that very poem that I still remember vividly: dancing angels go withering by ushering a banner across the jet black sky listen to the whistle of the banner as the wind blows."

Many adults in her life proclaimed to be in awe of Ciona's use of imagery, so she continued to grow in that particular art form. She cited Mrs. Herring, her seventh grade English/literature teacher, as someone who helped her appreciate grammar and taught her how to tell a story well.

By the time Ciona arrived to Nashville, it wasn't hard for her to surround herself with other people who quickly became her creative teachers and inspirations. Whether it was the musician k.s. Rhoads performing a dynamic set of original music that differed from anything else she had ever heard, Susannah Felts and Katie McDougall creating The Porch Writer's Collective to help other writers consistently create new stories, or the poets that spill over every month at Ciona's Lyrical Brew, the spirit of Nashville and its innate welcoming presence for all entrepreneurs, creators, and artists is something that Ciona could never have imagined being around and helping her move along her poetic journey when she first moved here over a decade ago.

But, as Ciona puts it, "Poetry, like life in general, when done well is comfortable with mystery. Whether reading or writing it, I learn to find more comfort in the questions than in the answers, which is important in life and relating to people; humanity isn't a straightforward, black-and-white answer. We exist in the gray, and so does good poetry."

It was in this poignant and classy shade of gray where Ciona was first inspired to do more with poetry and the writing community in Nashville.

She met a guy from Iran in Washington, D.C. at the Split This Rock poetry festival that had a profound effect on her outlook on poetry and her place in it. He shared a brief but deep discussion about how the poetry scene, from his personal opinion, was immensely lacking and different in the United States than in his hometown where everyone read poetry daily and talked about poets in the same way as we Americans glorify media celebrities.

Ciona took this serendipitous conversation to heart and returned to Nashville wanting to create poetry experiences that made people want to talk about poetry the day after said events. She had that opportunity through John Lasiter at Barnes & Noble and then Heather Riney at Atmalogy to dream of a way to bring poetry into their wonderful spaces. Ciona went on to use both spaces separately and consistently each month to create Lyrical Brew at Barnes & Noble and Writings on the Wall at Atmalogy. Both have loyal and growing audiences that continue to support local poets and the art of everyone finding more within the words that are shared between all in our city. Describing either one of these events and their positive impact on our literary community is easier done than said.

That said, just go experience one or both of these events as soon as possible and see Ciona do what she loves in person. You can visit the Facebook page links below for more background and information about the upcoming shows for both ventures.

But beyond sharing her love for learning and making good poetry with others, Ciona is still an artist who is on the verge of her best work yet. She has dreams of publishing a book of her own work and making that work more honest than she has ever been before. Never dishonest, she mentioned, "I know there are places I still don't go because I grew up in a very private family, and those privacy rules still repeat in my mind. I'm open to going to those places on the page now. I feel clear in these areas of my story, and, maybe because a lot is forgiven or healed, I want to now see how they might want to unveil themselves in my poetry."

Not long ago, Ciona took a month off from work to write and cast vision on everything she wants to become. Throughout 2016, she plans to have a chapbook published as well as starting a poetry-related video series that she's been dreaming up for a few years. Ciona's poetry, like life in general, is always inspiring and done well. Here's to her comfort in the word mysteries unveiling something magical and enlightening for all of us going forward.

Discover more at:

Ciona Rouse - http://do-the-crazy-thing.myshopify.com/
Lyrical Brew - www.facebook.com/LyricalBrew
Writings on the Wall - www.facebook.com/writingsonthewallnashville

ABOVE: Photo by Terry Price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Charlotte Rains Dixon reports from France, via Portland, Oregon ...

When Sugar Was Good For My Writing

We hear a lot these days about how bad sugar is for our poor, unexercised bodies. It shoots up the blood sugar and then drops it, makes small children into monsters, and packs on the pounds. It is especially bad for people who sit all day, like writers. And yet, it tastes so damn good.

Tastes so good, but it's so, so bad, right?

Not necessarily. Allow me to share my sugar story.

I teach writing workshops in the south of France, and the first of these was held in the small town of Ceret in September of 2013. One our participants that year was Nashvillian Marlene Roberts, who hauled several heavy suitcases on the train down from Paris. We gave her lots of good-natured grief for how much luggage she brought, but out of one of her over-packed bags emerged an amazing treat: a pastel-colored box of macarons from Ladurée.

It was love at first bite for me. The pillowy, almond-flavored cookies, baked in an array of Easter egg colors, come in flavors from coconut to strawberry to vanilla, and you can find them at the Ladurée flagship store on the Avenue des Champs-Élysées and other locations, as well as at nearly every patisserie throughout France. (Make note: we are not talking about the American-style macaroon, the cookie made of processed coconut and sugar.)

I took a box of macarons home to Oregon. I searched for them in Portland. I drooled over Internet images of them. And then one day, the magical thing that every writer dreams of happened: I got the idea for a novel. It would be a novel about a young woman who owned a struggling macaron bakery, and one day a famous entrepreneur would visit and become interested in investing in her bakery—and her.

The magic continued as I wrote the book, and it became one of those projects that fly onto the keyboard without a lot prompting or angst. I found a local baker who specialized in macarons to shadow, and learned how to make the fussy cookies. And I continued to write. I set a goal to finish the first draft before my second trip to France in September of 2014 and met that easily.

And then—more magic. (I'm convinced it all came from the sugar and the macarons.)

I finished the second draft at the end of January, 2015, and in a newsletter from the Women's Fiction Writers Association, I learned that one of my dream agents (Erin Niumata of Folio Literary) was opening to submissions.

I wrote a query, sent it off, and heard back from her immediately (like, in seconds immediately): she'd like to read the whole thing.

What happened next is my favorite part of the whole story.

The following Sunday, I accompanied my three-year-old grandson and his parents to a Raffi concert. (For those of you who don't know him, Raffi is a rock star to most toddlers.) Surrounded by screaming children, I decided to check my e-mail, because that's what one does when an agent has chosen to read one's work, check e-mail obsessively. And there it was—an e-mail from Erin saying she was not yet done with the manuscript but she knew she wanted to represent me and could we talk sometime this week?

As of this writing, the book is out with numerous publishers, several of whom have expressed strong interest in it, and I'm delighted with my relationship with Erin. I just got back from my third trip to France, where I ate macarons whenever and wherever I could.

So, never let anyone convince you that sugar is bad for you.

Oh, and for the record—in yet another magical twist, my next novel appears to be about....pies.

ABOVE: Photo by Suzanne Peters, Lifewishes Photography

LEFT: Photo by Jocelyne Genri/Paris Tourist Office

Linda Busby Parker reports from Mobile, Alabama ...

Food in Fiction

Every writer knows that the utilization of food in creative writing is a method of defining both place and character as well as generating an emotional response from the reader. Food especially signifies place. The (now classic) novel *Charming Billy* by Alice McDermott opens with a scene of family and friends gathering at a bar/grill after the memorial service of dead protagonist, Billy Lynch. That scene alone tells us this novel is not set in the South—it opens in a bar in the Bronx. In contrast, after a memorial service in the Deep South, family and friends gather for "pot luck," an assortment of dishes provided by (you know who) family and friends, many of whom are in attendance. The gathering is frequently in the deceased home or in the church parlor. The food consists of fried chicken, baked chicken, spiral ham, a pot roast or two, a few barbequed ribs, potato salad (multiple varieties), peas, beans, a green salad or three, Jello salads (some with coconut, fruit, and nuts, others with cheese), and loads of desserts—coconut cake, chocolate cake, Italian Cream Cake, an assortment of bundt cakes, and several pies.

In *Charming Billy,* the guests sit somberly at a long table with the widow at the head. This is a remarkably visual scene where the diners lean in toward each other and whisper about Billy, an alcoholic, and about how his widow is adjusting to her loss. Food after death is a tradition going back to Biblical times—after the death of his beloved son, King David "returned to his palace where he was served food and ate." But in the South, the after-death feast is generally not somber; this is the time to reflect on the life of the beloved by telling endearing and funny stories about the deceased and gain nourishment from not only the food, but also from moments of laughter.

Another example of the use of food in fiction—or in this case drink—is in Alexander McCall Smith's *The Number One Ladies Detective* series which is set in Botswana. The number one detective is Precious Ramotswe, who along with her secretary, Mma Makutsi, enjoys pot after pot of bush tea. While I've never had bush tea, everyone seems to serve it in Botswana. Precious Ramotswe generally begins her day with a cup or two before she goes to work. While sipping her morning bush tea and reflecting on the day ahead, she sits in her tiny yard on Zebra Drive under an acacia tree with some thorn trees in the distance and an occasional chicken or two scurrying around her feet.

In *The Number One Ladies Detective* series, bush tea become a literary device, a motif, used repeatedly to illustrate place and to defuse tension within characters and between characters. Precious Ramotswe enjoys her daily bush tea as a time-out—a time to step back from the moment, to think, to organize mentally, and to regroup. When there is tension between Precious Ramotswe and her secretary Mma Makutsi, the secretary steeps a pot of bush tea, the process of brewing the tea and sipping it always diffuses the tension.

Another example of food that is emblematic of place and emotion is the squid burger in Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News.* Protagonist, Quoyle, a man beaten down by the people and events in his life, retreats to Newfoundland, a place (as presented in Proulx's novel) that will cause a man to sink or swim. To demonstrate the rough and tumble alien environment, Proulx has an abundance of squid burgers—in fact, there are squid burgers on every menu. Ultimately, Newfoundland transforms Quoyle into a "man" (a real man), possessing dignity and self-respect, and Quoyle, in the course of his transformation, develops a palate for the squid burger.

Some Newfoundland natives argue that they have never encountered a squid burger on any menu—and perhaps they have not. Perhaps the squid burger is, in fact, an odd figment of Proulx's extraordinary imagination. Well—a writer should have license to create a new dish, a new menu item that should be on the menu. I hope to visit Newfoundland someday, and I hope to encounter Proulx's squid burger.

In my own writing, I'm not opposed to creating new food (or drink) items. In a novel-in-process, *Oliver's Song*, set during Mobile's Mardi Gras, I create a new Mardi Gras drink, one symbolic of the occasion—the Mardi Gras Kiss. The Kiss is orange and passion-fruit juices mixed with vodka and served over crushed ice—especially thirst-quenching at luncheons. While plenty of alcohol of all descriptions is consumed during Mardi Gras, I've never heard of a Mardi Gras Kiss. It exists only in *Oliver's Song,* but after the book is published (God willing), I hope the Mardi Gras Kiss becomes a standard of the season.

The lack of food and the quality of food also create a sense of place, character, and emotion. In Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, teenage protagonist Arnold (aka, Junior) lives on the Spokane Indian Reservation and knows the reality of no food in the kitchen. Junior creates a new formula: Poverty = empty refrigerator + empty stomach. Junior's idea of a delicious meal is a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken. Junior explains: "Sometimes my family misses a meal and sleep is the only thing we have for dinner, but I know that sooner or later, my parents will come bursting through the door with a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken. Original recipe."

The long and short of it is that people and places are defined by food. Food makes us happy, and the lack of it makes us sad. Food says we are in unusual places; food brings us comfort; food stirs our emotions. Writers know this. That's why food is as abundant in fiction as it is on our tables.

Jennifer Palley checks in from Stockholm, Sweden ...

New Words Opening up New Worlds

Living in a different country opens you to countless new experiences. In my case, as a Canadian living in Sweden, the biggest challenge has been achieving fluency in another language. Swedes speak great English, so in the beginning I had no trouble making myself understood, but to become fully assimilated and familiar with the culture, I knew that I would have to learn the language.

Becoming fluent in another language is more than just memorizing a new set of vocabulary, learning how to conjugate verbs again, and determining which prepositions to use. Learning a new language opens you to new concepts and the ideas they represent.

Take the Swedish word *lagom* as an example. In English, its best equivalents are probably "not too much, not too little" and "just enough." It's a hard word to translate as it means so much in Swedish. But it's more than just a word. It's a mindset that some people claim defines the Swedes.

Swedish people are said to strive for equality (everyone is entitled to their fair share) and modesty. The word lagom embodies that. It's about wanting no more than what you need, but it can be used to describe almost everything. You can have a lagom number of things to do; you can earn a lagom amount of money; and you can have a lagom big house.

Another word that is quintessentially Swedish is *allemansrätten* or "freedom to roam" in English. Allemansrätten is used to describe the very Swedish idea of being able to walk, hike, ski, or camp almost anywhere you want. (This excludes protected areas, private gardens, and areas near a house.)

Swedes love to spend time outdoors, and allemansrätten is a reflection of that love. The idea behind this word was foreign to me for the longest time. Where I'm from you could only be on a piece of land if you owned it, had permission from the owner, or were in a park.

My favorite Swedish word by far is *fika.* The English term just does not do the Swedish word justice, and how could it? As far as I know we have no equivalent in the English-speaking world. If I were to say it in English, I'd say "have coffee." But fika is so much more than that. It's a Swedish institution.

It's not just about having coffee (although Swedes do love their coffee). Fika means getting together and enjoying a coffee/tea/drink of choice. Oftentimes you have something to go along with your coffee, such as a cinnamon bun or sandwich. You can fika at a café, at someone's house, at work with colleagues, anywhere really. You can fika several times a day. Traditionally when you had fika, it was with seven different kinds of cookies. That's a lot of meaning for a four-letter word.

While on the topic of food, many language-specific words reflect the country-specific dishes. *Semlor* are an example from this Scandinavian country I now call home. These wheat buns, filled with whipped cream and almond paste, are traditionally eaten on Fat Tuesday. There are also *Wallenbergare*, a main course of a ground-veal patty mixed with cream and eggs and often served with mashed potatoes, gravy, peas, and lingonberry jam.

All these words are part of the Swedish language but more importantly, they reflect the culture–the people. Living abroad opens you to these new words and worlds.

Book Review: *Flavors from Home: Refugees in Kentucky Share Their Stories and Comfort Foods*

Something New in Southern Food

by Mary Popham

Photo courtesy of the author

Author Aimee Zaring

While gathering stories of refugees for her book, *Flavors from Home,* Aimee Zaring asked her new friend, originally from Bhutan, "What is the one thing you like most here in America?"

"Electricity," replied Goma Acharya.

Of course. It's basic. Those who have been forced to leave their country to escape war, persecution, or political upheaval remind us what the pursuit of happiness means. Kentucky's refugees are filled with gratitude, the basic thread Aimee finds during interviews.

Although some who seek asylum must live in a camp for years, there are agencies in this state, like the Kentucky Refugee Ministries and Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services, that assist them in finding jobs, learning English, and in other areas of resettlement.

Aimee's interest in writing about refugees began in the spring of 2008 when she took a bus tour with the Leadership Louisville Center, a regional resource for leadership development and civic engagement.

She became friends with a Bosnian native, Zeljana Javorek, and soon volunteered to teach ESL, English as a Second Language. Her book evolved from conversations with her students, whose memories were most vivid when describing food from their homelands.

"If you want to know our culture, look to the food," says Mya Zaw from Myanmar, formerly Burma.

"I wanted them to feel really natural, to see them in their kitchens...to see what it feels like to be in their homes," said Aimee.

Each chapter of *Flavors from Home* is followed by one or more recipes specific to the subject's homeland. It was almost universal: no one had routine methods or measured ingredients. Food is prepared as they were taught by elders: "by memory, instinct, taste, observation, imagination." As at home, they use what they have on hand or fresh from their gardens.

Many refugees come to Kentucky with advanced degrees but find work in the food industry because the language and misperception of their abilities limits job opportunities.

Dr. Mahn Myint Saing and his wife Chaveewan began Simply Thai in Louisville. Dr. Saing, from the Burmese jungles, had been a medical doctor who saw as many as a hundred patients a day and now works in his restaurant. The Thai and Burmese cuisines are similar, but with different ingredients. Both make lots of soups. The Thais like to use coconut milk, and more chili peppers.

From Myanmar, Pastor Thomas Kap and his wife make pumpkin soup and curry as they did at home, and Win Khine, resettled in Owensboro, Kentucky, serves an authentic multi-vegetable bean curry that will open up the sinuses. In the family garden, they grow the usual peas, beans, potatoes, peppers, and—from their homeland—Opo squash.

Also a refugee from Myanmar, William Thang learned from his mother's cooking and uses Burmese staples: fish sauce, chili peppers, turmeric, garlic, onions, shallots, paprika, and ginger. In Burmese (and Asian) kitchens, they never feel full unless they've eaten rice.

The Akrami family operates Ata's Catering. Azar and Ata's older son, Ramin, is in charge of the Shiraz Mediterranean Grill.

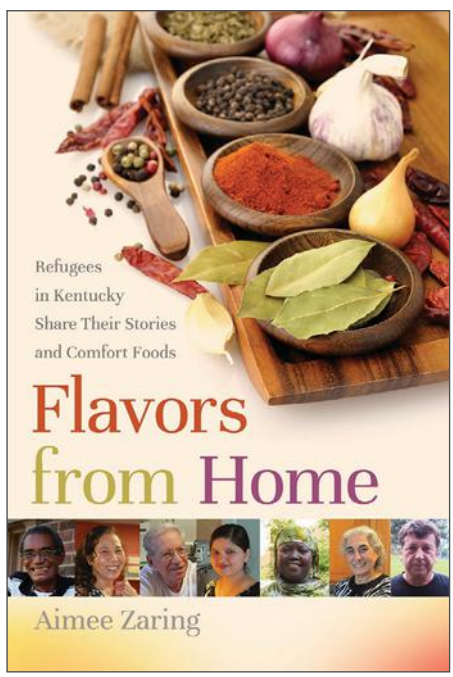
"Iranians are known for their hospitality," Ramin says. Persian cooking uses a lot of herbs, including parsley, basil, mint, tarragon, cilantro, and watercress, and it is very similar to Iranian cuisine.

The smells of aromatic spices, including cumin, cinnamon, cloves, and cardamom, bring the flavors of home to Dr. Gulalai Wali Khan, from Pakistan, which is situated between India and Afghanistan. Dr. Khan cooks Boorani, a vegetarian yogurt recipe handed down from her ancestors. It is constructed with layers of individually prepared eggplant, yogurt, and spicy tomato sauce.

For Hasana Aalarkess, an Iraqi mother of seven, it's all about the spices. Influenced by the cuisines of Turkey and Iran, she uses turmeric and curry but with less intensity. The family brews chai in a Turkish teapot and sweetens it with sugar, cardamom, and mint. A special dish is an elaborately constructed "Upside-Down Chicken, Rice, and Vegetables."

Zainab Kadhim Alradhee and her husband Barrak Aljabbari, from Iraq, cook biryani—a rice dish with endless variations. Theirs includes shredded chicken, peas, fried potato chunks, toasted almonds, and hard-boiled eggs.

Elmira Tonian is in the Elder Refugee Program. She is from Azerbaijan, a crossroads between Europe and Asia. Her Russian cooking is influenced by Persian cuisine: lots of greens, vegetables, fruits, and nuts. She comes up with new and delicious recipes for her friend, Arina Saforova, who co-owns the Golden Key international grocery store in Louisville and operates a full-service catering business.



Huong "CoCo" Tran, founded her enormously successful The Eggroll Machine and Café Mimosa—both in Louisville, and now owns Roots and the more casual spot, Heart & Soy. A native of Vietnam, she became a vegetarian and opened Zen Garden and Zen Tea House. Rice dishes, fish, and curry soups are usual. Curry contains vegetables or

meats, and the heat can vary.

A striking figure in brightly colored head scarf, Amina Osman fled from Somalia and now farms with the Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program (RAPP.) She grows vegetables and sells them at farmer's markets: cucumbers, tomatillos, bell peppers, and eggplants. Her specialty is Sambusa, a deep-fried, triangular pastry. They are filled with a variety of herbs and spices, and the vegetables and meat vary according to what is on hand.

Also from Somalia, Abdiaziz Haji and family do not eat pork according to Islamic law. Their special foods are a delicious salad with raisins and onions, served with rice and goat meat, as well as a butter cake, spiced with cardamom instead of vanilla.

Irene Finley from Hungary uses paprika, which is made from dried chili pepper. The country's most important spice gives flavor to her chicken with sour-cream sauce, a classic comfort food.

The man who knows just about every Bosnian in Bowling Green, Kentucky, is Mirzet Mustafić. He practiced law for fifteen years in the former Yugoslavia, and his wife, Ljiljana, is a physician. He was instrumental in establishing the Bosnian Club, and he grills sausages served in a flatbread with onions and sour cream at Bowling Green's International Festival.

Through rescue efforts of the American Red Cross, Rwandan refugee Nicolas Kiza has made a remarkable transition to America from being captured in a military camp during the Second Congo War (also known as the Great War of Africa). He and his wife serve up simple food, which is heavy on such vegetables as sweet potatoes, beans, corn, and peas.

A dynamic young woman who is resettled in Lexington, Kentucky is Sarah Mbombo, originally from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Africans love to cook with palm oil, and Sarah uses it in eggplant recipes and when preparing native foods, like cassava leaves. She also cooks Fufu, a dish that is Africa's equivalent to rice and bread. It is made by mixing fine ground white or yellow cornmeal and hot water, then stirring it into a paste to use as a scoop for the main dish, such as soup or stew. Aline Bucumi and Genevieve Faines, also from Africa's Democratic Republic of the Congo, prepare matoke, a stew-like dish made from starchy green cooking bananas.

In Cuba, Milagros Guzman-Gonzalez was an accountant, and her husband, Lázaro Hondares, a graphic artist. They have recently become proud United States citizens. Cuban food is thought to be spicy, but that's not always the case. The couple cooks tender beef meatballs, using onion, green pepper, lime juice, and cumin. It is believed in general to be a dish the Moors brought to Spain. Another Cuban refugee is an honored activist, Omar Pernet Hernández. His specialties are twice-fried green plantains, eaten like French fries. His fruit dessert is mango slices cooked with cinnamon and sugar.

From the small Himalayan country of Bhutan, Kamala Pati Subedi lives with thirteen family members in a five-bedroom house, where they all work together for the common good. As a team they make Steamed Momos—as traditional for South Asian cuisine as hamburgers are in America. The homemade dumplings are stuffed with a mixture of cooked cabbage, onions, and many spices including cumin, curry, ginger, chili powder, and turmeric.

Photo courtesy of The University Press of Kentucky

Amina Osman displaying fresh produce from her community garden in Louisville, Kentucky

The interviews Aimee Zaring conducted for *Flavors from Home* bring out the hardships, joys, and ultimate triumphs of refugees. Highlighting their stories with their familiar foods allows readers to see these amazing people at their ease in the comfort of their kitchens. They are interesting and admirable, and the information Aimee has recorded stokes a desire to know more. To get involved with global awareness and compassion for refugees, contact globalhumanproject.net

Two Questions with Aimee Zaring

Q: What first interested you to write *Flavors from Home* and how did that interest help to shape the finished book?

A: For many years, I taught ESL (English as a Second Language) to elder refugees, and we held occasional pot lucks where students could share dishes from their homelands. Something magical happened at those potluck dinners. Usually at snack time, the students from each ethnic group would sit together at the same table—but not during potluck days. I was always filled with awe when I looked around the room and saw people from all over the world coming together around food. And I loved seeing how the elders seemed to become kids again as they stood proudly by their dishes and encouraged everyone to "Eat, eat!"

It occurred to me that someone should collect all these delicious recipes before they became altered or "Americanized." As I began talking to the refugees about their favorite foods, I was reminded that food is never just food; there are always stories and strong memories associated with it. I realized that leaving out the refugees' stories would be like leaving out the indispensible saffron in the Persian dish tachin. So I decided to make food the unifying element, linking all the stories, just as food in general unifies all of humankind. It's one of the few things we all share in common.

Q: What do you hope *Flavors from Home* accomplishes, and what do you believe will resonate most with the audience while reading this book?

A: I hope *Flavors from Home* will serve as a launching point for dialogue between people from diverse backgrounds who might not otherwise have a reason or opportunity to communicate with each other. Food is something we all share in common and can enjoy together, and often no words are necessary. Food is its own language and can transcend barriers. I've seen time and again the goodwill that a fine meal can foster.

I hope, too, that the book will help educate readers on the many different cultures and ethnic groups that have been added to America's melting pot over the past half-century. And I hope the stories will inspire people to persevere, even when all hope seems lost. Native-born Americans will no doubt walk away from these stories with a greater appreciation of our great nation, especially after viewing it fresh through the eyes of refugees. Yes, there's a lot that's wrong with our country, but there is also a lot that's right, and refugees remind us to never take for granted our most basic freedoms. And, of course, I want people to try these delectable dishes and perhaps even discover, as did I, a whole new world of comfort foods.

Interview: *Catching up with the Murfreesboro, Tennessee native on her new book, Go For Orbit, now in a third printing*

Physician and Former Astronaut Rhea Seddon Reflects on Eating Southern Food in Orbit

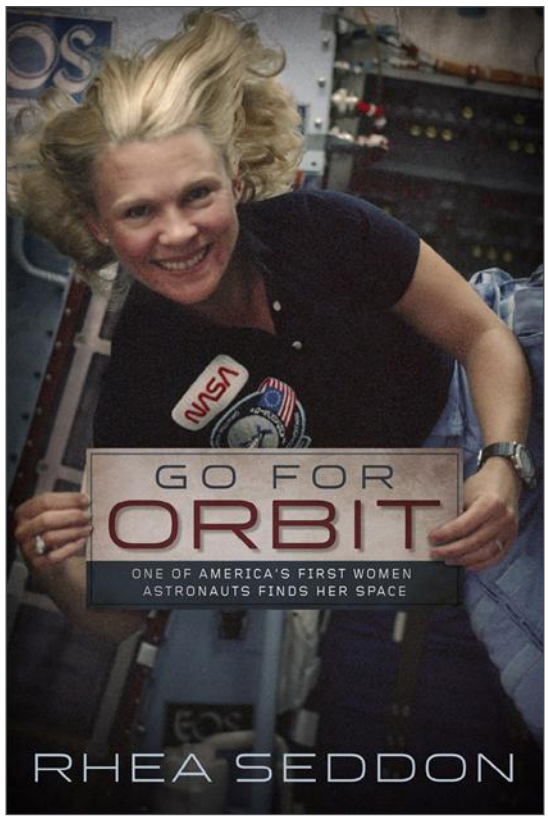
Dr. Rhea Seddon was the cover story/In Depth interview for our third issue, on memoir. Since that time, the physician and former astronaut has gone on to publish her memoir, *Go For Orbit,* which is now in its third printing. Not long ago, we sat down and caught up with Rhea.

Could you expand on what NASA has to do in order to prepare food for space?

NASA has a whole division of people concerned with feeding crews in space. They have to make sure the food is good and nutritious so the crew members health isn't jeopardized, is safe so no one gets sick from eating it, and-with the exception of the fresh food-is stable for stowage for extended periods of time. They are constantly looking for ways to make the food better and accommodating the desires and cultural preferences of the individuals. They have borrowed food ideas from our military and from other partner countries. They get debriefs from crew members post-flight on what foods were favorites and how the menus or packaging can be improved.

I am looking at four pouches of food that could be, maybe is, on the International Space Station now: cheese grits, barbecued beef brisket, cornbread dressing, and grits with butter. Have you eaten these specific items while in orbit, and what did you think of them at the time?

I have eaten the BBQ beef and the grits with butter in space. I liked them or I wouldn't have put them on my menu. Astronauts are given the opportunity to taste test any of the available foods and design their own menus. If they don't want to do that, a standard menu is prepared for them. Food can taste a little different in space, so often you change your menu for later flights.



In many homes, there is a ceremony around a meal, especially dinner in the South. Is a meal in space a group event, or is every meal sort of a "meal on the run," as it were?

I can only speak for the space shuttle, but it really depends on what the astronauts want to do. On one of my flights, the commander decided we should all get together for our "evening" meal to socialize and catch up on the day's events. On single shift missions (which my three were), we all awoke at about the same time, so some of us would eat breakfast and look out the window at the scenery before we got to work. Mid-day meals were frequently on the run.

Each of these foods items have a Velcro circular dot, which I am sure is to keep them from floating around the shuttle's cargo bay. What's the kitchen pantry like in space? Do you ever have these things floating around, and how do you get the food from the packets to your mouth without it slipping away?

Yes, the Velcro dot is to keep the food packages in place. We had food trays that had Velcro, clips, indentations, and straps that held various kinds of food down. Obviously, it was hard to put Velcro on bananas! Food would stick to the spoon as long as there was some liquid in it and you were careful. Other foods could be speared with a fork or be eaten with your fingers. We took some fresh (to be eaten in the first few days) or packaged food (peanut butter, cookies, candies, et cetera.) on the shuttle. Station crews love it when resupply ships bring fresh food to them.

Cooking instructions are in both English and Russian. Can you explain why that is?

The International Space Station has primarily English and Russian crew members plus people from partner space agencies, like Europeans, Japanese, et cetera. All can speak English or Russian and some both. Food names can sometimes be confusing if only given in one of those languages.

Getting to your book...in *Go for Orbit,* what's the message you want to share with readers?

It's being the first woman in a man's world, and what it was like to want a woman's life along with it and trying to figure out how to be able to do all those things. My husband (Robert L. "Hoot" Gibson) was also an astronaut. He's a macho man, a man's man, and that's another part of the story. It's also a circular story because after I went away and did all of those things, I came back to my hometown to raise my children and returned to the sort of the life I had started out to lead. It's a personal journey but in some ways typical of women my age.

Where did the desire to be an astronaut come from and how did you learn about NASA's astronaut program?

From the time I watched Sputnik blink across the sky through watching the early days of human space flight, I thought that this was the new field of discovery for my generation, and I hoped to someday play a part in it. Serendipitously, a friend of mine heard that NASA would be accepting applicants for astronauts to fly on the space shuttle in 1977. The application process would be open to women and minorities for the first time. I knew I had to apply.

Can you describe the pressures you felt in 1978 beginning in a male-dominated program?

The world of NASA, aviation, computers, and space flight was certainly a great leap for me. I had been in a male world in medical school and my surgery residency but the astronaut job was very much a more visible position. All six of the women felt we had to succeed so other women would be given the opportunity.

When you were in orbit, describe an experience that you like to share the most?

The two most amazing thing about being in orbit are weightlessness and the view. It takes a few days to learn how to work and live without gravity. You can fly everywhere and things tend to float away if you aren't careful. Eating and sleeping feel very different. The view of Earth takes your breath away. It is like drifting in a hot air balloon–but you go around the earth every ninety minutes. There are 45 minutes of daylight and 45 minutes of night in every orbit. Pictures can't fully capture

Continued on Page 125


STAR WARS
THE FORCE AWAKENS
A LUCASFILM LTD. PRODUCTION A BAD ROBOT PRODUCTION "STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS" HARRISON FORD MARK HAMILL CARRIE FISHER ADAM DRIVER
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East Side Storytellin' binds the best of music, words

by Tom Wood

Tell some friends that you're going to a writers night event in Nashville, and they'll almost certainly assume you mean songwriter.

This is, after all, Music City.

But there is far more than music being written in this city. It's a Literary City, too, where authors weave magical stories for every genre of fiction and cover every branch of nonfiction, from sports to war, from cooking to sewing, from self-help to how-to, and every other subject matter.

Bestselling authors live and write here.

Self-published ones, too.

Some of the stories feature Nashville as the backdrop, some take the reader to exotic locales.

But unlike the seemingly daily writers night music events scattered across Nashville, there are few places outside the Nashville Public Library's events where someone can go on a regular basis to hear local and national authors discuss their projects and other literary topics.

One such outpost exists in East Nashville.

East Side Storytellin' is the brainchild of Chuck Beard, owner of the independent bookstore East Side Story. This showcase event takes place at The Post, 1701 Fatherland Street, on the first and third Tuesday of each month.

And yes, there is also music.

I was privileged to take part in Chuck's 63rd such event on July 21, 2015, appearing with local musician, Ian Johnson.

We had a great crowd that night.

Ian played several songs, and I discussed my debut novel *Vendetta Stone,* a fictional true-crime thriller which is set primarily in East Nashville.

So that was an immediate connection I had with the audience, and they quizzed me at length about the who, what, where, when, why, and how of my journalism-based story.

Then it was Chuck's turn.

And during the Q&A session, Chuck touched on several other topics, such as delving into writing habits, style, and how-to tips for rising authors.

Chuck does his homework when it comes to interviewing authors, asking knowledgeable questions with meat to them, giving the author something to chew on, and making it easy for the crowd to digest.

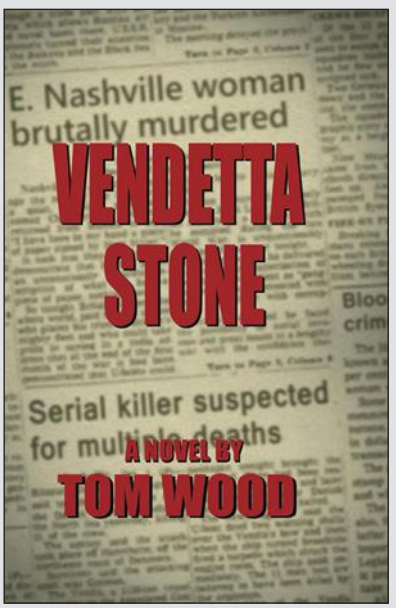
And best of all, the show is taped and later posted on SoundCloud. A link to each show can be found at eastsidestory.com.

All in all, it was a great experience, and I hope to be back to discuss the next chapter of the *Vendetta Stone* series.

Photo by Terry Price

Photo by Nora Canfield

Novelist Tom Wood



Tom Wood's debut novel is *Vendetta Stone,* a fictional true-crime thriller set in Nashville. He recently completed a screenplay based on the book, and it was a semifinalist in the 2015 Nashville Film Festival's screenwriting competition. The second chapter of the series is expected in 2016.

Photo by Nyoka Hawkins

Katherine J. Black

Book Review: *Talking with Kentucky Gardeners*

ROW by ROW

For two and a half years, Katherine J. Black crisscrossed Kentucky, interviewing home vegetable gardeners from a variety of backgrounds. *Row by Row: Talking with Kentucky Gardeners* is the result.

The people profiled here share a Kentucky backdrop, but their life stories, and their gardens, have as many colors, shapes, and tastes as heirloom tomatoes do. Black talked to those who garden in city backyards, who carve out patches from farmland, and who have sprawling plots in creek bottoms and former pastures. Many of them speak about our industrialized food system's injuries to our land, water, and health. More often, they talk about what they are doing in their gardens to reverse this course.

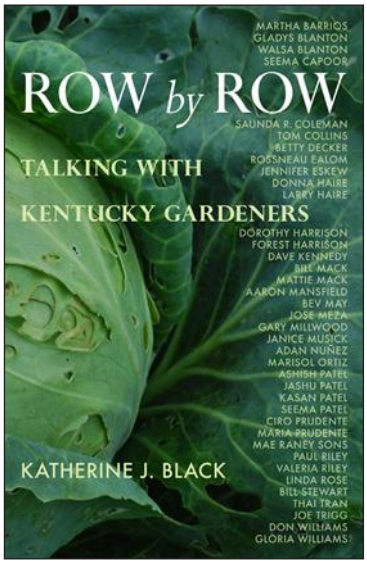
Drawn from oral histories and illustrated with color photographs, these stories form an eloquent meditation on the connections between land, people, culture, and home that resonates far beyond the Kentucky setting.

Katherine J. Black has been raising gardens since she was a child. She served as the curator of the University of Kentucky's Appalachian Collection from 1986 until her retirement in 2013.

Praise for Katherine J. Black

"Kate Black's tender portraits of Kentucky gardeners read like good visits with future friends. Although these compelling Kentuckians' backgrounds vary, they have in common their striking commitment to growing their own food. Why do they garden? Their answers make each story rich and satisfying."

—Rona Roberts, host of the "Savoring Kentucky" blog and author of *Classic Kentucky Meals*



"This is a loving and necessary book about our future: a possible world of connections with the earth, with the spirit, with the food we eat, and among human beings. Black's sensitive interviews, her narrators' creative lives, and the eloquent photographs are one powerful message of hope."

—Alessandro Portelli, author of *They Say in Harlan County: An Oral History*

"Black's commitment to listening to the oral histories cuts through the romanticism of much garden writing and the polarizing language that can afflict our food conversations in the United States."

—Elizabeth S. D. Engelhardt, author of *A Mess of Greens: Southern Gender and Southern Food and lead author of Republic of Barbecue: Stories beyond the Brisket*

Learn more at http://www.ohioswallow.com/book/Row+by+Row

PRESS RELEASE

From Kensington Publishing Corporation: *One Year*

After the Mountain: New Fiction, Activism

In a heartfelt story set in a picturesque small town in Virginia, Mary McDonough portrays three generations of women in a modern Irish-American family as they navigate marriage, motherhood, and independence…

"Mary McDonough played Erin on the beloved TV show, *The Waltons.* Now in her debut novel, a heartfelt, charming story set in a picturesque small town in Virginia, she portrays three generations of women in a modern Irish-American family as they navigate marriage, motherhood and independence."

-Library Journal

Mary McDonough is an award winning actor, writer, and director. She starred as Erin in the award winning television series, *The Waltons,* for nine years, as well as in the made-for-TV reunion movies that followed. She has also appeared in *The New Adventures of Old Christine, Will and Grace,* and *ER.*

One Year (Kensington, hardcover, $25.00/$27.95 Canada, May 2015, ISBN: 978-0-7582-9349-7) is Mary's first novel. Her memoir, *Lessons from the Mountain: What I Learned from Erin Walton* (Kensington, ISBN: 978-0-7582-6366-7) was published in 2011 to great critical acclaim.

She wrote and produced the award winning *For the Love of May,* a film starring Patricia Neal. McDonough has written, produced, and directed award winning-educational films. McDonough has experience in corporate and charitable organizations. As a board member of the national nonprofit Young Artists United, she served as chairman of their National Speakers Bureau from 1986-1991. The Lupus Foundation of America gave her their national award for outstanding service, and the American Heart Association awarded Mary the Les Etoiles De Coeur (Stars of Heart) Award for her participation in their Healthy Heart campaigns.

An outspoken activist, McDonough spent ten years lobbying congress on behalf of women's health. After experiencing and overcoming her own health crisis, she began performing hands-on work to help heal others heal their health, spirits and lives. With "can-do" determination, she adheres to an indomitable "if life gives you lemons, make lemonade" philosophy. Utilizing solutions she created to solve issues affecting her own life, she became a certified coach and public speaker. She works with businesses and organizations to help them attain their goals in a more harmonious and effective way. Her workshop *Body Branding, Getting Comfortable with the Skin You're In,* allows Mary to help others with their own personal challenges growing up.

Most gratifying of all is the one-on-one work she does with men and women to deal with and overcome the fears associated with career transition, family dysfunction, and eating disorders so they may experience the love, passion, and success they so deeply desire. She was founding director of the fund raising organization, *Lupus LA,* and currently heads *In The Know,* to educating women about their own health.

She currently lives in Denver, CO with her family.

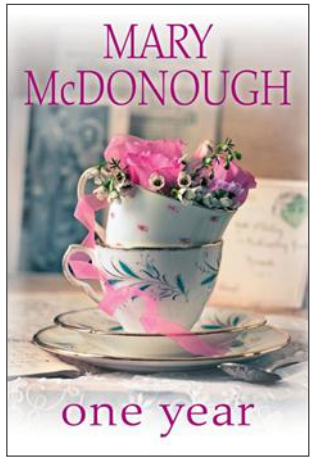
Readers can visit Mary McDonough online at: MaryMcDonough.com

Photo by Chelsea Claus Photography

Mary McDonough

A Peek Inside

The Fitzgibbons—especially the women—have long been the backbone of Oliver's Well, Virginia. Matriarch Mary Bernadette is still striking and tireless at seventy-five, with a generous heart that belies her sometimes sharp tongue. Her husband, Paddy, owns the local landscaping business, daughter Grace is a nun, and son Pat and his wife Megan are successful lawyers. Her grandson, PJ, and his new wife, Alexis, live in a charming cottage behind the main house. Church, family, tradition, and the local historical society—everything Mary Bernadette cherishes is in Oliver's Well. But below the surface, there are fractures.



Megan sees the strained relationship between her husband and Mary Bernadette, who has never quite recovered from the painful loss of her first-born son. Megan too is torn between gaining her mother-in-law's approval and living life on her own terms. Alexis loves PJ deeply yet chafes against his grandmother's influence in their marriage. Then a looming scandal brings unexpected tragedy, compelling the Fitzgibbons to determine the depth of their loyalty, find their strength—and repair the bonds that have held a town, and a family, together for so long.

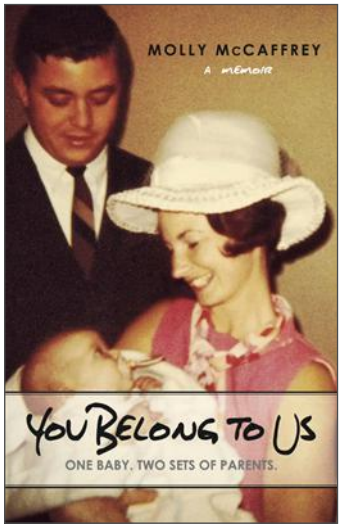
With warmth and an abundance of insight, Mary McDonough artfully captures the shifting dynamics of family life—and the revelations they may bear just in time.

Press Release

Kentucky writer launches second book, *You Belong to Us*

Bowling Green, Kentucky—Author Molly McCaffrey's second book was released with Mint Hill Books, an imprint of Main Street Rag Publishing, on June 30, 2015.

McCaffrey launched her book tour for *You Belong to Us* at the Bob Kirby Branch of Warren County Public Library in Bowling Green, Ky. The event was free and open to the public.



On April 5, 1970, Molly McCaffrey was born in a Catholic hospital and given up for adoption when she was six weeks old. Nearly thirty years later, she met her birthmother who had spent the time since McCaffrey's birth working at that same hospital, in that same ward—labor and delivery—wondering what had become of the baby she had long ago named Anne Marie. But something else occurred shortly after McCaffrey's birth. Her birthmother married her birthfather. And together they had four more children, giving McCaffrey an entire biological family she didn't know existed. A family that owned a biker bar. A family that karaoked together. A family that gave each other guns at Christmas. A family that she had virtually nothing in common with. *You Belong To Us* tells the story of McCaffrey's attempt to connect and find common ground across that span of years as well as class and educational lines. The book follows more than a decade in the lives of her unconventional family and asks the question that lies at the heart of adoption: Do we belong to the people with whom we share our blood? Or do we belong to those who raise us?

Joe Blair, author of *By the Iowa Sea,* which was chosen by *Publishers Weekly* as a top ten memoir of 2012, calls *You Belong to Us,* "A bare-naked plunge into the murky waters of nature, nurture, and an adopted daughter's search for her true identity. Molly McCaffrey has written a brave and important book." And WKU English professor Tom C. Hunley says, "McCaffrey holds nothing back. This compelling memoir deepens questions about nature versus nurture, forcing readers to confront sides of themselves they may not have previously known or acknowledged."

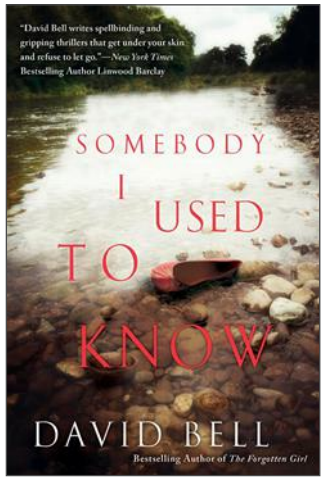
For more info, visit http://www.mollymccaffrey.com.

Press Release

WKU professor launches seventh novel, *Somebody I Used To Know*

Bowling Green, Kentucky—Western Kentucky University English professor David Bell's seventh novel was released with New American Library, an imprint of Penguin Random House USA, on July 7, 2015.

Bell launched his book tour for *Somebody I Used To Know* at the Bob Kirby Branch of Warren County Public Library in Bowling Green, Kentucky. The event was free and open to the public.



Somebody I Used To Know begins when Nick Hansen sees a young woman at the grocery store and his heart stops. She is the spitting image of his college girlfriend, Marissa Minor, who died in a campus house fire twenty years earlier. But when Nick tries to speak to her, she acts skittish and rushes off.

The next morning the police arrive at Nick's house and show him a photo of the woman from the store. She's been found dead, murdered in a local motel, with Nick's name and address on a piece of paper in her pocket.

Convinced there's a connection between the two women, Nick enlists the help of his college friend Laurel Davidson to investigate the events leading up to the night of Marissa's death. But the young woman's murder is only the beginning...and the truths Nick uncovers may make him wish he never doubted the lies.

Publishers Weekly calls *Somebody I Used to Know* a "satisfying thriller" and says, "Distinctive characters and a smartly crafted plot lift this well above the genre average." *New York Times* bestselling author Linwood Barclay says that "David Bell writes spellbinding and gripping thrillers that get under your skin and refuse to let go."

For more info, visit http://www.davidbellnovels.com/

Guitarist John Jackson and Minton Sparks

Martina Boone

JKS Comms Photo Gallery

JKS
COMMUNICATIONS
A LITERARY PUBLICITY FIRM

Korby Lenker

S.B. Alexander

Russell Scott

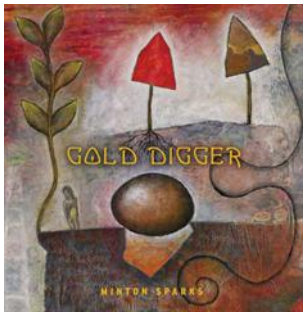
See page 117 for cast credits and photo captions.

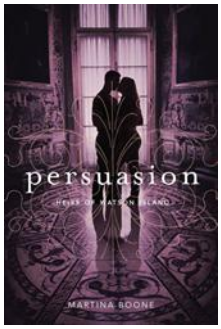
M. Travis DiNicola

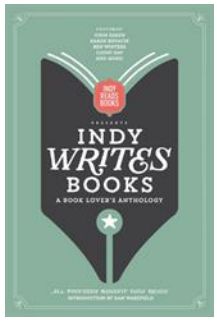
Kay Kendall

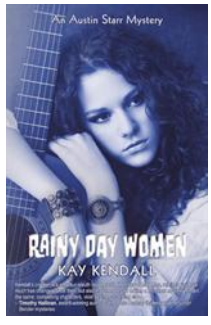
Peter Golden

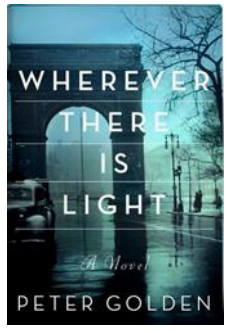
We salute the tireless champions of the written word: *2nd & Church*, authors, and bookstores











JKS
COMMUNICATIONS
A LITERARY PUBLICITY FIRM

JKS Communications is a full-service literary publicity firm, founded in 2000, with offices in Nashville, New York, and Chicago. We represent books and authors with major publishers, boutique and indie publishers, as well as select self published authors.

www.jkscommunications.com

JKS Photo Gallery Credits & Photo Captions

From start to finish, JKS Communications has the Expertise to take You form Page to Prominence.

JKS Communications is a full-service literary publicity firm that represents some of the finest publishers, authors, and books around the world. Their team consists of professionals who specialize in media relations, new-model book tours, social networking, online visibility, book trailer production, and website development specifically for the book publishing industry.

JKS Communications Photo Gallery: Pages 112 to 115

Page 112, Top - Minton Sparks and John Jackson. Photo courtesy of Gina Binkley. Nashville performance artist Minton Sparks dares you to define her. Her spoken word/honky-tonk hybrid performances elicit whoops and hollers from beer-swilling good ole boys and latte-sipping intellectuals alike, because she's doing something wholly new—rebel storytelling with marrow-deep power and resonance. Now this Grand Ole Opry star is raising the bar with her newest album release, *Gold Digger,* and her wildly unique performance video, "Time Flies."

Page 112, Bottom - Martina Boone. Photo courtesy of JKS Communications. Martina spoke several languages before she learned English after moving to the U.S. She has never fallen out of love with words, fairy tale settings, or characters who have to find themselves. She is the author of *Compulsion,* the acclaimed first book in the Heirs of Watson Island trilogy with *Persuasion,* that came out in October, 2015.

Page 113 - Korby Lenker. Photo courtesy of JKS Communications. Korby Lenker's first book, *Medium Hero*, features 27 stories culled from his 15 years as a solo touring indie artist. The stories are as colorful as his titles suggest ("Rat's Dude," "Manboy and the Mafia Table," and "Catlady") and flourish under his descriptive, empathetic pen. From a romantic-encounter-turned-family-crisis, to a humorous eulogy for his recently deceased piano teacher, to an unlikely visit with a convicted felon in a California desert, he has distilled an unusual life into a few potent vignettes that you will read more than once.

Page 114, Top - S.B. Alexander. Photo courtesy of Tracy Hope. Author S.B. Alexander has drawn on a childhood experience and her love of baseball to inspire her new adult novel, *Dare to Dream* (July 17, 2015). The book is the much-anticipated follow up to her 2014 release, *Dare to Kiss*.

Page 114, Bottom - Russell Scott. Photo courtesy of Scott Anderson. Weaving declassified CIA files with the intense truth behind the international diamond trade, Russell Scott's *The Hard Times* tells the story of Dr. Ray Moffett who finds himself facing an abyss, and one foot's already over the edge. After his best friend and partner dies weeks after retiring, Ray is forced to face his own future, and it looks pretty grim – a few more years in the ER, then pushed into retirement himself, a wrecked marriage ruined by an affair and two grown kids who couldn't care less.

Page 115, Top/Left - M. Travis Dinicola. Photo courtesy of JKS Communications. Indy Reads' Executive Director and editor of the collection, M. Travis DiNicola says, "*Indy Writes Books* is a celebration of literacy, and a celebration of the amazing authors who are making Central Indiana a thriving literary community. This collection is for anyone who loves books and bookstores. Not only is it a great read, but every purchase helps support adults learning how to read."

Page 115, Top/Right - Kay Kendall. Photo courtesy of Kay Kendall. Stairway Press is proud to announce the publication of *Rainy Day Women* by Kay Kendall, marking the sequel to her widely praised debut mystery, *Desolation Row.*

Page 115, Bottom - Peter Golden. Photo courtesy of Annis Golden. Peter Golden is an award-winning journalist, historian, and novelist who, during the course of his long and varied career, has interviewed Presidents Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, and George H.W. Bush; Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger, Alexander Haig, George Shultz, and Lawrence Eagleburger; Israeli Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, and Yitzhak Shamir; and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. On November 3, 2015, Atria Books published Golden's *Wherever There Is Light,* a sweeping, panoramic, historical novel that covers three generations in the intertwined lives of two families—the Roses, who are Jewish, and the Wakefields, who are African American.

Food and Stories Bind Us Together as a Culture

From Page 8

possible by Humanities Tennessee, a nonprofit organization dedicated to lifelong learning, civil discourse, and an appreciation of history, diversity, and community among our state. Led by Humanities Tennessee Executive Director Timothy Henderson and Serenity Gerbman, director of literature and language programs, the SFB boasts 200 authors and more than 20,000 visitors to downtown Nashville and the spectacular Nashville Public Library each fall.

Mike Turner, the perennial cheerleader of authors throughout Nashville for more than a decade, continues to support and encourage writers through the many literary groups operating as part of The Nashville Writers Meetup, a group of dedicated people who want to improve their writing and wish to master the craft of writing.

Indie and self-publishing is so much easier today because of Print on Demand (POD) technology, thanks to the Lightning Source division at Ingram Content Group, the distribution company through which nearly every book in the United States passes through on its way to homes, libraries, and bookstores, and Ingram's John Campbell is to thank for increasing POD from a million books a year five years ago to a capability of producing more than one million per month in 2015.

And please don't forget all of those quality organizations that offer all sorts of literary training, from workshops and classes to retreats and mentorship. Two of our favorites are The Porch Writers' Collective and MTSU Write, formally known as The Writer's Loft.

Our firm, JKS Communications, was founded 15 years ago. If you are a writer and you aren't involved in the Nashville literary scene, this is your engraved invitation to join our warm, wonderful family of book lovers.

Contact us and we'll help you get involved.

Julie Schoerke
Founder, JKS Communications, A Literary Publicity Firm
www.jkscommunications.com
info@jkscommunications.com

Book Review: *Chappell's latest novel--Silent We Stood--considers Underground Railroad from Texas to Mexico*

Novel tackles ignorance of slavery

by Kenneth (KJ) Moore

Silent We Stood is the third, most-recent novel by acclaimed author Henry Chappell. The title of "acclaimed" is unquestionable after having read this well-written, eloquently-structured, and historically-accurate work of historical fiction.

Silent We Stood follows the story of a group of abolitionists, one that only becomes more pulse-pounding as each page is excitedly turned. Though initially showcasing a large and unprecedented cast of characters, the focus gradually zooms onto Joseph Shaw—a strong-willed, justice-seeking abolitionist whose most deadliest of sins is his lust towards preacher Ig Bodeker's wife, Rachel—and Samuel Smith, his societally-proclaimed "slave" who is nothing less of an apprentice and a friend to he, one whose fate would later become sealed with his own selflessness.

Chappell's novel succeeds not only in creating a conspicuous picture into the valiant, benevolent work of abolitionists, but it does so in an imagery-filled style that seems nearly Shakespearean in its regard. Dialogue in the novel has ground-breaking realism and gripping discussion with respect to other novels set in the late 1800s; and while maintaining necessary seriousness concerning its subject matter, it will occasionally draw a slight, meaningful chuckle to relieve the exasperatingly-fluctuating tension.

All in all, *Silent We Stood* can only be described as modernized literary genius, something that is not nearly as omnipresent as it was in the days of Romanticism or during the early literary Enlightenment. It is one that leaves much to the imagination in terms of future events, but leaves little to skeptics' ignorance of the evil present during slavery, as it tackles this and more. It sheds lights upon numerous injustices present in the days of the malevolent slave owner, whilst shining the light brighter on those hell-bent on stopping their treachery and helping innocents find freedom.

Via an unparalleled method of storytelling, beautiful and aesthetic imagery, and description, as well as settings and characters that prove hints of heavy historical research, *Silent We Stood* is a novel that students, historians, and everyone in-between will thoroughly enjoy and be able to grasp with open arms, while fearing that "another two generations could pass before the hatred dies."

Photo by Jane Chappell

Henry Chappell

Press Release: Novel *imagines 1860s Dallas abolitionist movement*

Silent We Stood

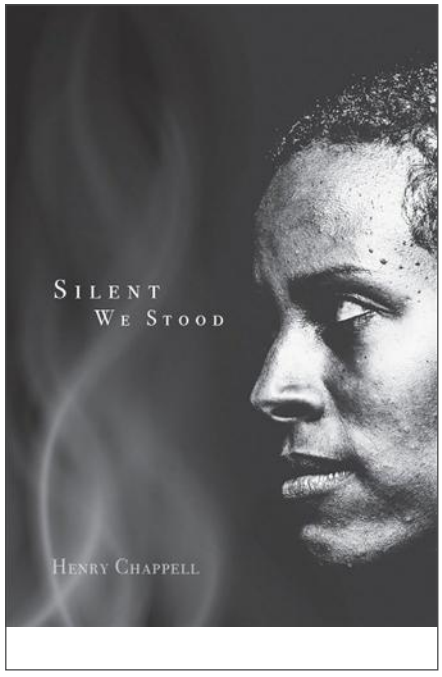
Many historians have believed that antebellum Texas was too remote and violent for substantial Underground Railroad activity. Yet, weaving together strands of historical evidence, Henry Chappell's newest novel invites us to wonder if abolitionism and subtle rebellion could have played a more important role than scholars have supposed.

Silent We Stood spins the tale of a small band of abolitionists working in secrecy within Dallas' close-knit society. In the aftermath of the July 8, 1860 fire that burned Dallas, three slaves were accused of arson and hanged without a trial. Today, most historians attribute the fire to carelessness. Texas was the darkest corner of the Old South, too remote and violent for even the bravest abolitionists. Yet North Texas newspapers commonly reported runaway slaves, and travelers in South Texas wrote of fugitives heading to Mexico. Perhaps a few prominent people were all too happy to call the fire an accident.

Chappell said that in 2004 he began reading about the Dallas fire and old newspaper articles suggesting that a few people helped slaves escape to Mexico. "I asked myself 'what if something really happened right under the noses of town leaders?' Few people other than scholars specializing in Texas history know that Texas wasn't a uniform pro-slavery, pro-secession state. Prior to the Civil War, pro-Union and pro-secession Texans engaged in ambushes and lynching in several counties north of Dallas."

Silent We Stood has already earned a Spur Award from the Western Writers of America, which named Chappell's book the Best Western Historical Novel of 2014.

Si Dunn of *The Dallas Morning News* credits the novel for its thorough research and engaging story. "Henry Chappell's recent third novel, Silent We Stood, paints an engrossing, fact-based and frequently tense portrait of slavery and anti-slavery sentiments in North Texas in 1860."



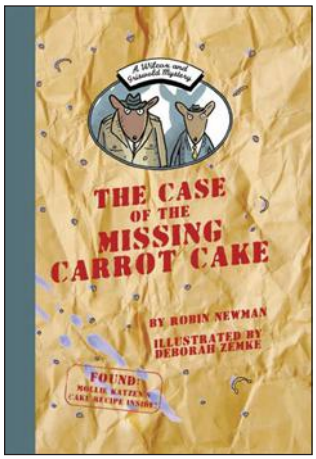
Henry Chappell is a field reporter for The Land Report and writes a regular column for Texas Wildlife. He has been a fulltime freelance writer since 1997, publishing three novels and several works of nonfiction in that time. He lives with his family in Parker, Texas.

The Case of the Missing Carrot Cake

by Marissa Moss

New Mystery Picture Book Encourages Problem-Solving and Fun, from Bestselling Author Marissa Moss' New Children's Press

Bestselling author Marissa Moss (the Amelia's Notebook series, five million copies sold) and her new children's press, Creston Books, are proud to announce the launch of a humorous mystery picture book for beginning readers which encourages problem-solving and logic skills, The Case of the Missing Carrot Cake (Creston Books, $16.95 hardcover, May 12, 2015).



Captain Griswold and Detective Wilcox are two hardboiled police mice and MFIs—Missing Food Investigators. When Miss Rabbit's carrot cake goes missing the day before her big party, Griswold and Wilcox must investigate a farm full of fun, colorful suspects—and it will take smarts (and a delicious dose of humor) to crack the case.

An easy-to-read mystery with plenty of clues to point readers in the right direction, the book includes the recipe for Miss Rabbit's tasty carrot cake from bestselling cookbook author, Mollie Katzen, and comes with a downloadable curriculum guide available for classroom use which teaches problem solving, logic skills, and storytelling.

Children will love this funny, friendly twist on classic mystery and detective stories as they follow the clues through pages filled with engaging illustrations and an entertaining, interactive story.

ROBIN NEWMAN has been a practicing attorney and legal editor, but she prefers to write about witches, mice, pigs, and peacocks. She lives in New York with her husband, son, goldfish, and English cocker spaniel.

DEBORAH ZEMKE is the author and illustrator of more than 20 children's books, and a frequent contributor to Ranger Rick magazine.

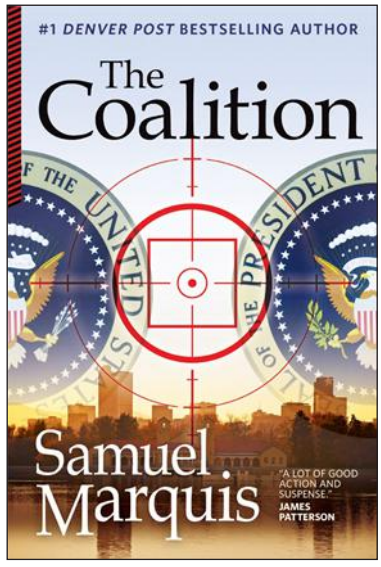
Press Release: *From JKS Communications*

Q&A with Samuel Marquis

About: The Coalition

From the fiftieth floor of an office building in Denver, Colorado, a long-range assassin calmly watches a procession of black Lincolns. When the motorcade pulls to the curb in Civic Center Plaza, a prominent leader steps from one of the vehicles and takes the stage to make an important speech. Moments later, a loud BOOM echoes through the Plaza and the man slumps to the platform like a stringless marionette. The mysterious sniper, whose very existence is unknown to the international law enforcement community, has just assassinated U.S. President-elect William Ambrose Kieger.

In the aftermath of the shocking political crime, the shooter escapes and a Task Force is swiftly assembled, headed up by Special Agent Kenneth Patton of the FBI's Denver Field Office. A ten year vet in Domestic Terrorism, the unconventional Ken is driven to solve the crime by both professional and personal motives. His search leads him to a secret society whose diabolical and far-reaching plot threatens the very highest levels of the U.S. government. Yet the group's motives, secret membership, and ambitious plans remain elusive. Can Ken and his team uncover the plot in time to save the day? Can they beat the countdown on the clock and catch the assassin and the shadowy group in the background pulling the strings? Or will time run out?



An Interview with Samuel Marquis

Question: The Coalition is the third out of six novels that you plan to release in one year. That's incredibly prolific—how do you stay disciplined and focused as a writer?

Samuel Marquis: It's not easy to juggle everything, but I do it because I love to write compelling stories. I also happen to have a backlog of seven very good novels since I have been at this for a few years and have had two New York literary agents. But the main reason I do it is because my father died last spring and my new motto is "I Ain't Wasting Time No More," in honor of the legendary Allman Brothers' song. In keeping with Greg Allman's resolute mantra, I'm not going to wait around for the supposed industry gatekeepers to get their act together and realize that I have something important to say.

Question: How was writing The Coalition different from writing your previous two novels?

Samuel Marquis: The Coalition is a political assassination thriller that is heavy on FBI and Secret Service procedural elements so I had to interview these two agencies and review a large volume of information about them. I also had to learn a great deal about modern politics, long-range snipers, international assassins, and criminal behavioral psychology since these are critical themes in the book. These things all made The Coalition quite different from my two previous suspense novels.

Question: Who are your greatest literary influences?

Samuel Marquis: In terms of literature and literary fiction, I am a great admirer of Hawthorne, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Steinbeck, A.B. Guthrie, Jr., Michael Shaara, Larry McMurtry, E.L. Doctorow, and Charles Frazier. For non-fiction my roster of greats includes Robert Utley, Stephen Ambrose, Kevin Duffus, Shelby Foote, Ben Macintyre, S.C. Gwynne, and Hampton Sides. My favorite commercial fiction writers are Frederick Forsyth, Gore Vidal, James Clavell, Dennis Lehane, Daniel Silva, Preston and Child, Ken Follett, Stephen Hunter, Richard North Patterson, Kyle Mills, Michael Crichton, and early Grisham. I tend to gravitate towards authors who tell stories in the same way I do and to subject matter dealing with my areas of research interest in pirates, the Plains Indian Wars, World War II, the War on Terror, and modern science with a geological, biological, or paleontological component.

Question: What is the number one thing you want readers to take away from your novel?

Samuel Marquis: I want people to root for the underdog. All of my books feature underdogs, iconoclasts, and sympathetic villains that are torn up inside on account of the havoc-causing decisions they are forced to make.

Nashville Rising: How Modern Music City Came To Be

by Cynthia A. Minor

With *Nashville Rising, The Tennessean* and its writers seek to inform and advise us, from a historical prospective, that the birth of Nashville's quantum growth stems from the development of a metropolitan form of government. It sequences from the floor debates of 1960, which ranged from heated battles regarding annexation of member cities to passage of the metro plan of 1963. Covering 50 years of celebratory observance in a salute to Nashville's progress, resilience, and challenges, the writers describe the basis for the current economic and destination position Nashville now enjoys in a two part-effort, replete with photographs that show Nashville as it was then and how it is now. *Nashville Rising* provides photographic proof of how the capital city grew from a medium-sized municipality to the nation's first city/county form of government, currently boasting a combined population of more than six hundred thousand and considered a demonstration of the Mid-South's success and vision.

"The courage of those visionary leaders should not be forgotten," Keel Hunt opines, regarding the development of Nashville's metropolitan form of government. Hunt, whose parents served on that early form of new governance, indicates that they believed the new format would prove lucrative, in time. *Nashville Rising* discusses, at length, that the plan had serious detractors. Even though some surrounding cities thought it a good idea initially, they decided to opt out of the metro plan and filed lawsuits because they felt Nashville unfairly received more access to resources. Those suits failed and consequently spurned significant and steady growth, attracting new and diverse residents to its prosperity, moderate climate, business friendly environment, and lifestyle. This growth did not come as a surprise to any of Nashville's past mayors, who are showcased in the book. Neither did the city's fortitude that was tested during the flood of 2010. Nashville surrounded itself with a wave of volunteerism and sheer grit to reestablish and rebuild. *Nashville Rising* advises that the effort was successful, fast, complete, and self involved.

This book suggests that the moniker, Music City, is based on Nashville's affinity to country music. However, it fails to provide accurate information on how Nashville actually came to be known as the Music City. Contrary to this representation, the moniker was not based on country music, but instead on Queen Victoria's recognition of the Fisk University Jubilee Singers, where after attending their London, UK command and historic performance, the British monarch suggested that Nashville must be a "Music City;" the moniker stuck and music thrived. This re-imagination of this story leaves out a significant portion of Nashville's musical history, as many minorities feel their stories and contributions are left out of the story of Nashville's growth.

In the 'Big Moments For Music City' portion of *Nashville Rising*, the book provides a cursory review of desegregation from the prospective of how busing gave rise to white flight and the private school boom. A discussion of race and discrimination seems incomplete without a discussion of the 'sit-ins' staged by Fisk University and Tennessee State University students, who risked arrest, injury, and violent attacks in order to desegregate Nashville's downtown segregated lunch counters and other public accommodations. The only mention of this nationally-significant moment in Nashville history is erroneously relegated to the 'North Nashville' section of the book.

As country music became one of Nashville's major businesses, attracting recording companies, artists, and associated companies from across the nation, Nashville is the international center for country music. With historic landmarks like the Ryman Auditorium, Music Row, the Grand Ole Opry, and the Country Music Hall of Fame, performers—young and old—pilgrimage to Nashville seeking once-in-a-lifetime opportunities yet to be discovered. Consequently, Nashville is the destination city for those who write, sing, record, publish, and love country music.

Nashville Rising reminds the reader that Nashville is not just a music city; it is a business city. Healthcare conglomerates, insurance and banking sectors, and corporations reside here. Notwithstanding that more than seven universities, two medical schools, a dental school, and two law schools are located in Nashville, the absence of a state income tax folds out an attractive invitation to companies and corporations seeking to relocate or expand. Nashville's decision to become business friendly and promote itself as a hub for conventions, with the new Music City Center and multiple high-capacity hotels, gives Nashville the panache it needs to be competitive nationally while maintaining its Southern charm. The proof of its attractiveness to business and commerce is easily seen, as waving building cranes dot the horizon beckoning developers to build and residents to move downtown

With growth come issues the city has yet to address adequately. *Nashville Rising* describes a city with no rapid transportation system, no current plan that addresses growing traffic congestion, public schools that score lower than one would hope, and diversity matters that have not been addressed.

The final portion of *Nashville Rising* identifies each member city of Nashville metro government. Various writers take us on a tour of those areas, identifying what makes these areas great, while identifying among other things key developments and their hopes for the future. *Nashville Rising* is an interesting book that must be read from the perspective of a history whose point of view is not inclusive and appeals to tourists.

ABOVE: Photo by Terry Price

Audiobooks

Why You Should Be Listening to Audiobooks

by Randy O'Brien

Elders gathered the young around the campfire and told them of the day's hunting adventures. The storytellers quickly found that the more vivid and emotional the tale, the more attention was paid to the story. That tradition of oral storytelling continued for generations and continues today in the popularity of audiobooks.

Thomas Edison's invention of the phonograph in 1877 brought that tradition of storytelling from around the campfire into the home. As the technology advanced and long play records helped make talking books, as they were called, popular in the 1930s with government programs providing recordings for the blind, it wasn't until the 1970s and the popularity and portability of audiocassettes and Books on Tape (BoT) that the oral tradition of storytelling began to find new scope and depth for the listener. According to the Audio Publishers Association, the term "audiobook" became the industry standard in 1994 and with the popularity of that format and new technical quality of the compact disc (CD), audiobooks found a new even wider audience.

I began listening to audiobooks in earnest in the 1990s when I started a 45-minute commute from Nashville to Murfreesboro. When I would mention this to people, they would always comment that it was good that I was traveling in the opposite direction of most of the congestion, but the "good" part of the commute was the dozens of books I was able to "read," first on cassette tape and then on CD.

My favorite titles, and possibly the most enjoyable books I read, were Crime and Punishment, A Tale of Two Cities, and much of John Irving's novels. I realized early on that the narrators played a significant part in the enjoyment of the production, and I began looking for particular artists to follow. Grover Gardner and Frank Muller led the pack with occasional work from well-recognized voices of actors like Brad Pitt and others who I added to my list of works that became an escape of the trials of traffic.

Near the beginning of the sixteen-year commute, I made an acquaintance with Robin Whitten, editor and publisher of AudioFile magazine in Maine. She hired me to review books and interview authors and narrators. I was able to catch up on classics from the library and soon-to-be-released titles for review. Authors I'd enjoyed for years, most fondly, John Irving, were subjects of these short phone interviews that soon became articles. The reviews were more challenging though. Just imagine writing a paragraph not to exceed 120 words of a book over 700 pages, or 20-plus CDs. I am grateful for the challenges.

As the CD fell out of favor and Internet downloads began to dominate distribution of audiobooks, the form has found even wider popularity. Being able to carry audiobooks in your pocket meant that you could listen during a walk or run, while cleaning the house, and when doing a number of other chores.

While the technology that delivers the stories has evolved, the basic principle of storytellers gathered around a campfire telling stories to rapt listeners continues in audiobooks.

Photo by Zach Simms

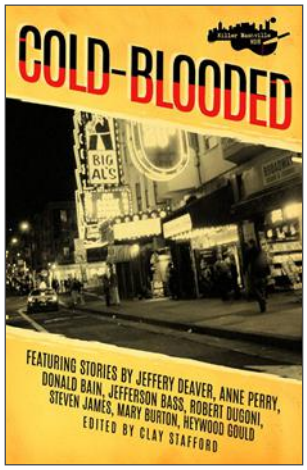
Clay Stafford

Diversion Books presents: *Killer Nashville Noir: Cold-Blooded*

edited by Clay Stafford

Bestselling authors and rising stars come together in this collection that proves Music City is a deadly place to be when your song gets called.

Springing from the annual Killer Nashville Conference held in Tennessee, where some of the biggest names in thriller, mystery, and suspense gather to talk about writing, murder, and everything in between, *Killer Nashville Noir: Cold-Blooded* is a collection of never-before-seen stories from bestsellers and up-and-comers alike.



This collection of new stories features some of the biggest names in suspense, from titans like Jeffery Deaver and Anne Perry to ferociously talented newcomers like Dana Chamblee Carpenter and Paula Gail Benson. Grouped around the classic theme of murder, *Killer Nashville Noir: Cold-Blooded* is a first-class collection and a must-have for fans of the genre.

The conference and anthology are the brainchild of Clay Stafford, who's been named one of the top Nashville literary leaders playing "an essential role in defining which books become bestsellers" not only in middle Tennessee, but "beyond the city limits and into the nation's book culture." With its status growing to match cons like ITW and Bouchercon, Killer Nashville's titular anthology is essential reading for thriller fans of all kinds.

The Killer Nashville Writers' Conference was founded in 2006 by writer and filmmaker Clay Stafford and American Blackguard, Inc. Since then, it has developed a reputation as a leading advocate for writers and readers of all genres. The signature event for Killer Nashville is its annual conference held in Nashville, Tennessee in downtown Nashville. Designed as an intimate conference with an emphasis on networking, education, and career planning, maximum attendance is capped at 500. The conference includes scheduled sessions, manuscript critiques, roundtables and panels, networking parties, and direct connections.

Courtesy of Southern Foodways Alliance/Photo by Brandall Atkinson

Chef Sean Brock and his mom, Renee Brock, at the 18th Annual SFA Symposium in Oxford, Mississippi: October 15-18, 2015.

A Conversation with Chef Sean Brock

▶ From Page 23

great thing about it is that hopefully that will continue to happen your entire life, so it gives you a lot to look forward to.

2&C: Can you envision a time when you will be more of a researcher, educator, and writer than someone who cooks full time?

Brock: Well, to be honest, I see myself turning into that already. As I continued to open more restaurants and the thinner I spread myself, the more that actually pulls me out of the daily kitchen life, and it's allowed me to step back from the stove a little bit and maybe perhaps really understand my calling. I don't think my calling was to stand at the stove and cook all day and stare at a pan and watch something cook. I think the older I get, the more I discover, the more I realize really what my true passion is and that is teaching and mentoring and sharing and raising awareness. That's really my true passion. Cooking certainly got me there, and cooking has certainly been an avenue for that. It allows me to chase what I am now realizing is my true passion, and that's teaching.

2&C: Could you share your experiences and thoughts on mentorship, in and out of the kitchen?

Brock: I was lucky enough to grow up with an amazing grandmother and—still to this very day—as I continue to be raised by my mother, you see that first hand, how lucky you are when you're able to learn from people who are very wise. Wisdom was something that fascinated me even as a young child. I was in awe of the wisdom of my older family members, and these days, when I am given the opportunity to pass things down to people and teach and share what little wisdom I've gained, it's a really incredible feeling when you suddenly realize four or five years has passed, and the person who started as an unpaid prep cook intern in your kitchen is now ten times the chef you'll ever be, that's really an amazing feeling. Mentorship is going back to realizing my purpose of teaching. Mentorship is the most rewarding thing in the world, and you gotta realize when you're given an opportunity to be a mentor, to be a teacher, it's an incredible gift. Once you realize that, you appreciate it on a different level and you try a bit harder. That's hopefully what I will turn into some day. You have to look at is as being a farmer. You have all these beautiful seeds, but it's up to you to nurture them and take care of them and watch them grow. And when it's time to let them go, it's time to let them go. A farmer goes through the same thing. As a mentor in the kitchen and in this industry, it's really the same thing. It's a very gratifying thing.

2&C: Kitchens turn us all into scientists. What was your first experiment in a kitchen? What's your favorite memory of cooking with your mom? Do you have a favorite cookbook that she owned?

Brock: I think a lot of Southerners share the same experiences initially in the kitchen with the art and craft of making biscuits and gravy, to be a child and watch that gravy go from this milk-like thin thing in a pan to this creamy, luscious gravy, and to watch biscuits go from this dry flour, this batter, and then magically leaven and turn golden brown and crunchy and fluffy and delicious. And the oven was really, for me, my first glance at the science of cooking. I remember when I went to my first day of culinary school at Johnson and Wales. My first class of my culinary education was stocks and sauces. On the first day, I'm 18 years old, the first day, the instructor is going over the five basic mother sauces, and he gets to Béchamel and he starts talking about Béchamel and rues and these classic things, and I'm thinking to myself, "That's gravy, I know how to make gravy." So it's cool to start linking those early lessons in the kitchen with your mother and your grandmother back to what people consider high-end cooking these days. It's pretty amusing.

2&C: Your grandmother's vinegar mother is 40 years old. It's the original mother of your projects. How did you come by it, how

do you store it, and what is a vinegar mother?

Brock: I remember being terrified of the things under my grandmother's sink and the things in her basement. It was almost like a laboratory. There were these vats of things bubbling away and Mason jars filled with scary-looking things. Foul-smelling, fermenting things everywhere. It was terrifying as a kid. When you're trying to play hide-and-go-seek down there, and you're hiding behind a vat of vinegar working, you know, it's very fun to look back on that. I was always fascinated with my grandmother's mother of vinegar she kept under the sick because it looked like a huge jellyfish, this crazy jellyfish floating around in this container. And to watch her cook with that and season food with that and prepare food with that was really crazy. I remember her explaining it to me when I was asking what it was. It's a mother of vinegar. What is that? And she explained it as something that when she was growing up was a real treasure. It was something that you gave as a gift, which was very popular among people in those mountains who didn't have a whole lot of money to go out and buy gifts. So it was a real treasure to people to pass on a very healthy and delicious and old vinegar mother because once you have that, it's essentially a cellulose structure that's full of factors that can turn alcohol into vinegar and very mellow and beautiful and balanced and calm vinegar. If you take care of it properly, it will last forever. It's like a sourdough starter. If you feed it, keep it healthy, take care of it, it will last forever. I'm very lucky. I still have that vinegar mother. And I recall when I received it. It was after my grandmother's funeral. We all came back to her house and were eating and cooking and people just starting saying "I want this," "I'd like to have that," "Mind if I take this?" I went straight for the vinegar mother. And it's still taking care of me.

2&C: How long have you possessed your great-grandmother's cast iron skillet? What's your favorite thing you've ever cooked in it?

Brock: Another one of those passed-down treasures is my great-grandmother's cast iron pan, the pan that my great-grandmother taught my grandmother how to make cornbread and biscuits in. And on to my mother. I've had it for almost three years now, and I'm 37 years old. You see how hesitant family members are to just pass things like that on. You have to earn it. You have to prove that you'll take care of it properly and continue to use it, but also promise to continue passing it on. Right now, it's a piece of art on my wall. It's hanging there. To me, it's as beautiful as a painting. I only cook biscuits and cornbread in that pan, and that's something my grandmother was very serious about. She had very specific pans for very specific things. She didn't want her pan for fish to be used for cornbread or her cornbread pan to be used for fried chicken. She believed that those flavors could transfer, but also the more you do one thing in one pan, the more suited and the more it adapts itself to that thing. So, if you take this pan off the wall and put it on the stove and mix up a batch of cornbread, what comes out of that is a beautiful thing. It knows what its purpose in life is.

2&C: As it turned out, your great-grandfather owned the grist mill in your hometown in Virginia. When and how did you discover that out? Has it had any impact upon your thinking about food?

Brock: I remember my grandmother briefly speaking about it in her random storytelling about the days past, but I don't think it really stuck with me for some reason. It wasn't something she talked about a lot. My grandmother was even a butcher for a little while. But recently, my mother reminded me that my family had a grist mill, and all of a sudden, it was like "Wow, this really is in my blood!" It's really not that shocking that I am obsessed with cornmeal and I'm obsessed with grits and I'm obsessed with anything and everything that comes from dried corn. It's funny how DNA works. It's really fascinating.

2&C: I read someplace that a third of the people on the planet uses silverware, a third uses chopsticks, and a third uses their fingers. Which category do you see the South falling into and does a way a culture consumes food say something about its people?

Brock: I always say you eat with your hands as much as possible. I just think it's more of a connection. I remember watching my grandparents eat with their hands. I think that something you certainly do in the comfort of your home, but you're certainly taught proper manners and how to behave in public, but I think there's this great connection when it's the food in your hands. I think it makes food taste better. I think it changes the atmosphere to a more humble setting. You see people eating with their hands, to me, it's a very humble thing. And I'm the guy who'll eat a salad with my fingers.

2&C: If you had to choose between your love of music and your love of cooking, which would you choose and why?

Brock: The older I get, the more time I spend trying to truly understand what makes up a culture. I realize that while food is an enormous part of that—I used to think it was everything—but literature, art, and music are equal to me now. I truly believe that. I can talk about Mississippi Blues or Alabama folk art the same way I can talk about shrimp and grits…with the same level of passion and prove the same point. For me, as I sit here in my apartment with 15 guitars surrounding me and piles and piles and piles of records, the first thing I do when I wake up in the morning: I get out of bed, I turn the coffee maker on, and I turn the record player on. The first thing I do when I walk in the door of my home is turn the record player on. I have to have music at all times. If I'm not around a record player, I have headphones on. Music has always been such an important thing to me that for a little while during high school, I thought that was what I was going to do for a living. And I think that someone else had a different plan for me because I am a terrible guitar player, but I sure love it. And so I was never given the opportunity to pursue a career in music because I just flat out wasn't good at it and realized that I needed to stay in the kitchen and make cornbread. So, cooking has taken care of me my whole life, and I owe a lot to that.

2&C: In December of 2014, you and singer-songwriter Jason Isbell appeared at a Parnassus Books/POP event as part of your fall book tour for *Heritage.* Can you talk about Jason and his music? How long have you two been friends?

Brock: In my opinion, Jason is the best singer-songwriter of our generation, hands down. I've watched him grow from this young kid just leaving home in Alabama, joining this band called the Drive-By Truckers and hitting the road, living the rock star life and writing amazing music to turning into a very wise and amazing person, not only an amazing singer and amazing songwriter. He's a perfect example of what happens when you focus and what happens when you stay focused, and that's very inspiring for me as a chef. When I think about him, when I hear his music or have a conversation with him or just be around him, man you just can't help but notice how incredibly focused he is. He's focused on being the best that he can be, and you can tell. He's so thankful for what he was given, and he uses that as a source of inspiration and motivation. To me, to see people doing that is very inspiring, and it helps you realize certain things. To be able to call someone like that a friend is pretty mind-boggling to me.

2&C: Willie Nelson once said that much of country music comes from poverty and hard times, that a country song is "Three chords and the truth." Reflecting upon the work done by you, Glenn Roberts, and USC Food Historian Professor David Shields, I see your three chords as being the following: 1) reviving antebellum grains; 2) raising heritage-breed animals; and 3) sowing heirloom seeds. I consider you three to be food revolutionaries. Can you speak about how you all met?

Brock: Recently, thanks to my new obsession with folk art and North Mississippi Blues, and adding on to my obsession of soul food and Southern food, Lowcountry food and Appalachian food, the link there, the common thread is—I don't want to say survival—but it's products of necessity, products of survival. When you have nothing, but you need to make something beautiful which holds true—speaking of agriculture, of writing, of painting, of playing music to cooking—when you're given nothing and you have to make something

extraordinary and something comforting and something touching, you have to push yourself ten times harder than the next guy, and I think that's what makes all those things so special. You have to try harder...to take a pot of beans and turn that into something nurturing and comforting and delicious and extraordinary...you have to try to take a beat up guitar without knowing how to read or write and write a song that touches people...you have to try very, very hard to restore or attempt to restore a cuisine...you have to try very, very hard. It's those people who wake up in the morning and make that decision that I'm most thankful for. It's a big inspiration for me. Once you see that common thread, once you come to that understanding, you want to try harder.

2&C: I visited Glenn's operation a few weeks ago, and he took me along on his rounds across South Carolina, and one of our stops was with Brian Ward. He directs research over at the Clemson Coastal Research and Education Center (CREC) Organic Research Farm (ORF). One of the many wonderful things I discovered was the Carolina African Runner Peanut. Brian said it was almost lost to history, but three years ago Professor Shields found 40 seeds at the NC State Peanut Germplasm bank. He gave Brian 20 seeds, a dozen survived, and those yielded 1,200 seeds. The following year, 900 were planted and that yielded 60,000 seeds. This year, about 40,000 were planted, and they are hoping for a million seeds. Talk about a success story! How long has everyone been working with Brian?

Brock: What I'd like for a lot of people to truly understand is how precious these things are, how precious they are and how lucky we are to have them. And thanks to the work of all those people, we get to consume them. We get to consume them on a nutritional level but on a soulful level, as well. We get to hear those stories, we get to continue to tell those stories, we get to learn from those stories. And all that goes back to some person caring enough with a handful of seeds realizing all of those things and taking care of them and nurturing them year after year without getting any financial return. This is not investment banking. It is not anything other than the cheesy phrase, "a labor of love." While that phrase continues to be misused and over used, this is a perfect example of that. I can speak about that because I've certainly lived that and I've done that. For years and years and years, I've planted things. Been on my hands and knees taking care of them, the blistering in the country sun, knowing that I'm not earning a penny. No one's earning a penny. But some day, that plant variable will end up in a restaurant on a plate and that story will live on. To me, that's the biggest reward in the world. For instance, when something like that particular variety of peanut is discovered, often times being brushed off as extinct when it is discovered, then the DNA tests are ran and it's a true land race variable, it can be at least three years...sometimes five and seven years... before there's enough of it to put in a pan and cook and taste. I can't even begin to tell you how many varieties of peas and beans that I've grown personally and never tasted. I don't even know what they taste like, but I know their story and I know their importance and I look forward to the day when I'll have enough of them that I can cook a pot of them. Once people start realizing that, they'll quickly see the importance of work of Glenn and David and Southern Foodways Alliance. Hopefully, I want to help. I want to contribute. Because we can use all the help we can get right now.

2&C: Do you think that the soil remembered the Carolina African Runner Peanut after Brian planted it? Does soil have a memory, and if so, how far back do you think it can remember?

Brock: One of the cool things about food and cooking and agriculture is the sense of belonging when it comes to animal breeds and plan variables. Specific plants and animal breeds thrive in a particular area because of climate and geography. So, therefore, I believe they belong there. It works. It's natural. It makes sense. I think soil—if you're as obsessive as I am—you look at is as a living being, a living thing that needs nurturing like a human does. It needs to be fed and taken care of and watched over. I think returning those old variables back to that soil is one way we can feed the soil and its soul.

2&C: Through misuse, how long do you think it takes soil to become dirt? And once it is dirt, how long would it take to return it to soil?

Brock: You're looking at two years, in my opinion. To take damaged soil, to get it back to where it needs to be, to where it's happy, where it can produce nutritious food and delicious food, it's a minimum of two years. It's not supposed to happen quickly, these things. The soil needs to experience all seasons: it needs to experience to experience the harshness of winter and the joys of spring. They are all very important parts in the life cycle of everything that is living in that dirt, which is an important statement because we have to take better care of our dirt.

2&C: When I was at Anson Mills, I watched their operation. They started each day with the raw product delivered from the fields. It's processed by his team—an army, really—and then it's shipped and delivered by the end of the day. The process starts over the next morning. That's the way the newspaper business runs, as well. Is there a similar scenario at Husk Nashville where local ingredients are gathered and then the day's lunch and dinner menus are determined?

Brock: One of the great opportunities that we have with a format like Husk is we want to cook in the moment. We want to capture a specific moment. We want our customers to experience what it feels like and tastes like to eat on a specific day in Nashville. Not a season. Not a week. A particular day. In order to capture that and create that emotion, you have to cook daily. You realize that your job of a chef is...all of a sudden, you're a collector, and a big part of your day is collecting the most beautiful and important things you can find and share with your guests. And sometimes, there's only enough for one day. Sometimes there only enough for ten dishes. What's fun about it is tomorrow we get a whole new adventure, a brand new adventure. We never know what's going to be the new discovery, what's going to walk in the door, what's going to come out of the waters, what's going to out of the soil. We look forward to those things.

2&C: Thinking locally, who do you collaborate with in the middle Tennessee area for your produce, cheese, and meat products?

Brock: We have some favorites, for sure. I've been eating food from great farmers for a long time, and I'm not sure that I've tasted better food than what Jeff (Poppen) at The Barefoot Farmer produces. If you want to start talking about the importance of soil, through his bio-dynamic practices—his obsession with that—the food that comes out of his farm is the most multi-layered, flavorful..the most insane depth of flavor I've ever had. So much so that a sweet potato from him, once you cook it and eat it, you realize that you don't need a piece of protein on the plate. That is the star. Then you create an entire dish around it. You treat it as if it were a living being. That's special food. LeeAnn (Cherry) at Bear Creek Farm produces the best beef I've ever eaten in my life. I'm obsessed...I'm a steak eater...I have to have at least three a week. That's something I've enjoyed my whole life. I remember the first time tasting a steak from her farm, I honestly couldn't believe it. I could not believe how insanely favorable it was, but once you meet her and you spend time with her, you understand why. She's an amazing person that cares deeply about her farm. You can taste that in the product, and what's great about cooking in this area of Tennessee is it really does have its own *terroir*, and I get the see that first hand because I bounce back and forth between here and the Lowcountry and it's night and day. A carrot here doesn't taste anything like a carrot there. Also, a piece of fish here doesn't taste anything like a piece of fish there. What's very interesting is the honesty of the place and what it is and what it tastes like, and that's what's so awesome about Southern food. It's so many different cuisines; it's so diverse. It's so interesting. Each little pocket, each little area, each little region has its own taste. To chase that, to experience that is what makes being a chef the best job in the world.

2&C: Realizing Husk's mission of using seasonal and regional foods, how do you deal with the winter season? How early in the year do you start thinking about and planning for the coming winter? What do you have canned right now?

Brock: We are very lucky in Charleston. We don't have the harsh winters that we have here. But I certainly grew up with very harsh winters and watched my family preserve all year long and helped preserve all year long, so I knew when I moving to Nashville and was going to start cooking here that the preservation kitchen was going to be crucial, especially with our format as a restaurant, where we can only serve food from here. If I recall the first winter I cooked here, it was terrifying to go into the walk in and realize that the only thing in there was kale and turnips. And you turn around, and there's just another pile of kale and turnips. And you have a menu to write that needs to be interesting and diverse to entertain our guests properly. And that did a couple things for me. It certainly made me appreciate the pantry and all of the things we put up, from drying green beans for leather britches to drying eggplant to preserving fish to curing hams to pickling and canning vegetables. But also the great pantry of grains and the wonderful things from Glenn all of a sudden became the focus of attention in our cooking. Inspired a whole new creativity. And I realized that I was thankful for winter and I was thankful to have only turnips and kale in the walk-in because it was all of a sudden one of the biggest challenges I had ever faced as a cook. I had to make something beautiful out of nothing, which harks back to the backbone of soul food, the backbone of folk art, the backbone of blues. I was appreciative and realized that it wasn't something that was annoying. It was something challenging and fun. So now, we look forward to winter. So all year long, we know it's coming. What can we do differently this year? What can we do that new and exciting this year? And that pushes us to be creative all year long in anticipation of cooking in the winter.

2&C: In closing, my 13-year-old son Seth is a big fan. (He says hello, by the way!) He spent all summer working in his grandma's garden, he went to cooking camp over the summer, and he's able to work in a garden at his junior high school. He announced the other day that he didn't want to go to college. Instead, he wanted to go to cooking school after high school. What are some of the paths that aspiring chefs may take toward a professional cooking destination?

Brock: Luckily, the role of a chef has changed drastically the last ten years. We used to just be people who cooked food. Now, we have the opportunity to make a difference in food on every single level. If you look at it in the sense of change and contributing to change, our food system is clearly not perfect. We have a lot to fix. What I would like to see happen is more advocacy from chefs. And I think that if we start in culinary school, if we start in high school, if we start inspiring and training our troops, it's what's going to make a difference. I want the next generation to not be just cooks. I want the definition of a chef to include food advocacy. That's what we need, and that's what's going to make a big difference. If people are fortunate enough to know someone in their lives like I did that this is something that they want to do for the rest of their lives, the training needs to start now. And that training can be in your grandmother's garden, that training can be reading the right books, that training can be spending time with chefs and farmers that train. It can certainly be going to culinary school as soon as you can. That training can be finding a mentor as soon as you can. When people ask me for my advice, that's what I tell them.

Photo by Terry Price

Husk Nashville, 37 Rutledge Street, Music City

Rhea Seddon

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how magnificent our planet is.

Looking back, how do you think you were able to accomplish your NASA career, marry, and have children?

I wasn't afraid to ask for help! My husband did his share of housework and child care. We had a wonderful nanny who took care of all of us. Other astronaut spouses and neighbors were willing helpers. I couldn't have done it alone and was blessed that angels appeared just when I needed them. It was truly a team effort.

What were your other favorite assignments at NASA?

I was part of the Search and Rescue team that was ready for potential accidents for the first few shuttle flights. It was an honor to work with the helicopter crews and parajumpers who had been in Vietnam. I also love being a CapCom in Mission Control. It is the next best thing to actually being in space.

What did you pursue after you left NASA?

I came back to healthcare. I didn't want to practice medicine and so became the assistant chief medical officer at Vanderbilt Medical Center. I helped the medical group improve safety, efficiency, and quality of care. After that I became a partner in a business that taught those same skills to hospitals and medical groups around the U.S.

What was it like, putting your story down on paper?

Essentially, I had the chronology and major parts of the story handwritten on yellow legal pads before I left NASA in 1996, so I could still go and ask the people I was working with, "Do I remember this right?" In technical fields, you have to be very factual. I was having a difficult time trying to figure out how to make it into a story that people would want to read, rather than just a technical paper on my experience. So the yellow legal pads sat for years. After my career at Vanderbilt, I had more free time, and I started thinking about it again. Of course one of the wonderful resources here in Murfreesboro is Middle Tennessee State University. I found a program called The Writer's Loft, now known as MTSU Write. I thought, "How perfect would that be? Have some class time, assignments in writing, and a mentor to help me build a lively story." Later, I found a terrific word editor and then a great fact checker at NASA. A team of experts in Nashville then helped me get the book to print.

To discover more about Dr. Seddon or purchase her memoir, visit her online at:

http://astronautrheaseddon.com/

Mountain Heritage Festival

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close around lunch tables to make room for more people. They cracked out guitars and banjos and washboards, snacked on Cheezits and chips and watermelon. They got down to the hard business of telling big stories. Everything about the weekend drew close and clung.

All those left on campus on Sunday morning congregated under the big blue and white festival tent for a non-denominational service. The tribute musicians, Erin Fitzgerald and Kate Larken, accompanied by other participants like poets Michael Henson and Lisa Parker, led the group in a series of well-known songs. The crowd trickled in, conjuring up extra chairs and benches. People called out suggestions for the next song. They searched for chords and lyrics on their phones. Many of the songs were solidly rooted in the culture of the region. Hailing from northern New Mexico, Linda Michel-Cassidy said, "The 'sing' on the last morning gave me a curious sense of nostalgia for a place I'd never been."

The weekend continued into the Cumberland Gap Writer's Studio, a five-day writing intensive program, where participants spend their days writing and gather in the evenings to workshop what they have written. One of the participants was Melissa Helton, whose poem "Hog Killing in Deep Snow" took second place in the festival's poetry contest. She said of the experience, "Writing can be so solitary. There's no competitiveness or defensiveness, only writers who love writing coming together to commiserate, celebrate, and create... One of the best moments of this past studio was when three of us met on Thursday morning at the coffeehouse to have a jam session and write alongside the creek. It was informal and organic and some lovely moments (and writing) came out of it."

In his history of Mountain Heritage, House caught the spirit of the event best.

"The moment I knew we were doing something right was the very first year when people began to gather in the evenings after classes were over," House said. "Chairs were pulled out onto the porches, guitars and banjos were pulled out of cases, and then people spent the next few hours jawing and singing. Visiting with each other. A community brought together by their mutual love of literature, place, music, culture. That's when I knew the festival was going to last and that it was going to be a good thing for our region and its literature."

Humanities Tennessee

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Youth Programs

One of Humanities Tennessee's favorite goals is fostering enthusiasm for reading and writing among the state's youth. Student Reader Day, a program run by Lacey Cook (Humanities Tennessee's program director), brings in authors—as prolific as Karen Joy Fowler and Junot Diaz—to speak to students in schools. Dedicated funds even allow the program to supply copies of the authors' books to students who come to hear them speak.

"To see the way that these kids are engaging the authors is really encouraging and inspirational," Tim says, "because it isn't just time out of class; they're seriously enthralled."

For students who have developed a serious interest in writing, Humanities Tennessee offers two, week-long residential writing workshops. The Tennessee Young Writers' Workshop, held at Cumberland University in Lebanon, is for students in grades eight through twelve, and the Appalachian Young Writers' Workshop, which takes place at Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, is for those in grades ten through twelve. The programs offer need-based full or partial scholarships and require writing samples and letters of recommendation for acceptance.

"Both of these workshops have really strong faculty—all published authors, poets, and songwriters—who work very closely, hands-on with the students over the course of a week," Tim says. "It is great to see the effect that it has on these young people, really all of whom have a sincere interest in writing."

The Letters About Literature program and contest also keeps young people engaged in reading and writing, and it has produced some national first-place winners from Tennessee. The program comes out of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. It invites students in grades four through twelve to write an essay about how an author's work has changed their view of the world or themselves. The entries go through several rounds of judging at the state level. State winners then go on to the national competition.

"We get hundreds and hundreds of letters to read each year to judge for that contest," Tim says. "They're often brilliant and really moving, and it's always a joy to see students participating in that program."

The Future of Humanities Tennessee

Humanities Tennessee is wrapping up a cycle of strategic planning in the fall of 2015 and will begin a new cycle later in 2016. Tim says the goal is to work hard to expand audiences around the state, especially in places where the council hasn't funded programs in a while.

"We're always looking to get to all Tennesseans," he says, "because really that is our charge, to serve the whole state."

In addition, the council has plans to expand the workings of Chapter 16 to include a searchable database of authors and publications. It also wants to create functionality that promotes more reader involvement.

Amidst all the program planning, Tim, a native Nashvillian who has been with Humanities Tennessee for 18 years, watches Nashville's growth with excitement. New bookstores pop up, and readers and writers gather at meet-ups, conferences, and workshops all over town to discuss craft.

"All of this is just brilliant, and I think it speaks not only to the literary community of Nashville specifically, but just to the creative and artful community around the city," he says. "We're blessed to be in such a creative city right now."

THE SUSTAINABILITY OF SOUTHERN

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family, and we have food, and I never want you to be without either of those" (Moore). Recipes are almost sacred in Southern society and Egerton explains why he chooses the recipes he did in "Eating In's" introduction: "They are not family heirlooms, more to be admired as works of art than reproduced and enjoyed; they are little pieces of Southern history, inviting you to partake" (177). Egerton views the sharing of these meals as something more profound than pure enjoyment; he sees it as a distribution of historical content with which the audience is capable of interacting. It is also Egerton's opinion that these interactions should be enjoyable: "People who make the effort to partake of these treasures of the past are apt to gain more than a taste of history; they can also look forward to the pleasure of preparing and sharing some wonderful things to eat" (177). The importance of these historical recipes as artifacts lends to the notion that there is significance in the culture that shares them.

A major way imperialism shaped the South was through the implementation of slavery that created a great racial divide even in after the Civil War. Because of the social climate it may be expected that there is a divide when looking at the ways that white Southerners experience food cultures versus how African-American Southerners understand it. In Beth Latshaw's study "Food for Thought" conducted in 2009 she finds that, while Southern white and African Americans may eat the same foods, the significance for certain dishes is deeper for one than it is for the other. "Certainly, the data point out how important these foods are to African American and white Southerners today, and to a certain extent, that they do show some commonality in their food preference" (Latshaw 124). The actual foods that are consumed in the South are consumed by all Southerners, but Latshaw goes on to explain why some of these dishes are more important to African Americans: "Still, as many Southern food historians and scholars point out, Southern food might be particularly meaningful to African Americans because of its association with times of enslavement: symbolizing a cultural pride, ingenuity, and perseverance in the face of adversity" (124).

In *Southern Food,* Egerton's discussion of food as a historical artifact for Southern culture allows its value to be noted. Although specific dishes or restaurants may hold more worth for some people than others, the appreciation by all people allows for an understanding and sharing of culture that may not be possible in any other social sphere. Egerton values Southern food as a communal experience and by noting how much of a necessity it is for the Southern lifestyle proves that it is a channel that allows for all forms of human connection. ☐

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KENTUCKY BOURBON CULTURE

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revenue from the actual bourbon and from different tours.

At this time, bourbon is both a beverage and a culture. Similar to other food items in the South, bourbon is associated with social scenes. In an interview with John Egerton, the author says that to him, Southern food is a way to socialize. He explains, "This is my favorite way to maintain close relationships with people I love… You can build a conversation around food; you can build a trip around food; you can certainly build a great meal around food, and people love to talk about it and—and this opens up a way for us to become more--our--our--our own individual selves and self-conscious selves and our relationships to other people." (Egerton, 2005) The same can be said about bourbon by the regular consumers. Bourbon brings individuals together to bond them in a way that other drinks cannot, because it is a drink that most people have to be conditioned to enjoy.

The article "Every Ounce a Man's Whiskey?" talks about this by saying, "I began drinking bourbon as a matter of choice and of taste, although at first I rather disliked the way it tasted." The article goes on to explain that bourbon in the beginning was rather similar, regardless of the brand. Over the years, the market for bourbon has moved from the working man's drink to a drink for all. Therefore, the market has expanded. Distilleries have created different flavored bourbons and whiskeys by using a variety of ingredients, proportions, and aging techniques (Mckeithan, 2012).

The tour guide, Sarah, gave her opinion of the market expansion. "Bourbon is mixed in with Kentucky history. It's something that people can connect over. My parents, grandparents, great grandparents, and even further back, all drank bourbon. It ties me to my Kentucky roots. I'm not exactly sure why, but bourbon is trendy right now. But that's good for us." (Sarah, 2014)

Bourbon has been popular in Kentucky since its creation. Though it has been modified and perfected over the years, it is still similar to the original product. The industry has provided a large number of Kentuckians with jobs. The Kentucky economy would not be the same without it. Bourbon has also given many Kentuckians a good time. It is often used in social settings and is best enjoyed with friends. It may have been the working man's drink to begin with, but it is now for men and women of various social classes and social scenes. Bourbon is much more than an original and premiere Kentucky beverage; it is a culture that has spread throughout the state of Kentucky, the nation, and the world. ☐

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Exploring *Heritage,* by Chef Sean Brock

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ing this gracious mansion into a fine dining establishment.

Metro Codes had to be followed.

Handrails—custom made—for the front porch were crafted to match the existing back porch staircase, the one with the graceful turn at the bottom. A tall window in the front parlor had to become a door to provide safe exit. The new kitchen needed plumbing and electrical to support a commercial workload. A wine cellar was carved from the old dirt-root cellar and paved with travertine, wine racks built to hold expensive bottles. Late nights and long, hot hours were spent tearing up the inside of the gracious old home so it could be built back with purpose. Old horsehair plaster walls had to be torn out in the storage room downstairs. That was where the old coins fell from a rafter to the floor at the carpenter's feet—my carpenter, my husband: Keith.

Just four coins: one from Europe, one liberty dime, and two American steel pennies.

In value, not much.

We asked the chef, the owner, if he wanted them, and he had no interest. I put them in a small, white pasteboard box and placed them in an ancient desk in our home office. Late one night about three days later at Rutledge Hill, my husband was downstairs in the back…alone. She appeared halfway down the stairs, a young girl maybe 14 or so with long, light-brown hair; he saw her like someone would see a shooting star, out of the corner of the eye. When he turned to see her better, she was gone. He saw her twice more before the remodel was finished, always when he was alone in the room, always late at night, always coming down the back staircase.

We thought about the coins, to put them back somehow.

I looked in the desk, and the box was gone. Keith didn't remember moving it. The restaurant opened late that fall. Unfortunately, it lasted only a year. In 2008, the beautiful old home on top of Rutledge Hill was empty again, lonely dark windows staring out from the porch.

In Charleston in 2008, Brock was putting McCrady's back in the business of fine dining and doing it his way: Southern, fresh, real food, local farmers, and heritage crops. In 2008 and 2009, he was a finalist for the James Beard "Rising Star Chef" award. In 2010, he was named "Best Chef Southeast." Southern Food and Southern Foodways had met one of their truest champions.

Over the years, I drove by 37 Rutledge Street from time to time after that restaurant closed, turned into the driveway that cut through to the back alley, and passed what once were stables. The beautifully-carved medallion of three horses—nostrils flared, manes flying out behind them—was always one of my favorite things about the property. It seemed sad that such a beautiful house was empty again. It's hard to watch an antique building come back to beauty and grace only to be lost and empty again.

Back in Charleston, Brock opened another restaurant, Husk, which was named by Bon Appetit magazine as "The Best New Restaurant in America" in 2011.

In 2013, I heard a rumor…

A friend of mine whispered that Brock was returning to Nashville to open a restaurant; my friend was giddy with anticipation. I assumed it would be in some hot new neighborhood in some prime location where the money was…Green Hills, perhaps. Then the rumor turned to Rutledge Hill, to an old empty house that had been the mayor's home sometime last century.

The graciousness was coming back to 37 Rutledge Hill.

In 2014, Husk Nashville opened.

That fall was the release of Brock's much-anticipated cookbook, *Heritage.* I couldn't wait to get my hands on it. My great friend—the editor of *2nd & Church*—sent me a copy, asking me to cook a meal and write a story about it. With the idea that it would be good to taste the food before one attempts to cook the food, I met friends from Nashville and Portland, Oregon, for a special reunion dinner of "writer foodies" at Husk Nashville, in November 2014. The drinks were amazing, and the food phenomenal. I was very impressed and put one of the dishes on my top 10 list, Shrimp and Grits. It landed at the number 3 position. That night, I encountered freshness that I had never before had with shrimp and grits. Then there was the combination of flavors that felt like a burst of technicolor on my palate.

Just like Chef Brock's food, *Heritage* is like no other cookbook I've ever read, and I have read hundreds, from a 1900s guide to making hogs head cheese (no, it isn't really cheese) to Julia Child to James Beard to famous restaurant cookbooks, as well as to church compilations from any small town in a tristate radius printed to raise money for charity. But *Heritage* was different; one of the first things I lit upon was the explanation of the difference between masa, cornmeal, polenta, hominy, and hominy grits. I've been trying to tell people this for years. (Thank you Chef Brock!) I can finally show people that cornmeal and masa and polenta are not the same thing, and that grits are made from hominy, and that cornmeal is not a substitute for grits.

Early summer 2015, there I was, cooking some pretty awesome food. I picked five recipes from the book that I felt I could competently handle. I am a pretty good cook, having been at it for many decades, starting in my grandmother's kitchen while standing on a chair at the stove. But I need to be honest, I don't generally use recipes. If I do, I tend to change things up when trying to follow them, thinking a lot of times that I know better. Not this time. I figured Brock is the chef, after all. Me…I'm just a cook. Besides, none of these recipes seemed difficult, except for putting the pork shoulder in at 5:00 a.m. because it required 14 hours of roasting time. Oh, the other hardest thing, perhaps most difficult of all, was smelling that roast pork cooking all day long and not reaching in the oven and tearing off a hunk to eat in secret, grease dripping down my chin.

I wanted to cook recipes from *Heritage* that used food I ate all the time. Obviously, if you cook food that is different from what you normally eat, it's exciting to the taste buds. I wanted to be excited by familiar food. I wanted to make Brock's Shrimp and Grits, but the recipe is not in the book, and shrimp fresh off the boat is hard to find in landlocked Tennessee. So, when I cook for my family, I try to cook what's here and eat what's here. Hogs we got, along with corn and tomatoes, and yes I did ship in some grits. But you would, too, if you ever taste these.

Here is the menu: Slow Cooked Pork Shoulder, Tomato Gravy, Roasted Baby Vidalias, Creamed Corn, Southern cooked Grits and Chocolate Chess Pie.

I gathered up the ingredients, White Plantation Grits and Antebellum Fine White Cornmeal ordered from Anson Mills in Charleston (where I had a lovely conversation with Glenn Roberts, the founder and owner); a pork shoulder from a heritage farm in Lebanon, Tennessee; fresh corn and baby Vidalias from a local organic purveyor; and Olive & Sinclair Chocolate from that local genius in Nashville, Scott Witherow. Lastly, Benton's bacon from East Tennessee, because that man knows how to cure a hog.

I got the freshest, best quality food I could lay hands on. I also gathered up my "sous chef" and husband, Keith. Along with being a bang up carpenter, he is very handy with a knife.

I rose at 3:30 a.m. to take the pork shoulder out of the refrigerator and let it come to room temperature. Then I mixed up the spice mixture for the rub, slathered on the Dijon mustard, and rubbed it down—putting it on the rack in a 250-degree-Fahrenheit oven by 5:00 a.m. so we could eat by 7:00 that night. That was super easy. I put the grits on to soak in spring water (they need at least six hours) and had two cups of coffee. I think I was most excited about the grits. I grew up on them and have loved them simple with butter and salt my whole life. But the grits from my childhood in North Carolina always tasted better than anything I've had since. My grandmother always got her grits from a local stone mill. My anticipation was high.

Everything else for the meal had to wait, the Vidalias until two hours before the roast was done, the creamed corn and tomato gravy in the last hour before the meal, as well as the grits. Which brings me to the pie…

I love pie, any kind that's homemade. Store-bought pie, I can walk right past, no problem. But you get a person who knows how to make a good pie crust and a really good pie…you need to keep them in your life as much as possible.

Because they show up. They show up for good times, with pie. They show up, most importantly, in bad times, with pie in hand and human kindness in their hearts.

A good pie friend is an invaluable gift to your life. If your friend shows up with this pie, just lock yourself away with your friend and this pie and two forks. You will not want to share. Because this is a chocolate chess pie with a flakey, buttery chocolate crust. When you read the recipe, the first thing you see are the instructions to put the food processor and the blades in the freezer, to get them really cold: Genius. I also put the 2½ sticks of butter in there for about 10 minutes to get it really cold. This way, you don't have to put the dough in the fridge and twiddle your thumbs for an hour waiting for it to get cold enough so you can roll it out. This is not a hard pie to make, rolling the cold pie crust out on cold marble helps a lot, but use a metal pie plate to cook it in. I used ceramic, and the crust sagged a bit during the pre-cook.

At about 3:00 p.m. that afternoon, Sous Chef Keith started shucking corn, for the Creamed Corn recipe. The most important thing is to have fresh, sweet corn. I used bi-color that I had tasted at the farm stand. It was picked the afternoon before I needed it. Never shuck it until you are ready to cut it off the cob and cook it. It stays freshest that way.

I have been eating or making fried creamed corn my whole life. My fried corn involves bacon, flour, butter, and milk. It's pretty good. This recipe from Brock is much cleaner, without the heaviness of the bacon and flour. It includes only five main ingredients: fresh corn, shallots, garlic, heavy cream, and fresh thyme. The pure sweet taste of the corn is enhanced by the sweetness of the sautéed shallots, the green earthiness of the thyme, and the heavy richness of the sweet cream. He lets the heavy cream reduce to thicken the end result. It would be an understatement to say that this is—hands down—the best corn I have ever had.

I put the grits on to cook at 5:45 p.m. and stirred them pretty much constantly in the beginning and then every five minutes after that until they were done, tasting them a lot in the last 20 minutes. I resisted putting salt in the water in the beginning as I would have normally done: Brock said not to. And that actually makes great sense because the grits absorb so much of the spring water in becoming their creamy fluffy goodness that the addition of salt would have made them too salty due to the long cooking time and the amount of water they absorb. These are not the grits you want to ruin.

The Vidalias went in to roast for the last two hours with the pork shoulder, basting the pork with the pan juices for the last hour. I'll just have to say the pork was getting harder to resist, but I didn't want to disturb the dark rich crust that had built up on the outside of the roast.

Keith was in charge of the tomato gravy, which was made with cornmeal and bacon fat. We fried up some Benton's bacon, which we snacked on because we only needed the fat and used Anson Mills fine white cornmeal as the base. We toasted that until tan and poured in three cups of crushed San Marzano tomatoes and let it reduce down until it had a thick creamy consistency.

Keith and I were starved from all the delicious smells, and my son Nate kept bopping through sneaking bacon, which he deserved since he had been the runner for the day, going to the grocery for anything that I didn't have at hand. Dinner was finally ready. All in all, it really wasn't hard to cook anything on my chosen menu. It was easy because all these recipes are developed by Brock to enhance the natural goodness and freshness of these quality ingredients, so there are no long lists of 20 ingredients and weird cooking instructions. Because I was cooking something new to me and doing it exactly how it was written in the cookbook, it took a little longer than usual. It was wonderful to have someone with me in the kitchen to help cook, especially since Keith is a person who loves instructions and following recipes. I would say the most helpful thing, besides Keith, was having two ovens, pork shoulder in one for 14 hours, pie in the other. You could of course bake the pie the day before, but it only lasted a day in my house, so that wouldn't work for me since I wanted everything for one, sit-down dinner.

The dinner we cooked, that we had all been a part of (my husband Keith, my son Nate, and I), was put on the table, and we began to eat. The pork shoulder, with that crispy crust, had become sweet, fatty, tender tendrils that melted in your mouth. Dipping the strands of pork shoulder into the sweet acid of the tomato gravy added another level of spicy sweetness to the pork. Taking a bite of the pork with a bit of tomato gravy and sweet roasted Vidalias was my favorite combination. Keith and Nate thought the tomato gravy was especially good on the creamy grits. I liked these Anson Mills Grits simple, melting with butter and salt. They were better than any I have ever had, even at my granny's house long ago, and they were more corn flavored and fluffy but with the soft mouth feel that you still had to chew a bit, not mushy at all, which is why I ate them for the next two days, about three times a day. It's a very happy morning with a bowl of these grits and a cup of coffee.

The Creamed Corn was a meal unto itself. Many times growing up, we had creamed corn for supper with biscuits, sliced fresh tomatoes, and sliced cantaloupe. And I will have a supper this summer just like that, while the corn is still coming in good and sweet, using this recipe. The sautéed shallots mimicked the sweetness of the corn, and the fresh thyme tasted like the corn husk smells when you are striping it off a fresh ear. Everything in this preparation simply made the corn taste better.

Now for the Chocolate Chess Pie: I've said a lot about how wonderful this pie is. It was amazing. It called your name in the middle of the night. Or as my husband said, "It's a pie you could get up in the middle of the night and eat the whole thing and not even feel guilty." The Olive & Sinclair chocolate gave the pie rich undernotes that were slightly floral, so it wasn't just sweet. Most important, the chocolate is fresh. Mr. Scott Witherow in Nashville roasts and grinds coco nibs to make it weekly. It had a rich, velvety depth of flavor that you just don't get with regular baking chocolate that has been sitting around for a year or so.

I learned so much reading and cooking from *Heritage.* Such a wonderful gift!

These recipes, this history of Southern food has informed my own cooking, and it has made me seek out better food sources for the meals I cook every day. Also…it has ruined me for any grits besides those from Anson Mills for the rest of my life. If you notice, there is a redundancy here, its fresh, even the grains, cornmeal, and grits are fresh-ground each week and shipped according to what has been ordered. All the sources are listed in the back of *Heritage;* it makes it very easy to find these foods.

As we sat down to eat this wonderful meal, I realized it felt like it did back home, growing up at granny's house in the shadow of the Blue Ridge. We had all spent the day together cooking and talking and tasting while making this meal of fresh wholesome food. That was the unexpected surprise at the end of the day: it felt like home. The meal did take longer to make, but the end result was more than a meal, it was a gathering of my small family in celebration of togetherness, and food of course. Because in the South, it's always about the food.

Footnote: Early in the spring of 2015, we were moving that antique desk in our home office. We took the drawers completely out to make it lighter and flipped it over to carry it. A piece of crushed, white pasteboard fell out. We sat the desk upright and looked into the dark recess with a flashlight. Crushed back in the corner of the space where the drawer had been was the box: the four coins are back home at 37 Rutledge Hill.

Meet our Authors

A look at the folks who contributed to this issue of *2nd & Church:*

Dhwanie (Priya) Anand

Dhwanie (Priya) Anand is a graduate of Belmont University and The Writer's Loft at Middle Tennessee State University. She writes from her home in Hohenwald, Tennessee.

Chuck Beard

Chuck Beard is a thinker by trade (will think for food; food for thought if you will), people observer-questioner/mental note-taker by habit (self-taught mind you), and curator of meaningless words searching for a dome near you. He works part-time at Oasis Center, is the editor for *Number:*, contributor for *Nashville Galleries Examiner,* a blogger, freelance writer, published author, and sole proprietor of East Side Story (Nashville's only all-local bookstore).

Brieana Bell

Brieana Bell received her B.S. in mass communications from Middle Tennessee State University. She works in technical literature and resides near Old Hickory Lake in Sumner County, Tennessee with her husband and busy six-year-old stepson.

Gaylord Brewer

Gaylord Brewer is a professor at Middle Tennessee State University, where he founded, and for more than 20 years edited, the journal *Poems & Plays.* His most recent books are a ninth collection of poetry, *Country of Ghost* (Red Hen), and the cookbook-memoir *The Poet's Guide to Food, Drink, & Desire* (Stephen F. Austin), both in 2015. He has published 900 poems in journals and anthologies, including *Best American Poetry* and *The Bedford Introduction to Literature.* During June of 2014 and 2015, he was in residence at the Centre d'Art i Natura in Spain.

Jennifer Chesak

Jennifer Chesak operates an independent publishing and editing company, Wandering in the Words Press. She earned her Master of Science in Journalism from Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism and has had a storied career as a freelance adventure, travel, and fitness writer with credits in publications like *Runner's World, Women's Running,* and *Field & Stream* online. She serves as a mentor in Middle Tennessee State University's certificate in writing program (MTSU Write) and teaches workshops with The Porch Writers' Collective in Nashville. Jennifer is currently working on a novel set in her native state of North Dakota.

Wendy Dinwiddie

Wendy Dinwiddie lives and writes in East Tennessee, where she serves on the board of directors for the Tennessee Mountain Writers. Her work has appeared in *Kudzu* and *The Red Mud Review,* and she is the winner of the Sue Ellen Hudson Excellence in Writing award. She hopes to see you at the 2016 Mountain Heritage Literary Festival.

Charlotte Rains Dixon

Charlotte Rains Dixon mentors entrepreneurs and creative writers from passionate idea to published and highly profitable. Charlotte is a freelance journalist, ghostwriter, and author. She is Director Emeritus and a current mentor at the Writer's Loft, a certificate writing program at Middle Tennessee State University. She earned her MFA in Creative Writing from Spalding University and is the author of a dozen books, including *The Complete Guide to Writing Successful Fundraising Letters* and *Beautiful America's Oregon Coast.* Her fiction has appeared in *The Trunk, Santa Fe Writer's Project, Nameless Grace,* and *Somerset Studios,* and her articles have been published in *Vogue Knitting, the Oregonian,* and *Pology,* to name a few. Her novel, *Emma Jean's Bad Behavior,* was published in February of 2013.

Brittany Eldridge

Brittany Eldridge is a senior at Western Kentucky University. She will graduate in May with a bachelor's degree in creative writing. She's an avid fiction writer and plans to work in editing and publishing after she graduates.

Gayle Edlin

Gayle Edlin excelled in undergraduate mathematics and chemistry but floundered in graduate studies in physics. Through an unlikely sequence of employment events, Gayle made her way into technical writing where she flourished…at least on the surface. Technically satiated but creatively starving, Gayle stumbled across a writing group and seized the chance to join it. Sparks flew and before she knew it (i.e., five years later), Gayle finished her first novel, *Here & Now,* which she published in December 2014. Gayle also enjoys photography and takes frequent walks to indulge both this interest and her love of nature. She is seldom at a loss for words in the written form, but frequently stumbles over them in speech.

Jennifer Eskew

Jennifer Eskew is a motorcyclist, writer, crafter, and cook. An Eastern Kentucky native and a graduate of the University of Kentucky, she works as a cooking publications manager for a major home appliances company. Jennifer currently lives in the Greater Nashville Area with her bourbon- and food-loving husband and two elderly pets.

Alina Hunter-Grah

Alina Hunter-Grah is a student at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, but hails from the grand and glamorous Clarksville, Tennessee. She is working her way to a bachelor's degree in Communications, with not much of a plan yet for afterwards. Alina is the current Assistant News Editor for UTC's newspaper, *The University Echo.* In her bits of free time between homework and pestering the people of UTC with questions about their opinions, Alina enjoys painting, hiking, and dreaming of all the different places she would like to travel.

David Holper

In addition to traveling by thumb several times across the country, David Holper has worked as a taxi driver, fisherman, dishwasher, bus driver, soldier, house painter, bike mechanic, bike courier, and teacher. He has published two collections of poetry: *64 Questions* and *Ghosts of Silence.* He teaches English at College of the Redwoods and lives in Eureka, California, which is far enough from the madness of civilization that he can get some writing done. Another thing that helps is that his three children continually ask him for stories, and he is learning the art of doing that well for them.

Les Kerr

Les Kerr is a songwriter, recording artist, and performer who merged Cajun music, blues, Rockabilly, bluegrass, and New Orleans music to create his own genre, "Hillbilly Blues Caribbean Rock & Roll." A Nashville resident since 1987, the Gulf Coast native was born in Louisiana and raised in Mississippi. Kerr has recorded six CDs and performs his original music at concert venues, festivals, nightclubs, and special events throughout the U.S. He is also featured periodically in broadcasts, including *Civil War Songs and Stories,* a PBS TV documentary aired nationwide in 2012. Having earned a journalism degree at Ole Miss, Kerr is a former

broadcast news director. He co-authored *The All-American Truck Stop Cookbook* (Thomas Nelson) and *Tennessee* (Graphic Arts Books), and two of his original lyrics were included in the New Orleans poetry anthology, *Maple Leaf Rag IV* (Portals Press). Allusions to works by authors as diverse as Hemingway, Dickens, and Hunter S. Thompson have found their way into some of Kerr's music.
"Most of my songs tell stories or describe people, places, and things I've done," Kerr said. "I have always been influenced by authors and others who tell great stories in person or in print."

Alvin Knox

Alvin Knox received his MFA in Creative Writing-Poetry from Vermont College in 1999. Currently an Instructor of English at Middle Tennessee State University, he is one the founding mentors of MTSU's Writer's Loft program. His poems have appeared in various publications, including the *Southern Indiana Review*, *Algonquin*, *Frisk Magazine*, and *Tar Wolf Review*.

Sidney Krome

Sidney Krome is currently Professor Emeritus in the Department of Humanities at Coppin State University in Baltimore, Maryland, where he has been on the faculty since 1970. He is the author of *The Nancy Tapes* (a memoir about the death of one of his cousins, Nancy Kanow Simpson); *The Life of a Star* (a memorial poem commemorating the 25th, then the 50th, anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy); *The Survivor: An Oratorio of Celebration* (a play about slavery and survival, produced at Coppin's campus in 2000), and a number of published book reviews, OP-ED page opinion pieces, scholarly articles, and poems.

Molly McCaffrey

Molly McCaffrey is the author of *You Belong to Us* (memoir) and *How to Survive Graduate School & Other Disasters* (stories). She is also the co-editor of *Commutability: Stories about the Journey from Here to There* and the founder of I Will Not Diet, a blog devoted to healthy living and body acceptance. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Cincinnati and has worked on films with Academy Award winner Barbara Kopple, *World War Z* author, Max Brooks, and Nashville filmmaker James Weems. Nominated for four Pushcart Prizes, she currently lives in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Cynthia A. Minor

Cynthia A. Minor is an attorney, author, and screenwriter.

Katie McDougall

Katie McDougall is the cofounder of The Porch, and she is author of the novel, *The Color Wheel.* Her short fiction has appeared in BarcelonaReview.com, Storyglossia.com, and in *Soundtrack Not Included.* She holds a B.A. in English from Colorado College and an MFA in Fiction Writing from Colorado State University. Prior to cofounding The Porch, Katie spent fifteen years as an English teacher in Colorado, Nashville, and The Bahamas.

Kenneth (KJ) Moore

Kenneth (KJ) Moore is a junior at Hume Fogg Academic Magnet High School in Nashville, Tennessee.

Mollie Moore

Mollie Moore is senior journalism student at Western Kentucky University.

Mandy Morgan

Mandy Morgan, a Nashville native, is a long-time supporter of the arts and the ever growing food scene in Nashville. She has worked in the promotional and theatrical marketing industry for 8+ years and most recently joined the educational marketing team of Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations. She has a home in East Nashville that she shares with her two rescue dogs, Banner and Hurley.

Randy O'Brien

Randy O'Brien recently retired from Middle Tennessee State University as an award-winning journalist and adjunct teacher of coursework in creative writing, script writing, and reporting. His novel Judge Fogg (2007 Literary Road Press) focuses on the turbulent time in Nashville between the 1960s through 1980 through the eyes of Nashville's first elected African-American criminal court judge. He has written several award-winning screenplays and signed four options with producers who circulated his scripts to production companies and networks.

Jennifer Palley

Jennifer Palley is *2nd & Church*'s first foreign literary correspondent. She is an Edmonton, Canada, native living in Stockholm, Sweden, for the past 16 years. Jennifer is a freelance writer and editor, and her portfolio includes a variety of assignments, everything from writing online help to editing Biblical literary texts.

Linda Busby Parker

Linda Busby Parker has taught on the faculties of Eastern Michigan University, Iowa State University, and the University of South Alabama. She is the author of two college-level textbooks. Her novel, *Seven Laurels*, won the James Jones First Novel Award and the Langum Prize for Historical Fiction. She has published short pieces in *Writer's Digest*, *Big Muddy*, and *Confluence*. Linda has served as editor and publisher of *Mobile Bay Monthly* and as publisher of Excalibur Press. She has reviewed books for *The Mobile Press Register*, the Alabama Writers Forum, and the *San Diego Union Tribune*. She has been a fellow in fiction at Bread Loaf and a Tennessee Williams Scholar in fiction at the Sewanee Writers Conference.

Charlotte Pence

Charlotte Pence's collection, *Many Small Fires,* was recently released by Black Lawrence Press, and her poems are forthcoming from *The Southern Review, Epoch,* and *Harvard Review,* among others. A Ph.D. graduate of the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, she is an assistant professor of English at Eastern Illinois University.

John Pleimann

John Pleimann is a professor of English at Jefferson College in Hillsboro, Missouri. His poems have appeared in *The Gettysburg Review, The Antioch Review, The Atlanta Review, The Connecticut Review,* and *Poetry Daily.* He studies jazz and bluegrass guitar.

Mary Popham

Mary Popham's fiction, nonfiction, poetry, essays, and book reviews have appeared in *The Louisville Courier-Journal*, *The Louisville Review*, *ForeWord Reviews*, *New Southerner*, *2nd & Church*, and *Appalachian Heritage*. She has produced short plays and published short stories in anthologies, holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Spalding University, and is an active member in two writers groups. In November 2013, her essay "The Kindnesses We Give Each Other" was published in *This I Believe: Kentucky*, and in October 2013, her novel *Back Home in Landing Run* was published by MotesBooks. She is currently writing a collection of short fiction.

Terry Price

Terry Price is a Tennessee writer, born in Nashville, about a half of a block from where he currently works. He has his MFA in Creative Writing from Spalding University in Louisville and is a mentor in, and Director Emeritus of, The Writer's Loft creative writing program at Middle Tennessee State University (now known as MTSU Write). His work has appeared in the online magazine NewSoutherner.com and in their print anthology, *Best of New Southerner,*

as well as in *Writers Notes* magazine, the online journal *BloodLotus*, and the *Timber Creek Review,* and he has had a story nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

Suzanne Craig Robertson

Suzanne Craig Robertson has been editor of the *Tennessee Bar Journal,* a statewide legal publication, for more than two decades. In the course of this work, she has written about members of the state and federal judiciary, recovering alcoholics and drug addicts, lawyer-missionaries, low-income people in need of legal services and those who helped them, pioneer women who broke through glass ceilings, and more. She received her bachelor's of science degree in communications/public relations from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, a certificate in creative writing from The Writer's Loft (MTSU Write) at Middle Tennessee State University, and has been a workshop participant at the Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Conference in Grapevine, Texas.

Wilfred G. Robles

JR Robles lives in McKenzie, Tennessee. He has had poems in *Collage* and *Uprise Magazine.* As a playwright, his plays have had staged readings in Chicago and Nashville, Tennessee. He completed his M.A. in English at Middle Tennessee State University and currently teaches in the English Department at Bethel University (TN).

Helen Ruggieri

Helen Ruggieri lives in Olean, NY and recently retired from the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford, PA. She currently coordinates the reading series at the Olean Public Library and conducts a writing workshop at the African American Center. Her latest book, *The Kingdom Where No One Keeps Time,* came out in the fall of 2015 from Mayapple Press.

Julie Schoerke

In 2000, Julie Schoerke founded JKS Communications, a book publicity firm in New York, Chicago, and Nashville. The firm represents traditionally published books with "The Big Five" and is the publicity firm of record for several boutique-publishing houses, and it sometimes publicizes hybrid and self-published books. JKS Communications is proud to represent books that have received scores of awards and several who have become *New York Times* bestsellers. Julie speaks nationally about book promotion and the changing tides of the book industry including appearances at University of Chicago, Decatur Book Festival, Oxford Creative Nonfiction Workshop, Highlights Foundation, Southern Festival of Books, Alabama Book Festival, and others. She also is a frequent guest on radio programs to discuss literary topics.

Luke Seward

Luke Seward is a Louisville based photographer currently completing a BFA in photography at the Hite Art Institute, University of Louisville. Seward is managing documentation of all public art works within the Louisville Metro Government through the Commission on Public Art. His work is presently on display at Spot5 Art Center in the Clifton area of Louisville, Kentucky. "Finding myself in the midst of a constant concrete jungle drove me to seek refuge behind a lens. While lurking through the streamline of urban environments I found myself stepping outside its systemic nature to observe. I find an appreciation for my surroundings by taking time to slow down, compose, and capture. Pumping the breaks in a fast paced world allows me to soak up the little details we are surrounded by, permitting me to find truth and authenticity within scenes carefully composed."

Qiana Towns

Qiana Towns's poem, "Social Regard," was selected as the Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Prize by the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature. She is a Cave Canem fellowship graduate. Her chapbook, *This is Not the Exit,* was published in July 2015 by Willow Books.

Skyllarr Trusty

Skyllarr Trusty is an English, writing, and biology senior at Loyola University New Orleans. She maintains several editorial positions as managing editor of *ReVisions*, and as staff writer, assistant editor of Life and Times and The Works section of *The Maroon.* Other publications she has worked with include *The New Orleans Review, The Ochsner Journal,* and *Object Lessons.* Her writing has appeared in *The Maroon, The 1718* reading series, *The Wolf, The New Orleans Review,* and *The Houma Times.* She balances her time between writing, editing, and acting as historian for Beta Beta Beta, The National Biological Honor Society. She enjoys journalism, flash fiction, critical theory and is currently working on a proposal for an interdisciplinary Ph.D in scientific communication which she will pursue after receiving her BA in English.

Candace L. White

Candace L. White is a mountain girl born at the foot of the Blue Ridge in North Carolina. She grew up near a cotton mill town on her granny's farm where stories and the tellin' of them were Saturday night entertainment in the front yard as the sun set and the cool air, soft with the scent of flowers, crept from the pine woods. A chorus of tree frogs from down at the creek provided a background cadence to the spoken words of relatives and friends who had just stopped by for cake, coffee, and visitin'. In this place of mountain laurel and bubbling creeks that sprang from artesian wells, a mountain child with bare dirty feet learned to live in the world. Candace tells this story in her creative nonfiction novel that is nearly complete and refers to it often on her blog and in her cookbook that shares the food and wisdom that she inherited from the women who raised her up.

Carolyn Wilson

Carolyn Wilson recently retired as Director of Library Services at Beaman Library, Lipscomb University. She holds an undergraduate degree from Lipscomb University and a graduate degree in Library Science from Peabody College. Her career has been filled with many activities, professional and otherwise, but primarily devoted to book-related causes. She has been involved with the Southern Festival of Books since its inception, is a member of the Women's National Book Association where she served as National President and from which she holds an Honorary Lifetime Membership. For many years at Lipscomb she directed the Landiss Lecture Series, bringing many distinguished literary figures to the Lipscomb campus. In retirement she continues to enjoy cooking, reading, family, and friends, and is involved in various writing projects.

Tom Wood

Tom Wood's debut novel is *Vendetta Stone,* a fictional true-crime thriller set in Nashville. He recently completed a screenplay based on the book, and it was a semifinalist in the 2015 Nashville Film Festival's screenwriting competition. The second chapter of the series is expected in 2016. His short stories appear in *Tennesseans West Vol. 1 (2015), Weird Western Yarns Vol. 1, Western Tales! Vol. 3* and *Filtered Through Time.*

Natalie Wynn

Natalie Wynn is a senior Elementary Education Major at Western Kentucky University. She hopes to become a teacher and change the world one child at a time. Though Natalie has never been published before, she hopes to produce some writing pieces and lesson plans that will be worthy of publishing in the future.

An Evening with Sean Brock & Jason Isbell

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"What are the things you can't do without?"

"The celebration of taking a plant and putting it in the ground and growing it; then, taking it at different stages of maturity and preserving it," Brock said.

And what about Amy and Lucian in the back of the room? What were their favorites from those many trips to Husk Nashville?

"That's a hard one," Geise said. "The chicken is fantastic, and we've had some deviled eggs that were delicious.

"All of the vegetables were so well prepared, and it's upscale Southern: that's what I would call it."

Oh, and there was one final question from Isbell: "How do you teach people to shop for food the right way?"

"One of the challenges we face…a lot of bad food is out there, and we are all getting used to it," Brock said. "Always buy the best quality you can afford.

"Don't let quality food be an afterthought."

And according to Philpott, Sean didn't treat the evening as an afterthought, either!

Sean was kind enough to stay and sign books for a long time—the signing line kept going and going." Philpott said. "People in line were chatting with each other and making friends, posing for pictures. The mood was high, and toward the end of the night, we were all just feeling silly." 🔖

From the Editor

▶ From Page 7

historian, often referred to as the Indiana Jones of the historical culinary world—allowed time in his day for a Q&A.

The list is simply too long to continue.

As I type these words, this issue is easily going to be 130 pages…maybe more.

You'll unearth feature stories on two wonderful bookstores: one in New Orleans, Louisiana and one closer to home. A nice blend of cookbooks, novels, and nonfiction make up the nearly 30 books covered in this issue. We are reminded of the great literary talent that thrives in Nashville. And we've added a column on audiobooks, great explorations of Southern food in films and songs, and reports from France and Sweden, as well as from Mobile, Alabama and Louisville, Kentucky.

And I cannot forget the generosity of our new friends at the Southern Foodways Alliance (SFA). We've included a multi-page exploration of their good work, as well as a kind reflection upon one of the founders, the late John Egerton.

And you may have noticed a change in the masthead. I'm stepping down from the day-to-day operations around here in order to wrap up my first novel, *the e-postle.* Starting in January, our WKU Editorial Assistant Brittany Eldridge will become the journal's associate editor for the 2016 calendar year.

I've never mentioned this before, but I've spent my adult life attempting to follow the example of Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus. He was a Roman aristocrat and statesman whose service as consul and dictator made him a model of civic virtue. You can learn all about *ole Lucius* at your local public library. Essentially, he resigned his near-absolute authority willingly and has been cited as an example of outstanding leadership, service to the greater good, and modesty…among other things. This served me well, over a decade ago, when I moved on from a creative writing program that I created at MTSU, The Writer's Loft. (It's now called MTSU Write.) And I know now that this Roman's example will continue to point me in a positive direction.

Ms. Eldridge is going to be busy throughout the coming year. She'll continue to support through our web site and social media outlets the writers and poets at JKS Communications, our friend and business partner. She'll have a weekly column on our web site. And she'll be publishing two of our four-page mini-issues. What will be in them? How am I supposed to know? I'm not in charge around here anymore.

As for me, it's time to pull down the shade in my home office, close the curtains, and write. 🔖