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GROWING ECONOMIC POSSIBILITY IN APPALACHIA: STORIES OF RELOCALIZATION AND REPRESENTATION ON STINKING CREEK

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GROWING ECONOMIC POSSIBILITY IN APPALACHIA: STORIES OF RELOCALIZATION AND REPRESENTATION ON STINKING CREEK

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

GROWING ECONOMIC POSSIBILITY IN APPALACHIA: STORIES OF RELOCALIZATION AND REPRESENTATION ON STINKING CREEK

This project explores the agricultural heritage and current social landscape of the Stinking Creek community of Knox County, Kentucky, and the legacy of the local nonprofit organization the Lend-A-Hand Center. Through participatory research, this project presents a reflexive account of the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program examining the diverse economy of the Stinking Creek watershed and possibilities for new economic imaginings and post-coal futures for central Appalachia. This dissertation includes an oral history project, a theoretical examination, and an ethnographic reflection, bridging several literatures in the fields of agricultural history, Appalachian Studies, Participatory Action Research, research within the diverse economy framework, and feminist political ecology. For three years I coordinated the Grow Appalachia program through the Lend-A-Hand Center, developing agricultural initiatives in Knox County, working to re-localize food systems through home gardens, community gardens, and the establishment of the Knox County Farmers' Market, and gathering stories through oral histories on the Creek. Problematizing the 1967 book *Stinking Creek*, by John Fetterman, this account of the community seeks to call attention to the importance of critical analyses of representations of people, processes, and places. In the face of pressing social issues in central Appalachia and renewed interest in the discourses of development, local food, and post-coal transition, this work seeks to intervene in region-wide discussions and suggest avenues for change and possibility. The Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program illustrates the potentials for community-based agriculture projects in the region to promote a variety of economic processes, foster and preserve agricultural traditions, and impact the conversation about outlooks for the region. This research provides policy and programmatic suggestions regarding the importance of relocalization of food systems and different (re)presentations of community narratives as part of a multifaceted agenda toward a just, sustainable future for eastern Kentucky and the region.

KEYWORDS: Appalachia, Local Foods Systems, Stinking Creek, Diverse Economy, Relocalization, Oral History

Kathryn Engle

10/18/2018

GROWING ECONOMIC POSSIBILITY IN APPALACHIA: STORIES OF RELOCALIZATION AND REPRESENTATION ON STINKING CREEK

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DEDICATION

To William—may we all exude the joy, wonder, happiness, creativity, and love for life and the region as you have.

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This project would not have been at all possible if it weren't for the many people supporting me and encouraging me along the way. First, this project and any success I have had over the years would have been impossible without my mom, Elizabeth Engle. She more than any other person has supported and believed in me going above and beyond to help me through each stage of the process. From helping with grant recordkeeping to helping me carry gardening equipment to helping me get out the door and to making sure I ate, my mom has been there for me every step of the way. Thanks to my sister Caroline who has become my closest confidante and friend. I am so proud of you and excited to see the work you will do in the region in the future. Also, thanks to my dad Allen Engle and brother Bud who have been supportive and put up with me through this process. I want to thank my granny Ella Sue Hoffman and pappy Clarence Hoffman and uncle Daniel Hoffman for giving me a place to stay, feeding me, and putting up with me taking over the kitchen table and leaving gardening equipment all over. This project would have been impossible without you. Also thanks to my uncle Bruce Engle for also allowing me a place to stay and my aunt and uncle David and Tabitha Hoffman who helped with the farmers' market and different aspects of the project. Thanks to my cousins Sadie and Savannah Hoffman for helping me remember why I do the work I do and the importance and wonder of the little things. Thanks to my sister from another mother Meghann Hart for being there to talk things out and encourage me. I also want to acknowledge my late grandparents Mary and Fred Engle, for also providing a place for

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I have been incredibly blessed to be able to do fieldwork in such a beautiful, complex, and welcoming part of the country. Thanks to the folks on Stinking Creek who have welcomed me into their community, helped me through the process, encouraged me, pointed me towards the right direction, and made this project a possibility. Thanks to the participants in the Grow Appalachia program for making the program such a success and teaching me so much. Many, many thanks to those who were willing to share their stories and oral histories. I have learned so much from your words which you shared so generously. Thanks to my fellow Grow Appalachia workers for making everything possible. Donnie, wherever you are, I miss you my friend. Charlotte and Joseph it has been such a pleasure to get to know you and work with you over the years. Thanks to others in Knox County I've worked with through this process and for the local community for supporting different programs and initiatives. Thanks to the Knox County Farmers' Market Board, who has dedicated an amazing amount of time and effort into creating an essential and powerful organization, especially Monica and Mary Beth who have been with me since the beginning.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation builds on previous research on the Lend-A-Hand Center (Engle 2013) and ongoing work in the Stinking Creek community of Knox County, Kentucky. It explores the agricultural heritage and current social landscape of Stinking Creek, and the legacy of the local nonprofit organization the Lend-A-Hand Center. Through participatory research, this project presents a reflexive account of the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program examining the diverse economy of the Stinking Creek watershed and possibilities for new economic imaginings and post-coal futures for central Appalachia.

I have been involved with the Lend-A-Hand Center and the Stinking Creek community since 2011. For three years, during the 2014-2016 growing seasons, I coordinated the Grow Appalachia program through the Lend-A-Hand Center, developing agricultural initiatives in Knox County and working to re-localize food systems through home gardens, community gardens, and the establishment of the Knox County Farmers' Market. I conducted oral histories on the Creek gathering stories about life history, agriculture, the Lend-A-Hand Center, and perspectives on the future; these have been archived at University of Kentucky's Nunn Center for Oral History as the "Stinking Creek Stories" oral history project (https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7gxd0qvb04). During this period, I became deeply involved with life in the county and developed many meaningful relationships with people, as well as nature. I spent time with co-founders and co-directors of the Center Irma Gall and Peggy Kemner, learning more about their story and the impact they have had on the community for the past 60 years.

As a lifelong Kentuckian and someone with deep ties to the Appalachian region and Knox County, this project was of personal significance to me. As a rural sociologist, trained in Appalachian Studies, I was interested in learning about the place where my family was from and an area that became well known within the Appalachian Studies discourse. I did not grow up in the county nor did I grow up on a farm. This project allowed me to explore agriculture and community while also contributing to the community through a tangible project involving local food systems development and oral history documentation. The following chapters share my experiences, understandings, and feelings participating in the program and working on Stinking Creek, giving a glimpse of a community and a program at a particular historical moment.

In the face of pressing social issues in central Appalachia and renewed interest in the discourses of development, local food, and post-coal transition, this work seeks to intervene in region-wide discussions on economic transition in order to suggest avenues for change and possibility. My experience with the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program illustrates the potentials for community-based agriculture projects in the region to promote a variety of economic processes, foster and preserve agricultural traditions, and impact the conversation about outlooks for the region. These articles examine two concepts central to an understanding of the economic and social landscape of the Appalachian region: relocalization and representation.

Relocalization

In the coalfields of central Appalachia, communities have been experiencing an economic shift. Areas throughout eastern Kentucky and West Virginia have struggled with the decades-long decline of the coal industry and the associated job losses,

unemployment, environmental degradation, and economic precarity. Recent national attention to the Appalachian region, especially in the wake of the 2016 election, disseminated stories of economic hardship brought on by the coal industry. Decades of neoliberal policies (Fisher and Smith 2012), changes in global energy markets, and the stark realties of climate change have had a palpable impact on small towns across the region. Faced with a changing economy, communities are coming to grips with the realization that coal is not "coming back" (Carley, Evans, and Konisky 2018; Lobao et al. 2016). During eight years of an alleged "War on Coal," in which corporate coal and its allies charged that the Environmental Protection Agency during the Obama administration was attempting to destroy the coal industry through over-regulation, the coal industry has attempted to manipulate the cultural identities of employees and the region's communities to identify with coal mining as the economic bedrock and savior of the region (Bell and York 2010; Bodenhamer 2016). Nevertheless, negative socioeconomic outcomes of the coal industry argue against coal mining as a panacea for the region's economy or for the health of the ecosystems and the people who depend upon them for a living (Betz et al. 2015; Epstein et al. 2011; Lobao et al. 2016; Partridge, Betz, and Lobao 2013; Perdue and Pavela 2012). Environmental, social, and health effects of coal mining and in particular mountaintop removal (Austin and Clark 2012; Hendryx 2008; Cordial, Riding-Malon, and Lips 2012; Bell 2016) plague communities dealing with population loss (Kratzer 2015), health disparities (Krometis et al. 2017), and opioid addiction (Moody, Satterwhite, and Bickel 2017; Chubinski et al. 2014). Many of the region's communities continue to search for alternative livelihood strategies and paths

for community and economic development in the face of persistent socioeconomic problems caused by an over-reliance on coal mining.

Although the decline of the coal industry presents many challenges in this region, the shift in the economic structure and social discourse also presents an opening for hope, renewed outlooks, creativity, justice, and systems change. Over the past several years innovative initiatives have emerged in the region to address changing economic realities. Talks of Appalachian "transition" and a "post-coal" Appalachia have risen in the discourse (Semuels 2015; Flaccavento 2010; Todd, Doshi, and McInnis 2010).[1] Ideas about a "just transition" that incorporates not only economic security for people displaced by industrial restructuring, but also addresses environmental, health, and democratic dimensions of changing social and economic landscapes have come to the fore (Newell and Mulvaney 2013). Citizens' organizations and government entities have proposed avenues for creating new economies, building networks, and restoring land (Tarus, Hufford, and Taylor 2017; Taylor, Hufford, and Bilbrey 2017). A variety of approaches have been put forward to address issues in the region and fill the gaps left from coal mining. Entrepreneurship, fostering small businesses, job training, homegrown industries, solar power, tech, sustainable forestry, tourism, and hemp have all been proposed.

Local foods has emerged as a central component of a renewed Appalachian economy. The development of local food systems in Appalachia has become a popular topic for government and development agencies in recent years. Local foods are increasingly seen as a mechanism for community economic development (Deller, Lamie,

[1] The Daily Yonder (http://www.dailyyonder.com/), Renew Appalachia (http://www.appalachiantransition.org/), and Making Connections News (https://www.makingconnectionsnews.org/) feature stories about Appalachian transition.

and Stickel 2017). Research reports and projects from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) construct local food systems development as a possible economic alternative to coalmining (Haskell 2012; Jackson, Perrett, and Descieux 2015). The "Local Foods, Local Places" program through the ARC has supported dozens of community-based projects over the past several years including in Knox County.[2] Kentucky's SOAR (Shaping Our Appalachian Region) initiative has local foods as part of its "blueprint."[3] Other recent literature on agriculture in the region highlights the role of organizations, tourism, and grant programs in the development of local food systems (Farley and Bush 2016; Holland 2016; Long 2010; Humiston 2015). In a recent report, Rossi, Meyer, and Knappage (2018) examine potentials for local food systems development throughout southeastern Kentucky.

Local foods promises a variety of benefits. Local foods is seen as a way to capture more income for the farmer and provide fresher food that has traveled less distance and used less transportation fuel. In the coalfields, agriculture has been proposed as a different way to use or reclaim abandoned mine land. Local foods have the potential to address health disparities and obesity, increase food security, build social capital, and create local jobs (Deller, Lamie, and Stickel 2017). Direct sales, farmers' markets, community supported agriculture (CSAs), food hubs, farm-to-school programs, community gardens, gleaning programs, food preservation programs,[4] local foods networking organizations,[5] community kitchens, local processing facilities, farm-to-table

[2] See https://www.arc.gov/program_areas/LocalFoodsLocalPlacesInitiative.asp The action plan we produced in "Strengthening the Local Foods System: Actions and Strategies for Barbourville, Kentucky" provides interesting insights into the possibilities for local foods in Knox County.
[3] See http://www.soar-ky.org/blueprint/rfs.
[4] See Conley (2012) and Black (2015; 2010).
[5] See the East Kentucky Food Systems Collaborative http://www.appalfoods.org/ and the Appalachian Food Summit https://www.appalachianfood.com/.

restaurants, and organic production programs have sprung up across the region. Regional branding like Kentucky's "Appalachian Proud" seek to capitalize on newfound interest in "buying local." National interest in regionally unique foods has highlighted Appalachian foodways and local traditions.

This talk of local food systems, buying local, or localized economies is often seen as innovative and trendy. I prefer the idea of *re*localization as these systems were much more localized in the past. The Post Carbon Institute defines relocalization as:

> a strategy to build societies based on the local production of food, energy and goods, and the local development of currency, governance and culture. The main goals of relocalization are to increase community energy security, to strengthen local economies, and to improve environmental conditions and social equity. The relocalization strategy developed in response to the environmental, social, political and economic impacts of global over-reliance on cheap energy.[6]

For many, sustainable agriculture, resilience, slow food, and local food systems are part of a transition away from fossil fuels. In *Edible Action* Miller (2009) discusses relocalization around foods in particular as a part of activism and the cultivation of alternative economies. Others have utilized the concept of relocalization to think about contracting supply chains and instituting different social relations through local economies and agriculture in the region (Taylor, Hufford, and Bilbrey 2017; Tarus, Hufford, and Taylor 2017; Jarrell 2011; Conley 2012).

Many scholars have examined the subsistence strategies, independent production, small-scale farming, local markets, cooperative enterprises, kin-based systems, nonmarket production, norms of reciprocity, home food preservation, use of the commons, seed saving, and barter and gift economies that existed and continue to persist

[6] See https://www.postcarbon.org/relocalize/. See also the work of the Relocalization Network (http://old.relocalize.net/), a past initiative of the Post Carbon Institute. See also the work of Transition United States http://www.transitionus.org/.

in Appalachian communities (Beaver 1986; Billings and Blee 2000, 2004; Billings, Blee, and Swanson 1986; Boyer 2006; A. Kingsolver 2011, 2015; LaLone 1996, 2008; Portelli 2011; Pudup, Billings, and Waller 1995; Scott 1996; Conley 2012; K. J. Black 2015; Best 2013, 2017). Although the trade of goods, raw materials, and people crossed the globe since colonization of the region, localized economies largely organized economic and social relations for decades. Agricultural products, livestock, timber products, building materials, textiles, spirits, salts, medicinals, and other essential items were primarily procured locally. As in many other areas of the country, families were able to fulfill most of their needs from a relatively small radius from their homes. Many families across the region, especially in rural areas, locally produced or procured much of their food well into the 20th century and many families and communities continue to do so. My work in southeastern Kentucky seeks to highlight these local traditions and shows the potentials of relocalization of food systems through programs like farmers' markets as a way to address important issues in the region today.

Representation

In addition to relocalization, this project and dissertation explore issues of representation in the region. Stinking Creek was made famous by John Fetterman's account of the community in his 1967 book *Stinking Creek.* His was the first major presentation of the Stinking Creek community to a broad audience. The book put Stinking Creek in the spotlight in Appalachian Studies discourse and has been widely cited within the literature. An interesting glimpse into the community and political moment of the 1960s, Fetterman's account leaves much to be desired. A journalist from Louisville, Fetterman was looking for a story. His motivations were "to write a book and

try to reveal—if only for self-edification—something of what the hillbilly is really like" (Fetterman 1967, 18).

The book was a journalistic exposé in the vein of many other War-on-Poverty era depictions of Appalachian communities. Fetterman's (1967) depiction of the residents of Stinking Creek focused on individuals' lives, giving vignettes of the people of the area in colorful language with an overly dramatic, judgmental tone. Fetterman spent time in the community talking to people and taking photos. He featured a chapter on the Lend-A-Hand Center, telling the story of Peggy and Irma and pondering on the beginnings of the Knox County Economic Opportunity Council (KCEOC) and the nascent War on Poverty. Fetterman's (1967) account was not well received by many in the community.

Written during a time of political upheaval, racial unrest, the growing women's movement, increased attention to poverty in rural America, and experimental social and economic programs, the social landscape Fetterman found himself in was not unlike today. As a country and region, then, and now, we are reexamining who we are, what we are, and where we are going. In many ways are again in the midst of a national rediscovery (Munn 1972) of the region, stemming from the collapse of the coal industry, the 2016 election, the opioid epidemic, and increased class inequality. Fetterman's (1967, 18) observations ring true again today, "Many newsmen prowl the mountains of East Kentucky to 'get some poverty stuff.' Poverty is 'hot.' It is a subject rarely rejected by editors, and poverty stories and pictures are highly salable, as every free-lancer has learned."

News coverage, photo journalism, and video segments abound as people try to make sense of "Trump Country" (Catte 2016; Wilkerson 2017). Conflicting and

sometimes contradictory voices of the region have emerged, making claims, shaping perceptions, and providing political agendas (Catte 2018; Stoll 2017; Vance 2016). Contested (re)presentations of the region—who gets to tell the story, how to tell the story, or what the story really is—occupy time and energy. Discourse around development, transition, and post-coal futures point to the complexities of describing a multifaceted place and the power struggles involved in envisioning different futures.

Working in the same community as Fetterman and with some of the same people and families, I was highly aware of the importance of (re)presentation through my work on the Creek. I often found myself interrogating, analyzing, deconstructing, and reflecting on his text—comparing my experiences and understandings to his account. The book was ever-present in my mind during my time on the Creek. Contesting his representations and problematizing his account, this dissertation seeks to call attention to the importance of critical analyses of representations of people, processes, and places. It is essential to examine individuals' many stories that are not heard and voices that are silenced or filtered (Harris 2001; Harris et al. 1995). Representations of economic processes are likewise important to consider. Within the context of Appalachian transition and sustainable development, many economic processes are *present* but not *represented* in conversations of the economy in the region. Lastly, representations of places like Stinking Creek and our complex relationships with those places are important for those working in the region to consider. Reflecting upon our places and roles in these discourses is essential for practicing critical regionalism (Reichert Powell 2007) and engaged participatory research.

Article Overviews

Integrating several subject areas, methodologies, and theoretical orientations, this dissertation includes three articles: an oral history project, a theoretical examination, and an ethnographic reflection. These three articles reflect on different facets of the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program and the work I have done in Knox County over the past several years. This work bridges literatures in the fields of agricultural history, Appalachian Studies, Participatory Action Research (PAR), research within the diverse economy framework, and feminist political ecology. The articles use different theoretical orientations, but primarily utilize the diverse economy framework of J.K. Gibson-Graham (1996, 2006) and feminist political ecology (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, and Wangari 1996; Harcourt and Nelson 2015). Based principally on participant observation and oral history interviews, these accounts are methodologically grounded in feminist research and PAR.

These articles present a series of stories: stories of individuals and their narratives through oral history; stories of representation and economic and agricultural discourse; and stories of myself and my understandings of my experiences and relationships with people, place, and nature. Each article stands alone, but they are also interconnect exploring the importance of relocalization of food systems and different representations of community narratives as part of a multifaceted agenda toward a just, sustainable future for eastern Kentucky and the region.

This dissertation is organized into a series of chapters including an introductory section, three central articles, and a conclusion. Introductory text and abstracts contextualize each article at the beginning of each chapter. Poems created from quotes taken from oral histories are scattered throughout the text. The remainder of this

introductory section gives an overview of my experiences working on Stinking Creek and the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program, presents my research questions, explains methods used in the project, and discusses methodologies. The first article *Stinking Creek Stories: Memory, Agriculture, and Community in Rural Southeastern Kentucky* centers the stories of Stinking Creek residents and the oral histories gathered through the "Stinking Creek Stories" oral history project. Building from the insights gathered in oral histories and agricultural initiatives in Knox County, the second article, *Cultivating Community Economy on Stinking Creek: The Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program,* applies the diverse economies framework to the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program. The third article, *Notes from the (Corn) Field : Feminist Reflections on (Re)presentation, Embodiment, and Abjection* presents an ethnographic reflection on my work in the community through the lens of feminist political ecology. It includes a series of poems titled *My Land is Burning,* which reflect on the ecological and political reality of eastern Kentucky in the fall of 2016—the destruction of the wildfires and the turmoil of the election that swept through the region. The dissertation concludes by revisiting research questions and looking towards future research.

Background, Methods, & Methodology

The Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program

I first heard about Stinking Creek from a fellow classmate in an Appalachian Studies class at Eastern Kentucky University in 2010. Stinking Creek is a rural area spanning the northeastern part of Knox County. It is located in the Cumberland Plateau sub-region of the Appalachian Mountains in southeastern Kentucky. Knox County is

classified as economically distressed by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and has a poverty rate of 39.2% and a population of 31,687.[7] Knox County and the Stinking Creek area have a long history of coal mining although very few mining operations remain in the county. Stinking Creek consists of a looping road (locally known as "the loop") and a road that winds through the mountains towards the northeast, making up areas colloquially known as Road Fork, Middle Fork, and Big Creek. The area is made up of smaller communities including Walker, Messer, Dewitt, Mills, and Salt Gum, places once defined by post offices and one-room schools. Stinking Creek still boasts a local elementary school that has been spared from consolidation for now.

I was told about an organization called the Lend-A-Hand Center and two amazing women that had worked on the Creek for decades. Although my family is from Knox County—my mom went to Knox Central High School, and my grandparents, uncles, and cousins live in the county—I did not know anything about the Stinking Creek area or the Center. Intrigued by the story of a small nonprofit in the area, I visited the Center and met co-founders and co-directors Irma Gall and Peggy Kemner in the spring of 2011. At that time I did not know that that encounter would change my life—I have been involved with the Center and community ever since.

The Lend-A-Hand Center is a nonprofit community service organization that has worked to address health, educational, agricultural, and family needs in the Stinking Creek watershed of Knox County, Kentucky (Engle 2013). Begun in 1958 by nurse

[7] County Economic Status based on 2018 ARC data, available online at https://www.arc.gov/research/DataReports.asp. Poverty rate estimate based on 2016 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates and population estimate based on 2016 U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program (PEP) both available at https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/knoxcountykentucky/PST045216./.

midwife Peggy Kemner, originally from Pennsylvania and schoolteacher and farmer Irma Gall, originally from Indiana, the Center has worked diligently to fulfill its mission to "lend a hand" to the people in the surrounding area. The Center has impacted thousands of people from Knox County and around the world with its many innovative and pioneering programs and partnerships. Through providing health services to a depressed and relatively isolated area and countless other outreach and community activities, the Lend-A-Hand Center has provided needed services in an otherwise marginalized and misunderstood community. Through health programs including nurse midwife services, a clinic, medical transportation, and home health services; youth programs; adult programs; agricultural programs; education programs; home improvement programs; 4H; volunteer opportunities; and Sunday School, the Center has made many contributions to the county and the lives of people on Stinking Creek.

The work of the Center and the story of Peggy and Irma, or "the nurses" as they were called, were featured in Fetterman's (1967) book. In a chapter called "The Do-Gooders" Fetterman profiled the women telling the history of the Center, then still less than ten years old. He told of the health and social programs the women started on the Creek including promoting women's reproductive healthcare, family planning, and contraceptive use. He talked about experimenting with new agricultural methods, cooking classes, and 4-H programs. Fetterman also told about the Center's religious programs like Sunday School, and how the women took in children that needed a place to stay. Fetterman contemplated the role of welfare programs in the community. He skeptically discussed the new Knox County Economic Opportunity Council (KCEOC), which Irma

helped start, and the burgeoning War on Poverty, wondering if it would really have any positive effect on the "hillbilly."

I began volunteering at the Center and working with Irma on the farm in the summer of 2011. The Center sits on approximately 500 acres of mostly forested land with some agricultural fields in the Walker community in the area of Stinking Creek known as "Big Creek." The Center includes a large stone community center, several other houses, and many outbuildings and barns. Irma built these structures with help from neighbors, family, and work groups over the years. In talking with the directors and learning about the Center, I quickly found out that Lend-A-Hand is well known and well respected in the community and that nearly everyone on the Creek has a story or personal connection to Peggy and Irma. The two women, now in their mid-80s, have directed the organization through many changing times and hurdles. In recent years the Center's programs have downsized considerably, but Irma still manages the farm at the Center, working with livestock and several gardens. As a volunteer I helped with different events in the community, building projects, gardening, and children's camp events held at the Center. I helped out on the farm during the summer, learning how to plant and maintain a garden, milk a cow, chink a log cabin, can peaches, mend fences, and take care of hogs and goats. I had many conversations with Irma over a late lunch break or while hunched over picking beans together. I realized there was quite a story to be told or retold. As I learned more about the organization, spent more time with Peggy and Irma, and began meeting people in the community, I realized the importance of the work of the Center, its legacy, and its future possibilities.

Both Peggy and Irma are remarkable women, mentors, and role models. I've spent the most time with Irma and have developed a strong bond and friendship that has been life changing. Working with her and learning from her has been one of the most meaningful outcomes of this entire project. As a teacher, mentor, friend, interviewee, manager, and supervisor, Irma has taught me so much about work and life. I have learned about nonprofit work and how to work with people, as well as how to lay rock and take care of animals. Irma and I have shared joys and frustrations on the farm and in the community. From her I learned about the history of not only Stinking Creek, but the region and beyond. Irma has worked in central Appalachia for over 60 years and has been tapped into many important movements and rubbed shoulders with important people—from working with Andrew Young and Martin Luther King during the Civil Rights Movement to visiting with Sargent Shriver during the War on Poverty. She is a fountain of wisdom, practical knowledge, and stories. She has solid grounding in and an understanding of her purpose in life and what things have meaning. I have asked her innumerable questions and have heard her retell the story of the Center and the Creek many times.

While at Appalachian State University, I wrote my master's thesis on the history of the Lend-A-Hand Center. Based on participant observation, secondary source materials, and primarily oral history interviews with Peggy and Irma and some volunteers, I tried to understand the organization within the context of other social movements and events in the region. I began to examine the complexities of motivations, measures of success, and integration with larger networks of service providers in the

region. My master's thesis (Engle 2013) was a preliminary attempt to document the work of the Center and make sense of the organization and the community.

As I began my doctoral program, I knew I wanted to continue my work with the Lend-A-Hand Center and build on insights I had gathered from spending time with Peggy and Irma. I found out about a program called Grow Appalachia and thought the Center would be a perfect fit as a partner organization. I thought it would be a good opportunity for me to continue my work in the county and explore different ways of working in the community.

The Grow Appalachia program was begun in 2009. It is administered by Berea College and partners with community organizations throughout the region to promote food security and access to healthy, local food. [8] The program is primarily funded through a private donor, John Paul DeJoria and his Peace Love and Happiness Foundation. Grow Appalachia provides funds and technical assistance to existing nonprofits throughout the region to fulfill its mission: "To grow as much food for as many people as possible."[9] The program believes, "When food grows, communities and families grow too."[10] With a strong commitment to education and organic production techniques, Grow Appalachia has steadily grown each year helping to grow thousands of pounds of produce with hardworking families. Many organizations near Knox County including the Laurel County African American Heritage Center, Red Bird Mission, and Henderson Settlement have been partner sites with Grow Appalachia.

[8] The program has some interesting similarities with the Council of the Southern Mountains. Several of these organizations, including the Lend-A-Hand Center, are former members of the Council of the Southern Mountains.
[9] See https://growappalachia.berea.edu/our-history/. The website also notes the program's mission is, "Working with families of central Appalachia to be better nourished, healthier & economically stronger."
[10] See https://growappalachia.berea.edu/our-history/.

The Grow Appalachia program presented a unique opportunity for me not only to create new programs for the Lend-A-Hand Center and interact with people in the community, but also to participate in conversations and activism around the local food movement in Appalachia. Recently, momentum has grown around local foods, gardening, and community agriculture in eastern Kentucky with events and organizations like the Appalachian Food Summit, the Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR) initiative, the East Kentucky Food System Collaborative, and the Appalachian Regional Commission's recent focus on local foods. I was interested in being a part of these conversations and doing something to further some of the initiatives that were developing. I also saw relocalization of food systems as an important part of social justice work, sustainability, and post-coal transition in the region. From the perspective of a social scientist, I was interested in seeing how a community gardening program could work on the ground and how it could impact the local community. As a researcher, I was interested in learning more about the Stinking Creek community, getting to know people, hearing stories, and experimenting with participatory development paradigms and engaged community research.

For the 2014, 2015, and 2016 growing seasons, I coordinated the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program. The program was "designed to break down barriers to gardening and build community, addressing food security issues in Knox County through providing resources and technical assistance for home and community gardens"—or at least that's the purpose as I saw it. The main components of my work with the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia program included working with home gardeners, establishing three community gardens in the county, facilitating workshops

and events, purchasing materials and managing the program budget, posting on the Grow Appalachia blog with updates from the program, collecting harvest reports from participants and submitting bimonthly reports to the Grow Appalachia administration, overseeing employees and interns, promoting the program, and working with participants to see how they can mold the program. The program worked with families primarily in the Stinking Creek area, as well as individuals in Barbourville and partner organizations throughout the county. I also worked on the farm and in the gardens at the Lend-A-Hand Center, primarily helping Irma with garden maintenance. The program addressed a range of issues in Knox County working to promote food security, health and nutrition, self-sufficiency, skill building, agricultural education, and marketing opportunities for gardeners. Through the program, I hoped to build relationships, foster community, and grow the local foods economy.

Since every Grow Appalachia site is different I had the responsibility of shaping and envisioning the program from the ground up and making important decisions about the program's emphasis and direction. I really didn't know what I was getting into when I applied to be the site coordinator for the Grow Appalachia program at Lend-A-Hand. However, I worked with David Cooke, the Director of Grow Appalachia and made connections with other site coordinators in the area, and soon began to learn. After recruiting participants through house visits, mailers, and newspaper announcements, I began a series of informational meetings about the program. I was honest about my lack of experience and expertise in agriculture as well as my lack of management experience. I told the participants the project would be a learning process for all of us together; it would also be an experiment in different kinds of community gardening initiatives.

Unsure of how my "research" for my dissertation would develop, I dove in and got my hands dirty, setting up the program as best I could and seeing what directions it would take. I constantly traveled between Stinking Creek, Barbourville, Corbin, Richmond, and Lexington, taking and teaching classes at UK through the week and working in the gardens on the Creek on the weekends. I most often stayed with my grandparents outside of Corbin while working on the Creek although I also sometimes stayed at the Center. I saw myself somewhat as an outsider to the community, because I did not grow up there; however, I have family roots in Knox County and, as time passed, I gradually felt more integrated into the Stinking Creek community.

A core group of families coalesced around the program. Over the years I worked with over 20 different families and hundreds of students at the local elementary school where the main community garden was located. The participant meetings brought different members of the community together. They placed each other, negotiating their identities and finding commonalities—shared acquaintances, common networks, similar relationships to land, and shared family heritage—and began to form or cultivate relationships. [11] They shared their knowledge about agriculture and stories of the Lend-A-Hand Center. In some ways our meetings resembled focus groups as people shared their experiences and brainstormed together. All different kinds of people participated, both men and women and families and children. Many of the participants were middle aged or older, yet younger people also participated. Participants in the program included a laid off coal miner, welfare recipients, self-employed individuals, and individuals on disability—people largely marginalized by capitalist economic systems. For three growing seasons

[11] See Kingsolver (1992, 2011) for discussions of placing.

we shared work, meals, and garden tips. We started a community garden at Dewitt Elementary on the Creek and had workshops on garden planning, garden planting, basic garden maintenance, heart-healthy cooking, food preservation, and cold weather gardening/off-season preparation. We had special events including sorghum cook-offs, potlucks, and a corn roast. We participated in the Daniel Boone Festival in Barbourville, making a float for the Center. We visited each other's home gardens on the "Stinking Creek Garden Tour." Some people were already experienced gardeners while others were beginners. Some stayed in the program for the duration while others were in and out. Some were very committed to the process while others were less so. Participants formed friendships and exchanged recipes and stories. I began to recognize people in the community and be recognized, sometimes known as the "garden lady" when stopping in at the local gas station on the Creek.

One unexpected outgrowth of my position as the Grow Appalachia coordinator was the development of the Knox County Farmers' Market. In May 2014, a group of community members and I began conversations about starting a local market. No organized market existed in Knox County and previous attempts to start a market were unsuccessful. After lots of planning and work we opened our first season in June 2014 serving both producers and consumers in Knox and surrounding counties. Since then we have formed an official board of directors, incorporated as a nonprofit, found a permanent home at the newly built outdoor pavilion at the Knox County Cooperative Extension office, and have been awarded multiple grants.

The ARC conducted a local food tour which stopped in Barbourville in May 2014. A group of federal and state officials, including the federal co-chair of the ARC,

Earl Gohl, visited the gardens I was developing. In the fall of 2014, working to build on a successful first market season and expand capacity, the city of Barbourville was selected as one of 26 communities nationwide to participate in the "Local Foods, Local Places" program to help develop the market and work on fostering the local food system in the county. I took the lead on writing and applying to the program on behalf of the Knox County Farmers' Market. The grant provided funds for different initiatives for the market and several federal agencies worked in conjunction to facilitate and implement a planning workshop that was held in June 2015. From this workshop, we developed an action plan with goals and plans for the market and local food systems development in the community.[12] We were also able to use funds from the Local Foods, Local Places program to purchase a trailer for the market to take to events and launch an advertising campaign.

Research Questions

I had no purposeful research question at the outset of this project. I wanted to experiment with the Grow Appalachia program and see what happened. I wanted to better understand the Stinking Creek community, agriculture, and the Lend-A-Hand Center. I went to the field already with a set of understandings and assumptions about the community, having been familiar with Knox County my entire life and having worked with the Lend-A-Hand Center since 2011. I was already influenced by certain literatures through which my experiences filtered. Subsequent coursework, conversations, and

[12] See the action plan "Strengthening the Local Foods System: Actions and Strategies for Barbourville, Kentucky" (Local Foods Local Places Technical Assistance Program 2015). This document, which I had a large part in crafting, and in and of itself is an interesting case study in representation and representing local foods goals and futures in the region.

conferences further shaped my understandings of the county and the agricultural landscape of the region. From working on the Creek and managing the program I developed a set of research interests and a loose set of research questions:

1) What can be learned from the stories, experiences, and knowledges of Stinking Creek residents regarding their community, agriculture, and the Lend-A-Hand Center?
2) How can oral history and Participatory Action Research be used in community gardening programs like Grow Appalachia to impact rural communities and encourage economic diversity, relocalization, and post-coal transition?
3) How do I make sense of my own embodied experience and role on the Creek and the responsibility I have in conveying stories of people and a place through new, different forms of (re)presentation?

These questions became starting places for thinking through my experiences. The three articles included here largely set out to answer these questions, showing the interconnectedness of different themes and the overlaps between theory, methods, and methodology.

Methods

It is difficult to parse out the "research" component of this project. It has been hard to separate what was an academic exercise and scholarly exploration from what was my job as program administrator and what was a part of my "regular" life and work in the county. Since I began working in the community and with the Grow Appalachia program in 2013, I have used participant observation as my primary research method. As a

participant observer, instigator, and administrator of the Grow Appalachia program I watched as the processes I set into place began to take off. Programs, initiatives, and events developed that I hadn't dreamed of through collaborations with different people in the county. Through this experience I have taken field notes, engaged in informal conversations with people, asked questions, worked with various stakeholders, and put forward my own ideas and initiatives. I have tried to make sense of the social landscape—the alliances, the power structures, the discourses, and silences. I've also tried to make sense of the agricultural landscape—the major entities, opportunities, foodways, and embodied knowledges. Living and working in the community, I have formed close relationships with people and have had incredibly insightful conversations in between bean rows and or sitting on the back of a truck at the farmers' market. I have been able to continue to develop my connection with the Lend-A-Hand Center and spend additional time with Irma and learn from her expertise in agriculture and community development.

The other main component of my research has been conducting oral history interviews. As I began the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia program everyone I talked to said something along the lines of, "My family used to garden and put up food. It's really important. People need to go back to that." There seemed to be a disconnect between past agricultural practices and current rural life as a gap generation developed in which people no longer gardened and preserved their own food, opting rather to buy things at the grocery store or go to fast food restaurants. Yet some people still carried on their family traditions and grew their own food in spite of changing societal norms. I realized how much great agricultural knowledge was still in the community and that there

were plenty of stories to be told about agriculture on Stinking Creek. I also found that almost everyone had a story about the Lend-A-Hand Center and the impact Peggy and Irma have had on the community.

The "Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project"[13] was a central component of my research from the beginning. I knew I wanted to include an oral history project to accompany and contextualize the participatory gardening project. I wanted to learn more about people's connection with agriculture and people's experiences with the Lend-A-Hand Center. In the summer of 2014 I developed my project, creating interview questions and completing the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process. Interview questions are available in the Appendix. One of my many struggles during the first summer of the program was realizing the IRB process and paperwork is not exactly made for participatory community-based projects. I tried to be as broad as possible in describing my work with the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia program, participant observation, and the oral history interviews.

After completing the necessary paperwork, I began recruiting people for oral history interviews. Using snowball sampling I interviewed participants in the gardening program and other community members. Besides general life history questions, I asked about perceptions of Stinking Creek, gardening and agricultural practices, involvement with the Lend-A-Hand Center, and the future of the community. For those involved with Grow Appalachia, I also asked about their experiences with the program and ideas for improvement. These interviews provided a platform to share people's stories showing what it's like on the Creek and giving insights into changing rural agricultural practices in

[13] The "Stinking Creek Stories" oral history collection is available through the University of Kentucky Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7gxd0qvb04.

central Appalachia. Motivated by a feminist interest in how gender operates in rural communities, I sought to interview an equal number of men and women and explored gendered questions of family life and agriculture on the Creek.

I conducted over two dozen interviews with Grow Appalachia participants and other community members. Participants were eager to share their experiences and point me towards others to interview. I began to see patterns and develop themes through the stories, getting a better understanding of the community and rural agricultural systems and knowledges. Oral history proved to be a valuable medium for exploring questions of representation, allowing direct representation of participants stories as well as a body of "data" for interpretation. Working with the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky, I developed the online collection to house the interviews, and began indexing and transcribing. The interviews are available directly, allowing researchers and community members the chance to hear interviewees' voices and first person narratives with limited interpretation.[14] I wanted to record and disseminate people's own stories as they told them unlike John Fetterman's account which was fully filtered through his experience, understanding, and remembrances. In analyzing and reproducing the oral histories in research products, I endeavored to take care in interpreting narratives and involved the interviewees in the shaping of the narrative and gained their final approval on any finished products.

[14] Even though oral history projects present direct narratives, they are still subjective articulations of reality. A large body of literature has developed examining the craft of oral history. See Ritchie (2015), Frisch (1990), Perks and Thomson (1998), and Thompson and Bornat (2017) for discussions of "truth," accuracy, meaning construction, interpretation, authority, and voice in oral history.

Methodology: Feminist Research & PAR

From a methodological standpoint, I wanted my project to be grounded in principles of feminist research. Based in an understanding of all knowledge as partial and situated, I wanted to highlight marginalized voices and work with the community (Harris 2001). Rather than seeking an objective "truth" or studying on the community, I wanted to engage with people and learn together. Feminist research is highly concerned with issues of standpoint, power, reflexivity, and accountability which I continued to come back to throughout my work (Maguire 1987; Craven and Davis 2013; Hesse-Biber 2007; Hesse-Biber and Yaiser 2004; Reinharz and Davidman 1992; Cancian 1992; Fonow and Cook 1991, 2005).

Based in feminist standpoint theories that place value on subjugated knowledge and focus on the lived experiences of people and communities (Naples 2000), my project sought to bring to the surface stories that had previously been overlooked. I wanted to understand women's experiences and thought it was important to view the Stinking Creek community and the Lend-A-Hand Center through the lens of gender. Scholars have highlighted the lack of critical attention to gender in the region (Maggard 1986, 1994; Smith 1998; Beaver 1999; Smith 1999; Anglin 2000), as a growing body of literature has developed taking a more nuanced approach to women's issues in Appalachia (Engelhardt 2005; Rice and Tedesco 2015; Tallichet 2006) and in rural areas in general (Sachs 1996; Pini, Brandth, and Little 2015; Bock and Shortall 2006). Fetterman's (1967) depiction presented a problematic portrayal of women and gender relations in the community. I endeavored to seek out women's narratives, highlighting women's voices in relation to agriculture, economic production, and rural life, taking a more nuanced approach to how gender operates on the Creek. Building on previous examinations of the Lend-A-Hand

Center (Engle 2013), I wanted to understand more about how gender affected perceptions of the work of Irma Gall and Peggy Kemner. As an organization led by women with many programs that served women, including reproductive healthcare services, the Center's history presents an interesting case study in gendered rural community service provision.

Grounded in a feminist concern for social justice, I wanted to work on a project that would actually have a measurable and (hopefully) positive impact on the community and the county. I wanted to experiment with Participatory Action Research (PAR) through my project on the Creek. PAR is an approach to research that involves working with people and communities on projects for social change (McIntyre 2008; Costello 2003; Gatenby and Humphries 2000; Reason and Bradbury 2001; Maguire 1987; Greenwood and Levin 2007). PAR has a rich history within Appalachian Studies (Keefe 2009; Appalachian Land Ownership Task Force 1983; Nesbitt 2000; Piser 2016; McSpirit, Faltraco, and Bailey 2012; Hinsdale, Lewis, and Waller 1995; Gaventa, Smith, and Willingham 1990; Fisher and Smith 2012). Studies considered to be PAR incorporate varying levels of participation by community members, sometimes referred to as co-researchers or collaborators as opposed to traditional research designs that would identify "informants" or "research subjects." McIntyre (2008, ix) outlines three characteristics of PAR: "the active participation of researchers and participants in the co-construction of knowledge; the promotion of self- and critical awareness that leads to individual, collective, and/or social change; and the building of alliances between researchers and participants in the planning, implementation, and dissemination of the research process."

In establishing the gardening program I hoped to construct a collaborative project and allow participants to decide the direction of the program.

The implementation of a model PAR project proved much more difficult than I thought. My work in many ways fell short of my participatory aims. I had hoped that participants in the garden program would take a more active role in the direction, programming, and decision making throughout the process. Although we did learn together, share stories, and undertake projects together, I often took a more managerial or supervisory role rather than a collaborator role. A fully participatory project would have fully integrated participant participation from the outset, envisioning the program, setting goals, identifying research questions, creating initiatives, and delegating responsibilities. The demands of implementing programs, getting beans planted, sending in reports to Grow Appalachia headquarters, and juggling my different roles meant that I was not able to take a deliberate, planned, and organized approach to the management of the program and the "research" component. Although in some ways the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program may be considered PAR—through the operation of the Dewitt Community Garden, the establishment of the Barbourville Community Garden, events organized and orchestrated by the participants like the sorghum cookoff, and the work that went into implementing workshops—in many ways it was more like traditional "research."

I worked with many different groups through the project: the garden program participants on the Creek, gardeners at the community garden in Barbourville, teachers and students at Dewitt Elementary, teachers and students at Knox Central High School, program interns and staff, Knox County Cooperative Extension office staff, Grow

Appalachia staff and other site coordinators, Lend-A-Hand staff, and the Knox County Farmers' Market board. Each of these groups had different goals, priorities, skill sets, and levels of success. My work with the Knox County Farmers' Market involved collaborating, planning, and implementing different initiatives with fellow board members. The market seemed to develop organically through the cooperation of several different stakeholders. The Knox County Farmers' Market perhaps better illustrates PAR than the overall garden program. The process of coming together with an idea, following through and creating a market, creating a formal organization, and keeping the organization going was a collaborative effort. We set goals and delegated responsibilities. Although we did not conceptualize our work as "research," the board shared ideas, worked through problems together, and learned together. The strategic planning process through the "Local Foods, Local Places" program and the creation of the action plan was an example of participatory development and government, academic, and community members coming together towards a common goal. Although it had its shortcomings, the process was an instructive experience that produced tangible outcomes for Knox County.

Participatory Action Research, although difficult, presents great potential for communities and researchers to explore avenues for alternative economic development and innovative community agriculture programs. Programs like Grow Appalachia provide incredible possibilities for developing new economic processes, building social capital, sharing knowledge, recording histories, and building synergies. Working through existing nonprofit organizations like the Lend-A-Hand Center enables researchers to better connect with communities and existing initiatives. My experience has shown the importance of engaged social science in rural sociology and "development" work within

the region. Participatory programs like Grow Appalachia that link researchers and communities are an essential part of a multifaceted approach to addressing social issues in post-coal Appalachia.

CHAPTER 1

right down here
as you turn up the hill to go to the farm
when you go down here
and you turn right
see those people
that little house on the left
when you turn right
or no it's on the right
you go down the road
and turn right
and the little house
right there on the right
that used to be a molasses mill

~

I still love the Creek or I'd been like everybody else, I'd left off.

~

The following article was written for a special issue of the *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* focusing on agriculture and rural life in Kentucky. Based on the "Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project" the article shares the narratives of nine individuals from the Stinking Creek watershed and explores and the meanings they give to agriculture, community, and the small nonprofit service organization, the Lend-A-Hand Center. This piece explores representations of people through the stories of oral histories. The stories, experiences, and knowledges of Stinking Creek residents provide

insights into larger changes in agriculture and the political economy of eastern Kentucky. While Kentucky is well known for horses and tobacco, small-scale diversified agricultural and gardening practices in eastern Kentucky have likewise made important contributions to the history and development of the state. Rural communities in eastern Kentucky have employed diverse economic practices and adapted to changing economic and agricultural systems.

Interviews for the Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project were collected over a period of time between 2015 and 2017. These interviews are available online through the University of Kentucky Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky.[15] I made a conscious choice to make as many interviews available as possible at the outset as the point of the entire project was to get these stories to a wider audience. Completing the oral history project was a central goal of my work on the Creek and something I had thought about for years prior to starting this dissertation. The process of planning and conducting the interviews took several years. I visited with people from the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening program and other individuals in the community. At first I was overwhelmed with the amount of information collected from over two dozen interviews with community members. I had so many wonderful stories, connections between the oral histories, and important insights about the community and the Center. An emphasis on agriculture and rural life in Kentucky helped me focus the scope of this article and hone my argument. As I processed and read through the interviews, themes began to arise. I began to see patterns and points of agreement and disagreement emerge.

[15] The "Stinking Creek Stories" oral history collection is available through the University of Kentucky Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7gxd0qvb04.

It was a difficult task to decide which oral histories to use for this article. Decisions were made based on the quality of the interviews and if the material was somewhat representative of stories from other oral histories in the collection. I picked interviews that highlighted each theme best. Choosing how to include certain material was difficult as well. I had to decide what to represent directly, what to paraphrase, and what to leave out completely. Some viewpoints shared were problematic and hurtful and were purposefully edited out, undoubtedly presenting a skewed picture of the community. Assembling and organizing these stores was like piecing together a puzzle, fitting together the different narratives and choosing which stories to use. The different narratives were in conversation with each other. I worked to arrange the stories to build on and complement each other. Re-presenting what people presented to me through oral history was an important responsibility. Those featured in the article were given a chance to review their piece and give feedback and final approval before their parts were finalized. Although using people's direct words, the overall shape and argument of this article is my own. My imprint is evident throughout as my shaping of these stories into a somewhat cohesive narrative reduces the complexity and depth of all the information that I gathered.

What emerged was a collection of profiles highlighting the voices of just a few of the people I have had the pleasure of getting to know on the Creek. I was constrained by length requirements and had hoped to include more people's stories in this iteration. The following themes are explored in the article: community, memory, place attachment, and pride in identity; the meaning and importance of agriculture; changes in agriculture and the community; multiple livelihood strategies, agricultural production outside of

traditional crops and livestock, and the declining role of coal, timber, and tobacco; representation and stereotypes; gender; the War on Poverty; the Lend-A-Hand Center and its impact on the community; and relocalization of food systems and economies. The processes described in residents' narratives provide insights into the role of rural Appalachian communities like Stinking Creek in the global economy and the capitalist and noncapitalist activities that people are involved with every day. The presence of these processes points to the need to change the discourse around agriculture and what constitutes agriculture.

This article and the larger project may be seen as a case study for ways regional scholars can use participatory research and oral history to not only document and preserve agricultural and community traditions, but also actively participate in the construction of different economies and local food systems. Recollections shared by interviewees and as well as current practices pointed to potentials for relocalization of food systems and economies, cultivation of diverse economic processes, and creative imaginings for the future of the community. The Stinking Creek Stories project is an example of a different way of representing community narratives, showing the importance of sharing stories like those on Stinking Creek, building relationships with interviewees, and preserving and utilizing community institutions like the Lend-A-Hand Center in rural areas.

Stinking Creek Stories: Memory, Agriculture, and Community in Rural Southeastern Kentucky Article Abstract

Based on the "Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project," this article profiles residents of the Stinking Creek community of Knox County, Kentucky, and shares some of their stories and the meanings they give to agriculture, community, and the small nonprofit service organization, the Lend-A-Hand Center. The stories, experiences, and knowledges of Stinking Creek residents provide insights into larger changes in agriculture and the political economy of eastern Kentucky. While Kentucky is well known for horses and tobacco, small-scale diversified agricultural and gardening practices in eastern Kentucky have likewise made important contributions to the history and development of the state. Rural communities in eastern Kentucky have employed diverse economic practices and adapted to changing economic and agricultural systems. These insights shared by Stinking Creek residents reveal agricultural traditions of the past and provide local possibilities for the future including relocalization of food systems and rural economies in post-coal central Appalachia. Part of a larger participatory gardening project through the Lend-A-Hand Center, this oral history project argues for the importance of community institutions in rural areas and shows how oral history and participatory research can be useful approaches for representing different community narratives, building relationships, and envisioning rural futures.

Article 1: Stinking Creek Stories: Memory, Agriculture, and Community in Rural Southeastern Kentucky

"What does agriculture mean to you?"

A hot July day was winding down on Coles Branch in Knox County, Kentucky.[16] Conrad Smith, a bachelor in his middle-60s with a small stature and toothy smile sat on an old lawn chair in the middle of his extensive vegetable garden. He seemed at ease in his work clothes with his scruffy face partially hidden by his ball cap and large sunglasses. I sat on a nearby five-gallon bucket used for watering. We had already toured his plot as he eagerly showed his garlic, beans, squash, cucumber, peppers, eggplant, tomatoes, and cabbage. We chatted about the weather, bugs, and people we knew as we wound through the rows and half rows scattered with hoses, mulch, and wire cages. The sun was slowly setting over the large sunflowers that rimmed the garden. The buzzing of the bees in the tops of the sweet corn began to subside. The humidity hung thick in the air while the sound of summer night bugs emerged. I propped the recorder on the tiller sitting between us—it teetered on the only surface available. Conrad told me he fashioned it out of two different tillers from the 1980s. We continued our conversations, now with the red light of the recorder on.

I met Conrad in 2014 when he became a participant in the Grow Appalachia Gardening Program I coordinated through the Lend-A-Hand Center, a nonprofit

[16] Conrad's interview, as well as the Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project, are available through the University of Kentucky Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History (hereinafter UK Nunn Center) at https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7gxd0qvb04 (accessed April 3, 2018). This research has been supported by University of Kentucky Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, the Kentucky Oral History Commission, the University of Kentucky Appalachian Center, University of Kentucky Department of Sociology, and the University of Kentucky Graduate School. The author would like to thank all of the interviewees for sharing their stories.

organization in Walker, Kentucky, that has served the community since 1958. I had enjoyed getting to know him and learning from him. As we began, I asked him about growing up, what his family was like, the different jobs he had over the years, and what it was like to live in the area of Knox County, Kentucky, known as Stinking Creek. He told me of his experiences with the Lend-A-Hand Center and its founders Irma Gall and Peggy Kemner and recalled the community center program through the Community Action Agency in Knox County during the War on Poverty.[17] Conrad reminisced about cutting hay, killing hogs, canning vegetables, plowing with mules, selling strawberries, and keeping bees.

About three quarters of the way through the interview I asked, "What does agriculture mean to you?" There was a long pause. The silence hung between us as he picked at the ground with his shovel. He struggled to find the words. Finally, "Well, I'd say it'd be my way of life. Being in this gardening, farming. I growed up with it. That's all I know here. I can't imagine not knowing it. It'd be terrible not to know how to raise something to eat. We've all got to have something to eat so it's simple to me, but I know a lot of people can't do it."[18]

Conrad's thoughtful answer reflected deep emotional ties to place. He explained his family history on Coles Branch and how his father had bought the farm from money made working in the coal mines. He remembered the practices handed down that he has carried on through the years. His pause pointed to the complex meaning of agriculture in

[17] Ronald D. Eller, *Uneven Ground: Appalachia since 1945* (Lexington, Ky, 2008); Thomas Kiffmeyer, *Reformers to Radicals: The Appalachian Volunteers and the War on Poverty* (Lexington, Ky, 2008).
[18] Conrad Smith, interview by the author, Knox County, Kentucky, June 24, 2015, 2016oh083_scs001, Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project, UK Nunn Center, available online at:, https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7c599z3277 (accessed April 3, 2018).

rural Appalachia in addition to tensions and uncertainties about the future for a way of life that is in many ways evolving.

Through oral history, this account profiles Stinking Creek residents and shares some of their stories and the meanings they give to agriculture, community, and the small, local nonprofit service organization, the Lend-A-Hand Center. The stories, experiences, and knowledge of Stinking Creek residents like Conrad provide insights into larger changes in agriculture and the political economy of eastern Kentucky. While Kentucky is well known for horses and tobacco, small-scale diversified agricultural and gardening practices in eastern Kentucky have likewise made important contributions to the history and development of the state.[19] Rural communities in eastern Kentucky have employed diverse economic practices and adapted to changing economic and agricultural systems. These insights shared by Stinking Creek residents reveal agricultural traditions of the past and provide local possibilities for the future including relocalization of food systems and rural economies in post-coal central Appalachia.[20] The experiences of

[19] Organizations like Community Farm Alliance have been doing important work building capacity and sharing stories about eastern Kentucky agriculture. See Mae Humiston, "2014-2015 Breaking Beans: The Appalachian Food Story Project Final Report" (Community Farm Alliance, September 10, 2015), available online at http://cfaky.org/test/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Breaking-Beans-Report-FINAL-with-stories.pdf. For an interesting overview of the local foods landscape of southeastern Kentucky see Jairus Rossi, A. Lee Meyer, and Jann Knappage, "Beyond Farmers Markets Local Food Opportunities in Southeastern Kentucky's Retail and Institutional Industry" (Community Farm Alliance, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, Community & Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky, March 2018), available online at http://cedik.ca.uky.edu/files/beyond_farmers_markets_final.pdf.

[20] Using the concept of relocalization rather than localization indicates that economies were much more localized and area specific in the past. Although the trade of goods, raw materials, and people crossed the globe since colonization of the region, localized economies largely organized economic and social relations for decades. Agricultural products, livestock, timber products, building materials, textiles, spirits, salts, medicinals, and other essential items were primarily procured locally. Families were able to fulfill most of their needs from a relatively small radius from their homes. Many families across the region, especially in rural areas, locally produced or procured much of their food well into the 20th century and many families and communities continue to do so. For recent examinations of local foods and local food systems development in the region see Jean Haskell, "Assessing the Landscape of Local Food in Appalachia," May 1, 2012, http://www.arc.gov/assets/research_reports/AssessingLandscapeofLocalFoodinAppalachia.pdf; Charlie Jackson, Allison Perrett, and Katie Descieux, "Agriculture and Food Systems Trends in the

farmers and gardeners and impact of small-scale subsistence and supplemental production in places like eastern Kentucky are often left out of metrocentric narratives of the state. Oral history and participatory research are invaluable methods for uncovering these silenced narratives, historical complexities, representational strategies, family memories, and outlooks for the future.[21]

Stinking Creek & The Lend-A-Hand Center

Conrad was the first person I interviewed for what became the "Stinking Creek Stories" oral history project now housed at the University of Kentucky Nunn Center. Stinking Creek is a rural area spanning the northeastern part of Knox County. It is located in the Cumberland Plateau sub-region of the Appalachian Mountains in southeastern Kentucky and has an interesting pioneer history due to its proximity to the Cumberland Gap. Stinking Creek consists of a looping road (locally known as "the loop") and a road that winds through the mountains towards the northeast, making up areas colloquially known as Road Fork, Middle Fork, and Big Creek. The area is made up of smaller communities including Walker, Messer, Dewitt, Mills, and Salt Gum, places once defined

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Appalachian Region: 2007-2012," Appalachian Regional Commission, (ASAP) Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, July 2015, http://www.arc.gov/assets/research_reports/FoodSystemTrendsReport2015FINAL3.pdf; Joseph "Jody" Holland, "Examining Capacity within the Local Food Economy: Lessons Learned from the Appalachian Region in Mississippi," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 22, no. 1 (2016): 31–44; Kathryn Webb Farley and Carrie Blanchard Bush, "Using Relationships as Resources in Social Impact Investing: Examining a Local Food Movement in Appalachia," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 22, no. 2 (2016): 224–44; Steven C. Deller, David Lamie, and Maureen Stickel, "Local Foods Systems and Community Economic Development," *Community Development* 48, no. 5 (October 20, 2017): 612–38.

[21] This account is not meant to be a comprehensive nor definitive study, but rather a starting point for examining emergent themes and considering larger issues relevant to Stinking Creek, central Appalachia, and beyond.

by post offices and one-room schools. Stinking Creek still boasts a local elementary school that has been spared from consolidation for now.

The county seat of Barbourville is a short drive west of where the main road into the community, 223, meets the highway, 25E. The county's history has been chronicled by a few local historians but largely overlooked in academic considerations of the state and region.[22] Stinking Creek, like Knox County as a whole, is overwhelmingly white.[23] The county is considered economically distressed by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and has a poverty rate of 39.2% and a population of 31,687.[24] Like other rural communities, jobs are found in the service sector (fast food and retail), the public sector (school system and local government), remaining manufacturing operations, healthcare, and the local private college.[25] Knox County has a long history of logging and

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[22] Elmer H. Decker, "History of Knox County and Southeastern Kentucky" nd; Charles Reed Mitchell, William Sherman Oxendine, and Ron Rosenstiel, *History and Families, Knox County, Kentucky, 1799-1994* (Paducah, Ky., 1994); King Solomon Warren, *A History of Knox County, Kentucky* (Barbourville, Ky., 1976). There are also many records and resources available at the Knox Historical Museum in Barbourville (https://www.knoxhistoricalmuseum.org/) including the organization's newsletter "The Knox Countian." Situated on colonized land nearby the route of the Warrior's Path (Athiamiowee) trail used by the Shawnee and Cherokee, relatively little information is known about the area's Native American history. See Mitchell, William Sherman Oxendine, and Rosenstiel, *History and Families, Knox County, Kentucky, 1799-1994*. See John Alexander Williams, *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2002) for a regional overview of Native American and settlement history. Little scholarship examines slavery in the area, while the town of Corbin, partially located in Knox County, is known for its forced removal of African Americans in 1919. See Kristy Owens Griggs, "The Removal of Blacks from Corbin in 1919: Memory, Perspective, and the Legacy of Racism," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 100, no. 3 (2002): 293–310; Elliot Jaspin, *Buried in the Bitter Waters: The Hidden History of Racial Cleansing in America* (New York: 2007); James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: 2005). For slavery and industrialization in the region see Mary Beth Pudup, Dwight B. Billings, and Altina L. Waller, eds., *Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1995); Wilma A. Dunaway, *Slavery in the American Mountain South* (Cambridge, UK, 2003); John C. Inscoe, *Mountain Masters: Slavery Sectional Crisis Western North Carolina* (Knoxville, 1989).

[23] Demographic data available at https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/knoxcountykentucky/PST045216.

[24] County Economic Status based on 2018 ARC data, available online at https://www.arc.gov/research/DataReports.asp. Poverty rate estimate based on 2016 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates and population estimate based on 2016 U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program (PEP) both available at https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/knoxcountykentucky/PST045216./.

[25] See the Data USA County profile at https://datausa.io/profile/geo/knox-county-ky/, Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky Knox County Economic Profile available at

coal mining but the county has been impacted by the long and steady decline of the coal industry over the past half a century. [26] Several factory closures in recent decades have also meant a decline in manufacturing jobs in the area. Many people depend on government assistance programs with 35.1% of the county participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps.[27] It is important to note that these official estimates and indicators from the ARC and Census Bureau reflect only the formal economy and do not take into account informal economic practices, cash economies, underground economies, informal labor arrangements, and household production.

Although the area boasts beautiful mountains and plentiful creeks running across bottomland, Stinking Creek is not without its share of cultural baggage, stereotypes, and social problems. Stinking Creek's memorable name, supposedly attributed to animal carcasses being thrown into the Creek during pioneer times makes for interesting conversations when describing the community. The area was made famous by Louisville journalist John Fetterman's 1967 book, *Stinking Creek*.[28] The War-on-Poverty era exposé

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https://cedik.ca.uky.edu/sites/cedik.ca.uky.edu/files/knox_epu.pdf, and 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates available at https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml.

[26] See the Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky Knox County Agriculture and Food Profile available at https://cedik.ca.uky.edu/sites/cedik.ca.uky.edu/files/knox_agfood14.pdf and the 2012 US Census of Agriculture County Profile available at https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Kentucky/cp21121.pdf. According to the Kentucky Quarterly Coal Report from the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet, in the second quarter of 2018 Knox County only had 57 mining related jobs. See http://energy.ky.gov/Coal%20Facts%20Library/Kentucky%20Quarterly%20Coal%20Report%20(Q2-2018).pdf.

[27] 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates available at https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml.

[28] John Fetterman, *Stinking Creek* (New York, 1967). Fetterman's book has been widely referenced within Appalachian studies literature. It may be considered part of a cohort of community studies that emerged in the region in the 1960s and 1970s and part of the journalistic rediscovery of Appalachia during the War on Poverty. The book has received mixed reviews over the years. It received positive reviews from Wendell Berry who praised the book's sincere portrayals of people and lack of preconceived notions and Tom Gish who commended Fetterman's honesty but defended outside journalists coming into the region which Fetterman ironically disparaged. See Wendell Berry, "Fetterman's Creek," *Appalachian Review* Spring

presented stereotypical portrayals of "hillbillies" and a bleak portrait of the community. [29] Fetterman set out to "write a book and try to reveal—if only for self-edification—something of what the hillbilly is really like."[30] Fetterman talked with people in the community, gathering their stories, asking questions, and observing ways of life on the Creek. He profiled individuals and recounted conversations and events including a church service, funeral, baptism, horse trade, and a day at the one-room Shady School. *Stinking Creek* explored poverty, welfare programs, outmigration, religion, lack of jobs, coal, environmental degradation, education, culture, the War on Poverty, and the future of the community.

Fetterman's account proved problematic to say the least. His depiction of the residents of Stinking Creek focused on individuals' lives, giving vignettes of the people of the area in colorful language often with an overly dramatic, judgmental tone. The work is flawed in many was as he tried to connect people's stories and lived experiences to larger social forces with little critical analysis or academic context. Throughout the book

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(1968): 37–40; Tom Gish, review of *Review of Stinking Creek*, by John Fetterman, *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 66, no. 1 (1968): 91–93. Others were more critical: "While his intentions were to tell us who the hillbilly is and to offer us a chance to listen to him, Fetterman has done neither. The book is just another sketchy, disappointing title on a topic that has become fashionable to write about." Nancy J. Buckeye, "Stinking Creek," *Journal of Popular Culture* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1972): 449. The book was heavily referenced by Thomas Plaut in the 1977 *Appalachian Journal* issue "A Guide to Appalachian Studies" and suggested as material for introductory Appalachian studies courses. See Thomas Plaut, "Anthropology and Appalachian Studies: Implications for the Discipline and Consequent Course Design," *Appalachian Journal* 5, no. 1 (1977): 31–39.

[29] Media portrayals of central Appalachia often present one-sided views of communities highlighting the lack of economic opportunity, declining community prospects, and other social issues. Few popular portrayals present stories from a variety of angles or include the voices of actual residents. For discussions of the "hillbilly" image see Anthony Harkins, *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon* (New York, 2004); J. W. Williamson, *Hillbillyland: What the Movies Did to the Mountains and What the Mountains Did to the Movies* (Chapel Hill, N.C.,, 1995); Anthony Harkins, "Colonels, Hillbillies, and Fightin': Twentieth-Century Kentucky in the National Imagination," *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 113, no. 2–3 (2015): 421–52. See also Dwight Billings, Gurney Norman, and Katherine Ledford, eds., *Back Talk from Appalachia: Confronting Stereotypes* (Lexington, KY, 1999).

[30] *Stinking Creek*, 18. Fetterman was looking for a story and decided on visiting the community after hearing about it at the courthouse dedication in Barbourville, seemingly by chance.

Fetterman referred to the "the hillbilly," always in the masculine, repeatedly bringing up British descent and the isolated past. The account is full of sweeping generalizations and references to the monolithic white Anglo-Saxon protestant image. Fetterman's descriptions centered on men, talking mostly to men, and portraying women in a simplistic, passive way. The lingering negative image for both residents and nonresidents is ever present in conversations of the area and its history.[31]

Fetterman's book included a chapter on the Lend-A-Hand Center and other media outlets have taken different angles to represent the work of the organization and the lives of people in the community.[32] Fetterman recounted the history of the organization, described the Center's programs, and incorporated quotes from "the nurses." This little-known nonprofit service organization was founded in 1958 by farmer and teacher Irma Gall and nurse midwife Peggy Kemner. The Center has worked diligently for decades to fulfill its mission to "lend a hand" in the Stinking Creek watershed. Providing a wide range of services including nurse midwifery, home healthcare, 4-H, children's programs, volunteer programs, Sunday School, and agricultural programs, the Center has a rich history of service and collaboration.[33]

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[31] Several aspects of the book seem to be particularly off putting including crude language, somewhat graphic descriptions of animal husbandry, focus on particular exceptional individuals rather than others in the community, photos of unkempt children, excessive dialect, and hints at deviant sexuality and reproduction. For a 2008 follow up on Lend-A-Hand and the community by Mindy Fetterman, John's daughter see Mindy Fetterman, "The Nurses' Birthed a Better Place at Stinking Creek," *USA Today*, December 26, 2008. See also the accompanying *USA Today* video "Return to Stinking Creek: A personal war on poverty" available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25CKvSVZlwM.

[32] For a discussion of media sources that have profiled the Lend-A-Hand Center and wider community see Kathryn S. Engle, "To Lend A Hand: A History and Analysis of the Lend-A-Hand Center in the Stinking Creek Community of Knox County, Kentucky" (Center for Appalachian Studies, Appalachian State University, 2013). Available online at https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/asu/listing.aspx?id=15182.

[33] I volunteered at the Center for several years after college and wrote my master's thesis on the history of the organization, interviewing the founders/directors and chronicling their lives and impact on the community. A full history of the organization is beyond the scope of this article. For a history of the organization see Engle.

In the fall of 2013, the Center became a partner site for Grow Appalachia, a program administered by Berea College that partners with nonprofit organizations throughout the region to promote food security and access to healthy, local food. Utilizing organic gardening techniques, Grow Appalachia's mission is "Helping as many Appalachian families grow as much of their own food as possible."[34] For three years I served as the site coordinator for the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program planning and implementing the project from the ground up. The program was designed to break down barriers to gardening and build community, addressing food security issues in Knox County through providing resources and technical assistance for home and community gardens.[35] Through my work with gardeners and farmers I became interested in stories and local agricultural histories and legacies. This oral history project became an outgrowth of my work as program coordinator. I wanted to understand people's relationships with agriculture, the land, and the Lend-A-Hand Center. I began collecting narratives and interrogating the past while planting in the dirt and looking toward the future.

[34] For more information see https://growappalachia.berea.edu/about/. Grow Appalachia is primarily funded through entrepreneur John Paul Dejoria's JP's Peace, Love & Happiness Foundation. See https://www.peacelovehappinessfoundation.org/.

[35] Coming into the program I knew very little about agriculture, only having learned from summers working with Irma and with my family's gardens. I have learned from experience and from participants in the community. I worked with families in the Stinking Creek area, community gardeners, program interns, and partner organizations in the county to expand agricultural possibilities and promote agricultural education. We hosted workshops, created community gardens at local schools including Dewitt Elementary on the Creek, and established the Knox County Farmers' Market. I currently serve on the board of the market and continue working in the county.

Sowing Connections & Gathering Narratives–Methodology

Between 2015 and 2017 I conducted over two dozen oral history interviews with Stinking Creek residents, former residents, or those with ties to the area. Working in the community for several years and making connections through my involvement with Grow Appalachia provided a pool of potential interviewees. I used snowball sampling to select interviewees and sought a mix of Grow Appalachia program participants and other residents. Using semi-structured interviewing, I developed an interview guide to steer the conversations. Interviewees were asked a range of questions relating to their life histories, experiences growing up, knowledge of agriculture and gardening, experiences with the Lend-A-Hand Center, perceptions of the Stinking Creek area, and what they saw as the future of agriculture and the community. When reviewing the interviews I looked for trends as many similar narratives emerged about rural life in the Stinking Creek watershed echoing aspects of other studies of rural Appalachian communities.[36]

I spoke with predominately older people and all of the interviewees were white. I did not directly delve into questions relating to race or whiteness, although race came up in latent ways. Instances of racist sentiment including disparaging attitudes towards Latinos or nativist ideology often took me by surprise. In the midst of a divisive political climate with dog-whistle politics and overt racist sentiment coming to the fore, I saw little concern from the people I worked with about racism, racial violence, or white

[36] Patricia D. Beaver, Sandra L. Ballard, and Brittany R. Hicks, eds., *Voices from the Headwaters: Stories from Meat Camp, Tamarack (Pottertown) & Sutherland, North Carolina* (Boone, N.C., 2013); Patricia D. Beaver, *Rural Community in the Appalachian South* (Prospect Heights, Ill., 1986); Mary B. LaLone, "Economic Survival Strategies in Appalachia's Coal Camps," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 2, no. 1 (1996): 53–68; Elvin Hatch, "Delivering the Goods: Cash, Subsistence Farms, and Identity in a Blue Ridge County in the 1930s," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 9, no. 1 (2003): 6–48; Elvin Hatch, "Modernity With a Mountain Inflection," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 14, no. 1/2 (2008): 145–59; James S. Brown, *Beech Creek: A Study of A Kentucky Mountain Neighborhood* (Berea, Ky., 1988).

supremacy. The springing up of confederate flags in the community in the wake of the Charleston church shooting in June 2015 and ensuing debate about confederate paraphernalia evidenced the level of comfort many in the community and county had with white supremacy, a mythical past, and assertions of hegemonic whiteness. The overwhelming support for the Trump campaign in Knox County and buy in to the "Make America Great Again" slogan further showed the level to which people in the area clung to whiteness. Reactionary, defensive reactions to national conversations about race showed how many were unable to come to grips with the realities of white supremacy, structural racism, and racial violence. Through this process and talking to people in the community I saw how white supremacy operated as a system and how whiteness is the presumed default, seldom critically considered by people in southeastern Kentucky. In the area within the context of agriculture, farming is still seen through the image of the hegemonic white male farmer. Better attention could have been paid to racial issues and how race intersects with land tenure, class, agricultural possibility, and community perceptions.[37]

I interviewed a roughly equal amount of women and men and some interviews were conducted with couples or friends. Most conversations took place in people's homes, porches, or yards and many interviews were conducted with other people in the

[37] See the special issue of *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, "Whiteness and Racialization in Appalachia," Vol. 10, No. 1/2, Spring/Fall 2004 for discussions of whiteness in the region. On African Americans and agriculture in the south see Debra A. Reid and Evan P. Bennett, eds., *Beyond Forty Acres and a Mule: African American Landowning Families since Reconstruction* (Gainesville, 2012); Katrina Quisumbing King et al., "Black Agrarianism: The Significance of African American Landownership in the Rural South," *Rural Sociology*, forthcoming, https://doi.org/10.1111/ruso.12208; Willie Jamaal Wright, "'Upside down from the Word Go' : Kentucky's Black Farmers Speak out on the Issue of Land Loss" (University of Louisville, Department of Pan-African Studies, 2010), https://doi.org/10.18297/etd/1595; Pete Daniel, *Dispossession: Discrimination against African American Farmers in the Age of Civil Rights* (Chapel Hill, 2013). See also the Family Farms of Kentucky: African American Farmers Oral History Project available through the Nunn Center at https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt74tm71z491.

room, often family members, children, or unexpected guests. The interviews conducted were not meant to be a representative sample of the community nor are the narratives meant to be wholly generalizable, but rather serve as a starting point for gathering community stories.

Grounded in feminist methodologies and part of a larger project that may be considered a type of Participatory Action Research (PAR), the "Stinking Creek Stories" collection seeks to present and make available to the public first-person narratives from the community.[38] The interviews are available online and housed in the University of Kentucky Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History and indexed using the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS) application.[39] Copies of interviews and individual profiles were also shared with and approved by interviewees as questions of representation are vital concerns for oral historians and social scientists. Oral historians and public historians continue to grapple with questions of voice, power, memory, collaboration, and authority.[40]

Considering these issues, several authors have written about feminist contributions to methodological and epistemological groundings of rural and agricultural

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[38] For introductions to PAR see Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury, eds., *Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2001); Alice McIntyre, *Participatory Action Research* (Los Angeles, 2008).

[39] The OHMS system is a web-based oral history application that allows oral history interviews to be indexed and shared online. Through OHMS, oral history audio and video files can be synchronized with transcripts, indexed, and supplemented with additional metadata. Researchers can use the application to organize and process interviews while users can easily access and navigate oral histories through the OHMS interface. More detailed transcriptions were created and shared with the interviewees. This project also piloted the Exactly file transfer system through the Nunn Center. The Exactly system allows interviewers to package and send oral history files directly to repositories in accordance with archival best practices and supplemented with metadata.

[40] Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany, 1990); Paul Thompson and Joanna Bornat, 4th edition, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (New York, 2017); David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (Amherst, 2001); Patricia Leavy, *Oral History: Understanding Qualitative Research* (Oxford, 2011); Alistair Thomson, "Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History," *The Oral History Review* 34, no. 1 (2007): 49–70.

sociology including the uses of local knowledge, reflexivity, and feminist standpoint.[41] A growing body of literature examines feminist oral history.[42] As feminist research, this project seeks to value lived experiences and marginalized voices, recognizing the salience of gender and different forms of inequality in research and everyday life. Ethical issues and power dynamics have been important considerations over the past several years as I have talked with people with different literacy rates, levels of education, gender identities, occupations, class positions, and political affiliations.[43]

As someone with family ties to the county and as a friend to many of the interviewees, I was able to talk with people on a familiar basis as individuals opened up about their lives and community. Knowing people on a personal level and participant observation in agricultural activities in the community—actually working with people in their gardens—helped me better frame questions, understand contexts, and look for

[41] Rosalind P. Harris, "Hidden Voices: Linking Research, Practice and Policy to the Everyday Realities of Rural People," *Southern Rural Sociology* 17, no. 1 (2001): 1–11; Rosalind P. Harris et al., "Empowering Rural Sociology: Exploring and Linking Alternative Paradigms in Theory and Methodology," *Rural Sociology* 60, no. 4 (Winter 1995): 585–606; Loka Ashwood et al., "Linked and Situated: Grounded Knowledge," *Rural Sociology* 79, no. 4 (December 1, 2014): 427–52; Shelley Feldman and Rick Welsh, "Feminist Knowledge Claims, Local Knowledge, and Gender Divisions of Agricultural Labor: Constructing a Successor Science," *Rural Sociology* 60, no. 1 (March 1, 1995): 23–43; Nancy A. Naples, "Standpoint Epistemology and the Use of Self-Reflection in Feminist Ethnography: Lessons for Rural Sociology," *Rural Sociology; Columbia* 65, no. 2 (June 2000): 194–214; Suzanne E. Tallichet, *Daughters of the Mountain: Women Coal Miners in Central Appalachia* (University Park, Penn., 2006); Carolyn E. Sachs, "Going Public: Networking Globally and Locally," *Rural Sociology* 72, no. 1 (March 2007): 2–24.

[42] Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, eds., *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (New York, 1991); Marjorie L. Devault, "Talking and Listening from Women's Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis," *Social Problems* 37, no. 1 (February 1990): 96–116; Sherna Berger Gluck, "Has Feminist Oral History Lost Its Radical/Subversive Edge?," *Oral History* 39, no. 2 (2011): 63–72; Koni Benson and Richa Nagar, "Collaboration as Resistance? Reconsidering the Processes, Products, and Possibilities of Feminist Oral History and Ethnography," *Gender, Place & Culture* 13, no. 5 (October 2006): 581–92.

[43] A full methodological examination is beyond the scope of this article. Unequal power dynamics undoubtedly affected the interviews as I served as the administrator of a program which some interviewees benefitted directly from and was known as a researcher/volunteer/employee aligned with a nonprofit that worked in the community.

points of reference.[44] My participatory work on Stinking Creek has shown the value of input from community members as this oral history project has developed.[45] This approach allowed me unique access to the agricultural history and current social landscape of the community.[46] This project may be seen as a case study for ways regional scholars can use participatory research and oral history to not only document and preserve agricultural and community traditions, but also actively participate in the construction of different economies and local food systems.

Getting to know a range of community members has been a wonderful and fulfilling experience. Residents have graciously opened their homes and given glimpses into their lives and histories. Working with people in their gardens through participatory

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[44] As I interviewed I listened for relationships among people as well as similarities and differences in narratives. As my experience with Conrad in his garden shows and as many oral historians know, often the setting and the story of how the interview took place is as informative as the interview itself.

[45] For examples of participatory projects in Appalachia see Susan Keefe, ed., *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability* (Knoxville, TN, 2009); Linda Spatig and Layne Amerikaner, *Thinking Outside the Girl Box: Teaming Up with Resilient Youth in Appalachia* (Athens, OH, 2014); Mary Ann Hinsdale, Helen M. Lewis, and S. Maxine Waller, *It Comes From The People: Community Development and Local Theology* (Philadelphia, 1995); Helen M. Lewis, "Community History," *OAH Magazine of History* 11, no. 3 (1997): 20–22; J. Todd Nesbitt, "Ethnography and Participatory Rural Appraisal in Central Appalachia," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 6, no. 1/2 (2000): 49–70; Zada Komara and Shane Barton, "Materializing Appalachian Kentucky Coal Towns: Public Archaeology as Applied Anthropology in the Coal Camp Documentary Project," *Practicing Anthropology* 36, no. 4 (July 1, 2014): 25–30; Karida L. Brown, "On the Participatory Archive," *Southern Cultures* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 113–27; Gabriel A. Piser, "Participation and Transformation in Twenty-First-Century Appalachian Scholarship," in *Appalachia Revisited: New Perspectives on Place, Tradition, and Progress*, ed. William Schumann and Rebecca Atkins Fletcher (Lexington, KY, 2016), 259-274. The work of the Appalachian Land Ownership Task Force has also been widely referenced as an example of a large scale participatory project in the region. See Appalachian Land Ownership Task Force, *Who Owns Appalachia? Landownership and Its Impact* (Lexington, KY, 1983).

[46] Although PAR has many benefits to communities and researchers, it also presents unique challenges. As an approach to research questions and knowledge production, PAR projects incorporate varying levels of participation by community members and use a variety of methods. PAR projects are often explicitly about action for social change, especially through working with marginalized groups. PAR projects can be very different from traditional research design and often take a long time and involve increased layers of authority and accountability. Questions of reliability, validity, expert knowledge, objectivity, and replicability have come from skeptics who doubt the scientific rigor of producing knowledge *with* rather than *about* communities. See Patricia Maguire, *Doing Participatory Research: A Feminist Approach* (Amherst, MA, 1987) for a classic discussion of the assumptions, difficulties, and shortcomings of PAR. See also L. Smith et al., "Between Idealism and Reality: Meeting the Challenges of Participatory Action Research," *Action Research* 8, no. 4 (December 1, 2010): 407–25.

research combined with oral history has provided experiences and angles that would have been unavailable otherwise. Knowing people's families, their daily schedule, their struggles and health issues, the physical layout of their homes and gardens, their physical abilities, their likes and dislikes, and their hopes and aspirations through spending time with them gardening together was invaluable context. People confided in me and told me things on or off the record that they would not have if we did not work together on this gardening project. Interviewees were eager to teach me and glad to share their perspectives with a larger audience.

Stinking Creek Stories

The stories that emerged from talking with Stinking Creek residents presented a wealth of information detailing life experiences and personal narratives that have not been recorded nor available to a wide audience. It is difficult to convey the insights from dozens of hours of interviewing, transcribing, and indexing in a few short pages. Different themes developed throughout the interviews although each interviewee brought a range of experiences and backgrounds to the project. People like Conrad spoke about community and how memory works to create identity, pride, and place attachment.[47] Interviewees discussed the meaning and importance of agriculture detailing how it has impacted their everyday lives. Participants broadly recounted different aspects of changes in the community, agriculture, and local economic systems over the past several decades. They described multiple livelihood strategies, agricultural production outside of traditional crops and livestock, and the declining role of coal, timber, and tobacco. Other

[47] Alessandro Portelli, *They Say in Harlan County: An Oral History* (New York,, 2011); Melissa Walker, *Southern Farmers and Their Stories: Memory and Meaning in Oral History* (Lexington, Ky., 2009).

themes revolved around representation and stereotypes as residents shared perceptions of their community and past portrayals of the Stinking Creek watershed. The significance of gender emerged in various latent and overt ways as both women and men detailed gendered processes and household and public divisions of labor. Interviewees commented on the significance of the Lend-A-Hand Center and its impact on the community and some shared stories about the War on Poverty in Knox County. Lastly, residents discussed diverse rural economic processes: local agricultural systems and institutions, reciprocal labor exchanges, norms of reciprocity, and community trading arrangements.[48] Their recollections and as well as current practices pointed to potentials for relocalization of food systems and economies, cultivation of diverse economic processes, and creative imaginings for the future of the community. What follows is not a comprehensive nor conclusive presentation of all the insights of the oral histories but rather a sampling of stories and profiles of people with valuable stories to share.[49]

Conrad Smith

The conversation I had with Conrad lasted well after the sun set. [50] Conrad was born just feet from where we were sitting. He carefully described growing up on a diversified farming operation: corn, mules, cows, hogs, chickens, hay, gardens, fruit

[48] J. K. Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron, and Stephen Healy, *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities* (Minneapolis, Minn., 2013); Dwight B. Billings, "Rethinking Class beyond Colonialism," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 22, no. 1 (2016): 57–64; Mary B. LaLone, "Running the Family Farm: Accommodation and Adaptation in an Appalachian Region," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 14, no. 1/2 (2008): 62–98; Dwight Billings and Kathleen Blee, "Social Origins of Appalachian Poverty: Markets, Cultural Strategies, and the State in an Appalachian Kentucky Community, 1804–1940," *Rethinking Marxism* 16, no. 1 (January 1, 2004): 19–36.

[49] When appropriate quotes have been edited for clarity and/or brevity.

[50] Conrad Smith, interview by the author, Knox County, Kentucky, June 24, 2015, 2016oh083_scs001, Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project, UK Nunn Center, available online at: https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7c599z3277 (accessed April 3, 2018).

trees, wild berries, and game. He has one of the bigger gardens on the Creek and has continued agricultural practices he grew up with. He explained, "I enjoy it. I guess you call it good therapy. Watching it grow. Planting it, anticipating it, sprouting, and then watch it grow and then get to eat it. That's the best part. Then you know what you put on it, if you put no chemicals on it then it's supposed to be even better for you." Conrad remembered fondly putting up hay and plowing with a mule. He described the processes and commented on the changing agricultural technologies, "I seen it happen. That's the best part for me. I got to see that progression—went from horse-drawn, mule powered, to tractoring."

His father was a coal miner and worked at a sawmill and his mother worked at the dry cleaners, the hospital, and the local community action agency. They worked in Michigan factories for a time during World War II. Conrad's history of migration echoed many stories I heard from Stinking Creek families.[51] With no jobs available locally, Conrad followed two brothers after high school to Ohio to work at a factory that printed and shipped magazines. After about ten years he returned to be with his parents when his mother became ill. He cared for her and then his father and never went back north. He commented, "I just kind of dug me out a spot to live here. Started me a little business, been here ever since." Conrad inherited the family farm and is the only one out of ten children that still lives on the Creek. When asked what Stinking Creek is like, Conrad responded, "It's home. I've been halfway around the world, this is home. This time of

[51] Phillip Obermiller, Thomas E. Wagner, and E. Bruce Tucker, *Appalachian Odyssey: Historical Perspectives on the Great Migration* (Westport, CT, 2000); Chad Berry, *Southern Migrants, Northern Exiles* (Urbana, IL, 2000).

night, before it gets dark, I want to be home. This is it right here. The sun goes down, I want to be home."

Conrad's work history shows how rural people navigate lack of jobs, sense of home, and family obligation. Conrad has a strong sense of place attachment and made a decision to stay on his family's land and take care of his parents.[52] His experience shows how agricultural production is often combined with other forms of employment to make a living on the Creek. Conrad described how over the years he has worked as a caregiver, carpenter, landlord, medical transportation coordinator, and gardener, illuminating the concept of multiple livelihood strategies.[53] From peddling homegrown strawberries as a small child in nearby Pineville, to building a business transporting people to doctors' appointments, to transitioning from carpentry work to owning properties, Conrad has been able to adapt to changing opportunities. Combining gardening and food preservation with public jobs and small business ownership, Conrad sought to "make ends meet."[54] His life and work illustrate the "diverse economy" that continues to thrive on Stinking Creek.[55] Producing primarily for home consumption and selling hardly any produce over

[52] A large body of literature within Appalachian studies looks at the importance of kinship and kinship ties in the region. See Ronald D. Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1982). For an overview of literature on family farm decline and agricultural changes in the twentieth century see Linda Lobao and Katherine Meyer, "The Great Agricultural Transition: Crisis, Change, and Social Consequences of Twentieth Century US Farming," *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (2001): 103–24.

[53] Rhoda H. Halperin, *The Livelihood of Kin: Making Ends Meet "The Kentucky Way"* (Austin, Tex., 1990); Rhoda H. Halperin, "The Kentucky Way: Resistance to Dependency Upon Capitalism in an Appalachian Region," in *Appalachia: Social Context Past and Present*, ed. Phillip J. Obermiller and Michael E. Maloney, 4th ed. (Dubuque, Iowa, 2002), 343–50.

[54] Halperin defines multiple livelihood strategies as "people preforming many kinds of work tasks in a given day, week, season, and lifetime." Halperin, *The Livelihood of Kin*, 19.

[55] The diverse economy framework developed by J.K. Gibson-Graham and colleagues is a way of understanding economic processes highlighting the different types of transactions, labor, and enterprises extant in everyday interactions. The framework examines capitalist, noncapitalist, and alternative capitalist economic forms seeking to identify and encourage nonexploitative class processes that often exist in the "shadow of capitalism." See J.K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* (Minneapolis, Minn., 1996): xxii; J.K. Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics* (Minneapolis, Minn., 2006); Gibson-Graham, Cameron, and Healy, *Take Back the Economy*;

the years, Conrad and his family and many other families on the Creek incorporate gifting and barter systems into their economic practices. Conrad commented, "It's kind of personal, I grow it but I hate to sell it. I'll give it away." After we finished our interview I left that evening with several bulbs of fresh garlic.

Judy Baker

The Bakers were some of the first people I approached in the community when I started the Grow Appalachia program. [56] I wasn't sure what county I'd end up in the first time Irma and I went up the long winding gravel road to the Baker property. Judy Baker, the family matriarch, is an excellent gardener, cook, baker, canner, and a big talker. After touring the family's new high tunnel greenhouse and picking some zucchinis that had escaped the prior day's harvest, Judy and I sat in the shade of a tree to talk about her life growing up in nearby Bell County and her experiences on Stinking Creek.

Judy told me about marrying into the Baker family that has had land on Laurel Branch for generations. She told about how she and her late husband, Charlie, cleared fields, bought cows, and began farming and raising a family on the property in 1971. Judy raised two children and while her husband worked as a strip miner and later a carpenter, she worked at Winn Dixie for about a decade decorating cakes and stocking

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Gerda Roelvink, Kevin St Martin, and J. K. Gibson-Graham, eds., *Making Other Worlds Possible: Performing Diverse Economies* (Minneapolis, MN, 2015); Ann Kingsolver, "When the Smoke Clears: Seeing Beyond Tobacco and Other Extractive Industries in Rural Appalachian Kentucky," in *The Anthropology of Postindustrialism: Ethnographies of Disconnection*, ed. Ismael Vaccaro, Krista Harper, and Seth Murray (New York: Routledge, 2015), 38–55; Billings, "Rethinking Class beyond Colonialism"; Amanda Fickey, "'The Focus Has to Be on Helping People Make a Living': Exploring Diverse Economies and Alternative Economic Spaces," *Geography Compass* 5, no. 5 (May 2011): 237–48.

[56] Judy Baker, interview by the author, Knox County, Kentucky, June 10, 2016, 2016oh144_scs006, Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project, UK Nunn Center, available for request online at: https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7nzs2k9d2r (accessed April 3, 2018).

the salad bar. Judy described how she loved her work, making people happy on special occasions and talking with the customers as they watched her decorate.

By the time she left her job she was able to step into the role of mamaw and now enjoys spending time with three grandkids and a new great-grandchild. Judy sees the importance of sharing stories with the younger generations. She told the story of catching a swarm of bees in the late 1970s with help from a neighbor,

> We started out with one stand of bees. We were hoeing corn and I went to the spring to get some fresh water and I found a swarm of bees in a little cedar tree right above the spring. I heard the noise and I didn't know what it was at first. I went back to the field and told Charlie, I said, "There's a swarm of bees up there above the spring." And he said, "Well I'd like to have some bees."

Judy then went to ask their neighbor Mathias Carnes if he had an empty stand. Mathias said he had a stand and had plenty of bees himself and would help them get the swarm. Judy remembered what they used,

> It was just a hollow log. He had hollowed out a log and it had two cross-sticks about middle ways. He took a piece of wood and cut it the right length and put in in there and then put a nail in from each side. I'd love to have one made just so people could see it because you don't see them anymore like that. But they didn't build boxes or anything. They'd go out and find a hollow tree and cut it and then chip all that dead stuff out of the inside and they'd last for years. But he helped him save that swarm of bees and we have not been without bees—we thought we were—we thought we'd lost every bee we had.

Judy recalled her husband checking the boxes and not seeing any bees.

> Well a couple weeks after that he went back and he said, "There's bees still in that box." He said, "I thought we'd lost them." Well he opened it up and checked them and he said, "They've got real low," but he said, "they'll make it." And to my knowledge—we have had the same—from that one hive of bees, we've have bees now since about '78 or '79.

Besides being one of the few honey producers in the county, the Bakers are well known for their annual sorghum stir off. Although many residents shared stories of growing cane and making sorghum molasses, the Bakers are the only family left on the

Creek still growing and producing regularly. They invite people to the farm throughout weekends in September to help with the process and watch the liquids get squeezed out of the cane by an old mill, cooked over an open fire in a large metal vat, transformed into delicious syrup, and funneled into quart jars. The Baker Family Farm sorghum is known beyond the community as well. Judy's son Grant, had recently traveled to the national sorghum growers' convention where he shared the seed and products with growers from around the country. Judy's baked goods have won blue ribbons in the national contest. Judy explained that they have been growing and making sorghum from the same seed they acquired locally in the late 1970s.[57]

Judy's sorghum cookies are a favorite at the Knox County Farmers' Market.[58] The Baker farm is a diversified operation that has been expanding production since the market began. Now with two high tunnels, the family builds on past agricultural traditions in the community and are exploring new directions and opportunities for agricultural production and marketing in the county. They sell produce and value-added products on the farm, at the market, and at other events in the community. Judy described the potential she saw for local food and other products. She explained the importance of cultivating and teaching local agricultural traditions and skills and celebrating local

[57] For discussions of heirloom vegetables in Appalachia see Bill Best, *Saving Seeds, Preserving Taste: Heirloom Seed Savers in Appalachia* (Athens, Ohio, 2013); Bill Best, *Kentucky Heirloom Seeds: Growing, Eating, Saving* (Lexington, Ky., 2017); James R. Veteto, "The History and Survival of Traditional Heirloom Vegetable Varieties in the Southern Appalachian Mountains of Western North Carolina," *Agriculture and Human Values* 25, no. 1 (January 2008): 121. For a thorough discussion of Kentucky family farms and agricultural practices including livestock, gardens, keeping bees, and making sorghum see John van Willigen and Anne van Willigen, *Food and Everyday Life on Kentucky Family Farms, 1920-1950* (Lexington, Ky., 2006). See also Lorraine Garkovich, Janet L. Bokemeier, and Barbara Foote, *Harvest of Hope: Family Farming/Farming Families* (Lexington, Ky., 1995). The "Family Farms of Kentucky Oral History Collection," UK Nunn Center, available online at https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt70p26q214p (accessed April 3, 2018) also provides access to dozens of interviews chronicling life on Kentucky family farms.

[58] In 2014 I worked with a group of people in the county including the Bakers to help found the market. We have since incorporated into a 501c3 nonprofit organization.

heritage and resources in the county. The Bakers have been building a strong customer base and show the real possibilities for relocalization and sustainable livelihoods on Stinking Creek.

Mary Broughton

Mary Broughton had soup beans, cornbread, and fried taters waiting for me when I came to talk to her. [59] Although not expecting dinner, I happily obliged, eating as we began to talk. Mary and her good friend Maudie were part of the Grow Appalachia program and shared a garden at Maudie's house. Mary has an infectious smile and was always laughing and cutting up when we worked in the community garden together, making the work seem a bit less strenuous.

Mary told of how she was born and raised on Mills Creek. Her father was killed in an accident while working for the railroad company when she was just one. Her mother raised Mary and her four siblings on her own. The family depended on garden produce, milk cows, chickens, and hogs to get by and her mother never had a public job. Like other people I interviewed, Mary said the family never went hungry. She remembered canning in a washtub outside and walking to Mills Creek Church. Her uncles probably helped her mom with plowing and other labor. Mary laughed remembering her mom giving the kids turpentine and sugar and Black Draught as home remedies.[60] She told of attending a one-room school on Mills Creek and shared her education and employment history:

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[59] Mary Broughton, interview by the author, Knox County, Kentucky, September 13, 2016, 2016oh549_scs018, Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project, UK Nunn Center, available online at https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7ngf0mwb5b (accessed April 3, 2018).

[60] These folk remedies were commonly used to treat intestinal parasites.

> I was in the 5th grade when I started on to Dewitt [Elementary School] and then on to Knox Central. I didn't graduate. I quit it when I was a junior. Thought I had to get married. That was life back then. You got married and had babies. But it's changed now. But I did, 19 years later, I did go back and got my GED. And then I started working for the school. I babysat for years. I worked at Warner's [factory] for so many years. It's a sewing factory. Made bras and underwear. I worked there for seven or eight years or something. I worked a long time. It shut down. And then my grandbabies came along. Instead of putting them in daycare I decided I'd take care of them and I did till they started school for nine year. And then I went to back to work again. I got a job at the school, Dewitt, as a cook and monitor and I worked there about seven year and then I retired.

Mary's story reveals a lot about how gendered processes have affected the lives of rural Appalachian women for the past several decades. In talking with people in the community, many narratives about hazardous public work primarily done by men emerge, including tales of men injured or killed working in coal, timber, or on the railroad. Besides the death of her father, Mary told of how her husband Ernie almost died after being hit in the head working in timber. She took care of him as he was in the hospital for over two weeks and had to go on disability after the accident. As the experiences of Mary and her mother show, women are often faced with added responsibilities of nursing, childcare, domestic labor, and provisioning when families deal with accidents and tragedies related to "men's work." The stories Mary told about her mother bring to light the struggles of single women raising children and the challenges and difficulties that rural Appalachian women have been able to overcome. Mary's experience with education, marriage, and childrearing also echoed other stories I heard from women as restrictive gender roles, lack of emphasis on women's educational attainment, and pressures to marry and have kids often limited possibilities for women on the Creek as they did around the country.

Mary's tales of working in the factory corroborated many rural women's experiences in the South during the 1990s.[61] According to Mary, there had been about 300 people working at Warner's—all women except for a handful of men that were mechanics or bosses. She thinks the factory closed around 1992, as many did across the South in the early to mid-1990s. Mary loved the job at the factory, but noted it was a lot of hard work as she described operating the machinery and trying to "make production." She shared that she thought some women had medical problems from breathing particulate from the material. Mary's experience illustrates the effects of global economic restructuring on Stinking Creek and the gendered implications of transnational processes that affect rural areas.[62] She mused, "They shipped it to Mexico. Ain't that something. That's where the job went." She and many other women felt the effects of global capitalist processes that were largely out of their control and had to adjust to changing opportunities and economic landscapes.

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[61] Eve S. Weinbaum, *To Move a Mountain: Fighting the Global Economy in Appalachia* (New York, 2004); Barbara Ellen Smith, ed., *Neither Separate Nor Equal: Women, Race, and Class in the South* (Philadelphia, 1999); Mary K. Anglin, *Women, Power, and Dissent in the Hills of Carolina* (Urbana, IL, 2002); Fran Ansley, "Putting the Pieces Together: Tennessee Women Find the Global Economy in Their Own Backyards," in *Women Working the NAFTA Food Chain: Women, Food and Globalization*, ed. Deborah Barndt (Toronto, 1999), 141–60; John Gaventa, Barbara Ellen Smith, and Alex Willingham, eds., *Communities in Economic Crisis: Appalachia and the South* (Philadelphia, 1990); Mary Ann Hinsdale, Helen M. Lewis, and S. Maxine Waller, *It Comes From The People: Community Development and Local Theology* (Philadelphia, 1995); Virginia Rinaldo Seitz, *Women, Development, and Communities for Empowerment in Appalachia* (Albany, NY, 1995); Timothy J. Minchin, *Empty Mills: The Fight Against Imports and the Decline of the U.S. Textile Industry* (Lanham, MD, 2012). For discussions of neoliberalism, globalization, and place in the region see Stephen L. Fisher and Barbara Ellen Smith, eds., *Transforming Places: Lessons from Appalachia* (Urbana, IL, 2012) and Dwight B. Billings and Ann E. Kingsolver, eds., *Appalachia in Regional Context: Place Matters* (Lexington, KY, 2018). See also the multimedia essay by Fran Ansley and Anne Lewis, "Going South, Coming North: Migration and Union Organizing in Morristown, Tennessee," for *Southern Cultures*, available at https://southernspaces.org/2011/going-south-coming-north-migration-and-union-organizing-morristown-tennessee and the 2007 Appalshop film by Anne Lewis, *Morristown: In the Air and Sun* available at https://vimeo.com/263660739?ref=fb-share&1.

[62] Ann E. Kingsolver, *Tobacco Town Futures: Global Encounters in Rural Kentucky* (Long Grove, IL., 2011).

Navigating public jobs and family responsibilities, Mary raised two boys and looked after two granddaughters. When the factory closed she chose to provide free household labor to help raise her grandchildren, as childcare responsibilities often fall primarily on the shoulders of mothers and grandmothers in the absence of paid family leave and affordable daycare in the US. Many interviewees described a gendered division of labor in the household and gendered perceptions of what constitutes work.[63] Household and childrearing labor was often seen as women's work, although men I talked to passionately acknowledged the hard work of their mothers, often viewing their tasks as more difficult than men's work. Returning to the public workforce, Mary described being hired by the school system. Positions such as teachers and aides at public schools, jobs primarily held by women, are often the only jobs available in many rural communities like Stinking Creek. Mary told of how the Lend-A-Hand Center filled in gaps in rural healthcare delivery for people on the Creek. She visited the Lend-A-Hand Center for sick visits, shots for the kids, birth control services, reproductive healthcare, and other medical needs.

[63] For rural Appalachian women, agriculture, and gender roles see Ann Kingsolver, "Farming the Edges: Women's Natural Resource Management on Small Farms in Eastern Kentucky," in *Gender, Livelihood and Environment: How Women Manage Resources*, ed. Subhadra Mitra Channa and Marilyn Porter (New Delhi, 2015); Shaunna L. Scott, "Gender Among Appalachian Kentucky Farm Families: The Kentucky Farm Family Oral History Project and Beyond," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 2, no. 1 (1996): 103–13; Shaunna L. Scott, "Drudges, Helpers and Team Players: Oral Historical Accounts of Farm Work in Appalachian Kentucky," *Rural Sociology* 61, no. 2 (June 1, 1996): 209–26. For rural women, gender, and oral history see Nancy Grey Osterud and Lu Ann Jones, "'If I Must Say So Myself': Oral Histories of Rural Women," *The Oral History Review* 17, no. 2 (1989): 1–23; Grey Osterud, "The Meanings of Independence in the Oral Autobiographies of Rural Women in Twentieth-Century New York," *Agricultural History* 89, no. 3 (2015): 426–43; Melissa Walker and Rebecca Sharpless, eds., *Work, Family, and Faith: Rural Southern Women in the Twentieth Century* (Columbia, Mo., 2006); Lu Ann Jones, *Mama Learned Us to Work: Farm Women in the New South* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2002).

Mary lamented the lack of jobs, changing social ties, and forces of consolidation in the community, including post office closures and attempts to shut down the school.[64] Mary still continues to attend church in the community as churches remain an important social institution on the Creek. She discussed issues like drug abuse and stereotyping. Towards the end of the interview she related,

> Every community there's good and there's bad. They's good people on the Creek. They's a lot of people that looks down on the Creek. "Oh you off the Creek?" "Oh yes I am and I'm proud of it!" I am. Don't move me out of here. Some people move off the Creek and they think they're too good for the Creek. They was a lot of people feels that way, they do. "You still live on that Creek?" I sure do! You know, I'm proud of the Creek. It's home. It's home to me and never nowhere else be home to me. You may take me somewhere else but it won't be home.

Wayne Broughton

Sitting outside his garage in the midsummer heat, Wayne Broughton went through half a pack of cigarettes as he told me about growing tobacco, hanging tobacco, and the tobacco buyout.[65] He described how it was the only cash crop for his family and proclaimed, "Kentucky is the best 'baccer growing state—quality—in the US." Wayne shared with me stories of his father who lost the use of his legs in a mining accident but

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[64] For discussions of social capital in the region see Susan Keefe, ed., *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability* (Knoxville, Tenn., 2009); Richard A. Couto, *Making Democracy Work Better: Mediating Structures, Social Capital, and the Democratic Prospect* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1999); Shannon Elizabeth Bell, "'There Ain't No Bond in Town Like There Used to Be': The Destruction of Social Capital in the West Virginia Coalfields," *Sociological Forum* 24, no. 3 (September 1, 2009): 631–57.

[65] Wayne Broughton, interview by the author, Knox County, Kentucky, July 31, 2015, 2016oh142_scs004, Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project, UK Nunn Center, available for request online at:, https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7xgx44tx4p (accessed April 3, 2018). For tobacco in Kentucky see John van Willigen and Susan C. Eastwood, *Tobacco Culture: Farming Kentucky's Burley Belt* (Lexington, Ky., 1998); Kingsolver, *Tobacco Town Futures*; Ann K. Ferrell, *Burley: Kentucky Tobacco in a New Century* (Lexington, KY, 2013); W. F. Axton, *Tobacco and Kentucky* (Lexington, KY, 1975).

continued to farm throughout the area. He told of his father driving a tractor all over the community as his disability did little to slow him down:

> Hoeing 'baccer, he'd go through there on his knees and it's 100 degree weather. He'd take two rows at a time. Hoeing 'baccer. We used to farm. *Farm*. We farmed 'baccer, everybody around here had a little old 'baccer patch. Well we farmed the most of it. Leased, rented it. Just not long after me and Ruby married we sold—the most I ever sold was 13,000 pounds that one year. We farmed. Didn't have no problem. Daddy bought a brand new International tractor in 1967, diesel. That's the biggest thing ever hit Stinking Creek, buying a new tractor. Seemed like had plenty time to do everything, now I've got three tractors, can't get nothing done.[66]

One of, if not the biggest farmer on the Creek, Wayne discussed the difficulties and changes in farming over the years. His wife Ruby sat in on the conversation keeping busy shucking corn and stringing beans and occasionally interjecting. We talked over the hum of the outdoor fan as the smell of recently harvested tomatoes that turned a bit too quickly wafted in the intensifying midsummer heat. There had just been an unseasonable "tide" in the community in the middle of July, overflowing creeks, flooding fields, and ruining crops. Wayne pondered on a changing climate, erratic weather patterns, and increased pests and disease.

> Would you believe these old mountains we're looking at, half of them, back when my mom was growing up, they farmed in corn. Can you imagine that? The hillside. I mean. That's where they growed their corn. They'd save their fields for hay for their cattle. We was talking about the climate change. Do that today, put it in corn and it'd wash away. What kept there'n from washing away? I set and study. They never had no problem.[67]

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[66] For discussions of tobacco and mechanization see Mark V. Wetherington, "'Buried in Original Records, Government Reports, Statistical Tables, and Obscure Essays'?: Kentucky's Twentieth-Century Agricultural History," *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 113, no. 2–3 (2015): 271–306.

[67] For discussions of issues such as soil depletion, steep slope farming, and industrial agricultural changes see Paul Salstrom, *Appalachia's Path to Dependency: Rethinking a Region's Economic History, 1730-1940* (Lexington, Ky., 1994); Dwight Billings and Kathleen Blee, *The Road to Poverty: The Making of Wealth and Hardship in Appalachia* (Cambridge, Mass., 2000); Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930;* Robert S. Weise, *Grasping At Independence: Debt, Male Authority, and Mineral Rights in Appalachian Kentucky,1850-1915* (Knoxville, Tenn., 2001); Mary Beth Pudup, "The Limits of Subsistence: Agriculture and Industry in Central Appalachia," *Agricultural History* 64, no. 1 (1990): 61–89; Ronald L. Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside: Railroads,*

In addition to farming, his father ran a store for 25 years. Wayne said his mother would work in the fields and tend the store when customers came. He recalled that everyone had milk cows and hogs and that people would bring hams to his family's store and swap them for groceries. Many people I talked to remembered small stores all around the Creek describing their importance in the community. Wayne exclaimed, "If you could only see what corn, feed, pinto beans, salt—100 pound bag—come out of that little building you'd say, "Man!" Beans would come in a 100 pound bag, loose, salt, 25 pound bag flour. And he delivered. He'd load his pickup down ever bit you can get on it. Corn and feed. Everybody had hogs and cattle." A handful of little stores still operate on the Creek selling mostly Little Debbie cakes, cigarettes, and pop rather than beans, corn, and flour.[68]

Wayne worked as a strip miner for eight years in the immediate area in addition to farming and doing custom backhoe work. He brought a more pessimistic view of current opportunities in the area and outlooks for the community:

> The timber's all gone. I'm not against logging, but now clear cutting it, it's no good. It ain't no good. What's your grand-youngins going to use? They won't be nothing. Right there was logged two year ago. There won't be a tree that'll make a log grow back next 400 years. It won't be there…They's not nothing left. Like I said the timber's gone. They won't let you work coal, so what's left? They ain't nothing.

Many individuals on the Creek described a conflicted relationship with natural resource extraction including coal and timber.[69] Logging continues off and on and at least one

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Deforestation, and Social Change in West Virginia, 1880-1920 (Chapel Hill, 1998); John Solomon Otto, "The Decline of Forest Farming in Southern Appalachia," *Journal of Forest History* 27, no. 1 (1983): 18–27.

[68] Fetterman has an interesting description of the items he found at Messer's store on the creek in the late 1960s, 112-118.

[69] A large body of literature has developed examining Appalachian communities and the negative externalities of resource extraction and the political economy of coal. See Helen Matthews Lewis, Linda

sawmill is still in operation on the Creek. Natural gas extraction in the area has increased over the past several years as many well heads can be seen while driving through the community. Other interviewees were aware of limited and declining resources and like Wayne advocated for a balance between use and conservation.[70]

Wayne was also pessimistic about the future of agriculture, telling of how much it has changed, predicting, "I'm going to say 10 more year, they won't be a garden in Stinking Creek. Now I'm not kidding you. I can see it coming." He explained how people no longer have to have gardens and talked about food stamps and other government assistance, as well as lack of interest from young people. "I'm going to grow me a garden. As long as I can make a move I'm going to grow enough for me. And these other people, I just feel sorry for them. They better wake up," Wayne warned.

Wayne spoke of other changes in the community and how his home address has switched multiple times as post offices have closed and consolidated. He described how

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Johnson, and Donald Askins, eds., *Colonialism in Modern America: The Appalachian Case* (Boone, NC, 1978); John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence & Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* (Urbana, IL, 1980); Stephen Fisher, ed., *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change* (Philadelphia, 1993); Chad Montrie, *To Save the Land and People: A History of Opposition to Surface Coal Mining in Appalachia* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003); Shirley Stewart Burns, *Bringing Down the Mountains: The Impact of Mountaintop Removal on Southern West Virginia Communities, 1970-2004* (Morgantown, WV, 2007); Michael Hendryx, "Mortality Rates in Appalachian Coal Mining Counties: 24 Years Behind the Nation," *Environmental Justice* 1, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 5–11; Robert Todd Perdue and Gregory Pavela, "Addictive Economies and Coal Dependency: Methods of Extraction and Socioeconomic Outcomes in West Virginia, 1997-2009," *Organization & Environment* 25, no. 4 (December 1, 2012): 368–84; Fisher and Smith; Shannon Elizabeth Bell, *Our Roots Run Deep as Ironweed: Appalachian Women and the Fight for Environmental Justice* (Urbana, IL, 2013); Linda Lobao et al., "Poverty, Place, and Coal Employment across Appalachia and the United States in a New Economic Era," *Rural Sociology* 81, no. 3 (September 1, 2016): 343–86; Aysha Bodenhamer, "King Coal: A Study of Mountaintop Removal, Public Discourse, and Power in Appalachia," *Society & Natural Resources* 29, no. 10 (October 2, 2016): 1139–53; Shannon Elizabeth Bell, *Fighting King Coal: The Challenges to Micromobilization in Central Appalachia* (Cambridge, MA, 2016); Pierce Greenberg, "Disproportionality and Resource-Based Environmental Inequality: An Analysis of Neighborhood Proximity to Coal Impoundments in Appalachia," *Rural Sociology* 82, no. 1 (March 1, 2017): 149–78; Sanya Carley, Tom P. Evans, and David M. Konisky, "Adaptation, Culture, and the Energy Transition in American Coal Country," *Energy Research & Social Science* 37 (March 1, 2018): 133–39.

[70] Wayne and many others' perspectives on environmental degradation contradicted Fetterman's assertions that it "appears to alarm no one," *Stinking Creek*, 25.

the Mennonite community in Clay County still help each other, share labor, and have a work ethic he no longer sees on the Creek. He was keenly aware of global economic restructuring, discussing agricultural competition from other parts of the country and the growth of industrial farms.[71] Ruby also worked at Warner's sewing factory for 21 years before it relocated. Wayne told of hearing that the workers in Mexico made a quarter an hour and walked to work.

People went to the Brougtons to buy produce as they have for many years. They also gave away extra produce to neighbors. As we were finishing the interview, a man in a big red pickup looking for a family farm stopped by. He and Wayne went back and forth until they placed each other and started talking about common family, acquaintances, mineral rights, farm landownership, and hormones in livestock.[72] After about 20 minutes of conversing, Wayne sent him on his way with directions, several ears of corn, and an invitation to come back anytime.[73]

Larry Sizemore

I met with Larry Sizemore one morning in August, in a remote area of the Creek known as Pigeon Roost, about 15 minutes past the Lend-A-Hand Center.[74] An assortment of chickens, ducks, cats, and dogs begin to stir as we sat on his front porch. Larry is one

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[71] Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture* (San Francisco, 1977); Deborah Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture* (New Haven, CT, 2003); Paul K. Conkin, *A Revolution Down on the Farm: The Transformation of American Agriculture since 1929* (Lexington, KY, 2008).
[72] Ann E. Kingsolver, "Contested Livelihoods: 'Placing' One Another in 'Cedar,' Kentucky," *Anthropological Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (1992): 128–36.
[73] Wayne Broughton passed away on October 12, 2016, after a short battle with lung cancer.
[74] Larry Sizemore, interview by the author, Knox County, Kentucky, August 26, 2016, 2016oh340_scs011, Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project, UK Nunn Center, available online at:, https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7tqj77wv1q (accessed April 3, 2018).

of a handful of people on the Creek that still milks cows recounting that he bought his first cow off of Irma. Larry and his family keep many agricultural traditions alive, raising beautiful gardens, logging with horses, raising and slaughtering hogs, and preserving a variety of foods.

Born in 1957 at Red Bird Hospital, Larry grew up one of 10 kids. He recalled attending Sunday School, 4-H, and receiving medical care at the Lend-A-Hand Center when he was young. His dad worked some in the nearby coal mines but the family had a fairly subsistence farming life. Larry fondly recounted memories from his childhood: growing their own food, canning in gallon jars, raising hogs, curing meat in the smokehouse, frying chickens, plowing with mules, getting water from the spring, walking to church, and using coal oil lamps.

Nearly everyone I talked to had some relationship to the coal industry, either from their own experiences or through a father, grandfather, husband, uncle, or other relative. In addition to the occupational dangers of mining itself, interviewees discussed the economic significance of coal, the ongoing downturn in employment, and the environmental impacts caused by mining.[75] Larry's family dug coal from the mountain on their property to heat with and also sold and delivered house coal in the community to make extra income. Few in the area still rely on coal stoves for heating and there are currently no active mining operations on the Creek.

Like Conrad, Larry's family employed multiple livelihood strategies to generate extra income, participating in a variety of ways in localized economies. He and his

[75] A large body of literature within Appalachian studies examines the changes in the coal industry over the past several decades. For an historical overview of changes in the coalfields of eastern Kentucky during the second half of the twentieth century see Ronald D. Eller, *Uneven Ground*.

siblings worked odd jobs in the community and helped work in neighbors' fields. The family leased land and hunted small game. He remembered being told stories of a grist mill that that used to grind corn right near his house. According to Larry, when he was young people did not sell much produce but rather gave it away and had reciprocal labor arrangements. Larry told of changes in the community including depopulation due to people moving to nearby towns to be closer to work.[76] He related, " I still love the Creek or I'd been like everybody else, I'd left off. I love where I live." He was nostalgic about how the community used to be, agreeing with others' assessment, "People are just not neighbors anymore like they used to be."[77]

Larry worked in a factory for several years then drove a truck making and hauling mining timbers. Since 1995, he has worked as a custodian at the county high school. Larry commented, "I work at the high school, I bet you could go through there and there's probably 900 kids in there, probably ain't 10 could tell you what a hoe is." He noted how things have progressed acknowledging that it is not necessarily a bad thing that kids can't identify implements like they used to. Admitting he doesn't plow with a mule anymore, but like Wayne, uses a tractor for just about everything, Larry knows the importance of utilizing new technology. He proudly explained that one of his daughters works as a nurse practitioner and one works as a Functional Mental Disability (FMD) aide at a county school.

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[76] Nate W. Kratzer, "Coal Mining and Population Loss in Appalachia," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 21, no. 2 (2015): 173–88.

[77] In 1967, Fetterman argued that Stinking Creek was not a community writing, "Stinking Creek is not a community. It is an area of steep slopes and narrow bottoms sprinkled with homes that range from neat painted clapboard houses—some of them even boasting an inside bathroom—to tottering, sagging little shacks. Each home is a little society unto itself, and many families find they have little in common with their neighbors. They differ in their religion, morals, ethics, and their attitudes toward the welfare program. Family bloodlines are complicated; and although there is a deep feeling of attachment to one's 'kin,' there is little sense of community unity," *Stinking Creek*, 32.

Larry, like others in the community, is very conscious of the impact of industrial agricultural processes. He shared that his family always fertilized with manure and that growing up he didn't remember ever buying chemical fertilizer. Larry commented, "People spray everything anymore which is not good for you. Our foods that we eat now, there's all these chemicals in them and they're just not good for people. So I'd rather grow it organically and eat what I can of it." He described pests building resistance to insecticides and thinks that going back to gardening would improve people's health. Seeing a market for organic vegetables, Larry has also taken advantage of changing technology and has begun selling some excess produce through Facebook. Larry's skills go well beyond the ability to grow a productive garden. He showed me the handmade cane bottom chairs we had been sitting on that an older gentleman in the community taught him how to make. They were beautiful and clearly showed dozens of hours of skilled labor and specialized craftsmanship.[78]

Larry remembered when John Fetterman came into the area in the mid-1960s and how his portrayal of Stinking Creek has been widely criticized.[79] He talked about how the book was belittling and how media representations of the area and the region present a one-sided picture. Looking out over his property he spoke about the tranquility, peace, and freedom of rural life. Larry commented, "They don't show the good stuff, it's always the bad stuff that makes the news. Never seen them come by and took a picture of Larry's garden and put it in the paper and say hey here look at what a nice garden."

[78] Fetterman did not seem to have an appreciation for folk art writing, "Mountain crafts are hideously unsightly," 22.
[79] Larry recalled that Fetterman interacted with his family who were featured in the book. His sentiments reflected that of many of the people I've met in the community.

I had passed Larry's garden and house many times before I met him, envious of the precision of the rows, vigorous, healthy looking plants, and bountiful harvests, seemingly ready to pick weeks ahead of mine. Driving away from his property, past his neatly tended bean trellises and corn stalks blowing in the breeze, I thought of what he said, "You never see the good stories."

Charlotte Morgan

Beyond Larry's house up a long gravel road is land that has been in Charlotte Morgan's family for generations.[80] I had traveled the road many times to pick her up for events and work days with the Grow Appalachia program. Charlotte is a hard worker and was hired as an assistant for the program. I have enjoyed getting to know her and her family for the past several years and am happy to call her a friend.

Although she grew up in Dayton, Charlotte asserted, "I might have lived in Ohio but this is my home." The land is her pride and joy and she works very hard to keep the property and gardens pristine. She moved back to Stinking Creek in 2006 to raise her one-year-old grandson, Joseph. I have watched Joseph grow up over the past few years, helping in the community garden and learning along with the rest of us. Like many grandparents in the area Charlotte told of the struggles of raising a child on her own with a limited income.

Charlotte reminisced about her own grandparents' gardens on the property and the steep patches they cultivated on the side of the mountain. Old gardens and orchards used

[80] Charlotte Morgan, interview by the author, Knox County, Kentucky, June 11, 2016, 2016oh145_scs007, Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project, UK Nunn Center, available online at:, https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7j6q1sj499 (accessed April 3, 2018).

to dot the land. She still gardens on the hillside but not nearly as high up. “That’s my lifeline up there. I depend on that garden every year,” she explained. According to Charlotte, people used to have big gardens because they had such big families. Charlotte noted that less people garden today, but hoped Joseph would carry on the tradition. Still standing on the property is an old dilapidated smokehouse she doesn’t want to tear down because of the meaning and memories it has for her. Looking up the hill she remembered an old barn that used to be there that she would like to build back. These phantom landscapes, landmarks no longer there in reality but still vivid in people’s minds, came up frequently in my discussions with Stinking Creek residents.[81]

We discussed the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia program further. She declared, “I love it. I love coming to all the meetings, the programs, and I get to learn a lot. I’ve learned a lot since I’ve been in the program for the last three years. I knew some, but I’ve learned a little bit more.” Charlotte stated that her favorite part of the program was getting to know other people and becoming friends with other program participants. Charlotte is definitely a people person. She helped design and decorate the Lend-A-Hand parade float for the Daniel Boone Festival.[82] She described riding on the float, “I get out there and say hi to them and wave to them and I can see the smiles on their faces. They’d just be sitting there like bumps on logs then all of a sudden I see them and I say, “Well hi there!” Wave at them and stuff and you should see the smile on their faces. It makes me feel good that I did that for that person.” The Lend-A-Hand Center has participated in the

[81] Kingsolver, *Tobacco Town Futures*, 114.
[82] For a discussion of possibilities for community events such as parades to promote community development, see Helen Matthews Lewis, “Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program,” in *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*, ed. Susan Keefe (Knoxville, Tenn., 2009), 75–79.

parade for decades. Charlotte and Joseph were both excited take part in the tradition and take home awards two years in a row including the 1st Place Float and President's Choice awards.

Besides having a green thumb and outgoing personality, Charlotte is a great cook. I asked her what she liked to cook and she lowered her voice and excitedly rattled off a list:

> Potatoes and green beans and cornbread and slice up tomatoes and cucumbers and green onions. I don't have to have meat. That is a meal all by itself and Joseph, he loves it, too. And do zucchini and corn, fried potatoes, and soup beans. But I like tacos and stuff like that too. Joseph, when the cucumbers come in, he'll go up there and pick him two or three and bring them, "Mamaw will you peel these for me?" and slice them up and eat them with ranch dressing.[83]

Many other people I talked to had a similar favorite list of home cooking. Later in the year, the Bakers hosted a potluck one Saturday for the garden program participants. They cooked off a batch of sorghum, participants visited with each other, kids painted pumpkins, and everyone brought a dish. Charlotte brought a dish made from sweet potatoes from the Dewitt Community Garden and a big bowl of chili that was everyone's favorite.

Betty Cornett

Betty Cornett grew up on Mill Branch in Dewitt near the elementary school.[84] Her family had a large farming operation growing a variety of crops and keeping livestock

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[83] Many of the people that I interviewed recalled fondly the home-cooked meals of their childhood. Their remembrances belie Fetterman's discussions of eating in the community: "Eating is not fun, but to stay alive… "Filling. Unsatisfying," 70, 72. A growing body of literature and a movement around Appalachian foodways has developed in recent years, especially as seen through the work of the Appalachian Food Summit https://www.appalachianfood.com/.

[84] Betty Cornett, interview by the author, Knox County, Kentucky, December 28, 2016, 2017oh004_scs021, Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project, UK Nunn Center, available online at:, https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt734t6f4h09 (accessed April 3, 2018).

including turkey and geese. Betty, like several other people I talked to, grew up without electricity or running water. Her dad was injured in the mines, but worked in timber in addition to farming. Her mom cooked, worked in the fields, and took care of 11 kids including three children with disabilities. Betty remembered, "She was an excellent quilt maker. I've got several of her quilts that she made. She could do almost anything, my mom, around the house." Betty described her mom sewing, canning, making taffy, and piecing together beautiful feed sack dresses.

Betty told of how her mom's family sold produce to nearby coal camps. She explained, "They rode a mule across the mountain on up in the holler above where we lived. They'd go across the mountain over to the commissary in Straight Creek up in Bell County and sell their stuff."[85] I heard similar stories from other residents. Continuing this tradition, Betty also helped her family make extra income "peddling," selling farm goods directly to customers. She remembered the family would load up the truck with produce and go to Pineville on Saturdays. They sold produce parked on the side of the road and also took goods around to restaurants and homes in town. The family sold potatoes to Dewitt school for the lunch room, although students on the Creek now get French fries and tater tots from food service companies. Betty described hunting small game, finding wild mushrooms, and her dad digging for ginseng and yellow root. She remembered how he could zig-zag up steep mountains on the Creek and would sell the dried ginseng for cash and make medicinal tea out of the root.[86] Many people I talked to described

[85] For oral history discussions of coal camp life see LaLone, "Economic Survival Strategies in Appalachia's Coal Camps"; Mary B. LaLone, "Recollections About Life in Appalachians Coal Camps: Positive or Negative?," *Journal of the Appalachian Studies Association* 7 (1995): 91–100.
[86] Anthony Cavender, *Folk Medicine in Southern Appalachia* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2003); Luke Manget, "Sangin' in the Mountains: The Ginseng Economy of the Southern Appalachians, 1865-1900," *Appalachian Journal* 40, no. 1/2 (2012): 28–56. For a discussion of gathering wild foods for supplemental income and nutrition on family farms see chapter nine of Willigen and Willigen, *Food and Everyday Life*

wildcrafting or foraging as a way to supplement farm production and earn extra cash. The importance of the commons in the agricultural economy on the Creek is evident in these stories of gathering wild greens and other plants, berries, roots, nuts, and mushrooms.[87]

Continuing family traditions, Betty and her husband David are active in local agriculture, food, and heritage networks. Now living in an area of the county called Mackey Bend, the Cornetts bought an historic property on the Cumberland River called McNeil's Crossing. They invite school groups, community groups, and clubs out to the property for special events. The couple also ran a Civil War reenactment at the farm for several years. They are involved with the annual Daniel Boone Festival in Barbourville and organize living history demonstrations with traditional cooking, frontier living, and old-time rifle demonstrations in the community. Although active in county activities and currently working in the school system, Betty commented on the diminishing social ties she saw in the community. She, like others, explained how she didn't think neighbors helped each other like they used to.

Betty agreed that people do less gardening today. The Cornetts have several gardens on their properties, recently put up a high tunnel, and are active in the Knox

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on Kentucky Family Farms, 1920-1950. See also Mary Hufford's broad range of work about gathering and the commons, including the collection "Tending the Commons: Folklife and Landscape in Southern West Virginia" through the Library of Congress, available online at https://www.loc.gov/collections/folklife-and-landscape-in-southern-west-virginia/ (accessed April 3, 2018).

[87] See Elizabeth S. D. Engelhardt, "Gathering Wild Greens: Foodways Lessons from Appalachia's Past," in *Appalachia in Regional Context: Place Matters*, ed. Dwight B. Billings and Ann E. Kingsolver (Lexington, KY, 2018), 133–52; Elizabeth S. Barron, "Situating Wild Product Gathering in a Diverse Economy: Negotiating Ethical Interactions with Natural Resources," in *Making Other Worlds Possible: Performing Diverse Economies*, ed. Gerda Roelvink, Kevin St Martin, and J. K. Gibson-Graham (Minneapolis, MN, 2015), 173–93. Wildcrafting involves gathering plants from the wild, usually for personal use. For the commons see Kathryn Newfont, *Blue Ridge Commons: Environmental Activism and Forest History in Western North Carolina* (Athens, Ga., 2012); Jefferson C. Boyer, "Reinventing the Appalachian Commons," *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 50, no. 3 (2006): 217–32; Herbert Reid and Betsy Taylor, *Recovering the Commons: Democracy, Place, and Global Justice* (Urbana, Ill., 2010).

County Farmers' Market. Although her family is interested in continuing to garden, Betty commented on the changing norms,

> We had to do our vegetables and all that because that's the only way we had… But now it's changed. They go to the store and buy what they want to…A lot of women have to work now. Used to they didn't. Women could stay home and take care of everything at home but now it takes two working and still they don't do very good sometimes. And that's cut down on people gardening.

Others I talked to viewed gardening as something that is no longer a necessity in communities like Stinking Creek. Many people I interviewed discussed changes from localized subsistence production and local exchange to commodity production, industrial agriculture, multinational food corporations, and government assistance programs. Stinking Creek residents experienced firsthand these transformations in systems so intimately connected to daily life. Betty's insightful comments show how gender has been a factor in these changes. Even with the rise of dual earner households, families struggle to make enough cash income through public work to provide for household needs, having to cope with workers' flattening incomes, shrinking purchasing power, and job scarcity. Betty's commentary about structural changes in the economy and the gendered implications of changes in agriculture connect little places like Mill Branch to larger state and nationwide processes. Likewise, Betty's continued involvement with cultural heritage preservation and local networks points to different kinds of integrations with interconnected economic systems. The Cornett's emphasis on local traditions, community education, and producing for the community points towards different kinds of economic possibilities and relationships at the local level. Through their efforts with community events, they are in many ways cultivating "community economy" and seeking to go back to some earlier traditions and ways of connecting with others in the county.

Janice Smith

I met with Janice Smith in the large kitchen of the Lend-A-Hand Center.[88] Five of her kids plus a relative's toddler played around us as we sat down to talk. Janice moved to Stinking Creek in the fifth grade after living in Houston, Texas. Her mom was from Knox County and she explained that her parents wanted to move to the country because they thought it would be a better place to raise kids. Growing up, Janice went to Lend-A-Hand for Sunday School, day camp, and 4-H. She recalled being taken to the dentist, getting medical care from Peggy at the clinic, and Irma doing veterinary work for her family.

Janice, who lives right down the road from the Center, did not have much gardening experience before joining the Grow Appalachia program. Her kids, whom she homeschools, have come to the Lend-A-Hand Center to work on the farm with Irma for the past several years. She explained, "They got garden experience and then more or less taught me how to garden and then through the Grow Appalachia program and you and Irma I've learned a lot about gardening." Janice has seven kids and Irma has tutored the older ones, teaching them how to grow crops, plant different seeds, milk cows, and feed chickens and hogs. Janice discussed the opportunity the Grow Appalachia program has given people in the community, "I think it has brought a lot of households back into gardening just because of the program, people that really can't afford to garden or have no garden experience or have no plan to garden. Between the Lend-A-Hand and the

[88] Janice Smith, interview by the author, Knox County, Kentucky, June 15, 2016, 2016oh146_scs008, Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project, UK Nunn Center, available online at: https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7djh3d2391 (accessed April 3, 2018).

community garden it does give a lot more people the opportunity that would not have the opportunity to do it." Janice's family worked at the Dewitt Community Garden at the elementary school that was created through the program and had their family garden at the Center. Janice explained, "We garden here at the Lend-A-Hand because we don't have the land to do it ourselves and the community garden gives that same opportunity to people."

Although Janice has enjoyed learning to garden the past several years, she agreed that people don't garden like they used to: "Very few people I think will continue the lifestyle of farming and raising animals and growing their own food and canning food. And if we don't somehow stop the rapid growth of drug use, drug addiction, we're not going to have any youth to grow up and to do anything. It's the young generation that it seems to be destroying." Most everyone I talked to listed drug abuse as the number one issue on the Creek as it is in many rural areas across the country. Many saw the progression from moonshine to marijuana to prescription opiates taking hold on the Creek. Many times I have been working outside and seen helicopters flying overhead looking for marijuana patches. I have also seen firsthand the devastating impacts of drug abuse in the community. Drugs are an important component of the underground or informal economy in many rural areas.[89] Janice pointed out meth in particular as a growing problem in the community. She commented, "I think people self-medicate to

[89] Paul Salstrom, "Appalachia's Informal Economy and the Transition to Capitalism," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 2, no. 2 (1996): 213–33; J. Patrick Williams et al., "Marijuana Use in a Rural Appalachian Community," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 9, no. 1 (2003): 93–113; Margaret K. Nelson, "Economic Restructuring, Gender, and Informal Work: A Case Study of a Rural County," *Rural Sociology* 64, no. 1 (March 1, 1999): 18–43; Emelie K. Peine and Kai A. Schafft, "Moonshine, Mountaineers, and Modernity: Distilling Cultural History in the Southern Appalachian Mountains," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 18, no. 1/2 (2012): 93–112; Jennifer Chubinski et al., "Painkiller Misuse among Appalachians and in Appalachian Counties in Kentucky," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 20, no. 2 (2014): 154–69.

numb their pain, of the past, of their whatever problems in life. I think they do it to ease pain that they're experiencing whereas it's addictive and destructive and you don't realize that the first time you do it and then you're stuck." Drug abuse is in many ways connected to other social problems in communities like Stinking Creek including high incidences of occupational diseases and accidents from working in dangerous fields such as coal or timber, poverty, unemployment, lack of opportunities for young people, and chronic illness.[90]

Even with these barriers, Janice sees potential for agriculture in the community, whether providing for family and friends, growing enough to sell, or promoting a good work ethic:

> We are only doing it for the opportunity for us to have it to eat, to share with friends and family, and to teach our children. I'm learning too and they're learning right along with me. But I feel like it builds character. It's good for people to do. I think the more you work for something the more you have respect for it.

Janice has learned how much hard work goes into growing food. Over the years we worked many hours in the garden together. She explained, "It's very satisfactory to grow your own vegetables and then cook them. It does more for you to grow it and cook it and eat it than to go to the store and buy it and fix it."

[90] For recent studies by the ARC about opioid abuse in Appalachia see "Appalachian Diseases of Despair," available online at: https://www.arc.gov/assets/research_reports/AppalachianDiseasesofDespairAugust2017.pdf (accessed April 3, 2018), "Communicating About Opioids in Appalachia" https://www.orau.org/documents/hctt/key-findings-report-opioid-communication-in-appalachia.pdf (accessed April 3, 2018), and "An Analysis of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disparities & Access to Treatment Services in the Appalachian Region," available online at: https://www.arc.gov/assets/research_reports/AnalysisofMentalHealthandSubstanceAbuseDisparities.pdf (accessed April 3, 2018). See also Lara N. Moody, Emily Satterwhite, and Warren K. Bickel, "Substance Use in Rural Central Appalachia: Current Status and Treatment Considerations," *Journal of Rural Mental Health* 41, no. 2 (2017): 123–35.

In addition to growing her own vegetables, Janice is a regular customer at the Knox County Farmers' Market. She discussed the advantages of the market:

> It gives the people that have grown stuff the opportunity to sell stuff to make money from their own labor. I think that's a good thing and then the fact that there's lots of people either elderly and can't grow a garden or don't have space to grow a garden or whatever, they still have the opportunity to get the homegrown, organic grown food.

She explained how the market supplies healthy organic options that are often too expensive to buy in the store. The Knox County Farmers' Market, like other markets throughout the state, has created programs to expand access for low-income customers and accepts SNAP cards and farmers' market vouchers issued by the health department for mothers of young children and seniors. The farmers' market builds on the history of local markets up and down the side of the road and in downtown Barbourville, while incentive programs and alternative exchange programs echo local trading systems, credit arrangements, reciprocal agreements, and currencies that Knox Countians have used for decades. Janice sees how these programs create ways to relocalize agricultural traditions and is thankful for opportunities to grow her own gardens and attend the farmers' market commenting, "I think it is a huge blessing to people."

Bige R. Warren

Bige R. Warren is well known in the community.[91] He lives right around the corner from the Lend-A-Hand Center. Born in 1937, Bige was one of the older interviewees I talked to, in his home on the same land where he was born the 10th of 13

[91] Bige Warren, interview by the author, Knox County, Kentucky, August 20, 2015, 2016oh084_scs003, Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project, UK Nunn Center, available online at:, https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt77d7959t42 (accessed April 3, 2018).

children. He is the fourth generation to live on his family's property on Roaring Fork. Bige's interview, which lasted three and a half hours, provided many insights into the history of the Lend-A-Hand Center. He shared fond memories and local stories and explained that his brother Sol Warren authored one of the few histories of Knox County.[92] I had talked with Bige on several occasions and was glad to hear more of his story.

Bige's family farmed and his dad was a "timber cruiser," meaning he could survey woodlands and estimate the amount of usable wood in a certain area. Bige recalled the agrarian lifestyle growing up having gardens, corn fields, hay, goats, hogs, and cattle. His family sheared sheep and sold the wool, shipping it to Louisville for processing.[93] He remembered when his family got electricity, running water, and a phone. Bige taught in one-room schools on the Creek and Dewitt Elementary after attending Cumberland College in nearby Williamsburg. For 36 years Bige worked for the Kentucky Education Association. Bige earned a Master's degree from Eastern Kentucky University, Rank I from Union College, married later in life, and has two adult children.[94] He described the many changes he has seen in the community including how depopulation and lack of jobs effect opportunities on the Creek. Bige related how government programs and changes in labor supply effected agricultural production through the decades. He told of his family getting government loans for agricultural purposes, discussed inflation, recalled different government jobs programs under

[92] Warren, *A History of Knox County, Kentucky*.
[93] For a discussion of sheep, multiple livelihood strategies, and relocalization efforts in the region, see Tracy Turner Jarrell, "'Sheep!' Sheep Production in Watauga and Ashe Counties in North Carolina from the 1930s to Now," *Appalachian Journal* 38, no. 4 (2011): 362–407.
[94] Bige's experience (and that of others I have met in the community) in many ways contradicts Fetterman's essentialist assertions about people on the Creek, particularly his statement, "They are not a learned group," 24.

different administrations, and told of the local effects of depopulation on agriculture. Bige related how technological advances changed the landscape of agriculture contributing to a need for less labor. Bige viewed many government programs in a positive light. He is somewhat optimistic about possibilities for agriculture in the area, seeing some renewed interest in gardens, and still keeping livestock and hayfields himself.

Bige remembered when Peggy and Irma first came into the community in 1958. He recounted the two ladies showing up, "They had the Jeep, the dog, and the horse." At first people were unsure about the two women as Bige described the early difficulties they had gaining trust.[95] Irma rode her horse to teach in one-room schools and Peggy began delivering babies and providing medical services for people which helped them get to know families on the Creek.[96] Bige and other local young people became friends with the two women and had youth meetings in the chapel on the Center grounds. Health services provided at the Center including nurse midwifery, home healthcare, and clinic checkups were needed services which Bige's family utilized. He discussed the range of programs the women created over the years including tutoring, Sunday School, day camps, agricultural programs, and hosting work groups and volunteers from all over the country to work at the Center and in the community. He recalled Irma's work as a farmer, growing food, keeping livestock, and piloting new agricultural methods. Bige described how the women took in and raised many children including some of his relatives, filling

[95] The women initially had difficulty finding a place to live and a place for Irma to teach school and a doctor for Peggy to work under. Irma relates that providing needed services in the community really opened doors and helped them integrate into the area.

[96] Both Peggy Kemner and Irma Gall have written about their experiences in eastern Kentucky see Peggy Kemner, *I Am With You Always: Experiences of a Nurse Midwife in Appalachia* (New York, 2000); Irma Gall, *Walk with Me* (2008); Irma Gall, *The Stones Cry Out* (2017).

parenting roles and providing a place for people to go when they had no other options. Bige highlighted their Christian commitment to service commenting, "I knew real early that there was something special about those ladies. They were wanting to do good. They were wanting to help us, all of us in the community."

Peggy and Irma defied many gender norms and expectations as women running their own service organization in rural southeastern Kentucky. Peggy, originally from Pennsylvania, had trained as a nurse midwife at Frontier Nursing Service in nearby Leslie County.[97] Irma, originally from a farm community in Indiana, came to the area through work with a Church of the Brethren Mission in Clay County. The women met and decided to form their own organization to serve Knox County and set to clearing grounds, planting gardens, and building barns, outbuildings, and the large stone main building known as "the Center." The image of Peggy delivering a baby and Irma riding a horse or tractor is vivid in many people's memories. Everyone I talked to commented on the fortitude and commitment the women have shown over the decades. Bige explained,

> They were two very brave women that would ride a horse and ride a tractor, and be out at night [to deliver babies]…A lot of their programs were geared to help the women. Peggy did a lot with birth control for example which was a wonderful thing…Women as a whole on Stinking Creek have gained from all this. Youth have gained from it. All of us have gained from it, from them being here. But you've got Irma laying rocks and building all these things and climbing up on roofs. They have been just unbelievable women. They've done men's jobs and everybody's jobs and they proved to me and I think proved to a lot of people that women can do the work.

[97] For histories of the Frontier Nursing Service see Mary Breckinridge, *Wide Neighborhoods: A Story of the Frontier Nursing Service* (Lexington, Ky., 1981); Marie Bartlett, *The Frontier Nursing Service: America's First Rural Nurse-Midwife Service and School* (Jefferson, N.C., 2008); Melanie Beals Goan, *Mary Breckinridge: The Frontier Nursing Service and Rural Health in Appalachia* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2008).

Peggy and Irma's pioneering and much needed work with reproductive healthcare and other services for women filled the gaps in social services that were largely unavailable in rural areas like Stinking Creek in the 1960s through the 1980s.[98]

Bige like many of the people I talked to also remembered the community center program through the Knox County Economic Opportunity Council (KCEOC), the local agency set up through the Office of Economic Opportunity during the War on Poverty.[99] Irma helped found and coordinated the program in the mid-1960s setting up over a dozen centers throughout the county including the Messer Center that many interviewees remembered.[100] Bige worked as the Kay Jay Center coordinator and he and others I talked to described the different programs at the centers including preschool classes, food programs, youth activities, community meetings, and VISTA volunteers from around the country.

Bige also remembered Fetterman's visit during the mid-1960s. He believed the journalist featured only on some areas of the community and families that were struggling economically at the time, portraying Stinking Creek in a negative light. He recalled a conversation with Fetterman, "I said, 'Well maybe you should write about

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[98] Rural areas in eastern Kentucky still struggle with access to affordable medical services, reproductive healthcare, mental healthcare, and social services.

[99] A growing body of literature examines the War on Poverty in Appalachia. See the special issue of *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* Vol. 107, No. 3, Summer 2009, "Appalachian Kentucky and the War on Poverty" as well as John M. Glen, "The War on Poverty in Appalachia: Oral History from the 'Top Down' and the 'Bottom Up,'" *The Oral History Review* 22, no. 1 (1995): 67–93; Thomas Kiffmeyer, *Reformers to Radicals: The Appalachian Volunteers and the War on Poverty* (Lexington, Ky., 2008); Jessica Wilkerson, *To Live Here You Have to Fight: Antipoverty, Labor, and Feminist Activism in the Appalachian South* (Urbana, IL, forthcoming). For a contemporary study of the early days of the Knox County Economic Opportunity Council see Paul Street, *Community Action in Appalachia: An Appraisal of the "War on Poverty" in a Rural Setting of Southeastern Kentucky* (1968), available online at: http://libwwwapps03.uky.edu/omeka/app-community (accessed April 3, 2018). See also the "Appalachia: War On Poverty Oral History Project" through the Nunn Center available online at https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7p5h7bvt40.

[100] Fetterman discussed the nascent War on Poverty programs and the early work of the KCEOC with trepidation, 176-182.

Miss Mills who teaches school? Lives in a brick home. Maybe you should write about the good things? There's a lot of good things.' He said, I think this is the way he put it to me he said, 'Well I'm not sure my book would sell, Bige.'" Like many others on the Creek, Bige's career and accomplishments show what is overlooked in one-sided narratives and simplistic interpretations of rural life. As issues of representation, voice, and scholarly and journalistic motivation continue to be contested in the Appalachian region today, the discourse around the story of Stinking Creek and the oral histories of Stinking Creek residents themselves show the complexity of rural communities and the power and self-awareness of individuals shaping and interpreting their own narratives.[101]

Bige currently serves as member of the Lend-A-Hand Center Board of Directors. He discussed with me the uncertain future of the organization, but is hopeful for a new chapter in the history of the Center. Bige remembered the early days when the women were still getting established. He told of how in the late 1960s Irma rerouted the creek and designed and built a bridge connecting the Center with the main road. The bridge, made of wooden planks and railroad trusses is suspended some 20 feet above the creek and has become a local landmark. "The bridge" as it has come to be called, in many ways symbolizes the two women reaching out and connecting with the community and still stands as a testament to their long term commitment to the people of Stinking Creek.

Bige also told the story of another recent landmark, this time reaching into the Center from the community, the Lend-A-Hand Road. Bige gave permission for the county to build a road through his property to make an alternate route to the Center. Bige

[101] For a recent discussion of the politics of representation in Appalachia see Elizabeth Catte, *What You Are Getting Wrong About Appalachia* (Cleveland, Ohio, 2018).

had the option to name the road. He explained that he thought about naming it after his grandpa, great uncles, or even himself, but he reasoned,

> I thought no, everybody knows about Lend-A-Hand and everybody's learned to love them including all of us. That road can be nothing but Lend-A-Hand. I looked at it down into the future too and it's not Irma or Peggy, it's Lend-A-Hand. And I said even when somebody else is around there, we'll remember that road as Lend-A-Hand even if some generation down the line forgets Peggy and Irma's names. And Lend-A-Hand means to really lend a hand. To help somebody… So the Lend-A-Hand—it's just what they've been. Those words say a lot about Peggy and Irma. Lend a hand. And I think that's what they have done for 60 years.

Kentucky Agriculture, Participatory Research, & Community Economy

These short vignettes highlight just a few individuals I have been able to get to know over the past few years. Their stories collectively point to larger themes and patterns about rural Kentucky life and the role of small-scale agriculture in Appalachia. Sociologist and Appalachian scholar Helen Lewis writes of the importance of stories in community building. She encourages us to start with "telling stories, understanding the past, and sharing memories" in order to strengthen connections between people, better understand economic processes, and cultivate community pride and identity.[102] She explains, "As communities regain their histories, they also develop an understanding of their community's role in the larger history of the region, the nation, and the world."[103] The stories presented here begin to speak to the ways in which Stinking Creek residents

[102] Lewis, "Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program," 74. See also Mary Ann Hinsdale, Helen M. Lewis, and S. Maxine Waller, *It Comes From The People: Community Development and Local Theology* (Philadelphia, 1995).
[103] Lewis, "Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program," 75. Lewis further explains, "Stories build connections between people, provide ways to share knowledge, strengthen civic networks, provide the tools to rebuild communities, and produce the infrastructure, the social capital, that is essential in democratic community-based development," 74-75. Lewis also discusses the role of food in development writing, "Communities also need to look for alternatives for survival, relearning older ways of self-sufficiency and survival from elders, such as raising and preserving food and home remedies," 81.

have been intimately involved with larger economic forces and discourses around representation and the role of rural Appalachian communities. These narratives advance a conversation about the connections between memory, agriculture, and community institutions and provide several key takeaways about Kentucky agriculture and rural life.

First, from these stories, it is clear that Kentucky agriculture is much more than what Wallace called the "golden agricultural trinity—tobacco, bourbon, and thoroughbreds."[104] The processes and complexities of agricultural practices in rural eastern Kentucky remain understudied within Kentucky history. Wetherington's recent article examined the historiography of Kentucky agriculture over the past century but there was no mention at all of gardening as agricultural practice.[105] Continued omissions of the persistence and importance of small-scale gardening practices and supplemental production obfuscate the diversity of agricultural and economic activities in eastern Kentucky and beyond.[106] Scholars should ask not only, "What does agriculture mean to you?" but also, "What is considered agriculture?" These stories shared by Stinking Creek residents begin to answer that question and illuminate the diverse and multiple livelihood strategies employed by rural Kentuckians. Residents I spoke with described their agricultural practices as part of a diverse social and economic landscape and how they

[104] James E. Wallace, "Let's Talk About the Weather: A Historiography of Antebellum Kentucky Agriculture," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 89, no. 2 (1991): 179. Wallace discussed the dearth of information about Kentucky agriculture, especially in eastern Kentucky.
[105] Wetherington, "'Buried in Original Records, Government Reports, Statistical Tables, and Obscure Essays'?"
[106] For an exception to this omission see the recent examination of Kentucky gardeners and garden practices presented through oral history Katherine J. Black, *Row by Row: Talking with Kentucky Gardeners* (Athens, Ohio, 2015). See also Lisa Conley, "Talking Food: Home Food Preservation in Eastern Kentucky," *Kentucky Journal of Anthropology and Sociology* 2, no. 2 (2012): 85–100; Sara A. Quandt, Joan B. Popyach, and Kathleen M. DeWalt, "Home Gardening and Food Preservation Practices of the Elderly in Rural Kentucky," *Ecology of Food and Nutrition* 31, no. 3–4 (March 1994): 183–99.

made a living "the Kentucky way."[107] The processes described in residents' narratives provide insights into the role of rural Appalachian communities like Stinking Creek in the global economy and the capitalist and noncapitalist activities that people are involved with every day. The presence of these processes points to the need to change the discourse around agriculture and what constitutes agriculture as small-scale gardening practices, local markets, common resources, community exchange, and underground economies make up substantial segments of the economy.

The stories of Stinking Creek residents are a distinct part of Kentucky's rural history. These stories of Appalachia matter although they have a long history of being included as an addendum, appendix, footnote, or afterthought in larger considerations of the state or told through the lens of a journalist or photographer.[108] Oral history uncovers new meanings and presents personal narratives to a large audience giving a platform for seldom heard points of view from people like Conrad Smith. These individual stories shed light on rural transformation in the mountains from the perspective of people who have lived it. The changing ruralities of places like Stinking Creek remain undertheorized within Kentucky history. Individuals' life histories help illuminate these rural and agricultural changes over the past several decades. Avoiding essentializing narratives, especially about the past, whether romanticized or stereotypical is a difficult task. As scholars continue to grapple with issues of representation, this account and the larger

[107] Halperin describes "the Kentucky way" as "making a living in the self-reliant, steadfast Kentucky style" and "a way of life based on ties to land and family that confers dignity and self-esteem upon rural working-class people," *The Livelihood of Kin*, 1–2.

[108] Many Appalachian scholars have highlighted the omission of Appalachian areas including eastern Kentucky from state histories as well as the long history of problematic journalistic and photographic portrayals of the region. For a recent discussion of gaps in the literature and historical research agendas in eastern Kentucky see Robert S. Weise, "Socially Relevant History: Appalachian Kentucky in the Twentieth Century," *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 113, no. 2–3 (2015): 321–55.

oral history project seek to present a different picture of an often misrepresented and misunderstood place. The sentiments conveyed here highlight the pride in identity and place that Stinking Creek residents possess and their agency in telling their own side of things and refuting harmful, one-sided narratives. These accounts show the multifaceted processes, histories, and traditions alive on Stinking Creek and the collective insights and pasts making up "communities of memory" comprised of the different recollections of individuals.[109] This selection of stories in particular seeks to feature perspectives of women as these narratives are often passed over and left out of history books and official records. Carefully considering gender remains essential to understanding rural areas. Identifying and evaluating gendered economic processes is needed for broadening the lens of alternative economic possibility and shifting development discourses and power structures that often remain androcentric.[110]

Secondly, combining oral history with participatory methods offers an innovative approach to learning about the past and looking towards the future of rural communities. Oral history has burgeoned into a multifaceted field providing tools for uncovering hidden and marginalized narratives and different avenues for theorizing about power, place, and identity.[111] The use of oral history has a rich precedent in Appalachian Studies

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[109] Walker, *Southern Farmers and Their Stories*, 9.

[110] For discussions of gender in the region see Sally Ward Maggard, "Will the Real Daisy Mae Please Stand Up? A Methodological Essay on Gender Analysis in Appalachian Research," *Appalachian Journal* 21, no. 2 (1994): 136–50; Barbara Ellen Smith, "Walk-Ons in the Third Act: The Role of Women in Appalachian Historiography," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 4, no. 1 (1998): 5–28; Elizabeth S. D. Engelhardt, ed., *Beyond Hill & Hollow: Original Readings in Appalachian Women's Studies* (Athens, Ohio, 2005); Connie Park Rice and Marie Tedesco, eds., *Women of the Mountain South: Identity, Work, and Activism* (Athens, Ohio, 2015). For general discussions of gender and rurality see Barbara Pini, Berit Brandth, and Jo Little, eds., *Feminisms and Ruralities* (Lanham, Md., 2015); Lia Bryant and Barbara Pini, *Gender and Rurality* (New York, 2011).

[111] For good overviews of the field of oral history see Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* (New York, 2015); Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London, 2016); Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds., *The Oral History Reader* (London, 1998). For a discussion of the use of oral history in Kentucky history see the special "Oral History" issue of *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 104, no. 3/4 (2006).

as large scale oral history projects have captured different perspectives on the region and many scholars have centered oral history in their research.[112] Several scholars have examined the utility of oral history in understanding agriculture and rural life, especially in the absence of such information in official records, archives, or history books.[113] Schultz's recent article discussed the utility of oral history in learning about farmers and understanding agricultural history.[114] As Schultz argues, oral history is particularly suited to probe certain questions not easily addressed by other sources. Oral history collects thick descriptions and provides opportunities for collaboration and dialogue. I would add to Schultz's assessment that oral history used in conjunction with participatory methods affords researchers unique opportunities for collaboration and more dynamic findings.[115]

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[112] The Appalachian Oral History Project of the 1970s collected hundreds of oral histories several of which were published in Laurel Shackelford and Bill Weinberg, *Our Appalachia: An Oral History* (Lexington, Ky., 1988). The Nunn Center also houses many Appalachian oral history collections including the Frontier Nursing Service Oral History Collection available at https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7vx05x9d96 and the War on Poverty in Appalachia Oral History Collection available at https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7p5h7bvt40. See also the Lend-A-Hand Center Oral History Project through the Kentucky Oral History Commission available at http://passtheword.ky.gov/collection/lend-hand-center-oral-history-project. For oral history projects in the region see Terry L. Birdwhistell and Susan Emily Allen, "The Appalachian Image Reexamined: An Oral History View of Eastern Kentucky," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 81, no. 3 (1983): 287–302; Mary B. LaLone, "Preserving Appalachian Heritage: A Model for Oral History Research and Teaching," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 5, no. 1 (1999): 115–22; Beaver, Ballard, and Hicks, *Voices from the Headwaters: Stories from Meat Camp, Tamarack (Pottertown) & Sutherland, North Carolina*; Portelli, *They Say in Harlan County: An Oral History*; Marat Moore, *Women in the Mines: Stories of Life and Work* (New York, 1996); Karida L. Brown, "On the Participatory Archive," *Southern Cultures* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 113–27.

[113] Lu Ann Jones and Nancy Grey Osterud, "Breaking New Ground: Oral History and Agricultural History," *The Journal of American History* 76, no. 2 (1989): 551–64; Melissa Walker, "Narrative Themes in Oral Histories of Farming Folk," *Agricultural History* 74, no. 2 (2000): 340–51; Walker, *Southern Farmers and Their Stories*; Lu Ann Jones et al., "'Agricultural History' Roundtable Complicating the Story: Oral History and the Study of the Rural South: Lu Ann Jones, Adrienne Petty, Mark Schultz, Rebecca Sharpless, and Melissa Walker," *Agricultural History* 84, no. 3 (2010): 281–326.

[114] Mark R. Schultz, "Conversations with Farmers: Oral History for Agricultural Historians," *Agricultural History* 90, no. 1 (2016): 51–69.

[115] For a discussion of the radical roots of oral history and using oral history and participatory research, with special attention given to the contributions of Appalachian activists Helen Lewis and Myles Horton, see Daniel R. Kerr, "Allan Nevins Is Not My Grandfather: The Roots of Radical Oral History Practice in the United States," *Oral History Review* 43, no. 2 (September 21, 2016): 367–91.

My experiences gardening with some of my interviewees and getting to know them outside of a strictly academic or research setting provided a special opportunity to understand changing agricultural practices and life on Stinking Creek. Involvement in participatory agricultural programs and Participatory Action Research (PAR) broadly offers valuable methodological possibilities, especially within the context of sustained community engagement. Working through an established community organization, the Lend-A-Hand Center, gave me access and resources I would not have had otherwise. The Lend-A-Hand name and the history and social capital that came with it enabled me to build on past connections with the community and facilitated conversations and connections on the Creek. Oral history combined with participatory projects through community organizations creates possibilities to preserve community voices and traditions, build relationships, and develop future projects.[116] New oral history tools and technologies enable the easy collection, indexing, transcribing, and dissemination of interviews allowing for increased participation and access for people without scholarly backgrounds.

Third, these stories point to the continuing importance of community institutions like the Lend-A-Hand Center in rural places.[117] Like the post offices, schools, churches, and country stores, the Lend-A-Hand Center has become an integral and cherished part of Stinking Creek life. The legacy of the Center and the lives of Peggy and Irma are a testament to the success small organizations can have over the long term when committing to an area and creating partnerships. Nonprofit organizations provide

[116] There are many examples of PAR projects in the region that utilize oral history interviewing. For an overview of participatory research in Appalachia see Keefe, *Participatory Development in Appalachia*.
[117] See Couto's discussion of mediating structures and social capital in the region and Seitz's examination of several community organizations.

essential services and a gathering place for community activities. Faced with social issues including poverty, drug abuse, unemployment, outmigration, diminishing social ties, precarious work, negative stereotypes, and lack of perceived opportunity, there continues to be a need for service organizations in rural areas. Neoliberal policies, defunding and consolidation of public schools, closing of rural clinics, decreased grant pools, and proposed dismantling of entities like the Appalachian Regional Commission present real obstacles for rural communities. People need places to gather together and institutions that bridge gaps and create spaces for opportunity and creativity. Investments should be made in nonprofit service providers in rural areas As the experience of Grow Appalachia has shown across the region, working through preexisting nonprofits on rural and agricultural initiatives can lead to the establishment of new enterprises like farmers' markets and facilitate successful programs like community gardens and agricultural education initiatives. Governmental programs also play an important role in rural communities. Interviewees recalled the community centers that were scattered across Knox County during the War on Poverty. The interesting history and important work of these centers point to potentials for direct investment in rural areas. These community centers not only provided services to the local area but programs through the centers often questioned power structures and empowered residents to solve their own problems.[118] These kinds of investments and innovative and sometimes radical programs

[118] For examples of the radical potentials and political controversies of War on Poverty programs in the region see Huey Perry, *They'll Cut Off Your Project: A Mingo County Chronicle* (Morgantown, W.Va., 2011) and Samuel Bollier, "Fruitful Failure: Mountaineers, Volunteers, and Federally-Sponsored Community Action in Eastern Kentucky, 1960-1970" unpublished thesis, (Department of History, Brown University, 2009). See also Wesley Phelps, *A People's War on Poverty: Urban Politics and Grassroots Activists in Houston* (Athens, 2014); Robert Bauman, *Race and the War on Poverty: From Watts to East L.A.* (Norman, 2008); Annelise Orleck and Lisa Gayle Hazirjian, eds., *The War on Poverty : A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980* (Athens, GA, 2011).

have not been attempted since the 1960s on a large scale. Initiatives like the ARC's "Local Foods, Local Places" program begin to incorporate grassroots input and provide avenues for addressing economic development and agriculture issues. [119]

Lastly, residents' accounts point to possibilities for relocalization of food systems and economies in rural Kentucky. Interviewees shared a mix of pessimism and optimism about the future of the community and local agriculture. Their remembrances of the past as well as their continued traditions show the presence of local systems and ways of interacting or "doing community" on an interpersonal level. Rather than the idea of localizing economies, it is more accurate to think about relocalizing economies as interviewees pointed out how economic activity was much more area specific. These economic processes of local markets, enterprises, labor arrangements, and property regimes have always existed as part of the diverse economy of rural areas.[120] Many important and meaningful activities are not captured in the official records gathered by the census and ARC that report the socioeconomic status of places like Stinking Creek. Scholars should consider the possibilities for understanding and cultivating nonexploitative processes like home garden production, family-based food preservation, communal labor sharing, community collaboration and events like the sorghum stir off, reclaiming or repurposing public land like the community gardens at county schools, barter and gifting exchanges, commoning, and using local markets as a way to promote "community economy."

[119] The Knox County Farmers' Market was awarded a "Local Foods, Local Places" grant in 2015. The organization worked with partners to create an action plan around local food systems development in Knox County.
[120] Gibson-Graham, *The End Of Capitalism (As We Knew It)*; Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics*; Gibson-Graham, Cameron, and Healy, *Take Back the Economy.*

Community economies are based in promoting noncapitalist processes and ethical decision making and resource use. Gibson-Graham et al. define community economy as "a space of decision making where we recognize and negotiate our interdependence with other humans, other species, and our environment." According to Gibson-Graham et al., (2013, xviii-xix) "Ethical decision making involves surviving together well and equitably; distributing surplus to enrich social and environmental health; encountering others in ways that support their well-being as well as ours; consuming sustainably; caring for—maintaining, replenishing, and growing—our natural and cultural commons; and investing our wealth in future generations so that they can live well." Many residents indicated that gardening was no longer seen as necessary yet these processes do still exist and provide potentials for different ways of doing economy in rural areas. As Stinking Creek residents navigate the contradictions and complexities of a changing rural and agricultural landscape, further research and applied work is needed to connect stories and agricultural initiatives. The identification, articulation, preservation, and promotion of local knowledge and traditions in communities like Stinking Creek through oral history is one way to begin to cultivate different processes, relationships, and meanings relating to agriculture and the economy. As Appalachian communities face the challenges and possibilities of post-coal transition, Stinking Creek residents will continue to use a variety of ways to make ends meet, create new meanings for agriculture, and have new stories to tell.

CHAPTER 2

Daddy said when the whippoorwills start it's corn planting time
I like to watch it grow.

Momma canned 'em in gallon jars we didn't can in quarts, it wasn't big enough
You can can that! You can can anything that you want to can!

~

The following article developed from a seminar class I took in the spring of 2014 taught by Dwight Billings. The course considered different approaches to class analysis including the diverse economy framework of J.K. Gibson-Graham. I was just beginning the Grow Appalachia program as I was taking the course and was influenced by this unique way to think about the economy. This framework got me thinking about economic discourse and the representations of economic processes within the landscape of local foods and agriculture in the community and region. This article presents stories of representation and economic and agricultural discourse and sets out to do the discursive work to identify and articulate processes and expressions of alternative economic spaces. This case study considers the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program and how the diverse economy framework can provide helpful tools to examine the region and influence the discourse, encouraging new economic imaginings, community economies, and post-coal futures in central Appalachia.

This article first explains the concepts of diverse economy, community economy, and resubjectivation. These concepts were essential in understanding the economic landscape on Stinking Creek. It also examines the diverse economy framework as a way of thinking about economic processes including diverse transactions, labor, enterprise, property, and finance relationships. These axes include capitalist, alternative capitalist, and noncapitalist processes. The article then reviews literature considering diverse, noncapitalist economic practices that have existed and continue to persist in the region.

Building on these literatures several scholars have used the diverse economy framework in particular as a way to think about the economy beyond a focus on capitalism—or what Gibson-Graham describe as capitalocentrism.

The article then applies the diverse economy framework to the agricultural landscape of Stinking Creek, filling out the chart highlighting transactions, labor, and enterprise relationships present in the program. The diverse economy framework helped me think about all the different economic processes that were involved with my work on the Creek and within Appalachian agricultural systems. I saw these processes, actors, places, and relationships all around me. In filling out the chart, it was difficult deciding what concepts and processes to highlight. Some of the categorizations seem arbitrary, unfinished, contradictory, and unproblematized. In addition, stories of alternative economies emerged through the oral histories conducted with Knox Countians, discussing barter, gift, and underground economies, as well as various noncapitalist land and labor relationships. Writing the article helped me process what I had done and better understand the relationship between theory and practice and between past and present noncapitalist economic formations. Gibson-Graham's chart was a liberating way to think about the economy, poverty, jobs, and class, and to situate the practices I saw around me within a broader context.

Lastly, the article discusses three specific aspects of the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia program—home gardens, community gardens, and the Knox County Farmers' Market. I chose these components to discuss further because they illustrate different facets of noncapitalist economic processes. I discuss home gardens as sites for unpaid labor through self-provisioning and shared labor, community gardens as

noncapitalist cooperative enterprises, and the Knox County Farmers' Market as a venue for alternative market transactions. Furthermore, each of these components illustrate different durations and varying levels of success. The home gardens largely existed prior to the program and continue to exist. The community garden at Dewitt Elementary only existed for the duration of the program. The farmer's market was created through the program and continues to thrive.

Building on previous dialogues about sustainable economic development, this examination highlights the importance of representation in Appalachian communities and the critical task of changing the discourse about the economy. Through breaking down these processes and using this framework, this article argues for the importance of relocalization of food systems and economies. Identifying and articulating local processes then allows for discussions of which economic processes should be supported, honed, or ended. In the face of pressing social issues in the region and renewed interest in the discourses of development, local food, and just transition, this work seeks to intervene in region-wide discussions and suggest avenues for change through critical regionalism and engaged participatory research.

Cultivating Community Economy on Stinking Creek: The Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program Article Abstract

This case study considers the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program and how the diverse economy framework can provide helpful tools to examine the region and influence the discourse, encouraging new economic imaginings, community economies, and post-coal futures in central Appalachia. Building on previous

dialogues about sustainable economic development, this examination sets out to do the discursive work to identify and articulate processes and expressions of alternative economic spaces highlighting the importance of relocalization and representation in Appalachian communities. This article 1) explains the concepts of diverse economy, community economy, and resubjectivation and examines the diverse economy framework as a way of thinking about economic processes including diverse transactions, labor, enterprise, property, and finance 2) reviews the use of this model in Appalachian scholarship, 3) applies this framework to the agricultural landscape of Stinking Creek, and 4) discusses three specific aspects of the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia program—home gardens, community gardens, and the Knox County Farmers' Market. In the face of pressing social issues in the region and renewed interest in the discourses of development, local food, and just transition, this work seeks to intervene in region-wide discussions and suggest avenues for change through critical regionalism and engaged participatory research.

Article 2: Cultivating Community Economy on Stinking Creek: The Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program

Introduction—Planting Seeds of Discourse in the Appalachian Landscape

I was talking to Bige Warren about agriculture in the area of Knox County, Kentucky, known as Stinking Creek. When asked about the future of gardening in the community, he said he was encouraged, explaining:

> We've got to say these things and put them in people's minds and if it comes all the way down after a while it kind of takes hold. I think people say, "Well, maybe we ought to have a garden and maybe we *could* raise a garden." See if you're not

> careful we've had a generation here that come along after the '60s and on that didn't think we needed a garden. …I think we just need to say more of it and talk about it more. [121]

Bige has lived most of his life on Roaring Fork. A retired educator and farmer, I had gotten to know Bige through my work with the Lend-A-Hand Center, a nonprofit community service provider that has served the community since 1958.[122] I interviewed Bige in 2015 as part of an oral history project documenting people's life histories, agricultural traditions, perceptions of Stinking Creek, experiences with the Lend-A-Hand Center, and thoughts on the future of the community. I spent several years coordinating the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program implementing agricultural programs and working with home and community gardens and helping establish the Knox County Farmers' Market.

As we conversed, Bige told of family traditions: shearing sheep, plowing with a mule, making molasses, canning vegetables, dressing hogs, picking fruit trees, and peddling produce to nearby coal camps. Although now in his 80s, Bige still keeps a small garden and some livestock and hayfields. He had an optimistic outlook for the future relating, "I think it's like anything else we set out to do, we have to say these things and do these things to put them in people's minds so they'll want to do it." Reflecting back on our discussion, I realized Bige was making a poignant statement about discourse. He was talking about the power that comes with how we discuss things, the power in the ways in

[121] Bige's interview as well as the Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project, are available through the University of Kentucky Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7gxd0qvb04 (accessed July 1, 2018).
[122] A full examination and history of the Lend-A-Hand Center is beyond the scope of this article. For a history of the organization see Engle (2013).

which we speak things into being. He was talking about a discourse of economic and agricultural possibility.

Discourse about/on/across/in spite of the Appalachian region has proliferated in recent years. Newfound national attention to rural America in the wake of the 2016 U.S. Presidential election has thrust the region, yet again, into the national spotlight. News coverage, photo journalism, and video segments abound as people try to understand "Trump Country" (Catte 2016; Wilkerson 2017). Conflicting and sometimes contradictory voices of the region have emerged, making claims, shaping perceptions, and providing political agendas (Catte 2018; Stoll 2017; Vance 2016). Conversations and TV specials harken back to previous discoveries of Appalachia seeking to flesh out the region's current place in the national imaginary (Munn 1972; Shapiro 1978). Discourse about the region's economic status, political landscape, and future outlook continues as pundits ask questions like, "What's the Matter with Eastern Kentucky?" (Lowrey 2014).

Citizens' groups have also found renewed interest in thinking about "post-coal" futures, transition, sustainability, and economic diversity, especially in relation to agriculture.[123] MACED's "Renew Appalachia" initiative, [124] Kentuckians for the Commonwealth's "Appalachia's Bright Future" conferences and Appalachian Transition campaign,[125] Appalshop's Making Connections News,[126] Highlander's "Appalachian

[123] As Billings (2008, 164) previously observed, "Citizen organizations are waging discursive "wars of position" in civil society to win support for counter-hegemonic representations of the Appalachian economy against developers, industry officials, and state agencies."
[124] See http://www.appalachiantransition.org/ which highlights stories from around the region and https://maced.org/appalachia-transition/. MACED's website reads: "Shifting the Narrative: MACED is working to reclaim, reframe and retell the story of Appalachia as a critical piece of Just Appalachian Transition. In order for the region to move forward, our story must be accurate and honest so we'll know from where we came and how to get where we want to be."
[125] See https://kftc.org/campaigns/appalachian-transition.
[126] See https://www.makingconnectionsnews.org/about/.

Transition Fellowship" program,[127] the Alliance for Appalachia's Economic Transition team, [128] and Community Farm Alliance's Appalachian Food Story Project[129] have all done their part to influence the discourse.[130] In recent years organizations like Grow Appalachia,[131] the East Kentucky Food Systems Collaborative,[132] and the Appalachian Food Summit[133] have developed, highlighting the potential and enthusiasm behind local foods and agricultural movements throughout the region, and specifically in eastern Kentucky.

Educational institutions, academics, and governmental organizations have worked to create spaces for discussions about possible futures and platforms for furthering local foods movements in the region. The work of institutions like the University of Kentucky, Berea College, the University of Pikeville, Eastern Kentucky University, Morehead State University, and Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College,[134] seek to serve the region and wrestle with tough questions about transition. Kentucky's SOAR (Shaping Our Appalachian Region) initiative has local foods as part of its "blueprint" [135] while the

[127] See http://www.appfellows.org/.
[128] See http://theallianceforappalachia.org/ and Taylor, Hufford, and Bilbrey (2017) and Tarus, Hufford, and Taylor (2017).
[129] See http://cfaky.org/what-we-do/breaking-beans/. The decades long work of the Community Farm Alliance shows what is possible when alternative imaginings are allowed to flourish and local people take power and economic futures into their own hands (D. Billings, Fitzgerald, and Markowitz 2010; Ruccio and Billings 2008). This important citizens' organization has focused recent energy to developing eastern Kentucky's local food system through its Appal-TREE program, Eastern Kentucky Farm to Table Program, Farmers' Market Support Program, and community food system assessments. See Rossi, Meyer, and Knappage (2018) for a recent report on the potentials for local food systems development in southeastern Kentucky.
[130] Narratives from all of these organizations heavily feature agriculture as an important component of the region's transition to a more just, sustainable future.
[131] See https://growappalachia.berea.edu/.
[132] See http://www.appalfoods.org/.
[133] See https://www.appalachianfood.com/.
[134] See in particular the Higher Ground productions https://www.highergroundinharlan.com/.
[135] See http://www.soar-ky.org/blueprint/rfs. SOAR also sees prisons as economic development, touting the successful advance of a new federal prison in Letcher County, Kentucky. During the 2016 SOAR Summit, members of the Letcher Governance Project (http://www.letchergovproject.com/) publically protested the use of government funds towards such ends. SOAR has also advertised corrections jobs in the newly

federal "Local Foods, Local Places" initiative [136] partially sponsored by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), has worked with communities throughout the region on different food and agriculture projects.[137] Federal programs including the difficulties of the Obama administration's Power + Plan[138] or conversely, the Trump administration's budget proposals to eliminate the Power + Plan, various environmental protections,

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reopened private prison in Beatyville, Kentucky, now run by CoreCivic, formerly Corrections Corporation of America (CCA). As Billings (2016, 61) writes, "Discussions in SOAR focus on jobs, jobs, jobs, but not the class processes that define those jobs," nor apparently the moral and social implications of such jobs. As criminologists and many within the region would attest, prisons are not economic development. See Perdue and Sanchagrin (2016). SOAR's recent use of hastags also is telling about the power of channeling the discourse in the region. Recently #faithandgrit and #thereisafuture (https://www.thereisafuture.org/) have emerged as ways to shape the narrative about eastern Kentucky. The use of #faithandgrit rather than something like #democracyandjustice or #participationandcollaboration or #sustainabilityandhealth shows the framing of SOAR's agenda and channels the bootstrap narrative so familiar within neoliberal discourse. Furthermore, #thereisafuture seems to be a strange choice as it begs the question, is the implication that there is no future or wasn't going to be a future?

[136] See https://www.arc.gov/program_areas/LocalFoodsLocalPlacesInitiative.asp. For recent reports by the ARC about local foods see Haskell (2012) and Jackson et al. (2015). In 2015, Knox County participated in the "Local Foods, Local Places" program and an action plan was produced "Strengthening the Local Foods System: Actions and Strategies for Barbourville, Kentucky." See Local Foods Local Places Technical Assistance Program (2015).

[137] It is important to note that organizations like the ARC are talking about "economic diversity" and "diversification," but not in the same sense as Gibson-Graham's (1996, 2006) "diverse economy." For a glimpse at the ARC's understanding of economic diversity see the website "Economic Diversity in Appalachia
A Research Report and Economic Development Tool" available online at http://economicdiversityinappalachia.creconline.org/ and the accompanying reports "Economic Diversity in Appalachia: Statistics, Strategies, and Guides for Action" https://www.arc.gov/assets/research_reports/EconomicDiversityinAppalachiaCompilationofAllReports.pdf and "Economic Diversity in Appalachia: Case Studies in Economic Diversification" http://www.arc.gov/assets/research_reports/EconomicDiversityinAppalachia-CaseStudiesinEconomicDiversification1.pdf and "Economic Diversity in Appalachia: Statistical Portrait of Economic Diversity in Appalachia" http://www.arc.gov/assets/research_reports/EconomicDiversityinAppalachia-StatisticalPortraitofEconomicDiversityinAppalachia.pdf.

[138] The Power + Plan faced opposition from the start. Recent struggles over coal severance tax funds, Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) funds, and earmarked funds for coalmining communities impacted by deindustrialization as in parts of the Power + Plan relate to Gibson-Graham's (1996, 165-166) discussion of changing systems to distribute surplus or "'distributive class struggles' on the part of local citizens, workers, and government, efforts to capture some of the surplus for the region of its origin and the community it supports" in monoeconomies such as coal mining communities. They discuss communities "obtaining allocations of economic surplus for local purposes, including (though not limited to) economic development projects of a noncapitalist nature" (Gibson-Graham 1996, 166). They show how communities could "increase the presence of noncapitalist economic activity and generate a discourse of the value of class diversity for economic stability" through locally managed community funds (Gibson-Graham 1996, 167). See also Gibson-Graham (1996) chapter 8.

agriculture programs, social safety nets, economic initiatives, and the ARC altogether, evidence the continued power of neoliberal ideology—the belief that free markets should decide societal outcomes[139]—and the prevalence and strength of alternative visions guided by corporate and special interests (Reid and Taylor 2010).[140] In Appalachia today the gendered discourse around economic transition programs focuses largely on retraining programs for (primarily men) coal miners transitioning them to jobs in construction, agriculture, or the technology sector. [141]

These entities are describing the present moment and providing competing narratives for the future of the region (D. B. Billings 2008). They are saying what the region currently is, what alternatives are available, what needs to be done, and creating agendas for change. It is important to consider who is steering the conversation, whose voices are heard, whose are stifled, and what is overlooked in discussions of development and transition. These discourses can offer possibilities for imagination, or alternatively cooptation.[142] As Gibson-Graham (1996, 117) explain, "Economic policy discourse curtails and truncates the possible avenues of economic intervention, to the cost of all

[139] Neoliberalism as the hegemonic political ideology of the past several decades among other things promotes increased privatization, lowering taxes, decreased government regulation, and lessening public safety net programs.

[140] Further research is warranted on the ARC's role in the discursive construction of Appalachian economic identity and the representational tactics that have been used and are currently being used to impact the region economically, especially the "coalfields"—a label which itself implies a certain hegemonic gendered economic subjectivity. See Gibson-Graham (2006) chapter 2.

[141] Current proposals to intervene in the international energy market and save dying coal plants by directing utilities to buy coal or talks of a coal "bailout" bears eerie similarities to Gibson-Graham's discussion of the Australian steel giant BHP. See Gibson-Graham (1996) chapter 8, especially 197-198. Gibson-Graham (1996, 203-204) report, "It would seem that the class politics enacted during the 1980s in Australian steel regions was confined to maintaining access to wages for some, and ensuring the continuation of outmoded, environmentally unfriendly and masculinist capitalist production processes in order to 'save the region.' It left unchallenged the mono-industrial culture of the regions, the environmental and health impacts of industrial pollution and failed to secure the rights of women, minorities and future generations to any entitlement in the local economy. It also left unchallenged BHP's rights to use its steel regions as a source of funds to be siphoned off through the corporate accounting system into speculative and production activities in other regions and nations."

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those interested in the political goal of class transformation." These conversations and initiatives echo Bige's point—that you have to talk about things to bring them into being. That people often don't know or realize things are there or possible unless they are identified, proposed, and encouraged. Ideas and processes have to be pointed out, talked about, formulated, articulated, and disseminated in order to take hold.

Within the context of Appalachian transition and sustainable development, many economic processes are *present* but not *represented* in conversations of the economy in the region. Likewise important parts of the agricultural terrain are overlooked in discourses around food and agriculture. Large segments of the economy are left out of official records, academic reports, and development agendas, including informal economic practices, cash economies, underground economies, informal labor arrangements, household production, and cooperative enterprises. Many indicators like US Census or United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) figures do not capture the full picture of economic processes. A host of agricultural and gardening outputs and relationships go largely unrecognized in the region and beyond, for example: home garden production, family-based food preservation, communal labor sharing, community collaboration and agricultural events, reclaiming, repurposing or occupying public land, barter and gifting exchanges, commoning, illegal growing, and use of local markets. Work must be done to uncover and bring to light these processes that are important components of Appalachian communities and economies. Whether coming from the media, nonprofits, governments, academics, or local residents, the way we talk about things matters. The current discourse in/on the region shows the necessity of positing alternatives, frameworks, and agendas.

The following examines one such framework and alternative visions for thinking about economic processes, especially in relation to agriculture. This case study considers the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program and how the diverse economy framework can provide helpful tools to examine the region and influence the discourse, encouraging new economic imaginings, community economies, and post-coal futures in central Appalachia. Building on previous dialogues about sustainable economic development, this examination sets out to do the discursive work to identify and articulate processes and expressions of alternative economic spaces highlighting the importance of relocalization and representation in Appalachian communities. This article 1) explains the concepts of diverse economy, community economy, and resubjectivation and examines the diverse economy framework as a way of thinking about economic processes including diverse transactions, labor, enterprise, property, and finance, 2) reviews the use of this model in Appalachian scholarship, 3) applies this framework to the agricultural landscape of Stinking Creek, and 4) discusses three specific aspects of the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia program—home gardens, community gardens, and the Knox County Farmers' Market. In the face of pressing social issues in the region and renewed interest in the discourses of development, local food, and just transition, this work seeks to intervene in region-wide discussions and suggest possible avenues for change.

The Diverse Economy Framework

The diverse economy framework presents a different way to think about class, economic relationships, and capitalism.[143] The framework, developed by feminist

[143] Using class as a discursive entry point to understanding the complexity of overdetermined processes is just one way to understand the social world. These processes are racialized, gendered, and sexualized. For

economic geographers J.K. Gibson Graham (1996, 2006), refocuses our attention from capitalocentric economic models which reduce the economy to one set of class relationships and productive/distributive processes, and helps us to recognize the diversity of economic processes and relationships that actually exist in society. They highlight the capitalocentrism[144] present in discussions of the economy wherein everything in the economy gets classified or understood in relation to capitalism.[145] Using class as an entry point to think about the social world and relationships in an overdetermined way, considering how all social processes are inextricably linked and no one singular cause can explain social phenomena, Gibson-Graham emphasize the importance of discourse and how we talk about the economy in an effort towards "constructing a language of economic diversity" (2006, 53).[146] In their analysis, they note, "Many different economic forms exist in the shadow of capitalism until we do the discursive and political work to bring them to light, to establish their credibility, vitality, and viability" (1996 xxii). Their framework seeks to queer the economy or unearth the hidden processes that also make up the economy but should not be considered capitalist relationships. By naming and understanding other economic forms, this framework seeks to make room for new ways of understanding economic subjectivity and economic arrangements and cultivating more just and sustainable relationships. They seek to build a new economic discourse and understanding of people's multiple relationships with

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further discussions of race, gender, and sexuality within this framework see Roelvink et al. (2015), Gibson-Graham et al. (2001), and Gibson-Graham et al. (2000). For patriarchal household relations see Gibson-Graham (1996) chapter 9.

[144] See also Gibson-Graham (2006, 56).

[145] See Gibson-Graham (1996, 5-11) and Gibson-Graham's (1996, 253–59) discussion of the "discursive features of Capitalism": unity, singularity, and totality.

[146] See also Gibson-Graham (1996, 15-17).

economic processes and how individuals can simultaneously be taking part in capitalist, alternative capitalist, and noncapitalist class processes.

Building from Resnick and Wolff (1987) and other nonessentialist Marxist analysis this framework views class as a process rather than a categorization or relationship to the means of production.[147] Class as process focuses on the process of the production, appropriation, distribution, and reception of economic surpluses.[148] Capitalist class processes[149] in which surplus is appropriated from wage laborers, as well as noncapitalist class processes in which surplus is self-appropriated, collectively appropriated, or forcibly or coercively appropriated coexist in contemporary society.[150] Gibson-Graham examine the economy as a complex system in which individuals often

[147] See Gibson-Graham (1996) chapter 3.

[148] As Gibson-Graham (1996, 17) explain "When individuals labor beyond what is necessary for their own reproduction and the 'surplus' fruits of their labor are appropriated by others (or themselves), and when that surplus is distributed to its social destinations, then we may recognize the processes of class." They discuss "class as an overdetermined social process" (Gibson-Graham 1996, 55). Gibson-Graham note, "An industrialized social formation may be the site of a rich proliferation of class processes and a wide variety of class positions - producer, appropriator, distributor, or receiver of surplus labor in a variety of forms. Class processes are not restricted to the industrial or even the capitalist economy. They occur wherever surplus labor is produced, appropriated, or distributed. The household is thus a major site of class processes, sometimes incorporating a 'feudal' domestic class process in which one partner produces surplus labor in the form of use values to be appropriated by the other" (Gibson-Graham 1996, 58-59). See also chapter 3 and Resnick and Wolff (1987).

[149] Gibson-Graham (1996, xxiv) define capitalism as "a social relation, or class process, in which nonproducers appropriate surplus labor in value form from free wage laborers. The appropriated surplus is then distributed by the appropriators (the capitalist or board of directors of the capitalist firm) to a variety of social destinations. In this rendition, capitalism becomes recognizable as a set of practices scattered over a landscape in formal and informal enterprise settings, interacting with noncapitalist firms as well as all other sites and processes, activities and organizations." See also Gibson-Graham (1996, 3).

[150] Building on Marxist tradition, Gibson-Graham discuss different modes of production/class processes including: capitalist, ancient, primitive communist, feudal, slave, and communal. See also Gibson-Graham (1996, 54) for further definitions of kinds of class processes. They note, "In any particular society we may find a great variety of forms of exploitation associated with production for a market - independent forms in which a self-employed producer appropriates her own surplus labor, capitalist forms in which surplus value is appropriated from wage labor, collective or communal forms in which producers jointly appropriate surplus labor, slave forms in which surplus labor is appropriated from workers who do not have freedom of contract" (Gibson-Graham 1996, 262). They also discuss feudal forms, in which "the surplus labor of one individual or group is appropriated under conditions of fealty and mutual obligation in use value form, in return for the provision of means of subsistence" (Gibson-Graham 1996, 54). See also Gibson-Graham (1996) chapter 9 for a discussion of feudal class processes.

hold multiple and perhaps contradictory positions.[151] How surplus is produced, appropriated, distributed, and received comprises the focus of Gibson-Graham's interrogation and their interventions to create more equitable and sustainable futures. As they point out, how one defines class fundamentally changes the nature of class struggles and social transformation.[152]

Billings (2016) advocated the use of post-structuralist Marxist analysis to examine economic processes in the Appalachian region. Building on his introduction to the framework and discussions of overdetermination,[153] capitalocentrism,[154] and class-as-process,[155] it is important to examine a few more concepts in Gibson-Graham's analysis: diverse economy, community economy, and resubjectivation.

Diverse Economy—A Politics of Language

In highlighting the variety of economic processes present at any time and place, Gibson-Graham describe what they call the diverse economy. The diverse economy

[151] See Gibson-Graham (1996, 19) and chapter 3.
[152] As they explain, "Because class is understood as a process that exists in change, the class 'structure' constituted by the totality of these positions and sites is continually changing. Projects of class transformation are therefore always possible and do not necessarily involve social upheaval and hegemonic transition. Class struggles do not necessarily take place between groups of people whose identities are constituted by the objective reality and subjective consciousness of a particular location in a social structure. Rather, they take place whenever there is an attempt to change the way in which surplus labor is produced, appropriated, or distributed" (Gibson-Graham 1996, 59). See also Gibson-Graham (1996, 57-59) and chapter 11.
[153] According to Billings (2016, 58–59), "This is the idea that all social processes are mutually constitutive and that no one of them, including class, can be singled out as *the* overriding or essential cause of social inequality and change…Class is not *the* essential motor of history but rather an important *discursive entry point* for analysis and criticism, a story or accounting device if you will, that highlights certain issues of justice that other approaches might miss by not focusing on economic exploitation brought about by certain forms of the production of goods and services."
[154] According to Billings (2016, 59), "This is the idea that all contemporary economic activities are ever and always capitalistic. Capitalocentric discourses overestimate the ubiquity, omnipotence, and unity of capitalism. There are many forms of production and exchange that should *not* be equated to capitalism."
[155] According to Billings (2016, 59), "Class is best thought about as *processes* rather than *groups*. Class stories describe how people participate in numerous and distinct class (and non- class) processes throughout the day."

encompasses the range of economic activities and relationships that relate to class as a process.[156] Their framework considers the economy along different axes—primarily transactions, [157] labor, [158] and enterprise, [159] as well as property,[160] and finance[161] (see chart below). Along these axes are capitalist, alternative, and noncaptialist economic formations emphasizing class processes that often go unacknowledged.[162]

Gibson-Graham show how language is political and deconstructing capitalist hegemony and identifying and classifying different types of economic formations is a political act. In creating the language of diverse economy, Gibson-Graham seek to overcome capitalocentrism and closely examine the production, appropriation, distribution, and reception of economic surpluses in order to direct those flows and decision making processes to create community economy.

Community Economy—A Politics of Collective Action

Building community economy involves taking ethical action: "*surviving* together well and equitably; *distributing surplus* to enrich social and environmental health; *encountering others* in ways that support their well-being as well as ours; *consuming* sustainably; *caring for*—maintaining, replenishing, and growing—our natural and cultural *commons*; and *investing our wealth in future generations* so that they can live well" (Gibson-Graham 2013, xviii-xix). Gibson-Graham (2006, 81) describe community

[156] Gibson-Graham (2006, 54) work to "construct a language of the *diverse economy* in which the economic landscape is represented as populated by a myriad of contingent forms and interactions."
[157] See Gibson-Graham (2006, 60-62).
[158] See Gibson-Graham (2006, 62-65).
[159] See Gibson-Graham (2006, 65-68).
[160] See Gibson-Graham, Cameron, and Healy (2013, 125-158).
[161] See Gibson-Graham, Cameron, and Healy (2013, 159-188).
[162] They also use an iceberg graphic to show the processes that lie just below the surface and go unnoticed. See Gibson-Graham (2006, 69-79).

economy as "a discourse and a practice," stressing the importance of interdependency and interventions at sites of ethical decision making in economic processes. They describe how community economy involves decisions about necessity, surplus, consumption, and commons.[163] Cultivating community economy involves changing class processes—processes of production, appropriation, and distribution of surplus value. They note that some class processes are "exploitative in the case of appropriation by nonproducers (in, for example, a capitalist, feudal, or slave class process) or nonexploitative in the case of producer appropriation (in an independent or communal class process)" (Gibson-Graham 2006, 90). Community economy involves performing economy by promoting certain class processes, curtailing others, and eliminating others. Community economy involves promoting alternative and noncaptialist economic processes that are nonexploitative or less exploitative of people and the earth rather than capitalist economic processes that are inherently exploitative.[164]

Community economies foster a different set of priorities and relationships and seek to promote more equal and just economic arrangements. They are community enactments that involve "enhancing well-being, instituting different class relations of surplus appropriation and distribution, promoting community and environmental

[163] Gibson-Graham (1996, xviii) explain, "We have tentatively identified *necessity*, *surplus*, *consumption*, and *commons* as four ethical coordinates or foci for organizing our discussions and negotiations around building a community economy. The questions we have used as a focus for reflection and decision making include the following: What are our needs and how can they be met? What is surplus to our needs and how should it be generated, pooled, distributed, and deployed? What resources are to be consumed and how should this consumption be distributed? What is our commons and how should it be renewed, sustained, enlarged, drawn down, and/or extended to others?" See also Gibson-Graham (2006, 88).

[164] Although Gibson-Graham (1996, 165) describe class as a process of exploitation, they explain, "Exploitation in the strict sense entails the appropriation of surplus labor by someone other than the laborer; non-exploitative appropriation of surplus labor occurs when individuals or collectivities appropriate their own surplus labor to distribute it as they wish or require. Taken together, these processes of appropriation and distribution constitute the 'processes of class.'"

sustainability, recognizing and building on economic interdependence and adopting an ethic of care of the other" (Gibson-Graham 2006, xxxvii). In "constructing other economies" Gibson-Graham (2006, 79) describe the importance of being-in-common[165] and the interdependencies that exist between people and the earth. It is through developing community economy that social transformations can occur.

Resubjectivation—A Politics of the Subject

Lastly, Gibson-Graham's framework points toward a different way of thinking about economic subjectivity. In addition to "a politics of language" and "a politics of collective action," Gibson-Graham (1996, x) call attention to "a politics of the subject." They invite us to reframe our understanding of the economy, our possibilities for creating economic alternatives, and our conceptualizations of ourselves. Identifying the vast amount of capitalist and noncapitalist processes that exist all around using the language of diverse economy, individuals can begin to cultivate a different understanding of themselves and others and their place in the economy. Individuals' economic identities are often primarily tied to capitalism—as consumers of capitalist goods, workers in a capitalist firm, or perhaps owners of capitalist firms. Gibson-Graham invite us to think about the multitude of economic processes we engage in—unpaid domestic labor, work with nonprofits, bartering, gift giving, interactions with the state.[166] In recognizing and understanding these economic relationships, individuals (and organizations and communities) can begin to identify with different subject positions and embrace multiple economic identities.

[165] See Gibson-Graham (2006) chapter 6.
[166] See Gibson-Graham (2006, 76).

They call for "destabilizing existing identities, prompting new identifications, and cultivating different desires and capacities" (Gibson-Graham 2006, 144). This frameworks seeks "dis-identification with the subject positions offered by a hegemonic discourse and identification with alternative and politically enabling positions" (Gibson-Graham 2006, 77). They call for building economic identification beyond capitalism toward noncapitalist becomings. This process of changing identifications may be described as resubjectivation[167] or cultivating subjects for a community economy. They note that this is not an easy task describing how resubjectivation is not only a discursive project but also one related to affect. It involves dealing with feelings, emotions, fears, anger, and attachments to previous economic subjectivities.[168] Harnessing emotion, uncertainty, discomfort, and optimism presents openings for new becomings. They point out that seeing class as process rather than category, and identifying with various subject positions

> might enable some individuals to understand their economic experience as both a domain of difference and a region of possibility: the possibility, for example, of establishing communal or collective forms of appropriation, or becoming self-appropriating, or reducing the surplus that is appropriated by others, or changing the destination and size of surplus distributions (Gibson- Graham 1999, 19).

These changed economic recognitions, identifications, and desires have the capacity to promote class transformation and different kinds of people building community in place.

[167] Gibson-Graham (2006, xxxvi) explain resubjectivation as "the mobilization and transformation of desires, the cultivation of capacities, and the making of new identifications with something as vague and unspecified as a "community economy."
[168] See Gibson-Graham (2006, 152-155).

Chart—The Diverse Economy

In *Take Back the Economy*, (2013) Gibson-Graham, Cameron, and Healy further hone the diverse economies framework. They present a how-to guide or handbook for understanding and enacting different economic relationships, building community economy, and developing different economic subjectivities. They continue to seek to reframe conversations about the economy and further elaborate on property, finance, and commons processes. They chart the different capitalist, alternative, and noncapitalist economic forms along the axes of labor, enterprise, transactions, property, and finance. The chart below represents a composite of their framework.

Table 1 The Diverse Economy Framework

Labor	Enterprise	Transactions	Property	Finance
Wage/Paid Labor [169]	Capitalist[170]	Market Exchange[171]	Private	Mainstream Market
Alternative Paid Labor	Alternative Capitalist	Alternative Market	Alternative Private	Alternative Market Finance
Self-employed Cooperative Indentured Reciprocal labor In-kind Work for welfare	Green capitalist firm Socially responsible firm State-run enterprise	Fair trade and direct trade Reciprocal exchange Alternative currency Local trading system Community-supported agriculture Barter Underground market Informal market	State-owned Tenanted Ninety-nine-year lease Customary Community-managed Community trust	State banks Government-sponsored lenders Credit unions Microfinance Friendly societies Community-based financial institutions
Unpaid	Noncapitalist	Nonmarket	Open Access	Nonmarket Finance
Housework Family care Neighborhood work Volunteering Self-provisioning Slave labor	Cooperative Social enterprise Self-employed business Slave enterprise Feudal estate	Household flows Gift giving Gleaning State allocations Hunting, fishing, gathering Theft, poaching	Atmosphere Water Open ocean Ecosystem services	Sweat equity Community-supported business Rotating credit funds Family lending Donations Interest-free loans

Adapted from J.K. Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron, & Stephen Healy Take Back the Economy

[169] Wage labor includes: salaried, unionized, nonunionized, part time, temporary, seasonal, familial (Gibson-Graham (2006, 63).
[170] Capitalist enterprises include: family firm, private unincorporated firm, public company, multinational (Gibson-Graham (2006, 65).
[171] Market exchange include: "Free," naturally protected, artificially protected, monopolized, regulated, niche (Gibson-Graham (2006, 61).

As shown, many economic relationships and entities exist outside of capitalist bounds. Capitalist processes are represented in the top section of the chart. The second and third sections examine alternative and noncapitalist economic formations. The columns show the different categories of economic arrangements in Gibson-Graham's framework. They examine labor—ways in which work is done, enterprise—organizations that organize economic activities and produce and distribute wealth, transactions—exchanges of goods and services or markets, property—ownership and access regimes, and finance—capital and investment activities. When considered closely, many processes we often ascribe to capitalism actually don't involve the appropriation of surplus from wage labor. We work in ways that belie our primary identifications as employees of capitalist firms. We interact with noncapitalist enterprises much more often than we imagine. We think of all markets as capitalist although we participate in other markets and types of transactions on a daily basis. We immediately assume property is private while accessing a range of property configurations. We assume the inevitability of totality of the capitalist financial sector while different ways of funding and using capital are expanding.

As mentioned, in pursuing community economy, Gibson-Graham seek to support and grow some processes, while curtailing or eliminating others. Many activities in these cells can promote an ethic of care for the other, equitable distribution of surplus, and sustainability, while others may be exploitative, undemocratic, and harmful to the earth. Some processes and relationships may be difficult to map or it may seem like important components are left out. This chart is just a guide for thinking about the economy in a more nuanced and inclusive way. Any number of entities, economic processes, or

relationships can be mapped through this framework. This may be helpful in considering your own communities and economic relationships. Now that we have an overview of the language of diverse economy, let's consider how this and similar frameworks have already been applied to the Appalachian region.

The Diverse Economy in Appalachia

The examination of diverse, noncapitalist economic practices in Appalachia is not a new idea. Many authors have considered informal economies, household economies, underground economies, and slave economies as important components of the economic landscape of the region. Traditional Native American economic and agricultural practices and relationships to settler colonial capitalist economic systems have been the subject of several studies (Bloom 2002; Ehle 1988; Hill 1997; T. Perdue 1998). Though preindustrial Appalachia was by no means an egalitarian society comprised of yeoman farmers, there is debate about the precise processes accounting for Appalachia's industrialization and integration into the global economy (D. Billings and Blee 2000, 2004; D. Billings, Blee, and Swanson 1986; Dunaway 1996; Egolf, Fones-Wolf, and Martin 2009; Eller 1982; Pudup, Billings, and Waller 1995; Salstrom 1994; Weise 2001; Gregg 2004). There is a consensus that the preindustrial Appalachian economy was based on exploitive class processes, including the theft of native land, slavery, patriarchal gender relations, and land ownership and wealth inequality. Even though preindustrial Appalachian communities like other American communities of the time were stratified, they had different ways of "doing community" and engaging in economic processes than industrial and late capitalist communities. Although the trade of goods, raw materials,

and people crossed the globe, localized economies largely organized economic and social relations. Agricultural products, livestock, timber products, building materials, textiles, spirits, salt, medicinals, and other essential items were primarily procured locally. Families were able to fulfill most of their needs from a relatively small radius from their homes. Although standards of living have changed drastically with globalization, potentials for *re*-localized economies in Appalachia today offer promising possibilities based on past systems of local exchange and cooperation.

Many scholars have examined the subsistence strategies, independent production, small-scale farming, local markets, cooperative enterprises, kin-based systems, nonmarket production, norms of reciprocity, home food preservation, seed saving, and barter and gift economies that existed and continue to persist in Appalachian communities (Beaver 1986; D. Billings and Blee 2000, 2004; D. Billings, Blee, and Swanson 1986; Boyer 2006; A. Kingsolver 2015a, 2015a; LaLone 1996, 2008; Portelli 2011; Pudup, Billings, and Waller 1995; Scott 1996; Conley 2012; K. J. Black 2015; Quandt, Popyach, and DeWalt 1994; Best 2013, 2017). The prevalence and influence of these forms of economic activity point to alternative ways of relating to each other and nature in Appalachian communities.[172] The traditions of the Appalachian commons also provides promising examples of communal resource use and conservation (Boyer 2006; Newfont 2012; Hufford 2002; Reid and Taylor 2010; Puckett et al. 2012) including

[172] Reece's (2014) discussions of co-ops as a possibility for eastern Kentucky also offers alternative economic imaginaries. Reece profiles contemporary examples of the successes of cooperative systems in Cleveland Ohio, and harkens back to historical examples of noncapitalist processes in eastern Kentucky. In the aftermath of the Upper Big Branch disaster, Reece poses the question, "What if the workers had owned that mine?" He describes the town of Himlerville in Martin County, Kentucky, which was a worker owned mine from that operated in the 1920s. Cantrell (1992) has researched the development and decline of this interesting exercise in economic imagination and political experimentation. See also Cantrell's "Himler, Himlerville, and a Historian's Quest" at http://www.appalachianhistory.net/2015/09/himler-himlerville-and-a-historians-quest.html.

commoning, community opposition to enclosure, and negotiations over ownership and access in the region.

In her 1990 work, Halperin anticipated the ideas put forth by Gibson-Graham about diverse economies in her analysis of "multiple livelihood strategies" of northeastern Kentuckians; these included flea markets, gardening, and "public" or wage work in factories and the service sector. Framed as resistance to dependence on capitalism, Halperin reads these complex processes as "making ends meet" showing how family networks facilitate complex strategies in the "deep" and "shallow" rural and urban areas of Appalachian Kentucky. Halperin (1990, 4) noted, "The concept of multiple livelihood strategies is an attempt to overcome the conventional dichotomies: formal and informal and capitalist and noncapitalist economies. It is designed to describe modes of livelihood that are neither rural nor urban, capitalist nor precapitalist, but combinations of these." Halperin (1990, 15) explained, "In the face of plant closings, plummeting tobacco subsidies, a less and less adequate minimum wage, and the seasonal vagaries of agricultural cycles, the Kentucky way represents both continuity with past forms of rural economic organization and some creative solutions to what are becoming widespread economic conditions." Halperin (1990) typologized three economic sectors: agrarian, wage, and market sectors that people navigate and analyzed different types of flea markets emphasizing the informal economy. This important study provided many of examples of how people are able to survive and thrive outside of capitalist economic formations and how capitalist and noncapitalist economic formations coexist. She also began to provide a language for thinking about these complex sites of production and reproduction and possibilities for resistance to capitalist exploitation.

A range of Appalachian scholars have gestured toward or incorporated the diverse economies framework as a way to understand the past and envision futures in the region. In several publications, Kingsolver (1992, 2011; 2015b) advocates conceptualizing class as process as she examines diverse livelihood strategies and webs of relationships in the tobacco, textile, service, and manufacturing sectors of Nicholas County, Kentucky. Billings and Blee (2004) use class as process to explain the development of poverty in Clay County, Kentucky. Oberhauser (2002, 2005) examines gender relations in Appalachia within the diverse economies framework. Fickey's (2014; 2014; 2010, 2011; A. Fickey and Hanrahan 2014; Amanda L. Fickey and Samers 2015) work on craft production and alternative economic geographies in the region has also taken up the diverse economies framework.

The 2002 issue of the *Journal of Appalachian Studies* directly addressed Gibson-Graham's framework. Reid and Taylor's (2002) article set off an intriguing discussion about ethics of care, commons building, and global struggles for justice. Graham et al. (2002) provide examples of the power of relocalization and participatory projects within the community economies framework in the face of the inequities of capitalist globalization.

The 2010 publication of Reid and Taylor's *Recovering the Commons: Democracy, Place, and Global Justice* further added to possibilities and alternative economic imaginaries. In one of the most compelling theoretical interventions in the region, Reid and Taylor (2010, 5) put forward the concept of body~place~commons: "subjectivity as intersubjectivity arising in embodied practices in concrete places within heterogeneous temporalities of the ecological commons." Reid and Taylor's (2010)

emphasis on the commons overlaps with Gibson-Graham's discussions of "commoning." Defining the commons as "the substantive grounds of social and ecological production," Reid and Taylor (2010, 22) lay out an intricate "feminist materialist understanding of the commons." Although somewhat theoretically diverging from Gibson-Graham, Reid and Taylor (2010, 82–83, 182–83) make connections between human and nonhuman forces and outline the global connections of resistance movements and struggles for justice, equality, and sustainability. Although Reid and Taylor often seem to inflate the "straw man" of global capitalism, many of their concepts relate to the idea of "community economy" and more sustainable and just futures for the region.

Several recent edited volumes mention the utility of Gibson-Graham's theorizing in the region. In an excellent chapter in *Transforming Places,* Puckett et al. (2012) examine the "knowledge commons" and possibilities for building transformative collaborations across the academy and across nation states using the internet. In concluding *Transforming Places,* Smith and Fisher (2012) mention the work of Gibson-Graham. They argue "place-based organizing can build on the fact that material survival, even in the U.S. capitalist economy, involves noncapitalist economic practices that are central to the social relations of any place"(B. E. Smith and Fisher 2012, 273). In *Studying Appalachian Studies*, (Berry, Obermiller, and Scott 2015) several contributors similarly posit the diverse economy framework as a possible path for the future of Appalachian Studies showing the importance of building just, sustainable, commons-generating communities in place. Smith (2015, 48) points out "the invisibility of noncapitalist economic relations and the tendency to overlook the activities of the majority of the population of Appalachia, which is female." In a chapter in *Appalachia*

Revisited, Piser (2016) likewise advocates for incorporating Gibson-Graham's ideas into Appalachian Studies scholarship. Most recently in a chapter in *Appalachia in Regional Context*, Pickles (2018) examines place and the commons in light of diverse economies.

Grow Appalachia and the Diverse Economy on Stinking Creek

Grow Appalachia

Gibson-Graham's framework has been helpful in conceptualizing my work in the Stinking Creek community of Knox County, Kentucky.[173] From 2014-2017 I coordinated a multifaceted gardening program through the Lend-A-Hand Center, working with community members, local organizations, and outside partners. Building from my previous research and volunteering with the Lend-A-Hand Center, this project sought to continue the work of the Center and to allow me to learn more about the community, develop relationships with people, become involved in agriculture and local foods, while at the same time developing a project that would make a tangible impact in the area. The Lend-A-Hand Center is 501c3 nonprofit community service provider located in Walker, Kentucky. Begun in 1958 by nurse midwife Peggy Kemner and farmer and teacher Irma Gall, the Center has worked diligently for decades to fulfill its mission to "lend a hand" in the Stinking Creek community. Providing a wide range of services including nurse midwifery, home healthcare, 4H, children's programs, and agricultural programs, the Center has a rich history of service and collaboration.[174]

[173] The community was made famous by journalist John Fetterman's (1967) book *Stinking Creek*.
[174] See Engle (2013).

In 2014 I applied for the Lend-A-Hand Center to became a partner site for Grow Appalachia. The Grow Appalachia program is a privately-funded[175] initiative that provides resources and technical assistance for nonprofits in Appalachia to facilitate agricultural initiatives including home, community, and institutional (schools, jails, rehabilitation centers, etc.) gardening programs. Grow Appalachia is administered by Berea College and partners with community organizations throughout the region to promote food security and access to healthy, local food. Utilizing organic gardening techniques, Grow Appalachia's mission is "Helping as many Appalachian families grow as much of their own food as possible."[176] Grow Appalachia makes grants to existing nonprofit organizations and helps encourage local food systems development, sustainability, and self-sufficiency.[177] Partner sites work with families in the region providing resources, training, and technical assistance to help grow gardens. The program addresses a number of economic issues and its processes, entities, goals, and outcomes may be conceptualized in interesting ways using Gibson-Graham's framework. Grow Appalachia aims to promote different kinds of nonclass processes,[178] as well as capitalist, alternative, and noncapitalist class processes. Grow Appalachia programs throughout the

[175] The program is privately funded with some government grant funding, fundraising, and matching funds.
[176] For more information see https://growappalachia.berea.edu/about/.
[177] The partner sites involved in the Grow Appalachia program includes some very influential and historic nonprofit organizations in the region. Representatives from the partner sites gather together for an affiliates meeting every year and are able to share knowledge and plan for the year. Many organizations, including the Lend-A-Hand Center, that were a part of the Council of the Southern Mountains have also been Grow Appalachia sites. When I attended the affiliates gathering I was struck by the power of meeting together with people from around the region that were doing such good work in their communities.
[178] Like any organization, Grow Appalachia spurs on myriad nonclass processes- environmental processes, interpersonal relationships, gendered processes, etc. The Grow Appalachia program also engages in the nonclass process of cultural heritage preservation and promotion through the online blog that partner sites post on and the literary journal "Pollen." The website notes, "We respect tradition. Families throughout Appalachia have heritages of family seeds, growing techniques and recipes. Grow Appalachia participants are encouraged to learn more about the legacy of farming and gardening in their families and local cultures. We deliberately establish mentorships among generations and families as well as among partner sites" (Grow Appalachia. 2015. "What We Do." Retrieved February 26, 2015).

region have spurred new enterprises, labor arrangements, initiatives, products, and interpersonal relationships.

According to the website, "Grow Appalachia was created in 2009 through funding from John Paul Dejoria, co-founder and owner of John Paul Mitchell Systems (JPMS) and Patrón Tequila,[179] to address the problem of food security in Appalachia"[180] In some ways it is difficult to make sense of a designer-haircare-entrepreneurial-capitalist-funded program that promotes a variety of capitalist and noncapitalist class processes relating to agriculture in Appalachia. The program exemplifies a matrix of diverse finance relations and various avenues for the distribution of surplus.[181] Funding from Dejoria's "JP's Peace Love Happiness" foundation[182] in addition to a mix of capitalist philanthropy, local matching and in-kind contributions, government grants, state grants, and individual donations provide the capital needed to implement these programs at the local level.

A wide range of noncapitalist class processes are involved with Grow Appalachia. The program simultaneously seeks to promote self-appropriation of surplus value through home consumption of produce and market-oriented production, viewing gardening as a possible entrepreneurial endeavor. The website notes, "We encourage growers to *move*

[179] Designer haircare products and high-end tequila seem to be the epitome of conspicuous consumption and global capitalist production.
[180] Grow Appalachia. 2015. "History and Goals." Retrieved February 26, 2015. (http://growappalachia.berea.edu/history-goals/).
[181] See Gibson-Graham's (1996, 18-19) discussion of how the capitalist firms and the finance industry can engender various noncapitalist class relations. They note, "Thus even if one theorizes the finance industry itself as thoroughly capitalist, it can be represented as existing in a process of self-contradiction rather than self-replication - in the sense that it is a condition of existence of noncapitalist as well as capitalist activities and relations. A frothy spawn of economic diversity slips out from under the voluminous skirts of the (demon capitalist) finance industry" (Gibson-Graham, 1996, 19). See also Gibson-Graham (1996) chapter 8.
[182] See https://www.peacelovehappinessfoundation.org/.

toward entrepreneurship[183] by providing technical assistance, which improves garden yields, and access to efficient kitchens and *markets*.[184] This way, growers can save on grocery costs[185] and begin to make extra money on *surplus produce*.[186] We also encourage growers to develop value-added goods such as jellies and salsas *through community commercial kitchens*" [187] (emphasis added).[188] Some growers in scaling up may hire wage labor, enacting capitalist class processes through the program. Furthermore, some growers may rely on household labor or feudal class processes in growing their produce enlisting labor from children, extended family, or spouses.

The program does not seem to specifically espouse communal class processes of selling produce communally or starting worker self-directed enterprises (Wolff 2012), but it does support community gardens many of which are collectively run as well as some community-based enterprises throughout the region such as community kitchens. The Grow Appalachia program is particularly interesting because of its focus on promoting and documenting the sharing economy and gift economy, alternative economic forms that seldom are recorded by capitalocentric institutions like the ARC, USDA, or the US Census. As part of the reporting procedures, sites are charged with quantifying the gift economy, sharing economy, and home consumption in relation to the produce harvested and used. Across all the partner sites[189] Grow Appalachia records how many pounds of

[183] This move could be seen as a sort of resubjectivation. "Entrepreneur" being a different kind of economic subjectivity and "entrepreneurship" being a particular kind of learning, skill set, and relation to the economy.
[184] These may be a variety of different kinds of markets as explained in Gibson-Graham's framework.
[185] The goal of saving on grocery costs is an explicit enunciation of pulling back from capitalist enterprises.
[186] The wording and acknowledgement of "surplus produce" implies at least somewhat of an understanding of economic surplus and the distribution thereof.
[187] These may be considered noncapitalist enterprises.
[188] Grow Appalachia. 2015. "What We Do." Retrieved February 26, 2015. (http://growappalachia.berea.edu/what-we-do/).
[189] There have been dozens of partner sites over the years.

produce are produced, donated, shared or given away, and preserved. The program may currently be the best, if not only repository of such information across the Appalachian region. As site coordinator I kept records for the program—budgets, employment figures, participant demographics,[190] garden sizes, number of workshops offered, attendance at workshops, produce harvested, sold, donated, shared, or preserved by participants, in addition to site generated revenue and leveraged resources. This data quantified many of the class processes that often go unnoticed by recording gift, sharing, and home-based economies. I also had qualitative and anecdotal information contextualizing the records, adding faces and stories to these diverse agricultural processes.

Education is a key component of Grow Appalachia's work incorporating technical assistance and science-based techniques to help people grow their own food throughout the region. The Grow Appalachia program aims to "both to educate communities and to learn from communities. It works to preserve the past, build hope for the future, and empower Appalachians to live healthy, productive lives."[191] Workshops are a required and central part of the program covering a variety of subject matter including garden planning, garden planting, basic garden maintenance, heart-healthy cooking, food preservation, and cold weather gardening/off-season preparation. Participants attend these workshops presented by Grow Appalachia staff, local extension agents, community

[190] Records for participants include gender, age, disability status, retirement status, veteran status, whether they were previously a tobacco farmer, whether they identify as a single parent family, and whether they are below the poverty line. I gathered harvest reports from participants every month and often had to do some estimation regarding the amount of produce harvested. It was difficult to get people to keep track of and quantify their gardening and preservation activities and to actually turn in their reports. The Grow Appalachia reporting system has a sophisticated system of converting harvest amounts (pecks, bushels, half-bushels, etc.) into pounds. These records are not without fault as they are only as good as the reporting systems and the information submitted by partner sites/garden program participants.

[191] Grow Appalachia. 2015. "Grow." Retrieved February 26, 2015. (http://growappalachia.berea.edu/grow/).

members, or other experts. The educational component of the program may be seen as a potential site for resubjectivation. Participants learn how to grow and manage a garden, but also are also given tools and knowledge to help them cook, market, and preserve their own produce. Some programs provide entrepreneurial workshops and assistance with starting a business. As economic subjects, Grow Appalachia encourages participants' noncapitalist becomings and identities beyond a wage worker in a capitalist enterprise. Grow Appalachia participants are encouraged to produce, consume, preserve, and sell their own produce right from their own home or community. People realize their identities as not just consumers but also producers, however small their garden might be. They are encouraged to work together. They learn from each other, sharing their knowledge and skills and engaging in conversations about their economy, land, and communities. This process of resubjectivation is especially important in the coalfields, where individuals' identities have been intricately tied up in an industry that has severely contracted over the past several decades.[192] Perhaps more theorizing of the "post-coal subject" in the region is warranted.

[192] In their discussions of becoming Gibson-Graham (2006, 25) note the importance of "interruption in ritualized practices of regional economic subjection" as important moments for transformation. This post-coal moment in Central Appalachia may be one such moment. They also discuss harnessing anger in the face of economic restructuring in a resource extraction region as a way towards creating new subjects (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 40-41). Gibson-Graham (2006, 51) present the case of the coal producing regions of Australia ("the valley"), that could be instructive for the Appalachian region: "The view that the regional economy is defined purely or primarily by its energy resources prevails, but it is exclusion from this instrumental vision that is today's subjection. What might this mean for the subject now deprived of economic citizenship? Might this interruption caused by exclusion from a dominant economic calculus liberate new subjectivities and alternative forms of economic being? Perhaps the only lasting connection between the performance of the resource-based economy and the majority of the population in the valley is the air people are forced to breathe, still laden with ash and chemical emissions from the power stations. But the break in the performance of established regional economic relations has not destroyed the legacy of a collective experience and the constitutive desire for a new kind of regional 'being.' By listening for expressions of 'fugitive energies' and emotions that exceed the fund of subjectivities institutionally provided and 'assumed' in the valley, we have identified care for the other, concerns for justice and equity in and for the region, and calls for new practices of community as potentialities that have arisen out of subjection. Connolly warns us that without an active politics of becoming, such potentialities can easily become reintegrated into old discourses and 'old piles of argument,' rather than directed toward new ways

These workshops provide possibilities for individuals to be resocialized about the economy and the chance to think about ideas such as building self-sufficiency, exploring small business ownership, creating and growing alternative markets, using common spaces differently, appreciating and using natural resources differently, and collaborating and sharing with others. The spaces, conversations, and programs created through Grow Appalachia present opportunities to grow community economy throughout the region. These programs have the potential to show people that their economic and community identity can be and is broader and more complex than they previously imagined and that they can enact alternative economic relationships and processes.

The Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program

Many amazing organizations have done impressive work with Grow Appalachia funds, leveraging resources, building capacity, helping feed hungry people, while also promoting alternative economic and agricultural imaginaries.[193] In Knox County, I served as site coordinator for the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program, envisioning, constructing, and implementing the program from the ground up. The program itself may be conceptualized as an alternative capitalist enterprise as an initiative of an existing nonprofit organization.[194] The Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia

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of being (1999, 146). Momentary eruptions that break familiar patterns of feeling and behavior offer glimmers of possibility; but before we can actively cultivate these glimmers, we require a new discursive framing. At the very least we need a discourse of economy to supplant the one that has still has purchase in the valley, yet excludes its subjects from active economic citizenship."

[193] Since 2009, the program has worked with dozens of different community organizations in 6 states. The partner sites vary from year to year with some partner sites participating for only a few years while others have been involved since the beginning of the program.

[194] Wage labor was involved as myself and others were paid through the program grant. The Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program could also be seen as a possible beginning of a community-based/cooperative enterprise, as we sold extra produce from the community gardens at the farmers' market and reinvested the funds into the program.

Gardening Program worked to break down barriers to gardening and build community, addressing food security issues in Knox County through providing resources and technical assistance for home and community gardens. The program worked with families in the Stinking Creek watershed, community gardeners, the Knox County Farmers' Market, and partner organizations in the county to expand gardening possibilities, facilitate connections, and learn through the process. Through collaboration, sharing, and collecting stories,[195] the program sought to build community and relationships in addition to growing food.

For three growing seasons, the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program worked with dozens of individuals and three community gardens in the county, making partnerships with local government agencies, educational institutions, and agricultural entities. Home gardeners on Stinking Creek were provided technical advice and gardening resources including seeds, transplants, fertilizers, organic pesticides, and tools for their home gardens. Gardeners attended workshops and work days, shared insights, gave updates on their gardens, completed harvest reports, donated part of their harvest, and volunteered at the Dewitt Elementary community garden. Home gardening participants got to know each other, learn from each other, and shape and guide the program through meeting and working together. Participants were encouraged to take ownership and provide visions for the direction and future of the program. Through mentorship and cooperation, intergenerational families and neighbors were able to come together to work in the community garden, harvest, prepare, and eat healthy food

[195] The "Stinking Creek Stories" oral history project was an aim at the outset.

together,[196] building community and relationships. Participants in the program included a laid off coal miner, welfare recipients, self-employed individuals, and individuals on disability—people largely marginalized by capitalist economic systems. Seeing class as a process rather than a label is helpful in conceptualizing these people's situations, complex identities, and opportunities, as well as their agency and economic possibilities.

The community gardens provided a site for people to come together and for communal class processes to take place. The "Dewitt Community Garden" at the Dewitt Elementary School on the Creek, the "Barbourville Community Garden" on the campus of Union College, and the "Panther Patch" at Knox Central High School developed somewhat organically. The garden location at Dewitt was chosen for practical considerations. I knew I wanted to create some sort of community garden in the community that was accessible and centrally located. The school seemed like an ideal fit. The Barbourville Community Garden developed unexpectedly through conversations with individuals at Union College who were interested in having a garden on campus and the garden at the high school began when a teacher reached out to me wanting to get involved with the Grow Appalachia program.

In addition to capitalist and communal class processes, the Grow Appalachia program may been seen as engendering feudal class processes through the process of the appropriation of children's labor in home gardens and students working the school gardens. Another less desirable and much more problematic noncapitalist class process involved the garden at the local jail. I had a very small part in encouraging a garden at the

[196] One particularly successful event was a corn roast that we had at the Dewitt Community Garden. We also had potluck meetings including ones in conjunction with a sorghum stir-off at one of the participant's homes. Gibson-Graham (2006, 155) note how these kinds of events can promote "being-in-common."

local jail. I was logistically not able to actually work with the garden or the inmates and follow up with the process, but did have some conversations with the jail staff.[197] Other Grow Appalachia programs have worked closely with correctional facilities and incorporated a substantial amount of inmate labor to work gardens and harvest produce.[198] In the diverse economies framework this may be seen as slave class processes.[199] The use of labor that is not freely given in agricultural programs, or slave labor in Gibson-Graham's framework, is an important aspect of the economy that is often overlooked. These processes warrant further interrogation and critical consideration in the region.

Through my work with the Grow Appalachia program at Lend-A-Hand, I witnessed changing subjectivities, including my own. As discussed by Gibson-Graham, new economic subjectivities can be cultivated through exploration of diverse economic processes and possibilities. Through the garden program, people began to see potentials for different economic identifications and new relationships. I watched as people from the same community who had never met before became friends through the garden program.[200] People got to know each other, worked together, cooked together, and ate together. Participants developed skills through workshops and some began to realize, as Bige pointed out, that they could raise a garden or can or cook in a healthy way. New possibilities, subjectivities, and enterprises emerged with the creation of the Knox County

[197] The jail staff essentially ran their own garden behind the jail in downtown Barbourville. I did not interact with inmates, keep track of production numbers, or any other metrics.
[198] Although I see possibilities for the rehabilitative potentials of agricultural programs, the dangers of exploitation are ever present. I do not think incarcerated individuals were directly coerced into or forced into participating in any of the garden programs.
[199] Gibson-Graham (1996, 262) describe slave class processes as when "surplus labor is appropriated from workers who do not have freedom of contract."
[200] See Gibson-Graham (2006) chapter 6 for a similar example of people coming together through gardening programs.

Farmers' Market as individuals and families became market gardeners, selling produce to their friends and neighbors. One family built high tunnel greenhouses and scaled up production for the market and incorporated value-added goods including breads and cookies to their offerings. People made economic relationships on their own outside of the formal program including one instance where a participant hired another participant to help on their farm. Besides myself, the program employed student interns and local part-time workers, who began to see their community differently and take a stake in the development of local food systems in the area while also being provided an income.

Developing and negotiating my own subjectivity was an ongoing process as the program progressed. I found myself juggling different subject positions—researcher, activist, gardener, vendor, community development practitioner, oral historian, employee, nonprofit incorporator, manager, teacher, friend. I worked in the community in a peculiar location as an insider/outsider—as someone who didn't grow up in the area but whose family had deep roots in the county. I had little experience with gardening or administering a program like Grow Appalachia. My primary identification was probably that of a student. People wanted to help me with my schooling, which seemed to open doors for me. My attachment to the Lend-A-Hand Center likewise provided social capital and trust from the beginning. I did not pretend to know everything, have all the answers, or be an expert. I hoped to learn from others and facilitate conversations. I found myself becoming deeply invested in people's lives and becoming part of a new community.

I began the first growing season thinking about the garden program within the context of the diverse economy framework. As both a producer and consumer and someone who wanted to change economic processes and possibilities I approached the

program not from an uninterested, objective position, but as an active participant enacting and constructing the community and the economy. Through the process I was able to begin thinking about the community and the economy differently and my place within both.

My contradictions[201] became strikingly apparent as I worked to grow the local food economy while still going to Taco Bell on a much too regular basis. Working to enact and understand community economy was not easy nor did it often seem successful. There were many aspects of the garden program that I had hoped to incorporate that I didn't accomplish. There were relationships I was unable to cultivate and phone calls I forgot to make. Many programs and initiatives did not work out as planned and many unanticipated obstacles arose. My participatory aims and hopes for a "real" Participatory Action Research project often got pushed to the side under the pressing needs of directing the program, sending in reports, and getting the corn picked before it spoiled. I struggled to understand power differentials while working with people from much different backgrounds with different strengths and life experiences. [202] Gibson-Graham's (1996, xxix) reminder that " there is no privileged social location from which to embark on building a community economy" helped me think about my role and purpose as an academic activist.

The overview and snapshot presented here belies the complexity of all the processes, thoughts, feelings, and interactions involved over several years. Distilling

[201] Gibson-Graham (1996, 29) note, "In the summary terms of a post-Althusserian conception of overdetermination, every entity or event exists at the nexus of a bewildering complexity of natural and social processes, constituting it as a site of contradiction, tension, difference, and instability (Resnick and Wolff 1987)."
[202] See Gibson-Graham (2006, 133-134).

years of experience to a neat chart seems grossly reductionist. This focus on the economy and using class as an entry point to understand this program elides the gendered, racialized, and sexualized processes and realities that were negotiated and continue to be negotiated in the community. This discussion overlooks the central importance of natural processes—photosynthesis, water cycles, nutrient transfer, seasons, fertilization, pollination, and "pests"—in the workings of the garden program as well as the physical embodied processes—digging, picking, weeding—that were an ever-present reality (Moore and Robbins 2015; Gibson, Cahill, and McKay 2015). Still yet, Gibson-Graham's framework helped me to see how the Grow Appalachia program could facilitate community economy. It helps to expand the narrative about agriculture and Appalachia and view the potentials of gardening programs to encourage new economic formations and identifications.

Chart—Stinking Creek Diverse Economy

Beginning to deconstruct the various class processes involved with local agricultural systems in southeastern Kentucky, the table below maps, at least partially, the diverse economy of the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program. Dozens of class and nonclass processes involved with the garden program could be identified and considered. The diverse economy of agriculture is expansive while this representation is partial and incomplete. This table is largely exploratory. Its purpose is to identify processes that often go unnoticed and widen the discourse around local food systems in the region.

Table 2 The Diverse Economy of the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program

Labor	Enterprise	Transactions
Wage/Paid Labor	Capitalist	Market Exchange
Site Coordinator Garden program interns Paid program assistants Grow Appalachia headquarters staff	Individuals selling produce produced with wage labor John Paul DeJoria's Paul Mitchell and Patrón companies Garden program suppliers- Walmart, Lowes, Four Seasons (local farm store)	Supplier Market Produce Market
Alternative Paid Labor	Alternative Capitalist	Alternative Market
Self-employed gardener selling produce Garden program intern (paid in room & board) Reciprocal labor- garden participants exchanging labor	Lend-A-Hand Center JP's Peace, Love, & Happiness Foundation Higher Ed- Berea College, Union College, University of Kentucky, UK Cooperative Extension Knox County Schools Cooperative Suppliers- Johnny's Selected Seeds, Southern States	Payment in produce or labor Selling self-appropriated produce Barter of produce Deciding who gets what from community garden Knox County Farmers' Market (direct trade)
Unpaid	Noncapitalist	Nonmarket
Home garden labor (self-provisioning & shared labor) Community garden labor Volunteering for community events Student labor (feudal) Inmate labor (slave)	Community Gardens (non-capitalist cooperative enterprise & alternative private property relationships) Self-Employed Suppliers- Pat's Plants and More, Overbey's Greenhouse Self-employed businesses and individuals selling produce Home garden (independent/feudal) Jail garden (slave)	Household flows- consumption, food preservation Sharing/giving away produce to neighbors Donations of produce to food banks, women's shelter Theft of produce, supplies Gleaning of produce from community gardens Gathering- berries, roots, etc. State grants – Local Foods, Local Places Donations from businesses

Adapted from J.K. Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron, & Stephen Healy *Take Back the Economy*

Mapping the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia program using the language of the diverse economy, begins to complicate the story of a region traditionally

conceptualized as a place of concentrated capitalist exploitation.[203] The agricultural landscape seen through Grow Appalachia entails a variety of class and nonclass processes, capitalist and noncapitalist actors, capitalist and noncapitalist enterprises, different market structures, and exploitative and nonexploitative relations. Many of the processes represented here were going on before the Grow Appalachia program began, while others were engendered by the program. Some continue on while others ended with the end of the garden program.

Although a full explanation of all or some of these processes is beyond the scope of this article, the relationships presented here show the complexity of nonprofit agricultural programs in the region. The Grow Appalachia program is an interesting experiment in local economies, community building, education, and collaboration between different actors and organizations. It brings to light the complex matrix of processes, organizations, and people that make up local food systems. The program in Knox County worked to grow food but also to build community. It promoted self-appropriation of garden produce, sharing of produce, giving away of produce, and the sale of produce. It engendered various kinds of labor relationships and injected capital into the county. The program sourced supplies from different entities from capitalist behemoths Walmart and Lowes, to a cooperative mail order seed company, to small-scale self-employed businesses like local greenhouses. Transactions took place at various markets, especially within the household. This web of resource sharing, gifting, bartering, state involvement, commodity exchange,[204] donations, tax distribution, children's work,

[203] Or a region seen as infertile, marginal land with little potential for agricultural success or as home to unentrepreneurial, economically backwards people.
[204] Gibson-Graham (2006, 68) define commodities as, "good and services produced for a market."

and home consumption conveys the interrelationships and interdependencies between different aspects of the agricultural economy.

I would like to further discuss three specific facets of the diverse economy of the garden program: home gardens, community gardens, and the Knox County Farmers' Market. In exploring these entities I hope to illustrate how Gibson-Graham's framework can be used to articulate, understand, and expand noncapitalist processes in an effort to complicate the economic landscape and hegemonic agricultural discourse in eastern Kentucky. In examining these elements of the diverse economy, I further explore the concepts of resubjectivation and the commons and incorporate some of the voices of people who implemented and performed the program alongside me. The following examines home gardens as sites for unpaid labor through self-provisioning and shared labor, community gardens as noncapitalist cooperative enterprises, and the Knox County Farmers' Market as a venue for alternative market transactions.[205]

Home Gardens—Labor

A central component of the garden program was providing resources and assistance for home gardeners on Stinking Creek. When starting the program, I held informational meetings at the Lend-A-Hand Center and sought participants from throughout the community. I went door to door and dropped off fliers at the local gas station and farm store. I wanted to get to know people on Stinking Creek and learn about their gardening practices and involve more people in gardening in the community. I told

[205] All three of these involve other processes along different axes in the diverse economies schema as well. For instance home gardens may be considered by looking at household or barter or market transactions. The following highlights just a few particular elements of these three aspects of the Grow Appalachia program.

participants what the program was about and what possibilities there were for shaping the direction of the program.

I worked with over 20 families, conducting garden visits, answering questions, arranging workshops, making phone calls, and taking lots of pictures. Families were provided seeds, transplants, tools, fertilizer, organic insecticide, and gardening guides and handouts. We had scheduled meetings and spontaneous meetings. During our group meetings participants gave updates about their gardens and shared tips. Many families had existing gardens on their property while others didn't. Some gardeners had many years of experience while others had none. Some had big families and lots of help while others didn't. Some individuals stayed committed to the program while others struggled to make it to meetings or dropped out.

In 2016 we had a Stinking Creek garden tour where participants were able to visit each other's' plots. Growers were able to see each other's gardens, learn from methods other participants were using, and share ideas and seeds. Gibson-Graham's conceptualizations of unpaid labor as well as private and shared property are evident in the home gardens supported by the Lend-A-Hand garden program. Through self-provisioning and shared labor participants were able to reap the harvest of their labor, appropriating their own surplus and engaging in noncapitalist labor arrangements.[206] One garden we visited during the tour that particularly illustrated these processes was tended by Mary Broughton. I interviewed Mary as part of the "Stinking Creek Stories" oral history project. She explained how her garden was located at her friend Maudie's house. I

[206] Many of the participants' home gardens also involved feudal labor processes and some employed wage labor.

asked her if she started gardening after she got married and she explained the land and labor arrangements she had with her friend:

> We didn't never start, we didn't have much farming land and so we tried up here once, and the ground just wouldn't do much and I was working, real busy. You know how it was, we didn't put out one for a while and then few years before I retired I guess we started down at Maudie's. See Maudie's man died and they were divorced and he died, she was up there by herself and she wanted a garden—she couldn't do it by herself—we just started putting a garden out ourselves…She needed us and we needed her. We needed her land, she needed us to work.[207]

Mary described these unpaid self-provisioning and reciprocal labor arrangements she had at her home garden. Mary, her husband Ernie, and Maudie worked together to collectively produce food on land that was shared. With support from the Lend-A-Hand program they canned quarts and quarts of beans and tomatoes that they collectively produced from their own land and labor. Theirs is just one example of noncapitalist labor arrangements and unique property relationships that exist all up and down the Creek. These home gardens existed prior to the garden program and continue to be important sites for various class processes and interpersonal relationships in the community.

Dewitt Community Garden—Enterprise

Community gardens developed as a key facet of the Lend-A-Hand Center garden program. Community gardens may be considered noncapitalist cooperative enterprises[208] in Gibson-Graham's schema. Community gardens can take many different forms with different ownership, access, and governance structures. I had no experience with

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[207] Mary Broughton, interview by the author, Knox County, Kentucky, September 13, 2016, 2016oh549_scs018, Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project, UK Nunn Center, available online at: https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7ngf0mwb5b (accessed July 1, 2018).

[208] Alternatively, since wage labor was somewhat involved in tending the garden, this could be considered an alternative capitalist enterprise although those who worked the garden decided how to run it and what to do with the harvest.

participating in or overseeing a community garden before this program. I researched other gardens and thought about different possible configurations. I worked with different groups to envision and create the gardens. We made things up as we went as program participants, members of the community, paid workers, student interns, and myself collectively planned, worked, planted, harvested, cooked, and ate and food from the gardens. I created community garden agreements and rules after seeking feedback from possible participants. Some sections of gardens were reserved for individuals such as the raised beds on the campus of Union College while others were collectively managed.

The garden at Dewitt Elementary was an interesting experiment in running a noncapitalist enterprise that also illustrated different property configurations and possibilities for resubjectivation. I knew that I wanted a community garden to be a part of the program on Stinking Creek as a place for people to come work together and as a space for people to garden who may have not had access to land. After considering several locations in the community, I settled on the grounds of the Dewitt Elementary School. I worked with the school principal and was given permission to plow up a large portion of land in the front of the school. We also put in raised beds, peach trees, and a smaller garden adjacent to the school. This land was not being used for any productive purpose and had to be mowed throughout the summer. In constructing a garden on the school grounds we created new and different commons. Within the diverse economy framework, commons are defined as "a property, a practice, or a knowledge that is shared by a community" (Gibson-Graham, Cameron, and Healy 2013, 130).[209] Through the garden program we appropriated or reclaimed public land for new community

[209] Gibson-Graham, Cameron, and Healy (2013, 131-132) discuss aspects of commons including access, use, benefit, care, and responsibility, noting that "commons can be created with any type of property."

purposes.[210] Land that was previously adding little value and taking rather than providing resources became a site for the production of community economy.

Garden program participants helped plow up the garden, set up the beds, and decided what to grow. It was difficult to figure out the best model for our community garden. Many participants, including myself, posed fundamental questions about the community garden project: who it was for, who would do the work, what we would do with the produce, who was allowed to harvest the food, who got money from selling produce, what to do with the leftovers, and what would happen if produce was stolen. People were not used communal ownership or labor in this context. As a cooperative arrangement I worked with program participants, negotiating roles and responsibilities. We talked through garden agreements and participants often came to me with questions about the garden, looking for leadership, and assuming I had answers. I tried to delegate and step back and let others take the lead in the decision making process, but this was a difficult task. Janice Smith, a participant in the program conveyed some of the confusion noting:

> My understanding was until recently that all the people that couldn't grow a garden at home could come together and grow this garden and pick out of this garden. That it was just the people that grew it and worked in it, I really didn't understand the concept that it was for the community. That you could come and pick beans even if you haven't worked in the garden. I think that's a wonderful thing but I think people don't understand what it is.[211]

Ideally, those who did work the garden got the first share of the harvest. The uncertain boundaries and expectations continued for the duration of the program, partially

[210] It is essential to point out that this land and Knox County is stolen land originally stewarded by a number of indigenous peoples including the Cherokee and Shawnee.
[211] Janice Smith, interview by the author, Knox County, Kentucky, June 15, 2016, 2016oh146_scs008, Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project, UK Nunn Center, available online at: https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7djh3d2391 (accessed July 1, 2018).

because of my own shortcomings and partially because of the open-ended nature of the enterprise. The garden was originally going to have some private plots reserved for individuals, but we realized having it all collectively worked was easier to handle. It was a process to figure out how to manage the garden and make sure everything was planted, tended, and harvested. I found the best way to get work done in the garden was to have the group of participants work in the garden together at a specified time. I often called people ahead of time saying that we would have a work day at the garden to plant or weed or harvest. On harvest days we split up the produce between families that attended. Participants were also able to go to the garden at other times and often would check on the garden and tell me if anything needed done. My interns, part-time employees, and I frequently tended the garden through the week and sold excess produce from the garden at the farmers' market. The funds were then to reinvested back into the program.

I also had work days with the elementary students where they would go out to the gardens to help plant and harvest. Kids from preschool to the sixth grade got to identify plants, get dirty, get outside, have fun, and actually see the progress of the crops they had planted. Taking advantage of kids' labor may be considered feudal class processes in Gibson-Graham's framework, but their labor was instrumental in getting some large tasks accomplished and most of them seemed to enjoy the break from their schoolwork. It was surprising how little some of the kids (and teachers) knew about gardening and vegetables. Through the community garden at their school, the kids learned about the different plants that could be grown in their community, how to mulch, the difference between a vegetable and a weed, and how to trellis beans. They worked together to complete small tasks and got to reap the reward of their harvests. The students were

especially excited when each class got to take a pumpkin from the pumpkin patch to their classroom.

Charlotte Morgan's grandson Joseph was one of the Dewitt students who helped in the community garden. As a participant in the program as well as a part-time employee, Charlotte and her family spent a lot of time working in the community garden. In an interview I asked what her experience had been like with the garden program. She responded,

> I love it. I love coming to all the meetings, the programs, and I get to learn a lot. I've learned a lot since I've been in the program for the last three years. I mean I knew some but I've learned a little bit more. …I want to learn as much as I can. I want to start my own—maybe one day—start my own business doing something—I said maybe yard work or [tending] cemeteries, but then I could do gardens too, who knows?[212]

Working with the garden program and the community garden opened up different possibilities for Charlotte and got her thinking about different economic becomings and identities. Charlotte's response and her participation in the program showed the process of resubjectivation that came with working communally with the Grow Appalachia program. She said she enjoyed the classes and enjoyed meeting with and working with new people. Charlotte expressed that her favorite part of the program was all the other people involved. Through participation in the program and working together in the garden Charlotte formed new relationships and learned to navigate working with groups. In our interview Charlotte went on to discuss the difficulties of working the garden with other people, getting enough people to come to work days, and making sure all the tasks got accomplished. We learned about the hard work involved in creating community

[212] Charlotte Morgan, interview by the author, Knox County, Kentucky, June 11, 2016, 2016oh145_scs007, Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project, UK Nunn Center, available online at: https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7j6q1sj499 (accessed July 1, 2018).

economies. The community garden was not an easy undertaking and had its share of hurdles to overcome.

The garden at Dewitt ended after the final season of the Grow Appalachia program at Lend-A-Hand.[213] This short-lived noncapitalist cooperative enterprise experimented with different ways of using land, working in groups, and producing food. Managing and working the garden was sometimes frustrating and it often did not operate as I had hoped. In some ways the garden may be considered a failure as it did not continue on past my leadership and the support of the Grow Appalachia program. Throughout the program I thought a lot about success and failure. I often found myself asking a series of questions: What difference does this make? Does this matter at all? Who actually benefits from this? Is this successful? Am I wasting my time? Weeding through rows for the fifth time in 90 degree heat, picking up tangled trellises of beans and cane poles that had been blown over, throwing out corn that the crows had gotten to first, or running for cover as torrential downpours arrive at the start of the work day, I felt the futility of the project. I'm not sure how much people's subjectivities changed from involvement with the community garden or how they really felt about the endeavor. The process of resubjectivation was not overt or intentional. Cultivating new subjects for community economy seemed to be met with varying levels of success. Gibson-Graham note that it is not an individual nor quick transformation. They explain, "The individual needs nourishment and encouragement from without to sustain acts of self-cultivation, to see changing selves as contributing to changing worlds…disclosing and sustaining new worlds requires nourishment over more than a few years" (Gibson-Graham, 2006 162).

[213] The garden at Union College also ended at the end of the program, while the garden at Knox Central continues to be tended by staff and students.

The diverse economy framework provides insights for thinking about the meanings of failure and success.[214] Although the garden at Dewitt is again a patch of grass being mowed, you can still see the contours of where the garden once was. The outlines of the Dewitt Community Garden show the changes and impression left on the landscape made by this experiment in community economy and the potentials for using the commons differently. The enterprise lasted only a few years, but the diverse economy framework shows that even small processes and short-lived projects matter. The experiences of people like Charlotte evidence the potentials for new economic becomings and relationships produced through small-scale agriculture programs. The community garden planted some seeds that may continue to grow towards enacting different economies and subjectivities.

Knox County Farmers' Market—Transactions

Lastly, one unexpected outgrowth of the Grow Appalachia program was the development of the Knox County Farmers' Market.[215] When starting the program I realized there was no organized place to sell produce locally. The farmers' market became a venue for alternative market transactions through direct trade between producers and consumers and has grown to be an important community institution in the county.[216] Farmers sell directly to consumers, getting their chosen price for goods while

[214] See Gibson-Graham (1996, xxviii-xxxii) regarding power, research ethics, activism, and definitions of success.
[215] See our website at http://www.knoxcountymarket.com/ for more information.
[216] The market itself may be considered a noncapitalist enterprise as a nonprofit organization with no wage labor involved run by an all-volunteer board. See Gibson-Graham (1996) chapter 8 for discussions of different processes involved in enterprises.

customers are able to interact with a friendly face each week knowing where their food comes from.

Prior to June 2014 there was no formal farmers' market in Knox County. I was approached by an administrator at the health department who had heard about my program and was interested in working on starting a farmers' market. This was also something I had not done before, but beginning in May a group of community members, my Grow Appalachia intern, and I began conversations and started to explore possibilities. Representatives from the Knox County Health Department, Union College, and small farmers formed the core of the organizing committee. The group was primarily made up of women including my aunt who was also interested in getting a market started. My family has lived in Knox County for generations. At my family farm where my uncle and grandparents live, and where I often stay, we put out a fairly large garden every year. We were looking to expand production for market and have different outlets for selling excess produce. The committee researched how to start a market and looked at options for the market in the county seat of Barbourville. A local law office on a main road in town allowed us to use their parking lot on Thursdays from 5 to 8 pm. We continued to make strategic partners in the community and began to publicize the market creating a logo, email address, and Facebook page. We sought out producers and held an informational meeting for vendors. We opened a bank account, purchased necessary equipment, and planned for entertainment including special events, children's activities, and theme nights.

The market opening was wildly successful, with both a large crowd and a large, diverse group of vendors. The market was met with great support from the community

and continued every Thursday evening through the month of October. We formed a formal board, which meets regularly to oversee the market. The board created and continued to hone rules and regulations for the market. We looked at other markets' rules and regulations and discussed as a group how we wanted our market to operate. We were able to shape the market to best fit the needs of our farmers and community. We decided that produce had to be from a 100 mile radius of Knox County and that vendors could not solely resell produce, but had to grow their own as well. We made guidelines for allowing handmade crafts and decided not to allow the sale of any commercially made products. We worked to understand and navigate state regulations about the sale of certain items like meats, cheeses, salsas, and jellies and decided to allow prepared food vendors to set up with preapproval from the board. These vendors were encouraged to use locally sourced ingredients in their products. We as a board steered the operation and direction of the market and eventually instituted a vendor fee to help fund the market's activities.

It became apparent that a farmers' market is an incredibly important community institution, especially in a small rural Appalachian place like Knox County. [217] It is not only the economic impact of the market that is important, but also the potential for community and relationship building, or what Gibson-Graham describe as community economy. Early on it was clear how the market functions as a community space, a free space,[218] a place for people to gather, buy from their neighbors, have a meal, hear local music, buy local crafts, and learn about community organizations and nonprofits set up at the market. Kids are able to play together, old acquaintances see each other for the first

[217] The board tracks sales, attendance, and vendor data.
[218] See Fisher (1993), Couto (1999), and Boyer (2006).

time in years, and new friends are made. People linger after they finished their shopping and vendors develop relationships seeing each other week after week. As a part of the public sphere, the market serves a vital function in the community and a role that was previously unfulfilled. It provides a community service through special events and educational programming. We host demonstrations and participate in outreach events throughout the county. Rebuilding relationships, creating social ties, and rebuilding social capital[219] and community networks is difficult to quantify in a development discourse centered on deliverables, dollars, metrics, and growth. The Knox County Farmers' Market provides a place for these activities and a venue for practicing and performing community economy.[220]

Following a very successful first year, the market was moved to the Knox County Cooperative Extension office parking lot after growing out of its original location. In June 2015 we were selected as one of 26 communities nationwide to participate in the "Local Foods, Local Places" program sponsored by the Appalachian Regional Commission and different federal and state partners. We went through a strategic planning process which included a two-day workshop and created an action plan for local food systems development in the county. [221] I was heavily involved in the drafting of this document as we put into words our aspirations for local foods in the community and the steps needed to make our goals a reality. We were also awarded $20,000 to help with

[219] See Keefe (2009), Bell (2009), and Couto (1999).
[220] Helen Lewis (2009, 75–79) has discussed the importance of "community ritual," "unifying events," "a gathering place to share stories," and "an organization to coordinate actions" in promoting community building.
[221] See Local Foods Local Places Technical Assistance Program (2015).

marketing expenses and purchasing a trailer for the market to use and take to events in the community.

The following year we finished incorporating into a 501c3 nonprofit. We drafted bylaws, officially registered with the state, and hosted vendor development programs. Wanting to expand our customer base and provide a service to the community and vendors, I took a lead role in doing the necessary paperwork to accept SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program also known as food stamps or EBT/Electronic Benefits Transfer) benefits at the market.[222] We received equipment to process EBT cards and devised an accounting and recordkeeping system that allowed customers to run their card at the information desk and receive tokens to spend with the vendors on fresh fruits and vegetables. The vendors could then return the tokens and be reimbursed by the market. We also were able to get Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) vouchers and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) vouchers distributed in Knox County.[223] These government programs provide free vouchers to spend at farmers' market for individuals who meet certain eligibility requirements. Vendors take trainings to be eligible to accept the instruments, which work like personal checks. In order to further increase access to the market for low-income customers, in 2016 we began participation in the "Double Dollars" program through the Community Farm Alliance.[224] The program funded by CFA and our local matching funds doubles the value of SNAP transactions and state-issued WIC and Seniors vouchers for customers at the

[222] I began attending various meetings and workshops about agriculture throughout the state and learned a lot about the organizations, systems, regulations, and actors that make up the local food movement in Kentucky.
[223] See https://www.fns.usda.gov/fmnp/wic-farmers-market-nutrition-program-fmnp and http://www.kyagr.com/consumer/senior-farmer-market.html.
[224] See https://cfaky.org/programs/healthy-communities-initiative/kentucky-double-dollars/.

market. Customers scan their EBT cards and are issued twice the amount of tokens as money that was taken off their card. Customers can also come to our information booth and present their state-issued WIC or Seniors vouchers and are given additional matching vouchers funded by the Double Dollars program. In a way this system uses an alternative currency system as funds circulate locally and can be used only at the Knox County Farmers' Market.

Many families have been able to take advantage of these programs. In addition to participating in the Grow Appalachia program Janice Smith is a regular patron of the farmers' market. In our interview I asked her for her thoughts on the market:

> I think it gives people the opportunity to have healthy food. It gives the people that have grown stuff the opportunity to sell stuff to make money *from their own labor*. I think that's a good thing and then the fact that there's lots of people either elderly and can't grow a garden or don't have space to grow a garden or whatever they still have the opportunity to get the homegrown, organic grown food. And if you go to the grocery store, Kroger's, whatever, and buy organic food, it's outrageous. I mean it is very expensive and so you know the farmers' market people sell it more reasonable. I love the farmers' market.[225]

Janice emphasized the market's potentials for developing self-employment and fulfilling actual community needs. [226] The market gives people work, provides for marginalized members of the community, offers organic and local food, and supplies needed products at a competitive price. She pointed out the difference between capitalist market exchanges like those at Kroger and the farmers' market where customers and growers come together in a face-to-face meeting. In this way she explained how the

[225] Janice Smith, interview by the author, Knox County, Kentucky, June 15, 2016, 2016oh146_scs008, Stinking Creek Stories Oral History Project, UK Nunn Center, available online at: https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/catalog/xt7djh3d2391 (accessed July 1, 2018).
[226] See Gibson-Graham's (1996, 170) discussion of how encouraging and facilitating self-employment can "promote noncapitalist commodity production and, more importantly, the existence of non capitalist class processes as positive and desirable alternatives to capitalist employment and exploitation."

market provides a venue for alternative market transactions, creating a space for people to sell products produced from their own labor.

This year that space became a physical place as we celebrated our opening day at the new outdoor pavilion at the extension office. In a few short years the market went from conversations with a small group of people to a full-fledged enterprise with a permanent location. The Knox County Farmers' Market continues to be a site for different kinds of exchanges and performing community and has become an important institution within the local foods landscape of Knox County.

Conclusion—Cultivating, Pruning, and Weeding

The process of mapping the diverse economy of the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program seeks to further the discourse and practice of growing community economy on Stinking Creek and within Appalachian Studies. These three examples—home gardens as sites for unpaid labor through self-provisioning and shared labor, community gardens as noncapitalist cooperative enterprises, and the Knox County Farmers' Market as a venue for alternative market transactions—begin to paint a picture of the diverse economy of agriculture in Knox County. These examples show the utility of the diverse economies framework in thinking about economic development and agriculture in the region. Identifying the many processes involved in the work of the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program enables critical consideration of which economic processes should be supported, honed, or ended. Some economic processes such as home and community gardens can be cultivated in order to promote nonexplotiative, sustainable systems and livelihoods or community economies. Others

should be pruned—purposefully adjusted and carefully shaped such as the development of local markets that encourage or require the sale of home grown items and use of family farm labor rather than the resale of produce from faraway industrial farms. While some processes should be altogether weeded out such as reliance on petroleum-based garden inputs, support of agrifood monopolies, and dependence on exploited global labor.[227] The work of Grow Appalachia also shows potentials for resubjectivation as people recapture skills and knowledges and learn to interact with each other, the land, and the economy differently. Communities and academics begin to imagine possibilities for relocalization of local food systems and rural economies as part of a multifaceted agenda toward a just, sustainable future for eastern Kentucky and the region (Deller, Lamie, and Stickel 2017; Miller 2009). Gibson-Graham have provided the tools and language for envisioning economic futures, and researchers and communities—people like Bige, Mary, Janice, and Charlotte—are putting them into practice.

As the discourse around development in the region increasingly recognizes the viability of alternative economic forms and the historical presence of such diverse practices, programs like Grow Appalachia continue to carve out space and create possibility for alternative economic formations, discourse, and political agendas. It is important to develop and support these kinds of organizations, relationships, and practices in order to be involved in the conversation around economic and agricultural futures. As Billings (2008, 165) reminds us, "The politics of economic representation play key roles in discursive struggles to define and intervene in Appalachian economies." We should claim a seat at the decision making table. We should amplify voices, highlight

[227] As York (2016, 11) notes, "Sustainable development suggest maintaining some conditions and changing others."

the people and organizations doing the work, and help bring ideas into being. Reid and Taylor's (2002, 2010) invitation to "civic professionalism" calls for scholar activists to examine the discursive constructions and interventions in regional and global economic processes, interrogating who controls the resources, who gets a say, and who is silenced. Reichert Powell's (2007) analysis of representation and call for critical regionalism, points out the potentials for engaged academic activists to shape the discourse in the region.[228] He explains, "Critical regionalism self-consciously shapes an understanding of the spatial dimensions of cultural politics in order to support projects of change" (Reichert Powell 2007, 8). Grow Appalachia may be seen as one such experiment in critical regionalism. Academic interventions will partially determine what future possibilities exist for the region and whether they are enacted towards "making other worlds possible."

CFA's Breaking Beans Report envisions such other worlds. It showcases local food systems development in eastern Kentucky and alternative economic imaginings. It visualizes "how local food and farming in Eastern Kentucky can contribute to a bright future in the mountains" (Humiston 2015, 3). The report tells stories of local people working on agriculture initiatives and evidences the importance of going from representation to action—from telling stories, to building movements, to changing policies.[229] Kate Black (2010; 2015) similarly lifts up the voices of everyday people,

[228] He explains that critical regionalism: "is about being aware that writing about a region creates and sustains a definition of that region and, in so doing, deliberately defines the region to create new, potentially revelatory perspectives on it. It is about being aware of the fact that one's own work participates in that broader constellation of discourse about the region. The path that the practice of critical regionalism draws across this intellectual landscape is designed to lead toward a view of the best possible version of the region from among all the versions that are out there (whether or not it actually gets there)" (Reichert Powell 2007, 7).

[229] The report reads: "The momentum of local food system development, and "economic transition" in general, has reached the "tipping point." With the emergence of federal, state and local political leadership,

framing gardening as resistance and telling the stories of Kentucky gardeners exercising oppositional voices and undertaking subversive actions. Using Habermas' framework of system and lifeworld, Black (2010, 124) explores how gardeners fight back against colonization of their "lifeworld" by "the system" or corporate agriculture. Halperin (1990, 142–47) likewise discusses resistance through people's use of multiple livelihood strategies and participation in informal labor and market arrangements. She explores the creation of alternative economic spaces—other worlds that include flea markets, large subsistence gardens, odd jobs, and family labor—that are often underestimated and left out of official accounting processes.[230]

Our current political moment requires that we shine a light on possibilities for alternative economic imaginings, engage on the ground in communities, and shape the discourse about the region's future. The recent *Journal of Appalachian Studies* special forum on economic development explored futures for post-coal transition, development, and sustainable livelihoods. Throughout this collection scholars in different ways examine the continued importance of discourse in shaping Appalachian futures. York

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what has been largely a grassroots movement supported by private philanthropy is at a moment where these efforts can either result a *series of projects over the short—term* or *a long—term process based on creating systemic change.*

Eastern Kentucky is at the point where it can build a food system that is equitable and accessible to all, provides fresh nutritious food, and is an economic generator that builds community wealth. Eastern Kentuckians can have a bright future, and agriculture can be an important part of it, but to do so we must educate everyone about the economic, health and social impacts of local food systems to build demand and to support public policy and the career viability of farming and food entrepreneurship by:

-Telling the story of compelling, diverse examples of how local food and farming in Eastern Kentucky can contribute to an economic transition.

-Getting the message out and create a movement that local food and farming have a vital role in economic transition in a way that inspires people and communities into action, and regional collaboration.

-Moving to action the general public and political leadership to adopt a process, policies and programs that support an equitable economic transition for Eastern Kentucky" (Humiston 2015, 3).

[230] Halperin (1990, 147) concludes her book writing, "Forms of resistance to capitalism, to dependence upon cash from wage labor are subtle. Often they are hidden and, as a consequence, all the more powerful. The failure of "country people" to talk to "city people," the stares at the auctions, the covert hostility to outsiders. These are not merely manifestations of fears of the tax collector, but resistance to invasions of privacy—the privacy to create alternative forms of livelihood."

(2016) discusses, the meanings of "sustainability" and "development" and "sustainable development," the normative goals of such agendas, and the policy implications of truly addressing inequality and protecting the environment in the region. Schumann (2016) argues for the importance of democratic participation and multiscalar discussion[231] while James and James (2016) as well as Greenberg (2016) consider the relationship between place and inequality.[232] Others examine the rhetorics and economic impacts of prisons, gambling, and rock climbing in the region (R. T. Perdue and Sanchagrin 2016; C. Lewis 2017; Maples et al. 2017). Holland's (2016, 38) work "initiate[s] a conversation" about the shifting definition of local food systems and the disconnects between policies, funding, and need in a call to build system capacity for the growth of local foods in Appalachian Mississippi and throughout the region. Farley and Bush (2016) use discourse analysis to examine how people talk about local food systems, capital, and networks.

The special session on the internal colonialism model and its persistent use in the region considered and problematized representations of Appalachia as a resource colony. Billings (2016, 60) in his discussion of postmodern Marxist class analysis writes, "Telling stories about diverse class processes helps us to see the diverse range of economic activities in contemporary Appalachia." Anglin's (2016) discussions of global context, House's (2016, 68) exploration of media narratives, and Kunkel's (2016, 72) call for naming capitalist domination emphasize the power of language in creating

[231] Schumann (2016 28) argues, "Collaborative interactions, over time, can become sounding boards for establishing a community-based consensus about relevant sustainable futures *that are in conversation with* region-wide, national, and global knowledge and initiatives."
[232] These authors note the constructed boundaries of Appalachia, the differences between Appalachian subregions, differences and similarities with other regions, and the significance of subdivisions down to the subcounty level.

Appalachian futures. Analytical frameworks always have their shortcomings as Smith (2016) discusses how the internal colonialism model can breed complacency and inaction. In a call for Appalachian Futurism she quotes Helen Lewis' introduction to *Colonialism in Modern America: The Appalachian Case*: "The way we define problems determines how we think about solutions" (qtd. in Smith 2016, 73).[233]

In their discussion of the work of the Alliance for Appalachia, Taylor, Hufford, and Bilbrey (2017) examine how bureaucratic structures, inaccessible language, and distant knowledge and power frameworks create barriers to democratizing knowledge and facilitating just transition. They employ the concept of "relocalization" and call for a holistic approach to combat the fragmentation that occurs in our lives, publics, and communities (Taylor, Hufford, and Bilbrey 2017, 23).[234] These calls for common language, working frameworks, multiscalar conversations, knowledge sharing, and different futures get back to Bige's point—that how we talk about things matters. That "we have to say these things and do these things to put them in people's minds so they'll want to do it." We have to fight back against entrenched power structures that atomize people and communities and rhetorics that foreclose possibility. We must guard against capitalocentrism and the tendencies to overlook processes and potentials all around us. We have to propose understandings, programs, and ways forward in engaged, democratic

[233] Smith and Fisher (2016, 76) also point out the power of the colonialism model and that it "*creates* Appalachia as a regional collectivity" and note the "analytical power and emotional appeal" of the model through "its capacity to interrelate spatial or place-based exploitation (Appalachia as dispossessed *region*) with cultural degradation (Appalachia as America's *Other*)." They conclude the discussion writing, "We make Appalachia, and ourselves, by reinventing the region together" (B. E. Smith and Fisher 2016, 79).
[234] Tarus, Hufford, and Taylor (2017) continue the discussion identifying and elucidating three major barriers to just transition and pointing out several collaborative initiatives and actions that have fought back against neoliberal forces. They pose the question: "What does the term 'economic transition' actually mean and to whom, in what contexts?" and discuss the "need for common language around economic *and* just transition" (Tarus, Hufford, and Taylor 2017, 155) although the concepts remain undefined.

ways. We have to engage in critical regionalism and support participatory community projects in place. We have to put these narratives into practice.

In my work on Stinking Creek, Gibson-Graham's framework has been helpful in doing these things; in deconstructing capitalist hegemony and bringing to light the different possibilities and different conceptualizations of economic activity. In the face of often overwhelming forces of neoliberalism, the continued political and ideological influence of the coal industry, the welfare state, industrial recruitment ideology, local political ineptitude, and the industrial-production ideology of many agricultural support organizations, programs like Grow Appalachia are charged with a tough row to hoe, so to speak. It is easy to get discouraged up against the likes of Monsanto and Walmart when trying to promote alternative economies. While promoting and administering this garden program, it has been liberating to acknowledge the presence and possibility of alternative economic spaces, build on agricultural traditions of the past, and explore local insights for the future. This framework has allowed me to think critically about the discourse around development and agriculture in the region in order to promote more inclusive and imaginative possibilities.

The diverse economy framework helps me consider how to develop "radical" programs like community gardens and farmers' markets in the face of growth-centered, capitalocentric ideology. It gives me hope for the small steps towards class transformation that can happen through changes in the appropriation and distribution of surplus value and the cultivation of alternative and non-capitalist economic formations and community economy.[235] Each little cucumber that is grown may be seen as a small

[235] See Gibson-Graham (1996) chapter 8 for class transformation and class politics of distribution.

act of rebellion/resistance/class transformation.[236] Every ear of corn sold, quart of beans canned, or plate of fried green tomatoes eaten may be seen as part of a complex rural Appalachian economic system that transcends capitalist boundaries.

CHAPTER 3

Yea, a lot of times
you tell people where you're from,
oh, you're from the Creek.
Ya know, like hey,
that's not good.
I said it's good for me.
I was fine with the Creek.
Didn't hurt me any.

I love Stinking Creek.

~

This final article continues to examine the thread of discourse and representation on Stinking Creek, but pivots from an emphasis on economic processes involved in my project to considering the natural and interpersonal processes at work on the Creek. This article considers representations of place and representations of myself and my relationship with my work. Continuing a feminist concern with issues of standpoint, power, reflexivity, and accountability, this reflection employs concepts from feminist methodologies and feminist political ecology (FPE) to explore and process my experiences with the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program.

In this article I present stories of myself. Trying to figure out how to reflect on my experiences, what to discuss, how to frame and understand my role in the research, and the impact it has had on me has been a difficult process. Writing this article helped me

[236] See Black (2010).

critically examine my time in the community and reflect back on what I learned through the process. Navigating roles as a student, scholar, activist, teacher, gardener, community member, and nonprofit administrator added several layers to my experience. For over three years I worked on a project in the Stinking Creek community of Knox County, Kentucky—a community that I did not grow up in and a place that has great natural beauty, history, and people, but has also been marginalized, misrepresented, and underserved. This ethnographic reflection is an attempt to make sense of my experience and work through questions of my place in the research and in the community considering issues of (re)presentation, embodiment, and abjection on Stinking Creek. It posits "Appalachian feminist political ecology" as a possible way to think about and represent the interconnectedness of natural and social processes in the region.

The article first provides a brief overview of political ecology, FPE, and conceptualizations of gender and the environment in the Appalachian region. I came to FPE through a geography course I was taking and was intrigued by the obvious applications of the field to my work in agriculture in Knox County. I learned about political ecology, feminist political ecology, and queer ecology, which pushed me to consider nature in a different way. FPE and queer ecology provided me new lenses to look at my work and see my role in social and natural processes happening all around me. Little has been written on the Appalachian region from an explicit feminist political ecology standpoint. I saw that there was a gap in the literature and wanted to build on ideas of regional political ecology to think about how FPE could be applied places like Stinking Creek. Through the act of naming the concept of "Appalachian feminist political ecology," I wanted to propose different directions for theorizing the region.

Second, the article reflects on how I have come to understand and represent the community, my role in the research, my relationship to the research, and the meaning the research has for me. Interrogating the idea of (re)presentation, this section directly addresses one of the main themes of this dissertation, discussing questions of accountability, public representations, private representations, and silences. In my work on the Creek, I have struggled with how to portray complex people, processes, and places as well as how to make sense of my own experiences and feelings. Based in the feminist importance of reflexivity, this also section examines roles, power, and my place on Stinking Creek. I incorporate family history into my understanding of my place on Stinking Creek. Writing this was difficult, emotional, yet therapeutic. I was able to put into words ideas and feelings I had been having for years.

Building off of feminist understandings of the body and embodiment, the next section of the article explores the role of human bodies and nonhuman bodies, including my body throughout this project. I became interested in the idea of embodied subjectivities, realizing the great amount of physical labor involved in agricultural work. I realized this project was as much a physical exercise as a mental exercise. Through reading feminist political ecology I began to consider nonhuman bodies and the relationships we have with plants and animals.

Fourth, the article builds off of FPE and queer ecology to wrestle with ideas relating to abjection. I was intrigued by Kristeva's (1982) ideas and saw how examining manure, rot, death, and the community itself as abject could add a different dimension to my understandings of the Creek. I saw how a focus on the dirty processes, soil,

decomposition, and microbes could add a different scale to my work and promote a focus on relocalization down to the dirt.

Lastly, this chapter includes a poetic exploration of embodiment and abjection. *My Land is Burning* provides an experimental example of "Appalachian feminist political ecology." Reflecting on the 2016 election and the rash of wildfires that swept through eastern Kentucky and the region, these poems push the boundaries of form illustrating possibilities for "Appalachian feminist political ecology" and potentials for different kinds of representations and scales of relocalization in Appalachian scholarship. These poems seek to bring attention to the intersections of politics, ecology, and emotion in the region.

Notes from the (Corn) Field: Feminist Reflections on (Re)presentation, Embodiment, and Abjection Article Abstract

This article reflects on my work with the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program as a student, scholar, activist, teacher, gardener, community member, and nonprofit administrator. For over three years I worked on a project in the Stinking Creek community of Knox County, Kentucky—a community that I did not grow up in and a place that has great natural beauty, history, and people, but has also been marginalized misrepresented, and underserved. Incorporating concepts central to feminist research and feminist political ecology (FPE), this ethnographic reflection attempts to make sense of my experience and work through questions of my place in the research and in the community considering issues of (re)presentation, embodiment, and abjection on Stinking Creek. This article concludes with a series of poems about the wildfires in

eastern Kentucky in the fall of 2016 illustrating possibilities for "Appalachian feminist political ecology" and potentials for different kinds of representations and scales of relocalization in Appalachian scholarship.

Article 3: Notes from the (Corn) Field: Feminist Reflections on (Re)presentation, Embodiment, and Abjection

Introduction: "What is your place in this place?"

Find out who you are. What is your place in this place?" [237]

Helen Lewis' concluding question in "Why Study Appalachia?" reflects one of the reasons I was drawn to Appalachian Studies. Like many others working in the region, I have used my research to explore questions related to my place in the world and to

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[237] "Why Study Appalachia?"

Appalachia is a region and a place. Real and mythical, beautiful and devastated, geological and political, rich in resources and a poverty pocket, a place to exploit, a watershed for the eastern seaboard and destroyed and polluted headwaters.

Weekend cabins and homes in the holler. Yesterday's and tomorrow's people. Hillbillies and folks. Bluegrass and hip hop. Poets and politicians. Professors and protesters, preachers and prophets. A model and a warning signal for the nation.

So if you want to study Appalachia, here is what you do.

Start where you live: Interview your elders, map your community, write your local history. Who lives where and why? Who owns the land, minerals, resources? Who is rich and who is poor? Who has power and who is powerless? Who are the story tellers, the poets, the singers? Who is in jail, who is sick, who is angry and who is throwing the bodies in the river and who is pretending it is not happening?

Who is speaking truth to power, who is feeding the hungry, who is healing the sick? Who is writing the poetry, saving the stories, saving the land, singing the songs?

Find out who you are. What is your place in this place?
– Helen Lewis
This short prose was available through the webpage of the University of North Georgia Appalachian Studies Center.

understand my community and history. I am drawn to answer questions about myself through my work in southeastern Kentucky. I feel compelled to understand personal connections, belonging, my environment, family histories, and a sense of place through my work. Echoing Lewis' sentiments, in my research, issues of representation, power, and the environment have been at the forefront as I have tried to navigate my purpose not only as a scholar, but as a person. I feel as though my dissertation fieldwork over the past several years in the Stinking Creek community of Knox County, Kentucky, has been working through the answer to her question. I have endeavored to construct a narrative, find meaning, and make sense of myself, others, and the systems around me. Her question is not only rhetorical, but also an embodied question, a metaphysical question, both a mental and physical location, a state of mind, a subjectivity, a position.

This article reflects on my place and work as a student, scholar, activist, teacher, gardener, community member, and nonprofit administrator, among other roles. For over three years, I worked on a project in a community that I did not grow up in—a place that has great natural beauty, history, and people, but has also been marginalized, misrepresented, and underserved. Insights from feminist theorists and environmental scholars have helped me navigate power imbalances, binaries, emotional strains, and competing goals, and have helped me understand and contextualize my experience. Incorporating concepts central to feminist research and feminist political ecology (FPE), this ethnographic reflection reflects on my experiences with the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program considering issues of (re)presentation, embodiment, and abjection on Stinking Creek. This article concludes with a series of poems about the wildfires in eastern Kentucky in the fall of 2016 illustrating possibilities

for “Appalachian feminist political ecology” and potentials for different kinds of representations and scales of relocalization in Appalachian scholarship.

Feminist Political Ecology

In coordinating the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program, I became interested in the field of feminist political ecology. Working with commitments to feminist research and experimenting with participatory paradigms, I began exploring how concepts and frameworks within feminist political ecology could help me understand my work on Stinking Creek. Working intimately with the environment I realized that the social structures I was interested in—the economy, social capital, changing technologies, gender—could not be separated from the ecological processes—growth, death, pollination, reproduction—going on around me. My work and the success of my project was completely dependent on nature as the environment and ecological processes intersected with human actions. I began considering more deeply about relationships between humans and the environment and found feminist political ecology to be a helpful field for thinking about my work.

Since the 1990s a growing body of literature examines relationships between power, nature, and society, making up the field of political ecology (Robbins 2012; Perreault, Bridge, and McCarthy 2015). This eclectic field has developed innovative ways to approach questions of the intersections between social and natural processes. Robbins (2012) traces the development of the field and gives an overview of different definitions that have been employed over the years He describes political ecology as “a *community of practice* united around a *certain kind of text*” (Robbins 2012, 20).

Springing from the intersections of several disciplines including Marxism, feminist development studies, science studies, cultural ecology, environmental studies, and environmental history, political ecology seeks to break down disciplinary bounds and work towards more just and sustainable relationships (Robbins 2012, 83). The field largely grew out of studies of resource use and control in "developing countries" and has since been applied to a wide range of subject matter using a variety of methods and theoretical groundings. Studies on the political ecology of food and agriculture explore the social and environmental impacts of global food systems critically analyzing how power operates in agricultural processes (Moragues-Faus and Marsden 2017; Jarosz 2011). Calls for and explorations of regional political ecology point to the utility of thinking about regional scales as a way to overcome difficulties between "first world" and "third world" political ecology and to make connections between micro-level interactions and macro-level social structures (Black 1990; James Todd Nesbitt 1997; Walker 2003; Neumann 2010; McKinnon and Hiner 2016; Walker 2016; Galt 2016)

Feminist political ecology (FPE) has emerged as a growing subfield within political ecology. In the foundational work within the field, *Feminist Political Ecology: Global Issues and Local Experience*, Rocheleau et al. (1996b, 5) describe how FPE examines "the complex context in which gender interacts with class, race, culture and national identity to shape our experience of and interest in 'the environment'". FPE considers "decision-making processes and the social, political, and economic context that shapes environmental policies and practices" while paying special attention to gender (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, and Wangari 1996b, 4). FPE "rejects dualistic constructs of gender and the environment in favor of multiplicity and diversity, and emphasizes the

complexity and interconnectedness of ecological, economic, and cultural dimensions of environmental change" (Thomas-Slayter, Wangari, and Rocheleau 1996, 289). Others have built upon early articulations of the field (Elmhirst 2011; Hawkins et al. 2011; Mollett and Faria 2013; Elmhirst 2015). In a roundtable discussion, Hawkins et al. (2011) chart gaps and trajectories in the field. Mollett and Faria (2013) point out the importance of considering race in FPE. Elmhirst (2015) also provides an overview of FPE and provides a description of directions of FPE including analyses of gendered resource access, poststructural theorizations of gendered subjectivity and power, relationships between human and non-human nature, and feminist ethics of environmental care. By focusing on complex processes of human-environment interactions and processes of power and marginalization, FPE bridges different disciplines and provides crucial insights into gender and place.

In an essential contribution to the field, *Practicing Feminist Political Ecologies*, (Harcourt and Nelson 2015) several authors push the boundaries of the feminist understandings of the environment, engaging with trajectories from decolonial studies, feminist theorizations of the body, and queer theory. [238] Queer ecology has developed as a complement to FPE, breaking down boundaries and categories, promoting antiessentialist understandings of phenomena, questioning difference, and examining how gender and sexuality operate in the environment (Morton 2010; Mortimer-Sandilands and Erickson 2010; Gandy 2012; Bauhardt 2013; Heynen 2018). Sandilands (qtd. in Heynen 2018, 448) describes queer ecology as "a loose, interdisciplinary constellation of practices that aim, in different ways, to disrupt prevailing heterosexist discursive and

[238] Appalachian studies also does not engage enough with queer theory. See Harcourt and Nelson (2015, 16–17) for a discussion of including work that does not identify as such into the field of FPE.

institutional articulations of sexuality and nature, and also to reimagine evolutionary processes, ecological interactions, and environmental politics in light of queer theory." These exciting, different approaches and theorizations of gender, sexuality, and the environment open up new possibilities for thinking about the complexities and interconnectedness of local food systems and rural communities like Stinking Creek.

Overall, feminist political ecology presents interesting possibilities for examining Appalachian communities and environmental processes. A few scholars have begun to incorporate political ecology into understandings of the region (Poole and Hudgins 2014; J. Todd Nesbitt and Weiner 2001; Gustafson 2015; Gustafson et al. 2014; Eskridge and Alderman 2010). Piser (2016) specifically calls for the integration of political ecology into Appalachian Studies scholarship. A quick database search shows that political ecology is not a recurring theme within the Appalachian studies literature.[239] Although many studies consider the relationships between environmental processes, power, and gender (Bell 2016, 2013; Scott 2010; A. Kingsolver 2015; Knight et al. 2002; Anglin 2002; Tallichet 2006; Stewart 1996), they do not do so within a specifically feminist political ecology framework. As Barbara Ellen Smith (2015, 52) lamented, as a field, Appalachian Studies could "use a little theoretical ferment." Lenses like FPE that relate to both the social and physical sciences, bridging the gap between nature and society and blurring binaries, present opportunities to expand theorizations of the region and create more robust feminist understandings of place and space. Working within the field of FPE allows for different scales of thinking and considerations of processes across disciplinary boundaries.

[239] The main journals are *Appalachian Journal* and *Journal of Appalachian Studies*. There is also little discussion of political ecology within *Rural Sociology*.

Building on these literatures, I have considered my work on Stinking Creek in light of some of the insights from FPE. My project contributes to the field of FPE by considering gendered experiences of the environment, gardening, and food on Stinking Creek as well as the multiple social and natural processes involved with the Grow Appalachia program. In describing the gendered, embodied, visceral experiences with this program this account explores possibilities for developing "Appalachian feminist political ecology." Building on theorizations of region in understanding environmental and social processes within political ecology (Black 1990; James Todd Nesbitt 1997; Neumann 2010; McKinnon and Hiner 2016; Walker 2016; Galt 2016) and calls for special attention to gender, embodiment, affect, and sexuality (Harcourt and Nelson 2015; Morton 2010), an Appalachian feminist political ecology articulates the regionally specific interactions, processes, relationships, discourses, and material realities in the region. Appalachian feminist political ecology opens the doors to thinking about different scales, across binaries, and beyond the nature/society divide and towards new modes of interdisciplinary representation.

Feminist Research & Political Ecology on Stinking Creek

Applying insights from feminist research methodologies and feminist political ecology, the following briefly touches on issues of (re)presentation, embodiment, and abjection. These are just a few concepts that have been helpful in making sense of my experience coordinating the garden program on Stinking Creek. Although this reflection is partial and brief, these explorations illuminate several issues that proved significant to

my time in the community. These descriptions of my experience seek to expand the scope of theoretical approaches and material emphases within Appalachian scholarship.

(Re)presentation & Reflexivity in Appalachia

I think that the act of articulation will always be one of reduction (a violence both in terms of itself and how it plays out in 'practice')… [240]

Much like other areas of the South, representations of central Appalachia have a complex and contested history (Griffin and Thompson 2002; Billings 2002; C. Berry 2002; Inscoe 2002). From War on Poverty exposés to contemporary photography projects, images of Appalachian Kentucky have often been controversial and politically charged. Newspaper articles, books, and magazines have told certain stories of the region, often presenting essentialist or reductive narratives. Scholars have theorized Appalachia's place in the national imaginary as depictions of Appalachian people and places serve particular purposes within popular culture (Munn 1972; Shapiro 1978; Foster 1988; Batteau 1990; Billings 2008; Satterwhite 2011; Catte 2018). A large body of literature examines issues of representation in Appalachian Studies scholarship and the importance of incorporating reflexivity into work in the region.

Reichert Powell (2007) analyzes issues of representation through the concept of critical regionalism. He explains that critical regionalism:

> is about being aware that writing about a region creates and sustains a definition of that region and, in so doing, deliberately defines the region to create new, potentially revelatory perspectives on it. It is about being aware of the fact that one's own work participates in that broader constellation of discourse about the region. The path that the practice of critical regionalism draws across this intellectual landscape is designed to lead toward a view of the best possible

[240] Harcourt, Knox, and Tabassi (2015, 295).

> version of the region from among all the versions that are out there (whether or not it actually gets there) (Reichert Powell 2007, 7).

He continues, "Critical regionalism self-consciously shapes an understanding of the spatial dimensions of cultural politics in order to support projects of change" (Reichert Powell 2007, 8). This idea of critical regionalism has helped me realize that through my work with Grow Appalachia, and my (re)presentations of Stinking Creek, I am in a sense constructing the community through rearticulation. The Grow Appalachia program I coordinated could be conceptualized as a practice in critical regionalism. As an intervention in the discourse and a participatory research project, my work sought to promote social change through supporting local food systems and amplifying different narratives of the community.

Similarly feminist research is highly concerned with questions of representation and reflexivity (Reinharz and Davidman 1992; Cancian 1992; Hesse-Biber 2013; Maguire 1987; D. E. Smith 1987; R. P. Harris et al. 1995). Fonow and Cook (2005) in particular describe how feminist methodologies grapple with issues of reflexivity, representation, and embodiment.

These issues developed as central concerns of feminist political ecology (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, and Wangari 1996a; Elmhirst 2015; Harcourt 2015; Barbosa da Costa, Icaza, and Ocampo Talero 2015). In describing the challenges or "troubles" of FPE, Harcourt and Nelson (2015, 15) ask:

> 'What do we know and who are we'? The politics of presenting/representing what is 'known' is something that intersectional thinking can help us work on in alignment with a broader decolonial project, and this has to do with the ideas of situated knowledge and positionality. All knowledge comes from somewhere, but we should not assume that we can see all that is to be known from within that somewhere. It is through conversation and articulation and staying with the troubles that multiple positionalities help generate richer, more complex theories

> and understandings beyond a simplistic and hierarchical God's-eye view and 'ground-up' view. The question of disclosing/sharing/representing what is 'known' is complex.

Those working within the field of FPE critically examine their and other's roles paying careful attention to how narratives are constructed and the power processes between academics, community members, and nonhuman others embedded in fieldwork.

In my work on the Creek, I have struggled with how to portray complex people, processes, and places as well as how to make sense of my own experiences and feelings. The following explores these questions of representation and reflexivity. This is a partial rehashing, a re-presentation of experience and place, which considers questions of accountability, public representations, private representations, and silences, as well as roles, power, and my place on Stinking Creek.

(Re)presentations of Stinking Creek

…but instead of seeing this as something stifling, I see it as empowering – it means, for me, that we need to be critically aware and that we have even more (rather than less!) responsibility to 'own up to' what we articulate. [241]

That was a mistake.
That really hurt a lot of people from things that were said.
How people lived and stuff.
That was ugly.
I didn't like it.
The book.
Of course I didn't read all of it.
But I heard a lot about it.

Throughout the process of my fieldwork I have struggled with how to convey what I've been doing, the significance and purpose of my work, and the ultimate goals

[241] Harcourt, Knox, and Tabassi (2015, 295).

and outcomes of my time on the Creek. Figuring out how to show and (re)present the people I've met, the organization I've been immersed in, and the community I have become a part of has been a difficult and emotional task. It seems to be a violent act of reduction to try to put into words over five years of my life and the many encounters, conversations, successes, and failures I've had. It is impossible to express the complexity of my experiences and to organize them into a neat narrative.

Conveying the multifaceted stories of communities requires nuance and forethought. It is a difficult undertaking—one that undoubtedly will lead to failures. Representations of Appalachia are important to me as an Appalachian scholar and as someone with deep ties to the region. Beginning work on Stinking Creek was a challenge from the outset. Besides the obvious difficulties that come with telling stories about a place called "Stinking Creek," I was stepping into a deep, public, and emotional discourse. It was difficult because I knew, at least partially, the history of representation of the place. I had a heightened sense of responsibility in my depictions because of the way Stinking Creek had been represented in the past, in particular through John Fetterman's 1967 account.

Fetterman's story, a representation that in many ways was self-serving, reductive, decontextualized, and historically inaccurate, has been ever-present in my mind during my time in the community. I asked people about their opinions of the book while conducting oral histories. His book came off as belittling, disparaging, and hurtful for many who thought he presented a negative and selective version of the community. In my work I had to contend with, problematize, and contest these past representations, yet I was unable to keep from filtering my own experiences and understandings through

Fetterman's words. I also dealt with his legacy as an outsider coming to the Creek also looking for a story.[242]

With a heightened sense of awareness of the politics of representation and feeling a heavy responsibility to do the people, the Lend-A-Hand Center, and the community justice, I hoped to not make the same mistakes as Fetterman. I realized that considering issues of accountability in feminist research could help me figure out how to best interact with the different stakeholders throughout this project (Benson and Nagar 2006; Ryan-Flood and Gill 2010). I began to constantly reflect on ethics in feminist research, Participatory Action Research, and feminist political ecology (Gatenby and Humphries 2000; Renzetti 1997; Benson and Nagar 2006; Craven and Davis 2013; Barbosa da Costa, Icaza, and Ocampo Talero 2015; Harcourt 2015). I realized the many layers of accountability I had: accountability to the people I work with in the community, the people who entrusted me with their stories, the Grow Appalachia staff I reported to, my dissertation committee, my department, my students, my family, my interns and employees of the Grow Appalachia program, the farmers' market board, co-founders Peggy Kemner and Irma Gall and the Lend-A-Hand Center, the Appalachian Studies community, myself. I had to be prepared to "own up" and answer to these stakeholders when called upon or when my actions or accounts were called into question. Sometimes these different levels of accountability were in conflict. I was pulled different directions. I had to work to prioritize roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, the compounding stress of being a volunteer, employee, and representative of the Lend-A-Hand Center—being a

[242] Fetterman (1967, 18) admitted his motivations were "to write a book and try to reveal—if only for self-edification—something of what the hillbilly is really like."

public face of the organization and responsible for upholding the reputation of the Center—added another layer to my expectations.

Running and also representing a participatory gardening program proved challenging. The difficulty of oscillating between coming up with ideas, running programs, processing my experiences, and writing about them seemed overwhelming at times. Over the years I created a variety of different research products and public representations of my project and experiences on the Creek. Some representations of my work included: blogging for the Grow Appalachia website, writing articles for the local newspaper, submitting press releases, creating promotional materials, posting social media updates, submitting reports to Grow Appalachia headquarters, taking photographs, giving conference presentations, giving classroom presentations, writing term papers, giving presentations to my committee, writing reflections on my personal website, organizing and indexing the "Stinking Creek Stories" oral history website, contributing to government reports and grant applications, and writing articles for publication.

Through working with these different media, I learned about the importance of being able to write for a variety of platforms and audiences. Engaged scholars should be able to speak to different audiences and communicate clearly and succinctly across mediums. How I wrote and what I wrote depended on the audience and where and how my work would be presented. Some representations were heavily filtered through my experience and understanding while others, like the recorded oral histories presented more direct narratives.[243] I conveyed my experiences differently in talking to residents,

[243] A large body of literature has developed examining the craft of oral history. See Ritchie (2015), Frisch (1990), Perks and Thomson (1998), and Thompson and Bornat (2017) for discussions of "truth," accuracy, meaning construction, interpretation, authority, and voice in oral history. Even though oral history projects present direct narratives, they are still subjective articulations of reality.

professors, students, conference goers, donors, supervisors, and government officials. I wrote things differently and used different language. I made decisions on what to convey to who about the Grow Appalachia program, the community, the Lend-A-Hand Center, the oral history project, and myself. Although all of these representations were in one way or another reductive and subjective, I tried to give appropriate and accurate interpretations, foregrounding respect, consent, and mutual agreement. Through these representational tactics, these articulations of experience, I sought balance my situated experiences with the larger picture, though I can't always say I succeeded. I tried to collaborate with others in running the different aspects of the Grow Appalachia program and representing the community, though I feel like my aims at collaboration and co-creation fell short.[244]

Other representations and ruminations of my work were more private. My private thoughts, field notes, post-it notes, unfinished documents, and incomplete lists show the development of my work in the community over time. Much of the analysis of this experience has been through talking things out with people. In making sense of my experience and trying to figure how to do my project, talking with my scholarly community, friends, and family has been invaluable. A number of individuals have been there to help make decisions, commiserate, ask questions, reassure, encourage, and push me. Describing my goals, issues, perceptions, and successes to others has helped me understand my work, my place in the community, and the social and natural processes

[244] I am interested in co-creation/co-authorship of research and nonacademic publishing as ways to equalize power dynamics in academia. Collaborative ethnography and PAR approaches are especially intriguing to me. This project incorporated elements of PAR, but like all PAR projects, did not involve complete collaboration throughout the research process. The demands of running the Grow Appalachia program often superseded my hopes at truly participatory decision making and knowledge production.

going on around me. In these private conversations I often revealed things I would not have in a public setting or expressed emotion in a way that would be frowned upon in academic discourse. Yet these conversations were necessary and often therapeutic. The telling of stories, experiences, or ideas that only a few know about constitutes an important part of the research process.

Equally as powerful as representations are silences (Ryan-Flood and Gill 2010; R. P. Harris 2001). I was constantly negotiating how to represent or not represent people and events in my work. Throughout this process I have asked myself a series of questions: What do I include? What do I exclude? What do I emphasize? What do I minimize? What is significant? What is insignificant? In representing the community and people's stories I tried to avoid tendency to romanticize the community or the Center, but I also didn't want to fully gloss over the troubles, hurdles, and negative experiences I have had on the Creek.

Not all aspects of the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program have been successful. There have been lots of starts and stops and ideas and conversations that didn't lead anywhere. I have had countless disappointments, difficulties, disagreements, frustrations, loose ends, unfulfilled commitments, and uninitiated initiatives. My time on Stinking Creek has not all been positive and enjoyable. I have met many wonderful people, heard amazing stories, witnessed powerful moments, and participated in meaningful projects. Yet I have also had to deal first-hand with real social problems in the area including poverty, drug abuse, ill health, pollution, lack of education, illiteracy, domestic violence, lack of transportation, and theft. I have witnessed instances of racism, sexism, and heterosexism working in the county, often blindsided by

the brazenness of people's words and actions. I have worked in a community where several murders took place, including a police officer killing an unarmed man. I have seen meanness and carelessness and have gotten my feelings hurt and been angered. I have struggled with how to make sense of these things and how much to disclose about negative experiences I've had and the negative realities of rural areas like Stinking Creek. Like all communities, Stinking Creek and Knox County as a whole have their share of problems. Working with different people has given me a deeper understanding of what it's like to live in a rural area in southeastern Kentucky and the struggles that people deal with on a daily basis. I have seen the contradictions and complexities of the place and the organization I have been a part of –I have contributed toward creating—over the past several years.

I realize that in presenting stories and recounting events, mine are not the first nor last representations of the Stinking Creek community or the Lend-A-Hand Center. Mine is just one viewpoint within the history and genealogy of this place; one perspective in a long line of representations. Overlapping and competing discourses and contestations of power, agency, and authority shape perceptions and "truth" about places like eastern Kentucky. The palimpsest of Stinking Creek conveys layers of meaning on top of each other. I was not alone in adding to this discourse as several others found their way to Stinking Creek and the Lend-A-Hand Center during the past few years—a photographer, newspaper writers, magazine writers, a master's student, an author wanting to write a book chapter, people looking for family history and ancestors—and I've probably forgotten others. All of these thoughts, narratives, conversations, and (re)presentations intersect and interconnect to create place.

My Place on Stinking Creek

I think if you write a good paper, people will want to read it.

I have become very aware of the power that comes with selective acts of articulation through writing, presenting, talking, asserting, and photographing. During my time working in Knox County I have been able to reflect on my role in the research process—my positionality, my relationship to the research, to people, and places, and the meaning it has for me. Far from being a disconnected, objective observer, I have been an active participant in the social and environmental landscape of the community. Over the past several years I've learned a lot about what it means to be an engaged academic/activist working in the region. The concept of reflexivity is central to feminist research, PAR, and feminist political ecology. Feminist research emphasizes the importance of reflecting on positionality, power dynamics, authority, and representation. Using a reflexive approach, researchers take into account their role in the research process and how their positionality impacts their experiences and findings (Naples 2000). Reflexivity promotes consideration of the different social locations of the researcher and the different positions of power and privilege embodied by the researcher. Thinking about roles and power, the following attempts to address Lewis' question of my place in this place.

My work in Knox County and with the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia program has been life changing for me as a person and a scholar. During my time in the field I have worn different hats (Katz 1994). As the program coordinator, researcher, and

graduate student it has been difficult to figure out which role I am playing at a given time. I have struggled to do program planning, administration, logistics, reporting, supervising, and promotion, while trying to learn about the community, make relationships, and think critically and theoretically about situations I find myself in, the people I meet, and the programs I administer. This is not to mention trying to learn the hard, embodied skills of gardening including planning, planting, maintenance, harvesting, and machine operation. I was constantly coordinating people and things all while being at the mercy of the weather and the endless onslaught of bugs and deer and constant equipment failures.

I was intimately involved in all aspects of the Grow Appalachia program from digging in the dirt and hauling the compost to program evaluation to analyzing the social and economic processes at play. I had moments where I was running the tiller while thinking about the intricacies of community economy and non-capitalist class processes going on around me. Navigating coursework and studying for exams while doing program planning and implementation, and trying to integrate what I was learning in my classes into my field practice proved trying. Making the long drive between Lexington and Stinking Creek made it all the more difficult.

Throughout my time working on this project, I have thought about the power relations embedded in my work and relationships. I am constantly aware of my class and educational privilege and the fact that through the Grow Appalachia program, I was bringing money into the community. I was the one with the resources in the form of grant money and much of the power in coordinating the activities and divvying benefits of the program. I also had different kinds of social and cultural capital. I have three vehicles and a supportive family. I have at least four houses I can stay in around the state. I don’t

struggle with finances or wonder how I will provide for myself or others. I did not work with Grow Appalachia primarily for the money or to make ends meet. Many times my experience has been very different than the experiences of people I work with in the community. Seeing the financial, health, and educational difficulties people struggle with has given me a new perspective on the role of nonprofit work and agricultural initiatives in the region. The contrast between some people's everyday lived experiences in rural southeastern Kentucky and my life as a graduate student at the University of Kentucky was difficult to understand at times. Often when interacting with people I tried to downplay my advanced education, often saying I'm just a "student" working on a "project." My educational credentials contrasted with my lack of life experience and agricultural knowledge. I engaged in code switching and became aware of my changing accent when working in the county versus elsewhere in an academic setting.

Early on I became very aware of my position as a young woman in the field, realizing the gendered realities of working in an area that is traditionally dominated by men. I have had several situations in which my identity as a young woman has impacted how I have been perceived and treated. I navigated awkward advances, assumptions, and uncomfortable conversations. I made sure to be accompanied by program interns or part-time workers when I went places or used the tiller. I think I was often underestimated or not taken seriously as a young woman working in the field of agriculture.

In some ways I think being a young woman has been advantageous in making ties in the community. As a small, white woman, I don't think I come off as very threatening and people seemed to want to help me with my school work. Considering the racial dimensions of my work has also been an essential part of understanding the community

and the history of the Lend-A-Hand Center. I worked with very few people of color through my program. As a white person working in an overwhelmingly white community, I was met with assumed commonalities and understood but unspoken racial norms. I was confronted with the realities of racism at the local level through racist sentiments and jokes. For the first time in my life, I began truly thinking about whiteness as I worked in a community where many were seemingly unbothered by the racial division, violence, and systemic oppression going on throughout the country. Working during a period of heightened racial awareness and seeing how racism and white supremacy operated around me added different dimensions to thinking about land use and poverty. I began to further examine my work within the complex history of race relations and land and agriculture in Kentucky (Buck 2001). Kentucky's long history of racial violence, nativism, and xenophobia impacted my place and work in the region. I was situated in a land stolen from indigenous peoples, worked by slaves, and currently owned by predominately white people, corporations, or the government. Considering the racialized components of the Appalachian region, the hillbilly image, and the racialized portrayal by Fetterman complicated my place and identity as a white person on Stinking Creek (Griffin 2004; Smith 2004; Hartigan 2004; Hayden 2002; Grove 2015; Scott 2010; Pearson 2013; DiAngelo 2011; Garringer 2018).

I find myself in-between the insider/outsider identification, often pondering the question of my self-identification as "Appalachian." Not to say that I have any sort of special objectivity when considering the Stinking Creek community or Knox County, but I think I was in an interesting place being far enough removed from the community not

having grown up in the area, but also having family and cultural ties that in some way might seem to authenticate my work and motivations.

As with many people not from the direct area working in Appalachian communities, I was often first asked when meeting someone where I was from. It seems the insider/outsider positioning is always at play and "placing" people holds continued importance in central Appalachia (A. E. Kingsolver 1992). Throughout this process I think I have been in an interesting position having grown up in nearby Richmond, but having my family roots in the county and many family members living in the county. My mom went to Knox Central High School and Union College. Because of my family ties this project has had special meaning to me. While working at the Center and in the county I most often stayed with my maternal grandparents outside of Corbin, coming home from a day of garden visits only to help pick more beans in the family garden. I am very fortunate and privileged to have a wonderful family support system and a home base. I got to spend time with my granny and pappy who suffered through hearing all about my projects, frustrations, and upcoming plans.

My family has been in Knox County since the early 1800s, settling in the Indian Creek area in the southern part of the county through Revolutionary War land grants. The Engles never lived on Stinking Creek but spent time as coal miners, farmers, shopkeepers, postal workers, caretakers, and teachers throughout Knox County and surrounding areas. I grew up knowing my great grandfather Jason Engle who worked as a coal miner and farmer in the area, and my mamaw Thelma Helton Engle, who kept a small store and raised three kids. Papaw developed black lung and had brothers that were killed in the mines. My granny, Ella Sue Engle Hoffman, worked in a restaurant before

having three kids including my mother. My pappy Clarence Hoffman, also came from a coalmining family. Raised in Pennsylvania, he traveled working for the telephone company while his father and brother were miners.

In the 1910s another one of my great grandfathers, Fred A. Engle, Sr. left small-scale farming life on Indian Creek to pursue his education, attending the Barbourville Baptist Institute and eventually earning an EdD from the University of Kentucky. He went on to a long teaching career at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) in Richmond. My great-grandmother, my namesake, Kathryn Johnson Engle, got an education at Cumberland College and taught high school for many decades. My grandfather, father, and uncle followed in the footsteps of the "family business" also earning doctoral degrees from UK. My grandfather also taught at EKU, followed by my father, meaning there has been an Engle teaching at Eastern for the past 90 years.

I feel like my research and work in Knox County in many ways has brought me full circle. I grew up in Richmond and attended EKU in Madison County, a few counties north of the Cumberland Plateau area of southeastern Kentucky. I grew up the daughter of a professor and accountant. I never gardened at home, although I spent a lot of time in Knox County with my grandparents and great grandparents. As a student at EKU I became interested in Appalachian Studies, foodways, and family traditions, going on to attend Appalachian State University for a master's in Appalachian Studies. My dad likes to point out that my great grandfather spent all his life trying get away from being scrub farmer in Knox County only for me to get back to the dirt a few generations later. My interest in the area largely stems from an interest in understanding my own heritage. Through this work I have tried to make sense of my own past and understand the place

that I come from. I have struggled to understand the changing nature of rural Appalachian communities and the role of places like Stinking Creek in larger social, economic, and agricultural systems. I found myself back digging in the dirt in southeastern Kentucky—trying to find my place in this place.

Bodies & Embodiment

Feminist researchers have been at the forefront of integrating issues of the body and embodiment into social theory (Bordo 1993; Boston Women's Collective 2011; Conboy, Medina, and Stanbury 1997; Grosz 1994; Price and Shildrick 1999; Butler 1993). Bodies and embodiment are particularly salient concerns within FPE as the interrelationships between people and nonhuman others, corporeality, and ecological processes are central interests for feminist theorists seeking to understand the environment (L. M. Harris 2015). The following explores the role of human bodies and nonhuman bodies, including my body throughout this project.

Human Bodies at Work

Over the course of this project, I have thought a lot about the concept of embodiment. Often in research or theorizing, the actual bodies, the humans, the body parts doing actions, the interactions between the body and external environment are left out. Feminist political ecology invites us to directly engage with embodiment in research (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, and Wangari 1996a; Harcourt and Nelson 2015; Neimanis 2013; Elmhirst 2011). Recent literature on food and food studies likewise calls attention to the importance of relationships between the body and the politics of food and

agriculture (Carolan 2011; Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy 2008). Building on insights from feminist theorists and FPE I began to consider questions of embodiment and the embodied nature of fieldwork that is quite literally "field work" and the manual labor, mental labor, physical movement, and inter-species natural processes involved in the Grow Appalachia program.

Coordinating the garden program was an incredibly visceral experience. It was an embodied practice and an explosion of the senses: feeling the paralyzing sting of a packsaddle, the mid-July sun beating on the back of your neck, the insatiable, infuriating itch of poison ivy, the prick of a blackberry thorns, the embrace of a stranger turned friend; smelling the rotting of overripe tomatoes, cigarette smoke in your clothes after visiting people's homes, the garden after it rains, cooked cabbage, freshly pulled garlic; tasting the refreshing crunch of a cucumber, sweat dripping from your brow, grainy dirt between your teeth, sweet burst of a blueberry straight from the bush, first mess of green beans; hearing the foreboding thunder in the distance, the satisfying crunch of an ear of corn coming off the stalk, the giggle of school kids passing around a worm, the rumble of the tiller, the squeal of piglets running for cover; seeing Irma's weathered face and hands, leathery by the end of May, the sun going down over the mountain, weeds pop up overnight, okra flowers bursting with color, crowds lining up for the farmers' market. These and other embodied experiences collectively made up my work on the Creek.

The physical effects of coordinating the program and working at Lend-A-Hand have been written into my body: calloused hands, tanned legs, toned arms, scars, bruises, bug bites, dirt under my nails. I did not grow up on a farm, but was always intrigued by farm life and wanted to work outside and with animals. The first time I talked with Irma

about coming to volunteer at the Center she warned me that it would be “menial labor.” Since then I have gained many hands-on experiences on the farm. I’ve learned how to milk a cow, butcher chickens, castrate pigs, trim goat hooves, and feed and handle livestock. I’ve helped plant and replant, chase animals out of the garden, fight off the deer and bugs, harvest produce, hunt for blackberries, make jams and jellies, and winnow popcorn. I’ve bottle fed baby animals and witnessed births and deaths. I’ve learned the strain of putting up square bales of hay in 90 degree heat and the heartache of losing animals. Like many volunteers, I’ve had experience using power tools, mending fence, splitting logs, resurfacing bridges, teetering on ladders, and repairing buildings. I’ve gotten covered in grease after changing the tractor implements and had several close calls with fingers and hands in between machinery. I’ve become more aware of the seasons and the weather dealing with heat, rain, and wind, through working on projects that require particular conditions. I’ve spent a lot of time digging ditches and moving rocks, helping Irma with stone masonry work. I’ve found out what concrete does if it dries on your hands. Chopping wood and carrying 50 pound bags of feed often serves as a good reprieve from graduate school; a good outlet for frustrations and a welcome distraction. Although probably not the typical curriculum of a graduate student in the social sciences, working with Irma around the farm and through the Grow Appalachia program has been far more than a mental exercise. The physical toll often intersected with the emotional toll of coordinating a program such as this manifesting as stress, anxiety, tears, and an eye twitch. I realized the importance of emotion and affect in fieldwork and the complicated relationships and responsibilities that must be navigated when working with groups.

While overseeing the program I thought a lot about bodies in and moving through place and space. I constantly navigated the labor of going to "the field" and the realities of being physically in "the field" (Katz 1994).[245] For someone coordinating a participatory gardening program, it seemed as though most of my time was spent in the car or in front of the computer. I spent a lot of time on the road going between Lexington and Stinking Creek. During the semester I made the two-hour one-way trip probably on a weekly basis. I realized the distance barriers as a researcher and student and the difficulties of doing Participatory Action Research or any sort of engaged community work in the field at the same time as being in the classroom. Unlike others' experiences, I did not take off from school and teaching for semesters or years to do my dissertation research. Physically driving back and forth from teaching or class to work in the garden on the Creek was a mentally and emotionally exhausting exercise. I often thought of the hypocrisy of all of the gallons of fossil fuel I expended to facilitate my work with this organic gardening program. I never really left the field as I continue the back and forth drive and my work in the community. I have the privilege of having family to stay with while working on the Creek. I also often stayed at Lend-A-Hand. Additionally I had places in Lexington and Richmond I stayed. Going between five different places and not knowing where I was waking up proved to be a challenge.

Other physical barriers I contended with included the lack of phone service on the Creek and poor internet access. I had to invest in an antennae service booster for my truck so I could have cell phone service at the Center and at Dewitt School, yet the booster only helped up to a certain part on the road up "Big Creek." Over a certain hill

[245] For a discussion of "fieldwork" see da Costa et al. (2015).

you enter into a “dead zone.” The physical realities of the mountains assert their presence and the social marginalization and lack of infrastructural investment in rural areas becomes stark. Internet service continues to be an ongoing issue. I often stay with my family in Gray while working on the Creek. We were unable to get internet service at the house for years because I was repeatedly told it was unavailable and the lines were full. Even though we are a six minute drive from downtown Corbin, there was only one service provider that was supposed to have coverage for our area and they repeated told me they could do nothing to provide service. We finally got satellite internet that struggles to play videos and literally cuts out when it storms. I continue to spend a good portion of my time working in Knox County either without phone or internet service which is a constant headache.

While coordinating the Grow Appalachia program I learned about the importance of people. Work is accomplished through people and people’s bodies. Labor from humans and nonhuman beings is at the base of our agricultural systems in spite of the mechanization of big ag. Money can be thrown at problems, but it is the individuals doing the daily work that gets anything finished. Berries don’t get picked without bodies. Fruit trees don’t get pruned without bodies. Tomatoes don’t get packed without bodies. Corn at the farmers’ market doesn’t get sold without bodies. Local food systems don’t get built without bodies. Within the global agrifood system, often these bodies doing the labor are hidden from us. Black and brown bodies, rural bodies, women’s bodies, undocumented bodies, marginalized bodies are out of sight even within such an intimate processes as producing and consuming food. My work with this program partially revealed to me the processes involved with those bodies—the real hazards involved with

agricultural production—slicing fingers when processing meat, breathing in toxic chemicals, getting caught in machinery, repetitive motion injuries, heat exhaustion, dehydration, allergic reactions. Building local food systems and community economies involves questions not only of changing decision-making and production processes, but also paying attention to the embodied experiences of workers.

I was further reminded about the differing levels of ability bodies have and the different skills and physical capacities of individuals through my work with Grow Appalachia. Participants' bodies in the garden programs were different, affording them different levels of engagement. Many people I worked with had severe or chronic illnesses. Participants dealt with heart trouble, hospitalizations, and a variety of ailments. I gained insight into the community's health problems—smoking coughs, heart attacks, diabetes, cancer, drug abuse, trips to the ER. I began to think about differently-abled bodies and the challenges that come with old age, chronic illness, poverty, and drug dependency. Even Irma's seemingly super-human body, strong hands, sure feet, and weathered skin began to change. In January of 2017 she suffered a heart attack shortly after being stepped on while milking a cow. She has undergone numerous surgeries and procedures and has slowed down considerably since I first met her years ago. Through my work on the Creek I learned about the fragility and fleetingness of health and how that intersects with food, the economy, and the ability to do physical labor.

Nonhuman Others

Feminist political ecology provides insights, not only into the processes of human bodies but also the role of nonhuman others and the agency of plants and animals.

Natural processes were a central component of my work—just as important as the social networks, oral histories, economic outcomes, and local politics involved in the gardening program. Feminist political ecology stretched me to reconsider the nature/society binary as well as the relationships between human bodies and other living and nonliving things. A central element of feminist political ecology is that it "recognizes the interconnectedness of all life" (Thomas-Slayter, Wangari, and Rocheleau 1996, 269). I began to realize that I should not only think critically about social processes going on around me, but also natural processes and the overdetermined way in which humans and nonhuman others interact.

I formed intimate connections with animals working on the farm at Lend-A-Hand—milking cows, caring for wounds, bottle feeding baby pigs, watching a goat give birth. I spent the summers constantly outside, dealing with rain or drought, fighting off pests, fertilizing plants, saving seeds, and trying to take care of living beings. I wondered if I was coordinating the garden or the garden was coordinating me as I constantly dealt with the agency of nonhuman beings—of unruly bean tendrils reaching beyond their trellises, tomatoes that refused to be caged, hybrid, volunteer Frankenstein squashes that appeared in the garden and took over, sneaky deer and raccoons that raided the corn patch, the uncanny ability of weeds to multiply and appear out of nowhere, the success of the blight regardless of attempts to ward it off. Interacting with the gardens and growing produce was a cooperative enterprise between myself, the garden program participants, and the plants and animals themselves. I became intimately connected with the plants through touch, taste, and smell. [246] They occupied my mind and time. I would sometimes

[246] See Mason's (2018) discussion of ecosexuality and the film *Goodbye Gauley Mountain*.

talk to them or touch them, thinking about the different ways plants can communicate. I marveled at the complex processes that went on in the garden. Processes I didn't even realize were happening nor understood. Processes including photosynthesis, meiosis, the Calvin cycle, the Krebs cycle, digestion, disease transmission, evaporation, condensation, rhizomatic exchange,[247] decay, wilt, and tropism[248] were all essential to the functioning of my little experiment on Stinking Creek. The entire project was predicated on the functioning of these systems.

Queer processes and sexuality are important considerations in any agricultural setting. Sexual reproduction, asexual reproduction, suckering, grafting, fertilization, pollination, and germination are central to local food systems and economies. I saw firsthand the complexity and fragility of these systems and the ways in which plants and animals belie sexual binaries and heteronormative standards. As Tabassi's discussion of hand-pollinating pumpkins points out, queer ecology allows for ways to understand the intricate interactions and processes of plants and animals and ways to rethink our social constructs around sexuality (Harcourt, Knox, and Tabassi 2015, 290–91). Identifying queer interactions between people and nature provides different conceptualization of difference, sex, and ability. Looking closely at natural processes and identifying the variety of sexualities and sex processes going on all around us helps break down binaries and shed light on both separation and interconnectedness. Through these processes and our interactions with them we can begin to see the queerness of life, down to the dirt.

[247] See Deleuze and Guattari (1987).
[248] Tropism is the movement of plants in response to external stimuli such as turning towards the sun.

"When will we centre life in humus?": (Use of) the Abject

Put your faith in the two inches of humus
that will build under the trees
every thousand years.[249]

When will we centre life in humus?[250]

Kentucky is the best 'baccer growing state—quality—in the US.
The only problem with Stinking Creek that I have with it
if they's any kind of weed in the world you're looking for
come to Stinking Creek and it'll be there.
Well what it is,
it's good dirt.
It'll grow your stuff,
and it'll also grow weeds too.

Dirt, manure, worms, rot, death, fire. All essential elements of agricultural systems; life systems. Yet these concepts seldom get the consideration they deserve. FPE and queer ecology have taken up these constructs and material realities as central elements to understanding environmental processes, embodied subjectivities, interspecies relationships, and emancipatory futures. In considering agriculture and local food systems, the role of the abject remains underdeveloped within rural sociology. In examining the Appalachian region, abjection and abject things—things that are cast off, unclean, defiled, polluted, taken for granted, avoided, marginalized—have been undertheorized.[251] Although Appalachia is associated with abjection through the concept of abject poverty, how abjection works in place and the role and possibility of abject things and people remains to be seen. The following presents thoughts on dirt and considers abjection on Stinking Creek examining manure, rot, death, and the community itself as abject. This section concludes with an experiment in practicing Appalachian

[249] From Berry (1998, 110–12) "Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front."
[250] Tabassi (Harcourt, Knox, and Tabassi 2015, 300).
[251] See Stewart (1996).

feminist political ecology—a poetic reflection on the wildfires in eastern Kentucky in the fall of 2016.

Reflections on Dirt

In coordinating the gardening program and working at Lend-A-Hand I became intimately involved with dirt. I spent a considerable amount of time looking at dirt, smelling dirt, tilling dirt, breathing in dirt, amending dirt, washing off dirt, filling bags of dirt, moving dirt. I often found myself covered in dirt—dirt sunk into my callouses, dirt up my nose, dirt on my truck, dirt stuck to my tools, dirt in my hair, dirt under my finger nails, dirt in my boots. I began knowing good dirt from bad dirt. To watch for certain signs. To see the changes from dust to dirt to mud. I distinctly remember arriving to a seminar class with dirt all over my Carhartt pants that had an ever increasing hole in the knee having just come from the field. I sat there thinking about myself and what I looked like in that moment. I contemplated the seemingly different lives I lived working on Stinking Creek and studying and teaching at the university. I was an embodied dualism. The dirt on my self and my physical appearance seemed out of place. It created a dissonance in my mind and a disconnect that I tried to work through.

FPE helps me begin to make sense of the liminal spaces between the academy, communities, and natural processes. FPE invites us to consider questions related to dirt. Tabassi discusses the importance of dirt in theorizing the "world-otherwise" or different ways of interacting and building liberatory futures. She asks, "When will we centre life in humus?"[252] (Harcourt et al. 2015, 300). This was a striking question to me because we

[252] Tabassi advocates for the idea of dirty resilience: "the dismantling of structures of violence that target particular racialized and gendered bodies as disposable. Dirty resilience is thus also the contextually

often take for granted the importance of two inches of topsoil and rain. Even as someone who works in agriculture, I forget how fragile our ecosystems can be and how violent and wasteful our modern food system has become. When a flood comes and washes away the crops and topsoil or a drought dries up the plants and blows away the dirt, I am reminded of the precarity of our existence. Tabassi and FPE bring the materiality of the dirt to the surface, focusing on the billions of microbes, the bacteria, the fungi, the algae, the protozoa, the nematodes, the spores, the decomposers, and the layers of processes that happen simultaneously in order for life to be sustained. I truthfully have no idea how natural processes of nutrient transfer, water exchange, and germination work and how it is that I am able to grow beans and corn and eggplants. I am not a soil scientist but the politics of pedogenesis—the process of soil formation—should be of concern to all of us.

We take for granted the soil, sun, air, and rain, the natural processes that undergird all of the social processes that sociologists, historians, and economists seek to explain. People in this country seldom feel the dirt, use water from a running water source, intentionally interact intimately and cooperatively with nonhuman beings, think about the importance of rain, or feel how the sun sustains life. Turning attention to these life-giving materials, feminist political ecology and queer ecology provide different directions for theorizing Appalachian communities and agricultural systems. A focus on soil, helps me get a sense of my place in this place, finding myself back in the dirt in Knox County.

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specific creation of spaces and structures supporting self-determination and collective liberation such as: …new food systems…" (Harcourt, Knox, and Tabassi 2015, 299).

Abjection & Stinking Creek

Following Kristeva (1982) those writing within the field of feminist political ecology as well as other feminist scholars have explored the concept of the abject. Abject things—things that are cast off, seen as defiled, refuse, and waste—and abjection—the process of being cast off, and the separation between subject and object—present interesting frameworks to think about in relation to agriculture and the Appalachian region. The separation between the self, the subject and the external other, the abject; between body and physical self and the environment or the other; the process of making distinctions and drawing boundaries is of interest to those thinking about nonessentialist versions of the environment. In discussing queer ecology, Morton (2010, 274) observes:

> Life-forms, along with the environments they compose and inhabit, defy boundaries between inside and outside at every level…Human society used to define itself by excluding dirt and pollution. We cannot now endorse this exclusion, nor can we believe in the world it produces. This is literally about realizing where your waste goes. Excluding pollution is part of performing Nature as pristine, wild, immediate, and pure. To have subjects and objects, one must have abjects to vomit or excrete (Kristeva).

Building from Morton, Tabassi (Harcourt et al. 2015: 299-302) discusses the abject and its utility within political ecology and queer theory. Tabassi invites us to ask ourselves, "What are our different relationships with land and soil and that deemed dirty and abject?" (Harcourt, Knox, and Tabassi 2015, 300). In this sense things like dirt, compost, bodily fluids—things that are seen as repulsive—should be examined carefully.

The idea of abjection has been helpful for me to think about my work with the garden program and at the Lend-A-Hand Center. Our lives are contingent upon abject things like dirt and compost and worms and decomposing leaves and mulch. These things are stigmatized and avoided, but it is difficult to cast off and stray away from certain

things on the farm. Castrating pigs, grooming animals, trimming hooves, pruning tomatoes, robbing bee hives, ringing piglets' noses, cutting off the rotten end of a cucumber, appreciating a deformed tomato, force feeding animals medicine, oozing poison ivy welts, and eating freshly killed meat has shown me the interrelationships between subject and abject and made me think differently about things that are deemed unclean, stigmatized. I have been given a different perspective on the fragility and awesomeness of existence, helping birth livestock and watching deaths. Abjection on the farm—the grisly, filthy activities that often go unnoticed, unrepresented—make up essential processes that queer the nature/society binary.

I have an interesting relationship with manure; compost; waste. A good portion of my time in graduate school has been spent cleaning out stalls, spreading manure, loading and unloading compost. Working on the farm you learn about the intricacies of different kinds of manure—hog , cow, chicken, goat—their different uses and characteristics. Hog manure is the most difficult to manage. Multiplying, sticky, pungent. The worst is when string from a hay bale gets stuck in it. Then comes the difficult task of fishing it out, the manure heavy, immovable matted layers. You also begin to be able to identify the different stages of composting and the significance of moisture content. You learn the right tools for the job when cleaning out stalls or side dressing rows.

I actually enjoy cleaning out stalls, hauling manure, getting dirty, smelling it, mixing it. It is incredible to think of how far removed we have become from what was a part of everyday life for many across the Appalachian region just a few short decades ago and what continues to be part of everyday life in many places in the world. For the Grow Appalachia program we used organic fertilizer made of chicken manure. Although it is a

pelleted, dried substance, it becomes quite potent on a hot summer day. We also used compost that was originally used to grow mushrooms to fill the raised beds at the community gardens. Working in the barn, with the fertilizer, and with the compost I thought about the loops and nutrient systems on the farm and in the garden. Irma taught me how to use the manure and would spread what we cleaned out of the barn out into the hayfield. I loaded many tractor buckets full of the recycled energies. The cows ate the grass out of the hayfield and came back to the barn to be milked, starting the process over again.

We also take for granted the incredible importance of the tiniest things—microorganisms and disease vectors. Rot and decomposition are essential to ecological systems. The decomposition—aerobic and anaerobic—that goes on in the compost pile, the systems that breakdown leftover organic matter, and the creatures that recycle nutrients are essential parts of any agricultural, and therefore social system. In the compost, the combination of cast off materials, sun, heat, air flow, and water allow for the creation of new, different matter that becomes the building blocks of life. Some rots are more unwelcome: Verticillium wilt, blossom end rot, powdery mildew, cedar apple rust, early blight. I have dealt with all of these as some fungi and bacteria are pathological, or at least seem so to the gardener. We constantly walk the fine line between life-giving and death; between fertilizing tomatoes with compost and killing them by spreading disease from plant to plant.

Death was an essential part of the Grow Appalachia program and is an essential part of any agricultural system. After all in harvesting many vegetables—carrots, turnips, potatoes—it means death. Every year fields are plowed under, weeds pulled up, bugs

squashed, some fields are sprayed and sanitized wiping out every living thing. The concept of necropolitics as described by Mbebe (2003) and utilized by Mason (2018) in the region provides intriguing ways to think about death, subjectivity, and power.

Some of the most incredible experiences I've had over the years helping out at Lend-A-Hand has been participating in hog killings. [253] I saw—participated in—death firsthand. Lend-A-Hand has been home to a variety of livestock through the decades. Many people have learned how to milk a cow, pluck chicken feathers, and fatten a hog at the Center. While at Lend-A-Hand I have had the fortune of participating in several hog killings, observing and documenting the process and helping with the butchering. After spending weeks feeding, talking to, and watching a hog (Irma likes to name hers after entertainment stars), killing it is a bittersweet moment. It is exciting but also unnerving. Irma sets up the process and directs people what to do. Every time I helped, there were several others involved as processing a 400 pound animal is no small task and requires a surprising amount of strength and physical exertion. Irma has shot many hogs, but Steve, a long-term volunteer at the Center has had that responsibility when I have participated. I remember one time in particular, I was leaned over the fence, looking at and talking to the hog, when Steve unexpectedly quickly swept the rifle over the fence in one swift motion and pulled the trigger. The jolting shot of the rifle and the traumatic, violent seizing of the animal was disquieting. The sow went from life to death in an instant.

Irma is an expert in the butchering processes, having learned from her dad and getting plenty of practice slaughtering chickens, hogs, and cows at the Center over the past nearly 60 years. Peggy is an expert at the cooking process and would promptly start

[253] For a reflections on the Appalachian practice of hog killings see Berry (1998, 135) "For the Hog Killing" and Howell (2013) *Render / An Apocalypse.*

to cook down the lard as it was brought to her. After the hog was shot, Irma would cut its neck to bleed it out. The hog was then loaded onto the front of the tractor bucket by its hind legs. Hanging from the chains the hog would be sprayed with a hose then skinned. Irma did the primary cuts as we worked our way through the animal, saving the lard, discarding the entrails, and creating ever smaller cuts of meat.

Killing and processing an animal is an enlightening and emancipatory process. Participating in such events will change the way you think about animals, your food, and your relationship with what brings sustenance and energy. Watching a living, breathing creature slowly become a recognizable cut of meat you would find in the store is an amazing experience. We are all so disconnected from the nicely packaged cuts of protein that we pick up at the store, having truly no idea about the process, the trauma, the death, the cutting, the blood, the feces, the entrails, the people involved. We have no idea about the life of the animals that we consume nor the process it took to raise the animal, process the animal, and get it to our plate. Perhaps considered the quintessential traditional Appalachian ritual, hog killings, are now a novelty. Butchering hogs was a normal and essential part of life on Stinking Creek for decades, but now few experience the power and gravity of the intimate interspecies connections at the precipice between life and death.

Lastly, in addition to considering abjection on the farm I have thought about the abject nature of the community itself. I have been constantly reminded of the peculiarity of the place by the reactions people give when I tell them I work on “Stinking Creek.” I am often met with a laugh or raised eyebrow. The words “Stinking Creek” conjure up a certain set of images and often suspicion from people who have heard negative stories

about the area. The place name indicates that there is something wrong, something repulsive. Stinking Creek's past explains a long history of abjection. According to the *Kentucky Encyclopedia*: "It was named by a group of Long Hunters, who are said to have killed a bear and thrown its carcass into the creek, where it rotted. Another account is that it was so named because of the odor of the corpses of game animals that hunters indiscriminately slaughtered when they came to the Flat Lick salt licks at the creek's mouth" (Arthur 1992). Stinking Creek was literally named after cast off things, waste, refuse, carcasses.

Fetterman's (1967) description of the Creek is rife with allusions to filth, decay, queerness, and violence. Sexual deviance, bodily functions, and environmental degradation are recurring themes. The people and the land are othered in this way, seen as cast off and disposable. The area may be considered abject not only in name but also socially, economically, and geographically. A peripheral area, marginalized within the county, Stinking Creek deals with the same problems as many rural areas throughout the country. Being from the Creek has a certain connotation to it. Arguably, the community and those on the Creek may be considered disposable, peripheral. The marginal land timbered out and the coal largely gone, there is no longer need for bodies to labor in the coal mines (Stewart 1996).

It may very well be problematic to re-present Stinking Creek or central Appalachia as a whole as abject, but perhaps it already has been done but not in so many words. The idea of Appalachia as a foil for modern America or a repository for American fears has a long history (Shapiro 1978; Pudup 2008; Billings 2008; Reichert Powell 2007; Satterwhite 2011; Scott 2010). Seen as a dying land, throwaway region, or sacrifice zone,

Appalachia has been considered polluted and discarded (Caudill 1971; Reid 1996; Bell 2015; Scott 2010; Fox 1999). Yet through that abjection there is possibility. Like the manure being spread on the fields and cycled back through the farm there are systems and cycles in the community. With death, destruction, and decay there is also life, production, and growth. I see this everyday interacting with people and the soil. Considerations of abjection, abject things, people, and places, bring to light the use and possibility of the abject. I have been desensitized to the peculiarity of working on "Stinking Creek." I forget the jarring discomfort of the name of the place like I forget to be repulsed when shoveling manure. Cultivating an appreciation for the abject—dirt, manure, rot, death, cast off people, and places—allows us to see the potentialities of the land and life on places like Stinking Creek. Practicing a queer ecology centered in dirt brings forward new and different stories being told and different worlds being constructed. Perhaps Tabassi (Harcourt, Knox, and Tabassi 2015, 302) describes it best:

> Sometimes the world-otherwise story, I tell myself in these regretful endtimes, is that of the carbon cycle. In a hope that one day more bodies will be able to die in the dirt, not because they have been shot in the back or drone-bombed, but because they are old, rotten and loved bodies that we gently lay in the soil: a true feast for decomposer organisms! 'The corpse … it is death infecting life' (Kristeva 1982:4). Stories of a world-otherwise where we celebrate death because we actually celebrate living and the world around us, recognizing that within the earth's geochemical cycles, whether carbon or water, there are no dead and living, no ends and beginnings: merely transfers of energy and matter. These stories look forward to sprouting life growing from our microbial decomposition, a rejuvenation of even the most depleted landscapes or mournful hearts.

An Experiment in Appalachian Feminist Political Ecology

The fire is not dead here.[254]

[254] Quote from Brittany Skidmore, a participant at the It's Good to Be Young in the Mountains Conference (IG2BYITM), Harlan, Kentucky, August 16, 2015.

In the fall of 2016 a rash of wildfires spread through eastern Kentucky impacting Knox and surrounding counties. Schools were shut down, air quality was diminished, buildings were destroyed, and thousands of acres of land burned throughout the Appalachian region. A severe drought exacerbated problems as a hazy, lingering smoke settled throughout the county. The smell of fire wafted in and out with the winds, sometimes so strong you could taste it. National Guard helicopters dumped water to try to suppress the flames. Some fires were shown to be the result of arson, proving to be an ecological and social disaster.

These fires coincided with the 2016 election, arguably one of the most divisive and heated in modern history. In addition to scandals surrounding the national presidential election, the Kentucky House of Representatives flipped to a Republican majority ushering in a wave of conservative legislation. The political tension was palpable as the election and its aftermath proved an inescapable conversation and ever-present reality.

The following set of poems explores the ecological and political reality of eastern Kentucky in the fall of 2016. It reflects on the destruction of the wildfires and the turmoil of the election—the literal and figurative burning of eastern Kentucky which voted overwhelmingly Republican. I began writing the day after the election, overwhelmed with emotion and trying to make sense of the changed world around me.

These poems present a snapshot of the social and environmental moment. A time of anger, fear, anxiety, sadness, and bewilderment. A time of heightened political unrest and a country trying to come to grips with its racism, sexism, heterosexism, xenophobia, nativism, and ableism, no longer able to ignore its rooting in injustice. The realities of

climate change, environmental degradation, and resource depletion became inescapable and undeniable. Race, class, gender, and sexuality found renewed interest in the national discourse as social movements and reactionary movements were given extensive coverage in the evening news, as was a candidate that bragged about sexual assault, promised to build a wall, used dog whistle language and outright racist sentiment, and called climate change a hoax along with his running mate who denied the danger of cigarettes and arguably supported gay conversion therapy.

The following references overlapping and intertwining social movements of the late 2010s including Black Lives Matter, the repercussions of the Charleston church shooting and the ensuing debates about the confederate flag and guns, the fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock, the fallout from the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, campaigns for LGBTQ* equality,[255] movements addressing the declining economic significance of coal as well as the continued ecological destruction in the Appalachian coalfields, critiques of US imperial pursuits and violent aggression around the world including conflicts over occupied Palestine, and the renewed class consciousness and critique of the 1 percent spurred by Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign in the face of increasingly severe neoliberal policies. All of these issues were on my mind as I coordinated the garden program on Stinking Creek over the years. My work and understanding of the community cannot be divorced from these events and discourses. I remember being at my family farm in the rural area spanning Knox and Laurel Counties known as Gray, looking out across the fields through the haze of the

[255] During my fieldwork in the summer of 2015 marriage equality was passed in Kentucky through the landmark Supreme Court decision *Obergefell v. Hodges*. Eastern Kentucky also rose to the center of national debates about same-sex marriage as the saga of Rowan County clerk Kim Davis captured international attention.

smoke and seeing a confederate flag flapping in the wind at the neighbor's house. In that moment I realized the intersections of the political and ecological moment. Racism materialized through new red flags that began to dot the landscape on the Creek and throughout the county. Ideologies and ecologies converged and new subjectivities emerged.

An experiment in form and a brief interlude from academic language, these poems seek to bring attention to the intersections of politics, ecology, and emotion. They convey the embodied experiences and physical realities of eastern Kentucky. They explore abjection and soil as a site of resistance and regrowth. The poems also pay homage to famous works of Appalachian literature borrowing several recognizable phrases and concepts. This exercise may be considered a performance of Appalachian feminist political ecology, presenting different scales of relocalization down to the dirt and a different type of (re)presentation of issues in the region.

My land is burning

November 9, 2016
Gray, Kentucky

My land is burning

Squinting through the smoke
a haze sets on the land

Forever changed
no longer the same
a flipped house
an altered state
a brave new world

Watering eyes
then rolling tears
blurred vision
and nostrils flared

Inescapable and intertwined
the smell settles into everything
lingers
infiltrates all

Can’t see into the distance
across the way
signals of uncertainty; distress

Blurred outlines of battle flags flap in the wind
contested banners, stars, bars
resurrected, re-hoisted
from barns, basements, homeplaces

Apple saplings shudder
crackling leaves swirl
embers whipped ahead
through the wilderness

Feel the heat of
the blaze start to
burn

Birthed from drought

Sparked by arson
    lightning
    negligence
    fear
    complicity

Stoked by hatred
    opportunity
    inaction
    ignorance
    the oppressor flickering, glowing, smoldering deep within each of us

Mangled natures of destruction
trees turned into burning crosses
spreading through the landscape

enabled and uncontained

The usual fog of the valleys
is now fire on the ridges
white supremacy

~~~~~

Red flag warnings
alarms dismissed, denied
attempts at prevention
met a climate of doubt, change

Cigarette buts
smoking kills
secondhand smoke spreads
our kids easy kindling

Deep cuts
scorched earth
rhetorics
slash and burn
torching of public lands, public trusts
domains imminent; eminent

National guards?
emergency states
lifelines of water
water: life

Continued air strikes
load after load
dropped in hot zones
red zones, conflict zones

Prisoning hills
occupied lands
internal settler colony
erecting fire-walls to keep out the fear
boundaries to keep in the flame

People lost in the smokescreens
prayers for the reign
in the forest [of] lies
despair
~~~~~

The firestorm swells
fighting fire with fire
left with ash

Coming out of the woodwork
darknesses arise
night is day; day is night

~~~~~

Ancient fires never fully snuffed out/quelled/extinguished
smoldering remains ignited and visible
fires that have always been burning
now in the open

Mother Nature grabbed

Flaming fairies
Skip through the hollers
Fleeing conversion to dust

Charred earth on the
ridge-pocket
tops removed
overburdened
laid bare

Standing Rocks exposed
through the gashes
on the hillsides
coals in the mountain cry out
water cannons deployed; pipelines burst

Trickle down
to the base
the rift
opens
wide
begins to seize and inflame
like Flint

Black lungs
Lives passed
Matter

Shortened breaths
~~~~~

searching for
suppressed paths
retardant routes
blazing trails

Rhizomatic ontologies
raging topologies
queer ecologies
changed geographies

Born again
under the dirt
slumbering seeds
mobilizations and resistances
regrowth and humus

The fires ignite something else
something beautiful dancing through the hills

My land is burning

CONCLUSION

See all the old people are died out
and the young'uns,
they just didn't want to raise a garden.
And they's not nobody grows nothing now hardly.

I think out of necessity people had to do that.
And so now, they don't.
They go to Krogers where they can get gas points.

~

I am not sure that I have answered Helen Lewis' question, of my place in this place. My experiences in Knox County, on Stinking Creek, with the Lend-A-Hand Center, and with the Grow Appalachia program have taught me so much but perhaps left me with still more questions. To conclude this dissertation I want to reflect back on this

project by revisiting my initial research questions, providing some recommendations based on this work, and outlining possibilities for future research.

Sharing Stories

1) What can be learned from the stories, experiences, and knowledges of Stinking Creek residents regarding their community, agriculture, and the Lend-A-Hand Center?

The article "Stinking Creek Stories: Memory, Agriculture, and Community in Rural Southeastern Kentucky" addresses this question head on. The stories that were shared with me through oral history provide insights into larger changes in agriculture and the political economy of eastern Kentucky. Individual stories shed light on rural transformation in the mountains from the perspective of people who have lived it. First person narratives, tales of the past, stories of people, tall tales, and foggy remembrances together, in many ways, create the community itself.

Stinking Creek is both a beautiful and complicated place. People's experiences and histories on the Creek are varied. The stories of growing up on the Creek, living on the Creek, social issues on the Creek, and ideas for futures shared by participants in the "Stinking Creek Stories" Oral History Project provide a wealth of material for consideration. Like all places Stinking Creek has its positives and negatives. The stories of Stinking Creek residents are a distinct part of Kentucky's rural history. These stories of Appalachia matter. Oral history uncovers new meanings and presents personal narratives to a large audience giving a platform for seldom heard points of view. The Creek will continue to be represented in different ways, adding to the layers of meaning in the community and contesting, muddying, or reinforcing past depictions.

The stories gathered on Stinking Creek show that rural communities in eastern Kentucky have employed diverse economic practices and adapted to changing economic and agricultural systems. Many people have a deep attachment to place and ascribe various meanings to agriculture and its role and future in the community. Some people see no future in agriculture in the area while others are more optimistic. Residents' stories evidence the profound changes in agriculture over the past several years from having sorghum stir offs in every hollow and every family with a small garden, to one remaining sorghum boil and a diminishing number of home gardens dotting the Creek. Stinking Creek residents have employed multiple livelihood strategies and engaged in agricultural production outside of traditional crops and livestock to make ends meet. The declining role of coal, timber, and tobacco in the community and region changed the face of an economy that was highly dependent on extraction. Local agriculture will likely not replace coal as an economic driver, yet activities on Stinking Creek shows continued potentials for small-scale production in the county.

My discussions with Irma and Peggy, my experiences with the Center, and the stories I have gathered through oral histories show the impact the Lend-A-Hand Center has had on the community and its importance within larger community development discourses in the region. The stories of the Lend-A-Hand Center show the role and potentials of small nonprofit community service providers in rural areas. Residents shared tales of getting shots, going to day camp, and learning how to sew with fondness. The impact and reach of these and other programs has been profound. People in the community are hopeful for the continuation of the Center. The remarkable lives and work of Irma Gall and Peggy Kemner stand as an incredible example of service and

perseverance. Now in their mid-to-late 80s, and after 60 years on Stinking Creek as of August 2018, the co-founders and co-directors have undoubtedly fulfilled their mission to "lend a hand." Led by a board of directors and still largely steered by Irma, the Center is looking to transition management and leadership. In 2016 the Lend-A-Hand Center Board of Directors voted to no longer continue the Grow Appalachia program. The future of the Center is still uncertain while its influence and stories remain.

Oral History, PAR, & Relocalization

2) How can oral history and Participatory Action Research be used in community gardening programs like Grow Appalachia to impact rural communities and encourage economic diversity, relocalization, and post-coal transition?

My work with Grow Appalachia illustrates the potentials for combining oral history, Participatory Action Research (PAR), and hands-on agricultural initiatives to learn about and impact communities. My experiences gardening with some of my interviewees and getting to know them outside of a strictly academic or research setting provided a special opportunity to understand changing agricultural practices and life on Stinking Creek. Involvement in participatory agricultural programs and Participatory Action Research broadly offers valuable methodological possibilities, especially within the context of sustained community engagement. Working through an established community organization, the Lend-A-Hand Center, gave me access and resources I would not have had otherwise. Oral history combined with participatory projects through community organizations creates possibilities to preserve community voices and traditions, build relationships, and develop future projects.

PAR projects are in no way an easy undertaking. There are many challenges to place-based, engaged community programs. Furthermore, working in agriculture is often difficult, frustrating, precarious, risky, and sometimes unfulfilling. As I learned, PAR projects are not perfect and often aims and hopes for projects fall short, yet PAR presents an important approach to working with communities. Although my programs were not as participatory as I had hoped, I learned about what engaged academic-activist work in the region meant and potentials for critical regionalism. Practicing critical regionalism provides ways for researchers to not only impact communities, but also shape discourses towards envisioning and creating different places.

The second article "Cultivating Community Economy on Stinking Creek: The Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program" proposes a framework to think about discourse, economies, and economic diversity. The stories of the past Stinking Creek residents shared and the practices of the present point to potentials for relocalization of food systems and economies in eastern Kentucky. Participatory agriculture programs like Grow Appalachia provide opportunities for researchers and communities to work together towards different kinds of economic formations and the cultivation of community economy. Through this program I have thought a lot about the concept of relocalization. Building on the rich histories of local agricultural and economic systems of the past, communities can promote local systems and processes. Programs like Grow Appalachia present opportunities to address post-coal transition by looking back to past traditions and identifying current and future agricultural and economic formations to create new, more sustainable and local economies and discourses.

Experience & (Re)presentation

3) How do I make sense of my own embodied experience and role on the Creek and the responsibility I have in conveying stories of people and a place through new, different forms of (re)presentation?

Questions of experience, embodiment, and representation are further addressed in "Notes from the (Corn) Field: Feminist Reflections on (Re)presentation, Embodiment, and Abjection." Throughout this process, principles of feminist research have helped me in understanding my role in the field and my responsibility in representing people I come into contact with. John Fetterman's legacy is still very much alive in the Stinking Creek community, as are other simplistic representations of the Appalachian region, but there are many other stories to be told. Discourse and how and why we talk about a place matters. My work has shown the importance of critical analyses of representations of processes, people, and places. My representations of Stinking Creek, the Lend-A-Hand Center, and Knox County, Kentucky, have been partial and interested. Taking a reflexive approach to my work, I have been able to see how my presence has impacted the research and the community. I have been able to critically examine the roles I play and the impact this research has had on my self and my emotions.

Feminist political ecology (FPE) presents intriguing ways to think about questions of representation, embodiment, and nature. FPE offers a different lens through which to view the region. FPE could be applied to a number of issues in Appalachia such as black lung, fracking, dams, wild ramps, paper mills, waste facilities and landfills, coal slurry

impoundments, slasher films, and kudzu.[256] Developing "Appalachian feminist political ecology" allows for new conceptualizations of gender and sexuality in the region. Paying attention to bodies, uncovering human/nature interactions, and foregrounding dirt are important directions for Appalachian Studies. Considering abjection and thinking about relocalizing down to the dirt opens up different scales and relationships to consider in Appalachian communities. Using different media like oral history and poems, or even photography and song, to explore issues at the intersections of nature and society in the region through FPE builds on the rich interdisciplinary nature of Appalachian Studies and creates novel representations of places like Stinking Creek.

Recommendations

In the face of pressing social issues in central Appalachia and renewed interest in the discourses of development, local food, and post-coal transition, this work seeks to intervene in region-wide discussions and suggest avenues for change and possibility. This research shows the importance of different (re)presentations of community narratives and relocalization of food systems and as part of a multifaceted agenda toward a just, sustainable future for eastern Kentucky and the region.

From my work with local food systems and the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program, several recommendations can be made regarding programs and policies in the region and beyond:

- Organizations like the Lend-A-Hand Center and other small nonprofits throughout the region should be supported in order to better serve their communities and interact with people at the local level.

[256] See Anna E. Eskridge and Derek H. Alderman, "Alien Invaders, Plant Thugs, and the Southern Curse: Framing Kudzu as Environmental Other through Discourses of Fear," *Southeastern Geographer* 50, no. 1 (2010): 110–29.

- Multi-sited programs like Grow Appalachia that partner with existing organizations provide a good model for agriculture and economic development work in the region, building important networks and providing resources to local communities.
- Participatory Action Research should continue to be explored by scholars of the region, especially in relation to agricultural initiatives and economic diversification.
- Oral history provides a critical method to capture narratives of communities, especially in relation to agriculture and economic change.
- Unique cultural legacies and traditions like sorghum stir-offs, hog killings, and root digging should be celebrated and preserved in the region as part of the diverse economy.
- Soil health and water quality should be central considerations of post-coal transition as people form different relationships with land.
- Scholars should practice critical regionalism, influencing conversations about the region and participating in local initiatives.
- Scholars, media, and others should critically analyze representations of processes, people, and places in the region and take care in providing accurate, multifaceted (re)presentations.
- Community economies and relationships that promote just, sustainable communities should be fostered as an essential component of post-coal transition.
- More public investment should be made in social support programs including drug treatment, healthcare, childcare, education, job training, and cooperative enterprises in order to provide the needed resources to facilitate community economy. Although with their shortcomings, the programs of the War on Poverty provide interesting examples of concerted efforts to address social problems through policy and investment in local communities.
- Government, nonprofit, and academic programs should encourage noncapitalist economic forms including coops, community enterprises like community kitchens, worker self-directed enterprises, small businesses, self-employed enterprises, and home-based provisioning.
- The scope of development initiatives like SOAR should be expanded to include considerations of community economy, democratic participation in decision making, and environmental sustainability. Less emphasis should be placed on jobs and traditional economic indicators. Rather, initiatives should center justice, participation, and sustainability in weighing development programs including taking into account the effects of economic activities on bodies and the earth. These programs should work to transition as quickly and as justly away from fossil fuels as possible, providing for communities most impacted by economic restructuring and climate change. These programs and political processes must be divorced from vested interests including the coal industry and agribusiness that coopt development efforts and thwart structural change.
- Local foods and home production should be supported through policies that encourage local purchasing including school purchasing, local subsidies, and farmers' market incentive programs.

- Agriculture programs that support small farmers, gardeners, and local communities including farmers' markets, direct sales, community supported agriculture (CSAs), food hubs, farm-to-school programs, community gardens, gleaning programs, food preservation programs, local foods networking organizations, community kitchens, local processing facilities, farm-to-table restaurants, and organic production programs should be central to state and federal agriculture policy.
- Agriculture and local foods should continue to be seen as important aspects of a just transition in the region as part of a multidimensional agenda for change.

Future Research

Looking back on this five year process, there are many things I would do differently in my work on Stinking Creek. Yet, I feel incredibly lucky to have been doing this research in this community at this time with such amazing people and through such an incredible organization. I have learned an immense amount about the community, the region, and myself through my work with the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program. I feel as though I have a better idea of my place and my role in the future of the region and a better grounding in where I'm from. In the face of tremendous changes, many programs, initiatives, mobilizations, and resistances are emerging. Post-coal futures for central Appalachia present a wealth of possibility. Many communities, organizations, and individuals are seizing this historical moment to change the social, political, economic, and agricultural landscape of the region.

The region and world are much different places now than when I started in the fall of 2013. I am amazed to reflect back on the research process, from the nascent stages of generating ideas and possibilities to making decisions, taking actions, and following through. Over the past five years this project has been far more than a scholarly exercise as I have gained invaluable life experiences and friends. I realize how naïve and enthusiastic I was at the beginning of this endeavor often biting off more than I could chew and thinking any and everything was possible. Through the different stages of the

project including the planning, data collection, reassessment, transcribing, writing, and rewriting, many people including my committee have helped guide me. Along the way I have learned about what it means to do fieldwork in the region and what it means to be a scholar. Presenting my findings at various classes, conferences, and informally talking through things with people has helped me understand the region and my place. Asking questions and honing my topical interests, I have seen my understandings of the community evolve. Although this process often seemed messy, out of control, unorganized, impossible, and infuriating, in the writing process and ultimately the dissertation defense, it became clear what I had accomplished and the importance of my work. This dissertation represents one form of the culmination of years of work as an academic activist although plenty of work remains to be done.

Building on this research, further work in Knox County and on Stinking Creek is warranted. There are many more stories to be told about Stinking Creek and agriculture in the region. Many additional oral histories could be collected in the community further complicating the narrative. In particular, talking to young people and learning about their experiences will help shed light on possibilities for the future of the area. Further work delving into the complexity of gender and sexuality in the region will help present a more complete picture of the region. More direct attention to race in the community and region is needed to understand the connections between politics, poverty, religion, and white supremacy in the region. Participatory projects such as collaborative ethnography and photovoice in the community present opportunities for continued collaboration. More research is needed examining the long-term effects of local foods programs like farmers' markets in the region. Local foods programs will continue to develop and impact

incomes, food security, and jobs in the region. Increased attention to not only the economic impacts but also the social and environmental impacts of programs like Grow Appalachia will help shed light on how agriculture fits into the larger agenda for growing economic possibility in Appalachia.

APPENDIX

Interview Questions

Background Information

1. Tell me a little about yourself.

(Ask about-Name, age, residence, how long have lived in a particular place, occupation, family)

Stinking Creek Life

2. What is it like to live on Stinking Creek?

3. How long has your family been on the Creek?

4. What are some of the biggest issues on the Creek?

5. What are some of the greatest possibilities or opportunities?

6. What do you think is the future of the Stinking Creek community?

Gardening

7. How long have you/your family been gardening?

8. What can you remember about gardening growing up?

9. What kind of gardening or farming practices have you participated in? (for example: planting methods, use of technology, harvesting methods, food preservation, seed saving, food preparation)

10. What different roles have family members or other individuals played in farming and gardening in your experience?

11. How much does home food production fulfill your household's needs? Your community needs? (food preservation, selling, sharing, gifting)

12. What kinds of foods do you family grow and prepare?

13. How has gardening or agriculture changed in your community over the years?

14. What do you see as the future of gardening or agriculture in the community?

Lend-A-Hand Center

15. What has been your experience with the Lend-A-Hand Center? How has it impacted you personally? (programs, individuals, events)

16. What kind of an impact do you think Lend-A-Hand has made on the community?

17. What do you think could be the future of the Lend-A-Hand Center?

Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program

18. What has been your experience with the Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program?

19. How could the program be improved or changed?

20. What kind of programs, events, or activities do you think would be good for the program in the future? (community gardens, classes, dinners, etc.)

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Chapter 1 References

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Education

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Gender & Women's Studies Graduate Certificate
Appalachian State University, August 2013
MA in Appalachian Studies with a concentration in Appalachian Culture
Eastern Kentucky University, May 2011
BBA in General Business
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Professional Experience

Fall 2018- Present
Associate Director, Appalachian Center and Appalachian Studies Program, University of Kentucky
Fall 2017-Spring 2018
Instructor, Department of Social And Behavioral Science, Union College (Ky)
Fall 2016-Spring 2018
Instructor, Department of Sociology, University of Kentucky
Fall 2014-Spring 2016
Teaching Assistant, Appalachian Studies Program, University of Kentucky
Spring 2014-Fall 2016
Lend-A-Hand Center Grow Appalachia Gardening Program Site Coordinator
Fall 2013-Spring 2014
Teaching Assistant, Department of Sociology, University of Kentucky
Fall 2012-Spring 2013
Instructor, Center for Appalachian Studies, Appalachian State University

Selected Grants & Awards

2016
Kentucky Oral History Commission Project Grant
UK Appalachian Center Eller & Billings Student Research Award
2014, 2015, 2016
Grow Appalachia Grant—Lend-A-Hand Center
2014
"Local Foods, Local Places" Grant—Knox County Farmers' Market
UK Appalachian Center James Brown Research Award
2012
Appalachian State University William C. Friday Research Fellowship
2011
Appalachian State University Cratis Williams Memorial Fellowship

Publications

Forthcoming

"Stinking Creek Stories: Memory, Agriculture, and Community in Rural Southeastern Kentucky," *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*

2017

Invited Book Review of *Women of the Mountain South: Identity, Work, and Activism*, Connie Park Rice and Marie Tedesco, Eds. The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, Vol. 115, No. 1. pp 107-109

2016

Book Review of *Thinking Outside the Girl Box: Teaming Up with Resilient Youth in Appalachia* by Linda Spatig and Layne Amerikaner *Appalachian Journal* Vol. 43 No. 1-2. Fall 2015/Winter 2016. pp 104-107

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2014

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2012

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