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"In the Land of a Million Smiles": Twentieth-Century America Discovers the Arkansas Ozarks

BROOKS BLEVINS

HEMMED-IN HOLLER HAS LONG BEEN a popular attraction for Ozark travelers. Today its rugged beauty and isolation attract hikers and awe canoeists floating on the swift upper reaches of the Buffalo River. Hemmed-in Holler was especially appealing to writers who "discovered" the Ozarks after World War I and whose preconceptions of Ozark people seemed to be satisfied by Holler dwellers. Perhaps no other community in the Arkansas Ozarks—a region that appeared staggeringly remote to most Americans—was as isolated and removed from the forces of modernization as Hemmed-in Holler. One observer described the exotic terrain in 1935: "There [were] no roads into the holler. One usually enter[ed] it, afoot, fording the river from one to a dozen times, following a mountainside trail steep enough to become discouraging to a mountain goat."[1]

This Newton County hollow was home to a community as isolated and anachronistic as any the United States had to offer in the middle of the twentieth century. When Charles Morrow Wilson, a Fayetteville native and freelance journalist, visited the Holler in the midst of the Great Depression, he found twenty-two families living lives similar to those of their ancestors a hundred years earlier. There were no automobiles, radios, or telephones; no electricity or indoor plumbing; no doctors, teachers, or even preachers. Although the Buffalo River bottoms were fertile, the difficulty of transportation allowed only subsistence farming. Most raised their own

[1]Charles Morrow Wilson, Hemmed-in Holler, *Review of Reviews and World' Work*, August 1935, 59.

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tobacco, and the women continued to spin and weave wool cloth and make the families' clothes. Cash incomes—estimated at only $60 a year per family—depended upon "by-products and incidental crops" such as wool, honey, sorghum molasses, cow hides, chickens, eggs, furs, and herbs. The residents of Hemmed-in Holler, their "names outstandingly English," could, according to Wilson, "swap talk and break bread with farmers of Chaucer's England, and suffer few misunderstandings."[2]

Hemmed-in Holler was an anomaly on the eve of World War II, an anachronistic, quaint model of a region as it had existed half a century earlier. Yet for all its uniqueness—in the Holler were no cotton tenants, apple orchards, or broiler houses—Hemmed-in Holler matches the Ozark image that developed after 1930. The Holler and other remote communities scattered across the region satisfied the demands of that image so well, in fact, that one must presume they served as the model for the popular Ozark portrait. Not surprisingly, writers and tourism promoters discovered the region and its Hemmed-in Hollers just as the quaint relics of frontier existence—the "diverting and picturesque" qualities so appealing to nostalgic urban Americans—were fading from the scene, rendered obsolete by the modernizing forces of government intervention and technology. As historian Janet Allured comments in her study of women and family life in the Ozarks: "Though many outsiders were loathe to admit it, not everyone was poor, few families kept a still at the spring house, even fewer women smoked a corn-cob pipe, and not every person was superstitious."[3] Thus, the image of the Arkansas Ozarks formed during the depression—of log cabin homesteads inhabited by broad-brimmed hat-wearing, barefooted moonshiners and wrinkled women weaving homespun—was based on nostalgia and whimsy, and it was supported only briefly by a select cadre of remote twentieth-century families living almost wholly lives of the nineteenth century.

By most standards, life in the Arkansas Ozarks before World War II would have been isolated and difficult, but the isolation and harshness were relative and in most areas decreased in the first four decades of the twentieth century. Isolation and accessibility, like agricultural practices, differed from subregion to subregion and community to community within the Ozarks. Two archaeological studies reveal these contrasts. Artifacts at the Moser site northwest of Lowell in Benton County dispute the backward image and "indicate that by the late nineteenth century the people were integrated through a flow of information and goods that connected the site to

[2]Ibid., 59-61.

[3]Janet Allured, "Ozark Women and the Companionate Family in the Arkansas Hills, 1870-1910," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 47 (Autumn 1988): 231.

the community, the region, and beyond." On the Moser farm, "what was not sold was consumed at the stead and not the reverse." This farm family owned Ball jars from Indiana and other items manufactured in nine different states as well as in England, Germany, and the Far East, all of which suggests that the Mosers "belong[ed] to a wider information network than just their neighbors."[4] Conversely, sites excavated in the Sullivan Creek area near Sandtown in northern Independence and southwestern Sharp Counties reveal a more isolated existence. Researchers found stoneware and pottery manufactured in the northeastern United States but little else—none of the decorated whiteware, stemmed glass goblets, and porcelain doll fragments of the Moser homestead—to indicate that the Sullivan Creek residents were anything but economically restricted and isolated in the early twentieth century.[5]

Contemporary accounts of pre-depression conditions in the most remote counties of the region also reveal a high degree of isolation and inaccessibility. The extension agent who arrived in Madison County in 1925 reported that his rustic new home county possessed no telephone connection, only fifty-six miles of gravel-improved state highway, and "not more than fifty miles of county roads that could be negotiated by auto." Bridges were so rare and streams so plentiful that often in winter and spring travelers could exit and enter the county in only one direction. The agent, who maintained both a car and a horse for local travel, could visit the southern part of the county during the wet months only by driving to Fayetteville and riding the train to Pettigrew, St. Paul, and other depot villages. This lack of transportation and communication facilities hampered market agriculture and often resulted in impoverished conditions. In neighboring Newton County, the agent observed: "Home conditions are frightfully bad. Hogs fare better in the progressive agricultural sections of the country than do many of the children of Newton County."[6]

[4]Leslie C. Stewart-Abernathy, *Independent But Not Isolated: The Archeology of a Late Nineteenth Century Ozark Farmstead*, Project No. 534 (Fayetteville: Arkansas Archeological Survey, 1983), 6, 271, 284, 291.

[5]Lawrence G. Santeford, et al., *Empty Rooms and Broken Dishes: Results of Testing Ten Historic Sites in the Sullivan Creek Project Area, Independence and Sharp Counties, Arkansas* (West Fork, AR: Spears Professional Environmental & Archeological Research Services, 1993), 91, 101, 103.

[6]"Narrative Report of County Extension Workers—Madison County, 1925," Box 19, Federal Extension Service Records—Arkansas (hereafter FESRA); "Narrative Report of County Extension Workers—Newton County, 1925," Box 19, FESRA, RG 33, National Archives and Records Administration, Southwest Region, Fort Worth, Texas. For a discussion of south central Missouri in the late 1920s, see W. A. Browne, "Some Frontier Conditions in the Hilly Portion of the Ozarks," *Journal of Geography* 28 (May 1929): 181-188.

Over the following decade and a half, large-scale highway construction and the introduction of electricity, radios, and automobiles improved traveling and living conditions in many areas. School consolidation made high school education available to a greater number of Ozarkers. Mail-order catalogs, rural free delivery, and automobile travel gradually supplanted drummers and peddlers. On the surface, however, even in 1940 the rural Ozarks in many localities appeared to be little changed from a generation or more earlier. Most rural families continued to rely on the local crossroads or hamlet merchant for necessities and for petty cash from sales of eggs, chickens, and cream. Thousands of children continued to walk three or four miles to one-room schools. Horse- and mule-drawn wagons and buggies outnumbered automobiles, and telephones and electricity remained luxuries enjoyed only by town folk and farmers on the outskirts of those towns.

Nevertheless, a transformation was under way. The signs could be as blatant as a noisy Model T or as subtle as a little white cotton card issued by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. The influence of outside forces is evident in one study of musical styles that challenges any notion of Ozark cultural isolation. In his study of musical life in Stone County, H. Page Stephens found that by the late 1920s and 1930s the traditional musical style, consisting of ballads and songs rooted in the southern highland experience, was dying out in the face of the onslaught of radio, the phonograph, and travel outside the Ozarks. Among Stephens' subjects—all pseudonymous—were Bill Jackson and Herbert Keller. Jackson, born in 1881 to a prosperous farm family in the fertile West Richwoods community south of Mountain View, became a banjo player for traditional local dances and singings. Nevertheless, Jackson's family owned a pump organ and ordered popular sheet music from Sears, Roebuck and Company. Before the arrival of radio and the phonograph in Stone County, Jackson had become familiar with national styles from visits to Mountain View stores, from contact with African-American riverboat workers, and from mail-order music. Herbert Keller, seventeen years younger than Jackson, had also abandoned any unadulterated traditional mountain musical style by the late 1920s. Like many other young Ozarkers, he began listening to phonograph recordings of popular national songs in the 1920s, and in the 1930s Keller looked for inspiration to the musical styles heard on radio broadcasts emanating from Nashville and Chicago.[7]

[7]H. Page Stephens, "The Case of Missing Folk Music: A Study of Aspects of Musical Life in Stone County, Arkansas, from 1890-1980," *Mid-America Folklore* 10 (Fall-Winter 1982): 59, 61.

By World War II, the foundation had been laid for a massive transformation and depopulation in the Ozark region. War would provide the impetus for swift and momentous change. In the latter part of the depression, then, the Ozarks stood on the threshold of modernity, a threshold that a few Ozarkers had already crossed and across which thousands more would wander in the coming decades. Even Hemmed-in Holler would not avoid the influence of the modern world outside the region. In fact, it had been no untouched Arcadia when Wilson visited. Several of the Holler's young men had left to fight in World War I—none returned—or to join the hordes of migrant Ozark workers. These folks were mostly literate, and Wilson found among them books "ranging from paper-bound dime-thrillers to collections of great poetry." In most homes he spotted the second most treasured publication, a Sears, Roebuck catalog.[8]

Many writers would have conveniently overlooked such un-Ozarkian appurtenances as mail-order catalogs, although scarcely a family would have been without one by the 1930s. Their search was at best for the quaint and picturesque, the living anachronism, and at worst for a mythical, fantastical land of slovenly dullards divorced from the march of time or independent rustics defying modernity and materialism. This search for the picturesque and for rejuvenation was hardly new. It had a long history in the Ozarks. Well before the depression, earlier generations of outsiders had "discovered" and changed the Ozarks. The most conspicuous examples were the founders of the health resorts and tourist camps that sprang up in the half-century after the Civil War. Like the romantic articles of depression-era writers, the resorts usually bore little resemblance to the region in which they were set.

While Ozark farmers scratched meager livings from the thin soil, a phenomenon completely unrelated to their agricultural existence took place in their midst. The healing mineral water craze of the late nineteenth century enriched speculators and entrepreneurs across the nation. Blessed with an abundance of such springs, the Arkansas Ozarks became home to

[8]Wilson, "Hemmed-in Holler," 68. By the time of Wilson's visits—and certainly by the time post-World War II writers entered the hollow—the southern "Anglo-Saxon purity" of this Newton County hideaway had been somewhat compromised by a wave of newcomers, among them Kewpie Doll creator Rose O'Neill's reclusive father. In a piece typical of her Ozark writings, Marge Lyon included a chapter in her book, *Hurrah for Arkansas!*, entitled "Newton County—Land of Unspoiled Beauty." According to Lyon, in this county where "one might expect to find the much-publicized barefoot ignorance," one found instead "keen reasoning, a delicious sense of independence and some of the most delightful people of all Arkansas." Lyon then proceeded to seek out and describe only fellow newcomers to the region: a former Chicago golf professional and his wife and a former Kansas City hotel operator whose wife once owned a linen shop. Marguerite Lyon, *Hurrah for Arkansas! From Razorbacks to Diamonds* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1947), 228, 230.

some of the trans-Mississippi's busiest health resorts. The mineral spring boom brought thousands of outsiders into the remote hills—albeit into overnight resort towns that had little to do with the surrounding towns and villages—and first involved the region in the tourist industry, a relationship that would intensify after World War II. The pioneer of the resort towns, and the most prominent, was Eureka Springs. In 1854, Alvah Jackson, a quack medicine man, hunter, and trader, discovered the head of a healing spring in Carroll County and began marketing the water in Missouri and Arkansas as "Dr. Jackson's Eye Water." A quarter-century later, after a prominent judge claimed to have had a leg sore cured by the water, the area began attracting visitors. By July 4, 1879, twenty families had settled around the spring. Incorporated in February 1880, Eureka Springs had grown to almost 4,000 by midyear. Three years later, the Eureka Springs Railway connected the booming town with the St. Louis, Arkansas & Texas (later incorporated into the Frisco) at Seligman, Missouri. The railroad's leadership reflected the clientele of Eureka Springs. The president and chief stockholder was Richard Kerens, a St. Louis businessman and prominent Republican. The man spearheading the railroad's construction was former Reconstruction Republican governor Powell Clayton, a one-armed Union veteran from Pennsylvania who had settled on a large cotton plantation in southeastern Arkansas after the war.[9]

During the heyday of the resort, thousands of visitors came from St. Louis and other midwestern cities and towns to bathe in the healing spring water. In 1886, former Republican presidential candidate James G. Blaine attended the dedication of the magnificent Crescent Hotel, the center of the town's bathing and tourist activity. For twenty-five years beginning in 1898, the town also boasted an electric streetcar system, an unusual sight to local farmers who ventured into town. The mineral water craze wilted around the turn of the century, but Eureka Springs—dubbed "Top of the Ozarks" and "America's Little Switzerland" for its steep, rugged terrain and peculiar Alpine architectural style—continued to attract wealthy midwesterners, though dwindling in number, throughout the early twentieth century, before becoming a small haven for writers and artists in the 1930s.[10]

In 1881, only two years after the public's discovery of Eureka Springs, Max Frauenthal, a Bavarian Jewish merchant with businesses in Conway, Arkansas, and in Memphis, sought to profit from a group of white sulfur

[9]Otto Ernest Rayburn, *The Eureka Springs Story* (Eureka Springs, AR: Times-Echo Press, 1954), 8, 9, 16; James R. Fair, Jr., *The North Arkansas Line: The Story of the Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad* (Berkeley, CA: Howell-North Books, 1969), 1-4, 8, 18.

[10]Rayburn, *Eureka Springs Story*, 46; Fair, *North Arkansas Line*, 31, 195.

springs in Cleburne County. Frauenthal bought the land containing the springs and promptly organized the Sugar Loaf Springs Company with ten other investors, mostly from Conway. Sugar Loaf Springs, as the town was known until its name was changed to Heber Springs in 1910, became a prosperous health resort for wealthy patrons from Conway, Little Rock, and other Arkansas cities in the 1880s. Yet, poor accessibility limited growth. By the time the Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad arrived in 1908, the healing water fad had long passed.[11]

Not all Ozark resort towns relied on spring water. One of northwestern Arkansas's most popular resorts was Winslow. When the St. Louis & San Francisco Railroad, commonly called the Frisco, reached Summit Home in 1882, entrepreneurs renamed the Boston Mountain hamlet Winslow, after the president of the railroad, and developed a thriving resort town with fine hotels and dining facilities. Like Eureka Springs, Winslow was almost completely divorced from its rugged subsistence-farming surroundings. By the mid-1880s, the Washington County town's largest investor was a Chicago businessman whose plush resort attracted wealthy visitors via railroad from as far away as Texas and Louisiana.[12]

On the far side of the region, the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis Railroad spawned a similar town in Sharp County. Although the railroad connected Hardy, also named for a railroad executive, to Memphis and other cities in the 1880s, only after the turn of the century did the town become a resort destination. The primary reasons for the growth of vacationing in Hardy were the lure of the Spring River and the booster activities of a Memphis physician, George Buford. Unlike Winslow, Hardy was not a mountain town, but the cool Spring River, whose headwaters flow from the Mammoth Spring some fifteen miles away, attracted sightseers and swimmers. When Buford visited in the early twentieth century, Hardy was a modestly progressive farming community of livestock and fruit raisers. In 1908, Buford purchased land south of the river on Wahpeton Hill, built the Wahpeton Inn and several guest cottages, and began selling riverfront lots. Buford used his Memphis connections to promote Hardy as the "Playground of the Ozarks." By 1920, Hardy was a popular vacation destination for Memphians and the site of summer camps for Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, the YWCA, and orphans, all sponsored by Memphis groups. So many residents of Memphis had relocated to Hardy or vacationed there annually that in 1920 a group of them established St. Mary's Episcopal

[11]Evalena Berry, *Sugar Loaf Springs: Heber's Elegant Watering Place* (Conway, AR: River Road Press, 1985), 2, 10, 59. The Ozark region contained several other smaller healing water resort towns, including Ravenden Springs and Siloam Springs.

[12]Shiloh Museum, *History of Washington County, Arkansas* (Springdale, AR: Shiloh Museum, 1989), 237, 241.

A 1912 postcard showing one of Winslow's most popular attractions, the Frisco Railroad tunnel. *Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History.*

Church, a sign of wealth and affluence amid the humble Baptists, Methodists, Christians, and Pentecostals of the surrounding countryside.[13]

Hardy, unlike many other Arkansas resort towns, experienced a minor resurgence during the depression. After the Wahpeton Inn burned in 1932, a new owner rebuilt the inn and added a bowling alley, shuffleboard court, and dance floor. The new Guthrie Wahpeton Inn enjoyed a steady business before it too was destroyed by fire in 1939. The year the original Wahpeton Inn burned, a second summer resort, Rio Vista, had been established in Hardy by Blytheville businessman Loyd Ward, Sr. This community of rental cottages served vacationers from Memphis, Little Rock, and eastern Arkansas until the 1950s.[14]

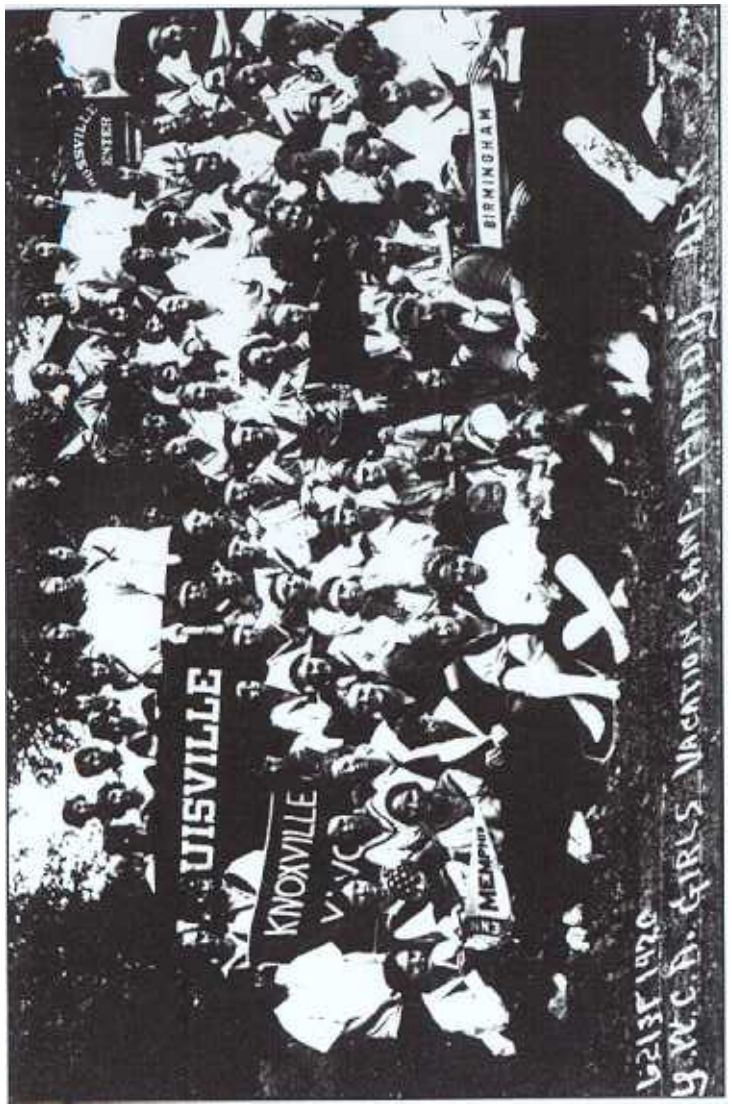
Undoubtedly, the two most ambitious resort schemes of the early twentieth century took shape in Benton County. The two communities, Monte Ne and Bella Vista, shared common beginnings but little else. Monte Ne was established in 1900 by William Hope "Coin" Harvey, a West Virginia native and sometime Rocky Mountain land speculator who had earned a fair degree of fame as author of the free silver tract *Coin's Financial School* in 1894 and as an adviser to Democratic presidential nominee William Jennings Bryan in 1896. In the latter capacity, Harvey accompanied Bryan to Rogers, Arkansas, to which he returned four years later because the area reminded him of his boyhood home in West Virginia. Harvey, whose wealth was derived primarily from sales of his book, bought 320 acres in the community of Silver Springs five miles southwest of Rogers. With the financial assistance of Chicago investors and several local businessmen, he established the Monte Ne Investment Company. In short order, the 320-acre spread was divided into lots worth between $24 and $300, and streets and parks were constructed; the Hotel Monte Ne opened for business in April 1901. The following year Harvey completed a five-mile railroad spur to transport visitors from Lowell. By the end of the decade, Monte Ne included a small lake (on which a Venetian gondola transported tourists from the depot to the hotel), a golf course, a swimming pool, an auditorium, and a dance pavilion. The sources of most of Monte Ne's visitors were revealed by the names of the two most popular sections of summer cottages—Missouri Row and Oklahoma Row.[15]

Faced with declining numbers of visitors, Harvey headed up highway-building efforts and in 1913 helped establish the Ozark Trails Association (OTA), whose purpose was to signpost and promote 1,500 miles of hill

[13]Timely Club, *The Hardy History* (Hardy, AR: Timely Club, 1981), 32, 75-76.

[14]Ibid., 77, 81.

[15]Lois Snelling, *Coin Harvey, Prophet of Monte Ne* (Point Lookout, MO: School of he Ozarks Press, 1973), 1, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18.



Y.W.C.A. chapters from across the South visited Hardy, "the playground of the Ozarks," in the 1920s. *Courtesy Bob Besom.*

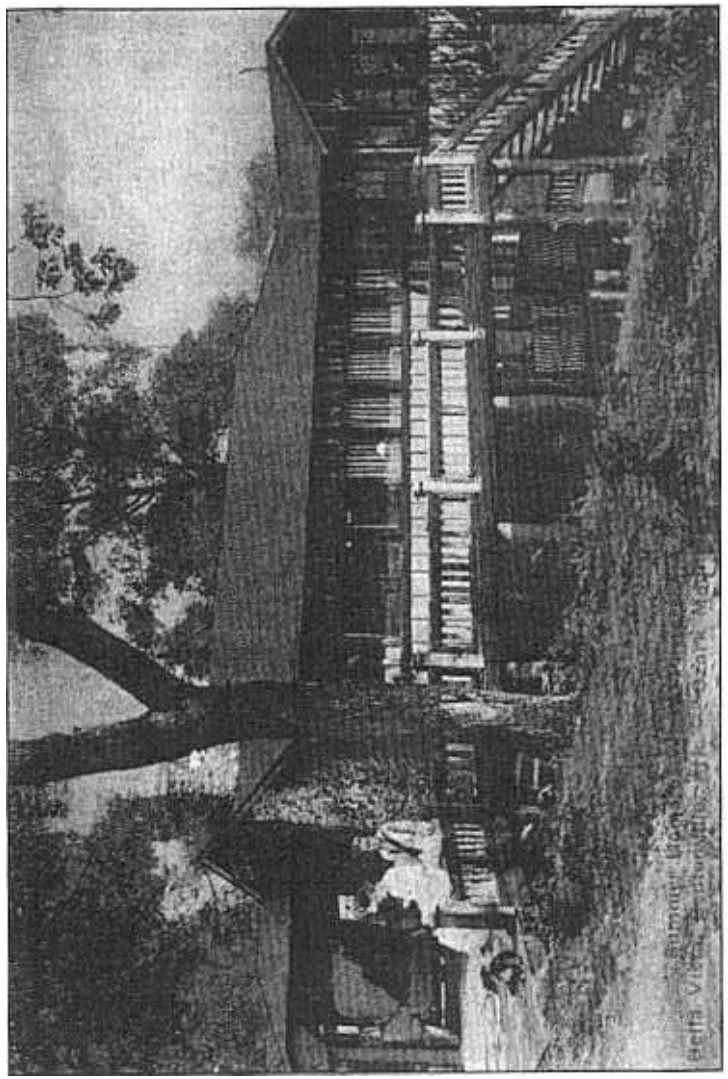
country highways in Arkansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Kansas. Harvey's dream was that all Ozark roads would lead to Monte Ne, but the automobile dealers and chamber of commerce people who made up the OTA had other ideas. The Monte Ne Railroad ceased operation in 1914, and, by 1917, Monte Ne was practically a ghost town. The aging Harvey, unfazed by the failure of his resort town, began work in 1926 on a grand concrete pyramid intended to serve as a time capsule, a project that attracted film companies from Hollywood and newspaper reporters from London, Paris, and across the United States. Never completed, the concrete remains today lie partially submerged in Beaver Lake. In the meantime, Harvey tried to recoup his fortune and his prestige by publishing a financial newspaper, *Liberty Bell*. He engineered Monte Ne's last hurrah when he gathered a convention to establish the short-lived and insignificant Liberty Party, under whose banner he received over 50,000 presidential votes in 1932.[16]

More successful than Harvey's Monte Ne was Bella Vista. The story of this Benton County community dates to 1909, when a Bentonville minister, William S. Baker, and his wife Mary bought 159 acres along Sugar Creek four miles north of their town for $4,500. For six years the land sat idle amid the surrounding family farms. In 1915, with the decline of Monte Ne, the Bakers decided to turn their land into a summer resort. The following year they built a small lake by damming Sugar Creek and began selling lots of 40 by 100 feet or larger. The Bakers also made plans for the construction of tennis courts, a golf course, and a hydroelectric plant.[17]

After selling twenty-six lots, the Bakers sold all but nine acres of their planned resort to Forrest W. Linebarger, a Texas realtor and entrepreneur. Linebarger and his brother Clayton began building the Arkansas Ozarks' most successful summer resort of the 1920s. The Linebargers were not strangers to the area. In 1900, the brothers had moved with their father and mother from their native Indiana onto a farm south of Bentonville in the hope of relieving Mrs. Linebarger's tuberculosis. When she died six years later, the elder Linebarger took his three sons to Dallas, where in 1908 Clayton and Forrest formed a real estate business. Forrest found his way back to northwestern Arkansas in 1917, after successfully promoting a new town site, Tomball, north of Houston. In addition to purchasing the

[16]Ibid., 29, 31, 35, 37-38, 40; Clara B. Kennan, "The Ozark Trails and Arkansas's Pathfinder, Coin Harvey," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 7 (Spring 1948): 299, 300, 313; Clara B. Kennan, "Coin Harvey's Pyramid," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 6 (Summer 1947): 132.

[17]Gilbert C. Fite, *From Vision to Reality: A History of Bella Vista Village, 1915-1993* (Rogers, AR: RoArk Printing, 1993), 1, 4, 5.



A 1920s postcard showing one of Bella Vista's 600 vacation cottages. *Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History.*

Bakers' land, Forrest Linebarger bought fifty-six adjoining acres from farmer Thomas McNeil. The entire plot cost him $6,100.[18]

Forrest Linebarger had to scramble to prepare Bella Vista for the 1917 summer season. He ordered construction of roads, a lodge, a dining hall, a dance pavilion, and bathrooms; arranged for the acquisition of a water system and electricity; and printed maps that he distributed to 250 members of the Arkansas Press Association at a May meeting in Bella Vista. Linebarger dispatched brochure-toting salesmen to Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Dallas, Texarkana, Little Rock, and other southwestern cities to peddle lots ranging in price from $300 to $750. Bella Vista opened in June 1917 with a thirty-room lodge; rooms rented for $2 per day or $12 per week. By the end of World War I, Bella Vista was a prosperous resort of 375 acres with a fifty-six-room lodge, a grocery store, a golf course, and dozens of individually owned cottages. Activities available included hiking, tennis, horseback riding, fishing, swimming, and automobile touring.[19]

Several factors accounted for the success of Bella Vista in the 1920s. As historian Gilbert C. Fite observes, the increasing financial mobility of a growing middle class allowed greater numbers of business and professional people to enjoy activities once reserved for the wealthy. The proliferation of automobiles permitted travelers to reach out-of-the-way places, and the postwar improvement of county roads connected Bella Vista with Bentonville. Perhaps most important, savvy marketing by the Linebargers targeted wealthy oil families in Dallas, Fort Worth, Bartlesville, Tulsa, and, later, El Dorado. The resort was so dominated by oil interests that residents from cities such as Dallas and Tulsa had their own cottage colonies in the "Summer Capital and Playground of the Oil Men of the Southwest."[20]

By the mid-1920s, Clayton Linebarger was practically the manager of a small town. In the summer of 1926 alone, 4,700 guests, including Congressman Sam Rayburn, Will Rogers, and Harry Truman, stayed in the resort's 600 cottages. In 1930, Clayton Linebarger opened Wonderland Cave, a nightclub in a natural cave that attracted national attention from newspapers and magazines. No amount of publicity could prevent declining lot sales during the depression, however, and Bella Vista's fortunes bottomed out in 1933. The resort limped through the remainder of the decade on its limited income from recreation facilities, house rentals, and food sales. By 1940, after an aborted attempt at establishing a winery on

[18]Ibid., 6, 7; Ellen Compton Shipley, "The Pleasures of Prosperity: Bella Vista, Arkansas, 1917-1929," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 37 (Summer 1978): 102.

[19]Fite, *From Vision to Reality*, 8, 10, 11, 15, 17, 18.

[20]Ibid., 1, 20; Shipley, "Pleasures of Prosperity," 127, 103.

company lands, Wonderland Cave remained the only tourist draw at the resort.[21]

The Linebargers' venture was unique among resort communities in its relationship with local farmers. Because Bella Vista was located within a farming community that lay several miles from the nearest substantial town, Bentonville, the Linebargers were careful to cultivate a sense of partnership with their agricultural neighbors. About thirty local farmers were allowed to sell milk, cream, butter, eggs, chickens, honey, fruit, vegetables, and meats to resort guests, and their teenage and young adult children often found employment at Bella Vista. One of these farm families was Roy Ritter's. As a young man on his father's Elm Springs farm, Ritter would take truckloads of early grapes into the resort town to peddle to Bella Vista residents.[22] Such positive interaction between tourism entrepreneurs, tourists, and native Ozarkers, according to Vance Randolph, was the exception rather than the rule. In his 1931 book, *The Ozarks: An American Survival of Primitive Society*, Randolph complained that "the realtors who are booming the Ozarks as a summer playground talk a great deal about how the tourists help the poor hillfolk by bringing money into the country, but the truth is that the hill farmer sees very little of this money." He claimed that tourists fished and hunted without permission, trampled and stole crops, and, to top that off, ridiculed the hill man almost to his face. "The tourist brings nothing but trouble to the real hill-billy."[23]

If Randolph's estimation of the negative effects of tourism was correct, then fortunately for the natives of the Ozarks, resort visitors and tourists were typically temporary guests. But another group of early twentieth-century arrivals envisioned the region as a permanent abode, or at least they did so when they first arrived. Spurred by the frenzy surrounding the closing of the frontier and the turn of the century and stimulated by the Arts and Crafts movement and Theodore Roosevelt's Country Life commission, thousands of middle-class urbanites left the city to find moral rejuvenation through rural life and work.[24] Many of these original back-to-the-landers found their way to remote Ozark sections where unoccupied mountain lands could still be homesteaded. A popular destination was the region's most remote county, Newton, especially the rocky mountain sides that even mountaineers avoided—in Donald Harington's words, "keeping . . . at arm's length, always handy, there to see, there to climb, but not there to plant, any more."[25]

[21]Shipley, "Pleasures of Prosperity," 105; Fite, *From Vision to Reality*, 24-25, 46, 49, 52, 53, 57.

[22]Fite, *From Vision to Reality*, 13; Nancy Caver, "Roy Ritter," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, September 20, 1998, 6D.

[23]Vance Randolph, *The Ozarks: An American Survival of Primitive Society* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1931), 300. For a discussion of the development and transforming effects of tourism in Taney and Stone Counties, Missouri, see Lynn Morrow and Linda Myers-Phinney, *Shepherd of the Hills Country: Tourism Transforms the Ozarks, 1880s-1930s* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999).

[24]T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 74.

In the century's first decade, lawyers, ministers, bankers, artists, and other energetic homesteaders invaded the hills and hollows around Jasper. Upon arriving in the county seat, most homesteaders hired a local citizen to direct them to their mountain Shangri-la. Isaac Coonrod Wishon, an old Union army veteran, blacksmith, and farmer from Low Gap, was the busiest of these pioneer tour guides. Along with his son Milas, the colorful Wishon, for a small fee, escorted the wide-eyed immigrants to their forested and rugged farms deep in the Boston Mountains and helped them contact local carpenters who would erect one-room log cabins in a matter of days, usually at a price of $50.[26] In Donald Harington's fictional Newton County hamlet Stay More, the homesteaders first requested that their houses resemble a picturesque local barn, but when "assured that the barn was a barn," they settled for an anachronistic log cabin.[27]

While we cannot be certain that a barn satisfied the urbanites' preconceptions of Ozark shelters, it is quite likely that their rustic log homes were anachronisms in the early twentieth century. The back-to-the-landers were not in search of authenticity, were not interested in joining their new physical community, and were not concerned in taking their new neighbors at face value. Instead, for the most part, theirs was an exercise in fantasy, an interlude of nostalgia in an otherwise normal existence, with "the city dudes putting on one act and the hill people the other, each group enjoying the show." Isaac Wishon, though perhaps unaware of the urban currents directing these outsiders into his hills, came to realize how he was perceived by his guests and probably enjoyed acting the part, exaggerating his drawl or dress to coax a wink of satisfaction between two Chicagoans. The nostalgic and poorly conceived nature of this homesteading movement was evident in the attrition rate among back-to-the-landers. By World War I, almost all the original homesteaders had vanished from their Ozark domi-

[25]Donald Harington, *Let Us Build Us a City: Eleven Lost Towns* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1994), 10.

[26]David E. Shi, *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 189; Walter F. Lackey, *History of Newton County, Arkansas* (1950; reprint, Salem, MA: Higginson Book Company, n.d.), 404, 147, 148.

[27]Donald Harington, *The Architecture of the Arkansas Ozarks* (1975; reprint, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), 233.

ciles, most having sold their free land to timber speculators.[28] As historian T. J. Jackson Lears has observed of the back-to-the-land movement, "Many reduced the simple life to a vacation cottage or a rustic exurban home."[29]

Homesteaders continued to brave the Ozarks and filter into the region after World War I, though far less frequently. In one of his many articles on life in the Ozarks, Charles Morrow Wilson told the story of Tom Puddister, a former New Jersey railroad conductor who homesteaded 160 acres in Hemmed-in Holler in the early 1920s. Ozark chronicler Otto Ernest Rayburn purchased a small farm near the Madison County hamlet of Kingston in 1925. Using this farm, which he named Kingston-in-the-Ozarks, as a base, Rayburn tried in vain to establish a communal enterprise for aspiring writers, artists, and craftspeople.[30]

The depression era brought another wave of back-to-the-landers to the Ozarks, many of them urbanites influenced by Ralph Borsodi, a New Yorker whose books *This Ugly Civilization* (1929) and *Flight from the City* (1933) touted the virtues of rural self-sufficiency.[31] Perhaps the best firsthand account of an Ozark back-to-the-land experiment was written by Charlie May Simon, who moved with her first husband, Howard, a New York artist, to Arkansas in 1931. Charlie May, who would later marry John Gould Fletcher and earn fame for her children's books, was the daughter of one of the Arkansas Ozarks' first memoirists, Wayman Hogue, but had been raised in Memphis and trained as an artist in Chicago. Her account of their sojourn on a sixty-acre homestead was mostly respectful of native Ozarkers but revealed fundamental misconceptions and ironies inherent in most back-to-the-land efforts. Although they reportedly lived ten miles from the nearest post office—an amazing distance, if accurate, even in the most remote reaches of the region—Charlie May and Howard owned a comfortable home, again built by locals, that included a studio, library, kitchen, washroom, indoor plumbing, and a stone-paved courtyard. The couple purchased a cow, calf, and chickens, baked bread, made cheese, and

[28]Lackey, *History of Newton County*, 149, 150. As historian Edgar D. McKinney has illustrated, curiosity was not the sole domain of the tourist. In the *Shepherd of the Hills* country of southwestern Missouri the same native Ozarkers who were frequently asked to pose for pictures with travelers often hitched up their wagons and ventured to Branson to catch a glimpse of the tourists. Edgar D. McKinney, "Images, Realities, and Cultural Transformation in the Missouri Ozarks, 1920-1960" (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, 1990), 287.

[29]Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 92.

[30]Charles Morrow Wilson, "Ozarkadia," *American Magazine*, January 1934, 59; Ethel Simpson, "Otto Ernest Rayburn, an Early Promoter of the Ozarks," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 58 (Summer 1999): 164.

[31]Shi, *Simple Life*, 226-228.

plowed and hoed the garden; however, they also hired a local teenage girl to cook and clean in exchange for clothes and an education. Simon's neighbors were burgeoning Ozark archetypes, such as Uncle John, "who lives alone with two half-starved hound dogs in a tumbledown shack," and Oval, a young, blonde moonshiner, with his "tall, gawky" wife and infant. Ultimately, life in the country—albeit an existence more akin to a squire than an Ozark farmer—was not for Charlie May and Howard. Although she boasted, "We have never before had so much leisure," Charlie May warned her urban readers that the back-to-the-land movement was not the answer to depression woes, that life on the farm was too hard, and that the city offered conveniences no modern person would intentionally forfeit. Charlie May and Howard were making preparations to leave their homestead as she wrote.[32]

Charlie May Simon's back-to-the-land account was one of many Ozark stories to appear in national magazines in the 1930s. The Great Depression marks another "discovery" of the region, this time by journalists and artists. Ozark scholar Milton D. Rafferty argues that the timing of this discovery, when Ozarkers were at their poorest and perhaps most unlike mainstream America, explains the development of the backwoods image that persists to this day. Such an explanation fails to consider both the development of an earlier "Arkansas image" based largely on the Ozarks and the long tradition of Appalachian stereotyping that greatly influenced depression-era writers and travelers. The hillbilly image of backwoods Arkansans dates to antebellum times, especially in the "Arkansas Traveller" legend and the writings of C. F. M. Noland and Thomas Bangs Thorpe. In the late nineteenth century, former *Arkansas Gazette* editor Opie Read contributed to the legend in the pages of his humorous, Chicago-based *Arkansas Traveller* magazine, through which he became the "voice of Arkansas" to the nation.[33]

Yet it was the Appalachian tradition more than longstanding Arkansas stereotypes that the post-World War I writers perpetuated. Many writers, even among Ozark chroniclers, believed these other southern mountains to

[32] Charlie May Simon, "Retreat to the Land: An Experience in Poverty," *Scribner's Magazine*, May 1933, 309-312.

[33] Milton D. Rafferty, "Changing Economy and Landscape in the Ozark-Ouachita Highland," *Mid-America Folklore* 15 (Spring 1987): 11; C. Fred Williams, "The Bear State Image: Arkansas in the Nineteenth Century," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 39 (Summer 1980): 103; C. F. M. Noland, *Pete Whetstone of Devil's Fork: Letters to the Spirit of the Times*, ed. Ted R. Worley and Eugene A. Nolte (Van Buren, AR: Press-Argus, 1957); Robert L. Morris, "Opie Read, Arkansas Journalist," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 2 (March 1943): 246, 249, 250. For an in-depth study of the "Arkansas Traveller" legend and other nineteenth century Arkansas tales and writings, see James R. Masterson, *Tall Tales of Arkansaw* (Boston: Chapman and Grimes, 1942).

be merely a smaller replica of Appalachia and hence reasoned that any study or stereotype pertaining to the latter could be applied to the former.

The timing of the Ozark discovery is significant. Despite the similarity of stereotypes, the nature of outside intrusion would be different in the Ozarks than in the Appalachians. In *Appalachia on Our Minds*, Henry Shapiro traces the evolution of the American idea of Appalachia through the half-century ending in 1920.[34] Although the popular conceptions of the region's inhabitants varied from quaint mountain folk to criminals and social deviants, the one constant was Appalachia's status as a reassuring model against which Americans could gauge their own well-being and self-worth. The various literary efforts of Appalachia watchers generated movements by outsiders, from missionary activity in remote hollows to preservation of indigenous crafts and musical traditions. The discovery of Appalachia coincided with the Progressive Era to create an atmosphere of observation and action.

The Arkansas Ozark region's experience with observers peaked only well after the end of the Progressive Era. If the formation of the idea of Appalachia had been accompanied by the missionary's zeal, both religious and otherwise, the genesis of the idea of the Ozarks occurred in an atmosphere of sociological and anthropological detachment. The story of the discovery of Ozark "otherness" is one of observation without concomitant action. This phenomenon can be traced back to the Appalachian experience, though such an explanation goes only so far. As Shapiro observes, by 1915, the tide of missionary activity in Appalachia had shifted from a focus on benevolent salvation and modernization to the maintenance of mountain distinctiveness. The establishment of a conscious community within Appalachia, a kind of "folk society manque," became the new goal.[35] By the 1920s, according to Appalachian scholar David E. Whisnant, "the solutions to problems in the mountains were judged to lie in integrating the region's politics and economy into the mainstream while preserving, if possible, its picturesque and nostalgic folkways and religion."[36]

The Arkansas Ozarks was not completely devoid of missionary efforts. Randolph proclaimed that "another thing which has prejudiced the hill people against outsiders is the fact that so many of them feel called upon to save the hillman's soul, or show him how to build a new-fangled

[34]Henry Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Minds: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Consciousness, 1870-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978).

[35]Ibid., 119.

[36]David E. Whisnant, *Modernizing the Mountaineer: People, Power, and Planning in Appalachia* (Boone, NC: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1980), 8.

privy, or advise his wife about the proper feeding of her children."[37] Despite Randolph's blustery condemnation, such efforts were quite rare in the Ozarks when compared to developments in Appalachia. Between 1903 and 1932, the Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas operated the Helen Dunlap School for Mountain Girls in the Washington County resort town of Winslow, and for about half a dozen years beginning during World War I the Arkansas Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (the Southern Presbyterians) maintained Mountain Crest School near Combs in the southern Boston Mountains. Southern Methodists in Arkansas also dabbled in mountain mission education between the two world wars, most notably at Valley Springs, south of Harrison. The Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church, USA sponsored the most notable missionary endeavors, however. The board established small hospitals in Mount Pleasant and Kingston and funded the construction of a gymnasium for the former's high school. The Kingston project of the board was perhaps the most ambitious example of missionary outreach in the region. In 1924, the Brick Presbyterian Church of Rochester, New York, sent the Reverend Elmer J. Bouher to the Madison County hamlet to survey religious and educational opportunities. When he found such opportunities lacking, he received board funding for the construction of a church house and a ten-bed hospital and for the establishment of the community's first high school. The departure of Bouher in 1929 and the onset of the depression doomed the short-lived mission, and the board eventually withdrew financial aid.[38] The Presbyterian efforts in Kingston and Mount Pleasant are significant not as representatives of a larger movement in the region but rather as unusual occurrences. The scarcity of such missionary activities in the Ozarks underscores a significant point of divergence between the experiences of highlanders in Appalachia and the Ozarks. The Ozark region was, and would remain, relatively free of one of the scourges of Appalachia, what Whisnant calls "systematic cultural intervention," by which he means the

[37]Randolph, *The Ozarks*, 304.

[38]Michael J. Beary, *Black Bishop: Edward T. Demby and the Struggle for Racial Equality in the Episcopal Church* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 200; Nancy Britton, *Two Centuries of Methodism in Arkansas, 1800-2000* (Little Rock: August House, 2000), 193; Otto Ernest Rayburn, *Forty Years in the Ozarks: An Autobiography* (1954; Eureka Springs, AR: Wheeler Printing, 1982), 46, 49. In addition to the school at Valley Springs, the Methodists established short-lived academies at Imboden and Yellville. All three, which were designed in part to provide students for Hendrix College in Conway, eventually became public schools. The Arkansas Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, or Southern Presbyterian Church, devoted most of its missionary zeal to Caddo Valley Academy in the Ouachita region of southwestern Arkansas.

conscious effort of outsiders to preserve and perpetuate certain characteristics of highland life and culture that they valued.[39] The urge to intervene had largely passed by the 1930s.

During that decade, observers and reporters of life in the Ozarks simultaneously borrowed from earlier Appalachian models and from current political and social trends. Many people's inability to support themselves financially during the depression brought about a reappraisal and celebration of subsistence cultures. Communities such as Hemmed-in Holler, while by American standards backward and unprogressive, seemed to defy the depression and reinvigorate one's faith in mankind and in American vitality. An acceptance of certain socialist, antimaterialistic tenets common among the young and educated of the era influenced some writers to search out and praise remnants of traditional folk societies relatively unadulterated by twentieth-century technological and economic trends. And a theme from earlier Appalachian studies, that hill folk were modern Americans' "contemporary ancestors," carried over as writers applied tested interpretations to a virgin region.

The genesis of the twentieth-century idea of the Ozarks dates back to 1907 and the publication of Harold Bell Wright's *Shepherd of the Hills*.[40] Set in southwestern Missouri, the story concerns, in the words of historians Lynn Morrow and Linda Myers-Phinney, "a careworn and spiritually burdened city pastor . . . who retreats to the wilderness . . . in an attempt to recover inner peace and heal his tormented soul." It is typical of the arcadian genre and is reminiscent of romantic Appalachian works by John Fox, Jr. and other nineteenth-century writers. Wright's novel, which by 1918 had sold two million copies, spawned a local tourism boom in the neighborhood of its setting and "transform[ed] the region into a commercialized imitation of the novel itself."[41]

Nevertheless, it was only in the late 1920s and early 1930s that American readers began to catch regular "non-fictional" glimpses of the region in magazines and periodicals.[42] These depression-era portraits of the Ozarks grew out of previous Appalachian studies but also tended to diverge sharply from the style of observation in vogue in the other southern highlands at the time. In his monumental study of Appalachia, Cratis D. Williams found that "by the mid-thirties, as new writers turned toward the mountaineer, they tended to see less of the folk quality in him and, possibly because so many of them were mountaineers themselves, became less concerned with romantic and sentimental aspects of his history."[43] Such realistic, unromantic interpretations of the Ozarks were rarely found, however, stemming in part from the belated discovery of the region. Historian Ronald D. Eller notes the irony in the emergence of a static image of Appalachia as the dominant literary theme in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the same time that an industrial and social revolution

[39]David E. Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 13. See also Abby Burnett, with Ellen Compton and John D. Little, *When the Presbyterians Came to Kingston: Kingston Community Church, 1917-1951* (Kingston, AR: Bradshaw Mountain Publishers, 2000).

[40]There were a handful of Ozark-themed novels published before *Shepherd of the Hills*, but Wright's book outsold them all and gave birth to a host of similar romantic works in the following two decades, most of which were rather obscure at the time and are forgotten now. In their study of White River country in southwestern Missouri, Lynn Morrow and Linda Myers-Phinney trace the "stereotypical characterization of Ozark natives" back to the 1880s when Missouri journalists from outside of the region began to explore peculiar karst features and float the swift waters of the White and its tributaries. Morrow and Myers-Phinney, *Shepherd of the Hills Country*, 41.

[41]Ibid., 28, 31. It appears that the *Shepherd of the Hills* phenomenon, based as it was on a particular location in southwestern Missouri, remained for the most part localized to Stone and Taney Counties into the depression era. Nevertheless, it must be viewed as a precursor to the barrage of Ozark-themed publications of the pre-World War II decade.

[42]The following discussion deals only with works of non-fiction, however romantic, because my purpose is to relate common themes found in firsthand, contemporary accounts of the Ozarks. The thorough examination and comparison of novels and fictionalized accounts of the region is a work that would prove invaluable to Ozark studies. Unfortunately, it is a work that remains to be done and one that does not fall within the scope of this article. Furthermore, the following pages obviously do not include evaluations of all depression-era articles and books about the Ozarks. I have excluded Wayman Hogue's *Back Yonder: An Ozark Chronicle* (New York: Minton, Balch & Company, 1932), because it is primarily a memoir concerning Hogue's youth in the Boston Mountains in the late nineteenth century. His "Ozark People," *Scribner's Magazine*, May 1931, 509-520, was written in the same vein. I have also excluded several excessively romantic and unrealistic pieces, such as: "Grandpap's A-makin," *Atlantic Monthly*, October 1938, 551-552; and R. Havelock-Baile, "A Country Boy Goes Home," *Forum and Century*, February 1940, 81-86.

[43]Cratis Dearl Williams, "The Southern Mountaineer in Fact and Fiction" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1961), 1358. Not all works on Appalachia in the 1930s displayed a greater emphasis on realism. One popular book, Muriel Early Sheppard's *Cabins in the Laurel* (1935), offered a romantic vision of mountain life by focusing on one uncharacteristically isolated community in western North Carolina. Historian Jane S. Becker recognizes *Cabins in the Laurel* as an example of an emerging trend among travel writers and local colorists who, instead of denying the changes taking place in Appalachia, searched for isolated, anachronistic communities in the mountains, as did many Ozark writers. Jane S. Becker, *Selling Tradition: Appalachia and the Construction of an American Folk, 1930-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 57.

shook the foundations of mountain social order.[44] In much the same fashion, the image that would come to represent the Ozarks was first articulated in the two decades between the world wars when revolutionary forces—though not industrial ones—undertook a fundamental restructuring of Ozark agricultural and social life.

Several different elements or themes were found in these pre-World War II books and articles. Often more than one is evident in a given work, reflecting the ferment of ideas emanating from the fresh evaluation of the Ozarks. Most of these ideas were also found at one time or another in Appalachian literature. On the extremes were the interpretations of the region as either a romantic of contemporary ancestors or a backwater of lazy, inbred deviants. Not infrequently, both sentiments poured forth from a single writer's pen. Other writers concentrated on the extraction of folktales, songs, and traditions; to these the contemporary status and lifestyle of their subject was often superfluous or at least of secondary importance. A few writers even followed the lead of the chambers of commerce and rotary clubs and highlighted the progressive element of the region. The most thorough of the observers recognized the era for what it was: a watershed in Ozark history, a last glimpse of an increasingly obsolete lifestyle practiced by a shrinking number of people at the dawn of the triumph of modernization and progress.

The Arkansas Ozarks' first prolific chronicler, and one who fits into the first category as a romantic, was Charles Morrow Wilson. A native of Fayetteville and a graduate of the University of Arkansas, Wilson spent his early career during the interwar years as a reporter and correspondent for such papers as the *Arkansas Gazette*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and *New York Times*.[45] Wilson first gained renown in 1927 when he edited and introduced Charles Finger's *Ozark Fantasia*, a collection of previously published essays by the Englishman whose Fayetteville-based magazine, *All's Well*, young Wilson served as coeditor. Both Wilson's introduction and Finger's Ozark essays (many of the book's essays had little or nothing to do with the Ozarks) staked out their romantic visions of the region. Wilson's Ozarks was "a world foreign to advertising, and sales luring, and

Charles Morrow Wilson, the Arkansas Ozarks' first prolific chronicler, in the mid-1930s. *Courtesy Special Collections Division, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.*

[44]Ronald D. Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: The Modernization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), xix.

[45]*Who's Who in America: A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Living Men and Women*, Vol. 28 (Chicago: Marquis–Who's Who, 1954), 2888. Wilson also tried his hand at Ozark-themed fiction. His best-known novel, 1930's *Acres of Sky*, was praised by Randolph as "the best Ozark dialect ever written." Vance Randolph, "Recent Fiction and the Ozark Dialect," *American Speech* 6 (August 1931): 427.

trade slogans, and patched pavements."[46] Finger described rugged Newton County in romantic terms and found there "folk who spent winter evenings, not in sitting each one with nose buried in book, but talking and singing ballads as they made quilts, or burred wood, or sewed harness, or churned."[47]

In a series of depression-era articles on life in the Ozarks, Wilson never wavered from his romantic contemporary ancestors theme. In a 1929 *Atlantic Monthly* article, which, according to folklorist and Ozark scholar W. K. McNeil, was the first work to establish a direct cultural link between the Ozarks and Appalachia, Wilson described the southern highlands as "a land of Elizabethan ways—a country of Spenserian speech, Shakespearean people, and of cavaliers and curtsies."[48] Among his subjects were the staples of romantic treatments of the Ozarks: fox hunting, square dancing, hand-loom weaving, superstition, folk remedies, and Elizabethan persistence in the Ozark dialect. To Wilson, the Ozark region was a land of indomitable neighborliness, of barter and simplicity, a refuge of tradition. His focus on the "frontier temperament" and the "all-American and invincible frontier" was another common romantic theme. In the end, Wilson's Ozarks was an arrested frontier, a region and people that, he thought, had not changed perceptibly in half a century and would likely maintain traditional practices and avoid modernity, the fate of all civilized peoples.[49]

The same romantic contemporary ancestors theme was evident in the work of folklorists as well. Chief among them was Vance Randolph. Extraordinary in his passion for the region and his prolific writing, Randolph was nonetheless typical of many Ozark chroniclers who settled among their subjects. Years after his arrival in the region an acquaintance offered her estimation of Randolph's—and most other Ozark writers'—intentions. "I think Mr. Randolph went to the Ozarks, as many writers do, to spend a few weeks then write ridiculous stories about the natives. But after living with and amongst them I believe he developed a deep and sincere love for them, their gullied farms, and for their pitiful but unfailing determination

[46]Charles Morrow Wilson, "Introduction," in Charles J. Finger, *Ozark Fantasia* (Fayetteville, AR: Golden Horseman Press, 1927), 2.

[47]Finger, *Ozark Fantasia*, 40-41, 37. See, also, Charles Morrow Wilson, "On an Ozark Store-Porch," *North American Review* 228 (October 1929): 493-498.

[48]Charles Morrow Wilson, "Elizabethan America," *Atlantic Monthly*, August 1929, 238. Reprinted in W. K. McNeil, ed., *Appalachian Images in Folk and Popular Culture*, 2d ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 206-214.

[49]Wilson, "Hemmed-in Holler;" Charles Morrow Wilson, "Friendly Days in the Ozarks," *Travel*, March 1933, 18, 19, 21, 45; Wilson, "Ozarkadia," 112.

to wrest a living from the rocky soil."[50] This description may have accurately captured the preconceptions of most Ozark writers, but, as we shall see, it is probably too simplistic to encompass the man who would become the region's most famous chronicler.

Raised in a prosperous Republican, Episcopalian family in Pittsburg, an ethnically diverse and politically radical small town on the outskirts of the Ozarks in the mining country of southeastern Kansas, Randolph at an early age became enamored of marginalized people. After moving in socialist and radical academic circles as a young man at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts (where he studied psychology under G. Stanley Hall) and in New York (where he unsuccessfully proposed to Columbia's Franz Boas an anthropology dissertation on "white mountain people"), he found his way to southwestern Missouri in 1919. His first Ozark publication, "A Word-List for the Ozarks," appeared in *Dialect Notes* in 1926, signaling the arrival of a scholar-romantic and reflecting his primary attraction to the region: the survival of obsolete traits among these contemporaries. Much of Randolph's early work derives from previous Appalachian studies and stories. The works of Horace Kephart and John C. Campbell particularly influenced his direction and work in the Ozarks.[51] In fact, in his first book on Ozark life and culture, *The Ozarks: An American Survival of Primitive Society*, he stated, "The Ozark country is, in a sense, only a small edition of the Appalachian highlands."[52]

The Ozarks was the first book-length study of the region, and its publication in New York gave it a national audience, even though the depression killed book sales for the unfortunate and often impoverished Randolph. One cannot classify Randolph as a simple romantic in the mold of Charles Morrow Wilson; he was too savvy, even too ornery, for such pigeonholing. Instead, Randolph consciously chose his subjects—the "diverting and picturesque"—and candidly informed his readers that he was "not concerned with the progressive element in the Ozark towns, nor with the prosperous valley farmers, who have been more or less modernized by recent contacts with civilization."[53] Reading Wilson's accounts, one would

[50]June Denby to Otto Ernest Rayburn, April 2, 1941, Otto Ernest Rayburn Collection (OERC), Box 1, Folder 2, Special Collections Division, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.

[51]Robert B. Cochran, *Vance Randolph: An Ozark Life* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 17, 42, 48; Robert Cochran and Michael Luster, *For Love and For Money: The Writings of Vance Randolph, An Annotated Bibliography* (Batesville: Arkansas College Folklore Archive Publications, 1979), 76. See, also, Horace Kephart, *Our Southern Highlanders* (New York: Outing Publishing Company, 1913); John C. Campbell, *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1921).

[52]Randolph, *The Ozarks*, 16.

[53]Ibid., v.

never suspect that progressive townspeople or prosperous farmers even existed in the region. Furthermore, the tone of Randolph's romanticism was more political than Wilson's, harboring in it the sentiments of a former radical put off by the materialism and hypocrisy of modern America. Where Wilson's contemporary ancestors had formed their "Ozarkadia" as much from necessity as from choice, Randolph's "hill-billies" and "ridge-runners" scoffed in derision at progress, consciously rejecting mainstream America. "With the possible exception of some remote districts in the southern Appalachians, the 'hill-billy' section of the Ozark country is the most backward and deliberately unprogressive region in the United States."[54] Coming from the mouth of a chamber president or Ozark booster, such words would have been meant to demean or degrade. But from Randolph they represented a sly compliment, a jab in the ribs of every small-town banker and insurance salesman, at every semblance of his middle-class background. From the outset, he fearlessly defended the folkways of the most backward people in his adopted region against all detractors, whether they be chamber of commerce progressives or unrealistically romantic outsiders.

Like Wilson and countless Appalachian observers before him, Randolph covered the gamut of stereotypical mountain traits and activities: dialect, superstitions, play parties, folk songs, fox hunting, and moonshining. Unlike many other romantic treatments, however, Randolph's book also included discussions of women's place in Ozark life, social networks, and the deleterious effects of tourism in a chapter entitled "The Coming of the 'Furriners.'" Such serious fare, inspired by Randolph's academic training, was rarely evident in romantic books on Ozark life published later in the interwar era, such as Catherine S. Barker's *Yesterday Today: Life in the Ozarks*.[55]

Randolph was not the only writer to find the Ozarkers stubbornly unprogressive people. In a 1930 *Outlook* article, William R. Draper focused on this obstinacy from a different viewpoint. Unlike Randolph, Draper found the Ozarker—or at least Randolph's hillbilly and ridge runner—an easy target for ridicule. "The Ozarkians, if such the tribe could be called,

[54]Ibid., 21-22. Randolph made his living as a writer, producing dozens of articles for both popular magazines and scholarly journals before World War II. Because most of these works dealt with folktales, songs, superstitions, or dialect, they are not mentioned here. *The Ozarks: An American Survival of Primitive Society* is Randolph's most thorough examination of depression-era Ozark life and, thus, is here relied on to convey his position in comparison with other writers of Ozark subjects. For a complete bibliography of Randolph's work, including dozens of ghostwritten books, see Cochran and Luster, *For Love and For Money*.

[55]Randolph, *The Ozarks*, 299; Catherine S. Barker, *Yesterday Today: Life in the Ozarks* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1941).

have lived lazy, kin marrying, morally clean, but none too God-loving lives. Feuds of love and passion have flared and died, moonshine has been made and bartered, tie timber has been stolen, some murders have been unnecessary . . . . The crop tenders are none too active in the growing season, and to them winter is a delight because they can group around the fireplace—and loaf." Like Randolph, Draper recorded the dissonance between town and country, noting that industrialization and the damming of rivers for hydroelectricity "is the cheerful vision of the townspeople who live in the hills, but not the native farmer."[56]

Other writers concentrated on this theme of transformation in the Ozarks, but without the derision evidenced by Draper. In July 1934, just one year after it featured a romantic piece by Charles Morrow Wilson, *Travel* magazine carried a much more balanced portrait of the region by distinguished Missouri artist Thomas Hart Benton. Benton's debt to the contemporary ancestors theme was reflected in the title "America's Yesterday," and he freely admitted that the region lent "itself readily to romantic interpretation." Nevertheless, once finished with his tale of a night's sojourn with a rustic Arkansas family and after covering the familiar ground of frontierism, superstition, and fundamentalism, Benton offered a valuable analysis of life in the region. He observed the differences between townspeople and rural dwellers. Movies and radio, he stressed, had only moderately affected the fundamental psychology of the hill man at the time. "But the automobile has come, and with it passable roads and an influx from the modern world bringing its load of new ways, beliefs and habits." While Benton did detect a certain degree of resistance to modernity, for the most part he found modern ways, beliefs, and habits being adapted or absorbed into traditional practices. "Tradition and the old ways fight still the entrance of the modern world in this country but in a little while

William R. Draper, "The Ozarks Go Native," *Outlook*, September 10, 1930, 60, 61

they will break down and the very last of our fathers' America will be gone."[57]

Benton's statement, and others like it, apparently sounded a wake-up call among some collectors of folk songs and tales, a call that many others had already heeded. The original draw for collectors was the wealth of traditional mountain songs, tales, and superstitions, both indigenous and archaic. Ballad (called "ballet" in the Ozarks) collectors had ventured into the region around the turn of the century. Sallie Walker Stockard's 1904 book of ballads included a number collected in northern Arkansas. Simultaneously, H. M. Belden, Carl Sandburg, and others visited the Ozarks to collect songs. As an Arkansas College student, John Quincy Wolf, Jr. began collecting ballads in the vicinity of Batesville shortly after World War I. By the late 1920s, Randolph had collected enough songs and tales in the region to supply several folklore articles. Nevertheless, before 1930 the bulk of ballad collecting took place in Appalachia. The depression years brought to northern Arkansas a wave of prominent collectors, including John Gould Fletcher, Laurence Powell, and John A. Lomax, as well as dozens of lesser-known collectors such as University of Arkansas professor Clement Benson and graduate student Theodore Garrison.[58]

Ballad collectors found in the region a wealth of folk songs, but they also discovered what Benton discovered: that the region was in a state of flux and that even the traditional music was beginning to be eschewed by a younger generation to whom radios and phonographs had delivered the commercial sounds of Nashville, Chicago, or New Orleans. For this reason, the best sources of Ozark ballads were the elderly. Perhaps the very best was Emma Dusenbury, who actually lived outside the Ozarks by the time ballad hunters found her. A native of northeastern Georgia, Dusenbury was raised and lived for thirty-five years in the foothills of Baxter and Marion Counties. In these hills Dusenbury learned more than one hundred songs. An illness left her blind as a young woman, but she continued to pick cotton and take on other laborious tasks to help support her family in their rambling, hardscrabble existence. By the time Randolph found her in 1928, with the help of a teacher at local Commonwealth College near Mena, she was living in poverty with her daughter and crippled husband in the Ouachita Mountain community of Rocky in western Arkansas. When John A. Lomax visited in 1936, the blind, elderly woman sang continuously for two consecutive days, leaving the venerable Library of Congress collector with eighty-two recorded songs, among them the greatest collection of Child ballads ever recorded from a single singer. Later that year, Dusenbury was the featured singer at Arkansas's centennial celebration in Little Rock. Despite her brief renown, the woman Randolph called the "greatest ballad singer I ever knew" was penniless and forgotten when she died a few years later.[59]

By the time Randolph and Lomax sat down to record Dusenbury's ballads, outside influences were beginning to push traditional songs to the side or were combining with traditional music to produce marketable hybrids. As H. Page Stephens illustrates with his study of Stone County, Ozark musical styles were in transition by the late 1920s. Commercial country music had made its debut in 1922 when Alexander Campbell Robertson, an Ozark native raised in Texas, and Oklahoman Henry Gilliland made their first recordings for the Victor Talking Machine Company. The next year, country music's first star arose in the form of Fiddlin' John Carson. The first Ozarker to achieve success in the world of commercial country music was Sam Long of Kansas and Oklahoma, who won a fiddling contest and recording contract in Joplin, Missouri, in 1926. That same year in Arkansas, Dr. H. Harlin Smith, a surgeon for the Missouri Pacific Railroad, promoted a fiddler's contest in Calico Rock and, with the five local winners, formed the Champion Hoss-Hair Pullers. The Hoss-Hair Pullers accompanied an Izard County band, the Hill-Billy Quartet, on a series of

[57]Thomas Hart Benton, "America's Yesterday," *Travel*, July 1934, 9, 8, 45, 46. A scholarly presentation of the crux of Benton's argument appeared in a 1936 *American Journal of Sociology* article by Walter O. Cralle. Focusing on the Missouri Ozarks, Cralle's work was a rare pre-World War II academic study of modernization in the region. His thesis was that somewhere between the hillbilly stereotype and the progressive rhetoric of the chambers of commerce lay a region in transition. An archaic, rural American culture, protected until recently by isolation, was in the 1930s rapidly giving ground before the onslaught of urban civilization. Among the forces of change Cralle cited were automobiles, highways, radio, newspapers, tourists, extension agents, and movies. "In general, the Ozarks may be accurately considered as an internally marginal subculture area whose essential uniqueness is being rapidly lost under the impact of modern civilization." But, harking back to Johann von Thünen's market accessibility thesis, Cralle noted that "the rate of change is closely correlated with accessibility." Whereas Benton simply predicted the demise of the Ozarks of legend, Cralle realized that the destruction of traditional subsistence culture had largely been accomplished. Walter O. Cralle, "Social Change and Isolation in the Ozark Mountain Region of Missouri," *American Journal of Sociology* 41 (January 1936): 435-446.

[58]Vance Randolph, "Ballad Hunters in North Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 7 (Spring 1948): 2, 3, 4; George E. Lankford, "John Quincy Wolf, Jr.: An Appreciation," *Mid-America Folklore* 13 (Winter-Spring 1985): 5; Robert Cochran, "All the Songs in the World: The Story of Emma Dusenbury," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 44 (Spring 1985): 9. H. M. Beldon conducted most of his folk song gatherings in Missouri.

[59]Cochran, "All the Songs," 4 (quote), 6, 7, 8, 9, 13. According to Cochran, the Dusenbury house lacked electricity, forcing Lomax to pick Emma up and drive her into Mena each day for recording. Because Lomax paid her a small fee for singing, Dusenbury insisted on putting in a full day at the "studio." In the evening Lomax drove her back home in time for the nightly milking. Child ballads refer to the ballads collected in Harvard professor Francis James Child's *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, published between 1882 and 1898.

Hot Springs radio broadcasts and recorded at least six songs for Victor. Four years later, Victor recorded versions of "Dry and Dusty" and "Ozark Waltz" by Searcy County's Absie and Abbie Morrison, two of the era's best-known Ozark musicians, after a company representative heard them in Little Rock. By the onset of the depression, thanks in large part to the proliferation of barn dance programs on radio stations from Fort Worth to Chicago, hillbilly music was popular in cities and the countryside around the nation. By World War II, the Arkansas Ozarks had produced its first commercial country music recording star, Eldon Britt, who was born James Elton Baker in Zack, Searcy County.[60]

Not only did the Hoss-Hair Pullers and Hill-Billy Quartet represent the melding of mountain music and popular, contemporary American sounds, but the group's performances reflected another common practice often associated with the discovery of folk tradition—boosterism. Before each Hoss-Hair Pullers performance, Dr. Smith delivered a rousing oration imploring listeners to "come to the Arkansas Ozarks, where you can eat the best fruit in the world, where home-cured meat is found in the smokehouse and corn and hay in the barn; where you can juice your own cow, feed your own chickens, [and] fish in the wonderful White River."[61]

The region's most prominent booster organization, the Ozark Playgrounds Association (OPA), initially distanced itself from the mountain music sound. Formed in Eureka Springs in 1919 at the behest of the Joplin, Missouri, Rotary Club, the OPA adopted the slogan "Land of a Million Smiles" and commissioned Green Forest carpenter, musician, and violin and mandolin maker James T. Braswell to write a song with this slogan as title. Recorded in 1925, his song was composed in a contemporary, popular

[60]Stephens, "Case of Missing Folk Music"; W. K. McNeil, *Ozark Country* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1995), 129; Helen C. Lindley, "Hoss-Hair Pullers and Hill-Billy Quartet," *Izard County Historian* 5 (April 1974): 9-13; Judith McCulloh, "Uncle Absie Morrison's Historical Tunes," *Mid-South Folklore* 3 (Winter 1975): 95, 96. See, also, Bill C. Malone, *Country Music, USA*, rev. ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985); and Malone, *Singing Cowboys and Musical Mountaineers: Southern Culture and the Roots of Country Music* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993). Other depression- and World War II-era Arkansas Ozark musicians who achieved regional or national prominence included Ashley's Melody Men from Marshall, Bill and Toby Baker of Madison County, Pinkley Tomlin from Marion County, and Wayne Raney of Wolf Bayou in Cleburne County. Robert Cochran, *Our Own Sweet Sounds: A Celebration of Popular Music in Arkansas* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1996), 28, 29, 31.

[61]Lindley, "Hoss-Hair Pullers," 12. For a discussion of similar radio acts in the Missouri Ozarks, see McKinney, "Images, Realities, and Cultural Transformation," 179-187.

style, and both song and slogan appeared in innumerable booster efforts before World War II.[62]

By the mid-1930s, most Ozark boosters and promoters had changed their tune—literally. The increased national attention to the region, which was based largely on interest in folk songs and traditions, came at a time when resort profits had dried up. Consequently, businessmen and boosters were more than willing to support folk peddlers and enthusiasts in their efforts to organize folk festivals in various Ozark communities. The first Ozark festivals were inspired by Appalachian models. Bascom Lamar Lunsford initiated the festival movement in 1928 with the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival in Asheville, North Carolina. After attending the 1933 Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, Sarah Gertrude Knott, director of the St. Louis Dramatic League, decided to organize a similar event for the Ozarks. The first folk festival in the Ozarks took place in the spring of 1934 at the Basin Park Hotel in Eureka Springs, the declining resort and tourist haven that was about as representative of the Ozarks as Beale Street was of Tennessee. Directing the program were May Kennedy McCord, a Springfield, Missouri, newspaper personality known as the Queen of the Hillbillies, and Sam Leath, a Eureka Springs tour guide, Indian enthusiast, and chamber of commerce president. Subsequent weeks witnessed similar but smaller festivals in the Missouri towns of Rolla, West Plains, and Aurora. These four festivals were followed by an All-Ozark Festival in Springfield and, in the fall of 1934, by the first National Folk Festival, sponsored by Knott, in St. Louis. The early Ozark festivals were light on folk material and heavy on profiteering and promotion. Yet, in Springfield, the Ozarks' largest city, many business and social leaders denounced the All-Ozark Festival for promoting an unprogressive image of the region. In other areas, chambers of commerce formed uneasy alliances with festival promoters. Vance Randolph quit the festival scene after 1934, angered by the rampant hucksterism of the folk peddlers.[63]

The festival business experienced a lull in the Ozarks after 1934 but began to gain momentum as the depression waned. In April 1941, Searcy County home demonstration clubs sponsored a folk festival on a bluff overlooking the Buffalo River some seven miles from St. Joe, a village on the Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad. This first rural Ozark folk festival revealed the misconceptions many folk enthusiasts had concerning the southern highlands and reflected a people and region very much in the pro-

[62]Jim Lair, *An Outlander's History of Carroll County, Arkansas* (Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Co., 1983), 212-213; Lackey, *History of Newton County*, 301; Cochran, *Our Own Sweet Sounds*, 30.

[63]Whisnant, *All That Is Native and Fine*, 183, 185; McNeil, *Ozark Country*, 167; Cochran, *Vance Randolph*, 133-135, 140.

cess of social and cultural transformation. Home demonstration club members had discovered three mandolins, the instrument of choice for collectors of mountain ballads, but could find no local residents who knew how to play them. The festival's activities, dictated primarily by local recreation practices and largely free of the cultural intervention of similar festivals in Eureka Springs and in Appalachia, included contests in skills both "traditional" and not so traditional: fiddling, jigging, hog calling, horseshoe pitching, archery, roping, and shooting. Four months later, the Stone County home demonstration agent organized a similar weekend musical, dance, and craft fair at an abandoned Civilian Conservation Corps camp near Blanchard Springs.[64] Had it not been for the outbreak of war, festivals and the folk movement would probably have soon become highly popular.

But the war did touch the isolationist shores of the United States only four months after the old and young of Stone County had gathered to sing, dance, and remember. No longer a quandary or an eyesore as Appalachia had been two generations earlier, the Ozarks was regarded as a quaint, nostalgic comfort, assuring people in Chicago and St. Louis that the frontier was still out there, that the past was not really past for those determined enough to reclaim it; it reminded them that their urban way of life was a superior product of American greatness, even more spectacular for having sprung forth from the Newton and Stone Counties of previous generations and centuries. Unfortunately, for the purveyors of the arcadian image of the Ozarks and for the observers of contemporary ancestors, the war and its aftermath would not be kind to their "unspoiled" region. The war years would bring about an intensification of the processes of transformation first sparked by technological intrusion and governmental intervention in the Ozarks.

Yet one more portrayal of the Ozark region would appear on the very eve of World War II. In December 1941, the last prewar Ozark book hit stores around the country in the form of Otto Ernest Rayburn's *Ozark Country*, the latest in a long line of regional works in Duell, Sloan, and Pearce's American Folkways Series. Rayburn provided a good bridge figure—he was active in Ozark writing circles before and after World War II—and his book, like the Ozark region, struggled to come to grips with modernization. Like Randolph, Rayburn, who was born in Iowa in 1891, grew up in eastern Kansas. After reading Wright's *Shepherd of the Hills* as a student at Baker University in Baldwin, Kansas, Rayburn moved to the

[64]James J. Johnston, "Searcy County Folk Festival: 1941," *Mid-America Folklore* 17 (Fall 1989): 100, 101, 109; *Baxter Bulletin* (Mountain Home), August 8, 1941, 1; Craig Ogilvie, "Ozark Traditions: Folk Culture, Blanchard Springs Caverns Created Stone County Tourism Industry," *Batesville Guard*, January 25, 1994, 10.

backcountry of southwestern Missouri in 1917. His stay was short, however, since service in World War I and three subsequent years of teaching in Kansas pulled him out of the Ozarks. The young teacher and writer returned to his adopted region in late 1923 to accept a short winter-term teaching assignment at a one-room school in southern Baxter County. He remained in northern Arkansas and southern Missouri for the next decade, teaching school, penning Ozark-themed columns for the *Arkansas Gazette* and the *Tulsa Tribune*, and editing his first two magazines, *Ozark Life* and the *Arcadian*. Rayburn left the Ozarks in 1933 and did not return until after World War II. Nevertheless, while teaching at high schools in Texas and southwestern Arkansas, he continued to write about his beloved Ozarks.[65]

Ozark Country, published shortly after Rayburn accepted a position as superintendent of a small rural school district in Garland County, Arkansas, resembled Randolph's *The Ozarks* in its unfortunate timing. Six days after the book's release, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, banishing more than a year of Rayburn's work to inconsequentiality, at least temporarily, and dampening book sales. Despite the popularity of the well-established American Folkways Series, *Ozark Country* sold only 1,200 copies in its first thirteen months.[66] Rayburn's work also resembled Randolph's in its mixture of realism and romanticism. Although Rayburn admitted in later years that *Ozark Country* had been written in the "spirit of romanticism," Randolph praised it as one of the "very few 'hill-billy' books which did not seem ridiculous to those of us who live in the Ozarks."[67] The romanticism evident in Rayburn's Ozark magazines—he had already started his third, *Arcadian Life*, by 1941—was balanced considerably by the demands of editor Erskine Caldwell, no stranger himself to the perils of realism and stereotype in treating southern regional groups. Caldwell informed Rayburn that he had "always been dissatisfied with the manner in which the Ozarks [were] almost always treated" and warned him "to stay away from the 'cute' conception of folkways." "I would suggest that you plan your book with the idea of presenting the Ozarks, not as a tourist area, but as though you were seeing it as a historian of contemporary America."[68]

[65]Rayburn, *Forty Years in the Ozarks*, 4, 18, 19, 33, 42, 43, 45, 50, 53, 59, 64, 72, 76. See, also, Simpson, "Otto Ernest Rayburn," 160-179.

[66]Charles A. Pearce to Otto Ernest Rayburn, November 19, 1941, Box 1, Folder 2, OERC; Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc., "Royalty Statement for *Ozark Country*," April 1, 1942, Box 1, Folder 4, OERC.

[67]Randolph, review of *Ozark Country*, by Otto Ernest Rayburn, *Kansas City Star*, December 13, 1941, E14.

[68]Erskine Caldwell to Otto Ernest Rayburn, May 21, 1940, May 3, 1940, May 9, 1940, Box 1, Folder 2, OERC.

The product of Rayburn's "spirit of romanticism" and Caldwell's entreaties for a more sociological approach was a mostly balanced but sometimes contradictory evaluation of the region at the end of the depression. *Ozark Country* is a mix of history, folklore, sociology, and anthropology. The book recalled Randolph's of a decade earlier in its selection of topics as well as in its tone of regret for the passing of traditions and the fate of these contemporary ancestors. Rayburn's phrases sometimes come across as schizophrenic, but they reflect the divergence within the region, the rapid but uneven modernization and transformation of Fayetteville and Greasy Creek, the homes of J. William Fulbright and Orval Faubus, respectively. In a chapter entitled "Anglo-Saxon Seed Bed"—the title a reflection of the contemporary ancestors theme and a long tradition of Anglocentricism among collectors of mountain folk materials—Rayburn waxed romantic: "Regardless of the contrasts and inequalities of the Ozark Country, I have found it to be a modern Arcadia where one may enjoy simple happiness, innocent pleasures, and untroubled quiet . . . . It is still possible in some sections of this romantic land to turn back the clock and listen to the hum of the spinning wheel, the creak of the loom, the groan of the water-wheel at the mill, the rhythmic poetry of the cradle in its golden sea of grain, and to enjoy the generosity that springs from every true hillman's heart."[69]

Most of Rayburn's evaluations were more balanced. He realized that the previous quarter-century had significantly altered his arcadian region. Whereas "social life of the Ozarks a quarter of a century ago had many of the primitive trappings of pioneer days," by 1941 "the tempo of fun and frolic [had] been greatly accelerated . . . by the use of the automobile, and by the invasion of modern entertainment in the form of movies and road houses." Furthermore, Rayburn concluded his book by tracing recent trends in the Ozarks, including government intervention in farming. A litany of government entities affected farmers by the late 1930s: the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Farm Security Administration, the National Youth Administration, the Soil Conservation Service, vocational agriculture programs, the Farm Bureau, the Protective Credit Association, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Works Progress Administration. "The Ozarkian desire for freedom still lives in the hearts of thousands of the people and I believe this feeling will continue as long as the blood stays pure Ozarkian. But the Machine Age has brought a New Order of life to the backhills and the Elizabethan remnants are in the Melting Pot. No one knows what the outcome will be."[70]

[69]Rayburn, *Ozark Country*, 54.
[70]Ibid., 118, 344, 345.

Rayburn's grudging recognition of the changes afoot in the Ozarks on the eve of war was telling. Few people familiar with the region could have missed these signs of transformation. By the time the smoke cleared in the Cold War era, the Ozark hawkers and observers would return to a region quickly being absorbed into regional and national patterns of life and rapidly becoming unrecognizable. Nevertheless, many travel writers and tourism entrepreneurs in the post-World War II years would conveniently overlook social, economic, and demographic developments in the Arkansas Ozarks, or at least downplay the changes in favor of the (often conflicting) static images first crafted by observers in the darkest days of the depression. As a result, even as the Ozarks moved farther and farther away from the backwoods existence that had once made for pleasant anachronism, the stubborn depression-era images clung tightly to the region and its inhabitants. Images die slowly, even in the face of damning evidence.