



People & **Mountains**

A Publication of the West Virginia Humanities Council

Winter 2005

A Tribute to **MARY LEE SETTLE**



“An autobiography that begins with one’s birth begins too late, in the middle of the story, sometimes at the end.”
Mary Lee Settle, at the beginning of *Addie*.

Novelist Mary Lee Settle died in September, leaving behind a rich trove of fiction and nonfiction, mostly having to do with her native West Virginia. Several of the novels deal with her family, well-to-do Kanawha Valley pioneers, and in 1998 Settle published a nonfiction memoir of matriarch Addie Tompkins, her grandmother. Moving several notches up the social scale with her marriage to Henry Preston Tompkins, Addie brought the backbone to the family.

“All her life she loved Jesus, ghosts, my grandfather, and food,” Settle says. “Her dinner table was always laden with food, and she looked at it as if it might disappear.” In the following passage Settle imagines the first meeting of Addie, then a young coal miner’s wife in worsening straits, with Mr. Tompkins, “the lord of the valley.”

There has always been a mystery to how Addie and my grandfather met and what they could have had in common. Maybe they shared the immediacy of memory of a better, richer earth before the black change came in their lifetime. Was the meeting on the ferry that plied between her town and his?

Or was it on a country road? I like to think so. Make it a hot morning and sandy bottom at the mouth of one

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Really Traveling

One day last November the Mingo County school board sent a van to Preston County to fetch the Humanities Council's *Born of Rebellion* traveling exhibit. *Born of Rebellion* had finished its stand in Kingwood, the county seat of Preston County, and was headed to Williamson, the county seat of Mingo.

The more I thought about that, the more I liked it.

Mingo and Preston counties are not as far apart as it is possible to be in West Virginia — not quite — but culturally and geographically they are a good ways from each other. Preston is farm country, tucked between Pennsylvania and Maryland in the highlands east of Morgantown. Mingo borders Kentucky and a bit of Virginia, lying on the Tug Fork in the heart of the southern coalfields. Draw a line between Mingo and Preston on the state road map, and you will have a pretty fair cross section of West Virginia.

As the name may suggest, the subject of *Born of Rebellion* is the creation of West Virginia during the Civil War. The exhibit spent a month at the Williamson library before moving across the county to the Larry J. Harless Community Center in Gilbert. I had the chance to see it there in the company of more than a hundred Tug Valley schoolchildren.

They were not the first young West Virginians to have their hands on *Born of Rebellion*. Mark Payne, our program officer, worked with students in Professor Eve Faulkes's design class at WVU to create the exhibit. Funded by Columbia Gas Transmission Company, *Born of Rebellion* was designed and fabricated entirely within West Virginia. It is the equal to the Smithsonian traveling exhibits we occasionally sponsor, and it was a pleasure to discover that our undergraduate students could produce work of that caliber.

Thus, *Born of Rebellion* is a West Virginia product with a West Virginia story to tell. It speaks to places as different as Kingwood and Williamson because it addresses their common interests as West Virginians. I'm not surprised that the exhibit found a warm reception in both towns, and that it is now booked for Parkersburg, Grafton and Shepherdstown.

Add those points to the Mingo-Preston tangent on your West Virginia road map, and you will see that this is one traveling exhibit that really travels.

— Ken Sullivan

continued from the front cover

of the hollows. The althea is in bloom, and scraggly roses crawl over a stump in the sandy front yard—a hot morning that smells of grass and sand and the wet wash that flaps on the line.

I see Addie standing by the fence, as if she is resting for a minute from too much work. The sweat, the glow, as Mr. Tompkins would have called it, stands out on her lovely forehead. She is small and lithe and beautiful. One of her daughters clings to her skirt. The two older girls are playing in the yard, but quietly, watching her from time to time as if they don't know which way the cat will jump. Behind her is the small white-washed house with a stoop. Two rocking chairs stand still beside a corrugated tin washtub with a hand wringer clamped to it. On the other corner of the stoop, where it can catch the sun, is an incongruously elegant wire stand that holds a huge blooming lily.

She had whitewashed the house herself. She never in her life, she told me when she was an old woman, could get a man to do a damned thing. I think that just at the moment he passed by, she leaned forward on the fence and sighed and he could see the sun glistening on the hair at the nape of her neck.

He was driving downriver. Maybe. Addie made her legends come true by lodging them with us. There were our own legends and hers, elusive and ponderous, and there behind them all, deep within the heavy old woman, was Addie when she was young, slim, beautiful, on a sand road by the river in the summertime, the valley lush around her, as it is still, so lush that it hides its scars and its sins every summer until the leaves fall on the slag heaps and the forgotten shacks and the car graveyards and the piles of old tires.

She told me that the first time she saw him, he wore a flaring red tie, a poet's tie, she called it when she told the story, and he drove the fastest four-in-hand, the lord of the valley, she said, when he got his hands on those reins. She said he cut a dash. He had been the valley's eligible bachelor as long as anybody could remember and still was what they called a great catch.

The tools Miss Addie had to change the only life she could have chosen as the wife of a coal miner, were, first, her imperious eyes. She had, too, hidden maybe even from herself, a will, a passion as strong and as inevitable as the river's current.

But on that morning her life was confined by the huddled coal town, the Company Store, her stepparents' house, the little church, Church of God Holy Roller, the washtub that sat on a bench on the stoop. The sun behind her made a halo around her head of glossy hair. That was what I think he saw at that



Mary Lee Settle received the West Virginia Humanities Council's Charles H. Daugherty Award in the Humanities in 2003. These photographs are from that year's lecture tour of state colleges and universities.

moment, at that place or at another place, a glance and then a look, and the lives of so many would spin out from it, including her children's, my cousins', my brother's, and my own.

After they met, did she dream at the washtub, in the privy, in the tumbled bed where she had to do her marital duty, calling the children, wandering down to the riverbank and watching the river flow toward where he might be? A whole new life opened up, a dream come true and turning terrible. All she knew was passion. It was all that her life had taught her, that and work, passion and work, and for herself, all her life afterwards, an imagination the people around her never had, except for my mother, the only child out of all of them who inherited it, and was teased, it being the time when women were derided for such things. It terrified her. She threw the talent away. I picked it up—a

hidden gauntlet, grandmother to mother to child—as carelessly as if I had found it in an alley and wondered what it was. I was punished for years for picking up something that might be dirty.

I guess that the year they met was 1887. I think the passion caught fire so that perhaps neither of them, certainly not Addie, could ever have withstood it. He, in his mid-forties, may have been more calculating in his watching as he passed, judging as he would have judged a dog, a horse, another man. He was the favorite son. Whatever he wanted, he got, or took with all the charm that was so famous. He wanted her. At last he had found somebody who could give him a family, which was the only thing in human relations he hadn't tasted, one way or another.

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Grant Guidelines

The West Virginia Humanities Council awards grants in the following categories:

Major Grants support humanities events: symposiums, conferences, exhibits, lectures. Maximum award: \$20,000. **Due:** Feb. 1, Sept. 1

Minigrants have a budget of \$1,500 or less and support small projects, single events, or planning/consultation. **Due:** Feb. 1, April 1, June 1, Aug. 1, Oct. 1, Dec. 1

Fellowships of \$2,500 support research and writing projects for humanities faculty and independent scholars. ***Due: Feb. 1**

Media Grants support the production of electronic or film materials, or a newspaper series. Maximum award: \$20,000. **Due:** Sept. 1

Publication Grants are available to nonprofit presses and recognized academic presses, and support *only* the production phase of a completed manuscript. Maximum award: \$20,000. **Due:** Sept. 1

Teacher Institute Grants are available to colleges and universities and support summer seminars for secondary teachers. Maximum award: \$20,000. **Due:** Sept. 1

**Don't miss the once-a-year-deadline!*

For full guidelines and forms:
call (304) 346-8500, or email
lerose@wvhumanities.org, or
download from our website
www.wvhumanities.org

Updating Shakespeare: Summer 2006 Teacher Institute

Each year, the West Virginia Humanities Council funds a two-week summer teacher institute. The 2006 institute will be held June 11-20, 2006, at West Virginia State University and London, England.

Secondary schoolteachers are invited to apply for this seminar, which provides the opportunity for intensive study to enhance classroom teaching. Participants are chosen competitively based on their applications. Teachers are required to pay \$450 for travel expenses. Graduate credit and continuing education hours are available.

For more information contact Dr. David Wohl at (304) 766-3186 or dwohl@wvstateu.edu.

Application deadline is February 15, 2006.



2006 Fellowships - An Invitation

The Council extends an invitation to West Virginia college and university faculty to apply for our 2006 fellowships. These fellowships, unique in West Virginia, offer support for research and writing projects for teachers, college faculty, and independent scholars. The awards provide scholars with a stipend of \$2,500 for research and writing in the humanities.

Applications are available on our website at www.wvhumanities.org. For technical assistance, please call Pam LeRose at (304) 346-8500 or email lerose@wvhumanities.org.

Deadline: February 1, 2006

Call for Board Member Nominations

The Humanities Council seeks nominations for its board of directors. Board members are responsible for the general governance of the Council and are selected on the basis of their commitment to the humanities. Members contribute to the Council through a commitment of time and expertise, and contribute financially according to ability. They participate in three meetings per year and actively work with board committees.

Nominations must include the nominee's name, address and telephone numbers, and a brief statement about his/her interest in the humanities. Self-nominations are welcome.

*Send board nominations to Mary Estep, West Virginia Humanities Council, 1310 Kanawha Blvd., East, Charleston, WV 25301.
Or email: mary@wvhumanities.org.*

Program Committee Election

Please vote for citizen members to serve on the Council's program committee. Your vote gives the public a voice in grants and program-making decisions. The Humanities Council program committee comprises twelve Council board members and twelve citizen members representing the general public, schools, and higher education. **Deadline for voting: February 15, 2006**

Higher Education Candidates:

Harold Forbes (Monongalia County) is associate curator of the West Virginia and Regional History Collection, WVU Libraries. He has been responsible for WVU Libraries' West Virginia books and newspapers since 1973 and the curator of rare books since 1994. Harold holds master's degrees from both WVU and the University of Pittsburgh.

Robert McCutcheon (Randolph County) is assistant professor of English at Davis and Elkins College. He is a past West Virginia Humanities Council fellowship recipient and has also directed two Council-funded West Virginia Shakespeare and Renaissance Association conferences at the College. Robert holds an M.A. from Oxford University and a Ph.D. from Stanford University.

Fran Simone (Kanawha County) is a professor and director of the Central West Virginia Writing Project at Marshall University Graduate College, a statewide affiliate of the National Writing Project at the University of California at Berkeley. She holds an M.Ed. from the University of Florida and a Ph.D. from Duke University. *She is an incumbent.*

David Cook (Berkeley County) is currently an adjunct professor at Marshall University and has also taught at George Washington University, the University of Maryland, and the University of Virginia. He had an extensive Navy career and holds a B.A., M.A., M.B.A., and a Ph.D. in mass communications. David is active in community theater.

General Public Candidates:

Richard Hartman (Kanawha County) teaches history at Marshall University. He has administered grants programs for the Federal Transportation Enhancement Program, the West Virginia Recreational Trails Program, and the West Virginia Tourism Commission. Richard holds two master's degrees from Marshall in political science and history.

Gerald (Jerry) Sutphin (Cabell County) is the principal author of *Sternwheelers on the Great Kanawha River* and has produced a video history of the Delta Queen for the Delta Queen Steamboat Company. He is an expert on the history of the western rivers and steamboats. Jerry holds a B.A. in art and journalism from Marshall University. *He is an incumbent.*

Julie Palas (Kanawha County) is special projects counsel for the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals. She also provides legal and support services for special projects such as Council-funded statewide programs honoring J. R. Clifford, the state's first black attorney. Julie holds a B.A. in art education and a J.D. from the Appalachian School of Law.

Charlene Byrd (Kanawha County) is a retired Director of the National Center for Human Relations at West Virginia State University. She has served 44 years as a teacher and administrator, the last 34 years in Kanawha County. Charlene holds an M.A. from the University of Chicago and an LL.D. from Marshall University Graduate College.

Please complete the ballot below and return to: WV Humanities Council, 1310 Kanawha Blvd., E., Charleston, WV 25301. Or email your vote to: lerose@wvhumanities.org

Higher Education Candidates (vote for 1)

- Harold Forbes
- Robert McCutcheon
- Fran Simone
- David Cook

General Public Candidates (vote for 1)

- Richard Hartman
- Gerald Sutphin
- Julie Palas
- Charlene Byrd

What's New in the Humanities

LITTLE LECTURES

The Little Lecture Series returns in 2006. Speakers include, on February 26, former NBC news correspondent and Emmy award-



Kristina Olson lectures on artist Blanche Lazzell (2005).

winner Ed Rabel; on March 26, poet and children's author Marc Harshman; on April 30, rare book restorer and bookbinder Jill Deiss; and on May 21, former historian for the U.S. House of Representatives Ray Smock.

Lectures are Sundays at 2:00 p.m. at our 1836 MacFarland-Hubbard House in Charleston. Call (304) 346-8500 or visit www.wvhumanities.org for additional information.

Southern West Virginia Music

Work has begun on the southern West Virginia music project. Musicologist Matt Meacham was hired in November to work with project advisors and Council staff to conduct the initial fieldwork in the area. Southern West Virginia is a major source area for American roots music including bluegrass, blues, country, gospel and mountain music.

Over a twelve-month period a survey of cultural resources will be completed including identification of existing scholarship; commercial, archival and field recordings of the music; oral history recordings; music venues; musicians past and present; and existing authorities including historians, folklorists, and cultural-resource and material culture specialists.

This project is the initial step to determine the feasibility of establishing a regional music heritage center. A report will be provided to 3rd District Congressman Nick Joe Rahall, who secured funding for the project. The mission of such a center could include demonstration, preservation, archival and research functions as well as musical performance.



Jeff Whetstone

Nat Reese, West Virginia blues musician. Courtesy of "Passing It On"—a project of the Larry Joe Harless Community Center and Appalshop.



PRODUCE FOR VICTORY TOUR

The statewide planning meeting for the upcoming 2006 West Virginia tour of the Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit, *Produce for Victory: Posters on the American Home Front, 1941-1945* was held in September in Flatwoods. Representatives from the six host sites brainstormed ideas for programs and companion displays. Museum on Main Street co-director LuAnn Kerns of Michigan and Council Program Officer Mark Payne outlined successful *Produce for Victory* programs developed locally in other communities around the country. West Virginia University professor Charles Keeney, project scholar for the tour, shared information on the West Virginia WWII home front with the participants. The tour begins in March 2006 at Bluefield State College.

Hechler Honored at McCreight Lecture

The Betsy K. McCreight Lecture in the Humanities was delivered by Pulitzer Prize winning author Joseph Ellis to a full house at the state Cultural Center on October 27. Ellis was the third Pulitzer Prize winner (David McCullough in 2002 and David Halberstam in 2003) that the series has brought to West Virginia. Ellis discussed the public's renewed interest in the country's founders and outlined the values and actions of the leaders who established our republic.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the 2005 Charles H. Daugherty Award in the Humanities to Dr. Ken Hechler. The award recognizes Hechler as a professor, writer, historian, and former congressman and state official who used his time in office to be a supporter of the humanities. Significantly, Hechler co-sponsored the legislation that led to the establishment of the National Endowment for the Humanities.



Ken Hechler (r) talks with Joseph Ellis.

"We are pleased to honor Dr. Hechler for his dedication to the humanities," says Council executive director, Ken Sullivan. "It is not often that an organization has an opportunity like this — to recognize a man who crafted the legislation that made our humanities programs possible."

Born of Rebellion Travels West Virginia

Born of Rebellion-West Virginia Statehood is traveling the state. The exhibit has been on display in Morgantown, Kingwood, Williamson, and Gilbert. Made possible through the generous support of Columbia Gas Transmission and the National Endowment for the Humanities, the exhibit focuses on the circumstances and constitutional questions surrounding the formation of West Virginia.

The exhibit tour continues as follows: January 1-31 at West Virginia University-Parkersburg; International Mother's Day Shrine in Grafton in February; and the Robert C. Byrd Center for Legislative Studies at Shepherd University in March. The exhibit is currently available for July and October-

December 2006. Contact Mark Payne at (304) 346-8500 or payne@wvhumanities.org.



Connie Cox, Susan Hardesty (as Mrs. McGrew) and Tabatha Holmes participate in the Born of Rebellion exhibit program at the McGrew House in Kingwood, Preston County.

Food for Thought 2005

Treated to an evening of Italian holiday cuisine and fine wines, guests enjoyed the 2005 *Food for Thought* dinner December 5 at the award winning Tarragon Restaurant. Charleston wine expert John Brown worked with Marriott Executive Chef Darren Phipps, Tarragon Chef Logan Springston and Marriott Director of Restaurants Gabriela Zamfirescu to present an exquisite seven-course Italian meal. Proceeds from the event benefit the programs of the West Virginia Humanities Council.

A special thanks to our 2005 *Food for Thought* sponsors:

Charleston Marriott Town Center
Jackson Kelly, PLLC
Marshall University (Communications)
Morgantown Printing & Binding
MotionMasters
R. Samuel Oliver, Jr., M.D.
United Bank

And, thanks to those who donated door prizes: Charleston Marriott Town Center; Despina Kapourales; Kenneth R. Bailey; Lisa Waugh, LMT; Living Life Massage, David Gould, LMT; Ohio University Press; Oxford University Press; Showcase West Virginia; Susan C. Power, Marshall University; Taylor Books; Tom's Word Horticulture Consulting; University of Georgia Press; Visions Day Spa; West Virginia Public Broadcasting (Mountain Stage); West Virginia University Press.

The sunflower, "girasol" in Italian, is one of the most cultivated crops in Italy and is widely used as an essential cooking oil, sweet in taste.

Folklife Award

Ken Sullivan, executive director of the West Virginia Humanities Council, was honored October 29 by the West Virginia Folklife Center at Fairmont State as a writer, editor, historian and humanist. Sullivan received the B. B. Maurer West Virginia Folklife Award. The award originated in 1999 when the Fairmont State Foundation honored Senator Robert C. Byrd as the first Folklife Center Scholar. The center was established to promote the identification, preservation, and perpetuation of the region's rich cultural heritage.

The Folklife Center continued the recognition of folklife scholars with the renaming of the award in honor of Dr. B. B. Maurer, considered "the father of cultural studies in West Virginia." Other previous



Ken Sullivan (l) receives the B. B. Maurer Folklife Award from Dr. Fred Fidura, Emeritus Provost and Academic Vice President for Fairmont State.

recipients include Richard N. Schnacke, traditional toy maker; Jean Ritchie, folksinger and musician; John H. Randolph, folk arts and cultural preservationist; and Patty Looman, traditional musician and educator.

The evening included a gala with music, food, and folk art demonstrations. According to Judy Byers, Folklife Center director, the event "shows the three areas of folklife — oral,

customary and material artifacts."

Sullivan's remarks at the event focused on *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, the signature project of the Humanities Council.

The West Virginia Humanities Council gratefully acknowledges support from the National Endowment for the Humanities; the Office of the West Virginia Secretary for Education and the Arts; and foundations, corporations, and individuals throughout the Mountain State and beyond.

West Virginia Humanities Council
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