THE CRATIS WILLIAMS CHRONICLES

I Come to Boone

Cratis Williams

&

Patricia D. Beaver

The Cratis Williams Chronicles: I Come to Boone

by Cratis D. Williams

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Acknowledgements

Appalachian State University's Centennial celebration in 1999 seemed a fitting occasion for preparation by the Center for Appalachian Studies of a volume of Cratis Williams's memoirs for publication. In 1997 I approached David Williams for family approval and guidance through his father's papers. David directed my attention to *I Come to Boone*, which represents a pivotal year (1942-43) in Cratis's adult life, beginning his long-term association with what was then Appalachian State Teachers College, with Boone, and with the North Carolina mountains. Cratis Williams's memoir is a most appropriate contribution to the university's Centennial, as his experiences intersect with the lives of many educators who shaped the college from its inception in 1899 into the university of the late 20th century. David Williams and I have worked together to bring Cratis's text to the community which grew with Cratis, which nurtured his professionalism, and which loved and admired him.

David Williams and I are responsible for alterations from the original manuscript, which include minor editorial changes and the addition of chapter breaks, chapter titles, and footnotes which do not appear in the original text. While I worked from locales in North Carolina, David traversed the eastern seaboard from Canada to Puerto Rico, enduring the fury of Hurricane Georges as he proofed the final manuscript copy.

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This manuscript is presented to honor Cratis, his pivotal role in our university, particularly the Graduate School, and his role in directing the humanistic embrace of regional culture in creating Appalachian Studies as a serious program of meaningful scholarship. No one has stepped into the large space which Cratis left, and we laugh a little less often.

Patricia D. Beaver, 1999
Boone, North Carolina

Introduction

Following his retirement in 1976 from a distinguished career as a teacher and administrator at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, Cratis Williams began to write memoirs of his life odyssey from a log cabin in eastern Kentucky to the upper echelons of American education. Destined to become a nationally recognized spokesperson for Appalachian culture–a preserver of its ballads, a teller of its tales, and a sympathetic interpreter of its customs and traditions–Cratis struggled during his formative years to find his direction in life. Most of Cratis's memoirs concern these years of personal and professional growth, focusing either on his recollections from childhood or on his educational and early professional experiences.

Two previously published memoirs, *I Become A Teacher* (Williams 1995) and *William H. Vaughan: A Better Man Than I Ever Wanted To Be* (Williams 1983), describe, respectively, his entry into the teaching profession in a one-room school in his native Lawrence County, Kentucky, and his high school principal and mentor. *I Come to Boone* describes his move in 1942 from Huntington, West Virginia, where he taught night classes at the Apprentice School of International Nickel Company, to Boone, North Carolina. Watching helplessly as his wife Sylvia slowly succumbed to tuberculosis, he took a temporary position as "critic teacher" at Appalachian Demonstration High School. Among his many assignments that year, Cratis taught methods of teaching English in high school to aspiring educators at Appalachian State Teachers College, the institution with which he was to be associated for the remainder of his life.

Early Years

Cratis Dearl Williams was born at 7:23 a.m. on April 5, 1911, in the telephone room of his grandfa-

ther's log house on Caines Creek, in Lawrence County, Kentucky.

He was the first child of Curtis and Mona (Whitt) Williams, and the first grandson for both David O. Williams, in whose house he was born, and Jefferson Davis Whitt. A small, presumably premature baby, Cratis was not expected to survive his infancy. "*[I]n the language of the community*," he later recalled, "*I was... a 'puny and pindlin' child, plagued with tonsillitis, colds and infections, and hives.*" A short time after his birth, his young parents, each but twenty years old at the time of his birth, moved a short distance "*up the creek*" to the "*Blythe cabin*," a small log house dating from the 1880s, which David Williams had purchased. "*In this house*," Cratis Williams later wrote, "*which was altered later and added to, I grew to maturity.*"[1] The alterations and additions were required, in part, by the growth of the family: Cratis was eventually joined by four siblings, Mabel, Ralph, Ruth, and Ottie Curtis.

Figure 1. A new generation of Williams: (l-r) Mabel, age 5; Cratis, age 6; Ralph, age 4; and Elva, their youngest aunt, age 3. July 1917.

Cratis's interest in mountain speech was practically stamped on him from the very beginning. Although, as he was to note wryly in later years, the name "Cratis" resonates nicely with those of the Greek gods, it was in fact an invention of his mother, who had not been trained in Greek mythology during her years in the local one-room country school. She liked the *sound* of the name. Names–and perhaps words generally–were differentiated and endowed with meaning, magic, and pleasure by sound; spelling was at best a secondary concern. Her own name, spelled "Mona," was pronounced "Mony." His middle name–"Dearl"–is a variant of "Darryl" (or "Darrell," as Wolfford [circa 1972,170] mistakenly lists it), but the spelling in this case is reflective of the pronunciation, which rhymes with "Earl." Trying to capture that sound through spelling proved to be an inexact science. In July, 1917, when he started school in the one-room school "*on the hillside across the*

[1]All quotations from Cratis Williams are in quotes and italicized. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations are from unpublished memoirs, essays, speeches, and short notes by Cratis Williams, which are in the possession of his family.

valley" from the house in which he grew up, his mother prepared him with a "*primer*" in which she had written, "Cratis Dearl Williams, His Book." The teacher enrolled him in the official record book accordingly. "*I did not know for 20 years,*" he later recalled, "*that she had misspelled my middle name, which was written 'Darl' on my birth certificate.*" Afterwards he remained, by choice as well as habit, Cratis Dearl.

"*Mostly of Scotch Irish origin,*" Cratis was a descendent on both sides of the early settlers along the Appalachian frontier during the period of the founding of this country. Among his "*forebears were Indian fighters, long hunters, veterans of the American Revolution, Tories escaped to the backwoods, refugees from the Whiskey Rebellion, Kentucky mountain feudists, and religious dissenters*" (*Big Sandy News* March 6, 1969, n.p.). As the "*oldest grandson of each of my grandfathers,*" Cratis "*enjoyed a special place in my early years in the favor of each.*" Each grandfather, albeit in widely different ways, was enormously influential on him. Cratis later recalled, "*My Grandfather Williams led me by the hand through the mysterious arrangements of his distillery, said to have been the last legal distillery in Eastern Kentucky. He gave me my own little bottle of whiskey so I could drink along with the workers.*" His other grandfather, "Pa Jeff," offered education of a different sort, "*Grandfather Whitt, a keen 'hardshell' scholar of the Bible, began talking Calvinistic theology with me before I was nine years old. By the time I was twelve we could 'argy' the 'scriptors' together with quiet skill.*" Of course, as Cratis concluded his recollection, "*more warmth was generated in our discussions when I shared with him my little bottle of whiskey.*"

As a young child, Cratis would go with his mother to the United Baptist Church "*which is located just across the valley from where we grew up. That was the only church in the valley at the time.*" There he would listen for hours to the preachers (for generally four or five preachers would go in succession on Sundays), and church would last from nine o'clock in the morning until perhaps two or three o'clock in the afternoon. What most impressed young Cratis, however, was not the theological content of the sermons but rather the oratorical style of the raw mountain preachers; he "*was intrigued with the style and the drama of it all.*" When an animal on the farm died, Cratis and his siblings would have a funeral, and Cratis "*would preach the funeral sermon. I would use this man's style and then that man's style.*" Curt Williams, concerned that his son's imitations would offend the preachers, "'*bursted' the seat*" of Cratis's pants "*several times for mocking the preachers.*" But "*when my father was completely out of hearing, I'd go on and do it anyway*" (Ross n.d.). It was in this manner that Cratis acquired both a deep appreciation of and skill in the oratorical styles of mountain preachers: "*I learned to preach like the hard-shell preachers. I liked the rhetoric. I wasn't religious*" (*Big Sandy News* July 3, 1979, 10).

At the age of six, Cratis was sent to the one-room Hillside School, also known as Middle Caines Creek School, near his home. The school "*was held in the United Baptist Church Building, which was constructed about 1885.*" His first teacher was Eugene Moore. Although Middle Caines Creek School was located conveniently for young Cratis and his siblings, its very remoteness no doubt contributed to an instability in its staffing. Eugene Moore moved after the term ended. Cratis's second teacher, Annie Young, eloped to California after only about three months. Harry Burton, later a prominent merchant and

banker in Blaine, finished Annie's term and was followed briefly by Randolph N. Boggs, who also moved away. But "Ran" was an important influence on Cratis: "*Ran encouraged me to read orally*," Cratis recollected about the 1919 school year. "*I recall that he once invited the whole school to hear me read aloud the story about the dog and the cock that spent the night in the forest. The response of my 'audience' to my cock-crowing was so gratifying to me that I began to aspire for skill in interpretation. I have considered this experience one of the most significant in my life. It sharpened my interest in school generally.*" Ran taught the school again in 1920, before leaving Blaine.

Beginning with the 1921-1922 term, Cratis's teacher "*was Ulysses S. Williams, my father's cousin. Lyss began the 1922-1923 term, but was shot and killed in November.*" He was twenty-two years old. "*Lyss had been one of the 'big scholars' in the school during my first two years*," Cratis recalled, "*but he had taken the teachers examination and been awarded a certificate. He had also attended a short winter 'institute' before he began teaching on Catt Creek in 1920. After being away from the school on Caines Creek for only one year, he returned, at the age of 21, as the teacher, and he was a good one.*" Lyss had developed an interest in a young woman who lived nearby on Abb Creek. On Sunday, November 12, Lyss went to Abb Creek to meet Roberta Stafford, "*to whom he was engaged.*" But at the church on Abb Creek, he was shot and killed by Elbert Caldwell. "*Caldwell's motive...was never made quite clear. He was quite drunk, however, and had engaged in a quarrel with young men from Caines Creek before Lyss arrived at the church. Lyss was shot at such close range that his clothing caught fire. He died instantly, without speaking a word.*" When they learned of this, the Williams men (headed by Lyss's brother Jesse and his father, Cratis's uncle Jake) attempted to hunt down the murderer, but their search parties returned empty handed.

Cratis recalled lying awake in the bedroom, with its window opening onto the porch, listening quietly to a conversation between his parents the "*morning following my father's all-night search, along with dozens of Williams relatives, for the man who had killed Lyss. He told my mother that Lyss had been the only one of our family who was determined to 'get an education' but that his murder 'just looked like it wasn't meant that a Williams would ever be allowed to have one.' With a mighty oath he swore that if one of his children wanted an education he would 'work on my hands and knees for a dime a day, if need be, to see that he had a chance to get it.'*" Although only eleven years old at the time, Cratis "*vowed secretly that I would challenge my father to the sacrifice that he declared he was prepared to make. During the remainder of that school year I advanced from third grade to the fifth grade and began in the sixth grade the following year.*" That term Cratis took the County Examination "*to determine whether I was eligible to go to high school. The examination lasted for two days. I passed it at the age of twelve.*" In February, 1924, Cratis rode the farm wagon with his father from Caines Creek to Louisa, where he planned to enter Louisa High School (which was completed in 1889) and board with his father's cousins, Simpson (Simps) and Nola Boggs. After meeting with the principal, however, he was assigned to the seventh grade.

Cratis immediately experienced culture shock; he was "*painfully ashamed of the quaint background*" he "*brought directly into the glitter of the Jazz Age*" which had already arrived in Louisa. Even as he struggled to adjust to his "*new surroundings*," he excelled in his studies

and impressed both his classmates and his teacher who "awarded" him with a metal pencil as a special prize for the top student. She had to purchase the pencil herself; Cratis, having enrolled late in the year, was ineligible for the official prize. His "*grades for the semester were 27 A's and 3 B's.*" When he showed his gradecard to his father that summer, Curt Williams asked his son "*to explain what the grades meant. I told him that A was the best grade a student could receive. He looked at the card intently, running his fingers up and down the columns, and handed it back to me as he asked, 'Well, what in the hell are these B's doing on here, then?'*" Cratis concluded that this expectation was not unreasonable. "*He had given me 50 cents a week for spending money, paid $4.00 a week for my board and room, and paid 75 cents a week for my tuition. Money was hard to come by. He had sacrificed, and he expected perfect performance in return.*"

The following September Cratis began high school in Louisa. He would be the first person from Caines Creek to graduate Louisa High School. His high school principal and history teacher was William H. Vaughan, an influential educator who was later to become President of Morehead State University (1940-1946).[2] Vaughan's influence on Cratis Williams would be difficult to overstate: he was a teacher, a mentor, a trusted advisor, and, eventually, a friend and a father figure. It was Dr. Vaughan who not only encouraged Cratis to think about education beyond high school–something inconceivable to Cratis while growing up on Caines Creek–but also facilitated the possibility. Vaughan, a native of Lawrence County, helped Cratis to take pride in himself, and perhaps from that basis to look upon his heritage with pride. Even so, Cratis's initial experiences in high school filled him not with appreciation of his heritage and its traditions but rather with shame.

The mountain dialect which Cratis spoke when he arrived in Lousia was the source of one of his greatest humiliations. During his first year of high school, Cratis became acutely aware of the differences between the town children and the country children, including the different attitudes that many of the teachers adopted toward the respective groups. Cratis felt that his own English teacher, Miss Roberts, was "*what we called in the country 'proud,' one who thinks herself better than others. I found it difficult to like her, but I was determined to do all I could to meet her requirements and to please her.*" One day, during "*oral assignments in which we were to deal with the 'spoken word,'*" Cratis volunteered to tell "*An Anecdote.*" He went to the front of the room, where he "*assumed the recommended posture for facing an audience, my feet planted side by side firmly on the floor, my body erect, my chest out, my chin up, my arms stiff by my sides, and my fingers pointed rigidly at my shoe tops. I was prepared to tell about Dave Prince's stuffing the overalls in the smokepipe of Granny Blyth's kitchen stove.*" But as he began his story, Miss Roberts interrupted and requested that he repeat the sentence he had just spoken:

"Hit was a-gittin' 'way up in the day," I responded.

The town girls restrained giggles.

"Say it again," Miss Roberts commanded.

[2]For a full discussion of their relationship, see Cratis D. Williams's (1983) biography of William H. Vaughan.

"Hit was getting 'way up in the day," I repeated with more precision. The town girls, now unrestrained, laughed outright. I could feel my face flaming as Miss Roberts asked me to say it again.

"Hit was getting away up in the day!" I almost shouted.

The town girls, now joined by some of the country children, laughed louder and longer.

"It, not hit," Miss Roberts corrected.

At that, "*the country children laughed uproariously while the town girls merely smiled at Miss Roberts as she looked in their direction.*" For Cratis, the "*humiliation was so deep and painful that I resolved to learn spoken English so well that no one would be likely to laugh at me again. Many years and a Ph.D. in English were required to salve my wound completely.*" As a result of such experiences, Cratis felt himself confronted with the need for radical self-change. In his later reflections upon these experiences, he concluded, "*I soon saw that my job was to make myself over. It was a shame to be Appalachian.*"

As deep and lasting as this humiliation was, Cratis received a counter-balancing impetus to begin serious examination of his own experience and culture from other teachers, none of whom, ironically, were from the region of the southern Appalachians. For instance, it was a high school teacher who first awakened Cratis's academic interest in ballads. "*When I was a junior,*" Cratis later recounted, "*we studied a unit in ballads. Suddenly I realized these were the songs I knew, the ones my people sang. My teacher made a big fuss over this and advised I start collecting them. I've been at it ever since*" (Alexander 1966). As a high school student he began to collect ballads from his relatives and neighbors. Learning the tunes and writing the lyrics, his interest began to broaden and he soon began "*to study the speech, tales, and oral rhetoric of the mountain folk.*"

Recognizing the uniqueness and value of aspects of his "home" culture in the county, yet suffering as well its stigma and social humiliations, Cratis found himself in a cultural quandary. Even as he acculturated to mainstream middle-class norms, he retained his country identity. "*I was living in two cultures,*" he later told the *Big Sandy News* (July 3, 1979, 10). "*I couldn't let the people back on the creek know or they'd think I was puttin' on the dog.*" Meanwhile, he entered the jazz age, slicked back his hair, shined his shoes to a two-toned gleam, and learned the popular songs of the day.[3] As he put it years later, "*I was as middle class in my behavior and appearance as it was possible for me to be and so careful with my personal grooming that a fly could not have rested on my slicked back hair without sliding off. I even shined the insides of my shoe heels. That was the Jazz Age. I wore bell-bottom trousers, loud socks, and bow ties, sang 'Yes, Sir, She's My Baby' and 'Blue Skies,' and danced the Charleston and the fox-trot, though not very well.*" Yet, despite his appearance of being in the middle class, the middle class was not in him. He was still, in a very fundamental sense, an Appalachian mountaineer–albeit now one clad in bell-bottoms, loud socks, and bow ties. "*I felt dreadfully unreal. I was a kind of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. That Appalachian boy who*

[3]This theme of cultural division is the unifying metaphor of the documentary film, *Cratis Williams: Living the Divided Life* (1998).

stood to one side and watched, reproved, chastised, and corrected the Jazz Age character I was playing in the charade, was the real me. It was he who would ask from time to time, 'How am I doing?'"

Figure 2. As a high school graduate, 1928.

Despite, or perhaps because of, his early embarrassments at Louisa High School, Cratis endeavored to become both a successful and, by all evidence, popular student. He was president of his freshman class, secretary of the Athenian Literary Society during his sophomore year, and became centrally involved in school activities during his junior and senior years, serving at various times as president of both the Science and English Clubs, member of the out-of-state debating team, and school representative in the district declamation contest. During his senior year he was editor of the *Louisian*, "*the five-column four-page school newspaper published twice a month and printed by the* Big Sandy News." The editorial direction of the paper soon reflected a strong Appalachian bent, although Cratis later did not recall having emphasized Appalachian themes in the paper. "*I had forgotten*," he wrote in 1979, "*until last year, fifty years later, when someone sent me a copy of one issue of the school paper I had edited, that on the back page of that paper I had written an essay on what it meant to be an Appalachian person. I was amazed that I hadn't changed my mind much. Also, I had included in the paper several mountain ballads, but I had forgotten that I had done that, too.*"

At his high school commencement in 1928, Cratis was recipient of the Honor Student Trophy, "*an 18-inch silver loving cup given by the faculty to the graduate who best exemplified scholarship and leadership.*" As salutatorian of his graduating class of forty, Cratis delivered the salutatorian address on May 25, 1928. According to the *Big Sandy News*, he painted "with beautiful diction a picture of happy, restful high school life," but recognized that graduates "have to give up these pleasures" and pursue their chosen courses in life.

One day during Cratis's senior year of high school, Dr. Vaughan showed him a letter from James L. Creech, President of Cumberland College, a small junior college in Williamsburg, Kentucky. "*The letter promised a tuition scholarship, a workship with a value equivalent to the cost of room and board*" (Williams 1983,22). With the help of Dr. Vaughan, Cratis received both the scholarship and workship. On September 1, 1928, he left Lawrence County to attend Cumberland College. He always credited Cumberland College with providing him an opportunity to continue his education, an opportunity which would not have been available to him otherwise.[4] After one year at Cumberland, Cratis became a one-room school teacher on Caines Creek.[5] The year was 1929; he was eighteen years old.

[4]Always a supporter of Cumberland College, one of Cratis's last requests was that certain investments from his estate, investments which had originated in an inheritance from his father a quarter of a century earlier, be used to endow a scholarship fund for mountain youth to attend Cumberland College, now a four-year institution. The "Curt and Mona Williams Scholarship" is awarded annually.

Although he had begun a career as a teacher, a career which would not span seamless-

Figure 3. Cratis stands tall behind his one-room school class on Caines Creek, about 1929. He was probably standing on a wash tub.

ly through the next fifty years of his life, he would continue on as a student. Cumberland College had whetted his appetite and he now had a dream: to work his way from one-room school teacher to high school teacher to college teacher. He thought that to be a college teacher was to have climbed the mountaintop. He could work as a one-room school teacher based on his certificate and his year at Cumberland, but to pursue his dream he needed a college degree, or perhaps two or three of them. After teaching in the one-room school through the fall and winter, Cratis then attended the second semester and one summer term at the University of Kentucky. He did this each year (with the exception of a summer term spent at Morehead in 1932) until he received his Bachelor of Arts degree in June, 1933.

High School Teacher and Principal (1933-1941)

As his graduation from the University of Kentucky approached in the spring of 1933, Cratis began to face significant career choices. Already determined to extend his formal education beyond the B.A. degree in English which he was earning from Kentucky that June, Cratis had assumed that he would continue to teach in the Upper Caines Creek school during the year and pursue his master's degree during the summers. But as the Depression deepened, teachers' salaries fell faster than Cratis's pay scale; indeed, his salary had declined each of the preceding four years he taught in the one-room school.

At that time, County Board of Education members in Lawrence County were elected by geographic districts and Curt Williams was well acquainted with Proctor Fyffe, Blaine's representative on the Lawrence County Board. With his father's assistance, through Proctor Fyffe, Cratis arranged to move to Blaine's high school beginning in the fall of 1933. Even

[5]Cratis wrote extensively about his experiences during his first year as a one-room school teacher. See Williams (1995).

Figure 4. Ralph J. Williams with his grade school students, Caines Creek, 1938.

Figure 5. Cratis with his two brothers: Ralph J. Williams (on the right) and Ottie Curtis, standing on the table, Caines Creek, circa 1930. Photo courtesy of O.C. Williams.

so, his salary would again be lower than it had been the previous year. He would be not the English teacher but the science teacher and club sponsor. He was to teach five classes: general science, biology, geography, physics, and agriculture. During the summer of 1933, Cratis remained in Lexington and took classes toward his master's degree in English, but he also audited lectures in beginning physics. He returned to Blaine just before the fall school term opened and had dinner the night before classes started at the home of David Morris, the principal of the high school, where he met the rest of the faculty. The next day he began his new career as a high school teacher. Blaine High School was a relatively new institution opened in 1929, one year after Cratis had completed his own high school degree in Louisa.

In 1934 Dock Jordan, county superintendent since 1922, retired. David Morris was

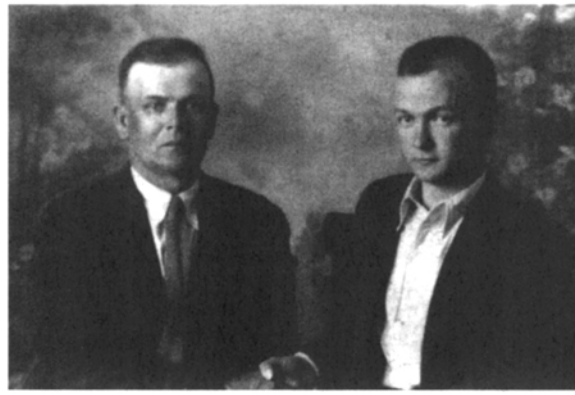

Figure 6. Curt Williams arriving at an understanding with his oldest son Cratis, late 1920s.

selected as the new superintendent, and with only one year of high school teaching experience, twenty-three year old Cratis (who was a college graduate and had taken coursework at Morehead during the summer of 1932 in preparation for certification for principalship) became the principal at Blaine. As a young principal, Cratis was energetic, innovative, and brimming with confidence. His enthusiasm may have been less infectious than alarming, however, for his predecessor and boss, David Morris, rebuked him sharply following completion of his first year: "In your work this year, you put too much stress on intelligence tests. I believe I mentioned this to you several times before. There are several other things I want to discuss with you before school begins." As a consequence of such innovations as the testing program, Morris emphasized that Cratis was in a precarious situation, lacking both his own confidence and, he felt, that of his teachers. Cratis's second year as principal–and his first as English teacher–saw improved relations among the faculty, and Cratis became recognized as a capable administrator and teacher by both his own faculty and, through county-wide teachers' meetings, faculty at other schools as well. At these meetings he furthered a friendship with Sylvia Graham, a young English teacher at Louisa High School and recent graduate of Morehead, whom he had first met at similar meetings while teaching at the Upper Caines Creek School. At the time Cratis was principal, Blaine High

School was a school of about 85 students (Williams 1983, 30).

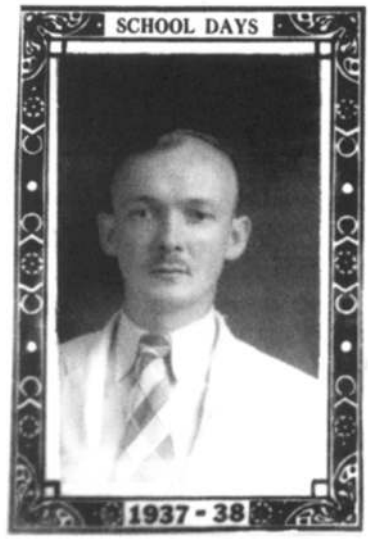

Figure 7. While principal of Blaine High School.

Working as English teacher and principal, Cratis had to curtail his course of study at the University of Kentucky. However, he continued to attend at least one summer term each year. During this period, Cratis studied primarily with L.L. Dantzler, from whom he had taken an undergraduate survey of English literature. That class had included "*a unit on the ballad, and when Professor Dantzler interpreted 'The Twa Corbies,' 'Edward,' and 'The Wife of Usher's Well,' I saw for the first time that the ballad is really great literature, that it lends itself to all sorts of humanistic approaches and interpretations.*" Throughout his undergraduate and graduate coursework, Cratis studied under Professor Dantzler's supervision, and when the time came for Cratis to think seriously about his thesis, he turned naturally and easily to Professor Dantzler: "*I said that I would like to get a master's degree in English and that I wanted to prepare a thesis on ballads.... He was so excited that he began puffing rapidly on his pipe and almost danced around the desk with it.*"

Thus began the several year project in which Cratis interspersed teaching and administrating during the academic terms, studying and taking coursework during the summers, and riding his mule out into the countryside tracking down ballads at every opportunity which arose. "*In the summertime when I would hear of some old man or old woman living far down in the head of a hollow, down the ridge ten to fifteen miles from where I grew up, I would get on the mule, ride over there, hear that person sing, and write down what I could. Sometimes that was difficult because the old person who started a song would sing faster than I could write.*" As Cratis collected more seriously, both his attitude toward and his appreciation of the ballad began to evolve. He reported in 1978, "*I gathered songs from all of my relatives, including my father and mother, my grandmothers, my aunts, and my father's cousins, the Boggses, for my people were in the musical tradition. Please understand now that while all of this was going on I was deeply ashamed of mountain music. The only thing respectable about studying the ballad had to do with the textual matter of the ballad itself. But my parents were musical. In fact, my relatives were all musical.*" Over time, and with deepening resonance, the music slowly swayed Cratis's orientation, but his thesis remained focused on text. After being as thorough as possible in his collection of ballads and his comparison of them with other published sources, he hunt-and-pecked his way through a submissable copy of the 450-page manuscript, for he was too poor to afford a typist. He submitted two copies–the original and a carbon–but, not being able to afford paper for a second carbon, he wasn't

able to keep a copy for himself.[6] He was awarded his master's degree in June 1937, but stayed in Lexington that summer to begin earning credits toward a Ph.D.

On August 7, 1937, shortly after returning to Lawrence County from the second summer session at the University of Kentucky, Cratis Williams married Sylvia Graham, "*an English teacher, poet, and amateur actress. A native of Cherokee in Lawrence County, Kentucky, Sylvia was a graduate of the academy at Berea College and of Morehead State Teachers College (University)*" (Williams 1975a, 67-68). She was one of three children born to Lemual Wakeman Graham and Berta Francis Cooper Graham, both of Lawrence County (Cratis Williams's letter to Theodore B. Walker, Feb. 11, 1980). Sylvia was well known locally for her literary accomplishments, having published stories and poems in the literary magazines of both Morehead State and the University of Kentucky, as well as in local papers. She had suffered health problems earlier, contracting tuberculosis of the lung and spending a period of time taking "the cure" in Southern Pines, North Carolina. Her sister Georgia died of the disease, but it was believed that Sylvia had recovered fully. As late as 1938, she received a clean bill of health from her physician in his report to the Lawrence County Board of Education.

Figure 8. Christmas 1933. Horsing around with Ethel Gambill and two dolls, Blaine, Kentucky. During this period, Cratis would often ride his mule far into the hollows of eastern Kentucky in search of ballads, which he collected in his master's thesis.

Cratis first "*called on*" Sylvia at her parents' home in Cherokee in 1931, and they probably were at Morehead at the same time during the summer of 1932. Six years and many teachers' meetings after first courting, they were married before the magistrate in Catlettsburg, Kentucky. Following the wedding, Cratis remained at Blaine High School while Sylvia continued to teach at Louisa, setting the tone for a marriage that simultaneously suffered and was strengthened from frequent and extended periods of separation, including most summers when Cratis continued to return to Lexington to work on his Ph.D.

In 1936, William A. Cheek, a graduate of Louisa High School (where he and Cratis had been in the same class, although Cheek was exactly six years older having been born April 5, 1905) had become principal of Louisa High School (Wolfford ©1972, 161). In 1938 Cheek challenged and supplanted David Morris as superintendent, and the three men rotated positions; Morris returned as principal at Blaine, and Cratis replaced Cheek as prin-

[6]Twenty years afer he completed his master's thesis (and twenty years since he had last seen a copy), he agreed to a request to put the thesis on microcard because there was scholarly value in the texts of the ballads. Malcolm Laws subsequently "*used it extensively in revising his handbook*, Native American Balladry."

cipal of Louisa High School which was now consolidated with the county system and had twice the enrollment of when he had been a student there some ten years earlier. It had become "*one of the larger high schools in eastern Kentucky*," with roughly 500 students and a faculty of twenty-two, three of whom had been there when Cratis was a student. Cratis was twenty-seven years old and he was now the only one there with a master's degree. Those teachers who had most impressed him as a student–"*people with a master's degree and from outside the region*"–had been victims of the Depression: "*Local pressures to replace them with home grown talent with only a bachelor's degree had driven them away.*"

In his first year as principal Cratis directed the development of both a "*school-wide counseling program and a testing program*" (Williams 1983, 32-33). Sylvia Graham Williams remained on the faculty as an English teacher and, at times, school librarian. As a high school principal in Louisa, Cratis was increasingly active in professional associations. In the fall of 1938, he attended the annual meeting of the Eastern Kentucky Education Association and served on its board of directors until 1941 (*Big Sandy News* Nov. 4, 1938, 1; Nov. 18, 1938, 1).

Louisa High School made great strides in those years. In addition to the innovative testing and counseling programs, Cratis worked to enlarge and improve the library (*Big Sandy News* Feb. 24, 1939, 1) and encouraged the "organization of a student government to aid the faculty in promoting school morale" (*Big Sandy News* Mar. 24, 1939, 1). He also initiated a vocational training program, and on September 1, 1939, the *Big Sandy News* (1) reported, "The new vocational-agriculture department, inaugurated this year, is already proving popular and a number of rural students as well as a few Louisa students are enrolled for the course." He also laid the groundwork for a complementary college-prep track. To combine vocational education and college preparation in the same school was innovative at the time, and it marked an important ambition in Cratis's agenda for the high school. In addition to its innovative programs, the high school was simply booming as never before. The graduating class of 1940, numbering 61 students, was "the largest in the history of the school" (*Big Sandy News* May 10, 1940, 1). The following fall the *Big Sandy News* proudly reported that 23 Louisa High School graduates were set to enter college (Sept. 13, 1940, 1).

Yet all was not well in Cratis's professional life. His agenda for Louisa High School was not shared by the county's central administration, and without any control over pivotal matters such as personnel decisions, Cratis feared that his innovations could not be fully implemented. Faculty morale was low and Cratis became concerned about his own viability as principal. He began to entertain seriously the idea of looking for a new position, perhaps at a college or a junior college. When Cratis left for Lexington in the summer of 1940, he took these worries with him. He wrote Sylvia, "*It would not surprise me to find open rebellion in the school this year. I really dread the year*" (July 30, 1940). He turned for advice to his friend, Richard M. Weaver,[7] who urged him to leave Lawrence County.

[7]Cratis became friends with Weaver during their summer sessions together at the University of Kentucky; their friendship lasted until Weaver's death in 1963. Weaver authored *Ideas Have Consequences* (1948) and *The Ethics of Rhetoric* (1953).

Weaver himself was in the process of leaving Texas A&M for doctoral work at Louisiana State, "*where he plans to do a dissertation in American lit.*" Weaver "*tells me that he hopes I'm on my way out of Lawrence County, that I'll never do any good until I cut loose. 'Sudden Salvation' is what I need. I think there's a whole lot to what he says*" (to Sylvia, June 30, 1940). Cratis began to look more seriously for other jobs, and he applied for several positions. Playfully echoing Weaver's comment from earlier in the summer, he wrote Sylvia on July 30, "*If there could be some 'call' to another place where I might persevere more favorably in the cause of the Lord!*"

As the summer of 1940 edged toward fall, it became clear that Cratis would return to Louisa, and he began to plan accordingly. However, Sylvia's position remained unsettled; she and several other teachers simply did not know whether or not they were to be retained. The uncertainty of Sylvia's employment added to an already precarious financial situation for the couple. Financial stresses had remained a constant throughout Cratis's life, and he and Sylvia had gotten into the habit of "selling" their checks in advance for less than face-value, easing pressures momentarily (particularly during the summer months when Cratis was at school in Lexington) but accentuating them down the road. Financial pressure made Sylvia's employment of paramount importance, and the situation became increasingly acute as Sylvia began to experience medical difficulties, including dental problems, chronic sore throats, coughs, and fatigue. Both she and Cratis attributed her fatigue to tonsillitis aggravated by persistent worry about jobs, money, and increasingly, politics. In the end, Sylvia was not retained for the 1940-1941 school year.

Board of Education elections were scheduled for the fall. Three of the five seats were up for election and the possibility of another route to "salvation" began to open in front of Cratis. If the majority on the Board could be reconstituted, the appointment of a new superintendent and changes in the county's agenda might be possible. Cratis was encouraged by other opponents of Superintendent William Cheek, including David Morris, to run his own slate of candidates for the Board. In mid-August, Cratis agreed to "stand-for" superintendent, at least after a fashion: "*If Bill is not to be superintendent next time, I shall accept the office. But I'm making no fight of any kind to get it. If I fought for it, I'd be compromising myself to become an ass just as Bill has done. If Board members are elected to vote for me, very well and good*" (to Sylvia, August 13, 1940). It promised to be an up-hill non-fight as the two members of the Board of Education not standing for election that fall were already committed to Cheek. To be successful, the challenger would have to win all three of the remaining seats.

The campaign was less about educational policy than personalities and, ultimately, power. The advertisements of Cheek's candidates attacked both Cratis and David Morris. Cratis would later tell the story that his opposition in that election campaigned by declaring Cratis to be the favored grandson of David O. Williams, a man of considerable (ill-reputed) reputation in Lawrence County, and then challenging the voters: "Do you want David Williams's grandson to educate your children?" Evidently they did not. The effort to wrest control of the Board of Education from those pledged to Cheek fell short, and Cratis, who in his own terms "*led a rebellion against my superintendent in Lawrence County*" (Williams

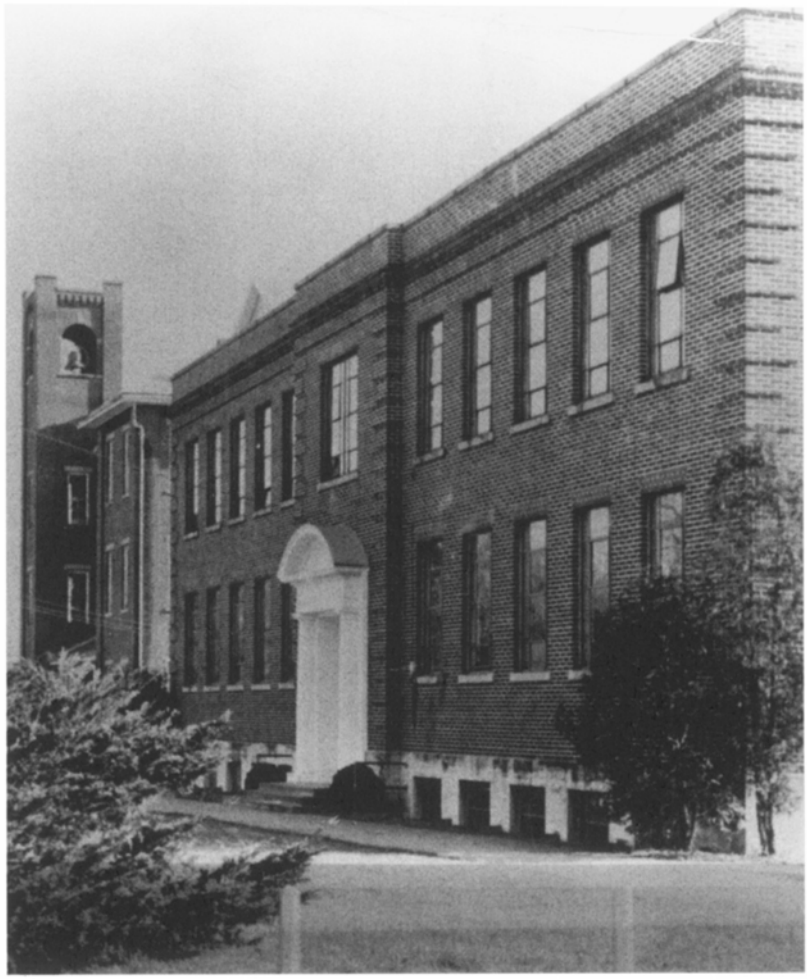

Figure 9. "The Louisa High School Building, distinguished by its bell tower, was the home for about twenty years of the Kentucky Normal College, which closed its doors in 1922 and sold its plant to the Louisa Public Schools. I attended high school in this building, 1924-1928. While I was a student there, the school had a maximum enrollment (9-12) of 225 and a teaching staff of 11. Ten years after graduation from the school I returned as principal. By then, this building was being used for junior high classes (grades 7-9). Senior high school students used a newer building, occupied first about 1933 and still standing, next door to this one. My office (1938-1941) was in the newer building." Cratis Williams, May 3, 1983.

Figure 10. Cratis Williams, center, principal of Louisa High School, surrounded by photos of his faculty in this arrangement from the 1940 annual of Louisa High School, **The Scarlack**.

1983, 35), now found it necessary to seek employment outside of Lawrence County. His career as a high school principal ended unceremoniously following the 1940-1941 academic year. Cheek's successful defense of his position as superintendent in the fall of 1940, following his first two year term, cemented his hold on the position. He remained as superintendent until his retirement in the 1970s (*Big Sandy News* Sept. 20, 1978, 3).

The Search for a Suitable Position

Unwelcome in the Lawrence County school system, Cratis began what was to become an arduous, year-and-a-half quest for a suitable position in public education. Initially dismayed upon discovering that his reputation as a malcontent did not end at the county line, he was "*shocked to learn that superintendents of other systems who were looking for principals viewed me as a troublemaker and one who might not be depended upon for loyalty*" (Williams 1983, 35). He came to feel that as "*one who had rebelled against his school administration and lost*," he could expect no quarter from school administrators in the area, perhaps in all of eastern Kentucky. He found it necessary to cast his net widely, and in the spring of 1941 he made applications for graduate fellowships, teaching positions in colleges and junior colleges, and principalships and superintendencies (see Cratis Williams to E.F. Farquhar, Jan. 2, 1941). As the spring term at Louisa High School neared its conclusion, he had received no offers of any sort; following the graduation of the class of 1941, Cratis joined Sylvia among the ranks of the unemployed.

Although still beleaguered by debt, worried about Sylvia's continued frail health, and increasingly frustrated by his inability to find employment, in June, Cratis took time out to participate in Jean Thomas's American Folk Song Festival, earning her praise. "The Traipsin' Woman" wrote to Cratis on June 15, 1941, "Your voice and your selections were genuine and most charming. I have not only received telegrams and letters about your fine appearance but many persons have come personally to me to express their appreciation of your part in making our Festival one of the greatest successes ever witnessed." She invited him to appear at the next festival, scheduled for June, 1942, as well as to attend a private reception at her "Wee House in the Wood" (Thomas to Williams, May 26, 1942), although it is not clear whether he accepted these invitations.

Desperately in need of income, Cratis did not return to the University of Kentucky that summer but instead traveled to Ohio in search of work of any sort. Sylvia remained at their rented home in Louisa, although she increasingly stayed with her parents in Cherokee. In mid-June, Cratis began work on the night-shift at a farm implement company, New Idea, Inc., in Coldwater, Ohio, a job he had gotten by telephone. Cratis continued to search for a teaching job, including registering with the Kentucky branch of the U.S. Employment Office's Teacher Placement Program; soon he discovered that he could obtain teaching certification in Ohio, and he began seeking positions teaching school there as well (Sylvia to Cratis, Aug. 19, 1941). But his efforts remained futile, and in August he joined the College Placement Bureau in Nashville and a public school placement agency in Columbus. He had no immediate inquiries, failed in applications made as far away as

Mississippi and as close to home as his "*desperate effort to get an instructor's position at the new junior college in Ashland,*" and continued to work at New Idea, Inc. As he later recalled, New Idea offered him a small wage increase that did little to dampen his feeling of being "*caught in a job that I detested and that could have been performed better by an ambitious high school graduate, like my immediate supervisor, but I had to continue in it.*" After his raise, he earned $47.15 every ten days, and on occasional weekends he was able to supplement that by working for as many hours as he was physically capable at a local canning factory for $0.35 an hour. With another raise possible if he stayed through Christmas, he wrote Sylvia, they might soon be able to "*really begin paying debts, if nothing serious happens to either of us. But I'd much rather be in a teaching job that I could afford to accept*" (Sept. 8, 1941).

These were dark days indeed for Cratis. He counted implicitly on Sylvia to help him through his anguish. His letter of August 26, 1941, is poignant, "*When I worry about the future, when there is naked terror in my soul, and blind fear in my eyes, it's you who can give full solacement to my soul, and quiet soothing to my fears.*" But worry there was. Sylvia's health was not improving (they had already decided that she was too weak to follow him to Ohio); he was not yet able to earn enough to make much debt-reduction; his efforts at finding a teaching position were proving futile; and now there were rumblings at the farm implements company, which, despite a spate of layoffs, had kept Cratis and another Lawrence County man, to the evident dismay of the majority of local employees. Cratis tried to approach the situation philosophically, telling Sylvia, "*It's the same old thing we contend with in teaching. It's like I've always said: People are the same wherever you find them. There is the same gossip, the same jealousy, the same lack of understanding everywhere you go. We shall never escape it. We can only learn how to abide it best. We must do that if we are to be successful*" (Sept. 8, 1941). Cratis tried to stave off his own despondency and depression, oddly seeking the rhetorical salve of Depression-laden Republican-ism: "*But 'prosperity is just around the corner.' That helped to keep a whole country sustained, even after there wasn't any corner, after it had become stretched-out into a concave, downward-trending plane of misery and want and pain and anguish, but the slogan still did them good. It gave them a hope that didn't exist and a faith that never was. Perhaps I can suck a few bitter drops of surcease from its withered udders too*" (Aug. 26, 1941). Nonetheless, his anxieties were building to a fevered pitch as he wrote to Sylvia on Aug. 27, 1941, "*Nothing about jobs. Nothing whatever. I'm so filled with waiting for the letter that will change my future! I can hardly sleep. I want it to come so bad.*"

The only teaching offer he received was from Paintsville, Kentucky, which was able to offer him only about $100 a month, or about a third less than he was making in Ohio. Still hoping to "*find a principalship or a college instructorship available somewhere,*" and fearful that he simply could not afford to accept the position, Cratis "*advised one of my supporters, an English teacher who left the Lawrence County school system when I did to apply for the position*" (Williams 1983, 37). Her name, ironically, was Miss Roberts. After she was hired, he must have taken some heart from a December 1, 1941 letter from R. G. Huey, Superintendent of Paintsville Public Schools: "It was with real regret that I was unable to

offer you the salary sufficient to interest you at the time we hired. We did appreciate greatly your recommendation of Miss Roberts.... With regard to your own work in Lawrence County, every school man in the valley recognizes the excellent piece of work you did in developing the Louisa High School and we have all known the political circumstances which were connected with your giving up the work. You will find that the school teachers in this section are in accord in feeling that the matter is to your credit." Nonetheless, as his rejection letters piled up and his hopes for a teaching position for the fall faded, Cratis began to fear that his career in education was finished: "*There is really small possibility of my getting a school job now. Next year my chances won't be as good as they have been this year. So I suppose I am through with teaching. It looks as if there is no possibility of my returning. I mean returning with credit to myself. I don't want to return any other way*" (to Sylvia, Sept. 13, 1941).

Later in the month, however, a glimmer of hope dawned when Cratis "*received a telephone call from Professor Chapell Wilson at Appalachian State Teachers College in Boone, North Carolina. He had received a set of my credentials from the College Placement Bureau and would like to meet me at Muncie, Indiana, near the end of the following week. I agreed to meet him.*" Chapell Wilson was to call the next Monday to make the final arrangements. Cratis went to the Coldwater Public Library in search of information on the College and the town, "*[h]aving never heard of Appalachian State Teachers College ... I found that Boone, population 1,200, is located in the remote mountain region of northwestern North Carolina and was then the southern terminus of the Eastern Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad, but I could find nothing about the college.*" Wilson never called. Even so, Cratis took time off from his job to attend the same professional meeting in Indiana which Wilson was scheduled to attend. They still did not meet. However, taking time off from New Idea, Inc. to attend the meeting may have contributed to Cratis's losing the job in Coldwater on December 5, 1941.

Earlier in the fall, Sylvia had released the house they were renting in Louisa, put their belongings into storage, and gone to Cherokee to live with her parents "*while we waited for better times*" (Williams 1983, 39). After losing his job in Ohio, Cratis joined her there for Christmas, one so dominated by their ominous sense of debt (Cratis "*owed nearly $2,000, much of it to restless, uneasy creditors*") and despair at the job situation that they did not even exchange Christmas gifts in 1941—a Christmas which would prove to be their last one together. Borrowing $20 from his mother-in-law, Cratis left shortly after New Years to plumb for work in the Ashland, Ironton, Huntington, Charleston area. February found him back in Cherokee, waiting anxiously for responses to the job applications which he had left "*everywhere I could in the four cities*" (Williams 1983, 40).

Finally, he received a letter from International Nickel Company in Huntington inviting him to interview for the position of "*assistant to the director of the Apprentice School there.*" Both Sylvia and he "*were so excited that we wept. We were both amazed that the invitation to come for an interview was in response to an application I had filed in early June of 1941.*" He was offered the position, beginning at $160 a month, the highest salary he had ever received. He began immediately as an instructor of shop mathematics. Sylvia joined

him on April 1, and they moved into a second floor apartment at 408 Fifth Avenue (Williams 1983, 40, 42).

Buoyed both financially and emotionally, but recognizing that Cratis's new position was at best a temporary salve, or perhaps a stepping stone, they decided that Cratis should explore the prospects of a doctoral program in English which might offer an assistantship sufficient for them to live on while he worked on the degree. He sent out applications and within a few weeks "*received a letter from Dr. Noyes at the University of Illinois. I had been accepted for doctoral work and was offered an $1,800 assistantship beginning in September. I accepted the offer of the assistantship immediately*" (Williams 1983, 46).

Their elation, however, was short-lived. After joining him in Huntington, Sylvia again developed a recurring and painful sore throat. In May she was examined and told she had "secondary tuberculosis" of the throat. Her physician, Dr. Proctor Sparks, who had grown up in Blaine, advised Cratis to relocate to a more therapeutically hospitable climate, suggesting that he *"apply for a position with the college at Boone, North Carolina, a quaint little town located in the high mountains where the air was pure. There was an outside chance that Sylvia might recover if she lived there or in a place like Arizona."* Failing that, he advised immediate application to the Pinecrest Sanitarium at Beckley, West Virginia. Having never heard again from Chapell Wilson, Cratis and Sylvia worked to secure her admission at Pinecrest. There were no immediate openings available; she was finally admitted on July 7, 1942, by which time she had worsened considerably. Even so, following her examination upon admission to Pinecrest, the doctors felt that "*with a good diet, rest, an optimistic outlook, and a new medication for reducing soreness in her throat she might recover, since the disease had not advanced very far, but she would be a patient for a long time, perhaps a year or two or longer*" (Williams 1983, 47-48).

Cratis informed Dr. Noyes at the University of Illinois that he would be unable to accept the offered assistantship. He also released their apartment in Huntington and located less expensive quarters in a rooming house. And he tried to focus his attention on performing his job at International Nickel.

"Sudden Salvation": Coming to Boone

"*About 9 o'clock Friday morning,*" late August of 1942, Cratis finally received the long-awaited telephone call from Professor Chapell Wilson in Boone, North Carolina, who offered him a one-year teaching position at the Appalachian Demonstration High School. With this telephone call Cratis begins the memoir to follow, and thus begins a saga which shaped both the rest of his life and the small college which grew into Appalachian State University.

Through their daily correspondence that fall, Sylvia was both sounding board and intimate advisor for Cratis, as she had been for the five years of their marriage. In part it was through that correspondence that Cratis was able to recapture, between 1978 and 1983, many of the intimate details of his daily activities during that critical, pivotal period

in his life. With a new, long-awaited job and a country going to war, Cratis's immediate concern was Sylvia's declining health. He wrote H. Mayo Williams (Sept. 12, 1942), "*Confidentially, Mayo, Sylvia is having a hard time of it. I'm very much worried about her... Blast it all, we just didn't get in position to do anything for her in time, I believe. Sometimes I'm afraid it's too late now. I'm really afraid I'll lose her... And something will go out of me when she's gone. You know I love that woman an awful lot. She is about the most courageous person in the face of adversity I've ever seen.*"

Sylvia's death on December 11, 1942 left Cratis devastated. Yet the new colleagues who surrounded him helped him through the remainder of the year and helped him to reestablish his life. As he reflected in a letter (July 19, 1973) to Hugh and Ruby (Donald) Daniel, fellow teachers at the high school, "*What good friends the three of you* [including Herbert Wey] *have been to me! And how fortunate I was to have such supportive intimates as you three in my first and hardest year in Boone when I was filled with bitterness, regret, grief, and self-doubt. (Hugh and I had dinner together at Dr. Whitener's the night Sylvia died.) Your support and durable friendship restored me and have helped me through the years.*"

The day after his arrival in Boone, Cratis found himself in the classroom, teaching drama ranging from Aristophanes to Shakespeare, while establishing his reputation as a scholar of regional verbal arts, and for many young people, firmly establishing the legitimacy of regional culture. As Mrs. Essie Hayes, a former student, recalls, "In those days at Appalachian High School we didn't hear terms like 'economically deprived,' yet we were vaguely aware that people outside the mountains had material things beyond our dreams. We never talked of being 'culturally deprived,' but we had acquired just enough sophistication to feel apologetic about our lack of prosperity, to be a little chagrined at the quaint dialect of some of our neighbors and kin, and to be downright embarrassed at their twangy, nasal rendition of mountain music. Then, Cratis Williams, in assembly one day and after being introduced by the high school principal, Herbert Wey, talked about his own mountain heritage with a pride that was contagious. Later, he delighted us by actually singing, unaccompanied, those songs we had thought backwoodsy. We knew that they were all right because by this time we knew that this inspiring scholar wouldn't be up there singing them in assembly if they weren't" (Hayes 1976, 9-10). On Cratis's part, he was adjusting well to Boone, writing to H. Mayo Williams (Sept. 12, 1942) regarding his class, Methods of Teaching English in High School, "*it has twenty-eight of the prettiest southern belles in it you mi' nigh ever saw–and one boy, a Yankee from New York City. They are all seniors and English majors. I am having a good time. I am not lonely like I was in Huntington. There is plenty to do.*"

In the summer of 1943 Cratis offered his first course focused on Appalachian subject matter, a course in traditional ballads and songs, using recordings from the Abrams collections. Herb Wey recalls that "Williams and his class regularly arranged songfests at the homes of native singers in Watauga County and recorded for the collection the singing that took place there" (Wey 1976, 1). Cratis also gave programs and lectures for students, faculty, and townspeople, while his reputation as a public speaker and entertainer well versed in the narrative and musical traditions of the Appalachians spread.

For four years, from 1942 until the fall of 1946, when he moved over to Appalachian State Teachers College, Cratis was a "critic teacher" at the Demonstration High School, as well as director of dramatics and eventually assistant principal. In 1946 Cratis planned to finally continue his doctoral study. Clearly inspired by the innovative, experimental leadership of his principal, Herb Wey, and by his own success both in the classroom and as director of the first school-wide counseling program established in North Carolina, he chose the program in counseling and guidance at Indiana University, and was awarded a teaching assistantship in English at the Indiana University High School. Having been feted the previous evening by his friends, he was packing his bags in anticipation of departing the next day when Chapell Wilson called upon him at the behest of President Dougherty. Mr. Wilson literally sat on his trunk in order to get Cratis's undivided attention for the persuasion that he needed to exercise. Mr. Wilson and President Dougherty were faced with a "*spate of faculty resignations on the eve of the beginning of the fall quarter*" (Williams n.d., 1), that left the College short-handed and in desperate need of experienced faculty. Among the faculty leaving the College was Dr. Amos Abrams, Cratis's friend and collaborator in the collection of mountain ballads and stories, who had resigned to become the editor of *North Carolina Education*. Cratis was persuaded to come into the English department to replace Dr. Abrams in teaching speech and as adviser to the cheerleaders. Within the English department, "*Only the new chairman, young Graydon P. Eggers, was there from the year before*" (Williams n.d., 3).

Cratis moved from Newland Hall, where he had lived as resident counselor for the 1945-1946 year, back into Faculty Apartments. He shared an apartment with Walter Hawkinson, new to the mathematics department, and embarked upon the next phase of his professional life. Recalling the demanding schedule of his work load as a full-time college teacher, Cratis lists the following courses: "*two sections throughout the year of freshman English, each meeting five hours a week for three hours of credit a quarter, the year-long survey of American literature, a three-quarter sequence of Southern poets, modern drama, and the short story, a three-quarter sequence of contemporary literature, the American novel, and play production, and speech as a sixth course one quarter.*" He had other responsibilities as well: "*I directed Playcrafters, which produced three full-length plays during the year, served as the faculty adviser for the cheerleaders and went with them to out-of-town games, and supervised the remedial English laboratory in the afternoon ten hours a week. I also had one section of freshmen for orientation that met once a week, and I was responsible for assisting these freshmen with their schedules at registration time.*" A few other tasks were added to a schedule that left little time for reflection, including "*administering the freshman English placement tests at the beginning of each quarter and helping to score the papers, assisting with registration each quarter, and being present to call off grades to be entered on student records after the close of each quarter. We attended faculty meetings at least one hour each Monday afternoon and chapel exercises in the auditorium each morning. Except for the lunch hour we were expected to be in our offices for student conferences, when not scheduled for class or other commitments, from 8 to 5 o'clock Monday through Friday and from 8 to 12 Saturday morning*" (n.d., 4-5).

Lest one think that Cratis took this burden lightly, he comments that "*I had never*

worked so hard in my life before that quarter." His teaching, service, and meeting demands were complicated by the additional personal responsibility for his own technical support: "*I bought my own stencils and mimeograph paper, duplicator carbons and paper, duplicator spirits, and mimeograph ink and pads. I typed my own tests and handouts, cut my own stencils, and operated the mimeograph machine and the duplicator myself, carrying with me the supplies I would need when I made trips to the office of the registrar, where the machines were kept. No funds for instructional supplies and equipment were available*" (n.d., 6).

Working from a "*shabby*" little office under the men's restroom in the basement of the Administration Building, Cratis sought relief from his insurmountable work load in a strategy which also served his students well. Recruiting advanced students to help him with the remedial laboratory, Playcrafters, and the cheerleaders, he found more time to spend with his students and with their work. He was rewarded with enthusiasm, skillful attention to their tasks, and loyalty by his advanced students for the responsibility bestowed upon them. His pedagogical innovations led to heightened relations with his students: "*I was relating to my students, especially the English majors and the Playcrafters, in both a personal and a master-apprentice relationship. The relationship was informal, playful, mutually respectful. I enjoyed them as competent students and interesting persons and felt that they enjoyed me as a qualified teacher and a person of integrity with a dash of teasing mischief in my personality*" (n.d., 8-9).

Following World War II, the large number of GI's entering college found support in the remedial laboratory which Cratis supervised. Equally important was Cratis's sensitivity to first generation college students and to older students. As H.G. Jones recalled, "From the moment I entered his public speaking class that fall of 1946, I felt at ease with 'Mr. Williams,' as we deferentially called him. He was older than I, but my fellow veterans and I were older than many of our classmates. The teacher seemed to be a little awed by our experiences in the war, and he encouraged us to discuss them. He never drenched us with his knowledge–indeed, his technique was to make us think that he was only a step or so ahead of us. Undoubtedly remembering his mortification when a citified high school teacher at Louisa, Kentucky, ridiculed his backwoods pronunciation, Williams was careful not to embarrass a student." As example of this sensitivity Jones recalls, "A native of Wilkes County clearly sought to camouflage his natural speech when he made his first appearance before the class. Williams listened intently, but his analysis contained not a word of criticism. Indeed, he picked out the remnants of Wilkesiana that had slipped through, and he praised them as genuine Appalachian speech that carried generations of meaning and beauty. The lesson was not lost on the student, who soon lapsed back into his natural speech" (Jones 1985, 2).

From 1946 to 1958 Cratis was a teacher of English, speech, and dramatics at Appalachian. During those years he directed the productions of Playcrafters, was the faculty adviser for the student newspaper, the first faculty director of the artists and lecture series, and a member of several faculty committees. "*After two or three years as a college teacher in a small institution in which the faculty members are assigned extra tasks done by personnel employed specifically for doing them in larger and more affluent colleges, I accepted what seemed a foregone conclusion to me. I would always be spending much time and energy doing jobs unre-*

lated to my teaching assignments" (n.d., 21).

Cratis contemplated his acceptance of the role of overworked educator: "*At no time during my 12 years of experience as a full-time college teacher did I ever reach the place that I would be the reflective professor meandering about, while puffing leisurely a meerschaum packed with rare imported tobaccos, among books and publications in a book-lined study or office...As late as 1957 I found, after logging my time for a few weeks, that I was working over 60 hours a week. By then, though, I had accepted what seemed inevitable to me: In successful college teaching there is no exit from long hours and hard work, which are tolerable only because the joy of teaching is great*" (n.d., 22).

Subject to the English department tradition of unloading the least desirable courses–American Literature–on the junior staff members, Cratis discovered a new "*worth,*" which his students shared, in a field that had also been disdained at the University of Kentucky during his M.A. study. Developing a reading plan for his doctoral research to catch up on "*great American fiction and criticism and some of the more important twentieth century poets and playwrights,*" he spent the summers of 1948 and 1949 in New York City "*and lived in a cheap hotel where I read in the New York Public Library. The reading kept firing me up*" (*Big Sandy News* July 3, 1979, 10). Beginning coursework in pursuit of the Ph.D. in English from New York University, he took a leave of absence during the 1949-1950 year to complete his coursework while supporting himself with a teaching assistantship at Washington Square College of New York University.

Returning to Boone, Cratis began to weigh various topics for his Ph.D. dissertation, writing to friends (Dec. 18, 1951), "*I have toyed with three possible subjects: the folklore of western North Carolina, the use of folklore in southern fiction since 1930, and the southern mountaineer in fiction.*" He concluded that "*At the moment the third appeals to me most,*" and he pursued that topic. Cratis optimistically informed his friends that having passed his oral exam he would use his spare time to improve his German to fulfill his foreign language requirement, after which "*I judge that I shall be getting my degree in August of 1955.*" Having failed his oral exam in English once, he considered it fortunate that "*there will be no more exams in English and American literature for me.*"

Writing a congratulatory letter upon H.G.Jones's appointment as State Archivist in 1956, Cratis confided: "'*I recall having a dancing stomach, hives, and paining muscles during the two years from the time I completed my graduate courses to the time I passed the oral examinations.*' Now, he said, '*I am devoting full-time work to writing the dissertation... . So far I have written about 150 pages this summer and am hoping to do about 100 more this month. I already had about 200 pages written. The dss will perhaps run to 700 pages*'" (Jones 1985, 9). Cratis finished his dissertation, *The Southern Mountaineer in Fact and Fiction*, in 1959 and it ran to 1600 pages. After two years, which his committee required for reading it, he received his Ph.D. in 1961. In 1962 he was awarded the Founders Day Certificate for Excellence from NYU for his dissertation. Cratis's dissertation is a comprehensive study of the cultural and literary history of Appalachian people and the enormous body of literature, both fiction and non-fiction, written about mountain people to 1959. It remains the most

Figure 11. Cratis Williams and friend, circa 1949.

H CAROLINA, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1948.

QUEEN OF HOMECOMING CROWNED

Miss Martha Laws, sophomore from Brentwood, Maryland, is shown being crowned "Miss Homecoming 1948" by Mr. Cratis D. Williams during halftime of the Elon-Appalachian football game. Miss Laws was chosen by the football squad for the honor of queen of homecoming. Mr. Williams, a member of the Department of English, served as Master of ceremonies. —Photo by Blair.

Figure 12.

important and comprehensive work on the subject, and "established Cratis as the foremost spokesman for the region on its cultural history and fiction." Dr. W.D.Weatherford, President of Berea College and a significant force behind publication of *The Southern Appalachian Region: A Survey* (Ford 1967) "encouraged Cratis to edit his dissertation for publication. For whatever reason, probably because he was busy with other tasks, he never complied" (Jones 1986, 292). However, *The Appalachian Journal* published an abridged version completed by Martha H. Pipes in four installments in 1975-1976 (Williams 1975, 1976a, 1976b, 1976c).

While in New York City in 1949, Cratis kindled a new relationship with Elizabeth Lingerfelt, whom he had met briefly in 1947 in Boone. Born on August 22, 1927, Libby was the daughter of the city manager in Elizabethton, Tennessee. The family's fortunes turned with the Depression, and they retreated to Libby's father's family home in the small community of Clearwater, near Athens, Tennessee. Like her father before her, Libby grew up on the family farm, leaving to attend East Tennessee State College from which she graduated in 1947. Her college roommate, Beverly Townsend (Southerland), transferred to Appalachian State Teachers College, where she became active in Playcrafters and, like many others, a devoted fan of Cratis Williams (Elizabeth Williams 1998).

After graduation from college, Libby responded to her sister's invitation to come to New York City. Fresh from small-town college life, Libby was eager to embrace and experience the wonders of New York, and moved in with her sister's family on Long Island. She soon began working as a receptionist for Brooke Cadwallader, an exclusive Fifth Avenue designer. At this time, according to Libby, "you could buy a bus ticket and pick your route" so she decided to route a trip home to Tennessee through Boone and visit her old roommate Beverly. Active in Playcrafters, Beverly "admired Cratis and wanted me to meet him. He was working on a set in the old Administration Building. She introduced us, and that was the end of that" (Elizabeth Williams 1998).

Libby returned to New York, moving into a furnished room on Long Island. During the summer of 1949 her friend Beverly came to New York and organized a gathering of friends which included Libby and Cratis. However, after Beverly returned home, Libby continued her life in New York, and Cratis returned to Boone, having completed his first summer's course work. The next summer, Cratis returned to New York and the social events of the previous summer were repeated, "Beverly came, Cratis said he'd tried to call me but hadn't connected, we partied, and then when they all left, we got married... the end of July, 1949" (Elizabeth Williams 1998). H.G. Jones, former student and fellow Ph.D. student at NYU, reported that Cratis and Libby were "the first couple to be married in Levittown, Long Island, and the developers of the brand-new model city treated them to a ceremony of almost royal proportions. The news media gave the affair wide coverage and my former English teacher and his bride were instant celebrities in Gotham" (1985, 4).

Cratis and Libby returned to Boone just after the school year began in 1950, and moved into a three room apartment in Faculty Apartments. Libby's careful attention to Cratis's continuing health needs are clear in his correspondence. The following year Cratis

wrote to friends (Dec. 18, 1951) that "*Libby and I are very happy that we now have an opportunity to relax. I have been a hard-working student and teacher ever since she has known me, and now she's going to see another side of me. She has been very helpful in conducting with me reviews over stacks of notes, piles of reviews, and loads of handbooks. Also, since she has gone in strongly for the new scientific diets and cooking, I have thrived beneath her care. I've been dutiful and faithful in taking my vegetable juice cocktails, vitamins, raw salads, fruits, liver, heart, brains and eggs, her own enriched home-baked breads, yogurt, etc. No doubt I am the most prophalactic* (sic) *man in Boone and certainly the most virile in our faculty.*"

Cratis's health needs had been of concern throughout the forties. His Registration Certificate with the Selective Service dated October, 1940 lists him as five feet, four-and-one-half inches tall, 146 pounds, with "brown" hair, and a "ruddy" complexion. Even as his first wife, Sylvia, lay dying of tuberculosis, Cratis fought to overcome a small spot which was discovered in his own lungs. One theme of the memoir which follows is his own struggle to maintain and improve his health against the specter of tuberculosis. Although classified 4-F by the Selective Service in May, 1943, Cratis never bore the full brunt of the disease and was able to regain his health.

Libby was soon busy as a homemaker and began to know the many friends that Cratis had cultivated as an eligible bachelor. Walter Hawkinson had married Martha Grey, who taught at the Demonstration High School from 1944 until 1951, and they too lived in Faculty Apartments. Over the years the Williamses and Hawkinsons spent Christmas eves together, and alternated in the birth of their children; Murray and John Hawkinson were born in 1952 and 1954, while Sophie Williams was born February 18, 1953 and David Cratis Williams was born April 25, 1955.

The summer of 1954 saw the Williams family settling into their new, yet unfinished home, where Cratis spent "*long hours each day on staining, steel-wooling, and finishing...*" while remaining was *"much to be done in decorating the grounds*" (Jones 1985, 4). That summer Cratis was an Angier Duke Research Scholar and spent six weeks in the Duke University Library studying the history, social customs, and literary treatment of the southern mountain people as part of his dissertation research.

Cratis shared his pleasure in his young children, writing to H.G.Jones in August, 1955 that "*Sophie is growing along beautifully. She is a sweet little girl and has the most impeccable taste when it comes to choosing boy-friends. Papa is her sweetheart, you know.*" Of baby David, "*(named for the infamous grandpa, not for Crockett)*" he writes in October "*The boy growls and gurgles most of his waking hours. He is especially fond of the man he regards as his papa. And the fondness is mutual. He is just now able to sit up safely. Soon he will be crawling. And the little monkey has already cut six teeth, an achievement that normally belongs to the year-old child*" (Jones 1985, 8-9).

Having enjoyed the "excitement and freedom to get on a subway and travel anywhere without fear" (Elizabeth Williams 1998) in New York City in the middle of the century, Libby experienced profound culture shock upon moving to tiny, provincial, teetotaling Boone and Appalachian State Teachers College. Libby later pursued teacher certification in

Figure 13. Elizabeth Lingerfelt, New York City, 1949, about the time she and Cratis began dating.

Figure 14. Cratis Williams married Elizabeth Lingerfelt

N.C. EDUCATION: SEPT., 1949

Dear Doc:

I was married Saturday, July 31, to Elizabeth Lingerfelt, Athens, Tennessee, in a home marriage in Levittown, Long Island, New York. The wedding was quite an affair. You will approve of Elizabeth. I met her first in Boone two years ago. I feel that I am the luckiest rascal alive.

I have been enjoying my class in modern poetry since the professor is a fine creative thinker. I am sitting in a class in Shakespearean tragedy. It is fun.

CRATIS D. WILLIAMS

How can you with a new wife talk about modern poetry and Shakespearean tragedy? You are indeed a lucky rascal.

Figure 15.

English and practice taught at the elementary school, then formally entered the labor force on December 1, 1971 at Belk Library on the Appalachian State University campus. She worked there until her retirement October 31, 1988.

Cratis saw progress in the changes unfolding since his arrival in 1942: "*Boone is a booming little city now. The population has doubled since I came here in the fall of 1942. The community seethes with civic enterprise and activity. Recently the Southern Appalachian Historical Association was chartered here. Over $30,000.00 has been contributed to the organization and Samuel Seldon and Kermit Hunter are planning an outdoor drama based on the Daniel Boone legend for the enjoyment of our summer visitors... Appalachian has three new buildings nearing completion. The college is growing too. We have 187 in our graduate school this year*" (letter to friends Dec. 18, 1951).

Following the launching of the outdoor drama, "Horn in the West," the Southern Appalachian Historical Association hosted a program of Saturday afternoon folk festivals on the grounds of the Daniel Boone Theater during the summer. Conducted for several years by Cratis and Richard Chase, "known nationally for his work with Appalachian folk tales and traditional dances," the festivals represented "authentic Appalachian traditions" through presentations by "mountain singers, musicians, dancers, and craftsmen" (Wey 1976, 2).

The year 1951 was a time of family transitions, as Cratis recounts in his Christmas letter (Dec. 18): "*My fabulous grandfather died last month. I was not able to get away for his burial. He was 85 and didn't die drunk after all. Fortunately he had joined the Free Will Baptist Church three years ago and the pious members of the family rejoiced that his chances in eternity look bright. He is now sealed in his tomb, a rough structure which he prepared for himself five years ago. (I have a picture of him sitting stewed as a boiled owl on the stone in front of the yawning tomb just after it was completed. He is enjoying the drama of his situation immensely.) For all of his rough ways he was one of the most admirable men I have ever known. His sober tongue-clucking cousins scattered up and down the valley preceded him in death from ten to twenty-five years, but he dared to live just about as he wanted to, enjoyed a long life of epicurean delight in which he drank enough whiskey to*

Figure 16. Walking the plank in front of his new house, 1954. Lee Reynolds contracted and built the new home according to Cratis's and Libby's design. The house was the first one on what for many years was called Reynolds Road.

swim a horse five miles, and now awaits the promise of his faith."

As an English faculty member in 1951 Cratis noted that his work was "*even more pleasant than usual this year,*" despite another heavy teaching load, comprised of "*six classes: the survey of American literature, contemporary literature, the development of the short story, play production, oral expression, and one graduate course called the American Romantic Period. My largest class has only thirty-two students in it and my smallest seven.*" Still struggling with the Ph.D., he contemplates the difficulty of finding the time to finish the degree while "*entering middle age.*" While questioning the wisdom of the quest, he concludes that there are certain financial advantages to the Ph.D.: "*since my salary has increased $700 a year since I started it in the summer of 1948, I've decided that it perhaps does pay for itself after all. And there is the added pleasure of knowing a great deal more than the anthology selections of the great writers*" (Dec. 18, 1951). Cratis was promoted to Professor in 1952.

In December of 1956, Cratis wrote a prophetic note to H.G. Jones that "*North Carolina almost lost one of its great English teachers last week. I had an offer of a chairmanship in Michigan at a salary of $8,000 but after a Gethsemane succeeded in letting the cup pass*" (Jones 1985, 9-10).

Cratis was developing new curricular materials on Appalachia and encouraging others to collaborate on Appalachian courses. In 1956 he worked with Beulah Campbell, whose specialty was children's literature, in offering a six semester hour workshop on the Living Folk Arts of the Southern Mountain People. In what may have been the first such interdisciplinary curriculum in Appalachian Studies, the program offered students the opportunity to participate in the Saturday folk festivals and home visits through which students documented local "speech, songs, tales, folk remedies, and lore, and... traditional crafts. Accomplished craftsmen, musicians, singers, dancers, and tellers of tales came to the campus to demonstrate their skills to students registered in the workshop. Students studied the literature of Appalachia, history and sociological writing about the region, dances and games, and ballads and songs still living in the oral tradition and developed curricular materials for use in their own classrooms the following year." In addition to the summer program, Cratis continued to offer his course on Ballads and Songs, and "to record hundreds of folk songs from singers in Appalachia, the great bulk of which recordings was lost in the fire that destroyed Appalachian's Administration Building in December 1966" (Wey 1976, 2).

Graduate School Dean

Chapell Wilson was in charge of graduate courses until his death in 1957, and was succeeded by Herbert Wey who held the position until returning to the University of Miami in 1958. Appalachian was then organized as a single unit without separate colleges and offered a single graduate degree, for teachers. President William Plemmons recalls that he looked into the faculty and picked the one person whose breadth of experience, energy, and creativity he considered assets for the leadership position, and named Cratis Williams Dean of the Graduate School in 1958, a position which he held for sixteen and a half years, until 1975. Taking the lead in the innovation of a small program, Cratis's "midnight

thoughts brought forth suggestions for expansion of offerings in the graduate program and new as well as different graduate degrees. Established offerings were strengthened, selection of faculty was made with the graduate program in mind. His proposal that those who taught graduate programs be organized into a graduate faculty was approved and it was that act that actually established the graduate school as such" (Plemmons 1976, 32).

Three years after Cratis assumed the deanship, the graduate school became a member of the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States and with the establishment of the university in 1967, it could boast "one organized internal school, the Graduate School." After ten years of Cratis's leadership, "Appalachian was offering more master's degrees in education and was delivering more graduate degrees in education than any other institution in North Carolina except the university in Chapel Hill." Plemmons recounted that "time proved that a wise and good selection had been made." As the College enrollment increased, the graduate enrollment increased faster; by 1974 ASU had awarded over 6,000 master's degrees. By 1974, the graduate faculty of 273 was "more than two and one-half times as many as the entire faculty totaled in 1958," while the graduate enrollment of 2,000 per year accounted for 25 percent of the total institutional enrollment. President Plemmons attributed the growth of the graduate school to Cratis Williams's leadership (Plemmons 1976, 33).

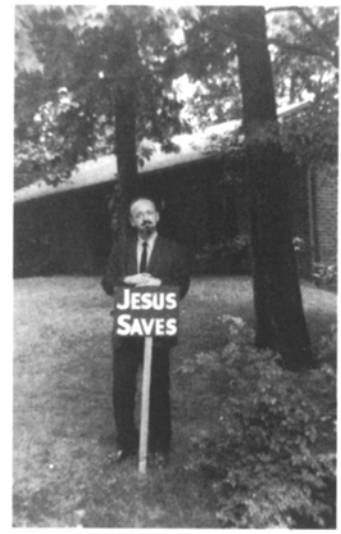

Figure 17. As dean of the graduate school, Cratis facilitated study for many international and minority students. In 1963, shortly after housing temporarily a dark skinned international student in his home while trying to secure more permanent housing for him in Boone, Cratis discovered this sign, placed in the yard during the night by parties unknown. "Preacher Cratis" couldn't resist the opportunity to seize the moment...

Figure 18. Cratis poses in his dean of the graduate school office in the new administration building, spring 1968.

Cratis Williams's administrative leadership was felt far beyond Boone, foremost through the teachers who earned graduate degrees. In addition, with the development of the region's community colleges, he anticipated "a shortage in qualified teachers in higher education and authored the first proposal for preparing teachers for these new institutions. He was a nationally recognized authority on graduate programs in education" (Jones 1986, 295). Cratis was later chosen to chair a new committee on graduate programs and degrees of the Association of State Colleges and Universities. In addition to his responsibilities at Appalachian State

University, he served on the Planning and Policies Committee of the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States, was for ten years "a member of a three person consulting team which evaluated graduate study for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities," (Jones 1986, 295) and was a member of the Executive Committee of the Council of Southern Graduate Schools. He was a member of the committee that developed the nationally accepted guidelines for the Education Specialist (6th-year) degree and for the Doctor of Arts degree. He was also a member of the Academic Policies Committee for the North Carolina Board of Higher Education (replaced in 1971 by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina which includes the sixteen state institutions), as well as a member of the Teacher Certification Committee of the North Carolina Board of Public Instruction.

After his retirement the Board of Trustees named the Graduate School for Cratis Williams. His restrained exuberance in response to this honor is captured in a letter (March 4, 1980) to Ruby Daniel: "*I hear tell that I am being 'framed' and will be 'hung' some time between 1:30 and 3:00 p.m. in the Graduate School office here March 20 and that among those engaged in the plot are the members of our Board of Trustees. I shall be especially pleased to see you and Hugh among those present. In a way, your presence will symbolize continuity at Appalachian for me. I began here with you, and it will be a kind of 'Our Town' experience for me to have you present at what is likely to be the last public notice of my having been here.*" In response to a playful letter from H.G. Jones he confesses, "*Your comments about the frightening aspects of having the Graduate School here bear my name lead me to wonder whether it might have been more comfortable for me had the Board named the Duck Pond for me.... They could have called it the Cratis D. Williams Drake Pond. There is also an old horse barn on the university farm that has never been named*" (Jones 1985, 12-13).

The Complete Mountaineer

Fires on the campus had a major impact on the College and on the professional career of Cratis Williams. In late fall of 1946, campus buildings neglected during the war were overcrowded by increased enrollment following the war. Cratis recalls, "*To add to our woes, Watauga Academy Building, which then housed the Department of Music, and the old science building, then occupied by the Department of Art, burned down one cold night... I walked out of Faculty Apartments in pajamas and robe to watch firemen from the town of Boone fight the flames... Dr. Dougherty stood and wept as he watched the buildings burn*" (n.d. 18). In December of 1966, the nighttime scene of destruction was repeated, but with more ominous consequences for Cratis. The old Administration Building burned, and with it, all of his field notes, collections, and records. David Williams recalls, "we watched pages catch fire and drift out the window, one by one; nothing was saved." Perhaps this provided a tragic turning point in his professional career as he now relied on his excellent memory and keen sense of analysis. Cratis knew and remembered things no one else would or could recall with such delight and such detail, and he shared his knowledge willingly.

Cratis's abiding interest in mountain speech led to publication of a series of articles

between 1961 and 1967 in *Mountain Life and Work* (1961b, 1961c, 1961d, 1961e, 1962a, 1962b, 1962c, 1963a, 1963b, 1964, 1967). His attention to rhythm and melody, the use of the "r," vowels and diphthongs, verbs, vocabulary and folk expression, manners, metaphors, prepositions and subtlety were elaborated with lively examples from everyday speech. His approach to linguistics was based in his lived experience, native ear, and keen memory. His skill in describing, for example, the angry mother's eloquent "*clustering of prepositions*," forged an indelible lesson on mountain rhetoric and on those who recall his telling: "*You git up out from down in under that thar table, er I'll whup ever' bit a hide offen... yer back*" (1964, 54). Cratis was generous with his knowledge, "a sharer, a presenter of gems from his collection" (Jones 1986, 294).

Cratis's devotion to the nuances and rich subtlety of mountain speech was matched by his meticulous knowledge of ballads and his artful capacity for telling tales learned in childhood. He joined the ranks of those who became "hooked on ballads and who treasured them as literature and as a key to the aesthetic of a people who have been accused of being without a literature." While Cratis didn't play the handmade banjo which adorned the wall of his study, he was often photographed with this treasured family heirloom, "leading Ray Lawless to list him as a banjo picker in his *Folksingers and Folksongs in America*" (Jones 1986, 294).

Dr. W.D. Weatherford read Cratis's doctoral dissertation and soon cultivated a relationship with him, both through private weekends at the Weatherford's Black Mountain, North Carolina retreat and in public forums. Herb Wey recalls that President Plemmons, Cratis Williams, and Dr. Weatherford were participants "in the planning meeting at the Nu-Wray Inn in Burnsville which resulted in the formation of the Appalachian Regional Commission" (Wey 1976, 2).

In 1968 Cratis played a role in the decision to create the Appalachian Collection of Belk Library, named the W.L. Eury Appalachian Collection in 1971, which was composed initially of materials the library had purchased to support his dissertation research. The 1970s saw many of Cratis's interests bear fruit in the formation of new curricula, outreach, and collaboration. In 1970-1971 the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) funded a $130,000 grant "to support a project for the preparation of teachers and supervisors for supervision of experimentation in individualized instruction in the schools of rural Appalachia and the ghetto...." While still serving as graduate school Dean, Cratis was project director and taught in the program, focused in part on the Appalachian child (Wey 1976, 3). Growing interest in the region brought attention to the limited library holdings, and representatives of Appalachian colleges and universities developed the idea of a consortium that would share resources and mount programs related closely to their respective strengths. "Williams was one of the first to conceive the idea of an Appalachian Consortium and among the first to help bring it to reality" ("ASU Dean..." 1973). Drs. Plemmons and Williams worked with representatives of East Tennessee State University, Mars Hill College, Lees-McRae College, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the National Forest Service in creating the Appalachian Consortium, and one of its first activities was "a workshop for faculty members from constituent institutions interested in developing Appalachia-

related learning experiences for their students" (Wey 1976, 4). Cratis was consultant for this workshop at Mars Hill College, which resulted in the integration of regional themes into existing courses and the creation of new courses. In 1972 *The Appalachian Journal* was launched on the ASU campus, with Jerry Williamson as editor and Cratis Williams as advising editor, and the Appalachian Consortium Press was also established that year with Cratis Williams as a member of the editorial board (Wey 1976).

In 1972 Cratis was the recipient of the annual award of the Western North Carolina Historical Association in recognition of his contributions to scholarship on the history and folk traditions of Appalachia. In 1973 he was awarded the prestigious O. Max Gardner Award given annually by the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina for "distinguished contributions to the welfare of the human race." The UNC Board of Governors recognized Cratis as a "master teacher, imaginative and confidence-inspiring administrator, creative and stimulating writer and conversationalist, singer of ballads, reteller of folktales, provocative speaker and lecturer... [who, by] precept and example [has] cajoled and dared" his fellow mountaineers to increased pride in their homeland (Daniel 1986). This award was probably the most cherished of his many accolades in affirming the value of his overall work in attempting "to impress upon mountain people the value of self esteem and pride in what lies behind them and the value of feeling that they are rooted to something that is permanent" ("ASU Dean..." 1973). Writing to Hugh and Ruby Daniel, he commented "*The award has come to me at a good time in my life, and I believe it also has special significance for Appalachian, the Consortium, and Appalachia itself...I am pleased and happy, although I am not a naturally enthusiastic person (perhaps a part of my 'heritage'), and I find it difficult to simulate enthusiasm and rarely attempt to do so*" (July 19, 1973).

In 1975 Cratis received the Outstanding Alumnus Award of Cumberland College. He was also recipient of the Brown-Hudson Award of the North Carolina Folklore Society which recognized him as "Master Folklorist of Appalachia," who has "poured out his own noble spirit, in teaching and writing and lecturing and singing the songs and ballads of his close neighbors in the hills and mountains. His great respect and love for the highlanders come through with splendor" (Clark 1975). He was the *Raleigh News and Observer*'s Tar Heel of the Week in June, 1976, and commented to H.G. Jones, "'*Having been immortalized' in the columns of the eternal* News and Observer, *I might never aspire to die and go to Chapel Hill, but perhaps Boone is at least the sixth heaven and I can content myself with an immortality here*" (Jones 1985, 10-11). He received the Appalachian Consortium's Laurel Leaves Award for Distinguished Service in July, 1976. In May, 1980, he received Berea College's special W.D. Weatherford Award for published work that furthers understanding of Appalachian people in a significant way.

Cratis was Acting Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at Appalachian State University in 1974 and Acting Chancellor in 1975. On the eve of his retirement Appalachian State University held in his honor a three-day symposium, during which scholars from across the nation gathered to share knowledge on Appalachia. Selected papers were published in *An Appalachian Symposium: Essays Written in Honor of Cratis D. Williams* (Williamson 1977). Inspired by the great potential for interdisciplinary exchange among

Figure 19. Cratis Williams and Loyal Jones, 1984.

Figure 20. After Cratis received the O. Max Gardner Award from the Board of Governors of UNC in 1973, he and Herb Wey clowned for the camera in Greenville, N.C.

scholars, activists, and practitioners in the region revealed in the Boone gathering, leaders in the field met in Berea the next year to create from the energy of the Cratis Williams Symposium an annual gathering, now, in its twenty-third year, known as the Appalachian Studies Association. In 1992 the highest award of the Association, given annually to the outstanding regional scholar, was designated the Cratis Williams Award.

Cratis retired on July 1, 1976, after 46 years as teacher and administrator, but continued at Appalachian on a part-time basis as Special Assistant to the Chancellor. Cratis's public speaking engagements and writing likewise kept him fully engaged, burning the midnight oil just as he had always done. Writing to Ruby Daniel (March 4, 1980), he advises "*You would enjoy the Elderhostel program. I taught one of those groups here for a week last summer. It was a marvelous experience and the only class I ever had that stood and gave me a resounding round of applause at the end of the course. They were bright, eager, studious, searching, challenging. Since I did not have to assign papers, read examinations, award grades, I concluded it was the most nearly ideal teaching experience I had ever had.*" Other bits of news attest to his busy schedule: "*I have been quite busy this winter with out-of-town things. In January I went to Washington, where I was one of the three 'plenary session' speakers at an ARC conference for personnel of local district development groups.... Later in January I spent a week at Alice Lloyd College in Kentucky, where I delivered fifteen lectures, many of them in high schools in Knott, Letcher, and Floyd counties there in Central Appalachia.*"

"*Last week I passed by Waynesville in a hurry to get to Cohutta Lodge on the top of Fort Mountain in Murry County, Georgia, where I gave a banquet speech and was entertained royally (cocktails before dinner and nightcaps afterwards). Then I hurried back to Boone and on to Salem, Virginia, where I gave two lectures at the symposium on 'Beyond the Blue Ridge' held by the Roanoke Valley Historical Society and Roanoke College. (I became snowbound and had to stay an extra day.) Friday I shall give a lecture at the annual meeting of the East Tennessee Historical Association in Knoxville.... I stay tolerably busy for a retired man, but I am enjoying myself and still finding time to write a great deal too.*"

Cratis took pleasure in the scholarly mission which he was able to pursue full time in his retirement, both in the text and in the circumstances of the telling, as the following commentary to Hugh Daniel reveals: "*Interesting things came together for my presentation. The banquet was in the Integon Room* [of ASU's Broyhill Inn]. *I was positioned with my back to the window. Just as I was announcing my topic lightning began to flash, thunder crashed and rumbled, and rain streamed down the glass. All of these marvelous effects continued while I presented my paper. When I sat down, the storm ceased. I am not a good enough Presbyterian to feel confident with my interpretation of these phenomena*" (April 17, 1984).

In 1982, diagnosed with lymphoma, Cratis set about to inform friends of his condition on a regular basis (Aug. 2, 1982). Writing to Ruby, he is optimistic, yet notes, "*But even if things have gone too far and there is to be no recovery, I think I shall not feel that I have been cheated. I have lived a rich, full life and enjoyed more than most are privileged to enjoy, and I do not have many regrets*" (Aug. 4-6, 1982). In remission by January 1983 (letters to friends, Jan. 17; July 28, 1983), he continued to write his memoirs, to engage in as many

public appearances as his health would permit, and to enjoy his family.

Writing to Ruby Daniel he continued to take pleasure in the mission which drove his professional life, the education of young people to the strengths of their culture: "*Thank you, Ruby, for coming out to hear me do my presentation at the high school. Upon reflection, I concluded that I had never enjoyed a more attentive, interested, and responsive high school audience. I hope the young people found in what I had to say reason to be proud of who they are and an increased understanding of the rich history of mountain folk. The young people were beautiful, like my Kentucky cousins. I enjoyed them.*" He also chose a moment to reflect on the shared past with his old friends and fellow high school teachers: "*Ruby, I had not known that you are now the vice chairman of our Board of Trustees. Isn't it fantastic that Dr. Wey, Hugh, you, and I should have found our separate ways to Boone at a time when our own lives should have become intertwined and tied to the history and development of the quaint little college hidden in the mountains that brought us together. It was not only significant but as it should have been that Hugh and you both served on our Board of Trustees*" (Dec. 7, 1983).

In 1984, Cratis mourned the death of his mother, Mona Williams, who "*died quietly last month. She would have been 93 on St. Patrick's Day. We buried her beside my father in the Williams Graveyard near Blaine, Kentucky. She took much of Appalachia with her*" (letter, March 19, 1984).

In his final years Cratis received five honorary degrees: Doctor of Pedagogy from Cumberland College in Kentucky, Doctor of Humane Letters from Morehead State University in Kentucky, Doctor of Humanities from the College of Idaho, Doctor of Literature from Marshall University in West Virginia, of which he wrote Al Perrin, "*Saturday I attended the graduation exercises at Marshall University and received a* literarum doctoris *degree. At that very time Morehead State University was conferring upon me in absentia a doctor of humane letters degree, which will be presented to me at a special ceremony during the Appalachian Celebration Week there in June. I am becoming a much doctored Appalachian, the kind who might be qualified to represent us to His Holiness Pope John Paul, should we ever think he would be more interested in a reality than in an illusion*" (May 14, 1984). Cratis's last honorary degree, from Appalachian State University, was to be awarded on May 12, 1985. Cratis died on Saturday, May 11, 1985.

Cratis always had the impression that if Mr. Wey–or perhaps even Dean Rankin or Dr. Dougherty–had interviewed him personally before he was offered the position at Appalachian Demonstration High School, with its openings into Appalachian State, he would never have been offered the job. He may well have been right, as he frequently was. And how that would have changed history.

Cratis endowed three separate scholarship funds at Appalachian which bear his name, which he supported through earnings from his numerous speeches, lectures, and workshops. A fourth scholarship fund, in Appalachian Studies, was created to honor him after his death. His commitment to the education of young people in the finest humanistic tradition and with pride in locale was constant through his years in education. In a speech in 1984 at the College of Idaho, where he received an honorary Doctor of Humanities, he

captured the essence of much of what he worked for and believed:

"The regional liberal arts college, which I perceive as one which draws most of its students from a defined geographical region and returns them to that region for lives of service to the common good, has a responsibility for making available to its students learning experiences in understanding the ethnic composition of the people who live in the region, their social and cultural traditions, and their history, both as to their origins and the adaptations they have made, and are making to the requirements of life within the region.

A liberal education must supply us with that vision that comes from learning about ourselves and our kith and kin as participants in a regional or ethnic society, for being born into and living in that region or ethnic group influences the course of our lives, whether we reject it or embrace it. Those who do not value what they have do not keep it for long. Those who reject their own culture, and in so doing, much of themselves, run the serious risk of losing their own identities, of becoming 'lone and lost souls,' to paraphrase our great Appalachian writer, Thomas Wolfe, of becoming wailing isolates who have stepped aside and lost their place. Central to what it means for each of us to be a good citizen in a free society, to be a self-accepting Appalachian, Creole, or Indian, without being less of an American at the same time, is our ability to reflect critically upon the meaning of our culture and history....

I began my professional career as a one-room school teacher in Appalachia and completed it as an English professor and administrator in an Appalachian university. I found it possible to remain an Appalachian person as I attempted to measure out to myself and increasing numbers of other Appalachians and scholars doing research and writing about Appalachia the humanistic dimensions of what must be one of America's most significant subcultures. I am convinced that my rich fulfillment and my enormous pride in who I found myself to be and in the culture from whence I came and which shaped me is owing to my decision early in life to keep my Appalachian self in spite of the efforts of my early teachers to destroy it. By remaining Appalachian, I was best able to integrate my experiences as I grew in understanding and developed those values that informed my actions as a teacher and administrator working for the common good in what purports to be a just society."

As has been often written, Cratis Williams was the complete mountaineer.

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Chapter One

A Call From Boone

About nine o'clock Friday morning before school was to open at the Appalachian Demonstration High School in 1942 my landlady called me to respond to a long distance telephone call from Boone, North Carolina. For me, that call was in the middle of the night, for my working hours at International Nickel Company in Huntington, West Virginia, were from 8:30 p.m. to 3:30 a.m., and I spent a half hour commuting by taxicab from the plant to the rooming house. Rubbing the sleep from my eyes, I threw on a bathrobe and slipped into house shoes and hurried to the telephone.

Professor Chapell Wilson[8] was calling. Mrs. Rivers, a critic teacher at Appalachian High School, had resigned that week, and he, in his role as Director of the Demonstration Schools, was trying at that late date to find a replacement for her. He had found in his file my credentials folder sent to him by a teacher placement service in Tennessee. He believed I was essentially qualified for the job, but that one of my duties would be directing high school dramatic activities. I would also teach a college class in methods of teaching English in high school and supervise practice teachers in English. My own teaching load at the high school would include two sections of eighth grade English, a class in speech, and a combined class of first and second year high school dramatics. Watauga County would pay me $150 a month and Appalachian State Teachers College would supplement that by providing me with a furnished apartment with utilities free valued at $40 a month. The appointment would be for one year but might be continued if I were not

[8]Chapell Wilson (1891-1957), professor of education and psychology at Appalachian State Teachers College, developed the two demonstration schools, Appalachian High School and Appalachian Elementary School. He later served as dean of the graduate school from 1948 to 1957.

drafted into military service. It was customary to interview applicants for positions, but because my credentials looked good and a teacher was needed immediately the interview would be waived if I were interested in the position.

The salary was exactly what I was receiving at International Nickel and more than I had received per month my last year as the principal of the high school at Louisa. I would be both a college instructor and a high school teacher. I would be living on a college campus and in the very town Dr. Sparks had recommended as a good place to take Sylvia.[9] I would be going to the mountains of North Carolina, made so appealing by Thomas Wolfe, especially in *Look Homeward Angel*, which I had read with deep yearning for glorious mountains fading away, range after range, into the blue horizon.

Sylvia was in Pinecrest Sanitarium at Beckley, West Virginia. There was no long distance telephone service available to her parents or mine in Kentucky. The decision I made would have to be wholly my own without benefit of counseling, or considering the offer with others. I agreed to accept the position but pointed out the difficulties I might encounter in trying to arrange to be in Boone the following Monday. Mr. Wilson obligingly agreed to let me skip the teachers meetings on Monday if I thought I could be ready to go to work Tuesday when the students were to begin classes. I told him I would arrive in Boone Monday evening.

Fortunately, I had stored our furniture at Louisa and returned to Sylvia's parents those things we had brought with us to Huntington for use in the apartment in which we had lived before Sylvia went to Pinecrest in July. I had only my personal belongings to be concerned with, but I would need at least one additional traveling bag.

I did not go back to bed following the telephone conversation. I dressed hurriedly and called the personnel office at International Nickel to discuss the termination of my work there. There were regrets expressed, but both my supervisors, Mr. Scott and Mr. Kaiser, were willing to release me. I could pick up my check the following morning.

Charged with excitement and anxiety, and working against time, I went to the bus station to work out a travel schedule. I could leave Huntington in the early morning and be in Boone late in the afternoon the same day. I then went to the railroad station to work out a travel schedule. I could go by train to Roanoke, then to Johnson City, Tennessee, then to Boone by the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad, a narrow gauge. Upon checking the schedules, though, the agent discovered that ET&WNC railroad passenger service to Boone had been discontinued, but I might like to consider riding a bus from Johnson City or Abington, Virginia, to Boone. Two days would be required for the trip. I then hurried to the bank and cashed my two shares of International Nickel common stock and went by the loan office and paid four weekly payments in advance, for one of the stipulations of the loan agreement had been that I would not be leaving Huntington during the life of the loan. I feared that if the sharks there learned that I was planning to leave town

[9]Sylvia Graham Williams married Cratis Williams on August 2, 1937. Diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1941, she entered Pinecrest Sanitarium in Beckley, West Virginia in July 1942. Dr. Proctor Sparks, Blaine native, was Sylvia's physician in Huntington.

they would garnishee my check at International Nickel and I would not have the money needed to get to Boone and to buy food for my first month there. After making the payment to the loan office I went down to Huntington Dry Goods Company and bought a heavy canvas bag into which I could stuff clothing.

Back at Mosely's I began to sort out and arrange and discovered that I had some books from the Huntington Public Library which I needed to return, some laundry I needed to pick up at the home of the pleasant black woman who lived in an alley five or six blocks away, and some dry cleaning at the shop on the way.

When I returned to work at International Nickel Friday night, I said nothing to my classes about my plan to leave. Yet I was filled with a special kind of excitement and in the 12:01 to 3:00 a.m. class encouraged more buffoonery than usual from one of those naturally comic characters who always keeps a class lively but who serves best under restraint, Jack Legg, whose very name invited comment. At the change of classes at midnight, one of the new arrivals offered me a White Owl cigar, which I accepted and lit up. After the class was under way, the telephone rang. It was unusual for the telephone to ring at any time after midnight. I stopped in the middle of a sentence, laid my cigar in the ashtray, and rushed to my desk to answer it.

The man calling was the operator of the plant cafeteria. He wanted to know whether my students were permitted to smoke in the classroom. I told him we all smoked, I believed. Were any of the students smoking cigars? Yes, perhaps a third of the class was smoking cigars at that time. Well, his box of White Owls, which he kept by the cash register, had been raided. Would I be willing to determine whether any of the students were smoking White Owls? I told him I would ask. With the mouthpiece of the telephone below my chin, I asked whether anybody were smoking a White Owl. Only Jack Legg admitted that he was. I responded only one, Jack Legg, admitted that he was. Well, he remembered that the only cigars he had sold during the break had been to Jack Legg, but he wanted me to announce that he would be reporting the raid to Mr. Kaiser on Monday. I gladly agreed to make the announcement. A moment of intense quiet ensued, and I proceeded with my presentation. On the bus to Boone Monday I wondered whether the student who had given me the White Owl felt as relieved on Monday when he learned that I was no longer working there as I did to know that my job future was not likely to be threatened by a possible charge that I had received stolen goods.

Saturday morning I returned to the plant, tidied my desk, said good-bye to John Kaiser, went by Mr. Scott's office to tell him that he might continue to send questions about grammar and syntax to me at Boone if he cared to do so, picked up my check, and caught a bus back to Huntington, regretting that the bus driver could not give me cash in exchange for fifteen cents worth of bus tokens that I would no longer need.

Back in the city I went by the bank, cashed my check, and closed out my account. I then went to the bus station and bought a ticket to Boone. That afternoon I wrote brief letters to friends and relatives reporting my decision to return to teaching and carried them to the post office. Captain Mosely, back from his horseback riding, was impressed by the

report that I was to become a college teacher. He invited me to his cocktail hour, attended also by Miss Westall, and was more expansive than he had ever been, and Miss Westall, who had normally passed me in the hall and on the stairs without so much as recognizing that I existed, exhibited a charm that I had not realized she possessed.

Sunday morning I got up before daylight, finished packing my bags, ordered a taxi-cab, and was at the bus station in time to have breakfast there before the bus departed for Charleston. I was surprised to see so many people up and around before daylight. About 7:30 we were on a crowded bus, with people standing in the aisles, for Charleston.

It was a foggy morning. (We did not know the word smog then.) All the way to Charleston only buildings and trees close by the roadside were visible. Streets we crossed in little towns and in Charleston disappeared into the fog only a few yards from the crossing. There was a long wait in Charleston before the departure of the bus to Beckley. While waiting I had my shoes shined by a black man who sang or whistled as he popped his shining cloth in rhythm with his tune. He volunteered that he had been to a party the night before and that the drinks he had there had not worn off yet. He exuded good will, and when I commented upon his cheerful disposition he observed that white folks don't seem to be able to have a good time because they take life too seriously. Almost as if he knew that I was going to a new job, he said, "You'll be a much happier man and get a lot more fun out of life when you are just simply yourself and don't take things too seriously."

As the bus to Beckley was climbing the mountain out of Gauley Bridge, we came into bright sunshine. From the road we could see plainly the New River Gorge, and mountains were bright and seemed close at hand. The cough I had developed while living in Huntington and the heavy odor of chemicals in the morning air led me to feel that the clean air I would be breathing at Appalachian on the Blue Ridge would be good for me.

In Beckley I deposited in a bus station locker all of my baggage except one suitcase and hurried with it down to Mrs. Mann's rooming house, where I had stayed before. Mrs. Mann had one room left, a small room over a porch, with a sloping ceiling and next door to a bathroom. I accepted the room for one night and hurried down to have Sunday dinner at the second seating of her guests, among whom were older residents of the town who had come directly from church services.

After lunch I walked up to the corner to take a bus out to Pinecrest. The first bus had already gone and the next one would not leave for nearly two hours. I started on foot, for I thought I could probably walk the three or four miles out to the sanitarium in thirty or forty minutes. An older couple, also on their way to Pinecrest, picked me up at the city limits.

Sylvia, bright-eyed and feeling that her condition was improving, was pleased that I had accepted the position in Boone. She hoped she might be sufficiently improved to join me later in the year. X-rays continued to show no activity in her lungs, the frost-like crystals that she fed into her throat through a glass tube brought relief from pain, and the throat pain that developed prior to the menstrual period and receded afterwards had not

become extended. Her voice was clean and clear, but the doctors advised that she continue to speak in whispers in order not to irritate her larynx. She remained strictly a bed patient, but many ambulatory patients came to see her during visiting hours, including the sister-in-law of a person we had known in Lawrence County, Kentucky.

She had taken a lively interest in a love affair that had developed between one of the doctors, himself formerly a patient there, and an ambulatory patient who hoped to be released in a few weeks. Both the doctor and the pretty young woman discussed their affair with Sylvia, who wrote about it in poems, many of them clever pieces of doggerel. While I was there the doctor came by. His warmth, congeniality, informality, and spirit of trusting friendship suggested that he considered Sylvia to be a special person, and she responded with smiles and clever remarks, teasing and pleasant. Soon after he left, the young woman came by, too. I was pleased that she and her secret lover, who was violating regulations of the hospital, found in Sylvia a trustworthy and stimulating counselor and friend.

Figure A: Sylvia Graham Williams circa 1937.

Prior to my leaving at 4:30 we talked about what living and working in Boone might be like. She liked North Carolina and had also been thrilled by Thomas Wolfe's presentation of mountain scenery. She, too, longed to live there. Somewhat uneasy about the hiring by telephone and remembering that Professor Wilson's failure the preceding year to meet me as scheduled in Ohio and that the day away from work I had requested for the meeting had contributed to my release on December 5,[10] she feared that I might not be paid the salary I was promised, or that the apartment might be a rat-and-roach den in which I was to live, or that the principal would be some egomaniac who would feel intimidated by an older and more experienced teacher in his staff and set about to discredit me before I could get myself adjusted to classroom teaching again.

Concerned about our financial status, she wanted to know whether I had money

[10]In the fall of 1941, Cratis had received a telephone call from Chapell Wilson asking that Cratis interview with him at a professional meeting to be held at Ball State in Indiana. Cratis was working in Coldwater, Ohio, at the time, and made arrangements to attend the meeting. But he never heard from Chapell Wilson to arrange the time, and the meeting never occurred. Cratis subsequently lost his job at New idea, Inc., and moved from Coldwater to Huntington, W.Va.

enough to buy food for my first month in the new job, what arrangements I had made about the loan from the company in Huntington, and whether I was prepared to pay her bills at the sanitarium. Distressed that I would have only twenty dollars between myself and starvation after I arrived in Boone, she offered suggestions for buying groceries that would be inexpensive but nutritious and urged that I be sure to eat eggs and drink milk and take my iron supplement and cod liver oil. I reassured her by telling her that I would attempt to draw an advance on my salary or sell my first month's check at a discount if I found it necessary.

I then told her that I had two resolutions for the new job. As a high school principal, I had responded to overtures for friendship from desperate people who needed friends and often found them incompetent dullards and insufferable bores. My first resolve was not to be lured too quickly into time-consuming friendships with over-eager people who seem to want to capture newcomers. Having worked in public education only in my home county, I had found it necessary to be political and to support publicly causes and efforts to which I did not subscribe privately. In the new job, I would follow the advice of the cheerful black man who had shined my shoes in Charleston and dare to be as nearly myself as possible and to abstain whenever possible from giving public support to causes to which I could not subscribe privately. Thus, I would not be manipulated by political persons and could refrain from being one myself. If I should find that this new philosophy would not work at Appalachian, I would leave teaching at the end of the year and find something else to do.

I had come up from Huntington to see Sylvia twice a month. It would be a month before I could return from Boone. I had checked bus schedules and found that I could take a bus late Friday afternoon from Boone to Sparta, make connections there with a bus from Winston-Salem to Bluefield and then from Bluefield to Beckley, and arrive in Beckley late Friday night. I would be able to visit with her on Saturdays and Sunday mornings and get back to Boone Sunday night. I felt that perhaps once a month would be as often as I could visit, but I assured her that I would write to her every night.

Concerned about my loss of weight, my morning cough, and my generally peaked appearance, Sylvia would make arrangements for me to have a chest X-ray when I came again. The question of whether she was eligible to remain in a West Virginia state health facility at the same rate I had been paying had not been resolved, for I had not notified the sanitarium that I was leaving the state. She would ask her doctor to check that out and felt sure that if policy permitted he would see that the rates would remain the same. We held hands in warmth and hope, and I kissed her forehead and departed, feeling that she would get well and that a new life was beginning for us.

At Mrs. Mann's rooming house I sat on the porch with guests and enjoyed the late August afternoon before the evening meal, a simple affair built around the delicious green beans that had been left from lunch and topped with apple cobbler and cream dip. Following the dinner, I tried to read by the light from the bulb screwed into a socket in the ceiling, but soon became tired and sleepy.

On the morning of September 1 there was heavy dew on the grass and weeds, already

rigid for autumn. The bus to Bluefield descended the mountain south of Beckley and went along a road beside a river for a time. The sycamores were heavy with dew, and meadows and fields were fresh and cleansed. Only wisps of mist floated lazily above them where the bright sun flooded through gaps in the ridges and mountains. Later, as we gained elevation again on Flat Top Mountain, the world was flooded with golden sunlight. Oak Hill and Princeton gleamed. Homes, neatly kept yards, gardens displaying tomatoes ripening on the vine, sunflowers sentineling the sun, and wine red dogticks marshaled along the fences all promised a plenty in neat comfort against the coming winter in a war-time economy.

There was only a short time for changing buses in Bluefield, not enough time for me to see whether my luggage, which I had checked to Boone, was transferred. Soon we were moving swiftly along a highway down a long Virginia valley between rolling mountains covered with pasture to their tops. Pigs, sheep, and cattle grazed in the pastures, and the corn growing in lowland fields was tall and tawny and heavy with ears. From behind groves of locusts, elms, and spreading oaks substantial and beautiful houses, many of them with green lattices by the windows and white pillars flashing in the sun, commanded from their sites on smooth-sided hillocks or alluvial plateaus at the mouths of little valleys vast holdings of fertile land. I wondered whether the owners of these lands considered themselves farmers or Virginia planters. Signs along the highway reminded us that we were traveling on the Trail of the Lonesome Pine.

Tazewell, Lebanon, Abingdon were old dignified towns strung along the highway; towns that were quiet, clean, and charming with their wide streets, substantial public buildings–grey in the sunshine–and ancient homes with dark roofs, peeling woodwork, rusting iron fences or crumbling stone walls. Yet manicured yards, noble trees, and profusions of shrubbery and ivy suggested that even though the owners had not been financially able during the Depression years to lay out money to repair and paint their proud houses and mend their forbidding fences and walls, they had been able to preserve their self-respect in the care they had lavished on their trees, shrubs, vines, and brick and stone walks, a care that required little money, only some of the leisure time and energy which people had in abundance during those hard years.

We arrived in Bristol about 1 p.m., I believe, and circled a spacious new bus station fitted out with the most modern equipment and designed to accommodate traffic expeditiously. The station was crowded with people and all seats in the shining restaurant on a level above the waiting room were filled. The bus to Elizabethton would not leave for two or three hours. I took a stroll down the street by the station, taking note of its diagonal approach to Stateline Street, down the middle of which runs the Virginia-Tennessee dividing line. On the corner was a wedge-shaped building in which a restaurant was located. I went in, sat at a stool, and ordered a sandwich and milk, for which I paid twenty cents. I then walked as far east as Virginia Intermont College, of which I had never heard, stopped in at the railroad station, walked north down a street lined with ancient buildings, and turned west toward a modern hotel, a tall structure with a spacious lawn and a comfortable patio equipped with rocking chairs. Aged men with white hair, straw hats, clean shirts, subdued ties, carefully brushed suits, and well worn but good shoes, brightly polished and

with soles edged in black, were lounging in the rocking chairs swapping yarns and exchanging views on the times and the progress of the United States in World War II. I sat nearby for a time, interested in the speech and idiom of the old men and wondering whether they were widowed Virginia gentlemen managing with frugality and care to live in the hotel or whether they were retired men of the town who came together for lunch in the hotel dining room and lounged the afternoon away in conversation on the comfortable patio.

As I walked back to the bus station I began to perspire, for the afternoon was warm. I was sensitive, too, about my shabby suit, an old summer suit, baggy and rumpled, that I had chosen because I wanted my better clothes to be fresh for wear in Boone. The bus to Elizabethton was loading. A long line had already formed. I was fortunate to get a seat. Again, people were standing in the aisle.

The character of the landscape changed as we moved into Tennessee. The mountains became bolder, steeper, more rugged, and forested. Valleys were rich and pasture fields covered low-lying hills, but forests began at the bottoms of sharp rises from which jagged and massive rock formations jutted out of the trees.

The trip from Bristol to Elizabethton was a short one. Even though the driver stopped the bus at farmhouses and crossroads to let people off or pick up new riders, we were in Elizabethton in less than an hour. The station was at the edge of town near a river lined with huge trees. The bus to Boone would not be leaving for another hour. The little waiting room of the station was filled with people, many of them women and children. It was warm. The sunshine was clear and bright and one perspired when he walked in it. My seatmate on the bus from Bristol was waiting for a bus in another direction. He was a salesman but in Elizabethton for the first time. We toured together a part of the little town and then ate standing up at a hamburger stall close to the station.

It seemed that most of the people getting on the bus to Boone knew one another. Conversations were lively and the speech and idiom of the people were essentially what I had heard while I was growing up near Blaine. Country women with weathered faces carried packages in their arms, and small children with bright and eager faces, scrubbed clean and tanned in the sunshine, swarmed around grandmothers and tired looking mothers with infants in their arms and shopping bags hanging from their wrists. I found a seat, but when all seats were taken and an old lady leaning on a cane took a position in the aisle beside me and propped herself against the side of my seat, I offered it to her. "W'y, no," she protested. She would be getting off "just a little ways up the road thair a piece." But I insisted and she sank into the seat. I moved toward the back of the bus to give her room to hold her cane propped upright so it would not slide onto the floor. When she got off a few miles up the road, a young woman with an infant in one arm and a child clinging to her skirt sank into the seat. Unlucky about being near seats as people vacated them and new riders got on the bus, I stood up all the way to Boone.

The road was narrow and the asphalt surface was uneven. Spread-eagled and planted firmly in the aisle, I clung to the baggage racks and looked out at the increasingly rugged scenery. Much of the time the highway ran parallel to or within sight of the narrow-gauge

tracks of the ET&WNC railroad. People got off and others got on at the little towns of weathered and old-fashioned wooden buildings along the way–Valley Forge, Hampton, Roan Mountain, Heaton, Elk Park, Banner Elk–but the bus continued to be crowded with passengers standing in the aisle.

What I saw along the highway fascinated me. By the time we had reached Hampton, I was seeing dense clumps of rhododendron and laurel. Tall spruce and hemlock trees grew from among the rocks on the steep mountainsides. High mountain ridges, purple in the late afternoon, rose above and far beyond closer mountains. Sparkling water churned along rock-strewn stream beds and dashed forcefully through gorges, the bottoms of which I could see almost straight down from the side of the bus. This rugged scenery had more daring, more energy, more resistance and wild beauty than any I had seen in Kentucky or West Virginia.

Once, the bus stopped in front of a store and filling station built against the mountainside. Beside it was a cage in which a huge bear was being teased by children. At Elk Park the little train on the narrow tracks had stopped at the quaint station, its smokestack puffing lazily as if it were resting after the steep climb up the mountain. Beside a weathered house of upright boards and with a roof of dark and curling shakes an old mountain man was making a drag sled like those my father made. At Banner Elk a beautiful little college campus[11] with buildings of native stone strung along a ridge behind the bus station was dressed in carefully arranged banks of rhododendron and evergreen trees.

From the top of the mountain before descending to Valle Crucis a sweep of blue and purple mountains, some outlined like cutouts against the sky, came almost suddenly into view, and I had the feeling that it was the glory of these mountains that I had longed for, that the beauty of this landscape was surely unsurpassed. The valley, resting peacefully in the late afternoon sun and crossed by purple shadows of mountains, seemed to be a mile down below, almost straight down from my standing position in the bus.

As the bus driver started down the steep incline, he lowered the gear, and applying the brake frequently, continued to lower the gear. I clung desperately to the baggage racks and leaned heavily against the side of the seat to keep from being plunged headlong into the aisle. Although I was frightened by the roughness of the descent and the depth into the valleys below the road, I consoled myself with the thought that the bus made this trip every day and that I might reasonably expect it to make it that day, too. Near the foot of the mountain the road had been built in a double hairpin curve so sharp that one could look straight up and see where he had been and straight down and see where he was going at the same time. A year or two after I had been in Boone, one bus driver coming down the mountain following an ice storm slid off the road but managed so skillfully to land below that he was headed in the right direction, and nobody was injured.

One of the tall tales about that curve repeated by yarn spinners gathered around the stove in Mast's Store at the foot of the mountain is about the farmer who covered his basket of eggs when he rode horseback down the mountain after Mr. Mast accused him of trying

[11]Lees-McRae College

to sell horse biscuits as eggs. The bus stopped at Mast's Store, but again, seats left vacant by those who got off were taken by people who stood closer than I.

The Watauga River Valley was in shadows. One could not see the sun from that depth. I saw young people and children playing on the porches and in the yards of the sturdy farmhouses along the river. Blue wood smoke rose from chimneys and spread out above, a sign in Kentucky of approaching rain. Fat cattle stood in the yards of huge barns. Corn in the bottom lands was still green. Grass on the hillsides looked fresh and tender and green as if it were springtime instead of late summer.

As we came up a long gently sloping hill toward a gap in the mountains, I saw on the side of a barn an advertisement for Stalling's Jewelry Store in Boone. Soon we had passed through the gap and there fanned out below us was Boone, quiet and mystical in that half hour of deepening shadow that precedes the turning on of street lights.

Chapter Two

Arriving in Boone: A New Beginning

The bus came down into the town, turned to the right at the first paved street we came to, and at the end of the second block pulled along-side a quaint little building that looked more like a country-stop railroad depot than a bus station. We got out and waited for the luggage to be unloaded. Only one piece of my luggage had arrived. After waiting for the station master to take care of details relating to packages and parcels that had been delivered by bus, I reported that only one of my bags had arrived. He filled out a form and said a tracer would be sent and that the missing pieces would probably arrive within a day or two. I should check at the station each afternoon.

With my one bag, into which I had put a box of stationery, shoes, a bathrobe, dirty sox, underwear, and shirts, I walked across the street to a taxicab stand and engaged a cab driver to deliver me to Faculty Apartments. He was there in about five minutes. He charged me a quarter.

With my bag of dirty laundry in my hand, unshaven, and in my shabbiest suit, wrinkled, threadbare, and smelling of perspiration, I entered Faculty Apartments. No one was in sight, but a little sign over a door announced "Office." I knocked on the door. An older woman with a kind smile opened the door. I told her who I was and that Professor Chapell Wilson had instructed me to report there, where I was to have an apartment.

She was Mrs. Coffey, the hostess for the building. Professor Wilson had told her that I would be arriving. Unfortunately, though, the apartment I was to have was not yet available and would not be for another two weeks. Professor and Mrs. Antonakos[12] were still in it and would not be leaving for Chapel Hill for several days. The principal of the high school, Mr. Wey[13], had requested that she call him as soon as I

arrived and he would come and meet me there and take me to a men's dormitory where I would stay until the apartment was available. She turned to the telephone on the wall opposite her door and called. She then invited me to have a seat in the parlor and make myself comfortable. Mr. Wey had said he would be there in a few minutes. She went back into the little office and closed the door.

Figure B. Herbert W. Wey, principal of Appalachian Demonstration School, early 1940s. Photo courtesy of Ruby Daniel.

I sat down in an easy chair facing the door through which I had entered the building. As I waited, I remembered Sylvia's fears that I might not receive all Mr. Wilson had promised. I began to check off rapidly the things I needed that were in the bags that had not arrived: razor, toothbrush, clean underwear and sox, clean shirts and ties, suits, hats, raincoat, overcoat. Soon the door at the end of the hall opened and an extremely tall, thin man with a slender face and a high nose came striding toward me, his long feet clicking heel and toe on the waxed floor. I had expected Mr. Wey to enter through the front door, so I did not rise as the tall man came on into the parlor.

"Is your name Williams?" he asked.

I then stood up and told him that I was Cratis Williams, in order to sound for him my first name, which, I had learned, people want to pronounce "Crattis."

"I'm Herb Wey, the principal of the high school. Come with me and I'll show you the school building, take you to your classroom and office, give you your keys, and go over the schedule with you. Then I will take you to Newland Hall, where you will have a room vacated by a young English teacher who married one of his students and is on his honeymoon."

I picked up my light bag, and Mr. Wey relieved me of it.

"Is this all the baggage you have?"

I told him that most of my baggage had not arrived with me but that the station

[12]Antonios Antonakos taught physics and chemistry at ASTC, organized the first drama club at Appalachian, and formalized Playcrafters in 1933. He took a year's leave of absence to study for his doctorate in physics at UNC-Chapel Hill during 1942-43, and returned to teach both physics and play production and to be an active force in the success of Playcrafters.

[13]Herb Wey was math and physics teacher and coach at Appalachian Demonstration High School from 1938 to 1942 before becoming principal in 1942, a position which he held until 1953. He earned his doctorate in education in 1950 from Indiana State University. He became dean of Appalachian's graduate school in 1957, and president of the college (1969) and later chancellor, leading the transition into Appalachian State University, before his retirement in 1979.

master was sending a tracer and thought it would be here in a day or two.

"You'll be lucky to get it in a week," he said.

Mr. Wey had parked his car at the high school building and walked over to the apartments. As we walked back, he a foot taller than I and taking one long step to my two, I could tell from the questions he asked that he had not seen my application materials. Although he was courteous, genuine, sincere, I felt that he disapproved of me in some way, perhaps because I was a small man. I was so pleased to be in such a delightful place and teaching on a college campus that I was glad I had been hired "sight unseen," for I would not have got past an interview with this man. Perhaps, if I were careful, followed his instructions, and kept silent about my own experiences as a high school principal for seven years, he would accept me while I was testing my skills anew as a high school teacher. It would be very important that I refrain from prefacing any suggestion I might have to offer with "When I was a high school principal...," but I felt that in time he would accept me.

Figure C. Main entrance of Appalachian Demonstration High School, early 1940s. Photo courtesy of Ruby Daniel.

The high school building,[14] a WPA structure with native stone veneer, was not up in quality to the building in which I had worked in Kentucky. Wooden floors creaked. Rooms were rough plastered and many had not yet been painted. Instead of standard teachers' desks and chairs for the classrooms, there were roughly made little tables with canebottom chairs. The offices were little more than large closets equipped with more of the canebottom chairs and little tables, which had been made in the carpentry shop on campus originally for study tables in dormitory rooms. There were no filing cabinets, nor were there typewriters, but each office and each classroom had a small portable bookshelf. The bookshelves, without backs, had also been made locally for dormitory rooms. On one of the tables in my office was an orange crate with a divider in it that my predecessor had used for filing. It con-

[14]Now Chapell Wilson Hall.

tained materials she had left, among which were things labeled English 310, the number, I understood, of the course in methods that I would begin teaching after the college students arrived about two weeks later.

In the course of our conversation Mr. Wey told me that the high school, though located on the campus and serving as a college demonstration school, was also a county school that served the town children and those brought in by bus from back in the mountains. The mountain children, he said, were rough and difficult to handle. They had run off some teachers in the past. Such a school, he said, was a better one for practice teachers to work in than the model schools found on most campuses, which only children of the professors and well-to-do parents in the community attended. Our school, he said, comes closer to being like the mountain high schools in which most of our college graduates will find jobs. Our practice teachers, then, are better prepared to deal with the teaching situations they will enter after they graduate than most college graduates are. In the keen competition for teaching jobs in public schools Appalachian graduates did well and very few failed to find appointments, and that had been true all through the Depression. We try to teach them both what they need to know and what they need to do to be good teachers.

He then took me to the library, which was located in a large cage at the side of the study hall. The librarian in past years had been responsible for the study hall but beginning this year a teacher would be responsible for the study hall every hour except one. The librarian needed to have time to build up the library, and Dr. Dougherty,[15] the president of the College, had promised some money for the purchase of new books. I would be called on to help select books for use in English classes. We looked at the pitiful collection of ratty books, all arranged and waiting for the students to descend upon them Wednesday, when they could begin checking them out. The library in the high school at Louisa was much larger and the collection much better, but I thought it inappropriate to refer to it.

The school had vocational agriculture and vocational home economics. A full four-year program in business was being developed, too. Mountain kids who did not plan or were not able to go to college needed the vocational programs. Girls who did not want to go to college could prepare to become secretaries.

I asked whether the school was required to qualify for accreditation by the Southern Association separately from the College. The College, he said, was not accredited and was not seeking accreditation at that time, but he had already discussed with Mr. Wilson the possibility of seeking accreditation for the high school and had been encouraged to begin working toward that goal. That was one reason why the librarian was being relieved of her responsibility for keeping the study hall. I observed that the last school in which I had worked was a member of the Southern Association and that I thought membership was important for the principal because the guidelines could support his request for budget increases for improving and keeping up to date the library, science laboratories, and busi-

[15]Blanford Barnard Dougherty (1872-1957) served as superintendent of Watauga County schools from 1899 to 1916. In 1899 he was co-founder and co-president, with his brother Dauphin Disco Dougherty, of Watauga Academy, which eventually became Appalachian State Teachers College. He served as president until 1955.

ness department. He said if Mr. Wilson should come through with what he had promised, maybe I could be a member of the planning committee.

We left the building and got into Mr. Wey's car, an older model that he considered himself fortunate to own in those days of gasoline rationing and moratoria on the manufacture of new cars. He delivered me to Newland Hall, directly across the valley from the high school building, and reminded me that there would be a faculty meeting in the Teachers Lounge at eight o'clock the following morning.

With my bag in hand, I went to the keeper's room. He was an older college student who had the responsibility of acting as a host. I told him who I was. Yes, he was expecting me. He turned to a key board, found a key to a front room on the second floor, and handed it to me. He did not know in what shape I might find the room. Mr. Dukes, then on his honeymoon, had left some things in it and the man who had shared the room with him would not be coming back to live there, for he had been given a room in Faculty Apartments. He gave me a roll of toilet paper to carry with me, just in case it was needed.

With my bag in one hand, my key in the other, and the roll of toilet paper clamped under my arm, I made my way up to the second floor of Newland Hall. The key would not unlock the door. Since there seemed to be no one else living on that floor at that time, I left my bag and the roll of toilet paper beside the door and went back to see whether I had been given the right key. The keeper took the key and examined it carefully. Then he turned to the key board and selected another, which he examined carefully.

"Try this one," he said. "Mr. Dukes had the lock changed and we forgot to throw the old key away."

I went back, unlocked the door, and flipped the light switch. Two beds with bare cotton mattresses and no pillows were pulled together against the back wall. Two study tables similar to those I had seen in the high school building and each with a canebottom chair in front of it were placed on either side of the window, which had no blind or drape. A double dresser with a mirror stood against the wall between two doors, one to a bathroom shared by occupants of the next room and the other to a clothes closet. One of the tables had on it a dilapidated lamp, a paperweight, a ruler, some pencils, a bottle of ink, some notebook paper, and a ball of string. Scattered about was refuse, old newspapers and magazines, an abandoned pair of disreputable looking sneakers without strings, sox eaten out at the toes, and empty cartons of one kind or another. In the closet was a stack of boxes tied with stout cord from the roll on the table. Mr. Dukes's "things," no doubt. The bathroom light had no bulb in it.

I went to the window and looked out. It was a clear night. The sky was deep and dark, almost indigo, and the stars floated in sharp brilliance as if each had its own space both behind and around itself. This was different night sky from any I had seen either in the hills along the Ohio River or in the flatlands of the Mid-West, where even clear night skies looked as if they had been sprayed with skim milk and the stars looked flat as if they had been spattered on the canopy of heaven and could twinkle only in linear fashion along

a flat surface. I opened the window a few inches for ventilation and noted that the night air had a chill in it that was unusual for September 1.

I then opened my bag, took the dirty clothes out and laid them on one of the beds, and brought out the box of stationery to write Sylvia a letter. It was a long one in which I went into detail about the bus trip, the people traveling in such throngs and on a Monday, too, the lovely scenery along the way, Boone at twilight, my lost baggage, Mr. Wey, the poverty-stricken aspect of the high school, and my winding up in a dormitory room with no pillow, no bed linens, no towels and soap, and no light in the bathroom, instead of the apartment I had expected. But I liked the town, Mr. Wey's openness and candor, the mountains, and was sure I was going to like living and working on the campus. But, I could see, by the time I had purchased bed linens, a pillow, blankets, and sundries, I would have little money left for paying for meals at restaurants for two weeks before I would be able to move into the apartment. When my money ran low, I would seek Mr. Wey's advice about getting some kind of a loan to help me through the first month.

It was ten o'clock. My routine had been upset. I was much more tired than I had realized. I had spent myself completely in writing the letter.

The chill that was in the air reminded me that the pajamas that would come in handy that night, but that I had not needed in Huntington and Beckley, were in one of my lost bags. I spread the bathrobe over the mattress for a sheet, pulled on a soiled undershirt over the one I had on, put on two of the soiled shirts, two pairs of shorts, two pairs of sox, placed my watch on a chair by my bed, turned out the light, lay down, and spread my thin summer coat over my bare legs. I might have slept for two hours when I woke up shivering. I got up, turned on the light, and closed the window completely. It then occurred to me that, with the soiled clothing I was wearing, it was not so important that I have the mattress covered with my bathrobe. I spread one of the shirts across the head of the mattress, spread out newspapers beside me, and turned the light off. Then I spread my coat across my legs, pulled newspapers across myself and spread the bathrobe across the newspapers. I felt warm in a few minutes, but when I moved the newspapers slid off, carrying the robe with them. I then slipped newspapers between my shirts and my shorts, put my pants on, wrapped my robe around my legs, pulled the thin summer coat up under my chin and went back to sleep. When I woke up at six o'clock I was lying in the same position in which I had gone to sleep.

I got up stiffly and went into the bathroom where I washed my face in cold water, for the hot water heater was not operating during the break between the close of summer school and the beginning of the fall quarter. I dried my face with one of the soiled undershirts, used the undershirt as a washcloth for a sponge bath and for washing my feet, and dried myself with another undershirt, shivering from the chill as I did so. I then hung the wet undershirts across the backs of the canebottom chairs to dry during the day. I used the corner of a soiled handkerchief to clean my teeth. Dressed in the clothing I had worn the day before and feeling despondent, I locked my door and made my way along a narrow gravel road across the valley toward town, the backside of which was visible from the win-

dow of the dormitory room.

The Gateway Restaurant was open and many people were having breakfast. I ate an egg with toast, butter and jelly, and coffee, for which, as I recall, I paid twenty-five cents.

Next door to the restaurant was the Sanitary Barber Shop. It was open for business by the time I had finished breakfast, and I went in for a shave. Only two barbers were on duty, though, and there were four or five ahead of me. About 7:45 I was called. By the time the barber had finished with me, I knew that I could not arrive at the school on time for the faculty meeting.

On my way uptown I had crossed an alley beyond the movie theatre which I had remembered as a street but did not notice at all on the way back to the school. So, instead of turning right down the street I had come, I crossed that street and came along the block to the corner at the church. Confused by this, I hurried back to the street I had crossed, but it did not seem familiar, so I returned to the corner at the church and turned right. Soon I could see the stone building in which the high school was housed, so I hurried diagonally across the playground on which children of all ages were chasing one another and entered the high school building from the east end.

Mr. Wey met me at the door.

"For crying out loud! Late the first day!"

I explained that I felt I had to have a shave before coming to school, for I had not shaved the preceding morning, my razor was in one of the bags that had not arrived with me, and I had felt it necessary to go to the barber shop, at which several customers had arrived ahead of me.

"Well, why didn't you tell me last night? You could have used my razor! The faculty meeting is over. The kids are already gathering in the auditorium. Here is the list of the boys who will be in your homeroom. When I introduce you, read off these names and go to your classroom. You remember where your room is, don't you?"

"Yes, 210."

"Well, here are the schedules for your boys. Give each his schedule. At the end of the homeroom period we will go through the class schedule for the day. Yours is in your office, you remember. Have you got your key?"

I reached in my pocket and flashed my key.

"Well, let's go!"

We hurried along down the hall, Mr. Wey in dactylic rhythm and I in double-time trochaic, our heels striking the floor together at about every third step for me. When we reached the door, he said, "Find you a seat down there somewhere," swinging his long arm in the general direction of the left front side of the auditorium. He hurried on down the center aisle to the front of the room and I along the outer wall about two-thirds of the way down, where I sank into the last seat in a row that had only three or four students seated in

it. By then, Mr. Wey had taken his position before the student body. His "greetings" were brief. Students were to be introduced to their homeroom teachers, who would read off the room number and call the roll of the students assigned to them. After that was finished, we would all go to our homerooms and teachers would hand out schedules and answer questions. When the buzzer sounded, we would then go through the schedule for the day. He began with eighth grade. Mine was eleventh grade. I would apparently be among the last to be introduced.

Several of the teachers were new. Mr. Wey made brief comments about them. Students applauded. Occasionally, a few groans were sounded when students heard their names read by teachers returning from the previous year. At last, the senior homeroom teachers were presented. The girls were pleased with their assignments. Then the teacher for one of the homerooms for senior boys was presented, a new math teacher, especially charming, whom Mr. Wey was sure the boys would like, Miss Poole. Miss Poole stood up, a pretty young woman just out of college. Her hair was arranged beautifully and her clothes were bright and stylish. All of the senior boys, it seemed, whistled in chorus, some stomped their feet, others beat their chair arms with flat hands. Mr. Wey said he knew how they felt. He felt that way, too, but he had a wife at home. The boys became quiet. Miss Poole read with a soft voice, perhaps Georgia but possibly South Carolina, the names of the boys in her homeroom. When she had finished, there was a resounding round of applause from the boys whose names she had called. Mr. Wey waited patiently for a few moments and then flung out his long arm for quiet.

"The other homeroom teacher for senior boys is our new English teacher, who is taking Mrs. Rivers's place. He will have charge of dramatics this year. Girls, he is married. Mr. Williams, stand up!"

I stood up at the end of the row of seats and turned to face the student body. The boys left for my homeroom sent up a chorus of groans. As the student body looked me over, others joined in the chorus. Then a chant to a rhythmical stamping of feet began, "No!" Stamp, stamp. "No!" Stamp, stamp. "No!" Stamp, stamp. It was like a cheering squad attempting to frustrate the player on the visiting team who was about to make a basket in a basketball game. I stood quietly, waiting for the protest to subside. Mr. Wey flung out his arm again and chided the students for the bad manners they were using in responding to a stranger in their midst. I smiled, bowed slightly, announced that I was pleased to be there and regretted intensely that I did not have Miss Poole's beauty and charm, but that I was sure the senior girls who liked cute short men would have loved to have me for their homeroom teacher. I paused, and some of the girls began to applaud. I bowed toward them and smiled. Then the applause increased. After a moment or two, I held out my hand for quiet, announced my room number, and read off the names of the boys in a chant similar to that used by the old time railroad porters in announcing the cities at which the train now on the tracks would stop. When I sat down, the students gave me a round of "good sport" applause. I felt that perhaps I had saved myself.

We were dismissed. I followed the students out of the auditorium and made my way

to Room 210. Most of the boys were there ahead of me and seated. I laid my materials on the little table and stood behind it. The boys were talking among themselves and teasing one another. Little attention was paid to me, and no one said anything to me. After the buzzer sounded, the boys stopped talking and became attentive. I began by telling them that I wanted to learn as quickly as possible the name of each young man present so well that I could address him by name if I should meet him in the school building or up the street and that I wanted to learn how to pronounce correctly any names with which I was not familiar. I would therefore begin by calling the roll slowly. Would each person please hold up his hand long enough for me to get a good look at him and correct me if I mispronounced his name?

With that ritual completed, I then gave out the schedules. There was considerable exchange among them in their effort to determine whether their buddies and cronies would be in the same sections with them. Teachers' names had not been listed on the schedules, only the period and the class in which each section would meet. Then there was speculation as to who of the teachers might be teaching this or that section. I did not know. Would I be teaching anything that the seniors might be taking? Yes, drama and speech were available to seniors. Three or four indicated that they would be in one or the other and one would be in both.

We were finished with what we had been scheduled to do, but the buzzer for the first period to begin did not sound. I asked whether they were planning to go on to college next year. Many planned to do so. I commented that they were fortunate to have in their town a college to attend. My comment stimulated the expression of many points of view. Only people who planned to teach attended Appalachian. Many planned to go to professional schools and would be going to colleges that had degree programs that would prepare them. Some would go to Davidson College, some to Wake Forest, one or two to Lenoir Rhyne, some to North Carolina State College at Raleigh. One, who did not plan to go to college, said, "They couldn't hire me to go down here to this college." Others added, "Me, either." I refrained from asking why, but while I was struggling with the temptation to do so, the one who could not be hired to attend Appalachian said, "I wouldn't teach school if it was the last thing on earth to do." This was followed by a chorus: "Boy, me neither!"

Then one of them asked me to tell them something about myself. I responded that I had grown up on a farm in Kentucky, attended a high school in town, been graduated from the University of Kentucky with both an A.B. and an M.A. in English, that I had done some additional graduate work toward a Ph.D. degree at Kentucky, and that I had taught for twelve years in Kentucky and had just come from a teaching assignment in the Apprentice School of International Nickel Company in Huntington, West Virginia, where I had taught shop mathematics. The one who could not be hired to go to Appalachian said, "You must be old." Everybody laughed. I responded that I was 31. A young man with a sensitive face who had indicated that he would be taking speech said, "You don't look that old." Others shouted, "Apple-polisher! Apple-polisher!" at him, and he smiled shyly. I said to the group, "Then, most of you think I do look that old?" There was some self-conscious squirming during a long moment of silence, broken by the one who wouldn't teach school

if it was the last thing on earth to do, obviously the joker in the group: "After teaching school twelve years, I'm surprised that you look as young as you do." The buzzer sounded, but the boys waited for me to dismiss them. I followed them to the classroom door with a warm feeling toward them and was pleased both with myself that I had not told them that I had been a high school principal for seven years and with them because they had made no reference to Miss Poole, to whom the other half of the senior boys had reported.

By the time I had taken my position in the hallway, little girls began to arrive, then four or five little boys, all smiling tentatively as they passed me. I followed them into the room. There were 28 eighth grade English students, most of them thirteen and fourteen years old. I announced the section number and room number, wrote on the blackboard my name and pronounced it for them, and asked them to sign a roll that I passed around. I then asked each to hold up a hand as I called the roll and to correct me if I mispronounced a name. There were Cooks, Greens, Greers, Hodges, Millers, Moretzes, Norrises, and Winebargers among them. They were mostly "bus" students, quiet country children many of whom were coming to town to school for the first time. I remembered what Mr. Wey had said about the rough children from back in the mountains who had in the past driven off teachers they did not like. These children, so young and small, it seemed to me, to be in high school, did not appear to be ferocious. After taking and calling the roll, I asked if there were any questions. Nobody had a question so I began to tell them about myself, that I had taught seventh and eighth grade English classes eight of the twelve years I had been a public school teacher. The buzzer sounded for the second period after we had been in the room only fifteen or twenty minutes, it seemed. They got up from their seats and rushed out of the room, except one wide-eyed little boy who had smiled broadly every time my eyes had rested on him. He hung back long enough to ask me whether I had any children of my own. Later, I learned that he was retarded. Little children, dogs, lackwits, and old people had always liked me. Probably there were some things about me that were all right.

The next group was the drama class of 25, which included students from the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades, among them three or four from my homeroom group. After required routines were completed, they wanted to know what plays we would be presenting. I did not know yet, but invited them to tell me about the plays that had been presented the preceding year. Four or five starry-eyed girls who were taking the class for the second year talked about plays in which they had had parts, how excited they had been, mistakes they had made, and what a fine director Mrs. Rivers had been. I smiled vacuously when one enthusiastic supporter declared that "she couldn't be beat." When the buzzer sounded for the third period, they waited to be dismissed. One boy remained in the room, a boy also in my homeroom.

Then came twelve students for the speech class, most of them boys from the tenth and eleventh grades. Many of them were planning to go to law school. One thought he might want to become a minister. Some hoped to hold public offices. Girls were interested in declamation, oratory, interpretative reading.

The fourth period was my "free hour." In the normal schedule, it would come

immediately after lunch. I sat in my little office and looked at names on the four rolls to see with how many of them I could associate faces. I had not learned many faces the first day, certainly, but perhaps more from the homeroom group than from the classes. I had become interested in what I was finding in the files Mrs. Rivers had left in the orange crate when the buzzer sounded for the fifth period.

This was another section of eighth grade English. Nineteen girls and a thin little boy with frightened eyes took their seats. These were "town" children, those who had gone through the campus elementary school and actually lived in town or had ridden buses from less than three or four miles outside the town. They were not as shy as the first-period section. Different family names were represented, too: Austin, Carroll, Clawson, Smith, Wilson; but there were Greens, Greers, Hodges, and Moretzes among them, too, polished a little brighter, a bit better dressed, somewhat more sophisticated, and with less uneasiness in their eyes than those with the same family names who had been in the morning class.

There was a group spirit among them. No doubt most of them had been in the same classes together since first grade. They buzzed and hummed among themselves as they followed the routines and procedures others had followed silently. There were two sets of identical twins among them, twins dressed alike and looking so much alike that I was never able to distinguish Mary from Martha or Mary Sue from Betty Lou, and the twins sat next to each other. (I decided later in the year that they either swapped seats occasionally or the one who was better prepared responded to my question without regard for the name that I had called. Other members of the class always laughed when I called on Martha while looking at Mary, or responded to Betty Lou when Mary Sue had asked the question.) Of my four classes, I was most apprehensive about this one, which had not as a group opened up to make room for me during this first meeting.

The sixth period was for the English methods class, which I would meet in the same classroom after the college students had completed registration in about two weeks. I went back into the little office and amused myself with Mrs. Rivers's files and a stack of one-act plays suitable for high school students.

When the buzzer sounded, there was a roaring rumble as students rushed along the hollow-sounding wooden floors in the hallways. I went downstairs and to the office. Everybody was gone except the secretary, who gave me copies of the texts and teachers' guides I would use, a roll book, copies of attendance forms, excuse permits, and other forms that would have been given to me that morning, had I made it to the faculty meeting. There would be another faculty meeting at eight o'clock the following morning. In fact, Mr. Wey means to have the faculty meet every morning at eight o'clock this year. No, it would not be necessary that I come back that afternoon.

The door to the inner office opened and Mr. Wey appeared. He wanted to know how I had gotten along with my homeroom boys. I reported. He apologized for their behavior in the assembly. I reported that no reference had been made to it at all and that it did not bother me. I was sure we were off to a good start. Remembering my fifth-period eighth grade class, I added that I hoped I was not too far away from my experience as a

teacher of eighth graders to have forgotten how to work with youngsters of that age. If I ran into difficulty, would he be willing to sit in my class for a period or two and offer suggestions for improvement? He was for a moment stunned by my question. Had I taught children of that age before? Yes, I had taught all grades in one-room schools for four years and seventh, eighth, and ninth grade English in a six-year high school for four years. He did not think I would have any difficulty, but if I should want him to visit my classes he would be pleased to do so and would help in any way he could.

He then asked how I had liked my room in Newland Hall. I reported my problems, told him that I had almost frozen, and explained what I had done to keep warm. He laughed, snorted, and shook his head. I added that I would buy myself a blanket that afternoon. He thought I might find a bargain at Belk's.

I took my textbooks and forms back to my office and walked up the street to the Gateway Restaurant, where I had eaten breakfast, and took a seat at the counter, for the booths and tables were occupied. Before I had had time to give my order, a young woman whom I recognized as one of the teachers at the high school but whose name I did not remember, got up from a booth, came over to me, and said, "I am Ruby Donald, the new teacher of physical education for girls at the high school. Would you join us?" I looked at her for a moment, and then glanced hurriedly at the booth from which she had come, at which three young women, one of whom I recognized as Miss Poole, were sitting. The young women, in rigid postures, were looking at us and smiling welcomes. I looked at Miss Donald, whose warm and friendly smile was reassuring and whose reddish auburn hair flowed to her shoulders, and felt that the invitation was a genuine gesture of welcome.

I climbed down from the counter stool and followed her to the booth. She introduced me to Miss Poole, a new teacher of mathematics, to Miss Penix, a new teacher of science, and to Miss Tucker, the new home economics teacher. Miss Donald slid into the seat and I sat beside her. We were all new teachers at the high school. Their orders had not yet been taken.

The four young women were first-year teachers. Miss Tucker and Miss Donald had graduated in the spring from Georgia State College for Women. I do not remember Miss Poole's college, but believe it might have been Newberry in South Carolina. Miss Penix was a graduate of Morehead State Teachers College in Kentucky. They were all living in the Faculty Apartments. Miss Tucker, who spoke a Georgia dialect, was talkative. Miss Poole had little to say but said it beautifully. Miss Penix, from Rowan County, Kentucky, affecting the "r" of the Deep South, spoke in carefully measured and deliberately chosen phrases. Miss Donald, who appeared to be most natural and thoroughly at ease, spoke rapidly and made a diphthong of "oo" in school, obviously coastal Middle Atlantic. I spoke somewhat refined hillbilly but made no effort to appear "Southern."

The waitress came and we gave our orders. As we did so, the young women asked many questions about what was on the menu and then settled for sandwiches and iced tea. Without asking any questions, I ordered a hamburger without the onion and a glass of milk, which totaled only 20 cents, I was pleased to note.

Someone ventured to ask where I was living. I explained that I was temporarily housed in Newland Hall but would be living in an apartment after the present occupants had vacated it about two weeks from then. Did I have hot water at Newland? I answered there was none and that I had had to come to the barber shop for my shave that morning, and had missed the faculty meeting because there were several persons ahead of me. Would my wife be coming down later? Was she also a teacher? Yes, she hoped to join me later in the year. She was a teacher, but was not currently teaching. A quizzical look followed this, and there was an exchange of glances accompanied by an almost imperceptible nodding of heads as if all had arrived at "Uh-hunh!" simultaneously. Did I have children? "Well, no. Not any to speak of, that is." Only Miss Donald laughed, but the others, faces slightly downcast, peeped upward at me in a kind of "Ah! You naughty man!" attitude.

Conversation then turned to what had taken place at the school that morning. There was resentment against having a faculty meeting at eight o'clock every morning. Wouldn't a faculty meeting once a week, and in the afternoon, for Heaven's sake!, be enough? Someone then asked me how I pronounced "sophomore." I responded. "Mr. Wey says 'sowphomore,'" Miss Tucker said. I had never heard that pronunciation. Perhaps it reflected a German influence on his speech, as in "sauerkraut." Miss Donald laughed. Miss Penix smiled. The other two were puzzled, not certain whether I had said something downright stupid or too brilliant for them to comprehend.

What do you think of the students at the high school? Miss Poole was, for the first time in our conversation, effusive. Her homeroom boys were the cutest things! Miss Tucker had been disappointed in the students she had met. They seemed to be so dumb! Miss Penix thought they were nice kids, especially those from town, and the country kids were shy, but they would come along in time. I thought she spoke from a wealth of experience. Miss Donald made no comment. Miss Tucker asked me what I thought. I responded that I was a mountaineer myself and that the students were in general not any different, so far as I had been able to tell, from students I had taught for twelve years in Eastern Kentucky. The town students might be a little more serious than town students I had known in Kentucky, but it is difficult to distinguish stupidity from self consciousness and shyness in students "from back in the mountains" until you have had a chance to see them perform. Sometimes some of them turn out to be your best students.

Except for Miss Penix, there was a feeling of disappointment in what these eager first-year teachers in a demonstration high school had found here. The town seemed so dull, too, and it was so far from everything! Perhaps it would be more interesting when the college faculty members returned from vacation and the college students arrived. What did I think of Boone and the school? The town was quaint and charming. The high mountains were beautiful. Even the sky at night had an awesome depth, a mystery, a something that made a difference. I liked it. The school had not yet come out of the Depression, and there were makeshifts, but the new principal was a fair, sincere, and capable man.

Following lunch, I took leave of the young women and walked up the street as far as the courthouse, a square structure with almost white mortar framing each dull red brick

and a round window in the top that looked like the eye of a Cyclops staring boldly across the little valley. People I met along the street spoke to me as if they knew me, including older women.

I then crossed the street at the courthouse and came back to the post office, a beautiful little building on a hillock near the corner of Depot Street and King Street. It was built of native stone, slabs of which varied in color from one stone to another. Across an inside wall was a mural depicting Daniel Boone on his way to Kentucky. Daniel was wearing a hat rather than the usual coonskin cap. As I slipped my letter to Sylvia into the out-of-town slot, I noticed on a placard on one of the bulletin boards a determined Uncle Sam proclaiming that he "needs you." I presented myself at the window and requested that any mail I might receive be held for me for the next two weeks until I would know where on campus I would be living. The lady who talked with me asked how I spelled "Cratis" as she wrote my name on a pad, offering no comment about the unusualness of my name. She was a small woman with a faint smile playing around very blue but sad eyes and a pleasant, soft voice. Behind her at work at a table stood a large man with hair that stood up across the top of his Prussian head. He paused, a bundle of letters in "hold" position in his hand, and looked at me for a moment.

I then crossed the street on the corner by the bank and made my way to Belk's to purchase a blanket. A friendly man came toward me as I entered and asked whether he could help me. I explained that I was interested in a fullsize cotton blanket, a double one if he had it. He advised that I might find something in the bargain basement and led me to the broad stairway beside the entrance. In the long basement room there were only two or three women standing at tables and turning items of merchandise over as they squinted at price tags in the dim light. A small woman came toward me and asked whether she could help me. I told her what I wanted. She led me to the far back of the room, pulled on a light over a table, and invited me to study the bargains. Soon I found a lightweight blanket of flannel-like material, white with large pale blue checks on it, and made of 100 percent cotton. It was full size and was washable. The bargain price was only $2.50. I took it to the clerk, who slipped it into a bag made of thin slick paper. When I peeped into my pocketbook and drew out a five dollar bill, I noticed that I had only a ten dollar bill left in it. That, the change I would receive from the clerk, and the loose change in my pocket would have to be spent carefully if it were to meet my needs for the remaining twenty-eight days of September, I thought rapidly as I handed the clerk the five dollar bill. She smiled with curiosity in her eyes as she handed me the change, but she did not ask who I was.

From Belk's I went to the ten-cent store on the corner and bought a water glass and a cake of soap, which I slipped into the paper bag. Then I went by the bus station to see whether my bags might have arrived. They had not, but the station master, who was not the same small older man I had talked with the preceding evening but a middle-aged man with a large and completely bald head, said they might be on the bus from Elizabethton that would arrive about the "edge of dark." He was an extremely friendly, helpful man, whose voice, when he turned and answered the telephone once or twice while we were talking, slid upward as if he were asking a question even when he made simple statements. He

pronounced "Elizabethton" as if it were a question even though he placed heavy stress on "beth." He told me that my bags might have gone from Bluefield to Winston-Salem. If so, they would be sent up directly from Winston-Salem but they might not arrive for two or three days. He would be glad to call me when they arrived if I cared to leave my telephone number. I explained that I was housed temporarily in Newland Hall and could be reached at the high school during school hours, but that I did not know the telephone number for either. He would look that up. He then looked at my name on the copy of the slip the older man had filled out, held it rather far in front of him, moved his glasses forward on his nose, and said "C-R-A-T-I-S? Crattis Williams?" I pronounced the name for him. He made no comment about the unusual first name, but asked, "Where are you from, Dr. Williams?" Noting the complimentary title, never before uttered, but unwilling at the moment to go into my credentialing, I responded that I had come to Boone from Huntington, West Virginia, but that I had grown up in Kentucky.

"Oh, old Kaintuck? What town in Kaintuck?"

When I answered that I was from a little place called Blaine about twenty miles west of Louisa in Lawrence County, he asked, "Is that anywhere near Pikeville?" Louisa, I explained, is located at the forks of the Big Sandy River and is about 90 miles down the river from Pikeville. He had relatives who had been in the drug business at Pikeville along with some of the Greers, who had gone up there to Kaintuck from "Wattogga" County. Had I ever heard of the Greer Drug Company? It dealt in roots and herbs. I had not. He then welcomed me to Boone and offered to help me any way he could. If I wanted to, I could call a little past six o'clock, since the bus from Elizabethton "ordinarily" made it on time, and ask whether my bags had come, unless I just wanted to walk back then. "My name is Herman Wilcox,"[16] he said, as he reached to shake hands with me while I shifted my paper bag from my right hand to my left.

I could see the top of Newland Hall peeping over the profile of a long green hill to the right front of the bus station. A narrow gravel road that did not seem to be used very much led in that direction, but I preferred to walk back across the bridge over the little creek and down a street with broken pavement and many potholes in it that was located behind the buildings that faced Main Street. There were no sidewalks along this street. Near the lower end of it was a complex of shabby structures that I took at first to be a sawmill and lumber company. I was finally able to see a sign painted on a long white board above one of the buildings: "Levites Pipe Company." It occurred to me that the sign painter had left out the apostrophe between "Levite" and "s," and then I wondered what people used wooden pipes for.

Back in the dormitory room I removed the tags from the blanket and dressed one of the beds with it, arranging it so I would be sleeping between the double. Then I removed

[16]Herman Wilcox served as Linville River Railroad agent and manager of Western Union before acquiring franchises for the Greyhound, Queen City, and Trailway buses through Boone. He also served two motor truck lines and Railway Express. Tweetsie railroad made its last trip from Boone to Johnson City, Tenn. in 1940 (see note 18). Wilcox later acquired the depot property on 211 Depot St. and built the rock business building which served for many years as the transportation center for Boone, where he also established Wilcox Travel Agency.

the undershirts from the backs of the canebottom chairs and sat down and wrote Sylvia's mother a letter telling her about my experiences in getting off to a new start in Boone and asked her to go through the things we had brought to her home, select four good sheets, two pillow cases, a quilt, and a small pillow and send them to me "general delivery." Possibly she could use one of the boxes in which we had packed things. I was pleased that, since she was the postmistress at Cherokee, Kentucky, she would not have to carry the package to a post office. I wrote Sylvia a letter, too, and told her about my first night in Boone, missing the faculty meeting, running through the schedule, lunch with the new young teachers, one a graduate of Morehead State Teachers College, also Sylvia's alma mater, but Sylvia had graduated in 1937.

I picked up trash from the room, stacked in the closet things that I thought might be useful to Mr. Dukes, including magazines, piled the newspapers on the other bed, and went down to the keeper's room to borrow a broom and a dustpan. He was not in, but I found what appeared to be a janitor's room unlocked. I borrowed a broom but could find no dustpan. There were light bulbs on a shelf. I took one for the bathroom light. There were boxes of toilet paper, too, but I had been given a roll of toilet paper. I went back and swept the room, using a sheet from a newspaper for a dustpan, returned the broom, put in the light bulb, cleaned the wash basin and the commode, cleaned the mirrors with some of the toilet paper, and dusted the tables and the dresser top.

About three o'clock I decided to walk back to the school and work out lesson plans for the following day. I spent two or three hours looking through the texts and the teacher's guides and wrote down on a pad my plans for each class. I could hear occasionally sounds from other offices and people walking up and down the hall. High school boys were practicing football in a field below a splendid oak tree that stood on the lower side of the street across from the high school building. I could hear the voice of the coach rising and falling, but could not understand what he was saying.

Having finished my lesson plans, I stood at the window of the office and looked up and down the valley and at the high tree-covered ridge that rose behind Newland Hall. The sun was swimming along above an evergreen forest that grew on the crest of the long green hill along which I had looked when I had seen the top of Newland Hall from the bus station. From a ravine behind the little restaurant that stood across from the bus station a cloud of smoke was rising from the town dump and drifting along the top of the pine trees. Long fingers of dark shadow were feeling their way softly across the little valley.

To the southeast was a dark looking brick building among pine trees on the hill across the ravine to the left of Newland. Peeping over the line of young maple trees growing along the driveway up to Newland was the top of a white frame building, much in need of a new coat of paint. It was in the Victorian style and had fire escapes from its upper windows. A flat, green building that looked much like a country store stood behind a little structure of round logs chinked with mud that I thought might have been a grist mill. A wooden stadium was backed against the creek that flowed by the college football field, at the lower end of which was an ugly brick gymnasium with small windows. The gymnasi-

um and the football field looked as if they had been built with no thought given to the fact that they were on a flood plain. Although it was only September 2nd, some of the trees among the hardwood forest on the high ridge were beginning to show touches of red and yellow. The air was clear and quiet. Details in the sunlight were sharp. Shadows were black patches on the landscape. The sky was blue and deep and far away.

I closed my door, walked back to the post office and posted my letters, and then made my way to the little restaurant across from the bus station. People were there, some at tables and some at the counter. Music from the jukebox was loud, "Rosie O'Day" and "Blues in the Night" still being chosen from time to time. As I sat at a small table alone and listened to the music, I thought of Huntington, the plant, and the apprentices, who came charging across the courtyard echoing "Rosie O'Day" and strolling into the classroom singing "Blues in the Night." I remembered with a sense of release the incident of the White Owl cigars, the stench in the early morning air in Huntington, the heat in the upstairs room in which I tried to sleep from four a.m. to noon each day, the noise from the traffic on Fifth Avenue, the exhausting six hours each night of teaching ten sections of apprentices, each section coming once a week, the dull monotony of repeating the same thing in three-hour stretches ten times a week, from nine p.m. to three a.m. each night. I was glad to be in Boone, and breathed deeply in appreciation.

The hostess came and left a menu. Soon the waitress came, dressed in a green and blue uniform that picked up the color motif of the little restaurant, both inside and out. I ordered a breaded pork chop, green beans, and mashed potatoes with a glass of milk, painfully noting that, although the dessert that came with the dinner was Ma Angell's famous apple cobbler, the price was 35 cents. I would have spent 80 cents that day for food! If my $13 plus a little change were to support me for the rest of the month, I would have to eat for about 50 cents a day. Perhaps I could buy some bread and cheese, a bottle of buttermilk, and a few apples at a grocery store, things that would not have to be refrigerated, and bring costs down by eating a sandwich and an apple in my room occasionally. I could handle the food budget better when I got into the little apartment, which had a refrigerator and an electric stove in it, but I would have to buy pots and pans, cutlery, plates and glasses, and a dish or two.

The food was good. That was the first full "dinner" I had eaten since Sunday evening. I was hungry and found Ma Angell's delicious cobbler justly famous. I did not leave a tip, one rarely did in Boone in those days. I paid my bill and walked over to the bus station.

The bus arrived "about the edge of dark," as Mr. Wilcox had predicted. It was packed. Many of those who got off grabbed their bags as soon as they were set on the sidewalk and raced for Ma Angell's Restaurant. Others embraced people who had come to meet them, some in cars and some on foot, and went away with them. Others picked up luggage and walked toward town as if they might have been going to the Daniel Boone Hotel and were eager to get there in time for dinner. My bags did not come. Perhaps they would come up from Winston-Salem tomorrow.

I had not really expected the bags to arrive. I went back to the dormitory to see what I might do to improve my appearance for the following day. I had worn my shirt, underwear, and sox for two days. I could hardly afford to risk a third day, considering that the trip down from Beckley had been a rumpling one and that I had perspired a great deal. After examining my soiled clothes carefully, I decided that the shirt I was wearing was the best candidate for the next day, so I pulled it off, wet the underarm areas, rubbed Bouquet soap on the wet spots, and washed the areas in the cold water in the basin, the wet circles getting bigger as I washed. I then rinsed them in cold water twice, discovering that the odor of the soap would not come out. But I wrung the wet places as dry as I could, pulled the wrinkles out, and hung the shirt over a chair. I washed two undershirts and two pairs of shorts, applying Bouquet soap generously, and spread them on newspapers on the floor to dry. Sox were more difficult. It seemed that the toes became stiffer as I tried to rinse the soap out of them. I had no way to iron them, but if I should wash two handkerchiefs, spread them between newspapers, and put the newspapers under my new cotton blanket, they might dry smooth from the weight and warmth of my body.

I then put on one of the soiled shirts, pulled on my thin summer coat, and went through the pile of newspapers, pausing to read feature articles and human interest stories that appealed to me. Not yet adjusted completely to the change of my daily work routine, I soon became sleepy and began to nod over the newspaper stories.

I prepared for bed by slipping on an extra pair of sox, an extra undershirt and pair of shorts, and two soiled shirts. I had taken two or three toothpicks at Angell's Restaurant in order to try to keep my teeth clean until my baggage arrived, for I did not want to spend money for a new toothbrush and paste. Standing before the mirror in the now well-lighted bathroom, I picked my teeth carefully and then cleaned their surfaces with the corner of a handkerchief, following which I washed my mouth out several times with the cold water from the tap.

Remembering the deep sky the preceding night, I turned off the light and stood by the window again. The sky did not look as deep and the stars shimmered behind a thin mist. Lights along the streets of the town shimmered in the mist in the breeze that was moving in the little maple trees on the hill below the dormitory. Perhaps the weather was changing. I cracked the window a half inch, turned the light on again, unfolded newspapers and laid them across the blanket, put the bathrobe over the papers, spread my coat above the bathrobe, wound my watch and placed it on a chair beside the bed, turned out the light, and crawled between the new clean smelling cotton blanket. I had freedom to move with this improved sleeping arrangement. Newspapers did not slip as easily over a flannel surface as they did over the hard cloth in shirts and shorts. I slept comfortably, but was dimly aware from time to time of the wind and the sweeping of the windowpanes by light showers.

Chapter Three

Settling into Boone

When I woke up at 6:30 instead of 6:00, I sprang out of bed and began to prepare hastily for the day. I took another sponge bath, but felt cleaner because I had used soap. I would not try to go by the barber shop for a shave this time. My beard was light. Perhaps I could get through a second day without a shave. My clean sox and underwear were still damp, and the circles under the arms of my shirt had not yet dried, but I put them on anyway. I went hurriedly over the surface of my teeth again and rinsed my mouth with cold water. The handkerchiefs under my blanket were dry but needed to be touched up with an iron. I smoothed one out with the palm of my hand, folded it carefully, and slipped it into my pocket. I was ready to go, and it was only seven o'clock. I had enough time for breakfast, I thought.

The morning was dark. Clouds rolled along the valley rapidly. I could not see the mountain behind town at all, and the top of the knob that stretched toward the east was hidden in a cloud. A light rain was falling and I had no raincoat or umbrella. Perhaps Mr. Cornett, the host for the dormitory, had one. I went by his room to see. He was up and the odor of the bacon he was cooking on a hotplate filled his room. No, he did not have an extra umbrella or raincoat either. There might be an umbrella in the storeroom. We looked, but there was none there. I said I would have to spread newspapers over my head and shoulders. "Wait," he said. "I believe I still have the laundry cover for the last suit I sent to the cleaners." He did. I tore a hole in it big enough for it to slip over my head, ripped it down at the corners far enough to get my arms out, put my hat on, and started at a fast clip, the paper slapping my knees.

The laundry cover had come unglued by the time I had reached the street by the high school build-

ing, but I held it together as best I could and rushed on to the Gateway Restaurant. At the door, I took off the laundry cover, folded it carefully, tucked it under my arm, and entered. I was not very wet. The cuffs of my trousers were dark looking, I felt damp across the shoulders, and one of my shoes leaked, but otherwise I had come through pretty well protected, I concluded.

I took a stool at the counter, slipped my bundle behind the foot-rail, and ordered an egg sandwich with coffee, noting with satisfaction that the price was only fifteen cents, what I had paid at the White Tower in Huntington for the same thing. The sandwich was ready in four or five minutes. A better bargain than a White Tower sandwich, it had in it thin slices of dill pickle, and one of the slabs of bread had been brushed with mayonnaise. It was served open, steaming hot and inviting a dash or two of black pepper. I normally took my coffee straight, but since cream and sugar did not cost extra, even though sugar was being rationed at the time, I took both when I remembered that I needed to get as much food for my money as possible. I ate the sandwich rapidly, gulped down the coffee, laid fifteen cents on the check by the cash register, and rushed out.

The rain had stopped, but it might begin again soon. I hurried on. Just before I reached the school building another brisk shower came, but I decided to dash to the building rather than fool with trying to get the laundry cover unfolded and around me again. My toes were squishing inside the shoe that had a hole in the sole, my coat, wet across the shoulders, had dark splotches down the front, my pants, quite wet below the knees, no longer had creases. My shirt collar was turned up at the tips, and my tie was splashed. Inside the door, I looked at my watch. It was 7:40.

I slipped up the end stairway to my office, took off my right shoe and sock, wrung the water from my sock and forced wadded up construction paper into my shoe to absorb as much moisture as it could while I cut out an insole from the cardboard back of a paper pad. I pulled the construction paper out and trimmed the insole to size. Then I made a second insole from a sheet of doubled construction paper and slipped them all into the shoe, put it on, and laced it up. My foot felt warm and dry. I took off my coat and slipped two sheets of construction paper under my shirt and across my shoulders and an undoubled manila folder between them and the shirt. After patting the paper into the shape of my body as best I could, I put my coat on, buttoned it, picked up a pencil and pad, and went downstairs. When I noticed that it was 7:55, I went into the washroom and combed my hair, tugged at the corners of my shirt collar and tucked them under the lapels of my coat, adjusted my wet tie, and hurried to the lounge. Mr. Wey was there, his watch in his hand, waiting. Perhaps half the faculty had assembled. Others were rushing in, some without having gone by their offices to leave their raincoats and umbrellas. I took a seat by the door and leaned back against the wall, enjoying the warmth that was glowing between the paper inside my shirt and my chilled shoulders. When I crossed my right leg over my left knee, I remembered the white spot of cardboard that showed through the sole of my right shoe and reversed the arrangement, aware of the odor of Bouquet soap that was fogging up from my steaming clothes.

Mr. Wey began the meeting with the observation to newcomers that we were experiencing a sample of Boone weather and that we might find it convenient to keep an extra umbrella and a raincoat in our offices, for the weather can change in a half hour here in these mountains. He summarized briefly the registration procedures and the problems that had surfaced in the trial run of the schedule and how they were being handled. He reviewed the uses of certain forms we had been given the previous day, advised that we dismiss classes promptly but that we not permit students to get up from their seats until we had formally dismissed the class, that we take a position in the hallway by our classroom doors during the change of classes, that we prepare absence and tardy reports for our homerooms first thing and hand them to the hall monitor near our room. There had not been enough textbooks to go around in some subjects, but others were expected soon and there would be an announcement when they arrived. Sometimes announcements would be made through the intercom system. Teachers and students were to stop in the middle of a sentence if necessary to hear announcements from the office. Later, we would have fire drills, but he would go more into that at a subsequent meeting.

He then asked if there were questions. An older teacher asked whether he wanted to say anything about the use of the library. Some teachers, he explained, managed their classes with a minimum of lecturing and discussion and provided for supervised study for a part of this time. This was a good time to permit students to go to the library, but no more than two or three should be sent at a time and a permit signed by the teacher and initialed by the librarian or an authorized helper must be issued to each student excused for library privileges. Students who required a great deal of help during the supervised study period should not be permitted to go to the library from the classroom. They could check out what they needed during their study hall period.

When another teacher, a new man in social studies, raised a question about the fairness of this arrangement, Mr. Wey explained that most of the good students took up to six or seven subjects and had no study hall hour–some had a regular five-course load and then added music, or art, or typewriting, or an elective. The newcomer found it strange that students were permitted to undertake so much. Mr. Wey responded that it was these very students who were the highest achievers and that many of them were graduated with 24 credits. The new teacher signed off with "Jeez!" in amazement as he looked around the room to see how others were responding. I maintained a stony silence.

There were no more questions. Mr. Wey then explained that the cafeteria in the basement would be open today for lunch. Not many students living in town used it. Children who qualified on the basis of poverty could eat there free. The manager of the cafeteria knew who they were. Others could eat there for a nickel a meal. The food was simple, nutritious, and unusually well prepared, and was probably the only good meal some of the children, who came to school without having had breakfast, got all day. Teachers who wished to eat there could if they wanted to do so. A teacher paid a dime. With this announcement I made some rapid calculations. Perhaps I could manage to make my money last to the end of the month. We were dismissed. I was proud of myself for not having raised any questions or offered any observations.

On his way out, Mr. Wey stopped to ask whether my luggage had come. He said, "I knew it hadn't. You'll not get it until about Saturday, and you might never get all of it. I brought one of my razors for you. I use an electric razor in my office after I get here every morning. The razor I brought for you is on the shelf in my washroom. I don't have to use shaving cream with my electric razor, but when I lived in a fraternity house at 'Turr Hut'[17] I used to use just ordinary toilet soap when I shaved with a safety razor." I told him I had not tried to make it to the barbershop this morning and might like to come by and use his razor during my free period. "Come right on," he said. "If I'm not there the secretary will let you go on in." He then wanted to know how I was liking my room. I explained that I had bought a double blanket the day before and had been comfortable last night, but that I missed not having warm water for bathing. I had taken sponge baths in cold water two days in a row. He shook his head, laughed a light little laugh, and snorted in a manner I had observed before, perhaps one of his idiosyncrasies, and hurried on.

He was taking an interest in my personal welfare and had actually taken the time to bring me one of his own razors. Possibly he was not really as negatively disposed toward me as I had thought.

I hurried up to my room, noting that the water splotches on my clothes were now barely visible but that my pants were wrinkled and baggy and my coat sleeves were drawing up. I slipped into my office and pulled the manila folder and construction paper from under my shirt, which was still damp but not wet. My coat was almost dry. The uppers of my right shoe, soaked from the inside, were still wet and the sole of the shoe was beginning to curl up at the edges. I looked at my watch and decided I would have time, if I hurried, to replace the construction paper insole with another, for it had begun to roll up from the moisture it had drawn from my wet sock. I took the shoe off, drew out the construction paper, laid it down as a pattern on another sheet of folded construction paper, outlined it with a pencil, cut it out and slipped it into my shoe. The buzzer sounded while I was tying the lace.

Classes that morning were routine first-time classes. I was unable to associate many faces with names, even though I called rolls and looked students in the faces again as they held up hands in response. Few questions were asked about assignments, which preceded work periods followed by questions which I asked, all as an introduction to exercises and activities assigned for completion before the next meeting. Much of the work for the eighth grade section was review of essentials learned in the seventh grade.

My lunch hour began at twelve noon. Four or five of the older teachers were in line for the ten-cent lunch at the cafeteria, where we filed by a window to the kitchen, deposited our dimes on a counter, and waited for a helper to place before us a plate of food and a glass of milk. The lunch consisted of a modest but delicious serving of meat loaf, mashed potatoes with gravy, spinach, a hot biscuit, and two waffled oatmeal cookies, each about an inch by an inch and a half in size. That for a dime, an egg sandwich and coffee for break-

[17]Terra Haute, Indiana

fast for fifteen cents, suppers alternating between something inexpensive in my room and a 35 to 45 cent meal at a restaurant might enable me to make out to the end of the month without having to ask for an advance or sell my first month's check at a discount. There was not a special table for members of the faculty, but we sat together, some on one side and some on the other, at one of the ten or twelve long, narrow tables with folding wooden chairs on either side. We were unanimous in our praise of the quality of the food and wondered whether, at prices like that, the cafeteria could keep it up. In our conversation we judiciously refrained from discussing our classes and our students.

Following lunch, I walked off the school grounds and toward town a few yards to smoke a cigarette. Many of the school boys, some of whom were in my classes, were standing in little clumps as they smoked. I did not offer to join them, but when I took my position, two or three of my students from the morning section of the eighth grade came and stood with me. They rode the bus to school. We talked about what farm boys do before leaving for school in the morning, after returning from school in the afternoon, and on Saturday and Sunday. They were surprised that I knew about and understood living on a mountain farm.

I teased about our being "sinners," since smoking was forbidden on school grounds and we had to slip away from the righteous to enjoy our little taste of sin in shame. They found this most delightful. As time went on that year, the number to assemble with me for a smoke on and around a flat rock across the little branch that marked the boundary line of the school grounds grew. Smoking in washrooms, under the stairs, and in the furnace room stopped almost altogether. Mr. Wey noticed. Sometimes he would refer in announcements to "Smokers' Rock," but we called it "Sinners' Rock."

During my office hour Mr. Wey came by to tell me that he had called to see whether there might be a room at Faculty Apartments that I could use until the Antonakoses moved out. Faculty Apartments had no hot water either between terms, but the rooms there were nicer and I would have a better chance to become acquainted with other members of the faculty, it would be closer to the high school than Newland Hall, and I might enjoy it more, if I wished to move. Also, I could use guest towels and linens the hostess would provide, and there was maid service. I was delighted at the prospect for a change. Well, if I would come by the office after my last class, his secretary would let me know whether anything had been worked out, if he himself should not happen to be available. His visit was brief.

My hopes rose high. I would not be receiving the package from Mrs. Graham for four or five days, perhaps longer. In the meantime, sleeping between sheets again and with a pillow under my head, having a washcloth and a towel (even with only cold water for washing), maid service, the comfort of hearing other people walking in the halls or talking in rooms close by would be a luxury.

My afternoon class was less pleasant than the morning classes had been. The little girls seemed tired and irritable. Their response to my assignment of review exercises was a half-hearted one, and they buzzed like angry bees. When I proceeded to the question-and-

answer phase of my plan, though, they were more responsive, many speaking at once, but all continuing to carry along the undertone of talking back and forth, and passing things from one to the other, over which they giggled. When I led into the homework assignment one protested. The teachers all day had been piling on assignments. Besides, they had done all of this "old stuff" last year. Somewhat stunned, I responded that if I should discover next day they did not need the review, we would move right on to new things, but that I doubted seriously whether it would be possible to dispense with homework. They were in high school now, and high school students are expected to do more homework and library work than grade school students. A question then rose as to how much time a high school student should spend in preparing for each class she takes. Falling headlong into the trap, I thought an hour of preparation each day for subjects like English, social studies, mathematics, science might be about right. Classes like shop, typewriting, physical education might not require as much outside preparation. This appeared to precipitate general antagonism. How was one to find four or five hours a day to do homework? Study! Study! Study! Students need some time for fun. I recognized that I had a class of bright youngsters with some ideas of their own and that I would have to exert special effort and plan work and activities carefully to keep them motivated and achieving. It was too bad that we met each other so late in the day! We might get along better if we met the first hour in the morning.

Although the sun was not shining, the afternoon was warm. Even with the windows open, odors of fatigue, anger, and clothing that had been drying all day on uncomfortable and tiring little girls commingled in the room. I noted that I was smelling stale myself. Long before the buzzer was to sound, they began to assemble their books and materials on their chair arms in anticipation of a rush from the room. I reminded them that one of the regulations of the school was that students were not to rise from their seats until the teacher had formally dismissed the class. They waited, some with blazing eyes, others with smiles of amusement. Perhaps they were not a solid wall of resentment after all, I thought, as I said, "Class dismissed." Suddenly, I was very tired.

I walked to the classroom door and watched the students hurry down the hall. Then, turning off the lights, I went over and closed the windows and adjusted the venetian blinds. Back in my office, I stood at the window and studied the landscape for a few minutes, noting that the sky was darkening again. The air was clean and details in the landscape were sharp and clear, even in cloudy weather. The smoke from the town dump hovered close to the ground. I sat down for a few minutes of meditation and self-searching questions. While allowing my mind to flow freely and my memory to hopscotch the events of the day, I remembered that I had not gone by Mr. Wey's office to use the razor he had brought. I rubbed my hand against the bristles across my chin and decided that perhaps I had not needed a shave after all, but that I would go down and get the razor and use it until my luggage came. As I rose from the canebottom chair, I noted that a light shower was pattering against the window panes.

Mr. Wey was not in right then but he had left word that I would come by for the razor he had brought. Miss Teems, the very young secretary, went on to say that Mr. Wey

had asked her to tell me that a room in the Faculty Apartments was available until the college faculty members returned. I would have Miss Helen Foster's room. Miss Foster had called Mr. Wilson to say that she would not be arriving until after registration. If the Antonakoses should happen to be a day or two late getting away to Chapel Hill, by being in Miss Foster's room, I would still have a room until the apartment was available. The maid had prepared the room for me and I could move into it when I was ready.

I went into the principal's washroom and put his razor in my pocket, noting that I had not had a private washroom, not even a basin in a closet, in either of the offices I had occupied while I had been a high school principal.

On the way back to my office, I stopped at the top of the stairs and studied the mountain behind the town. I had not yet heard it referred to, so did not know whether it had a name. It rose high and green. I could see little weathered houses scattered about on its lower slopes and a trail wound to a saddle gap between it and the knob that reached toward the east. The sky was blue beyond the top of the mountain. Perhaps the clouds hanging over Boone would be moving on and I would be able to walk over and get my things in Newland Hall without getting wet again.

I prepared my lesson plans for the following day, giving special attention to the afternoon class, in case I should need to adapt my plans following the discussion of the review exercises I had assigned. By 3:30 the clouds had moved on and the sun was shining again.

I walked to Newland Hall along the narrow gravel road, noting that the earth was still wet and that the cardboard insole of my right shoe was soaking up moisture. The first thing I did in the room was to change my shoes and sox. I did not like to wear brown shoes with blue or grey suits, but the brown shoes had new half-soles and heels. I would have to wear them without regard for my preference until the end of the month. My brown belts were in one of the lost bags, so I would have to wear a black belt with brown shoes and a blue-grey suit until I could do better. The hat of panama straw, for which I had blue, maroon, and tan bands, but which then had a blue band on it, had become floppy and dented in the rain. I would try to shape it up and let it dry when I reached Faculty Apartments.

Packing was not difficult. The bag was not very heavy, but there was not room in it for the blanket. However, I had kept the bag in which the blanket came. My bag in one hand and my bundle under my other arm, I went by the keeper's room to leave the key and report that I was vacating the room. He was not there. I tore off a piece of the bag, held it against the door, and wrote on it a note thanking him for courtesies, especially the laundry cover that morning, and telling him that I was moving to Faculty Apartments. I wrapped the paper around the key and slid it under his door. I was pleased to be leaving Newland Hall.

Mrs. Coffey was expecting me. She had a key to Miss Foster's room ready for me and repeated what Miss Teems had told me about the maid having prepared the room for me. When I was ready to leave the room, I could return to her the linens, towels, and washrags.

I went up the three flights of creaking stairs and found the room, which was the middle one above the second floor reception room. A small but cheerful room with a large curtained window that overlooked the main part of the campus, it was furnished with bright surfaced maple furniture, a bed, a desk and chair, a bedside stand with a lamp on it, a bedroom chair, and a chest of drawers with a framed mirror on the wall above it. I could be comfortable here, I thought, as I unpacked things and put my cake of Bouquet soap, waterglass, and the borrowed razor in the little chest with a mirror in the door above the wash basin. I spread my blue-checked blanket over the bed and folded it back in readiness for a good night's rest.

Figure D. Faculty Apartments at Appalachian State Teachers College, circa 1942. Photo courtesy of Ruby Daniel.

I would have to have clean clothes, so I put shirts, underwear, and sox in the bag in which the blanket had come and walked uptown to a laundry I had seen up the street above the post office. My laundry would be ready for me the following afternoon, I was told. I decided also that having my suit pressed while I waited was a necessity, although it really needed cleaning, too. I went into a booth with a curtain before it and handed out my suit to be pressed. It was ready in a few minutes, the cloth stiffer than usual and the odor of perspiration rising warmly from it. Although creased and smoothed, the pressing had emphasized its shabbiness, it seemed to me. I paid a quarter and left.

Walking back to the bus station along the street the bus had come two days before, I looked in the windows of shops along the way. There was a theatre at which western movies were shown. Near it was a little restaurant called Ruth's Place, in which beer was served. Walker's Jewelry Store had displays of bargains in the window. Boone Tire and Furniture was exhibiting new styles in house furnishings. Another restaurant near Farmer's Hardware had a shelf of wine behind the counter where the cash register was. People were already waiting for dinner in it.

I turned at the bank down Depot Street, passed the ancient town hall, and made my way again toward Angell's Restaurant, thinking as I walked along that I might enjoy eating

next month in the restaurant in which wine was sold unless it was considered improper in Boone for a teacher to dine in a place in which alcoholic beverages were available. I stopped at the bus station and asked whether my bags had come. They had not, but they might be on the bus that would arrive from Elizabethton.

It was barely five o'clock, too early to eat. Only two or three persons were in Angell's Restaurant. Since I was wearing my brown shoes with new heels and soles, I could risk a walk on an unpaved road that led toward the town dump. If I were careful, perhaps I would not get my feet wet. I walked past a weathered log cabin of ancient vintage and with a vine-covered porch on which stood canebottom chairs, the same kind of a cabin and porch that I had seen many times over in the hollows and coves near Blaine. Old-fashioned flowers grew in the yard and against the chimney of stone and mud. I was surprised to see an authentic old cabin in town, and so close to the bus station. I thought it might well be the oldest residence in Boone and was probably being preserved by some family that had lived in it for generations, possibly since before the time the town was founded.

Beyond the cabin the road became little more than a muddy trail. Deciding not to pursue it farther, I turned back and walked along the little-used gravel road toward Newland Hall. The road ran parallel to the creek a part of the way. Behind a swampy area, in which was an ancient spring with a tree growing beside it, was a dark green cottage made of boards and battens and with a tarpaper-covered roof. A rich garden with green things growing in it stretched along the lower side of the hillside behind it. Later, I learned that the spring beside the tree had been the one from which Daniel Boone had carried water to his hunting cabin at the foot of the hill on which Newland Hall stood.

I could see that the narrow road had been a railroad bed until recently. A few half-rotted ties were strung along beside it and there were indentations where ties had been half buried along the edges of the road. At one point the creek bank had broken off almost to the edge of the road. The creek bed was littered with refuse from the town, and pieces of lumber, limbs of trees, parts of furniture, and evidences of the 1940 flood[18] that had washed the little railroad out, lay along the creek. Having walked as far as the row of black cherry trees that stood beside an abandoned fence at the southern end of the green hill, I turned back toward the restaurant.

A few people had arrived for dinner. A black-haired waitress, in her fresh green and blue dress, was taking orders. The ground beef steak and French fried potatoes I ordered were overcooked, prepared no doubt ahead of time in readiness for a rush when the bus arrived from Elizabethton, but the pickle was good, the coleslaw fresh, the milk rich and cold, and the price reasonable. It was pleasant also to hear again familiar tunes on the juke-box.

The bus, on time, was crowded, as it had been on Monday and Tuesday. Some of those who got off were persons who had gotten off the preceding day also, possibly sales-

[18]In 1940 flooding in the southern Appalachians devastated local residents, local communities, and local and regional transportation, disrupting rail connections for the ET&WNC Railroad as well, incuding the famous "Tweetsie" line into Boone.

men who worked the little towns between Elizabethton and Boone or teachers who commuted to their schools by bus because they could not get enough gasoline to drive their cars. I stood against the wall of the little bus station and watched a friendly and efficient black man unload the baggage, piece by piece, but my bags had not come.

Without bothering the station master for other opinions about when I might expect my bags to arrive, I struck out for Faculty Apartments, taking Depot Street back to the corner of the main street, where the ten-cent store stood, and along the street toward the corner at the Baptist Church. People lounged against iron railings to basement steps, leaned against the front ends of the few cars parked before the two drug stores and the restaurants, and stood in little groups near fireplugs. High school teachers occupied tables and booths near the windows of the restaurants. High school students sat on stools at the soda fountains in the drug stores. Teenage girls with shoulder-length hair and dressed in pastel-colored sweaters and skirts that came far below their knees, bobby sox, and dirty saddle oxfords hurried along by twos and threes, animated and laughing as they tossed their heads to keep their hair rippling toward their shoulders, perhaps on their way to the Pastime Theatre, for the Appalachian Theatre was being renovated following a recent fire.

People sat on the porches of the funeral home and the boarding house near the intersection of College Street and King Street. Conversations stopped altogether or were lowered as I passed, aware that I was being studied and imagining that someone on each porch was asking, "Who is that?" Children were playing on the grounds around the elementary school, and the clumps of flowers were fresh and bright in the yard of a pretty little native stone house set on a bank retained by a stone wall behind the college bookstore. Locust Street was only a gravel road then, but there was a concrete sidewalk that led past Faculty Apartments. Little girls were zipping up and down the walk on tricycles, some daring to ride no-handed. Everybody was enjoying the quiet and fresh afternoon following the rain. Boone was a lively little town.

I could smell pork chops and the onion in casseroles being prepared in apartments as I climbed the two flights of stairs to my room. No one was visible and the only audible sounds came indistinctly from radios in the apartments. Those who occupied rooms were out to dinner. My room, put in good order by the maid, was neat and clean and smelled fresh. There was, I thought, a faint odor of perfume hovering over the chest of drawers, perhaps a droplet of Miss Foster's caught in the tidy white cover that lay across the top. The wash basin shone white and clean, the light odor of my cake of Bouquet soap rising from it.

From the window I could see the roofs of the dormitories and the administration building with ventilators like those I had seen on barn roofs in Ohio. Rows of little chimneys stuck up along the lower edge of the black tarpaper roof of the oldest dormitory, a rambling two-story building of light-colored locally baked brick. Trees growing along the low ridge across the valley from the campus were sharply defined in the clear air and a dark little house in an upland field was silhouetted against the pale green of a mountain that lay across the valley on the other side of the ridge. A lazy column of blue smoke rose straight

from the chimney of the little house into a streak that lay parallel to the top of the ridge and across the face of the mountain beyond. We would probably have more rain by tomorrow, I thought.

I sat down at the little desk and wrote Sylvia a long letter in which I related the details of my second day on my new job, my impression of the town, and my new room and its pleasant appointments. I was becoming more comfortable in my relationships with the principal who was certainly a sincere, capable, and unusually well organized person and beginning to look as if he planned his work more carefully than I had ever done while I was a principal. His English needed improving, for young teachers made comments about it, but he was a mathematics teacher, and sometimes mathematics teachers do not see a need for improving their English.

The comfortable bed in Miss Foster's room, with sweet-smelling linens, a soft pillow, and my new cotton blanket, invited me to sleep readily. I woke up once in response to the wind whispering at the eaves just above my window and discovered that a soft rain was falling. Next morning the rain was still falling and wisps of cloud trailed along the top of the low ridge across the valley. While I was shaving with Mr. Wey's razor and using cold lather from Bouquet soap, I could smell bacon frying and coffee making in the apartments. I dressed in the same sox, underwear, and shirt I had worn the day before, but was pleased to think that my brown shoes would keep my feet dry and that my suit looked better for having been pressed. The rain continued in little soft gusts. I decided that since I could not risk a trip up the street for breakfast I would pick my teeth, clean them with the corner of a handkerchief, drink water for breakfast, and watch for a lull between showers to make a dash to the high school building.

There was never a time when the rain stopped completely, but I was able to rush to school through what was mostly a mist shaken down by low clouds without getting wet enough for my trousers to lose their crease. At the school ahead of the other teachers, I stopped by the principal's office to thank Mr. Wey for his razor and for making arrangements for me to move into Miss Foster's room. He did not invite me into his office, but when I responded to his question about breakfast that I did not have a raincoat, for my baggage had not yet arrived, and that without one I could not take a chance on getting wet by going to the restaurant for breakfast, he let me borrow his umbrella and gave me a big apple. I took them to my little office and ate the apple while watching from my window waves of steaming rain pass down the valley.

At the faculty meeting that morning we were told that most of the schedule problems had been worked out and that orders had been placed for needed textbooks. Teachers, many of them wet and steaming from their rush through the rain, had few questions. Mr. Wey explained again how absences and tardies were to be reported and emphasized the importance of knowing at all times where students were. Then he expressed the hope that new teachers would write out lesson plans for a while in order to avoid falling into the habit of lecturing all hour. Classroom procedures, he said, ought to be varied within the hour, perhaps four or five times, to hold the attention of the students and to challenge their inter-

ests. He called on a soft-voiced English teacher to tell how she varied her presentations in order to hold the attention of her students. She emphasized the value of speaking in a pleasantly modulated tone of voice, making the assignment at a logical time, even if in the middle of a class period, and of giving students up to fifteen or twenty minutes for supervised study in the classroom. Questions followed. Other teachers volunteered information about how they worked for variety. Two of the men teachers defended the lecture approach. Again, I listened attentively but offered no comments.

That was my third day to meet my students. By then I was able to call most of the boys in my homeroom by name but was still confusing Greens and Norrises, Greers and Moretzes in my classes. My sixth period class was bothering me. It seemed to have my most intelligent students, but many of them were irritable and quarrelsome. That day I discovered that most of them certainly did not need the review exercise that I had planned and was glad that I had prepared an alternate plan for them. But they were noisy, talked with one another out of the sides of their mouths while looking at me, and were ruthless and sometimes vicious in their comments to one another, which they blurted out without regard for the direction of the discussion.

Eating lunch in the cafeteria was not only economical for me but convenient also. The fall rainy season in Boone, more clearly defined than I had remembered it in Kentucky, continued for nearly two weeks. I was pleased to have Mr. Wey's umbrella for protection until my baggage finally arrived on Saturday, but my shoes became so sodden that mold had grown on the edges of the soles by the end of my first week in Boone. Showers were unpredictable. Weather could appear stable but a cloud moving along the side of Rich Mountain could bring a deluge within ten or fifteen minutes. Between showers that afternoon I walked uptown for my laundry but having already learned the unpredictability of the weather, I carried Mr. Wey's huge umbrella with me. On the way back I stopped at the post office where I picked up a letter from Sylvia and instructed the gracious little clerk, whose name I learned later was Nell Coffey Linney, to send my mail in the future to Faculty Apartments.

For the first four or five evenings I walked alone to a restaurant for dinner, for which I usually paid 35 to 45 cents. Then Miss Donald, the pleasant sandy-haired physical education teacher, asked me one day at lunch whether I would care to go along with her and two or three others to dinner. I gladly accepted. Only two of the other teachers were male, Dr. Orby Southard, who taught vocational agriculture, and John Nelson, who taught social studies. Both of them were married and lived in apartments with cooking facilities. I was the only male who was free to socialize at dinner time with the young ladies. We usually went as a group about 5:30 to the Gateway Restaurant. The other young ladies were pleasant and I enjoyed them but Ruby Donald and Doris Penix, who knew people at Morehead, including Dean William H. Vaughan,[19] who had been my high school principal at Louisa and my friend ever since, gradually became my friends, with whom I could discuss matters that I did not care to discuss with cute Miss Poole, whose homeroom boys soon became

[19]See Cratis Williams's (1983) biography, *William H. Vaughan: A Better Man Than I Ever Wanted to Be.* Morehead, KY.: Morehead State University.

troublesome for her, and vivacious and talkative Miss Tucker, the new home economics teacher, who was disappointed in her job, critical of her students and Mr. Wey, and unhappy in a small town like Boone, where nothing exciting ever happened.

With my meals costing me only 60 to 75 cents a day I began to feel comfortable about whether I had money enough in my pocket to meet my expenses to the end of the month. But Sylvia took a turn for the worse. Her throat had become so sore again that she was finding it difficult to eat. She had developed a low-level fever and was suffering from nightmares, from which she awoke streaming with perspiration. Doctors were less confident about her situation than they had been at the time I stopped to see her at the end of August. She wanted me to come to see her that weekend, my second in Boone, if I could possibly do it. Also, while I was there, I could have my lungs X-rayed. She had spoken to Dr. Edwards about it, and he had said he would make an appointment for me if I could come to Pinecrest.

After my first four or five days in Boone, I had begun to suffer from insomnia and often woke from fitful sleep and distressing nightmares, wringing wet with perspiration. I was tired much of the time despite my good diet, including two glasses of milk a day and adequate proteins, cod-liver oil, and iron supplements. In addition to walking, I also did pushups and stretching and bending exercises each morning. But I had not gained any weight. The cough I had developed in Huntington had cleared up, but I had an early morning cough and continued to clear my throat a great deal all day long. I, too, thought I ought to have my lungs X-rayed.

But I could not afford expenses for a trip to Beckley from the nine or ten dollars I had in my pocket, all that stood between me and starvation. I wrote Sylvia that I would see whether it was possible for me to sell my check for the first month at a discount, as we had sometimes done in Kentucky, or borrow against it. I would write again the next night and let her know what arrangements I had been able to make.

The following morning I asked Mr. Wey at the end of the faculty meeting whether I might speak to him privately about a personal matter. He invited me into his office, where I explained to him that my wife had become quite ill and wanted me to come to see her that weekend. He made veiled references to whether a child might be arriving. I made no attempt to clarify the situation, thinking it to my advantage that no one suspect she had tuberculosis of the throat. I needed some money, I explained, for I did not have enough to go see her and meet my own essential needs for the remainder of the month. He explained that the selling of checks at a discount was not permitted and that there was no fund from which one could borrow. I explained that I thought I could make out with ten dollars. Mr. Wey told me to go see Mr. Chapell Wilson, who had plenty of money. He might be able to help me. Mr. Wilson's office was in the Elementary School Building. Mr. Wey would call him and make an appointment for me. I told him I would be glad to see Mr. Wilson, either during the lunch hour or my free period. He called. Mr. Wilson would see me as soon as I could get over there that morning. I had about ten minutes before my homeroom met.

I rushed to Mr. Wilson's office, my first visit there. Mr. Wilson, who was seated at his desk, invited me to sit down. I started to relate to him what I had told Mr. Wey, but before I could get into my request, Mr. Wilson took his pocketbook from his hip pocket, extracted a twenty-dollar bill, and handed it to me. I was about to say that I had wanted to borrow only ten dollars. "You may hand it back to me after you get your first check," he said. I assured him of my gratitude and left.

Having thirty dollars in my pocket removed a nagging fear that had possessed me from the time of my arrival in Boone. Suddenly, I enjoyed a freedom that I had not known before. I could afford now to use toothpaste every time I washed my teeth, to take things out to the laundry every week, and to have a juice with a full breakfast occasionally instead of restricting myself to an egg sandwich and coffee every morning. I might have enough money to buy a magazine or two to take to Sylvia, to give her a supply of envelopes and writing paper, to leave two or three dollars with her so she could send out for notions she might need. Financial independence gave me a new charge of energy. My classes seemed more alert and responsive that day. That night I told Sylvia in my letter of the generous help Mr. Wilson had provided and that she could expect me to be at Pinecrest Saturday morning. I slept well that night.

The college students would arrive the following week. Registration would be Monday and Tuesday. I would meet for the first time my college class in methods of teaching English in the high school on Wednesday. I had gone through the materials in the file Mrs. Rivers had left and examined the textbook she had used in the course. Mr. Wey was not prepared to tell me much about how I should teach the class, the number of students I might expect to register for it, or the objectives I should expect to hold in mind for the course. I asked whether he thought it out of order for me to seek a conference with the chairman of the department to discuss the course with him.

Mr. Wey thought that would be a very good thing to do. I could probably find Dr. Abrams, the chairman, in his office any afternoon, for the college faculty members had returned from vacations and most of them were on campus and getting ready for registration.

That afternoon I walked to the post office to post letters I had written the evening before. On my way back to campus I came to the corner at the Baptist Church and then came along College Street by the funeral home, Agle Apartments, a boarding house on the corner at Howard Street, and past the Episcopal Church. Sitting on the stone wall in front of a beautiful little stone cottage with a profusion of flowers blooming in the front yard was a well dressed old man with a wide, dark mustache, his glasses resting far down on his nose, and his blocked grey felt hat pulled so low on his forehead that a ring of baldness showed below it behind. A prominent black mole or wart was visible on the lower part of one cheek. Immediately, I thought of Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, and a demented old baldheaded man with a wide mustache and a wart on the lower part of his cheek in my home community in Kentucky who thought he was the president of the United States. Standing in front of the man seated on the wall was another old man, quite grey, tall, and

wearing a dark, carefully brushed suit. His mouth hung open much of the time and he seemed slightly palsied. He was listening to what the man on the wall was saying. Standing between the clump of flowers in the yard and the stoop of the cottage was an animated and fine looking older woman but considerably younger than the men, I thought. She was listening intently to the old man sitting on the wall.

As I approached them, the standing man, apparently ignoring for a moment what the other one was saying, turned toward me. I spoke as I started to leave the sidewalk in order not to come between the two. Only the standing man responded to my greeting.

"Are you one of the new high school teachers?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied. "My name is Williams. I came down from West Virginia to teach English in the high school."

"My name is Williams, too," he said, as he reached to shake hands with me. "I am the geography teacher at the College. Are you related to Williams families in North Carolina?"

I assured him that I was not to my knowledge related to Williams families south of Virginia.

"I would like for you to meet Dr. B.B. Dougherty, the president of the College."

Dr. Dougherty and I shook hands. No effort was made to introduce me to the charming lady behind the flowers. Dr. Dougherty asked a question or two about my educational background and my teaching experience, his voice low pitched and at a very slow pace but with a reflective hum behind it. He welcomed me to Boone and the College.

Thinking it unusual that the president of the College and the professor of geography should seem so aged in their appearance, I hurried on to the administration building, the one with white pillars in front and with "girls" over one ground-level entrance and "boys" the other as if they were doors to toilets. I climbed the steps and entered through the double front doors of the building. Most of the office doors were open. Unable at first to determine which of the doors was to the office of the dean of the College, I made a tour of the main floor, peeping into all of the offices that were open. A man with a shock of iron grey hair and keen eyes came from an office at the end of the hall and asked, "May I help you?" Unwilling to admit that I needed help, I replied, "No, thank you." Later I learned that the helpful man was Mr. Herman R. Eggers,[20] the registrar. Twenty-five years later, he reminded me of our first meeting. He had decided, he said, that I was one of those who wants to discover things for himself.

I found the dean's office and presented myself to the young secretary with piercing eyes and dark shoulder-length hair and asked whether I might see the dean. She went into his office, returned in a moment, and told me that Dean Rankin[21] would see me. I went in.

[20]Herman Eggers (1898-1990), was born in Mabel, North Carolina, and received his M.A. from George Peabody College in 1927. He served as teacher, registrar, and dean of student affairs between 1929 and his retirement in 1970.

Dean Rankin rose to greet and shake hands with me. He invited me to sit down. I explained that I was a new English teacher at the high school and was scheduled to teach the course in methods of teaching English in the high school. I wanted to meet Dr. Abrams,[22] the chairman of the English department, and discuss with him the contents of the course and to hear any advice he might have to give me about how I should conduct the course. He stepped to the door of the reception room and asked the secretary to invite Dr. Abrams to come to the office to meet me. He returned to his desk and engaged me in conversation about my educational preparation and previous teaching experience. I was impressed by his warmth, graciousness, and extremely fine and clean looking white hair, but noted that he had a slightly crossed eye and seemed like a very old man.

Soon Dr. Abrams came bouncing into the office through the door to the hall rather than from the reception room. Dean Rankin and I both rose, and Dean Rankin introduced us. Dr. Abrams shook my hand with vigor and we sat down, Dr. Abrams sliding far down into his chair and resting one spidery leg upon the other at the ankle, his long slender foot wriggling up and down stiffly. I was shocked by the homeliness of this little man who appeared to be between forty and forty-five years old. He looked at me for a moment, his tiny blue eyes resting alternately on me and then searching for something on the ceiling, his glasses with large lenses hugging his face tightly, his nose bashed in and twisted slightly to one side, his mouth curling up gleefully under the shabbiest excuse for a mustache I had ever seen, and his chin trembling so fast that it appeared to be trying to escape from his face. Then, his foot held rigidly in position, he said, "I want to tell you, sir, that I am mighty glad to have you join us. With you here, people can no longer say I am the ugliest man in Boone."

I was completely disarmed. Certainly, I had not done well at all in concealing my shock. Caught off guard, I had not a shred of *savior faire* and he had dressed me down with one rapier-like thrust. Dean Rankin laughed with good humor, Dr. Abrams laughed with good will, and I laughed in my abashment. I told Dr. Abrams why I had come to see him, but that if he were very busy I would be glad to come back any afternoon that week except Friday, when I planned to leave town as soon after school as I could get away. He was glad I had come to discuss my course with him. In fact, he could not remember that any other high school teacher to whom the methods class was assigned had ever come to discuss it with him before beginning the class and he regretted that some of them had not. He sprang from his seat and invited me to go to his office with him.

Taking leave of Dean Rankin, who continued to smile in welcome, I hurried along beside Dr. Abrams to his office at the east end of the hall on the ground floor. Dr. Abrams

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[21]J.D. Rankin (1875-1966) earned his M.A. and Doctor of Theology degrees from Oskaloosa College and was professor of English before becoming dean of the college, a position which he held from 1925 until 1955. He was also president of the college for three months following B.B. Dougherty's retirement until Dr. William Plemmons assumed that position in 1955.

[22]Amos Abrams received his M.A. from Duke University and his Ph.D. from Cornell and taught English at Appalachian from 1932 to 1946. He served as the first head of the English department, a position which he held until leaving Appalachian to become editor of *North Carolina Education.*

took his seat in front of a desk crowded into a corner and invited me to have a seat near him. He, too, asked about my academic preparation and my experience as a teacher of English. I explained to him that I had taken an excellent course, team taught by two splendid teachers, in methods of teaching in the high school and had done my project work in the teaching of English and history but that I had never had a course in the teaching of English in high school. He thought that I had taught high school English long enough for my experience to fully compensate for my not having had a specific course in the teaching of English. He had not himself had such a course either, but he had taught English in high school before coming to the College and had taught the English methods courses regularly for several years at Appalachian.

We discussed at length what should be included in an English methods class. He rose from his desk and found three texts for the course that he had found helpful when he taught it and gave them to me. They would give alternate points of view on teaching English that I might sometimes want to consider, he thought.

When I asked about the quality of students I might expect to register for the course, Dr. Abrams discussed proudly the academic preparation of the students and went into detail in describing the courses in English all were required to take. He thought I might expect as many as 30 or 35 to show up for the course, about 25 young ladies, and he could not with confidence say how many young men, for men were being drafted into the armed services rapidly. I might have only a handful of men, though, those who had been classified 4F or were deferred for some reason, and it was possible there would be no young men in the class at all.

Not wanting to impose on so affable and generous a man, I arose to go after we had talked about the methods course. I paused in front of a curious manuscript in old-fashioned handwriting in a frame on the wall. It was a "ballet" of an old song one of his students had brought him, Dr. Abrams said. He collected folk ballads as a hobby, he explained. I told him that I, too, had collected ballads and songs in the hills of eastern Kentucky and had written my M.A. thesis on them. Standing in his office, we became animated in our discussion of the Appalachian variants of the English and Scottish popular ballads. We exchanged accounts of our experience as collectors and soon Dr. Abrams had me singing fragments of both traditional ballads and indigenous ballads and songs I had collected. He took me to a closet in the corner of his classroom and showed me his Wilcox-Gay disc recorder and a stack of field recordings he had made.

Dr. Abrams kept walking along beside me, all excited about ballads, as I moved toward the ground level exit from that end of the building, the one that had "girls" above it. But it had begun to rain. The shower was too brisk for me to venture out into it with the books under my arm. We stood in the door and talked about ballads. The shower had stopped and the sun was shining again when I finally made my departure at the end of a visit that must have lasted an hour and a half.

That night I wrote Sylvia a long letter in which I told about having met the aged president of the College, who sat, like Humpty-Dumpty, on a stone wall while I talked with

him; the dean of the College, who seemed as old as the president; and homely but charming and friendly Dr. Abrams, the chairman of the English department and an avid collector of ballads and folk songs. I had liked all three of them and was looking forward to meeting the English methods class for the first time the following week.

Chapter Four

A Visit to Sylvia

Friday afternoon at four o'clock I boarded a bus in Boone for Sparta, where I would catch a bus for Bluefield, West Virginia, about seven o'clock. The bus was not crowded. I had a seat alone by a window. It was a cloudy afternoon, but we did not go through any rainstorm, though a light shower greeted us just as we arrived in Sparta. The rolling mountains, many of them covered with lush pastures to the top, were peaceful and lovely. The mountains one saw traveling eastward from Boone were less rugged than those between Boone and Elizabethton, Tennessee, but many of them were high, perhaps as high as those along the Tennessee border, I thought. West Jefferson, the terminus of a railroad that crossed the mountains from Abingdon, Virginia, was about the size of Boone, but seemed to be more of a business town than Boone did. Jefferson, the county-seat town, was a small and quaint little village dominated by a neglected courthouse with two or three white "inns" or boarding houses close by. Many of the somewhat pretentious farmhouses along the road needed paint and some of the barns were dilapidated, but the region had withstood the agonies of the Great Depression more gracefully, it seemed to me, than had the farming sections of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. The people living in Ashe County and Alleghany County, though they had little money with which to keep their homes and barns in repair, appeared to be living comfortably, for gardens were producing, corn was vigorous and still green, even in the middle of September, and livestock grazed contentedly in the mountainside pastures.

In Sparta I ate a hamburger at a little restaurant near the bus stop and then stood with two or three others against a building to wait for the bus from Winston-Salem. It grew dark while we waited, and a light patter of rain fell. One of those waiting was a gregarious country man, dressed in his best and wear-

ing a felt hat of good quality, the one article of clothing that proclaimed the self-esteem of the mountaineer who took a trip away from home. He let us know that he was Joe Clark and engaged our attention while we waited for the bus, which arrived on time.

Only two or three got off the bus at Sparta. I carried my light bag aboard and placed it on the luggage rack above the seats in which Joe Clark and I sat. The bus was crowded, but no one had to stand up. Most of the passengers were black people who sat quietly together from the rear forward. We moved on after only a brief stop and were crossing into Virginia within just a few minutes, it seemed. It was too dark to see any of the Virginia countryside. I remember only two things between Sparta and Bluefield that impressed me. The bridge across the New River, on the headwaters of which Boone is located, was longer than I had expected it to be and the river, which I could see only vaguely, seemed wide and shallow. The road across the high mountain at the edge of Bluefield twisted along a course of sharp curves to the top, from which we could see the lights of Bluefield far below us and then darted along hairpin loops into the city, the gears of the bus grinding and growling as the driver struggled with them.

Garrulous Mr. Clark kept me entertained. He was going to Beckley to visit a daughter who lived there. He was, he said, one of a line of many Joe Clarks, the best known of whom had been the subject of a well known song called "Old Joe Clark" that nearly everybody must have heard some time. He recited for me some verses of the song that I had not heard.

In Bluefield many of the black passengers left the bus. Others, mostly black, boarded the bus there. I was impressed by the finery of the young black men who were waiting to get on the bus. Attired in homburg hats, long dark jackets, loose gray trousers gathered in narrow cuffs at the bottom, and with long silvery chains dangling from their waistbands, they looked as if they were in a style parade. The zoot suit had arrived. Young people, by then able to earn money in war industries, were responding to the spirit of the times by becoming "sharp" dressers.

Mr. Clark ran down soon after we left Bluefield. He and I both dozed in our seats as the bus hurried along through the darkness toward Beckley, where it arrived at eleven o'clock.

Beckley was a rest stop for the bus. Nearly everybody got off. Some of those who were leaving the bus at Beckley had relatives waiting for them, but many took off on foot to their destinations. In days of gasoline rationing only a few cars were parked at the station, which was crowded with people milling about. Zoot-suited blacks, gathered into groups of three or four, talked quietly, some with homburgs pulled low on their foreheads. Most of them, apparently going on to Charleston, were stretching their legs while the driver enjoyed a sandwich and a cup of coffee. Joe Clark chose a seat and waited for someone to meet him. I stood about to watch the bus load for the trip on to Charleston.

After the bus left, only a few people remained in the station. I sat on the end of a bench and considered whether I should try to find a hotel room or sit in the station all

night and engage a room at Mrs. Mann's boarding house for Saturday night. It was too late to go to her house that night, I thought. Although I had money to pay for a hotel room, it would be expensive, perhaps as much as $3.50. A year earlier I was working eight hours a day for little more than $3.50. I was reluctant to spend that much for a hotel room. Sitting up all night to save $3.50 was certainly easier than working all day to make $3.50, I concluded.

Becoming very tired after an hour or two, I crawled through the arms of two seats, rested my feet on my bag, and went to sleep. But I did not sleep long. Someone pushed against my feet suddenly and I woke up. A policeman was looking down at me. "People are not permitted to lie down in the seats," he explained. "You will have to sit up or find you a hotel room."

I pulled myself from under the arms of the seats and stood up, embarrassed to note that the station attendant was smiling ambiguously at me as if he were not certain whether he should consider me a bum or a client of the bus company. Joe Clark, still sitting there, stared curiously but did not smile. Others sat rigidly and watched. It was as if the policeman and I were engaging in a dialogue before a fixed tableau. The intense quiet allowed everybody to hear what we said. I was asked to show my identification card, what I did for a living, whether I had a bus ticket, why I was in Beckley. The policeman smiled following my response to each of his questions. I explained that I usually stayed at Mrs. Mann's down the street there, pointing in the direction of her place, but that I thought it was too late when the bus arrived to report there. He volunteered helpfully, "You might find a room at the Hotel Milner up the street. If they have a room, they will probably charge you only two dollars."

I picked up my bag and started out. The policeman walked with me to the curb and pointed out the hotel sign to me. I half turned to thank him and observed that the people sitting in the station were all laughing at something Joe Clark was telling them. I was glad that I had not told Joe Clark that I worked at Appalachian and that I had found it necessary to say to the policeman only that I was a teacher from North Carolina. I hoped I would never see Joe Clark again. As I walked toward the Hotel Milner I concluded that the station attendant had called the policeman, who quite possibly received payoffs from the Hotel Milner, and who had put on a show, at my expense, for the amusement of the attendant and as an advertising gimmick for the Hotel Milner.

A single room was available at the Milner for two dollars. There was a wash basin in the room, the clerk said, but the bathroom was down the hall. I registered for the room and paid in advance. I asked about a restaurant in which I could have breakfast. The hotel had no dining room, the clerk said, but there were restaurants close by. He gave me a key to the room and sent me up alone, for the Milner had no bellboys. I was surprised to find a very clean but small room with a single bed in it. The sheets and pillow case, towels and wash cloths were clean, too, but the sheets had been patched and the towels were frayed. There was a small desk in a corner beside the bed and a lamp with a bulb in it that would burn. There was a cheap cotton mattress on the bed, but it seemed to be almost new. I

was so pleased with the room that I decided I would engage it for Saturday night, too.

Saturday was a bright day. Visibility was clear and trees were beginning to show touches of autumn. I ate a full breakfast at a restaurant only a few doors from the entrance to the hotel. After enjoying a second cup of better coffee than I had been getting in Boone, I went back to the hotel and engaged my room for Saturday night, too. I then returned to my room and groomed myself for a visit with Sylvia. I stopped at a stationery shop and bought paper and envelopes and two magazines to take with me to the sanitarium and walked back to the bus station, where I knew I could catch a local bus to Pinecrest. When I peeped into the waiting room of the bus station, I was relieved to see that a different attendant was on duty, but Joe Clark, his head hanging to one side and his hat pulled down over his eyes, was still sitting there, mostly on his shoulders, with his feet sticking far out in the aisle. Perhaps his daughter had not known that he was coming to visit her.

As I rode the local bus out to Pinecrest, I saw few cars on the road. The air was clear, crisp, and cool. The sanitarium was located in a healthy spot, I thought.

Sylvia was expecting me. She was bright eyed and excited, but talked only in a whisper. I gave her the paper and envelopes and the magazines. She looked at them briefly and asked that I put them on a chest of drawers in the corner of the room. Her hands were warm and perspiring and her brow felt fevered. She had not slept well. She had not been able to eat all of her breakfast, she said, and had reached the place that she did not like the food that was brought to her. She thought there was not enough good meat in her diet. She wanted hamburgers and asked that I bring her one when I went out for my lunch.

She was disappointed that I had not gained any weight after going to Boone. I was hollow eyed and pale. She inquired about my diet and asked whether I was taking my cod liver oil and mineral supplements. She advised that I eat two eggs for breakfast and drink at least a quart of whole milk each day. If I could have milk delivered every morning at my apartment, when I got into it, I could keep it cool in the refrigerator and drink a glass of milk before going to bed each night. She was worried about me. Dr. Edwards had made arrangements for me to have a chest X-ray that morning. We needed to keep me well, for if I should become sick and have to stop working, there would be no way out for us. We had no financial reserves, little of value that we could sell, no insurance to protect us in illness, and we were in debt. Her analysis of our situation was chilling. She shook with emotion and tears glistened in her eyes, larger than I had remembered them, for she had lost much weight since I had seen her only two weeks earlier. My persistent fatigue, insomnia, troubled dreams, night sweats, and low-level fever in the afternoon were certainly symptoms of illness, I thought, but I could only say in my helplessness that I would work as long as I was able and do the best I could to recover from illness while I worked.

She talked about how much she enjoyed the personnel at the sanitarium and of friendships she had made with ambulatory patients who were permitted to visit her. On warm days she had been taken in a wheelchair to sit with others in the sun and had made friends. I could tell that nurses and attendants who came by the room while I was there found Sylvia delightful and clever. They enjoyed being with her and were reluctant to leave her.

We then discussed in detail my work at Appalachian. She responded with glee when I told her again about the helpful and efficient principal of the school; Mr. Wilson's generous help when I needed extra money to come to see her; the quaint and aged President Dougherty, a bachelor who lived in a garage apartment because he did not think it appropriate that he live in the same house in which his brother's widow lived; courteous and gentle Dean Rankin, who appeared to be about as old as Dr. Dougherty; and bouncing Dr. Abrams who shared with me an interest in Appalachian ballads and songs. She asked many questions in her love for North Carolina and, with the hope that she might recover, longed for the time when she could be with me in Boone.

After I had been there an hour or two, Dr. Edwards came by the room. Sylvia responded to him with admiration and trust. He enjoyed being with her, I thought. We engaged in playful conversation for a half hour or longer before he invited me to go with him to the X-ray room where I had my chest X-rayed. Dr. Edwards stayed around until the films were developed. He then went over them with me and pointed out an area of infection in the apex of my right lung. I had tuberculosis. Prepared for the bad news, I was not shocked, but I saw immediately that hardships lay ahead for me.

Dr. Edwards said I should enter the sanitarium at once. In fact, he said, a space was available then. I explained that I could not possibly enter the sanitarium, that I had no financial reserves, insurance, or resources. It would be necessary for me to continue working as long as I was able. In that case, he said, the single most important thing for me to do was to accept my situation without worrying. Worry saps one's energy and causes more trouble than anything else. Neither should I worry about my work. I must learn how to turn off my troubles and relax, how to stop my work when I'm tired and take it up again after I have rested. I should eat two or three eggs a day, a plenty of good meat and a balanced vegetable diet, drink at least a quart of whole milk a day, take cod liver oil and mineral supplements before breakfast and dinner, rest for at least a half hour after lunch and dinner, and sleep at least eight hours every night. I could try this for three months and then return for another X-ray to check on my progress. It might be better, he said, if we reported to Sylvia that I was under observation and should have my chest X-rayed every three months until I had regained weight and felt more energetic.

Dr. Edwards did not return with me to Sylvia's room. I tried to look as nonchalant as I could when I entered the room. Sylvia wanted to know all about what the X-ray had revealed. I told of having had the heavily scarred areas in my lungs pointed out to me and that they looked much as they had looked when I had been invited to see X-ray films of my lungs at the health center at the University of Kentucky before our marriage. Dr. Edwards had prescribed a diet for me, advised that I rest for a half hour after lunch and after dinner both and sleep eight hours at night, continue taking cod liver oil and mineral supplements, not worry about anything, and report for X-rays regularly every three months for a year or two until our period of stress was over and I had begun to feel better.

Sylvia wanted to know whether my schedule would permit me to have a rest period after lunch. My free period, fortunately, was just after lunch. I was required to be in my

office, but I could lie on my back on a table in the office and rest and doze. Anyone coming to see me would enter through the door to my classroom. Since the only door from the hall to my classroom was at the rear of the room and since there were wooden floors in the building, I could hear footsteps in time to get off the table and into a chair beside my work table before the caller reached my office. I would not always be able to rest after lunch, but I could most of the time, I thought.

We discussed the apartment I was to have and into which I was to move the following week. It was on the third floor and at the end of a hall. It would be a quiet and restful place. Milk was delivered early each morning at the doors of teachers who wanted it. I would have an electric stove and a small refrigerator. I could cook a good breakfast and have both cereal and citrus fruit with it, and I could prepare my own dinner in time to eat and take a short nap before reporting to the school for play rehearsals, with which I would be spending much time all year long. It would be possible, I thought, for me to follow Dr. Edwards's advice, at least most of the time, and to keep my condition a secret, for I was sure everybody would be alarmed if it were known that I might have tuberculosis. I did not want to run the risk of being asked to resign by arousing suspicions or raising questions.

We discussed diet and cooking. Sylvia thought I should have soft-boiled eggs and little or no bacon or sausage for breakfast, rich whole milk with my cereal, and an orange or a grapefruit rather than the canned juice then available. I should also drink a glass of milk along with breakfast, another when I got home in the afternoon, two glasses with my dinner, and another before going to bed. It was important that I have a generous serving of beef, or fish, or chicken for dinner and that I have boiled or baked potatoes with butter rather than fried potatoes. I must be sure to have a good fresh vegetable salad with dinner. We discussed costs, too, and decided that I might be able to eat very well for as little as fifty cents a day but that I ought to go out for dinner once or twice on weekends.

"Keeping house" would be a problem for me, she thought, but I would find it simple if I followed the three basic rules we had used while she was able to keep house. Provide for time, she reminded me, to make up my bed as soon as I got up, wash my dishes and clean and restore to their places pots and pans used in cooking, put up left over food, and hang up my clothing before I left my apartment for work. I was reminded that one is not ready to leave a house or apartment until it has been cleaned up enough for him not to be embarrassed to bring a guest home. A little dusting and cleaning is needed every day and a thorough cleaning at least once a week. One saves time by washing dishes after each meal and spares himself the dread of facing a stack of dirty dishes before he can prepare the next meal.

During the morning several persons came by for brief visits, including a young woman from Louisa who had moved to West Virginia after she married. When lunchtime came, I left to find lunch for myself at a stand near the sanitarium. After lunch, I walked for a while along the road beyond the sanitarium and thought about our situation. For the first time I had to admit to myself that Sylvia would not recover. Her condition was worsening and new medications were not effective. She was taking medication to relieve the

pain in her throat, not to cure her illness. Dr. Edwards had thought it most unlikely that she would get well but she might linger for a year or two before dying. I had not yet had time to consider alone the implications of my actually having tuberculosis. Adjusting to that would be a slow and agonizing process that I would have to work through alone. I would not be able to share with anyone the heavy burden of my secret, but I believed that I could come through if I found it possible to follow Dr. Edwards's advice. The trouble had been discovered early. The spot, perhaps no bigger than a dime, had not been there long. If by rest and adequate diet I were able to keep it from spreading during the following three months, I could most likely recover within six months to a year. I had no choice. I had to concentrate on getting well.

Not wanting to disturb Sylvia during nap time, I sat in a lounge in the sanitarium for an hour. Others coming to see relatives and friends arrived and waited in the lounges for visiting time, some carrying flowers and gift packages. Talk was low. Many sat in solemn silence. I closed my eyes but was not able to nap. When it was nearly time for visiting hours, I returned to the roadside stand and bought a hamburger for Sylvia.

Sylvia was awake and waiting when I arrived. An attendant had helped her brush and arrange her hair. She wanted to eat at once the hamburger I had brought, but had first to inhale into her throat a special powder she took ten or fifteen minutes before eating that numbed her throat so she would not suffer pain when she swallowed. She asked that I hand to her a pipette and a bottle of white crystals. When she breathed the crystals through the pipette into her throat, her eyes bulged and she looked frightened. After allowing time for the medication to take effect, she began eating the hamburger as rapidly as she could. She was hungry for it and wanted to eat it all before feeling returned to her throat. She perspired as she ate. After she ate, she drank a glass of water, which she sipped slowly. She was exhausted.

That afternoon we talked about things her mother had written. She had received letters also from friends in Louisa and Huntington. We did not refer to her illness or to my work at Appalachian. She was interested in the progress of friends she had made in the sanitarium and we discussed war news. An attractive young woman who had made much progress toward recovery from lung cancer and was expecting to be released from the sanitarium within a few weeks called. She was radiant and smiling. Sylvia laughed a great deal in response to her witticisms and optimism. After she left, Sylvia told of her affair with young Dr. Edwards and of their shock when a nurse had popped into her room and found her and Dr. Edwards making love behind the door. Both she and the doctor had discussed their affair with Sylvia. They had feared that the nurse might cause problems for them, but so far the nurse had apparently said nothing about what she had seen. Sylvia had teased them by writing doggerel about their affair, which she read when they came by to see her.

The afternoon passed rapidly. The light conversation, good humor, and laughter had been good for us, but each was aware, too, of the depth of the agony of spirit that lay beneath the laughter. As the time for the end of visiting hours approached Sylvia asked me to go out and buy another hamburger for her. She would inhale crystals and get ready to

eat it while I was gone. I hurried out for the hamburger. Sylvia did not feel that her throat was numbed enough for her to eat it by the time I got back. Visiting hours were just about over. We held hands for a moment and looked deeply into each other's eyes. I told her I would be back for an hour's visit the following morning and hurried away. When I looked from a window in the hallway across a court outside her window, I saw Sylvia propped on her pillows and eating ravenously the hamburger I had brought.

The bus back to Beckley was crowded. The bus station was filled with tired people who were waiting. Crowds of young people, most of them black, stood along the sidewalk in front of the station. When I got off the bus I hurried to my room in the Hotel Milner, cracked my window two or three inches, lay on my back on the little bed, and stared at the ceiling a long time as I thought about my situation. I was numbed with grief for Sylvia and stunned by the knowledge that I had tuberculosis, too. Nothing was clear to me, but I knew I could recover if I could learn how not to worry and to lay my work aside and forget about it when I became tired. I had never been successful in doing either. I recalled the advice the black shoeshine man, the odor of his night of partying still clinging to him, had given me in Charleston while I was on my way to Boone. White folks take life too seriously and worry too much. I must learn to relax. Everybody suffers, mostly in secret probably. My suffering, as painful as it was, was not really unique. My job was to learn how to deal with it, how to keep it from becoming the main thing in my life.

After dinner at the restaurant in which I had eaten breakfast, I walked for a while, came back by the bus station where I sat for a half hour and watched people come and go, most of them dressed up for Saturday night and looking happy. When I began to doze, I got up, selected a newspaper from the rack, and returned to the hotel. Reading in the little room was not pleasant. The lamp on the bedside table had a 25-watt bulb in it, and the ceiling light must have had a 60-watt bulb in it. Soon my eyes began to burn and I became drowsy. Realizing that I was very tired, I prepared myself for bed, cracked the window, turned off the lights, and lay down. The murmur of street noises and the far off chorus of katydids singing a plaint to departing summer eased me into sleep.

About two o'clock I woke up with a start. I had not had a nightmare, but I was perspiring and felt clammy. I sat in darkness on the side of the bed and reflected. Sylvia had been getting better until only a week or two before she asked that I come that weekend to see her. We had thought she might be able to join me in the little apartment in Boone before autumn was over. That would not be possible. I wanted to be with her in her illness, to come and sit beside her for a while every day, to give her support as her illness grew worse. I could not do that. I felt uneasy and guilty. I could only come to see her occasionally, for it would be necessary for me to conserve my energy and to have some money at the end of each month to pay my creditors. If at all possible, I wanted to pay off completely the loan to the finance company in Huntington when I received my first check. I needed some new clothing. My newest suit, which my sister had given me in the fall of 1940, was beginning to look stale. My shirts were worn and frayed. But I would make them do until I was in better financial circumstances.

After perhaps two hours, I realized that solutions to problems worked out during sleepless hours in the middle of the night never seem right when one wakes up in the morning. I must cultivate the habit of going back to sleep. Not yielding to the temptation to get up and read or write or to sit and think dark thoughts would help. It would be better to remain in bed, turn off dark thoughts, refrain from reflectiveness and analysis, change my position in bed, and lie quietly until sleep comes again.

Sunday morning I found the restaurants closed. I walked to the bus station, where I was able to buy an egg sandwich and coffee at the stand that catered to travelers. After checking again bus schedules to the south, I bought a Sunday paper and returned to the hotel, where I read for perhaps an hour before packing my bag. I checked out of the hotel, carried my bag to the bus station and placed it in a locker, and waited for a bus to Pinecrest.

Visitors were arriving, most of them by car. They carried with them gifts for relatives they had come to see: flowers, boxes of food, packages, books and magazines. Sylvia was expecting me. She had been able to eat most of her breakfast and felt better than she had felt the day before. She had slept well, but her throat was sore. Eating the hamburgers might have irritated it, but she had needed the good meat. She had become tired of the bologna, hot dogs, meat loaf, and fish cakes served in the sanitarium. She was in a teasing mood. Our conversation was light and playful. It was good to be with her. I did not refer to my insomnia or my uneasiness about financial matters. I felt that I must not say anything about problems of my own. A nurse whom I had not seen before came and visited for a few minutes. After she left, Sylvia said she was the one who had found Dr. Edwards and the attractive patient making love behind the door. Toward the end of our hour together, I held Sylvia's hand and stroked her hair as I stood in silence by her bed. I kissed her on the forehead. Her eyes were moist and her hand trembled as I said good-bye and promised to write at least a few lines that night.

The bus from Beckley to Bluefield was crowded, but I was able to get a seat next to a window. A middle-aged woman wearing a hat with a broad brim sat beside me. We did not speak. The woman left the bus a few miles out of Beckley. No one occupied the seat she had vacated. Glad to be alone, I dozed in the warm bus all the way to Bluefield. I found myself wanting to think about Sylvia and my own problems but tried to put both out of my mind. The light dreams of my dozing were fleeting extensions of droning conversations near me, inarticulate and monotonous, into dream conversations of people I had known, but they were pleasant little excursions into escape from my own concerns.

In Bluefield I hurried with my bag in my hand to the bus then loading for Abingdon. Seats by the windows were all occupied, but I was able to get an aisle seat next to a young woman whose permission I asked to sit beside her. We engaged in conversation. She was a teacher. Not long before she got off the bus at Lebanon, she asked me what I did. When I told her I was a teacher, too, she said she had decided I was a salesman. She then asked what I taught. When I told her English, she said, "I might have known it." She had talked so easily and well that I was glad she had not known from the beginning that I was an English teacher.

My seat on the bus from Abingdon to Boone by way of Damascus and Mountain City, Tennessee, was next to a window but over a wheel. The road was narrow and winding. While we were gaining elevation in the gorge near Trade, I became nauseated. I struggled with an urge to vomit, swallowing as rapidly as I could the flood of hot saliva that kept boiling into my mouth. Just as I was deciding that I should let the driver know I was in trouble, he pulled the bus over and stopped. He was looking at me in the mirror. I got up and made my way to the front. He opened the door for me. I was vomiting by the time my feet struck the earth. I retched and heaved but did not vomit on myself, not even on my shoes. Shamefacedly, I returned to my seat. Conversations on the bus were suspended for a minute or two, but nobody laughed at me. I had never had car sickness before. I wondered whether my having a spot on my lung had anything to do with the nausea and vomiting, which continued to bother me for two or three years, especially at higher elevations. We arrived in Boone in darkness.

Chapter Five

Glad to be Living and Working in Boone

I walked to Faculty Apartments, for I did not want to spend a quarter for a taxicab. I still had nearly twenty dollars in my pocket, but I would need it, I thought, for food, a few kitchen utensils, laundry, and dry cleaning. At the apartments I learned that Professor and Mrs. Antonakos would be leaving for Chapel Hill in a day or two and wanted to talk with me about what they would store in the apartment I was to occupy. Miss Foster was to return later in the week and would want her room. I refreshed myself and called on the Antonakoses.

Professor and Mrs. Antonakos were affable and courteous. Incisive in his speech but good natured, he talked easily. Mrs. Antonakos, with a coil of hair around her head, was somewhat severe in appearance, but her voice had a lyrical quality and she was gentle, though she spoke guardedly as if she had carefully thought through in advance what she said. They would be gone for a year, they said, for him to study at Chapel Hill. They were leaving in the apartment personal items which they would be glad for me to use, but they wanted me to know what belonged to them personally. They had identified each. The beautiful cherry chest in the living room was theirs. They had stored in it clothing and personal items they thought they would not need in Chapel Hill. The long chest, shaped somewhat like a coffin, sat by a window and was an attractive piece. Professor Antonakos had made a storage closet of heavy paper and soft pine in the narrow hall to the bathroom. They were leaving some boxes of things in it, but I was welcome to use unoccupied space. They were also leaving drapes in the living room and curtains in the bedroom. Both had been cleaned recently and might not need cleaning again for a year. They were pleased, they said, that I would be occupying the apartment in their absence.

They felt comfortable about leaving their own things in my care. They would leave the key to the apartment with Mrs. Coffey, the hostess.

There was no hot water in the apartment building yet. I stood in the bathtub and sponged with cold water. Dressed for bed, I wrote Sylvia a longer letter than I had thought I might, recounting to her the conversation with the teacher who had thought I might be a traveling salesman, my nausea on the bus, and my visit with the Antonakoses. I was careful not to reflect my own discouragement or loss of hope about her situation.

Two days later I moved my things into the apartment and went up town and bought groceries and basic utensils for the kitchen. Pleased to be my own housekeeper, I cooked dinner for myself, discovering in the process that I had much to learn about how to cook on an electric stove. But I ought to be able, I thought, to eat very well for fifty or sixty cents a day.

Some time before the first month had ended, Mr. Wey called me in to tell me that there was a problem with my certification. I had not known before that as a teacher in a college demonstration school I would be required to have a certificate. He explained that my basic salary of $150 a month would be paid by the County Board of Education, which required certification, and that the College would furnish me the apartment and utilities valued at $40 a month but that I would receive no check from the College. It was then that I learned North Carolina had eight-month high schools. My annual cash salary would be $1200, but I could have my apartment for twelve months, which would bring the total worth of my year's work to $1680 plus salary for any work in the summer school I might do.

The Certification Division in Raleigh had determined that I needed three quarter hours of credit in methods of teaching English in the high school in order to meet requirements for the graduate certificate. My first concern was whether my salary might be reduced because I did not qualify for the graduate certificate. Mr. Wey explained that I would continue to be paid $150 a month for a time but that my salary would be reduced and deductions would be made for overpayment in earlier months later in the year if I were unable to meet requirements for the higher certificate. I explained that the course in methods of teaching in high school, which I had taken with Dr. William H. Vaughan, then President of Morehead State Teachers College in Kentucky, had met requirements in Kentucky for a certificate to teach in high school and that my projects for the course had been in English and history.

Mr. Wey advised that I write Dr. Vaughan a letter requesting that he describe in a letter to Dr. James Hillman in Raleigh the contents of the course I had taken and emphasize the component for English teachers. Dr. Hillman might accept the course as satisfactory if Dr. Vaughan were willing to state in his letter that it was equivalent to a methods course for teaching English. If I thought Dr. Vaughan could not do that, then I should arrange to take the course by individual study from Dr. Abrams. I disliked the idea of taking the course from Dr. Abrams. To do so would, I thought, suggest that I was not already qualified to teach the course in methods of teaching English in the high school, which I had

already begun and was enjoying. Mr. Wey advised that I determine whether a letter from Dr. Vaughan would solve my problem. If not, I could then arrange to take the course from Dr. Abrams.

That night I wrote to President Vaughan, recalling for him in my letter that I had done project work in the teaching of English and emphasizing that it would be necessary that he account the course equivalent to a methods course in English. I half feared that his integrity and strict honesty might be such that he would not feel he could recommend his course as equivalent to a methods course in English. I was burdened with anxiety and dread until I heard from him a few days later. He included a copy of his letter to Dr. Hillman, in which he not only stated that the course I had taken from him was equivalent to a course in methods of teaching English in high school but that it met requirements in Kentucky for certification in high school English. He went on to say that I had been a successful high school English teacher in Kentucky for a number of years. I showed the copy of Dr. Vaughan's letter to Mr. Wey. That would be satisfactory, he said. Dr. Hillman, a former teacher at Appalachian, was a fair man and would issue a graduate certificate for me. I felt as if a burden had been lifted from my shoulders.

The class in English methods was exciting and challenging. All English majors, it consisted of 25 bright and well-dressed young women ranging in age from 21 to 23 and a slender-faced young man with a vision problem. I thought he was most likely classified as 4F because of his eyes. All of them seemed to be exceptionally well prepared in English. I administered some standardized tests in English essentials to them, though, and found that there was a considerable range in their scores and that the norm for the class was in the eleventh grade. However, when I considered their scores in conjunction with their total educational experience, I decided that they had done well on the tests, for they had gone to eight-month public schools for eleven years for a total of 88 months and national norms for the twelfth grade were for students who had attended nine-month schools for a total of 108 months.[23] Discussions in class were lively. They spoke and wrote well and were charged with ambition to become successful English teachers.

My sixth period class continued for a time to disturb me. Negativism pervaded the class which seemed, as a group, to be set against me. Yet, the students were bright and responsible, and competition among them was keen. I tried many innovations, most of which engaged their attention for a day or two but soon became stale for them. I invited Mr. Wey to come to my class, observe me for the entire hour, and make suggestions for possible improvements both in my presentation of materials and my dealing with the students as individuals. Unannounced, he came one day and was in a seat in the back of the room before the students arrived. To my amazement, the little girls came quietly into the room, took their seats, and waited silently for the class to begin. All were eager to participate in discussion. Each responded when called upon. All set about with industry and good will to work exercises connected with the assignment I had made carefully. It was as if they thought Mr. Wey was checking on my effectiveness as a teacher and that they were

[23]North Carolina public schools shifted from an eleven to a twelve year curriculum during that year.

determined to show him that I was a good one. After the class left, Mr. Wey laughed his slightly snorting little laugh and said, "You are doing all right. W'y, you have those kids eating out of your hand. Thank you for inviting me to your classroom." Thereafter, I felt at ease and comfortable with the class. It became easy for me to tease those who became negative, to inject an undertone of light humor into discussion, to compliment those who did exceptionally well, to show compassionate respect for and come to the defense of those who made errors. It pleased me to see them grow together as an entity, to become a challenging, highly motivated, and most industrious class. Much later, members of that class who enrolled in my undergraduate and then graduate courses at the College were often the best students in the courses. I think it possible that I had never before had a class with comparable high intelligence and achievement.

Living in my apartment enabled me to maintain the privacy I needed for relaxation and rest. I was alone and remote from my fellow teachers there. Apartment 33 was at the end of the hall on the third floor of the building. Catherine Smith,[24] a new art teacher at the College, and her aged mother were in Apartment 31. Julian Yoder and Helen lived across the hall from me. Dr. Orby Southard and Irene lived in Apartment 30 next to the Yoders. Annafreddie Carsteens, a new psychology teacher at the College, and her aged mother, lived in the apartment under mine on the second floor. All were quiet people who kept their radios tuned low and retired early. In addition, it was possible for me to lie down on the table in my office for a half-hour after lunch. I worked in my office for at least an hour after students left in the afternoon, took a walk after that, and began cooking my dinner as soon as I got home. I prepared plain, simple food, but provided for variety in my diet. For breakfast I ate a dry cereal, citrus fruit, two eggs, bacon or sausage, and toast with margarine, with both coffee and milk to drink. For dinner I had a salad, a meat, a legume, potatoes or corn, cornbread or rolls, and a dessert, with two glasses of milk. I gained very little weight, continuing, despite the hefty meals, to weigh about 135 pounds for the next three or four years. After taking care of the dishes and the pots and pans, I lay down for an hour. Much of the time I returned to the school for play rehearsal for an hour or two after dinner.

It became increasingly easy for me to put aside thoughts about my own situation but more difficult for me to put Sylvia's condition out of my mind. After play rehearsals I wrote long stream-of-consciousness letters to Sylvia. The whining of the wind around the apartments as we moved into autumn and the roar of the wind and the beating of storms in the trees below the City Cemetery on the hill behind the building were orchestrations of sadness, melancholy, and loneliness. It was difficult for me to sleep well. I suffered from bad dreams and sprang up in bed in terror and streaming with perspiration from frightening nightmares. Then I would lie awake for interminably long periods, but I did not yield to the temptation to get up and read or write, though I would sometimes get up and prepare a glass of warm milk. Then I wanted to sleep when I should be getting up. The crowing of Mrs. Watson's rooster and the mooing of her cow in the barn next to the graveyard

[24]Catherine Smith taught art at Appalachian from 1941 until her retirement in 1966, serving as chairperson of the art department for twenty-five years. The art gallery on the Appalachian campus is named in her honor.

invited me to sleep a little longer. Sometimes I was late for the faculty meeting and was always embarrassed to arrive after the meeting had begun. Mr. Wey would reprove me for my tardiness, sometimes in the presence of the faculty members, but I could only sit in silence when he did so, for I did not feel free to tell him about my illness. Once or twice, when I explained that I suffered from insomnia, he told me I was not getting enough exercise. The human body is made for work, he insisted. If I should take enough exercise, I would rest well.

In the early morning faculty meetings I continued to restrain myself, marveling most of the time at Mr. Wey's administrative abilities and his thoroughness in analyzing situations and solving problems. He was certainly the most fair-minded person with whom I had ever worked. He shared with his faculty what he was thinking and tried his best to build on what he found that was good and positive in those who needed help. His meetings were carefully planned. He always brought with him an agenda on a clipboard, from which he worked. He prepared as carefully for each faculty meeting as he might have done to meet a class. Fair, willing to consider all points of view, courteous, and considerate, he was able to establish and maintain a spirit of team work in his faculty.

After I had been in Boone about a month, Mr. Wey called me into his office one afternoon and told me that Mr. Wilson had sent over to him my papers from the Placement Bureau, which he had been holding. Mr. Wey had not seen them before. He noticed that I had been a high school principal for seven years in Kentucky. I had said nothing about this. He invited me to talk about my experiences. I began by explaining that I had thought it unwise to volunteer in discussions in faculty meetings accounts of how I had handled administrative matters while I was a principal. I could think of nothing, I said, that might antagonize my fellow teachers more than for me to preface contributions I might want to make with, "When I was a principal..." or tell little anecdotes in which I was the hero. But I told him that for three years I had been the principal of what in Kentucky was considered a large high school, one with a faculty of 22 and an enrollment of over 500. The school was a member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. My experience as the principal of this school might be helpful when we got around to preparing for membership in the organization. Mr. Wey was pleased. He invited me to his home for dinner so we could talk about what we might need to do in organizing ourselves for a visiting team.

After that, Mr. Wey told the faculty that I had been the principal of a large high school that belonged to the Southern Association and that he intended to involve me in plans for preparing Appalachian Demonstration High School for admission to the organization. He called on me thereafter for my opinion about matters discussed in our faculty meetings, for I continued to feel that my volunteering opinions readily was unwise. One of Mr. Wey's characteristics as a principal that I admired most was his willingness to change his mind when he saw that decisions he had made were not working. He would say that he had been wrong. It had been difficult for me to do that in the highly politicized school system in which I had worked in Kentucky. There, one always had to be right to survive. Another of Mr. Wey's admirable traits, I thought, was his eagerness to give others credit

publicly for contributions that he could accept. Other administrators I had worked with felt compelled to lay claim personally to all good ideas that they accepted from others. I had become artful in planting ideas so I could hear them expressed later as those of the superintendent himself in a system in which all wisdom (and most blessings) flowed from the superintendent. Working with Mr. Wey was comfortable. One could be as open and nearly honest as he knew how to be without feeling that he was supplying items for a hidden agenda. I told Mr. Wey that I was enjoying academic freedom that I had not known since I was a teacher of a one-room school and that I admired his administrative style, but I did this privately, for to have done so in faculty meeting might have seemed to others at least simpering if not like "apple polishing."

As I recall, the College had 45 faculty members, perhaps ten of whom were already in military service. Soon I began to meet those still on campus. Dr. Wiley Smith and I met in the road below the high school and enjoyed a conversation that might have lasted a half hour. He had a keen and insightful mind, I thought, and intensely blue eyes that appeared to come into sharp focus just a bit in front of themselves. As I enjoyed watching him wind up his mouth before he said clever things, a shapely co-ed with hair to her shoulders and wearing a form-fitting light blue sweater that glistened in the afternoon sun, an ample skirt that came almost to her ankles, bobby sox, and quite dirty saddle oxfords, came by. She stopped to greet Dr. Smith, who had been one of her teachers. After the exchange of greetings, he introduced me to her. As she hurried on, Dr. Smith watched her in silence for a moment. Then, turning toward me, his eyes a bit misty, he said, "I never get close to one dressed in one of those tight sweaters that I don't want to reach out and feel of her." He chuckled lecherously, and we continued with our conversation. Afterwards, I was puzzled by his comment about the pretty young woman. I could not decide whether it was offered as an expression of disapproval of current styles in dress or as a confession. After becoming better acquainted with him, I decided that he was only trying to shock me.

From the window of my office I could see walking along the road two or three times every day a tall conservatively dressed man wearing a cap with a bill similar to caps that had been stylish in the 1920s. He carried a brief case and was deliberate in his movements. One day I met him. He presented himself to me as George Sawyer, the teacher of sociology at the College. His manner of speaking was as deliberate as his walking. He told me two or three carefully crafted jokes with walloping punch lines. As he delivered a punch line, his face would assume a straight, grave expression which he held for a moment. Then he seemed to peep from behind his mask to determine whether I had caught the point of his story. When I laughed, he joined me in merriment. I enjoyed his jokes and anecdotes, which he continued to tell me for thirty years, sometimes coming by my office simply to tell me a good one he had just heard.

The faculties of the campus elementary school and high school were expected to attend general faculty meetings of the College on Monday afternoons. At the first of those meetings Mr. Wilson introduced new faculty members of the campus schools. We responded by standing for a moment as our names were called. While each of us was standing, Mr. Wilson recited briefly our backgrounds, including states from which we came, colleges and

universities we had attended, and school systems in which we had worked. He did this without reference to notes, appearing to be proud of himself for having in mind factual information about each of us. Regular faculty members responded with animated faces as they turned in their seats to get a good look at each of us.

Then Dean Rankin requested by name the chairman of each department to present any new faculty members in that department. There were so few holders of doctoral degrees in the faculty that the title of doctor was considered more distinguished than professor. All males who did not hold doctorates were addressed and referred to as professor. Women were addressed and referred to as miss. As I recall, Appalachian had in its faculty at that time only one woman with a doctor's degree, Dr. Maud Cathcart in the biology department. In private life, Dr. Cathcart, who retained her maiden name professionally, was Mrs. Stout, but no one ever called her that. We were able to learn the names of department chairmen early: Miss Glada B. Walker, Art; Dr. Robert Busteed, Biology; Dr. W. Amos Abrams, English; Professor A.R. Smith, Chemistry; Dr. Harry B. Heflin, Education; Professor Gene Garbee, Health and Physical Education; Miss Lucy Brock, Home Economics; Dr. J.T.C. Wright, Mathematics; Miss Virginia Wary, Music; Dr. Wiley Smith, Psychology; Dr. D.J. Whitener, Social Studies. Also introduced were Mrs. Emma Moore, an aged woman of the vintage of President Dougherty, Dean Rankin, and Professor Joseph Williams, the Librarian. Mr. H.R. Eggers, the Registrar, was presented to explain procedures for reporting mid-term grades. It was a point of pride for me to remember the names when I met them on the campus or on the streets of the town. Mr. Wilson had emphasized the spirit of friendliness that pervaded the campus and told us that everybody always spoke to everybody else, including students.

Soon I was meeting and remembering thereafter others in the faculty: Professor Vance Howell who taught Political Science; Miss Meta Liles, Dr. Graydon Eggers, and Miss Helen Burch in the English Department; Miss Helen Foster and Professor O.M. Hartsell in the Music Department; Miss Ida Belle Ledbetter in Biology; Miss Cleone Haynes and Miss Thursa Steed in Health and Physical Education. Miss Myrtle Brandon, the Dean of Women, was also a teacher in the Education Department. One of the more colorful personalities, Mr. Leonard Eury,[25] was Mrs. Moore's assistant in the Library, but Mr. Eury and others including Coach Red Watkins, Professor Starr Stacy, Professor Edwin Dougherty, and Professor Gordon Nash, left in a few weeks to join some branch of the military service.

Occasionally, after the rainy season was over, faculty members who lived in the apartments would sit in the afternoon sun in front of the building and visit. Sometimes I would sit with them for a few minutes.

My friendship with Dr. Abrams grew. He told me about the North Carolina English Teachers Association, in which he was a member, and the North Carolina Folklore Society in the activities of which he had participated for several years. He invited me to go with him to the meetings of each group. I discussed with Mr. Wey the advisability of my

[25]Leonard Eury served as College Librarian until his retirement in 1970. The W. L. Eury Appalachian Collection, founded in 1968, was named after him in 1971.

becoming a member of these groups and what arrangements I should make for my classes when I attended meetings. Mr. Wey, who believed it most important that teachers identify with professional organizations, encouraged me to join both if I wished to do so. My classes, however, would have to be covered by a qualified person whom I would pay at the substitute rate of five dollars a day from my own pocket. He knew of no substitute available in English, but thought Dr. Abrams might be able to suggest someone. It was unfortunate, he thought, that the College provided no funds for travel and subsistence for faculty members interested in participating in professional meetings. I would also have to bear travel and subsistence costs for attending meetings, but he considered participating important and expenses for doing so worth bearing if I could afford to spend the money. Participating in professional activities was encouraged by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Being able to report that I was an active member of these organizations would look good on application materials.

Dr. Abrams and I discussed these matters. I decided to go with him to the fall meeting of the English Teachers Association at the North Carolina College for Women in Greensboro. We could ride down to Greensboro with someone he knew who was planning a trip to Raleigh at that time and come back on a bus. We could contribute perhaps a dollar each toward gasoline costs for the trip down, and the bus ticket back would not cost much. By that time I had received my second salary check and had bought myself a new suit for $13.00 at a sale up the street, a suit that I did not like very much and that did not fit me very well, but it was a good suit, the sale price of which had been slashed when it was moved to the bargain rack in the basement because of its small size. Although I could not feel well dressed in the suit, I would not look shabby.

It had been possible at the end of the first month for me to repay Mr. Wilson the twenty dollars I owed him. I insisted that he accept a dollar for interest, but he would not have it. I had finished paying in one payment what I owed the finance company in Huntington and had been able to pay for Sylvia's room at the sanitarium without undue hardship. I had also gone to see Sylvia again the first weekend in October and would go again the weekend before the meeting in Greensboro. Before deciding finally that I would go with Dr. Abrams to the meeting, I wrote to Sylvia about it, for I did not want to spend as much as $15.00 to attend a meeting without discussing it with her. She insisted that I go and that I participate actively in the organization. The trip would be good for me, and she felt that I deserved the right to spend some of my meager salary for professional advancement. I told Dr. Abrams that I would go with him.

Dr. Abrams recommended Mrs. Daisy Eggers as a well-qualified substitute teacher. I asked her whether she would be willing to take for the recommended five dollars a day my classes on the Friday that I would be gone to attend the meeting. She was, and took the assignment so seriously that she came in time on Thursday to sit in one of my classes before I provided her with lesson plans for Friday.

The trip to Greensboro was my first one east of Boone and down that side of the Blue Ridge. Highway 421 was narrow, crooked, and in places so steep that the driver low-

ered the car into second gear. Below Deep Gap the countryside was much torn up by a flash flood that had left death and destruction in its path two years earlier. As we descended the mountain, I could see a series of hazy blue ridges falling away in mystery in the far distance. The highway was routed through the towns. I saw North Wilkesboro, dominated by its impressive new hotel, for the first time. Then beyond the town we followed an alternate route through Ronda, with its chair factory, to Elkin, where we crossed the Yadkin River into Jonesville, a town I had not heard of before. Having heard that some of my ancestors had migrated from Wilkes County to Blaine, Kentucky, prior to 1820, I was personally interested in the countryside. Eroded farms, dilapidated houses, crooked barns, scrub brush on hillsides, and other evidences of depression poverty convinced me that I was traveling through a tired, worn-out land. I wondered whether it had been so poor and down at the heels when my ancestors had left over a hundred years earlier on the six-weeks trip over the mountains to what they considered a better land in the hills of Kentucky.

Coach Robert W. (Red) Watkins rode with us. It was on that trip that I became well enough acquainted with him to remember who he was when I met him on campus or in town, for he was occupied with coaching activities in the afternoons and had not attended faculty meetings regularly. We let Coach Watkins out in Winston-Salem, where he was to visit with friends and relatives.

Dr. Abrams and I got out at the O. Henry Hotel in Greensboro, where we engaged a beautiful room in an upper story that overlooked the city. It was quite dark when we arrived, but after getting ourselves settled in our room we went to dinner at a good little restaurant in the hotel.

The following morning we checked out of the hotel and rode a bus out to Woman's College where our meeting was held. Dr. George Wilson was our host, a jovial, spirited man whose professional interest was in American dialects. He was also editor of *PADS*, the publication of the American Dialect Society. He convinced me that I ought to join the society and invited me to prepare for publication a word list from Appalachian speech, which I did during the next year.

Dr. Abrams participated extensively in discussions and seemed to be one of the leaders in the North Carolina English Teachers Association. Most of the members were experienced and confident women who taught in city high schools. Dr. Abrams introduced me personally to most of them, making me feel good with compliments and the half-teasing attitude he maintained, both toward the lady teachers and me. It was obvious that the members held Dr. Abrams in high esteem. I met people there that day with whom I was to work actively in the Association for the next seventeen years, for I soon became a member of the Central Committee and attended planning meetings twice a year and the English teachers' divisional meetings at both regional and state conventions of what was then the North Carolina Educational Association.

We ate together on campus. The meeting continued for a while in the afternoon. Sometime during the day a new professor at Woman's College, a Dr. McNutt, I believe, gave a challenging talk on teaching writing to high school students. He recommended

especially that teachers try having high school juniors and seniors write "exegeses" of poems. I could not recall ever having heard or seen the word "exegesis" before and did not know what he was talking about. I wondered whether I might have been the only teacher present who did not know the word, but I could not tell from observing them. Afterwards, I did not feel sufficiently courageous to ask anyone for a definition, but I wrote the word on the back of my checkbook so I could consult a dictionary when I got back to Boone.

About the middle of the afternoon Dr. Abrams and I caught a bus to Winston-Salem. It was a cloudy day, but I could see the rolling, well kept farms and the prosperous countryside out of Greensboro. Many trees still had green leaves on them and others were flaunting the autumn colors that we had enjoyed in Boone before the frosts had come to the mountains a few weeks earlier. We waited in Winston-Salem for a bus northward to Bluefield, West Virginia. Since it was not possible for us to make connections for a bus to Boone that night, we bought tickets to Boonville, where we spent the night in the home of Dr. Abrams's sister, Louise, and her husband, Ralph Coram. Louise and Ralph lived in a new house, not yet completed, down a side street in Boonville. I had met neither of them before, but we enjoyed a delightful visit with them. Their bright-eyed little daughter, Winona, perhaps three years old, and I played games while Doc talked with Louise, a lively, vivid person who taught English in the local school, and, later, with Ralph, quiet, relaxed, and at ease with the two English teachers. Winona had a panda almost as big as she was. When I held the panda on my knee and carried on a conversation with it, like Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, she was so pleased that she required more of me than my imagination could supply. I escaped into a songfest, in which the panda sang children's songs and recited nursery rhymes that delighted Winona. Louise rescued me by suggesting that Winona show me the pups, who lived in a lot over the bank behind the house. After visiting with the pups, we went exploring together. Across the fence and in the edge of the woods behind the house, we found an ancient graveyard, in which there was a stone for a woman who was over a hundred years old, 108, as I recall, when she died.

Ralph was a farmer. The following morning he took me to meet his father and mother and to see the farm, a prosperous one with modern machinery, full barns, and fat cattle. After the tour of the farm Ralph took us up to the corner where we caught a bus to Boone. In North Wilkesboro we saw mountain people standing around the bus station, among them a pale young woman with a snuff stick in her mouth and breast feeding her baby with the same unconcern that I had observed in mothers at church when I was a boy in Kentucky. I thought that perhaps many of the blue-eyed, fair-skinned, and rangy mountain folk might have been my distant kinsmen, for they looked very much like the people who came to Blaine to trade on Saturdays.

On the way from North Wilkesboro to Boone the motor of the bus ground with agony as the driver geared down to manipulate steep, sharp curves. Below the crest of the Blue Ridge I became nauseated again, but after opening the window for fresh air I was able to make it to the top of the mountain without having to vomit.

The trip had been an enriching one for me. I had learned why the region west of the

Blue Ridge had been designated the "Lost Provinces." I had seen the face of a new land, I had gained a deeper respect for Dr. Abrams, and I was more proud than ever of Appalachian Teachers College. I was glad to be living and working in Boone.

That night I wrote in my letter to Sylvia a full account of my trip and expressed again my high regards for Dr. Abrams.

Working at the high school became more pleasant and enriching for me as I began to make use of student observers from the methods class. Soon they were helping me with the preparation of teaching materials for my two freshman sections and reading papers and quizzes. One assisted me with directing one-act plays the dramatics class was preparing. By the middle of October I was able to complete work for the day and make preparations for the following day by five o'clock each afternoon. I came back in the evenings for play rehearsals and was usually ready for bed by ten o'clock. The short nap on my work table after lunch, the longer one in bed or on the couch after my dinner, and eight hours in bed each night provided me with the rest time I needed.

I was finding it easier to push aside concerns for my own health, to rest when tired, to leave a job without giving it further thought before taking it up again, but it was more difficult to adjust to the seriousness of Sylvia's illness. Anxiety and deep dread disturbed my sleep. People invited me to dinner occasionally and my fellow teachers at the high school sometimes included me in their social plans. After pleasant outings and evenings with others, I found myself looking tired and disturbed when I glanced at myself in the mirror while brushing my teeth before retiring. I felt guilty when I thought of Sylvia suffering and slowly dying, for I wanted to be with her.

I wanted to be alone at times, to let my thoughts flow freely. One Saturday at the peak of the autumn's color season I rode the bus to Elizabethton, Tennessee, wandered around for an hour or two, and then came back by way of Newland and Blowing Rock, drinking deeply all the while the bittersweet of October's poignancy, its prodigy of painful beauty. I saw what Thomas Wolfe had described in *Look Homeward Angel*, a book that had more than anything else invited me to the mountains of North Carolina, which have always expressed October best. After my trip, Ruby Donald was interested in knowing why I wanted just to ride a bus over those narrow roads to Elizabethton and back. I felt shy, as if a secret had been pried out of me when I responded that I liked to feel the color season flowing by.

One Saturday during the lingering autumn John Nelson, the social studies teacher at the high school, invited me to ride with him and his wife, Mary, to Lenoir. Mary needed to stop by the hospital there for an examination and he wanted to shop for clothing. Perhaps I would like to shop, too, for he had learned that there were bargains available in men's clothing. Although I knew I would not be buying any clothing, I gladly accepted his invitation, for I wanted to ride down the mountain in autumn from Blowing Rock to Lenoir, which I had not yet seen.

John's car was dilapidated, but he was glad to have it at that time when any car that

would run at all was a prized possession. We left Boone at eight o'clock, early enough, John thought, for him to get to the hospital in time for his wife's appointment at ten o'clock. It was a bright day. The ride along the edge of the gorge in Blowing Rock was frightening. Visibility was so clear and sharp that one could see the individual trees clinging to the steep side of the mountain all the way to the bottom of the gorge perhaps 2000 feet below. The most spectacular view I had yet seen, the mountains were piled, heap upon heap, as far as one could see, the closer ones standing out in sharp detail in the sunlight and looking almost close enough for one to throw a stone across the gorge to them, even though they were miles away.

Highway 321 was narrow, on a steep grade, and as crooked as a snake crawling in the dust. John crept along in second gear applying the brakes so often that he had to stop on level stretches to let them cool. Once, beside a little clear stream below the church in the bend of the road near the turn off to Blackberry, he had me dip up a gallon tomato can of water for his radiator, which was so hot that steam was boiling out of it. We laughed because a radiator would get so hot in a car going down hill that it would have to be refilled. We must have spent the better part of an hour going down the mountain, at the foot of which we began to see many trees on which leaves were still green.

The drive along the river below the mountain was through productive farming country. Happy Valley, a pleasant little hamlet with a textile mill beside a stream and a store by the highway, was the only community we passed before reaching the outskirts of Lenoir, an impressive little city with a proud hotel, the Carlheim, settled among splendid trees, a statue of a Confederate soldier in the center of its bustling business district, and along a low ridge the lovely campus of Davenport College, already closed, a casualty of the Depression, we had heard. We took Mary to the hospital and went shopping. I looked but did not buy anything. John looked at some suits with bargain prices, but purchased only two shirts, a tie, and some socks. While John was in the hospital with Mary, I walked on the Davenport campus and peeped through windows of attractive old buildings surrounded by giant oak trees. It was such a quiet, restful campus that I regretted it was then abandoned.

We ate sandwiches at a little shop near the bus station and started back to Boone, having been in Lenoir not more than two hours. At the edge of town John stopped at a filling station for oil and gasoline, producing the ticket book required then. The attendant filled his radiator. The trip up the mountain was an ordeal. John would gear down to second and then low for steep places and stop on level spots to let the engine cool. I found water for the steaming radiator three times, the last time in the little stream below the church, but I filled the can two-thirds full and held it between my feet in case we would need more water before we reached Blowing Rock. We arrived in Boone at two o'clock. We had spent six hours making the 60-mile trip to Lenoir and back for a two-hour visit there. Certainly, Boone was hard to get to from all directions.[26]

[26]Cratis Williams note: By the mid 1950s Highway 321 up the Blowing Rock Mountain had been rebuilt. Since then one could drive to Lenoir in forty-five minutes, but the new highway passes the same clear little stream from which I dipped water for John Nelson's radiator. I never see it that I don't remember my first trip to Lenoir.

After I had received my check for my first month's salary and did not feel so tightly pinched, I went along occasionally with other teachers from the high school to the college cafeteria for the evening meal, where we could buy well prepared and wholesome but plain food at quite reasonable prices. In fact, a college student at the time paid only $3.50 for a meal book, which, it was said, one who selected food carefully could make last for a week. Owing to the scarcity of meats in war time, our selection was limited mostly to stew, meatloaf, patties, fishcakes, bologna, wieners, breaded chops, and small country-style steaks, but we had an abundance of both vegetables, many of which were grown on the college farm, and fresh milk from the College Dairy. Students and teachers especially relished Mrs. Ragan's spice cake and Mrs. Cullers's pastries, baked the same day on which they were served and of consistent high quality.

In the cafeteria we had opportunities to become acquainted with college students, especially those who were taking methods classes and doing practice teaching in physical education under the supervision of Miss Donald. Bill Killian, Hugh's friend on the editorial staff of the college newspaper, *The Appalachian*, for which Hugh was the business manager, was with us often. Before the fall quarter was over, I had become well enough acquainted with college students to recognize by name as many as fifty or sixty besides those enrolled in my methods course. When I went alone to the cafeteria, I was usually able to eat with someone I had already met. These opportunities for social exchange enabled me to develop a feeling of involvement in the life of the campus.

I liked Appalachian students, more of whom, I learned, came from small towns or farms in the piedmont than from the mountain region. Especially friendly and congenial, they were generally serious young people, usually the first in their families to go to college, eager for an education, and ambitious to become teachers. Most of them were poor, I was told, and worked in mills or chopped cotton or hoed in the fields during the summer to supplement the meager help sacrificing parents of usually large families could offer toward their college education. Others were themselves sons and daughters of struggling school teachers, many of whom were graduates of Appalachian. But their poverty did not show. In those days students dressed for college. Young men did not wear overalls, jeans, hickory shirts, denim blouses, or rawhide shoes, nor young women calico dresses, gingham aprons, or cotton stockings to college. The College operated its own laundry and dry cleaning establishment and charges were minimal. Residence halls were equipped with abundant facilities for bathing. College students were well dressed, well groomed, and clean in those days. They did not refer to their poverty in their conversations nor to humble, working-class origins. Only the quality of their spoken English betrayed them. Slovenly speech, careless diction, illiteracies, and folk idioms identified them as rural or working class young people, but they were generally courteous, considerate, and well mannered and left the impression that they were informed in etiquette and acquainted with the habits and customs of that middle-class society to which they aspired. Most important for their instructors, they respected and honored their teachers, even those whose idiosyncrasies they made the subject of indulgent conversations or mimicked in moments of levity.

Those teachers who lived in rooms and suites in Faculty Apartments found them-

selves restricted for entertainment possibilities. As we became better acquainted, we worked out arrangements for socializing in the apartments of those who were willing hosts. We occasionally bought food and pooled our resources for dinner with the Nelsons. After dinner, we sometimes played simple card games such as hearts, or those who could do so would play bridge. Mr. and Mrs. Wey had all of us in groups of four or five to their home for dinner and cards. Sometimes we would dance, but most of us, though willing learners, were not especially skilled at dancing.

Figure E. Ruby Donald and Hugh Daniel on King Street, © 1942. Photo courtesy of Ruby Daniel.

My apartment was well suited for communal dinners and talk sessions afterwards. Ruby Donald and Hugh Daniel began a courtship after a few weeks. We pooled our resources for simple dinners in my apartment, usually including at least one other person, but sometimes a couple like the Nelsons. These dinners were the basis of a friendship with Ruby and Hugh, who married later, that has continued since that time.[27]

Sylvia had never trusted my culinary skills so far as to let me fry a chicken. Even when she was too ill to do so, she would fry the chicken when we had one. I liked fried chicken very much but was not getting to eat it often in Boone. One day I bought a frying chicken from Mrs. Amelia Greer at the Winn-Dixie Store, confessing as I bought it that I had never prepared one. Mrs. Greer advised that I ask one of my neighbors for a recipe and follow it closely, for frying chicken, she said, is really simple if one watches the heat closely and turns the chicken at the right time. I asked Miss Catherine Smith, my next door neighbor, how I should prepare my chicken. She had me write down the procedure, which I followed slavishly. She had me roll the chicken in cracker crumbs, which I did not know was ever done, but it was especially good chicken, Pennsylvania fried, someone told me, for Miss Smith, who had come from Pennsylvania, knew nothing about Kentucky fried chicken. I liked the chicken so well that I fried chicken for my guests thereafter and was able to include chicken more often in my own diet.

Sometime before homecoming the English Club, under the sponsorship of Miss Meta

[27]Ruby Donald and Hugh Daniel were married the following summer at the end of the school term and Hugh went to midshipmen school at Notre Dame before serving in the South Pacific. Ruby continued to teach at the high school for the duration of the war. Upon Hugh's return, they left Boone for Memphis where Hugh attended Southern College of Optometry, later opening a practice in Waynesville, North Carolina. Hugh and Ruby both served on Appalachian State University's Board of Trustees, and Hugh served on the first Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina System.

Liles, a southern lady from Tarboro and much admired by young women majoring in English, invited me to a tea one lovely afternoon in the social room of Lovill Hall. Although I considered teas stiff and artificial, I felt it important that I accept the invitation, for all of the students in my methods class, including the slender-faced young man, Terry Mattern, were likely to be there. A few times while I was a student at the University of Kentucky I had helped my friend, Sidney Shell, who lived in the attic of the president's home, assist Mrs. McVeigh, the president's social-minded wife, with her teas at Maxwell Place.[28] I knew about teas, I thought, and the importance of standing about, looking one's best, sipping tea noiselessly, and occasionally engaging in light talk, but never for more than a few minutes at a time with other guests. Light talk, I thought, should never degenerate into a conversation, or sink to the level of a discussion, at a tea.

As soon as my sixth period class was over, I rushed to my apartment to freshen up, changed into my new $13.00 suit, touched myself with cologne, and hurried to the social room of Lovill Hall. Almost all of the young ladies in my methods class were there, dressed in pretty tea dresses and high heels, their hair hanging to their shoulders, and wearing white gloves. They were without exception attractive, animated, and gracious. Mr. Mattern, the slender-faced young man in the class, was all dressed up in a three-piece suit, a gleaming white shirt, and a tie knotted so tightly and neatly that it stuck out like a race horse's tail. It seemed that all of the members of the faculty, many of them with their spouses in attendance, and student office holders were there, some of them already saying good-bye to the hostess, the president of the English Club, and Miss Liles, the sponsor, when I arrived. Dr. Abrams, standing close by, was obviously pleased with what seemed to be a social triumph for English majors.

Soon President Dougherty arrived, accompanied by Dean Rankin. A young lady took them in hand immediately, relieving Dr. Dougherty of his spotless hat and hanging it on a rack near the entrance. Another young lady arrived with a cup of hot water and a tea bag, a cube of sugar, a spoon, and three tiny cookies on the saucer and thrust it into Dr. Dougherty's hand. He did not move far from where he was standing. While engaging Dr. Abrams in a discussion, he crumbled one of his cookies in the hot water, stirred it with the spoon gently, and sipped it, his tea bag and cube of sugar lying in place on his saucer. After he had drunk half of his concoction, he crumbled another cookie into the cup, stirred it a long time, and continued to sip. When his cup was empty, a young lady came with a teapot of hot water and asked whether he would like more. He looked at the empty cup for a moment and held it out for a refill. Then he crumbled his last cookie into the water, stirred it around and around, and continued to sip. People came, had tea, and left, but Dr. Dougherty continued to talk with Dr. Abrams. When his cup was empty, the tea bag and the sugar still lying on his saucer, a young lady came by and asked whether she might relieve him of his cup. As he handed it to her, he observed, "Young lady, that was powerful good tea." Her eyes twinkled but she managed to keep her composure as she looked at the

[28]Frank L. McVey was president of the University of Kentucky from 1917 until his retirement in 1940. He and Mrs. McVey were the first UK president's family to live in Maxwell Place, built in 1870 and sold to the University in 1917. It remains the UK presidential home.

tea bag and sugar on the saucer. Someone handed Dr. Dougherty his hat and he left.

Sensing my amusement, Dr. Abrams explained in a low voice that Dr. Dougherty, who did not like tea and did not want the sugar, was not absent minded. He knew exactly what he was doing, but felt it improper to refuse to accept the cup that had been offered him.

One bright Sunday afternoon I decided to go walking alone to the top of Howard's Knob. I thought the exercise would be good for me, but feared that I might need to stop and rest frequently because of my lungs, and if I became too tired to walk all the way to the top I could rest a while and return to my apartment. I did not ask anyone to go with me because I did not want to risk in the presence of a companion the possibility of having to return to the town before making it all the way to the top of the Knob.

On my way up the street I met Dr. Abrams, Dr. Busteed, and Dr. Whitener near the old Coffey residence on the corner of Appalachian Street and Main Street. Dr. Abrams wanted to know where I was going. I told him that I was planning to walk through the upper side of Boone, which I had not yet seen. He and the others were coming from a meeting of a Lions Club committee, he said. He then said that I might enjoy being a member of the Lions Club. I explained that I had enjoyed being a member of Rotary International in my home town in Kentucky but did not at the time want to be a member of another civic club. All three of them talked about the fun Lions have at their meetings and the good work they do for children who need glasses. A Lions Club is not much like a Rotary Club, they said, and they hoped I might decide later that I would like to become a Lion.

I walked to the courthouse square and turned up Water Street toward Howard's Knob. The road looped around the upper side of town, a section called Junaluska, in which the black population of Boone lived. I could see that the road looped back above a steep pasture field and that one might cut off perhaps a quarter of a mile by climbing a hundred yards up the steep field.

Soon I saw a path across the field and followed it, panting heavily and resting frequently until I reached the road above. The dirt road was not very steep for a way but then ascended on a steep grade toward the saddle gap between Howard's Knob and Rich Mountain. I rested when my heart began to pound and made it to the gap in perhaps 45 minutes from the time I had left the apartments.

The rutted old abandoned trail from the gap to the top of the Knob looked as if it had not been used for many years. I was finding my way to a spot where one could sit alone, feel the fresh brisk breeze whipping across his face, look at the town far below him, and think his deepest thoughts in strict privacy, I thought. I passed the foundation of a house, much of the floor still in place, that had apparently blown down in a wind storm. The ruins of the old house were the only signs of former human habitation there, although I had already heard that Howard, a Tory, had hidden in a cliff on the Knob for a year or two before he took the oath of allegiance to the new nation in 1777.

Beyond the end of the trail I ran into surprises. Behind nearly every tree and rock was a young couple. Some were standing, some sitting, and some reclining. They were college students who had slipped away from campus. "Boys" over one entrance to the administration building and "girls" the other, segregated seating in the auditorium, an eight o'clock curfew in the evening, and other precautions did not prevent courting couples from coming together when they set their heads to do so. Feeling like an unwelcome intruder, I retreated from the scene and returned to Faculty Apartments.

Dr. Abrams invited me to hear his collection of recordings of traditional ballads and songs which NYA students had arranged and catalogued for him. He permitted me to listen in the late afternoon in his classroom while he worked in his office or attended meetings. Occasionally, we found time to discuss ballads he had collected. He thought it important that I continue with my interest in collecting and that I become a member of the North Carolina Folklore Society, to which he had belonged for several years. He would be pleased to have me go with him to the annual meeting of the Society during North Carolina Culture Week in early December. I wrote about it to Sylvia and discussed it with her when I visited her. Membership dues were only a dollar a year, as I recall, and the trip to Raleigh and back by bus, expenses for sharing a room with Doc in the Sir Walter Raleigh Hotel, where the meeting would be held, and the cost of meals would not exceed fifteen dollars, but it would be necessary that I hire a substitute teacher to meet my classes at the high school on the one day that I would be away. Sylvia urged that I accept Doc's invitation and that I join the Society. I told Doc he could include me in his plans to attend the meeting.

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Chapter Six

Winter's Nightmare

When I went to see Sylvia in early November I was distressed to find her emaciated, blanched, and hollow eyed. She could not even swallow a sip of water without first soughing through a pipette some of the medicinal powder, Aureomycin, I believe it was called, to numb her throat. She was so weak that she required help just to sit up in bed. Her joy in living was gone. Even smiling required effort as her paper-thin lips peeled away from her teeth, leaving them exposed to the gums and greatly exaggerated in size. Her arms were as slender as tobacco sticks and her beautiful hands were thin and bony. She thought she probably weighed no more than seventy-five pounds. She was slowly starving to death. I suggested that intravenous feeding might give her strength, but she did not want it and the doctors did not recommend it, for there was no hope for her recovery. She would probably not live more than a few weeks longer.

Sylvia had given up hope. She wanted very much to die. Her pain was almost unbearable. She dreaded having to deal with it to the end. If she were physically able to do so, she said, she would get out of bed, go to the chest, gather up her medicine, and then get back in bed and take all of it. She would not wake up and her suffering would be ended. She looked at me imploringly. She could not ask me to hand the medication to her, but if I could I would be helping her. My heart pounded like a jackhammer as my sense of being ballooned to encompass the entire room and my vision became blurred. Sylvia had managed a ghastly smile. I could make out distinctly only her large eyes and those enormous teeth. I shuddered and contracted into myself again. I could not bear the pain of knowing that I had helped the one I loved better than all the world to die. I held her fragile little hand while we looked into each other's eyes a long time.

After a while, she said she wished that she was at her mother's home. She was not going to get well and she preferred to die in the house in which she was born and had grown up. We discussed problems involved. We had no notion of what it might cost to hire an ambulance to take her to Cherokee, but I would write and ask her mother to get a price from Mr. Curtright, the funeral director in Louisa, and she could request someone at the sanitarium to get prices from funeral homes in Beckley. We could engage one and I could come at Thanksgiving time and be with her on the trip.

When I got back to Boone, I wrote Mrs. Graham. She engaged Luther Hogston, a neighbor, to take her to Louisa to talk with Mr. Curtright, who studied a road map and offered to send an ambulance for Sylvia for forty-five dollars. Someone in the office at the sanitarium called funeral homes in Beckley. The director of a new home there was willing to send two young men with an ambulance over the mountains from below Charleston to Louisa and on to Cherokee for thirty dollars. I called that director and made arrangements for him to send the two young men on the trip on Thanksgiving Day and sent him ten dollars as a deposit.

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One of the pleasant occasions at the College that fall was homecoming. The weekend chosen for homecoming, which might have been in late October, was a golden one with bright weather throughout. Most of the students and faculty must have participated, but activities were not largely attended, for gasoline rationing, the war, and the dwindling student body reduced severely the number of persons who might have been present in normal times. Playcrafters, the drama club that had flourished under Professor Antonakos's direction in other years, had prepared under student direction some dramatic sketches and one-act plays for Friday night, carrying on, I learned, a tradition that had grown up five or six years earlier under Antonakos's leadership. Most of the small student body and remaining faculty and spouses attended. Many of the students in my methods class and two or three student actors from the high school were involved in the play production effort.

At a reception afterwards in the meeting room of Playcrafters under the auditorium of the administration building, teachers and spouses, President Dougherty, and Dean and Mrs. Rankin came by for punch and cookies and an opportunity to meet and compliment the actors, still in stage costume and makeup, and the directors. Few visitors were there, though. Alumni and friends of the College would arrive on Saturday.

No provisions had been made for a Saturday morning parade led by a lively band and a panache of prancing majorettes. Both the band and the majorettes were greatly reduced in numbers that year. Instead, we walked leisurely past a surprising number of colorful displays and tableaux strung across the lawns from Lovill Hall to the administration building, and gleaming in the bright morning, each attended by one or two costumed students representing the organization or club that had prepared the exhibit. I do not recall an alumni luncheon, or even a meeting, and believe that there might not have been a formally organized alumni association of the institution in existence at the time. After a stroll across the campus I went by the book store, where a few alumni and faculty members were enjoying

conversation over coffee and soft drinks at the tables and in the four or five booths while the juke box played loudly recordings of the music popular at the time. Feeling out of place and ill at ease, and not wanting to intrude on any of the groups around the tables, I stood by the counter and sipped a 7-Up.

After a simple lunch in my apartment and a long nap afterwards, I freshened myself up, dressed in my new and ill-fitting tweed suit, and walked down to the stadium in the bottom where Rankin Hall is now located. The little band was already playing and the energetic cheerleaders, dressed in orange and black sweaters and skirts that seemed dull and worn, were working hard to generate enthusiasm in the small and somewhat dispirited crowd on the home side of the stadium. There might not have been more than fifteen or twenty supporters of the visiting team in the stands along the north side of the field, which was bounded by Appalachian Street, then opened through the campus and one of the main roads into the town. The cheerleaders, under Dr. Amos Abrams's direction, were mistresses of their routines and were superbly coordinated in their execution, but the cooperation of the small crowd was sporadic and largely indifferent. I do not remember the name of the team Appalachian was playing that day.

I entered the stadium from the north side and walked around the end zone to the south side. As I was climbing the tier of wooden seats to the top row, where I wanted a seat in the mid zone, I met Dr. Wiley Smith and was surprised to note that he was wearing a tweed suit just like mine, but his suit looked good on him. As we exchanged greetings, I thought I detected a bit of a surprise that he should see someone else wearing a suit like his. He had most likely paid full price for his suit, unlike my bargain basement clearance sale purchase, and was proud to be wearing it.

The football game was not a good one. Both teams seemed to be leftovers. As I recall, two or three of Appalachian's players had been borrowed from the local high school squad. Despite the verve of the spirited cheerleaders, the liveliness of the band, the prancing routines of the pretty majorettes, and the crowning at half time of a beautiful homecoming queen (for whom no dance was scheduled that evening) on a windy afternoon in autumn, the football game was a disaster. I have forgotten who won the game but realized that neither team deserved to win.

Nothing was scheduled for Saturday night. Instead, faculty members invited the few alumni who had returned to campus to dinner in their homes. Dr. Abrams and Lillian invited me to their house for dinner, attended also by three or four alumni who were then teaching English in high schools.

Late that afternoon I had met Hugh Daniel on campus. Hugh and Ruby were entertaining a recent alumna, who was teaching in an elementary school in Allegheny County, and her date for the evening, who was one of Hugh's friends. The teacher, a good party girl, had brought with her a bottle of Four Roses. Entertaining them in Ruby's room in the Faculty Apartments would be awkward and crowded. Hugh wondered whether I might like to have all of them as my guests in my apartment. I had ice in my refrigerator. He and Ruby would bring mixers, extra glasses, and snacks. I explained that I had accepted an invi-

tation to dinner, but that I would leave my door unlocked and they could make themselves at home in my apartment until I returned, perhaps by 9:30.

Following Lillian Abrams's delicious dinner, built around a most successful chicken casserole, and an evening of delightful conversation that sparkled with Dr. Abrams's wit, I took my leave about nine o'clock and hurried to my apartment.

The party was in progress. Hearty laughter and the tinkling of ice in glasses let me know that my guests were enjoying themselves. My door was locked. Fearing that letting myself in with my key might startle them, I knocked. There was a hushed quiet as Hugh came and let me in. Everybody laughed, but I saw no evidence of a party. The bottle of bourbon and the mixers had been hidden behind the chest. Only the desk light was on.

In the semi-darkness I was presented to the teacher from Allegheny County, a plump but attractive young woman with dark hair hanging to her shoulders. She was congenial and laughed easily, showing beautiful teeth. Hugh asked what I wanted with my bourbon. Not caring for either of the mixers, I asked for a double jigger cut with branchwater and cooled by one cube of ice. There was a hearty response to my order. It seemed no one present had ever heard of mixing whiskey with branchwater. Observing that the bottle of bourbon was half empty, I consumed my drink quickly and announced that, being by then "even Steven" with my guests, I would accept another lighter drink, with one jigger, two cubes of ice, and the glass filled with branchwater. I sipped this one for the remainder of the evening. We swapped stories, laughed a great deal, and enjoyed ourselves, the two couples sitting together on the long couch while I sat in the easy chair. The rest of the bourbon was consumed by about 11:30. Conversation continued for another half hour. The young teacher expressed her appreciation for my hospitality and the guests departed.

It had been a successful party but I was soon very much alone in the quiet building. As I prepared for bed, I noticed in my bathroom mirror that my face was mask-like and my eyes were tired. Suddenly I was exhausted. I thought of Sylvia, suffering and dying, and felt guilty because I had not thought of her while enjoying the party. But she and I had enjoyed many similar parties with friends. I would tell her about this one, homecoming, and the football game on a perfect autumn afternoon in my Sunday morning letter. I slept better than usual.

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Early on Thanksgiving Day I arrived at Pinecrest Sanitarium to ride with Sylvia in the ambulance to her mother's home. She had become so emaciated that the contours of her teeth were visible beneath the pallid skin of her face and her eyes were as large as eggs, her thin lids meeting only half way when she batted them. She whispered with difficulty that she weighed only 65 pounds. She was unable to sit up by herself, but once propped into a sitting position she could use her hands and had retained considerable strength in her frail arms. Attendants had packed her bag and a cardboard box. The ambulance would arrive at ten o'clock.

After visiting with her, I went by an office to sign her out of the sanitarium and then to the X-ray room to have my chest X-rayed again. I was told that Dr. Edwards, off duty

that day, would read the film and send me a report the following week.

When attendants came to take Sylvia to the ambulance, I stood at the second story window above the exit and watched them wheel her from the building. I had stood at this same window and watched them bring her into the building four and a half months earlier. Then she had seen me at the window and smiled with hope. Borne from the building head first, she could have seen me at the window again, but if she did she was unable to smile a recognition. Her face was rigid and white in the sunlight and her large eyes were fixed. She looked like a corpse. I shuddered with grief as I stood alone by the window and fought back an almost overwhelming urge to cry out my agony and weep.

I went downstairs and out of the building through the loading exit and presented myself to the two young men, nineteen or twenty years old, who would be driving the ambulance. They pointed out to me on a road map the route westward they planned to take a few miles below Charleston. I sat beside Sylvia's cot in the ambulance and talked to her. She attempted to say very little herself. Struggling to whisper against the purring of the motor exhausted her.

The morning was bright on the mountains around Beckley and along the New River Gorge, but we came into hazy weather below Gauley Bridge. Sylvia rested comfortably on the cot. The young men were careful, smooth drivers and managed the traffic lights in Charleston without disturbing her. As we were leaving Charleston, she whispered that she

Figure F. Sylvia Graham Williams and Cratis Williams, shortly after they were married in 1937.

was thirsty and hungry. She wanted a dish of vanilla ice cream and a glass of ice water. I helped her arrange her medication. She soughed the powder into her throat, gagging and struggling as she did so. I told the young men in the cab to stop at the next restaurant they saw and we would have lunch.

In a few minutes the driver pulled into the parking area of a short order restaurant. The young men had brought lunch with them and ate in the cab. I went into the restaurant and ordered a hamburger for myself and a dish of vanilla ice cream and a glass of water for Sylvia. The little restaurant did not prepare food and drinks to go. I took the dish of ice cream with a stainless steel spoon in it and the glass of water with a straw in it to Sylvia. She struggled with the water but drank very little of it. I fed her ice cream but she took only a few bites of it. As I returned the dish, spoon, glass, and straw to the waitress I saw that the spoon and straw had bright red lipstick on them. When I told the waitress that she might want to scald with boiling water what I was returning, for the person in the ambulance had tuberculosis, she looked at the lipstick on the spoon and straw as if it were offal and, snarling with malevolence, dropped gingerly each article into the garbage pail. When I asked whether I might pay for the articles, she snapped "no" with begone-with-you venom in her voice. The three or four people at the counter who heard our conversation leaned away from me as if I might have been a leper who had dropped like a spider from the ceiling into their midst. They were all still staring at me with hateful disdain when I looked back at them from the door of the restaurant. I was glad that the young ambulance drivers had not witnessed my burning humiliation and I did not report to Sylvia what had happened.

The ambulance crept along the narrow road through the hills from the Kanawha Valley to Fort Gay. The afternoon was overcast with light clouds. The landscape was generally grey but bedecked here and there with dark oaks that had not yet surrendered all of their color. Wisps of smoke from black chimneys of weathered little houses signaled preparation of Thanksgiving dinner; men and boys waited on front porches or clustered around battered cars or trucks with ragged fenders parked by the gates of little brown yards.

As we went through Louisa, I craned my neck to see whether I might recognize any of the few people straggling along the sidewalks, but they were country people whom I did not know. I saw only two people I had known. Buell Lyon was standing in front of his gas station and Doug Lewis was cleaning the windshield of a dusty flivver beside his gas pump. Neither recognized me. Sylvia was glad that we had been able to come through the town without being seen by former friends and neighbors there, for she wanted as few people as possible to know that she was coming home to die.

Sylvia slept lightly on the way from Louisa to the Wellman Bridge. I held her warm thin hand and watched familiar countryside move by. As we crossed Adams Hill, I had a deep, sinking sensation of gloom as I held Sylvia's hand tightly. I watched in silence the passing of the familiar banks, rocks, and trees that I had seen many times with her, happy and laughing, beside me in our car. This was our last trip together over an intimate and friendly road, the last lap in our journey to the end.

Sylvia woke up when the driver stopped and changed gears to cross the Wellman Bridge. She was able to see the familiar countryside as the ambulance moved slowly and smoothly over the bumpy dirt road from the bridge to the mouth of Cherokee Creek. People at Paris Elswick's store recognized us and threw up their hands at us. We met no one on the road from the bridge to Cherokee. Although it was Thanksgiving Day, people were not driving their beaten up cars, held together with baling wire and the ingenuity of amateur mechanics, for gasoline was rationed. We arrived at the Graham home at three o'clock.

Figure G. Berta and Lemual Graham with Sylvia and Cratis on the Graham farm. Cherokee, Ky., circa 1938.

Mrs. Graham had moved a bed for Sylvia into the living room, which she had cleaned thoroughly. The blinds on the long double windows were rolled completely up, and a low wood fire was smoldering on the hearth. The young men carried the cot on which Sylvia lay into the house. Mrs. Graham and I transferred her to the bed and propped her up with pillows. She looked happy as light from the windows gathered in her enormous eyes. I paid the young men twenty dollars and thanked them for the care they had taken to make the long ride as comfortable as they could for Sylvia. While the driver was writing a receipt, I looked at the picture hanging on the wall above Sylvia's head. A dying American Indian with a long dipping spear in his hand slumped in his saddle as his horse, standing on a hillock, lowered his head toward sunset. That picture had been hanging there the first time I came to see Sylvia in 1931.

Mrs. Graham, stoical and controlled, did not betray to Sylvia her shock at seeing her so thin and weak, nor did she indicate that she noticed how large Sylvia's eyes were or how pale her skin was. The young ambulance drivers, eager to be on the road, left about 3:30. We made Sylvia as comfortable as possible and then retreated to the kitchen so she could take a nap.

Mr. Graham, who had gone to his nephew's home for a shave and a hair trim, returned soon. Sylvia awoke from her light nap when he came in. We hurried into the room, for Mr. Graham, then 76 years old, was hard of hearing and Sylvia could only whisper. Like Mrs. Graham, he did not express shock at seeing Sylvia so pale and wasted away. As I shook hands with him, I noticed that he had had most of his great shock of white hair trimmed away and was red-faced and thin. He did not look quite natural to me, but I did not know why. Sylvia struggled to laugh and whispered, "Dad has had his mustache shaved off. This is the first time in my life I have ever seen him without it." Sylvia, who loved her father deeply and looked like him, had often bantered with him to have his heavy, walrus

mustache shaved off so she could see what he looked like without it. That night she whispered to me that he had done it for her so she could see before she died what he looked like without it. She thought he looked better with it.

That night we kept a lighted kerosene lamp on a stand table inside the open dining room. I slept on the couch so I could attend to Sylvia's needs and keep a low fire burning on the hearth. She coughed a great deal and called for water often, though she struggled to get even a few drops down and strangled easily. Neighbors came by to see her on Friday, but their visits with her were brief. Some stayed to sit on the wide porch for a time, for the day was warm and pleasant. All of the callers, neighborly and friendly, offered no comments about Sylvia's grave condition and behaved as if they expected her to be up and around soon.

Fearing that I might not be able to get back to Boone in time for work Monday if I waited until Sunday morning to leave, I left soon after daylight Saturday morning. While Mrs. Graham prepared breakfast with Mr. Graham sitting silently in a chair by the wood box, I sat by Sylvia's bed for what proved to be our last conversation. Sylvia had rallied a bit at home. She had been able to take more liquids Friday than usual. She thought she might live another month or six weeks. Our winter holidays at the school would begin a week before Christmas, only three weeks away. I would be with her during a two-week holiday season. She teased and laughed.

After a hearty breakfast of country ham and eggs, big biscuits and honey, I packed my light bag and kissed Sylvia on the forehead while holding her hand tightly. She smiled and teased me. She seemed happy and accepting of what lay ahead when we said goodbye, but I recognized that she was wanting to protect me from pain and heartbreak.

As I hurried on foot through the frosty morning to Blaine, three miles away, to catch an eight o'clock bus to Louisa, I wept for Sylvia the tears I could not shed in her presence. Her courage and beautiful acceptance of the inevitable tugged at me. I wanted her to live long enough for me to be with her during the holidays.

It was not possible for me to get back to Boone that day. I rode a Norfolk and Western train from Fort Gay, West Virginia, to Bluefield, took a bus to Abingdon, Virginia, spent the night in an ancient hotel across the street from the bus station, and went on to Boone on Sunday. Except for the little bus from Blaine to Louisa, which had only a handful of passengers on it, everything was crowded. Every seat in the railroad coach in which I rode was taken. I remember that I was awakened from a deep slumber by a bright eyed young man who took a position in the aisle and played and sang to an accordion. After his first piece, he responded to requests, and many young people in the coach sang along with him. Young men in uniforms, young women with dreams in their eyes, smartly dressed young mothers with happy children on their laps were hurrying back from Thanksgiving Day visits. Sunday morning in Abingdon was lightly overcast but a light rain was falling in Boone when the bus arrived in the early afternoon. I took a taxicab to the Faculty Apartments, a quiet place shrouded in Sunday silence. Four quart bottles of milk, only one of which had spewed off the cap, were waiting at my door.

During that week I received from Dr. Edwards at Pinecrest Sanitarium a report of my chest X-ray the preceding Thursday. The spot on my lung had neither grown nor diminished. I was advised to continue with my diet and rest regimen and report for another X-ray in three months.

At the end of that week I went with Dr. Abrams to Raleigh to attend the meeting of the North Carolina Folklore Society. I engaged Mrs. Daisy Eggers to teach my classes for me on Friday. Thursday afternoon Doc and I rode a bus to Boonville, where we spent the night in his sister's home, and went on to Raleigh Friday morning, arriving in time to have lunch with the officers of the North Carolina Folklore Society in the Sir Walter Raleigh Hotel, where Doc had reserved a room for us for Friday night. It was at this lunch that I met Arthur Palmer Hudson, long-time secretary of the Folklore Society, Richard Jente, a professor of German at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Joe Clark from North Carolina State College at Raleigh, Newman I. White of Duke University, and others, including, I believe, Ralph Steele Boggs of Chapel Hill and Beatrice Cobb of Morganton.

Our bus had taken us through Guilford College, Elon College, Burlington, and Durham. In Durham we had passed beside the low stone wall beyond which we could see old Trinity College, which had become Duke University in the 1920s. Doc, a graduate of Duke, told me much about old Trinity and Duke. I remembered as we passed Elon College that I had ordered biological supplies from there while I was a science teacher at Blaine High School in Kentucky in 1933-1934. The road from Winston-Salem to Raleigh, Doc explained, crosses piedmont North Carolina, rich in the history of the state, and the sandy coastal plain lies east of Raleigh. Down there, where he had come from, customs were different and people spoke a different dialect. At Pinetops, down in Edgecombe County where he had grown up, housewives made thin, blue-looking cornbread of just meal and water and a pinch of salt and people said "wan't" for "wasn't" and "own" for "on." His father and mother still lived at Pinetops, near Tarboro. He would take me there to see them sometime and we could sit under a cypress tree and fish in Tar River.

By the time we had arrived at the elegant Sir Walter Raleigh Hotel, headquarters of North Carolina's annual Culture Week, I was feeling as if I had reached back a long way in history. I liked the rolling piedmont farms and pretty towns, even though farmhouses and outbuildings and the towns themselves needed repairs and paint as did houses and towns in Ohio and Indiana. I fancied I could see something of the Old South remaining in Raleigh, despite the neglected aspect that the Depression had left with it.

I was pleased to have Dr. Abrams as my sponsor. Still uneasy in the presence of older and experienced college teachers, I soon found myself comfortable and relaxed with those at the special table that had been reserved for the North Carolina Folklore Society. Conversation was light and filled with quips, banter, and anecdotes. Doc Abrams, in introducing me, called attention to my work as a ballad collector, singer, entertainer, and student of Appalachian proverbial lore and dialect. I felt self-conscious because I thought he was crediting me with more than I deserved, but I soon found that he was mostly clearing the

way for me to converse with those present. Dr. Jente, a collector of proverbs, and Dr. Clark, who had grown up in east Tennessee, Dr. Hudson, who had published a book of ballads and songs he had collected in Mississippi, all found opportunities to encourage me to participate in the conversation.

Later that afternoon I enjoyed the program of the Society, which included a report of Newman I. White on the progress of efforts to publish the North Carolina folklore collection of Dr. Frank C. Brown, a professor at Duke. I was amazed that so many people were attending the meeting, including splendidly attired dames and stylish looking young ladies, that attendants had to keep carrying in chairs for late comers. After the program, cookies and punch were served.

That afternoon we attended a tea in the governor's mansion and then that evening, a lecture, the highlight of the Culture Week program, in Morrison Auditorium. Hundreds of people, many of them in formal evening dress, attended the lecture.

Before I left Kentucky I had attended a meeting of the Kentucky Folklore Society in Louisville, but it had not had the class or tone of the meeting in Raleigh. Apparently, patrons of culture came from afar to participate in Culture Week activities. Old retired gentlemen who had been historians, poets, writers, musicians, renowned professors in the humanities and the arts, sat about the lobby or in groups on the mezzanine of the Sir Walter Raleigh Hotel. Once I had heard Professor Edwin Mims, whose students at Vanderbilt University had attracted national attention as the Southern Agrarians, speak briefly at a meeting of English teachers at the University of Kentucky. I recognized him sitting alone in the lobby of the Sir Walter Raleigh Hotel. He was sporting a white goatee and wearing a winged collar and looked much as he had looked three or four years earlier at Lexington. Dr. Abrams thought he had retired and returned to his native state and was living at the hotel, which seemed to me to be an appropriate home for so renowned a professor.

That night I found myself exhausted. The day had been a full and exciting one. I had been lifted to a new level culturally, I thought. But there had been no opportunity for rest, and I had not dozed at any of the meetings. I had thought of Sylvia a few times and realized that a deep concern for her had been with me constantly. My fatigue and fear that the spot on my lung might spread pulled at me, but I could not tell Dr. Abrams my troubles. We talked for a while after we were in bed, but I dropped into a deep sleep while Doc was telling me something. When I woke up two or three hours later embarrassed that I could not remember the end of our conversation, Doc was sleeping soundly. The following morning Doc told me that he had suspected he might have been talking to himself and asked me a question without changing the tone of his voice or the tempo. When I had not responded, he knew I was asleep, but he did not know how long I had been asleep.

Buses were crowded on Saturday, but we were at the station in time to board a bus to Winston-Salem early enough to get seats together. We spent Saturday night with the Corums at Boonville and arrived in Boone Sunday afternoon. I had enjoyed the meeting of the Folklore Society and other events at the end of Culture Week so well that I joined the

Society and continued to return for annual meetings, except for the year I was on leave, for eighteen years.

It might have been the following week that the local PTA sponsored a parents' visitation at the campus demonstration schools. Mr. Wey urged that the teachers dress their bulletin boards with exhibits of outstanding student writing or projects and make ourselves available to those parents who might wish to come by to meet us or to talk with us about how their children were getting along. Many of the teachers were less than enthusiastic about the affair and dreaded having to meet parents of some of their students. We had agreed in faculty meetings that we would offer positive evaluations whenever we could of students but that we would not hesitate to tell parents how we thought their children might improve their study habits and how parents might help. I enjoyed meeting parents of my students, though, and was gratified by the reports of parents, sometimes of students who were not doing very good work, that my students generally thought very well of me and enjoyed my classes.

We had three or four exceptionally talented students in the campus schools. One bright boy in the sixth grade was given permission to enroll in a high school class and a college class. I was not surprised to discover that teachers in the demonstration schools were just as prejudiced against brilliant students as teachers I had known in the high school at Louisa. I think they were afraid that bright students might ask questions they could not answer or offer information that would suggest to other students in the class that the teacher was not well prepared. Parents of these students took much interest in the PTA and were present to discuss their children and their progress and their problems with their teachers. Teachers generally dreaded meeting parents of these students, but they were also fond of telling how they managed to keep "smart alecks" in their places in *their* classes.

Students in my high school dramatics class were working on a round of one-act plays. I met for a while each evening a cast for rehearsal. One group, with a second-year student of dramatics as director and another as stage manager, was trying to prepare *One Dozen Roses*, a romantic little comedy dealing with late teen-age life, for production at the high school assembly program on Friday, December 11th. Nights were getting colder and frost was on the roofs in the morning, but days, though crisp, were bright and filled with sunshine. Going to rehearsals for an hour and a half each evening was pleasant, for the students were working hard and enjoying what they were doing.

Back in my apartment by 8:30 I spent an hour writing a free-flowing, stream-of-consciousness letter to Sylvia. I responded to her letters, in which she wrote about happenings in the community, who had come by to see her, letters from friends, but not much about herself, and told her about the play rehearsals.

Dr. and Mrs. D.J. Whitener, whose son Jack was in one of my freshman English sections, invited me to dinner in their home on Faculty Street at six o'clock Thursday evening, along with Hugh Daniel and Bill Killian, who were the business manager and the editor of the student newspaper, *The Appalachian*, for which Dr. Whitener was the faculty adviser. After arranging with the cast of *One Dozen Roses* for a dress rehearsal at eight o'clock, I

accepted the invitation to dinner.

It was a pleasant evening. Mrs. Whitener had prepared a delicious dinner. Conversation, managed skillfully by Dr. Whitener, was lively and included Jack, who was shy but articulate. Bill Killian, also shy, did not say much, but Hugh Daniel's good humor, contagious hearty laugh, and easy talk set a tone of informality that helped to relieve Jack and Bill of tension. We talked much of current events, the progress of the War, the still depressed but recovering economy.

I hurried from the dinner through a balmy evening to dress rehearsal, which was promising. Actors and actresses were exuberant, and Betsy Webster, the student director who sat beside me, was apprehensive at first but so encouraged at the end by the rehearsal that she hugged me as the curtain was pulled. Unaccustomed to being hugged by my students and surprised at the sudden display of enthusiasm, I was somewhat embarrassed when one of the young men teased Betsy about trying to make up to the teacher. We were all pleased that the play was ready for the stage.

That night I wrote a long letter to Sylvia, a letter which I did not send, but kept sealed in its envelope for forty years before opening it. I did not sleep well that night. Perhaps the excellent coffee I had drunk at the Whitener dinner made me wakeful. About midnight I woke up from a troubled dream with night sweats. I got up, bathed my forehead with cold water, drank a glass of milk, and read for a while before going back to bed.

At two-thirty I woke up again from a terrifying nightmare which I have never been able to forget. In the dream my brother and I had crossed the ridge from a neighbor's farm to ours in the mid-afternoon of a day in late autumn when the hills were tawny and the grass in the pasture was sere. While I was running ahead of my brother down the slope of the highest point in the ridge, I came so suddenly upon a heap of fresh yellow earth that I was on top of it before I could stop. There below me was an open grave with an open coffin in it. Sylvia lay in the coffin, her lids only partly covering her mud-colored eyes and the contours of her teeth discernible under thin skin made yellow by the muddy water that had sunk to a pool in which the coffin rested. I fell backward on the heap of earth as I tried to cry out but found myself unable to utter a sound. I woke up chilled with horror, leapt out of bed, and sat for a time in the kitchen. It was 2:30 when I turned on the light.

I thought about the nightmare, Sylvia's illness, and Dr. Rhyne's book on extrasensory perception, and wondered whether the dream had meaning. I remembered going with my mother when I was about five years old to a funeral in a graveyard near home, the first funeral I ever attended. I was playing among the gravestones when the singing began. My mother motioned for me to come to her. Between us was a heap of yellow earth. I had mounted the heap before I realized that it had been dug from the open grave below it. On the other side in an open homemade coffin lay the corpse of Lena Osborn, whose eyes were half open and the prints of whose teeth showed through thin skin. The sight terrified me. I fell backward, picked myself up, and raced around the grave to my mother's side. Lena Osborn had wasted away with tuberculosis. Obviously, my subconscious had transferred the images and the emotions of an early experience to my concern for Sylvia. But I had looked

down from a second story window of Pinecrest Sanitarium at Sylvia on the cot as she was being taken to the ambulance that brought her to her home at Cherokee. She had looked like a corpse. This must have been another image used in my dream. I went back to bed.

Just as I was sitting down to breakfast the next morning someone rapped on my door. It was the hostess, Mrs. Coffey, who had come to tell me that there was a telephone call for me. I threw on a robe and rushed downstairs. The call was from Herman Wilcox, agent for Western Union at the Bus Station. He had received a telegram that said, "Sylvia died at 2:30 this morning."

I asked Mr. Wilcox to hold the telegram for me to pick up later in the day and discussed with him an itinerary that would put me in Louisa at the earliest possible moment. He checked schedules for me. Two or three buses out of Boone in the forenoon would make connections with buses going north toward Huntington, West Virginia, or to Louisa by way of Jenkins, Kentucky, but if I should take any of them I would not get to Louisa until the following day. The closest way in the shortest time would be to take a bus to Bristol that would connect there almost immediately with one going to Bluefield. I could then ride a Norfolk and Western train to Fort Gay, West Virginia, across the river from Louisa and arrive about one o'clock in the morning. I would have a layover of an hour or two in Bluefield. That seemed to be the best schedule to follow. The bus in Boone I would need to take would leave about noon. I asked Mr. Wilcox to prepare a ticket for me to Bluefield.

Getting from Louisa to Cherokee late at night was a problem. One could not call by telephone from Boone to Cherokee, but with patience one in Louisa might be able to get through two or three old-fashioned community switchboards. I called Nova Wellman in Louisa. She would try to call Mrs. Graham and tell her that I would arrive on a train at Fort Gay about one o'clock in the morning and walk across the bridge to Louisa, where she should have Luther Hogston or Herbert Sturgill waiting for me in front of the Riverview Hospital. Nova assured me that she would get my message to Mrs. Graham. If she should not be able to reach her by way of the antiquated telephone system, she would drive her husband's half-ton truck out to Cherokee and deliver my message personally.

As I returned to my apartment, I remembered my terrifying nightmare and was aware that Mrs. Coffey's message delivered a few minutes past seven o'clock was a foreboding of bad news. I was certain that Sylvia had died and the telephone call would confirm her death. I wept as I tried to eat my breakfast, washed and put up my dishes, and dressed myself for the day. I then went downstairs to the telephone in the hall and reported to Mr. Wey that my wife had died and I would need to be leaving for Kentucky about noon. I could assist with the presentation of our play at the student assembly but would be leaving soon afterwards. I would return to Boone on Tuesday and be ready to meet my classes again on Wednesday.

Mr. Wey, who might not have had to deal before with the problems created when a teacher must leave suddenly for a few days because of a death in the family, extended sympathy before discussing the problems. I should not attempt to come to the morning faculty

meeting, he said. The student directors could handle the presentation of the play. He would tell them why I was not there. Although it was early in the quarter to turn classes over to practice teachers, he could do that and ask critic teachers with free periods to sit in the classes. Faculty members free at the time could meet my speech and dramatics classes. It would not be necessary for me to employ a substitute teacher, for I would need all of my salary to help pay bills. All I would need to do would be to come by and prepare lesson plans and assignments for my classes and leave them with Frances Teems, his secretary.

Mr. Wey's kindness, consideration, and help in arranging for my absence were exemplary. I wept silently not only in grief but also in appreciation of Mr. Wey's greatness of heart as I returned to my apartment, glad that I had not met anyone in the halls to see my weeping.

After packing a light bag that would not be too heavy for me to carry while walking from Cherokee to Blaine Monday morning, I went up town to the bank for money I would need for the trip. The weather had changed during the night. Clouds were low over Boone and a mixture of light rain and wet snow was falling. The change of humidity might, I thought, have aggravated my bronchial problems and made it more difficult for me to sleep. I returned to the school.

Before stopping by the principal's office, I peeped into the auditorium to see how the cast was getting along with arrangements for the play. The student directors were giving orders like professional producers and members of the cast were hurrying around, one of them carrying one dozen red crepe paper roses arranged in a vase. I did not make my presence known, but hurried on to the office to tell Miss Teems I was there and would be leaving about eleven o'clock to pick up my traveling bag and report to the bus station to catch a bus that would be leaving about noon. It did not take long for me to prepare the lesson plans and assignments that Mr. Wey had requested. When I took them to the office, Miss Teems told me to go to the lounge and rest. Mr. Wey had thought it might be good for me to talk with somebody for a while before I left.

Ruby Donald and Doris Penix were waiting for me in the lounge. Ruby and Doris had brought coffee from the school cafeteria and were sitting together near the window. Solemn but not emotional, they encouraged me to tell them about Sylvia's illness and death. I had not discussed the nature or seriousness of her illness with anyone in Boone and found it difficult to do so. For the first time I revealed that her trouble was "secondary tuberculosis" that had recurred in the throat seven or eight years after her "cure" of lung tuberculosis in Dr. Dickey's sanitarium at Southern Pines, North Carolina. We knew from the time Dr. Proctor Sparks had diagnosed her problem in the spring that there was little hope of her recovery, for at that time tuberculosis of the throat was almost always fatal, but she had shown signs of significant improvement at Pinecrest and we were encouraged to think for a time that she might be able to join me in Boone by October. By the end of October, though, we realized that there was no hope for her recovery.

Doris, who had entered Morehead State Teachers College as a freshman during Sylvia's senior year there, thought she had seen Sylvia and knew who she was but had never

met her. When she and Ruby expressed sympathy for me for the heavy burden I had been bearing in secret during the time they had known me in Boone, I could not tell them that I was continuing to deal secretly with my own attack of tuberculosis. I explained that Sylvia was so sensitive about having tuberculosis that she required absolute secrecy about it and that none of her neighbors at Cherokee had known for sure what her illness was. I felt as if I were betraying her by telling, even after her death, that she had died of tuberculosis. Ruby thought that most tuberculars are ashamed and seek to conceal their illness. I agreed with her.

When the time came for me to return to the apartments for my bag and go to the bus station, Ruby went along with me and stayed to wish me well when I got on the bus. As we sat together at the station, we talked of other things.

The bus to Bristol was crowded but there was a seat for me near the front. I suffered from nausea as we crossed the mountains but I had not eaten lunch and had taken only a few sips of the coffee that Ruby and Doris had brought to the lounge for me. Able to step outside for a few breaths of fresh air at brief stops, I did not get sick. Tired and deeply alone, I did not enter into a conversation with the aged gentleman with a cane who sat beside me, but I was afraid to nap because of nausea.

As I recall, the bus to Bluefield was loading when we arrived in Bristol and there was not enough time to enter the bus station even for a cold sandwich at the counter. I took a seat next to a window in the bus to Bluefield. A young woman wearing a dark blue dress with a snow white collar sat beside me. As we left Bristol, I noticed that no rain was falling. The clouds were high and white, but a sifting of light snow was scattered among patches of dark winter trees near the tops of the low hills.

My seat mate, a teacher, was going home to see her mother, who had become ill during the week. I did not tell her the kind of work I did or why I was traveling, for I wanted very much to be alone. A few miles out of Bristol I fell into a deep sleep, from which I awoke only briefly when the bus stopped at the towns along the Trail of the Lonesome Pine. My seat mate sat upright and looked straight ahead. Burdened with grief while awake, I was aware of incoherent but pleasant dream sequences flowing like a river in my naps, sequences that seemed to be completely unrelated to my going home to bury my wife, whose death was a shocking finality beyond which I could not see or know. After I woke up briefly at the bus stops along the way, I fell asleep again and plunged into my dream where I had left it, enjoying it as I had enjoyed floating on my back in the summer swimming hole when I was a boy. A few miles below Bluefield I woke up and pulled myself into an upright position. My seat mate, observing that I had been sleeping soundly, asked what kind of work I did. When I told her I was a teacher, she said she might have known it but thought I was perhaps a salesman of some kind. I did not want to tell her that I was going home to bury my wife.

I walked from the bus station in Bluefield to the passenger depot of the Norfolk and Western, where I bought a ticket to Fort Gay and sat for a long time in the crowded station, suffused with the faint odors of coal smoke from locomotives and cigar smoke. Again

I dozed, riding on a restful river of dream sequences that carried me away from the reality of the present.

When dinner time came, I put my bag in a locker and found an inexpensive restaurant crowded with working-class people. I ate a hamburger steak with pale peas, mashed potatoes and gravy, and a dry slice of tomato on a leaf of limp lettuce and topped with a dab of cream colored mayonnaise and had a small glass of milk. Although we were nearly a year into World War II, one could still find restaurants in which the price of a dinner was only forty-five cents.

On the way back to the depot, I wrapped my scarf around my neck and pulled my coat collar up, for it was cold and damp. Back at the station I sat with my overcoat on and my hat pulled over my eyes. After I became warm, I dozed in my seat, escaping again into a pleasant and regenerative sequence of impressionistic dreams. I had to wait a long time for the train to Fort Gay. My catnaps and dreams were coming at the time of the nap I had been in the habit of taking after dinner. I became wakeful in an hour or two and took a stroll on a busy sidewalk across the street from the depot. Although the evening was young, I was amazed at the number of dressed up young women whom I met along the way, floating perfume in the air and smiling as if they knew me. When I stopped for a traffic light to change, I looked back. The two friendly ones I had just met had stopped at the edge of the sidewalk and were looking back at me. One motioned for me. Having met no men as young as myself, I realized that while the young men were "off to the seven seas" the girls they had left behind were becoming lonely.

The cool air soon woke me up. I returned through the brisk night to the depot, got my bag from the locker and waited for the train, which was on time. The coach was crowded with dressed up, animated, talkative people. I found a seat at the back of the coach among black people–older, well dressed, heavily perfumed, and less talkative than the whites. As we left Bluefield, talking subsided and people began to settle back in their seats. After checking tickets, the conductor turned the lights down low and people went to sleep, the men covering their faces with their hats. I woke up briefly from my dozing when the conductor announced from the back of the coach the stations along the way.

A few miles from Fort Gay, the conductor touched my shoulder and told me in a low voice that I would be getting off at the next station, where the train would stop for two minutes. I was ready. The conductor helped me down the steps. I was the only one to get off at Fort Gay, and no one got on. The train moved on at once.

I walked from the station and across the bridge to Louisa, stopping at the toll house to pay the sleepy attendant three cents. As I came off the bridge, I saw a farm truck parked in front of the Riverview Hospital. Mrs. Graham, dressed warmly in the heavy brown alpaca overcoat I had left at the Graham house, was watching for me through the rear window of the cab.

Mrs. Graham was alone in the truck. We embraced silently. She had been dozing. She said Herbert Sturgill, who had brought her to town, was waiting in the hall of the

Courthouse. I was to go for him if he did not hear the train whistle. I put my bag in the bed of the truck and started, but we saw Herbert coming around the old jail. I sat between him and Mrs. Graham.

The weather in Kentucky was cool and cloudy, but the road from the Wellman Bridge to Cherokee was not muddy. We did not talk much. Nova Wellman, unable to get a call through to Cherokee, had gone out in her husband's truck and delivered my message. She had also offered to meet me at the bridge and bring me out, but Mrs. Graham had wanted to meet me herself. Mr. Graham and a few of the neighbors were keeping a wake for Sylvia, who had requested that no undertaker be employed and that she not be embalmed, and who had suffered a great deal the last day of her life. She had not lost consciousness, though, at the time of her death. At two o'clock in the morning she had announced that she would be dying soon, called for a pencil and paper, and had written the telegram stating that she had died at 2:30. She asked Mr. Graham to take it to Luther Hogston, give him the money to pay for sending it, and sent him on to town with it. She died at 2:30 with only Mrs. Graham present before her father had had time to return from the trip. After writing the telegram, she whispered that our marriage had brought fulfillment to her and that she regretted I must now go on without her. She had died easily a short time afterwards.

Mrs. Graham and Aunt Jenny Cooper had dressed her and prepared her for burial. Her corpse was in the lower room on the bed on which she had died. She had asked to be moved to the lower room soon after she had arrived from Pinecrest. The fire had been removed from the heater soon after her death, and the doors and windows were opened so the room would be cold.

When we arrived at the Grahams, Mr. Sturgill got out and came in with us. His wife was among those keeping a wake in the living room. I went alone into the lower room, cool and smelling of carnations in a floral arrangement that Nova Wellman had brought. A kerosene lamp on a stand near the bed burned with a white flame that trembled in the breeze from the open window where white curtains rustled. Sylvia's hair had been arranged carefully, weights had been removed from her eyelids, and her beautiful hands, crossed at the wrists and wax-like, were resting across her stomach. She had a fine profile. I remembered having noted early in our courtship the fineness of her profile as she was carrying a lighted kerosene lamp down the stairs one night. More than ever before, I was struck by how much she looked like her father. I remembered a folk saying that family resemblances show most in corpses. I knelt beside her, touched her hands and her broad brow, and wept. We had enjoyed an intense love, had known each other as nearly completely as it is possible for lovers and mates to know each other, and had found the knowledge rich and fulfilling. Her death left in me an empty place, and tore me apart with anguish.

Soon Mrs. Graham, who had known much grief and troubled sorrow, came and stood by my side. Feeling that grief is private and intensely personal, I did not offer to discuss how I felt. Mrs. Graham, neither emotional nor sentimental, understood. She called my attention to a dimple in the back of Sylvia's left hand, which, she thought, might have

come from the strain of writing the telegram but Sylvia could also have been frightened by death and unwilling to betray her fright to her mother. Sylvia disdained the sensational and the mawkish. Mrs. Graham also noted how much Sylvia looked like her father, who was shaken with emotion by her death, for she had been his favorite child and she had loved him dearly from her infancy.

We then discussed plans for a coffin. Sylvia had not wanted an undertaker's burial. She had wanted a casket and stone similar to that of her sister, who had also died of tuberculosis in 1935. Mr. and Mrs. Graham, knowing my financial limitations and understanding that I was deeply in debt, had considered buying a casket from Curtright Funeral Home but decided that I might not want them to do that. I did not have money then to pay for a casket, but I was sure Henry Curtright would permit me to pay for one in installments. If he required a note with security, then Mr. Graham could sign the note with me. Mrs. Graham had engaged Herbert Sturgill to go to town with us Saturday morning to purchase and bring back a casket and box.

Saturday was cloudy and dark. Herbert Sturgill came for Mrs. Graham and me about 9:30. He had put a tarpaulin in the truck to protect the casket in case of rain. We arrived at the funeral home about 10:30. I explained to Mr. Curtright that I was not prepared to pay for a casket then but should be able to complete payments within a year and expected to pay interest. He and I had known each other since he had established his business in Louisa while I was a high school student there. He had no qualms about my honesty and would not expect interest on an unpaid balance if I could finish paying within a year. He would extend credit for an undertaker's funeral if I wanted it. I explained that Sylvia had requested that we not have one and that I wanted only to buy a casket, which we would take back to Cherokee with us on Mr. Sturgill's truck. He then showed us caskets, beginning with expensive, ornate ones and ending with pine boxes covered with black cloth that cost as little as $75. We selected a beautiful one covered with an ashes of roses fabric. The price was $200. We decided not to buy a metal vault but to use the sturdy pine vault that cost nothing extra. Mrs. Graham observed that the casket we chose was very much like the one for Sylvia's sister, except that hers had been covered with a silver colored fabric. While attendants were loading the casket and box on Mr. Sturgill's truck, we supplied Mr. Curtright with information needed for vital statistics records. I signed a note for $200 and Mrs. Graham signed as my security. On the way back to Cherokee, we stopped to ask Arthur Morris, a United Baptist preacher who had been one of Sylvia's teachers at Rockhouse School, to preach the funeral and conduct graveside services the next afternoon at two o'clock. The dark sky was lower, the wind had begun to blow, and a light rain was falling when we reached Cherokee.

Aunt Jenny Cooper had taken charge of the kitchen. Neighbors had brought food. A big dinner around chicken and dumplings was waiting for us. Later in the afternoon Sylvia's Aunt Izzie Moore and her cousins, Ruth and Watson, arrived from Winchester bringing floral arrangements. Near dinnertime Nova Wellman and Sophie Roberts, our friend and fellow teacher at Louisa, arrived in a truck. Nova had checked at the florist's and the funeral home and brought flowers that had arrived, including a beautiful arrangement

of carnations ordered by Appalachian State Teachers College.

Nova and Sophie were not weepers and wailers. They recalled incidents in their relationship with Sylvia that reflected her splendid sense of humor and the depth of her understanding of people and motives behind what they do. We laughed a great deal.

The following day was cold and cloudy with snow blowing occasionally in an icy wind that cut to the bone. After sharing breakfast with those who had watched during the wake, I walked up to the family graveyard to look at the grave that neighboring men had dug in the yellow clay beside the grave of Georgia, Sylvia's sister. It was neatly cut and deep. The pine vault for the coffin was in place. The chestnut wood cross boards that would cover the vault lid after the coffin had been lowered into the grave were arranged in two stacks to serve as the bier for the graveside services. No one was there. Neighbors had done their job well and retreated before the piercing wind.

Soon after a big mid-day dinner followed by a hot apple cobbler that Aunt Jenny had made, people began to gather in the home. My father and mother arrived on mules, which they hitched to posts in the yard fence. The day was so intensely cold that they had almost frozen. Arthur Morris arrived in his Model A Ford about 1:30.

It was too cold to have the funeral on the broad front porch of the home, too cold, even, to have the hall doors open. We decided to place the casket on two kitchen chairs in the hallway, leave the doors open to the living room and the lower room, and let people sit or stand near the doors, while Mr. Morris stood at the foot of the stairs to deliver his funeral sermon. Aunt Jenny, an excellent singer, led in the singing of a hymn from the *Sweet Songster.* Mr. Morris's sermon, delivered in a conversational tone instead of a chant, was not doctrinal but an evaluation of Sylvia's achievements and a statement in praise of the positive influence her life had been on those who loved her and the many young people who had been her students. Knowing that Grahams were not Baptists, he delivered an ecumenical sermon which Sylvia would have approved, I thought.

Sylvia's father and mother and I sat near the open coffin during the sermon, each of us weeping lightly by the time Mr. Morris had finished. I closed the coffin lid, and the six pallbearers and two attendants bore it on poles up the steep hill to the graveyard. Not more than twenty or twenty-five persons had been present for the funeral. Many of them did not join the procession to the graveyard. When the coffin was in place on the improvised bier, I opened it again and Mr. Morris, Aunt Jenny, and one or two others sang from memory two or three verses from "The Poor Wayfaring Stranger." There was a commitment of ashes to ashes and dust to dust and a brief prayer. I closed the coffin lid, and the pallbearers lowered the coffin into the grave, screwed down the lid of the vault, placed the cross boards over it, and began filling up the grave. With the hollow thump of the first shovelful of earth on the cross boards, we left the grave in charge of the pallbearers. The hollow thump of the lumps of clay on the coffin brought tears gushing from my eyes. The frigid wind stabbed me with a shudder that bore my grief as I turned away to go.

That evening Mr. and Mrs. Graham and I were alone. After a dinner of leftovers, we

sat by a roaring log fire in the living room while a north wind shook the rafters of the hundred-year-old house, and related incidents in which Sylvia had been involved. Near bed time, Mrs. Graham nudged Mr. Graham gently with her elbow. He cleared his throat and told me that they had discussed my situation. Sylvia had loved me so much that she would not hear even the slightest of criticisms of me. I had loved her. They both loved me and were proud to have me for a son-in-law. Sylvia was dead. I was a young man with most of my life ahead of me. I would find it hard to accept my loss, but in time I would. He and Mrs. Graham were in agreement that I should, as soon as I was able to do so, search for another lover, marry again, and become a father. They would not feel that I was betraying Sylvia by loving another and marrying again, and they wanted me to write to them along and come to see them whenever I returned to Kentucky for a visit. I was happy in Boone and doing well there. If I could keep my health, I might find myself being promoted because I deserved to be in a school in which it was not necessary to play politics for promotions.

Mr. and Mrs. Graham were intelligent, perceptive, and wise. They had suffered many losses and known much sadness, and they were old enough to have learned that time seems long for the impatient young but short for the patient old. I never loved them more than I did that night.

I slept on the couch in the living room in which a low wood fire burned on the hearth. Throughout the night a cold wind lashed at the eaves of the old house and the timbers creaked. Once in a troubled dream I heard so plainly Sylvia ringing her bedside bell in the lower room that I rose upright on the couch.

Mr. Graham came into the room before daylight, built a bright fire, and sat before it. Mrs. Graham arrived and sat with him for a while before going into the kitchen to prepare breakfast. We ate a steaming breakfast of ham and eggs and hot biscuits with strawberry preserves before daylight. As soon as it was light enough for me to see, I packed my light bag and left on foot for Blaine.

The wind had died down. Frost covered fences and trees by the roadside and floated in the air. I walked briskly, recalling as I hurried on incidents along the road involving Sylvia. I stopped on the Narrows to determine precisely the tree below the road behind which we had hidden a kerosene lamp Louella Miles had lent us one dark night when my car became mired up in a mudhole in front of her house. The only light she had was the lamp which she insisted that we borrow. The wind kept blowing out the flame. When I had used my last match, I hid the lamp and we felt our way along the dark, muddy road to Sylvia's home. The only person I met on the familiar road to Blaine was Lewis Kazee's son, who carried the mail on horseback from Blaine to Webbville, and usually stopped about 7:30 at the Cherokee post office where Mrs. Graham was the postmistress. I waited at Cox's Garage and short-order restaurant for the bus to Louisa.

At Louisa I waited in the drug store and at the Courthouse for three hours before crossing the bridge to Fort Gay to catch a Norfolk and Western train to Bluefield. Not many people were stirring in Louisa. I saw only three or four courthouse loafers I had

known. It was a dark and cold morning with air so still that a pall of coal smoke from locomotives hung over the town. Of the oldtimers in the Courthouse with whom I had brief conversations, no one referred to Sylvia's death. About 11:30 I walked down to Rip's Restaurant for a hamburger, which I ate at the counter. Before I had finished eating, the restaurant was crowded with high school students, many of whom I recognized. They looked at me quizzically and nodded a recognition or spoke briefly as if they half feared to be seen talking with me. None paused for an exchange with me. While I was paying my bill at the cash register, four of the high school teachers came in, but none spoke to me. As I was returning my billfold to my pocket, I looked briefly at them after they had settled into a booth. One nodded a recognition in a startled fashion and turned his attention immediately to his companions. I knew I was not welcome in Louisa. Outside the restaurant, I looked through the window in time to see all four of the teachers staring after me.

I crossed to the east side of the street to avoid meeting the noon hour crowd of teachers and students. I was happy at Boone, where, so far as I knew, I had no enemies or evil-wishers. I was not in a mood to enjoy, as I might have enjoyed on other occasions, the indignities of fearful teachers and students whose principal I had been for three years, but I thought I was learning something about the political aspects of casual friendship.

The station master at Fort Gay told me the eastbound train was on time. I was the only passenger boarding it at Fort Gay. The train would stop for no more than two minutes. I bought my ticket and waited beside the track for the train, which stopped with a screech. The conductor helped a woman and a child down the coach steps and held my elbow while I got on. The train had started again by the time I had chosen one of several empty seats. I settled into my seat with my thoughts and memories.

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Christmas

I decided that I must write to my draft board at Louisa and explain that I no longer had a dependent. Though I was now eligible for the draft, I desired very much to complete the school term at Appalachian, after which I would report in May to volunteer. Dr. Joe Carter, who had been our doctor while Sylvia and I lived in Louisa, had written a letter to the board stating that I was the sole support of a sick wife who was in a sanitarium and that I myself had heavily scarred lungs and would probably not be physically qualified for military service. I had not heard from my board. I was not yet prepared to state for my records that I was then suffering from tuberculosis. Perhaps the spot on my lung would disappear by May and I would pass the physical examination at the induction center in Huntington. I should, I thought, base my plans on the assumption that I would be accepted for military service.

The cost of Sylvia's casket had brought my debts to $2200. When I thought of the possibility of my being accepted for military service, my blood pressure rose and hot water poured into my mouth. I would receive only $750 in cash for the remainder of my year at Appalachian. I was honor bound to pay Curtright. Paying interest on my notes at banks and making modest payments on the principal for a total of $250 might satisfy the bankers. I would then have $300, or $60 a month, to meet my own expenses for five months. I decided to follow this plan and put financial worries out of my mind as best I could.

No longer needing our household furnishings stored in Curt Young's place, I could see whether I might be able to sell them when I returned to Lawrence County for the Christmas holidays. A part of my debts was money I had borrowed to pay for some of the furniture. If I should be able to sell it for

half of what I paid for it, l could use the money to reduce my indebtedness another $300. Refrigerators, kitchen ranges, and stoves were becoming scarce. Ours were in excellent condition. I might be able to get more than half of what I paid for them. But my creditors would have to wait for the remainder of what I owed them until after I had completed my military service.

As the train rushed through the mountains in a grey afternoon, I dozed very little. Passengers, mostly older women who might have been returning from visits with sons or daughters employed in war industries in Ohio, were subdued and quiet.

From the depot in Bluefield I rushed to the bus station in time to get a bus to Bristol, where I could make connections to Elizabethton the following morning for a bus to Boone that would arrive there about the middle of the day. Seats in the bus station were all occupied. I stood about on the ramp and watched buses unload and load until mine arrived.

The bus to Bristol was crowded, but I was fortunate to find a seat by an old man returning to east Tennessee from a visit with his daughter, who was working in a plant in Columbus, Ohio. He was excited about his trip and talked about Columbus, which he had visited for the first time, and his daughter, who was doing classified work about which she was not permitted to talk, even to her old daddy. He wanted me to guess his age. He was immensely pleased when I guessed 65. He laughed with gusto, his face animated and his bright blue eyes darting about. "Would you believe," he said, narrowing his eyes at me, "that I am 75 years old?" He had been a widower for three years. One of his problems was that his youthful appearance made him attractive to younger women, some of whom had been "chasing after him." But he had decided not to marry again. He could not stand the thought, he said, of having another woman come in and take over his wife's things. The old man, an unsophisticated egotist, conversed easily. I found him interesting and encouraged him to talk. There was no opportunity for me to think about myself and my problems.

In Bristol I passed up the fine hotel near the bus station because I thought a room there would cost more than I wanted to pay and went to the Virginian, an old hotel with modest rates, but which was not at the time operating a dining room. Having settled into a room with musty Victorian furnishings and soiled wallpaper, I took a bath, the first one I had had since I left Boone. In a nondescript little restaurant around the corner I ate, for thirty-five cents and a tip, a surprisingly good hamburger steak with french fries, three or four chips of dill pickles, and a thin slice of a fresh tomato on crisp lettuce. Happy conversation in the next booth between two middle-aged, working-class men and a heavily made up young woman with a soft voice reminded me that lonely young women were searching for lovers.

My long day without a nap left me tired. I bought a newspaper in the hotel lobby but found myself too tired and sleepy to read very much of it. I slept soundly that night and was pleased to remember next morning fragments of dreams in which Sylvia and I were together and there was no awareness of her death.

Instead of going on to Elizabethton, as I had planned to do, I took an early bus through Abingdon and Mountain City. It was not crowded. No one occupied the seat beside me. I dozed until the bus started up the narrow winding road through the gorge below Trade, Tennessee, where I became nauseated and struggled with a temptation to vomit. The weather became brighter as we came out of the gorge at the North Carolina state line. From Highway 421 down Cove Creek one glimpsed sweeping views of the upper coves and timbered side of Snake Mountain, which terminated as Howard's Knob at Boone, bathed in light, though the sun was not shining. It was an enchanted land, a satisfying place. When I thought of the school, the excellent young principal, the friendly teachers, and my likable students, I felt as if I were coming home.

The clouds were high over Boone. The weather was warm for the middle of December. I walked from the bus station to the apartments and met no one along the way whom I recognized. At the apartments I picked up from the table in front of Mrs. Coffey's room a handful of mail that had arrived in my absence and went to my apartment, where I took a long nap before preparing my dinner. I called Mr. Wey to report that I had returned and would be on duty at eight o'clock the following morning, wrote Mr. and Mrs. Graham a brief letter, and went to my office to prepare for classes.

The school would be closing for the winter holidays at the end of the following week. I would be fully occupied with preparation for my classes. I made no reference to my bereavement to the teachers or my students. People looked at me with sympathy in their eyes but no one mentioned my bereavement. I talked about the burial with Mr. Wey and discussed it one evening with Ruby Donald and Doris Penix.

It was traditional at the school for homeroom teachers to plan a Christmas party for the last meeting of the homeroom students before the holidays. We drew names for inexpensive gifts and decorated the room in Christmas colors. I provided money for cookies and red punch and the boys prepared everything. I was taken by complete surprise when one of my homeroom boys, G.C. Greene, Jr., presented me with a gift, beautifully wrapped and decorated. I opened it and found a new white shirt and a striped tie. The card attached to the box had been signed by all of the boys. I found it difficult to refrain from showing my emotions. I had never received a gift from my students before.

Everybody was busy with Christmas plans. I had no visitors to my apartment during the time between my return from Kentucky and the beginning of the Christmas holidays. Nobody invited me out. I did not go to the college cafeteria or the restaurants uptown for evening meals but prepared in my own kitchen simple meals with a heavy concentration of proteins and milk, which I ate at six o'clock. I slept an hour after dinner, prepared for my classes, and read until eleven o'clock as regularly as I could.

There was an emptiness in my life with which I found it difficult to deal. My brisk walk to the apartments for my mail each day at noon became disappointing, for I had developed the habit in order to pick up my letter from Sylvia. Expectancy had been a part of the habit. After finding no mail at all for three or four days, I stopped going. At night I wanted to write letters to her, as I had done all year. Not having her to write to emphasized my loss.

I was lonely and ached with a hurt I could not assuage. Sometimes I sat alone and wept. It did not seem appropriate for me to talk about my grief, and fellow teachers were not calling on me out of a sense of respect.

Even though I kept saying to myself that I must not worry about anything and eat good food, take my cod liver oil and mineral supplements, exercise mildly, and sleep all I could, I found myself so tortured at night by troubling dreams and insomnia that I welcomed the crowing of Mrs. Watson's rooster and the mooing of her cow at daylight.

I wrote to Mrs. Graham that I would return to her home for Christmas and then spend a day or two with my father and mother before going to Columbus, Ohio, for a visit with my sister. I had my bag packed and was ready to go after school was dismissed at noon.

The bus from Boone to Sparta had only four or five passengers on it. I took a seat somewhat removed from other passengers. It was a dark, cloudy day. A rain the night before had left the earth wet and the streams swollen. The bus was warm. I dozed much of the way between Boone and West Jefferson. At West Jefferson I noticed for the first time a pink marble statue of Pocahontas in the display yard of a monument dealer. Not sleepy from there on to Sparta, I was able to see much of the green rolling countryside, for I had traveled from West Jefferson to Sparta in darkness on earlier trips.

At Sparta, I caught a crowded bus from Winston-Salem to Charleston, West Virginia. I found a seat beside a heavy dressed up middle-age woman, who replied when I spoke to her but looked straight ahead without saying another word between there and Bluefield, where she left the bus. I moved over into the seat she had vacated. No one took the seat next to me.

Nearly everybody got off the bus at a rest stop at Beckley. I ate a cold sandwich from a dispenser and drank a soft drink, as people wandered about or gathered in groups on the sidewalk.

In Charleston most of those who got off the bus rushed to a waiting bus to Huntington, which already had several passengers in it. We reached Huntington sometime in the late evening. The station was crowded with talkative, laughing people. I did not go into the waiting room, but hurried on down to the corner and engaged a room for the night at the Milner Hotel.

After settling myself in my room, I freshened up and walked up the street, looking into the packed waiting room of the bus station and at crowds of happy and well dressed people on the ramps. I remembered the threadbare, grim crowds I had seen there less than a year before. Prosperity had come with the War, and those traveling in December, 1942, were filled with the Christmas spirit as they hurried home for the holidays, money in their pockets and gifts in their suitcases and shopping bags. I walked as far east as Walgreen's, where I went in and ate a dish of ice cream at the counter. On the sidewalk outside I saw Myrtle Curry and her mother, friends Sylvia and I had known and with whom I had left a dulcimer I could not carry with me when I went to Boone. They had their arms filled with

bags and packages and were waiting for a bus. I walked over to the grand railroad station with a statue of Huntington, the railroad builder, in the yard. The waiting room was crowded with travelers, well dressed, laughing, and happy.

Returning to Fifth Avenue, along which only a few people were hurrying, I walked past the Mosely residence where I was rooming when I had received the call to come to Boone. The house was dark except for the window of the room which Miss Westall had occupied.

After breakfast the next morning at the White Tower, where I had eaten egg sandwiches with coffee while I was in Huntington, I went by the Mosely home for a brief visit. The Captain had gone to the country to ride one of his horses and Miss Westall was at work, but I enjoyed a good conversation with Mrs. Mosely and the friendly black couple who worked for her. Jim remembered with good humor and gratitude my prying his false teeth from his throat when he went to sleep while sitting in the kitchen door, fell down the steps, and swallowed his teeth the day before I left for Boone.

Huntington was swarming with Saturday shoppers. Moving among the happy crowds was exhilarating to me. I shopped for a few Christmas greetings. Remembering that I needed some new undershirts, I went to Huntington Dry Goods Store on Third Avenue to see whether I might find some in my size in the bargain basement. Two attractive young women, perhaps high school girls with vacation jobs, were in charge of the corner in which underwear was sold. The smaller one, shapely, animated, smiling, and eager to help, was free at the moment to talk with me. I told her what I wanted, but just then the other one turned away from the customer, who had inquired about something but had not bought it, and took charge of me. She had what I wanted. While she was putting two undershirts in a bag for me and accepting pay for them, the other was flirting with smiling eyes. As I turned away to go, I heard her say, "He was my customer. You took him away from me. You just did that because he's cute." Hurriedly, I adjusted my tie and checked to see whether my hat was raked at the right angle, turned, and walked past them. Their smiles boosted my drooping ego. It had been a long time since I had engaged in such an open flirtation and I could not remember how long it had been since an attractive young woman had said I was cute.

I returned to the Milner, brushed my teeth, packed my bag, left my key at the desk, and walked up to the square to catch a trolley car to Ashland. The ride was a nostalgic experience for me. I enjoyed riding in trolley cars and had gone from Huntington to Ashland and back on one many times. I was fortunate to get a seat. Many stood in the aisle, steadying themselves by holding to seats. I rode to Thirteenth Street and hurried to the bus station.

Clusters of laughing, talking people stood along the sidewalk. The station was crowded. I bought a ticket to Louisa. My bus would leave soon after lunch. There was not an empty seat in the waiting room. I stood against the wall with my light bag beside me on the floor while considering whether to wait for a seat at the counter and have a sandwich and milk there or go around the corner for lunch in a little restaurant in the Ventura

Hotel building. Thinking I might see someone in the crowd whom I had known, I was searching faces when a tall man with a friendly and vaguely familiar looking face walked up to me and asked, "Are you Cratis Williams? You might not remember me, but we went to school together on Caines Creek." He waited a moment to see whether I might remember him. I did not. "I am Curt Blankenship," he said. I remembered him then. It had been twenty years since we were in school together. He was one of the shy twins, Curt and Bert, whom I could never tell apart. They were very poor, sons of a widower who was a tenant living in a battered little shack up a branch in the head of the creek. The boys came to school each year only as long as they could go barefoot, for there was no money to buy shoes. There was a sister, too, but she did not come to school. I had never seen her. It was Curt who had delighted the school one Friday afternoon when he recited as his "piece," a folk rhyme: "Chicken pie and pepper cake/ The bullfrog died with the bellyache." He had not been able to finish grade school, but he had a good job and was doing all right then.

The bus to Louisa was crowded with young people on their way home from jobs in war industries in Ohio. I did not recognize any of them. Mostly young women, they seemed to be persons who had not gone to high school. They talked easily, many appearing to be determined to illustrate how well they had mastered Buckeye diction. Most of them got off the bus at Louisa for a rest stop, using facilities in the Courthouse. Afterwards, many of them crowded into the drug store for sodas or ice cream. They must have been returning to Johnson, Floyd, or Pike County. When I went in to inquire about the schedule to Blaine, the clerk said to me in a low voice, "Did you ever see so much Columbus red?" I looked around at those sitting at tables, or standing in clusters near the front of the store, sipping sodas or licking ice cream cones. Almost all of them wore dresses with bright red waists and skirts of red and green plaid. Their hair styles were so much alike that one might have thought all of them patronized the same beauty shop. "They come back from Columbus dressed like this," the clerk continued. "We call them Columbus reds. People in Columbus call them 'Louisies' because they say they are from 'Louisy.'"

The bus arrived at Blaine after dark. Most of the passengers who got off at Cox's Restaurant were young women who had grown out of my knowledge, if I had ever known them. They, too, wore "Columbus red." Each carried on one arm a coat with a collar of artificial fur and in the other hand a black suitcase too big to carry four or five miles up a muddy road. Fathers of some of them were waiting in the restaurant.

As I started, one of the young women called and asked whether she might walk with me. I looked at her closely. Her keen black eyes looked familiar, but the clusters of black curls I did not remember. She was tall and slender and with makeup applied with some skill, I thought. In fact, she was a pretty girl, perhaps eighteen or nineteen years old. I told her that I would be pleased to have a walking partner and confessed that I did not remember who she was. She was the daughter of the tenants on the farm Mrs. Graham had inherited from her parents. I had seen her often when she used to come to the post office at Cherokee, pick up any mail for her parents that might have arrived, and come in and sit on the porch to rest a while before walking, barefoot and brown legged, the three miles back to her home on Lick Fork. She was going to walk the five or six miles home that night.

Her big black suitcase looked heavy. I offered, though, to carry hers and let her carry mine. She would swap for a little while if she became tired, she said. I did not have a flashlight. A rain the night before and warm weather had left the road an extended mud-hole. Clouds were thick. The night was pitch black, but we could barely see water holes in the road when we were careful.

She chattered and laughed mirthfully as we stumbled along through the mud. Her mother had written her that Sylvia had died. She talked much of how well she had liked Sylvia and admired her pretty clothes. After we had walked a half mile she was willing to exchange loads with me. After we crossed the Cherokee bridge across Blaine, we found the mud stiffer and the road more difficult for walking than the road along the Narrows had been. We decided to leave the road and walk at the edge of the fields. When she became tired and staggering, I invited her to hold my arm, for she apparently had poor night vision. Soon she began telling of dates she had enjoyed with men who worked at the plant with her, squeezing my arm from time to time. Once we sat on a fallen post to rest. She sat close to me and clapped me on the shoulder and laughed to emphasize the cleverness with which she had dealt with men she had dated.

At Cherokee I expressed concern for her traveling alone, loaded with that heavy black suitcase another three miles in the darkness. Mrs. Graham would prepare a bed for her and she could go on to Lick Fork next morning. But she had written her mother that she would be home that night. She had thought her little brother would meet her at Blaine. Something must have happened. She stumbled on into the darkness.

Mr. and Mrs. Graham were listening to a radio program. The only light in the room was from the glow of wood coals in the fireplace. They were expecting me, but I was late. Mrs. Graham offered to prepare a supper for me, but I declined. She turned the radio down and we talked.

Herbert Sturgill had brought out from Louisa the living room and bedroom furniture that Sylvia and I had stored in Curt Young's house. Mrs. Sturgill would buy at half price, as I had proposed, the couch, end tables, and two chairs. Mrs. Graham would buy the remainder of it. Mr. Graham had talked with his cousin, Lafe Wellman, who operated a hardware and furniture store in Louisa, about selling for a commission our refrigerator, stove, and dining room furniture. Mr. Wellman was not certain that he could sell it but he would permit me to have it moved to his store and he would see what he could do with it. Mr. Graham had told Lafe Wellman that I would talk with him while I was home for the holidays.

We talked until eleven o'clock, mostly about neighborhood events and local persons, those who were ill, or had gone away to work, or were in some branch of military service. We referred frequently to Sylvia, but casually and unemotionally as if she might have gone away on a visit. The bed in the living room had been moved out. After the eleven o'clock news I retired to the unheated lower room in which Sylvia had died and slept on the bed that had been ours when we had our own house in Louisa.

While at the Graham home through Christmas Day, I visited with neighbors who came to the post office, unpacked and placed in shelves in the lower room the books that had been stored at Curt Young's, went through and discarded teaching materials from Kentucky that I no longer cared to keep, and arranged and put in Sylvia's trunk letters she had received from me during her illness along with her poems. Mrs. Graham helped me sort Sylvia's clothing, and we decided to whom we would give articles of value. Except for such articles as aprons and housecoats, Sylvia's clothing was too small for her mother. Working with Sylvia's things in this fashion was good for me. I thought I was better able to accept her death as a result but learned later that deep emotional attachments require a long time for resolution.

One sunny afternoon the Sturgills came for a visit. Mrs. Sturgill liked the living room furniture and the lamps that went with it, but since there was no electricity available at Cherokee then, she did not take the lamps. I helped Mr. Sturgill put the couch and chairs in his truck. He paid me $35 cash for the furniture.

Christmas night I discussed my financial situation with Mr. and Mrs. Graham. If Lafe Wellman should be able to sell my refrigerator, stove, and dining room furniture for what I wanted for them, I would have $300 to apply toward my debts. I planned to pay Henry Curtright as quickly as I could. When I returned for a visit in the spring I would have the cash needed to buy a stone for Sylvia's grave, one like her sister's. Mrs. Graham offered to buy the stone, but I felt that it was my obligation to furnish it. Mrs. Graham agreed to go with me to select it. I would return after the school in Boone closed in April and we could order the stone before I would volunteer for military service in the quota for May. It was my understanding that creditors were required to hold the debts of people in military service until they were discharged. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Graham thought I would qualify for military service.

The day following Christmas I walked the three miles over the hill to the home of my father and mother for a two-day visit. They were lonely. None of their children away from home had come back for Christmas. They had only my little brother, twelve years old at the time, with them. Everybody on the creek, except old people and children, had either joined the army or gone away to work. The local school, which I had taught for three years, had only nine or ten children in it. There was talk that it might be closed in a year or two. While I was there both sets of grandparents, all looking older than I remembered, came for visits. My great uncle Jake came for dinner one day. He had become a widower since I saw him last. Then 72, he was, as they say, "a-whettin' and a-honin' for him another womern." A compulsive talker, Uncle Jake addressed himself mostly to me and most of his stories were accounts of his recent encounters with widows, old maids, and teen-age girls, all of whom were "a-drawin' up to him." He talked loudly and rapidly. My mother, amused by his self-exaltation, would occasionally walk from the kitchen to ask him questions or offer comments. Uncle Jake, seeing me as a fellow widower, thought we must have interests in common, but he left little room for me to say anything. When he was ready to leave, he said, "When you come back this spring, come down and stay all night with me, and I'll take you a-courtin'."

My mother was distressed that my brother Ralph's marriage had broken up. He and his wife had resigned as teachers and gone to Columbus to work in war industries. They worked different shifts. She had fallen in love with a man with whom she worked, requested her half of investments and the bank account, the car, and the furniture and gone to live with the other man, who had promised to marry her after divorces came through. Following the separation, Ralph had given up the apartment and was living in a rooming house. My mother, who could not accept divorce, was sure the other man, whose wife and several children lived elsewhere, had no intention of getting a divorce to marry Ralph's estranged wife, who after her lover tired of her, would come right back and want to live with Ralph again, after she had "run through with" everything they had. Mama thought of her as a "piece of trash." She feared Ralph would be "easy and mealy mouthed" and take the "hussy" back. She wanted me to talk with him about that while I was in Columbus and to tell him that if he should take her back "after the way she had entreated him," she "shan't ever step foot in my house again what time I have breath."

I walked, mostly through the fields, to Blaine in time to get the morning bus to Louisa, where I had my suit pressed while I waited and my shoes shined before having lunch at Effie's, beside the railroad track, where I would not see former students or fellow teachers. I took a Norfolk and Western train from Fort Gay to Columbus and a taxicab to my sister Ruth's home.

While in Columbus I had four experiences which I have always remembered. My sister Ruth and her husband John invited me to go with them to a party in the home of friends of theirs. Ralph had been invited, too. He was nattily dressed, charming, and a favorite of the men present. He told good stories and laughed easily, but after his tongue had begun to seem thick and he staggered against the newel post, I remained close to him and discovered that he was making frequent trips to the liquor table and was drinking heavy drinks of hard whiskey straight. It was his intention to get drunk. When he started up the stairs to the bathroom, he collapsed on the stairs like a rag doll and came sliding back. We carried him to a bedroom, took off his shoes, loosened his tie, and stretched him out. He was unconscious. We were embarrassed that he had not limited himself to a few social drinks, but I was convinced that he was suffering keen disappointment, shame, and humiliation, though no one had referred to his former wife.

Ralph invited me to spend an evening with him. He had a date. He and his girl were going to a night spot called the Setting Sun, where drinks were served, there was good music, and people who wanted to could dance. His date had a friend, a recently divorced Catholic woman about my age with four children who had not dated since her husband ran off with another woman. She and her children lived with her father and mother, strict Catholics who did not want her to date. The attractive woman had been with Ralph and his date a time or two. Ralph's date had told her about me, that I was a teacher and recently widowed, and she thought she might enjoy going out with me. I agreed to go along on a date with the friend.

I took a cab to Ralph's rooming house, hoping that he might want to talk about his

problems while he was getting himself dressed for the evening. He evaded my questions. He was not ready to talk about how he felt about his divorced wife. He dismissed the matter with "I was more than fair in dividing with her what we had, and I'll not take her back." When he had dressed and was ready to go, he called the young woman who was to be my date and told her we would come by soon to pick her up. He then ordered a taxicab.

My date for the evening lived in an older working-class district. Her parents' home, about 1910 vintage, was a row house. When we arrived, Ralph decided to wait in the taxicab while I went in for the young woman, whose first name was Rose but whose last name I have forgotten. Two older men dressed in work clothes were sitting on the lighted porch. I presented myself and told them I had come for Rose. The men did not tell me their names. One of them, apparently Rose's father, told me to knock on the screen door and she would be there. I knocked. A little boy responded and reported that Rose was not quite ready but would be there in just a few minutes. I wondered whether the boy was Rose's son.

The man invited me to have a seat and interrupted his conversation with his neighbor to ask where I was from. Neither had ever heard of Boone but the visitor had been to Charleston once, which he apparently thought was in North Carolina, and wanted to know how far Boone is from Charleston. When I replied that I did not know exactly but that it is about the same distance from Boone as Columbus is, they looked at each other quizzically. Then the father asked, "And what do you do?" When I told him that I was a teacher, he turned toward his companion and they resumed their conversation, neither paying any more attention to me.

Rose appeared in about five minutes and I presented myself. She was a slender Irish girl with fair skin, brilliant blue eyes, and dark hair. She told her father she would be home about midnight. She did not offer to take my arm. I opened the door of the cab, she climbed in beside Ralph and I sat beside her. Ralph gave the cab driver directions to his girl's house. Ralph and Rose talked. She had a pleasantly modulated voice but chose her words carefully as if she feared she might make a grammatical error. I thought she probably knew that I was an English teacher.

We had a booth at the Setting Sun. I sat beside Rose. Ralph's friend, whose name was Audrey, was uninhibited and talkative. We drank beer. Audrey selected several records for us to hear during the evening and sang along with some of them. Our conversation was inconsequential. Rose said very little except in response to questions. She rarely looked at me, so I saw her mostly in profile, her pretty nose tilted slightly at the end. Once during the evening I pressed her hand, lying open and relaxed on the seat. Her hand was shapely and warm but dry and hard like a working person's hand. She did not respond. Her hand was as passive as if it had been made of rubber. Suddenly, it occurred to me that Rose was uncomfortable, ill at ease, and feeling guilty about having a date. I gathered her unresponsive hand in mine and squeezed it. It flopped back like rubber into passivity. I patted it gently and withdrew my hand. After we had consumed several beers, Rose became more talkative and went into detail about the work she did but she would look at me only briefly.

Rose and I faced the entrance to the Setting Sun, which was a favorite spot of people

from Kentucky. It was crowded with laughing, happy young folk, most of whom were young women. Two well-dressed girls waiting at the front for seats kept looking at me as if they knew me. In a few minutes I recognized them. They had been sparrow-legged students in the junior division of the high school at Louisa while I was principal there and had grown up since then. When I nodded my recognition, they came to the booth to speak to me. They had been Sylvia's students in English classes. I presented Rose and Audrey as my brother's friends and then presented Ralph. I was embarrassed at first because they had found me there but rebounded when I realized that they could have been embarrassed by my seeing them there but were not. They were pretty young women who were working in a plant. They asked about Sylvia, whom they referred to as the best English teacher they had while they were in high school. They had not heard of her death.

Apparently, the incident established my credibility for Rose. She asked me two or three questions about Appalachian and Boone, neither of which she had ever heard of. She had gone to a parochial school and graduated from a Catholic high school before marrying at the age of eighteen.

At the end of the evening I ordered a taxicab for Rose and me and Ralph ordered another for him and Audrey. Rose was talkative on the way home. She wished she had gone to college instead of marrying at age eighteen. She had been a good student in high school and would have enjoyed going to college. When we arrived at her home, her father and his friend were still sitting on the lighted porch. I asked the cab driver to wait while I escorted Rose to the door, where I thanked her for going out with me. She said she had enjoyed the evening. I bade her good night without offering to shake hands with her. And so ended my first date as a widower.

Aunt Alma, my mother's sister, and her husband, Nelson Williams, my great uncle Jake's son and a first cousin of my father, lived in Columbus. They had gone there soon after their marriage as late teen-agers and before I could remember. Nelson, who had been a railroad engineer for many years, had held his job throughout the Depression. I had known them mostly as well dressed and apparently well-to-do aunt and uncle who returned to Kentucky for short visits in late summer nearly every year and to attend funerals, homecomings, and family reunions. Their only child, a son about two years younger than I, had died when he was only a few weeks old. My mother had told me that Aunt Alma, who had become very religious in recent years, was in poor health and suffered intensely at times from a disease of the liver. She urged that I be sure to go see her while I was in Columbus, for she had been especially fond of me, her oldest nephew, and would not live much longer. I promised my mother that I would go see her.

Two or three days before I planned to leave for Boone I called my aunt to ask whether it was convenient for me to come for a visit. She and Nelson would be delighted to have me come that very afternoon and I had to come prepared to spend the night. They had always hoped I would come to see them. They had heard that I had been in Columbus a time or two but I had not called them. She upbraided me for my neglect of them. I agreed to come prepared to spend the night.

Aunt Alma and Uncle Nelson owned a row house in an old fashioned but still proud working-class neighborhood with trees along the sidewalks, well kept yards, and freshly painted porch floors. Every room in the house shone as if it had just been cleaned and the good but inexpensive furniture was waxed and polished. The guest bedroom looked like a model in a furniture store. I complimented my aunt on her taste and skill as a housekeeper. She had a roast in the oven. Nelson would be home about seven o'clock and we would eat about eight.

Not yet fifty years old, Aunt Alma in some ways looked older. Her naturally curly hair was as black as ever and her lively dark brown eyes as bright, but she was thin and her fair skin was dappled with dark brown spots, even the skin on her hands and arms. In response to my inquiry about her health, she went into detail, supplying a refrain of religious expressions like "Bless God," "God be praised," " Bless His Holy Name," "Blessed Jesus" to her account of a recent attack, brought on, she thought, by an imbalance in her medication. She had been in the hospital for several days. While there, she had been delirious and had tried to tear her skin off with her fingernails. It had been necessary to restrain her in a strait jacket. "Blessed be His Holy Name," she concluded, "He lifted me up and restored me." As she talked, she paused occasionally and stared with a faraway gaze as if she saw something I did not see. At the end of her account she stared past me and with a smile of happy recognition on her pretty lips for a long time. But she was getting along well then, she said, and was able to do her housework and cook for Nelson.

My mother had sent Aunt Alma pictures of me through the years. She had them all over the house. Standing on the dresser in the bedroom was a picture taken during my first year as a teacher. She had pictures of other nephews and nieces, but they were in an album she kept in the drawer of her library table.

While we were waiting in her living room for Uncle Nelson to arrive, she told me that she prayed for me every day and had done so for years, that she asked God to bless me and guide me in the ways of righteousness and that she knew He would, Praise Him. I was stunned by the realization that I had meant so much to her without having known it. I felt guilty because I had never been to see her, had never written her a letter, or sent her a Christmas greeting, or given her a present. She asked about my soul's welfare, whether I was saved. I felt like a hypocrite when I told her that I was at peace with God and felt confident in his grace, for I knew that for her salvation came as a mystical experience, as being born again, and exemplified itself in religious ecstasy and piety. I knew that as she understood and had experienced salvation I was not in that number, but I knew also that I did not want to be.

She left me with the radio while she went into the kitchen to prepare for supper. About seven o'clock Uncle Nelson arrived, all dressed in striped coveralls and an engineer's cap and carrying an overcoat across his left arm and swinging a black lunch kit in his right hand. Startled when he found me sitting in his living room, he did not recognize me at once, but he was voluble and warm in his welcome. Without taking the time to go by the kitchen to greet my aunt, he rushed upstairs to take a shower, shave, and change clothes before supper. Soon he came bounding down the stairs, booming questions at me as he

came. Like his father (and most Williamses), he was a compulsive talker and one who could not wait for a question to be answered before hurrying along with his own narratives. We went into the dining room for my aunt's delicious supper and sat opposite each other at the table. Aunt Alma, who was on a special diet, did not eat with us. She sat on a high stool near the table and "supervised" us, bringing more hot biscuits as we needed them and seeing that we had milk in our glasses.

Uncle Nelson kept a cascade of narrative charging and leaping over his own asides and interruptions. He gave me a full account of railroading in those busy times when the nation was gearing up for an all-out war effort, turning aside frequently to relate episodes of special runs he had made and arguments with his bosses he had won. His epic, of which he himself was the adventurous Ulysses, was expansive, but he had such a high regard for factual detail that he would frequently correct himself, sometimes two or three times, before continuing. Since he did not seem to be greatly interested in the adventures of a school teacher, I was a listener. My contributions to the conversation were short questions I managed to ask from time to time mostly to demonstrate that I was listening and interested in his narratives.

Following the meal, he took me out to show me his carefully tended back yard, which he had converted to a victory garden the spring before. While we were gone, my aunt ate her simple supper. She was washing dishes when we returned. We sat in the living room while Uncle Nelson talked. After finishing the dishes, Aunt Alma came and sat quietly with us for a time. She had begun to droop. Uncle Nelson was annoyed when she found it necessary to interrupt him to say that she would be getting up early to prepare Nelson's breakfast and pack his lunch in time for him to get to the railroad yards by six o'clock. I could sleep as long as I wanted to. She would keep a breakfast warm for me in the oven. She went off to bed.

After a time Uncle Nelson turned to asking me questions about people he had known on Caines Creek while he was growing up. My reports reminded him of many stories involving the old-timers which he told. I noted that he made judgments readily and was generous with his moral strictures, traits I had observed in others from Caines Creek who had gone away and enjoyed a measure of success in the world.

About 10:30 he announced that we would listen to the eleven o'clock news and then go to bed, since he had to get up so early. He always tried to listen to the news before lying down. He launched into his own analysis of the world situation, inserting, as appropriate, accounts of conversations about the progress of the war he had had with men at work. He was more up to date on the news than I was and was so charged with interest in the news report that he would interrupt with his own opinions. Following the program, he speculated for a bit on the turn of events and what he was certain would happen next.

I slept well. I was dimly aware of stirring around in the house in the early morning hours but did not wake up until about 7:30. Everything was quiet. Aunt Alma had lain down again after Nelson had left the house. When she heard me in the bathroom, she got up again and set out a warm breakfast for me. She sat with me while I ate.

About nine o'clock I was ready to leave. Aunt Alma was sitting by her fireplace when I set my light bag down to say goodbye to her. In the midst of the conversation she spoke my name almost in a whisper as if she meant to tell me a secret. I was standing at the end of the fireplace with my hand on the mantel. She said in a voice charged with emotion, "Cratis, Jesus came day before yesterday and visited with me. I was sitting here and looked up. He was standing right where you are standing now." Suddenly my spine felt like an icicle. I moved back a few inches so as not to fill the space Jesus had occupied. "He was a little man about your size," she continued. "He looked at me sweetly and smiled. The light around his head became brighter. He did not speak, just looked at me and smiled. Then, he faded away." She studied my face intently for a moment and then looked beyond me with her faraway gaze. I could think of nothing appropriate to say. After a moment she said in her natural voice, "His visit filled me with happiness and assurance, Bless His Sweet Name." She got up, walked with me to the door, and embraced me before I left.

(A few weeks later Aunt Alma returned to the hospital, where she had to be restrained again in a strait jacket. She died a painful death.)

Back at my sister's I prepared to go to town to window shop and feel the throb of urban life at noon time on a work day. The weather had become mild. I did not need to wear an overcoat. I rode a trolley car to High Street and wandered through the shopping district, looking especially at clothing for men. Some of the shops were advertising their post-Christmas sales and many suits and overcoats in my size had been marked down. I needed a suit and an overcoat desperately. My $13 suit was for fall or spring and my older suits were threadbare and out of style. My overcoat was six years old, but I felt that I could not really afford to spend money for new clothes, even at bargain prices. My brother-in-law had bought two days earlier for only $45 a rich brown suit with two pairs of pants and a topcoat of the same material at J.C. Penney's. I liked his outfit very much. He thought the same suit was available in my size. Although I was sure I could not afford to buy one, I did have $35 that Herbert Sturgill had paid me in cash. That with only $10 from my salary money would be enough if I should find myself overcome by an urge to buy. I went to Penney's, just to look around. There was an outfit like John's in my size. The length of the trousers would be adjusted while I waited if I wished to buy. I tried on everything and was pleased with the color and the neat fit. But I needed time to consider.

I strolled among shops until I became tired, stopped for lunch in a little restaurant near the Neil House, and then sat in the Neil House lobby a long time, associating it with Theodore Dreiser's novel, *Jennie Gerhardt*, which, as I understood it, had been set partly there. I dozed for a bit, got up and stretched myself, and went back and bought the suit and topcoat. After I had paid for my purchase, the clerk told me that the women who altered trousers were overworked just then and it would be at least an hour before they could get to mine. I could sit and wait or take a walk and come back. I decided to return to the Neil House.

A dry wind hurrying along down High Street was whisking bits of paper and chewing gum wrappers along the sidewalk. As I stepped from the street up to the level of the side-

walk, I noticed the scraps scooting along toward me and remembered that Mark Twain had once picked up a fifty-dollar bill along there, announced in the paper he had found it, and left town before being overwhelmed by the number of claimants. While I was chuckling to myself about Mark Twain's good luck, I saw what looked like a bill lifting, sliding, lifting, and bouncing toward me. I picked it up. It was a twenty dollar bill.

Not disturbed, as Mark Twain had been, by a vestigial conscience concerning such matters, I was pleased to think that good fortune had smiled on me and never once considered either advertising in the paper that a twenty dollar bill had blown into my hand or taking the bill to the police station. Instead, I remembered a men's shop two or three doors beyond the Neil House in which I had seen in the window a good looking yellow shirt and a beautiful tie that were just right for the suit I had bought. I put the bill in my wallet and hurried to the shop, half afraid that someone had already bought the tie I wanted. The tie was still there. I paid $3.50 for it, more than I had ever paid for a tie before, and bought a yellow shirt, a light blue shirt with a matching tie, and a bright green sport shirt made of a new synthetic material said to have been derived from cornstalks. I still had $2.00 of my fortune money.

My package was waiting for me when I returned to Penney's. With my new clothing under my arm I walked to the bus station to check bus schedules to Boone and learned that I could leave Columbus at seven o'clock in the morning and get to Boone at nine o'clock that night.

The following morning I was at the bus station on time. Snow was falling. By the time the bus was loaded and moving the snow was perhaps an inch deep. It became deeper for a few miles south of Columbus but by the time we had reached Chillicothe there was no snow at all. I changed buses at Ashland, Kentucky, and came on U.S. 23 through Louisa and Pikeville to Jenkins. The day was cloudy but there was no snow in the Big Sandy Valley. From Jenkins to Bristol there was no snow, but a few miles south of Bristol we came into snow again. It was six or eight inches deep in Boone, where a frigid wind was blowing and the snow was drifting. I rode in a taxicab from the bus station to Faculty Apartments, which seemed abandoned because so few had returned from their holidays.

My apartment was quiet and lonely, and I could hear no sounds in apartments near mine. It was two or three weeks before I learned that Catherine Smith, my next door neighbor, and Annafreddie Carsteens, who lived in the apartment under mine, had lost their mothers, who had been living with them, about the time Sylvia had died.

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Chapter Eight

Longing to Call Boone Home

As we moved into the second semester at Appalachian High School, teachers began including me in social activities they arranged. Mr. Wey and Jeannie invited me to their home for dinner several times, usually along with two or three other staff members. Dr. Abrams and Lillian had me to dinner occasionally. People living in the apartments, even those I had not met, began calling on me for brief visits in the late afternoons. No one referred to my having lost my wife recently. It was as if one were expected, after a few weeks of bereavement, not to refer to his loss any more. Holding my grief within intensified the pain of it at times. I would return to my apartment from a dinner or a room party, where I had enjoyed gaiety and laughter and not thought of Sylvia at all, and sink suddenly into despair and feel guilty.

The state of my health disturbed me, too. I took cod liver oil and my iron tonic faithfully, drank a quart of milk each day, and ate eggs and meat, but I had not yet regained all of the weight I had lost before coming to Boone. I took colds easily and coughed at night. I took a brief nap after lunch and a longer one after dinner, walked two or three miles a day and did bending and stretching exercises for about ten minutes before going to bed, and tried to sleep seven or eight hours at night, but I continued to be troubled with night sweats, bad dreams, and insomnia. I awoke often, wet with perspiration, from troubled dreams and tossed about for an hour or two before going back to sleep just before dawn, then sleeping through the alarm and arriving late for faculty meetings.

One afternoon about the middle of January two young women called on me. I had seen them in the building and had met one of them in the hall and on the stairs a few times, but I did not know their names. They presented themselves, Jennie Sue Allen and

Melba Lovill (later Tugman). Jennie Sue was a secretary in Dean J.D. Rankin's office and Melba worked for Barnard Dougherty in the business office. They were my neighbors, had seen me in the building, had heard of my wife's death, and had come for a brief neighborly visit of welcome. I invited them in. They sat on the long couch and I in an easy chair. After about ten minutes Melba excused herself to run some errands and Jennie Sue remained, though she, too, must be hurrying along soon to meet another young woman in the building to go together to the cafeteria for dinner.

Jennie Sue, a slight young woman in her early 20s, had well kept dark hair that rested on her shoulders and intensely dark eyes that danced and sparkled when she smiled. In our conversation I learned that she had graduated from college with a major in English but had not taught school because she preferred to work as a secretary and receptionist. She was not engaged, as most of the unmarried young women were, and did not have a "regular boyfriend." I told her that I was not yet ready psychologically for a girl friend and might not be for a long time, for I had loved my wife deeply and was missing her more than I could say. But if she could accept a casual relationship with me I would like to invite her to be my partner at parties and other social affairs if she were interested, knowing that I was not a serious suitor. She said she understood. She was lonely herself at times and would enjoy going with me. I could not tell her about my illness, but I did tell her that I was head over heels in debt and so desperately poor that I rarely went to the movies because I felt I could not afford to pay the price of a ticket. She said we could "dutch" if we should decide to go to a movie together or out for a dinner at a restaurant.

Figure H. Gathering of teachers in front of Faculty Apartments prior to an outing in the country, September 1943. (l-r) Sallie Pat Carson, Mary Madison, Dorothy Snyder, Cratis Williams, Ellen Bell, Pete Felts, Ruby Donald. Photo courtesy of Hugh Daniel.

Jennie Sue, who, I learned soon, was intelligent, wrote well, and spent much of her spare time reading, was naturally a quiet, pleasant, and smiling person. She became my partner when Hugh and Ruby brought food and drinks to my apartment for meals, or when we played cards, or went to a movie. After a few weeks my friends began including Jennie Sue when they invited me to parties. Quiet, smiling, warm, and sincere, she made friends easily. She was tolerant and charitable in her estimates of others and did not criticize others readily, but because she was keenly perceptive, listened well, and observed closely she understood better than most why people behave as they do.

Figure I. A country outing, 1943. (l-r) Cratis Williams, Woody Mizell, Winnie Stokes, Hugh Daniel, Ruby Donald. Photo courtesy of Ruby Daniel.

Before I left my office at five o'clock, I was usually able to complete preparations for my classes the following day and to check tests and papers I had accepted from my students. I only found it necessary to return to the school in the evening when I was to meet groups from my dramatics classes for play rehearsals or to sell tickets for basketball games. I had time to read. Some of the books I read were appropriate for high school students. I took time to make objective tests on these books that students could take in ten or fifteen minutes. Other books from the College Library I read for relaxation, but I did not attempt to build for myself a reading program as I had done while I was working for New Idea at Coldwater, Ohio, or International Nickel Corporation at Huntington.

Mr. Wey, who began planning that year for a self-study of the high school for the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges the following year, had four or five of us in his home several times for planning meetings. As I did not then think I would be returning to Boone the following year, I felt for a long time more like a referee and consultant than a participant at the meetings, but I especially enjoyed helping to develop a statement of the philosophy of our school. We wrote a tentative statement at our first meeting, a carefully worded paper about three-fourths of a page long. At subsequent meetings we criticized, revised, and re-wrote until we finally had what Mr. Wey preferred to call a first draft. He felt that as we discussed what we were actually doing at the school and changes we hoped to implement, we would want to revise the statement of our philosophy again at the beginning of the following year. We were not yet prepared to state goals and objectives or to identify strategies for change but we engaged in lively discussions of these matters as we considered our statement of philosophy. I became so interested in what we were doing that I began to wish I could return the following year and help complete the self-study.

Sometime early in 1943, perhaps in February, Dr. Abrams invited me to give a twen-

ty-minute program of Appalachian songs for the Lions Club, of which he, Dr. Whitener, and Dr. Robert Busteed from the College were members. I accepted his invitation and prepared and rehearsed several times in no more than a humming voice a program that I thought I could do in twenty minutes. The Lions Club was meeting then in the dining room of the Daniel Boone Hotel. The light-heartedness, good humor, and friendly fellowship of the Lions around the immense fireplace in the lobby of the hotel before their dinner meeting in the dining room impressed me. Unlike my fellow Rotarians at Louisa, Kentucky, who had been grave, reserved, a bit stiff, and inclined to nap and nod, even at luncheon meetings, the Lions were lively, informal, and relaxed. I saw among them business and professional people I had met up town, and they made me feel that I was a welcome visitor. The Lions met at tables arranged in a U shape in a curtained off part of the dining room. At that time the club had twenty-eight members.

The food was exceptionally good. The peas did not rattle like bullets on our plates, the mashed potatoes were not watery, biscuits were not warmed over. Mrs. Price, the wife of the proprietor of the hotel, supervised personally the preparation of the food, and enjoyed an enviable reputation as a cook. She baked the pastries herself. The food was unlike any I had ever eaten at a club meeting. The Lions engaged in lively conversation while two "tail twisters," twins Howard and Raleigh Cottrell, kept a routine of pranks going.

After we had eaten, the president called on the program chairman. Dr. Abrams was presented. He gave me a brief but somewhat exaggerated introduction, including an account of our first meeting, and presented me not only as an accomplished singer and interpreter of Appalachian ballads and songs but then, also, the ugliest man in Boone. The Lions applauded his introduction so long that I had to wait to begin my program, which everybody enjoyed so well that I was called back for two encores, even though the Club tried to restrict its meetings to one hour. Recognizing that the response was more in the spirit of fun and foolishness than of appreciation of my songs or my skill in singing them, I was, for all of that, pleased with my reception. No one had seemed bored. I had never had a better audience. Having given a similar program to the Louisa Rotary Club, I remembered long-suffering and patient looks on the faces of many of the Rotarians and the feeble and mechanical round of applause "for manners' sake" they had given me when I sat down. I thought I would enjoy being a member of the Boone Lions Club.

In a few weeks Dr. Abrams told me that the Club was beginning a membership drive and he would like to sponsor me for membership. The Club wanted to expand and hoped to take in six or eight new members. He discussed with me costs and worthwhile activities of the Club, emphasizing its good work for children with poor vision. The men had enjoyed my program and spirit of good fellowship. He was sure I would be accepted. I asked for three or four days to consider whether I ought to join. Certainly, the men enjoyed themselves and the dinners served at meetings were good and reasonably priced. There would be some work involved in being a member, but it would be so much fun that I would enjoy it. I was concerned mostly with the cost of belonging and whether even a little extra work might tax my energies. I could not reveal that the state of my health was a factor if I declined an invitation to join the Club. I discussed the matter with Mr. Wey,

who was not a member. He did not think he had time to be a member, he said, but he and Mr. Chapell Wilson both liked for the members of the faculties of the campus schools to participate in community activities. If I thought I had time to be a member and would enjoy belonging to the Club, I should join. I also discussed the matter with Jennie Sue. She thought the Club was one of the most active organizations in town and that I would enjoy belonging to it. I told Dr. Abrams that I was willing for him to sponsor me for membership.

As I recall, seven new members were initiated, including Professor A.R. Smith from the College faculty and Mr. Lee Reynolds, who taught seventh grade at the campus elementary school; Guy Hunt, who owned and operated Hunt's Clothing Store; Frank Payne, an insurance agent; and Mr. Price, the proprietor of the Daniel Boone Hotel. I believe the seventh new member was Council Cook, who had an electrical appliance shop.

One of the rules of the Club was that members had to be addressed or referred to by their first or full names. One who slipped up and addressed or referred to another as Mr. or Dr. was promptly fined ten cents by one of the tail twisters. Collections, as I recall, went into the blind fund. Soon I came to know many of the business and professional men of Boone by their first names. I believe names of members who were in military service continued to be included on the membership roll. Members whose names I remember were Amos Abrams, Wade Brown, Robert Busteed, Jake Caudill, Howard and Raleigh Cottrell, Jim Councill, Joe Crawford, Bus Crowell, Clyde Greene, Watt Gragg, Milt Greer, Albert King, Bill Matheson, G.K. Moose, B.W. Stallings, Lee Stout, D.J. Whitener, Herman Wilcox, and Gordon Winkler.

Soon after I became a member of the Club, a decision was reached to put on a Lions Club show to raise money for the blind fund. I was asked to develop a format for and direct a one-hour show. I protested that I was totally inexperienced in such work, had a full schedule at the high school, and did not want to assume such a task. I could not, of course, let it be known that I was physically unable to assume the extra work involved in such an undertaking. But the pressure, coupled with the argument that I was the only member of the Club who was a play director, was so great that I seemed unable to decline. In three weeks I prepared a kind of Lions Club Follies, selected the talent needed from among the members and their wives, met groups for rehearsals, advised with the publicity and the arrangements committees, and had the show ready for the stage.

The arrangements committee attempted to schedule the show in the college auditorium, but since we would be selling tickets for admission, President Dougherty would not give us permission to use college facilities. The manager of the Appalachian Theatre gave us permission to use the Theatre but required forty percent of the collections for ticket sales.

The show was scheduled for the evening of April 8th. The publicity committee did an outstanding job with advertising and advance ticket sales. We expected a full house. The night before the show was to be given we had a dress rehearsal in the theatre after the movie. It was three o'clock when I got to bed.

A soft snow was falling when I woke up in response to my alarm clock set on "loud." I was dog tired and coughing when I dragged myself unwillingly from bed. While I was shaving I was seized by a choking cough, with which I struggled. At the end of the attack I began spitting up blood. Frightened and tense, I began considering what I should do. In a few minutes there was only a trace of blood in my sputum. I wet a towel in cold water and held it against my neck and chest while taking as short and shallow breaths as I could. The coughing stopped. I decided to face the day as if nothing had happened while waiting to see whether I had another hemorrhage. I knew that I would be able to rest that day only a short time following lunch. I was careful not to over exert myself physically in order to avoid if possible another attack of coughing. I did not have another hemorrhage.

Snow fell intermittently throughout the day but it melted when it struck the warm spring earth. At 5:30 I began meeting with the "actors" for the show, helped them apply makeup, including mustaches and beards for some of them, supplied them with white cardboard top hats I had ordered for the show, and had them ready for the stage by seven o'clock. By then a heavy soft snow was falling so fast and remaining on the ground that we began to wonder whether the audience would get there. Since few people believed there could be a traffic-snarling snow at that time of year, the theatre was packed. Excited by such a turnout, the actors were stimulated to do their best.

The show, following no theme, included a scene in Dr. Sawbones's office in which two strapping fellows held a man with a broken leg on a table while Bill Matheson prepared to amputate the broken limb. The bottle of whiskey that a relative had brought for the patient to drink in order to withstand the ordeal was consumed with great gusto by the doctor and his helpers instead. Fortified by the spirits, the helpers laid hold of the struggling patient. Bill Matheson suddenly drew an enormous handsaw from under the table and was in the act of bringing it across the victim's leg when the curtain closed. Audience response was thunderous. Milt Greer, made up with lamb chop sideburns and a goatee and wearing a frock coat, delivered a marvelous folk sermon, which Dr. Abrams had recorded at a rehearsal. One of the Cottrell twins and Aunt Jenny Critcher engaged in an almost naughty dialogue in the park. A quartet did a few barber shop numbers. Council Cook sang quite well two or three songs, including "Lonesome Road." The show was a hit with the audience. By the time it was over, though, eight inches of snow had accumulated.

The "cast" met briefly for a reception in the home of Ray and Lib Manship, who lived in a little brown house among the trees on the north side of King Street a block from the theatre. The top hats, though glazed, had begun to come unglued by the time the reception was over. Over 500 tickets had been sold. Everybody had enjoyed the show. The Lions were elated. By 9:30 I had slogged my way through the deep snow to the apartments, my feet sloshing in my wet shoes. I was so tired that I considered wiping my feet with a towel and dropping in bed, but decided to take a soaking hot bath to protect myself from pneumonia. I was sure the fatigue, exposure to the weather, and the wet feet would leave me with at least a bad cold, but I slept well and woke up in the morning without a sign of a bad cold. I wore overshoes and an overcoat to school. But the day was bright and warm and by mid afternoon the snow had melted away.

The memory of my hemorrhage haunted me and kept me fearful. With final examinations, rehearsals for *War Correspondent*, the senior play, and working with student speakers for commencement exercises ahead of me, I found it necessary to decline most of the invitations I received for dinners and parties. I tried hard to maintain my routine of resting after lunch, taking a nap after dinner, and going to bed as early as I could each evening.

A bonanza came to me before the school was out. The North Carolina legislature, which met in early 1943, increased handsomely the salaries of teachers retroactive to September, 1942. I received nearly $500.00 as my increase, which brought to a total of $2140.00, including the worth of my apartment at $40.00 a month, my salary for my first year at Boone. If I should be able to return to Boone the following year, Mr. Wey explained, the increase would become a part of my salary. I was happy to think that the increase I had received, together with what Mr. Lafe Wellman could get for my furniture, would enable me to reduce my indebtedness by seven or eight hundred dollars.

Although I told Mr. Wey, Mr. Wilson, and Dr. Abrams that I would report to my draft board at Louisa in May, they wanted to include my name in the class schedule for the summer terms. No one had been selected as my successor and it was important that the instructor's name be listed along with the classes to be offered, for students tended not to register for courses listed without an instructor's name on the schedule. If I should learn that I would not be drafted until September, I could teach both summer terms.

Dr. Abrams and I had discussed my interest in offering in summer school a course in ballads and songs with emphasis upon those variants that had survived in the oral tradition of Appalachian mountain folk. I had as a valuable resource his excellent collection of recordings of native singers. I could use as a text Kittredge's one-volume edition of Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. We could invite a native singer, such as Frank Proffitt[29] or Mrs. Laura Timmons,[30] to visit the class once or twice, possibly arrange to take the class on a pleasant afternoon to the home of a native singer for a program on the porch or in the yard, and might be able to interest Dean Rankin in scheduling a well known folk singer for an evening program. The course, Dr. Abrams believed, would appeal especially to English majors, music majors, and elementary education teachers, especially those from Florida, South Carolina, and Georgia, who came to summer school to earn credits for the renewal of certificates to teach. He and I went together to discuss the possibility of offering such a class with Mr. Chapell Wilson, who was the director of summer schools. Mr. Wilson approved at once what we proposed and wanted to include the course in the 1943 summer class schedule, even though I might not be there to teach it. If I should be drafted in May, then the course could be deleted at registration time without causing serious problems. The course was scheduled, the first time, we believed, such a course had been offered below the graduate level in the country.

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[29]Frank Proffitt (1913-1964), Watauga County resident with a life-long interest in traditional music, collected and performed traditional mountain ballads, and recorded on Folkways and Folk-legacy labels. His son, Frank Proffitt, Jr. continues in his tradition of musicianship.

[30]Laura Timmons (1894-1964) was a local folksinger.

War Correspondent, not really a very good three-act play, was a wartime mystery with a cast of ten persons. Seniors selected for parts worked hard to achieve conversational delivery and convincing character. Not fully successful, they did learn their parts well and achieved a stage presence that enabled them to relate to one another convincingly. A stage crew built an imaginative portable set that could be assembled and taken down quickly in order to clear the stage area of the gymnasium for physical education classes. Students from the dramatics classes handled makeup and took care of stage props. We gave the play twice, once in the morning to the student body and once in the evening to their parents and other townspeople. It attracted nearly a full house for the evening performance.

One of the social affairs I attended near the end of the year was a picnic at the Fish Hatchery at Rutherwood for the staff and maintenance personnel at the College, an annual affair that Mr. Barnard Dougherty,[31] the Business Manager, arranged with the expert help of John Welborn[32] and the cafeteria staff. Jenny Sue had invited me as her guest. So few of us had cars and those who did were so restricted by gasoline rationing that Mr. Dougherty made arrangements for us to be transported to and from the picnic. It was a beautiful afternoon and the young grass was fresh and vivid, but buds on trees had not yet begun to swell. Fires had already been built for roasting hot dogs and marshmallows and the smoke from the burning hardwoods stimulated appetites. Pots of steaming coffee had been brought from the cafeteria, but there was also an abundant supply of half-pint bottles of cold milk from the dairy and soft drinks in tubs of ice. Stacks of buns and bowls of coleslaw waited on an improvised table. Jenny Sue took me among the workers and introduced me to those I did not already know. President Dougherty, Dean Rankin, Mr. Herman R. Eggers, and Mrs. Emma Moore, persons to whom staff members were responsible were there, but members of the faculty had not been invited.

Dr. Dougherty stood apart from the crowd and talked in a low voice with Mr. Eggers, the registrar. He did not move from the position he had taken until the food was ready. Someone prepared for him his hot dog and marshmallows. Mr. Barnard, as the business manager was called, made a few remarks and called on Dean Rankin to ask a blessing. Dr. Dougherty, interrupted by the asking of the blessing, proceeded with his account of something to Mr. Eggers as soon as the blessing was over. Others took positions around the fires to roast their hot dogs, moving as the shifting smoke dislodged them.

Those at the picnic seemed to be well acquainted with one another. There was a cohesiveness present, such as one might have found in a family reunion. A few of the workers had been with the College almost from its beginning. I felt that the staff and work force were the hidden empire, of whom the faculty was not fully aware, that made the College possible.

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[31]Barnard Dougherty (1909-1965) was business manager of the college from 1938 to 1955 when he was appointed vice president and comptroller.

[32]John Welborn, a graduate of Appalachian Training School and Appalachian State Teachers College, worked in food services for 34 years, serving as director until his retirement in 1973. Welborn Cafeteria was named in his honor.

We had also a senior hike to Flat Top Mountain near Blowing Rock. In late April, a few days before the close of the school year, the seniors and their faculty sponsors were given permission to take packed lunches and hike along one of the old roads from Boone to Blowing Rock and return by another of the first roads between the two towns. Both roads were unimproved and a part of one of them had been abandoned. It was said to be eleven miles to Flat Top and back. Afraid to try to walk eleven miles in a day, I agreed to walk until we had lunch and then return alone to the school where I would complete some work in my office that I needed to do.

We left the school at ten o'clock and walked up Winkler's Creek, turning left at the Austin farm, where two of my freshmen English students, Mary and Martha, lived. I had been to the Rocks in Winkler's Creek but had not gone beyond them. From the Austin farm the road was little more than a trail.

It was a fair day. Trees had not yet begun to leaf, but weeds were beginning to grow and the grass in meadows and pastures was young and tender. The dirt road, little traveled but rutted in places, frequently crossed the low and clear creek. There were no bridges, but foot travelers up and down the valley had put stepping stones at shallow crossings and foot logs over deeper ones.

Beyond Austin's the countryside was largely abandoned. A few rustic homes had freshly plowed gardens and barnyards within enclosures fenced with scrap wood. Occasionally, we passed an abandoned house with a sagging lichen covered shake roof, a deteriorating stack chimney, porch floors rotted away, doors standing open or ripped off the hinges, and windows long since knocked out. Second growth trees had marched across even the yards of many of the old houses. The few families living along the old road were still in the Depression.

When we had climbed to a gap along a straight stretch of the trail, where deep ruts worn into a clay base by farm wagons and ancient trucks were filled with leaves, I looked at my watch. It was almost noon. I decided to eat my lunch there beside a spring. Two or three of the hungry boys ate their lunches, too, expressed regrets that I could not go with them on to Flat Top, where we could see the Cone Mansion, and hurried on. I ambled back to Boone, stopping occasionally to rest. I thought I had walked about eight miles.

One Sunday morning near the end of the year G.C. Greene called and invited me to ride that afternoon with him, Charles Boone, and Kenneth Clay to Camp Yonalossee. They picked me up about two o'clock. We left Boone through Hodges Gap and drove along a narrow road to Shulls Mills. My first trip out that way, I was able to see much of the road bed of the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad, abandoned after the 1940 flood had washed away much of the road and broken the dam on Watauga River. We stopped above the old dam and explored the rocks in the river there, a favorite site for picnics and outings. The Robbins Hotel, a rambling wooden structure located at the mouth of a little hollow across the road from the railroad bed, was still receiving guests, but it was weathered and needed painting.

The boys told me that Shulls Mills had been a flourishing place a few years before when a big lumber company had been located there. It was said that it was then larger than Boone. The railroad had been extended from Linville to haul lumber out to Elizabethton, Tennessee, and on to Boone later.

We turned left across the valley at the hotel, crossed a low-water bridge over the river, and followed a narrow, winding road up the mountain to Camp Yonalossee for Girls. I did not go into the camp, stretched along the side of the mountain, but waited in the car while the boys went down to ask about some young lady who was working there while the camp was being prepared for the summer. They decided to go on to Flat Top.

The road to Flat Top had trees growing along both sides of it much of the way. It was a hard packed, narrow dirt road and looked as if it had been there a long time. In earlier days, that had been the main road from Boone to Blowing Rock, the boys said. We stopped on Flat Top and walked around but did not go to the Cone Mansion.

Just to show me around, the boys decided to return to Boone by a back way. They drove to Linville and came back along the narrow road beside the railroad bed to Shulls Mills. I saw Grandfather Mountain from the back side. We stopped for a few minutes near an old railroad sign that told us we were at Linville Gap. At that point one could see how vast and rugged Grandfather Mountain is. It seemed a long way down the mountain to Foscoe, where the road became straight and level back to Shulls Mills. As we were turning left at the old hotel, I looked up the valley at Grandfather, whose profile was well defined. A small cloud rested on his brow as he reclined in mystery, a million years old. The trip was one of the most impressive I had taken all year. Grandfather Mountain, bathed in a blue mist, rugged, enormous, added to the enchantment of the land that I longed to call home.

Boys in my home room were exceptionally considerate. From time to time throughout the year I would remember their response to me when Mr. Wey introduced me at the student assembly at the beginning of the term. Our relationship had been harmonious, warm, and fully trusting all year, even from our first meeting in the classroom. I soon knew that their booing me when I was introduced was more of a humorous response to Mr. Wey's high praise for lovely Miss Poole than a rejection of me. I found that they had a delightful sense of humor and an admirable capacity for enjoying one another. This *esprit* the group had already. I could take no credit for it. It had developed over the years, for most of those in the group had been together since they were in the primary grades.

My homeroom group included Charles Boone, Kenneth Clay, Cecil Greene, G.C. Greene, Jr., Hal Greene, Ted Hagaman, Ronda Hardin, Fred Hodges, Roy Johnson, Roy Marsh, Randall Page, Walter Ragan, Reece Roberts, Phil Vance, Harold Watson, James Watson and William Wilson. I believe there might have been four or five others whose names I have forgotten.

My involvement with plays and helping students selected to give talks at the commencement exercises enabled me to become acquainted with many students who were not enrolled in my classes. I enjoyed them and felt that they enjoyed me. At commencement

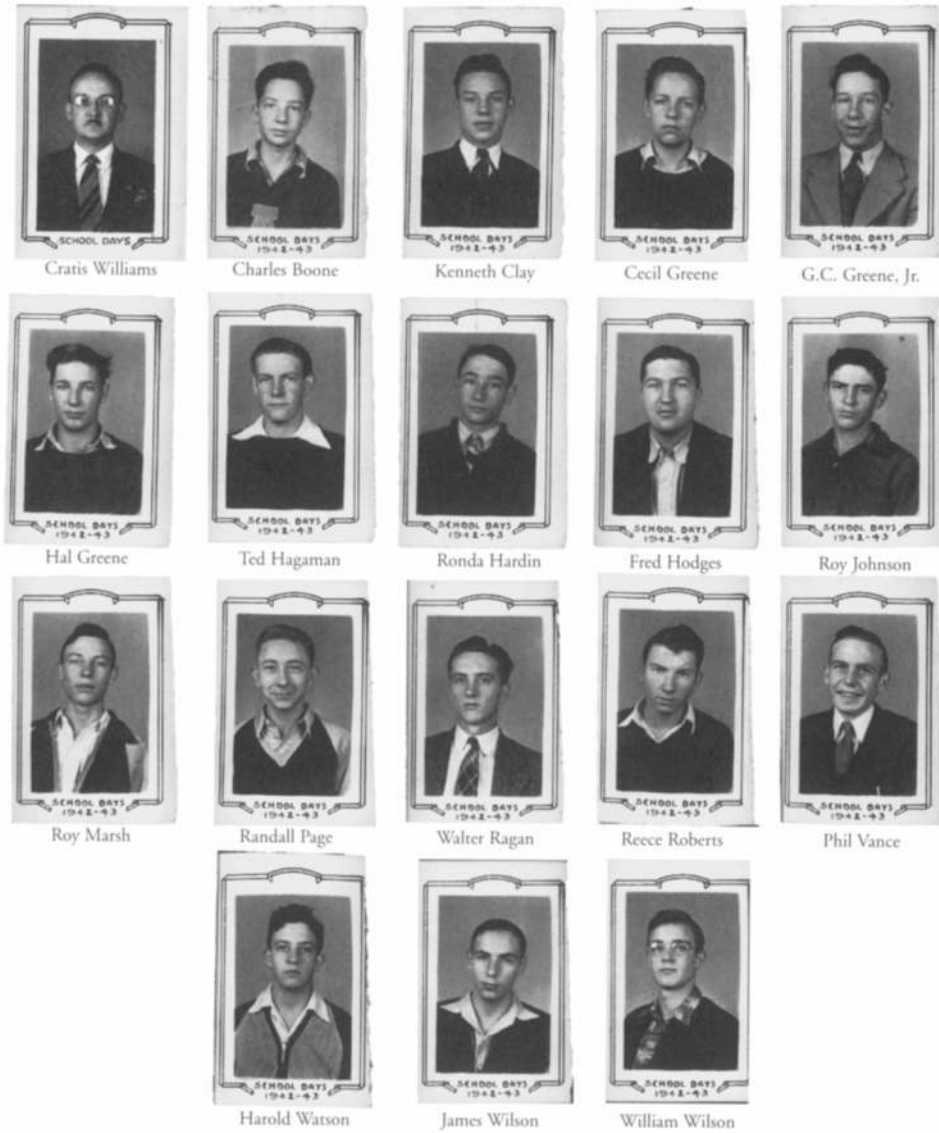

Figure J. Members of Cratis Williams's homeroom, Appalachian Demonstration High School, 1942-1943.

many of the parents of students with whom I had worked took time to tell me that their sons and daughters had thought well of me as a teacher and referred often to what they had learned in my classes and quoted me in discussions. They hoped I would be able to return the following year.

The campus schools, having only an eight-month term, closed about a month before the College was scheduled to close. I was so deeply involved in activities at the school that I did not attempt to prepare to leave Boone until I had turned in my reports, cleaned out my files, and carried to my apartment teaching materials and personal effects that I did not want to leave in my office. Even though I might not return to teach in the summer school, my apartment would not be assigned to anyone, for the Antonakoses would return to occupy it at the end of the summer. I could leave there anything I wanted to leave if I could return to get it before I would be drafted for military service.

The other teachers hurried away soon after commencement. Tired and very much alone except for dinners with Jenny Sue, I rested for a long weekend before I began packing my things in boxes, which I tied with stout string, addressed to myself at Cherokee, Kentucky, and stacked in my living room. If I should be drafted so quickly that there would not be time to return to Boone to have the boxes sent by parcel post back to Cherokee, Jenny Sue would engage a taxicab driver to carry them to the post office and she would send them for me.

Carrying only one bag with me, I left by bus for Beckley, West Virginia, on a beautiful day in late April. The sun was shining in Boone and the air was crisp and clear, but the only visible sign of spring was lush grass in yards and pasture fields. I spent that night in the Milner Hotel in Beckley and reported next morning to Pinecrest Sanitarium for an X-ray of my lungs and a talk with Dr. Edwards.

The spot on my lung had disappeared. I was not yet out of danger, though. Dr. Edwards advised that I continue to eat eggs, drink at least a quart of milk a day, take my cod liver oil, and rest after lunch and dinner and report for another X-ray six months later. I told him I was on my way to Kentucky to volunteer for military service. He told me that a skin test for tuberculosis was routine procedure in medical examinations for military service, that I would then be sent for an X-ray, and that a doctor would talk with me. It would be most important that I report that a spot on my lung had disappeared only recently if the X-ray did not show one. He was confident that I would not be accepted for military duty.

As my bus descended the mountain to Gauley Bridge, I could see signs of spring. Trees were budding, willows were already flaunting tags of tender green, blooming sarvice trees shimmered in the sunlight. In Huntington trees had leafed out. I had traveled through spring as it was climbing the mountains. Arriving in Huntington too late to make bus connections to Louisa that day, I engaged a room at the Milner Hotel near the bus station and took a walk. Huntington was bustling. Sidewalks were crowded with well dressed people hurrying along, many with packages in their arms. Window displays of stores and shops announced the advent of spring. I walked along Fourth Avenue to the Walgreen Drug Store. Crowds stood on the corner and waited for city buses. I crossed Fourth

Avenue and walked back toward the Milner, but stopped at a little restaurant where Sylvia and I had eaten a few times and had a seafood dinner, pleased that I was no longer so poor that I could not afford a good dinner occasionally.

After dinner I walked over to the railroad station, also crowded with people waiting for trains. As the evening was still young, I decided to ride a trolley car to Ashland, Kentucky, for I liked to ride trolley cars. It was so crowded when I got on that I stood in the aisle to Westmoreland before a seat became available. Many of those on the car were working people returning to their homes in Kenova, Catlettsburg, and Ashland. Passengers knew one another. They talked, teased one another, and laughed, all happy to have jobs again and free from fear as they responded to the coming of spring. I did not see any familiar faces. I got off at the corner of Winchester Avenue and Thirteenth Street in Ashland. Crowds were standing on the corner and people were clustered in front of stores and shops. I walked up to the bus station. Every stool at the lunch counter was occupied, as were all the seats in the waiting area, and people stood along the wall, their bags beside them, talking and laughing. I saw no one I had known. Not wanting to wait for a cup of coffee at the crowded counter, I walked back to the corner and took the next car back to Huntington. It was not crowded.

The following morning I had breakfast at the White Tower, where I had eaten often while I was working at International Nickel Corporation. The cost of an egg sandwich and a cup of coffee was still only fifteen cents. After breakfast, I walked by the Mosely home for a brief visit with Mrs. Mosely, the servants, and Miss Westall, her hair in curlers and wearing a house robe while she enjoyed a cup of coffee. Captain Mosely had gone to his farm to ride his horses. The bus from Huntington by way of Lavalette and Wayne to Louisa was not crowded. I sat near the back of the bus and talked with Oscar Cottrell, a black man with whom I had played cowboys and Indians in the pine woods behind Louisa while I was in high school. I had not seen him for many years. A big man with the same broad smile and happy face that I remembered, Oscar recalled many of our Saturday escapades on Pine Hill.

At Louisa I left my bag at the drug store in which the bus station was located while I attended to business matters. I volunteered for the next military draft quota and learned that a bus load of draftees would report to the center in Huntington in about a week. I went by the Riverview Hospital and talked with Dr. Joseph E. Carter, who had been our physician while Sylvia and I were living in Louisa. I told him about my bout with tuberculosis and that Dr. Edwards had thought I would not be accepted for military service. Thinking that I might not receive a careful examination at Huntington, Dr. Carter wrote a letter to the draft board in which he reviewed my medical history and recommended that I be given a thorough examination. I went to see Lafe Wellman. He had sold all of my furniture for me. My refrigerator, he said, was almost new. Thinking it was worth more than half price, or $200, he had been able to sell it for $300. I did not tell him that I still owed the bank $200 I had borrowed before leaving Louisa to finish paying for the refrigerator. Mr. Wellman had not tried to make a profit on the sale of my furniture. I had been in his Sunday school class when I was a boy. Our families were friends. Sylvia's father was his

cousin. I had suffered from misfortunes. He was glad to be of help to me. He wrote me a check for what he had collected. I went to the Funeral Home and paid Henry Curtright the remainder of what I owed for Sylvia's casket.

My business all attended to before noon, I decided not to have lunch at Rip's, crowded at lunch time with high school teachers and students, but stopped at Effie's Diner by the railroad track. Only a few farmers, none of whom I recognized, were there. After lunch I walked back to the drug store to wait for the bus to Blaine. On the way I met one of the high school teachers, to whom I spoke. He paused to shake hands with me, but seemed uncomfortable. He said he did not have time to talk as he hurried on. Since it did not matter to me whether we talked, I was amused. Apparently he thought I had wanted to detain him. While I was shaking hands with him, I noticed that the man who had been my assistant principal was not far behind him. When I started on, though, I did not see him. Looking around, I saw him on the other side of the street. He was hurrying along toward the school. I thought he had crossed the street to avoid meeting me. They were exceptionally fine teachers. I regretted that they were also frightened little men.

The bus to Blaine had only a few passengers. I got off at Low Gap and walked up the old rocky trail to the bridge across Blaine at the mouth of Cherokee. I met no one on the main road. Gasoline rationing was keeping people at home. Plowed gardens and wisps of smoke from kitchen chimneys were the only signs of human habitation.

Pete, the snow white spitz that had belonged to Sylvia and me, was lying on the porch of the Graham home. When I opened the gate of the yard fence, he began barking joyfully, bounded off the porch, and leapt several times to my chin to kiss me, wetting my front at each leap. Mr. and Mrs. Graham came from inside the house to greet me, both amused by Pete's enthusiastic welcome. They were expecting me. Mrs. Graham had baked pies and was preparing a special meal for my homecoming.

We talked far into the night. I reported on my visit with Dr. Edwards at Pinecrest, the letter Dr. Carter would write to the draft board, my volunteering for the draft, Lafe Wellman's sale of my furniture, my paying in full what I had owed Henry Curtright. The check I had received for a salary increase retroactive to the first of the school year together with the check Mr. Wellman had written for the furniture provided me with enough money to purchase a stone for Sylvia's grave, get new eyeglasses, and pay off one of the notes I owed. I would report in a week for the next draft quota for Lawrence County and would know soon whether I would be inducted into military service or be rejected.

Mrs. Graham agreed to go with me the following Friday to the place in Ashland at which she had bought a stone for the grave of Sylvia's sister. We thought Sylvia's stone should be like it or similar to it.

A day or two later I walked over the hill to visit my father and mother, both lonely because they had with them only my little brother, then twelve years old. While I was there, my father asked me how much money I had made as a teacher at Boone that year. When I reported proudly that I had made $2140, he responded, "And with all of your

expensive education! Hell, son, I can make more than that swapping knives."

Mrs. Graham had a neighbor take us to Louisa on Friday in time to get a bus to Ashland by mid morning. We selected a stone similar to the one at the grave of Sylvia's sister. The monument dealer agreed to have the stone erected at the grave. I paid him $150. We got back to Louisa in time for me to pay off a $200 note at the bank, but Mrs. Graham advised me to wait until after I had responded to the draft call. If I should be accepted for military service, the bank would be obliged to carry my note until I returned. I might need my money.

The day before I was to report early in the morning at the courthouse to the draft board I walked to Blaine and rode the afternoon bus to Louisa. I spent the night in the home of Ernest and Nova Wellman, whom I invited to have dinner with me at a restaurant. The following morning I went to the courthouse, where most of the young men who were to report at the induction center, had gathered. Some of them had been high school students while I was the principal of the school in Louisa. The bus in which we were to ride to Huntington was parked behind the courthouse.

Mr. Chesley Lycan, the chairman of the draft board, appeared at eight o'clock and stood by the door of the bus. From a list he had in his hand he called the names of those who had been selected for that month's quota. As each person's name was called he responded and entered the bus. I believe there were twenty-eight of us. Mr. Lycan then entered the bus and gave us brief instructions. He appointed me to check the roll when we entered the bus that afternoon to return to Louisa. He thought we might be ready to leave the center in Huntington as early as two o'clock. He asked that we not stray far from the center. He wished us well, left the bus, and the driver started.

Most of the young men talked and laughed as if they were pleased to be joining the army. Others were quiet, sober faced, and reflective. A few were grim, unresponsive, and uncommunicative. I thought they were frightened. I was the oldest of the group. The young men who had been students at the high school while I was the principal did not appear to remember me.

We were in Huntington within an hour. At the center we were rushed through routines by efficient personnel. The tough sergeant who supervised our undressing for physical examinations barked his instructions, throwing in sharp oaths and profanity with considerable skill. One of the grim faced young men, an awkward and fumbling fellow, became so frightened that he was unable to urinate in his little bottle. At two o'clock he had not yet been able to urinate, even though he had drunk a plenty of water. But he finally succeeded and we were able to leave at four o'clock.

When I was administered the skin test for tuberculosis I was directed to a station for chest X-rays. Later, I met with a doctor who had read Dr. Carter's letter and who asked questions about my medical history. He studied my X-rays, but he did not tell me whether they revealed a spot. He commented on the concentrations of scar tissue in my lungs. I might break down in rigorous boot training. He could not approve my acceptance for military service at that time.

We were herded into an eating facility where we passed rapidly by counters to pick up our plates of food for lunch. The unappetizing food, consisting of fried bologna, watery mashed potatoes, pinto beans with no seasoning in them, limp slaw, and a square of white, dry cornbread, had been slopped onto the plate. It must have been the worst food I have ever eaten in my life.

At the station for checking out we were given our classification cards. Mine was 4-F. The clerk stamped in red ink on the back of my hand REJECTED.

When the shame-faced boy who had taken so long to fill his little bottle finally joined us, I called the roll. All were present. The bus driver hurried back to Louisa.

We arrived too late for me to get a bus to Blaine that evening.

I went to the telephone office and called Mr. Wey. He was still in his office at the school. I reported that I had been classified as 4-F and would like to return to Boone if my position at the school were still open. No effort had been made yet to find a replacement for me. I was invited to come on back.

I had come to Boone on a one-year contract. I assured Mr. Wey that I would be returning for life if they could put up with me that long.

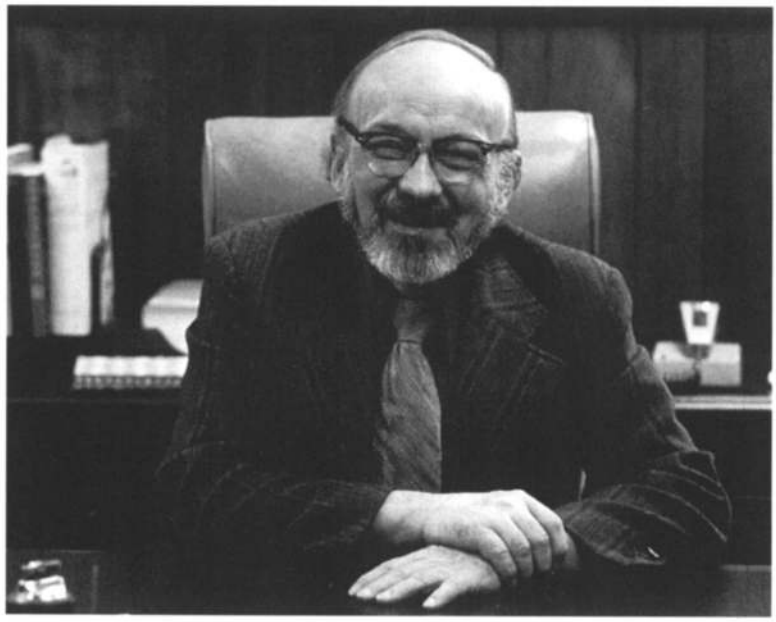

Figure K.

INDEX OF NAMES

CRATIS DEARL WILLIAMS CHRONOLOGY

April 5, 1911	Born to Curtis and Mona (Whitt) Williams in his grandfather David O. Williams's log house, Caines Creek (Lawrence County), Kentucky. The oldest of five siblings to survive infancy.
1922	Ulysses (Lyss) Williams shot and killed.
March 25, 1924	Graduated from elementary school (earning a Certificate of Promotion to High School).
May 27, 1928	Graduated from Louisa High School (Kentucky); received the "Honor Student Trophy."
1928-1929	Attended Cumberland College, Williamsburg, Kentucky, on a tuition scholarship and workship.
1929-1933	Taught in one room schools on Caines Creek in Eastern Kentucky.
Summer 1932	Took summer classes at Morehead State Normal School and Teachers College, where he studied principles of secondary teaching with William H. Vaughan and Earnest V. Hollis in preparation for certification for principalship.
June 2, 1933	B.A. University of Kentucky.
1933-1934	Teacher of science, Blaine High School, Kentucky.
1934-1938	Principal and teacher of English, Blaine High School, Kentucky.
August 7, 1937	Married Sylvia Graham.
August 20, 1937	M.A. University of Kentucky.
1938-1941	Principal, Louisa High School, Kentucky.
Summer-Fall 1941	Employed, New Idea, Inc. (maker of farm implements), Coldwater, Ohio.
1942	Instructor, Apprentice School, International Nickel Company, Huntington, West Virginia.
August 1942	Accepted a position as "critic teacher" at Appalachian Demonstration High School, Boone, North Carolina.
December 1942	Sylvia (Graham) Williams died of tuberculosis, Cherokee, Kentucky.
1942-1946	Critic teacher, assistant principal, director of drama, and director of the first school-wide counseling program established in North Carolina, Appalachian Demonstration High School, Boone.
1946-1949	Assistant professor, English and speech, Appalachian State Teachers College, Boone.
Summer 1948	Student, New York University.

Summer 1949– Summer 1950	Leave of absence from ASTC to accept a teaching assistantship at Washington Square College of New York University.
July 31, 1949	Married Elizabeth Lingerfelt, a native of Elizabethton, Tennessee, in Levittown, Long Island, New York. Two children: Sophie (b. February 18, 1953) and David Cratis (b. April 25, 1955).
1950-1958	Professor of English, Appalachian State Teachers College.
Summer 1954	Angier Duke Research Scholar, Duke University.
1958-1975	Dean of the graduate school, ASTC and Appalachian State University.
1961	Ph.D. New York University. Dissertation: "The Southern Mountaineer in Fact and Fiction."
1962	Awarded Founders Day Certificate for excellence from NYU.
December 29, 1966	Fire destroys ASTC administration building, burning Cratis Williams's office, containing his ballads collection, research files, correspondence files, and much of his personal library.
April 1972	Received Achievement Award Trophy, North Carolina Historical Association.
1973	Received O. Max Gardner Award, University of North Carolina.
August 1973	Named Honorary Citizen of Harlan County, Kentucky.
1974	Acting vice chancellor for academic affairs, Appalachian State University.
1975	Acting chancellor, Appalachian State University.
November 1975	Received Brown-Hudson Folklore Award, North Carolina Folklore Society.
April 1976	Symposium in honor of retirement from Appalachian State University (later evolved into the Appalachian Studies Association).
July 1976	Received Laurel Leaves Award from Appalachian Consortium.
July 1976	Retired.
1979	Received the W.D. Weatherford Award from Berea College.
1984	Received honorary degrees from Cumberland College, Morehead State University, College of Idaho.
1985	Received honorary degrees from Marshall University, Appalachian State University.
May 11, 1985	Died, Boone, North Carolina.

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The Cratis D. Williams Papers, a subset of the Cratis Dearl Williams Collection, contains mostly post-1967 papers, including Williams's research papers, speeches, conference presentations, memoirs, correspondence, and genealogical research, as well as materials related to the history of Appalachian State University and to Williams's service as graduate school Dean and Acting Chancellor. The Cratis Dearl Williams Collection is housed in ASU's W.L. Eury Appalachian Collection.

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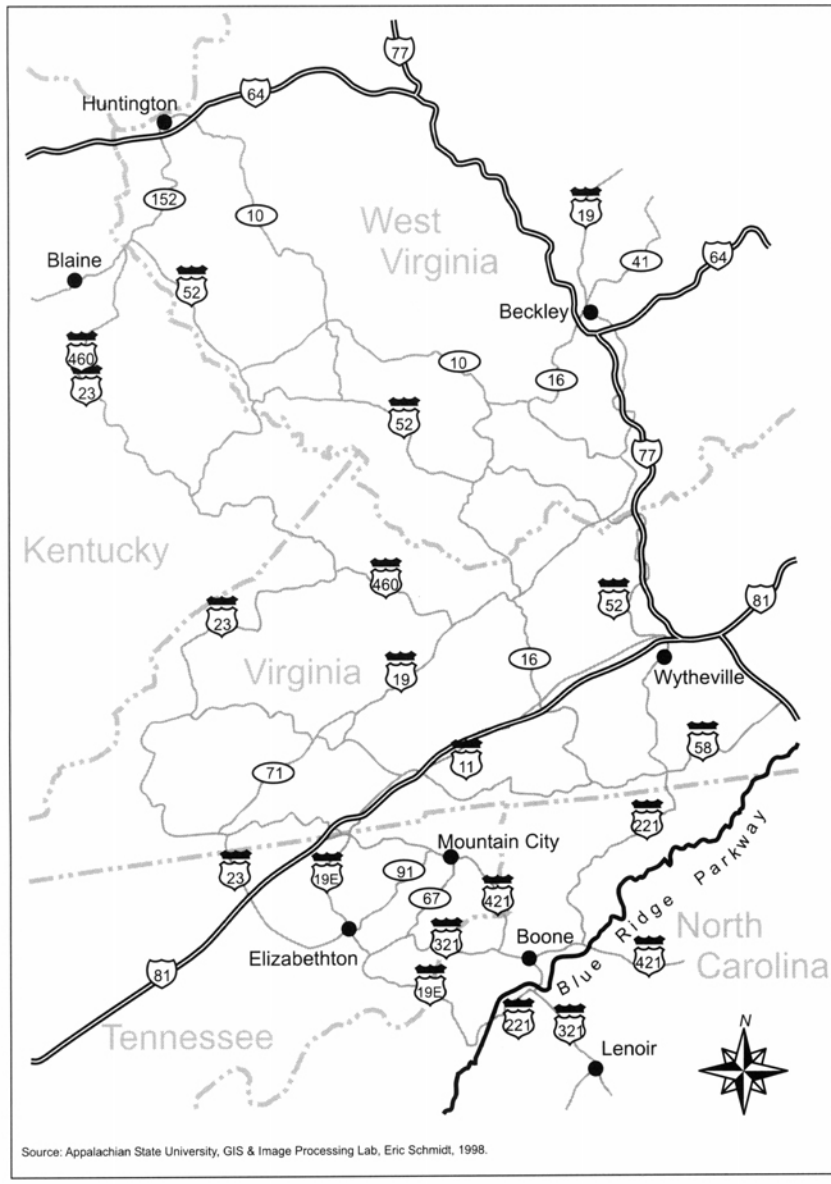
List of Photographs

The Cratis Williams Region, 1942



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

CRATIS WILLIAMS (April 5, 1911–May 11, 1985) gained international fame for documenting and interpreting Appalachian culture and language. Born in eastern Kentucky, he spent most of his professional life as a teacher and administrator at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. His two-volume Ph.D. dissertation, "The Southern Mountaineer in Fact and Fiction," examined how so many writers had disparaged the people of Appalachia with misleading and degrading stereotypes. Having himself experienced the humiliation resulting from such stereotyping, Williams worked tirelessly to put an end to it. With his storehouse of knowledge and his talent as a storyteller, he forcefully represented the struggle that so many people from the region have faced, that of coming to terms with what it means to be Appalachian.