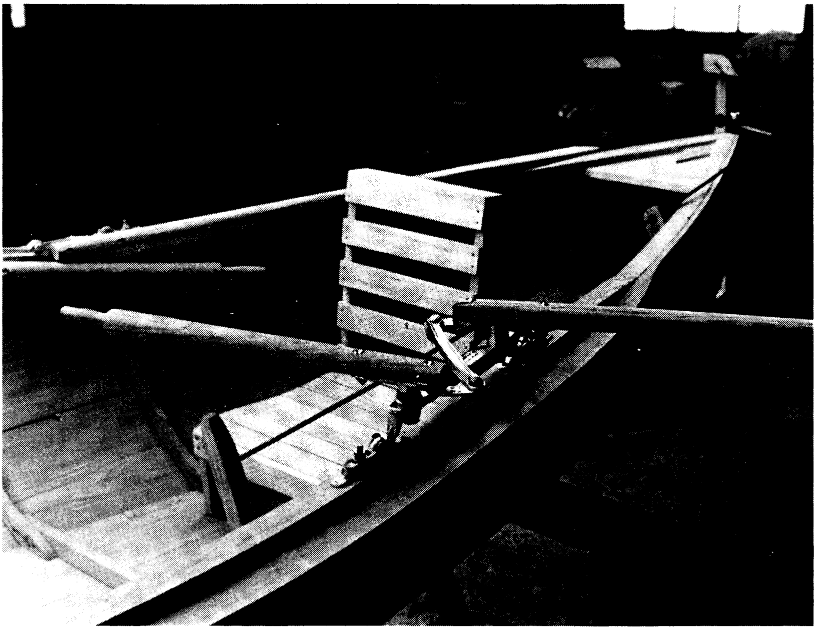

Figure 3. Stern of stumpjumper which will be motorized. Note articulated oars and steering mechanism.

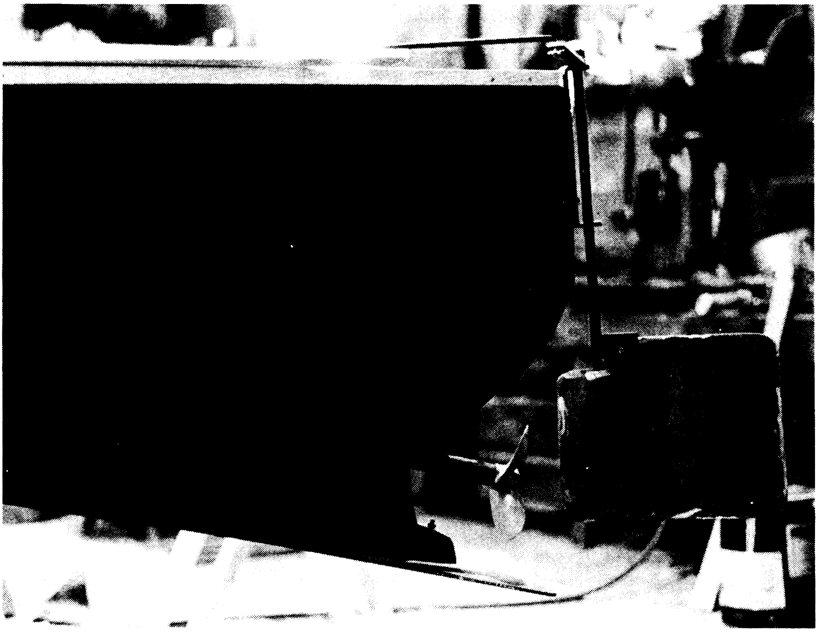

Figure 4. The propeller, protecting plate and kick-up rudder of a stumpjumper.

The Tradition of Geode Construction in Southern Indiana

ALICE MORRISON MORDOH

The Indiana Geode Belt runs directly through the south-central part of the state (see Fig. 1), and corresponds to the geographical parameters of my fieldwork on the subject of geode construction. Geodes are essentially nodules of rock with a silicon rind, often hollow inside and containing crystals, usually quartz but also often a large variety of other minerals, including semi-precious amethyst (in Kentucky) and iron pyrite. Some are solid inside, and one can generally tell whether or not a geode is worth cracking open by its weight. The name "geode" comes from two Greek words meaning earth-like, because of the globular shape of these formations. They range in size from less than one inch to several feet in diameter, and the largest known geode from the midwestern United States is 347 pounds and 26 inches in diameter, currently on display at the Indiana Geological Survey at Indiana University, on loan from the farmer in Salem, Washington County, Indiana, who found it. Geodes are often collected along stream beds or plowed up by farmers in their fields.

In this area geodes are used as a decorative element in the construction of homes and landscaping, and apparently have served this function since at least the nineteenth century. A 1945 article entitled "Hunting Geodes in Indiana" describes the author's excursions in the same area that I traversed. He tells of one isolated area southeast of Bedford, Lawrence County, called the Devil's Backbone, a high knife-ridge of land, where he found abandoned old farmhouses. "Here, behind the house, in the deep grass and bushes, can be seen rows of geodes that marked the border of old flower beds, and we know that some early pioneer wondered at their strange symmetry and loved their color and crystals just as we do today" (Eisele 1945:112). Likewise, a collector in 1947 noted that "the people around Bedford and vicinity use the geodes around flower beds, to outline walks, and even in concrete work" (Riley 1947:818).

People in this area today use geodes in quite a variety of ways to decorate their homes, yards and gardens: geodes are often placed, piled or lined on patios, porches, steps, walks, or in front of the foundations of houses; they are embedded in the earth to help bank up a sloping section of lawn or as accentuation around other objects such as mailboxes, electric or telephone poles, trees, fish ponds; flower beds and large gardens are made entirely from geodes, and they are incorporated into elaborate lawn sculptures made from wood, figurines and other objects; geodes are mortared together to build planters, birdbaths, wishing wells, gateposts, fence posts, lampposts, mailbox stands, and shrines; geodes are pressed into cement to help form walls around houses and walls of houses (external and internal), foundations and chimneys. The geodes are usually left whole, although in a few cases they are all cracked open.

There is no doubt that these geode creations constitute a type of folk art. They are, like most gardens in general, as E. N. Anderson, Jr. notes in "On the Folk Art of Landscaping," "the product of traditional rules transmitted by word of mouth, observation, or such ephemeral literature as the 'home' sections of Sunday newspapers." (Anderson 1972:180). The familiar conservatism/dynamism duality within folk art is immediately apparent in these artifacts. The makers use identical or similar construction materials, techniques, forms, and subjects, but inject their own individual styles, thus demonstrating the "variation within tradition" dictum of folklore. There is no identifiable original inventor of the technique of working with geodes in this way—one of my informants claimed to have "just thought it up" when asked what gave him the idea of building geode constructions, while others were even more vague about their inspiration: "Oh, I don't know. I've just always done it" (Nethery).

These geode artifacts, moreover, conform to two major laws operative in most of Western folk art: the dominance of form and the desire for repetition (Glassie 1972:271-72). By dominance of form is meant that the basic form of the folk artifact is never obscured by ornamentation; rather, ornament serves frequently to reinforce the visual effect of form. Folk ornament also often consists of the continual repetition of the same motif. The ideal frequently is to form a symmetrical whole through the repetition of individually symmetrical units. The geode constructions which I observed demonstrate exactly such repetition and symmetry. The geodes are initially carefully selected as to uniformity of size and then placed in rows or groups, sometimes with a gradation from smaller to larger incorporated into the overall design.

Geodes are commonly found throughout this area in what might be termed "minimal artistic expression": heaped in piles or placed singly on patios, porches, steps, walks, or lining house or trailer fronts. The next stage of artistry involves deliberately embedding the geodes in the ground along some utilitarian object, such as front steps, as an added decorative element, or to form a border for a flower bed, or to bank a sloping section of yard. In one elaborate example in a working-class neighborhood of Bloomington, Monroe County, fieldstone was used for banking a large section of sloping lawn alongside a driveway and geodes trimmed the fieldstone. A carved limestone nameplate lay in the center of the banking, with another trimming of geodes above it. Geodes are often placed around the bases of trees as a decorative touch, and around electric and telephone poles, lamp posts and mailboxes. In front of a mobile home just inside the city limits of Bloomington is a more elaborate than usual example of such decoration: large geodes are piled at the base of a mailbox leaving a small circular area in the center where a small planter sits. The planter is built of very small geodes mortared together into a cylindrical shape and holds a large cactus.

Round geode flower beds are very common in all of the counties surveyed, either simply piled or mortared, in both back and front lawns, or surrounding shrubs. A very singular and skillfully executed flower bed in a working-class neighborhood of Bedford, Lawrence County, consists of a ring of piled geodes mortared in such a way that no concrete is visible. In the center of the flower bed is a small geode sculpture consisting of a cylindrical base embedded with very small geodes, topped by one huge geode, which is in turn topped by a small wood disk on which sits a clump of white balls. In one Bloomington example in an upper-middle-class neighborhood, nine very uniform geodes embedded in the ground surround each of two evergreen bushes planted on either side of the base of a long gravel driveway. An early twentieth-century stone city house in the center of Bloomington, now a neglected rental property in the university district, has an elaborate series of three round, mortared geode flower beds within a stone patio. One brand-new home in a middle-class subdivision of Bloomington has a large round flower bed in the front lawn made of bricks with geodes mortared on top. The owner explained that the "niggerheads" had been unearthed during construction of the house and he thought they were "real pretty," so he built the bed. Several of my informants used the term "niggerhead" but qualified it by stating that the geodes were called that in the past, while others used the term without hesitation. Other examples of the folk terminology for geodes in this area include "muttonheads" (one woman using this word was unaware of the technical term "geode") "bullheads," "rattlers" (hollow geodes which rattle when shaken), and "thunderballs" ("They said the Indians, ther'd come a big rain and water would wash 'em down the hill, they'd come rollin' down the hill, they'd call 'em thunderballs. . . . That is the original name for 'em" [Brandt 1984:20].)

Occasionally one will see roadside stands where geodes are for sale. One such stand, in Jackson County near the border of Lawrence County, consists of four huge piles of geodes, sorted by size, lining the front lawn of the seller's trailer home. They were available for "from a dime to a dollar apiece." I asked the owner where he had found them all and he was reluctant to answer (evidently a trade secret) until I specified that I meant in general terms. He then stated that he collected them all over, in the past from streambeds now covered by Lake Monroe (built in the early 1960s), and today he still plows them up in fields. All of the creators of the geode objects I photographed in the surrounding areas, however, had gathered their geodes by themselves or with friends and relatives.

The category of objects which I call lawn sculptures consists of a wide variety of combinations of elements, usually placed in a prominent position in the front yard or within a flower bed. In this type of ornament, individual creativity is displayed in the often asymmetrical, fanciful use of various commonly used objects, including geodes and other things such as pieces of interestingly shaped wood, driftwood, branches, bricks, flowers, fieldstone and other rocks, old tires, buckets, metal rims, animal and dwarf figurines, plastic flowers, carved birds, placed together in widely varying combinations, but usually clustered around a central, larger object. For example, one such lawn sculpture from rural Monroe County consists of a tree stump with an eagle perched on top and several geodes seemingly randomly strewn around the base of the eagle. Another example, from a working-class neighborhood in Bloomington, includes a branched tree stump with geodes placed on different levels of branches along with flower pots and bird feeders, a plastic yellow daisy and a hand-made wooden cardinal, and geodes and gnome figurines piled at the base of the stump. The artisan, Mr. Phil Taylor, was unfamiliar with the term "geode." This sculpture stands in a driveway-parking lot which takes the place of a front lawn, and a geode flower bed borders the small house. In a side yard, beside the detached garage, is a wishing well of geodes constructed by Mr. Taylor, and stainless steel coffee pots hang from nearby bushes.

I encountered many other examples of such elaborate yard decoration, always in working-class or lower-middle-class neighborhoods or rural areas and never in the more affluent subdivisions. This finding corresponds with Anderson's observation that "One of the important things communicated by gardens is social class" (Anderson 1972:185). Anderson describes the differences between lower-class, middle-class, and upper-class yards and gardens, citing such factors as lawn versus ground cover, symmetry of the placement of bushes, and the shapes of lawns, and he notes the tendency of lower-middle-class gardens to be ornamented with concrete statues. Likewise, a 1978 study of the folk art of mailbox decoration demonstrates that while decorated mailboxes are a facet of the folk culture of the American middle class, "the character of a particular neighborhood influences the style of decorated mailboxes located there, and . . . there is a tendency for folk mailboxes to be replaced by popularized versions of folk styles in developments that are in a higher socio-economic class" (Jarrett 1978:20).

While Anderson's conclusion that gardens and landscaping are a mode of communication, "a paralanguage" (Anderson 1972:182), sending a message about the social class of a home's or neighborhood's occupants (among other possible messages) seems to apply as well to these lawn sculptures, there is a great deal of variety between individual works. One retired truck driver in Bloomington, who collected geodes during his drives, has many geode decorations around his house and yards: he mounted two very large geodes singly, one each in his front and side yards. He decorated his side yard with a loose pile of geodes, mounted on top by a particularly large one, which covers a pipe sticking out of the ground. Next to this pile is an old gasoline pump. At the base of his mailbox is a large rock painted white, with his name lettered in black. Lining one side of the driveway is one long row of rocks of all sorts, each of varying shapes and sizes and placed with spaces between them. In summer, flowers are planted between these stones, while in winter their stark shapes against snow make a striking effect. Mr. Grubb has a definite personal opinion on the aesthetics of working with geodes. "You know they don't make a purty wall. . . . I don't think so . . . no, I, I think the purtiest thing is just one big rock, but I don't think they're purty in a wall" (Brandt 1984:11). This sentiment may be shared by the creator of another lawn "sculpture" just outside of Bloomington consisting of a single geode placed atop a huge granite stone embedded close to the road in a front lawn. It is evident that individual artistic self expression is as dominant a force as neighborhood influence in the creation of these lawn decorations.

When constructing free-standing objects out of geodes, most of the artists employed a similar technique, using cement as mortar and often affixing the geodes onto a frame or base such as cement blocks (in the case of a mailbox stand, for example), a barrel (wishing well), a large pipe (birdbath), or a metal tub (fountain or pond). Wishing wells are usually cylindrical while birdbaths are usually hourglass shaped, as in mass-produced examples. There is much variation in the amount of mortar allowed to show between geodes, in the size of the geodes used in construction, and whether or not they are left intact or cracked open. In most cases the geodes are placed symmetrically, in horizontal or vertical rows. In many cases, only geodes of the same size are used in the formation of one object, though sometimes there will be a gradation from rows of smaller to larger geodes. Less often, though occasionally, one finds a mixture of sizes scattered throughout one object, just as one only occasionally finds a mixture of intact and broken geodes within one object. The tendency is towards symmetry of form instead of asymmetry.

Functions for these completed objects vary. One wishing well in Lawrence County is used as a planter, and birdbaths and planters are sometimes used interchangeably. One wishing well was later hooked up with a tap and hose, almost as though its status as solely a decoration were somehow an affront. I spoke with the creator of this well at length, but the only explanation I could draw from him as to why he built the well was "I wanted one." The well sits in the small front yard of a single-pen house in rural Monroe County, accompanied by the ubiquitous broken children's toys, non-functional washing machine, dozens of canning jars, and other odds and ends. The creator of this well also mortared geodes onto the top of his front porch rail. The well was formed by pressing geodes of various sizes into cement spread onto an old barrel, leaving large spaces of concrete visible in the end. A high pitched, tin roof was then placed on top. These objects represent this man's first and last attempts at such artistry, and they display less craftmanship than most of the other creations I observed. However, apparently a woman driving by on this typical Indiana secondary road stopped and asked the artisan if he would make one for her, but he refused: "I weren't interested—too much aggravation."

One commonly shaped, cylindrical geode and mortar planter displayed a unusual added detail—an old automobile luggage rack placed above so that a rose would grow up onto it. The rose later died and was not replanted, so that at first glance the planter appears to be an odd sculpture. The creator of this and two other geode objects on his front lawn, Virgil Frye of rural Monroe County, was entirely noncommittal about his work, which was completed in the 1970s. One of the objects is an unusual and striking birdbath of the common hourglass shape, but constructed of four large geodes mortared together as a base with a dish on top decorated with uniform, smaller geodes. Most birdbaths are built by mortaring smaller geodes onto a frame in the same manner as Mr. Frye's planter. The third geode construction on his front lawn is a very large, oblong planter completely encrusted with geodes. Virgil Frye demonstrates a high degree of artistry and craftsmanship in his geode creations, but dismisses them as a meaningless hobby abandoned years ago.

As Katherine Jan Jarrett noted in her 1978 article, rural delivery mailboxes "are a lively element of our continuing tradition of material folk culture in the late 20th Century" (Jarrett 1978:19). Floyd Hawkins, in rural Monroe County near Bloomington, built his mailbox post in 1983 with a great deal of skill and resultant pride. His wife, Darla, proclaimed her husband's ability and desire to create: "He's all the time makin' things, thinkin' things up like that" (Hawkins). The initial impetus for building the mailbox post had been functional—the old one had gotten knocked down and Mr. Hawkins said that he was going to "build one the kids couldn't tear down." The post has concrete blocks as a base, completely mortared over with intact geodes. The largest geodes are at the base of the post and the smallest ones towards the top. Another mailbox post on a secondary road outside Bloomington has an oval shape similar to that of Mr. Hawkins' stand, but the mailbox on top is enclosed by a row of geodes. This post also has the largest row of geodes at the bottom, and tapers in slightly towards the top, as does Mr. Hawkins' work. However, the second mailbox post consists of broken as well as intact geodes. The latter post sitting in front of a mobile home, was erected because cars on the very curved road kept running into the occupant's mailbox. The initial motivation for building this piece of folk art was again utilitarian. However, after the builder put geodes around the concrete block mailbox post to prevent it from being knocked down, he decided that the mailbox looked so nice, he would build geode posts all along the road, which he linked with a chain (Brandt 1984:13). More geodes are banked around trees in the front yard.

Gateposts and lampposts are other examples of geode objects constructed initially or primarily with a functional purpose, but eventually exhibiting an equal decorative component, as is the case with much folk art. One pair of large, elaborate gateposts in rural Monroe County was built in the 1940s by a jack-of-all-trades, Scott Richards, according to his son (Richards). The six-foot tall posts are cylindrically shaped and made with uniform sized, intact geodes placed in even rows, and each post is topped by one very large geode. A similar pair of five-foot tall lampposts sits at the base of the house walk. This craftman's brother had been a stonemason. According to his son, Mr. Richards liked his property "kept up real nice," and had many other hobbies, one of which was cabinetmaking.

I discovered another gatepost in an isolated area of Brown County, still attached to a dilapidated rail fence. It is about two feet high, rectangular in shape, and topped with a square limestone slab. It is mortared with even rows of small, intact geodes, with more mortar visible than in the Richards' gateposts.

A modern use of geodes on gateposts, in an affluent suburb of Bloomington, uses only one very large geode atop each post. The two-foot tall gateposts are made of manufactured limestone veneer covering concrete forms. This home also has factory-made lampposts—directly behind the gateposts at the foot of the asphalt driveway—which are decorated with replicas of birds and squirrels.

Most of the objects I observed were made from geodes which were left intact, with some exceptions as noted in the above descriptions. One very unusual planter which I found in the small town of North Vernon, Jennings County, is in the shape of a large basket and built from very small geodes, all of which have been cracked open to reveal the sparkling quartz centers. While I was not able to locate the creator of this object, one of my informants in Brown County expressed a decided preference for geodes which were cracked open; this was his sole technique in his many constructions. He told me almost with disbelief that many people preferred the geodes left whole (Hartley). Virgil Hartley is the creator of a large, impressive shrine on his front lawn. Every geode has been cracked open and embedded in cement, except for the unusual, pointed geodes bordering the top edge of the shrine. A white Virgin Mary statue stands inside the shell of the common upturned bathtub, but this tub is encrusted with cracked geodes. On either side of her there are symmetrical geode walls, each one formed by three rows of identical large squares composed of geodes, tapering down on each end. Thus each of the top two rows is formed by two squares and one triangle, the middle rows by three squares and one triangle, and the bottom rows by four squares and one triangle.

Virgil Hartley is a retired industrial electrician for General Motors from Anderson, Indiana, who also builds birdhouses and dollhouses as a hobby. I asked him if he were Catholic, because it is unusual to find Virgin Mary shrines in the Monroe and Brown County area, and he emphasized that he and his wife were not Catholic. His "wife's parents" are Catholic, but he just built the shrine because "it seemed like a pretty idea." The shrine sits on the front lawn facing the road. This subject seemed sensitive; perhaps there had been problems commonly associated with such religious intermarriage in the 1940s, as his wife had evidently left her faith upon their marriage. This subsequent building of a classic shrine to the Virgin Mary (folk "bathtub" style) forty years later seems to be an intriguing act, probably with more underlying it psychologically than the reasoning "it seemed like a pretty idea." Such a shrine is not usually found on the lawn of a non-Catholic. That Mr. Hartley is capable of choosing other subjects for his geode constructions is evident in the fact that he has also built two interior walls in his house completely out of cracked-open geodes, one in his kitchen and one surrounding a stone fireplace in the living room.

I photographed one other example of geodes used in the creation of objects with a religious theme, a truly spectacular construction filling a lot one block west of the huge, sandstone Catholic church in the center of Jasper, Dubois County. Dubois County is an area of nineteenth-century German Catholic settlement and is quite a bit west of the Indiana Geode Belt. This huge grotto of geode shrines and planters was built by the members of a home for the mentally retarded which is located adjacent to the grotto. The geodes were bussed in from other areas. The shrines are largely composed of intact geodes, but also have intermittent sections using only broken ones. The elaborate shrines are composed of strictly symmetrical units: on the largest, central shrine, for example, a circular base built from uniform geodes is topped with several groups of identical geode pillars, grouped in even rows or clusters, all topped by another, smaller base of geodes. This second base of geodes is decorated on the perimeter of the shrine with single geodes lined in a row. At the center of the shrine, however, it is topped with another row of geode pillars, which has another base on top of it, then a row of single stones, then a bathtub type shrine (encrusted with geodes) with a Virgin Mary in the center. Surrounding the bathtub is another row of geode pillars, topped by another base of geodes, topped by single geodes.

Geodes are also used decoratively in the building of house foundations, chimneys, and walls, and porch, carport, and house lot walls, both as actual construction material and as veneer, though their use in this way is less common. One self-designated "rock lover" in rural Jennings County—a woman whose small house inside is a museum of labeled semi-precious stones and fossils—has used geodes extensively outside her home. Two huge rock gardens in her front and side lawns consist largely of whole geodes of all sizes (Kahrs). Her carport wall and house foundation are embedded with intact geodes, and piles of unbroken geodes line her house, front walk and steps.

In the town of Mitchell, Lawrence County, a striking geode wall, about two feet high and made with even rows of uniform geodes, runs along the sidewalk in front of a white clapboard cottage in a working-class neighborhood. Very large geodes are placed on top of the wall all along it, evenly spaced and about a large geode size apart. Taller gateposts (about three feet high) flank each opening in the wall, and each is topped by an extra-large geode. There are several such openings—two or three for walks and as many opening onto lawn.

In Bloomington, the base of a screened porch was embedded with geodes in the 1960s by Mr. Beyer, who collected them during the construction of the Lake Monroe Dam. Mr. Beyer felt that he had been original in using geodes to decorate in this manner, though he acknowledged seeing geodes used in other ways (Brandt 1984:19).

A unique, modified bungalow in Bloomington, designed and built around the turn of the century by "Bloomington's first architect" (Craig 1980), makes extensive use of geodes in the construction of the foundation, front porch (which is adorned with Greek Revival pillars and a wide front gable), and side garden. Originally there were also rows of huge geodes, mortared together, lining the driveway and the sidewalk in front of the house.

There is a unique example of a whole house constructed of geodes, an enormous two-story Victorian known locally as "the Rock House," in Morgantown, Morgan County. It was built in 1896 by a local man, James Knight, as a home for his more than twenty children. Mr. Knight worked at various times as a U.S. postmaster, and sawmill, livery stable, and general store owner. The home is made of home-made concrete blocks, poured in forms, and before completely dry embedded with rocks, primarily geodes. Some forms were also embedded with items such as shells, pottery pieces, jewelry, marbles, dice, and animal skeletons. Knight's name appears in coal over the east front door and his wife's name (Isabelle) over the east window on the first floor (Rock House 1984).

The tradition of using geodes in landscaping, house decoration, mailbox ornamentation and gate, fence, and lamppost construction falls within the realm of folk art. As Michael Owen Jones has noted, folk practices are "generated spontaneously among people with shared identities and values (Jones 1972:47). Like most landscaping, such geode creations are the product of traditional rules transmitted informally, such as by word of mouth or imitation, in most cases among members of the working-class or lower-middle class in the area observed. While these artists conform as to materials used, techniques of construction, forms and subjects, there is a great deal of variety exhibited in individual styles. This finding confirms Jarrett's observation with regard to folk mailbox art that "trends vary from neighborhood to neighborhood and run along a continuum from a random variety of folk styles along rural roads, through more conformity of style in some suburban developments, to nearly totally conforming popular styles in the more exclusive developments" (Jarrett 1978:20). The few geode constructions observed in upper-middle-class neighborhoods were very simple, utilizing only a few, large, uniform geodes.

This semi-public folk art, the landscaping and decorative objects, is communicating more than just social class or the norms and values inherent within it, or, in some cases, religious beliefs. Each object represents a need for creative self-expression on the part of its maker, demonstrated by the variety exhibited. What is the source of this need, and why does it seem to be less prevalent in the middle- and upper-middle-class neighborhoods? What controls the dynamics between conformity and individuality in these material expressions of the self, one's home and land? Obviously, there are neither simple nor single answers to these queries, only the acknowledgment that there is much room for more research on the topic.

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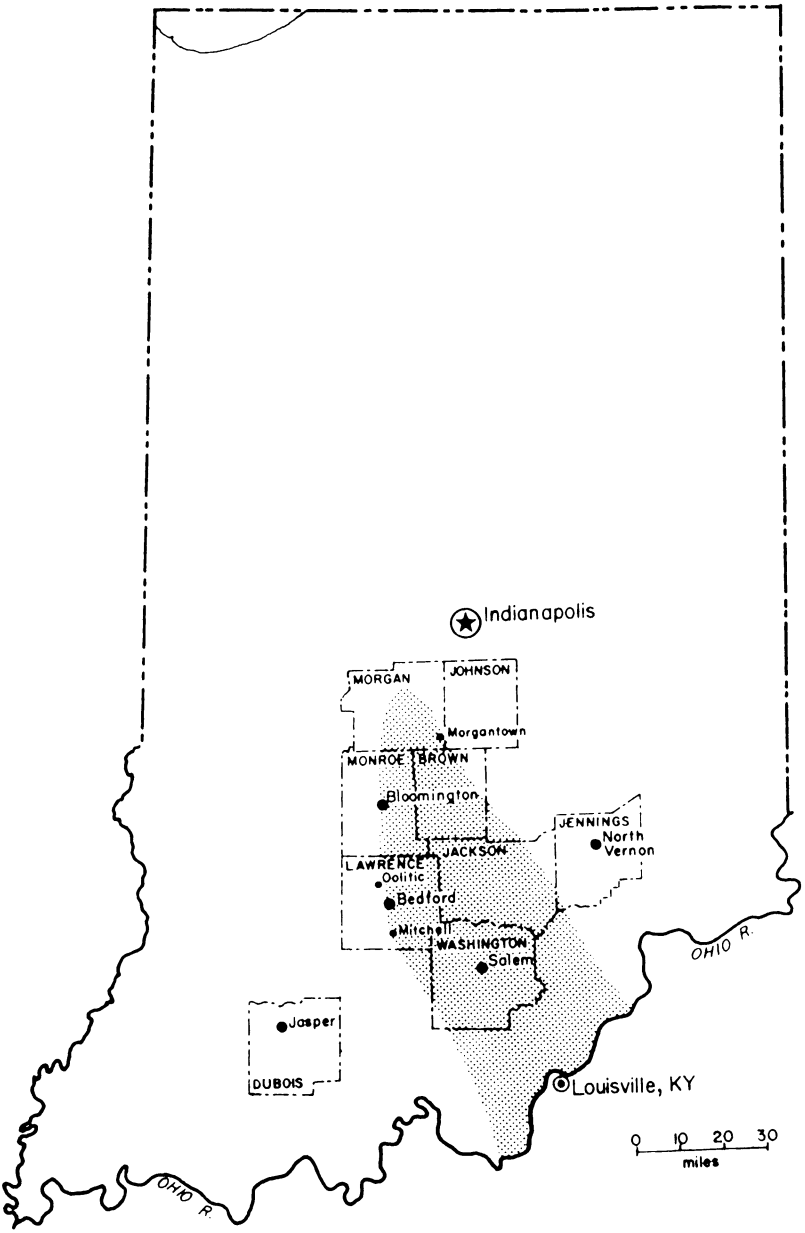
The Rock House Restaurant
1984 Menu for the Rock House Restaurant. Morgantown, Morgan County, Indiana.


Indianapolis
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JOHNSON
Morgantown
MONROE
BROWN
Bloomington
JENNINGS
North Vernon
JACKSON
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Figure 1. The Indiana Geode Belt.

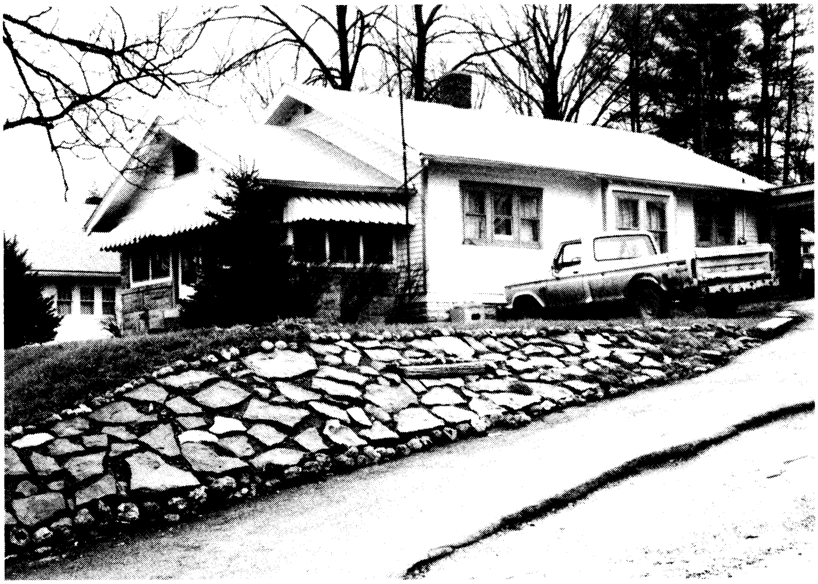

Figure 2. Fieldstone and geode banking, Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana.

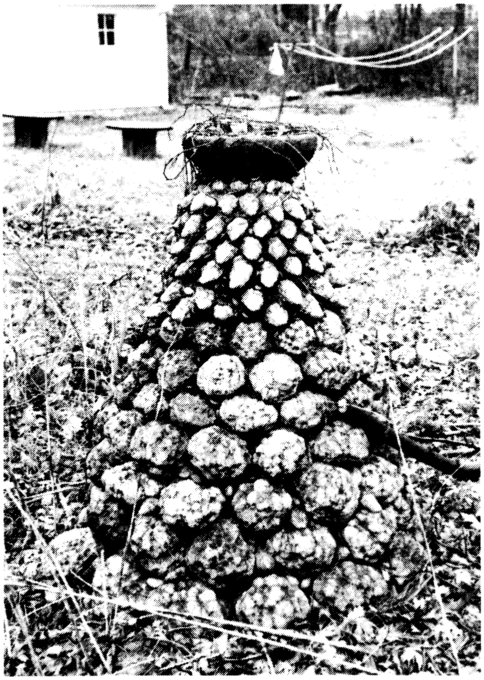

Figure 3. A striking geode birdbath or planter, Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana. Artist unknown.

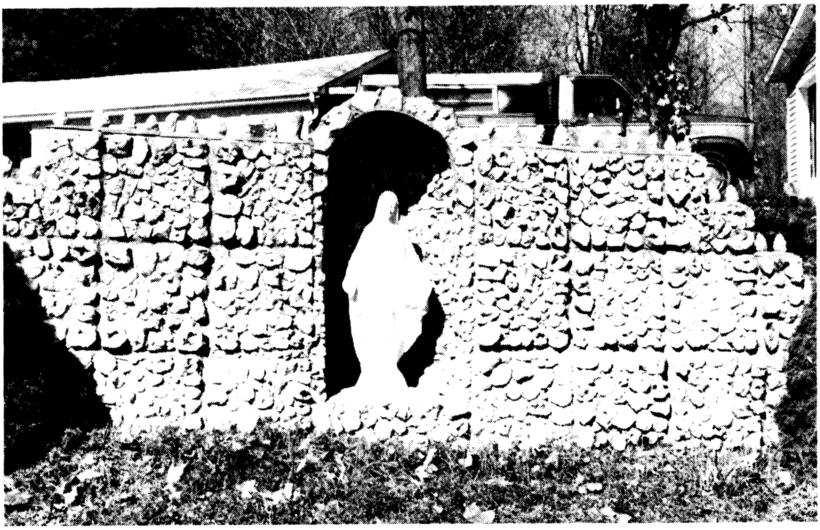

Figure 4. Front lawn shrine built of cracked-open geodes with whole, oval shaped geodes mounted on top. Note the repetitive three pattern. Brown County, Indiana. Virgil Hartley.

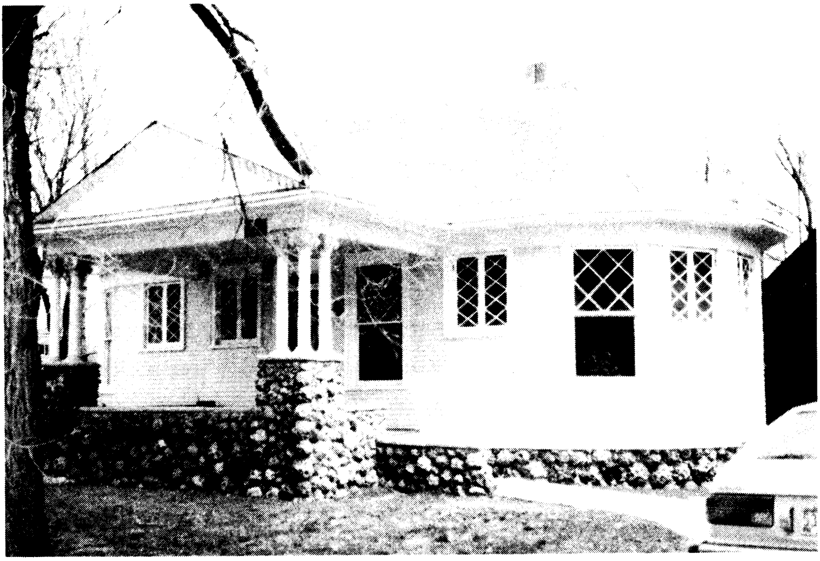

Figure 5. Geode foundation, built around the turn of the century by Bloomington's first architect, John Nichols.

Cemetery Decoration Customs in the American South

LYNWOOD MONTELL

This paper looks at southern cemetery decoration customs practiced across the years, how these customs have changed, and what remains the same about them. While this study is limited to the American South, certain examples from other parts of the world will be included for comparative purposes. Many of the older southern traditional practices surrounding death and burial, such as preparing the corpse, sitting up with the dead, and carrying the corpse to the grave, have been absorbed in recent years by funeral professionals. And while there may be other viable folk customs and practices associated with death and burial, I am concentrating only on social interactions associated with decorating graves and cemeteries. These represent customs and unifying group activities that have continued to the present day.

Here I will describe two basic kinds of folk activities associated with cemetery decoration: one-time activities and those that are on-going or repeated year after year. One-time customary activities consist of choosing and erecting gravestones, and of building structures such as gravehouses, walls, or fences, all of which are intended to be permanent, on or around the graves. The matter of choosing and erecting relatively permanent gravestones affords an excellent opportunity to study community levels of technology and human thought and emotion in historical perspective. Gravestone types and materials have, after all, evolved from the simple to the complex—from the days of fieldstones and hand-hewn, hand-lettered stones to the era of standardized marble and granite stones, which exhibit both standardized sizes, forms, and machine chiseled lettering.

The older custom of erecting nondescript fieldstones or shale is still practiced in some areas of the South by less affluent members of society such as tenants and sharecroppers. While these fieldstones, when whitewashed, may reflect a local aesthetic for tidiness, there is little about them to cause others to pick up on the custom and perpetuate it, especially since the identity of the deceased is not preserved on the stone except when roughly carved initials are used for this purpose. Less enduring even than fieldstones and, perhaps consequently, less widely used, are gravemarkers made of wooden slabs or planks (Ball 1977:167-70),[1] wooden crosses (Ibid),[2] and clay pots (Smith and Rogers 1979:142-43).[3]

The practice of using hand-hewn hand-lettered stones as grave markers was introduced into most southern communities at an early date. The custom grew up alongside that of using fieldstones to mark graves, and was practiced until the early years of the twentieth century. Rock used for making hand-hewn gravestones was generally obtained from nearby limestone and sandstone quarries, although many gravestones, like chimney rocks, came from creek beds where sedimentary rock was found in relatively thick layers. Quarried and creek-bed stones were hewn into appropriate shapes and lettered by community craftsmen who worked closely with representatives of the bereaved families. While the shape of the stones, the amount of lettering, and the motif choices were dictated by the family of the deceased, the final appearance of the stone was distinctly and unmistakably that of the mason, and his products can be spotted in different cemeteries within the geographical area where he worked (Taylor & Weldy 1976:15-33). In addition to the stones executed by local masons, some grave markers were hewn and lettered by amateurs, possibly by members of the family. This may have been the origin of such stones as the one in Monroe County, Kentucky, bearing the epitaph "Dear Papa" and having a heart carved in raised relief on the reverse side.

While a limited number of granite and marble gravestones were utilized during the earliest days of settlement in most southern communities, monuments made from these stones did not win wide acceptance until after the Civil War, when they became more accessible due to a gradually improving economy and more efficient rail transportation. The standardized sizes and forms of these granite and marble stones may be attributed to silent conformity to community standards; that is, it was customary to purchase a gravestone about the same size as others in the cemetery. The community norm was not to outdo one's neighbor on the one hand, nor to be outdone on the other. Tall obelisks and boulder-like stones, though present, are even today the exception rather than the rule, and occur more frequently in town and city rather than rural settlement or community.[4]

All types of stone markers, save fieldstones and shale, contain motifs (pictorial or symbolic representations carved into the stone) and epitaphs (word messages carved into the stone) that, while expressing the individuality of the deceased, are often national or international in popularity. One example of an epitaph popular in England and throughout the United States reads as follows:

Remember friend as you pass by,
As you are now so once was I;
As I am now so ye shall be,
Prepare in death to follow me.

Southern uniqueness in cemetery customs is not as likely to be found in motifs and epitaphs, or in rock types and forms, as in other practices associated with cemeteries and graves. One such predominantly southern folk custom is that of mounting a photograph of the deceased on the face of the gravestone near the top center. This custom, which apparently originated about 1890, knows no age limitations. I have viewed the photographs of people of all ages, from infancy to one hundred years, mounted in the stones. Like the practice of photographing corpses in their coffins, this one filled the human need for visible, tangible reminders of those who had died. Although it is not utilized as frequently as it once was, the custom of mounting photographs on gravestones is still practiced (Jeane 1966:41).

Here and there across the rural South, clusters of small gabled buildings were once built in profusion to shelter in-ground interments. Referred to variously as gravesheds, graveshelters, shelter houses, spirit houses, and gravehouses (Ball 1977:30), these rapidly vanishing structures may still be found in Euro-American cemeteries in the South within a line drawn from eastern Texas, northern Louisiana, and the Arkansas Ozarks on the west, to western West Virginia, western Virginia, western North Carolina, and northeastern Georgia on the east. According to data compiled by cultural geographers, archaeologists, and folklorists, it appears that middle and east Tennessee, south-central Kentucky, and east Texas contain the greatest number of them (Jordan 1980:252; Ball 1977:30; Fielder 1980). Verla Parrish, a resident of Floyd County, Kentucky, noted that these structures were numerous in that county until they were all torn down in the 1960s by Job Corps employees who were paid to clean up the cemeteries (Anderson 1980). Gravehouses are also part of Native American heritage in the South; John Lawson observed many of these tiny structures among the Indians of the Carolinas in the late eighteenth century (Jeane 1966:39).

The gravehouse, a rather distinctive form of grave decoration, may be defined as a shelter used to cover the graves of those whose corpses were buried in the earth. Most of these tiny houses are of wood, but brick, brick and wood, and metal examples have also been observed (Price 1973:9; Ball 1977:29). In rural southern cemeteries, these little houses usually consist of four posts supporting a gabled roof. While a few are open on the sides, most are enclosed with plain picket or stylized picket walls, or with weatherboards covering the bottom half of the walls (Coleman 1971:188). Gravehouses have a front door and sometimes one or more windows, making it possible to read the gravestone inscription without entering the tiny house. Most of these rather unique structures cover only one grave; some cover two. In two discoveries (in Monroe County, Kentucky, and Overton County, Tennessee), I found houses that covered from four to six graves, thus enclosing and sheltering entire families.

Some of these houses contain only grave markers, with the enclosed graves periodically decorated with flowers by survivors of the deceased. Some structures are more fully decorated with personal mementos of the deceased, however, or decorations placed there by bereaved survivors (Garrity and Wyss 1976:216). On Upper Devil's Creek in Wolfe County, Kentucky, for example, the grave of a nineteen-year-old girl, who drowned in 1939, is covered by a little white weatherboarded house, complete with a door, a double-hung window containing two sashes with six panes each, interior walls neatly papered, and a picture of the dead girl hanging on the wall above the headstone. Flowers adorn the grave itself (Treadway 1964). In another instance, this one from Claiborne County, Tennessee, the grave inside the gravehouse is decorated with plaster-of-Paris bulldogs, a framed picture of Christ, and other religious symbols (Corn 1977:34-37).[5]

The contemporary function of gravehouses appears to be one of keeping pigs, dogs, and other scavenging animals away from the corpse, or of sheltering the grave from rain. These two reasons are reported from New Guinea (Bendann 1930:110), and from Anglo-Americans in the Upland South (Ball 1977:53). I personally talked with a man in Pickett County, Tennessee, whose teenage brother accidentally shot himself in the 1920s. The parents erected a gravehouse over the son's grave in order to keep water from reaching his body.

Gravehouses may have served early people's presumed needs to control the spirit of the deceased. The desire to appease the spirit influenced what they did with their dead or, in the case of gravehouses, what people did for their dead. Egyptians made mummies as lasting bodies for spirits to dwell in, and the Etruscans placed the corpses of the dead in house-like tombs, believing that the dead lived in these structures (Bendann 1930:xi). The Greeks believed that the ghosts of the deceased came out of their tombs and sepulchers and wandered about the spot where their remains lay buried (Brand 1913:474), thus explaining in part why many cemeteries and church buildings are replete with reported ghosts. The same belief about wandering spirits seems to have persisted in the European folk mind across the centuries. We may conjecture that those early people who built coverings over graves wanted the spirits to come back and be close to the living, or that they were providing an abode for the spirits as a means of appeasing them and thus preventing them from inflicting harm upon the living.

Unlikely archetypes of southern gravehouses have been reported at various times in history in Sweden, Bosnia, Russia (Oinas 1964-:77-86), Indonesia, Melanesia, New South Wales (Bendann 1930:110), England (where cruck roof dwellings introduced during or before the Danish invasion bear resemblance to stone slab "hogback" graves), West Africa, and among some Native American groups. Further library research and fieldwork should be conducted before claims regarding the origins of southern gravehouses are made.

Other types of gravecovers, perhaps related to gravehouses, need to be dealt with here. Graves covered with sandstones, hand-hewn and placed together to look like small houses with gable roofs, are found in Cumberland and Wolfe counties, Kentucky (Treadway 1964)[6] and in portions of Tennessee (Fielder 1980). Such stone grave structures, referred to as cairns by one writer (Fielder 1980), are perhaps closely related to the Anglo-Danish hogback tombstones. These rather rare and archaic stone edifices are older than all other southern gravehouse forms. Unlike the roofs of the Anglo-Danish hogback tombstones, which are almost invariably slightly arched lengthwise and have tegular surfaces, the roofs of the stone cairns in Kentucky and Tennessee are entirely parallel with the ground lengthwise, and the gabled slope of the roof is achieved by hewing stones in the shape of a triangle and by exposing the hypotenuse (Walton 1954:68).

Another stone gravecover, prismatic in shape, is formed lengthwise over the grave by using two thinly sawn or hand-hewn sandstones, spaced about two and a half feet apart at the ground and tilted together at the top to form a gable roof. Triangular-shaped stones are generally set in the gable ends to provide a house-like appearance. Their distribution in the South is yet unknown; however, fieldwork has uncovered numerous examples in central Tennessee, with scattered occurrences in east-central Alabama, and the Arkansas Ozarks.

Another ancient activity associated with covering graves is that of placing flat stone slabs (hewn or unhewn), or concrete slabs, over graves to protect them not only from animal scavengers, but also from early medical students in need of cadavers (Coffin 1976:151). This form of grave covering, known across the southland, is mentioned by Cicero and by various English and Welsh writers as well (Brand 1913:481). The custom was common in England by 1775 (Puckle 1968:147), with some of the stones being whitewashed with lime at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide (Brand 1913:481). The inscriptions on such stones are at the head.

In the early Middle Colonies and New England, these table stones stood free above the ground on four stone legs (Coffin 1976:154). In the South, stone walls were built around individual graves and topped with the large, flat stones so that the physical appearance is not unlike a mausoleum. Many family and community cemeteries of the Upland South with burials predating 1850 have one or more of these three-dimensional rectangular rock gravecovers.

Finally, there are occurrences of coffin-shaped, coffin-size stones used as gravecovers reported in Boyd (Cann 1969) and Mercer counties, Kentucky, and in Fentress and Lincoln counties, Tennessee. More common, although still rare in the Upland South, is the practice of carving a half-inch profile of a coffin into the top surface of the flat table stones that are used to cap the rock fences described in the previous paragraph.

Most southern cemeteries began as single family graveyards, then grew to include extended members of the family. Because virtually no one was denied burial privileges in a family's burial plot, such spots often evolved into community burial grounds. Cemeteries of this variety are at times identified with certain religious denominations and with nearby church houses, although most burial grounds in the South are truly communal in nature and predate the construction of churches.

Even in contemporary community cemeteries, the identities of families within them are retained by various means of demarcation. Family plots, usually consisting of six burial sites, are fenced, walled, staked out, or marked with quarried marble or granite corner posts.[7] The original function of fences and walls around family grave plots or even entire cemeteries probably served no aesthetic impulse. However, individual, family, and community pride has generally kept these enclosures in good repair and uniquely suited to the aesthetics of cemetery landscapes.

The older community cemeteries have no business manager; thus the grave plots are available at no cost on a first come, first served basis. Since burial plots are free, however, most of the cemeteries have no endowments for perpetual care and must be cared for on a volunteer basis by the people of the community. For this reason many of the rural people of the South still come together on a community basis once or twice each year to clean and decorate the cemetery, and to share in fellowship around the graves of their deceased family members and friends. Even in those instances where cemetery labor is hired by means of interest-income derived from endowment bonds, members of the community annually contribute funds for cemetery upkeep, or raise money by selling refreshments, chances on calves, quilts, cars, and other commodities, and by holding bingo games and cakewalks (Ball 1975:93).

Rituals associated with cemetery decoration in the South often involve community celebrations variously referred to as "decorating the burial grounds," "decorating the graves," or simply "Decoration Day" or "Memorial Day," two terms in common and widespread usage. Since the celebration is generally observed on May 30, some southern people refer to the day when graves are decorated as "the thirtieth." The event may actually be celebrated on any date convenient for the community. While a day on or near May 30 is commonly observed as Decoration Day, there are numerous exceptions to the rule. To avoid possible conflict with a nearby community (a body of people with common ties to a particular cemetery), a given community may elect to celebrate Decoration Day a week or so on either side of the date chosen by its neighbor. Dates even further removed from May 30 are not uncommon. Barbara Allen and I observed a Decoration Day homecoming near East Lynn Lake in western West Virginia on July 6, 1980, and the fourth Saturday in August is the traditional day set aside by a church community in western Hardin County, Kentucky (Hoskinson 1959:117-19). The date for these later-in-the-year celebrations originated during pre-World War I times when social interaction was dependent on a "stabilized and orderly sequence of agricultural events," that is, the period between cultivating and harvesting crops (Ball 1975:93).

Decoration Day, as it is known and practiced today, began in the South, a fact that helps to explain its continued popularity there. Regarding the origin of the "official" Decoration Day, I quote from a note written by a resident of Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, and published in an 1894 issue of the *Confederate Veteran:*

> To the South belongs the credit of having established one of the most touching customs that has ever arisen out of war–namely, that of decorating soldiers' graves.
>
> During the time the war lasted, the people of the South suffered bitterly, and thousands of her bravest men and most promising youths fell in battle or died in prison. It was a long night in which the death angel flew over the land and when at last dawn appeared it was found he had touched the firstborn of nearly every household in the land.
>
> The brave men of the South, however, left behind them wives, mothers, and sisters whose devotion was imperishable.
>
> These devoted women, in order to show that they cherished the memory of loved ones, established the custom of strewing flowers on the graves of their dead sons and heroes, and since the war have devoted one day each year to honoring their dead by placing chaplets of laurel and flowers on their graves. [Murphy 1894:267]

Some scholars feel, however, that the real origins of Decoration Day lie not in Civil War times, but in Protestant modifications of All Saint's Day (November 1) and All Soul's Day (November 2), and ultimately, perhaps, in the pre-Christian Celtic celebration of Samain (Ball 1975:95-96; Rees and Rees 1961:89-92).

Just prior to Decoration Day each year, usually one to seven days in advance, present and former members of the community assemble to repair cemetery fences, clean individual and family burial plots, right overturned stones, repair broken stones, trim hedges and shrubs, and cut and rake the grass. When the physical landscape and/or cultural preference dictates a grassless, barren cemetery surface, people scrape and sweep the cemetery and reshape the graves by piling up dirt into tall mounds (Kniffen 1967:427). In many cemeteries, a pile of dirt, usually that which is left over from burials, is kept adjacent to the burial area for use by persons who desire to fill in or mound family graves in this traditional manner. "Cemetery cleanings," as these events are usually called, have taken on aspects of group or family ritual behavior; for in addition to bringing shovels, hoes, rakes, moving blades, and brooms, the group often brings basket lunches, and there is a communal sharing of food, which is prepared by the women, some of whom are present at the cemetery and take active parts in raking or sweeping the grounds. Reminiscing about former times is the order of the day. Thus, cemetery cleanings serve not only as a means of preserving and maintaining the physical appearance of the cemetery, but also as a social gathering for the area or as a family reunion, drawing relatives together again (Jeane 1966:39).

If the cemetery is adjacent to a church or chapel, there may be interdenominational religious services inside during late morning hours on Decoration Day; most people remain outside, however, to meet friends and former acquaintances and to talk over old times. When the religious service is concluded, all present indulge in a bountiful meal on the premises and continue with their visiting.

An Ozark writer describes the festive meal and accompanying human interactions as follows:

> Long wooden tables have been nailed to trees to hold the loads of fried chicken, ham, baked hens, potato salad and other garden vegetables, roasting ears and deviled eggs, dozens of pies and cakes. . . .
>
> Since the motor companies no longer provide running boards for vehicles, the men will back against a tree, slip down to their heels and balance well-filled plates on their knees. Others will use the hood or trunk of a car or truck. The coffee will be black.
>
> There will be much visiting and jollying, eye-balling of relatives never before seen. There will be group singing, gospel songs, and quartets. Decoration Day is THE day in the Ozarks. They would not trade it for Christmas or all the days in between. [McConnel 1980:67]

Permanent tables like those described by the Ozark writer have been built in numerous burial grounds across the South, from the larger, more elaborate community cemeteries to the small family graveyards in out-of-the-way places. The tables, themselves of folk derivation and construction, have virtually replaced the older tradition of "dinner on the ground."

The events taking place on Decoration Day are as much for the living as for the dead, as we have demonstrated. However, the first order of business on Decoration Day is grave decorating. The chief difference between these decorations and those described in the earlier part of this paper is that the objects used in the annual ritual on Decoration Day are not meant, for the most part, to remain as permanent fixtures.

The usual form of annual grave decoration is a floral arrangement. Flowers brought to the cemeteries in early years were seasonal. Home-grown varieties of flowers and roses, as well as wildflowers such as daisies and dandelions, were used for decoration. There was a time in the rural South when flowers for Decoration Day were handcrafted from crepe paper, using scissors, wire, needles, and thread. Entire families often spent many evenings before Decoration Day cutting, pulling, and fluting crepe paper into roses of various colors, which were then made more durable and weather resistant by being dipped in melted paraffin or wax (Stacy 1971). This art form declined rapidly with the introduction of plastic flowers following World War II, and is now virtually nonexistent.

Flowers, both real and artificial, are placed on graves in every conceivable type of container and manner, from cut-glass vases, tin cans (Bettis 1978:113), and plastic bottles, to metal frames clipped over the grave markers. The general practice is to locate the flowers somewhere between the chest area and the headstone, unless cemetery rules stipulate that all floral offerings be placed on headstones themselves (Ibid).

Decorating graves with flowers was practiced among ancient Christians (Brand 1913:485), and pollen analyses of grave sites reveal that Neanderthal people may have made similar use of flowers (Ball 1980). It is said that sweet-scented flowers were historically used to fill the bed, room, and coffin of the deceased. Such practices represented efforts to conceal the progress of bodily decay (Brand 1913:485). It was standard practice in South Wales in 1804 to cover the grave of the deceased with flowers for a week or two after the funeral. Common among the smaller villages and poorer folk of South Wales at the same time was the practice of planting flowers on graves as a more enduring tribute (Ibid). Some southerners likewise decorate graves by means of rose bushes, evergreens, and even trees. One person from east Tennessee claimed that some people there were buried with acorns in their hands. The acorns germinated in a year or so and grew into trees (Bettis 1978:113).

As a general rule in the American South, the choice of grave decorations is a family matter; thus, the variety of decorations above and beyond floral arrangements is extensive. Most of the decorations, such as the ubiquitous flowers, serve an aesthetic function for the living; but other decorative items, such as telephone line insulators, American flags, children's marbles, dolls, toy cars, toy airplanes, toy images of animals, light bulbs, and metal-tipped vacuum tubes from radio and television sets, had particular meaning to the deceased (Jeane 1966:4; Puckett 1926:105). Other items used to decorate graves serve ritualistic, symbolic functions. Black people in Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina have been known to place the cup and saucer used in the last illness on the grave to keep the dead from coming back again as a spirit. Medicine bottles are placed there also, turned upside down with corks loosened so that medicine will soak into the grave (Puckett 1926:104; White 1952:259; Bronner 1987:167-68). Throughout the southern Cotton Belt, broken crockery, broken glassware, broken pitchers, soap dishes, lamp chimneys, coffee cups, bits of stucco, and countless other items, generally from the kitchen, have been used to decorate the graves of black people (Bolton 1891:214; Ingersoll 1892:68-69; Bronner 1987:168). Most glass and pottery items used to decorate graves are broken. There are divergent views as to why this is so. Most southern blacks feel that the broken bits symbolize the family that has been broken by death (Puckett 1926:106). African people, on the other hand, intentionally break the pottery and glass containers to release the spirits from them so as to let them go to the next world to serve the owner (106). Such a belief is likely to be a survival of animism, even though the persons practicing it are not conscious of the fact (White 1952:260).

In addition to the many broken decorative items, lamps in a solid, unbroken state are frequently placed on graves. According to a 1925 report, one small black cemetery in Lee County, Alabama, contained at least twenty-three lamps at one time, some complete with oil and chimneys. Some said the lamps were there because they were aesthetically pleasing; others said their function was to light the darkness; still others believed the lights led the deceased person on to glory (Puckett 1926:106; White 1952:260).

One researcher found a grave with a drinking glass and pitcher of water neatly perched on a nearby flat stone, while another grave in the cemetery was covered with dishes (Jeane 1966:41). From Alabama's Black Belt comes the report that on a young murdered girl's grave, relatives placed the fan she had carried to a dance, along with the razor dropped by the presumed murderer (Sisk 1959:169-71). Again from Alabama black tradition, we read that lightning rods are placed on the graves of those persons who are restless in the grave (Lee 1960:120-21).

Large, white flint stones, as well as various unclassified fieldstones, are used by some southerners, both blacks and whites, not only to beautify graves, but also to define their limits clearly and thus safeguard the occupant against encroachment (White 1952:259,122). The most striking natural ornamental objects used on graves, however, are shells of both ocean and freshwater varieties. The custom has been practiced since early times by blacks on the Sea Islands and in the historic Cotton Belt, where it appears to be a continuation of an African custom (Toplovich 1980; Vlach 1978:139-47).

While the shell tradition is typically carried out as a means of decorating graves, some people feel that the shells have various supernatural qualities, such as insuring the peaceful rest of the dead (Ibid); others claim that the sounds of death can be heard to whistle through them.

Much attention has been given to the widespread use of shells among southern blacks, but it is seldom acknowledged that shell-decorated graves are found in scattered occurrences among Euro-Americans in the southeastern United States, from the coast of Florida to the interior of Texas, and northward through northern Arkansas into west Tennessee and west Kentucky. Southern whites likely borrowed the custom from black neighbors, but the possibility of an inheritance from Scotland exists (Ibid; White 1952:259; Kniffen 1967:427; Wilson 1966:31-40).

Two Tennessee archaeologists, Ann Toplovich and Vic Hood, have determined that shells used on the graves in Tennessee are freshwater mussels, generally collected from the Tennessee River or its tributaries (Toplovich 1980). Freshwater mussels are also present in western Kentucky streams, a fact that likely explains the use of shells on graves as far eastward in the state as Logan, Butler, and Edmonson counties, located in and adjacent to the Mammoth Cave area.

A former resident of northern Logan County responded to my direct line of questioning regarding the use of shells in Logan County in the following manner:

> Now, you may not believe this. When my sister was a little thing, she burned her hand something awful. My mother didn't know what to do about it; was really worried about what to do. This old lady there in the community told her to get some sea shells and burn them, then put the powder on the burn.
>
> Well, Mother wanted to know where in the world she could get some shells. The old woman said, "Go up here to the graveyard at Gupton's Grove near Bald Rock and there's some shells there on some of the graves."
>
> Well, Mother went and got some shells off the graves. And you know, it must have helped, for my sister's hand got all right. [Campbell 1980]

The cemetery customs and social activities discussed in this paper represent a variety of practices that had and still have a rather wide distribution in much of the American South. Certain of the older, one-time-only folk practices, such as the choice of grave-marker forms and types, erecting tiny houses, house-like forms, or other permanent covers over graves, placing photographs of the deceased on the gravestones, and building fences and walls around entire cemeteries and/or individual graves, are radically on the decrease, and their complete demise will likely occur with the passing from the cultural landscape of the extant examples.

Social gatherings and other on-going activities, in evidence at cemetery-cleaning events and on Decoration Day, represent tenacious folk customs and indicate a continuing cohesiveness and sense of identification with a particular hallowed spot by the persons involved in these social activities. Even these "never-say-die" customs are subject to change, however, as modern funeral technology makes deeper and deeper inroads into regional folkways. Southern cemeteries are already changing, as grassless, scraped cemeteries with mounded graves are yielding to grass-covered grounds replete with flat, ground-level grave markers. Patrons of those cemeteries that possessed grass covers all along find themselves, like patrons of the older, barren-earth cemeteries, compelled to place floral offerings on top of the grave markers or have the ground-level arrangements removed by caretakers in a week or so to make way for power lawn mowers. "Indeed," one person writes, "in a few years the old folk graveyard may be only a memory" (Jeane 1966:41). We must bear in mind, however, that customs and traditions seldom die out altogether, and that evolving human activities are understood only as we understand societal change and the factors that attend upon change.

In conclusion, I wish to make three additional observations: first, in order to obtain a broader data base on cemetery customs, it is imperative that we do adequate and proper fieldwork while there are extant artifacts and older living persons who can direct us to and describe for us the already diminishing or nonexistent customs and practices once commonly in vogue; second, the person researching cemetery customs and practices should exercise caution in making sweeping claims regarding origin and dissemination until more data are in; and third, even if the origins of cemetery decoration customs are never determined, and if we are never able to ascertain the motivations behind older practices, we can, by observing and talking with people, get at the folk rationale for doing things as they are done today. After all, for the people this is the most important consideration. To borrow the words of one investigator, "To observe only the outward form of any activity is to negate its function in the eyes of the participants and render fieldwork meaningless" (Ball 1975:98).

NOTES

1 Stuart Downs, a former student of mine, sent color slides of examples of plank markers from the Virginia Tidewater.

2 I have observed additional examples in Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia.

3 I have personally observed clay pot examples in Georgia and South Carolina.

4 I have intentionally avoided consideration of lawn-type cemeteries and ground-level gravestones that came into vogue, in the main, following World War II and bear every imprint of modern funeral technology.

5 While picket/slat/paling walls are most common, latticed wooden walls were photographed by John C. Campbell, *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland* (1921; rpt.,

Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1969), p.146, and Jack Corn, "Covered Graves," *Kentucky Folklore Record* 23 (January-March 1977):34-37.

[6] I discovered and photographed the one in Cumberland County.

[7] The custom of constructing walls around cemeteries stems from ancient Britain, possibly originating with early Celtic Christianity (Jordan 1980:254). In A.D. 752 the Pope issued a special decree to move church-related cemeteries inside the city limits; thus came the idea of consecrating a definite tract of land for burial purposes, isolated by walls or other means. Care was to be exercised so that the enclosed ground should not be neglected (Puckle 1968:141). An English bishop moved to strengthen the old decree in 1229 by requiring all cemeteries to be walled and by forbidding the grazing of livestock in the cemetery (Jordan 1980:141).

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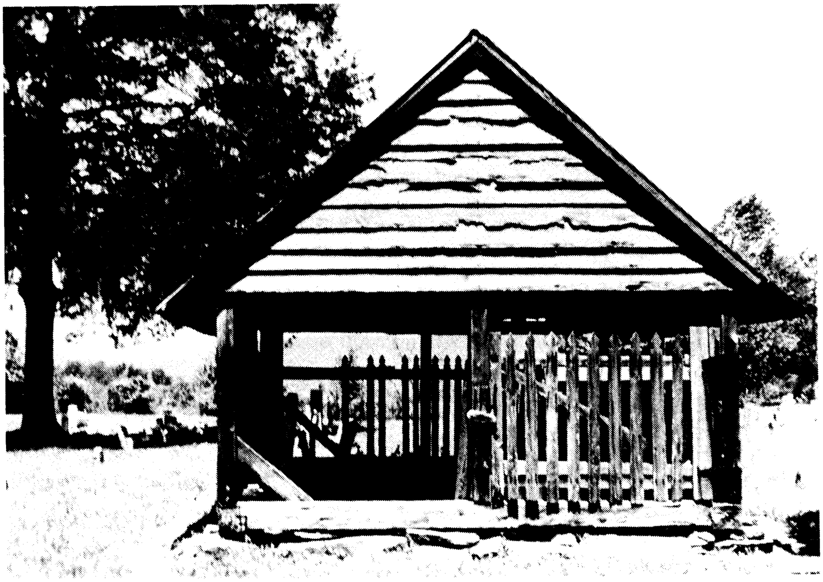

Figure 1. Gravehouse, Overton County, Tennessee, 1976. Photo by Lynwood Montell.

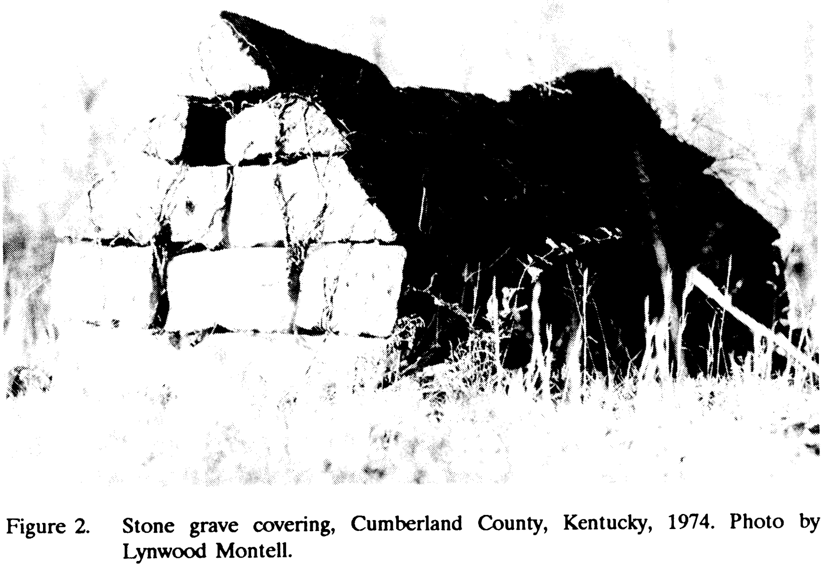

Figure 2. Stone grave covering, Cumberland County, Kentucky, 1974. Photo by Lynwood Montell.

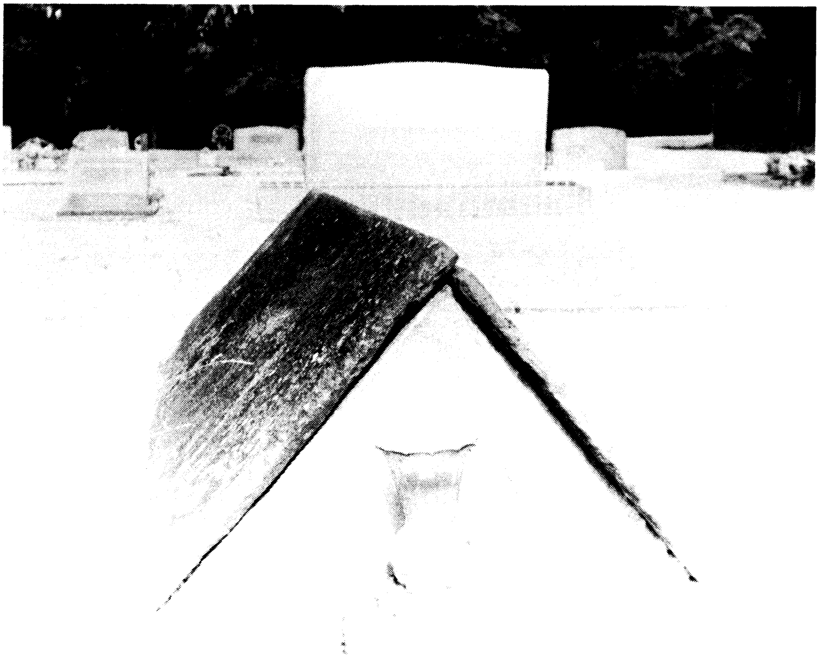

Figure 3. Prismatic gravecover, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, 1980. Photo by Lynwood Montell.

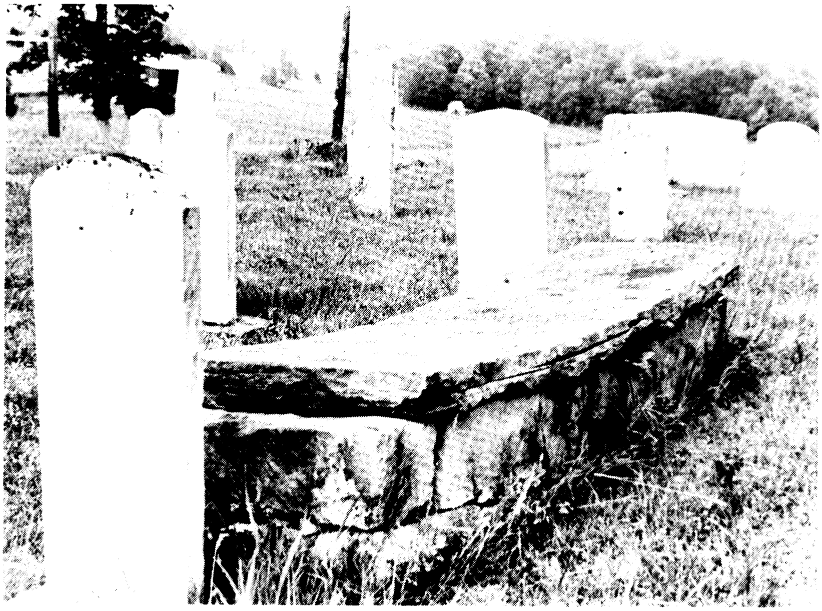

Figure 4. Mausoleum-like gravecover, Clinton County, Kentucky, 1972. Photo by Lynwood Montell.

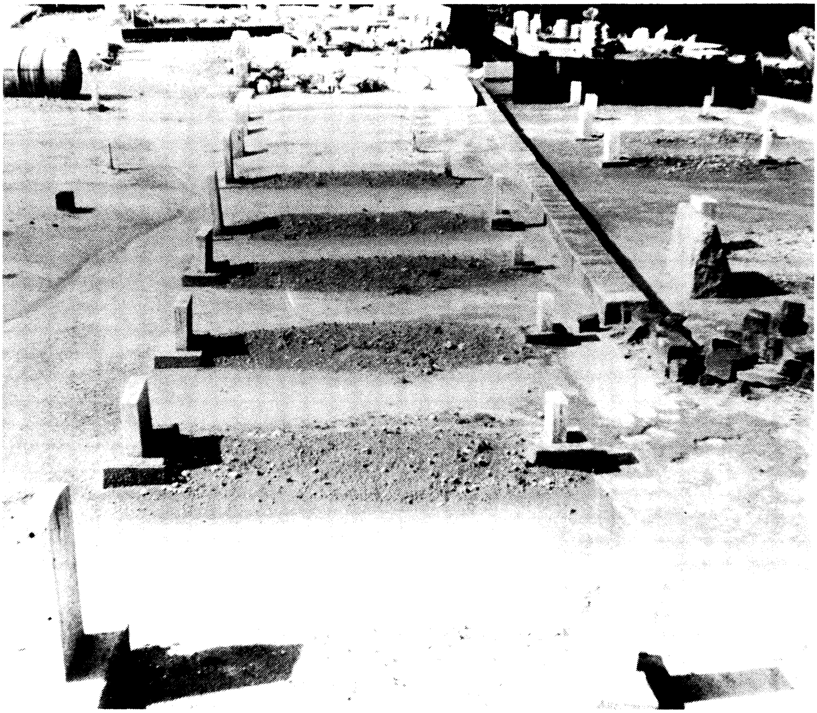

Figure 5. Grassless cemetery, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, 1980. Photo by Lynwood Montell.

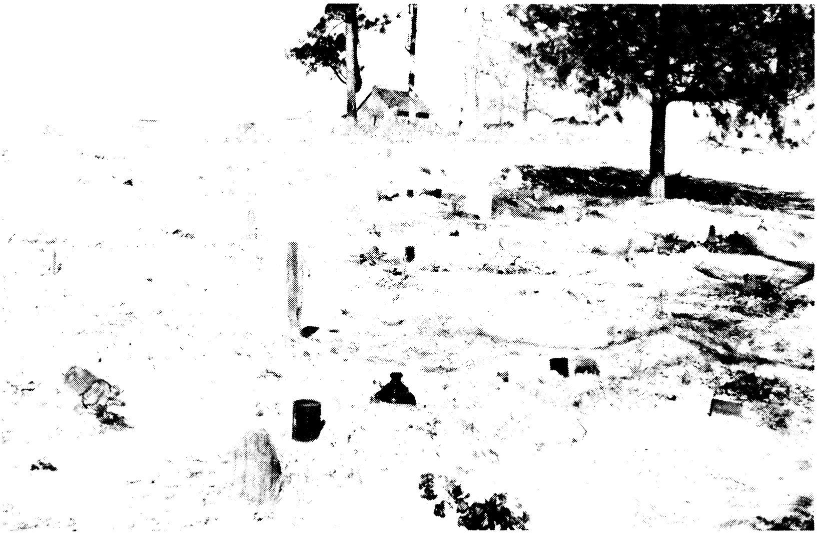

Figure 6. Sharecroppers' graves, Mississippi, 1935. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

The Shift From Artist to Consumer: Changes in Mormon Tombstone Art in Utah

GEORGE H. SCHOEMAKER

"*. . . that pretense of art, to wit, which is done with machines, though sometimes the machines are called men, and doubtless are so out of working hours: nevertheless long before it was quite dead it had fallen so low that the whole subject was usually treated with the utmost contempt by everyone who had any pretense of being a sensible man, and in short the whole civilized world had forgotten that there had everbeen an* art made by the people for the people, as a joy for the maker and the user." William Morris, HOPES AND FEARS FOR ART

The study of tombstone art is one way of approximating attitudes, values, and beliefs of a particular culture. Of this idea, James Deetz says, "Material culture, it is often correctly said, is not culture but its product. Culture is socially transmitted rules for behavior, ways of thinking about doing things" (1977:24). Henry Glassie echoes this notion by saying, "Artifacts are worth studying because they yield information about the ideas in the minds of people long dead" (1975:17). While it may be that tombstones are only the product of social beings from within their culture, they speak different things to different people. They reflect world views of individuals in addition to those of the society from which individuals emerge.[1]

Research in the area of gravestone studies has examined funerary art from numerous perspectives since the beginning of the century. Fieldwork and scholarship focusing on tombstone art of particular culture groups have dealt with the Puritans of New England (Benes 1953, Deetz 1977, Forbes 1927, Ludwig 1966, Tashjian 1974), and the Amish of Pennsylvania (Barba 1953, McDonald 1975). Studies dealing with African-American communities and their influences have been done in the Southeast (Vlach 1977, 1978) and as far north as Rhode Island (Tashjian 1989). Richard Meyer has pointed out, however, that the geographical emphasis has been predominantly on New England and Pennsylvania material while other regions have been more or less neglected or overlooked (1989:4). The Mormons of the Great Basin region represent one such group.

The pioneering work of Austin and Alta Fife surveyed the rich decorative art tradition of the Intermountain West (1988). The recent treatment of Mormon tombstone art has been sparse and of a relatively descriptive nature in comparison to studies done on other groups. Studies of a descriptive type have been done by Hal Cannon (1980a, 1980b), and Carol Edison (1983). Edison also weaves biographical accounts of stonecutters and their craft into some of her writing (1989), while in other studies she writes about the influence of popular cultural forms on tombstone art in southern Idaho (1985). Keith Cunningham's work has dealt perceptively with cross-cultural comparisons between Navajo, Zuni, and Mormon funerary ritual in the Southwest (1989:197). Finally, Richard Poulsen deals in some depth with tombstone art and what he terms as the fluctuating symbolic process (1982).

Using these works as a catalyst, I will maintain that nineteenth-century tombstone art in Utah underwent changes of considerable significance with the introduction of advanced technology and new materials in the early twentieth century. These changes were marked by a shift in power from the traditional competence of the artist in handcrafting tombstone art of the nineteenth century, to the consumer demand for mechanically reproduced, sandblasted personalized images in the twentieth century.

My research and fieldwork concentrate on tombstones of Weber, Cache, Salt Lake, Utah, Sanpete, and Tooele counties, in northern and central Utah dating from 1850 to 1920. This time period was chosen because of the distinct changes in materials and technology that I observed in stonecutting. These changes were marked initially by the use of hand tools in working with sandstone and marble, to using pneumatic tools in working with marble and granite, to sandblasting in working exclusively with granite. My conclusions are also based on an interview with Arthur Child, whose Springville, Utah, family has been involved with stonecutting during the past four generations.

When the Mormons began to settle in the Great Basin area of Utah, Brigham Young—spiritual, political, and social leader of the Mormon Church—directed many of the Saints to establish settlements in other parts of Utah, Idaho, Montana, Arizona, and Alberta, Canada

(Allen 1976:263-65). Thomas Child (1825-1910) came to America from England and followed the Mormon pioneers westward with his family. His great grandson, Arthur Child, recalls that Thomas borrowed $250.00 from the Mormon Church in order to make the trip and join the Saints in Utah.

Thomas settled in Springville, Utah, and became its first schoolmaster. This occupation was permanently interrupted, however, by his call by Church officials to work on the construction of the Salt Lake Temple (1853-1893). Thomas was assigned to work the teams of horses transporting the granite from Parley's Canyon to the Salt Lake Temple site.

Thomas Child also began working in the quarry and developed a keen interest in stonecutting. Arthur Child, in his description of stonecutting materials, shared with me a similar interest, especially the importance of the grain and the personality of the rock.

> The grain become a big deal. . . . it wasn't long 'till you learnt that the grain was a lot like . . . have you ever watched . . . I doubt it, you're . . . maybe you're too young even for this, but when I was a young man they used to have ice boxes not fridges not electric refrigerators, and I used to, (pause) it intrigued me to watch the iceman go out there and break up the ice, 'cause when he hit it in certain areas, he could break very square blocks, very neat sizes. And granite, I noticed and not sandstone incidentally, but granite and marble both had this same, ah, consistency that you could control the way it was going to break, by very careful planning. They (early stonecutters) must have learnt this, (because) they come back and proceeded to use the trade they had used in building the temple to start the monument business. [Child]

In 1858 Thomas Child began the monument business which served towns in all parts of Utah, including Salt Lake City, Springville, Provo, American Fork, Spanish Fork, Payson, and as far south as Saint George (Fig. 1). After the death of Thomas Child, his son, Alma H. Child, took over the business and it became known as A. H. Child and Sons. After Alma's death it was turned over to Ivan Child, Alma's son.

When Arthur Child began working for A. H. Child & Sons as a young teenager, his father Ivan started him off on traditional hand tools, the heritage of his family. When I asked Arthur why his father might have started him on hand tools, he responded:

> He was very much, he was just in favor of equal understanding of the rock, understanding the personality, the characteristics of rock and stone, and you couldn't do that with sandblasting stuff, you could only do that when you were working with a chisel and a mallet or a hammer or whatever . . . . you had to become personally involved with (it) to understand the personality of the different rocks, and the things we were working with. And I'm sure that's why he did it. [Child]

The perpetuation of traditional knowledge and methods in the Child family business made it possible for Arthur to understand the craftsmanship involved in stonecutting and also gave the artist an affinity for the different types of stone.

During the nineteenth century, tombstones were made primarily of sandstone and marble. Sandstone was quite easy to obtain in Utah, but marble was usually imported into the state from Vermont, Missouri, and as far away as Italy. Because marble was used as ballast on ships and arrived freight free, it was relatively inexpensive to import the marble from Italy to Utah via New Orleans.

Sandstone and marble were fairly durable in nature as long as they remained moist, but in Utah's arid climate sandstone tended to erode after many years. Hand tools, chisels, and mallets were used on sandstone and marble. But as the technology began to change, so did the materials, and soon consumers were demanding granite instead of marble because of its enduring qualities, and the Childs found it necessary to change with the times.

Pneumatic tools were introduced during the mid-1920's and essentially replaced the mallet. Pneumatic tools provided an alternative means of carving the stone; however, the stonecutter still needed a strong, steady hand in order to accomplish his work without making errors and incurring great expense through wasted materials. During this time it was found that pneumatic tools could be used more effectively on granite than with marble. Finally during the mid-1930's, sandblasting became a more efficient way of working with granite. Carol Edison explains the effectiveness of sandblasting:

> Sandblasting eliminated the chisel, replacing it with a stream of fine silica directed and controlled, not manually, but through the use of a latex stencil. Stones are incised by scouring away those areas that are exposed while leaving intact those surfaces covered by the stencil. [1985:185]

Sandblasting became a more efficient and economical means of reproducing tombstone designs and inscriptions because the stonecutter had complete control over even the most complicated designs by using the latex stencils. Ultimately, however, changes in both materials and technology brought about a new era in stonecutting.

During the nineteenth century, the monument business depended on the stonecutter for its success or failure. The stonecutter was an artist, and as such, often signed his work, partly out of pride, partly as a means of advertising. The stonecutter crafted each stone with a personal touch, something called style. Consumers were able to distinguish between the styles of different tombstones done by different stonecutters. Thomas Child had a style which was clearly recognizable. In examining closely the signed tombstones of Thomas Child, I was able to identify at least eight characteristics of his particular style, and as a result, I was able to recognize other stones which were done by Child, but which were unsigned. These eight characteristics were: 1) S-marks in the canopy area, 2) convex and concave bands separating the body from the medallion and base, 3) Christian and/or surname in bas-relief, 4) B-mark in relief area of name, 5) cutter mark separating base from body, 6) backward slant in the inscription of the epitaph, 7) proportionate utilization of space, and 8) distinct tripartite plan clearly delineated (Fig. 2 and 3).

The personal touch of the artist, so apparent in nineteenth-century tombstones, is lacking in sandblasted tombstones of the twentieth century. Sandblasting requires very little artistic skill compared to tombstones that are handmade. Reflecting on the changes in attitudes toward stonecutting, Arthur Child commented:

> Well now, as a matter of fact, the last ones I seen when I was able to get around, it isn't an art or a craft anymore, it's machine done. The machine cuts the letters, the machine . . . there's no . . . personal work anymore. . . . They get their stencils, they put them in, they stamp them, they stamp out the letters, they sandblast them they take out the letters that they do, . . . All you do is be fast like a mailman sorting mail and you could be a good monument craftsman today. [Child]

Arthur raises several issues in this interview. What had become of the tombstone as an artifact? What meaning did it impart once the technology had changed? Were consumers concerned about the craftsmanship of the artist? Did the fact that these stones became mechanically reproducible diminish the importance of the artist and the aesthetic authenticity of the artifact?

Walter Benjamin addresses similar questions in his seminal work *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1968). He states that throughout human history most works of art have been subject to reproduction in the form of imitations and replicas, studies done by students of their Master's work, or by third parties in pursuit of some kind of remuneration (1968:220). He is quick to point out, however, that "Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be. . . . The presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity" (Ibid:222). In the case of hand-carved tombstone art, the fact that many of the stones were man-made reproductions does not diminish the authenticity and the presence of that particular work of art. Each stone still possesses a history, the unique style and technique of the artist/stonecutter and, importantly, the potential for human error.

On the other hand, some folklorists believe that the advancement of technology opened up the way for a more individualized aesthetic (Edison 1985). The prevailing notion is that repetition of images is mundane and commonplace in nineteenth-century folk artifacts. While this notion may be true for certain artifacts, it is not the case for the majority of them. Writing about the idea of repetition in folk architecture structures and artifacts, Richard Poulsen contends that "the further an art form moves from the ritual repetition, the more abstract and limited in meaning it becomes" (1982:112). Repetition in folk architecture was not a reflection of a lack of innovation or style, it was a conscious decision to employ it. For example, the facades of many traditional folk architecture are simple and repetitious. Of this feature Poulsen continues, "the repetition itself becomes one of the fundamental, aesthetic traits for the culture as a whole. Such repetition is meaning that is reiterated and retrievable, meaning that is always part of the present simply because it can be re-made, re-used" (Ibid:113). The idea of repetition in nineteenth-century tombstones reflects this fundamental aesthetic trait of the culture, something which underwent changes during the early twentieth century with the advent of sandblasting.

Of the product of mechanical reproduction, Benjamin writes that the "quality of its presence is always depreciated. . . . its authenticity—is interfered with . . ." (1968:223). But what does Benjamin mean by the term *authenticity*? He says that, "The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced", or in other words *aura*. Benjamin continues, ". . . that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of a work of art" (Ibid:223). While *aura* diminishes with the introduction of sandblasting in the twentieth century, it is substituted by a superficial aesthetic. According to Arthur Child, consumers of mechanically reproduced stones were mostly concerned with cosmetically attractive work. Child suggests a reason for the shift in consumer attitude:

> I think the economy had a lot to do with it, and an influx of people. . . . It was obvious that people become more interested in the cosmetic than the personal. That was prior to the end of World War II, but during World War II the economy started to change, people started to get money, and more people started to come in, course U.S. Steel come in and other industries started to work and ah, I'm not saying it's wrong or right, it's just that cosmetics become more important then. So a lot of things were done for cosmetic reasons. As a matter of fact, if you were

> selling, (laughs) it got so you weren't very happy with your day sometimes, because you found yourself selling cosmetically. . . . and it wasn't fun, it was a little bit degrading sometimes. [Child]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Mormon church began taking measures to enter American mainstream culture.[2] The sudden flood of industry entering into the Great Basin region brought about economic changes giving the consumer more power, more freedom of choice. The demand to reproduce in quantity diminished the role and power of the artist. It also produced an alienation between the artist and his work, an alienation which Child felt when he would sell his work. This alienation is explained by Benjamin in this way: "the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. . . . The uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from being imbedded in the fabric of tradition" (1968:223, 225).

The economic factor gave power to the consumer, a power which contributed to the elimination of what Henry Glassie might call traditional or local competence. In determining which vernacular dwellings he might study, Glassie chose to focus on houses whose construction was based upon local or traditional competence and not those houses built according to purchased plans (1975:57). He says, "The break was abrupt. It was not only a break in a tradition, but a break in the responsibilities and capabilities of the house carpenter. He lost his designing role and became solely a builder" (1975:57). Similarly, the stonecutters role as artist had become one of a sandblaster, the power of creativity had shifted towards the consumer. Consumers could now choose many different types of images and lettering styles from catalogues, and as a consequence, the tombstones became more personalized in terms of imagery, but less personal in terms of *aura*.

This transformational shift, however, is not exclusive to aesthetic concerns. The expression of meanings must have some kind of form to be understood by people of the community. Language provides one means of communication, but symbols provide a culture with a language which is replete with meaning. Clifford Geertz comments:

> Meanings can only be stored in symbols: a cross, a crescent, or a feathered serpent. Such religious symbols, dramatized in rituals or related in myths, are felt somehow to sum up, for those for whom they are resonant, what is known about the way the world is, the quality of the emotional life it supports, and the way one ought to behave while in it. [1973:127]

If Geertz is correct in saying that symbols are repositories of meaning and sum up the ethos and world view of a culture, then symbols are dependant upon a culture for their use and disuse. The central argument of Mary Douglas' book, *Natural Symbols*, reflects a similar idea:

> Systems of symbols, though based on bodily processes, get their meaning from social experience. They are coded by a community with a shared history. Because of their hidden origins and community background, many such symbols seem to be more natural than language, but they are culturally learned and culturally transmitted. [1982:ix]

In doing fieldwork in Utah, I was especially intrigued by the preponderance of handclasp symbols used on nineteenth-century tombstones (Fig. 4). While this is a common motif found in cemeteries across the United States and in Canada (see Huber 1982, Lindahl 1986), nevertheless, during the nineteenth century it had been acculturated into the Mormon world view and was endowed with a meaning which reflected certain sacred religious temple rites (Schoemaker 1989; see also Poulsen 1982). The handclasp motif seems to eventually disappear around 1915 or 1920 depending on the region. What became of this communal symbol? Why is it no longer used by stonecutters of the Mormon culture in twentieth-century decorative arts? I asked my informant, Arthur Child, what his thoughts were on the disappearance of the handclasps in tombstone art:

> I'm not sure so I'll speculate. And I've thought the same thing you did. But there become a time when there weren't just LDS (Latter Day Saints) people here, like I said at first there were just Mormons around here. And there become other people and I think then the LDS church began fighting to keep these things a certain secrecy about these things. And some of these headstones were getting pretty close to giving the message. And so perhaps–I was never told, because they disappeared before I worked on them. But I'm sure that at one point the Church give the boys a message. The Church was never bashful about telling you when you got out of line. . . . I think that the Church started to become . . . got to a point where they could start worrying about those things. I'm sure one of the first things they would say later is, "Look! These things are not supposed to be discussed or talked about, let alone carved in stone outside of the temple." [Child]

Writing of a similar situation, Richard Poulsen presents what he calls the fluctuating symbolic process. He discusses an item of material culture found in central Utah—namely the Old Rock Schoolhouse built in 1870 in Spring City. Poulsen states that the Schoolhouse could possibly have been used as a religious edifice because of the carved symbols in the facade (Fig. 5):

> These symbols, from left to right, were the square, the beehive, and the compass, symbols of transcendent importance in Mormonism as well as Masonry. The beehive symbolized industry to early Mormon settlers. However, the compass and square are significant not only as marks in the Mormon Temple Garment, worn by faithful Mormons, but as symbols in the Mormon Temple ceremony, representing truth, moral accuracy, and unbending obeisance to the Lord and His Gospel. [1982:71-72]

He then discusses the erasure of the square and compass from the facade, while the beehive remained intact (Fig. 6). One reason he gives for the erasure of the symbols is the fact that these symbols were perceived as extremely sacred and an important part of the Mormon Temple Ceremony while the beehive was not (1982:73). In other words, it is quite possible that there was a kind of suppression of symbols by the official church, or as Poulsen calls it, vernacular regression (Ibid:75), and that handclasps and other sacred symbols were eventually phased out.

But the question arises as to why these symbols were shown openly during the nineteenth century and suppressed during the twentieth century? Mark Leone provides us with a possible answer: "Artifacts from the past symbolize attitudes and behavior of the past, symbols motivate behavior. Therefore, the artifacts (symbols) of the past may conflict and even impede new and different behavior" (1973:31). This statement illustrates that handclasps in Utah might have been phased out during the early part of the twentieth century because the concepts they represented were outdated and served a completely different function in the Mormon world view.

Writing about the explosive proliferation of personalized images on twentieth-century sandblasted gravestones in Idaho, Carol Edison states, "These new symbols, which are more specific and personal in nature, are both relevant and understandable to twentieth-century Idahoans and consequently have gained acceptance and ever-growing use" (1985:186). While I agree that with the shift from artist to consumer personalized images have become dominant during the twentieth century, I question whether motorcycles, guitars, temples, and wilderness scenes express shared knowledge and communal identity in the same way as earlier symbols did? In the following example, the twentieth-century sandblasted image of a Mormon Temple is equated with the nineteenth-century handmade handclasp motif:

> The representation of a Mormon temple, the holy place where members of the Church . . . are married . . . symbolizes the reunion of the family after death in the same way the clasped hands of the nineteenth century symbolized reunion for earlier Mormons. [1985:187]

Too often folklorists attempt to understand nineteenth-century symbols in terms of twentieth century attitudes and perspectives. While it may be possible to interpret symbols in this manner because of the relatively short time frame, twentieth-century temple images cannot and do not parallel the symbolic significance of nineteenth-century handclasps. By virtue of the fact that nineteenth-century Mormonism had undergone cultural transformations upon becoming integrated into American culture at the turn of the century, it cannot be said with much validity that the new symbols retained old meanings. Meaning is the arbitrary relationship between the signifier (form) and the potential signified (concept). A symbol requires an arbitrary form, "the relation to the signified object of which arises from social convention of limited validity in time and space" (Thom 1985:275). The new symbols have new meanings which are based upon a shared history, a shared world view, but also the infusion of extra-cultural influences. The temple design can be a personal expression by living relatives to the fact that the deceased was probably married in the particular temple. It can also be a direct reference to something or some event. It can also be an indirect allusion to something else as were handclasps or other communal symbols. But they will never mean exactly what nineteenth-century handclasps meant.

Consequently, with the emphasis shifting from the artist in the nineteenth century towards the consumer during the twentieth century, tombstone art has undergone changes of aesthetic and symbolic significance. What the gravestone gains in personalized images and statements in the twentieth century, it loses in symbolic and aesthetic features from the nineteenth century because of the changes in materials, technology, economics, the integration of Mormonism into mainstream American culture, and ultimately the hegemonic influence of the church on aspects of everyday life. Perhaps Arthur Child is correct in his assessment of the situation when he says, ". . . once they were monuments, now they're just markers" (Child).

NOTES

I would like to thank Warren Roberts for his interest and confidence in my research, for his instructional seminars, and for the enjoyable fieldtrips to southern Indiana. I would also like to thank Robert E. Walls and Phillip H. McArthur for reading and discussing earlier versions of this chapter. Finally, I would like to recognize the influence of Richard C. Poulsen and Pamela A.R. Blakely on my interest in material culture of the West and of Utah in particular.

[1] An earlier version of this essay appears in *Material Culture* 20:(1988)2/3, 19-26.

[2] Most Mormon scholars agree that such an attempt at cultural integration began at the turn of the century and as early as the Nauvoo, Illinois, period. The reasons for the integration, however, are diverse. (See Allen and Leonard 1976, Shipps 1985, Alexander 1986, and Poulsen 1988).

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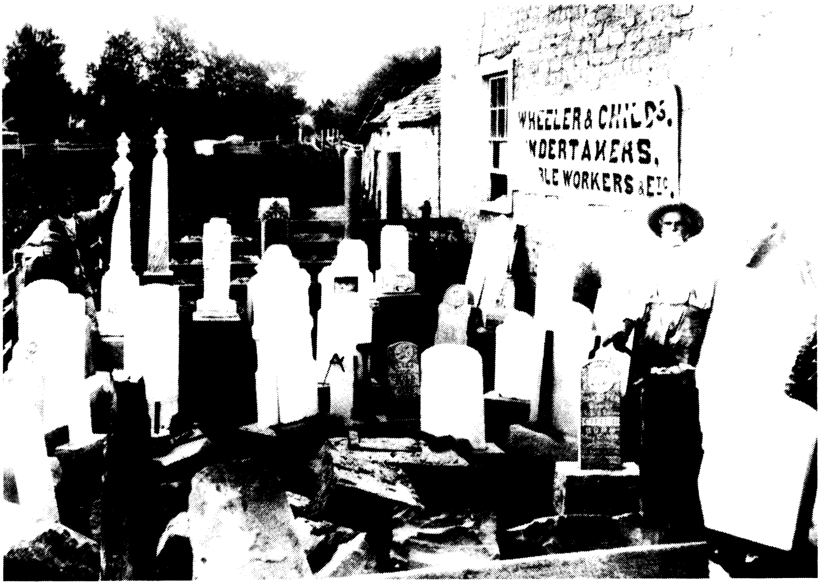
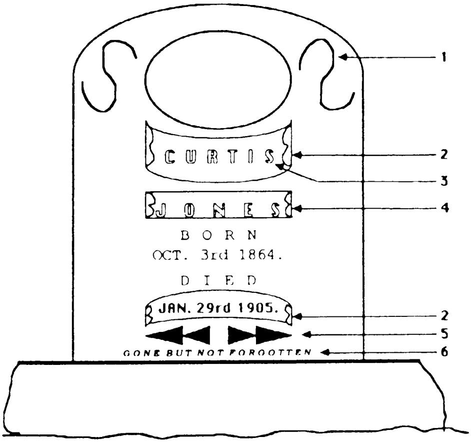

WHEELER & CHILD'S,
UNDERTAKERS,
LE WORKERS & ETC,

Figure 1. Wheeler & Child's Undertakers and Marble Works. Walter Wheeler and Thomas Child of Springville, Utah, 1888. (Photograph: Taken by G.E. Anderson, produced by Rell G. Francis, Heritage Prints, Springville, Utah)


1
CURTIS
2
3
JONES
4
BORN
OCT. 3rd 1864.
DIED
JAN. 29rd 1905.
2
5
GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN
6

1. S- mark in the medallion area.
2. ⌒ ◡ bands separating body from medallion and base.
3. Christian/Surname are in bas relief.
4. B-mark.
5. ◀◀ ▶▶ mark separating base from body.
6. Backward slant in the inscription of the epitaph.
7. Proportionate utilization of space.
8. Distinct tri-partite plan is clearly delineated.

Figure 2. Stylistic characteristics of Thomas Child tombstones.

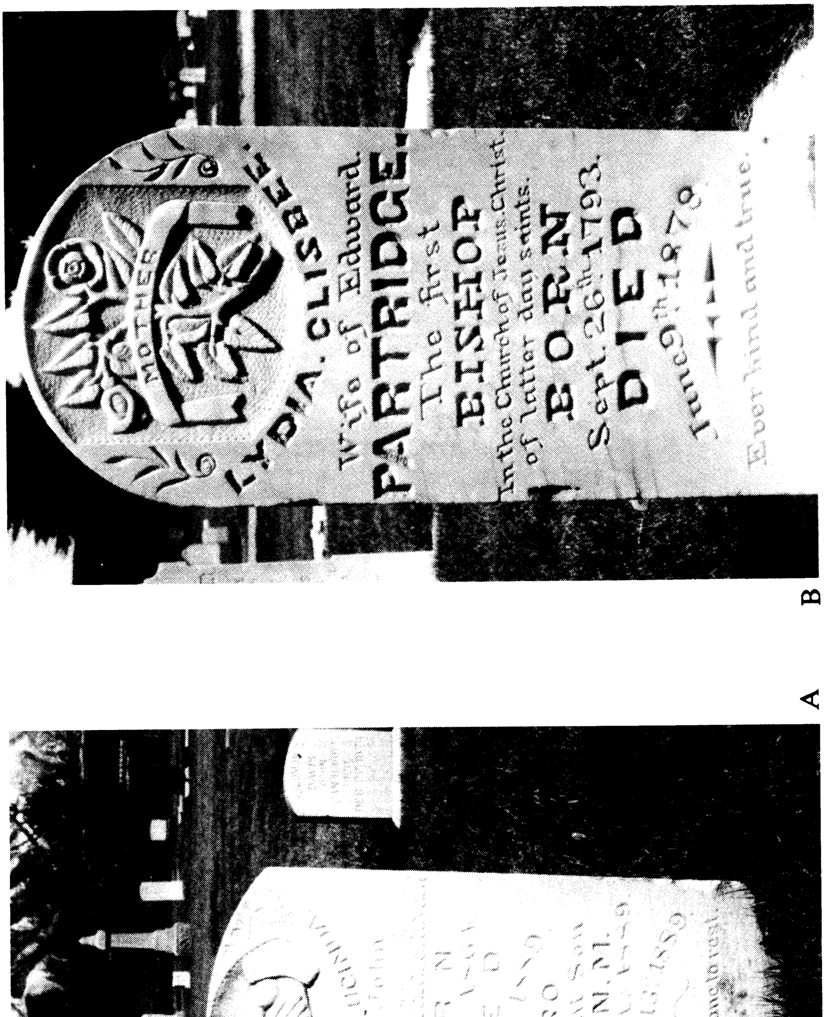


Figure 3. Two Thomas Child stones. (A) Abigail Lucinda Badham stone, Payson, Utah, c.1889; (B) Lydia Clisbee stone, Tooele, Utah, c. 1879. (Photograph by George H. Schoemaker)

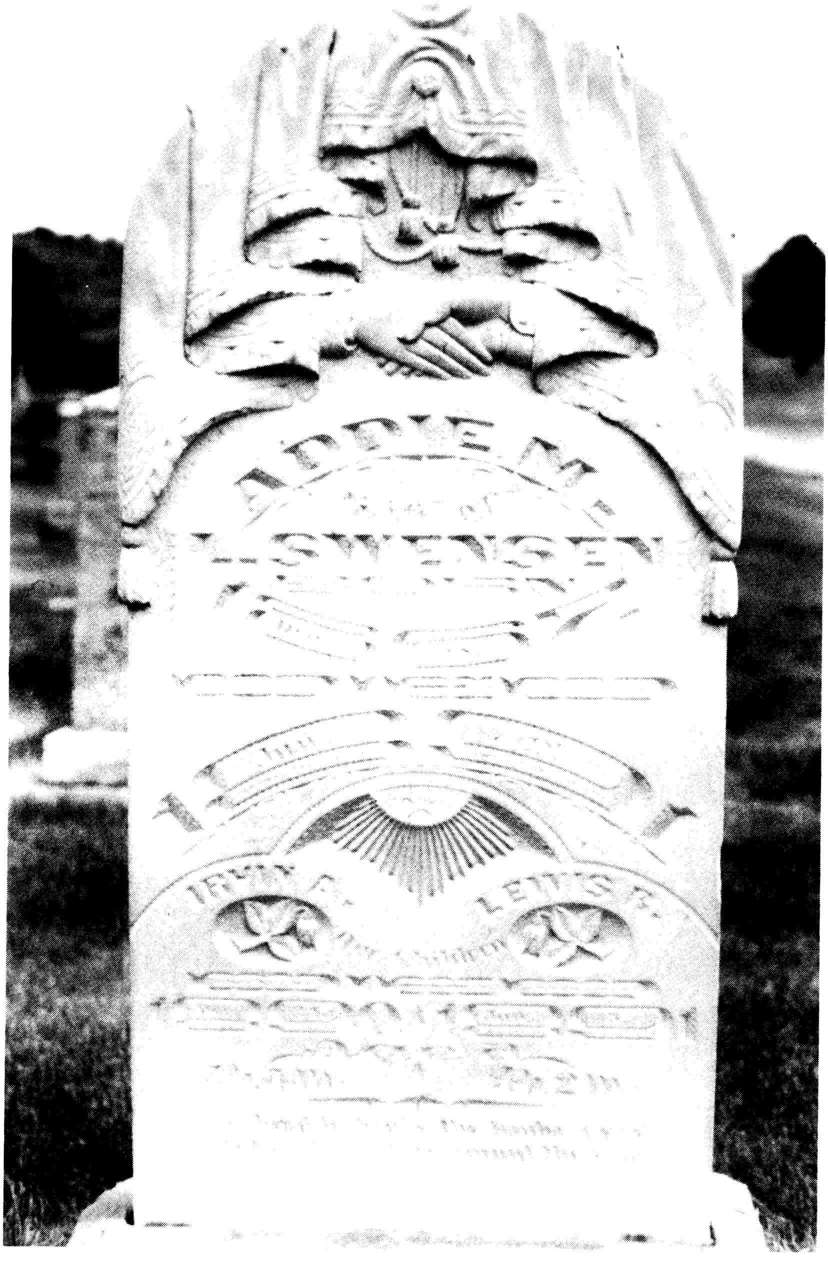


Figure 4. Provo Marble Works. Addie M. Swensen stone, Moroni, Utah, c.1891. Very stylized script, handclasp motif with draping veil. (Photograph by George H. Schoemaker)

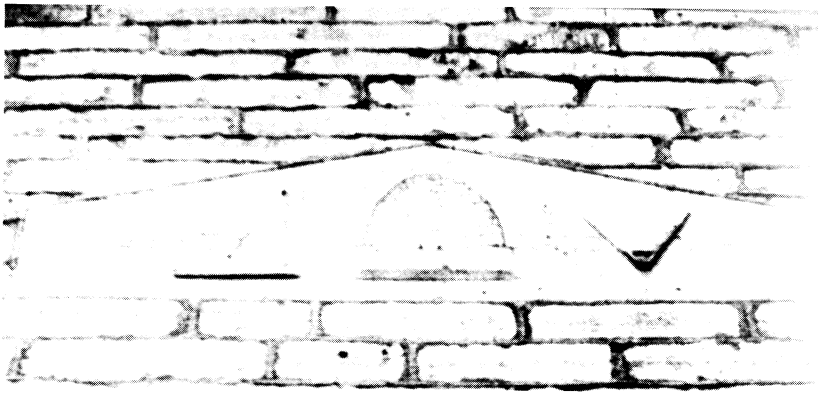


Figure 5. Old rock schoolhouse facade. Spring City, Utah, 1876, before the erasure of square and compass. (Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City).

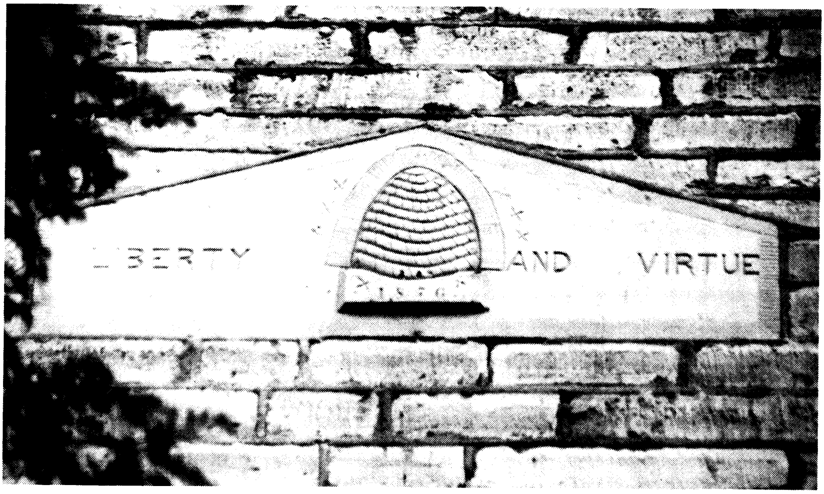


Figure 6. Old rock schoolhouse. Spring City, Utah, 1876, after the erasure of square and compass. (Photograph by Matthew K. Heiss)

‘Juneteenth’: Afro-American Customs of the Emancipation

WILLIAM H. WIGGINS, JR.

Juneteenth is the major Afro-American secular celebration in the region encompassing eastern Texas, western Louisiana, southwestern Arkansas, and southern Oklahoma. A 1923 Juneteenth handbill promised the celebrants an "occasion with fitting ceremonies, feasting, games of merriment and joy making."[1] (See Figure 1) An informant confirmed the fact that celebrants perpetuated this secular tradition through the 1950s:

> . . . most [celebrants] looked on the nineteenth of June as having a good time, eating and all of that. . . . The nineteenth of June you didn't have no hymn singing, if you want to put it like that, or prayer and all like that [chuckles]. He didn't care a thing about the thanksgiving prayer and that type thing. All he wanted to do was get to the ball game and get him some booze, corn likker. Whatever I may use [chuckles]. That's what they were looking for. Goodtimes![2]

And Juneteenth celebrations of the last three decades often feature such good-time events as blues concerts[3] and social dances.[4]

Historically, June 19, 1865, was freedom day for slaves in East Texas and portions of the surrounding states. It was on this day that General Gordon Granger landed with federal troops in Galveston, Texas, with the express mission of forcing the slave owners to release their slaves.[5] Many of these slaves had been brought to East Texas from other southern states, such as Tennessee, Georgia, Virginia, and "all over the South," by slave owners "because the abolitionists had talked freedom for the Negroes and they were afraid that their slaves would be freed and all that investment that they had [made]. . . ."[6]

Three legends have arisen to explain the genesis of the celebration: first, the news was withheld to make one last crop; second, the news was delayed because travel was by mule; and third, the news was delayed by the murder of the messenger.[7] The most frequently collected legend is the one that explains the date in light of the master's need to make one more crop. Versions of it have been used to explain the observance in East Texas and southwestern Arkansas.

The mule legend is not so popular. One informant said that he had heard it, but confessed, "I don't know the whole story."[8] Another simply said, "It is celebrated on this day because of the story of a man riding on a horse to Texas to tell the slaves that they were free."[9] And a third fragmentary account was given by an informant who had "heard" that a mule was ridden from Washington "through the South" and that the messenger "rode a horse and buggy and wore out two horses or something."[10]

This legend gives a fairly accurate account of Juneteenth's geographical spread. The tradition is strongest in East Texas. It is observed in southeastern cities of the state, such as Galveston and Orange, up to the northeastern section in towns such as Texarkana and Sherman. Juneteenth celebrations have been reported in cities as far west as San Antonio, but these are most likely celebrations that have been transplanted from the rich slave culture of East Texas. Big Juneteenth celebrations are also held in the twin cities of Fort Worth and Dallas. But all in all, the Juneteenth celebration in Texas is limited primarily to East Texas, the original area of the state into which the slaves were brought.

Juneteeth was also originally celebrated in Louisiana. Rupert Secrett, retired barber and former sponsor of the celebration in Brenham, Texas, mentioned friendly "hurrahing" among blacks of Louisiana and Texas as to which state was the first to celebrate emancipation. Louisiana blacks often said, "The people in Texas didn't know they was free until the people from Louisiana came over and told 'em [chuckles]."[11] David Johnson, Dean of Students at Texas College, Tyler, Texas, and a native of Louisiana, recalls the celebration being observed "all over the state of Louisiana."[12] He specifically recalled the celebration being strong around New Orleans, the city from which General Granger began his historic voyage to Galveston.[13] And U.T.D. Williams of Tyler, Texas, attended Juneteenth celebrations in the northwestern town of Grand Bayou, Louisiana, where "the white folks" furnished all the food.[14]

Southwestern Arkansas was another area of an adjoining state into which the Juneteenth celebration spilled over. This part of Arkansas, like adjoining East Texas, is heavily populated with blacks. Mrs. E.B. Tollette, who lived in the all-Negro town of Tollette in this rural southwestern section of the state, described it as being "a large community" of "farmers" and "home owners," which had its own post office.[15] She also remembered that black farmers in Blevins, Paraloma, Nashville, Tollette, and similar towns had "great big picnics on the nineteenth of June."[16]

In the 1880s many ex-slaves began to migrate out of this tri-state area into the territory that was soon to become the state of Oklahoma. Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas were among the states in which the promise of Reconstruction had been crushed and replaced with a new political and economic oppression of blacks. Hence, many ex-slaves gave up on the land of their enslavement; they joined the wagon trains led by such black wagonmasters as "Pap" Singleton and headed west for the promise of freedom in the new territories of Oklahoma and Kansas.[17] According to Marzee Douglass, high school teacher of black history and native of Ardmore, Oklahoma, blacks from these three states often mingled with the ex-slaves brought into the territory by the five "civilized Indian tribes," namely, the Seminoles, Cherokees, Creeks, Chickasaws, and Choctaws, to form all-black towns like Boley, Oklahoma.[18]

Juneteenth celebrations reflect the rugged individualism of this frontier area and follow no certain pattern. Even in East Texas, the area in which the celebration's tradition is strongest, the observances may be a completely secular celebration of picnics and baseball games, or cultural activities like speeches and pageants may be added to extol the richness of black culture and the advancements made by the race against great odds. For example, Onion Creek, Texas, had a diverse cultural/secular celebration where blacks played baseball, met "old friends," and heard "a history speech" that recalled "what they had accomplished and . . . the role they had to play to keep it changing and doing better. . . ."[19]

The most common type of Juneteenth celebration was an all-day secular affair that began around ten o'clock in the morning with a parade and ended around one o'clock the next morning with the break-up of the dances or "suppers." In the afternoon there were various activities, the biggest being the baseball game, "tie downs," individual games, and eating. One of the largest parades was held annually in Brenham, Texas. These marchers were routed through the heart of the downtown area and witnessed by very large mixed crowds. One informant recalled that it was so crowded "you couldn't walk on the streets."[20]

The parade was composed of blacks from the surrounding communities who prepared their own floats. Mrs. Eloise Holmes, a retired school teacher who grew up in Brenham, recalled that "each community would decorate floats and they would select children from the community to ride on these floats."[21] Accompanying these ten or twelve floats were men on horseback and a brass band.

The parade had a king and queen. The queen wore the title "The Goddess of Liberty" and was selected by a money-raising contest, in which several "nice looking girls" solicited donations. Each one carried shoeboxes for this purpose and raised sums that ranged from $600 to $1,000.[22] The king was selected by the queen.

On one occasion there were two parades. Around 1927 or 1928 Chancey Williamson and Ed Henderson vied for the right to stage the celebration. These two men, like Jacob and Esau, were worlds apart in terms of lifestyles. Chancey was "tight and Ed was a sport."[23] Chancey owned a store and a farm, but Ed was a "sport" who made his money through gambling and prostitution. And he looked the part with his "gambler clothes . . . slow walking . . . and gold teeth in front."[24] But their parades "met up" in downtown Brenham, with "one going one way, one going the other."[25] This was their only confrontation. Chancey did not have any more parades and Ed's celebration began to surpass Chancey's.[26]

All of Brenham's Juneteenth parades ended at the park. One informant recalled the crowded scene at Henderson Park:

> People would be everywhere. [muffled] Yeah, it used to be some people down to that park! I declare. If you would go down there with somebody and they got away from you, you never find 'em back no more. And they wouldn't find you back no more. You had to push and squeeze and pull to get through people. That's a fact.[27]

Baseball games and "tie downs" were the big spectator sports played at the park. The "tie downs" consisted of such events as calf tying and cowboy tournaments.[28] But these celebrants were Americans, and it was the "national pastime," baseball, that was played at almost every Juneteenth celebration. In many East Texas towns, these hotly contested games closed the downtown businesses and attracted large numbers of whites.[29]

Many baseball anecdotes were told on these occasions. Judson Henry, owner of the Chatterbox Cafe in Hawkins, Texas, grew up in Daingerfield, Texas, and had the once-in-a-lifetime thrill of hitting the game-winning home run in a Juneteenth game with arch rival Jefferson, Texas. He recalled that this mighty blow came with two outs, two strikes on him, and the score tied two-to-two. The fans carried him around the park on their shoulders and gave him sixteen dollars for his heroics, an event in his life that he "never willllllll forget."[30] However, Floyd "Skeet" Martin, retired outfielder of the Rockdale Tigers was not so fortunate. He made a once-in-a-lifetime defensive play that saved a Juneteenth baseball game for Rockdale over Georgetown, Texas. With two outs, the ball was hit to him with such force that "two strings broke" on his glove, but he held on to the ball to preserve a three-to-two victory. Even though "four girls come out of the stands and grabbed [him]," however, Skeet's exploits did not earn him "a piece of pussy."[31]

After the local cowboys and baseball players had entertained the crowds, Juneteenth celebrants settled down to large picnic meals of "special food, barbecue beef, mutton, pork."[32] Other Juneteenth menus have included "chitlings, greens, potato salad, corn bread and red beans and homemade cakes and bread."[33] Red (strawberry) soda water, also known as "June Nineteenth soda," was the most popular celebration drink. Watermelon and homemade ice cream were among the more popular desserts.

In Bastrop, Texas, these free dinners were served on "long, long tables." The young adults acted as waiters and waitresses, serving "crew" after "crew" of hungry celebrants who had to pay only for their soft drinks and ice cream.[34] Whites often attended these dinners, and in some instances a special table was set up for them.[35]

After the meal, the late afternoon and evening were given over to the carnival and dancing.[36] Carnivals were not held so widely as dances; however, they could be found in cities like Dallas, Texas, where the state fairgrounds were used,[37] and towns like Brenham.[38] One informant noted that the Brenham celebrations "would have something like a carnival for the children to ride, like on a Ferris wheel and hobby horses."[39]

There was great variety in the dances held on the night of June nineteenth. In smaller communities such as Ballenger, Texas, the celebrants hoedowned to fiddle music, while the larger cities like Abilene had "little four- or five-piece bands" who played the blues.[40] White citizens often attended these dances, but rarely joined the black celebrants on the dance floor.[41] However, there were Juneteenth dances at which neither whites nor the Christian segment of the local black community were to be found. These "suppers" catered only to the local "Frankies and Johnnies." They were held on the Saturday night nearest the nineteenth of June. The atmosphere was enhanced by the soft glow of "bottle lights," coal-oil lamps fashioned from pop bottles and rag wicks.[42] During the evening the dancers consumed large draughts of "bootleg whiskey," "home-brew," and "Sister-get-you-ready" in fruit jar tumblers. This heavy drinking often led to the expected Saturday-night type of violence, such as ice-pick stabbing or a knifing with a "Dallas Special."

Juneteenth celebrations were financed in different ways. The Juneteenth committees were usually comprised of outstanding black citizens, "maybe a couple of deacons and a minister and maybe the high school principal,"[43] who were motivated primarily by the desire to keep the tradition alive. They were men like Louis Brown of Temple, Texas, who was so dedicated to this task he was given the nickname "Celebration Daddy" by fellow members of "The Red Shirts," the original sponsoring group of the celebration in Brenham.[44]

In later years the profile of these committees changed radically, with men dedicated to honoring freedom being replaced by entrepreneurs who were interested in Juneteenth only as a means of financial gain. Mr. Multree was a member of one such committee whose members put up $15.00 and "cleared $35.00 a piece in profit." But avarice is a poor replacement for racial pride, and in the end it caused the destruction of the committee. Multree recalled that on two separate occasions men ran away with the total Juneteenth funds of $200 and $75.[45]

In addition to a group of individuals pooling their money to sponsor Juneteenth celebrations for profit, there were two types of nonprofit financial canvasses made by other Juneteenth committees. One method was to ask donations from the local white population.[46] A more common practice was to solicit annual dues of two to five dollars from each member of the local black community.[47] In both instances the food was free; the celebrant paid only for his red soda water and store-bought ice cream.

Many of these Juneteenth committees were informally organized each year about a month before the celebration date. Normally they met in the local Baptist or Methodist church, forming committees to buy meat, barbecue it, and haul water, among other things.[48] At this time the year's officers were elected by popular vote. Usually there would be just one accounting meeting after the Juneteenth celebration. In the case of the syndicate group it would be called to divide the profits into equal shares, but with the community-based Juneteenth committee "they would have one more meeting to distribute out and pay off all the bills and whatever it was [with] . . . the rest of it stay[ing] in the treasure until next year."[49]

Many Juneteenth committees raised money by selling booths. The Brenham committee sold "stand" space and charged admission to the park. They operated the beer stand but leased space for barbecue, hamburger, confectionery, and various other stands on the grounds.[50]

The Juneteenth committee was also responsible for generating publicity. The most popular means, after word of mouth, was the leaflet, which one informant described as being a "great looooooong paper with everything [celebration information] on there."[51] One flyer I collected listed these "feature attractions": "shetland pony races—bicycle races—tow sack race—shoe scramble race—barefoot race—softball games (boys and girls) . . . carnival attractions" and a "big dance."[52] (See Figure 3) It also announced that a "prize will be given to the oldest colored citizen in Rockdale," and that "prizes will be awarded to winners of each race."[53] Another flyer lists these "amusements": softball game, croquet, mule race (bareback), and bicycle race.[54] (See Figure 2) These eye-catching handbills featured "different colors, green, red, [with] black print."[55] Recently, sponsors have paid for radio spots. They have also run stories in local newspapers.[56]

The patriotism of World War II caused a temporary decline in the popularity of Juneteenth. Many younger and educated blacks shunned the traditional Juneteenth celebration and replaced it with the Fourth of July. As one informant aptly explained, they "have been taught that they're a part of this country and that the Fourth of July is the day for them."[57] This conflict of celebration dates was resolved partially by some committees transferring the Juneteenth program to the Fourth of July.[58] But this compromise did not satisfy either the older traditionalists or the young radicals. The older members of one community that tried moving the June 19 program to July 4 "didn't participate . . . they just didn't want it. They wanted the nineteenth of June."[59] The younger blacks have failed to keep the Fourth of July tradition alive.

The civil rights movement of the 1950s marked a resurgence in the celebration of Juneteenth among blacks. Once again it has become a symbol of racial pride. On June 17, 1972, the black artist Burford Evans opened a one-man show in Houston's New American Folk Gallery entitled "I Remember Juneteenth," which is "a suite of 19 paintings [that] . . . capture the mood . . . of the day Texas blacks honor the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863."[60]

Finally, this renewed interest in Juneteenth has generated efforts to make the day an official state holiday. In 1972, Zan Holmes of Dallas and Curtis Graves of Houston, two black congressmen, introduced a Juneteenth resolution that recognized "Juneteenth as an annual, though unofficial, 'holiday of significance to all Texans and, particularly, to the blacks of Texas, for whom this date symbolizes freedom from slavery.'"[61] This unanimously passed resolution helped pave the way for the efforts of black state representative Al Edwards, who in 1979 introduced a successful bill in the Texas legislature to make Juneteenth an official Texas holiday.[62] The June 19, 1980, observance of emancipation, 115 years after General Gordon Granger landed at Galveston Bay, marked the elevation of this celebration from being merely an informal Afro-American secular celebration of the American Southwest to its present status as an official Texas holiday. From now on the Lone Star State's official calendars will recognize June 19 as the date of Afro-American emancipation. And this achievement would not have happened without the annual barbecues, "tie downs," "suppers," dances, parades, and baseball games of past Juneteenth celebrations.

NOTES

[1] Daingerfield, Texas, Juneteenth handbill, June 19, 1923.

[2] Willie Hygh, interview, Karnack, Texas, June 16, 1972.

[3] "Live Blues: Juneteenth Blues Spectacular Miler Outdoor Theatre, Houston," *Living Blues* no. 39, (July-August, 1978):44.

[4] Wanda Pryor, "Juneteenth Celebration: A Flavor of the 1890's" *Austin* (Texas) *American-Statesman*, June 20, 1976.

[5] "Juneteenth: Texas Carries On Tradition of Emancipation Holiday with Amusement Park Celebration," *Ebony* 6, no.8, (June 1951):30.

[6] Uriah Weisner, interview, Karnack, Texas, June 16, 1972.

[7] "Juneteenth," *Ebony*, p.30.

[8] Artis Lovelady, interview, Rockdale, Texas, June 19, 1972.

[9] Shelia Marshall, questionnaire, Austin, Texas, November 15, 1972.

[10] William H. Ammons, interview, Tyler, Texas, November 12, 1972.

[11] Rupert Secrett, interview, Brenham, Texas, November 14, 1972.

[12] David Johnson, interview, Tyler, Texas, November 13, 1972.

[13] Ibid.

[14] U.T.D. Williams, interview, Tyler, Texas, November 13, 1972.

[15] Mrs. E.B. Tollette, interview, Little Rock, Arkansas, September 19, 1973.

[16] Ibid.

[17] John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 399.

[18] Marzee Douglass, interview, Ardmore, Oklahoma, June 21, 1972.

[19] Paul Darby, interview, Austin, Texas, November 15, 1972.

[20] Holsey Johnson, interview, Brenham, Texas, November 14, 1972.

[21] Eloise Holmes, interview, Hawkins, Texas, November 14, 1972.

[22] Booker T. Washington Hogan, interview, Brenham, Texas, November 15, 1972.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Holsey Johnson, interview.

[28] Smith Overton, interview, Austin, Texas, November 15, 1972.

[29] J.L. Donaldson, interview, Hawkins, Texas, November 14, 1972.

[30] Judson Henry, interview, Hawkins, Texas, November 14, 1972.

[31] Floyd "Skeet" Martin, interview, Rockdale, Texas, June 19, 1972.

[32] Darby interview.

[33] Pryor, "Juneteenth Celebration."

[34] Florence Hygh, interview, Karnack, Texas, June 16, 1972.

[35] Almond Multree, interview, Rockdale, Texas, June 19, 1972.

[36] "Juneteenth," *Ebony*, p.30.

[37] Secrett interview.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Katherine Burton, interview, Hawkins, Texas, November 14, 1972.

[40] Ammons interview.

[41] Henry interview.

[42] Eva S. Riggs, Los Angeles, California, to William H. Wiggins, Jr., no date.

[43] Ammons interview.

[44] Secrett interview.

[45] Multree interview.

[46] Washington interview.

[47] Darby interview.

[48] Multree interview.

[49] Darby interview.

[50] Secrett interview.

[51] Mrs. A.T. Lewis, interview, Milano, Texas, June 19, 1972.

[52] Rockdale, Texas, Juneteenth handbill, June 19, 1972.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Karnack, Texas, Juneteenth handbill, June 19, 1947.

[55] Mrs. C.A. Nelson, interview, Milano, Texas, June 19, 1972.

[56] "Juneteenth Events Slated," *Rockdale Reporter and Messenger*, June 15, 1972.

[57] Ammons interview.

[58] Darby interview.

[59] Ibid.

[60] "Notebook: Evans Show Set at Adept Gallery," *Houston Chronicle*, June 16, 1972.

[61] "Austin Wire: Juneteenth Recognized by House," *Dallas Morning News*, June 20, 1972.

[62] "'Juneteenth' Day Becomes State Holiday in Texas," *Jet* 56, no. 18 (July 19, 1979): 8.

FIGURES

Figure 1. Juneteenth handbill from Daingerfield, Texas, 1923.

-58th Anniversary-

Emancipation Celebration

June 19, 1923

At Suedon Park, Daingerfield, Texas

The colored citizens of this and adjoining communities in memory of the famous Emancipation Proclamation issued Jan. 1, 1863, and later made effective by order of Gen. Granger in Texas June 19, 1865, will celebrate the above occasion with fitting ceremonies, feasting, games of merriment and joy making.

Program

1:30 P.M.

Song, "America."
Invocation, Rev. C. Davenport.
Song.
Introduction of speaker.
Address, Prof. T.W. Pratt of Dallas, Texas.

2:30 P.M.

DINNER - Everybody requested to bring well filled baskets.

4:00 P.M.

BALL GAME - Daingerfield White Socks vs. Jefferson Black Cats.

Plenty of refreshments of all kinds, cool shade, free [illegible], an ideal place for enjoyment. Come everybody and let's make merry the occasion which gave us this freedom.

Committees

On Program: Rev. A. Austin, Jr., J.T. Heath, Jas. M. Henry.
On Grounds: H.P. Wallick, Chas. W. Williams, E.B. Edwards.
On Arrangement: M.Gilstrap, M.Austin, Julius Hodge, Robert Austin.
On Baskets: Mesdames Clara Henry, Shella Gilstrap, Mattie Wallick, Donie Whitmore, Texana Easley, Ilsie Wilkerson.

Figure 2. Juneteenth handbill from Karnack, Texas, 1947.

Nineteenth June Celebration

Leigh Community Center

1947

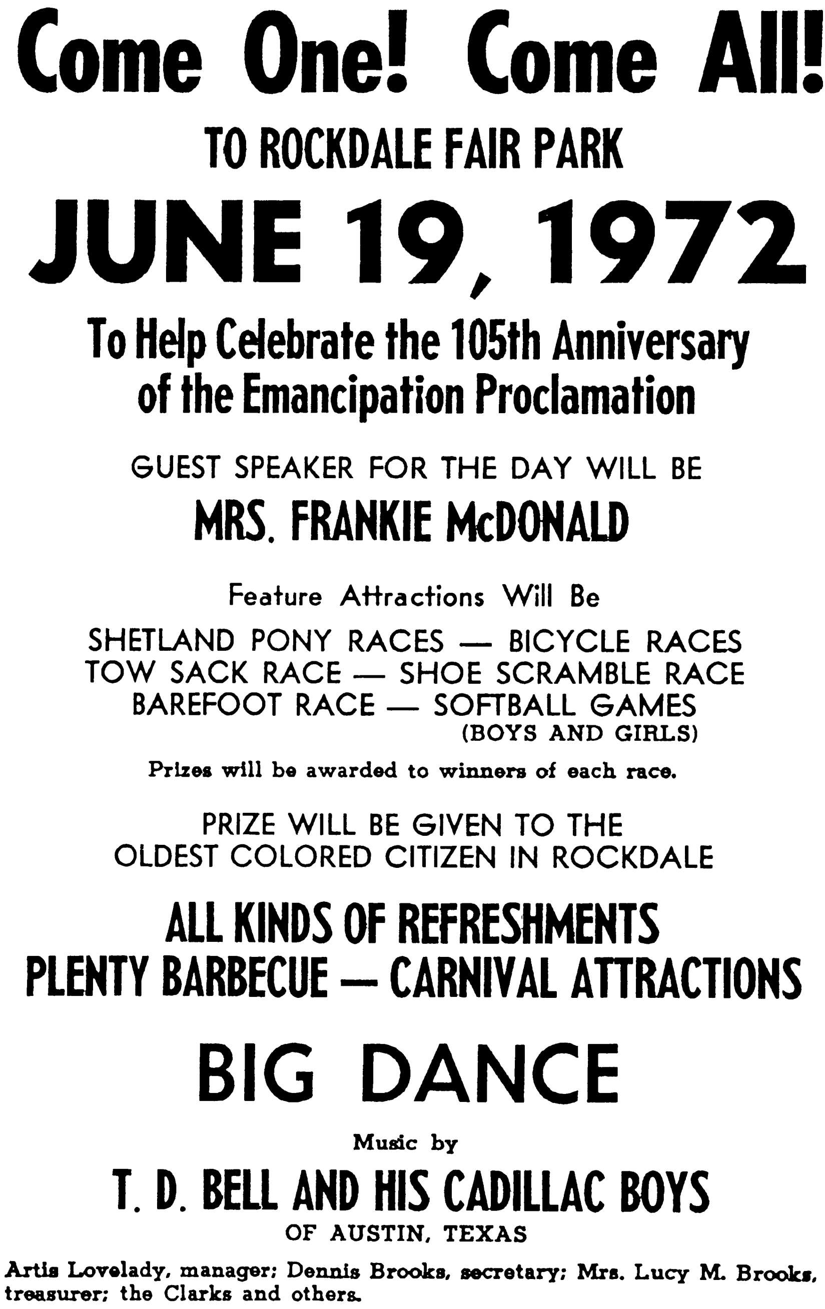
12 noon	Picnic Starts
3 pm	Public Program
Song	
Invocation	
Remarks	Mr. U.R. Weisner
Quartet	
Why celebrate June 19th	Taylor Vocational Agri., G.W. Carver High
Solo	Mrs. Lucile Buchanan
Address	Guest Speaker
Financial Reports:	
1. Anne Glade	Mr. Charley Richardson
2. Antioch	Mr. Kahn Whiten
3. Carver	Mr. Henry Hygh
4. High Ridge	Mr. J.L. Strange
5. Lake Chapel	Mr. Tom Taylor
6. Pleasant Hill	Mr. Willie Roberson
7. Smithonia	Mr. Henry Price
4:30 pm Announcements	
5:00 pm Amusements	Sponsored by Mr. A.I. Coleman

1. Soft Ball Game

2. Croquet

3. Mule Race (bare back)

4. Bicycle Race



Come One! Come All!

TO ROCKDALE FAIR PARK

JUNE 19, 1972

To Help Celebrate the 105th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation

GUEST SPEAKER FOR THE DAY WILL BE

MRS. FRANKIE McDONALD

Feature Attractions Will Be

SHETLAND PONY RACES — BICYCLE RACES
TOW SACK RACE — SHOE SCRAMBLE RACE
BAREFOOT RACE — SOFTBALL GAMES
(BOYS AND GIRLS)

Prizes will be awarded to winners of each race.

PRIZE WILL BE GIVEN TO THE
OLDEST COLORED CITIZEN IN ROCKDALE

ALL KINDS OF REFRESHMENTS
PLENTY BARBECUE — CARNIVAL ATTRACTIONS

BIG DANCE

Music by

T. D. BELL AND HIS CADILLAC BOYS
OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Artis Lovelady, manager; Dennis Brooks, secretary; Mrs. Lucy M. Brooks, treasurer; the Clarks and others.

Figure 3. Juneteenth handbill from Rockdale, Texas, 1972.

Community Festival and the Enactment of Modernity

BEVERLY J. STOELTJE
RICHARD BAUMAN

The more we explore the genesis and development of the core concepts of our field in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the more abundantly clear it becomes that the very idea of folklore itself was born of the epochal social transformation represented by the advent of modernity—the rise of mercantile and industrial capitalism, the growth of modern urban centers and the nation state, the emergence of a naturalistic and secular world view, and all the other political, economic, social, and intellectual concomitants of what we call the modern era (Bauman 1989). The strains of adjustment to modernity and the omnipresence of marked contrasts between the old and the new demanded comprehension, and folklore was one of the symbolic constructions of this intellectual effort. As social thought turned increasingly to the great enterprise of explaining the modernization of traditional societies (Habermas 1984:5-6), folklore took up the task of comprehending traditional, preindustrial society, while sociology, economics, and political science concentrated their efforts on modern social forms.

Warren Roberts, in his essay on "Folklife and Traditional Material Culture: A Credo" (1988), has argued cogently and effectively for the productiveness of defining the purview of our field of study as "the traditional society of the pre-industrial era" (1988:18). As the social and cultural forms of the pre-industrial era persist into the industrial age, however, Roberts affirms the need to examine the conditions of persistence—and presumably transformation—by which they continue to be a part of our lives. In the spirit of that charter, we undertake in this paper to explore a traditional cultural form, the community festival, in its modern guise as an enactment of modernity. As Milton Singer has noted (1959:145), "cultural performances" such as festivals, fairs, dramas, and spectacles, in which the central meanings and values of a group are embodied, acted out, and laid open to examination and interpretation in symbolic form, are especially well suited to the investigation of the dynamics of persistence and change in modern society.

Before proceeding further, let us specify what we mean by modernity. The subject is a complex one, and we cannot hope to do it full justice within the scope of this brief paper. For present purposes, we will concentrate on two tendencies that are prominent in all discussions of the forces of modernity, namely, social differentiation and centralization. By *differentiation* we mean the process by which "social life constantly subdivides and reorganizes itself in ever-increasing complexity" (MacCannell 1976:11), the range of categorical distinctions used to differentiate among members of society increases, and social relationships become more and more functionally specific, less and less functionally diffuse (Peacock 1975:9). *Centralization* refers to the process by which levels of social interdependency and integration grow successively deeper, and local structures are progressively incorporated into more and more centralized ones. The problem we will explore in this paper, then, is how differentiation and centralization are enacted in a community festival, the Luling Watermelon Thump, within the larger compass of the traditional event. The Watermelon Thump is not of great antiquity—it was first celebrated in 1954—but it is rooted in community and the seasonal cycle. It is, in fact, a first-fruits celebration, held on the last weekend in June when the first watermelons come in, and it is fashioned out of the same set of universal festival building blocks and transformations that people everywhere have used to construct their festivals: feasting, drinking, music, dance, noise, costume, display, play, performance, symbolic condensation, and so on (Stoeltje 1983, 1989).

Luling, Texas, is a small town of approximately 4,700 people, located in Caldwell County about forty-five miles south of Austin. It is primarily an oil town, the center of a large oil-producing area. Oil was discovered there in 1922 by Edgar B. Davis, a Massachusetts man who went on to develop the field in the years that followed. In 1926, Davis sold his oil interests for $12,100,000, using one million dollars of his fortune the following year to establish the Luling Farm Foundation, devoted to agricultural research. One result of the Foundation's efforts was the discovery that soil conditions around Luling were ideally suited to the growing of watermelons, which soon became established as an important crop in the area. At its height, in the 1940s and '50s, there were close to 150 growers in the vicinity of Luling. In 1954, Mr. Herman Allen, then principal of the Luling Elementary School and President of the Luling Lions Club, conceived the idea of organizing a "celebration to honor the growers and promote the Luling watermelon market," and with the aid of various civic organizations and other interested parties the Watermelon Thump was founded.

In recent years, the watermelon industry has declined, largely because the cheap labor on which it depended has been drawn away by the higher wages and better opportunities of the oil fields. Now, there are only about twenty-five growers left, many of whom do it only part-time or as a hobby. But the Watermelon Thump is very firmly established and going strong; it has become a valued community tradition with its own momentum. Indeed, there are beginning to be some indications that some of the growers continue to raise melons in order to help sustain the festival and their participation in it. The Watermelon Thump is a—perhaps *the*—major element of Luling's public identity, a link with an agrarian tradition, however recent, and the major event for the people of Luling to look forward to and back upon throughout the year (Abrahams 1977). For the three days of the festival, Luling is the center of the universe for its people. But this is not to say that for the purposes of the festival Luling draws in upon itself—quite the contrary. While much of the festival represents a series of symbolic statements by which the people of the community act out their social structure and social relations for themselves, among those themes most prominently displayed and enacted in the Watermelon Thump is Luling's place within a full range of levels of integration in the modern world. We propose to look briefly at two of the constituent events of the Watermelon Thump to suggest how aspects of modernity are addressed and played out within them.

The Queen Contest

The processes of differentiation and centralization of interest to us as features of modernity operate as basic organizing principles of the Watermelon Queen contest in constructing a model of gender relations (cf. Stoeltje 1988). Like other concepts displayed in festivals originating in modern social life, concepts relating to gender are not labeled or displayed as such, but are communicated through enactment. Interpretation must take into consideration, therefore, the purposes served by differentiation and centralization as they shape the Queen contest. Expressed at every level of the event, and the source of its attraction, is the social power manifested in these relations linking female and male.

Like initiation rituals in some cultures, the Watermelon Queen contest selects young, nubile women as its subject, and rewards the participants with public recognition if they complete the ritual. When the contest finishes and the participants play their roles in the Queen's coronation, they are completing the American female rite of passage. Transforming selected high school girls into young women and presenting them formally to the community, the ritual is disguised as a competition for a fantasy position of royalty. Those selected to participate learn the ideal role of the female as the community defines it through the intensity of the experience. While this role varies from one ethnic group to another or one nation to another, the meaning of gender enacted in a specific Queen contest derives from the two segments of the contest: (1) the selection process; and (2) the final performance of the Queen. It is through these that differentiation and centralization function to define the goals of the competition, who controls them, and how one competes for them. When men control the selection process and the competition, and the final performance presents the Queen as a passive object on display, the processes of differentiation and centralization have defined the ideal young woman as an object of display, subservient to males in spite of the fantasy position of power, as dependent upon male institutional power for identity, status, and recognition.

We will, then, consider first the process of selecting the Watermelon Queen. The formal eligibility criteria for this honored position are few: a girl must be of high school age, have lived in Luling for at least one year prior to the election, and be nominated by one of the voluntary organizations of the community. For most of the history of the festival, nominees have been put forward by the prestigious businessmen's civic clubs—the Kiwanis Club, the Evening Lions, the Noon Lions, the Chamber of Commerce, the Fire Department and the like. Within the last few years—a sign of significant social change within the community—minority group organizations like the Excelsior Social Club (a Black group) and LULAC (a Mexican-American civic and political group) have sponsored candidates as well.

Not just any girl will do—a candidate must be "appropriate," meaning that she must be physically attractive and an active participant in extracurricular high school activities. A record of academic achievement, while not essential, helps also. Here, for example, are the credentials of the girl who became Queen of a recent Watermelon Thump:

> Terry is a member of the Luling Eagle Band and has been selected as head twirler for the upcoming school year. She is a band officer and received Division One on solos and ensembles. Terry has served as manager of the High School Baseball team and was an active member and officer in the Future Teachers of America. She was selected for Who's Who Among American High School Students and the Society of Distinguished American High School Students. . . . Her hobbies include playing the piano, twirling, cooking, dancing and reading books.

The actual election of the Queen is a two part process. First, the candidates and their supporters compete in selling tickets (priced at one dollar each) to the Coronation ceremony. Each girl must sell a minimum of 200 tickets, but that is easy—indeed, total ticket sales reach nearly 10,000 although the Evening Lions Building where the Coronation is held only has a capacity of a few hundred. Each ticket counts as one vote for the candidate on whose behalf it was sold; the totals are added up on a specified Friday evening several weeks before the festival. On Saturday, the so-called "popular vote" is held throughout the day at a designated place. Here, every person who has purchased one or more tickets is eligible to vote, but on a one person-one vote basis, no matter how many tickets an individual has. The two sets of votes are then totaled and the girl with the most votes is elected Queen, while the runner-up is the Princess. All the other nominees become the Queen's in-town court. (There is also an out-of-town court, to be discussed later.)

The Queen's Coronation is held on the second evening of the Thump, a Friday, at the Evening Lions Building. The huge ticket sales notwithstanding, the Coronation attracts an enthusiastic crowd, primarily the girls' families and friends, reporters and photographers. In fact, no one even checks or collects tickets at the door any more—the tickets are important only as votes. We cannot describe the entire ceremony here, and so will restrict ourselves to a few of its salient features. Framed as a coronation, in the main it consists of the presentation and display of the young women who qualify as the most attractive to the men of the community and those whose fathers have influence. One after another, the members of the Queen's court, made up and dressed up in formals (white for the Luling girls, different colors for the girls representing other towns), walk down the elevated runway to the front platform, where they are met by their young male consorts, also in formal dress, and arrange themselves around the stage. First comes the Queen whose reign is ending, then the Visiting Royalty, who are the Queens of the festivals in their own respective towns in the surrounding region but reduced to Duchesses in Luling, then the in-town court, and finally the new Queen attended by her train bearers, a scepter bearer, and a crown bearer—all young children. As each girl walks down the runway, the announcer recites her praises, until finally:

> Presenting the Luling Watermelon Thump Queen, her most gracious majesty Queen Susan of the house of Crawford. Susan is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. F.A. Crawford. She is a member of the drill team, F.H.A. All State, F.F.A. Miss Personality first runner-up, F.F.A. Sweetheart. Her hobbies include swimming. Train Bearers: Kelly Crawford, Julie Crawford; Crown Bearer: Fred Richards; Scepter Bearer: Bill Kent. Queen Susan is escorted by Prince Consort Joe Phillips.

The new Queen, resplendent in her white gown and white train decorated with watermelon wedges made of red and green sequins, is crowned by the City Manager, the retiring Queen steps down from the throne at the center of the assembled royalty, and the new Queen ascends to her rightful place. The rest of the ceremony consists of interminable entertainment provided by local performers which we won't go into here.

Now, what does all this mean? A great many things, we believe, but let us just suggest a few of them. Clearly, the Queen competition represents an expressive mechanism for the creation and display of hierarchy (see Stoeltje 1983). This is especially interesting in view of the American ideology of egalitarianism, still strongly professed in Luling as in so many small towns reported in the community-study literature. This is the "just plain folks" and "we're all equal" public ethos of Springdale, for instance, reported by Vidich and Bensman in their classic *Small Town in Mass Society* (1968). It leads, among other things, to strongly negative feelings and sanctions against flaunting one's wealth, demanding deference because of it, or acting in public as if it makes a difference. But of course no observer of the American character has failed also to note the vigorous impulse toward economic achievement and the deep competitive spirit that makes American people run. Now, many analysts have addressed the problem of how the contradictions between the egalitarian ideology and the competition for status are worked out and expressed in American life. As folklorists, we are especially interested in expressive adaptations, and the Luling Queen competition is a case par excellence. How does it work?

First of all, the Queen selection process is publicly framed as a competition among young girls. Clearly, though, the girls are just the public surrogates of other elements in the community. Each contestant is sponsored by a voluntary association of *men*, prosperous middle-class and wealthy men. A girl can be elected Queen only with strong support, manifested by the money that goes for the purchase of tickets, from the organization that sponsors her, and from the personal network of family and friends for whom she stands. The more money and people in a contestant's support network, the more likely she is to win. Moreover, a girl's sponsors and backers can share in her status elevation: the girls at the Coronation ceremony are presented as nominees of a club and as representatives of "the house of" their families; the Queen's younger relatives are often recruited as her train-, scepter-, and crown-bearers; the girls' parents—especially the Queen's—are highly visible at the event; their boyfriends serve as their consorts, and so on.

Now, under ordinary, everyday conditions, men, families, and voluntary civic associations in Luling, as elsewhere, are not supposed to compete openly and publicly, especially in terms of how much money they can mobilize. But the Queen contest makes it all legitimate by framing it in a number of ways that establish it as "not real." Festivals, of course, have always been privileged mechanisms for this kind of transformative operation, and the Watermelon Thump is no exception. Additionally, by enacting this differential process in terms of the metaphor of royalty, it is framed as playful pretense—these are, after all, not "real" Queens, Princesses, or Duchesses; we don't have royalty in our democratic country, let alone in our town. But the metaphor is an effective one, insofar as it does signal clear status elevation, and the play of the Queen competition is very susceptible to becoming deep play, for some men have been known to spend several thousand dollars in support of their claimant to the throne. And finally, of course, it is all legitimized as being for the good of the community as a whole, for all of the proceeds from the competition go to the Watermelon Thump Association for the support of the *community's* festival, and the Queen becomes one of the principal signs of the festival and the community, to be displayed and employed in a variety of festive and ceremonial contexts. Not only does the context allow for the "play" of pretense that permits male competition through the Queen candidates, but simultaneous with the community competition a domestic model of gender relations is enacted in which the males of the community create their ideal female and exercise their authority over her.

In this female rite of passage the young women learn that the public construction of the ideal female rests on male competition. The several organizations of men who select candidates reflect the process of differentiation, allowing competing males to select candidates and to do so according to their own criteria. As the competition proceeds, the men continue to exercise control over the choices through the purchase of tickets. Finally, the winner's performance as Queen at the Coronation, her public ritual, requires of her only that she appear in her virginal white watermelon dress to be gazed upon as she sits upon her throne. Thus, as the competition moves toward the selection of the winner, the Queen, the process of centralization dissolves differentiation into community integration, and the power of ritual has been employed by the collective Pygmalion to transform high school girls into women, informed about the nature of power and skilled in the "appropriate" performance of their gender.

The Watermelon Thump Parade

Up to this point, in treating the Queen Contest we have emphasized the operation of expressive mechanisms of differentiation within the festival. There are elements of centralization at work in this event as well: for example, the regional structures of reciprocity whereby the Queens of the various community celebrations in the region serve in turn as supporting members of the enactments in other communities. However, the core dynamic of the Queen Contest has to do with structures of differentiation within Luling, implicating families, sex roles, voluntary associations, businesses, etc. We turn now to a consideration of a second constituent event of the Watermelon Thump in which the centralizing dynamic is more clearly played out, namely the Watermelon Thump Parade, held on Saturday morning, opening the main day of festival activity.

A parade is a display form par excellence, in which a succession of carefully selected signs is presented to an audience. Each of the entries in a parade stands for an element of the social structure, culture, or history of the social unit by and for whom it is enacted. The sign relations may be multifarious and complex: parades present us with iconic signs, such as floats in the shape of watermelons; indexical signs, such as the presentation of members of a voluntary association who stand for that association and its activities; or symbolic signs, such as the display of flags. Moreover, each of the signs is itself presented in a particular metacommunicative frame or combination of frames: esthetic, ludic, performative, display, etc. In addition, the parade as a whole may be seen as a unitary message with its own syntagmatic structure and meaning, and its overall movement may be seen as a message as well, often about the expressive laying of claims to a territory and endowing it with special significance by the act of physically encompassing it, marching over it, or displaying special signs upon it. Unfortunately, the scope of this paper does not allow for a full analysis of the Watermelon Thump Parade. Rather, we will concentrate on a special order of meaning within the parade, focusing on the way in which the parade entries stand for particular elements of social structure and their interrelationships. Every entry in the Watermelon Thump Parade indexes a social unit or level of integration, not an individual or group of individuals. This is the dimension we propose to consider.

As might be expected in a community-based celebration, a substantial number of the entries in the Watermelon Thump Parade represent the social order of Luling itself. Examination of these entries, in fact, reveals a significant cross-section of the social categories and group organizing principles that give shape to community life. At or near the front of the parade, we find representatives of the civil government of the town: the Chief of Police, the City Manager, the Fire Department, and other civic officials. Here too are the officers of the Thump Association, one of many voluntary associations in the community, but for this occasion singled out for special pride of place. Voluntary associations have long been noted as a major feature of American social life, and they are well-represented in Luling and in the parade. These range from businessmen's associations (Chamber of Commerce, Lions, Kiwanis, etc.), to veterans' organizations (Veterans of Foreign Wars), to hobby clubs (Luling CB [Citizens Band] Club), to recreational groups (Luling Saddle Club). Some of them reflect additional categorizing criteria: ethnicity (LULAC [Mexican-American], Excelsior Social Club [Black]), age (Cub Scouts, Little League), or gender (Beta Sigma Phi women's group). The town's institutions are also on display in the parade, in the form of entries from the schools, churches, and the local convalescent home. The final major category of entry we would mention is economic, namely the town's business firms, including automobile and farm implement dealers, oilfield service companies, and so on. Together, all these entries in the parade give one a pretty comprehensive overview of the ways that Luling is structured institutionally and organizationally, and most of the salient social categorizing principles by which the people of Luling sort each other out. To this point, then, we are still dealing with differentiation, but in terms of expressive indexes of acknowledged everyday organizing and sorting principles, rather than expressive mechanisms for the creation and display of hierarchical differentiation that can only be done publicly during the framed interval of the festival.

Beyond the scope of the community, however, the parade reveals to us lines of centralization at successively higher levels of integration. To begin with, the Caldwell County Commissioners and other county officials index the next highest level of government above the town, while the float of the Caldwell County Fair Association shows that the voluntary association that organizes the Watermelon Thump is also a part of a county-wide association of associations. Both in turn are part of the South Texas Fair Association, also represented in the parade.

As a community, Luling also maintains relations of various kinds with other communities in the region. While the reciprocal appearances of community celebration Queens has already been mentioned, we can also see representations of business ties (through Chambers of Commerce and individual businesses from other surrounding towns), organizational relationships (brother or sister chapters of national voluntary associations like the VFW), and links of institutional cooperation (e.g., the Lockhart Fire Department, which joins forces with the Luling Fire Department to fight especially big fires). But small towns do not just exist in a network of small towns and county structures. They are also connected by a variety of linkages—though chiefly economic ones—to the larger urban centers where economic institutions and power are concentrated. In the case of Luling, this means Austin, San Antonio and Corpus Christi. These links are not manifested by overtly economic signs, but at one remove, through representations of large-scale urban celebrations centered in those cities which are organized and sustained by their respective Chambers of Commerce.

Moving up still further through the levels of integration, we find the signs of Luling's participation in state and national government, in the persons of the State Representative, State Senator, and United States Congressman who represent Luling in the Texas Legislature and in Congress. In each case, we might note, Luling is only part of a legislative district, and the districts get successively larger as we move from State Representative, to State Senator, to United States Congressman, thus tying Luling into a series of progressively larger governmental units. Other signs of state and national links are manifested by National Guard, Army, and Air Force performing groups from various bases in San Antonio and Austin.

Finally, we find one lone sign, albeit a prominently featured one, that Luling is part of a larger international order. Riding on one of the floats is Ulla Kekkonen, a high school exchange student from Finland.

This is a very rough and ad hoc summary, but sufficient, we hope, to convey that part of the energy devoted to one of the major events of the festival is given over to a display and enactment of Luling's place in a range of higher and higher structural levels (including county, region, political district, state, nation, and world), and that the range of relations implicated in these structures is functionally and organizationally complex: political, economic, and expressive; institutional and associational; reciprocal and hierarchical.

Now, the existence of these various levels and mechanisms of centralization and the fact that local communities in the modern world are enmeshed in level upon level of centralized structures are not news. There is a long sociological tradition that has been devoted to the exploration of these phenomena of modern life, including the seminal work of Tönnies, Durkheim, Redfield, Parsons, and others. And certainly, the ways that these forces affect and are played out in Luling, as in any other small, rural community, are far more ramified and complex than we have been able to discuss here. But let us suggest at least one important fresh perspective that can be brought to these considerations by an examination of festivals like the Watermelon Thump, a contribution that folklorists are especially well-qualified to make.

There is a persistent tendency in the study of centralization and small communities to treat the phenomenon from the top down, viewing the local rural community as progressively invaded and dominated by more and more centralized structures, surrendering more and more of its local autonomy to higher level forces. This is the perspective, for instance, that dominates Vidich and Bensman's influential study, *Small Town in Mass Society* (1968). We do not propose to debate the reality or productiveness of this viewpoint; in certain terms, its validity is undeniable. As folklorists, though, our interest is in how people give expressive form to their social and material experience (cf. Hebdige 1979:80), how they create, recreate, transform and enact their experience and values on the vernacular level by expressive means, in the various symbolic discourses by which they explore and communicate the meaning of their lives to themselves and others. Hence, in this case, our interest in a community festival like the Watermelon Thump.

From the vantage point of this community-based symbolic enactment, a very distinctive dynamic is revealed. As viewed through the lens of the festival, what we see is a force that runs counter to the invasion-from-above-and-without view of the forces of centralization. In the Watermelon Thump, the people of Luling present *themselves* at the center of the macro-system, not on its periphery. In constructing their festival, especially the parade but other events as well, it is *they* who incorporate and assimilate the higher level structures, bringing them right onto the main street of Luling to be displayed and enacted as part of a Luling-eye view of the world. This is centralization in reverse. By combining the signs of extra-community structures and relations with those of their own community structure and culture into one comprehensive statement, they reaffirm each year their own capacity to comprehend the order of existence in the modern world in their own terms. This is at least as powerful a conception of reality as the alternative view of centralization.

What we hope to have suggested in this brief examination of a contemporary community festival is that the forces of modernity, specifically differentiation and centralization, are played out in complex and revealing ways in these public enactments of community. These forces certainly represent powerful factors in the everyday life of the community, but the festival events give them a concreteness and immediacy that they do not have in daily life by making them into enactments and framing them as public displays. Display heightens the process of objectification by setting things off in special contexts, marking them with special intensity as being on view, available for examination, contemplation, reflection, whether the object is woman, flag, agricultural product, or association.

The first of the events we have considered, the Queen Contest, represents an expressive mechanism for the playing out of hierarchical differentiations and gender relations in symbolically transformed guise. Framed in special ways, the festival allows the expression of otherwise suppressed but strongly felt impulses. The Watermelon Thump Parade, on the other hand, displays more regularly acknowledged and openly employed principles of differentiation within the community, but then incorporates them as well into an enactment of the ties of centralization in which Luling is enmeshed. But, as we have emphasized, this is centralization in reverse—not a matter of outside, extra-community centers drawing Luling into their own structures, but Luling incorporating *them* into its own, by marching them down its main street.

These, then, are some of the ways that the people of Luling deal expressively with the forces of modernity within the traditional framework of their community festival. As such, they offer us, as folklorists, the opportunity to come to terms with these large-scale social processes ourselves.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Much of the data on which this paper is based was collected by students in Stoeltje's 1975 and 1976 classes on Festival, at the University of Texas, and we would like to acknowledge their contributions.

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Grain Stacking in the Midwest, 1850-1920

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The evolution of traditional agricultural practices in the American Midwest is largely the result of interplay between an individual cultural heritage, local social contexts, the natural environment, and available technologies. Folklorists who document the tools, techniques, and products of the rural nineteenth century Midwest generally focus on relevant cultural, social, and environmental influences. Scholars devote less attention, however, to the impact of technology, particularly the results of changes motivated by the mechanization of agricultural processes. Perhaps some of our discipline's avoidance of cultural contexts in which mechanization is a crucial influence results from continued acceptance of an early-developed assumption about cultural determinism. This view holds that traditional cultural processes are hopelessly powerless in situations including machines and other forms of complex technology. Forecasts of "disorganization" or "disintegration" of folk culture in competition with industrial or popular culture, respectively made by Robert Redfield and Iowerthe Peate, are only two examples of this still-dominant idea.

In this short essay, I will focus on grain stacking patterns in the Midwest in order to demonstrate that farmers experience the ripple effect of technological development in work spheres related to the use of that technology. Farmers have never had mechanical devices to actually assist in the stacking and shocking of small grains. Their adoption of new technologies in the reaping and threshing of these crops, however, required producers to reconsider overall grain harvest patterns in order to make most efficient use of local resources. In essence, we can assume that the employment of complex machinery in one or more spheres of agricultural activity is not socially or culturally deterministic. The use of particular devices may limit the scope of local response, but people must adapt as well as adopt. They may modify their use of nonindigenous technologies to fit local conditions, for example, or extend existing sociocultural patterns to incorporate the use of new tools or processes.

Prior to the adoption of combined harvester-threshers in the Midwest during the second quarter of the twentieth century, farmers needed a system to handle their crops between the first steps of the harvest—reaping and binding—and the threshing of the grain from the straw and chaff. The major requirements of this middle phase were to protect the crop from inclement weather and to promote drying, and to carry on this process in a manner most appropriate to the anticipated plan for threshing. Three primary techniques were used by Midwestern farmers around 1860: piling the bundles by tiers into large structures or "stacks" at the site where the threshing would later take place; constructing small formations, normally called shocks, of ten to fifteen sheaves in the fields where the bundles were formed; and, transporting the sheaves to storage in barn mows, a system often termed "mowing." Of these systems, stacking was favored by the majority of grain producers until the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Mid-nineteenth century Midwestern farm diaries reveal that most farmers allowed their wheat, oats, and barley to mature on the stalk, so that stacking took place only a short time after reaping. Most operators allowed their grain to dry in shocks for ten days or more before they stacked; others simply cut and bound the grain and allowed the crop to lie in rough windrows for a few anxious days before hauling it in to the stackyard (Dorringh 1853; Downer 1863). The primary characteristics of a good stack were that it hold as much grain as possible, protect the crop from foul weather and vermin, and provide maximum drying and air circulation for the laid sheaves. Farmers located their stacks on high ground in the area where the threshing would take place, generally near the barn or shed where the stock was wintered and the bulk of the straw used for bedding and feed. Those people planning to use the mechanical threshing machines widely available on an itinerant basis by the 1860s built their stacks in adjacent pairs. This design allowed the machine owner to set the grain separator between two stacks from which the threshing crew could pitch bundles to either side of the machine (Photo 1).

Construction of grain stacks required at least two persons, though three men working together was the regional norm. As a minimum, one man pitched bundles to the stack from a wagon carrying the grain brought or "drawn in" from the field. The other person, working on the stack, arranged the sheaves in a careful and systematic pattern. Other participants usually worked in the transporting and pitching of the bundles (Thrasher, July, 1877; Page, July and August, 1844; Hubbard, August, 1844). Two men labored together in loading bundle wagons: one pitching the sheaves from field or shock while the second built a tiered load on the wagon bed. Three-man crews using two wagons and teams could typically stack the harvest of four to six acres in a full day's work (Yerkes and Church 1918:13-14; Jones 1980; Cravens 1981; Edger 1980). Stackers preferred to have bundles thrown to them from both sides of the stack with the pitchers laboring in an alternating rhythm. This system ensured even distribution of weight in the completed stack and prevented the structure from leaning as a consequence of loading from only one side. Builders could not always detect weight errors on lower tiers; often, imbalances became evident only as the problem compounded with the laying of successive tiers. Improperly constructed stacks, marked by asymmetric bulges or uneven settling, sometimes had to be torn down and rebuilt before they toppled in a storm or grew sodden from retained moisture. In the summer of 1844, for example, Illinois farmer Charles Hubbard "pulled down" a wheat stack "which had grown badly. The stack bulged a little on one side below the ring which deranged the position of the top sheaves" (August 16, 1844).

Labor divisions at stacking time reflect the unique responsibilities and status of the master stacker. Every man charged with this task had his own system and idea of proper construction; thus, variations in form existed in each locale. Building stacks that would shed water, remain standing through heavy winds, and provide necessary air circulation for the grain was a rural folk art developed through long practice and experience. Each neighborhood had a few individuals who were recognized by the community as expert or master stackers and who worked for a number of farmers during the harvest season. If two persons arranged the sheaves on the pile, one was always a master stacker and the "second" was generally an apprentice or farmer assisting the man in charge (Boyle 1966:17-18; *Indiana Farmer's* 1899:420). In most cases, farmers repaid the master stacker through providing reciprocal labor for other tasks. Wealthier farmers or large landowners who hired stackers on a daily rate always paid them a higher rate than that given for other harvest labor. Lewis Lesher, who farmed near New Carlisle, Ohio, in the 1840s, paid reapers and cradlers from 60 to 75 cents a day while the stacker received one dollar daily (Lesher 1848). In 1838 in Mercer County, Illinois, John Drury (1838) paid binders and reapers, respectively, 87 and 1/2 cents and one dollar per day, whereas a stacker earned $1.50. Binders attending their "stations" behind the reaper on Albert Dorringh's farm in Adams County, Illinois, received a daily rate of $1.25 in 1853. Two weeks after the grain was cut, a local stacker earned $2.50 a day to build four stacks near the "cow barn" (Dorringh 1853).

The basic components of stack construction are the foundation, lower courses or tiers, bulge or eave formed by the widest course along the horizontal plane, higher tiers sloping from bulge to peak, and cap. Beginning with the base of the stack, builders first decided how to keep the bottom sheaves elevated, and thus protected from both ground moisture and the appetites of rats, rabbits, and other animals. Stack construction providing some sort of air passage under the pile also aided the drying process as warm currents could more easily circulate through the bundles. A layer of rails placed in a single tier three or four feet apart, a double layer of boards laid in a latticework pattern, or a wood platform were the most common techniques used throughout the region. For example, platforms of rough lumber were used by Lee Smith, who built stacks with his father about 20 miles north of Cairo, Illinois (Smith 1981). He began the foundation by placing six planks on their edges along the length of the stack area. Smith then laid six- to eight-inch wide boards on their faces at foot intervals along the top edges of the foundation pieces. Other builders simply used a layer of old straw, hay, or other farm product to provide at least some protection from vermin. Some German-American farmers in Mercer County, Ohio, used straw left over from the previous year (Kotter 1979; *Prairie Farmer* 1849:5), while farmers in Iowa (Shutes 1968:5) or other areas in which slough hay was available could form a stack on a pile of local grass. Demonstrations of variation include one Benton County, Illinois, neighborhood where farmers built their stacks on a cross-laid grid of cornstalks (Cravens 1981). There is no evidence of Midwestern farm use of manufactured pole structures or cast pilings such as were sometimes used in nineteenth-century Great Britain.

Builders set the size and shape of the stack with placement of the first tier of sheaves. Average circular stacks had a radius of eight to twelve feet. The stacker placed the first tier's bundles either on their sides or standing on their butt ends. The latter technique was especially appropriate for a base when no foundation was used, for the butts could rot and the bundles settle without immediate damage to the grain heads. The cardinal rule of almost all Midwestern stack formations is to pack tightly the center with more bundles per cubic foot than any of the side areas. As stacks of all sizes and shapes settle during the drying period, a more dense center settles less and thus aids in promoting water runoff to the edges.

The two primary styles of Midwestern stacks were circular and rectangular in design. Most builders began the lowest tier of round formations in the middle by leaning a group of four to eight bundles against one another to form the stack "core." They "carried" the tier out to the edges of the planned structure by placing circular rows, usually called "ranges," around the core. As the builder approached the edge, he laid the bundles more horizontally with the sheaf heads always leaning towards the center. As a rule, stackers worked their way around the pile in continuous circular "rounds." Carrying the rows to the edge of the stack form constituted completion of a stack tier or "layer."

Isaac Tate, who built wheat and oat stacks near Macon, Missouri, during the 1880s and 1890s, described one method of circular construction using this technique (1935:16-18). With no base platform of foundation, he began in the center of the planned shape with the placement of four bundles standing upright on their butt ends. He then laid circular ranges of sheaves, also standing upright but with their heads inclined to the center. At the outside row, Tate took the bundles and bent them at the first joint along the straw below the grain heads. The builder placed the bundle stems upright with the heads facing into the stack. Because he bent the bundles, Tate used two layers to reach the height of the other ranges. The weight of this circle, leaning towards the center, helped to brace the stack.

He continued the process until the stack reached a height of around eight feet. Each succeeding layer in the lower section extended out a little further along the horizontal plane. Stackers often referred to this technique as "building out the stack." The result was the stack bulge that acted as an overhang to protect the base. As Tate raised the stack, the center rose more quickly because these sheaves were placed perpendicularly while the butts of the exterior ranges sloped downward towards the edge. He worked on his knees when laying the courses, using his weight to press in and down on each sheaf. No adjacent circular ranges began or ended at the same place in order to inhibit water penetration.

Once the main body of the stack reached the top of the bulge, Tate slightly changed his construction process to taper the pile up to the "cap." He formed a simple eave by projecting the butt ends of the last exterior row about a foot outside of the stack body. The builder then "brought in" succeeding tiers from the eave to the peak by decreasing by one the number of ranges in each new course. Tate continued with this process until a tier occupied a space no more than three to five feet in diameter. At this apex, he placed a single center sheaf with other bundles laid around it leaning towards the center. The stack builder wrapped a rope around the peak tier and tied the two ends to the base of the stack to prevent the "crown" from being blown over by a heavy wind. When the stacks were to stand until late fall or winter, Tate added extra ties in a criss-crossing pattern over the sides and tops.

In 1900, George Hendricks of Hancock, Iowa, offered readers of *Wallace's Farmer* his plan for stack construction. His method illustrates a second common method used in the Midwest, notably different from Isaac Tate's process in that the Iowa farmer began on the outside of each tier and worked towards the middle:

> Begin by setting sheaves upright, as in shocking, increasing the slant of the sheaves until the desired size of the stack is obtained. Then mount the stack, fork in hand; a light two or three-tined fork is preferable. If "right-handed" then stand with the right hand to the outside of the stack. Now with the fork place the sheaf for the outside row, then place the second sheaf–for next inside row–on first one, so the butt will cover the band of the first sheaf and step on the inside sheaf: continue with two outside rows at once, placing the same number of sheaves in each, walking on the inside row only. The reason for placing an equal number of sheaves on the two outside rows is that the inner row of the two being the smaller circle, the sheaves will be the harder packed, which allows the outside row to settle more than on the inside, thus giving the desired slant for the rain to run outward. Continue with third and subsequent rows towards the center, placing as many sheaves and packing as hard as possible, keeping the inside full, hard and higher than outside. A slight bulge in the stack will aid in securing the proper slant to the sheaves. [1900:783]

A final example, from the Shutes family of Carroll County, Iowa, in the 1890s, includes other variations in construction techniques, but also reveals continuities in the basic circular style and building design:

> A good stack was made by first setting a long sturdy stake firmly in the center where the stack would be built, then slew [slough] hay, if available, was stacked on the ground around the stake, higher in the center to drain any moisture to the outside. A shallow ditch was dug around the outside and away from the stack, to keep the water away. A starter shock of bundles was fastened to the stake, and then carefully placed bundles built around it in a circle. Care had to be taken not to give too much slant to these rows, or when the stack was getting high, the weight might cause a lower row to slip and ruin the stack. It would have to be rebuilt–after the stack settled [there was] no danger. The outside row had the butt ends of the bundles out, and the next layer was extended a few inches towards the outside, until the stack was up several feet, to shed rain away from the base. Then the bundles were gradually drawn in, to give taper, all the way to the top, to shed rain and snow. It was not unusual for snow before all the stacks in a run were threshed. At the

> top when the last bundles were used to cap the stack, an extra cap of hay was put on top and a stake driven through it, to keep the cap from blowing off. [1968:2-3]

All of these examples have strong European antecedents, particularly in the British Isles where conical shaped stacks of similar construction were popular throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Collins 1972:18-21; Fenton 1976:73-76; Hennell 1936:136-41; Jenkins 1976:47-50). One major difference between the stacks of the British Isles and Midwest was that the latter constructions were rarely thatched for protection, whereas it was customary for English and Scottish farmers to use rye or wheat straw to cover their conical caps. Midwestern farmers likely eschewed thatched coverings for two primary reasons. The mechanization of Midwestern threshing was widespread by the mid-nineteenth century (Rikoon 1988:20-27) and itinerant machine owners normally completed their seasonal runs within a few months of harvest. In England, stacks often remained standing for six or more months, and thus were subject to increased crop losses from inclement weather. It is probable, moreover, that few Midwestern farmers even knew how to thatch as that craft was not used, except on rare occasions, to roof houses, barns, or other outbuildings. The Midwestern counterpart to thatching was a farmer's layering of hay, straw, or grasses over the top of the stack. Ohio landowner George Brown, for example, preferred to use swamp or long rye grasses. One year he found neither was available and substituted last year's straw. He discovered that this covering worked well for a few weeks, but had to be replenished three times before threshing (1912:760). Temporary shields were usually held fast with tie lines draped over the piles. Some stackers in the late nineteenth-century used large sheets of canvas or burlap to cover the caps, a practice promoted by the agricultural press much as plastic wraps are used on today's hay bales. Other stackers used no coverings, but drove a long wooden stake down the center from the top, as in the Shutes example above, or attached "riders"—stones tied together with a length of cord or wire and draped saddle-fashion over the cap (Hager 1975:27-28; Logan 1975:130; Smith 1981).

Midwestern stacks do resemble British Isles constructions in their overall shapes and bundle placement patterns. It is not surprising, then, to note that farmers often cited first or second-generation English or Scottish settlers as the master stack builders in their communities. In south-central Ohio, where Welsh immigrants settled to work charcoal kilns and coal mines, they also became known for their grain-stacking abilities. Whereas it is uncommon to find references to women employed as stack-builders, this community had at least two women with reputations as expert stackers (Jones 1980). A correspondent to the *Wisconsin Farmer* wrote in 1866 that "every farmer who has not yet learned the art himself, should secure the services of some English, Welsh, or Scotch farmer to do that job for him, until he has thoroughly acquired the art himself" (Todd 1868:-398).

The stacking descriptions presented thus far emphasize circular designs. This form was the most common one throughout the nineteenth-century Midwest, but some grain producers constructed stacks shaped like oblong rectangles. These structures resembled hay ricks and were often called "grain ricks" by the farmers who built them. In general, while Midwesterners may use the term "stack" to refer to any systematic piling of grain sheaves, "rick" almost always denotes a rectangular design. Mid-nineteenth century rick constructions were normally associated with experiments in harvesting grain with headers produced by the Easterly and other companies (Johnson 1976:48-51; Quick and Buchele 1979:71-81). These machines cut the grain close to the head, thereby leaving the straw stems in the field and forcing stackers to build structures with the grain lying on its side. Longer ricks between 12 and 20 feet wide were built, most of them with rounded tops covered with hay or straw. The following description of a method used in Stephens County, Illinois, is typical of mid-century patterns:

> After preparing old rails, brush, etc., for the bottom of my stacks, I laid up for each stack a rail pen, 8 rails square, and 12 rails high, by having a boy in the pen or stack to keep it level and round up to the top nicely before putting on your cover of prairie hay, which should be done immediately after getting as much grain as you can; and unless the grain stands so uneven as to make it necessary to cut a good deal of straw with the heads, such a stack will hold from 12 to 15 acres of headings, which is about a common day's work; and rails enough for two such pens is all that is necessary during the harvest, for after the stacks have stood one day and two nights, if kept level while they were building, will have settled sufficiently so that the rails may be taken away from them and laid up for other stacks in the same manner. [Stephens County 1848:179]

Ricks of headed grain were part of the cultural landscape for only a short period, though, as Midwesterners did not adopt these machines in large numbers. Headers were never successfully designed for the region's uneven fields and climate, and farmers preferred to save their straw for bedding, feed, and domestic uses.

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, rick constructions became increasingly employed by mid-sized farmers as final storage for bound sheaves. Rising grain acreages and average yields per acre between 1880 and 1900 supported the use of rick constructions because the design was more expandable than the circular stack for holding additional grain. The settlement of larger numbers of central and northern European immigrants, more inclined to oblong constructions than their British Isles counterparts, provided the technical expertise that made rick constructions a familiar grain storage procedure. As a general rule, though certainly with exceptions, north and central Europeans opted to build rectangular grain and hay storage structures in greater numbers than British-American farmers, the latter continuing cultural styles emphasizing circular designs.

Most builders laid their ricks on a north-south axis in order to provide the greatest sun-drying exposure to the bundles. The favored shape resembled a loaf of bread, with the outside profile slightly bulged from the lowest tier to near the middle of the total stack height (Photo 2). As in circular constructions, the bulge or "bridge" is the widest part of the rick, with builders decreasing the width of the tiers from that point to the peak. William Brandston (1980), of Miami County, Ohio, noted that "you made that stack wider by keeping the outside of the stack higher than on the inside. Then you placed each layer on a little farther out [than] that one underneath. . . . When you overlapped the layers, reaching them down towards the center, that tied those outer layers down and prevented them from slipping off."

A fundamental difference between circular and rectangular constructions occurred in the laying of the sheaves. In rick formations, farmers typically placed the bundles flat in rows along the length of the design. Sheaves were laid, as Brandston notes, in overlapping fashion so that the butt ends of one layer held in the grain heads of the layer just below. A builder could also "tie in the rick" by placing the sheaves of any one layer over the space between any two adjacent bundles in the preceding tier. Within each course itself, the butts and heads of adjacent ranges overlapped to increase the strength of the tier. The stackers generally worked around the circumference, beginning from the outside, attempting to compress the center as much as possible and completing one entire range before moving on to the next (Brandston 1980; and Pepsen 1980). The overall building pattern resembles laying roof shingles, with bracing provided in all directions.

After reaching the bulge level, builders began "bringing in" the stack through the use of progressively smaller tiers up to the peak. Farmers could retain the rick's shape simply by holding in each succeeding tier six to twelve inches from the outside of the course just below. The stacker's most difficult and dangerous task was to set the outside sheaves without tramping them down or affecting their later settlement. If one walked too close to the edges of the loosely laid outside ranges, the stack sides would lean or, possibly, topple over. Joseph Pepsen (1980) recalled that a young man near Portland, Indiana, once suffered a broken leg and bruised ribs from stepping on "a soft place near the edge of a stack," and many older Midwestern residents note children were constantly admonished, for occupational and safety reasons, to stay off the irresistible stacks.

Farmers formed the roof or cap of most grain ricks by decreasing the width of sheaf tiers until they reached the "peak layer," generally two or three bundles—laid butt to head—in width. Builders often referred to this last stage as "topping out" or "topping off" the rick. The peak of an oblong stack is similar in slope to a moderately-pitched gable roof. Tops with greater pitch shed water more effectively, but were also more prone to toppling from heavy winds or storms. Since any peak construction has a tendency to settle, especially after rains, the caps of roof stacks invariably appeared flat a few weeks (and rains) after construction. To tie the rick together and ensure its longevity, some farmers saddle-draped their stacks with stones or poles tied together with rope or wire.

Descriptions of rick constructions indicate that more workers were generally used for oblong constructions than the number employed for building circular stacks. Although two men could comprise a rick crew, the median number of persons involved was four, with two teams of horses to draw the sheaves from the field (Edger 1980; *Farmer's Guide* 1899; Yerkes and Church 1918:13-15). Bundles were normally pitched up to the rick from both sides, with extra men joining the master stacker when the pile's height required middlemen to transfer bundles from the center part of the rick up to the head stacker. Although the large sizes of some ricks would seem to require two people to place bundles on each structure, expert builders could lay sheaves almost as quickly as they were received, thus freeing extra workers for loading, pitching, and transferring the crop.

The construction of stacks as a regular part of the grain harvest remained the regional norm until the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Agricultural patterns began to shift in the 1870s, primarily as a result of the itinerant thresherman's adoption of steam engines to power grain separators. The single most important innovation in farm power in the nineteenth century, the steam engine used in threshing was for many farmers the first on-farm use of the same energy designs that powered the urban industrial complex (Wik 1955). The use of steam engines stimulated changes in the progress and process of the threshing work and led to changed ideological perceptions of the thresherman and the threshing season (Rikoon 1988:79-88).

The increased horsepower provided by steam engines motivated a regional shift from stack to shock threshing because the additional power allowed threshermen to utilize larger, more complex separators that quickened the threshing pace and released farmers from the need to stack or mow their crops. On an ideal level, each person could reap his grain, allow it to go through a ten-day to three-week "sweat" in the shock, and then thresh by bringing the bundles directly from the field to the threshing machine. The grain would thus be in the granary or at the mill well before the need to tackle such fall tasks as harvesting corn or planting winter wheat. Adherents of shock threshing noted that it took about the same time to haul the sheaves to the machine as it did to bring them to the stack or barn. Further, pitching sheaves to a stack required more skill and labor than throwing the bundles onto the feeding table or self-feeding conveyer of a threshing machine. During the 1880s and 1890s, as larger threshing machines and steam engines multiplied on the rural landscape, it appeared likely that stacking would be an abandoned rural art by the turn of the century.

In addition to the speed of threshing from the shock, there were other good reasons for farmers to abandon the use of grain stacking. Elimination of stacking relieved the farmer of one extra harvest chore and meant that the grain would be handled one less time, thus avoiding yield loss due to the shattering of the grain head during transportation and handling. Stack or barn storage also increased the potential of crop damage due to what Walter Schmidt of Shelby, Iowa, called "rattage and birdage"; that is, the grain appetites of animals that squatted in and near farm outbuildings. Farmers used to storing their unthreshed grain in barns were also facing increasing demands on available barn space due to changes in other cropping patterns. For example, the amount of cultivated grass crops increased dramatically between 1880 and 1890, yet the use of mechanical balers was very limited before 1900. Unless one had one or more large barns, which was not common outside of certain German-American communities, mow space could be entirely filled with hay.

Although we do not have any comprehensive surveys of harvest techniques at the end of the nineteenth-century, there is ample evidence that farmers at this time were finding it increasingly difficult to locate men who could build effective stacks. Correspondents to state agricultural journals were complaining by 1903 that stacking experts were available only in the "good old times." An issue of

Wallace's Farmer in 1910 carried a large headline proclaiming that "Stacking is a Lost Art." This loss no doubt varied greatly between locales, and had a number of causes in addition to those previously cited as motivations for farmers to shift from stack to shock threshing. By 1910, there was a new generation of farmers who had grown up after neighborhood shifts to shock threshing systems and thus never learned how to construct a stack. It is relevant to note also that shock threshing was promoted heavily as a quicker and more efficient process by agricultural schools, Farmers Institutes, Farm Clubs, and the regional agricultural press. Although the widespread impact of these information conduits on general farm practices is certainly questionable, the art of stack building was neither encouraged nor taught in formal educational contexts. Finally, there was never any extensive settlement in the Midwest of a capable labor class that seasonly traveled to seek employment building stacks. European immigrants familiar with stacking procedures tended to settle in ethnic communities among people already familiar with the process.

Complaints about the loss of good stackers reveal, however, that Midwestern farmers periodically reconsidered their decisions to abandon the stack, particularly at those times when the apparent efficiency and advantages of the newer system proved to be less than had been anticipated. Manufacturing statistics claiming new highs in machinery purchases between 1890 and 1910 were little comfort to farmers when a thresherman's promise to arrive within a week or two of shocking stretched to a wait of a month or more. Most families in a neighborhood tended to follow similar agricultural cycles, with a result that the grain in that area ripened and cured at roughly equal intervals. Operators all threshing from the shock needed a thresherman at approximately the same time. Turn-of-the-century rural diaries and newspapers document repeated incidents in which harvest plans were undermined by an itinerant thresherman's tardy arrival. A delay in getting a machine to thresh grain standing in shocks engendered anxiety over the year's profits, hindered the progress of other fall tasks, and prevented the growth of pasture grasses planted to follow grain in the most common regional rotation. Umphrey Stump, of Darke County, Ohio, recalled (1903:771) the problems of his 1902 harvest:

> A party of neighbors and myself having in all about two hundred acres of grain decided to thresh from the field. As most of us raised tobacco and the sheds had to be gotten ready for the grain, we thought it would save work at so busy a time. There are four or five machines within as many miles of here and we were almost sure of getting one when we wanted it. We had the promise of one the first week of oats threshing and waited for it until the second week and still seeing no chance of getting it we decided to get another machine which was promised within one

> week. We waited on it for nearly two weeks and still no machine. Then we had to fall back on the first one and wait till it came. Of course they took on every job on the road as they knew we had to wait. The last two weeks it rained nearly every day and the grain was thoroughly soaked. Caps had blown off the wheat and the oats, having been badly lodged before cutting, was in big squatty heaps upon the ground. The machine arrived between showers and they were determined to thresh before the grain was dry enough. It was either thresh or let them pull away so we all threshed. The grain was damp and musty and not fit for market.

A farmer's decision to change from stack to shock threshing was not a choice made simply on the basis of efficiency and speed. People long used to stacking developed not only a tradition of harvest skills, but shared cultural patterns of attitudes and values associated with the agricultural cycle and with judgments of an ideal farm plan. Neighbors evaluated the quality of a crop, and by extension the expertise of the producer, not only by statistical means such as bushels per acre, but also in the way the harvest and threshing were conducted. Displays of carefully built stacks laid in a symmetrical pattern in the barnyard or sheaves placed in neat rows in grain ricks could be measured by others in terms of gross dimensions, for the largeness of the crop, and in form and style, for the quality of the farm and farmer. Aesthetics of farm appearance and tillage practices continue to play a part in agricultural decision-making. For example, contemporary farmers on sloping, highly erodible land who share the idea that clean fields and straight, smooth crop rows are symbolic of a "good" farmer are most likely to resist adoption of conservation tillage with high percentages of crop residue, contour planting, or other innovative tillage practices that decrease soil erosion.

Nineteenth-century farmers contemplating a switch from stack to shock threshing could not alter their harvest cycles without considering their neighbors. Although there were instances where only one or two families in an area stacked their grain, most often everyone in a neighborhood threshed with the same process due to the need to coordinate reciprocal work arrangements. Shock threshing began soon after harvest, or about the same time that most stacking normally took place. If only a few men wanted to stack their grain and postpone threshing, it could disrupt work cycles and require the thresherman to make extra trips to that area. Around the turn of the century, Ohio farmer George Petit (1901) stacked grain after his neighbors turned to shock threshing, "and for years [we] were hindered with our stacking by having to go help thrash." Most grain raisers who stacked their crop wanted it to cure for at least four additional weeks before threshing. Custom threshermen wanted to do all of their itinerant work in one continuous seasonal run, however, and did not favor short trips in the fall to "pick-up men who didn't think their grain was ready" (Edger 1980; Tracey 1981). In areas equally divided between shock and stack threshing, machinery owners often serviced the families that shocked at the beginning of the season and returned later for stack threshing.

Farmers who continued stack threshing well into the twentieth century normally did so because of ecological considerations or as the continuation of long-practiced cultural systems that emphasized the careful construction of grain stacks or the maintenance of large barns or sheds for crop storage. Ecological and environmental factors included the locations of the year's grain acreage and the likelihood of damage due to excessive moisture. Grain producers who farmed creek or river bottoms prone to summer flash floods preferred to stack their grain on safe higher ground near farm outbuildings. Threshing wet bundles often resulted in considerable grain left in the heads or blown over as "white caps" into the straw pile. Also, farmers in marginal grain-cropping areas with few reliable threshermen often stacked due to the need to hold their crops for extended periods of time.

Ethnoagricultural patterns in threshing style were particularly evident in Midwestern areas settled by central and north European immigrant groups. Neighborhoods of German-American farmers from central Missouri to northern Wisconsin, and from central Ohio to eastern Kansas continued to stack or mow their grain until they adopted combined harvester-threshers around 1940. In some cases, a desire to raise specific kinds of grain correlated well with local harvest systems. Farmers who continued to raise barley for regional breweries, for example, were better off stacking this crop as it required a lower moisture content than oats and wheat to cleanly pass through the separator's cylinders. Similarly, barn storage and threshing remained closely tied with the ownership and maintenance of outbuildings with ample storage areas. A former thresherman who operated in Darke County, Ohio, recalls two German-American farmers who continued to barn thresh long after their Anglo-American neighbors had changed to shock threshing:

> Those two men, well they had two of the biggest barns in the area, and I used to have to go out there two or three times over the winter to barn thresh their crop. They had a lot of grain, but they never wanted to thresh it all at once, so I had to go out to their place a few times. They'd just a-pile all their wheat in the lofts of those German barns and call me out whenever they needed me. . . They were about the only ones who'd ever want to thresh in the winter. [Edger 1980]

In areas such as northeast Iowa and southwest Minnesota, where Scandinavian immigrants settled among already-established Anglo-American communities, descriptions of harvest procedures at the end of the nineteenth century reveal a general persistence of the older pattern within immigrant neighborhoods. Lloyd Johnson, whose family farmed south of Rochester, Minnesota, learned the art of stacking from his uncle, a second-generation Norwegian-American. "The way he taught me was with the building of three stacks near the old barn on his home place," he noted. "I would just stand up there on the stacks as he laid out the bundles with his fork. Those stacks were not as easy to build as they looked, but they sure held up against the rain" (Johnson 1978; Main 1927-28:308; Hager 1975:25-8). As late as 1925, stack threshing remained the norm among Norwegians in both these areas and in southwest Wisconsin.

The process of change that marks the dynamism of traditional culture in contexts of developing industrialization is one of reorganization and adjustment to contemporary situations. The popularity of grain stacking in the middle decades of the nineteenth- century reflects its relevance to the cultural heritages of Midwestern farm families and the availability of competent stack builders. The form and style of the stacks resemble Old World antecedents, but also include modifications in design and placement due to the use of mechanical grain separators powered by horse sweep and treadmill devices. Changes in the technologies employed by threshermen motivated a sweeping change in harvest patterns to accommodate the availability and speed of innovative machinery. Farmers did not discontinue stacking until they first decided on another method, one that they believed would be a more efficient way of conducting the harvest, and coordinated their activities with the agricultural cycles of their neighbors. Stacking was thus more than a technique for storing unthreshed grain; it connoted a cycle of harvest, of labor and social relations, and of farm management. Decisions to continue older patterns due to environmental demands or cultural propensities did not denote the rejection of technological advances in other agricultural tasks. Rather, traditional cultural practices continued through an ability to modify the use of new technologies within culturally familiar patterns.

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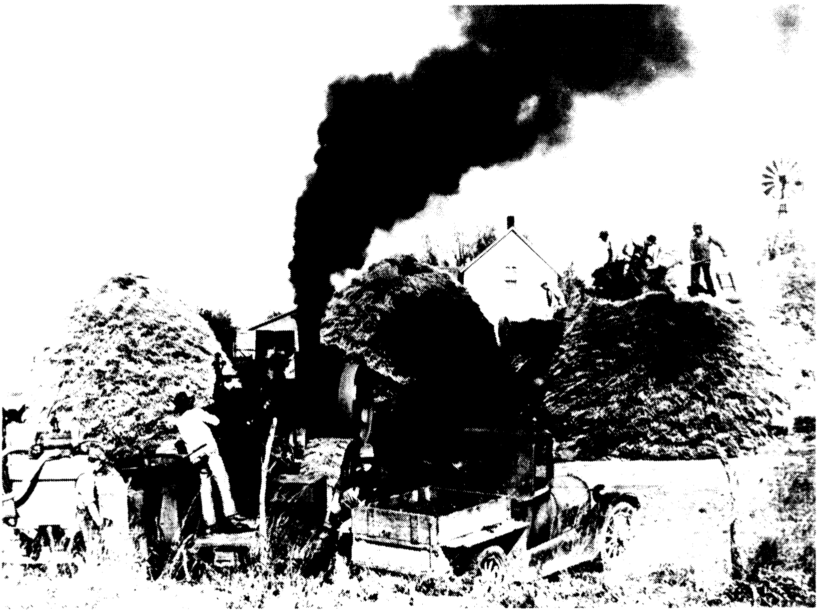

Figure 1. Stack threshing in northeast Missouri, ca. 1925, with grain separator set between stacks. Credit: State Historical Society of Missouri.

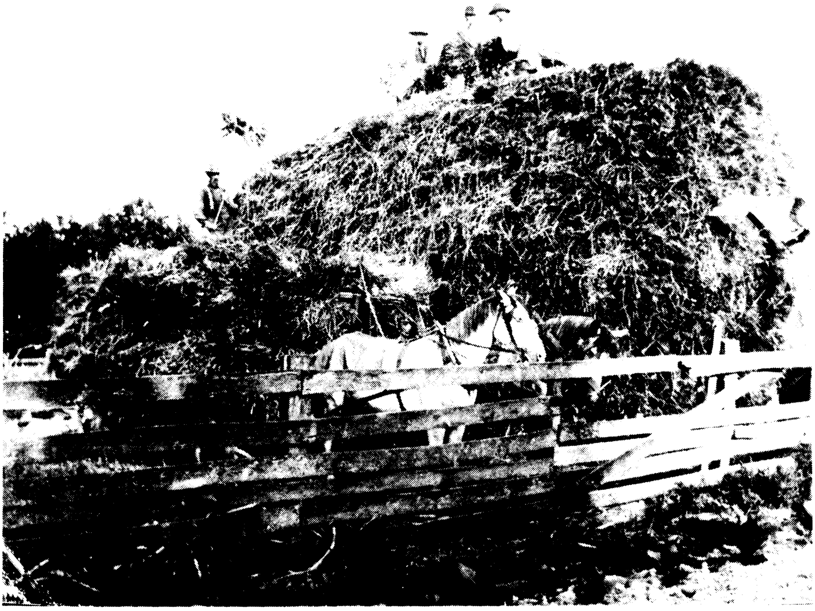

Figure 2. Building a grain rick in central Ohio, ca. 1900.

Casă Frumoasă: An Introduction to The House Beautiful in Rural Romania

JAN HAROLD BRUNVAND

Despite the inevitable changes that folk traditions undergo, both in the natural course of person-to-person transmission and as a result of being reproduced for wider consumption, much may still be preserved in a culture full of old ways and crafts handed down from one generation to the next, always absorbing or developing new themes in each succeeding period. Thus, the traveler in The Socialist Republic of Romania who has the time and inclination to leave the planned tour and walk (or even just drive slowly) through the village streets, will find that sometimes weddings, funerals, and festivals there are occasions for traditional costuming, song, and dance; that women and girls still spin, weave, sew, and embroider some of their own clothing and household textiles; that men still carve and decorate wooden tools, gateposts, or cheese molds; that village potters still sit at their wheels creating pieces in the regional ceramic styles; and that other artisans may be making leather coats, belts, or vests, building furniture, manufacturing barrels, baskets, or musical instruments, and (in a few rare instances) painting icons on glass.

While no modern Romanian village is a beehive of traditional activity with virtually every need of daily life supplied by the local folk, at the same time, hardly a village in Romania is without its vestiges of such traditional production, most of them revealing various accommodations to modern times, whether in the use of new materials (such as chemical rather than vegetal dyes) or of new techniques (such as sewing machines in place of needle and thread). A prime example of the survival and resiliency of tradition in contemporary Romanian