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## THE Mountain People

had settled in the Blue Ridge long before the United State gained its independence. They followed the Great Wagon Road from Lancaster, Pennsylvania to the Shenandoah Valley all the way south to Roanoke, Virginia—Big Lick as it was called back then. And they settled in the mountain hollows and in the valleys. Some took the Wilderness Road into Tennessee and Kentucky. Others continued south along the Great Wagon Road into the Carolinas and Georgia. They had brought with them a rich cultural tradition and lived somehow apart from the rest of the country. Their communities were woven tightly, almost clannish. They were staunch Presbyterians, many later becoming Baptists, who fought as patriots during the American Revolution, and were extremely distrustful of government. And then during the Progressive Era, five hundred families in Virginia were ripped from their land and placed in resettlement villages by the state and federal government. And the Mountain People would never forget. *continued on page 14*



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COVER PHOTO ILLUSTRATION by DOUG DOBEY



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## HIDDEN HISTORIES

# Virginia Is For Lovers But Not Loving

by JACK R. JOHNSON



**V**IRGINIA'S MOTTO may be Virginia is for lovers, but for a long time there was a qualifier to that happy phrase. You had to be of the same race. In fact, it wasn't until as late as 1958 that the case that made interracial marriages illegal in Virginia was thrown out.

Two Supreme Court cases operate as bookends for the story of interracial marriage in the United States. The first case that established the legality of so called interracial laws was *Pace vs. Alabama*. In this case, a young interracial couple from Alabama were not allowed to marry and thus were formally charged with living together "in a state of adultery or fornication" and both sentenced to two years imprisonment in the state penitentiary in 1882. They appealed to the Alabama Supreme court and lost with the court writing that:

*"The evil tendency of the crime [of adultery or fornication] is greater when committed between persons of the two races ... Its result may be the amalgamation of the two races, producing a mongrel population and a degraded civilization, the prevention of which is dictated by a sound policy affecting the highest interests of society and government."*

Yes, they really wrote that.

The *Pace* decision operated as the basis for other discriminatory laws based across the country. In 1924 the state of Virginia passed the infamous Racial Integrity Act that required that a racial description of every person be recorded at birth, and felonized marriage between white persons and non-white persons.

It wasn't until three quarters of a century later, that the case of *Lovings vs. Virginia* overturned The Racial Integrity Act in Virginia and opened the way for legal interracial marriages across the nation.

Here's the back story. Richard Loving was white; his wife, Mildred, was black. In 1958, they went to Washington, D.C. — where interracial marriage was legal — to get married. But when they returned home, they were arrested, jailed for one year that was suspended under condition that they be banished from the state for 25 years for violating the state's Racial Integrity Act.

To avoid jail, the Lovings agreed to leave Virginia and relocate to DC.

For five years, the Lovings lived in DC, where Richard worked as a bricklayer. The couple had three children. Yet they longed to return home to their family and friends in Caroline County, VA. So in 1963 they contacted the ACLU asked for help.

According to Bernard Cohen, the ACLU intern they contacted, "[The Lovings] were very simple people, who were not interested in winning any civil rights principle. They just were in love with one another and wanted the right to live together as husband and wife in Virginia, without any interference from officialdom." Cohen said "When I told Richard that this case was, in all likelihood, going to go to the Supreme Court of the United States, he became wide-eyed and his jaw dropped." For someone shy of the spotlight, Richard Lovings had a right to be hesitant. The case attracted massive attention, but in the end was phenomenally successful. Not only did the United States Supreme Court maintain the validity of the Lovings' marriage, they declared Virginia's anti-miscegenation statute, the "Racial Integrity Act of 1924," unconstitutional, thereby overturning *Pace v. Alabama* and ending all race-based legal restrictions on marriage in the United States.

Ironically, still more fame was to come Richard Lovings way: A movie for television was made in 1996 dramatizing the story of the Lovings and the court case that made interracial marriage a possibility for anyone in this country. And a new movie, Jeff Nichols' film *Loving*, based on the same story, is set to appear this month in theaters across the country. **NR**





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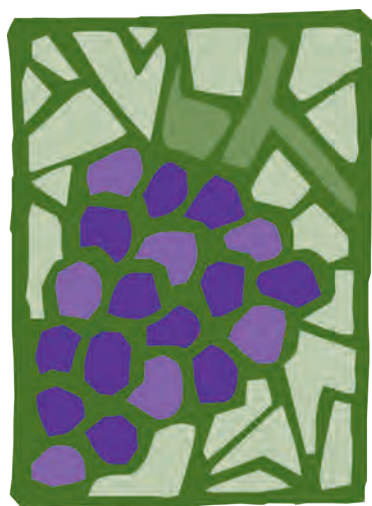
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**COMING SOON**

## A New Eatery on MacArthur

by **CHARLES MCGUIGAN**

**T**HE OWNERS OF DOT'S Back Inn, long-time restaurateurs Jimmy Tsamouras and his wife, Daniella, are planning to open a new restaurant just across MacArthur Avenue in the former home of Omega Grecian Restaurant. The new restaurant, slated to open by mid-December, will be called Demi's (after the Tsamouras' five-year-old daughter) Mediterranean Grill.

On Election Day morning, Jimmy was in the restaurant busily surveying both the kitchen and the front of the house, taking notes on a legal pad. Daniella plans to brighten up the dining area with a new more vibrant paint job. "As we go along we'll make more changes."

Jimmy takes a call on his smartphone. He nods, smiles. Then says, "If you're not moving, you're standing still, and it's always important to keep moving."

"We want to make Demi's, like Dot's, a neighborhood restaurant, nothing generic," says Jimmy when he gets off the phone. The new restaurant will feature Greek, Italian, some Spanish-influenced dishes, along with cuisine from Lebanon and other Middle Eastern countries. "It will allow us to feature various specials using lamb, veal and even whole fish," Jimmy says. "We'll do classic Greek dishes like spanakopita and pastitsio, and Italian marsalas and piccatas."

Entrees will be reasonably priced between twelve and twenty dollars, with specials between fourteen and twenty-eight dollars. They will also feature a host of mezzes and other Mediterranean-inspired food.

Jimmy was born into the restaurant business. His parents owned restaurants in Williamsburg and Yorktown, and Jimmy graduated from the Culinary Institute of America in New York, Hyde Park/Poughkeepsie in 1992.

A number of years back Dot's Back Inn was featured on the Food Network's Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives. "That let the world know about us," Jimmy told me a few years back. "Dot's has become more of a Richmond name rather than just a Northside name."

Which, I suspect, will happen with Demi's Mediterranean Grill. **[NJ]**



# Christmas on MacArthur Avenue

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**Parade Includes Bill Bevins, Jonathan the Juggler, Holton students, Police, Firefighters, U.S. Marines, Still Runnin' Hot Rods, Nutzy, All Saints School Choir, John Marshall Marching Band, St. Andrew's Legion Pipes & Drums, St. Nick, and much more! Plus, Crafts Vendors.**



# 12th Annual Christmas on MacArthur



Above, top to bottom:  
Saint Andrew's Legion Pipes & Drums.  
Last year's king and queen with Principal David Hudson.  
Bringing up the rear of the parade, Santa and his elf.

**G**ET A HEAD START on holiday cheer with Christmas on MacArthur, a day of family fun that benefits Toys for Tots. Christmas on MacArthur

has become one of the largest single donors to Toys for Tots—the U.S. Marine Corps annual toy drive. What's more every toy donated locally is given to a local child in need. This year's Christmas on MacArthur runs from 11 till 4 pm on Saturday, December 10 in Bellevue on Richmond's Northside.

Appearing live on the MacArthur Avenue stage directly after the parade will be The MelBays from 12:45 to 1:15, The Taters from 1:30 to 2:00, and Janet Martin from 2:15 to 2:45. The massive professional stage the musical artists perform on comes courtesy of Main Stage Productions and Lee Johnson, a close friend of Jimmy Tsamouras of Dot's Back Inn. The sound system is from David Schieferstein who also operates it.

Christmas on MacArthur kicks off with the Santa Parade down the center of the 4000 block of MacArthur Avenue.

Bill Bevins, the voice of the Soft AC Morning Show on Easy 100.9 FM, will again emcee the parade. Among the participants in this year's parade are Jonathan the Juggler, students of Holton Elementary, John Marshall High School marching band, Linwood Holton Principal David Hudson, live alpacas, Ring Dog rescue, ACCA Shriners, Richmond police and firefighters, U.S. Marines, Saint Andrew's Legion Pipes & Drums, Holton Safety Patrol, North Richmond YMCA's Indian Princesses Cayuga Tribe joined by their brother tribe the Mighty Waccamaws, Holton Band, antique cars, hotrods and trucks from Still Runnin' Magazine Car Club, and, of course, a visit from St. Nick. He'll be listening to kids Christmas wishes throughout the day, following the parade.

Christmas on MacArthur also offers great holiday shopping opportunities.

*IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE AS A VENDOR AT CHRISTMAS ON MACARTHUR, PLEASE CONTACT TERI PHIPPS AT (804) 310-7710, or EMAIL HER AT FireweedRVA@gmail.com*

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Scores of vendors will be on hand with their handmade arts and crafts, all locally made, one-of-a-kind products, which make perfect Christmas gifts.

None of this would be possible without the hard work and commitment of David Hudson of Holton Elementary, the Bellevue Merchants Association, Jimmy Tsamouras of Dot's Back Inn, Mike LaBelle, Chris and Cecelia Rich of Rich's Stitches, Bob Kocher of Once Upon A Vine, Teri Phipps and David Schieferstein, Amy Foxworthy and Josh Carlton of the mill on MacArthur, Claire McGowan of Stir Crazy, Bobby Shore and Rich Richardson of Decatur's Garage, Joe Stankus of Classic Touch Cleaning, Chris Egghart, John Whiting, Larry Brown, and scores of other volunteers too numerous to name.

This event is sponsored each year by the Bellevue Merchants Association, North of the James magazine and Holton Elementary School.



## Concert Ballet of Virginia's 41st Performance of The Nutcracker

For 40 years now Concert Ballet of Virginia has presented Richmond's most beloved rendition of The Nutcracker. Under the guidance of Scott Boyer, this classic has become a Richmond holiday tradition. The Nutcracker Suite, an abbreviated 45-minute version of the ballet perfect for younger audiences, will be performed December 6 at Williamsburg Regional Library. The full Nutcracker Ballet will be performed at Monacan High School in Chesterfield County on December 12 and 13, and at Atlee High School in Hanover County on December 19 and 20. Adults, \$24; children and seniors \$20. Please call (804) 798-0945. **N3**



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# Henrico Sheriff Kept UFO Sighting a Secret for 30 Years

by DALE M. BRUMFIELD



**D**URING A QUIET 1996 Christmas dinner at the Seafarers Restaurant in Williamsburg, former Henrico County Sheriff A.D. “Toby” Mathews suddenly blurted out to his former deputy, Patrick Haley, and Haley’s wife, Brenda, that 30 years earlier, he had seen a UFO hovering over his house and that it killed his dog. It happened in 1966, and he could no longer keep it a secret.

The Haleys were stunned, to say the least.

Mathews’ sighting came during a three-year epidemic of UFO sightings and encounters by law enforcement and private citizens. From November, 1964 until mid-1967 over 9,000 UFO sightings from all over the country were reported to the Air Force’s Project Blue Book at Ohio’s Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. In Virginia, dozens of reports of various flying discs and mysterious lights came from Norfolk, Wallops Island,

Staunton, Waynesboro, Roanoke, South Boston and Buchanan. In Fishersville, a huge craft resembling an 85-ft-tall beehive was reported by a Harrisonburg gunsmith named Horace Burns and by a busload of Woodrow Wilson High School students.

UFO sightings became so common that House Republican Leader Gerald Ford formally demanded a Congressional hearing and an investigation into the phenomenon. Celebrities Arthur Godfrey, Stuart Whitman, Sammy Davis Jr., and Johnny Carson all spoke of their UFO experiences on national television.

Sheriff Mathews was a very credible witness. Known to everyone as Toby, he started his law enforcement career as a patrolman with the Henrico Police in March of 1958, then rose to lieutenant by 1969. His career spanned uniform operations, communications and SWAT prior to becoming a commander in the criminal investigations division. Three years after his retirement from the police force, in 1992, he

was elected Henrico sheriff

Toby was not the only Richmond area resident to have sighted a UFO at that time. During the spring and summer of 1966, almost a dozen people, including three area police officers, reported similar objects hovering over the city, as well as Henrico and Goochland counties.

Richmond patrolman William L. Stevens Jr. told the former Richmond News Leader that two months prior to Mathews’ experience he had chased a 100-foot long, dirigible-shaped object 100 feet long at 3:30 a.m. in his patrol car. “If I live to be a hundred, I’ll never forget it,” the former Officer stated in a July 21, 1966 interview of his cat-and-mouse pursuit.

In 1999, Mathews recalled his UFO experience to the News Leader. It occurred August 1966, at about 10:30 p.m., just after he returned home to his family farm on Charles City Road in Varina.

Mathews said that after going into the

house his German shepherd, which was chained in the backyard, began barking loudly, so he went outside to investigate. Mathews untied the dog, which then ran to a nearby cornfield.

“I happened to look up and there was that UFO right above the cornfield ... hovering right up above the power lines about 200 feet in the air,” Mathews said. He described the UFO as white, about 30 feet in diameter and about four or five feet wide at its widest point in the center. The object made no sound and emitted no light.

Mathews said he rushed into his house to get a flashlight, and when he returned and shined it on the craft, the UFO turned slightly, released a burst of white light and “took off like a bullet, tremendously fast.”

Mathews retied his agitated dog and slept fitfully after his experience. He arose about five the next morning and went out to untie the dog. The shepherd ran off, but when he did not return, Mathews went looking and minutes later found him dead in the middle of the road. He said the dog “did not have a mark on him,” and his collar was lying nearby still clasped, as if someone took the time to remove it then hook it back together. Noting there had been not one car on that remote private road that early in the morning, he was sure it was a presence in the UFO that killed his dog.

Officer Stevens urged Mathews to notify the media about his experience. He declined to do so, as he was living alone at the time, and there were no other witnesses, so he kept quiet for 30 years.

“The way [Mathews] told it was so specific and he was dead serious, he wasn’t joking,” Haley told the News Leader in 1999, adding that he recalled a slightly different version in which Mathews said that his dead dog appeared to have been cooked.

Mathews denied that his dog had been cooked, but did stress that he “... did see [a UFO] ... I really don’t know what it was.”

Toby Mathews died in 2013 after a lengthy illness in a Richmond nursing home. **NJ**



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# THE *Mountain People*

## YOU HAVE TO FEEL THE MOUNTAINS

to know the mountains. See the mountains to love them. These Blue Ridge, these Alleghenies—the Appalachians. The very earth crumpled like the largest comforter in creation, as if all it would take is one mighty tug to flatten the creases, erase from the land every depression and elevation, iron out each ridge until the scape laid down like a great central plain of patchwork uniformity. Our mountains are sacred. Just before noon on this very late summer day, the first week of September I stand beneath a cascade of foaming water dropped fifty feet out of the side of a mountain, gurgling, it seems, from a mouth of solid rock. And I swim in the pool under a thin curtain of water, swim until my heart freezes in my chest. These mountains, an endless sea of them, stretching, I know, from Maine into Georgia are the vertebrae of the East. They're unmovable and in their bare outcroppings you can read in the strata every geologic chapter of our world—ten thousand years of sediment to create less than one inch of a mountain that rises three thousand feet into the sky. To know these mountains, you have to crawl through these mountains, sometimes on hands and knees, scaling their flanks through a fur of trees and mountain laurel, clinging to each follicle of branch and vine and root as if you're riding the hindquarters of some gigantic beast intent on throwing you. To know these mountains you must know their people. Those who settled here and scratched out a living in the rocky earth, planting terraced farms to cradle precious topsoil.

I thread my way through the mountains slowly, heading up to Blacksburg, frequently getting out of the car to hike a mountain trail, so when I arrive at the office of Katrina Powell, a professor of rhetoric at Virginia Tech, my shirt is streaked with mud and my Converse are caked with red clay.

Katrina tells me the story of The Mountain People. Just a little over 80 years ago, the most scenic drive in America opened to the public. It would eventually become 469 miles of asphalt and concrete, a continuous ribbon of roadway from the Shenandoah Mountains in Virginia to the Great Smoky Mountains in North Carolina. Some 20 million people drive along the Blue Ridge Parkway every year, making it the most visited of all the National Park Service's holdings.

But not everyone celebrated the birth of that section of the Blue Ridge Parkway called Skyline Drive. There are more than a few Virginians who remember what happened back in the 1930s as the government took their lands, burned their homes, and forced them into resettlement communities.

"I grew up in Madison County which is one of the counties that donated land to Shenandoah National Park during the 1930s," says Katrina. "I heard lots of stories about families who had been displaced during that time, they lost their homes in order to form this beautiful park. There were horrible stories about people losing their homes, homes being burned in front of them, being forced out, forced to live in plac-

es that they didn't necessarily want to live."

Government, when it's up to no good, or when it's trying to hide something insidious from the public, has the twisted tendency of abusing language. To get its way, government does the unthinkable, it changes the very meaning of words. And all too often the new meaning is the exact opposite of the original meaning. Consider the word donate.

"Mountain families during the twenties and early thirties were asked to quote, unquote, donate their land," Katrina says. "But some families who did not want to leave their homes, their homes had been in their families for generations or they had no means to leave. They did give some families government assistance through Farm Security Administration."

But anyone who resisted the government's desire was pegged as a sort of enemy of the state. "They were deemed not quote, unquote, a good citizen and they might not receive the assistance that was available to some other folks," Katrina explains.

If you played ball with the government, you were called a good citizen, if you disagreed in any way with the government, they called you something else. "They were deemed uncooperative, argumenta-

tive, resistant by government officials," says Katrina. "I did see one letter that referred to them as the worst class of citizen that exists."

Most all of these people were of Scots-Irish descent, who'd began arriving in America en masse back in the early seventeen hundreds coming through Philadelphia and Dover, Delaware. They were the border people from Scotland who'd been transplanted by the British to Ulster in an attempt to wrest the land from the Irish.

In the United States the Scots-Irish migrated to the west, to the hills and the mountains, and then south down the Great Wagon Road. For generations these mountain people lived full, creative lives that were family-centered. But then in the late 1800s the popular press began depicting them as something less than human—hillbilly became the word of choice in describing these people.

By the 1930s there was a movement afoot called eugenics. The objective of this pseudo-science, later embraced by Nazi Germany, was to socially engineer society, weeding out those who were deemed undesirable. It was a highly paternalistic attitude and was endorsed by institutions of higher learning. Eugenics was considered the wave of the future: It promised to bring the entire country a step closer to utopia.

"At that moment in history at University of Virginia there was a professor there who taught eugenics and one of his students was a woman who went to teach in the hills of Madison County," Katrina says. "People thought she had just come to teach."

In fact, the reason she was there was much more sinister. "She was conducting a eugenics study and her research was then used by sociologists to write a book called 'Hollow Folks,' which was published in 1930 and described people in very derogatory terms but terms that were accepted in sociology at the time," Katrina says. "Terms like feeble-minded and imbecile."

Labelling the people who inhabited the mountains of Virginia—the hollow folks—as feeble-minded and subhuman gave the government the ammunition it needed to take their land.

In Katrina's book, "Answer at Once," there are many letters written by people whose world was about to change forever. The Corbins, the Nicholsons, the Lambs, the Davises, the Shifletts, the Jewells and the Jenkins, the Meadows and the Taylors, and scores of others. Reading the actual words of these families who were displaced, these pleading words, these carefully chosen words, would break the heart of a man made of stone. But they had no apparent effect

BY CHARLES MCGUIGAN



# BETRAYED BY THEIR NATION



on the bureaucrats who had a vision for the land these families possessed. And as their power grew, the bureaucrats changed the rules. They did it all under the guise of eminent domain, that crouching beast that seems set to pounce with increasing frequency.

"Families were misled," Katrina says. "At first families who were told that they'd be able to stay there. Families got conservation easements along Blue Ridge Parkway. Their land would become government property, but they would continue to live there."

Just after FDR was sworn into office, a new secretary of the interior was appointed, and everything changed in an instant. He viewed the mountain people as unsightly, blemishes on the landscape. "He decided all people had to be removed," says Katrina. "This class of people had to be removed from Skyline Drive so people who came down from Washington to tour the park wouldn't have to see the poor people. It was all because one man thought they were a blight on society, the way they looked, the clothes they wore, the fact that their children didn't wear shoes, the fact that maybe their children's faces were dirty.

It seemed that being poor had become a crime of some sort, and though some of these mountain people may have been poor, they were anything but impoverished. They'd carved farms out of the rocky soil, and had learned to subsist off the land. They picked huckleberries in season, pickled Jerusalem artichokes, tracked wild mushrooms, and hunted raccoon, possum and pleasantly fat ground hog. And they made moonshine, a perfectly legitimate pursuit until Prohibition came along. After Prohibition, moonshining became illegal, giving authorities yet another means of denigrating the mountain people.

"Well not a few years before that moonshining was not illegal," Katrina says. "That's the way families made their living and it was not illegal, and then suddenly it was illegal. And moonshiners were looked down upon as criminals."

Governments cringe when certain groups of people are fiercely independent. In autocracies and other totalitarian forms, the military is employed. In democracies and republics, law is leveled against the nonconformist. And bureaucrats, armed with their functionary power, take aim. The objective is

to make the independent become submissive and dependent. That's what happened in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains.

"And in controlling people's lives that way, certain political agendas are arrived at," says Katrina. "One day they were free to wander the mountains with their sort of agreements with their neighbors. You can have my dead wood on my land, if I can come pick your berries. Whatever kind of bartering agreements people made with each other. Then suddenly that became illegal. From one day to the next people didn't change, how they lived, and how they would subsist didn't change, but this law made it illegal to do the things that they would normally do. It's an enormous kind of power to have over people, and if you take away their independence, and you take away their ability to take care of themselves, if they couldn't grow their potatoes anymore because suddenly that's against the law, then they become dependent on the government, and then they become looked at as not worthy citizens because they depend on the relief."

An entire society that had thrived for more than two centuries was destroyed for good and all in a matter of a few years. In some cases the mountain people were moved into "resettlement housing". Resettlement was the same word Hitler would use a few years later when he transplanted European Jews. Even with resettlement housing available to some of the mountain people, there were no guarantees. And their local economy was permanently turned on its ear. Things would never be the same again.

"Well there were seven resettlement communities formed where the federal government bought land out in the surrounding communities and built tract housing," Katrina says. "But, if you didn't meet certain financial requirements, which a lot of them didn't because they were subsistence farmers, then you were not able to get a federal loan and move into resettlement housing. And there were a couple of cases where someone was able to get a resettlement home so they lost their home in the mountains moved into a resettlement home, but were in fact not able to keep up the loan payments to the government and lost that home as well."

In very short order, almost five hundred families were uprooted from their communities, communities their forbears had settled over two hundred years before. In some cases their homes were burned as they watched. Katrina Powell tells me about one photograph that captures the spirit of this displacement. It was taken by federal agents to document the stubbornness of the mountain people.

"There's this photograph of a woman named Leslie Jenkins who was Walter Jenkins' wife and they were being forced from their home and she refused to leave as some people did," says Katrina. "And in the photographs two federal agents are carrying this woman. You can see that her feet are off the ground, her feet are behind her, and her home is in the back-

ground. And the story is that they burnt it to the ground. And some furniture is out and you can see furniture out in the yard and they burn the house right in front of her. And you can't really tell in the photograph, but I learned later by interviewing some of her grandchildren and great nieces that she's seven months pregnant in that photograph."

Eighty years ago, no one came to the defense of the mountain people. They were on their own, a people without a voice that could be heard in Washington. What's more, the government silenced them and caused them to feel shame when they did resist. Katy tells me about that small woman who stood up to feds, planted her feet in front of her home and stood defiant as a mountain. Leslie Jenkins. The woman who refused to leave her home.

"When I interviewed her family members they told me they had driven her up to the park's archives and asked that they not let anyone else get a copy of that photograph because she was so ashamed of it," says Katrina.

The heroic actions of Leslie Jenkins were reduced to something like common criminality. She was portrayed as an enemy of the public good, as were others who challenged authority.

After the interview, I drive up the Shenandoah Valley and make my way to a place called Ida Valley. It's a Saturday night, late, when I finally settle in for the night. It's not a campground but a thick woods at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains, on the bank of a creek where tall sycamores grow, their bark white as bleached bone. I fall asleep listening to crickets and something that could be a coyote. All night long, filtering in and out of my dreams, I keep hearing that coyote, and when my eyes open in the darkness I can see moonlight on the white bark of the sycamores.

After breakfast, I come upon three men who are rolling out an old tin roof with metallic paint. One man wears a silver work shirt the same color as the roof with a tag stitched on the pocket that says John. There's another man, lean and much younger than John, probably in his fifties, who has rust red hair and the features of a hawk. And the third man, the one who owns the house, is dressed in a white shirt and tie and dark slacks supported by suspenders. It is, after all, Sunday. This man named Carson Cornelius Aleshire has watched the sun rise over the Blue Ridge Mountains and set over Massanutten every day of his life.

"I was born and raised about a mile west of Stanley at the bottom of Zion Hill," he says. "I was born February the twelfth, 'twenty-three."

When I ask him about the resettlement village he nods his head, then points to the mountain behind him. "They burnt them all out of there and built this Homestead over here," says Carson. "You need to talk to Ora Meadows."

Ora Meadows lives not more than half-mile away in one of the tract houses the government built when



his father's land was stolen. Carson tells me Ora's father came from so far up a hollow that the Presbyterians there handled snakes, and the lone Episcopalian spoke in tongues.

Ora's house is a brick rancher that sits on a hilltop surrounded by farmland. His daughter Betty invites me in and I take a seat in their living room next to a man whose eyes are the color of a bright autumn sky. When he tells me his age I am fairly in awe.

"I am one hundred and two," Ora tells me. "And I grew up in Madison County up by Syria—the first big hollow over in Syria. My dad lived at the head of that hollow. They taking everything down a quarter of mile below us. Tell you how nasty and dirty they were they picked his nicest poplar. Cut it all down."

Ora tells me one story after another about what it was like growing up in the mountains before the time of displacement. He tells me that even when money was scarce a family could eke out a living.

"We'd pick huckleberries," he says. "They never did get cheap, even during the Depression, a dollar and a quarter a gallon. And back then you could catch coons, possums and things like that and get right much money out of them. That's the way the old man would get money for to buy a coat for their children. Possum, coon and a bear would go through once a while. And wild hogs. You wouldn't find a wild hog in that mountain now. Yes, sir, boy, it was dangerous too. I shot one for my uncle that weighed three hundred and twenty pounds, I think. He had plenty of meat and he sold the lard and the meat to a man in the mountain and the man who bought that said the lard never did get hard."

He talks about other meats that were once plentiful in the hollows. "Possum's good meat," he says, then, smiling, adds, "But ground hog. Yes, boy. Only get him in the fall when he's real nice and fat and you take a ground hog he's just fat as he can be around September and October and you boil him until he's tender, then take him out, put him in a bread pan, dress him off like you would a roast, and brown him up real nice and take the fat and trim it off. Ground hog's the best meat."

Ora Meadows also learned how to make moonshine, clear as mountain water, from his father.

"When we couldn't get no work nowhere, nearly everybody in there had a still for whiskey," Ora says. "I got pretty good with it myself. I used to sometimes haul a whole car load down around Somerset and Orange. I never could do no good with Culpeper."

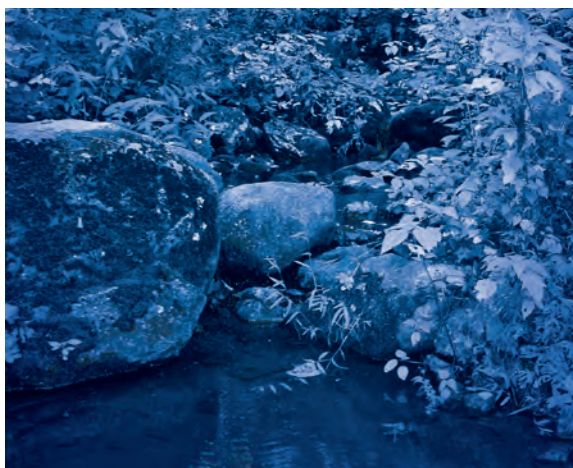
"You made it yourself," I ask. "You made whiskey? Or white lightning?"

"Moonshine, moonshine," Betty says as she brings us two glasses of iced tea, sweetened.

Ora then gives me the recipe for some of the best moonshine ever made.

"The way I made it, I had to take six bushels of corn and grain at a time, and put down two big hogsheads," he says. "You had to cook it. Wheat and corn made an awful good drink. You cooked the corn first, then after that cooked good, you hardly ever got the wheat into after dinner."

"Then you heat it up again and put cornmeal in it and then you'd have to cool that down, you had to use a thermometer then, I always took it down to about fifty-five degrees."



"What do you do after you've got that mash?" I ask.

"Well, it sets two to three days, sometimes a week and you run it and you had to run nine stills full before you could double it," he says. "Half of the people used plain raw sugar. I didn't use no sugar."

We drink tea together, while Betty is making dinner. He remembers when the federal agents pushed the people out of their homes and then set the homes on fire while the people watched. It all happened so quickly, no one could believe it. "You never see the front of anything until it's too late," says Ora.

"I don't guess they ever trusted the government again," I say.

"Nope," says Ora. "And they ain't to this day."

As I'm leaving their home, talking with Betty at the front door, Ora calls out to me. "The Indians were treated the worse of any people that's ever been in North America," he says. "Don't you think so?" And I nod.

I head over the mountain to Wolfstown, and park my car at the end of a road that runs parallel to the headwaters of the Rapidan River. What Ora had told me earlier, what Katrina Powell told me the day before, was a chapter of the New Deal that I'd never heard a thing about. It was a raw deal for the hundreds of families who were uprooted from communities settled before America gained its independence. What happened to them amounted to a kind of cultural genocide.

The sky is blue and cloudless. Cicadas still ratchet, clinging to summer. And the leaves haven't flushed with fall yet, but they've lost their green vibrancy. They seem to have given up, and are on their way out. They look dry. They look spent, as if they've lived too hard and too fast. Heat and passion will do that sometimes.

I've still got four hours of sunlight left. Maybe a little more. I hike uphill with a sleeping bag and a back pack, carrying bare essentials. These woods are old and at times the canopy is so thick the sun can't penetrate the shield of foliage. I follow the course of the Rapidan until I find its source high up in the mountain.

I take a trail that descends into a valley and then up another mountain. This hike is almost straight up. When I reach a flat spot, I sit on a boulder, drink water and look out on the mountains that surround me like a frozen sea. From this altitude the ridge lines are a radiant blue. As I continue upward I pass through a long tunnel created by mountain laurel that must be a hundred years old. I cross a small stream and wade in the icy water, then scale an almost sheer bluff at the top of which I find Jones Mountain Cabin.

It is two-story of log with a large stone chimney and a porch on the front elevation. The sun is close on setting and the sky turns velvety blue. Even before the sun has completely departed far to the west, the stars begin coming out and the moon, full and silver,

very old-looking, cratered and creased, rises with the speed of a helium balloon.

Because the door to the cabin is locked I sleep on the porch. I have a small Coleman lantern and a flask of bourbon. I don't drink the bourbon neat, I mix it with water. Here I am truly alone with my thoughts that crowd in on me like stars filling the night sky.

I know this about the cabin: it was rebuilt in the early 1900's by a moonshiner named Harvey Nicholson. When he took possession of the cabin all that was left of it was a stone chimney. And this, too: the Jones cabin was the only cabin that wasn't burned down by government agents when they cleared the mountain people out of their homes to make way for Shenandoah National Park. The only reason the cabin wasn't burnt was because it was so remote the government people couldn't find it.

I know too that before this mountain was settled by Scott Irish immigrants in the 1720 it had been home to successive tribes of American Indians for 12,000 years.

Those are things I know. Facts.

There is no wind, nor insect sound, only the night and the stars and moon.

Here's what I know: Dispossession is part of the very nature of our universe. I am witnessing, in the sky, right this second, a star burning out like a cinder and with it the planets that once followed it, clung to it like children.

One religion dispossesses another. One is overpowered by another until the old one slips into myth status. God knows what we'll believe in ten thousand years from now.

Cultures displace one another, sometimes in the comparative blink of an eye through extermination, other times slowly through assimilation.

And one generation dispossesses another. Almost as soon as our children are walking, they begin displacing us, steadily but surely. We all become irrelevant as the relevance of the next generation exceeds our own. The earth becomes theirs as we near the time when we return to the earth.

And within our own lives we displace ourselves. We may be one thing when we're in our twenties, and something entirely different a decade later. Sometimes we displace ourselves rapidly, three or four times a year, leaving behind the former self like the discarded husk of a crayfish. Other times the change is slow as the mineral displacement of petrified wood. At the end of it our former self is no more. Yet that former self is not gone entirely. Something still remains.

I don't drift off until three in the morning as I'm eyeing the leaves of the trees overhead that frame the stars in a sort of filigree. Dispossession is inevitable. All of it. And knowing this I understand that every moment counts for something, each memory, no matter how small. And that our actions can be tempered with compassion. Again, each one, no matter how small. This is what I'm thinking as I fall asleep on the porch of a cabin that escaped displacement, though its inhabitants weren't so fortunate.

In the morning, my eyes open wide to a bright sun as a breeze sifts through the leaves and rattles them. The leaves are spent. You can see that. And then one leaf, perhaps unwillingly, snaps away from a twig. Just one leaf, and it drifts down through air that is now decidedly cool. **NR**





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## BOOK REVIEW

# How the Dead Give Life

by FRAN WITHROW

**S**ARAH GRAY WAS overjoyed to find out she was pregnant with twins in 2010. However, one twin, Thomas, was diagnosed in utero with anencephaly, a fatal illness in which part of the brain and skull does not develop, and the infant dies shortly after birth.

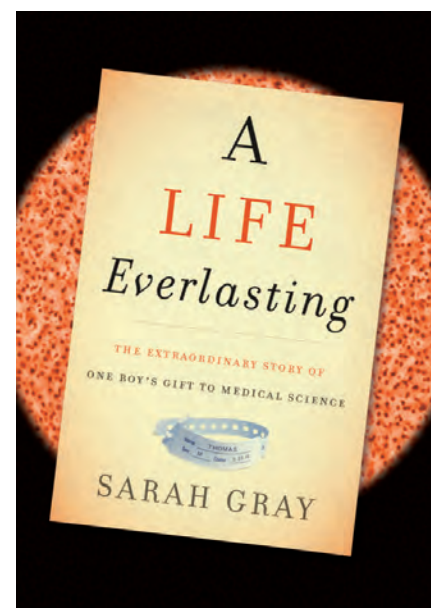
This was devastating news, but Gray and her husband decided to make sure that Thomas' short life counted for something. They chose to donate his body for research. She and her husband did so as a way of commemorating Thomas' life, while simultaneously welcoming the birth of his healthy twin brother, Callum.

This was not enough for Gray, whose gift of her son to science felt incomplete. Though she knew Thomas was helping others, she did not know exactly how. So she went on a quest to discover where her son's donated organs and tissues ended up. Her quest became this book: an insider's peek into organ donation, research laboratories, and cutting edge medical advances.

Gray began by asking to meet with researchers and found that, incredibly, no one had ever made this request before. She became a trailblazer: visiting researchers, touring their labs, learning what valuable work they were doing, and giving the laboratory staff members a face—Thomas—to put on the cells under their microscopes.

Gray discovered not only how Thomas' tissues were used, but also how critical viable, healthy human organs are for researchers. Some projects wait years for the arrival of appropriate human organs to advance their studies. One such researcher is Dr. Arupa Ganguly, who received Thomas' retinas for his studies of retinoblastoma, a rare cancer typically found in very young children. Healthy tissue, particularly from infants, is difficult to obtain. It is so valuable that some researchers only use part of what they receive, as scientists did with Thomas' liver, and freeze the rest for a later date. They don't know when, or if, they will ever get another sample.

Gray also gives examples of how re-



searchers, using donated whole bodies and tissues, have made crucial advances in the treatment of critical illnesses and disease. Her description of how Scotty Bolleter and a company called Vidacare used an infant donor to redesign a device for inserting IV's in critically ill children, as well as for teaching how to secure an airway in such tiny bodies, was riveting.

Bolleter waited an astounding eight years for a donor and the chance to prove that his device worked and could save lives.

Exploring what happens to donors, especially to Thomas, so profoundly changed Gray that she left her job and became director of communications for the American Association of Tissue Banks. She does not push anyone to become an organ donor, but her quote from Rebecca Cummings-Suppi, manager of tissue recovery and preservation at Gift of Life Donor Program in Philadelphia, summed it up for me.

"I don't believe in putting anything of value in the ground. Whether it's a diamond ring that can be passed down to another generation, or if it's tissue for transplant or research," she said. "That's how cures happen." **NE**

***A Life Everlasting:  
The Extraordinary Story of One  
Boy's Gift to Medical Science***  
by Sarah Gray  
HarperCollins, 288 pages, \$27.99

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION by DOUG DOBEY



## Chiocca's

by ANNE JONES

### ARE YOU THERE, GOD?

It's me, Anne. Please don't ever take Chiocca's away.

Please don't let fate, or progress, or zoning, or innovation, or expansion, or property sales, or rent increase, or slow business, or VCU, or anyone's bright ideas change a single thing about it. Keep it dark. Keep the mismatched chairs and old black and white mosaic tile floor. Keep every single picture that's been around for 60 years, without a hint of nostalgia. Keep the awkward bathroom arrangement. Keep all the signs exactly the same, especially the one that said "No soup for you" but was then covered up. Keep the menu. Keep the shrimp salad on the menu even though you haven't served it for years. Keep the no-questions-asked vibe when you walk through the door.

Most of all, keep the fare exactly the same. We don't need no stinkin' salads. We



need big nicely browned sub rolls. We need good ole NY-deli style sandwiches, with liverwurst, knockwurst, pastrami. We need a sandwich called The Dagwood and a sub called The Cold Cut, served hot. We do need Italian dressing and LTO on every sandwich. We need the pickle and chips with every sandwich. We need potato salad. We need a big fountain Coke with ice and the sign that says "Where Friends Meet."

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## RAINBOW MINUTES

by **BRIAN BURNS** and **JUDD PROCTOR**

### Joffrey Is Ballet



**T**HE MAN BEHIND THE infamous Joffrey Ballet Company is Robert Joffrey. Ballet was his world ever since his childhood in the 1930s, but he was too short to make it his career.

At sixteen, Joffrey met twenty-two-year-old Gerald Arpino, who became his lifelong domestic partner and his ballet company's resident choreographer.

Joffrey's gifts were many. As a superb director and teacher, he revived many neglected masterworks, and in pushing the boundaries he drew young audiences to the art form.

While others equated ballet with women, Joffrey's company staged ballets to showcase the sexual vitality and superb physical technique of male dancers.

In 1988, Joffrey died of AIDS. Yet his dance group remains one of America's most glorious cultural institutions.

### Obama's Words

When President Barack Obama spoke at the grand opening of the Smithsonian Museum of African American History & Culture on September 24, 2016, he quoted three gay icons.

The president kicked off his comments with the words of a famous writer. "James Baldwin once wrote," Obama said, "For while the tale of how we suffer, and how we are delighted, and how we may triumph is never new, it always must be heard."

Later, stressing the importance of African-American inclusion in society, Obama referenced the last line of a poem by Langston Hughes: "I too, am America."

African-Americans have shaped every aspect of our culture, Obama pointed out, reciting one of Walt Whitman's lines, "We are large, containing multitudes." This was taken from Whitman's poem, "Song of Myself."

### The Great Mademoiselle

Considered one of the greatest teachers of musical composition in the 20th century, Nadia Boulanger guided the careers of many of the most famous composers of her time. She was affectionately known as "Mademoiselle."

Born in France in 1887, she came from a long line of superbly-talented musicians, and began studying organ and composition at age ten.

During her distinguished career, she molded many gay composers such as

Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, Gian Carlo Menotti and Leonard Bernstein.

Mademoiselle was the first woman to conduct the Boston Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic and the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

In her dying days, her students comforted her by singing Mozart, Schubert and Schumann. In 1979, a newspaper headline read simply, "Mademoiselle Is No More." **NB**

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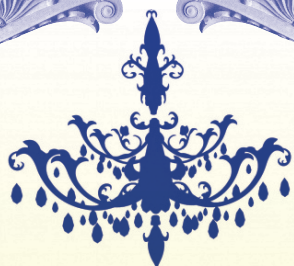
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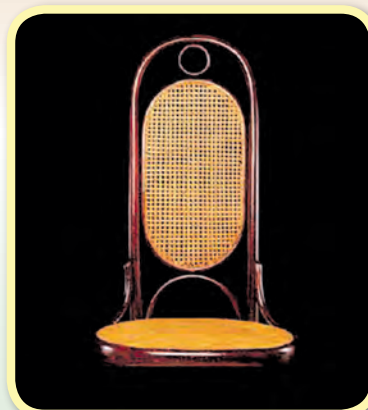
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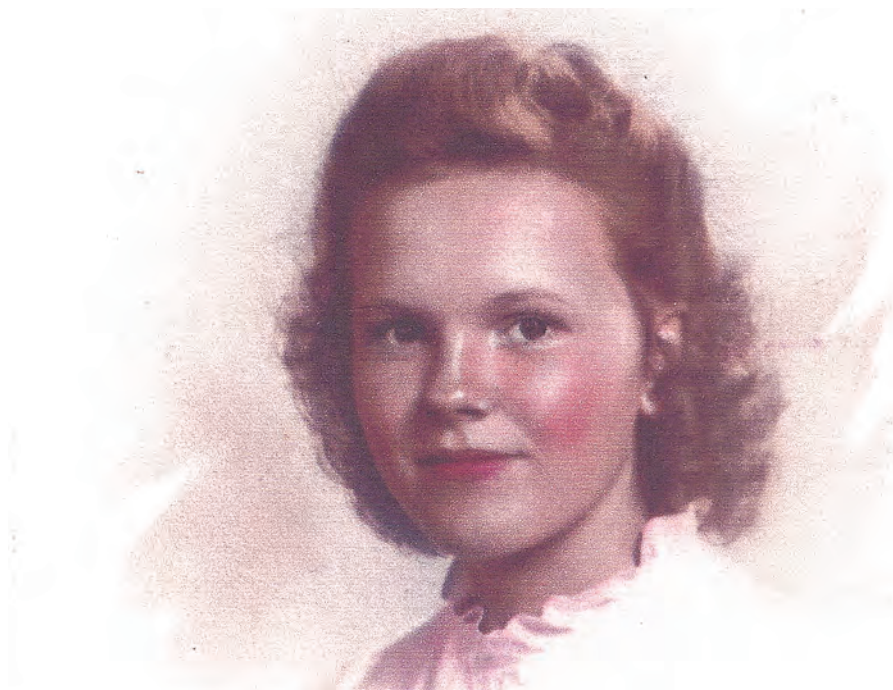


SOMEBODY'S ABOUT TO SAY SOMETHING. JUST LISTEN.

## IN MEMORIAM

# Florence Ernestine Rapp

February 24, 1929-November 4, 2016



**FLORENCE ERNESTINE** Rapp, who always preferred being called Ernestine, left this world on November 4, 2016 and joined her husband, Charles Lindbergh Rapp, who died last December. The pair had been married for 68 years when he passed.

Ernestine Rapp is survived by her daughters Diane and Donna, and son Thomas; her grandchildren Charles and Miranda, Tom and Tracy, and Hunter and Heather; and her great grandchildren Nick, Sara, Candice, Ryleigh and Gavin.

Born in Brunswick, Maryland, Ernestine was a member of the Eastern Star and Walnut Grove Baptist Church. She was a devout Christian, and lived her faith in the way she treated others. She was neither judgmental nor condemnatory, and it was said of her that she never knew a stranger.

Ernestine had worked at the Pentagon and McGuire VA Hospital, and for many years worked at the State Fair of Virginia. She and her husband Charles owned and operated Cold Harbor Market in Mechanicsville, and made friends of all their customers. She loved music, gardening, sewing, craft-making, and riding horses.


If you were to greet her with, "How are you, Ernestine?", chances are she would

respond, "Mean as ever." Truth is, there was not a mean bone in her body.

Ernestine was particularly fond of her daughter Diane, and son Thomas. Diane spent hours with her mother listening to music on an old Victrola and stereo console. Ernestine also dearly loved her grandchildren Charles and Miranda. Not long before Ernestine's death, Miranda had the chance to live with her. They were more than grandmother and granddaughter, they were soulmates and friends, and their love and friendship transcended the disparity of their ages.

"She was the best grandma anyone could ever have," says Miranda. "I was blessed to have the chance to live with her for a short while."

Ernestine will be sorely missed by the thousands she has touched over the years.

Miranda remembers what her grandmother said as she lay dying. "She told us she wasn't scared, and that she was happy to meet the Lord," Miranda says. "And she couldn't wait to see my grandfather again. In the hospital room, she saw him and talked to him. The next evening, at 6:25, she saw her husband again. I think Friday (the day she died) was the last happiest day of her life. She was with her husband and the Lord." 





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